

# **The Millennium Amharic Bible Translation and Its Incipient Sign System**

**by**

**Nebeyou Alemu Terefe**

(Student No. 2020808024)

**A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the requirement for the degree  
MA in Bible Translation**

**in the**

**Faculty of Theology  
University of the Free State  
Bloemfontein, South Africa**

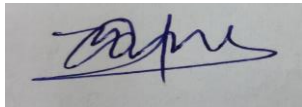
**Date Submitted: 1 December 2022**

**Joint Supervisors: Prof. Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and Prof. Jacobus A. Naudé**

## **Declaration**

I, Nebeyou A. Terefe (student no. 2020808024), declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the MA Degree with specialisation in Bible Translation, at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

I also cede the copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nebeyou A. Terefe', is shown within a rectangular frame.

Nebeyou A. Terefe

## **Abstract**

In this research, the author attempts to describe the Millennium Amharic translation by giving emphasis to the following three points: the reason for the translation, its incipient text, and its role in affirming the canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahedo* Church (EOTC). Ultimately, all three issues are interconnected.

The mini-dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter discusses background issues related to the mini-dissertation. Chapter two highlights the methodologies employed in the study. Chapter three briefly presents the history of Gə'əz and Amharic Bible translations. Chapter four discusses the Millennium Amharic Translation in light of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). Chapter five discusses the issue of biblical canon in relation to the Millennium Amharic Translation, and the final chapter provides the conclusion.

**Key Words:** Translation studies, Bible Translation, Amharic Bible, Descriptive Translation Studies, Canon.

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia .....	1
1.2 Background .....	3
1.3 Research Problem and Objectives.....	7
1.4 Research Design and Methodology .....	8
1.5 Ethical Considerations .....	8
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	8
Chapter 2: Theoretical Background and Methodology .....	10
2.1 Theories of Bible Translation .....	10
2.1.1 Pre-Linguistic Approach to Translation.....	10
2.1.2 Linguistics Approaches to Translation.....	11
2.1.3 Functionalist Approach to Translation.....	12
2.2 Descriptive Translation Studies .....	12
2.3 Narrative Frame Analysis .....	14
2.4 Summary .....	16
Chapter 3: Brief History of Bible Translations into Gə'əz and Amharic .....	17
3.1 Introduction.....	17
3.2 Gə'əz Bible Translation .....	17
3.3 Amharic Bible Translations .....	22
3.4 The 1953 Translation .....	25
3.5 The Millennium Translation .....	26
3.6 Other Translations.....	28
Chapter 4: Description of the Millennium Amharic Translation.....	29

4.1 Introduction.....	29
4.2 General Description of the Millennium Translation .....	29
4.2.1 The Incipient Sign System of the Millennium Translation .....	31
4.2.2 <i>Skopos</i> of the Millennium Translation .....	31
4.3 Organisational Frame.....	32
4.4 Translational Frame .....	32
4.4.1 Changes in Wording.....	33
4.4.2 Omission .....	34
4.4.3 Additions.....	35
4.4.4 Summary of Translational Frame .....	36
4.5 Socio-Cultural Frame.....	36
4.6 Translation Metatexts.....	40
4.7 Linguistic Features.....	43
4.8 Summary .....	44
Chapter 5: Canon .....	45
5.1 Introduction.....	45
5.2 Fetha Nägäst and <i>Sinodos</i> .....	46
5.3 The official position of the Church .....	48
5.4 Canon and the Millennium Amharic Translation.....	50
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	52
Bibliography .....	53

## Abbreviations

AC	<i>Andämta</i> Commentary
BCMS	Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society
BFBS	The British and Foreign Bible Society
EC	Ethiopian Calendar
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox <i>Täwahedo</i> Church
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MS	Manuscript
MSS	Manuscripts
NA27	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 27th ed.
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PE	Pastoral Epistles
ST	Source Text
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text
UBS4	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , 4th rev. ed.

## Amharic Transliteration

ሀ h	ተ t	ሀ z	ፀ ፈ
ለ l	ቸ ር	ዠ ጆ	ፈ f
ሐ ሐ	ኀ ከ	የ y	ፐ p
መ m	ነ n	ደ d	ቀፕ q <sup>w</sup>
ሠ ሰ	ኘ ሽ	ጀ ጅ	ኀፕ ከ <sup>w</sup>
ረ r	አ ’	ገ g	ኸ k <sup>w</sup>
ሰ s	ከ k	ጠ ተ	ኀፍ ግ <sup>w</sup>
ሸ ሸ	ኸ ከ	ጨ ር	
ቀ q	ወ w	አ ፑ	
በ b	ዐ ‘	ጸ ሰ	

### Vowels:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
ä	u	i	a	e	ə (or vowel-less)	o

**Note:** all dates are Gregorian dates, unless indicated that they are Ethiopian Calendar dates

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia

There are three proposals on how and when Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia. The first proposal argues that apostles or anyone who was present on the day of Pentecost brought the gospel to Aksum (Sergew, 1972: 97). The tradition in the church argues that Matthew preached the Gospel in Aksum and became a martyr (ibid: 99).<sup>1</sup> The early church historian Rufinus indicated that Matthew went to Ethiopia (Rufinus, trans. Philip R. Amidon, 1997:18).

Second, based on the narrative account of Acts 8:26–39, it is believed that Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian eunuch (Ephraim, 1968: 18; and Belay, 1992: 93). The Book of Acts narrates the conversion of the “Ethiopian” Eunuch and the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahedo* Church (hereafter, EOTC) considers the conversion of the Eunuch as the foundation of the Orthodox Church (Sergew, 1972: 97).<sup>2</sup> St. John Chrysostom in his *Epiphany Homily* and Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* confirmed the presence of Ethiopians on the day of Pentecost (ibid.). As Afework indicated, Orthodox Church historians place a great deal of emphasis on the conversion of the eunuch and see it as the catalyst for the growth of indigenous Ethiopian Christianity in Aksum (Afework, 2020: 103). Various sources indicate that there was a presence of Christianity before the establishment of the EOTC in the fourth century.

However, Frumentius (*Abba Səlama* - in Ethiopian tradition) played the most prominent role in establishing the EOTC. It was during the fourth century that Christianity become the official

---

<sup>1</sup> However, some in the EOTC did not accept his martyrdom. There is a widely held belief which says Ethiopia did not shed the blood of the apostles and Christianity spread without resistance (see Gorgorios, 1986 EC.: 20).

<sup>2</sup> The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is regarded as the fulfillment of Psalm 68:31, “Ethiopia shall stretch her hand unto God.” Psalm 68:31 plays, a prominent role in identity formation of the EOTC. Eusebius pointed out that, “Tradition says that he [the Eunuch] who was the first fruit of the faithful throughout the world, returned to his native land and preached the gospel so that, by him, was fulfilled the prophecy, ‘Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God’” (Eusebius, 1927:109-10).



religion of the Aksumite Empire (Sergew, 1972: 99; Sylvia, 1955: 56). Frumentius was ordained as the first Patriarch of Ethiopia (c. 330) by St. Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria.

Ezana was the first king of Ethiopia to be converted to Christianity, around 335 (Niccum, 2014: 64 and Knibb, 1999:12).<sup>3</sup> Even though the king converted to Christianity, Christianity was limited to the Aksum area. Greek was known in the Ethiopian court (ibid.) and Frumentius most likely taught in Greek. As Tadesse Tamrat argued, “The continued use of Greek might account for this restricting the potential audience to the educated classes” (Taddesse, 1972: 23).

However, after six centuries things changed, and many attributed these changes in terms of Christian expansion to the (ተስቦቱ ቅዱሳን)/*tse ’ätu kidusan* (“Nine Saints”), in the latter part of fifth century.<sup>4</sup> With the arrival of the Nine Saints, from the various parts of the Eastern Empire, Christianity spread even further across the country.<sup>5</sup> The Nine Saints made significant contributions to the church’s growth by spreading the Christian message to the common people. They introduced monasticism. The Aksum royal court had converted to Christianity more than a century ago, but outside of Aksum, the majority of the kingdom had not. The Nine Saints established churches outside of Aksum. The translation of the Bible into Gə’əz is traditionally attributed to monks who had taken refuge in Ethiopia during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Ullendorff, 1967: 56).<sup>6</sup> Christianization triggered the rise of translation of Christian literature from Greek and, after the rise of Islam, from Arabic into Gə’əz.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ezana engraved the sign of a cross on Aksumite coins after converting to Christianity, replacing his earlier symbols like the crescent and the disc (Munro-Hay, 1993: 102). This is taken as evidence for his conversion to Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> According to the records of the church, the names of the Nine Saints are as follows: አሌፍ/Alef, አረጋዊ/Aregawi, ሊቃኖስ/Likanos, አፍጺ/Aftsi, ገሪማ/Garima, ጉባ/Gub, ይምጻታ/Yimata, ጳንጠሊዎን/Pantoliwos, ጽሕማ/Tsehima. Most of these saints have a hagiography written for them and churches named after them. A saint’s day is dedicated to each of them.

<sup>5</sup> In Ethiopia, Christianity is spread from top to bottom. That explains why it spread so swiftly across the entire Aksum kingdom. Christianity was first practiced by peasants in the Greco-Roman world and, after three centuries, was recognized as the official religion under the rule of Constantine. In Ethiopia, it starts out as the official state religion before spreading to the lower classes of society. As a result, unlike in the Greco-Roman states, Christians in Ethiopia did not experience any form of persecution.

<sup>6</sup> It was the Jesuit missionaries who initially attributed the translation of the Bible to Nine Saints, as it is reported by Hibo Ludolf in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (see Knibb, 1999: 23). Paolo Marrassini (1990) doubts the historical existence of the

## 1.2 Background

Bible translations have increased tremendously since the last century, and many languages have their own copies of the Bible in multiple versions. This trend is becoming common in Ethiopia, and now we have multiple translations of the Bible available in the Amharic language. The working language of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is Amharic (see Meer and Richter: 2003: 23ff.).<sup>7</sup> Endoglossic language policy that favors Amharic as a lingua franca is practised in Ethiopia and “[t]his is a rarity in Africa, where most official languages are that of the former coloniser” (Nebeyou, 2019).

Modern Bible translations in Ethiopia started in the 19th century, primarily as a result of Protestant missionaries. In 2007, the EOTC issued a new Amharic Bible translation, the first Amharic translation fully recognised by the church, under the auspices of the Bible Society of Ethiopia. This new translation was intended to coincide with the Ethiopian millennium.<sup>8</sup> The Bible Society of Ethiopia is an ecumenical society composed of EOTC, Catholics, and Protestants. However, as indicated in the preface of this translation, the translation was conducted by scholars of the EOTC (*Amharic Bible*, 2007: iii). The translation committee was set up in 1986 EC (1993/94) by the Patriarch, and the Patriarch himself was overseeing the translation (*Amharic Bible*, 2007: iii). In the course of the translation, the Bible Society of Ethiopia provided consultants for the purpose of advising on issues related to the biblical languages. The translation consultant himself is an adherent of the EOTC.<sup>9</sup>

---

Nine Saints and their involvement in Bible translation. He further argues that the translators of the Bible into Ge’ez must be Ethiopian themselves (Marrassini, 1990: 41).

<sup>7</sup> In the past, Amharic was the only official language of the country. However, thirty years ago it was changed into the working language of the federal government. Regional governments use their own local languages.

<sup>8</sup> The Ethiopian calendar is seven to eight years behind the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>9</sup> Dr Ammanuel Mikre-Sellassie was the consultant for this translation. He was a UBS translation consultant.

The Millennium Amharic translation is a confessional translation for the EOTC.<sup>10</sup> A confessional translation is done by a given church or sponsored by it. As Omanson (2011:2405) rightly indicated:

In the first few centuries of the church, there were no confessional or interconfessional translations of the Bible; there were simply translations. But with the division of the Church over the centuries into Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches, translations of the Bible were for the most part confessional.

This translation was very controversial when it was issued a decade ago and received criticism mainly from Evangelicals (Bruk, 2014: 50) and from a few adherents of the Orthodox Church (see Getachew, 2011EC).

The EOTC issued the Millennium Translation because they considered the already available Amharic translations do not retain their liturgical and cultic vocabulary like that of the Gə'əz Bible. Gə'əz has been the language of all sacred literature within the Orthodox Church. However, no complete Gə'əz Bible has ever been published until this year. The available Amharic translations were not translated from the Gə'əz and show some discrepancies against the Gə'əz and LXX.<sup>11</sup> Alexandru Mihăilă (2018: 3) observed the following concerning the

---

<sup>10</sup> “Millennium Translation” is a name given to this translation by Bruk. The cover page of the translation simply reads “መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የብሉይና የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጻሕፍት”/ *Methaf Kidus Yebluyena Yhadise kidane Mtsehaft* “Bible: Books of the Old and the New Testament.”

<sup>11</sup> Which Bible version should the contemporary translator regard as reliable and translate from? Most people would concur with the following response: Old Testament books from Hebrew, and New Testament texts from Greek. Some people, though, disagree with this notion. Brock presents an alternative perspective when he argues: “Certainly most modern translations set out to translate from the Hebrew and the Greek, but even here problems arise; the edition of the Hebrew Bible used is in fact a medieval Jewish one where the originally consonantal text goes back more or less in its present form to the late first century AD, but in many cases (especially in poetic books) this consonantal text can be read with different vowels, providing somewhat a different meaning. Modern translators normally follow the medieval Jewish tradition of understanding the text, but it would also be possible to take the consonantal text as the starting point, without necessarily following the particular interpretation of reading the vowels which the medieval tradition provides...” (Brock, 2006: 14). Brock came up with two important terms which are relevant for his argument: which are relevant for his argument: “literary authenticity” and “scriptural authenticity.” “Literary authenticity” refers to the exact wording of the original author (which in the case of Hebrew

Septuagint in relation to the oriental churches, “While Western biblical scholars gave precedence to the Hebrew text over the Septuagint, in the Orthodox world one can see a tension in the relationship between the two textual witnesses and sometimes, even recently, there are voices which tend to give the Septuagint total authority in the Church.”<sup>12</sup> However, his statement applies for EOTC.

