The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609–1641): Latin Letters in Translation

Translated by
Jessica Wright and Leon Grek

Edited by
Wendy Laura Belcher

Aethiopistische Forschungen 84

Harrassowitz Verlag

Aethiopistische Forschungen
Band 84

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Aethiopistische Forschungen

Begründet von

Ernst Hammerschmidt

Fortgeführt von

Siegbert Uhlig

Herausgegeben von

Alessandro Bausi

Band 84

2017

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609–1641): Latin Letters in Translation

Translated by
Jessica Wright and Leon Grek

Edited by
Wendy Laura Belcher

Introduced by
Leonardo Cohen

2017

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Titelvignette: Adelheid Kordes

The Princeton University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (UCRHSS), as well as the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of African American Studies, provided generous funding for this project. With special thanks to Professor Eileen Reeves, chair of the Department of Comparative Literature, for emergency graduate student assistance funding.

Source: *The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609–1641): Latin Letters in Translation* constitutes the first English translation of Latin letters relating to the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia found in volumes 11–13 (*Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, published 1911–1913) of Camillo Beccari's monumental fifteen-volume *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX* (1903–1917).

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.dnb.de abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

For further information about our publishing program consult our website http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de

© Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden 2017
This work, including all of its parts, is protected by copyright. Any use beyond the limits of copyright law without the permission of the publisher is forbidden and subject to penalty. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.
Printed on permanent/durable paper.
Typesetting and Layout: William Morosi
Copy editing: Cathy Slovensky
Printing and binding: Memminger MedienCentrum AG
Printed in Germany

ISSN 0170-3196
ISBN 978-3-447-10879-9
e-ISBN PDF 978-3-447-19692-5

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Contents

Abbreviations ix
Chronology x
Preface by Wendy Laura Belcher xi
Introduction to the Text by Leonardo Cohen 1
A History of the Catholic Mission in Ethiopia (1557–1632) 1
Jesuit Texts about Ethiopia 3
Latin and the Jesuits 4
Exporting the Counter-Reformation 5
The Conversion of Noblemen: The Case of Śəᶜəlä Krəstos and Susənyos 7
The Conversion of Noblewomen 11
The Defeat of Catholicism 14
The Reasons for the Defeat of Catholicism 17
Was Mendes Responsible for the Defeat of Catholicism? 19
The Capuchins and the Mission's Project in Ethiopia 26
Under the Crown of Martyrdom 28
Conclusion 30
Introduction to the Translation by Leon Grek and Jessica Wright 31
Text 31
Syntax and Style 31
Pronouns and Articles 32
First-Person Plural Pronouns 32
Punctuation 32
Paragraphs 32
Personal Names 32
Place-names 33
Technical Terms 33
Biblical Quotations 33
Annotation 33

The Translation of Selected Latin Letters by Jessica Wright and Leon Grek 35
01LLOJ Anonymous Description of the Ethiopian Empire [1533]
Regarding what the Jesuits knew about Ethiopia when they arrived in the sixteenth century 36

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

02LLOJ Excerpts from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1609
Regarding rebellion and hardship in Abyssinia, the support of the emperor, virtues that please the Abyssinians 40

03LLOJ Father Pedro Páez to Father Nicolas Pimenta, Visitor of the Indies [. . . 1610]
Regarding conflict with the Turks, good relations with Sella Christos, Páez the teacher, expedition against the Oromo 45

04LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1611
Regarding the Jesuits' success with the imperial family, civil conflict, anecdotes about local women as Catholics or heathens 54

05LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1612
Regarding the Jesuits' success, including the conversion of women; conflict with the Oromo 60

06LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1613
Regarding the Jesuits' success, including doctrinal influence on the two natures of Christ and other matters 75

07LLOJ Excerpts from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1615
Regarding monastic conflict and imperial conflict: plots, women, and war 92

08LLOJ Excerpts from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1618
Regarding Ethiopia as in a wretched state, conflict over imperial Roman Catholicism, plots against them; description of the seminary in Gorgora, including an exemplary Portuguese woman 100

09LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 1622
Regarding the life of Pedro Páez 111

10LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, Father Ioannes da Silva, 1623
Regarding new fathers sent to Ethiopia, the great danger from local Muslims, the death of Franciscus Antonius de Angelis 113

11LLOJ Father Aymar Guerin to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Cairo, 14 September 1627
Regarding the author being prevented from performing sacred duties while traveling 115

12LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Dänqäz, 1 June 1629
Regarding the difficulties of the mission; Mendes compares himself to ancient martyrs 118

13LLOJ Father Bruno Bruni to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Ethiopia, 30 June 1629
Regarding miracles, the cure of a royal woman, conversion of the imperial granddaughter 137

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

14LLOJ Father Mendes to the Roman Pontiff, Däbsan, 8 July 1629
Regarding Tacla and his sister killing a Jesuit attached to the imperial house 142

15LLOJ Father Nicolaus de Fenal to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Luanda, 23 May 1630
Regarding Nicolaus having a place in the king's house 144

16LLOJ Urban VIII to Fasilädäs, Son of the Emperor of Ethiopia, Rome, 28 November 1630
Exhorting Fasiladas to not rest until all of Abyssinia is Roman Catholic 145

17LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to the Roman Pontiff, Fremona, 11 May 1633
Regarding the disintegration of the Ethiopian Catholic church, gossip about Fasilädäs and his wife 146

18LLOJ Excerpts from the Annual Letter of the Province of Goa, 5 February 1635
Regarding conflict between those loyal to the national religion and those loyal to the Roman Catholic Pope, heretical monks and rebellion, religious violence, an anecdote about the imperial daughter Zadanguil and Catholic woman 153

19LLOJ Father Bruno Bruni to the Jesuit Priests of the Province of Goa [From Seraoê, where he was in hiding], 17 July 1635
Regarding the Jesuit martyrs and the imperial perpetrators 165

20LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Goa, 22 February 1637
Regarding military aid and the dangers to the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia 168

21LLOJ Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to Patriarch Mendes, Rome, 12 September 1637
Regarding consolation for the martyrs, refusing the request for military aid 170

22LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Goa, 11 November 1638
Regarding the false rumors about conflicts between the Ethiopian princes and the Jesuits on the account of nationality 172

23LLOJ Decree of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Rome, 17 January 1639
Regarding helping the Jesuits 177

24LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to Pope Urban VIII, Goa, 10 October 1639
Regarding martyrs and imperial perpetrators, the emperor being persuaded to persecute Jesuits to prove his Ethiopian faith 178

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

25LLOJ Patriarch Mendes to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Goa, 7 December 1639
Regarding the martyr narrative 181

26LLOJ Report of Father Brother Manoel de Asunção, of the Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Regarding the Causes of the Expulsion of the Jesuits from Ethiopia
Regarding the expulsion of the Jesuits from Ethiopia and the accumulation of their possessions 183

27LLOJ Summary of the Acts in the Meeting Held for the Ethiopian Mission by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Rome, 3 May 1640
Regarding dissension between the missionaries causing trouble 186

28LLOJ Father Brother Antonio da Virgoletta to the Rector of the College of Diu, S. I., Suakin, late June 1640
Regarding that martyrdom is not the result of royal cruelty but of competition between the bishops 187

29LLOJ Excerpt from the Annual Letter from the Province of Goa, 3 January 1641
Regarding martyr narratives, how King Fasilädäs lures them out 189

30LLOJ The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to Patriarch Mendes, 1641
Regarding consolation on the martyrdom, hope they will help the mission 191

Glossary of People, Places, and Terms in the Latin Letters of the Jesuits
by Emily Dalton and Wendy Laura Belcher 193

Index 261

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Abbreviations

BecRASO. The fifteen-volume Beccari series (*Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*), collecting in one place the materials written by the Jesuits about Ethiopia. The letters we have translated were taken from three of the five volumes in his series devoted to letters and reports, volumes 11–13, entitled *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum* (Beccari 1911, 1912, 1913).

EAE. The five-volume *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, the best authority in Ethiopian studies (Uhlig 2003, 2005, 2007; Uhlig and Bausi 2010; Bausi and Uhlig 2014).

I.A. *Index Analyticus Totius Operis*, the index of the Beccari series (vol. 17 in BecRASO [1917]).

