IN THE COMPANY OF *IYÄSUS*
THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

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This work is dedicated to my grandparents, Lluís and Guillermo, for there is a touch of them in its conception, and to the late Father Miquel Batllori, who showed the way.
IN THE COMPANY OF JESUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632
This study focuses on the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia (1557-1632). It presents a comprehensive history of the mission, from its inception during the reign of the Portuguese King Dom Manuel I, through its phase of expansion up to the expulsion of the Jesuit missionaries. Being the first mission personally conceived by the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola, the Ethiopian was also the last of the “imperial” undertakings of the Society to fall, after the collapse of the projects in Japan and Mughal India in the 1610s and 1620s, respectively. The Ethiopian enterprise unfolded in lands far beyond Spanish or Portuguese control and under the protection of a powerful regional monarchy, the Ethiopian Solomonic House. The mission, which had a modest beginning during the last decades of the sixteenth century, turned in the next century to be an ambitious project of transformation of Ethiopian church and society. The Jesuits made use of a persuasive approach, their intellectual supremacy and links to sophisticated cultures – Renaissance and Manneristic Europe and Mughal India – to win over Ethiopian nobility, high clergy and state officials. In this study I focus on the mission taking into consideration both the geopolitical and the religious-cultural aspects.

The thesis is aimed as being an institutional history of the mission; I distinguish its main actors and focus in its different stages of development. In addition, I also take into account factors hitherto disregarded in historical literature, such as the role played by local and regional intermediaries and the indigenous agency of missionary discourse. Prosopography and quantitative methods have been used to shed light on to all the men that were involved in this project and also to get acquainted with the different social groups the missionaries interacted with in India and in Ethiopia. The thesis also benefits from a large compilation of images which illustrate the importance that the arts played in the project to ‘reduce’ Ethiopian Christianity.

The study aims to be a further contribution to the growing interest this mission has attracted from scholars. Although this has recently been the object of intense scrutiny, there were still many neglected episodes. The thesis critically reviews some traditional assumptions found in historical literature and offers new ways of understanding specific aspects of the mission.
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Introduction

The Setting: The Mission and the Land

The subject of my dissertation is the mission that the Society of Jesus led in the highlands of Ethiopia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was one of the earliest and most important Jesuit undertakings in the early modern period. Jesuit presence in Ethiopia began in 1557, with the arrival of five missionaries and continued almost uninterrupted until the missionaries were expelled in 1633-34. However, the official end of the mission is considered to be in 1632 when the replacement of the ruler at the head of the Ethiopian state, which was to turn fatal for the Jesuits, occurred. The Ethiopian mission was born as a special project of the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola, who even offered to go to the Preste – as at the time was known Christian Ethiopia – himself. In the background, however, there were decades of contacts that took place between the Portuguese and Christian Ethiopian monarchies. Since the late fifteenth century the Ethiopian Solomonic monarchy and the Portuguese House of Avis exchanged envoys and invested in diplomatic efforts to approach each other. The Portuguese were, above all, interested to gain a regional ally in the Red Sea area who would help them to control the important trade that crossed its waters. The Ethiopians, in their turn, wanted Europeans craftsmen and artists. Moreover, during the djihad led by the neighbouring sultanate of Adal and Ahmad Grañ between 1528 and 1543, they also appealed to the Portuguese for military help.

Whilst as early as in the 1520s there developed in the Portuguese court a party that pressed for a religious reform of the Ethiopian monarchy, the way for the Jesuit mission was only cleared with two episodes that occurred in the late 1530s and early 1540s. João Bermudez, a surgeon who had arrived to Ethiopia in 1520 as part of a larger Portuguese embassy, began a trip to Lisbon and Rome towards 1533 claiming to be the Patriarch of Ethiopia. Spurious as his claims may have been, his example inspired the creation of a Catholic Patriarchate during the papacy of Paul III, which was to be sponsored by the Portuguese King Dom João III and managed by the Society of Jesus. In 1541, the Portuguese from India sent a military company to the Ethiopian highlands to help the Ethiopian ruler, Gälawdewos (regnal name Asnaf Sāgād), then challenged by the expansion of the Adal armies. Once the confrontation was over, a large number of the Portuguese survivors remained in the country, settled and established families. They were the origin of a mixed-race group, known locally as Burtukan or Ferenj and whom the Portuguese crown
considered its subjects. It was principally to serve them that the first Jesuits were sent to Ethiopia.

The Jesuit mission had a modest start and in the first decades it failed to achieve many of its objectives and yet, with the turn of the century there opened a successful period. The mission led then by skilled men such as Pedro Páez, Luís de Azevedo, António Fernandes or Manoel de Almeida expanded rapidly. The Ethiopian negus Susenyos, his brother ras Se’elä Krestos and a part of the court embraced Catholicism and offered full sponsorship to the Jesuit enterprise. In the 1620s, the Jesuit undertaking reached its peak: Susenyos openly embraced the new faith, the Catholic Patriarch Mendes arrived and the Jesuits became the leaders of the Ethiopian Church. Towards the end of the decade there were about twenty Jesuits active in some thirteen residences across the kingdom. According to missionary sources, the number of converts peaked at over 150,000 in 1629. This course was, however, abruptly halted by the death of Susenyos in 1632. His son and heir, Fasilädäs, ordered the expulsion and persecution of the missionaries and initiated the restoration of the status quo before the arrival of the Jesuits. Although, the Jesuits tried for decades to reverse the crisis from Goa, their mission could never be reinstated.

* * *

The focus of activity of the Jesuit missionaries was primarily the Christian Ethiopian Church and the polity under control of the Solomonic dynasty in the Ethiopian highlands. Historians agree in stating that Christianity was taken to Ethiopia by Syrian monks during the period of activity of the kingdom of Aksum, towards the fourth century A.D. Henceforth, the Ethiopians developed their own national Church but borrowing most of the traditions and theological corpus from the Coptic Church of Egypt. Moreover, the See of Alexandria also appointed the abun, the Egyptian bishop who should rule over the Ethiopian ecclesiastic hierarchy, a praxis that remained uncontested until the twentieth century. The Ethiopian Church shared, together with the other Oriental churches, a similar liturgy as well as a set of Christological dogmas and ritual practices that placed it at odds with the Roman Catholic doctrines. Up to the sixteenth century, Rome had led several attempts to incorporate these churches into its body but without being much successful. The coming to scene of the Society of Jesus brought renewed hopes to an old quest.

Although the Solomonic monarchy sustained its legitimacy from claiming direct descent from the Biblical King Menelik and the Queen of Sheba, the actual foundation of the dynasty came under the rule of Yekunno Amlak (1270-94), who would have replaced
the Zagwe line and ‘restored’ the Solomonic lineage. The Solomonic state supported a nomadic court whose main revenues were tributes and taxes exacted to subject kingdoms and other polities, military raids and, in minor measure, participating in trade. The Ethiopian rulers were at home in their court-camps (the kätäma) and until the sixteenth century never set to establish any permanent or semi-permanent capital. When moving around the country with his army we are told the negus processed at the head of several thousand men. An important aspect of the Christian Ethiopian Kingdom is that its boundaries were never fixed and in the course of the centuries the state contracted and expanded as often as it moved its centre. Roughly speaking, the Christian state reached its widest expansion during the period that runs from the reigns of Amdä Seyon (1314-44) to Zära Ya’eqob (1434-68). In contrast, the period that witnessed the contacts with the Portuguese is largely seen in historiography as one of decay. The djihad of Ahmad Grañ in the 1520s, the arrival of the Ottomans at Massawa and the expansion of the Oromo tribes from the 1540s onwards, had landlocked the state and pushed it to relocate its base northwards. In the mid-sixteenth century, the core of the kingdom was mostly concentrated in the Lake Tana area and even in the neighbouring provinces, such as in Gojjam and Tegray, political control by the negus was weak. An illustration of this is shown by an episode which occurred in 1627, when the missionaries who went to collect the remains of Christovão da Gama in Wäfla (southwards from Tegray), then inhabited by Oromo having expanded in the mid-sixteenth century, had to be escorted by an army of between 7,000 to 8,000 men. Other areas inhabited mostly by Christians, such as the Hamasen, the Damot and large parts of the Amhara and Shäwa provinces were de facto independent.

The central highlands were populated mostly by Semitic-speaking peoples, speaking Amharic and Tegrayan, although within and at its borders were also clusters of Cushitic speakers, such as the Agäw. Ethiopian Christianity was the religion of a majority of the population as well as the official religion of the Solomonic monarchy, but groups of Jews (Fälasha or Betä Esra’el), Muslims and pagans were also present. Moreover, the religious confession was never rigid and religious groups shared a great number of practices and rites and changes of faith occurred.

The geographical setting where the missionaries worked was therefore largely defined by the area occupied by the Christian Ethiopians. Missionary activities were confined for the most part to areas under state control. The most important residences were

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1 RASO VI, iv. VIII, ch. XXIV.
located near the royal kätäma and close to regional lords favourable to the mission, in Dämbeya, Gojjam and Tegray. Residences were also established in peripheral areas (Hamasen, Agäw, Damot) but only for a short period and towards the end of the mission. Furthermore, the Jesuits visited sporadically some areas with which the Christian state kept relations, such as the Ottomans in Massawa, Ennarya, Kambaata, and Danakil, but without establishing any permanent mission.

With a topography ranging from several very high mountain ranges (the Semien Mountains and the Bale Mountains) to one of the lowest areas of land in Africa (the Danakil depression), Ethiopia’s great diversity of terrain determines wide variations in climate, soils, natural vegetation, and settlement pattern. The country is a massive highland complex of mountains and dissected plateaus divided by the Great Rift Valley, which runs southwest to northeast and is surrounded by lowlands, steppes, or semi-desert. For the most part, however, the Jesuits moved in temperate areas at elevations of 1,500 up to 2,400 meters that enjoyed mild temperatures throughout the year of between 16 to 30 °C. In these areas, defined by the zones known locally as the degua and qwella life is shaped by two clear-cut seasons: a rainy season, called in Amharic keremt, lasting from mid-June to mid-September, and the bäga, or dry season (October to May). War campaigns, tax and tribute collecting and expeditions to foreign lands would avoid the rainy season, when the intense and daily showers made roads impracticable and isolated politically bound provinces. The missionaries adapted their work to this climatic pattern and used the rainy season to celebrate the annual assembly at the core residence of Gorgora, to focus on educational tasks at the schools and seminaries and to compile information for their voluminous annual letters shipped to India and Europe.

**OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The Jesuit mission in Ethiopia appears today as one of the most thrilling undertakings of the episode known under the banner of the ‘Iberian expansion’ in the world. With good reason it has attracted numerous attention since its demise. The first histories of the mission were in fact written by the Jesuits themselves and it is hence with them that an overview of historic literature owes its beginning. The earliest treatises on the Ethiopian mission date from a time when the undertaking was still active. As skilled ‘propagandists’ of their order, the Jesuits were conscious of the importance of the huge missionary enterprise they were leading and took care to make the news reach the European public. The first Jesuit-made histories of the mission were the work of Maffei, Godinho and Páez. These
works had a strong moral underpinning and were often self-congratulatory. Yet, these treatises were more than simple institutional hagiographies and should be thus considered as pieces of historiography in their own right. The Jesuit authors used modern methods of historical analysis; they compiled thoroughly all fresh information that periodically reached Jesuit houses from the terrain, consulted other relevant non-missionary material and even had access to oral information. Their narratives are thus often framed according to a satisfactory thematic-chronological structure and the information provided would easily endure the examination of empirical evidence. The most successful example of this early group of narratives was Pedro Páez’s *História de Etiópia*, written in Ethiopia towards 1622. The author presented things from personal experience or from reliable informants, as he himself stressed in the opening words of the text: “I only talk of things I have seen and those things which I tell from the books of Ethiopia have been translated in conformity to the original texts. Besides, in reporting information taken from other people I tried to choose the most reliable persons I could find”. An ample analysis of this essential text follows in Chapter 5.

The culmination of Jesuit missionary historiography were the treatises completed by Afonso Mendes and Manoel de Almeida once the mission had fallen. The second is of special interest because it is a comprehensive narrative of all the stages the mission went through, from her beginning down to its collapse and uses a wide array of sources. Moreover, Almeida makes valuable historical interpretations that were not at the reach of men like Paes, whose death in 1622 stopped him experiencing the most glorious and also the most unpleasant moments of the mission. Finally, because Almeida is concerned in finding out what the causes were that provoked the fall of the mission, he also offers interesting psychological insights into central political figures, such as Susenyos and his brother Se’elä Krestos. The modern reader has, indeed, much to learn from the chapters where Almeida narrates the crucial period in the late 1620s, when the mission, whilst being at the peak of its achievements, began also to loose ground within Ethiopian society. Another dimension of this work is also worth mentioning. Due to its qualities and also because it managed to present under heroic vests an adventure that ended in disaster, Almeida’s became the official history of the mission. In 1660, the Portuguese Provincial and humanist

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3 ... Em que ordinariamente falo de vista, e o que refero dos livros de Ethiopia trasladei fielmente, e as cousas que escrivo por informaçaõ procurei de tomar das pessoas mais fide dignas que ca ha...; Dedicatory to Mutio Vitelleschi in RASO II.
4 RASO V-IX.
Balthasar Tellez published a revised version of it, which, by a series of editions into European languages, thereby turned it into a source of reference for those interested in learning about this episode and on Christian Ethiopia in general.\footnote{Balthazar TELLEZ, Historia geral de Ethiopia a Alta ou Preste Ioam, Coimbra: Manoel Dias, 1660.}

Subsequently, the interest for this mission became largely an issue of northern European circles, which had already in the past been the main vectors informing on the Iberian discoveries.\footnote{Cf. W.G.L. RANDLES, “La diffusion dans l’Europe du XVIe siècle des connaissances géographiques dues aux découvertes”, in: La découverte, le Portugal et l’Europe. Actes du colloque célébrée à Paris le 26, 27 et 28 mai 1988, ed. Jean Aubin, Paris: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, 1990, 269-77.} During the Baroque period, however, we are not to expect to find further comprehensive narratives on the mission. The Jesuits narratives could hardly be surpassed and authors focused in specific points about the mission. Unsurprisingly a number of the works, such as those by Johann Wansleben and Michael Geddes,\footnote{Johann Michael WANSLEBEN, A brief account of the rebellions and bloodshed occasioned by the anti-Christian practices of the Jesuits and other popish emissaries in the empire of Ethiopia, London: Jonathan Edwin, 1679; Michael GEDDES, The church history of Ethiopia ..., London: R. Chiswell, 1696.} now drew on the mission’s tragic finale to rebuke Catholicism. These deserve here little more interest than that of being the foregrounds of a Protestant anti-popish and anti-Jesuitic black legend. Other works were, on the contrary, more respectful and reviewed in a synthesized form what had already been exposed by the Jesuits. The most famous among the Baroque scholars on Ethiopia was the German Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704), an Orientalist and friend of Leibniz, who wrote his treatises on Ethiopia and the mission with the help of abba Gregorios († 1658), an Ethiopian monk who had been ordained as a priest by Patriarch Afonso Mendes and served as auxiliary of the missionaries in the residences of Gorgora and Dänqäz. Ludolf’s overview of the mission provided in the Historia aethiopica deserves study in that it also presents the viewpoint of a local Ethiopian Catholic.

The next significant step in the study of the mission was taken by James Bruce (1730-94), in his well known Travels to discover the sources of the Nile. The work, which appeared at the eve of the French Revolution, served to keep the interest for Ethiopia and the Jesuit mission alive but it also misapprehended some key episodes of the mission. To be true, Bruce’s narrative on the mission is not deprived of interest for, in contrast to earlier authors, he had the chance to visit the field. He stayed in Ethiopia from 1759 to 1761 and therefore was able to see the ruins – by then probably in a fairly good state – of the imposing buildings erected by Susenyos and the Jesuits in the 1620s as well as of hearing fresh popular stories of the ‘chalcedonians’, as the Jesuits and, by extension, the Catholics, were to be known in the country. Yet, it is perhaps under the influence exerted by the sto-
ries Bruce heard in Ethiopia and of his own Anglican confession (during his youth he prepared for a priestly career in the Church of England), that he portrayed the missionaries and their activities in a negative and misguided light. In short, what Bruce did was to write once again the standard narrative of the mission as he had learnt it from Ludolf but spiced it with some (poor) lies and (false) interpretations. Among the first, was his rejection that Páez, or any other Jesuit, had ever been at the sources of the Nile. This reasoning, which anticipated the aggressive nineteenth-century exploratory praxis, was clearly motivated by Bruce’s pretension to be the first discoverer of this famous spot, a fact that also pushed him to deny that his loyal and skilled Italian assistant, Luigi Balugani, had accompanied him there. However, the most important of his contributions for our present purpose was his misreading of a number of key episodes of the mission. He gave, for instance, an oversimplified picture of how the mission developed and what its main figures were. Pedro Páez would have proceeded “in moderation, charity, perseverance, long-suffering, and peace” and Dom Alfonso Mendes with “tyranny”, “blood and violence”, thus having reduced Ethiopia to “a Portuguese government”. Yet, such a picture failed to see coherence between the different stages of development the mission went through. Moreover, it overlooked the fact that if Páez’s methods were gentler than those of his successors it was partly because when he was active the missionaries’ supporters were still in the minority. Páez’s ‘tolerant’ approach was a compulsory tactic rather than a free choice at a time when the country was on the verge of civil war and the actions of the missionaries were being daily scrutinized – a fact that the Castilian himself was to acknowledge on more than one occasion. In addition, the Scott explained the events of 1632-33 as a complete breakdown of the mission and suggested the idea (although never properly saying so) that Susenyos abdicated in favour of his son Fasilädäs. A criticism of this assumption is offered in Chapter 7.

Now, such misconstruction of how the mission unfolded would have been harmless if it was not for the widespread acceptance the Travels enjoyed. Thus, although Bruce’s claims on discovering the sources of the Nile came to be received with great scepticism, his lengthy account enjoyed several editions: in 1813 appeared the third English edition and by the 1830s twice as many abridged editions had been issued. This also shows that during the Enlightenment period curiosity for this part of the African continent was as high ever. Thereafter, the Scott’s became the most authoritative narrative of the mission for the gen-

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8 Bruce did not say that Susenyos abdicated but made it implicit in the following passage: “The Portuguese historians deny both his resignation of the crown, and his perseverance in the Roman Catholic faith to his death, but this apparently for their own purposes”; Travels to discover the sources of the Nile, Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790, vol. III,
The mission was then still largely seen as a history of deception and failure. In fact, not even the Jesuits, who came just from recovering of the expulsion, managed to draw a more elaborate portrait. The Society enjoyed a historiographic revival under such projects as Sommervogel’s (1834-1902) Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus and the Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, which was initiated under the generalate of the Spaniard Luís Martin (1892-1906). Moreover, the need to catch up with the ‘successes’ that Capuchins and Lazarists began to gather in Ethiopia from 1850 onwards, also encouraged the compilation of a 14-volume collection of sources on the Ethiopian mission by the Jesuit Camillo Beccari (RASO I-XV). The collection offered an accurate survey of the mission and its protagonists and, most importantly, a compendium of most of the sources; for these reasons today it is extensively used by scholars. However, in the early twentieth century its potential for research was little or only superficially exploited. The sources on the mission were now an easy reach for everybody, but readers took time to turn up and Bruce’s schemas were as lively as ever.

At the turn of the twentieth century there was a rise in the production of articles on the mission. This corresponded with a growing interest among intellectuals from within the religious milieu and Italian scholars for the missions. A first set of authors focused principally on ‘missiological’ issues, which since the decisive papacy of Leo XIII (1878-1903) were a central theme in the agenda of the Church. In their articles, however, they said nothing new and by personalizing too much the achievements and failures of the mission in two figures (the ‘angelic’ Páez and the ‘brutal’ Mendes), they reinforced Bruce’s di-

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chotomy. The Italians, who then began the wide scale colonisation of what was to be known as Eritrea, saw with interest the past experiences of the Portuguese and Jesuits. Although they contributed indirectly to the study of this episode – Beccari’s collection was, for instance, funded by the Italian Colonial Office (Ministero delle Colonie) – they produced few serious historical surveys. An example of that is the treatise that Monti della Corte wrote on Gondar architecture. The author, then an officer engaged in the local administration of the Africa Orientale Italiana, made ample use of new resources such as cartography and photography but took little benefit from the sources already available to him. Therefore, without having done a proper reading of the historical evidence, he could declare that Gondar architecture “whoever has conceived them, it is obvious that they are our work” (Ma tornando ai castelli, chiunque li abbia ideati, è evidente che sono roba di casa nostra) and that the bridges, castles and other stone buildings would have solely an European (i.e. Portuguese-Jesuit) origin.10 As it will be seen in Chapter 6 neither of these hypotheses is confirmed by the missionary record. A remarkable exception to this trend was the survey made by the dean of Ethiopian studies in Italy Carlo Conti Rossini on the Portuguese-Jesuit period in Ethiopia.11 For its part, the only monograph dedicated to our subject, Charles F. Rey’s The romance of the portuguese in Abyssinia, from 1929, was, as its title announces, a superficial and romanticized account of the same story.12

With decolonisation, the interest for this mission intensified. The first significant piece to appear was a monograph written by two Ethiopian scholars, Merid Wolde Aregay and Girma Beshah.13 Their work transported a welcomed breeze of fresh air to a topic that had been stuck for a long time with too much of the same. In spite of its size and modest appearance theirs was a well written and well researched (it was the first time that Beccari’s collection was thoroughly used) narrative on the century and a half of Portuguese and Jesuit activities in Ethiopia. Moreover, it was the first survey made by Ethiopians, thus providing a more informed picture of the political-religious crisis that ensued at the arrival of Mendes. The authors mounted also a convincing critique of the Páez vs Mendes paradigm thus seeing the two as actors in a continuous project of reform of Ethiopian Christianity. Then, Tewelde Beiene’s doctoral dissertation on the Jesuit mission from 1983 bears mention. The text was written from a missiological-theological perspec-

13 Girma Beshah – Merid Wolde Aregay, The Question of the Union of the Churches in Luso-Ethiopian Relations (1500-
tive and was thus largely concerned with the intricate theological discussions between the Catholics and the traditionalists. A central point of the author was that the Jesuits, despite their intellectual preparation and skills, were unable to grasp the Ethiopian mentality, thereby precluding any chances of success for the mission.\textsuperscript{14} The hypothesis is interesting but understates the fact that in the Jesuits’ agenda there was also a change of the mentality of the locals. Of the same period, were two survey articles by the French archaeologist Francis Anfray on Gondärine and missionary architecture in the Lake Tana area.\textsuperscript{15} Although these were isolated and concise works, they constituted a first serious attempt to review the significant architectonic developments that ensued in Ethiopia since the presence of the Jesuits.

In the 1980s religious missions at large began to attract widespread attention in the academia. This phenomenon was not dissociated from trends in popular culture. In 1986, the Hollywood film \textit{The Mission} (directed by Roland Joffé, screenplay by Robert Bolt) focused in the Paraguayan Jesuit reductions and reached a wider public. The film was itself inspired in \textit{The lost paradise: The Jesuit Republic in South America}, a book by the British Jesuit Philip Caraman on the Paraguayan reductions issued in 1975. A few years later, another Hollywood-produced film, \textit{Black Robe} (1991, directed by Bruce Beresford, screenplay by Brian Moore), tried to call the same success with one more history of Jesuit activities in French Quebec. A rush of studies on Jesuit missions followed suit and, from 1980 to the present, over 168 theses (MA and PhD) have been written on Jesuit missions in North American and British academic institutions alone.\textsuperscript{16} As a result of that, thanks to a generation or so of scholarly spadework, the Jesuit missionary enterprise is one of the better-known facets of the European expansion.

The mission in Ethiopia also benefited from this trend. Significantly, it was also Philip Caraman who opened up a new wave of production on Páez and his friends with a, for a large part inaccurate, monograph on the mission.\textsuperscript{17} Accordingly, from 1985 to 2005 have appeared over 120 titles on this topic. The historical literature on this endeavour has
improved with the works of Hervè Pennec and Leonardo Cohen, each having completed a doctoral dissertation on the Jesuit mission and published a number of articles. Together with Tewelde Beyene, their researches are based in a thorough employment of primary sources – both Ethiopian and European. They have looked at hitherto untapped issues and thus offered a better understanding of the mission. The complementarities and disagreements between theirs and the present dissertation will appear with the unfolding of the text, though it is helpful to sketch now the main points of their work.

Pennec’s dissertation covers a vast period and is thematically ambitious. The author uses an impressive array of methods and techniques, quantitative and qualitative, from archaeology to textual analysis and cartography, and benefited from a field work exploring some of the missionary sites. He makes also strong points on the Jesuit conversion of Ethiopian political leadership. The overall outcome seems, however, unbalanced. The dynamics of the mission in the terrain were not properly elucidated, in spite of a notorious effort to survey missionary sources and the archaeological analysis did not lead the author to provide conclusive answers on the models of inspiration of the architectonic complexes built by the Society. Furthermore, the tight distinction drawn between “political” and “religious” motives is, as I try to demonstrate in Chapter 5, not helpful when trying to understand the intercourse between Ethiopian political elite and the missionaires. A less ambitious but more focused account appears to be Cohen’s dissertation. His methodological approach is largely constrained to a qualitative analysis of missionary and Ethiopian sources but Cohen also sheds light into the social and cultural dimensions in the encounter between Ethiopian traditionalists and European Catholics. His analysis of the exorcist activities practiced by the Jesuits – an important factor in the local perception of the Europeans – and on the Europeans’ hermeneutic deconstruction of Ethiopian literary tradition are welcomed insights into a hitherto neglected area. In the next section I will outline why one more study of this topic is justified.

**FOCUS OF THE THESIS**

This thesis tries to understand how the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia functioned. The work

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19 These shortcomings are accompanied by a failure by the author to come to terms with non-French literature on the European expansion and religious missions and his silence over past historiography on the Ethiopian mission.
opens roughly with the inception of the mission during the reign of Dom João III and ends with its demise. It focuses mostly on the endeavours of the missionaries and the study of the Ethiopian monarchy and society finds here a secondary place. Such a bias has two justifications. On the one hand, adequate examinations of the indigenous side can be found in the work of Leonardo Cohen as well as in the studies by Tewelde Beyene and Girma Beshah-Merid Wolde Aregay. Moreover, the same authors are also far more competent in Ethiopia’s important literary tradition than myself. On the other hand, contemporary missionary sources are overtly superior in quantitative and qualitative terms to the indigenous sources and thus permit a more accurate reconstruction of the missionary enterprise itself. The indigenous side of the mission is, however, not left untapped, as it will appear more clearly in Chapter 7.

This study contends that the “mission” was a complex human organization that can be better appraised if it is treated as an institution. In this sense, the mission can be approximately defined as a structure developed in the early modern times by the Jesuit Order; imbued by the ethos of Ignatius of Loyola; managed by a group of missionaries and aiming at an important, though never one-sided, transformation of the targeted society.20 The mission to Ethiopia or the missão do Preste – as it was often called – was one such institution. In understanding the mission as a human organization or institution I draw on a path of research that was opened in the early 1990s by such American scholars as Dauril Alden and David Block, the first in an outstanding enquiry into the Jesuit missions in the Portuguese world and the second in a brilliant case study on the Jesuit mission in Moxos, Bolivia.21 Alden’s quantitative and pragmatic approach fits well to understand the decision making process and organization in as complex an institution as the Society of Jesus. Block, for his part, demonstrated that a local mission was dependent on a continent-wide network to survive. Moreover, his concept of ‘mission culture’ appears as a valuable tool to

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20 It is beyond the reach of the present introduction to explain how and why the Jesuits created the modern mission. It may suffice to provide some hints at sources and bibliography. Among the specific references to missions in St. Ignatius, cf. Constituciones, part VII, 593-605. For the role of Francisco de Borja, third general of the Jesuits, in setting up the roots of Propaganda Fide, cf. Leon LOPETEGUI, “San Francisco de Borja y el plan misional de San Pio V. Primeros pasos de una congregación de Propaganda Fide”, Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu 11, 1-2, 1942, 1-26. Jesuit pioneers in missionary ‘theory’ were the Italian Alessandro VALIGNANO, author of Il cerimoniale per i Missiari del Giappone... [1581], ed. G.Fr. Schütte, Roma: Istituto Grafico Tiberino,1946 and the Spaniard José de ACOSTA, author of De Procuranda Indorum Salute [1588], Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984. To these names should be added those of the Spanish Discalced Carmelite THOMAS A JESU (i.e. Díaz Sanchez d’Avila, 1568-1627), author of Stimulus Missionum; sive de Propaganda a Religiosis per universum Orbe Fide, Romæ; Jacob Mascadarum, 1610 as well as the De Procuranda salute omnium gentium, Schismati-corum, Haereticorum, Judaorum, Sarra-cenorum..., Antwerpiae: Peter Beller, 1613.

appraise the religious cum cultural transformations that the Jesuit missions provoked in indigenous societies. A further source of inspiration of this dissertation has been Gregory Konz’s innovative study of Jesuit missions in New France. Konz equated a Jesuit mission to modern business organizations and used metapopulation analysis to grasp the dispersal strategies deployed by the mission for persistence and survival. Although I use different methods his analysis appeared to me as an example of how to apply quantitative methods and a long term institutional perspective to the study of Jesuit missions.

In this thesis, I have tried to focus on both the individual actors and in the common project they were part of. One of the greatest weaknesses of much historical writing on the mission has been to have merely surveyed individual figures and ignored the collective factor. In so doing scholars have perpetuated the schema created by Bruce of splitting the good and evil aspects of the mission between just two figures, Páez and Mendes. A strong point made by this study is that the mission was a collective project guided by a compact group of men, who were imbued of a similar ethos. For although Jesuit missions — and the Preste was no exception — were often composed of men with opposed characters (the Jesuit catalogui, for instance, would accurately classify the members of the Society as sanguineus, cholericus and flegmaticus), of dissimilar national and social origins and sometimes with different skills, they functioned relatively well as a collective undertaking. Individual members were supposed to subsume their differences into a common project; to bring diversity into unity and sum forces and skills rather than oppose differences. Such purpose was, as it is shown in Chapter 5, a strong component of the Ignatian concept of reducción (i.e. ‘reduction’), which was itself a guiding principle in missionary praxis. To be true, the ‘mechanism’ of the Jesuit mission was not perfect; missionaries sometimes clashed with one another and indeed some figures managed to imprint their own mark in particular missionary endeavours. On the whole, however, it is a general agreement that the Jesuit missionary enterprise — in both the local and global dimensions — was a finely tuned machine, one which, in many an instance drew successfully together individual forces into a collective goal. The single missionaries wanted above all their institution, the missão, to survive and to grow.

As a second point, I have also taken into account all the individuals that were part of this human group. Here the research has demanded a strong prosopographical focus rather than, as it is often done, the study of a few chosen figures. For an important lesson

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22 Gregory N.P. Konz, “The Jesuit Mission to New France: an application of a metapopulation diffusion model to a
drawn from missionary history is that the Jesuit missions had no heroes, but a group of men who rather than seek their own benefit put their skills in the service of the collective project. To be true, the missionary endeavours of the early modern times had a strong heroic component, but the heroic deeds were often credited to the order itself, to its saints and martyrs, rather than to living figures.23 Under this premise I have tried to reassess the role played by Pedro Páez (an important figure but in no way one acting in solitary) as well as to identify other important human components of the missão do Preste, such as António Fernandes, Luís Cardeira or Diogo de Mattos, joining here an approach already opened by Merid-Wolde and Hervè Pennec. My perspective here has been to assume that the Jesuit mission had outstanding personalities, men who did indeed stand up above the rest, but also to be aware that they owed their skills and personal achievements to the fact that they belonged to an exceptional institution and that they were surrounded as well by more 'silent' but just as able companions as themselves. In Ethiopia over 50 Jesuits and auxiliaries worked in the mission, to which number should be added a similar number of locals who worked close in hand with the Jesuit priests, whose names are not always recorded in sources but whose presence is always felt. Whilst it has not been possible to follow the traces of all these men, I have nonetheless tried to unveil their most important contributions and to provide, above all, the sense of a collective enterprise.

An ample survey of how the mission worked occupies most of the second and central part of the thesis. The pragmatic components of the missão do Preste are surveyed in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I analyse the ideological dimension of the mission, ground which has been largely absent from historical discussion; up to date, only Leonardo Cohen has looked at the Jesuit ethos – as conveyed in such texts as the Constituciones or Ignatian correspondence – as a way to understanding the praxis in the mission field. By directing attention towards St. Leo the Great and St. Paul, as well as to Ignatius of Loyola, I tried to lo-

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23 I believe such an ‘altruistic’ ethos of the Jesuit missionary functioned at least until the mid-seventeenth century. Until this moment Jesuit missionaries rarely claimed authorship for their achievements and the annual letters that were published in Europe (in such collections as the Annuae Litterae Societatis Jesu, Anni M D L XXXI Ad Patres et Fratres eiusdem Societatis, Romae: in Collegium eiusdem Societatis, 1583 seq) for the sake of the curious metropolitan public were often offered in an anonymous way. The European public was duly informed of the ‘conquests’ of the order but rarely knew about who the real actors were. A corollary of this practice is that, during the first century of missioning, with the exception of martyrs (and these only by often crude sketches), the missionaries rarely had their images portrayed in printed form, a fact that also conformed with Ignatius of Loyola’s own refusal to be portrayed. It is hence telling that the first realistic portraits of Jesuit missionaries were done by indigenous artists in Mughal India and Japan. Towards the second half of the seventeenth century, however, the missionary ideal type would have changed and embodied a more personalized understanding of mission work. Then some missionaries also became authors and well-known figures in Europe. One of the first of such new ‘missionary heroes’ would be the French Jesuit Paul Lejeune, missionary in French Canada in the 1630s and 1640s. His case is studied in an original work: Rhetorique et
cate the main ideological figures that were in the background of the mission. As I show with the case of Jesuit opposition to circumcision, the influence exerted by these figures explains to a great extent the attitude taken by the missionaries towards Ethiopia’s religious and cultural fabric, which, ultimately, would push them to adopt positions that spoiled their chances to fully take root in the country.

At the same time that I plead for an institutional approach to the mission, I am aware that, like any kind of institution, the Jesuit enterprise did not move within a vacuum. The origins of the Ethiopian mission are not solely to be found in the designs of European kings or Jesuit leaders. The religious drive set up by King Dom João III, the ‘Pauline’ spirit embodied by the Farnese pope Paul III and the ambition of one Ignatius of Loyola were decisive to forge the project of a religious mission to Ethiopia. Yet, as important factors as these were also episodes such as the forgery mounted by João Bermudez or the military expedition of Christovão da Gama. In Chapters 1 and 2 I survey the lies, adventures and haphazards that were in the background of the missão do Preste.

Moreover, the mission was never a self-supporting institution. For its survival and expansion the Jesuits relied on a diversity of external figures and groups. The institutional approach of one Dauril Alden or Charles Boxer has thus to be balanced by what cultural historians and anthropologists have recently done in the study of mission encounters. For Alden has sometimes fallen prey to a certain eurocentrism when he defined mission work as one among “indigenous multitudes whose basic systems of belief and customs they [the Jesuits] sought to alter”. The local support received by missions and the local agencies of missionary actions were important elements in the success and failure of mission endeavours and need to be assessed. Among the most stimulating studies in this field are those by Bruce Trigger on the Jesuit mission among the Huron in French Canada and by Nathan Wachtel on Jesuit activities among the Urus from Lake Titicaca.

Drawing from these perspectives, I have made an effort to identify the individuals, institutions and social groups that helped (or undermined) mission work. In Chapter 3, I explain the important role that banian and Ottoman ‘partnerships’ played in logistic as-

pects of the Ethiopian mission. These partnerships maintained the mission alive: they allowed the missionaries to travel safely and communications to run unmolested between India and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia an obvious partnership was the one established with part of the nobility, state officials and learned clergy. Prosopographical analysis has helped me here in determining who supported the mission among Ethiopian upper social layers and at what time they did it. In this way, I could establish when did significant ‘conversions’ take place and when also was dissent to the mission voiced. The data produced has supported the hypothesis that adherence to the mission did not solely occur from top to bottom, as it is often believed. Thereby I have been able to maintain that within the nobility and upper church and state echelons there was a disposition to embrace the ideas and style embodied by the Jesuit priests. The Jesuits seeked the support of local political and intellectual elites but also aimed at forming their own elites in their schools and seminaries. Moreover, I have extended the analysis to a group that has been surprisingly left aside from past literature on the mission, the Ethio-Portuguese. The importance this group had in helping the Jesuits set a foot in Ethiopia cannot be exaggerated. Here again, prosopography has permitted me to map the numerous members of this group who served as assistants, interpreters and auxiliaries of the missionaries. It was largely with their help that the Jesuits could produce the outstanding cultural-material improvements during the second half of the 1620’s. This crucial episode of ‘mission culture’ has been surveyed in Chapter 6. Recently appeared studies on Jesuit art, such as those by Christina Osswald and Evonne Levy, have helped me to understand this central theme in Jesuit proselytising. The economics of the mission, another aspect absent from historical literature, finds its way into the last section of Chapter 6.

Continuing with this all-embracing perspective, I have also tried to situate the mição do Preste within a wider network of Jesuit missions. The Jesuit missions scattered across the immense Asian Assistency were in contact with each other through an agile system of communications, personal intercourse and the centralizing force of Goa. Ideas, men and goods travelled from China to Ethiopia, from India to Japan. The dozens of Jesuit houses, colleges, seminars and missions formed a global network, perhaps the first to be fully operational throughout the whole globe, and their missions benefited from it. Chapter 6 tries to explain how the Jesuits combined a set of eclectic elements to form a mission culture in Ethiopia, which had indeed a Catholic and European underpinning but depended on the constant import of techniques and goods from India and the far east. The look at the Mughal mission, a mission geographically close and with a similar orientation
to the Ethiopian, has been advantageous to understand the origin of the most remarkable architectonic models employed in the Lake Tana area by the missionaries. Paraphrasing the term coined by my colleague Cristina Osswald, Jesuit architecture in Ethiopia was an important example of the *modo indiano*, which would find its epitome both in the churches of São Paulo in Diu and in its dazzling ‘copy’ built on the northern shore of the Tana Lake, in Gorgora Nova.

The third and last part of the thesis taps into issues that have not been reviewed so far. The demise of the mission seems to have appeared as too obvious an episode for any scholar to try to explain how this happened. In Chapter 7 I study the grade of social consensus enjoyed by the mission: who were the mission’s principal opponents and how was discontent expressed? Here I pretend to take the benefits from an approach already applied over other mission areas by Trigger, Wachtel, Bernard and Salazar-Soler and I enquire into the perception locals had on the missionaries and on the Catholic group who dwelled within their residences. This analysis has shown that in the 1620s the mission was less well established than the cultural-religious developments would let it imagine: whilst the Jesuits had achieved the ‘reduction’ of important figures of the Ethiopian state, their social grounding was weak and a large part of Ethiopian society – at its top and at its bottom – were silently hoping for their fall. Moreover, the very cultural patterns the mission tried to impose, such as the abandon of the circumcision or the devotion to a ‘foreign’ God – *Iyäsus* instead to the local *Egziabeher*, – would lead many a local to perceive the Catholics as a heretic cum monstrous group of men. In Chapter 8 I survey the period of exile, when the missionary project had been seriously hurt by the decree of expulsion but not definitively terminated. Here I dwell on Block’s idea of a ‘mission culture’ to explain that the Catholic culture forged during the years of the mission could survive the expulsion and the murder of most of the Jesuit priests well into the seventeenth century. In parallel, I show that as the comeback to Ethiopia became more and more unrealistic the mission and the land the Jesuits had helped to ‘discover’ turned into a historical cum literary topic in its own right. Finally, consideration is given to the impact that patterns imported by and developed during the mission had in the cultural life of Gondärine Ethiopia.

With this study, then, I aim to further the comprehension of an early modern mis-

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sion, one of the most enduring and interesting institutions that accompanied the European expansion. Although the number of historical titles on the Jesuit Ethiopian mission is today considerable, I hope to have completed neglected episodes and, wherever I tap into already covered ground, to have provided a new perspective. In the end, I expect to produce a portrait of the missão do Preste that speaks for of all the men that were involved in it and not just a few ‘heroes’ that historical production has obstinately recalled; a portrait, also, that neither hides the mission’s most apparent achievements nor ignores the difficulties this enterprise went through.

**Methodological Remarks**

This study is largely based in the consultation of missionary sources. The amount and quality of documentation directly or indirectly produced by the Jesuit missionaries is not unmatched by any other type of documentation, European or otherwise. Therefore, Beccari’s 15th-volume collection, with its well prepared indexes and handy display, has been an invaluable tool of the research and a large number of quotations made in the text are drawn from it. A few more missionary documents to be found in other published collections have also been used. In addition, I consulted a number of unpublished missionary texts kept in archives and libraries in Rome (Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, Archivio della Propaganda Fide) and Portugal (Arquivo Distrital de Braga, Arquivo Municipal de Evora, Biblioteca Nacional, Lisboa). The visit to the Archivo General de Simancas (Spain) produced only the finding of a few minor documents. The Jesuit central archives in Rome and the National Library in Lisbon are by far the two centres that contain the largest and most interesting documentation. Since a number of the sources (especially the series “Goa” in ARSI) has been already consulted by other scholars interested in the Ethiopian mission, I have tried to look into lesser known documents, among which are Arana’s interesting hagiography on Andrés de Oviedo (BNL) and a few documents from the Fondo Gesuitico (ARSI). Moreover, I have exhaustively read the major treatises written by missionaries in Ethiopia (Páez, Almeida, Mendez, Lobo) and by other Jesuits working in Europe but concerned about the mission (Maffei, Godinho, Tellez), which are all published in Beccari’s collection or elsewhere.

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29 The work, which is an outstanding individual accomplishment, contains only minor inaccuracies. For instance, a letter written by Melchior da Silva to the Archbishop of Goa and published in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 21, appears wrongly dated to 5 August 1695 when in fact the document was actually sent in 1595, one century earlier.

A second major set of sources is represented by European non-missionary texts. I did study most of the documents concerning the mission produced by the Spanish, Portuguese and Papal chancelleries, which for the most part are published in different collections of sources (RASO, CDP, Bullarium). I also got acquainted with the main Portuguese treatises on Ethiopia (Alvares, Castanheda, Góis, and Bermudez) and the Orient (Barros, Correia, Couto, Castanhoso, Góis and Faria e Sousa) during the age of expansion. Besides being literary masterpieces and historiographic achievements in their own right, works such as the *Décadas* have been particularly useful in reconstructing the context in which this mission unfolded.

Indigenous sources have been also considered. Christian Ethiopia stands close to the Arabic-speaking regions in Africa in holding a rich literary tradition. In Ethiopia such a tradition has been especially fertile in two types of genres: religious and hagiographical texts and royal chronicles. Whilst the first group is of a rather little value for the historical reconstruction here attempted, the later holds more interest. Royal chronicles, which began to be compiled in a systematic form in the sixteenth century, display the exploits of the Ethiopian Solomonic rulers. Although they are mostly dedicated to record life in the court and military campaigns, they provide scattered hints to the Portuguese and missionary activities as well as a non-jesuitic perspective over the political and social upheavals in Christian Ethiopia. Of similar interest has been a second set of texts the production of which had much to do with the blossoming of Catholicism in the country at the time of Susenyos: a series of polemic treatises produced by local religious scholars as a response to missionary’s activities. Most of the royal chronicles and theological treatises are today available in accurate and reliable bilingual editions.

As a work that tries to combine institutional history with local and regional perspectives, this study had to draw on a range of methodologies. At the preludes of the research there was a comprehensive bibliographical survey of secondary literature on the mission, a late fruit of which was the publication of an analytical bibliography on the mission.31 Thereafter I proceeded with an exhaustive reading of primary sources. After the compilation of the information in two bibliographical databases (on primary and secondary sources) I went on to do a quantitative-qualitative analysis of the data. I summarized information in the database and organized it according to keywords using concepts that appeared to me of relevance during the mission, such as “ethio-portuguese”, “circumci-

sion”, “local perceptions” etc. From this ready-to-hand information I was able to set up four databases to facilitate prosopographical analysis. A first database was dedicated to missionary personnel and close associates (over 50 names), another to the Ethio-Portuguese (over 200 names), a third one to Ethiopian figures (over 350 names) and a fourth one was aimed to compile information on the Jesuit sites in Ethiopia (20). From this data I could produce a series of tables and figures illustrating particular aspects of the mission’s composition and developments in Ethiopia. A complement needed for the thesis was cartography so to be able to locate the network of residences and places associated with the missionary endeavour. The composition of maps was done using an excellent free-of-charge software available in the internet (Online Map Creator, www.aquarius.geomar.de/omc). Coordinates were gleaned from the Gazetteer of Ethiopia\(^\text{32}\) and the websites www.infoplease.com and www.mapcrow.info. Some places and Jesuit residences, however, could not be properly located and had to be guessed with the help of historical descriptions and the use of such maps as Manoel de Almeida’s or those provided in Huntingford’s Historical Geography.\(^\text{33}\) Finally, I have made ample use of pictorial material, which shall serve to remind the reader that the Jesuit mission relied for its success, besides of the intellectual sophistication of Catholic theology, in sensorial means.

In the use of the terms I have tried to avoid anachronisms and to be as precise as possible. The main goal was to be clear and to respect as much as possible the historical and social context. To refer to the area targeted by the Jesuit mission I use mostly the term Ethiopia or Christian Ethiopia and, in the first chapters, sometimes also that of ‘Preste’. This is out of convenience, as the first are the terms most broadly used in historiography. Other less friendly terms, such as ‘Abyssinia’, ‘Solomonic state’ or ‘Ethiopian space’ (Penne) would have been perhaps more historically accurate but appeared rather outdated or artificial. The Ethiopian negus is addressed by the indigenous title or by the European equivalent of king. The term ‘Emperor’, much estimated by the missionaries, is explicitly avoided since, as part of the study will try to prove, it was an ideological construct of the Europeans. The coastline around Massawa, today part of the state of Eritrea (founded in 1890 as an Italian colony), is mentioned as ‘Ethiopian shore’ and the like. This is out of convention and the reader shall bear in mind that during the period under consideration the power of the negus never reached further than the Hamasen, south of Asmāra. For the

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use of local place names and names of ethnic groups I retained the terms employed in Jesuit literature but standardized the transcription. Nevertheless, I have preferred to use the term Oromo rather than the more historically accurate Galla because of its widespread use in today’s scientific literature. The group of ‘Portuguese’ who lived in Ethiopia and were known locally as Burtukan or Ferenj are distinguished by the term Ethio-Portuguese.

In the references to Jesuit and Portuguese sources that have more than one edition (e.g. Barros, Couto, Páez, Almeida) I indicate the book (livro, shortened as liv.) and the chapter instead of the pages to help the reader who is using a different edition to the one employed here more easily locate the exact reference.

**NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION**

For the transliteration of Amharic and other Ethiopian language terms I have followed the system employed by the Encyclopaedia Aethiopica but omitting the use of diacritical marks, which would have rendered the reading difficult. In addition, Hiob Ludolf’s *Historia aethiopica* and Pereira’s Index for the Chronicle of Susenyos have also been helpful in clarifying the spelling of local names employed in missionary literature. The vowels of the third and sixth orders are rendered by the same sign, “e” (e.g. “Krestos”). To bring names closer to standard transliteration, the “c” has been substituted by a “k”, and, when applies, the “u” for “w” (e.g. “Malacautauit” to “Mäläkotawit”, “Za Christos” to “Zā Krestos”). The explosives “s”, “t” and “p” are not distinguished by any diacritical sign here; thus “Sägga Zā’ab”, (lake) “Tana” and (abba) “Petros”. Explosive “k” appears as “q”, e.g. in “Qollela”.

In the transcription of Portuguese sources, I kept faithful to the original. However, a few minor standardizations have been carried out. Abbreviations have been written out (“que” or “quem” for “q˜”, “que˜”; “tempo” for “tpo˜”; “muito” for “m. to”; “grande” for “grd.e”; “dizem” for “dize’” etc.). Accentuation and punctuation were left as in the original.

**NOTE ON THE UNITS OF MEASURE AND CURRENCIES**

As far as it has been possible, I have tried to standardize measures and currencies employed in historical literature. For this task I have relied on the compilation made by Georg Schurhammer in his monumental *Franz Xaver, sein Leben und seine Zeit* and con

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fronted it with the classic works by Gerson da Cunha and Charles Boxer. Although Schurhammer’s list focuses on units of measure from the period of Francis Xavier in India (1541-56), the currency values concerned in this thesis suffered very slight or no variations in the first decades of the next century. In some instances, standardization was deemed inappropriate and therefore the original unit value was preserved.

Table 1: Equivalences of currencies and units of measure used in the sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Equivalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currencies</td>
<td>1 cruzado</td>
<td>360 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 oukea/ouquea (Ethiopia)</td>
<td>3,000 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 pardão (Gujarat)</td>
<td>300 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 pataka (India)</td>
<td>300 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 xerafim</td>
<td>300 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ducado?</td>
<td>3,300 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 scudo</td>
<td>300 reis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>1 alqueire</td>
<td>13,5 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>1 legua/legoa</td>
<td>6,1-6,6 kms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>1 palmo</td>
<td>22 cms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations**

**ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Arquivo Distrital de Braga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS</td>
<td>Arquivo General de Simancas, Valladolid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AME</td>
<td>Arquivo Municipal de Evora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APF</td>
<td>Archivio della Propaganda Fide, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSI</td>
<td>Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNL</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nacional, Lisboa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUB</td>
<td>Biblioteca de la Universitat de Barcelona</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PART I. BEGINNINGS
1. The Prester John’s new clothes

Although contacts between Europe and the Prester John/Ethiopia date back to the Middle Ages, it was only in the fifteenth century that they took a solid form. Two powers were responsible for that: Italy and Portugal. The former, enjoying privileged ties with the Orient, became a main vector for news about this distant African Kingdom. Over the course of the century, commercial houses from the most powerful Italian states, Florence, Venice and Rome, sent their agents with a view to closing ties with the negus. Among the most well-known missions conducted was that headed by the agent and diplomat of Sixtus IV (1471-84) Giovanni Battista Brocchi da Imola who reached Ethiopia during the reign of Bä’eda Maryam (1468-74). Also worth mentioning is that of the Italian Andrea Corsali, envoy of the Florentine Medicis, dating to the beginning of next century. But clergymen and men in search of adventure also reached the Ethiopian highlands, especially from the Dominican and Franciscan families. Papal diplomacy contributed to this story with the short-lived success of the Ecumenic Council of Florence (1438-43), which, among several other Eastern churches, saw the participation of a small Coptic-Ethiopian delegation headed by the Franciscan Friar Alberto da Sarteano. The Council of Florence and the numerous Italian travellers that reached Ethiopia had an impact on Renaissance culture. Mention of the Prester John and Ethiopia appears in the works of the greatest humanists and artists of the time, such as Picco della Mirandola, Dante Aligheri, Poggio Bracciolini, Antonio Averulino “il Filarete” (Plate Ia) and Ludovico Ariosto. The Council, with the Bull Cantate Domino contributed also in the future to foster renewed hopes of Union.

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1 “In Aethiopia’s realm Senapus reigns, Whose sceptre is the cross; of cities brave, Of men, of gold possest, and broad domains, Which the Red Sea’s extremest waters lave. A faith well nigh like ours that king maintains, Which man from his primaeval doom may save”; Ludovico ARIOSTO, Orlando Furioso, Turni 1536, Canto 33, 102 (Engl. tr.: William Stewart Rose, London: G. Bell, 1905-07).

2 On the issue of early contacts between Europe – mainly Italy – and Christian Ethiopia, ample literature is available in the form of articles, the most comprehensive of which remain those written by Renato LÉFEVRE, “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea del Medioevo e del Rinascimento (Parte Prima)”, Annali Lateranensi VIII, 1944, 9-89; Ibid. IX (Parte Seconda), 1945, 331-444; Ibid. XI (Parte Terza), 1947, 255-342.

3 LÉFEVRE, “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Prima), 64-67; Salvatore TEDESCHI, “L’Etiopia di Poggio
Moreover, Ethiopians present in Italy and probably Italian nationals with experience in Africa helped Fra Mauro composing the most accurate map on Africa in the fifteenth century.

The Kingdom of Portugal, having engaged in overseas explorations since the late fourteenth century, based part of its projects that were carried out during the fifteenth century on forming an alliance with the Prester John. An important factor in involving the Portuguese in what was to be a fascinating career was the large number of Italians taking part of the Lusitan expansion. Italians brought to the Iberian land the expertise and cartographical knowledge so indicative of Renaissance Italy. But the Portuguese also followed the steps undertaken by a relative of the Avis monarchs, King of Aragón Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1416-58), whose Kingdom competed with the Italian republics for control of the Mediterranean trade. In the first half of the century, Alfonso V established contact with Yeshaq and Zära Ya’eqob. Envoys from Yeshaq (1414-29) were in Valencia to meet the Aragonese king about 1428. A yet more important encounter occurred in 1450, at the moment of Alfonso’s triumphal entry into Naples. It was then that the monarch received two ambassadors of negus Zära Ya’eqob (1434-68), the Christian “Fra Michele” and the Muslim Abu Omar. They had been brought to Italy by the Sicilian adventurer Pietro Rombolo, long since established in the Ethiopian highlands. However, Aragón’s Ethiopian policy did not bear concrete fruits; the rise of the Ottomans, the strengthening of Mamluk zeal in Egypt and the death of the monarch shortly after precluded further contacts. It was Alfonso’s nephew ruling in Portugal, Alfonso V o Africano (1432-81), who took the relay.

It is during O Africano’s reign and under the sponsorship of the famed Infante Dom Henrique o Navegante that might have occurred the first Portuguese attempts to contact the “Prester John”. But it was well after Henrique’s death, under King João II (1481-95) that the Portuguese were successful. The “Perfect Prince”, who according to the Portuguese historian Luís Filipe Thomaz was the first to lead a “coherent overseas policy”, launched a series of missions to reach the Ethiopian negus using all the intelligence and human

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4 Alan Ryder, Alfonso the Magnanimous: King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 282, 293-96, who, however, is mistaken in stating the names of the Ethiopian negus; Lefèvre’s seems to be more accurate; “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Seconda), 391.


6 … A primeira política de expansão ultramarina coerente e integrada; Luís Filipe Thomaz, De Ceuta a Timor, Lisboa: Díbel.
means at his disposal. A first sourceable mission was that attempted across Africa by João Afonso Aveiro, which eventually reached the Ifé Kingdom of Oni (Benin) around 1485. Two years later another mission, led by Bartolomeu Dias, took a different route, by sea and around the continent, ultimately failing to reach the Prester John but leading to the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. The last route undertaken by the men of Dom João was across the Mediterranean and Egypt. The first attempt at following this route was headed by Pedro de Montarroio and frei António de Lisboa, but failed. The second, on the contrary, was a semi-success. In 1487, Afonso da Paiva and Pêro da Covilhã left Portugal and after a long journey across Egypt, India and the Red Sea, Covilhã was able to reach the Ethiopian highlands, where he lived until his death around 1530. Shortly after, an Ethiopian residing in Rome “Lucas Marcos” arrived to Lisbon and was charged with bringing back to his country letters for the negus. The fate of his mission is, however, not known.

With Portuguese expansion in India, carried out under King Dom Manuel I (1495-1521), cousin and successor to João II, and after the failure of other African endeavours such as the first evangelization of the Kingdom of Congo, contacts with Ethiopia gained momentum. The great naval commander Afonso de Albuquerque took to the Ethiopian coast one João Sanches, a priest, and João Gomes, who would have reached the Christian court around 1508. As a follow up to that mission, the Ethiopian regent Eleni (1508-22) sent to Portugal an Armenian merchant, Mateus, who reached Lisbon in 1514. Mateus brought with him a letter of friendship and two pieces from the Holy Cross, a symbol that was later sent to Rome by King João III. O Venturoso had time to organise a second diplomatic mission, the most relevant of all. The embassy was dispatched in 1514-15, thus shortly after Mateus’ arrival to Lisbon, and placed under the guidance of Duarte

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9 On this short-lived episode, which began in 1490 with the shipment of Franciscan and Dominican missionaries to Congo and reached its apex on 3 May 1491 with the baptism of the Nzinga a Nkuwu as João I, cf. Georges Balandier, La vie quotidienne au royaume de Congo du XVle au XVIIe siècle, Monaco: Hachette, 1965, ch. 2.
10 This was a not so well known embassy mentioned in the letter of Queen Eleni and in various contemporary documents; see Damião de Góis, Chronica do Felíxissimo rei dom Manuel [1566], Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1954, parte III, ch. lxx; also Cortésão, Esparso, 77-81; Aubin, “L’ambassade du Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel”, 6-7. For a discussion on the names of the two envoys cf. Cortésão 1938, 25.
11 Mateus seems to have been a nickname whereas the real name was Abraham; see David [Lebnä Dengel] to Dom Manuel I, in: Bullarium I, 292-94, 292. The identity of this envoy and the significance of his embassy are carefully analysed in Aubin, “L’ambassade du Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel”.
Galvão, a closer aide of Dom Manuel and royal biographer. But opposition from the Governor of India, Lopo Soares de Albergaria, and the death of Galvão on Kamaran Island brought about a delay. Some five years later a new embassy was organised in India. Headed by the fidalgo Rodrigo da Lima, it was taken to the Ethiopian shore in 1520 by the new governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira. Da Lima and his train managed to reach the camp of the negus, in the Southern Shäwan highlands. On their return trip to Portugal seven years later, an Ethiopian ecclesiastic, Säga Zä’Ab, acting as ambassador for Lebnä Dengel, joined the Portuguese. Meanwhile, a member of Lima’s embassy, João Bermudez, stayed in Ethiopia and later, between 1535 and 1538, became an improvised ambassador for the negus to the pope.

By the 1530s, already positioned as the principal maritime power in the Indian Ocean, Portugal had therefore become Europe’s privileged partner with the Christian Ethiopian Kingdom. It had in its favour a history of some thirty years of stable contacts with this kingdom and was spreading throughout Europe news about this Christian African monarchy. Credit for these diplomatic successes should go to its rulers and agents. The Portuguese kings never abandoned the quest to reach Ethiopia and knew, Dom João II and Dom Manuel I in particular, to give impetus to a pursuit that in other royal houses had remained a daydream of isolated monarchs. But the Portuguese kings also counted with a number of valuable people. After decades of travels, its fidalgos and sailors became experienced and skilled navigators and warriors, determined and intrepid enough as to reach corners such as the Straits of “Mecca” (Aden) and Hormuz where no Christian fleet had ever ventured before. Among its other valuable assets were the foreigners who acted as investors, soldiery and agents. Italians and Jews played a prominent role here. The involvement of Italian banking families in the Portuguese expansion is well known. The Florentine house of the Marchionni procured the foreign credit needed for the expedition of Pedro da Covilhã and Afonso da Paiva. In their turn, Jews, who until the coming to the throne of João III enjoyed a much better status in Portugal than in neighbouring Castile, provided the Kingdom with the intelligence and the contacts with which to move

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13 Aragon’s failed attempts under Alfonso V being a case in point. A similar fate was endured by the Medici from Florence, who, within their Oriental agenda, failed in closing ties with the Ethiopian negus; see Carla Sodeni, I Medici e le Indie Orientali. Il diario di viaggio di Placido Ramponi emissario in India per conto di Cosimo II, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1996, 7.
14 See Laurence A. Noonan, John of Empoli and his Relations with Afonso de Albuquerque, Lisboa: Ministério da educação, Instituto de investigação científica tropical, 1989, 23.
with relative ease in the East. Portuguese Jews in Cairo were instrumental in facilitating, through their far-reaching contacts, Covilhã’s and successive missions. A Jew Samuel from Cairo, for instance, translated the letters brought by Mateus to Afonso de Albuquerque and another Jew from Spain, baptized as Alexandre de Ataíde, became an interpreter and close aide of the admiral during his conquests in Asia. Finally, the Portuguese also drew resources and men from the native societies they encountered; they used plenty of natives in their trips, be it in the form of pilots, lingua (i.e. interpreters) or informants, and proved ready to learn from them.

The Ethiopian adventure, besides being one of the longest and most publicized diplomatic exchanges of its time, was also a costly endeavour. The Solomonic House in Ethiopia had neither the means nor the institutional framework to afford modern diplomatic games and it was, to a large extent, the Portuguese Crown who carried the burden of the diplomatic exchanges. Portugal’s investments in its overseas ventures, in particular in Ethiopia, were indeed huge, in both material and human resources. The costs to form a fleet (armada) such as those sent regularly to the Red Sea between 1507 and 1545 were extremely high and during the period of most heated communication with

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18 Portuguese reliance on indigenous powers and manwork has been amply studied. Winús pointed to the Portuguese flexible attitude towards the indigenous as to one of the keys to their rapid success in India; George D. Winius, “The Estado da India on the Subcontinent: Portuguese as Players on South Asian Stage”, in: Id., Studies on Portuguese Asia, 1495-1689, Suffolk: Ashgate, Variorum, 2001, ch. XII, 193-94. The importance and role of the lingua has been surveyed in Dejanirah Couto, “The Role of Interpreters, or Lingua, in the Portuguese Empire During the 16th Century”, eJPH [e-Journal of Portuguese History] 1, 2, 2003, 1-9.
19 Although there are shortcomings for the evidence referring to expenses of the armadas ao Estreito, the following document might serve as a point of reference to assess the sheer size of the costs incurred by the crown: “Despezas extraordinárias que celei D. João 3.º fez des do tempo que começou a reinar até que fez terceiras cortes em Almeirim, no ano de 1544” [Extraordinary expenses made by the King Dom João III from the beginning of his reign to the celebration of the third court assembly in 1544], in: Sousa, Anaíz, vol. 2, “Memórias e Documentos extraídos dos apontamentos de frei Luís de Sousa, relativos às lacunas que se encontram no manuscrito”, 272-75.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Armada</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>condi almirante fôa a India com grossa armada 2,600 homens=</td>
<td>200$000 cr. [*=72,000,000 réis]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1528</td>
<td>Nuno da Canha a India, a tomar Dão com grossa armada, 2,800 homens=</td>
<td>200$000 cr. [*=72,000,000 réis]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1533</td>
<td>D. Pedro de Castel-Blanco a India, 1 galeão e 10 caravelas e 800 homens=</td>
<td>100$000 cr. [*=36,000,000 réis]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1538</td>
<td>D. Garcia a India por viâsere, armada grossa, 4,150 homens =</td>
<td>300$000 cr. [*=108,000,000 réis]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethiopia, Portugal sent at least seven huge fleet to the Red Sea (Table 2). In these Ethiopian adventures the Portuguese also took high political and military risks, as they interfered in an area that was clearly beyond the actual reach of its military and human capabilities.

For an evaluation of Portuguese investments of special interest is the most important and decisive of all the embassies, the one directed, first, by Duarte Galvão, and, later, by Dom Rodrigo da Lima. This was conceived as a great diplomatic endeavour, analogue to those Dom Manuel’s agents had organised shortly before in Rome. The embassy carried a rich list of gifts, including Oriental fabrics, precious church paraphernalia, a large collection of printed books and musical instruments. None of the gifts reached their destination, however, as when the embassy failed they were looted in Cochin by the elusive Governor Lopo Soares de Albergaria. Nonetheless, the Portuguese from India managed to improvise a minor but yet still ambitious second embassy, composed of at least thirteen officials, which included a fidalgo, Lima, a chaplain — Francisco Alvares —, an escrivão (chronicler, secretary), a língua (interpreter), and several officers, such as a musician skilled in playing the organ (tangedor de órgãos), a doctor and painters and was followed by a train that probably tripled them in number; the presents offered to the negus and to Eleni were meager but still important, including a quantity of pepper, a mapamundi, some organs and a clavicordium.

To single out positive gains that Portugal obtained or expected to obtain from this expensive diplomacy is not an easy task. It is to be assumed that benefits of a symbolic character played an important role. Privileged ties with the Eastern Christian ruler were, at a time of mounting patriotism, a source for national pride. Besides, the crown of Avis and its people likely gained much symbolic credit by approaching a kingdom that many in Europe believed was the site of the mythical Prester John. By way of fine and brave diplomacy, the peripheral House of Avis became the protagonist of a legend that the great-

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* Gastos alem do q. se pudera gastar se fora armada ordinaria

20 ALVARES 1883, ch. V: “Das peças que o Capitão mando ao Preste João”. Also Gaspar CORREIA, Crónicas de D. Manuel e de D. João III (até 1533), ed. José Pereira da Costa, Lisboa: Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, 1992, 116-17. The list of gifts has been studied by Aída Fernanda DIAS, “Um presente régio”, Humanitas 47, 1995, 685-719. On the important collection of books included in the royal present, which do not seem to have reached its destination, see David HOOK, “A note on the books sent to Prester John in 1513 by King Manuel I”, Studia 37, 1973, 303-15. Also AUBIN, “L’ambassade du Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel”, 39, n. 190. Thomaz related the failure of Duarte Galvão’s mission to an intentional sabotage of Dom Manuel’s Ethiopian policy by a “commercial party” (partido mercantil) within the court, which would have counted with such men as Lopo Soares himself and the future King Dom João and supported a more pragmatic and less ‘messianic’ policy in Asia; THOMAZ, De Ceuta a Timor, 198 seq.

21 The whereabouts of the embassy were minutely recorded by its chaplain in ALVARES 1883; see especially ch. IV-V. For the list of presents, “Carta das novas que vieram a el-rei nosso Senhor do descobrimento do Preste João” in
est figures of the Italian Renaissance had largely contributed to spreading.

However, the undeniable fascination for the Preste was not the unique reason attracting Europeans to Christian Ethiopia. The Lusitanian crown and its principal advisors, ever so skilled in their geopolitical manoeuvres in Asia, were certainly well aware of more concrete political gains. Situated at the periphery of a world whose model and centre were the Italian states and cities, the House of Avis probably saw in the number of diplomatic ventures it was engaged in such places as in Ethiopia, Persia, Siam, Malacca, China and Japan – a means to consolidate its image and to place its dynasty in the front line of the European powers. It is, thus, remarkable that contact with Ethiopia flourished during the reign of Dom Manuel I, the ruler who most skilfully employed diplomacy and propaganda to obtain prestige and political power at home. In parallel to the fabulous military expansion in India, he led a conscious policy of propaganda in Europe. This included the two outstanding embassies to Rome from 1505 and 1514, where his agents paraded before the pope the successes achieved overseas. It was also during his reign that the printing press was deliberately used to publicize the discoveries. In this, Dom Manuel was also helped by a network of able and active agents, among whom stand out the Bishop of Viseu, Dom Miguel da Silva, and Damião de Góis. The former was Ambassador to Rome between 1515-25 and friend of a number of important contemporary Italian personalities, none the least the Medici family, who ‘ruled' at the eternal city during the papacies of Leo X and Clement VII. Góis was secretary at the commercial house in Antwerp and became famous for his works reporting on the two Ethiopian embassies that reached Lisbon between 1510 and 1527. Figures such as these made sure that all news of progress in the overseas’ expansion, including Ethiopia, promptly reached the European capitals.

CORTESÃO 1938 and also BARRETO 1988.

22 On the rise of modern diplomacy during this century see José Antonio Maravall, Estado moderno y mentalidad social (Siglos XI a XVIII), Madrid: Ediciones de la Revista de Occidente, 1972, § “El papel de la diplomacia, en su transformación renacentista”, 186-91.

23 The first was described by P. Mac Swiney de MASHANAGLASS, Le Portugal et le Saint-Siège. Une ambassade portugaise à Rome sous Jules II (1505), Paris: Plon, 1903 (extrait from Revue d’histoire diplomatique 17, 1903, 50-65). The standard study for the second and most famous embassy, that lead by one of the conquistadores of India, Tristão da Cunha, is Salvatore de CIUTIIS, Une ambassade portugaise à Rome au XVIe siècle, Naples: Michèle d’Auria, 1889.

24 See W.G.L. RANDLES, “La diffusion dans l’Europe du XVIe siècle des connaissances géographiques dues aux découvertes”, in: La découverte, le Portugal et l’Europe, 269-77. The first Portuguese treatise published on Ethiopia – and on the expansion as well – was the Carta das novas que vieram a e o Rei nosso senhor do descobrimento do Preste João; it came to press in Lisbon in 1521 and informed on the landing at Massawa of Diogo Lopes de Sequeira’s expedition; repr. in CORTESÃO 1938.


The result was that Portugal enjoyed great visibility in Rome and in the European courts. The Lusitanian Crown was admired, its achievements praised and its progresses closely observed. This respect and visibility paid off. The Papal chancellery dedicated a great amount of time to Portugal, writing on its behalf a great deal of Briefs and Bulls, most of them with an accentuated eulogistic character. Although not all of these documents carried the same weight, they helped boost and legitimate the campaign of expansion in the Indies. Through them, Dom Manuel I, and later Dom João III, were granted a series of important ecclesiastical rights and privileges without which it would have been virtually impossible to carry out the process of expansion to its full extent.

Besides local and domestic factors, there were also strong geopolitical reasons pushing the Portuguese towards Ethiopia. From the time of Henrique o Navegante on, the Portuguese had hosted grand ideas to destroy Islam with the help of the mythical Prester John, whose dominions were believed to be, at least until the seventeenth century, much greater than they were in reality. Accordingly, most of the maps on Africa produced during the sixteenth century granted a dominating geographical position to “Ethiopia” or “Abassia”, and showed the Ethiopian place names identified by Alves scattered throughout the whole southern part of the African continent (Plate Ib). In the sixteenth century, however, projects became more accurate and realistic and although Dom Manuel probably did not yet abandon his eschatological projects, as the historian Luís Filipe Thomaz argued, he – and especially key players in the expansion in India such as

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30 Luís Filipe THOMAZ, “L’idée impériale manueline”, in: La découverte, le Portugal et l’Europe, 35-103 and Id., De Ceuta a Timor, 192 seq.
Albuquerque – realised that Christian Ethiopia could be, above all, a formidable ally due to its position in the Red Sea area. During the times of Albuquerque, the alliance with the Ethiopians should ease the project to occupy a strategic place in the Red Sea and therefore close the Portuguese control of the Asian spice trade, which by 1515 provided 68% of the Crown’s revenues.\footnote{Stefan Halikowski Smith, “Portugal and the European Spice Trade, 1480-1580”, PhD, European University Institute, Florence, 2002, 19.} To maintain if not increase these contributions the Portuguese focused a large part of their diplomatic skills and military forces in the Red Sea area and Ethiopia. In 1505, a royal regimento urged the first Viceroy of India, Francisco de Almeida, to raise a fortress at the mouth of the Red Sea,\footnote{Diffie – Finius, Foundations of the Portuguese empire, 227-28. Similarly, in Dom Manuel’s official chronicle, Góis explains that the main reason why the king’s insisted in reaching the “Abyssinian Emperor” was discussing with the later “about preparing a war against the Turks, and about his own plans to set up fortresses in the coasts of the Arabian and the Ethiopian Seas” (Pera com elle tractar sobela guerra contra ho Turquo, & fortalezas que tinha, presoposto fazer na costa do mar Darabia, & da Ethiopia); Góis, quoted in Cortesão, Espaços, 83.} which Albuquerque accomplished the next year with the erection of the fort São Miguel on Socotra. However, as soon as Albuquerque appraised the minor strategic relevance of the island, the site was abandoned and the Portuguese put in practice a more effective policy. Henceforth, without abandoning the quest for territorial conquests, the admiral of the Portuguese fleet established the practice, which remained unaltered until the mid-sixteenth century, of sending every year a fleet to the mouth of the Red Sea.\footnote{On the establishment of this practice, cf. Castanheda 1979, liv. III, ch. VIII. Boxer places around 1569 the moment when the Portuguese armadas stopped patrolling in the Red Sea area; Boxer, Portuguese Conquest and Commerce, 419. According to Francisco Rodrigues da Silveira, who served from 1505-06 in the Red Sea, “as many years had elapsed since any fleet of ours had sailed in the Red Sea, we had no accurate knowledge of the prevailing winds, nor of the ports, anchorages, and watering-places”; ibid. 420. During the first decades the most important armadas, those that managed to penetrate beyond the strait of Bab al-Mandab were enterprised in 1508 and 1513 (Affonso d’Albuquerque), 1517 (Lopo Soares de Albergaria), 1520 (Lope de Sequeira), 1524 and 1525 (Hector de Sylveira), 1528 (Antonio de Miranda) and 1530 (Hector de Silveira); A. Kammerer’s Introduction to João de Castro, Le routier de Dom Joam de Castro. L’exploration de la mer Rouge par les portugais en 1541, tr. A. Kammerer, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1936, 4-6.} In this way the Portuguese could effectively control the trade flowing through this area without incurring in the risks and costs demanded to maintain distant and isolated fortresses.

The Ethiopians had also their own interests at stake. The establishment of ties with Europe had been an ever-present desire of the Solomonic dynasty, founded in 1270 by Yekunno Amlak (1270-85). The first traceable and serious attempts to contact European rulers date, however, to the period of Renaissance of the Christian Kingdom. These began with negus Yeshaq (1414-29), the ruler whose reign, as a contemporary Arabic source would put, “brought to an end the chaos” in the kingdom and who ambitiously set about reforming the army and the administration via the engagement of Coptic officials from
Egypt. As noticed before, Yeshaq sent envoys to Valencia around 1428 to ask the King of Aragón, Alfonso V, for craftsmen to be sent to Ethiopia, a request that in the future was to be repeated in every diplomatic communication. His brother Zära Ya’eqob (1434-68) sent another embassy headed by the Sicilian Pietro Rombulo to the Aragonese king in Naples. This mission was carried out during a critical period for the Christian Kingdom. War with the Christians’ eternal enemies, the Walashma dynasty from the sultanate of Adal, was at its peak; relations with the Mamluks from Egypt had dramatically deteriorated and the negus was carrying out an ambitious programme of internal reform, of both the church and state. The establishment of ties with the wealthy and technically more advanced Italian powers was certainly envisaged as a move to surmount these problems. Zära Ya’eqob was, however, only successful in part. From his reign onwards the presence of Europeans, especially Italians, increased. Yet, the Solomonic Kingdom had not gained the official and continuous support of any European power. It remained land-locked and the zealous pro-Christian course followed by the negus did not help in securing routes through the Muslim states encircling it.

Later, with Portuguese dominion in India, the Christian Ethiopians resumed their quest for European allies. A key role was played then by Eleni. As regent of the kingdom whilst Lebnä Dengel was underage, around 1508 she received the envoys sent by Albuquerque and organised the return expedition to Portugal headed by the Armenian Mateus. As read above, Mateus reached Lisbon about 1514 carrying with him a letter addressed to Dom Manuel I signed by Eleni herself. There, the regent proposed a marriage between the heirs of the kingdom and a military alliance against the ‘Moors’. In the 1520s, profiting from da Lima’s diplomatic mission, negus Lebnä Dengel (1508-40) sent a series of letters to Europe making renewed pleas to the new allies, the kings of Portugal.

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55 On Pietro Rombulo, see Carmelo TRASSELLI, “Un italiano in Etiopia nel XV secolo: Pietro Rombulo da Messina”, Rassegna di Studi Etiopici 1, 2, 1941, 173-202. Rombulo’s mission could be an indication that the relatively active diplomacy of the Ethiopian kings in the fifteenth century was, to an extent, guided by the intelligence and skills provided by Europeans, mostly from Italy, living in Ethiopia.
56 On the important political and religious reforms enforced by Zära Ya’eqob see TADDESE Tamrat, Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, ch. VI: “Zär’a Ya’iqob, and the Growth of Religious Nationalism (1380-1477)”.
57 Giovanni Battista Brocchi, in the account compiled by the Dominican Francesco Suriano, lists ten Italians as having arrived there around 1454, thus probably following the embassy in Naples of 1450; LEFEVRE, “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Prima), 398-99. For evidence on later arrivals, cf. ibid. as well as O.G.S.CRAWFORD, Ethiopian itineraries circa 1400-1524, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958, 41-42, 166, 172, 190.
58 AUBIN, “L’ambassade du Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel”, stressed the active role played there by Eleni and the disagreement of Lebnä Dengel with her diplomatic agenda.
and the pope, for craftsmen and military skills.  

The Christian Ethiopians thus had their own motives for playing diplomatic games with European states. Although their isolation was never as dramatic as historiography has traditionally put it, their position amidst strong Muslim and pagan states did shut many gates to the outer world and trade and diplomatic ties were weak. The Renaissance European states offered them a way out of this seclusion and the possibility to strengthen the state’s structure.

**DOM JOÃO III, RELIGIOUS REFORM AS EXPANSION**

By the late 1520s, the Portuguese attitude towards Christian Ethiopia began to change. The high-style ‘diplomacy’ of Dom Manuel was abandoned to give place to a policy of much stronger religious character and dominated, from the 1540 onwards, by the active presence of the Jesuit Order. There were many reasons to account for this, both internal and external.

Among the internal factors, the death of Dom Manuel I and the succession to the throne of his son Dom João III (1521-57) was decisive. *O Piadoso* proved a monarch of different, if not opposite, ideals to his father. While not yet fully abandoning the political and military expansionism of the first decades of the century, he gave great importance to the reinforcement of the national church, both domestically and in the overseas dominions. During his 36-year reign, Portugal experienced the largest religious reforms ever attempted by a single monarch. In stressing Dom João’s religious engagements, I do not think, however, that the king was a puppet in the hands of inquisidores or Jesuit priests, as Portuguese liberal historiography has often argued. As a matter of fact, the introduction of the Inquisition was first conceived during the reign of Dom Manuel and the Jesuit Order was not an intruder but came to the kingdom by the very decision of Dom João and

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39 The documents were published in *Bullarium* I-II. It is interesting to quote one of the passages requesting for craftsmen for the variety of offices listed: “at the same time, send me learned men and also craftsmen who could make images in gold and silver, copper and iron, stain and plumb smiths. In addition, send me officers who could print books in our alphabet for the advantage of the church and also someone who is able to produce gold leaves and guild other metals” (*Interim mittote [sic] ad me viros eruditos, atque etiam coelatores imaginum auri et argenti; et fabros cupri, et ferræ, et stani et plumbi; item artifices, qui litteris nostrae linguæ pro ecclesia libros imprimant; item aliquos, qui ex auro bracteolas [i.e. bracteola, bratteola, ‘gold leafs’] facere, et cum his inaurare alia metalla sciant*); David [Lebnä Dengel] to Dom Manuel I, 1520, in: *Bullarium* I, 292-94, 294; also in ALVARES 1883, ch. LXXVII.

40 The issue of Ethiopia’s isolation is an old theme in historiography.Whilst its origins may be traced back to the Portuguese and Jesuit narratives of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it has been a popular theme in historical literature. An example of it is the famous statement by Edward Gibbon: “Encompassed on all sides by enemies of their religion, the Ethiopians slept for near a thousand years, forgotten by the world by whom they were forgotten”; *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: Campbell, 1993 [London: Strahan & Cadell, 1776-89], ch. 47.

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his advisors. Thus, although the ideas and character of the king did affect the way in which policies were chosen or implemented, Portugal’s religious drive is to be considered within the wider European context, where religious and political reforms (Protestantism, absolutism) reshaped the foundations of church and the nation states.

Under Dom João, important religious institutions were incorporated into the architecture of the state. In 1532, the Mesa da consciência e ordens was created, an institution that, manipulated by the ecclesiastical milieu, was to become a powerful tool for controlling the state.\footnote{See ALMEIDA, \textit{Historia da Igreja em Portugal}, vol. 2, \textit{liv}. III, 12 seq.}

Four years later, a Papal Bull set up the Inquisition as a special tribunal in the kingdom, the first inquisidor mor being Dom Frei Diogo da Silva, Bishop of Ceuta.\footnote{On the political role of the tribunal at the service of the centralizing state, see J. Lácio d’AZEVEDO, \textit{Historia dos Christiós Novos Portugueses}, Lisboa: Livaria Clássica Editora, 1921, 63. The establishment of the tribunal came, though, after many years of unheeded petitions, beginning with the reign of Dom Manuel I, who had requested it since 1515; see Dejanira Couto. \textit{História de Lisboa}. tr. Carlos Vieira da Silva, Lisboa: Gótica, 2003 (4th ed.), 153; ALMEIDA, \textit{Historia da Igreja em Portugal}, vol. 2, \textit{liv}. III, 184-86.}

Shortly after, a freshly founded order with a promising future, the Society of Jesus, was called into the kingdom; this made Portugal the second state – after Italy – where the Jesuits settled down.\footnote{The presence of the Jesuits in Portugal was inaugurated in June 1540 with the arrival in Lisbon of Simão Rodrigues and Francis Xavier; it was only in September that the order was officially confirmed by Bull \textit{Regimini militantis Ecclesiae} of Paul IV. Proof of the importance of the Portuguese’s sponsorship of the Jesuit Order is given in the following letter sent by Ignatius to Dom João: “¿De quién o por qué mérito viene a nosotros, siendo tan bajos y tan abatidos en la tierra, que, llegando algunos de los nuestros en Portugal, por V.A. tanto fuesen favorecidos, alzados y en tanta estima puestos?”, Ignatius of Loyola to Dom João III, in: IGNACIO DE LOYOLA 1997, 766. An excellent study on the cultural-religious reforms during the reign of Dom João III remains: JOSÉ SEBASTIÃO DA SILVA DIAS, \textit{Covrtes do sentimento religioso em Portugal (séculos XVI e XVIII)}, 2 vols., Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1960, especially ch. 3-4.} Then, in 1551, the pope conferred absolute rights over the Order of Christ to the House of Avis. In the same period, the Portuguese Church continued its campaign of expansionism as initiated under Dom João II and Manuel I, creating a number of new dioceses, bishoprics (Leiria, Miranda, Portalegre), especially in the newly acquired territories overseas (Angra, Bahia, Cabo Verde, Goa, S. Thomé), and archbishoprics (Evora, Funchal, Goa). The administration of the Church also took important steps towards major cohesion and control; from the Council of Viseu in 1527, Diocesan and Provincial Councils began to be celebrated with regularity, forerunning by some decades the Decree of Trent of 11 November 1563 officially instituting this practice.\footnote{On ecclesiastic expansion see Fortunato de ALMEIDA, \textit{Historia da Igreja em Portugal}, vol. 3, \textit{parte} I, \textit{ch}. 1, and \textit{Ibid}, \textit{parte} II, \textit{liv}. III, 12 seq. Also Council of Trent, 24th Session, “Decretum de reformatione”, \textit{Kanon} 2, in: Josef WÖHL-MUTH – Giuseppe ALBERIGO (ed., tr.), \textit{Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien/Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta}, Paderborn et}
became Archbishop of Braga, the first religious see of the kingdom, in 1534, and later of Lisbon and Evora; in 1539 he was made *inquisidor mor* and in 1546 Cardinal of Portugal. Both *infantes* were also for some time likely candidates for the Papacy.\(^{46}\)

These grants, institutional reforms and individual achievements, often obtained against the will of the Papacy,\(^{47}\) played an important role in strengthening the absolutism of the state, which came to gather decisive political, religious and economic assets.\(^{48}\) They also gave the state free hand in setting up its own religious agenda. During the regency of Cardinal Dom Henrique (1562-68), further reforms were introduced, especially concerning the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–63). However, it was the long reign of Dom João that determined the direction and form taken by state and Church in the following centuries.

The court itself was also reformed. Although the breach here was not radical, under Dom João a progressive displacement of the Erasmian circles that had flourished under the auspices of his father is indeed noticeable. Figures of marked liberal character who had been close to and favoured by Dom Manuel I encountered some obstacles. This was the case of the Bishop of São Tome, Dom Miguel da Silva, who hastily abandoned the kingdom in 1540 to receive, against the monarch’s will, the red hat in Rome, and, partially, also that of the cosmopolitan Damião de Góis, whose case is discussed below. Important literates such as André de Resende suffered a similar fate. The court, saw the emergence of circles that bound a thorough theological education with religious zeal – it was the period of the ‘Parisian Bachelors’. Therefore, more orthodox-oriented figures such as Diogo Ortiz, Bishop of S. Thome, and the theologian Pedro Margalho, increased their influence in orienting the king’s and the kingdom’s spiritual affairs. This reformed shift culminated in the arrival of the Jesuits, beginning with Francis-Xavier and Simão Rodrigues in 1540.\(^{49}\)

Portuguese society also endured important changes that ultimately had an impact in relations with Christian Ethiopia: exponential growth of Lisbon, which became the

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\(^{47}\) On tense relations between the Vatican and the crown of Portugal during this period, see ALMEIDA, *Historia da Igreja em Portugal*, vol. 3, *parte I*, 25-26 and §109.

\(^{48}\) AZEVEDO, *Historia dos Christãos Novos Portugueses*, 63.

\(^{49}\) In the first letter that Francis-Xavier sent from Portugal, he declared that “once the nobility is reformed, a great part of the kingdom will follow” (… reformados los nobles, gran parte de su reino será reformada); Francis-Xavier to Fathers Ignacio de Loyola and Nicolás Bobadilla, 23 July 1540, Lisboa, in: FRANCISCO JAVIER 1996, doc. 6, 61.
largest town in the Iberian Peninsula and the second metropolis in Europe;50; beginning of migration to the Indies and Brazil; and increasing presence of foreigners, among them Italians, northern Europeans and Jews in the Portuguese territory. While being the natural outcome of the growth and wealth of the state, these phenomena brought about conflicts. The fate of Portuguese Jews is a case in point. The Jewish community in Portugal, ever active throughout Portuguese history, grew dramatically at the turn of the sixteenth century following the arrival of Jews en masse from neighbouring Castile fleeing the religious policies of the Spanish Catholic Kings.51 Dom Manuel I hesitantly faced it in an ambiguous way, first acquiescing to the pressures of Castilian policies, and later, after the massacre of 1506, largely tolerating the life of the christãos novos.52 Dom João’s policy on behalf of this group was to be quite different. The start of the Inquisition’s juridical machinery, which in nine out of ten of the cases dealt with the christãos novos, imposed a dogmatic and fixed definition of the model citizen, from which the Jews were excluded. As a consequence, this group progressively abandoned the country in the central decades of the sixteenth century. From this migration, Portugal lost not only between five and ten percent of its overall population but a group that for centuries had been an important element in its socio-cultural fabric and economic framework.

Last but not least, the years following Dom João’s succession to the throne were also marked by important changes in the geopolitical arena. Under Selim I (1512-20) and Suleyman I the Magnificent (1520-66), the Ottoman Empire achieved its greatest expansion. Ottoman conquests in Europe, including the Hungarian steppes and the Balkans, placed the Empire close to the centre of Western Christianity and directly menaced Habsburg supremacy in Europe, as seen by the battle of Wien (1529). Of more concern for Dom João’s kingdom, however, was the swift take over of the crumbling Mamluk Egyptian state by the Ottomans, a development to which the Portuguese had indirectly contributed in no small degree.53 In 1517, Sultan Selim I turned Egypt into a pashalik and

51 The number of Jews having migrated from Castile during the reign of Dom João II is estimated between 100,000 and 200,000; see: Gotthard DEUTSCH – Meyer KAYSERLING, “Portugal”, in: Adler, The Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 10, 135-41.
52 Albeit compelled by royal marriage to expulse the Jews from 1496, Dom Manuel never gave free hand to popular anti-Judaic feelings. Thus, the dreadful massacres of April 1506, which revealed the popular hatred towards that group, gave also the king the opportunity of enforcing a severe repression on its instigators and, henceforth, to establish a policy combining segregation with tutelage of the christãos novos; see AZEVEDO, Historia dos Christãos Novos Portugueses, 61-62; Hermann Prins SALOMON, “Quelques documents concernant l’expulsion des Juifs du Portugal décrétée par le roi Manuel I et la subséquente transformation de celle-ci en ‘conversion générale’”, in: Les juifs portugais. Exil, héritages, perspectives: 1496-1996, ed. Aldina da Silva et al., Montréal: Médiaspaul, 1998, 13-33.
53 It was the blockade of traffic between India and Egypt enforced by Portuguese dominion in the Indian Ocean that
set up a navy at the Port of Suez. Gradually, the *pashalik* incorporated the main ports of the Red Sea: Sawakin in 1524, which also became the administrative centre of the province of *Eyalet el-Habesh*; Mocha, in 1535; and Aden, three years later. The Portuguese faced a new and major challenge to their pretensions of dominance in the Red Sea and, to an extent, in the Indian Ocean. While the latter area was secured with the victories at Diu in 1538 and 1546, the Red Sea was eventually lost and the ambitious projects outlined by Albuquerque and Dom Manuel were given up for good. Such a dim geopolitical horizon could have led the king, as the French historian Jean Aubin proposed, to drop the ‘messianic’ projects of his father and to adopt a more reserved attitude towards the Ethiopian ally.54

**The Prester’s new clothes**

When the ‘manueline’ embassy of Rodrigo da Lima arrived in Lisbon in 1527, the atmosphere in the kingdom was therefore significantly different to that which he had left seven years earlier. In Portugal, news about the kingdom of the Prester John were probably received with the same level of interest shown during the visit of the Armenian Mateus, but officials of the Portuguese court now scrutinized the religious orthodoxy of the allied kingdom. The Ethiopian envoy, Sägga Zä‘ab, who in contrast to the Armenian Mateus enjoyed a high status and the official support of the *negus*,55 experienced in Lisbon a rather hostile reception and had to manoeuvre in a much more difficult environment to his predecessor, whose reception was in all likelihood warm and whose stay was short and friendly.56 His visit, which originally should have represented just one further step in closing ties between the houses of Avis and Salomon,57 lingered on for some eleven years, during which the monk suffered the humiliation of being excluded from participating in the

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55 He is mentioned in GOIS 1540, 93, as “épiscopus”, which appears clearly as a mistranslation of the title of ḫaq qa henneṭ, i.e. ‘chief priest’, a high religious position in Christian Ethiopia and close to the *alun* or metropolitan; David [Lebna Dengel] to Dom João III, in: *Bullarium I*, 295. Besides, shortly before his trip to Portugal he was made “ras Bugana”, governor of the province of Bugama, one of the historical regions of the country; ÁLVARES 1883, ch. LV.

56 Aubin, “L’ambassade du Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel”, 47. Although Mateus’ trip to Lisbon was not easy, since he had been frequent target of suspicion and disdain in India, his stay at the Portuguese court was, according to all accounts, delivered of the problems faced by Sägga Zä‘ab.

57 These were at least the expectations of the Ethiopian envoy himself, as he declared it later: “I was not sent by most Potent Lord, the Emperor of Ethiopia, to the Roman Pontiff, and to the most Serene John King of Portugal, to quarrel and dispute, but to contract Friendship and Alliance between them” (*Ego autem non sum missus a potentissimo domino meo, Imperatore Aethiopum, ad Romanum Pontificem et Serenissimum Joannem, Lustianiae Regem, ad disputationem et contentionum rivas, sed ad amicitiam et societatem contradiebant*); Sägga Zä‘ab, in: GOIS 1540, 85 (I used the English translation – updating style – by Michael Geddes, *The church history of Ethiopia...*, London: R. Chiswell, 1696, 66).
Christian mass and instead obliged to dispute with Diogo Ortiz and Dr. Pedro Margalho.\textsuperscript{58}

Ortiz and Morgalho were prominent figures at the court of Dom João III. They had studied at the University of Paris and occupied important ecclesiastic and academic positions in Portugal and Spain. Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas was nephew of the Spanish astronomer and theologian Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas “Calzadilla”, who had participated in the foregoings to Covilhã’s trip to Cairo and Ethiopia. During the 1520s, he was Dean of the royal chapel and instructor to the future king, Prince João, and to his brothers, the infantes Dom Luis and Dom Fernando. Later he was nominated Bishop of S. Thomé and Ceuta. Pedro Margalho (1471/73-1556) had been professor at Salamanca and Lisbon and in 1527 participated at the meeting of Valladolid to decide over Erasmus’ writings. Between 1529 and 1533 he was instructor at the court of Cardinal Infante Dom Alfonso.\textsuperscript{59}

In all likelihood the disputes with the two theologians took place between 1530 and 1533.\textsuperscript{60} As a result, Sägga Zä’ab composed in 1534 a passionate plea in defence of his faith and sent it to Damião de Góis, whom he had befriended whilst the latter was on a short visit to Lisbon. The text, whose Latin title is \textit{Haec sunt, quae de fide et religione apud nos Aethiopes habentur et observantur}, was included as the main body of Góis’ later famous treatise \textit{Fides religio moresque}, published in 1540.\textsuperscript{61} Besides its inherent value, as it was the first document published in Europe by an Ethiopian, Sägga Zä’ab’s text is important to the present study because it helps in understanding what was discussed during the stay in Lisbon, an issue that apparently is otherwise not described in any Portuguese annals or sources.\textsuperscript{62}

In the treatise, the Ethiopian monk describes throughout 41 pages the main characteristics of Ethiopian Christianity and of the Christian Kingdom; he points to the errors implicit in the European use of the title Prester John, tells about the Solomonic roots of the monarchy and describes at length genuine features of Ethiopia’s Christianity. Among the

\textsuperscript{58} GÓIS 1540, 78, 85.


\textsuperscript{60} The definitive arrival of Margalho in Portugal in August 1529 sets a date \textit{post quem} and the composition of the treatise, signed 1534, a date \textit{ante quem}; on this encounter, see also SOARES, Pedro Margalho, 118.

\textsuperscript{61} GÓIS 1540, 54-96.

\textsuperscript{62} Although the text certainly did undergo an important number of modifications, beginning with a series of translations (from Ethiopian – probably Amharic – to Portuguese and later to Latin), it does appear to be the genuine work of Sägga Zä’ab, except for some modifications probably made in Italy by Góis and Paolo Giovio; cf. Isabel Boavida, “Damião de Góis e a frase caldaica e etiópica”, in: \textit{Damião de Góis na Europa do Renascimento}, Braga: Publicações da Faculdade de Filosofia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 731-42.
later issue, a central theme are the ‘Mosaic’ practices. The author gives elaborate explanations for why circumcision, the Sabbath and the dietary prescriptions were observed by Ethiopian Christians. He stresses that those practices neither contravene the Christian principles nor the ideas set up by St. Paul. In a passage further on in the text, the heart of the polemic is unfolded:

What I have written concerning these traditions, I did not do it out of a spirit of contention, but to defend my Countrymen against the violent reproofs of those who paid so little respect to the most Potent Precious John and his Subjects, as to load them with reproaches, calling us Jews and Mahometans, because we circumcise, and sanctify the Sabbath, after the manner of the Jews, and do continue our Fasts till Sunset, as the Mahometans do: They do likewise object to us with great bitterness, that our Priests do marry, after the manner of the Lay-men; and that mistrusting our first Baptism, we are baptized yearly; and that we circumscribe not only Males but Females also, which the Jews never did; lastly, that we observe a distinction of meats with great strictness; and that we call Children Half-Christians before they are baptized.

The Portuguese, seem to have been predominantly concerned with the ritual practices of the Ethiopians. Circumcision, in the first place, but also the Sabbath and some dietary prescriptions rendered the Ethiopian Church, in the eyes of the Portuguese, a church still imbued with the Mosaic Law. On the same basis, Margalho had provided earlier a harsh and unfavourable view of Ethiopian Christianity in his treatise the Phisices Compendium (1520):

And such land of Ethiopia is beyond Egypt and its inhabitants are called Ethiopians and Abyssinians: they have as a tradition to mark their face with a branding iron. They do not baptise with fire as some say; with the water of baptism they receive heretics and erroneously they admit dogmas and customs from the Old Law [which] together with our Law they observe; and they imitate the habits of other infidels having several wives; they claim fabulously to come from Salomon and the queen of Sheba.

Following this meeting a religious clash between Ethiopia and Portugal was, as it seems,
inevitable. The monk was only allowed to return home in 1538, eventually dying in Cochin the next year. In 1539, Cardinal Infante Dom Alfonso, one year before his death, sent a letter to the negus Lebnä Dengel answering every one of the arguments set forth by Sägga Zä’ab in his plea and urging the Ethiopian ruler and his Church to engage in full-scale religious conformity with Rome. The following year Góis’ treatise Fides religio moresque was published in Louvain. The book, which was quickly translated into French and German was banned in Portugal and Góis was severely admonished by Dom Henrique. In two letters sent in 1541 to his friend Góis, the inquisidor geral of Portugal justified the decision. He talked favourably on the first part of the book but criticised the second, that with Sägga Zä’ab’ text. According to Dom Henrique, the Ethiopian monk misquoted the Holy Scriptures and in his description of the pollemic had ignored the criticisms waged by Margalho and Ortiz.

What is important to stress about this controversy is that neither Sägga Zä’ab nor Góis were unveiling anything new to the public. The Europeans had known that circumcision and other ‘Judaic’ rites were practised by the Ethiopians for a long time. Contacts with Ethiopian Christians during the fifteenth century and earlier, established mostly through the Ethiopian monastic community in Palestine, had already informed Europe of the most ‘exotic’ features of this Oriental Church. During the Council of Ferrara/Florence, the Bull of Union with Copts and Ethiopians Cantate Domino from 4 February 1442 had also made clear reference to these ‘deviations’. Thus, the scandal provoked in Portugal by Sägga Zä’ab was only in a minor measure related to what the defiant Ethiopian monk said. Indeed, it had much more to do with the changing atmosphere in Portugal and with the reformist trend that was transforming the country and its institutions. By the late 1520s and early 1530s, the ‘Mosaic’ elements found in Ethiopian Chris-

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67 Cardinal Infante Alfonso to David [Lebnä Dengel], 20 March 1539, in: RASO X, doc. 3.
69 The Bull recalled the authority of St. Paul (Cor 6,12; 10,22) warning both Copts and Ethiopians “not to practice circumcision either before or after baptism” and went: “Therefore it denounces all who after that time observe circumcision, the sabbath and other legal prescriptions as strangers to the faith of Christ and unable to share in eternal salvation, unless they recoil at some time from these errors. Therefore it strictly orders all who glory in the name of Christian faith, not to practise circumcision either before or after baptism, since whether or not they place their hope in it, it cannot possibly be observed without loss of eternal salvation” (Omnes ergo post illud tempus circumcismionis et sabbathi religiosorumque legalium observatores alienos a Christi fide daniatit et salutis aeternae minime posse esse participes, nisi aliquando ab iis erroribus resipiscant. Omnibus igitur, qui christianum nomine gloriantur, precipit omnio, quocunque tempore vel ante vel post baptismum a circumciscione cessandum, quoniam sive quis in ea spem ponat sive non, sine interita salutis eternae observati omnino non potest); Council of Florence, 11th Session, Bull “Cantate Domino”, 4 February 1442, in: WOHLMUTH – ALBÉRIGO, Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien, vol. 2, 567-83.
tianity, those that Leo X had once judged liberally, became a matter of debate. The idea of a Church hosting within its core such ‘Judaic’ practices as circumcision and Sabbath manifestly embarrassed those who had pursued an aggressive policy of persecution towards Jews and christãos novos. As Dom Henrique himself put it in his letter to Góis, the Fides had to be banned because it represented a danger regarding the state’s policies towards the new Christians: “… so that those who were mistaken in the faith would not favour their errors with the wrong ideas from the Ethiopians”.

Moreover, the discovery of a ‘heretical’ Christianity in Ethiopia also came hand in hand with the erosion of the myth of the Prester John. The association of the Ethiopian negus with the mythical Prester John began during these years to faint. Thanks to the Portuguese, the negus had indeed reached a privileged status in the European and Portuguese courts. Its means may have been modest but the visits of its envoys to Lisbon and Rome, the treatises written by Portuguese agents and the missives dispatched by Eleni and Lebnã Dengel were to have an undeniable impact in Europe. The most renowned sixteenth-century geographers gave ample space in their cosmographies to describing the negus and his state. Leo Africanus, drawing from Alvares’ Verdadera Informação and from Góis’s Fides, informed at length on the provinces and kingdoms subject to “Neguz or Christian Emperor of Abassia”, and the French cosmographer Jean Bodin, also using Alvares’ account, praised the “great negus or Prester John, the greatest lord of the whole Africa” and his fifty “gouvernemens”; a number of estates that the Italian cosmographer Giovanni Boemo increased to sixty two. Yet, whilst the negus entered into sixteenth century political discourse with pomp, he also revealed, however, his weakness: his embassies were much more modest than those styled by Dom Manuel and at every opportunity available the Ethiopian negus revealed the shortcomings of his state by the constant petition of craftsmen and military aid. The association between this ‘new’ political figure and the mythical

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70 Of the Ethiopians Leo X will say: “in truth, exceptuating circumcision, they only disagree in a minor way from the observance of the Christian faith” (verum, praeterquam in circuncisione, a ritu, ac observantia Christianae fidei minime discrepare); Bull “Oratores Majestatis”, addressed by Leo X to Dom Manuel I, 1514, Rome, in: Bullarium I, 108-09, here 108. Leo X, dedicated three further briefs to the issue, none having the tone of a religious censure. The same message was repeated in form of a Brief: “Verum considerantes circuncisionem, quam adhuc servatis, Baptismatis institutione sublatum desideramus apud eos, quibus pro inde duximus consulendum ad animarum periculum evitandum, penitus aboleri”; Brief of Pope Leo X to Dom Manuel, 1514, in: CDP, vol. I, 250.

71 … Porque aquelles que mal sentissem da fé nam favorecessem seu erro com a má opiniam dos etiopios; HENRY, Inéditos Goesianos, 47.


73 … Grand Negus ou Preste-Jan, qui est le plus grand Seigneur de toute l’Afrique; Jean BODIN, Les six livres de la République, Paris: Fayard, 1986 [Paris 1576], liv. V, 126; liv. VI, 55.

74 Giovanni BOEMO, Gli costumi, le leggi, et l’usanze di tutte le genti, raccolte qui insieme da molti illustri scrittori, Venetia: Michael Tramezino, 1549, 7v-8r.
Prester John became thus outdated. The ruler of Ethiopia gained, in European eyes, a resolutely earthly character.

Evidence of this shift is provided in Góis’ works on Christian Ethiopia. The first of them, published in 1532 against the author’s will, was dedicated to the Embassy of Lebnä Dengel headed by the Mateus to King Dom Manuel I. The title of the book made reference to the *Magni Indorum Imperatoris Presbyterii Ioannis*, i.e. ‘the Prester John Great Emperor of the Indies’, an identical formula to that found in Alvares’ narrative of 1540. Eight years later, however, in the *Fides, religio, moresque Aethiopum*, Góis corrected the naming of the Ethiopian ruler to *Pretiosi Ioannis* (i.e. “Precious/Great John”) and clarified that the title *Presbyterum Ioannem* was incorrectly “used by the plebs”. This change was obviously motivated by information provided by Sägga Zä’ab, who told Góis that the title of Prester John was a simple misnomer, the actual name for the Ethiopian ruler being Jan Bellul i.e. *Joannes Pretiosus sive altus*. Whether such a hypothesis was true or not is unimportant now. What we want to emphasize is that the rephrasing of the concept “Pretiosi Ioannis” in the *Fides* reflected a more general shift in the Portuguese and European attitude towards the Preste. Thereafter, following Góis correction, the idea that such an association was false became widespread in the contemporary Portuguese chronicles.

Therefore, by the time Góis wrote his account, contact with Christian Ethiopia was no longer moving in a field of illusions but fostered real encounters between individuals. Distances had been shortened by frequent Portuguese incursions in the Red Sea and diplomatic exchange allowed both parties to gather enough factual information for myths and equivocal images to perish. The number of editions and publicity enjoyed by Góis’ and Alvares’ accounts point to a growing desire in the Lusitanian Kingdom – and also in Europe – “to know”, as Góis would put, “the truths about these things [from Ethiopia]”. After some three decades of contact, both the Indian and the religious associations with the name of Ethiopia’s ruler were disappearing, leaving place for a more down-to-earth image, more akin to the changing times. The negus was turning into a modern African Prince, whose power had to be respected and the Christian faith scrutinised. A political-

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76 Góis 1540.
77 Góis 1540, 90; also in *Id., Chronica do Felicissimo rei dom Manuel*, ch. LXI.
78 For instance in *Castanheira 1979, livre III, ch. XCVI*, and *Barros, Década III, livre IV*, ch. I.
79 *Desejo de saber ha verdade destas cousas*; Góis, *Chronica do Felicissimo rei dom Manuel*, ch. LXI.
80 The fading of the myth was, however, progressive. The term *Preste* was used, at least, up to the first half of the seventeenth century as synonymous for *negus*. This occurred especially in narratives of a more popular character, beginning with Alvares 1883 and Correia 1976. However, a look into texts from the papal, Portuguese and Spanish chancelleries indicate that in official communication the equation was already broadly abandoned in the first
religious worldview was replacing a mythical one.
2. From Santiago to St. Paul

Verdadeiramente, senhor, que fico espantado e atonjto, e ante disto não podera creer que ho costume de quall quer cousa, ou quiça costolção da terra mudaçe tão facilmente e empronto a nossa natureza, por que vejo quem chegando de Portugall a Jamda no mesmo jstamte tomamos nova forma, nova arte, nova maneira de vjver: a pesoa que vem por soldado na mesma ora quer parecer mercador, a que vem por mercador logo prefia e julga nas cousas da guerra e trabalha de parecer soldado, os fidalgos e capitãis todo ho tempo gasão em praticas sobre a fazenda delRey ...

IMPROVISING THE MISSION

The conflict aroused by Säga Zä’Ab’s visit to Portugal reflected a change in the Portuguese court’s stance regarding its Ethiopian allies and it helped stirring up the idea of reforming Ethiopian Christianity. However, the latter was only fully accomplished following two momentous events that resulted in a shift in the way the Portuguese dealt with the Preste, pushing this kingdom to abandon the diplomatic praxis and to engage in a full-scale proselytist commitment. The first event that pushed the Portuguese to change its policy with Ethiopia was the self-proclaimed Patriarchate of João Bermudez (ca. 1495-1570). The second was the military expedition led in 1541-43 by Christovão da Gama in the Ethiopian highlands. The former gave way to a concept of long-lived success, the Catholic Patriarchate; in its turn, Christovão’s expedition set the roots for a group of fundamental importance during the Jesuit mission, the Ethio-Portuguese group of mixed-race. These events, it should be stressed, had less to do with any defined projects enforced by the Conselho da India than with the adventurous momentum that drove Portuguese expansion in the East. For Portuguese affairs with the Preste did not develop any differently to that of expansion in India overall. Both were as much influenced by the clever improvisations from agents acting independently from Lisbon – as was the case during Albuquerque’s decisive governorship – as they were inspired by geopolitical planning in the Portuguese and Indian metropolis. To understand their unfolding it is first necessary to consider the politi-

1 “Honestly, sir, I remain stunned and amazed, and at seeing that I could hardly believe that in this land our conduct changes so easily and quickly; since those who come from Portugal to India adopt a new identity, a new style [arte], a new way of life: those who came as simple soldiers suddenly pretend to be merchants, those who arrived as merchants later decide to be involved in the things of war, pretending to be true soldiers. The fidalgos and captains spend the whole time dealing with the King’s finances”; Dom João de Castro to Infante Dom Luiz, 30 October 1540, Dia, in: João de CASTRO, Obras completas, ed. Armando Cortesão – Luís de Albuquerque, vol. 3, Coimbra: Academia internacional da cultural portuguesa, 1976, doc. 11, 29.
cal context both in Portugal and its dominions and in Christian Ethiopia.

During the 1530s, Portuguese affairs with the Preste were at an impasse. Diplomatic manoeuvres that had defined the decades of 1510 and 1520s stagnated as much as the Portuguese projects to control the Red Sea did. After Säga Zä’Ab’s stormy visit, it seems Dom João did not make up his mind as to what policy his kingdom was to adopt regarding Christian Ethiopia. Certainly, the controversy surrounding the Ethiopian monk had pushed the religious ‘errors’ of the African ally to the foreground. This, together with the reformist trend that began to dominate Catholic Europe following the sack of Rome (1527), could have convinced the king and his entourage that religion was the main issue to be dealt with in further encounters with the Ethiopians. However, the religious admonitions sprouted in Portugal did not immediately take the form of any concrete missionary project. In line with his ever hesitating policy, the king did not make any relevant decision regarding Ethiopia for at least ten years; the repeated requests of Eleni and Lebnä Dengel for a concrete alliance and technical help thus fell unanswered.

Dom João probably realised that his kingdom lacked the means to carry out the pronouncements of his father. The latter, taking advantage of the weakness of the Mamluks in the Red Sea, carried out an optimistic and expensive policy that reaped some profit. Dom Manuel could at least feed his ambition and thus enlarge his flamboyant royal title with that of “Lord of the Commerce of Ethiopia”. However, by the time his son reached power, the military expansion into the Red Sea was halted de facto by the rapid rise of the Ottomans. This left the area with little military and political options. From the 1530s onwards the Portuguese were to concentrate most of their forces and energies on a much more realistic objective, the Persian Gulf. There they kept two important and lucrative possessions, Hormuz and Maskat. Furthermore, as the historian Winius critically pointed at, during his rule Dom João dilapidated most of the kingdom’s military resources in the North African campaigns, thus, sparing few of its energies for the Asian theatres. What was certain was that in the 1530s Manuel’s costly diplomatic feats were a thing of the past.

In Ethiopia the time was not ripe for high-profile diplomatic endeavours either. In the years following Säga Zä’Ab’s embassy, the Christian Kingdom faced a major chal-

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2 Dom Manuel’s famous title was adopted on the return of Vasco da Gama from his first trip to India and went as follows: Dom Manuel per graça de Deus rey de Portugal e dos Allgarves, daquem e dallém-mar, em Africa senhor de Guinee e da conquista e da navegação e comércio de Etiópia, Arábia, Pérsia e da India. For an analysis of the title see Luís Filipe THOMAZ, “L’idée impériale manueline”, 37.

