

The Translation of the Poem *Portrait of Walatta Petros* (*Mälkə'a Wälättä Petros*)

A mälkä' is a genre of Gə'əz poetry in which the poet praises the saint from head to toe, using the saint's body parts to create an allegory of the saint's virtues and life. Thus, many stanzas allude to some episode in the saint's life. Typical mälkä' poems have between twenty and fifty stanzas and mention the saint's name in every stanza, generally on the third line. The genre has five rhymed lines per stanza with the rhyme scheme AAAAA, BBBBB, and so on. Generally, the lines rhyme only the last syllable of the line (i.e., the last fidäl character), which always ends in a vowel. Even if it looks like the rhyme is slant (i.e., sharing just a consonant sound), in traditional recitation the singer adds a schwa sound to any sixth-form syllable at the end of a line (e.g., singing amlak as amlakə). To listen to the poem being recited in the original, please go to wendybelcher.com. To aid the scholar or student who does not read Gə'əz but is interested in understanding the skill and elegance of the original as well as possible, we have provided the poem in fidäl below, in transliteration, and in word-for-word English translation. On the facing page is the poetic English translation by Derek Gideon. Those wishing to read or assign Gideon's translation on its own (in an easy-to-read version properly spaced and without the facing pages of fidäl, transliteration, or word-for-word translation), can find it as a PDF at wendybelcher.com. In the word-for-word translation, we have made sure that the nouns, verbs, and adjectives are all exactly what is there and in the right order, but we have sometimes added articles (since Gə'əz has none) and dropped relatives for clarity.

[1] In the name of God, who was when time was not,

(no moment before him, no wink of an eye):

Walatta Petros, may the priest Shenoute¹

brighten my heart with some small insight, that I

might voice for you these strings in holy song.

[2] Hail to your name's memory, which wears a crown² of grace,

and to your hair, poured over with the oil of Mass.³

Walatta Petros, our mother, we desire your help

to save us from the rise of the Enemies Three:⁴

for they are most bitter, most bitter indeed.

[3] Hail to your head and your face, that command

¹ *Sinoda* (Shenoute of Atri) was a fifth-century Egyptian monk. He is a famous figure of Coptic monasticism and considered the greatest author of Coptic literature. He is venerated as an important saint in the Tāwāḥədo Church, too. His commemoration takes place on the same day as WP's, 17 Hədar.

² *Qäśäla* also means the silk head covering fringed in gold with which Tāwāḥədo Church priests cover their heads during the Liturgy, and thus may be a reference to WP's quasi-priestly status.

³ *Qəddase* (holiness, sanctification) also became the technical term for the Divine Liturgy; the use of this term here implicitly elevates WP to priestly status.

⁴ It is unclear who or what the three enemies are; perhaps, as in other Christian traditions, they are the world, the flesh, and the devil. Alternately, perhaps they are bad thoughts, bad speech, and bad actions or anger, arrogance, and lust.

[1] በስሙ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ዘሀሎ፡አመ፡ኢሀሎ፡ዘመን፡።

Bä-sämä əgziʾabher zä-hallo amä i-hallo zämän

In the name of | God, | who was | when | not was | time,¹

ወኢቀደሞ፡ሰዓት፡መጠነ፡ቅጽበታ፡ለዓይን፡።

wä-i-qäddämo säʾat mäṭänä qəṣbäta lä-ʾayn

and not preceded him | a moment, | by the measure of | a blink of it, | of an eye.

እሰንቁ፡ለኪ፡አውታረ፡ነባቢ፡ድርሳን፡።

Ḥsänqu läki awtarä näbabi² dārsan

So that I may play/sound | for you [fem. sg.] | the strings of | a speaking |

hymn/composition/poem,

ያብርህ፡ውስተ፡ልብዩ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ምእመን፡።

yabräh wəstā ləbbäya Wälättä Petros³ məʾmān

may let shine | in | my heart, | Walatta | Petros | faithful,

ጸዳለ፡አእምሮ፡ነስቲተ፡ሲኖዳ፡ካህን፡።

ṣädalä aʾmāro nəstitä⁴ Sinoda kahən

the gleam of | understanding | a little | Shenoute | the Priest.

[2] ሰላም፡ለዝከረ፡ስምኪ፡ዘቀጸላ፡ሞገስ፡ትርሲቱ፡።

Sälam lä-zəkrä səməki⁵ zä-qäṣāla mogäs⁶ tərsitu

Peace | to the memory of | your name, | a crown of | grace | its adornment/

glory,

ወለሥዕርትኪ፡ስውጥ፡ዘቅብአ፡ቅዳሴ፡ውስቴቱ፡።

wä-lä-śəʾərtəki səwəṭ zä-qəbʾa qəddase wəstetu

and to your hair, | poured | the oil/ointment of | holiness | [is] into it.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡እምነ፡ትንብልናኪ፡ነፈቱ፡።

Wälättä Petros əmmənä tənḅələnnaki nəfättu

Walatta | Petros | our mother, | your intercession | we crave

ከመ፡ያድኅነነ፡እምነ፡ትንብልናኪ፡ነፈቱ፡።

kämä yadhənänä əm-tənśaʾe aşrar śälästu⁷

so that | it may save us | from the rising of | the enemies | three,

እስመ፡መሪራን፡ፈድፋደ፡እመን፡።

əsmä mārīran fädfadä əmuntu

for/indeed | bitter/ferocious | very, | they [are].

[3] ሰላም፡ለርእሰኪ፡ወለገጽኪ፡ስቡሐ፡።

Sälam lä-rəʾəki wä-lä-gäṣṣəki səbbuḥa⁸

Peace | to your head | and to your face, | praiseworthy

¹ Since BDJ do not have the *mälkäʾ*, we have checked CR against CEF, the only manuscripts providing the *mälkäʾ*.

² CE: *nābabi* [masc.] (speaking); F: *nābabit* [fem.] (speaking); CR: *nābabe* [masc., genitive] (speaking of).

³ CR needlessly altered to *lä-Wälättä Petros* (for Walatta Petros).

⁴ CR: *ṣädalä aʾmāro nəstit* [nom.] (the gleam of a little understanding).

⁵ CR: *səməkā* (your [masc.] name).

⁶ CR: *mogäsä* (grace of).

⁷ C: *śälästu*; EF: *3tu*; CR: *3*.

⁸ CR: *bəzuḥa* (by far).

more praise than ethereal lights.

Saint Peter's Daughter,¹ adorned in faith's garment:

at dusk and at dawn raise up our entreaties

to your Lord, who has freed us from Satan's shackles.

[4] Hail to your eyelashes, and the tears they have suffered,

and to eyes that have seen the beauty of the mother of God.

Walatta Petros, from the chains of sin set me free.

Direct my feet along repentance's path

before cruel-faced death appears to me.

[5] Hail to your ears, which heard the Good News,

and your cheeks, which felt the blows the Lord felt.

Walatta Petros, come to us when we cry out

and on the warring demons and spirits, make war

¹ The first of several plays in the poem on the meaning of WP's name, Daughter of Saint Peter. In these cases, we translate it as Peter's Daughter, to communicate the double function, descriptive as well as appellative.

እምብርሃናቲሁ፡ለሰማይ፡ዘአስተርአየ፡በዙኅ፡፡

*əm-bərhanatihu lä-sämay zä-astär'ayä bəzuḥa*¹

more than its lights, | the sky's, | they appear | by far.

ስርጉተ፡ከለንታ፡ለጴጥሮስ፡ወለቱ፡ዘሃይማኖት፡እልታኝ፡፡

Sərgutä k'əlläntä lä-Petros wälättu zä-haymanot əltaḥa

Adorned | all over, | of Peter | his Daughter, | for whom faith | her cloak:

አዕርጊ፡ስአለተነ፡ሰርከ፡ወነግህ፡፡

a' rəgi sə'lätanä särkä wä-nägha

raise | our pleas | at dusk | and at dawn

ኅብ፡አምላክኪ፡ማእሰሮ፡ለሰይጣን፡ዘፈትሐ፡፡

ḥabä amlakəki ma'säro lä-säyṭan zä-fäṭḥa

to | your Lord, | his shackles, | namely Satan's, | who has untied.

[4] ሰላም፡ለቀራንብትኪ፡ሕማማተ፡አንብዕ፡እለ፡ጸሩ፡፡

Sälam lä-qəranəbtəki ḥəmamata' anbə' əllä şoru

Peace | to your eyelashes/eyelids, | sufferings of | tears | which | have borne,

ወለአዕይንትኪ፡ሥነ፡አንተ፡አመ፡አምላክ፡ነጸሩ፡፡

wä-lä-a' yəntəki šənnä əntä əmmä amlak² nəşşäru

and to your eyes: | the beauty | of | the mother of | the Lord | they have contemplated.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ፍትሕኒ፡ለጌጋይ፡አማእሰሩ፡፡

Wälättä Petros fəṭəḥəni lä-gegay əm-ma'säru

Walatta | Petros, | release me, | of transgression, | from its shackles,

ወአርትዒ፡አኢጋርየ፡ፍኖተ፡ንስሐ፡ይሐሩ፡፡

wä-ärtə' i a'garəyā fənotä nəssəḥa yəḥuru

and direct | my feet, | the path of | repentance | so that they may walk

ቅድመ፡ይዳደቀኒ፡ሞት፡ዘፀዋግ፡ሕብሩ፡፡

qədmä yəddadäqāni mot zä-šəwwag ḥəbru

before | befalls me | death, | cruel | its color/countenance.

