

THE CAUSE OF THE ἘΣΤΙΦΑΝΟΣΙΤΕΣ: A Fundamentalist Sect in the Church of Ethiopia*

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I

The movement of the Ἐστίφανοσιτες in fifteenth century Ethiopia has been known outside Ethiopia at least since Dillmann's study of the writings of *Aṣe Zār'a Ya'əqob* in 1884 that was published a year later¹. These writings inevitably present the account of the movement from the standpoint of the established Church, which the sect was challenging with an amazing degree of perseverance. Our knowledge about it advanced greatly when Conti Rossini edited in 1910 the *Gädlä Abäkärüzun*, the acts of one of the important leaders of the sect², and when A. Mordini published in 1953 a report of his visit to the center of the Ἐστίφανοσιτες, the Monastery of Gunda Gunde³. A true picture of a movement can best be attained when it is seen from the standpoint of those holding the view. The editions of the *Gädlä Abäkärüzun* by Conti Rossini and the *Gädlä Əzra* by A. Caquot⁴, the acts of another saint canonized by the movement, were aimed primarily at this purpose. *Zār'a Ya'əqob's* writings themselves were subsequently edited by Conti Rossini and K. Wendt⁵. Two recent studies, one by Tadesse Tamrat⁶ and another by R. Beylot⁷, have used published and unpublished materials in an attempt to review the history of the movement of the sect and its teachings.

That the *Gädlä Ἐστίφανος*, the acts of the founder of the sect, and the other individual *gädlät* of the saints of the movement, e. g., the *Gädlä Gäbrä Məsiḥ*, have not yet been edited is undoubtedly an impediment to our knowledge of the movement, even though these works have been studied by those who have devoted their attention to the movement. This is equally true of the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw zä-Däbrä Gärlen*, EMM 4 (= IES MS 496), which is a collection of the martyrdoms of the Fathers and Brothers of Däbrä Gärlen, or the story of the persecution of the Ἐστίφανοσιτες during the reign of *Aṣe* (King) *Zār'a Ya'əqob* (1434–1468)⁸. The need to edit the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw (zä-Däbrä Gärlen)* becomes even more urgent when seen from the point of view of the political geography of Ethiopia before the revolt of *Graññ* (1527–1540). The manuscript seems to have been copied shortly after the composition of the work, which probably took place during the reign of *Bä'ədä Maryam*

* In memory of Professor Stefan Strelcyn

1 Dillmann 1885: 24, 44–5. "Aṣe" was the title of the Ethiopian monarch under whom there were several kings and governors of semi-autonomous regions.

2 Conti Rossini (1910a) 1954: 1–64.

3 Mordini 1952: 29–70.

4 Caquot 1961: 72–121.

5 Conti Rossini 1964: 43–8; 1965: 48; Wendt 1962: 12 ff., 38 ff.

6 Tadesse Tamrat 1966: 103–15.

7 Beylot 1970: 103–116.

8 Macomber, EMM 1, 1975: 7; cf. Mordini 1952: 50–1.

(1468–1478)⁹. The author, who was in all probability the monk who composed the *Gädlä Abäkäräzun*¹⁰, mentions many places to which the Ḥṣṭifanosites were banished, some with their rulers, to an extent that no other indigenous writer of the time has done. This paper aims at clarifying the cause of the movement in the light of the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw* and other sources. The paper is motivated by the fact that their teachings, which made them a distinct sect, have not been sufficiently clarified in previous studies¹¹. It will attempt, therefore, to make it clear that the issues over which the Ḥṣṭifanosites disagreed with the Zär'a Ya'əqobites, the supposed representatives of the established Church, were numerous and sufficed to constitute them a sect.

II

The name *Ḥṣṭifanosite* is derived from the name of the monk, *Abba Ḥṣṭifanos* (died ca. 1450), who organized the followers of his teachings into a distinct sect, but still under the umbrella of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church¹². In the local language, they called themselves *Däqiqä Ḥṣṭifanos*, meaning the spiritual children or followers of *Abba Ḥṣṭifanos*, analogous to *Däqiqä Taklä Haymanot* „the Taklä Haymanotites“, *Däqiqä Ewostatēwos* „the Ewostatēwosites“, etc. Their opponents, the Zär'a Ya'əqobites, called them in derogatory fashion, *Däqiqä Ḥṣṭifa*, meaning, according to the author of the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, the children of an evil spirit called Ḥṣṭifa “in the Egyptian language”¹³.

*Lä-mäggabe betu lä-Əgz'abḥer sämäyawwo bä-sämä
säyṭan zä-yəbləwwo Ḥṣṭifä [sic].*

They called the administrator of the house of God
by the name of a demon called Ḥṣṭifa.

The monasteries in those days enjoyed freedom to compose their own service books, lay down their own rules and rites, and even to interpret the doctrine of the Orthodox Faith according to their own understanding¹⁴. A study of the history of Ethiopian monasteries

- 9 The Ḥṣṭifanosite literature is reluctant to mention the names of the kings who persecuted them. In the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw zä-Däbrä Gärgen*, the *Aṣe* is called *Dəbb Bəzär* “a bear to the enemy”, or *mästä'amani* (probably for: *mästä'mäyyən*), “the wily one”. There, the name Zär'a Ya'əqob is mentioned only once, EMMML 4, f. 122 v, Macomber, EMMML I, 1975: 7. But it is clear from the incidents and the persons involved in them that the work covers only the persecution which the members of the sect suffered during Zär'a Ya'əqob's reign. The report ends with the ascension of Bä'ədä Maryam to the throne of his father, Getatchew Haile 1980b: 226–8.
- 10 The phonological and grammatical mistakes in both works and their style are the same; see Conti Rossini's introduction to the *Gädlä Abäkäräzun*. The texts of the first few folia in both works are also more or less alike (see no. 59). While preparing this article, I was not able to consult a copy of the *Gädlä Ḥṣṭifanos*.
- 11 Previous studies had no access to sources that I have been privileged to consult. This paper is not in contradiction to the previous studies but is complementary to them.
- 12 Other writers call them “Stephanites”, “Stefaniti”, etc. but their leader has never been called other than Ḥṣṭifanos.
- 13 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw (zä-Däbrä Gärgen)*, EMMML 4, f. 84r, Macomber, EMMML I, 1975: 7. *Ḥṣṭifä-ssä (sic) bä-nägärä Gäbš sämä säyṭan wə'ətu*, “Ḥṣṭifa in the Egyptian language is the name of a demon”, f. 142 v.
- 14 See Getatchew Haile 1981c: 102–36.

may, in fact, reveal that each one of them was founded on certain principles laid down by its founder. What kept these monasteries together seems to have been, speaking in general terms, the spiritual authority of the metropolitan, from whom they all received ordination, and the political authority of the Christian crown, which defended them from a series of raids by the non-Christian communities found in and around Ethiopia. The differences which these monasteries manifested among themselves were confined to their books and their practices during services. Seen from this point of view, the movement of *Abba* Eṣṭifanos would not have been unusual for the Church. All that *Abba* Eṣṭifanos needed to do was to leave his monastery at Qoyyāša and found his own, which, indeed, he did. However, the Eṣṭifanosites deviated from this tradition of peaceful co-existence by undertaking to challenge the other monasteries and propagate their own views on Christian life and monasticism. They even had a special kind of cap which irritated and outraged their opponents¹⁵. It was very unfortunate for the movement that it came into existence at a time when Ethiopia was ruled by Zār'a Ya'əqob (1434–1468), who took it upon himself to bring an end to the tradition of independence which the monasteries had enjoyed since time immemorial.

III

The position of the Eṣṭifanosites may be summarized as follows:

1. Worship none other than the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. Pursue a strict Christian morality.
3. Pursue strict observance of the ascetic life by the monks.
4. Observe the two Sabbaths, Saturday and Sunday.
5. Speak out against anyone who does not follow the first four points.

IV

Not all these points could be observed in Ethiopia in the fifteenth century without coming into open conflict with the spiritual and political leaders of the country. And some of them are not as simple as they appear on paper. The first, which seems to be the simplest as expressed in English, happens to have been the reason for their extermination from the face of Christian Ethiopia! The problem lay basically in their understanding of the meaning of the word which stood for “worship”. Strictly speaking, the Gə‘əz verb “to worship a deity” is *amläkä*, “to treat an object or a being as a god”. This verb seems not to have been drawn into the conflict, at least not at that time. There was no disagreement that the word should apply only to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The controversial verb was *sägädä* “to bow out of respect, to prostrate oneself to the ground, to worship in

15 *Gädlä Abāw wā-Aḥaw*, f. 45v: *Lämənt zä-itāhabbaru məslä fälästä Itəyopp ya bā-qob^c·'a*. “Why is it that you do not agree with Ethiopian monks with regards to (monastic) caps?” They claim that theirs was the right kind, which was also regarded thus by the Metropolitan as being that of the followers of Pachomius, *ibid.*, f. 60 r. The Eṣṭifanosites call their monks *qəddusan* “saints”. Monks of other monasteries were for them *fäləst*, plural of *fälasi*. A *fälasi* is one who is uprooted from a normal life in one’s own region. A monk is a *fälasi* who has voluntarily left his worldly life in favour of the life to come.

prostration.” For the Ǝstifanosites the word meant “to worship in prostration”, while for their opponents it meant primarily “to bow down before an object or someone as an expression of respect”, especially while giving or exchanging greetings, a common oriental custom. The Ǝstifanosites were not disrespectful of objects or people deserving respect; modesty was at the heart of the teaching of their father: *Kunu-ne [sic] abgärtä lä-ahawikəmu* “Be, indeed, servants to your brothers.”¹⁶ They only objected to expressing it “in a way that should be reserved alone for God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”, which is the *səgdät*, a form of worship. They were regarded as arrogant men, who deliberately undermined the authority of the King whom God had elected, and as heretics, in fact, Jews who showed no due reverence to the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God and to the Holy Cross, which was sanctified by the blood of God which had drenched it at the time when Christ was crucified.