Furthermore, the translation principles used deviate from the church's method of biblical interpretation (የአተረጓጎም ስልት/interpretive tradition), making it difficult for church scholars to fully accept those versions as the word of God, hence the translation.<sup>13</sup> This reflects the historical

---

is unattainable) and “scriptural authenticity” refers to a form of biblical text which has been held by the religious community as authoritative” (Brock, 2006: 14). He claims that these two terms have a distinction, which in turn has important consequences. Namely, literary authenticity can be applied only to a single form of text, while scriptural authority refers “simultaneously to different forms of text” (ibid.: 14–15). Hence, if we take the Hebrew Bible as an example, we can say that scriptural authenticity applies to both the medieval Jewish edition of the Hebrew and the Hebrew text that was used by the translators of the LXX. But this does not mean that scriptural authenticity is confined only to the Hebrew Text and the LXX; “it applies just as much to the ancient versions, the Greek Septuagint and the Syriac Peshitta, since both these translations have been regarded as authoritative biblical texts by the communities using them” (Ibid.: 15). This argument leads to the logical conclusion that modern biblical translations should not be made solely from Hebrew or Greek.

<sup>12</sup> The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible written for Jews residing in Egypt, whereas the Hebrew Bible is written in the Hebrew language for Jews in the Palestine region. The LXX translation of the Bible marks the beginning of a significant period in Bible translation. There are several instances where the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint diverge. The three parts of the Torah—also known as the Hebrew Bible—are the *Torah*, *Nev'im*, and *Ketuvim*. The LXX, on the other hand, is split up into four main categories: law, history, poetry, and prophets. The LXX's 52 books make up its larger canon, which also includes apocryphal and deuterocanonical works. There are some differences between the Hebrew Bible and LXX in terms of substance as well. For instance, the Hebrew Bible is shorter than the Septuagint translation of Isaiah. The LXX's Ester and Daniel, for instance, include certain additions.

<sup>13</sup> The EOTC has a commentary tradition called the *andemta* commentary (AC). The AC tradition has been influenced by both local and external traditions. The phrase AC refers to a vast body of work that provides interpretations of biblical, patristic, liturgical, canonical, and monastic texts in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahido* Church tradition. The AC corpus first appeared as an Ethiopian oral commentary on Biblical and Patristic writings after these texts were translated into the Gə'əz language. The distinctive social history reflected in the commentary material suggests that the oral tradition, expanded and augmented, reached its most definitive form in the Gondarine period (ca. 17 century). Some of the *andemta* commentaries are published and a few of them remain unpublished.

influence of the Gə'əz translation of the Bible on almost all of the liturgical and interpretive traditions of the EOTC.

Even after Amharic became the dominant language starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> century C.E., all sacred texts continued to be written in Gə'əz. There was a reluctance to translate the Bible into other Ethiopian local languages.<sup>14</sup> The Jesuit missionaries who came from Portugal in the 17th century were the first to use Amharic as a literary language within the religious context (see Caramen, 1985). During Tewodros' reign in the nineteenth century, Amharic literature flourished. Prior to that, there are several Amharic glosses, commentaries, war songs, and short theological tracts in MSS. However, for his overall objective of unity, King Tewodros advocated the use of Amharic literature rather than Gə'əz as a written language. He even allowed Protestant missionaries to distribute the Amharic Bible (Isichei, 1995: 213).

Besides addressing the above point, the issue of canonical books is also addressed in this translation. The placement of the deutro-canonical books within this translation provides important information about the translators' and the Church's views of these books and their relation to other canonical books. There is a general practise of grouping apocryphal books together in a separate section, between the OT and NT. This tradition was set by Martin Luther. As indicated by Naudé, and Miller-Naudé (2015: 240), "This decision set the precedent for all Protestant English Bibles that followed to place the Apocrypha in a separate appendix at the end of the Old Testament". However, this translation mixes the apocryphal books with other canonical books; it is a move that aims to give apocryphal books equal status with other biblical books. Commenting on this Seyefeselassie Yohannes (2011: 6) said the following:

[In the 1980 edition of the Amharic Bible,] books like Enoch, *Kufale*, ... and the Maccabees, which are recognized by the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahedo* Church as

---

The AC make a comment on the Gə'əz translation of the Bible. According to Afework (2020: 284), the *andemta* traditions developed " ... as a source of interpretation towards instituting uniform understanding of the meaning of biblical texts to mitigate strife and division and also, probably, to counter misguided and trivial interpretations of the texts by offering a set of alternative answers for a particular text."

<sup>14</sup> It was through missionary and individual efforts that the Bible begun to be translated into other Ethiopian languages.

canonical but rejected by other churches, are placed after the prophet Malachi and are referred to as deuterocanonical. However, the church does not refer to these texts as deuterocanonical. They should have been placed the way we have put them [in the Millennium Amharic translation].

The Millennium Translation of the Bible into Amharic has received a lot of concern and criticism from various circles. Some critics argue that some changes were made to the translation to fit the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahedo* Church's existing theology (see Yared, 2009). To date, no serious research has been conducted on the Amharic Bible translations. The only published academic work on this translation is the work of Bruk A. Asale (2014), published in *The Bible Translator*, entitled "A Millennium Translation Based on the Gə'əz and LXX: A New Bible Translation in the Ethiopian Church and Its Controversy". There is also another self-published Amharic work entitled ተፋልሶ/*Täfaläso* ("Discord") by Getachew Täräfä (2011EC).<sup>15</sup> Apart from these two works, no serious work has been done on this translation. Hence, this translation requires an in-depth study. This study fills that gap and hopes to add to the corpus of work already done in the field. The Descriptive Translation Study approach will be employed in the research, and this translation will be analysed using the Narrative Frame Analysis method of Mona Baker (2006).

### 1.3 Research Problem and Objectives

The research attempts to explore the following questions: 1) What is the reason for the translation? 2) How has Orthodox theological tradition influenced this confessional translation? 3) How has this translation contributed to the issue of canonicity of biblical books in the EOTC? The research will not offer a normative analysis of the translation as "good" or "bad"; rather, it is a descriptive translation to understand the use of translation strategies and what influences them.

This study has the following objectives:

---

<sup>15</sup> The author defined ተፋልሶ (*Täfaläso*) as ያልተገባ ትርጉም መስጠት፣ የእግዚአብሔርን ቃል መቀየር፣ በአስተምህሮ መሳት "assigning incorrect meaning, changing God's word, doctrinal error."

- 1) To investigate the influence of the Orthodox theological tradition on this translation by exploring the historical, organizational, sociological and theological impetus behind this translation
- 2) To position this translation in relation to other Amharic versions with emphasis on the issue of incipient sign system and biblical canon.

## 1.4 Research Design and Methodology

In order to describe the Millennium Translation, to understand the influence of Orthodox theological tradition in the translation and to situate the text with other Amharic translations of the Bible, the researcher will employ Descriptive Translation Studies and Narrative Frame Analysis. DTS allows texts to be the objects of study in their own right.

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses background issues relevant to the issue at hand. Chapter two highlights the methodologies employed in the study. Chapter three highlights the history of Gə'əz and Amharic Bible translations. Chapter four employs DTS and Narrative Frame Theory to analyse the translation. Chapter five discusses the issue of Biblical canon in relation to the Millennium Translation. Chapter six concludes the mini-dissertation.

## 1.5 Ethical Considerations

This research is a “desk top” research and does not involve human or animal subjects. The research uses the published edition of the Amharic Bible. Ethical clearance number: UFS-HSD2022/1504/22.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

As it has been mentioned above there is no ample study dealing with this translation. The study attempts to redress this. This study will contribute for the knowledge of Bible translation in

Ethiopia and for those who seek to understand the influence of Orthodox theology in this particular translation. It will also serve as a basis for further studies on the subject.



## Chapter 2: Theoretical Background and Methodology

This section provides the theoretical and methodological framework for the study. The theoretical framework that informs this dissertation is DTS and Narrative framework Theory.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.1 Theories of Bible Translation

The practice of translation dates back to the earliest times in history. However, translation studies emerged as a distinct academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century. It was Holmes, in his famous article “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” (1972), who suggests the term “Translation Studies” (TS) and paves the way for the subject to be considered as a distinct discipline. He delineates what TS covers, namely pure and applied research.

#### 2.1.1 Pre-Linguistic Approach to Translation

The practice of both religious and secular translations was there long before TS became an academic discipline. The period prior to the development of modern TS is referred to as “the pre-linguistics period of translation” (Newmark, 1981:4). During this period, the philological approach to translation was dominant and a “word-for-word” (i.e., literal) translation was the hallmark. The criteria for evaluating a given translation were vague and subjective.

It was Cicero and Horace (first century BC) who first comment on word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation. Jerome’s (4th century) translation also impacted later translators of religious texts. As Munday (2012: 13) indicated, Jerome’s translation impacted later translations of the Bible.

There exist only a few metatexts about religious translation activities of the past recorded in history. One example is the book of Aristeas, which records how the Septuagint translation was produced (see Naudé, 2009 and 2012).

---

<sup>16</sup> For more on theoretical frameworks of translations, see Munday (2012), Pym (2010), and Venuti (2012).

### 2.1.2 Linguistics Approaches to Translation

The objective of translation, according to linguistic methods to translation, was to substitute one language for another between the source and target languages (Trivedi, 2005:2). With this method, translation is studied as a “science” (see Nida 1959; 1964; Catford 1965). The writings of the foremost linguists and translation theorists Eugene A. Nida (1959; 1964) and J. Catford (1965) provide the motivation for the linguistics paradigm. Nida influenced and greatly contributed to TS. He was highly influenced by Noam Chomsky’s formulation of a generative-transformational grammar and he is recognised for his theory of dynamic equivalence (later renaming it as functional equivalence).<sup>17</sup> As Nida and Tabor (1982:12) put it, “Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.” The linguistic-oriented model starts the translation process by analysing the source text and conduct the translation with the features of the source text in mind. The end product has to be faithful to the source text.

Equivalence is categorized as formal and dynamic. Formal equivalence gives emphasis for the form and content of the message (Maluleke, 2017: 13). On the other side, “the principle of equivalent effect” is the main character of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964: 159). A given translation will be considered good if the source text is adequately reproduced with an equivalent message in the target language rather than the preservation of the original grammatical structure.

The translation approaches of both the pre-linguistics and linguistics era were normative and prescriptive. However, in the recent development of TS scholars tend to be descriptive. There is a growing interest to study the process and product of translation.

---

<sup>17</sup> Fidelity, clarity, and naturalness are the three tenets of functional equivalence (see Loba-Mkole, 2019: 161).

### 2.1.3 Functionalist Approach to Translation

The functionalist approach is a reaction to the linguistics-based approach to translation. Proponents of the functionalist approach to translation view translation as a “purposeful activity” that can be determined by a translation brief (see Nord, 2018). Translation is a communicative action in which the translator serves as a text producer with some sort of communicative purpose based on the translation brief. The functionalist approach is related to *skopos* (“aim/goal”) theory. As Naudé (2002: 51) indicated:

As an alternative to equivalence, Katharina Reiss introduced a functional category into her translation model and Hans Vermeer formulated his *skopos* theory in which function or aim (*skopos*) are key concepts. It is the intended function (*skopos*) of the target text which determines translation methods and strategies and not the function of the source text.

The function of the translated text in the target language governs the technique of translation and a translation is evaluated against its intended purpose or what it attempts to serve. As Pym (2009: 43) indicated:

This approach accepts that the one source text can be translated in different ways in order to carry out different functions. The translator thus needs information about the specific goals each translation is supposed to achieve, and this requires extra-textual information of some kind, usually from the client.

## 2.2 Descriptive Translation Studies

In the 1970s, a new approach to translation emerged that looked at it from social and political angles rather than from a linguistic one. These changes occurred at the same time as the “culture turn,” a term used to describe the advent of multidisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences.

Translation scholars became critical of the prescriptive nature of translation and the theory of equivalence. As Naudé (2011b: 257) noted, “It is not possible, as the equivalence-based theory

implies, to produce a translation that adheres directly to the original source text”. The prescription paradigm of translation elaborates how a text should be translated and give high emphasis for the accuracy of the translation as the primary standard. On the contrary, the descriptive approach is concerned with the context in which a translation comes into being. In this case, translation is defined by its function and usage within a target audience. Toury define translations as “facts of the culture which hosts them” (Toury 1995: 24). The DTS paradigm positions the source text (ST) and target text (TT) within their respective historical and literary context.

Descriptive Translation Studies is a reaction to the normative approach to translation studies.<sup>18</sup> DTS is associated with the work of Gideon Toury (1995). Toury pointed out that the aim of DTS is “to mitigate the subjectivity in translation research” (1995: 81).<sup>19</sup> DTS is “target oriented”. Such study generates translation norms. Toury (1995: 54-55) defines “norms” as

... the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for an applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension.

DTS is referred as “empirical” because it focuses on the observable aspects of translation.<sup>20</sup> It studies the product of a translation instead of evaluating a given translation. It describes the translator’s strategies and at times compare various translations of similar literary work with the aim discerning the sociocultural factors that influences each of the translators. Translation is not a neutral activity and the translator plays a prominent role in the translation process. Naudé (2011a: 223) notes that “the translator has always had a position of power and has always been an agent of change, but the translator’s power and role in this regard have not always been recognised or appreciated.”

---

<sup>18</sup> The series of three conferences held in Leuven (1976), in Tel Aviv (1978) and in Antwerp (1980) are significant for the development of description theory of translation (DTS).

<sup>19</sup> Toury brought the concept of empiricism in social science: observation, experiment, proposing hypotheses, testing them and summarizing theories.

<sup>20</sup> It is also referred as ‘polysystem approach’ (see Even-Zohar, 2012: 162-167).

There are three research areas of DTS:

- 1) **Product-oriented DTS:** Translation is a product and Product-oriented DTS describes the existing individual translation or do a comparative description of various translations that share common source text.
- 2) **Function-oriented DTS:** Function-oriented DTS studies the contexts of the translated text with the aim of understanding the “function of translations” in the recipient socio-cultural context.
- 3) **Process-oriented DTS:** Process-oriented DTS is mainly interested in translation psychology.

## 2.3 Narrative Frame Analysis

TS does not have a single unified methodology, rather it is a field developed through the interaction of various ideas from linguistics, literary criticism, sociology, interpreting, and more. The DTS approach describes or analyses completed translations to understand the use of translation strategies. Descriptive Translation Theory connects translation with the various elements that affect the production of a translation work. These elements include the cultural, social and political environment of both the source and the target languages.

This mini-dissertation employs frame analysis theory as a heuristic tool to study the Millennium Amharic translation. It will closely follow the method and approach used in Naudé’s analysis of the 1933 Afrikaans Bible (Naudé, 2011b). Goffman (1974) came up with “frame analysis” in the study of linguistics. Out of frame analysis, narrative theory was developed by Mona Baker (2006) and it has been applied to the study of Bible translations in Africa. The two more known studies are by Naudé (2011b) and Maluleke (2017). Narrative frame analysis enables us to review the translator’s product and discern what aspects were critical for the translators as s/he attempts to interpret and convey the source text. The DTS approach describes or analyses completed translations to understand the use of translation strategies.

