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### Article

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## Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995.
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011; 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG, *ibid.*, 2011f.; 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI, *ibid.*, 2012ff.
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"*, Napoli: Università di Napoli "L'Orientale" (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London 1917ff.
- CSCO* *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003; II: D–Ha, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005; III: He–N, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007; (in cooperation with A. BAUSI), IV: O–X, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010; A. BAUSI (ed. in cooperation with S. UHLIG), V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014.
- EFAH* Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung, Epigraphische Forschungen auf der Arabischen Halbinsel, herausgegeben im Auftrag des Instituts von NORBERT NEBES.
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- IJAHS* *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston, MA – New York 1968ff.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
- NEASt* *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig – Roma – Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- OrChrP* *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, Roma 1935ff.
- PICES 15* S. UHLIG – M. BULAKH – D. NOSNITSIN – T. RAVE (eds.) 2005, *Proceedings of the XV<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20–25, 2003* = *AethFor* 65, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PICES 16* H. ASPEN – BIRHANU TEFERRA – SHIFERAW BEKELE – S. EGE (eds.) 2010, *Research in Ethiopian Studies: Selected papers of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Trondheim July 2007* = *AethFor* 72, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND – A. J. DREWES – R. SCHNEIDER 1991, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches*, Paris: [Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres] Diffusion de Boccard.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma 1941–1981, Roma – Napoli 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.
- ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig – Wiesbaden – Stuttgart 1847ff.

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## Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Theological Controversies in Ethiopia: A Letter of the Coptic Metropolitan Ǽtros of 1904

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In November–December 2012, the team of the Ethio-SPaRe project visited several churches and monasteries in the Täm̄ben region (Däg<sup>c</sup>a Täm̄ben *wäräda*, Central Təgray zone) and digitized a substantial portion of their manuscript collections. A very interesting document was found in one of the books housed in the Qəddəst Maryam monastery in Qäqäma – a letter written by the Coptic Metropolitan Ǽtros (1881–1917) in 1904. The present article aims at editing and commenting this important historical document. Even if the tenure of Ǽtros is known to historians in broad outline, clear information concerning his activity is certainly lacking. What is more, the period of his stay in Təgray between 1903 and 1914 is basically not documented. To the best of our knowledge, until now, no writings of the Metropolitan concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have emerged and become known to the scholars. Thus far only one document signed by the Metropolitan has been published (though not commented), that is, his letter to Alfred Ilg dated to 1896.<sup>1</sup>

The present letter deals with the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines and is addressed to the clergy of Təgray. Because of its historical significance, we decided to translate this document, provide some comments on it and eventually publish it. For one thing, this publication gives the chance to lay down the facts of the tenure of Ǽtros in Ethiopia. For another, it sheds light on information about a little known theological controversy, which appeared in Təgray at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also, the analysis of the new historical material leads to proposing a more balanced and accurate view on the role of the Coptic bishop within the organization of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

### The tenure of Ǽtros between 1881 and 1904

Ǽtros was Coptic Metropolitan of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tärwahədo* Church from 1881 to 1917. He appears as Ǽtros VII in the traditional lists of

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<sup>1</sup> BAIRU TAFLA 2000: 213 (text), 472f. (tr.).

the Coptic Metropolitans of Ethiopia, but as Petros IV in the historically reconstructed lists.<sup>2</sup> The previous Coptic Metropolitan of Ethiopia, <sup>3</sup>Atnatewos, died in 1876.<sup>3</sup> Because of hostilities between Ethiopia and Egypt, King Yoḥannəs IV (r. 1872–89) delayed the replacement of the metropolitan for four years.<sup>4</sup> He finally decided to request not for one but for four bishops. The request for several bishops was not unprecedented in the history of Ethiopia, since its rulers usually tried to avoid the absence of the bishop after the death of the incumbent bishop. The aim was keeping and, at times, even improving the ecclesiastic control over clergy.<sup>5</sup> However, such petition was accepted by the Alexandrian Patriarchate only once, during the reign of Zär<sup>c</sup>a Ya<sup>3</sup>əqob (r. 1434–68) when two Metropolitans, Gäbrə<sup>3</sup>el and Mika<sup>3</sup>el, were consecrated.<sup>6</sup> At the time of King Yoḥannəs IV, the problematic religious situation dramatically conditioned his request. Even if Yoḥannəs did not apparently need the bishop to convoke the council at Boru Meda in 1878 or to impose the *Täwähädo* doctrine as the only one authorized in the kingdom, he definitively needed several bishops to controll the local clergy and to supervise the conversion of the population.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in January 1881, he sent 12,000 Maria Theresa thalers to the Coptic Patriarch in Cairo, Cyril V (1874–1927).<sup>8</sup> Then, in June, an Ethiopian delegation was sent to Cairo with gifts for the Patriarch and the Egyptian ruler.<sup>9</sup> As a result, on 8 July 1881, the Coptic Holy Synod accepted the Ethiopian request<sup>10</sup> and Patriarch Cyril consecrated four Coptic Bishops for Ethiopia: Matewos (1881–1926), Luqas (1881–99/1900), Marqos (1881–83) and Petros. The four prelates reached Mäqälä, the capital city of Təgray, on 29 October 1881.<sup>11</sup> The witness of their arrival in Mäqälä, the French traveller Gabriel Simon, tells us that according to the initial plan of Yoḥannəs, one of the Bishops, not indicated by the name, was to assume the leadership of the Ethiopian Church.<sup>12</sup> Without denying the fact that the ques-

<sup>2</sup> SHIFERAW BEKELE 2010: 139a; HƏRUY WÄLDÄ ŚELLASE 2000: 96; MUNRO-HAY 2005: 4.

<sup>3</sup> TEDESCHI 1999: 109; BAIRU TAFLA 1977, note 131.

<sup>4</sup> ID. 1977: 150 (text), 151 (tr.); ZEWDE GABRE-SELLASSIE 1975: 108.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; SIMON 1885: 345.

<sup>6</sup> MUNRO-HAY 2007: 28–36; GETATCHEW HAILE 1981: 73–78.

<sup>7</sup> The population of Wällo was to be converted to Christianity while the populations of Goḡgam and Śäwa were to deny the *Qəb<sup>c</sup>at* and *Śägga laḡ* doctrines, respectively. The problem of the conversion of people definitively won over the Coptic authorities; cf. ZEWDE GABRE-SELLASSIE 1930: 303.

<sup>8</sup> SIMON 1885: 249–251.

<sup>9</sup> ZEWDE GABRE-SELLASSIE 1975: 108.

<sup>10</sup> MURAD 1958: 1; ZEWDE GABRE-SELLASSIE 1975: 108.

<sup>11</sup> SIMON 1885: 346; ZEWDE GABRE-SELLASSIE 1975: 109.

<sup>12</sup> SIMON 1885: 344.

tion of rank among the four prelates was posed at their arrival, the Italian Perini reports that the Coptic Bishops refused to establish any hierarchy among them.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the chronicler of the reign of Yoḥannəs, *a posteriori*, clearly sets apart Ʋṯros, designated as ሊቀ ፡ ጳጳሳት *liqä papasat*, from Matewos, Luqas and Marqos, designated as ጳጳስ *papas*.<sup>14</sup> Also Ašmä Giyorgis in his historical work singles out Ʋṯros from the other Coptic Bishops. According to him, however, Ʋṯros was appointed as ጳጳስ *papas* and the three others only ኤጲስ ፡ ቆጳስ *episqopos*.<sup>15</sup> Two possibilities are offered to us: the differentiation in terms of rank between the Coptic prelates was established after their arrival in Ethiopia and, consequently, concerned only the Ethiopian context, or Ʋṯros was consecrated as Bishop of higher rank already by the Patriarch.

Before we try to investigate which of these two options is more likely and realistic, let us discuss the nomenclature and the usage of high rank ecclesiastic titles by the Alexandrian Patriarchate and by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. From the Patriarchate point of view, the Coptic Bishop of Ethiopia was traditionally the *mutrān*, an Arabic word meaning “metropolitan”,<sup>16</sup> which was always translated into Gəʿəz as *papas*.<sup>17</sup> The Patriarch of Alexandria in Gəʿəz sources was called *liqä papasat* that is “the head of the metropolitans” – term which basically refers to his authority over them, while in Arabic he was called *ʿaba*, “pope”, or *batriyark*, “patriarch”.<sup>18</sup> Ordinary bishops were called *ʿepisqopos*, in Arabic “*ʿusquf*”.<sup>19</sup> In theory, the Metropolitan (*mutrān/papas*) had the right to consecrate bishops (*ʿusquf/ʿepisqopos*) who were subject to his jurisdiction. However, during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Patriarch of Alexandria gradually became the only

<sup>13</sup> PERINI 1905: 340.

<sup>14</sup> BAIRU TAFLA 1977: 152 (text), 153 (tr.).

<sup>15</sup> ID. 1987: 738 (text), 739 (tr.).

<sup>16</sup> GRAF 1954: 107. The Greek-Coptic word *mētropolitēs* is rendered in Christian Arabic as *matrübūlī* or *mutrān*. The term *mutrān* was always used in the letter sent by the Coptic authorities for designating the Coptic bishop of Ethiopia; see MURAD 1942: 132.

<sup>17</sup> The term *mutrān* corresponds also to another word in Gəʿəz, ሙጥሮጳሊስ *mätropalis*. However, it was not used and *papas* was preferred by the Ethiopians. The translation of the canon concerning the election of the Patriarch of Alexandria present in the *Senodos* and in the *Fəṯha Nägäšt* is in this case very clear: “The election of a Patriarch shall take place only in the presence of the bishops and the *mätropalis*, who is the *papas*”. See in the *Fəṯha Nägäšt* in GUIDI 1936: 30f.; ID. 1899: 24; PAULOS TZADUA 1968: 19; see in the *Senodos* in BAUSI 1995: 91.

<sup>18</sup> GRAF 1954: 25; see also MURAD 1942: 110, 130, 135.

<sup>19</sup> BITTNER 1909: 250; GRAF 1954: 8.

hierarchy who was eligible to appoint bishops.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the Coptic Metropolitans lost their power as archbishops in Egypt. From that time onwards, even the Metropolitan of Ethiopia could not consecrate bishops, just like his counterparts officiating in Egypt. The change of the ecclesiastical situation in Egypt explains the disparity in the *Senodos* and in the *Fəṭḥa Nəgəšt*, the two main Gəʿəz canonical sources, about the authority of the Coptic bishop of Ethiopia.<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned before, in the chronicle of Yoḥannəs IV Ʋeṭros is referred to as *liqä papasat*, the title which implies at least some jurisdictional power over the bishops, as well as the right to consecrate them. The chronicler uses almost the same term in reference to the Patriarch of Alexandria with the exception that he adds the information **ⲙⲕⲏⲏⲛⲉⲩⲥⲓⲛⲓ** (*zä-ʿAskəndərya*, “of Alexandria”) after the title of the Patriarch.<sup>22</sup> However, from the Coptic perspective, the Bishop of Ethiopia could not have a higher rank than the Metropolitan (*papas/muṭrān*), since the Patriarch of Alexandria monopolized all the archbishopric powers. Furthermore, it is highly improbable that the Patriarch of Alexandria would accept the same title as the “main” Metropolitan of Ethiopia. All in all, it transpires that while Ʋeṭros was considered the Metropolitan (*mētropolitēs* in Coptic/*muṭrān* in Arabic) by the Coptic Patriarchate, he was addressed as *liqä papasat* in Ethiopia.