[5] ሰላም፡ለአእዛንኪ፡ሰማዕያተ፡ዜና፡በቋዒ፡፡

Sälam lä-a'zanəki sāma'əyatä zəna bäq'wə' i

Peace | to your ears, | the hearers of | the story | beneficial,

ወለመላትሕኪ፡ሱቱፍ፡ጽፍዓተ፡አምላክ፡ተሰባኢ፡፡

Wä-lä-mälatəḥəki sutuf şəf'atä amlak təsäba' i

and to your cheeks, | partakers of | the slaps to the face of | the Lord | incarnate.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ኅቤነ፡ሰብ፡ንጼወዓኪ፡ንዒ፡፡

Wälättä Petros ḥabenä sobä nəşewwə'aki nə' i

Walatta | Petros, | to us | when | we cry out for you, | come,

ኢጋንንተ፡ወመኖፍስተ፡ኢይጽብኡ፡ትጽብኢ፡፡

aganəntä wä-mānafəstä i-yəşbə'unä təşbə' i

the demons | and spirits, | so that they not attack us, | to attack

¹ CR: *səbbuḥa* (praiseworthy).

² CR: *šənnä əntä ḥabä amlak* (the beauty that is with the Lord).

³ CEF, CR: *sutuf* [sg., nom.], which we regard as standing in for *sutufatä* [pl., *status constructus*].

with the sword of your mouth, a seraph's slaughter.

[6] Hail to your nostrils, the houses of marvelous scents,

and to lips that provide your power of eloquence.

Daughter of Peter—that Peter whom John overtook on the path,¹

from you to me may understanding pass—

my own lies buried beneath my foolishness.

[7] Hail to your mouth, which advanced a new order,

and your teeth, which deflected the laughs of those who scorn.

Your voice brings more joy than the wine of Cana.²

On the death-day decreed for the Daughter of Peter, John's son,³

the whole Church wrapped itself in mourning.

¹ John 20:4 has Saint Peter being outraced in running toward Christ's tomb by "that other disciple, whom Jesus had loved." Traditionally, that disciple has been identified with Saint John the Evangelist.

² John 2:1–12. An allusion to the first miracle of Christ, which was changing the water into wine at the wedding of Cana.

³ Matthew 16:17; John 1:42.

በሰይፈ፡አፉኪ፡ሰራፊል፡ሠዋዒ።

bä-säyfä afuki surafel säwa`i

with the sword of | your mouth, | [you] seraph | sacrificing/priestly.

[6] ሰላም፡ለአናፍክ፡አብያተ፡ቅታፊ፡ዘአንከሮ።

Sälam lä-a`nafäki abyatä qəttare zä-änkəro

Peace | to your nostrils, | houses of | the fragrance | of [inducing] marveling,

ወለከናፍርኪ፡ዓቅመ፡እለ፡ሠርዑ፡ለተናግሮ።

wä-lä-kānafəräki `aqmä əllä sär`u lä-tānagəro

and to your lips, | the means [acc.], | that | ordained/provide | for speaking.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡በረዊጽ፡ዮሐንስ፡ዘበደሮ።

Wälättä Petros bä-räwiş Yoḥannəs zä-bädäro

Daughter of | Peter, | in running | John | beat him [namely, Peter],

ይትፋለስ፡መንገሌዮ፡እመንገሌኪ፡እእምሮ።

yətfäləs mǝngǝleyä əm-mǝngǝleki a`məro

may pass | to me | from you | understanding.

ለእእምሮ፡ትየስ፡ዝንጋዒ፡ሰወሮ።

Lä-a`mərotəyā-ssä¹ zənga`e säwwäro

My understanding, by contrast, | foolishness² | has hidden it.

[7] ሰላም፡ለአፉኪ፡መፈክረ፡ሐዲስ፡ቀኖና።

Sälam lä-afuki mäfäkkärä ḥaddis qānona

Peace | to your mouth, | expounder of | a new | order/canon,

ወለአስናንኪ፡ሠሐቀ፡ዘመስተሳልቃን፡መነና።

wä-lä-asnanäki šāḥaqä zä-mästāsalaqan männäna

and to your teeth, | the laughter | of the mockers' | they have repulsed/
repudiated.

መስተፍሥሐ፡አልባብ፡ድምፅኪ፡ፈድፋድ፡እምወይነ፡ቃና።

Mästäfsəḥe albab dəmṣəki fädfadä əm-wäynä Qana

Joy-bringing to | the hearts | [is] your voice, | much more | than the wine of |
Cana.

ሰበ፡ተጎትመ፡ጊዜ፡ሞት፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ዘዮና።

Sobä täḥatmä gize mot Wälättä Petros zä-Yona

When | was sealed/decreed | the time of | death | [for] the Daughter of | Peter, |
[the son] of John³

ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡በልብስ፡ላሕ፡ገልበበት፡ጎሊና።

betä krəstīyan bä-ləbsä laḥ gälbäbät ḥəllinna

the House of | the Christians, [the Church,] | in the garment of | mourning |
wrapped | the mind.

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¹ EF: *wä-lä-a`mərotəyā-ssä* (but my understanding, by contrast).

² Ricci translates *zənga`e* as *dimenticanza* (forgetfulness), probably misled by Amharic *zänägga* (to forget, be absentminded).

³ Lit., *zä-Yona* (of John). In Gə`əz, the standard equivalent of John would be *Yoḥannəs*, not *Yona*, which normally is the equivalent of Jonah. In using *Yona* as a short form for *Yoḥannəs*, the author here takes some poetic license so as to arrive at the required rhyme syllable *-na*.

[8] Hail to your tongue, which has never ceased praying,

and your honey-sweet words, harp of praise and thanksgiving.

Walatta Petros, following Christ, Calvary's sacrifice,

you acquired no gold and pursued no silver,

and so the seducing servant fell sick with terror.¹

[9] Hail to your breath, its fragrance incense,

and your throat, untouched by water or wine.

Walatta Petros, heaven's highest say of you:

"How excellent your blessedness, our sister,

and your reward unseen by mortal eye."

[10] Hail to your neck, which humility's leash dragged down,

and to shoulders that carried tribulation's yoke.

¹ This is another *sām-anna wārḳ* line that can be understood in two ways. *Māṣḥati māl'ak* can mean "seducing servant" or "deceitful angel." On the surface level (wax), the line alludes to WP's jailor in Žäbäy, who made sexual advances toward her until he saw her being defended by an angel and fell down in shock. At a deeper level (gold), it alludes to the archseducer Satan, the one driving WP's jailor to behave improperly.

[8] ሰላም፡ለልሳንኪ፡ዘኢያንተ፡ጸልዮ።

Sälam lä-ləsanəki zä-i-yantägä šälləyo

Peace | to your tongue, | which never ceased | praying,

ወለመዓርዒር፡ቃልኪ፡አርጋኖን፡በሰሐት፡ወተጋንዮ።

Wä-lä-mä^aar^air qaləki arganonä səbhat wä-təganəyo

and to honey-sweet | your words, | a harp of | praise | and thanksgiving.

በእንተ፡ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡ዘተዋዓ፡በቀራንዮ።

Bä^aəntä Iyäsus Krəstos zä-täśo^aä bā-Qəranəyo

On account of | Jesus | Christ, | who was sacrificed | at Calvary,

ኢኀዋሥኪ፡ወርቀ፡ወብሩረ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡አጥርዮ።

i-ḥasäsäki wärqä wä-bərurä Wälättä Petros aṭrəyo

you did not seek | gold | or silver, | Walatta | Petros, | to acquire,

እስከ፡ለመስሐቲ፡መልእክ፡ድንጋፊ፡አድወዮ።

əskä lä-mäšəti mäl^aak dəngəše adwäyo

so much so that | the seducing/deceiving | servant/angel, | shock | made him
fall sick.

