

# **WÄWÄHABO QOB'A WÄ'ASKEMA...: REFLECTIONS ON AN EPISODE FROM THE HISTORY OF THE ETHIOPIAN MONASTIC MOVEMENT**

Among the traditions transmitted in Ethiopian hagiographic works, those referring to the encounters between Täklä Haymanot<sup>1</sup> and Iyäsus Mo'a<sup>2</sup> — two late 13<sup>th</sup>–early 14<sup>th</sup>–cent. monastic leaders and great Ethiopian saints —

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<sup>1</sup> There is no need to quote all existing scholarly literature on Täklä Haymanot's activities, hagiography and cult, or all works on the history of his monastic foundation, Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa. These topics have been discussed in a number of publications, ranging from brief entries in reference-books to chapters in monographs [for the list of abbreviations used in this article see p. 239]: s., e. g., BHO 247–248, nos. 1128–1134; CERULLI 1943:228–232; TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:160–169; *DEB* 157–158; *KRZ* 92–93, no. 151; KRISS — KRISS HEINRICH 1975:30–41; among the recent publications, s., e. g., BÖLL in: *LTK* IX, 1244–1245; TEDESCHI in: *EnSanti* II, 1132–1138; DERAT 2003, passim. On the hagiographic legend of Täklä Haymanot, s. DERAT 1998, NOSNITZYN 2003 (concerning the hagiographic reports on the Saint's *translatio*), NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming (on the Synaxarion commemorative note about the Saint). Let us only recall that, according to the more or less commonly accepted chronology, Täklä Haymanot is thought to have lived in ca. 1214/15–1313; the Saint's major annual feasts are celebrated on 24 *Näḥase* (*obitus*) and 12 *Gənbət* (*translatio*).

<sup>2</sup> As is commonly known, *abba* Iyäsus Mo'a was one of the most prominent representatives of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥstifanos, which, like Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, is today one of the most venerated monasteries of Ethiopia. However, Iyäsus Mo'a appears to have been somewhat less popular than a number of other holy monks. The rather local character of his cult becomes evident when compared to the country-wide veneration of Täklä Haymanot, Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus, Samu'el of Waldəbba, Zä-Mika'el Arägawi, as well as of several other Oriental saints. Iyäsus Mo'a's commemoration is recorded in the Synaxarion, but only in a short notice (26 *Ḥədar*), not in a hagiobiographic account. His popularity could have been increased by hagiographies of other saints, where he is mentioned as a prominent monastic leader; yet, the considerable difference between the respective cults of Täklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Mo'a is demonstrated, e. g., by the number of manuscripts containing their hagiographies. Whereas Täklä Haymanot's hagiographic tradition, represented by a substantial number of works, is attested by many dozens of manuscripts, the same cannot be said about the tradition of Iyäsus Mo'a (s., e. g., *DEB* 92; TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970:88–91; *KRZ* 78–79, no. 86; MARRASSINI 1986; TEDESCHI in: *EnSanti* II, 267–271; BAUM in: *BKK* XX, 804–806).

are considered central for the reconstruction of medieval Ethiopian church history. This is reflected in the well-known evaluation given by Tadesse Tamrat of one such episode: «His [sc. Täklä Haymanot's] encounter with Īyāsus-Mo'a on this second occasion is shrouded with uncertainties in the traditions, and has become one of the most controversial points in Ethiopian ecclesiastical history. The controversy basically evolves around the mutual claims of seniority later advanced by Däbrä Hayq and Däbrä Lībanos».<sup>3</sup> This «controversy» has been the subject of a number of studies; yet, the progress made in the understanding of Ethiopian history and the growing number of accessible sources offers an opportunity to assess the problem one more time, at the cross-roads of historical and philological studies. Today, a deeper analysis of the relevant hagiographies is possible, with the aim not only of coming closer to the reconstruction of the late 13<sup>th</sup>-cent. events, but also of tracing the development of the traditions within their original context, their sources and interrelations — thus correctly assessing their value. The present essay is an attempt at such analysis.<sup>4</sup>

# I

Before embarking on the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the accounts I would like to summarize the most important points and acting characters of the story, according to its «classical» version as transmitted by the early-16<sup>th</sup>-cent. Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the recension of Däbrä Libanos.<sup>5</sup>

Obedying the Lord's command,<sup>6</sup> Täklä Haymanot, who had converted large numbers of pagans in the south of the Ethiopian kingdom and worked miracles, sought to take on the monastic habit and learn the «monastic rules».

<sup>3</sup> TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:164.

<sup>4</sup> The essay is drawn from my Ph.D. thesis, «The Vita of Täklä Haymanot as a monument of Ethiopian medieval literature», completed under the supervision of the late Sevir B. Chernetsov and defended at the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University on 20 December 2002.

<sup>5</sup> From here on, the text of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension is quoted after the *editio princeps*, BUDGE 1906; however, one should note that this text represents not the original but a slightly reworked variant of that recension (a problem I have addressed on several occasions: e. g., Nosnitsin 2006, forthcoming, cp. also n. 34, below). The translation provided in BUDGE 1906 is often erroneous; when referring to it, I will attempt, therefore, to rectify it (and simplify the transcription of proper names).

<sup>6</sup> The summary follows BUDGE 1906, chs. 68–88 (particularly relevant are chs. 68–75, 77–81, 85–88). In the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita, Täklä Haymanot's monastic career does not appear as detailed and lengthy as one would expect considering the time (more than 30 years) Täklä Haymanot spent in different monasteries (s. the synopsis in BUDGE 1906, ch. 113; 10 years in the community of Bāšälötä

In order to fulfil his predestination — the foundation of the monastery of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos — Tāklä Haymanot was deemed to become a monk. Since there are no monasteries in Säwa, he travelled to the north of Ethiopia, seeking to assume the monastic habit there. The first place where he made a halt is that of *abba* Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel «of Gəṣṣe», the head of a (unidentified) monastery in Amḥara.<sup>7</sup> Tāklä Haymanot spent ten years there;

Mikaʾel [Amḥara], 10 years at Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos, 12 years at Däbrä Dammo, 1 year wandering in Təgre and Jerusalem, 29 years in Däbrä Asbo; in manuscripts, there are some differences concerning the last period).

<sup>7</sup> While the historical context of the episode is more or less clear (cp. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:112–117, 177–178), the chronology and historical identity of *abba* Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel is difficult to ascertain. According to the Synaxarion recension of Tāklä Haymanot's Vita — which is probably one of the most ancient hagiographic sources on the Saint (s. Nosnitsin 2006, forthcoming) — Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel was the only spiritual teacher of Tāklä Haymanot and it was he, one could presume, who imposed the «monkish yoke» upon Tāklä Haymanot (s. GUIDI 1912:381). However, the Waldäbba recension of Tāklä Haymanot's Vita does not mention Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel at all, while in the Ḥayq and Däbrä Libanos recensions Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel is styled as *Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel zä-hagärä Gəsse* (e. g., in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, éth. 342 = Griaule 38 [s. below], fol. 89vb; however, he is «Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel of Amḥara» on fols. 85va, 87ra) and *Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel zä-Gəṣṣä* (BUDGE 1906, ch. 68) respectively. It is difficult to identify him as «Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel of Däbrä Gol» whose hagiography was edited by C. CONTI ROSSINI (1905), and who was the spiritual father of Aron of Däbrä Daret (cp. Turaiev 1908:125; *EA* I, 350f.). Däbrä Gʾäl of Amhara — a historical monastery identical, according to the Vita of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel, to Däbrä Šəmmona, where Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel assumed the monastic habit from Anorewos and lived (Conti Rossini 1905:14; there he lays the monastic habit upon Aron) — can hardly be identified with the well-known monastery of Däbrä Baḥrəy (in Gassačča, domain of *abba* Giyorgis of Gassačča/Sägla), the contemporary site of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel's cult, where his relics were transferred from G[ʾ]əlo Mākäda (northeastern Təgray; s. CONTI ROSSINI 1905:50–53; SAUTER 1963:275). The identification of Gəṣṣe (the region where the important church of Mäkanä Šəllase was situated) with Gassačča is also problematic, though it is favoured by the local tradition (this identification, recorded in the Acts of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel preserved in Däbrä Baḥrəy of Gassačča [s. DERAT 2003:116–117], may in fact originate from the Acts of Tāklä Haymanot; however, the monastic library of Däbrä Baḥrəy needs further investigation). In any case, Däbrä Gʾäl is traditionally said to have been destroyed during the 16<sup>th</sup>-cent. Muslim war and never rebuilt; its precise location remains unknown. In his hagiography, Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel appears as the contemporary of Metropolitan *abunä* Yaʿəqob and King ʿAmdä Šəyon I (1314–1334), as a strenuous opponent of the latter and reformer of the Church and monastic life (s. *EA* I, 493f.). Thus, there seems to exist more reasons to distinguish between «the early» Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel of Gəṣṣe (mentioned in the hagiographic legend of Tāklä Haymanot) and «the later» Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel of Däbrä Gʾäl (as proposed by TURAIEV 1902:53; s. also Getatchew Haile's commentary to MS EMLL 1834, fol. 93b). The Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa seems to conflate «earlier» and «later» personages, while stating that Iyäsus Moʾa was the spiritual father of Bä-

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Däbrä Dammo and told *abba* Yoḥanni that he received his monastic garb from Iyäsus Moʿa. Stating that Tāklä Haymanot is «the (spiritual) son of his son», Yoḥanni bestowed upon him the *qob*<sup>c</sup> and *askema*.<sup>11</sup> After visits to other monastic communities of northern Ethiopia and three miraculous travels to Jerusalem, Tāklä Haymanot, following God's command, returned to Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos and handed the monastic cap and scapular over to Iyäsus Moʿa, in accordance with the latter's will.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the account, there is a fragment containing Tāklä Haymanot's monastic pedigree beginning with Anthony the Great, in which the «spiritual kinship» between the three holy monks — Iyäsus Moʿa, Yoḥanni and Tāklä Haymanot — is explained once again; however, referring to Tāklä Haymanot, the hagiographer or deliberately leaves out or forgets to mention, from whom the Saint received the parts of the monastic habit of the first grade («monastic clothes» — from Iyäsus Moʿa). However significant this contradiction might be, we can not say that this pedigree «reverses» the preceding account.<sup>13</sup>

It seems that this version of the story first became widely known because of the popularity of the Däbrä Libanos recension of Tāklä Haymanot's Vita.

<sup>11</sup> BUDGE 1905, ch. 78. Before vesting Tāklä Haymanot with the monastic cap and garb, *abba* Yoḥanni questions him; after that, he performs the consecration rite: «And he [*abba* Yoḥanni] said: What is your name, and who vested you with the monastic garb (ልብስ : ምንኩስና)? And he said: My name is Tāklä Haymanot, and *abba* Iyäsus Moʿa who dwells on an island of the lake, endowed me with the garb of the monk. And *abba* Yoḥanni said: Verily you are son of my son, for I begot him by the Holy Ghost. And *abba* Yoḥanni prayed over the cap and scapular according to the law (ወእለየ : አባ : ዮሐን፡ ሳዕለ : ቆብዓ : አስኬማ : [በ]ከመ : ሕግ...), and he gave them to our father holy man Tāklä Haymanot».

<sup>12</sup> BUDGE 1905, ch. 87, 188–189 [tr.]: «And on the morrow he rose up and departed, and he came to the place on the sea-shore, and he walked upon the water, even as a man walketh on the dry land; and he came unto Iyäsus Moʿa. And when the Abbot saw him, he rejoiced exceedingly, and said unto him, “Where didst thou receive the [monastic cap and the scapular] (ቆብዓ : ወእስኬማ) [with thy] holy hands?” And Tāklä Haymanot said unto him, “In Mount Damo, at the hand of Abba Yoḥanni”. And [he] said unto him, “From this time onward I will cease from the toil of the road; I will be thy son, and thou shalt be [my] father; give me the [monastic cap and the scapular] which are in thy holy hands”. And [Abba Tāklä Haymanot] gave [him] the cowl [the monastic cap] and the cloak, for the angel said unto him, “Hearken unto what he sayeth unto thee”».

<sup>13</sup> Cp. DERAT 2003:106–107; s. BUDGE 1906, ch. 88, with the somewhat vague title «How the garb of the monk and the rule of ascetic life descended from Anthony to Takla Hāymānôt» (ibid., 189–190 [tr.]): «...and Abba Mäsqäl Moʿa begot Abba Yoḥanni, and Abba Yoḥanni begot Abba Iyäsus Moʿa and Tāklä Haymanot, [Iyäsus Moʿa] by the cassock and girdle (በቀሚስ : ወበቅናት), and [Tāklä Haymanot] by the [monastic cap and the scapular]; and Abba [Tāklä Haymanot] gave Iyäsus Moʿa the monastic cap and the scapular, even as we have said before».

Yet, this story — in particular its conclusion, which makes Tāklä Haymanot the «spiritual father» of Iyäsus Moʾa, the latter having had no monastic cap or scapular before — was emotionally refuted in another hagiography, the *Vita* of Iyäsus Moʾa. This work is considered to reflect the point of view of the monastic community of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos; it summarizes Tāklä Haymanot's biography, seeking to prove that the case was only that Tāklä Haymanot gave Iyäsus Moʾa the scapular. The same story is repeated, with some variants, in other hagiographic texts (the Waldəbba and Ḥayq recensions of the *Vita* of Tāklä Haymanot, the *Vita* of Zä-Mikaʾel Aräğawi), and mentioned in many other sources. As the most important of these texts were edited, the episode in question attracted considerable scholarly attention, mainly to the aim of reconstructing the sequence of developments and ascertaining which of the two holy monks, Tāklä Haymanot or Iyäsus Moʾa, held superiority concerning the parts of the monastic habit. Different interpretations of the story resulted in varying understandings of the roles Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa and Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos played in Ethiopian medieval church history. The question became even more delicate from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> cent., when Tāklä Haymanot, Iyäsus Moʾa and Zä-Mikaʾel Aräğawi were raised to symbols of Ethiopian Christianity by the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwäḥədo Church.

Summarizing the main points of the studies, one should note that, whereas the encounters of Tāklä Haymanot, Iyäsus Moʾa and Zä-Mikaʾel Aräğawi — the prominent 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup>-cent. monastic leaders — are generally thought to have been historical events, there is a commonly accepted view that hagiographical accounts must be approached critically and evaluated as both historical events and fictional products.<sup>14</sup> The prevailing tendency today is to refrain from the positivistic enquiry into the episode as described in the hagiographies (including the monastic investiture performed by the «spiritual son» Tāklä Haymanot upon his «spiritual father» Iyäsus Moʾa), and attempts to find out who precisely conferred particular parts of the monastic habit upon

<sup>14</sup> S. KAPLAN 1986; cp. E. Cerulli's remark in the preface to the *Vita* of Iyäsus Moʾa (KUR 1965:v–vi [tr.]): «Un cliché commun dans l'hagiographie éthiopienne sont les rencontres du saint dont on écrit la Vie, avec d'autres saints personnages de l'Église qui sont de la même époque ou plutôt qu'on peut vraisemblablement attribuer à la même époque» (cp., however, on the possible historical background of such episodes, CERULLI 1958:271). The establishment of the identities of the characters interacting with the protagonist of a *Vita* is thus a common subject of hagiographical. While pursuing this task, scholars define possible chronological and historical frames of the narrated events and establish the historical value of hagiographic accounts. In many cases, reports about encounters of holy monks can be counter-checked against other hagiographic traditions. The results, however, are different depending on the type of individual hagiographic work in question. Cp. the typology of such accounts in MARRASSINI 1981:xciii–c («incontri con personaggi del passato», «incontri con personaggi 'contemporanei' »).



whom, when and where.<sup>15</sup> One would rather prefer to consider this story as a reflection of a particular historical process, namely the rivalry between Däbrä Libanos of Säwa and Däbrä Ḥayq ʿĪṣṭifanos that started presumably some time after the death of both saints and left traces in their hagiographies, the episode in question being one of the main pieces of evidence. As a result, the accounts with that story have been carefully investigated in order to find the idea of (spiritual) superiority expressed therein that was thought to have been functional to earning and consolidating religious and political influence.<sup>16</sup> For the later period, the alleged rivalry is fitting with the political and religious context of the Gondärine kingdom, with the inner struggle of the «houses» of Täklä Haymanot and Ewostätewos.<sup>17</sup> The idea of the superiority of

<sup>15</sup> TADDESSE TAMRAT (1972:165 and n. 5) thinks that the story of Täklä Haymanot handing over the monastic cap and scapular to Iyäsus Moʿa is the result of an inconsistent usage of terminology and should not be given historical credibility. Monastic canons render it impossible that a disciple could perform the monastic investiture upon his spiritual father. In Taddesse's opinion, the system of the grades of monastic habit was introduced in Ethiopia at a later point: «It appears, however, that these rules of gradual investiture were of a relatively recent date»; in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> cent. the novice was supposed to assume the «monastic yoke» only once. Taddesse, pointing to the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arägawi as the central source, considers the episode in question to be partly a result of some sort of «confusion» and partly a kind of «literary invention» of the hagiographer, which was subsequently introduced into other hagiographic works: «This Däbrä Damo tradition seems to be the original source of all the controversy, and was apparently invented by an over-zealous scribe of the monastery to stress the historical fact that both Iyäsus-Moʿa and Täklä-Haymanot derived their monastic origin from the house of Abunä Arägawī» (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:166). It is remarkable that in his important study on the abbots of Däbrä Ḥayq ʿĪṣṭifanos, Taddesse does not discuss the episode, only characterizing the relevant passage of the Vita of Iyäsus Moʿa as a «highly polemical» one (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970:89, n. 13).

