

The Catholic Kingdom of Ethiopia: Father Manuel de Almeida's Account of the Imperial Conversion Ceremony*

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Abstract: This article analyzes the detailed account of the conversion ceremony of Emperor Susānyos to Catholicism, as it was compiled by Father Manuel de Almeida in his book *História da Etiópia*. At this ceremony, Afonso Mendes, the recently appointed Patriarch of Ethiopia, gave a learned exposition on Church history that championed the authority of Rome above all else. Father Mendes' speech reveals, beyond all doubt, that he was more interested in expounding upon ecclesiastical history and the various heresies that had shaped the Church's past than contending with the premises and concerns of his Ethiopian hosts. From the Catholic patriarch's standpoint, primitive heresy had inevitably tainted the Alexandrine Church. For Emperor Susānyos, the proceedings on February 11, 1626 were indeed a confirmation ceremony, but they also gave rise to a new version of Ethiopian religious history. This article presents for the first time an English version of this account and the original text in Portuguese accompanied by an introduction and detailed notes.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Jesuits, Ecclesiastical History, Catholicism, Mission.

Resumo: O presente artigo analisa o relato detalhado da cerimónia de conversão do imperador Susānyos ao catolicismo, tal como foi compilado pelo Pe. Manuel de Almeida, no seu livro *História da Etiópia*. Nesta cerimónia, Afonso Mendes, o recém-nomeado Patriarca da Etiópia, fez uma exposição sobre a história da Igreja, defendendo a autoridade de Roma acima de tudo. O discurso de Afonso Mendes revela, sem sombra de dúvida, que ele estava mais interessado em expor a história eclesíastica e as várias heresias que moldaram o passado da Igreja do que em confrontar-se com a realidade e as preocupações dos seus anfitriões etíopes. Do ponto de vista do patriarca católico, a heresia primitiva tinha inevitavelmente maculada a Igreja de Alexandria. Para o imperador Susānyos, o evento de 11 de fevereiro de 1626 era de facto uma cerimónia de confirmação, mas que também daria origem a uma nova versão da história religiosa etíope. Este artigo apresenta pela primeira vez uma versão em inglês deste relato e o texto original em português, acompanhado por uma introdução e por um aparato crítico.

Palavras-chave: Etiópia, Jesuítas, História da Igreja, Catolicismo, Missionaçãõ.

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Introduction

On February 7, 1626, the third Catholic patriarch of Ethiopia, Afonso Mendes, entered Emperor Susānyos' camp with all the trappings of his lofty office for the purpose of administering a solemn ceremony in which the kingdom's ruler and distinguished members of his court were to take a solemn oath of obeisance to the Roman pontiff.¹ According to Father Manuel de Almeida's description, Mendes' arrival was graced by "the luminous light of the true and holy Catholic faith", which drove out "the darkness of Egypt."² Four days later, the ceremony formalizing Ethiopia's commitment to the Church of Rome was indeed held.

The Society of Jesus had toiled feverishly and allocated considerable resources to promoting Catholicism in the Ethiopian empire. As the Jesuit missionaries saw it, their objective was to reconcile the Church of Ethiopia with that of Rome. From its inception in the fourth century, the Ethiopian Church had been formally dependent on the See of Alexandria, which is traditionally believed to have been founded by the Apostle Mark. Over the centuries, both the Ethiopian and Alexandrine Churches had strengthened their anti-Chalcedonic or monophysitic views, so that each was labeled schismatic by the Roman Curia. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church never relinquished its hopes of bringing these streams back to the fold³. Significant attempts at reconciliation took place in 1557 with the arrival of Jesuits to Ethiopia, but the mission's entreaties mostly fell on deaf ears. It was only in 1622, after a tireless campaign launched by a new generation of missionaries, foremost among them Pedro Páez, that Emperor Susānyos took communion from a Catholic prelate⁴. However, within a decade, the sovereign would abdicate the throne due to the mutiny and unrest that his conversion had instigated.

In the pages that follow, we will take stock of a detailed account of the said conversion ceremony that was compiled by Father Manuel de Almeida⁵. Philip

1 The first person to be nominated Catholic patriarch of Ethiopia was João Nunes Barreto (d. 1562), but he never so much as reached the kingdom. The second patriarch was Father André de Oviedo, who died in Färemona, Ethiopia in 1577. Some forty-six years later, Afonso Mendes was named the third patriarch at the Church of San Roque in Lisbon. See Ángel Santos Hernández – *Jesuitas y obispos: los Jesuitas Obispos y Misioneros y los Obispos Jesuitas de la extinción*. Vol. 2. Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2000, p. 27-55.

2 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*. Vol. 6. Roma: C. De Luigi, 1903-1917, p. 481.

3 The Council of Florence in 1437-1443 was the last serious attempt by Rome to put an end to the long-lasting schism that opposed it to the Eastern Churches. See Umberto Proch – La unión en el Segundo concilio de Lyon (1274) y en el concilio de Ferrara-Florenca-Roma (1438-1445). In *Historia de los concilios ecuménicos*. Ed. Giuseppe Alberigo. Tr. Alfonso Ortíz García. Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1993, p. 237-267.

4 On the mission of the Father Pedro Páez to Ethiopia see Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vols. 2, 3; Hervé Pennec – La mission Jésuite en Éthiopie au temps de Pedro Paez (1583-1622) et ses rapports avec le pouvoir éthiopien. *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*. 36; 37; 38 (1992-1994) 77-115; 135-165; 139-181.

5 The original version in Portuguese was published by Beccari – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 481-492. The present transcription comes from this source.

Caraman, the Jesuit scholar, avers that Susānyos had already proclaimed his Catholic faith in 1624. Therefore, Patriarch Mendes' insistence on ostentatiously confirming the emperor's submission before the kingdom's elite, against the backdrop of the majestic hills of the Ethiopian heartlands, was extraneous and provocative⁶. According to de Almeida, Susānyos had firmly expressed his leanings toward Catholicism as early as November of 1621⁷. The following year he repudiated polygamy, made confession to Father Páez, and as noted took communion from a Catholic dignitary⁸. By 1624, Susānyos had promulgated the kingdom's obeisance to the Petrine See⁹. What, then, was the point of this public spectacle?

The event in question was apparently of great symbolic import, as it marked the start of a "reformation" process within Ethiopia's nascent Catholic Church. The intention was to consolidate the gains already made, reorganize the institutions, ratchet up ecclesiastic discipline, and clearly distinguish sacred expanses from the profane. To Susānyos, the proceedings on February 11, 1626 were indeed a confirmation ceremony, but they also gave rise to a new version of Ethiopian religious history – one that culminated in the triumph of Catholicism. For the Catholic nobility, the event also reinforced their church's authority, intimidating both opponents and skeptics of the devotional transformation.

It is our hope that this critical edition of de Almeida's account will shed new light on the themes and arguments that undergirded the debate between Ethiopia's Catholic and Orthodox factions. This work also promises to elucidate the outlook of Patriarch Mendes and improve our understanding of the religious and political significance of this confirmation rite. Most notably, Susānyos took advantage of this spectacle to shore up his rule, as it stymied – if only fleetingly – those adversaries who had questioned his authority and religious identity.

The highlights of this event were a speech delivered by Patriarch Afonso Mendes, which will indeed be scrutinized below, and the response by Governor Mālkə'a Krəstos on the emperor's behalf. As per the relevant sources, the imperial hall was accommodated to receive all the empire's dignitaries. In attendance were princes, other relatives of the emperor, distinguished governors, and senior monks, all of whom had already embraced the Catholic faith. Two seats were mounted on the imperial dais. The right one was reserved for Susānyos and the left seat for the patriarch, who was arrayed in the pontifical vestments and a ceremonial cape. Soon after both leaders had taken their places, Mendes delivered a lengthy sermon.

6 Philip Caraman – *The Lost Empire*. South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985, p. 143.

7 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 355-357.

8 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 359-363.

9 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 396-400.

Transmission of Mendes' Speech

It stands to reason that Father Mendes wrote this speech on his own well before the ceremony itself. As opposed to many of the extant post-patristic sermons, the Jesuit's speech was certainly not an improvisation that was rescued from oblivion by the odd stenographer¹⁰. In fact, there are several versions of the patriarch's speech in multiple languages. We will be presenting the most compact version of the speech – a Portuguese text that Manuel de Almeida assembled and included in his essential work, *História da Etiópia*. According to its compiler, this document encompasses the essence of what Patriarch Mendes had to say at that eventful ceremony.

De Almeida began working on his history in Gorgora (an Ethiopian town on the shores of Lake Tana) in 1628, but completed the undertaking in Goa between 1643 and 1645. The work draws upon the author's own experiences, oral communications, and Ethiopian and Portuguese texts. In all likelihood, *História da Etiópia* was not published in its entirety until the early 1900s, when Camillo Beccari incorporated the text into his monumental work, *Rerum Aethiopicarum*¹¹.

That said, Father Balthazar Tellez, a Portuguese Jesuit, published an abridged version of de Almeida's original work, under the title *Historia da Ethiopia a Alta*, in 1660¹². Moreover, de Almeida's transcription of Mendes' speech appeared in *Relaçam Geral do Estado da Christiandade de Ethiopia* – a compendium of, above all, Jesuit correspondence that was published by Manuel de Veiga, the Provincial Father of the Society of Jesus in India, in 1628¹³. In consequence, de Almeida's version of the sermon was the most widespread and popular among Portuguese readers.

Mendes himself left two different Latin editions of his speech. The longer version¹⁴ appears to have served as the basis for his actual sermon at the above-mentioned imperial camp in Dänqáz¹⁵. He also summarized the text in a letter¹⁶,

10 Alexandre Olivar – *La predicación cristiana antigua*. Barcelona: Biblioteca Herder, 1991, p. 902-922.

11 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vols. 5, 6, 7.

12 Balthazar Tellez – *Historia Geral de Ethiopia a Alta*. Coimbra: na officina de Manoel Dias, 1660, p. 414-421.

13 Manuel de Veiga – *Relaçam Geral do Estado da Christiandade de Ethiopia; Radaçam dos Scifmaticos; Entrada, & Recébimento do Patriarcha Dom Affonso Mendes; Obediencia dada polo Emperador Steltã Segued com toda fua Corte à Igreja Romana; & do que do nouo focedeo no defcobriméto do Thybet, a que chamam gram Cathayo*. This work is, by and large, a compendium of letters and communications that were sent by all the Jesuits in Ethiopia and Tibet. The author's objective was to present and propagate a triumphalist vision of the mission's accomplishments during those years.

14 This edition was included in Mendes' *Expediçio Aethiopica*; see Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 8, p. 147-177.

15 Dänqáz is located 30 kilometers south of Gondar. Between 1617 and 1618, it served as the emperor's primary residence. See Richard Pankhurst – Dänqáz. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. Ed. Siegbert Uhlig. Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005, p. 92-93.

16 "D. Afonso Mendes, Patriarca da Etiópia, notícia em latim ao Padre Mutio Vitelleschi, sobre a Etiópia". *MS 779*. Arquivo Distrital de Braga, fl. 346-351.

which was subsequently translated into Italian and edited in 1628¹⁷. The existing versions may have been revised in accordance with what Mendes and/or Almeida deemed to be most interesting and useful to the European Catholic public, as their audience's edification was indeed the primary concern of both figures. In light of the above, it is uncertain what was actually uttered at the confirmation rite itself. Moreover, none of the Jesuit missionaries who refer to these events offer any hints as to the language in which the oration was delivered. At any rate, it stands to reason that there was considerable vacillation over the language in which to deliver the speech. The Ethiopian attendees understood neither Latin nor Portuguese, and Mendes was less than fluent in Amharic or Classic Ethiopian. According to James Bruce, a Scotsman who travelled in Ethiopia from 1769 to 1774, the patriarch's speech was delivered in Portuguese and included numerous citations in Latin. He also contended that Mälkə'a Krəstos' response was in Amharic, so that it was unintelligible to the patriarch and his retinue¹⁸. However, there is a possibility that the language barrier was bridged by an interpreter. From Antiquity, the practice of simultaneous translation had been developed in the Christian world for the sake of allowing, say, a Greek orator to address a Syriac audience¹⁹. There were indeed a number of individuals in Ethiopia who were proficient in both Amharic and Portuguese, foremost among them Captain João Gabriel and António Fernandes (a missionary). Mendes even wrote an epistle lauding Gabriel as the main instrument behind the introduction and confirmation of Catholicism throughout the land. More specifically, the letter notes that the Portuguese officer simultaneously translated the first sermon that the patriarch gave in Ethiopia and "many others in the Kingdom of Tégray."²⁰ Against this backdrop, and given the fact that Bruce was an outspoken adversary of Catholicism, there are doubts as to the trustworthiness of his account.

At any rate, the Scottish traveler also provided an account of the ceremony in question, but refrained from discussing the content of the speeches:

Socinios [Susənyos] ordered the patriarch to be placed on a seat equal in height to his own, on his right hand; and at that very audience, on the 11th day of February 1626, it was settled that the king should take an oath of submission to the see of Rome.

This useless, vain, ridiculous ceremony was accordingly celebrated on the 11th of February, with all the pageantry of a heathen festival of triumph. The palace was adorned with all the pomp and vanity that the Church of Rome, and especially that part of it, the Order of the Jesuits, had solemnly abjured. The patriarch, as a mark of his superiority over the

17 Muzio Vitelleschi – *Lettere Annuè di Ethiopia Del 1624. 1625. e 1626. Scritte al M. R. P. Mutio Vitelleschi, Generale della Compagnia di Giesu*. Roma: per l'herede di Bartolomeo Zanetti, 1628, p. 120-142.

18 James Bruce – *Travels to discover the source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773*. Vol. 3. Edinburgh: Printed by J. Ballantyne, for A. Constable and Co., 1804-1805, p. 362.

19 Alexandre Olivar – *La predicación cristiana...*, p. 890-901.

20 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 13, p. 252.

Abunas, preached a sermon in the Portuguese language, upon the primacy of the chair of St. Peter, full of Latin quotations; which is said to have had a wonderful effect upon the King and Sela Christos, neither of whom understood one word either of Latin or Portuguese... . It was a day ever to be marked with black, not only in the annals of Ethiopia, but in those of Rome²¹.

Needless to say, Bruce always sought to dissociate himself from the Jesuits who preceded him in Ethiopia. His hostility notwithstanding, the Scotsman's testimony confirms the import that the Ethiopian court placed on this event.

The Content of Mendes' Oration

A century after the Protestant Reformation had cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Petrine See, Mendes' sermon was mainly devoted to shoring up the pontiff's authority and tightening the unity of the Roman Church. The Reformation focused its criticism on the excessive centralization of papal power. For example the Church's opponents claimed that the emphasis on the Holy See overshadowed other devotional pursuits, such as lay believers reading directly from the Scriptures²². However, these were not the obstacles facing Mendes in Ethiopia. For this reason, the polemic sequences of his sermon contended with issues that differed from those of the Protestant-Catholic dialogue. While the Ethiopian Church had hitherto refused to recognize the patriarch of Rome as the supreme ecclesiastical authority, its opposition did not stem from flaws in the Church's bureaucratic and legalistic character. Ethiopian Christianity indeed respected and abided by its own hierarchy, so that the patriarch's objective, as we shall see, was to glorify Rome at the expense of the other patriarchates.

