

# Religious Controversies and the Growth of Ethiopic Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

by

GETATCHEW HAILE

## Introduction

Thanks to the works of Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob (1434-1468) and to the study of them by A. Dillmann<sup>1</sup>, K. Wendt<sup>2</sup>, Conti Rossini<sup>3</sup> and E. Cerulli<sup>4</sup>, we now have a fairly good knowledge about the literary situation in fifteenth century Ethiopia. The contents of the writings of Zär'a Ya'eqob, notably the *Mäṣḥafä bərhan*, the *Mäṣḥafä milad* and a substantial part of the collection of the miracles of the Blessed Virgin, the *Tä'ammärä Maryam*, show clearly that religious controversies were the main reasons for the growth of Gə'ez literature in the fifteenth century, in translation as well as in original composition. There is convincing evidence that disagreements in interpreting scriptural passages resulted in the production of "refutative" literature, *därsanat*, also prior to the days of Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob. The texts studied so far, however, have been those that were presumably composed by representatives of the established Church. As a result, we know very little about the dissidents or the "heretics" and their literature, especially from

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<sup>1</sup> A. Dillmann, "Über die Regierung, insbesondere die Kirchenordnung des Königs Zar'a-Jacob", *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philos-histor. Cl. Abh. 11, Berlin 1884.

<sup>2</sup> K. Wendt, *Das Maṣḥafa Milād (Liber Nativitatis) und Maṣḥafa Sellāsē (Liber Trinitatis) des Kaisers Zar'a Yā'qob*, CSCO, vols. 221, 222, 235, 236, *script. aeth.*, t. 41-44 (1962-3); *id.*, "Das Maṣḥafa Berhān und Maṣḥafa Milād", *Orientalia*, N.S. vol. 3 (1934), pp. 1-30, 247-173, and 259-293; *id.*, "Die theologischen Auseinandersetzungen in der äthiopischen Kirche zur Zeit der Reformen des XV. Jahrhunderts", *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome 1960, pp. 137-146; *id.*, "Der Kampf um den Kanon Heiliger Schriften in der äthiopischen Kirche der Reformen des XV. Jahrhunderts", *JSS*, vol. 9 (1964), Amsterdam 1969, pp. 107-113.

<sup>3</sup> C. Conti Rossini, "Il libro di re Zar'a Yā'qob sulla Custodia del Mistero", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, vol. 3 (1943), pp. 148-166; Conti Rossini col concorso di L. Ricci, *Il libro della luce del Negus Zar'a Yā'qob (Maṣḥafa Berhān)* part I, CSCO, (text): vol. 250, *script. aeth.*, t. 47 (1964) and (tr.): vol. 251, *script. aeth.*, t. 51 (1965) and (tr.): vol. 262, *script. aeth.*, t. 52 (1965).

<sup>4</sup> Enrico Cerulli, *Il libro etiopico dei Miracoli di Maria e le sue fonti nella letteratura del Medio Evo latino*, Rome 1943.



### The "Qäleməntos"

The study begins with a quotation from the *Māṣḥafā māṣṭir*, ascribed to Giyorgis Säglawi, as preserved in microfilms of two late fifteenth century manuscripts. It is taken from the reading designated for the feast of the Transfiguration, *Däbrä Tabor*, the treatise against the Sadducees who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> The theological treatises of the Zāmika'elites edited and translated by Enrico Cerulli, *Scritti teologici etiopici dei secoli XVI-XVII*, (Studi e testi, no. 198), Vatican City 1958, were composed many generations later. For the literature on the Ἀστίφανοσιτες, another dissident group of the fifteenth century, see Taddesse Tamrat, "Some Notes on the Fifteenth Century Stephanite 'Heresy' in the Ethiopian Church", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, vol. 12 (1966), pp. 103-115; and Robert Beylot, "Un épisode de l'histoire ecclésiastique de l'Éthiopie. Le mouvement Stéphanite. Essai sur sa chronologie et sa doctrine", *Annales d'Éthiopie*, vol. 8 (1962), pp. 103-116.

<sup>6</sup> A closer look at the *Māṣāḥafā barhan* clearly shows that its author has consulted a wealth of theological works including some not yet known to us as having existing in Gə'əz in the fifteenth century. The editors, however, failed to locate most of the quotations from the extra-canonical scriptures, including the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Book of Maccabees*.

<sup>7</sup> EMMML [= Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa/Collegeville, Minnesota] 6837 (ff. 156v-157r), copied during the reign of ʾĒskāndār (1478-1494); and EMMML 6456 (ff. 121r-122r), copied during the reign of Naʾod (1494-1508). Since EMMML 6837 is a better copy, my English translation of the quotation is based on it, with all relevant variants of EMMML 6456 taken into account. The top inner Corners of EMMML 6837 are damaged; the manuscript escaped the invasion of Graññ, apparently, by being buried in the ground. Other quotations from the *Mäṣḥafä məstir* are taken either from EMMML 6456 or EMMML 1831, also a late fifteenth century manuscript. The *Mäṣḥafä məstir* has not been published. The edition was apparently, prepared by Conti Rossini; see *Aethiops*, year 1, no. 1, January 1922, n. 1, p. 2. On *Abba Giyorgis*, the apparent author of this famous work, see Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 222-225.



Furthermore, I have found a story which is pertinent for the celebration of this feast: I met an Armenian priest whom I asked, saying, "Which Apostle preached in your country"? He answered me saying, "Actually Peter and Paul visited it, but the faith was established by the preaching of Luke the Evangelist". I asked him again, saying, "Do you put salt and oil in your Eucharist as the Syrian eucharistic custom demands"? He answered, saying, "We do not offer as oblation save bread of pure wheat and a cup of wine mixed with water, as Our Lord mixed wine and water and gave it to his disciples". Then I asked him, saying, "Is there (any reference) in your books that reports that the Apostles put salt and oil in their Eucharist"? The Armenian priest was pleased that I continued (my) inquiry about the rite of the Mystery. He took out of his pocket a book which tells the story of the pure Apostles. He opened the book, which was written in Armenian, and started to inform me by reading it first and then translating it for me. He said to me: "Since Our Lord gave his disciples on the night he was going to be arrested bread and wine, saying, 'This bread is my flesh, and this cup is my blood', the Apostles did not receive the Holy Mystery until the [first?] feast of *Däbrä Tabor*<sup>8</sup>. On the day of *Däbrä Tabor*, they appointed James, Brother of Our Lord, Bishop of Jerusalem. He was the first to offer as sacrifice the (eucharistic) oblation. He, too, offered for the oblation pure bread, without salt or oil. He mixed water and wine and prepared the (eucharistic) sacrifice and gave it to the Apostles, as Our Lord did". In addition, he told me the following: "Matthew the Evangelist wrote (his) Gospel two<sup>9</sup> years after the ascension of Our Lord; Mark the Evangelist wrote (his) Gospel twelve years after the ascension of Our Lord; Luke the Evangelist wrote (his) Gospel two years after the ascension of Our Lord; John the Evangelist wrote (his) Gospel forty years after the ascension of Our Lord". In connection with this question, I have also found (a reference) in our books which says that Clement wrote the *Šər'atä Betä Krəstiyan* [= The Ordering of the Church]. That is the teachings of the *Didəsqäləya* [= Didascalia]<sup>10</sup>, because the Apostles say, "We have written this book of admonition and have published (it) through our brother Clement, (our) emissary to the world"<sup>11</sup>. The *Sinodos* [= *Synodicon*] of the Apostles consists of seven (parts): 1. *Täfäśśəhu wəlundnä* [= Rejoice our sons]<sup>12</sup>;

<sup>8</sup> "The feast of the Transfiguration"; the occasion may have been its first anniversary.

<sup>9</sup> Corrupted most probably from the numeral 9. Of all the manuscripts on microfilm in the EMLL collection, only these two (EMML 6837 and EMML 6456) disagree among themselves and with the other MSS. Almost all of the others have 9 for Matthew, 12 for Mark, 22 for Luke and 30 for John. The information on Mark is omitted in EMML 1831; in EMML 2429, the number 30 for John has been altered from the numeral 40, which EMML 6837, also, has. The 2 for Luke in EMML 6837 is most probably the result of a failure to copy the numeral 20; EMML 6456 has, in fact, 24 for him.

<sup>10</sup> Although differently interpreted by the author of the text, this particular quotation may have been taken from the *Sinodos*, or the Ethiopic version of the Synodicon, and not from the *Didəsqäləya* or the Ethiopic version of the Didascalia.

<sup>11</sup> Introduction to the *Didəsqäləya*; see Thomas P. Platt, *The Ethiopic Didascalia; or the Ethiopic Version of the Apostolical Constitutions, Received in the Church of Ethiopia*, London 1834, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> The parts of the *Sinodos* are listed here by their *incipits*, following the traditional way of referring to them. EMML 6456 has "Rejoice, our brothers and sons", but neither the Arabic nor the other Gə'əz texts that I have checked have "brothers". However, it is interesting to note that it may have been corrupted from "sons and daughters" which some of the older MSS



2. *Səm'on Qānānawī* [= Simon Cananaeus]<sup>13</sup>; 3. *Abṭəlis* [= τίτλοι]<sup>14</sup>; 4. *Ḥm-dəḥrā 'argä* [= After the Ascension]<sup>15</sup>; 5. *Sər'atä habṭ bā'əntä əllä yəṭṭämmäqu* [= Ordinance of grace concerning those who are baptized]<sup>16</sup>; 6. *Kämä bā'əntä 1 k'ānnani* [= As though 'concerning one ruler']<sup>17</sup>; 7. *Tə'əzaz zä-azzäzä Pətros lä-Qäleməntos* [= Ordinances given to Clement by Peter]<sup>18</sup>. For this reason they say (that) the *Book of Clement* and the *Sinodos* make eight (books)<sup>19</sup>. As for those who say that the *Book of Clement* by itself consists of eight parts, (they only need to be reminded that) if (they) add them to the seven parts of the *Sinodos*, the total would be fifteen; thus their mistake is evident since it exceeds the eight parts that they have enumerated for us<sup>20</sup>. As for that book (full) of their lies<sup>21</sup>, Peter never uttered it nor did Clement write it down, but it was Yəshaq Təgray, a usurper of the episcopate like Meletius<sup>22</sup>. His ordination, too, came from the Melchites. For this reason his teaching is alien to our teaching, and his books, too, to our books, because he brought it [= the *Book of Clement*] from a treasure<sup>23</sup> of lies and translated it with lying words.

The note deals, obviously, with the *Qäleməntos*<sup>24</sup>. Today the work is not

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still have, as in the original Arabic. The possessive pronoun, which is "our" in Gə'əz ("our sons [and our daughters]") and "my" in Arabic ("my sons and my daughters"), is curious, especially since the Greek has neither ("sons and daughters"). For the Arabic (and the Greek), see J. and A. Périer, "Les '127 canons des apotres', text Arabe", *POr*, vol. 8 (1912), p. 573. For the part called *Täffäššəhu wəluḍənä*, see Cod. Bor. Aeth. MS 2, ff. 94-49v, perhaps also ff. 49r-55v and 102v-108v. Cod. Bor. Aeth. MS 2, a manuscript of the *Sinodos* copied in Däbrä Halle Luya by the command of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob for the Ethiopian monastic community in Jerusalem, has been described in detail by S. Grébaut and E. Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici Vaticani et Borgiani Barberinianus Orientalis 2 Rossianus 865*, *Bybliotheca Vaticana* 1935, pp. 767-782.

<sup>13</sup> Cod. Bor. Aeth. MS 2, ff. 74r-83r and 94r-102v.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 62v-73v and 83v-94r.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 56r-62r.

<sup>16</sup> It is not clear to me which part of the *Sinodos* is meant here, probably the Orders given to Clement by St. Peter concerning baptism and ordinations, *ibid.*, ff. 109r-113v; but see the seventh part (n. 18).

<sup>17</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>18</sup> Probably Cod. Bor. Aeth. MS 2, ff. 109r-113v.

<sup>19</sup> *Abṭəlis* no. 81, *ibid.*, ff. 73r and 93v.

<sup>20</sup> This is a refutation of a commentary on *Abṭəlis* no. 81, which includes the *Qäleməntos* among the canonical books of the Church.

<sup>21</sup> The expression *mäsəḥafä ḥassät*, "book of lies", is obviously taken from the *Sinodos*; see, for example, *Abṭəlis* II, no. 56.

<sup>22</sup> Meletius was an Egyptian ecclesiastic who attempted to replace Peter of Alexandria (died 25 Nov. 311) when the Patriarch was in concealment during the persecution of Diocletian; see Charles J. Hefele (tr. William R. Clark), *A History of the Christian Councils*, vol. I, Edinburgh 1894, pp. 341-55.

<sup>23</sup> The expression *māzgäb* "treasure" may not be related to the *betä māzagəbt zä-qəddus Qirqos* of the colophon in the *Qäleməntos* but to the "Schatzhöhle" of Graf, p. 284. I could not find the expression in EMM 2147; see n. 24 below. The reference could be to *māzagəbtä jebäb* of the *Tä'mmarä Iyyäsus*, e.g. EMM 2180, f. 165'.

<sup>24</sup> The *Qäleməntos* has been extensively studied by A. Dillmann, "Bericht über das aethiopische Buch Clementinischer Schrift", *Nachrichten von der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, (1858), pp. 185-226. Selections have been edited, and the whole text



rejected, certainly not as a heretical work. It may in fact be one of the so-called "Eighty-One Enumerated Books", whose list can be made flexible enough to include more than those listed in the *Sinodos*<sup>25</sup>. Our text is presumably refuting an interpretation that includes this apocalyptic work in the list. It is not known when the *Qälemāntos* was accepted, then rejected and finally "rehabilitated". All the manuscripts (in microfilm) of the *Mäṣəḥafä məṣtir* that I have been able to check, EMMML nos. 13, ff. 243r-244r; 406, ff. 189r-190r; 714, f. 192rv; 1191, pp. 306bis-309bis; 2426, f. 140rv; and 2429, ff. 166r-167r (all nineteenth-twentieth century copies), have this report with such variants as are to be expected in the transmission of texts. Only EMMML 1831 (f. 201rv), a late fifteenth century manuscript, has deleted the reference to the Armenian priest and Yəṣḥaq Təgray and has altered the rest of the paragraph in such a way as to signify that the *Qälemāntos* is included in the list of the canonical books. The sentence, "As for those who say that the *Book of Clement* by itself consists of eight parts..." has been altered to say: "For this reason they [= the Apostles] say, 'The *Book of Clement* by itself is of eight parts'..."! However that may be, there is little doubt about the credibility of this text. It refers, I believe, to the colophon in the *Qälemāntos*:

*wā-täfäṣṣämä zəntu Mäṣəḥafä Qälemāntos bä-60-wā-4' Amätä Məhrät, bä-mäwa'älä Iyyosəyas nəguṣ wā-Abba Yəṣḥaq pappas.*

[The translation of] this *Book of Clement* was completed in the 64th year of Mercy [of the 532-year cycle], in the days of King Iyyosəyas and Metropolitan Yəṣḥaq.