The disparity between the Coptic and the Ethiopian way of understanding the Ʋeṭros’ position is reflected in his official seal. The seal appears in the edition of the chronicle of King Mənilək II<sup>23</sup>, in the above mentioned

<sup>20</sup> In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Coptic theologian Yūḥannā ibn ʿabī Zakaryā stated this fact in the 51<sup>st</sup> chapter of his nomocanon; cf. PERIER 1922: 746; see also KHS-BURMESTER 1967: 154.

<sup>21</sup> In the *Senodos*, the Bishop of Ethiopia is authorized to consecrate bishops subject to his jurisdiction; cf. MAURO DA LEONESSA 1942: 50 (text), 78 (tr.). However, in the *Fəṭḥa Nəgəšt*, the Bishop of Ethiopia did not have the right any more to appoint bishops; cf. GUIDI 1936: 23f.; ID. 1899: 29; PAULOS TZADUA 1968: 18. The canon concerning the authority of the Bishop of Ethiopia comes from a canonical work ascribed to Marūtā of Maipherqat written in Syriac probably in the 6<sup>th</sup> century; cf. VÖÖBUS 1982: 62f. (text), 55f. (tr.). Later, this canonical work was translated by the Coptic Church under the title “84 Arabic canons of Nicea”; cf. MEINARDUS 1962: 231–242. These canons were then translated into Gəʿəz and included in the Ethiopic *Senodos* before the 15<sup>th</sup> century; cf. BAUSI 2010: 623b. Yet a new translation appeared in the work of an Egyptian theologian al-Şāfi abū ʿl-Fadāʿil ibn al-ʿAssāl in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This specific book, in turn, was rendered into Gəʿəz in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and appeared under the title *Fəṭḥa Nəgəšt*; cf. PAULOS TZADUA 2005: 534a.

<sup>22</sup> BAIRU TAFLA 1977: 86, 150 (text), 87, 151 (tr.).

<sup>23</sup> ZEWDE GUEBRE-SELLASSIE 1930: 308 figure 46.



that Ɔetros could have been designated as *liqä papasat*. However, it seems to be a matter of usage rather than a fact. The Metropolitan, who sat on the right of the King of Kings, took the title which enabled him to stand out from the others, but without real authority over them. And indeed, Ɔetros did not seize more power than the other Coptic prelates.<sup>32</sup> Each *papas* was installed in the region under the rule of the Prince to whom he was entrusted, without disturbance from the others. The Bishopric was totally divided and, consequently, Matewos and Luqas were totally independent. The French traveller Jules Borelli does not mention any hierarchy among them and was extremely pleased when Ɔetros allowed him to enter Təgray after Matewos let him enter Šäwa.<sup>33</sup>

Ɔetros accompanied Yoḥannəs to the battle of Mätamma and was present when the King of Kings died from his injuries on 9 March 1889. On his deathbed, Yoḥannəs bequeathed his throne to *ras* Mängäša and Ɔetros supported him against Yoḥannəs' other nephews. On 3 November 1889, Mənilək of Šäwa was crowned King of Kings by Bishop Matewos. Ɔetros protested against this act arguing that having been the Bishop of the previous King of Kings, he was the one who was supposed to crown the new ruler. Despite his objection a letter from the Patriarch of Alexandria confirmed the coronation and, at the same time, the new "status" of Matewos.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the transfer of the secular power from Təgray to Šäwa had the same repercussions for the Bishopric: Ɔetros, the Bishop of Təgray, lost his *primus inter pares* status in Ethiopia. But again, it did not mean that Matewos had an authority over Luqas and Ɔetros. Just after the battle of Mätamma, Luqas and Ɔetros stayed in Däbrä Tabor, but later Mənilək sent Luqas to Lalibäla and Ɔetros to Yäggu,<sup>35</sup> probably to isolate them from the centre of any secular power jeopardizing Mənilək's rule. Luqas was given back to Täklä Haymanot after the Prince submitted himself to the new sovereign of Ethiopia. Ɔetros, in turn, was kept in Addis Abäba until the problematic political situation in Təgray was settled: Mənilək definitively could not permit him to join *ras* Mängäša, who threatened his authority over the country.

Matewos and Ɔetros together exercised their power at the ecclesiastical court in Addis Abäba.<sup>36</sup> In 1891 Mənilək decided to divide Ethiopia into three dioceses, intending to clarify the jurisdiction of the three Bishops. Two Bishops ruling at the same place with exactly the same power was definitively not

<sup>32</sup> The role of the Bishop consisted mainly in the consecration of churches and in the ordination of priests and deacons; cf. *ibid.* 210; ANNARATONE 1914: 262f. They could also place excommunication; cf. BAIRU TAFLA 1987: 738f.

<sup>33</sup> BORELLI 1890: 118.

<sup>34</sup> ZEWDE GUEBRE-SELLASSIE 1930: 303f.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 284.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 299–302.



a favourable situation and could probably provoked conflicts. Luqas, who died in Goḡḡam between 1899 and 1900, was granted authority over Täklä Haymanot's territories (Goḡḡam, Agāw Mədər, Käffa). ʔeṭros received jurisdiction over Təgray, Eritrea, Lasta and Wāg, while Matewos received authority over the rest of Ethiopia.<sup>37</sup> The diocese of ʔeṭros was really smaller than his previous one as he lost a large part of the central highlands (Gondär region, Bägemdər). But the division into dioceses proves again that the three Coptic Bishops had the same type of ecclesiastical authority and ʔeṭros could hope to enjoy the same independence as before. Finally, in 1899, *ras* Mängäša submitted himself to Mənilək and from that moment on the situation in Təgray settled step by step. In 1903, ʔeṭros was permitted to come back to Təgray.<sup>38</sup>

#### The letter of ʔeṭros found in the manuscript collection of the Qäqäma monastery

Extremely limited historical information is available on ʔeṭros' stay in Təgray between 1903 and 1914. Only the Italian traveller Ferdinando Martini provides us with some information on the occasion of his visit to ʔeṭros on 27 April 1906.<sup>39</sup> More information on the Coptic bishop appears later when he crowned *ras* Mika'el Ali (1847/50–1918) as *nəgus* in Däse in 1914 and when he decided to support him against Šäwa aristocracy after the *coup d'état* of 1916.<sup>40</sup>

The letter that we deal with has been found in a manuscript kept in the Qəddəst Maryam monastery in a village called Qäqäma, located in Däg<sup>c</sup>a Tämben *wäräda* between towns Haḡärä Sälam and <sup>c</sup>Abiy <sup>c</sup>Addi.<sup>41</sup> The monastery was founded by King Yoḡannəs IV, whose associate and close companion, Gäbrä Giyorgis, became the first abbot of the community. The monastic library includes a fine Octateuch manuscript on the last folios of which we find the letter of ʔeṭros presented here.<sup>42</sup> According to the colophon (on fol. 150r), the manuscript<sup>43</sup> was written in 1664, in the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 304ff.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 305.

<sup>39</sup> MARTINI 1943: 309–312.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. POLLERA 1926: 221; BERHANOU ABEBE 2001: 317f.; SMIDT 2001: 67f.; GEBRE-IGZIABIHER ELYAS 1994: 346.

<sup>41</sup> NOSNITSIN 2013: 388–396.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 392–395.

<sup>43</sup> 152 fols., dimensions: mm 394 x 295 x 75. The shelfmark given by the Ethio-SPaRe project to the manuscript is QDGM-003. The manuscript was identified as coming from Mäqdäla library; see ANCEL – NOSNITSIN 2014: 90–95, here 94.

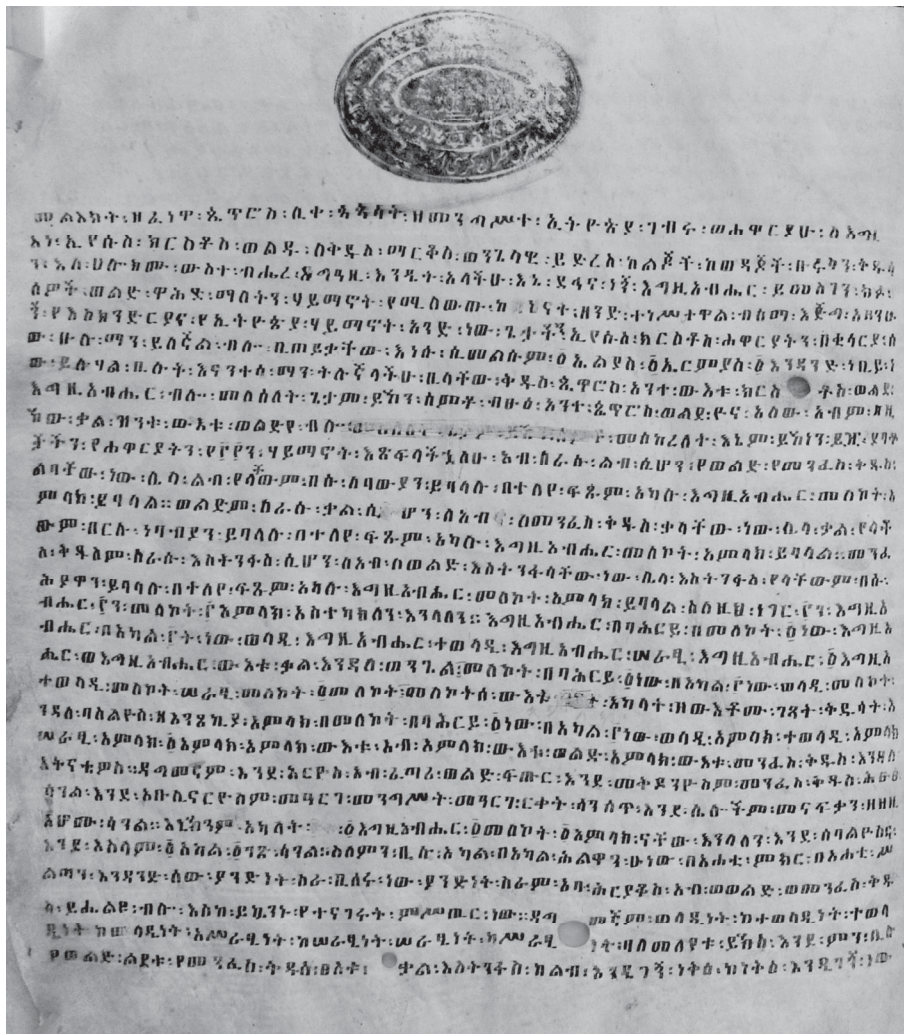


Fig. 1: Letter of Petros, manuscript, Qəddəst Maryam monastery, Qäqäma, Təgray, fol. 151v