3 Diffie – Finius, Foundations of the Portuguese empire, 282. On the financial troubles of Dom João III, see Almeida,
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In the company of Yáṣus: The Jesuit Mission in Ethiopia, 1557-1632

allenge in the person of Ahmad b. Ibrahim al-Ghazi (Ahmad “Grañ”). The son-in-law of imam Mahfúz b. Muhammad, Ahmad Grañ (1506-43), represented probably the most serious threat the Christians had ever faced from their traditional rivals from the Sultanate of Adal. Following a power struggle in the Sultanate between the Walashma and the ‘religious’ factions, the second guided by al-garad Abuñ b. Adash, Ahmad Grañ killed the Sultan Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Azar around 1525-27 and, claiming the religious title of imam for himself, took de facto hold of the sultanate’s reins. Thereafter, reviving the aggressive policy followed earlier by his father-in-law, who was killed in battle against Lebna Dengel in 1517, he launched a full-scale dhijad against the neighbouring Christian Kingdom. Whilst initially unsuccessful, from 1529 onwards Ahmad Grañ chained a series of victories and within a few years subjugated large parts of the formerly Christian-dominated highlands, in Fatagar, Däwaro, Gafat and Damot.4

Repeatedly defeated in the field and weakened by the numerous defections of Christian highlanders who moved to the Muslim side, the negus could only but retreat and wait for better times. He died in 1540 as a fugitive in his own kingdom, at the fortified monastery of Däbrä Damo in Tegray, leaving behind a shattered realm and a broken family – his eldest son Fiqtør was killed by the army of garrad Utman on 7 April 1539 and another son, Minas, was taken captive to Zabid, Yemen.

The dhijad of Ahmad Grañ and its later success were not disconnected from the rise of both the Portuguese and the Ottomans as the principal regional powers. The sack and burning of Zeyla in 1517, the Sultanate’s main outlet to the sea, probably stirred Adal’s fear of losing its access to the sea thus stimulating its expansionist policy. In its turn, since the 1530s, the Ottomans were providing important material and human support to the armies of Adal, who traditionally had counted as its principal allies with lesser-armed powers such as Yemen and Arabia. The Ottomans sent weapons, horses and slaves to Adal5 and around 1540 they dispatched a company of Turks from Zabid armed with firearms and artillery, making of that a far superior army to that of the Christians.6 A con-

**Historia da Igreja em Portugal,** vol. 3, parte I, 294-95.


5 Alvares 1883, ch. CXIII. Eventually, European agents in seek of profitable business and powers harmed by the Portuguese rise in India could have also joined in such illicit trade with the ‘unbelievers’. Around 1517, for instance, three Catalans would have sold weapons in Zeyla to the Muslims shortly after the town was burned by the soldiers of Lopo Soares de Albergaria; *Década III,* liv. I, ch. V. The latter source also reports of three Catalan fellows selling weapons to the Muslim sultanate after it was burned by the soldiers of Lopo Soares de Albergaria.

6 Sources disagree on the actual number of the Turkish company. A contemporary Yemenite chronicle, put it at
temporary of the events who had a fine geopolitical grasp, Giovanni Botero, defined this development:

The push of the Portuguese had two bad consequences in these lands: one is that the Arabs have much fortified their ports, which were once open and without fortresses. The other consequence is that the Turks have turned against the Prete. Military campaigns should only be made with high resolution and with enough forces to bring them to completion; otherwise they only serve to wake up and arm the enemy.7

It is against this background, dominated by political weakness in Portuguese India and a serious territorial crisis in Ethiopia, that the figures of João Bermudez, on the one side, and Christovão da Gama and his peer, on the other, entered centre stage. João Bermudez first arrived in Ethiopia as surgeon/doctor of the embassy headed by Rodrigo da Lima. In 1526, when the embassy returned to Portugal he was left behind in the hands of the Ethiopian negus, together with the painter Lázaro de Andrade. Little information remained as to what occupied Bermudez during his successive years there. What is certain is that thanks to his long stay he became acquainted enough with the country as to be able to embark on a career that shadowed that of any foreigner having previously served there. At the peak of Ahmad Grañ’s expansion, Bermudez was allegedly appointed Patriarch by abunä Marqos shortly before the latter’s death in 1535 and entrusted by Lebnä Dengel with an embassy to seek European help. Around 1536, taking a route crossing the Sudan and Egypt, he reached Rome. There, he presented himself to Pope Paul III as Ambassador of the negus and Patriarch of Ethiopia; he requested that the Pope recognise his title and informed of Ahmad Grañ’s invasion. He then moved to Lisbon where he presented the same credentials to João III.

As it has been repeatedly underlined by other scholars and as written evidence and common sense suggest, Bermudez’s grand claims were probably just a “tissue of lies”.8 No contemporary document, except Bermudez’s self-indulgent text written during the last years of his life in Lisbon and published in 1565,9 has hitherto appeared backing the claims to the Patriarchate; neither did Pope Paul III provide him with the necessary Bulls

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7 … Si che l’ardire dei Portoghesi ha fatto due cattivi effetti in quei paesi; l’uno, che gli’Arabi hanno fortificato benissimo i loro porti, prima aperti e senza fortezze; l’altro che il Turco si è rivolto contro il Prete. Non si debbono tentare imprese se non con risoluzione, & con forze atte a condurle a fine: perché altrimenti sogliamo, & armano il nemico: & di altro non servono; Giovanni Botero, Relatio Universali, Venetia: I. Giunti, 1640 [Roma, 1592-95], 130.
9 BERMUDEZ 1875.
and Briefs to recognise the religious titles. Likewise, it seems implausible that Lebnä Dengel was then willing to break with the age-old ties between Ethiopia and the See of Alexandria by creating an office, that of Patriarch of Ethiopia, that was unknown to his country. In all likelihood, Bermudez was a simple envoy, sent together with other Ethiopians, to Europe with at the background the serious crisis affecting the Christian state. Ethiopian diplomatic history renders this a plausible hypothesis. The employment of foreigners as envoys of the negus was a normal procedure in Ethiopian diplomacy, as the cases of Pietro Rombolo in the fifteenth and Mateus in the sixteenth centuries attest. Lebnä Dengel himself had previously made the Portuguese chaplain Francisco Alvares his envoy to Europe in 1526 and no doubt he tried to do the same ten years later with the Portuguese surgeon.

But another hypothesis can be pushed forth to explain Bermudez’s extravagant Patriarchate. It could be suggested that the embassy he was participating in had another important commitment, that of requesting the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo to appoint a new metropolitan in order to replace Marqos who died in 1535. Again, finding a European with such commitment was not unique. In the mid-fifteenth century the Italian friar Alberto da Sarteano took advantage of his visit to the Egyptian capital to intercede on behalf of Ethiopia’s interests before the Coptic patriarch. Other well-known examples came later, following the fall of the Jesuit mission. Thus, around 1640 the German Peter Heyling led a failed mission organised by Fasilädas demanding a new metropolitan in Egypt. Still, two centuries later, the Italian Lazarist Giustino de Giacobis was included in a mission of däjjazmach Webe of Tegray to find a substitute for the deceased metropolitan. De Giacobis eventually followed a very similar path to Bermudez, as after the halt in Cairo he proceeded to Rome to be received by the Pope. Although there is no document proving that a mission of Bermudez’s to Cairo ever took place – Bermudez’s account itself being completely deprived of details about the trip back to Europe – the singular route the Portuguese took would make it plausible. The route across the Bilad al-Sudan and Egypt, while rarely used by the Portuguese at the time – who relied on the convoys sent regularly to the Red Sea, – was frequented by Ethiopian pilgrims to Jerusalem and, above all, was the

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12 Cf. Jean RICHARD, La papauté et les missions d’Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe-XVe siècles), Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1998, 267 seq; and Salvatore TEDESCHI, “Etiopi e Copii al Concilio di Firenze”, Annaeum historiae conciliorum 21,
obliged path for any Ethiopian embassy aiming for the headquarters of the Coptic Church in Cairo. It could be argued that it was precisely such a mission to Cairo the element that stirred up Bermudez’s own patriarchal ambition.

Due to his extravagances, Bermudez’s case has been despised by many a historian and, in consequence, its importance in the foundation of a religious mission to Ethiopia has been minimized. However, the impact this figure had during his visit to Europe and posterior trip to India seems to have been considerable. After all, lies have always been important historical factors. Indeed, thanks to Bermudez the Ethiopian dossier received a major boost. His discussed visits to Rome and Lisbon coincided with the arrival of news reporting the preparation of a major fleet by the Ottomans and the Sultan of Khambay to attack the Portuguese in Diu. In view of the central importance of this port for the Indian Empire, this compelled the Portuguese king to respond rapidly. In 1538, Dom João dispatched the new governor and Viceroy Dom Garcia de Noronha to India aboard a large fleet of some 12-15 large ships and between 2,000 and 4,000 men. Bermudez was also included there, but could only travel to the East the following year, together with Säga Zä’Ab. Far from being removed of any charge, mestre João from this time forth turned to Dom João, was backed financially by the crown and allowed to travel to Ethiopia. The adventure mounted by Bermudez made it so that, for the first time in his reign and more than thirteen years after the second of Dom Manuel’s embassies had arrived back in Lisbon, Dom João decided to act in what had been one of his father’s main terrains of action.

It is not clear though what the “Patriarch”’s official duties involved during his second trip to India. In several letters written by Dom João, Bermudez seems to be treated only as embasador do Preste. while Bermudez himself – followed by Gaspar Correia – claimed to be in charge of a more important mission: to form an army in Goa to help the


13 Among the severe historiographical judgements received by “Patriarch” Bermudez, one had him as “the victim of a ridiculous narcissism” (vittime d’une sotte vanité); CHAINE, “Bermudez, patriarche de l’Ethiopie”, 329. Another of suffering from “a long crisis of megalomania” (uma longe crise de megalomania); RODRIGUES, “Mestre João Bermudes”, 135.


15 ANDRADA 1796, parte III, ch. LXXII.

16 On suspicions by the monarch about Bermudez’ nomination to the Ethiopian Patriarchate, see RODRIGUES, “Mestre João Bermudes”, 123. Georg SCHURHAMMER, Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer …. Rom: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1962, doc. 195 also reports a letter of King Charles V to Luís Sarmiento, 12 March 1537, Valladolid. The German summary states: “I am sending you what it seems are messengers of the Prester John; one came by land and wishes to close a partnership against the unbelievers; another is going to Portugal: check him!” (Anbei sende ich angeblichen Gesandten d. Preste Juan [n. Lissabon]; kam überland, will Bündnis gegen Ungläubige, anderer kommt zu Portugal Kg. Prüft ihn!). Also in AGS, “Secretaría de Estado” 167 (371), 188 M.
negus in his internal struggle with Ahmad Grañ. But for the present discussion, there is another and more interesting detail. Bermudez reported in the Breve relação that four Dominican friars, one of them named Pedro Coelho, escorted him in the trip to India with the further intention of going to Ethiopia. Besides, he was also allegedly in charge of carrying a letter addressed to the negus by Dom Alfonso where the Cardinal Infante urged his Ethiopian friend to abandon the ‘errors’ exposed earlier in the Portuguese court by Säga Zä’Ab. It appears that none of the friars reached Ethiopia – the four stayed in Goa – and Dom Alfonso’s religious admonitions – provided they ever reached their destination – failed to convince the negus of his alleged religious wrongdoing. Be that as it may, this evidence indicates that Bermudez’s mission incorporated a defined religious agenda in its military and diplomatic intentions. Indeed, this ‘Patriarchal’ mission foresaw, though in a clumsy and sketchy way, the main principles of the mission that the Society of Jesus successfully organised in the following years: the institution of the Patriarchate of Ethiopia, a reliance in a learned religious order, and a strong Paulist commitment – represented in Dom Alfonso’s letter.

SANTIAGO’S LAST CALL

Along with Bermudez’s second trip to Ethiopia unfolded another major episode that paved the way for the religious mission to the Preste, the expedition headed by Christovão da Gama that between 1541-43 confronted Ahmad Grañ’s army in the highlands of Ethiopia. This famous chapter in Portuguese expansion, to which Luís de Camões dedicated a strophe, impacted upon the Portuguese contemporaries. It is described in detail

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17 BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. X; CORREIA 1976, vol. IV, 179.
18 Bermudez reports on a “frei Pedro Coelho” and three other friars; BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. IV. The issue is also mentioned by the Dominican frey João dos SANTOS, Ethiopia Oriental e varia historia de cousas notaveis do Oriente, Evora: Manuel de Lyra, 1609, parte II, ch. 1; and in a “Sumaria relaçã” kept at Evora, probably compiled after dos Santos, in: AME, Cod. CV/2-6, 2v. The Jesuit Gonçalves identified the other three Dominicans as Fr. João de Haro, Fr. Luís da Vitoria and Fr. João Alvim; GONÇALVES 1960, vol. III, 304. However, this is probably a wrong identification since these friars were said to be already in India around 1522. Cf. “Ralaçao Sumaria ... do que obrarão os Religiozos da ordem dos Pregadores na conuerção das almas e pregação do sancto Evangelho ...”, in: BNL, cod. 177 [F 3085], 322r-60r.
19 The letter – 1539 – appears in: RASO X, doc. 3.
20 The choice of Dominican friars for the ‘mission’ led by Bermudez might not have been random. The Dominican Order, with its exquisite theological training, was well-suited to deal with Ethiopia’s ‘heresies’. Moreover, it was an order claiming strong historical – though not all based in sober truth – links with Christian Ethiopia. Cf. Andreu MARTINEZ, “Dominicans”, in: Siegbert Ullig (ed.), Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, vol. 2, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005, 189-90.
21 Further evidence pointing to this expedition as the turning point in the beginning of the missionary era in Ethiopia is that two years later, Francis-Xavier, future Apostle of the Orient, was named “apostolic envoy to the Oriental Indies and was recommended to the King of Ethiopia and other Oriental princes” (nuncio de la India Oriental y se le recomienda al rey de Etiopia y a otros principes orientales); FRANCISCO-JAVIER 1996, 4.
by the great Portuguese chroniclers covering this period – Couto, Correia, Andrade, Faria e Sousa – and is the subject of two valuable chronicles by veterans of the expedition, Castanhos and Bermudez. The Jesuits, in their annual letters and treatises, also dedicated ample descriptions to the episode. Moreover, brief references to the history of Bergugal (‘Portugal’) and Dongestobou (‘Dom Christovão’) scatter the contemporary Ethiopian royal and “short” chronicles. Therefore, rather than a detailed description of this military exploit, here I will try to assess some issues that have been disregarded in previous analyses and that shed some light on the subsequent Jesuit mission.

The campaign of 1541-43 was the result of a series of factors, among which the geopolitical improvisation characteristic of Portuguese India, colonial adventurism and a prophetic dimension counted to no small a degree. The military expedition to the Preste was probably first conceived in Lisbon. This is indicated by Bermudez’s own words and by the ordenamento (instructions) that the incoming governor, Dom Garcia de Noronha, had received. However, as happened with earlier endeavours such as those led by Albuquerque in Cochin, Goa, Malacca, Hormuz and Diu, pivotal for the formation of the Estado da India, the timing, forces and way of approach were only decided in India and by men who had practical experience in the East and who counted upon with the invaluable help of local informants and indigenous forces.

Initially, however, the Portuguese were rather hesitant with regards the Preste. Following his failed campaign in Diu, the ageing Viceroy Noronha only agreed to send to the Red Sea a reconnaissance mission to enquire about the figure of Bermudez and the state of the negus; it was led in 1539 by a Fernão Farto, said to be a man “of considerable experience in the strait”. Back in Goa, in May 1540, the envoy reported about the miserable state of the Christian Kingdom. But with the death of the Viceroy and the assuming of the governorship by Dom Estevão da Gama, things changed. The son of the discoverer of India was a young and energetic man who, as captain of Malacca, had amassed experience and, more importantly, a considerable fortune. When he went to take possession of the


24 CASTANHOSO 1936 and 1898; BERMUDEZ 1875.

25 A comprehensive modern study is SCHERHAMMER 1955, vol. 2, 1, 86-72, 498-512 (map in 499).

governorship of the Estado da India he soon realized what was at stake. The moment was indeed critical. The Ottoman siege of Diu from 1538 had proven to the Portuguese the seriousness of the Ottoman menace; as Diu was not a minor nor dispensable possession but a port that connected and controlled a huge trade network across the Indian Ocean, with axes in Malacca and the Red Sea. Loosing it was loosing a place of strategic importance and – as time would prove – also a potential economic goldmine. The siege ultimately failed but only because of the enemy’s own indecision, as the fleet captained by Dom Garcia de Noronha had missed its opportunity.\(^28\) In the same expedition that should conclude with the siege of Diu, the Ottomans conquered the port of Aden, a position long coveted by the Portuguese. To protect such assets, the entire forces of the Estado da India were mobilized. In the winter of 1540 Estevão gathered the Conselho de Estado\(^29\) and, with the support of the main fidalgos\(^30\) and the ecclesiastic authorities, formed a fleet for the Red Sea, one of the largest to be sent there.\(^31\) On 1 January 1541, the fleet left the port of Goa, its principal objective being the destruction of the Ottoman fleet in Suez.

By then, in all likelihood, the fidalgos and the governor had already resolved to go to the Preste, since the enormous crew included the officious envoy ‘Patriarch’ Bermudez as well as enough soldiers and craftsmen to mount an inland campaign.\(^32\) However, as was usual in Portuguese warfare in India, its composition and leadership were only decided in the last moment. This occurred at Massawa, in May/June 1541, after part of the fleet had carried out a series of campaigns around Suez. There the Portuguese were contacted by the baheb nægash Yeshaq, who informed the Portuguese of the bad shape of the Christian state and later played a prominent role in securing the passage of troops across the high-

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27. *Mayo prático no estreito*, ANDRADA 1796, parte III, ch. LXXII; BERMUDEZ 1873, ch. V.
29. An institution only officially created in 1563 but de facto active since the years of Albuquerque; see DIFFIE – FINIUS, *Foundations of the Portuguese empire*, 325.
31. Although sources disagree, the number of boats and men was, by all accounts, impressive; Correia speaks of 88 boats: 77 fustas and catamaras, 3 galeotas with some 2000 remeiros, and 3,000 sailors canarios (natives from Goa) and Arabs; *Correia* 1976, vol. IV, 162 seq. Schurhammer, following Dom Manuel de Lima, speaks of 84 boats and 2,300 soldiers; SCHURHAMMER 1953, vol. 2-1, 86-87. For the meaning of Portuguese marine lexikon, see Ibid., Anhang VIII. In the past, however, other armadas had boasted similar numbers. See also Table 2.
32. On the participation of craftsmen, Correia informs that “with these people [the soldiers] came more than 70 artisans of all sorts, namely: cross-bow makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, shoemakers, gunsmiths and other artisans that Bermudez had gathered in India” (… *Antre esta gente hião passante de setenta homens officiais de todos officios mecanicos, a saber : bèsteiros, ferreiros, carpinteiros, pedreiros, çapateiros, armeiros, e outros officiais que o Bermudes ajuntou pola Índia…*); *Correia* 1976, vol. IV, 201. See also ANDRADA 1796, parte III, ch. LXXVI.
lands. Then, the governor formed conselho with the fidalgos and captains and decided to send a military detachment to help the negus. The soldiers formed a company of 400 men, who were divided into six squadrons. Five squadrons were composed of fifty men and were placed under a captain each; a sixth unit counted 150 men under Dom Christovão da Gama, who was made head of the whole detachment.

By comparison with today’s standards the number of 400 men does not appear impressive. However, at the time and considering the context, it was more than enough in order to face a war in good conditions. Most of the ‘great’ feats in the first age of discoveries had been achieved with just a few companies divided into mobile and independent squadrons. Hernán Cortés (1485-1547) commanded not more than 500 infantes in his successful campaign against the Aztec Empire in 1519-21; his soldiers were also split into squadrons of fifty men, like the Portuguese company in Ethiopia. Francisco Pizarro (1478-1541) had less than 200 men when he crushed the Inca Empire in 1532-33. Albuquerque, in turn, conquered Malacca in 1511 with 1,500 Portuguese and 800 allies and with a similar number took Goa and Hormuz. In the winter of 1540, Christovão da Gama had attacked the lands of caimal, between Porquá and Cochim, with 600 men and at about the same time, also in Malacca, his brother Estevão da Gama fought against the King of Ugentana with a 400-men strong force. Ahmad Grañ himself could thank part of his successes to the presence among his army of a small company – around 200 men – of arquebusiers from Zebid. Indeed, with few men but superior military equipment and tactics the Europeans were unbeatable on many a front. The Portuguese in Ethiopia counted with these advantages. In the highlands of Ethiopia the use of gunpowder was very limited. If not for the presence of Mamluk and Turkish mercenaries, small firearms, though appreciated, played a minor role in local and regional warfare, whilst artillery was completely absent from the battlefields. The Ethiopian expedition of Christovão da Gama was, by all accounts, extremely well armed and was also provided with all the offices necessary

33 This is the number found in most sources, e.g. CASTANHOSO 1936, ch. 4; Década V, liv. VII, ch. IX. However in a “Relatio anonyma”, 8 December 1541, Goa, in: RASO X, doc. 4, 20, it is suggested there were 500 men. Correia speaks of 397 men, including 130 slaves; CORREIA 1976, vol. IV, 345. Moreover, the Portuguese seem to have originally offered their Ethiopian counterpart, baher någash Yeshaq, 1,000 men; SCHURHAMMER 1955, vol. II-1, 91, n. 56.


35 CASTANHOSO 1898, ch. 18.

36 ANDRADA 1796, part III, ch. XXVII. In all likelihood, a large number of those who fought in Asia with Christovão also volunteered for the campaign in Ethiopia.

to make things roll. The Portuguese soldiers were also experienced warriors and made a skilled use of modern military tactics – the use of Swiss headlong phalanx-like tactics is thus attested. We may now reasonably ask, who were these 400 men and what drove them to fight for an alien cause?

Sources provide the names, which in some cases included the status and occupation, of around a hundred and seven men. The leadership of the expedition was given to fidalgos – six are mentioned as such –, some being the sons of well-known families, such as the son of Vasco da Gama, Christovão. However, the main bulk of the army was composed of simple soldiers, probably young and with only a brief experience in India. Their performance was irregular. Like with other scenarios in India, the campaigns in the Red Sea and Ethiopia showed a regrettable tendency for discipline to break down among the troops. Thus, during the halt at the bay of Arquico facing the island of Massawa, before any decision to go inland, some hundred Portuguese fled towards the highlands. Headed by the fidalgo António Correa they were killed shortly after by Muslim troops. Disagreements about the leadership were also frequent during the whole campaign, beginning with the choice of the leaders of the troop. However, as the campaign unfolded, the Portuguese proved to be able and decided men, skilled in the use of matchlocks – to a Portuguese arquebusier, one Pedro Leão, was credited the shot that wounded and successively killed Ahmad Grañ – and in logistics tasks – construction of vehicles to transport artillery, preparation of gunpowder, etc. The troop was also not moving entirely in hostile and unknown terrain. At least four veterans of the Preste having participated in the earlier embassy of Rodrigo da Lima, appear among its numbers: the already noticed João BERMUDEZ, the lingua João Gonçalves, the mixed-race Ayres Dias and the fidalgo Jorge de

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40 The chronicler of Dom João III tells that upon leaving for the Red Sea Estevão da Gama “refused to enroll married as well as old or weak men” (não quis tomar casados nem homens velhos e fracos); ANDRADA 1796, parte III, ch. LXXVI. Furthermore, in a search in SCURHAMMER 1955 and Id., Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen, I could not find any reference to names related to the Ethiopian expedition in other fields of action in India. This could indicate that the Ethiopian was one of their first military campaigns.
42 Christovão da Gama’s appointment was much discussed, the soldiers regarding him as being too young. Upon the latter’s death, the leadership of Ayres Dias, a man of mixed race, was also the source of vivid disputes.
43 BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. XXXIV.
44 During the keremt of 1541 (May to September), probably at Dàbrà Damo, Portuguese carpenters were able to construct twenty-four trolleys to carry a hundred musquets, six artillery pieces, gun powder and munition; CASTANHOSO 1936, ch. VI; also CASTANHOSO 1898, note 80.
Abreu. Their practical experience, rather than their social position, awarded them a position of leadership among the troop. By nationality, besides the Portuguese, there were a few Spaniards and, although not mentioned in the sources, it is to be assumed that Italians and native Indians were also involved.\(^{45}\)

The very reasons that pushed these men to fight for the negus and in many instances lose their lives are a matter of conjecture; yet there is also room here to elaborate some hypotheses. A first issue to bear in mind is that this was not the first occasion when Portuguese troops were engaged in alien causes in the Indian Ocean world. Besides the legion of lançados living in Africa and India,\(^{46}\) Portugal had elsewhere embroiled its colonial forces with the aim to help its favourite rulers in local or regional feuds. Such was the case of the policy followed on behalf of the Shah Ismail I (1502-24), founder of the Safavid dynasty in Persia, whose army was empowered by a few hundred Portuguese soldiers to help him challenge the mounting Ottoman expansion in the Persian Gulf.\(^{47}\) In Ethiopia, a similar geopolitical praxis was probably at work. The Portuguese had always coveted its main ports (Massawa, Sawakin, Aden) and since the times of Albuquerque had continually attempted to set foot there.

Another dimension to this endeavour was colonial adventurism. As stated above, by the 1540s, the king and his circle of advisors abandoned the optimistic and adventurous policies of O Fortunado and drifted towards a more religious agenda. Dom João seemed much less focused on the Red Sea than his father had been. In actual terms, the responsibility of the fleet to Suez lay largely with the men ruling in Goa and with one Estevão da Gama, weary of embellishing his family name with yet again another brilliant feat. Likewise, the expedition to the Preste depended more on the desires of individual men, who had

\(^{45}\) The presence of Italians within the Portuguese crews in India is often mentioned in sixteenth century sources. At least a name – Sangano – among those who participated in Christovão’s expedition seems to be of Italian origin. For its part, with the armada to the Red Sea travelled a company of lashkarins, the most important indigenous force enrolled in the service of the Portuguese in India; cf. CORREIA 1976, vol. IV, 161, 176, 199.

\(^{46}\) The lançados were the Portuguese, and eventually the Europeans, living ashore. There is a discussion of their role in the context of West Africa in George E. BROOKS, Landlords and strangers: ecology, society, and trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630, Boulder u.a.: Westview Press, 1993, 137 seq.

\(^{47}\) Sanudo quoted in GODINHO, Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial, vol. 3, 123. The Ottoman advance was, though, unstoppable; in 1546 they occupied Basrah, hence securing the control of the northern Persian Gulf; cf. Salih ÖZBAYAN, “The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, 1534-1581”, Journal of Asian History 6, 1972, 43-87, 68. In another study it has been, however, argued that the Portuguese fighting in the army of Shah Ismail were “mercenaries recruited by the agents of the Shah in Hormuz and India” rather than agents of the Portuguese Crown; Jean Louis BACQÉ-GRAMMONT, Les Ottomans, les Safavides et leurs voisins. Contribution à l’histoire des relations internationales dans l’Orient islamique de 1514 à 1524, Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-archeologisch Institut te Istanbul, 1987, 170. Other instances of Portuguese men and weapons being put at the service of local rulers in W. G. L. RANDLES, “Artilleries and land fortification of the Portuguese”, in: Id., Geography, Cartography and Nautical Science, ch. XVII, 11-12.
joined the expedition voluntarily,\textsuperscript{48} than on the will of the crown.

An important factor to be taken into account is that behind the soldiers’ decision to go to Ethiopia was their search for wealth. As was the case in the campaigns in India against ‘infidels’, soldiers who went to the Red Sea were not paid but depended on potential pillage and looting. The Ethiopian campaign was a last opportunity for them to achieve the expectations aroused by the trip to the Red Sea, which, as it was coming to an end, had proved by all accounts deceiving from both military and economic standpoints. It is likely that some men, lay soldiers and low-ranking \textit{fidalgos}, saw it as an opportunity to improve their lives. After all, the \textit{Preste} was still surrounded by the same mystery and power that had drawn legions of Mediterraneans there in the previous century.\textsuperscript{49} The large number of survivors who decided to stay in Ethiopia after 1543 tells indeed that their choice was not that unrealistic after all.

Finally, a later aspect not to be shoved to the back of the closet of this expedition is prophecy and providentialism. These factors were, in fact, central to motivating Portuguese expansion, as attested not only in the prophetic tone that dominates contemporary epopees such as those of Camões or Diogo do Couto, both soldiers, but in the very military praxis that made Portuguese expansion possible. The countless episodes mentioned in Portuguese sources, mixing faith with victory in battle, reveal how dear divine protection was to the warmongers. The Christian God and the Patron saints gave the soldiers strength in the battlefield, provided guidance and ensured that the enemy was defeated, despite the often meagre number of men mobilised by the Lusitans in India. The two symbols that best represented this providentialism were the sign of the Holy Cross and the Apostle \textit{Santiago Matamoros} (St. James ‘the Moor-Killer’). Both figures were pervasive throughout the expansion: they became the object of countless visions and were present in Portuguese victories. As a consequence, these two figures turned into the most used banners in the East.\textsuperscript{50} The Portuguese expeditions into the Red Sea and Ethiopia shared a

\textsuperscript{48} On this particular, Bermudez informed that “and once they [the soldiers] came to learn that the expedition could bring them honour and profits, many wished to join it much more than before” (\textit{E porque ia iam entendendo que e empresa era de honra e proveito, muytos a cobiçavam mais que dantes}); BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. X.

\textsuperscript{49} In the fifteenth-century treatise compiled by the Dominican Francesco Suriano on Giovanni Battista Brocchi’s trip to Ethiopia, some Italians would have gone to Ethiopia with the intention “to find jewels and precious stones” (\textit{de trouar zoye et piétre precisio}); in LEEFVEE, “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Terza), 399.

\textsuperscript{50} The Holy Cross gave name to the two first lands ‘possessed’ by the Iberians in America (the coasts of Mexico and Brazil were initially baptised as “Veracruz” and “Santa Cruz”, respectively). Albuquerque himself, during the expedition to the Red Sea of 1513, gave to an island off the strait of Bab al-Mandab – probably Perim – the name of “Santa Cruz”. In its turn, the importance of \textit{Santiago Matamoros} for the Iberian expansion, especially in the first half of the sixteenth century, is witnessed in the number of forts, bastions – some later becoming major towns – and towns named for Santiago, in both the Western (Santiago in Republica Dominicana [1494], Santa Cruz de Santiago de Tenerife [1496], Santiago de Fernandina, later Cuba [1514], island of Santiago of Cabo Verde, San-
similar providential fervour. Visions and prophecies circulated profusely. During the first Portuguese incursion beyond the “Strait of Mecca” (Bab-el-Mandeb), Albuquerque and his crew saw the sign of the Cross “towards the lands of the Prester John”\(^51\) and around 1520 the “Coptic Patriarch” (probably abūn Markos) would have recounted Francisco Alvarés a local prophecy in which after having its 100th \(\text{papás}\) the Ethiopians would receive the bishops that should rule their Church from Rome.\(^52\) But it was during the expedition of 1541-43 when prophecy attained its peak. Battles with Ahmad Grañ became fertile terrain for the intervention of the supernatural. The Apostle Santiago, invoked by the soldiers at every encounter with the Muslims, reportedly appeared in the battlefield charging the Muslim troops.\(^53\) The death of Portuguese soldiers became also motives for supernatural episodes, especially the ‘martyrdom’ of their leader Christovão da Gama.\(^54\) An important factor for such rich visionary scenario to occur was probably the fact that the enemies the Portuguese were fighting were Muslim, which gave to the campaign all the characteristics of a \(\text{guerra santa}\) (‘holy war’) and that they combated to save the Prester John.

The outcome of the expedition is well known. The small Portuguese company proved decisive in stopping the Muslim advance. On the course of the two years of the campaign, they had at least four major encounters with the Muslim troops and they liberated two important positions at Amba Sānaytī and Semen. In August 1543, Ahmad Grañ was killed, allegedly with the help of a Portuguese arquebusier and the Muslim \(\text{djihad}\) dissolved “like the smoke and the ash of an oven”, as a contemporary Ethiopian source po-

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51 C. Troncoso y Massieu, Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque seguidas de documentos que as elucideam, ed. R.A. de Bulhões, Lisboa: Typographia da Academia Real das Ciências, 1884, 393-402, 399; also in Correia 1976, vol. IV, 731.

52 The story, which is somewhat incoherent since Ethiopia had never received a \(\text{papás}\) (‘patriarch’) from Alexandria but an \(\text{abun}\) (‘metropolitex’), appears in Alvares 1883, ch. XCIX. It was also reported in Década VII, šn. I, ch. I.

53 Bermúdez 1875, ch. XVI; and Castanhoso 1936, ch. 15.

54 At least on one occasion sources inform of the incorruptibility of the dead bodies of Portuguese soldiers, Década VII, šn. VII, ch. VI. The miracles attributed to Christovão’s death are described in Bermúdez 1875, ch. XXIII; Castanhoso 1936, ch. 20; Década VII, šn. I, ch. I.
etically put it. But negus Gälawdewos also became weakened from the war. He had lost control of some important provinces – Shäwa, Tegray, Damot – and in the years to come was to face major challenges: in the north with the disembarkment of the Ottomans at Massawa and Debarwa and the de facto independence of bahe nägash Yeshaq, ruler of Tegray; in the south, with the expansion of the Macha Oromo beginning 1546. Of the Portuguese who survived the two years of campaigns – about one third of the initial number – most decided to stay, while a few, probably those with more interests in India and Portugal, took the route for home.

**Paul’s momentum**

At the same moment the Portuguese were carrying their last important venture into the Red Sea, things began to move in Rome, too. Until then, the Italian capital had been a secondary scenario in the contacts with the negus. The Medici popes had looked favourably upon the Portuguese diplomatic manoeuvres in the East and granted them, via bulls and briefs, juridical cover. They also had taken some initiative. Thus, Leo X sent the Florentine Andrea Corsali to enquire about the Ethiopian Christian state and also addressed two letters to the negus in 1514 and 1521. In January 1533, Clement VII solemnly received Francisco Alvares, then as ambassador of the negus, during the pope’s second encounter at Bologna with the Emperor Charles V. However, the early Ethiopian policy of the Medicis was not very fruitful; the first pope was too concerned with leading a life of pleasure and artistic patronage, while the second had to cope with the menace of the Emperor throughout his whole papacy. The Holy See was at the time indeed hardly ready to engage in ambitious projects, as the leisurely Leo X and the thoughtful, but ineffective, Clement VII had left the institution financially and morally bankrupt and its political and religious might dramatically anaesthetised by conflicts with transalpine monarchs.

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55 I translate from the French version; Basset, Études sur l’histoire d’Éthiopie, 112.
57 Repatriation – in total about fifty men – occurred in two moments: on 16 February 1544, a group of a few dozens (Couto informs they were about fifty), including Miguel de Castanhoso, left for India in a fusta of Diogo de Reinoso. Later, during the rule of the Viceroy Dom Constantino de Bragança (1558-61) another group of about 10 men left; CASTANHOSO 1936, ch. 28, 29; Década V, lá. IX, ch. IV; COUTO, *Trattato dos feitos de Vasco de Gama*, 180; BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. XLVIII. In Ethiopia, the number of Portuguese who stayed was between 120 and 150.
58 Corsali travelled in the armada that took Rodrigo da Lima to Ethiopia.
60 It was at that time that one after another the northern European powers became alienated from the control of the Church: France began in 1516 with the Concordate of Bologne, then followed Germany, focus of the Reformation movements since 1517, and finally England in 1534. In 1527, the sack of Rome at the hand of the Imperial troops and the virtual imprisonment of the pope at St. Angelo became a symbol of the state of the institution. For biographies of the two popes, see Marco PELLEGRINI, “ Leone X”, in: *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol. 3: Innocenzo VIII-Giovanni Paolo II, Roma: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000, 43-64; and Adriano PROSPERI, “ Clemente VII”, *Ibid.*, 70.
But from the late 1530s onwards the eternal city became a privileged environment for the European projects in Christian Ethiopia. This happened, to a large extent, under the auspices of the pope credited for the beginning of the Church’s renewal in early modern times, Paul III (1534-49). It was in the circle of the Farnese pope that converged two figures who gave the Ethiopian dossier a new élan: Täsfa Seyon and Ignatius of Loyola. Täsfa Seyon (1510?–50) or “Fra Pietro l’Indiano”, as he was known in Italy, was an Ethiopian monk who had fled the destruction in 1533 of his home monastery, Däbrä Libanos, head of the most important monastic movement in Ethiopia. The monk first went to Jerusalem and towards 1537 arrived in Rome, where he became the leading figure of a number of Ethiopians living within the pope’s ‘family’. He showed to be highly skilled at moving within the courtiers’ milieu as well as deeply engaged in the intellectual life and in the reformed spirit of the town. The Ethiopian befriended influential figures from within the pope’s entourage, such as the theologian Pietro Paolo Gualtieri, the humanist Ludovico Beccadelli and a niece of the Farnese pope and became the main source of information on Ethiopia in a city ever more interested in the Eastern Churches. It was also thanks to him that the semi-abandoned Ethiopian hospice of San Stefano dei Mori was restored and provided with funds by Paul III. This gave new vigour to the institution, which henceforth increased the number of its guests and received, in 1551, one year after the death of the Ethiopian, its first fixed rules. Fra Pietro also prepared works that, after those published a few years earlier by Góis and Alves, had an impact in making Europe aware of Ethiopia’s Christianity: an Ethiopian version of the New Testament, being the first ever to be printed and having enjoyed great success; an Ethiopian–Latin edition of Paul’s thirteen epistles; and, with the help of Bernardino Sandri, a treatise on Ethiopia’s Christian traditions.

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91. According to Chaine he would have died at the age of 40, which would put his birth date around 1510; Marius Chaine, “Un monastère éthiopien à Rome au XVe et XVIe siècle: San Stefano dei Mori”, Melanges de la Faculté Orientale, Beyrouth 5, 1 (repr. 1973), 1-36, 17.

Lefèvre, “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Terza), 260 seq.
60. Testamentum novum cum Epistolae Pauli ad Hebraeos tantum, cum concordantia Evangeliarium Eusebii et numerazione omnium verborum eorum, Missale cum benedictione incensi cera..., Romae: Valerium Doricum et Ludovicum Fratres Brixianos, 1548. The pope offered this edition as a present to leading contemporary personalities; Chaine, “Un monastère éthiopien à Rome”, 15.
Täsfa Seyon’s success in Rome was related to the renewal the city experienced during Paul III’s long rule. The papal capital recovered swiftly from the decay incurred with the sack of 1527: its population almost doubled and it experienced the first modern urban planning. It also aimed at becoming the true and active centre of Christianity and to attract members of the Oriental Christianities. Rome was also an arena where new forms of Christianity were experimented in order to face the challenges of the time. Under the Farnese pope, a large number of new or reformed orders, called to give new vigour to the shattered Church, found protection and support there: the Capuchins, Barnabites, Jesuits, Theatins, the Confraternity of the Ss. Sacramento and the Ursulines. It is with the most important group among this new wave of religious orders that the Ethiopian monk entered into close relations.

Ignatius of Loyola’s acquaintance with the deeds of the Portuguese in Ethiopia came within the decade following his arrival in Rome, in November 1537. During this period, the Society of Jesus was an untried order, formed by a few learned and intelligent men gathered around the charismatic figure of Ignatius of Loyola; they were committed to the reform cause and had powerful tools-to-be – such as the Spiritual Exercises – and ideas to offer but little experience. In Rome, rather than breaking new ground, Ignatius and his peer tried to respond to the petitions of the society that hosted them and thus came to work in a wide variety of tasks: teaching at the university, preaching, catechism to children, spiritual advice etc. It was in part through these improvised beginnings that the order was to define its famous modo nostro and to focus on fields where they were to become true masters, such as education, preaching in towns and the counsel to kings and nobility. With the Ethiopian mission it probably happened likewise. It is to be assumed that Ignatius and the Jesuits came to be interested in Ethiopian Christianity through the men that sponsored them in Rome and Portugal. It is within the period that the historian O’Malley calls the “Taking Shape for Ministry” when Ignatius came to know about

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68 See Pierre HURTUBISE, “Rome au temps d’Ignace de Loyola”, in: Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo. Congreso internacional de historia (9-13 Setiembre 1991), ed. Juan Plazaola, Bilbao: Mensajero, 1992, 441-71, 446-47. Visits of Ethiopians to Rome, however, did not begin with Paul III but had older roots; an excellent survey are the studies by LÉFEVRE: “Riflessi etiopici nella cultura europea” (Parte Seconda e Terza); “Roma e la comunità etiopica di Cipro nei secoli XV e XVI”, Rassegna di Studi Etiopici 1, 1, 1941, 71-86; and “Note su alcuni pellegrini Etiopi in Roma al tempo di Leone X”, Ibid XXI, 1965, 16-26.


70 It is also important to bear in mind that the guiding texts of the order only reached complete form years after the first Jesuits set foot in Rome. The Constitutions, whose first draft was from 1550, was first approved in the first general congregation of 1558 and modified for the last time in 1594; LOYOLA 1997, 445-46. The Ratio Studiorum was first printed in 1581 and given final form only in 1599; Ratio 1970, i.

71 HURTUBISE, “Rome au temps d’Ignace de Loyola”, 467.

72 O’MALLEY 1993, 50 seq.
Ethiopian Christianity. During these years, the Jesuit founder read the newly published accounts by Alvares and Góis\(^73\) and also befriended Täsfa Seyon, who was reportedly to play an important role in opening Paul’s court to the new order. A testimony of that is a painting the Jesuits commanded for their mother church of Il Gesù where the Ethiopian monk stood behind the pope whilst the Jesuits offered him the Formula of the Institute (Plate IIb). In May 1542, Ignatius’ companion Francis-Xavier, arrived in Goa with, among other commitments, that of reaching la tierra del Preste (“the land of the Preste”).\(^74\) Although such a desire was never fulfilled, the future Apostle of the Indies continued to hope to go to Ethiopia during his years of wandering in the Orient.\(^75\)

The first concrete steps of the Jesuit mission to Ethiopia must have been taken in the central years of the 1540s, around 1544 or 1545, at the time of the opening of the Council of Trent (formally convoked on 22 May 1542 and opened on 13 December 1545). In 1543 the Portuguese campaign in Ethiopia ended and by the beginning of the following year the first survivors returned to Goa, bringing with them the news about the success of the military campaign as well as of Bermudez’s sound failure to have his ‘Patriarchate’ approved by the negus. The fate of the pseudo-patriarch, as Ignatius of Loyola called him,\(^76\) must have more than offended the Portuguese monarch – as it is apparent in his letters questioning Bermudez’s titles and behaviour\(^77\) – as well as embarrassing the pope. Thereafter, stimulated by these events, Rome, Lisbon and the Jesuit leadership began to join forces in order to set up an official and grand mission to Ethiopia headed by a solemnly chosen patriarch. The aim was to provide the Ethiopian church with a new ecclesiastic hierarchy that, besides dignity, enjoyed a true authority over the whole (new) diocese of Ethiopia.

However, the origins of the project did not lay solely in the adventurous career of Bermudez neither in the missionary push of Rome, Lisbon and the Jesuits. After all, they were officially responding to the ‘call’ of a necessitated church that had provided signs enough – so the Europeans thought – of their will to accept the Catholic predicaments. The Ethiopian and the Roman Churches had long been in contact. Their communities es-

\(^{75}\) Thus in two letters written in 1549: Francis-Xavier to Simão Rodrigues, 20 January 1549, Cochin, in: Francisco Javier 1996, doc. 73, 284; Id. to Pablo Camerte et al., 20-22 June 1549, Malaca, in: Ibid. doc. 84, 329.
\(^{77}\) For instance, João III to Batlhasar de Faria, 27 August 1546, in: CDP, vol. VI, 69-72, 71.
tablished in the Holy Land had played a role in bringing the two churches together. Written records attest to regular contact being made between members of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem and European friars during Medieval and Renaissance times. It was in Jerusalem that the most important attempt to reach an understanding with Rome originated, the embassy by Alberto da Sarteano that in 1442 signed the decree of Union Bull Cantate Domino in Florence. There, too, Täsfa Seyon spent about three years before coming to Rome.

In the mid-sixteenth century these contacts seem to have reached momentum. The Ethiopian rulers had welcomed the Portuguese envoys and reciprocated by sending their own agents and missives. Between 1509 and 1546, Christian Ethiopia and Europe exchanged at least twenty-two official letters, of which fifteen corresponded to letters sent to and from Rome and nine originated in the Ethiopian court (cf. Appendix 3). Standing out among these are the texts that Lebnä Dengel sent in 1526 via his improvised envoy Francisco Alvares, two letters to Pope Clement VII, together with an Obedientia. The missives, that only reached their destination in 1533, insisted in the perennial request for trained personnel (theologians, painters, producers of weapons, smiths, masons) whilst the third text offered obedience to the pope. They had an impact: solemnly handed by Alvares to Clement VII in 1533, they became the main documents proving to Rome the ‘true’ desires of Ethiopian Christianity. Although their genesis, composition and transmission seems to have been, as in many other instances, in the hands of the Europeans that were in the service of the negus – Alvares himself helped in composing the first two texts whilst the letter of obedience is nowhere mentioned as among those having been written in Ethiopia79 – to Rome they meant the readiness of the Ethiopians to conform to the new reformed standards being defined by the Catholic Church. Obedience, henceforth, became the object of frequent reference in the correspondence with the Ethiopians.80 Even if Rome and Portugal were mislead by their own agendas or by the tricks of diplomatic rhetoric, it is nonetheless a fact that by the 1540s – be it only thanks to spurious diplomatic

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78 The reference work on this issue is Enrico Cerulli’s, Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme, 2 vols., Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1943.
79 Cf. Alvares 1883, ch. CXV.
80 For instance, Francisco Barreto to Gälawdewos, 2 January 1557, in: RASO X, doc. 21, 83; King Sebastião to Constantino de Bragança, Viceroy of India, March 1558, in: RASO X, doc. 23, 94; Brief of Pius IV to Minas, 20 August 1561, in: ibid., doc. 32, 126. Maffei informed in his treatise that “... of the Abyssinian king and kingdom, to be once and for all integrated into the Catholic faith. Indeed, even though the aforementioned ambassador to David had reported the veneration and respect for Clement VII” (... Abassini Regis ac regni ad catholicam fidem, atque ad auctoritatem Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae tandem aliquando adiuendi. nam etsi ad Dauidis legatus, de quo supra commemoratum est, Clementi VII. venerationem obsequiavisse detulerat); Ioannis Petri Maffei, Historiarum Indicarum, Lugduni: ex Officina Iuncta, 1589, 389.
exchanges – the Ethiopian and European Christianities were closer than they had ever been before.

A second external aspect that probably stimulated the idea of a mission was the prophetical momentum in Christian Ethiopia. Portuguese and Ethiopian sources thus reported numerous scenes where prophecies intervened in human action. On top of the story about the sending to Ethiopia of bishops from Rome, early sixteenth-century sources reported on the coming of Christian soldiers that should help the Ethiopians destroy the main sites of Islam in Jiddah, Tir and Mecca.\(^{81}\) Other sources recorded similar prophecies during the campaign of Christovão da Gama in 1541-43.\(^{82}\) Although it is to be assumed that, here again, the Portuguese over-encouraged native stories, these scenes may not have been entirely the invention of Europeans. Contemporary Ethiopian chronicles are littered with prophetical scenes and it could be assumed that the two Christian countries that met in the Red Sea shared, to a degree, similar prophetical narratives. What is more important, these stories had a sound impact. They were mentioned in the main Portuguese chronicles\(^{83}\) and circulated among the Portuguese soldiery and decision-making centres. Loyola himself recalled some of them in his famous instructions to the missionaries for Ethiopia.\(^{84}\)

But let us go back to Rome. In a brief dated 1544, the pope informed the negus that before sending a patriarch he would send learned men to instruct the Christian faith.\(^{85}\) Two years later Dom João urged his ambassador in Rome, Balthasar de Faria, to press towards the election of a Jesuit as new patriarch of Ethiopia. From that year on the Jesuits became the third main axis of the ambitious patriarchal mission to Ethiopia. During this period, Täsfa Seyon became also an active lobbyist for the patriarchal cause in the eternal town.\(^{86}\)

It must be stressed, however, that if compared to other early missions managed by

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81 ALVARES 1883, ch. XCIX.
82 CASTANHOSO 1936, ch. 7; also recorded in CORREIA 1976, vol. IV, 352.
84 “You should know that they tell a prophecy about a king from the West [added: and here they do not think, so it seems, in another person than in the King of Portugal] who, during this time, should destroy the moors” (Adviértase que ellos tienen prophetia que en estos tiempos un Rey de estas partes de ponente [added: y no piensan, parece, en otro que en el de Portugal] ha de destruir los moros); Ignacio de Loyola, 1551-53, in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 2, 251.
85 Paul III to Claudius [Gälawdewos], 23 May 1544, Roma, in: SCHURHAMMER, Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen, doc. 1241.
86 “This fray Pedro [i.e. Täsfa Seyon] began to speak of the many needs the lands of the Prester John had so that as quickly as possible the many souls there could be saved. So, he and the others [i.e. friendly prelates and cardinals in Rome] achieved what they pretended, namely that five bishops were sent to Ethiopia so that the Prester John could choose one of them to be the patriarch” (Este frai pedro… começou a mostrar la mucha necesidad de las tierras del preste Joan, para q con presteza fueren remedidahs tantas almas, y poniendo sus diligencias en compañía de los otros, alcançaron lo q pretendían es a saber, fueren cinco obispos para ethiopia, y q despues el preste Joan eligiese uno de ellos por patriarcha); Peter Fabro to
the Society of Jesus overseas – India (1542), Molucas (1546), Congo (1547), Brazil and Japan (1549) – the initial Jesuit involvement in this enterprise was neither swift nor easy. There were several reasons for that. First, contrary to what happened with other projects, the Jesuits counted for some time with an important concurrent in the Dominican Order. The Dominicans held a certain advantage regarding Ethiopia; unlike the order founded in 1534 by Ignatius, they could claim century-old connections with Ethiopian Christianity – some of them fictitious and some true. They were also the traditional ‘protectors’ of the Ethiopians on pilgrimage to Europe, during which visits the Ethiopians used to ‘adopt’ the Dominican dress. It is, therefore, not by chance that during the initial and confusing years of mission to the *Preste*, the first to be mobilized were the sons of St. Dominic. Thus, in 1539, as mentioned earlier, four Dominican friars escorted ‘Patriarch’ Bermudez aiming at Ethiopia, though they were never to reach their destiny.87 Still, in March 1546, the Ambassador in Rome Balthasar de Faria informed João III on a Castilian friar lobbying in the Holy City for the nomination of two bishops for Ethiopia. This was probably Friar Francisco Vazquez, to whom the pope granted indeed in the Brief *Cum sicut nobis* permission to go Ethiopia and India one year later.88 But the friar did not reach his destination and his attempt seems to have marked the last moment when Dominicans were associated with the mission to Ethiopia.

The Dominican was never a choice that could have worked. The friars probably boasted an impressive curriculum but, albeit active in Spanish America since the early decades of the century, they hardly had any practical experience with religious reformation in the East. In the 1540s, reformism promoted in Rome and in Portugal was wanting for new ideas, which an order formed during Mediaeval times and imbued with scholastic doctrines was unlikely to provide. Whilst the Dominicans still held a privileged position in the universities and as custodians of theological doctrines, they were badly fit for a time that requested action and a well-trained and organised body of men. Efficient management, fresh ideas and capacity to mobilise men and forces were precisely the abilities that the ‘new men’ gathered around the personality of Ignatius of Loyola offered and that made them rapidly gain the trust of popes and kings. The thinker Giovanni Botero (1544-1617) captured, some forty years from the events here described, the big gap between the order he once belonged to and the mendicant orders:

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87 Yet, Bermudez mentions in his account that his *provisor* (i.e. purveyor, treasurer) during the expedition to Ethiopia was a frey Diogo da Trinidade; BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. XXIII.
The priests of St. Francis and St. Dominic, and the Jesuits began a race about who could better take care of this vast vineyard, being generously supported by the King of Portugal, with the construction of convents, colleges and seminars and with important fundings, donations and favours. However, the priests of St. Dominic and those of St. Francis are mostly occupied in preaching the salms and officiating in their own churches, in burying the dead and in taking care of the souls. The work of conversion was left, in large part, for the priests of the Society of Jesus, who do not miss any opportunity and means to help the gentiles and to confirm the Christian neophytes. They celebrate magnificently the baptisms and with the rich vestments they give to the neophytes, with the garments [they use?] in the lands they cross and of the churches... and with all sorts of feasts and entertainments they produce amazing effects. Besides, they favour the newly-baptized by offering them honorable and important charges and functions and making them exempt of some laws, allowing them to wear weapons and similar things...89

Additional difficulties of the Ethiopian project were related to the institution of the Patriarch of Ethiopia. Since Bermudez’s adventure, this institution had been at the centre of all discussions about Ethiopia. Born in the mind of a Portuguese adventurer, the idea of an Ethiopian patriarchate became, during the years when Bermudez struggled in Ethiopia to gain recognition from negus Gälawdewos, a sine qua non of the mission.90 In Rome and in Portugal it was clear that no matter who was to be in charge of the mission, its head was to be a patriarch with full authority over the Ethiopian Church and directly obligated to the pope. Yet, such an institution was almost untested in the Catholic world91 and certainly a challenge to the Society of Jesus. Although in the 1540s the Society was still halfway through its formation, Ignatius had made the refusal of ecclesiastic dignities one of its defining features.92 Accordingly, he repeatedly refused the bishoprics and red hats that were offered to his first companions Claudio Jayo, Francisco de Borja, Peter Canisio, Pascal

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88 Paul III, Breve Cum sicut nobis, 8 March 1547, Roma, in: SCHURHAMMER, Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen, doc. 2880a.
89 I Padri di S. Francesco, di S. Domenico, e i Gesùiti cominciarono a far a gara a chi meglio coltuisse quella vigna amplissima, avutati cio liberalissimamente dalle Re di Portogallo, e con fabliche di conventi e di collegi, e di seminarii, con grosse entrate, donazioni, e favours. Ma i Padri di Sun Domenico e di S. Francesco sono per lo più occupati o in salmeggiare, & affilare, le loro Chiese, & in seppellire i morti, & in cura d’anime. L’opera della conversione e restata in gran parte a Padri della Compagnia, che non lasciano indietro occasione minima, ne maniera di aiutare i Gentili, e di confermare i nouelli Christiani. Celebrazono magnificissime i battesimi, e con la ricchezza de’ vestimenti che si fanno a’ Neofiti, con l’apparato delle contrade, per le quali passano, e dell Chiesa...e con ogni sorte finalmente di festa & di allegrezza fanno incredibili effetti. Accarezzano poi i battezzati col procurar loro i carichi, e gli uffitij di qualche honorolezza, & utilita: col farli fare essenti dalle grauvze, co la facolta di portar arme, et con simili altre cose ...; BOTERO, Relatio Universalis, 490.
90 Earlier hints at sending a patriarch date, though, to the papacy of Leo X. In a letter to Manuel I, who came just from receiving Mateus and was about to send to Ethiopia his friend Duarte Galvão, the pope suggested: “it is desirable to that purpose to intervene at the death of the same patriarch Marqos and to elect a successor, so that the brethrens do not suffer at their loss” [...] (... petereque propter a morte ipsius Marci Patriarche, ne christianos patiamtur a quo obitum, eligamus successorum); Leo X to Manuel I, 1514, in: CDP, vol. I, 249, 249.
91 There existed, however, the so-called “minor patriarchates”, such as that of Venice or the “Patriarchate of the West Indies”, instituted by Leo X in 1520 for the Spanish territories in Mexico and enjoying a mere testimonial character.
92 The position of Ignatius and the Jesuits on this issue and a survey of the ecclesiastic dignitaries enjoyed by Jesuits has been the issue of a recent study; Angel SANTOS HERNÁNDEZ, Jesuitas y obispados, vol. 1: La Compañía de Jesús y las dignidades eclesiásticas; vol. 2: Los jesuitas obispos misioneros y los obispos jesuitas de la extinción, Madrid: Pontificia Universidad de Comillas, 1998-2000.
Broet, Diogo Laynez, Nicolas Bobadilla and Simão Rodrigues. With the Ethiopian patriarchate he initially showed a similar scepticism, as his letters written in 1546 attest. However, he soon adopted a more pragmatic position; with his usual skill, the Basque soon twisted the terms and assumed that the patriarchate was more of a burden than a dignity, that it called for “fatigues and hardships” (fatigas y trabajos) instead of for “pomp and rest” (pompa y descanso), as he wrote the same year to Simão Rodrigues. Once the moral issues had been settled, he thus accepted the challenge and began to work at full strength for its completion.

The acceptance of the patriarchate had important consequences for the overall missionary policy followed by the Society in the Eastern Indies. It was at the origin of a special fifth vow defined in the Constitutions and instituted the practice, followed ever since, of receiving dignities for the missionaries destined to work in the Orient. The founder also committed himself to the project. He was especially careful that Dom João – whose Padroado rights included the nomination of ecclesiastic dignities within his domains – would not forget about it and to this end lobbied before the Portuguese ambassador in Rome and the king himself. With the same purpose, Ignatius also assured the support of prominent figures from within the religious milieu of Spain, a land that was then siege of an Emperor and the most powerful Catholic nation. Among those who gave their support to this project were the Cardinal-Archbishop of Compostela and son of the Duke of Alba, the Dominican Juan Alvarez de Toledo (1488-1557), the influent Dominican theologian Fray Luis de Granada (1504-88) and the Duke of Gandia, secretary of Charles V and later third Jesuit General, Francisco de Borja (1510-72).
Last but not least, the election of candidates for the patriarchate and bishoprics of Ethiopia was to be the source of intense discussion. The special requirements for this position and the limited number of Jesuits available made it a particularly difficult issue. In 1546, João III had proposed as a candidate mestre Fabro (Peter Fabro), one of Ignatius’ early companions, but it became soon clear that he was too old for the office. Moreover, the Jesuit leaders emphasized that the patriarch was to be good looking, have presence – Alfonso Salmerón was discarded because with a “childish and beardless face” –, of good health and constitution and with experience and knowledge.98 Only around 1553, after discarding several names, among which was Igantius’ own, could João III and Ignatius come to a positive conclusion. The choice fell on Iberian Jesuits, who, significantly, were not founders of the Society but had nonetheless joined during the first years: João Nunes Barreto (joined 1544) was nominated Patriarch of Ethiopia, Andrés de Oviedo (joined 1541) future Bishop of Hyerapolis and Melchior Carneiro (joined 1543) was elected Bishop of Nicæa, the latter two with rights to succeed Barreto in the Patriarchate.

In July 1553, Loyola’s mediation bore the first results as Dom João formally requested from Ignatius priests for the patriarchate and the bishoprics of Ethiopia. Following this, in a series of texts written between 1554 and 1555, the Basque gave the missionaries precise guidelines.99 These were unique documents: on the one hand, they were the only concrete instructions the general was ever to write on a specific mission; on the other, they provided a synthesized picture of Ignatius’ missionary strategy overall. Soon, official bulls from Pope Julius III, successor of Alessandro Farnese, followed.100 In the meantime, preparations in Lisbon speeded up and in 1555 the first convoy of missionaries to Ethiopia embarked, headed by Barreto and the two co-adjutors, Carneiro and Oviedo. In another sign of its exceptional placement within the Society’s agenda, the Ethiopian mission formed a province of its own, directly depending on the Jesuit General, though effectively it was part of the province of Goa (created in 1549) and of the Portuguese Asistancy. After years of arduous negotiations, the Jesuit adventure to the Preste had officially begun.
3. Native networks

Os pregadores levam a Fé aos reinos estranhos, e o comércio leva às costas os pregadores.¹

THE CARREIRA TO THE PRESTE

The mission to Ethiopia was in many aspects a unique enterprise: its patriarchal foundation, the aim to reduce the ‘Prester John’ and the direct involvement of Ignatius of Loyola placed it in a prominent position amongst the projects that the Society of Jesus and the Crown of Portugal were setting up during the first decades of what was to be a lengthy engagement. At the same time, reaching Christian Ethiopia was not an easy task and this confronted the mission, over its eighty years of existence, with important logistic problems.

At the time the mission was being approved in Lisbon and Rome, the areas controlled by negus Gälawdewos (1540-59) were scant. Following the fall of Ahmad Grañ the centre of the Christian Kingdom moved again southwards, near the fertile regions of the south.² However, the eighteen years of Gälawdewos’ reign were not peaceful. They were marked by endless campaigns aiming at recovering the dominion of the southern tributary states (Gurage, Haddiya, Kambaata, Damot), crushing internal dissent (Fālasha) and coping with major geopolitical challenges (Ottomans, Oromo expansion). On all these fronts Gälawdewos, with all the skills he seems to have incarnated, was only partially successful.

The Christian Kingdom was concentrated in the provinces of Damot, Shāwa, Gōjjam, Tegray, Dāmbeya and Lasta. It was actually landlocked state, surrounded in most parts by Muslim states. The sultanate of Adal, facing an internal crisis, continued to dominate the whole territory to the East of Shāwa; in the north, it was bordered by Muslim Beja tribes and, since the 1530s, the Ottomans; in the west, by Gumuz-speaking tribes; and to the south of the areas historically linked to the Christian state, largely Muslim, such as Gurage, Kambaata, Ennariya, there were Oromo tribes advancing northwards. Christian access to the outer world was, therefore, largely dependent on its neighbours. The sea was difficult to reach and the baher nägash, a regional ruler subject to the negus, had no ef-

² Mordechai Abir, Ethiopia and the Red Sea: The rise and decline of the Solomonic dynasty and Muslim-European rivalry in the Re-
effective control over the main ports of Massawa and Arquico. Ahmad Grañ’s death in 1543 brought only short relief to the negus, as soon afterwards Adali attacks resumed and the Oromo tribes began their great expansion northwards. Gālawdewos himself perished in 1559 at the hands of Nur bin Mujahid, Sultan of Adal. His brother and successor, Minas (regnal name Admas Sāgād), died in 1563 of fever during a campaign against the northwards advance of the Macha Oromo.³

Table 2: Portuguese fleets to the Red Sea, Hadramawt coast and Yemen, 1507-48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commander(s)</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1507</td>
<td>Tristão da Cunha/Afonso</td>
<td>19 boats</td>
<td>Sack of Baraawe; occupation of Socotra; João Gomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>de Albuquerque</td>
<td></td>
<td>João Sanches and Sidi Mafamede are sent to the Preste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duarte de Lemos</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visits Mogardishu, Socotra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1513</td>
<td>Afonso de Albuquerque</td>
<td>20 boats, 2,700 men</td>
<td>Fails to take Aden; visits Kamaran; exploration and sack of Zeyla and Berbera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1517</td>
<td>Lopo Soares de Albergaria</td>
<td>36/43 boats (15 nauas), 1,800-5,400 men</td>
<td>Duarte Galvão, Mateus are taken to the Preste; some lançados go to the Preste; attack against Jiddah, Kamaran; burns Zeyla, fails to take Aden; Galvão dies in Kamaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1520</td>
<td>Diogo Lopes de Sequeira</td>
<td>24 zelas, 10 nauas, 1,800 men</td>
<td>Embassy of da Lima and Mateus to the Preste; attempt to attack Jiddah; visit to Massawa; peaceful visit to Aden (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1523</td>
<td>Luís de Menezes</td>
<td>7/9 boats</td>
<td>Fails to take da Lima back to India; plundering of al-Shihr; visit Socotra, Dahlak; letters handed to da Lima; sack of Dhofar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>Heitor de Silveira</td>
<td>7 boats</td>
<td>Fails to take da Lima back to India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td>António de Miranda de</td>
<td>5 boats, 600-700 men</td>
<td>Peaceful visit to Aden and trade “agreement”; attacks Dhofar; reaches Kamaran; da Lima and Sāgā ṭā’ab are taken to India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azevedo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fails to reach Massawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1526</td>
<td>Heitor de Silveira</td>
<td>5 boats</td>
<td>Peaceful visit to Aden and trade “agreement”; attacks Dhofar; reaches Kamaran; da Lima and Sāgā ṭā’ab are taken to India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>António de Miranda de</td>
<td>20 zelas, 1,000+ men</td>
<td>Visits Socotra, Qishn, Aden, Zeyla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azevedo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peaceful visit to Aden, trade agreement there; visits Socotra, cape Gardafuí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1531</td>
<td>Manoel de Vasconcelos</td>
<td>9 boats</td>
<td>Attack on al-Shihr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1532</td>
<td>António de Saldanha</td>
<td>10 boats</td>
<td>Peaceful visit to Mete and al-Shihr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1533</td>
<td>Diogo da Silveira</td>
<td>16 boats</td>
<td>Visit to al-Shihr, Aden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1534</td>
<td>Dom Fernando de Lima?</td>
<td>2 boats</td>
<td>Pillage of al-Shihr; reconnaissance visit in Aden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1535</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4 boats</td>
<td>Visit to Kamaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>Manoel Rodrigues Coutinho?</td>
<td>8-10 boats, 600 men</td>
<td>Peaceful visit to Aden, trade agreement there; visits Socotra, cape Gardafuí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1540</td>
<td>Vasco da Cunha</td>
<td>12 boats</td>
<td>Short visit to the Strait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1541</td>
<td>Estevão da Gama</td>
<td>12 boats, 3,000 men</td>
<td>Lootings of Dahlak and Sawakin; visit Massawa, al-Kusair, Tor, Suez; Christovão da Gama and 400 men go to Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1543?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Failed attempt to reach Massawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1548</td>
<td>Alvaro de Castro</td>
<td>2 boats, 300 men</td>
<td>Attempt to take Aden and Qishin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The arrival of the Portuguese in India helped little to improve this state of affairs. For some decades the dispatch of regular armadas to the Estreito, as the Portuguese named the Red Sea, the area of Cape Gardafui and the southern Yemenite coast, secured a route linking Ethiopia with Portuguese India (Table 2). This option was used by the Christian state to send the envoy Sägga Zä’ab in 1526 and a series of letters to his European partners. But, around the end of the 1550s, as we saw above, the armadas stopped and thereafter only individual Portuguese ships made sporadic visits to the area. The acquisition of Diu in 1535 and the exceptional fortification, built according to Italian engineering designs after the siege of 1546, granted the Portuguese a secure grasp over this strategic port and thus led to their ostentatious and costly armadas, such as the one commanded by Estevão da Gama in 1541, being unnecessary.

We mentioned before the effect that the Portuguese presence had in stirring up conflict in the Red Sea. Another important by-product of the Portuguese arrival was the ‘fortification’ of the region. Traditionally, as the use of modern artillery was largely unknown, the ports of the region lacked any serious defences. The arrival of the heavily gunned Portuguese caravels and galleys was quite a new development in local warfare and obliged regional polities to respond similarly. Every Portuguese incursion thus provoked the rapid reinforcement of local ports. Around 1506-07, the Mamelukes fortified Jiddah probably following news of Portuguese ravages in the Indian Ocean and between 1515-16, after Albuquerque’s short-lived occupation, the Egyptians built a fort on Kamaran Island. Aden, at the time the port most coveted by the Portuguese, which had grown in importance since Portuguese began obstructing Red Sea-India traffic, was fortified after every one of their attempts to take it: following Albuquerque and Lopo Soares de Albergaria’s unfriendly visits of 1513 and 1517. In 1520, the arrival of an armada under governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, the same that landed Rodrigo da Lima at Massawa, stimulated the Ottoman occupation of Sawakin and Zeyla. The same protagonists took Massawa in 1557 and two years later they went far into the Eritrean highlands and occupied the capital of the baher nágash region, Debarwa.

Therefore in the 1550s, although the Portuguese had become dominators of the

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4 Mateus, on the contrary, seems to have taken the traditional path followed by trade routes – mostly in the hands of Muslims – embarking for India in the port of Zeyla aboard a Muslim ship; cf. CORREIA 1976, vol. II, 584.
5 SERJEANT 1963, 162.
6 Ibid. 49.
7 This development had already been observed by João de Barros, who commented: “With our arrival in India Aden became more prosperous and important” (Com a nossa entrada na India Adem se fez mais rico e celebre; Década II, liv. VII, ch. VIII.)
Plate Ia (above): Basrelief of Pope Eugene IV giving the Bull of Union to the Copts and Ethiopians, 1445, Antonio Averulino "Il Filarete", bronze gate, St. Peter, Rome, detail.

Plate Ib (below): Map of Africa, Gerhard Mercator, 1595, detail.
Plate IIa (above): the Prester John on his throne in Ethiopia, 1558, map by Diego Homem, Queen Mary Atlas, detail.

Plate IIb (below): St. Ignatius and his fellow Jesuits present the Formula of the Institute to Pope Paul III, in the presence of cardinal Alessandro Farnese and Tafsa Seyon (the black bearded man behind the Pope), ca. 1615-25, anonymous, antesacristy, Church of Il Gesù, Rome.
Indian Ocean trade and consolidated the conquests of the generation of warmongers headed by Afonso de Albuquerque, they also definitively lost control over the Red Sea. That the men enforcing the patriarchal mission to Christian Ethiopia were not deterred by such an unfavourable reality is witness to the importance they accorded the project as well as the confidence they had in their own capacities. After all, this was a period when no destination – in America, Africa or Asia – seemed difficult enough for the spiritual sons of Ignatius of Loyola and their main sponsor, João III. The Jesuits’ philosophy of action likely contributed to this sense of over confidence. Strongly inspired by Paul the Apostle, it was imbued with the idea that, as Jeronimo Nadal expressed, “the world is our oyster”, and, therefore, the most exotic missions turned into domestic enterprises.

An important factor in stirring up the imagination of the mission-planners was also the optimistic news that arrived from Ethiopia in the early 1550s. Gälawdewos had by then incorporated remnants of Christovão da Gama’s army in his service – a few dozen – and pursued an ambiguous game with Europe. Via the Portuguese soldiers, he sent a number of friendly letters to Europe and, while dismissing Bermudez’s claims to a patriarchate with the request of a metropolitan to the See of Alexandria, also had time to court the Portuguese from Ethiopia and India, probably to strengthen his domestic political position. The Jesuits, in their turn, had been gathering intelligence on the negus from the Portuguese veterans and in 1551 one of Francis-Xavier’s first companions, Gaspar Barzeo, came to the optimistic conclusion that the Preste “was ready for a mission”.

Last but not least, the military failure to control the Red Sea probably also contributed to strengthen the project of a mission to Ethiopia. In fact, with the opening of the missionary era in Ethiopia, Portuguese ambitions for the area were not abandoned but

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9 Nadal quoted in O’Malley 1993, 46.
10 This philosophy was a constant focus of Ignatius’ epistles. Another instance of it is found in a famous passage from a letter he addressed to Diego Mirón: “For if we were only to seek carrying out safe tasks, and we should defer good deeds so as to be protected from any danger, we would not be able to live and speak to anybody. Yet, according to our vocation, we speak to everybody and, following the words of St. Paul, ‘We have become all things to all men’” (Porque si no buscásemos otro, según nuestra profesión, sino andar seguros, y habiésemos de postener el bien por apartarnos lejos del peligro, no habíamos de vivir y conversar con los prójimos. Pero según nuestra vocación, convérsamos con todos; antes, según de sí decía San Pablo: Debemos hacernos todo a todos, para ganar a todos a Cristo), February 1553, in: Ignacio de Loyola 1997, doc. 86, 931. The passage by St. Paul is from 1 Corinthians 9:22: “I became all things to all men, that I might save all” (cf. also 1 Corinthians 10:33). Further evidence, in O’Malley 1993, 73.
11 The new metropolitan, abunä Yosäb, arrived in Ethiopia in 1547.
12 In 1551, the Jesuit Gaspar Barzeo produced in India a report on the state of Ethiopia based mostly on hearsay from Portuguese soldiers where he mentioned “the king is very interested in knowing the truth about the things of the faith and desires to talk about them” (El rei he muito curioso de saber a verdade das cousas da fé e folga de falar nells); Gaspar Barzeo, “Relatorio de statu politico et religioso Aethiopie...”, 1551, in: Raso X, doc. 6, 29. The role of the Portuguese living in Ethiopia could have not been unimportant in pressing the negus towards a more Catholic friendly-policy. Evidence in Gaspar Calaça to Superior General, 30 April 1556, ibid., doc. 16, 61.
took other methods. The armadas stopped sailing to Bab el Mandeb but the Jesuits were no less aware of the geopolitical implications of their presence in the area. Throughout their stay in Ethiopia they kept in mind the idea to send a fleet to occupy Massawa and on many an occasion suggested to the Goan and Lisboan authorities to provide the necessary military means. Next to ‘intelligence’ reconnaissance, the missionaries’ most important geopolitical contribution was likely their very attempt to convert the negus. With this they would render him a direct ally of Portugal and by way of their skills in statesmanship also form a modern powerful Prince in the heart of Africa. Portuguese decision-makers might have thought that with the religious subtleties of the Jesuit priests the Estado da India could indeed be able to reach further than with the hands of soldiers; their zeal and ambition to convert numbers of natives could be a solution to the chronic shortage of people, means and resources in India. The mission could have been, therefore, the alternative continuation of politics and war.

Be that as it may, when the mission set out, the route to the Red Sea was blocked. As the Jesuit priest Barzeo put it in 1551, the “[Ethiopian] King cannot navigate by sea and the Portuguese from Ethiopia wishing to go to India are obliged to wait upon our armadas travelling to the strait”. The Jesuits could ultimately settle this problem and during their some eighty years in Ethiopia they mostly used the century-old trade route linking the Gujarat with the Red Sea. This was a not completely secure route but, as time proved, it was the only one available to Christian missionaries in an Islamic-dominated territory. Before explaining how it functioned, a look into alternative ways explored during the mission is in order. The Gujarat-Red Sea route used by the missionaries had indeed some drawbacks. These drawbacks accounted for the project, never completely abandoned, to reach Christian Ethiopia by following other paths. Possibilities left open to the Portuguese were scant. The route that in the fifteenth century and earlier had brought a legion of Europeans to Ethiopia by the Mediterranean, Cairo and the Sudanese desert was never properly undertaken. As a matter of fact, in the early years of mission the Portuguese and Jesuits had agents in Egypt involved in the Ethiopian project. In 1561, António Pinto, a Portuguese merchant and former captive of the Turks, was commanded to bring a brief from Pope Pius IV to Gälawdewos passing through Cairo. In the letter of instructions to Pinto, Lourenço Pires de Tavora, Dom Sebastião’s ambassador in Rome and former soldier in India, also requested the envoy to enquire in Ethiopia about the possibiliti-
ties of opening new routes through Cairo and the so-called Malindi Coast (Banadir Coast). Pinto reached Cairo in November 1562 but could not proceed further due to political instability in Ethiopia. About the same time two other Jesuits, Cristoforo Rodríguez and Giovanni Battista Eliano, were active in the Egyptian capital involved in a different affair but, nonetheless, related to the Ethiopian mission: the conversion – which ultimately failed – of the Coptic Patriarch Gabriel VII Minchawi. Overall hostile conditions in Egypt made it nearly impossible or otherwise too expensive to secure passage to Catholic missionaries. Thereafter, the way through Egypt was only used sporadically, especially for correspondence sent to and from Italy (such was the case, it seems, with the numerous letters exchanged between Susenyos and the popes in the 1610s and 1620s). In 1627, four Jesuits attempted to reach the mission following this route but failed as well. It was only towards the end of the mission, in the mid-seventeenth century, that Franciscan and Capuchin missionaries, well protected by a good friend of the Porte, France, could use this route again to reach the Ethiopian highlands.

Another of the alternative routes considered to go across the Western African coast. This was the route that João Afonso Aveiro had already attempted to follow in the fifteenth century at the time of Dom João II. In March 1546, Dom João III informed the Portuguese soldiers in Ethiopia about the possibility – which he requested they further explore – of finding a route between Ethiopia and the Banadir Coast. In the same text, reminding us of the projects enforced by Dom João II in the previous century, the king also hinted at other routes through Manikongo – a kingdom with which the Portuguese were in contact through their outposts in Angola – or following the rivers that were believed to connect the Nile with the Cape of Good Hope. In the last two proposals the imperfect

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15 Fulgencio Freire to Superior General, Cairo, 30 November 1562, ibid., doc. 40, 157.

16 The episode is described in detail in Mario SCADUTO, “La missione di Cristoforo Rodriguez al Cairo (1561-1563)”, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 27, 1958, 233-78.

17 Aimarus Guerinus to Superior General, 14 September 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 64, 224; Gabriel Fernolux to Superior General, 25 March 1628, Cayro, ibid. doc. 69, 234.

18 Similarly, as late as 1609, a Florentine agent recommended to the Pope that the safest way to Ethiopia was by crossing the Kingdom of Congo; Jeronimo Vecchietti to Paul V, 1609, in: RASO XI, doc. 26, 180 seq.

19 “As I am informed that a road could be easily found to the Malinde coast, or to some other point on that shore, which would afford easier communication between the said King and myself, that matter might be more quickly known, I have written to him to have it explored and examined; you will be careful to remind him, and should it seem well to him for any of you to explore this route, I should consider it good service to me for you to undertake it ... As it may be that the land of Abyssinia extends so far west, and Manicongo so far east, that the distance between
hydrographical and cartographical knowledge of the interior of the African continent misguided the king and, for that matter, his cartographers: the borders of the continent were well-known and accurately drawn in maps but the interior was largely *terra incognita*, which the cartographers had to guess at using the scant factual information at their disposal and much of their own imagination. At the time the mission took off, map-makers were still influenced by the myth of the Nile river as being the ‘backbone’ of Africa and that Ethiopia (and its synonymous terms *Abyssinia* and *Preste*) was the continent’s most powerful and dominant polity (Plate Ib).²⁰

A few years after João’s letter, exploration efforts became more realistic. The Portuguese, those living in India and Ethiopia, tried to find routes connecting the southern Ethiopian highlands with the coast north of Cape Delgado, along the Swahili and Somali coasts. Along this coast, the Portuguese controlled a series of posts that secured them military dominion: since 1503 they were at Zanzibar; in 1499 they established a trading post in Malindi, and later occupied Kilwa and Mombaça, where in 1593 they built the imposing Fort Jesus. In 1551, Barzeo mentioned Portuguese living in Ethiopia who had been gathering information from the natives on rivers flowing to Mogadishu, probably pointing to the Webi Shabeelle.²¹ During the second missionary period (1603-32), the search for a safe route along the Swahili coast resumed. Around 1591, just before the two last missionaries from the first period died, an envoy of *negus* Sārsā Dengel (1563-97), the monk Täklä Maryam, reached Rome bringing news from his land and some requests to the Pope and Felipe II of Spain. The monk also related optimistic prospects about reaching Ethiopia from Baraawe and Mogadishu.²² The Portuguese secretary to Felipe II of Spain – and later also to his successor, Felipe III, – Miguel de Moura, seems to have taken notice of this and between 1593 ad 1617 he pressed the Goan authorities on this subject.²³

In turn, in 1613, Susenyos charged António Fernandes (1571-1642), a skilled missionary

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²⁰ On the inaccuracy of early modern cartography, the historian Randles wrote: “The notion of a vast African continent inhabited by primitive politically organised negro tribes was something Europe had still to grasp. If the vast length of the African coastline, in comparison with that of Europe, was being slowly appreciated, there was no comparable appreciation of the immense unknown in the interior. Thus Abyssinia was stretched down to fill the vacuum, and the consequences of this are to be seen in maps of Africa well into the 18th century”; W.G.L. RAN- DLES, “South-east Africa as Shown on Selected Printed Maps of the Sixteenth Century”, in: Id., Geography, Cartogra-phy and Nautical Science, ch. XX, 74.

²¹ Barzeo, 1551, in: RASO X, doc. 6, 32.

²² Tecla Mariam [Täklä Maryam], “Relatio”, [1598], in: RASO X, doc. 146.

²³ For instance: Felipe II to Governor of India, 15 February 1593, in: RASO X, doc. 125; id. ad eundem, 21 No- vember 1598, ibid. doc. 147; Felipe III ad eundem, 21 March 1617, in: RASO XI, doc. 47; and id. ad eundem, 27 March 1620, ibid. doc. 56.
with nine years’ experience in the country, with a secret diplomatic mission to the Pope and Felipe III of Portugal. As the mission was considered to be highly important and also considerably risky, the Jesuit avoided the areas dominated by the Ottomans and headed southwards, hoping to reach the port of Malindi. Ultimately, Fernandes travelled as far as the regions of Ennarya, Kambaata, Jangero and Haddiya but failed to achieve his objective. Some ten years later, with the impending arrival of Afonso Mendes, the new Patriarch of Ethiopia, to India, geographical examinations resumed. In 1624, the Jesuit Jerónimo Lobo made a trip to reconnoitre possible ways through Pate-Jubo, Macada and Baraaue-Mogadishu (Braava-Magadax) and towards the end of the decade two Jesuits attempted to reach Ethiopia from Angola and the Congo. In the end, however, the Jesuits concluded that these routes were too dangerous and expensive and were thus abandoned. Indeed, most of the coastal rulers along this area were engaged in chronic wars with the inland tribes. Besides, were the trips ever to be attempted, they would be too expensive, or as Lobo once put it, be a “flood of expenses,” since at crossing every territory the Europeans would be obliged to offer costly payments and gifts to the numerous rulers spread in the area.

**DIU AND THE BANIANS**

The Gujarat – Red Sea route was thus the only practicable way left to the Portuguese and Jesuits who wanted to reach the *Preste*. From the first trip in 1555, made by *mestre* Gonçalo in a reconnaissance mission, to the last trip in 1630 by the Bishop Apollinar de Almeida along with two fellow companions, this was the route undertaken by nearly all the missionaries who worked in Ethiopia (Table 3). It was the so-called *via* (or *viagem*) *ordinaria*. The look at how it worked will help to understand some developments in the mission. On the one hand, it will show how the missionaries moved within a generally hostile environment and, on the other, it will shed light on alliances set-up by the Jesuits at Diu, Massawa and

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27 *Hum diluição de gastos*; Juan de Velasco to André Palmeiro, 25 July 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 32, 80.  
28 According to an informant of the Jesuits in Goa, the sum the missionaries should have taken to complete the trip through one of these routes was 6/7,000 *pardãos* (18,000/21,000 *reis*); ibid. 77. This was an enormous sum if we consider that the rent of the College of São Paulo in Goa, the richest in India, in 1575 was 13,000 *pardãos*; Maria Cristina OSSWALD, “Jesuit Art in Goa between 1542 and 1655: From ‘Modo Nostro’ to ‘Modo Goano’”; PhD thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2003, 40. Almeida provides a descriptive explanation of the difficulties surrounding this route in RASO VI, šv. VII, ch. VIII.
Sawakin, which indirectly determined some missionary strategies and practices set up in Ethiopia.

At the time the Portuguese reached India, Gujarat was, as Jean Aubin remarked, the “keystone of the commercial structures of the Indian Ocean”29 and Diu was its centre.30 Diu was both a transhipment hub and an exporting centre. Most of the traffic – including pilgrims to Mecca – between Malacca, the Far East and the Red Sea and Persian Gulf ended there. The port also handled the big bulk of exports of clothes from Gujarat, which together with Bengal and the Coromandel Coast was one of India’s three major textile areas. A few groups managed this huge traffic: banians, professing both Hindu and Jain religions, Arabs, Egyptians and Turks. Additionally, Armenian merchants were also involved in trading activities since earlier times. These groups provided the complex set of offices and skills necessary for the trade and movements to flow: from the technical skills required to navigate (captains, sailors, pilots) to the merchant and capitalistic framework (shipbuilding, purchasing merchandise, banking, hospitality). The most important of these groups (the banians) had trading offices – managed by a xabandar (i.e. ‘ruler of the port’) – all over the Asiatic trade, including Malacca, Massawa, Sawakin, Aden, Diu and Goa.31

Table 3: Routes undertaken by the Jesuits to Ethiopia, 1555-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routes</th>
<th>Journeys</th>
<th>Men reaching the mission</th>
<th>Cost per mana</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo-Sudan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa-Massawa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banadir Coast</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diu-Massawa/Sawakinb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 killed, 2 captive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diu-Massawa/Sawakinc</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20,000d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diu-Danakil/Zeyla</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7e</td>
<td>2 killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: a) in reis, estimated; b) without banian and Ottoman involvement; c) with banian and Ottoman help; d) estimated from the presents given at Sawakin and Massawa in 1623 and 1624 (Almeida paid at the customs of Sawakin ca.17,800 reis); e) the expedition included also 13 servants.

Sources: RASO III; RASO VI, 372-74, 462; RASO XII, 77, 80, 110, 152, 295.

The Portuguese knew of Diu’s strategic importance and soon made of it one of

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their central objectives. Moving the capital from Cochin to Goa would have been motivated, in part, by a desire to be closer to Diu. There they waged on 3 February 1509 one of the fiercest navy battles of the century against a joint fleet of Mamluk sultanate, Ottoman Empire, Calicut and the Sultan of Gujarat. In 1535, the Viceroy Nuno da Cunha signed a treaty allowing the Portuguese use of the port. Subsequently, the Portuguese built a formidable fortress and withstood two major sieges in 1538 and 1546. Finally, in 1553, Dom Diogo de Noronha assumed over the government of the whole island and of the custom duties. Although never evolving into a major Portuguese town, thereafter Diu became, with Hormuz, Baçaim (Vasai) and Goa, one of the four main sources of income for the treasury of the Estado da India. Its annexing also changed the way the Estado was organised: the Portuguese policy of diverting the entire Asian spice trade to the Cape of Good Hope was abandoned and the century-old routes flowing to the mare Rubro resumed. The Portuguese came to learn that it was much more realistic and profitable to join the trade system of the infieles and moros by way of the system of cartazes and by individual commercial joint ventures than to try to eliminate it for the sake of Christendom.

The Jesuits, active in India since 1541, appear to have been rather inexperienced initially, both at moving in the Ethiopian highlands and in the waters of the Indian Ocean. In 1555 a first convoy of missionaries, formed by the Ambassador Diogo Dias and the Jesuit envoys mestre Gonçalo and Fulgencio Freire, reached Ethiopia aboard a ship escorted by a small fleet from Goa. In 1556, two small ships (fustas) captained by António Peixoto landed at Massawa and took João Bermudez, ten Portuguese soldiers and the two Jesuits back to Goa. The following year a second convoy of missionaries reached the Preste, with Bishop Andrés de Oviedo, the priests Manuel Fernandes and Andrés Gualdames and

52 The first to inform the Portuguese on the conditions of the Asian trade were Italians merchants and agents. One of the first was probably Ludovico de Varthema, author of a famous Itinerario [ca. 1503]; cf. in particular Ludovico de Varthema, Itinerario [ca. 1503], ed. Paolo Giudici, Milano: Alpes, 1928; also Giovanni da Empoli, § Second Letter to his father, 1514, in: Noonan, John of Empoli, 25-26, 149-79. An interesting work summarising the century-old dynamics the Portuguese met in Asia is: Francisco Roque de Oliveira, “Os portugueses e a Asia marítima, c. 1500 - c. 1640: contributo para uma leitura global da primeira expansão europeia no oriente. 1ª parte: os mares da Asia no início do século xvi”, Geo-Critica-Scripta Nova [Revista electrónica de geografía y ciencias sociales] 7, 151, 2003.

53 See SERJEANT 1963, 18.

54 GOMINHO, Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial, vol. 3, table: “Situação financeira do império oriental português em 1574”.


56 GONÇALVES 1960, vol. II, 139.
Brothers Francisco Lopes, Gonçalo Cardoso and António Fernandes (1536-93). However, on 20 April 1557, seven days after the latter trip, the Ottomans under Ozdemir Pasha occupied Massawa and closed the way to the Portuguese fleets. The six missionaries thus remained isolated for decades to come: communications between Ethiopia and Goa were almost blocked and the mission could hardly receive the materials – books, church paraphernalia, images – and funding necessary for its development and renewal.

Towards the end of the century the Jesuits made four more attempts to reach Ethiopia with all but one ending badly. In 1560, the coadjutor Fulgencio Freire, during a second trip to Ethiopia, was taken captive by Turks near Massawa and sent to Cairo. Two years later, the Turks at Arquico killed the priest Andrés Gualdames who had earlier requested to abandon the mission. In 1589, the Spaniards Pedro Páez and Antonio de Montserrat departed from Muscat, then a Portuguese possession, were captured in Dhofar and spent six years in captivity in Hadramawt and Yemen. On 30 April 1595, at Massawa it was discovered that Abraham de Georgis, a Maronite Jesuit who had left Diu, was a missionary and he was killed on the spot. Only in 1598, did a Jesuit of Indian origin, Melchior de Sylva, manage to reach Ethiopia safely via Diu. By then, however, the mission was already dead.

Things changed with the establishment of the Jesuit College of São Paulo at Diu. Unlike most of the other Jesuit settlements in India, the motivation behind coming to this town was technical rather than apostolic. The town hosted just a small Christian community and the residence was principally intended to prepare the way for Ethiopia. In 1600, Father Gaspar Soares wrote to visitor Nicolao Pimenta that Diu was the gate through which to enter Ethiopia. The next year Páez informed his fellow and friend Tomás de Ituren that “the main reason why we established a residence [at Diu] was because it is...
necessary to sustain the Ethiopian mission, since only from this harbour left ships hitherto …”.

About the same time, Soares arrived at Diu with a Jesuit brother and began working in the church of São Paulo, which was to be designed by the Jesuit brother João Martins. Henceforth, by intervention of King Felipe III of Spain (1598-1621), the Jesuits received full institutional support in their new settlement. The governors Aires de Saldanha (1600-05) and his successor Martim Afonso de Castro (1605-07) granted them a series of privileges: a levy of 0.5 % on all the goods aimed for the fortification of the fortress and a yearly payment of 100 pardãos de larins (30,000 reis) from the customs for the maintenance of the seminaries in Ethiopia (Fremona and Gorgora).

Portuguese society in India also contributed to the budget and the powerful Archbishop of Goa, Dom Frei Aleixo de Mendes (1595-1610 and 1559-1617), who had also funded the trip of Abraham de Georgis and Melchior de Sylva to Ethiopia, gave a grant of 1,000 cruzados (360,000 reis) yearly and another of 300 pardãos (90,000 reis) to the Jesuits in Diu. In addition, the priests also received voluntary donations from the banian community for the construction of their houses. Last but not least, the role played by the Jesuits as mediators between local and foreign merchants and the Portuguese military and custom officials seems to have granted them further informal revenue. Therefore, at Diu the Ethiopian mission found an important gateway. The port, which by the time the Jesuits arrived was at the peak of its prosperity, offered them regular communication with the Red Sea, a considerable source of revenue as well as credit, and as it will be shown later, an inspiring socio-cultural milieu that had an impact in the mission culture implanted in Ethiopia.

Throughout the unfolding of the second missionary period (1603-32), Diu maintained its status as a ‘connecting residence’ with Ethiopia. The banian-funded church of residence in Diu cf. RASO III, liv. IV, ch. III and GUERREIRO 1611, 270v.

42 … La principal causa porque hicimos aqui residencia fue porque es necesario para conservar la mission de Ethiopia, puesto que de solo este puerto van naves para alla; Pedro Páez to Tomás de Ituren, 2 September 1601, Diu, in: RASO XI, doc. 7, 30. See also GUERREIRO 1611, 270v.


44 Felipe III of Spain to the Viceroy, 28 March 1608, in: Raymundo A. de Bulhão PATO (dir.), Documentos remetidos da India ou livros das moções, tomo I, Lisboa: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1885 (Monumentos inéditos para a história das conquistas dos portugueses em Africa Asia e América VII), doc. 82 (also in: RASO XI, doc. 23); Id. to Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, 12 March 1611, in: Ibid. tomo II, Lisboa: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1884, doc. 200. Almeida informed that towards the last decades of the sixteenth century the Portuguese Crown had assigned for the Ethio-Portuguese an annual payment of 1,000 pardãos (300,000 reis) to be obtained from the revenues of the customs in Diu (… assinando pera estes filhos dos Portugueses de Ethiopia cada anno mil pardãos de mrmades nos rendimentos da alfanadega de Dio); RASO V, liv. IV, ch. XXIV.

45 This later privilege was strongly contested by the king because it diminished royal revenues and could cause trouble with the local merchant community; thus, Felipe III of Spain to the Viceroy of India, Março 28, 1608; id ad eundem, 23 December 1609; Id. to Ruy Lourenço de Tavora, 4 February 1610, in: PATO, Documentos remetidos da India, tomo I, docs. 82, 95, 107.
São Paulo became an imposing example of Indo-Jesuit art but the activities at the residence were very limited, a shadow of those in other Indian centres presided by the Jesuits. The seminary had few children and the house hosted mostly missionaries who were moving to and from Ethiopia and spent most of their time preparing for the mission and learning Ethiopian languages.\(^47\) Its rectors were also delegates (procuradores) of the Ethiopian mission and their principal duty was to take care of the payments and shipments for Ethiopia. With time, however, this dual goal also resulted in conflict and dispute, as I will show in Chapter 6.

![Map 1: Route between Diu and the Red Sea and ports of landing used by the Jesuit missionaries, 1595-1630](image)

In 1603, Pedro Páez inaugurated the first in a series of missionary expeditions to Ethiopia that took the main trade route linking Diu with Massawa and Sawakin (Map 1). Until the fall of the mission in 1632, nine trips ran almost unmolested across this route, with no reported serious incidents.\(^48\) How did this route work? What were its main fea-

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\(^{46}\) Alpers, “Gujarat and the Trade of East Africa”, 32.

\(^{47}\) For instance, in 1608 two Jesuits in Diu were said to be “… learning the [Ethiopian] language” (Estão ja dous em Dio aprendendo a língua); Annual letter of the Indian Province, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 22.

\(^{48}\) On Páez’s role at ‘opening’ the route from Diu to the Red Sea, cf. RASO IV, ch. III, where it is apparent that Páez first dealt with local Ottoman merchants without formal approval from the Jesuit Provincial Manoel de
tures?

**Timing**

The route to Ethiopia was, above all, dependent on travel conditions on the Indian Ocean, which were directly determined by the monsoons. The dry monsoons blew northeasterly to southwestwards and afforded travel in that direction from September to March; the wet monsoons moved in the opposite direction between June and September. The first Red Sea bound merchant ships sailed in November or December and the last did it in March-April.\(^{49}\) We know that the missionaries preferred to leave Diu with the last convoys, a choice probably related to the distance between Diu and the main Jesuit centres in India; most of the missionaries lived in Goa, Baçaim, Rachol, Chaul and Cochin and the journey to Diu was long (up to two/three months)\(^{50}\) and it was regularly obstructed by local bandits off the Malabar coast and also Dutch and British pirates (corsairos), so the trips had to relay on the escorts provided by the *armada do norte*.\(^{51}\) Moreover, as the missionaries only travelled to Diu once the local Jesuits from Diu had arranged the trip beforehand,\(^{52}\) they necessarily had to miss the first convoys to the Red Sea. Finally, an additional factor could have been the time-consuming dealings with local merchants at Diu.

The journey to the Red Sea lasted between three weeks and two months, depending on the winds and port calls made along the Hadramawt coast and the missionaries usually reached the ports of Massawa and Sawakin between May and July.\(^{53}\) The ships taking the reverse trip began sailing in May, but most of the boats apparently departed towards early September. A few missionaries travelled along this route during the second mission period and at the time of the expulsion from Ethiopia. Most importantly, the route was used to carry the yearly correspondence that the missionaries sent to the Jesuit centres in Goa, Portugal and Italy.

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Veiga. At the same time, Páez’s long captivity in Yemen and years of wandering across the Red Sea seem to have been fundamental for providing him with the knowledge and skills to organize the travel system to Ethiopia. In 1589, when he was barely 25 years old and largely inexperienced, he accepted the foolish proposal made by an Armenian merchant to take him and Montserrat to their destiny via Baçora (Al Bashrah) and Cairo; RASO VI, *ls.* V, ch. I. Such a proposal should have appeared to him, ten years later, as completely unrealistic.


\(^{50}\) Manoel de Almeida requested two months to reach Diu from Baçaim; Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 20.

\(^{51}\) The most descriptive account of the trip from the Indian residences to Diu and Massawa remains that from 1623-24 by Manoel de Almeida and three other fellow Jesuits; RASO VI, *ls.* VIII, ch. I; cf. also Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 20. On Dutch activities in India and their effects on the Jesuits since the early seventeenth century, cf. Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise*, 159 et passim.

\(^{52}\) On this procedure cf. RASO VI, *ls.* VIII, ch. XV.

During the 1623 trip, the winds were weak enough as to oblige the boat carrying the four missionaries – Manoel de Almeida, Manoel Barradas, Francisco Carvalho and Luís Cardeira – to stop at Dhofar and wait until the next
Local and Regional partnerships

In the journeys to the Red Sea the Jesuits could not count on any military support. Instead, to survive and reach their destination they relied on the trust and friendship gained from local merchants in Diu and Ottoman officials in the Red Sea. A central factor helping them was also the privileged position they enjoyed at Diu. Indeed, at the Gujarati port the Jesuits became valuable agents for the merchants and sailors. They mediated before the Portuguese authorities on behalf of the merchants and Ottoman pashas, obtaining favours and privileges for their ‘clients’. This arrangement was paid back to them during the trips to Ethiopia, as frequently hinted in the annual letters. The captains of the ships, Ottoman officials, the pashas of Massawa-Sawakin and banian merchants, were reported to be on friendly terms with the Jesuits. The Ottoman pashas graciously granted them the necessary formãos (from Turkish firman, written permission issued by the Ottoman officials) to reach Massawa and Sawakin and in general offered the missionaries a context of security. A document from 1606 defines this ‘exchange’ in crystal clear wording:

The Turkish pashas who live in the strait of the Red Sea request us in their letters and firmans favours for their agents who come to this fortress [of Diu], sending also presents; and here their wishes are fully satisfied, since these are the men who let the fathers go to the Preste.

This system worked reasonably well until the mid-1620s, when the acting pasha in Sawakin (Ahmed Pasha?) is even said to have wished to convert to Catholicism and move to India to be trained by the Jesuits.

To set the record straight, not all movements were easy. Some incidents are spe-
cifically mentioned, such as in 1607 when Jesuits from India complained of the exactions exerted on the banians by an Albanian “Senam Pasha” (probably Yemen Bayerlebi Hasan Pasha) of Mocha (which was, with Massawa and Sawakin, one of the three ports where these officials initially sieged), who had also stolen the royal contribution for the mission. To remedy the situation the Porte, also interested in having peace with the Europeans, was said to have “sent one to command over all the rest” (mandou hum pera ter domínio sobre todos os outros). In 1609, the pasha staying at Sawakin (Murtaza Pasha) stole the clothes sent from the Crown of Portugal for the Ethio-Portuguese children in Ethiopia. However, the fact that Páez energetically complained to the governor of Tegray, Amsalā Krestos, about it – and the latter eventually to the pasha himself – could mean that this action was a rarity rather than the norm. Furthermore, in the 1620s, some developments hindered the *entente cordiale* between the Portuguese and the Ottomans. The appointment of the Latin patriarch Afonso Mendes automatically deprived the Sawakin customs of the lavish fees – estimated in 40,000 to 50,000 cruzados (14,400,000 to 18,000,000 reis) – paid by the negus of Ethiopia to obtain passage for the Coptic metropolitans sent from Cairo. For that reason, in about 1623, the Jesuits began having problems in obtaining the *firman* and the subsequent convoys of missionaries travelled without it at their own risk hoping to request the document at Massawa. The situation got worst for towards 1624 the banian merchants refused to furnish ships to Sawakin and Massawa due to the harassment they had received from the Turks from Mocha in 1622 and 1624. These inconveniences prompted the Jesuits, as I have shown earlier, to resume old explorations for an alternative port. In 1624, two missionaries, Francisco Machado and Bernardo Pereira, landed at the port of the Muslim Sultanate of Adal, Zeyla, probably mistaken for Beylul. They were taken captive and executed despite repeated invitations to pay a ransom made from Christian Ethiopia. The following year an expedition headed by the Patriarch Afonso Mendes was luckier. It left Diu on 1 April aboard two *galliotas* arranged by captain Lopo Gomes de Avreu for the occasion, on 3 May reached the small port of Beylul (*Baylur*), today in Eri-

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59 Cf. RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXIX.
62 Afonso Mendes to Brothers of the Portuguese Province, 9 July 1625, Fremona, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 138, 141.
63 The reaction of banians at this crisis fits with their general avoidance of conflict, as reported by NEWITT, “East Africa and Indian Ocean Trade”, 217, who affirms that “Indian merchants did not settle in areas of political instability”. Earlier encounters with the Dutch – who around 1612 sacked thirteen banian boats – do not seem to have posed a problem on the annual convoys; [Francesco Antonio de Angelis], Annual letter, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 103-10v (a Latin copy in: RASO XI, doc. 36), 109v.
trea, crossed the Danakil desert and by June it had arrived at Fremona.\(^6^4\) This expedition, eventually the largest ever to be sent, counting seven missionaries and thirteen servants, was, however, just provisional opened ad-hoc to secure the crucial journey of Patriarch Mendes and his large train. It only succeeded after important diplomatic efforts made by Susenyo, Se’elä Krestos and the then governor of Tegray, the pro-Jesuit Qeba Krestos, before the Danakil sultan. Thereafter, its costs may have been deemed too large and the truthfulness of the Afar inhabiting the Danakil too frail to be ever attempted again.

The banians, who provided most of the financial backing for Portuguese enterprise and the *Estado da India*,\(^6^5\) were also the Jesuits’ main creditors. In 1560 local merchants, a *nacoda* “Abda Rama” and *nacoda* Ismael, are mentioned as possible backers to rescue Portuguese – among whom there was the missionary Fulgencio Freire – taken captive the same year to Cairo.\(^6^6\) In 1596, one gentle merchant bought the freedom of Páez and Montserrat at Mocha for 1,000 cruzados (360,000 reis), under agreement by the Viceroy to be reimbursed in India.\(^6^7\) On the occasion of their expulsion from Ethiopia, the banians from Sawakin provided the Jesuits with the capital to buy their ransom whilst capitive of the pasha. Besides that, it is likely that the same source of credit was used to pay for passage, for the purchase of material at Diu and the expedition of letters.

A third partner the missionaries counted on were the Portuguese who were involved in trade. Although their role was secondary if compared with the groups mentioned above, in the first decades at least they made their contribution for the Ethiopian cause. Portuguese merchants fletted special boats at their own cost and risks to take missionaries and merchandise to the Ethiopian shore. One Toralva went to Ethiopia in ca. 1561, probably to meet the Turks at Massawa and press for the liberation of the Portuguese captives in Cairo.\(^6^8\) Another, having played a leading role during the first decades was a Portuguese *casado* from Diu, Luís de Mendoça. For some years, he managed the

\(^6^4\) RASO VI, lvi. VIII, ch. XVI, XVII.

\(^6^5\) Compare with NEWITT, “East Africa and Indian Ocean Trade”, 210, 214, 216. For evidence on *emprestimos* (‘loans’) made to the banians: Felipe III of Spain to Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo, 14 February 1613, in: PATO, *Documentos remetidos da India*, 1884, tomo II, doc. 314, 322: “Requests to open an investigation on the loan that was taken from the banians and the locals during the government of Archbishop Dom Frey Aleixo de Meneses [1607-09]” (*Demana se inquirir sobre um emprestimo que se tirou dos Baneanes e naturaes da terra em tempo que governou o arcebispo Dom Frey de Aleixo de Meneses*); and Id. ad eundem, 14 March 1616, in: Ibid., 1885, tomo III, doc. 743, 479: “From the inquest I have been informed that the chief judge, Diogo Lobo Pereira, received loans that had been previously requested to the banians by Dom Pedro Coutinho, Dom Henrique de Noronha and Dom Jorge Castel Branco, when these were captains of this fortress; these [the banians] satisfied their petitions thus suffering a great loss” (*Tenho entendido que pola devassa que o desembargados Diogo Lobo Pereira tirou em Ormuz, constou de certos emprestimos que Dom Pedro Coutinho, Dom Henrique de Noronha e Dom Jorge Castel Branco, sendo capitães daquella fortaleza, pediram aos baneanes, dos quaes lhes deram satisfação, com grande perda sua*).

\(^6^6\) Fulgencio Freire to João Nunes Barreto, 12 August 1560, in: RASO X, doc. 27, 111.

\(^6^7\) RASO III, lvi. III. ch. XXI.
traffic of letters from and to the mission and, in consequence, in 1589 asked the king to be retributed for such service. Mendoça also arranged in the same year, with the help of banian traders, the failed trip to Ethiopia of Montserrat and Páez.

**Security**

Friendship and trust ensured safe passage for most of the missionaries and the relay of goods and letters between Diu and Massawa-Sawakin. Between 1603 and 1630 no missionary was killed or detained whilst on the *via ordinaria* and letters and goods appear to have reached their destination on schedule, as well. However, Diu was a sort of frontier for the Portuguese in India as beyond that port began foreign territory. Officials there were Portuguese, but almost all the traders, merchants and locals with whom the missionaries interacted were not. The missionaries had to travel in small groups and in Indian or Arab-owned ships frequently loaded with Muslim pilgrims to Mecca and consequently, some precautions were in order. The Jesuits tended to travel undercover and at Diu, they bought *cabayas*, *tocas* and *turbantes* (*turbans*) and adopted an Oriental look. The preferred disguise was dressing as an Armenian. The reason for such a preference is never detailed but we can speculate: Armenians were Christian merchants who played an important role in the Asian trade. Moreover, they looked more European and shared an abhorrence for the widespread practice of circumcision in the region. A further method of disguise was used in 1623, during the trip of the visitor Almeida and three other fellows. Then the missionaries did not use the blue colour distinguishing the Armenians but were dressed like Turkish *Sodagares*, which as the source implied, was a complicated stratagem to appear as...

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68 Manuel Fernandes to Fulgencio Freire, 28 July 1562, in: RASO X, doc. 38, 144.

69 The memorial describes his job as “forwarding the letters for our Fathers in Ethiopia, for the Portuguese, and the King” (*Encaminhar as cartas para nossos Pais da Ethiopia, e para os Portugueses, E para Elrei*); “Relación del P. Provincial de la Compañía Oriental a El Rei Nsso. Sr.,” 10 November 1589, Goa, in: AGS, Libro 1551, 738r-v. Also “Relación sobre las cosas de la India”, 28 November 1587, Ibid. 34-43v, 39r. This is also corroborated by Almeida, in: RASO VI, liv. V, ch. I.

70 RASO VI, liv. V, ch. I.


72 On more than one occasion the missionaries revealed their embarrassment at, once aboard, having to contemplate the Hindu and Muslim ceremonies aimed at protecting the navigators officiated by the sailors; e.g. RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. I-II.

73 RASO III, liv. IV, ch. III; Bernardo Pereira to Provincial in Goa, 1 June 1624, Zeyla, in: RASO XII, doc. 29, 65; Barreto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 67, 513. Patriarch Mendes was not spared of this compulsory exercise; cf. “Noticias que o Provincial da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa manda a Real Academia de Portugal ...”, ca.1720, in: BNL, cod. 176 [F. 2527], 42v-78v, 52r.

74 However, this practice had been endured previously by Portuguese agents in the East. In a letter from 1514, Albuquerque inquired: “those whom you sent there, did not go dressed like moors and one of them was not even first circumcised in Malindi?” (*os que la mandastes, nam foram eles em tragos de mouros, e hum deles nam se circuncidou em milimdy...*)
Armenians in disguise.75

Another precaution the missionaries took while aboard the ships was not showing any sign of friendship towards their protectors, the nacodas and banian traders.76 At the same time, especially when the commanders of the ship was a banian, the passage of Bab el Mandeb was made at night, in order to avoid the control of the Turks at Mocha, who extorted, it seems, exaggerated customs fees.77

**Costs**

Global costs of the journeys to Ethiopia are nowhere fully reported, and even less so that of the expenses of shipping all the material the Jesuits sent from India and the correspondence exchanged between India and Ethiopia. However, to set the record straight, these were probably not low. The warning voiced by Lobo about the high costs demanded for an eventual journey beginning in the Banadir coast – around 750,000 reis78 – indicates that the standard route between Diu Sawakin and Massawa costed much less but yet still a considerable sum. To all counts, this seems to have been not only the safest but also the cheapest way to get to the *Preste*. But how much is cheap?

For the journeys proper there is no written evidence of any payments. This, however, does not seem to be a sign of omission. Jesuits were – especially from the 1610s onwards – quite tedious in reporting the smallest details about their journeys and whereabouts. Therefore, it must be assumed that if they had paid they would have recorded it, at least in one of the six occasions they approached the Red Sea between 1620 and 1630 (1620, 1623, 1624, 1625, 1628 and 1630). The silence in this respect could perhaps indicate that the missionaries did not pay at all for the journeys proper or that costs were irrelevant enough as not to be recorded. That the banians, and, in minor measure, some Portuguese merchants, offered free of charge passage to the Jesuits seems to be corroborated.

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75 With two shirts, turbans, moorish-like trousers, feigning to be what they were not. So, in this way people believed that they were Armenians” (… Com duas camisas, tocas na cabeça, calçoes a morisca, fingindo o q. não eram. E assim correm pola terra serem armenios); Barreto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 67, 513.

76 This appears clearly in a statement by the procurador Soarez, who explains the need to breach the code of security with some officials: “for it was necessary to warn some people of the departure, namely the captain of this fortress, the captain of the ship where the father travels, and a banian who handled with the Turks, and another who has his agents in Dahlak, and another one who deals with the things and letters of Ethiopia; so far all these men have shown to be loyal” (… por ser causa necessária avise de comunicar sua ida com algumas pessoas, que forão o capitão desta fortaleza e o senhor da não em que vay o mesmo padre e hum Baneane corretor dos Turcos e outro que tem seus feitores em Dalech, e outro que corre com as cousas e cartas de Ethiopia, os quaes aepar el corram com fidelidade); Soarez, 1603, in: RASO XI, doc. 12, 41.


78 The importance of this sum can be better appraised by considering that in the early seventeenth century the cost of sending a missionary to America – from Sevilla to Veracruz, all expenses comprised – amounted to 24,000 maravedis (211,202 reis); Carlos Martínez Shaw, La emigración española en América (1492-1824), Gijón: Archivo de Indíanos, 1994, 71.
rated by the frequent elogious comments (a form of payment?) the missionaries make of their hosts aboard. On board, the Jesuits likely used the ‘credit’ they obtained from its mediations at the departing port of Diu and the same system probably worked for the shipment of the post that circulated between India and Ethiopia.