V

Neither of the parties could defend its view persuasively as long as the word, *səgädä*, and the practice expressed by it had the dual connotation “to worship” and “to express respect”; instead, they continued to collide – the Ǝstifanosites, with all the behavior of a stubborn militant group, and the establishment, with all the moves of a reactionary oligarchy which was determined to suppress the movement – until the sect was almost eradicated through coercion. The texts that Zär’a Ya’əqob used against them, which are reported in his as well as in their writings, were Genesis 23, 7 and 33, 3 and I Sam. 24, 8, which report how Abraham prostrated himself to the children of Heth, Jacob to Esau and David to Saul, respectively. The sect’s interpretation of these biblical facts was not satisfactory, even judging from their own accounts. On the other hand, the *Aše* seems to have so exceeded limits in demanding that his subjects bow to him out of respect that the Ǝstifanosites were thoroughly outraged. He demanded from his subjects that they say the following three things and act accordingly:

(a) *Lä-səbhatä səmu yədällu səgid*, “Prostration is proper for the glory of his name”, whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned;

(b) *Lä-kəbrä nəgsä yədällu səgid*, “Prostration is proper in honor of her reign”, whenever the name of Mary is mentioned; and

(c) *Lä-kəbrä mängəstu yədällu səgid*, “Prostration is proper in honor of his kingdom”, whenever the *Aše*’s name, Zär’a Ya’əqob called Q^wəstāntinos, or even his title, *Nəguś* or *Nəgäsi*, is mentioned¹⁷.

According to the last point, one did not have to be in the presence of the *Aše* to be obliged to fall to the ground in his honor or that of his kingdom.

Secondly, his interpretation that the three guests who visited Abraham were the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit was based principally on the argument that the host had prostrated himself to them¹⁸. If they had been angels, he argued, Abraham would not have

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 15 v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 130 v–131 r; Dillmann 1885: 33; Getatchew Haile 1980b: 232.

¹⁸ “The Homily of *Aše* Zär’a Ya’əqob of Ethiopia in Honour of Saturday Sabbath”, EMML 1480, f. 102v, Getatchew Haile, EMML IV, 1979: 607; Getatchew Haile 1982: 200–206.

prostrated himself to them. Quoting the statement of the angel to John the Apoclypt as reported in Revelation 22, 9, “Prostrate yourself not to me, you should know that I am the servant of your masters and of your brothers, the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book; prostrate yourself to God”, the *Aṣe* declares, “An Angel is a creature; (the angel) did not accept prostration from John, the Son of Thunder. But those two who were called angels accepted prostration from Lot because they were the Son and the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹ The *Aṣe* went still further in his argumentation, in order to show that man prostrates himself only to God²⁰:

Now let us go back to rebuke the foolishness of those who say that Abraham prostrated himself to God and his angels. O foolish ones, where have you found that men prostrated themselves to angels with God, as Abraham prostrated himself to God who appeared to him in the likeness of three men? When Our Lord was born of Mary in the flesh for the salvation of the world, the wise men fell and prostrated themselves to him alone as he was laying in the manger. They did not prostrate themselves to him together with Joseph and Salome.

This is more or less what the Ǝstifanosites stood for! Prostration was proper, according to them, only for God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There was no circumstance under which it might be performed to others. The *Aṣe* does not indicate whether the wisemen prostrated themselves to the Child Jesus together with Mary or not.

The Ǝstifanosites, for their part, were also inconsistent about the question of Abraham’s visitors. When the *Aṣe* wanted to know who they believed the visitors to be to whom Abraham prostrated himself, their answer was simple and pointed but contradicted their tenet that man should not prostrate himself except to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; they replied, “The Scripture says: Three men.”²¹ The point of issue which they were evading was, of course, whether the visitors were the Trinity, as *Aṣe* taught, or three men, or God and two angels, as his other opponents, Zāmika’el, Gāmalāyal and their followers are reported to have held.

VI

Gə’əz has words for two ways of expressing respect to others at the time of exchanging greetings, *sägädä*, that is, bowing down before the person or object (icon, *tabot*, church, etc.), as has already been indicated, and *näs’a ədä*, that is, shaking hands, (literally “taking the hand”). The practice of bowing down and the expression, *näs’a ədä*, have continued as a living tradition until the present. But the meaning of the expression *näs’a ədä* (or Amharic

19 *Getatchew Haile*. 1982: 202.

20 *Ibid.* : 206.

21 *Gädla Abāw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 37 r.

ጸጎጎ ከእኛ) has become, as one official said to the ጭቸኖስገሮች who were insisting on its literal meaning, “to bow down in respect to the person being greeted.”²² We know very little about the history of these two expressions and the practices that they suggest in the nation’s culture except that the word *sägädä* in its meaning, “to bow in greeting”, has not been preserved in the modern vernaculars and that the meaning of *näs’a ädä* (or *ጸጎጎ ከእኛ*) has been changed from “to shake hands, to take the hand” to “to bow down in greeting.” Was there a period of transition during which it was used as a euphemism for *säg(g)ädä*? But it is interesting to note that the opponents of the ጭቸኖስገሮች substituted *näs’a ädä* for *sägädä*, even though their demand in practice remained the same, that the ጭቸኖስገሮች should prostrate themselves to the ground out of respect for their monarch like any of the subjects.

VII

The ጭቸኖስገሮች’ insistence, that one should prostrate oneself to none but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, coincided with the introduction of the cult of Mary into the local Church by Zär’a Ya’äqob²³. It was probably at about the same time, too, that similar cults were introduced by him for the Angels, the Prophets and the Apostles²⁴. The sect may also have challenged the use in the liturgy of the hymns of Yared and the *Näገጃ* hymns composed by the *Aጃ* himself²⁵. The sect’s position on prostrating oneself to venerate the Blessed Virgin is not clear from their literature, as it has been studied so far. As far as their opponents were concerned, however, they were *Zürä Maryam*, that is, enemies of Mary, and, again according to their opponents, it was this enmity that caused their destruction²⁶. Zär’a Ya’äqob’s veneration of the Blessed Virgin had, apparently, gone so far as to become counterproductive. One might conclude from the writings that he has left behind that he was demanding of the Christians that they worship her through her icons. In practice, Mary came before Christ for Zär’a Ya’äqob; our Lord was the Son of Mary, *Wäldä Maryam*, rather than Jesus Christ²⁷. The world was created for her sake²⁸. The whole expanse of Ethiopia belong-

22 When the official, who once gathered them together to see how they would behave, said to them: *ጃድ (sic) ከእኛ* “Shake the hand (of the King)”, one of them inquired: *ላይቴ ወጻጽቴ ሃጻጽቴ ከእኛ ከእኛ ከእኛ* “Where is he now, so that we may greet (him by shaking) his hand?” The official reminded them before he punished them for their refusal: *አክኮኑ ከእኛ ከእኛ ከእኛ ከእኛ ከእኛ* “Did we not tell you to prostrate yourselves to the King! Prostrating oneself to the King is (the same as) shaking (his) hand(s)”, *ገዳሌ ለአገራዊ ወይም ለሌላ*, f. 131 r. See, for example, *Azzaጃ Sinoda* in: Guidi 1961: 29 (line 33); *Wä-äm-zä bäwī’omu näs’u ädä näገጃ* “They then came in and took the hand of the king [i. e., ‘fell to the ground before the King’].”

23 Cerulli 1943: 91; *Tä’ammärä Maryam* 1951 E. C.: 15 ff.; Tadesse Tamrat 1966: 112 (n. 1).

24 Perruchon 1893: 76; EMMML 1835, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMMML V, 1981: 318–29; Wendt 1963: 102–4; Conti Rossini 1965: 44–5.

25 When a disgraced dignitary who thought that he could win back the favour of the monarch by berating them to his sovereign, asked one of them what he thought of the *maḥāletä Däbitära* “the chant of the *Däbrära*”, his answer, for which he was convicted, was, “If it is done while abiding by the law and with a cleansing of the soul and body, praising in chant [*səbḥatä maḥālet*, i. e., the *dəggwä*] is good; if not, it is (just) entertainment, [*täwnet*], *ገዳሌ ለአገራዊ ወይም ለሌላ*, f. 69 v. Cf. the *därsan* for Yared, Conti Rossini 1961: 19.

26 Conti Rossini 1965: 48; Cerulli 1943: 94–103; *Tä’ammärä Maryam* 1951 E. C.: 112–21.

27 See my study of the *Näገጃ* hymns ascribed to Zär’a Ya’äqob in Getatchew Haile forthcoming b, paragraph 12.0. According to one of the miracles of Mary, the ጭቸኖስገሮች were accused of refusing to prostrate themselves to her and to “the cross of her Son”, *masqälä Wäldä, Tä’ammärä Maryam* 1951 E. C.: 113; Cerulli 1943: 95 (line 26).

28 *Bä’antä ጃገጃጃጃ Maryam täገገገገ k’wällu ‘äläm; bä’antä ጃገጃጃጃ Maryam täfäጥru Addam wä-*

ed to Jesus Christ and to the Virgin Mary²⁹. Many of the miracles of Mary, which the *Aṣe* and his *Kahnatā Dābtāra*, “the Clergy of the Royal Camp”, composed, were concerned with the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, rather than with the spiritual life of the Christian population. Among those for whom miracles were worked were robbers, highwaymen, murderers, adulterers and even those who denied Christ³⁰. Their virtues varied from reciting the “Hail Mary” so many times a day to making feasts on any or all of her thirty-three major holy days, that the *Aṣe* commanded should be observed like Sundays³¹. According to what Zār’a Ya’əqob himself reports, Zāmika’el and Gāmaləyal, two of the articulate scholars of the time, were openly condemned for saying, “If a man is a murderer or an adulterer or a thief or the committer of any sin, his sins shall not be forgiven him nor shall he become righteous by honoring a feast day of Our Lady Mary. . . There are too many of her holy days which the Apostles did not prescribe [in their *Sinodos*].”³²

The root for his devotion lay most probably in the fact that he was, as the Amharic language has it, *yä-sələt ləḡ* “a child conceived through prayer or vow”. He owed his life to St. Mary; she had helped his mother so that she would not have a miscarriage. As soon as he was born through the intercession of Mary, he was dedicated to her and was branded with an incision on his body. He lived and died as her unfreed slave, *gäbra wə’ətu ənḃäla gə’zan*³³.