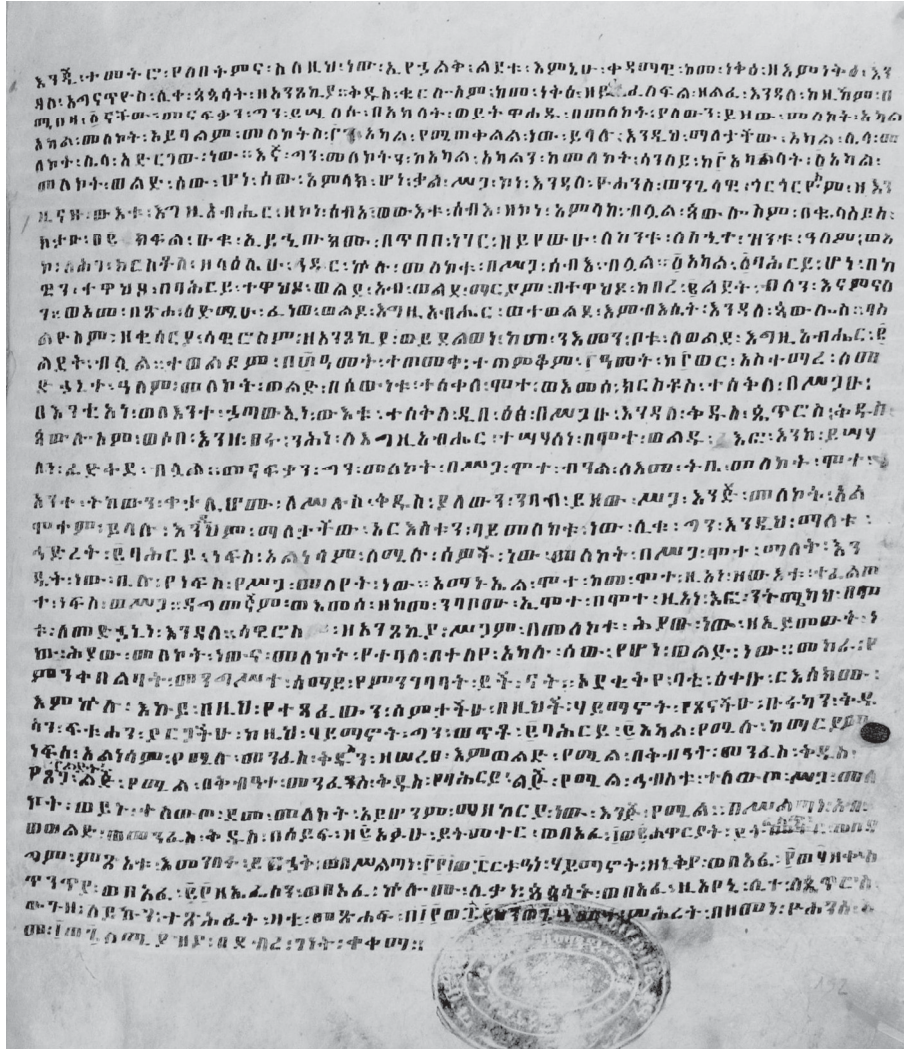


Fig. 2: Letter of Petros, manuscript, Qəddəst Maryam monastery, Qäqäma, Təgray, fol. 152r

of King Fasilädäs (1632–67, here called ‘Alämä Sägäd). The letter was written on 25 April 1904 (17 Miyazya 1896 °A.M.), but we do not know what the circumstances were when the document was penned. We can only assume that ʔeṭros personally visited the monastery since the letter contains his seal. The letter of ʔeṭros is written on the flyleaves of the manuscript, on two ruled and pricked folios, 151v and 152r [Figs. 1 and 2].<sup>44</sup> The seal of ʔeṭros appears twice, in the upper margin of fol. 151v and in the lower margin of fol. 152r. Even if faded, the Arabic inscription is still partly visible on fol. 151v [Fig. 3] while the Gəʿəz inscription is to some extent legible on fol. 152r [Fig. 4]. As mentioned before, it is the same seal as the one published in the edition of the chronicle of Mənilək and in the letter of ʔeṭros to Alfred Ilg from 1896.<sup>45</sup>

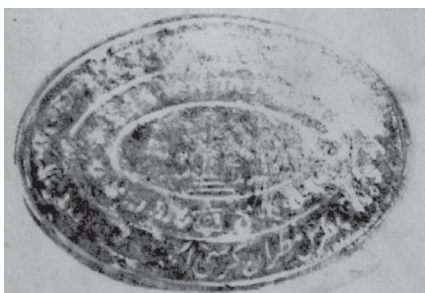


Fig. 3: Seal of ʔeṭros, letter of ʔeṭros, manuscript, Qəddəst Maryam monastery, Qäqäma, Təgray, fol. 151v



Fig. 4: Seal of ʔeṭros, letter of ʔeṭros, manuscript, Qəddəst Maryam monastery, Qäqäma, Təgray, fol. 152r

Characteristic features and exact periodization of the script(s) of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have still not been sufficiently studied.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, we will restrict ourselves to drawing attention to some features of the hand that penned the letter. The handwriting is of rather mediocre quality mainly because of the irregularity in the shape of the letters. They are produced in a manner common to the Ethiopic scripts with the pen nib at 0° angle to the writing line, resulting in bold upright vertical strokes and thin horizontal strokes. The curved stroke of such letters as **Ṕ**, **አ**, **ጸ** appears thinner where it is most twisted and broader in its more straight areas. To make the writing of some letters easier, the scribe started penning the first stroke from a thin line,<sup>47</sup> as in the letters **ሌ** and **ያ** (in **አሌያስ**, fol. 151v, l. 6). Finishing the

<sup>44</sup> Fol. 151v: 29 lines; fol. 152r: 35 lines.

<sup>45</sup> ZEWDE GUEBRE-SELLASSIE 1930: 308, figure 46; BAIRU TAFLA 2000: 213.

<sup>46</sup> UHLIG 1988: 768–806.

<sup>47</sup> So called “Haarstriche”, see *ibid.* 781; “hair-like strokes”, see ID. 1990: 107.

stroke with this simple flick of the pen is less frequent, for instance in the letter ን (in መናፍቃን, fol. 152r, l. 3). The shape of the letters has an angular form. The letters are tall, slender and spaced well apart. In a number of words, for instance እንዴት (fol. 151v, l. 3), ይገፍ (fol. 151v, l. 9), ቁርሎስም (fol. 152r, l. 2) and ዘላለሁ (fol. 152r, l. 9) the loop of the letters of the 5<sup>th</sup> order, that is, ዴ, ገፍ, ቁ and ለ is reduced to a short thick dash. Similarly, the loop of the letters of the 7<sup>th</sup> order looks like two short thick dashes since the scribe failed to connect them with two parallel lines. The examples that illustrate this case mostly concern the letter ለ as in ሀሎክሙ (fol. 151v, l. 3), ብሎ (fol. 151v, l. 8, l. 9), ሌሎችም (fol. 151v, l. 23) and ቁርሎስም (fol. 152r, l. 2). Also, the vowel marker of the letter ቁ in በቁላስይስ (fol. 152r, l. 7) is reduced to simple dashes.

The Amharic writing does not differ that much from the contemporary practice. There are only two peculiarities which may be worth a remark. First, the letter ገፍ (in ይገፍ, fol. 151v, l. 9) is penned with an additional dash extending to the left from the bottom of the left leg. This feature is attested in Amharic texts dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, the palatalization marker consists of two dashes that extend diagonally from the top of the letter, one to the left and one to the right (for example ጆ and ኘ in ከልጆች ፣ ከወዳጆች, fol. 151v, l. 2). In contrast, the present day convention is to pen the dashes horizontally.

It is reasonable to assume that the letter found in the Octateuch is a copy of the original letter of Petros that was made to record this important document. The original letter, most likely written on paper, was sent to the addressee. The present document is written continuously without any visual organization of basic textual units, such as the part containing an address to the reader and greetings, the main body of the letter and the concluding part. It is difficult to say whether this unstructured stream of words mirrors the visual organization of the original letter. However, among the edited letters, private and official, penned around the same time as the letter of Petros, we most often encounter letters with at least rudimental division into three parts.<sup>49</sup>

A few erasures and corrections made in the text show that the scribe proofread the text, possibly under some kind of supervision. This, in turn, indicates that he was aware of the significance of the document and serious consequences which any unintended changes may have brought about. The corrections usually involve adding omitted words and letters, and, in one case, crossing out a part of the word and substituting it with another. Punctuation is applied in a consistent and logical manner. There are three differ-

<sup>48</sup> GETACHEW HAILE 1983: 158.

<sup>49</sup> ULLENDORFF 1972: 229–270.

ent punctuation signs used in the text: two dots ( ∙ ) for separating words, four dots ( ■ ) for separating sentences and two dots with a dash above and below ( ⚭ ) for separating two related ideas within a sentence. Apart from a few exceptions, all numbers are written in Ethiopic numerals, for instance, ፩መለኮት “one Divinity”.

