

THE FEZ IN THE NORTHEAST AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION ON THE ISLAND OF MASSAWA IN
1849-1865 PERIOD

A Master's Thesis

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June 2022

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Bilkent University 2022

To my beloved parents

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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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Osman Alp Çıbıklı

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The Fez in the Northeast Africa: an Analysis of the Ottoman Administration on the Island of Massawa in 1849-1865 Period

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

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ABSTRACT

THE FEZ IN THE NORTHEAST AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE OTTOMAN
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This thesis is about the policies pursued by the Ottoman administration in Massawa, a city in Ottoman Abyssinia during the 1849-1865 period. After the end of Massawa's decentralized administrative structure with the efforts of Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt, Sublime Porte found the opportunity to implement policies that were not possible to execute before. Starting from the late 1840s, the district governorship in Massawa pursued a wide range of precautions against any risks of occurrences that could endanger the remains of the Ottoman presence in Northern Abyssinia. When the correspondences of the French and British consulates in Massawa are examined along with the Ottoman archival material related to this port city, it can be deduced that Sublime Porte had concerns about a possible military alliance between Europeans and Abyssinians or a military invasion directly from Occidental nations to colonize the city. Therefore, the Ottomans followed specific strategies, along with the help of the *Na'ibs* of Arkiko, that limited the actions of foreign elements to

maintain the status quo on the East Coast of the Red Sea, which resembled a blockade from the perspective of the Europeans and Abyssinians.

Keywords: Habesh Eyalet, Massawa, Ottoman Africa, Red Sea, centralization.

ÖZET

KUZEY DOĞU AFRIKA'DAKİ FES: 1849-1865 DÖNEMİNDE MASSAVA ADASI'NDAKİ OSMANLI YÖNETİMİNİN BİR ANALIZI

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Bu tez, 1849-1865 döneminde Osmanlı Habeşistan'ında bir şehir olan Massawa'da Osmanlı Yönetimi'nin izlediği politikalar hakkındadır. Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın çabalarıyla Massawa'nın desantralize yapısı ortadan kaldırıldıktan sonra Babıali, daha önce uygulanması mümkün olmayan politikaları gerçekleştirme fırsatı bulmuştur. 1840'ların sonlarından itibaren, Massawa'daki kaymakamlık, Kuzey Habeşistan'daki Osmanlı varlığının kalıntılarını tehlikeye atabilecek her türlü riske karşı çeşitli önlemler aldı. Bu liman kenti ile ilgili Osmanlı arşiv belgeleri ile birlikte Massawa'daki Fransız ve İngiliz Konsolosluklarının yazışmaları incelendiğinde, Babıali'nin Avrupalılar ile Habeşliler arasında olası bir askeri ittifaktan veya doğrudan Batılı Devletlerin şehri kolonize etmek için yapacağı bir askeri istiladan endişe duyduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bu nedenle Osmanlılar, Arkiko *Na'iblerinin* yardımıyla birlikte, Avrupalılar ve Habeşliler açısından bir ablukaya benzeyen Kızıldeniz'in doğu kıyısındaki statükoyu korumak için yabancı unsurların eylemlerini sınırlayan özel stratejiler izlediler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Habeş Eyaleti, Massava, Osmanlı Afrikası, Kızıldeniz, Merkezileşme.

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GLOSSARY

Abuna: The title of the head of the patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Ethiopia in the nineteenth century.¹

Asakir-i Hassa: One of the two branches of Asakir-i Mansure. It is responsible for the protection of the palace and the capital.²

Ayan: A word used for people who stand out among the public by their lineage or prestige in the Ottoman Empire. Some of these people, particularly in the eighteenth century managed to amass a significant amount of power and established their de facto dynasties within the Empire.³

Berat: It is a document bearing the sultan's *tuğra*. It can be presented to a person on issues such as an appointment to the civil service, an allocation from an income, or when a privilege or exemption has been granted.⁴

¹ Margery Freda Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 104-105.

² Evren Gökçe, "Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye Ordusuna Asker Alımı (Hamid Sancağı Ve Isparta Örneği)," *Social Sciences Research Journal* 6, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): pp. 191-213, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/384881>, 197.

³ Özcan Mert, "Âyan," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1991), pp. 195-198, 195-196.

⁴ Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, "Berat," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1992), pp. 472-473, 472.

Beylerbeyi: The title used by the provincial governors in the Ottoman Empire.

Defterdar: Head of the financial affairs in the Ottoman Empire. The same title is also used by the person in charge of a province's financial matters.

Dejzmach: An Abyssinian aristocratic and military title. The direct translation of the word is head of the gate.⁵

Derbend: This word, which means holding a pass, is also the name of an organization in the Ottoman Empire. This organization was established in order to ensure the safety of important passages and the continuation of the trade without interruption.⁶

District Governor: In this study, it was used as the translation of the word "Kaymakam/Kaimakam". This title was used by Ottoman governors of districts like Massawa during the nineteenth century.⁷

⁵ Richard Pankhurst et al., *The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory Against European Colonialism*, ed. Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia (New York: Algora Pub., 2005), xi.

⁶ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Derbend," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), pp. 162-164, 162.

⁷ Yücel Özkaya, "Kaymakam," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 25 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2022), pp. 84-85, 84.

Kaimakam: This word, which means deputy, was used for substitutes for various positions in the Ottoman administrative organization or for governors of districts in the nineteenth century.⁸

Meclis-i Vala: The supreme legislative and judicial body that was established by Mahmud II shortly before his death, which plans the reforms to be carried out and supervises their implementation.⁹

Na'ib: The word means deputy in Arabic and is equivalent to Kaymakam/Kaimakam in Ottoman Turkish. In the Ottoman framework, it is usually used by the deputies of qadi.¹⁰ However, in the case of this study, this word is associated with a family which governed Arkiko and Massawa in the name of sultan.

Nezil: Also called nesil, the name of the agents who provide assistance for the maintenance of the business of traders or merchants at Massawa.¹¹

⁸ Özkaya, 84.

⁹ Ali Akyıldız, "Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-i Adliyye," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 28 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2003), pp. 250-251, 250.

¹⁰ Özkaya, 84.

¹¹ Ghada H. Talhami, *Suakin and Massawa under Egyptian Rule: 1865-1885* (Washington (D.C.): University Press of America, 1979), 45.

Paşa: A high rank used by Ottoman state officials both by military and political office holders like governors, high-ranking soldiers, or viziers.

Ras: Just like the *Dejazmach*, originally a military title that means head. It could be considered as an equivalent of marshal rank, so a rank higher than *Dejazmach*. In political terms, it can be the equivalent of a duke or a prince. The most important title that every noble fights to obtain.¹²

Sancakbeyi: The title of the person in the Ottoman administrative organization who governed the administrative units smaller than the province, such as Massawa and Arkiko.

Tuğra: Seal of the monarch in the Ottoman Empire.¹³

Zemene Mesafint: The term itself means the era of the princes. It is an era of civil war or an interregnum that lasted around 86 years in Northern Abyssinia until the coronation of Tewodros II in 1855.¹⁴

¹² Thomas P. Ofcansky and LaVerle Bennette Berry, eds., *Ethiopia: a Country Study*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993), 25; Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 44,45.

¹³ M. Uğur Derman, "Tuğra," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2012), pp. 336-339, 336.

¹⁴ Chris Prouty Rosenfeld, "Eight Ethiopian Women of the 'Zemene Mesafint' (C. 1769-1855)," *Northeast African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1979): pp. 63-85, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43660013>, 63.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and the Objectives of the Thesis

My late despatches will have shown the annoyance and insults to which we are sometimes subjected. The Abyssinians being in contact with the Turks alone of the white races, and these occupying the only practicable approaches to Abyssinia, the foreign policy of that country resolves itself into three questions: whether it is better that Egypt and Abyssinia should be under one sovereign; whether the Turkish Government should be obliged distinctly to recognize the independence and limits of Abyssinia, and to afford every facility and protection to a transit trade, and to the residence of European and Abyssinian merchants in their territory for that purpose; or whether, and much better, we ourselves should break through this blockade, and by securing a point fit for the free intercourse of the two races, and where European intelligence, wealth and enterprise might produce their full effect, should throw open these rich and secluded realms to the efforts of the statesman, the merchant, and the philanthropist.¹⁵

How would a state agent with specific orders in his hand feel when he realizes that he could not carry out the instructions he received from his superior for reasons that did not originate from him? Frustration, burnout, and anger. Many French or English citizens who were on duty in the city called Massawa in Northern Abyssinia, which was under the control of Sublime Porte during the period of 1849-65, expressed that

¹⁵ Plowden, Walter. *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 4), Massawa, July 9, 1854.* Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Further Correspondence Respecting the British Captives in Abyssinia* (London, 1866), 41.

they felt like that many times. Walter Plowden, the author of the words above, was the British consul in Massawa. Throughout his incumbency in the city, he complained about the way of Ottoman administration governed Massawa, which he referred to as a blockade, by stating that the Ottomans only wanted to maintain the status quo and were trying to prevent anyone who wanted to alter the existing circumstances in Ethiopia.¹⁶ Although Plowden's ideas as an unhappy state servant may be seen as an exaggeration, they were not. In fact, the Ottomans wanted to maintain the political status quo in Massawa and the entire Abyssinia mainly by preventing modern weapons from Europe, entering Abyssinia through Ottoman-controlled Massawa, and making it as difficult as possible for relations between Europeans and Abyssinian Chieftains to work by putting pressure on diplomats by various ways. After the Crimean War, these policies eventually had to evolve to a certain extent under pressure from the British and French. However, despite these particular variations, the Ottomans always tried to strengthen their influence on the coastline and tried to prevent the Europeans from selling modern weapons to Abyssinians against the constant complaints of foreign diplomats.

To put it more precisely, Massawa, one of the few anchorable ports in the entire Abyssinia region,¹⁷ was part of the domains of the Ottoman sultans since 1557.¹⁸ However, starting in the seventeenth century and gaining momentum in the eighteenth century the sultans' authority in this city gradually weakened and vanished. This eventually led to a situation where a family, known as the *Na'ib*

¹⁶ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, (London, 1868), 129.

¹⁷ Talhami, 46.

¹⁸ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996), 43.

family in the region, replaced Ottoman governors and ruled Massawa and its periphery solely in the name sultan through the *berats* they received from Istanbul. Just before the nineteenth century, Massawa had a decentralized administrative structure as in many parts of the Empire. In other words, the Ottomans had no real power in Massawa; instead, the power was in the hands of the *Na'ibs*. Interestingly, the *Na'ibs*, who can be referred to as the notables or *ayans* of Massawa, would be forced to transfer their power back to the Sublime Porte, primarily due to the efforts of another *ayan*, Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt in 1813-1848 period. Although Mehmed Ali's efforts were solely for his interest, his death transformed Mehmed Ali's endeavor into a great legacy for the Sultan. After Mehmed Ali's death, the Sublime Porte began to work to establish a new, centralized administration in the city.

The beginning of this new era, in 1849, under the direct control of Istanbul, brought a new perspective on governing this city. The Empire wanted to benefit from the geopolitical advantage it already had. Accordingly, starting from 1849, the Ottoman Empire tried to be a spanner in any possible occurrence which could endanger their presence on the Western Coast of the Red Sea. In this period, when the Ottomans made themselves felt intensely in Abyssinian politics after centuries, Ethiopia was about to enter into an epoch of great change with the effect of the settlement of actors other than the Ottomans in the region. When the Sublime Porte took control of Massawa back from the Egyptians, the Ethiopian Empire was in an ongoing interregnum while the first footsteps of their interactions with the modern European Empires were about to begin. The British and French built consulates at Massawa and officially started to interact with the Abyssinians in the early 1840s.

Unlike the British or the French, the Ottoman Empire did not utilize the power of controlling Massawa to negotiate with the Abyssinians or forge profitable relations but simply used their power to prevent other actors from engaging in potentially threatening dealings or practices. On the other hand, the Abyssinian notables were aware of the fact that the presence of the Ottoman Empire/Egypt at the coastline of Ethiopia prevented them from reaching the sea, which above all, blocked them from interacting with the rest of the world easily. Therefore, the existence of the Ottomans in Abyssinia was not welcomed in the region generally, and if these chieftains or princes could have found an opportunity, they would not hesitate to eradicate the Ottomans in Northern Abyssinia. On the contrary, the Ottomans were worried more about the presence of the Europeans at Massawa, which was reflected in their documents. The Ottomans considered them as a potential threat that could endanger their presence by invading Massawa directly or maybe supporting Christian Ethiopians through their diplomats and using them to conquer the country's coastline on their behalf. These circumstances caused the creation of policies that British consul Plowden referred to as a blockade.

Although the Empire seemed to be weak on this small Island due to its small garrison and inadequate support, mainly the technological superiority of their weapons protected them from a potential invasion from Abyssinian chieftains. In addition, very interestingly, unlike the other cases of the Ottoman efforts of centralization, the Empire also used *Na'ibs* as agents of the state after their pacification to subdue these policies instead of eliminating their military and political power completely. In the 1849-1865 period, the *Na'ibs* and their relatives served as powerbrokers, bureaucrats, recruiters, and officers so that the Ottomans

could maintain their control over the coast of the Red Sea and keep blockading Abyssinia.

Therefore, to explain the objectives of this thesis in the light of what has been explained above, the study focuses on the 1849-1865 period in Massawa and the policies that the Ottoman administrations that governed the city in this period. This era covers an Ottoman administration that was established under the direct rule of Sublime Porte after a century-long decentralized structure. That is also the reason why the title of the thesis is the fez in Northeast Africa. To represent the return of the Ottomans to Abyssinia after the reforms and centralization efforts of Mahmud the Second, who introduced the fez as the official headdress of the Empire. Meanwhile, in addition to the presence of centralized governance in Massawa, the *Na'ibs*, the former exercisers of the Sultan's power in the city, came to the fore as the agents of this new administration, unlike many other *ayans* all around the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the Island of Massawa rose to prominence with its two features. First, it was the only anchorable port in the entire Northern Abyssinia at that time. In other words, managing this port meant acting as arbiters over everyone and every product arriving and departing from Ethiopia. Secondly, since the early nineteenth century, the European empires, which had been taking more of an active role in the politics of Abyssinia, such as the United Kingdom and France, were managing their relations from Massawa by opening consulates in the 1840s. Therefore, by controlling Abyssinia, the Ottomans also gained the opportunity to intervene in these nations' diplomatic and commercial relations. This study aims to illuminate the course of events in a regime created by the Ottomans to protect their last hold on the coastline of Ethiopia from the threats of conflicts with Abyssinians under European

influence to maintain the status quo. As this local administration was formed, the new role of the *Na'ibs* with its direct and indirect impact on the occurrences will be covered in this thesis.

1.2. The Methodology

This study mainly relies on Ottoman, French, and British archival material or secondary sources which cited or paraphrased the content of primary sources. The opening of the British and French Consulates in Abyssinia created a rich perspective on primary resources. The correspondences and reports from these consulates are very vital for this work primarily for two reasons; firstly, documents written by French or British nationals present a good narrative of the daily events and daily life in Massawa, which is a trait that the Ottoman documents did not have in general. This helps this study to illuminate the alterations in the policies that the Ottoman Empire followed in Massawa during this period, along with how the Massawa administration used the *Na'ibs* to enhance and sustain the policies referred to as a blockade. Secondly, the correspondences of the Europeans as a group that directly be in contact with the Abyssinians included important details and anecdotes about these interactions. These documents help uncover the Ottoman blockade's impact on the Abyssinians and how the Abyssinian notables regarded the Ottoman presence.

All of the French archival documents used in this thesis are from the French Diplomatic Archives. Primarily they were written by French vice-consuls of Massawa or rarely by other diplomatic personnel from the Red Sea region, missionaries, and merchants. As a limitation, only a part of the correspondence of the French Consulate in Massawa could be acquired, and the thesis had to be written

with the obtained documents, in consequence of the studies carried out in the French Diplomatic Archives. For the British Archival Material, the study mainly relied on the publications of collections of correspondences from the British Archives. Just like the French ones, these documents were also largely written by consuls at Massawa or other diplomatic personnel, including the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. About the documents from the Ottoman Archives, it is possible to divide them into two main groups. The documents from the Translation Office and the others. Translation Office documents are usually complaints or propositions of British or French diplomats to Sublime Porte about Massawa or the Red Sea region in general. Therefore, for this study, their purpose is similar to the correspondences of the Europeans that have been mentioned above. The documents named as others consist of the assignments made by the Sublime Porte to Massawa, the orders or instructions the Empire sent to Massawa, or the documents conveying the discussions on Massawa in Istanbul. These documents, apart from conveying bureaucratic appointments and important dates, particularly the instructions, reveal what were the official policies of the Ottomans and help this study to show how they were enforced on this Island, far away from the capital. These Ottoman documents were accessed either from the study conducted at the Presidency State Archives of the Republic of Turkey or directly from the website of this institution. Finally, this study has benefited from the writings of travelers, merchants, missionaries, or diplomatic officials who came to the Red Sea or Massawa, in addition to official documents.

1.3. A Brief Description of Massawa

Massawa is simply a port city in today's Eritrea on the West Coast of the Red Sea. The city was founded on an Island less than 1.5 kilometers wide, only 800 meters from the sea to the land.¹⁹ Today, it is a matter of debate when Massawa first appeared on the stage of history and when the settlements began.²⁰ However, when the Ottomans first set foot in the Red Sea Region in the sixteenth century, Massawa stood out as a commercial hub and an essential port.²¹ Massawa had a perfect harbor with a depth of water convenient for all kinds of ships in the eighteenth century.²² More than 20 ships could anchor at this port at the same time.²³ Yet, no crops were grown on the Island of Massawa, and it did not have a fresh water source.²⁴ The demand for water of Massawa was met from another port, Arkiko, about five kilometers south, and sometimes from a village called Monkullo or Moncooloo, which was five kilometers away from Massawa.²⁵ Both Massawa and Arkiko had considerable populations for the nineteenth century Ethiopian towns.²⁶ Massawa's population was around a 1000²⁷ but probably with the settlements around its

¹⁹ Talhami, 37; James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, In the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773 in Five Volumes* (London: Robinson, 1790), Volume 3, 1.

²⁰ Jonathan Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 2-3.

²¹ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 3.

²² James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, In the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773 in Five Volumes* (London: Robinson, 1790), Volume 3, 1-2.

²³ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

²⁴ Remedius Prutky and Richard Pankhurst, *Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries*, trans. J. H. Arrowsmith-Brown (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1991), 66; Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: Mısır, Sudan ve Habeş (1672-1680)*, vol. 10 (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938), 944.

²⁵ Talhami, 37; Edward Walker, *Report by Vice-Consul Walker on the Commerce of Abyssinia for the year 1863 (No.353)*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 231.

²⁶ Richard Pankhurst and Leila Ingrams, *Ethiopia Engraved: an Illustrated Catalogue of Engravings by Foreign Travellers From 1681 to 1900* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1988), 68.

²⁷ Edward Walker, *Report by Vice-Consul Walker on the Commerce of Abyssinia for the year 1863 (No.353)*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 232.

periphery it can reach to a number between 3000 and 4000.²⁸ In addition, the majority of the population of Massawa spoke a version of Arabic, and even after centuries under Ottoman Rule, Turkish was not an important language throughout the region, even in the mid-nineteenth century, when the presence of Sublime Porte was at its height.²⁹ Massawans were Muslims.³⁰ Remedius Prutky, a Franciscan missionary who arrived in Massawa in February 1752, said that only Muslims could settle on the Island and that no Christians lived here, except for some traders. He wrote that the Island had no production of any value and that its people were destitute, except for a few traders.³¹ The only sector that kept this Island alive was commerce. Massawa traded with the Arabian Peninsula, Suakin, and the interior of Abyssinia.³² The merchants of Massawa were about 50 locals, 20 Banians, and a few Arabs. In addition, some merchants had agents called *Nezil* stationed at Massawa to preserve their business.³³ Apart from these, non-merchant natives were actually a kind of intermediary for trade. Almost everyone in Massawa was a middleman of some sort.³⁴ A severe preponderance of Muslim traders in the region over Christians existed. According to the British, this was because the slave trade was entirely in the

²⁸ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

²⁹ Chauvin Baillard, *Baillard to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, June 7, 1856*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

³⁰ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

³¹ Prutky and Pankhurst, *Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries*, 66.

³² Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

³³ Talhami, 45.

³⁴ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massowah, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

hands of Muslims.³⁵ Of the 4000 slaves exported from Abyssinia every year, 3000 came out of Massawa, and this trade was the most important source of income on the Island.³⁶

1.4. Literature Review

The interest of historians in the Habesh Eyalet begins with the research of Cengiz Orhonlu. He conveyed the story of this state, which was founded on July 5, 1555,³⁷ up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, in a very satisfactory way, due to the abundance of sources for this period particularly. During this period, important cities such as Massawa (1557) and Debarwa (1559) were captured, numerous wars were fought against the Abyssinians, and the borders that constituted the state changed frequently.³⁸ These changes were easily conveyed by his works, thanks to the satiety of the number and content of documents. In the intervening period, no significant contribution was made to Cengiz Orhonlu's narrative in the sixteenth century. As a result of the classification studies carried out in the Ottoman archives, in addition to the documents found by Orhonlu himself, only a few documents were revealed, and

³⁵ Plowden, Walter. *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184)*, Massowah, July 9, 1854. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 119.

³⁶ Rolland, Eugene. *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 30 July 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 320.

³⁷ Cengiz Orhonlu, "Osmanlıların Habeşistan Siyaseti 1554-1560" *Tarih Dergisi* 15, no. 20 (1965): pp. 39-54, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/101646>, 45.

³⁸ Cengiz Orhonlu, "Osmanlıların Habeşistan Siyaseti (1540-1560)" *VI. Türk Tarih Kongresi* 6 (October 20, 1961): pp. 413-423, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7liBn5XLsAFWGWZ3a0tENmhCYmM/view>, 421-422.

the recent studies on the classified Ruus³⁹ and Mühimme Registers⁴⁰ did not make epochal contributions to the story of Orhonlu. A number of gaps, such as Andrew Peacock's articles on Suakin⁴¹ or the Funj Sultanate⁴², have been filled in the specifics of the sixteenth century in some measure. Although it is not directly related to the Province of Habesh, the Ottoman Red Sea policies and aims in the region have also attracted the attention of historians and have been the subject of many works in recent years. However, studies on this subject generally did not contradict Orhonlu's theses, and even the works of researchers such as Salih Özbaran strengthened Orhonlu's theories.⁴³ In the light of all the studies that have been conducted, it does not seem easy to revise or make a major contribution to the history of Ottoman Abyssinia about the sixteenth century.

It is not possible to say that the works of Cengiz Orhonlu for the seventeenth century and beyond preserved the same didactic quality and content as his works provided for the earlier periods of the state. This is due to the scarcity of sources related to Habesh Eyalet from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly among the documents classified until today. Especially with the annexation of the province to Jeddah after 1701, the vast majority of documents that remained from

³⁹ Bilgin Aydın and Rifat Günalan, "Ruus Defterlerine Göre XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Teşkilatı Ve Gelişimi," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 38, no. 38 (2011): pp. 27-160, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/112230>, 14-15,63-64,72,117.

⁴⁰ İlhan Zengin, "Mühimme Defterleri'ne Göre Habeş Eyaleti (1550-1600)," in *Prof. Dr. Feda Şamil Arık'a Armağan: Türk Tarihine Dair Yazılar-3*, ed. Alparslan Demir et al. (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2018), pp. 221-234.

⁴¹ A.C.S. Peacock, "Suakin: A Northeast African Port in the Ottoman Empire," *Northeast African Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): pp. 29-50, <https://doi.org/10.1353/nas.2012.0009>.

⁴² A.C.S. Peacock, "The Ottomans and the Funj Sultanate in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75, no. 1 (2011): pp. 87-111, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0041977x11000838>.

⁴³ Salih Özbaran, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Ve Hindistan Yolu," *Tarih Dergisi* 0, no. 31 (1977): pp. 65-146, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/101788>, 138-142.

the post-classical period deal with issues concerning the Hejaz region.⁴⁴ In addition, starting from the second half of the seventeenth century, important cities of the state, such as Massawa, Arkiko and Suakin, began to be governed directly or jointly with local rulers instead of a *sancakbeyi* appointed by the governor of the Habesh Eyalet.⁴⁵ This was legit not only for the cities but also for the state itself, as those appointed as governors of the Habesh Eyalet would not go there and instead send a deputy in their place.⁴⁶ It led to the weakening of central authority and the emergence of decentralization throughout the Province of Habesh.⁴⁷ In this case, it would be logical to think that these two occurrences may be the reasons for the scarcity of documents because documents are usually about a state interference, and if there is no state presence to act, then there can be no documentation of it.⁴⁸ Therefore, a small number of historians who want to investigate this period of the Ottoman presence in Ethiopia have not benefited from the Ottoman sources and mainly used other primary or secondary sources and located the ones in which Ottoman officials were mentioned to make examinations. The articles which Emeri van Donzel wrote on Massawa⁴⁹ and Yemenite-Ethiopian relations against the Ottomans⁵⁰ resulting from his investigations on the Habesh Eyalet in the seventeenth

⁴⁴ Muhammed Tandoğan, “The Ottoman Involvement in Ethiopia During the Mid-Fifteenth Century,” in *A History of Ottoman Africa: Black Pearl and White Tulips*, ed. Şakir Batmaz (İstanbul: Kenz Yayınları, 2013), pp. 77-113, 100.

⁴⁵ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti* 129; Evliya Çelebi, 948.

⁴⁶ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 129.

⁴⁷ Tandoğan, 101.

⁴⁸ Alexis Wick, *The Red Sea in Search of Lost Space* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 68.

⁴⁹ Emeri van Donzel, “The Turks of Habeş Eyaleti in a Yemenite Source, 1650,” in *Ciépo Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi VII. Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, Ilber Ortaylı, and Emeri Van Donzel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994), pp. 309-317.