Grébaut renders *pappas* by "patriarche"<sup>26</sup>. But it is clear from the report of *Abba Giyorgis* that Yəṣḥaq was an Ethiopian metropolitan who, according to this colophon, would have lived in the Year of Mercy 64 (= 1411/2 A.D.). I have been unable to find any reference to such an event in Ethiopian history; *Abba Giyorgis* does not recognize him as such either. But the note may throw some light on one of the obscure periods of the history of the country. The year 64 (of the 532-year cycle) is commonly accepted as the beginning of the reign of Tewodəros I, the King whose period of reign is not known<sup>27</sup>. But according to this colophon, the monarch in power at

translated by S. Grébaut, "Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-Clémentine", *ROC*, vols. 12 (1907); 13 (1908); 15 (1910); 16 (1911); 17 (1912); 18 (1913); 19 (1914); 20 (1915-17); 21 (1918-19); 22 (1920-21); and 26 (1927-28). My quotations come from EMMML 2147, a microfilm of a nineteenth century manuscript belonging to the Monastery of Miṭaq Täklä Haymanot, Ankobärr, Shoa.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the interpretation of the list in *Fəṭḥa Nägäšt*: *Nəbab-ənna Tərg'amew*, Addis Ababa 1958 E.C., pp. 41-44; and *Abuṣakər* (*Yä-qān māq'äriya*), Addis Ababa 1962 E.C., pp. 90-92.

<sup>26</sup> S. Grébaut, "Littérature", *ibid.*, 16 (1911), p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> See Tadesse Tamrat, "Problems of Royal Succession in Fifteenth Century Ethiopia:



that time was Iyyosəyas, a ruler whose name is not included in the numerous lists of Ethiopian kings that I have checked. The crown may have gone for a short period from Dawit (1381/2-1413) to Iyyosəyas through the help of a Melchite metropolitan, Yəshaq the usurper, *mäsate päppəsənna*, or it may have been claimed by him from "his father" in a kind of a politico-religious coup. According to one of the miracles of Mary, the monasteries were in favour of Dawit's abdication. There was no such "patriarche" in Egypt in those days. The only patriarch in the history of the Coptic Church with the name Isaac is the one who died at the end of the seventh century. It is interesting to note, however, that a short history of *Abba Giyorgis of Gasəčča*, whose reliability has not yet been established, mentions a certain Iyyosəyas among the children of Emperor Dawit who received their religious instruction from the saint<sup>28</sup>. The Iyyosəyas mentioned in some anaphoras might be this unknown monarch rather than the biblical Josiah<sup>29</sup>. He may have died in a religious uprising to be discreetly mentioned in liturgies whose orthodoxy at the time of their composition has not yet been proved. The interpretation of the colophon of the *Qäleməntos* suggested by Conti Rossini, that the year should be read 6000 'Amätä Məhrät and that Iyyosəyas should be identified with Iyyo'as, who ruled between 1755 and 1768 is so far from reality that it needs no comment<sup>30</sup>.

The note of *Abba Giyorgis* explains why the *Qäleməntos* is not very prominent in the writings of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob<sup>31</sup>. On the contrary, the Emperor rejects as heretical some theological views originating from it, directly or indirectly, and labels Färe Maḥəbär and others who quote it as heretics, 'ələwan.

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A Presentation of the Documents", *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Ethiopici*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome 1974, pp. 508-10.

<sup>28</sup> Miracle of the Archangel Ura'el, *Dərsanä Ura'el*, e.g. EML 1942, ff. 63v-67v. This miracle is not yet edited, but the history of *Abba Giyorgis* in the *Mäṣəḥafä Sä'atat bā-Gə'əz-ənna bā-Amarəñña zä-lelit wä-zä-nägh*, Addis Ababa 1952 E.C., pp. 5-6, is most probably taken from his miracle. EML 1942 is described in the fifth volume of the EML *Catalogue* (forthcoming); see also my article, "A Preliminary Investigation", Paragraph 6, 3, note 119; see n. 81 below.

<sup>29</sup> He is mentioned in the Anaphora of the Three Hundred Eighteen Orthodox Fathers and in some manuscripts of the Anaphora of Cyril, *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase* (Addis Ababa 1951 E.C.), pp. 133 and 219 respectively. He is not mentioned in M. J. Harden, *The Anaphoras of the Ethiopic Liturgy*, London 1928, p. 133; see also O. Löfgren and S. Euringer, "Die beiden äthiopischen Anaphoren des 'heiligen Cyrillus, Patriarchen von Alexandrien'", *ZSem*, vol. 8 (1932), p. 224. Iyyosəyas was also another name of Emperor Āskəndər (1478-1494) during whose reign there was a metropolitan by the name Yəshaq, Conti Rossini, "I. Pergamene di Debra Dammo II. I Galla Raia III. Il libro della rivelazione dei misteri attribuito a Tolomeo", *RSO*, vol. 19 (1941), p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> Conti Rossini, "Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection D'Abbadie", *Journal Asiatique* (1912), no. 38, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> I say, "not very prominent" because he does not quote it directly; it is possible, however, that some of its ideas have influenced his thinking.



The *Qālemāntos*, (Our Lord talking to St. Peter)<sup>32</sup>:

*Abuyä zāhay, wā-anā bərhanu wā-Mānfās Qəddus wa'əyu.*

My Father is sun, I his light and the Holy Spirit his heat.

Färe Maḥəbār's "heretical" doctrine, according to Emperor Zār'a Ya'əqob<sup>33</sup>:

*Ab zāhay Wāld bərhanu wā-Mānfās Qəddus wa'əyu.*

The Father is sun, the Son his light and the Holy Spirit his heat.

From a comparison of these two quotations one might conclude that Färe Maḥəbār was quoting the *Qālemāntos*, even if indirectly, and that the *Qālemāntos* was, in accordance with the quotation from the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir*, rejected by the Emperor. It is important to note here that the Emperor preferred for his explanation of the mystery of the Trinity the vision of Petros Bāwarəs, Peter the Fuller, who, according to the *Gädlä Sawiros Sorəyawī*, saw three equal suns, each representing one of the persons in the Trinity<sup>34</sup>. (A complication was avoided by altering the subsequent sentence: "And the light which proceeded from them was like unto the Son of Man", to "And one light of divinity proceeds from them"). The point of controversy was whether the mystery of the unity and the trinity of God should be interpreted with three distinct suns, each representing one person of the Trinity, or with one sun, its disc representing the Father, its light the Son and its heat the Holy Spirit. According to Zār'a Ya'əqob the example of three suns would illustrate clearly the existence of three distinct persons in the Trinity. For the dissidents, however, this would be tantamount to saying three gods; they preferred, instead, the example of one sun. This was vehemently rejected by the Emperor, who saw Sabellianism in it, a limitation of the theology of the Trinity to *səm*, "name", only, and not extended to *mālkə*, "appearance", "stature", "hypostasis", "figure", "form". Each of the opposing parties consistently upheld its idea with other examples (fire, water, milk, human beings—the *3tu ədäw* "three men", that appeared to Abraham, as against one man who has three attributes—etc.) brought

<sup>32</sup> See chapter two, "Livre second", or the chapter on the mystery of the Trinity, EML 2147, f. 29r. This chapter corresponds to what Wright, *Catalogue*, CCCXX, 1, p. 216, calls "Mysteries revealed by S. Peter to Clement"; and to "Première révélation de Pierre à Clément", by Grébaut, "Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-Clémentine", *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1907), p. 74.

<sup>33</sup> Conti Rossini and L. Ricci, *Il libro*, part II (text), pp. 143-4.

<sup>34</sup> The editors of the *Mäṣəḥafä bərhan* have not indicated the source of his quotation but I believe it comes from "The Conflict of Severus Patriarch of Antioch by Athanasius", edited and translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed in *POr*, vol. 4 (1908), p. 700. As found in some manuscripts, the vision of Petros Bāwarəs has been included, probably by Zār'a Ya'əqob himself, in the collection of miracles of the Blessed Virgin, *Tä'ammärä Maryam bā-Gə'əz-ənnā bā-Amarəñña*, Addis Ababa 1961 E.C., pp. 169-71.



forward to explain the mystery of the Trinity. The dissidents preferred one object with three attributes while Zär'a Ya'eqob and his party insisted on three equal and similar objects, each having all attributes similarly and equally.

The rejection of the *Qälemāntos* may have been only short lived. The "Bibliography" in the *Mäzmurä Krəstoš*, composed ca. 1582 or even earlier, includes this work.<sup>35</sup> That in itself may not make the work canonical, but it certainly shows that it was not considered a heretical work in the sixteenth century. We have also seen above the favourable attitude of EMLL 1831 towards the *Qälemāntos*. EMLL 1831 is a microfilm of a manuscript of the *Mäšəḥafä məstir* owned by the Monastery of Ḥayq Ḍstifanos!

### *Rətu'a Haymanot*

This brings me to the second question which I intend to raise in this paper: Who is *Rətu'a Haymanot*? There may have been some Ethiopian theologians who, for one reason or another — modesty, pride in the Orthodox faith and, perhaps, even because they held views that may have been considered heretical by the established Church — preferred to remain anonymous under this pen name. This paper is particularly concerned with the *Rətu'a Haymanot* to whom a homiliary for the *Bä'alat 'Abbäyt*, "Great Feasts" is ascribed, and assumes, without critical study, that all or most of the homilies in it are composed by one doctor. Like the homilies in the *Mäšəḥafä məstir*, they are normally found together in one manuscript. This anonymous teacher makes statements that seem to derive from the condemned work, the *Qälemāntos*. What, then, was the position of Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob regarding the works of this teacher?

*The Qälemāntos* (Our Lord explaining the nature of the Trinity)<sup>36</sup>:

*Wā-albo zä-yətmassälännä əsmä mälə'əltä amsal nəḥnä.*

There is nothing that may be likened to us because we are above all likenesses.

*Rətu'a Haymanot*, explaining the nature of God<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> British Museum MS Or. 534, W. Wright, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1877, no. CXXXVIII, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> EMLL 2147, f. 29r.

<sup>37</sup> The Homily of *Rətu'a Haymanot* for the Ascension of Our Lord, e.g. EMLL 7028, f. 74r, and the homily for the Baptism of Our Lord, *ibid.*, f. 29v, respectively. These quotations may also be scriptural, e.g. Isa. 40,21; but they have to be taken together with his other quotations. The collection of homilies ascribed to *Rətu'a Haymanot* has been described in several catalogues, including W. Wright, *Catalogue*, pp. 231-2; Conti Rossini, "Notice", no. 133; William F. Macomber, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and for the Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville*, vol. 1: *Project Numbers 1-300*, Collegeville 1975, p. 14, and Getatchew Haile, *A Catalogue*



- (1) *Wā-i-yyät'awwāq kunātu bā-mənt-əni, bā-kāmā yəbe lālihu : Bā-amsalā mǎnnu tastāmassəluni ... Antəmu-ni i-təḥśəsū amsalā lottu.*

His essence is not manifested by anything, as he himself said: "With whose likeness will you liken me?" ... You, too, do not look for a likeness for him.

- (2) *Wā-bahəttu i-yyədāllu nastāmasəllo lä-Fätari bā-fəṭuran.*

But it is not proper that we liken the Creator to creatures.

The heretical doctrine of the Zāmika'elites, according to Zār'a Ya'eqob:

- (1) *Wā-əmmā-ssä albo zä-rə'əyo gəmurā, mǎnnā-ke yəməssəl əbl*<sup>38</sup>.

If no one has ever seen [God], whom shall I say he looks like?

- (2) *Qəddus Qəddus Qəddus Əgzi'abḥer, bā-ar'aya fəṭrätat i-yyətmessəl*<sup>39</sup>.

Holy, Holy, Holy is God; he is not likened to the image of creatures.

These quotations that I have chosen — and many more could be quoted — put *Rətu'a Haymanot* on the side of the theologians who were considered heretics by the established Church of the time of Emperor Zār'a Ya'eqob, who made himself its spokesman. In his homily for the Nativity of Our Lord, *Rətu'a Haymanot* sounds as though he is defending Fəre Maḥəbār, or rather, as though he is speaking in the name of Fəre Maḥəbār:

*Rətu'a Haymanot*, defending his views<sup>40</sup>:

*Wā-zä-mässälkəwwə-ssä bā-zāḥay akko əm-ḥabeyä alla lālihu yəbe : Abuyä zāḥay wā-anä bərhanu wā-Mǎnfäs Qəddus wā'əyu.*

It is not my (idea) that I have likened him to the sun; but he himself has said [in the *Qəleməntos* (?)] : "My Father is the sun, I his light and the Holy Spirit his heat".

The other accusations, too, directed against Fəre Maḥəbār (*loc. cit.*) can be traced to the *Qəleməntos* and are defended in the homiliary ascribed to

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of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville, vol. IV: *Project Numbers 1101-1500*, Collegeville 1979, p. 150 (for convenience of reference, it may be noted at this point that Project Numbers 1-1100 of the EMLL collection have been catalogued in three volumes by W. F. Macomber with similar titles [*ibid.*] Project Numbers 301-700 in vol. II (1976); and 701-1100 in vol. III (1978); vols. V and VI, comprising Projects Numbers 1501-2000 and 2001-2500, respectively, are in preparation). None of the homilies in the collection, especially those I am interested in, has been edited.