LLOJ. The letters in this volume that we have translated from volumes 11–13 in BecRASO. For instance, 06LLOJ means the sixth letter translated in this volume.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Chronology

1515 Roman Catholic priest Francisco Alvares sent on a mission to Ethiopia by Portuguese king Manoel I; he arrived in 1520.
1520 Capuchin Order is founded.
1529 Muslim invasion of Ethiopia by Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ġāzī begins.
1534 Jesuit Order is founded; approved by the pope in 1540.
1540 End of the Ethiopian emperor Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign.
1541 Portuguese military commander Christovão da Gama comes to Ethiopia with four hundred Portuguese musketeers to fight the Muslim invasion.
1542 Aḥmad kills Christovão da Gama.
1543 Ethiopian emperor Gälawdewos, with Portuguese aid, kills Aḥmad in battle.
1557 Jesuits arrive in Ethiopia.
1560s Jesuits move to Fremona in Təgray and live there off and on until 1651.
1563 Beginning of the Ethiopian emperor Śärṣ́ä Dəngəl's reign.
1595 Jesuit priest François Abraham de Georgiis is martyred at Məṣəwwaᶜ.
1597 End of the Ethiopian emperor Śärṣ́ä Dəngəl's reign.
1603 Beginning of the Ethiopian emperor Zä-Dəngəl's reign, ending 1604.
1603 Jesuit missionary Pedro Páez arrives in Ethiopia.
1607 End of the Ethiopian emperor Yaᶜəqob I's reign.
1607 Susənyos becomes king.
1612 Páez converts King Susənyos and his brother, *Ras* Śəᶜəlä Krəstos.
1617 Battle against Yolyos, an anti-Catholic rebel, happens 11 May.
1621 King Susənyos forbids the teaching of Ethiopian Orthodoxy and publicly professes Roman Catholicism.
1622 Pedro Páez dies.
1624 Francisco Machado and Bernard Pereira are martyred in Zaylaᶜ.
1625 Afonso Mendes arrives in Ethiopia and Roman Catholicism becomes stricter.
1628 Rebellion led by Täklä Giyorgis happens.
1632 King Susənyos rescinds the edict forcing conversion to Roman Catholicism.
1632 King Susənyos dies on 10 Mäskäräm (17 September) and his son Fasilädäs becomes king.
1633 Fasilädäs banishes the Jesuits.
1635 Jesuit priests Gaspar Paes and João Pereira are martyred in Təgray.
1636 *Abunä* Marqos is installed as patriarch of the Täwaḥədo Church.
1637 The Catholic priest Eustachios, the noble Zä-Ḥawaryat, António Pessoa, and the Capuchin missionaries Agathangelus and Cassianus, as well as Apolinar de Almeida, Hyacinth Franceschi, and Franciso Rodriguez, are hanged by Fasilädäs and thus martyred.
1638 Capuchin missionaries Franciscus and Cherubino are killed at Brava, before entering Ethiopia, and more than a dozen Ethiopian Catholics are killed, along with the emperor's former chronicler, Täklä Śəllasse.
1640 Luis Cardeira and Bruno Bruni are martyred; the Jesuits Damião Calaça, Antonius Almeida, and António de Andrade attempt to enter Ethiopia but are unsuccessful.
1641 No Catholic priests are left in Ethiopia, having all been banished or lynched.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Preface by Wendy Laura Belcher

The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609–1641): Latin Letters in Translation constitutes the first English translation of Latin letters relating to the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia found in volumes 11–13 (*Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, published 1911–1913) of Camillo Beccari's monumental series *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*.[1] Covering a period beginning shortly after the accession of Emperor Susənyos, who would convert to Catholicism in 1612 and declare Roman Catholicism the religion of Ethiopia in 1621, to the ejection of the Jesuits by Susənyos's son Fasilädäs in 1633 and the suppression of the mission in the course of the following decade, the letters document a fascinating encounter between African and European civilization, and between Western Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Christianity. Included among the volume's selection of thirty letters are extracts from the annual reports sent from the Jesuit province of Goa, under whose auspices the Ethiopian mission was conducted, to Jesuit authorities in Rome; an early letter from Pedro Páez, the highly effective head of the Jesuit mission from 1603 to 1622, to Nicolas Pimenta, the Jesuit Visitor of the Indies; a 1630 letter from Pope Urban VIII addressed to Crown Prince Fasilädäs; extensive correspondence between Afonso Mendes, Catholic patriarch of Ethiopia from 1623–1632, and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide), founded in Rome in 1622 to oversee the global missionary activities of the Catholic Church; and two letters of Bruno Bruni, one of the eight Jesuit "Martyrs of Ethiopia" and, at the time of his death, one of the last two Jesuit priests remaining in the country. As well as providing detailed accounts of theological, political, and educational activities of the Jesuit mission, the letters provide important insight into foreign and domestic threats to the stability of the Ethiopian state during this period, including the continuing Oromo migrations and repeated aristocratic rebellions, and into the significant role played by Ethiopian aristocratic and royal women in resisting the imposition of Western Catholicism.

Beyond the intrinsic historical interest of the material, the English translations of the Latin letters of the Jesuits also meet a distinct scholarly need. As Leonardo Cohen and Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner observe in "The Jesuit Mission to Ethiopia (16th–17th Centuries): An Analytical Bibliography" (*Aethiopica* 9 [2006]: 190–212), scholarly interest in the Jesuit mission has increased dramatically in the last twenty-five years. Recent years have also seen the publication in English translation of Jerónimo Lobo's *Itinerário* (Hakluyt Society, 1984), Manoel Barradas's *Tractatus Tres Historico-Geographici* (Harrassowitz, 1996), and Pedro Páez's 1622 *History of Ethiopia* (Hakluyt Society, 2011). Yet much of the official correspondence between the missionaries and the Jesuit and ecclesiastical authorities in Goa and Rome remains inaccessible to the Latin-less reader, including many scholars of Ethiopian and African studies. Particularly significant in this regard are the letters of Patriarch Mendes, who, unlike many of his peers, conducted his correspondence mostly in Latin. Mendes is a crucial figure in the early modern history of European-Ethiopian interaction. His intolerance of Ethiopian

1 Camillo Beccari, ed., *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*, 15 vols. (Rome: Printed for C. de Luigi, 1903–1917); hereafter referred to as BecRASO followed by date of publication, volume, and page number.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

religious practices is widely believed to have contributed to the failure of the Jesuit mission, and he is a particularly important source for Ethiopian women's resistance to Catholicism. Our translations, therefore, should play an important role in bringing Mendes's writings to the attention of a wider scholarly audience for the first time.

The English translations in *The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609–1641): Latin Letters in Translation* aim to remain as close to the original Latin as readability and English idiom permit. We number each text differently than Beccari; for instance, the second Latin Letter of the Jesuits (LLOJ) is given as 02LLOJ in this volume. Notes accompanying the translation explain the Latin terminology used by the Jesuits for Ethiopian secular and religious officials. Names of people and places have been translated into the appropriate modern vernacular for ease of further research. The translations are accompanied by a substantial historical introduction by Leonardo Cohen, author of *The Missionary Strategies of the Jesuits in Ethiopia* (Harrassowitz, 2009), and an extensive glossary of people, places, and terms referred to in the letters. The volume as a whole should be a valuable resource for readers with or without access to the letters in the original Latin, and to scholars of Ethiopian history, African studies, colonial and postcolonial studies, and Jesuit and missionary history.

History of the Translation

In 2011, my friend and colleague Janet Downie, a professor of classics, introduced me to Jessica Wright, then a graduate student in Princeton's Department of Classics. Wright and I agreed that she would survey the documents in Beccari's volumes of letters in order to identify letters that had strong historical value and/or provided more information on Ethiopian noblewomen. After consulting and selecting thirty documents, she began translating these documents for me, working throughout her degree with remarkable steadfastness on what was very much a side project for her. Very few have such skills in persistence. When she had completed a draft, she invited Leon Grek, then a graduate student in the Princeton Department of Comparative Literature, to join us as an expert on the Latin of this period, and he worked with her to finalize the translation. He also wrote the first draft of the "Introduction to the Translation" and wrote the overview of the contributions of this volume that begins this very preface. I then asked Leonardo Cohen, now a professor in the Department of Middle East and African Studies at Ben-Gurion University and one of the foremost experts on the Jesuits in Ethiopia, to write an introduction, placing the letters in the larger context of the mission. Then, another graduate student in the Princeton Department of Comparative Literature, Emily Dalton, assisted me with writing the glossary, along with some help from Meseret G. Oldjira, a graduate student in the Princeton Department of Art and Archaeology, and Jill Jarvis, then also a graduate student in the Princeton Department of Comparative Literature.