Hewan “The whole world was created for the sake of Our Lady Mary; Adam and Eve were created for the sake of Our Lady Mary: *Tä’ammərə Maryam* 1951 E.C.: 9. According to one of her miracles, one of the teachings that *Abba Sälama*, the first bishop of Ethiopia, brought to Axum, “which was then under Jewish Law”, and was waiting for the coming of the Messiah, was not only that the Messiah had already come but also: *zä-kämä sägädu tä’ayyənä säb’ wä-mälä’əkt lä-kəbrä nəḡsa zä-gäbrä sämay wa-mədr* (sic), *wä-zä-kämä täfätru mäla’əkt wä-säb’ bə’anti’aha*, “How Salvation had been accomplished, how the choirs of men and angels had prostrated themselves to the glory of her reign, which had made heaven and earth, and how men and angels had been created for her sake.” *Tä’ammərə Maryam*, EMML 642 f., 28 v; Macomber, EMML II, 1976: 390. According to the *Səḃḃatä Fəqur*, or “Praise of the Beloved,” a communal prayer for the time of tribulation composed by the *Aṣe*, Mary existed before the world, *Ḥm-qədmä sämay wä-mədr, halləwotəki, zəḃay wä-wārh iqādāmuki* “Your existence was before (that of) heaven and earth; the sun and the moon did not precede you”. EMML 1529, f. 91 r, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMML V, 1981: 30 (lines 4–5).

29 Wendt 1962: 5.

30 See my analysis of the large collection of the miracles in the *Tä’ammərə Maryam*, EMML 1606, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMML V, 1981: 89–114. Many prominent leaders of monasteries were against the *Tä’ammərə Maryam*; see, for example, Cerulli 1943: 123; Getatchew Haile 1980b: 232. The Ḥṣṭifanosites did not know what to do with it when a copy of the collection was handed to them during a eucharistic service, *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, ff. 36 v–37 r. The reason for their objection was, *wä-sobä yəsämmə’u mäṣəḥafä tä’amrəriha lä-Dəngəl zä-kämä adḥanättomu läbəzuḥan ḥaṭ’an yəḥaddəgu əmmuntu-ni ṣamahomu wä-gädlomu wä-yənābbəru bə-nəzəḥial* “When [the ascetics] hear (from) the Book of the Miracles of the Virgin how she saved many sinners, they, too, would abandon their strife and combat and live at ease”, *Tä’ammərə Maryam*, EMML 2952, f. 39 r, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMML VII forthcoming.

31 See the *Mäṣəḥafä Šər’at* “the Book of the Rite from Mu’allaqa,” in: *Tä’ammərə Maryam* 1951 E.C.: 15–20; see also Perruchon 1893: 75–6; Conti Rossini 1964: 44; Euringer 1911: 216. *Ḥmmä-bo zä-iyakābbər bə’ala lä-Əgzə’ətanä yətbərbär betu wä-yətk’wännän nəfsu* “If there is anyone who does not observe her holy day(s) let his house be confiscated and his soul be condemned,” *Tä’ammərə Maryam*, EMML 2952, f. 106v, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMML VII forthcoming.

32 Getatchew Haile 1980b: 232.

33 Cerulli 1933: 82. “Now listen, all you Ethiopians, men and women! You are captives/slaves [*zewa*] of Mary, who received you as a tithe so that you might be her present from her Son. Always take refuge with her because she is capable of saving you from all evils. Make your children, too, take refuge with her so that she may make them grow through her good prayer. If children are born for you before the holy day of Mary, bring offerings to the priests on the holy day of Mary in the month they were born, according to your ability, the wealthy according to his wealth and the poor according to his poverty, even if it means a cup of cold water. . . If they were born after the holy day of Mary, let

VIII

Every time that the Ἐστίφανοσιτες were required to prostrate themselves to the King or in honor of his kingdom, *Səgədu lä-nəgus*, their answer was invariably, *Nəhnä i-nəsəggəd lä-ba'd zä-ənbälä lä-Ab wä-Wäld wä-Mänfäs Qəddus*, “We prostrate ourselves to none but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”³⁴ Their answer was, however, ambiguous when they were asked to prostrate themselves to the Blessed Virgin. In the early period of their movement they answered consistently, *Lä-Maryam-əssä sobä nəsəggəd lä-Walda bä-həyyä nəräkkəba*, “As for Mary, we find her there while we prostrate ourselves to her Son.”³⁵ This reminds us of the worship by the wisemen of the Christ Child in the manger, as quoted by Zär'a Ya'əqob himself. When the wisemen fell to the ground and prostrated themselves to the Child, the Mother was there. They were referring to the tradition that maintains that she is still with her Son. The Ἐστίφανοσιτες never refused in clear terms to prostrate themselves to her as they did when it came to the question of the King or his kingdom. They themselves were probably not sure how they should treat the (icon of the) Blessed Virgin and the holy Cross, although they recited her praises by St. Ephrem/Simon, the Syrian Potter, the *Wəddase Maryam*, like the rest of the clergy³⁶. At one point they came very close to obeying the *Aṣe*'s command, *Səgədu lä-Maryam*, but they refused, believing that this would never bring an end to their persecution by him and the clergy of the established Church³⁷:

Bä-sägid lä-Maryam-hi i-yyəhaddəgännä, wa-bəhəttu
 [sic] *yahassəs məknəyatä bä-zä yəqättəlännä. Məntä*
nəgbär. Sägidä-ssä [sic] lä-Maryam Waläditü [sic]
Amläk [sic] əmmä sägüdnä i-yyahəzz ənännä.

them bring their offering on the holy day of Mary of the following month, so that they may bless their children.” Taken from the so-called Vision of John Son of Thunder, composed by *Aṣe Zär'a Ya'əqob*, EMLL 1480, f. 106 v, Getatchew Haile, EMLL IV, 1979: 559–603. Slaves were apparently branded with the initial of their masters. The Ἐστίφανοσιτες complain that they were branded with the symbol for Z (= Zär'a Ya'əqob) by the command of the *Aṣe*, who wanted to show them that they were his slaves and should not defy his orders, *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 73 v. The author of *Gädlä Krəstos Šämra* reports that the king donated to the saint, Krəstos Šämra, slaves who were branded with the brand of the king, *əllä hətuman bä-məhətämä nəgus*, Cerulli 1956: 10. See also *Fəṯha Nägäst*, chapter [anqäs] 51, Guidi 1897: 324.

34 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, ff. 30 v–31 r, 31 r, 35 r, 36 r and *passim*. *Wä-yəbelo nəgus, bä-bəhilä zä-i-sägädu (sic) lä-kəbrä mängəštəyā k'wənnənomu*, “The King said to (the governor): ‘Punish them for their refusal to prostrate themselves for the honor of my kingdom’”, *ibid.*, f. 44 v; see also Tadesse Tamrat 1966: 111.

35 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 61 r and *passim*; and Tadesse Tamrat 1966: 111.

36 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 63 r; see n. 43. It is interesting to note that the *Wəddase Maryam* does not have passages with the verb *sägädä* addressed to the Blessed Virgin. The *Anqäsä Bərhan*, in fact, answers clearly the question which the *Aṣe* evaded, that the wisemen fell down and prostrated themselves, *sägädu* (to) the child only: “He dwelt in your womb and you carried him nine months. The heavens rejoiced and the earth was gladdened by the birth of your Son. The angel brought joy and the heavenly hosts glorified saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ And the shepherds in Bethlehem admired what they saw and heard. Having seen a star, the Magi came from a distant land to worship your Son (or: “to prostrate themselves to your Son” [*kämä yəsgədu lä-Wäldəki*]) and to submit to you [*wä-yəgnəyu läki*]. It is that star that guided them from the east and brought them to Bethlehem and halted over you, where you were with your child. When the Magi saw (that), they rejoiced greatly. They entered into his presence, stood before him and fell to the ground and worshipped him [*sägädu lottu*]. Then they opened their treasures and presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense and myrrh.” Taken from the third stoppe of the *Anqäsä Bərhan*; for the text, see Velat 1966: 70.

37 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 61 r.

He will not let us go for prostrating ourselves to Mary, but he will rather look for (another) pretext to execute us. What should we do? If we do prostrate ourselves to Mary, the God-bearer, that will not grieve us.

They were frank about this question only when discussing it with the Metropolitan. When *Abba* Gabrə'el asked them saying, *Lä-mənt i-təsäggädu lä-Maryam*, “Why do you not prostrate yourselves for Mary?” they answered saying³⁸:

Akko zä-räkäbnä qədmä-zə ənzä yətbəhal, əsəggəd lä-Maryam, zä-ənbälä zä-yətbəhal, əsəggəd lä-Ab wä-Wäld wä-Mänfäs Qəddus.