<sup>38</sup> Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 128. On the sect known by modern writers as the Zāmika'elites — Zāmika'el, Gāmaləyal, 'Aşqa, Giyorgis, etc. — see Cerulli, *Il libro etiopico dei Miracoli*, pp. 107-121; *id.*, *Scritti teologici*, pp. VII-XXII. These scholars are known to have opposed some of the theological views of Emperor Zār'a Ya'eqob. There may not be any solid foundation for considering them all as having belonged to a sect called Zāmika'elite. Zāmika'el was not a founder of the sect either. Bitu may have been the founder of a sect to which Zāmika'el belonged. His followers are called *Däqiqä Bitu*. I am not aware of the existence of a sect called "*Däqiqä Zāmika'el*".

<sup>39</sup> Probably "... zä-i-yyətmessəl", "... who is not likened...". Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 126.

<sup>40</sup> EMLL 7028, f. 11r.



*Rätu'a Haymanot*. It is not unusual to find contradicting theological views in the literature of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. But, unlike the others, although they, too, may have interesting history if studied, the views mentioned here were the source of grave controversies in the fifteenth century.

The writings of *Rätu'a Haymanot* have not yet received serious attention from Ethiopicists and, as a result, questionable hypotheses have been made about his identity<sup>41</sup>. To begin with, the quotations indicate that an identification of *Rätu'a Haymanot* with Giyorgis zä-Gasəčča or zä-Säglä is impossible if Säglawi and Gasəččawi are one person and if the *Mäšəḥafä məstir*, which rejects the *Qälemənṯos*, is his work. (No one, to my knowledge, has made such an identification; but it is necessary to raise the question since both writers have, in many cases, common themes). We have now at least two manuscripts of the collection of homilies ascribed to *Rätu'a Haymanot* that come from the fifteenth century<sup>42</sup>. The work must have been in circulation during, or even before, the days of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob<sup>43</sup>. The author of the *Mäšəḥafä məstir* may have intended that his work replace the collection of *Rätu'a Haymanot*. Coming from a particular monastery like the *Mäšəḥafä məstir*, the homilies of *Rätu'a Haymanot* may have started to have a wider acceptance already in the fifteenth century. Although *Rätu'a Haymanot* is not as systematic as Säglawi, the writings of both teachers are on heresies, each, of course, from his point of view. This does not mean that the theological views found in the *Mäšəḥafä məstir* are always closer to those found in the works of Zär'a Ya'əqob than to those in the homilies of *Rätu'a Haymanot*. The supposition that the *mäšəḥafä məstir* may have been meant to replace *Rätu'a Haymanot* presupposes that *Rätu'a Haymanot* lived before Säglawi, or, at least, that the composition of the homilies of *Rätu'a Haymanot*

<sup>41</sup> In his description of D'Abbadie MS 80, Conti Rossini, "Notice", (1913) no. 133, p. 15, assumes that most of these homilies belong to John Chrysostom!

<sup>42</sup> EML 7028; and D'Abbadie 80 (According to Chaîne, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection Antoine D'Abbadie*, Paris, 1912, no. 80, p. 54; Conti Rossini dates it in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The discovery of another older copy of it has been announced by Eike Haberland, "Altes Christentum in Süd-Aethiopien", *Frankfurter Historische Vorträge*, Heft 2, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1975, facing p. 20. Haberland dates it ca. 1500 (A.D.); but the hand seems older than that, perhaps early fifteenth century).

<sup>43</sup> A copy of the treatise on the question of the two Sabbaths which was sent by Zär'a Ya'əqob to the Ethiopian monastic community in Jerusalem, Cod. Bor. Aeth. MS 2, ff. 177r-177v, is ascribed to *Rätu'a Haymanot*; and an older copy of it has been located in the Monastery of Däbrä Ḥayq ʾĪstifanos, EML 1763, ff. 37v-48v. Although they have not stated their arguments for thinking so, Grébaut and Tisserant believe that this treatise, too, belongs to the *Rätu'a Haymanot* of the homiliary; S. Grébaut and E. Tisserant, *Codices*, p. 775. My quotations are taken from EML 7028, a microfilm of a manuscript copied, perhaps, during the reign of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob (1434-1468).



preceded that of the treatises of Säglawi. The composition of the *Mäṣḥafä məṣṭir* was completed on the 21st of June 1424 A.D. or 27 *Säne* 6916 A.M. (= Anno Mundi or year since the creation)<sup>44</sup>. The author of the homilies in the *Rätu'a Haymanot* has not dated his compositions. But it can safely be assumed that the teacher lived at least a few decades before 1424: The year 1424 A.D. or 6916 A.M. is 84 years before the end of the seventh millennium from creation. According to *Rätu'a Haymanot*, there were still 125 years to go till the end of the world, that is, till the end of the seventh millennium, at the time when he composed his homily on the Birth of Our Lord of the Blessed Virgin<sup>45</sup>; its composition seems, therefore, to have taken place about 6875 A.M. or 1382/3 A.D. In the homily for the feast of the Blessed Virgin, *Rätu'a Haymanot* wonders why the Islamic rule over Egypt has not come to an end after 600 years, as Victor the martyr prophesied, although it was already — that is, I presume, at the time of the composition of this particular homily — well over 660 years<sup>46</sup>, that is, well after 1309 A.D. (660 may be just a round figure comparable in sound with 600, the years of the prophecy. The comparison of 1309 with 1382/3 should, therefore, not be rejected on purely mathematical grounds). No conclusive evidence can be submitted at this stage that the homilies ascribed to "*Rätu'a Haymanot*" that are incor-

<sup>44</sup> Most of the manuscripts consulted, including Zotenberg's B.N. (= Bibliothèque Nationale) MS no. 113, agree on 27 *Säne*, 6916 A.M., or the tenth year of Yəshaq (1414-1429), that is, 21 June (or 21 *Haziran*, as the manuscripts have it) 1424 A.D. as the day on which the composition of the *Mäṣḥafä məṣṭir* was completed. Hammerschmidt's interpretation of the numbers as 14 June 1422 A.D. was obviously based on a combination of two errors, his failure to see how the Ge'ez of the colophon in Zotenberg no. 113 was structured (it does not indicate "20. Senē", as Hammerschmidt thought) and how Tadesse Tamrat's tentative suggestions for revising the regnal years of certain Ethiopian Emperors was based on a questionable analysis of some documents, including the note of Dawit in Kebrān MS 1, f. 236v, in which both Hammerschmidt and Tadesse Tamrat read the 31st year of Dāwit as the 34th. (It may be remembered that the symbol for 1 in an old hand, such as in Kebrān MS 1, looks more or less like a 4 in a modern hand). Assuming, apparently, that they do not synchronize correctly, Hammerschmidt has not reproduced in his catalogue the numbers for the date in the colophon of Kebrān MS 18. H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (gheez et amharique) de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris 1877, no. 113, p. 129; E. Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tānāsee I, Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, W. Voigt (ed.), vol. XX 1, Wiesbaden 1973, Kebrān 1, p. 90 and Kebrān 18, III, p. 125; and Tadesse Tamrat, "Problems of Royal Succession", p. 507. For the synchronization of *Haziran* with *Säne*, see *Abuṣakər*, (*Yä-qān māq'äriya*), p. 70.

<sup>45</sup> Ge'ez manuscripts do not always transmit numbers carefully; but a number of manuscripts that I have checked in this place, including EML 7028 (f. 9v), do agree on 125. These are apparently the number of years lacking to the year 1500 E.C. about which he speaks in his introductory homily, EML 7028, ff. 2v-3a; *əm-amä tā[säggä]* (f. 3r) *wä Ēgzi'anä əm-Maryam əskä yom i-mäl'a 1000-wä-500 'amätä*, "It is not yet 1500 years [that is, the seventh millennium] since Our Lord was incarnated of Mary till now".

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 113v.



porated into the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir*<sup>47</sup> belong to our *Rətu'a Haymanot*, which is unlikely, to say the least concerning the works ascribed to a teacher of this name in manuscripts of the first half of the fourteenth century<sup>48</sup>. But these works indicate the possible existence, in the earlier history of the Ethiopian Church, of a certain *Rətu'a Haymanot* whom the opposing parties of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries recognized.

Among the many points of disagreements between *Rətu'a Haymanot* and the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir* there is the example used to represent the mystery of the unity and trinity of God—one sun according to *Rətu'a Haymanot*, three suns according to the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir*.

*Rətu'a Haymanot*<sup>49</sup>:

*Səma' zä-yəbe Ḩgzi'ənä, Abuyä zäḥay wä-anä bərhanu wä-Mämfäs Qəddus wa'əyu.*  
Listen to what Our Lord has said, [in the *Qäleməntos*?], “My Father is sun,  
I his light, and the Holy Spirit his heat”.

*Mäṣəḥafä məstir*<sup>50</sup>:

*Əmmä-bo zä-yəbl: Ab kämä zäḥay wä-Wäld kämä bərhanu wä-Mämfäs Qəddus kämä wa'əyu yətwägüz.*

If there is one who says, “The Father is like the sun, the Son like its light and the Holy Spirit like its heat”, let him be anathema.

There was Bishop *Rətu'a Haymanot*, the author of the *Gädlä Pänṭälewön*, who was made Metropolitan of Axum<sup>51</sup>. The possibility that he may have been Yəṣḥaq Təgray cannot be ruled out with complete certainty. The hypothesis of Conti Rossini, however, that the author of the *gädl* was a metropolitan called “Yəṣḥāq” who came to Ethiopia about 1480 A.D., cannot stand closer scrutiny<sup>52</sup>. On the other hand, it may be suggested at this

<sup>47</sup> E.g. Kebrän MS 18, ff. 57v-62v and 63r-65v, Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische Handschriften*, p. 124.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Br. Lib. MS Or. 8192, ff. 5v, 31v, 46r, 56v, 99r, 128v and 136r, S. Strelcyn, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the British Library*, London 1978, no. 56, pp. 88-91; and EMLL 1763, ff. 3r, 90v, 106r, 114r, 139v, 162r, 182r and 190r. EMLL 1763 is described in the fifth volume of EMLL *Catalogue* (forthcoming). Br. Mus. MS Or. 774, f. 134v (Wright, *Catalogue*, no. CCCXL, 27, p. 229) may also belong to this category.

<sup>49</sup> See his homily for the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, EMLL 7028, f. 29v.

<sup>50</sup> EMLL 6456, f. 29r. Each of these two teachers has a lengthy paragraph on the question whether the Father, too, comes down to earth to the saints like the Son or not, the answer to which, according to Giyorgis (EMLL 6456, f. 79v), is yes, but, according to *Rətu'a Haymanot* (EMLL 7028, f. 11r), is no! *Rətu'a Haymanot* also refutes vehemently the tradition (shared by Giyorgis of Säglä) that a child's future is determined on the fortieth day of its conception.

<sup>51</sup> *Gädlä Pänṭälewön* edited by Conti Rossini, CSCO, vol. 26, *script. aeth.*, (text), t. 9 (1904) reprint vol. 26, t. 9 (1961), p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> See his introduction to the *Gädlä Pänṭälewön*, *ibid.*, p. 41. But we now have a text of the *gädl* copied a couple of decades before the coming to Ethiopia of Metropolitan Yəṣḥaq, EMLL 1479, ff. 64r-72v. The name Yəṣḥaq found in the “colophon” of the seventeenth century



stage of the study that the collection of homilies ascribed to *Rətu'a Haymanot*, particularly EML 7028 or Br. Mus. MS Or. 786<sup>53</sup>, were originally prepared for a monastic community whose theological views were not always in conformity with those of the established Church. The suggestion is based primarily on the theological positions expressed in the homiliary, such as those quoted above. It is also worthwhile to note that the homiliary is very rare. There was no copy of it among the manuscripts microfilmed for EML from the Monastery of Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos, the school of *Abba Giyorgis zä-Gasəṣṣā* or *zä-Säglā*, the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məṣṭir*. More importantly, EML 7028, (a microfilm of) a manuscript of the fifteenth century, was copied for a (monastic) community whose head was *Abba Nob*<sup>54</sup>!

*Šälləyu lä-zä-šəḥəfo wā-lä-zä-säm'a qalatihu bā-amin, ... wā-fädfadä-ssä lä-Abunä Nob məslä dəqiqu burukan, əllä təwāldu bā-Qəddəst Betä Krəstian, wā-yəkfəllomu Mängəštä Səmayat, amen.*

Pray for the copyist and for him who listens to its words in faith, ... and especially for *Abunä Nob*, with his blessed (spiritual) children who have been begotten in Holy Church, that [God] may bestow on them the Kingdom of Heaven, amen.

manuscript which Conti Rossini edited, D'Abbadie 110, f. 122v, is not found in EML 1479, dated 6925 A.M. (= 1459/60 A.D.). The *Yəshaq* of D'Abbadie 110 may also be *Abba Gärīma*, to whom, according to the original conclusion of the *gädl*, the Holy Spirit revealed the passing away of *Abba Pāntälewōn*, his spiritual father; *Yəshaq* [= *Gärīma*] came to bury him: *Wā-bəṣṣə kāmā yastägabe'o*. In that case the "colophon" in D'Abbadie 110 is most probably a later addition intended to give credit to the authenticity of the *gädl*.

<sup>53</sup> The two manuscripts may be collated as follows:

EML 7028	Br. Mus. MS Or. 786
f. 2r	f. 5r (Introduction)
f. 6v	f. 10v (Nativity of Our Lord)
f. 20v	f. 24v (Baptism of Our Lord)
f. 36r	f. 88v (Palm Sunday)
f. 38r	f. 92v (Washing of the feet by Our Lord)
f. 53v	f. 109v (Good Friday)
f. 68r	f. 125r (Ascension of Our Lord)
f. 75r	f. 132v (Paraclete)
f. 90v	f. 148v (Feast of the Apostles)
f. 95v	f. 154r (Transfiguration)
f. 102v (Feast of the Blessed Virgin, probably D'Abbadie, 80, f. 133r).	
f. 120r (Feast of the Archangel Michael, Br. Mus. MS. Or. 608, f. 21r, Wright, <i>ibid.</i> , p. 147 and probably D'Abbadie, 80, f. 143v).	

