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Personalia

Academic News

The Israel Prize awarded to Olga Kapeliuk

The Israel Prize is awarded every year to a few persons for achievements in various scientific disciplines, in art and one Prize for national merits. It is distributed on the Independence Day at an official ceremony in the presence of the President of the State. The prize in general linguistics is awarded once in five years.

“Professor Olga Kapeliuk of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is among the best Israeli linguists and scholars of Semitic languages. She studies two of the less known branches of Semitic: the Ethiopian languages on the one hand and the Neo-Aramaic dialects on the other hand. Professor Kapeliuk is considered today a worldwide expert on the grammatical, literary, lexical and other aspects of Amharic thanks to her numerous publications and her participation at International Conferences. Professor Kapeliuk has developed a new and unique field of research in the study of Semitic languages comparing evolutionary processes of Neo-Aramaic and Ethio-Semitic.”

In memoriam Pawlos Cardinal Şadwa (1921–2003)

TEDROS ABRAHA, Asmara

The late Pawlos Cardinal Şadwa was born in a devout Christian family on August 25, 1921 in ‘Addi Fənniə’, a village in the Şän^oadäglä district of the Akkälä Guzay region of Eritrea. His baptismal name was Səbhat LäAb, but until his priestly ordination he was called Məsgənnä. He was introduced to the first notions of Gə‘əz and received his basic Christian education in his home village. In 1932 he joined St. Michael’s primary school in Sägänäyti and while there he felt a call to the religious life. This call led him to the town of Mändäfära where the Franciscan Capuchins have a school. He studied there until 1940. He was then admitted to the Capuchin novitiate, but was subsequently asked to leave because the then novice master, Padre Felicissimo Suardi da Gaverina, thought him unsuited for the Capuchin way of life.

Cardinal Şadwa never showed any resentment for his dismissal from the religious order to which he always remained close, but he was never convinced by the argument that led the novice master from Milan to dismiss him. His determination to pursue a priestly vocation remained unshaken. In 1941 he was a seminarian in Kärän, and in 1944 he was ordained priest by Bishop

Kidanä Maryam Kasa. He began his priestly ministry as assistant parish priest of Kidanä Məhrät Church in Asmara and director of the adjoining school. As a result of his five-year term as director of the school he is widely credited with having raised the academic level by a thorough-going reorganization of the program of studies. In 1949 he was sent to Gurage in western Säwa where he was active in pastoral ministry for three years. These years in Gurage created a bond of affection between him and the Gurage people which lasted for the rest of his life. He was recalled to Eritrea towards the end of 1951 to serve as a teacher of English at the seminary of Kärän. Despite his heavy teaching load, he commuted regularly between Kärän and Asmara to attend the Italian Liceo Ferdinando Martini, and obtained a *Maturità Classica* in 1953. About this time the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart at Milan was offering a scholarship to promising candidates from overseas. Abba Pawlos took the examination, won the first prize, and went off to Milan. In 1957 he graduated with a doctorate in Political Science *summa cum laude*. A year later, in 1958, he was awarded a doctoral degree in jurisprudence, once again, *summa cum laude*. He returned to Eritrea in 1959 and was appointed secretary of the episcopal curia in Asmara where, as he himself put it, he spent two “odd” years. In 1961 he was assigned to the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa as secretary of the then archbishop, H.E. Asratä Maryam Yämarru as well as secretary general of the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference. Besides his curial duties, he devoted much time and energy to being chaplain of the university students of Addis Ababa. He was also one of the two observers of the Holy See at the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches held in Eritrea at this time. On March 1, 1973, he was elected titular Bishop of Abila in Palestine and named Auxiliary Bishop of Addis Ababa. He was ordained bishop on May 20, 1973. Two years later he was chosen president of the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference, a service he rendered until 1999.

On February 24, 1977, Abba Pawlos became Archbishop of Addis Ababa. One of his most remarkable initiatives as archbishop was the implementation of the spirit and directives of the Second Vatican Council, especially with regard to the more active participation of the laity in the affairs of the Church. He established an archdiocesan council for the laity and encouraged all parishes in the archdiocese to follow suit. He was created cardinal by Pope John Paul II in the consistory of April 25, 1985. He was the first Ethiopian cardinal in history. His investiture as “first ever cardinal of Ethiopia” evoked a strong reaction from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The objection was that Ethiopia had had a patriarch hundreds of years previously. The reaction was summarized in a special issue of the official monthly bulletin of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *Zena Betä Krästiyän* dated Tərr 30, 1978 EC¹. The tone of