⁵⁰ Emeri van Donzel, “The Turks in Masawwa’ During the 17th Century,” in *IX. Türk Tarih Kongresi: Ankara, 21-25 Eylül 1981: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7liBn5XLsAfs2N3M18zUkJRQVE/view>.

century are two good examples of this situation. Although he mainly tried to understand the state of this Ottoman province in both of these articles, he uses only Evliya Çelebi's famous *Seyahatname*, which can be considered as an Ottoman source and is the most substantial source of many historians due to the scarcity of Ottoman sources. Therefore, the information he gave about the state of the *Eyalet* in the seventeenth century is not as satisfying as Orhonlu's publications for the sixteenth century. Moreover, unlike the sixteenth century, the post-Classical period of the Habesh Eyalet has not been studied in detail, and no comprehensive work has been published that investigates the Ottoman existence, but it is almost impossible to do it with known sources today.

In the last century of the state, the nineteenth century, the scarcity of sources and studies for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is not observed for this period. In fact, the existence variety of sources for this era combined with the fact focal sources Orhonlu's book briefly analyses this period compared to the 1550-1650 epoch makes this century more prone to be studied.

By this time, the Habesh Province had shrunk considerably compared to its sixteenth-century state, and the ports of Suakin and Massawa had increased in importance in the region.⁵¹ Therefore, the literature on the Habesh Eyalet in this era almost entirely proceeds through these two cities. Their control was given to Tosun Paşa of Egypt and later to İbrahim Paşa's disposal after the Wahhabi War,⁵² and finally, in 1849, to the governor of Jeddah, Hasip Paşa.⁵³ Although on paper, it

⁵¹ Cengiz Orhonlu, "Habeş Eyaleti," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 14 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1996), pp. 363-367, 366.

⁵² Presidency of Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives (hereafter cited as BOA), C.DH. 2/61.

⁵³ *Osmanlı İdaresinde Sudan* (İstanbul: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2013), 41.

seems that only the administration of these two cities was taken from the Egypt Eyalet and given to the another Ottoman province at the Red Sea, yet with this change, the cities were directly entered into the domain of Sublime Porte.⁵⁴ The history of this period, which started in 1849 and ended in 1865 when the two ports were transferred back to the control of Egypt,⁵⁵ has been studied by a few historians.

In this context, a few theses have been written to cover the nineteenth-century histories of these two cities. Some chapters of Tariq Mohamed Nour's doctoral dissertation on Suakin in the nineteenth century offer a comprehensive narrative from the Ottoman perspective. Although this work mainly deals with the period after 1865, it also gives a detailed account of the events that happened between 1849 and 1865 in the light of Ottoman archival material, which is abundant for this period as they are for the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ Yet, this work, does not investigate course of events in Massawa and Abyssinia in detail due to the fact that its focus is mainly on Egyptian Sudan and Suakin.

On Massawa, few publications can be identified as works that mention this period of the city in the light of Ottoman archive sources.⁵⁷ Najwa Mutahar's doctoral dissertation in 2014, just like Nour's dissertation, makes a study by placing the interest shown by the Occidental States in the region of these two port cities at the center of the study. However, unlike Nour, this time, it sheds light on Massawa instead of Suakin. Additionally, again unlike Nour's work, it does not examine the

⁵⁴ Durmuş Akalın, "The Policy of Expansion of Egypt in East Africa in the 19th Century," in *New Trends in Social and Liberal Sciences-2*, ed. Zafer Gölen and İbrahim Serbestoğlu (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2017), pp. 518-542, 523-524.

⁵⁵ *Osmanlı İdaresinde Sudan*, 41-42.

⁵⁶ Tariq Mohamed Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin," PhD diss., (Istanbul University, 2006), iv-v.

⁵⁷ Najwa Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa," PhD diss., (Istanbul University, 2014).

period of 1849-1865 in detail and focuses on some particular events that happened at that time.⁵⁸ Additionally, Mutahar's dissertation does not have an emphasis on the Ottoman blockade and the evolution of the *Na'ibs* in this era.

Also, Durmuş Akalın and Selim Parlaz's book on the Italian-Ottoman rivalry at Massawa and the Red Sea, where they benefited from a large part of the documents in the Ottoman archives, can be called the most informative book about the 1849-1865 period of Massawa. However, similarly to Mutahar's work, while this study examines the developments in this period, it does bring the blockade issue into the picture mainly due to the fact that this book mainly focuses on the perspectives of the Ottoman Officials rather than focusing on the *Na'ibs* and the Europeans.

Apart from these, the works of historians of Ethiopia and the Red Sea for this period are also prominent. For instance, the work of Thomas Marston, where he conveyed a narrative of British primary sources, mainly foreign office documents, about the nineteenth-century Red Sea politics of the United Kingdom, was a solid source for understanding the characteristics of the British presence at Massawa. However, it should be noted that their works primarily did not study the 1849-1865 period of Massawa with a perspective focused on the aspects of the Ottoman Empire. Especially since the studies of names such as Mordechai Abir, Richard Pankhurst, or John Spencer Trimingham, who dealt with Ethiopia's political, social, or economic history in the nineteenth century, did not use Ottoman sources; their works can be used as examples for this situation. Accordingly, this gap is usually tried to be filled with references to local sources, English, Italian, Dutch and French documents, or

⁵⁸ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 42-53.

travelogues. However, it clearly seems that the Ottoman perspective was not well investigated in these studies. While it is possible to learn economic, political, or military information about Abyssinia and Massawa from the works of these people, it is not easy to understand the motives of the Ottomans and the Ottoman perspective of the events.

Although the works that were explicitly written for Massawa are very few in number, it is possible to see the same deficiency in this literature. In this regard, Jonathan Miran's dissertation stands out as an actual example.⁵⁹ This work more or less covers the entire period (1557-1885) when Massawa was under the control of the Ottoman Empire but did not include any sources related to the Ottomans except Evliya Çelebi. Therefore, just like other historians of Ethiopia, Miran tried to close this gap with English, Italian documents, and travelogues to a certain extent, but the Ottoman elements were still missing.

To summarize the main missing points in the literature that this thesis will cover; first of all, by presenting the centralization process of Massawa, will show that the pacification of the *Na'ibs*, the *ayans* of Massawa, can be linked to the literature on the Ottoman efforts of centralization. Secondly, although some works examine the 1849-1865 period that this will cover, none of them has analyzed the Ottoman policies, which were referred to as a blockade, and also these studies never put emphasis on the transformation of the *Na'ibs* and their new role in this framework.

1.5. Thesis Outline

⁵⁹ Jonathan Miran, "Facing the Land, Facing the Sea: Commercial Transformation and Urban Dynamics in the Red Sea Port of Massawa, 1840s–1900s," PhD diss., (Michigan State University, 2004).

Chapter one begins by describing the Ottoman occupation of Massawa and the early years of Habesh Eyalet. It later conveys the emergence and seizing of power of the *ayans* of Massawa, the *Na'ibs*. Later in the first chapter, the story of *Na'ibs* and how they eventually took control of Massawa until the nineteenth century will be explained. After the complete separation of Massawa from Istanbul's sphere of influence, the thesis will add the Province of Egypt and Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa to the story with the dawn of the nineteenth century. From now on, a particular example from the Ottoman efforts of centralization will be told. The struggle of Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt, an *ayan* himself, against another *ayan* family, *Na'ibs*, to take complete control of the city for almost three decades will be conveyed in this work. In this process, it will be explained how *Na'ibs'* authority gradually faded with the Mehmed Ali Dynasty taking control of Massawa, and the Island was getting closer to being under the direct control of the Ottoman capital every year. In the 1840s, this process accelerated, and when Mehmed Ali Paşa of Kavala died, the actors behind the decentralized structure in Massawa were completely pacified. The chapter will be concluded with a description of the legacy of the Egyptian governance at Massawa.

Chapter two will demonstrate the early stages of the establishment of the Ottoman administration in Massawa and therefore beginning of the implementation of Ottoman policies for Abyssinia, which was basically a blockade for the region, as British consul Walter Plowden simply described.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, this work also demonstrates how gradually the *Na'ibs* transformed into agents for the Ottoman

⁶⁰ Walter Plowden. *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184)*, Massowah, July 9, 1854. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 129.

officials at Massawa and how they helped them to maintain these policies referred to as a blockade. Also, at this stage, the events in Abyssinia that affected the Ottoman administration in Massawa will have a more significant place in the narrative. Especially the interactions of British and French agents with prominent Abyssinian leaders such as *Dejazmach* Wube and *Ras* Ali will be examined to illustrate how the Ottoman presence played a role in these occurrences.

The central theme of chapter three is the alterations in the policies followed by the Ottomans in the region to protect the status quo with each new district governor appointed to Massawa until 1865, when the city's administration was transferred to Egypt again. In other words, this chapter will show how the Ottoman blockade and policies to protect their interests at Massawa evolved throughout the course of events, particularly after the creation of a new political environment by the Crimean War and the Treaty of Paris. In addition, it will be explained how the end of the interregnum of Abyssinia reflected on Massawa and on the relationship of Abyssinians with Western nations.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION IN MASSAWA (1557-1848)

2.1. Establishment of the Ottoman Administration in Massawa (1555-1579)

When the Portuguese crossed the Cape of Good Hope at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they had both religious and economic ambitions. They sought to fight against Muslims, spread Christianity, and direct regional trade to Lisbon. Here, the Abyssinia region was a point where almost all of these aims intersected. In fact, Portuguese-Ethiopian relations, which created the basis for all of these aims, began in 1490; a short time after the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, but the intensification of the relations was possible with the diplomatic delegation sent in 1520.⁶¹ In the same period, the Ottomans did not show much interest in the Abyssinia Region, as it can be understood from the report of Selman Reis dated 1525.⁶² Despite this, the Ottoman Empire supported the campaign of seizing all of Abyssinia initiated by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi of Adal Sultanate in the late

⁶¹ C. R. Markham, "The Portuguese Expeditions to Abyssinia in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 38 (1868): pp. 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1798566>, 3.

⁶² BOA, TSMA.e. 757/62; İdris Bostan, "Selman Reis," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2009), pp. 444-446, 445.

1520s.⁶³ In addition, as a result of the direct Portuguese military support to the Ethiopian Empire by sending soldiers during this war, the first Ottoman-Portuguese struggle in the region started.⁶⁴ Although this military operation failed in 1543, it would not be wrong to claim that it increased the Ottoman interest in the Abyssinia region. However, this interest did not turn into a major military campaign in the 1540s, most probably since the Portuguese presence in the South of Egypt was not very intense anymore.⁶⁵ These circumstances would change definitively when Özdemiş Paşa, governor of Yemen, was dismissed from his post in 1554 and called to Istanbul.⁶⁶ Özdemiş Paşa, just like many officials who served for the sultan, was a former Mamluk, who later joined the Ottoman naval expeditions in the Indian Ocean against the Portuguese and became the governor of Yemen when the province was in a very delicate situation.⁶⁷

When he arrived in Istanbul, Özdemiş Paşa had the opportunity to meet with Sultan Süleyman many times due to the backing of Grand Vizier Kara Ahmet Paşa, and in one of these meetings, he persuaded the Sultan to make an expedition on Abyssinia.⁶⁸ This project has two main objectives which were related to the state's economic interests. According to Orhonlu, the first of these was that, as the desired level of harm to Portugal could not be done in the Ottoman naval expeditions in the

⁶³ Miguel de Castanhoso, Bermudez João, and Gaspar Correa, *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541-1543*, trans. Richard Steven Whiteway (London: Hakluyt Society, 1902), XXIII-XXIV.

⁶⁴ Asa J. Davis, "The Sixteenth Century Jihād in Ethiopia and The Impact on Its Culture," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 4 (December 1963): pp. 567-592, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41856679>, 572-582.

⁶⁵ Peacock, "Suakin: A Northeast African Port in the Ottoman Empire", 34.

⁶⁶ Samuel Fessahazion Tewelde, "The Ottoman-Portuguese Rivalry and Its Impact on the Ethio-Eritrea Region (16th -17th Century)" Master's Thesis, (Selçuk University, 2020), 50.

⁶⁷ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89-91.

⁶⁸ Orhonlu, "Osmanlıların Habeşistan Siyaseti (1540-1560)", 418.

Indian Ocean made in the 1550s, the Ottomans wanted to compensate for this situation by taking control of another Portuguese area of influence.⁶⁹ The second reason was that in the middle of the sixteenth century, a severe gold shortage began in the Ottoman Lands, and as a result of this scarcity, gold imports had to be banned in some provinces.⁷⁰ In a period of these troubles, it must have been much more attractive to the Ottomans to make an expedition to Ethiopia, which had rich gold mines and was known to have a vital alliance with Portugal.⁷¹ In the light of all this, Özdemiş Paşa, who was ordered to organize an expedition to Abyssinia, was declared as commander in chief and went to Egypt for preparations. However, he could not gather enough soldiers for this expedition during the earlier stages of his time in Egypt.⁷² Thanks to his intense efforts, he was able to form an army in the middle of 1555, but going south from Suakin Harbor, the southernmost tip of the Ottoman Empire on the West Coast of the Red Sea required an exceedingly tricky journey. For this reason, the first operation from the land was very troublesome, there was unrest among the soldiers, and Özdemiş Paşa had to cancel it and return to Egypt.⁷³ It can be said that the launching of the second operation was on July 5, 1555, when the Sultan declared the official establishment of the Province of Habesh in Suakin.⁷⁴ Özdemiş Paşa, who spent the year 1555 on the one hand collecting troops for the expedition and on the other for the preparation of the state's

⁶⁹ Orhonlu, "Osmanlıların Habeşistan Siyaseti 1554-1560", 41.

⁷⁰ Halil Sahillioğlu, "Kuruluşun XVIII. Asrın Sonlarına Kadar Osmanlı Para Tarihi Üzerinde Bir Deneme" PhD diss., (Istanbul University, 1958), 192.

⁷¹ Mukerrem Miftah, "Key Dimensions in Abyssinia-Ottoman Relations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Critical Review of Literatures," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): pp. 265-278, <http://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol10no1/10.1-16-Miftah.pdf>, 273.

⁷² Reyhan Şahin Allahverdi, "The Ottoman Domination in The Red Sea: Ozdemiroglu Osman Pasha's Governorship of Abyssinia (1561-1567)," *Studies of the Ottoman Domain* 3, no. 5 (2013): pp. 35-48, <https://doi.org/10.19039/sotod.2013514126>, 36.

⁷³ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 36.

⁷⁴ BOA, KK. 213, p. 212; Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 37; Habesh Eyalet founded as a *Salyaneli Eyalet*, just like Egypt.

bureaucracy and organization, was given the money required for the campaign from the Treasury of the Province of Egypt.⁷⁵ In addition, the revenues of some regions of Yemen were left to Özdemir Paşa as well.⁷⁶ With the founding of the state, Özdemir Paşa, who was appointed as the first governor of the province, has chosen the Massawa Island as his first target in the second expedition, which was the most crucial port of Ethiopia as the gateway to the outside.⁷⁷ The main reason why Massawa determined as an objective was that the Portuguese used this city and its port intensely for their transactions with Abyssinians. Therefore, the seizure of Massawa and its port could reduce the influence of the Portuguese in the region.⁷⁸ As a result of military operations both from land and sea, in 1557, two important port cities, Massawa and Arkiko, and some strategic places such as the Dahlak Islands around these cities conquered.⁷⁹ With the capture of Massawa, it became the new capital of Habesh Eyalet, and a palace, which would be used as meeting place of the council of the province, and a mosque were built here by Özdemir Paşa.⁸⁰

The Ottomans continued to occupy the coastline of the Ethiopian Empire in order to completely sever the link between the Portuguese and the Ethiopians so that the Abyssinians would be completely landlocked. The second phase of the occupation started in 1557, and in 1558 Tigray Region was subdued to Ottoman rule.⁸¹ With this conquest, the entire coastline of Ethiopia came under Ottoman

⁷⁵ *Osmanlı İdaresinde Sudan*, 22.

⁷⁶ BOA, KK. 213, p. 212.

⁷⁷ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 43.

⁷⁸ Orhonlu, "Osmanlıların Habeşistan Siyaseti 1554-1560", 49-50.

⁷⁹ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 43.

⁸⁰ Evliya Çelebi, 943-944.

⁸¹ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 45.

dominance. As a result, now Ottomans had a say over everyone and every product entering and leaving Ethiopia.

Upon this, Özdemiş Paşa, who planned to move into Inner-Abyssinia and annex the country altogether, captured the city of Debarwa, which can be considered as a major stronghold for the conquest of the Ethiopian Empire, in 1559. The Ottomans, who continued their advance in the region until the death of Özdemiş Paşa in 1560, entered a period of decline in this region with disorder created by Paşa's demise. The Ottomans had to withdraw from inner-Ethiopia but managed to preserve their presence on the coastline with the appointment of his son Osman as the new governor.⁸² During his governorship, which lasted until the summer of 1567, Osman succeeded in expanding the borders of the province more than his father's time, taking advantage of the internal turmoil in Abyssinia by making alliances with nobles like Yeshaq, the ruler of Maritime Provinces of Ethiopia.⁸³ In the period following Osman Paşa's departure from office, the problems of the province increased significantly, and the need for military and financial aid from Egypt and Yemen became paramount. In the 1567-1579 period, the Ethiopian Empire and other local rulers and the Ottomans continued to wage war against each other; as a result, cities such as Debarwa changed hands frequently.⁸⁴ However in 1579, the Emperor of Ethiopia, Sarsa Dengel, launched a major attack on Habesh Province, and the Ottoman army, which could not receive the necessary support from Yemen and

⁸² Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 48-72.

⁸³ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 52-53.

⁸⁴ *Osmanlı İdaresinde Sudan*, 25-28.

Egypt, lost many of its high-level elites, including the Governor, Ahmet Paşa, and suffered a heavy defeat.⁸⁵

2.2. The Rise of the *Na'ibs* (1579-1701)

After this calamity, the heavy defeat against the Emperor of Ethiopia in 1579 caused a significant decrease in the number of Ottoman soldiers in the province, and after this date, the military importance of local groups became crucial for the survival Habesh Eyalet against Ethiopians.⁸⁶ Accordingly, after the new governor Hizir Paşa arrived at Massawa, he used locals extensively both for his campaigns at the defense of Arkiko and his offensive at Debarwa later, in 1582.⁸⁷ After the victories in these battles, the Ottomans again took control of the whole Tigray Region back from the Ethiopians. Although Massawa still seemed to be the center of the province in the 1590s, the governors often used Debarwa, which was further inland, as their operation center.⁸⁸

Despite the situation in Northern Abyssinia seeming to be restored, the importance of Massawa and the Habesh Eyalet for the Ottoman Empire began to decline with the effect of the Portuguese abandoning the region. Therefore, the end of the sixteenth century can also be regarded as the beginning of the decline of Ottoman interest in the region, the weakening of the Habesh Eyalet, and the rise of intermediaries throughout the province. In the case of Massawa, this meant a significant increase in the power of a family, which had the potential to provide

⁸⁵ *Osmanlı İdaresinde Sudan*, 28-29.

⁸⁶ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 63.

⁸⁷ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 61-63.

⁸⁸ Tandoğan, 85-86.

many services like soldiers when needed. Members of this family were originally locals of Arkiko and became major actors in the politics of Massawa much later. According to Jonathan Miran, the local stories state that this family arrived at Arkiko from Sudan in the fourteenth century as part of a Beja tribe and started to establish their dynasty in the city, most probably by controlling the daily water and food supply to Massawa.⁸⁹ This family did not have a known official name. However, at a certain point during the decline of the central authority in the region, this family started to obtain charters from the Ottoman sultans and started to be referred to as the *Na'ibs* of Arkiko or the *Na'ib* family of Arkiko. The word *Na'ib* itself is the Arabic equivalent of *kaimakam*, meaning deputy, and was frequently used for people who replaced other state officials temporarily in the sixteen and seventeenth centuries.⁹⁰ In accordance with that, starting from this period, a member of this family used the title *Na'ib* and ruled Arkiko in the name of the sultan. Accordingly, this family is referred to as the *Na'ib* family in the literature and in the sources of this period in general.⁹¹

The family that now held the sultan's official *berat* gradually managed to gain a significant influence in Massawa as well. Although there is no doubt that the *Na'ibs* were very influential in the city throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in early the 1600s, there was still a district governor who was subordinated to the governor of Habesh Eyalet, in Massawa.⁹² Even though the actual date of the first appointment of a person from this Balaw family as *Na'ib* with a *berat* from

⁸⁹ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 36-38.

⁹⁰ Özkaya, 84; Talhami, 57-58.

⁹¹ Evliya Çelebi, 948.

⁹² Miran, "Facing The Land, Facing The Sea: Commercial Transformation and Urban Dynamics In The Red Sea Port of Massawa, 1840s -1900s.", 43-44.

Istanbul is unknown, especially after the second half of the seventeenth century, the narratives of travelers who visited the city proceeded through the *Na'ib* and his relatives. Particularly in this period, power struggles among the branches of the family started to be seen, mainly for obtaining the *berat* of the sultan, which would last until the mid-nineteenth century.⁹³ For that reason, despite the existence of state officials in Massawa, it would be reasonable to assume that the Ottomans transferred remarkable amount of their power in the city to this family starting around the early seventeenth century.

Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, which is one of the most important sources for the political conditions in Massawa in the seventeenth century, narrates how influential and powerful *Na'ibs* were during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. When Evliya Çelebi arrived at the port of Massawa, the de facto control of the city, with the exception of customs, was in the hands of the *Na'ib*, like many places in the surrounding areas.⁹⁴ More importantly, *Na'ibs* were serving as the official *Sancakbeyi* of their home, Arkiko, by the appointment of the Ottoman sultan.⁹⁵ Although there was an Ottoman *Sancakbeyi* affiliated to the district governor of Habesh Eyalet in Arkiko when the province was first established, the *Na'ib* family eventually managed to take over this title.⁹⁶ In addition to this, even though there were many Ottoman officials still present at Massawa and Arkiko

⁹³ Miran, "Facing The Land, Facing The Sea: Commercial Transformation and Urban Dynamics In The Red Sea Port of Massawa, 1840s -1900s.", 44.

⁹⁴ Evliya Çelebi, 948.

⁹⁵ Evliya Çelebi, 948; "*Kara Nayib cümle urban ve üryan kara zengiler üzre mirlivadır. Cümlesinin akdi halli ve zabt rabt anın destindedir.*" transcribed by Devlet Basımevi. Evliya Çelebi, 948.

⁹⁶ Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, 59.

including a district governor at Massawa, the district governor was completely under the influence of the *Na'ib* Family, according to Evliya Çelebi.⁹⁷

2.3. The Golden Age of the *Na'ibs* (1701-1813)

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Habesh Eyalet, which had almost become invisible in the framework of the Empire and shrank compared to previous centuries, was unified with Jeddah Province and given under the domain of the governor of Jeddah by an edict in 1701.⁹⁸ This meant the end of the existence of a separate Habesh *Beylerbeyi* who resided in Suakin, and from now on, the governor of Jeddah would be the governor of Habesh Eyalet as well. Predictably, this situation led to the strengthening of the local forces throughout the province, and it is not possible to say that the interest that the Ottomans attached to the region increased in this century. Although ivory and some valuable materials were being transported from the region to Istanbul to be used in mosque constructions, the supply of these goods alone is not enough to show that Porte was interested in her domains on the West Coast of the Red Sea.⁹⁹

This also coincided with the rise of *ayans* or, in other words, notables throughout the Empire. These people or families, just like *Na'ibs* of Arkiko, gained significant political and economic power. The vast majority of them, like the *Na'ib* family, achieved this by obtaining a contract from or an office such as the governorship from the sultan.¹⁰⁰ As a result of this situation, which was seen in

⁹⁷ Evliya Çelebi, 948, 949.

⁹⁸ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 25-26.

⁹⁹ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 24.

¹⁰⁰ Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 67.

almost every province of the Empire, quite varied, powerful, and influential notable families emerged, and the family which consolidated power in the Ottoman-controlled Northern Abyssinia was the *Na'ib* family. Accordingly, the *Na'ib* family could also be classified as a product of this era of decentralization throughout the Empire.¹⁰¹ Although the *Na'ib* family had begun to consolidate power long before most of the other notables, like them, they gained an abnormal autonomy and influence in the eighteenth century, and therefore, like other *ayan* families, all affairs in their region were now within the grasp of the *Na'ibs*.¹⁰²

The most salient distinctness of the *Na'ibs* within the framework of Ottoman notables was that the *Na'ibs* were also subjects and vassals of another monarch, the Abyssinian Emperor. When Remedius Prutky came to the port of Massawa in 1752, he met the *Na'ib* of that period and conveyed that this person was attached to both the Abyssinian Emperor and the Ottoman Emperor at the same time, and he was entrusted with duties of both Empires by the two monarchs.¹⁰³ In addition, the *Na'ibs* were forced to pay tribute to the ruler of Tigre region in the same period.¹⁰⁴

The presence of the Ottomans in the region, on the other hand, was extremely minimal. According to Prutky's account, there was no regular Ottoman official on the Island, and he also addressed the *Na'ib* as the governor.¹⁰⁵ He stated that only a district governor was appointed to the Island by the governor of Jeddah every year, and he came to Massawa with a group of soldiers to collect taxes from

¹⁰¹ Yaycıoğlu, 68.

¹⁰² Yaycıoğlu, 76.

¹⁰³ Prutky and Pankhurst, *Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries*, 69.

¹⁰⁴ Talhami, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Prutky and Pankhurst, *Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries*, 66-76.

anyone entering or leaving the port or any merchandise arrived from the Province of Jeddah.¹⁰⁶

According to James Bruce, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, decentralization had reached such a level that the *Na'ibs* did not pay tribute to any Ottoman authority throughout the Red Sea region, including the governor of Jeddah.¹⁰⁷ Conversely, most probably starting from the early eighteenth century, the *Na'ibs* received a certain amount of money in exchange for meeting the needs of the small Ottoman garrison within Massawa.¹⁰⁸ Although this garrison, whose sole existence purpose was to represent and maintain the sultan's authority, through marriages with the locals and enlistment of the Massawan groups turned into a unit that was loyal to the *Na'ib* family.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, in the light of these developments in the early 1800s, Massawa more or less transformed into an autonomous city-state that was more connected to the Abyssinian world than the Ottoman Empire.

In such a case, while the Habesh Province and Massawa existed quite disconnectedly from the rest of the Empire until the nineteenth century, major developments would occur in the north of Ottoman Abyssinia. Mehmed Ali Paşa of Kavala, who succeeded in usurping the governorship of Egypt by making excellent use of the environment created by Napoleon's invasion, managed to become the unchallengeable ruler of all of Egypt in a very short time.¹¹⁰ In 1811, Paşa managed

¹⁰⁶ Prutky and Pankhurst, *Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries*, 355.