A different situation was encountered when the missionaries reached the Red Sea ports. Jesuit mediation on behalf of Turkish interests at Diu secured them protection but no ‘cheap deals’ at the two ports which the Ottomans contoled, Massawa and Sawakin. Expenses there were exorbitant. From the moment they landed at Sawakin until they left Massawa for the Ethiopian highlands missionaries were obliged to a seemingly ritualized process of tax paying and gift-giving to Ottoman and local officials. Almeida’s account is illustrative. At his arrival in Sawakin, although he claimed to be a “poor priest” and was formally exempted of the paying the official tax, he still had to give six to seven patacas (1,800-2,100 reis) to the pasha. The day after the group of Jesuits offered the pasha the traditional sagoate (also saguate, present given as homage); this included “a quilt, bed-spread” (cubertor) from China, another bed-spread from cotton-silk (colcha de cotúnia de seda) finely embroidered, a large velvet carpet, a scriptorium from Diu, half a dozen fine bafta, some flags and large bowls from China, and other pendants made of corjas de chavanas”. Following, the missionaries offered a present to the adjoint (quequea) of the pasha, to the head of the customs (amim) and to a number of subordinates. This to the dispair of Almeida: “since those taking care of our things are plenty; secretarians, door keepers, guards, all of them want to make a profit, and steal as much as they can”. On top of that the missionaries had to pay a tax on 16 % of fabric transported, which were themselves overvalued at 50 % to increase the total amount. The ‘ritual’ was repeated at Massawa, though probably with some alleviances. The tax imposed on fabrics and clothes seems to have been a standard procedure at the customs but its amount varied in accordance to the pasha in charge. At the time of Mahmud Pasha (late 1610s) the charge rate was one of twenty-five pieces of

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79 Cf. the case of a fidalgo, Lopo Gomes de Avreu, who took Mendes and his train to Beyulu aboard galliots fleetted apparently at his own costs; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XVI. On that occasion the Viceroy had helped in stirring private generosity to the mission with a general permission to capture enemy ships taken without cartazes; ibid.

80 On this cf. Soarez, 1603, in: RASO XI, doc. 12, 41.


82 Hum cubertor da China, huma colcha de cotúnia de seda bem lavrada, huma alcatifa de veludo, hum escritorio de Dio marchetado, mea ducia de bofetas muito finos, algumas bandeiras e palanganas da China, e outros brincos de algumas corjas de chavanas; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. II. Another account reports instead a present of “two Chinese carpets” (duas alcotias da China); António Roiz to Mutio Vitelleschi, 13 February 1625, Goa, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 220r-30r; 220r.

83 Porque são muitos os que puxão e levão: escrivães, capitães de varios passos, porteiros, guardas, emfim todos chupão, sangrão e metem á lança quanto podem; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. II.

84 Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 22.
cloth (panos). In all, between 1623 and 1624, when eight more recruits joined the mission through the traditional route, the Society of Jesus spent between four or five thousand patacas (1,200,000-1,500,000 reis) in ‘presents’ at the Red Sea ports. Last but not least, the Ottoman pashas received regular presents from the mission’s Ethiopian counterparts. These probably consisted mostly in payments and victuals but the offering of exotic presents has also been recorded. In 1624, Susenyos sent a zebra to the Turks in Massawa to ease the expedition of four missionaries; the animal would have then been forwarded to Istanbul. Another such animal had been sent earlier and sold by the Turks to agents from the Mughal Emperor.

**Massawa, Fremona and the Ethio-Portuguese**

When the missionaries landed at Sawakin they visited the pasha, offered him gifts and within a week or two could expect to catch a gelba for Massawa. If instead they had landed at Massawa, they had either to travel to Sawakin (main siege of the pasha) or to send an emissary to obtain the firman granting passage to the interior. In both ports, the Jesuits counted upon the help of the xabandar, head of the local community of banian merchants. The banians often played the role of guides and advisors for the inexperienced Jesuits: they hosted them, informed them on the procedures to follow before the Turkish officials and the locals and taught them the basics in order to survive. From 1605, sources mention one Veidamano, captain of the banians from Massawa, who was in charge of managing the affairs of the Jesuits. At Massawa they also met the amil, head of customs, and the Governor of Arquico. There the missionaries engaged again in a delicate diplomatic game, visiting certain officials, offering gifts and promising to report back to Diu on the good treatment received.

Arrival to the shores of what today is Eritrea was, however, by no means a relief to the missionaries. Although the Ottomans were generally protective, they had no control of

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85 Gaspar Paes, Annual letter, 30 June 1626, Tamgra, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 302r-21r, 304r.
86 Afonso Mendes to Provincial in Goa, 26 December 1624, Bandorae, in: RASO XII, doc. 41, 110.
87 E.g. Gaspar Paes, Annual letter, 15 June 1625, Tamqha, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 236r-59v, 246r; and Annual letter of the Indian Province, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 43, 118.
88 Annual letter, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 43, 116; Diogo de Mattos to Superior General, Fremona, 2 June 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 469-73.
89 Páez mentions one “Martaban” holding then this position; Páez, 1603, in: RASO XI, doc. 14, 49. For evidence on important banian presence in Zeyla, cf. Bernardo Pereira to Provincial in Goa, 1 June 1624, Zeyla, in: RASO XII, doc. 29, 65.
90 This is apparent in ibid. 66.
91 Luis de Azevedo to Superior General, 12 July 1605, Fremona, in: RASO XI, doc. 15, 61.
the lands in the interior, the Hamasen. Neither the nearest Christian lord, the *bahei nágash*, could offer protection as far as to the coast. The passage from the coast to the haven of Debarwa, some 87 kilometers southwestwards, was difficult and the missionaries were obliged to rely in the protection of a series of regional powers. During the journey between Massawa and Debarwa the missionaries often travelled with an escort or in a caravan. The Turkish officials were the first interested in keeping missionary traffic active because they also received from the highlands provisions and merchandise to be taxed at their customs and forwarded abroad as well as presents. Therefore, they offered the Jesuits all facilities to continue their journey unmolested. Almeida informs that his train – probably one of the most important in the amount of belongings transported – was escorted to the first Christian outpost, Asmâra, by the whole Turkish detachment of Arquico, comprising of seventy musketeers (*espingardeiros*). In the surrounding regions of Massawa other figures offered protection to the missionaries, such as the banians and a local sheikh friend with the banian captain at Massawa. Further protection was provided by posts given to the missionaries by the *negus* (Almeida mentions as ‘secure’ villages Zelot, Asmâra and Adegada), by members of the Portuguese community and by detachments sent by the governor of Tegray. The most difficult part of the journey ended officially at Debarwa, capital of the *bahei nágash*, under whose protection the Jesuits could feel safe. Therefore, it was often at that point when most of them changed the Oriental attire they had been wearing since leaving Diu and returned to the Jesuit dress. From Debarwa the missionaries had yet to travel some three days until reaching Fremona, the northernmost Jesuit outpost in Ethiopia.

The Portuguese living in Ethiopia (henceforth, Ethio-Portuguese) played a crucial role for the missionaries during their arrival and stay. By the time the Jesuits had begun to regularly send missionaries, the Portuguese having remained in Ethiopia had married or mixed with local women, establishing racially mixed families.

The emergence of the Portuguese as a distinct ‘cast’ within Ethiopian society was directly linked to *negus* Gâlawdewos and *bahei nágash* Yeshaq. Gâlawdewos owed the survival of his state mostly to the intervention of this group of foreign soldiers. It comes thus as no surprise if once the wars with the Muslims were over he tried to incorporate them...
within his own military corps. Most of the Portuguese chose indeed to use their military skills and experience and become an elite unit in his army, serving both as a sort of prétorian guard and vanguard unit. The mercenary of mixed-race origin Ayres Dias and Gaspar de Sousa (both active around 1545) were the first in a series of Portuguese working as “Portuguese captains” in the royal kätäma and in the army of the negus. Eventually, for a short period they also served the regional lord baheer nágash Yeshaq. Moreover, the Portuguese soon formed families and by the third decade in the country they were said to number about 1,200 (Table 4). Thereafter the number of those having a “Portuguese” origin grew, until reaching a peak of between 2,000 to 3,000 people in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

During the early decades most of the Portuguese and their families were placed by negus Gälawdewos as frontier garrisons at the borders of his state, in the provinces of Däwaro, Damot, Amhara and Gojjam. However, it is to be assumed that an important number remained near the court as well. In 1555, when the Jesuit mestre Gonçalo went to meet the negus in the province of Gurague he found at the court 93 Portuguese under the command of Captain Gaspar de Sousa. Names such as Afonso de França Moniz, Diogo de Alvelos da Azinhaga, Simão do Several, Alvaro da Costa de Covilhão are also mentioned as important servants of Gälawdewos. This unit participated in at least two important campaigns next to the negus: in Bale against the Oromo and in 1559 against the company of Mälasay of Nur bin Mujahid of Adal, where Gälawdewos eventually perished. Around 1555 there is also mention of a Christian agent of the Portuguese staying in Arquico to forward the contributions sent from India (pera arrecadar as rendas). The Ethio-Portuguese were given land-grants and they also seem to have received a payment. Thus, when in 1557 Andrés de Oviedo went to meet Gälawdewos, the latter ordered a golden mark to be given to the Bishop and an ounce to every Portuguese soldier and servant, a quantity that was “more than sufficient in view of the cheap prices in the land and sources also report a few Portuguese being granted large states. Towards the end of the 1550s and beginning of the 1560s, those who had been settled in the south to counter-
oppose the Oromo re-settled in ‘safer’ provinces, mostly in Bägemder, Gojjam, Dambil, where the negus established his kätäma, and in Tegray.

Table 4: Portuguese and Ethio-Portuguese in Ethiopia: numbers and leaders, 1541-1646

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Leaders (capitãos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1541</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Christovão da Gama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1543</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Ayres Dias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1545</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gaspar de Sousa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550</td>
<td></td>
<td>Afonso Cardeira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1554</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diogo de Figueiredo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1555</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Lopo de Almança/Gaspar de Sousa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1559</td>
<td></td>
<td>Francisco Jacome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1561</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gaspar de Sousa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1567</td>
<td>450</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Francisco Jacome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1590</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>António Gois (as capitão mor), António Guerra, Mezquita, Luiz Teixeira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1595</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dinis de Lima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1602</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maurício Soares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td></td>
<td>João Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1608</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1617</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td></td>
<td>Basílio Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>João Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1633</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>Rafael Fernandez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1635</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1638</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1639</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1646</td>
<td></td>
<td>Damo Teixeira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Arana 1631, 112; Bermúdez 1875, ch. XXII, XLIV; Década VII, liv. VII, ch. IV-V; Década VII, liv. VIII, ch. IX; RASO I, 378, 430; RASO VII, 243; RASO X, 122, 135, 264-65, 279, 362, 393, 403; RASO XI, 142, 217, 382, 424; RASO XII, 81, 86, 228; RASO XIII, 138, 266.

The settlement in Tegray turned into the most important. At the background of its foundation there was the political crisis that followed Gälawdewo’s sudden death and the open confrontation between his successor, Minas (1559-63), and baḥer nāgash Yeshaq. Minas alienated part of the Portuguese group with his harsh treatment on their behalf and that of the missionaries. As a consequence, part of the group fled to Tegray, where they were well received by Yeshaq, who had already dealt with the first Portuguese troops arrived with Christovão da Gama back in 1541. In the late 1550s a group of Portuguese settled for a period at Debarwa and in 1562, they fought next to Yeshaq and Ozdemir Pasha against Minas.103 Shortly after this event, some families would have also settled in the Adwa plateau and were followed by the Jesuit missionaries, who chose the strategic hill of

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103 Década VII, liv. X, ch. VI.
Fremona as the site of a residence.\textsuperscript{104} Henceforth, Fremona was to be associated with the missionaries and the Ethio-Portuguese for the next 130 years. It was there that the largest number of Catholics and Portuguese were concentrated and in the years to come it became a connecting point between the southern residences and the coast as well as a fortress.

In spite of the upheavals provoked by Minas anti-foreign agenda, an important group of Portuguese stayed faithful to him. Under his service they fought alongside Hamälmal against the Oromo.\textsuperscript{105} News of their exploits come again under negus Susenyos, when the community was in its third and fourth generation. Among the prominent figures mentioned in sources are João Gabriel and his son Basilio Gabriel (cf. Appendix 12). The former met the three generations of Jesuits who worked in Ethiopia and he grew up with Patriarch Andrés de Oviedo and introduced Páez and Manoel de Almeida into Ethiopia. In addition, he served as Páez’s interpreter and advisor. His son Basilio was interpreter for negus Susenyos, headed an expedition against the Baläw and died fighting the Agäw.\textsuperscript{106}

As far as their religious affiliation is concerned, most of the Portuguese remained Catholic and composed the majority of folk served by the Jesuit missionaries. For the missionaries they became indeed a precious asset and a raison d’être. As members of a foreign nation and enjoying special privileges for the military services rendered, the Ethiopian negus allowed them to be served by foreign priests.\textsuperscript{107} Accordingly, when Bermudez was rejected from the court, he was offered the title “Patriarch of the Portuguese” and a similar position would have been granted to Bishop Oviedo a few years after Bermudez when the Castilian excommunicated the negus for his refusal to join Catholicism. The Ethio-Portuguese maintained the status of the Portuguese soldiers that came with Christovão da Gama, which meant that the Portuguese king considered them as his subjects. In consequence, he was obliged to care for their safety, and in this respect, he sent an annual sum of money for their well being and missionaries to preach them (a more in depth treatment of this particular follows in Chapter 6).

\textsuperscript{104} The settlement was on land that was further empowered by additional land grants from baḥer nāgūḥ Yeshaq; Annu-
\textsuperscript{105} Década VII, liv. VII, ch. XII.
\textsuperscript{106} RASO III, liv. IV, ch. III; L. de Azevedo to Provincial in India, 3 July 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 424, 432.
\textsuperscript{107} Gälawdewos would thus have offered ‘Patriarch’ Bermudez and bishop Andrés de Oviedo to remain in Ethiopia as long as they only preached to the Portuguese community; cf. BERMUDEZ 1875, ch. XLVI.
PART II. EXPANSION
Map 2: Jesuit residences and associated places in Ethiopia, ca. 1566-1633
4. Foundation and expansion of the mission: the practical dimension

Miralis? nihil est, quod non in peccatore magnum concepit Eutropius. semper nova, grandia semper diligit et celeri degustat singula sensu. nil timet a tergo; vigilantibus undique curis nocte dieque patet; lenis facilisque moveri supplicibus mediaque tamen mollissimus ira nil negat et sese vel non poscentibus offert; quod libet ingenio, subigit traditque fruendum; quidquid amas, dabit illa manus; communiter omni fungitur officio gaudetque potentia flexi. hoc quoque conciliis peperit meritoque laborum, accipit et trabeas argutae praemia de xtrae.

1555-1603: DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

Missionary stagnation

The first missionary period in Ethiopia was inaugurated with the arrival of two convoys of missionaries in 1555 and 1557. In 1555, mestre Gonçalo Rodrigues, Brother Fulgencio Freire and a veteran of Christovão da Gama’s expedition, Diogo Dias, led an expedition to reconnoitre. Mestre Gonçalo visited negus Gälawdewos at his court and soon realized that the path for a religious mission was not going to be easy. Reportedly, Gälawdewos was friendly to the foreign convoy but determined in holding to the traditional Ethiopian faith. As a consequence the missionaries took the way back home. Despite this initial setback the Society and the Portuguese Crown carried on with the planned shipment of more missionaries. The appointed Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia, Dom João Nunes Barreto, stayed at the College of São Paulo in Goa together with the rich present meant for the Preste, while the Portuguese ambassador Fernão de Sousa e de Castello Branco had died during the trip to India. Yet, in 1557 four galiots were prepared in Goa and took six other missionaries to Ethiopia, headed by the Bishop Andrés de Oviedo and twenty other Portuguese for their service.

1. “Dost thou wonder? Nothing great [magnum] is there that Eutropius does not conceive in his heart. He ever loves novelty, ever size, and is quick to taste everything in turn. He fears no assault from the rear; night and day he is ready with watchful care; soft, easily moved by entreaty, and, even in the midst of his passion, tenderest of men [mollissimus], he never says ‘no’, and is ever at the disposal even of those that solicit him not. Whatever the senses desire he cultivates and offers for another’s enjoyment. That hand will give whatever thou wouldest have. He performs the functions of all alike; his dignity loves to unbend. His meetings and his deserving labours have won him this reward, and he receives the consul’s robe in recompense for the work of his skillful hand”; CLAUDIAN, Against Eutropius [ca. 399 A.D.] in: Claudian, tr. Maurice Platnauer, London: William Heinemann et al., 1963 (The Loeb Classical Library), Book I, lines 358-70, pp. 164-67.

2. The events are described in RASO III, liv. III, ch. IV.

3. ANDRAIDA 1796, parte IV, ch. XX. Evidence on the number of Portuguese who served in Oviedo’s train comes in
During the first decades the missionary project stagnated. On 26 May 1557, the missionaries reached the court. Reportedly, the negus was again cordial to the Europeans but was also straight in rejecting the project of union with Rome. The arrival of the first group of missionaries is hence portrayed in the royal chronicle as an attempt “to criticize the faith coming from Alexandria”. Discussions over religion broke out and Oviedo admonished the negus to accept the Catholic faith. Gälawdewos, in his turn, rejected the reprimand and wrote what probably was the famous Confessio Claudi. He “answered them, so the Ethiopian chronicler wrote, with words taken from the books of Catholic Faith and he confused and covered them of shame”. This provoked a harsh reaction from Bishop Oviedo and the strategic retreat of the missionaries and a small Portuguese group into the northern province of Tegray.

Minas’s (1559-63) rise to power changed things for the worst. The new ruler during his brief tenure took care to reverse the friendly policy made by his brother. He revoked the liberal regiments created by Gälawdewos on behalf of the Ethio-Portuguese and soon forbade any born-Ethiopian from visiting Portuguese churches. The two communities were deterred from mixing and the Catholics forbidden from transmitting their faith to their offspring. Other measures included the expropriation of land belonging to Portuguese and the public persecution of a few of them. This provoked a split within the Ethio-Portuguese group. Whilst some Portuguese remained faithful to Minas, a considerable number joined bafer nägash Yeshaq in Tegray. Yeshaq used his contacts with the Portuguese to challenge Minas. Between 1560 and 1562, he attempted to place two puppet kings on the throne, both sons of abetohun Ya’eqob. It was probably once the second and most dramatic encounter between the armies of the rebels and of Minas took place – on 20 April 1562 – that the Jesuits decided to fix a residence. Provisionally, they settled in Debarwa but later moved to the Adwa plateau and settled a permanent place in Fremona. In Tegray the Catholic group had the support of the rebel bafer nägash but was also cut from the mission’s primary goal, to convert the negus. The missionaries basically...
moved in the surrounding areas; visits to Aksum, Endä Abba Garima, Däbrä Damo, Debarwa were frequent but the core provinces of the Christian Kingdom, Dämbeya, Bägemder and Gojjam, remained untapped.

Minas’ successor, Säsä Dengel (1563-96), was more inclined towards Europeans. Around 1574, following repeated Turkish incursions in Tegray, a large group of Portuguese were allowed to settle in Dämbeya and between ca. 1574-85 the priest Francisco Lopes went to preach among them. In 1593, Säsä Dengel sent a monk by name Täklä Maryam via Cairo to Rome to request military help from Portugal and Spain. Moreover, in a statement from 1595, Francisco Lopez, the only remnant of the mission, asserted that “[the King] does not treat us badly nor is contrary to our faith, he shows sympathy to us and in some issues concerning the faith he does like us, which his ancestors never did”. In fact, Säsä Dengel’s positive attitude could be, to some extent, seen as an announcement of what was to come at his death with the easy ‘conversions’ of Zä Dengel and Susenyos. However, under Säsä Dengel’s reign the missionary project could not move forward: conversions were few and the group of Catholics remained stable. As Manoel de Almeida with his usual wit put it the head of the mission Andrés de Oviedo was “first badly received by Gälawdewos, persecuted by Minas, forgotten by his son Mälak Sägäd [Säsä Dengel] and obeyed by none”.

Unprepared personnel

The first mission also had problems of its own. The most important was related to the human personnel chosen. The group of men sent to Ethiopia in 1555 and 1557 belonged to the first or second generation of Jesuits and if compared to successive generations a number of them joined the Society relatively late in their lives (Table 5). João Nunes Barreto, first Patriarch of Ethiopia, only joined the Jesuits in 1544, when he was 27 years old and was already abbot of a church. Andrés de Oviedo was also one of the first recruits of

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12 Cf. RASO III, liv. III, ch. XII.
13 In the eternal city, the monk was hosted at the house of the cardinal of Santa Severina, Giulio Antonio Santorio (1532-1602), president of the Congregation “super negotiis Sancta Fidei et Religionis Catholicae”, instituted in 1599 and precursor of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. He was also visited by the Jesuits Juan Alvarez and Sebastião Rodrigues, secretary to the Superior General; GUERREIRO 1611, 272v.; also Täklä Maryam, 1598, in: RASO X, doc. 146, 405.
14 El Rei não nos fas mal nem lhe parece mal a nossa fee, mostranos boa vontade e fas algumas cousas conforme a nos erga fidem que os seus passados não fasião; Francisco Lopez to Visitor Alessandro Valignano, 21 March 1584, in: RASO X, doc. 110, 333. A missionary letter from 1614 also mentioned an edict published by Säsä Dengel granting permission to the missionaries to preach; de Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 106v.
15 … Mal recebido primeiro de Gladios, persiguido de Minâs, esquecido de seu filho Malac Saged e de nenhum obedecido; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XV.
16 He received the vows to join the Society from one of its first members, the Swiss fellow Pierre Favre; Anonymous
the Society of Jesus – he joined it in 1541 – and Ignatius of Loyola directly supervised his career.\textsuperscript{17} The rest of fellows joined the Society of Jesus during the 1550s, which was then in its second decade of life. So, the order chosen for the conversion of the ‘Prester John’ was in process of formation and its members were still largely unproved in missionary terrains. Besides, as Jesuit curriculum had yet not been established,\textsuperscript{18} the first members did not go through the whole curricula that later candidates for the missions had to follow. They were too ‘ripe’ to have been fully shaped according to the Jesuit \textit{modo nostro} and intellectually poorly prepared to face the ‘other’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of missionaries</th>
<th>Average age at joining the Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1555-98</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603-23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624-32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Sources:} see Figure 1

Another problem the Jesuits faced was recruitment and Jerónimo Nadal once complained about it.\textsuperscript{19} Following its foundation, the Society of Jesus enjoyed a steady growth. In 1556 it had 1,500 members in Europe, India and the Americas, but the largest expansion came later, under the rules of Acquaviva and Vitelleschi. In 1579 the number of operatives reached 5,164; 8,519 in 1600 and 10,641 eight years later.\textsuperscript{20} The same pattern applied for India (including The Moluccas, China and Japan), where the Jesuits had 45 members in 1549, in 1582 167 members and five years later the original number had increased almost ten fold, peaking 387.\textsuperscript{21} The take off of the Society occurred, hence, in the last two decades of the century with recruits that belonged to the third generation of novices (Figure 1). The low number of professed Jesuits during the first years made it so that the choice of candidates for missions was limited. As a consequence, those who were sent were sometimes not the best fit for the role. The Ethiopian mission in particular could have not been affected by this problem; since the \textit{Preste} was one of the Society’s most cherished projects, candidates for Ethiopia were not lacking. Ignatius of Loyola and Peter Fa-
ber were the most illustrious among the number of those who volunteered for the mission in its early phases. However, even for the Ethiopian project it is apparent that there were not enough recruits to provide an optimal selection of operatives and that election was done in a rather hastened way.

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1**: Growth of missionary operatives in India and Ethiopia, 1549-1632


Some incidents during the first mission are telling. First, there is the fact that one of the five missionaries who reached Ethiopia with Andrés de Oviedo, the Spaniard Andrés Gualdames, requested to abandon the mission soon after his arrival. Eventually, the Bishop granted permission to Gualdames but also warned Jesuit authorities in Goa of the bad manners of the failed missionary. Second, the performance of the missionaries in Ethiopia was not particularly encouraging either. Their attitude seems to have been aggressive and polemic. Accordingly, the response that mestre Gonçalo Rodrigues, the first Jesuit to have reached Ethiopia, gave at seeing Gälawdewos’ rejection of Catholicism showed little of the patience requested by Loyola in his famous instructions written four years earlier. With the help of an Ethio-Portuguese, Rodrigues also composed a treatise

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22 Oviedo mentioned that Gualdames “has left incensed” (va tintado) and that those in India should not give much credit to his words; Andrés de Oviedo to Fulgencio Freire, 27 July 1562, in: RASO X, doc. 37, 142. Gualdames eventually was killed in Massawa while trying to embark for India. Interestingly, the episode was later censured and embellished by Páez in his own narrative of the first missionary period. Páez said that “this father was sent by the Patriarch to India upon recommendation of the other fathers in 1562 so he could duly inform of the situation in Ethiopia” (a este padre (segundo dicem) mandava o padre Patriarcha a India com conselho dos demais padres no anno de 1562, para que dese enteira relaçam das causas de Ethiopia); RASO III, liv. III, ch. XII.
refuting Ethiopia’s ‘errors’ that helped little in paving the way for the missionaries that were to arrive during the following year.23

Yet another, more important, case to be highlighted is that of Andrés de Oviedo. The Castilian priest had an impressive curriculum and was also held in excellent esteem by Francisco de Borja, which probably accounts for his quick nomination as substitute for João Nunes Barreto for the Patriarchate of Ethiopia. Indeed Oviedo had been a relevant figure among the early disciples of Ignatius of Loyola. In 1541, at the request of the General, he went to Paris to complete studies and, in 1544, he moved to Coimbra to help organizing the first Jesuit College in the Portuguese town. The next year he was appointed first rector of the College of Gandia, which was later elevated to University. In 1550 Oviedo was in Rome during the communication of the Constitutions by Ignatius, where he also received a doctorate in theology, and in 1551 he moved to Naples to take care of the college there. However, his choice as actual leader of the mission – since Patriarch João Nunes Barreto never set foot in Ethiopia – was not all that wise. Oviedo was certainly a competent administrator and organizer but, as the polemic he was involved in whilst in Gandia showed, he lacked many of the qualities a good missionary needed. Between 1547 and 1549, whilst he was rector at Gandia, under the influence of the Franciscan Fr. Juan de Tejada, Oviedo and his fellow Francisco Onfroy developed a strong hermitical and spiritual inclination. The two Jesuits shared ascetic practices, spent hours praying and doing retirement and refused to be involved in administrative and public tasks.24 This attracted the positive attention of the then Duke of Gandia, Francisco de Borja, but also caused trouble to Ignatius and his secretary Polanco.25 The well-known Jesuit idea of obedience would have been first developed by Polanco in 1548 in response to Oviedo’s odd request to spend seven years in “retirement and solitude”.26 Oviedo’s monastic leaning would have been transposed to the Ethiopian mission. According to Melchior Carneiro, during his stay in Goa the Spaniard confided in him that “God had called him to those

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23 The text has been lost but its content, which was composed with the help of Portuguese living in Ethiopia, can be guessed from a letter written by Gonçalves quoted in: RASO III, liv. III, ch. IV.

24 Oviedo confided to Ignatius his doubts in a letter from 1548. There he said: “very often has invaded me the desire of loneliness, like to be in a desert or in an isolated place” (... diversas veces me ha venido el deseo de soledad, como en algun desierto o lugar apartado); Andrés de Oviedo to Ignatius of Loyola, 8 February 1548, Gandia, in: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, Epistolae Mixtae, vol. 1: 1537-1548, Madrid: A Avriel, 1890-1901, doc. 142.


deserts of Ethiopia to be able there to practice contemplation".  

This monastic penchant was not only contrary to the general spirit of the Jesuit Order, which Nadal defined as *contemplativus in actione*, but also highly problematic when leading a mission. Oviedo’s – and the mission’s – errant path until the retreat at Fremona seem to indicate indeed that such penchant was partly responsible for the early failure of the mission. Furthermore, the Bishop’s upfront and harsh attitude towards Gälawdewos during his encounter in 1558 was not the best strategy to use with the self-asserted and proud Christian Ethiopians. His admonition to the negus to “abandon the errors of his faith” alienated the mission from a ruler who had shown signs of sympathy for the foreigners living in Ethiopia since 1541.

Rodrigues and Oviedo’s attitude shows that the first and second generation of Jesuits had not yet assimilated some important principles of the missionary praxis proposed by Ignatius of Loyola, defined by the terms flexibility, adaptation (the famous *accomodatio*) and a patient attitude. Hence, when another sympathetic figure came to power, Särsä Dengel, no attempt to approach him was ever made. As the biographer of Oviedo, the Spaniard Antonio de Arana, puts it, the second Latin Patriarch of Ethiopia spent the last sixteen years of his life at Fremona “neither having seen the face of any Emperor of Ethiopia nor having ever been at his court”. Oviedo became the spiritual leader of the small Ethio-Portuguese mixed-race group and gave up the grand project to convert the ‘Prester John’.

**A project of withdrawal from Ethiopia**

The problems in Ethiopia were evident as soon as in the early 1560s and serious enough for the decision-makers in India and Europe to suggest an abrupt end to the mission. In a

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27 *Ho chamava Deus a aquelles desertos de Etiopia pera se llá dar á contemplação*; Melchior Carneiro to Francisco de Borja, 3 December 1565, in: *DI*, vol. VI, doc. 86, 585.
29 Oviedo’s ascetism is reflected in most of the texts dedicated to him. Although some of them (i.e. Arana’s text) had a clear hagiographic character others appear instead as truthful accounts of his life in Fremona. For instance, passages such as the following, which would have been experienced by Father Manuel Fernandes and transmitted to Pedro Páez by a Portuguese, Francisco Dias Machado: “because he had crucified the flesh and all the desires and was freed from these things, this devout servant was always vigil waiting for the hour when the Lord would come to knock on his door… And the first message that he received, as if He was saying ‘here comes the bridegroom’, was an extraordinary longing of heaven and an ardent wish to be free of the constrains of the flesh and to be with Christ; which provoked him a loathing for all the earthly things” (… porque sempre teve crucificada com elle a carne e todas suas paixões, e assim desembaraçado dellas, estava em continua vigia este servio fiel com grande esperança ha hora em que o Senhor lhe avia de vir bater a porta … E o primeiro recado que lhe mandou diante como dizendo: ‘Ecce sponsus venit’. foramus extraordinarias saudades do ceo e tam aceos desejos de se ver lixe das atrahadas da carne e estar com Christo, que lhe causaram hum fastio geral de todas as cousas da terra …); RASO III, liv. III, ch. XI. In addition, Esteves Pereira saw Oviedo as a man of “uncontrolled zeal and intempestuous” (zeão immoderado e intempestivo); Francisco Maria Esteves PEREIRA (tr.), *Historia de Minda, Además Sagad, rei de Ethiopia*, Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1888, 12.
30 *Sin haber en todo este tiempo visto la cara a ningún Emperador de Ethiopia, ny entrado en su corte; Arana 1631, 97.*
letter from 1563, the brother of the Patriarch of Ethiopia and Jesuit Provincial in India, Melchior Nunes Barreto, showed his scepticism to the Jesuit General Diego Laynez about the mission. He confided that “the project of the Preste is in a bad state” (el tema del Preste esta mal) and concluded, pessimistically, that a military expedition to the red Sea “will be never put in practice” (não vira a efeito).\(^{31}\) In 1564, the two exchanged another letter in which Barreto suggested moving the mission to Japan, with all “its ornaments and Fathers, and with Mestre Andrés being placed as Bishop of Japan”.\(^{32}\) In the next two years, the new Jesuit General Francisco de Borja and his secretary Polanco insisted on the same idea.\(^{33}\) About the same time, Juan de Polanco told the Jesuit Juan de Mesquita that “the Provincial could use at his wish the men initially destined for Ethiopia”.\(^{34}\) Finally, after a ‘lobbying’ in Rome, the Jesuits convinced Pope Pius V to send a Brief to Oviedo proposing “… to send him to the island of Japan and the Province they call China (which are inhabited by gentiles), in which Provinces the Christian Faith of Our Lord begins to be received with great devotion”.\(^{35}\)

Oviedo, eventually, as his companions imagined, ‘refused’ the Papal instructions and stayed in Ethiopia. Among the reasons he listed for justifying the refusal was the fact of leaving the small Catholic group without spiritual guidance.\(^{36}\) Additionally the Patriarch was still convinced that the whole project, and for that matter the political problems of the Christian state too, could be solved by sending a military expedition from India. In 1566, he wrote to the General Francisco de Borja that “the solution to [the problems of] Ethiopia and of its reduction and obedience to the Roman Church lays in the coming of Portuguese … and 500 or 600 men are enough to reduce Ethiopia to the Catholic

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\(^{32}\) … Com todos os seus ornamentos e Padres, e com o Patriarcha Mestre André ser mudado em Bispo de Japão; Melchior Nunes Barreto to Diego Laynez, 10 January 1564, Cochin, in: DI, vol. VI, doc. 28, 163.

\(^{33}\) Francisco de Borja to Leon Henriquez, Provincial of Portugal, 29 November 1565, Roma, Ibid. doc. 82, 521; Juan de Polanco to Juan de Ribera [Archbishop and Patriarch of Valencia], 11 January 1566, Roma, Ibid. doc. 104, 667.

\(^{34}\) Los destinados para la mission de Ethiopia … pode el Provincial disponer dellos libremente; 14 January 1566, Roma, in: Ibid., doc. 105, 669.

\(^{35}\) Fuese embiado a la Isla del Japon y a la Provincia que llaman China (que son poblados de gentiles) en las quales Provincias la fe de Jesu Christo Nuestro Senhor con grande devoción comienza a ser recibida; ARANA 1631, 107-08. On Jesuit pressures on the pope in order to remove the Patriarch from his office, cf. Melchior Carneiro to Francisco de Borja, Malaca, 3 December 1565, in: DI, vol. VI, doc. 86, 383.

\(^{36}\) The extent to which this group of Portuguese flock mattered to the Jesuits and Portuguese can be guessed by the proposal that Oviedo also made in case the mission was to be abandoned. He suggested the Pope ship the whole Ethio-Portuguese community back to India: “your Highness could write [to the King of Portugal] so that at least he sends an armada large enough to take all the Catholics … so that if we leave at least the Catholics don’t die and get lost living among unfaithful and heretics” (… V.S le escriba [al Rey de Portugal] embie por lo menos una armada grande que vaste para recoger todos los catolicos … para que lo menos estos catolicos que ay y quedaren aca y yendo nos otros no perescan y se pierdan morando entre herejes y otros infieles); ARANA 1631, 113.
Faith”. The idea was to have a long life indeed. Alessandro Valignano picked up on it in a letter sent to Felipe II in 1587, a year when the mission was already languishing. Later, throughout the second missionary period, the Jesuits were to go back to it recurrently, especially in times of troubles. However, the project to repeat the experience of 1541-43 was highly unrealistic. The generations that ruled in Portuguese India had changed and so had military spirit as well as geopolitical interests. In Goa, men were less prone to give their life for such projects and Portuguese interests in general had also moved to other terrains. Besides that, the Lusitans were no longer masters of the seas; the Ottomans dominated the Red Sea and in Indian waters they were being challenged, and were soon superseded, by the Dutch, British and, in minor measure, French navy.

Table 6: Average age of missionary operatives arriving in Ethiopia, 1555-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of arrival</th>
<th>Number of effectives</th>
<th>Age of missionaries</th>
<th>Age of hierarchy (titled, visitors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1555</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1557</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35,2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1595-98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44,5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37,3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34,8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>35,8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: see Figure 1

Another factor explaining the stagnation of the mission was linked to the Ottoman blockade of Massawa and Sawakin. The impossibility of sending more convoys of missionaries after 1557 precluded renewal of missionary personnel. Renewal of personnel was an important precondition for the good success of any mission. This was particularly pressing in Christian Ethiopia where conditions of life – especially in Tegray – were extremely hard. Accounts of sickness, scarcity of food and clothing punctuate missionary correspondence for the entire mission period. On top of that, communications were difficult. Distances were large and travel conditions poor, with frequent activity of bandits and difficult roads, which were often cut during the rainy season. In 1574, for instance, a group of bandits killed the priest Gonçalo Cardoso who was on his way to the province of Dám-

57 El remedio de Ethiopia y su reduccion y obediencia a la Iglesia Romana está en venir Portugueses … y 500 o 600 hombres bastan para reducir a Ethiopia a la fe catholic; Andrés de Oviedo to Francisco de Borja, 3 July 1566, in: ARANA 1631, 102 and also 110.
beya.\textsuperscript{39} Life expectancy in the mission – 49,3 years – was also significantly lower to that in India – 59,6 years.\textsuperscript{40} Only young, physically fit and strong men could carry out all the tasks that missionary work demanded. To be sure, the average age of the six missionaries that reached Ethiopia in 1557 was lower than that of missionaries who arrived in the seventeenth century (Table 6). But two decades after having landed in Massawa the average age in the mission had risen dramatically (Figure 2). In 1577, the remaining four missionaries were over 60 and were unable to do little more than to preach in the areas around Fremona. Matters could have changed had Pedro Páez and Antonio de Montserrat (then 25 and 53 years old, respectively) been able to reach Ethiopia in 1589.\textsuperscript{41} Their capture in Hadramawt, however, precluded any chance of renewal of the ageing personnel.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig2.png}
\caption{Average age of the Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia, 1557-1632}
\end{figure}

\textit{Sources:} see Figure 1

In the 1590s, the Archbishop Dom Aleixo de Menezes, together with the political authorities in India, the Viceroy’s Mathias de Albuquerque and Francisco de Gama, funded the envoy of two ‘Oriental’ missionaries to Ethiopia. This, however, proved of little help. The first missionary, the Jesuit Maronite Abraham de Georgiis, was sent in 1595 and killed by the Turks at Massawa. The fact that he had, as a memorial to him stated, “the look and the face of an Asian, similarly to the blackness of the Ethiopians, and did not look

\textsuperscript{38} 3 December 1587, in: \textit{DL}, vol. XIV, 684.
\textsuperscript{39} ARANA 1631, 120; RASO III, 36., III, ch. XII.
\textsuperscript{40} See Figure 1; ALDEN, \textit{The Making of an Enterprise}, 279, who provides data on India only for the period 1625-1716.
\textsuperscript{41} The choice of a person as old as Montserrat is itself a problem given the need the mission had for young recruits and was at the time much criticized within Jesuit circles.
like an European”, was no protection against the well-informed Turkish officials. The second was the Brahmin Melchior de Sylva, educated from an early age with the Jesuits at the College of São Paulo in Goa. De Sylva reached the mission in 1598 and worked there for six years, ministering to the Catholic group in Fremona. Among the few remarkable things that happened during his lonely apostolate was a meeting held in 1602 with Ethio-Portuguese leaders. The group discussed the ways to get more Jesuit missionaries into Ethiopia and concluded that a practical and secure way was through ‘Dancali’, the Danakil coast. However, both de Georgis and da Sylva were provisory solutions. They were not part of any missionary strategy but just desperate attempts by the Indian authorities to minister to the Ethio-Portuguese. The ‘mission to the Preste’ needed much more than that and it was soon to come.

**1603-23: THE TAKING SHAPE OF THE MISSION**

The landing of Pedro Páez in Ethiopia in 1603 and of four other fellows in 1604 and 1605 opened a new missionary era in Ethiopia. The five missionaries, headed by the skilled figure of Páez, gave new vigour to an undertaking that for decades had not seen any progress. A few factors were at the background of the missionary achievements during this period.

**Factors of success**

By the time the second mission marched, the Society of Jesus had learned a number of lessons from the past. Errors made by the previous generation of missionaries had not been in vain. First, an aggressive and upfront ‘strategy’ such as that used earlier by Gonçalo Rodrigues and Andrés de Oviedo was out of the question. Confrontation was to be avoided and enmities with members of the court and the Ethiopian Church reduced to a minimum. Such was the general sense of the instructions written by Ignatius of Loyola back in the 1550s.

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42 … Hauen l’aspetto e faccia asiatica, tirando assai alla negrezza dell’Etiopi, e niente aveva del Europeo; “Vita del P. Abram Giorgio, Maronita et Aluno del Collegio de Maroniti in Roma e poi Religioso della Comp. di Gesù e Martire nell’Etiopia” (1595), in: ARSI, Missiones apud infideles 720/1/6/111 “Del ministerio delle Missioni”, 4r.

43 RASO III, liv. V, ch. II. Additionally, during these years a third Jesuit, Diogo Gonçalves, should have been sent to Ethiopia but the project was eventually dropped. Gonçalves finally landed in the Malabar mission; cf. Diogo GONÇALVES, *História do Malavar* [1615], ed. Josef Wicki, Münster/Westfalen: Aschendorfersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955, ix.

Towards the end of the century Jesuit missionary praxis and theory had been much refined, too. The large number of missionaries the Society had abroad (by 1600 about 400 Jesuit missionaries had already left from Lisbon for missions in Asia, Africa and America) had helped adjusting methods, correcting strategies and improving apostolate. Figures like Alessandro Valignano had also produced excellent handbooks on how missions and proselytism were to be managed. The principles the Italian visitor pushed forth were also applied to the Ethiopian mission, where the Jesuits had a clear religious message to transmit but also possessed many other qualities – dialectic skills, technical and intellectual preparation, refined culture, contacts with India and Europe etc. – that should be better put in use first in order to prepare the ground for conversions. Hence, non-religious aspects could also become assets at the service of the missionary project. Missionaries were asked to be more pragmatic and selective; they had to seek favour of the influential groups among the targeted societies, learn local traditions, languages and manners. Given time, this would be rewarded.

The second shift of missionaries knew that their work could not be reduced to an apostolate among the converted as had been largely the case with the work of Oviedo and his peer among the Ethio-Portuguese at Fremona. The importance of the Ethio-Portuguese during the second Jesuit mission did not diminish, as events were to show, but it was no longer placed as the unique target of missionary action. Likewise, experience had shown the Jesuits that patience was a valuable asset for ambitious conversion projects. This change is well reflected in the different attitude towards the Patriarchate of Ethiopia. The first mission opened in a grand manner, with the hastened nomination of a Patriarch and two co-adjutors Bishops, and the shipment of one of them to Ethiopia. For the second mission, Patriarchates and Bishoprics had to wait and the work in Ethiopia was entrusted to simple priests. The idea to renew the Catholic Patriarchate was consequently postponed for better, more favourable, moments. Time would show that it was a wise decision to make.

The human factor was also important in helping the mission succeed. The missionaries sent after 1603 had undeniable qualities. Born in 1564, Páez was probably the first missionary to reach Ethiopia who was fully aware of a distinct Jesuit identity and when, in 1582, he joined religious life the Society of Jesus was no longer in its phase of

45 LOBO, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 13.
46 These principles are summarized in the pioneer treatise by Alessandro VALIGNANO, Il Ceremoniale per i missionari del Giappone: Advertimentos e avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Japão [1581], ed. J.F. Schutte, Roma: Storia e Let-
‘Taking Shape’. He entered into an organization that already enjoyed a worldwide network of houses, colleges and missions and whose main texts had been published or were about to be finished (the last official text to be issued was the *Ratio Studiorum* in 1599) and the first famous figures sprouted from its houses.\(^{47}\) One of them, Alessandro Valignano, would have indeed had some influence on Páez during his stay in India.\(^{48}\) Páez studied at the College of Belmonte and at the University of Alcalà de Henares. In 1588, he reached India and the next year led the first attempt to reach the Ethiopian mission. This led him to spend seven years in captivity in Yemen, a period when he learnt the Arabic language – that he seems to have used later when dealing with the merchants in the Red Sea – and, probably, also got a good grasp of the best ways to move in the Red Sea area. The idea to travel to Ethiopia disguised as an Armenian would have been his own.

Table 7: Mean length of service in the Society of Jesus for the missionaries in Ethiopia, 1555-1632

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1555-1557</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598-1632 (missionaries)</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598-1632 (hierarchy)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\)Note a: the Bishops João da Rocha and Diogo Seco, who never reached Ethiopia, have been included (computed at their year of arrival in India)

**Sources:** see Figure 1

The four other companions who followed Páez’s steps, Francesco Antonio de Angelis, António Fernandes, Luís de Azevedo and Lorenzo Romano, shared a similar profile. They had also joined the Society at an earlier age, when they were between fifteen and nineteen (Table 5), and came to the mission after years spent studying, training and working in different Jesuit colleges. Therefore, whilst the missionaries that arrived in Ethiopia between 1555-57 averaged ten years as members of the Society – some, like Cardoso, Gualdames and Manuel Fernandes, had not reached even half this time, – those who came later, had doubled the amount of years spent within Jesuit walls. Reasonably enough, the Jesuits with titles who came in 1625 and later (Afonso Mendes and Apollinar de Almeida) present a longer period as members of the Society (Table 7). This shows that the Jesuits from the second mission arriving on the Ethiopian highlands were well tested by the rigors of the order. They had received an excellent preparation at the European tradition, 1946.

\(^{47}\) Among them, in philosophy and theology, Pedro de Fonseca (1528-99), Francisco Toledo (1532-96), Luís de Molina (1535-1600), Roberto Bellarmino (1542-1621) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617); in the missions, José de Acosta (1539-1600), Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), Matteo Ricci (1552-1610); in historiography, Juan de Mariana (1536-1624).

\(^{48}\) The influence, as Trozzi pointed out, could have also been mediated by one of Valignano’s disciples, Father Alberto Lacerio, with whom Páez spent a year in Salsete; Nicola Trozzi, “L’influenza di Alessandro Valignano sul pensiero di Pero Paez”, *Africa* [Roma] 47, 4, 1992, 587-94, 593.
colleges and incorporated Jesuit ethos. They shared the same esprit de corps and acted according to the Jesuit ‘way of proceeding’ or, as Mendes would put it in late 1625, “in them it is found the spirit of the Society”.49

Last but not least, the second mission unfolded under a favourable political climate at home. The dynastic change that Portugal suffered in 1581 and its incorporation into the Spanish Crown had played in favour of the Ethiopian undertaking. The leadership problems that Portugal suffered after Dom João’s death had left major themes in the overseas agenda of the Kingdom dormant, one of them being the mission to Ethiopia. Cardinal Infante Dom Henrique, who ruled in Portugal for different periods between 1557 and 1580, was never as enthusiastic about the Ethiopian mission as his brothers King João III and Cardinal Infante Dom Alfonso had been. It is to be noted, though, that during his regency (1562-68) he also demonstrated some opposition to the idea of moving the missionaries to Japan.50

Under the new dynasty the Ethiopian mission was dealt with differently. When Felippe II became king of Portugal he tried to put new energy into cutting the Red Sea route51 and reopened diplomacy with the Ethiopian negus. Under him and his heirs Felipe III and Felipe IV, the cause of Ethiopia became again a major theme in the missionary policy of Portugal.52 Between 1585 and 1634 the Habsburgs exchanged at least nineteen letters with the governors of India relating to the Ethiopian mission where they pressed the Indian authorities to help the missionary project.53 The kings also took care that the annual contribution sent for the Ethio-Portuguese reacted its destination, a practice that seems to have been interrupted in several occasions under the previous dynasty. Similarly, the royal chancellery did not forget the negus. In the 1580s, Felippe II addressed two letters to Särsä Dengel and in 1609 and 1617, Felippe III sent two more missives addressed to Susenyos (cf.

49 ... Nelles está o espirito da Companhia; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XX.
50 For evidence on this see Juan de Polanco to Melchior Nunes Barreto, 10 January 1566, Roma, in: DL, vol. VI, doc. 101-02, 661; Polanco to Juan de Ribera, 11 January 1566, Roma, in: Ibid., doc. 104, 667. See also Ibid., doc. 13, p. 67. Dom Henrique’s positioning, however, was probably motivated more by financial than by ideologic reasons. LANE, *The Mediterranean Spice Trade*, 34.
51 It was also under the aegis of the Felipes that the Society of Jesus initiated the fulgurant expansion in the Spanish overseas colonies. Cf. Teófanes Egido – Javier BURRIEZA SANCHEZ – Manuel REVUELTA GONZÁLEZ (eds.), *Los jesuitas en España y en el mundo hispánico*, Madrid: Fundación Carolina – Marcial Pons, 2004, 186 seq. Unfortunately, there is not much literature on the relations between the monarchs and the Society. Among the few articles dedicated to specific aspects of this relation are: Lesmes FRÍAS, “Tres cartas de Felipe II recomendando la Compañía a los reyes cristianísimos (1565-1567)”, *Archivo Historico Societatis Iesu* 5, 1936, 70-76, who deals with the intervention of Felipe II on behalf of the persecuted Jesuits from Paris. Besides, we might also address to Javier BURRIEZA, “La Compañía de Jesús y la defensa de la Monarquía”, *Guerra y sociedad en la monarquía hispánica. Política, estrategia y cultura en la Europa moderna* (1500-1700), Congreso de Historia militar, 9-12 March 2003, unpublished paper; and Félix ZUBILLAGA, “El procurador de la Compañía de Jesús en la corte de España”, *Archivo Historico Societatis Iesu* 16, 1-2, 1947, 1-55.
52 A leading Jesuit figure in Ethiopia, Manoel de Almeida, agrees in stating that it was the coming to power of Felippe
Appendix 3). Furthermore, the delegate (procurador) that the Society of Jesus had in the Spanish court was probably an efficacious defender of the interests of the Ethiopian mission.  

Finally, the political and dynastic crisis that dominated Ethiopia at the turn of the century helped the missionary project. The death of Sārsā Dengel in 1597 without a designated heir sparked a dynastic dispute that lasted for over ten years. Until the arrival to power of Susenyos, there were four changes at the head of the Solomonic Kingdom. Power fell in the hands of court officials and members of the royal family, chief among them were Sārsā Dengel’s widow, Maryam Sena, ṭwāyẓō Ṭáltattā Giyorgis and ras Ṭanatewos. Within the same royal lines there were violent feuds that undermined royal authority. The figure of the negus was highly volatile, its power weak and in need of help. It was probably such weakness that stimulated the sudden and open interest that the three rulers who had fought each other for over a decade (1597-1607) had in approaching the second shift of foreign missionaries. Zā Dengel (regnal name Atanas Sāgād) first, and later Ya’eqob (regnal name Malak Sāgād) and Susenyos (regnal name Setlan Sāgād), would thus have seen in Páez and his peers men capable of providing the needed reforms for the kingdom. If local courtiers and eunuchs were deceitful, why not try to engage the refined and well educated Jesuits who were coming from Europe? These could also bridge strategic alliances with the, still then, admired Portuguese nation.

How then did the second missionary period proceed? This period brought about important changes in relation to the earlier phase. To explain the complex unfolding of the mission, the different aspects that were at stake and the strategies put into play by the European priests, I shall focus on a few central points.

**Foundation of new residences**

The first important change that the second mission brought about was the break from the isolation that had characterised the Patriarchate of Oviedo and the foundation of a number of residences throughout the country. Although the boom of residences and stations
only occurred with the arrival of Patriarch Mendes, it was under the leadership of Pedro Páez that a network of residences was first set up. It should be emphasized, however, that the importance of Fremona did not diminish. The Adwa plateau where this residence was located still hosted a considerable group of Catholics – mostly Ethio-Portuguese – faithful to the cause of the mission. Besides, its proximity to the coast and to Massawa made it a key station connecting the mission with the sea route to India. The main task of the superior of this residence was to receive men, equipment and letters coming from the coast and to forward it to the rest of missionary settlements in Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{56}

The first residence to be founded during the second period was Maraba, in Semen. Here, the same pattern that motivated the foundation of Fremona was repeated and the residence was both associated with royal power and with the Ethio-Portuguese. A number of Ethio-Portuguese had been resettled by negus Ya’eqob from Gojjam to Maraba, using them as a sort of cushion garrison to block Fälasha incursions.\textsuperscript{57} It was also following Ya’eqob’s invitation that in 1605 two Jesuits moved there. However, the garrison was rapidly removed, probably by 1607. Thereafter, the Portuguese moved back to their main settlements in Dämbeya and Tegray and the Jesuits did accordingly. After the failure of Maraba, the Jesuits founded Gorgora, in Dämbeya. Its origins were also associated with the presence of Ethio-Portuguese who had settled there in 1574.\textsuperscript{58} Páez decided to establish a residence there around 1606-07 and to take the fathers first placed in Maraba. Given time, Gorgora became the focal point of the mission; until his death, Páez used it as his main residence, and Luís de Azevedo and António Fernandes resided there at length. With this foundation the missionary centre moved definitively to the Lake Tana area.

Once Gorgora was consolidated, in about 1611 the missionaries established a third residence at Qollela, in Gojjam. If the earlier foundation was associated with negus Susenyos, Qollela was associated with his brother ras Se’elä Krestos, governor of Gojjam from 1609. The residence was put in charge of the Italian Francesco Antonio de Angelis and became the main gate to a region hitherto unexplored by the missionaries, the fertile province of Gojjam and the Agäw lands. With this foundation the missionaries had set up a network – albeit minimal – of residences in the main regions of Christian Ethiopia. The mission was present in three important terrains of action of the Ethiopian state – Tegray, Dämbeya and Gojjam – and was at close reach of two similarly important areas,

\textsuperscript{56} Pedro Páez to Superior General, 22 June 1616, Gorgora, in: RASO XI, doc. 44, 374.
\textsuperscript{57} Luís de Azevedo to Provincial in Goa, 26 July 1617, Fremona, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 135.
\textsuperscript{58} Reportedly, Särsä Dengel had given a gwelt around Gorgora to Ethio-Portuguese and the right was confirmed later
agäw/Damot and Bägemder. The residence of Gorgora in specific became of crucial importance to approach Ethiopia’s political and religious elite. Placed in a favourable location, in the middle of the peninsula of the same name and at the heart of the province of Dämbeya, which had gained relevance following the political crisis of the monarchy. Since the reign of Säsä Dengel the advance of Oromo tribes in Shäwa and Gojjam had pushed the rulers to seek safer havens in northern provinces. Säsä Dengel spent the first decades of his reign mostly in the southern provinces and in his chronicle the region of Shäwa was said to be as of 1573 “the centre of the kingdom”. However, towards the 1580s he had to move northwards and in 1586 built a castle in Guba’e, Bägemder. Thereafter, Dämbeya and neighbouring Bägemder turned into the favourite sites for the royal kätäma. This tendency reached its peak under Susenyos, who set up a series of camps in the areas east and north of Lake Tana: Qoga (1607-09 and also 1613), former residence of Ya’eqob, Deqhana (1610 and 1618), Cund Amba/Gorgora (1611-12, 1614-17), Dänqäz (1615-17, 1618-23?, 1625-32) and Fogara (1624).

Manoel de Almeida reported that when the negus had his kätäma in Cund Amba, where later the missionaries founded Gorgora Nova (New Gorgora), “there was much communication and familiarity between our fathers and the people of the court. A number of them used to come to our house and at the court there was always the presence of a father. In this way, the traditions of our holy faith were being heard and better understood”. It would have been then that Susenyos and his half-brother Se’elä Krestos, began to sympathise with the missionary ideals.

After this, expansion halted for a few years as with the number of five Jesuits the mission could not afford to manage more residences. However, in 1618, on special request by Susenyos, Páez asked de Angelis to go from Qollela to a nearby area inhabited by pagan Agäw who had been recently subjugated. He founded a new residence there, Ancasha, which later became a focal point of Agäw conversions to Catholicism. Further expansion only became possible with the massive arrival of effectives during the 1620s. In 1620, Antonio Bruno and Diogo de Mattos joined the mission, which increased its operatives to seven members. As a result, the following year the Jesuits opened a residence in

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59 I use the French translation; Carlo Conti Rossini (tr.), Historia regis Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad), accedi: Historia gentis Galla, interpreti I. Guidi, Lipsiae: Otto Harrassowitz, 1907 (CSCO vol. 21, SA series altera, Tomus III), 51.

60 This particular has been analyzed in detail in Hervè Pennec, Des jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean (Ethiopie): Stratégies, rencontres et tentatives d’implantation (1495-1633), Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian - Centre Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian (Paris), 2003, 203 seq.

61 … Houve muita comunicação e trato familiar entre os padres e a gente da corte, indo muitos á nossa casa, e estando também sempre algum padre no arrayal, forçado ouvindo e entendendo melhor as cousas de nossa santa fé; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XI.

62 RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XXXVII.
Azäzo, Dämbeya.\textsuperscript{63} Dedicated to Jesus and bearing the name Gännätä Iyäsus (“Ganeta Jesus”), i.e. ‘Paradise of Jesus’, the residence was the culmination of the missionaries’ influence over Susenyos. On 1 November 1621, the negus had made open profession of Catholicism and condemnation of the ‘Orthodox heresies’ and consequently requested Páez to found a residence, which construction began on 9 November. By then the association between the missionaries and Susenyos had reached its peak. Important court rebellions during the 1610s had been thwarted and Catholicism was not only a religious choice in the kingdom but was soon to become an obligation for all its subjects.

\textbf{Courting of nobility and royal power}

The Jesuits went to Dämbeya and Gojjam, in the first instance, to serve the Ethio-Portuguese. Their principal commitment was to keep this group within the Catholic constituency and it was principally with this aim that the Portuguese, and later Spanish, Crowns invested large amounts of money and resources in the mission, including the yearly \textit{esmola} sent to Ethiopia. However, the new foundations responded as well to an explicit policy to be as close as possible to the centres of power of the Ethiopian monarchy. Although this topic was one of the main focus of Pennec’s thesis,\textsuperscript{64} I shall briefly outline the way this strategy worked. An extended discussion on Jesuit political ontology and their ideological contribution to the foundation of an ‘Ethiopian Empire’ comes later in Chapter 5.

The story of the mutual courting between Jesuits and Ethiopian rulers began early. During the first years, from 1603 to around 1617, the missionaries took distance from Ethiopian internal religious affairs. Until the turning point of the battle of 1617, none of the five missionaries in Ethiopia was directly involved in any open religious debate. The missionaries, complying to what the Jesuit founders had recommended,\textsuperscript{65} proceeded with

\begin{footnotes}
\item[63] Details on this foundation are provided by Páez, who, though, does not mention the name and only informs of its invocation to Jesus; \textit{RASO} III, liv. IV, ch.XXII.
\item[64] \textit{PENNEC}, \textit{Des jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean}, 203 et passim.
\item[65] Loyola thus insisted that the missionaries in Ethiopia, “try that the Patriarch and those who go there befriend the Prester and, with any honest means possible, make yourself esteemed… If you could induce some noble and important persons of the Prester John, or even the Preste himself, to do the Exercises and to practice oration and meditation and spiritual things, it seems, would be the best means to make them less fond of, and even abandon, bodily things… As for what concerns the errors they have, try to open the eyes of the Preste and some people of authority later, without tumult, once these persons are convinced, see if you could gather in a meeting the most praised people for their doctrinal knowledge and, without depriving them of anything they cherish, make them capable of seeing the truths of Catholicism” (Procuren de tomar familiaridad con el Preste el Patriarca y los que alla fueren, y con todos m\textit{edios honestos hazerse querer bien hazerse querer… Si se pudiesen atraer algunas personas grandes y que mucho salgan con el Preste Juan, o tambien el mismo, a hazer exercicios, y gustar de la oracion y meditacion y cosas espirituales, pareze seria el mas efficaz medio de todos para hazerles estimar menos y aun dexar los extremos, que tienen en cosas corporales… Quanto a los abusos que tienen, primero procuren hazer capaz poco a poco al Preste y algunos particulares de mas auctoridad, y despues sin tumultu, siendo estos dispuestos, se mire si se podra hazer ayuntamiento de los que mas estimados son en doctrina en aquellos reynos, y sin que se les quitase interesse nin-
\end{footnotes}
moderation and discretion, avoiding open confrontation with the clergy. In parallel, however, they also took an unexposed approach to selected figures and lost no time in trying to put the Society on a secure footing.

Páez began to apply this method early. Shortly after his arrival in Ethiopia, he tried to meet negus Zä Dengel (1603-04), who would have described the Jesuit missionary as that “highly learned priest”. The two finally met on the shore of Lake Tana in mid-1604, where for 26 days Páez had several disputates with royal clergy and officiated Latin masses to the court. According to the missionary’s own narrative, he made such an impression on the negus that the latter agreed to the superiority of the Roman Catholic Faith and offered him the Patriarchate. Yet, when the negus decided to join Catholicism and hastened to forbid the observance of Sabbath, Páez recommended him a more guarded approach: “Lord, I do not think that the people are yet ready to accept so many prohibitions. If Your Majesty acted somehow slower in introducing things, I think they would be better received”. Under the guidance of Páez the mission advanced in a much more prudent and intelligent way: the forces at play were carefully measured, the enemies that opposed the mission and the friends the Jesuits could count on being quickly identified. With this information the missionaries decided their strategies and moves. The missions’ new strategy appears in a statement from 1614, during a serious crisis in which high ecclesiastics – including abunä Sem’on – and nobles openly opposed the Portuguese-friendly detour of Susenyo. Páez then recommended

… that I did not think it was wise to use force, since at the time the Emperor did not have it; rather it was better they acted in a good [clever] way, so they [the opponents] could hear the reasons and read the books; and with these methods they would surrender more gently; and if they thought they could not obtain victory, the Emperor should put the project aside and leave it still, without taking neither of the sides … since when
The fury had gone, they would later calm down and [we] could convince of our reasons the prominent people, or they could leave the issue open until the Emperor had enough power.  

The idea to use power and force was thus never abandoned, but it was hardly ever made explicit. The missionaries did not drop earlier plans to ‘rescue’ Ethiopia with a military expedition sent from India. Páez, for instance, hinted at it to the Jesuit General in 1614 and evidence indicates that this issue was amply discussed in private conversations between him and Susenyos. In 1618, he informed that the negus knew that the ‘reduction’ of Ethiopia to Catholicism “could not be done without the help he had already requested”. The same idea of a military expedition made vivid appearance during the dramatic moments prior to and following the expulsion of the missionaries. However, during the peaceful years the Jesuits rarely made this idea explicit and Páez was careful enough to hint to it in such a way that others could not know it. In the age of Mannerism and the early baroque actions were measured according to the consequences. Caution, disguise and ambiguity became common resources among ruling men and the Jesuits were among the best in using it to their own benefit. In this way, a policy of double standards and a veil of secrecy fell on the mission. In Ethiopia the Jesuits did not lie about their intentions, but neither did they reveal them so openly as the missionaries that preceded them had done.

When Zä Dengel was killed in battle on 12 October 1604, Páez persisted in his approach. Assisted by Ethio-Portuguese, he wandered for months in Dämbeya, witnessed Susenyos’ near arrival to power in 1605, met the queen regent Maryam Sena and, together with Francesco Antonio de Angelis and António Fernandes, met in Gubay the rein-

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70 … Que no me parecia que convenia llebar aquello por fuerça, pues el Emperador en aquel tiempo no la tenia, sino que trabajasen lo posible por buen modo, para que oyesen las razones y viesen los libros; que con esso mas suavemente se renderian; mas que si ultimamente les pareciese que no podian salir con lo que pretendian, que el Emperador diese desvio para que quedase en abierto, sin se determ…

71 No puede tener effecto sin la ayuda que tiene pedida; Pedro Páez to Mutio Vitelleschi, 16-23 June 1618, Gorgora-Decana, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 326.

72 Accordingly, in the correspondence the military expedition was hinted at with such vague terms as esso, y V.P. ya sabe or as in the following quotation: “… They will not be able to … offer obedience to His Holiness but only with the help of what they cherish and that Your Paternity already knows” (… No an de poder … dar obediencia a Su. S.d sino con la ayuda que pretenden y V.P. ya sabe); Pedro Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 333.

73 The Jesuits were fond of protecting information and keeping outsiders away from looking at the functioning of the Society. This issue, already present in the writings of St. Ignatius, brought the Society to develop sophisticated secret systems of communication, which are amply documented in the fascinating collection “Cifraria” from the ARSI, which does not seem to have yet been object of any study. The same ethos gave way to the development in popular European imagination of negative meanings associated with the Jesuits. In Europe thus the terms “Jesuit”, “Jesuitic”, “Jesuitism” became synonymous of ‘hypocrite, ‘false attitude’. An interesting study of anti-Jesuitic attitudes in French society is Michel Leroy, Le mythe jésuite: de Bréanger à Michelet, Paris: PUF (Coll.: Ecriture), 2000.

74 On the centrality of the concept of artificiality in Mannerism I follow the seminal study by Ernst Robert Curtius,
stalled Ya’eqob. The story somehow repeated itself once more. The negus was quickly attracted by the missionary and “the things from India and Portugal” but was also victim of another rebellion and killed in battle. In 1604, Páez also befriended ras Atmatewos, a powerful figure during the stormy years that concluded with the rise of Susenyos, who had asked him “to become his theologian and master, because local Ethiopian priests knew nothing”. Around 1606, abba Marca (i.e. Mäherka Dengel), was duly instructed on doctrinal issues and was to become one of the mission’ strongest advocates.

With the rise of Susenyos to power, the Spaniard was introduced at his court and within a short time acquired a position probably rivalling that of the royal eunuchs. Until his death in 1622, he became one of the leading personalities in the kingdom. He made frequent visits to the court, advised on reforms, helped in the government of the state and followed the ruler during military campaigns. In his letters the missionary often recalled the high esteem in which he was held at the court; in 1616, he wrote: “The Emperor makes me stay at his court almost the whole time, and when he goes away he rarely separates from me”. At the court, Páez lobbied for the cause of the mission and included in the number of tasks he had, one was similar to that of the Jesuit procurator at the Spanish court.

In the early 1610s Páez, Fernandes, de Angelis and Azevedo began to gather the first fruits of their subtle ‘courting’. Around 1611, the ‘conversion’ of the learned Fequr Egzi’e occurred, whom Almeida late in the 1620s described as “one of the first who knew and received … the holy faith”. Shortly after, the missionary gained to his cause the negus Susenyos himself, ras Se’elä Krestos, abetohun Be’elä Krestos (“Bellachristos”), cousin of Susenyos, Amsalä Krestos, governor of Tegray, abetohun Zä Dengel, Zä Manuel, abbot

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75 Las cosas de la India y de Portugal; Ibid. 247, 250.
76 … Suo theologo e maestro, perché i suoi frati niente saperano; Pedro Páez to Provincial in Goa, 29 July 1605, Fremona, in: RASO XI, doc. 16, 70.
77 A my casi de ordinario me hace el Emperador estar en la corte, y quando va fuera pocas veces me dexa…; Páez, 1616, in: RASO XI, doc. 44, 376.
78 On this office see ZUBILLAGA, “El procurador de la Compañía de Jesús”.
79 Foi hum dos primeiros que conheceu e recebes, ainda primeiro que Rás e que o Emperador, a santa fé; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. IX.
80 It cannot be determined when exactly Se’elä Krestos and Susenyos began to ‘convert’, because, as the Jesuits understood it, ‘conversion’ was a process that could take years. However, the crucial period when both might have adopted Catholic positions should have been during the early 1610s, when Susenyos had assumed some control of the kingdom and in the first years of Se’elä Krestos as governor of Gojjam (1610-12). For instance, towards 1612 Páez reported that he was eating next to Susenyos so the unusual physical proximity reflected deep ideological sympathies; Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 251. In 1614, Susenyos wrote a letter to the Jesuit General Acquaviva where he expressed unequivocally his religious convictions: “for that reason we won’t move away, and this until the day of our death, from the precepts of the Holy Roman See of St. Peter, whom we venerate as if it was our mother” (… perché non ci allontaneremo affatto, insino al giorno della nostra morte, dai precetti della S. Sede Romana di Pietro, cui veneriamo da qui come nostra madre); Susenyos to Claudio Acquaviva, 3 July 1614, in: RASO I, doc III-2. On Se’elä Krestos’s leaning for the Jesuits cf. RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XXVIII.
from the monastery of Däbrä Selalo (Sellalo) in Gojjam, the royal chronicler azzaj Tino (aka Wäldä/Zä Krestos), fitaurari Zä Sellase, blattengeta and Gojjam nägash Adero, and the monk Gäbrä Mädhen.\textsuperscript{81} The Jesuits indoctrinated them in private about central dogmatic, Christologic and ritual aspects. As a consequence, a pro-Jesuit Ethiopian élite began to form within the court and around the Jesuit residences. This group grew in number and importance for as long as the activity of the Jesuits progressed. It also grew in confidence and began to openly speak up in favour of the mission and of Catholic ideas. In 1613-14, Páez stated that “as the Catholics saw that they had on their side so great lords, they began to openly profess as such and to abandon and condemn the wrong practices of Euthyches and Dioscorus”\textsuperscript{82} Se’elä Krestos, in particular, became a sophisticated Catholic polemist, or, as Almeida put it, “the strongest [Catholic] spear in Ethiopia”.\textsuperscript{83} Likewise, together with his brother, he became the mission’s main benefactor. The Jesuit residence of Qollela he funded became an important missionary centre and his nearby kättäma was, probably, also the first place in Ethiopia where Catholicism began to be professed in an open, institutional-like, way. Soon the group of neophytes began to favour the celebration of religious debates to combat Ethiopian Christianity. The first were celebrated at the royal kättäma in Gorgora and later in Achafer, Agäw land and the missionaries played only a secondary role.\textsuperscript{84}

However, the zeal of the new converts also put the missionary method in jeopardy on more than one occasion. Back in 1604, Páez cautioned negus Zä Dengel of enforcing Catholic decrees too quickly, as it was shown above. In 1612 he recommended an enthusiastic Susenyos “to be more moderate” (\textit{que fuese mas de espacio}) with the religious reforms\textsuperscript{85} and the next year, amidst the first open religious debates, he reprimanded Susenyos, who had opened a discussion about the filioque that Páez wanted to avoid at all costs.\textsuperscript{86} Around 1614 his brother Se’elä Krestos received a similar reprimand. These were critical years for


\textsuperscript{82} Vendo os catholicos que tinhão por si senhores tam grandes começarião descubertamente á se professar por tais, e á condenar nas praticas os erros de Euthyches e Dioscoro; RASO III, liv. VII, ch. XX. The passage was later paraphrased by Almeida; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XX.

\textsuperscript{83} …A mais forte lança que avia em Ethiopia; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXI.

\textsuperscript{84} There seems to be little doubt on that as in several passages the Jesuits informed of their almost accidental awareness of the debates; Almeida, said that at the opening of the first debates: “Father Pedro Páez and Father Luís de Azevedo were present only by chance” (… acharíou-se aly á caso o padre Pedro Paez e o padre Luiz d’Azevedo); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XX. For the second, though, Páez played a more active role for he met with the Catholic neophytes and taught them “the solution to some doubts and weak formulations that the opponents defended” (… a solução de algumas duvidas e argumentos bem fracos que os contrarios trazião por sua parte); Ibid. ch. XXI.

\textsuperscript{85} Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 234.

\textsuperscript{86} Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 327-28.
the mission since the balance of power between the two parties at the court was even and
the Jesuits wanted to avert a wider division at the court and provoking a major social
clash.87

**The exchange mechanism within the mission**

During the years of most vigorous activity, the mission could survive and grow thanks to
the support of external partners. As we have seen before, the support of Ethiopian court
and of the Ethio-Portuguese was essential. The Christian Ethiopian state was, like the
Spanish monarchy, a sophisticated political and bureaucratic machinery. Within it the
highest and most important attributions fell on the negus and his entourage. The ruler
granted lands (gebelt), decided on tributes, delivered monetary benefits and victuals and
gave permission to erect churches.88 In consequence, the mission being present at the
court was not a choice but a mandatory need and the genius of Páez was to grasp this
right from the beginning and to penetrate and move in the Ethiopian political arena with
such ease. It was thanks to his work in the court that the mission could be granted all the
necessary benefits and favours needed to grow and expand: lands, victuals, juridical and
military protection. He implemented the ‘mechanism’ of exchanges that fed missionary
needs, allowed it to grow and to acquire prestige and power in the kingdom.

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87 Towards the end of 1613, amidst the debates held at Achefer and news of a coming uprising of traditionalists, Páez
told Susenyos that "since the enemies did not accept reason but force, and since neither the Emperor nor the
Catholics had enough power to face so many heretics, it was better to divert the problem and to say that as positions
were so opposed it was not yet time to resolve so important an issue; and also that the books should be care-
fully read. In the meantime the war against the Agáus would be over and later there would be time to resolve this
problem"; (… ia que, os inimigos não queriam reação, senão força e esta não na tinha o Emperador nem os catholicos para resistir á
tantos hereses, que era bem dar algum desvio, dizendo que, pois as opiniões estavão tão enconradas, que por então não se podia de todo
resolver cousa tam grave e importante; que se vissem os livros mais devagar, e entretanto se acabaria a guerra dos Agáus, e depois averia
tempo para se concluir este ponto); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXII.
Figure 3: The reciprocity system in the mission

Figure 4 tries to summarize how this mechanism worked. Although sources, mostly of missionary origin, tend to provide an image of the Jesuits as a self-sustained group, such was never the case. This has been amply shown for other Jesuit missions, particularly in the study of the Jesuit mission in Moxos by David Block. Indeed, in Ethiopia the Jesuits were one of three main ‘actors’ involved in a complex network of exchanges that made the system work. In this system, ephemeral as it was, every actor gave and received something. The Jesuits granted expertise to the Ethiopian court, access to the cosmopolitan Euro-Indian culture and grew to be leading reformers of the Ethiopian Church. The missionaries received from the court the things necessary to keep the residences running; travel allowances as well as a protecting umbrella to carry on their work. A third important actor at play was the Ethio-Portuguese. Often left aside from analysis when studying the Jesuit mission, their role was fundamental. As we saw above, the men surviving the expedition of Christovão da Gama formed an elite troop fighting for the Ethiopian state. They put their military and political expertise to the service of the technically inferior Christian Ethiopian armies. In exchange, the Ethiopian state granted influential positions to some of them as well as lands. Finally, Jesuits and Ethio-Portuguese depended on each other for survival. The first were a vital asset for the Jesuit priests: they provided intelligence on the country, practical help – the Jesuits took most of their interpreters from this group – and recruits to be trained in the missionary residences; during the 1620s some of them played an important role in joining the growing apostolate tasks of the mission. The Jesuits, in their turn, offered them a ministry, education and, to some extent, a reassuring nest to keep the Portuguese-Catholic identity of the group alive.

**Diversifying the apostolate**

Another aspect that improved with the second mission was the widening of apostolate. The setting up of a network of residences gave the mission reach to a large array of groups living in the Ethiopian highlands. Although it was not until the 1620s that the number of missionaries and residences took off, the five Jesuits in charge of the mission during the years 1603-20 did immense work and managed to be active on several fronts. They carried out important intellectual activities translating several religious texts and also expanding the missionary network. They made frequent journeys to hitherto unknown regions to

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88 On this see TADDESE, Church and State in Ethiopia, 98-103, 244.
89 David BLOCK, *Mission culture on the Upper Amazon: native tradition, Jesuit enterprise and secular policy in Moxos, 1660-1880,*
the mission and opened new areas for exploration. The phenomenal expansion that the mission witnessed during the 1620s was in fact prepared by their intense work, tenacity and efficacy. At Fremona missionaries preached to the Ethio-Portuguese as well as to the Tegreñña-speaking population. At Dāmbeya they targeted the same group and also made some conversions to locals, probably Amhara speakers.

However, it was in Gojjam where the mission found a most promising field of action. Towards the end of the 1610s the area had been pacified through a series of successful military campaigns by Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos, which also made large groups of fierce Agäw subjects of the Christian kingdom. Jesuit annual letters report that the Agäw had requested Susenyos to send Jesuit priests to their lands rather than traditional Ethiopian priests. Although such a statement could be read as self-justifying, there could also be some degree of true in it. The missionaries were well established in the kingdom by then, they enjoyed the favour of the negus and of a large part of the court. Besides, their methods were considerably different to those practiced by the local clergy. Be it only to be more easily accepted, they seem to have shown a tolerant and dialoguing attitude towards the indigenous peoples who were under the dominion of the Christian state. Hence, on one occasion de Angelis obtained that the tribute the Agäw had to pay to the negus was condoned and he also served as an umbrella protecting this tribe against military raids. Therefore, the Agäw had reasons to regard the Jesuit priests with more positive eyes to the traditional Ethiopian clergy. The missionaries probably offered them both a peaceful transition towards subjection to central Ethiopian rule and protection from the not too disciplined troops of the Christian state. Moreover, by the end of the decade the mission was ready to aim further south and even hinted at approaching the Kingdom of Ennarya (Narea).

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90 These successes were largely due to Susenyos’ military prominence. Having been brought up among the Oromo, he could learn their military tactics and once he got to power he incorporated large numbers of them into his army. During one of the early campaigns in Gojjam, Páez spoke of Susenyos as “a great captain, ingenious and well trained in the matters of war” [... grande capitam, ardidoso e bem exercitado nas cousas da guerra...]; RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XXXVIII.

91 Páez reported: “I hope in Our Lord that we will be much successful among these peoples, as they are very intelligent and are so numerous that neither the five fathers living here nor 20 more would be enough to work among them” (Espero en nuestro Señor que se ha de hacer grande fruto entre esta gente, porque tiene muy buen entendimiento y son tantos que no digo los cinco padres que aca estamos mas ni 20 bastavan para ellos solo); Ibid. 409.

92 Missionary sources attest that groups such as the Agäw clearly perceived the difference between the Jesuit missionaries and local clergy; e.g. Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 497.

93 Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 408; also RASO III, liv. III, ch. XXXVII.

94 Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 431.
Missionary organisation blended autocracy with democratic procedures. Like in other Jesuit endeavours, the mission in Ethiopia was headed by a superior da missão. During most of the period considered here this role fell on Pedro Páez, who, around 1619, probably due to the major dedication to his opera magna, the História de Etiópia, was replaced by António Fernandes. The latter would lead the mission with a forceful hand until the coming of the visitor Manoel de Almeida (early 1624) and Patriarch Mendes (1625). The principal commitment the superior had was distributing tasks and duties to the small troop. The superior took care that residences had enough personnel and that they had tasks to fulfil. Accordingly, in 1605, upon the arrival of the third convoy that brought two more missionaries to Ethiopia, Páez ordered two men to stay in Fremona and the other two to go with him to the newly founded residence of Maraba. Throughout the following years Páez seems to have exercised the same authority. In 1613, when Susenyos rejected his own candidature to lead the secret expedition to the pope, he also chose António Fernandes as a substitute to lead the same mission.95 In a similar way, as we saw above, Páez also manoeuvred the strategy that the mission followed: focusing on royal power, courting of important personalities and never confronting hostile subjects directly.

Another task that the superior exercised with vigour was that of keeping order and consensus among the missionaries. This is reflected in a polemic that occurred in the early 1610s between Lorenzo Romano and Luís de Azevedo, who had worked together in Fremona. The polemic was centred, apparently, on the methods to employ in educating the children at the seminaries. In a letter addressed to the Provincial in Goa, Páez opens in by explaining the way he chose to cut the problem short:

> On the dispute between Father Luís de Azevedo and Father Lorenzo Romano, some time ago, I warned twice Father Luís de Azevedo that if he had something to say about it he shall not write to anybody but send his plea to me so that I report on it. I also warned Father Lorenzo not to interfere in the things that Father [Azevedo] had arranged for the children without first telling me; this is the way these things are now kept calm. I forwarded your congratulations to Father Luís de Azevedo for his good work in the seminary, which pleased him very much. A few days ago, I also reprehended Father Lorenzo Romano because he was neglecting his duties there and now I have been told he is teaching diligently.96

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96 Acerca dos queixumes entre o Pe. Luís dacevedo e o Pe. Lourenco Romano ja ha muito tempo que avisei duas vezes ao Pe.Luis dacevedo que se tivesse alguma cousa della nam lha escrevesse, se nam que mandasse para eu a facer e ao Pe. Lourenco tambem avisei que nam se metese de nenhuma maneira nas cousas que la o Pe. deixara ordenadas sobre seus meninos sem primeiro me avisar, e assi agora estamos sujeitos. Ao Pe. Luis dacevedo di os agradecimentos que V.R. lhe mandou pollo bom cuidado que tinha do seminario e folga muito mais ao Pe. Lourenco Romano reprehendi os dois passados porq. se descuidava muito com o que la tem e agora me dicem que insina com dili-
Plate IIIa (above): Portable icons, Ethiopia. Left: Virgin of St. Luke or Sta. Maria Maggiore. Right: Ecce Homo, identified by Olivier Meslay as close to the school of Luis de Morales (1519-86); probably second Jesuit period in Ethiopia.

Plate IIIb (centre left): Virgin of Sta. Maria Maggiore, ca. 1580, engraving by Hieronymus Wierix.

Plate IIIc (centre right): Engraving by Hieronymus Wierix of the circumcision of Christ, from Nadal’s Evangelicae Historiae Imagines, 1596.

Plate IIId (below): Mughal painting of a Portuguese organ positive, detail from a scene depicting Plato charming the wild animals by his music, 1595, Nizami, Khamsa (‘Five Poems’).
Plate IVa (above): Various scenes showing the miracles of St. Ignatius of Loyola, 1612, unsigned.

Plate IVb (below left): St. Francis Xavier, ca. 1622, engraving by Antoine (Jr.?) Wierix.

Plate IVc (below right): First page of Alonso de Ledesma’s “Testamento de Christo nuestro señor”, ca. 1606.
The mission was, therefore, organised in a similar way to how the whole Society of Jesus was ruled. The duties of the superior somehow reproduced those of the Jesuit superior general. Individual polemics and quarrels, if not avoidable, had to keep a low profile and should never reach public light; the aim was that they did not interfere into the well being of the mission. The famous concept of ‘obedience’ was also subtly used by the superior to impose consensus and full dedication to the common project; at least according to Jesuit sources, it seems to have been duly respected by the rest of missionaries.97

However, decisions seem to have also been taken in a consensuate way. The main instrument to guide missionary activities was the junta, which was held on a yearly basis at the residence of Gorgora, apparently without interruption until the expulsion. It was a general assembly that was attended by the head of the mission and a representation of missionaries from the different residences and areas of action and could last for several days. The gathering had spiritual as well as practical aims. According to Almeida, in the meetings the missionaries “renewed the life and the exercises from the [Jesuit] community”98 and in the words of another Jesuit, “first it deals about our own reformation and that of our houses and then the conformity that we have to use in our doctrines and methods to teach these peoples”.99 It was thus an important moment that permitted the Jesuits to have a sense of community and of belonging to a common project and, more importantly, a unique decision-making body, where the information from the different areas was exchanged and decisions taken accordingly.100 Missionary strategies were decided following a careful examination of the information gathered from the field. As time was to show, such was the best way to proceed. Strategies could not be uniquely determined from above or from the distant Jesuit centres at Goa, Lisbon and Rome. It was by learning from the local context and by keeping a good exchange of the information that the most effective methods of action could be found. This procedure assured them the needed flexibility and grasp of the local milieu and was also an optimal form to use the human resources and to secure success. Issues such as the successful expansion in the Agäw areas in the

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98 ... Nellas renovávamos a vida e exercícios da comunidade em que nos criáramos; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XI. Cf. also LOBO, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 462.
99 ... Se trata primeiro da reformação de nossas pessoas e cazás, e depois da conformidade que devemos ter na doutrina e no modo de a encinar a toda esta gente; Manoel de Almeida to Superior General, 16 June 1628, Gorgora, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 275.
100 Almeida described this in a clear way, stating that the principal purpose of the junta was to discuss and deal with “... the most effective ways to proceed for the conservation of our ideals and for the work of the reduction that maintained us occupied all year long” (... tratávamos e confirámos os meos e modos que seríamos mais acomodados e efficazes para a conservação de nosso spirito e para a obra de redução em que todo o anno andávamos ocupados); Ibid.
1620s and the intelligent attitude towards the local clergy (first cautious and later, in the 1620s, severe) were probably first decided during these meetings.\footnote{Thus, for instance, Almeida informed that the decision that Patriarch Mendes should confer orders \textit{sub conditione} to those having already received them from the previous metropolitans was taken during a \textit{junta} celebrated in 1625; the meeting also involved “some important issues for the well being and increase of that Christianity” (… \textit{varios pontos importantes para o bem e augmento daquella christiandade}); \textsc{RASO VI, liv. VIII}, ch. XXI.}

Nevertheless, when the \textit{negocio do Patriarca} was almost at close reach, the decision-making centres were wanting for a more tight control of the mission. For that they sent Manoel de Almeida in 1623 as \textit{visitador}, who was to spend his first year in Ethiopia meeting his fellows and giving instructions “for the well being of the mission” (\textit{ao bem da missam}). Almeida, who in the early 1620s had been in Rome to meet with the pope and to consult with the General Muzio Vitelleschi, probably came with precise instructions on how to deal with the beginning of the Patriarchate. It is also likely that now that the Jesuits were to guide effectively the Ethiopian Church he imposed a tighter approach over Ethiopia’s ‘heresies’. The imposition from the outside of a missionary policy seems, however, to have encountered little opposition; as one Jesuit informed, Almeida’s instructions were passed and respected “with so much agreement, love and so much respect to everybody’s mind, especially of the older fathers”.\footnote{Com tanta concordia, amor e chanesa, e com tanto respeito ao parecer de todos e principalmente dos Padres velhos na missão; \textsc{Paes, 1625}, in: \textsc{ARSI, Goa} 39 I, 246v.}

\textbf{Logistics and communications}

Another important dimension of missionary management was communications. The Society of Jesus and its missions were organised through a network of houses, colleges and missionary residences and they had to rely on a good system of communications. This system began to be implemented in the Society from its early beginnings, as the gigantic production of Ignatius of Loyola shows.\footnote{Cf. \textsc{João Pedro Ferro}, “A epistolografia no quotidiano dos missionários jesuítas nos séculos XVI e XVII”, \textit{Lusitania Sacra} ser. 2, 5, 1993, 137-58.} In Ethiopia, however, it duly worked only during the second mission, when annual letters began to be produced systematically and a regular communication system was established between India and Ethiopia. From about 1605 up to the expulsion, there was constant flow of information between the different residences in Ethiopia and between Ethiopia and the decision-making centres in India and Europe.

As far as internal communications are concerned, news from the different stations in Ethiopia regularly reached the two main residences, Gorgora and Fremona. For internal communications the missionaries relied on local networks that seem to have worked reasonably well. Gorgora, as the central residence, had to be informed of the work in pro-
gress in the remaining stations to help in designing a common missionary strategy. The missionaries staying in Gorgora and Fremona also used the briefings from other residences to produce summaries of the overall missionary work, the famous annual letters that were sent abroad every year. In the first decades of Oviedo’s mission, a number of Ethio-Portuguese wrote letters to India and Europe and thus contributed to keeping the system of communications of the mission active. During the second mission, however, the annual letters were all written and signed by the missionaries, though it is to be assumed that members of the faithful Ethio-Portuguese mixed-race group were also engaged as secretaries and scribes. Their absence from epistolary production in later periods could be an indication of a growing desire by the missionaries to centralise the way information was produced, spread and shared. Moreover, the Ethio-Portuguese, who seem to have enjoyed a high mobility within Ethiopia, helped in keeping the different Jesuit residences informed.¹⁰⁴ In addition, since a number of residences were placed along main trade routes (principally Fremona, Gännätä Iyäsus and Qollela) internal exchange of letters may have also used the caravans linking the different Ethiopian provinces as well as other traditional forms of communication. These, although not well documented, seem to have been well structured at the time of the mission and the Jesuit sources thus hint to a royal system of communications, which within a few days could connect the capital with the most distant provinces.¹⁰⁵

Communication to the decision-making centres was the other element of the mechanism. The missionaries used the keremt season to compile the annual letters, a task that could last for a few weeks and the texts often extended over several dozen pages. In this way, letters were normally ready to be sent by June-July. For shipping the letters the mission used a similar system to that taking its operatives and missionary material (books, victuals, clothes) to Ethiopia. Missionaries sent the letters in the months of July-August, so they could reach the ships that sailed from Masssawa and Moca – which towards the 1620s gained importance as port of transshipment – for India. The men taking care of this trade were banians, although Muslim servants are also mentioned for carrying out these duties.¹⁰⁶ The good rapport with the pasha at Massawa secured a proper flow of the mail, which experienced some incidents, but from 1607 onwards seems to have run rather

¹⁰⁴ In 1614, for instance, Páez reported that letters sent by António Fernandes from Ennarya were brought by a Portuguese; Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 331.
¹⁰⁵ Traditional communication systems in Ethiopia have still been poorly studied.
¹⁰⁶ Annual letter, 1606, 76; in 1619, Azevedo informed of a moor from Diu (mouro de Diu) who took the ordinaria (the regular payment to the mission made by the King of Spain) to Ethiopia and also helped the fathers in the trip from
smoothly.\textsuperscript{107}

Map 3: Distances between the main Jesuit centres in Ethiopia, 1557-1632 (in days of journey)

Exchange of information with the Jesuit centres in India and Europe was fundamental. However, in that case postage was slow and was eventually affected by blockades of maritime traffic in the Red Sea (Table 8). In optimal conditions a letter could reach the mission within a year and a half of being sent from the Iberian Peninsula, and about half a year if it was coming from Rome.\textsuperscript{108} This means that a response to Europe could be re-

\textsuperscript{107} Among the incidents reported, in 1615 Páez complained that in twelve years he had only received two letters from the Jesuit General; Pedro Páez to Tomás de Ituren, 20 June 1615, Dämbya, in: RASO XI, doc. 41, 337. In 1617, an incident was also reported, with incoming letters being detained at Moca; Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 410.

\textsuperscript{108} In the most optimistic scenario, a letter sent from Portugal or Spain to Ethiopia should reach Lisbon by March/April of year 1 in order to be shipped in the armada for India. The letter then would arrive in Goa in August/September of the same year and then reach Diu in October. If catching the “monsoon” fleets to the Red
ceived three or four years after the original letter was sent to Ethiopia. On the one hand, this gave autonomy to the mission, whose daily life and most immediate decisions were at the hands of the missionaries themselves. On the other hand, however, it slowed decision-making processes in important matters, where approval of the superiors in Europe was needed. This was particularly evident when the missionaries hastened to receive a Patriarch. Although the project had already been formulated on the occasion of Fernandes’ trip of 1613 to Ennarya and the last Egyptian metropolitan, Isaac, died in 1620 or 1621, the actual arrival of Mendes was finally in 1625, only after a long and tenuous exchange of letters, intelligence gathering and diplomatic games.

The destination of letters is also an optimal indicative of with whom information was shared and how decisions were taken. In this sense, if we consider the group of letters published in Beccari collection, we notice a remarkable contrast between the two missionary periods (Figure 4). During the first period, the destination of the main bulk of letters sent by the missionaries (40 out of 50) was evenly split between the Jesuit Provincial in India, various Indian personalities and the Superior General in Rome. In the second period, on the contrary, most of the correspondence (30 of 49) was addressed to the Jesuit General. To a minor extent, though, the missionaries also sent letters to friends and relatives. Pedro Páez, for instance, managed to have some exchanges with several members of his family and with friends from within the Society; two of them are mentioned by name, Tomás de Ituren and Jerónimo Xavier.

Table 8: Speed and main routes of communication for the mission, 1557-1632

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin – Destination</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Couriers and route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence to residence in Ethiopia</td>
<td>a few days/weeks</td>
<td>Caravans, Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia to India</td>
<td>2/4 months</td>
<td>Banians; Massawa-Diu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia to Spain/Portugal</td>
<td>1,5/2,5 years</td>
<td>Banians, Portuguese; Goa-Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia to Rome</td>
<td>5/7 months</td>
<td>Caravans, Cairo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: RASO VI, 449-50; RASO XI, 188, 213, 400; RASO XII, 230; O’Malley 1993, 63; Schurhammer 1955, vol. II/2, Anhang V; Lobo, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 18-20.

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109 According to O’Malley, four years might be required for a letter and response between Rome and India; a time that might have been slightly reduced in exchanges targeting Portugal; O’MALLEY 1993, 63. The second letter sent by Susenyos to Felipe III (dated 2 July 1615) was announced as received by the Viceroy of Portugal on 21 February 1617; Felipe III to Archbishop of Lisbon, Madrid, in: RASO XI, doc. 46, 380. Shorter periods are nonetheless also recorded; a letter written by the Jesuit General dated January 1617 was received in Ethiopia on July 1618; Susenyos to Mutio Vitelleschi, 13 July 1618, Decana, in: RASO XI, doc. 51, 400.

110 Whilst in India and Ethiopia Páez exchanged several letters with his brother, Juan, sisters, doña Ana Maria and doña Isabel and nephew, Gaspar. However, it was with Ituren with whom the exchange was most intense. Ituren (1557-1630) was not an uninteresting figure for understanding Páez’s personality. Born in Navarra, he studied theology and was Páez’s teacher at the College of Belmonte, a time when a strong friendship seems to have developed.
The difference between the two periods reflects a major centralisation of the Society, following the strong rules of the Italians Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615) and, especially, Muzio Vitelleschi (1615-45). Vitelleschi received twenty-six letters from the mission whereas only two were destined to the Provincial in India during the General’s tenure. A closer look shows that during the first period news, information and decisions were shared with and taken by a large array of leading figures, not all of them Jesuits: the Jesuit Provincial of India, the Jesuit General, the Governor of India, Jesuit Fellows in Goa, the Kings of Portugal and Spain, the Jesuit Provincial in Portugal and the Jesuit Visitor in India (Valignano). Later, all these actors except the Superior General disappeared from decision-making processes. By then the Society was more powerful and self-sufficient. To govern and enforce its policies the Jesuits depended less on external actors and more on their own will and capacities and they were also better organised. The General ruled in a monarchical way over its men and the corps of Jesuits knew that important matters were to be addressed to him. It was for the General and his secretaries to decide, ultimately,
which news to spread and share with the rest of the order and the wider society. Epistolary production in the missions was organized accordingly. Thus, for instance, amidst the optimism aroused by Susenyos’ rapid leaning towards Catholicism, Páez decided to inform the General instead of the Pope of it so the first “receiving … all the information, could briefly present to his Holyness what he considered necessary”. Missions were also planned in a more coordinated and coherent way and the key commands were given from the centre and passed on to the periphery by letters, dispatches or personal envoys. Rome was duly informed of what was going in the worldwide network of Jesuit missions and decided its policies in a centralised, rational way.

It is, however, important to stress that the virtual monopoly of information by the Jesuit centre in Rome did not preclude non-Roman elements from influencing the Ethiopian mission. In fact, agents and factors external to Rome did play a role in the way the mission was run and unfolded. As it will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6, Portuguese Indian society and Spanish theological culture remained main referents in the mission. Communication was not limited to the letters sent from and received by the mission, but also included a large number of objects, books and paraphernalia that the mission received year after year. These elements helped the mission to be up-to-date with the artistic and ideological trends in Europe and India and were, above all, a major contribution to the mission culture founded in Ethiopia in the 1610s and especially 1620s.

Paving the way for the Patriarchate

The second mission began in a contrasting way to how the mission headed by Andrés de Oviedo opened. The Jesuits sent to Ethiopia did not hold grand patriarchal or bishop titles; they were well trained, intelligent and energetic but, nevertheless, still simple priests. The nomination of a whole new Catholic hierarchy for the Ethiopian mission was out of the question and was rarely discussed in the early correspondence. Nonetheless, the coming of a Catholic Patriarch remained the mission’s main objective. In the early seventeenth century, the Jesuits were probably wiser in their methods but they did not forget what their main objective in Ethiopia was: to substitute the century-long dependence of the Ethiopian Church from Alexandria with one subordinating it to Rome. What changed

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111 On the organisation of the Society of Jesus as a monarchical system an interesting study is Antonio M. de ALDAMA, “La forma de los contratos de alienación en la Compañía de Jesús desde San Ignacio al P. Acquaviva”, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 25, 1956, 539-73. Evidence of the same centralisation and of a major control of Jesuit endeavours in the world comes from the institution under Acquaviva of the office of revisor of books and annual letters in Rome.

112 … Me pareció mejor hacerlo en esta menudamente, para que tiniendo V.P. noticias de todo, pueda brevemente representar a su Santidad
was the style and the way the Jesuits imagined this to happen.

The second shift of missionaries had realized that it was a bad tactic to confront from the beginning and in an open arena the metropolitan sent from Egypt who ruled over the Ethiopian Church. Similarly, an aggressive strategy towards the proud native religious hierarchy (etege, abbots of important monasteries, monastic circles) and royal ecclesiastics was doomed to fail. Although when writing – both in the annual letters and in the *História de Etiópia* – Páez frequently used a sharp vocabulary when speaking of the native clergy and Ethiopian Christianity, he seems to have been rather cautious at making them public. Accordingly, from his early arrival at the court, he appears to be on friendly terms with those who later were to become the mission’s main opponents, Yolios, Yostos, *ras Atnatewos* and *abunä* Sem’on. He probably had some tamed religious discussions with members of the royal clergy and nobility, but these never seem to have turned into open confrontation.

The introduction of the Catholic Patriarch was a subtle, slow and time-consuming process. For this purpose the Jesuits used all the skills and resources they were famous for. On the one hand, the missionaries had first to learn local conditions and the disposition of the different powers – ecclesiastic, monarchic, social – to mount a missionary strategy. Páez got a quick grasp of Ethiopian history and traditions and realized that the metropolitan, which he and his fellow Jesuits, often misleadingly called Patriarch, was directly dependent on the *negus*. It was the *negus* who paid to the Egyptian government the copious sums to bring a new bishop from Cairo and also covered the lavish fees charged by the Turkish customs in Sawakin. Once in Ethiopia the metropolitan was well provided for. He used to lodge permanently at the royal camp and his tent was placed within the *jägol*, the royal compound, just behind the central space occupied by the *negus*. The metropolitan followed the *negus* during his displacements and thus depended on him for subsistence and protection. Therefore, without full royal support the patriarchal project was not feasible. This is one of the main reasons why Páez’s strategy focused immediately on the royal court, and in Susenyos in particular. He knew that the *negus* was the only one with the re-

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lo que le pareciere necessario; Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 316.
113 TADDESSE, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, 270 (map), 273.
sources, authority and power to have a “Patriarch” brought to rule over the Ethiopian Church.

On the other hand, in India and Europe a second front working for the Patriarchal cause was opened and Jesuits and other agents exchanged information on the development of the mission and discussed the issue of the Patriarchate. Thus, at the time of his arrival, Páez exhumed the remains of Patriarch Oviedo at Fremona and sent the head to the Provincial in Goa.115 This may be an early indication that the Jesuits were fostering a memory of Oviedo’s Patriarchate and thus creating symbols to sponsor a second Patriarchate. The Castilian also mentions that Zä Dengel had had the intention of removing the ‘scismatic’ Patriarch and granting him his revenues.116 Furthermore, in 1607, the Jesuit delegate at the court in Madrid, Father Luís Pinheiro, informed the Superior General that in a letter by Zä Dengel and sent to the pope offering obedience, the negus:

Does not talk of the Patriarch nor of the Bishop, and the courier did not bring [the letter] for the Nuncio that Y.P. told me about dealing with that issue or with the nomination of a Patriarch, which Y.P. so wishes and that should go to the Society. I wish you could see it, because I felt that these men were favourable so that everything would run according to your plans.117

In the same document, Pinheiro spoke of the Ethiopian Patriarchate and the Bishopric of Japan as the two most pressing issues in the Eastern missions.118

However, the idea of the Patriarchate lingered for some years. In Spain and Portugal, the memories of the first mission’s failure likely made political leaders cautious about the subject. Thus, when the negus began to send letters to the Spanish King year after year, answers came late and with vague proposals.119 In Ethiopia there were also important obstacles to be surmounted. Despite Susenyos’ partiality for Páez and his fellows was strong and sincere, the kingdom was yet too ripe for such an ambitious project. During the first five years of his reign, Susenyos was busy enough strengthening his power and suppressing numerous rebellions – Manoel de Almeida counted sixteen to eighteen rebellions during the first two years alone.120 The weakness of the Kingdom did not allow him

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117 A carta para Sua Magestade não falla em Patriarca nem Bispo, nem este correo trouxe a de que V.P. me avizava para o senhor Nuncio tocante a esta materea nem tão pouco a nomeação do Patriarca que V.P. deseja e convem que seja da Companhia. Muito folgara que visera, porque sentia a estes senhores dispostos para tudo poder sair junto como V.P. desejava; Luís Pinheiro to Superior General, 26 February, Madrid, in: RASO XI, doc. 18, 77.
118 Ibid.
119 Páez complained about that to the General when he said that the requests made by Susenyos had no answer: “In Spain they hardly answer to the letters” (… corresponden tan mal de España); Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, 273-74.
120 RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. V-VII. Henceforth, to summarize the events of the 1610s I follow the accurate account of Manoel de Almeida, Ibid. chs. XX-XXIII, completed by the annual letters from the period.
to take part in grand political and religious adventures and Páez summarized this situation in a letter he sent in 1612 to his teacher and friend Tomás de Ituren:

The Emperor appears every day more affectionate to our things, and he never misses an opportunity to praise them in front of his people. He often tells them: Why shouldn’t we join the Portuguese What wrong do you see in their law [?] However, in spite of that he does not dare to take many actions he wishes but dreads instead of incurring in the same fate as that of the good Emperor [Zä Dengel] who was killed…; and a few days ago as the Captain of the Portuguese asked him if he would give obedience to the pope, he answered: I would wish to have settled everything twelve [sic] or six years ago, since I rule in the Empire, and thus be able to do whatever it pleases me, without having any trouble with this people.121

In the mid-1610s things began to change. The pro-Catholic ‘party’ within the court and religious circles grew: among the most prominent names, besides the Emperor, that joined the missionaries’ cause were Susenyos’ cousin abetohun Be’elä Krestos, abetohun Zä Dengel, the chronicler azzaj’Tino and abba Marca.122 Besides them, a number of priests became also sympathetic to Jesuit ideals. As the pro-Catholic ‘party’ grew, it also became more confident to openly challenge Ethiopian Christianity. In 1613, Susenyos, pressed by public discontent, organised a debate – held at the ‘capital’ of Gojjam, Särka (“Serca”) – that the traditionalists adamantly saw as an opportunity to finish for all with the foreign ‘heresy’. Still then, the negus and the Jesuits remained in the background of the polemic, though the missionaries observed “with incredible joy their disciple disputing about very difficult issues and unveiling with some truths all the falsehoods that he himself had once professed”.123 The debate, which initially centered on Christological issues, escalated. Abunä Sem’on ordered his envoy to excommunicate those who professed the double nature of God and went to the court to directly confront the missionaries. There, discussion revolved around the faith of the Ethio-Portuguese and about the right the missionaries had to preach and enact conversions. The abun concluded the controversy by excommunicating those who would listen to the missionaries and Susenyos responded by publishing a decree granting the missionaries the same freedom as they had enjoyed under Särsä Dengel.124

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121 El Emperador tambien se muestra cada dia mas aficionado a nuestras cosas, i nunca pierde occasion de burlas delante de los suios y las dize muchas vezes: Porque no nos uniremos con los Portugueses [?] Que mal hallais en su ley [?] Mas esto no obstante no se atreve a hacer muchas cosas, que tengo por cierto que benciera, si no que temo no le suceda lo que a aquel buen Emperador que mataron… ; y pocos dias ha que diciendole el capitán de los Portugueses como dava la obediencia al Sumo Pontifice, respondio: Ojala: ubiera doce [sic] o seis años que tengo el imperio que yo dexara asentadas todas las cosas y fuera corriendo con ellas de la manera que halla, sin tener trauvio con esta gente; Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 271.

122 Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 146; also RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XX.

123 … Con incredibile et allegrezza udire disputare il loro discepolo di cose difficilissime e giuttare a terra con varie ragioni le falsità da lui in altro tempo credute et abbracciate; de Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 104r. The overall debate is described in the same document and the original text was probably written by one of the two Italians in the mission, Lorenzo Romano or Francesco Antonio de Angelis.

124 Ibid. 106v.
This *disputatio* represents a first important turning point in both the strategy followed by the missionaries and the relation between the supporters of Catholicism and Ethiopian Christianity. At the time it happened, the lead of the traditionalists over religious discourse was probably still strong, but the empowering within the court of a pro-Catholic front became a real challenge to the traditionalists. As seen earlier, the pro-Catholics began also having a voice in religious and court matters and making it heard. The court thus inevitably split and as the group of those friendly to the missionaries grew, so did the ranks of the traditionalists. *Ras* Yámanä Krestos (“Emanä Christôs”), half-brother of Susenyos, and Yolios ("Julios"), Susenyos’ son-in-law and governor of Tegray, initially on friendly terms with the missionaries and the *negus*, joined the traditionalist cause.\(^\text{125}\) So did *blattengeta* Keflo (“Cafelo”), royal eunuch and second in power in the kingdom after Susenyos, and the ‘queen mother’, *etege* Hamälmalä Wärq. The Ethiopian preachers began thereafter to plot to jeopardize Susenyos’ and the kingdom’s progressive drive towards Catholicism.

The Jesuits, in their turn, with the full complicity of Susenyos and *ras* Se’elä Krestos, engaged in a more upfront, though still secret, career to obtain the Patriarchate. A first clear move towards that goal was the famous secret mission to Europe led by Antônio Fernandes and the ambassador Fëqur Egzi’e. The expedition was mounted in 1613 in highest secrecy and its path across the southern regions was aimed at diverting both the control of the Turks at Massawa and the suspicions of those opposed to the missionaries at the court.\(^\text{126}\) Its aim was to offer obedience by Susenyos to the pope and to obtain military help from Spain.\(^\text{127}\) The expedition, that lingered for nineteen months, eventually failed and showed the missionaries and Susenyos how difficult direct communications with Europe were to be.

This notwithstanding, in the following years the royal chancellery was the centre of an intense diplomatic activity. With Páez, his fellow Jesuits and pro-Catholic figures like

\(^{125}\) Yámanã Krestos helped the Jesuits acquire new lands for Gorgora in 1607 and was initially also favourable to calling a Portuguese military expedition into Ethiopia; RASO VI, *ibid.*, VII, ch. II and III. Yolios had a prominent role as military leader during Susenyos’s defeat of Ya’eqob and rise to power, and appears in documents as hostile to the missionaries only from about 1613 onwards.

\(^{126}\) A letter from 1614 stated that the metropolite was made to believe that Fernandes had only gone to preach to the Kingdom of Ennarya; Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 316.

\(^{127}\) In a contemporary speech by Susenyos reported in an Annual letter, the *negus* declared: “I have decided to profess the same faith as the Portuguese King, who is my ally in the power of arms and to commit this Church to the Roman Pope, and to receive with the greatest reverence the Patriarch that he shall send me, who, correcting the errors of Ethiopia, shall rule on everything according to the rites and traditions of the Roman Church” (… *Hò già risoluto professare l'istessa fede con il Rè di Portogallo, congiurato con me nella potenza [delle armi] e di [commettere] l'amministrazione di questa chiesa al Pontefice Romano e ricevere con ogni riverenza il Patriarca mandatami da quello, il quale, emendando gli errori d'Etiopia, governi il tutto secondo i riti e costumi della Chiesa Romana*); de Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 109r.
Fequr Egzi’e well placed at the centre of royal affairs, the demands on Rome and Spain became more pressing. Between 1613 and 1621, Susenyos and his brother, Se’elä Krestos, signed twelve letters to the Kingdom of Spain and to Rome. In the letters, the Ethiopians insisted on receiving military help from Portuguese India to help secure the Eritrean coast and, whilst openly professing allegiance to Rome, pressed to speed up the issue of the Patriarchate.128

In the meantime, opposition by religious traditionalists grew and in 1614, there followed more discussions and demonstrations in favour of Ethiopian Christianity. In these, the Jesuits, once in the background, became little by little more and more involved. They began administering to the non-Portuguese and offering a growing number of Ethiopians to communicate with them. By then it was clear to both sides that an entente between the two parties was impossible. Jesuit sources inform of subtle plans – eventually diverted – to kill Susenyos in 1613 and 1614.129 At the court and also in the kingdom the situation was untenable. The negus, began to enforce the first repressive measures against those who sustained traditionalist views about the true nature of Christ.130 The inevitable clash came in 1617 when a coalition of notables, headed by abunä Sem’on, Yolyos, Yämanä Krestos, Keflo and ras Atnatewos, together with their respective armies, defied in open battle the pro-Catholic forces guided by Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos. The short battle, that took place on 5 May somewhere between Gännätä Iyäsus and Dänqáz, was devastating for the traditionalists. Sem’on, and Yolyos were beheaded and ras Atnatewos was exiled to Amhara and Yämanä Krestos to a mountain in Gojjam.131 Shortly afterwards, another plot against Susenyos organized by Keflo was diverted and the once influential eunuch was executed.

However, tension was not relieved by this ‘victory’ because in 1620, a renewed uprising led by some 400 monks and scholars from the court targeted ras Se’elä Krestos. The monks were infuriated because Se’elä Krestos began to openly profess the Roman Faith and to repress demonstrations in favour of Ethiopian Christianity at his court in Dämbeya. The ras of Gojjam had thus forbidden the practice of the Sabbath and used harsh

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128 In a letter from 1618, Felipe III said that “The Emperor requested me to send a Patriarch” (O Emperador me pede que se lhe envio um Patriarca); Felipe III to Viceroy of India, 18 March 1618, Lisboa, in: RASO XI, doc. 52, 401.
129 Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 321; RASO VI, le. VII, ch. XXIII.
130 Following discussions in 1614 on this issue, a secular scholar was imprisoned; Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 324.
131 Pedro Páez to Tomás de Ituren, 6 July 1617, in: RASO XI, doc. 48, 383, 386; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 432.
measures against those contravening it. The clash was only avoided through the clever intervention of the Jesuits who suggested provisionally withdrawing pro-Catholic measures.