We have not found it said [in the literature] before this [time]: “I prostrate myself to Mary”, but [we have only found] it said: “I prostrate myself to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The sources to which these simple monks were referring may have been specifically the *Wəddase Maryam* “Praises of Mary”, by Ephrem/Simon, the Syrian Potter, and the *Sä'atat zä-Gəbs*, or the Coptic *Horologium*, which contains hymns for the Blessed Virgin and petitions for her intercessions; both consistently reserve the verb *sägüdä* or *səgid* for God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit³⁹. At the same time, however, they give us an invaluable landmark in the history of Ethiopic literature. The *Sä'atat* of Giyorgis zä-Gasəčča (see nn. 39 and 88), the *Səbhatä Fəqur* of Zär'a Ya'əqob (see n. 28), and the different collections of *Nägś* hymns (see n. 27), which have long passages on the worship of the Blessed Virgin were introduced into the Ethiopian Church at this time, just like the *Tä'mmərə Maryam*, with its Book of the Rite of Mu'allaqa, and the other writings of *Abba* Giyorgis in praise of the Blessed Virgin, the *Arganonä Wəddase* (The Organ of Praise), the *Ənzira Səbhat* (The Lyre of Glory) and the *Hoḥətä Bərhan* (The Portal of Light).

IX

The Ḥstifanosites may claim that they did not find in the literature anything that supported the views of their opponents, but they definitely did come across sources that objected to undue veneration to the Blessed Virgin or her icon and the holy Cross. Although it is not pointed out in their literature, the controversial views held by the Ḥstifanosites were not original

38 *Ibid.*, f. 62 v.

39 See, for example, Turaev 1897: 34 and *passim*. The Coptic *Horologium* was the accepted book of hours in the Ethiopian Church until it gradually gave way to its rival service book, the *Sä'atat* of *Abba* Giyorgis, which was composed in the first half of the fifteenth century. The prayer of the Ḥstifanosites, *O-wäladitä Amlak, nahu asmäknä tahatä şəlotä şahläki; i-təmännə-ke (sic) sə'lätənä bə-gize mändabäyätinā (sic)*, which is mentioned in their *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 51v, comes from the Coptic *Horologium*, cf. Turaev 1897, 82.

thoughts of their leader. The churches were in a state of schism at the beginning of the so-called Solomonic dynasty precisely because of this heresy⁴⁰:

During his days [i. e. those of Yagbä'a Şəyon (1285–1294)], a great controversy took place in all the churches, because there arose lawlessly heretics who said, "We will not prostrate ourselves to the cross nor to an icon [of Mary] because an icon is but [just] a tablet and the cross a piece of wood from Golgotha.

The monastic life, too, which the Ḥṣṭifanosites propounded and followed in literal fashion was not novel. *Abba* Samu'el's monastery of Halle Luya, for example, was founded on a strict observance of monastic rules. Alarmed at the consequences of such a movement of independence, Dawit (1382–1413) artfully brought the monastery into the main stream of Ethiopian monasticism⁴¹.

X

Their appearance at the court of the *Abun* which is discussed here (section VIII) took place after the martyrdom of *Abunā* Ḥṣṭifanos. This means that Ḥṣṭifanosites were definitely against prostration to anything other than the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, up to this point in the history of the sect. According to the author of the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, the meeting was a turning point of the movement. When the *Abun*, the local supreme spiritual head of the country, asked them if they would accept his views on the matter, they answered in the affirmative. Then the Metropolitan said to their spokesman, *füşşame nägär*⁴²:

Those who have knowledge do not despise you, but those do who do not have it, on account of which they call you denouncers of Mary. It will not be a transgression for you if you do not prostrate yourself to Mary, but it will not be a sin for you either if you do. So let not your death be for or against prostrating yourselves to Mary, but rather for not prostrating yourselves to the King and for not cursing your teacher.

It may be questioned whether an Egyptian metropolitan during whose tenure, if we can accept the report of the establishment, the *Book of the Rite of Mu'allaqa* for the cult of the Blessed Virgin was translated into Gə'əz would have expressed his support for them in these words, but it is clear that from this time on the Ḥṣṭifanosites wanted to make it clear that the *Aşe* was persecuting them only because they refused to worship him or to prostrate

40 Conti Rossini 1904: 12; Getatchew Haile 1981b: 102.

41 Getatchew Haile 1980a: 163–72. See also Conti Rossini 1903: 97–9.

42 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 62 v.

themselves for the glory of his reign, *lā-kabrū māngəṣtu*. Although the wording may be questioned, the Metropolitan may have sided with them in the controversy, especially if they were willing to change their attitude towards Mary. Accepting his advice, and admitting at the same time that formerly they had, indeed, declined prostration to her, they said, “You are our father; if you speak to us thus in the Spirit, that is good. It was not in disrespect (to her) that we formerly said, ‘We shall not prostrate ourselves to Mary.’ As for us, our life is through Mary.”⁴³ Nowhere in the literature of the sect that I have been able to consult is there a clear indication that they were in disagreement with the metropolitans, the only authorities who could declare them schismatic. On the other hand, there may be a grain of truth in their report that the alliance between the *Abun* and the *Aṣe* to condemn them for the view they held was not a smooth one⁴⁴. This can also be deduced from the fact that *Zār’a Ya’əqob* was reluctant to ask for a replacement when the Metropolitans died. It should likewise be remembered that the writings of *Zār’a Ya’əqob* that are known thus far do not indicate that the Metropolitans had excommunicated them⁴⁵. *Zār’a Ya’əqob’s* reported reaction to the report that the Metropolitan saw no deviation from the true faith of the Church in the view held by the *Däqiqä Ḥṣṭifanos* is very interesting in more than one respect⁴⁶:

What is it that you say, “They believe (in Mary) and do prostrate themselves (to her)? Was it not out of a fear of clubs and beatings and out of a fear of starvation, thirst, cold and nakedness that they prostrated themselves (to her)? If you want to teach (people) to believe your way [i. e. if the religion you propagate is like that of the sect], there are the sorcerers (of) *Wägi* who prostrate themselves to the *Däsk*, the *Mayya* who sacrifice to the sea (*bahr*) and the *G^wərage* who prostrate themselves to the *Marit*. How dare you slander Ethiopia (by saying that theirs is the right view and other views are heretical), you who are an Egyptian? Do we not know the heresy (*‘əlwät*) of the Egyptians? You never knew the honoring of the Sabbaths but only when we taught you.

43 *Ibid.*, f. 63 r. Their acceptance speech continued: *Aklilä məkəhənä wä-qädamitü mädhānitəna wä-mä-särätü nəṣəhənä*. This quotation is the *incipit* of the refrain of the *Wəddase Maryam* for Tuesday; see Karl Fries 1892: 34; Velat 1966: 78.

44 *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 65 r. The *Gädlä Abunä Ezra*, edited by Caquot 1961: 81, indicates vaguely that they were excommunicated by a certain metropolitan (*pappas*); but cf. *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw*, ff. 66 v–67 r (Appendix I); see also Taddesse Tamrat 1966: 113.

45 It is interesting to note that they were brought to a court of justice that was attended by a delegation of the Patriarch of Alexandria that happened to be in Ethiopia at that time, and that it is not reported that the Metropolitans were among those present when the accused were condemned. *Tä’ammərə Maryam* 1951 E. C.: 112–21; Cerulli 1943: 94–9. According to the sect, there was not even a formal court session to consider their case at that time. According to their *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw* (f. 88 r), five of their leading teachers were severely punished when the Ḥṣṭifanosites, who were present at the parade in honor of the guests, embarrassed the King by remaining standing erect while all present fell to the ground before the King when he appeared with his guests. However, the *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw* (f. 67 r) reports earlier of a council attended by the religious leaders, including the two bishops, at the end of which *Abba Gäbrä’el’s* servant – probably his interpreter – was obliged to announce that the *Abun* had excommunicated the Ḥṣṭifanosites; see appendix I.

46 *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 65 r.

Again, the language of the report may be questioned, but most of the facts in the above report can be verified in other sources. According to one source, Metropolitans Mika'el and Gäbr'el themselves admitted that it was Zär'a Ya'əqob who had convinced them of the importance of observing the Saturday Sabbath⁴⁷. Wāgi, which is reported in other sources, too, as the origin of the Däsk⁴⁸, was apparently in or adjacent to Gwərage. Wāgi could also be identified with Əndägäbšan, as both are indicated as the region where the Däsk was worshipped⁴⁹. When a group of Əstifanosites was intercepted while going to Wāgi, the *Ase* asked them with sarcasm, "Are you going to Gwərage – to a Däsk – where there is no church?" They replied, "We are not going to a Däsk but to a church, because we are children of the Church." His next question was probably intended to ridicule them, "What church is there in Gwərage?" They gave him an answer that had many sharp edges: "Hagärä Märyam [*sic*] which King Yəšhaq built." They probably knew that ascribing virtues to his brother, Yəšhaq, who was in all probability a supporter of their cause, would not please him⁵⁰. They were also reminding him of his ignorance of the churches in his own dominion. Their immediate message was, however, to remind him that they were going to a church built in the name of the Blessed Virgin, whom he believed they did not venerate.

XI

Pursuing a strict Christian morality and an ascetic monastic life should not have brought them into collision with the rest of the Christian population. The wilds of Ethiopia are said always to have been inhabited by hermits who pursued the strictest life of asceticism. *Abba* Eləyas, the *Aşe*'s own nephew, was one of them. It has always been a blessing to be visited by them. According to tradition, they are one of the channels of God's response to the prayers of the faithful. The births of many Ethiopian saints were announced by the visit of such ascetics. But the Əstifanosites had decided to speak out against those who claimed to be Christians but did not observe Christian principles; and they refused to be in communion with such people. When the Metropolitan asked them why they disassociated themselves from the rest of the Christians, they were again frank with him⁵¹:

[We disassociate ourselves from them] because the people
of Ethiopia do not abide by the law of our Fathers the
Apostles, be it concerning the worship of other gods
or the observance of the Sabbaths [*Sänbätat*] and other

47 Getatchew Haile 1981a: 73–8; see also Conti Rossini 1965: 154–5.

48 Getatchew Haile 1980b: 219.

49 Conti Rossini 1965: 51.

50 Zär'a Ya'əqob at least once openly slandered his brother, Yəšhaq, by implying that the latter had used *asmat*, that is, had practiced magic, while he was the King of Ethiopia (1414–1429), Getatchew Haile 1980b: 226. It may be interesting to note that, of the kings who were contemporaneous with the beginning of their movement, the Əstifanosites mention only Yəšhaq by name; see also Conti Rossini (1910a) 1954: 13. Yəšhaq may have been the monarch who ruled that "anyone who wishes to follow his [i. e., Əstifanos'] teaching in this province or in others may freely do so", Tadesse Tamrat 1966: 108.