¹⁰⁷ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, In the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773 in Five Volumes* (London: Robinson, 1790), Volume 3, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Chichele Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1868), 355-357.

¹⁰⁹ Bruce, 3; Evliya Çelebi, 948.

¹¹⁰ Carl F Petry, M. W. Daly and Darrell Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt, 1798-1801." in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: From 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 113-139, 129-134.

to rule out the remaining obstacles on his way, such as the Mamluk Lords, with the infamous Massacre of the Citadel. Later, an edict was delivered to him by the agents of the Sultan.¹¹¹ Sultan Mahmud II had to ask for help from the governor of Egypt, as the Saudi armies from the Najd region captured the holy cities of Islam and defeated all the Ottoman forces that were sent to crush them.¹¹² When the Egyptian forces under the command of the governor's son, Tosun Paşa, succeeded in capturing the Holy cities in a few years, Mahmud II appointed him as the governor of Hejaz and Habesh in 1813, thus establishing the first Egyptian administration in Massawa.¹¹³ Technically, Provinces of Jeddah and Habesh were not under the domain of Mehmed Ali of Egypt but by making his son governor of these states, Sultan made Paşa the de facto ruler of Habesh and Jeddah. Although it is not known what transformations Tosun Paşa caused exactly in Massawa and Suakin while he was the governor of Jeddah and Habesh between 1813 and 1818, Richard Pankhurst stated that the period was a breaking point for the authority of the *Na'ibs* and the arrival of the Egyptians began to break their absolute dominance in the city.¹¹⁴ Although there is not a significant indicator which shows a decline in the influence of the *Na'ibs*, it would be reasonable to assume that the return of the state presence to the city might have changed present circumstances in Massawa.

2.4. The First Mehmed Ali Paşa Period in Massawa (1818-1840)

¹¹¹ Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: The Army and the Quest for Modernization in Mehmed Ali's Egypt 1805-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9-10.

¹¹² Fahmy, 52.

¹¹³ Akalın Durmuş and Selim Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2015), 21.

¹¹⁴ Robert K. P. Pankhurst, "L'Éthiopie Et La Somalie," in *Histoire Générale De L'Afrique, VI: L'Afrique Du XIXe Siècle Jusque Vers Les Années 1880*, vol. 6 (Paris: Ed. Unesco, 1996), pp. 415-451, 423.

Tosun Paşa period, which lasted only five years, concluded with his death in 1818. When he died, Paşa wanted Tosun's brother İbrahim to take over and become the new governor of Jeddah and Habesh.¹¹⁵ Although it is not easy to make a definitive interpretation of the Tosun Paşa period, İbrahim Paşa clearly attached importance to the West Coast of the Red Sea and wanted to the end its relative independence from the rest of the Empire. Accordingly, İbrahim Paşa appointed a district governor to Massawa, Abidin Bey.¹¹⁶ This appointment could be considered as the initial footsteps of the beginning of the end for the local autonomy of the *Na'ibs* in the city; mainly due to the fact that this appointment made Abidin Bey, the first stable district governor who set foot on Massawa after a long absence of any such state official. In 1826, Abidin Bey dismissed *Na'ib* Yahya, who was the acting *Na'ib* at that time, and he appointed Osman to replace him, who was also a member of the same family.¹¹⁷ Later, the district governor weakened the family's power further by cutting the flow of money which the Jeddah Province sent for the garrison that the *Na'ibs* controlled over centuries.¹¹⁸ However, considering that even the commander of the garrison in the city was a member of this family as well, it cannot be said that the influence of the family was significantly harmed.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, the deposed *Na'ib* Yahya and his close relatives began to gather soldiers around Massawa to fight back against the Egyptians. Although they knew

¹¹⁵ BOA, C.DH. 2/61.

¹¹⁶ Najwa Mutahar "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 23-24.

¹¹⁷ Mutahar, 24; Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 57.

¹¹⁸ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 23.

¹¹⁹ George Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806 (London, 1809), Vol. III., 252*, vol. 2 (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1809), 54.

that they could not conquer the city with their small force, Yahya and his allies wanted to gain leverage against the new administration by causing serious troubles.¹²⁰ First, they attacked the port, which was the city's most important source of income, and held the customs for three days,¹²¹ and later used their influence in Arkiko, a city which was providing fresh water to Massawa for centuries,¹²² to cut the water supply of the city. Although customs were recaptured and water supply from Arkiko restored, Yahya and his men proved to be a severe source of menace to the Egyptian administration. Even though this event could escalate and form the basis of an operation that would bring the permanent end of the *Na'ibs*, various reasons prevented such occurrences and allowed the family to dominate Massawa in the upcoming decades.

Shortly after these nuisances, a major in charge of Jeddah's customs wrote a letter to Istanbul and asked Sublime Porte for help against the former *Na'ib* Yahya, and his bandits. However, the response was unexpectedly negative. The Empire demanded the officials in Jeddah to stop pursuing a campaign against Yahya.¹²³ The Ottomans were already occupied by the Greek War of Independence, and they stated that they did not have the resources to spare for incidents like that; therefore, Sublime Porte demanded this conflict to be over as soon as possible.¹²⁴ In short time İbrahim Paşa and the Ottoman Empire, publicly granted a pardon for *Na'ib* Yahya

¹²⁰ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 57.

¹²¹ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 24.

¹²² Pankhurst, Richard. "Some Notes on the Historical and Economic Geography of the Meşewa Area (1520-1885)." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 13, no. 1 (1975): 89–116, 103.

¹²³ Mutahar "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 24.

¹²⁴ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 24-25.

and Abidin Bey was replaced with a new Egyptian district governor who had a much smaller garrison than Abidin Bey had.¹²⁵

This minor setback failed to persuade the Egyptians to give up their ambitions in the region. Their armies continued to descend to the south and raid or conquer the Abyssinian territories throughout the 1820s and 1830s, but this aggressive expansion never turned into a military operation against the *Na'ibs*.¹²⁶ Although, Egypt was getting stronger and stronger day by day in the region, and this essentially posed a great threat for the *Na'ibs*, who had consolidated their power by distancing themselves from the state authority for years however throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Abyssinia was never a priority for the ambitious governor of Egypt in this period. Meanwhile, the Balaw *Na'ibs* were still quite strong in this period. They were charging heavy taxes from caravans, pilgrims, or travelers coming to cities such as Massawa and Arkiko, and with the revenues they obtained, *Na'ibs* managed to maintain their political and military superiority at the local level in the early nineteenth century.¹²⁷ Also, external factors led to the developments that would benefit the rule of *Na'ibs* in Massawa. The Occidental powers like the British or the French were not happy with the presence of the Egyptians in Abyssinia; therefore, in this period; through diplomacy, they successfully put Mehmed Ali under pressure to prevent him from invading Abyssinia, which certainly postponed the *Na'ib* family's political demise in the region.¹²⁸ However the following development would be more

¹²⁵ Miran, "Facing The Land, Facing The Sea: Commercial Transformation and Urban Dynamics In The Red Sea Port of Massawa, 1840s -1900s.", 70.

¹²⁶ J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 114-116.

¹²⁷ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 48-49.

¹²⁸ Mordechai Abir, "The Origins of the Ethiopian–Egyptian Border Problem in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967): pp. 443-461, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021853700007957>, 446-448.

noteworthy than all aforementioned factors and that would be the beginning of the open warfare between Mehmed Ali and the Sultan after years of unnamed rivalry.

When the Sultan did not grant the governorships of the provinces that Mehmed Ali wanted in return for his support during the Greek Revolution, Paşa chose the hard way and started the Ottoman-Egyptian Wars (1831-1841) by invading Ottoman Syria with his Nizam-ı Cedid Army under the command of his son İbrahim Paşa.¹²⁹ Unfortunately for Mehmed Ali himself; this ignited a Western intervention to the Ottoman Empire which later led to the destruction of almost every aspect of his enterprise, including his control in the Red Sea territories of the Ottoman Empire: Suakin and Massawa.¹³⁰ As a result of Convention of London, Egyptians evacuated the entire Hejaz Region in 1840, and this allowed Ottomans to appoint a new governor to Jeddah, who would be independent from Mehmed Ali Paşa.¹³¹ These incidents combined, created an environment which allowed *Na'ibs* to be vital actors of all affairs in Massawa for almost another decade.

2.5. Post-Convention of London Era (1840-1846)

Although the Egyptian administration could not achieve the desired results on Massawa and the Habesh Province in general, the replacement of the Egyptians by Ottoman authorities was far from good news for the *Na'ibs*. Just like Mehmed Ali, Sublime Porte believed that the autonomous state of this province was a fundamental

¹²⁹ Andrew James McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Ramadan War* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 105-106.

¹³⁰ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 32.

¹³¹ Abir, "The Origins of the Ethiopian–Egyptian Border Problem in the Nineteenth Century," 459; William Cargill, *The Foreign Affairs of Great Britain Administered by the Right Honourable Henry John Viscount Palmerston* (London: John Reid and Co., 1841), 225.

problem that must be solved. Therefore, the policies to be implemented in Massawa by the Ottomans would resemble the former Egyptian administration. The new Sultan Abdülmecid appointed Hacı Nuri Paşa as the new governor of Jeddah Eyalet in the same year.¹³² Unlike the previous Ottoman governors of Jeddah, Nuri Paşa wanted to make severe alterations in the structure of the state. He prepared plans which included military, financial, administrative, and architectural elements. Mainly, thanks to his administrative reforms, the structure of the governorship in the Province of Habesh had been made much more functional, at least on paper, due to the merits such as knowing the language of the people of the region, which started to be sought primarily in the officers who would be appointed alongside with the district governor.¹³³ Accordingly, appointing government officials to the region who spoke local languages would help Ottomans to cut out intermediaries like the *Na'ibs*. However, these well-intentioned projects would not have a significant effect on the city, and therefore Ottoman administration would fail to deter the *Na'ibs*.

While the Ottomans were trying to enhance their influence on the city with such reforms made by their newly appointed governor, *Na'ib* Yahya was engaged in an all-out war in Inner Abyssinia, against Wube Haile Maryam (Oubie).¹³⁴ *Dejazmach* Wube, who controlled a vast territory in Tigray region, had started to be menaced by the raids of the *Na'ib* Family in early 1840s.¹³⁵ As a response, the forces of the *Dejazmach* attacked and pillaged almost all of the crucial positions of the

¹³² Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 24-26.

¹³³ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 24-26, 27.

¹³⁴ Georges Douin, *Histoire du règne du khédive ismaïl*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1936), 235-236.

¹³⁵ Johathan Miran, "Power without Pashas: the Anatomy of Na'ib Autonomy in Ottoman Eritrea (17th-19th c.)," *Eritrean Studies Review* 5, no. 1 (2007): pp. 33-88, 62-63.

Na'ibs, including Arkiko and Moncooloo which caused tremendous amount of economic harm and 15.000 inhabitants to take refuge in Massawa.¹³⁶ Despite the fact the he failed to conquer Massawa, and end the *Na'ibs* once and for all, he forced the Ottoman officials at Massawa and Yahya to accept his demands.¹³⁷ In addition, *Dejazmach* Wube's influence over the coastline of Northern Abyssinia increased significantly and he had become a major figure in Massawan politics.¹³⁸ This was one of the most decisive blows to the strength of *Na'ibs* and it debilitated their influence and power of intervention to Ethiopia.

In Egypt, Mehmed Ali Paşa was still actively lobbying to obtain the remaining Ottoman cities in the West of the Red Sea. Although Mehmed Ali Paşa lost most of the territories that he once had in 1840 and had to reduce the size of his army,¹³⁹ he was still the sole ruler of Sudan. Additionally, his governor of Sudan, Ahmed Paşa, was frequently making raids into Abyssinia, despite the warnings of French and British ambassadors.¹⁴⁰ As a result of these constant attacks and invasions, Ahmed Paşa's armies occupied the Taka region. Thanks to this conquest, the Province of Egypt became a neighbor to Suakin.¹⁴¹ This gave a vital trump card to Mehmed Ali, who wanted to expand to the south as much as possible. He began to demand taxes from some tribes affiliated with the Suakin District Governorate in

¹³⁶ Roy Pateman, *Eritrea: Even the Stones Are Burning* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998), 38.

¹³⁷ Miran, "Power without Pashas: the Anatomy of Na'ib Autonomy in Ottoman Eritrea (17th-19th c.),", 63.

¹³⁸ Schimper, *Schimper to French Vice-Consul at Jeddah, Jeddah, February 5, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 207.

¹³⁹ Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali from Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (London: Oneworld Academic, 2018), 96-97.

¹⁴⁰ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 45; De Goutin. *De Goutin to Ismael Pasha, Massouah, January 28, 1846*. Letter. France, *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 214.

¹⁴¹ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 37.

order to persuade the Sublime Porte to subdue this Island, one of the two most important cities of the Province of Habesh. His aim here was to seize the tax sources of the Island and then to take control of Massawa with the bureaucratic chaos it would create.¹⁴²

One year later, the governor of Egypt sent a letter to Istanbul, claiming that sufficient taxes were not collected in Massawa and Suakin and he could collect about twice the currently collected customs revenue if he was given control of these areas.¹⁴³ Subsequently, this issue later turned into a cold war between the governor of Jeddah and him. While the Paşa of Jeddah was complaining about the actions of the Egyptians to Sublime Porte, Mehmed Ali Paşa, on the other hand, sabotaged Jeddah by not paying the wages he had to pay for the soldiers in Hejaz.¹⁴⁴ Despite the efforts of Sublime Porte to settle the issue calmly,¹⁴⁵ they could only withstand the pressure of Mehmed Ali until 1846. Although the European intervention in 1840 weakened Egypt, Istanbul was still somewhat wary of Paşa and also needed his might to defend her positions in the Western Red Sea region against Abyssinians. Therefore in 1846, the Ottomans agreed to cede Massawa and Suakin to the Egyptian administration.¹⁴⁶

In the end, despite the fact that this era seems like a period where *Na'ibs* could usufruct to consolidate their power while Ottomans and Egyptians devoured each other, their involvement in the power struggle in Abyssinia weakened them

¹⁴² Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 37-38.

¹⁴³ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 33.

¹⁴⁴ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 42-47.

¹⁴⁵ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 48-50.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Leslie Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan 1820-1881* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 83.

significantly and made them a much easier target for the Second Egyptian administration to come.

2.6. The Second Mehmed Ali Paşa Period in Massawa (1846-1848)

When the Egyptians returned to Massawa, the *Na'ibs* still had an influence and a certain amount of power in the region, despite their decisive loss against *Dejazmach* Wube. The British consul still thought he was equivalent in power to the governor on the Island.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless their relative strength was also diminishing at that time due to an ongoing conflict within the family that divided them decades ago.¹⁴⁸ After the death of *Na'ib* Yahya in 1844, Hasan was appointed as the new *Na'ib* however when Hasan did not submit the taxes he had to deliver to the district governor, he was dismissed and the son of Yahya, Mohammed had been appointed as *Na'ib* in 1845 by the district governor.¹⁴⁹ Rüstem Bey, the district governor, who wanted to take the money belonging to the Massawa administration that Hasan failed to deliver, was not satisfied with just dismissing him and sent the garrison commander to Arkiko to arrest Hasan.¹⁵⁰ However, this caused a rather unexpected result: the two branches of the *Na'ib* family, Hasan and Osman Clans,¹⁵¹ who had been competing against each other for decades, united against the Ottomans and resisted in their ancestral home, Arkiko. Unable to break this resistance, the Ottoman

¹⁴⁷ Walter Plowden, *Memorandum written by Walter Plowden (No.4), August 28, 1847*. Memorandum. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 8A.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas E. Marston, *Britain's Imperial Role in the Red Sea Area 1800-1878* (Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1961), 178-179.

¹⁴⁹ Miran, "Facing The Land, Facing The Sea: Commercial Transformation and Urban Dynamics In The Red Sea Port of Massawa, 1840s - 1900s.", 72.

¹⁵⁰ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 31-32.

¹⁵¹ Talhami, 59.

garrison had to retreat to Massawa, and with the moral of pushing the Ottomans back, the Balaws began to blockade Massawa.¹⁵² Obviously, the reunification of the family seemed to be very beneficial for the *Na'ibs*, but the return of the Mehmed Ali Paşa's men turned the tide for them. As always, Paşa had no intention of creating a peaceful co-existence with the locals. In early 1847, Major Ismail Hakkı Bey, who was appointed to Massawa, and Ilyas Bey, the commander of the army that he brought with him, reached the city.¹⁵³ Their target was straightforward, ending the attacks of the *Balaws* by completely annihilating influence of the *Na'ib* family while making investigations throughout the area to understand what kind of resources that can be gathered lied here.¹⁵⁴ Egyptians knew that Arkiko was the hearth of the power of the family; therefore, Paşa's men planned to build a fort in Arkiko to control the city and protect the water supply to Massawa, after defeating the Balaw forces.¹⁵⁵ Accordingly to their plan, On June 16, 1847,¹⁵⁶ Egyptian forces landed on Arkiko, and they almost leveled every structure in the city with the ground.¹⁵⁷ The *Na'ibs* and their comrades had to flee to the mountainous regions where Mehmed Ali could not reach them.¹⁵⁸ The Egyptian administration showed the same ruthlessness in the city of Massawa and caused serious dissatisfaction among the population, which led to many people complaining about the Egyptian administration to the governorship of Jeddah.¹⁵⁹ Along with ruling Massawa with an iron fist, Egyptians managed to

¹⁵² Douin, 237.

¹⁵³ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa."34.

¹⁵⁴ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa."34.

¹⁵⁵ Marston, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa."179.

¹⁵⁶ Douin, 238.

¹⁵⁷ Marston,181.

¹⁵⁸ Douin, 239.

¹⁵⁹ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 52.

build a citadel in Arkiko which even prevented numerous forces of *Dejazmach* Oubie to take the city back for his vassal, the *Na'ib* Family.¹⁶⁰

Although *Na'ibs* were continued to be appointed by the Ottomans from the same family in the following years, this two-year-long period represented the political demise of the *Na'ibs* of Massawa and the conclusion of the story of centralization in Ottoman-controlled regions of Northern Abyssinia. It is possible to say that their influence within Massawan politics was minimized compared to the previous decades. The British believed Mehmed Ali's invasion of Arkiko was the effective end of the effective control and influence of the *Na'ib* family in the region.¹⁶¹ However, this was not the end for the *Na'ibs*, as the Ottomans would use them as agents of their new regime that was about to be established.

2.7. Conclusion: The Legacy of Egyptians in Massawa

As a focal city for the Ottoman presence in Northern Abyssinia, Massawa has always been prominent for the government officials, even before the establishment of the province, due to the geopolitical importance of the city to Abyssinia. When the forces of Özdemiş Paşa conquered the Island, Massawa was immediately declared as the new capital of Habesh Eyalet. However, the extensive presence of the Ottomans would not last for long. The heavy defeat against the Abyssinians in 1579 created an environment that enhanced the Ottoman dependency on local human

¹⁶⁰ Schimper. *Schimper to French Vice-Consul at Jeddah, Jeddah, February 5, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853 (14CPC/1)*, 207; Arnaud, *Arnaud to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, February 6, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 237.

¹⁶¹ Plowden, Walter. *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No. 31), Massawa, December 3, 1849*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 21.

resources for their forces. In order to fill their ranks with these people, Ottomans needed to strengthen their alliances with local chieftains and notables. Just like many other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, this occurrence caused an era of decentralization in Habesh Eyalet that was dominated by a Balaw family whose members would serve as *Sancakbeyi of Arkiko* for the sultan. At the end of the sixteenth century, this family, which started to consolidate its power on Massawa and Arkiko year by year, succeeded in coming to the forefront of the Empire's framework and began to receive *berats* from the sultan. Although it is not precisely known when the Ottomans officially recognized them as the exercisers of the power of Istanbul, it is very likely that the *Na'ibs* began to receive a charter from the sultan in the early seventeenth century. Thanks to these *berats* and the weakening of Ottoman authority throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they became the most influential people in the Ottoman-controlled territories of Northern Abyssinia in a period when decentralization was about to become a significant issue.¹⁶² Although Massawa continued to host a district governor up until the end of the seventeenth century, the Habesh province, in general, was being erased from the Empire's framework in time, and the *Na'ib* family was becoming more and more visible in the Red Sea World. However, with the merging of Habesh and Jeddah Provinces in 1701 and making Habesh Eyalet a territory to be administered by the governor of Jeddah, over time, the existence of the Ottoman Empire in Abyssinia was reduced to the *Berats* given to *Na'ib* and to the district governors who visited the city's port from year to year to collect taxes. This allowed the infamous *Na'ib* family

¹⁶² Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume 1: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1280–1808*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 182.

to become sole exercisers of the power of the sultan in Massawa and Arkiko. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, all the institutions of the city, including the garrison, were in the hands of the *Na'ibs*. The *Na'ibs* managed to enjoy these privileges until the first quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁶³ However, for them, Mehmed Ali Paşa's takeover of Egypt Eyalet was the beginning of the end.

Mehmed Ali's seizure of Egypt was the commencement of a rare example or version of Ottoman efforts of centralization in the nineteenth century. Typically, in other regions of the Empire, including in North Africa, these efforts were generally carried out by people who were subordinated to the sultan and represented his authority. However, in the case of Massawa and other remaining cities of Habesh Eyalet, this war against the people causing this decentralized structure was conducted by another notable, Mehmed Ali Paşa, who was the source of decentralization in another province.

The first phase of the reintegration of Massawa into the Ottoman framework began with Tosun Paşa's appointment as the governor of the Hejaz Eyalet, which allowed him to take control of the remaining towns of Habesh Eyalet thanks to the Edict of 1701. Accordingly, when Egyptians became the new rulers of Habesh Province after liberating the holy cities, they engaged in a struggle against the *Na'ib* family through the men appointed by the sons of Mehmed Ali. Although this struggle was interrupted for various reasons, like the Ottoman-Egyptian Wars, even the existence of state officials, such as district governors, on the Island of Massawa, perhaps for the first time since the eighteenth century, harmed the

¹⁶³ Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia, the Era of the Princes: The Challenge of Islam and Re-Unification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855* (London: Praeger, 1968), 7-8.

autonomy of the *Na'ibs*, and was an essential step in centralization. In the continuation of this period, Mehmed Ali Paşa was forced to hand over his rights over the Province of Habesh to the Sublime Porte because of the Convention of London in 1840. Although the temporary end of the Egyptian rule in Massawa in 1840 seemed negative for the centralization process, the Ottoman Empire had a vision similar to Kavalalı Family for Massawa.

Under the direction of a new governor of Jeddah , the Ottomans prepared reforms for the administrative structure of Habesh Eyalet. These reform plans, which could weaken the influence of the *Na'ibs* in the city and lead Massawa to centralization, seemed quite logical on paper. Yet, they did not produce the desired results, and *Na'ibs* managed to survive this six-year-long period without any serious harm to their influence in the region.

Nonetheless, the *Na'ibs*, who were still enjoying their relative independence from the central authority due to the failure of the Ottomans and Egyptians to implement reforms and deploy a sufficient number of troops on Massawa Island, were about to face a grave danger in the same period from inner Abyssinia which could possibly annihilate them completely. Wube Haile Maryam, one of the most brutal figures of Ethiopia, was waging war against them. The conflict between the two parties concluded very gravely for the *Na'ibs*, and *Dejazmach* Wube managed to subdue them eventually. This clash was also a critical breaking point in the process of centralization for Massawa that started with Tosun Paşa's appointment as the governor of Jeddah Eyalet in 1813. Wube's victory caused the evaporation of a notable quantity of the family's influence and power in the region. Now, it would be up to the Egyptians, who initiated this process, to deal the final blow to *Na'ibs*.

Mehmed Ali Paşa succeeded in regaining control of Massawa back from the Sublime Porte in 1846. This time, the Egyptians would advance towards Abyssinia with all their might since there was no region left for them to expand except the south of Egypt. As a result, Mehmed Ali's forces embarked on an extended military operation to ultimately break the de facto influence of the *Na'ibs*. The Egyptian Army, under the command of İsmail Hakkı Paşa, managed to conquer Arkiko while building a fort in the city to effectively end the dominance of the *Na'ibs*.

In short, this operation can be considered as the final blow to the autonomy of the *Na'ibs* of Arkiko and the beginning of their new roles under the new Ottoman administration that was about to be established. A year after the operation, unlike the previous centuries, *Na'ibs* started to pay tribute to the district governors of Massawa and started to be referred to as the loyal servants of the Ottomans by the European diplomats.¹⁶⁴ It would be a bold claim to state that the power and influence of the *Na'ibs* in the coast of Northern Abyssinia completely disappeared with Mehmed Ali's invasion Arkiko however it can be said that they ceased to exist as the source of decentralization in Ottoman-controlled regions of Northern Abyssinia.

This whole case which started with the appointment of Tosun Paşa as the new governor of Jeddah and concluded with the invasion of Arkiko can be considered as a distinctive case of Ottoman efforts of centralization due to the fact the notables or *ayans* of Massawa, *the Na'ibs*, who were the sources of decentralization were pacified by another notable who was a source of decentralization in another province.

¹⁶⁴ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 61.

CHAPTER III

TRANSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATION FROM EGYPTIANS TO OTTOMANS: FORMATION OF OTTOMAN ABYSSINIAN POLICIES (1848-1851)

3.1. The struggle against the Ruler of Tigre (1847-1849)

The Egyptian Government along the northern frontier of Abyssinia at least merits the name, and rules in some order and tranquility, many ferocious and treacherous Arab tribes; but the Turkish Government at Massowah, dependent on Constantinople, of which I have now to speak, is not a Government but a blockade, just sufficient to prevent others from enjoying that which itself cannot pretend to profit by, and to maintain a condition of hopeless stagnation in all the surrounding provinces.¹⁶⁵

The words above belong to Walter Plowden, who in 1854 was ambassador to Abyssinia for the British government for about six years. Probably one of the best descriptions of the Ottoman administration, which ruled Massawa from 1849 to 1865. Of course, seeing this blockade analogy as a notion that was only related to customs would be wrong. Despite the fact the Ottomans were interested in that as well to a certain extent, this was more like a regime that tried to prevent any possible occurrence that would endanger Ottoman presence on the coast of the Red Sea,

¹⁶⁵ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854.* Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 129.

where foreign agents believed a strong Ottoman influence exist, at least on the Babel Mandab.¹⁶⁶ The presence of the Ottomans in Northern Coast of Ethiopia, not only obtrusive for European nations but it was plaguesome for Abyssinians due to the fact it prevented the Abyssinian chieftains from reaching the sea and exchanging freely with the rest of the World. Although, when Habesh Eyalet was first established in the sixteenth century, Özdemiş Paşa, in a way, blocked the entire Abyssinia by conquering the coastline, this situation had become much more vital in this nineteenth century when access to the modern world and, more importantly, technology was very crucial. This is why this blockade that the Ottomans imposed on the whole of Abyssinia through Massawa in the 1849-1865 period was therefore cardinal because it interrupted all kinds of exchanges between Abyssinia and technologically superior Western Empires.