De Almeida's account reveals how Mendes perceived the Eastern Churches – a subject that indeed preoccupied the Jesuit throughout his tenure in Ethiopia²³. At the ceremony, the father did not officially speak on his own behalf, but as a representative of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church and its exalted leader. Nevertheless, the sermon's content is closely tied to the patriarch's life experiences. Mendes lectured on human and divine letters at the Portuguese universities in Coimbra and Evora, and the father's hagiographers tout his rhetorical eloquence in both Greek and Latin. Likewise, they note that he “never resorted to poetic hyperbole or exaggerations befitting disciples, but sincere history and words befitting a master.”²⁴ Mendes' works indeed

21 James Bruce – *Travels to discover...*, p. 361-364.

22 Gillian Rosemary Evans – *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

23 See Afonso Mendes – *Bran-Haymanot Id est Lux Fidei in Epithalamium Aethiopiae, sive in Nuptias Verbi et Ecclesiae*. Coloniae Agrippinae: Egmond, 1692.

24 Alonso de Andrade; Juan Eusebio Nieremberg – *Varones Ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús*. Vol. 2. Bilbao: Administración del “Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús”, 1889, p. 533.

attest to his predilection for ecclesiastical history and theological debate – themes that he was drawn to since his formative years at Coimbra. These same interests also come to expression in his first encounters with Susānyos' court and figure prominently in the conversion speech.

Mendes arrived in Ethiopia at a time when theological and Christological controversy was rampant in the local church and court. Besides the different Jesuit sources that bear witness to confrontations between missionaries and local prelates over doctrinal issues, Susānyos' chronicle demonstrates that the Jesuit mission managed to splinter the Ethiopian clergy over Catholic tenets²⁵. That said, it is impossible to verify whether Mendes was aware of these factions shortly after his arrival in Dänqāz. We do know that at the beginning of his speech, the father emphasized Christ's dual nature as an elemental Christological dogma that sets Catholicism apart from the "schismatic" churches, like the Alexandrine Patriarchate.

Be that as it may, Mendes' speech did not center around theology. Instead, it constituted a learned exposition on Church history that championed the authority of Rome above all else. According to the period's Jesuit historiography, the genesis of Ethiopian Christianity was the baptism of Queen Candace's Ethiopian eunuch along the Jerusalem-Gaza road. While the origin of this story is the Acts of the Apostles 8: 27-40, the narrative was subsequently corroborated and amplified by Ethiopian traditions²⁶. Pedro Páez, a forerunner of Mendes as head of the Jesuit mission to Ethiopia, indeed referred to these sources in his writing, thereby imparting them with a modicum of credibility²⁷. According to this perspective, the source of Ethiopia's Christianity is pure, whereas its schismatic character is a later development. More

25 Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira – *Chronica de Susenyos*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1892-1900, p. 216 (Gəfəz); p. 237-38 (Portuguese).

26 The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how Philip the Apostle baptized Queen Candace's Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39). It bears noting that "Candace" was the title of "queen mother" in the Nubian Kingdom of Meroë, not Ethiopia. Regardless of the story's historic significance, it does not directly pertain to the Ethiopian Kingdom of Aksum. The Ethiopians' interest in Candace surely stems from the fact that she is called the "queen of the Ethiopians" in the Acts of the Apostles. Since this is the only reference to Ethiopia in the New Testament, it is only natural that this story was enlisted as the 'creation myth' of Ethiopian Christianity. See Francisco Alvares – *The Prester John of the Indies*. Ed. Charles Fraser Beckingham and George Wynn Brereton Huntingford. Tr. Lord Stanley of Alderley. Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1961, p. 148-151. Edward Ullendorff maintains that the Queen of Sheba and Candace were conflated into a single person in the Ethiopian tradition (*Kəbrä Nəgəst*, chap. 33). Furthermore, he suggests that this sort of amalgamation informs a variety of other Candace-Sheba and Solomon-Alexander legends. For example, the Syriac and Ethiopian versions of Alexander's romance with Candace are highly reminiscent of the story in the *Kəbrä Nəgəst* about the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Edward Ullendorff – Candace (Acts VIII, 27) and the Queen of Sheba. *New Testament Studies*. 2 (1955-1956) 53-56. That said, Roderick Grierson and Stuart Munro-Hay contend that the descriptions of Alexander's love for Candace in versions of the Alexander Romances are less similar to the relationship between Solomon and Makkada (Sheba's Ethiopian name) than Ullendorff believes. Grierson, Roderick and Stuart Munro-Hay – Candace. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*. Ed. Siegbert Uhlig. Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003, p. 679-680. A number of seventeenth-century works demonstrate that in its capacity as the 'creation myth' of Ethiopian Christianity, the Candace story occupied a prominent place in the era's Jesuit historiography; see Jerónimo Lobo – *Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos*. Ed. M. Gonçalves da Costa in collaboration with Charles Fraser Beckingham and Donald M. Lockhart. Lisboa: Livraria Civilização – Editora, 1971, p. 348-349.

27 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 2, p. 349-350; Jerónimo Lobo – *Itinerário e outros escritos...*, p. 348-349.

specifically, the Ethiopian Church's deviancy is the product of its subordination to the Alexandrine Patriarchate, which since the Council of Chalcedon has rejected the jurisdiction and doctrinal line of the Petrine See²⁸. In a text penned after the ceremony, though, Mendes questioned certain elements of this narrative as presented in Ethiopian texts: "In these stories of Ethiopia, there are certain fantastic things that I have no intention of sanctioning."²⁹ Against this backdrop, we can surmise that on the occasion of his speech, the Jesuit preferred to reconcile with the official version of Ethiopia's Christianization, despite his serious doubts as to its veracity.

Generally speaking, Mendes' oration is grounded on arguments that informed the eleventh-century schism between Catholicism and Eastern Christianity and were subsequently dusted off amid the Protestant Reformation. After listing the different heresies embraced by the other patriarchates (Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem), he asserted that supreme and infallible judgment was in the sole possession of Rome, for it had never fallen prey to heretical beliefs. This contention was raised four centuries earlier by Anselm of Havelberg³⁰. Yet another underlying principle of the father's sermon that Catholic thinkers had been harping on since the eleventh century was that disobedience to Rome was linked to heresy. In other words, papal primacy is a divine institution, and whoever spurns the head of the Apostolic Church is instantly marginalized as a heretic. Mendes was thus continuing to put forward a medieval demand that the Church of Constantinople defer to Rome as a *sine qua non* for resolving the conflicts between the Latin and Greek Church³¹.

Other issues that long preoccupied the Jesuits in their polemic against the Ethiopian Church are entirely absent from the patriarch's sermon. To wit, there is no mention of Jewish rites, creationism, the nature of souls, the *Filioque*³², or the sacramental differences between Orthodox Ethiopians and Catholics. The only topical issue that Mendes clearly raised, at the beginning of his speech, is the Chalcedon controversy pitting Monophysitism versus Duophysitism – a debate that indeed had a great bearing on the identity of both churches. In understating the Catholic-Ethiopian polemic, the father was apparently more concerned with framing the conversion rite within

28 Leonardo Cohen – Ethiopian Christianity as Heresy: the Development of the Concept in Portuguese and Jesuit Sources. In *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Ed. Siegbert Uhlig. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2006, p. 649-655.

29 "Informação em que se mostra, em que tempo se pregou o evangelho em Ethiopia, é começou a vida monastica, e ques foram seus instituidores e pregadores. Composta pello Patriarcha d'Ethiopia Dom Afonso Mendez da Companhia de Jesus". Arquivo Distrital de Braga, MS. 779, fl. 559v.

30 Steven Runciman – *The Eastern Schism. A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the XIth and XIIIth Centuries*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 116. Although Anselm of Havelberg is more concise than Mendes, both theologians list heretical authors who, in their estimation, misinterpreted the Scriptures. In addition, both of them concluded that the "true faith" had survived for centuries exclusively under the Pope's tutelage. See Anselm Bishop of Havelberg – *Dialogues*. Ed. Gaston Salet. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966, p. 76-83 (Sources chrétiennes, 118).

31 Steven Runciman – *The Eastern Schism...*, p. 116-117.

32 For an in-depth look at these topics, see Leonardo Cohen – *The Missionary Strategies of the Jesuits in Ethiopia 1555-1632*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009, p. 129-140, 180-186.

the context of ecumenical history. Put differently, he viewed Susānyos' acceptance of Catholicism as one more phase in the war against the heresies that were trammeling Christianity, many of which are taken in a similar light by Orthodox Ethiopians³³. In conferring authority upon tradition, the papacy, and the ecumenical councils, the sermon constituted an exhortation to obedience. Only at the tail end of his speech did Mendes phrase Church unity as an obligation stemming from the relationship and encounters between the Kingdoms of Ethiopia and Portugal over the previous two centuries. The ceremony is portrayed as the resolution of a protracted breach of commitments on the part of the Ethiopian empire, which were ratified by the Council of Florence (1431). According to the Catholic orator, from the 1500s onwards, successive Ethiopian emperors had recognized this synod as a historic convocation whose decisions were religiously binding.

In sum, the text of Father Mendes' speech reveals that he was more interested in expounding upon ecclesiastical history and the various heresies that had shaped the Church's past than contending with the premises and concerns of his Ethiopian hosts. From the Catholic patriarch's standpoint, primitive heresy had inevitably tainted the Alexandrine Church – the source of Ethiopian Christianity. Accordingly, this ceremony represented no less than Ethiopia's return to the path of righteousness, after losing its way due to its long-standing ties with Alexandria.

Sources

Not unlike the rest of the debates between Jesuits and Ethiopian prelates, Father Mendes' arguments were based on the Scriptures and the exegesis of the Church Fathers. Accordingly, the patriarch's speech is laden with references to patristic sources and the canons of the first ecumenical councils. It is only natural, then, that most of his citations are from the works of Tertullian (the putative founder of Latin Christianity), Jerome, Leo the Great, and other church historians (he also exhibited a fondness for Socrates and Sozomen). As noted above, Mendes' words strongly echo medieval disputes over the supremacy of Rome. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Catholic patriarch also turned to medieval authorities, like Bernard of Clairvoix (the theologian, monastic leader, and so-called "doctor" of the Church). He may also have occasionally drawn on patristic sources that passed through the filter and pen of sixteenth-century historians. The Jesuit was also partial to Cardinal Caesar Baronius, one of the most distinguished church historians of the Counter-Reformation era³⁴. Although Baronius is not explicitly quoted in the sermon under review, other documents

33 See Enrico Cerulli – *Scritti teologici etiopici dei secoli XVI-XVII*. Vol. 2. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1960, p. 31-33 (ገጽ 31); p. 98-100 (Italian).

34 Baronius' twelve-volume work, *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Rome, 1598-1607), was a riposte to *Centuria Magdeburgenses* – a Lutheran history of the church.

indicate that Mendes considered him a reliable source in all that concerns Church history on through the sixteenth century³⁵. The consonance between Mendes and Baronius' arguments is indeed striking. For example, the cardinal's interpretation of Matthew 16:18 is predicated on a number of citations from Church Fathers, such as Cyprian, Augustine, and Leo the Great, as well as the acts of the Council of Ephesus. In Baronius' estimation, "all the orthodox ecclesiastical writers who came after those cited above together with all the synods that are legitimately united in the holy spirit have without exception constantly and frankly professed this same principle, namely that Peter was instituted as the foundation of the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁶ The consensus among the Fathers, according to Baronius, guarantees that the interpretation of Matthew 16:18 is correct. Furthermore, he believed that the Church's supreme authority rests entirely on the Petrine See and the ecumenical councils³⁷.

At this early stage of his encounter with the nobility and high Ethiopian ecclesiastics, we can assume that Mendes had already gleaned some information about Ethiopian Christianity from the following sources: other Jesuits; the chronicle of Francisco Alvares; Páez's history of Ethiopia; and from oral communications with Portuguese who spent time in Ethiopia. As per de Almeida version of the speech, Mendes availed himself of some Ethiopian sources as well, most notably the Ethiopic version of the Council of Nicaea's canons. In referring to Ethiopian emperors as descendants of Solomon and Sheba, he alluded to the *Kəbrä Nəgäšt*. It may be assumed that Mendes could not read Gəʿəz, so that his reference to this work in all likelihood drew on the insights of predecessors like Father Páez³⁸. In the Latin version of Mendes' speech, there are also obvious allusions to the *Haymanotä abäw* (the Gəʿəz version of an extensive Arabic compendium of writings by Church Fathers). Jesuits often turned to this anthology for the purpose of debunking their opponents' arguments³⁹.

The Emperor's Response

At the time of the ceremony, the Ethiopian nobility was divided on the matter of religious affiliation. Some were enthusiastic devotees of Catholicism, while others accused Susānyos of betraying the ancestral faith. Of course, a fair share of the elite simply kept a low profile on this issue, biding their time until the struggle reached its

35 In his work *Expeditio Aethiopica*, Mendes pays homage to Baronius' work as historian of the Church, placing him in the same company as Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret. See Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 8, p. 56.

36 Cited in Enrico Norelli – The Authority Attributed to the Early Church in the *Centuries of Magdeburg* and the *Ecclesiastical Annals* of Caesar Baronius. In *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurist*. Ed. Irena Backus. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 756-757.

37 Enrico Norelli – The Authority..., p. 760-766.

38 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 2, p. 25-49.

39 Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 8, p. 165, 167. For more on how the Jesuits employed the *Haymanotä abäw* in their oral debates, see Leonardo Cohen – *The Missionary Strategies...*, p. 122-126, 134-135.

denouement. The emperor chose to respond to the patriarch's sermon through Mälkäṗa Krəstos, one of his close allies. That said, his choice for this task is rather perplexing. It stands to reason that Susənyos was eager to involve the upper class in the conversion process. On the one hand, the Ethiopian ruler needed a loyal supporter; on the other hand, he could ill-afford to have a fervent Catholic like his cousin Səʿälä Krəstos, whose unbridled devotion constituted a political liability for the emperor, serve as his mouthpiece⁴⁰. As opposed to Səʿälä Krəstos, Mälkäṗa Krəstos had been a staunch enemy of the missionaries. Although he spearheaded the repression of the anti-Catholic revolt (1617), during which *Abunä Səməʿon* was killed, this can be attributed to his loyalty to Susənyos. As a result of the *abunä* death, his wife, Wälättä Pēṭros, left him to become an Orthodox nun and eventually turned into one of the leaders of the anti-Catholic opposition⁴¹. Mälkäṗa Krəstos's hostility to the Jesuits notwithstanding, he had indeed been faithful to Susənyos for many years. Against this mixed record, the emperor's decision to have the governor represent him at the ceremony was most intriguing.

In choosing a secular figure for the job, Susənyos revealed that he was more concerned with political legitimacy than doctrinal consolidation. Mälkäṗa Krəstos attributed his own devotional *volte face* to the vicissitudes that the empire had undergone. The opposition and rebellions made it inevitable, from Mälkäṗa Krəstos's standpoint, that the emperor's victory would coincide with Ethiopia's conversion to Catholicism. However, de Almeida notes that Susənyos and his orator were not in complete lockstep, to the point where the former was compelled to interject several times over the course of the governor's response.

In the final paragraphs of his account, de Almeida describes the severe warning that was issued to the rebels and dissidents towards the end of the proceedings. Brandishing a sword, Səʿälä Krəstos verbally admonished and intimidated the rivals of the Catholic Church with words that de Almeida brings in full. The text appears to suggest that this episode was extemporaneous. At any rate, it certainly ran counter to the discretion and prudence with which Susənyos intended to handle this delicate event. That said, the overall picture that the Jesuit compiler paints is one of a harmonious encounter between the powers of Heaven and Earth.

40 In Susənyos' chronicle, Səʿälä Krəstos is blamed for the implementation of religious policies that were alien to Ethiopian customs. It stands to reason that the authors of the chronicle sought to distance the emperor from the pro-Catholic policies that sullied his reputation in the eyes of his readership. See Izabela Orlowska – The Chronicle of Susneyos as an Ethiopian Source for Research on the Jesuit Period in Ethiopia. In *Ethiopian Studies at the End of the Second Millennium. Proceedings of the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, 6-11 November 2000, Addis Ababa*. Ed. Baye Yimam, et al. Vol. 1. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 2002, p. 422-434.