<sup>16</sup> As early as 1898, Vasilij Bolotov, the Russian historian of the Early Church, suggested that versions of the story concerning the spiritual relationship between Iyäsus Moʿa and Täklä Haymanot and their taking parts of the monastic habit reflect the historical changes in the position of the offices of *ʿaqqabe säʿat* and *əččäge* respectively (BOLOTOV 1898:195, n. 12). Cp. DERAT 2003:105: «La substitution progressive de Täklä Haymanot à Iyäsus Moʿa, dès le début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, est le signe que les communautés de ces deux saints étaient concurrentes... Il s'agit d'un affrontement entre les deux communautés monastiques, par texte interposé, à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> et au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle». Perhaps, the same view stands behind the statement in SIX 1975:27–31, esp. 29 and n. 50, where it is said that the head of Däbrä Ḥayq ʿĪṣṭifanos was invested with the title and office of *əččäge* already under the King ʿAmdä Šəyon I (1314–1344), which was transferred to the head of Däbrä Libanos during the reign of Zärʿa Yaʿəqob after 1445.

<sup>17</sup> M.-L. Derat came to the conclusion that different variants of the story in question reflect the early stage of the «rivalry» between Däbrä Libanos and Däbrä Ḥayq ʿĪṣṭifanos, the later being reflected in the *Bəʿälä Nägäšt*, the narrative about the reestab-

«the spiritual father» over his «son» can therefore be interpreted in terms of the actual — religious and administrative — submission of one monastic community to another. If applied to the case of Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šāwa, this concept provides, *a priori*, a well-structured picture for a long period of the Ethiopian church history.<sup>18</sup> It is clear, however, that the acceptance of one all-embracing model does not remove either the task of a comparative evaluation of all the pieces of evidence or the need to reveal and explain, as far as possible, all the contradictions and discrepancies between them.<sup>19</sup>

A closer look at Ethiopian hagiography reveals that monastic initiation is often featured in the biographical accounts of Ethiopian saints. However, in most cases hagiographers record the mere fact of the assumption of the monastic habit. While describing how the protagonist enters monastic life, they mention sometimes the monkish «tunic» or robe (*qāmīs*), more frequently girdle (*qənat*), «monastic cap» (*qob*<sup>c</sup>) and scapular (*askema*), or simply un-

lishment of the Solomonic dynasty (in which the role that originally belonged to *abba* Iyäsus Moʾa is taken over by Tāklä Haymanot: «one third of the kingdom», thought to have been previously promised to Däbrä Ḥayq, is promised to Däbrä Libanos), and is thus to be dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> cent. (DERAT 2003:97–98). A passage of the «monastic chronicle» of Däbrä Libanos (*Zena Däbrä Libanos*) is considered to be important in this connection, since it may present the core of the story to be later developed in the *Bəʿälä Nägäšt* (the account of Tāklä Haymanot's intervention in the political struggle and his intercession on behalf of Yəkunno Amalak), and contain allusions to the «testaments» in the Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa (ibid. 102–103). Regarding the episode under enquiry, M.-L. Derat encounters a difficulty since she accepts the dating suggested by E. Cerulli: «En effet, les actes du Iyäsus Moʾa datant de la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle apparaissent comme une réponse des auteurs des Ḥayq à ceux de Tāklä Haymanot rédigés au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Soit la réponse des auteurs de Ḥayq est postérieure à la rédaction de la Vie de Iyäsus Moʾa, et représente un remaniement de ce texte après le début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Soit, du côté de Däbrä Asbo/Libanos, la vie de Tāklä Haymanot a connu des versions intermédiaires entre le début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle et le début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans lesquelles le rattachement de Däbrä Asbo/Libanos à Däbrä Ḥayq fut d'abord affirmé, puis nuancé par l'épisode du *qob* et de l'*askéma*» (DERAT 2003:109; s. below).

<sup>18</sup> This interpretation of the episode with Tāklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Moʾa, with the subsequent conclusions concerning the relations between Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šāwa, would fit into the picture of the development of Ethiopian monastic movement as presented by E. CERULLI 1958:270–273.

<sup>19</sup> E. g., Turaev pointed out that the suggestion of Bolotov concerning the «rivalry» between the offices of *əččäge* and *ʿaqqabe säʿat* (s. above, n. 16) can not be fully supported by the evidence from the hagiographic tradition of Tāklä Haymanot: the early Waldäbba version of Tāklä Haymanot's Vita has the «controversial episode», whereas it is missing in the more recent Synaxarion note on Tāklä Haymanot, 24 *Nähase* (TURAIEV 1902:96).



specified monastic garb or clothes (*ləbsä/albasä/mälbäsä mənkwəsənnä* or *ar<sup>c</sup>utä* [lit. «yoke»] *mənkwəsənnä*).<sup>20</sup> Yet, the exact listing of all the *insignia* received by a saint in the course of his monastic career or the precise recording of respective bestowing rituals were not considered obligatory; in a few cases, the mention of the monastic initiation is missing altogether.<sup>21</sup> Hagiographers apparently wanted to attract more attention to the religious and ethical value of the monastic vow and ensue moral responsibilities and obligations. Consequently, most of the relevant episodes appear in the form of brief, loosely formalized hagiographic «common places», which only occasionally include more details.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> According to traditional sources, these are parts of the monastic habit and, at the same time, *insignia* designating the grades of the monastic profession, up to the *askema*, for the «perfect monk». The *qāmīs* is the traditional long shirt (or «tunic»), usually made of undyed material (cp. GUIDI 1901:248; cp. also *KBT* 359). The *qənat* is a rough leather (or fibre) belt but frequently nothing else but a simple rope (GUIDI 1901:283; cp. *KBT* 387). The *qob<sup>c</sup>* (Amharic: *qob*) is a round, flat-topped cap without brims, made of white or black material (GUIDI 1901:274; *KBT* 437; cp. an Amharic idiom *yäqob səm* «monastic name»). The *askema* consists of two leather strips hanging over the shoulders and crossed on the back and breast, with 12 small crosses hanging from it (GUIDI 1901:446; cp. *KBT* 729, s. «Askema»; «Clothing: Ecclesiastic» in: *EÆ* I, 373, 761–763). The term derives from Greek σχῆμα «habitus, species» (s. LESLAU 1987:43; cp. DILLMANN 1865:752), this clarifying the meaning of such term as *askema zämäla<sup>2</sup>əkt* — ἀγγελικὸν σχῆμα — «appearance [likeness] of angel». The *askema*-scapular symbolises the third, highest grade of the monastic profession, at which the monk reaches the highest degree of purity and obtains the «angelic nature» (cp. KAPLAN 1984:81–83; cp. HAMMERSCHMIDT 1962:221). All parts of the Ethiopian monkish apparel have parallels in other (Oriental) Christian traditions (cp. the similar composition of the monastic habit in the Byzantine *typika*, THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES HERO 2000, vol. 1, xxii).

<sup>21</sup> For the typology of this motive as presented in Ethiopian hagiography, s. Appendix, with examples from some 22 hagiographies.

<sup>22</sup> The terminology used there is, indeed, not quite consequent, yet the accounts are clear and transparent. There is seemingly no difference in the use of the term *ləbs* and its plural *albas*, which mean all the parts of the monastic habit together, with the exception of the scapular. The term *askema* (monkish, holy, angelic — *zämänäk<sup>w</sup>əsət*, *qəddəst*, *zämäla<sup>2</sup>əkt*) may appear as a potential source of uncertainty, referring to both the monastic life in general (as equivalent for *ar<sup>c</sup>utä mənkwəsənnä*) and the scapular as the highest («angelic») grade of the monastic profession in particular. In fact, the *askema* symbolizes the monastic profession and monastic life; «to take on the *askema*» may simply mean «to enter monastic life», but also «to assume the scapular [the angelic habit]». Yet in the sources the term *askema* is only ambiguous in a few cases (s. Appendix: Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus, Yəshaq/Gäräma, Libanos/Mätṭa<sup>c</sup>, Nine Saints in the Vita of Zä-Mika<sup>2</sup>el Arägawī). For a similar problem in Byzantine monastic documents s. THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES HERO 2000, vol. 1, 155, n. 1; cp. also the Coptic monastic rite, EVETTS 1906:64.

The attempts at regarding the hagiographic accounts of monastic consecration as reflections of a real practice lead to conclusions concerning the organization of the Ethiopian monastic institutions. The hierarchical order of monastic communities based on the three grades of the monastic profession does not appear to have been commonly accepted across Ethiopian monastic communities, because of the decentralised character of Ethiopian monasticism and the absence of a strong Church organization.<sup>23</sup> However, it can be assumed that the idea of the monastic investiture and the corresponding rituals could have been known in Ethiopia even before the re-establishment of the Solomonic line (ca. 1270).<sup>24</sup> From the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. onwards the gradual monastic investiture (this being nothing but the formal expression of the basic principle of the progressing spiritual contendings, shared by all monastic traditions) possibly gained wider circulation. The assumption of the girdle, tunic and «monastic cap» at one time and the scapular at another time would thus correspond to the custom of distinguishing between the «little habit» and the «great habit». However, a few hagiographies (among them those re-

<sup>23</sup> TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:165.

<sup>24</sup> The tradition of the book of monastic consecration rites known as *Ṣarʿatā Mənkʿəsənna* («Rule[s] of the Monasticism») or *Mäṣḥafä Mənkʿəsənna* («Book of the Monasticism»), preserved in many manuscripts, may well go back to the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. (cp. MSS EML 2093, 2168, 2272, 2459; HAMMERSCHMIDT — SIX 1983:197–198, no. 103; SIX 1989:73, no. 42; cp. a probably 15<sup>th</sup> cent. MS of the *Ṣarʿatā Mənkʿəsənna* from Däbrä Dammo, STRELCYN 1976:323–323, no. 131; cp. also for the same work MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, éth. 80, ZOTENBERG 1877:85, no. 79). The book could have also been composed at an earlier time (RICCI 1969a: 816–817). GRÉBAUT (1940) edited and translated the monastic rite after the 14<sup>th</sup>–/early 15<sup>th</sup>-cent. MS éth. 80 (ZOTENBERG 1877:85, no. 79; s. UHLIG 1988:287); though this *Ṣarʿatā Mənkʿəsənna* is not complete, there are chapters devoted to the ritual of cutting the hairs of the novice (GRÉBAUT 1940:227) and the prayer over the monastic garb (መልበስ, ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ወጋጋጥጥ : ካበበ : መልበስ : ወጋጥጥ : ወጋጥጥ..., ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the *askema* is unfortunately missing. The *Ṣarʿatā mənkʿəsənna* in MS EML 1950 (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> cent., Däbrä Ḥayq ʿEsfanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ወእመብ : ዘፈቀደ : ይልበስ : አስኬማ : ዘውእቱ : ልብስ : ምንኩስ...) should spend a year of probation in the monastery, with the monks, his conduct and qualities being carefully studied and checked by the community. The probationer himself must consider the seriousness of his intention concerning the assumption of «the holy *askema*» (አስኬማ : ቅድስት) — the monastic habit. There is a description of the monastic initiation ritual: when the probationer is found worthy of becoming a monk (after the time of probation is over, and only if he has reached the age of 40 years!), the monastic rules are read to him (fol. 1vb). Then, at night, he is taken to the altar, here the ritual of the assumption of the «vestment of *askema*» (ልብስ : አስኬማ) being performed over the novice (ፈድኦ) by his «spiritual father».

lated to the tradition of Däbrä Libanos) clearly speak of the separate assumption of the scapular, whereas the majority of the sources do not, proving to be indifferent to the question. On the whole, the sources produce no substantial evidence on the introduction of the strict «twofold» monastic consecration as a result of «reforms»,<sup>25</sup> though it is known that active attempts to reorganize some spheres of monastic life did take place. At the same time, hagiographies reflect a range of different attitudes to the «monastic career» in general.<sup>26</sup>

With regards to the Ethiopian monastic tradition as reflected by hagiography, one can not say that the current monastic practice basically disagrees with the information originating from the sources.<sup>27</sup> At the same time there are same obvious discrepancies which are not easy to explain. For instance, it has been repeatedly reported that, especially in the countryside, the mode of clothing of clergy and monks hardly differs from that of laymen; a distinctive feature of the monk or priest, besides the cap (*qob*), may be the turban (*maṭṭamṭamiya*), and for monks, of course, the cloak or «mantle» made of crude dry sheepskin (Gəʿəz: *ḥamelat* or *meloṭo*, Amharic: *däbälo*), the last two items excluded from the monastic ritual and rarely appearing in hagiographies.<sup>28</sup> However, at least in contemporary Ethiopian monastic practice,

<sup>25</sup> Repetition of the ritual would raise concern about its «desacralisation». In Byzantine monastic tradition, e. g., there was a controversy about the «duplication» of the assumption of the monastic habit, which some monastic leaders considered unacceptable like the repetition of Baptism; consequently, they rejected the distinction in the monastic dress: S. THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES HERO 2000, vol. 1, 78; 155, n. 1, 2; vol. 2, 1203.

<sup>26</sup> They were not always only positive. In fact, in many hagiographic accounts hermits appear as «spiritual athletes» (like *abba* Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus) who supersede cenobitical monks in asceticism, miraculous power and sanctity. Hermits did not always seek complete separation from the cenobitical communities but frequently kept up relations with them; the hermitic way has been fully recognized as an honourable way of ascetic life, more difficult than the that in the community. E.g., in Waldäbba, a monk could become a hermit and be separated from the community only if the abbot decided that he was experienced enough and ready to continue the ascetic life alone. In order to become a hermit, a monk would not need to assume the scapular (on the contrary, hermits were supposed to reject a formal recognition of their spiritual merits). Having settled in a deserted place, a hermit would stay in complete isolation and seldom appear in the community. Some hermits never leave their abodes; however, they are sometimes helped by younger monks (GIRMA ELYAS 1977: 110–113). In Ethiopia, hermitic life has always exercised an immense attraction, its followers being revered by both laymen and ecclesiastics (yet, they were sometimes at odds with representatives of the official Church hierarchy).

<sup>27</sup> Cp., e. g., RICCI 1969–1970: 144–145; VAN DE WEYER 1973.

<sup>28</sup> On *ḥamelat/meloṭo*, which is considered to be the traditional clothing of both the monks and wandering students seeking for the education in church and monastic schools, s. DILLMANN 1865: 71, KWK 449. Cp. *EÆ* I, 761–763: those monks who re-

the assumption of the scapular (the highest grade of the monastic profession) though formally quite important, is implemented only in rare cases<sup>29</sup> — in spite of the fact that the service books provide a full set of relevant rituals, well known to, and much revered by, Ethiopian monks. It is possible that the early assumption of the scapular as described in many hagiographic works should be understood as a sign of the extraordinariness and sanctity of the *vitas'* protagonists (and be ascribed, thus, to the «imaginary world» of the hagiography): a saint need neither many years of ascetic exercises to reach the «angelic nature», nor should he wait many years for the scapular to be conferred upon him;<sup>30</sup> even the period of probation and noviciate appears very short or even non-existent. As in the past, the institution of the «spiritual fatherhood» is also vivid today: the senior monk who initiates a novice into monastic life remains his «spiritual father» and actively participates in the «spiritual upbringing» of his «son» (while the latter maintains warm attitude to the former for many years), yet his advising concerns matters of spiritual life and is not binding, especially when his pupil matures and moves to another place.