[9] ሰላም፡ለእስትንፋስኪ፡ዘመዓዛሁ፡ስኒን።

Sälam lä-əstənfəsəki zä-mä^aazahu səḥin

Peace | to your breath, | whose fragrance | [is] incense,

ወለጉርዒኪ፡ዘየብሰ፡እምአጥልሎተ፡ማይ፡ወወይን።

wä-lä-g^wər^eeki zä-yäbsä əm-aṭləlotä may wä-wäyn

and to your throat, | which remained dry | from the moistening of | water | or
wine.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ይብሉኪ፡መላእክተ፡ሰማይ፡ኄራን።

Wälättä Petros yəbəluḳi mäla^aəktä sämay ḥəran

Walatta | Petros, | they say to you, | the angels of | heaven, | noble:

ሚይሢኒ፡እኅትነ፡ዘተውህበኪ፡ብጽዓን።

Mi-yəsənni əḥətənä zä-təwəḥbäki bəṣ^aan

“How beautiful/excellent, | our sister, | [is] that which has been given to you |
beatitude,

ወዕሴትኒ፡ዘኢርእዮ፡ዓይን።

wä-^aəsset-ni zä-i-rə^ayä^a ayn

and the [heavenly] reward also, | which never saw | an eye!”

[10] ሰላም፡ለክላድኪ፡በሐብለ፡ትሕትና፡ዘተስሕበ።

Sälam lä-kəsadəki bā-ḥablä təḥtənnä zä-təsəḥbä

Peace | to your neck, | by the leash of | humility | it has been dragged,

ወለመታክፍትኪ፡ዘጸረ፡አርዑተ፡ምንዳቢ፡ዕጹብ።

wä-lä-mätakəftəki zä-šorä¹ ar^autä məndabə^a əṣubä

and to your shoulders, | which have carried | the yoke of | tribulation | severe.²

¹ CEF: zä-šorä [sg.] (which have carried); CR: zä-šora [pl.; identical meaning].

² The adjective refers to yoke, not tribulation, as the Gəʿəz makes clear through its case endings.

Walatta Petros, fill my heart with wisdom:

For if, lacking wisdom, I am like a pigeon,

your Lord will permit me no treasure in heaven.

[11] Hail to your back, which cast off luxurious cloaks,

and to your chest, a banquet-table for the wretched.

Walatta Petros, our mother, lover of fasting and prayer,

request forgiveness for our sins before the Lord:

Thus we implore you, we who are yours.

[12] Hail to your bosom, rich embrace of monastic life,

and your hands, outstretched with mercy for the stranger.

Walatta Petros, crown of the True Church,

the myriad hosts of heaven and earth praise you

with one voice of song and delightful hymns.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ምልእ፡ውስተ፡ልብዮ፡ጥበብ።

Wälättä Petros mäläʾi wästä ləbbəyā ʾəbābā

Walatta | Petros, | pour | into | my heart | wisdom:

እንበለ፡ጥበብሰ፡ሰብ፡ተመሰልኩ፡ርግብ።

ənḃälä ʾəbāb-əssä sobä tämässäлку rəgbä

without | wisdom, specifically, | when | I resemble | a[*n* ignorant] dove,

ኢያበውሐኒ፡አምላክኪ፡እትዋረስ፡መዝገብ።

i-yabäwwəḥani amlakəki ətwaräs mäsḡäbä

he will not permit me, | your Lord, | that I inherit | the [heavenly] treasure.

[11] ሰላም፡ለዘባንኪ፡መዋጥሐ፡ትፍግዕት፡ዘመነካ።

Sälam lä-zäbanəki mäwaṭəḥa təfgəʾt zä-männänä

Peace | to your back, | the cloaks of | luxury | it rejected,

ወለእንግድክኪ፡ምርፋቀ፡ለምስኪናን፡ዘኮነ።

wä-lä-əngədʾaki mərfaqä¹ lä-məskinan zä-konä

and to your chest, | a seat/banquet/table | for the wretched | it became.

መፍቀሪተ፡ጸሎት፡ወጸም፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡አምነ።

Mäfqäritä ṣälot wä-ṣom Wälättä Petros əmmənä

Lover of | prayer | and fasting, | Walatta | Petros, | our mother,

ትተንብሊ፡ቅድመ፡አምላክ፡ስርየተ፡ኅጢአት፡ለነ።

tätənbəli qədmä amlak səryätä ḥaṭiʾat länä

may you request | before | the Lord | forgiveness of | sins | for us:

ናስተበቁኣኪ፡አሊክኪ፡ንሕነ።

nastäbäqqwəʾaki əlliʾaki nəḥnä

We implore you, | who are yours, | we.

[12] ሰላም፡ለሕፅንኪ፡ሕፅነ፡ምንክስና፡ክቡር።

Sälam lä-ḥəṣṇəki ḥəṣṇä mənkʷəsənnä kəbur

Peace | to your bosom/lap, | the bosom/lap of | monasticism | glorious/precious,

ወለአላዳውኪ፡ዘሰፍሑ፡ለምሒረ፡ኸሉ፡ግድር።

wä-lä-aʾdawəki zä-säfhū² lä-məḥirä kʷəllu gəyyur

and to your hands, | which are stretched out | to show mercy toward | every | stranger.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡አክሊላ፡ለያዕቆባዊት፡ማኅበር።

Wälättä Petros aklila lä-yaʿqobawit maḥbär

Walatta | Petros, | its crown, | of the Jacobite | community,

ይዌድሱኪ፡አላላፍ፡ተዓይነ፡ሰማይ፡ወምድር።

yəweddəsuki aʾlaf tāʿayənä sāmay wä-mədr

they praise you, | the myriad | hosts of | heaven | and earth

በድምፀ፡ማሕሌት፡ሠናይ፡ወሐዋዝ፡መዝሙር።

bä-dəməṣä maḥlet sānnay wä-ḥawwaz mäsḡmur

with the voice of | song | beautiful | and delightful | hymn.

¹ C, Abb. 88: *mərfaq* [nom.] (banquet), which CR altered to *mərfaqä* [acc.], as is required due to subsequent *konä*.

² EF: *zä-säfhū* [masc. pl.] (which are stretched out); CR: *zä-säfhä* [fem. pl.; identical meaning]; C omits.

[13] Hail to your arms and your elbows, those buttresses¹

that have never been captured by fetters of sin.

Walatta Petros, like Martha who loved Christ,²

you shrouded in a garment of shame that angel

who made Adam fall from God's high dwelling.³

[14] Hail to your forearms, full of strength for works of right,

and your palms, surpassing sun and moon as they shine bright.

Walatta Petros, plead with Saint Mary, Galilee's dove,⁴

to ask her child, Savior of the World,

to keep us safe from Marcian the wolf.⁵

¹ Lit., *məsmak*. Figuratively, the term also refers to the biblical passages read during the service before the reading from the Gospels, usually Psalms. Both WP's arms and these readings are types of supports for the sacred.

² Martha is a woman in the New Testament who hosted Christ in her home, witnessed his resurrection of her brother, and acknowledged Christ as the Messiah (John 11).

³ That is, Satan. Ricci says this alludes to a story told in the *Aksimaros* (the Greek *Hexameron*) and in the *Māṣahāftä Mānākosat* (Books of the Monks). An Ethiopian gädlat topos is the background of these two lines, as many gädlat claim that their subject, a particular saint, could reverse, in their monastic communities, the corruption caused by the fall of the first human beings.

⁴ This appositive, "dove of Galilee," appears to be from the *Sənkəssar* (Budge 1928, 1:xliii; 4:1200).

⁵ Lit., *Märqəyan*. The fifth-century Eastern Roman emperor Marcian approved the ecclesiastical condemnation of the non-Chalcedonian hero Dioscorus and had him exiled after the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

[13] ሰላም፡ለመዛርዕኪ፡ወለኸርናዕኪ፡ምስማክ።

Sälam lä-mäzaräʿäki wä-lä-kʷärnaʿäki məsmak

Peace | to your arms | and to your elbows, | buttresses/supports

ዘኢተእጎዙ፡ፍጹም፡በማእሰረ፡ጌጋይ፡ድሩክ።

zä-i-täʿəḥzu fəṣṣumä bā-maʿsä rä gegay dəruk

which have not been captured | ever | by the fetters of | transgression | savage.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ማርታ፡መፍቀሪተ፡ክርስቶስ፡አምላክ።

Wälättä Petros Marta mäfqäritä Krastos amlak

Walatta | Petros, | [a] Martha, | a lover of | Christ | the Lord:

ተከድነ፡ልብሰ፡ኅፍረት፡በእብፊትኪ፡መልአክ።

täkädnä ləbsä ḥafṛät bā-əbretäki mälʾak

he was covered with | the garment of | shame | through you, | that angel,

[Satan,]

ለአዳም፡ዘአውደቆ፡እምሣልስ፡ፈለክ።

lä-Addam zä-awdäqo əm-säləs fäläk

him, Adam, | who made him fall | from the Third | Heaven.