41 See Carlo Conti Rossini; Charles Jaeger (eds.) – *Vitae Sanctorum Indigenarum I Acta S. Walatta Pēṭros, II, Miracula S. Zara-Buruk*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Vol. 68. Scriptores Aetiopici Vol. 30. Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1953; Lafranco Ricci (tr.) – *Vita di Walatta Pēṭros*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Vol. 316. Scriptores Aetiopici. Vol. 61. Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, Waversebaan, 1970. Sevir B. Chernetsov – A Transgressor of the Norms of Female Behavior in Seventeenth Century Ethiopia – the Heroine of the 'Hagiography of our Mother Walatta Petros. *Khristianskij Vostok*. 4 (2006) 56-72.

Father Manuel de Almeida's Account: Transcription

Obediencia que o Emperador e todos os grandes de Etiopia derão publicamente ao muito sancto papa Urbano oitavo nas mãos do patriarca dom Affonso Mendez.

Pera este acto tam sancto, tam religioso e solenne se sinalou huma quarta feira, dia undecimo de fevereiro do anno de 1626; e podese dizer com muita rezão que não vio Ethiopia dia mais ditoso, e merecedor de ser todos os annos festejado com todas as demonstrações de verdadeira alegria; pois nelle lhe amanheceu a luz clarissima da verdadeira e santa fée catholica, que nelle todos professarão, nelle desfeitas e acabadas as trevas palpaveis do Egypto, afogados no Mar Vermelho os erros e heregias de Eutyches e Dioscoro, quebrado o vil iugo dos ingnorantissimos Abbunas e Patriarchas de Alexandria, se vio Ethiopia alevantada á dignidade de filha de Deus, polo que podia com rezão cantar com Moyses e Maria sua jrmã: *In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Iacob de populo barbaro, facta est Iudaea sanctificatio eius*, etc. Ornouse pera este tam solenne acto a sala imperial o melhor que pode ser, acudirão á ella todos os grandes do imperio, príncipes, irmãos do Emperador, Viso Rejs, capitães, Azages e Ombares, que são todo o dezembargo e tribunal da justiça, os Debteras e frades mai[s] graves que ia tinhão recebida a santa fée de Roma. Junto ao trono, que he o leito imperial, se puzerão duas cadeiras de estado, na da mão direita se assentou o Emperador, na da esquerda o Patriarcha, revestido em pontifical, com thiara e capa de asperges; feito silencio começou o Patriarcha huma larga pratica, ou pregação acomodada ao acto que se celebrava, pera a qual tomou por thema aquellas palavras que Christo Senhor Nosso disse á s. Pedro: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*; e porque ella foi tam grave e tam bem fundada em passos da escritura, authoridades de santos e mais historias sagradas, e por isso muito á proposito pera convencer e provar a primasia da cadeira Romana, faria eu grande agravo á esta historia, se não escrevesse aqui ao menos a substancia della.

Pratica do Patriarca no acto do juramento

Perguntou Christo Senhor nosso á seus discipulos, que opinião tinhão delle os homens? e respondendolhe que falavão com variedade, lhes perguntou por seu voto: *Vos autem quem me esse dicitis?* S. Pedro, como mais fervoroso, acudiu dizendo: *Tu es Christus filius Dei vivi*. Nas quaes palavras cifrou tudo o que de Christo se pode confessar, á saber que he huma pessoa divina com duas naturezas, divina e humana. Porque dizendo: *Tu es*, fala com hum só individuo e imcommunicavel supposto; dizendo: *Christus filius Dei vivi*, declara as duas naturezas; a divina, porque não pode ser que seja filho de Deus, sem ser Deus da mesma natureza e substancia que o Pay;

e a humana, em lhe chamar Christo, que quer dizer unguido. O qual nome com sua significação se não pode attribuir a Deus: porque unção significa nova graça, e se esta podera aver em Deus de novo, não fora eterno e immutavel e assi se chama Christo unguido por respeito da humanidade, da qual o propheta disse: *Propterea unxit te Deus tuus oleo laetitiae. ps. 44.*

Por galardão desta altissima confissão, que s. Pedro, com particular revelação do eterno Padre, fez de Christo Nosso Senhor, o declarou por cabeça e pedra fundamental de sua igreja: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*, e pera mostrar que á nenhum dos outros *discipulos* dava esta preeminencia, que á Pedro, apontou só nelle: *Et ego dico tibi*. Não que o fizesse logo em effeito, e com real entrega e jurdição vigairo seu, senão prometendolhe de o aver de ser depois de sua morte e paixão; porque emquanto o Senhor vivia, não era neecessaria esta substituição. Polo que depois de Christo Senhor nosso morrer, Pedro ficou o seu vigairo e pastor universal da Igreja; tanto que o mesmo Senhor depois de sua gloriosa resurreição lhe disse: *Pásee oves meas*, etc. Ioann. 22.

Avendo pois eu de receber do poderosissimo emperador Seltan Segued e de todos os grandes de seu imperio o juramento de união e fedelidade desta igreja de Etiopia com a Romana, que he cabeça, mestra e may de todas as igrejas, e de obediencia ao santissimo padre papa Urbano VIII legitimo successor de s. Pedro, não os quero exhortar com outras palavras que com aquellas mesmas com que Christo Senhor nosso uniu e ajuntou em Pedro toda sua igreja: *Super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*, não falando de muitas igrejas, senão de huma só em singular, *Ecclesiam meam*. Porque ainda que s. Paulo falle de igrejas em plural, *Ecclesiis Galatiae* ad Gal., I; *Per omnes ecclesias*, etc. I, Cor., I. E São João no Apocalypse, Apoc., I, *Septem ecclesiis quae sunt in Asia*; e se nomeão igreja grega e latina, occidental e oriental, não he mais que huma só igreja catholica e apostolica, como diz Tertuliano: porque ainda que no paço imperial aja muitas casas, todas ellas se comprehendem neste nome paço, que he hum só; e nem, por no corpo humano aver muitos membros, deixa elle de ser hum só corpo. Assi as igrejas, ainda que muitas, todas se comprehendem e unem nesta igreja unica Romana, como no Credo confessamos: *Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*.

Esta união com a igreja Romana tevestes, Senhores, e conservastes com a fé que recebestes de s. Matheus e do eunucho de vossa rainha Candace, emquanto do Egypto e Alexandria não rebentou e saio aquelle falso pastor e cabeça sem juizo, que, desunindo vos do verdadeiro pastor e cabeça, vos fez corpo monstruoso. Ora he ia chegado, por merce divina, aquelle dia no qual (já que tanto vos prezaes de descendentes del rey David, par meio de Menilech, do qual escrevem as historias de Ethiopia que foi filho de Salamão e da rainha Sabâ, tronco da descendencia imperial) vemos comprida a prophecia de Amos, cap. 9: *in illa die suscitabo tabernaculum David, quod cecidit, et*

reaedificabo aperturas murorum eius, ea quae corruerant iustaurabo, et reaedificabo illud sicut in diebus antiquis. Agora tendes architecto, mandado da sede apostolica, pera se refazerem estas ruinas, que ainda que indigno do officio e menos sabio, sabe pelo menos (conforme ao de s. Paulo: *Ut sapiens architectus fundamentum posuit, quod est Christus*, I Cor., 3) mostrarvos o fundamento da verdadeira fée que hé Christo e não ignora ser cabeça de igreja aquelle de que o mesmo Senhor disse: *Super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam.* Tendes pastor que, ainda que não pode dizer: *Ego sum pastor bonus*, comtudo he enviado daquelle summo pastor, á quem o Senhor emcomendou suas ovelhas: *Pasce oves meas*; e procurará, quanto suas forças abrangerem, que se cumpra o de Ezechiel: *Pastor unus erit omnium eorum* Ezech., 37, e o de Christo: *Ut fiat unum ovile et unus pastor* Ioan., 10.

Ninguem pode negar ser s. Pedro fundamento e cabeça universal da Igreja catholica; por tal o reconhecerão os Apostolos depois que o Senhor lhe disse: *Tu es Petrus*, ou como lee nosso livro: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam.* Como tal presidiu no primeiro concilio que em Jerusalem celebrarão os Apostolos; condenou a Simão Mago e deu sentença de morte contra Ananias e Saphira, como quebrantadores da pobreza evangelica; nem ja mais entre os Apostolos ouve com s. Pedro competencia sobre a primazia, que todos lhe obedecião sempre como á *suprema* cabeça e prelado seu; e sendo assi que Santiago era bispo de Jerusalem e estava em sua propria diocesi, comtudo s. Pedro como superior seu e em prezença e ajuntamento dos mais Apostolos resolvia as duvidas e controversias que se movião. Donde disse s. Bernardo: *Iacobus, qui videbatur columna, una contentus est Hierosolyma, Petro universitatem cedens*; e pera mostrar esta preeminencia que a igreja Romana, fundada sobre s. Pedro, tem sobre todas as Igrejas patriarchaes como inferiores e sogeitas, apontarei de cadahuma em particular o que faz á nosso intento pola verdade.

A igreja de Jerusalem, a qual por sua antiguidade, chamou o concilio Constantinopolitano may de todas as igrejas, *quia de Sion exivit lex et Verbum Domini de Ierusalem*, e se estendeu com sua jurdição por toda Palestina, sempre reconheceu por seu superior o Pontifice romano, e por elle os seus bispos forão julgados em todas as occasiões que se offerecerão, como foi polo papa Hormisdas no anno de 520 sentenciado o bispo João, ao qual os hereges e Eutichianos levantarão aquella dignidade, excluindo o santo Elias; o mesmo fez o papa Theodoro com Sophronio, anno 643, e o pontifice Paschoal com Herbermano, anno de 1109; e no anno de 1115 com Arnulpho.

A igreja de Constantinopla, com pretender por vezes, estribada no favor dos Emperadores, o principado das igrejas orientaes (posto que dellas era a mais moderna), nunca porem teve competencia, nem fez opposição com a igreja Romana, e ainda que no tempo do papa Pelagio e Gregorio Magno, João seu patriarcha intentasse usurpar o titulo de pastor universal, foi logo pelos mesmos Pontifices reprimido seu atrevimento, e sempre elles forão reconhecidos por supremos e como á taes recorrerão

com appellações, Paulo, perseguido de Macedonio e s. João Chrisostomo de Theophilo Alexandrino. Por o papa Celestino e Xisto III foi condenado e deposto Nestorio, Acacio por Felix, Euphemio por Gelasio, Antimo por Agapito, e outros mais contra os quaes se executou o rigor justo da suprema jurdição romana e apostolica.

A igreja de Antiochia cedeo sempre á Romana, porque s. Pedro, deixando nella Alvodio mudou com sua pessoa toda a dignidade pontifical e suprema pera Roma; e Juvenal bispo de Jerusalem no concilio Ephesino mostrou contra João patriarcha antiocheno, que se oppunha aos legados apostolicos, que sempre a igreja de Antiochia foi subdita da Romana, e seus patriarchas mandavão pedir confirmação de sua eleição a Roma, como fez Caniridico, que sucedeu a Estevão; e no tempo de Innocencio II pelos annos de 1136, hum certo Rodolpho intruzo foi condenado por Alberico bispo hostiense, legado do Papa.

E vindo ia a igreja de Alexandria, que depois de Roma tem o segundo lugar, como lho derao os concilios Niceno e Constantinopolitano, não há duvida que sempre se houve como subdita e discipula da igreja Romana, na forma com que sam Marcos seu primeiro patriarcha, se reconheceu por subdito e discipulo de s. Pedro, e Dionisio seu patriarcha deu rezão de sy ante o summo Pontifice, de que muito o louva santo Athanasio, e o mesmo s. Athanasio, perseguido dos Arrianos, appellou pera o romano pontifice, s. Pedro recorreu ao papa Damaso e por elle foi restituído á sua igreja. A sentença de Theophilo contra s. João Chrysostomo foi declarada por injusta e nulla pelo papa Innocencio, e elle depois escomungado e deposto; s. Leão papa condenou ao perverso Dioscoro e, ainda que os hereges o não querião assy crer, bem o testemunhou aquella publica aclamação e mortificação que os padres e concilios por este respeito lhe derão: *Vicit leo de tribu Iuda*; e dizerem os hereges alexandrinos que sua igreja he cabeça de todas, por ser a mais oriental, bem se vêe quam inepta e redicula he esta rezão; porque por ella, se boa fora, se teria por universal a igreja de s. Thome, que está mais metida pelo oriente; e bem ingnorantes geometras são os que dizem ser a igreja de Alexandria a mais oriental, porque, ainda que á respeito de Roma e de Constantinopla o he, comtudo, a respeito de Jerusalem e Antiochia fica mais occidental. Polo que se deve ter por verdade certa e infalivel, que a igreja Romana hé a cabeça de todas as outras, como fundada sobre aquella pedra: *Et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*; e nao tem ellas outro ser, outra verdade e jurdição, mais que a que recebem desta fonte e cabeça suprema.

Isto se confirma bem com o que se lêe no vosso livro synodal, em que se relata hum canone verdadeiro do concilio Niceno, que, fielmente traduzido, diz: Quatro são em todo o mundo as cadeiras principaes, como os quatro rios, que saem do paraizo, os quatro ventos universaes e quatro elementos, mas sobre todas tem excellencia e primazia a cadeira de s. Pedro de Roma, segundo insinarão os Apostolos; no segundo lugar esta a de s. Marcos de Alexandria; no terceiro a de s. João Evangelista; no quarto

a de Antiochia, que tambem foi de s. Pedro e destes procedem todos os mais bispos damigreja; ate aqui o canone. Vede agora á quem se deve dar maior credito, se a hum falsario grosador, ou á hum decreto de trezentos e dezoito Padres mui catholicos e verdadeiros.

Sendo pois verdade que esta hé a primeira cadeira da igreja, vede, senhores, com quanta rezão vos exorto á seguila, e que, deixados os regatos, vos chegueis á fonte. Ate agora *malae quaedam lamiae nudaverunt mammam* Thren., 4, e vos criavão a seus peitos empeçonhentos; agora que conheceis a verdadeira e legitima may, *Quasi modo geniti infantes rationabiles et sine dolo lac concupiscite* Petr., I, que não há cousa mais posta em resão que beber o leite daquella igreja e cadeira apostolica, que nunca foi inficionada com peçonha de alguma heregia, erro ou engano. A igreja Jerosolimitana, posto que se conservou na pureza da fé até o anno de 109, comtudo, morto Simeão filho de Cleophas, foi nella intruso hum Tibulles [sic] que semeou a zizania da heregia; e s. Jeronymo no quarto seculo escreveu diffusamente contra os erros de João bispo de Jerusalem.

A igreja Antiochena teve á Paulo Samozateno, Eulalio, Eusebio, Eufronio, Flacilo [sic], Estevão e outros hereges inventores de falsidades; na Constantinopolitana se levantou Nestorio, Eusebio Nicomediense, Macedonio e ontros muitos, cuja doutrina foi reprovada e julgada por heretica; a Alexandria [sic] deu ao mundo com parto monstruoso ao perfido Arrio e teve por bispos Heracla origenista, Lucio, Jorge, Dioscoro e outras pestes semelhantes. Só a cidade de Roma e cadeira de s. Pedro, nem gerou, nem consentio em si algum heresiarcha, nem fora de sy o sofreu, mas a todos em qualquer parte do mundo, que brotarão com falsa doutrina, perseguiu, julgou e condenou.