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ceived the sacerdotal consecration can carry hand-crosses, as priests do. In the sources one can find references to the lack of acknowledged standards in monastic clothing, cp. the most valuable notes by Almeida, in: *Historia Aethiopiae*, ed. by C. Beccari, Roma 1907, book II, ch. XVIII, 195–200. There are also mentions of the yellow robes or cloaks worn by some monks (s. BECKINGHAM — HUNTINGFORD 1961:126, 424), a custom preserved, e. g., in Waldəbba monasteries, and currently followed also by monks of Däbrä Libanos (Šäwa) and some other communities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> cent., there were some attempts at standardizing (and «modernizing») of the clothing of the ecclesiastics and monks.

<sup>29</sup> S., e. g., RICCI 1969–1970:144–145, CHAILLOT 2002:154–157.

<sup>30</sup> Quite the opposite to the living monastic tradition. According to the rules of Däbrä Abrāntant, one of the monasteries of Waldəbba, a candidate for the scapular should be elected among old monks of the community. He must be renown for his piety, virtue, knowledge and other merits. He had to spend a long time living as a monk and being an example of perfect ascetism (in particular, abstaining from meat and sleeping in a bed). Due to his age and way of life, he was expected to stay most of the time within his community; he could offer spiritual teaching, but he had to abstain from participation in any other active work, especially in administrative matters (BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1971:108–115). As local tradition reports, during the entire history of Waldəbba Abrāntant only four monks have assumed the scapular (though honourable monks were numerous). The first was 14<sup>th</sup>-cent. Samu'el of Waldəbba, who is considered to be the founder of Abrāntant (the scapular was reportedly conferred upon him by Mādhaninā ʿĒgzi' in Däbrä Bānkʷal; the Vita of Samu'el, however, relates that he assumed from Mādhaninā ʿĒgzi' the clothes [*albas*], the girdle [*qanāt*] and the monastic cap [*qobʿ*], s. TURAIEV 1902a:2), while the others were three prominent superiors of the community. Abba Gäbrä ʿĒgzi'abəḥer Täsämma was the last one to receive the scapular at Däbrä Dammo, in the late 1960s (BÄRIHUN KÄBBÄDÄ 1971:109).

Historically, the issues of strict distinction between the grades of monastic profession, the standartization of everyday monastic vestments and their distinction from the clothes of laymen, were certainly not a crucial point in Ethiopian monastic discourse; it is, however, quite natural that, regarding the question of garments, local Ethiopian tradition put emphasis on some other specific points.<sup>31</sup> As to the hierarchy within the monasteries, this certainly existed in any Ethiopian cenobitical community, though its formalization (also by means of the parts of the monastic habit) may have happened only in a few cases — when it was required, e. g., by the growth of the monastery and by the need of organizing the religious and economical activities of a great number of monks. Ethiopia was famous for its numerous monasteries, but most of them, including the well-established and influential ones, had comparatively small communities.<sup>32</sup> Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, being among the few excep-

<sup>31</sup> While the Bible and extensive monastic literature (*Mäṣṣāḥəftä Mänäkosat*) provided the religious, ascetic and ritual foundation for Ethiopian monasticism, the local tradition had a specific appearance. It is from this point of view that one should consider the notable remark by J. Simon concerning the so-called Ethiopic *Regulae Pachomii* (DILLMANN 1866:57–69 [HAMMERSCHMIDT 1988]): «On ne peut citer aucun monastère éthiopien qui ait été organisé selon la “Règle de S. Pachôme”» (SIMON 1941 [HAMMERSCHMIDT 1988]:301). While two of the three parts of these «Regulations», where a lot is said on the role of the monastic garb, were translated during the Axumite period (LUSINI 1997:54–55, n. 16–20), and the «Regulations» certainly exercised influence on the life in Ethiopian monasteries, attested collections of genuine Ethiopian monastic regulations are deeply rooted in the local reality and focus on quite different points (ibid. 55). Cp., e. g., the regulations (from the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>-cent. manuscript, compiled at an unknown monastery) containing a paragraph about the vestments expressing concerns different from the *Regulae Pachomii* (ibid. 57–60; «Ancora, il §2 contempla soltanto la pelle di capra come elemento specifico del vestito monastico, probabilmente per sottolineare come quello più degli altri sia l'autentico segno di riconoscimento del monaco», ibid., 58–59); cp. also concerns expressed in the «rules» of *abba* Nabyud (BEYLOT 1974:1, 16–17). Concerns of leaders of local communities should have focused on the simplicity of clothes, or avoidance of outspoken inequality among monks in this respect (e. g., as a repercussion of their different social background), or the amassing property by individuals, etc. Certainly, a substantial degree of disagreement between what is written/prescribed in the books and what is implemented in the real life is characteristic of the Ethiopian monastic tradition, as of any other (e. g., the Coptic monastic rite includes rituals for both the «little» and «great habits», but cp. EVETTS 1906:65: «Aujourd'hui les moines égyptiens ne portent que des tuniques noires et turban de même couleur sur une calotte, comme les prêtres séculiers»).

<sup>32</sup> It seems that the population of most monastic communities did not exceed a few dozens of brothers (like those noted by Alvares, s. BECKINGHAM — HUNTINGFORD 1961:175, 185). Ethiopian sources hold witness to a few larger monastic communities; cp., a valuable description of the Ewostätean monastic organization in Zär'a Ya'eqob's *Mäṣṣāḥəftä Bərhan*, which reports that in three nunneries affiliated to Däbrä

tions, is reported to have had a population of no less than one hundred monks or many more over a long period of time. For the early 16<sup>th</sup> cent. — shortly before the monastery was destroyed by Aḥmad Grañ — there are some pieces of evidence that the community was hierarchically organised according to the monastic grades, and the bestowing rites for the parts of the monastic habit were established and duly performed.<sup>33</sup>

## II

There is no doubt that the value of the story's versions as presented in the hagiographic texts mentioned above is different for each of them. It is usually assumed that the hagiographers, more or less consciously, used their works for expressing their ideology and asserting the claims of their respective communities. However, one should not forget that this was just one — and possibly not even predominant — of the many functions at work in hagiographic texts. When compiling a new *Vita*, the hagiographer hardly distinguished those passages in the text which would serve as his monastic community's «credo» or «proclamation»; however, he maintained the same «literary devices» throughout the work. In addition to the passages he penned himself, the hagiographer used elements he borrowed, directly or indirectly, from both oral and written sources, which he could re-interpret and/or revise.

Bizān there were 1146 nuns (CONTI ROSSINI — RICCI 1965:150). This information, however, refers to the peak of the Ewostatean movement; the number of monks decreased in the early 16<sup>th</sup> cent. (cp. BECKINGHAM — HUNTINGFORD 1961:88–90); currently there is no trace of a large monastic settlement there. There are some other reports on monastic settlements with hundreds and even thousands of monks (cp. GIRMA ELYAS 1977:101; BECKINGHAM — HUNTINGFORD 1961:201). Even if these reports are trustworthy, big communities could not persist for long, since they would quickly exhaust the ecological resources of the region and would be vulnerable to epidemics and military conflicts (for the population in Byzantine monasteries, and approximate statistics comparable to the Ethiopian situation [notwithstanding the important cultural, social and economical differences!], s. THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES HERO 2000, vol. 1, XVI–XVII).

<sup>33</sup> Almeida, in: *Historia Aethiopiae*, ed. by C. Beccari, Roma 1907, book II, ch. XVIII, 196–200. Almeida mentions those who assumed «the great habit» — the scapular; he also reports of an exceptionally lengthy probation period (7 years). A monk could assume the scapular only after he had assumed other parts of the habit (some assumed only the tunic first, and the monastic cap later), only if he reached the age of 30 years and fulfilled another period of probation. It seems that the community of Däbrä Libanos retains, to the great extent, the old organisation: it consists of probationers (*ardaʾət*, sg. *rädəʾ*) who are waiting for being accepted into the monastery, junior monks (*nəʾusan*, sg. *nəʾus*), senior monks (*aʿərug*), and «perfect monks» (lit. «saints», *qəddusan*, sg. *qəddus*; s. *ACDic* IV, 142–156; for the term, s. also RICCI 1966:77 and 93, n. 174; RICCI 1969–70:145).



Thus, understanding the message of a hagiographic account would mean, to a great extent, disentangling the process of its emergence, the task being distinct from, though parallel to, establishing the work's textual history within the framework of a critical edition.<sup>34</sup> Let us therefore discuss each of the most important traditions that relate the story in question, in chronological order.

<sup>34</sup> Even though I have already expressed my view concerning the hagiographic tradition of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot on several occasions, I would like to summarize here the most crucial points. It is generally accepted that the hagiographic tradition of the Vita consists of four recensions. 1) The Synaxarion note on 24 *Nähase*, the day of Täklä Haymanot's death, is represented by at least two text-types: the old one (GUIDI 1912:377–383, the text from the MS «P»), and the more recent one (ibid. 1912:474–476, «Appendice»; cp. BUDGE 1928:1241–46). 2) The Waldäbba recension, only preserved in two copies (one of them, MS éth. 136, from Bibliothèque nationale de France, dates possibly into the 15<sup>th</sup> cent.) has the reign of Yəṣṣṣaq (1414–1429) as its *terminus post quem*. It can not fully be excluded that this work does not date from an even earlier period, since King Yəṣṣaq is not mentioned in the main body of the text, but in the «Miracles», which could be attached to the Vita somewhat later. 3) The best-known recension of the Vita is the Däbrä Libanos version (BUDGE 1906), compiled around 1515 by the initiative of ፳፻፳፻፻ ፆፆፆፆ. This recension is represented by two text-types: the original one and its slightly reworked and much more recent variant (the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> cent.; cp. NOSNITZYN 2000). 4) There is a number of definitively interrelated texts — their archetype remains to be reconstructed — which precede the recension of Däbrä Libanos and were incorporated into it. The so-called Ḥayq recension (the critical edition of which I am currently preparing) owes its name to MS EMMML 1834, a 16<sup>th</sup>-cent. *Gädlä Qəddusan* from Däbrä Ḥayq ፳፻፻፻፻, the hagiographic collection with the Acts of Täklä Haymanot differing from both the Waldäbba and Däbrä Libanos recensions (see Getatchew Haile's description of EMMML 1834, 2134). MS EMMML 8742, from ፐፐፐፐ ፆፆፆፆ (not catalogued, accessible only in the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa), contains a text of the same type as EMMML 1834, though with substantial differences. EMMML 1834 seems to represent an abridged version (typical for a work included into a collection of texts), with a few new passages (in some cases the influence of the Däbrä Libanos recension can not be excluded) of the same text as in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éth. 342 = Griaule 38 (late 15<sup>th</sup> cent., s. GRÉBAUT 1941:18–20), to which 16<sup>th</sup>-cent. or older MS ፐፐፐፐፐ 162 = Däḡä ፳፻፻፻፻ 51 (SIX 1999:202–206) is identical. A suggestion concerning the dating of this text, designated as «the 1<sup>st</sup> Däbrä Libanos recension», ca. 1425–1426, was made on the basis of Éth. 697, another text related to Éth. 342 (s. DERAT 1998:77; for the internal evidence pointing to a slightly more recent time, i. e. to the early reign of Zär'a Ya'eqob, s. NOSNITSIN 2003:149, n. 40). The brief version of the Synaxarion recension of the Vita appears to be one of the oldest hagiographic documents about Täklä Haymanot and most probably antedates both the Ḥayq and the Däbrä Libanos recensions; this text was the basic source for the compiler of the Ḥayq recension (s. NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming). After the Däbrä Libanos recension was composed, but before 1532, the Homilies on the annu-

In Waldəbba recension of the Vita of Tāklä Haymanot, the account of the Saint's visit to (Däbrä) Ḥayq is included in the sequence of events which took place when the saint was wandering in northern Ethiopia. According to this recension, Tāklä Haymanot decided to adopt the «monkish yoke» (አርዑተ : ምንነትስና) after he was consecrated priest and distinguished himself while converting the people into Christianity. Thus, Tāklä Haymanot went to Angot and reached Lake Ḥayq (ሐይቀ : ባሕር), where he received the monastic habit (indiscriminately denoted here as «monastic clothes»: አልባሶ : አልባስ : ምንነትስና) from Iyäsus Mo'a. After nine years, having received blessing from Iyäsus Mo'a, he moved (ፈለሰ) to Təgray and received the monastic cap and scapular at Däbrä Dammo (the name of the superior is not mentioned). The account states that in Təgray Tāklä Haymanot introduced many people into monastic life (አመንኩስ : ብዙኃን) and built/ founded many monasteries. On his way back to Sewa (Šäwa), Tāklä Haymanot visited Ḥayq where the notorious conversation with Iyäsus Mo'a took place. The superior asked his pupil what he had on his head; having learnt that this is the «perfect order» of the monastic habit (ፍጹም : ሥርዓተ : ምንነትስና), he asked Tāklä Haymanot to give him both the monastic cap and the scapular, and the latter fulfilled his teacher's request.<sup>35</sup>

The perception of the Waldəbba recension as the early stage in the development of the hagiographic legend of Tāklä Haymanot (which may have been «only» 120–140 years apart from the events it described) is important for understanding the episode. The hagiographer did not try to adapt the account to any literary model,<sup>36</sup> being perhaps not skilled or knowledgeable

al holidays of the Saint and three respective collections of the Miracles were attached to the Vita. «The Book of the Translation of the Body of Tāklä Haymanot», which is usually found in the MSS with the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita, represents a still separate tradition (s. NOSNITSIN 2003).

<sup>35</sup> CONTI ROSSINI 1896:107–108 (text), 133–134 (tr.), from: ወሐለየ : ካዕበ : ከመ : ይንግእ : አርዑተ : ምንነትስና... till the well-known passage: ወይቤሎ : አቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : እፎ : እክል : አነ : ውሃቦተከ : እንዘ : አቡየ : አንተ : አአባ :: ወይቤሎ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : እንዘ : አንተ : ወልድየ : በዝሰ : ኩነኒ : አበ :: ወሶበ : አገበሮ : ወሀቦ : አባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ለአቡሁ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ቆብዐ : ወአስኬማ : ወተሰናአዉ : በበይናቲሆሙ : ጸሎቶሙ : የሀሉ : ምስሌነ : አሜን :: Remarking another «episodio di grandissima importanza», Conti Rossini (ibid., 133, n. 1) gives in the footnote, as elsewhere, the contents of the corresponding passage from Manuel de Almeida's resumé of the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita; for this purpose Conti Rossini used a copy of the work received through M. Esteves Pereira (ibid., 102; originating, most probably, from an MS of the National Library, Lisbon, cp. ESTEVES PEREIRA 1899:6, n. 6).

