

## **Italy**

We Italians have been exploring land in Africa since the 1870s. In 1880 we took over a Red Sea port and began moving north. In 1882 we officially claimed the area and send our Italian missionaries and explorers to Africa. We have plans to expand all along the Red Sea coast, and have already taken some land and the port of Massawa from the Egyptians. We will work with King Menelek of Ethiopia to sign treaties that will place both Ethiopia and Eritrea in Italian control. This treaty will offer “mutual protection” between us and Menelek. We need the French to stay out of this business, and refrain from selling weapons to King Menelek, or any African chief for that matter.

We also plan on taking over Eritrea, capturing Kassala and taking over Sudan, colonizing the Somalia coast. We are happy to work with Britain to arrange the specific borders between our colony and hers.

### **Berlin Conference Italy Speech: Instructions to students**

On \_\_\_\_\_ you will be participating in a mock-Berlin Conference. The real conference was held in 1884, and it decided which European countries got to rule over which parts of Africa. No Africans were invited to the Berlin Conference. You will read about Italian claims to Africa and then give a speech about those claims.

#### **Reading and Speech preparation**

Answer the following questions in your notebook, using complete sentences. Be sure you thoroughly understand the questions/answers, because your speech must include information from each question.

1. How long has Italy been exploring and colonizing Africa? What have they accomplished in Africa?
2. What lands does Italy claim?
3. What lands have Italy taken from the Egyptians?
4. How does Italy plan on working with King Menelek II, of Ethiopia? How is France involved?
5. How is Italy going to work with Great Britain to establish borders?

#### **Berlin Conference Speech and Participation**

Write a speech to give during the Berlin Conference.

- Your speech must be in first person (“We Italians explored...”)
- Your speech must be at least one minute long (no longer than 5 minutes)
- Your speech must include information from each question
- Your speech must include at least one quote (use “quotations”) from *Partition of Africa*

#### **Speech:**

- Speak so everybody in the room can hear you
- Use eye contact, gestures, and your voice to engage others in your speech
- Take turns speaking during the general debate.

#### **During the Berlin Conference:**

- Listen to all speeches, but non-verbally react as someone from your country would react to each speech
- Only speak when it is your turn, or during general debate time.
- Complete the “Berlin Conference” worksheet throughout the Berlin Conference.

#### **Map: Draw in the areas that Portugal claims**



## Italy: Speech guide

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We need the French to stay out of this business, and refrain from selling weapons to King Menelek, or any African chief for that matter. We are a little worried about King Menelek because

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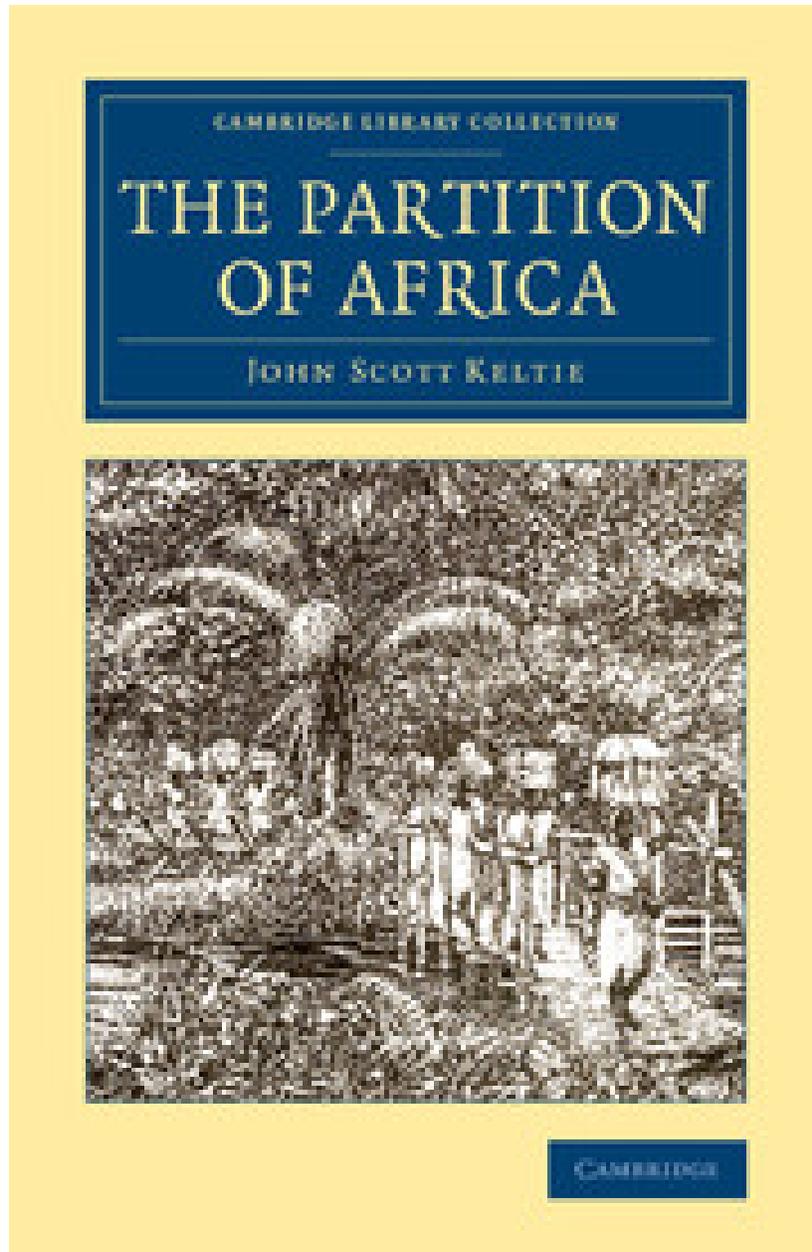
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We also plan on taking over Eritrea, capturing Kassala and taking over Sudan, colonizing the Somalia coast. We are happy to work with Britain to arrange the specific borders between our colony and hers.