The following frames will be employed as analytical tools for this mini-dissertation (Wilt 2002; Baker 2006; Wendland 2008): a sociocultural frame; a translation studies frame; an organizational frame, and a linguistic frame.<sup>21</sup>

**Socio-cultural frames** discuss the historical and sociopolitical environment of the translation. It studies the context in which the translation is produced. The ST is influenced by its surrounding socio-cultural context that serves as a frame of reference for its intended audiences/readers. These socio-cultural practices are significant factors “passed down formally or informally as ‘tradition’ from one generation to the next” (Alfredo, 2010: 24). The translator’s context and the context of the TT are different from the context of the ST, though there might exist some similarities.

**Translation frames** situate translation in the context of the broader field of translation studies. What is the source text, what translation strategies/methods are used and what is the intended communicative function (*skopos*) of the translation?

**Organizational frames** study how external actors such stakeholder institutions (clients) and the translator’s perspective of the organizational component of her/his work influences the translation process (Wilt 2003: 46). It addresses questions like who is involved in the translation process? How is the translation organized?

**Linguistic frames** discuss issues related to orthography, phonology, and other linguistics-related issues of the translated text. How did the language shape the translation?

This section highlights the methodology that will be employed in this study: DTS and Frame Analysis. Four heuristic frames are discussed. As Mangum (2018: 108) indicated, “These frames represent four broad categories of experience that affect both a translator’s interpretation of a

---

<sup>21</sup> Wilt lists socio-cultural, organizational, communicational and textual frames of references (2003: 43; see also Berman, 2014: 3). Wendland refer to these contexts as cognitive, sociocultural, organizational, situational, textual and lexical frames (2008: 6).

source text and his or her reproduction of that text for a new audience.” These frames affect the outcome of any translation and provide concrete ways to look at completed translations.

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, we briefly highlighted the theories of Bible translation, namely the pre-linguistics approach, the linguistics approach, and the functionalist approach. And finally, this chapter discussed the DTS, which is used as a tool in this paper. In analyzing the Millennium Amharic translation, the four frames—namely, socio-cultural frames, translation frames, organizational frames, and linguistic frames—are employed. The following chapter will discuss the history of Bible translation in Gə’əz and Amharic.

## Chapter 3: Brief History of Bible Translations into Gə'əz and Amharic

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the history of Gə'əz and Amharic Bible translations. The translation of the Bible into Gə'əz plays a prominent role in the formation and development of EOTC liturgy. It is used as the main language of the liturgy and considered a foundation of Orthodox culture and religion. It is impossible to discuss the Millennium Amharic translation without discussing the Gə'əz Bible tradition and its transmission history.

### 3.2 Gə'əz Bible Translation

Gə'əz is a Semitic language of northern Ethiopia. The translation of the Bible into Gə'əz has a long history going back to the Aksumite period.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with EOTC tradition, the OT was translated into Gə'əz soon after the Queen of Sheba paid a visit to Jerusalem (Ephraim, 2012: 61).<sup>23</sup> Basing their argument on the Jewish influence on Orthodox Christianity, some have argued that the OT as a whole or portions of it were translated before the Christian era (Mikre-Sellassie, 2002: 59).<sup>24</sup> They further said that the Ethiopian eunuch of the book of Acts was

---

<sup>22</sup> Though the Gə'əz Bible was translated during Aksumite period, the earliest extant material that we have is dated 12-13<sup>th</sup> century. The Gospels books from 'Endā 'Abbā Garimā (I, II and III) are believed to be the oldest known Ethiopian manuscripts. However, “their dating ... is still uncertain and a matter of discussion: it ranges, according to different scholars, from the 7<sup>th</sup> or even the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries up to the 14<sup>th</sup>, with the earliest dating (*i.e. ante* the 7<sup>th</sup> century) supported by the style of the illuminations (Canon tables) and radiocarbon dating” (Bausi, 2014: 48). The Aksumite kingdom declined in the seventh century by the rise of Islam. The Red Sea trade route was cut.

<sup>23</sup> The primary Ethiopian source for the Queen of Sheba is a book called the *Kibra Nägäst*. According to the *Kibra Nägäst*, the Queen of Sheba had an intimate relationship with King Solomon and later accepted the Jewish religion; upon her return from Jerusalem, she bore Solomon a son named Menelik, who was thought to be the founder of the Ethiopian royal dynasty. For the literary sources of the *Kibra Nägäst* see Hubbard, 1956.

<sup>24</sup> 'Metshafe Mestir' (“the book of mystery”), believed to be composed by Abba Giorgis Ze'gasicha, considers the OT to have been translated from the Hebrew in the days when the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. Cf. also Sergew, 1972: 44.



reading the Gə'əz Bible. According to this tradition, the descendants of the Jews who came to Ethiopia with Sheba's son, Menelik, kept the text for centuries. However, we do not have historical evidence to corroborate this claim.

The majority of scholars agree that the translation of Biblical texts began shortly after Christianity was introduced in the fourth century CE (Knibb, 1999: 2). The translation of the Bible into Gə'əz is traditionally attributed to Syrian monks who had taken refuge in Aksum, Ethiopia, during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Ullendorff, 1967: 50; and Sergew, 1972: 115–119).<sup>25</sup>

According to the tradition of the church, the Bible translation was carried out by *Abba*<sup>26</sup> Salama, or Frumentius, as he is known to western Christendom (Ullendorff, 1967: 50). Hiob Ludolf also credited Frumentius with initiating the translation project (Niccum, 2014: 66). Ludolf said the translation was not completed at the beginning of the fourth century but took a span of time to be completed (Ephraim, 2012: 62). August Dillmann also argued for an early translation but denied Frumentius' involvement. Rather, he argued that many translators over a period of two centuries were involved in the translation process (see Niccum, 2014: 66). Ullendorff (1967: 35) also argues that Gə'əz Bible translation extended over a century or two, a view shared by Conti Rossini, who rules out early dates of the fourth century for the work.

Dillmann argued that there are three distinct groups of Gə'əz manuscripts of the OT: 1) those translated from the Septuagint; 2) those manuscripts subject to revision based on Hebrew; and 3) those later texts revised based on the Septuagint (Ephraim, 2012: 63). He argues that the Greek proficiency of the translators was not very good. This initiates a second version, which is produced by consulting the Hebrew and Semitic scholars to correct errors in the translation. For this reason, the Gə'əz Bible seems to follow the Hebrew, but in a real sense, “the language was faithful to the Septuagint, even down to the word order” (Ephraim, 2012: 114).

---

<sup>25</sup> The earliest available evidence of the translation of the Bible into Ge'ez is found the three royal inscriptions with brief quotation from the Psalm and one or two other books, dating the first half of six century (Knibb, 1999: 46-54).

<sup>26</sup> *Abba* means “father.” It is a title given for religious figures in the Ethiopian *Tāwahedo* Orthodox Church.

It is very unlikely that all twenty-seven of the “canonical” books of the Gə’əz New Testament was translated at the same time by the same translator(s).<sup>27</sup> Niccum (2014:4) argues, Acts and Revelation may have been translated over a century later than the Gospels for these books have less liturgical and evangelistic values. However, it is believed that all the canonical and Apocryphal books of the scripture were available in Gə’əz before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Ullendorff, 1967: 33-34). These represent the most notable literary achievement of the Aksumite kingdom.

The Gə’əz translation of the Bible contains Apocrypha books. Protestants referred those writings which lie outside the canon of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament as “Apocrypha” while Catholics and Orthodox churches preferred to refer them as “Deutro-Canonical”. The following writings are considered as “Apocrypha/ Deutro-canonical”: 1 Esdras (= III Ezra), 2 Esdras (=IV Ezra), Tobit, Judith, Additions to the Book of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees (see, Stuckenbruck: 2011: 179). In addition to these deutro-canonical books, the Orthodox Bible contains pseudepigraphal books such as the books of Enoch and Jubilees (*kufalle* in Gə’əz).<sup>28</sup>

Currently, the majority of scholars consider the Gə’əz OT to be translated from a Greek version (or versions) (Edele, 1995: 250; Knibb, 1999: 3; and Ullendorff, 1968: 31-59). However, there is evidence that in the medieval period there were several revisions based on the Hebrew or Arabic texts. However, as Zuurmond (2003: 564) indicated, “Textually, one finds that, where the Hebrew O.T. text differs from the Septuagint, the Gə’əz usually follows the latter.”

The Bible, being the first material being translated into Gə’əz, had a huge impact upon the succeeding Gə’əz literature. The Gə’əz Bible contributed to the expansion of Christianity and greatly impacted Ethiopian culture. Dillman, the great Ethiopic scholar, described the Gə’əz

---

<sup>27</sup> The very fluid nature of the Ethiopian canon seems to suggest that there existed an environment which contributed for the gradual rather than immediate collection of sacred texts. R. W. Cowley argues that the book of *Sirach* was not translated until 676 (Cowley, 1974: 318-23).

<sup>28</sup> These two books are only available in Gə’əz in their entirety.

Bible as “the foundation of all Abyssinian literature and the standard to which all other writers conformed their style of writing” (Harden, 1926: 23). Many generations of Gə’əz writers have been nurtured and brought up on the Gə’əz Bible and it has had a profound influence on both their language and their style. In shaping the language and terminology of liturgical texts, the role of the Gə’əz Bible is fundamental.

The Gə’əz Bible in Ethiopia has been in use for around 1500 years, but it has only been published as a complete Bible very recently. The Gə’əz MSS were written on parchment and often bound in leather over wooden covers and were not easily accessible to all. Their size varies from as large as 30 x 40 cm. to as tiny as 6 x 8 cm. (Zuurmond, 1989: 3). In 2022, the whole 81 book canon of the Gə’əz Bible has been published in one volume by the Bible Society of Ethiopia for the EOTC.<sup>29</sup>

Portions of the Gə’əz Bible were published previously. The Psalter,<sup>30</sup> edited by Johannes Potken<sup>31</sup> in collaboration with the Ethiopian Christian community in Vatican in 1513, was the first Gə’əz biblical text to be published along with Song of Songs and few biblical canticles (Ephraim, 2012: 115). It was titled “Psalterium Chaldaicum” and it was the first oriental book to be published in Europe other than Hebrew (Austern et al., 2016: 6). By that time, Gə’əz was no longer used as a vernacular language in Ethiopia, and the dominant language was Amharic.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> The cover page reads: መጻሕፍ ቅዱስ ዘብሉይ ወሐዲስ ኪዳን ዘልሳነ ግዕዝ/*mäthafe kidus zbeluYe wähadise zlesan Gə’əz* (“The holy Bible, the Old and the New, in the language of Gə’əz”). At the bottom it reads ቅዱሳት መጻሕፍት ዘብሉይ ወሐዲስ ኪዳን/*kidusat metsheft zbeluYe Wazhadise Kidane* (“The Holy Scriptures the Old and New Testament”). The cover page also contains a beautiful hand cross of a priest. The prefix and the introduction sections are written in Gə’əz.

<sup>30</sup> Potken 1513.

<sup>31</sup> Potken knew about Gə’əz from the Ethiopian monks at Santo Stefano degli Abissini. The printed Psalter is situated in the Vatican Library (Vat. Ethiop. 20).

<sup>32</sup> However, Gə’əz continued to be used as the liturgical language and the language of scholarship. Gə’əz was called “the language of the books”, while “the language of the kings” was Amharic. (Ayele, 2000: 237; see also Girma, 2009).

The Gə'əz NT<sup>33</sup> was edited and published in 1548 in Rome by three Ethiopian monks (Täsfa Səyon and two other monks) at Santo Stefani dei Mori in Rome (Ullendorff, 1967: 8). They travel from the *Däbrä Libanos* monastery in Ethiopia to Jerusalem for a visit, then proceeded to Rome. This edition is referred to as the *editio princeps* of the NT. It was based on three manuscripts at the Vatican Library (Hofmann, 1977: 228ff). The Walton Polyglot reprinted this Bible in 1753.<sup>34</sup>

The most widely known Gə'əz NT is by Thomas Bell Platt, published in 1830 by the British Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). This edition was “an uncritical eclectic text intended for missionary use” (Weninger, 2003: 569). August Dillman was planning to publish the entire OT, however he was not able complete it. Between 1853 and 1894, he published the Octateuch (i.e., the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, 1853), 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings (1861-71), and the deuterocanonical books. The entire Gə'əz OT was published in 4 volumes (between 1922 and 1926) by Francesco Da Bassano, a Roman Catholic scholar in Asmara, Eritrea.<sup>35</sup> Da Bassano also edited the NT.<sup>36</sup> However, these publications were not critically edited and produced (Ullendorff, 1967: 59).<sup>37</sup> The church published the Gə'əz New Testament through the Bible Society for Ethiopia in 2017 (2009 EC) under the patronage of the current Patriarch of the Church, *Abune Matiyas*.

As we can clearly observe from the print history of the Gə'əz Bible, until recently the EOTC's role in printing and disseminating the Gə'əz Bible is minimal. Most of the printing and editorial works of the Gə'əz Bible have been conducted by various individuals or mission related entities.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Testamentum Novum*, Rome, 1548–49.

<sup>34</sup> Nine languages are used: Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Greek and Latin.

<sup>35</sup> Francesco da Bassano, 1922/23-25/26. “Da Bassano's edition of the Ethiopic Old Testament was the first to be published in Ethiopia and remains the most important. It does not provide a critical edition of the text, but was intended as a practical tool for the use of Ethiopian clergy and laity” (Knibb, 1999: 3).

<sup>36</sup> Francesco da Bassano, 1920.

<sup>37</sup> Variant readings of various MSS are not indicated.

### 3.3 Amharic Bible Translations

Amharic is a language, and the original speakers are referred to as Amharas. Along with Gə'əz, Tigre, Tigrinya, Argobba, Harari, Gurage (several dialects), and Gafat, Amharic is an Ethio-Semitic language. It is challenging to determine the exact origin of Amharic. However, most academics agree that it began prior to the 13th century in a location on the southern borders of the historic Aksumite heartlands. Since the rise of the Solomonic dynasty (end of the 13th century), Amharic served as the language of the court (Appleyard, 2003: 233). Amharic is the most widely spoken Semitic language next to Arabic, and it is believed that around eighty percent of Ethiopians use it as their first or second language (Meyer and Richter, 2003: 40).