¹ On the last page there is a note that says: ቤና፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ጋዜጣ፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡ መንበረ፡ ፓትርያርክ፡ የማስታወቂያና፡ ሐዋርያዊ፡ ተልእኮ፡ መምሪያ፡ በየወሩ፡ ህፃን፡ ቀን፡ የሚታተም፡ ሰነድ፡ ይህ፡ ልዩ፡ እትም፡

the contents of the six pages of heated polemics written in elegant Amharic was set by the title **ዎናን ፡ የታሪክ ፡ ቅሰጣ** # ('brazen mystification of history'). The cardinal's response was a dignified silence, and the incident did not affect his relationship with the Orthodox Church. In 1994 he was appointed president delegate to the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. He resigned as Archbishop of Addis Ababa on September 11, 1998, after a long period of dedicated service. He was beyond the age limit for bishops to stay in office (i.e., 75 years) set by the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church.

Abba Pawlos died in Rome on December 11, 2003, after an illness of several months, at the age of 82. John Paul II, who led a funeral service on December 16 in St. Peter's Basilica, paid tribute to him, describing him as "a generous and active shepherd and an authoritative spokesman of the African Church". The then Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XIV), presided at the solemn Mass. The body was flown to Addis Ababa where it was entombed on December 21. Among those in attendance were the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Pawlos, together with five bishops from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There were representatives from the Mäkanä Yäsus Church, from the Evangelical Federation and from the Norwegian Church. The Catholic bishops of Ethiopia were all present. The occasion was viewed as an important ecumenical milestone and was clearly a vindication of the policy of Cardinal Šadwa with regard to other Christian churches. The cardinal's motto, often repeated, was: "Wherever I see a Cross I feel at home and I believe that that is my Church". Both the president of the Ethiopian Republic and the prime minister sent a delegate to attend the funeral. The Ethiopian foreign minister, Siyoum Mäsfän, and Prince Ras Mängäša Siyoum were also present at the service. Diplomats, friends and relatives took part in great numbers.

The participation of these high-ranking figures from the different churches and from the government is perhaps one of the best tributes to a man who had always inspired respect for his wisdom, balance and goodness of heart. During his long tenure as head of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the cardinal succeeded not only in remaining very much in charge and in keeping his flock united in turbulent and critical times but in transmitting optimism and hope. He never took sides in the difficult and bloody events that unfolded during his presidency of the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference, and remained unvaryingly neutral so that he could effectively serve as a father to all parties. He was basically a rather retiring person who shunned disputes and controversies whenever he could. He was neither a natural speaker nor a charismatic leader who could excite a crowd, but many times what he said

በኢትዮጵያ ፡ ኦርቶዶክስ ፡ ተዋሕዶ ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን ፡ ቋሚ ፡ ሲኖዶስ ፡ ውሳኔ ፡ ጉዳዩ ፡ በተለይ ፡ ታተመ # '...this special issue has been published by a deliberation and at the orders of the permanent Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahädo Church'.

and what he refrained from saying or doing carried considerable weight. During the Eritrean referendum of 1993 he was approached and asked to vote even incognito if he wanted; he kindly but firmly declined the offer! He had a good sense of humor and had a simple life style. One of the traits (not always found in people of his high status) for which he is remembered was his availability. People had easy access to him even without an appointment.

Abba P̄awlos was an intellectual, with an honourable record in the world of Ethiopian scholarship. He was fluent in Italian and English and knew French as well. He was well read in classical literature, especially in Gəʿəz and Latin. His principal contribution to the world of learning is his translation from Gəʿəz into English of the Fəṯḥa Nägäšt, written for the Haile Sellase I University. His paper on the Fəṯḥa Nägäšt, presented in Vienna in 1971 at the Congress of Oriental Canonists and later published in English, confirmed his status as a scholar of high caliber. In the mid 1980s he began to chair a small group of Ethiopian scholars who met regularly at the Catholic Cathedral of Addis Ababa. The idea of such a group was conceived and encouraged by another prominent churchman, the present bishop of ʼEmdäbär (Gurage), Muse Gäbrägiyorgis. It was known as the “Yäliqawunt Gubaʿe” and it discussed especially matters related to the Gəʿəz language and liturgy. The minutes of these discussions are kept in the archives of St. Francis Catholic Seminary in Addis Ababa. The cardinal was basically a canonist, but he had an interest in many other fields of learning as well, such as Ethiopian history and Ethiopian liturgy. He wrote papers on the Ethiopian anaphoras and on Christian marriage.

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