<sup>36</sup> It can not be excluded, however, that the author «reversed» 1 Par. 17:12 (the words God addressed to King David through the Prophet Natan) «I will be his father, and he shall be my son (and I will not take my mercy away from him...)», according to the standard Ethiopic Bible: ወአነ : እከውኖ : አበወ : ውእቱኒ : ይከውነኒ : ወልድየ (cp. also 1 Par. 22:10).

enough to put the narrative into a more elaborate literary shape, or simply having no intention to do so. Thus, in the Waldəbba recension the account has neither literary decorative elements nor, seemingly, ideological implications, and may have a direct link to the oral legend, as attested by the frank and somewhat naïve expression of astonishment and admiration in the words Iyāsus Moʿa directed to his own pupil: «Oh my son! What is it on your head, and what is on your neck?!», and the following: «Give me the (thing) that is similar to what I see on your neck, for it is nice!»<sup>37</sup>

The Synaxarion commemoration of Tāklā Haymanot on 24 *Näḥase* (in its «short version») differs from the Waldəbba recension of the Vita of the Saint. While reporting that Tāklā Haymanot had only one spiritual teacher — Bāšālotā Mikaʿel of Amḥara (s. above, n. 7), it does not mention whether Tāklā Haymanot received from him any separate part of the monastic habit.<sup>38</sup> This story was incorporated into the hagiographic legend of Tāklā Haymanot as a stable element and appears in other recensions of the Vita, its variations being developed from the common narrative core: Tāklā Haymanot stayed in the monastic community of Bāšālotā Mikaʿel for a long time (the Synaxarion: ብዙኃ : መዋዕል) and was introduced into the monastic life; yet neither version says that he received there either monkish robe, or monastic cap and scapular.<sup>39</sup>

The Ḥayq (/«1<sup>st</sup> Dabrā Libanos») recension as transmitted in MS Éth. 342 = Griaule 38 and a few other manuscripts<sup>40</sup> presents the story of Tāklā Hay-

<sup>37</sup> One may get an impression of a somewhat «anecdotal» character of the account, which in this sense appears to be unique and differs from both hagiographic accounts and reality: it is hardly possible that monastic cap and scapular could be adopted in such a simplified way and without appropriate rituals (still another feature of an oral account?). Curiously, the account implicates that Tāklā Haymanot was «deprived», in fact, of his monastic cap and scapular, which he had to give to his spiritual teacher. Most probably, in this case we should assume that, to a certain extent, this passage of the Waldəbba recension remains a mystery — we still have no proper understanding of the message conveyed in the episode. So far I have found no similar stories in other hagiographic sources that could facilitate the analysis.

<sup>38</sup> At the same time, the Synaxarion reports that, in Wägda, Tāklā Haymanot «gave the monastic garb» (ወክልበሶሙ : አልባሰ : ምንክሰና) to his first 17 disciples (GUIDI 1912:382).

<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, the reliability of this account is difficult to assess against what is said in the Waldəbba recension of the Vita (it looks a little unusual that a novice could spend a considerable number of years in the monastic community while receiving no part of the monastic habit; in fact, we can only speculate why in one case it is Iyāsus Moʿa, in another Bāšālotā Mikaʿel); on the other hand, this «lacuna» inspired other hagiographers to «fill» it with different personalities — spiritual teachers — who overshadowed Bāšālotā Mikaʿel (s. NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming).

<sup>40</sup> Apart from MS Éth. 342 = Griaule 38, I was able to check MS Ṭānāsee 162 = Dāgā Ešṭifanos 51; furthermore, MS Éth. 697 (s. French translation in DUCHESNE-FOURNET 1908, vol. 1, 338–440), though recent (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> cent.?) and copied with omissions and mistakes, contains the same variant of the story.

manot's stay at Däbrä Ḥayq ʾĪṣṭifanos as a lengthy and detailed account containing much more information than the Waldäbba recension (the latter was obviously unknown to the author). Apparently following the Synaxarion note, the text reports that Tāklä Haymanot entered the community of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel (neither its name nor its location are designated), asking Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel to educate him in the «monastic custom(s)» (ግብረ : ምንኩስና). Yet neither here nor further on does the text mention any separate part of the habit as symbols of the grades of monastic profession, though it does touch upon some topics related to regulations of monastic life.<sup>41</sup> After a long stay with Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel, Tāklä Haymanot proceeds to Däbrä Ḥayq ʾĪṣṭifanos and remains there for 10 years, before returning to his native Säwa (Ṣäwa). In general, the text in MS Éth. 342 = Griaule 38 does not add anything special to the episode in question.<sup>42</sup> The account is enriched with hagiographic «common places» on the endurance of the Saint in fasting and praying, his miraculous walking on the water, etc.

<sup>41</sup> The account about Tāklä Haymanot's life in the monastery of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel is lengthy (MS Éth. 342, fol. 89vb–97ra), very dynamic and full of developments. In the scene of the first conversation between Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel and Tāklä Haymanot, the hagiographer raises an important topic concerning the monastic discipline, namely, the move from one monastic community to another. Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel states that a monk should ask his superior (*mamhər*) for permission if he wants to leave his community and move to another one; otherwise the head of any other community may not accept him, under the threat of «excommunication» (ግዛት; MS Éth. 342, fol. 89vb–90rb). This statement certainly reflects the constant intention of the monastic elite to prevent the uncontrolled wandering of monks (cp. KAPLAN 1984:49); however, the request of Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel as presented in the Ḥayq recension — to hear the words of Tāklä Haymanot's *mamhər* confirm what Tāklä Haymanot said — appears to be a literary device «repairing» the inconsistency of the legend concerning Tāklä Haymanot's initial receiving of the monastic garb. Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel accepted Tāklä Haymanot as «a monk from the country of Sewa» (the monk with whom Tāklä Haymanot travelled was also convinced that he was a monk), though the latter has virtually not entered the monastic profession yet. However, Tāklä Haymanot tells that it was his *māmḥər* who sent him to Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel to learn the monastic life, while the Holy Spirit confirms his words. Though the language of the passage is somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that Tāklä Haymanot virtually had no spiritual teacher; so the Holy Spirit orders Bäṣälotä Mikaʾel to «make him a monk» (...አመንኩሶ : መመህሮ : ግብረ : ምንኩስና), whereas the question of the assumption of the monastic habit remains without clear answer.

<sup>42</sup> It only reports that Iyäsus Moʿa received Tāklä Haymanot well and offered him a «dwelling» (መመህሮ : ማግደረ, MS Éth. 342, fol. 98ra); the account about Tāklä Haymanot's stay at Däbrä Ḥayq ʾĪṣṭifanos is very brief (fol. 97rb–100va), its major portion being of a didactic treatise inspired by Mt. 25 (fol. 98ra–vb). Occasionally, the text refers to the monastic habit (ልብስ : ምንኩስና) that Tāklä Haymanot took upon his nephew Marqos, «his brother, the son of his father's brother in the flesh» (fol. 100va: እኀብሁ : ወልደ : እኀወ : አብሁ : በሥጋ) in Wägda (s. NOSNITSIN 2006, forth-

The text preserved in the 15<sup>th</sup>-cent. MS EMMI 8742 from Ṭana Qirqos represents a source of particular value, unfolding a version of the story as possibly related and perceived in the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. by the monks of Ṭana communities. According to MS EMMI 8742, too, Tāklä Haymanot spent a number of years at the place of Bāšälötä Mikaʾel, without the formal assumption of the monastic habit.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, the angel told him to go to Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos, where Iyäsus Moʾa was supposed to vest him with «the monastic yoke» (አርዑተ : ምንነትስና). Tāklä Haymanot went to Ḥayq, did not find a boat, and stood praying untill Archangel Michael appeared, walking on the surface of the water (fol. 35rb), and urging Tāklä Haymanot to follow.<sup>44</sup> Here, at Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos, Iyäsus Moʾa vested Tāklä Haymanot with the monastic garb, obviously completing the ritual of the monastic consecration.<sup>45</sup> After some time, Tāklä Haymanot decided to visit other monasteries,<sup>46</sup> and,

coming). The absence of certain details concerning the «monastic career» of the Saint might have been later considered as an inconsistency, leading to attempts at «correcting» the legend: e.g., in recent MS Éth. 627, fol. 137, Tāklä Haymanot is reported to have acquired the scapular from Bāšälötä Mikaʾel.

<sup>43</sup> Tāklä Haymanot is called by God «to adopt the monastic habit of the fathers» (ተጽዕኖ : እምነብ : እግዚአብሔር : ከመ : ይንሣእ : ምንነትስና : ዘአበው : ቅዱሳን, fol. 31va), the name of the place he is supposed to go to is not indicated. When he comes to a monastery, he is accommodated by a monk. The following day, the *abä mənēt* of the place, *abba* Bāšälötä Mikaʾel, is informed about the new-comer and asks him to come (fol. 31rv: ብእሲ : እንግዳ : ይፈቅድ : ይንሣእ : በረከተከ). When Tāklä Haymanot enters, Bāšälötä Mikaʾel stands up, greets him and kisses his head (fol. 32ra ... ወናይ : ምጽአትከ : ኅቤዩ : አቅዱስ : ለእግዚአብሔር : በከመ : ነገረኒ : መንፈስ : ቅዱስ : በ[fol. 32rb]ዛቲ : ሰዓት); Bāšälötä Mikaʾel questions Tāklä Haymanot, since «this is the custom of the wise» (fol. 32rb... እስመ : ልማዶሙ : ለጠቢባን : ከማሁ : ወእቱ...), Bāšälötä Mikaʾel allows Tāklä Haymanot to stay with him, yet nothing is said about the assumption of a monastic habit. Tāklä Haymanot serves in the community doing every kind of work (32vb: ወእኀዘ : ይትለእክ : ውስተ : ግብረ : ማኅረጽ : ወይቀድሕ : ማየ...), here the narration being interrupted by biblical quotations (Mt. 20:28; Phil. 2:3–9). Then the contendings of Tāklä Haymanot are described (fol. 33rb–va), including him healing a man possessed by a demon (ብእሲ : ዘጋኔን; fol. 33va–34rb). Finally, Tāklä Haymanot is displeased by fame (fol. 34va).

<sup>44</sup> Tāklä Haymanot and Archangel Michael reach the church of the monastery; there follows a complex account on how Iyäsus Moʾa learnt about Tāklä Haymanot's arrival, how the key-keeper (ዓፃዊ) informed him about the coming of a guest (እንግዳ) and let Tāklä Haymanot enter (fol. 35va–36ra, s. below).

<sup>45</sup> Fol. 36ra: ወእምዝ : ሰአሎ : ቅዱስ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ለአብ : መንፈሳዊ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : እንዘ : ይብል : አልብሰኒ : አ(fol. 36rb)ርአያ : ምንነትስና : ብርሃናዊተ : ወጸለዩ : ሳዕለ : ልብሰ : ወአልብሶ : ልብሰ : ምንነትስና :: ወነበረ : ህዩ : በጸማ : ወበድካም... This passage is followed by the description of Tāklä Haymanot's ascetic life at Däbrä Ḥayq and his celestial travel to Paradise (ገነት), where he saw the «mysteries» (fol. 36va–37ra).

<sup>46</sup> Fol. 37rb: አድባረ : ቅዱሳተ : ወሕርማተ : ምንነት[ስ]ና : መልእክታዊት.

having crossed Lake Ḥayq by walking on the water once again, he went further and reached Däbrä Dammo. Here, at «the place of Arägawi», he took on the monastic cap and scapular,<sup>47</sup> the name of the superior — Tāklä Haymanot's spiritual father — not being mentioned.<sup>48</sup> After the description of Tāklä Haymanot's contendings at Däbrä Dammo and an extensive praise of him, there follows a note on Tāklä Haymanot's travelling around Däbrä Dammo and back to Sewa (Säwa), via Däbrä Ḥayq,<sup>49</sup> and — the most important matter — the note concerning the parts of the monastic habit received by Iyäsus Mo'a from his spiritual son Tāklä Haymanot, with a striking statement: «...And many of our elders told that our father Iyäsus Mo'a took the (monastic) cap and scapular from his (spiritual) son Tāklä Haymanot».<sup>50</sup> The passage on fol. 39va recalls the Waldäbba recension of the Vita;<sup>51</sup> and it is remarkable that the hagiographer refers to an oral tradition (ወዜነውን : አዕሩግ : ብዙኃን...) — not to the «old writings» — as to his source.

The most remarkable thing is that the same version of the story is found in a copy of the work produced at Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos — late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup>-cent. MS EML 1834 — the text that gave name for the entire recension<sup>52</sup>. This text repeats the entire passage narrating the «monastic career» of Tāklä Hamynanot as it appears in MS EML 8742 (including what the «elders told» of Iyäsus Mo'a's assumption of the monastic cap and scapular). There are some differences which probably reveal the virtual considerations of the hagiographer: e. g., in EML 1834 the phrase ተጸውዓ : እምነበ : እግዚአብሔር : ከመ : ይንሣእ : ሥርዓተ : ምንኩስና : ዘአበው : ቅዱሳን... (s. above, n. 43) appears before the account of Tāklä Haymanot's stay at Ḥayq, in order to show that his «monastic career» developed in the proper way: according to the legend, indeed, Tāklä Haymanot was formally initiated into monastic life at Däbrä Ḥayq,<sup>53</sup> not in the community of Bāšälötä Mika'el.

<sup>47</sup> This note comes after the praise of Arägawi and the Nine Saints (እሉ : እሙንቱ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃን : ዘአዋከዩ : ኩሉ : አድያማተ : ኢትዮጵያ..., fol. 37vb–38ra).

<sup>48</sup> Fol. 38ra: ወአቡነስ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ብፁዓይ : በሆነ : ነሥአ : ቆብዓ : ወአስኬማ : ኅበ : መካነ : አረጋዊ : ዘከርነ : ቀዳሚ ::

<sup>49</sup> Fol. 39va: ወብፁዓስ : አቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : አደ : አድያማተ : ኩሉ : ትግራይ : ወምኔታት : ወጉንደየ : በሆነ : እንዘ : ይገብር : ተአምራተ : ወመንክራተ : በከመ : ልማዱ : ወወለደ : ደቂቀ : ዘመንፈስ : በምህሮ : ወበምንኩስና : ወበሆነ : ነበረ : በብ(39vb)ሕታዊ :: ወኢያጥረዩ : ደቂቀ : ምኔታተ : ወአስከ : ይእዜ : ይሰመዩ : በስሙ ::

<sup>50</sup> Fol. 40ra: (ወበእንተዝ : ግብር : ተመይጦ : ውስተ : ሐይቅ : ኅበ : አቡሁ : መንፈሳዊ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ ::) ወዜነውን : አዕሩግ : ብዙኃን : ከመ : ነሥአ : አቡነ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ቆብዓ : ወአስኬማ : እምወልዱ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : አቡነ : አመ : ተመይጦ : እምዳሞ :: ወእም(fol. 40rb)ድኅረ : ጌንደየ : ፈነዎ : ብሔረ : ሴዋ...

<sup>51</sup> CONTI ROSSINI 1896:107–108 (text), 133–134 (tr.).

<sup>52</sup> S. EML 1834, fol. 93rb–100rb; here fol. 100va.

<sup>53</sup> S. EML 1834, fol. 99rb.



Like EMM 8742, EMM 1834 refers to two spiritual fathers of the saint (አቡ-ሁ : መንፈሳዊ): an unknown monk of Dābrā Dammo and Iyāsus Moʿa of Dābrā Ḥayq.<sup>54</sup>

The question of how the hagiographic tradition explains the strange story of Tāklā Haymanot giving the monastic cap and scapular to his spiritual father makes it necessary to examine the traditions of Dābrā Dammo. The Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arägawi appears to be the most important source.<sup>55</sup> The passage which is usually referred to in connection with the analyzed episode is not included in the description of the life of Zä-Mikaʿel. It is found in a brief history of the community of Dābrā Dammo — attached to the biography of the Saint. In turn, this history is not a homogeneous text: it encompasses several different (predominantly historiographic) pieces, mostly following the sequence of the abbots of Dābrā Dammo — from Matyas to Zä-Iyāsus. The narration concerning the tenure of *abba* Yoḥanni — the seventh after Zä-Mikaʿel — is composed of two notes. The first reports the construction of a church; the second refers to two prominent monastic leaders visiting Dābrā Ḥayq — Iyāsus Moʿa and Tāklā Haymanot.<sup>56</sup> The account obviously follows the chronology of events: Iyāsus Moʿa came first, received the «scapular of

<sup>54</sup> S. EMM 8742, fol. 40ra; EMM 1834, fol. 100va.

<sup>55</sup> S. *DEB* 209–210 («Zä-Mikaʿel ʿArägawi»); RAINERI in: *EnSanti* II, 1382; the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arägawi is supposed to have been written in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. (GUIDI 1932:60; RICCI 1969:825).