[14] ሰላም፡ለአመታትኪ፡ለተገብሮ፡ጽድቅ፡ዘተጋየላ።

Sälam lä-əmətatäki lä-tägäbbəro šədq zä-täḥayyälä

Peace | to your forearms, | for the work of | righteousness, | which were strong,

ወለእራሕኪ፡ብሩህ፡እምሥነ፡አርያሬስ፡ወእብላ።

wä-lä-əraḥəki bəruh əm-sənnä aryares wä-əbla

and to your palms, | brighter | than the beauty of | the sun | and the moon.¹

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ተጎብሊ፡ኅብ፡ማርያም፡ርግብ፡ገሊላ።

Wälättä Petros tänbəli ḥabä Maryam rəgbä Gälila

Walatta | Petros, | intercede [for us] | before | Mary, | the dove of | Galilee,

ትተጎብል፡በእንቲአነ፡መድኅኔ፡ዓለም፡እጓላ።

tätänbəl bāʿəntiʿanä mädḥane² ʿalām əgʷala³

that she may beseech, | on our behalf, | the Savior of | the World, | her child,

ከመ፡ይዕቀብነ፡እመርቅያን፡ተኮላ።

kämä yəʿqäbänä əm-Märqəyan tākʷala

so that | he may save us | from Marcian | the wolf.

¹ The terms for sun and moon employed here, *aryares* and *əbla*, are rarely used loan-words, both of which may first occur in the book of Enoch, traditionally regarded in Ethiopia as part of the biblical canon. In addition, these terms also occur in the *Sənkəssar* entry for 17 Nəḥase and in a *sälam* poem to a saintly Anṭawos, according to Dillmann (1865, col. 744, 756). For the sake of the rhyme, *əbla* here is to be pronounced as *əbala*. The standard Gəʿəz terms for the sun and the moon are *šäḥay* and *wärḥ*, respectively.

² E, CR: *əmə-mädḥane* (from the Savior of).

³ CEF: *əgʷala* (her child); CR: *əgʷla* (different term, but identical meaning).

[15] Hail to your fingers, branches of their trunk, the hand,

and their tips, your nails, their color is snow and hail.

Walatta Petros, oh, you topaz and emerald stone,

your rebuke has given wisdom to the fool

and to many the gift of a return from heresy.

[16] Hail to your breasts, which gave forth the milk of grace:

their fullness for mercy has never diminished.

Daughter of the judge Saint Peter, when you,

our lamp, lay hidden in the basket that was death,

darkness then ruled on our right and our left.¹

[17] Hail to your sides, adorned with verdant gold,

¹ Matthew 5:15, “Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket.” This is one of the most common New Testament quotations in Gəʿəz hagiobiographies, whose authors deployed the metaphor with tremendous skill. Here, the death of WP is compared to a basket that covers a shining lamp, which causes darkness to descend.

[15] ሰላም፡ለአጻብዕኪ፡አዕጽቀ፡ተቅዋም፡እድ።
Sālam lä-aṣabəʿəki¹ aʿṣuqā tāqwam əd
 Peace | to your fingers, | branches of | the base, | the hand,
 ወለአርእስቲሆን፡አጽፋር፡ዘሕብረ፡አማንቱ፡በረድ።
wä-lä-arʾəstihon aṣfar zä-ḥəbrä əmantu bāräd
 and to their heads, | the nails, | the color of | them | snow/ice.
 ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ወራውሬ፡ወእብነ፡መረገድ።
Wälättä Peṭros wārawre wä-əbnä mārāgd
 Walatta | Petros, | [you] topaz | and stone of | emerald,
 ጥበበ፡እምተግሣጽኪ፡አጥረዮ፡አብድ።
ṭəbābä əm-tāgśaṣəki aṭrāyā əbd
 wisdom | through your rebuke/instruction | acquired | the fool,
 ወሀብተ፡ሚጠት፡ብዙኃን፡እምካሕድ።
wä-häbtä miṭät bəzuḥan əm-kaḥd
 and the gift of | turning away, | many, | from heresy.

[16] ሰላም፡ለአጥባትኪ፡ዘሐሊበ፡ጸጋ፡አንቅዓት።
Sālam lä-aṭbatəki zä-ḥalibä ṣägga anqəʿat
 Peace | to your breasts, | which the milk of | grace | poured forth,
 ወኢደውኅዶን፡ምሕረት።
wä-i-yəwəḥədon məḥrät
 and never decreased on them | mercy.
 ወለተ፡መበይን፡ጴጥሮስ፡በከፈረ፡ሞት።
Wälättä mǝbəyyən Peṭros² bā-kāfārä mot³
 Daughter of | the judge | [Saint] Peter, | with the basket of | death
 ጊዜ፡ተሰወርኪ፡ማኅቶትነ፡በርሀት።
gize tāsəwwārki maḥtotənä bərəht⁴
 when | you were hidden, | our lamp | shining,
 ውስተ፡ገጸ፡የማን፡ወፀጋም፡ሰፈነ፡ጽልመት።
wəstā gāṣṣā yāman wä-ṣāgam sāfānā ṣəlmāt
 on | the side of | right | and left | ruled/prevailed | darkness.

[17] ሰላም፡ለገቦኪ፡ስርግው፡ዘወርቅ፡ሐመልማል።
Sālam lä-gāboki sargəw zä-wärq ḥamālmal⁵
 Peace | to your flanks/ribs | adorned | with gold | green/verdant,

¹ CR: *lä-lä-aṣabəʿəki* (to each of your fingers).

² CEF: *Wälättä mǝbəyyən Peṭros* (daughter of the judge Peter); CR: *Wälättä Peṭros mǝbəyyən* (WP, judge).

³ *Bä-kāfārä mot* (with the basket of death) where Ricci expected *bä-kānfārä mot* (with the lips of death) and translated accordingly (*con le labbra della morte*). However, CEF confirm CR, with the biblical allusion clearly being to the “basket” of Matthew 5:15.

⁴ CR: *mǝbrəht* (illuminating).

⁵ CEF: *ḥamālmal* [fem.] (green); CR: *ḥamālmil* [masc.; identical meaning]. See Psalm 68:13.

and your belly, treasury of the Gospel's pearl.¹

Walatta Petros, loftier in your struggles than Sarah,

may your wings shade me, just as in the wilderness

God's cloud gave shade to the Tent of the Testimony.²

[18] Hail to your heart and your kidneys. Every moment,

they let sprout no iniquity and harbored no deceit.

Walatta Petros, break me blessing's bread

and I will give you the fruit of my lips,

a hymn to your boundless glory.

[19] Hail to your mind, which dwelt on the Crucifixion,

and your bowels, never knotted with even the least evil.

Walatta Petros, while my people listen, say to me:

¹ *Bahräyā wāngel* (Pearl or essence of the Gospel) is a common metaphor in the Tāwāhədo Church for Christ, symbolizing a pure seed passed down through human bodies since Adam. See also Matthew 13:45–46.

² The Tent of the Testimony was part of the temporary building that the Israelites set up for worship in the wilderness while on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. It contained the Ark of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments, which is why it was also called the Place of the Testimony or of the Law. Regarding the cloud covering it, see Numbers 9:15 and Jubilees 1:2. God lifted the cloud over the Tent of the Testimony when it was time to move on, and lowered it when the Israelites had reached the next camp spot, so it was a visible sign of God's presence and protection.

ወለከርሥኪ፡መዝገቡ፡ለባሕርየ፡ወንጌል።

wä-lä-kärsäki mägäbu lä-bahräyä wängel

and to your belly/interior, | a store/treasury | for the pearl/essence of | the Gospel, [Christ].

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡እምሳራ፡ልዕልተ፡ዝከር፡ወገድል።

Wälättä Petros am-Sara lə'altä zəkr wä-gädl¹

Walatta | Petros, | than Sarah | loftier in | memory/fame | and struggle, ይጸልላኒ፡አክናፍኪ፡ከመ፡ጸላላ፡በሐቅል።

yəšälləlani aknafəki² kāmä šälläla bä-ḥaql³

may shade me | your wings, | like | it [the cloud] shaded it | in the wilderness, ለደብተራ፡ስምዕ፡ደመና፡ቀሊል።

lä-däbtära sām⁴ dämmäna qälil

namely, the Tent of | the Testimony,⁴ | a cloud | light.

[18] ሰላም፡ለልብኪ፡ወለኩልያትኪ፡ንስቲተ።

Sälam lä-ləbbəki wä-lä-k^wäləyatəki nəstitä

Peace | to your heart | and to your kidneys, | for even a moment

ዘኢያሥረጹ፡ዓመፃ፡ወኢዘገቡ፡ጽልሑተ።

zä-i-yaśrāšu⁴ ammāša wä-i-zägäbu šəlḥutä

they did not let sprout | iniquity | and they did not harbor | deceit/falsehood.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ፈትቲ፡ኅብስተ፡በረከት፡ሊተ።

Wälättä Petros fättati ḥəbəstā bäräkät litä

Walatta | Petros, | break | the bread of | blessing | for me:

ሀየንተ፡አቅረብኩ፡ፍሬ፡ከናፍር፡ማሕሉተ።

ḥəyyäntä aqräbku färe kānafər maḥletä

in exchange, | hereby I offer | the fruit of | lips, | a hymn

ለዕበይኪ፡ዘአልቦ፡መስፈርተ።

lä-⁵əbəyəki zä-albo mäsfärtä

to your greatness/magnificence, | which does not have | a measure/limit.