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Relevant pages included here

# Italy

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE ITALIAN SPHERE AND THE EGYPTIAN SUDAN

Italy occupies Assab Bay—Massawa—Hostilities with Abyssinia—Treaty with Abyssinia—Colony of Eritrea—Italy captures Kassala—Annexations on the Somali coast—Italian relations with the British East Africa Company—Italy's position in Africa—The Egyptian Sudan—Baggara Arabs—Wadai,

IT will only be necessary to deal briefly with the advance of Italy in Africa since the Berlin Congress, while the position in the abandoned Egyptian Sudan has remained practically unchanged so far as European influences are concerned. As was the case with Germany, Italy very soon after it became a united kingdom sought to obtain possessions abroad. So long ago as 1875 Italian vessels were hovering around Sokotra, and compelled England to step in and place her Imperial stamp upon the island. Tripoli was for a time a sore temptation also to the young kingdom on the other side of the Mediterranean, but fear of complications with France and Turkey induced her to keep her hands off. We have seen that, although in 1870 a spot in Assab Bay, just inside the Red Sea, was purchased as a coaling station, it was not till 1880 that the Italian Government even nominally took it over. From this as a starting-point the Italian possessions in the Red Sea spread northwards. Southwards they could

Italy occupies Assab Bay.

go no farther than Raheita, as the French station of Obock barred the way. It was not until July 1882 that the Italian Government took actual possession of the territory and bay of Assab. Italian explorers and Italian missionaries had been active in this part of Africa for years. Until 1885 Italy's footing in the Red Sea hardly extended beyond Assab; but in that year, taking advantage of Egypt's difficulties with the Mahdists, she took possession of Beilul and of the important port of Massawa, the Egyptian garrison of the latter being compelled to quit. These steps were taken with the connivance if not the approval of England. Had Italy not taken and held Massawa, it might have fallen into the hands of the Mahdists. Italian domination rapidly extended all along the coast, so that by 1888 it reached from Cape Kasar, south of Suakim, on the north, to the French colony of Obock in the south, some 650 miles.

Hostilities  
with  
Abyssinia.

These advances on the part of Italy were not regarded, as may be believed, with anything like complacency by King John of Abyssinia. The hostile action of the latter led to what was really a war between the Italian garrison and the Abyssinian army; at Dogali, in January 1887, an Italian force was almost annihilated. But this did not prevent Italy from adhering to what she had gained, and attempting to push her influence into the interior. After the death of King John, the interior posts of Keren and Asmara were occupied, as well as other places not far from the coast, but giving command of the routes to the lofty tableland. King John was succeeded by Menelek,

King of Shoa, who showed some inclination to establish friendly relations with the Italians. By an agreement of May 1889, confirmed and renewed in October of the same year, a treaty of "mutual protection" was entered into between Menelek and Umberto I., King of Italy. This was naturally regarded as in effect placing Abyssinia under the protection of Italy, though on more than one occasion since Menelek has formally repudiated any such interpretation, the protection he maintains being as much on his side as on that of Italy. As a matter of fact the Italian protectorate of Abyssinia is of the most nominal and shadowy character, and may possibly vanish even in name if the French influence continues to extend from the south as it has been recently doing. It is well known that Abyssinia has been supplied with arms and ammunition by France ; that French agents have been promoting French interests at the court of King Menelek ; and it is stated on good authority that wells are being dug from the French colony of Obock to meet a similar line of wells from Abyssinia eastwards. Russia has also manifested an interest in Abyssinia, and no doubt if it suited her purpose that interest might result in action. In the beginning of 1895 a Russian expedition, nominally for exploration, left Europe for the French section of Obock, whence, with the approval, if not support, of France, it is to make its way into Abyssinia. It is only at a few points on the coast, and those referred to in the near interior, that the influence of Italy is actually felt. By various decrees in 1890 and 1891 the Italian possessions on the Red Sea have been constituted into the

Treaty  
with  
Abyssinia.