<sup>56</sup> After the description of the death of the Saint in the time of king Gäbrä Mäsqäl there is no concluding formula, only the blessing: አሉቱ : ወበረኩቱ ... ወይትማሕጸነን : ወይናሳወን : ለዓለሙ : ዓለም (s. GUIDI 1895:31). It is followed by the accounts about: the tenure of Matyas, who is credited with having commissioned the writing of the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel and — along with Yosef — to have been the main informant about the life of Zä-Mikaʿel (ibid. 31–32); the commemoration of the Saint, established by Matyas, with the miracle the multiplication of foods (ወተከከሩ : ሥርዓተ : ዘሠርዐ : ሉሙ..., ibid. 32); stories of the Saint's (posthumous) miracles related by the witnesses — his spiritual sons (ወይቤ : ፩እምደቂቁ...). These stories reached king Gäbrä Mäsqäl, who bestowed upon the community the rich land possessions enumerated in the text (ወሶበ : ሰምዓ : ንጉሥ : ገብረ : መስቀል..., ibid. 32–33); the tenure of Matyas and the internal order of the community (ወቅዱስስ : ማትያስ : ጸንዐ..., ibid. 33–34). After Matyas's death, the account proceeds with brief mentions of Yosef and Mādhaninā Ḥgziʾ, the subsequent two abbots, and with an extensive story of the tenure of *abba* Yoḥanni (ibid. 34: ወእምድጎረ : ጉንዱይ : መዋዕል : በዘመኑ : ለአባ : ዮሐን ...). The first tells of the construction of a church in a cave, intended as a burial place for monks; the second, more lengthy, relates the story in question. Thereafter, there is only a mention of *abba* Zä-Iyāsus who succeeded Yoḥanni, and a long and elaborate concluding formula (ibid. 35–36). I have checked quite a number of manuscripts containing the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arägawi, and in all of them the portion of the text described above reveals no substantial differences (apart from the usual variant readings).

the monks» from *abba* Yoḥanni and went to Ḥayq. Shortly after, Tāklä Haymanot arrived from the place of Iyäsus Moʿa (sic!) and asked for the monastic cap and scapular. However, as he told of his intention to go to Jerusalem, Yoḥanni persuaded him to give up this idea. Tāklä Haymanot received the monastic cap and scapular and, after several years at Däbrä Dammo (in Guidi's edition: 12 years), returned to Iyäsus Moʿa. The account ends with the laudation of both Tāklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Moʿa. The hagiographer seems to be generally unbiased, and, at a first glance, has no other aim than preserving the memory of the two prominent monks in the annals of his monastery.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Here is the English translation of the Ethiopic passage (GUIDI 1895:34–35; the editor did not translate the passage into Italian, and limited the renarration to only a brief remark [ibid. 42]: «Abbâ Yohanî riveste dell'abito monacale Abbâ Iyasus Moʿa...): «And thereafter *abba* Iyäsus Moʿa came and said to *abba* Yoḥanni: 'Oh *abba*, vest me with the scapular of monks [the monastic habit? አልብሰኝ : አባ : አስኬማ : ዘመነሳት]'. And then he vested him, and he stayed for a long time obeying his teacher. And he learned the writing and became the one who loved solitude and prayer (ወከነ : መፍከሪ : ጽሑፍ : ወጸሎት). And he was alone among the rocks, and he wrote the (book of) Gospels there, which exists untill now. And he went and returned to a country whose name was Ḥayq, and he became the father of many monks there. And after a short time *abba* Tāklä Haymanot came, having taken on the soldier's clothes (?; ልብስ : ሐራ) from *abba* Iyäsus Moʿa, and wished to go to Jerusalem. And he reached the holy Däbrä Dammo where *abba* Yoḥanni resided. As he saw him, he liked him and kissed him; and he told him about (the cause of) his coming, and he said to him: 'I came so that you would vest me with the monastic cap and scapular; I wish to go to the Sepulchre of our Lord'. And *abba* Yoḥanni said to him: 'I do not think (that you should) go (ሐዋርስ : ኢይመስሉኝ); but you will be (ሀለወክ : ትኩን) father of many (monks) here. But let us tell (this) together (ንንገር : ንቡር) to God, in order that he will show us the good way'. And he gave him the scapular and monastic cap, and they stayed together, devoting themselves to praying. Our father Tāklä Haymanot worked signs and miracles, and he was with *abba* Yoḥanni for 12 years. He returned to Iyäsus Moʿa having taken the scapular and monastic cap, for he had gone out of a desire of righteousness, loving the solitude and seclusion. They — Iyäsus Moʿa and *abba* Tāklä Haymanot — are wide in (their) branches, and they generated bright stars, as numerous as the sea sand, and they filled the land of the south (ምድር : አዜብ)». The words ልብስ : ሐራ were not translated by Guidi, but were interpreted in TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:165 (followed by KAPLAN 1986:54) as: «dressed like a soldier». Indeed, *ḥarra* in Gəʿəz means «army, troops»; yet the hagiographer did not mean «soldier» in the proper (military) sense, but was probably referring to the Saint as «a soldier of Christ» (*ḥarawī zā-Krastos*). However, as an alternative explanation one may suggest that the word *ḥarra* might be connected with Arabic word *ḥarīr* or Amharic *harr* 'silk' (s. LESLAU 1987:243), hence *ləbsä ḥarra* may originally have the meaning «silk garb», i. e., «white cloth» referring to the monastic garb; about the Arabic loanwords in the Vita s. GUIDI 1895:54). The Vita simply mentions that Tāklä Haymanot came to Yoḥanni from Iyäsus Moʿa, having received the monastic garb, but not yet the monastic cap and scapular.

Surprisingly, the comparison of additional manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arāgawi demonstrates that one of the most important passages is uncertain to such a degree that one should ask, who — Tāklä Haymanot or Iyäsus Moʿa — «left without receiving the cap and scapular»?<sup>58</sup> Understand-

<sup>58</sup> Cp. Guidi's edition: [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዐ : ... አቡነነ : አባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ :] ወነበረ : ምስሌሁ : ለአቡነ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፲ወ፪ : ዓመት :: ወገብአ : ኀበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢኦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዐ : እስመ : እንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዐ : ወዕአ : እንበይነ : ጸህቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕታዊ :: ውእቱ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ስፋሐነ : አዕቡግ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃነ : ወብዙሃነ : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር... (GUIDI 1895:34).

— Cp. a copy of the Vita of Zä-Mikaʿel Arāgawi from the monastic library of Däbrä Ḥayq, MS EMMML 1953 (18<sup>th</sup> cent.; cp. SERGEW HABLE-SELASSIE 1992):

(fol. 38va-39ra) [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ :: ... ወአቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ :] ወነበረ : ምስሌሁ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፯ : ዓመት : ወገብአ : ኀበ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢኦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ :: እስመ : ዘይነሥእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወጽአ : እንበይ[ነ] : ጸሕቅ : ጽድቀ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕትውና : ውእቱ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ :: ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ኮነ (sic!) : ስፋሐ : አዕቡቅ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃነ :: ወብዙሃነ : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር...;

— Cp. MS EMMML 1440 (17<sup>th</sup> cent., Gubalafto, Yäggü, Wällo):

(fol. 57ra) [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ :: ... ወአቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ ::] ወነበረ : ምስሌሁ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፯ : ዓመት : ወገብዓ : ኀበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞ[አ] : ነሢኦ : ቆብዓ : ወአስኬማ : እስመ : ዘእንበለ : ይንሥእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወዕአ : እንበለ : ባሕቅ : ጽድቀ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕታዊ : ውእቱ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ስፋህ : አእጹቅ : ወወለደ : ብሩሃነ : ወብዙሃነ : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር...;

— Cp. MS EMMML 2795, 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> cent., from the collection of Täsfa Haylu, obviously a member of the community of Däbrä Ḥayq (the manuscript is not registered in SERGEW HABLE-SELASSIE 1992):

(fol. 53ra–vb) [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ ... ወአቡነነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ ::] ወነበረ : ምስሌሁ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፯ : ዓመት : ወገብአ : ኀበ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢኦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወዕአ : እንበይነ : ጸሕቅ : ጽድቀ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕትውና : ውእቱ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ :: ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት (fol. 53vb)ት : ኮነ : ስፋሐ : አዕቡቅ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃነ : ወብዙሃነ : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር...;

— Cp. MS EMMML 2504 (late 17<sup>th</sup> cent., Miṭaq Amanuʿel, Tägulät-Bulga, Šäwa):

(fol. 40ra) [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ ... ወአቡነነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ :] ወነበረ : ምስሌሁ : አባ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፫ ዓመት : ወገብአ : ኀበ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : እስመ : ዘእንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወዕአ : እንበይነ : ባሕቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕትዊ : ውእቱ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ኮነ : ስፋሐ : አዕቡቅ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃነ : ወብዙሃነ : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር : ወመልእኸ : ለምድረ : አዜብ;

— Cp. MS Ṭānāsee 164 = Dägā Eṣṭifānos 53 (18<sup>th</sup> cent., s. Six 1999:207–211; s. below):

(fol. 94va) [... ወወሀቦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ (94vb) ... ወአቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ይገብር : ተአምረ : ወመንክረ ::] ወነበረ : ምስሌ : አባ : ዮሐን : መጠነ : ፯ ዓመት : ወእምድኅረዝ : ገብአ : ኀበ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢኦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : እምኀበ : አባ :

ing that the text of the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi should be established in a new critical edition, I assume nevertheless that the short eulogy concluding the account originally contained the name of *abba* Täklä Haymanot only; therefore, the phrase «...for, not having received the cap and scapular, he left seeking righteousness, desiring silence and solitude...» originally referred to Täklä Haymanot, whereas the name of Iyäsus Mo'a was added at a later point.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the (hypothetical) archetype could have read: **ወገብአ : ጎበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢአ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : እስመ : ዘእንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወፅአ : እንበይነ : ጸሕቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕትዊ :: ውእቱ : አባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ኮነ : ስፉሐ : አዕቡቅ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃን : ወብዙኃን : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር : ወመልእክ : ለምድረ : አዜብ.**<sup>60</sup> The inclusion of the name of Iyäsus Mo'a into this passage could have led to its gradual re-interpretation with harmonisation of the grammatical forms up to the thorough usage of the plural ones (as in the text presented by I. Guidi):

**ዮሐን :: እስመ : ዘእንበለ : ይንሣእ :: ወፅአ : እንበይነ : ጸሕቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕትዊ : ውእቱ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ :: ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ኮነ : ስፉሐ : አዕቡቅ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃን : ወብዙኃን : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር : ወመልእክ : ለምድረ : አዜብ.**

In the introduction to the edition I. Guidi states that the text of the Vita has been established on the basis of three manuscripts: 1) British Museum Add. 16,228 (DILLMANN 1847:50, no. 46, not dated) = L1; 2) Orient. 709 (WRIGHT 1877:188, no. 285, «first half of the XVIII cent».) = L2; 3) Museo Borgiano L. V, 12 (missing for many years, s. GREBAUT — TISSERANT 1935:828) = R1. Additionally, the fourth one — 4) Museo Borgiano, L. V, 13 ( ibid. 826–828, no. 22) = R2, dated to 1559 r. — presents special variants not shared by the first three copies. R2 reads: ... (**እንበይነ : ጸሕቅ : ጽድቅ**) : **ውእቱ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ኮነ : ስፉሐ : አዕቡግ : ወወለደ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃን : ወመልእክ : ለምድረ : አዜብ** :: In the relevant passage, I. Guidi (GUIDI 1895:35, s. above) probably followed manuscript L. V, 12 = R1 (today missing!) which gives grammatically correct text, whereas the variants in the remaining three manuscripts are similar to those indicated above: they have, e.g., **ውእቱ**, not **ውእቶሙ**; **ኮነ** (missing in the main text); **ወወለደ**, not **ወወለዱ**. In most manuscripts the period of Täklä Haymanot's stay at Däbrä Dammo is reported to have been 7 years, but in all the copies used by Guidi — 12 years (as in the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, s. n. 6, above).

<sup>59</sup> If the original sentence had two subjects connected by a particle, all the forms would preferably have taken the plural (cp. DILLMANN 1907:501–502); there would have been no reason for divergent readings.

<sup>60</sup> «He returned to Iyäsus Mo'a having taken the scapular and monastic cap (**አስኬማ : ወቆብዕ**), for he had gone because of desire of righteousness, loving the solitude and seclusion. He, *abba* Täklä Haymanot, became wide in (his) branches, and he generated bright stars as numerous as the sea sand, and they filled the land of the south». In the Waldäbba recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, the metaphor «wide in (his) branches» refers to Täklä Haymanot, while *mədrä azeb* (lit. 'the land of the south', cp. *nəgəśtū azeb* from Mt. 12:42) may refer to the historical southern part of Ethiopia, i. e. Šäwa, the region thought to have been the place of Täklä Haymanot's major activities.

ወገብአ : ኀበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢኦ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : እስመ : እንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወፅአ : እንበይነ : ጻሕቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂሮ : ጽሙና : ወብሕታዊ :: ውእቶሙሰ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወአባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ስፉሐነ : አዕፁግ : ወወለዱ : ከዋክብተ : ብሩሃን : ወብዙኃን : ከመ : ጥፃ : ባሕር : ወመልእኖ : ለምድረ : አዜብ. The sentence ... እስመ : እንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወፅአ... later came to be occasionally perceived as referring to Iyäsus Mo'a. However, there is another account found in the manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mika'el only a page before this one, relating, in clear terms (and in keeping with the hypothetical reading), that Iyäsus Mo'a received the scapular from *abba* Yoḥanni, and disrupting the entire construal of Täklä Haymanot giving the monastic cap and scapular to his spiritual father.<sup>61</sup> The manuscript tradition of the Vita of Zä-Mika'el currently counts more than 15 *testimonia*, but it is difficult to answer such questions as: 1) whether the historiographic notes were composed together with the Vita or added some time thereafter;<sup>62</sup> 2) at what time the contradictory reading emerged. In any case, it is clear that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., anyone reading the Vita could have had two interpretations of the episode in question.

From what has been said, it is not difficult to presume that in the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot the corresponding account — about Täklä Haymanot acquiring the grades of the monastic profession — emerged as a synthesis of several earlier hagiographic traditions. The origin of the different elements, however, can not be always established, since by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent. they must have been included in «common version(s)» of the legend of Täklä Haymanot — the famous Saint, — circulating along with the written traditions of his Vita. Yet, it is certain that the author of the Däbrä Libanos recension shaped his narrative following, more or less, the structure of the account according to the Ḥayq recension and used extensively its text(s), while extracting less voluminous but important details from another — Waldäbba — recension of the Vita.

The narrative structure of the account about the Saint's wanderings<sup>63</sup> is symmetrical: Täklä Haymanot departs from and returns to Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣti-

<sup>61</sup> CM. GUIDI 1895:34 ወእምድኅረዝ : መጽአ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወይቤሎ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : አልብሰኒ : አባ : አስኬማ : ዘመነካሳት : ወሶቤሃ : አልበሶ; s. MSS EMMML 1953 fol. 38ra–rb; 1440 fol. 56va–vb; 2795 fol. 51vb; 2504 fol. 40rb–va. In fact, TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:165 and n. 4 refers to this contradiction as well, though his remark on the «uncertainty of language» does not fully expose the problem of the passage.

<sup>62</sup> I think, it was most probably the case, though we have no single manuscript with the Vita alone (the information about an old manuscript of the Vita dated before 1425, which is preserved in Däbrä Dammo [MATTHEWS — MORDINI 1949:49], can not be confirmed). A similar example can be found, e. g., in the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Waldäbba recension, where the Vita and the attached notes differently describe one and the same event — the funeral of Täklä Haymanot.