Noble Ethiopian Women in the Letters

My aim in commissioning this translation was to provide better access to texts on remarkable early modern African women, who were intellectually and politically active

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

in the history of their nations. The letters in this volume do much to illuminate such women's lives in Ethiopia. They document that Ethiopian women were part of leading their people to resist early European protocolonialism, refusing to convert to Roman Catholicism from Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity when the Jesuits were in Ethiopia from 1557 to 1653. Of course, European men wrote these Latin letters, and they did not admire these resistant women—indeed, the Portuguese texts negatively portray them as "diabólica" (diabolical women)—but without their reports, we would know almost nothing about these women.

The twentieth-century Portuguese editor of one of these texts, Father M. Gonçalves da Costa, was the first scholar to point out, in 1971, that the Ethiopian royal women seemed to have played a particularly important role in the Portuguese accounts.[2] Undoubtedly, the new religion that Emperor Susənyos embraced estranged him from most of the women in his life: his mother rebuked him, his senior wife left him, his beloved niece gave land to shelter anti-Catholic resisters, two of his sisters mocked him, and two of his daughters participated in anti-Catholic rebellions against him.

To understand these women's motivations and character, it is essential to read these European texts along with the Ethiopian texts, which positively portray these same women as "qəddusat" (female saints). In my article "Sisters Debating the Jesuits: The Role of African Women in Defeating Portuguese Proto-Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Abyssinia," I compare the Ethiopian and European sources to illuminate the lives of some of these extraordinary women, some of whom converted, some of whom didn't. I will reprise some of that here, regarding the Ethiopian noblewomen who appear in this volume (for full documentation on which information appeared in which sources, please see that article). Many nameless women fill the pages of the Jesuits' letters, making it difficult to build accurate pictures of them. A few do appear with their names, however.

One of the women who appears frequently in the Jesuits' texts, including the letter in this volume from Mendes to the superior general of the Society of Jesus on 1 June 1629 (12LLOJ), is Adära Maryam, the sister of the emperor's son-in-law Täklä Giyorgis. Täklä Giyorgis is a fascinating figure in his own right—a member of the royal court who converted to Roman Catholicism but then returned to the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church and led a failed rebellion against Susənyos in 1628. Apparently, Adära Maryam was not merely "a partner in the conspiracy" but "instigator of her brother's desertion" (12LLOJ). Her role in leading the bloody rebellion is so significant that she is executed. When the emperor condemned her to death, all of the royal women turned out in force to protest this barbarous act of executing a woman. Mendes, Manoel de Almeida, and *Abba* Gorgoryos, an informant for Hiob Ludolf's history, reported at length on the women's protests. According to Gorgoryos, all begged the emperor to spare Adära Maryam's life and remonstrated against being forced to watch her execution:

2 M. Gonçalves da Costa, "Introdução," in *Itinerário e Outros Escritos Inéditos* (Porto: Civilização, 1971), 40, 49. He was a learned Jesuit priest who found the original manuscript of Lobo's account and published a fine edition of it in Portuguese, including many notes about Wängelawit from Mendes's and Barradas's accounts in their works *Expeditionis Aethiopicae Liber* (vols. 8 and 9 in BecRASO) and *Tractatus Tres Historico-Geographici* (vol. 4 in BecRASO), respectively.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

> Nor could all the Intercessions of the Queen, nor of all the Noble Ladies could prevail, tho they pleaded hard the disgrace done to their Sex, and that it was never before known in *Ethiopia*, that a Noblewoman was Hang'd: especially being call'd by the King to behold so sad and infamous a Spectacle.[3]

According to Mendes, the emperor responded to their protest with chilling words and a curt fable:

> There was an old person who, whenever she heard that some child had died, responded indifferently: "children are soft and delicate and the slightest breath could knock them down, so it is no wonder if the child has died." When she was told that a youth had been carried off in his prime, she responded: "youths are bold and rash, perhaps this one brought on his own death." If, however, she heard that an old person had crossed over to Libytina, she struck her head with her hands, covered her hair, and scraped her cheeks with her nails, saying: "alas world, alas children, alas adolescents. All is lost: for mind, intelligence, and good counsel belong only to the old." Just so, you have heard that the companions of Tecla Gueorgu are dead, and you have seen him hung, and you have remained silent; now, when it is a matter of the hanging of a woman, you murmur and shout and make a commotion. Know, therefore, that the thong that bound the feet of the Abbot Jacob is enough for that little pig ([he] spoke of her that way on account of her uncouth obesity) and for those like her who ought to be hung.[4]

Another woman who appears in the Jesuits' texts is Wängelawit (Evangeline in English), mentioned by role, not by name, in the same letter in this volume (12LLOJ) and also Mendes's letter to the Roman pontiff on 11 May 1633 (17LLOJ). She was the emperor's eldest daughter and the rebel Täklä Giyorgis's wife. Barradas, Almeida, Lobo, and Mendes repeatedly discuss her.[5] Indeed, Mendes devotes more than a dozen pages to her, stating that Wängelawit is the "principal figura nesta tragédia" (principal figure in this tragedy); that is, the tragedy of the Jesuits' failure in Ethiopia.[6] Almeida's antipathy is such that he suggests her name should really have been "Satanawit."[7] He calls her "a

3 Hiob Ludolf, *A New History of Ethiopia: Being a Full and Accurate Description of the Kingdom of Abessinia, Vulgarly, Though Erroneously Called the Empire of Prester John*, trans. J. P. Gent (London: Samuel Smith Booksellers, 1682), 343.

4 Afonso Mendes, *Expeditionis Aethiopicae Liber*, BecRASO (1908), 8:225. A similar account appears in Manoel de Almeida, *Historia Aethiopiae*, BecRASO (1908), 7:30.

5 Manuel [Manoel] Barradas, *Tractatus Tres Historico-Geographici*, BecRASO (1906), 4:46; Manoel de Almeida, *Historia Aethiopiae*, BecRASO (1907), 6:340 and BecRASO (1908), 7:7, 18, 25, 63–64, 101, 135, 169, 179, 243, 281, 318, 324; Mendes, *Expeditionis Aethiopicae Liber*, BecRASO (1908), 8:216, 286, 334–335, 337 and BecRASO (1909), 9:81, 156, 285, 335; Camillo Beccari, ed., *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1911), 11:480; Jerónimo Lobo, *The Itinerário of Jerónimo Lobo*, ed. Donald M. Lockhart, M. Gonçalves da Costa, and C. F. Beckingham, trans. Donald M. Lockhart (London: Hakluyt Society, 1983), 218–219, 225.

6 Mendes letter of 9 May 1633 from Fremona, Ethiopia, cited in da Costa, "Introdução," 49, and Camillo Beccari, ed., *Notizia e Saggi di Opere e Documenti Inediti Riguardanti la Storia di Etiopia durante I Secoli Xvi, Xvii E Xviii*, in BecRASO (1903), 1:147.

7 Almeida, *Historia Aethiopiae*, in BecRASO (1908), 7:135. Mendes also says that her name is not apt, because "non quidem Christi, sed Satanae" (not indeed of Christ but of Satan), in Mendes, *Expeditionis Aethiopicae Liber*, in BecRASO (1908), 8:216.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

mais infernal furia que Ethiopia gerou" (the most hellish fury that Ethiopia spawned).[8] The Portuguese report on much gossip about Wängelawit. One detail is that Täklä Giyorgis had been married to her sister, another daughter of the emperor, but when the sister died, Täklä Giyorgis married Wängelawit, a type of levirate practice common among the Ethiopians. Another is that Wängelawit had herself been married before; Täklä Giyorgis was her fourth husband. In fact, she had been given a special dispensation to divorce her third husband and marry Täklä Giyorgis on the false grounds of the third husband's impotence. After Täklä Giyorgis converted to Roman Catholicism, the emperor rewarded him with a significant post, the viceroy of one of Ethiopia's leading provinces, Təgray. Wängelawit refused to accompany him to his post, however, preferring to stay at court. After a trip, Täklä Giyorgis returned to court to hear reports of Wängelawit's infidelity. Lobo goes on to say that there is little that Täklä Giyorgis could do about her alleged infidelity, however, since it was considered normal behavior for the royal women. In other words, Wängelawit is identified in the Portuguese texts as the engine of the failure of Roman Catholicism because she was unfaithful to Täklä Giyorgis and he decided to punish the emperor and the Portuguese for her betrayal.