Since Amharic was used as the language of communication in the Ethiopian Church, the letter sent by the Metropolitan to the Təgrəñña-speaking educated community was in that language. Aside from Amharic, the letter also contains a few Gəʿəz sentences. Both languages may be viewed as forming two layers: the author leads the main argumentation in Amharic, the profane language, and supports his stance with quotations in Gəʿəz, the language of the Scriptures and authoritative religious texts. Let us discuss both layers beginning from Gəʿəz. The Gəʿəz layer of the letter consists of quotations from the New Testament, from *Haymanotä ʾabäw* (“The Faith of the Fathers”) – theological miscellanea from which the author cites the Church Fathers – from the Anaphora of St. Mary and from some other unidentified writings. Also, Gəʿəz is the source of numerous words employed as technical terms in the theological discussion. Finally, a few formulaic expressions, by which we mean fixed phrases applied in specific acts of communication, are written in Gəʿəz. These are the introduction of the sender of the letter (መልእክት ፡ ዘፈነዎ... , fol. 151v, ll. 1–2) and the excommunication (በሥልጣነ ፡ አብ... ውጉዘ ፡ ለይኩን, fol. 152r, ll. 30–34). Most of the quotations are introduced by various Amharic expressions indicating direct speech, such as the simplest and most common እንዳለ... “as he said”, ብሏል... “he said” as well as ብሎ ፡ መለሰለት... “he answered him saying:”, ብሎ ፡ መስከረለት... “he testified to him saying:”, which specify the type of the speech act. With the exception of 1 Pet 3:18, all the remaining citations are identical or almost the same as in their source books.<sup>50</sup>

The Amharic layer appears very dominant in the letter. It starts with a formulaic expression used at the beginning of any letters (ይድረስ ፡ ከ... , “may it reach”, fol. 151v, l. 2) and the everyday greeting. Then, the author explains the cause of the letter and mentions the authority of the fathers that stands behind him. After that, the argumentation follows which is concluded with listing and anathematizing those who would deny the *Täwähädo* doctrine. In two instances, the author explicitly applies the way of leading a

<sup>50</sup> The New Testament citations have been compared against the following church editions: ሐዲስ ኪዳን 1975; የቅዱስ ፡ ጳውሎስ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ ንባቡ ፡ ከነትርጓሜው 1948; ቩቱ ፡ መጻሕፍተ ፡ ሐዲሳት ፡ ንባብ ፡ ከነትርጓሜ 1951. The point of reference for the quotations from *Haymanotä ʾabäw* is ሃይማኖተ ፡ አበው 1967.

polemics known from the *andəmta*-commentary.<sup>51</sup> They are indicated with such expressions as ስለምን ፡ ቢሉ ፡ ... “if they say ‘why’,” (fol. 151v, l. 25) and ይኸስ ፡ እንደ ፡ ምን ፡ ቢሉ ፡ ... “as for this, if they say ‘how’,” (fol. 151v, l. 28). The type of Amharic, in which the letter is penned, indicates Modern Amharic, namely the language that is known from written sources from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is to a great extent in use today, especially in religious circles.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, one syntactic peculiarity, which nowadays is obsolete but was still present in the language at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is worth mentioning. That is, on one occasion, the writer of the letter uses content clauses composed of the complement እንድ- and the simple imperfect form of the verb, ከሌብ ፡ እንዲገኝ ፡ ነቅዕ ፡ ከነቅዕ ፡ እንዲገኝ ፡ ነው (fol. 151v, l. 29). This construction is currently substituted by the complement እንድ- followed by the relative imperfect.<sup>53</sup> The quality of Amharic is indicative of the native speaker knowledge of the language. The abundance of citations and their exactness, the smooth and skilful flow of argumentation, the knowledge of the *andəmta*-commentary jargon and the ease with which the theological matters are discussed suggest that the author of the letter was very well-versed in the teachings and the doctrinal position of the *Täwähədo* Faith.

Given that the sender of the letter, Petros, came from Egypt, where he also obtained his theological education, we may rightly ask if he initially wrote the letter in Arabic and had it translated into Amharic and Gəʿəz. This possibility should be excluded based on the linguistic features and the content. Aside from one Arabic word, ክታቡ (fol. 152r, l. 8), being in fact a loan word in Gəʿəz, the language of the letter does not show any signs of an Arabic *Vorlage* neither on the syntactic, morphological nor lexical levels. The word ክታቡ used in reference to the Pauline epistle, instead of Gəʿəz መልክት suggests that, indeed, the Metropolitan had a major role in making up the letter. As for the content, it reveals the way and the sources of argumentation peculiar to the Ethiopian theological tradition. To make this claim even more convincing, let us mention that the Anaphora of St. Mary was still unknown to the Coptic Church at the time of Petros.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Concerning *andəmta*-commentary, see: COWLEY 1983: 19–61; STOFFREGEN-PEDERSEN 1995: 6f.; BÖLL 1998: 62–81; MERSHA ALEHEGNE 2011: 8–12; STOFFREGEN-PEDERSEN – TEDROS ABRAHA 2003: 258a–259b.

<sup>52</sup> APPELYARD 2003: 111f.

<sup>53</sup> GOLDENBERG 1965: 10.

<sup>54</sup> At that time, the Coptic Church used only the Anaphoras of St. Cyril, St. Gregory and St. Basil.

### Theological context of the letter

In his letter, Pētros aims at exposing the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines accepted by Alexandria, and thus by the Ethiopian Church and State, to the clergy of the “land of Ag<sup>c</sup>azi” (ብሔረ ፡ አግዓዚ). Although the expression “land of Ag<sup>c</sup>azi” was usually employed in reference to Ethiopia, in this case it may refer specifically to the central regions of Təgray. The expression is rather obsolete and does not exist in Modern Amharic. However, it is still used by the elders in some parts of the present-day Təgray when they talk about the region they live in.<sup>55</sup> Pētros’ letter, being didactical in character, presents and also explains difficult but crucial theological issues. In what follows, we will summarise the contents of the letter and, subsequently, we will try to analyse the key points that it raises.

The letter was sent as a reaction to the presence of “wicked people” (ክፉ ፡ ሰዎች) among the clergy who were challenging the *Təwahədo* doctrine (ወልድ ፡ ዋሕድ ፡ ማለትን ፡ ሃይማኖት). At first, he says that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same intellect (ልብ), word (ቃል) and breath (እስትንፋስ). Pētros explains that they represent one divinity, called Lord (እግዚአብሔር), Divinity (መለኮት) or God (አምላክ), in three persons, which respectively generates (ወላዲ), is generated (ተወላዲ) and is the sprout (ወራዲ). Thus, he contests the existence of any hierarchy among the Persons of the Trinity. Then, he gives an answer to the technical problem posed by the statement which says, at the same time, “one Divinity in three Persons” (ይህለሱ ፡ በአካላት ፡ ወይትዋሐዱ ፡ በመለኮት, fol. 152r, l. 3) and “one Person is equal to one Divinity” (መለኮት ፡ አካል ፡ አካል ፡ መለኮት, fol. 152r, ll. 3f.). In this way, he insists on the impossibility to separate notions of “person” (አካል) and “divinity” (መለኮት). After this, he comments on the statements concerning Christology by saying that “[Christ] is one Person, one Nature; united in the Mode of Existence, united in Nature, [being] the Son of the Father, the Son of Mary, He was honored by the [hypostatic] union” (፩አካል ፡ ፩ባሕርይ ፡ ሆነ ፡ በከዊን ፡ ተዋህዶ ፡ በባሕርይ ፡ ተዋህዶ ፡ ወልድ ፡ አብ ፡ ወልድ ፡ ማርያም ፡ በተዋህዶ ፡ ከበረ, fol. 152r, ll. 9f.) and highlights that for him Christ knew (only) two births (፪ልደት). Then, he exposes the problem of the death of Christ on the cross. He contends that only the flesh and not the divinity died on the cross and explains that, on the contrary, “Divinity died in the flesh” (መለኮት ፡ በሥጋ ፡ ሞተ, fol. 152r, ll. 20f.). He finishes his letter by pointing out several theological ideas which he condemns.

<sup>55</sup> Information given by Wolbert Smidt (Mekelle University); see also SMIDT 2010a: 890b.



Ṗetros does not explicitly say who the people that are challenging the Orthodox faith are and where they are. Nevertheless, the religious context of Təgray at that time and the theological themes that he deals with allow us to identify the characteristics of these opponents and their location. The council of Boru Meda in 1878 had imposed *Täwähədo/Wäld qəb* Christological doctrine as the only one accepted in the Christian kingdom. *Qəbʿat* and *Şägga läğ* doctrines were condemned.<sup>56</sup> But it did not put an end to theological controversies in Ethiopia. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a controversy concerning the Trinity and the concept of divinity (**መላኩት**, *mäläkot*) emerged.<sup>57</sup> In Waldəbba hermitage, monks divided themselves into two rival factions. The first one, called the “house of *abunä* Minas”, after the name of a known spiritual father of that place, professed that Trinity represents “one Divinity in Three Persons”. This doctrine was summarized as the “one Divinity” (**፩መላኩት**, *and mäläkot*) doctrine. The second one, called the “house of *abunä* Ṭaʿəmə Krəstos”, after the name of another recognized spiritual father, professed, on the contrary, that Trinity represents “Three Divinities in Three Persons”. It was known as the “three Divinities” (**፫መላኩት**, *sost mäläkot*) doctrine.<sup>58</sup> Apparently, the religious dispute had its source in the problematic interpretation of the statement written in the *Mälkäʿa səllase* (“Image of the Trinity”): **መላኩት ፣ ለለ ፣ አሐዱ ፣ ዘዘአክሙ ፣ ገጽተ**, “Each of Your faces has Divinity”.<sup>59</sup> Starting from Waldəbba, the controversy spread to other parts of Təgray and appeared among the clergy of different monasteries like Däbrä Abbay and Däbrä Bizän, and finally among the clergy of Aksum.<sup>60</sup> The theological dispute gained vital importance and in April 1907 King Mənilək II (r. 1889–1913) was urged to write a letter to Waldəbba calling for reconciliation of the two movements.<sup>61</sup> Evidently, it did not solve the problem and so the monarch sent another letter in June 1910.<sup>62</sup> In both letters, Mənilək threatened those who disobeyed with anathema from

<sup>56</sup> Concerning the council of Boru Meda, see among others studies: CAULK 1972: 23–41; TESFAZGHI UQBIT 1973: 83–86; CRUMMEY 1978: 427–442; YAQOB BEYENE 1977: 1–9, 31–59.

<sup>57</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 992a–993a.

<sup>58</sup> BERHANÄ MÄSQÄL TESFAMARYAM 1996: 238; BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1983: 124ff.

<sup>59</sup> **መልክክ ፣ ሥላሴ** 1985: 2; TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 992b; BERHANÄ MÄSQÄL TESFAMARYAM 1996: 241.

<sup>60</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 992b; BERHANÄ MÄSQÄL TESFAMARYAM 1996: 242f.

<sup>61</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 992b.

<sup>62</sup> The letter was sent in Waldəbba on 1 June 1910 (24 *gənbət* 1902 °A.M.). The photos of the letter and its transcription are published by Bärühun Käbbädä in his book about Waldəbba; cf. BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1983: 141–149.

Bishop Matewos.<sup>63</sup> As mentioned, Waldəbba was under the jurisdiction of Matewos while Aksum and Central Təgray were under the jurisdiction of Ɔṭros. In November 1914, a council in which Ɔṭros participated, was even set up at Däse to overcome the problem involving clergy of Aksum and of Däbrä Abbay monastery.<sup>64</sup> In fact, at that time Däse became the See of the new diocese of Ɔṭros as the Bishop of Təgray and Wällo under the patronage of the newly crowned *nəgus* Mika'el.<sup>65</sup> Even if, apparently, the dispute calmed down in Aksum and Däbrä Abbay, it continued over the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Waldəbba where it still lingers on today.<sup>66</sup>

Obviously, the letter of Ɔṭros written in 1904 refers to this Trinitarian controversy. It seems that it was sent to the clergy of Aksum or to the monks of Däbrä Abbay. In his letter, Ɔṭros aims at proving that Trinity represents “one Divinity in Three Persons”. At first, he treats the old and well known heterodox doctrines like those of Arius, Macedonius, Apollinaris or Sabellius (fol. 151v, ll. 22–25). But then, when he exposes then the “arithmetic” problem posed by the statement telling, at the same time, that “they are Three Persons in one Divinity” and “one Divinity is equal to one Person” (fol. 152r, ll. 3f.), he refers to unnamed “heretics”. Thus, in this passage, Ɔṭros targets the followers of the “three Divinities” doctrine without calling them as such, but he exposes their theological argument.