When the events that will be told in the first part of this chapter are combined with the story told in the previous sections, it seems evident that the Egyptians unwittingly contributed to the establishment of this blockade as well by eliminating the *Na'ibs*. Particularly İsmail Hakkı Bey, the new governor of Egyptians in Massawa, contributed significantly. Although the arrival of İsmail Hakkı had greatly consolidated Ottoman/Egyptian control of the coast of Northern Abyssinia, dangers still lingered within Ethiopia. It is very likely that the landing of the Egyptian army on the shores of Abyssinia was not welcomed by the majority of the Christian Abyssinians; however, the Sovereign of Tigre, *Dejazmach* Wube, was the most disturbed person within Ethiopia by this situation. Wube, just like his other rivals in

¹⁶⁶ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854. Report. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 128.*

Abyssinia, wanted to enhance his power and dominate the entire Northern Abyssinia. He knew that the fastest and easiest way to achieve superiority over his rivals was finding a European ally that could provide advanced weapons and modern tools for his forces. Despite he had contacts with the British when they first arrived in the region in the early nineteenth century; his first target was the French, most probably due to their more apparent presence in Ethiopia. He wrote a letter to King Louis Philippe of France on May 24, 1845, about two years before the landing of the Egyptian army in Arkiko. Although the British made the first voyages to Abyssinia, the fact that there has been a French Consulate in Massawa since 1840 may have been influential in the Wube's decision to approach the French first.¹⁶⁷ In his letter, Wube wrote that he knew that the Prince of France has been fighting against the Muslims in Morocco. For this reason, he demanded that the Kingdom of France help him in the Muslim-Christian war that would soon break out in Abyssinia and that the Kingdom of Sennar, which Egypt had recently annexed, be occupied by France on his behalf and made him the governor of that region.¹⁶⁸ However, the French did not respond to the requests of the *Dejazmach* at first. More importantly, due to the plans of the Lord of Tigre over Sennar, the French wrote a letter to their ambassador in Cairo to warn the governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Paşa.¹⁶⁹ The French also stimulated the Egyptians not to intervene in Abyssinia, and they emphasize that

¹⁶⁷ De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 25, 1849*. Letter. Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. France, *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/ 1)*, 125.

¹⁶⁸ Haile Maryam Oubie, *Oubie to Louis Philippe, Arkiko, May 24, 1845*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 212.

¹⁶⁹ De Goutin, *De Goutin to Schimper, Massawa, February 28, 1846*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 214.

Abyssinia is a Christian country; therefore it is under the protection of France.¹⁷⁰

After warning the Egyptians about this, the French, who sent a letter to Wube, told him that they had spoken to the necessary people and that he should no longer be afraid of an attack from Egypt.¹⁷¹ About a year after these correspondences, the new Egyptian governor Major Ismail Hakkı Bey landed in Massawa with an army to completely eliminate the *Na'ibs* of Arkiko. The *Na'ibs* of Arkiko were traditionally subjugated to pay tribute to the rulers of Tigre.¹⁷² So, a direct attack from a force that the French ensured that it would not be a problem against his tributary shook Wube's confidence in the French. Wube was highly disturbed by İsmail Hakkı Bey's arrival to the region with his army and sent him a very threatening letter. In his letter, he said that *Na'ib* was under his sovereignty and that if Egyptian soldiers did not leave the area, he would complain to the King of France, who assured him about the safety of this area.¹⁷³ However, German botanist Georg Wilhelm Schimper, who was working as a mediator between two sides, took the letter to the district governor İsmail Hakkı, and told him that the French did not officially give such a guarantee.¹⁷⁴

While these developments were taking place in Massawa, Egyptian armies began to gather in Sennar, which would frequently happen in the following years, and this

¹⁷⁰ De Goutin, *De Goutin to Schimper, Massawa, February 28, 1846*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 214.

¹⁷¹ De Goutin, *De Goutin to Schimper, Massawa, February 28, 1846*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 214.

¹⁷² Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 129.

¹⁷³ Haile Maryam Oubie, *Oubie to Ismael Efendi, Adowa, April 15, 1847*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 215.

¹⁷⁴ Georg Wilhelm Schimper, *Schimper to Ismael Efendi, Adowa, April 15, 1847*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 215.

situation would also enhance Wube's extremely unsettled mood.¹⁷⁵ Faced with the danger of being surrounded by Egyptian armies from both the North and the East, Wube decided to amass an army to attack Sennar before the Egyptian armies could reach the shores of Arkiko, but could not gather enough troops in the desired time.¹⁷⁶ Although the French later asked the Egyptians to stay away from Arkiko on behalf of Wube, they were not very successful in this and their failure to prevent the Egyptian invasion of Arkiko, seriously disturbed the relationship between the French and the Ruler of Tigre.¹⁷⁷ In the months that followed, the Egyptians started to extinguish possible threats to their administration in the city, and they started it by imprisoning some members of the *Na'ib* family. Mohammed, who was also a member of this family, was appointed as the new *Na'ib*, utterly subordinated to the district governor.¹⁷⁸ Mohammad's appointment was also the beginning of the role that the *Na'ibs* would play for the Ottomans in Abyssinia. From now on, the *Na'ibs* would almost always come to the forefront as loyal servants of the Massawa Administration, and their services would be used to maintain and extend the Ottoman blockade on the coast of Northern Abyssinia.

The British, who had been making discoveries in Abyssinia since the beginning of the nineteenth century, decided to establish a consulate here for the first time, almost simultaneously when the Egyptian army set foot in Massawa, and began to engage in Abyssinian politics more publicly. Walter Plowden was appointed as

¹⁷⁵ Georg Wilhelm Schimper, *Schimper to Ismael Efendi, Adowa, April 15, 1847*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 215.

¹⁷⁶ Georg Wilhelm Schimper, *Schimper to De Goutin, Adowa, June 15, 1847*. Letter. France, *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 219.

¹⁷⁷ Georg Wilhelm Schimper, *Schimper to De Goutin, Adowa, June 15, 1847*. Letter. France, *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 219.

¹⁷⁸ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.26), Massawa, September 17, 1848*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 19.

the British consul in November 1847 and started to make preparations to establish a consulate in Massawa.¹⁷⁹ Plowden's establishment of this consulate was a very shrouded work that the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Stratford Canning, was compelled to publicly declare that the Ottomans have rights in Suakin and Massawa in order to appease Sublime Porte, which was suspicious of a secret invasion.¹⁸⁰ Despite this incident, the aims of Queen Victoria's Kingdom in Abyssinia, at first, were minor. They were in Abyssinia only to strengthen their trade relations, observe the French presence in the region, and, if possible, making a treaty on trade with the Abyssinian princes.¹⁸¹ However, they were still protective of their rights. Accordingly, Plowden did not take kindly to the 12 per cent tariff imposed in Massawa by the pacification of the *Na'ibs* and the re-establishment of Egyptian administration in his absence.¹⁸² In order to avoid this tax, he examines places such as Amphylla to use it as an alternative port to Massawa, which was seen as the only way out of Abyssinia to the Red Sea at that time, but the desired results could not be obtained.¹⁸³

After all, Plowden's first task was not to find a new trade route but to propose a treaty of friendship and commerce to the strongest man in Ethiopia. In the late 1840s, for the British, this man was Ali II of Yejju or, in short, *Ras Ali*, the de facto

¹⁷⁹ Royal Comission. *Royal Comission to Walter Plowden (No.6), Massawa, November 21, 1847. Report. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Marston, 187.

¹⁸¹ Talhami, 12.

¹⁸² Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.27), Massawa, August 16, 1848. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 17-18.

¹⁸³ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.22), Massawa, August 16, 1848. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 17; Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854. Report. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 128.

ruler of the Ethiopian Empire, who even forced Wube to pay tribute to him.¹⁸⁴

Accordingly, in December 1848, Plowden left Massawa to meet Wube in person and later to visit *Ras Ali*. Meanwhile, Wube, who was collecting troops to inflict a heavy blow to the Egyptians and, if possible, to subjugate the *Na'ib* again, attacked Massawa and its vicinity before he met with consul Plowden.¹⁸⁵ On January 6, 1849, his forces burned down the village of Moncooloo, where the consulates of the French and British were. The forces of Wube massacred many people and enslaved 500 locals.¹⁸⁶ After destroying Moncooloo, the Abyssinian forces raided Arkiko, but thanks to the canons at the fort, they had to retreat with casualties.¹⁸⁷ The district governor of Massawa, who had a garrison of only 400-500 Nubian soldiers against the army of Tigre, which consisted of a force of 8,000 to 12,000 men, could only watch these offenses safely from the inner Island.¹⁸⁸ As a result of this devastating attack, the British and French consulates were also burned, and the French consul, De Goutin, barely escaped with his life.¹⁸⁹ Upon this situation, the French were in a

¹⁸⁴ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 354; Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 114.

¹⁸⁵ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 373.

¹⁸⁶ Haines, *Captain Haines to the Secretary to the Secret Committee (Inclosure 1 in No.33), Aden, January 28, 1849*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 22.

¹⁸⁷ De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 9, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 245; De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 9, 1849*. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (14CPC/1)*, 245.

¹⁸⁸ Haines, *Captain Haines to the Secretary to the Secret Committee (Inclosure 1 in No.33), Aden, January 28, 1849*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 22; Haines, *Captain Haines to the Secretary to the Secret Committee (Inclosure 2 in No.33), Aden, January 28, 1849*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 23.

¹⁸⁹ Arnaud, *Arnaud to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, February 6, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 237.

great panic, believing that their operations in Abyssinia would be endangered if a warship would not be sent to the region urgently.¹⁹⁰ The French Consul thought that they have no relations left with Wube anymore and now they had to fight against him.¹⁹¹ The fact that Plowden was not in the city during this period also made them suspicious of the British and a possible British-Wube alliance. In the continuation of these events, Wube demanded an earnest payment from the helpless Massawa officials for the *Na'ib* incident; additionally, he threatened Ismail Hakkı, that if he tried to take measures against him, his forces would retaliate immediately.¹⁹² The French also thought that the situation was not very bright for the Egyptian administration and Massawa. French Consul De Goutin stated that this attack showed that Massawa's defense was quite weak and that if Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa did not take serious precautions, that is, if Egyptians did not dispatch more troops to the region, similar attacks would repeat every year.¹⁹³ However, acting governor of Egypt, İbrahim Paşa was already dead, and Mehmed Ali Paşa was very sick, so sick that he did not even realize that his heir had died and himself followed him on August 2, 1849.¹⁹⁴ At the same time, starting from the last months of 1848, the governor of Jeddah was communicating with Sublime Porte to take the ports of

¹⁹⁰ Arnaud, Arnaud to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, February 6, 1849. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 237.

¹⁹¹ Arnaud, Arnaud to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, February 6, 1849. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 237.

¹⁹² De Goutin, De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 9, 1849. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 117.

¹⁹³ De Goutin, De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 9, 1849. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 117.

¹⁹⁴ Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 256.

Massawa and Suakin back under his administration.¹⁹⁵ As a result of these, it was decided in December 1848 that these two ports should again be part of Jeddah Province and that the soldiers and bureaucrats affiliated with Egypt should leave the city within two years.¹⁹⁶

In the light of all this, there was no possibility of military or political support from Egypt for İsmail Hakkı Paşa and his 400 soldiers against Wube's colossal army. Therefore, despite showing some reluctance at first,¹⁹⁷ the district governor paid Wube the money he wanted, and the Tigre army withdrew from the area. Yet this did not mean that the Ruler of Tigre forfeited his desires for the Turkish-controlled coast of Abyssinia.¹⁹⁸ However, in the end, Egyptian authorities managed to achieve the desired result, pacified and contributed to the transformation of the *Na'ibs*, and provided the domination they wanted in the Massawa region. So, in February 1849, when the administration officially transferred from the Egyptian Province to the Jeddah Province, the Ottomans found Massawa in a situation much more suitable to be attached to the central administration. Additionally, due to the lack of a sufficient number of soldiers in Jeddah, it was decided that the Egyptian soldiers should remain in Massawa for a while more.¹⁹⁹ Since the arrival of the governor to be appointed by the Ottomans in the region would be in the summer of 1850, the de facto Egyptian administration in Massawa lasted for one and a half more year than

¹⁹⁵ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 35-36.

¹⁹⁶ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 36.

¹⁹⁷ De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 9, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 245.

¹⁹⁸ John Hobhouse, *Sir J. Hobhouse to Viscount Palmerston (No.29), India Board, March 29 1848*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 25.

¹⁹⁹ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa." 37-38.

this date. Therefore, even though, technically, this date represents the beginning of the first direct Ottoman administration, which was established in Massawa in the sixteenth century, this administration actually began with the arrival of Mehmed Paşa in June 1850.²⁰⁰

Although the Ottomans and Egyptians seemed to have made significant progress in their favour in the problems against their authority in Massawa and even transformed the *Na'ibs* into state agents working for the sake of Ottoman policies, the dangers in Ethiopia were still present. *Dejazmach* Wube, who was not satisfied with only gaining a certain amount of money from Ismail Hakkı Bey, dispatched a letter to Plowden, after their meeting, for Queen Victoria.

Formerly my ancestors were in possession of, and governed all the coast of the Red Sea and Massowah; recently when we quarrelled amongst ourselves, the Turks took possession of Massowah. After this, two years back, they also sent troops to the main land, and occupied Moncooloo and Arkeeko. The Naib of Arkeeko being thus prevented from paying me my usual tribute, I this year sent down my forces and drove the Turks back into the Island of Massowah. You are a Christian Queen, and the friend of Christians; you are powerful, and I now request your assistance and friendship, that you will not permit the Mahommedan forces to ravage and occupy my territories, but will insist on their remaining content with the possession of the Island of Massowah (though that even they have no right to), without setting foot on the mainland, or interfering with the Naib that I appoint at Arkeeko and the coast. My soldiers, by mistake and from ignorance, burnt the house of your Consul at Moncooloo for which I was sorry. I wish much for the friendship of the English, and trust that you will now show the sincerity of your goodwill towards Abyssinia.²⁰¹

The presence of the Ottomans prevented the Abyssinian princes, who were trying to get the upper hand against each other in the on-going interregnum, from reaching the sea, just like in the sixteenth century. This meant that the Abyssinian

²⁰⁰ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 18/59.

²⁰¹ Haile Maryam Oubie, *Dejaj Oobeay to Her Majesty the Queen (No.49), March 3, 1849*, Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 30.

warlords mostly relied on traditional weapons as long as they could not find a supplier of modern weapons who could smuggle for them because geographically, the presence of the Ottomans in Massawa and Egyptians in Sudan in a way prevented Abyssinians from obtaining modern tools easily.²⁰² The arrival of Western powers to the region in the nineteenth century, particularly after the establishment of consulates in the 1840s in Massawa, created an opportunity for all parties of the *Zemene Mesafint*, to access new technologies, particularly modern weapons. Wube, as one of the contenders in this on-going struggle, was trying to find an ally who could supply him modern weapons and help him to conquer the coast of Abyssinia. Wube or any other Abyssinian warlord obtaining the support of a global power would be a disaster for the Ottoman presence in Abyssinia as much as for the other parties of the Abyssinian Interregnum. Yet, despite his efforts and warm behaviors towards Plowden, the response Wube obtained from the British was negative. Although the Queen shows interest in Wube, she explicitly stated that her government is an ally of the Turks.²⁰³ Of course, this answer did not satisfy the *Dejazmach* at all.²⁰⁴ He knew that he had the power to defeat the weak Nubian garrison of Massawa in the open field; however, the cannons and other modern weapons of the fort in the city completely nullified the numerical advantage of his army. As long as these conditions continued to exist, Wube was aware that he was far from achieving his goals, which disappointed him. Yet, this disappointment did not prevent him from acting wisely. He knew that one way or another, he had to find

²⁰² Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians: A History* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1998), 142.

²⁰³ Henry John Temple, *Viscount Palmerston to Dejaz Ooheay (No.52), Foreign Office, July 3, 1849. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 31.

²⁰⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.72) Massawa, April 2, 1850. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 42.

a European ally; therefore, he had not to despair about making an alliance with the French or the British.²⁰⁵

3.2. Establishment of the Rule of Sublime Porte in Massawa (1849-1850)

It was very important for the Ottoman Empire, which had an organization like the *Derbend* since the fifteenth century, to be able to control major trade routes and ports like Massawa, but it was also essential for them to protect the trade as much as possible while maintaining their presence in the region.²⁰⁶ The Ottomans were preparing policies within the framework of these thoughts. In accordance with that, Sublime Porte and Jeddah Province were in consultation for the future of Massawa in 1849. In these correspondences, although the governor of Jeddah mentions people who could pose a threat to the Ottoman presence in the region, he stated that the real threat lies elsewhere.²⁰⁷ The governor of Jeddah, Hasip Paşa, stated that the increasing influence of the British and the French, who had just started to settle in the region, was a menace to the Empire, and therefore strict measures should be taken in the region in order to protect the remains of Habesh Eyalet.²⁰⁸ Accordingly, Sublime Porte appointed Mirliva Mehmed Paşa from Tripoli in April 1849 to Massawa.²⁰⁹ In this appointment, Mehmed Paşa was prominent because he was accustomed to the African climate and spent a lot of time among Arab tribes in

²⁰⁵ Fulgence Fresnel, *Fresnel to French Delagation at Constaniople, Jeddah, 27 April, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 249.

²⁰⁶ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nda Derbend Teşkilâtı*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Eren, 1990), 9-33.

²⁰⁷ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 38-40.

²⁰⁸ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 39-40.

²⁰⁹ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 40.

Tripoli.²¹⁰ Before Mehmed Paşa moved to Massawa, he was given a fundamental instruction written in the *Meclis-i Vala*.²¹¹ Some of the articles in this ordinance would later be the motivation behind many of the actions of the Ottoman governors in Massawa against foreign agents.

At the very beginning of the document, it was told where Mehmed Paşa would gather soldiers for his future garrison at Massawa and how he would reach Egypt.²¹² After reaching Egypt, he was asked to go to Jeddah first by sea from Alexandria and talk to his superior, governor of Jeddah about this instruction and his further orders.²¹³ However, Sublime Porte did not give the initiative to the governor of Jeddah on some important points and gave very precise orders to Mehmed Paşa. Primarily, the Ottomans were not happy with the chapel that was built by the efforts of Mr. Jacobist in Massawa, head of Catholic missionaries, in Moncooloo.²¹⁴ According to both Ottomans and the French, this chapel was built without the consent of the Egyptian authorities. The former *Na'ib*, Yahya, helped the French with the location in exchange for a certain amount of money.²¹⁵ The Porte learned about this incident from the governor of Jeddah, and it was clearly emphasized in the instruction that the land had to be reclaimed somehow, regardless of the amount of money.²¹⁶ In addition, Sublime Porte gave definite directives to Mehmed Paşa that

²¹⁰ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 40.

²¹¹ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹² BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹³ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹⁴ Walter Plowden. *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.72) Massowah, April 2, 1850. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 42; BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹⁵ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.; De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, 5 January, 1849. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 203.

²¹⁶ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

such an event should never happen again; therefore, it is possible to say that Istanbul was highly negative towards the possibility of Europeans expropriating land from Ottoman Massawa.²¹⁷ Following this, a chapter that can be considered the motive behind this aggressive attitude of future district governors of Massawa started to be conveyed in the document given to Mehmed Paşa. In this section, the Sublime Porte emphasized that European states sometimes colonize regions through missionaries. The Ottomans believed that European nations first increased their influence in the region thanks to these people, then they occupied important places, and finally, they began to spread inland as much as possible in those territories.²¹⁸ The instruction openly declared that although missionaries may seem innocuous, their main aim was creating an environment where their governments could benefit for their interest.²¹⁹ Therefore, Istanbul asked Mehmed Paşa to monitor and if necessary restrain the activities of the citizens and employees of the Western States very carefully since he would be working in a place like Massawa that needs precaution.²²⁰ However, Sublime Porte also stated that, while blocking these people, it was requested not to be prevented in a way that could cause a problem with these countries that they have treaties with, and utilize friendly methods like using the lack of security in the region instead of exercising violence.²²¹ At the same time, the Ottomans recommended that the trade should not be harmed in anyway, and that if ships belonging to foreign states arrived into the region, their activities should be examined, but not hindered in a way that would harm the commercial activities.²²² In addition to all these, it can be

²¹⁷ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹⁸ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²¹⁹ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²²⁰ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²²¹ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

²²² BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

said that Mehmed Paşa was also tasked with enhancing the influence of Istanbul in the region after the centuries-old disunity between Massawa and Istanbul.²²³

Since too many people could not adapt to the weather conditions in Massawa, three companies of soldiers from the Arabian Army were given under the command of Mehmed Paşa.²²⁴ Mehmed Paşa, who was on his way to the Red Sea with very definite orders in his hand and with considerable military force, would not encounter very positive conditions in Massawa. Primarily because of the Yemeni expedition of 1849, Jeddah Province, in particular and Sublime Porte, in general, shifted their attention to the other side of the Red Sea.²²⁵ Perhaps as a result of this, Halil Bey and his company of soldiers, who were the only protection the Ottoman administration in Massawa had after İsmail Hakkı Bey's departure, left the region before Mehmed Paşa and his army could reach the Island.²²⁶ Halil Bey left Massawa in August, only a couple of months after İsmail Hakkı's departure.²²⁷ Wube, who wanted to take advantage of this weakness, wrote a letter to the Ottoman administration in Massawa. Ömer Ağa was acting temporarily as the district governor, probably due to being the highest-ranking officer at that time in Massawa who received this letter. Demanding payment from him, Wube said that he would destroy Arkiko and Massawa if his request was not met.²²⁸ In addition, there were no heart-warming developments in Abyssinia for the Ottomans as well. As the Ottomans took control

²²³ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 44.

²²⁴ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 50.

²²⁵ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 50-60.

²²⁶ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 57.

²²⁷ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, August 15, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 271.

²²⁸ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, August 15, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 271.

of Massawa and Suakin from Egypt Eyalet, *Dejazmach* Wube, who was in search of modern weapons, gradually began to lose confidence in the British for suppliance of such material.²²⁹ Thereupon, although Wube and the French seemed to be on bad terms, while the Ruler of Tigre apologized to the British for what happened at Moncooloo, he offered the French certain amount of money to repair their burned-out buildings.²³⁰ This softening in Wube created an opportunity for France. Eugene Rolland, who was appointed to the region as the new vice-consul of France, replacing De Goutin, went to Wube's camp on September 16, 1849.²³¹ Wube was reported to be quite afraid of the rapprochement of the British and *Ras Ali*. He was worried about being caught in the crossfire between a British-backed *Ras Ali* and the United Kingdom that may invade the coastline as a result of this detente.²³² Very interestingly, at the end of this meeting, the French vice-consul Rolland started to be very anxious about this alliance as well. He began to think that it was evident that the British were trying to establish hegemony in Abyssinia by supporting *Ras Ali*.²³³ Therefore, this situation led to cooperation between the French and the Ruler of Tigre to the point of signing an agreement. Wube asked the French to act as arbitrators to persuade the Turks to evacuate the coastal areas of Northern Ethiopia.

²²⁹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, September 16, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 281.

²³⁰ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 28, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853(14CPC/1)*, 259; Maryam Haile Oubie, *Dejaj Oobeay to Her Majesty the Queen (No.49)*. Letter. Great Britain. *Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 30.

²³¹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, November 6, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 283.

²³² Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, November 6, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 283.

²³³ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, November 7, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 285.

The French ambassador, Rolland, found this request reasonable, as he considered it impossible for the Turks to protect the coastal zone and because he thought that a possible conflict would harm French interests in the region.²³⁴ In fact, Rolland even proposed to form an army of enslaved Christians freed by the French and conquer Arkiko by fighting the Turks if the Ottomans did not agree to withdraw from there.²³⁵ As a result of these developments, on October 1, 1849, the French and the Ruler of Tigre signed a treaty.²³⁶ According to this treaty, the French, as the representatives of the *Dejazmach* in Istanbul, would be the arbitrators for the transfer of the Turkish lands on the coastline to Wube, and when this article of the treaty was fulfilled, they would give the Tigre King 1,000 firearms.²³⁷ In return, Wube would protect the rights of the French along the coastline and expel all non-French European elements from the coast of Northern Abyssinia.²³⁸

Meanwhile, Plowden achieved his primary goal in Abyssinia and managed to convince *Ras Ali* to sign the treaty of friendship and commerce on November 2, 1849, after several months of negotiation, and returned to Massawa.²³⁹ Although the British had no desire to invade Massawa, unlike the French vice-consul, which they

²³⁴ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, November 7, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 285.

²³⁵ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, November 7, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 285.

²³⁶ *Treaty Between France and Tigre, October 1, 1849*. Treaty. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 288.

²³⁷ *Treaty Between France and Tigre, October 1, 1849*. Treaty. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 288.

²³⁸ *Treaty Between France and Tigre, October 1, 1849*. Treaty. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 288.

²³⁹ *Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Great Britain and Abyssinia (No.71), November 2, 1849*. Treaty. Great Britain. *Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 39-41.

openly expressed in their correspondence,²⁴⁰ this treaty did increase the relative power of *Ras Ali*, who most likely did not have any good intentions for the Ottoman Empire which controlled the only port and one of the most vital positions of his country. Very interestingly, again, the Ottomans had very positive thoughts about him. In the discussions held in the *Meclis-i Vala*, it was stated that *Ras Ali* had no affinity with Christians and even thought of converting to Islam because his mother was Muslim.²⁴¹ Therefore, as a result of these discussions, the Ottomans decided that it would be right to write a letter to him as well.²⁴² In the light of all this, it is possible to easily say that Sublime Porte did not see the situation on the Northern Abyssinian Coast as very negative, but in fact, the troubles and dangers aggravated due to the fact that Mehmed Paşa had not yet reached the region.