7028, f. 2r, was not microfilmed; the comparison with Or. 786, f. 5r is a conjecture as I have not seen Or. 786 nor has Wright copied its *explicit*. None of the catalogues which described D'Abbadie 80 has given *incipits* of the individual homilies; but Wright identifies Or. 786 with it. EML 7028 has more works after the homiliary: Inquiries of *Abba Sinoda*: (*Zəntu nəgär zä-təsə'əlo Abba Sinoda lä-Ṭgzi'ənä bā-dāḥari 'əlat zä-yəkəwwən ...*), f. 127r; *Gädlä Arsima*, f. 130r; and the history of Mary the Egyptian (*Zənəḥa lä-Maryam Gəḥṣawit*), f. 167b.

<sup>54</sup> EML 7028, f. 102r; see also f. 167r.



Nob is such a common name among monks that identifying him might seem presumptuous, but it is unlikely that he can be anyone else but *Abba* Nob, the *Nəburä ad*, “Abbot” of the Monastery of Däbrä Damo, who fell from the favour of Zär’a Ya’əqob (1434-1468) for his heretical views, like Zämika’el, Gämäləyal, ‘Aşqa, Giyorgis and Färe Maḥəbär<sup>55</sup>. In EMLL 7028 there is no prayer for the king of that time!

The dissatisfaction of the Ethiopian monks with the Egyptian metropolitans and the rigid policy of the Emperors and their *Kahnatä däbtära* “the Clergy of the Tabernacle” at the royal camp, in correcting “erroneous views”, may have led some monasteries to consider having their compatriots consecrated *pappasat* “metropolitans” by another church, e.g. the Syrian Church, or even the Melchite, Greek, Church in Alexandria. We know, for example, how *Abba* Ewoşatewos turned to the Armenian Church when he was disappointed with Alexandria<sup>56</sup>. The *Actes de Marḥa Krestos* notes two attempts of Ethiopians to have native metropolitans<sup>57</sup>. The protest of *Abba* Bäşälotä Mika’el against the sin of simony allegedly committed by the metropolitan who served at the court of ‘Amdä Şəyon (1314-1344) may have had a direct connection with the information supplied by the colophon found in the manuscript of the *Qäleməntos*, if scattered pieces of information could be harmoniously fitted together: Taddesse Tamrat has already noticed the relationship of the vision of *Abba* Bäşälotä Mika’el with the content of the *Mäşəḥafä məştirä sämay wä-mədr*, one of the names of whose author is, besides Bäḥaylä Mika’el and Zäsimas (or “Zosime”), Bäşälotä Mika’el<sup>58</sup>. EMLL 2161, a microfilm of an eighteenth century manuscript of the *Mäşəḥafä məştirä sämay wä-mədr* belonging to the church of Miṭaq Amanu’el

<sup>55</sup> E. Cerulli, *Il libro etiopico dei miracoli di Maria*, pp. 107-108 and 110-112; J. Perruchon (ed. and tr.), *Les Chroniques de Zar’a Yä’eqob et de Ba’eda Maryām*, Paris 1893, pp. 11-12; *Tä’ammärä Maryām, bä-Gə’əz-ənna bä-Amarəñña*, Täsfä edition 1961 E.C., p. 134; and Conti Rossini, “Gli atti di Abba Yonas”, *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, ser. 5, vol. 12 (1903), p. 199; but see also no. 68 below.

<sup>56</sup> Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, pp. 206-8.

<sup>57</sup> Edited by S. Kur, *CSCO*, vol. 330, *script. aeth.* t. 62 (1972), pp. 83-88. The 42nd article of the Canons of the Council of Nicea, according to the *Sinodos*, which deprives Ethiopians of the right to have a metropolitan from among their own doctors was altered in some manuscripts from the Gə’əz, i-yyəşimu, “they should not install — Arabic: *lā ya’malū* — to yəşimu, “let them install”. This alteration can be seen even in the manuscript of the *Sinodos* prepared by the command of Emperor Zär’a Ya’əqob for the Ethiopian monastic community in Jerusalem, Cod. Borg. MS 2, f. 135b. In the Arabic text edited by W. Hoenerbach and O. Spies, *CSCO*, vol. 161, *script. arab.*, t. 16 (1956), the article is no. 5; see p. 30. The Coptic Church of Alexandria was, apparently, not responsible for the creation of this article although it has exploited it for centuries. The article may not refer to the Church of Axum!

<sup>58</sup> Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, n. 2, p. 178.



(Shoa), has some additions to the text edited by Perruchon<sup>59</sup>. Since these additions are not found in EMLL 7023, a microfilm of a fourteenth century (?) manuscript of the same work belonging to Ġärr Šəllase (Shoa), one may assume that the additions in EMLL 2161 were not part of the original composition of the work. However, the information found in these texts is not without significance. According to one of them, the reporter of the vision of Bāšəlotä Mika'el/Bahaylä Mika'el/Zäsimas, or the *Mäšəḥafä məstirä sämay wā-mədr*, was Yəshaq, a disciple of the apoclypt! This is very important for our study, especially since one of the additions (EMLL 2161, ff. 29v-30a) offers a theology of the divinity which is identical with what is found in the first chapter of the *Qäleməntos*. EMLL 2161, ff. 99r-101r is, in fact, *Fəkkare bā'əntä nəgəšt əllä šəḥufan wəstə Qäleməntos* or "An interpretation of the kings who were recorded in the (*Book of*) *Clement*"! The relationship between the *Qäleməntos* and the *Mäšəḥafä məstirä sämay wā-mədr* cannot be ignored even if the additions are disregarded. The homilies of the *Rətu'a Haymanot* contain quotations from both works<sup>60</sup>.

### *The Ethiopic Anaphoras*

The controversy between the established Church and the dissidents may have gone much further than is generally realized. The parties of the dissidents seem to have composed their own service books, including anaphoras based on what they believed about the mystery of the Trinity, and the Church may have responded in the same way by composing anaphoras against theirs. A glance at the locally composed anaphoras shows that they were treatises against "heresies" which have been rearranged into *akk "āletä q"ərban*, or eucharistic prayers, and have been supplied with the parts that such prayers need, pre-anaphora, dialogue, institution, etc. Let us first consider the Anaphora of Our Lady ascribed to Cyriacus of Bəhənsa/Bahnasah, which is generally known by its *incipit* *G"ās'a*, and the Anaphora of the

<sup>59</sup> J. Perruchon, "Le livre des mystères du ciel et de la terre", *POr*, t. 1, fasc. 1, Paris 1947.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the homily in the *Rətu'a Haymanot* on the incarnation of the Word, EMLL 2375, f. 59r. (This homily is not included in 7028; cf. Br. Mus. MS Or. 786, f. 72v). It is striking that the Gə'əz translation of the Octateuch current at that time, which was used by the authors of the *Mäšəḥafä məstirä sämay wā-mədr*, the *Mäšəḥafä məstir* and the homilies in *Rətu'a Haymanot*, characteristically lacks the expression *wā-mədr*, "and the earth" at the end of the first verse of Genesis (cf. the homily, in the *Mäšəḥafä məstir*, against the heresy of Macedonius, e.g. EMLL 1831, f. 180r; and Perruchon, *Le livre*, p. 4). The editor of the latter work, who was apparently unaware of the fact that this was the current reading, has supplied the "missing" word. The "omission" had a serious consequence, the heresy that the earth was there before creation! The next verse begins with: *Wā-mədr-əssä halləwāt əm-təkat*, "(In the beginning God created heaven). As for the earth, it was there since time immemorial".



Three Hundred and Eighteen Orthodox Fathers of Nicea, known by its *incipit Gərum*. *Gʷāsʹa* and *Gərum* manifest the dissidents' way of using the sun to explain the mystery of the Trinity so that we cannot assume that these two anaphoras were composed for the established Church:

*Gʷāsʹa*<sup>61</sup>:

*Ab zāhay Wāld zāhay wā-Mānfās Qəddus zāhay; I-du wəʾətu zāhayä šədq zā-laʾälä kʷəllu. Ab əsat Wāld əsat wā-Mānfās Qəddus əsat; I-du wəʾətu əsatä heywät zā-əm-aryam.*

The Father is sun, the Son is sun and the Holy Spirit is sun; the sun of righteousness which is over all is one. The Father is fire; the Son is fire and the Holy Spirit is fire; the fire of life from the highest heaven is one.

*Gərum*<sup>62</sup>:

*Bä-kämä awśəʾa Əgziʾənā lä-ardaʾihu ..., "Abuyä wā-ana wā-Mānfās Qəddus zāhay wā-bərhan wā-waʾəy. Abuyä wā-ana wā-Mānfās Qəddus əsat wā-näbälbal wā-fəhm".* As Our Lord answered his disciples, [in the *Qäleməntos*?]..., "My Father and I and the Holy Spirit are sun and light and heat (respectively). My Father and I and the Holy Spirit are fire, and flame and red hot coal (respectively)".

The word "respectively", in my translation of the quotation from *Gərum*, is supplied in parentheses. The *Gəʾəz* construction is ambiguous; there is no clear evidence in this construction that the Father is likened only with sun/fire, the Son only with its light/flame, and the Holy Spirit only with its heat/red hot coal, as the dissidents taught. The case of the quotation from *Gʷāsʹa* seems to be even clearer: the sun is mentioned three times to explain the three persons in the Trinity, like the vision of Peter Fullo, the way Zärʾa Yaʾəqob wanted the mystery to be explained. Still, there is little doubt that the two anaphoras base their interpretation of the mystery of the unity and trinity of God rather on the *Qäleməntos*. They have been revised in the course of history, it seems, to suit the theology of the established Church. The ambiguous expressions in the Anaphora of the Three Hundred

<sup>61</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, Addis Ababa 1951 E.C., p. 115; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, Addis Ababa 1954, p. 111; S. Euringer, "Die äthiopische Anaphora unserer Herrin Maria", *OrChr*, vol. 3, ser. 12 (1937), p. 84; Samuel B. Mercer, "The Anaphora of Our Lady Mary", *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, vol. 3 (1919), p. 56. For a summary of the studies of the Anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church, see E. Hammer-schmidt, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras*, Berlin 1961; and *id.*, "Zur Bibliographie äthio-pischer Anaphoren", *OstKSt*, vol. 5 (1956), pp. 285-290.

<sup>62</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, *ibid.*, p. 131; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *ibid.*, 126 M. J. Harden, *The Anaphoras of the Ethiopic Liturgy*, London 1928, p. 105; Mercer, "Anaphora of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Orthodox", *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, vol. 8 (1924), pp. 68-69; S. Euringer, "Die Anaphora der 318 Rechtgläubigen", *ZSem*, vol. 4 (1926), p. 135.



Eighteen Orthodox are apparently the result of this unsystematic revision. The revision it underwent was not as rigorous as the one that was performed on the Anaphora of Our Lady Mary by "Cyriacus", *G<sup>w</sup>ās'a*, seems to have been, although even it, too, still manifests a contradiction in its interpretation of the theology of the Trinity. On the one hand, there is the "one sun" of the substratum: "The sun of righteousness is one". (*Zār'a Ya'eqob* may not have accepted this statement. For him, it is the light (of righteousness, the divinity) which comes forth from the three suns, that is one). On the other hand, however, there are the three suns of the upper stratum, introduced at the time of the revision of the anaphora to satisfy the conservatives: "The Father is sun, the Son is sun and the Holy Spirit is sun". But more importantly, the text of this quotation from *G<sup>w</sup>ās'a*, as preserved in Vatican MS 15, f. 186rv, and Vatican MS 18, ff. 72v-73r (both fifteenth century manuscripts) is significantly different when compared with that of the standard liturgical books (e.g. the *Mäṣḥafä Qəddase* published in Addis Ababa in 1951 E.C.); in these manuscripts (Vatican 15, f. 186rv, and Vatican 18, ff. 72v-73r) it is free of contradiction and one-sidedly favours the position of the dissidents<sup>63</sup>:

*Ab zāḥay* [Vat. 18: *zāḥayä*] *wā-Wäld bərhan* [Vat. 18: *bərhanä*] *wā-Mānfäs Qəddus wa'əy* [Vat. 15: *wā'ey*, and Vat. 18: *wa'əyu*] *l wə'ətu zāḥayä šədq zā-yabärrəḥ lä-k'əllu. Ab əsat* [Vat. 18: *əsät*] *wā-Wäld nābälbal wā-Mānfäs* [Vat. 15: *wā-Mä mənḥäs*] *Qəddus afḥam*.

The Father is the sun; the Son is the light, and the Holy Spirit is the heat; the sun of righteousness is one. The Father is the fire; the Son is the flame and the Holy Spirit is the red hot coal.

It may be fair to mention that the text in Vat. 16, a sixteenth century manuscript, is similar with the standard *G<sup>w</sup>ās'a* of today at this particular point<sup>64</sup>. But this may only mean that the revision of the anaphoras and their adaptation by the established Church had taken place as early as that time. Furthermore, all three MSS (Vat. 15, Vat. 16 and Vat. 18) are at one in disagreeing with the *textus receptus* of *G<sup>w</sup>ās'a* at another equally important place, the column-long paradigm for the interpretation of the mystery of the Trinity. Only the first paragraph will be quoted here.

<sup>63</sup> This variant is given as an alternative in the *Mäṣḥafä Qəddase/Missale Ethiopicum*, published in the Vatican City in 1938 E.C./1945 A.D., p. 79. For a description of Vat. 15 and Vat. 18, see S. Grébaut and E. Tisserant, *Codices*, pp. 45-61 and pp. 69-84 respectively; see also S. Euringer, "Die äthiopische Anaphora unserer Herrin Maria", pp. 82-3. Hammerschmidt believes that "there is no need to assume that any apocryphal source was used". He even gives biblical references where these citations may be traced, "according to the Ethiopic point of view" (!), Hammerschmidt, *Studies*, p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> See Vat. 16, f. 47r. For a description of Vat. 16, see Grébaut and Tisserant, *ibid.*, pp. 61-65.



*Gʷāśʿa*, according to the *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase* (Addis Ababa 1951 E.C.), p. 114<sup>65</sup>:

*Ab wā-Wāld wā-Mānfäs Qəddus yəhelləyu. Ab wā-Wāld wā-Mānfäs Qəddus yətnag-gäru. Ab wā-Wāld wā-Mānfäs Qəddus yəsämməru.*

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit think. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit speak. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are pleased.