Portanto, huma e mil vezes com affectuoso desejo de ver esta igreja de Ethiopia limpa de erros e de todo sogeita á Romana, exhorto aos christãos della, ovelhas que por espaço de quatrocentos e sincoenta annos se sustentarão com o leite puro desta may, com aquel estiverão unidos até o tempo do concilio Calcedonense, de que depois se apartarão, agora com novo espirito e *fervor* appetção tornar á seu gremio os que delle se achão apartados, como muitos de vossos antepassados summamente dezejarão tornar, assi nos seculos mais antigos, como nestes mais chegados. Quem não sabe, que no anno de 1177 o Emperador que então governava Ethiopia, pediu por seu embaixador mestres doutos e catholicos ao papa Alexandre III: ao concilio Florentino forão mandados embaixadores pelo Emperador e Patriarcha, e trouxerão cartas do papa Eugenio quarto ao emperador Zara Jacob; e o emperador David no anno 24 do seculo passado, escrevendo ao papa Clemente VII, dizia ter a dita carta em seu poder; e mandou tambem seus embaixadores, que acharão ao Papa em Bolonha coroando á Carlos V emperador dos Romanos no anno de 1530; escreveu tambem depois ao Romano Pontifice o emperador Za Danguil; mas atalhado com a morte, não chegou ao cumprimento de seus desejos; este tem Vossa Magestade, christianissimo e felicissimo

Emperador, visto; depois de tantas cartas escritas com instancia ao papa Paulo V e ao catholico Rey de Portugal, pedindo pastor e pregadores evangelicos, ajudandose em tudo do conselho e doutrina dos padres da Companhia de Jesu, aos quaes, depois de Deus e do zelo de Vossa Magestade, se pode dever a restauração de Ethiopia.

Ora, Senhor, *venit hora et nunc est*, em que Vossa Magestade se pode desobrigar daquella antiga divida com que vossos antepassados morrerão obrigados aos serenissimos Reis de Portugal, os quaes com tanto zelo tomarão por empreza sua e alvo, á que sempre tirarão seus desejos, á união de Ethiopia com a igreja Romana, e ja á esse fim no anno de 1486, tendo noticia de hum Rey christão com nome de Preste João, que avia no Oriente, por terra e por mar mandarão suas espias e exploradores pera o descobrirem e delle lhe darem noticia. Torno á dizer, muito poderoso emperador Seltan Segued, *venit hora et nunc est*, que esta he a hora em que he justo que Vossa Magestade faça a todos seus vassallos semelhantes á sy na fée que professa, porque Segued quer dizer adorar, e esta he a hora na qual *veri adoratores adorabunt Patrem in spiritu et veritate* Joan, IV, porque como diz sam Cypriano, quem ouver de ter a Deus por pay, ha de der [*sic*] a igreja Romana por may. As outras igrejas que desta estão desunidas, não são mais senão madrastas, que crião filhos adulterinos, que Deus não conhece por seus. Só esta may cria pera Deus filhos legitimos em espirito e verdade, os quaes elle conhece por seus e como á taes lhes deita sua paternal benção e concede vida sempiterna.

Era se acabando a pratica do patriarcha, que foi ouvida com muita atenção e aceitação, mandou o Emperador levantar a Melcâ Christos, seu primo e mordomo mór antigo, e ao presente Viso Rey de Semen e por elle falou na forma seguinte, suprimindo o mesmo Emperador nos lugares onde o orador discrepava das cousas que lhe elle primeiro tinha praticado e communicado.

Pratica do emperador Seltan Çagued no mesmo acto

Ouvi todos os que estaes presentes. Em tempo do emperador Galadios veyo o mouro Granh e se fez senhor de quasi toda Ethiopia; vendose el Rey neste aperto, mandou recado aos Portugueses pera o virem socorrer e remediarem os danos que o inimigo tinha feito em suas terras; erão as condições, que, vindo este socorro Portugues, receberião os de Ethiopia todos a fée Romana, que só era a verdadeira e aos Portugueses darião a terceira parte de todas as nossas terras, firmando tudo com juramento e escomunhão posta, pera não faltarem no contrato feito. Os Portugueses, como verdadeiros filhos da fée, vierão em numero de quatrocentos e forão tão notaveis as vitorias que alcançarão dos inimigos, que poserão espanto á todos nossos naturaes, e desbaratando os mouros, matarão muitos milhares delles e ao Granh seu rey e capitão

da guerra, o que custou a vida e sangue a muitos dos Portugueses que morrerão na empreza, pera nos ser a nós restituído nosso reino e terras.

Não quiz porem o Rej e a nossa gente guardar com elles o juramento feito, e contra elle e a escomunhão posta, recuzarão receber a fée romana e ao patriarcha catholico que lhes veyo de Portugal. Polo que nos castigou Deus com os Gallas, que nos destruirão e occuparão as terras, como tendes visto. Andando o tempo, por morte do emperador Malac Saged, succedeulhe no reino seu filho Jacobo, que todos receberão como legitimo sucessor de seu pay, feito juramento e posta a escomunhão de lhe guardar fidelidade. Mas, passados poucos annos, rebellarão contra elle, e desapossandoo do reino, o desterrarão, dando por causa não ser filho do emperador Malac Segued; e derão o cetro e coroa do imperio á Za Danguil, com a mesma pena de escomunhão e juramento de fidelidade; e no mesmo anno o matarão.

Estando eu quieto e retirado no mosteiro de Debra Libanos, e depois de ter percorrido por muitas terras fugindo destas revoltas, me vierão pedir quizesse ser seu rey, porque estava o imperio desamparado. Respondilhes: Vos outros tendes por costume quebrar as escomunhões e juramentos, matar aos reys e perturbar a gente; comtudo instarão que eu avia de ser seu rey e nenhum outro, promettendome lealdade com juramento e escomunhão. Entrei no reino que eu não pretendera, posto que me pertencia; e não tardou muito que não intentassem fazerme o que aos passados tinhamo feito, e assy mandarão chamar a Jacobo do desterro pera os vir governar, e me excluirão do reino. Porem eu os desenganei, que ia que por força e em que me pez, me quizerão levantar por rey, avia de sustentar o estado em que me poserão confiando em Deus que me ajudaria. E bem se viu logo o favor do ceo, porque, dando batalha a Jacobo, o venci e desbaratei, morrendo elle juntamente com muitos que o seguião.

Fiz logo diligencia sobre as cousas da fée, perguntando aos letrados a causa de nossa doutrina discordar com a da igreja romana, e lendo os livros achei que muitas cousas se insinavão em Ethiopia contra elles; polo que me resolvi que só a fée romana era a verdadeira sem variedade nem fallencia, e a que tinhamos era falsa e heretica, communicada pelo mao Dioscoro, que negou em Christo duas naturezas, seguindo ao impio Eutyches, os quaes ambos forão condenados no concilio Calcedonense por 630 bispos e padres juntos de toda a igreja por mandado de s. Leão papa vigairo de Christo e successor de s. Pedro; os quaes erros ja dantes tinhão sido condenados no concilio Ephesino por duzentos padres e antes destes, no concilio Constantinopolitano; por isso em tempo de s. Sylvestre papa e do emperador Constantino, tambem forão condenados por 318 padres no concilio Niceno; e assy por esta doutrina falsa foi Dioscoro escomungado e apartado da igreja Romana, ao qual seguindo hum seu discipulo Jacobo, pregou esta falsa doutrina em Alexandria, donde se nos pegou á nós e ficamos cheos de seus erros e mintiras.

Isto tudo considerado, e a variedade e inconstancia de nossas cousas e doutrina de nossos mestres, que, como não estava fundada na verdadeira pedra Christo, não podia ter firmeza, comecei a favorecer os catholicos, e finalmente recebi a fé Romana, e pera ella arrisquei a vida muitas vezes. e fui perseguido de muitos de dentro e fora de minha casa, que contra mim se alevantarão, como sabeis; entre os quaes foi Jonael, a quem tinha feito visó rey dc Begameder, e meu genro Julios, á quem tinha dado minha filha e feito grandes merces. Mas a todos derrubou o braço de Deus, e pos á meus pées; polo que entendi que esta he a minha fé e que ou com reino ou sem elle creo e confesso a fé de Roma, e por ella estou aparelhado á morrer, se for necessario, nem ávera cousa que della, com a graça divina, me possa apartar; e assi digo com s. Paulo, que nem fome, nem sede, nem persiguição, nem trabalhos, nem angustias, nem o presente, nem o porvir me poderá apertar da verdadeira fé Romana e amor de Christo.

Ate aqui falou o orador, depois, virandose o mesmo Emperador pera o Patriarcha, lhe disse: Não cuide Vossa Senhoria que o que hoje me pede, e eu quero fazer, hé cousa nova; porque ia ha muito que tenho dado esta obediencia á Sua Santidade nas mãos do padre superior, que esta presente; e respondendolhe brevemente o Patriarcha, tomou o livro dos evangelhos nas mãos aberto e pondose o Emperador de jolhos, fez o juramento na forma seguinte.

Nos Seltan Segued, emperador de Ethiopia, cremos e confessamos que s. Pedro principe dos Apóstolos, foi constituido por Christo nosso Senhor cabeça de toda a igreja christã, e que lhe deu o principado e senhorio sobre todo o mundo, quando lhe disse: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum*: e outra vez quando lhe disse: *Pasce oves meas*. Item cremos e confessamos, que o papa de Roma, legitimamente eleito, he verdadeiro sucessor de s. Pedro apostolo no governo, o qual tem o mesmo poder, dignidade e supremazia de toda a igreja christã; e ao santo padre Urbano VIII deste nome, por merce de Deus papa e senhor nosso, e á seus sucessores no governo da igreja, prometemos e offerecemos e juramos verdadeira obediencia, e sogeitamos com humildade á seus pées nossa pessoa e imperio. Assi nos ajude Deus e estes santos evangelhos.

Seguirãose logo após o Emperador os principes, irmãos do Emperador, Visó Reys e senhores, ecclesiasticos, frades e clerigos, dizendo cada hum sobre o missal: Eu Fulano prometto, offereço, juro o mesmo; assi me ajude Deus e estes santos evangelhos. No cabo deste acto fez Ras Cella Christôs sua pratica exhortando a todos com palavras muito graves a guarda daquelle juramento, e entrando em fervor levou da espada e disse: Ora sus, o passado, passado, e quem daqui por diante não fizer o que deve, com

esta ha de ser julgado. Dizia isto pera aviso de alguns que estavam presentes, os quaes tinham trato com o alevantado filho de Cabrael, e Ras Cella Christôs achara em hum saco suas cartas, em que o animavão á ir por diante com seu alevantamento, e se fazião certos de sua parte, aos quaes a ameaça de Ras causou grande espanto, e aos leaes catholicos grande consolação.

Á celebridade deste acto se ajuntou o juramento do principe Faciladês por herdeiro de seu pay e futuro successor do imperio; cousa que o Emperador desejava muito, porque, como tinha muitos filhos e amava a este sobre todos, pretendia seguralo na herança do governo; polo que todos os sobreditos principes e senhores o jurarão. Mas o grande Ras Cella Christôs, como verdadeiro filho da igreja Romana, ajuntou ao juramento huma condição digna de seu animo e christandade: Eu juro, disse, ao principe por herdeiro de seu pay no imperio e de lhe obedecer como leal vassallo, emquanto elle tiver, defender e favorecer a santa fé catholica; porque fora disto eu hei de ser o primeiro e o maior inimigo seu. A mesma condição poserão quasi todos os capitães de Ras e seu filho primogenito.

Acabados estes dous actos solenissimos, lançou o Patriarcha escomunhão pera todos guardarem o que tinham jurado, e a mesma lançarão os padres, frades e clérigos presentes; porque he costume de Ethiopia em cousas graves serem muitos os que lanção a escomunhão, pera causar mais horror e medo. Logo o Emperador mandou lançar pregão por dous Azages, a que se ajuntarão dous padres, no meio do arrajal (tocandose primeiro os atabales) que todos os clérigos e frades dahi em diante não dissessem missa, nem fizessem officios ecclesiasticos sem se apresentarem ao Patriarcha; fundouse este mandado na duvida grande que avia em estarem legitimamente ordenados; porque, alem de entre elles se não darem ordens menores, nem de subdiacono, ordenavãose os diaconos com lhe ungirem a testa e cortarem alguns cabellos, e os sacerdotes, com tirarem com suas mãos hum pão da janella do templo; e caso ouve em que, concorrendo ao Abbuna alexandrino perto de tres mil a se ordenarem, por estar occupado, mandou dizer, que cadahum tomasse as ordens que queria, e se fosse embora, e assy se derão por ordenados. Polo que he necessario fazer o patriarcha Romano muito exame nestes ordenados, e conforme á elle ver os que se devem tornar á ordenar pelo menos *sub conditione*. Tambem se lançou pregão, que so pena de morte todos entrassem na fé Romana, e que ninguem encubrisse os rebeldes culpados. Assy mesmo que todos guardassem a ordem da igreja Romana no fazer da pascoa e jejum da coresma, e que o comesassem quando os padres e não primeiro, como era seu costume. E com isto se concluiu a solennidade deste dia, decretandose outro em que as senhoras de sangue real jurassem o mesmo.

Father Manuel de Almeida's Account: Translation and comments

Public obeisance given by the emperor and all the luminaries of Ethiopia to his holiness, Pope Urban VIII through the offices of Patriarch Afonso Mendez

This most sacred, religious, and solemn act was performed [on] Wednesday February 11th of the year 1626. It can duly be said that there is no happier day that Ethiopia deems fitter to celebrate with demonstrations of true joy on an annual basis, for on this day the luminous light of the true and holy Catholic faith dawned, on this day the darkness of Egypt was undone and extinguished; drowned in the Red Sea were the errors and heresies of Eutyches and Dioscorus; broken was the vile yoke of the most ignorant abunas and patriarchs of Alexandria; elevated was Ethiopia with the dignity of God's daughter and she can now sing with Moses and his sister Mary: *In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Iacob de populo barbaro, facta est Iudaea sanctificatio eius*⁴², etc.

For this solemn act, the imperial hall was decked out in its finest; and all the luminaries, princes, brothers to the Emperor, viceroys, captains, *azages*⁴³, and *ombares*⁴⁴ who comprise the entire tribunal and court of justice, the *debteras*⁴⁵, and most austere monks who have already received the Holy Roman faith [graced the occasion with their presence]. Beside the throne, the imperial bed, two stately chairs were mounted. The one to the right was taken by the emperor and in the left one sat the patriarch cloaked and pontifical with diadem and ceremonial cape. When silence prevailed, the patriarch commenced a long discourse, a homily befitting of the day being celebrated. He turned to the words that Christ our Lord said unto Saint Peter: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*⁴⁶. By virtue of the great solemnity [of the event] and its strong basis on passages from Scripture, the authority of saints, and other sacred stories, which faithfully served the purpose of convincing and attesting to the supremacy of the standing of Rome, I would be most remiss were I not to write herein at least the substance of this story:

42 "When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech, Judah became God's sanctuary" (Psalm 114:1-2).

43 Literally a commander, *azzož* (or *azages*) was a common term for civil administrator. According to Sevir Chernetsov, "being men of profound ecclesiastical learning, they were dressed as ecclesiastics as well, in white gown and white turban, and had a small staff of subordinates, usually literate clerics. Apparently in the 15th-16th cent. these were, with the exception of the royal clergy, the only civil courtiers whose services Ethiopian kings needed." Sevir B. Chernetsov – *Azzaž*. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia...*, vol. 1, p. 422.

44 The plural form of the Amharic term *wämbär*, *ombares* literally means chair or seat. Moreover, it commonly refers to top-ranking judges that accompanied the emperor or regional governors on the legal circuit. Although the representatives of the executive usually rendered the verdicts, at times these judges decided cases on their own. See Steven Kaplan – *Wämbär*. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*. Ed. Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi. Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, p. 1125-1126.