For a while, Ottoman authorities in Massawa have been claiming full sovereignty over the coastline of Northern Abyssinia against the British and the French.²⁴³ In reality, most of the tribes living on the coastline lived independently from the Ottomans. Yet, theoretically, the Arab tribes living on the Abyssinian Coastline were subordinated to the authority of the *Na'ibs*, the tributaries of Rulers of Tigre, and paid taxes to them.²⁴⁴ Therefore, as the *Na'ib* was technically an Ottoman officer, this made the coastline also an Ottoman territory. In 1849, the

²⁴⁰ Henry John Temple, *Viscount Palmerston to Mr. Plowden (No.5), Foreign Office, January 3, 1848. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 8B; Even though, Plowden proposed such plan, London immediately declined it.

²⁴¹ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 58.

²⁴² Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 58.

²⁴³ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 128; Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, June 22, 1849. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 262.

²⁴⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.20), Massawa, August 16, 1848. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 17.

Ottomans, who wanted to take de facto control of the coastline of Northern Abyssinia, decided that it would be logical to make an agreement with the current *Na'ib* on this issue.²⁴⁵ They found it appropriate to be made an accord with the *Na'ib* on subordinating these Arab tribes and collecting taxes. In return for his services, he would be entitled to keep the ten per cent of the tax to be collected from those tribes.²⁴⁶

As can be understood from the plan mentioned above, the *Na'ib* of Arkiko was now almost an instrument for the Ottoman district governorate;²⁴⁷ yet, this was not the case for the Arkiko people living under the *Na'ib*'s rule or other tribes subordinated to the *Na'ibs*. This case would become quite clear due to the reactions to the alterations in the way the Massawa administration ruled the region. For instance, after a while, Ömer Ağa decided to alter the policy of Massawa Administration on paying tribute to the population of Arkiko in exchange for certain services. On the contrary, he even demanded taxes from the people of Arkiko without having sufficient troops to collect from them.²⁴⁸ In addition to this numerical disadvantage, most likely due to the war in Yemen, the money that should have been given to the soldiers has not sent from Jeddah Province for two months, so the soldiers were in a challenging situation as well. This was also a result of the quasi-duality between Jeddah Province and Massawa, which has become much clearer in this period. *Na'ibs*, whose authority has already weakened, tried to act as an

²⁴⁵ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 63.

²⁴⁶ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 63-64.

²⁴⁷ *The Secret Committee to Sir J. Hobhouse (No.69), East India House, March 28, 1850. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 38.

²⁴⁸ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 15, 1849. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 290.

arbitrators in this conflict, but this endeavor was seen as a weakness among the people of Arkiko and decreased *Na'ibs*' influence even more.²⁴⁹

3.3. The Blockade Begins (1850-1851)

Eugene Rolland, the vice-consul of Massawa of France, sent a letter to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 15, 1849. In this letter, he conveyed that the duty of the new Paşa en route, Mehmed Paşa, would be not to allow any monopoly on the Island, and at the same time, no laws and rules that were not suitable for his taste would not be valid in Massawa.²⁵⁰ The British and especially the French did not get on well with the officials assigned to Massawa from Egypt, particularly after Halil Bey's departure from Massawa on August 4, 1849, as can be understood from the correspondences.²⁵¹ However, foreign agents in Massawa would have serious problems with the Ottoman authorities beyond their imagination. Even before Mehmed Paşa reached Massawa, consul Plowden and vice-consul Rolland started to experience problems that would disturb them at the level that they would decide to leave the port. Therefore, with the arrival of the new Paşa Ottoman blockade would have been put into effect very decisively

French vice-consul Rolland left Massawa on January 25, 1850, due to the strife he had with the officials of the Ottoman/Egyptian administration in Massawa

²⁴⁹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 15, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 290.

²⁵⁰ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, December 15, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 290.

²⁵¹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, August 15, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 273.

and went to the other side of the Red Sea to meet with the governor of Jeddah, to which Massawa was affiliated, to resolve this situation.²⁵² In the letters he wrote from Jeddah on 11 and 14 February, Rolland explained his issues with the Ottoman/Egyptian administration in Massawa. The French complain that Halil Bey and Ömer Ağa started to apply some rules that were not normally exercised here before. Because of the fact that Rolland unloaded some goods before visiting the dock, he was kept under surveillance by some officers for two days, in a public place where every Massawan could see him. Rolland even says that he was forced to handle his gun at one point, adding that the Massawa administration did not warn him of any alteration in their policies. In their response, the Ottoman officials stated that the rules were binding for every single person in Massawa, whether a monarch or a simple individual; therefore, he had to obey them as well.²⁵³

On the other hand, when the British consul Plowden returned to Massawa in April 1850, he had difficulties that he had never faced before too.²⁵⁴ Plowden, who saw when he arrived at the port that many of his belongings and documents were confiscated, immediately asked the Ottoman district governor for an explanation. Even though there was a British man'o war with him in the harbour, the authorities refused to meet with Plowden.²⁵⁵ On the 14th of April, Plowden wrote another letter to London where he explained that his issues with Ottoman authorities worsened.

²⁵² Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to Commandant*, Massawa, January 25, 1850. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 293.

²⁵³ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, February 14, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 301.

²⁵⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.74) Massawa, April 2, 1850*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 42.

²⁵⁵ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.74) Massawa, April 2, 1850*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 42-43.

The complaints that Plowden would be discussed here were actually quite compatible with the instruction given by the Ottomans to Mehmed Paşa, and similar complaints would be frequently voiced by the French and British officials in the coming periods. According to Plowden, he was prevented from hiring local workers to rebuild the consulate building that Wube's soldiers burned down, and if someone from Massawa worked in that process, he or she was immediately punished by Ottoman authorities.²⁵⁶ In addition to these, Plowden stated that the ivory sent to Queen Victoria by their new ally, *Ras Ali*, was also seized.²⁵⁷ Noting that he had been insulted in a way that everyone in Massawa could easily understand, similar to Rolland's complaints about his arrest, Plowden announced that he could no longer stay in Massawa and informed that he would go to the Tigre region to await new orders.²⁵⁸

As the Ottoman authorities began to increase their pressure on the foreign agents and making their blockade more belligerent day by day in the region, the dangers within Abyssinia continued to manifest. Wube informed Walter Plowden that he was ready for a deal similar to the one signed by his greatest rival and technically overlord, *Ras Ali*, although he had signed an agreement with the French that could be considered to be against the British interests.²⁵⁹ Additionally, Wube, who asked the Ottomans for the tax that *Na'ib* had to pay to him in January 1850, but whose request did not find a response, sent another letter to the Ottomans two months later. This time, he demanded that the tribute of the last four years should be

²⁵⁶ BOA, HR.TO. 213/40.

²⁵⁷ BOA, HR.TO. 213/40.

²⁵⁸ BOA, HR.TO. 213/40.

²⁵⁹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.76), Massawa, April 4, 1850. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 43.

paid to him as soon as possible; otherwise, he would invade Ottoman-controlled lands and massacre the people.²⁶⁰ At this time, Mehmed Paşa had not even arrived in Jeddah yet.²⁶¹ Although the relationship between the Massawa administration and the governor of Jeddah was disorganized and inefficient most of the time, unlike the previous threat, the governor of Jeddah acted upon these threats and began sending reinforcements to the Massawa garrison.²⁶² The ruler of Tigre did not carry out an attack on these developments, but even the possibility of this attack created a great panic and activity in the region.²⁶³

At a time when Massawa was under the threat of the Ruler of Tigre, and foreign ambassadors left the city due to the problems they were experiencing, Mehmed Paşa arrived in Massawa with an army of 400 men in June 1850, and the Ottoman administration in Massawa began de facto.²⁶⁴ The fact that Mehmed Paşa, who was officially appointed on August 7, 1849, was able to arrive in this region after almost a year, shows that there was still a severe disconnect between Istanbul and Massawa in the middle of the nineteenth century.²⁶⁵

When Mehmed Paşa came to the region in June, some tribes revolted against *Na'ib*, whom the Ottomans had recently assigned to collect taxes. Together

²⁶⁰ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 44-45.

²⁶¹ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 66.

²⁶² Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 45.

²⁶³ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 45.

²⁶⁴ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 18/59; Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to Commandant, Massawa, January 25, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve.

Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1), 293; Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 30, 1850*. Letter. France, *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 318.

²⁶⁵ BOA, A.AMD. 9/53.

with the Ottoman forces, the men of *Na'ib* marched against those tribes where they have faced significant resistance.²⁶⁶ These tribes did not pay their coconut tribute to the Massawa Administration. In fact, these tribes organized a raid on *Na'ib*'s tribes one year ago in September and obtained a large number of captives and animals. A second operation was launched against this group in August with cavalry units, but these groups had already left the coastline and dispersed to other regions.²⁶⁷ The tribes fled because they did not have modern weapons, and they knew that they could not defeat the army of Massawa with outmoded tools such as swords and shields. Knowing this situation, the Paşa sent heavily armed soldiers after these tribes.²⁶⁸

Although the Ottomans seemed to be mostly in conflict with the surrounding tribes, there were also groups with which they managed to have good relations recently. This situation also caught the attention of the French. While forces of the Paşa chasing certain tribes for taxation around Massawa, the French vice-consul wrote to Paris that the Abyssinian people, in general, were not satisfied with the Turks' control of the coastline. Therefore, they should take advantage of it by making alliances with more chieftains to increase their influence, just like the Turks have been doing for a while.²⁶⁹ Although these ideas will not be materialized in a short time, the first seeds of the competition that the French and Ottomans would

²⁶⁶ Miran, *Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa*, 61.

²⁶⁷ Fra Pasquale, *Fra Pasquale to French Consul General Le Moyne, Massawa, September 11, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 330.

²⁶⁸ Fra Pasquale, *Fra Pasquale to French Consul General Le Moyne, Massawa, September 11, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 330.

²⁶⁹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 30, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 318.

take part in the following periods, especially for the Dahlak Islands on the coast of Massawa and the Danakil region in the South, began to be sown in this period.

On the other hand, even though it was a very short time since the arrival of Mehmed Paşa to Massawa, serious complaints about him started to be conveyed to Sublime Porte.²⁷⁰ Most probably, the second fire incident, which caused the destruction of 22 buildings in Moncooloo played a significant part in these complaints.²⁷¹ On November 2, 1850, another arson took place in Moncooloo; one of the houses damaged in this fire was Mr. Baroni's house, Plowden's closest associate. When that fire was extinguished the next day with Baroni's efforts, 22 houses were burned to the ground, including the house of vice-consul Rolland.²⁷² Although one person was taken into custody because of this event, Baroni saw Mehmed Paşa and the Massawa council as the architects of the incident. Enraged by this, Mehmed Paşa writes a letter to Baroni. It can be said that this letter reflects the general point of view of the Ottoman bureaucrats working in Massawa against European agents very well during this period.²⁷³

Someone was arrested that evening without my order, and I know that you Europeans want to rule the Abyssinian coast. But we don't need owners like you at all. I request that he be transferred from here because I do not accept any responsibility for any incident that may happen to you in Moncooloo.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 72.

²⁷¹ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, December 31, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 332.

²⁷² Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, December 31, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 332.

²⁷³ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, December 31, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 332.

²⁷⁴ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, December 31, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 332.

In addition to the accusations of the British, the French also believed that Mehmed Paşa was the culprit in this incident, and they say that he treated the Vincentian priests in Moncooloo very badly and did not give the Christians a chance to shelter in this region.²⁷⁵ Having similar complaints with the British about Mehmed Paşa, the French Consul General in Cairo, Le Moyne sent a corvette ship to the region after failing to find a solution to the problems that the French had in Massawa. The ship went to another side of the Red Sea, and its captain complained about Paşa of Massawa to the governor in Jeddah. As a result, the governor of Jeddah promised to write an order authorizing the repairs of the burned houses and treating the missionaries well.²⁷⁶

Some of these complaints of foreign agents were very likely from the time when Ömer Ağa or Halil Bey ruled Massawa before the arrival Mehmed Paşa, yet the Paşa ended up being the only person responsible for the accumulation of the complaints made to Sublime Porte or Jeddah Eyalet. These complaints became well visible in the Ottoman framework and intense in 1851. Although these were serious protests, which Mehmed Paşa was aware of, from foreign states that could cause problems for him in the future; he continued to carry out his duty with the same aggression in the light of the instruction given to him. For instance, on May 27, 1851, Lord Palmerston, the British foreign minister, wrote to Sublime Porte in a letter, expressing very clearly that if the persecution of Mr. Plowden continued, they

²⁷⁵ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, December 31, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 332.

²⁷⁶ Guèrin, *Guèrin to Le Moyne, Suez, April 7, 1851*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 345.

would send warships to the region and protect their rights directly in the Red Sea.²⁷⁷ In fact, in February 1851, HCS Mahi had already arrived at Massawa from Aden to bring gifts for *Ras Ali*, but there were no replies from the ship to the appeals that Plowden had been making for a while to the Mehmed Paşa's superior, governor of Jeddah.²⁷⁸ Thereupon, Plowden, who went to Jeddah in person with this ship, saw that none of the complaints he sent to vice-consul of the United Kingdom A. C. Ogilvie, who was sick when he arrived here, were not forwarded to the governor of Jeddah. While Plowden was going to Jeddah, the British sent some guns to Massawa to be taken to Tigre, but Mehmed Paşa did not allow these guns to pass through customs.²⁷⁹ Therefore, Plowden, decided to meet with Paşa of Jeddah in person. In this meeting, Plowden and the governor reached an agreement on the return of the confiscated property as a result of his meetings, even though the governor did not appease by this visit.²⁸⁰

During this period, problems began to arise in the relationship between the *Na'ib* and the Ottomans as well, or rather the Jeddah administration. These troubles would cause the governor of Jeddah to write a complaint about Mehmed Paşa in the future. *Na'ib* was demoted in the Massawa hierarchy in 1850 because of some of his deeds.²⁸¹ In fact, the issue of *Na'ib* became quite complicated about a year later, and Mehmed Paşa had to ask the Sadrazam what should be done about the issue of

²⁷⁷ BOA, HR.TO. 215/57.

²⁷⁸ Marston, 189.

²⁷⁹ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, April 23, 1851*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853, (14CPC/1)*, 349.; Marston, 189.

²⁸⁰ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, April 23, 1851*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853(14CPC/1)*, 349; Marston, 189.

²⁸¹ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, April 23, 1851*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 349.

Na'ib.²⁸² However, these problems did not turn into major events in the short term, and the Ottomans were able to continue to use the *Na'ib* family as a tool for their own policies at the coast of Northern Abyssinia for the time being.

Frankly, there was not a very positive atmosphere about Mehmed Paşa in Istanbul anyway. The governor of Jeddah, in his memorandum written on December 25, 1850, stated that Mehmed Paşa's administration was a poor administration and that he had a corrupt relationship with the *Na'ib*; therefore, he should be warned harshly.²⁸³ Only two months after this statement, on March 10, 1851, Mehmed Paşa was dismissed and Ibrahim Paşa, a retired *Asakir-i Hassa* member, was appointed in his place.²⁸⁴ It seemed that this dismissal was more related to the inappropriate actions of the district governor, including his relationship with the *Na'ibs*, rather than the complaints of foreign states. Besides, his replacement Ibrahim Paşa would cause much bigger problems with the agents of the foreign states; therefore, it would be wrong to assume that the Ottomans wanted their district governors to change strategies and be more tolerant towards the presence of diplomatic personnel of European nations. İbrahim Paşa would carry out all kinds of maneuvers during his 3-year tenure, from supporting the slave trade to further strengthening the policies which, Plowden referred to as a blockade thanks to the Ottoman control in Massawa, which exacerbated the European agents.

3.4. Conclusion

²⁸² BOA, İ.DH. 231/00231.

²⁸³ Durmuş and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 72.

²⁸⁴ BOA, İ.DH. 242/14770.

To sum up, in the three and a half years that have been described in this section, the landing of Egyptian forces in Massawa meant the final stage of rebuilding of the domination that the Ottomans had started on the Red Sea coast in the sixteenth century. In other words, the conclusion of Ottoman efforts of centralization at Massawa and pacification of notables of the city, the *Na'ibs*. The first step in this regard was İsmail Hakkı Bey's capture of Arkiko and the construction of a fort there and then turning *Na'ib* back into a loyal Ottoman official. While the Egyptians were unwittingly establishing dominance on behalf of the sultan, there was an ongoing interregnum in Abyssinia that continued for almost more than a century. By the nineteenth century, it was essential for all states to somehow reach and acquire modern technologies to continue their existence independently. In that sense, many inventions that can be called modern had not yet reached Abyssinia and its surroundings. Accordingly, those who were part of this struggle for dominance of Northern Abyssinia, which in a way could be called a civil war, were trying to gain an edge over their opponents, fighting against each other mostly with archaic weapons. In accordance with that, it was crucial to acquire modern weapons in some way, especially finding a constant supplier of these tools was lethal due to the fact modern weapons needs to be supported with a constant supply of certain materials.

During this period, the United Kingdom, and France, which started to show themselves with the consulates they opened in Massawa, started to communicate with the actors of this struggle at this time. This meant a possible new phase in *Zemene Mesafint* if one of the belligerents managed to make an alliance with these powers. This coincided precisely with the establishment of the Ottoman/Egyptian administration at Massawa and the dissolution of the decentralized state of Ottoman control over the remaining cities of Habesh Eyalet, including Massawa. Starting in

1848, the Ottomans began to pursue a policy that can be best described as maintaining the status quo in the entire region to prevent any occurrence that could endanger Ottoman/Egyptian presence on the shores of Ethiopia, which included a possible military alliance between a European nation and an Abyssinian warlord. As a result of these policies, the Ottoman administration in Massawa, on the one hand, gradually regained its dominance in the region through the *Na'ib*, who ceased to exist as a source threat to the authority of Sublime Porte and turned into a very beneficial tool for the Ottoman policies to be implemented; on the other hand, tried to restrict the activities of the French and British agents, who had just settled in the region just like the Ottomans.

Ottoman officials in Massawa faced French and British agents many times. These restrictions were mostly on the goods brought to Abyssinia by the British and the French via Massawa in this period, yet the Ottomans also tried to enforce their authority and control over their domains to those people as well, particularly on issues related to confiscation and development rights of the land.

The primary purpose of these policies was to prevent the Ottoman territories on the shores of Northern Abyssinian from being invaded somehow as a result of a potential threat created by the operations of foreign agents in Abyssinia. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Ottomans were more worried about the Europeans than the warlords of Abyssinia. Hence, this policy, or in other words, this blockade, which started in this period, would continue even more intensely than before in the period of the new governor, İbrahim Paşa. Unlike the previous term, Sublime Porte would become more prominent instead of the governorate of Egypt, and the Egyptians would only be visible at specific times in the Red Sea.

CHAPTER IV

THE BLOCKADE (1851-1865)

4.1. Arrival of İbrahim Paşa (1851-1854)

As mentioned earlier, the Ottomans continued to carry out the same policies that would restrict foreign agents without exceeding certain limits, that is, without resorting to violence or harsh treatment. Contrary to the previous period, much more intense and irritating complaints would be received from France and British Empire during the governance of İbrahim Paşa. As a result, the states that had consulates at Massawa began to put pressure on Sublime Porte, which led to alterations and moderations in the policies of Istanbul at Massawa after the end of İbrahim Paşa period. Another difference in this period from the previous one was that mainly the British started to make severe protests about Massawa and Massawa Administration's position in the slave trade.

Remote areas such as Massawa were not usually the destinations for ordinary foreign diplomats. For example, bureaucrats assigned to Massawa were often modern explorers. The Massawa administration was also aware of the situation that

the majority of foreign agents working in these regions were not ordinary bureaucrats of foreign offices.²⁸⁵ For this reason, the European officials who arrived at the Port of Massawa were not people who had information about diplomatic relations, except for the manuals given to them and the instructions they received. More importantly, the officers that the Ottomans would assign hereafter Mehmed Paşa were civil servants whose previous work was not related to diplomacy or administering; that is, they had no direct contact with foreign diplomatic personnel. In this case, it would play a role in the problems that would arise between agents of Sublime Porte and Europeans at Massawa in the coming years.

Most probably, the dismissal of Mehmed Paşa, the first Ottoman district governor who had a permanent stay at Massawa, made foreign agents very happy. Yet, his replacement, İbrahim Paşa, would create a nightmarish environment for almost every single European individual in the Ottoman-controlled domains of Northern Abyssinia by displaying harsh treatment towards foreign agents beyond the orders given by the Sublime Porte. Rochet d'Hericourt, the French vice-consul who replaced Rolland,²⁸⁶ bluntly states that his treatment of the Frenchman in Massawa was much worse than his forerunner and, exceptionally, his way of handling business in this place was corrupt.²⁸⁷ In addition to this, the conflicts of the past continued with the same intensity. The Ottoman administration still did not allow

²⁸⁵ De Goutin, *De Goutin to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 25, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 126.

²⁸⁶ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, May 17, 1850*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 138.

²⁸⁷ Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeddah, January 20, 1852*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 359.

foreigners to construct new buildings in Massawa.²⁸⁸ The French who resided at Massawa say they could not even drive nails unless the Ottoman authorities in the region allowed it.²⁸⁹ More importantly, as the French ambassador stated before the arrival of Mehmed Paşa, the law in the region would be the district governor himself and that the capitulation agreements would not be valid here.²⁹⁰ It should be noted that this general discontentment was not limited with the diplomatic personnel but, as whole, merchants and missionaries were also unhappy with the treatment of the district governor. Of course, this situation was not only related to the Ottomans, but there were also masses that did not like the presence of Christians and particularly Christian missionaries in Massawa and its environs, a large part of which was Muslim. For example, according to Plowden, the French succeeded in obtaining a charter for the establishment of an official Catholic mission in Massawa. However, the district governor was unable to execute this order due to a public outcry.²⁹¹ The French also admitted in their documents that the people had a prejudice against the Catholic missionaries.²⁹² Of course, the problems that the Catholic missionaries faced were not limited to the public opinion about them. As it was written in the instruction given to Mehmed Paşa, the Ottomans were quite hesitant about the activities of the missionaries as well. According to a Catholic missionary in

²⁸⁸ Stella, *Prete Stella to French Consular Agency at Egypt, Moncooloo, January 17, 1852*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 366.

²⁸⁹ Stella, *Prete Stella to French Consular Agency at Egypt, Moncooloo, January 17, 1852*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 366.

²⁹⁰ Le Moyne, *Le Moyne to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexandria, September 10, 1852*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 366.

²⁹¹ Marston, 192.

²⁹² De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 15, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 383.

Massawa, the Ottoman officers continue to cause plenty of problems to their activities as before. Catholic missionaries were primarily concerned by the fact that, as the people who were responsible for maintaining security and order on the Island, the Ottomans did not interfere with any of the problems that had no relation to them. Abuna Salama, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Ethiopia, to which the majority of the Abyssinians belonged, was not very happy with the activities and presence of the Catholic missionaries in Massawa. He usually was the source of negative affairs that the Catholic missionaries faced in Abyssinia. In these frictions, perhaps with the influence of Egypt, the Massawa administration did not take a stance on the side of the Lazarists in Moncooloo.²⁹³

On the other hand, the British had problems that resembled the remonstrance of the French. Also, the officials of the United Kingdom were very disturbed by the fact that they could use the port of Massawa as they wished because of the fact this situation prevented them from establishing relations with Abyssinian princes as they wanted. In accordance with that, after his new meeting with *Ras Ali*, consul Plowden wrote a memorandum to London dated June 20, 1852. The English Consul explained in this document that it would be challenging for the British Empire to carry out their agreement with *Ras Ali*, which the queen recently ratified.²⁹⁴ He stated that the primary demand in Abyssinia from notables was gunpowder and weapons and that the Turks banned the passage of these materials from the only anchorable port in

²⁹³ Leon, *Leon to Le Moyne, February 23, 1852*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 364.

²⁹⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Earl Granville, (No.1), Massawa, June 20, 1852*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Further Correspondence Respecting the captives in Abyssinia*, 1.

Abyssinia, Massawa.²⁹⁵ In this case, Plowden, quite bored and somewhat despondent, believed that he had no use in Abyssinia as long as this situation continued.²⁹⁶

Under these circumstances, it is possible to say the İbrahim Paşa Administration in Massawa followed very similar policies more aggressively to the era of Mehmed Paşa, which continues to disturb foreign nationals regardless of their state of origin. This epoch was also a period when the Ottoman reform movements first started to show their influence in the city. One of the vital features of the period of Gülhane Decree was, in order to strengthen the power of the central authority in rural provinces, local assemblies started to be established.²⁹⁷ Accordingly, on December 16 1852, the governor of Jeddah ordered İbrahim Paşa, district governor of Massawa, to form a local parliament on the Island.²⁹⁸ This assembly, in which the *Na'ib* would also participate as a member, has the distinction of being the first Tanzimat institute that the Ottomans managed to establish in this city.²⁹⁹

Again, at the end of 1852, as it can be understood from the text above, the central authority was getting stronger day by day in Massawa. However, the Ottoman presence in Massawa still depended on support from other provinces in the Red Sea region, just like in the sixteenth century. Egypt was the only place, with the exception of Jeddah Province, where the Ottomans, who did not have enough troops in the region, could count on for suppliance of reinforcements when needed. Jeddah

²⁹⁵ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 132.

²⁹⁶ Marston, 192.

²⁹⁷ Ortaylı İlber, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri: (1840-1880)*, 4th ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2020), 17-19.

²⁹⁸ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 117/84.

²⁹⁹ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 117/84; It is not very clear whether the *Na'ib* in question in this document was the *Na'ib* of Arkiko or the deputy of an Ottoman *qadi*.