Even after Amharic become the dominant language during the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, all sacred texts continued to be written in Gə'əz.<sup>38</sup> The Amharic language entered the palace and church and was used as a working language for administration and spiritual education during the reign of Emperor Adyam Seged Eyasu (1674-1698). During those times people found it difficult to understand Gə'əz language, which created a barrier between the church scholars and the laity (Yared, 2009: 89). However, there was reluctance to translate the Bible into other Ethiopian local languages.<sup>39</sup> The Jesuits translated parts of Psalms and the Songs of Solomon into Amharic. Peter Hayling (1634-1635), a German Lutheran missionary, translated part of the NT in Amharic while residing in Gondar (Tibebe, 2009: 48). However, the full translation of the Amharic Bible was done by a monk called *Abba* Abraham (Abu Rumi or Abu Ruhh) in the year 1818.<sup>40</sup>

During Tewodros' rule in the nineteenth century, Amharic literature flourished.<sup>41</sup> For his overarching goal of unifying the nation, King Tewodros urged Amharic literature to be utilized

---

<sup>38</sup> The eleven Royal Songs, composed between the 14th and 15th century in praise of the Ethiopian rulers, are the earliest recorded written Amharic manuscripts that are currently known to us. There are copies of these eleven royal songs at the Paris, Oxford, and Frankfurt libraries.

<sup>39</sup> It was through missionary and individual efforts that the Bible began to be translated into other Ethiopian languages.

<sup>40</sup> However, this translation was not accepted as authentic by Ethiopian Orthodox officials. It was printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society and distributed by Protestant missionaries.

<sup>41</sup> Unlike his predecessors, Tewodros' chronicle was written in Amharic.

as a written language in place of Gə'əz. Instead of Gə'əz Bibles, Tewodros permitted missionaries to distribute Amharic Bibles (Isichei, 1995: 213 and see also Crummey, 1972: 121). As Baur (2000: 157) indicated, "The mission to Ethiopia got its first impetus from the Amharic Bible translation by the Ethiopian monk Abu Rumi in Cairo." *Abba* Abraham's Bible is a notable publishing event in the history of Amharic Bible translations. This translation was the first of its kind. It is the first to be translated in its entirety (the whole Bible into the Amharic language), translated in a foreign country (Cairo), and translated by one individual within a period of ten years.

We do not have many sources for the biography of *Abba* Abraham. One resource we do have is an exchange of letters by missionaries, the French consul and the BFBS. A second major source is the story recorded by William Jowett. *Abba* Abraham was from Gojjam, the north-western part of the country. *Abba* Abraham was a teacher of James Bruce and Sir William Jones (Ullendorff, 1968:63). He had acted as an interpreter and instructor for Bruce in Gondar in 1772, at the age of 22 (Kleiner, 2003: 54). At the age of twenty-eight *Abba* Abraham went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem by way of Egypt and visited places like Syria, Armenia, and Persia before he returned to Ethiopia (Aren, 1978: 42). At the age of about 50, he went to Egypt for a second time. While he was in Cairo, he fell seriously ill, but he was found and "snatched from the arms of death" by the French vice-consul, M. Asselin de Cherville, "to whom he become strongly attached" (Ibid: 200). The French vice-consul found that *Abba* Abraham "was not only a linguist, who spoke Persian, Italian, Greek and other languages, but also a true scholar and master of Ethiopian literature, ... [he] set him to translate the entire Bible into Amarinya, the vernacular spoken at Gonder" (Ibid: 43). These two, *Abba* Abraham and the French consul, spent every Tuesday and Saturday together translating the Bible for about ten years. *Abba* Abraham translated the Bible verse by verse with great care while Asselin helped him by explaining difficult words and phrases with the aid of "the Hebrew original, the Syriac version, or the Septuagint as well as a few glossaries and commentaries if Abraham himself had trouble finding the expression in Gə'əz" (Ibid: 43). We do not know what motivated *Abba* Abraham to translate the Bible into Amharic. Perhaps it might have been to create a tool for evangelism, as part of the missionaries' agenda.

There were no printed works in Amharic prior to Peter Heyling's Gospel publication and distribution in the 1640s. When the British and Foreign Bible Society decided to distribute the Bible in Ethiopia, the only portion of Scripture available to them was Job Ludolf's version of the Psalter of 1701 in Gə'əz, under the title of *Psalterium Davidis*.<sup>42</sup> In December 1818 William Jowett, the agent of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Mediterranean, came to Egypt and met Asselin de Cherville, the French vice-consul in Cairo, who owned a translation in manuscript of the entire Bible in Amharic. The translation of *Abba Abraham* consists of about 9,539 pages of handwriting in small octavo (Aren, 1978: 43). Asselin requested the "repayment of actual expenses" and the Bible Society accepted his offer. He received £1,250. The translation was typeset and printed in Britain once he brought it there. The Gospels were printed in 1824, the entire NT in 1829, Psalms in 1933, the Pentateuch in 1937, and the complete Bible translation in 1840 edited by Thomas Pell Platt.

A number of changes have been introduced into *Abba Abraham*'s translation since the first edition. Most of these have been minor, but some of them reflect the thoughts of the editors. In the 1870s Ludwig Krapf published the improved edition. This edition became very vital for the Protestant mission of reforming the EOTC in 19<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopia. As Sundkler and Steed (2000: 157) pointed out, "In certain northern monasteries, the printed Amharic Bible caused distrust and fear, as well as great expectations." Johann Martin Flad with the *Falasha* convert *Aleqa*<sup>43</sup> Mikael Aregawi (1850-1931) worked on editing and publishing the Bible translation of *Abba Abraham*, which appeared in a one-volume edition in 1886.<sup>44</sup>

In 1935, when the Italian forces invaded Ethiopia, a fresh translation was produced under Emperor Haile Selassie's sponsorship. This translation was written on parchment and the

---

<sup>42</sup> Job Ludolf was the first foreign scholar to study Ethiopian languages. He studied Gə'əz and Amharic under the Ethiopian monk Gorgoreyos, and published a Gə'əz-Latin dictionary, Gə'əz grammar, and an Amharic dictionary and grammar (Habte-Mariam, 1990: 97).

<sup>43</sup> *Aleqa* is the head of a parish church.

<sup>44</sup> Johann Martin Flad (1831-1915), a German-born missionary, spent about 60 years in Ethiopia. Among his other activities, he worked to convert the Falashas (Ethiopians of Jewish faith), and produced an Amharic translation of the Old Testament that was widely read throughout the country. See the entry by Lockout on <https://dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/flad-j/>

Amharic and the Gə'əz versions were written in two columns. The manuscript was then transferred to Britain and produced by photo-offset, but the majority of the copies were lost in a fire in London as a result of the bombings during World War II. This translation is frequently referred to as the “Buxton” translation, after Alfred Buxton, a British Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society (BCMS) missionary who was essential in getting the manuscript from occupied Ethiopia to Britain. With funds collected by Rev. Donald Barnhouse, the same basic translation of the New Testament was eventually produced in the United States, with some revisions. Unfortunately, after it was published, this translation (also known as the “Barnhouse New Testament”) was discovered to have severe mistakes so that most copies were destroyed. Among, the translation problems the ones in Rev 19:10 and 22:9 are noteworthy – instead of forbidding John from worshiping him, the angel in Revelation 19:10 and 22:9 commands John to do so (Fargher, 1996: 291).

### 3.4 The 1953 Translation

In 1953 the books of the Old and New Testament were published. Local and foreign experts from various denominations (Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants) participated in this translation. As it is indicated in the prefix this translation is done by the consent of the Synod of the EOTC. This translation was the most standard translation and was used by the majority of Christians in Ethiopia across various denominations (Bruk, 2014: 60). This translation contains 66 books of the Bible and was republished in 1980. Thirteen additional books (OT Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books) were translated and placed between the Old and New Testament for the use of the Orthodox believers. The 13 additional books inserted between the OT and NT are titled የብሉይ ኪዳን ተጨማሪ መጻሕፍት/*YäbeluYe Kidane tächemari mätaheft* (“Additional books of the Old Testament”). Though the table of contents lists 79 books, in actual fact it is a collection of 85 books. However, as Bruk indicated, this “version has never been a satisfactory translation for the EOTC as the majority of the translators were non-Orthodox and the MT [Masoretic] is the dominant *Vorlage*. This necessitated another Amharic translation exclusively by and for the EOTC” (Bruk, 2014: 61).



In 1980 EC/1987 Ethiopian Bible Society published an easy Amharic translation of the Bible. (Yared, 2009: 91). A revised version was issued in 2005. This translation did not enjoy a wide acceptance, either by the EOTC or by the Evangelicals.

### 3.5 The Millennium Translation

The EOTC did not fully accept the available Amharic translations for the following three main reasons:

1. The Amharic translations are not based on the Gə'əz text. There exist few discrepancies between the Amharic translations and the available Gə'əz versions.
2. The OT translation of the Amharic Bible differs from the LXX version.
3. The translation/interpretation method followed by various Amharic translations are different from the church's tradition.

These arguments were voiced by various teachers of the Church and clearly stated in the prefix of the Millennium Amharic translation. Here, we will look at some of the arguments forwarded for a new Amharic translation.

Daniel Kibret (1994 EC), a famous and influential persona in the EOTC, presented a paper on the issue of Bible translation. Daniel argues that the Gə'əz OT was translated before the birth of Christ around 900 BCE. He argued that the Gə'əz translation has the following three features: centrality, authority, and exemplar.

The Gə'əz translation shows centrality. By centrality he is referring the fact that the translation has been done under the ownership and leadership of the church (ቤተ ክርስቲያን). He further said that the Gə'əz Bible has authority because those who did the translation of the Bible were priests and scholars (ካህናት እና ምሁራን) of the church, hence they have authority to do the translation and the accuracy (ትክክለኛነት) of the translation is accepted. The third point he raised resembles the second point. The Gə'əz translation is considered as the exemplar (አብነት). The translators were parts of the church and servants in the temple. They were not mere secular scholars. He argues that, based on the above three points, the Gə'əz translation can be used as ST for the new Amharic

translation. For Daniel Kibret and others in the church the Gə'əz translation is a “good translation with no or very few errors.” Keon-Sang An (2015:124-125) indicated that “Ge'ez texts are regarded as correct and authoritative, consequently, texts that depart from the Ge'ez texts are regarded as wrong” (An, 2015: 124-125 see also Cowley, 1983: 3).

In comparison with the Gə'əz Bible translation Daniel Kibret said the following concerning the available Amharic Bible translations: when Amharic became the *lingua franca* of the country, it became necessary to use Amharic in the place of Gə'əz. This necessitates Amharic Bible translation. He said the available Amharic Bible translations were translated in the following three ways: by individuals' efforts (like *Abba* Abraham and Martin Flad), by organization (Bible Society) and by the EOTC. He indicated that these translations were done from different sources, by various bodies with various aims. As a result, the following problems are reflected in the above (particularly the first two types of translations): problem of ownership, lack of standardization, confusion emanates from the existence of many translations, errors, and additions. However, he failed to provide some examples for the above-mentioned problems. At the conclusion, he suggested the preparation of a new Amharic Bible translation. Abayneh Kase (2014 EC: 4-6), a deacon in the EOTC, also urges the church to find ways to prepare a new Amharic translation using her own scholars.

Cherenet Abebe in his book መሠረታዊ የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ አጠናኝ ዘዴ/Mäsärätawi Yämäsehäfä Kiduse 'ätānanə (“Foundational Methods of Bible Study”) (2005 EC: 330- 350) discusses the history of Bible translation in Ethiopia. In this section he explained why there exist variant readings among various Amharic translations. He came up with the following four reasons: 1) each translation is translated from various sources (incipient text), 2) translated by various denominations, 3) translated for limited purposes and 4) lack of standard translation. To deal with these problems he suggested a new Amharic Bible translation in a consultation with the Hebrew, Greek and Gə'əz.

We can see from the above publications that there was a push from the clergy within the EOTC for a new Amharic translation of the Bible. The Millennium Amharic translation aims to meet these demands.

### 3.6 Other Translations

Living Bibles International produced a New Testament and Psalms in 1985. It is titled as አያው ትርጉም/*Hiyaw Təṛəgumə* (“Living Translation”). The International Bible Society (now Biblica) produced a complete Bible in 2001 referred as አዲሱ መደበኛ ትርጉም/*’äddisu Määdäbäña Təṛəgumə* (“The New Standard Version”). This translation contains the 66 books of the Bible as its canon and is widely used among Evangelical Christians in Ethiopia.

In 2008, the Jehovah’s Witnesses also published their own translation into Amharic. It is titled መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ አዲስ ዓለም ትርጉም/*Mäṣəḥäfə kiduse adis alem Təṛəgumə* (“New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures”). In 2020, the Bible Society of Ethiopia issued another Amharic translation for the Catholic Church: The Amharic Bible (Catholic Edition – Emmaus). It contains 73 books. In 2021, the Trinitarian Bible Society published the NT and Psalms into Amharic based on the Greek Received Text of the NT and the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament. አዲስ ኪዳንና መጽሐፈ መዝሙር (ሥላሴያውያን መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ማህበር)/*’ädisə kidanena Mäṣəḥäfə mzemure (trinitarian Msehaf Maheber)* “The New Testament and the Book of Psalms (Trinitarian Bible Society”).

The history of the Gə’əz and Amharic Bible translations, as well as their print histories, have been covered in this chapter. As we have stated, the EOTC is dissatisfied with the current Amharic translations since they do not accurately reflect the doctrine and canon of the church, and some believers are requesting that the church provide a new translation. The Millennium Amharic Translation is discussed in the chapter that follows.

## Chapter 4: Description of the Millennium Amharic Translation

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the given Amharic translation using the tools that we discussed in chapter two. It briefly describes the Millennium Translation, its incipient sign systems and *skopos* and then moves into discussing the four frames of the translation.

### 4.2 General Description of the Millennium Translation

The following point is indicated in the introduction concerning the translation: The translation is based on the Gə'əz and LXX; when there exist variant readings between the Gə'əz and LXX, it is indicated in a footnote. This translation contains a lot of footnote materials to document variant readings and explain some words. In the OT books these footnotes register how the Gə'əz reading differs with the LXX and Hebrew Bible. The NT footnotes contain variant readings of the Gə'əz against the Greek and vice versa. It also contains cross-references.

Section headings are added to aid readers. However, introductory notes and outlines for each book of the Bible are not included. In some Gə'əz MSS and *Andəmta* commentaries it is common to include *Mekenyat* (“reason for writing”) and *tarik* (“history”) of a given book of the Bible. Generally, the *mekenyat* has the following pattern: heading and introduction, the circumstance that caused the author to write the book, list of issues discussed in the letter and, a remark from where the book was written and by whose hand it was sent off (if it is an epistle). (see Cowley, 1977: 144; An, 2015). However, this translation lacks these features. Direct quotes are put in quotation marks. Utmost care is given to the translation not to deviate from the Gə'əz version. The translation principle also follows the church fathers' interpretation.