After all these episodes the path for the mission had been cleared, in 1620, communion from the Jesuit priests was still held in secret but the prospects for the mission were brilliant. That same year, de Angelis informed Nuno Mascarenhas, Provincial of Portugal, that the way for the future Patriarch was opening up and the following year the freshly arrived Diogo de Mattos also sent the most optimistic news about the state of the court and the Catholic Faith. In 1621, Susenyos decreed a privilege exempting Catholics to pay taxes at some ‘toll’ spots and, following an invective written by monks from Tegray, he decreed further prohibitions to profess the Sabbath. On November the same year, the negus made an open profession of Catholicism and with it there ensued an official persecution of the traditional faith.

Following the murder of Sem’on, Susenyos decided not to request another abun to Alexandria. Still, in 1619 or 1620, a Coptic Bishop, Isaac, was sent from Egypt to occupy the empty See of Ethiopia, a fact that also indicates that despite Susenyos’ decision the traditionalists’ party was still strong at the court and among the clergy. However, the metropolitan did not reach Ethiopia but died in the Sudan desert. All the obstacles cleared, the way for the (Catholic) Patriarch was finally wide open. About 1621, the Jesuits openly began to request the sending of a Catholic Patriarch and Bishops with rights to succession.

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132 Luís de Azevedo to Superior General, 8 July 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 58, 461; Francesco Antonio de Angelis to Nuno Mascarenhas, 13 July 1620, Ancaxa, ibid. doc. 59, 464.
133 Cf. Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 487.
134 “The ras [Se’elä Krestos] is paving the path for the future Patriarch” (Vaz Ras abrindo o caminho para o futuro Patriarca); de Angelis, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 59, 464; Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 483. A last sign of the good route of the mission was that in 1620 its main ideologist, Pedro Páez, took a rest at Gorgora. Probably having seen that part of the job was done and that work was less pressing at the court, Páez thus began compiling his masterpiece, the História de Ethiópia; ibid. 484. In 1620, however, the Viceroy of India, Fernando de Albuquerque wrote to Felipe III that conditions in Ethiopia were still not fitting to receive a Patriarch; Fernando de Albuquerque to Felipe III, 7 February 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 55, 440.
135 Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 477.
136 Ibid. 480.
137 RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXVI.
138 Most probably the one who had requested a new Bishop in substitution to abunä Sem’on was a member of the Solomonic family and was placed high in the hierarchy of the kingdom A similar scene repeated at the time of Fasilädäs, when two Egyptian bishops met in Ethiopia, Mikael and Yohannes. The first had been called by the negus and the latter by his brother and rival Galawdewos; cf. BÉGUINOT 1901, 51.
139 Two conflicting versions exist about the Bishop’s fate. Jesuit sources report that as he approached Ethiopia, he fell ill in the land of the Bälaw, and, having been denied any help by the ruler, he was left to die; RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XX; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 432. In the chronicle of Susenyos, however, Isaac would have died whilst a prisoner of Rubat, king of Semnar, with whom Susenyos was in dispute; PEREIRA 1892, ch. XXII.
140 De Angelis, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 59, 465. In 1622, de Angelis wrote: “All we wish for is a Patriarch, everybody wishes for one; if they do not send him, all our endurances would have been in vain, and all those wars and blood spilt by Christians and monks would have been in vain” (Soo pedimos Patriarca, todos gritam Patriarca, e se logo não mudarem Patriarca, nossos trabalhos ficam botados ao vento, e tantas guerras e tanto sangue que se derramou de cristãos e de frades
1623-32: The Catholic Patriarchate and the Expansion of the Network

Renewal of personnel

In the beginning of the 1620s, the mission was in an enviable position but human personnel showed every sign of exhaustion. Operatives were drained after nearly two decades of work, which included frequent trips between distant residences and enduring the hardships of life in the highlands, such as heavy weather, hunger and disease. The secret mission by António Fernandes to southern Ethiopia, carried out when he was already 46 years old and that continued for nineteen months in extreme conditions, remains a symbol of what the mission demanded from its main actors. In turn, in the chapter of health conditions, some of the symptoms described in the sources indicate that the seventeenth-century missionaries were battered by the same diseases that makes Ethiopia today one of the countries with the highest mortality rates in the world. The Jesuits thus suffered of eye diseases (probably caused by Onchocerciasis and Trachoma), which affected de Angelis and Azevedo on at least one occasion, and of fistulas. In 1621, Lorenzo Romano died from an illness after seven months of “excruciating pains” and the next year Páez and de Angelis died following a fever, both at a relatively young age (58 and 56 years, respectively).

Furthermore, successes at the court and in areas like Gojjam and Dämbeya had also overstretched the mission’s capacities. The growing number of brethren in the main centres of Qollela, Gorgora and Fremona could hardly be attended to. To make matters worse, effectives could not be sent to the promising areas of the south, in Agäw land and areas further south, such as Ennarya, where the Jesuits thought there were legions of potential converts to be made. Hence, in 1621, Mattos informed, probably without exaggeration, that the mission of the Agäw itself could provide work for fifty missionaries. Likewise, from the court, too, the secretario moor (probably azzaj Tino) urged the missionar-
ies of the need and great profit drawn from placing a priest there permanently.\textsuperscript{145} Last but not least, although the first five missionaries worked intensively in forming a local Catholic community as well as \textit{ministros}\textsuperscript{146} to help in missionary work, the Jesuits could not yet rely entirely on them. A sober Jesuit direction was still needed.

To remedy this situation and to prepare the ground for the landing of the new Catholic Patriarch, towards the late 1610s and early 1620s, the Jesuits began to press Portuguese India and Europe to obtain more men. In 1618 Páez wrote to the Superior General Vitelleschi saying “we urgently need more fellows”\textsuperscript{147} and two years later Azevedo went further by saying that “the fathers are alive and healthy but aged and tired from the many burdens they have, which are doubled by not having anyone to help them”.\textsuperscript{148} In June 1620 two more men, the Portuguese Diogo do Mattos and the Italian Antonio Bruno, joined the mission. Theirs was, however, just a provisory relief. In a letter dated 1622 de Angelis asked the Provincial from Portugal to send a hundred men, then, more realistically, the same year António Fernandes requested some twenty men and insisted that “the need for Patriarch and priests is extreme and spiritual”.\textsuperscript{149}

With this news the men in India and Europe began to move. In 1621, Felipe IV chose the doctor of Theology and professor at the University of Evora, Afonso Mendes, as candidate for the Patriarchate and in 1622 the Duke of Villa Hermosa, in the name of the king, pressed the governor of Portugal to provide for the shipment of the Patriarch and successors to Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{150} Eventually, the complete process of selection, approval (in Portugal and Rome) and shipment of the Patriarch took some four years. In 1623, four missionaries (the visitor Manoel de Almeida, Luís Cardeira, Manuel Barradas and Francisco Carvalho) left Diu but after a troubled trip, could only reach the mission in January the following year. The same year, the superiors in India nominated eight more missionaries for the mission, to comply with the number of twelve initially requested by the General Vitelleschi.\textsuperscript{151} The eight men took two different routes: a group of four (Manoel Lameira,

\textsuperscript{144} Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 493.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid. 483.
\textsuperscript{146} So were called the best pupils of the schools from Gorgora, Qollela and Fremona who were given apostolic tasks. On their engagement in the field, cf. Fernandes, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 57, 443.
\textsuperscript{147} [...] Sesamos mucho compañeros; Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 411.
\textsuperscript{148} Os padres... ficam vivos e de saude, inda que ja velhos e cansados das grandes cargas que carregão, que sam quasi dobradas, por não aver quem os ajude; Azevedo, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 58, 458.
\textsuperscript{149} [...] A nessesidade de Patriarca e padres he estrema e spiritual; de Angelis, 1622, in: RASO XI, doc. 62, 503; António Fernandes to Superior General, 3 December 1622, in: RASO XI, doc. 63, 505; Id. ad eund., 30 April 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 66, 510.
\textsuperscript{150} Mendes, 1625, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 128; Felipe III to Governor of Portugal, 7 December 1622, Madrid, in: RASO XI, doc. 64, 506.
\textsuperscript{151} RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. VIII.
Tomás Barneto, Gaspar Paes and Jacinto Francisco) took the viagem ordinaria and landed safely at Massawa; another two (Francisco Machado and Bernardo Pereira) were diverted across Zeyla and were imprisoned and killed by the Sultan of Adal; finally, Juan de Velasco and Jerónimo Lobo intended to reach the mission via Malindi but failed and returned to India. Finally, in 1625, the largest contingent of men arrived – about seven missionaries, headed by the Patriarch Afonso Mendes, and some ten servants.¹¹²

**Choice, origins and profile of the new missionary operatives**

The choice of personnel for the missions was an issue dealt with by special care within the Society. This was never a random practice but one to which was attributed the highest importance. The dynamics of vocations themselves, the needs of the local mission and the prospects and strategies fostered from Rome and other decision-making centres were the main factors directing it.

Firstly, men were chosen for the mission because in one way or another, they had made the request themselves, although this did not always apply.¹¹³ The attachment of Jesuit novices for specific missions was grounded in personal preferences and mainly from the novices’ becoming familiar with the different missionary achievements of the Society of Jesus. This occurred specifically from a reading of annual letters, a common practice in Jesuit houses in Europe and India since at least the 1570s.¹¹⁴ As far as its visibility and appeal in Europe and India are concerned, the Ethiopian mission was well placed over its ‘concurrent’ missions. Together with the mission to Japan, it was probably the most popular undertaking during the first half of the seventeenth century. Accordingly, the series *Annuae Litterae Societatis Jesu* had included, since the first edition of 1583, summaries on that mission and the *Historiarum Indicarum* by the Jesuit Giovanni Pietro Maffei reported on it at length.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the heroic deeds of Patriarch Oviedo and the ‘martyrdom’ of the Maronite de Georgis secured in Europe constant attention. Finally, in 1615, Nicolao

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¹¹² The names of the missionaries travelling with Mendes were: Fathers Jerónimo Lobo, Bruno Bruni, Juan de Velasco, Francisco Marques, brothers Manuel Luís and João Martins. Among the servants, two lay priests are known as specifically serving the Patriarch: Salvador de Menezes from Salcete (Goa) and Dominguos de Azevedo from Baçaim; Manoel Barradas to Antonio Gonçalves, 1623, Maskat, in: RASO XIII, doc. 5, 14.

¹¹³ The envoy of missionaries who did not ask for the mission also occurred. Such was the case of Francisco Machado and Jacinto Francisco; RASO VI, ltt. VII, ch. IX; Andrés Palmeiro to Superior General, 24 January 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 16, 36. Cf. also de Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 21-22.

¹¹⁴ Although the famous *litterae annuae* already circulated in manuscript and oral form earlier, the Jesuits began publishing a digest of annual letters in 1583: *Annuae Litterae Societatis Jesu, Anni M D L XXXI* Ad Patres et Fratres eiu dam Societatis. Romae: 1583. The series, originally published in Latin, continued, in different forms, up to the seventeenth century and enjoyed a widespread success with versions in Italian, French, Portuguese, German and Spanish. On the magnetic effect of these letters in Europe, cf. also BLOCK, *Mission culture on the Upper Amazon*, 109.

Godigno, who was in charge in Rome of revising the letters sent from India, published a history written in Latin on Ethiopia and the Portuguese and Jesuit activities. Requests to go to Ethiopia were likely plentiful. These normally occurred through the standardised system of writing Indipetae, but could also take the form of informal requests to the superiors in the Jesuit houses.

However, although the personal engagement of every missionary was important, so were the real needs in the field. Every mission was a special case and required certain missionary profiles. Decision-makers in Europe and India tried, as much as possible, to fulfil the needs voiced from the Ethiopian field. This was true for the number as for the type of men sent.

The envoy of about seventeen men – together with at least thirteen servants of the Patriarch – between 1623 and 1625 satisfied the earlier requests by António Fernandes. The Jesuits in India seem to have indeed made all the efforts to comply with the needs of the mission and to have given it a certain priority, despite the growing demand for men in other equally important missionary fronts. Accordingly, in 1624, Andrés Palmeiro half-complained to the Jesuit General that to respond to the needs in Ethiopia the Jesuits in India had assigned a missionary for Ethiopia, Jacinto Francisco, who was originally destined to Japan.

Similarly, the profile of those sent, responded quite accurately to what the mission in Ethiopia needed. Firstly, the missionaries fitted the physical requirements that Francis Xavier had already established as needed in India back in the 1540s: “They should be young, healthy and neither ill nor old” (Han de ser mancebos, sanos y no enfermos ni viejos). The men sent between 1623 and 1625 were thus relatively young, most being in their mid-thirties (Table 6). Besides, the missionaries’ performance in Ethiopia proved that...
they had the constitution to withstand the strenuous life conditions in the highlands, for only one of them, Juan de Velasco, had to abandon the mission due to serious illness.

Secondly, the men sent to Ethiopia possessed qualifications appropriate for the enterprise. A large number had training and teaching experience in theology and philosophy. Mendes was himself doctor in theology and had been professor at the chair of Holy Scriptures in the two Jesuit Universities in Portugal, Coimbra and Evora. The Bishop coadjutor with rights of succession, João de Rocha, who whilst in Goa refused to join the mission, studied theology at Coimbra and among other fellows defined as teologos or lentes de teologia were Diogo de Mattos, Antonio Bruno, Juan de Velasco, Manoel Barradas, Francisco Machado and Bernardo Pereira – the last two, however, never worked in Ethiopia as they were killed whilst trying to reach the mission via Zeyla. Due to the special characteristics of the Ethiopian mission, which worked in an area with a well-established Christian Church, demand was for men with strong theological preparation: Ethiopia needed, more than the missions among ‘pagans’, intellectual power to duly face people with a Christian culture. To fulfil that need, the new group of missionaries also included skilled preachers and orators, such as Jacinto Francisco and Jerónimo Lobo. Moreover, the new recruits of the mission included a number of missionaries with ‘technical’ and artistic skills. Thus, Luís Cardeira, was described as “designer, mathematician, theologian, interpreter and musician”, and at least three other companions, Bruno Bruni, Manoel Lameira and Brother João Martins, had been trained as artists and architects. Such a choice was also determined by careful observation in Ethiopia and Europe of the needs the mission had and the better assets to put into play.\footnote{In 1623, António Fernandes asked Goa and Rome: “It seems also necessary that Y.P. send us for the time being twenty fathers (even though the Emperor asked for 200) and that these fathers be good fellows; in addition, it would be a great help if these fathers were skilled in singing, playing instruments and painting, so to teach the 100 boys that we have here in the seminary” (Também convém nos mande V.P. por agora 20 padres (ainda que o Emperador queria que viessem 200) e seiam bons sócios, e se souberem cantar, tanger, e pintar que possam ensinar a 100 nossos do seminário que ha,} The negus and his pro-Catholic entourage admired ‘Portuguese’ culture, its buildings, clothes, music and literature and the missionaries took care in pleasing their main supporters. Furthermore, men with technical and ‘cultural’ skills were fundamental in helping to develop a mission culture that should substitute the ‘Orthodox schismatic’ culture (on this issue see Chapter 6). Seven more Jesuits reached the mission in 1628 and 1630 responding to a similar pattern. At least one, Francisco Rodriguez, was a mason, another, the Bishop with right of succession to the Patriarchate, Apollinar de Almeida, had studied humanities and philosophy at Coimbra and two other, Damião Colaça and José Giroco, were theologians.
The national origin of the missionaries shows a predominance of Portuguese fellows (Figure 5) and also of fellows who had been formed in Portuguese centres. This was a pattern common in all the Oriental missions of the Society of Jesus, which fell in areas of the Portuguese Padroado real. However, it is interesting to note a difference between the two missionary periods in the number of non-Portuguese fellows. In the first period (1555-98), there were no Italian nationals but two Spaniards instead; one of which, Oviedo, was indeed elected Bishop successor to the Patriarchate. In the second period (1602-32), the presence of Spaniards was reduced and the number of Italian recruits gained prominence, becoming the second group after the Portuguese. Such a development corresponded to a general trend in the Eastern Indies. From around 1581 onwards, Italy provided about 27% of the Jesuit missionary workforce whilst the number of Spaniards decreased dramatically (Figure 6). This happened indeed during the rule of the ‘Felipes’ when the crowns of Portugal and Spain were united. This shift is largely explained because at the time of union the already strong rivalry between the two nations grew along with the susceptibilities of the decision-makers.  

\[^{162}\] The years 1564 to 1581 were marked by the conflict between the governments of Spain and Portugal on the jurisdiction over the Philippine and the Molucas islands, which had been occupied by the Spaniard Diego de Legazpi in 1564. Moreover, the political union of 1581 had also stirred anti-Spanish feelings in the

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Portuguese world. For these reasons, the missionaries became more and more suspicious of being agents of their respective nations. Indeed, the relations between Jesuits from both nations were not that good either; in 1597 Valignano would have informed “of the little union that exists among our Portuguese and Castilian fellows” and that he was “suffering from that” and begged for a better understanding and “union”.

The decision-makers in Rome and India probably tried to avoid points of conflict and thus emptied the Eastern Indian missions under Portuguese Padroado from Spanish nationals. Thus, although few Spaniards still worked in the Indian missions from 1580 onwards, in Ethiopia and elsewhere cases such as those of Oviedo or Páez would never be repeated. The ruling and privileged positions in the mission were to apply only to Portuguese nationals: the Patriarch of Ethiopia, Afonso Mendes, the three Bishop coadjutors with rights of succession, Diogo Seco (who died on the way to India), João da Rocha (who was considered unfit for the mission in India), Apollinar de Almeida, and the superiors and visitors of the mission, António Fernandes and Manoel de Almeida, were all Portuguese.

![Figure 6](image_url)

Figure 6: Compared national origins of the Jesuits in Ethiopia and India (in %), 1540-1640

Sources: Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise*, 268; see Figure 1.

As soon as Spanish nationals disappeared, the Italian colleges turned into excellent candidates for the provision of ‘neutral’ recruits. This is explained by the growth of Jesuit Italian provinces, where after a dormant period in the central years of the sixteenth century – none of the founding Jesuits were Italian – Jesuit missionary vocations gained mo-
mentum under the generalates of the Italians Acquaviva and Vitelleschi. The Eastern Indies became particularly cherished by young Jesuit recruits\textsuperscript{165} and, from the 1580 onwards, a number of Italian missionaries (Valignano, Ricci, Acquaviva, De Nobili) strongly contributed to the development and expansion of Jesuit missions.

However, another factor explains the increase in Italian recruits. Artistic and architectural skills were in great demand in the Portuguese overseas colonies, particularly from the arrival of the Society of Jesus and the beginning of the great architectural works (fortress of Diu, Damão, Church of São Paulo) from the 1540s onwards.\textsuperscript{166} Italy was the land per excellence in Europe to provide artistic patterns and skilled craftsmen and the Jesuit Colleges there tended to produce able artists and designers. It is thus logical that Italian recruits had significant possibilities of being called to the Indies and to contribute to its architectural and artistic expansion. As it happened in Portuguese India, some Italian missionaries were involved in artistic tasks in Ethiopia, too. The most important was Bruno Bruni, who took care of the large-scale restoration of the church of Märtulä Maryam in Gojjam. Sources do not mention another Italian involved in similar tasks, although the Latin Lorenzo Romano, the Sicilian Antonio Bruno and the Florentine Jacinto Francisco, all three having lived in Fremona, could have also contributed to the erection of a ring of walls during the 1620s and the extension of this settlement (cistern, stone church etc.).

A final aspect to underline from the missionary personnel is the importance India played in the choice and training of most of them. In contrast to the first, the second mission period in Ethiopia unfolded when Portuguese India had reached its full maturity. In India, the Jesuits disposed of several colleges, which enjoyed of similar facilities to those in Portugal, such as the College of São Paulo in Goa (in 1610 transferred to São Paulo Novo), created in 1543 and which offered a full academic curriculum and formed generations of missionaries and administrators. When, towards the last decades of the sixteenth century, the missions boomed and the need for men was more pressing, Jesuit novices reached India at earlier ages than their predecessors and completed their noviciate and higher education in Goa. Therefore, in the seventeenth century the candidates for the missions spent several years living and studying in the Jesuit facilities in India. In Ethiopia, while those from the first mission had only stayed for a short period in Ethiopia (2,1 years


\textsuperscript{166} Carlos de AZEVEDO, \textit{Arte cristã na India Portuguesa}, Lisboa: Junta de investigações do ultramar, 1959.
on average) spent in India, those who came later resided on average 8 (1603-22) and 9.7 (1624-30) years there (Table 14). By then, India was already able to offer a pool of novices from which the superiors could choose able candidates for the mission. A consequence was that Portuguese India, and Goa in particular, became a vector of missionary patterns and methods, which influenced local missionary action as much as other patterns and methods imported from Europe. The influence of Portuguese Indian culture in the Ethiopian mission will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In conclusion, it can be said that the choice of the some 32 men who reached Ethiopia between 1603 and 1632 was well made. Once in Ethiopia, Mendes said that “the missionaries who are here, except one, have all the qualities and disposition to work within this church”. In fact, none of them abandoned the mission before a pre-arranged time span and sources (generally accurate in informing to the superiors about the ‘negative’ aspects) report only a few internal conflicts that could have affected the well being of the missionary project. Besides their proven physical fitness, the missionaries developed their tasks according to the requirements and proved to be able administrators and intelligent organizers.

Expansion of the missionary settlement

The arrival of about sixteen more operatives within a time span of three years gave a boost to the mission. In 1625, when Mendes finally arrived in Ethiopia, there were eighteen Jesuits active in Ethiopia. Such an increase – almost four-fold between 1620 and 1625 – posed important logistic and managerial problems. What were their tasks? How was such a number dealt with? Where were the new arrivals sent?

As it appears distribution of the missionaries happened in a rather smooth way. As long as the men arrived from India, they were incorporated within the Jesuit structure in Ethiopia. The new recruits would first reach Fremona and once there they would receive prompt instructions on where to go next. The Jesuits focused on three main areas, which were the three residences with schools for children (Fremona, Gorgora and Qollela), the

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167 Os sugestos que cá estam, uno excepto, sam escolhidos e os mais a proposito que podia aver para a cultivaçam desta igreia; Afonso Mendes to Nuno Mascarenhas, 11 June 1626, in: RASO XII, doc. 54, 170. The man that Mendes described as not fitting for the mission was in all likelihood Barraças, old and unable to cope with the physical works.

168 The fact that some missionaries had previously occupied leading roles in the Jesuit educational structure in India shows that the Society was looking for experienced workforce in Ethiopia. Juan de Velasco, for instance, was the aide to Father André Palmeiro, Jesuit Provincial in India, and Manoel de Almeida, chosen as visitor of the mission, had been Rector of the College of Baçaim. Of him, André Palmeiro said: “it was my hands and feet” (era meus peus e mãos); Palmeiro, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 16, 35. Moreover, Father Diogo Rodriguez, a Jesuit sent in 1624 with Tomé Barneto but who eventually did not reach Ethiopia, had been rector of the College of Moçambique and of Baçaim; Palmeiro, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 16, 35
royal encampments and the areas of Gojjam and the Agäw.

Firstly, the new arrivals helped to cope with the increasing duties in the three main Jesuit residences. As the number of children to teach and Catholics to minister grew, so did administrative and managerial tasks, such as the gathering of revenues, the cultivation of fields and the translations of texts. The Jesuits tried to place permanently at least two or three men in each of these residences (Figure 7). With the help of an extended group of aides and novices, this seems to have been an optimal number to give dynamism to the demands of the main missionary settlements. Having two missionaries in each residence was also important for spiritual reasons, since without the company of another fellow, Jesuits could not confess. However, the initial location in these centres also was necessary for the new arrivals to learn and master local languages and to know about the country. Manoel de Almeida thus stated that once he had accomplished some of his duties as visitor, around 1625, he settled at Gorgora and began to learn the Amharic language together with Luís Cardeira. It is likely that the other newcomers did the same, at least those settling in Gorgora, Fremona and Qollela. Besides the language, it could also be assumed that the veteran fellows and the novices in the Jesuit schools taught the newcomers details about the country such as its political situation and ‘religious’ and ‘cultural’ traditions. For the same reason, the newcomers were – at least during the ‘first contact’ moments – seldom left alone and instead guided by fellow veteran Jesuits. Accordingly, at his arrival in early 1624, Francisco Carvalho was taken to his first missionary destination, Tanqha (also Tanqua, Temkla, Tumkha), in Agäw land, by Luís de Azevedo, a veteran arrived in 1605; Almeida spent some time “helping Father António Fernandez” at the court of Dänqäz, before being experienced enough himself to become the third superior of the mission. The smooth functioning of this system accounts for the unusually short period the new arrivals needed to adapt to the mission’s standards and thus to start working with efficiency and autonomy.

In second place, attention was paid to the settlements around the royal court. Initially, this was secured with the work of António Fernandes, who, whilst being the head of the mission, spent most of the time at the kältäma of Dänqäz. However, the arrival of Patriarch Mendes pushed the Jesuits to open a new residence at Emfraz. Enjoying a stunning view over Lake Tana, it was just half a day’s journey away from Dänqäz and one day’s

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169 This need was explicit by Almeida on behalf of de Mattos’ long and solitary stay in Fremona, between 1621 and 1624; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. III.
170 RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. X.
journey from Gorgora and Gännätä Iyäsus. From there, Patriarch Mendes was to lead the reform of the Ethiopian Church.

Finally, a major destination of the new arrivals was Gojjam, Damot and Agäw lands. Since the foundation of the residence at Qollela, the missionaries found two invaluable assets for expansion there: ras Se’elä Krestos and the partially pagan tribes of Agäw and Damot. On the one hand, Se’elä Krestos became the most devout and zealous supporter of the missionaries’ cause and, on the other, the Agäw areas offered wide opportunities for missionary work. Accordingly, during the 1610s, while he was head at Qollela, Francesco Antonio de Angelis already focused upon this as being a potential expansion area. He began preaching there and throughout the decade succeeded in the first conversions to Catholicism. In 1619, Luís de Azevedo stated that the Agäw lands of Cacura, Chara, Bandea, Zalabaca, Ateta, Chagussa and Dangela had shown willingness to receive Jesuit priests and, as earlier stated, his fellow Jesuit Mattos put up the number of men required there to fifty. Thereafter, the expansion in Gojjam, the Agäw lands and Damot was rapid and vigorous. In the course of 1624-25, the Jesuits opened five more residences there (Table 9). To cope with the work, Francisco Carvalho, Antonio Bruno, Tomás Barneto and Manoel de Almeida were first sent out there. In Gojjam they opened a station at the kättäma of the governor Se’elä Krestos in Särka, then later they settled at En:näbesse and Hadasha (“Adaxa”). In Agäw land the missionaries founded Náfasha (“Ne-

Figure 7: Expansion of residences and missionaries in Ethiopia, 1602-32

Sources: see Figure 1

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171 RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. X.
fasa”), Tanqha and Ancasha (“Anqaxa”). In Damot, they responded to the call of its governor, the pro-Catholic Buko (“Buqqo”), and founded a residence first in Gäbärma (“Gabrama”) and, at having to abandon it, in Lejjä Negus (also Leg Negus, Liqä Negus).\footnote{Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 437.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Other name</th>
<th>Location, historical</th>
<th>Location, present</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Invocation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fremona</td>
<td>May Gwagwa</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
<td>1561-66</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>St. Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maraba</td>
<td>Tämben</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>Semen</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>1607</td>
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<td>Ombabaqha</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>1607</td>
<td>1622</td>
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<td>Qollela</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>Gorgora</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>St. Ignatius of Loyola</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hancaxa</td>
<td>Agäw</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1618</td>
<td>ca.1620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gännatä Iyäsus</td>
<td>Azazo</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>Jesus/Iyäsus</td>
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<td>Cund Amba</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>Dämbeya</td>
<td>1622</td>
<td>1633</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Tumha</td>
<td>Agäw</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
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<td>1632</td>
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<td>Sarca</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1624-25</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>Annunciation of the Virgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfraz</td>
<td>Debsan</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Nelaça</td>
<td>Agäw</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gäbärma</td>
<td>Gabrama</td>
<td>Damot</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Atqhana</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennäbesse</td>
<td>Martula Maryam</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lejja Negus</td>
<td>Läqä Negus</td>
<td>Damot-Gafat</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debarwa</td>
<td>Barua</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
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<td>1627</td>
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<td>Adaxa</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>Gojam</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>1628</td>
<td>St. Francis-Xavier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adegada</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
<td>Tegray</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dänqäz</td>
<td>Dancas</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>Bägemder</td>
<td>1628</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>Jesus/Iyäsus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Jesuit residences in Ethiopia, 1561-1632 (sorted by year of foundation)


Last but not least, the mission also tried to expand to other areas, although with less success. Around 1625 Gaspar Paes began a mission in Bägemder and also in roughly the same year his companion Jacinto Francisco founded a residence at Atkäna (“Atqana”). However, the site remained active for only a few years and was abandoned ca. 1630. In Tegray, the Jesuits suffered a similar blow as the settlement which was opened in 1626 in the capital of the baher nägash, Debarwa, had to be abandoned after a year for a closer location at Adegada. This later settlement only lasted to witness how the houses built by Manuel Barradas were destroyed in 1628 by a bizarre order of Susenyos.\footnote{The proper spelling of the later settlement is confused for the Jesuits are not consistent in their letters. I decided for the variant of Lejjä Negus following Mendes, who informed that “Ligenegus” means “‘Sons of the Emperor’, for formerly his sons were put there” (… Ligenegus, idest, Filiorum Imperatoris (quod aliquis antiquorum suos ibi locaverit)); RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. V.}

Therefore, towards the end of the 1620s, expansion had been largely successful,
but seems also to have reached its limits. The biggest achievements were confined to the old settlements related to the Ethio-Portuguese and to the areas under local friendly rulers such as Se’elä Krestos (Gojjam), Buko (Damot) and Qeba Krestos (Tegray) and beyond these ‘sectors’ the mission failed in establishing permanent positions. Moreover, the limits encountered then were different to the ‘crisis’ the mission suffered in the late 1610s. The latter was related to pressing political demands to the Jesuits for an expansion when suffering a lack of missionary personnel. In the late 1620s, however, limits were drawn less by the lack of personnel (see ratio men/residence in Figure 7) than by a shift in the political forces. The fate of the residences in Bägemder and Tegray reflected the deterioration of the relations between Susenyos and part of the nobility. Somehow, it also precluded the sudden fall of the whole missionary project at the beginning of the next decade. The way this unfolded and the consequences for the mission’s failure are discussed in Chapter 7.

174 RASO IV, 52.
5. Organization and expansion of the mission: the ideological dimension

The Jesuit concern for Ethiopia and their undertakings there were influenced by a specific religious ontology and worldview. Although once in the field, the missionaries had to improvise and to adapt to local conditions, they also responded to ideological concepts. A mission was, after all, no ethnographic excursion. It was an institution established first by the mendicant orders and upgraded in the sixteenth century by the Society of Jesus to change whole societies according to the standards defined by the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation. Accordingly, its premises were strongly ideological and Eurocentric. In the early modern missions Catholics were confident that they held the truth and that the indigenous were often wrong in many of their beliefs and practices. The tools to observe indigenous practices were ethnographic observation but the parameters by which to judge their wrongdoing were not improvised. In judging the natives’ way of life, the missionaries responded to the scholastic tradition, to their own national customs of thought and above all to the principles of what O’Malley termed ‘Early Modern Catholicism’.

In Ethiopia, Jesuit missionaries were no less free from these ideological constrains than their fellows who discovered the roots of barbarism among the American Indians. Today, the missionaries are mostly remembered in Europe for their accurate ethnographic and historical accounts although they went to Ethiopia in the first instance out of a belief in duty to redress the country’s (many) ‘errors’. They had strong confidence in their own project and a clear-cut idea of what was wrong with this African Church. Although such an idea was nothing like a well-drawn ‘image’ of Ethiopia, we can nonetheless find its traces in the Jesuit texts. Such will be our first task here. Additionally, the mis-

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1 “The [Catholic] faith is what makes the kingdoms grow and heresies... what makes them perish”; Fray Luys de URRERA, Historia eclesiastica politica, natural, y moral, de los grandes y remotos Reynos de la Ethiopia, Monarchia del Emperador, llamado Preste Juan de las Indias, Valencia: Pedro Patricio Mey, 1610, 368.

sion shared a ‘positive’ project. The Jesuits wanted to replace the ‘wrong’ with ‘good’ things and to introduce other patterns then absent from Ethiopian society. This was indeed a major endeavour. The changes the missionaries wanted to enforce in Ethiopia did not only affect the ‘religious’ sphere, but were designed to modify its political and cultural fabric. To identify and define these changes and how they were enforced will be our second task. Finally, the following chapter will offer a more discerning analysis on the ‘cultural’ transformations the mission – partially – brought about and the birth – ephemeral as it was – of an Ethiopian Catholic culture.

**The ideological background**

Jesuit religious ontology shaped the way missionaries saw Ethiopian society and its Christian Church. The main elements of this ontology were based on two Church fathers, St. Leo the Great and St. Paul the Apostle. The two figures – who also gave the names to three popes having played important roles in the mission: Leo X (1513-21), Paul III (1534-49) and Paul V (1605-21) – were of fundamental importance during the unfolding of the mission and a description of missionary ideology in Ethiopia shall begin with them. Another important aspect affecting Jesuit actions and world view was the Ignatian idea of *redução*. Finally, a last major influence in the mission was the Council of Trent, which will occupy the end of the section.

**St. Paul, St. Leo the Great and the definition of Ethiopia’s ‘heresies’**

Paul’s theology was an important factor in making the Europeans regard Christian Ethiopia as a Christian ‘otherness’. European Christian ontology had indeed largely drawn on St. Paul (ca. 10-65) to define its Christology and ritual system. In Ethiopia, however, this was not the case. Although the Apostle was an equally powerful figure there, the ritual system of the Ethiopian Church diverged to a great extent from Paul’s main principles, or at least from the Western interpretations of them. The Ethiopian society observed, in the view of the Europeans, a number of ‘Mosaic’ Laws, such as the Sabbath, circumcision, the levirate and a number of food prescriptions and prohibitions. In Europe this was seen as profoundly un-Christian and un-Pauline. During the early contacts with Ethiopia at the turn of the sixteenth century, the Europeans had already had time to observe such differences and to express them to their Ethiopian friends. In 1515, as a result of the embassy of Mateus to Dom Manuel I, Leo X addressed a Brief to the *negus* Lebnä Dengel urging him
to abandon circumcision and the same request was repeated a few years later. Then came the visit of the Ethiopian ambassador Sāga Zā’ab, with whom the ever-zealous Portuguese theologians discovered that if they were ever to succeed in replacing the wrongdoings of their African friends they had to do something other than to keep exchanging embassies and long-winded letters of friendship. As we saw earlier, the polemic aroused by the Ethiopian envoy and the theologians Margalho and Ortiz eventually pushed Rome and Portugal into organising a religious mission and here too, Paulinism was a central inspiring factor. The first document in which a religious mission was implicit was the letter that Dom Alfonso sent to Lebnā Dengel via the pseudo-Patriarch Bermudez. Therein, Paul was quoted several times. Dom Alfonso took from the Apostle the principal arguments to convince the Ethiopian negus that their faith was wrong. When, as a consequence of Bermudez’ affair, the religious mission to Ethiopia began to take shape, the choice of the Society was not at random.

The Society of Jesus was profoundly influenced by the ideas of Paul the Apostle. Within the Catholic constituency, the Ignatian order was the first to catch up with the Protestant’s appropriation of St. Paul. The fondness of the Society for this figure had occurred since its formative years and was never to abandon it. It was at the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura in Rome, where St. Paul had been allegedly killed, where the six companions made the first solemn profession, on 22 April 1541. The Apostle was also, by far, the first Scriptural source used in Jesuit correspondence, sermons and theological treatises. A look into St. Ignatius’s gigantic correspondence provides a grasp of how vivid and influential the texts of the Apostle were in the mind of the founder. However, among the Jesuits’ many facets, nowhere was Paul more prominent as in the missions. The contact with the technically advanced though pagan societies in the Orient pushed the Jesuits to a full identification with the thinking of the Apostle. The long sea trip to India seems to have been a favourite place for the immersion into the thought of the Apostle and nearly every

3 Leo X to Lebna Dengel, 1 May 1515, in: Rainieri 2005, doc. 10; Cardinal Alfonso, 1539, in: RASO X, doc. 3.
4 Cardinal Alfonso, 1539, in: RASO X, doc. 3.
5 On the importance of Paul for the early Protestant Reformation, cf. David C. STEINMETZ, “Calvin and Abraham: The Interpretation of Romans 4 in the Sixteenth Century”, Church History 57, 1988, 443–55, 443-44. The author rightly complains of the little attention the figure of Paul has been given despite the fact that the Epistle to Romans “was commented on in the sixteenth century by more than seventy theologians”. Cf. also Andreu MARTÍNEZ D’ALON-MONER “Paul and the Other: The Portuguese Debate on the Circumcision of the Ethiopians”, in: Ethiopia and the Missions: Historical and Anthropological Insights, ed. Verena Böll et al., Münster: Lit, 2005, 31-51, 37-38.
6 St. Paul’s importance in Jesuit thought and action has, surprisingly, attracted relatively little scholarly attention; cf. however, O’MALLEY 1993, 73, 107-09. In the context of Jesuit activities in Germany, it is interesting Jeffrey CHIPPERS SMITH, Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany, Princeton – Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002, 15, 71, 89, 139, 142.
7 In a document from the first decade in India, a Jesuit Father informed that aboard the ship taking them to India
first college founded by the Society in their overseas provinces was dedicated to the Apostle. Moreover, Paul was the preferred name given to the first new converts in India: the celebrated Japanese Anjirô, the son of a Samurai family, was baptised 20 May 1548 with the name Paulo da Santa Fe (“Paul of the Holy Faith”) and the same name was given to the head of the Yogis from Ormuz at his conversion in 1550 at the hands of the Flemish missionary Gaspar Barzeo. Additionally, the Jesuits were soon to be known in Goa under the term of Paulistas and their first missionary, Francis Xavier, was to be post-humously compared to St. Paul and renamed the Apostle of the Orient. Therefore, the Jesuits’ Paulinist identity made it a logical choice for the difficult issue of Ethiopian Christianity. The renewed vigour that Ignatius and his fellows gave to Paul’s ideas pushed them to quickly embrace the project of a mission to the Prese and, likewise, convinced their sponsors in Portugal and Rome that they were the best fit for the project.

During the course of the mission, St. Paul became a familiar figure. The missionaries frequently compared conversions in Ethiopia to that which turned Saul into Paul: an annual letter from 1620, copied in Goa by Jeronimo Majorica, said of a converted in Gojjam that “from Saul he was made Paul” and, in 1627, Manoel de Almeida said of the progresses of conversions among the Agaw that “many Sauls become Pauls”. This sentence was repeated several times on the occasion of other conversions. The *imitatio Pauli*
was thus a main factor stimulating missionary action and shaping the perception the missionaries had of their own work. Likewise, the Jesuits demonstrated a deep knowledge of the Pauline epistles, which were avidly read during their formative years, in Europe and in India.\textsuperscript{15}

St. Paul was indeed the main source in the missionaries’ discourse and pedagogical methods in the Ethiopian highlands. His reflections formed the backbone of the sermons, conversations and discussions held without interruption since the refoundation of the second mission. Examples are almost too numerous to cite but the following are typical: in 1603, during his first interviews at the court of negus Ya’eqob, Páez dismissed the practice of circumcision with the help of the classic passage, repeated also on later occasions, of Gal 3\textsuperscript{16}. Around 1608, during discussions with the wife of the baher nägash at the residence of Fremona, a missionary – probably Lorenzo Romano – read an epistle of St. Paul.\textsuperscript{17} In 1612, in a letter to his friend Ituren, Páez made a survey and criticism of the Ethiopians’ ‘abuses’ largely based on the Apostle, which he repeated two years later.\textsuperscript{18} In 1613, during the first important religious debate at the court, ras Se’elä Krestos in the role of plaintiff of the Catholic position used the Pauline and Leonine ideas of unity and uniformity – \textit{Una la fede, et uno il battesimo} – which he had doubtlessly heard during his meetings with the missionaries.\textsuperscript{19} Later, one of the boys from the seminary in Gorgora justified the prohibition of circumcision because of the Pauline understanding that it was “ceremony of the Jews”\textsuperscript{20} and Gaspar Paes, discussing circumcision again, reported having read an epistle of Paul to one of the daughters of Susenyos.\textsuperscript{21} The Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia was also imbued of


\textsuperscript{16} “And St. Paul, in Galatians 3, said that those who circumcise would not be ready for Christ. I explained to him that Christ had annulled circumcision and, thus, to uphold this practice today was tantamount to saying that Christ had not come, as if we were still obliged to preserve all the [Old] Law, whilst in fact Christ had put an end to all these practices” (\ldots E que são Paulo, ad Galatas 3, dizia que aos que se circuncidassem não lhes aproveitava nada Cristo, lhe mostrey como Christo dera fim a cricuncisão, e que circuncidarse agora era dizer que Christo não era vindo e que ficavão obrigados a guardar toda ley, com ser Christo o fum della); Páez, 1603, in: RASO XI, doc. 14, 56. Other references in Gaspar Páez [15 June 1625?], in: GOUEIA, \textit{Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa}, 55v.

\textsuperscript{17} Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 158.

\textsuperscript{18} Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34; 214-29 and Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 324-25.

\textsuperscript{19} De Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 104r. Further evidence on the use of St. Paul during these debates in RASO VI, \textit{ib.} VII, ch. XXII. It is interesting to underline a similar reference to the one made by Se’elä Krestos had been used back in 1557 in a letter that Oviedo sent to Galawdewos; \textit{Cum enim fides Christi una sola sit, scit aut dicit Paulus: ‘unum Deus, una fides, unum baptisma’}; Oviedo to Galawdewos, 22 June 1557, in: \textit{Bullarium II}, 305-06.

\textsuperscript{20} Fernandes, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 57, 443-44.

\textsuperscript{21} Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 258r. On another occasion the same source informed that “some days a week, during dinner and until late in the night, a servant reads \ldots aloud the Four Gospels and Paul’s Epistles” to a niece of Susenyos who was gran catolica, i.e. fervently Catholic (\textit{Em alguns dias de somana lhe esta lendo hum seu criado desda cea até a madrugada em voz alta os quatro Evangelhos e as Epistolas de San Paulo}); Gaspar Paes, quoted in GOUEIA, \textit{Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa}, 54r-v. The woman Paes met at the residence of Tamqha could have been Wängelawit, married
the ideas of the Apostle. Although Mendes, as incarnation of the pope in Ethiopia was more prone in the mission to represent rather the figure of St. Peter, first Patriarch of the Church, in his discourses in Ethiopia he also draw largely on the Pauline epistles. Thus, in the speech offered to accept the solemn obedience to Urban VIII by Susenyos from 11 February 1626, Mendes paraphrased a passage from 1 Cor 3 and compared his role in Ethiopia to that of an architect. In the same year he also mentioned 2 Cor 8 in a letter to the General Vitelleschi. Further into his ministry, Mendes used the same apostolic source during a conversion with an aunt of Susenyos (Amätä Krestos?) and the mother of blattengeta Mälke’a Krestos.

Table 10: The Paulinist framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholicism</th>
<th>Ethiopian Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures</td>
<td>literal interpretation of the Scriptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baptism</td>
<td>circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual sacrifice</td>
<td>physical sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>efficacious</td>
<td>superfluous</td>
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<tr>
<td>emphasis on the soul</td>
<td>emphasis on the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original, pure</td>
<td>alien, contaminated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusive</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>universal</td>
<td>particular, ethnic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paul’s ideas on Christ, the body, faith and the church provided then the Jesuits with a framework with which to classify and to judge indigenous practices. The Jesuits draw a ‘picture’ of Ethiopian Christianity in a dichotomic way (Table 10). Its traditions and practices served to construct a binary opposition between Ethiopian Christianity and Western Catholicism. The Ethiopian Church was characterized by observing the Old Law, circumcision and the other ‘Mosaic’ prescriptions and was opposed to the New Law, Baptism and the ‘Paulinist’ prescriptions as followed by Western Christianity. Traditional beliefs and practices were considered to rely too much on the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, excessively centred on the body and its physical suffering and they were also deemed obsolete and old. The Jesuits, propounded a more symbolic and metaphorical approach to religion, wherein “desire and ethnicity”, as the historian Daniel Boyarin characterized Paul’s most radical message, had been fully suppressed. Representation then to the governor of Bägemder Zä Krestos.

22 RASO VI, iv. VIII, ch. XXII and also in GOUEIA, Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa, 83v-84r.
24 Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 418r-41r.
25 Daniel BOYARIN, A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 69. As Boyarin stressed, however, the Christian (he focuses solely on the ideas of Luther and Protestantism) reading of Paul’s thought must be distinguished from Paul’s thought itself; cf. ibid. 209 seq. Here thus whenever I speak of
and allegory should replace the literal form; circumcision should be subsumed into baptism. Ignatius had emphasized in his writings dedicated to the mission the need to change “the hardness that [Ethiopians] use in fasting and other corporal exercises”, which could be achieved “with the help of the Scriptures, lauding more the spiritual than the corporeal exercises”.26

St. Leo the Great (440-61) was the other significant figure that influenced the Jesuit ‘image’ of Ethiopia and their missionary strategy. Like St. Paul, St. Leo had been a man of action, whose ideas were transmitted through epistles rather than in theological treatises, and his chief aim was to sustain the unity and universality of the Church — universalis Ecclesia — under the primacy of the bishopric of Rome.27 Indeed, Leo carried out an immense programme of centralisation and standardization in both parts of the Roman Empire. In the East, he also became famous for his letter Tomus ad Flavianum (Epistle XXVIII) intended to condemn the Monophysite doctrines defended by the monk Eutyches about one sole – Divine – nature in Christ. The issue was discussed openly; first at the Council of Constantinople (449), and eventually resolved in favour of the duophysites at the Council of Chalcedon (451), which also took Leo’s dogmatic epistle to Flavian as an expression of the Catholic Faith concerning the Person of Christ.28 The Ethiopian Church, which was tied to the See of Alexandria, chose the way of Monophysitism and henceforth became a strong opponent of Rome’s primacy, in general, and of Leo’s figure, in particular.

In 1612 a Jesuit spoke of the missionaries in Ethiopia as hijos de León (‘sons of Leo’) and at the arrival of Afonso Mendes at the court of Dänqäz the neo-Jesuit Se’elä Krestos presented himself as representative of St. Leo Pope.29 Additionally, the mission was strongly committed to the Leonine ideal of unity of the Church under the supremacy of the Roman See. In the missionaries’ view, the Ethiopian Church originally belonged to

Paulinism it is to the one adopted in Christian theology and more in specific to the reading of Paul by the Protestant and Catholic Reforms.

26 Las asperidades que el ayuno y otros exercicios corporales usan [los Etiopes], parece se puedan con suavidad moderar y reduzir a la medida de la discreción por cuatro vias. Una es alabar mas, con testimonios de las escripturas, los exercicios espirituales que los corporeales…. Ignacio de Loyola, 1551-53, in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 2, 243. The Jesuit criticism of Ethiopian bodily expiation practices was a variation of the Society’s strong rejection of monastic life and spiritual methods. The Constitutions stressed that “the self-punishment of the body should not be excessive, nor it should contain exaggerate abstinences and deprivation of sleeping and other interior expiations and exercices that are harmful and that prevent [the person] from achieving greater goals” (La castigación del cuerpo no debe ser inmoderada ni indiscreta en abstinencias, vigilia y otras penitencias exteriores y trabajos que dañan y impiden mayores bienes); Constituciones, part III, § 300.


the body of Rome and had been only accidentally subjected by the See of Alexandria. Supporting this view, Almeida declared that Ethiopia was subject to Rome until between the year 620 and 700.\textsuperscript{30} The split between Rome and Ethiopia and the latter’s subjection to Alexandria was explained in different ways in missionary texts and the Jesuits came to blame century-old Christian figures, the Mamluk rule in Egypt and Ethiopia’s leadership. Firstly, the Jesuits attributed it to the action of individual figures, such as Eutyches and Dioscorus. Secondly, they emphasized the influence of the Mamluk and Ottoman rules over Egypt, which would have impeded proper ‘commerce’ to run between Europe and Ethiopia and therefore isolated the Ethiopian Church. Thirdly, the Jesuits also argued that most of the ‘errors’ practiced by the Ethiopians were not original elements of this Christianity, but rather had entered the country during the Alexandrian rule, an idea that received an official-like sanction in 1624 with a letter where Susenyos condemned the metropolitans having previously served in Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{31} Finally, the missionaries maintained that some Ethiopian kings had added further gaps between the local church and Rome. Negus Zărâ Ya’eqob, for instance, was considered one of those liable of having introduced the ‘errors’ into Ethiopia and Azevedo described him as the one who “spoiled this church and made them half-Jewish”.\textsuperscript{32}

In Catholic eyes, the legitimacy of the mission was thus twofold. On the one hand, the mission was not an imposition of something alien but aimed instead at the ‘restitution’ of an original bond, “to bring back to its see those who had been separated from it”, as Mendes declared during his solemn opening sermon at the court of Dänqäz in 1626.\textsuperscript{33} The Jesuits saw their mission as a ‘restoration’ of an original bond, the Catholic Patriarchate being used as an instrument with which to sever Ethiopia’s ties with Alexandria and ‘reconnect’ it to Rome. Such an assertion was also assumed by Susenios and probably contributed to his conviction to enforce Catholic reforms, for in one occasion in reply to accusations launched by the traditionalists’ party he said “I do not change of faith”.\textsuperscript{34} On the other hand, the mission, as representative of the only ‘true’ Apostolic See, carried out a work of purification of the Ethiopian Church from ‘alien’ elements that had contami-

\textsuperscript{29} Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 269; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXI.
\textsuperscript{30} RASO VI, liv. VI, ch. II. A similar analysis is developed in COHEN, “The Jesuits in Ethiopia”, ch. 3, § 1-2.
\textsuperscript{31} The letter is reproduced in Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I.
\textsuperscript{32} … Que he o que deitou a perder esta igreja e os fez meos iudios; Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 146. Similar accusations with regards to the same ruler are repeated in Id., 1609, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 40v: “he introduced the observance of the Sabbath, circumcision and many other Jewish practices” (… mecio a guarda do sabbado, a circumcisao e outras muitas ceremonia de judeus).
\textsuperscript{33} … Tornar á seu gremio os que delle se achão apartados; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXII.
\textsuperscript{34} Eu não trouco a fe; Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 482. Also mentioned by Almeida in Ibid. VI, liv. VII, ch.
nation it and rendered it strange to its original ‘Catholic’ nature. Its work was hence deemed purifying, of deliverance and renewal.

Such a stress for the unity of the church under the guide of Rome and the re-establishment of an original bond was a central argument in missionary discourse. In the speech of 11 February 1626 delivered at the royal Kitāma Patriarch Mendes declared

There was a time, sirs, when you were in union with the Church and you preserved this union with the faith received from St. Mathew and the eunuch of your Queen Chandace. This you did until from Egypt and Alexandria came that false pastor and mindless man, who, separating you from the true pastor and head, made of you a monstrous body... Now you have an architect sent by the Apostolic See to rebuild these ruins.35

For the reasons cited above, the possibilities for practicing the *accomodatio*36 were severely restricted in Ethiopia. Although in some instances forms of *accomodatio* were practiced (such as learning of local languages) and the missionaries in Ethiopia were to a certain extent more respectful towards indigenous customs than they were in other missionary fields, they proved, in other ways, to be far more severe and dogmatic. After all, the Ethiopians had in one way or another ‘failed’ in keeping the ‘true’ Christian message and thus deserved a tougher approach to that reserved for the pagan peoples. They had also been ‘corrupted’ by the Alexandrian faith, defined by Ignatius in his letter to Galawdewos as “a rotten member separated from the mystical body of the Church”.37 In Ethiopia the missionaries did not work among a ‘barbaric’ yet innocent society but, as Mendes earlier declared, one with a “monstrous body”. Ethiopia thus fitted with those lands defined by the Constitutions as places where “the enemy of Christ has spread hatred” (*el enemigo de Cristo ... ha sembrado cizania*) and hence one “should be there more intransigent” (*se debía cargar más la mano*).38 This pushed the missionaries in Ethiopia to adopt a rigour they rarely showed elsewhere. These factors were also the cause for the broad opposition the mission encountered which, eventually, also brought its sudden collapse. The traditional Ethiopian point of view and the specific episodes that were to lead to the fall of the mission will be

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35 Esta unión con la iglesia testes, Senhores, e conservastes com a fée que recebestes de s. Mathaus e do eunucho de vossa rainha Candace, enquanto do Egypto e Alexandria não rebentou e saio aquele falso pastor e cabeça sem juizo, que desunindo vos do verdadeiro pastor e cabeça, vos fez corpo monstruoso... Agora tendes architecto, mandado da sede apostólica, pera se refazerem estas ruínas...; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXII.


37 ... Miembro cortado y podrido del cuerpo mystico de la Iglesia; J. DERAMEY, “Une lettre de Saint Ignace de Loyola à Claudius, roi d’Ethiopie ou d’Abyssinie”; Revue de l’histoire des religions 14 année, 27, 1893, 37-75, 48.

38 Constituciones, part VII, ch. 2, §622. A similar expression was employed in 1628 by Manoel de Almeida, who instructed that with the local practice of circumcision “it is necessary to be especially severe” (*he necessario neste ponto carregar-lhe muito a mão*); Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 425v.
discussed in Chapter 7.

**The redução of Ethiopia**

An important concept to understand Jesuit thought and missionary praxis is the Ignatian idea of *redução* i.e. ‘reduction’. Early modern proselytizers rarely employed the modern term of ‘conversion’ to describe the main purpose of their activities in Europe and in the missions and typically described the act of converting individuals with such expressions as *está muy reducido* or *es muy nuestro* (‘he is much reduced’, ‘he is all ours’). To understand the nuances implicit in the term reduction we may profit from looking at how Ignatius of Loyola used the concept. In his classical study on the thought of the Jesuit founder Dominique Bertrand counters the modern ‘negative’ meaning of reduction – decrease, lessen, diminish, transform, dominate, constrain – and instead brings it closer to the sense found in Aristotelian-Thomistic theology. The Ignatian reduction, thus, emphasizes a process in which a reality in potency becomes an act, wherein a disorder and confusion are addressed towards a unity and order. Bernard summarizes its function in two points: “to overcome the dispersion of forces within a community, no matter what kind of community, and to achieve, as being above oneself, the right government”.

A few important points can be gleaned from the Ignatian meaning of reduction. Firstly, it conveys the idea that hierarchy and power, when well exerted, are necessary for the well being of the society and the church. A good government requires order, organisation and agreement between the different parts and institutions in which a society or nation is divided. Another aspect relevant for the present discussion is that Jesuit reduction is a process encompassing individual as well as social life: the reduction was enforced onto individuals and onto the social and political structures wherein the Jesuits ministered. The Society of Jesus itself was probably the first institution where these goals were first ex-

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39 There are, however, some exceptions. In 1542, for instance, Francis-Xavier wrote that “The governor has told me that he has great hope in God Our Lord and that whereto he wants to send us many Christians will be converted” (*El señor gobernador me tiene dicho que tiene esperanza muy grande en Dios nuestro Señor que adonde nos ha de mandar, se han de convertir muchos cristianos*); Francis-Xavier to fellows in Rome, 1 January 1542, Moçambique, in: FRANCISCO JAVIER 1996, doc. 13, 80.


41 BERTRAND, La politique de Saint Ignace de Loyola, 87 also points to the dictionary of Covarrubias from 1614 who described reduction as: “to be brought by conviction towards a better order” (*Reducido, convencido y vuelto a mejor orden*); Sebastián de COVARRUBIAS OROZCO, Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española, ed. Felipe C.R. Maldonado, Madrid: Castalia, 1994 [Madrid 1611], 854.

42 Vaincre la dispersion des forces d'une communauté, quelle qu'elle soit, et accéder, comme au-dessus de soi, à un bon gouvernement; BERTRAND, La politique de Saint Ignace de Loyola, 88.

43 The concept would find its social reflect in the practices of social disciplining to which the Jesuits strongly adhered through the system of rural missions in Europe; cf. Federico PALOMO DEL BARRIO, Fazer dos campos escolas excelentes. Os jesuítas de Évora e as missões do interior em Portugal (1551-1630), Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian-Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2003; Marcello FANTONI (ed.), The Jesuits and the Education of the Western World,
performed and achieved: the years of noviciate and probation of the Jesuit candidates could therefore be seen as a process leading towards a transformation of the self in the terms the Ignatian reduction demanded. Similarly, the high level of organisation, the effectiveness and achievements of the Society of Jesus are all examples of a successful reduction at the institutional level. I contend that in the missionary arena, this concept set a method and a goal. On the one hand, it provided the Jesuits and the missionaries with powerful working tools, such as effective organisation, obedience, discipline, self-confidence, focusing, endurance. On the other hand, it set concrete goals for action: centralisation of government, standardisation of practices, submission to a superior will. Therefore, the idea of reduction merged political, social, cultural and religious goals towards a single aim, the global improvement of individual and social life. So, what was the goal of the reduction in the context of the Ethiopian mission?

The reduction of Ethiopia incorporated the principles of St. Leo and St. Paul’s and Ignatian pragmatics. Its goal was not a simple conversion by way of a subjection to Rome as it could have been formulated by other missionary orders or by the papacy itself. The reduction of Ethiopia, as Ignatius and his peer saw it, was a complex and long process aimed at changing the very nature of Ethiopian Christianity and of the Christian Ethiopian state and society at large. Reducing was “rendering uniform” its church with Rome and re-shaping the socio-political framework. Ethiopia’s traditions had to be tamed, the rituals reframed according to Catholic ideals and its art and architecture renewed. Moreover, the organisation of the state had to be re-shaped and the political government reinforced albeit not in the terms of an absolutist monarchy, as I will show below. Therefore, the Jesuit goals in Ethiopia were neither solely political nor religious but a mixture of both for in the Jesuit understanding the conversion affected both the socio/political and religious spheres and the gains were twofold. The adoption of Catholicism by the Ethiopians should provide them salvation and also strengthen the political and military basis of their kingdom. An example from Ignatius’ instructions to the missionaries for Ethiopia clarifies this point. According to the Basque, the ‘exaggerated’ piety and repeated fasting of the Ethiopians not only contravened the Paulinist spirit but also rendered its people physically “weak to carry out the necessary works” (debiles para las buenas obras) and also

44 Reduzirlos a uniformidad con la yglesia catholica; Ignacio de Loyola, 1551-53, in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 2, 249. Other references to reducir in the same text p. 254 and in the title itself, “Recuerdos que podrá ajudar para la reducción de los reynos del Preste Juan a la unión de la yglesia y reliqion catholica”; Ibid. 237.
easy victims to whichever enemy wanted to attack them. Abandoning the ‘fruitless’ Orthodox traditions would thus turn political power to be more efficient and religious salvation closer to hand. The missionaries were convinced both that there was no salvation outside the church and that no conditions for the proper development of social and political life were possible outside the mission.

The Tridentine impetus

Although staged at the eve of the largest missionary expansion ever to be accomplished by the Catholic Church, the Council of Trent, where Jesuit theologians also played a prominent role, had no words for the missions. As the Jesuit historian O’Malley remarked “Trent had a remarkably narrow, ‘local’ pastoral focus as it dealt with ‘reform of the church’ precisely in the technical sense that Jedin correctly gives it, that is, reform of bishops and pastors of parishes”. In view of this, how could Trent have affected the mission in Ethiopia? Moreover, should it have, after all? The Council had an impact in the mission, though it was not a direct one and it came late. To be true, Trent neither provided instructions dedicated to the union with the Ethiopians, nor were the missionaries initially as committed in enforcing application of its decrees in Ethiopia as were the bishops of Portuguese India in the territories under their jurisdiction. The first missionary period evolved parallel to the celebration of the Council and it had, thus, little chance to be influenced by it. When Oviedo landed at Massawa, the Council was in the twelfth year of its proceedings and still had five more years to go. At that time, the only connection between the mission and Trent was a formal invitation to the negus to go to the council, an act that was probably fostered by the optimistic views with regards to the Ethiopian Church as well as the deceiving intelligence system of the papacy.

The influence of Trent in the Ethiopian mission came with the second missionary period. During the phase of the strongest Catholic influence in Ethiopia, between Susen...
yos’ profession of faith of 1621 and Mendes’ first years of Patriarchate, Trent inspired a number of the reforms imposed by the Jesuits. The Portuguese religious historian Da Silva has summarized the main goals of the Council “as catechetic theologisation, liturgical uniformisation and authoritative centralisation” and these will also define the main guidelines of the missionary project in Ethiopia. On the one hand, a major ‘Tridentine’ focus was the missionaries’ insistence in making uniform the Ethiopian Church, its liturgy and rites. The Jesuits considered the forms and practices of the Ethiopian Church as a mass of norms with little coherency and barely resembling the Christian ideal. They wanted to clean, purify and standardise it and developed, in consequence, a strong criticism of the local way to dispense the sacraments (the Eucharist above all), the ordinations – deemed incorrect under the previous metropolitans – and the liturgy. The celibacy of priests – only observed in Ethiopia by some ecclesiastic figures – was another element they insisted upon. On the other hand, the Tridentine decrees inspired some of the ‘social’ reforms the missionaries tried to impose upon Ethiopian society, one of which affected the institution of marriage. The Jesuits were faithful to the definition that Trent had made of this institution as a sacrament and saw marriage practices in Ethiopia as being too flexible. Moreover, they were also particularly disapproving of the practice, common in Ethiopia, of marriage unions between close relatives, also known as levirate. Finally, the Professio fidei Tridentina reached Ethiopia towards 1630 after it had been modified by the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide.

MISSIONARY METHODS: OBSERVATION, DECONSTRUCTION AND REPLACEMENT

The Jesuit ‘reduction’ of Ethiopia could ideally be described as a three-step process including the observation and description of the country, the deconstruction of its ‘heretical’ and ‘corrupt’ features and their ultimate replacement by Western/Jesuit forms (Figure 8). The three steps overlapped in time, although each of one them was particularly strong during a different period. The period of observation and description can be dated back to the years up to the late 1610s and early 1620s and was marked by the figure of Pedro Páez and the

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49 SILVA, Trent’s impact on the Portuguese Patronage Missions, 61.
writing of his *opera magna*, the *História de Etiópia*. De-construction gained momentum during the superiorship of António Fernandes as head of the mission (1619-25) and was exemplified by Fernandes’ rework of Christian Ethiopia’s main literary bulwark, the *Haymanotä Abäw*, ‘The Faith of the Fathers’. Finally, the phase of replacement was largely confined to the years of Mendes’ Patriarchate (1625-32), the period of strongest enforcement of Catholic reforms.

Figure 8: The path to ‘reduce’ Ethiopian Christianity

**The observation and description of ‘Ethiopia’: between admiration and contempt**

The mission to Ethiopia found its origins, in part, in the curiosity and wonder aroused in Europe by Christian Ethiopia. This attraction probably began with the establishment of the Solomonic monarchy in the thirteenth century but reached its peak during Renaissance times. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits who went to Ethiopia shared with their contemporaries a similar curiosity and attraction for this land. Although with the unfolding of the second missionary period, perceptions and ideas changed (often for the worst), some major ‘positive’ ideas pervaded throughout the two missionary periods. Moreover, the energy with which the missionaries collected information, the interest with which they looked for explanations and hypothesis to local phenomena and the elegant manner in which they exposed it in the annual letters and in their treatises reflect the aesthetics and preferences of the time. Missionary texts from Ethiopia indeed reveal a taste for antiquarianism typical of the Renaissance and a cultist drift characteristic of the time of Mannerism.  

With Mannerism, the missionaries also shared a will to inform – even to show off to – the world they came from about the wonders they were seeing and feeling.

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54 That the missionaries perceived their activities in this sense is revealed by some hints from the main works they composed. For instance, in the *História de Etiópia* Páez avoided describing Rodrigo da Lima’s visit to Ethiopia because it had already been dealt with at length in Alvares’ account and thus focused in other things “of which in
A primordial focus of interest during the mission was Ethiopian Christianity. Although the main goal of their mission was that of ‘reshaping’ local Christianity according to Catholic Roman patterns, the missionaries proved, nonetheless, a genuine interest and attraction for it. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Christian faith, although deemed wrong and contaminated, was lauded. The Jesuits, for instance, often called attention to the ascetical life of local monks and to the long periods of fasting observed by clergy and people alike. They tended to convey the image of a primitive Christianity ‘deviated’ in some practices due to ‘external’ – Alexandrian – influences but also blessed by the innocence and sense of piety. Towards 1608, a Jesuit reported:

Although the Abyssinians host many and great errors in their faith, it is, however, true that, leaving apart their errors and schism they had in the past, they have now an excellent character and a natural disposition towards piety and the virtues. Moreover, as the Jesuits fathers have seen, even today the Ethiopians have lesser sins than in other parts, such as in Europe, where we have the Catholic Faith. Generally, the people are sincere, honest and innocent; they are also much fond of fasting, which is as rigorous as in all the Oriental Churches: they only eat when the sun has set… They are very keen in suffering penances and always deem the worst penances their confessors oblige them to do as too light so that they are permanently calling for more severe ones… Lastly, the Abyssinians have all the chances to become one of the most perfect Christianities in the world, if they were to receive the true light of pure faith, with which they blossomed during the times of the primitive Church. 55

Therefore, whilst in some instances local devotion was considered superficial and ‘anti-Paulinist’, in others these practices were imitated. In 1623, for instance, the Jesuit Barneto informed of fellow missionaries adopting local ascetical practices. 56 But a more radical example of adoption of local traditions was perhaps that of Patriarch Oviedo, who, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, retreated to Fremona and adopted a lifestyle similar to the monks that populated the neighbouring areas. Moreover, following his death, his tomb would have become an object of local pilgrimage. The Patriarch was revered like a saint and local population attributed to sand from his tomb healing properties. 57

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55 “Ainda que os Abexins estam em muitos, & grandes erros na Fè, todavia (nam tratando dos seus erros, & schisma) he certo que a sua excelente índole, & boa inclinazam natural para toda piedade, & virtude atem ainda agora, como tinham antigamente & que ha nelles (conforme a experiencia do que os padres vem & palpam) ainda de presente muito menos pecados, que em outras partes, onde cá por Europa nossa santa Fè está inteira. Ha geralmente muyta sngleza, & innocencia no trato da gente huma com outra em materia de honestidade, ha muito amor ao jejum com ser tam rigoroso como he em toda a igreja Oriental, pois nam comem senão ao sol posto… Sam muy affeiçoados a penitencia, & por maior, que o confessor lha dá sempre dizem que he pequena, & que fazem mais… Finalmente tem os Abexins todas as partes para ser huma das melhores Christianidades do mundo, se lhes entrara a verdadeira luz da pura Fè, em que na primitiva igreja tanto floresceram; [Luís de Azevedo] in GUERREIRO 1611, 38r-39r. Also in Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 111.

56 “[The Jesuits] fast continuously, on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays” (… jejum os padres continuamente quarta, 6a e sabado…); Barneto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 67, 524.

57 References to the cult to Abbuna Andreas are numerous in the annual letters. Although it might have been explicitly
Table 11: Ethiopian clergy friendly to the missionaries, ca. 1600-32 (in chronological order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Flourishes</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>title</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Täklä Maryam</td>
<td>1590-91</td>
<td>monk</td>
<td></td>
<td>1591: is sent by the Jesuits and Särsä Dengel to Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Za Manuel</td>
<td>1600-16</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td>monastery</td>
<td>Selalo, Gojjam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marca/Mäherqa Dengel</td>
<td>1608-21</td>
<td>abba, scholar, monk</td>
<td></td>
<td>1613: is instructed on Catholic dogmas; 1621: convinced by Paes of the Catholic ‘truths’; writes Susenyo’s chronicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wäldä Krestos</td>
<td>1611-32</td>
<td>azzaj</td>
<td>Catholic priest</td>
<td>1611: converted by de Angelis; 1621: participates in conversions; his lands are given to residence of Atqhana; ca.1634: becomes a priest at the death of his wife and goes to live among the Catholic Agäw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fequr Egzi’e</td>
<td>1613-32</td>
<td>abba (?)</td>
<td>Gojjam</td>
<td>1611: conversion by de Angelis, whom he helps in translations; 1613: goes with A. Fernandes in a trip to Ennarya; 1621: preaches using the texts of Maldonado and Bras Viegas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gäbrä Mädhem</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>scholar, monk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akälä Krestos</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>monk, azzaj</td>
<td></td>
<td>1618: helps in choosing the site for a new church at Gorgora; helps in translating various treatises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Täzkarä Maryam</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>scholar, monk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keflä Krestos</td>
<td>1620-26</td>
<td>monk</td>
<td></td>
<td>1620: leads the position of the Unionists at Fogära; 1626: converted to Catholicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachímos</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>abba from Gojjam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ca.1625: meets Almeida at Qollela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participates in a dispute with schismatic monks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mälke’a Krestos</td>
<td>ca.1625-</td>
<td>monk</td>
<td></td>
<td>For some years is mestre at the seminary of Gorgora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krestos</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Za Krestos</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td></td>
<td>1632: is sent to Dämbeya after the decree of freedom of faith and remains faithful to the Jesuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esqanafer/Gregorios</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>abba of monastery in island Mechreqa</td>
<td>Ca.1626: converts at Tanqha and changes name to Gregorios; teaches at Debsan; 1634: helps Cardreira composing a vocabulary in Ethiopian; goes to India and Europe and meets Ludolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petros</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disciple of the Jesuits; confesses in “Salante”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensa’e Maryam</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>monk</td>
<td></td>
<td>1627: preaches in Wälqayt and is killed by followers of Ethiopian Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yämanä Krestos</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td></td>
<td>1627: is converted, preaches in Wälqayt and is killed by followers of Ethiopian Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attawos</td>
<td>1628</td>
<td>abba</td>
<td></td>
<td>1628: accuses a Ethiopian rebel, Atquo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Za Sellase</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td>abba Selalo</td>
<td></td>
<td>1631: is killed by rebel Särsä Krestos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In a similar way, relations with the monastic circles, one of the main bulwarks of Ethiopian Christianity, seem to have been generally positive. During Oviedo’s ascetic Patriarchate the Jesuits befriended the abbot of Endä Abba Garima, an important monastic centre in Tegray. They held religious discussions at the monastery but also seem to

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58 In approaching local clergy and monasteries, Ignatius of Loyola recommended to “Visit the churches of canonomes and monasteries of religious from both sexes and see what needs to be reformed and act accordingly” (Visitæs las yglesias de canonomes y monasterios de religiosos utriusque sexus, y mires que en ellos se ha menester reformacion y provease quanto se...
have showed reverence and respect for its monastic leader. When the mission expanded southwards, a similar scenario repeated. The missionaries were particularly successful in Gojjam, another important monastic region and also gained adherents in the areas around the Lake Tana (Table 11).

The naming of the Jesuit residences also reveals the intention the missionaries had to follow local traditions (Table 9). Unlike what happened in other scenarios, the Jesuits in Ethiopia tended to use local names for their residences. Their first settlement was named after Feremonatos (known in Ethiopia also as Sālama Kesate Berhan), one of the fathers of Christianity in Ethiopia and a similar practice was followed during the second mission. The introduction of foreign, Jesuit names came only later when Jesuit power was solid, and eventually affected only a couple of residences. Thus, when news of the canonization of the Jesuit founders reached Ethiopia, the missionaries dedicated the residence of Qollela (founded in 1611) to St. Ignatius, although they preferred to call it by the Ethiopian name.

In addition, Se’elä Krestos and the missionaries wished to dedicate a church to St. Francis-Xavier in Hadasha, but here again they tended to use the local name when speaking of the residence.

Finally, the Jesuits displayed an emphasis on compiling all available information on Ethiopia and producing the regular reports that modern historians and anthropologists have found so useful. This occurred first in Europe and then, with the growth of the Jesuit Indian province, also in India. Good communication between Goa and the metropolis afforded the Indian Province to keep up to date with what was being published in Europe and soon the College of São Paulo and, in second place, that of Diu, became centres of intelligence on Ethiopia. The books by Alvares and Góis were already on the shelves of São Paulo in Goa by the mid-1540s, shortly after publication, and it is likely that the same


59 The name of Fremona almost certainly predated the presence of the missionaries, as indicated by early Sixteenth-century Italian itineraries compiled in Crawford, Ethiopian Itineraries, 140 and in a couple of comments from Almeida’s treatise: RASO V, liv. IV, ch. XV and VI, liv. VIII, ch. III. The French historian Hervè Pennec, however, argues that the name was first used by the Jesuits in order to bind the new foundation to Ethiopia’s Christian heritage; Hervè PENNEC, Des jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean, 154-59.


61 The church was, however, never built due to the abandonment of the residence in 1628; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XIV.

62 “In the armada of Diogo de Sylveira [1543] that left the kingdom arrived in Goa a small treatise [Góis]… that included all things dealing with the faith of those people from the kingdom of Abyssinia, Prester John… I left it in Goa at the College of São Paulo so that mestre Diogo [one of the founders and first rector of the College of S. Paulo] or any other man can see it and thus instruct the Abyssinian boys there” (Na armada que deste reino foy Diogo...

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occurred with works rich in information on Ethiopia published later, such as Couto’s *Décadas*, Correia’s *Lendas da India* and the journey accounts by Castanhoso and Bermudez. The anti-Jesuit pamphlet written by the Dominican Luís de Urreta (1610), reached Goa in the early 1610s and was in the hands of Páez in Ethiopia by 1615, at the latest. The College of São Paulo seems to have also been a meeting point of Portuguese experienced in Ethiopia. Thus, Bermudez spent some ten months there before going back to Portugal and a number of veterans of the *Preste* shared their views with the Jesuit priests in the same place.

The gathering of information had several purposes. Firstly, it was used in Europe to compile summaries such as those by Giovanni Pietro Maffei and Manuel Godinho that had ‘edifying’ and propaganda purposes and probably also helped in designing missionary strategies. Moreover, information was used to instruct the candidates for the mission and to provide them with ground knowledge on the country and its religious ‘shortcomings’. All in all, the Jesuits were well informed on Ethiopia. Ignatius of Loyola, for instance, displayed quite an accurate knowledge of some of Ethiopia’s features in his missives, thus pointing to an attentive reading of Góis and Alvares’ accounts. Similarly, the missionaries to Ethiopia followed a sort of preparation before reaching the mission and at the houses in Goa and Diu they also learnt the first notions of Ethiopian languages.

Moreover, once on Ethiopian land, the Jesuits carried out a considerable work studying Ethiopia’s past and cultural patterns. It seems that the learning of languages was considered a priority and once the men arrived in Ethiopia they were instructed in Ge’ez, Amharic, Tegreñña and, eventually, Agäw. Not all the missionaries, however, displayed the same proficiency but some indeed, mastered one or more indigenous languages. António Fernandes, for instance, composed several treatises and made translations into Ge’ez. The Italian Francesco Antonio de Angelis was said to be expert in *linguam ethio-

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63 *Urreta, Historia eclesiastica politica, natural, y moral*, 1610.
64 *Páez, 1615*, in: *RASO XI*, doc. 41, 359.
65 *Maffei, Historiarum Indicarum*; *Godigno, De Abassinorum rebus*.
66 Although there is little evidence, language lessons at Goa and Diu can be inferred from the speediness – which betrayed an earlier familiarization – with which some of the missionaries, such as Luis Cardeira, learnt Amharic and Ge’ez once in Ethiopia.
67 The Jesuits thus became pioneers in the study of Ethiopia’s historical capital, Aksum. Missionary descriptions on this place have been compiled in Ugo *Monneret de Villard, Aksum. Ricerche di topografia generale*, Roma: Pontificio Instituteum Bibliicum, 1938, 63-77.
IN THE COMPANY OF IVÁSUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

Lestringant defined traditional topography as “this particular narrative that corresponds to the practice of the person who, whilst moving from one place to the other, observes and takes notes about the changing landscape” (cette narration particulière qui relève bien de la pratique journalière de l’individu qui se déplace, regarde et prend les notes sur le spectacle changeant qui l’entoure); Frank LESTRINGANT, L’atelier du cosmographe ou l’image du monde à la Renaissance, Paris: Albin Michel, 1991, 44.

Par juxtaposition et par collage; Frank LESTRINGANT, Écrire le monde à la Renaissance: quinze études sur Rabelais, Postel, Bodin et la littérature géographique, Caen: Paradigme, 1993, 321.

Nas ultimas partes do reyno do Preste ha huma terra que se chama Sinaxi ques esta ao longo do rio Nylo onde huns Cafires como salvagens que tem huma maneira de rabo curto de quatro finos e algum vestido de ervas; e ali preguntou hum destes Portuguezes

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Barzco’s was, however, one of the last remains of a ‘Mandevillian’ view of Africa in European narratives. The Jesuit descriptions of Ethiopia from the late sixteenth century onwards will set a deep break with cosmographical and topographical narratives typical of the Renaissance. The radical way with which in 1602, even before his travel to Ethiopia, Pedro Páez dismissed the myth of an Ethiopian Prester John,73 synthesises the change in paradigm between sixteenth and seventeenth century visions of Ethiopia.

After all, it was not by chance its author was also the new founder of the mission and one of the architects of its quick progresses in the 1610s and 1620s. Behind the composition of the História de Etiópia there were solid practical reasons that help us understand the whole missionary project to ‘reduce’ Christian Ethiopia.

It should be first stressed, however, that the História de Etiópia had first of all a defensive purpose for it was meant to refute two works that the Dominican Fray Luys de Urreta had published in Valencia in 1610 and 1611.75 Urreta, who had never been in Ethiopia, had used data collected from an Ethiopian informant, “Juan Baltasar”76 to compose two treatises – for the most part fictitious – emphasizing Ethiopian ‘Catholicism’ and the long-lived Dominican ‘presence’ in the land. To attempt such an undertaking the Span-

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73 Páez declared to his friend, Ituren, that the likely placement of the Prester John was in Catayo, probably meaning the Tibet of the Dalai Lama; Pedro Páez to Tomás de Ituren, 4 December 1602, Diu, in: RASO XI, doc. 8, 35.
75 URRETA, Historia eclesiastica politica, natural, y moral y Id., Historia de la sagrada orden de predicadores, En los remotos Reynos de la Et..[etapa]…, Valencia: Juan Chrysostomo Garriz, 1611. There is hardly any information on the identity of Urreta. The surname could indicate that he had Basque origins, although we know that he studied at the Dominican convent in Valencia, where he should have met the Ethiopian informant Juan Balthasar. It might be assumed that by the time he wrote the book he was already aged, since his Ethiopian informant stayed in Rome in the late 1570s. Pennecc and Ramos assume his dates of birth and death at ca. 1570-1636, without nevertheless providing the source. A sketchy notice appears in Scriptores Ordinis praedicatorum recentis, notisque historicis et criticis illustratis..., vol. 2, Paris: apud conventus SS. Annunciationis, 1719-23 (facsimile repr. New York: Burt Franklin, 1959), 378
76 The informant is described by Urreta as “one Juan Baltasar, an Ethiopian gentleman, from the kingdom and city of Fatagar in Ethiopia, military manager of the Order of St. Antonio Abat and of the royal guard of the Ethiopian king, called Prester John of the Indies, who owned original documents, partly written in Ethiopian partly in Italian language, which are in a poor state but which are still important and truthful” (Un cavallero Ethiope natural del reyno y ciudad de Fatigar en la Etiopia, llamado Iuan Baltasar, comendador militar de la Orden de San Antonio Abat, y de la guarda del Rey de la Etiopia, llamado Preste Juan de las Indias, con unos originales y papeles, parte en lengua etiopica y parte in italiana, mal concer-
lard had probably been inspired by the rivalries between the two orders, particularly strong in the Spanish territory, and by traditions dating back to the thirteenth century transmitted within the two preaching orders on earlier ‘missions’ to the Orient and Ethiopia. Additionally, we might gain some understanding of these peculiar works if we place them in the context of the utopian discourse that gained momentum in the sixteenth and earlier part of the seventeenth centuries with figures such as Thomas More (1478-1535), Guillaume Postel (1510-81) and Urreta’s fellow in religion Tomasso de Campanella (1568-1639). Indeed, the Ethiopia described by Urreta strongly resembles an utopian society, whose people live in harmony and which, thanks to the rulership of the Dominican Order, enjoy all the benefits of professing the true Catholic Faith.

We need not insist much on the fact that Urreta’s Historia eclesiastica dealt a severe blow to the whole Jesuit project in Ethiopia and was particularly damaging to its image in Europe. Moreover, the broad institutional support that in Spain the work received and the fine literary quality of the piece guaranteed it ample diffusion. The Jesuits soon realized these dangers and already in 1611 Guerreiro’s summary on the stand of the missions in the East included a long Fifth Book written by the Italian Jesuit António Colasso dedi-

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77 During the last decades of the sixteenth century Dominicans and Jesuits were involved in a number of polemics in Spain. The most important and virulent was probably the one involving the Dominican Melchor Cano (1509-60), one of the major theologians of the time and an influential voice at the Spanish court, who violently opposed the Society from the moment of its foundation until his own death. Cf. Mario Scaduto, Storia della Compagnia di Gesù, vol. 3: L’epoca di Giacomo Lainez: Il governo (1556-1565), Roma: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1964, 111; and Feliciano Cereceda, Diego Lainez en la Europa religiosa de su tiempo, 1512-1565, vol. 1, Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1945, 369-417. Apparently, Urreta participated in another anti-Jesuitic polemic in Spain by making a harsh criticism of Mariana’s masterwork, the Historiae de Rebus Hispanicæ; cf. Juan de MARIANA, Historia de España [antología], ed. Manuel Ballesteros, Zaragoza: Ebro, 1964, 124. Last but not least, the work of the Jesuit Luis de MOLINA, Concordia Librorum Aristotelis cum Gentibus Donum divina praesentia, providentia, praeestinatione et reprobatione (Lisboa: António Ribeiro, 1988) faced major opposition from the Dominican Order, and towards 1594 the issue was put in the hands of the Holy See.


79 The major ‘utopian’ works of the mentioned authors are: Utopia (1515), De orbis terrarum concordia (1544) and La Città del Sole (1623), respectively.

80 The most uncomfortable points raised by Urreta in the eyes of the Jesuits were: treating the Ethiopian Church as a Catholic Church, explaining the severing of relations between the two churches by a Muslim invasion and being tolerant and comprehensive with such practices as the circumcision, baptism and the communion with mosto, i.e. grape juice or unfermented wine; URRETA, Historia eclesiastica politica, natural, y moral, 424, 437-38, 468 seq, 498.

81 In the preface to the book Urreta lists to the following supporters: Capitán General de Valencia, Don Luis Carrillo de Toledo, Marqués de Caracena; Don Baltasar de Buja, Vicario General del Arzobispado; Juan Pasqual, rector de la iglesia de S. Martín, por mandado del Ilmo y Exc.mo ves. Dom Juan de Riberas Ph. de Antiochia y Arzobispo de Valencia; Maestro fray Raphael Ripley; Prou. de la Prou. de Avignon de OP; Maestro fray Iupercio de Huete; … del M. fr. Geronimo Mus, calificador del tribunal del santo Ofício de la Inquisición. The second book is dedicated to Luis Estella, Vic葛. OP e M. del Palacio Sucro de Roma; URRETA, Historia eclesiastica politica, natural, y moral, 1611, fol. 2.

82 The Portuguese translation of the text was prepared by a Jesuit; cf. Paolo REVELLI, “Una relazione sull’‘Abissinìa” del 1578 (con due carte e due fac-simili)”, Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana, ser. IV, vol. XI, parte I, anno XLIV-vol. XLVII, 1910, 607-24, 609. The translation, however, was probably not aimed at a publication but rather for internal use within the Society of Jesus.
cated to refute the Dominican’s treatise. Three years later, the first monograph by a Jesuit on Ethiopia, Manuel Godigno’s *De Abassinorum Rebus*, partly confronted some of Urreta’s claims. Around the time these two works appeared, the missionaries in Ethiopia had been informed of the issue and by 1615, at the latest, Páez had received the first and the most important book written by Urreta. Hereafter, he systematically began to work to answer every argument set forth by the Dominican with data collected “from the most truthful people that live here.”

The resulting text, however, was far more ambitious than what Páez modestly declared it to be in the preface – a “small piece of work” and may have even gone far beyond the instructions the Castilian had received from Rome and Goa. Indeed, the *História de Etiópia* became a major asset in the missionary project. To understand it we shall first focus on the moment when it was written and proceed with the analysis of its structure and content.

As far as the time of composition is concerned, it has been suggested that Páez began compiling the book in 1613-14. However, the above mentioned letter that Páez addressed to Ituren in 1615 places the *terminum post quem* to any preparative works in that year. It was probably then when Páez began to assemble and translate all the material used in the book. In support of that, we also know that in the same year he had asked to the provincial in Goa Francisco Vieira “glasses as for one who begins to loose sight”, what seems to be an indication of his growing dedication to the narrative project. Yet, the text proper was in all probability written later, between 1619 and 1921, when the Castilian resigned from the office of head of the mission and retired to Gorgora. Consequently, a first important aspect of the *História de Etiópia* is that it represented a work of maturity of its author and of the second mission period. Páez writes it in his mid fifties and

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83 “Addiçam a relaçam das cousas de Ethiopia com mais larga informação dellas, muy certa, & muy diferente das que seguio o Padre Fr. Luis de Vrreta no liuro que imprimio da historia daquelle Imperio do Preste Iom”, in: GUERREIRO 1611, 265-344.
84 GODIGNO, *De Abassinorum Rebus*.
85 In an annual letter from 1615, Páez informed Ituren that he was going focus in refuting Urreta’s book; Páez, 1615, in: RASO XI, doc. 41, 359.
86 … Das pessoas mais fidedignas, que ca ha; RASO II, 4.
87 … Este pequeno trabalho; Ibid.
88 On the requests made by Jesuit superiors in Rome to Páez to write the text, cf. RASO II, 4 note 1.
89 PENNEC–RAMOS, “Pero Paez”, 910.
90 … Oculos para quem começa a perder a vista; Páez, 1615, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 153r.
91 Páez progressively alienated himself from the direct control of the mission around those years: in June 1618 he signed the last known annual letter (Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53) and between 1618-19 he handed the office of superior da missão to António Fernandes. Moreover, although the manuscript was signed May 1621, just days before his death, some relevant omissions (the public profession of faith made by Susenyos and the foundation of the ‘royal’ residence of Gaññätä Iyässu in November 1621) set the *terminum ante quem* for the finishing of the manuscript to mid-1621. On this particular, cf. also Beccari’s judgement in: RASO II, xxx.
with more than fifteen years of missionary experience behind him. He also undertakes it during a decisive period for the fate of the mission, marked by two momentous events: the death of abunä Sem’on and other important opponents in the battle of 11 May 1617 and the profession of Catholic Faith made by Susenyos at Gännätä伊ësä on 1 November 1621. It is a period in which the Jesuits and the pro-Jesuit Ethiopians take a more public stand, abandoning their initial prudence and the traditionalists’ party within the court loses the lead. So it is then when the huge programme of reforms projected by the Jesuits begins to take form.

A second important aspect of the História de Etiópia is its content and narrative framework. The book was no minor achievement. It is a vast ethnographical, geographical, natural and historical compilation in four livros (i.e. ‘books’), comprising 536 folia, of all the information known hitherto on ‘Ethiopia’ and the Portuguese and Jesuit presence there. The method followed by Páez is ambitious indeed. The author made substantial use of Ethiopian sources, discussing, summarizing or rephrasing a number of Ethiopian royal chronicles, epistles of the kings, lives of saints (Gädl) as well as the foundation text of the Solomonic monarchy, the Kebrä någäst. Moreover, he completed these sources with local informants he himself had met – monks, nobility descendants of kings – and data from his own experience as a missionary. Finally, he also used Western sources, including accounts such as those by Alvares, Castanhoso and Guerreiro and a number of the letters exchanged between Europe and Ethiopia.

For all of these reasons the book has to be associated with the important historiographic tradition developed from the late sixteenth century onwards and mostly by Jesuits in Europe and in the overseas provinces. Authors like Juan Gonzalez de Mendoça, Giovanni Pietro Maffei, Juan de Mariana, Fernão Guerreiro, Sebastião Gonçalves, Diogo Gonçalves and Nicolao Godigno93 created a new narrative to describe the world, which breached with traditional cosmographical and topographical discourse and imposed a discourse centred in specific regions – nations, kingdoms, empires – and had a strong moral

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92 The list of sources used by Páez has been compiled by Beccari in the introduction to RASO II, xxxii-xxxiii; Ibid. III, iii-vi. Let it be mentioned that, as it happened with all the literary works enterprise by the missionaries, Páez might, in all likelihood, have also received the help of his own fellows and of a number of learned indigenous assistants. Among the latter there was azozj Tino, who, as author of part of the Chronicle of Susenys, provided Páez with ample excerpts from the text.

93 Juan Gonzalez de Mendoça, Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reyno de la China …. Medina del Campo: Benito Boyer, 1595; Maffei, Historiarum Indicarum; Juan de Mariana, Historie de rebus Hispaniae, Toleti: P. Roderici, 1592 (Spanish edition: Historia general de España, Toledo: Pedro Rodriguez, 1601-10); GUERREIRO 1611; González 1960; Gonçalves, História do Malavar; GODIGNO, De Abassiorum rebus. Part of this information has been compiled from Charles R. Boxer, The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1440-1770, Baltimore - London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, ch. 2: “Cultural interactions”.
underpinning. With this tradition the *História de Etiópia* shared the historiographic and ethnographic ‘method’, a moralist purpose as well as an effort to objectify reality. Similarly, Páez’s *História* is also the culmination of a process that began with the *Verdadera informação* of Francisco Alvares and achieved maturity in the text of the Jesuit Godigno. In this process ‘Ethiopia’ cum ‘Abyssinia’ emerged as a socio-political entity comparable to those being formed in Europe and overseas – a number of them with the important contribution of the Society of Jesus. The old ‘myths’ that during Renaissance times had circulated on the kingdom, in particular that of the Prester John, are abandoned and replaced by a modern political-historical discourse.

Parallelisms can be particularly drawn with the work of a Castilian fellow of Páez, Juan de Mariana (1536-1624), author of the pioneer *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*. Mariana’s text is a description of a kingdom that was profoundly shaped during the decisive rule of King Felipe II, to whom the book is duly dedicated. The reason to be of his *História* is to provide ideological support for a monarchical project of religious and political unification. Spain becomes there a subject of its own, with a defined history and a cultural and political framework. The fine and clear picture provided of the nation reflects that given of its ruler, a modern monarch, powerful but also careful to serve his people. In Mariana historiography becomes a nation-making tool at the service of the state. Whether Páez knew of Mariana’s *História* or not remains a matter of speculation. However, the fact that he studied at Alcalá twenty two years after Mariana, that the latter retired to the Jesuit profess house in Toledo in 1574 and the publication of the first Latin edition of the *História* in 1592, could have made him acquainted either with the person or with his work. Be it as it may, the *História de Etiópia* shares with it a number of features. Páez’s *História* ‘invents’ a new historical subject, ‘Ethiopia’. He provides it with a specific history and a mission, constructed from a thorough reading of the ideological discourses of the Solomonic monarchy and indigenous historiographic traditions. With the book ‘Ethiopia’ becomes a ‘manageable’ socio-political entity, with a defined political system, dominating a number of provincias and reynos and having its own geographical boundaries. Hence, the first chapter of the book is dedicated to the “geographical setting and the number and nature of the kingdoms and provinces of the lands of Ethiopia, which is ruled by the Emperor called Prester

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Plate Va (above): Eastern view of the hill of Fremona-Giyorgis, from the road Adwa-Addi Abun.

Plate Vb (centre): Northern view of the two rings of walls of the fortress of Fremona.

Plate Vc (below): View of the top of the hill of Fremona, the church of Giyorgis (St. George) in the rear back.
Plate VIa (above): View of the church of Giyorgis, end 17th century (?), rebuilt 20th century.

Plate VIb (centre left): Tentative location of the cistern of lime and stone of the Jesuit residence, ca. 1629.

Plate VIc (centre right): Rests of the basement of the Jesuit church, ca. 1629.

Plate VIId (below left): Western remparts of the fortress wall, ca. 1624-30.

Plate VIe (below right): Northern remparts of the fortress wall, ca. 1624-30.
Plate VIIa (above): The peninsula of Gororá and the Jesuit locations. Legend: a) tentative location of Gororá Velha (1603-19); b) tentative location of Paez’s church (1619-21); c) Gororá Nova (1626-33) and Susenyos’ palace (1614); d) quarry; e) tentative location of the island given for refugee to the Jesuits; f) modern harbour and village of Gororá.

Plate VIIb (centre): Aerial view of the ruins of Gororá Nova.

Plate VIIc (below left): Facade of the church of São Paulo, Diu, ca. 1602, architect João Martins and others.

Plate VIIId (below centre): Plan of the church of São Paulo, Diu, ca. 1602.

Plate VIIe (below right): Plan of the church of Iyäsus, Gororá Nova, ca. 1629, architect João Martins.
Plate VIIIa (above): Southern view of Susenyos’ palace, 1614, and walls of the Jesuit residence-seminar, 1620s.

Plate VIIIb (centre): Remaining structure of the coffered vault of the altar maior, church of Iyäsus, Gorgora Nova, ca. 1629.

Plate VIIIc (below): View of the vault of the church of Iyäsus, Gorgora Nova, before the collapse in the 1960s.
Moreover, the two narratives share the same purpose, typical of the new treatises born during the Mannerist period: to typify, classify and map the diversity implied under the terms ‘Spain’ and ‘Ethiopia’ and also to present it under a strong moral argument. In both treatises, too, the author becomes a powerful figure, one who possesses a ‘true’ picture of the kingdom and identifies its shortcomings and values. He is advisor to the Prince and instrument of the religious reform in the making.

In opposition to Mariana’s text, however, the História de Etiópia was written in a vulgar language, a fact that places it in relation with most of the historical treatises written by other Jesuit missionaries – which Mariana was not. Moreover, like most of these treatises, the work was never published during the mission’s lifetime. In fact, the use of the vulgar indicates that texts such as the História de Etiópia or the extraordinary História do Malawar by his fellow Gonçalves were principally used for specific missionary projects and were only on a second stage meant for propaganda purposes: first and foremost, they should help in providing accurate information and ways of understanding the societies that the missionaries wanted to transform. I believe that a crucial commitment of the História de Etiópia was to offer a pattern for comprehending Ethiopia’s society and history and an ideology for the mission. A study of its structure (for a schema of the treatise cf. Appendix 9) may illustrate how, in my view, this was accomplished.

The treatise is divided into four, uneven, ‘books’. The first, with its 34 chapters, is the longest one and offers a ‘neutral’ description of Ethiopia. Its first chapter describes the dimensions of the kingdom, following an explanation of the foundation of the monarchy during the time of the Queen of Sheba and then proceeds with extended descriptions on its political features. After that it provides ethnographic sketches and hints to Ethiopian hydrography, flora and fauna, the last seven chapters focusing on the Portuguese diplomatic contacts with Ethiopia and the military expedition of Christovão da Gama. The livro two, with 23 chapters, is a thorough anatomy of Ethiopian Christianity from the Catholic/Jesuit point of view, identifying its ‘goods’ and ‘wrongs’. In the livro three the history of the mission enters centre stage, occupying most of its 21 chapters and finally, the livro four blends local political events (the dynastic successions in the early seventeenth century, revolts under Susenyos) with the progresses of the mission since Páez’s arrival. The livro and

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95 Em que se trata da situaçam e de quantos e quais sejam os reynos e provincias da parte de Ethiopia, que senhorea o Emperador que chamam Preste Joam; RASO II, liv. I, ch. I.

96 Lestringant characterized the new treatises that replaced Renaissance cosmographical discourse as more interested in describing the states and their resources, wealth and power, than in providing a general account of the world; LESTRINGANT, Ecrire le monde à la Renaissance, 336.
the treatise conclude with the opening of the mission of Ancasha (1619) in the Agäw land.

In spite of the diversity of the chapters, Páez composed the work according to a solid structure. His work bears indeed relation to the literary masterpieces that his fellow countrymen and contemporaries produced in Spain during the Siglo de Oro, a number of whom were also born in Madrid or surrounding areas and had also studied at the University of Alcalá de Henares. Accordingly, the structure of the book evolves in a ‘symphonic’ manner; the four books are all different to each other but set to compose an emotional piece. The long ‘opening’ (book one) is dedicated to presenting the setting where events will occur later. In the first proper act (book two) the main elements of tension in the story are revealed, those that will make the drama unfold: Ethiopian Christianity and its ‘heresies’. The third ‘act’ introduces a crescendo in the rhythm of the story as it gives way to the arrival of the Jesuits in Ethiopia under Andrés de Oviedo and to their first struggles and setbacks in the country. The last and concluding ‘act’ is in opposition to the first for its lack of ‘neutral’ stories and its full ‘theatrical’ sense and it also contrasts with the rest because it is by far the most personal piece of the História. Whilst the first part is a ‘cold’ description of Ethiopia the fourth is a ‘warm’ autobiographic-like narrative of the endeavours of Páez and his two Ethiopian alter egos, the God-chosen ‘Emperor’ Susenyos and his brother ras Se’elä Krestos. In this latter part, the dramatic clash between Ethiopian Christianity and Catholicism under the reign of Susenyos takes centre stage and is resolved in favour of the latter. To sum up, the História de Etiópia begins with a sober description of the country and ends with the victory of Catholicism. In this way, the indigenous (Ethiopian) and ‘foreign’ (Portuguese, Jesuits) elements are finally interwoven in one and the same narrative. The Jesuit mission becomes, throughout the narrative, a part of Ethiopian history and it is indeed presented, together with ‘Emperor’ Susenyos’s rule, as the greatest achievement in Ethiopian history. The glorious mythical past of ‘Emperor’ Menelik has a symmetric reflect in the modern achievements of ‘Emperor’ Susenyos. Therefore, Páez’s masterpiece should be seen both as a missionary textbook and as a powerful ideological tool towards creating a missionary-Ethiopian Catholic discourse.

Following this work, the missionaries did not produce any other major literary work until after the expulsion. The pieces written in exile and the rationale behind them

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97 The arid Castilian highlands around Madrid and Toledo where Pedro Páez Jaramillo was born (Olomeda de las Fuentes) gave birth also to among some of the finest writers of the Siglo de Oro: the Jesuit Juan de Mariana (Talavera de la Reina), Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra (Alcalá de Henares, 1547-1616), Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (Madrid, 1562-1635) and Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Santibáñez Villegas (Madrid, 1580-1645). All of them studied at the famed University of Alcalá.
are discussed in Chapter 8. Páez had in fact achieved everything that the mission needed as far as the legitimizing and objectifying discourse goes. The next undertaking in the 

*redução* of Ethiopia was an active reshaping of Ethiopian society and Christianity.

**De-construction**

The de-construction of Ethiopian Christianity by the Jesuits gained momentum with the maturity of the second mission. Then the Jesuits came to define the main targets of their religious mission. In the end, they gathered a long list of themes due to be changed, suppressed or temporarily tolerated from Ethiopian Christianity. It can be assumed that around mid-1615 such a ‘list’ was more or less ready (Table 12).\(^98\) Several factors had been influential in its composition. Firstly, the second mission had inherited major themes issued during Oviedo’s Patriarchate, such as circumcision and the observation of other ‘Mosaic Laws’. To these they added other eminently ‘Pauline’ preoccupations, such as a strong criticism to the dietary prescriptions, the ‘excessive’ fasting of the Ethiopians and the dogma on the single divine nature of Christ itself, which had also come to the fore following a more direct acquaintance by the Jesuits of Ethiopia’s religious particularities. Moreover, another group of themes were strongly influenced by the spirit of Trent that directed towards a major reform of Church (celibacy among priests) and social (indissolubility of marriage) institutions. Still, other reasons pushing the Jesuits to fill the basket of Ethiopia’s heresies could have been more prosaic. Aesthetic reasons, for instance, could have induced them into placing so much emphasis upon details – such the use of wine or hosts in the Catholic way – which, as Leonardo Cohen already studied, were not incompatible with the Roman liturgy.\(^99\) After all, the Jesuits were also moved by an idea typical of the Society and of their time: the unification – according to patterns provided by Rome – of religious rituals and their simplification and standardization. Finally, the negation of some Ethiopian Christian practices was, as Cohen also pointed out, another way of “undermining the Ethiopian priests’ authority” and to strengthen their own influence.\(^100\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12: The ‘errors’ of the Ethiopians as typified during the second mission, 1603-32</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Denial of double nature of Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Denial of the ‘Filioque’</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Theory on the transmission of souls</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Practice of Judaic ceremonies: circumcision, Sabbath, food prescriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Wrong practices during baptism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^98\) In 1610, António Fernandes provided one of the earliest drafts of the list of “heresies” of Ethiopian Christianity: Fernandes to Visitor in India, 3 June 1610, in: RASO XI, doc. 31.


\(^100\) Ibid. 146, 150.
Ignorance of the sacraments of confirmation, confession, extreme unction and penitence
Wrong practices in the Eucharist: use of raisins in wine, leavened bread
Wrong use of ordinations by the metropolitan
Wrong observance of marriage
Wrong ideas on the purgatory
Wrong practice of masses
Dissolution of life among monks and clergy

It was against the background of these “wrongdoings” that the missionaries designed their strategy. The Jesuits made ample use of their scriptural knowledge and dogmatic assertiveness to convince their audience of the “wrongdoings” of Ethiopian Christianity and the virtues of their model of religion. They believed that the change in the native peoples could be achieved by the force of words and by convincing the opponents with a clear exposition of theological doctrines. Suggestion, persuasion and convincing should prevail over forceful methods. In their view, these methods would be even more effective upon groups that, like the Ethiopians, had a basic scriptural knowledge. In 1607, Azevedo portrayed the Ethiopians in the following way:

Since here they don’t learn any other science than the text of the Holy Scriptures, which is the same as ours, and especially the holy Gospels, the epistles of St. Paul and the Psalms, and they all learn it by heart and they also have other books of the Old Testament, but all in hand-written and old parchments, so that to transport the Bible from one place to another an animal is needed ... [however] if one were able to teach them their errors with the help of Scriptures they shall easily surrender.¹⁰¹

When the mission entered its second decade, the Jesuits began what, with the years, was to turn into an outstanding work of hermeneutics, literary criticism and intellectual production. Such a task, which found few parallels in other missions of the Society,¹⁰² had three main focuses: the translation of European texts into Ethiopian languages; the re-writing of local Christian texts; and the composition of new treatises.¹⁰³

The translation of European texts into Ethiopian languages was the task that was given utmost priority and that channelled most of the forces during the first decade and a
half of the mission. The first work to be translated by the missionaries was a version of the *Doctrina Christae* or *Cartilha*, probably the version written by Marcos Jorge (1524-71) and revised by the Jesuit Inácio Martins, which in the East was first adapted to the Tamil language and then to a number of other languages.\(^{104}\) The *Cartilha* was mainly used at the residence schools of Fremona, Gorgora and Qollela to teach the Christian basics to the children and the neophytes.

However, when the first religious disputes began, the Jesuits and their local patrons realized they needed more powerful instruments and from that point onwards they began to introduce into the country the ideas developed in Spain by the theological Schools from Salamanca and Alcalá de Henares (see Appendix 8).\(^{105}\) A study of the choice of titles is in order here.\(^{106}\) Francisco de Toledo (1535-1610), Francisco de Ribera (1537-91) and Juan de Maldonado (1533-83) were the first authors introduced into Ethiopia. They belonged, together with Francisco Suárez, to a generation of Jesuits who had studied or learned the methods and ideas of the Dominicans Francisco de Vitoria (1483/86-1546) and Domingo de Soto (1494-1570), professors of Holy Scriptures at the University of Salamanca.\(^{107}\) Both Soto and Vitoria had formulated influencing theories on the state and rights of the Indians in colonial America\(^ {108}\) and provided a renewed reading of the Scriptures to combat the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Soto also wrote a sound refutation of the Lutheran theories on justification, *De natura et gratia*, that strongly influenced the way their Jesuit disciples faced Lutheran and the other ‘heresies’ encountered in the missions. What their Jesuit disciples did was later spread the theories and methods formulated by this school to the main centres of Jesuit learning at Alcalá, Coimbra, Evora and the Colegio Romano in the Eternal City.


\(^{105}\) Smoothness of communications between Diu and Massawa might have afforded the missionaries to request and receive the books within a time-span of less than a year provided that Goa, or even other Jesuit centres in India, were well furnished with enough copies of the theological treatises wished. The beginning of the translation program around 1614, one year after the celebration of the first religious disputes, seems to indicate indeed that the period between the request of the book and its reception was short.

\(^{106}\) The choice of the titles, however, was not always in the hands of the missionaries themselves but also fell on the Indian Province and the Jesuit Generalate at Rome. This is attested by a passage from a letter by Father de Angelis to Nuno Mascarenhas, provincial in Portugal, complaining that “Titelmans is useless” (*Titelmano não aproveita*); de Angelis, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 59, 465. No reference is provided to which work of the Franciscan theologian Frans Tittelmanns (1502-37) was sent to Ethiopia although the likeliest candidates are the *Collationes quinque super Epistolam ad Romanos Beatii Pauli* (Antwerpen 1530) and the *Elucidatio in omnes Epistolae apostolorum*, (Antwerpen 1328); cf. Stephan MEIER-OESER, “Tittelmann, Frans”, in: Friedrich W. Bautz (ed.), *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Herzberg: Traugott Bautz, 1997, vol. XII, cols. 190-92. Another title that might have been selected in India or Europe – probably in Rome – for the mission could be GIUSTINIANO’s comments to Paul’s Epistles, which first edition of 1613 could have hardly been known to the missionaries for them to have requested it.

\(^{107}\) Toledo and Maldonado had been direct disciples of Vitoria and Soto.
The fact that the texts chosen belonged to Jesuit rather than Dominican scholars was not spurious. No discourse fitted the purposes of the modern missions better than the one produced by the Jesuits themselves. The Jesuit theologians were contemporaries to the missionaries and spoke a similar language. They added a fresher discourse to the Scholastic solidity of Soto and Vitoria, more ready-to-use in the different fronts in which post-Tridentine Catholics faced religious dissent. The language was clearer and the arguments were more focused towards directly confronting and convincing the (Protestant or ‘heretic’) adversaries. Moreover, in Jesuit treatises the complicated Scholastic and Thomistic doctrines that framed the Dominican treatises were abandoned in favour of more simplistic expositions of a single corpus of texts, the Pauline epistles. Although the Dominicans had themselves made ample use of Paul,\(^{109}\) the Jesuits knew that the Apostle provided most of the answers and arguments they needed, and in a much clearer way to the whole Scholastic School. Accordingly, from Toledo and Ribera, both professors at Salamanca, the missionaries translated their commentaries to the Pauline epistles to Romans and Hebrews, and from Maldonado his voluminous Comments to the Four Gospels.\(^{110}\) The translation of the first two titles specifically, with their minute and lengthy readings (883 and 554 pages, respectively) of Paul’s ideas and their extensive thematic indexes, had a clear practical purpose. They should provide polemic and demonstrative arguments to the growing number of clergy and nobility who openly professed Catholic ideas during their discussions with the local learned clergy. There is hence evidence that these and the rest of the treatises were read aloud at the kätäma of Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos.\(^{111}\) Eventually, translation activities attained such a level that in 1615 António Fernandes warned the Jesuit Provincial of India on the issue: Páez thus informed that “[Fernandes] warns that if so many fathers are occupied translating books this would affect the spiritual needs of the Portuguese and the teaching in the seminary”.\(^{112}\)

The missionaries were overtly confident that the refined theology of their peers

\(^{108}\) Cf. Pagden, *The fall of natural man*.

\(^{109}\) Example of the use of St. Paul in Dominican treatises is a ch. of de Soto’s *De iustitia et iure*, Lugduni: Carolum Pesnot, 1582, Libri II: “De Lege Veteri”, Quaest. V: “De preceptis caeremonialibus”, which might have been inspiring for Toledo and Ribera when they wrote their own treatises.

\(^{110}\) It is to be noted that, at least for some titles, the missionaries seem to have made a selection rather than an integral translation; cf. for instance Páez, 1615, in: ADB, *Legajo* 779, 152v.

\(^{111}\) For instance, towards 1614, it was reported that “with the lessons received from these books [i.e. the Jesuit treatises], chiefly the Emperor and Se’elä Krestos were organizing frequent public readings in their rooms and tents, in front of many people, during the spare time, when they were not occupied in the government or in the war” (Com a lição destes livros, que muitos, principalmente o Emperador e Cella Christos faziam continuamente ler em suas salas e tendas, diante de muita gente, todo o tempo que lhes ficava vago dos negocios do governo e da guerra); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXIII.

\(^{112}\) … Pede consideraçam se se ocuparam tantos padres em traduzir livros, porque necessariamente ha de azer alguma falta em acudir ao spiritual dos Portugueses e ao insino do seminario; Páez, 1615, in: ADB, *Legajo* 779, 153r.
and the intellectual superiority of their neophytes would convince their opponents of the
truths of the Pauline-Catholic message,\textsuperscript{113} hence their insistence that “the issues of faith be
only decided by listening and providing valuable arguments”.\textsuperscript{114} In their view, Orthodox
Ethiopians were simple and ignorant people, “who, as they don’t know philosophy at all,
they cannot distinguish between abstract and concrete things”.\textsuperscript{115} Therefore, the ‘reduction’
could be achieved by a clear exposition and repetition of the ‘true’ interpretation of
Scriptures as well as by unveiling the falsehood of the arguments of the contender. The
chief Jesuit exegetical treatises of Ribera and Toledo, in particular those reinforcing the
new spiritual and allegorical vision of Christianity defended by St. Paul in Corinthians and
Hebrews,\textsuperscript{116} were particularly addressed to a church that was categorized as profoundly
influenced by the Mosaic Law. In addition, the last three Jesuit \textit{Commentaria} introduced in
Ethiopia during the late 1610s–early 1620s proceeded from a younger generation of theo-
logians formed at the Jesuit universities: the comments to St. Paul’s epistolary by the Ita-
lian Benedetto Giustiniano (1555-1622), the work by the Portuguese Bras Viegas (1553-99)
on the Apocalypse of St. John and that by the Spaniard Benedicto Pereira (1535-1610) on
the Genesis. These are further confirmation of the exegetical character that most of the
discussions and sermons held in Ethiopia had, along with the interest of the missionaries to
be up to date with the developments of exegetical science in Europe.