Province already had problems with not having a sufficient number of soldiers to deal with the problems in the Hejaz region, and particularly the growing British influence in the South of Holy Lands.³⁰⁰ Accordingly, rebellions or any other event that could be seen as a weakness in Egypt or Jeddah could cause problems for the security of Massawa. For instance, around the same time when Jeddah Province ordered İbrahim Paşa to establish a parliament in Massawa, a rebellion occurred among the soldiers at Sennar.³⁰¹ Sennar was the location of the closest Egyptian military base to Abyssinia. On top of this, an atmosphere of fear arose in Massawa, and as would be expected, an invasion threat was made by Wube on the Island.³⁰² However, as in previous periods, this threat did not materialize. In fact, Wube's political and military condition worsened in the aftermath of his threat. *Ras Ali's* armies further consolidated his dominance over most of Northern Abyssinia and forced Wube to retreat to the West of the Amhara.³⁰³

At the beginning of İbrahim Paşa's third year as district governor, that is, 1853, the Europeans started to realize some of their projects, albeit a little. Although the Ottoman administration did not allow the construction of a new building, they succeeded in turning the existing house of a missionary in Moncooloo into a chapel by mounting a cross on it.³⁰⁴ In addition to these, permission was obtained by İbrahim Paşa for the repairs of the houses, most likely as a result of constantly

³⁰⁰ William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz Under Ottoman Control, 1840-1908* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 156; Zekeriya Kurşun, "Hicaz," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 17 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1998), pp. 437-439, 438.

³⁰¹ Marston, 192.

³⁰² Marston, 192.

³⁰³ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 15, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 383.

³⁰⁴ Marston, 192.

bribing him, probably without any restoration or alteration to its original outlook.³⁰⁵ Of course, this does not show that there has been a fundamental alteration in the perspective of İbrahim Paşa or Sublime Porte towards these people. Paşa continued not to allow the construction of a building that he had never authorized, and if construction was made without his knowledge, he had this new building demolished. For this reason, the French could not build the consular building they wanted. So, it is possible to say that, still the policies which were defined as a blockade continued without any moderation.³⁰⁶

During the whole of 1853, the French would complain about İbrahim Paşa to Sublime Porte, and they would repeat the same problems in their complaints.³⁰⁷ In other words, the district governor did not allow any construction without official permission, and moreover, he only allowed the existence of traditional straw-covered Moncooloo houses.³⁰⁸ After all, the first accounts of the new French vice-consul De Laye, who arrived in Massawa on May 4, 1853, did not have any aspect which could contradict the previously reported views of his predecessors or British colleagues about the Ottoman authorities in Massawa, notably İbrahim Paşa. In fact, according to the vice-consul, Istanbul was constantly sending texts that had warnings about consular agents, which caused a significant cynicism in İbrahim Paşa about these people.³⁰⁹ In addition, according to De Laye, the Ottomans definitely did not want

³⁰⁵ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 16, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 386.

³⁰⁶ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 16, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 386.

³⁰⁷ BOA, HR.TO. 193/50.

³⁰⁸ BOA, HR.TO. 193/50.

³⁰⁹ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 7, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CC/1)*, 145.

foreign agents to settle in the Arabian Peninsula and its surroundings, especially in Massawa.³¹⁰ His opinion was entirely compatible with the directives written on Sublime Porte's instruction to Mehmed Paşa.

In addition, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the slave trade question started to become much more important for the French and particularly for the British. During this period, the British were claiming and would claim that the Massawa administration was disturbed by Plowden's relations with Abyssinian notables, and they would link this to the Ottoman desire to maintain and usufruct the slave trade. Consul Plowden was claiming to have gained considerable influence both over *Ras Ali* and over *Dejazmach Wube* in early 1853.³¹¹ Also, he stated that the biggest reservation of the Ottoman administration in Massawa regarding this relationship was the possibility of stopping the lucrative slave trade from the Muslim Galla Region because of the British struggle against slavery.³¹² Remarkably, the chiefs living in the South of the region was making the existence of this trade possible.³¹³

The slave trade has always been a cardinal feature of Massawa. Consulates have always reported these incidents since their establishment. For example, the French vice-consul Rolland, in his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1849, mentions that 4000 enslaved people, most of whom were Christian children, majority of them were brought to Massawa, and more importantly, he expresses that

³¹⁰ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 7, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CC/1)*, 145.

³¹¹ Marston, 193.

³¹² Marston, 194.

³¹³ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 120.

the Massawa district governor and the Massawa council also benefits from this trade.³¹⁴ Again, according to the statements of the vice-consul, the only significant source of income for the Ottomans in the region was the taxes they received from the slaves, and even these taxes were not sufficient for operating this place.³¹⁵ Of course, the Ottomans were not the only group that had their share of this trade. Arabs and Banians, who hold a large part of the Commerce of Massawa, also played a vital role in this trade.³¹⁶ The Ottoman authorities only levied a tax of two Marie Theresa Dollars per slave, and in return for this tax, they also provided protection to slave owners.³¹⁷ It should be noted that the French, although they were uncomfortable with the enslavement of some Christians, did not put pressure on Sublime Porte at the level of the British on this issue. On the other hand, the British approached this issue much more determinedly and started to work to prevent the abduction and enslavement of Christian children in Northern Abyssinia and began to warn Sublime Porte openly.³¹⁸

In addition to supporting the slave trade by their control over Massawa, European diplomats were also disturbed by the fact that the Ottomans were trying to establish a de facto domination of the Coast of Northern Abyssinia by claiming even

³¹⁴ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, September 13, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 276.

³¹⁵ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, September 13, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 276.

³¹⁶ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 30, 1850*. Letter France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 318.

³¹⁷ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 30, 1850*. Letter France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 318; Rochet d'Hericourt, *Rochet d'Hericourt to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 2, 1848*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 114.

³¹⁸ BOA, HR.TO. 219/10.

territories far beyond their reach. By all means, this further angered the Europeans, who were extremely disturbed by the policies of the Ottomans in and around Massawa. During this period, Plowden used the word blockade for the first time for the Ottoman administration established here. He stated that, by seizing the coastline, the Ottomans built a blockade that they could neither protect nor profit from.³¹⁹

The Ottoman sultans' titles were very well known in the region; therefore, it was not a problem for the Ottomans to make a claim for a territory which the Sublime Porte had no effective authority.³²⁰ In Massawa, for instance, the locals regarded the *berat* of the sultan very highly; presumably, the people of the region prioritize this document bearing the sultan's signature than any other official document.³²¹ Eugene Rolland, French vice-consul stated that the effect of the decree of the writings of the viziers is insufficient in Massawa, the sultan's *tuğra* sent from Istanbul is required to do business here. The seal of the sultan was a talisman which has the power to solve every possible problem.³²² I should be noted that, apart from the reputation of the Ottoman sultan among the Muslims of Northern Abyssinia, the *Na'ibs'* domination of the coastline over a century was highly helpful for the Ottoman Massawa Administrations as well. Therefore, their transformation from *Ayans* and the cause of the decentralized structure of Ottoman Northern Abyssinia to officers of the new administration of Massawa was a vital contribution to the Ottoman blockade.

³¹⁹ BOA, HR.TO. 220/31.

³²⁰ Marston, 195.

³²¹ Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 23, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 253.

³²² Eugene Rolland, *Eugene Rolland to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 23, 1849*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 253.

In addition to laying claim on the coastline, Plowden criticized İbrahim Paşa for collecting taxes from many tribes in a 50-60-mile region of the coastline without offering any services in return, such as protection, and therefore this region continues to be in an appalling state, also taking into account the raids of other tribes.³²³ For instance, in March 1853, while *Ras Ali* was occupied by fighting against a new contender, in the ongoing interregnum, called Kassai or Kassa, some Shiho tribes, relieved from his pressure, raided the other tribes at the coastline. These tribes did not bow to any authority Abyssinian like *Na'ib* nor foreign like Ottoman, and in order to reach Massawa, one must pass through their territory.³²⁴ İbrahim paşa did not act at first and waited. Later, he demanded additional tax from the tribes that survived this event with more minor losses than the others.³²⁵

Just like Plowden claimed, it was not an easy task to maintain this structure, which can be called an embargo or a blockade, both economically and politically, in a region so far from the Ottoman capital and very poor. Already, Sublime Porte was aware of the problems on these two issues and was looking for solutions. Consultations were held in Istanbul on meeting the needs of Massawa. In a document written from Istanbul, the opinion that the Jeddah Province was inadequate to meet the needs of the city of Massawa, especially in terms of security, came to the fore. Therefore, it was started to be considered that Massawa would be connected to Yemen. The governor of Jeddah, Hasip Paşa, stated that there would be problems both in matters such as the dispatch of soldiers and financially due to

³²³ Walter Plowden, *Memorandum delivered by Mr. Plowden to Viscount Palmerston (No.1B), August 13, 1847*. Memorandum. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Further Correspondence Respecting the captives in Abyssinia*, 4.

³²⁴ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 131.

³²⁵ Marston, 196.

distance, and he opposed this change.³²⁶ However, there were those who had the opposite opinion; for example, the district governor of Suakin, Nureddin Paşa, which was also a part of Jeddah Eyalet, sent a letter to Istanbul and said that although the orders of Sublime Porte were followed, the Jeddah Province could not provide sufficient support to this region.³²⁷ In fact, in February 1854, the governor of Yemen requested Massawa to come under his control.³²⁸ Discussions on this issue continued for a while. The proposal written by the governor of Jeddah in December 1853 on this subject was crucial both in terms of concluding the issue and because it contained important information about Massawa. He explained that the Ottomans still could not fully secure Massawa, and if the Island had become a district of Yemen Province, it would be commercially harmful because Massawa was heavily associated with Jeddah in these matters. The request of the governor of Yemen was denied in the aftermath.³²⁹

4.2. The Crimean War and Massawa (1854-1855)

Despite the fact that this issue was resolved for good and the Abyssinian princes, who were the biggest threat to the security of Ottoman Massawa, had to struggle with much bigger problems in this period and left the coastline alone compared to the recent decade, difficult days were waiting for the Ottoman administration in the region in terms of implementing their own plans. Russian Troops under the command of Field Marshal Ivan Paskevich and General Mikhail Gorchakov invaded

³²⁶ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 146/ 85.

³²⁷ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doęu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 78.

³²⁸ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doęu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 79.

³²⁹ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 146/ 85; Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doęu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 79.

the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.³³⁰ This meant an existential threat to the Empire was at its doorstep. An enemy they could never defeat alone was in a position to wipe out the Empire. However, the Russians, who thought that the other European powers would not come to the aid of the Ottomans, started one of the biggest wars in history with the Raid at Sinop because Britain and France entered the war on the side of the Ottoman Empire to prevent Russian expansionism.³³¹ In this way, the satisfaction of the consuls of these two states, which have consulates in Massawa, has become much more important than before.

Of course, these developments did not immediately cause variations in Ottoman Ethiopia policies, and İbrahim Paşa's way of governing in the region and his hostile behavior towards western agents continued for a while more. In this era, the French repeated their opinion about İbrahim Paşa and stated that he wanted to expel non-Muslim merchants and agents from the region and acted accordingly. The other issue which enraged the French was that the Ottomans did not comply with the capitulations and trade agreements from their point of view. In other words, the Massawa Administration did not accept the claims of the French regarding commercial taxes and applied its own ideas. Accordingly, the French started to state in their correspondences that İbrahim Paşa did not recognize the customs tariffs pre-determined by treaties with the Ottoman Empire on trade.³³² According to an employee of the company called Auguste Thomas, the principal actor of the incident, İbrahim Paşa did not comply with the trade agreements and demanded other fees in

³³⁰ John Sweetman, *The Crimean War: 1854-1856* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001), 20.

³³¹ Sweetman, 17, 20.

³³² De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, April 27, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 155.

addition to these.³³³ Furthermore, when a hangar wanted to be built for the mules of this company, İbrahim Paşa, who learned this, punished the workers who worked in the construction of this building, just like the houses in Moncooloo.³³⁴ Not content with that, the district governor bans even bakers who sell bread to the employees of this company, just as it did to other foreign government officials before.³³⁵ Finally, the author of this letter states that it is impossible for them to buy goods from Massawa in the current situation, and they have been exposed to many insults.³³⁶ When they applied to the Paşa to protect the rights of their merchants, İbrahim Paşa drew a contrasting conclusion from documents that the vice-consul presented to him about taxation against French nationals.³³⁷ As a result of this negative response, vice-consul De Laye decided to report this situation to the French Embassy in Istanbul.³³⁸ However, these complaints of the French did not cause any alteration not until, they were combined with the dissatisfaction of the British towards the Ottoman Massawa Administration.

Continuing to experience similar problems with the same intensity, British consul Plowden was complaining about the Massawa Administration to both the

³³³ *Massawa, April 26, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 156.

³³⁴ *Massawa, April 26, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 157.

³³⁵ *Massawa, April 26, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 157.

³³⁶ *Massawa, April 26, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 157.

³³⁷ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, April 27, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 156.

³³⁸ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, April 27, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859*. (195CCC/1), 156.

Istanbul Embassy of Great Britain and London.³³⁹ The report he sent to London for Abyssinia, dated July 9, 1854, in which Plowden paralleled the Ottoman Massawa Administration to a blockade, painted a rather negative picture about Massawa. The Consul states that since there was no police force in the city, crimes were constantly being committed, fires were constantly breaking out, and the soldiers were in a constant state of mutiny. In addition, he said, just as the French stated in their correspondences, the district governor was constantly trying to humiliate foreign agents in the eyes of the Abyssinians and discourage European merchants who wanted to settle and do business here.³⁴⁰

Complaints about İbrahim Paşa, who tried to send the European population in Massawa away from the region, with a rudeness beyond and even contradicting the orders he received, were increasing day by day. As a result of this, the number of letters with intense complaints reaching directly to Istanbul and Sublime Porte started to increase. In fact, this situation led the British and French, despite the rivalry between the two nations in the region, to unite against their common enemies. The letter sent by Plowden to the British Embassy in Constantinople almost at the same time was the first proof of this situation. While being very confrontational towards the Massawa Administration, this letter also bore the signature of the French vice-consul De Laye along with Plowden. In this complaint, as De Laye wrote to his own government, many common accusations have been described above against İbrahim Paşa, like constantly insulting foreign agents or

³³⁹ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, July 1, 1854*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 157.

³⁴⁰ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting the British Abyssinia*, 129-130.

harboring hostility towards the Europeans.³⁴¹ Upon receiving complaints, the French ambassador in Istanbul wrote a letter to Sublime Porte on November 10, 1854, as well. The ambassador, repeating the grievances of vice-consul De Laye in the letter, also stated that with the start of the Crimean War, zealotry increased in the city and that İbrahim Paşa had shown no effort to restrain it.³⁴² As a result of this fanaticism, it was stated that De Laye was attacked in the street one day, and İbrahim Paşa did not turn a hair to catch the criminals.³⁴³

In this period, in addition to the complaints mentioned above, similar to those seen in earlier periods, complaints about the lack of respect for the territorial integrity and borders of Abyssinia by the Ottoman authorities in Egypt and Massawa began to be voiced by British Agents. For example, in March 1854, a raid was made from the Taka directorate, the Egyptian military base in Sennar, to the Tigre region, and 340 Christians were enslaved. The fact that the ruler of the region, Wube, was struggling with the growing danger of Kassa, made this attack possible and paved the way for many new raids because the Ruler of Tigre could no longer protect these people. Thereupon, Plowden tried to intervene in this situation by involving the British ambassador in Alexandria to pressure the governor of Egypt, particularly about the slave trade.³⁴⁴ While Plowden was uneasy about the new developments in Egypt, he generally spoke of an increase in the slave trade during this period.³⁴⁵ It is not known how much of this was due to the relief that the civil war between Kassa and the other Abyssinian Lords created on Muslims, but it certainly had an effect.

³⁴¹ BOA, HR.TO. 221/19.

³⁴² BOA, HR.TO. 195/57.

³⁴³ BOA, HR.TO. 195/57.

³⁴⁴ Marston, 197-200; BOA, HR.TO. 221/19.

³⁴⁵ BOA, HR.TO. 221/19.

Dejazmach Wube's and *Ras Ali*'s dealings with Kassa also relieved İbrahim Paşa for a short time. This allowed Paşa to try to dictate terms to the Ruler of Tigre, unlike in previous years. İbrahim Paşa conveyed Wube in June 1854 that the mines 100 miles south of Massawa, the source of all Abyssinia's salt, belonged to the Ottoman Empire.³⁴⁶ Although Plowden thought that the Ottoman administration in the region was unaware of its surroundings, this was not true.³⁴⁷ Plowden was very disturbed by this move because he thought that he was the only reason for a time that Wube spared Massawa.³⁴⁸

İbrahim Paşa's actions were not limited to claiming territories around Massawa. He sent *Na'ib*, who since the construction of the fort at Arkiko has been giving the impression of an officer for the implementation of the Ottoman policies for Abyssinia, to whom he has given 150 of his soldiers, against the Shiho tribes who have looted the coastline last year. *Na'ib* burned many villages and churches along the way.³⁴⁹ The British and the French expressed their dissatisfaction with the Ottoman authorities' attacks as they wished which violated the borders of Abyssinia and conveyed this situation to İbrahim Paşa.³⁵⁰ Plowden has already requested the

³⁴⁶ Marston, 201.

³⁴⁷ Walter Plowden, Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 184), Massawa, July 9, 1854. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 123; Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 128.

³⁴⁸ Marston, 201.

³⁴⁹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.194), Massawa, November 28, 1854*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 134.

³⁵⁰ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.194), Massawa, November 28, 1854*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 134

British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to persuade the Ottomans to recognize the territorial integrity of Abyssinia in order to prevent such offences.³⁵¹

At the beginning of 1855, the complaints about İbrahim Paşa and Ottoman policies had become more severe. In January, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs George Villiers wrote a letter to Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, demanding that İbrahim Paşa be punished or dismissed as soon as possible.³⁵² Stratford Canning then wrote a letter to Grand Vizier Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa. In this letter, he stated that the Ottoman authorities mistreated British agents in both Jeddah and Massawa, but the attitude of the governor of Jeddah improved as a result of Sublime Porte's warnings, but this was not observed in Massawa. Noting that Plowden could not benefit from Capitulations and Commercial Treaties to British Subjects in any way, he even could not arrange his house or garden; the ambassador said that they attributed this to İbrahim Paşa's ignorance, up to a point.³⁵³ He stated that the Paşa's behavior damaged the image of the Ottoman Empire and that if these behaviors continued; the United Kingdom would not be indifferent to this situation, even if they valued their relations with Sublime Porte.³⁵⁴ In addition to these, the British in Massawa stated that their primary demand was a change in the system rather than the district governor himself. They do not want to be disturbed, especially in their relations with the Abyssinians. Also, they repeat

³⁵¹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.194), Massawa, November 28, 1854.* Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 134

³⁵² Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.189), Adowa, September 25, 1854.* Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 132.

³⁵³ Stratford Canning, *Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon (No.201), Constantinople, March 12, 1855.* Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 137.

³⁵⁴ Stratford Canning, *Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to Aali Pasha (No.201), Pera, March 9, 1855.* Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 138.

their disturbance towards the raids that have been conducted by the forces who were subjected to the district governor.³⁵⁵

In these critical days of the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire, which did not want to deteriorate relations with its allies, had to act. While new complaints were constantly being received about the Paşa, Sublime Porte had already asked the governor of Jeddah to inspect the administration of Ibrahim Paşa, and he sent an official to the region in January.³⁵⁶ This inspection, according to Plowden, concerned specifically the robbery of a Spanish merchant under French protection. İbrahim Paşa, who was in a pressing panic during this supervision, hanged himself in his harem on February 14, 1855.³⁵⁷ In the midst of the Crimean War, not knowing he was already dead, the Empire forced to dismiss Ibrahim Paşa, in order not to confront its two allies in the face of such serious complaints, and appointed Emin Efendi, who was the former Yemen property manager, on March 21, 1855.³⁵⁸

Thereupon, Sublime Porte sent an instruction to the newly appointed district governor Emin Efendi³⁵⁹ within the knowledge of the British. This instruction could be summarized as the complete opposite of the one that Istanbul gave to Mehmed Paşa when he was appointed. In this document, all the complaints of the French and English consuls were accepted by Sublime Porte. Ottoman authorities stated that, from now on, the district governor would show special efforts to ensure that the

³⁵⁵ BOA, HR.TO. 221/21.

³⁵⁶ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.214), Massawa, March 12, 1855. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 144.*

³⁵⁷ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, (No.212), Adowa, April 7, 1855. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 144.*

³⁵⁸ BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 67/15.

³⁵⁹ *Extracts from the Imperial Instructions addressed to the Kaimakam of Massowah, April 8, 1855. Instruction. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 142.*

consuls of these nations, which were two crucial allies of the Ottoman Empire, did not experience the same nuisances, and if he could not provide an environment which made these agents comfortable, he would be both recalled to the center and punished.³⁶⁰ Additionally, the issue of slavery was also explicitly mentioned in this document. Sublime Porte drew attention to how enslaved Christians were sold in Massawa, and various persecutions were made to convert them. It was stated that such acts are now strictly prohibited, and Emin Efendi would inspect these events.³⁶¹

As a result, although the British and the French seemed to ease the blockade a little in terms of pressure on the Europeans, the rule of Emin Efendi would not be very bright for them, just like when İbrahim Paşa replaced Mehmed Paşa. In fact, the first reports about Emin Efendi show that he had a friendlier attitude towards the European diplomatic personnel, but it is understood that the irregularities in Massawa and the Christian slave trade that the French and the British complained about were still continuing.³⁶² However, problems related to insulting or publicly humiliating foreign officials would be minimal from now on in Massawa during the Ottoman Era. Therefore, with the dismissal of İbrahim Paşa was the end of the policy of pressuring the Europeans to force them to leave Northern Abyssinia ended permanently, yet still, the Empire would continue to block the arms trade and try to enhance their control over the coast of Northern Abyssinia. One month before İbrahim Paşa was dismissed, Kassa defeated *Dejazmach* Wube in the Battle of

³⁶⁰ *Extracts from the Imperial Instructions addressed to the Kaimakam of Massowah, April 8, 1855. Instruction. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 142.*

³⁶¹ *Extracts from the Imperial Instructions addressed to the Kaimakam of Massowah, April 8, 1855. Instruction. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 142.*

³⁶² Chauvin Baillard, *Chauvin Baillard to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, June 7, 1856. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1), 169.*

Derasge³⁶³ and removed the last obstacle in his path to dominate entire Northern Ethiopia and became the new Ethiopian Emperor under the name Tewodros II, ending the interregnum that had been going on for more than a century.³⁶⁴

4.3. Long Live the Emperor (1855-1858)

On another occasion he said, "I mistrust much. All men say that Turks and Franks only come to take your country from you; and if I did not love you personally, I should have sent you away on the first mention of a consulate." He then said, " You must make me friends with your Queen." I replied, " That is what I came for." He said, " Better be destroyed by you, who believe in Christ, than be saved by the Turks!"³⁶⁵

The new Emperor, or the man formerly known as Kassa, could be seen as a savior, conqueror, malefactor, or hero. His image would vary depending on the place and religion of the person living in Ethiopia at that time. For the Ottomans in Massawa, he unquestionably was a problem. He was a man who hated both Catholicism and Islam.³⁶⁶

Although he had resolved an interregnum that no one had been able to finish for over a century, in fact, he was not a very important person at first, a son of a minor chief in Qwara.³⁶⁷ In time he became the ruler of Qwara and took the title of *Dejazmach*.³⁶⁸ With the effect of his increasing power, eventually, he denied the

³⁶³ David Hamilton Shinn and Thomas P. Ofcansky, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013), 390-391.

³⁶⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.217), Massawa, March 3, 1855*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 146.

³⁶⁵ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 461.

³⁶⁶ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 15, 1853*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1)*, 398.

³⁶⁷ Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Los Angeles: Tsehai, 2012), 8.

³⁶⁸ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*, 8; Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 149.

authority of *Ras Ali's* mother, the empress, and managed to defeat all of the forces that were sent after him.³⁶⁹ In 1847, *Ras Ali* was forced to recognize his authority and allow him to marry his daughter.³⁷⁰ In the following period, Kassa, who made good use of the wars in Abyssinia for his own benefit, increased his power.³⁷¹ In 1852 he rebelled against *Ras Ali* again,³⁷² and just like last time, he managed to defeat every army *Ras* sent to destroy him.³⁷³ Kassa, who forced *Ras Ali* to ask for help even from Wube, defeated *Ras Ali's* superior force and erased him from Ethiopian Politics.³⁷⁴ Although Wube made friendly calls to Kassa after *Ras Ali's* defeat, later, he claimed the title of Emperor and started making plans of being coroneted at Gondar. However, Kassa did not allow this to happen. Two *Dejazmachs* fought in a deceive battle in 1855. Kassa managed to defeat and imprison Wube.³⁷⁵ Normally, Abuna Salama traveled to Abyssinia to crown Wube as the new Emperor, but his defeat changed the course of events.³⁷⁶ This victory of Kassa also meant that all the major chiefs of Abyssinia were killed or captured, so that five days after this victory, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Ethiopia, Abuna Salama,

³⁶⁹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855.* Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868,* 149.

³⁷⁰ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935,* 8.

³⁷¹ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935,* 8.

³⁷² Marston, 229.

³⁷³ De Laye, *De Laye to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, May 15, 1853.* Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853. (14CPC/1),* 383.

³⁷⁴ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855.* Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868,* 149.

³⁷⁵ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855.* Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868,* 149.

³⁷⁶ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935,* 8.

crowned the *Dejazmach* with the title of Kassa Theodorus, King of Kings of Ethiopia.³⁷⁷

This definitely meant bad news for the Ottomans, who benefited greatly from the political environment created by the wars between Kassa and other Abyssinian chieftains. Now, they had to deal with a man who was very close to uniting entire Ethiopia, disfavored Islam, and had a force of 50.000 men. In addition, he was looking for ways to obtain modern weapons and, more importantly, wanted to take back control of the coastline of Northern Abyssinia.³⁷⁸ Accordingly, as soon as he was crowned, he ordered all Muslims living in his lands to become Christians. If not, they would be forced to leave. He exiled Catholic missionaries and ordered his subjects to abandon Catholicism.³⁷⁹ He banned the slave trade in his territories, just like he said to the British, a year ago.³⁸⁰ Chiefly, after annihilating Muslim Galla Tribes and maybe Shoa tribes, he planned to attack and conquer Massawa, and Plowden believed he had the power to do so. He also wanted to conquer Egypt;³⁸¹ a dream would exist in his mind for a long time. Under these circumstances, Plowden believed that it was the best option for the Turks to leave Massawa all together in the face of this threat because he thought that it would not be in their interest, as the

³⁷⁷ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*, 8-9.

³⁷⁸ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.212), Adowa, April 7, 1855*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 143.

³⁷⁹ Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country: With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, ed. Trevor Chichele Plowden, 458.

³⁸⁰ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855*. Report. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 149; Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.192), Massawa, November 6, 1854*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 133.

³⁸¹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.212), Adowa, April 7, 1855*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 143.