The letter also mentions other controversies. Ɔṭros reminds the main theological statements officially accepted by the Ethiopian Church. In relation to the Trinity, he makes a clear reference to the statement saying that: “The Father generates, the Son is generated, and the Holy Spirit is the sprout” (fol. 151v, ll. 16–21). This reference permits him to contest the Catholic doctrine of the *Filioque*. As such, he invokes the dispute which occurred with Catholics during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

If his purpose was both to remind the statements accepted by the Church and to confront those who, in the past, had contested them, he was also concerned with other Ethiopian theological movements. Just after explaining the necessity of not separating the notions of divinity and person for Trinity, Ɔṭros invokes the statements accepted by the *Täwähädo* doctrine concerning the Christological teaching in telling that: **ጴሐካል ፡ ጴባሕርይ ፡ ሆነ ፡ በከዊን ፡ ተዋህዶ ፡ በባሕርይ ፡ ተዋህዶ ፡ ወልደ ፡ ኣብ ፡ ወልደ ፡ ማርያም ፡ በተዋህዶ ፡ ከበረ ፡ ጂልደት ፡ ብለን ፡ እናምናለን** # “We believe that He is one Person, one Nature; united in the Mode of Existence (*käwin*), united in

<sup>63</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 992b; BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1983: 144, 147.

<sup>64</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 993a.

<sup>65</sup> ANCEL 2011: 506; SMIDT 2001: 361–373.

<sup>66</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 993a; BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1983: 123–140.

Nature (*baḥrəy*), [being] the Son of the Father, the Son of Mary, He was honored by the [hypostatic] union, [so there are] two births” (fol. 152r, ll. 9f.). At first, this sentence exposes the statements accepted by *Täwähädo* doctrine during the controversy on “unction” and “union”, also summarized as “በተዋሕዶ ፣ ወልድ ፣ ባሕርይ” “[Christ] is the Son [of God] in nature by the [hypostatic] union”. It opposes followers of both *Qabʿat* and *Ṣägga läḡ* movements.<sup>67</sup> It is interesting to note that Peṭros tries to avoid misunderstanding in using both “*kawin*” and “*baḥrəy*” to express the notion of “nature”.<sup>68</sup> Secondly, it is a summary of the *Täwähädo* doctrine on the number of Christ’s “births”, as it was expressed at the council of Boru Meda in 1878. Even if Peṭros admits that during the hypostatic union “the Son was honored”, he professes the “two births” (“*hulätt lädät*”) of Christ, which are the eternal birth from the Father and the temporal birth from the blessed Mary. This doctrine opposed the “three birth” (“*sost lädät*”) followers (mainly from the *Ṣägga läḡ* movement), who believed in a third “birth” which happened when the unction by the Holy Spirit took place (at His incarnation or His baptism).<sup>69</sup> In fact, Peṭros continues his discourse by focusing on the absence of a third “birth” during the life of Jesus Christ.

The last part of the letter deals with the problem concerning the death of Christ and the statement claiming that “Divinity died in the flesh” (fol. 152r, ll. 20f.). Here again, it is a clear allusion to the debate with the Catholics.<sup>70</sup> Finally, he concludes his letter by reminding the main doctrines that he refutes and he threatens those who profess them (fol. 152r, ll. 27–34). He refers to Catholics (those who profess Diophysite doctrine and *Filioque*), but also to Protestants (those who deny the transubstantiation), to the *Ṣägga läḡ* movement (those who say “Son of Grace through the unction”<sup>71</sup>), and to the *Qabʿat* followers (those who say “Son of nature through the unction”<sup>72</sup>).

Written in 1904, the letter shows an early state of the involvement of high ecclesiastical and political authorities in the Trinitarian controversy, which occurred in Təgray at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nicknames of each group (“one Divinity” and “three Divinities”) do not appear. They will be clearly identified only in the letters of Mənilək in 1907 and 1910. Also, Waldəbba is not mentioned in the letter. The sending of this letter in 1904 was nevertheless motivated by the spread of the dispute about

<sup>67</sup> GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: xi; cf. also ID. 1986: 205–209.

<sup>68</sup> TESFAZGHI UQBIT 1973: 33, 35f.

<sup>69</sup> ID. 1973: 84; YAQOB BEYENE 1977: 1–9; ID. 1981: 15 (footnote 48), 281f.; GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: ix f.

<sup>70</sup> ADMASU ĞÄMBÄRE, 1954: 180; TESFAZGHI UQBIT 1973: 65.

<sup>71</sup> GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: 27 (text), 25 (trs.); cf. also ID. 1986: 205–209.

<sup>72</sup> ID. 1990: 29–34 (text), 26–31 (trs.); cf. also ID. 1986: 205–250.

the number of divinities for the Trinity in the central regions of Təgray. It seems that Peṭros did not really know all the characteristics of the controversy or its origin, perhaps because the Waldəbba region did not belong to his diocese. However, the controversy was brought into the heart of Təgray. In this letter, Peṭros targeted all potential opponents to the official doctrine of the Ethiopian Church present in Ethiopia at that time, such as Catholics, Protestants, *Ṣägga läğ* and *Qəb'at*.<sup>73</sup> Peṭros as bishop of that region, was apparently the first one who officially reacted to solve the problem. And one had to wait for the letters sent by Mənilək II to Waldəbba in 1907 and 1910 to see that the high authorities of the Church finally identified the origin and the two groups of the “*mäläkot* controversy”. Thus, it may be concluded that the letter presented here is probably the oldest known historical document issued from high ecclesiastical authorities which refers to the “*mäläkot* controversy”.

Text

Fol. 151v: መልእክት ፡ ዘፈነዋ ፡ ጴጥሮስ ፡ ሊቀ ፡ ጳጳሳት ፡ ዘመንግሥተ ፡ ኢትዮጵያ ፡ ገብሩ ፡ ወሐዋርያሁ ፡ ለእግዚእነ ፡<sup>74</sup> ኢየሱስ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ወልዱ ፡ ለቅዱስ ፡ ማርቆስ ፡ ወንጌላዊ ፡ ይድረስ ፡ ከልጆች ፡ ከወዳጆች ፡ ቡሩካን ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ እለ ፡ ሀሎክሙ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ብሔረ ፡ አግዓዚ ፡ እንዴት ፡ አላችሁ ፡ እኔ ፡ ደኅና ፡ ነኝ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ይመስገን ፡ ክፉ ፡ ሰዎች ፡ ወልድ ፡ ዋሕድ ፡ ማለትን ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ የሚለውጡ ፡ ከ[ካ]ሀናት ፡ ዘንድ ፡ ተነሥተዋል ፡ ብሰማ ፡ እጅግ ፡ አዘንሁኝ ፡ የእስክንድርያና ፡ የኢትዮጵያ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ አንድ ፡ ነው ፡ ጌታችን ፡ ኢየሱስ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ሐዋርያትን ፡ በቂሳርያ ፡ ሰው ፡ ሁሉ ፡ ማን ፡ ይለኛል ፡ ብሎ ፡ ቢጠይቃቸው ፡ እነሱ ፡ ሲመልሱም ፡ ሄኤልያስ ፡ ሄኤርምያስ ፡ ሄእንዳንድ ፡ ነቢይ ፡ ነው ፡ ይሉሃል ፡ ቢሉት ፡ እናንተ ፡ ማን ፡ ትሉኛላችሁ ፡ ቢላቸው ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ጴጥሮስ ፡ አንተ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ወልደ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ብሎ ፡ መለሰለት ፡ ጌታም ፡ ይኸን ፡ ስምቶ ፡ ብፁዕ ፡ አንተ ፡ ጴጥሮስ ፡ ወልደ ፡ ዮና ፡ አለው ፡ አብም ፡ በዚኸው ፡ ቃል ፡ ዝንቱ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወልድየ ፡ ብሎ ፡ [erasure<sup>75</sup>] ፡ መሰከረለት ፡ እኔም ፡ ይኸነን ፡ ይዜ ፡ ያባቶቻችን ፡ የሐዋርያትን ፡ የ፫፫ን ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ እጽፍላችኋለሁ ፡ አብ ፡ ለራሱ ፡ ልብ ፡ ሲሆን ፡ የወልድ ፡ የመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ልባቸው ፡ ነው ፡ ሌላ ፡ ልብ ፡ የላቸውም ፡ በሱ ፡ ለባውያን ፡ ይባላሉ ፡ በተለየ ፡ ፍጹም ፡ አካሉ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ መለኮት ፡ አምላክ ፡ ይባ

<sup>73</sup> Catholics were very active in Agame and Irob regions, and of course in Eritrea due to the Italian colony; cf. ANCEL 2012: 92f. Less active Protestants were also present in the northern part of Təgray and in the Eritrean highlands. An Ethiopian ecclesiastic, Wäldä Šəllase Kənfu (1841–76) had created a Protestant movement in Ḥamasen; cf. SMIDT 2010b: 1110; ID. 2010c: 426a–427b.

<sup>74</sup> ግዚ is a monogram.

<sup>75</sup> Still readable: መለሰለት ፡ ጌታም ፡ ይኸነን.