Yet another woman who appears in the Jesuits' texts is Susənyos's mother, Ḥamälmal Wärq, mentioned by role, not by name, in the Annual Letters of 1613 and 1618 (06, 08LLOJ). She was the wife of a regional governor when Susənyos's father first slept with her. It was not until after Susənyos was born that his parents were officially married. According to the scribe's account of Susənyos's reign in the *Royal Chronicle*, Susənyos was close to his mother. Páez agrees, saying that "she loved him very much as the youngest of her sons." It must have struck home, then, when she disapproved. Páez reports that when Susənyos's brother wrote saying that Susənyos "should not go ahead with the matters of faith, but that he should command everyone to follow the [Ethiopian Orthodox] patriarch's doctrine," their mother "wrote to him in the same vein," having been persuaded by Ethiopian Orthodox monks that God would punish Susənyos with death for introducing Catholicism.[9] Intriguingly, a nineteenth-century royal chronicle from Sälale includes an anecdote depicting Susənyos's mother chastising him for favoring Roman Catholicism.[10]

Some royal women seem to have converted in the early days of the Jesuits' mission, as attested by 04LLOJ, which discusses two royal women who seem to have converted. One is a nameless maternal cousin of the emperor, married to the emperor's *Baḥər Nägaš*, who invited the Jesuits to her home to attempt to convert her husband, either Yoḥannəs Akay or Gäbrä Maryam. The other is a nameless niece of the emperor, who was "extremely zealous on our behalf." It is unclear whether this is the same woman as the emperor's niece and the wife of Mäzraʾətä Krəstos, the governor of the district of Šire in Təgray. This later woman, also nameless in the Jesuits' texts, takes up more space than perhaps any other woman, with the Portuguese describing her as the greatest heretic

8 Almeida, *Historia Aethiopiae*, in BecRASO (1908), 7:243. Both also likened her to the furies of Greek mythology. For instance, Almeida called her "megera de Ethiopia" (7:281).

9 Pedro Páez, *Pedro Páez's History of Ethiopia, 1622*, trans. Christopher J. Tribe, ed. Isabel Boavida, Hervé Pennec, and Manuel João Ramos (Burlington, VT: Ashgate for the Hakluyt Society, 2011), 2:334.

10 Anonymous, "Tarikä Nägäśt (History of the Kings)," in Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: National Library), HMML Ms. 8053, folios 83v–86r.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

in the land. This "letrada" (lettered) woman debates with the Portuguese. While Lobo wrote, years later, that they were never successful in converting this woman, the Jesuit Thomas Barneto states in 1627 that they were.[11] I discuss these different interpretations, and her rhetorical brilliance, in the article "Sisters Debating the Jesuits."

Biracial Ethiopians

The letters in this volume illuminate not just the bitter struggle over religious faith in Ethiopia and the remarkable lives of noblewomen but also provide insights into the nature of slavery, which the Jesuits both supported and fought, and the lives of the many biracial Ethiopians who appear in these letters' pages, who often had conflicting allegiances. As one of the letter writers explains, many people they call "Portuguese" were indeed biracial Ethiopians.

Note on Prejudices

In these letters, the Jesuits sometimes expressed prejudiced sentiments about certain ethnic groups as well as Jews, Muslims, Ethiopian Christians, and gender. As translators and editors, we had to make decisions about whether we would sanitize the text (which would have the unfortunate effect of painting the Jesuits in a better light than they deserve) or keeping terms, phrases, and sentences that would be offensive to modern readers. We decided not to sanitize it, except in the one case where we regularly, but not always, replaced the extremely offensive ethnic term "Galla" with that ethnic group's name for themselves: Oromo. In other cases we have retained offensive terms (e.g., Kaffir). Obviously, the views of the Jesuits on these matters are not our own.

11 Thomas Barneto, letter of 12 March 1627, reproduced in *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1912), 12:185–189.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Introduction to the Text by Leonardo Cohen

Regarding the number of existing external sources on the history of Ethiopia, the period between the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century is an extraordinary moment. During those decades, several important groups of Jesuit missionaries were active in the country, working intensively to report on their endeavor to advance the Catholic faith. This book represents a collection of some of the more interesting texts that they wrote.

A History of the Catholic Mission in Ethiopia (1557–1632)

The aspiration of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, was to reconcile the Ethiopian and Catholic Churches, an idea that inspired many generations of Jesuits to travel to the African country in order to convert the Ignatian dream into reality. The first missionaries arrived in 1557, and most of them remained in Ethiopia for several decades without being particularly successful. In 1603, Father Pedro Páez arrived in Ethiopia and renewed efforts to establish the Catholic mission. Páez worked enthusiastically with Emperors Zä-Dəngəl (r. 1603–1604) and Susənyos (r. 1607–1632). With the assistance of other Jesuits, such as Luis de Azevedo and Francisco Antonio de Angeles, Páez effected gradual but significant progress for the Catholic mission in Ethiopia. Despite the lack of interest shown by the Spanish-Portuguese Crown in the project of Ethiopia's conversion, Páez drew the emperor ever closer to Catholicism. Emperor Susənyos was open to this effort, as he hoped that the Catholic nations would help him revive Ethiopia's power.

The number of Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia was relatively small, but they assumed crucial positions in close proximity to the nobility and in the emperor's court. Although antagonism toward the Jesuit fathers in general grew among the Ethiopian monks, Páez's prestige rose in the eyes of Susənyos and other sectors of the nobility. From 1607 on, Susənyos showed increasing sympathy for Catholicism. His brother, Śəᶜəlä Krəstos, also embraced the new faith in 1613, and he helped to establish a Catholic mission in the province of Goğğam. Susənyos received communion from the Jesuit father in 1622.

Then, two significant events occurred, which many have interpreted as key to understanding the fate of the Catholic mission in Ethiopia. First, a few months after effecting Susənyos's conversion, Páez died.[12] Second, also in 1622, Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623) founded a mission oversight organization, the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), aimed at transforming mission

12 This period in the history of Ethiopia and the Jesuit mission has been discussed in the works of Hervé Pennec, "La Mission Jésuite en Éthiopie au Temps de Pedro Páez (1583–1622) et Ses Rapports avec le Pouvoir Éthiopien," in *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 36, 37, 38 (1992–1994): 77–115, 135–165, 139–181; *Des Jésuites au Royaume du Prêtre Jean* (Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003); Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner, *Envoys of a Human God: The Jesuit Mission to Christian Ethiopia, 1557–1632* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2015), 96–116; Girma Beshah and Merid Wolde Aregay, *The Question of the Union of the Churches in Luso-Ethiopian Relations* (*1500–1632*) (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1964), 69–87.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

work from a colonial phenomenon into a purely ecclesiastic movement, freeing the missionaries from political interference. The Holy See thought that a new and solid organization was necessary to manage missionary work and to reduce Spanish and Portuguese power. The Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide sent letters to all of the orders' generals and papal nuncios (the Holy See's diplomatic representatives) requesting comprehensive information about each mission's progress and tools employed in spreading the faith. Founded during the final period of the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia, the organization instructed the missionaries to submit annual reports about the prospects and resources of their respective missions.[13] Eventually, the mission would have to cope with great demands and control from Rome, intended to centralize and unify the missionary methodology.

As a result of both events, in 1625, a new Catholic patriarch arrived at the court of the Ethiopian emperor, a Portuguese Jesuit priest named Afonso Mendes. His period as head of the Ethiopian Catholic patriarchy began when the new instructions issued by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome took effect, and he accomplished significant religious and cultural reforms. First, he oversaw a substantial increase in missionary personnel. Second, many Catholic priests were ordained, Latin masses were translated, and non-Catholics were rebaptized. Third, Emperor Susənyos definitively severed relations with the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church, the patriarchy of Alexandria, and the *abunä* (the Egyptian head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church and its only bishop). Catholicism then seemed firmly anchored in Ethiopia, despite the strong opposition it aroused. Indeed, the enemies of Catholicism were increasingly identified as enemies of the state.