It should be stressed that these translations were, like most of the achievements of
the mission, not solitary enterprises. Although the authors credited for the translations
were normally Jesuit missionaries these profited from the help of a team of learned locals
and had the enthusiastic support of \textit{negus} Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos,\textsuperscript{117} who provided the
necessary funds to realise the projects – which demanded important material (paper was
rare and expensive in Ethiopia) and human investments (scribes, local exegetical experts,
local translators etc.).\textsuperscript{118}

The crisis of 1617 and its outcome brought a drastic change to missionary strate-

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{113} The main language of translation was initially the Ge’ez, although in ca. 1616 was issued the first translation into
Amharic, Ethiopia’s ‘lingua franca’. This could be a sign that discussions reached a wider public and other than
traditional Ge’ez experts like \textit{däbtära}, abbots of monasteries and other learned members of the clergy, the Catholic
positions were also defended by lay courtisans and lesser educated clergy.
\bibitem{114} \textit{As cousas da fé não se determinavão \ldots senão ouvindo e dando boas rezões}; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XX.
\bibitem{115} \textit{... Porque como não sabem Philosophy, não fazem diferença de abstractos e concretos}, ca. 1625; \textit{Gouveia, Jornada do Arcebispo
de Goa}, 32. The passage was probably borrowed from Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 249v.
\bibitem{116} Cf. \textit{Boyarin, A Radical Jews}, 8.
\bibitem{117} The missionaries also emphasized that the two rulers had also an active participation in the choice of the theologi-
cal treatises; cf. for instance Luís de Azevedo to Francisco Vieira, Gorgora, 2 June 1614, in: ADB, \textit{Logigio} 779, doc.
17, 109v; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 419.
\bibitem{118} For evidence cf. Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 332-33; Id., 1618, in: RASO X, doc. 53, 410; and Páez, 1615,
\end{thebibliography}
gies. With the defeat of Yolyos and abunä Sem’on balance of power shifted in favour of the Catholics, the number of which had also grown considerably by then. As a consequence, the Catholic religious stand strengthened and its attitude became more aggressive and, as more and more resources of the state were allocated to them, the action of the mission became more overt and wide-ranging. The shift in strategy was also decisively influenced by a change of leadership in the mission. By around 1618, Páez had quit as superior da missão and António Fernandes (1571-1642) assumed the superiorship. The choice was not made at random. Seven years younger than the Castilian but with the same years of experience in Ethiopia, the Portuguese priest became an energetic, decisive and intelligent leader who drove the missionary project forward pushing it to frantic activity on several fronts.\textsuperscript{119} Fernandes abandoned the cautious approach set up by Páez and took the mission to an open confrontation with Ethiopian Christianity, its principal aim being a global abolishment of the main Ethiopian ‘errors’ so as to pave the way for the arrival of the Catholic Patriarch.\textsuperscript{120} Firstly, he turned the mission into an intellectual centre in its own right. Hence, the ‘translating machine’ that characterized the mission in the mid-1610s became, in the following decade, an intellectual-production machine and, as if the Spanish Jesuit theology was not enough to challenge Ethiopian Christianity, the missionaries also turned to producing their own polemical treatises. Indeed, after his return from his failed trip to Spain, Fernandes began to produce a series of treatises condemning Ethiopian ‘errors’ and ‘heresies’ and defending Catholic dogmas. The first was probably the \textit{Flagellum mendaciorum/Magseph Asettat}, a remarkable polemist treatise written in Ge’ez refuting another traditionalist text. Later, came other important works such as revisions of two major bul-

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\item[\textsuperscript{119}] Jesuit sources leave little doubts about Fernandes’ commanding position throughout the 1620s. In 1628, he reported that while not wishing to accept the title of general vicar due to the formal prohibition that professed members of the Society attain this position he still had to cope with “all the burdens of his [the Patriarch’s office]” and that Mendes “placed him in charge of all the things and does nothing without letting me know… helping [Mendes] as an adviser, secretary and coadjutor” \ldots eu me ocupo em servir ao Padre Patriarcha em todas as causas ecclesiasticas, que ainda que num aceitei o officio de vigario geral… tenho porem toda sua carga; por sua senhoria tudo descarregar sobre mi e nam fazer alguma sem me dar parte \ldots aidingandoo como assessor, ou administrador, ou coadiutor\ldots”; António Fernandes to Superior General, 25 June 1628, Emfraz, in: RASO XII, doc. 77, 290-91. Three years later, Mendes informed the Superior General that Fernandes “takes care of most of the tasks, the examination and instruction of the priests and monks who will be ordained, he deals with their petitions [?] on ecclesiastic causes. The father shows particular zeal in sending priests and monks who had been properly instructed to different parts so they can baptize and confess and give the communion to those they can reach” \ldots carrega a mayor parte dos negocios, examens e doctrina dos clérigos e frades, que se vam ordenar e tratar de suas demandas em causas ecclesiasticas. Tem o padre muito zelo de mandar clérigos e frades bem instruídos a diversas partes para baptizarem e confessarem e darem a comunhão aos que puderem abranger \ldots”; Afonso Mendes to Superior General, 8 July 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 400.
\item[\textsuperscript{120}] The Jesuit uncompromising approach finds direct evidence in a few annecdotes mentioned in the annual letters. In 1620, local priests invited the Jesuits to take communion together and faced their refusal; Azevedo, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 58, 462. Towards the end of the decade, when the kingdom was on the verge of a civil war, the missionaries closed the doors to a compromise (Almeida calls it a “concordate”) sponsored by many a Catholic to blend Catholic dogmas with Alexandrian practices; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXV.
\end{enumerate}
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works of Ethiopian Christianity, the *Haymanotā Abāw*, i.e. ‘Faith of the Fathers’, and the *Senkessar*. In the first, Fernandes – and his aides – displayed all the skills they had. Although like most of the Jesuit production in Ethiopia today the work is lost it appears as a compelling instance of textual hermeneutics, literary criticism and scriptural erudition. Accordingly, Fernandes purified the original text from the ‘false amendments’ that Ethiopian Christians would have done throughout the time and added one important Roman Catholic milestone, Leo’s epistle to Flavian. The missionaries did not conceive these ‘surgical’ interventions over Ethiopia’s literary corpus as censorships or modifications but as a legitimate way to render the texts to their original Catholic state. Hermeneutics became a powerful tool in the ‘reduction’ of Ethiopia.

Secondly, Fernandes guided the mission to expand its activities as well as its geographic scope. Since the time of the envoy of a Patriarch was known, around 1622, Susenyo gave him full ecclesiastic powers. He acted *de facto* as Patriarch *in absentia* and was in charge of examining and approving those who were later to receive new orders from the Catholic Patriarch. Fernandes also extended the mission’s tasks and worked to reach the countryside. Activity increased at the residences of Fremona and Gorgora, where the number of children studying at their schools almost tripled between 1616 and 1626 (Table 15). Even more remarkable were the new missions made in the countryside, which had a double purpose. On the one hand, once the Jesuits became the leading clergy in the kingdom and the political shield had expanded to the whole state, movements across the state increased. The missionaries aimed at bringing their apostolate to as many areas as possible, a condition that became imperative once the local clergy was deemed unworthy of serving its people. On the other hand, rural field trips searched the subjugation to Rome of one of the bulwarks of Ethiopian Christianity, monasticism, which had largely been ignored hitherto by the mission. In this way, in 1624, four missionaries who had just arrived in Ethiopia were sent to areas in the north of strong monastic presence: Amba Sānayti, Tāmben and Gāralta. During the same year the Jesuits carried out two defying actions, one in the important monastery of Enda Abba Gārima in Tegray and another in Amba Sānayti.

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121 “And he [Susenyo] gave me [Fernandes] full powers over ecclesiastic matters, over all the monasteries and churches and so I use of it, dismissing the superiors who do not want to receive the holy faith and replacing them with those who receive and teach its doctrines” (… e a mim deu poder sobre todo o ecclesiastico, sobre todos os moasteiros e igrejas, e assim coro com elle depando os superiories dellas que nam quizerem receber a santa fe e pondo os que a recibem e ensinam); Fernandes, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 66, 509-10.

122 Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 424r.

123 Gaspar Paes to Francisco de Vergara, 15 June 1625, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 255r-v.
The first action was described in detail in the annual letters and seems to provide the general pattern of how the missionaries ‘reduced’ monastic communities. Firstly, once within the monastery’s church, the Jesuit Tomé Barneto had placed above the traditional tabot a pedra de ara (i.e. altar) to conform with Roman liturgy and officiated a Catholic mass. Subsequently, the Catholic priest desecrated the tabot, held in great esteem in the monastery, for which, due to the mounting resistance, he had to count with the support of the forces of the blattengeta of governor Qeba Krestos. In the missionaries’ narrative Barneto would have found in the interior of the tabot nothing else than “a stick of bamboo large as a finger and long as an elbow”, thereby also deceiving the popular belief that tabot contained treasures. The action was concluded by a speech where the Jesuit accused the monks of officiating over “a filthy altar full of superstitions and evident relics of Judaism”. He further added: “What is this bamboo? A figure made of a stick of Moses and Aram. And the box where it was hidden was a replica of the Arch of the Covenant; in all you are Judaic, in circumcision, in the veils and curtains that you place before the altars, and even in this arch and stick that you keep inside”. When following this iconoclastic ceremony and once the Jesuit priest had left the monks re-used the tabot, the soldiers of the governor took it and burned it publicly at the governor’s kätäma.

In parallel, under the attentive view of their Jesuit advisors, Susenyos and Se’élà Krestos began to enforce a rigid pro-Catholic policy, which turned into a full-scale repression of traditionalists. These measures both reflected and reinforced the religious divide that was building up within the kingdom. The first signs came during the debates held between 1613-14, when initially, the repressive hand of the negus and royal officials (azzaj) turned less against the traditionalists as against those who, having been taught the Catholic ‘truths’, still showed ambiguity or hesitated between the two faiths. Accordingly, in early 1613, a monk who had offended the champion of Catholicism in the court abba Marca and who was not able to take a solid stand concerning the Christological dogma of the two natures “different and perfect” (distintas e perfeitas) in Christ was initially con-

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124 In the text the Father is wrongly called Jacome Barneto; Manoel Barradas, 22 June 1626, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 469r.
125 … Hum bambu de grossura de hum dedo e cumprimento de hum covado; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. X.
126 … Altar immundo com supersitções e relíquias tam claras do judaísmo. Este bambu que cousa hé? senão huma figura de vara de Moises e Aram, e a caixa, em que estava, outra da Arca do Testamento, em tudo sois iudeus, na circuncisão, nos veos e cortinas, que pondes diante dos vossos altares, e até nesta arca e vara que dentro nella guardais; Ibid.
127 A further evidence of repression of monastic circles in RASO VI, liv. VI, ch. XV. Around the same time, Father Diogo de Mattos was at the centre of a similar action, probably in Tegray as well, when he unveiled some figures that the monks pretended were sleeping saints in order to “cheat the people” (enganauão ao pouo); cf. Paes, 1625, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 252r-v.
demned to a death sentence that was reduced to whipping.\textsuperscript{128} When, after the rainy season, discussions moved to Achafer, in Agäw land, a learned man who had confessed two natures in Christ and later had retracted (\textit{linha mudado}) received a similar punishment.\textsuperscript{129}

However, the more determined decisions were taken after the traditionalists’ defeat of 1617. In 1620, following discussions with a monk who sustained the traditional Ethiopian theory that Christ was the Son of God by grace, Susenyos issued a decree forbidding the practice of Sabbath. This was the first of a series of decrees aimed at undermining the backbone of Ethiopian Christianity and then shortly after, another decision compelled people to work during the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{130} On 31 October 1621, after a successful campaign of Se’elä Krestos in Damot, Susenyos’ cousin and close officer, \textit{blattengeta} Mälke’a Krestos, made a solemn proclamation of Catholic faith at Dänqäz in front of the principals of the court and the kingdom.\textsuperscript{131} The speech of Susenyos’ kin, who had only recently adopted Catholic positions,\textsuperscript{132} is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it proclaimed again the theory of two natures in Christ but stressing in particular that it was the original faith of the Ethiopian Church and not an imposed faith.\textsuperscript{133} Secondly, it voiced the first direct accusations against the monastic community and the clergy in general (dissolution of life, ignorance of chastity), which were to become a leitmotif in successive encounters. Finally, azzaj Tino added a severe punishment against disobedient supporters of Ethiopian Christianity, which also inaugurated an unusually repressive period for the traditionalists. Tino proclaimed that those accused of apostatizing would loose their belongings in favour of the accusers and, eventually, also their lives. The following day on 1 November, Susenyos made an open profession of Catholicism at Azäzo and around the same time prohibited that the name of Dioscorus was revered in the local Ethiopian mass. In March 1622, Jesuit sources recorded another pro-Catholic speech by the \textit{negus}. Catholicism was turning less into an option as an obligation and the traditionalists began, for the first time, to fear that to sustain their traditional faith could have a high cost indeed.\textsuperscript{134}

Thereafter and until the coming of the Patriarch, a series of anti-Orthodox meas-

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\item \textsuperscript{128} \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XX; Almeida’s chronicle leaves no doubts that the monk was not punished for defending Ethiopian Christianity but for not taking an open religious stand.
\item \textsuperscript{129} \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XXI.
\item \textsuperscript{130} \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XXX.
\item \textsuperscript{131} “Catholic lords, with many other nobles from the court, Catholic and heretics” (… \textit{Todos senhores catolicos, com outros muitos grandes da corte catolicos e hereges}); \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XXXII-XXXIII.
\item \textsuperscript{132} In 1620 he still led a mutiny against the Jesuits; Fernandes, 1620, in: \textit{RASO XI}, doc. 57, 453.
\item \textsuperscript{133} The Catholic neophyte thus argued: “neither this faith [on the two natures of Christ] came from overseas by way of trafficking” (… \textit{Nem esta fé nos vem do mar chatinando}); \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XXXIII.
\item \textsuperscript{134} E.g. \textit{RASO VI}, \textit{liv. VII}, ch. XXXIII.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
ures issued by Susenyos succeeded. Around April 1622, at Foqära, the negus confessed for the first time to Páez and renounced all his wives except for the first, Seltan Mogäsa Wäld Sahlä. This was just the previous step for declaring that marriages should be permanent. Around mid-1624, Susenyos issued a famous decree denigrating the figure of past metropolitans. In the document, the faith the metropolitans represented was deemed false because it was inherited from Dioscorus, their lives were presented as dissolute and their attitude towards their servants as despotic and prone to selling ecclesiastic positions. Ethiopian Christian hierarchy, and the part of the clergy that did not accept Catholicism, was therefore unworthy of its position and should be converted either by force or be deposed of its functions.

**Replacement**

The arrival of the Patriarch Afonso Mendes in Ethiopia in 1625 sanctioned *de facto* the replacement of the Ethiopian Christianity that had been taking place during the preceding years and *de iure* installed a new Catholic hierarchy in the kingdom. This was indeed a momentous event which deserves due attention. For the Jesuits it was the culmination of two decades of intensive work, the outcome of an intelligent method, one that blended discrete lobbying, the work behind the curtains, with a patient attitude. In their turn, for those Ethiopians who were friendly towards the mission, the arrival of Mendes, with his important train of servants and fashionable garments, was the sign that their choice had been the right one, that Catholicism was the right religion and that the coming of the missionaries indeed announced an era of prosperity. Moreover, for those less enthusiastic about the mission it could also have been a good reason to abandon doubts and to join in for, as Almeida put it when describing another achievement of the missionaries, “this faith could [not] be wrong, since God made so many favours to it and to its ministers”. The arrival was even more cherished as the death of the last acting metropolitan and the absence of a replacement had kept the country without ordinations for eight years.

For the veteran professor of Holy Scriptures and doctor in theology from Evora, Afonso Mendes, then in his mid-40s, the arrival in Ethiopia was the beginning of a huge personal and collective challenge. With the exception of Oviedo’s short-lived and ill-fated mission, it was the first time the Society of Jesus took charge of a Patriarchate. The Jesuits

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136 RASO VI, Liv. VII, ch. XXXIV; Liv. VIII, ch. VII.
had faced other challenges elsewhere, they had managed a number of bishoprics in Asia and America, reached cardinal dignities in Europe and managed huge dioceses in Latin America but they had never been alone at the head of an entire national church. For all that, during the short time of seven years that it was active, the Patriarchate moved between improvisation, harsh reformism and royal authoritarianism. This mixture oriented the steps of the Patriarch and gave his measures force during the initial years but was probably a crucial factor in preparing its sudden and rapid dismissal in 1632.

Mendes, helped by António Fernandes as his semi-official vicar, brought the reform of Ethiopian Christianity to its limits. The contention of the earlier decades was abandoned and the missionaries came instead to join a more aggressive, ‘militaristic’, approach. The measures against traditional Christian practices and beliefs and their systematic replacement by Catholic patterns ensued at a fast pace. Towards December 1625, the Patriarch began to attribute the first ecclesiastical orders. Those whom previous metropolitans had already ordained had to be examined by the Patriarch or his aides and receive new orders *sub conditione*, as earlier ordinations were deemed illegitimate. Then on 11 February 1626, Susenyos along with the entire court made an open vow of obedience to the pope at the hands of Mendes. Subsequently, with the full machinery of the state on the mission’s side the ‘heretic’ practices that the Jesuits had been studying, classifying and reframing earlier in written form began to be systematically abolished or changed. Local fasting practices, which the Jesuits had always considered to be excessive, literal and brutal, began to be celebrated “according to the Roman way” and the traditional Ethiopian fasting days and calendar were adapted to the Roman tradition; the fasting day on Wednesday was moved to Saturday and the main religious celebrations were recalculated so as to follow the Roman calendar. In its turn, religious dissent was punishable by death. Likewise, local marriage practices – levirate, concubinage, and dissolution of marriage – were severely punished and the canons of Trent on this issue were implemented. An example of the latter can be found in 1629 when the intended marriage of Susenyos’s daughter, Wängelawit, to her lover and companion for years, *ras bitwëddäd* Zä Krestos, was banned on the grounds that the latter had already been married to her sister, Mäläkotawit and that Wängelawit herself was still married to the then governor of Tegray, *dàjjaz-

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138 … Nem podia deixar de ser verdadeira esta fé, pois Deus a ella e a seus ministros fazia tantos favores; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. II.
139 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXI.
140 This encounter was recreated in a French engraving of the early eighteenth century; cf. Plate XIVc.
141 For instance, Almeida informed that “durante Lent people began to fast according to the Roman way” (*Começouse este anno a jejuar a quaesma ao modo de Roma*); RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIV.
The liturgy and masses progressively began to be celebrated also following the Roman ritual. To this purpose in 1626 António Fernandes started translating the Roman missal, probably following the latest version prepared under Pope Clement VII in 1604. This affected initially only a few churches – those that had been built by the Jesuits for that purpose. Thus, in 1628 “divine office was celebrated in various parts with great solemnity because there were churches already prepared for that, which had been properly arranged, as well as chapels of good musicians at Gorgora and Qollela and principally at Gännätä Iyäsus”.

However, shortly after, the number of available churches grew along with the number of offices celebrated following the Roman ritual. Indeed, since the arrival of Patriarch Mendes, the Jesuits had set up an intense programme of church building throughout the country that had a principal purpose of creating buildings fitting the Tridentine and Jesuit architectural cannons. The new buildings were to permit the missions and their local aides to officiate the Roman mass in a proper way and also to a growing number of brethren. Local church architecture, as the missionaries repeatedly affirmed, did not fit the purposes of the mission and a number of indigenous churches were closed and Ethiopian Christian ritual forbidden.

During rural visits, however, it is assumed that the Jesuits were also obliged to officiate in indigenous churches, although the use of the Roman ritual was then stressed. In 1629, for instance, the priest Bruno Bruni carried out a rural mission in Gojjam “officiating with due decency and arrangement of hosts, wine, vestments and other paraphernalia used on the altar”. When architecture was missing, the appropriate liturgical setting was provided by an obsessive use of Catholic paraphernalia and liturgical elements, such as proper wine and hosts made with European instruments (ostiarios). The tabot, the local altars, were dismantled and replaced by altars made according to the European tradition. 

Rural missions continued to target chiefly monastic communities. The goal of the Jesuits, though never achieved, was reforming life at the monasteries according to the Tridentine decisions: enclosure was imposed, separation of monks and nuns and some traditional practices forbidden. The missionaries also tried to impose the organizational struc-

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142 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI.
143 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VI.
144 Almeida thus informed that, around 1629, “masses are no longer celebrated in the traditional form and churches are closed down” (se não dizem as missas antigas e estão as igrejas fechadas); RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI.
145 … Dizendo missa com a devida decencia e concerto de hostias, vinho, vestimentas e os mais ornamentos do altar; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XII.
146 Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 425r.
ture of the Catholic Church. Temperance in legislating was only observed in minor cases and even when this happened it was for pragmatic reasons. Marriage among those priests who were already ordained before the arrival of Mendes was hence tolerated only because of the lack of availability of priests.

Soon the number of Catholic priests also increased with local recruits educated and formed under the direct supervision of the Jesuits. In 1627, Mendes had already ordained over 300 candidates to priesthood and the Jesuits began to use, among those ordained, those who were “especially zealous and well instructed” to help them in apostolic tasks. This group considerably and largely contributed to the ‘reduction’ campaigns in the countryside, which in 1628 reportedly affected more than 100,000 people (cf. Table 16). Catholic zeal also reached pagan areas and around 1624 Se’elä Krestos burned a “idolatrous temple” (temple idolatra) called Machoca in Tanqha, Agäu land.

Jesuit political ideas and the Ethiopian state

Jesuit political discourse

The political role played by the Jesuits in Ethiopia has been a much-debated issue. Scholars have both criticized and lauded the political and religious achievements of the Jesuit missionaries. However, only recently attempts have been made to approach the mission’s ‘political’ aspects from a more analytical perspective and focusing in one of its fundamental themes, the relationship between the missionaries and the Ethiopian state. The Russian scholar Sevir Chernetsov argued in a concise article that the missionaries offered the welcoming negus Ya’eqob and Susenyos two important assets: ‘consistent support’ – in opposition to the independent and often rebellious religious circles – and the skills to bring a project of state unification and centralization to conclusion:

In the Jesuits he [Susenyos] saw both the famous discipline of the particularly disciplined Order and complete and perfect dogmatic unity. Besides, Susenyos considered the Jesuits to possess one more attractive quality, very important for him and coming already not from their internal structure, but from the position, in which they found

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147 About 1627, for instance, a campaign at the monastery of Däbrä Libanos, spiritual centre of the Ethiopian Church, aimed – with little success, as it seems – at rearranging the churches around parishes; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 401.
148 A Jesuit justified this fact in the following way: “Otherwise soon there wouldn’t be enough parish priests to minister in the numerous churches of the kingdom, which would be cause of great scandal […] Duas maneira não se acharido tam cedo paroços que pudessem acudir às muitas igrejas que havia e seguir-se hia notavel escandalo”; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXI.
149 RASO VI, liv. IX, ch. II.
150 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VI; Antonio Antica to Propaganda Fide, 1627, Goa, in: RASO XII, doc. 65, 228.

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themselves in Ethiopia. They came out as consistent supporters of the autocratic power of the Ethiopian kings and in this respect won a great deal in the eyes of Susenyo compared to the Ethiopian ecclesiastics.\textsuperscript{132}

In another passage, Chernetsov summarizes the reasons for the “reciprocal attraction” between Jesuits and central political power:

Ethiopian kings, resenting the highhandedness of feudal lords, believed the European absolute monarchies to be a dream come true, a triumph of power bestowed upon the monarchs by Gods, of stable law and order. On the other hand, the Jesuits considered an Ethiopian king converted to Catholicism as the best tool to propagate their religion throughout the whole country. And here as well the aspiration of king to autocracy and the establishment of firm control over the feudal lords corresponded completely to the intentions of the Jesuits.\textsuperscript{133}

In his dissertation Hervè Pennec also discussed the political and religious implications of Susenyos’ progressive conversion to Catholicism.\textsuperscript{154} To begin with Pennec drew a dividing line between the intentions of the missionaries (religious reform) and the negus (political absolutism) and then enquired as to which side held the upper hand: did the Jesuits use Susenyos to enable them to enforce their religious project or rather was the ruler who used them to carry out a state’s centralisation already in the making in the sixteenth century? According to the author “The King’s strategy [vis à vis the Jesuits] seems to have been that of enforcing a series of measures in order to be able to pursue his own interest and to strengthen his personal power”.\textsuperscript{155} Actions such as the progressive movement of his kätäma closer to the residence of Gorgora or the foundation of Gännätä Iyäsus were aimed at achieving “a more effective control of the missionaries”.\textsuperscript{156} Nevertheless, according to this view the Jesuits also would have managed, little by little, to introduce their ideals (le religieux catholique) into the kingdom (espace royal). The author argues, accordingly, that whilst in the 1610s and early 1620s there was a clear use (instrumentalisation unilatérale) of the missionaries by Susenyos, subsequently this changed and the Jesuits also had the chance to use the negus for the sake of their religious project. This shift culminated in the public alle-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{133} Ibid. 208.
\item \textsuperscript{155} La stratégie du roi semble avoir été la mise en place d’un certain nombre d’actions visant en premier lieu ses propres intérêts et permettant le renforcement de son pouvoir personnel; Ibid. 187.
\item \textsuperscript{156} … Un meilleur contrôle des jésuites; Ibid. 207, 218.
\end{itemize}
giance to Catholicism by Susenyos in 1621, which would be the moment when the two parties or forces were to reach a balance of respective powers (rééquilibrage des rapports de forces).

These two analyses have drawn our attention towards important aspects previously neglected by historiography. They have shown that the history of the mission can be further understood by connecting it to (local) political history and have also provided interesting hypotheses for the understanding of the successes and pitfalls of the Jesuit mission and the complex relationship between the Ethiopian Princes and the missionaries. However, in light of the theoretical and empirical evidence available, the conclusions and methods they showed need revision. As far as theoretical aspects are concerned, the two studies seem to have incurred a double confusion – common in scholarly narratives dealing with the Jesuit Order. Accordingly, they have amalgamated, on the one hand, political absolutism and political unification and, on the other, Machiavellianism and Jesuit political ideology.\(^{157}\) A look at the intellectual background of the Jesuit missionaries could help to clarify this. Such an excursion will also lead us towards a better definition of the overall ‘political’ goals of the mission.

The Society of Jesus played an important role in framing European political discourse in the post-Tridentine era. This came about mostly through the work of Spanish Jesuits formed at the Castilian Universities of Alcalá and Salamanca. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Luis de Molina, Francisco Suárez and Juan de Mariana renewed the field of ‘practical Theology’ as had been formulated by the Dominicans from the School of Salamanca, such as Bartolomé de Medina, Domingo de Soto and Francisco de Vitoria. These Jesuit thinkers entered a similar path to what their fellows Ribera, Toledo, Maldonado and once again Suárez had done with the Thomistic doctrines on Dogmatic theology: they added to the Scholastic firmness of de Soto and Vitoria a more modern discourse, in accordance with the society they were living in.\(^ {158}\) As the historian Dempf emphasized, in opposition to the preceding ethical-juridical discourse on the state, the Jesuits went on to analyse and define the tangible structure of the modern state and of political life and, eventually, to propose ideas to act upon its problems and shortcomings.\(^ {159}\) Theirs was a

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159 I paraphrased here Dempf’s analysis of Mariana: Im Gegensatz zu den ethisch-juristischen Staatstheorien betrachtet Mariana
theoretical as well as a practical endeavour. As instructors of princes – Mariana, for instance, was ‘instructor’ (preceptor) of the future Felipe III – and sensitive to the people’s will, the Jesuit scholars tried to define the rights of the citizens – setting the foundations for the modern human rights and democratic ideology, – the optimal functioning of the monarchies and the limitations and duties of royal power.

Yet more importantly for the present argument, Jesuit political discourse was also the Tridentine Catholic response to the ‘secular’ absolutist theories developed by Nicolò Machiavelli and Jean Bodin in their respective works Il Principe (1513) and La République (1576). For Jesuit political scholars the need for the Prince to defend the Catholic faith and the rights of its subjects were no less important than the idea to reinforce the state and its head. This ‘social’ sensitivity of Jesuit political theory emphasized the idea of the mass of citizens as a ‘moral person’ and as the true depository of political legitimacy. Suárez thus formulated the anti-Machiavellian formula Populus ipse princeps supremus naturaliter, ‘the society is by nature the supreme Prince’: the powers of the Prince were defined by the people and did not emerge, as Machiavelli and Bodin would have argued, from the Prince itself. His fellow Molina went even further and in the De justitia et jure propounded a drastic limitation of the power of the state over religious issues and also became known for his theory on the libero arbitrio, a forerunner of the modern theories on liberty and freedom. Ribadeneyra, considered by the German historian Dempf as the most ‘machiavelianist among the antimachiavellianists’, added nonetheless to his main political treatise, the subtitle “Against what Nicolò Machiavelli and current political scientists teach” (Contra lo que Nicolas Machiavelo y los politicos deste tiempo enseñan) and considered that the main virtues of the Christian rulers were to be justice, temperance, prudence, and courage. But anti-Machiavellian doctrines may have perhaps reached their zenith with the work of Juan de Mariana, who, after completing his masterwork on the history of Spain, wrote De rege

\[\text{den Staat immer in seiner konkreten Form; Alois DEMPF, Christliche Staatsphilosophie in Spanien, Salzburg: Anton Pustet, 1937, 113.}\]

\[\text{Ibid. 80.}\]


\[\text{De justitia et jure, Choncae (Cuencra): 1593-1600.}\]

\[\text{Luis MOLINA, Concordia liberti arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescencia, presidencia, predestinatione, et reprobatione, ad nonnullas praeceps partes D. Thomae articolos, Olyspionc: Apud Antonium Riberium, 1588.}\]


\[\text{Dempf defined Mariana as one who “led the anti-machiavelian doctrines to their zenith and, with his historical-}\]
et regis institutione, a handbook offering a precise definition of the rights and duties of the Prince and the citizens, which also became the source of polemic in Europe because, under some circumstances, it justified regicide.\textsuperscript{166}

Therefore, whilst the Jesuits were strongly attached to defending the monarchical state as the best political system, they were no advocates of absolutism and tyrannical, autocratic, power. Popular imagination has come to identify them with the second goal, though this has been more by popular mythmaking than by actual understanding of their political ideology.\textsuperscript{167} Moreover, if anything seems to have defined the Jesuit political school it was its titanic effort to reform – a goal that was in part achieved – the model of absolutism that was imposed in all European states during Renaissance times. After the great Jesuit theorists, the absolutist monarchy was replaced by the model of a reformed monarchy, attentive to the rights of its citizens and zealous to the propagation of faith.

![Figure 9: The Spanish political school and the missionaries in Ethiopia](image)

It was such anti-machiavellian Spanish School that shaped the political thinking of the Jesuit missionaries and, therefore, it is by looking at these theories and in the way they were adapted to the Ethiopian landscape that we are more likely to find responses to the...
‘political’ projects and ideas that unfolded during the mission. Indeed, the political thought of the Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits who went to Ethiopia is reflected in the curriculum of its most influential men. The four men who had the most active role as superiores or visitadores of the mission and guided the reins of the Ethiopian project, Pedro Páez, António Fernandes, Manoel de Almeida and Afonso Mendes, received in a direct or indirect way the influence of the four Spanish ‘political’ masters as is shown in Figure 9. Páez studied at Alcalá when Suárez taught there and it seems reasonable to assume that he also attended some of the courses of the Doctor Eximius. Similarly, as it has been suggested earlier, he may have been acquainted with the work, although still then in the making, of his fellow Castilians Ribadeneyra and Mariana. The latter two, albeit never teaching at any University in the Iberian Peninsula, nonetheless, influenced the programmes imparted at the rooms of Alcalá, Evora and Coimbra. However, it was the other three missionaries above-mentioned with whom the jurist-theologians were closer. They belonged to a younger generation than Páez: Fernandes, who arrived in Ethiopia around the same time as the Castilian, was seven years his senior and Mendes and Almeida fifteen and sixteen years, respectively. They therefore joined the Portuguese universities during the years of the most energetic activity by the Spanish theorists, when Suárez, Molina, Ribadeneyra and Mariana were composing their major works, which occurred within a short span of time, between 1588 and 1612. In some cases, such as in those of Suárez and Molina, they were also testing their theological and political theories at the chairs of Prima Theologica in the Portuguese university rooms. The years of studies spent in Evora and Coimbra, where Mendes, and perhaps Fernandes, also taught, probably put the three Jesuits in contact with the Spanish masters. Moreover, the lengthy stay of Suárez at Coimbra – where he occupied the chair of Prima Theologica from 1597 to his death in 1617 – secured the influence of the Doctor Eximius over a whole generation of missionaries. Regarding this later aspect, it must be noted that when Mendes was preparing to go to Ethiopia, Philip IV gave him permission to take the library of Suárez with him to the mission – a property which was then an issue of vivid contention between the Colegio de Artes (managed by the Jesuits) and the University. The project was likely never put totally in practice although whilst on the way to Ethiopia Mendes allegedly transported an important number

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167 On this particular, cf. below Chapter 7, n. 25.
168 Suárez’s De legibus was the outcome of the classes held in 1601-03 at Coimbra, where he also completed, in 1602 and 1607, the two last and most important manuscripts; cf. P. MONNOT et al., “Suarez, Francois”, col. 2646 and Francisco SUAREZ, Tractatus de Legibus, ac Deo Legislatore [i.e. De Legibus], ed. Luciano Pereña et al., vol. 1, Madrid: CSIC, 1971 (Coimbra: Didacum Gomez Loureyro, 1612), xxvi-xxxvii.
of books.\textsuperscript{169}

Last but not least, a fifth missionary, from the ‘second rank’, but with important achievements in Ethiopia, Diogo de Mattos, shared an identical background. Mattos was born the same year as Mendes\textsuperscript{170} with whom he also studied philosophy at Coimbra. Later he taught theology himself at Goa and in 1620 joined the mission. Whilst during the first years in the mission Mattos was ‘isolated’ at Fremona, from 1625 he moved, by petition of Susenyos, to the kätäma in Dänqäz and remained at the side of the negus until his death. Therefore, during the years of major religious reforms, he was the Jesuit ‘insider’ at the royal court.

It is time now to see how Jesuit political ideology unfolded during the Ethiopian mission. What role did it play in defining missionary strategies? Moreover, if we thus assume that the missionaries were no keen ambassadors of autocratic and absolutist theories, what else could the Ethiopian rulers have seen in them? What services did the missionaries offer to their Ethiopian patrons and what were the expectations of the latter?

\textbf{European influences in Ethiopian society before the mission}

The political role played by the missionaries in Ethiopia should not be exaggerated, nor the expectations the Ethiopian rulers had put in them. It has often been claimed that the early-seventeenth century Ethiopian rulers were avid of reforming the structure of the state to achieve a higher centralisation and that this unfulfilled desire brought them to embrace the missionaries’ cause. However, authors have been less keen in explaining with empirical evidence how a group of European priests without any experience in the country could have helped the negus in achieving such ambitious goals at all. Yet, the missionaries had something to offer; albeit not of the kind it has been hitherto said. In fact, if we approach the history from a more long-term perspective and take into account factors other than the negus, we shall see that neither the unexpected arrival of the missionaries nor their immediate success was attributable to a magic capacity by the Jesuits to ‘produce’ power. It may finally appear that the missionaries did indeed play a positive role in orienting the political drive of the Ethiopian kingdom, although not by creating an autocratic ‘Machiavellian’ negus as some have imagined was the case.

The rapid immersion of the Jesuits in Ethiopia from the arrival of Pedro Páez on-

\textsuperscript{169} In 1623, the already elected Patriarch Mendes, asked King Felipe IV (III of Portugal) whether he still could take such a library; Afonso Mendes to Felipe IV, 18 February 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 4, 11.
\textsuperscript{170} For the date, I rely on a biographical sketch reported in Afonso Mendes to fathers of the Portuguese Province, 1 December 1639, Goa, in: RASO XIII, doc. 47, 180-81. Sommervogel, who is often inaccurate in this respect,
wards occurred after a long period of contact between the Portuguese and the Ethiopian Solomonic kingdom. The period preceding the mission has been outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 but it may still be worth recalling here some elements from this history. Since the Portuguese set up a rule of their own in the Indian Ocean in around 1515, human and epistolary exchanges between Portugal, its dominions in India and the ‘Prester John’ were frequent. The envoys running back and forth to Ethiopia and the number of Portuguese living in Ethiopia grew throughout the century. These exchanges assured that the negus and the Ethiopian court were informed about the life and the socio-cultural developments in Europe and in Portuguese India. Now, monarchies are always weary of the exotic; kings fancy being surrounded by foreigners as well as to adopt distant and distinctive techniques, modes and styles. Royal power tends to appropriate the exotic and turn it into symbolic cum political power. It can be contended that at the time of Portuguese expansion, the Portuguese played a primordial role in providing the Ethiopian monarchy with exotic elements that increased its own symbolic power. Such a role was also an important asset used by the missionaries and will be further studied in the next chapter. What I would like to stress here is that the increasing Portuguese presence at the Ethiopian court and in parts of the kingdom was not inconsequential; it enforced, it would seem, important changes in the cultural and political life of the kingdom.

Firstly, the arrival of the Portuguese coincides with the period of literary ‘Renaissance’ in Ethiopia. From the sixteenth century onwards, Ethiopian royal chronicles began to be systematically written and the same period witnessed the production of chief theological treatises. The Italian scholar Enrico Cerulli thus emphasized that the Portuguese and Jesuit presence provoked “a strong movement of cultural renewal, which had also enduring consequences”. Indeed, historical evidence indicates that the Portuguese presence was not alien to those developments. During his long stay at the Ethiopian court between 1520 and 1524, Francisco Alvares helped the secretaries of the negus in writing letters to Europe and also made friends with Ethiopian literates such as the monk Enbaqom. Enbaqom could have been one of the first men to respond to a new, more cosmopolitan spirit brought into Ethiopian society by the contacts with the Europe of the humanism and the discoveries. Himself a foreigner, of Yemenite origin, he knew several languages, in-

including Portuguese, and was the author or translator of important religious treatises. Later, as we saw above, the Jesuits were able to befriend a number of Ethiopian *letrados*, ‘learned men’, with a similar profile to that of Enbaqom. One of them, *azzaj* Tino, was a highly esteemed intellectual, author of the first and major part of the chronicle of Susenyos and another was *abba* Marca, defined as “the greatest religious scholar in Ethiopia”. Moreover, by this time, Jesuit sources inform of a number of locals knowing or willing to learn the Portuguese language. Therefore, by all accounts during the sixteenth century there was an intense communication and mutual interest between European visitors and some learned men living at or close to the Ethiopian court. Such a ‘dialogue’ may have introduced some cultural patterns, such as Western historiography, and by consequence inspired its developments within the indigenous context.

A second transformation that might have been related to the Portuguese presence in Ethiopia was that occurred in the rites and protocol followed by the Ethiopian negus. The symbolism of negus Lebnä Dengel as described by Alvares seems to correspond with earlier Ethiopian descriptions and closer to other systems of divine kingship in Africa: invisibility of the king, complex ritual system to access to the ruler, symbolic avoidance etc. Yet, his son and successor already introduced significant changes. Although Gälawdewos still greeted the missionaries in a traditional way – hidden behind a silk curtain – he was already said to have been “hispanized” (*fecho a costumbre españoles*). In support of this, Páez provided a valuable description about the progressive tarnishing of the traditional ritual system surrounding the negus:

These traditions [ritual avoidance of the king etc.] were partly abandoned under David [i.e. Lebnä Dengel]..., since by then people entered [in the court] more easily and were allowed to see him [the negus]. Later, during the rule of his son Gälawdewos, who took the reigning name of Admas Sägäd, the custom of hiding was abandoned and the great lords could enter [the court]. Yet, they also tied their clothes to the belt and left their chest uncovered in sign of submission and humility. Such a custom began to be abandoned about 24 years ago [ca. 1596]. Then, when the Emperor Ya’eqob was still a child, some great lords entered [the royal tent] fully dressed. They only tied the mantle they wore on the clothes. Yet, now they all enter properly dressed. The only custom


173 ... O maior frade letrado da Etiopía; Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 146.

174 The German ethnologist Eike Haberland has studied the Ethiopian Solomonic monarchy from the perspective of the African divine kingship, with which perspective this work largely agrees; Eike HABERLAND, *Untersuchungen zum Äthiopischen Königton*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965, 104 et passim.

that has been preserved is that of tying the clothes out of courtesy. Sometimes, addressing that issue, the Emperor shared with me his criticisms about the old custom of entering in the court naked. To remove this practice now he even obliges the slaves working as pages to be dressed with velvet and other clothes of silk, especially on the occasion of celebrations.\textsuperscript{176}

If we go by the evidence provided by Páez, by the turn of the next century, the image and symbolism of the negus had already gone through significant changes. Between 1603 and 1607, Páez could thus meet with relative ease Zä Dengel and Susenyos and did not report any special protocol he had to follow at the court. In the next decade, when the Castilian became a close aide of Susenyos, the latter was said to have abandoned some important ritual practices in the presence of the missionary, such as eating on a separate table.\textsuperscript{177} This could be explained by an influence of the missionaries themselves – as it will be shown below, this was in some respects indeed the case. Nevertheless, the choice for a more ‘human’, European-like image of the king could also indicate that Susenyos was at the end of a process that had begun earlier, with Lebnä Dengel and Gälawdewos; a process which would have seen a progressive ‘Europeanization’ of Ethiopian royal protocol by way of the influence exerted by the Portuguese living in Ethiopia and the contacts with the wider world facilitated by the establishment of Portuguese India.

Moreover, it needs to be stressed that the embassy of Francisco Alvares and Rodrigo da Lima Ethiopia became also an important target of European objects. Da Lima brought to Lebnä Dengel a mappamundi, an organ and some weapons. Later, the company of 400 men headed by Christovão da Gama introduced more objects to the country, of military character in particular. Until the arrival of the Jesuits, the import of European and also Oriental objects traded by the Portuguese in India possibly increased. These could have been other factors explaining the ‘Westernization’ of the life at the Ethiopian court and the changes in the symbolic image of the negus.

Last but not least, Portuguese influence was strong in the military field.\textsuperscript{178} The

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\textsuperscript{176} Estas cousas em parte se forão deixando em tempo do Emperador Dauid … , por que então ia entrando mais facilmente e o vião. Depois no tempo de seu filho Glaudiós, que quando lhe derão o Imperio se chamou Ahanë Çaguêd, se deixou de enterrar o comer e entrando todos os Grandes, mas cingião os panos que trazião vestidos e ficauão nus da cinta pera cima dando mostra de sumissão e humildade; Este uso se começou a deixar haureu 24 annos, que por ser o Emperador Jacob minino, entrão alguns Grandes vestidos, só cingião o pano que levauão sobre o vestido em lugar de capa. Mas agora todos entrão muito bem vestidos; só lhes ficou o cingir o pano por cortezia; e por vezes tratando disto, me disse este Emperador que lhe parecia muito mal o uso antigo de entrarem no Paço daquella maneira nus; e assim ate os pajens escravos mandou vestir particularmente nas festas de veludo e outras sedas; RASO II, liv. I, ch. IV.
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{177} Susenyos, though, as Haberland notices, did not fully break with the principle that considered taboo to see the negus during eating and thus placed a curtain between him and the missionaries; HABERLAND, Untersuchungen zum Äthiopischen Kïnigtum,169.
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{178} For a survey of the Portuguese military in the period of Ethiopian-Portuguese contacts see Nuno Varela RUBIM, “La organización militar portuguesa en la época de los descubrimientos”, in: La paz y la guerra en la época del Tratado de Tordesillas, Madrid: ed. Alberto Bartolomé Arraiza, Sociedad V Centenario del Tratado de Tordesillas - Electa, 1994, 277-79.
\end{flushright}

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some 130 Portuguese survivors of the two years of wars against Ahmad Grañ remained in the country in part to remedy the actual shortcoming in the Christian kingdom of modern military tactics and weaponry. The Portuguese soldiers and their offspring formed an elite troop that served several negus and local rulers and should be credited for the transmission of a number of military techniques and habits that did not exist before their arrival. Giovanni Botero, drawing on the Jesuit sources he had at hand, stated towards the end of the sixteenth century that:

[The Portuguese] took with them weapons, both offensive and defensive; and with the example they gave of waging war they have waken up the spirits and skills of the Abyssinians… In this way they introduced (which is still occurring) European warfare, and the use of arms, the methods to erect fortifications and the important movements and techniques.179

Local Ethiopian sources agree with Botero’s analysis. The chronicle of Säsä Dengel thus noted that around 1583 the king was received by his soldiers “with shooting of guns and cannons, according to the habit of the Europeans [Ferenj] and Turks”180 and also used a company of musketeers, which could have been of Portuguese and Turkish origin. Säsä Dengel also had at least one Portuguese named António de Goes as his aide, thus continuing with a tradition started by Gälawdewos with the Portuguese captains Ayres Dias and Gaspar de Sousa.181 Moreover, Jesuit sources from the time of Susenyos mentioned that Ethiopian cavalry and infantry practiced military formations of obvious European origin. Almeida thus noted that at the käitāma of Buko in Gojjam his army performed caracoes e escaramuças,182 a typical infantry movement developed in Switzerland in the early sixteenth century and already practiced in Ethiopia in 1541 by the soldiers of Christovão in front of etage Säblä Wängel.183 The phalanx-like tactics of the Swiss could have been greatly useful

179 … Hanno portato arme così da offesa come da difesa; e svegliato gli animi, e gli ingegni degli Abbesini con l'esempio loro nella guerra: perché tutti quelli che avanzarono alla rota di Christoforo di Gamma e diversi altri, che vi capitrono anche poi, e vi capitrono tuttavia, e si fermono ivi, s'accasano, e fanno figliuoli: e Alessandro [sic.; i.e. Säsä Dengel] commesse loro, che s'eleggessino un giudice, che tra loro tenesse ragione. Così hanno introdotto (e vanno tuttavia introducendo) la forma di guerreggiare d'Europa, e l'uso dell'arme, e la maniera di fortificare i passi & luoghi d'importanza; BOTERO, Relatio Universali, 348.

180 … Avec des coups de fusil et de canon, selon la coutume des Européens et des Turcs; CONTI RÖSSINI (tr.), Historia regis Sarsæ Dengel, 109.

181 Goes is first mentioned during a battle of Minas against the Muslim Malasay in 1562; he appears next to Bishop Oviedo during the rebellion of Yeshaq and later took a letter of Felipe II to Säsä Dengel. Around 1594 he met with three Portuguese captains in Ethiopia so to form a military alliance with Portugal. Finally, in ca. 1596, he wrote by order of the negus the letters that his envoy Täklä Maryam should bring to Rome; Década VII, liv. VII, ch. VI; Ibid. liv. X, ch. IV; António de Goes and Portuguese in Ethiopia to Superior General, 12 April 1596, in: RASO X, doc. 138, 391, 393; Täklä Maryam, “Relation to statu religionis catholicae in Aethiopia”, [1598], in: RASO X, doc. 146, 405.

182 The scene occurred around 1620; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XII.

183 The scene, that occurred at the fortress-mountain of Diährä Damo, was recalled by Castanhoso in the following way: "accompanied of pijaro [i.e. flute like instrument] and drums, all standing in formation and holding the pikes, we made the Swiss [formation] twice in front of the Queen, with the spiral shell formation [caracoel] open and closed… The Queen was rejoicing at seeing us with one more invention of war, especially in the opening and clos-
in the Ethiopian context and largely successful against groups like the Oromo and their mighty cavalry, which may explain its use sixty years from its adoption. Indeed, its adoption by the army of Buko, and probably by those of Se’elä Krestos and Susenyos as well, could have contributed – together with a strategic use of gunpowder – to the important military victories these armies achieved against the once unbeatable Oromo and other fierce groups like the Fälasha, the Agäw and the Damot.\(^{184}\)

Last but not least, Portuguese or figures related with the Portuguese presence in Ethiopia probably played a role in the important developments in military architecture. In fact, it was during the ‘Portuguese period’ when the Ethiopian highlands witness the erection of the first military fortifications. Gälawdewos erected a ‘castle’ in the 1550s in Däwaro or Wäj with the help, so the royal chronicle informs, of “Frank” (i.e. Western Europeans) and Egyptian engineers\(^ {185}\) and in 1578 Sàrsä Dengel built another palace or fortress at Guba’e. The Portuguese were, with the Ottomans, the masters of these fortifications in the East. They based their dominion in the Indian Ocean in their establishment of a network of impregnable fortresses (Zanzibar, Kilwa, Mombaza, Ormuz, Mascat, Diu, Damão, Bassein, Goa), designed mostly by leading Italian military architects. The fronte bastionato migliorato, the modern Italian fortress design, introduced in India towards the end of the sixteenth century, was able to keep the powerful Turkish artillery in check.\(^ {186}\) Now, although nowhere in Ethiopia were these sophisticated designs ever employed – not least because local warfare did not demand them, – European engineering superiority probably exerted some appeal to the Christian Ethiopians. It seems plausible that some Portuguese and Italians in service in India, and familiar with these types of constructions, introduced some fortifying notions – be it only in a simplified way – into Christian Ethiopia.\(^ {187}\)

Therefore, if we can go by the above evidence, around 1600 the negus, as well as

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\(^{184}\) The use of artillery in Ethiopia seems, however, more dubious. For instance, in 1625 Susenyos gave to Se’elä Krestos a *peçatinha aresoada* ("a piece of medium size", probably a light cannon), of which it was reported that a few existed in Ethiopia but were never used; Paes, 1625 in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 251v.

\(^{185}\) CONZELMAN, Chronique de Galácidos, 149.


part of the nobility and higher clergy, had gone through substantial cultural transformations; frequent intercourse with the Europeans would have changed the habitus[^188] of part of the nobility and higher clergy and consequently turned these groups more receptive towards things, ideas and cultural patterns taken in from Portuguese India and from Europe. In this way, military, artistic and cultural forms embodied by the Portuguese – and later the Spaniards as well – made their way into Ethiopia. One such thing could have been the need for religious and socio-political reforms, a pressing matter in Portugal since the reign of Dom João III. Although Christianity had its own dynamics in Ethiopia, a part of its upper and learned classes may not have been indifferent to the reformist ideals that their major ally promoted since the mid-sixteenth century. After all, throughout the century and particularly after the rescuing military expedition of Christovão da Gama Ethiopians held everything Portuguese in great esteem. I contend that such a change of habitus played in the missionaries’ favour: the Jesuits were greeted by a society in transformation and strongly interested by and influenced towards the same culture the missionaries came from. Thereby in the early 1600s, when Páez and his peer arrived to Ethiopia, the Jesuits’ discourse could reach out far more receptive audiences than it had done during the mission of Oviedo back in the 1550s.

In support of this argument it must be stressed that the rapid ‘integration’ of the Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia was not only the fruit of a bilateral relationship between the Europeans and the negus. Historians have often simplified the picture by describing the Jesuit mission as an encounter between a committed leader and ambitious missionaries. In fact, there was much more to it than that. The missionaries did indeed spend a lot of time next to Susenyos and counted on his help, protection and patronage. Yet, they also befriended and profited from the hospitality of an important number of nobles, learned men and court clergy. Christian Ethiopia was after all not a state resembling the European monarchies or the Mughal Empire in the slightest. In spite of the high symbolic position of the negus, power was largely scattered throughout the country and in the hands of local lords. Central control was weak, relying on the ability of the negus to concentrate larger armies than those of provincial lords. As a result, the acceptance by local elite groups was fundamental to the survival of the mission within the Ethiopian state. In Table 13 a list of those whom the Jesuits befriended and/or ‘converted’ until the year 1616 is provided. By ‘conversion’ or friendship it is meant those whom Jesuit sources described with such terms

as “much affectioned, much reduced, a very good friend of ours, a great Catholic” (muito afeiçoado, muy reduzido, muy nostro amigo, grande catolico) and the like. This list corresponds to a period when the kingdom’s official discourse was still that of Ethiopian Christianity and, hence, Catholicism was not yet an obligatory faith. Therefore, it can be assumed that the opening to the Jesuits was then entirely voluntary, sincere and non-induced, a fact that would be further confirmed by noticing that, besides Se’elä Krestos, no close kin to Susenyos had converted at that time.

Table 13: Influential secular figures friendly with the Jesuit mission, 1603-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Conversion'</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Flourishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>Zä Dengel</td>
<td>negus (1603-05)</td>
<td>1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Keflä Wahed</td>
<td>dîgazmach, governor of Tegray, married to the daughter of Särä Dengel</td>
<td>1587-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malak Mogäsa Maryam Sena</td>
<td>tie, wife of Särä Dengel</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>Amätä Seyon</td>
<td>wîjzerō, daughter of Särä Dengel</td>
<td>1606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macabo</td>
<td>secretary of negus Ya’eqob</td>
<td>1605-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611</td>
<td>Fequr Egzi’e</td>
<td>translator, lieutenant of Se’elä Krestos</td>
<td>1613-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wàldä Krestos</td>
<td>azzaj from Gojjam</td>
<td>1611-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zä Mänfäs Qeddus</td>
<td>Gojjam nägash, grazmach</td>
<td>1611-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adário</td>
<td>blattengeta, Gojjam nägash</td>
<td>1611-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zä Sellase</td>
<td>filawari</td>
<td>1611-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>Amsalä Krestos</td>
<td>governor of Tegray</td>
<td>1607-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abeçan</td>
<td>captain (xum?) of Ennarya</td>
<td>1613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benero</td>
<td>xum of Ennarya</td>
<td>1612-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Se’elä Krestos</td>
<td>ras, governor of Tegray and Gojjam</td>
<td>1583-1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zä Dengel</td>
<td>abetohun of Wàlkayt</td>
<td>1613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>negus (1607-32)</td>
<td>1607-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be’elä Krestos</td>
<td>abetohun, cousin of Susenyos</td>
<td>1597-1613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tino (also Wàldä/ Tàklä Sellase)</td>
<td>azzaj, chronicler</td>
<td>1613-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>Säblä Wängel</td>
<td>wîjzerō</td>
<td>1615-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>Zä Mika’el</td>
<td>bägerond/treasurer of Susenyos</td>
<td>1616-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: RASO III, 298; RASO VI, 190, 223, 236-37, 251, 277, 286, 303; RASO XI, 119, 148, 319-20; de Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I bis, 106v.

As it is apparent in the Table, the number of reduzidos or being in good terms with the missionaries in the earlier years was important. What is even more remarkable, a large part were ‘converted’ before Se’elä Krestos became a passionate – and violent? – advocate of the mission, at around 1613, when he was cured from a serious illness by the intercession of Páez. Pedro Páez, for instance, was warmly received at the courts of ras Atnatewos in Gojjam and etege Maryam Sena in Guba’e, the two most powerful people until the rise of Susenyos. The first would have asked him “to become his theologian and master, because local priests knew nothing”.189 The latter, widow of Särä Dengel, is also said to

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189 de Minuit, 1980, ch. 3.
189 … Ser suo theologo e maestro, perche i suoi frati niente sapessano; Páez, 1605, in: RASO XI, doc. 16, 70.
have died in 1607 “much fond of the [Jesuit] fathers”. Once the Jesuit had settled their residences at Gorgora and Qollela, more important people arrived: military leaders, local governors, higher clergy and nobility. Moreover, the local ruler Keflā Wāhed (“Kafluade, Cafluade”), governor of Tegray between 1594 and 1607, was to all accounts instrumental in bringing the young and energetic Susenyos close to the missionaries.

This group of neophytes and sympathizers provided the mission with a circle of protection, friendship and trust. Together with the commitment of the Ethio-Portuguese community and to that of Susenyos and Se’elā Krestos, with their help the mission could pervade and eventually grow. In exchange, the Jesuits offered them a principal reform of the customs and religious traditions. Judging from Ethiopia’s social and cultural transformations this is exactly what they seem to have been expected to do. It is within this pledge to reform Ethiopian society, particularly within the elite strata, that the Jesuits may have had an influence in the political life of the Christian kingdom. The next section looks into how this might have happened.

The Jesuits and the formation of a national Ethiopian discourse

The most enduring ‘political’ contributions the Jesuits made in Ethiopia did not come by way of the enforcement of an absolutist state and making Susenyos an absolute monarch. The disciples of St. Ignatius did not share those commitments nor would they have ever disposed of the means to bring this into a practice. Instead, I believe that the Jesuits had a more down to earth yet equally ambitious goal: to reform some of Ethiopia’s ruling men according to the anti-Machiavellian ideals formulated by Ribadeneyra, Molina, Mariana and Suárez. It is nonetheless true that by way of this the Ethiopian state was also to be, by some measure, transformed. After all, that is what their fellows in Europe were successfully doing in a number of courts. Although conditions in Ethiopia were different to those in Europe, the missionaries deemed such a project feasible. Their goal in Ethiopia was to form a ruling class that was guided by the Jesuit and Trent’s precepts. Power and (Catholic) faith, politics and (Tridentine) religion were to march hand in hand. Which steps did

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the Jesuits undertake in Ethiopia’s political life?

In the first instance, the Jesuits made recurrent use of a providentialist discourse at the court to explain political and military events in Ethiopia. As the Spanish historian José António Maravall has analyzed, providentialism ideas found fertile ground in Sixteenth-century Spain, during which time the once minute kingdom became with Carlos I the seat of the Holy Roman Emperor and later under his son Felipe II the largest empire on earth.\(^{193}\) Political theorists and novelists shared the idea that Spain could only achieve such a wide dominion because God helped those professing the righteous faith and chastised those who did not follow its precepts. Ribadeneyra emphasized that “God gave a good outcome to those endeavors undertaken for his service”. In Ethiopia the main advocate of providentialism was to be the Spaniard Páez, born and raised under the inspiring figure of Felipe II. The *História de Etiópia*, which was discussed above, is filled with this discourse. Susenyos’ rise to power is accordingly presented as the outcome not only of his military prowess but of God’s given-gift to the defender-to-be of Catholicism in Ethiopia; similarly, the mission appears as having brought important temporal benefits to the rulers, whose lands have been ever since extended and the rebels quelled. The rest of missionaries shared the same discourse and as early as in 1608 Azevedo sustained that the success of Susenjos in the battlefield demonstrated he was God’s chosen leader.\(^{194}\) Ras Se’elē Krestos was also often heard participating in the same discourse: in 1620 he attributed a victory over the Oromo near the Nile, in which he killed a thousand enemies and took a large booty, to the “Roman faith” and in 1625, when news of the defeat of the rebel Qebryal (“Kabrael”) reached the court, he told the nobles that “after all the favours that God had made to this undertaking, the faith he defended could only be the true one”.\(^{195}\)

Providentialism was also accompanied by a moralistic and pragmatic understanding of the political role. According to Ribadeneira a “just, honest government paid off in the support of subjects and God’s blessing on the prince and the state”.\(^{196}\) Drawing on the theories of the Jesuit political school, the missionaries thus lauded the strong but yet righteous ruler and emphasized the pursuit of “a morality of power”, as Bireley defined the anti-Machiavellian stance towards power.\(^{197}\) They considered that the ruler had to be mighty and decisive in the battlefield but also merciful and controlled in the aftermath of

\(^{193}\) José Antonio MARAVALL, *Utopía y contrautopía en el ‘Quijote’*, Santiago de Compostela: Pico Sacro, 1976, 100.

\(^{194}\) Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 164.

\(^{195}\) Não podia deixar de ser verdadeira a fe que elle sustenaua pois tanto o foauorecera no ceo nesta empresa; Paes, 1626, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 303v.

\(^{196}\) BIRELEY, *The Counter-Reformation Prince*, 127.
the battles. Passion should not overtake reason, extreme and radical decisions should not prevail over moderate moves. The emphasis was also for consensus as the basis of government.

As far as the practical governance of the kingdom goes, the role of the Jesuits is less easy to grasp. As the historian Tsegaye Tegenu has shown, the Ethiopian state endured a profound transformation during the period of Portuguese and Jesuit presence in Ethiopia. After the crisis provoked by Ahmad Grañ and the Oromo expansion in the mid-sixteenth century, there ensued a militarization of the state that consisted in the creation of a military aristocracy, auxiliar military troops and the concomitant expansion of tax exactions and predatory campaigns by the state and local governors. Moreover, during this period new political-military figures were created, which were to have enduring importance in the Ethiopian state for the centuries to come: the office of däjjazmach would have been created under Särsä Dengel and it was apparently Susenyos who created the office of blattengeta, which became one of the most influential court offices and was defined by the Portuguese as “the second person [in rank] after the Emperor”. The question to pose is whether the Jesuits directly participated in his process: Were the ‘ethnic-religious’ campaigns waged by Susenyos a practical response to the political ideology transmitted by the missionaries? Were the military campaigns that Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos commanded during the second and third decades of the mission aimed at imposing the ‘European’ idea of a unified ‘Empire’ under one sole Prince and one religion?

When trying to answer to these questions, however, caution is required once again. Political and military decisions were mostly in the hands of the negus, his closest aides and the local rulers. The main preoccupations the kingdom faced were the Oromo’s chronicle and devastating incursions and the mounting internal rebellions. Therefore, in spite of the presence of the missionaries regional political dynamics remained largely strange to the mission and the Jesuits seem to have had little to say in the way the campaigns were planned and done. On one occasion Jacinto Francisco allegedly spared a major defeat of the troops of Se’elä Krestos by advising them to play the drums, which scared the rebels and pushed them to withdraw. However, this seems to have been an exception and the Jesuits rarely abandoned the role of intelligent observers.

197 BIRELEY, The Counter-Reformation Prince, 32.
199 TSEGAYE, The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism, 82.
200 RASO VII, Liv. IX, ch. VIII.
Yet, Jesuit political discourse also had an impact on practical issues concerning the functioning of the Ethiopian state. The missionaries worked often as military chaplains of their most trusted Ethiopian lords and, therefore, when Catholicism became the state religion, the presence of the missionaries in the military campaigns increased. In 1624, António Bruno went on a campaign headed by Se’elä Krestos in Gojjam against the Egyptian rebel ‘João’;201 the following year Luís Cardeira travelled as military chaplain with an army that went to fight the Oromo202 and in 1626 António Fernandes accompanied the troops of Susenyos against the Agäw.203 In 1629, at least two missionaries were active in battle scenarios: Luís Cardeira with Sārsä Krestos204 and, towards the end of the year, Jacinto Francisco with Se’elä Krestos in Amhara.205 In the next year, Carvalho carried out the same duty and during three months accompanied the troops of Sārsä Krestos in Bägemder.206 By being engaged in these tasks the priests were able to minister in distant provinces under the protection and intimidating force of the troops. At the same time, they were convinced of the efficiency of their prayers and believed that, with their mediation, God would help the righteous armies. This is reflected in the following words where a Jesuit encouraged his brothers in Europe to pray on behalf of a planned campaign by Susenyos against the Bälaw in 1619: “Shall God accept his good desires, shall He give grace and power to help put them in practice. And to accomplish it the sacrifices and prayers from V.R. and the other fathers will also help”.207

Moreover, the good understanding between the missionaries – Páez, in the first place, but also de Angelis and later António Fernandes and de Mattos – and political-military leaders – principally Susenyos, Se’elä Krestos, Qeba Krestos and Buko – assured an influence of the governing skills of the first onto the second. The missionaries were conscious that their role in the mission was that of being guardians of the ‘spiritual’ affairs and on more than one occasion refused temporal dignities offered to them. Yet, it is apparent they did also advise their patrons on ‘temporal’ affairs. Indeed, the long and accurate excerpts they periodically dedicated to the estado temporal (“the political situation”) in Ethiopia in the annual letters attest that politics was an important chapter of the mission. In 1610,

201 Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 228v. Somewhere else, however, the target of the campaign was said to be his Egyptian father Qebryal (Kabrael); Paes, 1626, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 302v.
204 Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 459.
205 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VIII.
206 Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 459.
207 Deus nosso Senhor conserve seus bons desejos, de graça e forças para os por em execução, ao que ajudarão muito os sacrifícios e devotas orações de V.R. e dos mais padres…; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 440.
for instance, Páez recommended the negus to moderate the repression over the Gongä people (south of the Abbay) – who had refused to pay tribute – so as to avert bigger problems. In Páez’s reasoning, repression would provoke a depopulating of the land, which would hinder the payment of future tributes and in turn open the way to pagan invaders.208 Ultimately, Susenyo’s seems to have followed his advice. Thereafter, similar scenes were repeated. In 1618 a group of Agäw who had been recently subjected by Susenyo’s went to Gorgora to ask Páez to mediate before the negus for a truce, which was duly accorded209 and about that time the same group petitioned to the negus via the Jesuit de Angelis an exemption of the tributes.210 In 1618, the Castilian also helped the negus in choosing the location for the foundation of a town and probably provided the very idea of establishing a permanent capital.211 In 1619, the Jesuits exhorted Se’lâ Krestos not to attempt a campaign against the Bälaw due to diseases present in that area. Certifying the influence of the missionaries in the running of the state, in 1619 a Jesuit noted that “whenever nobles and court officials wish something important they go to the see the missionaries” and another fellow informed that the negus before appointing governors of Tegray demanded advice from the fathers “getting to know those who are more favourable to us [the Jesuits], so as to nominate one of them, and once this is done he commends us to him”.212

As we saw before, Páez in particular became an important mediator at the court; in his own words, “thanks to my intervention, he [the Emperor] grants them [to the nobles] things that otherwise he would not have accepted to grant from anybody else”.213 In 1621 an envoy of the Ottoman pasha (probably Mahmud Pasha) went to meet a Jesuit priest – probably Páez – “because he knew the influence he had at the court and he could not think of any other better way to conclude the deal”.214 In 1626, the new pasha, Aydin Pasha, sent a banian to ask Patriarch Mendes to mediate with the negus for the reopening of caravans to Massawa, which had been stopped by Susenyo’s following repeated Turkish incursions in the Ethiopian mainland. Mendes eventually accepted to mediate but impos-

208 Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 267. Also in RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. X (who provides the date of March 1610).
210 Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 408.
211 Ibid. 404. The site is not mentioned though it could be Deqhana, where Susenyo’s stayed in 1618 or the future emplacement of Gänätä Iyäsus.
212 Deste grande respeito e amor que nos tem nasce valeremse de nos os pobres e misquinhos en suas necessidades e ainda os grandes officiais da corte quando querem alguma cousa de mais importancia do Emperador. Quando faz visores do Tigré, pede conselho aos padres, informandose dellos das peçous que nos são mais aficiosadas para fazer huma delas, e quando os manda, encarecidamente os lhes encumbendo aos padres; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 428.
213 ... Los grandes, que antes teniam poca aficiun a nuestras cosas por no las entender, agora muestran mucha, y el Emperador me acredita mucho con ellos, diéndoles en mi ausencia mucho mas de lo que ay en mi, y concediéndoles por mi intercesion cosas que, como les dixe, despues por ningun otro lo hiciera; Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 272.
214 ... Por entender quanto podia em toda a corte e não achar remedio mais facil a seus negocios; Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc.
ing conditions largely favourable to the interests of the negus and the missionaries.\footnote{184}

It should be stressed, however, that the Jesuits did not pursue a deliberate strategy to use political power for missionary aims. Their political influence was rather the natural outcome of their progressive integration within the Ethiopian state structure. Placed close to royal and provincial power, the missionaries introduced their own ideas into the government. First of all, they provided intelligent advice and tried, in some respects, to put a break on to some aggressive practices of the Ethiopian state, such as the annual devastating raids to collect tributes in the southern provinces. In other instances, however, they also showed a penchant for authoritarianism. In 1616, amidst growing internal riots, Páez informed the Jesuit General Muzio Vitelleschi that “If he [Susenyos] had a thousand soldiers to serve him as guard, he would doubtlessly quell them [the rebellions], and nobody else would even dare to speak up against him”\footnote{215}. This quote also reminds us that the missionaries from the second period never abandoned the project first formulated at the time of Andrés de Oviedo to call for a military expedition from Portuguese India (cf. Chapter 4). Their aim was to create a Praetorian guard obligated to the negus only and bound to the designs of the missionaries. In some respects, the patience and moderation used during the rulership of Páez was a strategy only serving to temporize until the concentration of power was sufficient to crush dissent.\footnote{216} However, to my understanding, this tells more about the weakness of the sovereign within the Ethiopian state structure\footnote{217} rather than of any intention to introduce absolutism in the state. The Jesuits considered monarchy the best form of government – which Mariana had theorized in his De lege – and, in consequence, they consecrated all their skills and forces to defending it. This notwithstanding, they also disapproved tyranny and were not weary of alienating popular support to the ruler. Their eventual espousal of authoritarian measures did not contradict these principles. In their view, as it was expressed in such pamphlets as the accusative letter of Susenyos against the previous Ethiopian metropolites,\footnote{219} the local priesthood had deceived their brethren and hid the true Christian message for the sake of their own personal profit; they

\footnote{Paes, 1626, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 304r.}
\footnote{Si tuviera mill soldados para guarda de su persona, sin duda lo acabara luego, sin aver quien se atreviese a hablar; Páez, 1617, in: RASO XI, doc. 48, 386.}
\footnote{Cf. Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 487.}
\footnote{Of which fragility the Jesuits had already realized in the previous century. In 1562, for instance, Melchior Carneiro informed the Jesuit General that “the might of the Abyssinian king is small and it is not what it appears to be” (… o poder do rei do Abexim hé muy pouco e não e o que laá soa); Carneiro to Superior General, November 30, 1562, Goa, in: DI, vol. V, doc. 84, 563-66.}
\footnote{As above mentioned, the document is reproduced in RASO VI, b. VIII, ch. VII and Gaspar Paes, 1625, in: ARSI: Goa 39 I, 237v-39r. Although signed by Susenyos, the document summarized the ideas of the Jesuit mis-}
had failed their people and their duties as servants of God. Moreover, the Jesuits also abhorred religious dissent – which they considered an obstacle for the good government – and held religious ‘heresy’ as an enemy of freedom.²²⁰ For those reasons, they considered their opponents as being tyrants for whom were reserved the worst of the treatments. If, as Juan de Mariana had asserted, regicide was in certain conditions lawful, much more lawful was the suppression, insistently celebrated by the missionaries, of the petty ‘tyrants’ who sprung up in the Ethiopian highlands.

Last but not least, an aspect where the mission seems to have had an impact is in encouraging the birth of a national ‘Ethiopian’ conscience. The mission was under the aegis of two countries, Portugal and Spain, where nationalism played an important role in the birth of the modern state. According to national ideals, the state was no longer identified with the domains of the king but as a unity of peoples, faith and territory; neither was its history reduced to the history of the royal family but encompassed the whole history of all the peoples having lived in the same territory under different rulers. In Spain, national ideals took special force under the rule of Felipe II and his heir Felipe III and found the most vigorous theorizer in the Jesuit Juan de Mariana. As indicated above, the História de Etiópia shared the goal to serving a monarchical and national project with Mariana’s work. Páez doubtlessly composed his work bearing in mind the example of Felipe II’s Spain and either consciously or unconsciously he transposed some of the principles of modern nationalism and Spanish political discourse to the Ethiopian monarchy. He tried to shape the Solomonic king according to the image of a modern European monarch and, more importantly, brought to the foreground a subject that hitherto had been obliterated by Ethiopian traditional chronicles: the territorial state known henceforth as ‘Ethiopia’ or, alternatively, ‘Abyssinia’.

It is with this project of ‘nation building’ that the Jesuit imperial discourse can be

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²²⁰ The notion of sin as a privation of liberty was a recurrent theme in Catholic theology and an important element in the Jesuit moral and practical theology. In the 17th rule of the orthodoxy, Ignatius stressed: “N’insistons pas tellement sur l’efficacité de la grâce, que nous fassions naître dans les esprits le poison de l’erreur que nie la liberté”; E. VANSTEENBERGHE, “Molinisme”, in: Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique, vol. 10, cols. 2094-2187. In an unpublished document from the Jesuit central archives a similar view was emphasized: Tria sunt, malum Peccatum et Culpa. Malum est privatio cuique boni etiam habitualis, Peccatum, privatio boni in operatione, etiam naturali; Culpa privatio boni in actione voluntaria. Si ergo autor celi, peccatum generis, esse sine voluntario, vera est eius sententia, et ex tali ratione peccati non sequitur demeritum, si vero loquitur de peccato in moribus quod dicitur culpa, errore est dicere esse voluntario, Nam rationem culpa necessario seguitur demeritum; et sane cum autor loquatur m. materia morali, debuisset saltem [salutem] distinguere; “De tribus propositionibus”, 1591 [9 August 1591], in: ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico 656 A-I, Censurae Opinionum, “Opiniones praescripta à S. Francisco de Borria”, 71r-72r. In fol. 71r appear the following names that should stand for the authors of the piece: Jo. Baptista Carminata Provincialis, P. Bernardinus Regionalus Rector Collegij Romani, P. Jacobus Cracius Praefectus Studiorum, P. Benedictus Pereirus, P. Jo Azor, P. Rubertus Bellarminus.
related. On another occasion, I pointed out at the formation of an imperial discourse during the Jesuit mission, when the missionaries came to identify the negus with the figure of an Emperor and ‘imposed’ the idea of an Imperio da Ethiopia where once the Portuguese had read the Preste.221 Toubkis and Pennec have sustained that such a discourse was meant to justify the missionary enterprise as well as “to suggest the enormity of the political and religious stakes involved in converting such an ‘empire’ to Catholicism”.222 I believe, however, that the imperial discourse was not the product of an error of perception neither was it an ‘ideal model’. This has to be seen as the transposition in the Ethiopian Christian polity of the political discourse endorsed in Spain, mostly, but not solely, by Jesuit political scientists. In the sixteenth century the Holy Roman Empire was no longer a political reality, although the mirage of Charles V’s rule had placed again for a short period this institution centre stage. The dissolution of the idea of a universal Empire was replaced by the conception of national ‘Empires’, where the kings became ‘Emperors’ in their own kingdoms, adopting the early Renaissance maxima of rex imperator in regno suo.223 This process gained momentum with the reign of Felipe II, who inherited de facto an ‘Empire’ from his father and was reflected in the use by the King of Spain of the same peerage as his father: Su Majestad ‘His Majesty’ became henceforth the standard peerage of the kings, replacing the earlier of Su Alteza ‘His Highness’. In Ethiopia – as well as in other major kingdoms visited by Jesuit missionaries, such as China, Japan and Mughal India – the Jesuits transposed this political discourse to the Solomonic monarchy. Susenyos was accordingly called ‘Emperor’ and addressed by ‘His Majesty’. I contend that the intention of the missionaries was less that of defining a grand Ethiopian Empire than to categorize ‘Ethiopia’ and its political system according to the concepts available in sixteenth-century Spain. In so doing, however, they helped changing the way Ethiopia was perceived in Europe and also to some extent the way the Ethiopians, or at least its political and religious elites, perceived themselves.


6. Mission culture

Consideraba cómo los reñían con suavidad, los castigaban con misericordia, los animaban con ejemplos, los incitaban con premios y los sobrellevaban con cordura, y, finalmente, cómo les pintaban la fealdad y horror de los vicios y les dibujaban la hermosura de las virtudes, para que, aborrecidos ellos y amadas ellas, consiguiesen el fin para que fueron creados.¹

Like other missions managed by the Society of Jesus in the early modern period, the Ethiopian mission was not reduced to the import of religious models or ideas. Jesuit missions were a complex endeavour. The idea of reduction, as it was conceived by Ignatius of Loyola and was further defined with the time and the gathering of missionary experience, meant more than a religious conversion. The adoption of Roman Catholicism by indigenous groups went hand in hand with the transformation of the individuals and their social and cultural environment. It was this particular understanding of conversion that explains the strong involvement of the Society of Jesus in ‘non-religious’ tasks, such as education, the arts and, in some cases, the sciences as well. Moreover, Jesuit missions ‘used’ non-religious assets to penetrate more easily into local societies. They offered their hosts access to a cosmopolitan culture that in the time of late Mannerism and early Baroque was at the peak of its success. The less agreeable religious and moral doctrines should make their way into hosts’ societies more smoothly with the help of ‘sensual’ means. Music, theatre and other artistic activities were deemed strong mediums of cultural transmission and understanding. The Jesuits brought new means of cultural expression to the missions and adapted some elements from the existing cultures of the native peoples. These factors, which played a crucial role in the development of a mission culture in Ethiopia, are the focus of the present Chapter.

¹ “I reflected on how they scolded them gently, punished them compassionately, inspired them with examples, encouraged them with rewards and gently and tolerantly bore with them. Finally, they depicted the ugliness and horror of vice and portrayed the beauty of virtue, so that, hating the one and loving the other, they would attain the end for which they were created”; Miguel de CERVANTES, “Coloquio de los perros”, in: Novelas ejemplares [ca. 1601-06], Id., Barcelona: Crítica, 2005, 672 (Engl. tr. from: Exemplary Stories, tr. Lesley Lipson, Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 264). Interestingly, Cervantes seems to have paraphrased here a passage from the Jesuit Constituciones, part IV, §307: Siendo el scopo que derechamente pretiende la Compañía ayudar las ánimas suyas y de sus próximos a conseguir el último fin para que fueron creadas.
SHAPING AN ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC SOCIETY

Jesuit pedagogic methods and the shaping of a Catholic youth

Jesuit reformist praxis in Europe and in the overseas missions was strongly motivated by a need of renewal. The Society of Jesus was attracted to St. Paul because of his radical breach with Judaism and commitment towards the foundation of a new society. Yet, in early modern times nowhere could this goal of renewal be better achieved than by influencing the children and education. For this reason, Ignatius, initially reluctant to use it, made education one of the principal areas of action of his order. Therefore, the first assignment Francis-Xavier and his fellow Miguel Pablo had on reaching India in 1542 was to found the College of São Paulo, originally called da Conversão de São Paolo e da Santa Fé. The institution, which was one of the earliest to be set up worldwide by the order, should educate indigenous boys from heterogeneous origins in the Christian doctrines: “It was founded, Francis-Xavier wrote to Ignatius, to instruct the natives of these lands in the [Catholic] faith and also those from various nations so that once duly instructed they would be sent back to their homes and prosper with what they had learned”. Moreover, the founder recommended to the missionaries in Ethiopia to “open many schools where they teach how to read and write and others where they teach letras, and colleges to instruct the youth and all those who would need it, and the Latin language, Christian traditions and doctrine”.

This emphasis in the education of the children inspired the Jesuits to firstly indoctrinate the Ethiopians in the College of São Paulo in Goa. Recruits – mentioned then as Abexims, i.e. ‘Abyssinians’ – probably arrived there shortly after its opening. Hence, in 1546, four of the some fifty boys at the college were ‘Abyssinian’ and by 1556 their number had tripled. The catalogue from that year also provided the names of six of the Abexims: “Mateus, Pedro, who has one year [of schooling], Yoane, Pedro who has seven

[Notes]


3 Fue fundado para que ahí fuesen enseñados en la fe los naturales de estas tierras, y de estos que fuesen de diversas naciones de gentes; y después que fuesen instruidos en la fe, mandarlos a sus naturalezas para que fructifiquen en lo que eran instruidos; Francis Xavier to Ignatius of Loyola, 20 September 1542, Goa, in: Francisco Javier 1996, doc. 16, 95.

4 ‘Hicien muchas escuelas de leer y escribir, y otras de letras, y colegios para instruir la juventud, y también los demás que lo hiedrón de menester, en la lengua latina, y costumbres y doctrina cristiana; Ignatius of Loyola, “Instrucción al P. Juan Nuñes, patriarca de Etiopía”, February 1535, Roma, in: Ignacio de Loyola 1997, doc. 144, 1047.

months, Manoel has three months; Ilario has nearly one year”. In 1564, when the number of meninos at Goa had reached one hundred, sources still report the presence of damaoti (i.e. from Damot) and abiscini. The way this small group of neophytes reached Goa is mentioned nowhere. Yet, the reference to the region of Damot and to a Christian Ethiopian boy named Yoane (Yohannes, i.e. John) could mean that they were indeed Christians who came to India on one of the at least two trips that between 1544 and 1556 repatriated some of the Portuguese who had fought in Ethiopia with Christovão da Gama. Be that as it may, once the first Ethiopian mission took off the schooling of Ethiopians in India lost its purpose and was progressively abandoned.

Yet, the establishment of a school system in Ethiopia took its time. In the first period the missionaries did instruct to a group of Catholic youth but without setting up any proper educational structure. Most of this youth probably belonged to the first generation of Portuguese born in Ethiopia and later some of them became valuable aides in the missionary enterprise. Among them there was one Antonio Joannes, who was auditor of Oviedo, and João Gabriel, born around 1550, who towards the turn of the century was captain of the Portuguese in Ethiopia and from 1603 onwards became a close assistant to Pedro Páez. However, the reduced number of neophytes living in the area of Fremona, approximately two hundred and thirty, and, more importantly, the lack of funds, did not allow Oviedo to put fully in practice the experience in education he had gathered at Gandia and Naples. In fact, it was only when the mission reached a mature stage that organization of the school system gained momentum (Table 15). The first ‘school’ began to be organized by Pedro Páez at Fremona around the time of his arrival and in 1605 he was already teaching ten sons of the Portuguese and two Ethiopians, one being the son of a local Catholic. With the rise of Susenyos and stabilization of the political situation, the Jesuits opened a new school at Gorgora, which, in 1610, comprised ten children (meninos). Hereafter, they also began to call these institutions seminarios, indicating a major structur-
ing and improving of pedagogical standards. The students were mostly filhos dos Portuguezes, i.e. Ethio-Portuguese, and their age can be assumed to have been between five to around fifteen years old, as the frequent reference to meninos and moços indicates. They hence belonged to the third and fourth generations of Portuguese mixed-race group, a fact that strongly determined the strategy followed by their masters. The Jesuits wanted them to preserve or cultivate their ‘Portuguese’ identity and designed the pedagogical curriculum accordingly. Thus, primary consideration in the school curriculum in Ethiopia was learning the Portuguese language, which later also affected students who were not of Portuguese origin. Portuguese became the first major ‘cultural’ missionary import into Ethiopia; it turned into a lingua franca at the residences as well as a sort of language of prestige that some Ethiopian figures, like Se’elä Krestos and abba Marca, came to learn. Se’elä Krestos would have even placed a son in the residence in Qollela so that he could “learn good things and to read and write in Portuguese”. Additionally, as it was the pattern in Jesuit schooling in Asia, Latin was also taught and vernacular languages – Tegreñña, Amharic and Agäw appear in the missionary record – were used in instruction.

As it appears, the seminaries in Ethiopia were formed from the example of São Paulo in Goa and by the standards set by the Ratio Studiorum, in use in India a few years after its approval in 1599. The influence of Jesuit Indian didactics was due to a great deal to the fact that the missionaries sent to Ethiopia had spent, on average, almost ten years in India before joining the mission (Table 14). A number of them had indeed taught at the Jesuit schools there and some had great experience managing noviciates and colleges. In fact, a solid experience at the Indian schools seems to have been a necessary requirement for those being sent to Ethiopia. For instance, Luís de Azevedo, who instructed during more than two decades at Fremona, Gorgora, Qollela and Gännätä Iyäsus, had been mestre de noviços at São Paulo Novo. The visitor Manoel de Almeida and Tomé Barneto had both been rectors of the College of Baçaim and Manoel Lameira occupied the same position in Tana (Thana), and was also head of the noviciates of Goa and Diu. Juan de Ve-
lasco had, in his turn, been *mestre de noviços* at Cochim and António Bruno had been minister at São Paulo Novo in Goa.

Table 14: Mean years spent in India by the missionaries before reaching Ethiopia, 1555-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of missionaries</th>
<th>Mean years in India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1555-98</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603-22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623-30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: see Figure 1

One of the first methods applied at the Ethiopian seminaries was the *Cartilha por perguntas e respostas*, a system to teach to children and illiterate adults the Christian Doctrine. Pedro Páez translated the *Cartilha* into Ge’ez with the help of the Ethio-Portuguese João Gabriel and the text, with further translations to other languages, Amharic, Tegreñña and Agäw, continued to be used until the end of the mission. Soon, however, with the coming of men with more teaching experience than Páez, like Azevedo, and perhaps Fernandes, de Angelis and Romano as well, teaching must have been further structured and refined. There is disappointingly little information about this particular but we can still sketch a picture of its organization. The seminaries in Ethiopia, like everywhere in the order, had a boarding status and focused in the Lower Studies. They proposed a propaedeutic education and it is assumed that this included the five lower classes, rhetoric, humanities and the three grammar classes (on Greek and Latin). Additionally, elementary schooling, generally avoided by the order, might have been offered to teach the younger ones reading and writing. The didactic methods fixed by the *Ratio Studiorum* were doubtless also implemented: active learning (through periodic disputations, debates, repetitions), written exercises in imitation of the author being read, public correction of the exercises, original essays in the upper grades, contests and examinations.

However, the specific religious context in Ethiopia and the problems posed by the Ethio-Portuguese also induced the missionaries to give even more weight to the Society’s most inspiring figure, St. Paul. The missionaries believed – not without reason – that the Ethio-Portuguese mixed-race group was in danger of dissolving into the mainstream and ‘heretic’ Ethiopian society and back in 1575 António Fernandes (1536-93) warned that “without priests, these would not be able to reject heresy and unfaithfulness”. Not only

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18 Cf. Constituciones, part IV, ch. 12.
19 On these methods see the introduction to Ratio 1970, ix and “Rules of the Prefect of Lower Studies”, ibid.
20 … Não podem esquivar de ser herejes ou infieis; António Fernandes to Superior General, 22 September 1575, in: RASO X, doc. 84, 264.
did this small group inevitably follow an indigenous way of life but, as it will be explained in Chapter 7, they also began to incorporate some of the practices most abhorred by the Jesuits, such as circumcision. Moreover, as I showed above, the missionaries saw Ethiopian Christianity as founded in a sound rejection of Paulinist Christianity. For all that, besides the Psalms (Psalterio), Pauline epistles were read, learnt and discussed by the children on a daily basis. The teaching was thorough and was strongly focused in making the students aware of the wrongdoing of many of the core practices of Ethiopian Christianity: circumcision, practice of Sabbath, frequent fasting. The Jesuit priests thus often expressed their pride at the memorization of Pauline passages and the dialectical skills shown by some of their students. In public discussions held at the seminar, pupils were asked to rebate Ethiopian Christian practices using the arguments of the Apostle. In about 1612, for instance, two Portuguese children who declared the Christian Doctrine entertained Susenios, Maryam Sina and her son-in-law – perhaps däjjazmach Kellä Wähefd. The missionaries believed that by a mixture of Paul’s ontology and Jesuit pedagogic methods the “golden and innocent” Ethiopian children were to strike the roots of the future Catholic Ethiopian society.

Table 15: Number of interns at the Jesuit schools in Ethiopia, 1605-26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FREMONA</th>
<th>GORGORA</th>
<th>ANCASHA</th>
<th>QOLLELA</th>
<th>Total year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1610</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1626</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: RASO VI, 414; RASO XI, 85, 201, 311, 314, 333, 374, 395, 409, 419, 425, 443, 510; RASO XII, 247-89; Pedro Páez to Francisco Vieira, 4 July 1615, Gorgora, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 154r.

In the 1610s the number of students grew considerably and towards the end of the decade two new schools were opened in the south: in Ancasha, in Agäw land and in Qollela, Gojjam (Table 15). In the 1620s expansion continued apace and in 1626 Gor-

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22 Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 235.
23 ... De naturaes aureos e estão, ainda oje, em muito mais innocencia do que se pode imaginar; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 83.
gora, by far the most important educational centre, was said to host a hundred students (Figure 10), and towards 1628, the school at the Patriarchal residence in Enfraz counted 60 *pueri*. With the growth of effectives the composition of schoolrooms changed. If the Ethio-Portuguese formed the largest group throughout the whole period, in the 1610s and especially 1620s indigenous Ethiopians, mostly of Tegrayan, Amhara, Agäw and Damot origin, and in minor measure some Oromo, also began to entrust their children to the missionaries. Hence, commenting on conversions in Agäw land ca. 1619, Fernandes added that “although with the parents we still encounter some difficulties in making them abandon the gentile rites, because they are attached to them after many years practicing them, with the sons and children who are brought up with the doctrine and intelligent teaching methods of the priests, much fruits will be gathered in the future, with God’s favour”.26

![Figure 10: Evolution of the number of students in Fremona and Gorgora, 1605-26](image)

*Note: gap years (e.g. 1618 in Fremona) have been replaced with estimates from the previous year(s)*

*Sources: see Table 15*

Local recruiting followed similar patterns to other Jesuit missions, such as in Japan or even Europe. First, this was voluntary and depended on the capacity by the Jesuits to attract the locals. In Ethiopia, like elsewhere, this does not seem to have posed a problem. The style, savoir-faire and intelligence of the priests in the black robe did not pass unnoticed to the locals who claimed their presence. Some groups proved particularly sensitive

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24 RASO VIII, *liv.* II, ch. IV.
25 Cf. e.g., Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 276.
26 *... Ainda com os pays aja alguma dificuldade em deixarem os ritos gentilicos, em que por custume de tantos annos estão abitados, com os filhos e mininos, que se crião com a doctrina e bon ensino dos padres, se colheia ao diante com o favor divino muito fruto; Fer-*
to the Jesuit charm: members of the nobility are said to have entrusted a number of their offspring to the missionaries, a feature that recalls the well-known Jesuit inclination towards the higher classes. Habtā Iyāsus, a powerful and influential lord in Tegray and married to a Portuguese orphan, had a son in Fremona and in 1620 “there were four or five sons of noble lords” (senhores principaes) in Qollela. Nevertheless, as the Constitutions and the Ratio recommended, poor children having shown good aptitudes were also accepted at the seminaries. Indeed, to make a good student from a poor boy was an excellent form of promotion of the missions’ teaching methods. An additional attraction, especially for peoples placed in ‘peripheral’ areas like Agäw (Ancasha) and Gojjam (Qollela), must have been the growing influence of the missionaries in the court. Once Catholicism became the official religion in the 1620s, Jesuit schooling, besides a better education, guaranteed social promotion. Moreover, since most of the students were in boarding schools – they slept and were all provided for at the residences – Jesuit schooling offered living standards unmatched in the rather poor surrounding areas where the residences were placed. Locals could find there a haven where their offspring received lodging, food, clothing and protection and security against the long continued crises (famine, raids, lack of resources) affecting the Ethiopian highlands. Finally, in the case of the southern peoples who had recently been subjugated by the negus, schooling at the Jesuit residences seems also to have depended on political reasons. Hence, towards 1618 or 1619, before the missionaries had completely settled in the Agäw land, Se’elä Krestos invited the locals in Ancasha to “maintain their oath of receiving the faith, entrusting their boys and girls for baptism and the adults, with their wives attending on sundays the sermons of the father” in exchange of generous rewards and tax exemptions, including 400 cows and 400 loads of honey and protection for them in the kingdom. Towards 1620, Susenyos also pressed the same subjects in Ancasha to bring their offspring to the Jesuit priest – Francesco Antonio de Angelis – to receive Christian indoctrination and he also entrusted some of his Agäw servants for

27 Fernandes, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 57, 443; Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 498. In 1614, a mother who was of royal stem wanted to entrust her child to the fathers; Lorenzo Romano to Mutio Vitelleschi, 16 July 1613, Fremona, in: RASO XI, doc. 37, 314.
30 ... Prometendo-lhes amor paternal, se guardassem seu juramento e recebessem a fé, dando logo seus mínimos e mínimas para se batizar-rem, e elles com suas mulheres ouvindo nos domingos as practicas do padre...mandou juntamente fossem os gentios de Ancáx recebidos com benevolencia em toda a parte de seu reino e que ningem os demandasse por culpas passadas; Luís de Azevedo, 8 July 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 412-40.
education at Gorgora. A similar proselytizing tactic was probably followed in the residences founded later in the recently dominated province of Damot, then under the rule of the pro-Jesuit Buko.

In the course of time, the nuclei of neophytes formed at the residences became of paramount importance for the missionary enterprise. If we assume that children stayed at the schools for about ten years (five for elementary schooling and five more for the lower studies), a first class of students should have gone through the whole curriculum by the mid-1610s. In the successive years more effectives should have added to a growing number of young, confident and dynamic group of neophytes, grown and trained according to the Jesuit ‘way of proceeding’. Hence, towards the fall of the mission in 1632 about 178 scholars had been trained at the two main Jesuit residences in Fremona and Gorgora. With such a large number the Jesuits were able to multiply their effectives, initially reduced to the few priests sent from Europe and India. Therefore, when Catholics began to openly profess as such following the crisis of 1617, the mission began to use them in an active way. Tasks were distributed carefully according to the Jesuit’s accurate system of measuring human capacities: those more gifted for preaching were sent to instruct in the countryside, whilst the more intellectually skilled were reserved as interpreters and aides in the intellectual ‘machinery’ set up by António Fernandes, Luís de Azevedo and Francesco Antonio de Angelis at Gorgora and Qollela.

It is worth recalling a number of those who studied at the schools due to their important contribution in the mission. One of the early interpreters the Jesuits had at the court was Basílio Gabriel, who had studied at one of the Jesuit schools, probably at Fremona, where his father João Gabriel had resided. From 1613 to at least 1619, a gifted native scholar from Gorgora called Dionísios (or Denazios, born in 1607) took over the office of interpreter at the court; besides speaking Portuguese and Amharic, Dionísios could write in Latin and Ge’ez. One Barakato, also a Portuguese born in Ethiopia and educated by the Jesuits at Fremona, was able to reach the semi-official status of “brother of the order” (irmão da ordem) and advised Susenyos on António Fernandes’ expedition to

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32 A sense of superiority seems to have been promoted in Jesuit schools. In an annua from 1607, Azevedo explained the strength of the Catholic group in the ‘endurance’ (constância) that was given to them by receiving a sacrament – confirmation – that Ethiopian Christianity did not deliver; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 99.
33 To reach this estimate I have assumed that scholars spent between eight to ten years at the Jesuit schools and that at least three full school classes were formed from 1605 to 1630/32 (cf. also Table 15). The total aggregate in Fremona was 506 and in Gorgora 918 (empty years were given the value of the previous recorded year). If we sum the two aggregates (1,424) and divide it by 8, we get 178.
southern Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{35} In 1625, Lakä Krestos, who had served for several years as \textit{mestre dos meninos} (‘head of students’) in Gorgora, was ordained as a priest by Patriarch Mendes and put at the head of a hundred churches recently placed under Jesuit administration.\textsuperscript{36} In the early 1610s, another Ethio-Portuguese, Alexandre Jacobo (born ca. 1586 in Ethiopia), who had studied at Fremona with Lorenzo Romano, was administering that residence. In the late 1610s, he worked among the Agäw helping de Angelis in baptizing “eighteen thousand men” and in ca. 1625 was ordained as a priest by Mendes and became chaplain and confessor to the missionaries.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, at the schools the missionaries also found zealous aides who accompanied them in country missions and served as private interpreters and guides. One Francisco Machado accompanied the Jesuit João Pereira, whilst two other Ethio-Portuguese, Cosme de Mesquita and Lucas Rapozo, were the guides of Pereira and Gaspar Paes, respectively. Another Ethio-Portuguese, Zana Gabriel Machado, was assistant to Bruno Bruni for ten years and was killed by traditionalists in ca. 1635.\textsuperscript{38} Finally, the cases of Bernardo Nogueira and António de Andrade, both born in Ethiopia of Portuguese grandparents, which are explained in Chapter 8, are further examples of how integrated the two groups – Jesuits and Ethio-Portuguese – were. Most importantly, their Jesuit-like careers also indicate that towards the end of the 1620s the Jesuits counted with a number of neophytes from Ethiopia who were ready to join the Society if sent to India and hence had set the ground for the mission’s internal – though never achieved – renewal.

\textbf{The reduction of the self}

The Jesuit reduction also reached the Ethiopian society at large. Whilst the children studying at the boarding schools could guarantee the future reproduction of missionary effectives, the mission grew and expanded as well thanks to a circle of friends, clients and catechumens established throughout decades of tireless work. The focal points for most of the conversions accomplished during the ‘silent period’ (1603-17) were the Jesuit residences of Gorgora, Fremona and Qollela. The pace of conversions was in this period slow (Table 16); the Jesuits were mostly concentrating their efforts at running the schools, which resulted in the scarcity of priests and the growing number of students were enough to keep them busy. Preaching missions were only attempted in the areas surrounding the resi-

\textsuperscript{36} Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 424r.
\textsuperscript{37} RASO VII, \textit{liv.} IX, ch. IV.
\textsuperscript{38} RASO VII, \textit{liv.} X, ch. XXIX-XXXI.
dences. As it appears, the build up of a circle of friends and neophytes occurred during these visits in the neighbourhood but, principally, through the Ethiopians getting acquainted with the way of life at the residences.

The Jesuits knew that to appeal to the locals they had to provide them with something new to what they already had from Ethiopian monasticism and parish clergy. In the ‘religious market’ of Christian Ethiopia, as in other ‘markets’ elsewhere, the foreign priests could only survive and succeed if people felt they offered something different, necessary and advantageous. The assessment of what the locals found in the missionaries is a difficult task. In the earlier chapter I suggested that, as a result of the contacts with the Europeans in the sixteenth century, some sort of reformist ideals developed within Ethiopian society. Those more prone to religious and political changes belong to groups that were traditionally open to foreign influences, principally local nobility, monastic leaders and higher clergy and court officers. The natural reformist drive in these groups probably rendered the style and the ethos embodied by the Jesuits attractive, even necessary to their needs. I think this was a strong factor in bringing locals close to the missionaries. This seems to be especially true for the beginning of the second period of mission (after 1603), when the Jesuits could still not dispose of the political and economic support that Susenyos, Se’elā Krestos and eventually the Ethiopian state were to grant them in the 1620s.

Table 16: The pace of ‘reductions’ in Ethiopia, 1605-30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tegray</th>
<th>Gorgora/Dambeya</th>
<th>Bägemder</th>
<th>Agäw</th>
<th>Gojjam</th>
<th>Damot</th>
<th>Other areas</th>
<th>Total year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>530</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1626</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>4,110</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>77,350</td>
<td>6,065</td>
<td>65,794</td>
<td></td>
<td>157,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>47,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>1629</td>
<td>59,696</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>119,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>356,279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is apparent, however, that to enhance their position the Jesuits resorted to aes-
thetic and ‘cultural’ means; their aim was to be seen as a new and superior type of clergy, which to an extent they succeeded in achieving. Firstly, as mentioned before, they used their notorious good preparation in both the intellectual and communicative spheres. The missionaries cherished personal conversations and persuasion as the most efficacious means of ‘reduction’. Moreover, aesthetic values played also a central role in the Society. During his youth, Ignatius of Loyola notoriously faced severe pain in order not to let his body be deformed by a battle wound received during the siege of Pamplona. The Constituciones also established that to join the Society the candidates were to be free from physical deformities and recognized that clothing and external form were capable of fostering “Jesuitness”.39 In the mission field, these aesthetic values were reflected in a number of judgements made by the missionaries. Páez described Susenyos as a “tall and well-built man” and valued some pagans converted in southern Gojjam because “handsome and white as the Portuguese”.40 Aesthetic reasons had been also an important argument for choosing the Catholic Patriarch to Ethiopia, both in the case of João Nunes Barreto and in that of Afonso Mendes.41 Moreover, in his instructions to the missionaries Ignatius emphasized that “it will be helpful if they go well provided of paraphernalia for the church, the altars and the priests as well, dacons and subdacons, including also chalces, crosses and other things that serve to the external cult”.42

The missionaries were conscious that their physical appearance mattered as well. In their attempts to be seen as an entirely new sort of priesthood, they took as much care for the way they looked and behaved as for the way they talked to locals. Hence, they tried to convey an image of dignity and even beauty. Their way of lifes and their external looks should be impeccable. They were aware that they were scrutinized and that giving a good impression to locals could foster many a conversion. Accordingly, Mendes reported that Susenyos was convinced of the truth of the missionaries as much for aesthetic as for intellectual reasons:

For many years he was in contact with them and studied their way of live. He could never find anything that he thought was wrong and thence he was convinced that the

40 Hombre alto y bien dispuesto; Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 250-51; ...Por ser hermosos y tan blancos como hijos de Portugueses; Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 409.
41 On the election of Barreto, cf. Chapter 2. On Mendes, all the sources agree that he was a well built man and frequently stress his tallness.
42 Ayudara tambien que vayan bien provistos de ornamentos de yglesia, asi para altares, como para los sacerdotes, dacons y subdacons y acolites, asi mesmo de calices, cruces acetes y otras cosas, que seiren al culto exterior; Ignacio de Loyola, 1551-53, in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 2, 250.
faith that such saintly men preached and sustained could not be wrong.\textsuperscript{43}

The Jesuitic ‘uniform’, the long black gown, was also proudly worn in Ethiopia; it served to identify the missionaries as distinctive priests and also expressed the values of the community they belonged to: sobriety, intelligence, sincerity, order. For the same reason, the missionaries were critical with the clothing habits of the Ethiopians, and the clergy in particular. The Jesuit António Roiz thus wrote in 1625 that “instead of the holy vestments they [the priests] wear clothes purchased to the Moors and Turks and used corporals not properly clean and made of cotton”.\textsuperscript{44} To its remedy, they pressed the negus to order that corporals be clean and white and preferentially of lino and that the holy vestments follow Roman standards.\textsuperscript{45}

Whilst the Jesuit and neophytes’ garments signified the new facade of Catholic men, the residences were the new facade of a Catholic Ethiopian society in the making. Missionaries could develop their tasks relatively unmolested in their residences, somehow enjoying the freedom that Ethiopian traditional law attributed to churches – conceived as sacred places and areas of shelter. It may be helpful to glance at how these settlements looked like: What were, besides schooling, the main tasks of the Jesuit priests? How did this Catholic microcosm look like?

The placement and distribution of the residences was subject to a number of local-related factors but doubtlessly the principles applied worldwide to erect Jesuit colleges and churches – those summarized in the concepts of utilia, sana, fortia, urbana, centralia, romana (i.e. serviceable, healthy, sound, urban, central and Roman) – played an important role.\textsuperscript{46}

To choose the areas of settlement, the Jesuits were often determined by the presence of friendly groups, such as the Ethio-Portuguese, as well as by the availability of ‘free’ lands at their disposal. Yet, a mixture of strategic and aesthetic reasons was crucial for orienting choice: availability of water, good communications, healthy location, the possibility to

\textsuperscript{43} Por espaço de muitos annos, os tratara e examinara seu modo de viver, sem nunca nelles achar cousa que lhe parecesse mal, e com isso se veyo á persuadir que não podia deixar de ser verdadeira a fée que se sustentava e pregava por homens de tam santas obras; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XX. This argument was held throughout the whole mission period. In 1609, the Jesuits alleged the following four reasons for the “great opinion in which the Abyssinians hold us” (Magna omnino Abissinorum de nostris est sublimis opinio ob virtutes quas curiosius obsevarunt); “purity of mind and body” (mentis corporisque puritatem), “trustworthiness and fidelity in keeping promises” (veracitas et in exsolvendis promissis fidelitas), “trustworthiness in keeping deposits – jewelry etc. – of outsiders” (fidelitas in servandis depositis); “nonviolent and nonindictive attitude” (in iuriam non vindicent); Annual letter of the Indian Province, 1609, in: RASO XI, doc. 25, 173.

\textsuperscript{44} Em lugar das vestiduras sagradas costumam a usar de vestidos comprados aos Mouros e Turcos; Usavam de corporaes pouco limpos e feitos de algodam; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 225v.

\textsuperscript{45} Os corporaes fossem limpos e alvos o mais que podessem ser, e fossem de algodam soo em quanto nam ouesse linho. E as vestiduras sagradas se fizessem ao modo Romano; ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} On this topic, I borrow from the excellent study by OSSWALD, “Jesuit Art in Goa between 1542 and 1655”, 132 seq; cf. also Jean VALLERY-RADOT, Le recueil de plans d'édifices de la Compagnie de Jésus conservé à la bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1960, 35.
erect a fortress and access to panoramic and ‘dominating’ views over the landscape. Accordingly, most of the residences were placed on top of defendable hills enjoying of generous views over the countryside and with easily connections to main routes of communications. Fremona sat on an imposing hill overlooking the Adwa plateau and at the intersection between wide-ranging trade routes. The site was fortified in successive occasions – 1606, 1616 and 1624 – with a circle of walls that turned it into an impregnable fortress.47 In Gorgora Velha (Old Gorgora), which was in a lesser favourable emplacement – in the milieu of the plateau on the homonymous peninsula – the missionaries, nonetheless, owned a nearby island where they took refuge in times of trouble.48 This relative shortcoming was avoided in 1626 when the residence moved to a small Peninsula dominating a daunting view over Lake Tana, known to the locals as “Cund Amba”, which was henceforth renamed as Gorgora Nova (cf. Plates V-VIII).49 Moreover, the site of Gännätä Iyäsus in Azázo, the fourth residence to be opened, was chosen because of its proximity to the court in Dänqät (three legoas away, about 20 kms) and because the terrain there was suitable for establishing a royal garden.50

The residences to the east and south of Lake Tana followed a similar logic. Enfraz (also known as Debsan), the residence-to-be of the Catholic Patriarch, had a beautiful view over Lake Tana and was mid-way between the two main areas of action of the mission, Gojjam and Dämbeya.51 Qollela’s initial location at the foot of a hill was abandoned towards 1624 for a nearby location which was easier to defend and within a few years architectural improvements turned it into the safest fortified residence in Gojjam.52 Lejjä Negus replaced Gäbärma, which was judged not secure enough because it was near the Agäw of Sacala and easily prone to Oromo attacks. The residence was fortified “with a wall of stone and mud thick and resistant” (em muro de pedra e barro largo e forte).53 Tanqha, the main residence in Agäw land, was placed on top of a hill, with easy access to water from a nearby stream and was said to enjoy of “a pleasant view”.54

47 The works proved soon their value: towards 1612 they successfully defended its inhabitants from attacks by Oromo and, in 1616, from local bandits and rebels; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXIX, and liv. VIII, ch. III; Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 254. On the architectonic/military improvements cf. also Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 434; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 229r.
48 “Where we gather when there are rebellions” (… onde nos acolhemos no tempo das revoltas); Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 416.
49 The local name is mentioned in RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XI. Cf. also RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIII.
50 Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 229r; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXIII.
53 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XII and ch. XXIII; Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 279; RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. V.
54 … Com alegre vista; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 227r.
Plate IXa (above left): Anup talao tank, Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh, India, 1575.

Plate IXb (above right): Fasilädäs’s bath, southern view, Gondär, ca. 1660.

Plate IXc (centre): Fasilädäs’s bath, northern view.

Plate IXd (below): Hiran Minar complex, Sheikhupura, Punjab, Pakistan, 1606.
Plate IX-XII: Mughal-Indian influences in Jesuit missionary and Gondarine architecture: gardens, palaces and decorations, 1619-ca. 1660

Plate Xa (above): Palace of Fasilädäs, southwestern view, Gondär, ca. 1660.

Plate Xb (centre): Man Singh Mahal (palace), Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India, late 15th century.

Plate Xc (below left): Khirki Masjid, Delhi, India, mid-1370s.

Plate XIa (above left): Decorative motifs, Altar maior, church of Iyäsus, Gorgora Nova, ca. 1629.

Plate XIb (above right): Decorated barred wall, Adalaj-Rudabai stepwell, Gujarat, India, 1499.

Plate XIc (below left): Decorated motifs, Southern doorway, church of Märtulä Maryam, Ennäbesse, ca. 1630.

Plate XIId (below right): Decorated motifs, Vadhvan, Madha stepwell, Gujarat, India, 1294.
Plate XIIa (above left): Wall decoration in the residence of Dänqäz, ca. 1628.

Plate XIIb (above right): Floral decorations in the interior of the Khwabgah, Red Fort, Delhi, India, completed in 1648.

Plate XIIc (below left): Work of stucco, interior of the palace of Fasilädäs, Gondär, ca. 1660.

Plate XIIId (below right): Work of stucco, ruined Jahangiri pavillon, garden in the topmost enclosure, Hari Parbat, Srinagar, India, ca. 1570.
Initially austere refugees, the residences grew to become attractive Catholic havens cocoons protected from the outside world. There, the missionaries openly officiated the Catholic mass to their community and taught in all freedom the Catholic doctrines. Initially, these places counted not more than a few dozen permanent inhabitants but in the course of the 1620s this number might have grown considerably. The missionaries, the scholars and a group of assistants, such as Ethio-Portuguese of various ages and former scholars in their teens, formed the core. Besides them, there were also locals who found there a refuge, like pilgrims, infirm seeking to be cured or a few destitute. As well as receiving education, protection and medical treatment, the guests of the Jesuit priests had to keep discipline and strict rules of behaviour and cases of expulsion from the community did occur.