<sup>63</sup> BUDGE 1906, chs. 76–87.

fanos; before returning to Däbrä Ḥayq he goes to Däbrä Dammo, departs from there and returns there.<sup>64</sup> Täklä Haymanot leaves Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos seeking to receive the monastic cap and scapular, having been requested by Iyäsus Moʿa to also bring the cap and scapular to him.<sup>65</sup> In Däbrä Dammo he receives the cap and scapular from *abba* Yoḥanni<sup>66</sup> then he proceeds to other monasteries receiving blessings from other monks, and after three pilgrimages to Jerusalem he returns to Däbrä Dammo again.<sup>67</sup> The sequence of the episodes is concluded with Täklä Haymanot's second coming to Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos and his handing over of the monastic cap and scapular to Iyäsus Moʿa. In the Däbrä Libanos recension, when asking Täklä Haymanot to give him the monastic cap and scapular, Iyäsus Moʿa expresses the essence of his request by means of the sentence found, in the same function, in the Waldəbba recension (the sentence was incorporated in the corresponding passage of the Däbrä Libanos recension!): ወበሳኢታ : ተገሥኦ : ወበጽሐ : መካነ : ሐይቅ :: ወሐረ : ዲበ : ባሕር : ከመ : ዘየሐውር : በየብስ :: ወቦኦ : ኀበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞኦ : ወቦበ : ርእዮ : ተፈሥሐ : ፈድፋደ : ወይቤሎ : በኦይቲ : ነሣእከ : ቆብዓ : ወኦስኬማ : [በእምደዊከ] : ቅዱሳት :: ወይቤሎ : በደብረ : ዳሞ : በእደ : ኦባ : ዮሐኒ :: ወይቤሎ : እምይእዜስ : ኦዕረፍኩ : ኦንሰ : እምዓማ : ፍኖት : እንዘ : ወልድየ : ኦንተ : ኩነኒ : ኦበ : ሀበኒ : ወኦስኬማ : በእምደዊከ : ቅዱሳት :: ወወሀቦ : ኦባ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ቆብዓ : ወኦስኬማ :: እስመ : ይቤሎ : መልኦክ : ስምዖ : ዘይቤለከ.<sup>68</sup>

The episode in its entirety appears neither in the short version of the Täklä Haymanot's commemorative reading in the Synaxarion nor in the Ḥayq recension-related texts of the Saint's Vita. A remarkable chronological element, not attested in the earlier versions of the story, is the inclusion of *abba* Yoḥanni, during whose tenure Täklä Haymanot, then, came to Däbrä Dammo — certainly a result of the influence of the hagiographical tradition of Zä-Mikaʿel

<sup>64</sup> [Šäwa] — Däbrä Ḥayq — Däbrä Dammo — pilgrimages — Däbrä Dammo — Däbrä Ḥayq — [Šäwa].

<sup>65</sup> BUDGE 1906, ch. 77: indeed, here the hagiographer anticipates the kind of relationship that will come to existence if Iyäsus Moʿa receives the parts of monastic habit — the monastic cap and askema — from his spiritual son, consequently, the essential passage from the Waldəbba recension (s. below) is echoed here: ወሰሚያ : ኦባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞኦ : ቃሎ : ለኦቡነ : ቅዱስ : በከየ : ብዙኃ : እንዘ : ይብል : ለመኑ : ተነድገኒ : ኦንሰ : ኢይሬእየከ : በእምሳለ : ወልድ : ኦባ : ነበርኩ : እንዘ : እሬእየከ : ከመ : ኦብ : ክቡር : ወባሕቲ : ቃልከሰ : ኦደመኒ : ለሐዊር : ውስተ : ደብርየ : ወበጸሐከ : ህየ : ይንሣእ [ነሣእከ] : ቆብዓ : ወኦስኬማ : ወድጎረ : ኦንተ : ትህበኒ : ሊተ : ወትከውነኒ : ኦበ (for the translation, s. n. 10, above; it was E. Cerulli who signalled that the phrase እንዘ : ኦንተ : ወልድየ is found in both the Waldəbba and Däbrä Libanos recensions of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, KUR 1965:VIII–IX, n. 29).

<sup>66</sup> BUDGE 1906, ch. 78 (s. n. 11, above).

<sup>67</sup> BUDGE 1906, ch. 86.

<sup>68</sup> BUDGE 1906, ch. 87 (s. also n. 12, above).



Arägawi.<sup>69</sup> It is noticeable that the author of the Däbrä Libanos recension chose (from the Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi?) one particular version of the story, yet it is not certain that the episode of that recension was supposed to demonstrate in any way Tāklä Haymanot's superiority over Iyäsus Moʾa. This interpretation can not be excluded, but the primary goal of the hagiographer was most probably the «historical reconstruction» of the episode on the basis of (all) the pieces, scattered in different traditions, included into a coherent and complete account of the Saint's wandering; this account tells the story which, in fact, is not quite different from the one in MS EMLL 1834. One should not assume that the primary aim of the author was to refer to the contemporary situation of his monastery and its relations with Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos, or to express any kind of ideological program or claims. In addition, in order to understand the limitations of any direct interpretation in this case, one should consider other episodes from the Vita of Tāklä Haymanot, as well as accounts from other hagiographies; despite the turbulent religious history of Ethiopia, and the very intensive production of hagiographic works, the topos of the assumption of the parts of the monastic habit (as well as that of spiritual fatherhood) does not seem to have been overexploited.

The hagiographic tradition known as the Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa — the document which has attracted much attention in recent years — raises even more complicated questions.<sup>70</sup> Some time ago the so-called «Homily [in honour]

<sup>69</sup> This relationship should be emphasized (cp. already TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:166). There are some narrative elements shared by both texts. 1) As in the Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi, the Däbrä Libanos recension reports that Tāklä Haymanot spent 12 years at Däbrä Dammo. 2) the Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi might have also been the source for the account of Tāklä Haymanot's pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Even though the former reports that *abba* Yoḥanni persuaded Tāklä Haymanot to leave the idea of the pilgrimage to the Holy City, the Däbrä Libanos recension transformed the topic into a «positive account» and reports of the Saint's three visits to the holy city (beside the fact that the pilgrimage to Jerusalem is one of the most common motifs of Ethiopian hagiography). 3) The Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi might account for the unusual situation: how it happened that Iyäsus Moʾa, though having stayed at Däbrä Dammo, did not receive the scapular (according to the Däbrä Libanos recension, he did not receive either the monastic cap or scapular) and, afterwards, had to ask his disciple Tāklä Haymanot to bring him these parts of the monastic habit.

<sup>70</sup> In fact, among the sources discussed in this article, the Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa was the latest to have been studied and published (s. E. Cerulli, in KUR 1965, also for the sources of the work, the rivalry between the monasteries and its possible historical context; for the substitution of Iyäsus Moʾa through Tāklä Haymanot in the legend about the re-establishment of the Solomonid dynasty, and the aforementioned polemical passage in the Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa). This was compensated by the fact, that the hagiography of Iyäsus Moʾa has attracted considerable attention in recent years: s. MARRASSINI 1986; TEDESCHI 1994; Id. in: *EnSanti* II, 267–271; KROPP 1998, 2003; HIRSCH 2003.

of Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a» came to light, in which the biography and contending of this Saint are depicted in a different way from the Vita<sup>71</sup>. The dating of the composition of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a to the period between the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent.<sup>72</sup> seems to have been abandoned. Currently, the Homily, not the Vita, has been largely seen as the earlier stage in the development of the hagiographic tradition of Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a, both works having different literary features and functions.<sup>73</sup> The Vita ap-

<sup>71</sup> The value of this text has been fully recognized only in the recent years: s. TEDESCHI 1994, with a fine analysis of the Vita but with the Homily largely discarded; the same in SERGEW HABLE-SELASSIE 1992; cp. also TEDESCHI in: *EnSanti* II, 267–271; BAUM, in: *BBK* XX, 804–806. In the latter publication the Homily is mentioned, yet the biography of the Saint is presented without differentiation of the sources or references to the origin of the details; cp., e. g., one «common place»: «Als Junge wanderte er nach Tigre und trat in das Kloster Debre Damo ein, wo er unter Abba Yohannis zum Kalligraphen und Theologen ausgebildet wurde». At the same time, the author states: «Das Gadl des Heiligen (EMML 1940) wurde nach 1601 aus älteren Quellen wie z.B. einer Homilie auf den Heiligen (dersan) und Motiven aus den Erzählkreisen über die Anfänge der Salomoniden zusammengestellt».

<sup>72</sup> E. Cerulli points to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. (CERULLI 1961:95). In the preface to the translation of the text, he considers the Vita «la rédaction composite» and states: «les Actes de Iyasus Mo'a ici édités ont été rédigés dans leur forme actuelle dans la deuxième moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle» (KUR 1965:XIV–XV). Yet some arguments supposed to foster this hypothesis (ibid. IV–V, XV) appear today less convincing: e. g., «style ‘fleuri’ des introductions» is not a feature of 15<sup>th</sup>-cent. literary works alone; in the case of *Därsanä Ura ʾel* one should remember that the recension which is referred to was composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. (in the library of Däbrä Ḥayq ʾĒṣṭifanos there are both the brief and the lengthy recension of this text, s. MS EMML 1942) etc. Cerulli stresses: «la question ... des rapports entre Iyasus Mo'a et Takla Hāymānot qui ne s'expliqueraient qu'en se référant à la période où l'hégémonie sur le clergé régulier éthiopien était à peine passée ou sur le point de passer du monastère de St Étienne de Ḥayq à celui de Dabra Libānos...» (KUR 1965:XV).

<sup>73</sup> Against the cautious point of view expressed by MARRASSINI 1986:177, criticizing the proposal of Getatchew Haile in his comments to MS EMML 1960. The problem of the relationship between the Vita and the Homily was mostly dealt with by M. Kropp, who came to the conclusion that the *terminus post quem* for the Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a should be «Ende des 15./Anfang des 16. Jhdts» (KROPP 1998:306); in his more recent publication, Kropp concludes, regarding in particular MS EMML 1960, that «der Textzeuge des dersan älter ist (Anfang 15. Jhd.?), und der Text selbst aus noch früherer Zeit stammen kann» (KROPP 2003:194); the question of the time of the composition of the Vita remains without a clear answer (yet it is supposed to have been an instrument acting as a response to the spreading legend of Tāklä Haymanot; ibid., 195). Recently, M.-L. Derat has summarized existing views, yet she cautiously accepted the old chronology and considers the Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a to have been created prior to that of Tāklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension («la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle»: DERAT 2003:88–90, 107, 109, 118 and elsewhere).

pears to have been composed on the basis of the Homily by means of the revision and insertion of new pieces, including the well-known «testaments» between Iyäsus Moʼa and king Yəkunno Amlak.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, the Vita of Iyäsus Moʼa can be characterized, at first glance, as a hagiographic compilation — belonging to the same type of hagiographic composition as the Vita of Tāklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension.

As to the origin and structure of the passages concerning the relationship between Tāklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Moʼa, the Vita of the latter has the topic developed in *three* separate and complicated accounts:

1) Two parts of different origin can be distinguished in the first account. The first is clearly based on a fragment taken almost *verbatim* from the Homily with the only difference being that in the Homily Iyäsus Moʼa receives from *abba* Yoḥanni both the scapular and the girdle, whereas in the Vita — the monastic garb (clothes) and girdle.<sup>75</sup> The theme of the parts of the monastic habit is only further developed in the Vita; the second part of the account, in which, following his «monastic carrier», Iyäsus Moʼa receives the scapular and monastic cap, is based on a rather faithful borrowing from the Acts of Zä-Mikaʼel Arägawi.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Homily has been extended by numerous decorative literary elements and the «second narrative circle» (s. KROPP 1998:306–308).

<sup>75</sup> In the Homily, the account of Iyäsus Moʼa's assumption of the monastic habit from *abba* Yoḥanni appears after the following episodes, which, in fact, do not differ much from what is recounted in the Vita: Iyäsus Moʼa leaves the worldly life, together with pious Yəmṣaʾ Məḥrät, following the order of Archangel Gabriʼel (MS EMMML 1960, fol. 31va–33va; KUR 1965, 8–9:25); he comes to abbot Yoḥanni and is introduced into the community (fol. 33va–rb; KUR 1965, 9:25–10:10); as Iyäsus Moʼa was dispatched to a travelling, he met robbers were nearly to kill him (fol. 33rb–34rb, KUR 1965, 10:10–10:25); Iyäsus Moʼa punishes a rich man who has refused to let the Saint sleep in his house (fol. 34rb–35vb; KUR 1965, 10:25–13:2); Iyäsus Moʼa stays (at Däbrä Dammo) for seven year humbly completing his pious works (fol. 35vb–36ra; KUR 1965, 13:2–14:5). After he carries out one extremely difficult task received from Yoḥanni, the latter brings him into the church, reads a prayer and, according to the Homily, ወአለበሶ ፡ እንተ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ አስኬማ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ወዓቅነቶ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሐውቄሁ ፡ ቅናተ ፡ ዘአዲም ፡ ወቅናቱስ ፡ አርአያ ፡ ድንግልና ፡ ወንጽሕ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወነሥአ ፡ ቡራኬ ፡ እምነብ ፡ መምህሩ... (fol. 36vb–37ra) «...he vested him with that which is the scapular of Christ [/the habit of Christ], and he girded his loins with the nice girdle, and this girdle is the likeness of the chastity and purity; and he [Iyäsus Moʼa] received the blessing from his teacher»; the Vita has a slight, yet important change: instead of «the scapular», it has «monastic clothes/habit»: አለበሶ ፡ አልባስ ፡ ምንኩስና ፡ ወአቀነቶ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሐውቄሁ ፡ ቅናተ ፡ ዘአዲም ፡ ወቅናቱስ ፡ አርአያ ፡ ድንግልና ፡ ወንጽሕ ፡ ውእቱ (KUR 1965, 15:2–4).

<sup>76</sup> After the accounts of miracles that happen to Iyäsus Moʼa while in Däbrä Dammo (fol. 37ra–38rb; cp. KUR 1965, 15:4–17:24), there follows — in the Vita only — the story of the foundation of Däbrä Ḥayq, the legend of the dragon (KUR 1965,

2) In the second account, which is missing in the Homily, there appears *abba* Tāklä Haymanot. The account begins with a short traditional history of the Ethiopian monastic movement, exposed, apparently, from the point of view of the community of Däbrä Dammo, with the list of regions where Iyäsus Mo'a's spiritual children preached and founded monasteries.<sup>77</sup> After a mention of the «testament» between Iyäsus Mo'a and king Yäkunno Amlak, in accordance with which the title of *‘aqqabe sä‘at* was given to the abbot of Däbrä Hayq Ḥṣṭifanos, the hagiographer describes the pious life that Iyäsus Mo'a lead in his monastery<sup>78</sup> and then proceeds with a lengthy account concerning *abba* Tāklä Haymanot which appears to be comprised of three parts:

**I.** Tāklä Haymanot arrives at Däbrä Hayq Ḥṣṭifanos, he assumes the monastic yoke and takes on the tunic, girdle and monastic cap from Iyäsus Mo'a. He stays at Däbrä Hayq Ḥṣṭifanos for 10 years — 7 years before and 3 years after the assumption of the monastic habit, the numbers, most probably, brought in accordance with the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Acts of Tāklä Haymanot;<sup>79</sup>

**II.** This lengthy part relating how Tāklä Haymanot received the scapular is composed of several episodes.<sup>80</sup> The Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a narrates Tāklä Haymanot's departure to Däbrä Dammo and his stay with *abba* Yoḥanni (following, in general, the outline of Tāklä Haymanot's legend). The Vita reports that Tāklä Haymanot wanted to go to his country (ሀለዩ : በልቡ : ወይቤ : አሐውር : ብሔርዮ), yet, when Iyäsus Mo'a said good-bye to him, Tāklä Haymanot headed in the opposite direction, to the north — to *abba*

17:25–19), the story of *abba* Yoḥanni (ibid. 20), a notice on Gäbrä Ṣəyon, Iyäsus Mo'a's brother who has entered «another monastery» and dies on the 25<sup>th</sup> of *Yakkatit* (ibid. 20:21–21:6). The next account (about the construction of a church «in the entrance of [Yoḥanni's] cave», ibid. 21:6–21:13) is the same — with the exception of some slight changes — as in the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi (GUIDI 1895:34, ወእምድኅረ : ጉንዱይ : መዋዕል ... የሐዩ : እምድዌሁ ::), the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a undoubtedly being the recipient text; the same is also valid for KUR 1965, 21:13–19 ወእምድኅረዝ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : አልብሰኒ : አስኬማ : ዘመነካሳት : ወሶቤሃ : አልበሶ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ዘመላእክት..., cp. ወእምድኅረዝ : መጽአ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ወይቤሎ : ለአባ : ዮሐን : አልብሰኒ : አስኬማ : ዘመነካሳት... ወገብአ : ሀገረ : እንተ : ስማ : ሐይቅ :: (GUIDI 1895:34). The account in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a is enlarged by details describing how Iyäsus Mo'a went to Hayq following a directive from Archangel Gabriel (KUR 1965, 21:20–22:7).

<sup>77</sup> KUR 1965, 34:22–35:11.

<sup>78</sup> KUR 1965, 35:12–36:17.