45 The *däbtäras* may be described as lay ecclesiastics. The *däbtäras* "occupy an intermediate position between the clergy and the laymen. They are not ordained, but no service can be held without them." Steven Kaplan – *Däbtära*. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia...*, vol. 2, p. 53-54.

46 "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

The Speech of Patriarch Mendes at the Emperor's Conversion Ceremony

And our Lord Jesus Christ once asked his disciples what men thought of him. They answered that the thoughts of men were manifold. He asked for their own thoughts: *Vos autem, quem me esse dicitis?*⁴⁷ Saint Peter, the most fervent one, answered thus: *Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi*⁴⁸. With these words, he exemplified all that can be confessed about Christ, mainly the divinity of His person with natures both divine and human. By uttering *Tu es*, he speaks of one individual that is deemed to be ineffable. Saying *Christus Filius Dei vivi*, he states both natures: the divine one, for Christ cannot be Son of God without being God of the same substance and nature of the Father; human, by calling him Christ, that is the anointed one, a name whose significance cannot be attributed to God, for anointing means a *new grace*. And if this [trait] were to be in God, again, He would not be eternal and immutable. Thus, Christ is the anointed one with respect to mankind, of which the prophet sayeth: *Propterea unxit te Deus tuus oleo laetitiae. Psalm. 44*⁴⁹.

As a reward for this supreme confession which St. Peter, through indisputable revelation from the Eternal Father, made to Christ our Lord, He declared him [Peter] head and cornerstone of His Church: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam*. And to show that none of the other disciples had such preeminence as Peter, He appointed only him. *Et ego dico tibi*⁵⁰. This vicarage did not take effect at once; the promise was that it would only come to pass after His passion and death, for as long as the Lord was alive the substitution was unnecessary. Therefore, after the passing of our Lord Christ, Peter became vicar and universal pastor of the Church, a dignity

47 "He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'" (Matthew 16:15).

48 "You are the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

49 "Therefore God has anointed you with the oil of gladness" (Psalm 45:8). Qəbat, also known as the *unctionist* theology, turns to the same verse in order to explain how the Son (i.e., Jesus) became a natural Son – a living king and high priest. See Getatchew Haile (ed. and tr.) – *The Faith of the Uctionists in the Ethiopian Church (Haymanot Mäsihawit)*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Vols. 517, 518, Scriptorum Aetiopici. Vols. 91, 92. Louvain: Peeters, 1990, p. 13 (Gəʾəz); p. 12 (English). In the Latin version of this speech, which was translated into Italian, Mendes expounded on the meaning of the term unction, probably with the objective of distancing himself from the Qəbat theology. "If only the divine nature is seen," Mendes added, "Christ cannot be defined as *anointed* because the unction points to a new grace, and newness or even mutation are not possible in God. Be that as it may, God can anoint any other creature, such as the humanity of Christ. As the prophet says: *Unxit te Deus tuus oleo laetitia, pre consortibus tuis* ('wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows'). Here it has been duly noted that *God anoints, and the human nature of Christ is anointed*. He who is anointed refers to one who receives plenty of grace: But given his divine nature, the son of God does not have a consort, thereby precluding any other natural son of God". Muzio Vitelleschi – *Lettere Annue...*, p. 121.

50 "And I say also unto thee" (Matthew 16:18). The first recorded instance of verses from the Gospel of Matthew being used as arguments for the preeminence of Saint Peter turns up in the mid-fifth century work of Pope Leo the Great; *Idem* – "Letter XXXIII: To the Synod of Ephesus". In *The Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church [2d series]*. Translated into English with prolegomena and explanatory notes, under the editorial supervision of Philip Schaff and Henry Wace in connection with a number of patristic scholars of Europe and America. Vol. 12. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978-1979, p. 46-47; *Idem* – *Patrologia Latina*. Ed. Jacques Paul Migne. Vol. 54. Paris: Excudebatur apud Migne, 1844-1891, p. 797-800; *Idem* – Leo the Great – "Sermon LXII (On the Passion)". In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers...*, vol. 12, p. 174; *Idem* – *Patrologia Latina*. Vol. 54, p. 350-351.

bestowed upon him by the Lord Himself following His glorious resurrection, saying unto him: *Pasce oves meas*, Ioan. 22⁵¹.

Thus, having received from the almighty emperor, Seltan Segued, and all the empire's luminaries, the oath of union and fealty of this Church of Ethiopia to the Roman Church – our head, teacher, and mother of all churches – and obeisance to the holy father, Urban VIII, St. Peter's acknowledged successor, I do not wish to address you with any other words besides those with which Christ Himself united and reunited His Church in Peter: *Super hanc Petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*. I speak not of multiple churches, but of a single one, *Ecclesiam meam*. For even when Saint Paul speaks of churches in the plural, *Ecclesiis Galatiae*. Ad Gal. I⁵² *Per omnes Ecclesias*, etc. I. Cor. I⁵³, and Saint John in Revelation, Apoc. I. *Septem Ecclesiis, quao sunt in Asia*⁵⁴, speaks of the Greek, Latin, Western, and Eastern Church, they are nothing more than one and only one Catholic and Apostolic Church, as declared by Tertullian⁵⁵; for even when there are many mansions in the imperial palace, all these are subsumed under a single solitary name: palace. Just because a human body hath many limbs, it does not cease to be a single body⁵⁶. The same holds true for the churches: even if there are many, all

51 "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17).

52 "Churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2).

53 "Among all the churches" (2 Corinthians 8:18).

54 "The seven churches that are in Asia" (Apocalypse 1:4).

55 This refers to the following passage of Tertullian's work: "The churches, although they are so many and so great, comprise but the one primitive Church, [which was founded] by the Apostles, from which they all [spring]. In this way, all of them are primitive, and all are Apostolic, whilst they are all proved to be one, in [unbroken] unity, by their peaceful communion and title of brotherhood, and bond of hospitality – privileges which no other rule directs that the one tradition of the selfsame mystery". Tertullian – "On Prescriptions against Heretics". In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1978-1981, p. 252; *Idem – Patrologia Latina*. Vol. 2, p. 32.

56 Gillian Rosemary Evans cites the following passage from the writing of Gregory the Great: "No one that is separated from the Church is a Christian, says Gregory...()... The unity of the universal Church is the very bond (*compago*) which makes it the body of Christ...()... He who suffers martyrdom outside the unity of the Church cannot be [a] martyr, whatever his suffering." Gillian Rosemary Evans – *The Thought of Gregory the Great*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 130. Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, numerous ecclesiastical authorities compared the relation between Rome and the other churches to that between the head and the members of the same body. For Pope Paschal II, the connection between *caput* and *membra* provides unity in the face of geographic distance. Moreover, the head suffers the affronts and injuries to the other parts. Uta-Renate Blumenthal – Paschal II and the Roman Primacy. *Archivum Historiae Pontificae*. 16 (1978) 72-74. According to Anselm of Havelberg the one body of the Church "began with Abel and shall be consummated when the last of the elect be saved; this same Church is always one in faith, through it is expressed in different members, in different manners, and at different times". Cited in Lawrence F. Barmann – Reform Ideology in the 'Dialogui' of Anselm of Havelberg. *Church History*. 30 (1961) 384-385. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, put a new spin on the notion that the Church is the mystical body of Jesus, using the term "body" as a metaphor for institutional structure. For a disquisition on the use of this term in the social and religious context of the 1500s, see Rogelio García Mateo – El cuerpo de la Compañía en el contexto socio-religioso del siglo XVI. In *Ignacio de Loyola: su espiritualidad y su mundo cultural*. Ed. Rogelio García Mateo. Bilbao: Mensajero, 2000, p. 387-400. In his letter to the Ethiopian emperor from 1555, Ignatius suggested that the Patriarchate of Alexandria was an amputated and rotten member of the Church's mystical body. As a result, the Patriarchate had "neither movement nor virtue, nor could receive it from the body itself". Santiago Madrigal – La carta al Negus de Etiopia. *Miscelánea Comillas*. 53 (1995) 341-379. As demonstrated in the present article, these ideas characterized the outlook of subsequent generations of Jesuit missionaries toward the Ethiopian Church.

join and are united in this unique Roman Church; as we profess in the creed, *Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*⁵⁷.

This union ye had and faithfully maintained with the Roman Church, was by virtue of the faith ye received from Saint Matthew and the Eunuch of thy Queen Candace⁵⁸. It endured so long as the false pastor and senseless head rose not in Egypt and Alexandria, which made ye stray from the true pastor and head and turned ye into a monstrous body. Since ye so pride yourselves on being scions of King David, through Menelik, who in the annals of Ethiopia is said to be son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, source of imperial offspring⁵⁹. Divine mercy has now ushered in the day on which we see the prophecy in Amos chap. 9 fulfilled: *In illa die suscitabo tabernaculum David, quod cecidit, et readificabo aperturas murorum eius, et ea quae corruerant, instaurabo, et readificabo illud sicut in diebus antiquis*⁶⁰. Now ye have an architect sent from the Apostolic See to rebuild these ruins, which even if unworthy of its office and less wise, displays at least (according to St. Paul, *Ut sapiens architectus fundamentum posuit, quod est Christus*. I Cor. 3)⁶¹ the true foundation of the true faith, Christ, and forsakes not his responsibilities as head of the Church; he of whom the Lord himself says: *Super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*. Ye have a pastor who, even if he is unable to say *Ego sum pastor bonus*⁶², is the highest of pastors to whom the Lord entrusted His flock, *Pasce oves meas*, and will endeavor so long as his strength endures, so that Ezekiel's *Pastor unus erit omnium eorum*⁶³, Eze. 37, and Christ's *Ut fiat unum ovile et unus pastor*, Ioan. 10, are fulfilled.

None can deny that Saint Peter is the foundation and universal head of the Catholic Church; and he was recognized as such by the Apostles after the Lord said to him: *Tu es Petrus* (or as thy book reads) *Tu es Petrus, et Super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*. What is more, it is in this capacity that he presided over the first council of the Apostles in Jerusalem⁶⁴, condemned Simon the Magician⁶⁵, and pronounced the

57 "One, holy and Apostolic Church." This creed was established by "the Exposition of the 150 fathers" during the First Council of Constantinople (381). See Norman P. Tanner (ed.) – *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Vol. 1. London: Sheed & Ward, 1990, p. 24.

58 See footnote 25.

59 The *Kabrä Nägästä* (The Glory of Kings) substantially elaborated on this story. See Paolo Marrassini –Kabrä Nägästä. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*. Ed. Siegbert Uhlig. Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007, p. 364-368. Moreover, it is considered the foundational story of the Solomonic Dynasty, which governed Ethiopia between 1270 and 1974. Mendes did not read the original text; instead, the narrative was conveyed to the patriarch by his Jesuit predecessors in Ethiopia, such as Pedro Páez. See Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 2, p. 25-44.

60 "On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11).

61 "Like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it" (1 Corinthians 3:10).

62 "I am the good shepherd" (John 10: 11).

63 "They shall all have one shepherd" (Ezekiel 37:24).

64 Acts 15 contains a precedent for ecclesiastical councils: Paul and Barnabas, legates of the Antiochian Church, meet with the Apostles and elders of the Church of Jerusalem to discuss whether the new gentile converts must undergo circumcision.

65 Acts 8:9-24. Peter rebuked Simon Magus, who was converted to Christianity by Philip, for paying in order to secure a position of influence in the Church. In alluding to this passage, Mendes adheres to a known patristic tradition whereby Simon is the father of

death sentence against Ananias and Sapphira⁶⁶ for violating [the duty of] evangelical poverty. Nor was there any further competition for supremacy between the Apostles and Saint Peter, for all recognized him as their supreme head and prelate. For this reason, James Bishop of Jerusalem, whilst in his own diocese with Saint Peter as his superior, and with the assistance of the other Apostles, found solutions for uncertainties and controversies that transpired. Where Saint Bernard says *Iacobus, qui videbatur columna, una contentus est Hierosolyma, Petro universitatem cedens*⁶⁷; and to illustrate the preeminence that the Roman Church hath over all Patriarchal Churches, which are inferior and subordinate to it, I shall relate every one of our specific attempts at the truth.

By virtue of its seniority, the Church of Jerusalem summoned the Council of Constantinople, mother of all churches, *quia de Sion exivit lex, et verbum Domini de Ierusalem*⁶⁸, and extended its jurisdiction over all of Palestine. [Nevertheless, it] always recognized the Roman Pontiff as its superior and the authority for judging all bishops. [For instance,] in 520 AD Pope Hormisdas sentenced Bishop John, from whom the Eutychian heretics lifted such dignity, to exclude Saint Elijah⁶⁹. The same can be said for Pope Theodore with respect to Sophronius in 643⁷⁰ and by Pontiff Paschal with respect to Hebremanus in 1109 and Arnulf in 1115⁷¹.

all heresies. See, for example, Irenaeus – Against the Heresies. In *The Ante Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 1, p. 347-348. Irenaeus – *Patrologia Graeca*. Ed. Jacques Paul Migne. Vol. 7. Lutetiae Parisiorum: J.P. Migne, 1857-1886, p. 670-672; Justin Martyr – The First Apology. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 1, p. 171-172; Justin Martyr – *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 6, p. 367-370; Hippolytus – The Refutation of all Heresies. In *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 5, p. 74-81; Hippolytus – *Refutationis Omnium Haeresium*. Ed. Lud. Duncker and F. G. Schneidewin. Göttingae: Semptibus Dieterichianis, 1859, p. 232-259.

66 Acts 5:1-11.

67 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Consideration*, book 2, chapter 8: “James, who seemed to be a pillar of the Church, was willing to suffice with Jerusalem, giving Peter universal jurisdiction over the churches”. See Bernard of Clairvaux – *Obras Completas de San Bernardo*. Vol. 2. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, p. 609 (my translation). The notion of Peter’s episcopal preeminence was developed by Pope Leo (440-461). More specifically, he argued that just as a person can inherit the rights of the deceased, so too can an elected pope inherit the powers and rights of St. Peter. From Leo’s vantage point, the Church was a new society and the pope is Peter’s heir. Leo’s successors even applied this idea to the Roman State. According to Gelasius I (492-496), the Church and the state were separate jurisdictions, but the latter was in the ascendancy. See Adam Hood – Governance. In *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*. Ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge. New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 544. In the eleventh century, there was a noticeable change in emphasis with respect to the concept of the papacy, and its scope was expanded appreciably. Manifold Church thinkers interpreted the Petrine texts exclusively in favor of the Roman See. From that point on, obedience to Rome was considered a matter of faith. See Uta-Renate Blumenthal – Paschal II..., p. 68. It is only natural, then, that some of these figures loom large in Mendes’ speech.

68 “We wish to inform you that the most venerable and God-beloved Cyril is bishop of the church in Jerusalem, the mother of all the Churches.” This citation is taken from a letter to the bishops gathered in Constantinople. See Norman P. Tanner (ed.) – *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils...*, vol. 1, p. 30.

69 Hormisdas, a native of Frosinone, Campagna di Roma, served as Pontiff of Rome from 514 and 532. During his tenure, there was renewed hope that the Acacian schism would be mended. William Hugh Clifford Frend – *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 229-247.

70 Theodore I (642-649) was the first pope of Byzantine origin. While undoubtedly a member of the Byzantine priesthood, he was paradoxically among the vanguard of leaders that underscored the division between Rome and Constantinople. See Jean Durliat – Theodore I. In *The Papacy. An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Philippe Levillain. Vol. 3. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 1486-1487.