Turks would incur serious expenses to defend this place against the massive forces of the Emperor and survive a possible blockade from inner Abyssinia.³⁸²

The Emperor was not slow to put his plans into effect. He immediately wanted to have formal relations with the British.³⁸³ Nonetheless; the British Foreign Office had some doubts; the Egyptians were aware of the Abyssinian Emperor's plans and a possible diplomatic rapprochement between the United Kingdom, and Kassa could disturb Egypt Eyalet. The British did not want to break their ties with Said Paşa, especially after he ended the raids on Abyssinia and fought against slavery.³⁸⁴ Although Sublime Porte and even Emin Efendi did not seem very aware of the plans of the Emperor,³⁸⁵ the British did not want to spoil their relations with Istanbul as well.

Under these conditions, examining Plowden's reports, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs George Villiers conveyed to Plowden that Britain was willing to engage in relations with the Emperor, but only on the condition that Tewodros II abandons his plans for both Massawa and Egypt.³⁸⁶ It should be added here that the agreement between *Ras* Ali and the United Kingdom was effectively abolished after his defeat. Therefore, due to this fact, they were pursuing the ratification of the trade agreement the British Empire did with *Ras* Ali by the new Emperor or signing a

³⁸² Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.227), Gondar, June 25, 1855. Report. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 153.*

³⁸³ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.212), Adowa, April 7, 1855. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 143.*

³⁸⁴ Walter Plowden, *The Earl of Clarendon to Consul Plowden (No.228), Foreign Office, November 27, 1855. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 154.*

³⁸⁵ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 88.

³⁸⁶ Walter Plowden, *The Earl of Clarendon to Consul Plowden (No.228), Foreign Office, November 27, 1855. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 154.*

similar one.³⁸⁷ However, the new Emperor would never sign a treaty with the British due to the fact he did not like the article about extra-territoriality in which he claimed that every person in Abyssinia must answer to his jurisdiction.³⁸⁸

After the success of the Emperor's Galla and Shoa campaigns and the involvement of the British consul general in Egypt, the Foreign Office decided to convey Plowden's plan about Massawa to the Sublime Porte.³⁸⁹ The British considered Massawa to be the Emperor's next target, to create a link between his domain and the Red Sea. In addition to Massawa's geopolitical importance, it was known by the British that Emperor Tewodros detested the enslavement of Christians by Muslims, so it could be expected that the Emperor would carry out an attack on Massawa in a short time because the Island was considered as the center of the Christian slave trade in Abyssinia at that time. The British did not have a concern about the safety of Egypt because they felt that the Egyptian armies in Upper Egypt were sufficient for its protection, unlike the garrison of Massawa. Therefore, they decided to transmit the idea of the Ottoman Empire's transfer of Massawa to the Ethiopian Empire in Istanbul. They believed concluding the affair without a conflict would benefit their interests. It was reported that the small garrison of the Ottomans could only protect the city; it wasn't strong enough to defend trade routes or the periphery of Massawa. Due to the fact that, the city was dependent on the income

³⁸⁷ George Villiers, *The Earl of Clarendon to Consul Plowden*; (No.266), *Foreign Office March 3, 1857. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 174; Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon* (No. 184), *Massawa, July 9, 1854. Report. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 81.

³⁸⁸ Marston, 230.

³⁸⁹ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon* (No.234), *Gondar, October 28, 1855. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 157; Frederick Bruce, *Mr. Bruce to the Earl of Clarendon* (No. 236), *Alexandria, February 17, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 158.

from the slave trade and a constant blockade or attacks from tribes on the trade routes would prevent the Ottoman administration from even earning enough money to meet the needs of the soldiers. Due to this unfavorable situation, the British seemed to have the opinion that Sublime Porte could also take a good look at this offer.³⁹⁰ However, the Sultan declined the offer and decided not to transfer his most significant hold in Abyssinia to Emperor Tewodros.³⁹¹

In such an environment, Mehmed Emin Efendi, who arrived at Massawa as the new district governor, started to send reports about the status of Massawa to Istanbul in 1856. In his reports, he did not seem frightened by the reunification of the entire Northern Abyssinia under a single ruler because he was aware of the fact that although these people possessed modern weapons; they were not heavily relying on them; instead, they were mainly using outdated arms like swords.³⁹² In fact, this situation would have relieved him a lot, as he claimed that all Abyssinia could only be conquered with 1500-2000 soldiers, so Tewodros was not a factor which worried the district governor.³⁹³ This correspondence is a good example why the main concern of the Ottomans was the Europeans not the Ethiopian princes or chieftains. Although they had enormous numbers of soldiers, the Abyssinians were ineffective against modern armies, especially in defensive positions.

However, this did not mean that the Abyssinians could not besiege and blockade the city, just as the Ottomans did to the whole of Abyssinia. A report

³⁹⁰ Frederick Bruce, *Mr. Bruce to the Earl of Clarendon (No. 236), Alexandria, February 17, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 158-159.

³⁹¹ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 47.

³⁹² Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 88.

³⁹³ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 88.

written in March 1856 by Emin Efendi mentioned an attack from Christian tribes and the arrival of 350 soldiers as reinforcements from Egypt.³⁹⁴ On the other hand, the British stated that this event actually was almost an existential threat to the Ottoman presence at Massawa and occurred because Mehmed Emin Efendi, the district governor, decided to replace the *Na'ib* with his officers.³⁹⁵ The *Na'ib* forced the Shiho tribes to join him and burned down the villages which did not provide troops for his new army.³⁹⁶ This was the first and only major revolt of the *Na'ibs* since the construction of the fort at Arkiko. His force of 1000 men reached the port and started to blockade Massawa just like the old times. *Na'ib* had demanded from the Ottoman administration of the city. He demanded the restoration of the pre-1848 order; that was, he wanted to get an annual fee from Jeddah Province and control his territory independently. He also stated that the fort in Arkiko must be destroyed.³⁹⁷ On this occasion, Moncooloo burned down again. Despite the small number of Egyptian soldiers who came to help Massawa, they managed to repel the forces of *Na'ib* with the help of modern weapons such as cannons and ended the blockade, which lasted for months.³⁹⁸ After the end of this battle, the district governor sent the Egyptian forces after the tribes, which provided the soldiers for the army of the *Na'ib* and enslaved 160 people.³⁹⁹ In any case, the slave trade still continued in Massawa; this occasion made it more public.⁴⁰⁰ After these events, the

³⁹⁴ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 89-93.

³⁹⁵ Marston, 231.

³⁹⁶ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.247), Gondar, February 17, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 163.

³⁹⁶ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 88.

³⁹⁷ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.247), Gondar, February 17, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 163.

³⁹⁸ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.249), Gondar, April 22, 1856.*

Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868, 166.

³⁹⁹ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 90-92.

⁴⁰⁰ Frederick Bruce, *Mr. Bruce to the Earl of Clarendon (No.250), Alexandria, June 20, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 167.

British, who were especially disturbed by the attacks of the Massawa administration on the tribes and the continuation of the slave trade, made a complaint to Sublime Porte through their ambassador in Istanbul. In this complaint, they declared that Mehmed Emin Efendi treated the Ethiopian Empire as if it was a barbarian state and attacked their lands without making any declaration, and enslaved their people.⁴⁰¹ Emin Efendi, on the other hand, stated in his reports that banning slave trade caused problems in the city.⁴⁰²

Therefore, although Emin Efendi, arrived at Massawa with certain orders in his pocket, he decided to ignore some of them and adapted himself to the reality of Massawa. Barroni, Plowden's right-hand man, stated that in 1857, Mehmed Emin Efendi had a more positive approach than his predecessors at first, but that he too returned to classical Ottoman rule over time. Accordingly, the district governor, who handled much work with bribery, severely contributed to the slave trade.⁴⁰³ Actually, Sublime Porte began to struggle against the slave trade officially at the end of 1856, under the influence of intense British pressure. As a result of this, edicts banning the slave trade were sent to the governors in Africa in 1857. However, despite this very clear order, the slave trade in Massawa continued with the approval of the district governor.⁴⁰⁴

Apart from the slave trade, the way how Emin Efendi conducted the running of the customs of the city was also not very different from his predecessors. The French, in particular, were highly disturbed by the issues related to the tariffs and

⁴⁰¹ BOA, HR.TO. 319/48.

⁴⁰² Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 89.

⁴⁰³ Marston, 236.

⁴⁰⁴ Taledano, 135-136.

customs of the city. According to the French vice-consul, in addition to the fact that the Ottomans prevented the passage of certain goods, the Massawa administration demanded four times the amount of tax they normally had to pay, contrary to the agreements between them. The Massawa administration justified their taxation policies by stating that the delivered goods were transported under the protection of an Ottoman agent, *Na'ib*, and therefore the goods were not considered as a foreign country's property, but as Ottoman property.⁴⁰⁵ The French later had to accept the claims of the district governor on this issue and continued to pay the same percentage of tax, along with the additional taxes they paid, which they marked as determined by the initiative of the *Na'ib* or the district governor.⁴⁰⁶ Although the French could not use the Massawa port as they wished, a vital opportunity arose for them to increase their influence in Abyssinia, particularly in Danakil region in the South of Massawa during this period. This opportunity was a chief named Negoosee or, more appropriately, *Dejazmach* Negoosee. He emerged as a rival to the Emperor in the Tigre region,⁴⁰⁷ and established good relations with the French. He managed to occupy certain parts of Tigre and Gondar while the Emperor was campaigning at

⁴⁰⁵ Chauvin Baillard, *Chauvin Baillard to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, June 13, 1857*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 186.

⁴⁰⁶ Chauvin Baillard, *Chauvin Baillard to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, September 15, 1858*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1859. (195CCC/1)*, 193; Theodore Gilbert, *Theodore Gilbert to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, February 25, 1860*. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2)*, 002.

⁴⁰⁷ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.260), Gondar, October 5, 1856*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia*, 171.

Shoa.⁴⁰⁸ His entry into the fray of Ethiopia definitely magnified the hand of the French in the region.⁴⁰⁹

4.4. Pertev Efendi and the New Ottoman Policies (1858-1863)

Just like İbrahim Paşa's dismissal process, complaints about Mehmed Emin Efendi started to reach Istanbul, but this time the complaints were mainly about the slave trade rather than the ambassadors' mistreatment. On December 17, 1857, Sublime Porte sent a message to the governor of Jeddah. In this document, it was written that Mehmed Emin Efendi condoned the slave trade and even profited from it.⁴¹⁰

Although the Sultan banned slavery, the people of the region were asked to comply with this decision gradually, even though they had habits regarding this institution. It was stated that if it was not done, the officials here would bear the consequences.⁴¹¹

Despite the fact that the district governor later wrote a letter stating that these allegations were not true, he was dismissed on July 6, 1858.⁴¹²

Shortly before the dismissal of Emin Efendi, a massive rebellion broke out on the Island, and as a result of the rebellion, which the British described as an attempted revolution; the already weak influence of the district governor was further reduced.⁴¹³ In such troubling situation, after Mehmed Emin Efendi's dismissal due to

⁴⁰⁸ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.260), Gondar, October 5, 1856. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia*, 171.

⁴⁰⁹ Marston, 235.

⁴¹⁰ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 94-95.

⁴¹¹ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 94-95.

⁴¹² BOA, A.MKT.UM. 318/2.

⁴¹³ Marston, 237.

his role in the slave trade, it was decided to appoint Pertev Efendi as his replacement.⁴¹⁴

The British stated that Pertev Efendi, probably due to the fact that he was the former *Defterdar* of Konya,⁴¹⁵ was much more knowledgeable in commercial matters than the former district governor.⁴¹⁶ However, additionally, to the issues related to trade, his district governorship would be the era where the Ottoman Empire embraced new strategies that did not present during the rule of other district governors. Therefore, starting from 1858, the Massawa strategy of the Ottomans or briefly, the Ottoman blockade would enter a new era. Sublime Porte's agents from now on would be part of an imperialist race against the French and British for the control of the coastline of Northern Ethiopia, especially for the Danakil region in the South, and they would try to control these regions in a bloodless way by using the influence of the *Na'ibs* and sultan's titles.

This period was also a period when Abyssinia was once again shaken by disorder and conflict. On the one hand, Said Paşa, the governor of Egypt, began to make plans to invade Abyssinia; on the other hand, the struggle between Negoosee, the de facto sovereign of Tigre, supported by the French, and the Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II, supported by the British, intensifies with each passing day and their final confrontation drawing close.⁴¹⁷ However, the Ottomans' blockade at Massawa, which lasted for years, prevented them from giving military aid to the people they supported on both sides, weakened to a certain extent for the first time during his

⁴¹⁴ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 96.

⁴¹⁵ BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 113/62.

⁴¹⁶ Marston, 238.

⁴¹⁷ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to the Earl of Clarendon (No.286), Toramba, June 5, 1858. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 184.

era, which forced the new district governor to seek help.⁴¹⁸ the French managed to break through this blockade by using the services of the *Na'ib* in exchange for waiving their rights over the Island of Disseh.⁴¹⁹ However, this weakening did not lead to the opening of Abyssinia market to arms dealers or creation of an environment where the European can by-pass the Massawa customs easily. Only some minor transactions occurred. The French, even in 1862, still claimed that the Ottoman administration of Massawa prevented the passage of all kinds of weapons.⁴²⁰ Therefore it is possible to assume that this was one of the few times when Europeans managed to deliver a small number of weapons to the region.⁴²¹ In line with the statements of the French vice-consul, the Ottoman blockade against the arms trade was still very effective; in fact, it even forced Tewodros to create his own enterprise to produce weapons and gunpowder in Abyssinia.⁴²² Although the Ottomans were able to continue to suppress the arms trade, the district governors could no longer show aggressive attitudes towards the European diplomats as they were doing the early 1850s. As a result of this situation, with the appointment of Pertev Efendi, the Ottomans altered their policies for maintaining and sometimes even expanding their presence in the region.

As mentioned before, the Anglo-French rivalry on the West Coast of the Red Sea had increased more than ever before. The rivalry between the two great powers, especially for the control of some of the Dahlak Islands, pushed the Ottomans to take

⁴¹⁸ Marston, 240.

⁴¹⁹ Charles Tilstone Beke, *Dr. Beke to Sir J. Emerson Tennent (Inclosure 2 in No.342), Bekesboume, November 3, 1862*. Memorandum. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 215; Contrary to what Beke has reported, this event may have taken place within the knowledge of the district governor.

⁴²⁰ *Paris, May 7, 1862*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2)*, 023.

⁴²¹ Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*, 583.

⁴²² Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*, 583-585.

some steps in this regard.⁴²³ In 1860, Sublime Porte, which was worried about the activities of the Western states in the region, asked Pertev Efendi to try to strengthen their influence on the Abyssinian coastline without resorting to violence.⁴²⁴ The French declared that they had bought Disseh Island, which was very close to Massawa and affiliated to the British,⁴²⁵ while the inhabitants claimed that they were independent.⁴²⁶ Acting on this situation, the Ottomans, after negotiating with the notables of the Island, turned the territory into a directorate and appointed a person from the *Na'ib* family to this task.⁴²⁷ On January 1, 1862, Pertev Efendi sent a letter to Istanbul, saying that the Western states, this time, were trying to gain influence in the Danakil region.⁴²⁸ Indeed, the French made agreements with some of the tribes of the Danakil region in order to obtain a dock for their usage.⁴²⁹ The Ottomans then accelerated their work in the Danakil region and tried to fully control the coastline from Massawa to the Bab-el Mandeb Strait. The fact that the Ottoman administration started to settle in the Danakil area with the help of significant amount soldiers sent by the governor of Jeddah, particularly to Edd and Zula, by planting their flags and establishing directorates, drew the attention of both the British and more importantly

⁴²³ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 50.

⁴²⁴ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 51.

⁴²⁵ Theodore Gilbert, *Theodore Gilbert to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, June 25, 1860*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 3, 1860-1874. (14CPC/3)*, 42.

⁴²⁶ Marston, 241.

⁴²⁷ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 108-109; Colquhoun, *Mr. Colquhoun to Earl Russell (No 328), Alexandria, February 10, 1862*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 207; Raffaele Barroni, *Mr. Barroni to Earl Russell (No.328) Massawa, December 14, 1861*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 207.

⁴²⁸ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 96.

⁴²⁹ Guillaume Lejean, *Guillaume Lejean to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 2, 1862*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2)*, 21a.

the Emperor.⁴³⁰ This situation made Tewodros particularly uneasy because the advance of the Ottomans in these areas meant that they approached the mines that supplied the sulfur and salt needs of the whole of Northern Abyssinia.⁴³¹

Particularly, the sulfur was vital for gunpowder production. This concerned the British as well, not because it could threaten their ally Tewodros but because this could extend the slave to the South of the region.⁴³²

Although the new policies of the Ottomans on the coastline disturbed both the Emperor and the British, both Tewodros and the United Kingdom had more important problems. Dealing with the onslaught of the Galla tribes on the one hand and the Negoosee on the other, although he had difficulties at first, the Emperor took the lead in early 1860.⁴³³ During this turmoil, the murder of British consul Walter Plowden in March 1860 by Negoosee supporters put this crisis into a state that would never appease for many years.⁴³⁴ Although Negoosee was utterly defeated in February 1861, about a year after Plowden's death, the growing turmoil in the region did not subside in the long term.⁴³⁵ As discussed earlier, Tewodros has not ratified the treaty *Ras Ali* signed despite his friendly attitude towards the British, which gave the United Kingdom the most favored nation status. Plowden's replacement

⁴³⁰ Charles Duncan Cameron. *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.333), Massawa, March 20, 1862. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia*, 209; Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 110-111.

⁴³¹ Marston, 272.

⁴³² Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.333), Massawa, March 20, 1862. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia*, 209

⁴³³ Walter Plowden, *Consul Plowden to Lord J. Russell (No.306), Debra Tabor, February 3, 1860. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 193.

⁴³⁴ Raffaele Barroni, *Mr. Barroni to Mr. Colquhoun. Massawa, March 30, 1860. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 193-194.

⁴³⁵ Colquhoun, *Mr. Colquhoun to Lord J. Russell (No.315), Cairo, February 28, 1861. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 200.

Cameron, also tried to make him endorse this treaty, but he was still refusing the proposals.⁴³⁶

Tewodros, who met with Cameron in October 1862, thought that the Turks were surrounding him from all sides and was planning to attack them, even thinking of sending emissaries to the European states to justify this attack.⁴³⁷ The British certainly did not want a conflict to occur on both sides.⁴³⁸ Charles Beke, who wrote a memorandum for Northern Abyssinia, also stated that the civil wars and conflicts damaged the trade in the region, and therefore it would be in their interest to strengthen the presence of the Turks on the coastline in order to prevent further disorder.⁴³⁹ However, those who prioritize the abolition of slavery, like Cameron, continue to reiterate the idea that the Turks should cede this place to the Ethiopian Empire bloodlessly due to Tewodros 's opposition to slavery.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, it was not possible to state that the British had a clear uniform policy towards the Ottoman-controlled coastline even in the 1860s. In addition to these, in June 1859, under the influence of British pressure, Sadrazam Ali Paşa ordered the governor of Jeddah to stop the slave trade in Massawa definitively. When compared with his previous predecessors on this subject, Pertev Efendi worked hard, according to Ottoman

⁴³⁶ Marston, 274.

⁴³⁷ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.343), Godjam, October 31, 1862. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 219.

⁴³⁸ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.343), Godjam, October 31, 1862. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 219-221.

⁴³⁹ Charles Tilstone Beke, *Dr. Beke to Sir J. Emerson Tennent (No.342), Bekesboume, November 3, 1862. Memorandum. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 213-214; Charles Tilstone Beke, *Dr. Beke to Sir J. Emerson Tennent (No.342), Bekesboume, November 3, 1862. Memorandum. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 215.

⁴⁴⁰ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.346), Godjam, November 1, 1862. Letter. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 226.

documents, mainly dealing with tribes and merchants who were behind this operation.⁴⁴¹

4.5. Final Years of the Ottomans in Massawa (1863-1865)

My fathers the Emperors having forgotten our Creator, he handed over their kingdom to the Gallas and Turks. But God created me, lifted me out of the dust, and restored this Empire to, my rule. He endowed me with power, and enabled me to stand in the place of my fathers. By his power I drove away the Gallas. But for the Turks, I have told them to leave the land of my ancestors. They refuse. I am now going to wrestle with them.⁴⁴²

The turmoil in Abyssinia was about to take a new turn, and interestingly, the Ottomans, whose territories were threatened by the Emperor, as can be seen from his letter to the Queen of the United Kingdom, would manage to stay out of it generally. Henry Bulwer, British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, started to receive complaints from Sublime Porte in September 1863, stating that the British consul Cameron was trying to convince Tewodros to lay a claim on the Habab region, North Coast of Massawa, where Ottomans stated that this region was a dependency of Ottoman Massawa for a very long time.⁴⁴³

Although Tewodros was interested in conquering back the coastline of Northern Ethiopia, he wanted to conquer Egypt. He had a belief that his realization of the Egyptian invasion, which he had been planning for years, would end the poverty of his people.⁴⁴⁴ However, a new phase of Abyssinian politics would bring

⁴⁴¹ Akalın and Parlaz, *XIX. Yüzyılda Doğu Afrika'da Osmanlılar ve İtalyanlar*, 102-104.

⁴⁴² Tewodros II, *King Theodore to Her Majesty the Queen (No.343.)*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 224-225.

⁴⁴³ Henry Bulwer, *Sir H. Bulwer to Earl Russell (No.367), Therapia, September 19, 1863*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 243; Mehmed Emin Ali Paşa, *Aali Pasha to Sir H. Bulwer (No.367), September 16, 1863*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 244.

⁴⁴⁴ Charles Duncan Cameron. *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.343), Godjam, October 31, 1862*. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 219.

his ultimate end. There were various revolts against the Emperor in Abyssinia for a while.⁴⁴⁵ During this period, he was trying to establish relations with Western states, as can be seen in the fragment of the letter above. However, in time he grew impatient, and he first arrested a British missionary and later the French vice-consul at Massawa in mid-1863.⁴⁴⁶ Finally, in January 1864, he had British consul Cameron arrested because he received reports from his officers about a possible attack from Egypt and got suspicious. This arrest started a process that led to the British expedition to Abyssinia of 1867-1868, or in other words, his permanent end.⁴⁴⁷

While the events in inner Abyssinia were concluding in this way, the Ottomans' control in Massawa was nearing its end as well. In the North of Massawa, in 1863, İsmail Paşa became the new governor of Egypt.⁴⁴⁸ İsmail, like Mehmed Ali, wanted to pursue aggressive policies to aggrandize his dynasty. His target was Abyssinia. While his soldiers and governor at Kassala continued to enslave people, which caused the British to complain to him,⁴⁴⁹ İsmail Paşa, like his grandfather, wanted to follow an aggressive policy and expand his dominance in the Red Sea. The governor, who was also aware of the Western interest in the Red Sea, wanted to use it.⁴⁵⁰ For the first time on December 26, 1864, İsmail Paşa formally asked Sultan

⁴⁴⁵ Guillaume Lejean, *Guillaume Lejean to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massawa, June 6, 1863*. Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2)*, 36.

⁴⁴⁶ Journal La France, *Correspondance particulière de M. Lejean, July 12, 1863*. Newspaper. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2)*, 040.

⁴⁴⁷ Colquhoun, Mr. *Colquhoun to Earl Russell (No.385), Cairo, January 23, 1864*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 254.

⁴⁴⁸ Carl F. Petry, M. W. Daly, and Robert F. Hunter, "Egypt under the successors of Muhammad Ali." in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: From 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 180-197, 187.

⁴⁴⁹ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Consul-General Colquhoun (No.362), Kadarif, Soudan, May 20, 1863*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 238-239.

⁴⁵⁰ Talhami, 20.

Abdülaziz to give the effective control of the ports of Suakin and Massawa to the Province of Egypt by writing a letter.⁴⁵¹ İsmail Paşa based his request on two main grounds. The first was that some of the Arab tribes affiliated with the Taka directorate in Sudan did not pay taxes by fleeing to Massawa or Suakin. Also, some tribes settled on the Abyssinian border and threatened the security of this region.⁴⁵² The second was the struggle against the Red Sea slave trade, which had been increasing since the 1860s.⁴⁵³ İsmail Paşa claimed that if control of these ports were given to him, he could contain the slave trade.⁴⁵⁴ Thereupon, Sultan Abdülaziz requested an investigation on this issue.⁴⁵⁵ The governor of Jeddah was asked to provide information on this issue. As in the case of Yemen before, the governor again opposed the idea. First of all, the governor stated that the Hejaz administration was more centralized than the Egyptian Administration and that it revived the region more economically.⁴⁵⁶ Most importantly, however, he claimed that the primary source of the slave trade was Egypt, not Massawa or Suakin.⁴⁵⁷ For this reason, İsmail Paşa sent a new letter to Sublime Porte to refute the claims of the governor of Jeddah. As a result of the negotiations, it was decided to connect these ports to Egypt for three years, contrary to İsmail Paşa's will, who wanted to obtain governorships of these two ports permanently.⁴⁵⁸ This event was made official with the edict

⁴⁵¹ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 96.

⁴⁵² Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 96.

⁴⁵³ Talhami, 27.

⁴⁵⁴ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 96.

⁴⁵⁵ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 55.

⁴⁵⁶ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 98-100.

⁴⁵⁷ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 100.

⁴⁵⁸ Mutahar, "Struggle for influence in the East African Coast and the Ottoman Empire: Example of Massawa.", 57-58.

written by Sultan Abdülaziz in May 1865, and the Ottoman Empire's direct rule at Massawa was ended forever.⁴⁵⁹

4.6. Conclusion

Until the political environment created by the Crimean War altered the Ottoman Red Sea strategies, the Ottomans continued to carry out plans which could prevent foreign agents from taking actions that expand their sphere of influence and, if possible, somehow remove them from this area. Although these policies of the bureaucrats of the Ottomans in the region drew criticism in every period they were implemented, the dose of complaints increased considerably when İbrahim Paşa replaced Mehmed Paşa. Due to İbrahim Paşa being the supreme authority in the only anchorable port of the whole of Abyssinia, he had a say in almost every product entering and leaving Abyssinia and especially caused difficulties for the European states who wanted to establish relations with Abyssinian princes or chieftains. However, the complaints about him, which intensified day by day, and the fact that the source of these complaints was the two allies of the Empire in the Crimean War, caused İbrahim Paşa to be dismissed. Emin Efendi, who was appointed as the new district governor, was sent to the region with definite orders to treat the consuls of the Ottoman allies very well and to fight the slave trade, which has become more prominent in recent years. Therefore for the first time, Ottoman policies, which were defined as a blockade by the British consul, were altered and softened. In the period when Emin Efendi was appointed as the district governor of Massawa, *Dejazmach* Kassa defeated all Abyssinian chiefs, united Northern Abyssinia under his rule, and

⁴⁵⁹ Nour, "The Anglo-Turkish Struggle on Suakin.", 102-103.

became the Emperor of Abyssinia under the name Tewodros II, who ended the interregnum period.