At the residences the Jesuits could also receive their guests in due form. They proudly showed them the advances of the néophytes, who would display their oratorial skills and declaim the Christian doctrines to a public amazed “of seeing that our children know more about the mysteries of faith than they do and even more than their own priests”. The Jesuits also believed that Catholic mass could serve as a magnet for the locals and tried to play in their favour as much as they could with the evident differences between the two liturgies. They thought that the more liberal liturgy and more embellished forms of the Tridentine mass could be an additional force pulling locals towards them. Accordingly, Azevedo was informed that locals were attracted by the fact that the Catholic mass was “public and open to everybody” and was not forbidden to menstruating

55 Cf. Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 98. Azevedo presented the medical services offered at the residences as one of the reasons making the mission more accepted to locals. Services were probably elementary for the missionaries complained that conditions in Ethiopia were nothing compared to those offered by the “dispensary” (dispensário) of São Paulo Novo, though still of much better standards than local health care. Among the treatments and remedies offered in Ethiopia were lavatorios (i.e. laxativo, ‘laxative’), sangrias (‘bloodletting’, i.e. phlebotomy) and, of course!, praying; Ibid. 120-21. A famous patient the missionaries had was ras Se’élä Krestos. In 1613, he was cured by Páez of a “serious illness”, a fact that could have helped in stirring up his religious conversion; Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 319-20; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXI. An ulterior instance of conversion with the help of medical services was around 1626, when Zä Mikaél, a former governor of Tegray, was cured by Father Barneto with the help of antimony – used in the past to treat people infected with parasites – and thereafter was “converted”; Tomé Barneto to Stefano da Cruz, 12 March 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 60, 192. In later periods, involvement in medical practices will be a recurrent practice of missionaries in Ethiopia and two cases are worth being recalled here. In the nineteenth century, the Capuchin missionary Guglielmo Massaja achieved much success among the Oromo thanks to his medical skills; cf. Guglielmo MASSAJA, Memoire storiche del Vicariato apostolico dei Galla: 1845-1880, ed. A. Rosso, Padova: Edizioni Messaggero, 1984 (repr. of I miei 35 anni di missione nell’alta Etiopia, Roma: Tipografia Poligotta di Propaganda Fide, 1885-95), vol. 2, 154 seq. In the twentieth century, the doctor Thomas Lambie of the American Sudan Interior Mission achieved similar success among the Maale and reflecting on it he wrote that “There is perhaps no country where a medical diploma acts more efficiently as an entrance passe porte than Ethiopia”; cited in Donald Lewis DONHAM, Marxist modern: an ethnographic history of the Ethiopian revolution, Berkeley [u.a.]: Univ. of California Press, James Currey, 1999, 88-89.

56 In 1607 a woman said to be “bad, indecent and … incurable” (maa molher escandalosa… incuravel) was expelled from Fremona; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 96.

57 Porque os espanta ver (como ellos dizem) que os nossos meninos sabem mais nos misterios da fe que elles e seus frades; Ibid. 119, also
women.58

It seems now fair to ask what did ‘reduction’ mean in practical terms for those living under the watchful eye of the Jesuit priests? To join the circle of the mission Ethiopians had to abandon not only their religious practices; the friends, néophytes and associates actually adopted a new identity that was largely based in foreign elements introduced by the missionaries. Accordingly, a number of local converts were said to have adopted a Portuguese name and the missionaries were also keen of giving such names to newly-baptised people during missions in the countryside. The devout Se’élä Krestos, for instance, named one of his sons Bellarmino, after the famous Jesuit theologian and other Portuguese names, such as Padre, Ines, João, Anna, Antonio and Ignacio, are mentioned as having been adopted by locals.59 Another important element stressing the new identity of the cathecumens, scholars, friends and ministers instructed by the Jesuits was clothing. Scholars were dressed in clothes and fabrics imported from India and eventually cut by a tailor from the missionary residences. Wearing a new dress signaled for them the beginning of their transformation. Cathecumens issued from the conversions in the countryside are also mentioned as adopting Western-style habits. In ca. 1618, Se’élä Krestos sent a merchant to Massawa with 140 cruzãos em ouro (50,400 reis) to buy “nice clothes” for those whom Francesco Antonio de Angelis baptized in Ancasha.60 In 1624, on the eve of the wide-scale reformation of local liturgical practices and monastic life, a number of monastic communities are reported wearing “garments according to the Roman tradition”.61 Similarly, about 1627, the Jesuit Gaspar Paes hosted a group of local priests in Lejjä Negus whom he instructed on how to administer the sacraments, and provided them with patens and chalices (forged by an officer working at the residence) and new clothes cut “in our mode”.62 Moreover, missionary evidence from the next year suggests that towards the end of the

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58 Folgão muito de ouvir a nossa missa, porque se diz em publico e a vista de todos e não he prohibida às mulheres ouvila em certos tempos de suas doenças naturaes; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 122-23.
59 Afonso Mendes, “De rebellione Sarza Christôs et de martyrio…”, 31 June 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 114, 490. For further references: ca. 1627, an Agäw at converting adopted the name Padre; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 393. About the same year, during a conversion campaign in Tegray, Father Barneto baptized three children with the names Ines, João and Ignacio, the latter scene occurred after the mother gave birth safely with the help of an image of St. Ignatius; Barneto, 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 60, 183, 200-01, 208. Towards 1630 in Gojjam two friars were converted and one of them adopted the name Pedro; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 470. In the same period, Jeronimo Lobo lead a rural mission in Tegray and informed that after baptizing people for the hundreds “all men were called Pedro or Antonio, all women Maria and Anna” (... todos se chamarão Pedro ou Antonio, estas Marias ou Anna); Lobo, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 390.
60 ... Fatos lustrosos; Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 490; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 439.
61 ... Vestimentas ao uso romano; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 237r. The same letter informs of a campaign of conversions among the Agäw done “by disciples who are dressed like the [Jesuit] fathers” (... por meio discípulos q. andito vestidos como os paes); Ibid. 256r.
62 ... Cortavaleiras as vestimentas a nosso modo e fazíalhes concertar os calices e patenas por hum official, a que foro este effeito pagava
decade the Catholic dressing code became the norm among the court clergy. The new identity also meant the adoption of a new religious language. Jesuits were not fond of local blessings and religious expressions. They considered, for instance, Ethiopian liking to bless after St. Mary a disrespect and tried to prevent its use, a stance that, as I explain in Chapter 8, will be eventually interpreted by many an Ethiopian as a sign of the Jesuits’ dislike for this holy figure. Similarly, the missionaries introduced with gusto a name dear to them, that of Iyäsus (Jesus), a personal ‘trademark’ of the Society that was also used to name the mother church in Rome, the first Christian church to bear such a name. Accordingly, they named after Iyäsus their three most important churches in Ethiopia – Gorgora Nőca, Gänmätä Iyäsus and Dänqäz – and taught Catholic converts to bless after the same name. This practice was new in Ethiopia as locals rather favoured blessing after Egziabeher and churches were seldom if at all named after Iyäsus. Indeed, in accordance with its theological and Christological positions, Ethiopian society had traditionally favoured names stressing the divinity and might of God (i.e. Medhane Alem, ‘Saviour of the World’ or Egziabeher itself, literally meaning ‘Lord of the Earth’) rather than its humanity (embodied in such names as ‘Jesus’). The use of the ‘new’ term Jesus/Iyäsus conveyed a whole religious worldview: it substituted a God with divine features (the Ethiopian Egziabeher) with a God of human features (Jesus). The Iyäsus as it was adopted by the Catholic brethren in Ethiopia was one more step towards defeating the traditional Ethiopian doctrine that denied the humanity of Christ. Thereby using the name of Iyäsus/Jesus seems to have become, like the Catholic amulets and images displayed on the bodies, a public sign of the Catholic brethren, a trademark of the new Catholic community growing up in the kingdom.

Clothing also served to seduce the royal court and the Jesuits benefited here from two circumstances. On the one hand, they enjoyed of privileged ties with the banian merchants in Massawa and Diu, one of the most important ports for exporting the valued Gu...
jarati textiles. Ethiopian lords and nobility had been for ages consumers of these products and in the seventeenth century the Jesuits were placed as key mediators to gain them access to these luxurious goods. On the other hand, the Spanish dressing code gained widespread acceptance during the reign of Felipe II. Then, Spanish fashion was imitated in European courts and denoted cultural and social distinction and it is reasonable to assume that its appeal reached more distant corners. Susenyos, for instance, was notoriously fond of foreign clothes, a fact that probably characterized the Ethiopian court since the arrival of the first Portuguese in the previous century. The missionaries, especially Páez, played on it to gain his trust if not dependence and in 1614-15, at his request, Páez taught a tailor at the court how to cut shirts according to the Portuguese style. Reportedly, foreign forms (such as las lechuguillas de las camisas) were also particularly attractive to other hosts at the court and the same tailor eventually cut eight pieces that were worn by the negus, his brother Se’elä Krestos and other dignitaries. The next year, the Castilian asked the provincial in India for a rich “cape of golden damask crimson” (una capa de damasco carmesí de capello com as franjas de fio de ouro), probably also for the same beneficiary. During the 1620s, imports of Oriental fabrics must have but increased and its consumption at the court of Dänqäz is amply attested. In 1624, when Manoel de Almeida and other Jesuit fellows arrived at Dänqäz they saw Susenyos “laying on a bed covered with a silk blanket and dressed like the Portuguese, with a robe of damask crimson”. On 7 February 1626, on the occasion of the reception offered to Patriarch Mendes at the court, the people were reported to have appeared in their “best garments, which, for the nobles were cabayas of different types of silk, velvet, setins, brocados from Mecca in Turkish fashion, and those of the ordinary people: fotetes, bofetas, saraças and other clothes from India and some locally made.”

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65 In the chronicle of Särsä Dengel, for instance, the negus receives as presents from habbūragh Yeshaq clothes “imported from the sea”, undoubtedly of Indian origin; CONTI ROSSINI (ed., tr.), Historia regis Sarsa Dengel, 46. A summary study on the consumption of Indian goods – especially textiles – in Ethiopia is Stanislaw CHojNACKI, “New aspects of India’s influence on the art and culture of Ethiopia”, Rassegna di Studi Etiopici new ser. II, 2003, 5-22.


68 Páez, 1615, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 153r.

69 … Em hum leito encoberto de seda traiavase a Portuguesa com hum roupão de damasco Carmesi; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 222r.

70 … Sairão naquelle dia com as libres e gallas que mais prezavão, que são, as dos senhores, cabayas de varias sedas, veludos, setins [i.e. cetim: tecido de seda lustroso e macio;], brocados [estofo de seda ricamente bordado em relevo de ouro e prata;] de Meca á turquesca, as da gente ordinaria, fotetes, bofetas, saraças e outros panos da India e alguns da terra; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXI. The indo-portuguese terms in italics find in Dalgado’s dictionary the following definitions: cabaya: roupaça ou túnica, que os orientais usam geralmente; fotas: tecido de lã, ou de algodão, e seda com listas, do tamanho e feitio de huma cinta; bofetas: antigo tecido de algodão, fabricado principalmente em Baroche, India; saraça: tecido de côr, geralmente de algodão, com que se envolvam da
Moreover, the *redução* of “pagans and heretics” affected also the physical body. Thus, it is likely that scholars and adults alike adopted Western looks, although this is one of the areas where data is more scant. The most critical aspect that had to bring about the true transformation – physical as well as spiritual – of the self was the renunciation of circumcision, which was practiced by all the groups the missionaries came in contact with. On that issue, the proverbial patience and capacity of adaptation of the Jesuits was set aside. For the Jesuits, strongly adhering to Pauline and Western anthropology, circumcision endangered the capacity to lead a truly Christian life and the very chance of salvation. Circumcision appeared to them as an artificial and useless physical deformation of the body, an issue to which Jesuit thinking was highly sensitive. Moreover, since in the Ethiopian context this rite was practiced before the baptism, the Jesuits argued that it deprived a part of the body from the Christian rite and, eventually, from resurrection. Finally, and most importantly, it denied full efficiency to baptism, which in the Catholic conception had truly and completely replaced circumcision and embodied all its virtues. Therefore, without its suppression no proper ‘reduction’ of the self was possible. In addition, the Jesuits also introduced specific dietary changes that aimed at replacing what they considered useless and at times harmful local feeding habits. Susenyos himself, under advice of the missionaries, reportedly abandoned one of Ethiopia’s gastronomic delicacies, *ketfo* (i.e. raw meat), to become a regular pork eater, which, the Jesuits informed, was healthier and tasted much better than other types of meat.71

The conversion by the objects

Visual support and printed material constituted for the Jesuits an important group of objects due to their propaganda and proselytist effects. The Jesuit religious and missionary praxis was, to borrow a definition coined by Christina Osswald, based in a “theology of the visible”:72 Catholic norms and doctrines had to be transmitted to the peoples through a profuse exhibition of images and aesthetic forms; the religious messages had to reach the hearts of peoples through the senses. In consequence, in Ethiopia, like elsewhere, the import of religious images was remarkable although today only a few pieces have survived the

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71 Hence, Jesuit records inform that the negus and nobles alike “requested to eat pork for health reasons”, saying that it was like “medicine against many illnesses” (…, folgava muito com carne de porco que a gente de Ethiopia… por nenhum caso toca, por saber que os de Roma a comêdo e dizia della mil bens; e o mesmo fazido já muitos grandes homens e mulheres pedindo com occasião de saúde, afirmando que era mezinha para muitas enfermidadeos); RASO IV, 28.

72 OSSWALD, "Jesuit Art in Goa between 1542 and 1655", 163 seq.
hazards of time and persecution. The subject matter of these imported European paintings is concerned with a wide variety of themes. First above all there was the Virgin from Santa Maria Maggiore (Rome) known as Salus Populi Romani (i.e. ‘Protectress of the Roman People’) but normally called in sources the Virgin of St. Luke due to a legend attributing its painting to the Apostle. The importance of this image in the Society is well known and its cult is associated with the third General, Francisco de Borja. In 1568, Pius V permitted reproductions of this image and thereafter copies were taken to several missionary fronts. In 1570, Ignacio de Azevedo took a copy to Brazil and in 1578 another copy reached India, where the image would be also known under the name of Nossa Senhora das Neves. In 1580, Fathers Antonio de Montserrat, Rodolfo Acquaviva and Francisco Henriques presented a copy of the icon produced in Rome to the Mughal Emperor Akbar, who reportedly received it with enjoyment. The first reference to their presence in Ethiopia dates to 1605 and the images were probably brought by Pedro Páez – the virtual blockade of the Red Sea in the 1570s and 1580s, would have made it unlikely that any copy reached the mission at an earlier date. As it seems, Jesuits imported painted icons and printed stamps alike; products of the Goan workshops – cheaper and available in larger quantities – probably constituted the larger bulk, although more canonic copies made in Rome could also have reached the mission. The Jesuits placed the finest copies at the main residences – Fremona and Gorgora – and during processions and pastoral missions they also showed small icons (a likely reminiscence could be the object shown in Plate IIIa) and distributed engravings to newly converts. European engravings in particular seem to have been used en masse and played an important role in evangelization tasks. Chief among them must

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73 There is little information on how and when did the objects reach the mission. A large number of objects seem to have been transported during the major caravans of missionaries that arrived between 1623 and 1625. In addition, during other periods the banian and Ottoman ships heading for the Red Sea and the caravans crossing the Hamaseen plateau might have been also active transporting items needed in the mission. In 1615, for instance, Páez informed that “the images, books and clothes had arrived to Massawa” (as imagens, livros e fato chegaram ja a Macau; Páez, 1615, in: ADB, Legajo 779, 152r).

74 Personal communication of Cristina Osswald. For the worldwide circulation of the image the most comprehensive study remains Pasquale M. D’ELIA, “La prima diffusione nel mondo dell’immagine di Maria ‘Salus populi romani’”, Fede e arte. Rivista internazionale di arte sacra II, X, 1954, 301-11.


77 Towards the late 1570s massive production of this motive in Goa took off; cf. Maria Cristina OSSWALD, “Goa and the Jesuit Cult and Iconography before 1622”, Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu 74, 147, 2005, 155-73, 158-59.

78 In ca. 1610, Father António Mascarenhas is said to have sent copies whilst he was assistant in Rome (1607-15); Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 414. Cf. also STREIT – DINDINGER, Bibliotheca Missionum, vol. XVI, doc. 2292.
IN THE COMPANY OF IYÁSUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

have been engravings from the well-known Antwerp workshops, in specific from the workshop of the Wierix brothers (e.g. in Plate IIIb), which towards the 1570s became the principal furnisher of printed religious imagery for the Society of Jesus. The impact of this image on indigenous imagination cannot be overstated. The icon was soon an object of popular worship: locals came to the residences from afar to request favors and to enjoy the image’s alleged thaumaturgic power. Engravings were also distributed to the people and the icons were shown on occasions when guests visited the residences and were paraded in the neighbouring areas.

It is also much probable that the icon soon began to be reproduced by local Ethiopian artists who were trained by or in contact with the missionaries, as could be the case with the icon shown in Plate IIIa. Some historical evidence would also support the hypothesis that the mission was associated with the creation of local artistic workshops, a feature already well attested in the Jesuit mission in Japan.

In 1624, for instance, Susenyos offered to the Jesuits in Gännätä Iyäsus an image of Christ crucified and another of Our Lady of St. Luke, both described as a “fine work”. In the next year, Diogo de Mattos, on a visit to the monastery of Abba Garima found a copy of the icon said to be of bad quality but revered by the community and the next year his comrade Barneto, on a visit to the church of Aksum Seyon, saw “two retablos of Our Lady of St. Luke”. Moreover, other images imported by the Jesuits were reproduced in the mission. In 1628, during the celebrations of the Passion held solemnly at Gännätä Iyäsus and Gorgora, two Ecce homos were shown to a group of the faithful; the first had been painted by a priest assistant to the Patriarch and the one shown at Gorgora by the architect João Martins. Indeed, the Patriarchal residence of Enfraz could have been an important centre of production of Catho-

80 Cf. in Azevedo, 1605, in: RASO XI, doc. 15, 62; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 106, 107-09, 115. Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 483, 490, reports that an infirm man was cured with an Agnus Dei and a stamp of the Virgin with Jesus child on her hands, i.e. the Virgin of Santa Maria Maggiore (registo da Virgem como o menino Jesus nos braços).
82 … De boa mão; Roiz, 1625, Goa, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 223v.
83 … De pintura tosca mas estimada delles; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 250v.
84 … Dous retablos de Nossa Senhora de sam Lucas; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 250v. Also Barneto, 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 60, 189.
lic Ethiopian art, including books, paintings and music and towards 1627 Mendes informed that some of the boys studying at his seminar were “translators and skilled in writing Ethiopian characters (who could also truly paint as well as write”).

Towards the fall of the mission, reception of the icon of Mary had been so enthusiastic that this had already replaced all previous Marian patterns and for centuries to come became the canonic form of representing the Virgin. Images of the Assumption of Mary, in Ethiopia known as Felsäta, a widespread motive in Renaissance and Manneristic painting, seems also to have been imported during this period, thus provoking its spread into local painting. Moreover, images of the patriarchs of the church, icons of Christ—such as Veronica and Ecce Homo—portraits of the first Jesuit martyrs and, as it will be seen below, of the Jesuit founder (beatiﬁed in 1609) and Francis-Xavier also reached the mission.

The import of images into Ethiopia had communicative and propaganda purposes. On the one hand, they showed to Ethiopian Christians that the Jesuits shared a similar Christian legacy to them thus giving the foreign priests more respect from the local society. This point was important because in the strong conservative milieu of Ethiopian Christianity the missionaries often had their faith questioned as unorthodox and unfaithful. On the other hand, by sponsoring public religious devotions, the Jesuits showed that some of the boys studying at his seminar were “translators and skilled in writing Ethiopian characters (who could also truly paint as well as write”).

The introduction of another icon, the Virgin with golden elements (in the frame?) that was offered to Susenyos in 1624 by Manoel de Almeida (Plate IIIb); Roize, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 222v. A few icons of Christ of foreign origin have been found in Ethiopia. One strongly resembling the image offered by Almeida is described in the Jesuit letter informing that a chapel in, or near, Fremeon had in custody a famous icon painted by one “Nicolaus Venetus”, which almost certainly points to a work by the Venetian artist Nicolò Brancacone, who lived in Ethiopia from ca. 1480 to the third decade of the sixteenth century; Annual letter, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 281r-84v, 283v. On the activities of European painters in Ethiopia before the Jesuit mission, cf. Chojnacki, Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting, ch. VII: “European painters in 15th and early 16th century Ethiopia”.

One of the accusations the missionaries received from the traditionalists was that of not being devout of the Holy Virgin; de Angelis, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 59, 464. This point is treated more extensively in the next chapter.

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86 Interpretes et grafitici aethiopiarum litterarum pictores (verius enim pingi quam scribi dici possunt); RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. IV.
88 There is, however, no speciﬁc evidence of the import of such an icon during the mission. In its turn, a comparison of the iconography of European and Ethiopian Assumption icons is still missing. For an overview of this image in Ethiopia, cf. Marilyn E. Heldman, “Felsäta”, in: Uhlig, Encyclopedia Aethiopica, vol. 2, 518-20.
89 There is a reference to an image of the Christ with golden elements (in the frame?) that was offered to Susenyos in 1624 by Manoel de Almeida (Plate IIIb); Roize, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 222v. A few icons of Christ of foreign origin have been found in Ethiopia. One strongly resembling the image offered by Almeida is described in Richard Holmes, “A Flemish Picture from Abyssinia”, The Burlington Magazine 29, 7, 1905, 394-95.
90 Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 459. The introduction of another icon that became popular during the Gondarine school of painting, the Kiser'ata re'esu, is, however, less easy to attribute to the Jesuit mission. Chojnacki considered favourably at the idea that the so-called ‘Imperial Icon’ entered during the embassy of Rodrigo da Lima in the 1520s; Stanislaw Chojnacki, The Kiser'ata Re'esu: its iconography and signiﬁcance. An essay on cultural history of Ethiopia, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale (1985 (supl. Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale 45, 1, 1985), 12-14.
91 The portrait of St. Ignatius is ﬁrst mentioned in Ethiopia in 1619; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 414, 424. As it was the case with the Virgin of St. Luke, copies of these images had also been produced by the Wierix workshop – cf. Maquoy-Hendrickx, Les estampes des Wierix, vol. 2, image 828 seq, 1146 seq, vol. 3, image 1809 seq – and are also likely to have reached en masse the mission. Additionally, a Jesuit letter informs that a chapel in, or near, Fremeon had in custody a famous icon painted by one “Nicolaus Venetus”, which almost certainly points to a work by the Venetian artist Nicolò Brancacone, who lived in Ethiopia from ca. 1480 to the third decade of the sixteenth century; Annual letter, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 281r-84v, 283v. On the activities of European painters in Ethiopia before the Jesuit mission, cf. Chojnacki, Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting, ch. VII: “European painters in 15th and early 16th century Ethiopia”.
92 One of the accusations the missionaries received from the traditionalists was that of not being devout of the Holy Virgin; de Angelis, 1620, in: RASO XI, doc. 59, 464. This point is treated more extensively in the next chapter.
aries were keeping in step with their times. The public cult to the holy images had been sanctioned by the Council of Trent in its decree De invocatione, veneratione et reliquis sanctorum, et de sacris imaginiis93 and thereafter was strongly supported by the Society of Jesus: images were deemed to have a pedagogic and ‘hypnotic’ quality and their public use was to be fostered by the ecclesiastic authorities. The priests were also responsible that the images and the cults associated with them followed norms of decency, purity and devotion. In Ethiopia, the foreign images were to replace local icons and help towards spreading Catholic devotions over a wider population.

Additionally, sources also inform of a large number of imported resists (i.e. registos, images of saints printed on bookmarks), which served as give away presents for the people the missionaries encountered during conversion campaigns.94 Finally, an influential visual reference in the mission was the Evangelicae historiae imagines, adnotationes et meditationes compiled by Jerónimo Nadal at the end of the sixteenth century, which included a series of prints of the life and the passion of Christ produced at the Wierix workshop.95 Its use in the mission can also be taken as an indirect attestation of the introduction of the practice of the Spiritual Exercises, which were associated with these images, among the Catholic community.96 Moreover, some of the prints associated with this work became popular motives in the Ethiopian painting catalogue that was created at the demise of the mission (Plate IIIc).97 Finally, towards the late 1610s, the illustrated Biblia Complutense also reached the mission and its prints were reportedly shown to the enchanted public at the court.98

Among the non-visual religious objects imported into Ethiopia there were sumptuary goods for mission churches, such as ostiarios, chalices, and other church paraphernalia that, besides affording the celebration of the Roman ritual, should give visitors a glimpse of the magnificence of Catholicism.99 Rosaries, Agnus Dei, crowns of the “Holy

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93 26th Session, 3-4 December 1563; published in WOHLMUTH – ALBERIGO, Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien, vol. 3, 774-76.
94 For instance, Tomé Barneto to Provincial in Goa, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 86, 313.
98 Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 423.
Virgin”, tin crosses, chaplets, small reliquaries (contas, relicarios) were imported, as it seems, en masse so as to be distributed to the people during preaching missions. It can be assumed that soon these objects also became individual marks of those who had joined the Jesuit ideals; they distinguished its bearers from the broader Ethiopian society and provided them as well with the feeling to belonging to a small but yet select elite. Moreover, in another sign of the connivance between the missionaries and the state, the royal power sanctioned the use of these Catholic objects by discriminating those not wearing them. Hence, towards 1629 Susenyos reportedly only received at his court those who wore necklaces with veronicas having been provided by the missionaries.

Responding to the precepts of Trent, veneration of relics was also encouraged during the mission. Since the opening of the first mission, the Jesuits showed an interest in gathering the remains of the most important missionaries and Portuguese who had died in Ethiopia. The ‘relics’ of Patriarch Oviedo were exhumed and eventually sent to India as early as in 1605 and those of his fellow Francesco Antonio de Angelis were moved to the new church of lime and stone in Qollela. The bones of Christovão da Gama were searched for for years until definitely being found in 1626 by Jerónimo Lobo and also sent to India as a reward to the Count of Vidigueira, the Viceroy Francisco da Gama, Christovão’s nephew and one of the mission’s greatest benefactors in India. During the 1620s, as we will see below, minor relics of St. Francis Xavier also reached the mission.

The profane objects of the mission included a large number of books, writing material (paper, pens), Indian desks (escritorios) and Chinese porcelain. To all intents and purposes, a large part of these items were for internal use in the residences, the missionaries wishing to reproduce in Ethiopia the domestic atmosphere they were accustomed to during their years in India. Thus, in 1612 Páez informed his friend Ituren that he had received “crosses and paper” (cruces i papeles) whilst European-printed books also began to be gathered at Fremona, Gorgora and Qollela and were to serve the more prosaic intelle-

from Shire, once opposed to the European priests, observed that “hosts, particulas, priests’ vests and the remaining instruments to officiate the mass were perfect and very clean” (...) hostias, particulas, vestes sacerdotais e mais serviço do altar, tudo era perfeitíssimo e mui limpo; Barneto, 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 60, 189.

100 Sources mention rosarios, coronas B. Mariae, contas para rezar, Agnus Dei; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 108, 138; Annual letter, 1612, in: RASO XI, 286; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 367. In 1619, these objects were given to a train of notables from Eunarya during a visit to the court; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 431.

101 ... A ninguem despacha se advirte que não tem contas; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 380.

102 Páez once even declared to have the skull of Francisco Lopes († 1597) on top of his headrest (cabeceira); Páez, 1603, in: RASO XI, doc. 14, 58; on de Angelis cf. RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIV.

103 Eventually, Lobo had travelled to India in the armada led by the Count of Vidiguiérea, who substituted Afonso de Noronha as Viceroy of India; cf. LOBO, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 20.

104 Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 272.
tual activities. Mendes, who was given rights over the important library of Francisco Suárez, took a large number of books with him, as well as desks, wax, *lacrer*, house furniture to help in the works at the residences and even matchlocks (*espingardas*) to guarantee his protection.

However, the missionaries also used non-religious objects as symbols of prestige and as luxurious gifts for the mission’s patrons and friends. Thus, towards December 1612, a nativity scene (*un bellissimo presepe*) was arranged and shown at Gorgora. It was said to be the object of great admiration by Susenyos and nobles: “The King, the Prince his son [probably Fasilädäs, born 1603], Se’elä Krestos and Be’elä Krestos and other nobles and personalities, adored with the greatest devotion the infant Jesus, who was lying in the *pressepe*, being all astonished of this new and graceful thing”. The same object was frequently arranged to embellish the celebrations of Christmas held at the Jesuit residences. About the same year three Jesuit priests on visit to the royal *kätäma* offered to the negus “a precious stone [jewell] to be embedded in the royal ring, a Roman glass [*gutturium*] and a pan made by Chinese handwork” and in the first object “the art of the carving was admirable as it is well known that it was carved by an excellent craftsman from Goa and the sight of which moved to great joy the king”. In December 1618, António Fernandes took “a present with things from Diu” (*hum prezente de couzas de Dio*) from Tegray to the court and in 1624 Susenyos was delighted at receiving a relic cage sent by Nuno Mascarenhas, Provincial Assistent in Portugal, which hung from a “precious golden necklace” produced by a banian. In the early 1625, the negus also received a golden bed (*catre dourado*), which probably was of little help for him to daunt the nightmares to come.

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105 Mendes, 1625, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 161. In his own treatise, the Patriarch informed that his library contained “sacred history of all the [Church] fathers, theological treatises, books on the councils and [Canon] Law” (*… omnibus patribus sacra historia, libros theologicos, concilis et iuris textibus*); RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. IV. On the issue of Suarez’ library, which was object of a heated debate in Portugal, cf. also Mário Brandão, *Estudos Vários*, vol. 1, Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1972, 95.


107 Il Rè, il Principe suo figliuolo Ceilos Christos e Bella Christos, et altri nobili e gran personaggi (?) adorarono con ogni affetto di devotione il bambino Gesù che giaceva nel presepe, meravigliandosi tutti di quella novità e vaghezza; de Angelis, 1613, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 109v.

108 In 1624, Father Azevedo made a *pressepe* at Gännätä Iyäsus and in 1628, no Se’elä Krestos, *ityge* Seltan Mogisä and her daughters, visited another one in the same residence; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 255v; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 384.

109 ... Pater lapidem regio annulo accomodandum, *gutturium et patellam* Synnarum artificio confectam ... *Artificium enim excisionis mirabile erat, namque in civitate Goa ab artifici absoluvo excisum liquido constat, cuius intuitu ad tantam laetitiam fuit Rex commotus*; Annual letter, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 35, 280.

THE IMPORT OF MANNERISTIC, BAROQUE AND INDIAN CULTURAL MODELS

It was in the 1620s when mission culture fully developed in Ethiopia. The missionaries then became the ruling clergy in the kingdom and could hence dispose of immense resources. The arrival of twenty five men between 1620 and 1630, among whom men with outstanding artistic and technical skills, made it possible for the Jesuits to put fully into practice their idea of a religious cum cultural transformation of Christian Ethiopia. A primary focus of this was the renewal of local architecture.

Profane and religious architecture: stone churches, palaces and gardens

Traditional church architecture in Ethiopia was simple and at odds with the architecture the Jesuits promoted. In fact, the wide divergence in liturgy between the Latin and Orthodox/Ethiopian Churches was reflected in opposing church architectures. Ethiopian churches were typically round and the walls were made of clay and were covered by a roof of straw. For building construction, the Ethiopians used the few materials (the use of lime being largely ignored) and the schematic architectural patterns they had at hand. Local church shapes fitted well with Christian Ethiopian liturgy: the public used to attend services outside the main building and the altar was hidden from their view. Whilst in Tegray masonry was much more developed, in the areas where the Jesuits were more active, around the Lake Tana and in Gojjam, the use of stone was rare and examples of two-storey buildings non-existent.

In consequence, Ethiopian churches were evidently improper for developing the liturgical practices that Trent and the Jesuits were trying to export around the world. The Decretum de observandis et vitandis in celebratione missarum (“Decree concerning the things to be observed, and to be avoided, in the celebration of mass stated”) from the Council of Trent, for instance, stated “that all industry and diligence is to be applied to this end, that it be performed with the greatest possible inner cleanness and purity of heart, and an outward show of devotion and piety”.111 Tridentine mass also stressed standardization, uniformity and a clear prescription of movements and gestures by the officiants and considered that for a proper, efficace, celebration services had to be free, open to the public and visible from all corners of the church. A good communication between the officiant and the public should not only let everybody see the service but also give the priest full view over the public, thence controlling their behaviour and movements. These ideals were at the base of

the new architectural canons for churches enforced in the *Instructiones fabricae, et supellectilis ecclesiasticae* by cardinal Carlo Borromeo (1538-84)\textsuperscript{112} and above all by the strenuous church construction enforced by the Society of Jesus worldwide. The Post-Tridentine church model found its prototypes in the churches built by the Society of Jesus, chief among them being Il Gesù (Vignola, 1568-75/84). The Jesuit church – though there was never anything like a static model – tended to have a single large nave, which was to be well illuminated by the generous use of lateral windows and provided of lateral chapels for particular devotions and for the celebration of several masses simultaneously. Manneristic and baroque facades became also important elements of the church. Facades were decorated in a theatrical-like manner and aimed at transmitting the values of classic architecture and to represent the values and forces gathered within the church.\textsuperscript{113}

The inappropriateness of local Ethiopian architecture was soon obvious to the missionaries and in 1607 Azevedo reported on the modesty and darkness of the houses and churches at Fremona and Gorgora.\textsuperscript{114} The missionaries were likewise conscious that much could be achieved were they able to officiate like in the principal churches of the order. Still in 1607, Azevedo wrote that “much could be done if here we could show the beauty of the divine cult as it is performed in our lands”.\textsuperscript{115} The introduction of Jesuit church patterns, however, only became possible following the crisis of 1617, which allowed a more public stance to the Catholics. Characteristically, after this event one of the first steps undertaken by the Jesuits and their main patron, ras Se’êlê Krestos, was to plan the construction of a church at Gorgora Velha following European designs (*ao modo das nossas*). Its beauty, it was believed, should help in fostering conversions.\textsuperscript{116} The building was designed by Pedro Páez, who towards 1614 had already successfully designed and erected a small


\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{114}} Jesuits often described their primitive buildings as “straw huts” (*ramadas de palha redondas*; *esta nossa igreja de palha*); Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 113; Id., 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 413. A similar sentence was paraphrased later by Guerreiro: *o que seria & causaria em suas almas se os padres tiveram lá possibilidade & commodidade de igreja, & culto divino somelhantes aos destas partes de Europa*; Guerreiro 1611, 39v.

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{115}} ... Se faria muito se ca se podesse mostrar a ferenosura do culto divino de nossas terras; Id., 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 123. A
IN THE COMPANY OF IVÁSUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632
	palace at the kätäma of Susenyos in Gorgora. The church, which comprised of outer sacristy, was eventually completed within two years from its beginning (27 December 1618) and consecrated on 16 January 1621. Although small, it was described by its master mason as a remarkable construction: the main gate was formed by an arch and two columns and seven large windows; on the frieze there was a Jesus, doubtlessly the symbol of the order IHS, as well as roses and jars, elements that were probably borrowed from Diu and that were reproduced later in more imposing buildings. The facade included also eight ionic columns, a feature that Páez had probably borrowed from the Bom Jesus in Goa (completed towards 1585), and the ceiling was flat and covered by cedar poles.

Like most of the Jesuit heritage in Ethiopia no remains of it have survived but to all instants and purposes it was rather modest. The church was relatively small, 6.16 m wide, 15.84 m long and about 3 m high and in all probability many problems punctuated the building for around 1625 the structure collapsed. Be it as it may, carrying on this ‘success’, in November 1621, Páez was requested to erect a similar church at Gännätä Iväšus, which was aimed as being a private chapel for the negus. The church had a similar size (6,16 m x 18,48 m, 28 x 84 palmos) and was probably of an experimental character, too, although its alleged ornamentation, carved on stone by local masons and including details such as “big roses, fleurs de lis, carved jars with flowers and roses”, was used again later in more grand constructions.

Beyond their qualities and deficiencies, these two trials were valuable for the enthusiastic effect they had over the mission’s local patrons and probably the Catholic community at large. The two buildings gave local patrons an idea of what the Society of Jesus was capable of and decisively helped to fuel their resources into the missionary enterprise. By the time of Mendes’ election, it is to be assumed that the Jesuits had already conceived the beginning of the Patriarchate as a global transformation of Ethiopian society, including its architecture and landscape. The mission needed new, better and nobler structures. This pushed the missionaries to a complete architectural and technical upgrading of the residences: better and nobler materials should be substitutes for the clay and straw and late Manneristic and Indian designs should replace the unrefined local construction forms.

117 The building was situated on the future emplacement of Gorgora Nova. One of its rooms measured ca. 13 m per 4,4 m (de comprimento de 60 ou 70 palmos e largura de 20); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXIII. Some of the ruins of the building are still visible today, next to the church of Iyäsus from Gorgora Nova.
118 Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 485 and RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXX.
119 ... Ancho 28 palmos de marca y 72 de campeido... 14 palmos de alto; Páez, 1618, in: RASO XI, doc. 53, 406.
120 ... Rosas grandes, flores de lis, jarros muyto bem lavrados com flores e rosas que saem dellas gravadas em fermosa pedra; RASO III,
To make this project work the needed architects and masons came in 1625 as part of the entourage of Patriarch Afonso Mendes: the temporal coadjutor Brother João Martins, the priest Bruno Bruni and a number of masons (pedreiros) from India, including at least one from Diu who was reported to have previously worked in the church of São Paulo Novo in Goa (i.e. the Bom Jesus, 1610-20). In 1628, another Jesuit with architectural skills, Brother Francisco Rodriguez, joined the mission. Additionally, other missionaries without specific masonry skills – like Diogo de Mattos, Tomé Barneto and Antonio Bruni – helped or supervised in some architectural works. The experience of Páez indeed proved that Jesuit missionaries had enough basic knowledge of architecture as to permit them, with the help of skilled masons, to be in charge of the fabrica (i.e. building works) of a church. Moreover, the lack of constructing materials was largely solved in 1624 when Manuel Magro, an associate of the Jesuits in Diu who traveled back and forth between Diu and Massawa and was in charge of taking the royal esmola from India to the mission, found a method to locally produce lime and lime mortar (chunambo ou cal).

Works began almost simultaneously in a number of residences. At Fremona, which had seen some improvements already around 1619 when a water tank and a house of mud and stone were built, Diogo de Mattos supervised the construction of a ring of imposing fortified walls on top of the hill (cf. Plates IVd and IVe). A few years later, Almeida described the place as “quite well fortified with its seven or eight bastions” (assáz fortificada porque tem sete ou oito baluartes) and “in Ethiopia it was held as an exceptional and invulnerable position” (era tida por praça unica e inexpugnavel em Ethiopia”). Construction work on a new church of stone and using a local technique to produce mortar began on 12 February 1625.

About September 1624, the recently discovered method to produce chunambo was first utilized in the complex of Gännätä Iyäsus although the Jesuits in Qollela also claimed this as their primacy. Under the guidance by the stonemason who came from Diu, the

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121 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. IV; Mendes, 1625, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 144.
122 On Manuel Magro, cf. Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 157; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. II. On how he developed the method cf. RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. VI. Chunambo (from Indian chunnampu) was a kind of lime mortar traditionally used in India for construction and profusely used by the Portuguese. The historian Helder Carita, who studied its use in Portuguese India added that: “Used in India only in classical showpiece architectural works, the chalk-like chunambo was mixed from various vegetal ingredients and though extremely difficult to produce was an extremely strong binding agent”; Helder CARITA, “Creating norms for Indo-Portuguese architecture. The Livro de Acordãos e Assentos da Câmara de Goa, 1592-1597”, Itinerario 31, 2, 2007, 71-86, 76. I want to thank Stefan Halikowski who addressed me to this study. See also GAONÇALVES, História do Malavari, 24 n. 6 and DALGADO 1919, vol. 1, 282.
123 Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 434; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 229r; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. III.
124 Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 251r.
125 Ibid. 253r.
works were large-scale; they took some four years to be completed due to the lack of masons (officiaes), so wrote Almeida. The complex included a large two-storey building to serve as the royal palace (paço), some houses for the missionaries, a ring of walls with bastions and a pool with water. By mid or late-1625 it was completed far enough as to host the feasts for the canonization of the two Jesuit founders. The site became a local attraction and thereafter members of the nobility such as Mälke’a Krestos, a former blattengeta and cousin of Susenyos, built their own residences there.126

In early 1625, works on a new church at Qollela began and the structure was almost completed in 1628; it comprised of a church built of lime and stone with two towers opposite the facade and a house for the missionaries and the whole complex served as a fortress providing shelter against periodic attacks. There is no mention of who the master mason was, although it could have been the Italian António Bruno who since 1623 was living in Qollela.127 It was shortly after the beginning of this church when the true artists' of the architectural renewal arrived, João Martins and Bruno Bruni.

There is little information on Martins or Martinez, whom Mendes defined as an “exceptionally expert architect” (architectonices admodum perito). The missionary record inform that he was a Spaniard and that himself or a namesake “Brother João Martins” had worked during the previous decade in the professed houses of São Paulo in Diu and in the Bom Jesus in Goa.128 Martins proved to be one of the best architects the Ethiopian mission could have selected from India. With him the modo Goano or Indiano129 became the main architectural referent of the mission. Shortly after his arrival, about the beginning of 1626, Martins began to work on a grand church at Gorgora. The site chosen was a few kilometres to the south west of the church designed by Páez on a place where Susenyos had previously set his kätäma. Renamed as Gorgora Nova, the emplacement benefited by

126 Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 421v; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. VI.
127 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XIII; Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 278.
128 The figure of Martins is not deprived of its mysteries. Mendes wrote that the João Martins in charge of the works at Gorgora Nova had been involved in the construction of the college of São Paulo in Diu; RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. V. Oswald, however, puts the date of death of the Martins working in India in 1617; cf. OSSWALD, "Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1655", Appendix. Pennec, in his turn, informs that the 'Ethiopian' João Martins/Martínez would have been born about 1572 in "Corpa" (probably a misspelling of Corpa, a small village near Alcalá de Henares, hence his designation as "Castellano") and had joined the order in 1598; PENNEC, Des jésuites au royaume du Père Jean, 178 and 317. In addition, one “Irmão Juan Martin” from Spain departed for India in the armada of 21 March 1574; Josef WICKI, “Liste der Jesuiten-Indenfahrer 1541-1758”, in: Aufsätze zur portugiesischen Kulturgeschichte, ed. Hans Flasche, Münster Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967, 253-96, 274. A verification of the death date of the 'Indian' Martins could eventually identify the two as being one and the same person, thus explaining the striking resemblances between the buildings the two designed in India and Ethiopia.
129 I borrow the term from Oswald, who has studied the development of a distinct Indian Jesuit style, a variant of the general Jesuit modo; OSSWALD, "Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1655". A critical discussion of the theory of the noster modo or modo nostro is provided in Gauvin Alexander BAILEY, "‘Le style jésuite n’existe pas’: Jesuit corporate culture and the visual arts", in: The Jesuits. Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts: 1540-1773, ed. John W. O’Malley et
having a better defensive position and enjoyed outstanding views over the Lake Tana. The church was consecrated on 25 November 1627 although works at the residence continued up to 1631, then under the watch of the priest Gaspar Paes.\textsuperscript{130} Within the same period and probably under the guidance of the same architect, the missionaries erected a college adjacent to the church that copied a plan typical of Jesuit colleges and houses in India.\textsuperscript{131} The ruins today standing of these buildings still allow the visitor to form an idea of the magnificence of the whole complex (Plates VII and VIII).

The design of Gorgora Nova was explicitly inspired in São Paulo in Diu and most probably Martins used in Ethiopia the very same plans he had used in India.\textsuperscript{132} Hence, it shared almost identical size (Gorgora was 26.40 m long and 9.24 m wide)\textsuperscript{133} and proportions to the Indian prototype (compare Plates VIId and VIIe): a single nave with a ‘telescopic’ layout in the main chapel (\textit{capela mor}),\textsuperscript{134} coffered barrel vault, small lateral chapels topped by a shell and false round windows (\textit{oculos}, i.e. \textit{ojos de buey}) on the second level – a feature also applied to the Bom Jesus in Goa. For the transportation of the stones from the quarry, situated a few kilometres along the western coast of the peninsula of Gorgora, Martins constructed a boat in Lake Tana according to European design, which was itself also focus of admiration by the mission’s benefactors.\textsuperscript{135}

The similarities with the Jesuit Indian churches are, however, only an aspect of this exceptional building. The building incorporated also elements from the wider Jesuit architecture and from Indian traditions and the Indian masons taken to Ethiopia were in all likelihood familiar with the important sacred and profane architecture of northern India (states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat), none the least with

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 439.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} Plans for the Jesuit colleges in India have been compiled in OSSWALD, “Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1655”.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} A missionary source informed that “the church follows the plan of the college of Diu” (… \textit{A igreja fazce polla traça da do collegio de Dio}); Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 423rv.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} 120 x 42 palmos; ibid. Measures provided in sources are of the external building.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} The ‘telescopic’ layout, pervasive in most Jesuit churches worldwide, has been admirably studied by the Spanish historian of architecture Fernando Chueca, who identified its origins in the churches of Languedoc and Catalonia and hypothesized its influence – through the General Francisco de Borja – in the final adopted plan for Il Gesù in Rome. In Portugal the ‘telescopic’ church plan was successfully employed in the Jesuit churches of Espírito Santo in Evora and São Roque in Lisboa and soon expanded to its colonies in Brazil and Asia; Fernando Chueca GÓITIA, “El estilo Herreriano y la arquitectura portuguesa”, in: \textit{El Escorial, 1563-1963}, VV.AA., Madrid: Ediciones Patrimonio Nacional, 1963, 215-52, 240-42.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} On the boat, cf. Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 269-70, 280. The transportation of the material would have been unthinkable with the fragile local boats – \textit{tanque} – made of papyrus. The exact position of the quarry was identified by Major Cheesman on a small bay a few kilometers towards the north-western coast of the peninsula of Gorgora (cf. Plate VIIa); Robert Ernest CHEESMAN, \textit{Lake Tana and the Blue Nile. An Abyssinian Quest}, London: Cass, 1968 (London: Macmillan and co, 1936), 210-11. Páez’s church in Gorgora Velha exploited a nearby quarry
\end{itemize}
the outstanding Mughal constructions that had been sponsored by Agbar and Jahangir. The Indian influences are most apparent in the abundant use of luxurious materials. The lavish decoration of Gorgora comprised several carpets and materials imported from India, such as a godomexims de papel lacrados muito bem de vermelho e verde e salpicados de binga. The first element most probably indicates the godorim, godrim (Indian gudri), a rich linen from Gujarat which in that case is said to have an embroidery of binga, a variety of the blue spinel gemstone found in Sri Lanka. Most importantly, the Catholic temple, like in Indian religious architecture, was conceived as a ‘display’ of symbols: walls and doorways, vaults and columns should all convey a message. Among the symbols used, probably there was the Jesuit symbol IHS, which as we saw before Páez had already placed on the facades of Gännätä Iyäsus and Gorgora Velha and that was also carved at Märtulä Maryam (cf. Plate XIc). Another important element shared with São Paulo in Diu and with sacred Indian architectonic styles are the fine floral and geometric ornamentation, some still visible today (Plates VIIIb, XIa). The floral motives used in Gorgora and in other residences (Plate XIc) strongly recall the characteristic sense of horror vacui of Indian temple architecture, where floral and plant ornaments should fill every transitory space between the columns and storeys. These ornamentations were doubtlessly the work of the Indian masons (masters in this field, compare Plate XIb with XIId) and embodied a Jesuit/Catholic and Indian symbolism. The fleur de lis, which had also been placed previously at Gännätä Iyäsus is constantly repeated all over the building in Gorgora and was probably a reference to the emblem of the Farnese family, who counted among the strongest supporters of the first Jesuits: Pope Paul III Farnese had approved the Institute of the Society in 1539 and his nephew Alessandro later funded the construction of Il Gesù. Its placement as a central theme in both the “Jesus” (Gännätä Iyäsus) and “Mary” (Gorgora) churches was a reminder of this illustrious family, and perhaps was meant to draw a parallel between the foundation characteristics of the Farnese and the Ethiopian ruling family. The fact that the missionaries aimed at this effect seems to be further supported by their frequent reference to Gorgora Nova as of an “Ethiopian Rome” (Roma na Ethiopia). Other important


137 It might be also interesting to notice that the same moulding that incorporates the fleur de lis in Gorgora also appears in the inner wall of the monastery of Narga Sellass, founded by the “Portuguese” queen Mentewwab in 1737/38; cf. Mario DI SALVO et al., Churches of Ethiopia. The Monastery of Narga Sellassé, Milano: Skira, 1999 (2nd ed. 2000), 113, 118-19. The author, however, does not provide an explanation for the employment of this sign there. A question might be posed as to whether the queen used such a symbol to recall the memory of her alleged ances-
floral motives at Gorgora Nova include the rose of Iran (rosa do irão) and in the case of Mārtulā Maryam, which is discussed below, a flower jar at the entrance gate.

Additionally, there could be another, stronger, lesson to be learnt by comparing the decorative patterns in the missionary architecture in Ethiopia with those employed for centuries in Indian temples and palaces. In India, flowers were more than just simple elements of decoration and possessed, and still do in the present, a profound spiritual significance. They enjoyed of a prominent presence in the Hinduistic cults, where offerings to the Gods are always accompanied by gifts of flowers. As far as architecture is concerned, floral motives framed the whole sacred space in the Indian temples, defining it as a ‘garden’, a perfumed – incense was conspicuously used in religious rituals – and paradisiac place. In addition, in Indian royal paintings flowers were an emblem of the cultured ruler and the Mughal rulers contemporary to the Jesuits played conspicuously with this association. The use of floral symbols in missionary architecture in Ethiopia was, therefore, probably strongly inspired by the rich Indian artistic culture. As in India, the designs at Gorgora and in other residences should enhance the sacred quality of the Catholic temples and stress the good virtues of the Ethiopian figures who sponsored the works. Indian profane and religious (both Hinduistic and Islamic) patterns became thus powerful means not only of embellishing the Catholic space but of enhancing the majesty of the mission and its sponsors.

The Jesuits counted this architectural masterpiece as being a major propaganda tool. Defined by Manoel de Almeida as the “phoenix of Ethiopia”, the building was explicitly meant to recall the major Jesuit prototypes (the Bom Jesus in Goa, the church of São Paulo in Diu, Il Gesù in Rome) which had already shown the power of Jesuit architecture; Almeida, consequently proudly informed that “the fathers who had seen the works in Europe and India said that it could be placed among the best examples that we have there”. Therefore, it became an exceptional monument symbolizing the mission’s triumph, at a moment when the coming of the Jesuit Patriarch was to inaugurate a new era for the Ethiopian Church. It was also a major attraction for the local inhabitants and

139 Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 423r.
140 Os padres que virão as obras da India e Europa, afirmam que podia esta ter lugar entre quaisquer das boas que por lá ha; Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 268.
141 An ‘emic’ local perception of the new building as a new beginning comes from the following confession that Susenyos made to the Jesuits priests in the chapel, after having contemplated “the barren vault and the rest of the
probably a factor of conversions as well. Plenty of people visited the site during construction and were stunned to see a “house with a roof made of stones” (caza cuberta de pedra). Susenyos, in his turn, was said to be full of joy with the work and took pleasure in observing its architectonic features.\textsuperscript{142} As the historian Evonne Levy noticed on Jesuit architecture at large, in Ethiopia “the architectural ‘event’ drew people into the church”.\textsuperscript{143}

Before going back to India in 1629, João Martins prepared the preliminary designs and supervised the beginning of the building works of the second \textit{magnum opus} of the mission, the restoration of Märtulä Maryam/Ennäbesse, a monastery that had been originally built by itege Eleni and destroyed during Ahmad Grañ’s invasion. When he left in 1629, Bruno Bruni overtook the role of master mason at Märtulä Maryam. Bruni was born in Civitella del Tronto a small village in Abruzzo (central Italy) and studied rhetoric and philosophy at the Collegio Romano, where he probably also acquired the architectural skills that eventually brought him to Ethiopia. Bruni supervised the works at Märtulä Maryam until the fall of the mission, when restoration was stopped and he once proudly informed the Jesuit general that he was “its architect, artisan (carpenter?) and mason”.\textsuperscript{144} The plan of the church, with its three naves, differed from the Jesuit type, a fact that was determined by the previously built structure. Decoration, however, was rich and recalled the style of São Paulo in Diu and, like in Gorgora, indicated Indian craftsmanship (Plates Xlc and XId). The building, although unfinished, was an imposing structure of about 9 m high and the whole compound included, like most of the Jesuit residences, a fortified structure with bastions and a water cistern.\textsuperscript{145}

In the meantime, the architectural upgrading reached the more peripheral residences. In 1625, António Bruno began building a “fine stone church” (igreja muj formosa) at Tanqha, in Agäw land\textsuperscript{146} and another stone building was erected at Lejjä Negus, in Damot. Construction of a see Patriarchal and houses for the Patriarch Mendes began around

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\textsuperscript{142} “He was entertained by contemplating the vault and the rest of the building” (Se recebia com a vista da abobada e do mais edificio); Ibid.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque}, 186.

\textsuperscript{144} … \textit{Ego hic architector, ego fabrefactor, ego caementarius}; Bruno Bruni to Superior General, 30 June 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 95, 355.

1628 at Dänqäz, under supervision of the priests Francisco Rodriguez and Bruno Bruni. The church, which may never have reached completion, was designed as having three naves and described as “large and graceful” (capaz e formosa). Moreover, elements still standing from its vault imitated some decorative patterns from the church of Iyäsus in Gorgora Nova. In Fremona, the last efforts at ‘modernisation’ occurred also between 1626 and 1630, when a church of lime and stone was built, probably having been inspired by that of Gorgora Nova. In addition, the fortification walls were improved and the old cistern was replaced by a new one, which remains are still visible today (Plate VIIb). Towards 1628, works also began on a royal palace at the kätäma of Dänqäz. Interestingly enough, works there were directed by a local architect named Gäbrä Krestos, who was helped by two foreign masons: an expert stonemason (mestre do corte da pedra), the banian ‘Abd al Kerim, and an expert carpenter (mestre dos artífices de madeira), the Egyptian Sadaqa Nesrani.

It is important to stress that renewal of the residences and construction of palaces was not just relative to the buildings but affected the neighbouring territory as well. In fact, during the same period some residences saw a complete rearrangement of the surrounding landscape. In Ethiopia the missionaries showed an interest for botanical and agrarian tasks similar to that in other missions. Orchards and plant nurseries formed an important component of the residences since their foundation and the missionaries thoroughly supervised the cultivation of the lands they managed as gwelt. Hence, in the orchards at Gorgora Velha and Fremona “papaya, grape, peach, fig and orange trees” (papaieiras, parreiras, piskeigueiros e laranieiras) were planted, apparently on the initiative of Páez himself who used plant cuttings taken from Portugal and India. Somewhere in the 1620’s, the missionaries began also to produce their own wine. Additionally, under the aegis of the Jesuits began some important works of infrastructure, which, though eventually halted by the collapse of the mission, could have represented, if fully accomplished, an ambitious project

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147 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VI; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 439, 455.
148 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIV; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. X; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 482. The man in charge of the fábrica was Tomé Barneto, who in 1627 went to Goa as procurator of the mission. The church, of which today there is only extant the basement, was 8,80 m (40 palmos de largo) in width and the length was said to be proportioned to its width (proporcionado á esta largura); since the standard length of Jesuit churches in Ethiopia (and India) was between 2,5 and 3 times their width, this means that the length of the church of Fremona was between 12,10 and 14,52 m.
149 PEREIRA 1892, ch. LXXIX, LXXXVIII.
151 Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 415; RASO IV, 194-95.
152 Se faz vino por industria dos jesuitas; de poucos annos a esta parte se faz por nossa industria vinho que em nada sede ao bom de Portugal; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 450.
of transprovincial unification. The most spectacular realization of it was the Alata bridge over the Blue Nile, made by a “pagan [Hindu?] stone mason from Diu”, which was, as Almeida pointed out “the first and last stone bridge ever to be seen in Ethiopia”.153

The most outstanding achievement in the mission’s ‘landscape architecture’ was Gännätä Iyäsus. The palace-garden there was chosen to imitate to the royal residences in Portugal “because it was a fresh and agreeable location, like that in Cintra and Almeirim”.154 The purpose of Susenyos and Páez was to establish there a complex that had to serve both as residence and palace-garden. Well provided with fresh water, a number of ‘exotic’ plants were grown, such as “peach trees, romeiras, Indian (“banian tree”) and Portuguese fig trees, sugar cane” (pesigeiros, romeiras, figueiras das da India e Portugal, canas de açucar), a number of which had probably been brought to Ethiopia by the missionaries. With the arrival of the masons from India in 1625, the garden was embellished with a large pool in the middle of which a pavilion was built with a fountain (about 8 m by 8 m), which also served for the celebration of naval battles.155 The whole complex should give the feeling of a paradise on earth (façar paraiso), as Almeida said, providing “fresh environment and a space set aside for amusement” (cousa muyto fresca e de grande recreação) for the negus and his court.156

But the mission garden of Gännätä Iyäsus brings us back again to the strong influence that Indian motives had in the development of mission culture in Ethiopia. The complex – as well as that built later by Susenyos’ son and heir, Fasilädäs, in Gondär, the Fasil geram – vividly recalls the magnificent tomb and palace-gardens that were constructed in the times of the Mughal Emperors Akbar (1556-1605) and his son Jahangir (1605-27) (Plates IX, X and XIIc).157 In fact, both Mughal Emperors were not unknown figures to the Jesuits. In 1580, responding to a call by Akbar, Jesuit missionaries from Goa reached the imposing Mughal capital of Fatehpur Sikri, where they were given space to build a chapel and eventually became among the emperor’s favourite courtiers. Presence of the missionaries continued with his son Jahangir and was abruptly halted when the much more Muslim-oriented Shah Jahan accessed to power in 1627. During this period the missionaries were influential in many an aspect of Mughal’s cultural life, particularly in the

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153 A primeira e derradeira ponte de pedra que ate hoje se viu em Ethiopia; RASO VII, liv. X, ch. VII.
154 Por ser lugar fresco e de recreação, como la Cintra e Almeirim; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 383.
155 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. VI.
157 The only study that to my knowledge has associated the buildings built in connection to the Jesuit mission with Mughal architecture is CHOJNACKI, “New aspects of India’s influence”, 12. Chojnacki, however, provides insight-
visual arts.\textsuperscript{158} It is also very likely that Mughal architectural developments made a strong impression upon the European priests. Now, these experiences probably reached easily the Jesuits who went to Ethiopia. Páez, for instance, who was the main factor of the first plan of the palace-garden at Gännätä Iyäsus, spent a long time with the Catalan Antonio de Montserrat, one of the first three Jesuits to visit the Mughal court in the 1580s and was also a close friend of Jerónimo Xavier (1549-1617), who worked from 1595 to 1614 at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir in Lahore and Agra.\textsuperscript{159} Finally, the priest and artist Luís Cardeira himself was a missionary for a few years in Agra at the time of Jahangir.

Thus, the square pool from Gännätä Iyäsus, with its motif of a central island pavilion, strongly resembles the talao (Gujarati for ‘pool, reservoir, artifical lake’), a typical motif of the Mughal palace-gardens, such as can be observed in the Anup talao at Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh (built by Akbar in ca. 1575), the magnificent Hiran Minar complex in Sheikhpura and the Anarkil’s tomb garden in Lahore fort (both built by Jahangir in ca. 1600 and 1615, respectively; cf. Plate IX).\textsuperscript{160} Moreover, in the pool pavilion of Gännätä Iyäsus Indian hydraulic engineers who came with the Jesuits had designed a fountain spouting water fed by a canal from a raised level. Since hydraulic works were particularly sophisticated in Mughal architecture, it would not be exaggerated to think that such engineers had also developed their careers in Mughal India.\textsuperscript{161} Another element, a cherubim carved on a frieze at Märtulä Maryam, bears strong parallels with the cherubims painted on Jahangar’s palace, themselves influenced in their turn by Jesuit missionaries.\textsuperscript{162} Gännätä Iyäsus also resembles the superb Mughal structures in its conception: the complex was thought as a garden-city, a place mixing a symbolic (association with the paradise) and precise political, courtly and environmental functions – all of them having been described as distinctive features of profane Mughal architecture.\textsuperscript{163} Later on, Susenyos’ heir, Fasilädäs, literally, and perhaps more successfully, copied – probably with the help of In-


\textsuperscript{161} The importance of water in Mughal gardens has been admirably studied in KOCH, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, ch. 7: “Mughal Waterfront Garden”.

\textsuperscript{162} KOCH, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, ch. 2: “Jahangir and the Angels: Recently Discovered Wall Paintings under European Influence in the Fort of Lahore”.


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\textsuperscript{162} KOCH, Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, ch. 2: “Jahangir and the Angels: Recently Discovered Wall Paintings under European Influence in the Fort of Lahore”.

\textsuperscript{163} Later on, Susenyos’ heir, Fasilädäs, literally, and perhaps more successfully, copied – probably with the help of In-
dian masons, too – the same model in his palace in Gondär and in the famous complex known as Fasil Gārram or Fasil’s Bath.

The comparison finishes here, though. The ‘city-garden’ in Azāzo never achieved the perfectly symmetric forms and fine craftsmanship of its Indian prototypes. Neither could its relatively small size be a rival to the monumental Mughal complexes. The Solomonic rulers were driven by historical and cultural processes that precluded being the true residents of any particular garden or city, and therefore of bringing to full accomplishment the forms and purposes of the splendid Mughal architecture. Moreover, the scant resources of the Ethiopian state set precise limits to the grandeur of royal architectural projects.

The missionary buildings in the Lake Tana area remind us of the syncretic qualities of Jesuit mission culture. Ethiopia was not the only place where the Jesuits took foreign ‘pagan’ elements and incorporated them into their missions. In fact, the Jesuits were ready every time to assimilate into their cultural ‘treasury’ anything considered morally valuable and aesthetically beautiful from the lands they visited, even if these things did not belong to Christian cultures. The missionary developments in the 1620s mixed pagan elements together with Christian ones, although they all shared the same characteristics of excellence, beauty and enjoyment. The Portuguese-Jesuit church-plan, Manneristic church architecture, Indian carving techniques, Mughal tomb- and palace-garden designs – themselves of Persian origin – were the most important influences of the Jesuit architectural achievements in Ethiopia. This syncretistic architecture had some major goals. Firstly, they were the most blatant sign of the power embodied by the Society of Jesus. Unlike the Copts, who had been at the head of the Ethiopian Church for over a thousand years and introduced hardly any architectonic work, the Jesuits, within just a decade, embellished the core of the kingdom with outstanding constructions. Secondly, they were aimed at transforming the rough Ethiopian landscape thereby creating areas where the missionaries, their patrons and the Catholic community at large could properly express and cultivate their values; the new Catholic spaces were thus conceived as stages for performing Catholic religiousness and also as places for the amusement of and the practice of a cultivated cosmopolitan life by the elite who had chosen to be in the side of the Society. Finally, for the Jesuits’ patrons the new complexes were a firm political statement and sym-

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164 The Jesuit Gaspar Paes once wrote that from Egypt and Alexandria there came no architects, but only destroyers; Gasparo Paes, Lettere annue di Ethiopia del 1624, 1625, e 1626. Scritte al M.R.P. Mutio Vitelleschi Generale della Compagnia
bol of the new order that should result from the joint work between the military-political elite and the Jesuit missionaries.

_The joy of the senses and the confusion of the enemies_ 165

One of the activities the architectonic works in Ethiopia were aimed at hosting were performing arts, which played a central role in the mission. Music was the art the Jesuits probably introduced first in Ethiopia. Although music had a secondary role in the formation of Jesuit novices, it soon gained importance in the overseas missions. As early as in 1551, Manuel de Nóbrega taught music to the Portuguese and local children in Brazil and noticed the good effects it had over the Indian tribes he approached 166 and in Goa liturgical music soon played an important role in religious celebrations and festivals and was profusely used by the Society of Jesus. 167 In Ethiopia, music was soon used in liturgical activities and children were instructed with a method already used in Goa of singing the Christian Doctrine at night. 168

Initially, performances were of a rather private character, confined to the celebration of liturgy and to mnemothecnec activities. 169 However, towards the time of arrival of Patriarch Mendes the mission witnessed an important development of the ‘scenographic’ activities, including music concerts, but also dramatic performances, poetical events and games. As with the architectural upgrading, the involvement of the missionaries in these activities responded to a moment of blossoming in the mission. In the 1620s, the Catholic community, including those who had learned at the Jesuit seminaries, reached an important number. The mission had also increased the personnel as well as its resources. The country, in its turn, enjoyed of years of relative political stability, once the internal and external opponents had been thwarted. A new era of celebrations opened for the Catholics

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165 I paraphrase Hitler’s famous words on behalf of the Society of Jesus: “In the face of Luther’s efforts to lead an upper clergy that had acquired profane habits back to mysticism, the Jesuits restored to the world the joy of the senses” (Gegenüber der Bemühung Luthers, das bereits völlig verweltlichte Kirchenfürstentum zur mystischen Verinnerlichung zurückzuführen, hat der Jesuitismus an die Sinnesfreude appelliert); Adolf Hitler, 21-22 July 1941, quoted in LEVY, Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque, 1


167 See VV.AA., “Música y danza”, in: _Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús biográfico-temático_, vol. 3, 2776-89, especially § III: “Música y danza en las misiones”.

168 This occurred in both Portuguese and Amharic languages; cf. Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XI, doc. 113, 443.

and theatre, drama and music were to become the main forms welcoming it. Moreover, the Jesuits deemed dramatic arts as important tools for the education of pupils and for representing their moral ideals. The Jesuit Juan de Mariana wrote that music could not only entertain but also served “to awaken the senses of the soul” (para despertar los afectos del alma). Music thus was deemed a great instrument to reach into the inner self, the hearts of the people and thus was a valuable tool in the ‘reduction’ of local peoples. In Ethiopia, the growing number of Catholics and pupils could both benefit from the moralistic purposes of drama and be entertained with the artistic activities developed in the residences.

On the whole, this development was made possible by another exceptional figure the Ethiopian mission counted on, Luís Cardeira (also Caldeira). When he went to Ethiopia in 1623 with Manoel de Almeida, Cardeira was an already proven and skilled missionary, having worked for eight years in the missions of Chambay and Moghor (Mughal). As Almeida informed, Cardeira himself did not request to go to Ethiopia and as it seems it was his superiors in Goa who decided to send him there after noticing his manifold talents; described as musician, mathematician and quick at learning local languages, he matched the qualities that the superiors in Ethiopia had demanded. In Ethiopia, Cardeira played indeed a prominent role in renewing missionary methods and approach. He brought to Ethiopia a number of musical instruments – including violas, bandorilhas (i.e. bandurria, bandore), a harp and an organ (see Plate IIIId). Like his other colleagues, at arrival Cardeira was quickly engaged in strenuous activities. In early 1624, he taught singing and playing music at Fremona and, towards September, developed the same tasks at Gorgora, where he was additionally in charge of the daily management (superintendencia) of the residence. By Christmas 1624, the choir he had formed, composed of children from the seminary, was skilled enough as to welcome the four new missionaries who arrived that year with a Benedictus “so well performed as one would expect from the College of Goa”. On the same occasion the choir also sang a mass for three voices. The musical facilities expanded with the arrival of Mendes’ expedition in 1625, which took several in-

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170 Quoted in VV.AA., “Música y danza”, 2777.
171 Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 21-22.
172 In 1623, the Jesuits in Ethiopia requested missionaries who would “…know to sing, play music and paint so that they could teach the 100 boys in the seminary” (soubere cantar, tanger e pintar que possam ensinar a 100 mossos do seminario que ha); Fernandes, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 66, 510.
173 The import into Ethiopia of European musical instruments had already occurred in the sixteenth century. In 1520, the embassy of Rodrigo da Lima included the organist Manuel de Mares, who presented to Lebna Dengel a monocordo (also monocordio), a one-string portable organ precursor of the clavichord; ALVARES 1883, ch. V; CORREIA 1976, vol. 2, 587.
174 … Tão bem cantado e ensayado como se podera esperar no Collegio de Goa; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 252r.
175 Ibid. 246r, 252r.
strumets from India: harps, violas and little fiddles (arpas, violas, rebecas) and “five young boys skilled in music” (cinco moços bem destros na musica), among which were chapelmasters (mestres de capela).176

Hereafter, Cardeira organized a vast array of scenic activities in the mission. These were inaugurated with the solemn celebrations for the canonization of St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis-Xavier. News of the canonization (first celebrated at St. Peter in Rome on 12 March 1622 and then in Lisbon on 31 July177) reached Ethiopia with Manoel de Almeida and by March 1624 letters from Mendes, Vitelleschi and the Assistant in Portugal celebrating that event were handed to Susenyos.178 Although celebrations in Ethiopia were no match to those held in Goa or Lisbon they nonetheless boosted artistic and scenic performances. The most splendiferous were those organized by Cardeira at Gän-nätä Iyäsus, which was deemed a more appropriate place than the ‘mother’ residence of Gorgora. Performances there included two vesporas, a mass for five voices, a dance performed by Ethio-Portuguese children and a terreiro (probably a type of dance as well). It followed a descante (concert with choir and instruments)179 with two violas and a bandorilha. Another performance was a ‘dialogue’ (diálogo de tres), a typical feature of Jesuit school theatre, which versed on the lives of the Jesuit saints. At night, the feasts concluded with several types of fireworks (foguetes, bombas e triquitrazes), a feature also used profusely in Goa.180

The services of Cardeira were soon called for at the kätäma of Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos, where he performed a series of concerts. He played before Susenyos181 and organised polyphonic concerts, composed of a few (two or three) voices and accompanied of instruments, such as harps and violas.

Although data is scant in this area, sources indicate that the mission’s repertoire was mostly composed of religious texts sung in Ge’ez but according to European music. During a drama held in Gorgora the children sang a hymn in Ge’ez and based on European music (huma cantigua na lingua do seu livro, mas pello nosso modo e metro) and to greet the

176 Mendes, 1625, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 144; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XVII and XX.
178 Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI: Goa 39 I, 229r.
179 Concerto em coro acompanhado de instrumentos; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 252r.
180 The exact date of celebration is nowhere provided but it should be set shortly after the celebrations held at Dän-quiz, on 11 April 1624; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 252r.
IN THE COMPANY OF IVÁSUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

Patriarch Afonso Mendes the same group performed a *Laudate Dominum* in Ge’ez (… no nosso tom mas a letra na língua do livro). During the Easter celebrations in 1626, the group of musics trained by the Portuguese priest performed a *Miserere* chant for two choirs and a *Magnificat* but the missionary source did not provide the name of the composers. On another occasion, at the royal court a group of musicians and singers conducted by Cardeira performed a “Testament of Christ on the Cross composed by Ledesma” (*Testamento de Christo na Cruz que fez Ledesma*), doubtlessly the “Testamento de Christo nuestro señor” by the Spaniard Alonso de Ledesma (1562-1623; cf. Plate IVc). Two important points can be gleaned from this reference. On the one hand, it shows once again that the Jesuits imported to their missions no outdated cultural patterns but the finest and most advanced artistic and cultural forms they had to hand in Europe and in colonial centres like Goa. Ledesma was indeed one of the most successful literates of his time, a product of the second half of the *Siglo de Oro*. He invented the *conceptismo*, a literary genre that was based on an ingenious use of tropes and was imitated later by Francisco de Quevedo and admired by Baltasar Gracián. Moreover, Ledesma was an apologist of the Society and had contributed to the feasts for the beatification of Ignatius of Loyola with eulogistic poems, which were reproduced in the third part of his best-known work, the *Conceptos espirituales y morales*. On the other hand, the fact that the poem was read in the Spanish original — eventually perhaps in the Portuguese translation — indicates how cosmopolitan life at the court had become under the influence of the missionaries.

Cardeira spread his skills to other residences. Until his expulsion he worked at least in Sárka, Hadasha and Qollela and in the later settlement he set up a musical school similar to the one in Gorgora. Moreover, at the school in Enfraz Indian musicians who came with Mendes taught the boys singing and playing music. Commenting on their abilities, the Patriarch added: “Even the boys learned to play lyra, and they adjusted the

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182 Paes, 1626, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 305r.
183 Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 252v-53r. There is no information on the European composers that were played in Ethiopia but there is ground to assume that these included the most renowned contemporary Spanish authors of the Golden Age, such as Francisco Guerrero (1528-99), Cristobal de Morales (ca. 1500-53) and Tomás Luis de Victoria (ca. 1548-1611). Contemporary records attest of Francisco Guerrero’ *Ave, Virgo sanctissima* being performed [probably by the Jesuits] in Manila; cf. William J. Summers, “The Jesuits in Manila, 1581-1621: The role of music in rite, ritual, and spectacle”, in: *The Jesuits, Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, ed. O’Malley, 659-79. Further evidence on the origin of the mission’s repertory is provided by the important role allotted instruments in missionary performances, which was itself “the most distinctive aspect of Spanish sacred music”; cf. Robert Stevenson, *Spanish cathedral music in the Golden Age*, Berkeley – Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961, 298.
185 Evidence on the use of either a Spanish or Portuguese source comes from ras Se’élä Krestos having asked for the meaning of the poem; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 252v. A Portuguese translation of the first part of the *Conceptos Espirituales* appeared in Lisbon: António Alvarez, 1605.
movements of their feet onto the rules of European dances with such a skill that the Abys-
sinians felt not ashamed to say that our gestures were of birds, their own, of wild
beasts."

So by 1628, the use of European music was widespread wherever Jesuits were
active. Music and dances became a normal component of Catholic liturgy and a com-
ppanion to the numerous processions organized by the Europeans. Elaborate religious pro-
cessions, which were revitalized during the pontificate of Sixtus V, became also frequent. The
most spectacular seem to have been those held in Easter and those made in honour of the
saints of the Society.

It was probably also Cardeira who was behind the development of the mission
theatre. Drawing on practices typical in the Iberian Peninsula and in Portuguese India,
compositions, dialogues, egiologas, comedies, máscaras, jeroglíficos, triunfos, tragedies and tragi-
comedies began to be performed in Ethiopia. The actors were the children and youth
educated by the priests at the residences and favourite guests of these functions – hosted at
the residences and at the court – were the negus, his Catholic brother and the court at
large. The most elaborate plays focused on Biblical and classical themes and the mission-
aries were generally their authors, selecting motifs and scenes that in the Ethiopian context
had allegoric and metaphoric meanings. As the scholar Castro Saores emphasized, “the
representation on stage of figures of the Old Testament… offered to the poet the possibi-
licity to draw parallelisms between the Biblical past and the present and to open a debate
about the most pressing problems of contemporary society”. Hence, the first recorded
play to be performed, towards November 1627, was an allegory of King David and the
Virgin. The piece, celebrated in Gorgora just next to the church being built by João Ma-
tins, addressed Ethiopia’s alleged Solomonic descent and celebrated the achievements
accomplished in Ethiopia since the arrival of the missionaries. The performance cleverly
blended a moralizing discourse with entertaining goals. The Jesuits explicitly wanted it to
be “short and variegated” (procurouse que a obra fosse breve e varia) and made use of sophisti-
cated scenic effects, such as elaborate costumes for the actors (including masks) and a

186 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XII; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 436, 460.
187 Fídlus etiam pueri discebant, et pedum motus ad europaeaum saltationum normas ea
dexteritate flectebant ut fateri non erubescerant
Abassini, nostras gesticulationes avium esse, suas belluarum; RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. IV.
188 On the importance of Jesuit theatre in Portugal since the mid-sixteenth century and its educative value, cf. An-
tónio Maria Martins MELO, Teatro jesuítico em Portugal no século XVI. A tragicomédia Iosephus do P. Luis da Cruz, S. J.,
189 A apresentação em cena de figuras do Antigo Testamento… permitia ao poeta fazer o parelelismo entre o passado bíblico e o presente e
debater os problemas mais prementes da sociedade contemporânea; Nair de Nazaré Castro Saores, quoted in MELO, Teatro je-
scene wherein an image of the Virgin was made rise over a fake cloud. Towards the next year is recorded the celebration of a drama on the sacrifice of Abraham.

**Jesuit saints for the protection of the Ethiopians**

The last remarkable ‘cultural’ import that will be surveyed was the cult dedicated to the Jesuit founding fathers. Although Ignatius of Loyola was beatified 27 July 1609 and Francis-Xavier exactly ten years later, the missionaries in Ethiopia seem to have waited until things in the mission were ripe before they introduced their cults. Most probably, the Jesuits wanted to be sure that their saints would be accepted and successful. The canonization of the two figures and the inauguration of the patriarchate provided an optimal context for this to be guaranteed. So in about 1624, the Jesuits began introducing with force the cults to the two saints. As it was seen above, the two Jesuit saints were first shown to Ethiopian society by way of solemn festivities dedicated to their canonization. The splendid ceremonies at Gännätä Iyäsus were preceeded and then followed by two minor feasts made at Dänqäz and Fremona. The first was held on 11 April, day of St. Leo the Great (today moved to 10 November) and consisted of a procession in front of the court where Se’elä Krestos and the captain of the Portuguese, Baltasar Gabriel, carried the images of the two saints – presumably icons brought from Goa. The procession, which included music, concluded with a mass in honour of the two founding saints.

Towards October-November 1624, celebrations reached Fremona, where the papal jubilee was made public, the church was properly arranged and arquebuses were fired from the fortress. Celebrations included several confessions and missions in the neighbouring lands and finished on 3 December, day of Saint St. Francis Xavier.

With the celebrations came ‘relics’ and images of the two saints. It is well known that the incorrupt body of Francis-Xavier remained in India whilst the right arm and some organs were sent to Europe and to other major Jesuit centres; therefore, only minor objects associated with the Saint arrived in Ethiopia. The most frequently mentioned relic

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190 Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 247-89. Also in RASO VIII, lie. II, ch. V. On the mission theatre in Ethiopia the only study remains that by Anton HUONDER, *Zur Geschichte des Missionstheaters*, Aachen: Xaverius-Verlag, 1918, § “Das Missionstheaters in Ethiopien (Äthiopien)”, 76-80. The performance owed the Patriarch a reprimand from the cardinals of Propaganda Fide, who considered “an insult to the ecclesiastical rite” (*un abuso contro il rito ecclesiastico*) that the representation of Abraham’s sacrifice finished with a dance of shepherds; “Accusationes contra patr. Mendes”, 2 October 1629, Romae, in: RASO XII, doc. 101, 408; also RASO VI, lie. VIII, ch. XXIV.
192 Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 250v, 251r.
193 The first attestation of images of Ignatius in Ethiopia, however, dates to 1619; Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc.

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is water that had been in contact with a cross made from the coffin of the Saint.\footnote{Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 279; Paes, 1625, 253r; and Annual letter, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 284r.}

Another relic was a cruz de S. Francisco, which could have been a copy of the famous cross from Cape Comorim or perhaps one of the several crosses made from wood from his coffin.\footnote{Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 458. On this object, cf. Georg Schurhammer, "Die Xaveriusreliquien und ihre Geschichte", in: Id., Gesammelte Studien, doc. 130, 363-64.} In turn, the images of Francis-Xavier brought to Ethiopia followed the same patterns as those which were imported earlier of Ignatius of Loyola and other church fathers. The mission thus probably relied on engravings from the famed Antwerp workshops such as the Wirix brothers (Plate IVb) and others – of minor quality – made in Goa,\footnote{The first image of Francis-Xavier produced in Goa dates to the 1560s; Maria Cristina Oswald, “Culto e iconografías jesuíticas en Goa durante los siglos XVI y XVII: El culto e iconografía de San Francisco Javier”, in: San Francisco Javier en las artes. El poder de la imagen, Pamplona: Fundación Caja de Navarra, 2006, 255-53, 253. The iconography of St. Ignatius has been the focus of a detailed study in Ursula König-Nordhoff, Ignatius von Loyola, Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisationskampagne um 1600, Berlin: Mann, 1982. Cf. especially § C: “Die Bilder im Zusammenhang mit den bemühungen um die Kanonisation”, 55 seq. König-Nordhoff’s work includes a huge collection of paintings and engravings produced at the time of the canonisation of Ignatius, a number of which might have also been sent to the missions; e.g. picture 107 seq. Unfortunately, this impressive study does not provide any detail on the transmission of images of the early Jesuit saints to the missions and the overseas colonies. The export of Jesuit iconography remains an episode deserving still a careful study.} although icons produced in India could have also been introduced. These may have served to embellish Hadasha and Qollela, the two churches in Gojjam that ras Se’elä Krestos wanted to dedicate to the founding fathers.\footnote{Paes, 1626, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 303r.}

Similarly with the icon of Sta. Maria Maggiore, local production of these images should not be ruled out for, on the occasion of the celebrations for the beatification (occurred in 1624) of St. Francis de Borja, Gaspar Paes made an image of “papier mâché” (de pasta) of the third general of the Society.\footnote{Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 422r.}

Reportedly, the importation of objects helped to spread the cults of the two saints among the Catholic community. Accordingly, the annual letters from 1624 onwards report a profusion of miracles and benefits given by using the powers of St. Ignatius and St. Francis-Xavier. Interestingly enough, the two saints seem to have reproduced in the mission the roles they had previously played in Portuguese India. Hence, Francis-Xavier had pre-eminently thaumaturgic and conversion powers. Images of the saint, water associated with his coffin and other unspecified relics (probably printed images called ‘relics’) helped ill people to heal and pregnant women to safely give birth.\footnote{Ibid; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 456-58, 463, 484; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 243v; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 398. The Indian cult to Francis-Xavier has been the object of a recent study in Oswald, “Culto e iconografías jesuíticas en Goa”, especially 246.} Moreover, the Saint also intervened during conversions, his powers being requested by missionaries and local Catho-
lics alike. The cult to non-corporeal relics, it shall be noticed, was a popular feature in all the areas of the Orient where the Portuguese were present, although there is no evidence of the use of ‘holy water’ from St. Francis-Xavier outside Ethiopia. In his turn, the ‘twin’ Saint, Ignatius of Loyola (more according to his own biography) embodied a more ‘combative’ stand. He was thus particularly active in two other important spheres of Ethiopian society, exorcisms – which was the only miracle that occurred during Ignatius’ lifetime – and the war. Printed stamps associated with these practices were profusely used in the mission and distributed as presents and protective amulets (a possible example in Plate IVa). Towards 1627, the Jesuits also introduced the cult to St. Francis de Borja.

Caution should be used, however, on reading the enthusiastic reports written by the Jesuits, which insisted on the success of the two saints and the acceptance of their cults by local populations. The maturation of a Catholic Ethiopian society, sharing beliefs and practices with the missionaries and being receptive to their imaginary, was accomplished by 1625, a fact that probably eased the cults to the Jesuit saints taking roots in the country. However, their arrival was not spontaneous for in Ethiopia, unlike in Portuguese India, these devotions were clearly exogenous to local Christianity and did occur in an abrupt way: hence, prior to 1624-25 there is no evidence of the two saints exercising their powers whilst in Goa, on the contrary, the cult to Francis-Xavier began much earlier. The missionaries waited until times were ripe, with political power on their side and the Catholic community mature enough, to carry this out. Details in the annual letters reveal indeed that the mission relied on a strong pedagogy of sainthood. Emulating the modern forms of commercial propaganda, the missionaries used a number of methods to spread the cults they deemed appropriate. They taught locals which saints to venerate and how to do it properly. For all that, I believe that this episode reflects again the strong drift of Portuguese India in shaping mission culture in Ethiopia. It also represents the last chapter, even the most ambitious, to transform Ethiopian society. The Jesuit saints were another important asset in the ‘Jesuit propaganda machine’: they served to ‘protect’ and to ‘help’ expanding the Catholic community and had also to rival with, if not suppress altogether, the

201 Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 457; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI: Goa 39 I, 248v. Among those who received the favours of the Saint there was Qeb’a Krestos, governor of Bägemder and his wife; cf. Annual letter, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 284r.
203 See LEVY, Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque, 147 and fig. 42.
204 See Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 236r, 239v. The ‘opposition’ between the two saints was, however, not complete, since on occasions St. Ignatius was also said to heal the sick and help women give birth; cf. Ibid. 253r-v.
cults to the local Christian pantheon, with which the missionaries never seem to have compromised.

**MISSION SUPPORT**

In the previous pages I explained how in less than about ten years, between 1620 and 1630, the mission had largely renewed its infrastructures and the country had suffered important changes by the enforcement of Catholic reforms. Parts of its landscape had been shaped following the ideals of the Jesuits and the pro-Catholic leaders, whilst the celebrations of Jesuitic-styled feasts were frequent. The number of residences had also expanded and, likewise, their needs. A question that may be profitably raised at this point is how was all that sustained? How much did the running of the schools, the maintenance of the residences and the build up of the mission culture cost? And more to the point, who paid for it?

![Diagram: Contributions and disbursements in the Ethiopian mission, ca. 1610-30](image)

Figure 11: Contributions and disbursements in the Ethiopian mission, ca. 1610-30

To support the mission complex, the Society of Jesus developed a variety of resources. The diversity of funding resources as well as the main focus of the disbursements are summarized in Figure 11. The bulk of expenses should have been centered in the maintenance of the residences: provisions, clothes, purchase of animals, construction and renewal of buildings. Other important expenses were the dowries for Ethio-Portuguese brides. Moreover, the massive imports of objects (used either in the residences or as gifts) probably took a large stake of the mission’s treasury. Finally, the residences incurred extraordinary expenses, like in Tegray in 1628, when some 8,000 people who fled famine

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206 Costs of tools and clothes imported from India are seldom provided. An isolated reference from 1628 is to a viola that was aimed for the mission and was said to have costed 40 sarafins (12,000 reis); Barneto, 1628, in: RASO XII,
were converted with the help of alms distributed to them.\textsuperscript{207}

Since the project of the \textit{Preste} was born within the Portuguese \textit{Padroado} in the Orient, it was to this structure that its finances were bound (Table 17). Thus, throughout the whole missionary period a constant source of funding were donations sent, initially, by the Crown of Portugal, and, later with the union between the two Crowns, by the Spanish Treasury. These donations were directly linked with the Ethio-Portuguese group that grew in Ethiopia after Christovão da Gama’s expedition. Under the terms of the \textit{Padroado Real}, the Iberian monarchs assumed responsibility for spreading Christianity and in taking care of their subjects overseas. The Crown considered the ‘Portuguese’ in Ethiopia as being their subjects and thus took responsibility for their well being: it provided them with ‘spiritual’ and ‘temporal’ help, priests and donations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Disbursements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca.1555</td>
<td>80,000/10,000 cruzados (28,800,000/36,000,000 reis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1595</td>
<td>500 pardãos (150,000 reis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598</td>
<td>1,000 pardãos (300,000 reis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>1,000 pardãos (300,000 reis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>400 pardãos (120,000 reis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1608</td>
<td>400 pardãos (120,000 reis); 100 pardãos for each priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>200 pardãos (60,000 reis) yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1617</td>
<td>200 pardãos (60,000 reis) yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1622</td>
<td>1,000 pardãos (360,000 reis; accumulated?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>200,000 reis for each coadjutor bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>500 pardãos (150,000 reis) for 5 fathers; 200 pardãos (60,000 reis) for the seminaries; 400 xerafins (120,000 reis) from the viceroy for the Ottoman baxa; 500 xerafins (150,000 reis) for the Patriarch, who has an ordinaria of ca.400 xerafins (120,000 reis); 200 xerafins (60,000 reis) to buy ornaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>100,000 reis ordenado for Mendes plus 200,000 reis de dote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>1,000 pardãos (300,000 reis) as the ordinaria of missionaries; increase of 100,000 reis to ordenado of 200,000 (in total 300,000 reis); 600 pardãos de larins (270,000 reis) in Diu to pay for transportation to Ethiopia; 1,000 pardãos de larins (600,000 reis) for the Patriarch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Table 17: Portuguese and Spanish expenditure for the Ethiopian mission, 1555-1617}


The first regular royal contribution to the mission was recorded in 1595 and amounted to 500 pardãos (150,500 reis). It was probably aimed at and administered by the Ethio-Portuguese themselves. However, with the refounding of the second mission and the establishment of seminaries for the Ethio-Portuguese children the Jesuits began to play the role of mediators and to administer the sum sent from Spain. In the early seventeenth century the fix alm (mentioned in sources as \textit{almoina} or \textit{esmola}) amounted to around 200 pardãos.
(60,000 reis) and was probably divided into equal parts between the two main seminaries of Fremona and Gorgora. Later that sum increased and in 1628 it was of ca. 2,000 xarafins (600,000 reis). This resource was meant to be used for the education of the Ethio-Portuguese children and to provide for the needs of the Catholics. Sources inform that providing clothing for the Ethio-Portuguese children and neophytes was one of the primary purposes of the esmola; in fact, it was often the case that the missionaries bought fabric at Diu, a principal exporting centre for textiles, to be converted into clothes in Ethiopia by local tailors. However, the direct control of this resource by the missionaries made it so that de facto it also fueled the structure of the mission, a fact that provoked the complaints of the Ethio-Portuguese.

In addition to that, every missionary had a ‘stipend’, the so-called ordinaria. A ‘stipend’ for missionaries had been established during the reign of Felipe II to face the growing needs of missionaries in the newly conquered territories in America. In Ethiopia the first five missionaries received an ordinaria of 100 pardãos (30,000 reis) each. When the mission expanded, however, neither the Crown nor the Estado da Índia were in any condition to pay the same amounts to the growing number of Jesuits in Ethiopia. Therefore, up to the last years of the mission, the Crown kept sending an ordinaria of only between 500 to 600 pardãos, to the frustration of the missionaries.

As it happened in other missions, to increase the value of the official contributions the Jesuits recurred to investment strategies. The esmola and ordinarias were first gathered at the residence of Diu and before being forwarded to Ethiopia were invested in local trade. There are no precise details on how these investments worked, although it is very

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208 In 1607, Azevedo informed the Jesuit Provincial in Goa that the Ethio-Portuguese in Fremona received per head meia teada de pano (fabric); Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 93. In the Orient, teada was a pano branco de algodão, pano patente ou cre and stood for a more or less fixed quantity of Indian fabric; Dalgado 1919, vol. 2, 364.

209 In 1628 a Jesuit priest informed that “… for that reason the Portuguese are distrustful and believe that the fathers take for themselves the money the king sends to them. They frequently protest about that, as I heard during the two years in which I was their vicar, which also brings into disrepute the missionaries” (… Polo qual respeito entrará ja os Portuguezes em desconfiança, acendo que os padres lhe comem a dita esmola, e assim fazem disso muitas queixas con notavel discredito nosso, como eu aqui nestes dois annos em que fui seu vigario); Barneto, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 86, 312.

210 In 1607, Azevedo informed the Jesuit Provincial in Goa that the Ethio-Portuguese in Fremona received per head meia teada de pano (fabric); Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 93. In the Orient, teada was a pano branco de algodão, pano patente ou cre and stood for a more or less fixed quantity of Indian fabric; Dalgado 1919, vol. 2, 364.

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210 Agustín Galán García, “Financiación de las expediciones de misioneros a las Indias occidentales”, Archivum Historiae Societatis Iesu 62, 1994, 260-80. Gonçalves da Costa informs that towards the end of the sixteenth century the ordinaria amounted to 50 cruzados per missionary and was aimed to be used for the trip; Lobo, Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos, 16.

211 Cf. the indications provided by the visitor Manoel de Almeida to Superior General, 8 May 1624, Gorgora, in: RASO XII, doc. 24, 49-50. Also in Azevedo, 1608, in: RASO XI, doc. 24, 142. A diverging sum is given by Gouveia, Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa, 26, which indicates an ordinaria for Ethiopia of 1,000 cruzados (360,000 reis) from ca. 1598. Also Luís de Azevedo to Superior General, 22 May 1627, in: RASO XII, doc. 62, 222. Borges, informs that towards 1570 – the “Crown stipend to each departing missionary was 100 cruzados” (36,000 reis); Charles J. Borges, The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759. An explanation of their rise and fall, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1994, 44.

212 The Jesuit missionaries in Japan, for instance, based part of the funding of their mission on the participation in the Macao-Japan trade; Charles Ralph Boxer, The Christian century in Japan: 1549-1650, Berkeley: University of Cali
likely that the Jesuits used the banian merchant networks with whom they had excellent relations. The gains obtained from this brokerage, which normally faced low risks, are said to have been of about 100%. Therefore, a clever investment at Diu could easily increase a yearly ordinaria valued at 500 pardãos into 1,000 pardãos (300,000 reis) or even more.

The royal esmola and the ordinaria seem, with few exceptions, to have reached the mission on a yearly basis, at least in the first years. Although the quantity was not enormous its importance must not be minimized. It provided the mission with a stable source of income and the term esmola only served to hide this very fact, since the Constitutions did not permit the Jesuits to enjoy such benefits. This gave the missionaries a relative independence from local factors. Moreover, with the royal support, the Jesuits could distribute gifts and donations for their friends or ‘clients’. With it they also could increase their appeal in the eyes of the local people as well as to secure the loyalty of the groups close to them. In their turn, the Portuguese endowment – and additional benefits received in Ethiopia – allowed the Ethio-Portuguese to enjoy of superior living standards to the local population. Thus, Almeida informed that “in the past years the Portuguese lived – whilst not in plenty – at least secured from many needs. Moreover, since their own sense of dignity and beauty pushed them to be dressed as nicely as possible, most of them looked at the court wealthier to many of the wealthiest Ethiopians.”

In addition to the regular funding, the Spanish Crown incurred in lavish expenses on occasion of the nomination and sending of the ecclesiastic authorities – Patriarchs and Bishops. In 1555, the shipment of Patriarch João Nunes Barreto and the two Coadjutor Bishops and of their respective entourage cost the treasury of João III the enormous sum of between 80 to 100,000 cruzados (28,800,000-36,000,000 reis) and was spent mostly on clothes, books, transportation and rich liturgical paraphernalia that, however, never reached the mission. As it seems, an important number of objects, such as “miters, a cro-

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213 Thus, Dom Frei Aleixo de Meneses (1595-1610), who had also funded the trip of Abraham de Georgis and Melchior de Sylva to Ethiopia, gave once a grant of 1,000 cruzados (360,000 reis) yearly and another of 300 pardãos (90,000 reis) to the Jesuits in Diu. The sum was then invested in local business and the surplus earned was forwarded to Ethiopia: … Assentados na alfandega de Dio, pera se repartirem pelos mais pobres & necessitados... os quais [1,000 cruzados] empregados em Dio em fazendas que no Preste valem, que possam passar facilmente, como as mais dos mercadores, se dobra o dinheiro, fazendo huma grossa esmola, com q se remedeã o as necessidades de muytos, a qual acentuou o Arcebispo, mandar todos os annos de sua fazenda trezentos Pardãos, com outros que a Misericordia de Goa lhe da cada anno, & alguns particulares, que tambem empregados em Dio se poem la em marca particular para casamento das orfaas, pobres filhas dos mesmos Catholicos... E... o VisoRey ... acentuou a ordinaria de mil cruzados, que Sua Magestade mandaua dar, quinhentos mais de fazenda delRey em cada hum anno; António de GOUVEIA, Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Meneses..., Coimbra: Diogo Gomez Loureyro, 1706, 26.

214 On that particular cf. IGNACIO DE LOYOLA 1997, 459, 867 and Constituciones, §5, 326, 331, 398, 533-54.

215 ... Vivião estes annos atraz os Portugueses (se não em muita abundancia) ao menos sem muitas necessidades, e como o brio e primor os obrigava a se tratarem e trajarem o melhor que podesssem, os mais delles na corte e arroyal aparreço ordinariamente avançados a
IN THE COMPANY OF IYÁSU: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

sier, a pontifical” (mitras, bago, pontifical) and books ended up at the College of São Paulo or embellishing the See of Goa. Yet it was the expedition and maintenance of Mendes that probably represented the largest of all the investments. Mendes mentioned in 1622 that he had been discussing with the Mesa de Consciencia ways to fund his Patriarchate and proposed such means as using the income from the Bull of Cruzada and the encomendas of the Order of Santiago. The two proposals were dropped by King Felipe IV, who nevertheless attributed to the project large sums of money and ordered the Estado da India to cover all the additional costs incurred by the expedition to India and Ethiopia. Hence, around 1624, the Crown destined 200,000 reis for each Bishop coadjutor appointed in 1624 and for transportation and maintenance the Patriarch received 2,900 cruzados (1,044,000 reis). The latter sum should serve him as payment of the large entourage – about thirteen people – that went with him to Ethiopia and for the purchase of an important number of tools in India, such as church paraphernalia, jewelery, musical instruments, vestments and presents. The ordinaria of the Patriarch was of ca. 400 xeräfins (120,000 reis), to which the Viceroy of India, Francisco da Gama (1622-27), a great supporter of the mission, added a further contribution of 500 xeräfins (125,000 reis). Towards 1628, the Patriarch was said to dispose of a dote of 200,000 reis and an ordenado (i.e. ordinaria) of 100,000 reis.

Table 18: Comparative estimates of expenditure and revenue for the Ethiopian mission, Jesuit Indian residences and the Japan mission, 1575-1638 (in 1,000 reis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ethiopia (estimate)</th>
<th>São Paulo Goa</th>
<th>Salsete</th>
<th>Damão</th>
<th>Japan mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1622</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>ca.1600</td>
<td>1638</td>
<td>ca.1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>360/540</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>3,318</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,600/4,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>750/900</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Charles J. Borges, The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759. An explanation of their rise and fall, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1994, 163; Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan, 114, 117; Oswald, “Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1653”, 40, 68; RASO XI, 505; RASO XII, 56; see Table 17 and 19.

216 According to a contemporary source: “The King provided all these prelates [those aiming for Ethiopia] of rich ornaments for the altar as well as pontificals, with the necessary instruments for the holy ministries, a beautiful sino [i.e. church bell] that was used later in the cathedral; likewise, the ornaments and objects of silver stayed in the church of the college of São Paulo” (A todos estes prelados proveo El-Rey de rios ornamentos assy pera o altar como de pontificales, com a baixella necessaria pera os sagrados ministerios, e hum fermoso sino que depois servio na See de Goa, como tambem os ornamentos e prata ficou a igreja do collegio de Sam Paulo), GONÇALVES 1960, vol. 2, 215.

217 The amount was enormous for the period and we might better perceive it if we consider that the salary of a professor of Theology at the University of Evora towards 1600 was of 250,000 reis; BRANDÃO, Estudos Vários, 48.

218 Mendes, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 4, 12.

219 Felipe IV to Viceroy of India, 2 February 1629, Lisboa, in: RASO XII, doc. 88, 321.
It must be mentioned, however, that Mendes did not use the whole sum – he informs of having spent between 169,000 and 237,000 reis in “clothes and church paraphernalia” (vestidos and ornamentos). Moreover, he never received that sum in cash for he was obliged to resort to loans at onerous interests from private creditors in India.\textsuperscript{220} This also indicates that despite formal funding by the Spanish Crown, a large part of the expenses incurred in transportation of the Patriarch were covered by contributions from the \textit{Estado da India} and by private creditors.\textsuperscript{221} The \textit{Preste} was, after all, an endeavour that still galvanized the desires of the whole Portuguese population in India. There it was seen like a collective enterprise that everybody wanted to support and both loans and free contributions probably flowed into Mendes’ Patriarchate easily.\textsuperscript{222}

Taken all together, however, neither the ordinary nor the extraordinary payments sent from Europe seem to have been enough to cover all the expenses of the mission. As early as in 1616, Páez informed that the 200 \textit{pardãos} given by the Crown could not cover expenses.\textsuperscript{223} Later on, with the projected expansion of seminaries and residences funding problems increased. In 1624, Almeida, then still in the role of \textit{visitador}, complained that the \textit{ordinaria} hardly ever reached Ethiopia intact as a large sum had to be wasted for purchasing rich presents for the Turks. To make matters worst, the chronic state of corruption in Portuguese India began to affect the Jesuit missionary network.\textsuperscript{224} In the early 1620’s, missionaries denounced misconduct from the part of the Jesuits in Diu: the superiors there would have taken little care of the Ethiopian mission and thus deviated part of the contributions to be sent to Ethiopia for their own uses.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{220} Mendes informed that he borrowed 430 cruzados (154,000 reis) from an unknown creditor and received 1,250 cruzados (450,000 reis) from the king that were spent in his sacral apparel; Afonso Mendes to Superior General, 9 October 1624, in: RASO I, parte II, doc. 20 (summary), 135; Id. ad eundem, November 1624, Goa, in: RASO XII, doc. 37, 96; Id. to Nuno Mascarenhas, 8 November 1624, Goa, in: RASO XII, doc. 38, 97.

\textsuperscript{221} Cf. the letters sent by Afonso Mendes from India, which are full of chrematistic details; Afonso Mendes to Superior General, 8 and 14 January 1625, Baçaim, in: RASO XII, doc. 44, 123; Mendes, 1625, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 133.

\textsuperscript{222} Cf. for instance Mendes’ description of the enormous efforts mobilized in India to bring him and his entourage safely to Ethiopia; Ibid; also Barneto, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 86, 312.

\textsuperscript{223} Pedro Páez to Superior General, 22 June 1616, Gorgora, in: RASO I, parte III, doc. 10, 352.

\textsuperscript{224} On the issue of institutional mismanagement in Portuguese India, it may suffice to quote an excerpt from one of the most insightful studies on this topic: “Corruption in the \textit{Estado da India} was hardly the result of a decadencia but the consequence of permanent conditions: patronage, the nature and attitudes of the Portuguese nobility and the distance from the metropolis. No doubt an odious and privileged court nobility at home set the pace, or rather, non-pac giving rise to the notion that the crown owed the \textit{fidalguia} a living – that the administrative posts were rewards rather than responsibilities”; George D. \textsc{Winius}, \textit{The Black Legend of Portuguese India. Diogo do Couto, His Contemporaries and the Soldado Prático. A Contribution to the Study of Political Corruption in the Empires of Early Modern Europe}, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1985, 88. I don’t know of any study focusing in eventual corruption within the Jesuit Indian structure but, as the case of the residence in Diu shows, it is unlikely that the Jesuits were more protected from this affliction than their secular contemporaries.

\textsuperscript{225} Almeida wrote that “… these years some procurators and rectors payed little attention to the [Ethiopian] mission” (… estes annos houve hum e outro, procurador e reitor, menos zelo desta missão [da Etiópia] do que devia haver); Almeida, 1623, in: RASO XII, doc. 12, 23-24.
zeal” towards the mission of the procurator at Diu and five years later the missionaries in Ethiopia complained that the mission was covered with debts due to the mishandling of mission funds in Diu.²²⁶ Francisco de Azevedo, acting as produçador da missão towards 1625, was said to have stolen resistos, veronicas and a viola that were aimed for Ethiopia and his successor (probably Manoel de Sousa) was accused of provoking “enmity and frustration among the fathers and the Patriarch” (sizanea e desgostos entre os padres e Patriarca) by his negligent and at times even hostile attitude towards the mission.²²⁷ A few years later, the priest Tomás Barneto still notified that “his Majesty offered 600 pardãos de larins … for those who should stay in the College of Diu with the intention of going to Ethiopia; yet, over the last 20 years this sum has been used for the college [of Diu] without having right to it”.²²⁸

The Jesuits tried hard to resolve this crucial problem. In 1627, seeing that complaints were not producing any results, Barneto, at the time serving in Ethiopia, was sent to India and appointed delegate of the mission (procurador da missão) to survey things on place and make the funds duly reach the mission.²²⁹ Meanwhile, Almeida, had proposed the Jesuit authorities in India to assign to the Ethiopian mission the rents of a village belonging to the Mughal mission or, alternatively, to assign 1,000 or 2,000 cruzados from the rents of the noviciate in São Paulo in Goa, imitating a strategy that had been profusely employed earlier to fund the Japan mission.²³⁰ These requests, however, were never adequately met. By the time these proposals were voiced the mission’s finances were being already largely reliant on local funds. The corruption at place in Diu, the expansion that accompanied the arrival of Patriarch Afonso Mendes and the generous offers waved by the mission’s main benefactors made the Jesuits in Ethiopia to naturally turn to the local milieu. The consequence was that gifts and grants by Ethiopian local nobility and royal figures (most notably Susenyos and Se’elà Krestos), helped in covering a large part of the mission’s needs and proved decisive in boosting the expansion during the 1620’s (Table 19).²³¹

²²⁶ Ibid. 24.
²²⁷ Barneto, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 86, 313, 316.
²²⁸ Tem sua Mag. feito merce de 600 pardãos de larins… para seis sogeiros que ouverem de residir no collegio de Dio pera dali passarem na monção a Ethiopia: estes lhe come o dito collegio, ha mais de vinte annos, sem justo titulo pera isso …; Ibid. 312.
²²⁹ Aimar Guerino to Superior General, 14 September 1627, Cairo, in: RASO XII, doc. 64, 227; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIV.
²³⁰ Almeida, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 24, 50; Azevedo, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 30, 71; also Manoel de Almeida to Nuno Mascarenhas, 22 June 1624, Gorgora, in: RASO XII, doc. 31, 73. Almeida knew what he was asking for the Goan Houses were the richest in India and held important coconut and rice fields in the neighbouring lands and even as far as in Bombay (today Mumbai); cf. BORGES, The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 49-50, 163.
²³¹ A more limited data on the mission support is offered in PENNEC, Des jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean, 167.
Table 19: Ethiopian local expenditure for the mission, 1570-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Focus of the disbursements (=?reis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1570</td>
<td>FREMONA: 40 head of cattle, foodstuff, 60/80 panos [private donor]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>UNSPECIFIED: 100 hanegas (i.e. fangas) of wheat (5,500 l), 300 golden cruzados (108,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>FREMONA: increase of lands [Susenyos]; GORGORA VELHA: 3 plots of lands made perpetual [Susenyos]; UNSPECIFIED: 5 head of cattle [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1609</td>
<td>FREMONA: 300 ducados (990,000 reis) [Susenyos], 2 horses [Sársä Krestos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611</td>
<td>QOLLÈLE: lands [Se’elä Krestos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>UNSPECIFIED: for the trip of A. Fernandes 20 pesi d’oro (oukeas?) equal to 200 scudi (60,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>UNSPECIFIED: 50 pesi d’oro (oukeas?) equal to 500 scudi (150,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>GORGORA VELHA: slaves, 200 golden cruzados (72,000 reis), a vast land [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>GORGORA VELHA: 200 pardãos (=60,000 reis), lands, 300 ducados en oro (990,000 reis), 20/100 cows [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>GORGORA VELHA: lands, cedar wood [Susenyos]; ANCAHA: lands [Se’elä Krestos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>FREMONA: 300 head of cattle [Susenyos]; GORGORA VELHA: 14 golden onças (50,400 reis) [Se’elä Krestos]; ANCAHA: 140 golden cruzados (50,400 reis) [Se’elä Krestos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>GORGORA VELHA: 1,300 cruzados (468,000 reis) [Se’elä Krestos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>GORGORA VELHA: alcatifa (carpet), esmole de ouro equal to 100 patacas (30,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1622</td>
<td>UNSPECIFIED: 500 cruzados (180,000 reis)/year produce lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>GANNÁTA IYÁSUS: various objects, 600 patacas (180,000 reis), 100 cargas de mantimento or alqueires (1,550 l), extensive lands [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>FREMONA: lands [Qe’ba Krestos]; GANNÁTA IYÁSUS: 8 carpets, church objects, 300 couwados (?) (195 ms?), 300 ducados de renda (990,000 reis) 100 cargas de trigo (ca. 1,350 l) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>FREMONA: 300 silk panos (=108,000 reis) [Qe’ba Krestos]; GÁBARMA: 5 villages with good lands, 100 head of cattle, gold and clothes [lords of Damot/Buko]; TANQHA: 100 cargas de mantimento equal to 1,000 alqueires (13,500 l) [lords of Damot/Buko]; UNSPECIFIED: 500 golden pardãos (180,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1626</td>
<td>FREMONA: 200 head of cattle, 300 frumenti [Susenyos]; GORGORA NOVA: 200 (frumenti?) IN FRAZ/PATRIARCH: 60 golden oukeas (180,000 reis), cows, 300 cargas of mantimento, 300 patacas (90,000 reis) de alciãras, 300 pardãos (90,000 reis) [Qe’ba Krestos/Buko/Se’elä Krestos]; LEJA NEGU: 2 manilhas de ouro equal to 20 oukeas (60,000 reis), lands in “Gaxete” [Buko]; ENNABESSE: 1,400 oukeas (4,200,000 reis) [Susenyos]; DANQAZ: 200 golden oukeas (600,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>FREMONA: 30 oukeas (90,000 reis) [Habtá Iyáisus Zämagarat], lands in Nader [Sársä Krestos]; GORGORA NOVA: 50 golden oukeas (150,000 reis), 2 fine carpets, lands producing 1,500 cargas de mantimento (ca. 20,250 l) [Susenyos]; ATRKANA: houses and lands [ra’ Waldä Krestos], an expensive carpet, 50 + 10 oukeas (150,000 + 30,000 reis) [Susenyos], help to produce lime and masons [Buko]; QOLLÈLE: 10 oukeas (30,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>FREMONA: 20 oukeas (60,000 reis) for the cistern [Susenyos]; ENNABESSE: 1,000 golden nummos (i.e. coin, cesterce, oukeas, 300,000 reis?) for the church, 500 pro molvo, 200 pro calicis [Susenyos]; ENFRAZ/PATRIARCH: 10 golden oukeas (30,000 reis) for the children and a crown worth 20 oukeas (60,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1629</td>
<td>FREMONA: 20 oukeas (60,000 reis) [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>FREMONA: increase of the gwal, 1/10 of cows from subjects [Susenyos]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A central element used to channel local funding was the residences’ network. Residences were the only Jesuit structures whom the Constitutions permitted to have a stable income and build up a certain wealth. Following the example set by the colleges in Europe and those in India, the colleges in Ethiopia were to concentrate wealth and rents.
Amounts are difficult to deduce from sources but these were doubtlessly important. The contributions received from Ethiopian donors were mostly in the form of lands, provisions and gold, but payments in kind (clothes, carpets, objects) and slaves also occurred. The earliest donations date from the period of Andrés de Oviedo, when baher nägash Yeshaq gave lands in the neighbourhood of Fremona to the missionaries. During the same period an anonymous donor gave to Oviedo provisions, cows and pieces of cloth. Sàrsä Dengel seems to have ratified the rights over the lands, which were probably of gwelt type, in Ethiopia held only for a limited period and at the discretion of the ruler. During the second mission, the rights were once again ratified and the states of Fremona grew considerably by acquiring estates in Maydaro, Nadir, Zalot (Tselot), Debarwa and Adegada (cf. Map 2).232

A similar system was at work in the other residences. In 1607, a traditional Ethiopian rite, an awadj, was celebrated at Gorgora, with which Susenyos granted perpetual rights to the missionaries over neighbouring lands granted earlier by Sàrsä Dengel and Ya’eqob to the Ethio-Portuguese.233 In approximately 1611, Qollela received the first lands, by donation of Se’elà Krestos. It might be assumed, in consequence, that over the years Fremona, Gorgora and Qollela became important landowning centres, sometimes controlling distant states and perhaps rivaling with the wealthiest lords in the country. In addition, Gännätä Iyásus, which enjoyed of a special status as an ‘imperial’ residence, seems to have disposed of extensive lands as in 1624 these were producing a rent of 300 ducados (990,000 reis) annually.234

In addition, local landowners and members of the court made spontaneous donations in the form of cattle (mules, horses, cows), honey and cereals and, less often, money. In 1609, Susenyos gave 200 ducados (when golden ducados, 660,000 reis) for the residence in Fremona and another donor, perhaps Se’elà Krestos, then acting governor of Tegray, offered two horses. Successive donations came at the time when most heated debates between the traditionalist and Catholic parties were taking place. Furthermore, Susenyos would have welcomed every new missionary with a donation of ten oukeas (about 30,000 reis).235

Reportedly, exploitation of the lands and donations in kind combined with what came from India and Europe were enough to cover the daily needs of the residences dur-

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232 Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 251v; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXIII.
233 RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XXIII.
234 Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 229r-v.
ing the period when these were still relatively modest. In 1622, the superior of the mission, António Fernandes, informed the General in Rome that “for the subsistence and maintenance [of the mission] were sufficient 500 cruzados (180,000 reis) that the lands here produce yearly as well as the more than 1,000 cruzados (360,000 reis) that I received from the alms.”