71 Arnulf Malecorne of Choques was the Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem in 1099 and again from 1112 to 1118. His first stint was cut short by Daimbert of Pisa, a papal legate, who rescinded his election due to simony charges. Thereafter, Daimbert clashed with King Baldwin I and was deposed by a council on grounds of simony, embezzlement and treason against the king. The papal

Despite its claim to primacy over the Eastern Churches (for it was the most modern of them all), which was supported by the emperors, the Church of Constantinople never managed to vie with or display any real opposition to the Roman Church. Though, its patriarch, John, attempted to usurp the title of universal pastor during the time of Pope Pelagius II and Gregory the Great, such boldness was later repressed by the same pontiffs, who themselves were always recognized as supreme. For this reason, they are the ones who hear appeals⁷². Paul was [indeed] persecuted by Macedonius⁷³ and St. John Chrysostom by Theophilus of Alexandria⁷⁴; Nestorius was condemned and deposed by Pope Celestine and Sixtus III⁷⁵, Felix by Acacius⁷⁶, Gelasius by Euphemius⁷⁷, Agapetus by

legate was replaced by Evremar of Chocques (Hebrenanus). Daimbert appealed to Rome and was on the cusp of recovering his see. However, the legate's reinstatement was precluded by his death in 1105. Arnulf subsequently claimed that the decision handed down in Rome meant that Evremar had to step down. Pope Paschal II declared that he would intervene in the case, but before any decision was reached, Evremar resigned (in 1107) and was replaced by the papal legate Gibelin of Sabran. Following Gibelin's passing, Arnulf was reelected patriarch by the canons of the Holy Sepulcher. Although a Jerusalem council found the Patriarch guilty of simony in 1115, he was able to clear his name at Rome and held on the see until his death in 1118. See Jean Richard – The Political and Ecclesiastical organization of the Crusader States. In *A History of the Crusades*. Ed. Kenneth M. Setton. Vol. 5. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 236-237.

- 72 John IV, Patriarch of Constantinople (582-595), is also known as John the Faster. His assumption of the title "ecumenical patriarch" (*patriarches oikumenikos; patriarcha universalis*) was perceived by Pope Pelagius II and Pope Gregory the Great as a claim to universal jurisdiction. In response, Gregory stated that there is no universal bishop and that even the pope himself is merely a servant of God's servants. See Robert Austin Markus – *Gregory the Great and his World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 91-96.
- 73 Macedonius was pronounced a heretic in the First Council of Constantinople. See canon 7. Norman P. Tanner (ed.) – *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils...*, vol. 1, p. 35. After the passing of Alexander, bishop of Constantinople (341-350), Macedonius vied with Paul over the city's bishopric. The former prevailed due to the support of a council of Arian bishops, and Paul was forced into exile. See John Mee Fuller – Macedonius. In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 3. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 775-777.
- 74 In July of 403, the Provincial Synod of Oak was held in Constantinople. The convocation was presided over by Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, between 384 and 412. Theophilus accused John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, of bad behavior and protecting the Tall Brothers. Moreover, he excommunicated a group of respected monks living in the Egyptian desert – Dioscorus Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius – on the grounds that they were followers of Origen. John Chrysostom's attempt to find a compromise formula was the main reason that he was condemned by a majority of Egyptian bishops at this synod. See Wendy Mayer; Pauline Allen – *John Chrysostom*. London; New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 9-10; Donald B. Spangel – Theophilus. In *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Ed. Aziz. S. Atiya. Vol. 7. New York: Macmillan, 1991, p. 2250-2251.
- 75 The Emperor Theodosius II (401-450) convoked a general council in Ephesus. Due to the popularity of the *Theotokos* formula among the delegates, he promoted a special seat for the veneration of Mary. The emperor and his wife supported Nestorius, whereas Pope Celestine I backed Cyril. The latter assumed control over the council, opening the floor to debate before the arrival of a tardy contingent of bishops from Antioch. The council deposed Nestorius on grounds of heresy. Moreover, Pope Sixtus III, who was consecrated in 432, approved of the Acts of the Council of Ephesus. See Charles Joseph Hefele – *A History of the Councils of the Church*. Vol. 3. New York: AMS Press Inc. 1972, p. 118-119.
- 76 In a letter to Acacius, Pope Felix III reprimanded the addressee for accepting communion with the anti-Chalcedonian leaders and for ceding the patriarchy of Alexandria back to Peter Mongus. On July 28, 484, Acacius was formally excommunicated by a Roman Synod. Upon the confirmation of his banishment the following year, Acacius erased Felix's name from the diptychs. See Claire Sotinel – Felix III. In *The Papacy: an Encyclopedia*. Ed. Philippe Levillain. Vol. 1. New York; London: Routledge, 2002, p. 572-573.
- 77 Euphemius (d. 515) was patriarch of Constantinople from 490 to 496. Upon assuming the reins, he recognized the Council of Chalcedon, restored the pope's name to the diptychs, and broke with Peter Mongus. In so doing, Euphemius expressed his desire to heal the rift with Rome. Nevertheless, he refused to delete the names of his two predecessors, Acacius and Fravitta, from the diptychs, where they appeared among the faithful departed. Pope Gelasius I (492-496), Felix's successor, exacerbated the tensions with Constantinople by insisting that Acacius' name be removed from the tablet. During the Acacian schism, Gelasius affirmed

Anthimus⁷⁸, and others against whom the just rigor of supreme Roman and Apostolic Roman jurisdiction was applied.

The Church of Antioch always yielded to the Church of Rome⁷⁹, for upon leaving Evodius there Saint Peter moved, along with all the Pontifical and supreme dignity, to Rome⁸⁰; and Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem during the Council of Ephesus, showed the Antiochian patriarch, who opposed the Apostolic legacy, that the Church of Antioch had always been a subject of the Church of Rome⁸¹; and its patriarchs, like Caniridius⁸², who succeeded Stephen, asked the Church in Rome to confirm their election; and during the time of Innocent II, circa 1136, Ralph of Domfront was sentenced by Alberic, bishop of Ostia, the pope's legate⁸³.

Once the Church of Alexandria saw that it had secured the second position after Rome, as granted by the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople⁸⁴, there is no doubt that it always believed itself to be a subject and disciple of the Roman Church, in the

the primacy of Rome. In basing his argument on the succession of the Roman Popes from Peter the Apostle, he devised a model that would serve pontiffs for generations to come. According to Frend, "Gelacius was the true architect of the papal victory in 519." William Hugh Clifford Frend – *The Rise of the Monophysite...*, p. 193-197.

- 78 Anthimus I, a Miaphysite, served as patriarch of Constantinople between 535 and 536, but was deposed by Pope Agapetus I before March 13, 536. Empress Theodora subsequently hid Anthimus in her quarters until her death twelve years later. See Isaac Gregory Smith – Anthimus. In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 1. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 118-119.
- 79 The idea that the Antiochian See is dependent on its counterpart in Rome penetrated the public consciousness towards the twelfth century. Insofar as Pope Paschal II was concerned, the jurisdiction of Peter and Paul encompassed Jerusalem and Antiochia. According to Blumenthal, "the enigmatic reference to the division of the world among all the apostles, which is found nowhere else in Paschal's correspondence, is no more than a rhetorical device to emphasize the special authority of Peter..." See Uta-Renate Blumenthal – Paschal II..., p. 76.
- 80 Eusebius mentioned that Evodius was the first bishop of Antioquia. See Eusebius of Cesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History*. Tr. Kirsopp Lake. Vol. 1. London: W. Heinemann, 1926-1932, p. 240-241. Consequently, Origen referred to him as the second bishop, after St. Peter. Origen – Homilies in Luke. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 3, p. 938.
- 81 Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem (422-458), supported Cyril of Alexandria against his rival Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus. Together with three papal legates and a group of 198 bishops, Juvenal signed the document precluding John of Antioch and 33 other oriental bishops from communion. Ernest Honigmann – Juvenal of Jerusalem. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. 5 (1950) 224.
- 82 Also known as Calandio of Antioch, Caniridius was the bishop of the patriarchate from 481 to 485. He supported the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon and eschewed the Henotikon formula, which was put forward by Zenon, the Byzantine Emperor, in an attempt to reconcile the parts concerning the Monophysite question. Calandio was promoted to the bishopric by Emperor Zenon and Acacius, bishop of Constantinople. However, he soon betrayed his political and episcopal masters. For instance, they accused him of erasing the diptychs crediting Zenon as the author of the *Henotikon*. Consequently, he was exiled in 485. See Edmund Venables – Calandius. In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 1. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 387-388.
- 83 After the death of Bernard, the venerable Latin patriarch of Antioch, his successor, Radulph of Domfront, the Latin bishop of Mamistra, assumed the post without waiting for a canonical election, drawing on the unequivocal support of the local populace. Alberic of Beauvais, bishop of Ostia and the new legate from Rome, arrived in November of 1139. He immediately convened a synod that was attended by all the Latin patriarchs of the East, Jerusalem's included. It was obvious that the council's sympathies lay with the dissident clergy. At the sessions in the Cathedral of Saint Peter, the representatives decided to condemn Radulph. Steven Runciman – *A History of the Crusades*. Vol. II: *The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East 1100-1187*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1952, p. 198, 221. The only firsthand source for this story is William of Tyre. However, it is possible that Mendes obtained this information from the *Annals* of Cardinal Baronius who dates the event to 1136; Caesar Baronius – *Annales Ecclesiastici 1424-1423*. Vol. 18. Barri-Ducis [Bar-le-Duc, France]: L. Guerin, 1864-1883, p. 528-531.
- 84 Pope Leo I preceded the Council of Chalcedon, the acts of which were historically rejected by the Church of Ethiopia. In contrast to other medieval pontiffs, Pope Leo is well known in Ethiopian literature, where he is dubbed "Leo the impure." See, for

way Saint Mark, its first patriarch, was recognized as subject and disciple of Saint Peter, and Dionysius, its patriarch, reported to the supreme pontiff of the esteemed Saint Athanasius⁸⁵. Persecuted by the Arians⁸⁶, Saint Athanasius appealed to the Roman pontiff, Saint Peter, [namely he] appealed to Pope Damasus, who restored him to his church⁸⁷. The ruling of Theophilus against Saint John Chrysostom was declared unjust and null by Pope Innocent, and Theophilus was later excommunicated and deposed⁸⁸. Pope Leo condemned the perverse Dioscorus⁸⁹; and even when heretics refused to accept it [i.e., the sentence], the public acclamation and mortification on the part of Fathers and councils testified to it. *Vicit leo de tribu Iuda*. The Alexandrine heretics say that their church is the head of all others because it is the easternmost. It can clearly be seen how flawed and absurd this reasoning is; for if such a reason were valid, Saint Thomas' Church would be universal by dint of its location far to the east. In addition,

example, *Hamāra nāfs*. Enrico Cerulli – *Scritti teologici...*, vol. 1, p. 168 (Gǽʿaz), p. 207 (Italian); and Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 7, p. 178.

- 85 An acclaimed ruler and theologian, “Dionysius the Great” served as bishop of Alexandria between 247 and 264; see Athanasius of Alexandria – On the Opinion of Dionysius. In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 4, p. 171-187; Athanasius of Alexandria – *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 25, p. 479-522. The bishop adopted a moderate position toward heretics and apostates, as he opposed having those who returned to the fold baptized anew. Mendes is apparently referring to the fact that Dionysius wrote to Sixtus II, patriarch of Rome, claiming that his predecessor’s excommunication of the churches of Minor Asia and Africa was excessive. In brief, he exhorted Sixtus to take into account the wide range of traditions concerning the baptism of heretics. Eusebius of Caesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History...*, vol. 2, p. 140-141; William Hugh Clifford Frend – *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church. A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1965, p. 421-429; also, Aziz S. Atiya – Dionysius the Great. *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Ed. Aziz S. Atiya. Vol. 3. New York: Macmillan, 1991, p. 910.
- 86 Mendes is referring to the followers of Arius the Heresiarch (d. 336).
- 87 The last forced exile of Athanasius, at the hands of Valens (the Arian emperor, 364-378), was in the winter of 365/6. However, Valens had Athanasius reinstated in February of 366 for the purpose of drumming up popular support for his campaign against the Goths. That same year, Damasus (304-384) ascend to the throne of St. Peter. In his work “To the Bishops of Africa. Letter of Ninety Bishops of Egypt and Libya, including Athanasius”, Athanasius wrote that “we thanked [Damasus] for his piety and that of those who assembled in the great [city of] Rome. By expelling Ursacius and Valens, as well as their supporters, they preserved the harmony of the Catholic Church.” Cited in Athanasius of Alexandria – To the Bishops of Africa. In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 494; Athanasius of Alexandria – *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 26, p. 1045-1046. Also see Timothy D. Barnes – *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. London: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 180-182. Damasus left no stone unturned in his efforts to suppress Arianism and strengthen the prestige of Rome *vis-à-vis* the other patriarchates; Frank Leslie Cross (ed.) – *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 448.
- 88 Innocent I, bishop of Rome, maintained communion with John Chrysostom after his deposition and cut off relations with the Sees of Alexandria and Antioch over the dispute that erupted at the Synod of Oak. He seized every opportunity to urge the other churches to conform to Roman praxis, proclaiming that “Such is the law of our Church”. John Chrysostom – *Patrologia Latina*. Vol. 20, p. 531. Also see Nancy Gauthier – Innocent I. In *The Papacy. An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Philippe Levillain. Vol. 2. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 781-783.
- 89 Dioscorus was the twenty-fifth patriarch of Alexandria. Leo the Great issued the following command: “the names of Dioscorus, Juvenal and Eustathius are not to be read aloud at the holy altar.” Leo the Great – Letter LXXX (To Anatolius Bishop of Constantinople)”. In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 12, p. 66; Leo the Great – *Patrologia Latina*. Vol. 54, p. 914-915. According to Enrico Cerulli, the Ethiopian text, *Māzgābā Haymanot* (The Treasure of the Faith), was written in the late 1550s. The first part of the book, which was translated from the Arabic, summarizes the Church’s first four councils. The text attributes the following statement to Dioscorus: “In the past, Satan was the prince of the angels, superior to all celestial beings. And when he rebelled and ignored the divinity of the creator, he was thrown from his throne and from the highs of his glory and converted into a base object. How great indeed is the chair of Peter, prince of the Apostles, if this [glory] lies in the things that our fathers taught us. But if he corrupts our Faith and transgresses their [fathers’] words he [the Patriarch of St. Peter] becomes like him [the rebellious angel].” Enrico Cerulli – *Scritti teologici...*, p. 11 (Gǽʿaz), p. 78 (Italian).

those geometricians who say that the Church of Alexandria is the easternmost are ignorant; for though this is indeed the case with respect to Rome and Constantinople, it is west of Jerusalem and Antioch. Therefore, it must be held as a certain and infallible truth that the Roman Church is the head of all others and [that it is] built on that stone: *Et super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam*. What is more, there is no other being, truth, and jurisdiction than that received from this source and supreme head.

This is well confirmed, as it is duly written in thy synodal book, which tells of the true canon of the Nicean Council. Faithfully translated, it tells of only four principal seats in the entire world, which are akin to the four rivers flowing from Paradise, the four universal winds, and the four elements. However, as was taught by the Apostles, the seat of Saint Peter in Rome hath excellence and supremacy over all of them. The second position belongs to Saint Mark's [See] in Alexandria; in third is Saint John the Evangelist's; in fourth is Antioch's, which was also Saint Peter's. And from all of these emanate the rest of the Church's dioceses. So much for the canon⁹⁰. Should credibility be conferred upon a slanderer or to a decree [issued] by 318 true Catholic fathers?