Although Emin Efendi's period was an era when complaints about the ill-treatment of the employees of European states, as requested, ceased to be received by Sublime Porte, however, contrary to the orders of Istanbul about the slave trade, instead of crusading against the enslavement of Christians, the district governor became an actor in it. Therefore, he was dismissed in 1858, and Pertev Efendi arrived at the Island as the new district governor. Pertev Efendi's appointment represented the second alteration in the Ottoman Abyssinia policies in the 1849-1865 period. During the Pertev Efendi governorship, the Ottomans engaged in an imperial race against the British and French elements in the region to enlarge their influence over the coast of Northern Abyssinia.

In the late 1850s, France was trying to become a major power in the region by increasing her influence in the Dahlak Islands and Danakil region by making alliances with the chieftains around Massawa. Observing the French officials, the Ottomans, with the effect of not being able to resort to violence, wanted to persuade the tribal chiefs in these regions by using the influence of the *Na'ib* to join their ranks and expanding the Ottoman presence on the coastline to counter the expansionist French policies.

On the other hand, the slave trade was still a major issue, and mainly the British were very discontented with its continuation. Although, during his district governorship, Pertev Efendi worked with Sublime Porte to restrict this trade, he was not successful in this regard. According to the new British consul, the slave trade

was more active than ever during the early 1860s.⁴⁶⁰ Yet, his district governance was very quiet in terms of ambassadorial complaints even though the British still thought that the Massawa authorities had unjustly intervened in the lands belonging to the Ethiopian Empire and continued to act inconsistently, especially in tax collection.⁴⁶¹ However, that was very normal in a place where the Ottomans, even in 1865, did not earn enough money to operate this place and also did not have pellucid borders.

In this period, although the Ottomans began to expand horizontally compared to previous years, as a result of the applications made since 1864 by the governor İsmail Paşa, who had plans for the Red Sea and Abyssinia, the two ports of the Habesh Eyalet were reconnected to Egypt as before, and the Ottoman presence there ended.

⁴⁶⁰ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Consul Cameron to Earl Russell (No.361), Gadarif, Soudan, May 18, 1863*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 237.

⁴⁶¹ Charles Duncan Cameron, *Council Cameron to Earl Russell (No.355), Bogos, Abyssinia, March 31, 1863*. Letter. *Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846-1868*, 234.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Abyssinian adventure of the Ottomans, which started with the conquest of Egypt by Selim I and continued with the descent of the Empire to the Red Sea, was a period that left important traces in today's Ethiopia and especially Eritrea. In this thesis, the 1849-1865 period of the city of Massawa, the only anchorable port of Northern Abyssinia, has been examined. Even during Özdemiş Paşa's conquest of Abyssinia, Massawa was the Ethiopian Empire's window to the world. Therefore, when Ottoman forces conquered the city along the coastline of the Ethiopian Empire in the late 1550s, the Ottomans gained the power to intervene in almost all of Abyssinia's interactions with the rest of the world. However, the Ottomans were able to maintain this influence only for a few decades. Starting from the late sixteenth century, Istanbul's influence began to wane in Habesh Province and throughout the Empire in general. As a result of this, as in other parts of the Empire, the central authority in Habesh Province and its cities weakened, and intermediaries began to come to the fore. In Massawa's case, this meant the beginning of the rise of the *Na'ib* family in both Massawan and Ethiopian Politics. In the late sixteenth century early, or early seventeenth century this family took over the control of their

home, Arkiko, from the sultan and started to serve as the *Sancakbeyi* of Arkiko, which increased their influence in the Massawa. In 1701, after the declaration of the decree which unified Habesh and Jeddah Provinces further strengthened decentralization, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the city of Massawa and its periphery had almost no ties left with the capital, except for the *berat*, which the *Na'ibs* obtained from the sultan. However, in the nineteenth century, the effects of the centralization efforts that began in the reign of Mahmud II in the Empire, and more importantly, with Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa taking control of Egypt and becoming the governor of the province, turned the tide of events and commenced a process which would end the dominance of the *Na'ibs* at Massawa. Over the years, Mehmed Ali Paşa controlled Massawa through his children, thanks to the Wahhabi War. In the period starting from 1813, when Tosun Paşa was the governor of Hejaz, the influence of *Na'ib* in the city began to diminish gradually, with the appointment of permanent officers and district governors to Massawa, especially from 1818 onwards, by İbrahim Paşa, until the ratification of Convention of London. In 1840, Sublime Porte, which regained effective control of Massawa years later, tried to work to strengthen the central authority, just like the Egyptians. In the continuation of this process, Mehmed Ali Paşa, who retook control of Massawa in 1846, sent an army under the command of the new district governor İsmail Hakkı Paşa to Massawa in the summer of 1847 to permanently annihilate the *Na'ibs*. Accordingly, by attacking Arkiko and building a fort in the city, the Egyptian Army unintentionally prepared the perfect environment for the establishment of a regime under the direct control of the Sublime Porte. Now the *Na'ibs* were not a threat to the new centralized administration to be established at Massawa; however, unlike many other examples of Ottoman efforts of centralization, the *Na'ibs* allowed to

continue to exist as agents of the Ottomans at Massawa and helped them to implement their policies by military, political and economical means.

After Mehmed Ali Paşa's death, the Ottomans regained control of Massawa officially in 1849 and suddenly found themselves in a rather complicated sequence of events. On the one hand, France and Britain wanted to get involved in the politics of Abyssinia with the consulates they opened in Massawa; on the other hand, there were the Abyssinian princes and chieftains who were devouring each other during the interregnum period had been going on for years. While both foreign and Abyssinian powers could pose a threat to the Ottoman presence in Abyssinia, an alliance between some actors could create even worse problems. Knowing these, the Ottomans took some measures to prevent such occurrences.

Abyssinian princes or chieftains would want to occupy Massawa and the coastline of Northern Abyssinia to access the Red Sea, however, the lack of modern weapons and the ongoing civil strife in Abyssinia prevented them from waging war against the Ottomans of Northern Abyssinia. If any of the belligerents of this interregnum managed to make an alliance with the Western nations and access to modern weapons, that would change the course of events and might end the Ottoman presence on the coast of Northern Abyssinia permanently. Being aware of these facts, the Ottomans tried to preserve the status quo in the region. This policy was pursued primarily by preventing the passage of modern weapons from Massawa and pressuring European agents in various ways. Accordingly, as clearly written in the instruction given to Mehmed Paşa, the first district governor the Empire sent to the region by the sultan after many years, Sublime Porte did not want the Europeans to purchase land in Ottoman Abyssinia and wanted the works of European missionaries

and diplomats to be monitored and limited. Sublime Porte even demanded the Europeans in and around Massawa to be expelled from the region without resorting to violence and ensuring the functioning of the trade. Accordingly, Mehmed Paşa and İbrahim Paşa, who served in Massawa in the first half of the 1850s, imposed various restrictions on the actions of the French and British missionaries and diplomats, tried to send these people away from the region, did not allow arms trade, and as a result, these foreign agents started to complain to Istanbul about the behavior of the district governors of Massawa.

Until about 1855, despite intense grievances from Western diplomats, Ottoman officials continued to implement these policies in Massawa combined, which were referred to as a blockade by the British consul Plowden. However, with the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853, eventually, the Ottomans were forced to soften their policies against their two allies, France and the United Kingdom. Although it was very clear from the documents of these two states that there had been an improvement in the attitudes of the Ottoman bureaucrats in the region towards the Europeans, Western diplomats were still unhappy due to various reasons. For example, the slave trade, which was at the top of the complaints of the British, continued to be exercised with the involvement of the Ottoman administration and was almost only source of income for Massawa Island. British complaints lead to dismissal of new district governor Emin Efendi who was alleged to take part in slave trade in 1858 and Pertev Efendi was appointed in his place in 1858. In fact, despite the Sultan's prohibition and precise instructions given to the district governors sent to Massawa, the slave trade in the city still continued even in 1865, when Massawa was ceded back to Egypt.

With the advent of Pertev Efendi, there was another major alteration in the Ottoman policies in Massawa as in 1855. As discussed before, at first, the Ottomans tried to restrict the Europeans in the region to prevent them from establishing relations with Abyssinia or causing any occurrence that could endanger Ottoman presence. Later, these policies were softened by the political environment created by the Crimean War. However, in the late 1850s, especially with the French started to plant their own flags by making agreements with tribes in some regions in Abyssinia, mobilized the Ottomans, and pushed them to compete against the French in this imperial race. Although the Ottoman administration in Massawa previously claimed sovereignty over many regions, resources, and tribes along the coastline and even actually collected taxes from people living in these territories, the Ottoman presence has never been formalized in regions other than Massawa and Arkiko. However, during Pertev Efendi's district governorship, directorates were established in places such as Danakil, and the Ottomans managed to make their presence official in order to prevent expansionism of any Western nation in the coast of Abyssinia, shortly before İsmail Paşa's obtainment the control of the city.

In the end, the 1849-1865 period in Massawa, which this thesis focused on, can be basically described as an era of a regime that employed its power of controlling the only anchorable port in the entire Abyssinia to maintain and prolong the Ottoman existence in the Western Coast of the Red Sea through limiting activities of others. Although this situation seems to be exercising the sovereignty rights in their own lands from the Ottoman perspective, for the other characters in this story thought otherwise. The Ottoman presence and policies on the coast were quite clear, a blockade that tried to prevent all kinds of development and change.

Essentially, that was what the Ottoman administration in Massawa between 1849 to 1865 was.

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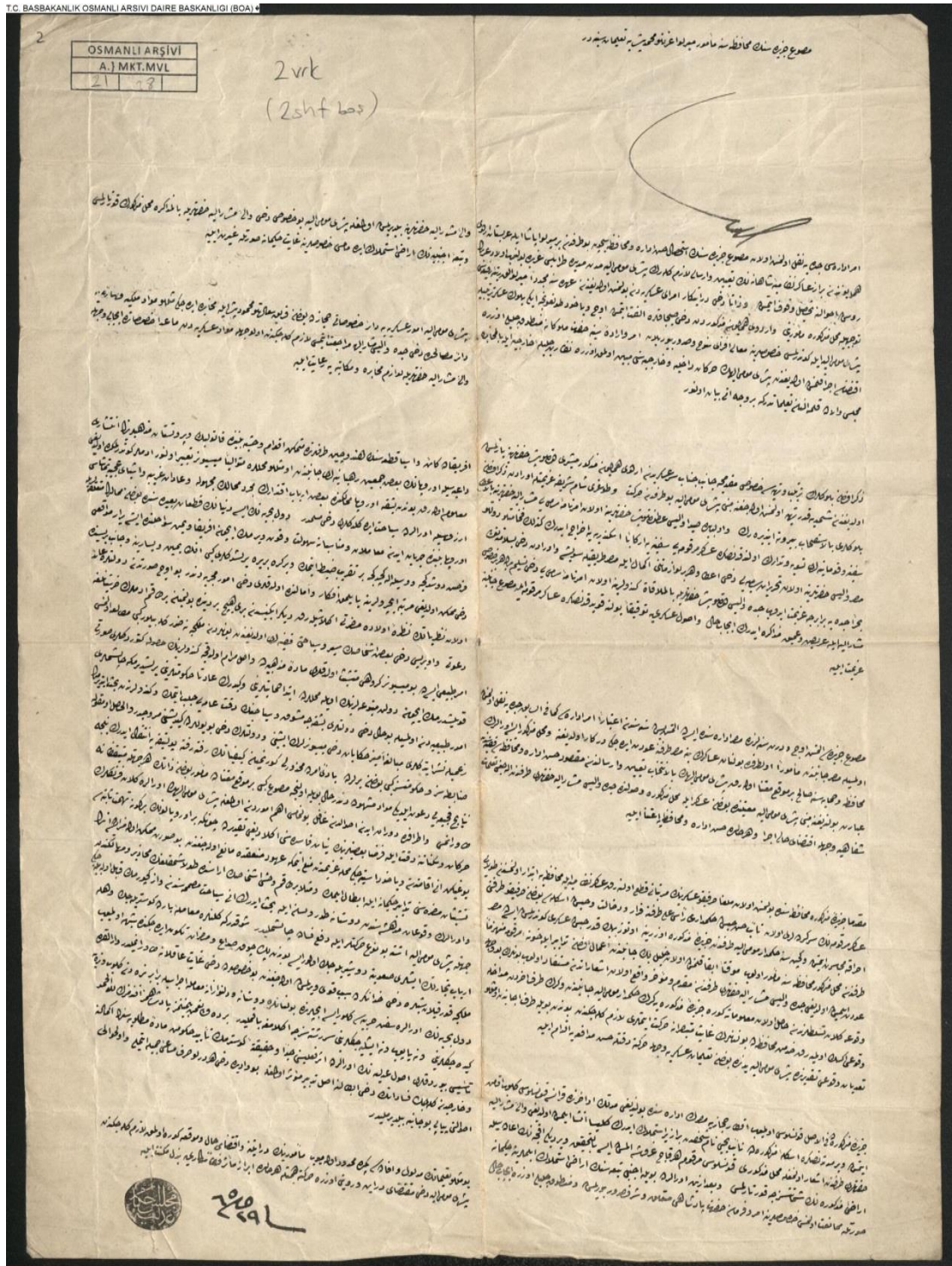
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Appendix B: Instruction given to Mirliva Mehmed Paşa, who was appointed as the governor of Massawa.



A.MKT.MVL.00021.00038.001

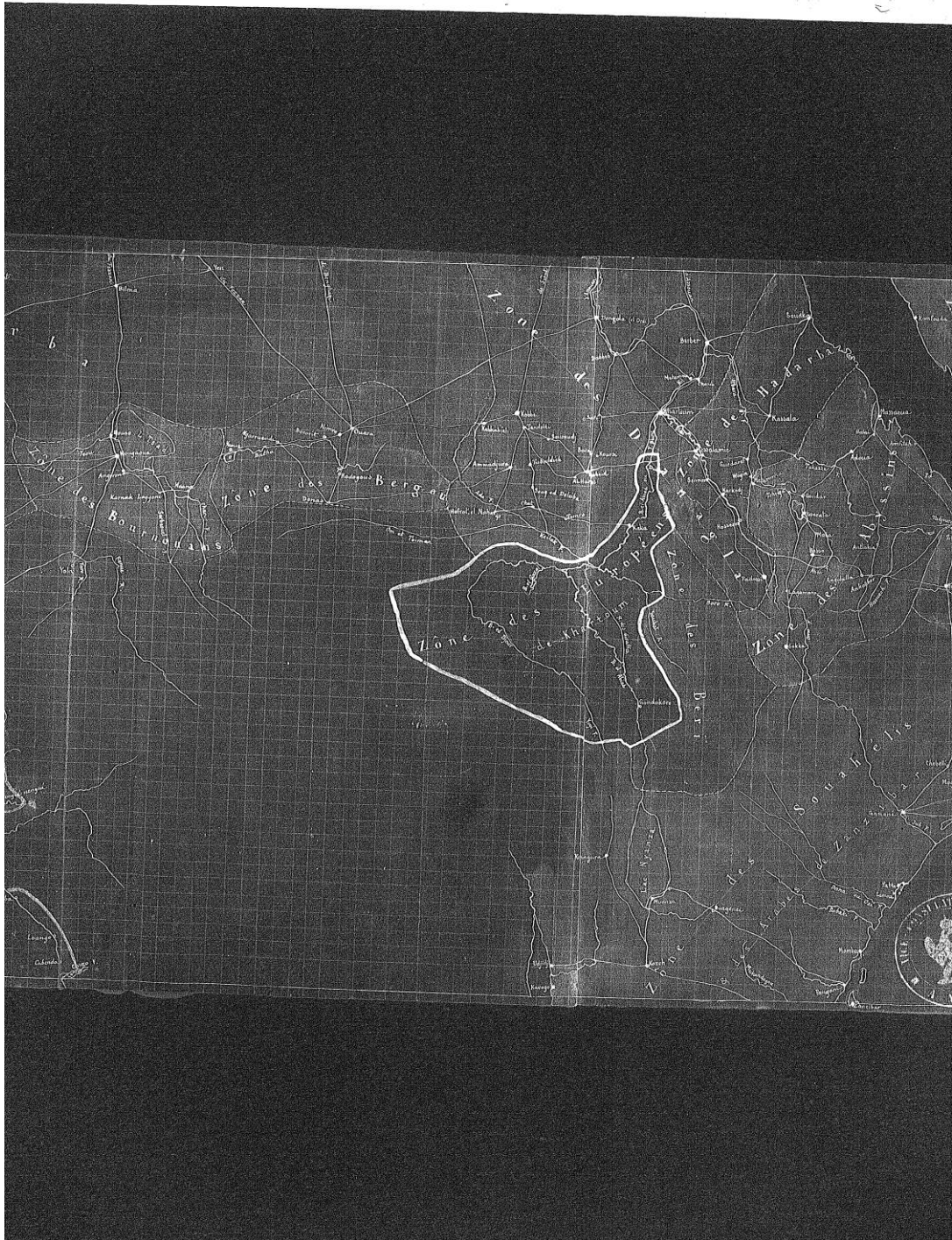
Source: BOA, A.MKT.MVL. 21/38.

Appendix C: This record shows that Özdemir Paşa was appointed to Suakin, today considered as the founding document of Habesh Eyalet.

روز و مور پاشا به ولایت قسطنطنیه و روز کرم نور محمدی ادرین
سواکنف ز لهد بعد از این در صبط اید و در این روز
سوزیدن سواکنف و لهد

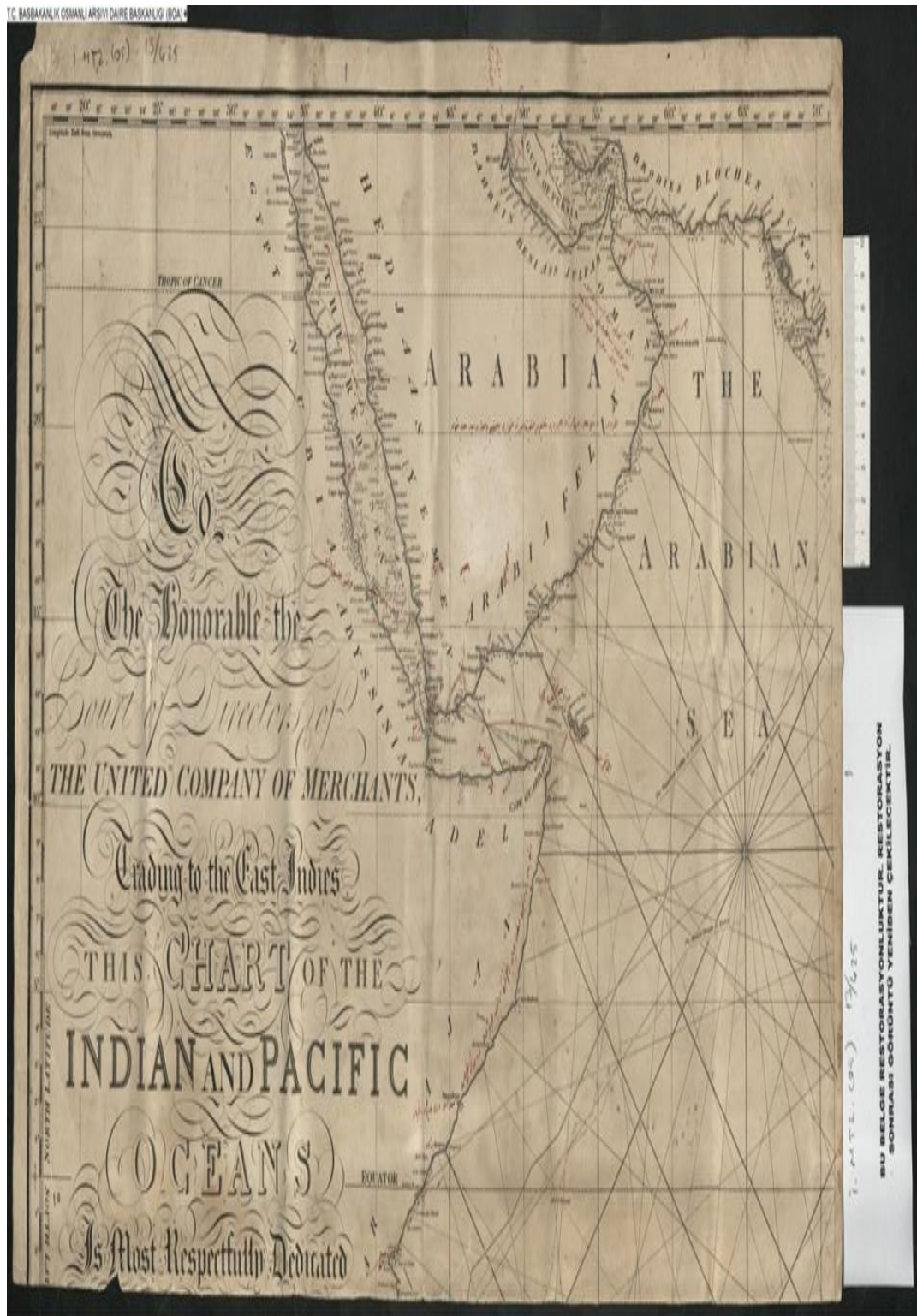
Source: BOA, KK., 213, p. 212.

Appendix D: A Map of the Red Sea from the French Archives.



Source: *A Sketch of the Commercial Divisions of Equatorial Africa*. Map. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve. *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale Massouah Volume 2, 1860-1885. (195CCC/2), 049.*

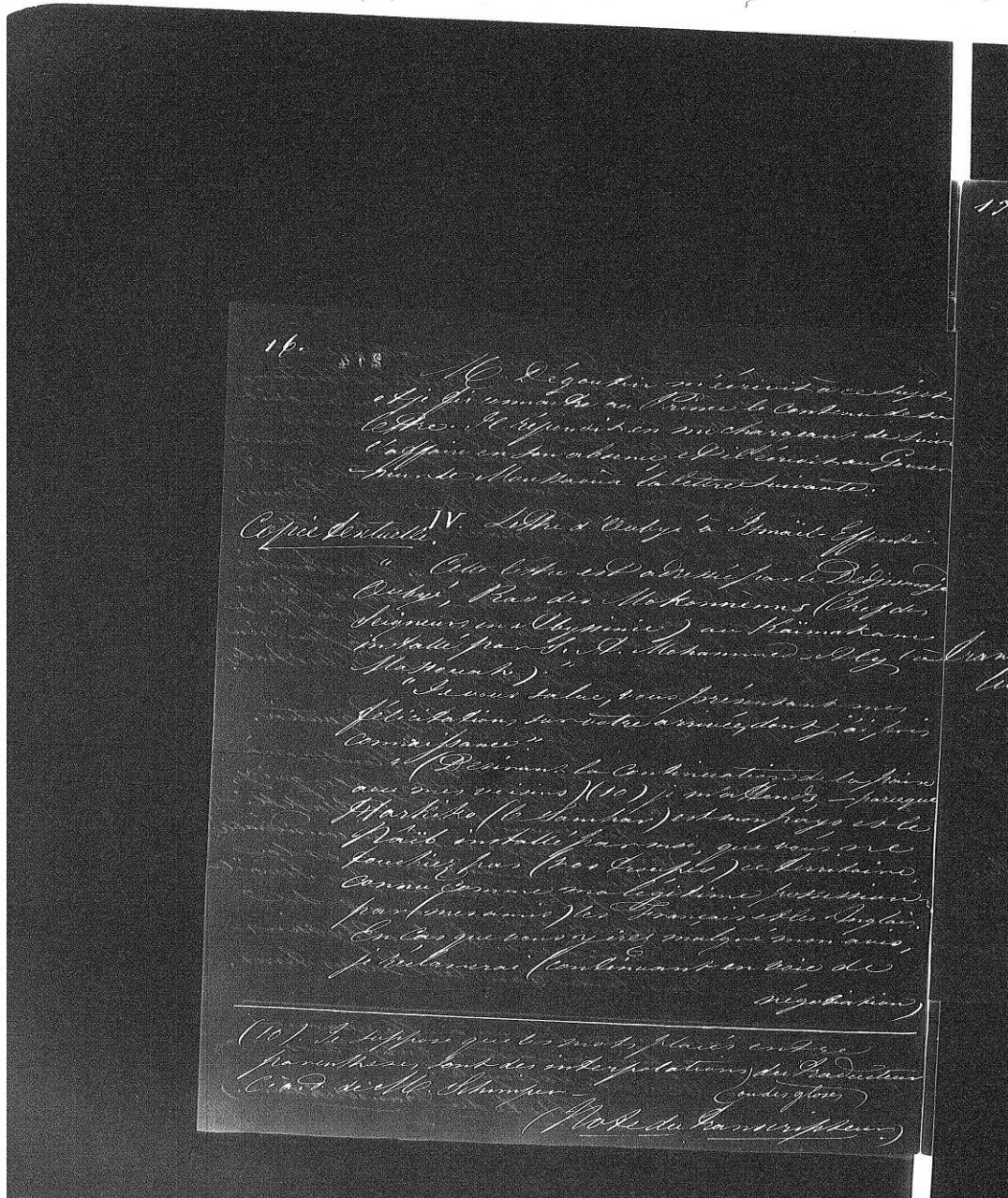
Appendix E: A Map of the Red Sea from the Ottoman Archives.



Source: BOA, İ.MTZ.(05). 13/425.

Appendix G: The letter written by *Dejazmach* Wube to District Governor

İsmail Efendi



Source: Haile Maryam Oubie, *Oubie to Ismael Efendi, Adowa, April 15, 1847.*

Letter. France, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve.

Correspondence politique des consuls Egypte-Massouah Volume 1, 1840-1853.

(14CPC/1), 215.