If we assume that by then the Jesuits properly managed three residences (Gorgora, Fremona and Qollela – Gännätä Iyäsus having a special status as royal residence), we can estimate yearly costs to amounting around 500 cruzados (180,000 reis) per residence.

However, when the mission flourished, needs grew accordingly and so did the number of recorded contributions. In 1618, Susenyos granted lands and a large quantity of cedar wood to be used for the construction of the first Jesuit-style church at Gorgora. The wood – a scarce material in the highlands – had to be obtained from nearby monasteries and this aroused the protest of the local monks who saw parts of the holy forests – which surrounded local churches – erased. In the following three years, the residence of Gorgora received a total of about 548,400 reis from Ethiopian donors for the completion of the same works. Contributions grew even more from 1624 onwards, when most of the residences began to renew or implement new infrastructures. Between 1624 and 1630, Fremona received 200 heads of cattle (bulls), 300 frumenti (i.e. cereal, most likely indicating a tax that was equal to the amount of produce per man, normally described in Portuguese sources as cargas de mantimento) as well as donations amounting to 300,000 reis. Gorgora received a total of 300,000 reis and gifts including four expensive carpets. Lavish contributions also flowed into Gännätä Iyäsus, which received 180,000 reis, 200 amounts of produce, 300 couvados and eight carpets. Moreover, the provision of the necessary workforce seems to have been the responsibility of local governors. Local workers helped in the transportation of the materials and, under the supervision of Jesuit or Indian architects, in masonry tasks (as efficiâes and maçones).

In consequence, in 1628, Almeida put the yearly costs for a house or a small college in Ethiopia at 1,000 patacas (300,000 reis). Considering that the mission managed then between four and five schools or seminaries (Fremona, Enfraz, Gorgora, Qollela and perhaps Särka as well) it should not seem exaggerated to consider that expenses had risen.

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235 RASO IV, 38.
236 Pera a sustentacão e suficiente com os 500 cruzados q. desta terra dam cada anno com as terras que ca se lavrão e pasante de mil cruzados q. tenho juntos de esmola; Fernandes, 1622, in: RASO XI, doc. 63, 505. A similar text with slight divergences: De sua sostentaçam [of the missionaries] ca, os sostentaremos alguns anos com mais de dous mil cruzados que tenho juntos com os venimentos das terras e co[m] 500 cruzados que na India se recebem sempre das ordinarias dos 5 padres que ca estavamos; António Fernandes to Superior General, 15 May 1624, Dânqäz, in: RASO XII, doc. 26, 56.
twice or thrice from 1622 to that date. With this economic boost, the mission would have abandoned its status as an important but yet economically modest undertaking to become, financially speaking, one of the most lavish endeavours of the Society in the East (Table 18). In the end, it appears that a considerable share of the peasant economy of Ethiopia was exploited to provide provisions and manpower for the mission (Table 20). Within a time span of about ten years, from 1619 to 1629, five Jesuit residences received together in contributions made in oukeas, loads of produce and donations in kind almost as much as the amount of taxes that the province of Tegray, the richest in the kingdom, payed annually to the royal treasury. Susenyos had attributed to Gännätä Iyäsus alone a rent amounting to 990,000 reis, which was more than half (66 %) the annual produce of the province of Dämbeya. Towards 1626, another Jesuit settlement with royal endowment, Ennäbesse, which was then enduring an ambitious architectonic renewal, was attributed over four million reis alone, nearly as much as the amount that the province of Gojjam – where the residence was set – gave to the state. Moreover, an additional half a million reis or so were granted to other residences (Tanqha, Atkana, Qollela) and to Jesuit-related facilities that are not specified in missionary sources.

An important aspect of the support system in the mission in Ethiopia is that it had all the typical features of the patronship system enjoyed by the Society of Jesus in Europe and abroad, which has been admirably described by historian Evonne Levy. Accordingly, contributions flowed in a relative spontaneous way into the residences and Jesuit patrons became co-participants in the “architecture experience”. The Jesuits used all the magnetism of their cosmopolitan culture and their diplomatic skills to attract local attention and also to stimulate patronship. They often invited their potential donors (ras Se’elä Krestos, Susenyos, Buko, Qeba Krestos) to the residences, dully hosted – a task more cumbersome than it appears, since Ethiopian nobility used to move with an entourage of

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238 I borrow the term from Levy’s brilliant analysis of the Jesuit system of patronage; cf. in specific LEVY, Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque, 192 seq.
hundreds of people – and showed them how work was progressing. Susenyos in particular, whose royal kätäma lay just at a distance of one day of journey, visited Gorgora once or twice a year during construction works. Donors could, therefore, observe construction in the making and also have their say about what was being done. Thanks to these visits, they would become more involved in the building process, be conscious of its costs and eager to see works completed. It is for this reason that donations often targeted specific architectural parts. Therefore, in ca. 1628 donations for some residences were detailed in the following way: the governor of Tegray Qeba Krestos gave 20 oukeas (60,000 reis) for the cistern of Fremona; in Ennäbesse, the patron gave 1,000 golden nummos (i.e. coin, cesterce) for the church, 500 pro muro (fortress walls) and 200 for a chalice. In consequence, in the mission patronage became a creative authorship of the architectural works.239

By applying a system of local patronship, the mission managed to sustain the expansion of effectives, students and converts and to achieve outstanding architectonic works. Yet, the over dependence from local funding was an undesired tactic. As I will explain in the next chapter, it placed the missionaries in an awkward position: they wanted to be seen as a humble and austere group of priests but the reforms they enforced and their own desire to satisfy their local sponsors inevitably surrounded the mission with an aura of luxury and wealth. Moreover, whilst the missionaries belonged to a nation that had been traditionally over generous with the Ethiopians and they had also used conspicuously present-giving as a means to reach the ‘hearts’ of Ethiopian nobility, now it was the Ethiopian social fabric who seemed to be working for the mission. The system backfired in the end and was to alienate Ethiopian society from the mission.

239 Ibid. 192.
PART III. FALL
In 1632 the missionary adventure in Ethiopia came to an end. On 24 June that year Susenyos published a decree granting freedom of religion. With this, the authority of Patriarch Mendes and the Jesuits was de facto removed. On 16 September, Susenyos died and was succeeded by Fasilädäs (regnal name Alam Sägäd/Seltan Sägäd II), who took quickly the banner of Ethiopian Christianity. Pushed by the court fervently anti-Catholic, he began the removal of all traces of Catholicism and the restoration of Ethiopian Christianity. During the following years the Catholic community, including a few Jesuits who decided to stay, were to suffer harsh persecutions, and their number was decimated by emigration and murders. The Ethio-Portuguese group survived a few more decades but in no better condition. This period of crypto-Catholicism was a late attempt to continue the mission underground and is discussed in the next chapter. Below follows a discussion of the main factors that brought about the sudden fall of the missionary enterprise.

**Utopian Ethiopia**

An inquiry into the reasons for the failure of the Jesuit mission could appear as rather eurocentric. After all, why should the grand reforms initiated by the Jesuits and sponsored by a few Catholic lords and the negus have succeeded in the first place? Why should a people with a Christian tradition as old as that of the Europeans have accepted a credo and ritual practices so contrary to their own way of thinking? Moreover, how could a small group of Westerners (not more than twenty at most) think to reduce a whole ‘empire’ with the sole help of their, unquestionable outstanding, skills, with the sole force of their famous modo nostro?

In truth, the project to reduce the Preste was, like many undertakings during the European expansion, overly ambitious and to some extent unrealistic. It indeed shared a utopian impulse that pervaded the Iberian expansion in the world.\(^1\) During the colonisa-

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1. "We are only like sponges who suction the juice of the nations in which we settle so as to be able, thereafter, to extract the juice in our coffers in Rome"; Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, *La araña negra*, Madrid: Cosmópolis, [1928], tomo I, 74.

2. On the importance of utopian thought during the conquest of America, cf. José Antonio Maravall, *Utopía y re-
tion of America and Portuguese expansion in Africa and Asia, every project seemed feasible to the Iberian *conquistadores* and to their spiritual counterparts, the missionaries. The experiences of Cortés, Pizarro, Albuquerque, and even Christovão da Gama, had demonstrated that few yet brave and determined men could achieve extraordinary results. Later, the intelligence and energy of Ignatius of Loyola and his peers would promise to bring European ideals to further limits. In this time, no challenge was big enough to deter the imagination of the Europeans and from 1588, for instance, dates the famous *memorandum* by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Sánchez addressed to King Felipe II that planned the invasion of China with a 20,000-men force.³ The Society of Jesus, which in its first generation was composed mainly of Spaniards, inherited this spirit and determination. In Ethiopia, once seen as the ‘Land of the Prester John’, similar utopian forces moved hundreds of Spaniards and Portuguese to go there, including the missionaries themselves. The historian Dauril Alden commented that “Considering the paucity of Jesuits in Ethiopia, the lack of effective support from secular authorities in Goa or in Europe, and the complexity of the power structure in the highlands, one may well question whether the Jesuits ever stood any chance of permanent success there.”⁴

However, the mission in Ethiopia was much more than a showpiece of Iberian bravado. In the previous chapters, it was the intention to demonstrate that it was a complex undertaking, stretching over a period of more than eighty years during which at least four generations of missionaries worked strenuously and deployed a number of skills and activities that had never been seen before in the Ethiopian highlands. Moreover, these men succeeded in many of the goals they set themselves. The ‘reduction’ of Susenyos and part of the Ethiopian nobility in the 1610s and 1620s, the arrival of the Catholic Patriarch Mendes in 1625 and the artistic and architectonic developments in the late 1620s are compelling arguments to regard this episode as something remarkable. Indeed, the wishes formulated by Ignatius of Loyola, Dom João III and Pope Paul III back in the 1550s were largely accomplished some seventy years later.

Thus, the inquiry into why the mission failed is justified. However, rather than asking *tout court* why this happened, I will try to explain, firstly, why it failed at the time of the widest development of a mission culture; and, secondly, why it failed in the form of a

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large-scale anti-Jesuit uprising. In so doing, I take issue with some of the main arguments that scholars have previously brought forward to answer that question. Generally, scholars have focused on the missionaries’ own shortcomings when trying to explain the collapse of the Jesuit project. This has led a number of them to identify Afonso Mendes as responsible. With his harsh, uncompromising religious policy, the Catholic Patriarch allegedly alienated the mission from a large part of Ethiopian society and triggered its abrupt end. In this view, Pedro Páez generally appears favourably portrayed, as a man who had a better understanding of Ethiopian society and a capacity to compromise. His abrupt death in 1622 and ‘replacement’ by a man like Mendes would have thus precluded a better acceptance of the missionaries by the Ethiopians. This perspective is, however, flawed. Firstly, it personalizes too much an undertaking that was above all a collective enterprise. Mendes and Páez were only two, albeit among the most important, of the some thirty-five missionaries who worked in Ethiopia between 1603 and 1632. Secondly, it also ignores a figure who could more legitimately be cast in the role of Nero of the mission: António Fernandes. As we saw, Fernandes was the man truly leading the mission when the Europeans began setting up the programme of reforming the Ethiopian church and society. Throughout the mid-1620s, he was the most experienced operative the Society of Jesus had in Ethiopia and when Mendes arrived he was also the one chosen for the charge of vicar general. Thirdly, this perspective avoids considering the local context and the transformations undergone by Ethiopian society under the Jesuit ‘rule’ as factors of the mission’s crisis. Finally, a look into chronology shows that 1632 was not the only moment when the activity of the Jesuits could have come to an end. The fall of the mission could have also occurred in 1617, with the open rebellion of the metropolitan and of key state figures, and around 1622 as well, when the number of active missionaries decreased to three. Therefore, only a wider consideration of a variety of factors – political, social, cultural, religious and even psychological – can account for the sudden fall of the mission.

**Local Perceptions of the Mission: Between the Heresy and the Monstrous**

So far, I have only superficially outlined the problems faced by the Jesuits during their in-

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5 The literature centred on the Jesuits’ ‘mistakes’ in Ethiopia goes back to the early anti-Jesuitic pamphlets written when memories of this mission were still vivid. A first title to bring in mind should be that by Johann Michael WANSLEIBEN, *A brief account of the rebellions and bloodshed occasioned by the anti-Christian practices of the Jesuits and other popish emissaries in the empire of Ethiopia*, London: Jonathan Edwin, 1679 and James BRUCE’s, *Travels to discover the sources of the Nile*, Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790. A modern example of this position is Paulo DURÃO, “A intolerância dos Jesuítas na Etiópia”, *Brotéria* 21, 1935, 228-35.
teractions with the local people. It is therefore important to now reassess the more negative aspects of the missionary enterprise. This may eventually show that the missionaries’ activities were not always perceived locally as the missionaries expected. Often local views of the padroch were quite different from the views expressed by some of the most prominent figures such as Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos. Ultimately, it will appear that the mission was in many ways on the verge of collapsing on occasions and that even during the years of the clearest control of the situation by the Jesuits they were far from being accepted by Ethiopian society at large.

The Jesuits came from a social and religious milieu that was entirely different from the one they encountered in the Ethiopian highlands. Theirs was a society undergoing an intense transformation. Many of the benefits and pitfalls of modernity thus have their origin in the same period and geographical setting that gave birth to the Society. The Roman Catholic Church and the Society of Jesus were also powerful and sophisticated institutions that dominated intellectual thought in Europe. In Christian Ethiopia the missionaries moved in a rather different context. The Solomonic state was weak and the social fabric mostly rural. The church was also a poorly centralized and conservative institution in which the regular clergy played a far more critical role than the secular clergy and – without giving right to all the claims made by the Jesuits – the theological preparation of both groups was often deficient. As we have seen above, such a contrast rendered the Jesuits attractive for a few members of Ethiopian elite groups but it also made them complete strangers for the rest. This was a heavy burden that the missionaries carried throughout the whole mission period. Whilst access to the elites was secured, that to the masses, a typical target of Jesuit action in Europe, was not. In consequence, the missionaries, and the small group of faithful that supported and lived with them, were never successful in erasing from the locals the perception that they were something alien. In a society as conservative and traditional as the Ethiopian, the renewal and change propounded by the Europeans were unlikely to be seen as something positive. In fact, evidence from Jesuit and Ethiopian sources indicates that many an Ethiopian saw the presence of the missionaries in his land as a menace and a danger to the religious traditions and the social status

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6 TADDESE, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, 108 seq. The influence of monasticism in Ethiopia has also been the subject of a recent study by Marie-Laure DERAT, *Le domaine des rois éthiopiens (1270-1327). Espace, pouvoir et monachisme*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003, ch. 7. On the scant preparation of the local clergy, which probably was similar to that of the clergy in rural Europe, the historian Steven Kaplan wrote: “The perpetual lack of priests probably played a major role in the development of a priestly class with only minimal educational attainments... selection and deviation to the priesthood were generally not based upon special learning or piety, but rather on a family tradition of serving in the priesthood”; KAPLAN, *The monastic holy man and the Christianization of early Solomonic Ethiopia*,
Plate XIIIa (above): Manoel de Almeida’s map of Ethiopia, ca. 1644 (modified 1662).

Plate XIIIb (below): Wälättä Petros being rebuked by negus Susenyos; top inscription: “How negus Susenyos questioned her [Wälättä Petros] on her faith and looked at her with anger”, second half 17th century [7].
Plate XIVa (above): Frontispiece of Balthazar Téllez’s *Historia geral de Ethiopia a Alta ou Preste João*, Coimbra: Manoel Dias, 1660, design by Philip Fruytiers, engraving by Peter van Lisbetten.

Plate XIVb (below left): The Emperor of Ethiopia and Andrés de Oviedo at the feet of St. Ignatius of Loyola; from: “Weltmission der Jesuiten”, Dillingen, 1664, design by Christoph Storer, engraving by Bartholomäus Kilian, detail.

Plate XIVc (below right): Susenyos receives the Patriarch Afonso Mendez at Dänqäz on 7 February 1626, ca. 1725, design by Louis de Boullongne, engraving by Charles Nicolas Cochin.
IN THE COMPANY OF IVÁSUS: THE JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

A view into the stereotypes applied to the Catholics in Ethiopia shall help to illustrate this point.

One of the most common ways the locals used to call the missionaries was with the term *Ferenj*, i.e. ‘Franks’. Such was, and still is today, a widespread form to refer to Europeans in the Orient – including in India. It was not necessarily a negative epithet as it in fact expressed in a rather neutral way the patent racial and cultural differences between the locals and the Europeans. Similarly, the members of the Ethio-Portuguese group were often known in the local context as *Burtukan*, i.e. ‘Portuguese’, which also articulated the different identity this group cultivated amidst the wider Ethiopian society. Still, considering the conservatism of the Ethiopian Christians, the foreigner was also a threat to the traditions and hence a person with more negative than positive qualities. Moreover, the mixed-race group contributed with their own misconduct to reinforce the fears of the locals. Almeida, hence, justified the dislike of locals for the Portuguese because the latter ones often adopted a violent conduct and even took the wives to local men.

It likely was more surprising for the Jesuits to find out that from the very beginning locals also described them as ‘Turks’. Thus in 1607 Luís de Azevedo informed the Jesuit Provincial in India that “locals, without knowing anything about us, treat us as such [Turks], despite the fact that the only things they know we differ from them is in the observance of the Sabbath, which they observe like the Jews, and in that we eat many things contrary to the Judaic prescriptions, which they carefully observe”. Fifteen years later, Almeida reported that locals still called becoming a Catholic *fazerse Turco*, i.e. “becoming Turk” and towards the end of the 1620s another insulting epithet was added: that of being “moors”. This reveals a serious problem the missionaries had: important elements of their cultural (culinary preference for the pork) and religious (Pauline approach to religious

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7 The term originated at the time of the Crusades, when the French composed the bulk of the Christian armies. In the Orient, Europeans serving the Ottomans were mostly known as rumi, rumes. Cf. “Rumes”, in: *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. XXVI, 378-79.

8 There is also at least one reference to the Ethio-Portuguese being locally called *mestíços*; Annual letter, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 33, 287. Unfortunately, the author did not provide the local term, though this could have been the modern Amharic term of *kelles* (‘mixed, adulterated, diluted; half-caste, half-breed’), which embodied a clear derogatory meaning; Thomas Leiper KANE, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990.

9 “It is true that earlier our people gave way to these beliefs because they were involved in violent actions and disdained the locals; some of them even went as far as to steal locals their own wives” (*He verdade que naquelles principios os nossos derão á isto alguma occasião polas violencias de que muitos uzavão fazendo menos caso dos Abexins, e chegando alguns á lhes tomar suas próprias mulheres*); RASO VI, liv. IV, ch. XXIV.

10 … *Por tais nos tem a gente que não sabe nossas cousas e soo sabem que timos delles diferentes na guarda do sabbado, que elles como Judeus observão e em corôeres e outras cousas que vão contra as carremoinias judaicas, que elles ao pe da letra em muitas cousas guardão*; Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 86. A latter reference in Barneto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 67, 521.

11 Manoel de Almeida to Superior General, 12 December 1623, Sawakin, in: RASO XII, doc. 14, 30.

12 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI.
rituals) identity associated them with their strongest opponents in the Orient. In the eyes of Ethiopian Christians the Jesuits were seen as unclean, impure, people, a fact that indubitably put in jeopardy their very attempts to appear as a distinguished community of priests. Likewise, the few converts that the missionaries managed to win during the first years of the mission received other derogatory epithets. A nun having accepted Catholicism was once accused of acting out of pure material interest, so as “to be able to eat meat”.\(^{13}\) The act of conversion was therefore also seen as the outcome of pure material interest.

As it is apparent from the progress of the mission, the European priests managed to overcome some of these problems. Their good manners, intelligence and some adjustments in their mise-en-scène in the field, such as the adoption of strict fasting habits, in all probability helped in transforming the initial scepticism and mistrust of many into open friendship. This happened more quickly among social groups that already possessed a higher disposition to accept changes, such as the Ethio-Portuguese, members of the nobility, court officials, and the higher clergy. It is thus not without interest that the Jesuits were relatively successful in introducing consumption of pork at the court.\(^{14}\) The feat was probably the work of Pedro Páez who by the early 1610s had already become an influential figure at the court and had managed to ‘Europeanize’ in some measure the way of life of his friend and protector, Susenyos. Having a European or Portuguese appearance therefore became fashionable at both the royal and in other Jesuit-friendly local courts. For an elite, the foreign people, their forms, ideas and manners were regarded as something positive.

However, a more negative perception of the mission apparently pervaded the wider Ethiopian Christian society, and increased once the Jesuits gained adepts and took a more public stand. In 1612, at the eve of the first serious religious discussions, Páez informed his friend, the Jesuit Tomás de Ituren, that the missionaries were called “sons of Leo” (i.e. of Pope St. Leo the Great), whilst the Ethiopian Christians reserved for themselves the nobler epithet of “sons of God”.\(^{15}\) At the same time, other similar belittling epithets began to circulate in the anti-Jesuitic circles and in the successive years the Jesuits thus recorded that themselves and the Catholics in Ethiopia were called “Nestorians”, in reference to the figure whose Christological doctrines the Ethiopians – and the Catholics,

\(^{13}\) Azevedo, 1607, in: RASO XI, doc. 20, 98.
\(^{14}\) Cf. above, Chapter 6, n. 71.
\(^{15}\) Páez, 1612, in: RASO XI, doc. 34, 269.
too – considered heretical;\textsuperscript{16} \textit{parentes de pilatos}, i.e. “relatives of Pontius Pilatus”;\textsuperscript{17} and were also accused of supporting the theory of the ‘two Gods’,\textsuperscript{18} an intentional misreading of the Jesuits’ defence of the theory on the two natures of Christ. Two anti-Catholic pamphlets, probably dating from the 1610s, also called the Catholics \textit{Chalcedonians}.\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, about 1613, at the outcome of one of the religious disputes held at the court, Ethiopian priests were heard accusing Susenyos of being a “black Portuguese”.\textsuperscript{20} The designation indicates that embracing the Jesuits’ ideals was perceived as a renunciation of one’s own identity, a perception that likely increased during the 1620s when mission culture reached its peak of development. Therefore, regardless of the Jesuits’ attempts to make their religious ideas appear as the original traditions of the Ethiopian Church, theirs was for many Ethiopians a faith of the “Portuguese”, of “strangers” and “a new faith being newly introduced”.\textsuperscript{21}

In the late 1610s and early 1620s, as the missionaries expanded their influence within the Ethiopian state, more religious-oriented prejudices further damaged their image and the beliefs they represented. In 1625 Gaspar Paes informed that “the monks launch against our holy faith unbelievable and horrible blasphemies and lies”.\textsuperscript{22} The missionaries were also accused on numerous occasions, as it seems at the instigation of traditional Ethiopian clergy, of “dishonouring” or being “enemies of the Virgin” and denying that she was the mother of God.\textsuperscript{23} The accusation originated, as the Jesuit source explains, from the fact that the missionaries compelled the Catholics to moderate the local use of taking oaths by invoking the Virgin, a behavior the Europeans considered disrespectful. The prohibition was part of their attempt to accommodate Ethiopian public religiosity to the canons of Early modern Catholicism. The problem this particular decision provoked was serious enough to compel the missionaries to a more conspicuous display of Marian devotion during celebrations and preaching missions. In addition, locals also claimed that the foreign priests pretended to be superior to the Apostles, reflecting the perception

\begin{itemize}
\item Barneto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 67, 521.
\item Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 480.
\item Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 325. Also in Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 430.
\item Hamara Nafs ‘La nave dell’anima’ and \textit{Mars Amin ‘Il porto sicuro’}, both reproduced in Enrico CERULLI (ed., tr.), \textit{Scritti teologici etiopi dei secoli XVI-XVII}, vol. 1: \textit{Tre opuscoli dei Mikaeliti}; Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1958. Tewelde provides a later datation in ca. 1628; TEWELDE, “La politica cattolica de Seltan Sägäd I”, 368. The latter study offers a thorough and perhaps more accurate analysis of the religious pamphlets to the one by Cerulli.
\item Páez, 1614, in: RASO XI, doc. 39, 325. Also RASO VI, \textit{liv.} VII, ch. XXII.
\item Fie dos Portugueses, que val tanto como dizer, fie dos estrangeiros, fie nova, e novamente introduzida. These words were voiced in 1617 at the court by a group of dignitaries headed by the eunuch Keflo; RASO VI, \textit{liv.} VII, ch. XXIII.
\item Prodigiosas e horribveis, são as blasfemias e falso que de nossa santa fé dizem, e jurid os frades; Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 240r.
\end{itemize}
Ethiopians had of the Jesuit strenuous reformism carried out in the mid-1620s: pushing change as the missionaries were doing was tantamount to, in the eyes of many an Ethiopian, defying apostolic authorities. In the same period, a widespread belief had it that the Jesuits produced the hosts they used for the liturgy from camel or other animals’ dung, a charge that played on the flat, light, quality of the Catholic hosts. An echo of this charge appears in the contemporary anti-Jesuitic pamphlet Mars Amin: “you drible [?] the ants and ingest the camels and look like whitewashed sepulchres, which from the outside seem beautiful but in the inside are full of bones of dead people and of all things evil”. To counter it the missionaries were compelled to regularly show to the public the instruments (ostiarios) and material (wheat) with which the hosts were actually made.

The latter passage from the Mars Amin introduced another perception of the mission that the Jesuits had already encountered in Europe, especially but not solely, in the northern Reformed part and which put them as friends of insincerity, deviousness and artificiality. In Ethiopian popular imagination, for instance, they would be soon associated with spiders and with wolfs dressed in sheep’s clothing and this motif seems to have gained special force at the court and in the milieu of the learned clergy. At the court the relationship of the missionaries with Se’elä Krestos began also to be seen with suspicion and equalled to “conspiring”, “intelligent manoeuvring” and “business making”. The faith the missionaries represented was likewise said to show itself in nice clothing but disguising secret evil intentions: “in the facade the faith of the Portuguese offers sweet kisses but inside of it one realizes that it is actually made of bile [i.e. hatred] and poison”. At least two important Ethiopian texts were to recall similar metaphors in the decades that came after the expulsion. The chronicle of Susenyos’ grandson, negus Yohannes I (1667-82), reported that the negus saw the Jesuits as “prophets dressed in sheep’s clothing” and “seduce—
ers” and the *Liber Axumae* spoke similarly of the *padroch* (i.e. the ‘[Jesuit] priests’) as “wolves who are like scavengers and deadly snakes” disguised as “sheep”.

The Jesuit ‘image’ was also badly shattered by the Europeans’ inflexible stance towards Ethiopia’s ‘Mosaic’ legacy and more specifically by their abhorrence of circumcision. This point is of importance and deserves special attention here. When the missionaries chose to abolish circumcision they believed to be truthfully following the steps traced by Paul’s Christian eschatology. Catholic ontology had an ambivalent though overtly negative position towards this rite. On the one hand, it considered it superfluous, ‘superstitious’, for the Mosaic benefits of the rite had been superseded by the ‘spiritual circumcision’, i.e. baptism. This idea was strongly advocated by St. Paul in passages such as Gal 5:2 and were later summarized in literary form by Philo (I Cent. B.C.-I cent. A.D.). On the other hand, Patristic theology saw it as a real menace for salvation; the last true circumcision had been that performed on the body of Christ, which, as the art historian Leo Steinberg explained, in Catholic theology was interpreted as a “first installment, a down payment on behalf of mankind. It is because Christ was circumcised that the Christian no longer needs circumcision”. In consequence, continuing the practice was seen as a denial of the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice. Continuing with Middle Age and Renaissance traditions, the circumcision of Christ became a popular Jesuit theme. The name of Jesus, which gave name to the order and to a number of its chief churches, had been given to Christ during his circumcision and, consequently, the pictorial reproduction of this scene was highly revered within the Society: the high altar of Il Gesù in Rome is dedicated to the Circumcision and in 1605 Rubens painted a Circumcision for the Jesuit church in Genoa. Additionally, the Jesuits were ardent advocates of the suppression of human circumcision by the rite of baptism (as a spiritual circumcision) and tried to impose this dogma on every missionary front.

In Ethiopia, however, the Jesuits’ stance towards this rite made them actually challenge a fundamental institution in the anthropology of most of the groups inhabiting the central highlands. Indeed, the practice of circumcision was not limited to the Christian ar-

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29 “Be vigilant with the fake prophets who come to us dressed in sheep’s clothing, for in the interior they are like rapacious wolves. You will recognise them by their acts” (*Prenz gardez aux faux prophètes qui viennent à vous revêtus de la peau des agneaux, tandis que dans leur intérieur ils sont des loups rapaces; vous les reconnaîtrez à leurs fruits*); Ignazio Guidi (tr.), *Anales Iohannis I, Iyasu I, Bakaffa*, Parisiis – Lipsiae: Otto Harrassowitz, 1905 (repr. Louvain 1960-61; CSCO vol. 22, 23, SA series altera, Tomus 3, 6), 6 seq (tr.).

30 … *Sous l’aspect de brebis, des loups déchireurs et des serpents meurtriers*; Carlo Conti Rossini (tr.), *Liber Axumae*, Parisiis: Carolus Foussieguie, 1910 (CSCO vol. 58, SA ser. alt. VIII), 92 (tr.).


cas, nor was its meaning confined to an imitation of the Mosaic prescriptions as the missionaries tended to believe. Ethiopian Christians (Amhara and Tegreñña-speakers), pagans (Agäw, Damot and Oromo) and Muslims alike practiced it on both sexes, and they all attributed to it a similar sense: circumcision was an essential rite of passage in the life of an individual; it provided him with the necessary conditions to develop entirely as a human being and become part of the social order. Circumcision removed the last remnants of animalness from the body and prepared it for its immersion into society. For that reason, too, to not be circumcised was regarded as a serious imperfection of the body. Hence, the uncircumcised body was seen as dirty, ugly, closer to animal nature and unfit to live a normal social life. In modern Amharic yaltägärräzä, literally ‘non-circumcised’, stands as well for “ill-mannered, insolent, rude, and vulgar”.

Throughout the some hundred years of debate between the Catholic and the traditionalists, the latter frequently voiced arguments pointing to the importance of circumcision for local ontology. Negus Gälawdewos, responding reproaches by the pseudo-Patriarch Bermudez, said that he circumcised “out of cleanness” and on another occasion, responding this time to admonitions by the Jesuit missionaries mestre Rodríguez and Bishop Andrés de Oviedo, he defended it as a “simple national tradition” (costumbre de nação).

Some fifty years later, locals made a similar argument to Páez, stating that they practiced the rite “out of beauty”. Páez also remarked in his treatise that in Ge’ez the word for uncircumcised, qwälläfätä, could also mean “gentile”, and be used as an insult and Mendes informed that “among them there is no more shameful reproach than to be called Colafa,

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37 A Jesuit priest once informed that a local Ethiopian couple considered ugly (pansea foalsfide) the uncircumcised state of their son; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 474.
39 Me circuncido por limpeza; Década VII, liv. VII, ch. XII.
40 Almeida quoted in Leonardo Cohen, “Los portugueses en Ethiopia y la problemática de los ritos ‘judáicos’”, Historia y grafia 17, 2001, 209-40, 238. The arguments used by Gälawdewos and his advisers at the court should in fact be related to a certain royal discourse where circumcision is openly defended but also perceived in a rather spirituistic and formalistic - Judaic? - light, which emphasizes its role as a sign of the chosen people – in the Confessio Claudia, the rite is defined as “a sign of the truth [of the true lineage?]” (contrassegno di verità) – and obliterating local somatic conceptions; Lozza, “La confessione di Claudio re d’Etiopia”, 67-78. In the sixteenth century, other major texts emphasized similar arguments, for instance Saga Za’Ab’s plea of 1330 studied above in Chapter 1 and the Fetha Nägäst (the original Arabic text dates from the thirteenth century but its attested use in Ethiopia coincides with the Portuguese and Jesuit presence); cf. Paulo Tsadua-Red., “Fetha Nägäst”, in: Uhlig, Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, vol. 2, 534-35. Similar arguments also appear in an older classical text from the times of Zära Ya’qob, the Mäshäfät Berhan, Carlo Conti Rossini (ed., tr.), Il Libro della Luce del Negus Zar’a Ya’qob (Mëshäfät Berhan), Louvain: Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1964 (CSCO vol. 251), 90-98, especially 96-97.

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which means imperfect or uncircumcised”. Mendes also added that “they circumcise neither as a formal act nor with the intention to keep the Mosaic Law, they regard circumcision as being necessary for salvation and as needed preparation for the Baptism … and they give it not only to the children but also to the gentiles when they are converted and to the prisoners of war”. 

It is thus not surprising that the Jesuits experienced serious difficulties in their attempts to extirpate this practice. This occurred even from within the groups that were closer to them. The case of the Ethio-Portuguese is telling. In many other instances this group managed to maintain a strong Portuguese identity, keeping their language and a number of their religious traditions, but they seem to have begun to circumcise their sons born in Ethiopia from the very beginning. In 1582, Manuel Fernandes already pointed to this problem. However, the Jesuit priest also tried then to justify the choice of Ethio-Portuguese parents by explaining that they adopted this practice out of social pressure: “[They did not circumcise] to obtain salvation but simply to prevent the harassment over those who are not circumcised by local Christians”. Resistance to abandon the rite grew during the second mission period, when major efforts and resources were invested to combat these and other ‘errors’. Accordingly, the Jesuits appear to have been only able to keep away from this practice the families under their direct watch or living in their residences. The rest, including the Ethio-Portuguese, found it hard not to take their children through this rite, as the Jesuits regularly reported. Thus in 1631, when the failure of persuasive methods had brought the Patriarch Afonso Mendes and the negus Susenyos to publish a royal decree forbidding the practice all over the country, the missionaries relate a case that may have been widespread: the mother of a child who had not yet been circumcised due

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41 … Ne inter illos turpis sit opprobrium, quam si quis Colafa, id est clausus seu incircumcisus appelletur; RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. XXVI.

42 … Não se circuncidam com acto formal e intenção de guardar a lei de Moisés, usão da circuncisão como cousa necessaria para a salvação e como disposição requisita para o Baptismo ... e a dão não so aos meninos sendo tambem aos gentis se alguns se concertem, e aos que cauido na guerra; Afonso Mendes, 9 May 1633, in: AME, CXV/2-7, P.2. In addition, skilled Ethiopian theologians produced during this period sophisticated arguments backing the circumcision to counteract Jesuit theological sophistry. An example of that could be a passage from the traditionalist treatise “Mars Amin ‘Il porto sicuro’”, in: CERULLI, Scritti teologici etiopici dei secoli XVI-XVII, vol. I, ch. VIII, dedicated to the salvation of the circumcised during the Resurrection.

43 Isto não foi por lhes servir de necessitate salutis, senão somente por recusarem a afrenta com que os christãos desta terra iniurão aos incircuncidados; Manuel Fernandes to Superior General, 3 July 1382, in: RASO X, doc. 108, 329. Supporting the argument of the missionary, Almeida reported that “what the Ethiopians considered revolting was to see that our people were not circumcised and that they ate hare and rabbit, so that since the beginning they called them colafas, which means uncircumcised and Nestorian heretics” … o que lhes dava muito nos olhos era verem que os nossos não se circuncidavão e comitão lebre e coelho, e assi os chamaram sempre colafas, idest incircuncidos, e hereges nestorianos; RASO V, liv. IV, ch. XXIV.


45 For instance Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 42v.
to the prohibition was heard saying “If my son has to remain uncircumcised, I wish he rather dies”\textsuperscript{46}.

Therefore, the missionaries confronted the Ethiopians with a difficult choice: either to give in to one of the most pressing wishes of the missionaries while at the same time condemning their children to the worst status in Ethiopian society, or to conform to popular pressure and then be accused by the missionaries of judaizing practices. For those joining the Jesuits, renunciation of circumcision was seen as imperative for salvation while the contrary was true for most Ethiopian societies. The dilemma probably deterred many an Ethiopian to join the mission on the terms expected by the European priests and it may also have isolated those who complied fully with the Pauline-cum-Jesuit tenet from the wider society. Indeed, the Jesuits and those who followed their tenet found themselves in the undesirable position that Ethiopians ascribed to uncircumcision. Their opponents often insulted them with the opprobrious term \textit{qwälläfa}\textsuperscript{47} and many probably saw their uncircumcision as a sign of the Franks’ barbaric nature, as witnessed in the early eighteenth-century by a Franciscan missionary\textsuperscript{48}.

Compounding this gloomy scenario some well-intentioned proselytizing strategies amply exploited by the missionaries in the 1620s backfired. A case in point were the exorcisms and the healing practices which, though developed since an early date in the mission, became central elements in the spectacular displays of power the Jesuits made in the Ethiopian countryside since 1625. Catholic images, amulets and relics became then the main assets with which the Jesuits wanted to combat mundane illnesses and also harmful traditional spirits, such as the \textit{zar} and \textit{weqabi}. Now, healing and removal of evil spirits were a frequent practice of holy men, \textit{däbtära} and other sort of local specialists (\textit{bäla weqabi}, \textit{wofa}) in Ethiopian ‘folk religion’ and, therefore, the Jesuit ‘exorcists’, as Cohen has already proposed, probably simply embodied a traditional role that predated their arrival\textsuperscript{49}.

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\textsuperscript{46} Se este meu filho assy ha de ficar sem ser circuncidado, melhor lhe fora morrer; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 474.

\textsuperscript{47} E.g. in a letter from 1621 written by an anonymous supporter of Ethiopian Christianity the \textit{negus} was exhorted, “not to listen to the colaafas, i.e. the uncircumcised, who said that in Christ there are two natures” (não ouça os Colâfâs, idest incircuncisos, que dizem que em Christo estão duas naturezas); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXX.

\textsuperscript{48} A Franciscan missionary, fr. Giacomo da Oleggio, living at the court of \textit{negus} Yostos (1711-16), was reporting to Rome of the difficult position of the missionaries, who were accused of \textit{Franchi ed incirconcisi} and unless willing to circumcise brought to death; Fr. Giacomo da Oleggio, ca. 1717, letter partially quoted in: RASO I, parte II, doc. 18, 184.

lan studied in the case of the holy men, the missionaries’ particular position as strangers placed them as excellent candidates to play as mediators in social and individual conflicts. Additionally, for the Jesuits approaching rural people and caring for their sufferings was a sincere response to the Ignatian commitment for the destitute as well as a way of rejecting local stereotypes that put them as coveters of riches and power. Mixing among poor and ill was an activity with old roots within the Society and a prerogative of the missionary vocation: healing the soul and healing the body were complementary actions aimed at saving the person. Yet, the upper echelons of Ethiopian society, those trying to embody a more serious and depurated form of Christianity, regarded folk beliefs with disdain and often combatted them. For that reason, the Jesuits seem to have been easy prey of criticisms from the Christian Ethiopian hierarchy and nobles who regarded their healing-exorcistic activities as heretic. Moreover, in the rural areas the idea that the missionaries were believers or carriers of misfortune seems to have been also widespread. On one occasion, a local peasant informed a Jesuit missionary that his reluctance to go to meet the Europeans was because local clergy had told him that “once the Jesuits came to preach in one region, a plague of locusts would destroy it”.

The case in Ethiopia finds indeed an interesting parallelism with the Japanese mis-

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50 The monastic holy man’s ability to act as a mediator was to a considerable extent the result of the unique position he occupied in Ethiopian society... as a monk he had neither family nor country; KAPLAN, The monastic holy man, 75.

51 This became a standard occupation for the forthcoming generations of Jesuits. Moreover, the Jesuit hagiology included numerous scenes of healing heroicitics, such as St. Ignatius’ famous penchant for the destitute and ill (especially promoted in Rihadencira’s Vita Ignatii Loiolae, Napoli, 1572) or the martyrdom of St. Luigi Gonzaga, who died in Rome after being contagiated by the sick people he was trying to console.

52 ASPEN, Amhara traditions of knowledge, 110, 116. Passages against magic practices and folk beliefs also appear in classical Ethiopian texts, especially from the times of Zära Ya’eqob. The first Jesuits notoriously spent their early years taking care of the infirms, as it happened in Venice in 1537, and this became a standard occupation for the forthcoming generations of Jesuits. Moreover, the Jesuit hagiology included numerous scenes of healing heroicitics, such as St. Ignatius’ famous penchant for the destitute and ill (especially promoted in Rihadencira’s Vita Ignatii Loiolae, Napoli, 1572) or the martyrdom of St. Luigi Gonzaga, who died in Rome after being contagiated by the sick people he was trying to console.

53 ... Tanto que nós entavamos em alguma terra apregar, logo nos seguia uma praga de gafanhotos que destruia aquella comarqua. O gafanhoto, a besta predileta dos bruxos, era uma figura de terror na mente popular, e os bruxos eram associados com os demônios. O problema dos bruxos era um dos maiores desafios para os missionários, que eram frequentemente acusados de serem bruxos. Nesse sentido, o jesuíta português António Fernandes solicitou que Lobo, após sua chegada à Etiópia, fosse enviado à capital para combater os bruxos. Lobo, no entanto, preferiu procurar por respostas religiosas para o problema, como em sua missão na cidade de Addis Ababa, onde fundou a Igreja de São João de Júpiter. Lobo, Itinerário e outros escritos, 398-99. Additionally, Luddolf informed that the prayers taught by the Jesuits to their neophytes were held by some locals as “magic prayers” (abhettā rāgēt); Luddolf, quoted in TEWELDE, “La politica cattolica de Setan Sagad I,” 81.
sion. The historian Elisonas has shown that in Japan missionary involvement in healing practices had attracted great many people to Christianity but it had also procured them a bad reputation among higher classes: “persons of quality were reluctant to associate with missionaries who left themselves open to contamination with the most dreadful afflictions… Persons of quality were not afraid of catching a disease. They did not want to be polluted”.54 Similarly, Jesuit residences in Ethiopia turned into local dispensaries, where (principally poor) people went to profit of the better healing services the Europeans offered and this probably pushed many a member of higher Ethiopian classes and of court clergy to regard with disdain and even to avoid mixing with those who were in frequent contact with polluted people. Supporting this hypothesis, the chronicle of Wälättä Petros reported that “since the Europeans had contaminated the deacons ... the Ethiopians had to wait until the coming of the metropolitan”.55 Therefore, the Catholics and those who lived with them were associated with a “despised caste”; in the eyes of upper classes, and, in the eyes of common people, they came to be identified with the tänqway (i.e. sorcerers) and tämar (lit. student, persons who are believed to sometimes use their knowledge in the service of evil).56 The problem for the missionaries lied less in becoming healers per se than in wanting to combine two positions that in traditional Ethiopia – and for that matter, in Europe, too – were incompatible: on the one side, taking part in the ‘folk beliefs’ and, on the other, sharing positions of leadership within the state and the church.

Another missionary method that had a boomerang effect was the missionaries’ *mise en scène* of the sacred. Although the two religions, Ethiopian Christianity and Catholicism, shared some basic Christian principles, the Catholic praxis – especially in its Tridentine version – was a more open form of Christianity, rather interested in passing a message and making it understood than in keeping custody of the Christian mysteries and “mechanically recite biblical texts”.57 Tridentine Catholicism might in no way be said deprived of mysteries but its liturgy pretended to be opener and, to some degree, closer to people. Moreover, the Ignatian notion of reaching to the hearts of the people and the Jesuit pedagogic drift were all about communication and letting people understand the Christian truths, for only after a true understanding had been achieved could the heart (the inner

56 ASPEN, *Amhara traditions of knowledge*, 121. For instance, in 1618 de Angelis reported that a group of Agäw saw the Jesuit priests as “magicians who turned men blind” (... *Encantadores e feiticeiros que cegavão os homens*); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXVIII.
person) be ‘reduced’ and become Christian. As we saw in the previous chapter, in Ethiopia the Jesuits buttressed the introduction of their Catholic worldview with the creation of outstanding architectural models and enforcing the Roman liturgy. Yet, there is ground to believe that a large number of Ethiopians were keen neither with the new church buildings nor with the Tridentine mass that the Jesuits, from 1625 onwards, tried to impose. In spite of the superiority the Jesuits believed their mass conveyed, it is apparent that it contradicted a deep-seated way of understanding and representing the sacred in the local Ethiopian context, where, as Harald Aspen stressed, “only a minimal importance is attached to an intellectualisation of the Holy Word”. The Ethiopians probably looked at the manners of the Catholics and of the Jesuits in particular with the same degree of bewilderment with which Catholic Europe saw the new religious praxis defended by the Protestantism. Not only was the sacrifice (eucharist) open to the public – instead of practiced within the walls of the mäqdas – but the Jesuits permitted that ‘impure’ bodies – such as menstruating women – ‘contaminate’ the church. Significantly, the Liber Axumae listed among the chief mistakes of the missionaries the following ones: “they taught to breach the Sabbath, to eat fat food during fasts … Still, they required that menstruating women enter the church and in cases where the women have married an impure and polluted man they let the two enter the church as well”. In consequence, the Catholic temple was no longer a space of the holy but a space for everybody, a fact that indirectly harmed the sanctity itself the Jesuit priests pretended to embody. Additionally, the frequent public display that missionaries made of religious imagery during exorcist and proselytising campaigns breached the mystery with which traditionally Ethiopian Christians treated, and still today do, the images of the sacred. In local Christianity the only image that was openly exhibited was the cross carved on the staff carried by the monk or parish priest and icons and major images hardly ever left the dark rooms of the mäqdas, the sancta sanctorum; for the

57 I draw the latter sentence from ASPEN, Amhara traditions of knowledge, 78.
58 According to St. Ignatius the conversation was one of the chief methods to stimulate the intellect of the neophytes and to bring people to the “Christian perfection”. In a famous document concerning the approach Jesuits had to adopt with non-Jesuits, he emphasized: “One should try hard through conversations on human and spiritual things to pull people to the life of perfection” (Deberá procurarse con las conversaciones de letras o de cosas espirituales atraer a otros a la vida de perfección); Ignatius of Loyola to Juan Pelletier, 13 June 1551, Rome, in: IGNACIO DE LOYOLA 1997, doc. 70, 895-96. Similarly, the ideal type of the Jesuit novice, as found in the Constitutions, was one who “knows the doctrine or has the skills to learn it… with talent to learn and to remember what has been learnt… it is desirable the ability to communicate, so important for the communication with the others” (doctrina sana, o habilidad para aprender… aptitud para aprender y fidelidad para retener lo aprendido… es de desear la gracia de hablar, tan necesaria para la comunicación con los próximos); Constituciones, part I, § 154-57.
59 Ibid.
60 … Ils apprenaient à violer le samedi, à manger les aliments gras pendant les jeûnes … Encore ils commandaient que la femme ayant ses règles entrât dans l’église; de même si une femme s’était unie, par le mariage, avec un homme contaminé et impur, ils permettaient à tous les deux d’entrer dans l’église); CONTI ROSSINI, Liber Axumae, 93 (tr.). On the strict prohibitions concerning access to the
most part, holy images remained permanently concealed under the huge sacral blankets (the mägaräsja) and were seldom shown to the visitors. In consequence, the missionaries’ promotion of a conspicuous display of the holy imagery, which for them was a sign of devotion, could only be perceived in local eyes as a desecration.

In Ethiopia, therefore, the missionaries could not gain a desired degree of dignity and respect – two main preconditions for success. Due to the ironies of cultural asymmetry, what the Jesuits thought were their principal assets turned into a serious liability for the progress of the mission. A diametrically opposite anthropology to that of Pauline Catholicism undermined the claim the Jesuits made to embody in the religious ‘market’ of seventeenth-century Ethiopia a perfect, and new, type of priesthood. Therefore, by the end of the 1620s, the atmosphere in Christian Ethiopia had become largely hostile towards the Catholics. The mood was perfectly captured in 1629 by the leader of the mission and of the short-lived Catholic Church in a poetical but frightening passage that bears the hallmarks of an omen:

Plenty and tall are the spines that scratch the seeds, and the stones too hard to receive them; many are the infernal birds that take the seeds away from the hearts. So, despite the good stand in which we currently are, there are signs of great storms, for most of the people host great hopes in a change, their eyes and hearts ‘listening’ to the wind. The omens addressed against us and the prophecies foreseeing our death are so many that if only one of them was to become true we would all be finished.61

Local perceptions of the mission, however, were not circumscribed to the Christian groups speaking Amhara and Tegreñña languages, those forming the core of the Christian Ethiopian state. The missionaries also worked and lived for long periods in ‘peripheral’ areas, such as in Damot and Agäw land and it is therefore fair to assume that their hosts had their own ideas about the mission. I believe that these were peripheral views about the mission that did not determine the course of events. However, scant as the references are, it is interesting to study them in order to have as wide and heterogeneous a picture as possible of local perceptions of the mission. After all, insights from the peripheries can also enlighten what was being thought in the centre.

churches in Ethiopia, cf. ASPEN, Amhara traditions of knowledge, 85.

61 ... As espinhas que afogão a semente são muitas e muj altas, as pedras muj duras que a não recebem; ha muitas aves infernaes que a afastão e tirão dos corações, e no meio da bonança, de que agora parece gozamos, ha sinaes de grandes tempestades, por que a mais de gente está com as esperanças na mudança do tempo e como os olhos e coração no vento; e são tantas as sortes que se lanção sobre nossas cabeças e tantas as profecias de nossas mortes, que huma so que sahira verdadeira bastava pera todos sermos homenventurados; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 402. Mendes, wrote these words when memory of the killing of three Catholic
On the one hand, images from the periphery do not appear to have differed very much from those held in the centre of the Ethiopian state; on the other, they differed a great deal. All the ‘peripheral’ groups with whom the Jesuits met, for example, shared many cultural traits with the Amharic and Tegreña-speakers. Agäw, Damot, Gongä and Oromo groups alike practiced circumcision and at least the first and second groups also followed the Sabbath, a fact that probably induced them to see the Catholics in an unfavourable light. Batavis (hermits) who went to preach among the people of Damot, themselves staunch supporters of Ethiopian Christianity, spread the idea that the Jesuits were enemies of the Virgin and that their hosts were made from animal dung. Likewise the southern groups, pagans and Christians alike, were aware of the difference between the Christianity of the Ethiopians and that brought to them by the missionaries. For them the Jesuits were also Ferenj, members of a foreign nation and a Church different from that of the Ethiopians. On one occasion, a missionary hinted at such awareness as a major obstacle to work among the Agäw.

However, this same perception of the Jesuits as a different group of Christians could have worked in their favour. The southern peoples had suffered the exactions enforced by the Christian state and local clergy in the past. According to the Jesuits the Ethiopian clergy employed aggressive methods to catechise and also tolerated a traditional policy of the Ethiopian state on behalf of newly-conquered peoples: to minimize conversions so as to be able to enslave as many people as possible. The Jesuits had positively gentler methods and a more pedagogical approach, a fact that, as it was observed before, perhaps fostered conversions and spread positive views with regards to the mission.

Therefore, for some locals the Jesuits were regarded as liberators and effective mediators between them and the Christian state. Likewise, the distinct appearance of the Jesuit priests, the significant resources they displayed and their origin from a distant and powerful land favoured perceptions of the European priests as rich men who could bring plenty; as the Agäw from Ancasha once put it, under the patronage of the missionaries, priests whom he himself had recently ordained was still fresh.

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62 Dizão que eramos inimigos da Virgem Maria Senhora nossa, que diamos a comunhão em miolos de camellos, de coelho e lebre; RASO VI, fe VII, ch. XXXII and XXXIII.

63 "... I don’t know whether by influence of the [local] friars or for other reasons, but the gentiles came to learn that our faith and communion was not that of Ethiopia; they were much aware of this fact. However, as they were told that the King and ras had sent the fathers, who were also their own spiritual guides, to indoctrinate and teach them they became more peaceful and obedient during our sermons and came to accept everything the fathers instructed them to do" (... não sej se por via dos frades ou por outra, viendo os gentios a saber que a nossa fe e comunhão não era haver [a de ] Ethiopia, e nisto repararão muito; mas desdoadores que el Rey e Eras Selacristos mandaram aos padres que erão seus mestres para os doctrinar e inxinar, se aquelebarão e sogeitaraosse ao ensino e a tudo mais que lhe mandassem os padres); Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 497.
the land will “live in peace, with plenty of food and honey”.64

**FROM DISSENT TO OPEN RESISTANCE**

A great deal of the ‘images’ circulating in Ethiopia about the mission and Catholicism were disapproving and expressed a form of rejection. I believe they contributed to harming the pace of conversions, thus preventing the mission’s attempt to become a truly popular phenomenon. Yet, dissent to the mission also had a more prosaic and aggressive expression in the form of open, sometimes physical, resistance. In the lines below, I will try to provide a chronology of that crucial chapter of the Jesuit mission.

The history of active resistance to the mission commenced around the first years of the 1610s. Before, the mission had witnessed some violent incidents, but only of minor importance. In 1608, for instance, Luís de Azevedo reported a complaint by a group of monks from a church near the residence of Gorgora. The monks had demanded from Susenyos, albeit without success, that the Jesuits erect their church further away because it was attracting too many brethren who therefore did not attend the local church any more.65 In 1609, one nebura’ed (title of the head of the church of Aksum Seyon) “Thomas” tried to destroy Fremona with an 800-man force, though later he made peace with the Jesuits.66 The ideal defensive conditions of Fremona likely were a deterring force for him.

Yet it was only at the opening of its second decade of life that the mission’s fate was first discussed openly in the political arena. About that time, in response to the growing influence of Páez and his peer at the court, a number of forces hostile to the mission began to take shape. It makes sense to assume that most of them came from the clergy and nobility. These were, after all, the two groups that had to fear the most from – and must have been more conscious about – the missions’ progress: the first because of the challenge the mission represented for local Christian dogmas and for their own status within the land, and the second because it could easily perceive the mission as a menace to the political order and hence to their own privileges. Yet, the strong attachment to traditional Christianity in Ethiopia was probably reason enough for a wider number of locals also joining the opposition.

In 1613, amid the first quarrels between traditionalists and Catholics, a polemic around the Ethio-Portuguese emerged that involved issues of land rights and religious af-

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64 *A terra de Ancaxã ficara de paz, chea de mantimentos e mel*, Azevedo, 1619, in: RASO XI, doc. 54, 439.
66 RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. X.
filiation in ‘mixed’ (Catholic and Orthodox) families. The metropolitan Sem’on defended the interests of the traditionalists and forbade these mixed families to raise their children in the Catholic faith: only when both parents were of Portuguese origin were they allowed to take their offspring to the Jesuit priests. To give the decision more weight, Sem’on pronounced an excommunication against those who had contact with the Catholic priests. The decision, which de facto would have condemned the mission to stagnation, was neutralized by Susenyos who proposed that people have the right to choose their faith. Thereafter, the traditionalists’ party, headed by Sem’on, forced a public debate, the first of a series of debates where Ethiopian Christians and Catholics openly expressed their ideas. Before its opening, a group of monks and nuns headed by the metropolitan demonstrated at the royal kätäma calling for Yätent, i.e. ‘as in the former days’. Whilst calling for ‘restoration’ at such an early date in the mission was probably a bit premature, it certainly conveys the unwillingness that many Ethiopians then showed to accept any change – large or small – in the local religious framework.

In consequence, fear about possible changes to come grew among the traditionalists. Rumours against the missionaries also began to be spread. As a response to Sem’on’s decisions, däjjazmach Yolyos, a figure who had been pivotal during Susenyos’s accession to power, began to harass local Catholics in Tegray, the region where he had been appointed governor and baker nägash. He confiscated the lands of those who had converted to Catholicism and exacted a tribute from the missionaries.

In 1614, also in Tegray, a local lord, afä måläwänmen Asqedon (“Asquedon Affamacon”), publicly rejected the Jesuit doctrines on the human nature of Christ and bullied the Catholics living in his lands.

About the same time, Yämanä Krestos, half-brother of Susenyos and governor of Bägemder, and Susenyos’ own mother, Hamälmalä Wärq, each wrote a letter to Susenyos trying to persuade him to abandon his Jesuit longing.

A further piece of evidence for dissent stems from 1614 when a monastic community from an island in Lake Tana – probably Daga Estifanos – refused to accept a gift of candles traditionally offered to them by Susen-
yos.73

The threats to the work of the Jesuit priests were apparently thwarted. Yolyos was deposed from his governorship and Asquedon executed in 1614. Similarly, the calls of dignitaries and relatives for a more upfront policy towards the mission went unheard. Subsequently, the kingdom experienced for a few more years calm. However, the calm was just apparent, for traditionalists used the time to reorganize, gather forces and prepare a more solid uprising. This found its conspicuous expression in the famous battle of 11 May 1617 near Sädda, in Dämbeya. As is well known, the outcome was favourable to Susenyos, who owed his victory to his military and strategic talent and to the rapid death at the beginning of the fight of one of the rebellion’s leaders, Yolyos. However, the caliber of the opponents – däjjazmach Yolyos himself, däjjazmach Yämanä Krestos, abunä Sem’on, blattengeta Keflo – and the number of forces gathered by them74 was a patent sign that a considerable portion of the state was overtly against the mission and not willing to compromise.

A brief calm again ensued after this second defeat. It was used by Susenyos to take a few more steps forward towards the introduction of Jesuit-oriented norms. About 1619 he abolished the Sabbath and compelled people to work on that day and on Wednesday, both fasting days in the Ethiopian calendar. In 1621, on the eve of the foundation of Gännäätä Iyäsus, he publicly and solemnly professed Catholicism, and the next year declared marriage to be indissoluble. With these few major steps, conflict was inevitable.

The 1620s were indeed a period of endless unrest, which eclipsed in intensity the crises of the earlier decade. Religious debates, political conflicts and military clashes succeeded each other at a rapid pace, being the local response to the mission’s spectacular expansion. In March-April 1620, the ichege Zär’a Wängel together with a group of some 400 monks and court dignitaries gathered at the court, calling for a ban on conversions to Catholicism.75 On 26 October 1621, the army of ras Se’elä Krestos fought a battle to quell a rebellion in (New) Damot, which probably was motivated by religion, as the region experienced then a strong increase in missionary activity. One of the vaali (‘captain’) of ras

73 “Five of the monks told him that in their church they did not light torches coming from a person who said that in Christ there are two natures” (Le dixeron cinco de los frayles que no se encendian en su iglesia antorchas de quien decia que en Christo estan dos naturalezas y no las quisieron recibier); Eventually, the protests earned the monks to be repeatedly lashed (los llevaron a una plaça grande y les dieron muchos açotes); Ibid. 332-33; also in RASO II, liv. II, ch. IV. Cohen has identified the monastery as Däbrä Sina; COHEN, “The Jesuits in Ethiopia”, 102.

74 When describing these vents, Páez reported that the rebels included “almost all the court” (… quasi toda a gente da corte) and managed to form a formidable army, “the men of Yolyos being so numerous that covered the land like locusts” (… os de Julios eram tantos que cubriam a terra como gafanhotos); RASO II, liv. II, ch. V; RASO III, liv. IV, ch. XIX.
Se’elä Krestos’s army allegedly abandoned his master to join the revolt.76

Pressure mounted again, and in May 1622 at Fogära, on the eastern shore of Lake Tana, the two religious parties met again in a council which was attended by Susenyos, part of the nobility and the main religious figures of the kingdom.77 There, each party adopted a particular doctrine over the relationship between God the Father and God the Son; the Catholic party, represented by Susenyos himself, defended the ‘Unction’ theory (Qebat) and the traditionalists’ party, guided by azaj Zä Dengel and abba Kellä Krestos, the ‘Union’ theory (Tewahedo). More than the content itself of the theological contest, however, what was at stake was whether Catholic reforms could be pushed forth or not. The council also demonstrates that both traditionalists and Catholics still believed in the power of reason and in their capacity to convince the other. However, this trust in dialog was ephemeral. In the same year still, däjjazmach Yona’el, then ruling in the province of Bägemder and motivated by Susenyos’ support of the ‘heretic’ Unctionist theory, rebelled together with Qwärif Seno, married to Walättä Giyorgis, a grand niece of Hamälmalä Wärq, and the sons of one Daharagot.78 Around 1623 and 1624, when news of the imminent coming of the Catholic patriarch probably had already spread across the country, many localized revolts were launched. About 1623, one Wäldä Qebryal led an aggressive guerrilla war against the royal forces in the region of Amba Sal.79 Reportedly, he had also fathered one “João Egipcio” who conducted perhaps the most ferocious set of campaigns. About 1624, the latter claimed to be negus of Ethiopia and champion of Ethiopian Christianity, formed an army whose squadrons – bearing such telling names as ‘Dioscorite or Jacobite souls’ – were headed by monks and nuns, and challenged the royal forces in at least three theatres, Amhara, Gojjam and Shäwa.80 In the same period, one bandit Aaron (“Aarao”) led for a few months a group of some 600 to 700 outlaws who assaulted people on the roads of Tegray and threatened the Catholics in Fremona and the motivation for his attacks would be previous quarrels he had with Portuguese dwelling in Gurre.81 The prophetic and Biblical names that many of these rebels carried speaks for itself and in addition demonstrates...
the eschatological element of the movements they led. In 1625, the Fālasha leader Gedewon, certainly aware of the widespread state of turmoil, rebelled in Semen. Likewise, it was probably at the beginning of the decade that the famous female saint Wālattā Petros began her unbending opposition to the Catholic reforms. Her rebellion, which was initially localized in the province of Waldebbá, spread to the Lake Tana region and had as its centre the monastic islands of Dāq and Daga. In parallel, in Lasta one Wäldā Gābre’el rose in arms and claimed to be king of Shāwa under the throne name of Tewodros Sāhay. Having brought Lasta, Amhara and Shāwa to a state of turmoil, he was killed towards mid-1626 in Fatagar by Nhae Sarse, a Mācha Oromo ally to Se’elā Krestos.

A few years later, a new wave hit the kingdom, and with it civil war took centre stage. This time the challenge to the mission and the Ethiopian state was more serious because at the head of the rebellions were key players in the state as well as members of the royal family who directly aspired the royal throne. Thus, in 1628, a mighty coalition that had gathered in the northern province of Tegray led a short but harmful uprising. The coalition comprised prominent lords: dājjazmach Tāklā Giyorgis, governor of Tegray and formally married to Wängelawit; his sister Adāro Maryam; two former baher nägash, Yohannes Akay and Gābrā Maryam; and two grandchildren of Sārsā Dengel, Zāwäldā Maryam and wäyzäro Krestosawit; religious figures, such as the monk Sebo Amlak; and local shefta, such as one Goito Täfa. In November 1628, the provincial court in Tegray professed the Alexandrian faith, to which followed a destruction of the images and objects that the Jesuits had distributed and a persecution of Catholics. The five missionaries staying in the north managed to foresee the threat and retreated into the safe fortress-residence of Fremona, but the traditionalists got hold of, and executed, one of the best assistants the Jesuits had in Ethiopia, Jacobo Alexandre. The bloody rebellion was only

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82 An interesting analysis of these movements appears in COHEN, “The Jesuits in Ethiopia”, 105-08, who has convincingly argued that their messianic message was the expression of strong social and political unrest.
83 “Gedewon” was the generic term of the Fālasha leader of Semen; his death is reported in RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XIV.
84 Her exploits, although somewhat distorted by the narrator, were recorded in a gādl (i.e. Vita) dedicated to her. The text provides a valuable indigenous viewpoint of the anti-Catholic movements in the 1620s; RICCI, Vita di Walaatta Petros. On Wālattā Petros’ presence in the Lake Tana area, cf. ibid. 55. On the Lake Tana as a centre of religious dissent, cf. COHEN, “The Jesuits in Ethiopia”, 101-02.
86 The later was described as “famous rober” (Famoso salteador); Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 365.
87 Born in Fremona in 1586, Alexandre was the grandson of Messer Alexandre, a Spaniard who had fled from captivity under the Turks and had joined the Portuguese group in Tegray. Jacobo grew up with Father Francisco Lopes and for a long time assisted Lorenzo Romano in the daily affairs of the residence of Fremona. In 1618, he accompanied Father de Angelis on a mission among the Agāw in Ancasha. About 1626, he became one of the first priests to be ordained by Patriarch Mendes and thereafter worked as confessor of the Jesuits. His fate was sealed when the Jesuits chose him as chaplain to serve at the kāttina of Tāklā Giyorgis; it was whilst he was officiating to
crushed thanks to the rapid intervention of däjjazmach Qeba Krestos. In 1629, two more rebellions guided by challengers to the Ethiopian throne in Amhara (Lakä Maryam) and Tegray (a son of ras Zä Sellase) were averted, the second at the price of 4,000 enemy soldiers killed. In the meantime, ‘peripheral’ groups also joined in. In 1627, the Oromo of the Billole gaada (wich set off in 1626) began a series of devastating incursions into southern Damot and Gojjam that confronted the battalions under däjjazmach Buko, who eventually died in battle. Towards 1629, an Agäw tribe from Bägemnder that refused to accept royal authority allied with Mälke’a Krestos to enthrone him as king.

These revolts were accompanied by a widespread refusal, at top and the bottom of the social scale simultaneously, to implement the religious and social reforms fostered by António Fernandes and Afonso Mendes. Circumcision was, as it was said before, still widely practiced, even in areas as close to the mission as Dämbeya; the Tridentine matrimonial precepts were in the mid-1620s only embraced by a few; many an Ethiopian openly professed Catholicism – an act considered, since the early 1620s, either as an obligation or as a shortcut to social promotion – but few seem to have done it sincerely. In 1620, for instance, the Jesuit record stated that in the lands of Wängelawit the Sabbath was still observed and in the same year, Susenyos’s wife, iête Seltan Mogäsa Wäld Sahlä, a notorious defender of Ethiopian Christianity, implored her husband not to ban this tradition. Towards 1620 as well, an influential figure, liqä mämheran Zä Mälakot, chose the moment of his death to reject the doctrine of the double nature of Christ, which he previously had allegedly defended only “out of convenience”. The same year, Susenyos’ decree abolishing the observance of the Sabbath was received with a popular protest: monks from different parts of the country wrote letters to the negus imploring him to withdraw the law. In 1623, an local priest was imprisoned because he had written and spread a pasquin harming the “honour and the dignity of the good Emperor”. Also about that year and with the intention of undermining the arrival of the Catholic Patriarch, a number of

his new spiritual son that he was caught by surprise and executed on 6 November 1628; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. IV; Mendes to Superior General, 1 June 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 94, 340; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 361, 366-68. Another source has Jacobo’s grandfather as an Italian who was captured in the Tyrrhean sea; RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. IX.

88 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. IV and V; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 363.
89 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VIII; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 429, 431.
90 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VII; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 391.
91 Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XI, doc. 113, 480; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXX.
92 Mattos, 1621, in: RASO XI, doc. 61, 481.
93 Ibid. 478.
94 An example in a letter sent by monks from Tegray; Ibid. 479-80.
95 ... Fizera elle huns versos na sua lingoa, e espalhara pollo povo hum pasquim com que infamara e posera nodos na honra e dignidade do bom Emperador; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 225r.
Ethiopian dignitaries, which probably included members of the court and the Tegrayan nobility, received a Greek Melkite monk from a monastery in Mount Sinai – the area wherefrom Egyptians metropolitans traditionally came – and nominated him “Papa of Alexandria”. Initially gathering numerous followers in the northern regions of Bur, Hamasen and Tegray, towards mid-1623 the monk was at the court in Dänqäz where he received the support of ichegue Zära Wängel and a large part of its clergy and officers. At the capital he consecrated priests, celebrated mass following the Alexandrian liturgy and become the spiritual leader of those at odds with the Catholic reforms: “People would go to him begging for a due punishment and penitence that they claimed they had deserved after having abandoned the faith of their grandparents”. ⁹⁶

Therefore, much against the will of the pro-Catholic rulers and the Jesuit missionaries, the kingdom was, more than ever, divided (cf. Appendices 10 and 11). Catholic and traditionalists’ parties opposed each other in every segment of Ethiopian society and the Catholics could only feel free in the residences and courts under their direct control. The persuasion of the Jesuit priests, the example of figures like Susenyos and Se’élä Krestos and the opportunities a Catholic state offered to the Catholic converts had not been enough to avert local scepticism and refusal. Moreover, Susenyos and the Jesuits did not properly take into account the immense areas occupied by Christians. Many of them were far beyond their reach, such as the provinces of Amhara, Lasta, and Shäwa. While the core seems to have been secure, the periphery was constantly in rebellion. Likewise, the social fabric was frayed. At the top of the social pyramid, half or so of the members of the royal family professed Catholic ideas, while the other half took clear traditionalist positions.

Significant as well of the state of the things was Se’élä Krestos’ fate; the one whom the Jesuits often called “the column of the Catholics”⁹⁷ in Ethiopia began to fall in disgrace amongst his peers. He became the target of a virulent attack by the traditionalist party: bad rumours were circulated in court, some accusing him of wanting to take over the state, others of preparing an invasion with forces from Portuguese India; and from about 1625 onwards, he began to be involved in open disputes with high-ranking figures such as azzaj Lesanä Krestos, abetohun Mälke’a Krestos, Särsä Krestos, Yämanä Krestos, Fasilädäs and Susenyos, which turned out to have enduring consequences for both the

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⁹⁶... Comcorriam a elle pedindolhe o castigo e penitencia que disião tinham merecido por deixarem a fee de seus avos; Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 225v; PEREIRA 1892, ch. LXVIII. Also RASO VI, lxx. VIII, ch. VII; Barneto, 1623, in: RASO XI, doc. 63, 522.
ras's career and for the missionaries. About 1625, at the return from the campaign against João the Egyptian, Susenyos removed from his brother the governorship of Agäw, which was given to one of the negus' sons Marqos, and between August 1627 and the beginning of 1628, he transferred the governorship of Gojjam to Säräs Krestos. With these moves Se’elä Krestos saw how his power in the kingdom was strongly diminished: lands and regiments of soldiers were taken away. In consequence, he was pushed to take briefly shelter in Ennarya to save his life and in 1629 was compelled to publicly display his obedience to Fasilädäs who accused his uncle of harbouring murder intentions against him. Eventually, some of these disputes could be settled and around 1629 Se’elä Krestos got the region of Gojjam back. However, the image of the Catholic champion had been damaged and his power within the kingdom irreparably undermined. A partnership that had been vital for facilitating the mission’s progress thus became largely worthless. Around 1630, whilst both were on a campaign in Amhara to quell a rebellion, the enmity between Se’elä Krestos and his half-brother Yämanä Krestos brought them to the verge of confrontation with their armies and the clash could only be averted through the direct diplomatic intervention of aqqabä sä’at Hablä Sellase.

The reasons for this major crisis are somewhat obscure. Contemporary Jesuit accounts explain it through the greed and the bad influence exerted on Susenyos and Fasilädäs by prominent members of the court, such as Lesanä Krestos and Mälke’a Krestos, who could have aimed at undermining the core of Catholic power. Additionally, the royal court possibly saw with envy and mistrust the developments that occurred south of Lake Tana, as Gojjam indeed made formidable progress thanks to the joint work of Se’elä Krestos, a group of able officials, abbots of monasteries and the Jesuits. There, the mission had the largest number of active residences and had an important network of friendly monasteries and of local converts. Gojjam was like a vanguard area, for the mission and often the innovations the missionaries brought to Ethiopia were first tried out there. This was, e.g., the case with the method of using lime and stone for building, reportedly first applied at Särka under the auspices of the Catholic ras. As Pennec and Toubkis have argued, the negus probably believed that Gojjam was growing too independ-

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97 Coluna dos catholicos; e.g. RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXII.
98 According to Manoel de Almeida, it was during this year that Susenyos began to become estranged from his brother; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXI.
99 The events are narrated in RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XI; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. I and VII; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 394-96. Also in PEREIRA 1892, ch. XCV.
100 PEREIRA 1892, ch. LXXXVII.
101 For instance, RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. I and XXIV.
ent and dynamic an area and that it represented a potential challenge to the authority of the central government. However, I believe this ‘personal’ crisis was also the sign of something graver: the faith Susenyos and his son put in the mission was vanishing. Though the two were to profess Catholicism until the end of the mission, the unrest of the 1620s probably made them believe that peace and control of the state could no longer be achieved by speeding up religious reforms and by escalating repression, as Se’elä Krestos and some Jesuits unyieldingly advocated.

Additional corroboration of this is provided by other major hindrances to the mission’s expansion provoked by the effect of Susenyos’ direct or indirect intervention. Two Jesuit residences in Tegray, Adegada and Debarwa, were dismantled shortly after their foundation, in 1626 and 1627, respectively, because, reportedly, Susenyos feared the Jesuits could use them as bases to introduce a Portuguese militia from India. In 1628 and 1629, two more residences, Hadasha in Gojjam and Atkäna in Bägemder, suffered a similar fortune. Towards the late 1620s, it therefore seems that Susenyos whilst publicly defending the Jesuit project was also trying to slow down the rhythm of reforms and of the mission’s expansion as imposed by the Jesuits and his brother.

Likewise, at the court, important dignitaries who hitherto had shown no sign of dissent or had even professed to be pro-Catholic began in significant numbers to disagree with the political and religious power and to form a potent clique against the mission. The group of the wäyzero and the circle of wives of nobles and dignitaries became dynamic opponents behind the curtains, chief among them Susenyos’ wives. The residences of the wäyzero living at court became places where traditionalists could go in hiding and in 1628 Manoel de Almeida informed the Jesuit General that

many more are those who in the exterior pretend it [to follow the Catholic faith] and profess as Catholics, but in their hearts the errors and traditions with which they grew up and aged are deep-seated. This not only affects the simple people but also those higher placed in the empire, and in particular the women known as wäyzero, which is the same as daughters or granddaughters of the Emperor.

103 RASO IV, 32, 52.
105 Almeida informed of a plan orchestrated in 1628 by Susenyos’ first wife, one of his daughters (perhaps Wängelawit) and other members of the royal family to kill the negus during one of his frequent trips between Dän-gäz and Gännätä Iyäsus; Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 252, 261.
106 … Muitos mais que a fingem no exterior e se professão por catholicos, porem seus corações estão mui arreigados em os erros e custumes em que se criaram e emvelhescem. E não he esta somente a gente do vulgo se não da mais grada do imperio, particularmente mulheres das que chamo Ozieros, que val tanto como filhas e netas do Emperor; Ibid. 259. Further evidence of the wäyzero’s opposition to the mission in RASO VI, ūc. VIII, ch. XI.
Azazj Lesanä Krestos, who had escorted Mendes from Fremona to Dämbya in early 1626 and was once said to be “very close” (muito privado) to him, began plotting against Mendes and azazj Tino towards 1628. The Patriarch excommunicated the aggäbe sä’ät in office in 1628 because of his religious positions. Blattengeta and abetohon Mälke’a Krestos, since 1621 an active participant in the mission’s life, parted company with the Jesuits and joined a rebellion in Bägemder, Wag and Lasta. Also in 1628, a plot in the court, which aimed at capturing the negus and “throwing his body into lake Tana”, was prevented. Säräsä Krestos, a nephew of Susenyos and one of those who welcomed Mendes at his arrival in Dänqäz in 1626, rebelled during his governorships over Bägemder and Gojjam in 1629 and 1631, respectively. Whilst in Gojjam, he also tried unsuccessfully to gain the support of Fasilädäs and, on 21 May 1631, he declared himself negus and ordered everybody to abandon the Roman faith and instead return to traditional Ethiopian Christianity: people were invited to circumcise, practice the Sabbath and marry as many women as they wished. Towards the end of the year he attacked the Jesuit residence of Ennäbesse and the priests staying there were forced to flee. The fury of the insurgent was then diverted against two important local adherents to the mission, abba Zä Sellase, abbot of Selalo, and Tequr Emano, a soldier in the elite unit Enoch, who were both executed. Furthermore, in the spring of 1632, a rebel advance into Bägemder forced Susenyos to retreat from Dänqäz and the Patriarch to flee with all his belongings from Enfraz to Gorgora.

Last but not least, the missionaries also suffered the first serious blows in their attempts to expand into areas hitherto untapped. About 1625, Jacinto Francisco began work in Bägemder, but with no fruits. There, as Almeida reported, people were “more bound to their errors” and the “Vice Roys were less zealous about the reduction”. In late 1627 or early 1628, two local Catholic priests, Yämanä Krestos and Tensa’e Krestos who had

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107 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. I and ch. VI.
108 Mälke’a Krestos was for instance said to have converted in 1621, the year in which he also delivered a speech in favour of the new faith. Around 1624 he built houses in Gännätä Iyäsus, and two years later gave a speech at Dänqäz in honour of the Patriarch. In 1632 he was defeated by Susenyos and died shortly after; Lettere annue d’Etiopia, Malabar, Brasil e Goa Dell’Anno 1620 fin’el 1624, Roma: Francesco Corbelletti, 1627, 5; RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. XXXII, XXXIII; liv. VIII, ch. VI; liv. VII, ch. XXI and XXII; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VII; Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 429; BÉGUINOT 1901, 48-49. A reference to his rebellion appears in the indigenous hagiography of Wälättä Petros’; RICCI, Vita di Walatta Pietros, 59.
109 ... Em que avião de prender ao Imperador e açoutalo e botalo com huma pedra ao pescoço no mar ou lagoa deste Dambia; Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 247.
110 RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. IV; Mendes, 1651, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 486, 489-90, 496-97.
111 The fathers crossed the Abbay using the newly-built Alata bridge and after four days of march could reach the safe location of Enfraz; Ibid. 492; PEREIRA 1892, ch. XCII.
112 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XX.
113 RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXVIII.
114 ... Por a gente delle ser mais ferrada á seus erros, como por os Viso Roys não serem muito zelosos da redução; RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XIII.
been sent to preach in Wälqayt were murdered by a local lord. About the same time, the residence of Tanqha in Agäw-land was abandoned due to the instability in the area, and that of Näfasha seems to have suffered the same fate. In 1629, although there were twenty Jesuits in Ethiopia, Almeida informed that “only a few mission campaigns were undertaken [in the countryside] because the lands are too insecure with the wars affecting many kingdoms of the empire”. A few words must be said to explain the social and political context within which such a crisis could erupt. Traditionally, this has been done by focusing on religious causes with which we partially agree. The uncompromising approach of the mission’s leaders, the severity of their reform program and the zeal with which the influential local converts tried to put them in practice could only produce a widespread social clash. The strong conservatism of Ethiopia’s religious fabric – embodied by such groups as the batavis and the däbtära – was naturally reluctant to the new religious methods and ideals brought by the Europeans. The Ethiopians thus rebelled to defend their belief in the one nature of Christ and right to follow the religious traditions. In addition, it can be also maintained that the mission’s goals were too influenced by the dogmas of the Council of Trent and by a poor understanding of Ethiopian Christianity to have any chance of succeeding. Yet, while stressing that religion was important, I believe that what happened in the years prior to the restoration of Ethiopian Christianity cannot be solely explained from the deeply set theological disagreements between Ethiopians and Europeans. Political and economical factors also played a decisive role in stirring up protest and opposition, and therefore in shaping the course of the events.

The educational, artistic, architectonic and religious achievements during the 1620s presupposed colossal spendings, which increased with the growth and spread of the Christian missions throughout the kingdom. As I already explained in the previous Chapter (cf. Table 19 and Table 20), the Jesuits came to support their expansion mostly by recurring to local donors and contributions. Although most of these contributions came di-

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116 Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 266.
117 Se fizerão poucas saídas em missões, à respeito de estarem as terras quasi todas alteradas com os movimentos da guerra, que abrangia a muitos reinos do imperio; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XII.
118 The däbtära and batavis were among the groups more reluctant to the missionary activities according to Almeida; RASO VI, liv. VI, ch. XV.
rectly from the pro-Catholic rulers, we might assume that in a somewhat indirect way the burden reached a larger group of Ethiopian society. Moreover, while the dissenting Christians began to be dispossessed of their properties, the Catholics accumulated privileges. In 1618, for instance, in order to provide timber to cover the ceiling of the first Jesuit building designed by Páez, Susenyos resorted to cedar wood from nearby monasteries that the monks were obliged to sell. Needless to say, the monks were neither fond of the idea nor happy with the missionaries. In the years that followed, when royal contributions to the mission began to increase, the sense of frustration must have but only grown among Ethiopians. To be true, the mission’s patrons were careful enough to also make donations to the locals and the Jesuits equally frequently distributed alms to the poor thus turning their residences into bodies by which the royal treasury was distributed to the destitute. However, the perception was that the Jesuit residences were accumulating a great deal of wealth. It must be said that in the light of historical evidence such perceptions appear, to a large extent, to be accurate: the residences indeed became refined centres of study and cultural activity and in contrast to the austerity of local constructions – including local monasteries – they undoubtedly appeared as places of luxury and plenty. This gave the missionaries access to a large number of people but probably also reinforced local prejudices that considered them as strangers and wealthy people. This was, I think, a major ‘secular’ factor to induce locals to dislike the mission. In the eyes of many an Ethiopian the presence of the missionaries was not only depriving them of resources but, what was worst, that these resources went instead to those whom they, for the most part, considered heretics.

The missionaries were well aware of their uncomfortable position and in 1627 a
generous land grant that Susenyos had made to the residence of Gorgora was felt by the missionaries to be more of a burden than an asset for, as they saw it, this would turn the previous owners against the mission. In 1628, Manoel de Almeida likewise recommended to the Superior General in Rome not to send more priests “because these people feel oppressed by us, for as they have very little and we have received many lands, there are many rumours saying that nothing is enough for us and for that reason we are hated”. Later, whilst he was in Goa composing his História de Ethiópia, Almeida would identify the wealth the mission was accumulating as one of the causes for the growth of discontent, for people believed “that what was being taken from them was being given to the foreigners” and that their “residences were seen more as fortresses than as praying centres.”

Whilst in the earlier years the missionaries and the Catholics at large were seen as a potential source of wealth in the end the social imaginary inverted the cards and came to perceive them as thieves, ever thirsty of benefits and ravagers of the land and its peoples. Envy, mistrust and the blatant contrast between the way of life in the residences and in the rest of the country stood in the way of the popular support the missionaries wished to obtain and left them with just a narrow circle of neophytes.

Secondly, the mission also enforced a series of reforms that had an unsettling effect upon the social and political fabric. A case in point is the effect upon local marriage practices which the missionaries began to have under control since the arrival of Mendes. The Jesuit reform of these practices according to the strict decrees made by Trent earned them important clashes. I believe that courtiers and nobles saw in these Jesuit-sponsored reforms an intrusion into the sphere of their private lives and an injury to one of the prerogatives of their elevated and privileged social position, which was the frequentation of concubines and lovers. Even those having embraced the new faith found it difficult to cope with these norms and the case of Zä Krestos and Wängelawit is illustrative. The two lived

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123 This notwithstanding the fact that “the Emperor had given them [the plaintives] other lands similar to these ones” (o Emperador lhes deu outras iguaes á estas); RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. II.

124 … Porque esta gente abafa com nosco e como tem pouco e nos tem dadas algumas terras, ha muito marrumar de nos que queremos muito e que nada nos basta e vay nos isto fazendo odiozos…; Manoel de Almeida to Superior General, 30 June 1628, Dänqäz, in: RASO XII, doc. 78, 295-96.

125 … Que se lhes tirava á elles o que se dava á estrangeiros;… Ia nossas igreias erão avaliadas não por casas de oração, senão por fortalezas; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXIV.

126 In 1608, for instance, a rebellion in Tegray aimed at attacking the Portuguese settlement in Fremona “because of the belief in the wealth of the Portuguese” (pela fama que avia da riqueza dos Portuguezes); RASO VI, liv. VII, ch. V. Towards 1624, an old man from Tegray told the interpreter of a Jesuit priest that when he was a young and rich owner of mules and horses he was told that under the “law of the Portuguese he would still have much more wealth” (No tempo da ley dos Portuguezes avia de ter ainda muito mais fato); Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 247v.

127 Around that time the negus would have ordered that marriages be examined by a judge appointed by the mission-
together since the early 1620s and had children, despite the fact that Wängelawit was formally married to däjjazmach and governor of Tegray Täklä Giyorgis. Although as early as in 1621 Zä Krestos was said to be a “pious Catholic” (grande católico) and was never involved in any of the court plots against Susenyos he could not, nor did he not want to, renounce the pleasures and benefits that his aristocratic condition offered. Therefore, towards 1628, the two decided to marry and the Jesuits, building on their strong position at court, led a fierce opposition to their project, which they considered unlawful on two grounds: firstly, they intended to marry even though Zä Krestos had once been married to Wängelawit’s sister, Mäläkotawit († 1626); secondly, as noticed, Wängelawit was herself formally married to Täklä Giyorgis. It makes sense to assume that the decision to confront a couple whom Almeida described as “among the wealthiest and from the highest lineage in Ethiopia” was not a wise choice and far from being deterred by the Jesuits’ remand the couple only waited until Ethiopian Christianity was restored to attain their purpose. Thus, when the distinguished lovers managed to consumate their wish, a number of people at the court reportedly said that “we will be no longer controlled nor deprived of our private wishes. We will live with our girlfriends and will marry and separate as we please”.

Yet even more decisive may have been a major scheme to reform the structure of the Church that began to be set in motion around 1627 or 1628. This was an undertaking that had long been on the agenda of the Jesuit mission and, probably, had also been carefully devised by the actual mastermind of the mission, António Fernandes. The scheme was once again inspired by the Tridentine decrees and aimed at setting up not only the dogmas and rites the Ethiopian Church was to follow and practice – a task that had already begun in about 1613 – but also the way the Church as an institution was to be organized and funded.

In terms of organisation, the structure of the Ethiopian Church was nearly the opposite to the sophisticated Roman Church. Its structure was frail, a proper hierarchical
system was missing and any standardisation of norms and forms was by and large absent. The Church was also deprived of a financial system of its own right and for its survival it depended entirely upon the country’s scarce resources and on the goodwill of the land-owners, the local lords and the central rulers. The tithe system was unknown – it was first introduced into Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century following the modernisation led by Menelik II – and in consequence the bulk of the priesthood lived in very poor conditions, a serious shortcoming indeed for foreign priests accustomed to the comforts enjoyed by their class in Europe. Almeida thus once pointed out that while some monasteries and churches had been granted important estates these often turned out to be only temporary and fragile grants. The Jesuits wanted to change all that swiftly and with the force of their theoretical hegemony over the Ethiopian Church. Their plan was to ‘give back’ to the church the jurisdiction over ‘religious issues’, such as marriages and to force local individuals or lords to restitute lands “previously owned” by churches and monasteries. Some religious communities probably saw in these reforms an opportunity for growth and a chance to gain autonomy. This is corroborated by the support that the mission until the last moment received from important monasteries in Gojjam – Dima Giyorgis, Gong Tewodros (Gonge), Däbrä Wärq and Selalo. However, this also inevitably led to a confrontation with the secular society, in particular at the local level. The group of the azzaj and the wämbär (umbares), two important offices in the Ethiopian state structure, were particularly hostile to giving away their jurisdiction over marriage causes. Moreover, the exemption of clergy from civil jurisdiction, which prevented the secular authorities from having any power over religious affairs, seems also to have encountered serious obstacles. Therefore the Jesuits’ attempts toward a major restructuring of the Ethiopian Church and its relations with the state were an important factor in fostering local aversion against the mission.

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For all the gravity of the situation, however, the mission could apparently still not be completely thwarted, for during the 1620s the ‘Catholic’ state managed to overcome most of the threats outlined above. The strategic withdrawal on occasions of the more conflicting reforms – Sabbath, circumcision, observance of chastity and matrimonial precepts, – the
direct intervention of military forces commanded by talented pro-Catholic lords, such as Buko or Qeba Krestos, the relative popular support the mission still enjoyed in some areas – such as Gojjam, Dâmbeya and Damot – and perhaps also a good amount of luck became once again effective shields for the mission. In 1630, as if the situation could still be reversed, two more missionaries arrived in Ethiopia, the Italian José Giroco and the Portuguese Apollinar de Almeida, nominated titular bishop of Nicaea with rights to succeed in the Patriarchate.136 In Easter of the same year, after repeated request by Susneyos and in a desperate move to stave off disaster, Afonso Mendes allowed the celebration of masses following the Ethiopian Christian rite and the fasting on Saturdays and Wednesdays.137

However, by the end of the decade the missionary project was in reality irreparably doomed. The Jesuits were conscious of that and expressed it on more than one occasion to their fellows in India and Europe.138 The civil wars had taken their toll, too. As of 1631, an impressive number of pro-Catholic figures had disappeared from the scene, some of them in the battle field: wäyzero Amätä Seyon, däjjazmach Afä Krestos, däjjazmach Buko, wäyzero Phanae, blattengeta Qeba Krestos, Fequr Egzi’e, abba Zä Sellase, azzaj Edug Ras, grazmach Zä Mänfäs Qeddus and the Ethio-Portuguese captain Basilio Gabriel. The deaths of Qeba Krestos, Fequr Egzi’e and Buko in particular had, in the words of Almeida, “enormously weakened the Catholic party”.139 To their names should be added that of Se’elä Krestos, who by 1631 was a shadow of the ruler he had been in the previous decades: he no longer had a powerful army under his command and suffered from gout.140

Moreover, Susenyo controlled only a few areas of his once ‘immense’ kingdom, and the

136 The arrival of the Bishop, however, was also meant to prevent a sudden vacuum of power in case Mendes would die or was assassinated, a scenario that, given the situation, the Jesuits definitely contemplated. Hence, in 1628, Fernandes wrote to the Superior General that the coming of two bishop coadjutors was to be speeded because “is far less convenient that this Church is left depending on the life of the Patriarch, for, if he dies (shall God avert this ever to occur) there is room to suspect that they would bring a bishop from Alexandria” (… muito menos convem estar a christiandade dependente da vida do Patriarcha só, porque morrendo (quod Dominus avertat) se pode muito arreear que tragam outro de Alexandria); Fernandes, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 77, 292.

137 Afonso Mendes to the Pope, 11 May 1633, Fremona, in: RASO XII, doc. 123, 509-10; also in RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI.

138 At the eve of the arrival of the Patriarch, few Jesuits expressed pessimistic views on the mission. Characteristic of this mood is the following statement by Father Roiz from 1624: “The state of the Ethiopian Church was never so flourishing as today, when the Catholic religion triumphs over the impious sect of the schismatics” (O estado da Igreja de Ethiopia em nenhum tempo esteve mais florente do que neste em que a religiam catholica triumpha da impia seita dos schismaticos); Roiz, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 223r. Still in 1627, Manoel de Almeida could write “Since many years the Abyssinian Empire has never been so quiet and peaceful as it is today” (Ha muitos annos que o Imperio dos Abexins não gozou da paz e quietenção em que hoje estã); Almeida, 1627, in: ARSI, Goa 39 II, 418r. However, a few years later, the opposite was true: in 1631 an anonymous Jesuit wrote, with a degree of resignation, that “not every year offers the same degree of fertility and the same quality of provisions and hence the years of plenty appear to be over” (Não são os annos todos iguaes na fertilidade e qualidade de mantimentos, e assy os das vacas gordas parece que paçarão em Ethyopia); Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 428.

139 … Emfraquecerão grandemente o bando e partido dos catholicos; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI.

140 Mendes, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 114, 487. Almeida reported that in 1632 Sc’elä Krestos was “completely dispossessed, without any lands, servants or money” (… Totally despeso, sem terras, sem criados, sem dinheiro); RASO
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armies under pro-Catholic leaders could not cope with the many fronts opened. Furthermore, whilst the number of military troops probably had been drastically reduced by mass defections and war fatalities, the rebellions had grown into a network: war was unpredictable and widespread.

Such a desperate situation seems to have also induced the Catholics towards an escalation of repression that added more fuel to the fire. In 1628, abba Asko, a learned and well-known priest, was sent into exile because he did not adhere to the Catholic Christological doctrines, eventually perishing at the hands of his custodians. The next year, Patriarch Mendes ordered the corpse of ichegue abba Zära Wängel, who had been removed from office in 1624 due to his support of the Greek Melkite papas, to be unburied from the Catholic church where he lied buried because “the church was violated with the corpse of a heretic” (a igreja estava violada com o corpo do herege), thus provoking popular protest. Polic ing campaigns over local churches and monasteries were also frequent: the temples would be stormed with the help of military force, traditional altars and objects destroyed, the most recalcitrant priests and nuns imprisoned and priests loyal to the mission imposed.

By the beginning of the next decade the Jesuits had few supporters at the court and a land largely hostile to them. As it is vividly recalled in Manoel de Almeida’s História de Ethiópia, by far the most detailed account on the whole crisis, the situation at the royal kätäma became soon untenable. The anti-missionary party, no longer on the defensive,

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141 Jesuit sources seldom provide data on casualties in the ranks of the pro-Catholic armies. The numbers, however, must have been considerable as deduced by looking at data on enemies’ casualties. Below follows a compilation of casualties on both sides (most of the data comes from Almeida’s História): 1628: 300 rebels in Tegray. 1629) 300 rebels and between 600 to 700 loyals in Bägemder and Lasta; 100 loyal horsemen in Amba Legot (Amhara); 400 enemies in Amhara. 1630) 4,000 rebels in Tegray. 1631) 300 rebels near the Nile. 1632) 8,000 rebels in Lasta; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. VI, VII, XIII, XXI, XXVIII. An alternative source provides 3,000 enemy casualties for Bägemder in 1629; Afonso Mendes, 24 May 1631, Gorgora, in: RASO I, parte II, doc. 26 (summary), 140.

142 Evidence for this comes from the simultaneity of the rebellions themselves, which could indicate that its leaders knew about each other’s movements. Moreover, there is evidence of contacts between officials in the royal court and the rebel Qebyal, in RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XXII. Finally, about 1631, the advance of rebels from Lasta into Bägemder would have been stirred by the awareness in the rebel’s side of divisions within the royal kätäma, where the rebels had an important ally in abetohun Mälke’a Krestos; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXVI.

143 Almeida, 1628, in: RASO XII, doc. 76, 262-63.

144 Foi notavel a poeira que com isto se alevantou; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XI. Missionary sources call him normally ichegue and his name appears only in RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXXI. On the Greek ‘metropolitan’ cf. RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. VII.

145 Two instances of such punitive expeditions are a raid in 1629 into a church near Lejjä Negus, where Father João de Souza is said to have “assaulted” a church that was a “haven of heretic monks and nuns” (covil de frades e freiras schismaticos); Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 397. The same priest led a similar assault two years later when he was serving as chaplain during an expedition of Se’elä Krestos into Amhara. Backed by the power of the army, he is said to have been busy during his march through the regions of Ambassäl and Legot with “throwing down Alexandrian churches and altars and in erecting new Roman altars to duly officiate the religious service” (… muito derrubar de igrejas e altares alexandrinos e alevantar novos romanos para se dizer missa); Barradas, 1631, in: RASO XII, doc. 113, 469. The method used here, however, could be also explained by de Souza’s lack of experience in the country for he had arrived there only in 1628 and hence had had little chance to see a nicer picture of the land than the civil wars of these years could offer.
adopted a clearly aggressive stand and gained the support of the most likely successor to the throne, Fasilädäs. On 24 June 1632, shortly after he came back from yet another—perhaps the most devastating—campaign to quell a religiously motivated rebellion in Lasta, Susenyos decreed freedom of religion.¹⁴⁶

Thereafter, a confused period opened up, where neither the Jesuits nor the traditionalists were in control of the kingdom. The negus fell ill and recluded himself within the walls of the recently-built palace in Dänqäz which had been designed by Indian masons and calling next to him the Jesuit priest Diogo de Mattos, another Jesuit after Pedro Páez with whom he had grown close.¹⁴⁷ Some secondary sources would claim that during this period Susenyos abdicated in favour of his son,¹⁴⁸ though this could not be confirmed by any contemporary evidence.¹⁴⁹ The true scenario, as it can be inferred from the most accurate narrative on the mission, probably was one where the negus was still officially in power but in practice Fasilädäs and the traditionalists supporters had managed to take effectively control over the state. Moreover, it might be speculated that sooner or later an open putsch to take over the kingdom would have taken place.¹⁵⁰ However, nature, or conspiracy, speeded up the events for on 16 September 1632 Susenyos died—according to the Jesuits under the effects of poison.¹⁵¹ The claim of Manoel de Almeida, and other Jesuits, to prove that the negus died a true Catholic (or as they said, tinha a fé no coração) is, I believe, well founded. Yet, it can also be argued that Susenyos had understood that his long-lived adventure with the foreign priests had to come to an end, that the costs of the mission began to outweigh its presumed or real benefits. His land, that he had striven to ‘modernise’ with the ideas and projects imported by the Jesuit missionaries, was clamouring for Yätent! i.e. ‘restoration’,¹⁵² and his son probably wanted a more peaceful kingdom to rule over. Neither of these goals were completely achieved by such radical political

¹⁴⁶ RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXX.
¹⁴⁷ Mattos joined the court in 1625 and would not separate from Susenyos’ side until his death; cf. Paes, 1625, in: ARSI, Goa 39 I, 246v, 247r; and RASO VI, liv. VIII, ch. XII.
¹⁴⁹ The scenario of an abdication is nowhere mentioned in the missionary record, neither in the royal chronicle of Susenyos. Besides, an abdication had hardly ever occurred in Ethiopian history. The abdication hypothesis, which is taken at face value by most of the scholars, probably originated, as it will be argued in the next chapter, in one of the many texts unfavourable to the mission that appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is not claimed by Ludolf while it appears in Bruce’s account, who asserted that, “The Portuguese historians deny both his [Susenyos’] resignation of the crown, and his perseverance in the Roman Catholic faith to his death, but this apparently for their own purposes”; BRUCE, Travels to discover the sources of the Nile, vol. 2, 397.
¹⁵⁰ Almeida’s narrative on this period depicts an atmosphere of virtual political vacuum and permanent turmoil; cf. RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXXI-XXXIII. The traditionalist party would then obtained that Susenyos orders the Jesuits to evacuate all their residences but three, Gännätä Iyäsus, Qollela and Fremona; ibid ch. XXXII.
¹⁵¹ RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXXIII.
¹⁵² Such was the slogan that a group of Alexandrian supporters shouted during a demonstration at the ይበጣና in the
choices, but the mission was over.

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early 1610s; RASO VI, iv. VII, ch. XXI. Cf. also above n. 67.
8. Exile and memory

\[ \text{Quasi morientes et ecce vivimus}^1 \]

The mission after the Jesuits

With the decree of 24 June 1632 declaring freedom of religion and the death of Susenyos on 16 September 1632, the Jesuit mission ceased to exist; the normal development of apostolic activities, the daily tasks at the residences and the joint work between the Ethiopian state and the Society of Jesus finished. Yet, neither the Catholic group that had grown strong around the Jesuit missionaries disappeared at once nor the Jesuit legacy in Ethiopia could be completely erased.

The political and religious volte-face was followed by a widespread repression of Catholicism. This, however, did not happen all at once but lingered for about two decades. During a first wave of religious violence Catholic churches were rioted and the priests ordained by the Jesuits expelled. Mendes described with the following words the scenes that succeeded the accession of power of Fasilädäs:

Now, the heretics, whom the seniority and the authority of the father [of Fasilädäs, i.e Susenyos] had restrained, took advantage of the minority of the son, and contaminated most of the churches, expelled the priests that I had appointed, destroyed the images, teared from the necks of the Catholics their devotional images, openly proclaimed the restoration of the Sabbath and the blood’s consecration with coloured water [i.e. not made from grapes], allowed rebaptism and circumcision of everybody who during the period of the Roman faith had remained uncircumcised and forbade the invocation after the name of Jesus, which was dear to the Portuguese.\(^2\)

Likewise, the religious and social traditions condemned by the Jesuits were reinstated. Ethiopian priests also obtained a ban against the use of the name of Jesus, which as we saw had been one of the trademarks of the mission.\(^3\) The missionaries were progressively dispossessed of their residences and lands, which came into the hands of prominent members

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1 “As dying and behold we live”; Mendes, 1629, in: RASO XII, doc. 97, 402. The sentence is a quotation from St. Paul’s “Second Letter to the Corinthians”, 6:9: Quasi morientes et ecce vivimus ut castigati et non mortificati (“As dying and behold we live: as chastised and not killed”).

2 Nam haeretici, quos patris senectus et authoritas aliquantulum retardabat, filii adolescentia abusi, plerasque ecclesias polluerunt, sacerdotes a me praepositos exegerunt, imagines abscederunt, globulos piaules ex catholicorum cervicibus deicerunt, sanctorum Jesu nominis invocationem (quod Lusitanis familiaris esset) interdixerunt; Mendes, 1633, in: RASO XII, doc. 123, 513.

3
of the traditionalist party. Qollela went to the governor of Gojjam, to abetohun Gälawdewos and Fremona to Wängelawit, the indomitable daughter of Susenyos with whom the missionaries had clashed because of her dissolute life. Gämmätä Iyäsus, once the royal residence and the place of celebration of stunning Catholic festivities, soon became, under the new name of Azäzo Täklä Haymanot, the site where the community of Däbrä Libanos relocated after abandoning their original home in Shäwa. The ichegue was given the Jesuit lands and reused the buildings built by order of Susenyos and the Jesuit priests. The residence of Gorgora, the pride of the mission, probably endured a similar fate and the lands under its dominion were likely given back to their original holders. However, Fasilääs’ liking for the buildings in Gorgora Nova reportedly spared its complete destruction. Interestingly enough, a number of Catholic churches appear to have also been reused to host Ethiopian Christian services; such was the case with the Jesus church in Gorgora Nova, which was renamed Maryam Gemb, that in Fremona, renamed Qedeste Giyorgis (St. George) and, perhaps of Särka as well, bearing also the name of Giyorgis. The numerous objects that embellished the residences, when were not destroyed by the missionaries to prevent their desecration, became the footer for anti-Catholic iconoclastic bursts. Perhaps the only type of Catholic objects that were spared destruction were the Marian and Christological icons imported by the Jesuits from India and Europe and also produced at the residences in Ethiopia. These icons would have rapidly gone to the possession of Ethiopian Christian monasteries and churches and become the object of vivid local veneration as it is witnessed in the popularity enjoyed by Catholic-related icons in the Gondärine school.

When the mission fell there were twenty-two Jesuits in the country, this being, ironically, the largest concentration of effectives in Ethiopia. With the disappearance from

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5 Mendes to Felipe IV, 1632, in RASO I, parte II, doc. 30, 149.
4 I have been unable to identify him.
5 Cf. RASO VII, liv. X, ch. II.
6 The latter point is just an hypothesis for, to my knowledge, the site of Särka has been only badly identified. The location I propose to consider is that of the present-day Church of Giyorgis in Baher Dar, in which compound there still is an imposing Catholic altar from the Jesuit period as well as a two-storey house made of lime, similar to those the Jesuits built at Gämmätä Iyäsus and also popularly believed to be the work of Pedro Páez. Cf. Otto F.A. MIEARDUS, “Ein Portugiesischer altar in Bahar Dar Georgis”, Annales d’Ethiopie 6, 1965, 281-84 and Francis ANFRAY, “Les monuments gondariens des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Une vue d’ensemble”, in: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. University of Addis Ababa [26-30 November 1984], ed. Taddese Beyene, 2 vols., Addis Ababa-Frankfurt-am-Main: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1988-89, vol. 1, 9-45.
7 Such an action occurred, for instance, when the missionaries were compelled to abandon Gorgora; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXXII.
8 An inventory of the most evident examples of foreign ‘Catholic’ icons kept in the Ethiopian monasteries and churches could help in understanding the fate of the Jesuit iconic heritage in the land. Among these icons, a few have been studied and reproduced in printed form; e.g. Plate IIIa (probably of foreign origin or produced in a Jesuit residence). Cf. also Diane SPENCER, “In search of St. Luke Ikons in Ethiopia”, Journal of Ethiopian Studies 10, 2,
the scene of their two main protectors their presence in Ethiopia became untenable although their expulsion did not happen at once. Initially, with the intention of unifying forces, most of them, including Ethio-Portuguese and Catholic Ethiopians armed with weapons, gathered in Gorgora. Their intention was probably, as the Ethiopian authorities suspected, to stay there and turn it into a Catholic stronghold. To prevent that Fasilädäs ordered the Catholic group to relocate at Gännätä Iyäsus, where he probably thought to have them better under control. Another group composed of the missionaries living southwards of Lake Tana and Gojjame and Agäw converts was obliged to congregate in Qollela. By the beginning of 1633, however, the Catholics were summoned to exile in the Tegray and deprived of their weapons. On 29 March, Patriarch Mendes abandoned Enfraz and went to the exile at the head of a large group, which comprised most of the missionaries – only Luís de Azevedo was allowed to stay in Dämbeya due to his poor health – and a convoy of about 500-600 people, mostly Ethio-Portuguese and a few Catholic Ethiopians from Gojjam and Dämbeya. About a month later, in late April, the group reached Fremona, where they settled under the watchful eye of the governor Zä Maryam.

Towards September 1634, in another decision showing his vacillating approach, Fasilädäs ordered the expulsion of all the missionaries and the Ethio-Portuguese to be re-settled near his kätäma in Dämbeya. He also contacted the Ottoman pasha in Sawakin to request him to stop any Catholic or European priest wishing to enter the land. A number of political-related factors seem to have been at the background of this decision. Firstly, the kingdom was then in a state of turmoil and some of the rebellions that had begun with Susenyos continued unabated. Hence, in 1635, the Jesuit priest Mattos informed – not without some satisfaction – that the negus was “running away from one part to the other, without feeling safe anywhere” and that “the rebellions, sprouting everywhere, threatening and enclosing him, are irredeemable because he lacks all the forces necessary [to quell them]”. Although some of these movements could have been fuelled by the personal ambition of a few, I believe they also indicate a popular and widespread feeling of distrust.

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10 RASO VII, liv. X, ch. XI.
11 For instance, when in August 1635 Mälke’a Krestos was killed, his struggle was continued by his brother; RASO VII, liv. X, ch. XXIII.
12 O Rey, como outro Caim, Fogindo de huma parte para a outra, sem se dar em ninhuma por seguro. As guerras, que de todas partes em roda o ameaço, são inremediavelis por lhe faltarem capitãis de importancia; Diogo de Mattos to Superior General, 22 September 1635, Diu, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 45.
towards the central power. During the rule of Susenyos and his two predecessors, the state had forced the people into a path which, for the large part, they did not wish to take and had pushed them to pay a high prize for it. For that reason, the central power had lost the legitimacy to govern and to impose its rights. Secondly, Catholicism had still followers within the Ethiopian society and Fasilädäs had to face the discontent of a minor, though, important group of dignitaries and regional lords who had remained staunch supporters of Catholicism. Towards 1634, for instance, some 60 soldiers and lords, among whom one Be’elä Krestos, a “devoted Catholic” and brother-in-law of the negus, organised a plot in the court – eventually averted – to kill Fasilädäs.13 About the same year, Qerilos, a son of Se’elä Krestos, began to make a series of raids into Gojjam with the help of Oromo tribes and Yämanä Krestos, xum of Ennarya and son-in-law of the once powerful ras, refused to pay the yearly tribute unless his father-in-law was liberated.14 Yet, the most serious feud Fasilädäs must have had was the one with his brother, Gälawdewos. About five years his senior and born to the same parents (Susenyos and Seltan Mogäsa), Gälawdewos seems to have turned into a staunch supporter of Catholicism. Thus, from about 1633, he led an active guerrilla against his brother that only finished in 1648 when he was killed. Thirdly, another factor that might have contributed to the expulsion of the missionaries was that Fasilädäs and his court feared that the Jesuits in India and Ethiopia could jointly prepare an invasion of the Ethiopian shore by Portuguese forces. Ethiopian fears in this respect could appear exaggerated but to their credit it must be argued that as soon as the Jesuits reached India they led a passionate lobbying before the authorities that lingered for decades to prepare a military expedition for the Red Sea.15

Faced with this, the missionaries set up a dual strategy that was meant to keep Catholicism alive. One group of missionaries would leave for India and another stay undercover in Ethiopia. The first group comprised initially of four effectives (Almeida, Barradas, Giroco and Calaça) but the decree of 1634 committed the Patriarch to leave as well.16 The exile was seen by the Jesuits rather than as a complete abandon of the mission as a tactical

13 Ibid. 45-46. On the presence of Catholics in the court, a Jesuit informed that these “are not a few neither they are amongst the least important” (não são poucos nem dos menos principais do arrajal); Ibid. 61. Among other supporters of Catholicism within the higher class were abetohun Mälke’a Krestos, a cousin of Fasilädäs, who in 1635 reportedly was hosting in his residence in Dänqäz two Catholic priests; abetohun Yohannes, another cousin of Fasilädäs; abeto Zä Iyäsus and wäyzero Wälättä Giyorgis, grandson and daughter of Särsä Dengel, respectively. The latter also appears in the Chronicle of Wälättä Petros; RICCI, Vita di Valatta Petros, 88-89.
14 Ibid. 47.
15 On this particular, cf. RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XIII; liv. X, ch. III.
16 The trip to India was itself a logistic challenge, due to the deteriorated relations between the Jesuits and the local authorities in Christian Ethiopia and in Ottoman territory. Mendes and a few companions spent almost a year in an Ottoman prison in Sawakin and could only reach India in December 1635; Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc.
withdrawal: they aimed at gathering forces in India, convince their sponsors of the need to continue investing in the missionary enterprise and prepare a counterattack, which should have included the envoy of individual effectives and the preparation of a military expedition to occupy Massawa. Although battered by the course of events their ‘Ignatian’ conviction that the situation could be reversed and the mission restored by a good diplomatic and geopolitical plan was, strange as it could appear to a modern gaze, fairly strong. Besides, this forced exile to India became an opportunity for them to offer a full Jesuit curriculum to the most talented among their students in Ethiopia.\footnote{António de Andrade, for instance, a grandson of João Gabriel who had been brought up in Fremona, studied grammar, rhetoric, philosophy and theology in Goa and joined the Jesuits somewhere in the 1630s. With the first convoy of missionaries, together with the four Jesuit priests, also travelled two priests of the Patriarch, five or six banians and fourteen young Ethiopians; Afonso Mendes to Assistant of the Portuguese Province, 6 January 1646, Goa, in: RASO XIII, doc. 83, 262.}

Therefore, towards late 1634, eight Jesuits remained in Ethiopia with the aim to coordinate the Catholic community. Among them was Bishop Apollinar de Almeida, who should serve later to eventually ordain further priests and the talented Bruno Bruni and Luís Cardeira. Completing the leadership of the Catholic group were eight secular priests, four of them of Portuguese origin, who had been ordained by Mendes before leaving for India.\footnote{The names of the Ethio-Portuguese priests were: Bernardo Nogueira, Lourenço da Costa, Pero da Costa and Antonio Dalmança; Francisco Rodriguez to Afonso Mendes, 20 January 1636, in: RASO XIII, doc. 15, 102} That core of sixteen priests should guarantee that Catholicism remained alive.

