

Preface

The background and aim of the series *Acta Aethiopica* was explained by Sven Rubenson, the editor of the series, in the preface and introduction to the first volume, *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854*, published by Addis Ababa University Press and Northwestern University Press in 1987. Co-editors of the first volume were Getatchew Haile, Collegette, and John Hunwick, Evanston. The second volume, *Tewodros and His Contemporaries 1855–1868*, was published in 1994 by Addis Ababa University Press, with the Lund University Press of those days – a scheme of collaboration between various Lund University departments and the academic publisher Studentlitteratur – as co-publisher, and the third volume, *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869–1879*, by Addis Ababa University Press and Transaction Publishers/Rutgers University. These two volumes were co-edited by Amsalu Aklilu, Addis Abeba and Hamburg, Merid Wolde Aregay, Addis Abeba, and Samuel Rubenson, Lund. Sadly, the first two of them passed away in the subsequent years.

This volume, the fourth in the series, was prepared by Sven Rubenson with Amsalu Aklilu and myself as co-editors, but owing to health issues publication was delayed, and when Sven Rubenson passed away in 2013 the material was left in an unfinished state. It was only when Shiferaw Bekele offered to assist me as co-editor that I was finally able to finish the work. I am also deeply grateful to Wolbert Smidt and Marianne Thormählen who have both read the entire volume and contributed numerous corrections at the last stage.

As with previous volumes, many colleagues have shared their skills and knowledge with us as we have dealt with the archival research; with Arabic and Ethiopian philology; and with details of biography, history and geography. Hussein Ahmed, Ezra Gebremedhin, Fisseha Mekuria, Tekeste Negash, Kjell Norlin, Kevin O'Mahoney and Richard Pankhurst are but a few of the many who have assisted us in various ways and deserve to be mentioned with gratitude. Special thanks are due to Jocelyne Girgis who translated most of the Arabic documents. Where several translations are possible, or at least seem to be so, the final choice has been made largely on contextual grounds. It is thus only fair that I accept the ultimate responsibility for any shortcomings of the volume, linguistic as well as historical.

Also, as with previous volumes, special thanks are due to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, to the *Conservateur en Chef* of the diplomatic archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to the authorities of the archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Archives of Egypt, as well as to the librarians and keepers of all other archives concerned, for their kind permission to have documents in their possession published in *Acta Aethiopica*. Our gratitude goes to librarians and archivists who have generously assisted us in our search in Cairo and Jerusalem, in Athens and Rome, in Paris, London, Stockholm, Moscow and St. Petersburg. They are too many to be listed by name. The generous financial aid of the Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) as well as of *Riksbankens Jubileumsfond* is acknowledged with deep gratitude.

Lund in October 2020
Samuel Rubenson