The dramatic church reforms and Emperor Susənyos's administrative policies aroused the opposition of monks, ecclesiastics, the population at large, and several imperial relatives. Rebellions and uprisings against the emperor's rule and centralized authority multiplied during these years, rooted in religious and political issues. By 1630, Emperor Susənyos was compelled to rescind many of the measures taken in favor of Catholicism in order to allow freedom of faith. He finally abdicated and died in 1632, placing the reins in the hands of his son, Fasilädäs (r. 1632–1667). The new emperor refused to receive the Jesuits who supported him, taking away some of their land and privileges. Most of the Catholic missionaries left for the coast and then embarked for Goa, the capital of Portuguese India. Only a few remained in the country to serve a small Catholic community.

13 Josef Metzler, *Compendio di Storia Della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o "de Propaganda Fide," 1622–1972* (Rome: Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1973); "Foundation of the Congregation 'de Propaganda Fide' by Gregory XV," in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, I/1, ed. Josef Metzler (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 79–111; and "Orientation, Programme et Premières Décisions (1622–1649)," *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, I/1, ed. Josef Metzler (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 146–196.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Jesuit Texts about Ethiopia

Despite the relatively short period of the Jesuit and Catholic mission in Ethiopia, the missionaries composed many treatises and historical works that enrich our knowledge about the country during the seventeenth century. Five of the Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits who lived in Ethiopia in the early 1600s—Manoel de Almeida, Manoel Barradas, Jerónimo Lobo, Afonso Mendes, and Pedro Páez—wrote accounts of their experiences in Ethiopia. However, none of the Portuguese Jesuits' accounts were published in full in Portuguese until the twentieth century. Only some of these texts have appeared in English (part of Barradas's text, part of Almeida's text, and Lobo's and Páez's texts in full).

The Jesuits also wrote numerous letters and reports, a monumental collection of documents that circulated to and from Ethiopia. As far as we know, regarding the production, exchange, and archiving of correspondence, the Society of Jesus was more efficient and better organized than most European states of the time. One example is the Jesuits' renowned *Litterae Annuae* (Annual Letters), which were a special instrument of internal communication since the beginning of the order. The purpose of the annual letters consisted, in part, of the exchange of information among missionaries in the various Catholic mission sites outside Europe and with the Curia (or central government of Catholicism) in Rome, addressing the organization of daily and administrative issues. The other purpose consisted of Jesuits reporting to their superiors about relevant annual events, the scope and achievements of the mission, and obstacles they encountered. These annual letters were organized around factual knowledge, as Markus Friedrich correctly pointed out: "With the genre of *litterae annuae*, edification was meant to be achieved through, not beyond or outside every-day Jesuit life. Realistic, historical facts and events—according to early modern standards—comprise the bulk of the letters."[14] Therefore, the letters provide ample information about the local context in which the Jesuits worked. For this reason, the Jesuit's letters from Ethiopia are an indispensable source for the study of the Jesuit mission project and also for the study of Ethiopian culture, religion, politics, and society during that period. Unfortunately for the English-speaking public, however, most of this vast Jesuit collection of letters was written in Portuguese or Latin, and very little of it has been translated into English. Although the historical books by the Jesuit fathers Jerónimo Lobo and Manoel de Almeida have been disseminated (in whole or in part) in English since the seventeenth century,[15] those of the Jesuit fathers Pedro Páez and Manoel Barradas were translated into English only

14 Friedrich Markus, "Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*: Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 77 (2008): 10; emphasis in the original.

15 Jerónimo Lobo, *A Voyage to Abyssinia, by Father Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese Missionary*, trans. from the French by Samuel Johnson (London: Printed for Elliot and Kay, 1788); Jerónimo Lobo, *The Itinerario of Jerónimo Lobo*, trans. Donald M. Lockhart from the Portuguese text, ed. M. G. da Costa, with an introduction and notes by C. F. Beckingham (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984); Charles F. Beckingham, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646; Being Extracts from the History of High Ethiopia or Abassia, by Manoel de Almeida, together with Bahrey's History of the Galla* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954), 1–107, 143–202.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

a few years ago.[16] This volume translates into English, for the first time, many of the Jesuit missionaries' letters from and about Ethiopia that were written in Latin, taking advantage of the work of Camillo Beccari, the renowned Italian Jesuit scholar who began collecting the works of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, dating from the foundation of the Society of Jesus until the end of the nineteenth century. He published them in fifteen volumes at the beginning of the twentieth century as *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales inediti a saeculo XVI ad XIX*. The letters of the Jesuits, in their original languages, appeared in volumes 10 through 14 of his monumental collection of fifteen volumes, today considered one of the great achievements in Ethiopian studies.

Latin and the Jesuits

As the seventeenth century progressed, vernacular languages slowly displaced Latin as the privileged means of expression in daily and official life. However, the official communication in and documentation of the Catholic Church, even after the Reformation, remained in Latin, as illustrated by the Jesuit correspondence from Ethiopia.

The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus reveal the emphasis that it placed on the value of Latin: "Everyone, and especially the humanists, should speak Latin regularly, and should remember by heart whatever their teachers teach them, and they should practice their style in compositions, [always] having someone correct them."[17] Subsequently, the Ratio Studiorum (The Official Plan for Jesuit Education, 1559) refined and detailed the expectations on this topic, for the Latin language was at the center of the Jesuit learning model. The imperative of teachers and pupils was to understand the classical authors, to speak the language properly, and to write it with Ciceronian eloquence. The Jesuit course of study began with Latin grammar, rising by degrees from lower to middle and upper grammar, proceeding to the humanities, and from there to rhetoric. Latin was the classroom's living language: even national or local languages, an indispensable tool for the ministries, were taught in Latin, according to the method in vogue at that time, and accepted in the most renowned educational institutions. By teaching the vernacular, the teacher highlighted the similarities and differences between languages so that students would learn to express themselves on a par with one another.[18]

The Jesuits in Ethiopia alternated between writing in their vernaculars and Latin. Certainly, a broad spectrum of Jesuit correspondence was not conducted in Latin, but in Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian, the original languages of the missionaries who

16 Pedro Páez, *Pedro Páez's History of Ethiopia, 1622*, trans. Christopher J. Tribe, ed. Isabel Boavida, Hervé Pennec, and Manuel João Ramos (London: Ashgate for the Hakluyt Society, 2011); Manoel Barradas, *Tractatus Tres Historico-Geographici (1634): A Seventeenth-Century Historical and Geographical Account of Tigray, Ethiopia*, trans. Elizabet Filleul, ed. Richard Pankhurst (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996).

17 Constitutions of the Society of Jesus 381, 13. See S. Arzubialde, J. Corella, J. M. García Lomas, eds., *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús* (Bilbao: Mensajero–Sal Terrae, 1993), 181.

18 Francisco Rodrigues, *A Formação Intellectual do Jesuita* (Porto: Livraria Magalães & Moniz, 1917), 42–48. See also John O'Malley, "From the 1599 *Ratio Studiorum* to the Present: A Humanistic Tradition?," in Vincent J. Duminuco, *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 127–144.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

arrived in the country. Their reasons for choosing one language over another varied. For instance, the Jesuits in Ethiopia depended on the Portuguese Padroado (an agreement by which the Holy See delegated administration of its churches to the Portuguese Empire) and saw themselves as an extension of the Portuguese maritime empire. This, naturally, awarded the Portuguese language a special status. However, in direct correspondence with the Holy See, Latin was preferable, and many authors gave preference to Latin when composing theological and historical works, especially Mendes.[19] His hagiographers wrote extensively about his admiration for Greek and Latin eloquence, as in the writings of Demosthenes and Plutarch. "Among the Latin poets, he [Mendes] was the most elegant of his time," wrote the Portuguese Jesuit historian Balthazar Tellez in 1660.[20] Also, Father Bruno Bruni, who was born in Rome, was reported to possess great strengths in Latin. As Tellez remarked in the same volume, Bruni went to study Latin in Florence, becoming "famous in this language, an eloquent rhetorician."[21]

Exporting the Counter-Reformation

After the Protestant Reformation that resulted in a schism from the Roman Catholic Church, starting in 1517, Catholics responded with the Counter-Reformation (or Catholic Reformation) from the 1540s to the 1640s. The movement to reform the Catholic Church from within—with a focus on better priestly training, spirituality, and returning non-Catholic Christians to the fold of the Catholic Church—was very much on the minds of the Jesuits in Ethiopia. The missionaries' efforts to export the culture of the Counter-Reformation to Ethiopia are clearly evident in the works of Páez, Mendes, and Almeida, as well as the Jesuits' letters.