[19] ሰላም፡ለኅሊናኪ፡ስቅለተ፡ፈጣሪ፡ዘኅለየ።

Sälam lä-ḥəllinnaki səqlätä fātari zä-ḥälläyä

Peace | to your mind, | the crucifixion of | the creator | it pondered,

ወለአማዑትኪ፡ሕቀ፡ዘኢቁጸረ፡እከየ።

wä-lä-ama⁶utəki ḥəqqä zä-i-q^wäšärä əkäyā

and to your bowels, | even a little | they did not knot/hatch evil.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡በልኒ፡እንዘ፡ይሰምዑ፡ሕዝብየ።

Wälättä Petros bäləni ənzä yəsämmə⁷u ḥəzbəyā

Walatta | Petros, | say to me | while | they listen, | my people:

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¹ *Gädl* for the sake of the rhyme here is to be pronounced as *gädäl*.

² CR: *yəšälləlani* [sic] *aknafəki* [the verbal stem to be reconstructed from *yəšälləlani*, namely, *ašällälä*, is not attested].

³ *Ḥaql* for the sake of the rhyme here is to be pronounced as *ḥaqəl*.

⁴ *Däbtära sām⁵* is not, pace Ricci's *arca della testimonianza*, an ark.

“Truly, I have prepared a home for you in heaven

where we shall be together. Do not worry, my son.”

[20] Hail and hail again to your organs within,

and your navel without, the seal that stamps them.

Walatta Petros, like Elizabeth, the Baptist’s mother,¹

all the orders of the angels and of humankind,

fashioned of all four elements,² proclaim you blessed.

[21] Hail to your womb, like a grape-bearing vine,

which has brought forth fruits of holiness and Law.

Daughter of Peter, that leader of leaders,

together with Shenoute and the Martyrs of Waseef,³

¹ That is, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, who heralded the coming of Christ in the New Testament.

² Likely a reference to the four elements of Greek medicine: melancholic (bile, autumn, earth), choleric (bile, summer, fire), phlegmatic (phlegm, winter, water), and sanguine (blood, spring, air). Alternatively, it might be two elements for the angels (fire and air) and two for humans (earth and water), perhaps from such original Gəʿəz works as *Sennā Fəṭrāt* (Beauty of Creation).

³ WP shares her saint’s day with the two invoked here: the fifth-century Coptic saint Shenoute of Atripe and a group of Egyptian martyrs about whom very little is known, the *Ṣadəqanā Wəṣīf* (Righteous Ones of Waseef).

ማኅደረ፡በሰማያት፡ከመ፡ተሀሉ፡ምስሌየ።

Maḥdärä bā-sāmayat kāmā tāhallu mäsleyä

“An abode | in the heavens, | so that | you will be | with me,

እስመ፡እስተዳለውኩ፡ለከ፡ኢትሕዝን፡ወልድየ።

əsmä astädäläwku läkä i-təḥzən wäldäyä

truly | I have prepared | for you: | do not worry, | my son!”

[20] ሰላም፡ሰላም፡ለንዋየ፡ውስጥኪ፡ኅቡእ።

Sälam sälam lä-nəwayä wəstəki ḥəbuʾ

Peace, | peace | to the vessels/organs of | your interior, | hidden,

ወለክንብርትኪ፡ዘአፍአ፡ከመ፡ዓይነ፡ማኅተም፡ልኩእ።

wä-lä-ḥənbərtəki zä-afʾa kāmā ʾaynä maḥtām ləkuʾ

and to your navel | of outside, | like | the eye of | a seal | stamped/impressed.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ኤልሳቤጥ፡ወላዲተ፡መጥምቅ፡በጸዕ።

Wälättä Peṭros Elsabeṭ wäladitā mätmaq bəṣuʾ

Walatta | Petros, | [you are like] Elizabeth, | the mother of | the Baptist | blessed:

ያስተበጽዑኪ፡ነገደ፡መላእክት፡ወስብእ።

yastäbäṣṣəʾuki nägädä mäla ʾəkt wä-säbʾ¹

they proclaim you blessed, | the order of | angels | and humans

እለ፡ሠሩራን፡እምጾታ፡አርባዕ።

əllä šururan əm-²šota arbaʾ

who | are made | of the elements³ | four.

[21] ሰላም፡ለማሕፀንኪ፡ከመ፡አስካለ፡ወይን፡ዘሐረግ።

Sälam lä-maḥṣänəki kāmā askalä wäyn zä-ḥaräg

Peace | to your womb, | like | a bunch of | grapes | on the vine

ዘፈረየ፡ፍሬ፡እንተ፡ቅድስና፡ወሕግ።

zä-färäyā färe əntä qəddəsənna wä-ḥəgg

it has brought forth | [numerous] fruits | of | holiness | and the Law.

ለርእሰ፡ርእሳን፡ጴጥሮስ፡ወለቱ፡እንበለ፡ነቲግ።

Lä-rəʾsä⁴ rəʾusan Peṭros wälättu ənbälä nätig

Of the head of | the leaders, | Peter, | his daughter: | without | ceasing

አንቲ፡ወሲኖዳ፡ወጺድ፡ቃነ፡ወጺፍ፡አእሩግ።

anti wä-Sinoda wä-šadəqanä Wäšif aʾrug

you | and Shenoute | and the Righteous Ones of | Waseef, | the elders,

¹ *Säbʾ* for the sake of the rhyme here is to be pronounced as *säbäʾ*.

² C, CR: *əllä šururan əm-* (which are made of); EF: *əllä šərunan əm-* (which are higher up than).

³ Ricci translates *šota*, which normally means “order, class, kind, gender,” as *elementi*, explaining in a note that here he regards it as equivalent with *täbayəʾ*. Dillmann defines *täbayəʾ* as (the four) elements (of traditional cosmology), (the four) human types (of traditional psychology) (1865, col. 1233). Since the conventional meanings of *šota* do not yield a contextually convincing translation, we have followed Ricci.

⁴ CR: *lä-rəʾusä* (of the leader of).

pour the saffron of your blessing on us.

[22] Hail to your hips, grown thin through much fasting,

and your legs, paired pillars with a sturdy stance.

Walatta Petros, enlighten my heart's dim eye,

so I can see you standing there together

with the Firstborn's¹ joyful community of Law.

[23] Hail to your knees, always bent in genuflection,

and your feet, ever-swift on the ministry's path.²

Walatta Petros, protect your children from disorder.

And as for Satan, who hates camaraderie and love,

tear his snares apart and uproot his thorn.

[24] Hail to your soles and the ground where they stood,

¹ In the Bible, the firstborn son is consecrated to God and firstborn animals are used in holy sacrifice; see Deuteronomy 12:6. Regarding Christ as the firstborn, see Colossians 1:18.

² This is another *sām-ənnā wārḳ* line that can be understood in two ways. What here appears as "and your feet, ever-swift on ministry's path" could also be translated as "and to the Apostles, [that is,] your feet on mission's path."

መጽርየ፡በረከት፡ላዕሌ፡ነሰንሱ፡በደርግ።

mäṣṣrəyā bārākāt laʿālenā nāsnəsü bā-därg

the saffron of | blessing | upon us | sprinkle, | [you] jointly.

[22] ሰላም፡ለሐቆኪ፡በአብዝኖ፡ጸዊም፡ዘደግደግ።

Sālam lā-ḥaqʷeki bā-ābzəḥo šāwim zā-dägdägä

Peace | to your hips, | through the multiplying of | fasting | they have become emaciated,

ወለአቀዳጽኪ፡አዕማድ፡እለ፡ይትሌለ፡ዘውግ።

wā-lā-aqʷyaṣəkī aʿmad əllä yətlelläyā zāwgä

and to your legs/thighs, | columns | that are | separate, | a pair of.

ወለተ፡ጺጥሮኪ፡አብርሂ፡ዓይነ፡ልብ፡ሕመግ።

Wälättä Peṭros abrəhi ʿaynä ləbbəyā ḥəmuḡä¹

Walatta | Petros, | enlighten | the eye of | my heart/mind | dim,²

ከመ፡እነጽርኪ፡እንዘ፡ትቀውሚ፡ደርግ።

kämä ənäsṣərki ənzä təqäwwəmi dārgä

so that | I can see you | while | you are standing | together

ምስለ፡ማኅበረ፡በክር፡ፍሥሐን፡ዘሰለጡ፡ሕግ።

məslä maḥbärä bākʷr fəšsuḥan zā-sälläṭu ḥəggä

with | the community of | the Firstborn, [Christ,] | the happy ones, | who have observed/fulfilled | the Law.

[23] ሰላም፡ለአብራክኪ፡እለ፡አዝለፋ፡አስተብርከ።

Sālam lā-ābrakəki əllä azläfa astäbrəko

Peace | to your knees, | which | continuously did | genuflecting,

ወለሐዋርያት፡ሰላም፡እኢጋርኪ፡ፍና፡ተልእኮ።

wā-lā-ḥawarəyat sālam aʿgarəki fənnā tələʿəko

and to the ever-moving/the apostle-like, | peace [upon them], | your feet, | on the path of | service/ministry/mission.