*Gʷāśʿa*, according to *Missale Ethiopicum* (Vatican 1945), p. 78 (= Vat. 15, ff. 185v-186r; Vat. 16, f. 47r; and Vat. 18, ff. 70v-71v)<sup>66</sup>:

*Ab yəhelli wā-Wāld yətnaggär wā-Mānfäs Qəddus yəsämmər.*

The Father thinks, the Son speaks and the Holy Spirit is pleased.

Distributing the special actions about the one thought of creation to each of the persons in the Trinity in this way, as though assigning them to the mind, the tongue and the heart of *one person*, is not acceptable to Zärʿa Yaʿqob or to the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir* (see n. 66). But this quotation represents, most probably, the original formula of the anaphora.

More evidence could be given to show that these two anaphoras were originally liturgies of heretical sects. The revision was not so thorough in some places as to eliminate all traces of dissent. One may recall, for example,

<sup>65</sup> See also Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 110.

<sup>66</sup> The fact that manuscripts (including EML 6229 (f. 99v), a microfilm of a seventeenth century manuscript belonging to the church of Mäyṭi Abbo in Wollo when microfilmed in 1976; EML 2443 (f. 50r), a microfilm of a nineteenth century manuscript of Ankobärr Mädhane ʿAlam microfilmed in 1975; and EML 2511 (ff. 79v-98r), a microfilm of a nineteenth century manuscript of Miṭaq Gäbräʿel, also microfilmed in 1975) fall into the category of Vat. 15, Vat. 16 and Vat. 18 shows, interestingly, that this version of *Gʷāśʿa* is still in use in Ethiopia; see also Euringer, "Die athiopische Anaphora unserer Herrin Maria", p. 82. But the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir* strongly rejects the theology of this anaphora in his treatise against Macedonius, in the reading for Pentecost, *Bäʿalä 50*, EML 6456; f. 110r:

*Wā-i-konä-mmä Ab zä-yəʿezzəz wā-Wāld zä-yəgäbbər wā-Mānfäs Qəddus zä-yaṭäʿaṭṭəʾ: Bā-kämä Ab gäbrä <wā-> Wāld gäbrä bā-amsalu; wā-bā-kämä Wāld-əni yəgäbbər <wā-> Mānfäs Qəddus-əni gäbrä bā-arʾayahu. Akko bā-bbā-mäkfältomu alla zä-bā-1 məkr wā-1 ḥəllina.*

It is not so, that the Father commands, the Son works and the Holy Spirit makes perfect. As the Father works, so does the Son in the same manner; and as the Son works, so also the Holy Spirit in the same way. They do not (act) each on his own, but are one in counsel and one in thought.

I understand this quotation to be a rejection not only of the theology of *Gʷāśʿa* but of the Anaphora of Our Lady Mary by Cyriacus of Bahnasah itself, at least in the version of the dissidents. Cf. Euringer, *ibid.*, paragraphs 53-55 (including notes), pp. 82-3. Revision of a theological formula in this manner has taken place again in the nineteenth century controversy on the question of the anointment of Christ, from *Ab qäbaʿi, Wāld tāqäbaʿi, Mānfäs Qəddus qəbʿ* to *Ab qäbaʿi, Wāld qäbaʿi, Mānfäs Qəddus qäbaʿi ... Wāld qəbʿ Mānfäs Qəddus qəbʿ*. There were even heretics called *Maryam ʿInnatu* who introduced in their liturgy statements such as *Ab qəbʿ, Wāld qəbʿ, Mānfäs Qəddus qəbʿ; 1 wəʾətu qəbʿa mäləkot* "The Father is ointment, the Son is ointment, the Holy Spirit is ointment; the ointment of the divinity is one", e.g., EML 1703, f. 147v.



that Fære Maḥəbār was accused of denying the distinct existence of the Son by saying<sup>67</sup>:

*Mälkə'u wā-ṭəbābu wā-ḥaylu wā-bərhanu wā-yāmanu wā-māzra'ətu lä-Ab Wäld wə'ətu.*

The image, the wisdom, the power, the light, the right (hand) and the arm of the Father is the Son.

This doctrinal thesis is found almost word for word in the homily of *Rətu'a Haymanot* for the Nativity, so that the identification of *Rətu'a Haymanot* with Fære Maḥəbar, directly or indirectly, becomes more and more probable<sup>68</sup>:

*Nahu tā'awqä kämä Wäld qalu lä-Ab ... Mälkə'u-hi wā-ṭəbābu-hi wā-ḥaylu-hi wā-bərhanu-hi wā-yāmanu-hi wā-māzra'ətu-hi* [MS: *wā-māz'ətu-hi*] *lä-Ab wə'ətu.*

Behold, it is evident that the Son is the Word of the Father. ... He is also the image, the wisdom, the power, the light, the right (hand) and the arm of the Father.

This "heresy", whose origin is the *Qäleməntos*, is very well preserved in *Gərum* even in its present form<sup>69</sup>.

*Wə'ətu lä-Abuhu yāmanu, ədä mäzra'tu, Wäldu wā-fəquru, zä-kāmahu amsalihi.*  
He is the right (hand) of his Father, the hand of his arm, his Son and his beloved, who is as he is like him.

The description of the throne of God in *Gərum* seems to have been taken

<sup>67</sup> Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II* (text), p. 144. The descriptive words added to the name of Fære Maḥəbār, *ḥaddis ba-aminä Krəstos*, "a new believer [or, "new in the belief] in Christ", (Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische Handschriften*, 1973, p. 106) indicate that the teacher was a born again Christian, a new convert to a certain theological view, perhaps established in the name of the first *Rətu'a Haymanot*, whoever he may have been and whenever he may have flourished.

<sup>68</sup> EMMI 7028, f. 10v. The bastion of one of the dissident groups seems to have been the Monastery of Kəbran, on one of the islands of Lake Tana. According to some manuscripts that come from there, e.g., Kebrān MS 6, Fære Maḥəbār was abbot of Kəbran during the reign of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob; Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische Handschriften*, (1973), p. 103. He was, in all likelihood, the teacher accused of the heresy in question; see note 67 above. It may also be helpful to remark here that there was an ecclesiastic by the name of *Abba Nob* mentioned in Kebrān MS 1, f. 237v.

<sup>69</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddasē*, Addis Ababa 1951 E.C., pp. 128-9; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 124; Euringer, "Die Anaphora der 318", p. 132. The idea of this formula might seem to be found in the *Təmhərt ḥəbu'at* or "The Ethiopic Version of the Mystagogia", ed. and tr., F. Hallock, in *Le Muséon*, vol. 53 (1940), p. 74; D. Lifchitz, *Textes éthiopiens magico-religieux*, Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris 1940, p. 42; and E. Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische liturgische Texte der Bodleian Library in Oxford*, Berlin 1960, p. 50; but this work has no reference to *mälkə'* or *ar'aya*, the central object of the controversy. It also makes a difference if the descriptive words as applied to Our Lord are taken figuratively or literally.



from the Book of Revelation, but the influence of the *Qälemāntos* there cannot be ignored:

*Gərum*<sup>70</sup>:

*Wā-əm-taḥtehu la-wə'ətu mänbär yänäqqə' baḥr zä-2e fənnawihu : baḥr zä-bərhan wā-baḥr zä-nāfas.*

And beneath the throne there springs a sea of two currents, a river of light and a river of wind.

*Revelation 4, 6:*

*Wā-qədmehu lä-wə'ətu mänbär baḥr kämä əntä bäräd. Wā-əm-gäbäwatihu lä-wə'ətu mänbär arba'əttu ənsəsahu ...*

And before the throne there was a sea as though of crystal. And on the sides of the throne there were his four beasts...

The two currents, or streams, coming from the sea are not found in Revelation (see also chapter 12).

*Qälemāntos*, (Our Lord describing the throne of the Trinity)<sup>71</sup>:

*Wā-rässäynä mänbarinä zä-əm-bərhan wā-əsət wā-gərma ... əsat tənāddəd əm-taḥtehomu wā-mänk<sup>w</sup>arak<sup>w</sup>ər zä-əsət la'ələ 2 baḥr 1 zä-əsət wā-kalə'u zä-yä'abbi zä-nāfas.*

And we set up our throne, which is of light, fire and majesty.... Fire burns beneath [the four beasts], and there is a wheel of fire above two streams, one (of which) is of fire and the second, which is the greater, of wind.

It may sound far-fetched, but one can hypothesize, from a study of the theological views of Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob, that the Anaphora of John Son of Thunder, *Ḥabekä I*, and the Anaphora of Cyril, *Ḥabekä II*, may also have been adapted to suit the requirements of the communities of dissidents. The following quotation from *Ḥabekä I* is not basically different from the alleged heretical doctrine of Färe Maḥəbär<sup>72</sup>:

*Iyyäsus Krəstos ḥaylu wā-ṭəbäbu lä-Abuhu.*

Jesus Christ is the power and the wisdom of his Father.

For one who is a stranger to the theological controversies of fifteenth century Ethiopia, this quotation and others like it do not express heretical views concerning Christian faith, especially since the idea behind this last

<sup>70</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, *ibid.*, p. 132; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *ibid.*, p. 128; Euringer, "Die Anaphora der 318", p. 136.

<sup>71</sup> EML 2147, f. 30rv.

<sup>72</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase* (Addis Ababa 1951 E.C.), p. 96; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 94; S. Euringer, "Die äthiopischen Anaphoren des hl. Evangelisten Johannes des Donnersohnes und des hl. Jacobus von Sarug", *Orientalia Christiana*, vol. 33-1, no. 90, (1934), p. 30; cf. I Cor. 1,24.



quotation can be found in the Scriptures and the *Təmhərtä ḥəbu'at*, the Mystagogia of the Testament of Our Lord, which is accepted by the Church, but for the Church of Zār'a Ya'eqob they did. It would not have been in the interest of the established Church to express such controversial doctrines in works of such great and lasting impact as the anaphoras. The dissidents, on the other hand, may have thought that it was to their advantage, or was even an obligation to express their faith in their service books.

Another expression attributed to Zāmika'el and Gāmäləyal and considered heretical by Emperor Zār'a Ya'eqob, is found in this anaphora, *Ḥabekä I*. First a direct quotation of the alleged heretical doctrine of Zāmika'el and Gāmäləyal from the "Homily (of Emperor Zār'a Ya'eqob) in Honour of John the Evangelist"<sup>73</sup>:

*Egzi'abḥer-əssä-ke i-yyastärä'i wā-albottu mälkä'a zä-ye'amməro säb'; lālihu yä'ammər mälkä'o.*

As for God, he is invisible and has no image which man may know; he (alone) knows his image.

*Habekä I*<sup>74</sup>:

*Wā-albo zä-yä'amməräkkä wā-albo zä-yəkl rə'əyotäkä; lālikä tā'ammər rə'əsäkä.*

And no one knows you, and no one is able to see you; you (alone) know yourself.

These two quotations are, I believe, closely related to each other even though the first has *mälkä'*, "form", "figure", "image", "shape", where the second has *rə'ə*s "self" from Romans 1,20 of their text of the New Testament. According to the "Homily in Honour of John the Evangelist", both words were used in the controversy over the anthropomorphization of the persons of the Trinity at the court of Emperor Zār'a Ya'eqob. The phrase<sup>75</sup>,

*Zähayä šədq zä-əm-kənāfikä yəsärrəq zähayä šədq wā-fälfälä räbaḥ ...*

The sun of righteousness from whose rays [lit. wings] there rises the sun of righteousness and a fountain of benefits,

which is translated in different ways by modern scholars, may originally have been worded differently to express the mystery of the Trinity, for example:

<sup>73</sup> EML 1480, f. 48v. The homily is ready for publication. The contents of the homily at this point are basically similar to what is reported in the *Mäṣḥafä bərhan*, edited by Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 128. For a description of EML 1480, see my *Catalogue of EML manuscripts* (Collegeville 1979), pp. 599-603.

<sup>74</sup> *Mäṣḥafä Qəddase*, p. 91; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 89; Euringer, *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren*, p. 16; J.M. Harden, *The Anaphoras*, 73; see also n. 94 below.

<sup>75</sup> *Mäṣḥafä Qəddase* (Addis Ababa 1951 E.C.), p. 96; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 94; Euringer, *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren*, p. 32.



(Zähayä šədq zä-əm-kənāfikä yəwāššə' bərhanä šədq wā-fälfälä haywāt.

The sun of righteousness from whose rays there come forth the light of righteousness and the fountain of life).

It is interesting to note that the literary sources of *Ḥabekä I* do not include works whose canonicity was challenged by the so-called Zämika'elites of the days of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that the Blessed Virgin and John the Evangelist are closely tied together in the literary tradition of the established Church<sup>77</sup>. Our Lady Mary is not mentioned in this locally composed Anaphora of John Son of Thunder! The anaphora was either very old or belonged to a dissident group of the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The situation with the Anaphora of Cyril, *Ḥabekä II*, is not basically different. The alleged heretical doctrine of Fəre Maḥəbär is nowhere as clearly preserved as in the Anaphora of Cyril<sup>78</sup>:

Wə'ətu Wäldəkä wā-mäl'akä məkrəkä wā-fəqurəkä zä-əmənnekä amsalikä wā-mälkə'əkä ḥallinakä wā-ḥayləkə təbabəkä wā-məkrəkä yəmanəkä wā-māzra'təkä. He is your Son, the messenger of your counsel and your beloved who is from you, your likeness and your image, your mind and your power, your wisdom and your counsel, your right (hand) and your arm.

The authors to whom these anaphoras are ascribed are also not without interest. According to one manuscript of the *Mäšəḥafä məštir*, *Ḥabekä II* was ascribed, in its primitive stage(?), to *Rətu'a Haymanot*<sup>79</sup>! It may have

<sup>76</sup> On the controversy, see K. Wendt, "Der Kampf um den Kanon Heiliger Schriften in der äthiopischen Kirche der Reformen des XV. Jahrhunderts", vol. 9 (1964, reprint Amsterdam 1969), pp. 107-113. Since the description of the Father and the Son with words such as those quoted in n. 72 is widely accepted, the possibility that its origin could be the *Təmhərtä ḥəbu'at* may be of little importance.

