

tic rules. In the prison he had to change from an “extensive” style of reading to an “intensive” one. He did not have Internet access there and was permitted to have only a few books with him on a continual basis. So he started to create his own *Četii Sborniki*. In some notepads he wrote down by hand the most important fragments of the monastic literature. He prepared detailed summaries of the book of Abba Dorotheus of Gaza and the *Ladder* by Saint John Climacus. In addition he wrote down excerpts from other books and articles. The average length these excerpts was between 1/3 and 1/4 of a page although longer fragments are also present. Such sets of abstracts from monastic literature gathered for spiritual needs can be considered to be centon collections according to Gritsevskaya’s terms.

Irina Gritsevskaya has succeeded in introducing a very interesting and promising subject, making this a book that those studying monasticism or intellectual history should include on their shelves and in their readers.

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A LONELY CHURCH AS A SYMBOL OF FAITH AND POWER

Dorothea McEwan, *The Story of Dāräsge Maryam. The history, building and treasures of a church compound with a painted church in the Semen Mountains, Zürich, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013, 179 p., 73 figs., 4 fold-outs. ISBN 978-3-643-90408-9.*

Dorothea McEwan, a tireless explorer of Ethiopian art, both *in situ* and in European archives, has published a monograph study dedicated to an important Church centre in Ethiopia: Dāräsge in the Semen Mountains in the North. The church of the Theotokos, Dāräsge Maryam remains an important centre of pilgrimage to the present day. But this church (completed in 1852) was constructed with another, quite ambitious, purpose: to become the main cathedral of the newly established Church capital of the unified Ethiopia — this

dream of its builder, *däggazmač*¹ Webe (ca 1800–1867) was never accomplished.

Alongside the church, the study is dedicated to two German protégés of Webe, the botanist Georg Wilhelm Schimper and the artist Eduard Zander, who helped in its construction. The author has worked in archives with their papers, and she uses their unpublished writings, drawings, and photos in the book.

I would like to note, *en passant*, that the phenomenon which I call “the Church capital” is somewhat specific to the Ethiopian civilisation, because the Ethiopian “Church capital” (the settlement around the main cathedral of the country) was normally distinct from the civil state capital. Ethiopian civilization did not incorporate cities for centuries, and its “civil capital” could be a moving military camp of the Emperor. Nevertheless, since the seventeenth century, the civil capital city became Gondär, and Gondär would keep this status up to the fall from power of *däggazmač* Webe in 1855. The Church capital, however, changed during this period. Until the time of Webe, the main centre of the Ethiopian church was Qwesqwam near Gondär with its Maryam church which had been established by Empress Mentewwab in the 1730s. The new centre of Däräsge Maryam replaced the former but imitated it in many respects.²

Webe was a powerful feudal figure in the North of Ethiopia during the final phase of the so-called *Zämänä mäsaḥant* (“Epoch of Judges”), 1769–1855; its name, taken from the biblical Book of Judges, alludes to an extreme feudal fragmentation during which there was no emperor. During this period, Webe’s accession to the vacant throne of the *nəgusä nəgäst*, that is, the Emperor of the whole Ethiopia, seemed very likely. This is why he constructed this new church of Mary for

(1) An ancient title that became, in the 19th cent., equivalent to “prince.”

(2) The relation of Däräsge Maryam to the Maryam church in Qwesqwam has been investigated in an earlier study by Robin McEwan (edited posthumously by his wife Dorothea) dedicated to the two illuminated Ethiopian Apocalypses: R. MCEWAN, *Picturing the Apocalypse at Gondär: A Study of the Two Known Sets of Ethiopian Illuminations of the Revelation of St John and the Life and Death of John*, ed. by D. MCEWAN, Torino, 2005; cf. my review (“The Third Level of Ethiopian Commentaries on the Apocalypse: Illuminated Manuscripts”) in *Scr* 4 (2008), pp. 442–445. There are only two illuminated Apocalypses of John in Ethiopic, those of Qwesqwam and Däräsge Maryam, the latter being patterned after either the former or an unknown but very similar manuscript.

his own coronation. Nevertheless, in February 1855, he lost the decisive battle (at Dāräsge!) to his rival, *däggazmač* Kasa, who would be crowned, a couple of days later, as *nəgusä nəgäst* Tewodros (Theodore) II (1855–1868). The coronation ceremony took place in the church Dāräsge Maryam, thus fulfilling the role for which it was predestined, although in a somewhat unexpected way. After this the civil capital was moved from Gondär to Däbrä Tabor and later to Mäqdäla, whilst the Church capital temporarily ceased to exist. The Metropolitan of Ethiopia (*Abunä*) Sälama who had originally been brought to Ethiopia by Webe in 1841 but had subsequently attached himself to Kasa, came into conflict with Emperor Tewodros within about a year after having him crowned in Dāräsge Maryam. He passed his final years (1864–1867) in a state of internal exile in the Emperor's residence Mäqdäla, where he died from bronchitis half a year before the suicide of Tewodros in the fortress of Mäqdäla, a location that was then besieged by the British expedition of Lord Napier (1868). In the same year, 1867, Webe died, also in the fortress of Mäqdäla, however his remains, at least, were buried in the church Dāräsge Maryam, within a separate chapel.