ላል ። ወልድም ፣ ለራሱ ፣ ቃል ፣ ሲ[erasure]ሆን ፣ ለአብ[erasure<sup>76</sup>] ፣ ለመንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ ቃላቸው ፣ ነው ፣ ሌላ ፣ ቃል ፣ የላቸውም ፣ በርሱ ፣ ነባብያን ፣ ይባላሉ ፣ በተለየ ፣ ፍጹም ፣ አካሉ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ መለኮት ፣ አምላክ ፣ ይባላል ። መንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ ለራሱ ፣ እስትንፋስ ፣ ሲሆን ፣ ለአብ ፣ ለወልድ ፣ እስትንፋሳቸው ፣ ነው ፣ ሌላ ፣ እስትንፋስ ፣ የላቸውም ፣ በሱ ፣ ሕያዋን ፣ ይባላሉ ፣ በተለየ ፣ ፍጹም ፣ አካሉ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ መለኮት ፣ አምላክ ፣ ይባላል ፣ ስለዚህ ፣ ነገር ፣ ፫ን ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ፫ን ፣ መላኮት ፣ ፫አምላክ ፣ አስተካክለን ፣ እንላለን ። እግዚአብሔር ፣ በባሕርይ ፣ በመለኮት ፣ ፩ነው ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ በአካል ፣ ፫ት ፣ ነው ፣ ወላዲ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ተወላዲ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ሠራዊ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ፩እግዚአብሔር ፣ ወእግዚአብሔር ፣ ውእቱ ፣ ቃል ፣ እንዳለ ፣ ወንጌል ፣ መለኮት ፣ በባሕርይ ፣ ፩ነው ፣ በአካል ፣ ፫ነው ፣ ወላዲ ፣ መለኮት ፣ ተወላዲ ፣ መለኮት ፣ ሠራዊ ፣ መለኮት ፣ ፩መለኮት ፣ መለኮት ፣ ውእቱ [erasure<sup>77</sup>] ፣ አካላት ፣ ዘውእቶሙ ፣ ገጸት ፣ ቅዱሳት ፣ እንዳለ ፣ ባስልዮስ ፣ ዘአንጸኪያ ፣ አምላክ ፣ በመለኮት ፣ በባሕርይ ፣ ፩ነው ፣ በአካል ፣ ፫ነው ፣ ወላዲ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ተወላዲ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ሠራዊ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ፩አምላክ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ውእቱ ፣ አብ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ውእቱ ፣ ወልድ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ውእቱ ፣ መንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ እንዳለ ፣ አትናቱዎስ ፣ ዳግመኛም ፣ እንደ ፣ አርዮስ ፣ አብ ፣ ፈጣሪ ፣ ወልድ ፣ ፍጡር ፣ እንደ ፣ መቅደንዮስ ፣ መንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ ሕፁፅ ፣ ሳንል ፣ እንደ ፣ አቡሊናርዮስም ፣ መዓርገ ፣ መንግሥት ፣ መዓርገ ፣ ርቀት ፣ ሳንሰጥ ፣ እንደ ፣ ሌሎችም ፣ መናፍቃን ፣ ዘዘዘአሆሙ ፣ ሳንል ። እኒኸንም ፣ አካላት ፣ [erasure] ፣ ፩እግዚአብሔር ፣ ፩መለኮት ፣ ፩አምላክ ፣ ናቸው ፣ እንላለን ፣ እንደ ፣ ሰባልዮስና ፣ እንደ ፣ እስላም ፣ ፩አካል ፣ ፩ገጽ ፣ ሳንል ። ስለምን ፣ ቢሉ ፣ አካል ፣ በአካል ፣ ሕልዋን ፣ ሁነው ፣ በአሐቲ ፣ ምክር ፣ በአሐቲ ፣ ሥልጣን ፣ እንዳንድ ፣ ሰው ፣ ያንድነት ፣ ስራ ፣ ቢሰሩ ፣ ነው ፣ ያንድነት ፣ ስራም ፣ አባ ፣ ሕርያቆስ ፣ አብ ፣ ወወልድ ፣ ወመንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ ይሔልዩ ፣ ብሎ ፣ እስከ ፣ ይኳንኑ ፣ የተናገሩት ፣ ምሥጢር ፣ ነው ። ዳግመኛም ፣ ወላዲነት ፣ ከተወላዲነት ፣ ተወላዲነት ፣ ከወላዲነት ፣ አሥራዊነት ፣ ከሠራዊነት ፣ ሠራዊነት ፣ ከሥራዊነት ፣ ባለመለየቱ ፣ ይኸስ ፣ እንደ ፣ ምን ፣ ቢሉ ፣ የወልድ ፣ ልደቱ ፣ የመንፈስ ፣ ቅዱስ ፣ ፀአቱ ፣ ቃል ፣ እስትንፋስ ፣ ከልብ ፣ እንዲገኝ ፣ ነቅዕ ፣ ከነቅዕ ፣ እንዲገኝ ፣ ነው [Fol. 152r] እንጂ ፣ ተመትሮ ፣ የለበትምና ፣ ስለዚህ ፣ ነው ፣ ኢየሁዳቅ ፣ ልደቱ ፣ እምኔሁ ፣ ቀዳማዊ ፣ ከመ ፣ ነቅዕ ፣ ዘእምነቅዕ ፣ እንዳለ ፣ አግናጥዮስ ፣ ሊቀ ፣ ጳጳሳት ፣ ዘአንጸኪያ ። ቅዱስ ፣ ቂርሎስም ፣ ከመ ፣ ነቅዕ ፣ ዘይ[erasure]ፈለፍል ፣ ዘልፈ ፣ እንዳለ ፣ ከዚኸም ፣ በሚበዛ ፣ ፩ናቸው ፣ መናፍቃን ፣ ግን ፣ ይሄለሱ ፣ በአካላት ፣ ወይትዋሐዱ ፣ በመለኮት ፣ ያለውን ፣ ይዘው ፣ መለኮት ፣ አካል ፣ አካል ፣ መለኮት ፣ አይባልም ፣ መለኮት ፣ ፫ን ፣ አካል ፣ የሚጠቀልል ፣ ነው ፣ ይላሉ ፣ እንዲህ ፣ ማለታቸው ፣ አካል ፣ ሌላ ፣ መለኮት ፣ ሌላ ፣ አድርገው ፣ ነው ። እኛ ፣ ግን ፣ መለኮትን ፣ ከአካል ፣ አካልን ፣ ከመለኮት ፣ ሳንለይ ፣ ከ፫አካላት ፣ ፩አካል ፣ መለኮት ፣ ወልድ ፣ ሰው ፣ ሆነ ፣ ሰው ፣ አምላክ ፣ ሆነ ፣ ቃል ፣ ሥጋ ፣ ኮነ ፣ እንዳለ ፣ ዮሐንስ ፣ ወንጌላዊ ፣ ጎርጎርዮስም ፣ ዘእንዚናዙ ፣ ውእቱ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ዘኮነ ፣ ሰብአ ፣ ወውእቱ ፣ ሰብአ ፣ ዘኮነ ፣ አምላክ ፣ ብሏል ፣ ጳውሎስም ፣

<sup>76</sup> Still readable: -ና.

<sup>77</sup> Still readable: ገጸት.

በቁላሰይስ፡ ክታቡ<sup>78</sup>፡ በጀ[erasure]ክፍል፡ ዑቁ፡ ኢይኒጠክሙ፡ በጥበብ፡ ነገር፡ ዘይየውሁ፡ ለከንቱ፡ ለስኒተ፡<sup>79</sup> ዝንቱ፡ ዓለም፡ ወአኮ፡ ለሕገ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ዘላዕሌ ሁ፡ ኅደር፡ ኩሉ፡ መለኮቱ፡ በሥጋ፡ ሰብእ፡ ብሏል ። ጀአካል፡ ጀባሕርይ፡ ሆነ፡ በከዊን፡ ተዋህዶ፡ በባሕርይ፡ ተዋህዶ፡ ወልደ፡ አብ፡ ወልደ፡ ማርያም፡ በተዋህዶ፡ ከበረ፡ ጀልደት፡ ብለን፡ እናምናለን ። ወአመ፡ በጽሐ፡ ዕድሜሁ፡ ፈነወ፡ ወልደ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወተወልደ፡ እምብእሲት፡ እንዳለ፡ ጳውሎስ ። ባሳልዮስም፡ ዘቂሳርያ፡ ሳዊሮስም፡ ዘአንጾኪያ፡ ወይደልወነ፡ ከመ፡ ንእመን፡ ቦቱ፡ ለወልደ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ጀልደት፡ ብሏል ። ተወልደም፡ በጧዓመት፡ ተጠመቀ፡ ተጠምቆም፡ ፫ዓመት፡ ከ፫ወር፡ አስተማረ፡ ለመድኃኒተ፡ ዓለም፡ መለኮት፡ ወልድ፡ በሰውነቱ፡ ተሰቀለ፡ ሞተ፡ ወእመሰ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ተሰቀለ፡ በሥጋሁ፡ በእንቲአነ፡ ወበእንተ፡ ኃጣውኢነ፡ ውእቱ፡ ተሰቀለ፡ ዲበ፡ ዕፅ፡ በሥጋሁ፡ እንዳለ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ጴጥሮስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ጳውሎስም፡ ወሶበ፡ እንዘ፡ ፀሩ፡ ንሕነ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ተሳላላነ፡ በሞተ፡ ወልዱ፡ [erasure]እፍ፡ እንከ፡ ይሳላላነ፡ ፈድፋድ፡ ብሏል ። መናፍቃን፡ ግን፡ መለኮት፡ በሥጋ፡ ሞተ፡ ብንል፡ ለእመ፡ ትቤ፡ መለኮት፡ ሞተ፡ አንተ፡ ትከውን፡ ቀታሊሆሙ፡ ለሥሉስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ያለውን፡ ንባብ፡ ይዘው፡ ሥጋ፡ እንጅ፡ መለኮት፡ አልሞተም፡ ይላሉ፡ እንዲህም፡ ማለታቸው፡ አርእስቱን፡ ባይመለከቱ፡ ነው፡ ሊቁ፡ ግን፡ እንዲህ፡ ማለቱ፡ ኅድረት፡ ጀባሕርይ፡ ነፍስ፡ አልነሳም፡ ለሚሉ፡ ሰዎች፡ ነው፡ መለኮት፡ በሥጋ፡ ሞተ፡ ማለት፡ እንዴት፡ ነው፡ ቢሉ፡ የነፍስ፡ የሥጋ፡ መለየት፡ ነው ። አማኑኤል፡ ሞተ፡ ከመ፡ ሞተ፡ ዜአነ፡ ዘውእቱ፡ ተፈልጦተ፡ ነፍስ፡ ወሥጋ ። ዳግመኛም፡ ወእመሰ፡ ዘከመ፡ ንባቦሙ፡ ኢሞተ፡ በሞተ፡ ዜአነ፡ እፍ፡ ንትሜካህ፡ በሞቱ፡ ለመድኃኒነ፡ እንዳለ ። ሳዊሮስ[erasure]፡ ዘአንጾኪያ፡ ሥጋም፡ በመለኮቱ፡ ሕያው፡ ነው፡ ዘኢይመውት፡ ነው፡ ሕያው፡ መለኮት፡ ነውና፡ መለኮት፡ የተባለ፡ በተለየ፡ አካሉ፡ ሰው፡ የሆነ፡ ወልድ፡ ነው ። መከራ፡ የምንቀበልባት፡ መንግሥተ፡ ሰማይ፡ የምንገባባት፡ ይች፡ ናት ። አደቂቅየ፡ ባቲ፡ ዕቀቡ፡ ርእስክሙ፡ እምኩሉ፡ እኩይ፡ በዚህ፡ የተጻፈውን፡ ሰምታችሁ፡ በዚህች፡ ሃይማኖት፡ የጸናችሁ፡ ቡሩካን፡ ቅዱሳን፡ ፍቱሐን፡ ያርጋችሁ፡ ከዚህ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ ግን፡ ወጥቶ፡ ጀባሕርይ፡ ጀአካል፡ የሚሉ፡ ከማርያም፡ ነፍስ፡ አልነሳም፡ የሚሉ፡ መንፈስ፡ ቅዱስን፡ ዘሠረፀ፡ እምወልድ፡ የሚል፡ በቅብዓት፡ መንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ የጸጋ፡ ልጅ {፫ልደት}፡ የሚል፡ በቅብዓተ፡ መንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ የባሕርይ፡ ልጅ፡ የሚል፡ ጎብስቱ፡ ተለውጦ፡ ሥጋ፡ መለኮት፡ ወይኑ፡ ተሰውጦ፡ ደመ፡ መለኮት፡ አይሆንም፡ መከከርያ፡ ነው፡ እንጅ፡ የሚል ። በሥልጣነ፡ አብ፡ ወወልድ፡ ወመንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ በሰይፍ፡ ዘጀአፋሁ፡ ይትመተር፡ ወበአፈ፡ ፲ወጀሐዋርያት፡ ይት [erasure]{ፈለጥ፡} ወበዳግም፡ ምጽአቱ፡ እመንበሩ፡ ይርጋቅ፡ ወበሥልጣነ፡ ፫፫፫ወጅርቱዓነ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ ዘኒቅያ፡ ወበአፈ፡ ፻ወ፻ዘቀሱስጥንጥያ፡ ወበአፈ፡ ጀጀዘኤፌሶን፡ ወበአፈ፡ ኩሎሙ፡ ሊቃነ፡ ጳጳሳት፡ ወበአፈ፡ ዜአየኒ፡ ሊተ፡ ለጴጥሮስ፡ ውጉ

<sup>78</sup> The word ክታቡ is coming from Arabic language and is unusual even if it can be found in Gəʿəz sources.