51 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 64v.

holy days [whose observance] is required, or swearing falsely or stealing or fornication/adultery [*zāmməwo*] or murder or any similar [sin].

They were probably also against the simplification of penance, seven times seventy times a day⁵².

XII

The monasteries, too, would not tolerate such a challenge. The big monasteries, which had representatives at the royal court, were enjoying in extravagance the yield of the numerous and enormous land grants with which monarchs and governors had generously endowed them over the centuries. The kings of Ethiopia felt it to be their duty to show liberality in reaffirming earlier grants in the possession of the monasteries and adding new ones to what they already had⁵³. These were in turn given to peasants who paid the revenue to the owning monasteries in food and drink for the commemoration of a given saint. Almost every day of the year in the Ethiopian Church calendar is designated as the anniversary of at least one saint⁵⁴. This gluttony in food and string drink was openly denounced by the sect, whose rule for monastic life was Numbers 6, 1–5:

And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Say to the people of Israel: When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to separate himself to the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes fresh or dried. . .’⁵⁵

XIII

The King tried everything he could think of to bring an end to their movement, from praise to executions. He feared the receptiveness of the population to their teaching. There were even smaller monasteries that offered to join them⁵⁶. He dreaded the challenge to his

52 Conti Rossini 1964: 43–8; Dillmann 1885: 44. The question was whether the words of Our Lord to Peter, Mt. 18, 22, dealt with penance or the forgiveness of offenses among friends. They were certainly not against penance as such. The *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw* has several references to ʿĪṣṭifanosite monks who sinned and repented, e. g., f. 27 rv, 83 rv and f. 114 r.

53 See, for example, Conti Rossini 1909: 18–86; 1901: 177–219; Tadesse Tamrat 1970: 87–117.

54 See, for example, Budge 1928; Ludolf 1691: 389–427.

55 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, ff. 4 v–5 r; see also Caquot 1961: 75 (line 22). ʿĪṣṭifanos and his followers exposed and embarrassed the big and wealthy monasteries by saying loudly: *Kämä-za-nu fənoto (sic) Lä-mənkʷəsənnä zä-bä-atrayo ʾərit wä-bällic wä-sätiy* ‘Is the conduct of monasticism like this, the acquiring of property and eating and drinking (to excess)?’ f. 7v.

56 Conti Rossini (1910a) 1954: 14. Other monasteries, like *Däbrä Säma*^ct in Tämben, were at least sympathetic to the cause. There were even reports that their way of life had appealed even to some

authority and the eventual schism in the Church, which he had united with an iron fist. His basic question was *Lä-mənt təkäffälu haymanotä Itəyoppäya lä-käl'e-'a* “Why do you divide the religion of Ethiopia in two?” His persecution included cutting off their dangerous tongues⁵⁷, banishing them to non-Christian regions and putting them in the custody of Islamic families, who found pleasure in mistreating Christians⁵⁸. But the report reaching the *Aše* from their banishment was that they were winning the hearts of many to their views⁵⁹. According to them, even the hostile heathens were kind to them⁶⁰:

They came to a border (district) of his dominion which is *mədrä [säb'a] Zägam*⁶¹ [= the land of the people of the left], whose dwellings are in trees and who are accustomed to wage war against [other] districts far or near. There are some [among them] who dig in the ground to make cellars for lodging, for men as well as for beasts and [other] possessions. Above these cellars they build their houses. When the fighting becomes too heavy for them, they retreat into them through their holes. When they go to Christian countries [for war], they kill the male population. They do not spare even babies that are a year or half a year old: they spare neither monks nor priests. They devastate their churches, take their animals and all their possessions as booty and return to their country. If a man succeeds in killing ten men, he ties scarlet threads around his neck and arms, because such is the sign of blood. Although they do this to others, they received the saints [i. e. the *Ḥəstifanosite* monks who were in banishment] and did as much good to them as they could and asked them to live in

of the ruling class, Conti Rossini (1910a) 1954: 21, 34. In prisons, too, they were able to spread their teaching among many disgraced noblemen, *Gädlä Abäw wä-Ahaw*, f. 113 r.

57 *Tä'ammərə Maryam* 1951 E. C.: 115; Cerulli 1943: 96 (line 5).

58 *Wä-tämakäru əmmuntu Arämi kämä yəsifəwwo lä-nägadəyanä 'Adäl əllä yəssämmäyu Ḥarlä* (sic). “The *Arämi* [i.e., *Moslems*] conspired to sell him [i.e., the *Ḥəstifanosite* monk in their custody] to merchants of 'Adäl called *Ḥarla*,” *Gädlä Abäw wä-Ahaw*, f. 58v.

59 *Tüzärwu wəstā bəwärtä* (sic) *mängəstəkä wä-bəzuhanä meṭu wəstā təməhərtomu* “(The *Ḥəstifanosites*) have been dispersed in the dominions of your kingdom and have converted many to their teaching”, *ibid.*, f. 83 v; see also f. 68 r; and n. 56 above. Both sources probably relate the same incident that took place in *Qəfraya*.

60 *Ibid.*, ff. 96 v–97 v.

61 On the microfilm, the initial letter of the name of the region looks like an *ca*; but it obviously should be a *zä*. Furthermore, the word *säb'a*, “people of”, is missing, apparently due to a copying error. In other place in the same *gädl*, f. 117 r, a hostile territory to which the monks were banished is called *zägam*: *Mäš'a k'winat Zä-säb'a zägam wəstā yə'əti haḡär bə-kämä yalämmədu tüzabə'o*: “The war of the people of the left came to that region (where the *Ḥəstifanosites* were banished), according to their custom of making war.”

their country. The saints gave thanks to God for the temporary respite which he gave them. They lived there, coming together from their dispersion. They converted to their teaching many of the people of that country, men and women, [who] even renounced the world and became martyrs. God opened [the way] in that country for the saints in everything they needed, so that they built a church and commemorated their brothers.

As with all revolutionary movements, the ʿEṣṭifanosites may have attracted minority groups that felt oppressed and underprivileged. Judging from the language of the *Gädlä Abäkäräzum* and the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, the language of their author(s) was not Semitic.

XIV

The ʿEṣṭifanosites were not theologians. Their writings, except perhaps for the *Gädlä ʿEzra*, do not indicate that they were composed by sophisticated scholars. They were simple monks who were persuaded that the Scriptures and monastic rules should be followed literally. They had to answer theological questions only because they were forced to do so by their opponents who sought pretexts to get rid of them. Their answer to complex theological and philosophical questions was simple and straight: “Listen, people! The beginning of good deeds is belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and its end is the rejection of this world.”⁶² They, however, seem to have developed a trinitarian theology, for the *Aṣe* accused them of holding the heretical view that there are in God three Words and three Spirits, one of each for each person in the Trinity, which would amount to three gods⁶³. The literature of the time, however, may show the contrary. The heresy took its origin from the examples that were used to explain the trinity and unity of God, either one object with three attributes or three objects each with the same attributes that the other two objects have. The former would undermine the trinity of God and the latter his unity. The writings of the ʿEṣṭifanosites which I have been able to consult do not confirm in clear words the heresy which the *Aṣe* accuses them of. *Abunä ʿEṣṭifanos* is reported in the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw* to have taught:

The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit (are/is) one God (*Amlak*). One God means one God and one Godhead (*mäläkot*). The Father is father, and the name Father is his since before the world, and he did not precede the Son because of (his) being father (f. 13v). The Son, too, is son, and the name Son is his since before the world, and he did not come after the Father because

62 *Ibid.*, f. 66r: *Səməʿu ḥəzb: Wä-ṭəntu-ssä lä-məgbarä šənnay amin bā-Ab wä-Wäld wä-Mänfəs Qəddus, wä-täṣəmetu männəno zə-ʿaläm.*

63 Wendt 1962: 38–40; 1960: 144–5.

of (his) being son. The Holy Spirit, too, is holy spirit, and the name Holy Spirit is his, the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and he did not come after the Father and the Son because of (his) being (their) Holy Spirit. They are equal in Godhead, glory (*kəbr*), authority (*səltān*) (*sic*) power (*ḥayl*) and dominion (*māngəst*), in one will (*səmrūt*) while they are three hypostases (*ḥəlləweyat*) and three persons (*gəššat*)⁶⁴.

This confession of faith disagrees in some basic aspects with the heresy which the *Aṣe* has accused them of. They do not confess three (Words and three Holy) Spirits. The *Təməḥərtä ʿEṣṭifanos wā-Abəkərazun*, in fact, makes it clear that they were using one object with three attributes to explain the unity of God and his Trinity. For them, the three persons in the Trinity are likened to man, his word and his breath⁶⁵. Such a theology is vehemently rejected by the *Aṣe*, who sees a denial of the existence of three persons in the Trinity, each with traits or attributes similar to any of the other two. He prefers to express his theology by likening the three persons of the Trinity to the three men who visited Abraham (they were, in fact, the Holy Trinity), each of whom had body, word and breath like the other two, or to the three suns which *Ṕeṭros Bāwarəs*, or Peter Fullo, saw in a vision, each with a disc, light and heat, as opposed to the theology of others, apparently including the *ʿEṣṭifanosites*, who explain the Trinity and Unity of God with a single sun, with its disc resembling the Father, its light the Son and its heat the Holy Spirit⁶⁶.

