

UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE  
DIPARTIMENTO ASIA, AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO

Studi Africanistici

Serie Etiopica

12

# NEGOTIATING POWER IN IMPERIAL ETHIOPIA

## WALLAGGA, 1890s–1930s A HISTORY IN DOCUMENTS

Edited by

ALESSANDRO TRIULZI

ETANA HABTE DINKA

TESEMA TA'A



UniorPress



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## FOREWORD

This volume constitutes the completion of a thirty year-long research done into an exceptional dossier of Amharic documents. To this scientific journey, promoted and for decades sustained by Alessandro Triulzi with inexhaustible energy, many people have contributed, and of this the reader will find exhaustive illustration in the introductory essays. Here we want to limit ourselves to expressing and justifying the satisfaction of the members of the steering committee of this series, since the editors of the book wanted to hand over to us the publication of a book that fulfills an ancient promise and realizes an old project.

At the University of Naples L'Orientale, the complex cultural articulation of ancient and modern Ethiopia, inclusive of its eastern and western lowlands, has always received due attention, alongside the 'classical' studies focusing on the languages and the cultures of the highlands, predominantly inhabited by communities of Christian religion. It is no coincidence that the volume from which this also flows, that of Alessandro Triulzi and Tesema Ta'a (eds), **የወሊጋ የታሪክ ሰነዶች ከ1880ዎቹ እስከ 1920ዎቹ**, was published in 2004 jointly by the Department of History of Addis Ababa University and the Department of Studies and Research on Africa and Arab Countries of the University of Naples L'Orientale. That collaboration was one expression of the need, felt by both academic institutions at the end of the last century, in Italy as in Ethiopia, to preserve local historical sources. And it is no coincidence that financial backing for that project was provided by the Italian Cooperation.

Twenty years after the documents were published in the Amharic language, the English translation now arrives, an event of great significance that will certainly enliven scholarly debate about birth and development of modern Ethiopia. To frame the importance of this documentation, covering the forty-year period 1890–1930, suffice it to consider that it is currently a unique source for the history of a province of pre-1991 Western Ethiopia, the Wälläga (Wallaggaa), bordered by Goğgam, Ilubabor, Šäwa and Sudan, and now part of the regional state of Oromia. It is precisely the historian of modern Ethiopia who is primarily addressed by this publication, which offers a wealth of material for new and deeper reflections.

Therefore, we are grateful to the editors of this volume and to all those who contributed to its production, for their great effort and its relevant results. In particular, one of the three scholars, Alessandro Triulzi, was a co-founder of the series “Studi Africanistici. Serie Etiopica”, and a teacher for generations of Ethiopian scholars at the University of Naples L’Orientale. For this reason, too, it is not possible to hide the considerable symbolic value inherent in the fact that his most recent work is now being published here, underscoring continuity and persistence of an important tradition of scholarship.

Gianfrancesco Lusini