Holding as true that this is the first seat of the Church, is it not reasonable that ye should heed my plea and follow it? And living aside the stream, ye shall reach the source. *Malae quaedem lamiae nudaverunt mammam*. Thren. 4⁹¹. And ye that suckled on poisoned breasts recognize the true and legitimate mother. *Quasi modo geniti infantes rationabiles et sine dolo lac concupiscite*, 1 Petr. 1⁹². There is no more reasonable thing than to suckle the milk of the Church and Apostolic See, which hath never been infected by the poison of heresy, error, or deceit. The Church of Jerusalem kept its purity of faith until the year 109 AD, when upon the death of Symeon son of Copas, one Thebouthis⁹³ sowed the poisoned seed of heresy⁹⁴; and in the 4th century, Saint Jerome wrote at length against the errors of John, bishop of Jerusalem⁹⁵.

90 A similar comparison informs Canon 37 of the Ethiopian version of the Council of Nicea's apocryphal canons: "In the world, four are the patriarchs, [just as] four are the rivers, four [are] the winds, and four [are] the elements of men. These four indeed sustain the entire world. And behind it remains the holder of the cathedra of Peter of Rome. And after him, the holder of [the See] of Alexandria, which is the seat of Mark. And third, the See of Ephesus, namely the seat of John the Evangelist. And fourth, Antioch, which is also the See of Peter. And all the bishops derive their authority from these four patriarchs". Mauro da Leonessa – La Versione etiopica del Canoni Apocrifi del Concilio de Nicea Secondo I Codici Vaticani ed II Fiorentino. *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*. 2:1 (1942) 48, 76-77.

91 "The jackals offer the breast" (Lamentations 4:3).

92 "As obedient children, do not conform to the desires that you had when you lived in ignorance" (1 Peter 1:14).

93 Thebouthis.

94 Simon son of Cleofas (or Clopas) is considered the second bishop of Jerusalem, after James the Just. Citing Hegesippus, Eusebius maintains that "after James the Just had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, his cousin Symeon, the son of Copas, was appointed bishop. They all proposed him because he was another cousin of the Lord. For this reason, they called the church virgin, for it had yet to be corrupted by vain messages. However, spurned of the bishopric, Thebouthis begins its corruption by the seven heresies ..." Eusebius of Cesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History...*, vol. 1, p. 374-377.

95 Jerome or Eusebius (also known at the time as the abbot of Bethlehem), firmly challenged the authority of John II, bishop of Jerusalem (386-417), on two occasions. First, Jerome accused him of backing the ideas of Origen. Second, he criticized John II for agreeing to

The Church of Antioch had Paul of Samosata⁹⁶, Eulalius⁹⁷, Eusebius⁹⁸, Euphronius⁹⁹, Flacillus¹⁰⁰, Stephen¹⁰¹, and other heretics – forgers of lies. The Church of Constantinople had Nestorius, Eusebius of Nicomedia¹⁰², Macedonius, and many others whose doctrines were censured and judged to be heretical. Alexandria gave monstrous birth to the deceitful Arius and had as bishops Heraclius of Alexandria¹⁰³, Lucius¹⁰⁴, George¹⁰⁵, Dioscorus, and other such plagues. Only the city of Rome, seat of Saint Peter, did not produce or consent to any heresiarchs, nor did it tolerate them beyond [its borders. In fact,] it prosecuted, judged, and sentenced disseminators of false doctrines who arose in other parts of the world.

receive Pelagius only two years after the latter was condemned by the Synod of Diospolis. See Yves-Marie Duval – Sur les insinuations de Jérôme contre Jean de Jérusalem: de l'arianisme à l'origénisme. *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*. 65 (1970) 353-374.

- 96 Paul of Samosata, patriarch of Antioch (260-268), played a substantial role in the Christological polemics, lecturing on the person of Christ at two or perhaps three synods in Antioch. In 268, he was deposed from his see. Eusebius of Caesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History...*, vol. 2, p. 208-227.
- 97 At the beginning of the Arian controversy (332), Eulalius was nominated bishop of Antioch, but died after five months on the throne; Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus – *History of the Church*. London: H. G. Bohn, 1854, p. 59; Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus – *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 82, p. 967-968.
- 98 Eusebius of Emesa was deposed, together with Acacius, by the Semiarian party at the Council of Seleucia (359). Edmund Venables – Eusebius (3). In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 2. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 305.
- 99 Euphronius was bishop of Antioch for a few months between 333 and 334.
- 100 Mendes apparently drew on chapter 22 (titled “Bishops of Heretical Opinions Ordained after the Banishment of St. Eustathius”) of *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret*, for it provides the following information: “Eulalius was first ordained in place of Eustathius. But surviving his elevation only a short period, it was much desired that Eusebius, bishop of Palestine, should be transferred to this bishopric. Eusebius, however, refused the appointment, and the emperor forbade its being conferred on him: the dignity, therefore, fell upon Euphronius, who died after the lapse of only one year and a few months, and was succeeded by Flacillus. All these bishops secretly clung to the Arian opinions”. Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus – *History of the Church...*, p. 59-60; Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus – *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 82, p. 967-970. Moreover, Jerome lists the names of the Arian bishops who succeeded Eustathius: “Eulalius, Eusebius, Euphronius, Placillus...”, Joseph Barber Lightfoot – Eusebius of Caesarea. In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 2. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 315.
- 101 Stephen I of Antioch, one of Athanasius of Alexandria’s main adversaries, gave voice to his Arian tendencies at the Council of Sardica, along with Acacius of Caesarea. See Timothy D. Barnes – *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 71-81. Stephen was deposed by the Third Council of Antioch. Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus – *History of the Church...*, p. 90.
- 102 Eusebius of Nicomedia, bishop of Constantinople from 338 to 341, was one of the most influential Arian bishops. He promoted his gospel among the Germanic peoples, especially the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals. Henry Robert Reynolds – Eusebius of Nicomedia. In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 2. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 360-367.
- 103 Heraclius of Alexandria, the thirteenth patriarch of Alexandria (232-248), was a pupil of Origen at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. See Eusebius of Caesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History...*, vol. 2, p. 60-63. He has been identified as the first Bishop of Alexandria to assume the title of “pope” or *papás* in Greek (the term was originally a form of address meaning father). While the Church of Rome did not adopt this term until the sixth century, the first known record thereof surfaces in a letter by Dionysius, the bishop of Rome, to Philemon (wherein the honorific is bestowed upon Heraclius). See Eusebius of Caesarea – *The Ecclesiastical History...*, vol. 2, p. 144-145.
- 104 Lucius, who possessed Arian leanings, was installed as patriarch of Alexandria in 363 (during the exile of Athanasius) and again in 373; he then served in this capacity until 380. Most of the information about Lucius derives from Gregory of Nazianzus, Sozomen, Socrates and Theodoret. See Walter Besant – Lucius (11). In *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, literature, sects and doctrines*. Ed. William Smith and Henry Wace. Vol. 3. New York: AMS Press, 1984, p. 753-754.
- 105 This is a reference to George, a Cappadocian who substituted for Athanasius in 349. Seven years later, George was formally recognized as bishop of Alexandria and filled this post until 361.

In light of the above, I sincerely hope one and a thousand times to see this Ethiopian Church without errors and in absolute submission to the Church of Rome. I call on its Christians, those who for 450 years fed on the unpolluted milk of the mother [i.e., the Latin Church] and thus stood united [with the Petrine See] until the Council of Chalcedon, from which they strayed, to return to their guild. Who does not know that in 1177, the emperor who then ruled Ethiopia requested, through his ambassador, that Pope Alexander III dispatch learned and Catholic teachers [to the kingdom]¹⁰⁶. Ambassadors were sent to the Council of Florence by the emperor and patriarch, and they brought back letters from Pope Eugene IV to Emperor Zara Jacob¹⁰⁷. And in the 24th year of the previous century, the Emperor David¹⁰⁸ wrote to Pope Clement XII, who told of having such a letter in his possession. He also sent his ambassadors, who found the Pope in Bologna crowning Charles V emperor of the Romans in the year 1530. In addition, Za Danguil subsequently wrote to the Roman Pontiff. However, cut short by death, he was unable to fulfill his wishes. And here before your very eyes, your majesty, most Christian and felicitous of emperors, after writing so many letters in instance to Pope Paul V and the Catholic king of Portugal requesting a pastor and evangelical preachers, Ethiopia hath undergone the restoration and reduction thanks to them [the pope and king] and all the more so God himself and your majesty's [own] zeal, with assistance from all of the Council [members] and the doctrine of the fathers of the Society of Jesus.

Pray Lord *Venit hora et nunc est*¹⁰⁹, that your majesty hath indeed rid himself of the ancient debt that your ancestors died in arrears of to the most serene monarchs of Portugal, who with such zeal personally embraced this enterprise and always exhibited their desire for a union between the Ethiopian and Roman Churches. In

106 Indeed, this is a reference to the letter of Pope Alexander III to his dearest son in Christ, [Prester] John, illustrious and magnificen King of the Indians (27 September 1177). The letter was probably a consequence of a meeting, somewhere in the East between the Pope's personal physician Master Philip, and the subjects of the "King of the Indians" (it is highly probable that they were Ethiopians). Of Philip, Nothing more is recorded, but it is most probable he did not return with word from Prester John. See Marta Kozłowska—First Contacts Between Ethiopia and Europe (from the Fourteenth until the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century). *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures*. 37 (2006) 17.

107 In all likelihood, this claim is predicated on information that Mendes gleaned from authors like Cardinal Baronius. The latter writes that a handful of Armenians and Ethiopians arrived in Florence towards the end of the eponymous council of 1441. After professing their belief in the Catholic faith, they were given copies of the letters of union that were concomitantly signed between the Latin and Greek Churches. Caesar Baronius – *Annales Ecclesiastici...*, vol. 28, p. 354-358. While Alfonso of Aragon indeed wrote to Emperor Zār'a Ya'āqob about an Ethiopian mission to Pope Nicholas V, the reason for this visit to Rome is vague. See Charles-Martial de Witte – Une ambassade éthiopienne à Rome en 1450. *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*. 22 (1956) 286-298. At any rate, Tadesse Tamrat has demonstrated that Zār'a Ya'āqob was not favorably disposed towards the Council of Florence and no official Ethiopian delegation took part in its sessions; Tadesse Tamrat – *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 265.

108 The Portuguese also referred to Emperor Ləbnā Dəngəl as David (Dawit). According to Francisco Alvares, Ləbnā Dəngəl sent two letters to Clement VII informing the pontiff that he had received letters from Pope Eugene during the Council of Florence. See Francisco Alvares – *The Prester John...*, p. 7. Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 118-119.

109 "But the hour is coming, and is now here" (John 4:23).

1486, upon hearing of a Christian king in the East by the name of Prester John, they sent their spies and explorers by land and by sea to discover and get word of him. I reiterate, almighty Emperor Seltan Segued¹¹⁰, *Venit hora et nunc est*, that it is just that your majesty equates his vassals with himself. In the faith thou profess, for Segued means worshipper and this is the time in which *Veri adoratores adorabunt Patrem in spiritu et veritate*, Ioan., 4¹¹¹: For as Saint Cyprian said, whoever hath God as his father should have the Roman Church as his mother¹¹². The other churches that are removed from this [i.e., Catholicism] are nothing more than stepmothers raising bastard children whom God does not acknowledge as His own. Insofar as God is concerned, only this mother [i.e., the Church of Rome] raises children that are legitimate in spirit and in truth that are recognized by Him as His own and are thus bestowed with His fatherly blessing and granted eternal life.

And when the patriarch's sermon, which captivated [the audience's] attention and merited wide acceptance, came to a close, the emperor sent for Melcâ Christos, his cousin and oldest steward, at present viceroy of Semen¹¹³, to speak on his behalf. The emperor did interject in places where the orator diverged from the words that he [i.e., Susənyos] himself had told and communicated to him.

The response of Emperor Seltan Çagued on this same occasion

Hear ye all that are present. At the time of Emperor Galadios¹¹⁴, Granh the Moor arrived and became lord of almost all [of Ethiopia]¹¹⁵. Under the circumstances,

110 Səltan Səgəd was Susənyos' regnal name.

111 "When the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).

112 Cyprian Bishop of Carthage – *L'Unité de l'Église (De ecclesiae catholicae unitate)*. Critical text by CCL 3, (M. Bévenot); introduction: Paolo Siniscalco and Paul Mattei; tr. Michel Poirier; apparatus, notes, appendix and index Paul Mattei. Paris: Cerf, 2006, p. 188-189.

113 Səmen is a highland region that borders the Təkkāze River to the south and west. By the fourteenth century, it was one of the major centers of *Ayhud* (most likely Betä ʿIsra'el). Between 1559 and the 1620s, Səmen was indeed the seat of the Betä ʿIsra'el leadership. A mere two years before the ceremony in question, the head of this group, Gedewon was finally defeated and killed by the emperor's army. The squashing of a mutiny led by Gedewon's son the following year put an end to Betä ʿIsra'el's political independence in Semen. See James Quirin – Səmen. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia...*, vol. 4, p. 611-613.

114 Named after the Roman-Antiochian martyr, Gəlawdewos (also known as Claudius) rose to power in Ethiopia in the aftermath of the Muslim invaders' ouster in 1540 (following thirteen years of occupation). Ruling from 1540 to 1559, Gəlawdewos welcomed the first Jesuit missionaries to Ethiopia, who arrived in 1557. Portuguese and Ethiopian sources provide conflicting accounts as to whether he was personally attracted to the Catholic faith. In any event, Gəlawdewos' firm rejection of the missionaries' conversion efforts and his backing of the indigenous orthodoxy were motivated by pure *raison d'état*. "This stance," according to Kleiner, "is epitomized in the famous confession of faith associated with his name, the *Confessio Claudii* (1555)". Michael Kleiner – Gəlawdewos. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia...*, vol. 2, p. 657. Also see Lino Lozza – La Confessione di Claudio Re d'Étiopia. *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*. 5 (1946) 67-78; Edward Ullendorff – The Confessio Fidei of King Claudius of Ethiopia. *Journal of Semitic Studies*. 32:1 (1987) 159-176; Leonardo Cohen – The Portuguese Context of the *Confessio Fidei* of King Claudius. In *Ethiopian Studies at the End of the Second Millennium. Proceedings of the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, 6-11 November 2000, Addis Ababa*. Ed. Baye Yimam et al. Vol. 1. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 2002, p. 152-168.

115 Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī, also known as Aḥmad Grañ, commanded the Muslim armies that conquered and ruled Ethiopia for nearly thirteen years. He perished in the war against the Portuguese and Ethiopian armies in 1543. His deeds are recorded in the

the emperor sent a message to the Portuguese urging them to come to his aid and remedy the harm done in his land by the enemy. In return for the Portuguese's assistance, all of Ethiopia would receive the only true Roman faith and the Portuguese would be given a third of all our lands. What is more, these conditions were bound under oath and the punishment of excommunication, lest the pact be violated. As true children of the faith, the Portuguese came, 400 in number. So remarkable were their victories over their enemies that our natives were astounded. In destroying the Moors, the Portuguese slew many of their commanders and Granh, their king and warlord. However, this quest to restore our lands came at the cost of many Portuguese lives as well¹¹⁶.

It came to pass that despite the oath made under punishment of excommunication, neither our king nor our people kept the oath; and [thus] spurned the Roman faith and the Catholic patriarch who had arrived from Portugal. For this reason, God punished us with the Gallas¹¹⁷, who destroyed us and occupied our lands, as ye have seen. In time, Emperor Malac Sagued¹¹⁸ died and was succeeded by his son Jacob. He was accepted by all as the true heir of his father, swearing fealty [to Jacob] under punishment of excommunication. A few years later, though, they rose against him. Depriving him of the kingdom, they banished him saying that he was not the son of Emperor Malac Segued. What is more, they gave the imperial scepter and crown to Za Danguil, under the same punishment of excommunication and oath of fealty, and they [nevertheless] slew him that same year¹¹⁹.