The book of Genesis contains 64 variant readings while the book of Revelation contains 44 variants reading excluding lists of cross references. Different expressions are used to describe the variant readings. Here are some of them:

- “...” does not exist in the Greek LXX
- “...” does not exist in the Hebrew Bible
- “...” does not exist in the Hebrew and LXX
- In the Hebrew and Greek LXX it reads “...”
- The LXX reads “...” while the Hebrew reads “...”
- The Gə’əz reads “...”
- The Gə’əz reads “...” while the LXX reads “...”
- The LXX reads “...”
- The Hebrew reads “...”

Example: (Genesis 1:2a):

ምድር	ግን	ባዶ	ነበረች፤	<b>አትታይም*</b>	ነበር፤	የተዘጋጀትም አልነበረችም፤
The earth	but	empty;	was	<b>not visible;</b>	<b>was</b>	was formless;

ጨለማም	በውኃው	ላይ ነበር።
and darkness	on the water	was hovering

\*The footnote reads: the word **አትታይም/atetayem** (“not visible”) is not found in the Greek LXX. This is true; however, this same word does not exist in the Hebrew Bible. It should be noted that all the previous versions of the Amharic Bible do not include the word “not visible”. The Gə’əz translation at times deviates from the Hebrew of LXX versions.

## Revelation 1:10

በእሁድ	ቀን
On Sunday	day

The footnote reads: the Greek [text] says “on the day of the Lord.”

## Revelation 1:11

የምታየውንና                      የምትሰማውን  
What you see and                what you hear

The footnote reads: in the Greek [text] “what you hear does not exist”

### 4.2.1 The Incipient Sign System of the Millennium Translation

Marais suggests using the phrases “incipient sign system” and “subsequent sign system” in place of “source text” and “target text” (Marias, 2019). It is Marias who coined the terms and develop the concepts. The incipient sign system has numerous streams of meaning from numerous sources, making it an intricate incipient sign system rather than only a source—hence the term “translation complex.” The process of translation is not linear as has been assumed; rather it is a transfer from incipient system to subsequent system. A transition from incipient sign system to subsequent sign system is never linear. Instead, in the process the subsequent sign system may influences the interpretation of the incipient system (Marais 2019, 122-137). In the case of the Millennium Amharic Translation, the incipient sign systems are the Gə’əz and LXX versions. However, in the process of translation, the doctrine and practice of the EOTC affect the translation process or serve as a hidden “incipient sign system.”

### 4.2.2 *Skopos* of the Millennium Translation

Translation is a purposeful activity (see Nord, 2018). The intended function (*skopos*) of the TT determines the translation methods and strategies. It decides who should participate in the project, from which denomination, and who the end users will be. The Millennium Amharic translation is intended for the Orthodox Church and this affects the translation process. It is for this reason that, the translators select the Gə’əz and LXX as incipient sign systems. In addition, extratextual information from the tradition of the church influences the translation. The decision made on the incipient sign system affects the way the translation is presented.

As indicated above, the metatexts of this translation are determined by the *skopos* of this translation. The introductory note of the patriarch, the prefix, and the footnotes aim to gear the

reader to the intended function of the translation. The textual decisions made by the translators are influenced by the intended function of the translation (e.g., deciding to put the variant readings between the Gə'əz and the Greek).

### 4.3 Organisational Frame

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahedo*<sup>45</sup> Church (EOTC) issued a new Amharic Bible translation, the first Amharic translation fully recognized by the church, in 2007 under the auspices of the Bible Society of Ethiopia. This new translation was intended to coincide with the Ethiopian millennium.<sup>46</sup> The Ethiopian Bible Society is an ecumenical society composed of the EOTC, Catholics and Protestants. However, as indicated in the prefix, the translation is conducted by scholars of the EOTC (*Amharic Bible*, 2007: iii). The translation committee was set up in 1986 EC (1993/94) by the Patriarch of the EOTC (*Abune Paulos*) with the Patriarch himself was overseeing the translation process (*Amharic Bible*, 2007: iii). In the course of the translation, the Bible Society of Ethiopia provides a consultant for the purpose of advising on issues related to the biblical languages. The translation consultant himself is an adherent of the EOTC. Hence, in terms of Organization this translation is conceived and implemented by the EOTC. One can say that the stakeholder institution (namely, the EOTC) own the translation process (Bruk, 2014: 50). As Loba-Mkole (2022: 3) rightly pointed out, “Ownership is synonymous with authorship, commissioning authority, responsibility, proprietorship, and the copyright holder.”

### 4.4 Translational Frame

In this section we will briefly look at some of the variant readings of the Millennium Translation. Some verses are selected from the New Testament.

---

<sup>45</sup> The Ethiopian Orthodox church believes in the doctrine of two natures of Christ and officially rejects the dogma of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which officially approved the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. It is for this reason that the term *Täwahedo* (“made one”) is used in naming the Church.

<sup>46</sup> The Ethiopian calendar is seven/eight years behind the Gregorian Calendar.

#### 4.4.1 Changes in Wording

**1 Corinthians 1:24:** In this verse the Greek word κλητοῖς, (“those that are called”) is translated as “ለእኛ ለዳንነው” (“for us who are saved”). This follows the majority of Gə’əz texts (see Abraha, 2014:105). The Gə’əz reads “ለእለ ድኅነ” (“for us who are saved”). At the footnote it is indicated that the Greek reads “for those that are called”.

**2 Corinthians 6:16:** In this verse the Greek word ναὸς (“Temple”) is rendered as “ታቦት”/*tabotā* (“Ark [of the Covenant]”). The Gə’əz Bible also reads “ታቦት”. Other Amharic translations follow the Greek reading. This is a clear indication that the Millennium Amharic translation strictly follows the Gə’əz tradition, even if the Gə’əz NT at times deviates from the Greek version. Such a rendering results in a semantic change: it is not in the temple (in this case believers) God dwells, rather according to this translation God dwells on the ark (replica of the ark), that is kept in the church.<sup>47</sup>

According to the church’s tradition, the ark of the covenant resides in Aksum, Ethiopia and even in NT times God still dwells in the ark. A church cannot be considered as a church if it does not contain the replica of the ark of the covenant. “It is the *tabotā*, and not the church building, which is consecrated by the bishop and gives sanctity to the church in which it is placed” (Friedlander and Friedlander, 2007: 2). Liturgical practices cannot be conducted in a church devoid of the “ark”. The temple cannot exist without the ark and the temple cannot be considered as consecrated without it. Hence the word “temple” is rendered as “ark”. This serves as a good example in which the already existing theological formulation affects the translation process.

---

<sup>47</sup> “Ethiopian legend has it that the Ark of the Covenant was taken from Jerusalem to Ethiopia by Menelik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Ethiopians believe that they are still the keepers of the original sacred Ark – the *tabotā* – containing the tablets of the law given to Moses by God, which they guard in monastery of St Mary of Zion at Aksum. The *tabotā* is the guarantor that Ethiopians are the Chosen People and therefore is their focal point of worship. Every church has a replica of the *tabotā*, either in stone or hard wood, and some churches have more than one” (Friedlander and Friedlander, 2007: 2). A typical Orthodox church has three divisions: 1) ቅዱስ ማህልት (*qəne mahəletə*) 2) ቅድስት (*qədəsətə*), and መቅደስ (*mäqədäsə*). *Mäqədäsə* is the sanctuary where the *tabotā* rests. Only senior priests are allowed to enter in this room.



**2 Corinthians 6:15:** In this verse Paul urges believers not to associate with ἀπίστων “unbelievers.” The Millennium Translation rendered the Greek term ἀπίστων as መናፍቅ/*mānafəqə* (“heretic”). The root word for *mānafəqə* is a Gə’əz word ነፈቀ/*näfäqä* and it means to “tear off, divide, separate, split” (Leslau, 1987: 388). The Amharic dictionary defines the word as follow: “በአንድ ሃይማኖት ውስጥ አጠቃላይ ከሆነው ከእምነቱ ድንጋጌ ውጭ ለየት ያለ መንገድ ይዞ የሚከተልና በእምነቱ ውስጥ ያሉትን አንዳንድ መሰረታዊ ነገሮችን የማይቀበል፣ ተጠራጣሪ።” (“A skeptic; who does not embrace some of the fundamental principles of the faith and takes a different path than the general prescriptions of a religion”) (*Amharic Dictionary*, 2001EC: 57). Within the EOTC context the word መናፍቅ/*menafik* in its current usage means “heretic” and refers to evangelical Christians (Seblewengel, 2019: 252). Hence, such an interpretation has a direct impact on the relationship between adherents of the Orthodox Church and those in the Protestant faith.<sup>48</sup> Gə’əz MSS read ኑፋቃን/*nufuqanə* (“one who is doubtful, hesitant, unbelieving, hypocrite, schismatic” (Leslau, 1987: 388).

#### 4.4.2 Omission

**1 Corinthians 3:9:** The Greek word γεώργιον, (“[God’s] field”) is omitted in the Millennium translation. However, in the footnote it is indicated that the Greek reads “you are God’s field”. The phrase “you are God’s field” is missing in the entire Gə’əz MSS tradition (Tedros, 2014: 110).

**2 Corinthians 1:3:** In this verse God is referred as θεὸς καὶ πατήρ (“God and father”) of Jesus Christ. We read a similar expression in other passages of the NT (2Cor 11:31; Eph 1:3 and 1Pet 1:3). In all these passages the Millennium Amharic Translation (contrary to other available Amharic translations) omits the word θεὸς (“God”). God is referred as only as a father of Christ, not as “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Gə’əz MSS of 2 Corinthians omits the word “father”. In all the above verses, the translators did not indicate that the Greek reading differs from the Amharic or Gə’əz readings. No explanation is offered in the footnote why the

---

<sup>48</sup> Some evangelicals also consider themselves as አማኞች/*’ämagoch* (“believers”) and refers the adherents of the EOTC as አሕዛብ/*’ähəzabə* (“gentiles”).

word “God” is omitted. Perhaps the translators were afraid that referring God as a God of Jesus makes Christ human.

#### 4.4.3 Additions

**1 Corinthians 11:28-29:** This verse talks about worthy admission to the eucharist. Paul urges the Corinthians to “examine himself before taking the bread and drinking the bread”. However, the Amharic translation reads “መርምሮና አንጽቶ”/*märəmerona ’änitsəto* (“examine and purify”). The Amharic translation like the Gə’əz adds the word “አንጽቶ”/“purify” (Gə’əz = “ወአንጸሐ”<sup>49</sup>). A few Gə’əz MSS read ወአንጸሐ ተነፍሶ (“purify his soul”) (Tedros, 2014: 140). This may reflect the theological bias of the church. In the EOTC, women are not allowed to enter into the church compound let alone to take part in the holy communion when they are in their menstrual cycle. Besides this, those who gave birth are not allowed to come to the church compound until 40 or 80 days have passed. A husband and wife are not allowed to perform sexual intercourse for three days if they desire to take part in the holy communion (Fritsch, 2007: 271).<sup>49</sup> This is part of the ritual of purifying one’s body. Those who consider themselves impure are expected to refrain from partaking of the Eucharist.

**Matthew 24:41:** The Greek of Matthew 24:41 reads “Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and one left.” However, the Amharic translation adds the following sentence: “ሁለት ሰዎች በአንድ አልጋ ላይ ይተኛሉ፤ አንዱን ይወስዳሉ፤ ሁለተኛውን ይተዋሉ” (“Two people will sleep in one bed; they will take the one and left the other”). This sentence is found in the Ge’ez rather than the Greek. The AC interpret this sentence as follows: “ባልና ሚስት በአንድ አልጋ ይተኛሉ . . . አንዳቸው በሞት ይወስዳሉ . . . አንዳቸው በሕይወት ይኖራሉ።” (“Wife and husband lay side by side on the bed... One of them will be taken by death, and one will still be living”).

---

<sup>49</sup> Some of the OT rituals are still kept and practiced in the church.

#### 4.4.4 Summary of Translational Frame

The translation frame is marked by changes in words, omissions, and additions. The incipient sign system and the doctrinal bias of the translators and the church can be taken as reasons for changes in words, omissions, and additions.

#### 4.5 Socio-Cultural Frame

One has to understand the sociological aspect of a given translation in the process of describing it. The *Kibra Nägäst* (“Glory of Kings”), the medieval Ethiopian epic claimed that the Queen of Sheba was from Ethiopia (see Yamauchi, 2006: 354 and Ullendorf 1955/56: 53-54). The Queen of Sheba went to Jerusalem to visit King Solomon and returned pregnant and gave birth to a son to King Solomon and named him Minilik. Later Minilik went to Jerusalem to see his father and came back to Ethiopia with the Ark of the Covenant. As it is narrated in the *Kibra Nägäst*, the coming of the Ark to Aksum from Jerusalem reinforces the self-perception of Ethiopian Christians as the true Israel, the chosen people of God. Levine comments: “This sense of being God’s chosen people extends to the notion that the EOTC is the only authentic Church, and the unique bearer of the Christian faith” (Levine, 1965: 254). Ethiopia is one of the rare nations that has its own early translation of the Bible.

When the Protestant missionaries came to Ethiopia, they got strong rejection and resistance from the EOTC.<sup>50</sup> The Orthodox priests were against the missionaries. The clergy reasoned: “Their ethos [missionaries] is not like ours and their sacred book is different from that which is accepted in our country. If they are allowed to return, people will fall away from the faith of their fathers”

---

<sup>50</sup> The history of the relationship between the EOTC and the Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia is not characterized by smooth interaction. In the sixteenth century, the Jesuit missionaries (Pedro Paez 1603-1622 and Alfonso Mendez 1626-1636) attempted to catholicize Ethiopia and this caused instability and doctrinal division among the members of the church (see Shenk, 1999: 88-100). The negative experience the EOTC had with the Jesuit missionaries forced the church to look with suspicion on any foreign-based mission activities in the country. Since the Protestant missionaries set foot in the northern part of the country, they experienced resistance by the then kings and the Church. Such an encounter forced the missionaries to neglect the idea of engaging with the Orthodox in the north and led them to focus on the non-Christian people groups in the southern and western part of the country. Even in those areas the missionaries had a negative relationship with the EOTC.

(Aren, 1978: 81). The missionaries disagreed with the EOTC on issues of Canon, theology of intercession, and veneration of saints, to mention a few. These doctrinal differences created a divide between EOTC and evangelicals. As Seblewengel (2019: 400) argues, “At the heart of the Orthodox-Evangelical divide, therefore, is their sense of identity (who they think they are) and their perception of others (who they think the other party is).” Below, I shall discuss two of the doctrinal differences, the doctrine of intercession and the means to salvation.