From this brief historical sketch it can be perceived that the new book by Dorothea McEwan is dedicated to both architecture and art — the church itself, its mural painting and artefacts, and the castle and the area around it — that were overloaded with symbolic meaning related to imperial power. The church was constructed as one of the imperial *insignia*. This fact is witnessed, among other things, by the painting programme, the analysis of which occupies a great part of the book. In the bottom section of the painting on one of the walls of the square *maqdas* ("Holy of Holies," the central part of the traditional, concentrically planned, Ethiopian church building) Webe himself is depicted sitting on a grey horse, in the middle of a pompous procession.

Being the central monument of the imperial ideology of its time, the church is also a symbol of the anticipated ecclesiastical unification which was allegedly achieved soon after at the Council of Amba Čara in 1854, when one Christological teaching, *Sost lədət* ("Three births") was condemned, and another one, *Karra* ("Knife") confirmed. McEwan is aware that the church under study appeared from the middle of the flame of dogmatic quarrels, but this theological context, except for some general remarks, remains beyond the scope of her study. Moreover, in her short comments on the contents of competing Christolog-

ical teachings she relies with excessive confidence on the corresponding entries of the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (EAE). These entries are certainly very informative as philological and historical introductions but they are rather deliberately unfocused and fragmentary in terms of dogmatic content. The EAE authors responsible for writing on Christology turned out, from the very beginning of the work, to be unable to find a common approach that would touch no one's religious sensibility. Thus, the editorial board adopted an attitude of reluctance towards the dogmatic (I must confess that I was among those who unwillingly provoked this decision). This is why the Christological entries of EAE do not form any coherent system and even contradict each other. For instance, McEwan writes in a note, with a reference to the corresponding entry of EAE, that "Today *Karra* is the official teaching of the church. EA, entry 'Karra', vol. 3, 348–349" (p. 21, fn. 50). This entry — written by one of the highest authorities in Ethiopian philology and culture, Getatchew Haile, — does indeed contain such claim. It presents the events as if the Ethiopian Christological quarrels were eventually settled at the Council of Boru Meda in 1878, where the *Karra* doctrine was promulgated as the only Orthodox teaching. It would have been enough, however, to check another entry in the next volume, "Täwähädo" by Tedros Abraha [EAE, vol. 4 (2010), pp. 873–875], to get an idea of the real variety of modern interpretations, both more and less official, of the Christological doctrine of the Ethiopian Church and the very modest, if not marginal place of the *Karra* doctrine among them. To explain Getatchew Haile's attitude in identifying the modern official *Täwähädo* with *Karra*, we need to take help from a specialised review of twentieth-century Ethiopian theological discussions, where the corresponding theological group is mentioned.³

McEwan's book provides a detailed study of the main symbolic expression of some kinds of Ethiopian Christology on the eve of the Amba Čara Council, and so, must be taken into account in future studies of the history of Ethiopian Christological doctrines as well as their representations in Ethiopian art. This is why I permit myself to go a little beyond this book in order to precisely locate Dāräse Maryam on the map of Christological polemics.

(3) Tesfazghi UQBİT, *Current Christological Positions of Ethiopian Orthodox Theologians* (OCA, 196), Rome, 1973, p. 178.

The Ethiopian Church since the Arab conquest of Egypt in the middle of the seventh century has been transformed into a self-standing Christian ecumene separated from other parts of the Christian world by a semi-permeable membrane. The seeds of various Christian doctrines, having fallen on the fertile Ethiopian soil, grew up in conditions different from those of the rest of the Christian Orient, although without any break in communication during the process. In particular, by this point in time the Ethiopians had managed to finish discussing the Christological questions that split the anti-Chalcedonian world in the sixth century into a dozen of doctrinally different factions. The maximum number of logically possible Christological doctrines is limited by the number of logically possible combinations of different Christologies with different Triadologies. Not all such combinations were exhausted in the sixth century. Predictably, this resulted in the formulation, in Ethiopia, of almost the entire spectrum of logically possible Christologies (including a local version of Nestorianism) but, of course, always in Cyrillian wording. Since at least the sixteenth century it has been an obligatory custom, for any faction in the Ethiopian Church, to call itself the only true representative of "Alexandrian" theology. It goes without saying that all Ethiopians were able themselves to decide what is truly Alexandrian and what is not and were ready to kindly explain the matter to any Coptic metropolitan of Ethiopia. During the eighteenth century, it was the doctrine *Qəbat* ("Unction") that was both predominant and official. On the level of Christology, this was nothing more than the traditional Severianism shared by the Coptic Church and approved, in official epistles to Ethiopia, by two eighteenth-century Coptic patriarchs. On the level of Triadology, it had a strong local flavour (the idea of the Son's eternal birth from the Father by the *unction* of the Holy Spirit is a mirror image of the Latin *Filioque*), but Severianism has never had any coherent and elaborated Triadology common to all Severianist factions (cf. my entries "Damian of Alexandria" and "Benjamin of Alexandria" in *EAE*, vol. 2 (2005), p. 77–78, and vol. 1 (2003), p. 530). Therefore, *Qəbat* was a doctrine that coincided with that of the Coptic Church in its frontal Christological part and which explored the wild steppe which the Coptic Church left behind her in Triadology. The high status of the *Qəbat* doctrine in the Ethiopian Church was symbolised by the new Church capital of Qwesqwam, the very name of which referred to the most famous holy place in Egypt, the Egyptian abode of the Holy Family (cf. more

on this in my review of Robin McEwan's book, *Scr 4* (2008), pp. 444–445).

