

PETROS IV (d. 1921)

After the [death](#) of Abuna Atnatewos in 1876, Negus Yohannes IV (1871-1889), alleging that one bishop was insufficient for his whole empire, asked the Coptic patriarch [CYRIL V](#) (1875-1927) to [send](#) Ethiopia four bishops. Thus, at Maqale, in late fall 1881, Yohannes received a new metropolitan bishop, Abuna [Petros](#) IV, who was to stay with him at Tigre, and three coadjutor bishops: Matewos, who was to become bishop of [Shewa](#) and all territories governed by Menelik, negus of Shewa (1865-1889); Marqos, destined for the bishopric of Bagemder and Semen, but who died soon after his arrival at Dabra Tabor; and Luqas, who was assigned to all the territories under Negus Takla Haymanot and to Gojam, where he died around 1901.

[Petros](#) IV set up residence in the traditional fief of the bishops of Tigre, at Addi Abun, near Adwa. He carried out his duties for some eight years. He accompanied Yohannes IV in the Ethiopian expedition into the [Sudan](#) against the Mahdists and was present when the negus died from a wound suffered during the battle of Matamma on 10 March 1889.

Menelik, who then became supreme ruler of all Ethiopia (1889-1913), promptly requested that Matewos be promoted to the rank of metropolitan in place of [Petros](#) IV. The latter tried in vain to prevent this, but Menelik succeeded in obtaining approval from the Coptic patriarch in Egypt and Petros IV was replaced. At the same time, Menelik repartitioned the territories of these two prelates, with Matewos receiving not only the greater part of [Shewa](#) but also many other important lands such as Yajju, Bagemder, and Dambya, and [Petros](#) being given the northern part of the country (Tigre, Wag, etc.) and certain central territories.

After the battle of Matamma, Menelik confined [Petros](#) to [Shewa](#) to prevent him from consecrating as emperor the [prince](#) of Tigre, Ras Mangasha, alleged son of Yohannes IV, and pretender to the imperial

throne. However, once Mangasha was defeated in 1899 and exiled to Shewa, [Petros](#) was allowed to return to Tigre and to the residence at Addi Abun. After ten years, he left for Dassie, where he had been invited to consecrate Ras Mika'el as negus of Wallo (31 May 1914), an office that Mika'el had obtained through his son and Menelik's successor, Lej Iyyasu. When Lej Iyyasu was later deposed at Addis Ababa (27 September 1916), Mika'el took arms in his support. He begged the aged Petros to accompany him into battle. When Mika'el was defeated at Sagale on 26 October 1916, he and Petros were taken prisoner. Petros was granted his freedom soon thereafter, but only on condition that he remain in Bulga (Shewa), where he died in 1921.

Among the four Coptic prelates received by Yohannes in 1881, only [Petros](#) and his successor, Matewos, attained the dignity of metropolitan. Marqos was dead at Dabra Tabor in 1882, while Luqas died in Gojam around 1901 after a rather insignificant episcopate.

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SALVATORE TEDESCHI

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