It is assumed by many adherents of the EOTC that the doctrinal difference between EOTC and Evangelicals arise from wrong translation and interpretation of the Bible. Hence, a new translation is required. The theology of intercession becomes an important concept within the EOTC mainly because of the development of the protestant type of Christianity in Ethiopia. Evangelical Christianity brought afresh christological questions in Ethiopia, particularly the intercessor-mediator role of Christ.<sup>51</sup> Protestants argue that Christ intercedes on behalf of believers. On the contrary, within the EOTC the intercessory role is attributed to Mary and the saints.<sup>52</sup> Orthodox Christians believe in the need for አማላጆች/’ämalajocə (“intercessors”)<sup>53</sup> that can stand between God and humankind. On the contrary, Protestants/Evangelicals discard the idea of intercessors except for the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup> The Orthodox believers argue that Christ cannot be አማላጅ/’ämalajə (“intercessor/mediator”) since he himself is God – to whom would he mediate or intercede? Instead, he is the ተማላጅ/tämalajə (“the one who receives intercession”). Indeed, Christ was an አማላጅ/’ämalajə (“intercessor”) when he was on earth as a man, however since he is no longer a man, he does not have that role. Let us see some examples from the Millennium Translation to see of how the social and theological factors affect the translation.

---

<sup>51</sup> To understand how adherents of Protestants and followers of Orthodox faith perceive and understood each other see Seblewengel, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> For the veneration of Mary and saints see the following: Marcus, 2002: 9-26; Wright, 2004: 368–376.

<sup>53</sup> The Virgin Mary, the angels Gabriel and Michael, the biblical and Ethiopian saints Estifanos, Menfes Qedus, Tekle Haimanot, Gebre Kristos and the *Tsadeqan* are the most well-known አማላጅ/ämalajoch (“intercessors”).

<sup>54</sup> As Seblewengel (2019: 254) indicated, “the intercessory role of Christ poses a serious problem to the Orthodox because it nullifies the need for human or angelic intercessors, most importantly, Mary.”

# **Rom 8:34:**

የሚፈርድስ	ማን ነው?	የሞተው፥	ይልቁንም	ከሙታን	
The one who judges	who is	the one who died	indeed	from the dead	
ተለይቶ	የተነሣው፥	በእግዚአብሔርም	ቀኝ	የተቀመጠው፥	
separated	raised	in God's	right	who is sited	
ደግሞ	ስለኛ	የሚፈርደው*	ኢየሱስ	ክርስቶስ	ነው።
indeed,	for us	the one who <b>judges</b>	Jesus	Christ	is

\*In the footnote the following is stated: “the Greek reads ‘intercedes’”. However, the above rendering differs both from the Greek and the Gə’əz MSS traditions. It also differs with the previous Amharic translations. The Gə’əz Bible agrees with the Greek and reads, **ይትዋቀስ**/yitəwaqüsa (“intercede”).<sup>55</sup> The meaning of the Greek word *ἐντυγχάνει* is “intercede”. However, here in this translation it is rendered as “judge”.

*Aleqa* Ayalew Tamiru, who was the head of the Council of Scholars of the Orthodox Church, said “. . . ካረገ በአብ ቀኝ ከተቀመጠ በኋላ አዲስ አገልግሎት የለም ተቀምጦ ምልጃ የለምና . . .” (“There is no new ministry once he rose to the right hand of God and sat there; there is also no intercession while one is seated [next to God]”) (Ayalew, 1992EC: 28). Based on John 17:4, he argues that the phrase which says “the one who intercedes on our behalf” is ጥፋት ነው/“wrong”. The passage in John 14:4 implies that Jesus has completed his work.

# **Heb 7:25:**

ዘወትር	በእርሱ	በኩል	ወደ	እግዚአብሔር	የሚቀርቡትን	ሊያድናቸው
Always	in him	through	to	God	who approaches	to save them
ይቻለዋል፤	ለዘለዓለምም	ሕያው	ነውና	ያስታርቃቸዋል።		
possible for him	to eternity	living	he is	he reconcile them		

<sup>55</sup> This word has a range of meaning “to accuse”, “to criticize”, “to advise”, “to debate”.

Again, in this verse, the Amharic reading differs both from the Greek and the Gə'əz and also with the previous Amharic translations. The literal translation of Hebrews 7:25 of the Amharic reads as follows: “he is able to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives, he will reconcile them.” It omits the phrase which says “to make intercession for them.”

**Mathew 5:6:** “ሰለ ጽድቅ የሚረብና የሚጠሙ ብፁዓን ናቸው”

**Translation:** blessed are those who hunger and thirst **for the sake of** (ሰለ) righteousness.

The footnote for this verse reads: “the Greek reads ‘those who hunger and thirst righteousness’”. In this verse, we see how Orthodox theology affects the translation. Within the EOTC, strong emphasis is given for salvation which is earned through work and this doctrine is the core identity marker of the EOTC. As Ephraim (2012: 70) noted, “In Ethiopic theology, the formula ‘salvation through faith and good works’ is indivisible.” This is one of the main teachings that differentiate the EOTC with that of the Protestant Churches. Protestants give emphasis to salvation earned through the work of Christ and they use this teaching to convert adherents of Orthodox faith into Protestantism. Members of the Orthodox Church could not find a straightforward biblical text to counter the Protestant doctrine. Hence, such a modification in this verse might be motivated by the need to provide a text for members of the church. In this translation emphasis is given on being hungry and thirsty for *the sake of* righteousness instead of being hungry and thirsty *for* righteousness.

We have seen that this Amharic translation differs from the Greek and Gə'əz in a few places in the two samples above (Rom 8:34 and Heb 7:25). Even though the translation’s prefix specifies that it adheres to the Gə'əz translation, there are moments when the translation is determined by church doctrine.

## 4.6 Translation Metatexts

Interest in using metatexts has grown in the last two decades.<sup>56</sup> Metatexts are supplementary materials which guides the readers' interpretation of the texts. As Naudé and Miller-Naudé indicated (2019: 286-7),

Metatexts include prefaces, dedications, introductions, subject headings, title of books/chapters, marginal notes, footnotes, endnotes, illustrations, indices and addenda, as well as the material and visual presentations of the translation (for example, script, type face, printing layout, etc.).

Metatexts also indicated the intervention of the translators or editors in the work of the translation (Naudé and Miller-Naudé, 2105: 238). It also somehow reflects the context of the translated material. The usage of metatexts allows the translator to be less explicit, with the assumption that metatexts explain relevant key cultural terms. Metatexts also make the text more accessible to the reader.

The Millennium Translation contains a prefix, introduction, section headings, and footnotes. The prefix of the Millennium Translation contains a message from the late Patriarch of EOTC, *Abuna*<sup>57</sup> Paulos, and an introduction to the translation. In these two sections the reader gets some information concerning the incipient sign system, the intended function (*skopos*) of the translation and the translation strategies employed.

The prefix contains a message from the late Patriarch of EOTC, *Abuna* Paulos. It raises some interesting facts concerning the translation. It states that in the past the church used to disseminate the Bible (Gə'əz Bible) using handwritten manuscripts made of parchment. However, books that are considered canonical by the church were not bound in one volume and

---

<sup>56</sup> In some literature metatexts are referred as 'paratextual elements' (see, Yi, 2018: 56–78).

<sup>57</sup> *Abuna* is a title for the head of the EOTC.

as such, it was difficult to access the entire Bible at once (*Amharic Bible*, iii).<sup>58</sup> Hence, the new translation needed to put all the canonical books of the church in one volume. Traditionally, in the Gə'əz tradition, the NT books are divided into sections (Four Gospels, Pauline Epistle, Catholic Epistles, Apocalypse) and usually bound separately as four volumes.

The introduction indicates that the translation is based on the Gə'əz and LXX; when there exist variant readings between the Gə'əz and LXX it is indicated in footnote. A number of other books commonly called apocryphal or deuterocanonical are included in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew. As such, using the Gə'əz and LXX as incipient texts is justified. As indicated above, it is generally believed that the Old Testament of the Gə'əz version was translated from the LXX.

The introduction section states the following points and those points are presented by way of summary.

1) It is believed that Ethiopia accepted the OT scripture before the birth of Christ with the coming of Minilik the first and those Levites who came with him to Ethiopia.<sup>59</sup> The OT was translated into Gə'əz shortly after the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem (Ephraim, 2012: 113). Some traditional church scholars, basing their argument on the Jewish influence on Orthodox Christianity, have argued that the OT as a whole or portions of it were translated before the Christian era. This claim raises an interesting question, if the OT was translated from the Hebrew text why then does the church decide to translate the OT from LXX?

The **introduction** section of the Millennium confessional Bible reads as follows:

---

<sup>58</sup> In Gə'əz tradition the NT books are bound in five separate volumes. Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, Apocalypse and Acts (sometimes Acts can be bound with the Pauline Epistles).

<sup>59</sup> Based on the Kəbrä Nəgāšt, the Ethiopian Church tradition claims that the Levites are responsible for the translation of the OT into Gə'əz (see Ullendorff, 1967: 31, 68). However, it should be noted that we do not have any evidence that proves Gə'əz was developed as a written language during this period.



“ኢትዮጵያ እጆቿን ወደ እግዚአብሔር ትዘረጋለች” (መዝ. ፳፯፥፴፩) ተብሎ እንደ ተነገረ ኢትዮጵያ ሀገራችን ህልውናዋ ከታወቀበት ጊዜ ጀምሮ ቀደም ሲል ከብሉይ ኪዳን እምነት፥ ቀጥሎም ከብሉይ ኪዳንና ከሐዲስ ኪዳን እምነት ውጭ የኖረችበት ጊዜ የለም።

**Translation:** As it is prophesied or said, “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand” (Psalm 68:31). Ethiopia has never existed without faith, first with the Old Testament faith and later with the New Testament faith, since the beginning of time.

2) The New Testament faith also came to Ethiopia during the first century with the Ethiopian Eunuch and spread throughout the country during the fourth century and onwards. (*Amharic Bible*, v) The Gə’əz Bible was in use for more than a century. When Gə’əz became less popular and was only understood by church scholars ... starting from the 17th century church scholars started to teach the mass by interpreting the Bible in the form of *andämta*.<sup>60</sup> At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a monk named *Abba* Abraham from EOTC translated the entire Bible into Amharic. In 1921 EC, the scholars of the church prepared 46 books of the OT and 27 NT books side by side with the Gə’əz and it was ready for print. However, due to the Italian occupation, it was not possible for it to be printed. King Haile Sillassie took the handwritten manuscript to London where it was duplicated through offset print.

3) The 1932 translation (*Abba* Abraham translation) was revised (it is Amharic) by the committee established by Haile Sillassie and republished in 1948 with added OT books, which the church accepts as canonical. This same translation was revised using the Gə’əz and republished in 1980. However, since the above translation and its subsequent editions were not translated from the Gə’əz, all show some discrepancies against the Gə’əz and LXX. Besides this, the translation principle employed deviates from the church’s የአተረጓጎም ስልት/*Y’äträg<sup>w</sup>agomə səlätə* (“translation/interpretive method”) and as such the scholars of the church find it difficult to fully accept those versions as the word of God, hence the need for a new translation. It seems the

---

<sup>60</sup> In the Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahido* Church tradition, the term *Andämta* (አንድምታ) refers to an enormous corpus which contains traditional interpretations of religious texts. These religious texts include the exegesis of biblical, patristic, liturgical, canonical, and monastic texts. The purpose of the *Andämta* commentary is to clarify and illustrate the meaning of the translated Gə’əz text.

case that the Gə'əz translation is more favoured or considered as more authoritative than the Hebrew OT and Greek NT.

This translation is intended to serve members of the EOTC. This is clearly indicated in the prefix. The Patriarch of the church pointed out that the EOTC do not have a Bible that lists all the canonical books in their order and a translation that agrees with the Gə'əz version and the interpretive tradition of the fathers of the church (*Amharic Bible*, iii). This reflects the historical influence of the Gə'əz translation of the Bible in almost all of the liturgical and interpretive traditions of the EOTC.

Even if the previous versions which were published in 1947 and 1980 should be revised based on the Hebrew and the Greek, both translations were not based on the Gə'əz version and did not indicate the variant readings against the Gə'əz text. As a result, many within the church comment that some of the content of these versions were not in line with the interpretive tradition of the fathers of the church (*Amharic Bible*, iii). Hence, the Patriarch during his tenure gave priority for the translation of the Holy Scripture using scholars of the Orthodox Church. The translators used the language of the church and the translation strategy follows that of the traditional interpreters of the church (*Amharic Bible*, iii).

#### 4.7 Linguistic Features

The Millennium Translation is intended to reflect the theological tradition of the church to make it useful for liturgy. We have indicated above that all subsequent writings of the church were shaped by the Gə'əz Bible. Geez, which is used in services, is the Church's official language. Aymro and Motovu said (1970: 51), "The priests who went to preach the gospel in other areas said the Liturgy in Geez, seeing that the local language was wanting in words needed for the purpose of religious service."

Another reason for the church using Gə'əz is to maintain unity of the church. To quote Aymro and Motovu (1970: 51-2), "It is of the utmost importance that the dogmas of religion should be defined with great exactness, in a language that conveys the meaning precisely. Geez is not a

spoken tongue so it does not vary in meaning, hence it offers itself as a means apt for the preservation of unity.”

The introduction section reads, “ትርጉሙ ከግእዝ ምንባብ እንዳይረቅ ከፍተኛ ጥረት ተደርጓል። የአተረጓጎሙም ስልት በአባቶች የአተረጓጎም ስልት መሰረት ሲሆን በተቻለ መጠን ግልጥና ተነባቢ እንዲሆን ጥንቃቄ ተደርጓል።” (“Utmost effort is exerted for the translation not to be far from the Gə’əz. The translation method is based on the interpretation and translation traditions of the fathers of the church”) (*Amharic Bible*, vi). Hence, the linguistic choice of the translators is highly shaped by the Gə’əz Bible.

#### 4.8 Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed the Millennium Translation. The metatext of this translation indicates that it is based on the Gə’əz and LXX versions. Besides this, the prefix indicates that the EOTC has a long history of Bible translation. However, due to the decline of Gə’əz as a medium of communication, various attempts have been made to translate the Bible into Amharic. Such translations, however, are not considered satisfactory because they do not adhere to the Gə’əz and LXX versions and do not properly include the canonical books, which are considered authoritative by the church. The translation is intended for members of the Orthodox Church. Hence, in some instances, the translation is forced to reflect the theological and traditional stand of the church in issues related to the intercessory role of Christ and the eucharist, to mention a few. Besides, this translation strongly reflects the Gə’əz, even if the Gə’əz disagrees with the Greek of the NT.