XV

Another point of disagreement between the King and the *ʿEṣṭifanosites* was the controversial question of *Məṣah bā-Dābrā Šəyon* “the Banquet on Mount Zion”. The scriptural basis for it is, apparently, Revelation 14 and 20–21, and the second part of the *Məšəḥafä Kidan*,

64 *Gädlä Abāw wā-Aḥaw*, f. 13 rv; see also Caquot 1961: 82. The word *ḥəlləwe* means basically “existence”, but it is clear that they used it to mean “hypostasis”, as in some places in the Gəʿəz version of the works of Cyril of Alexandria, Weischer 1977: 247, “*ḥəlləwe(2)*”. However, the *ʿEṣṭifanosites* do admit that they did say – through their spokesman, Pawlos, at the big Council attended by the Clergy of the *Dəbtāra* of the “three churches” and chaired by Fəre Bərhan – the following:

ʿEwwä əbe bā-kämä qälä [altered from: *qälä*] *məšəḥaf yətnəggäru* [altered from: *yətnəggäru*] *bä- [] qəloomu* [altered from: *bä-[] qəloomu*; furthermore, the blank space indicates that it has been altered from: *bä-bä-qəloomu*] *Ab wā-Wäld wā-Mänfəs Qəddus (Gädlä Abāw wā-Aḥaw*, f. 118r.)

Yes, I say, in accordance with the Scripture, “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit speak (each?) with his own word.

But they complain that they were not given a chance to explain their position.

65 Beylot 1970: 111. It seems clear now that the *Məzgəbä Haymanot* which was edited by E. Cerulli 1960: 3–4 is a work of the *ʿEṣṭifanosites*; see also Cowley 1974: 597–607; Getatchew Haile 1980c: 579 (n. 2).

66 I have attempted to present the arguments and the counter-arguments in Getatchew Haile 1981c: 102–36. But see also Conti Rossini 1965: 126–31; and the prayer to the Trinity which was most probably composed by the *Aṣe*, D’Abbadie MS 133, f. 120 v–121 r, Conti Rossini 1912: 479; It is interesting to note, however, that the *ʿEṣṭifanosites* were absorbed by the established Church as early as the region of *ʿƏskəndər* (1478–1496). According to the *Gädlä Abunä ʿEzra*, they even used three objects, e. g., three suns, to explain their trinitarian theology, Caquot 1961: 77 (lines 12–17).

“the Revelation in Galilee”. Zār’a Ya‘əqob has gone to great length in his *Mäṣəḥafä Milad* to explain what the Banquet on Mount Zion is, with all the references he could think of⁶⁷. Other teachers, too, including *Abba* Giyorgis of Gasəḥḥa, the author of the voluminous work on theology called the *Mäṣəḥafä Məṣṥir*, “The Book of the Mystery”, have written on this question⁶⁸. The theory which, judging from the history book of Giyorgis Wälda ‘Amid, may have been Coptic, is, in brief, as follows: The normal way of life in this world, as it was known down to the time of the authors, and apparently down to our time, will come to an end in 7000 AM (i. e. *Anno mundi* or since the creation of this world), which corresponds to 1500 E. C. (= 1508 A. D.)⁶⁹; at this time an angel will bind Satan for a thousand years (Rev. 20, 1), and the reign of Christ with his elect will commence and is to last through the period of the imprisonment of Satan, hence the one thousand years of the Banquet on Mount Zion; this is the doctrine of Millenarism held by St. Irenaeus but rejected by most of the Fathers. The Banquet on Mount Zion will be preceded by the reign of the Anti-Christ (I Jn. 2, 18) and will be succeeded by the New Heaven and the New Earth (Rev. 21, 1). The wicked ruler, the Anti-Christ, is not called in Gə‘əz *zärä-Krəstos* or *zärä-Mäsiḥ* but *Ḥassawi Mäsiḥ* “False Messiah”.

Many good theologians apparently became ‘*ələwan*, “heretics”, by refusing to accept this theory of world history. They, too, were called *Ayhud* “Jews”, like the Ἐστίφανοσιτες⁷⁰. In the few references that he makes to the Ἐστίφανοσιτες in his writings, the *Aṣe* does not indict them expressly for opposing this interpretation of *Məsaḥ bä-Däbrä Ṣəyon*, but it is very clear from their *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw* that they were among those whom he condemned for this “heresy”. For them, the *Məsaḥ bä-Däbrä Ṣəyon* began for the righteous on the day of salvation and will continue until the real end of the world, which no one knows, not even the Son⁷¹. The other title of the *Aṣe*, *Mäsiḥ*⁷², and the period of his reign, which preceded – according to his own compilation of the calendar – the Banquet on Mount Zion, may have tempted the Ἐστίφανοσιτες into calling their enemy, Zār’a Ya‘əqob, the *Ḥassawi Mäsiḥ*, the Anti-Christ!⁷³

67 Wendt 1963: 31–34; Beylot 1974: 31–43.

68 See his treatise against Bitu, the reading for the feast of *Däbrä Zäyt*, “Transfiguration”, tr., Conti Rossini 1943: 39–53. *Rətu‘a Haymanot*, another teacher who lived in the fourteenth century, was convinced that there were only one hundred seventy-five years from the time he wrote one of his homilies to the time of the Banquet, Getatchew Haile 1981c: 109 ff.

69 The year 7000 AM is arrived at by adding 1500 years to 5500 AM, the time of the Birth of Our Lord; and 1500 years is the interpretation of the 150 years found in the declaration of Our Lord to his disciples in the *Mäṣəḥafä Kidan: Amä 100 wä-50 ‘am əm-amä täfäṣṣämä ma‘əkälä Päntäq wäste wä-Ḥasika yəkäwwən məṣ‘atu lä-Abuyä*, “When the one hundred fifty years between Pentecost and Pasch are completed, the coming of my Father will come to pass”, EMMI 2358, f. 47 r, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMMI VI, 1982: 417–19. See also Guerrier and Grébaud 1913: 199.

70 Conti Rossini 1965: 48; Wendt 1962: 95–6. The last time that this accusation was heard was in the *Mäṣəḥafä Kidana* of Lake Tana, which was composed during the reign of Ἐskəndər who lived close to the end of the 7000 years of 7000 AM., Conti Rossini 1910b: 597. Na’od (1494–1508) died, drowned in the river of Ayrarra, only a few days before the beginning of the *Məsaḥ bä-Däbrä Ṣəyon* and his successor, Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508–1540), who died as a fugitive, may not have enjoyed any banquet. The teaching of the *Məsaḥ bä-Däbrä Ṣəyon* has not been abandoned by the Church today, but she does not give a precise date for it as Zār’a Ya‘əqob did.

71 *Wä-bä‘əntä-hi Däbrä Ṣəyon, yə‘əze-hi halläwä lä-gäbarəyan (sic) ṣədq wä-däḥari-ni yə mässə‘ lä-gäbarəyan (sic) ṣədq*, “As for (the Banquet on) Mount Zion, it is there now for workers of righteousness; later, too, it shall come for workers of righteousness”, *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 69 v.

72 Perruchon 1893: 3.

73 *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw*, f. 69 v. The introduction of the *Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw* includes a quotation

XVI

It seems proper to write a few lines on the question of the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday⁷⁴. It is commonly accepted that this was a tenet of the Ewostatewosites. This is possibly because Zär'a Ya'əqob has put it this way⁷⁵. For a Church, like that of Ethiopia, which makes the pseudo-Apostolic writings the central basis of its authority, the heretics should be those who do not observe Saturday⁷⁶. The Ewostatewosites, the Zär'a Ya'əqobites and, as we saw earlier, the Ǝstifanosites were all observers of Saturday. It is more than probable that *Abunä Tāklä Haymanot* of Shoa, too, was a religious leader who kept the Sabbath. *Abunä Qāwəstos*, a cousin and a disciple of *Abunä Tāklä Haymanot*, was, according to his *gädl*, a staunch observer of Saturday⁷⁷. *Abba Giyorgis zä-Gasəçça* has commented on each of the Ten Commandments for the purpose of showing that keeping the seventh day is one of them, so that no man has the authority to abolish it⁷⁸. There is no indication that *Abba Giyorgis* was a new convert to the observance of the "Jewish" Sabbath. According to its own homiliary, the monastery of Ḥayq Ǝstifanos, where *Giyorgis* spent his formative years, must have been among those that observed the Sabbath in the fourteenth century⁷⁹, just like *Däbrä Maryam* and *Däbrä Bizän*.

Now, who were those who were not observing the Sabbath, and against whose erroneous practice *Aše Zär'a Ya'əqob* devoted a substantial part of his writings? In a twentieth century copy of *Gädlä Abba Eləyas*, the heretics are called *Kahnatä Agämin* "the Priests of Agämin", who based their teaching on the Book of Judgment by *Yoḥannəs*, *Məsəḥafä Yoḥannəs zä-Fəth*, which says, "Observe not the Sabbath like the Jews"⁸⁰. But these may have been heretics of a later date. However, if the *Aše* represented the established Church, he was writing against "heretics". And the "heresy" must have been introduced by the metropolitans who came from Egypt, the country of Bishop *Sawirus*, who disapproved of the

from Revelation 20, 4, referring to their persecutor as the beast who demanded to be worshipped and who insisted that his subjects carry his sign or mark upon their foreheads, *ibid.*, f 23 r). Zär'a Ya'əqob had, indeed, demanded these, Perruchon 1893: 6.

74 The theme has interested many writers including Dillmann 1885: 45–50; Ullendorff 1956: 216–56; 1968: 109–13; Hammerschmidt 1963; Tadesse Tamrat 1972: 209–31.