ወለተ፡ጺጥሮኪ፡ዕቀቢ፡ማኅበረ፡ደቂቅኪ፡እምተሀውኮ።

Wälättä Peṭros ʿəqābi maḥbärä dəqiqəki əm-tāhawko

Walatta | Petros, | preserve | the community of | your children | from turmoil.

ለሰይጣንሰ፡ዘኢያፈቅር፡ተዓርኮ።

Lä-säyṭan-əssä zā-i-yafäqqər təʿarəko

As for Satan, in particular, | who does not like | harmony:

መሣግሪሁ፡በትኪ፡ወስብሪ፡ሦኮ።

mäsagərihu bətəki wā-səbəri soko

his snares | tear apart | and break | his thorn.

[24] ሰላም፡ለሰኳንውኪ፡ምስለ፡መከየድ፡ዘቆሙ።

Sālam lā-sākʷanəwəki məslä mākäyäd zā-qomu

Peace | to the soles of your feet, | together with | the ground | on which they stood,

¹ CR: ʿaynä ləbbunnayä ḥəmuḡä (the dim eye of my reason).

² The adjective refers to eye, not heart/mind, as the Gəʿəz makes clear through its case endings.

never nourished by rest's loaf that feeds the weary.

Walatta Petros, sound the prayer bell of our plea

for the Jacobites, believers in his name:

May Christ our sins through His blood redeem.

[25] Hail to your toes, twice five in their number,

and your ten toenails, that sit well there together.

Daughter of Peter our elder,¹ from your distance

draw near to the griever and fill his longing;

and consecrate the righteous for their righteousness.

[26] Hail to your stature, beautiful as choice cedar,

and hail to your figure, a sun that inspires joy.

Walatta Petros, instead of riches, give me

¹ See 1 Peter 5:1.

ኅብስተ፡አዕርፎ፡እምጻማ፡እንዘ፡ይጸውሙ።

həbəstä aʿrafo əm-šama ənzä yəṣäwwəmu

the bread of | rest | from toil, | while | abstaining from [it].

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ጥቅራ፡መጥቅሩ፡ስእለት፡ለለኔሰሙ።

Wälättä Peṭros ṭəqəʾ i mätqəʾa səʾlät lä-lä-gesämu

Walatta | Petros, | blow/sound | the trumpet/church bell | of pleading | each new morning,

ለእለ፡አመነ፡ያዕቆባውያን፡በስሙ።

lä-əllä amännä yaʿqobawəyan bā-səmu

for us who | believe, | the Jacobites, | in his name:

ቤዛ፡ኅጣውኢን፡ይኩን፡ለክርስቶስ፡በደሙ።

beza haṭawəʾin yəkun lä-Krəstos bā-dämu

the redemption | of our sins, | may it happen | [by] Christ's, | by his blood.

[25] ሰላም፡ለአጻብዓ፡እግርኪ፡ኅምስ፡ከዑባት፡በኅልቆ።

Sälam lä-aṣabəʾa əgrəki ḥams kəʿubat bā-ḥʾwālqo¹

Peace | to the fingers of | your feet, | five | doubled | in their number,

ወለአጽፋርኪ፡ዓሥር፡እለ፡ይነብራ፡በተላጽቆ።

wä-lä-aṣfarəki ʾasər² əllä yənābbəra bā-tälašəqo

and to your [toe]nails | ten, | which | sit | neatly side by side.³

ወለተ፡አረጋይ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ቅረቢ፡እምተራሕቆ።

Wälättä arəgay Peṭros qəräbi əm-täraḥəqo

Daughter of | the elder, | Peter, | draw near | from being distant

ለትኩዝ፡በእሲ፡ከመ፡ትፈጽሟ፡ጸህቆ።

Lä-təkkuz bəʾəsi kāmā təfäṣṣəmi ṣahqo

to the grieving | man, | so that | you fulfill | his longing,

ወለጸድቅ፡ትባርኪ፡ጽድቆ።

wä-lä-ṣadəq təbarəki ṣədqo

and to the righteous one, | so that you bless/consecrate | his righteousness.

[26] ሰላም፡ለቆምኪ፡ሥነ፡ቄድሮስ፡ኅሩይ።

Sälam lä-qoməki šənnä qedros ḥəruy

Peace | to your stature, | of the beauty of | a cedar | chosen,

ወለመልክእኪ፡ሰላም፡ወላዴ፡ፍሥሐ፡ፀሐይ።

wä-lä-mälkäʾəki sälam wälade fəśśəḥa šähay

and to your figure/face/aspect, | peace: | [it is] a procreator | of happiness, | a sun.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ሀብኒ፡ተውላጠ፡ንዋይ።

Wälättä Peṭros habəni täwlatä nəway⁴

Walatta | Petros, | give me, | in exchange for | wealth/possessions,

¹ Lit., *bä-ḥʾwālqo* (in its number), rather than the more grammatically correct *bä-ḥʾwālqon* (in their [fem. pl.] number). The author takes some poetic license to make sure this stanza's lines all end in *-qo*.

² Standard form *ʾasru*; the author has altered the form for poetic purposes.

³ Our translation here differs from Ricci's, who has *che vi si trovano per attaccatura* (which find themselves attached there [i.e., the nails to the toes]).

⁴ CR: *täwlatä zəntu nəway* (in exchange for these possessions).

a morsel of blessing before the Great Gathering,¹

a taste of your blessing that is ever so sweet.

[27] Hail to your soul's departure, sung on its way by our hymns,

and the corpse of your flesh, more radiant than pearl.

Walatta Petros, so wise and upright, our morning star,

when your memory's rays shine forth,

worry vanishes from troubled hearts.

[28] Hail to your shroud, its glory beyond all glory,

and your tomb, a refuge for all who seek it there.

Walatta Petros, crystal vessel, bowl for faith's ointment,

pour clemency's fountain that your sheep may drink

when the heat of hellfire blazes near.

¹ See 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, regarding the reunion of all believers (living and dead) upon the Second Coming of Christ.

ፍተ፡በረከት፡በቅድመ፡ጉበኤ፡ዓባይ።

fəttä bārākāt bā-qədmā guba'e ʿabbay

a morsel of | blessing | before | the Gathering/Reunion | Great,

እምበረከትኪ፡ዘጥቀ፡ሠናይ።

əm-bārākātəki zä-ṭəqqä šānnay

from your blessing | that is so | good.

[27] ሰላም፡ለፀአተ፡ነፍስኪ፡በጣዕመ፡ዝማሬ፡ሐዋዝ።

Sālam lä-šä'atä näfsəki bā-ṭa'mā zəmmare ḥawwaz

Peace | to the departure of | your soul, | under the delight of | singing of hymns
| sweet,

ወለበድ፡ነ፡ሥጋኪ፡ጽዱል፡እምጸዳለ፡ባሕርይ፡ዕንቡዝ።

wä-lä-bādnä šəgaki šədul əm-¹šādalä baḥrəy ʿənbuz

and to the corpse of | your flesh, | radiant/splendid | more than the radiance/
splendor of | a pearl | stupefying.²

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ጠባብ፡ወሠናይተ፡ግዕዝ።

Wälättä Peṭros ṭäbbab wä-šānnaytā gə'z

Walatta | Petros, | wise | and fine of | character,

ለለይሠርቁ፡ምዕዛራተ፡ዝከርኪ፡ቤዝ።

lä-lä-yəšārrəqu mə'zaratā zəkrəki bez

each time when shine | the rays of | your memory, | [you] morning star,

እምልበ፡በእሲ፡ሕዙን፡ይትረሳዕ፡ትካዝ።

əm-ləbbä bə'asi ḥəzun yətrāssa ʿtəkkaz

from the heart/mind of | a man | troubled | is forgotten | worry.

[28] ሰላም፡ለግንዘተ፡ሥጋኪ፡ዘትሩፈ፡ትሩፍ፡ዕበዩ።

Sālam lä-gənzätä šəgaki zä-tərufä təruf ʿəbäyu

Peace | to the shrouding of | your flesh, | eminent of | eminent | its glory,

ወለመቃብርኪ፡ምስካይ፡ለእለ፡ቡቱ፡ስከዩ።

wä-lä-mäqabərəki məskay lä-əllä botu sākäyu

and to your tomb, | a refuge | for those who | at it | seek refuge.

ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡በረሌ፡ለዕፍረተ፡አሚን፡ሙዳዩ።

Wälättä Peṭros birälle lä-ʿəfrätā amin mudayu

Walatta | Petros, | crystal vessel, | for the perfume of | faith | its vase,

ቅድሒ፡ፈልፈለ፡ሣህል፡አባግዕኪ፡ይርወዩ።

qədəḥi fälfälä sahl abagə'əki yərwäyu

pour | the fountain of | mercy/clemency | for your sheep, | that they may drink

ጊዜ፡አንበልበለ፡ለመርቁ፡ዋዕዩ።

gize anbälbälä³ lä-märqe wa'yu

when | blazes, | of the burning [of hell], | its heat.