<sup>79</sup> A part is omitted. It should be: ዘይየውሁ፡ ለከንቱ፡ [በሥርዐተ፡ ትምህርተ ሰብእ] ለስኒተ፡ ዝንቱ፡ ዓለም.

ዘ ፡ ለይኩን ፡ ተጽሕፈት ፡ ዛቲ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ በ፲፪ወ፰፻፲፮ ፡ ዓመተ ፡ ምሕረት ፡ በዘመ  
ነ ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ አመ ፡ ፲ወ፯ ፡ ለሚያዝያ ፡ በደብረ ፡ ገነት ፡ ቀቀማ ።

English translation

[Fol. 151v] The letter sent by Pētros, Metropolitan of the kingdom of Ethiopia, the servant and the apostle of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of Saint Mark the Evangelist. May it reach the blessed and saintly children and friends who live in the land of ḂAg<sup>c</sup>azi. How are you? I am well, thanks be to God. It greatly saddened me to hear that among the priests wicked people have risen who are changing the doctrine of (lit. “the doctrine which says”) “the only Son”.<sup>80</sup> The faith of Alexandria and Ethiopia is one. When our Lord Jesus Christ asked the apostles in Caesarea [Philippi], “Who do all people say that I am?” they answered, “One says that you are Elijah, one that Jeremiah, some that one of the prophets (lit. “like one prophet”).” When he said to them, “And you, who do you say that I am?” Saint Peter answered him, “You are the Christ, the Son of God”. And upon hearing this, the Lord said to him, “Blessed are you, Peter son of Jonah”.<sup>81</sup> And the Father testified to Him in these words, “This is my Son.”<sup>82</sup> And I have taken this and I am writing to you the faith of our Fathers, the Apostles and the Three Hundred.<sup>83</sup> The Father, being in and of himself intellect, is [also] the intellect of the Son and the Holy Spirit. They do not have another intellect. Through Him they are called possessors of intellect. In His separate perfect Person He is called Lord, Divinity, God.<sup>84</sup> And the Son, being in

<sup>80</sup> The Ethiopian Orthodox theologians commonly refer to the *Täwähädo* Christological doctrine as the doctrine of the ‘unique Son’ (ወልድ ፡ ዋሕድ), an abbreviation of the statement: በተዋሕድ ፡ ወልድ ፡ ዋሕድ (“by the [hypostatic] union He is the unique Son [of God]”); cf. ADMASU ĜĀMBĀRE 1954: 64, 89. With this expression, they emphasise the union of the divine and the human nature in Christ.

<sup>81</sup> Mt 16:13–16.

<sup>82</sup> Mt 3:16.

<sup>83</sup> ‘The Three Hundred’ refers to the 318 Orthodox Fathers who, according to Ethiopian tradition, were present at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

<sup>84</sup> In line with the Alexandrian tradition, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church emphasizes the unity of the Three Persons in one Divinity. The *Täwähädo* doctrine accepts Jacob Baradaeus’ declaration: “Ich spreche und glaube und bekenne, dass der Vater die Weisheit (νοῦς *nous*) und der Sohn die Vernunft (λόγος *logos*) und der heilige Geist das Leben (ζωή *zōē*) ist” (“I say, I believe and am convinced that the Father is the Heart, the Son is the Word and the Holy Spirit is the Life [and, or the Breath]”; CORNILL 1876: 443). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church uses these metaphors: the Anaphora of the Three Hundred, verse 47, reads: “My Father, I, and the Holy Spirit are the sun, the light and the heat”; cf. መጽሐፈ ፡ ቅዳሴ 1962: 131. Also, the Anaphora of St. Mary says: “The Father

and of himself the word, is [also] the word for the Father and the Holy Spirit. They do not have another word. Through Him they are called possessors of speech. In His separate perfect Person He is called Lord, Divinity, God. And the Holy Spirit, being in and of itself the breath, is [also] the breath for the Father and the Son. They do not have another breath. Through it they are called possessors of life. In its separate perfect Person it is called Lord, Divinity, God. Because of this we call [all] Three equally Lord, [all] Three equally Divinity, [all] Three equally God. Lord in Nature and Divinity is one. Lord in Person(s) is three.<sup>85</sup> Lord generates, Lord is generated, Lord [is] the sprout, one Lord.<sup>86</sup> As the Gospel says, “And the Word was Lord”.<sup>87</sup> The Divinity is one in Nature (and) is three in Person. The Divinity generates, the Divinity is generated, the Divinity [is] the sprout, one Divinity. And as Basil of Antioch says, “And the Divinity is the Persons who are the holy Faces”.<sup>88</sup> God in the Divinity and Nature is one, in Person(s) is three. God generates, God is generated, God [is] the sprout, one God. As Athanasius says, “God is the Father, God is the Son, God is the Holy Spirit”.<sup>89</sup> Again, we do not say with Arius, “The Father is the creator, the

is the sun, the Son is the sun, and the Holy Spirit is the sun”; cf. መጽሐፈ ፡ ቅዱስ 1962: 115; see also TEDROS ABRAHA 2010: 990; PIOVANELLI 1994: 204f.

<sup>85</sup> This is a reference to the statement accepted by the *Täwähädo* doctrine: “One Divinity in three Persons”. See in the *Mäšbetä läbbuna*: “ነአምን ፡ መቅድመ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ በጅመላ ኩት ፡ ወበፎካካላት ፡ ዘውእቶሙ ፡ አብ ፡ ወወልድ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ” (“We believe before everything in one Divinity and in three Persons who are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”); cf. CERULLI 1960: 140 (text), 164 (tr.). See also the words ascribed to John of Antioch as exposed in the *Haymanotä ’abäw*, chapter 103, section 2, paragraph 1; cf. ሃይማኖተ ፡ አበው 1967: 463.

<sup>86</sup> This a reference to the statement accepted by the *Täwähädo* doctrine: “The Father generates, the Son is generated and the Holy Spirit is the sprout”. See in the *Mäšbetä läbbuna*: “አብ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወላዴ ፡ ወልድ ፡ ወአሥራዔ ፡ መንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ኢተወልድ ፡ ወኢሠረፀ ፡ እምካልእ ፡ ወልድኒ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወልድ ፡ ተወላዲ ፡ እምአብ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስኒ ፡ ሠራዒ ፡ ውእቱ ፡” (“The Father generates the Son and let proceed the Holy Spirit, He is not born and does not proceed from anyone else. The Son is (indeed) the Son, born from the Father. And the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father; cf. CERULLI 1960: 145 (text), 170 (tr.). Here Petros clearly used this statement to explain that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit represent one Divinity (called Lord, Divinity or God) in three Persons, which respectively generates, is generated and is the sprout.

<sup>87</sup> Jn 1:1.

<sup>88</sup> From the letter of Basil of Antioch to Saint Mar Cosmas of Alexandria as exposed in the *Haymanotä ’abäw*, chapter 96, section 1, paragraph 5; cf. ሃይማኖተ ፡ አበው 1967: 420.

<sup>89</sup> As exposed in the *Haymanotä ’abäw*, chapter 25, section 4, paragraph 4; cf. ሃይማኖተ ፡ አበው 1967: 74.



Son is the creation”<sup>90</sup> and with Macedonius, “The Holy Spirit is inferior”<sup>91</sup> and we do not with Apollinarius assign [different] hierarchy of dominion and [different] hierarchy of subtlety<sup>92</sup> and we do not say what any other heretics [say]. We say, “These Persons are one Lord, one Divinity, one God”. We do not say with Sabellius and with Islam, “One Person, one Face”.<sup>93</sup> If one asks “why”, [the answer could be:] because person existing within person, it is as if with one counsel, with one authority, like one man they produced a joint work. And the joint work is the mystery about which Cyriacus [of Behnesa] said [beginning from], “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit think” up to “they judge”.<sup>94</sup> Again, if one asks how this is that there is no difference between generating from being generated, being generated from generating, causing to proceed from proceeding, proceeding from causing to proceed, it is like the birth of the Son, the origin of the Holy Spirit, the word and the breath issue from the intellect [and] a spring issues from [the same] spring, but it is [all] indissoluble. [Fol. 152r] It is because of this that, as Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch said, “His birth does

<sup>90</sup> As exposed in the *Mäṣḥafä bərhan*, book VI; cf. CONTI ROSSINI – RICCI 1965: 134 (text), 75 (tr.); see also in the *Mäzgäbä haymanot*; cf. CERULLI 1960: 6f. (text), 72f. (tr.). In the preparatory service for the liturgy, chapter 4, verse 43 the statement that “we believe also that Christ is not in the least degree inferior because of His incarnation ...” is declared; see also the Anaphora of Cyril, verse 97; cf. መጽሐፈ ጳጳሴ 1962: 53, 229.

<sup>91</sup> As exposed in the *Mäṣḥafä bərhan*, book VI; cf. CONTI ROSSINI – RICCI 1965: 134 (text), 75f. (tr.); see also in the *Mäzgäbä haymanot*; cf. CERULLI 1960: 7f. (text), 73f. (tr.). The statement, refuting it, is declared in the Anaphora of John Chrysostom, verse 72: “May this Holy Spirit, who is neither searchable nor inferior ...”; see also in the Anaphora of Jacob of Serug, verse 38; cf. መጽሐፈ ጳጳሴ 1962: 214, 235. The statement telling that the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Son seems to be an idea ascribed to the Catholics still recently by Ethiopians, even if it is not true; cf. TEFAGZHI UQBIT 1973: 50; ANCEL 2012: 98, 100.