75 Conti Rossini 1965: 145–57.

76 As others, including Zär'a Ya'əqob and, before him, *Giyorgis* of *Gasəçça*, have indicated, the *Sinodos*, the Ethiopic version of the *Synodicon*, and the *Didəsqəlaya*, the Ethiopic version of the *Didascalia*, have articles reaffirming the commandment of the Old Testament (including the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Kufale*), that one should keep the Sabbath. See also Conti Rossini 1903: 112–114.

77 EMLL 1513, pp. 49–52, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMLL V, 1981: 4.

78 See his Homily on the Ten Commandments in his *Məsəḥafä Məstir* (the Reading for Easter Saturday), e. g. EMLL 1831, ff. 139 v–157 v, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMLL V, 1981: 289; Tadesse Tamrat 1972: 224. One of the manuscripts of his *Sə'atat*, "Book of the Hours", has a lengthy introduction to the prayers of Saturday dealing with the importance of observing Saturday as commanded by God, EMLL 204, ff. 106 r–110 v, Macomber, EMLL I, 1975: 215.

79 "Homily of *Rətu'ca Haymanot* on the importance of observing the two Sabbaths", EMLL 1763, ff. 37 v–48 v, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMLL V, 1981: 219; Codex Borg. Aeth. 2, ff. 177 r–185 v, Grébaud and Tisserant 1935: 775.

80 EMLL 1126, f. 60r, Getatchew Haile, EMLL IV, 1979: 32. Judging from the quotation, the "Book of Judgement" is, of course, the *Fətha Nəgəst*, chapter [anqas] 19, Guidi 1897: 133. According to the History of the Galla and the Vision of *Nəgus Ləbnä Dəngəl*, EMLL 80, f. 27rv, *Yoḥannəs* was the man who brought the *Fətha Nəgəst* to Ethiopia, to Zär'a Ya'əqob. Two Egyptians (Copts) from the episcopal residence in Bärara, *Yoḥannəs* and *Fädlällä*, are reported to have attended an ecclesiastical council convoked by Zär'a Ya'əqob (see Appendix I, nn. 3 and 5). It seems that these sources deal with the same *Yoḥannəs*. For a brief description of EMLL 80, see Macomber, EMLL I, 1975: 84.

Jewish customs observed in the Church of Ethiopia⁸¹. The letter of *Abba* Mika'el and *Abba* Gabr'el on the question indicates that their predecessors, *Abba* Bärtalomewos, and, before him, *Abba* Sälama, had resisted pressure to observe Saturday⁸². The pressure must have been to reinstate the custom rather than to introduce it anew. The statement allegedly made by *Aše Zär'a Ya'əqob* to Metropolitan Gabr'el, "Do we not know the heresy (*'əlwat*) of the Egyptians? You never knew the honoring of the Sabbaths, but only when we taught you"⁸³, may contain some truth in it.

XVII

As Taddesse Tamrat has noted, the turn of the century (1499–1508) was "a turning point in the history of the movement"⁸⁴ of the Ǝstifanosites. But the history was made, not because the Ǝstifanosites submitted to pressure so as to compromise what their predecessors since Abäkäräzun had not, but because they were favorably treated by the royal court on account of *Abba* Ǝzra, who successfully defended their case before Ǝskändär (1478–1494). The absence of confrontation between them and their opponents clearly led to a relaxation of tension and a stagnation in the movement, to such an extent that they were completely absorbed by the mother Church, even accepting *g^wəlt* "land grant", which they had abhorred at the beginning of their movement⁸⁵. The cult of Mary, on the other hand, continued with more miracles⁸⁶ and probably more holy days⁸⁷ added to the many others that were already well established. The *Sä'atat* of *Abba* Giyorgis replaced the *Sä'atat zä-Gəbəs*, or the Coptic *Horologium*, despite opposition, even from important monasteries⁸⁸. In the course of the history of the Church the question became no longer whether or not the verb *sägädä* or *sägid* should also apply to Mary, but rather whether she should be worshipped, with the verb *amläkä*, with her Son. The expression, *Nə'u nəsgəd wa-nəgnäy latti*, "Come, let us prostrate ourselves and submit to her"⁸⁹, found in the second (and well developed) supplication for the reading of her miracles, the *Mästäbq^wə' lä-Nəgästä k^wəllənä*, was accepted by all churches and monasteries, but what followed this sentence in the same supplication, *Latti yədällu kəbr wä-səbhat wä-məslä Wälda amləko wä-səgdət*, "Honor and glory for her and worship and prostration (for her), together with her Son, are meet", divided Christian Ethiopia in two. The churches from Axum to Bashlo rejected the expression *wä-məslä Wälda*, "together with her Son" and replaced it with *wä-lä-Wälda* "and for her Son", while those in Gojjam accepted it as is. As an unedited letter of Patriarch Cyril V (1854–1861) to the Christians in

81 See Taddesse Tamrat 1972: 209.

82 Getatchew Haile 1981a: 120; Conti Rossini 1903: 120.

83 See n. 46.

84 Taddesse Tamrat 1966: 115.

85 *Gädlä Abba Eləyas*, EMLL 1126, f. 42 rv, Getatchew Haile, EMLL IV, 1979: 32.

86 EMLL 1601, nos. 567 and 568, Getatchew Haile and Macomber, EMLL V, 1981: 86.

87 Cerulli 1933: 104–5.

88 Getatchew Haile forthcoming a. Although the original *Sä'atat* of *Abba* Giyorgis may not have had as many hymns for the Blessed Virgin as the current versions ascribed to him have, it certainly extols her more than the Coptic *Horologium*. EMLL 204, a microfilm of the *Sä'atat* of *Abba* Giyorgis copied from a fifteenth century manuscript, uses the verb *sägäd* or *sägid* for the Blessed Virgin, but it does not have the supplication for the reading of her miracles (see next note) as the present day versions of the *Sä'atat* have. For the description of EMLL 204 see Macomber, EMLL I, 1975: 215.

89 *Mäšəhafä Sä'atat* 1952 E. C.: 149; *Mäšəhafä Qəddase* 1950 E. C.: 191.

'This is the Holy Spirit'. (As for) us monks, however, he hates us and calls us 'vow breakers.'" . . . (f. 66r) . . . Then that Abäskiron, who was clothed with outrage – earlier, he had separated two (of) the brothers from their friends, taken them to a desert place and given orders that they be beaten there; they beat them severely with a club and tortured them to such an extent that they completed (their combat) through the torture – became intoxicated with wrath at that time. He ground his teeth and said to them, "Curse your teacher (Ḥstifanos) and call him unclean!"⁶ Then one of the brothers, whose name was Pawlos, raised his voice and said, "Listen, people! The beginning of good deeds is belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and its end is the rejection of this world". When he had said this, one of the delegates stood up in a rage and strangled him (f. 66v) saying, "Who asked you to say this, instead of cursing your teacher and calling (him) unclean?" Then one brother said, "Our teacher is not unclean, but a saint and a fulfiller of the law." He strangled him, too. Then all the saints [i. e. the Ḥstifanosite monks] said, "Ḥstifanos is a saint; (he is) a saint; (he is) a saint!" At this time they rose up against them in wrath and beat them. The Saints [i. e. the Ḥstifanosite monks] cried out saying, "Christ! Christ! Christ! Help us!" Having said this, they fell to the ground. (Their opponents) stepped on them and beat them severely like sheaves on the threshing floor. They stripped them of their clothes, their (monastic) caps, their underwear, the *ma'ätäb* [i. e. the sign of Christianity] on their necks and the crosses in their hands and also their girdles and their (walking) staves. They left nothing save for a piece of the *askema*. (The delegates) then said to the Metropolitan, "Now, excommunicate (them) as the King has commanded you!" He refused them. The Metropolitan's colleague [lit. "brother"], too, the elder, *Abba* Mika'el, was there, for he had been Metropolitan for a longer time⁷. On that day they brought him, carrying him to hear the case. When (f. 67r) he heard their position, it pleased him and he liked their Orthodox Faith. He advised his colleague [lit. "brother"] saying, "It is better for you that you die rather with them." Then one of the servants of the Metropolitan stood up and raised him up, holding his hand. The name of the servant was Däbrä Şeyon. He said (in the name of the Metropolitan), "We have stripped these monks of their priesthood and their monasticism. Receive them not neither for bread nor water. Let whoever receives them be anathema." The Metropolitan, however, said, "I did not say so, nor have I excommunicated (them) but Däbrä Şeyon said (so)." The Metropolitan, *Abba* Gäbr'el, used to love the saints [i. e. Ḥstifanosite monks] and receive them. He would not shrink even from death (for their cause) according to the word(s) of the Gospel, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁸ From that time on, the King held a grudge against the Metropolitan until the day of his [i. e. the Metropolitan's] death. He used to coerce him in everything. Even the priestly liturgy he used to command him to celebrate when he was not willing. He would not leave him be even when he fell sick. For this reason the Metropolitan was in agony until he died. . .

(f. 11v) As for Abäskiron, who used to torment the saints [i. e. the Ḥstifanosite monks] in wrath, God repaid him with what was greater than what he had done by the hand of the wily one [*mästä'amami*, for: *mästä'mäyyän*, a word with which the author commonly refers to

6 The followers of *Aşe Zär'a Ya'eqob*, the representatives of the established Church, demanded from the Ḥstifanosites invariably: (1) to prostrate themselves to Mary, the Cross and the King, and (2) to denounce their teacher in such language as is used when renouncing Satan.

7 *Abba* Mika'el was apparently retired by this time.