In the early nineteenth century, the situation underwent drastic change. The *Qəbat* doctrine was marginalised by the *Karra* in the North and the *Sost ləḏāt* in the South. The feudal wars of *Zāmānā mäsafənt* thus acquired a theological component. Two Christologies were left in the ring, all others withdrew to the subs bench. The name *Karra* alludes to a single-edged *karra*-knife, an image of the unique nature of Christ that absorbed his human nature, as well as being a symbol of the knife that cutoff the human nature of Christ after the union with the divine nature. This doctrine⁴ is traceable — probably through the great fifteenth-century teacher Giyorgis Säglawi and the monastic order of St. Eustathius with its fourteenth- and fifteenth-century connexions to the Julianist Eastern Armenia — to the doctrines of Julianism in the late sixth and seventh century (already different from the authentic doctrine of Julian of Halicarnassus). The Triadology of *Karra* has never been studied historically, but it appears to be Damianite (three hypostases which are ontologically identical: Christ-Logos is anointing, anointed, and unction). The doctrine of *Sost ləḏāt*, according to presently available knowledge [cf. Tedros Abraha's entry "Šägga" in *EAE*, vol. 4, pp. 453–455], is an original creation of the Ethiopian mind datable, I think, to the first half of the eighteenth century or slightly earlier. Two births, one from the Father in eternity and another from the Virgin in time, were found insufficient for divine incarnation. A third birth — by divine "grace" (*šägga* = χάρις; this term became another name for this faction) or "energy" (*gəbr* = ἐνέργεια) — was necessary within the womb of Mary to restore the human nature to the pre-fall Adamic condition. The European missionaries could hardly fail to recognise here the main ideas of Nestorianism and adoptionism, although in perfectly "monophysite" apparel (utilising terms such as "one nature" and other Cyrillian wording). Because the Incarnation is located, in this system, completely outside the Holy Trinity, *Sost ləḏāt* did not require any specific triadological teaching. The reign of the great Emperor

(4) Cf. В. М. ЛУРЬЕ, Авва Георгий из Саглы и история юлианизма в Эфиопии [B. LOURIE, Abba Giyorgis of Säglā and the History of Julianism in Ethiopia], *Христианский Восток*, 1 (7) (1999), pp. 317–358 (326–334), where I elaborate, among other things, on some observations of Yaqob Beyene relating to *Karra*, as well as my entry "Julianism" in *EAE*, vol. 3, pp. 308–310.

Menelik II (1889–1913) lead to the marginalisation of all three doctrines enumerated above in favour of a predecessor of the current official doctrine *Täwəḥədo* ("Union") thus bringing this story to a conclusion.

The new *Abunä Sälama* was faced with a choice between *Karra* and *Sost lədät*, because these were the only doctrines then supported by important secular powers. Given that the *Sost lədät* doctrine carried too much stigma due to its non-traditional idea of the third birth, and sowas absolutely unacceptable to any Coptic hierarchy, Sälama was forced to support *Karra* at a date long before the Amba Čara Council. He had no option to choose *Qəbat*.

Webe frequently came into conflict with Sälama because of *däḡḡaz-mač's* protection of European missionaries (valuable communication channels with the Western world) and certainly did not show any particular religious zeal (unlike his rival Kasa/Tewodros) but, as it seems, he too accepted the *Karra* doctrine, due to its absolute predominance in Northern Ethiopia. This fact could be important for understanding Dārəsge Maryam's painting. McEwan notices that on the mural icon depicting the placing of Christ's body in the shroud, "curiously, his eyes are open" (p. 105). This peculiarity belongs rather to Christology than to art: it is an expression of the belief that the dead body of Christ was not dead — because it continued to be the body of God. The theological peculiarity here is the idea that the union of humanity and divinity in Christ is performed in such a way that it not only prevents the corruptibility of his dead body (a view that was, and is, shared, in the Christian Orient, by the majority of both "mono-" and "dyophysites," whilst mostly rejected in the Christian West) but also makes inapplicable to Christ the very notion of human death. This latter idea is an identifying trait of extreme Julianism (called in Byzantium "actism"), a fact which also fits closely with the doctrine of *Karra*.

Studies of the mutual relations between art and theology in Ethiopia are still in their early stages, despite the efforts of a number of scholars since the early twentieth century. This new book by Dorothea McEwan provides rich food for thought to all those who are interested in this field. — But, first of all, this book is a beautiful gift to all those who love the Ethiopian culture.

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