## Chapter 5: Canon

### 5.1 Introduction

The term “biblical canon” refers to a list of books that are considered normative for a given religious community. The development of the EOTC canon was shaped by both internal and external factors over the centuries. Canons are issued by various synods and councils, and the writings of early church fathers played a prominent role in shaping the biblical canon of EOTC (Dibekulu, 1995: 35-61). The available materials in Gə’əz concerning the issue are translations of foreign sources and are not written by local church scholars. “All books revived as biblical in any of the other Christian denominations are considered to be canonical in Ethiopia as well. But there are some other books of the same status. So, the list of biblical books in the Ethiopian Church is the longest in Christendom” (Brandt, 2003: 571).

As argued by Roger Cowley (1974), in the EOTC, the concept of canonicity is loose compared to other churches.<sup>61</sup> Generally, the EOTC canon consists of eighty-one books, though there are variations in manuscripts and printed texts.

It is believed that all the canonical and Apocryphal books of Scripture were available in Gə’əz before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Ullendorff, 1967: 33-34). The EOTC canon differs from other churches even with those of other Eastern Churches such as the Coptic Church. Theoretically there are a total of 81 canonized books (46 books of the OT, 35 books of the NT and apocryphal

---

<sup>61</sup> There is a belief in the Orthodox Church that tradition has an equally valid value as the word of God. “The word of God is not contained in the Bible alone, it is to be found in tradition as well. The Sacred Scriptures are the written word of God who is author of the Old and New Testaments containing nothing but perfect truth in faith and morals. But God’s word is not contained only in them, there is an unwritten word of God also, which we call Apostolic Tradition. We receive the one and the other with equal veneration” (Aymro and Motovu, 1970: 77).

or deuterocanonical) which are considered authoritative by the Church.<sup>62</sup> However, this total is reached in different ways. “Today it is impossible to reconstruct the exact canon of the Aksumite period or any kind of Urkanon” (Brandt, 2003: 572).

## 5.2 Fetha Nägäst and *Sinodos*

The concept of an 81-book canon is not Ethiopian in origin, but rather reflects Coptic influence (Brandt, 2003: 572). The *Fetha Nägäst* (“The Law of the Kings”) and *Sinodos* (a collection of directives attributed to the Apostles and early Fathers) are the two sources of the canon of 81 books.

*Fetha Nägäst*, collection of ecclesiastic law (*nomocanon*), deals with both Canon and Civil Law. It was compiled in 1240 CE by a Coptic Egyptian writer Fada’il Ibn al-‘Assal and later translated into Gə’əz during the reign of Zära Yaqob around 1450. The *Fetha Nägäst* also lists the following canonical books in addition to the 66 canonical books of the OT and NT: the Book of Judith, the 3rd and 4th Books [of Kings], the 1st and 2nd Books of Chronicles, the two Books of the writer Ezra, the Book of Tobit, the two Books of Meqabyan, the Wisdom of Baruch, the Wisdom of Sirach, and the Book of Joseph Ben Guriyon, which is a Book of the Meqabyan. The list of the NT contains the known 27 books.<sup>63</sup>

The *Fetha Nägäst* has its own commentary<sup>64</sup> and the list of books in this commentary differs from the list given above for the New Testament. The commentary adds eight additional books

---

<sup>62</sup> The Old Testament is divided into ኦሪት/*Orith* (“Torah”), ዜና/*Zena* (“Chronicle” or “history”), ነቢያት/*Nebiyat* (“Prophets”), and wisdom book are categorized under ጥበበ ሰሎሞን/*Tibebe Solomon* (“Wisdom of Solomon”). The narrow New Testament canon contains 27 books, while the broader canon contains 35 books.

<sup>63</sup> *Feteha Nägäst*, 1999: 23f. For the English translation see, *Fetha Nagast: The Law of the Kings* (2nd ed; ed. P. L. Strauss; trans. P. Tzadua; Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2009; first published Addis Ababa: Faculty of Law, Haile Selassie I University, 1968).

<sup>64</sup> “The Reading Explanation of the *Fetha Nägäst*”

of Church Order.<sup>65</sup> The commentary provides the missing books to make the number 81. The following lists the missing eight books.

- Four books of “*Ethiopic Sinodos*” 1) ሥርዐተ ጽዮን/ፊርድ ስርዐተ (‘‘The Order of Zion’’), ትእዛዝ/ፈንግግ (‘‘commandment’’), ኦብጥሊስ/’äbṭälis, ግጽው/ገጽጽው (‘‘The Order of the Church’’),
- አንደኛ መጽሐፈ ኪዳን እና ሁለተኛ መጽሐፈ ኪዳን (Two ‘‘Books of Covenant’’)
- ቀሌምንጦስ/qäleminṭosä (‘‘Ethiopic Clement’’) <sup>66</sup>
- ዲድሳስቅልያ/didäsäqäläyā (‘‘Ethiopic Didascalia’’) <sup>67</sup>

The *Sinodos* (a collection of directives attributed to the Apostles and early Fathers) list eighty-one books. Books like that of *Mashafa Henoch* (‘‘The Book of Enoch’’) and *Meshafa Kufale* (‘‘Jubilees’’) are considered part of the canon. It also includes works such as the Shepherd of Hermas, and sometimes also the Ascension of Isaiah (added to the Old Testament), and the Didascalia Apostolorum, Testamentum Domini, Synodos etc. (added to the NT).<sup>68</sup>

Haile Selassie instructed church academics to research the canon, translate the Bible into Amharic, and hand-copy it. He is credited with declaring any scriptural collection to be complete in EOTC history. In the four-volume Gə’əz and Amharic diglot<sup>69</sup> that the emperor pronounced complete,<sup>70</sup> three books, namely, the books of Enoch, Jubilees and *Meqabyan* are also included. As Eva Mroczek (2016: 156) argued, ‘‘... Selassie’s canon making is not binding for the church. No council has never officially defined exactly what texts constitute its Bible, and church authorities have never followed the emperor’s lead in ascribing completeness to any existing Bible’’ (see also Cowley, 1974: 318–23).

<sup>65</sup> Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, 1996: 47.

<sup>66</sup> For a discussion on this book see Cowley, 1980.

<sup>67</sup> There is a difference between the Ethiopic Clement and Didascalia and those MSS traditionally referred as Clement and Didascalia. For more on Disascalia, see Platt, 1884 and Harden 1920.

<sup>68</sup> For canonicity in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, see Mikre-Sellassie, 1993: 111-123; Cowley, 1974: 318-323; Kealy, 1979: 13-26.

<sup>69</sup> መጽሐፍ፡ ቅዱስ፡ በግዕዝ፡ በአማርኛ፡ የተጻፈ፡ 4 vols, London, undated [1939].

### 5.3 The official position of the Church

Based on the *Fetha Nägäst*, the EOTC accepts 81 books as canonical. The official published book by the church (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, 1996: 45-47) lists the following OT and NT books (46 OT books and 35 NT books) as canonical. In this counting, each of the following are counted as one: 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings; 1 and 2 Chronicles; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ezra and Ezra Sutuel; 2 and 3 Maccabees. This list follows the interpretation of the *Fetha Nägäst* and it is clearly indicated in the book, “Even though there are variations in the number of Scriptures, the above are 81 accepted by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church and are cited in the interpretation of the ‘Fetha Negest’ ” (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, 1996: 47).

**Table 1. Canonized OT books in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church**

<b>Books of Law (the 5 Books of Moses)</b>	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
<b>Book of history</b>	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, <sup>71</sup> Ezra and Nehemiah, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ezra and Ezra Sutuel, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 Maccabees, 2 and 3 Maccabees <sup>72</sup> , Joseph Ben Guriyon <sup>73</sup>
<b>Books of Psalms (Songs) and Wisdom</b>	Job, Psalms, Proverbs, <i>Tegsats</i> (Reproof), Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Sirach.
<b>Book of Prophecy</b>	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Although they are not on this list, the Books of Enoch and Jubilees are included in the Millennium version. The writings of Joseph Ben Guriyon are accepted as canon. However, the

---

<sup>71</sup> 2nd Chronicles includes the Prayer of Manasseh.

<sup>72</sup> The Ethiopic books of Maccabees are entirely different from those of the Septuagint.

<sup>73</sup> The book of *Joseph Ben Koryon*, also called *Zēna 'Ayəhud* (“The History of the Jews”).

Millennium Amharic Bible does not have it. There are 54 printed Old Testament books, and they are not in this book's order.

**Table 2. Canonized Books of the NT**

<b>The Gospels</b>	Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
<b>History</b>	Acts of the Apostle
<b>Pauline Epistles</b>	Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews
<b>Other Epistles</b>	1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1John, 2 John, 3 John, James (Jacob), Jude
<b>Prophecy</b>	Revelation
<b>Books of Church Order</b>	The Order of Zion ( <i>Sirate Tsion</i> ), Commandment ( <i>Te'ezaz</i> ), <i>Gitsew</i> , <i>Abtilis</i> , the Book of Covenant <sup>74</sup> , Clement, and Didascalia.

Source: *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church*, 1996: 47.

The eight Books of Church orders, though considered as canonical, are not included in the Millennium Amharic Translation or any other previous Amharic Bible translations published by Ethiopian Bible Society and other translation agencies. The recent Gə'əz publication of the Bible also did not include these books. It means that we reached the number 81 without the eight books of the church order that were added in the NT.

Cowley (1974: 318) classifies the canon of the EOTC as a “narrow” and “broader” canon. The “broader” canon contains 46 books of the OT and 35 books of the NT, while the “narrow” canon contains 54 OT books and 27 NT books. In both cases the OT books are the same, the difference

---

<sup>74</sup> It contains two books.



is how they are organized/divided. The printed Bibles do not include the eight additional books of the NT, maybe because it is bulky to print them all in one volume.<sup>75</sup>

*Abba* Abraham's translation of the Bible contains 66 canonical books which are accepted by Protestant tradition and it omits other writings which are considered canonical by EOTC. We cannot be sure why those books were omitted by the translator. However, it became a factor for adherents of EOTC not to fully embrace this translation.

#### 5. 4 Canon and the Millennium Amharic Translation

Printing helped to standardise the arrangement and contents of the Bible (introduction of standardized systems of chapter and verse numbering) (Brock, 2006: 7). It seems the case that the Millennium Amharic translation aims to address this issue. Eva Mroczek said, "The concept of canon as a strict list of books is foreign to the scriptural imagination of the Ethiopian tradition" (2016: 156). The issues of canon are not yet a settled issue within the EOTC. However, the publication of the Millennium Amharic Bible and recently the full Gə'əz Bible places the Deutero-canonical books on an equal footing with the widely accepted 66 books of the Bible.

The Millennium Amharic Bible includes the following canonical books:

**Table 3. Canonized OT books in the *Millennium Amharic Bible***

<p>Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 King, 2 King, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, <b>Jubilees</b>, <b>Enoch</b>, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezra Sutuel (1 Ezra Apocalypse), 2 Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 Meqabeyan, 2 Meqabeyan, 3 Meqabeyan, Job, Psalms, Messale (Proverbs 1 -24, Tägsats (Proverbs 25-31), Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, Song of</p>
--

<sup>75</sup> The explanation may be found in what Clement said about these texts in the 85th Apostolic Canon: "And the Constitutions dedicated to you the bishops by me Clement, in eight books; which it is not fit to publish before all, because of the mysteries contained in them" (Schaff, 2004: 759).

Songs, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, **Baruch**, Lamentations, **Remainder of Jeremiah**, **Remainder of Baruch**, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

**Source:** Ethiopian Bible Society. *Metsehaf Kidus* (The Holy Bible, Amharic version). Addis Ababa, 2007.

The Millennium Amharic translation of the OT contains fifty-four books. As it can be seen in Table 3, unlike other Amharic translations the Millennium Amharic Bible did not put the Deutro-canonical books in a separate section from the OT (inter-testamental section). Rather, those books are mingled between other books of the Old Testament (e.g., Jubilees and Enoch are placed between 2 Chronicles and Ezra). This gives the two books an equal level with the Hebrew Bible. The same approach is followed by the recently translated Amharic version published for the Catholic Church of Ethiopia. This is contrary to Protestant tradition.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Currently, most Protestant translations of the Bible do not include the Apocrypha books of the OT. There are a few exceptions such as the Revised English Bible, the New Revised Standard Version and the Good News Bible.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This mini-dissertation indicates that the EOTC translated new Amharic Bible for historical and theological reasons. In addition, the rapid growth of the Evangelical type of Christianity and their involvement in Bible translation motivates and urges the Orthodox Church to come up with her own Amharic translation that reflects the tradition of the Church. Recently, the EOTC also printed the first ever full Gə'əz Bible. These translations incorporate books that are deemed non-canonical by Protestant Churches.

Church leaders pushed for a fresh translation because they felt disassociated from the old Amharic translations. The necessity of Gə'əz and the LXX as incipient texts for the Amharic translation was also a major factor the Millennium Amharic translation. This is indicated in the prefix and introduction of the new translation. The translation incorporates some elements that reflect the already existing theology of the Church (e.g., the issue of intercession). The Millennium Translation also affirms those books which are considered canonical by the church by placing them along with OT books.

According to the prefix of the translation, the source material is translated in a way that clearly shows a tight affinity with the Geez text and the church's tradition of biblical interpretation in order to fulfill the needs of the clergy of the EOTC.

The EOTC created the Millennium Amharic translation, as stated in the document, to fulfil modern requirements while maintaining their Geez tradition. According to the research, the church's doctrine only seldom influences the translation process.

## Bibliography

**Note:** Ethiopian and Eritrean authors are listed under their first names

Abayneh Kasse. 2014 EC. *የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ጥናት በኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ*. Addis Ababa: Far East Trading.

Afewerk Hailu. 2020. *Jewish Elements on the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwähädo Church*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.

Alfredo, JM. 2010. *ጥበ and Ikharari: The Book of Ruth from a Lomwe Perspective*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.

An, Keon-Sang. 2015. *An Ethiopian Reading of the Bible: Biblical Interpretation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church*. (American Society of Missiology Monograph Series vol. 25) Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications.

Appleyard, David L. 2003 “Amharic” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* (Vol. 1 A-C), 232-234. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Aren, Gustav. 1978. *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*. Stockholm: EFS Forlaget.

Ayalew Tamiru. 1992EC. *ጥልጃ፣ እርቅና ሰላም/Milja, Erqena Selam* (“Intercession, Reconciliation and Peace”). Addis Ababa: NP.

Ayele Teklehaymanot, 2000. “Early Christian Traditional Sources in the Ethiopian Ghe’ez Literature” *Ethiopian Review* 2. Addis Ababa: Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology.

Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu (ed.). 1970. *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church*. Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Mission.

Baker, Mona. 2006, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*. London & New York: Routledge.

Baur, John. 2001. *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.

- Bausi, Alessandro. 2014. "Writing, Copying, Translating: Ethiopia as a Manuscript Culture" in *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*. Jörg B. Quenzer, Dmitry Bondarev and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch (Eds.) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Berman, Sidney. 2014. "Cognition and Context in Translation Analysis: Contextual Frames of Reference in Bible Translation." *Scriptura* 113(1): 1-12.
- Berman, Sidney. 2015. "Translation Shifts and the Improvement of Bible Translations: The Case of Ruth 4:13 in the Setswana Versions." *Journal for Semitics* 24(2): 470-483.
- Brandt, Peter. 2003. "Bible canon" *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* 1 A-C (Siegbert Uhlig, ed) Harrassowitz Verlage: Wiesbaden, 571-73.
- Brock, Sebastian. 2006. *The Bible in Syriac Tradition*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
- Bruk A. Asale. 2014. "A Millennium Translation Based on the Gə'əz and LXX: A New Bible Translation in the Ethiopian Church and Its Controversy". *The Bible Translator* 65(1): 49-73.
- Caramen, Philip. 1985. *The Lost Empire: The Story of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, 1555-1634*. South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press.
- Catford, J.C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Cherenet Abebe. 2005 EC. መሰረታዊ የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ አጠናኝ ዘዴ/Meseretawi yemetsehaf kidus atenan zede ("Foundational Methods of Bible Study"). Addis Ababa: Eleni Publisher.
- Cowley, Roger W. 1974. "The Biblical Canon of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23: 318-323.
- Cowley, Roger W. 1977. "New Testament Introduction in the *Andemta* Commentary Tradition," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 26/2-3: 144-92.
- Cowley, Roger. 1980. "The Identification of the Ethiopian Octateuch of Clement, and Its Relationship to the Other Christian Literature," *Ostkirchlichen Studien* 27: 37–45.
- Cowley, Roger. 1983. *Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Church*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Crummey, Donald. 1972. *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia 1830-1868*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Daniel Assefa, 2022. “The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawāhədo Church (EOTC) In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Orthodox Christianity* (ed., Eugen J. Pentiuć) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 211-226.
- Daniel Kibret. 1994EC. የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ትናንት ዛሬና ነፃ ዐውደ ጥናት [*“Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahedo Church: Yesterday and Today”*] ሐመር ልዩ መጽሐፉ. 149-159.
- Dibekulu Zewde. 1995. ሰማኒያ አንድ ቅዱሳት መጻሕፍትና ምንጮች- ቀኖናት/81 *Kidusat Metsaheftena Minchoch-Kenonat* (The 81 Holy Books and the Sources –Canons). Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Enterprise.
- Edele, B. 1995. *A Critical Edition of Genesis in Ethiopic*. PhD. Dissertation. Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Ephraim Isaac. 1968. *The Ethiopian Church*. Boston: Sawyer.
- Ephraim Isaac. 2012. *The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahido Church*. Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church. 1996. *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church: Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations*, Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.
- Eusebius, 1927. *The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, J. E. L. Oulton, and Hugh Jackson Lawlor. London: W. Heinemann.
- Even-Zohar, I. 2012 [1979], “The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem”, in L Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, pp. 162-167.
- Fargher, Brian. 1996. *The Origins of the New Churches Movement in Southern Ethiopia, 1927-1944* (Studies of Religion in Africa, 16). Leiden: Brill.
- Feteha Nägäst* (“Law of the Kings”). 1999. Addis Ababa: Tesfa Gebreselassie Printing Press.

*Fetha Nagast: The Law of the Kings*. 2009. 2nd ed; ed. P. L. Strauss; trans. P. Tzadua; Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press; first published Addis Ababa: Faculty of Law, Haile Selassie I University, 1968.

Friedlander, Maria-Jose and Bob Friedlander. 2007. *Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia: A Guide to the Remote Churches of an Ancient Land*. London: Bloomsbury

Getachew Täräfä. 2011 EC. ተፋልሶ/*Täfaläso* (“Discord”). Addis Ababa: Getachew Täräfä.

Girma Awgichew Demeke. 2009. *The Origin of Amharic*. Addis Ababa: Centre Français d’Etudes Ethiopiennes.

Goffman, E. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gorgorios (*Abba*). 1986 EC የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ (“The History of Ethiopian Orthodox Täwähädo Church”) 2nd ed. Addis Ababa: Bərhanənnä Sälam Printing Press.

Habte-Mariam Marcos. 1990. “Scholarship on the Ethiopian Languages – Retrospect and Prospect” in *Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies*. (Richard Pankhurst and Taddese Beyene, eds.) Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

Harden, J. M. 1926. *An Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Harden, John. 1920. *The Ethiopic Didascalia*. London: Macmillan.

Hofmann, Josef. 1977. “The Ethiopic Version”, in Bruce Metzger (ed.), *The Early Version of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 215-256.

Holmes, James S. 1988. “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”. In Holmes, J.S., *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 67-80.

Hubbard, David Allan. 1956. *The Literary Sources of the Kebra Nagast*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of St. Andrews.

- Isichei, Elizabeth. 1995. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. London: SPCK.
- Kealy, Sean P. 1979. "The Canon: An African Contribution." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 9(1): 13-26.
- Kleiner, Michael. 2003. "Abu Rumi". *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 1, edited by Siegbert Uhlig, pp. 53,54. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Knibb, Michael A. 1999. *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leslau, Wolf. 1987. *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge'ez English/English-Ge'ez with an index of the Semitic Roots*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Levine, Donald. 1965. *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Loba Mkole, Jean-Claude. 2019. "Intercultural Translations of Christian Canonical Scriptures" *Acta Theologica* 39(1): 156-180.
- Loba Mkole, Jean-Claude. 2022. "Intercultural Frames of Bible Translation Ownership in DR Congo." *Journal for Translation Studies in Africa* 3: 1-17.
- Lockout, Hans W. "Flad, Johann Martin (A)" In *The Dictionary of African Christian Biography*. (<https://dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/flad-j/>). Accessed on November 25, 2022.
- Maluleke, M. J. 2017. *The role of Bible translation in enhancing Xitsonga cultural identity*. Ph.D. thesis, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- Mangum, Douglas Todd. 2018. *To Conceal or Reveal? Self-censorship and Explication in the Ancient Bible Versions*. Ph.D. thesis, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- Marcus, Cressida. 2002. "In Praise of Women: the Veneration of the Virgin Mary in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1: 9-26.
- Maraïs, Kobus. 2019. *A (Bio)Semiotic Theory of Translation: The Emergence of Social-Cultural Reality*. London and New York: Routledge.



- Marrassini, Paolo. 1990. "Some Considerations on the Problem of the 'Syriac Influences' on Aksumite Ethiopia." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 23: 35-46.
- Matthew, A. F. 1956. "The Revision of the Amharic Bible." *The Bible Translator* 7(2): 72-76.
- Meyer, Ronny and Renate Richter. 2003. *Language Use in Ethiopia from a Network Perspective: Result of Sociolinguistic Survey Conducted among High School Students*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Mihăilă, Alexandru. 2018. "The Septuagint and the Masoretic Text in the Orthodox Church(es)." *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1): 30-60.
- Mikre-Sellassie, A. A. 1993. "The Bible and its Canon in Ethiopian Orthodox Church." *The Bible Translator* 44: 111-123.
- Mroczek, Eva 2016. *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Munday, Jeremy. 2012. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. 3rd edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Munro-Hay, Stuart. 1993. "Aksumite Coinage" S, in *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2002. "An Overview of Recent Developments in Translation Studies with Special Reference to the Implications for Bible Translation." *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2: 44-49.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2004. "An overview of recent developments in translation studies with special reference to the implications for Bible." *Acta Theologica* 2(1): 44-69.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2009. "The role of metatexts in the translations of sacred texts. The case of the Aristeas Book and the Septuagint." *Vetus Testamentum Supplementum* 261: 281-98.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2011a. "From submissiveness to agency: An overview of developments in translation studies and some implications for language practice in Africa." *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 29(3): 223–241.

- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2011b. "A narrative frame analysis of the 1933 Afrikaans Bible". *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 37(1): 255–274.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2012. "Metatexts and the regulation of reader responses in the translation of sacred texts." *Folia Orientalia* 49: 339 – 355.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. and Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. 2015. "The Metatexts of 1 and 2 Maccabees." *Journal for Semitics* 24(1): 237-270.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. & Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. 2019, "Theology and Ideology in the Metatexts of Bible Translations in Muslim Contexts: A Case Study", in GR Kotzé, CS Locatell, JA Messarra (eds.), *Ancient Texts and Modern Readers. Studies in Ancient Hebrew Linguistics and Bible Translation*, Brill, Leiden & Boston, pp. 280-299. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004402911\\_016](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004402911_016)
- Nebeyou Alemu. 2019. "How Amharic unites – and divides – Ethiopia" in *African Arguments* ([How Amharic unites – and divides – Ethiopia – African Arguments](#) )
- Newmark, P. 1981. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford and New York: Pergamon.
- Niccum, Curt. 2014. *The Bible in Ethiopia: The Book of Acts*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.
- Nida, E. 1959. "Principles of translation as exemplified by Bible translating". In *On translation*, ed. R.A. Browers. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp 11–31.
- Nida, E. 1964. *Toward a science of translating*. Leiden: Brill.
- Nida, E.A. and Taber, C.R. 1982. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Nord, C. 2018. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Omanson, R. 2011. "Confessional and interconfessional Bible translation in the 19th and 20th centuries" / (Konfessionelle und interkonfessionelle Bibelübersetzungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert). In: Kittel, H. ed. 3. *Teilband*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 2405-2408. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110226621-077>
- Pankhurst, Sylvia. 1955. *Ethiopia: A Cultural History*. Lalibela House: Essex.

- Platt, Thomas. 1834. *The Ethiopic Didascalia or the Ethiopic Version of the Apostolical Constitutions, Received in the Church of Abyssinia*. London.
- Pym, Anthony. 2010. *Exploring Translation Theories*. London: Routledge.
- Schaff, Philip. 2004. *Ante-Nicene Fathers (ANF) Vol. 07, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Seblewengel Daniel. 2019. *Perception and Identity: A Study of the Relationship between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia*. Langham Monographs. Carlisle: Langham Publishing.
- Sergew Hable Selassie, 1972. *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270*. Addis Ababa: United Printers.
- Shenk, Calvin E. 1999. "Reverse Contextualization: Jesuit Encounter with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church." *Direction* 28(1): 88–100.
- Stuckenbruck, Loren. 2011. "Apocrypha and the Septuagint: Exploring the Christian Canon." In *Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum*. eds., Thomas Schott Caulley and Hermann Lichtenberger, 177-201. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Sundkler, Bengt and Christopher Steed. 2000. *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taddesse Tamrat, 1972. *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Tibebe Eshete. 2009. *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience*. Waco, TX: Baylor.
- Toury, Gideon. 1995. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Trivedi, H. 2005. "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation" *91<sup>st</sup> Meridian*, 4(1): 1-8.
- Ullendorff, Edward 1968. *Ethiopia and the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Ullendorff, Edward. 1955/56. "Candace (Acts VIII.27) and the Queen of Sheba," *NTS* 2: 53-54.

- Venuti, Laurence (ed.). 2012. *Translation Studies Reader*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wendland, Ernst. 2008. *Contextual Frames of Reference in Translation: A Coursebook for Bible Translators and Teachers*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- Weninger, Stefan. 2003. “Gə‘əz Bible Editions” *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* 1 A-C (Siegbert Uhlig, ed) Harrassowitz Verlage: Wiesbaden, 569-71.
- Wilt, Tim. 2002. “A new framework for Bible translation”, in Naudé, JA & Van der Merwe, CHJ (eds.), *Contemporary translation studies and Bible translation: a South African perspective*. *Acta Theologica Supplementum*. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.
- Wilt, Tim. 2003. “Translation and Communication” In Wilt, T. (ed.). *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference*, 28-80. Manchester and Northampton, MA: St Jerome Publishing.
- Wright, Marta C. 2004. “Mary in Contemporary Ethiopian Orthodox Devotion.” *Studies in Church History* 39: 368–376. doi: 10.1017/S0424208400015229.
- Yamauchi, Edwin M. 2006. “Acts 8:26-40: Why the Ethiopian Eunuch Was Not from Ethiopia.” in *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis*. (Darrel L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning, eds.) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- Yared Səferawe. 2009 EC. *የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ታሪካዊ አመጣጥ/Yämäshäfe Kiduse Tarikawi Amtate* (“*The Historical Origin of the Bible*”). Addis Ababa: Solar Publishing.
- Yi, An-Ting. 2018. “When Notes Start to Speak: An Investigation of Footnotes and Interlinear Notes in Contemporary Chinese Bible Versions” *The Bible Translator* 69(1): 56-78.
- Zuurmond, Rochus. 2001. 1989. *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice: The Synoptic Gospels* (Edition of the Gospel of Mark). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH.
- Zuurmond, Rochus. 2003. “Bible Vorlage: Greek” *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* 1 A-C (Siegbert Uhlig, ed) Harrassowitz Verlage: Wiesbaden, 564-65.

## Bible Translations

Francesco da Bassano (ed.) 1922/23-25/26. ብሉይ ኪዳን፡፡ (*Bəluṃ Kidan*, “The Old Testament”). Asmara: Bāmāḥtama frānčaskānā.”

Francesco da Bassano (ed.) ሐዲስ ኪዳን (*Haddis Kidan*, “The New Testament”), Asmara, 1920.

Potken, Johann. 1513. *Psalmi et Cantica* [*Psalterium et Canticum Canticorum et Alia Cantica Biblica Aethiopice et Syllabarium seu de Legendi Ratione*]. Romae: Silber.

መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ፡ በግዕዝና፡ በአማርኛ፡ የተጻፈ/*Mäsehäfə Kiduse Bgə’əzna Bä’ämärga Yätsäfä* (“The Holy Scripture: Written in Amharic and Gə’əz) 4 vols, London, undated [1939].

ሕያው ቃል አዲስ ኪዳንና የዳዊት መዝሙር/*Heyaw kal Addis KidaneN YeDawit Mezmur* “Living Word New Testament and Psalms”) 1985. Living Bible International.

መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የብሉይ እና የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጻሕፍት [“The Amharic Bible: With the Old Testament Based on Septuagint”] 2000 EC/2007. Addis Ababa: The Bible Society of Ethiopia.