One feature of great importance to the Jesuits was rhetoric. Like Latin, rhetorical training played a central role in Jesuit education, and the Jesuits tenaciously cultivated the art of persuasion. The court of the Ethiopian emperor proved a fertile ground to develop public theological debates, with the primary objective of extolling the Catholic faith and raising its prestige among the priests and the country's nobility. The letters presented in this current volume are proof of the importance that Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia attributed to the public debates in the royal court and how they cultivated their rhetorical skills in order to address them.[22] In the Jesuits' eyes, both Protestants and Ethiopian Christians were Christians who, though flawed, nevertheless recognized as the ultimate authority the same holy texts as the Catholics. Thus, the Jesuits in Ethiopia saw theological argumentation as a legitimate tool to convert the lettered men of the

19 Afonso Mendes, *Bran-Haymanot idest Lux Fidei in Ephitalamium Aethiopistisae, sive et Nuptias Verbi et Ecclesiae*, 3 vols. (Coloniae Agripinae, 1692) and *Expeditionis Aethiopicae Liber* in BecRASO, vols. 8 and 9 (1908–1909).

20 Balthazar Tellez, *Historia Geral de Ethiopia a Alta* (Coimbra: Na Officina de Manoel días Impressor da Universidade, 1660), 696.

21 Ibid., 637.

22 About this topic, see Leonardo Cohen, *The Missionary Strategies of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, 1555–1632* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 77–96.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

court, believing in the efficiency of their reasoning to alter the faith of "schismatics."[23] When there was a change in faith in favor of Catholicism by noblemen and lettered men of the court, the Jesuits often considered it to be a consequence of their own "correct" reasoning and the "right" interpretation of the scriptures. They frequently explained the defeat of their rivals in theological debates and their ultimate acceptance of Catholicism as surrender to "reason and the authority of the scriptures." Therefore, the Jesuits took these debates seriously, and believed they reaped the fruits of their rhetorical skills in the form of the conversion of souls (Annual Letter of 1615 [07LLOJ]; Annual Letter of 1609 [02LLOJ]).

If the missionaries believed in the efficacy of their arguments before the Ethiopian priests and monks, it was because they saw in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church a deteriorated Christianity. They believed that its origin was orthodox, but that it had, through the passage of time, degenerated into heresy (Annual Letter of 1618 [08LLOJ]).[24] According to this perception, they were obligated to theologically redirect this church that had lost its way. Public debates were thus a legitimate tool to rediscover theological truths that, even if hidden, were still present in Ethiopian Christianity.

However, the Jesuits did not always depend on rhetoric. When the options of convincing and persuading had failed, the Jesuits used violence and threats to achieve greater social control (Annual Letter of 1615 [07LLOJ]). That is, after the emperor converted, the public debates between Catholicism and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity took place in circumstances more and more unfavorable to the Ethiopian monks. The latter were often brought before the emperor as prisoners, arrested for inciting the population against the emperor's faith and authority. Often, under the guise of theological or Christological controversy, the Catholic side posed questions and threats to the Ethiopian Orthodox monks that left them no opportunity to respond or defend themselves without being accused of treason. Many Ethiopian monks were forced into accepting Catholic theology and Christology.

A second feature of the Counter-Reformation that was important to the Jesuits was its literature. The Jesuits translated into Gəᶜəz (Ethiopic) several theological works belonging to the milieu of the Counter-Reformation,[25] produced in the Iberian Peninsula during the second half of the sixteenth century. Several letters are noteworthy for the enthusiastic way in which they represent newly converted noblemen, such as Bəᶜəlä Krəstos and Śəᶜəlä Krəstos, reacting to the novelty of reading these texts in a language they understood (Annual Letter of 1612 [05LLOJ]). The Counter-Reformation commentary on the four Gospels by Father Juan de Maldonado held a prominent place among these texts. For instance, Śəᶜəlä Krəstos commanded that "the noblemen and monks who excelled in learning should be summoned to a meeting, and that this most

23 Páez says, "I have tried to dissuade them [the Ethiopians] of it [their errors] by clearly showing them the truth through the Holy Scriptures, the holy councils, the authorities of the saints and reasoning." See *Pedro Páez's History*, 1:313. Páez thought that reason could convince; he believed in its power of seduction. See Hervé Pennec, "La Mission Jésuite . . . Deuxième Partie," 144.

24 See Leonardo Cohen, "The Ethiopian Christianity as Heresy: The Development of the Concept in the Portuguese and Jesuit Sources," in Siegbert Uhlig, ed., *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg 2003* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 649–655.

25 Leonardo Cohen, "The Jesuit Missionary as Translator (1603–1632)," in *Ethiopia and the Missions: Historical and Anthropological Insights*, ed. Verena Böll et al. (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), 7–30.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

elegant—and to them unheard-of—interpretation should be read aloud with them looking on" (Annual Letter of 1613 [06LLOJ]).

The Conversion of Noblemen: The Case of Śəᶜəlä Krəstos and Susənyos

The Jesuits' letters about Ethiopia vividly bring to life a number of Ethiopian noblemen and noblewomen. One of the more outstanding is the leading advisor to the emperor, Śəᶜəlä Krəstos, a most remarkable Catholic nobleman. He was, along with Emperor Susənyos, the cornerstone of local Catholicism in Ethiopia. Missionaries spared no word in praising him; Śəᶜəlä Krəstos appears throughout the Jesuit correspondence. From his conversion to his martyrdom, throughout the flowering of the Catholic cause, he always maintained a privileged place in Jesuit literature. Moreover, the Jesuits assigned to him, from a very early period, qualities that Catholic authorities considered as indispensable for perfect faith. They said that Śəᶜəlä Krəstos was extremely fond of Catholic literature and doctrinal debates, lauding reason and authority at the same time (Annual Letter of 1612 [05LLOJ]). He had been interested in Catholicism since 1612, they said; he approached the Catholic faith with a genuine interest in the Portuguese culture, its language, and literature (Annual Letter of 1613 [06LLOJ]). The Jesuits held him in high esteem, calling him prudent, courageous, an acute intellect, and a man well versed in Ethiopian books.[26] Śəᶜəlä Krəstos had the characteristics of a clever and ruthless enemy, they said, but he turned into their fiercest emissary for the missionary endeavor.[27] They found in him an agent for the spread of Catholicism.[28]

One of the letters in the present volume adds information about the cultural impact of the Jesuits' texts and debates on such nobles as Śəᶜəlä Krəstos during 1611–1612 (Annual Letter of 1612 [05LLOJ]). According to the excerpt, Śəᶜəlä Krəstos learned the alphabetical script of the Portuguese so well that "in a short time he began to read through a little book, known commonly as a *cartilha*"[29] (Annual Letter of 1612 [05LLOJ]). In addition to being impressed by Catholic texts, Śəᶜəlä Krəstos was impressed by the

26 Páez, *Pedro Páez's History*, 2:300.

27 Pedro Páez compares him in his religious zealousness to the apostle Paul in *Pedro Páez's History*, 2:303; Balthazar Tellez also wrote, "He appeared to be a new man onto whom the diligence of the Spirit and the diligence of Apostle Paul had entered, to destroy the deviations and the heresies of the false Dioscoros, beliefs with which he had been raised and on whose eradication he persisted till the hour of his death." *Historia Geral*, 306.

28 See, for example, the epistle Śəᶜəlä Krəstos wrote to Mutio Vitelleschi, general of the Society, in 1625. Beccari, *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1912), 12:163–165. Much of the success of the missionaries in many cases can be credited to indigenous converts who became, in turn, active missionaries of their new faiths. Donald Donham, *Marxist Modern, an Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 97–99; Dena Freeman, *Initiating Change in Highland Ethiopia: Causes and Consequences of Cultural Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

29 This was probably the first pedagogic method applied by the missionaries at the Ethiopian seminaries. The *Cartilha por Perguntas e Respostas* was a textbook or primer for teaching children and illiterate adults the Christian doctrine. See Martínez d'Alòs-Moner, *Envoys of a Human*, 213; Cohen, *The Missionary Strategies*, 101–102, 142.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

Jesuits' skills in debate. For instance, Luis de Azevedo wrote that "[w]ithdrawing from his business affairs, he [Śəᶜälä Krəstos] entered with me into a more secluded chamber of the royal residence and, with onlookers removed, spent no few days almost entirely in investigating the mysteries of the faith. There is almost no theological question that this man did not touch upon, but, by God's grace, I answered, and what I said pleased him in such a way that all error was lifted away and all reason for doubt removed" (Annual Letter of 1611 [04LLOJ]).