<sup>79</sup> S. n. 7, above. KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18, from: ... መጽአ : ኀቤሁ : ፩ብእሲ : ጌር : ወቡሩክ : እምብሔረ : ሸዋ : ዘይብልዎ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት... to the most relevant sentence: ወሶቤሃ : አልበሶ : አልባባሰ : ምንኩስና : ቅናተ : ወቀሚሰ : ወቆብዓ : ነሥአ : እምድሁ :: ወእንበሮ : ኀቤሁ : መጠነ : ሿዓመት : ነበረ : ቅድመ : ይመንኩስ :: ወእምድኅረ :: መንኩስ : ቺዓመተ...

<sup>80</sup> KUR 1965, 36:18–38:8.

Yohanni.<sup>81</sup> While telling Tāklä Haymanot to receive the scapular at Däbrä Dammo, Iyäsus Mo'a himself confirms that he went from Däbrä Dammo without the scapular: በሎ : ለአቡነ : ዮሐን : መጻእኩ : እምነቤክ :: እስመ : ዘእንበለ : እንሣእ : አስኬማ : እምነቤክ : አፍቂርዮ :[sic] ጽሙና : ወብሕታዊ. The sentence is related to the corresponding passage from the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi and closely follows it, though with one correction.<sup>82</sup> Further on, Iyäsus Mo'a explains why he went without receiving the scapular: he was involved in a political struggle on the side of Yəkunno Amlak and could not return.<sup>83</sup> On the following pages, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a narrates how Tāklä Haymanot came to Däbrä Dammo and met Yohanni (extensively drawing upon the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi, with the difference that it refers to the scapular only) and indicates that Tāklä Haymanot received the scapular from Yohanni and spent 7 years at Däbrä Dammo.<sup>84</sup>

III. This part relates how Tāklä Haymanot, being on the way from Däbrä Dammo to his native region, met Iyäsus Mo'a for the second time.<sup>85</sup> He brought the scapular and delivered it to his spiritual father, not only fulfilling the latter's order, but also obeying the request of *abba* Yohanni. The hagiographer agrees that Iyäsus Mo'a accepted the scapular from Tāklä Haymanot (but the scapular only: አስኬማ : ባሕቲታ), considering it credible from the point of view of both the history and monastic canon, and,

<sup>81</sup> They crossed the lake walking on its water: የሐውሩ : ጁበ : ባሕር : በእግር : ከመ : እንተ : የብስ (KUR 1965, 36:22–37:3).

<sup>82</sup> KUR 1965, 37:2–3, cp. the translation: «Je suis jadis de chez toi sans prendre chez toi le scapulaire, ayant aimé le silence at la solitude» (ibid. 30 [tr.]). Also above, nn. 60, 61; GUIDI 1895:35 (in particular manuscript A): (ወገብአ : ኀበ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ነሢአ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ) እስመ : ዘእንበለ : ይንሣእ : አስኬማ : ወቆብዓ : ወዕአ : እምነቤክ : እንበይነ : ጸሀቀ : ጽድቅ : አፍቂር : ጽሙና : ወብሕታዊ. The passage from the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi was transformed into direct speech; the scribe probably took out, by mistake, the word ወዕአ together with ቆብዓ.

<sup>83</sup> In a difficult phrase, clearly influenced by Amharic speech, Iyäsus Mo'a asks Tāklä Haymanot to transmit his request to Yohanni and bring him the scapular from Däbrä Dammo: ወናሁ : ፈኑ : ሊተ : ብሂለክ : ንገር (KUR 1965, 37:10–11) «Now, having said to him: send (it) for me, tell him (all this)!» (the French translation in ibid. 30 [tr.] is not quite exact).

<sup>84</sup> Cp. GUIDI 1895:34: ወበኅዳጥ : መዋዕል : መጽአ : አቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ለቢሶ : ልብስ : ሐራ till ibid. 35: ...ወመልእኦ : ለምድረ : አቤብ — the passage we have already referred to. Cp. KUR 1965, 37:20–38:8. As in other cases, it is impossible to ascertain which text of the Vita of Zä-Mika'el was used; yet the relation between the traditions is transparent, apart from the similar structure of the episode in the both works, cp., in particular, in the Vita of Zä-Mika'el: ወይቤሎ : አባ : ዮሐን : ሐዊረስ : አይመስለኒ : አባ : ሀለወክ : ትኩን : አባ : ብዙኃን : በዝየ..., cp. ibid., 38:2–3. In many manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi it is said that Tāklä Haymanot spent 7 years at Däbrä Dammo (see n. 58, also n. 6, above); the number 12 does not seem to be the prevailing reading.

<sup>85</sup> Cp. KUR 1965, 38:8–23, from ወእምዝ : ገብአ : ኀበ : አባ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ...

probably, seeing a comparable situation in the Bible, as indicated by the quotation of Jn. 3:27.<sup>86</sup> By means of the quotation, the hagiographer transposes the story of Iyäsus Mo'a receiving the scapular with the biblical account of the Baptism of Jesus Christ: the interpretation of the story remains, thus, «open», since each of the Saints — both the spiritual father and son, senior and junior — can be considered as the one with «greater grace».<sup>87</sup> Even though Iyäsus Mo'a humbly accepts the formal initiation from Täklä Haymanot, the one who is junior, the latter fulfils the request of a senior monk and his spiritual teacher; in any case, the consecration of the scapular for Iyäsus Mo'a had been completed by *abba* Yoḥanni and the rest is a purely technical operation. The hagiographer refuses to believe only one thing, which, according to his understanding, is untrue and contradicts both the canons and common sense about monastic life: that up to that time Iyäsus Mo'a had had neither monastic cap nor scapular (asserting, thus, that he had the former).<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, we are not able to reconstruct the entire process of the Vita's composition, so we will never learn why its author — being well acquainted with the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi and perhaps even directly using it for his own work — oversaw or neglected the passage (as the hagiographer from Däbrä Libanos did) which would have removed the doubts: the passage reporting that Iyäsus Mo'a duly accepted both the monastic cap and scapular from his spiritual father *abba* Yoḥanni.

<sup>86</sup> KUR 1965, 38:15–17.

<sup>87</sup> This topic is attested, though rarely, in Ethiopian hagiographies: cp. the Vita of Täklä Ḥawaryat, in which Täklä Ḥawaryat and a certain Zär'a Šəyon, probably his disciple, «imitate» the baptismal ritual in a lake, recalling, thus, the Baptism of Jesus: first Zär'a Šəyon, the junior, «baptizes» the saint, and then Täklä Ḥawaryat, the senior, baptizes Zär'a Šəyon (CONTI ROSSINI 1910:127). Cp. also the Vita of Yoḥannəs Məsraqawi (*ʾenzä yebel: waldeya kunanni ʾaba*, MARRASSINI 1981:196–197, esp. n. 2). Besides, one has to remember that in Ethiopia John the Baptist was a popular saint, and the stories about him — or the account on Jesus Christ's Baptism in which God's Son is baptized by a man — used to attract the attention of traditional Ethiopian scholars. Among the Ethiopic writings ascribed to John Chrysostom, there is a Homily on John the Baptist and the Baptism of Christ. A passage of this work, popular and preserved in quite a number of manuscripts, helps to understand the traditional view of this biblical episode: as Christ was baptised by John, the «insane» Jews (አብጃጃ), who were observing this, immediately concluded that the latter was «greater». In order to refute this erroneous view, God sent the sign — the dove (ESTEVES PEREIRA 1911:6; Portuguese translation *ibid.*, 10–11).

<sup>88</sup> This would mean that he was introducing others into monastic life before he himself «was born in the monastic habit». Therefore, the author of the Vita considers this version of events not only as a lie, but also as an offence (which, because of its obvious absurdity, can not be proposed by a reasonable person; hence the reference to «stupid» or «insane», አብጃጃ, cp. n. 87) and an attempt to dishonour «his» Saint, s. KUR 1965, 38:19–39:3.



3) The third account, like the second, is missing in the Homily. It relates once again how Iyäsus Mo'a and Täklä Haymanot assumed the monastic habit.<sup>89</sup> This time, the author of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a retells the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, following the Ḥayq or, most probably, Däbrä Libanos recension — as it may be proved, among others signs, by the mention of Täklä Haymanot's encounter with a monk from Amhara before the Saint's arrival at the monastery of Bäšälotä Mika'el.<sup>90</sup> Though the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a briefly summarises the story,<sup>91</sup> the sequence of the episodes and the entire structure of the narrative remain the same. The account ends with Iyäsus Mo'a imposing the monastic yoke upon Täklä Haymanot and vesting him with the «monastic garb» (ልብስ : ምንኩስና). In the conclusion, the hagiographer poses the same question once again: how Iyäsus Mo'a could fulfil this without having reached the proper grade of the monastic profession (i.e., everything except the scapular)?<sup>92</sup> The arguments used here do not go beyond those presented in the previous account: the hagiographer postulates that Iyäsus Mo'a «was born in the monastic life» long before Täklä Haymanot's coming; the receiving of the scapular from the hands of Täklä Haymanot, his spiritual pupil, is accepted in the sense indicated above: as the ritual fulfilled according to the spiritual father's request, which does not essentially change the relationship of the «spiritual» fathership.<sup>93</sup> We can conclude that the author of the

<sup>89</sup> KUR 1965, 39:4–40:4.

<sup>90</sup> As it has already been noted by E. Cerulli (s. KUR 1965:x [tr.]; *ibid.*, 39:4–9); in fact, neither the Ḥayq nor the Däbrä Libanos version of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot says that the monk whom Täklä Haymanot met on his way to Amhara was «a novice» (ረድኡ) of Bäšälotä Mika'el; in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a this is an anticipation typical of a renarration, indicating that the hagiographer had known the text or story in advance.

<sup>91</sup> Cp., in particular, in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a (KUR 1965, 39:9–15), such phrases as: ወእምዝ : እንዝ : ይመርሖ : መልእክ : እግዚአብሔር : በጽሐ : ኀበ : ጽንፈ : ባሕር : ሶበ : ኢረከበ : ሐመረ : አስተራእዮ : እንዝ : የሐውር : ዲበ : ባሕር (*ibid.* 39:11–13), which seems to be a corruption of a passage from the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension (BUDGE 1906:69 [ch. 67]): መበጸሖ : ውስተ : ሐይቀ : ባሕር : ኢረከበ : ሐመረ : በዘየዐዱ : ባቲ : ወጸለየ : ነዋኝ :: ወአስተርእዮ : ቅዱስ : ሚካኤል : ሊቀ : መላእክት : ገሃደ : እንዝ : ይከይድ : ባሕር :: ወይቤሎ... (due to this the translation in KUR 1965, 31:33–35 [tr.] is somewhat uncertain) the original form አስተርእዮ or አስተርእዮ referred to the angel; further on, in the Däbrä Libanos recension, Täklä Haymanot, accompanied by the angel, entered the church, whereas in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a he stayed at the entrance of the church (ቆመ : ኀበ : አንቀጽ : ቤተ : ክርስቲያን — humble behaviour to be expected from a new-comer). Cp. also, respectively, ብእሴ : እግዚአብሔር — ጀብእሴ : ፈራሄ : እግዚአብሔር; ዓፃዊ — renarrated as ጀእምአርዳኢሁ etc.

<sup>92</sup> KUR 1965, 39:26–40:4.

<sup>93</sup> The Vita strongly prohibits monks to receive the girdle, monastic tunic, cap and scapular from other spiritual teachers; this prohibition appears in the *dispositio* of one of the «testaments» between Yəkunno Amlak and *abba* Iyäsus Mo'a. How-

Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>ʿ</sup>a collected and scrutinised all the hagiographic documents relating to how Iyäsus Mo<sup>ʿ</sup>a and Täklä Haymanot assumed the monastic habit (though, in fact, he failed to find the necessary evidence!); in order to denounce the versions of the story that he considered untrue, he created a new tradition which — curiously enough — was supposed to be a proof in itself.

The introduction of such a polemic against another monastic leader, which apparently was not caused by any theological controversy or other serious contradiction concerning matters of faith, was pretty unusual for Ethiopian hagiography. It must have had quite a peculiar historical background; in this respect, the question of the dating of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>ʿ</sup>a — and the time when the story in question took its final shape — becomes the primary issue. One more — previously little known — testimony appears to be of considerable importance: a possibly 18<sup>th</sup>-cent. manuscript from the monastery of Däbrä Daga ʾEstifanos (already quoted above), recently described (Ṭānāsee 164 = Dāgā ʾEstifānos 53)<sup>94</sup> and containing, among other texts, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo<sup>ʿ</sup>a, but in a version different from both the Homily and the Vita known from Kur's edition. A closer investigation demonstrates that this is most probably the «intermediary recension», the document which should be placed between the Homily and the Vita.<sup>95</sup> This text contains an account of Iyäsus

ever, this passage — certainly intended against particular practices in monastic life — was written later, since it is missing in the original document, MS EMLL 1832, fol. 269r (s. KROPP 1998:309–310).

<sup>94</sup> SIX 1999:207–211.

<sup>95</sup> SIX 1999:209 pointed out to the differences between the Vita and the text preserved in Ṭānāsee 164; yet the latter is obviously not the shortened text of the Vita, but rather the extended Homily (for the collation below, MS EMLL 1960 and MAR-RASSINI 1986 are used):

1) The Homily's short introduction (ድርሳን : ዘርቱአነ : ሃይማኖት : ዘደረሰ...till: መፍትሔ : ለነ... fol. 29ra) is extended in Ṭānāsee 164 by an extensive addition which begins with the rhymed passage: በስመ : እግዚአብሔር : አብ : ለጽልማት : ጌጋይ : ዘይሰድዶ :: በስመ : እግዚአብሔር : ወልድ : ዘሠምረ : እምድንግል : ተወልዶ ... (fol. 1ra–3ra, then we find: መፍትሔ : ለነ...); the Vita drops the introduction of the Homily, accommodates the introduction from Ṭānāsee 164 (KUR 1965, 3:18–5:10) and extends the introduction by one more piece (ibid., 1:3–3:17);

2) The next piece of the Vita (ibid., 5:11–20, መፍትሔ : ለነ...) coincides with Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 3rb);

3) The text in Ṭānāsee 164 from fol. 4ra: ወዘንተ : አርዑተ : ነሢአሙ... till ወሰአልዎ : ከመ : የሀብሙ : ውሉደ... (fol. 6rb) coincides with the Vita KUR 1965, 5:22–7:9, yet the latter has some small additions; thereafter it adds the passage 7:9–8:2. For ibid. 8:2–8:12, Ṭānāsee 164 has only: ወልሀቁ : እሙንቱ : በሠናይ : ልህቀት : እንዘ : መንፈስ : ቅዱስ : የዓቅቦሙ : በኩሉ : ፈናዊሆሙ (KUR 1965, 8:2–3);

4) The Homily relates Iyäsus Mo<sup>ʿ</sup>a's escape from worldly life: ወአንተ : ዕለተ : እንዘ : ይነውሙ : አዘማዲሁ... (fol. 31rb) up until the story of his «wandering» (ግድ, fol. 33rb); the piece from Ṭānāsee 164 fol. 6ra–8ra is the basis for the Vita, s. KUR

1965, 8:14–10:10; the Vita adds 8:14–18; 9:10–11 (**ወፍጹመ : በጸጋ : ወጽድቅ : ወእቱሰ...**) and other small pieces elsewhere;

5) The saint's wandering: the texte in Ṭānāsee 164 fol. 8ra–10rb is mostly the same as in the Vita 11:14–13:25 till **ወበዘከመዝ : ግብር : ነበረጂዓመተ...** where the Vita makes here and there small additions; the Vita makes a substantial addition, continuing: **እንዘ : የሐውር : ውስተ : ንግድ...** (13:14–13:24);

6) In the story about Iyäsus Mo'a's monastic consecration Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 11ra) omits the name of the saint's *mamhər*, as does the Homily (fol. 36rb); cp. the Vita, KUR 1965, 14:6. In the sentence describing how Yoḥanni vested Iyäsus Mo'a with parts of the monastic habit, already Ṭānāsee 164 reads *albasä mənkwəsənnä* (fol. 12rb), instead of *askema*, as in the Homily (s. above; cp. MARRASSINI 1986:179);