<sup>92</sup> The doctrine ascribed to Apollinarius has not been identified. Cyril of Alexandria mentions Apollinarius in his letter to Awfamius, *Haymanotä ’abäw*, chapter 73, section 15, paragraph 27; cf. ሃይማኖተ ጳጳሴ ፡ 1967: 274. However, only the Amharic “translation” of this passage (col. b, page 274) specifies the Apollinarius’ idea: “እንደ ጳጳሴ ፡ አቡሊናርዮስ ፡ ነፍስ ፡ አልነሳም ፡ አላልኩም ፤ መዐርገም ፡ አልሰጠሁም” (“I did not say with Apollinarius: ‘[Christ] did not assume a soul’ and I did not give any ranks”).

<sup>93</sup> As exposed in the *Mäṣḥafä bərhan*, book VI; cf. CONTI ROSSINI – RICCI 1965: 133 (text), 75 (tr.); see also *Mäṣḥafä məstir*, chapter 1; cf. YAQOB BEYENE 1990: 2 (text), 2 (tr.).

<sup>94</sup> Petros refers to the Anaphora of St. Mary (which is ascribed to Cyriacus of Behnesa), verse 58–66, where 27 joint activities of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are enumerated. He mentions the first joint work (verse 58: “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit think”) and the penultimate (verse 66: “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit judge”); cf. መጽሐፈ ጳጳሴ 1962: 114.

not stop with his first [birth], just like a spring is from a spring”.<sup>95</sup> Also as Saint Cyrill [of Alexandria] said, “Like a spring which bubbles forth forever”.<sup>96</sup> And they are one in more than this [what is listed above]. The heretics, however, taking, “They are three in Persons and one in Divinity”, they say, “Divinity cannot be called person, [and] person cannot be called divinity, but it is that Divinity encompasses Three Person[s]”.<sup>97</sup> By saying this they take person separately and divinity separately. We, however, do not separate divinity from person and person from divinity. Out of Three Persons one Person, the Divine Son, became man, man became God, “The word became flesh” as John the Evangelist says.<sup>98</sup> Also, Gregory of Nazianzus said, “He is God who became man and man who became God”.<sup>99</sup> Also, Paul in the second part of his epistle to the Colossians said, “See to it that no one deceives you with philosophy [and] what is vain deceit [and] errors of this world and not on the law of Christ in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.”<sup>100</sup> We believe that He is one Person, one Nature; united in the Mode of Existence (*käwin*), united in Nature (*bahrəy*), [being] the Son of the Father, the Son of Mary, He was honored by the [hypostatic] union, [so there are] two births.<sup>101</sup> As Paul says, “When

<sup>95</sup> Unidentified quotation.

<sup>96</sup> Unidentified quotation.

<sup>97</sup> He refers to the contradiction which says at first that “one Divinity, three Persons” and secondly “Divinity and Person are equal”. His response is clearly an answer to the problem posed by monks in Waldəbba and then in Däbrä Abbay when they proposed that Trinity is composed with three Divinities rather than only one.

<sup>98</sup> Jn 1:14.

<sup>99</sup> As exposed in the *Haymanotä ’abäw*, chapter 61, section 4, paragraph 23; cf. ገጽ ፳፻፲፫ ፡ አበው 1967: 217.

<sup>100</sup> Ref. to Col 2:8f.

<sup>101</sup> At first, this sentence is a summary of statements accepted by *Täwəhədo* doctrine during the controversy on “unction” and “union”, also summarized as ብተዋሕዶ ፡ ወልደ ፡ ባሕርይ “[Christ] is the Son [of God] in nature by the [hypostatic] union”. It opposed to both followers of *Qəb’at* and *Şägga läğ* movements; cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: xi. Petros uses both *kəwin* and *bahrəy* to express the notion of “nature”; cf. TESFAZGHI UQBİT 1973: 33, 35f. But also, it is a summary of *Täwəhədo* doctrine as it was expressed at the council of Boru Meda in 1878 on the controversy concerning the number of “birth” of Christ. Even if he admitted that during the hypostatic union “the Son was honored”, Petros professed the “two birth” (*bulätt ləddät*) of Christ which are the eternal birth from the Father and the temporal birth from the blessed Mary. It opposed to the “three birth” (*sost ləddät*) followers (mainly issued from *Şägga läğ* movement) who believed in a third “birth” which happened when the unction by the Holy Spirit took place (at His incarnation or His baptism); cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: ix f.; YAQOB BEYENE 1981: 15, footnote 48, 281f.; TESFAZGHI UQBİT 1973: 84.

the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman”.<sup>102</sup> Also, Basil of Caesarea [and] Severus of Antioch said,<sup>103</sup> “And it is fitting for us to believe in two births of the Son of God”.<sup>104</sup> And after being born, He was baptised in His 30<sup>th</sup> year; having been baptised, He taught for 3 years and 3 months. For the salvation of the world the Divine Son was crucified in the flesh [and] He died.<sup>105</sup> As St Peter said, “For Christ was crucified in the flesh for us and for our sins. He was hung on a tree in the flesh”.<sup>106</sup> Also, St Paul said, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, all the more so, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life”.<sup>107</sup> When we say Divinity died in flesh, then heretics, in taking the reading which says, “If you say Divinity died, you will become the killer of the Holy Trinity” [they] are saying that the flesh died but and not the Divinity.<sup>108</sup> Saying like that they must be ignoring the subject matter [of this passage]. The scholar, however, said like that to people who say, “[the nature of the relationship between the two natures is that of] dwelling, [Christ has] two natures, He did not assume the soul”. If one says, “How is it that Divinity died in the flesh?” it means separating the flesh and the soul. Emmanuel died like we die, which is a separation of soul and flesh.<sup>109</sup> Again, as Severus of Antioch says, “For according to their reading if He did not die our death [so] how could we glorify his death for our salvation?”<sup>110</sup> Also, flesh in the Divinity is everlasting, it is immortal, since the Divinity is everlasting. What is called the Divinity is the Son who became [was incarnated as] man in His separate Person. It is this [faith] through which either we receive suffering or through which we enter the Kingdom

<sup>102</sup> Gal 4:4.

<sup>103</sup> In singular in the text.

<sup>104</sup> Homily of Basil of Caesarea as exposed in *Haymanotä ʾabäw*, chapter 34, section 5, paragraph 6; cf. *ገጽግጽተ ፡ አበው* 1967: 117. Petros refers also to words ascribed to Severus of Antioch as exposed in *Haymanotä ʾabäw*, chapter 84, section 1, paragraph 8; cf. *ibid.* 357.

<sup>105</sup> Here Petros aims at showing that there was no “birth” of Christ after the eternal birth from the Father and the temporal birth from the blessed Mary.

<sup>106</sup> Reference to 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>107</sup> Rom 5:10.

<sup>108</sup> Petros refers to Catholics as this doctrine was ascribed to them by the Ethiopian theologian at that time. See the report of the dispute between Ethiopian scholars and Catholic missionaries proposed by the Ethiopian theologian; cf. ADMASU ĞÄMBÄRE 1954: 180; TESFAZGHI UQBIT 1973: 65. But this dispute was also reported by Pedro Páez; cf. BOAVIDA – PENNEC – RAMOS 2011: 338.

<sup>109</sup> Statement ascribed to Severus of Antioch in *Haymanotä ʾabäw*, chapter 85, section 3, paragraph 25; cf. *ገጽግጽተ ፡ አበው* 1967: 367.

<sup>110</sup> As exposed in *Haymanotä ʾabäw*, chapter 85, section 3, paragraph 28; cf. *ibid.* 368.

of Heaven. Oh my children, in her [the faith] guard yourselves from all evil. He who has heard what is written here and firmly stays in this faith, may He make you blessed, saintly, and absolved. However, he who would go astray from this faith: those who say two natures [and] two persons;<sup>111</sup> those who say He did not take on [His] soul from Mary;<sup>112</sup> he who says that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Son;<sup>113</sup> he who says [Christ is the] Son of grace through unction of the Holy Spirit {the three births};<sup>114</sup> he who says [Christ is the] Son of nature through unction of the Holy Spirit;<sup>115</sup> he who says that the bread having changed does not become divine flesh and the wine having changed does not become divine blood but is [just] a reminder;<sup>116</sup> by the authority of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, may he be split by a two-bladed sword, may he be excluded by the mouth of the 12 Apostles, and at the Second Coming may he be kept far from His throne, by the authority of the 318 Orthodox of Nicaea and by the mouth of the 150 Constantinople [fathers] and by the mouth of the 200 Ephesian [fathers] and by the mouth of all the bishops and by my own mouth of me Ṕetros, may he be cursed. This writing was written in 1896 Year of Mercy in the year of John on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of Miyazya (25 April 1904 A.D.) in Däbrä Gännät Qäqäma.

<sup>111</sup> Christological doctrine usually ascribed to diophysites by Ethiopian theologians. Here Ṕetros refers to the Catholic doctrine even if it should be described as “one Person, two natures” (as described in the *Mäzḡäbä haymanot*; cf. CERULLI 1960: 11 [text], 77 [tr.]). In fact, according to Ethiopian theologians, to separate the two natures of Christ means also to divide the person in two, because they did not believe that there may be in Christ a nature without its own subsistence and personality. So, according to them, to accept two natures of Christ would mean recognizing two natures with two wills in contradiction with each other; cf. AYELE TEKLEHAYMANOT n.d.: 253; BANDRÈS 2003: 27; see also the letter of Diyonasyos to Səntyos in *Haymanotä ʾabäw*, chapter 99; cf. ጊዩግዮተ ፡ አበው 1967: 438–444.

<sup>112</sup> It is a reference to the dispute with Catholic concerning the origin of the soul of Christ; cf. COHEN 2009: 136–140. It is also possible that Ṕetros targets all those who deny the *Theotókos* doctrine, namely that of Mary as ወላጊተ ፡ አምላክ (“begetter of God”), meaning Protestants.

<sup>113</sup> It is a reference to the dispute with the Catholics concerning the *Filioque* doctrine; cf. COHEN 2009: 133–136. King Gälawdewos (1540–1559) have already contested it in his letter to the Catholics; cf. ULLENDORFF 1987: 166 (text), 170 (tr.). The proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father is also explained in the *Mäzḡäbä haymanot* and in the *Mäšhetä löbbuna*; cf. CERULLI 1960: 7f. (text), 73f. (tr.); 140 (text), 165 (tr.).

<sup>114</sup> Ṕetros refers to followers of the *Šägga läḡ* movement; cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 1990: 27 (text), 25 (tr.).

<sup>115</sup> Ṕetros refers to the followers of the *Qəbʾat* movement; cf. *ibid.* 29–34 (text), 26–31 (tr.).

<sup>116</sup> Ṕetros may refer to those who refute the transubstantiation, meaning the Protestants.

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### Summary

In November–December 2012, the team of the Ethio-SpaRe project found a letter written by the Coptic Metropolitan Ɔəṭros (1881–1917) in 1904. The letter was copied into one of the books housed in the Qəddəst Maryam monastery in Qäqäma. It deals with the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines and is addressed to the clergy of Təgray. Because of its historical significance, the present article aims at editing and commenting this document.