The Jesuits do note that the Ethiopians' reasons for converting were not all spiritual. Śəᶜälä Krəstos made clear that he expected to receive military aid from the Portuguese: "It is my great desire to transfer myself entirely to the Roman faith, but the shortage of soldiers poses an obstacle to these wishes" (Annual Letter of 1612 [05LLOJ]). In the same conversation, he reminded the Portuguese that four hundred soldiers had accompanied Christovão da Gama when he saved Ethiopia from Muslim incursions in the 1500s.

However, while many scholars have emphasized the political motivations behind Ethiopian noblemen's conversions, they do so by ignoring important biographical aspects of their lives. Besides his manifest intellectual drive, Śəᶜälä Krəstos's network of family and friends may have played an important role in his conversion. Louis Rambo has commented that social connections aid the conversion process: nonbelievers feel more inclined to accept the validity of foreign beliefs and explore them further if someone close and trusted expresses those beliefs.[30] In this light, another very educated nobleman, Bəᶜälä Krəstos, who the Catholics had already favorably impressed, may have prompted Śəᶜälä Krəstos's conversion. It was Bəᶜälä Krəstos who showed his good friend Śəᶜälä Krəstos how the Ethiopian books did not dispute but rather contained the Catholic doctrine, especially one of the most revered Ethiopian Orthodox texts, the *Haymanotä Abäw*.[31] From a careful scrutiny of the Jesuits' letters, one can learn about Śəᶜälä Krəstos's strong bonds with several Jesuit fathers, his intellectual fascination with the methodology and theological rigorousness of the missionaries, and his close relationship with other new Catholics. All of these social connections must have played a pivotal part in Śəᶜälä Krəstos's conversion, alongside his political ambitions. As such, these complementary layers should be accredited their proper place in understanding his conversion process, in order to fully understand it in all its richness and complexity.

One of the other outstanding figures in the Jesuits' letters is the emperor himself, about whom similar questions remain regarding his religious intentions and motives. The Jesuits greatly appreciated him—not only as a Catholic but also as a good governor. In the excerpts of the Annual Letter of 1618 (08LLOJ), the virtues of Susənyos as a man of state are evident:

> [He] is indeed worthy of this authority, distinguished as he is in all the virtues of leadership: he has excellently combined prudence with vigor and justice with pity,

30 "Even when a conversion is intellectual in content," Rambo says, "the presence of friendships or a system of support provides a critical milieu in which the persons can explore intellectual and spiritual issues." Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 110. See also Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects," *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1980): 1376–1395.

31 The *Haymanotä Abäw* is a brief collection of passages of the Church Fathers that treated Ethiopian Täwahədo doctrine favorably. See Páez, *Pedro Páez's History*, 2:300–301.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

> he loves peace and loathes discord, he censures dissidents, and he is extremely moderate in his drinking. (Annual Letter of 1618 [08LLOJ])

From an early stage in his rule, Emperor Susənyos also adopted a pro-Catholic policy. In 1607, soon after he took office, Susənyos sent a letter to the pope in Rome.[32] He wrote that he considered the Roman Church as his spiritual kin and stressed the common denominators both traditions shared. The Ethiopian emperor also asked the pope to support Ethiopia, which faced the threat posed by the non-Christian Oromo. His goal was to receive support from Philip III, King of Spain and Portugal, to overcome the local dangers to his Christian kingdom. At the same time, the text does nothing to suggest that Susənyos would be willing to subject himself to the Catholic Church. One of the annual letters (06LLOJ), commenting on a letter sent by Pope Paul V to the Ethiopian emperor, repeats Susənyos's words:

> If, indeed, recognizing the Roman pontiff as the shepherd of the true church, I shall reap as many blessings as I hear promised to me by him and understand to be contained in this letter, then I desire to send an embassy to him, and am determined to send a legate in my name to the Roman pontiff, who will set forth my goodwill toward him, and will offer the veneration that was lacking from my ancestors. (Annual Letter of 1613 [06LLOJ])

The same letter ascribes to Susənyos a speech in a very similar tone:

> since I intend to confess the same faith as the king of Portugal, who is allied with me by a treaty of arms to commit the administration of my church to the Roman pontiff, and to venerate the patriarch whom he sends to me and who will correct the errors of Ethiopia and administer all things on behalf of the government of the Roman Church, I will entrust to your care and instruction my own dearest son. (Annual Letter of 1613 [06LLOJ])

The other document we would have most expected to reveal Susənyos's intentions regarding religion remains suspiciously silent: his *Royal Chronicle* (the Ethiopian emperors from the 1300s into the 1900s all had chronicles written in Gəᶜəz during their tenures and after). This text, from the only emperor in Ethiopian history to have accepted the Catholic faith and communed with the Catholics, is relatively silent regarding the Jesuit mission's work and the ascendancy of Catholicism, a silence telling in and of itself.[33] As Páez pointed out after his translation of the early years of Susənyos's *Royal Chronicle* (1607 to 1622, and therefore long before the heat of the conflict over Catholicism), it "says very little of the many things he has done and the efforts he has made to introduce the matters of our holy faith in his empire and for his vassals to submit to and obey the Roman Church, or of the mortal dangers that he has faced in this respect."[34] The

32 The original Spanish text, as well as a French translation, can be found in Hervé Pennec, "La Correspondance Royale Éthiopico-Européenne de 1607, Traduite et Réinterprétée," *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Africaines* 9 (1998): 91–111.

33 Another analysis of such silences is an article by Solomon Gebreyes Beyene, "Representations of the Portuguese in the Royal Chronicle of King Gälawdewos (1540–1559): A Historical Commentary" (in progress).

34 Páez, *Pedro Páez's History*, 2:259.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

few references the chronicle makes to the Catholic mission are more suggestive than revealing. Perhaps the chronicler was wary of compromising Susənyos's legitimacy by portraying him as supportive of Catholics; perhaps the chronicler lacked interest in the Catholic influence or harbored an overt antagonism toward the Jesuits. Páez suggests a possible answer when he says:

> The writer was at that time very opposed to the matters of our holy faith, since he did not understand them, but after we explained them to him he was so satisfied and so steadfast that he said that he would die a thousand times for the faith of the holy Roman Church, and how he upholds it with great fervour and zeal, and he brings many people to it by convincing them with arguments, for he is a very sharp-witted man of great understanding and very well read in their books.[35]

By 1617, Susənyos seems to have completed his choice of the Catholic faith, yet that did not lead to a significant change in how his chronicle was written. The chronicler cites the rumors involving the new religion and the two natures of Christ, but his style is ambiguous in a number of passages where Susənyos's preference for Catholicism could have been prominent. A Catholic chronicler, writing about an emperor who was coming ever closer to fully embracing the new religion, would have dealt extensively with Susənyos and his empire's religious status, but this was not the case here.[36] Thus, Susənyos's proclivity toward Catholicism was handled differently in different cultural texts, some directed internally toward Ethiopians and others externally toward Europeans. Susənyos's *Royal Chronicle* expresses the little impact that the Jesuits' mission had on internal Ethiopian discourse.