The missionaries and their associates used a number of strategies for survival. Firstly, they split up into smaller groups and settled in different areas so that the eradication of a unit did not endanger that of the whole group. Secondly, the Jesuits still counted with a circle of friends and sympathizers, some of them in ruling positions, who were committed to host and defend them. Thus, Luís de Azevedo, who died of natural causes in 1634, was the guest in northwestern Dämbeya of an Ethio-Portuguese called Damoteixeira.\footnote{Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 49.} In late 1633 or early 1634, the Jesuit priests Gaspar Paes, João Pereira and Francisco Rodrigues were the guests of \textit{baheer nägash} Johannes Akay, a powerful lord in the Hamasen who in 1628 had participated in the rebellion led by \textit{däjjazmach} Täklä Giyorgis.\footnote{Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 52.} In the same year, Jacinto Francisco and Apollinar de Almeida were hosted by Käflä Maryam, \textit{xum} in Bur, and in the same province one \textit{kantiba} Zära Johannes took under his protection Cardeira and Bruni.\footnote{RASO VII, \textit{liv.}, ch. XVIII; Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 49.} Thirdly, the missionaries concealed their identity and

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\item Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 52.
\item RASO VII, \textit{liv.}, ch. XVIII; Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 49.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
only officiated the mass in secret and to a small loyal group.\textsuperscript{22} Last but not least, the Catholics in Ethiopia and the exiles in India should be coordinated. The information system that had so smoothly connected India with Ethiopia during the time of the mission was, if less efficiently, still in place during the first years of the exile and was duly used by the Catholics in Ethiopia; it was an important factor to breach their sense of isolation and keep spirits up until the awaited reversal of the situation occurred.

Soon, however, the awareness in the court of the strategy pursued by the Catholics and the mounting pressure of traditional circles pushed Fasilâdâs to increase vigilance. This forced local lords to hand him the Catholic priests they were protecting. In parallel, a second upsurge of anti-Catholic violence spread throughout the country, which was doubtlessly stimulated as well by news of the imminent arrival from Egypt of abunâ Marqos.\textsuperscript{23} Therefore, in the course of the following five years or so, the Catholic leadership and supporters will be nearly annihilated. By 1640, all the Jesuits had been assassinated together with at least six local Catholic priests and assistants. Repression also abated with force over Ethiopian individuals who did not want to renounce to Catholicism: within the period 1634-40, Jesuit sources provide the names of at least fifteen Ethiopians whose belongings were confiscated or who were sent into exile.\textsuperscript{24} It is probably also during this anti-Catholic wave that the dramatic scenes described by Bruce took place: the proclamation of a general circumcision by the local priests and the populace murdering “many catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part”.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} At the court of Yohannes Akay, for instance, João Pereira feigned to be one of his servants whilst his fellow Francisco Rodríguez was dressed like a soldier, pretending to be a member of the Ethio-Portuguese militia; Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 53; Mendes, 1639, in: RASO XII, doc. 47, 172.

\textsuperscript{23} Marqos arrived in Sawakin in 1635 but only reached the royal kätäma in Dänqäz in early 1636.

\textsuperscript{24} In ca. 1633, abetohun Zâ Iyásus, grandson of Sârsä Dengel and husband of Wälättä Giyorgis, together with other Catholics, was sent into exile to Qwara, dying shortly after; in the same year, azmâqh Yamanâ, cousin in the second degree of Susenyos, had his belongings expropriated and the captain Gedewon, a servant of Susenyos from the casta Adea (of Haddiya origin?) was judged and killed. One year later, in 1634, Tâklâ Manuel, son of Assa, who had protected the Jesuits in his lands, was removed from office. In 1635, a boy and former servant of Gaspar Paes named Nasso was killed. In 1636, Mâlak Deb, a servant of Se’elä Krestos, had to endure a trial because found with Catholic devotional objects (“a cross and relics”) but managed to avoid chastisement; meanwhile, one abba Horassi Krestos, who had been ordered by Mendes, was killed at the royal kätäma by a mob at publicly professing his Catholicism and one azzaj “Taca” was said to have died a Catholic. In 1638, a boy named Baxa Krestos, who served at the monastery of Dâbrä Semona, was hang from a tree because he refused to comulgate in the Ethiopian rite and bägerond Ambäsay, who had served Apollinar de Almeida, nearly suffered the same fate at refusing to comulgate with the Ethiopian rite. In ca. 1639, abba Ascra Krestos, also a scholar (mestre) from Dâbrä Semona was martyred. In 1639, abba Lebâ Krestos, publicly confessed Catholicism and in ca. 1648 an homonymous abba of Selado died; BÉGUINOT 1901, 51; Afonso Mendes to [Felipe IV], 9 May 1633, in: RASO I, parte II, doc. 30 (summary), 149; Diogo de Mattos to Superior General, [September 1635], in: RASO I, parte II, doc. 35 (summary), 160; RASO VII, liv. IX, ch. XXX; liv. X, ch. II; ch. XXXI; Bruno Bruni to the Fathers of the Indian Province, 17 July 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 9, 37; Mattos, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 54, 56, 60, 71; Diogo de Mattos to Alvaraes Tavares, 26 September 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 11, 80; Rodríguez, 1636, doc. 15, 99; Francesco, 1636, in: RASO XIII, doc. 18, 109; Afonso Mendes, [1636], in: RASO XIII, doc. 19, 115; Bruno Bruni to Afonso Mendes, 19 February 1637, in: RASO XIII, doc. 22, 124; Mendes, 1639, in: RASO XIII, doc. 47, 174-75, 179.

\textsuperscript{25} Presumably Bruce heard these facts from local informants 100 years after the events; BRUCE, Travels to Discover the
However, a few more optimistic news reached India during these troubled years. In 1636, Jacinto Francisco informed Mendes that there were more than 150 dignitaries and nobles (fidalgos) at the court who supported the Catholic faith and three years later Az-zay Tino, former royal chronicler, wrote to the Jesuits in India that there was still an important number of Catholics in Gojjam and Damot being served by local priests. The latter document, whilst revealing the important role Ethiopian converts played in maintaining the ideals of the mission alive, states as well that Catholic groups were coming close to a state that the Jesuits wanted to avoid at all costs: guidance fell on locals and no longer on Jesuit priests.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian exiles in India led an intense lobby for the cause of the mission. In 1635, Jerónimo Lobo went on a diplomatic mission to the court in Madrid and Lisbon aiming at convincing political authorities to back their military plans for the Red Sea and Ethiopia. Lobo’s mediation was successful for in 1636 and 1638 the king recommended the governor of India to send “an armada comprising eight ships” (huma armada de oito navios) to the Red Sea. About the same time another former missionary, Francisco Marquez, was still procurador of the Ethiopian mission in Diu. Subsequently the Jesuits sent a number of envoys to the Red Sea who should enter in contact with the Catholic community and eventually bring new leadership into Ethiopia. However, the obstacles they encountered were insurmountable. On the one hand, Portuguese India had long ceased to be a powerful player in the Indian Ocean world and the Estado da India had neither the resources nor the means to entail itself in more adventures in the Red Sea as the Jesuits demanded. Thus, a few months from receiving the directive from Lisbon, the Viceroy Pedro da Silva tactfully informed Felipe IV that the military project had to be
postponed “until other things of greater importance would not interfer in it.”31 On the other hand, the Ottoman vigilance against Catholic subjects in its Red Sea ports, fuelled as it was by lavish payments from Fasilädäs, was from 1633 onwards too efficacious to be broken.

Moreover, the dramatic end of the mission and the failure shown by the Jesuits to introduce new men into Ethiopia did not pass unnoticed to the Roman authorities. Whilst the mission was still alive, the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, the papal institute created in 1622 to centralize missionary policy-making, had been respectful with regards the Jesuit ‘jurisdiction’ over Ethiopia.32 However, as soon as the crisis in Ethiopia emerged it changed its attitude and began to favour alternatives for this “schismatic” land. Towards the second half of the 1630s, the cardinals that were guiding the institution, together with its energetic secretary Francesco Ingoli (1578-1649), started to question the methods followed by the Jesuits and to consider other options that bypassed both Portuguese India and the Society of Jesus.33 This gave way, in the late 1630s and 1640s, to an intense diplomatic exchange between the Jesuits and Propaganda Fide on the ‘jurisdiction’ over the Ethiopian project. The Jesuits tried to disrupt the ambitions of other missionary groups but to no avail.34 In 1635, Francesco Ingoli obtained a decree that sanctioned the opening of a Franciscan mission in Ethiopia.

Besides, since restoration of power in Portugal the Jesuits in India and Portugal entered into a serious crisis. In Portugal in 1640 a separatist faction revived an old plan to

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31 ... Quando altre cause de mir impo or importancia as non diwrisite; Pedro da Silva to Felipe IV, 26 November 1638, Goa, in: RASO XIII, doc. 40, 153.
32 In 1627, Propaganda Fide still blocked the pressing demands by French Capuchins to go to Ethiopia. In the summary of the general congregation for that year, § 2 stated that: “It has been determined to write to the same fr. Joseph [a French Capuchin missionary] telling him to abandon the [project of a] mission to Ethiopia so not to disturb the Jesuits – who since 1557 are leading a mission for the propagation of the faith in the large Ethiopian provinces – with the introduction of men from other orders” (Censura scrbendum esse edem fr. Josephi ut à missione in Ethio- piam suprasedeat, ne Jesuit[s] in amplissimis Etiopie Provincijs ab anno 1557 Propagationi fidei vacantes per introductionem Religiosorum alterius Religionis turbentur); document of 26 July 1627, in: APF, Acta, vol. 4 (1626-1627), 260rv. The initial attitude of Propaganda may be also explained by the fact that its cardinal Prefect during the first ten years was Ludovico Ludovisi, a strong supporter of the Jesuits in Rome.
34 There is plenty of evidence of a covert campaign conducted by the Jesuits in India against other missionary groups aiming at reaching Ethiopia. For instance, an internal document from Propaganda Fide reports that “[the Jesuits] are trying to hinder the mission of the [Franciscan] Reformed in Ethiopia” (Si sforzan d’impedir la Missio de Riformati in Ethiopia); document of 1637, in: APF, Indice Generale Fino ad Aprile 1657, A1. ABCDE [Fondo Acta-Indice alfa-
create a separate province for the south (Algarve and Alentejo), thus provoking an internal feud that lingered for two decades and a half. Meanwhile, in India tensions between opposed ‘factions’ (reinós vs indílicos, supporters of the Spanish government vs advocates of the independence, respectively) grew to the point of rendering the province ungovernable.\footnote{Cf. \textsc{lobo}, \textit{Itinerário e outros escritos inéditos}, 66 seq; \textsc{alden}, \textit{The Making of an Enterprise}, 238-40.} The Society was no longer held together, its reputation was badly damaged and the government was chaotic. Therefore, in 1633 the mission to Ethiopia of the Minori Riformati (Reformed Franciscans) was formally instituted and in the 1640s Propaganda Fide definitively took the lead of the Ethiopian mission and began sending, by way of Cairo and under the aegis of the new colonial power, the France of Louis XIV and Cardinal Richelieu, Observant Franciscan friars and Capuchins.\footnote{A review of missions sponsored by Propaganda da Fide to Ethiopia is provided in \textit{metodio \textsc{Carro}, “Martirio ed espulsione in Etiopia”, in: Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum,} 624-49.}

During the 1640s and 1650s news on the Catholics in Ethiopia is scarce. As it appears, a concealed form of Catholicism continued to be practiced by survivors from earlier persecutions. Hence, Catholic ‘clusters’ are reported active in Gojjam and in the village of Taqussa, on the western shore of Lake Tana and once a major Ethio-Portuguese spot, and it is also conceivable that other clusters existed in Tegray. In 1646, Bernardo Nogueira an Ethio-Portuguese priest who had been accepted into the Society off the record and who served as the \textit{liaison} with the Jesuit leadership in India, informed that five Portuguese priests and confessors were still active, together with three other Amhara aides.\footnote{Bernardo Nogueira to Afonso Mendes, 7 June 1646, in: RASO XIII, doc. 84, 265.} Nogueira was, however, more ambiguous on the fortune of the Ethio-Portuguese. Most of them should still remain concealed Catholics – whatever this could have meant – except for a few who gave up resistance and accepted traditional Christian practices. This group of ‘apostates’ included two Portuguese captains, Damo and Rafael Fernández\footnote{Ibid. 265. Fernández was Portuguese captain about 1633, the time when Mendes, before going to Tegray, left his collection of books in his house; \textsc{MattoS}, 1635, in: RASO XIII, doc. 10, 62. Damo was probably the Damo Teixeira who in 1633 and 1634 hosted Luís de Azevedo in his home in northwestern Dâmbeya; RASO \textsc{VII}, \textit{liv. X}, ch. VII.} and their choice could indicate that those wishing to maintain their occupations in the state had assimilated into mainstream Ethiopian society or were on the way of doing so. Towards the late 1650 and early 1660s, the Catholic clusters would probably die out due to the lack of leadership, the death of the older generations who had lived in contact with the Jesuit priests and of social pressure. Nogueira himself was hanged in 1652.\footnote{These problems notwithstanding, a group of Ethio-Portuguese continued serving
at the court and at the army of Fasilädäs. Moreover, although many had probably given up any sort of religious resistance deep-seated prejudices and stereotypes probably continued to be attached to the Burtukan and the Ferenj, thus perpetuating the perception they belong to a foreign group. Yet, with the arrival to power of Fasilädäs’ son, Yohannes I (1667-82), the Ethio-Portuguese were the object of a political decision that cancelled for good their presence in Ethiopia. Shortly after being elected negus, Yohannes compelled the Ethio-Portuguese who were still Catholic to abandon the country either by way of Sennar, capital of the Funj kingdom, or the Red Sea. They chose the first option, which lied after all not so far away from one of the areas of strongest Portuguese presence, Taqussa, and close to Qwara, a place of forced exile for many local Catholics. What brought the Ethio-Portuguese towards this choice remains, however, a mystery: did their leaders believe perhaps that under that prosperous Muslim kingdom, then centre of a wide-ranging commercial network, they could be able to carry on their mercenary life-style?

From the Ethiopian side, the expulsion of the Ethio-Portuguese occurred in the context of a council that saw the participation of important ecclesiastics and that also determined the creation in the royal capital of Gondär of separate ethnic districts for the Muslims and the Fälasha – the Islam Bet and the Kayla Meda. Behind its motivation there was, I contend, a set of factors. Chief among them was the empowerment of a party within the Ethiopian Church that was trying to impose a dogmatic, although also modern, definition of the religious identity: religious communities should be properly distinguished and the borders between them clearly drawn. Groups such as the Burtukan, with their singular religious and racial mixture, were seen as a threat to this religious cum racial agenda. Moreover, the death of Fasilädäs, who after all grew up among Jesuits and Ethio-Portuguese and had all the disposition to appreciate their skills, seems to have retrieved the last protecting shield this group counted with. Hence, I believe that Yohannes, rather than being a strong policy maker was at the receiving end of social and religious forces who were fanatically opposed to anything ‘Portuguese’, ‘Jesuit’ or ‘Catholic’. It was probably due to these pressures that he, or his counsellors, decided such a radical meas-

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40 The episode is reported in GUIDI, Annales Iohannis I, Iyasu I, Bakaffa, 6-11 (tr.).  
41 Among the few scattered evidence on the whereabouts of this group in Sennar, a questionary of the Dutch authorities in Batavia to the ambassador Murad from ca. 1696 (compiled by Hiob Ludolph) reported that: “The envoy says that this is not 150, but about 70 years ago when the emperor banished all of them out of his empire, so that at present not a single Portuguese is to be found in Abyssinia. All have left for the regions of Soenar, where several of them are still living under the Muslims; some still practice the Roman religion, others have adopted Islam”; quoted in Emeri VAN DONZEL, Foreign relations of Ethiopia, 1642-1700. Documents relating to the Journeys of Khodja Murad, Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-archeologisch institut, 1979, 94. On the Kingdom of Sennar, the classical study is...
This episode indicates as well that more than thirty years from its fall, memories of the mission were still in force in Ethiopian society. The Ethio-Portuguese were still seen as a distinct group of *Ferenj*, despite the fact that their racial and cultural features probably differed little from that of the local populations. For their part, the image of the Jesuits, and of Catholic missionaries in general, reached a legendary status and their sole remembrance seems to have provoked awe to the population. Moreover, the fate of the *Burtukan* recalls the fate of other minorities – the Jews in Spain and Portugal, the same group in contemporary Germany – who were also obliged to abandon their homes out of political caprice and social prejudices. In all the cases, whatever the specific motivations were, the local societies aimed at exorcising daunting truths. The daunting truth in Ethiopia was, to my understanding, that the Christian society had been strongly influenced by the Portuguese and Jesuit presence. The mission had left an unperishable mark over the Ethiopian society and its monarchy as a number of social and cultural developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to attest. Gondär, which began to blossom during the last years of Fasilädäs’ reign and especially under his son and grandson, Yohannes I and Iyasu I, was nothing else than a fortunate reproduction of the Mughal-style palace garden of Gännätä Iyäsus planned by the Jesuits, Susenyos and Indian engineers back in the 1620s. Furthermore, the chief iconic motives and artistic features employed by the Gondärine painting school, which dominated artistic production in Ethiopia from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, had been first introduced into Ethiopia during the Jesuit mission; it could be even argued that the very origins of this school are found in the artistic workshops promoted by the Jesuit priests and their Catholic patrons, Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos. In religious and theological discourse, the legacy of the mission was important, too. The religious controversies aroused during the mission provoked a century-long feud within the church between rival theological schools. This feud, which was revived in a number of religious councils in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – which found their prototype in the one held in Fogära in 1620 – led to a new definition and reshaping of the Ethiopian Christian Church. Thereby theological discourse gained force in a church hitherto mostly concerned by the liturgical and religious rites. It has also been sug-

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42 The royal chronicle of Yohannes, meager as it is in off-the-record information, reports that just before the negus took the decision to expell the Ethio-Portuguese “there was a state of agitation among the monks due to the Franks [i.e. the Portuguese]” and that “the monks requested that these are expelled” (*il y eut de l’agitation parmi les moines à cause des Frans… et maintenant qu’ils s’en aillent pour nous [i.e. pour notre soulagement]*), which seems to proof that it was
gested that the emphasis in using vernacular languages during the mission stiumlated the creation of a literature in Amharic.\(^{43}\) Last of all, the political power also assumed predicaments that would have satisfied as exigent a man as Patriarch Mendes had been. For instance, during the same council that sanctioned the expulsion of the Ethio-Portuguese in 1668, religious and political leaders would have decided that “no man marry his sister-in-law and no woman marry her brother-in-law”.\(^{44}\) Henceforth, the levirate, the century-old practice that, together with circumcision, the Jesuits had most fiercely opposed, was abrogated.

**LONGING FOR ETHIOPIA**

Progressively, as the project to return to Ethiopia was turning more and more unrealistic, the Jesuit mission entered another dimension. The Jesuit exiles in India engaged in a literary career that finds, I believe, no other parallels in the world of Jesuit missions: between ca. 1635 and 1660 five missionaries, Jerónimo Lobo, Afonso Mendes, António Fernandes, Manoel Barradas and Manoel de Almeida, completed at least eight major treatises dedicated to the mission (Table 21). With them the mission became a literary cum historical topic in its own right thereby joining the realm of history and memory.

**Table 21: Exile literature produced by the Jesuit missionaries, ca. 1628-60**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Begun</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>1643-44</td>
<td>Almeida</td>
<td>Historia Aethiopiae</td>
<td>Published in 1660 as Balthazar Tellez, <em>Historia geral de Ethiopia a Alta ou Preste Ioam</em>, Coimbra: Manoel Dias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1625</td>
<td>ca.1635</td>
<td>Fernandes</td>
<td>Magseph Asetat. id est Flagellum mendaciorum,</td>
<td>Published in 1642, Goa: Collegio D. Pauli, Societatis Jesu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1630</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>Mendes</td>
<td>Expeditionis Aethiopicae</td>
<td>Published in 1908-90 (RASO VIII-IX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1634</td>
<td>ca.1635</td>
<td>Barradas</td>
<td>Tractatus tres historici geographicci</td>
<td>Published in 1909 (RASO V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1630</td>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Mendes</td>
<td>Cathecismo Aethiopicò</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1640</td>
<td>ca.1645</td>
<td>Mendes</td>
<td>Brun Haimanot: Id est lux fidei in Epiphalanum Aethiopissae, sive in Naptias Uerbi et Ecclesiae</td>
<td>Published in 1693, Cologne: Balthazaris ab Egmond et Sociorum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645?</td>
<td>ca.1650</td>
<td>Fernandes</td>
<td>Vida da Sanctissima Virgem Maria May de Doos &amp; Senhora nossa</td>
<td>Published in 1652, Goa: Collegio de S. Paulo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: RASO I, 85, 89, 109, 165, 177; Afonso Mendes, 30 April 1632, in: BNL, cod. 7640 [F 2866], 1r-v.

The works composed by the expatriate missionaries, only a few of which were

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\(^{44}\) Ibid. 8 (tr.).
published during the lifetime of their authors, came with old and new material. Half of them (the second title and the three last ones in the Table) were classical polemical and dogmatic treatises and continued with a tradition that had been developed in Ethiopia at the residences of Gorgora, Qollela and Fremona. They were produced as if the mission was still alive – a few had even been commenced in Ethiopia – and as if the Jesuit priests had still the chance to convince their Ethiopian opponents by their intellectual dominance. One could also see in them the desire to tear down for good Ethiopian Christianity chiefly by using an aggressive rhetoric – the most relevant work, for instance, bears the telling title of *Flagellum mendaciorum* (‘whip of the lies’), – which their authors would have never dared to use in Ethiopia. With the expulsion no respect oblige.

Yet, it is the remaining four texts that bear more interest in that they represent something new in the mission, which had not seen any work of synthesis since Páez’ *História de Ethiópia*. To be true, we are dealing here with homogeneous texts and none of them could be ascribed to a single literary genre. As many a treatise of the Baroque period, the texts under consideration have a composite character. They include, all in one, travel accounts, personal biographies, *récits d’aventure*, ethnographical reports, geopolitical surveys and institutional histories and each of them has a stronger penchant for a specific genre. Thus, Almeida and Mendes’ treatises could be seen as the most accomplished institutional histories of the mission; the two were, after all, the official leaders of the Jesuit enterprise in Ethiopia. Barradas’ text, for its part, contains fine ethnographical descriptions, mostly about the region he knew best, the Tegray. The *Tractatus tres historico geographic* has, as well, chapters of a clear geopolitical intent and resembles, with his minute descriptions of the Red Sea ports, a modern intelligence report. Finally, Lobo’s *Itinerario* has more a biographical-like character and is the nearest to a modern *récit d’aventure*.

Yet, for all their unbalances and dissimilarities, the four treatises could also be seen as part of a collective enterprise. Their unbalances in fact reinforce this idea, for the narratives, rather than opposing each other, are complementary and what one describes is left untapped by the other. Moreover, the authors enjoyed positions of leadership in the Jesuit structure in India, which would entail them being in communication with each other, that they knew about the development of their respective works and probably helped each other in their making. It could be even speculated that besides using the archives of the

45 The *Magseph Asssetat*, for instance, was published in Goa in Ethiopic characters with the aim of sending the printed volumes to Ethiopia; RASO VII, I, X, ch. XLI.
46 Barradas wrote most of his treatise during his 16-month captivity in Aden but I assume he completed it in India,
Jesuit college in Goa, the authors also had the chance of completing information with the help of other fellows who had been in Ethiopia and who also resided in India. António Fernandes, the missionary with more years of experience in Ethiopia, and Diogo de Matos, who was for seven years Susenyos’ personal confessor, could have been both excellent informants for them.47

What was then the aim of these missionary histories? On the one hand, these works were the produce of expatriates for whom, I believe, writing had been a way of coming to terms with their newly-acquired condition; the literary commitments became a remedy to cure a personal frustration. The fall of the mission was indeed a severe blow for every Jesuit who had been engaged in it. To them it meant the termination of important careers, regardless of how trying these could have been. In Ethiopia they were part of a challenging enterprise, they had important commitments and enjoyed the admiration of their peers in India and Europe. In 1632, personal ambitions, grand individual and collective dreams were put to an end all at once and with no previous warning. The authors were somehow conscious that the Ethiopian mission would be their last important undertaking – it is thus telling that all the Jesuit émigrés from Ethiopia remained in India working in administrative tasks and were not relocated in other missions that the Society was still managing in the East. With the help of these narratives they could at least recall their times in the mission and describe to their fellows, and to the generations to come, their personal experiences.48 The authors could be for one last time actors in a play that was over, heroes – either themselves or the organisation they represented – of an undertaking that should be for ever remembered.

On the other hand, another important dimension is the institutional underpinning these of these treatises – especially those by Almeida and Mendes.49 The Society of Je-

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47 It must be as well stressed that the Jesuits also used Ethiopian informants who had travelled to India with them for the elaboration of the theological-polemical treatises. On this particular cf. RASO VII, liv. X, ch. XLV.

48 Most of the authors of the treatises here under survey emphasized the empirical basis of their accounts and that theirs should serve as eyewitness records for those to come. Barradas, for instance, declared in the introduction to his treatise “I composed a short treatise to inform those who should come to its remedy [of the Jesuit mission] … as well as if I die the information I provide can be used by someone else to produce an improved account” (… trabajo hei fazer um tratado breve para informar os a que pertence acudirem, com o remedio, assim por me falter a pratica, ainda que chegue, como por se a caza eu não chegar, não falte a noticia bastante que outro pode melhor que eu representar); RASO IV, 2. Almeida informed that “I only write what I have experienced, heard from the locals or read in their books” (… só escrevo o que nella acho, o que dizem os naturaes e escrevem seus livros); reported by Beccari in RASO V, xlix.

49 The treatise by Manoel de Almeida is here a case in point because the author only decided to complete it in India after petition of the Jesuit General Vitelleschi; cf. Michael KLEINER, “Almeida, Manoel de”, in: Uhlig, Encyclopa-
sus had, since the times of Ignatius of Loyola, invested hugely in the Ethiopian mission. Ethiopia was, together with Japan, one of the order’s ‘flag’ missions and its fall was, consequently, a huge collective defeat. Most importantly it also fuelled a wave of criticisms towards the methods and means used by the Jesuits. Anti-Jesuitic currents within the Catholic and Protestant world could find there easy fodder to express their dislike for that religious group. Therefore, the image of the Society – a perennial main concern of the Jesuits – was threatened. By taking into account this context we can, I believe, better understand the reason why these works came to being. Jesuit historiography of the mission was a means of discouraging or neutralizing criticism. With it the Society could provide its own version of the history of the mission, of how it came to blossom and how it collapsed. The Jesuits, who had been the main players of a fascinating endeavour, also wanted to control its memory, reassure their contemporaries and those to come that they had all done their best.

It is important to underline that the production of these titles coincided as well with a moment of vibrant historiographic and artistic activity in the Society of Jesus, which began during the last years of Vitelleschi’s rule and gained momentum under the generale of the Italian Giovanni Paolo Oliva (1664-81). In 1640 the *Imago Primi Saeculi*, the official book to celebrate the centenary of the Jesuits, appeared and seven years later Juan Eusebio Nieremberg issued the four volumes of his *Vidas ejemplares y venerables memorias de algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús*. Towards 1670 the *Menologium Virorum*, which recalled the biography of a few dozens of among the most memorable fellows of the order, came to light. These books, which reached a widespread European public, celebrated the achievements, sufferings and manyfold activities of the Jesuits. In parallel, also during this time the representation of the Society’s glories through the conspicuous use of artistic techniques – sculpture, painting and architecture – gained momentum. Towards the mid-

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50 Among the most disapproving institutions towards the Jesuits was, as it was seen above, Propaganda Fide. It is interesting to notice that whilst this institution came to recommend to its missionaries for Ethiopia the use of softer methods (which did not include, however, the acceptance of circumcision) than those of the Jesuits – reception of Ethiopians into priesthood, tolerance of locally-made wine, etc. – it also stepped up its criticism of the liberal methods employed by the same order in China. On contemporary directives of Propaganda for its missions in Ethiopia, cf. APF, *Indice per località degli atti di rito orientale della S. C.: 1622-1699* (V), which refers to *Fondo Acta*, 60.20, 328.20. On overt criticisms of the Jesuit approach, cf. Ibid. *Indice delle congreg. particolari Orientali per località: 1622 al 1664* (IX) that refers to *Congregazioni Particolari*, vol. 5, 374.


52 The four volumes appeared in Madrid: Alonso de Paredes. Later, between 1734 and 1736, new biographical updates appeared in three volumes prepared by the Jesuit José Cassani (*Glorias del Segundo Siglo de la Compañía de Jesús*).
seventeenth century, Il Gesù, originally deprived of any internal decoration, began to be refashioned according to the Baroque visual and aesthetic taste and in 1676-79 Giovanni Battista Gaulli painted the famous Triumph of the Name of Jesus on the church’s vault. Most importantly, from 1672 until his death Andrea Pozzo (1642-1709) began producing a series of masterpieces glorifying the Jesuit founders and the missionary expansion, the most famous being the vault of the church of St. Ignatius in Rome that displayed the victory of the Society in the four known continents. The missão do Preste was not, and could not be, exempt from this celebratory trend and the treatises here under consideration justifiably participated in it.

It is therefore not by chance if it was also during this period that the Jesuits produced the first pictures on the Ethiopian mission. Tellez’ Historia geral de Ethiopia a Alta, issued in 1660, which is commented further below, had on its frontcover a fine engraving on the mission produced by two prominent Flemish artists, the painter Philip Fruytiers and the engraver Peter van Lisebetten (Plate XIVa). The picture showed the four official leaders of the mission (the three Patriarchs, João Nunes Barreto, Andrés de Oviedo, Afonso Mendes, and the bishop with rights to the Patriarchate, Apollinar de Almeida) being received by the ‘Prester John’. The scene clearly plays with the contrast between the finely dressed Catholic bishops and the half-naked and somehow grotesque-looking Ethiopians who had rejected the Catholic message; interestingly, however, in some (posterior) versions of the same picture the painter added a dress on the Ethiopian naked bodies. Likewise, the rendering of the Preste with such elements as the nudity and the dark skin should probably stress his ‘africanness’, thus also establishing a patent break with previous European iconography on the Prester John (compare with Plate IIa). Four years later two of the figures portrayed in Tellez’ book – Oviedo and the negus – reappeared again in a splendid picture the Jesuits from Dilingen commissioned to two popular German artists, the painter Johann Christoph Storer and his fellow engraver Bartholomäus Kilian (Plate XIVb). The image is a remarkable example of the Thesenblätter, an artistic expression used profusely by German Jesuits to defend their theses in the academic milieu. Following an accurate composition, the piece is intended as a summation and apology of the Soci-

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ety’s missionary expansion. On top of the image, the Christ is surrounded by the Virgin, St. Peter, St. Paul (the only figure with his face directly staring at St. Ignatius and at the whole group below), St. Theophorus with the lion of his martyrdom next to him, and St. Catherine, protector of the learned men. The Christ irradiates his light upon St. Ignatius, who is situated one level below. The Spanish saint forwards the divine power in the form of small beams to a third group of figures that represent important early figures of the Society: St. Francis Xavier, whose head stands above the rest and who is the first to receive St. Ignatius ‘powers’ and to his left and right, Diego Laynez and Petrus Canisius. To the right of the Navarrese an indigenous warrior represents the Indian Americans. On the same level, to the right of the picture, another set of beams reach a Jesuit figure who in all likelihood seems to represent the mastermind of the Oriental missions, Alessandro Valignano, the Patriarch Andrés de Oviedo and the martyr Andreas Bobola. At the feet of Francis-Xavier is situated Blessed Luigi Gonzaga (beatified in 1605 but only canonized in 1726), who points to a planisphere inserted within a heart in flames with the inscription “Dei et proximi amore”, thereby inviting the viewer to ponder about the Society’s God-blessed worldwide expansion. In front of Patriarch Oviedo, to the bottom right of the picture, is situated the Ethiopian negus (Gälawdewos?), whose sceptre lays on the floor and looks bewildered at the map symbolizing the Society’s expansion. Behind Oviedo two non-Europeans should represent the Asians. Towards the bottom left there is the Jesuit Gaspar Barzeo, one of the first companions Francis-Xavier had in India, active among other theatres in Hormuz and next to him we see an Oriental ruler who represents the Shah of Persia, in all probability Tahmasp I (1524-76), who granted the Portuguese permission to settle at Hormuz.

As far as the Jesuit mission is concerned, the ‘message’ conveyed by the two pieces is similar to that conveyed by the literary works written by the Jesuit missionaries. The Jesuits aimed at stressing the importance of this undertaking and wanted as well to insist that its collapse should be seen as a failure of the Ethiopians to receive the true message. The negus and the Ethiopians had missed their chance to be part of a glorious undertaking.

From the methodological point of view, we must insist upon the fact that the Jesuit

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54 Appuhn-Radtke provides two alternative identifications of this figure in Peter Faber or the theologian Lais de Molina; APPUHN-RADTKE, Das Thesenblatt im Hochbarock, 259.

55 The figure was identified by Appuhn-Radtke as an “African ruler” (afrikanischer Fürst), though it is unmistakably the ‘Prester John’ i.e. Ethiopian negus; Ibid. Interestingly, Oviedo, who stands behind the Preste, has his eyes exactly in the axis formed by St. Paul and St. Ignatius’ eyes.

56 Alternatively, Appuhn-Radtke thinks he is the Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman I ‘the Magnificent’ (1520-66); Ibid. However, the Persian ruler is clearly identified by the feather stick on its turbant.
narratives on Ethiopia did not distort historical truth in order to celebrate their ill-fated mission. Indeed they presented things taken from personal experience and having done an outstanding historiographic effort – for that matter, Almeida’s is today the unsurpassed chronicle of the whole mission period. Ultimately, all the above-mentioned authors could be censured of is trying to hide under a meticulous narrative of the events a few inconvenient facts. Indeed, a certain lack of self-criticism pushed them to leave out uncommented the exaggerated self-confidence and miscalculation of forces that pervaded during the Patriarchate of Mendes, which in the light of current research seem the two factors which most decisively contributed to the breakdown of the mission. But Jesuit historiography, besides providing a narrative and hiding some disturbing facts, aimed at transmitting a message, wherein history was seen as a fatality and the missionaries as the victims of people who were unfit to receive the ‘true’ Christian message. The Jesuits were telling their readers that their mission was another apostolic story of sacrifice and deception; in Ethiopia, as the frontispiece of Tellez’ edition of the Historia geral de Ethiopia went, it happened like in the words of the Apostle “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehend it not”.

THE MISSION BETWEEN OBLIVION AND CURIOSITY

Until the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Jesuits from Portuguese India sporadically sent missionaries to the Red Sea trying to reach Ethiopia. Yet, the project to return to Ethiopia and restore the mission would progressively die out. Some of its symbols, however, showed some resistance to oblivion. Afonso Mendes, who died in Goa in 1656, had two successors as Patriarchs of Ethiopia. In 1670, King Pedro II (1667-1706), a devout to the cult of Francis-Xavier in Goa, appointed the Jesuit Fernão Queiros (1617-88), professor of Philosophy and Theology at São Paulo Novo, for this position. The papacy, since 1640 involved in a harsh dispute with the Crown of Portugal on the rights of the Padroado Real, did not confirm the appointment, though this probably mattered little to the Portuguese authorities and hierarchy in India. The revival of this title, which had remained dormant for fourteen years, added one more pompous ingredient to the daily life of the “Relic State”, as the historian Pamila Gupta has nicely termed the Estado da India.

57  *Lex in tenebris lucet et tenebrae eam non comprehendunt*; Gospel of St. John 1:5; quoted in the frontispiece of Balthazar TELLEZ, *Historia geral de Ethiopia a Alta ou Preste Ioam, e do que nella obraram os padres da Companhia de Iesvs*, Coimbra: Manoel Dias, 1660.

and Goa in particular. The Goanese probably took pleasure in hosting in their town this figure, which since it initiated its economic and political decline in the mid-seventeenth century plunged itself into a celebratory dynamic that helped the locals to forget of their gloomy, unattractive, present. In 1709, the title of Patriarch of Ethiopia reappeared once again with the appointment by King João V (1706-50) of the Jesuit Manuel de Sá (1658-1728). However, in the decades that ensued the latter’s death, nobody in Goa or Portugal thought it appropriate to recall the title again. In the first half of the eighteenth century the context was no longer advantageous to the Society. Political power was parting company with the Jesuit Order, which was to approach the darkest period of its history. Moreover, the creation of the Patriarchate of Lisbon in 1716 rendered the existence of a similar Oriental counterpart unwanted.

However, in its literary form the mission was more successful. In 1660, as we saw above, Balthasar Tellez, head of the Jesuit Portuguese province and a friend of Jerónimo Lobo, published a revised version of Almeida’s treatise. The work, which was apparently initiated at the request of Muzio Vitelleschi, became the official story of the mission. It also served, however, to close the period of Jesuitic remembrance of the mission. In consequence, the rest of the missionary treatises on Ethiopia, which included the titles mentioned above and the História de Etiópia written earlier by Páez, remained dormant for centuries in Jesuit houses and in the hands of private collectors. In all likelihood, after its main actors had died, the mission lost its most important advocates and within the Society its memory became rather a source of embarrassment; the remembrance of its realizations could not hide the fact that, after all, it was an unaccomplished mission.

Probably these reasons account for the fact that the Jesuits were unable to push forth any postulations towards the beatification of the several missionaries who had died or had been murdered in Ethiopia. During the most favourable period they did indeed

60 Cf. “Proposiçam da Academia [Real] da Historia Ecclesiastica de Portugal, que por ordem de S. Magestade se abrio no Paço da Casas de Bragança em 8. de Dezembro de 1720”, 8 December 1720, in: BNL, cod. 665 [Microfilm 4868], 167v-68r.
61 As known, the era of the Jesuit expulsion was inaugurated, significantly, by the kingdom that had first sponsored its foundation. In 1739 the Marques of Pombal, prime minister of Portugal, dictated the expulsion of the Jesuits from the metropolis and the colonies. Following a decree signed by Pope Clement XIV in July 1773, the Society of Jesus was suppressed in all Catholic countries.
62 História geral de Etiópia a Alta.
64 The last survivor of the Ethiopian mission was Jerónimo Lobo, who in 1660 went into retirement in the Jesuit mother house of São Roque in Lisbon, where he died in 1678.
65 At least ten Jesuit priests could have opted to a high status in the annals of the Church, given their tragic death.
try to elevate the memory of past fellows who had worked in Ethiopia. In their correspondence, for instance, they always considered Abraham de Georgis and Andrés Gualdames martyrs and, as it was seen above, they promoted a cult to Andrés de Oviedo and Cristovão da Gama. They sent the bones of Oviedo and Gama to Goa and towards 1628 a Jesuit from Palencia, Antonio de Arana, apparently using material compiled by the archbishop of Goa Dom Fernando Alexo de Meneses, completed a hagiography on the second Jesuit Patriarch. The treatise was doubtlessly aimed at preparing the cause of beatification, which was introduced in Rome on 8 June 1630. However, neither Oviedo’s cause survived the Roman bureaucracy nor further causes of the other fellows murdered in Ethiopia in the 1630s and 1640s were introduced. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and under the influential generalate of Luis Martin (1892-1906), the Jesuits tried for a second time to gain honours for their Ethiopian cause. They were inspired by the popularity the Lazarists and Capuchins were achieving with their missions in the Ethiopian highlands. Thus, on 19 June 1902, the causes of beatification of Gaspar Paes, João Pereira, Apollinar de Almeida, Bruno Bruni, Luis Cardeira, Abraham de Georgis and two other fellows were introduced in Rome. Yet, not even here the Jesuits were successful. Therefore, to the date and in contrast to a large number of other Jesuit undertakings the Ethiopian mission has neither saints nor martyrs.

Hereafter, the Society of Jesus was no longer the sole custodian of the memory of the Ethiopian mission. In the peak of the Baroque period, the Jesuit – and Portuguese – adventures in Ethiopia became the object of the curiosity, discussion and entertainment of learned and upper class circles. In Germany the study of the mission and Ethiopian Christianity reached momentum with the joint work of the Orientalist Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704) and of a former skilled assistant of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, abba Gorgoryos (†1658). Under the patronship of Ernst I, Duke of Sachsen-Gotha (1640-75), they produced a number of studies on Ethiopian Christianity that, to an extent, completed the analytical and descriptive work set up by the Jesuit missionaries. Likewise, the memory of the mission also

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66 Arana 1631, Alonso Romo, “Andrés de Oviedo”, 216, n. 8, informs that another copy of the same manuscript with the title “Vida del padre Andres de Obiedo de la Compañia de Ihesus, patriarca de Ethiopia, sacada de la informacion que mando hazer D. Fernando Alexo de Meneses, arzobispo de Goa, Primado de las Indias” is kept at the Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca, ms. 2112. For the year of composition of the treatise, cf. Arana 1631, 231.

67 Chief among these works were Hiob Ludolf, Historia aethiopica, sive Brevis et succincta descriptio regni Habessinorum, quod vulgo malo Prelatori Johannis vocatur, Francofurti ad Moenum: apud J. D. Zunner, 1681 and Id., Iobi Ludoii aliae Ludolff
served to promote anti-Catholic and anti-Jesuitic narratives. In 1679, the German Johann Wansleben (1635-79), who, also under the patronship of the Duke of Sachsen-Gotha, had led a failed expedition to Ethiopia, issued a libel on the ‘mischief’ of the Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia.\(^6^8\) Wansleben was a former Protestant who had converted to Catholicism and had joined the Dominican Order and his work should also be seen as one more title fuelling the old quarrel between the two distinguished orders. Moreover, in 1696, the Church of England clergyman Michael Geddes (ca. 1647-1713) published a *Church history of Ethiopia* whose main focus was the Jesuit mission. His was the second of a trilogy dedicated to stimulate the black legend on “Popery cruelty” and his aim at exposing the “bigotry” and “ambition” of the Jesuits was that of “creating a right understanding betwixt all Antipapal Churches, to unite them all into one Body; that so they may be better able to withstand their common Enemy, who is still indefatigable in his Endeavours to bring all Churches yet into bondage”.\(^6^9\)

For its part, the treatise written by the Jesuit Lobo remained unpublished in the original language but enjoyed of a series of editions in France, England, Holland and Germany.\(^7^0\) Its liking for the anecdote, the adventurous details and the encountering-of-the unknown-like narrative turned the text into popular reading in the eighteenth-century. The French edition by Le Grand also included an engraving representing an historical episode in the mission, the meeting between Susenyo and Patriarch Afonso Mendez in Dänqäz on 7 February 1626 (Plate XIVc). The picture was designed by Louis de Boullongne and engraved by Charles Nicolas Cochin and although of less artistic value than the two masterpieces studied above, it was far more accurate historically speaking.\(^7^1\) Finally, bears mention the fact that Lobo’s English edition was prepared by the intellectual Samuel Johnson who worked on the basis of the French edition and who, as a result of this work, produced the famous moral fable *Ras Sellas*, an insightful critique of modern proto-industrial civilization.\(^7^2\)

With these works the mission and the Ethiopian kingdom that the Portuguese and

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\(^6^8\) WANSLEBEN, A brief account of the rebellions and bloodshed.


\(^7^1\) The authors visibly consulted the missionary records and, in specific, a passage reported by Mendes in his own treatise describing the encounter with Susenyo in detail; cf. RASO VIII, liv. II, ch. I.

\(^7^2\) Cf. Ellen Douglass LEYBURN, “‘No Romantick Absurdities or Incredible Fictions’: The Relation of Johnson’s Ras-
Jesuits had helped to appraise became topics for the consumption of secular society. It was largely secular European circles that were now looking at the rise and fall of the mission, at times with enjoyment and genuine curiosity and at other times with abhorrence. During colonial times a new wave of interest for this endeavour arrived. This, however, belongs to another era and, thus, to another study to tell. It is fair though to remember that thanks to these processes, the historical episode (the mission) became part of discourse and historical narrative. A number of their interpretations have thus been incorporated into the “official” history of the mission; this would include important episodes during the mission, such as the alleged “abdication” of Susenyos, the “Portuguese” contribution to the architectural developments in Gondärine Ethiopia or the attribution of the responsibility of the fall of the mission solely to Patriarch Mendes.


73 I have studied this particular in Andreu Martínez d’Alos-Moner, “Colonialism and memory: The Portuguese and Jesuit adventures in Ethiopia through the colonial-looking glass”, *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures* (University of Warsaw) 41, 2007, 73-90.
9. Conclusions

There are moments in the history of human societies when these take a U-turn, abandoning what their ancestors have reproduced almost unchanged during generations and adopting new vests. In some instances these breaks occur abruptly and in others it is done progressively. Likewise, whilst the changes can be externally induced or enforced, societies develop internal drifts as well that can bring about a drastic alteration of the social and cultural fabric. A contention of the present study is that the Christian Ethiopian kingdom offered, at the time of the Jesuit mission, one such moment. The lessons that shall be learnt from this study are, first, that the changes enforced during the mission were world-shattering (the mission was far more than a ‘religious’ undertaking) and, second, that these had both an internal and an external origin.

The Jesuit mission began in 1557 after decades of intercourse between the Portuguese and Ethiopian kingdoms. During this time the two kingdoms exchanged gifts, representatives and offers of friendship and alliance. In the process, they also came to know each other, to appreciate the virtues and to identify what – in their own worldviews – were the shortcomings of the other. Whilst the Ethiopians came to regard Portugal as a powerful nation, under King Dom João III the idea gained force that the Ethiopians professed a heretical Christianity that had to be reformed. But if the ideological conditions for the mission existed already in the late 1520s, I also tried to show that the project of a religious mission began to be conceived only following the episode of João Bermudez’s pseudo-Patriarchate and the military expedition of Christovão da Gama in the late 1530s and early 1540s.

During its early decades of life, the Jesuit mission developed under an ambitious institutional umbrella – the Catholic Patriarchate of Ethiopia – but in practice it had modest commitments. The Jesuits managed only one residence in the north of the kingdom and were mostly surrounded by a few hundred descendants of the Portuguese who had settled in Tegray. The negus and his court, which the missionaries were meant to approach, remained beyond their reach. Such a state of isolation lasted until the end of the sixteenth century but with the new century conditions changed. On the one hand, the Society was then more experienced, its members having gone through the full Jesuit curricu-
lum in education possessed an excellent intellectual preparation and had the confidence of belonging to an institution that was active over four continents. On the other hand, the situation in Ethiopia turned more favourable for the mission. The Ethio-Portuguese mixed race group became a small but influential mercenary corps in the service of the negus and their offspring came to exercise a crucial role as intermediaries and culture brokers between local Ethiopians and the Europeans as well as supplying a pool of auxiliaries for the mission system. Moreover, long term intercourse with the Europeans had made some groups within Ethiopian society view the missionaries and the ideas they represented with sympathy. The use of a prosopographical analysis helped me to confirm that the Jesuits were, indeed, welcomed by a relatively large number of members of nobility and higher clergy. It was this blend of internal and external factors that assured the success of the second Jesuit mission.

In the second missionary term I distinguished, as other scholars have already done, between two periods. The first (1603-23) was headed by the brilliant figure of the Castilian Pedro Páez, and then the missionaries (not more than five) tried to maintain a low profile. They cultivated the friendship with a few selected figures (ite Maryam Sina, negus Susenyos, ras Se’elä Krestos, azzaj Tino, däjjazmach Qeba Krestos, among others) and slowly expanded the number of residences. The death in 1617 of abunä Sem’on and a number of figures who opposed the religious drift inspired by the missionaries in the court of Susenyos has been presented as a crucial moment of this period, for it cleared the way for a second period where the mission joined a more upfront stance with regards Ethiopian religion and society. In the early 1620s, the religious conflict between traditionalists and Catholics came to a head and as a consequence Susenyos officially recognised Catholicism as the state religion and Jesuits or Jesuit-friendly figures were placed at the top of the religious hierarchy. In the mid-1620s, the mission witnessed the arrival of the Patriarch Afonso Mendes, the expansion of the resources at the disposal of the missionaries and the start of ambitious missionary projects: a steady number of about twenty Jesuits were to manage as much as thirteen residences.

In the second, and central, part of the thesis I tried to show how the institutional framework of the mission functioned. A major focus has been to present the mission as a complex institution, which relied on the work of a well-prepared and coordinate group of men and on the commitment of local elites. Joining here a trend opened by Girma-Wolde and continued by Cohen and Pennec, I reassessed the role that is frequently attributed in historical literature to Páez and Mendes and showed that their pragmatical ap-
proaches differed not in view of divergent ideological commitments but of the fact that they worked in two overtly different socio-political moments. Moreover, I identified other determining figures in the missionary enterprise: within the Jesuits, such as António Fernandes, Luís Cardeira or Manoel de Almeida; and within Ethiopian society, such as a number of Ethio-Portuguese and members of court clergy, state structure and nobility. The conclusions from this part refute the idea that the missionaries helped Susenyos in enforcing political absolutism. Not only was Jesuit political ideology at odds with an absolutist form of government but there is no evidence of the missionaries ever trying to apply such principles in the Christian Ethiopian state. Instead, an alternative proposed here to understand Jesuit missionary praxis has been to focus in the Jesuit discourse as it can be gleaned from the missionary record. In particular, the Jesuits in Ethiopia seem to have been influenced by three figures, St. Ignatius, St. Paul and, in a small measure, also St. Leo the Great. Concepts such as the Ignatian redução, the Pauline neotestamentary praxis and the Leonine concern for the unity of the Church can explain in large part the approach and aims of the missionaries in Ethiopia.

The role of the cultural developments during the 1620s, which had its most spectacular expression in architecture, the scenic arts and painting has also been reviewed by focusing on aspects hitherto neglected in historical literature. On the one hand, I tried to provide an exhaustive survey of the imagery and objects imported by the Jesuits and interpreted them as elements of symbolic prestige (they brought beauty to the mission and surrounded the missionaries of ‘holiness’) and as means of non-verbal communication: as the Council of Trent had already stated, the truths of Catholicism should be more easily transmitted by the public display of religious symbols. On the other hand, I considered the important architectonic developments in the Lake Tana area as a typically Jesuitic patron-client undertaking; as art historians have already shown, the close relationship between the Jesuits and local patrons was crucial in the spectacular development of artistic works set up world wide by the Society of Jesus. An important task here, which has been only partially completed, was the identification of the architectonic models imported by the Jesuits. Whilst the transposition of the modo Goano – or rather Indiano if we take into consideration that the chief architectonic source in Ethiopia was the church of São Paulo in Diu and not that of the Bom Jesus in Goa – has been demonstrated, the importance that other models played could only be but outlined. Hence, although the evidence shown on parallelisms between Indian, and more in specific Mughal, architecture and the main missionary constructions (Gorgora Nova, Gänätä Iyäsus, Mertulä Maryam) is compelling, there is still
much work to be done in order to spell out exactly how the ‘cultural transfer’ between Mughal India and Ethiopia operated. A research into Indian and British archives – the Ethiopian documentation being in this particular nearly exhausted – could perhaps shed some important light onto this fascinating and still little known case of architectonic symbiosis. Last but not least, the conclusions from this analysis disprove the architectonic role the Ethio-Portuguese have been traditionally attributed in historical literature.

Finally, this study was aimed at addressing the reasons for the mission’s sudden collapse. I admit that there cannot be a definitive and univocal answer to such a complex question. Moreover, it can also be argued that like any human enterprise the mission was meant, at some point, to perish – even more so when this project was associated with a wide-reaching transformation of the local society according to foreign patterns. Yet, the fact that the mission’s dismissal arrived in Ethiopia at the very moment of its major expansion convinced me that something went, indeed, very wrong. There were, surely, many factors accounting for that and I may have, in the course of the analysis, overlooked a few of them. My intention has been, firstly, to show that a strong current of dissent to the mission and the leaders that backed it pervaded throughout the second mission period. Whilst the missionaries successfully attracted to their cause relevant figures, they were also seen in rather negative terms by a large part of Ethiopian Christianity. The Jesuits’ uncompromising opposition to circumcision, fasting and the Sabbath and the fostering of practices such as healings and exorcisms endangered their position within Ethiopian Christianity. Moreover, the more liberal spirit of the religion of the Europeans (frequent exhibition of religious images, acceptance of menstruating women in the mass, openness of the liturgy) contravened a deep-seated paradigm of coping with the sacred in Ethiopia, which rested on the mysterious and inscrutable. In the end, a long list of negative epithets abated over the missionaries (qwällafa, buda), adding up to their already problematic status as foreigners, i.e. Ferenj, and perturbators of the traditional order.

Secondly, I showed that missionary progresses during the 1620s backfired. The expansion which the mission experienced in this period and the enthusiastic support offered by figures such as Se’elä Krestos seem to have made the Jesuits overconfident about their own project and induced them to push demands up to limits that few Christian Ethiopians could assume. For instance, their dogmatic application of the Tridentine decrees supplied them with new opponents from within the Ethiopian nobility and the state structure, as the clashes on concubinage practices within the court manifested. More importantly, there was the economic issue. In the 1610s the Jesuit undertaking was, finan-
cially speaking, largely independent from local support; the colonial state in Goa and the
Spanish Crown sponsored the mission through financial support from royal treasures and
investment strategies in Diu. Under this context the Catholics appeared in the eyes of the
locals as generous present-givers and suppliers of basic needs: health care, education, pro-
tection against enemy raids and a mediation role with Jesuit-friendly authorities. However,
by the turn of the decade this financial system could no longer provide for the growing
needs of the mission and it was replaced by another that emphasized local support. In-
deed, the mismanagement of the funds in India and increasing demands from local pa-
trons pushed the mission to buttress its expansion from local contributions. Consequently,
in the 1620s the mission became de facto a branch of the Ethiopian state. The architectonic
constructions, infrastructure improvements and maintenance of an expensive cultural
‘programme’, all projects related to the Jesuit presence, were paid by Ethiopian contrib-
utors and, in the last instance, by the Ethiopian peasantry. In a land like Ethiopia, poor, ru-
ral and with a scarce concentration of resources such a scenario was, as I demonstrated,
unsustainable. In the views of many an Ethiopian, the missionaries were not only replac-
ing the religion of their ancestors but, as it is metaphorically expressed in local languages,
they were ‘eating the country’, accumulating lavish privileges, rents and donations. For all
that, in the early 1630s, the mission was a giant with feet of clay. Then, the removal from
office or the death of influential supporters and the eventual illness of Susenyos retrieved
the last resorts of local support the Jesuits counted with.

It is, nonetheless, a testimony to the power and influence of the mission that
Ethiopia preserved many of the innovations introduced by the Jesuits long after their de-
mise. The small surviving clusters of Catholic groups became the primary bearers of mis-
sion culture and a form of Ethiopian Catholicism continued to be practiced until at least
the coming to power of Yohannes I. Moreover, important missionary elements were in-
corporated by the Ethiopian monarchy and Church and turned into symbols of their own
‘Ethiopian’ identity. The famous Gondärine style of painting, which developed in the late
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, found its inspiration in the workshops and images
taken by the Jesuits. Thus, and most ironically, the truly Roman and Catholic icon of St.
Luke and such scenes typical of Catholic Christianity as Nadal’s Evangelicae Historiae Imagine
had a fulgurant success in entering the local imaginary, one which few missionaries would
have ever imagined. The Ethiopian monarchy also cherished the urban and architectonic
ideas that resulted from the Jesuit presence, thereby giving birth to such splendid creations
as the castles of Gondär. Therefore, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards the life of
the monarchy will develop in a urban landscape (Gondär) and within the walls of superb palaces, just as the Jesuits and Susenyos had imagined it. Finally, a more detailed study over local theological and historical literature might also shed light on the impact the mission had over Ethiopia’s religious life. Here, however, a hypothesis can still be proposed: contrary to the above mentioned arts, the impact the mission had over religious ideology seems to have gone in the opposite direction and rather than producing an opening of the religious fabric to foreign ideas it provoked a defensive retreat: the belief in the traditional religious dogmas might have been reinforced and the rites and practices once deemed wrong by the Jesuits strengthened. Yet, the new emphasis that the Ethiopian Church placed on defining theological dogmas had an indisputable Jesuit origin.

However, responsibility for the collapse of the mission cannot, by any means, be solely put on the shoulders of such extraordinary men as Pedro Páez, Manoel de Almeida or António Fernandes had been. Indeed, if we approach the issue from a broader perspective it might be noticed that the padrocho were not all alone in their mishap. The cases of the Japan and Mughal missions are strikingly similar to that which was presented here and could help us in contextually following the events in Ethiopia. The two missions had been, like the Ethiopian, among the most brilliant projects the Jesuits led in the Orient. In both countries the missionaries had seduced powerful lords and set up important Catholic bases and, likewise, the Jesuits and Catholics rapidly came to lose their privileges and face exile or martyrdom. In 1614, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the shogun who since 1603 ruled a newly centralized Japan, signed the Christian Expulsion Edict, which set the start to a period of persecutions and struggle for survival of small Catholic clusters that shows many parallels with what happened in Ethiopia in the 1630s and 1640s. In India, dismissal was less dramatic but equally radical, for the Jesuit-friendly policy of Emperor Jahangir was called off once his heir, the devoted Muslim Shah Jahan, accessed to power in 1627. Now, all these three missions had evolved under powerful states; they had been set up, largely, by the ‘caprice’ of enlightened potentates and could expand and succeed thanks to the capacity of Jesuit missionaries to seduce the monarchs, the nobility and state bureaucracy. My contention is that within such a socio-political context, the Jesuit presence was extremely fragile and at some point it also became undesired. As the foreign priests upgraded their status

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1 There is evidence that the three undertakings were placed in the same level by missionary decision-makers in India and Europe. For instance, there are a few recorded cases of missionaries being exchanged between at least two of these three missions: Melchior Carneiro, auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarch of Ethiopia João Nunes Barreto, became the first Jesuit Bishop in Japan; Oviedo was requested once to abandon Ethiopia and move to Japan and Antonio Montserrat was sent to Ethiopia after years of successful missioning at the Mughal court. Finally, Luís Cardeira
in the state structure, acquiring influence, privileges and friends, they progressively came to clash with some groups within the state structure that saw them as a threat – in Ethiopia we have identified such groups as those of the abetahun, the wäyzero and the wämbär, but there were probably others, such as the corps of azzaj and, obviously, traditional clergy and local governors. In such a context, jealousy, suspicion and the missionaries’ own ambitious drive turned against the Jesuit mission.

Yet, the fact that these three missions terminated within a few years of each other invites the scholar to look at another external cause. In the early seventeenth century the Estado da India was a mere shadow of what it had been in the previous century. The Portuguese Indian empire was shrinking by the day; it was buried in debts and led by inefficient and corrupt institutions; a polity in a state of decay after all, which neither could guarantee internal consensus (e.g. in the case of the struggle between the reinóis and indiáticos) nor face external challenges (Dutch, British, French, Mughal). The Jesuits, which had begun their most inspiring enterprises in the sixteenth century under the umbrella of a rising empire, could not rely now on this fact as an asset for attracting Oriental princes. Moreover, the Society itself was no longer the well-functioning machine of the past, as the cases of mismanagement and internal quarrels in the Indian Province attest. Most likely the Oriental lords that had appealed to them during the glory days of the Estado or the descendants of these ones noticed these changes and considered that maintaining the foreign priests in their courts, with all the efforts and risks this implied, was not going to pay off. Weapons, military aid, Oriental textiles, monumental architectonic projects, luxury goods and spiritual counseling, elements with which embellish the thirst of the cosmopolitan habits of princes and monarchs, could now flow through other intermediaries.

Therefore, being the first mission conceived by Ignatius of Loyola, the Ethiopian was also the last of the ‘imperial’ missions to expire. The mission in China continued unabated but there the Jesuits endured frequent hardships and had to accept important compromises. Hereafter, the changing conditions in the East drove the Jesuits to engage in more modest or safer enterprises, be this as the heads of the Astronomy Bureau in Qing China or in rural missions in the Indian countryside and Cohin China. Similarly, they were to call within its troop a more mixed collection of nationalities. A great, but fragile, missionary era had ended.

spent some years in the Mughal mission before becoming one of the most skilled effectives in Ethiopia.
Appendices
APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF ETHIOPIAN AND PORTUGUESE TERMS, 16TH – 17TH CENTURIES

Abba an Ethiopian honorific title applied to religious figures, such as monks, abbots.
Abeto, abetohun a male member of the Solomonic dynasty. In Portuguese texts it appears as abeteom.
Abun, abunä the Egyptian metropolitan sent by the Coptic Patriarchate of Alexandria to rule over the Ethiopian Church. In Jesuit literature it is often erroneously translated as patriarcha.
Afä mäkwännen an Ethiopian title, literally ‘breath of the dignitary’, the deputy of the Tegray mäkwänn- nen.
Amba in Ethiopia ‘mountain’, usually of difficult access. Frequently they have strategic importance and are used as military camps and safe havens.
‘Aqqabe sä’at literally ‘keeper of the hours’, the chief ecclesiastic at court, monitoring the monarch’s schedule and audiences. Often appears in Portuguese texts as cabeata.
Assistencia a group of provinces of the Society of Jesus headed by an assistente, who normally resided in Rome. The Portuguese was the geographically most extensive of the Society’s assistancies, consisting of five provinces and two vice-provinces in the kingdom of Portugal, its empire and the missions in Japan, China and Southeast Asia.
Ase, hase a term of address to the Christian Ethiopian ruler.
Azmach an Ethiopian state office. Literally ‘the one who leads’, commander of troops.
Azzaj an Ethiopian state office, literally meaning ‘commander’, a civil administrator, versed in both juridical and ecclesiastic issues and one of the highest offices in service at the royal court. In Portuguese texts transcribed sometimes as azage.
Bägerond an Ethiopian court office, chief of the court craftsmen or of the royal treasury.
Bahter nägash literally ‘ruler of the sea’, the governor of the northernmost Christian provinces in Ethiopia, near to the Red Sea.
Banian (Bengali) also banyan or banean, a Hindu trader, especially from the province of Gujarat.
Bäga the Ethiopian dry season (September to May/June).
Blattengeta literally ‘chief of pages’, an influential court office in command of a guards’ regiment that had been created at the time of Susenyos. Translated in Portuguese sources as mordomo mor, maestro do ar- royal, mestre de casa and defined as “the second person [in rank] after the Emperor”.
Buda in Ethiopia it refers to the evil eye, to the person with the power and sometimes the resulting afflictions in its victims.
Capitão, capitam in Spain and Portugal the highest military title in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The captain could lead a simple company of about 50 men or a larger formation with more than 1,000 men. In Ethiopia, also the leader of the Ethio-Portuguese militia.
Däbr, däbrä in Ethiopia literally ‘mountain’, normally designates the emplacement of a cloister or monastery.
Däbtära a non-ordained class of clergy in Ethiopia that play important roles within the church and society, such as scribes or specialists in buda and exorcisms.
Däjjazmach literally ‘rear-guard commander’, also ‘commander of the ruler’s door’, one of the highest Ethiopian military titles, in charge of corps of his own army and/or provinces.
Don, Dom a Portuguese and Spanish honorific title attributed to high-ranking figures: in Portugal to kings, royal family and clergy; in Spain to nobles and clergy.
Fitawrari a commander of an advanced detachment of a traditional Ethiopian army en march.
Gada an Oromo system of classes (laba) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each gada class remains in power during a specific term (gada) and before assuming a position of leadership it is required to wage war against a community that none of their ancestors had raided.
Galla a term designating the Oromo people until the mid-twentieth century.
General, Superior General the head of the Society of Jesus elected for life. In Portuguese sources often known as Preposito general, Superior Geral.
Gwelt in Ethiopia non-permanent rights to tribute over a piece of land given by the monarch.

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Ichegue title given to the abbot of Däbrä Libanos monastery in Shäwa, second in importance in the hierarchy of the Ethiopian Church after the abun.

Itege the title of the consort of the Ethiopian monarch, princess, queen. In Portuguese texts appears also as ître.

Käntiba a representative of the Ethiopian monarch in a small region, village.

Kätäma an Ethiopian royal encampment, normally temporary.

Liqä in Ethiopia, a learned person, scholar, doctor, expert.

Liqä mämheran in Ethiopia literally ‘master of masters’, the head of the scholars, doctors, one of the highest offices in the Ethiopian Church.

Kerent Ethiopian rainy season. In the highlands it spans from May/June to September.

Mestre title used in Portugal and Spain and normally accompanied by the person’s first name. Given to a doctor, surgeon, a teacher, someone with studies, a university degree.

Negus, negusä någäst the title of the Ethiopian ruler, equivalent to king. The Jesuits of the second mission period often translated it as Emperor.

Pasha an Ottoman title, commander of a port or province.

Pashalik the Ottoman jurisdiction or territory administered by a Pasha.

Professed a priest of the Jesuits who has taken three solemn vows and a fourth one of obedience to the pope. Only the solemnly professed may hold certain higher posts. Known often in Portuguese texts as profeso de cuatro votos.

Procurator a Jesuit in charge of managing in situ affairs concerning his mother house or Province.

Provincial the head of a province of the Society of Jesus nominated by the General. In the Jesuit Indian Province, the head was often called ‘Provincial of Goa’.

Qäññazmach literally ‘commander of the right’, one of the main commanders of army in Ethiopia, together with the däjjazmach and grazi mach.

Ras bitwäddäd literally the ‘beloved Prince’, the highest court noble rank in Ethiopia.

Rest in Ethiopia permanent or semi-permanent rights over a piece of land. Normally given by the monarch. Sometimes exchangeable for gwelt.

Sähafe lam an Ethiopian court position. In Portuguese texts rendered as veedor da fazenda.

Shefta a rebel, outlaw, bandit; it has a political connotation.

Spiritual Coadjutor a priest of the Jesuits who has taken three simple vows.

Tegray mäkwännen literally the ‘Lord of Tegray’, a governor of part of Tegray, sometimes sharing power with the baher någash.

Temporal Coadjutor a brother of the Jesuits with a wide variety of assignments: clerical, technical, household or farming duties. In Portuguese sources known as irmão.

Viceroy of India a title given in the first half of the sixteenth century only to a few governors of Portuguese India and from 1550 up to the eighteenth century to most of the governors.

Visorey a term employed in Jesuit sources to designate Ethiopian provincial lords. The term is a misnomer for not all lords carried the same title and in this study whenever Jesuit sources mention a visorey the more neutral term of governor is used. It follows a tentative list of equivalences between the visoreys of the most important regions and the actual Ethiopian titles: Visorey of Amhara=sähafe lam; Visorey of Bägemder=däjjazmach, xum; Visorey of Damot=lam saha, azmach; Visorey of Gojjam=Gojjam någash, ras; Visorey of Semen=xum Semen; Visorey of Tegray=Tegre Mäkwännen, däjjazmach, baher någash; King of Ennarya=xum Ennarya; King of Danakil=shakḥ Danakil.

Visitor a Jesuit office, held normally only for a limited number of years during which the holder had full power over a determined area (mission, province). Chosen by the General as his personal delegate it was intended to act as a link between him and the provinces.

Wämbär an Ethiopian office designating judges. In Portuguese sources the umbares are sometimes described as senadores do Visorey.

Wäyzero a female of Solomonic descent, of high rank or upper nobility. In Portuguese oziro, oizero.

Xum a title of the commander or lord of a region in Ethiopia. The office holds political as well as legal powers and some commanded an important army.
### APPENDIX 2: LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES IN THE RED SEA, INDIA AND EUROPE, CA. 1600-32

**Ottoman governors of the Eyalet el-Habesh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali Pasha</td>
<td>1594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Pasha</td>
<td>1602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen Beyerlebi Hasan Pasha-olj Mehmed Pasha</td>
<td>September 1604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmeh Pasha</td>
<td>1606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murtaza Pasha</td>
<td>September 1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayezid Pasha</td>
<td>1612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Pasha</td>
<td>1612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmud Pasha</td>
<td>1618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accem-zade(? Pasha</td>
<td>9 March 1621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Pasha</td>
<td>June 1622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aydin Pasha</td>
<td>1626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostarli Mustarla Pasha</td>
<td>1629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmeh Pasha</td>
<td>1640</td>
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**Jesuit Superiors and Procurators at Diu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaspar Soares</td>
<td>1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mendes</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Cerqueira</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Bautista</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco de Azevedo</td>
<td>1625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manoel de Sousa</td>
<td>1628</td>
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**Jesuit Provincials and Visitors in India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicolao Pimenta</td>
<td>1601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaspar Fernandez</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Vieira</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolao Pimenta, vis.</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jácome de Medeiros</td>
<td>1615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luís Cardoso</td>
<td>1620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André Palmheiro, vis.</td>
<td>1621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco de Vergara</td>
<td>1624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvaro Tavares</td>
<td>1632</td>
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</table>

**Governors and Viceroys of India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aires de Saldanha</td>
<td>1600-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martim Afonso de Castro</td>
<td>1605-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexio de Meneses</td>
<td>1607-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André Furtado de Mendonça</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rui Lourenço de Távora</td>
<td>1609-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerónimo de Azevedo</td>
<td>1612-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Coutinho, conde de Redondo</td>
<td>1617-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernão de Albuquerque</td>
<td>1619-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco da Gama, conde de Vidiguiera</td>
<td>1622-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luís de Brito</td>
<td>1628-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel de Noronha, conde de Linhares</td>
<td>1629-35</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Europe**

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan Correa</td>
<td>1601, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1604, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin de Melho</td>
<td>1607, vprov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerónimo Dias</td>
<td>1608, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio de Abreu</td>
<td>1627, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1629, vprov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego Monteiro</td>
<td>1629, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luís Lobo</td>
<td>1632, prov.</td>
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</table>

**Jesuit Superiors Generals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudio Acquaviva</td>
<td>1598-1615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzio Vitelleschi</td>
<td>1615-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe III (II in Portugal)</td>
<td>1598-1621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe IV (III in Portugal)</td>
<td>1621-40</td>
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</table>

**Portuguese kings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clement VIII</td>
<td>1592-1605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leão XI</td>
<td>1605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>1605-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory XV</td>
<td>1621-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>1623-44</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Popes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan Correa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1604, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin de Melho</td>
<td>1607, vprov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerónimo Dias</td>
<td>1608, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Alvares</td>
<td>1610, vis., prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Pêrcira</td>
<td>1614, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco de Gouveia, vprov.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1618, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro de Novaes</td>
<td>1621, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel Fernandez</td>
<td>1624, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1624, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António de Abreu</td>
<td>1627, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Mascarenhas</td>
<td>1629, vprov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego Monteiro</td>
<td>1629, prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luís Lobo</td>
<td>1632, prov.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: prov.=provincial; vprov.=viceprovincial; vis.=visitor, visitador; when only one date appears, it is meant the beginning of the term.

Sources: Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun güney Siyaseti. Habes Eyaleti* [“The southern policy of the Ottoman Empire: the Eyalet of Habesh”], Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1974; RASO X-XII.
## APPENDIX 3: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN RULERS IN EUROPE AND ETHIOPIA, 1509-1631

The present list aims at being an exhaustive register of all the letters, briefs, bulls and similar documents exchanged between ruling figures in Europe and Christian Ethiopia from the beginning of the Ethio-Portuguese contacts to the fall of the mission. The column to the right (“Sources”) lists the works where the documents have been published although it does not attempt to offer an exhaustive list of all the places where the documents have been published.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sender</th>
<th>Destinatary</th>
<th>Title/Opening words</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1509</td>
<td>Eleni</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Por esta levamos</td>
<td>Sends Mateus and proposes matrimonial alliance</td>
<td>Castanheira 1979, flic, III, ch. XVIII; Barreto 1988, 45-48; Bullarium I, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1514</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Bull Oratores Majestatis</td>
<td>Ethiopians are not so distant in the faith; ask them to drop circumcision</td>
<td>CDP I, 246-50; Bullarium I, 108-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1514</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Fazemos saber</td>
<td>Informs of arrival of J.Gomes and J.Sanches, departure of Mateus</td>
<td>Cortesão 1938, 123-24; Barreto 1988, 40-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10/1514</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Profissicent ad te</td>
<td>Recommends A.Corsali</td>
<td>Rainieri 2005, doc.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/05/1515</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Nuper, ex orantibus</td>
<td>Encourages to abandon circumcision</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 292-94; Alvarez 1540, part II, ch. VII; Barreto 1988, 48-52; Góis 1945, 133-42, 143-61; Correia 1976, vol. III, 52-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1520</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Esta carta mundo-vos</td>
<td>Asks to send craftsmen</td>
<td>Rainieri 2005, doc.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/1521</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Quam pro nostra</td>
<td>Informs about contacts with Prester John</td>
<td>CDP XI, 257-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/05/1521</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Quam pro nostra</td>
<td>Informs about contacts with Prester John</td>
<td>CDP XI, 257-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Cam superioribus amnis</td>
<td>Congratulates for union</td>
<td>CDP II, 51-54; Bullarium I, 123-26; Cortesão 1938, Apêndice C; Rainieri 2005, doc.10a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Church of Ethiopia</td>
<td>Bull Cam classis</td>
<td>Encourages union</td>
<td>CDP II, 34-55; Bullarium I, 127; Rainieri 2005, doc.10b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Eleni</td>
<td>Bull Cam nuper charissimus</td>
<td>Praises Eleni</td>
<td>Cortesão 1938, Apêndice D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Marqos, Patriarch</td>
<td>Ex alii nostris litteris</td>
<td>Offers protection and invites to recognize papal authority</td>
<td>Cortesão 1938, Apêndice E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Marqos, Patriarch</td>
<td>Brief Magnus Omnipotente</td>
<td>Sends craftsmen to Ethiopia and Portugal</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/09/1521</td>
<td>Leo X</td>
<td>Marqos, Patriarch</td>
<td>Bull Dandum signilum</td>
<td>Sends craftsmen to Ethiopia</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 129-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Hoc esse</td>
<td>Asks to send craftsmen</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 297-99; Barreto 1988, 55-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Eu, Rei</td>
<td>Asks for holy images and offers union</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 300-01; Barreto 1988, 58-60; Rainieri 2005, doc.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Has litteras ego Rex</td>
<td>Asks for holy images and craftsmen</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 130; Rainieri 2005, doc.12</td>
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<td>04/02/1525</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Bull Ductus est</td>
<td>Sends Jewish envoy of Arabia to make an alliance against Mosors</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 300-01; Barreto 1988, 60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/05/1532</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Sanctissim in Christo</td>
<td>Recommends Alvarez</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 302-03; Barreto 1988, 60-62</td>
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<td>28/01/1533</td>
<td>Francisco Alvarez</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Obedientiae Regis</td>
<td>Presents obedience</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 304</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/01/1533</td>
<td>Francisco Alvarez</td>
<td>Clement VII</td>
<td>Sanctissimus dominus</td>
<td>Short response to Ethiopian legacy</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 305</td>
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<tr>
<td>20/03/1539</td>
<td>Cardinal Alfonso</td>
<td>Lebnä Dengel</td>
<td>Ha haemgam</td>
<td>Criticizes Ethiopia’s “Judaic” practices</td>
<td>RASO X, doc.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/01/1541</td>
<td>Gálawelwos</td>
<td>Paul III</td>
<td>Audi pater noster</td>
<td>Asks for help</td>
<td>RASO X, 43-51; Rainieri 2005, doc.13; Duensing 1904</td>
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<tr>
<td>31/12/1543</td>
<td>Gálawelwos</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Estas carta è enviada</td>
<td>Reports on Castanheira</td>
<td>Castanheira 1898, doc. V; Kammerer 1949, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/05/1544</td>
<td>Paul III</td>
<td>Gálawelwos</td>
<td>Delectus filius Paulus</td>
<td>Proposes to send missionaries</td>
<td>Rainieri 2005, doc.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>13/03/1546</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Gálawelwos</td>
<td>Vi a carta</td>
<td>Complains about Bermudez</td>
<td>Andrade 1968, 442; Castanheira 1898, doc. VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/08/1547</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Batcheas de Faria</td>
<td>Davus ao sancto padre</td>
<td>Proposes to send a Patriarch to Ethiopia</td>
<td>CDP VI, 69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>06/12/1550</td>
<td>Galawdeos</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Omen e ponde</td>
<td>Explains the campaign of Christovão da Gama</td>
<td>Sousa, Anhs, 427; Castanhoso 1898, doc. VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/01/1554</td>
<td>Cardinal of Compostela</td>
<td>João III</td>
<td>Aqui e entendido la obra</td>
<td>Asks to consecrate 4/5 more bishops for Ethiopia not from Portugal</td>
<td>CDP XI, 554-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/01/1554</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Patriarch Barreto</td>
<td>Bull Cam nos super</td>
<td>Inaugurates Patriarchate</td>
<td>RASO X, doc. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/01/1555</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Patriarch Barreto</td>
<td>Bull Décima disponente</td>
<td>Defines rights and duties as Patriarchial cláusula</td>
<td>CDP XI, 558-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/01/1555</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Dignitaries for Ethiopia</td>
<td>Cedula provisit Ecclesiae</td>
<td>Election of Patriarch of Ethiopia</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/02/1555</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Patriarch Barreto</td>
<td>Brief Cam nos super</td>
<td>Gives rights to the Patriarch</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/02/1555</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Patriarch Barreto</td>
<td>Bull Cam nos super</td>
<td>Defines rights and duties of Patriarch and two coadjutor bishops</td>
<td>CDP XI, 560-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/02/1555</td>
<td>Julius III</td>
<td>Barreto, Oviedo, Carneiro</td>
<td>Brief Cam nos super</td>
<td>Dispenses from visita ad limina</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/02/1555</td>
<td>Ignacio de Loyola</td>
<td>Galawdeos</td>
<td>El sermonissimo rey</td>
<td>Invites to join the Catholic Church</td>
<td>Loyola 1997, doc. 143</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/03/1556</td>
<td>Paul IV</td>
<td>Galawdeos</td>
<td>Memores sumas</td>
<td>Presents the Catholic patriarch</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 189-90; RASO X, doc.15; Rainieri 2005, doc.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/08/1561</td>
<td>Pius IV</td>
<td>Oviedo</td>
<td>Audimins te</td>
<td>Asks to send an Ethiopian legate to the Council of Trent</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 202; RASO X, doc.33; Rainieri 2005, doc.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/08/1561</td>
<td>Pius IV</td>
<td>Minas</td>
<td>Beatissimi Apostolatum</td>
<td>Invites a legate to the Council of Trent</td>
<td>CDP IX, 321-25; RASO X, doc.32; Rainieri 2005, doc.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/1563</td>
<td>Pius IV</td>
<td>Dom Sebastião</td>
<td>Perseveximus enim</td>
<td>Recommends sending an expedition to help the Ethiopians</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1566</td>
<td>Pius IV</td>
<td>Oviedo</td>
<td>Ex litteris</td>
<td>Invites to leave the mission and go to Japan</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/1569</td>
<td>Pius V</td>
<td>Dom Sebastião</td>
<td>Cum ex venerabilis</td>
<td>Recommends sending an expedition to help the Ethiopians</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/1569</td>
<td>Pius V</td>
<td>Cardinal Henrique</td>
<td>Nuper ex</td>
<td>Recommends sending an expedition to help the Ethiopians</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/1571</td>
<td>Pius V</td>
<td>Dom Sebastião</td>
<td>Maximam et</td>
<td>Invites to write to Ethiopian King</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/1571</td>
<td>Pius V</td>
<td>Minas</td>
<td>Quaestion pro</td>
<td>Informs of victory at Lepanto</td>
<td>Bullarium I, 228; Rainieri 2005, doc.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/12/1578</td>
<td>Gregory XII</td>
<td>Cardinal Henrique</td>
<td>Libenter commendamus</td>
<td>Asks to protect the Portuguese in Ethiopia</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 228; Africa Pontificia, doc.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1579</td>
<td>Gregory XII</td>
<td>baibar någeš Yeshaq</td>
<td>Apostolici maneris</td>
<td>Invites to end disputes with the king</td>
<td>RASO X, doc. 100; Rainieri 2005, doc.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1579</td>
<td>Gregory XII</td>
<td>Galawdeos</td>
<td>Pastoralis officij</td>
<td>Invites to end disputes with Yeshaq</td>
<td>Rainieri 2005, doc.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/01/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Non putabamus alamam</td>
<td>Invites to end disputes with Yeshaq</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 230; Rainieri 2005, doc.25; Africa Pontificia, doc.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/01/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>baibar någeš Yeshaq</td>
<td>Multum nos</td>
<td>Invites to make peace with the king</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 231; Africa Pontificia, doc.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/01/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>M.Fernandez</td>
<td>Acceptimus a viris</td>
<td>Encourages the Jesuit M.Fernandes</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 232; Africa Pontificia, doc.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Roman ante</td>
<td>Will mediate with the King of Portugal</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 234; Africa Pontificia, doc.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>baibar någeš Yeshaq</td>
<td>Ex Joanne Baptista</td>
<td>Encourages to abandon the alliance with the Turks</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 235; Africa Pontificia, doc.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04/1380</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Sanctissimus Dominus</td>
<td>Encourages to take care of the Patriarchate</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 236; Africa Pontificia, doc.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/04/1384</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Binas jam litteras</td>
<td>Presents embassy of G.B.Britti</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 245; Rainieri 2005, doc.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11/1385</td>
<td>Gregory XIII</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>vos façar saber como</td>
<td>Congratulates for victory against Yeshaq</td>
<td>RASO X, doc. 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1567</td>
<td>Felipe II</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Por o ano passado</td>
<td>Offers help and asks to protect the Ethio-Portuguese</td>
<td>RASO X, doc. 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/02/1389</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Sixtus V</td>
<td>Cam nos in imperio</td>
<td>Proposes alliance with Spain; asks for missionaries and craftsmen</td>
<td>AGS, Libro 1551, 726v-727v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/06/1389</td>
<td>Särsä Dengel</td>
<td>Felipe II</td>
<td>Cam e bello</td>
<td>Offers alliance and to send the Viceroy of India to Massawa</td>
<td>AGS, Libro 1551, 722v-v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/06/1604</td>
<td>Zä Dengel</td>
<td>Clement VIII</td>
<td>Cam nos in imperio</td>
<td>Proposes alliance with Spain; asks for missionaries and craftsmen</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 308; RASO III, 247-48; Rainieri 2005, doc.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/06/1604</td>
<td>Zä Dengel</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Cam e bello</td>
<td>Offers alliance and to send the Viceroy of India to Massawa</td>
<td>Bullarium II, 309; RASO III, 249-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Ya’elogb</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Moxo tem po ha que</td>
<td>Requests help against the Oromo</td>
<td>Lost doc., mentioned in RASO III, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Ya’elogb</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Moxo tem po ha que</td>
<td>Requests help against the Oromo</td>
<td>Lost doc., mentioned in RASO III, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/10/1607</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Moxo tem po ha que</td>
<td>Requests help against the Oromo</td>
<td>Guerreiro 1611, 31v; RASO III, 402-03; VI, 197-98; Rainieri 2005, doc.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/10/1607</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>A causa principal</td>
<td>Offer of friendship</td>
<td>Guerreiro 1611, 32v; RASO VI, 199-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Sender</td>
<td>Destinatary</td>
<td>Title/Opening words</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td>Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/03/1609</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Quamvis semper</td>
<td>Offer of friendship</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 310; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 239-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/06/1609</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Che con grande</td>
<td>Asks for mediation to receive help from Spain</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/06/1610</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Abhaim voluto che</td>
<td>Inform of victory over the Oromo</td>
<td><strong>RASO I,</strong> doc.3-1; <strong>RASO XI,</strong> 204-05; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/01/1611</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Gratias agimus</td>
<td>Offers moral support</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 18; <strong>RASO III,</strong> 436-37; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 240-41; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02/1611</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>nesci nos alegramos</td>
<td>Offers moral support</td>
<td><strong>RASO III,</strong> 487-88; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 310-11; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/01/1613</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Accepiimas, Pater</td>
<td>Offers religious obedience</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 311; <strong>RASO III,</strong> 434-39; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 2-24-43; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/01/1613</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Deposi que o todo</td>
<td>Requests military help</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 312, <strong>RASO III,</strong> 440-41; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 244-45; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/02/1613</td>
<td>Se’elä Krestos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Sicut dicit</td>
<td>Requests military help to Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/02/1613</td>
<td>Se’elä Krestos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Vendo eu que</td>
<td>Requests military help</td>
<td><strong>RASO VI,</strong> 245-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02/1614</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Multum gravissi sumus</td>
<td>Shows joy over victories <strong>Oromo</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/06/1614</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Esta paz seja</td>
<td>Petition of help to Spain</td>
<td><strong>RASO III,</strong> 488-89; <strong>VI,</strong> 311; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/07/1614</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Claudio</td>
<td>Abbiamo ricercato la vostra</td>
<td>Petition of help</td>
<td><strong>RASO I,</strong> doc. III-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/07/1614</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Acquaviva</td>
<td>Mutia cesex esseceamus</td>
<td>Petition of military help</td>
<td><strong>RASO VI,</strong> 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/02/1615</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Por cartas que tive</td>
<td>Asks to keep supporting the mission</td>
<td><strong>RASO VI,</strong> 312-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/1615</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Seis anos continuos</td>
<td>Petition of military help</td>
<td><strong>RASO I,</strong> doc. III-3; <strong>RASO XI,</strong> 360-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/03/1616</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Haeetus delectus filius</td>
<td>Inform of A.Fernandes did not arrive to Rome</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/07/1616</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Cosimo deMedici</td>
<td>Vuestra carta, amado</td>
<td>Petition of support</td>
<td><strong>RASO I,</strong> doc. III-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/12/1616</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>In genti quidem animi</td>
<td>Congratulates him and promises help</td>
<td><strong>RASO III,</strong> 491-93; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 314-15; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/03/1617</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Nuncio cebis</td>
<td>Promises military support</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/07/1618</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>o que nos deve cede</td>
<td>Petition of help</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 313; <strong>RASO III,</strong> 493-94; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 315-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/1618</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe III</td>
<td>pelos padres da Comp.</td>
<td>Petition of help</td>
<td><strong>RASO III,</strong> 494-95; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 317-18; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11/1619</td>
<td>Paul V</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Langissimo quidem tertorum</td>
<td>Requests to be patient on Rome</td>
<td><strong>RASO III,</strong> 496-97; <strong>RASO VI,</strong> 318-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/04/1621</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Felipe IV</td>
<td>Mas sentimos el dilatarse</td>
<td>Petition of military help</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1622</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Nuno Mascarenhas</td>
<td>Ha doze annos</td>
<td>Petition of Patriarch and mediation for help</td>
<td><strong>Patriarch</strong> 202-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/05/1624</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Gregorius XV</td>
<td>Vehementer lautaet semus</td>
<td>Rejoices for the election of the Patriarch</td>
<td><strong>RASO XII,</strong> 46-48; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>Felipe IV</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Nani flaminis</td>
<td>Praises his efforts in religion; concedes Giubilar indulgence to Ethiopia</td>
<td>Text not found; rfr. in <strong>RASO XII,</strong> 438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02/1627</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Bull Pastoralis officii</td>
<td>Concedes Giubilar indulgence</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 42; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.44; <strong>Africa Pontificia,</strong> 40; <strong>RASO XII,</strong> 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/08/1627</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>people of Ethiopia</td>
<td>Vici Deus</td>
<td>Thanks Meneles and the Jesuits for their work</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 46; <strong>Africa Pontificia,</strong> doc. 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/1628</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>Mendes</td>
<td>Vehemontium lautaet semus</td>
<td>Invites to promote Catholicism</td>
<td><strong>Bullarium II,</strong> 47; <strong>RASO XII,</strong> 422; <strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.46; <strong>Africa Pontificia,</strong> doc. 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/12/1630</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>Fašálášas</td>
<td>Opulencia Nili</td>
<td>Congratulates for victories</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/02/1631</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>Susenyos</td>
<td>Gratias aginac Do</td>
<td>Praises his Catholic zeal</td>
<td><strong>Rainieri</strong> 2005, doc.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/02/1631</td>
<td>Urban VIII</td>
<td>Se’elä Krestos</td>
<td>Audiji Roma soritius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4: RULING FAMILIES IN ETHIOPIA AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND THEIR DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS, 1434-1632

Legend:
- △ male
- ○ female
- — siblings
- — filiation
- = alliance
- Fasiladás ruler
- Spanish royal lines
- Portuguese royal lines
- Diplomatic contacts
APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF SUSENYOS [TO NUNO MASCARENHAS, JESUIT PROVINCIAL IN PORTUGAL, CA. 1622/23]

Description:
The present document is a letter that negus Susenyos sent to Europe and that does not appear to have been published before. Neither the date nor the destinating appear in the manuscript but these can be inferred from the text. The date should be set between the late 1622 and early 1624. The terminum post quem is deduced from the mention of the death of Páez (20 May 1622) and the terminum ante quem comes from the fact that the sender asks for a Catholic Patriarch, of which election the negus should have been informed with the arrival to Fremona of the group of four missionaries headed by Manoel de Almeida in January 1624. Moreover, the recipient is deduced from the use in the text of the peerage V.R. (i.e. Viessa Reverencia), which in the letters sent from Ethiopia was only applied to the Provincial of Portugal, at that time Nuno Mascarenhas (1615-37).2

The document was issued at a time when Susenyos had already publicly declared his allegiance to the mission and to Catholicism. The document complements the group of about fifteen letters (cf. Appendix 3) that between 1607 and 1624 Susenyos sent to Europe pressing for the dispatch of more missionaries and the Catholic Patriarch. Here the negus summarizes the main advances and setbacks of the mission, regrets the death of Páez and presses the Portuguese Provincial to lobby in Rome for the cause of the Catholic Patriarch. Its main interest lies in the reverence with which the author talks about his friend and close advisor Pedro Páez. With the memory of the latter’s death perceptibly fresh in his mind, he speaks of the Spaniard as “most perfect and righteous” (perfeitissimo penitente e Virtuoso), “father of our soul, transparent sun of our faith, who brought the light to Ethiopia and took it out from darkness” (pai de nossa alma, claro sol da fé, que aluminou a ethiopia das tenebras). Such a metaphorical and poetic rhetoric has to be taken as a genuine expression of the attachment that existed between the two figures and, for that matter, also encourages us to think whether Páez ‘substitute’ – the Patriarch Afonso Mendes – was able at all to fill such a great loss. I could not ascertain whether this was the original document or not, though in all likelihood the text was written in Portuguese. In its composition probably participated Jesuit priests, António Fernandes being the likeliest candidate for at the time he was the head of the mission and the man who frequented Susenyos the most at his court in Dänqäz.

The transcription of the text presented problems due to a poor handwriting. Therefore, a few words that could not be identified are distinguished by question marks in square brackets. In the transcription I have preserved the original spelling and the abbreviations used by the author.

Location:
ARSI, Goa 39 I, 232r-v.

Text:
Carta do emperador de Etiopia
/232r/ Carta do emp.dor Seltan Sagued por graça de deos Rey de Etiopia, que tem e cre aver duas naturezas em huna pessoa de x.o N. S. sem se confundirem e mesturar em, sem se dividirem e sem se perderem. E despois que começamos a aver esta Fee convem a saber que hâ em hum X.º duas naturezas sem se confundirem e mesturar em, e juntamente duas vontades em hum concordia. Há doze annos, por tanto, o veneravel p.e Luís Cardoso, cuja fama chegou a esta terra da Ethiopia, se enviou esta carta a V. R. que lhe declarava lo de q. temos necessidade, e para proveito das almas. 1º temos mandado m.tos recados e cartas m.tas vezes aos p.es e ao nosso Srimo. pontefice, cabeça da Igrja, q. esta na cadeira de S. Pedro de Roma, a quem estão sogeiros os quatro sedes [lata e deata?], pello poder que lhe deu o senhor do poder nosso sumo sacerdote, e se mandar foi desta manera primeiro mandamos ao P.e Ant.º Fernandes e nosso enviado por via de marca [abba Marca], per a nos trazerem varuos famosos, e patriarca, e sabios e muitos padres socorro e officiaes, porem [?] por lhes impedir o caminho hum senhor mouro depois mandamos por outro caminho outros nossos criados, os quaes achando impedimento na passagem tornaro a nos, e desta maneira mandamos mtas. vezes muitos criados pera que os alcansase, trabalhando nos tanto pera isso. O segundo, he de morte do perfeitissimo penitente e Virtuoso R.do P.e

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2 E.g. Azevedo, 1624, in: RASO XII, doc. 30 and Almeida, 1624, ibid. doc. 31.
I

IN THE COMPANY OF I

YÁSUS:

THE

JESUIT MISSION IN ETHIOPIA, 1557-1632

Pº Paes, pai de nossa alma, claro sol da fé, que aluminou a etíopia das trevas e [despois?] que se eclipsou, e por este nosso sol achamos tristeza em lugar de alegria, e pranto em lugar de contentamento. E tal pranto qual fui a del Alexandrina pella morte de s. marco, e tal sentimento qual a de Roma no fallecimento de S. Pº e S. Paulo; mas que falleremos e contarem os vertudes deste apostolo, de dentro e de fora, humil, de leve, "em suas e palavras. Se o papel fora tamanho como [ouo?] la tinta como o mar, ouvera nos de parecer que nam bastaria p.ª fazer escrever a fama de suas bondades, proveitos e regras; enfim, o que concevo não se pode colher as flores que se espalharam, e nem tornar o dia que passou, nem se receber agua que se entornou. Por tanto, pedimos e instamos a V. R. que nos ponha toda a diligencia em nos fazer vir patriarcas por socorro, porque depois que descansou este nosso mestre p.e pº paes, boa de bemções que descassa em pas, se entendeo a fé apostolica e a recebero a mor parte de etíopia, os grandes della e s.res ós doutores e mestres, e não temos nenhua nescidade para acabar de indereitar esta fé, mais que patriarcha que dem ordens, alen diso não tem conto a gentilidade que se tem feito christão pelos mãos dos p.es, e querendo deos nos vir na cara e patriarcas, sejam homens bens que impidam nossa lastima e nos conselem com sua doutrina e boa disciplina, p.º que nos os sigamos com sua bondade, e nos (?) se alunie com a luz de sua doutrina, como a comezo a luniar aquelle apostolo todo louuauel q com sua morte amargurou [sic] nossas alegrias, e se viaram patriarcha somente sem socorro venhal por Zéila, porque nos ahijos receberemos m.to pelos amigos estamos em pas com o Rey de [?], mas se hirírem com gente d’armas [??] para aquel negocio llamamos a V. R. por medianteiro em lo negoceem toda a dili-
gencia por nos, afastandos da cadeira da alexandria, por saber nos sua heregia e obedecemos de todo nosso coração a sede Romana. Porque entendemos deceiros a verdade de sua fé. O 4º ponto desta carta he contar g.des guerras e levantamentos q tevemos e por Rezam de nssa. fé grandemente se elevaou Julio casado /232v/ com nossa filha, com o patriarca Simão vindo contra nos ed m.to gente de cauallo, porem de mas entrega e morrerão elles com seus criados, depois se elevaou outro nosso vasalo por nome caflo, o que era a segunda pessoa abaixo de nos, e de nos este tambem nos entregou deos nas nossas mãos e depois deste rebelou outro nosso criado jonael, a quem tinha nos feitoVisorey de Bagomediou, com muita gente, e entrou nos galas, e se viua com [Sui]Rey mourou, e elevaou contra nos Rey falso a este tambem nos entregou deos nas nossas mãos porque lhe não contentou sua traça e fé [?], e a todos os seus enemios escatou da morte dos nossos, porem em tantos aleavimentos. e guerras em que tanto delles morreram; nenhum [?] todas estas victo-
rías nos deu deos por rezan da verdadeira fé, e porque muitos viram estas cousas maravilhousas, e como dono [??], receberem esta Santa fé sem doulhe contrarias per ignorancia das [?] e creaturas, e os [??] da inveja de [satana?], porem iudando q estaria deos no seu [?], e q não auria dos contrarios quem posde contra nos por rezão da alteza e nobrezza de esta fé, e por pouca que obrou maravilhous em seres siervos [?] o esse seogitarão pelo que não se esquesa V. R. em tudo o q poder de nos para [?] o que começou, e V. R. nos faça comprir estes desejos.
## APPENDIX 6: NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL RULERS IN CHRISTIAN ETHIOPIA, 1603-36

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Negus</th>
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<th>Bahar</th>
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Sources: see Appendix 10
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APPENDIX 7: JESUIT MISSIONARIES IN ETHIOPIA, 1555-1632 (listed by year of arrival)
<table>
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<th>Surname, name and year of arrival in Ethiopia</th>
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<th>Birth place</th>
<th>Birth date</th>
<th>Death place</th>
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<td>Civitella del Tronto, Italy</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>Desert of Assa, Ethiopia</td>
<td>1640</td>
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<td>Lisboa, Portugal</td>
<td>1595</td>
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<td>1634</td>
<td>St. Aleixo, Moura, Portugal</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>Goa, India</td>
<td>1656</td>
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<td>Velasco, João de 1625</td>
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<td>Fuenterrabia, Spain</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>Diu, India</td>
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<td>Viana do Alentejo, Portugal</td>
<td>1602</td>
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<td>Cârnide (Nossa Señora da Luz), Portugal</td>
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<td>Tana, Ethiopia</td>
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<td>Cella d'Alcobaça, Portugal</td>
<td>1601</td>
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Sources: see Appendix 10; Oswald, “Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1655”, Appendix; Pennec, De jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean, 178, 317; Sommervogel, Bibliothèque.
### APPENDIX 8: INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTION DURING THE MISSION, 1611-32

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<td>Gonçalves</td>
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Note: the editions mentioned here refer to the first editions and not necessarily to those used by the Jesuits in Ethiopia

Legend: tr.=translation; cmp.=composition; amd.=amendment; Amh=Amharic; Ptg=Portuguese

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APPENDIX 10: THE ETHIOPIAN NOBILITY AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MISSION, 1603-32

Legend and symbols:
1=also cousin of Susenyos
2=also married to Walatta Haywariy
3=ancestor of Dekama Mesfin, Binyos, Yemane Krestos, Demeit, Krestos, and others
4=also fathered Kebra Krestos
5=granddaughter of Sarsa Dengel
6=son of Guatif Seno also identified as husband of Walatta Giyorgis and as father Fasilidas

- male
- female
- unknown
- marriage
- alliance
- family
- favorable to the mission
- contrary to the mission
- not positioned/unknown
- relationship
APPENDIX 11: CHART ON THE STANCE OF THE ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY TOWARDS THE JESUIT MISSION, CA. 1607-32

Description:
The table here displayed tries to illustrate the attitude of the Ethiopian society towards the mission during the rule of Susenyos (1607-32). The table is based on a list of 148 Ethiopian actors who lived during this period and whose activities are reported in sources, mostly in the missionary record. The vertical Y axis shows in a scale 1 to 9 their attitude towards the mission: 1 being a most negative attitude and 9 being an absolute accord with the Jesuit predicaments; 5 stands for a neutral stance. The horizontal X axis (scale 1 to 10) shows their position in the social scale: 1 being a person of modest position and 9 being the highest figure in Ethiopian society, in that case the negus.


Methodology:
The table has been based on a database on Ethiopian figures – one of the three databases I have used during the dissertation. The whole database comprises 354 names; 201 of them are figures who were active during the second Jesuit mission (1603-32), though only 148 of them have been taken into consideration. Figures from the first mission period (1557-93) and those who first appear in sources under the rule of Fasilädäs (1632-67) were ruled out. An exception, however, was made when considering figures who were active during the second mission but who revealed their political and religious preferences when the mission was dismissed (e.g. abetohun Zä Iyäsus, xam Shire Täklä Sellus). I assumed that these figures had already hosted the same views (pro and contra the mission) during the time of activity of the Jesuits, though perhaps in a more concealed way. Moreover, I only considered figures whose attitude towards the mission and Catholicism is reported in the sources. A number of actors (roughly about 50 in the database) maintained a neutral attitude towards the mission, or eventually, their opinions have not been transmitted in the sources. Including them in the
table would have distorted the present aim of showing the divide that the mission provoked in the Ethiopian society. For this reason, it is important to be aware that about 25 % of the actors with whom the Jesuits interacted between 1607-32 are not represented in the table.

In order to use quantitatively the data according to the two parameters here employed (attitude towards the mission and placement in the social scale) I applied a number of values. This task represented obvious difficulties: sources were not always accurate and the actors' attitude towards Catholicism was in some instances ambivalent. Moreover, Ethiopian social scale was at the time nowhere as fixed as to render quantification work easy. For these reasons, the results shown here should be taken as indicating a tendency rather than as providing a precise sociological picture of the Ethiopian society during the rule of Susenyos. This exercise in historical sociology is meant to complement rather than substitute the historical narrative provided in this dissertation.

In order to establish the position of each historical actor within the Ethiopian social 'scale' I have applied the following values:

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<td>ras</td>
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<td>abuna/ichage</td>
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<td>baher nāgash</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>governor/ruler region</td>
<td>6/7</td>
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<td>dājjazmach</td>
<td>5/7</td>
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<td>liqā mâmheran</td>
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<td>'aggabe sâ'at</td>
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<td>abetohun</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>nebrâ 'ed</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>xum</td>
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<td>regional rebel</td>
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<td>azzaj</td>
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<td>iće</td>
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<td>abba</td>
<td>3/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>sâhafe lam</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>azmach</td>
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<td>wâyzero</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>fitawrari</td>
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<td>relative negus</td>
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<td>abba</td>
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Additionally, if the person held more than one office (e.g. blattengeta and dājjazmach, such as in the case of Sârsâ Krestos) or was married to an important person (i.e. a wâyzero or abetohun) I have sometimes added a value of one to two points.

To quantify the attitude shown by every figure towards the mission and the political-religious reforms set out by Susenyos I used the biographical information stored in the database. Those who participated in Jesuit-related activities and who showed their full commitment to the missionaries (e.g. ras Se’elâ Krestos, negus Susenyos, azzaj Tino) received a value of 8-9. Those who are reported as endorsing the Jesuit presence and religious ideas, to be their friends or who were said to having been “reduced” (i.e. abba Kellâ Krestos, the governor of Tegray Amusalâ Krestos) receive a value of 6 to 7. Values 1 to 4 were given to people who in one way or another opposed the Jesuit presence and religious reforms. Here I again distinguished among those who were active opponents (i.e. blattengeta and Gojjam nagash Keflo, the Saint Wâllättät Petros, ite Hamälmal Wärq; values 1-2), from those who were ‘passive’ opponents (e.g. wâyzero Sophia) or who, whilst having opposed the mission at some point, were also ready for a compromise (i.e. wâyzero Wângelawit, azzaj ‘Asqâ Häwaryat; values 3-4).

Analysis:

The table shows that the division caused by the Jesuit presence in Ethiopia affected all the layers of the Ethiopian society. The missionaries and Susenyos had supporters and friends across the whole social and political scale: they were backed by influential governors as well as by simple monks and priests. Nevertheless, it is apparent that they found an important group of supporters at the centre of the socio-political hierarchy. Therefore, of all the supporters of the mission (83 figures or 56 % of the total), nearly a third of them (31 %) are situated half-way through the socio-political scale. This group was largely composed of court officers (e.g. 'aggabe sâ'at Bakimo, azzaj Tino), higher clergy (e.g. abba Zâ Manuel of Dätbrâ Selalo, abba Gorgoryos of Mechreqa) and local lords (xum Asma Giyorgis of Amba Sânnyati, xum Fequr Mika‘el of Tämhen). Similarly, the Jesuits found numerous supporters in a layer immediately inferior, particularly in the rank of the abetohun, the male descendants of royal line (e.g. Yámanâ Ab, Yostos, Be‘elâ Krestos).

Among the enemies and opponents of the mission (62 figures or 42 % of the total) all the socio-political layers seem to be represented as well. Here, though, there are some interesting nuances. A considerable number of the mission’s antagonists (37 %) came from the upper socio-political echelons. This agrees with the data displayed in the Chapter 7: the Jesuit project faced the strongest opposition from powerful governors and ambitious abetohun (e.g. blattengeta and Gojjam nagash Keflo,
däjjaznach Särsä Krestos, blattengeta and abetohun Mälke’a Krestos) who aspired to replace Susenyos as negus of Ethiopia. Similarly, opposition formed in lower though also influential echelons, represented largely by local rebels (e.g. Qwärif Seno, Adäro Maryam), priests (Ammeha Giyorgis) and wäyzero (Eskendrawit).

A few conclusions can be drawn from the data above. Firstly, the mission found a strong basis of support among members of Ethiopian state ‘intelligentsia’. As we observed above, learned clergy and able court officials found the work and the ideas represented by the Jesuit padres attractive and worth being embraced. As a hypothesis explaining their choice we could think that these actors, deprived of royal blood or noble descent, saw the meritocratic system (based in learning, intellectual and cognitive skills) that the Jesuits wanted to establish as an advantage. In a state where the higher positions were traditionally occupied by the abetohun and people of royal blood, the introduction of Jesuit religious and political ideals (which were respectful towards the traditional social order but also emphasized efficiency, good government and dynamism) represented a clear opportunity for the fittest and cleverer minded. These groups, we may assume, had all the chances to improve their conditions under an Ethiopian Catholic state.

In a similar way, a number of the religious traditionalists (wäyzero, aznach and governors of royal descent) were also those who had more reasons for being faithful to the traditional political order. They believed (with some degree of true) that a radical change in the religious sphere (which is what the missionaries aimed at) would entail parallel changes in the socio-political order and eventually curtail their traditional privileges.

Nevertheless, the different responses that the Jesuits encountered in Ethiopia cannot be uniquely explained by looking at social factors. Indeed, the ‘trends’ indicated above (pro-Jesuitic groups among state officials and learned clergy and anti-Jesuitic factions among the abetohun, wäyzero and local governors) face also counterexamples: as we indicated, the missionaries were supported by a number of abetohun and wäyzero and their opponents included important ‘intellectuals’, such as abba Täklä Haymanot, who grew up with the missionaries and was made abbot of the monastery of Mechreqa. Dissent and support to the mission criss-crossed the entire socio-political landscape. Therefore, we must also assume that subjective and ideological reasons were equally determining factors in orienting the Ethiopians’ response to the mission. Nevertheless, what is certain is that the upper and learned classes were evenly split in their attitude towards the mission. This guaranteed some support to the mission beyond those already granted by Susenyos and Se’elä Krestos and certainly encouraged the missionaries in stepping up their social and religious reforms. However, the forces the missionaries gathered were not enough to cushion their project in the medium- and long-term against the opposition and scepticism that their activities would necessarily provoke in the conservative Christian Ethiopian society. The Jesuit missionaries thus managed to seduce a large portion of the Ethiopian elites but they did not manage to win the hearts of all the society.
APPENDIX 12: PORTUGUESE FAMILIES IN ETHIOPIA, 1541-CA. 1650

Legend:

- male
- female
- alliance
- siblings
- descendants
- hypothetical relationship

Plates credits

Plate Ia: Photo 2005, Andreu Martínez.
Plate IIa: British Library, e3679-05, Add. 5415 A, f. 15v.
Plate IIIa: Giancarlo Rocca (dir.), *Dizionario degli istituti di prefezione*, vol. 2, Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1975, 1288 face.
Plate IIIb: Jacques Mercier, *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesv fvndatoris ad uiuum expressa ex ea quam P. Petrus Rebadeneyra ...,* Paris; Jean Le Clerc, 1612; in: BUB, Fons Antic, 0700 CM.
Plate IVa: British Library, Or. 12208, f. 298.
Plate IVc: Alonso de Ledesma, *Conceptos espirituales y morales de ...,* ca. 1606 [manuscript lacks front and back cover and credit pages]; in: Centre Borja, St. Cugat, Barcelona.
Plate Va: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Vb: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Vc: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Va: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Vb: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Vc: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
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Plate Vii: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Vili: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate Viii: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate IXa: www.archiafrika.org; last visit: 20 November 2007.
Plate IXb: www.alivepakistan.com; last visit: 20 March 2008.
Plate Xa: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
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Plate XIIc: Photo 2006, Andreu Martínez.
Plate XIIIa: Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, fig. 8.7.
Plate XIIIa: RASO I, doc. VI [facsimile reproduction of British Library, add. 9861, Ms. *Historia de Ethiopia a alta, ecc.*].
Plate XIIIb: Sächsische Landes und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Mscr. E415e, Bd. 2, Bl. 147v [also reproduced in Robert Grumme, *Land and society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: from the thirteenth to the twentieth century*, Urbana [u.a.]: Univ. of Illinois Press [u.a.], 2000, 70].
Plate XIVa: Georg-August-Universität Göttingen-Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, HG-OR1, 2 H AFR 1430 [Ethiopian faces erased in the original].
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