8 Mt. 26, 41.

the *Aṣe*], who tortured him with a club of wrath and ruined his body. Women sang about him while they were pulling out his hair and pouring ashes on him and mocking him. He died an evil death⁹. Ǝṣṭifanos, too, the abbot of Simāy who was a false witness against the saints [i. e. Ǝṣṭifanosite saints at the time (of the Council in) Bārara], God repaid him with wrath. He delivered him into the hand of the wily one. They stoned him, and he died a shameful death.

Appendix II

Medicine of the *Aḥəzab* (= non-Christians),
Gädlä Abäw wä-Aḥaw, EMMML 4, ff. 57v-58r

(f. 57v) One of the dispersed brothers, who was caught at the gate of Gədəm while (attempting) to translate the relics of *Abunä* (Ǝṣṭifanos) and was imprisoned in the house of an *Arämi* [= Moslem/Heathen] in the land of Amäda and who was called Bərhanä Mäsqäl [MS: Mäsqäl] (was imprisoned) near the prisoner, the man of God, Gäbrä Maryam. While he was in prison in that house, the *Arämi* fell sick. They brought oil so that they might spit (their) spittle into it, because this is the custom of the Gentiles (*Aḥəzab*). When one of them falls sick, they bring oil and ask everyone, big or small, to spit (their) spittle into the oil, if there is one whom they suspect to be a *G^wədale*¹⁰. They ask the one they suspect to spit. The one who refuses they call *G^wədale* and beat him severely and torture him (f. 58r). They then anoint the sick man with the oil in which they spat, thinking that he will be healed by that oil. So when the *Arämi* fell sick, his people were very much worried, and they brought oil and spat (their) spittle into it. They brought the oil to the brother [i. e. the Ǝṣṭifanosite monk] and asked him, too, saying “Spit your spittle”. He asked, “What for?” They replied, “So that it may be for the healing of the sick.” He said, “I will not do (it). Our usage is not like this. This is the usage of Gentiles.” Saying this, he refused them. The *Arämi* then rose against him and beat him severely.

Appendix III

Marriage with, but no greetings for the *Arämi* [= non-Christians]
Gädlä Abäd wä-Aḥaw, EMMML 4, f. 110bis.

(f. 110bis r) Once, another governor [*mäk^wännən*] was sent by the command of the King to the region in which the saints [i. e. Ǝṣṭifanosite monks] were (banished). The community of the saints [i. e. Ǝṣṭifanosite saints] said (to themselves), “Now, what shall we do? There is suffering right and left. Let us, indeed, send to this governor and inquire about his character, whether he is good or bad. They then picked two brothers and sent (them) to him saying, “Talk to him according to what God inspires you.” As for greetings, they did not

⁹ Cf. Getatchew Haile 1980b: 217.

¹⁰ A *g^wədale* was a man possessed by an (evil) spirit that was apparently worshipped, like the Däsk, the Dino and the Ƨäfänt, Wendt 1962: 42; Strelcyn 1972: 47, “*gudale*”.

send any to (him) through them because the man was an *Arāmawi* (= Moslem/heathen)¹¹. They came to him and said to him, “We have an affair (to discuss) with you. Give orders that (your) people may leave your presence.” He said, “All right”. The people left his presence, and they told him in private their problem. He listened to them like a kind (man) because he was the (father/brother)-in-law (*ḥamuhu*) of the King¹². When they finished telling (it) to him, he gave orders that (f. 110 bis v) the dignitaries (*māk^wanānt*) gather together in his presence. (Then) he said to the saints [i. e. the ʿĪṣṭifanosite monks], “Say again what you have said (to me)”. The saints knew that he was dealing craftily with them. They said to him, “Why do you want (us to repeat) what we have already said?” He told the nobles their deeds and then gave orders that they should beat them. They beat them severely, until they thought that they were dead. He sent one brother to the King, and left the other (behind) because he could not walk. As for the (first) brother, they brought him to the King and threw him in jail; he completed his martyrdom in the peace of the Lord. May his prayer be with us. Amen and amen. Then God showed (his) revenge for the blood of his servants on that *Arāmawi* [MS: *Arāmāwi*] governor: the King sent his soldiers and they cut off his head.

Appendix IV

Medicine prohibited among Christians, *Gädlä Abāw wā-Aḥaw*,
EMML 4, ff. 44v–45v.

(f. 44 v) There was a monk who lived in the neighborhood of (the ʿĪṣṭifanosite monks in exile), whose name was Yafqərännä ʿĪgzi'. He was a physician (*bā'alā fāws*). He cut plants and dug the ground for roots [lit. “and roots”]. He (prepared) some (of them) as a potion, some as a salve and some as a spray. For this reason people liked him and received him very well (f. 45 r). . . Then (the ʿĪṣṭifanosite monks) met this monk and talked about religious matters and about abiding by the rules of the law of the New and Old Testaments. He took a liking to them and asked them to visit him. Then they came to his house and (there) they saw leaves steeped in water. They asked him, “What is this?” He answered them, “Medicine (*fāws*).” They said to him, “Why do you do (this)? Is this not vain? Our fathers, the Apostles, have said, ‘If there is anyone who comes to our law who (f. 45 v) practices

11 Greetings in Ethiopia are exchanged by invoking the name of God whose name, and by extension whose identity, is understood to be different in each religion. The God of the Christians is *ʿĪgzi'abher* while that of the Moslems is *Allah*. For Ethiopians, the difference between these deities seems to be more than linguistic. Although the wish is the same, it matters, even today, which name (or God) is invoked in a statement of greetings, such as, “May the peace of God be with you”. The answer to the question, “How are you?” is, for example, the same in both Arabic and Amharic: “Thanks to God, [I am well]”. However, the Moslem has to answer it in Arabic – *Ḥamd lilla*[<*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi*] – whether he knows Arabic or not, and the Christian in Amharic – *Zāhar māsken*[<*ʿĪgzi'abher yammāsgän*] – even if the rest of the conversation is conducted in another language. The Copts in Egypt have not been able to keep their language alive so as to indulge in this kind of peculiarities, but it is interesting to note that they prefer, *Aš-šukru lillāhi*, to, *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi*, which they consider Islamic.

12 Although it is commonly used for father-in-law, as in John 18, 23, the word *ḥam* can mean any male in-law relative. The name of the governor is not mentioned here. One is tempted, perhaps incorrectly, to identify him with *Ḥadāyya Gärrad* Mahiko, the *Aṣe*'s brother-in-law, the son of Gärrad Məhmäd, the father of ʿĪlleni, Zār'a Yaʿqob's queen of the right. His head and limbs were cut off when he attempted to revolt, Perruchon 1893: 16–21. But this source may be referring to the marriage between Salih ibn Ahmäd and the daughter of *Aṣe* Zār'a Yaʿqob, Wendt 1935: 491–2.

medicine (*sərayat*), let him either abandon (the practice) or be expelled.’ And you, as a monk, do not do (things) like this.”¹³ (This) did not please the monk¹⁴.

Appendix V

A Third Supplication for the Reading of the Miracles of Mary, translated from EMLL 2969, ff. 114v–15r, a liturgical manuscript copied between 1930 and 1950¹⁵.

We supplicate the holy tabernacle, the fountain of life,
 who bore and contained the prosphora.
 The greatness of her honor is admired
 when her miracle is read:
 The man with a corrupted heart, who ate the body of his fellow (man),
 by invoking the name of Mary,
 entered the kingdom of heaven for a handful of cold water.
 Listen and admire!
 Love the history that recalls her!
 Remember her reign!
 The one who saves all is Our Lady Mary.
 Come, let us prostrate ourselves and sing for her reign,
 she who carried and contained in her womb
 the Lord of heaven and earth, the forgiver of sin and transgression.
 Without exalting the rich
 nor despising the poor,
 Mary loves everyone who performs good deeds,
 she who is the sister of the vigilant Angels,
 the daughter of the virtuous Prophets,
 the wealth of the Apostles,
 the grace of the Righteous and the Martyrs.
 Honor and glory are meet for her,
with worship and prostration to her together with her Son,
 on earth and in heaven,
 in the sea(s) and in the abysses, for ever. Amen.

13 *Sinodos* (the Ethiopic version of the *Synodicon*), section *Täfäśśəhu wəḷudənā*, articles 28, and 62; e. g. Codex Borg. Aeth. 2, f. 17 r and ff. 39 r–40 r, respectively, described by Grébaut and Tisserant 1935: 767–8; see also the section *Səməʿon qānānaqi*, article 9, *ibid.*, f. 82 v, Grébaut and Tisserant 1935: 769.

14 When the monk refused to give up practicing medicine, the Ḥəṣṭifanosite monks turned to the public to stop this “sinful” act of seeing a doctor! When the number of his clients was drastically reduced as a result of their preaching, he reportedly revenged himself by writing to the King false accusation against them.

15 See paragraph XVI of the article.

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EMML 80 = History of the Galla and the Vision of *Nəgus Ləbnā Dəngəl*.

EMML 642 = *Tä'ammärā Maryam*.

EMML 1126 = *Gādla Abba Elāyas zā-Ḥntoṭṭo*.

EMML 1480 = *Tomarā Təsbə't* and other homilies.

EMML 1513 = *Gādla Qawəstos zā-Māhaggəl*.

EMML 1529 = *Səbhatā Fəqur*.

EMML 1601 = A list of Gə'əz (and some Amharic) books.

EMML 1606 = *Tä'ammärā Maryam*.

EMML 1763 = Homiliary for the year.

EMML 1831 = *Məṣəhafa Məstir* by Abba Giyorgis of Saglā.

- EMML 1835 = Homiliary in honor of the angels.
 EMML 2358 = *Mäs hafä Kidan* or the Ethiopic version of the Testament of Our Lord.
 EMML 2965 = Four Gospels and a copy of an Amharic version of a letter of Patriarch Cyril IV (1854–1861), concerning the anointing and the number of births of Our Lord, addressed to the clergy and population of Yäggu (Wallo).
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