¹ C, CR: *šədul əm-* (more radiant than); EF: *šəruy əm-* (purer than).

² Gə'əz ʿənbuz means being fainthearted, downcast, senseless, foolish, or bewildered, which does not immediately make sense.

³ CR: *anbälbäla* [sic: fem. pl.] (blaze).

[29] To your cowl—like the thorns on Christ’s brow

when the Jews crucified him that he might redeem the world—

and to your cloak woven of purity,

and to your habit, your belt, and your gown,

I say “Hail, hail.” My poem I close with a seal.

[30] Praise unto Him, Lord of Lords, God of gods,

His essence a light that shines above all lights.

He has saved even me from the Entangler’s snares

and has let your child finish, Walatta Petros,

the song in your memory I began for you.

[29] ለቆብዕኪ፡አክሊለ፡ሦኸ፡ዲበ፡ርእሱ፡ክርስቶስ፡ዘተሠይመ።

Lä-qob'äki aklilä sók dibä rə'sä Krastos zä-täsäymä

To your monastic cap, | [like] the crown of | thorns | upon | the head of | Christ
| that was set/who was appointed,¹

አመ፡ሰቀልዎ፡አይሁድ፡ከመ፡ይቤዙ፡ዓለመ።

amä säqäləwwō ayhud kāmā yəbezu 'alāmā

when | crucified him | the Jews, | so that | he might redeem | the world;

ወዓጽፈ፡ንጽሕና፡ዓጽፍኪ፡ወአስኬማኪ፡ቅድመ።

wä-'asfä nəṣḥənnā 'asfäki wä-askemaki qədmä

and [to] the *atsf*-vestment | of purity, | your *atsf*-vestment, | and [to] your
askema-vestment, | first,

ለቅናትኒ፡ወቀሚስ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ዳግመ።

lä-qənat-ni wä-qāmis Wälättä Petros dagəmə

[and] to the belt/sash also, | and [to] the gown/shirt, | Walatta | Petros, | second:

ሰላም፡ሰላም፡እንዘ፡እብል፡ረሰይኩ፡ማኅተመ።

Sälam sälam ənzä əbəl rässäyku maḥtämä

“Peace, | peace” | while | saying, | I hereby put | the [closing] seal.

[30] ይትባረክ፡እግዚአብሔር፡አምላክ፡አማልክት፡መላኪ።

Yəṭbaräk əgzi'abḥēr amlakä amaləkt mälaki

Praised be | God, | the Lord of/over | the lords/idols, | the Ruler,

ዘባሕርይሁ፡በርሃን፡ዘመልዕልተ፡በርሃናት፡ያዋኪ።

zä-baḥrəyhu bərhan zä-mäl'əltä bərhanat yawakki

whose essence | a light | that above | [all] lights | shines.

እስመ፡ዓቀብኒ፡ሊተ፡እመሥግርተ፡ሰይጣን፡ሀዋኪ።

Əsmä 'aqəbāni litä əm-mäśgärtä säyṭan hawaki

Truly, | he has saved me, | [yes,] me, | from the snares of | Satan, | the Subverter

ወአፈጸመኒ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ወልድኪ።

wä-äfəṣṣämāni Wälättä Petros wäldəki

and has let me finish/accomplish, | Walatta | Petros, | your child,

ማሕሊተ፡ዝክርኪ፡ዘወጠንኩ፡ለኪ።

maḥletä zəkrəki zä-wäṭānku läki

the song in | your memory | that I began | for you.

¹ This is another *sām-ənna wärq* line that can be understood in two ways: the relative *zä-* can refer to the crown or to Christ, and the semantic range of the verb *täsäymä* is such that, depending on which *zä*-reference one favors, it takes on the meaning of “was set” or “was appointed.”

The Translation of the Poem *Hail to Walatta Petros* (*Sälamta Wälättä Petros*)

A sälam or sälamta is a short poem or hymn in Gəʿəz that focuses on a leader's or saint's good deeds or spiritual essence and begins each stanza with the words sälam lä- (peace upon, or hail to). Sälamat (plural) generally have between six and twelve stanzas, with only three lines per stanza, with a long first line and two shorter lines of three to four words each following it, and a final four-line stanza. To aid the scholar or student who does not read Gəʿəz but is interested in understanding the skill and elegance of the original, we have below provided the poem in fidäl, in transliteration, and in word-for-word English translation. On the facing page is the poetic English translation, by Kristin Fogdall. Those wishing to read or assign Fogdall's translation on its own (in an easy-to-read version properly spaced and without the facing pages of fidäl, transliteration, or word-for-word translation), can find it as a PDF at wendybelcher.com.

[1] Hail to you, Walatta Petros, a garden! Wrapped in heavenly scent,

you are shade for the doves,¹ from the heat of misery

that fills our world.

[2] Hail to you, Walatta Petros, a mirror! You reveal the Trinity

in its holiness to everyone, high and low:

now the faithful sit safe on dry ground.²

[3] Hail to you, Walatta Petros, a light! Your preaching split the darkness

and the foolish friends of this world

ran eagerly toward repentance.

¹ When Christ grants WP her kidan, he says, “many people will gather around you, from east and west. They will be pure doves, and they will benefit [from you] for the salvation of their souls.” The doves are a metaphor here for WP’s disciples.

² The author appears to allude to the episode when water suddenly rushed down the dry riverbed where WP and her followers had camped. Alternately, it is a reference to God creating dry ground for his people to cross dangerous seas or rivers; for example, Exodus 14:22 and Joshua 4:23.

[1] ሰላም፡ለኪ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ገነት፡ክልልተ፡መዓዛ፡ጥዑም።

Sālam läki Wälättä Petros gännät källältä mä`aza tə`um

Peace/hail | to you | Walatta | Petros, | a garden/Eden | enclosed/protected by |
fragrance | sweet/delicious,¹

ወምጽላለ፡አርጋብ፡አንቲ፡እመርቄ፡ሕማም።

wä-məṣlalä argab anti əm-märqe həmam

and a shade/refuge for | the doves | you [are], | from the burning of | affliction
ዘሰፈነት፡ውስተ፡ዓለም።

zä-säfänät² wəstā `alām

that rules | in | the world.

[2] ሰላም፡ለኪ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡መጽሔት፡ሃይማኖተ፡ሥሉስ፡ቅዱስ።

Sālam läki Wälättä Petros mäṣṣhet haymanotä šəllus qəddus

Peace/hail | to you | Walatta | Petros, | a mirror. | The faith in | the Trinity | holy
ዘተከሥተ፡ብኪ፡ለዘነብ፡ወርእስ።

zä-täkästä bəki³ lä-zänäb wä-rə`s

has been revealed | through you | to tail | and head.⁴

ኅዱራን፡መልዕልተ፡የብስ።

ḥəduran māf əltä yäbs

they sit/dwell | on | dry ground.

[3] ሰላም፡ለኪ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ብርሃን፡ስብከትኪ፡አመ፡ውስተ፡ጽልመት፡አብርሀ።

Sālam läki⁵ Wälättä Petros bərhan səbkätəki amä wəstā šəlmāt abrəha

Peace/hail | to you | Walatta | Petros, | a light. | Your preaching, | when | into |
darkness | it brought light,

ለመክፈልተ፡አብዳን፡ዓለም፡አዕርከቲሃ።

lä-mäkfältä abdan `alām a`rəktiha

of the share of | fools, | the world, | its friends

ተባደሩ፡ኅብ፡ንስሐ።

tābadāru ḥabä nəssəḥa

ran eagerly | toward | repentance.

¹ Since BD do not have the sālam, we have checked its CR text against CEFJ, the only manuscripts providing it. Note that in MS J, the sālam appears before the miracles, not after them.

² FJ: *zä-säfänä* [masc., as opposed to fem. *zä-säfänät*; no translation difference].

³ CR: *läki* (to you).

⁴ “Tail and head” is probably a metaphor for “everyone,” like “young and old” or “high and low,” as in Isaiah 19:15.

⁵ Abb. 88: *sālaməki* (your peace), which CR sensibly altered to *sālam läki*.

[4] Peace upon you! What no eye has seen nor ear ever heard,¹

that mystery you chose as your wedding finery,

refusing a life of luxury.²

[5] Hail to you, Walatta Petros, our mother! Strength of will carried you

through the narrow gate³—like thousands of martyrs before

and the righteous monks of Waseef.

[6] Peace upon you and your forebear Shenoute, arrayed in the armor of
chastity!

Come, comfort our distress and woe;

guard us while the whirlwind rages.⁴

¹ Regarding God promising as a heavenly reward what no eye has seen nor ear heard, see 1 Corinthians 2:9.

² This is an allusion to WP leaving a wealthy man and her life as a pampered wife to become the bride of Christ as an ascetic nun.