<sup>77</sup> Examples are the *Ra'eya Maryam* or *Visio Mariae Virginis* (ed.), M. Chaîne, *CSCO*, text; series prima, t. 7 (1909), pp. 53-80; and *Säne Goləgota* or, "La prière de Marie au Golgotha", *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 226 (1935), pp. 273-286. The composition of the first is ascribed to John the Evangelist, and the second to his disciple, Prochorus.

<sup>78</sup> *Mäšəḥafä Qəddase*, pp. 216-217; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 210; the text is slightly different in O. Löfgren and S. Euringer, "Die beiden äthiopischen Anaphoren 'des heiligen Cyrillus, Patriarchen von Alexandrien'", *ZSem*, vol. 8 (1932), p. 220.

<sup>79</sup> EMMML 6456, f. 35r. It is not clear, from the way it is presented here, whether this is supposed to be the whole anaphora, excluding, of course, the pre-anaphora, the dialogues, the institution, the imposition of the hand, etc., which do not necessarily differ from one *akk'ätetä q'ərban* to another, or a quotation *in extenso* from it. Introduced with the title, the quotation covers paragraphs 33-36 of Euringer's, "Die äthiopischen Anaphoren", pp. 230-2 and paragraphs 92-102 of the *Mäšəḥafä Qəddase*, pp. 225-6; see also Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, pp. 218-9.

*Akk'ätetä Q'ərban zä-Rətu'a Haymanot. Həlləw Ab məslä Wäldu wā-məslä Mänfäsu Qəddus əm-qədmä sā'at wā'əlāt, əm-qədmä azman wā'əlāt* [apparently for: 'amātat]... *Ḥəburan bā-i-tussahe wā-dəmmuran bā-i-bu'ade gəzəwan* [interestingly also EMMML 6229, f. 187a, a seventeenth century *Mäšəḥafä Qəddase*: *gəššəwan*] *bā-təsləst* [MS: *bā-təslət*]...



been attributed to a different author, Cyril, when it was enlarged with more prayers, including those that contain “heretical” passages like the one quoted above. Through this anaphora, it seems, the dissidents were strengthening the members of their community in the Orthodox faith and were calling the authorities of the established Church to come back to the teachings of the early Fathers. *Gərum* may originally have received its name from a group of dissidents called *Rətu’anä Haymanot*, and only later the name was interpreted to mean the Orthodox Fathers of Nicca.

That the “Anaphora of John Son of Thunder” was composed as a result of a theological controversy may be concluded with a certain degree of confidence. To begin with, the theme of the anaphora is John 1,18: *Lä-Ḩgzi’abher-əssä albo zä-rə’əyo gəmurä*, “No one has ever seen God”, (which explains, I believe, the attribution of the anaphora to John the Evangelist/Son of Thunder). The object of the Zämika’elite controversy, which lasted up to the middle of the fifteenth century, that is, after the composition of the anaphora, was precisely the image of God that no one has ever seen. According to the reports of Zär’a Ya’əqob, Zämika’el, who was probably the abbot of a big monastery, composed a service book, *Dərsanä qəne zä-mämfäqä gəbrä lelit*, (*Horologium*, not an anaphora), for his (monastic) community based on his doctrinal interpretation of this quotation from the Gospel according to St. John. Another ecclesiastic, Gämaləyal, was accused by the Emperor of collaborating with Zämika’el in seducing the faithful from the Orthodox doctrine<sup>81</sup>. The Emperor summoned, therefore, a large council in which John 1,18 was “discussed”. Gämaləyal was called upon to state where he stood on the issue, whether or not God has a *malkə’*, “image”, “form”, “figure”. Gämaləyal’s answer, as reported by the Emperor, was uncompromisingly to the point<sup>82</sup>:

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The Anaphora of *Rətu’a Haymanot* [*de recta fide?*] The Father is existent with his Son and his Holy Spirit before hour and day, before times and (years)... They are united without being mixed and are together without separation; they are personified in a trinity...

Compared with the other anaphoras, especially *Yohannəs wäldä Näg’ädg’wad*, *Šälästu mə’ət*, *Basləyos* and *Diyoşqoros*, this eucharistic prayer should have come towards the beginning of the anaphora and not towards its end, or where it should have ended. This prayer may have been the original anaphora of a *Rətu’a Haymanot* that was accepted by all parties but was later incorporated into a new anaphora and called the Anaphora of Cyril. The beginning of this quotation is also quoted in the *Mäşəhafä məştir* in the treatise against the heresy of Photinus (Nativity), *ibid.*, f. 29r. There may have been historical reasons for the strikingly unequal lengths of the anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church.

<sup>80</sup> Conti Rossini and Ricci, *il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 126f.

<sup>81</sup> Getatchew Haile, “A Preliminary Investigation of *Ṭomarä təsbə’t* of Emperor Zär’a Ya’əqob of Ethiopia”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2 (1980), paragraph 6, 1, note 77.

<sup>82</sup> Conti Rossini and Ricci, *il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 128.



*Ansä habärku məslä Zämika'el bä-kämä yəbe Wängel, lä-Əgzi'abher-əssä albo zä-rə'əyo gəmura. Wä-əmmä-ssä albo zä-rə'əyo gəmura männä-ke yəməssäl əbl.*  
I agree with Zämika'el as the Gospel said, "No one has ever seen God"; if no one has ever seen him, who shall I say that he looks like?

On this occasion the Emperor composed a homily, quoting several verses from the Scriptures in support of his view, that God has a *mälkä'*, to refute the writings and teachings of the Zämika'elites and, apparently, to justify the elimination of the leadership of the movement, "The Homily in Honour of John the Evangelist"<sup>83</sup>. As we have seen above, Zär'a Ya'əqob quotes from the *Dərsanä qəne zä-mänfäqä gəbrä lelit* composed by Zämika'el: "Holy, Holy, Holy is God; he is not likened to the image of creatures"<sup>84</sup>. The Emperor states in another place, in connection with the same quotation, that Zämika'el had, in fact, composed a service book which might be called an anaphora<sup>85</sup>:

*Wä-bä'əntä-zə yəbe bä-'əbädä ləbbu bä-wəstā šəlot zä-šär'a bä-betä Krəstiyānu, wä-ənzä yəqəddəs yəbl 3 gize qəddus qəddus qəddus bä-kämä sām'a əm-habä Näbiyat əllä šāhafu sāmi'omu ənzä yəqəddəsəwwo mälä'əkt šəlsä la-Šəllus Qəddus. Wä-wə'ətu-ssä i-yyə'əmmən šəllasehu la-Šəllus bä-gəššawe wä-bä-mälkä'.*

For this reason he said (this) in the foolishness of his heart in the prayer which he ordained in his church [probably, "monastery"]. When he consecrates, he says three times, "Holy, Holy, Holy", as he has heard it from (the Books of) the Prophets, who wrote (thus) having heard the angels sanctify the Holy Trinity three times; but he himself does not believe in the threeness of the Trinity in person and form/figure.

Whether one considers it heretical or not today (or even then), the Anaphora of St. John Son of Thunder in some passages reflects more closely the religious views of Zämika'el or his school than those of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob. The ambiguous and obscure expressions in several places in this anaphora, which should rather be called a confession of faith or a creed, may be the result of emendations or distortions introduced into it at a later stage. It is still not clear what the following formula means and whether Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob would have accepted it<sup>86</sup>:

<sup>83</sup> See n. 73 above.

<sup>84</sup> Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 126.

<sup>85</sup> "The Homily in Honour of John the Evangelist", EMLL 1480, f. 51r; see n. 73.

<sup>86</sup> The problem starts with the significance of the first word, *ḥərūm*, in each of the first three sentences as applied to God; *ḥərūm* normally means, "forbidden", "untouchable", "dedicated to God", therefore probably "holy". Euringer, *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren*, p. 25, has "hochheilig" (= most holy). The word has been borrowed as it is in the Amharic translation of the *Mäṣəḥfä Qəddase*, p. 93. The text used by Harden, *The Anaphoras*, p. 74, has either *gərūm*, as the note of Euringer indicates, or the author has misread it, for he has translated it as "awful". S. Mercer, "The Anaphora of the Holy and Blessed John", *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, vol. 6 (1922), p. 23, renders the word by "diverse", but his knowledge



*Ḥarum antä wä-hallokä Ab Qəddus. Ḥarum antä wä-hallokä Wäld Qəddus. Ḥarum antä wä-hallokä Mänfäs Qəddus. 3tu sām 1 ʿġziʿabher Qəddus.*

According to the teaching of the Church, the trinity of God is not only in *sām*, “name”, but also in *gəṣṣawe* “hypostasis”, *akal* “person” and *mälkäʿ*, “figure” “form”, before as well as after Incarnation of the Word. The Anaphora of John Son of Thunder, as it is now, is not willing, it seems, to go that far in unambiguous terms at this particular point. According to the above formula the three names are not addressed one to each of the corresponding persons of the Trinity but to the one God: You are the Father, you are the Son, you are the Holy Spirit, three names, one God. The author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir* has quotations from the Anaphora of John (Son of Thunder) which means that this anaphora was well established in Ethiopic by the first quarter of the fifteenth century<sup>87</sup>:

*Yohannəs-əni yəbe bā-Mäṣəḥafä Qəddasehu : yəṯqäfäs ḥohatä bərhan wä-yətrāḥawa ḥawahəwā səbḥat wä-yəmšaʿ Mänfäsəkä ḥəyaw wä-qəddus ; yəräd wä-yənbär yəḥdər wä-yənuḥ wä-yəqəddəs zäntä akkʿätetä qʿərban. Wä-ṣəwwaʿ-ni yəqəddəs. Lä-yəkun zəntu ḥəbəst ṣəgakä ḥəyaw, wä-ṣəwwaʿ-a-ni sutafe däməkä məstäsahl.*

John [Son of Thunder], too, said in his Anaphora, “Let the gate of light be unlocked and let the doors of praise be opened and your living Holy Spirit come; let him come down, rest, dwell, linger and sanctify this Eucharist. Let it sanctify the cup, too. Let this bread become your living body and the cup, too, the communion of your compassionate blood.

Those who have translated this anaphora into European languages have tried to rectify the above ambiguous quotation rather than trace the possible

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of Gəʿəz was that of a pioneer. Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 91, understand it as “unique”. See also V. Six, *Die Vita des Abuna Tādēwos von Dabra Märyām im ʿTānāsee*, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 238. In the writings of Giyorgis of Gasəṣṣa, e.g., his *Saʿatat*, one finds the expression *ḥarum əmenna rəkʿs* EMMML 204, f. 24r or *ḥarəmt əm-rəkʿs*, *ibid.*, f. 64r. The verb *ḥarāmā* is also a synonym of *ḥarāwā*, “to make a sketch”, “to mould”. Although the meaning of the word may remain unclear, the theology that this quotation purports is different in the homily against the heresy of Photinus in the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir*, e.g. EMMML 6456, f. 29r:

*Ḥarum Ab zä-i-yyastārəʿi bā-həllawe zä-ənbälä daʿəmu bā-raʿyā tənbit lä-näbiyatihu. Ḥarum Wäld zä-i-yyastārəʿi bā-mäläkotu zä-ənbälä bā-təsbəʿtu. Ḥarum Mänfäs Qəddus zä-i-yyastārəʿi bā-akalä gərmahu zä-ənbälä daʿəmu bā-nəṣṣare zä-yəṯfäqqäd [MS: zä-i-yyəṯfäqqäd] bā-zä-yəräddəʿomu lä-qəddusan.*

The Father, who does not appear in (his) essence but in prophetic visions of his prophets, is *ḥarum* (= distinct?). The Son, who does not appear in his divinity but in his humanity, is *ḥarum*. The Holy Spirit, who does not appear in the person of his majesty but in the appearance needed for the help of the saints, is *ḥarum*.

Both the author of the Anaphora of John Son of Thunder, as we know it, and the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir* seem to have a common source at this point, the original Anaphora of John the Evangelist!

<sup>87</sup> The homily against the heresy of Macedonius, e.g. EMMML 6456, f. 109v; cf. *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, p. 102.



history of its development. Similarly, the awkward formula at the end of the following passage<sup>88</sup>:

*Ab säma'tä Wäld wā-Mānfäs Qəddus, wā-Wäld yəsäbbək bā'əntä Ab wā-Mānfäs Qəddus wā-Mānfäs Qəddus yəməhər bā'əntä Ab wā-Wäld, kämä bā-1 səm Šəllusä yamləku.*

The Father is witness for the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son preaches about the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit teaches about the Father and the Son, that one may worship the Trinity in one name.

which does not agree very well with the thought of the rest of the anaphora, or even with the rest of the quotation itself, may have been the result of an attempt to reverse the message by altering the original text, which could have been

*(... kämä bā-3 səm waḥədä yamləku*

... that one may worship one (God) in three names).

The question is not which of the two formulae is theologically sound now but which is in greater harmony with the thought of the anaphora. However, it is only fair to recognize that none of the many manuscripts in microfilm that I have checked has anything to support my proposed reconstruction. Only the microfilm of one manuscript, EMM 4174 (17th century), differs slightly from the rest, f. 22r:

*... kämä bā-1 Šəllusä yamləku* [the word *səm*,  
“name” is lacking].

... that one may worship the Trinity in one.

This paper is not, and does not claim to be, a systematic study of the individual anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church. However, one can recall the historical fact that, during the days of Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob (1434-1468), the established Church recognized only the two anaphoras that are found in the *Sinodos*, or the Synodicon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the *Mäṣəḥafä kidan* or the Testament of Our Lord of the Ethiopian Church, that is, the Anaphora of the Apostles and the Anaphora of Our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>89</sup>. It was only logical for the Zämika'elites or more precisely, their ancestors, who openly challenged the canonicity of these two pseudo-apostolic writings, to look for an alternative. Their initiative in composing anaphora(s) is attested in the writings of the Emperor himself<sup>90</sup>:

<sup>88</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, p. 92; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 90; Euringer, *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren*, paragraphs 20-1, p. 20.

<sup>89</sup> A. Dillmann, “Über die Regierung”, p. 66.

<sup>90</sup> Conti Rossini and L. Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): p. 41.