Colony of  
Eritrea.

colony of Eritrea, with an autonomous administration and the management of its own finances. These, however, have to be subsidised by Italy, which spent over five millions sterling on her Red Sea colonies between 1887 and 1892. The area of the territory strictly included in Eritrea is not more than 52,000 square miles, while that of the so-called protectorate of Abyssinia is about 195,000 square miles, including Shoa, Kaffa, Harrar, and other places claimed by King Menelek.

Italy  
captures  
Kassala.

In July 1894, owing to the threatening attitude of the Dervish forces at Kassala on the north-west frontier of Abyssinia, a large Italian force proceeded from the Italian post at Keren, thoroughly defeated the Dervishes and captured Kassala. By an arrangement with England in March 1891, Italy was permitted to occupy Kassala if necessary for military purposes, only, however, on condition that it would be temporary, and that she should give it up whenever Egypt was in a position to take it over. The immense advantages to Italy of occupying the frontier post is evident; moreover, it may prove of great advantage when the time comes for Egypt or England or both to make an attempt to free the Egyptian Sudan from the thraldom of the Mahdists. The position of Italy in Kassala has naturally provoked the hostility of the Dervishes, and the result may be that the Italians will in self-defence be compelled to enter upon a campaign which might end in Khartum. This Italy could hardly undertake single-handed. Moreover, the success of the Italians has excited the active hostility of King Menelek of Abyssinia, so that between the Dervishes on the one

side and the Abyssinians on the other, the resources of Italy in money and men are likely to be strained.

But Italy was not content with securing a position on the Red Sea. Since she could not obtain Sokotra, she turned her attention to the barren coast opposite on the African mainland, inhabited by the fiercely independent nomads, the Somalis and Gallas. In February 1889 the Sultan of Obbia or Oppia, on the Somali coast, between  $5^{\circ} 33'$  north latitude and  $2^{\circ} 30'$  north latitude, placed his Sultanate under the protection of Italy. In April of the same year the Italian sphere was extended to the country between  $5^{\circ} 33'$  north latitude and  $8^{\circ} 3'$  north latitude by treaty with the Sultan of the Mijertine Somalis, who at the same time bound himself to make no treaty with any other Power regarding the rest of his territory. On the other side, in November 1889, the Somali coast from the Sultanate of Obbia to the mouth of the Jub River ( $0^{\circ} 15'$  S. lat.) was declared to be within the sphere of Italy

Here was a stretch of some 800 miles of coast, with vague extension inwards, added with wonderful rapidity to Italy's "foreign possessions." It apparently did not concern her that the coast was little better than a sandy waste; she had a vague idea that somehow it might be a convenient back door to Abyssinia and Shoa, all the more if the Jub River were found to be a practicable waterway. At the mouth of the river the Italian sphere and the British sphere overlapped. As the Sultan of Zanzibar had ceded to the British Company his territory as far north as Warsheikh, beyond the mouth of the Jub, Italy obviously claimed what already be-

Annexation of the Somali coast.

Italian relations with the British East Africa Company.

longed to another Power. However, the two Powers found no difficulty in coming to an understanding. The British Company very readily conceded all its claims on the coast to the north of the Jub, on the understanding that Italy would not be too exacting as to the delimitation between the spheres of the two Powers in the interior. When, however, it came to actual negotiations, Italy showed but little disposition to minimise her claims. The boundary between the spheres of the two Powers was settled by agreement (March 1891). The line ascends the channel of the Jub River from its mouth to 6° north latitude, instead of to 8° as was understood would be the case in the preliminary negotiations with the Company. It then follows the 6th parallel as far as 35° east longitude, that meridian forming the boundary between the British and Italian spheres up to the Blue Nile. In Somaliland and Gallaland this gives to Italy an area of 355,000 square miles, on which it is estimated there is a scanty population of one and a half million. The whole area claimed by Italy in Africa is over 600,000 square miles. To the west her Abyssinian protectorate is bounded by the former Egyptian Sudan, the limits here being somewhat indefinite.

A further delimitation between the British and Italian spheres in Somaliland was made by agreement between the two countries 5th May 1894. The British protectorate in Somaliland dates from 1884, in which year Great Britain occupied Berbera, Bulhar and Zaila. By an Order in Council dated 19th September 1889, a protectorate was proclaimed over the whole coast from Ras Jibuti on the Gulf of Tajura to Bandar Ziyada.