Arab chronicle by Arabfaqih, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir – *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abysinie (XVIe siècle)*. Ed. and tr. René Basset. Paris: E. Leroux, 1897. See also Miguel de Castanhoso – *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541-1543*. Ed. and tr. Richard Stephen Whiteway. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967.

116 From the mid-sixteenth century on, the Jesuits' main 'sales pitch' in Ethiopia was that their own country, Portugal, had earned the African empire's gratitude by virtue of the crucial support that the Europeans rendered in the struggle against Aḥmad Grāfi.

117 Large numbers of Oromo, who are referred to as Galla in sixteenth and seventeenth-century records, began to move into the central and north-western highlands from their heartland in the plains of modern-day southern Ethiopia. The idea that the Oromo invasions were divine punishment for the Ethiopians' iniquities rears up time and again in Jesuit and Ethiopian sources. For example, a local monk by the name of Baḥrāy made this case in his late sixteenth-century work, *The History of the Galla*. According to Baḥrāy, "some people have said that God allowed it [the Ethiopians' defeat at the hands of the Oromo] because of our sins". See Charles Fraser Beckingham; George Wynn Brereton Huntingford (eds.) – *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593-1646*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1954, p. 125.

118 Śāršā Dəngəl, whose regnal name was Mälāk Sägäd, ruled Ethiopia between 1563 and 1597. The emperor's major accomplishments are registered in his capacious royal chronicle. See Carlo Conti Rossini (ed. and tr.) – *Historia Regis Śāršā Dəngəl (Malak Sagad) accedit Historia Gentis Galla*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Vols. 20, 21. Scriptores Aethiopic. Vols. 3, 4. Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1955. While treating the Portuguese in Ethiopia well, Śāršā Dəngəl apparently shunned their appeals to embrace Catholicism. Nevertheless, he dispatched a few epistles to the West requesting military support. See Osvaldo Raineri (ed. and tr.) – *Lettere tra i pontefici romani e i principi etiopici (sec. XII-XX): Versioni e integrazioni*, Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 2005; Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner – *In the Company of Iyāsus: the Jesuit Mission in Ethiopia, 1557-1632*. Ph.D thesis. Florence: European University Institute, 2008, p. 77.

119 Ya'āqob, the son of Emperor Śāršā Dəngəl, assumed the helm in 1602 at the tender age of fifteen. From the outset he ruled the empire on his own and immediately took steps to curtail the influence of his brothers-in-law. Ras Atatewos, the governor of Goḡḡam, consequently rebelled, but the young sovereign managed to place him under arrest. Thereafter, an aggrieved captain, Zā Šallase, convinced Atatewos that Emperor Ya'āqob's exiled cousin, Zā Dəngəl (the son of Lassanā Krastos, the brother of Emperor

After having traversed many lands while fleeing from these insurrections, I quietly retired to the Debra Libanos monastery¹²⁰. At this point, they came and asked me to be their king, for the kingdom laid helpless. I answered thus: Ye habitually violate excommunications and oaths, slay kings, and disturb people. However, they insisted that I should be their king, swearing fealty by oath and by punishment of excommunication. I thus entered the kingdom. Though I claimed it not, it belonged to me. It was not long before they sought to do unto me as they had done unto others in the past. They brought back Jacob from exile to rule over them, and I was banished from the kingdom. But I deceived them, as perforce they wanted to elevate me as their king so as to uphold the state; and trusting in the help of God and the favor of Heaven, I battled Jacob and vanquished and destroyed him. In addition, many of his followers were slain in the process¹²¹.

Thereafter, I focused my attention on matters of faith, asking scholars why our doctrine was incompatible with that of the Roman Church; and from reading books, I discovered that many things were taught against it [i.e., Catholicism] in Ethiopia. On this basis, I came to the conclusion that only the Roman faith was the true undisputable one and that ours was false and heretical. It was given to us by the evil Dioscorus who, following the heathen Eutyches, denied the two natures of Christ. Both [Dioscorus and Eutyches] were condemned at the Council of Chalcedon by 630 bishops and fathers of the Church under the auspices of his holiness Pope Leo, vicar of Christ and successor of Saint Peter. These errors had already been condemned at the Council of Ephesus by 200 fathers and even earlier at the Council of Constantinople. Furthermore, during the reign of Pope Sylvester and Emperor Constantine, they were condemned by 318 fathers at the Council of Nicea. On account of this false doctrine, Dioscorus was excommunicated and turned away from the Roman Church. According to one of

Šāršā Dəngəl), would make for a more tractable monarch. In September 1603, while Ya'āqob was away at his court in Goga, Zā Dəngəl was brought to the capital and proclaimed emperor. Correspondingly, Ya'āqob's rivals accused him of abandoning the Christian faith – breaking crosses, consorting with sorcerers, and participating in pagan divination ceremonies. As a result, Ya'āqob was exiled to the neighboring kingdom of Ənnarya and Zā Dəngəl assumed the throne. The latter indeed reigned as Emperor of Ethiopia from 1603 to 1604 under the throne name Asnaf Sägəd II. Zā Dəngəl ruled during a turbulent period in which the weak Ethiopian monarchy was constantly challenged. See Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 3, p. 379; vol. 11, p. 322; Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira – *Chronica de Susenyos...*, p. 48-49 (Gə'əz); p. 39 (Portuguese).

120 Susənyos became a potential claimant to the throne during the reign of Emperor Ya'āqob. Fearing for his life, Susənyos took to the road, adopting the peripatetic life of a bandit between 1597 and 1607. At some point, he found haven at Däbrā Libanos – a monastery in Šāwa that was established by Tāklā Haymanot during the fourteenth century. Chapter 6 of *The Chronicle of Susənyos* reports that the monks of Däbrā Libanos “received him with open arms, and they loved him very much, like a father loves his son and a mother loves her daughter, for they were” allied “with the emperors, his fathers, who reigned before him, since the beginning of the Kingdom of Yakunno Amlak to this very day, passing from generation to generation.” Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira – *Chronica de Susenyos...*, p. 13 (Gə'əz), p. 10 (Portuguese).

121 This is a summary of the events as related in the Chronicle of Susənyos. See Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira – *Chronica de Susenyos...*, p.13-114 (Gə'əz), p. 10-89 (Portuguese).

his disciples, James, he espoused this false doctrine in Alexandria, where he preached it to us [i.e., the Ethiopians] and filled us with his errors and lies¹²².

Having considered all of the above and the variation and inconsistency of our ways and the doctrine of our teachers¹²³, and the fact that they were not based on the true Stone of Christ and thus could not be deep-rooted, I started to favor Catholics and in the end accepted the Roman faith. I often risked my life for it [i.e., Catholicism] and was persecuted by many within and outside my household, who as ye know rose up against me. Amongst them were Jonael, the viceroy of Begameder¹²⁴, and my son in law¹²⁵, to whom I had given my daughter and upon whom I had conferred great mercies. However, all [of my foes] were struck down by the arm of the Lord and were laid at my feet. Wherefore, I understood that this is my faith and that, with or without a kingdom, I confess the faith of Rome and am willing, if necessary, to die [for my beliefs]. Moreover, there will never be anything that, by grace of God, shall cause me to stray from it. As Saint Paul professed, neither hunger nor thirst nor persecution nor work nor despair nor even the present nor the future shall make me stray from the true Roman faith and the love of Christ.

To this point, the orator assumed the floor. At this point, the emperor himself turned to the patriarch [and said]: Do not think, your lordship, that that which you ask of me, and which I want to do, is something new, for I have long given this obeisance to His Holiness from the hands of the superior father in attendance. The patriarch then offered a brief response. He [i.e., Mendes] opened the book of Gospels in his hands, whereupon the emperor knelt down and took the following oath:

122 In espousing this view, the text whole-heartedly adopts the Jesuit position: the Alexandrian See is a source of lies and tall tales, whereas Ethiopia is an innocent victim of Egyptian heretics. See Leonardo Cohen – The Ethiopian Christianity...

123 This claim was also put forth by the Society of Jesus. According to the Jesuit Manuel Barradas, a contemporary of Mendes, the Ethiopians used to recite mass by heart without placing any book on the altar, thereby exposing "themselves to many errors." Cited in Leonardo Cohen – *The Missionary Strategies...*, p. 93-94.

124 Between 1619 and 1620, Iona'el was governor of Bägemdär, a province of Ethiopia east of Lake Ṭana. Iona'el dispatched a letter to the emperor offering his obeisance on the condition that the Jesuits, who had recommended that he cease observing the Sabbath, be evicted from the country. However, Susānyos' refusal prompted Iona'el to join the Oromo. The latter ultimately betrayed the defector and delivered his decapitated head to the emperor. See Leonardo Cohen – *The Missionary Strategies...*, p. 47.

125 In 1617, Yolyos was dismissed from his post as governor of Tagray by his father-in-law, Emperor Susānyos. The ousted governor subsequently took up arms. The rebels set out on this campaign under the banner of the Orthodox faith, with the blessing of *Abunä* Sam'on. However, the rebels were defeated at the Battle of Säda, over the course of which both Yolyos and the *abunä* were slain. For more on Yolyos' uprising, see Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 2, p. 392-402; Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira – *Chronica de Susenyos...*, p. 163-170 (Gǎǎz), p. 126-131 (Portuguese); Jules Perruchon – Notes pour l'histoire d'Éthiopie: règne de Susenyos ou Seltan-Sagad (1607-1632). *Revue sémitique*. 5 (1897) 174; Balthazar Tellez – *Historia Geral de Ethiopia...*, p. 337-342.

Thus sayeth the emperor:

I, Seltan Segued, emperor of Ethiopia, believe and profess that Saint Peter, prince of the Apostles was nominated head of the Christian Church by Christ our Lord, who bestowed the government and lordship of the world upon him upon saying: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam; et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum*¹²⁶. And again upon saying to him: *Pasce oves meas*. Thus we believe and confess that the legitimately elected pope of Rome is the true heir of Saint Peter the Apostle in the government; he hath the same power, rank, and primacy over the Christian Church. And to the holy father, Urban VIII, our pope and lord by the grace of God, and his successors in the Church's government, we offer and promise true obeisance and humbly submit at his feet our personage and our empire. So help us God and the Holy Gospels.

Thereafter, the emperor, the princes, brothers of the emperor, lords, ecclesiastics, monks, and clerics took the missal and declared: I, so and so, promise, offer, and vow, so help me God and the Holy Gospels. At the end of the ceremony, Ras¹²⁷ Cella Christòs gave a sermon exhorting all with harsh words to keep that oath. Entering a state of great fervor, he lifted a sword and uttered: Now the past is past; and whoever shall henceforth refrain from filling his duties, with this [i.e., the sword] shall he be judged. This was meant as a warning to some of those present who had dealings with the rebel son of [the Egyptian] Cabrael [i.e., Yohannés]¹²⁸. Ras Cella Christòs had found a sack containing letters by them [i.e., the above-mentioned rebel sympathizers] encouraging him [Yohannés] to continue with his revolt and expressing their support. This threat elicited great fear amongst them, but was a great consolation to loyal Catholics.

The renown of this ceremony was bolstered by the oath of Prince Faciladàs¹²⁹, who was his father's heir and the future sovereign of the empire. His succession was much desired by the emperor. Whilst the father of many children, he [Susānyos] loved this one above all and endeavored to ensure his inheritance of the government. Thereafter, the aforesaid princes and lords took their oath. But the great Cella Christòs,

126 "You are Peter, and upon this rock I build my church, and to you I give the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19).

127 Literally "head," *ras* was the second highest rank (after *nəgus*) in the feudal military hierarchy of the Ethiopian empire. See Denis Nosnitsin – Ras. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica...*, vol. 4, p. 330-331.

128 In 1623, Yohānnəs mutinied against Susānyos in the Amhara region. Supported by groups of local monks and nuns, Yohānnəs raised the banner of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith. Sə'älä Krəstos defeated Yohānnəs in battle several times, but failed to capture him. Only in 1625 did Sə'älä Krəstos finally manage to kill the emperor's foe on the battleground. See Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 6, p. 386, 439.

129 Fasilādās reigned as emperor from 1632 to 1667. Not long before assuming the throne, the heir apparent convinced his father to institute freedom of religion throughout the land. Upon restoring the old Alexandrian orthodoxy in June of 1632, Susānyos abdicated the throne to Fasilādās. The latter immediately honored his compromise agreement with the Ethiopian Church and facilitated the mission's expulsion from the country. See Emeri van Donzel – Fasilādās. In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica...*, vol. 2, p. 499-502.

as a true child of the Roman Church, added a condition to his oath that is worthy of his spirit and of Christianity: I swear, he said, to the heir apparent of his father to the empire, obeisance as his loyal vassal so long as he observes, defends, and obliges the Holy Catholic faith; otherwise, I shall be his principal and greatest enemy. The same condition was attached by almost all the captains of the ras and his firstborn.

Having completed these two most solemn acts, the patriarch along with the fathers, monks, and clerics in attendance issued an excommunication, so that all comprehended what they had sworn. It is indeed the custom in Ethiopia that excommunication is often issued for important matters to inspire more dread and fear. As two fathers were escorted to the center of the celebration by two *azages* (after first sounding the drums), the emperor declared that all clerics and monks should henceforth refrain from saying mass or performing the duties of their ecclesiastical office until they have presented themselves before the patriarch. This edict was promulgated for the crucial purpose of obligating all [clerics] to be properly ordained, even in the absence of lower ordainments, to include sub-deacons. Deacons were ordained by anointing their head and cutting some of their hair and priests by putting out a loaf of bread with their hands through the window of the temple. There was a case in which an Alexandrine abuna was supposed to ordain nearly three thousand candidates. Overburdened, he sent word that each should take ordination as they saw fit and then immediately leave; and they were indeed ordained in this fashion. For this reason, it is incumbent upon the Roman patriarch to examine the ordained, and it is his duty to ascertain those who must be sanctioned anew, at least *sub conditione*. It was also proclaimed, under penalty of death, that all [Ethiopians] are to adopt the Roman faith and are forbidden to harbor accused rebels. Moreover, all were to abide by the orders of the Roman Church, not to observe Easter, not to fast on Lent, and to commence with the fathers and not before, as was the custom. After decreeing that maidens of royal lineage are to take the same oath, the solemnity of this day came to a close¹³⁰.

130 The missionaries spared no effort to win over and convert noble women (*wezaro*). However, this was no easy task, for upper-class Ethiopian women stood at the vanguard of the hostile opposition to Catholicism. Jesuit texts suggest that the mission struggled to make inroads among the *wezaro* even after Susānyos' conversion. See Gérard Geist – *L'influence portugaise sur la femme éthiopienne aux XVI^{ème} et XVII^{ème} siècles*. Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1986; Leonardo Cohen – *The Missionary Strategies...*, p. 175-178; Wendy Laura Belcher – Sisters Debating the Jesuits: the Role of African Women in Defeating Portuguese Proto-Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Abyssinia. *Northeast African Studies*. 13:1 (2013) 121-166. According to de Almeida, the resistance of the noble women was a major stumbling block to the mission's progress in Dänqāz: "These daughters and granddaughters of the emperor and descendants of the royal house lived in absolute freedom, taking and leaving husbands at will, without fear of God or modesty in the presence of men. These women had much trouble adapting themselves to a faith that forced them to follow the straight path of the Holy Scripture." P. Emmanuel de Almeida, "ad Praepositum Generalem Soc. Iesu. Gorgorra, 16 iun. 1628". Camillo Beccari (ed.) – *Rerum Aethiopicarum...*, vol. 12, p. 259.