*Wā-qəddase qʷərban-əhi aqāmu bā-fäqadä rəʼəsomu hədigomu Qəddase Əgziʼənā zä-təşəhfä bā-Kidan wā-Qəddase Hawarəyat zä-təşəhfä bā-Sinodos.*

They established a eucharistic anaphora, too, on their initiative, leaving aside the Anaphora of Our Lord, which was written in the Testament [of Our Lord], and the Anaphora of the Apostles, which was written in the *Synodicon*.

This could be a reference to *Habekä I* or *Habekä II* as adapted by them. The “*Rətuʼa Haymanotites*” may have been less conservative and leaning more towards the Churches of the Mediterranean regions, especially in their attitude towards the Blessed Virgin and the apocryphal literature. We have to admit, however, that we know nothing about the attitude of the Zāmikaʼelites towards the Blessed Virgin except from their opponents, the “Zärʼa Jacobites”. The Anaphora of Our Lady Mary by Cyriacus, *Gʷāsʼa*, and the Anaphora of the Three Hundred Orthodox Fathers, or *Rətuʼanā Haymanot*, *Gərum*, may have been the composition of the “*Rətuʼa Haymanotites*”. Points of disagreement among the radical groups, whose number we do not know, should be expected, but they seem to have been in agreement in opposing “the heresy of the anthropomorphization of the persons in the Trinity” imposed by the Emperor and the *Kahnatä däbtära*, “the clergy of the Tabernacle” at the royal camp. Earlier than that, moreover, Giyorgis of Gasəčča was approached by the Metropolitan, probably Bärtälomewos (1398-1436), to compose anaphoras, *qəddaseyat* [MS: *qəddəsəyat*]<sup>91</sup>. This may indicate that the need was urgent at that time for liturgical books that could satisfy and unify the Mother Church and the splinter groups. More importantly, however, it shows that the controversy concerning the image of God did not start during the reign of Zärʼa Yaʼəqob but before him. Zāmikaʼel and Zärʼa Yaʼəqob were each expressing the views of their predecessors as found in the literature that they inherited. The *Mäşəhfä məştir*, whose composition was completed in 1424, a decade before the coming to power of Zärʼa Yaʼəqob, has a treatise dealing with this same question. A large part of one of the homilies, the treatise against the heresy of Sabellius, the reading for *Səbkät*, is devoted to the doctrine that God has a *mälkäʼ*, “form”, “figure”, “image”, that resembles that of man.

The homily concludes with the following words<sup>92</sup>:

*Nahu abşahnä läkä səmʼa əm-mäşəhəft kāmā bottu lä-Əgziʼabher fəşşumä mälkäʼa əgʷalä əməhəyaw.*

<sup>91</sup> *Gädlä Giyorgis zä-Gasəčča*, EMM 1838, ff. 21v-22r; Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, n. 4, p. 223.

<sup>92</sup> E.g., EMMK 6456, f. 7r; see also his treatise against Bitu, Conti Rossini (tr.), “Due capitoli del libro del Mistero di Giyorgis da Saglā”, *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, vol. 7 (1948), pp. 39-53. Whether it is significant or not, the writings of Giyorgis treat the *mälkäʼ* of God and not the *mälkäʼ* of each person in the Trinity.



Behold, we have brought you testimony from the Scriptures (to show) that God has a perfect human form.

The efforts of *Abba Giyorgis* in composing anaphoras does not seem to have brought, at least for the time, the desired result. It aroused opposition from the members of the established Church, so that one of the new anaphoras, *Mä'aza qəddase*<sup>93</sup>, had to go into oblivion for about five hundred years. The beautiful literary piece of admonition called the Anaphora of Athanasius, too, is in all probability the composition of this famous writer. If the several quotations given above as heretical teachings can be used as measuring sticks for distinguishing the writings of the established Church from those of the dissident groups, the Anaphora of Athanasius must undoubtedly belong to the traditionalists<sup>94</sup>. Furthermore, like the Anaphora of Our Lord and the Anaphora of the Apostles, but unlike the anaphoras suspected to contain heretical views and the homiliary of *Rətu'a Haymanot*, the Anaphora of Athanasius is a Monophysite composition, in the sense that the triune God, who is addressed in the prayer, is identified with Jesus

<sup>93</sup> A.T.M. Semharay Selam, *La Messe de Notre Dame dite Agréable Parfum de Santeté*, Rome 1937; *Mäṣḥafä Qəddase/Missale Ethiopicum*, Vatican City 1938 E.C./1945 A.D., pp. 87-94; and *Nəburä əd Dəmeṭəros Gäbrä Maryam and Mə[kəttəl] Afä nəguś ʾTəbābu Bäyyānā* (ed.), *Qəddaseyatä Maryam (G'ās'a-Mä'aza Qəddase)*, Asmara 1959 E.C. *Mä'aza Qəddase* may have been composed in reaction to *G'wās'a!* The role of the Blessed Virgin in helping the saints found in the *Mä'aza Qəddase* (e.g. *Missale, ibid.*, pp. 88-89), *mädhanitu lä-Addam*, "the salvation of Adam"; *täwəkafitā mäswa'tu lä-Abel*, "the receiver of the sacrifice of Abel", etc. is taken almost word for word from the first part of *Hoḥətä bərhan* ascribed to *Abba Giyorgis*. For a copy of the *Hoḥətä bərhan*, see M. van den Oudenrijn, *CSCO*, vol. 208, (1960), pp. 95-7.

<sup>94</sup> It would, of course, be necessary to study the different heresies that were current in Ethiopia in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries to be able to draw a list of theses or formulae by which particular works could be measured. The manner of formulation of some views would also have to be taken into account. The discovery, in *Nä'akk'əto*, of the declaration,

*Albo əmāq lä-mäləkotu, albo la'l wā-albo taḥt, albo nuḥ wā-gədm, albo yāman wā-albo šəgam, wā-albo mā'əkal alla məlu' wə'ətu wəsta k'wəllu aṣnafä 'alam.*

His divinity has no depth, no upper and lower (limits), no length or width, no right and left, and no centre, but it is full in all the ends of the world.

by itself cannot make the Anaphora of Gregory unacceptable to traditionalists. It was probably formulated by a member of the established Church in such a way as to forestall its use by dissidents to show that God has no *mälkə'*, "form", "figure", "image"; for the text, see O. Löfgren and S. Euringer, *Die beiden gewöhnlichen Gregorius-Anaphoren, Orientalia Christiana*, xxx-2, no. 85 (1933), p. 82. Furthermore, the fact that this anaphora calls the three persons of the Trinity *3tu ədāw*, "three men", (*ibid.*, p. 86, from Gen. 18,2), a manner of speaking that the dissidents repudiated in an argument with Zär'a Ya'əqob, proves that it cannot have been theirs; see Wendt, *Das Mashafa Milād I* (text): pp. 70-71; and Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II* (text): pp. 135-8. The dissidents were not comfortable with expressions such as *mäləkoto ar'ayä*, "he showed his divinity", Löfgren and Euringer, *ibid.*, pp. 90-1.



Christ, "who, while living in heaven, is only one on earth and who, while live on earth, is a trinity in heaven"<sup>95</sup>:

*O-Əgzi'o ənzä hallokä bä-la'əlu tətbəhat bä-təhətu; wä-ənzä hallokä bä-təhətu təssəlläs bä-la'əlu.*

In the anaphoras discussed so far and in the homiliary of *Rətu'a Haymanot*, on the other hand, Our Lord Jesus Christ is, generally speaking, the Son of God, who is always in heaven on his throne and to whom prayers are addressed. Whether the Anaphora of Athanasius was written by Giyorgis or not, the contrast between it and the other anaphoras in question is so clear that one suspects that the former was written to refute the views expressed in the latter. Expressions such as,

*Sa'ali länä, astämhəri länä*  
Pray for us, intercede for us,

are similar to the language of the *Sä'atat* of *Abba Giyorgis*. The prayer<sup>96</sup>,

*Nəhnä-ssä əllä təsädädnä bä'əntä səməkä wä-konnä həbləyə əm-həbehomu lä'əlwən, rə'ayännä bä-šahləkä kāmā nəhaddəf ləbbomu lä-māhayyəmmānikä,*

As for us, who are persecuted for the sake of your name and have become the prey of the heretics, shepherd us with your compassion so that we may guide the hearts of your faithful.

may give the impression that the anaphora originally belonged rather to a minority group, but we know from his *qädl* and from his treatise against the heresy of Bitu that *Abba Giyorgis* was persecuted for his faith. His confession of faith concludes with a very revealing sentence<sup>97</sup>:

<sup>95</sup> *Mäṣəhafä Qəddase*, p. 155; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 149. S. Euringer has apparently missed this crucial point; see his translation, "Die äthiopischen Anaphora des hl. Athanasius", *OrChr*, vol. 3, ser. 2 (1927), pp. 276-7. The controversial quotation, "You [= God] alone know yourself", (see n. 74), follows immediately (*ibid.*), rephrased and addressed to Our Lord Jesus Christ:

*Antä lälükä tä'ammər həllawekä; wä-antä lälükä tətəyyeq mäləkotəkä.*

You (alone) know your essence; and you alone understand your divinity.

A quotation from the homily for the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord in *Rətu'a Haymanot* may clearly show how the opposing parties wanted to formulate this teaching, EMM 7028, ff. 22r-23v:

*Nä'ammən bä-aḥadu Əg(23v)zi'abher Ab aḥaze k'əllu, gäbare sāmayat wä-mədr wä-bəhr wä-k'əllu zä-wəstetomu, zä-yərə'i k'əllə wə'ətu-ssä i-yyastärə'i lä-aḥadu-ni, wä-wə'ətu yä'ammər k'əllə wä-albo zä-yä'amməro; wä-rə'əso-ssä lälihu yä'ammər mäləkoto.*

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, the maker of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, he who sees all but himself is visible to no one. He knows all but no one knows him. Himself, his divinity, however, he alone knows.

This formula appears also in some of the other homilies of *Rətu'a Haymanot*, e.g. *ibid.*, f. 10r.

<sup>96</sup> *Mäṣəhafä Qəddase*, p. 157; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 151; S. Euringer, "Die äthiopischen Anaphora des hl. Athanasius", p. 280.

<sup>97</sup> *Haymanotu Lā-Giyorgis zä-täsämyä Qerəlos*, "The Faith of Giyorgis who was called



*Bä-zə haymanotəyā nābārku wəstā[-zə] 'alām bā-amṭanā ḥəywātəyā ənzā ətwāggāz  
bā-ḥabā 'ələwan wā-ənzā awāggəzomu lā- 'ələwan.*

I have lived in this faith of mine all my life long, condemned by the heretics  
and condemning the heretics.

Giyorgis did not hesitate to complain about the persecution he suffered  
to the Blessed Virgin in his *Sä'atat* in a moving rhyming prayer<sup>98</sup>:

*Lä-mənt qomki əmännä rəḥuq,  
arwe zä-wādqä bā-amsalä mäbräq  
ənzä ḥəzbəki (sic) yəwəḥəṭ (text: yəwəṭ) bā-bbä-ḥəqq.*

... O ...

*Ənzä nətwekkäl kiyaki əmännä ḥəllina wā-af  
wəstā adbar agbərtəki rə'əsä šādf  
əffo-nu nə'ayyəl kāmā 'of.*

Why do you stand far off, [O-Blessed Virgin],  
when the serpent which fell like a thunderbolt  
swallows up your people gradually?

... O ...

While we depend on you in mind and mouth,  
(we) your servants in the monasteries,  
how is it that we wander like a bird on top(s) of precipice(s)?

There could be one or two reasons why the author ascribed this anaphora  
to St. Athanasius. Its relation with the *Mäṣəḥafä ʾəmar zä-wāradāt əm-sāmayat  
la'ələ ədä Atnatewos ba-'əlätä əḥud*, "The Epistle which came down from  
heaven to Athanasius on Sunday"<sup>99</sup>, is clear. Both are no more than  
exhortations to the faithful and the clergy to observe the Christian Law  
including the observance of the Christian Sabbath, Sunday—which indicates  
that this anaphora, if it was the work of Giyorgis, was composed before he  
joined the Ewostəwosites in honouring Saturday Sabbath<sup>100</sup>. There is also  
a local tradition that it was Giyorgis Säglawi who translated the so-called  
Athanasian Creed into Gə'əz<sup>101</sup>.

When Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob came to power, he attempted to control  
the growth of liturgical literature from unauthorized sources by issuing a

Cyril (of Ethiopia)", *Mäṣəḥafä məṣṭir*, EML 6456, f. 37r. "The Faith of Giyorgis..." is also  
found in *Mäṣəḥafä Sä'atat*, EML 204, ff. 38v-42.

<sup>98</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Sä'atat bā-Gə'əz-ənnā bā-Amarəñña*, p. 152.

<sup>99</sup> The Epistle is usually found in the manuscripts as a supplementary text to the *Haymanota  
Abāw*, e.g. Br. Mus. MS. Or. 784, f. 205r, Wright, *Catalogue*, no. CCCXLIV, p. 234; see  
also E. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, London 1973, p. 145.

<sup>100</sup> For the position of Abba Giyorgis on the controversy on the observance of Saturday,  
the Jewish Sabbath, see Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, p. 224. It should be pointed  
out that Giyorgis revered Sunday in his writings more than Saturday; see Zotenberg,  
*Catalogue*, no. 113, f. 260, p. 129; *Mäṣəḥafä Sä'atat*, EML 204, f. 137r-138r. There is also  
no evidence either that he had ever been anti-Sabbath.

<sup>101</sup> Br. Mus. MS. Or. 793, f. 109v, Wright, *Catalogue*, no. CCCLXI<sup>o</sup> 11, 23, pp. 274-5;  
*Mäṣəḥafä Sä'atat*, EML 204, ff. 102v-105r; L. Guerrier, "Un texte éthiopien du Symbol  
de saint Athanase", *ROC*, vol. 20 (1915-17), pp. 68-76.



decree that no anaphora other than the Anaphora of the Apostles and the Anaphora of Our Lord was to be used in his dominions<sup>102</sup>, apparently to the exclusion of those composed by members of the established Church. Neither Giyorgis nor the Ewostatewosites would regret the banning of a Christian liturgy that discriminated against Saturday, especially after the Council of Däbrä Məṭmaq, in which a decision was made that the Jewish Sabbath, too, be observed as a Christian holy day<sup>103</sup>. We should also consider the possibility that this anaphora may have been composed in reaction to an anaphora of the Ewostatewosites even though none of the anaphoras known thus far can be suspected as having originated from them. The decree of the Emperor in itself is sufficient evidence that, at least during the reign of Zär'a Ya'əqob, the Church accepted only the two anaphoras which are contained in the pseudo-Apostolic writings and that the rest, that is, those that existed at that time in Ethiopic, were rejected by decree as heretical. This would include the Anaphora of "*Rətu'a Haymanot*" or Cyril, the Anaphora of Our Lady Mary by Cyriacus and the Anaphora of John Son of Thunder, all of which, it seems, were known to the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä məstir*!