³ See Matthew 7:13–14; Luke 13:24.

⁴ See Proverbs 1:27–28.

[4] ሰላምለኪ፡ዘዓይን፡ኢርእየ፡ወእዝነ፡መዋቲ፡ኢሰምዓ።

Sālam läki zä-¹ayn i-rə²yä wä-əznä mǎwati¹ i-sām³a

Peace/hail | to you. | What an eye | has not seen | and ear of | mortal | has not heard,
ከመ፡ትትረሰዩ፡ትርሲ፡ተመርዓ።

kāmā tǎträssäyi² tǎrsitā mār⁴a

so as to | adorn yourself [with that], | as the adornment of | a [heavenly]
wedding,

ገደፍኪ፡ ሰርጐ፡ፍግዓ።

gädäfk³i sǎrg^wä⁴ fǎg⁵a

you rejected | the trappings of | a life of pleasure.

[5] ሰላምለኪ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡እምነ፡ተኅየልኪ፡ለበዊኢ፡ጸባብ፡ምኅላፍ።

Sālam läki Wälättä Petros əmmənā tāḥayyälki lä-bāwi⁷a šābbab mǎḥlaf⁵

Peace/hail | to you, | Walatta | Petros, | our mother. | You had the strength | to
enter through | the narrow | gate,

ከመ፡ተኅየሉ፡ቅድመ፡ሰማዕታት፡አላላፍ።

kāmā tāḥayyālu qədmā sāma⁶ tat a⁷laf

like | they had the strength | before, | martyrs | thousands,

ወጺድቃን፡እለ፡ወጺፍ።

wä-šadəqan əllā Wäšif

and the Righteous Ones | of | Waseef.

[6] ሰላምለኪ፡ምስለ፡ሲኖዳ፡አቡኪ፡ስርግወ፡ሎግዮ፡ድንጋሌ።

Sālam läki məslä Sinoda abuki sǎrgəwä logyō⁶ dəngale

Peace/hail | to you | together with | Shenoute, | your father, | adorned with | the
priestly armor of | chastity.

ለናዝቡትነ፡ንዒ፡እምሐዘን፡ወወይሌ።

Lä-nazəzotənā nə⁵ i əm-ḥazän wä-wäyle⁷

To our comforting | come, | from distress | and woe

ወሐውጺ፡እመ፡ውልዋሌ።

wä-ḥawwəši amä⁸ wəlwale⁹

and watch over [us] | at the time of | agitation/whirlwind.

¹ F: *wä-əzn mǎwati* (and a mortal ear); CR: *wä-əzn* (and an ear).

² FJ: *kāmā tǎträssäyē* [substandard orthography, but identical meaning]; CR: *kāmā tǎrässäyi* (so that you adorn [trans.]).

³ CE: *zä-gädäfkⁱ* (it is that you have rejected).

⁴ In Amharic, the similar word *sārg* means “wedding” or “wedding celebration.” Therefore *Gəʿəz sārg^w*, despite its different meaning, here amplifies the stanza’s wedding imagery for the poem’s monastic audiences, who would have known both *Gəʿəz* and Amharic.

⁵ CR has stanzas 5 and 6 in the opposite order.

⁶ CR: *logyon* [orthographic variant].

⁷ E, CR: *əm-ḥazän wäyle* (from distress, woe).

⁸ CEFJ, CR: *kāmā* (like), which makes little sense contextually. We assume that *ከመ kāmā* is a corruption of optically and acoustically similar *እመ amä*.

⁹ CR: *wəlwale* [scribal error, producing a nonexistent lexeme]. See Proverbs 1:27–28.

[7] Hail to you Walatta Petros, who brings harmony! May the power of your help

outweigh the schemes of Satan and of men;

may it veil us like a cloud.¹

[8] Peace upon you! We make a walled fortress from your aid;

we fear not the assault of godless enemies

when they rise against us.

[9] Peace upon you! For your children, the brothers and all the sisters—

plead without ceasing in the presence of the Lord,

that they may avoid temptation.

[10] Peace upon you! You escaped the snares of beastly iniquity

by carrying the guarantee of victory—the cross—

¹ For references to God as a protective cloud, see, for example, Mark 9:7 and Matthew 17:5.

[7] ሰላም:ለኪ:ጥገሰ:ረድኤትኪ:ጎይል:ወለተ:ጴጥሮስ:ሰላሜ።

Sālam läki mogäsä räd'etäki ḥayl¹ Wälättä Peṭros sulame

Peace/hail | to you. | The favor of | your assistance | [is] a force, | Walatta |

Petros, | [embodiment of] harmony.

እመከራ:ሰይጣን:ወሰብእ:በኢፍጻሜ።

Em-mäkära säyṭan wä-säb' bā-i-fəṣṣame

From the temptations/plots of | Satan | and men | without end

ይከድነት:አምሳለ:ጊሜ።

yəkdənänä² amsalä gime

may it [your assistance] veil/protect us | like a | mist.

[8] ሰላም:ለኪ:ለረድኤትኪ:ጸወን:እንዘ:ንፊስዮ:አረፍተ።

Sālam läki lä-räd'etäki³ šāwän ənzä nəressəyo aräftä

Peace/hail | to you. | Your assistance: | a fortress, | by | making it [i.e., your assistance] into | the walls of [that fortress],

መራድ:ረሲዓን:አፅራር:ኢንፈርህ:ምንተ።

māradä räsi'an ašrar⁴ i-nəfärrəh mēntä

the attack of | godless | enemies | we do not fear | at all

ጊዜ:ሠርዐ:ተቃውሞተ።

gize šār'u tāqawəmotä

at the time when | they plot | rising up.

[9] ሰላም:ለኪ:ለደቂቅኪ:አኅው:ወለኩሎን:አኃት።

Sālam läki lä-däqiqəki aḥaw wä-lä-k'əllon aḥat

Peace/hail | to you. | For your sons, | the brothers, | and for all | the sisters,

ቅድመ:ገጸ:አምላክ:ተንብሊ:እንበለ:ፅርዓት።

qədmä gäṣṣä amlak tänbəli ənbalä šər'at

before | the countenance of | the Lord | plead | without ceasing

ኢይባኡ:ውስተ:መንሱት።

i-yəba'u wəstā mänsut

so that they may not enter | into | perdition/temptation.

[10] ሰላም:ለኪ:እመሣግሪሁ:አምሠጥኪ:ለአርፎ:ዓመፃ:መሥገራ።

Sālam läki əm-mäsagərihu amšätki lä-ärwe 'ammäša mäšgäri

Peace/hail | to you. | From its snares | you escaped, | [the snares] of the beast of | wickedness, | the ensnaring one, [Satan,]

አረቦን:መዊእ:መስቀለ:እንዘ:ትጸውራ።

arəbonä māwi' mäsqälä ənzä təšäwwəri

the collateral of | victory, | the cross, | by | carrying,

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¹ CR: *mogäsä räd'etäki ḥayyal* (the favor of your powerful assistance).

² CR: *yəkdənāni* (may it protect me).

³ CEFJ: *lä-räd'etäki* (lit., regarding your assistance); CR: *räd'etäki* (your assistance).

⁴ CR: *māra'əyā räsi'an ašrar* (the flocks of the godless enemies).

as did the disciples of Saint Macarius.

[11] Hail to you, Walatta Petros! From the Four Creatures of Heaven¹

to where the Holy Trinity is worshipped,

raise the incense of our song—

with a censer wrought of light!

¹ This refers to the four living creatures of Revelation 4:6–8: the lion, the calf, a humanlike creature, and the eagle, each of which has six wings and praises God saying, “Holy, holy, holy.”

ዘጸርዖ፡አለ፡መቃሪ።

zä-šorəwwo əllä Mäqari

that which [also] had carried | those of | Macarius.¹

[11] ሰላም፡ለኪ፡ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ፡አዕርጊ፡ዕጣነ፡ማሐሌትነ፡ዝንቱ።

Sälam läki Wälättä Petros aʿrəgi ʿəṭanä mahletənä zəntu

Peace/hail | to you, | Walatta | Petros. | Make rise | the incense | of our song/
hymn/poem | this,

እምእንስሳ፡ሰማይ፡አርባዕቱ።

əm-ənsəsa sämay arbaʿtu²

from the Creatures of | Heaven | Four

ኅበ፡ይትቄደሱ፡አካላት፡ሠለስቱ።

ḥabä yəṭqeddäsu akalat šälästu³

to where | are revered | the Persons | Three [of the Trinity],

በማዕጠንት፡ዘብርሃን፡ግበረቱ።

bä-maʿṭänt zä-bərhan gəbrätu.

with an incense censer: | of light | its making.

¹ For the purposes of the end rhyme, the poet has shortened Saint Macarius's name from Mäqarəyos to Mäqari.

² C, CR: *arbaʿtu* (four); EFJ: ፬ (4).

³ CE, CR: *šälästu* (three); FJ: ፫ (3).