Seen as good Catholics by the Jesuits, Śəᶜälä Krəstos and Susənyos had different temperaments and approaches to religion. The conflict between Śəᶜälä Krəstos's fervent Catholicism and the emperor's cautious attitude flared up during the third decade of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Hervé Pennec has dubbed him "the uncontrollable Śəᶜälä Krəstos."[37] Almeida concurred: "The Emperor was not in such a forward place [as Śəᶜälä Krəstos] who, for the sake of the Heavenly Kingdom, is willing to lose or compromise the worldly realm."[38] In a power struggle over the very empire,[39] Susənyos deprived Śəᶜälä Krəstos of his vice-kingdom at Goğğam,[40] and the relationship between them suf-

35 Ibid. Páez doesn't identify the chronicler he's referring to. Three different authors tackled Susənyos's *Royal Chronicle*, of which only two are known by name: Məhərka Dəngəl wrote the first twenty-three chapters and Täklä Śəllase, best known as Ṭinno, authored the bulk of the *Royal Chronicle* (chapters 24–79). On an adverse attitude toward the emperor's conversion, Páez is probably talking about the latter, Ṭinno. See Izabela Orlowska, "The Chronicle of Susenyos as an Ethiopian Source for Research of 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*, vol. 1, ed. Baye Yimam et al. (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 2002), 425.

36 See the various examples provided by Orlowska, in "The Chronicle," 422–434.

37 Pennec, *Des Jésuites*, 234.

38 Almeida, *Historia Aethiopiae*, BecRASO (1907), 6:423.

39 Pennec, *Des Jésuites*, 234.

40 Beccari, ed., *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1912), 12:249. As Susənyos's *Royal Chronicle* states, Śəᶜälä Krəstos wanted to arrogate for himself the *gult* (granting of land by the emperor) of the churches and the *wäyzäro* (married women). At Goğğam—as the *Chronicle* further explains—there were many weak women, widows, orphans, and monks, and so the emperor chose to please God rather

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

fered greatly. The damage seemed to have been repaired when Śəᶜälä Krəstos voluntarily led another attack against the Oromo in the name of the emperor. As Almeida narrates it in 1628, Śəᶜälä Krəstos confirmed before the emperor that he was willing to serve as he had always been, and that he did not do so in defense of the Goğğam vice-kingdom, or out of respect for those lands, but out of the brotherly love he professed for the emperor and because of his duties as the loyal subject he was and continued to be.[41] At last, Śəᶜälä Krəstos managed to convince Susənyos to give him the governorship of Damot, for he was ready to fight against the Oromo on behalf of his half-brother the king.

The Conversion of Noblewomen

The Jesuits also took great measures to obtain the favor and the conversion of noblewomen. This was no easy task, since many of these women were actively hostile to Catholicism, but around the world, a main tactic of the Jesuits was engaging women in dialogue on spiritual matters, and the conversion of noblewomen was nothing new to them.[42] Like John Calvin, Ignatius of Loyola actively sought the favor of aristocratic and politically influential women, to whom he held out the possibility of living a religious life as well as a worldly one.[43] The Jesuits followed suit with, for example, Francis Xavier sometimes visiting a lady to talk to her about spiritual issues and hear her confession. The Jesuits' enemies noticed this attention as well, with Fray Melchior Cano, sworn enemy of the Society of Jesus, denouncing from the pulpit those "men who like to have intimate conversations with women and who visit their houses with the excuse of converting them."[44] But the Jesuits believed that it was important to win the Ethiopian noblewomen over and into the sphere of Catholic influence because they were thought to have great political power.

In recent years, scholarly interest has grown in the reaction of Ethiopian women of noble descent to missionary influences and an assessment of the role many of them played in the struggle to restore the Alexandrine faith. Among the scholars publishing on the topic are Gerard Geist, Verena Böll, Sevir Chernetsov, Leonardo Cohen, and Wendy Laura Belcher.[45] Belcher's work is the most extensive, using Ethiopian hagiog-

than Śəᶜälä Krəstos. That was the reason for his destitution. Jose Maria Esteves Pereira, ed. and trans., *Chronica de Susenyos, Rei de Etiopia* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1892–1900), 1:293 (Gəᶜəz), 2:225 (Portuguese). Still, Śəᶜälä Krəstos managed to negotiate and secure the vice-kingdom of Damot. Esteves Pereira, *Chronica de Susenyos*, 1:292–293 (Gəᶜəz), 2:225–226 (Portuguese).

41 Beccari, ed., *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1912), 12:252.

42 Of the 7,000 epistles Loyola wrote, more than 90 were addressed to women. He received more than 50 letters from women in exchange. See Charmaire J. Blaisdell, "Calvin's and Loyola's Letters to Women: Politics and Spiritual Counsel in the Sixteenth Century," in Robert V. Schnucker, ed., *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 235–253.

43 Rogelio García Mateo, "Mujeres en la vida de Ignacio de Loyola," in García Mateo, *Ignacio de Loyola, Su Espiritualidad y Su Mundo Cultural* (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2000), 207–223.

44 Jean Lacouture, *Os Jesuítas*, vol. 1, trans. Maria Fernanda Gonçalves de Azevedo (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1991), 195.

45 Gerard Geist, *L'Influence Portugaise sur la Femme Éthiopienne aux XVIème et XVIIème Siècles* (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1986); Verena Böll, "Holy Women in Ethiopia," in *Saints, Biographies and History in Africa*, ed. Bertrand Hirsch and Manfred Kropp (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003),

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5

raphies as sources, as well as the Jesuits' books and letters, to arrive at a better portrait of six important Ethiopian women and to argue that Ethiopian noblewomen must be considered one of the primary reasons for the failure of the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia.

My interest is slightly different, so I shall now examine the impact of Catholicism on the condition of noblewomen and analyze both positive and negative reactions to the new religion in the context of the transformations it produced in marital relations and family behavior. During the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits' reports seem to point toward a positive reception of the Catholic faith by noblewomen. Fernão Guerreiro, in his annual report (1607—1609), discussed the devotion that these women felt toward the Catholic Church: "They come to the church sometimes to hear the service and preaching and the doctrine of the children, which they appreciate very much." According to Guerreiro, the sister and daughter of an unnamed viceroy (*däğğazmač* in Amharic) insisted that the fathers come immediately to confess them and reconcile them with the Church in the event that one of them should fall ill. Also, "the daughter of the viceroy [*Baḥər Nägaš*], each time she came [with the fathers], requested that the children should discuss the doctrine in front of her, read some of the texts from the books, or show her images of Christ Our Lord and of the Virgin Our Lady."[46] In 1608, Luis de Azevedo relates the story of a noblewoman who had belonged to the Catholic Church and left it twenty years earlier. Azevedo comments that, "though belatedly, she has opened her eyes and seen the error of her ways, and so has come from far to do public penance and to abjure her heresy with plenty of emotion."[47] He also tells us of another noblewoman who was married to one of the emperor's captains (*ras*). When her husband died, she married a Portuguese man born in Ethiopia, and, following her conversion, lived with him "under the laws of holy matrimony."[48] Clearly, some of the Ethiopian noblewomen did convert to Catholicism.

However, in the second decade of the seventeenth century, Ethiopian noblewomen rarely converted to Catholicism or they became disenchanted with it. The letters presented in this volume have several notable examples of resistance to or ambivalence about Catholicism that developed among noblewomen even before the formal conversion of Emperor Susənyos in 1622. For instance, in the Annual Letter of 1615 (07LLOJ), "[t]wo of the emperor's sisters [probably including Amätä Krəstos] began to mock Bəᶜəlä Krəstos, reproaching him for his defense of the Roman faith," although the author states that they were then persuaded by his arguments. In the Annual Letter of 1613 (06LLOJ), the Jesuits report that the emperor's mother, Ḥamälmal Wärq, participated

31–45; Sevir B. Chernetsov, "A Transgressor of the Norms of Female Behavior in Seventeenth-Century Ethiopia: The Heroine of the 'Life of Our Mother Walatta Petros,'" *Hristianskij Vostok*, new ser. 4, 10 (2006): 56–72; Leonardo Cohen, *Missionary Strategies*, 170–178; Wendy L. Belcher, "Sisters Debating the Jesuits: The Role of African Women in Defeating Portuguese Proto-Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Abyssinia," *Northeast African Studies* 12 (2013): 121–166. See also the recent edition of hagiography of the Ethiopian nun Wälättä Ṗeṭros by Wendy L. Belcher and Michael Kleiner, eds., *The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros*, by Galawdewos (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

46 Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação Anual das Coisas que Fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas Suas Missões (1607–1609)*, ed. Arthur Viegas (Coimbra: Impr. Da Universidade, 1930–1931), 3:48.

47 Beccari, ed., *Relationes et Epistolae Variorum*, BecRASO (1911), 11:151.

48 Ibid., 11:153–154.

© 2017, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden
ISBN Print: 978-3-447-10879-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-447-19692-5