It may be relevant to note that *Fəkkare mäläkot*, "Interpretation of the divinity", a treatise which defends the belief that God, contrary to what the Church of Zär'a Ya'əqob taught, has no *mälkä'*, "form", "figure", "image", like that of man, draws extensively its evidence from the anaphoras which we have thus far suspected of containing heretical views<sup>104</sup>. One quotation in the treatise is of special interest to this study<sup>105</sup>:

*Akko zä-bottu lä-mäläkot gədmä wā-nuḥa, la'lä wā-taḥtä, yämanä wā-zägamä.*  
Not that the divinity has width or length, upper and lower (limits), or right and left.

As the editor has noted<sup>106</sup>, this is taken from *G"ās'a*. It is also rephrased, interestingly, in *Gərum*<sup>107</sup>:

*Albənä yäman wā-albənä zägam; albənä ṭäfär wā-albənä mäśārät; nəḥnā ṭäfär wā-nəḥnā mäśārät.*

We have no right or left; we have no firmament. [= upper limit] or foundation [= lower limit]; we ourselves are the firmament and the foundation.

<sup>102</sup> See n. 89.

<sup>103</sup> Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, p. 230; Conti Rossini and Ricci, *Il libro della luce II*, (text): pp. 153-5; Getatchew Haile (ed.), "The Letter of the Archbishops Mika'el and Gäbrä'el", *JSS*, vol. 26/1 (1981), pp. 73-8.

<sup>104</sup> Cerulli, *Scritti teologici*, pp. 22-39.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>107</sup> *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, p. 131; Marcos Daoud and Marsie Hazen, *The Liturgy*, p. 126.



According to the *Qālemāntos*, these are, more or less, the words that Our Lord spoke to St. Peter, who relayed them to his disciple, Clement<sup>108</sup>:

*Albənā nuḥa wā-gədmā; ... albənā yəmnā wā-i-ṣəgmā.*

We have no length or width; ... we have neither right nor left.

If the observations made so far are correct, formulae such as these should not be expected to occur in anaphoras composed for the established Church. It is not without interest to add here that according to *Rətu'a Haymanot*, this theology was formulated by a certain teacher, *aḥadu əm-qəddusan*, "one of the saints", i.e. one of the monks, for a colleague who was sincerely interested in knowing the mystery of the divinity<sup>109</sup>. The report in the *Gädlä Giyorgis zä-Gaṣəṣṣā* that this explanation was given by *Abba Giyorgis* to a Jew who had challenged the Christians who believed that God had a *gäṣṣ* "face", by asking them sarcastically to tell him in which direction that face, if he had one, was pointing<sup>110</sup>, is rather suspect. Judging from his *Mäṣəḥafä məṣtir*, which shows disagreements with the homiliary of *Rətu'a Haymanot*, Giyorgis was a firm believer in the *mälkä'*—hands, arms, ears, etc.—of God<sup>111</sup>. Even though members of the established Church believe that God is omnipresent, this is not the formula they use in describing the fullness of God in the whole world. I have not found it in the *Mäṣəḥafä məṣtir*.

The anonymous author of the *Fəkkare mäläkot*, a *Zāmika'*elite who seems to have lived after the invasion of the army of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghāzī, Graññ, may not have been aware that proofs from these anaphoras could have not been accepted by his opponents had he lived a century or so earlier. The invasion of Graññ and the devastation of the churches and monasteries of the Empire by his army of mercenaries for over ten years<sup>112</sup>, followed by the unwelcome arrival of the Galla<sup>113</sup>, may have changed the situation. What survived of the clergy may have come together, either forgetting their differences or unaware of their existence, to put together whatever was left of the literary heritage of the country and to stand together against a new challenge, the theological propaganda of the Portuguese.

<sup>108</sup> EML 2147, f. 29r.

<sup>109</sup> See his homily for the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, EML 7028, f. 47r.

<sup>110</sup> EML 1838, f. 21v.

<sup>111</sup> See n. 92.

<sup>112</sup> R. Basset, "Études sur l'histoire d'Éthiopie", *Journal Asiatique*, sér. 7, no. 17 (1881), pp. 327-334; *id.*, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abyssinie (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle) par Chihab ed-Din Ahmed ben Abd el Qader surnommé Arab-Faqih* (2 vols.), Paris 1879-1901.

<sup>113</sup> Bahṛay (I. Guidi ed.), *Historia Gentis Galla*, CSCO, series altera, t. III (1907), text : pp. 220-232, translation 193-208; Cf. C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford (tr.), *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593-1646*, The Hakluyt Society, London 1954, pp. 111-127; A.W. Schleicher, *Geschichte der Galla*, Berlin 1893.



### Conclusion

Ethiopic literature, in its present form, manifests contradictory views regarding some basic doctrines of Christian faith. At first glance, that would seem to be the work of individual teachers who lacked a profound knowledge about the principal teachings of the Church. When studied closely, however, it soon becomes clear that each pair of opposing views has a history of its own. The history of some of these may go back as far as the beginning of Christianity in Axum. The most obvious ones, however, seem to have originated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the Church was in danger of disintegrating into many smaller or dissident groups, each with its own liturgical books that expressed its theological views. This seems to have taken place within a few decades after the death of the energetic Metropolitan Sälama (1348-1388). Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob (1434-1468) and his clerical clique, the *Kahnatä däbtära*, apparently used their talent and authority to challenge the dissidents and to establish a strong, centralized Church. The literature of the dissidents has survived even though the churches that produced it have disappeared, not only because of the persecution of the established Church but because of the invasion of Graññ. Lack of a strong *cathedra* from which orthodox teaching could have been declared, especially after the destruction of the country by Graññ, left the surviving clergy no option but to embrace the liturgical heritage as found in the churches and monasteries, with all the contradictions it manifested. The teachings of *Abunä ʾEṣṭifanos*, the founder of the ʾEṣṭifanosite sect; the views of Färe Maḥəbār and his followers expressed in the homiliary of *Rətu'a Haymanot*, but rejected by Emperor Zär'a Ya'eqob; the Anaphora of Our Lady Mary by Cyriacus, which was anathematized by the author of the *Mäṣəḥafä Məsṭir*; the *Qäleməntos*, considered a book of lies by Giyorgis Säglawi; and the homiliary of *Rətu'a Haymanot* and the *Mäṣəḥafä məṣṭir*, two major theological works which are in disagreement more often than not, constitute today part of the literary tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Examples have been given to illustrate these interpretations, save for the teachings of *Abunä ʾEṣṭifanos*. The Amharic *Təmhərtä Haymanot*, edited by R. Cowley<sup>114</sup>, is apparently a work produced by his school, judging by a comparison between it and the analysis of their teachings made by R. Beylot<sup>115</sup>. The Gə'əz text of it is found in several manuscripts<sup>116</sup>. The *Mäṣṭäbq* "ə"

<sup>114</sup> Roger Cowley, "A Text in Old Amharic", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 37 (1974), pp. 597-607.

<sup>115</sup> Robert Beylot, "Un épisode de l'histoire ecclésiastique de l'Éthiopie. Le mouvement Stéphanite. Essai sur sa chronologie et sa doctrine", *Annales d'Éthiopie*, vol. 8 (1962), pp. 103-116.

<sup>116</sup> E.g. EMMML 2082, f. 107.



*zä-Nəgəstä k'əllänä*, or “Supplication of the Queen of us all”<sup>117</sup>, and the *Mästäbq'ə zä-Mäsqäl* or “Supplication of the Cross”<sup>118</sup> were composed and made part of the liturgy because of the “heresy” of the Ḥṣṭifanosites or their predecessors<sup>119</sup>. This same heresy inspired Baḥrəy, the author of the *Zenahu lä-Galla*, or “History of the Galla”, to compose the following hymn<sup>120</sup>:

*Hallawu əllä yəblunä, taməlləkunu lä-fəṭur,  
wä-təgəbbəru bā'alä lä-əzä gədam mətur.*

*Mäsqäl lə'ul mälə'əltä k'əllu nəgär,  
nəḥnā-ni nəbələmu, sobä täsäqlä bā-qätr  
Krastos i-qəddäso-nu bā-dämu kəbur.*

There are those who say to us, “Do you worship a creature,  
and celebrate a feast to a piece of wood of the wilderness?”

“The Cross is high above all things”;

we say to them, “When Christ was crucified at noon,  
did he not sanctify it with his honoured blood?”

A critical study of the “prayer” known as *Säyfa Šəllase*, or “The Sword of the Trinity”, would reveal that it is nothing but a confession of faith and a treatise against Sabellianism and Arianism (religious views allegedly entertained by Zämika'el, *et al.*) and against magical practices, all concerns of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob (1434-1468)<sup>121</sup>.

Although religious controversies threatened the unity of the Church in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, they were certainly the main impetus for the growth of Ethiopic literature during those two centuries, not only in original compositions—as the refutative literature mentioned above shows—but also in translations—as the following example shows<sup>122</sup>:

But Gämäləyal is very diligent in undermining the *Book of Jubilees* because the *Book of Jubilees* speaks openly about the persons of the Trinity. While instructing those who accept his teaching, he has said, “The *Book of Jubilees* is not among the Enumerated Eighty-One Books; but rather (it is) the *Book of Maccabees* (that) is called the *Book of Jubilees*, because where the Apostles mention in their *Sinodos* the *Book of Jubilees*, they do not mention the *Book of Maccabees*, and

<sup>117</sup> E.g. *Mäṣəḥafä Qəddase*, EMMML 389, ff. 12v-13r.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 13rv; and EMMML 6780, f. 32r-33r.

<sup>119</sup> The heresy of refusing to revere the holy Cross and the icon (of the Madonna) was a serious problem for the Church during the reign of King Yagbä'a Šəyon (1285-1294); see *Gädlä Märqorewos* edited by Conti Rossini, *CSCO, script. aeth.*, text, series altera, t. 22 (1904), reprint vol. 33, t. 16 (1962), pp. 12-4.

<sup>120</sup> A hymn to the Cross, *Səbḥatä Mäsqäl*, Br. Mus. Or. 534, f. 4v, Wright, *Catalogue*, no. CXXVIII, 1, p. 82.

<sup>121</sup> The *Säyfa Šəllase* in Br. Mus. MS. Or. 525 comes from the fifteenth century; Wright, *Catalogue*, no. XLVI, 1, pp. 30-31.

<sup>122</sup> “The Homily (of Emperor Zär'a Ya'əqob) in Honour of Saturday”, EMMML 1480, f. 99r. On EMMML 1480, see note 73 above.



where they mention the *Book of Maccabees*, they do not mention the *Book of Jubilees*<sup>123</sup>. Furthermore, in order to denounce the *Book of Maccabees*, he has said, “The *Book of Maccabees*, too, is not among the Enumerated Eighty-One Books; but rather (it is) the *Book of Joseph ben Gorion* (that) is called the *Book of Maccabees*”.

Behold! Gāmalāyal has denounced four of the Enumerated Eighty-One Books, for the *Book of Jubilees* is one and the *Book of Maccabees* is three. But the *Book of Joseph ben Gorion*, which Gāmalāyal said is called the *Book of Maccabees*, is not a book of the Prophets but a homily which the doctors wrote under [Emperor] Constantine, for when King Zār’a Ya’aqob, named Q’wāstāntinos, heard of the false teaching of Gāmalāyal, he ordered that the *Book of Joseph ben Gorion* be translated from Arabic into Gə’əz. When it was translated, it was found that it was a homily composed during the days of Constantine, Emperor of Rome, and so King Zār’a Ya’aqob repudiated the false teaching of Gāmalāyal.

This document shows not only the obvious fact about the *Zena Ayhud* which seems to have been rejected, at least initially, because of the Emperor’s attitude towards the Jews in Ethiopia, but it also shows the possible existence of the *Fəṭḥa Nəgāst* (in translation) in the fifteenth century in that Gāmalāyal may have referred to it. The *Fəṭḥa Nəgāst* is the only local source, as far as I know, that equates the *Book of Joseph ben Gorion* with the *Book of Maccabees*: *Mäṣəḥafä Yosef wäldä Koräyon wä-wä’ətu Mäṣəḥafä Mäqabəyan*<sup>124</sup> (= “The *Book of Joseph ben Gorion*, that is, the *Book of Maccabees*”), and which explicitly excludes *Kufale* or the *Book of Jubilees* from the list of the Enumerated Eighty-One Books.

<sup>123</sup> Gāmalāyal’s argument about the listing of *Kufale*/*Mäqabəyan* has some basis in the *Täfäśśəhu wəḥudənä I* and *Abṭälis I* list *Kufale*, whereas *Abṭälis II* has *Mäqabəyan*; neither of them is listed in *Täfäśśəhu wəḥudənä II*; see Cod. Borg. Aeth. MS 2, ff. 55v, 73v and 93r. A little further on in the text, the Emperor explains that *Kufale* does not consist of three parts as the *Simodos* “seems to suggest”. That would probably mean that Gāmalāyal took the number as further evidence that *Kufale* is really another name for *Mäqabəyan*. *Kufale* is only one (book) while *Mäqabəyan* is three, although without *Kufale*. The argument of J. Horovitz, “Das äthiopische Maccabäerbuch”, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, vol. 19 (1906), pp. 194-233, that it is one book is not in accordance with local tradition; see also *Gädlä Märqorewos*, ed. Conti Rossini, p. 20 (lines 1-2).

<sup>124</sup> I. Guidi, *Il “Fetha Nagast” o “Legislazione dei Re”*, R. Istituto Orientale in Napoli, Rome 1897, p. 18.