7) The story about the accident that happened while the saint was splitting wood with an axe coincides with Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 13ra–14rb) and the Vita (KUR 1965, 15:24–17:7), as does the story about salvation of the jar (respectively, fol. 14rb–15ra; KUR 1965, 17:8–20);

8) The history of Däbrä Ḥayq (in the Vita s. KUR 1965, 17:21–19:27) is missing in Ṭānāsee 164: **እስመ : ኀይለ : እግዚአብሔር : ይወፅእ : እምኔሁ : ወያሕይም...** [cp. KUR 1965, 17:19–20] : **ወአባ : ዮሐን : መምህሩ : ለብፁዕ : አቡነ : ኢየሱስ : ሞዑ...** The account continues with the story of the life of *abba* Yoḥanni (ibid. 20:1–20); cp. the Vita: **ወበጽሐ : ውስተ : መካን : ዘትሰመይ : ደብረ : ጳዋ...** Ṭānāsee 164: **ወበጽሐ : መካን : ዘትሰመይ : ጳዋ.** Notes on Gäbrä Šəyon's life and death follow (ibid. 20:21–21:3; Ṭānāsee 164, fol. 16rb); and then in Ṭānāsee 164 the story of Iyäsus Mo'a's migration to Ḥayq, simplified and without the angel (fol. 17ra: **ወአቡነሰ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : ሶበ : ርእየ : ከመ : አእረፈ : እኑሁ : ወመምህሩ : ሐረ : ርኑቀ : ፍኖተ : ወበጽሐ : ጅመካን : ዘተሐፀረ : በባሕር : ወነበረ : ህየ : ወአፈድፈደ...**, the Vita providing here more literary details, while its narrative develops somewhat differently (KUR 1965, 21:13–22:8). Lengthy pieces of the Vita are missing in Ṭānāsee 164, which coincides with the Vita only in the concluding part, ibid. 35:17 ([**ወእምዝ : ተመይጦ : ውስተ : ደብሩ**] : **ወነበረ : ህየ : ወአፈድፈደ...**);

9) The description of Iyäsus Mo'a's pious life on Ḥayq in his Vita (KUR 1965, 35:17–36:8, from **ወነበረ : ህየ : ወአፈድፈደ...**) is extended as compared with Ṭānāsee 164, fol. 17ra (the extension begins, in the Vita, from: **ወይከውን : ብዙኃ : አንብፅ...**; the texts converge at the quotation from Ps. 83:11; s. KUR 1965, 36:7–9);

10) The story about Täklä Haymanot KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18 appears in Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 17ra);

11) Ṭānāsee 164 does not contain other stories about Täklä Haymanot, and continues with the episode of Iyäsus Mo'a's chair (fol. 18ra: **ወሀለዎ : ለአቡነ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ...**; KUR 1965, 40:5–13);

12) There is a passage of the Vita (KUR 1965, 40:14–41:4) containing some pieces of the Homily which do not appear in the corresponding portion of Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 18ab);

The rest of the text in Ṭānāsee 164 corresponds to the Homily and to the Vita (cp. also MARRASSINI 1986:180–182), yet the collation demonstrates that it is closer to the Homily and was the basis for the further elaboration in the Vita (mostly revision of style and «decorative» additions); the text in Ṭānāsee 164 ends at KUR 1965, 54:11. The colophon is, thus, different from that in the Homily (it does not mention Sofonyas; s. MARRASSINI 1986:182).

Mo<sup>3</sup>a's assumption of the monastic habit identical to the account **1**) of the Vita; therefore, the change of «the scapular of Christ» into «the monastic garb» was made first in the account in Ṭānāsee 164, possibly for purely stylistic, not ideological, considerations (both terms meaning «monastic habit»); the latter variant was taken over into the Vita of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a.<sup>96</sup> There is only one narrative on Tāklä Haymanot's assumption of the monastic habit that corresponds to the (rather neutral) account **2)-II.** of the Vita of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a.<sup>97</sup> As the first possibility, we should assume that this text is a genuine document that originated in the community of Däbrä Ḥayq and reflects its position concerning the spiritual relationships between Tāklä Haymanot and Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a. The relevant traditions — different recensions of the Vita of Tāklä Haymanot, the Vita of Zä-Mikā'el Arāgawi — were certainly well-known at the time of the creation of this «short» Vita of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a; however, those who composed the text simply did not consider the episode as «contradictory» and were not keen on «rectifying» the history. On the basis of the material that we presently have, the time of the composition of the «lengthy» Vita of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a should be therefore dated to a later period — during the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. — since it is hardly possibly that Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a's biography would have been revised twice within such a short period of time. Consequently, the polemical passages found in the «lengthy» Vita should reflect the contemporary (19<sup>th</sup> cent.?) views of the community.

My hypothesis concerning the recent character of the «contradiction» is corroborated by its ideological and literary context. The preliminary search for traces, which the controversy must have left in the written tradition of both monasteries, brought rather disappointing results. Documents from Däbrä Ḥayq which deal with the «monastic carrier» of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a appear to be of recent origin; none of them pays much attention to the question of how

<sup>96</sup> Thus, the Homily: ወአልበሶ : እንተ : ይእቲ : አስኪማ : ክርስቶስ : ወዓቅነቶ : ውስተ : ሐውቋሁ : ቅናተ : ዘአዲም : ወቅናቱስ : አርአያ : ድንግልና... (fol. 36vb–37ra); cp. Ṭānāsee 164: አልበሶ : አልባስ : ምንኩስና : ወአቀነቶ : ውስተ : ሐውቋሁ : ቅናተ : ዘአዲም :: ወቅናትስ : አርአያ : ድንግልና : ወንጽሕ : ወንጽሕ : ውእቲ, cp. the Vita: KUR 1965, 15:2–4 (s. above, n. 75, also n. 95); after all, it is improbable that the author of the Vita would have omitted the mention of the scapular.

<sup>97</sup> Ṭānāsee 164 (fol. 17ra): ወእንዝ : ይነብር : እመዋዕል : መጽአ : ኅቤሁ : እምብሔረ : ሴዋ : ብእሲ : ኄር : ዘስሙ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት :: ወይቤሎ : አባ : አልብስኒ : ልብስ : ምንኩስና... the style is slightly revised in the Vita of Iyāsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a (KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18): ወእንዝ : ይነብር : ከመዝ : ምብዙኅ : እመዋዕል : መጽአ : ኅቤሁ : ጀብእሲ : ኄር : ወብሩክ : እምብሔረ : ሴዋ : ዘይብልዎ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ተክለ : ሐዲስ... ወይቤሎ : አአባ : አቡዮ : ኢየሱስ : ሞአ : አልብስኒ : ልብስ : ምንኩስና... The collation of the texts (Ṭānāsee 164, fol. 17b; KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18) demonstrates that from the words ከመ : እንተ : የብስ... (ibid., 36:24; where the narrative has an unexpected development concerning the travelling direction of Tāklä Haymanot) the Vita adds new passages the origin of which is discussed above.

exactly Iyäsus Mo'a assumed the monastic habit, and none contains polemical passages comparable to those found in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a.<sup>98</sup> However, some of them describe the monastic carrier of Iyäsus Mo'a in a peculiar way; of particular interest is the lengthy «History of the Churches and Monasteries of Ethiopia»<sup>99</sup> in MS EML 1942, linked to the cycle of Homilies in honour of Archangel Uriel, obviously of Mənilək II's period (and of Šāwan origin). According to the colophon of this work (which deserves, in fact, a closer look), it was composed by a certain 'aqqabe sä'at Yoḥannäs, the contemporary of King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-40). The History is certainly a pseudoepigraphic work of a much later period, and was probably not composed at Däbrä Ḥayq; the ideological background of its author is not quite clear, and the work should not prematurely be described «pro-Šāwan».<sup>100</sup> In any case, it speaks more about Təklä Haymanot than about Iyäsus Mo'a; the account concerning Təklä Haymanot follows his Vita in the Däbrä Libanos recension, and the author of the History shows no interest in taking up the occasion to raise the discussion and revise the story about Iyäsus Mo'a's assumption of the monastic habit, unless the absence of the author's clear position should be considered an attempt to hide details of Iyäsus Mo'a's life.<sup>101</sup> Otherwise,

<sup>98</sup> While working on his well-known essay (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970), Tadesse Tamrat managed to gain access to and consult the unique sources preserved in Däbrä Ḥayq; however, he apparently did not find any material which would have lead him to discuss the problem in his article and/or start its closer investigation.

<sup>99</sup> MS EML 1942, fol. 67b–85a.

<sup>100</sup> Cp. also Getatchew Haile's comments, EML V, 440.

<sup>101</sup> Here is the relevant passage according to MS EML 1942. It is related that Təklä Haymanot was born in the seventh year of the reign of Nə'akk'eto Lā-Ab at the age of 22 years he left his parents, quitting the worldly life. Thereafter, the Saint had preached and built churches in Kātata, Damot, Ənnarya etc. Thereafter, «(72vb) saint Uriel ordered him to learn the monastic law from Bəšälötä Mikael of the country of Amhara, in order to become the father of all holy monks of the land of Ethiopia [ዘብሔረ : ኢትዮጵያ]. He went and stayed (there) 10 years, learning the monastic law and making signs while healing the sick. And thereafter Saint Uriel ordered him to go to Lake Ḥayq and stay with Iyäsus Mo'a. And he stayed with him 10 years. And after this, he departed from *abba* Iyäsus Mo'a and ascended (73ra) Däbrä Dammo, to *abba* Yoḥanni; and he stayed with him 12 years». Təklä Haymanot travelled to Jerusalem three times, till the Patriarch Michael ordered him to stay in Ethiopia to promote monasticism. «(73rb) And after this (73va) he returned from the Patriarch *abba* Michael and ascended Däbrä Dammo, to *abba* Yoḥanni. And he told him what the Patriarch said, all his words. And thereafter *abba* Yoḥanni responded to him and said: 'I heard [it] from the mouth of all holy monks, the beloved of Our Lady Mary, and they told me that you would be the father of holy monks of the monasteries of all [the country of] Šāwa (አድባራተ : ኩሉ : ሸዋ), which Archangel Uriel consecrated with the blood of Christ... Go there and stay there... (73vb)' And after this he left Däbrä Dammo and went to Däbrä Libanos, after he [reached the age of] 70 years after he had been

at first glance there are no Däbrä Ḥayq documents concerning the biography of Iyäsus Mo'a, except for his Vita, which would deal with the episode in a very different way, speaking from an articulated and consequently ideological position.<sup>102</sup>

An additional last group of documents worth noting is represented by monastic spiritual genealogies and other texts of this kind. These sources have not yet been a subject of comprehensive research; yet many of them mention both Täklä Haymanot's and Iyäsus Mo'a's assumption of the monastic habit, thus recording the relationship between the two saints. The spiritual pedigree of Täklä Haymanot, which follows the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita, was compiled simultaneously with or, most probably, somewhat later than the latter, and spread throughout Ethiopia in numerous copies.<sup>103</sup> Taking into account the fact that the genealogies show numerous variations

born... And in the second year after his entering Däbrä Libanos, the Orthodox King Yəkunno Amlak reigned through the prayer of this father [who] anointed him by his [own] hand with the pure anointment of the kingdom. And it was fulfilled what was called «the miracle of his name» in the Homily of Urael...» The King went to Roha, visited Lalibäla and built another one church — Gännätä Maryam, which Täklä Haymanot consecrated. «(74rb) And after this Yəkunno Amlak went to the island of Lake Ḥayq and built a church for Iyäsus Mo'a and called it Däbrä Näg'ädg'ad... (74rb) And he appointed *abba* Iyäsus Mo'a Archpriest (ሊቀ ፡ ከሆኖት) and *ʿaqqabe sä'at* for the entire country of Ethiopia, and he said to Täklä Haymanot: «Bring all your [spiritual] sons that you generated through the Holy Spirit, so that they will construct and build church[es] in the name of our Lady Mary, the Mother of God (74va), on all the mountains that Saint Uriel blessed with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Täklä Haymanot chose from his [spiritual] sons 33 who took the monastic cap and scapular from his hands...»

<sup>102</sup> Cp. also the Miracles of Iyäsus Mo'a (EMML 1940, 19<sup>th</sup> cent., from Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos; the Miracles seem to post-date the bulk of Iyäsus Mo'a's hagiography, and sometimes draw upon his Vita) which begin with the account of how Iyäsus Mo'a left his family at the age of 40 and went to Däbrä Dammo where he spent 7 years with *abba* Yoḥanni. The author of the Miracles does not provide details on Iyäsus Mo'a's assumption of the monastic habit — tunic, monastic cap and scapular (fol. 69–70, s. also MARRASSINI 1986:183; unless the reference to Iyäsus Mo'a as a «perfect monk», መነሱ ፡ ፍጹም on fol. 78vb [cp. MARRASSINI 1986:188] is a hint to his complete monastic profession).

<sup>103</sup> The earliest edition of such a text, from MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éth. 160 is in BASSET 1896:15–16. Some time in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> cent. this genealogy was combined with a short description of Täklä Haymanot's life deriving from the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita and became known as the «Genealogy of our fathers, the monks». The account renarrates the life of Täklä Haymanot, taking its start from his spiritual genealogy (this spiritual genealogy is missing in BUDGE 1906, which has only its «short» variant in ch. 88; in manuscripts with the original Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita this genealogy usually stands before the Homily



which reveal that their creators could easily «reinterpret» different points of the Ethiopian monastic history, we can not escape the impression that the episode in question failed to attract particular attention, and did not generate resentment or polemic in monastic circles (at least until a certain moment). The episode is sometimes found in the spiritual genealogies of those monks whose communities were distant from both Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa and «the house of Täklä Haymanot» in Azäzo near Gondär, with the variant of the story rejected by the hagiographer of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos apparently dominating, but sometimes difused and/or incorporated into other traditions.<sup>104</sup> Some of the genealogies omit central details of the story or mutilate it, or depart from its main framework, probably making reference to different traditions.<sup>105</sup> On the whole, though the topic of spiritual fatherhood appears important, the genealogies do not focus on the monastic habit and do not create on its basis any claim for superiority.

on the day of his *translatio*, following the Vita and the family genealogy of the Saint). It tells that Yoḥanni «begat» Iyäsus Moʼa with *qämis* and *qənat*, and Iyäsus Moʼa, in turn, «begat» Täklä Haymanot with *qämis* and *qənat*; Täklä Haymanot received *qob*<sup>c</sup> and *askema* at Däbrä Dammo, from Yoḥanni; as he came back, he gave *qob*<sup>c</sup> and *askema* to his spiritual father, following the request of the latter (GETACHEW HAILE 1982–1983:9–10, 23–24 and n. 12).

<sup>104</sup> Cp. the spiritual genealogy of Mädhāninä Ḥgziʼ, the founder of Däbrä Bankʼal in Šäre, Təgray (CONTI ROSSINI 1943:337): «Yoḥanni generò Iyasus-Moʼa e Takla-Häymānot: generò Iyasus-Moʼa col camice e col cingolo e Takla-Häymānot col cappuccio e con la scapolare. Takla-Häymānot generò Madḥanina-ʼEgziʼ di Bankual»... Cp. the genealogy from the monastery of Gundä Gunde: «Mädhāninä Ḥgziʼ generated Mäsqäl Mäwaʼi, and Mäsqäl Mäwaʼi generated Yoḥanni, and Yoḥanni generated Iyäsus Moʼa, and Iyäsus Moʼa generated our father Täklä Haymanot with the tunic and girdle and the garb [ጸጽፍ], whereas he took the scapular and [monastic] cap from *abba* Yoḥanni of Dammo, who is the father of his father in spirit ... And our farther Täklä Haymanot generated *abba* Mädhāninä Ḥgziʼ of Bonkäl...» (MORDINI 1952:56, 58).

<sup>105</sup> In MS EMMML 1440, a brief monastic genealogy from Anthony the Great until a certain Lābbawi Krəstos states that Iyäsus Moʼa was the spiritual son of Yoḥanni, but neither mentions Täklä Haymanot nor contains any further details about Iyäsus Moʼa (fol. 58ra–vb). Cp. also the genealogy of the disciples of Iyäsus Moʼa from EMMML 1960, fol. 28vb, in which nothing is said about Iyäsus Moʼa's spiritual father, whereas a certain Täklä Haymanot is mentioned only after some generations, as the spiritual son of Gäbrä Ḥndrəyas. Besides, cp. the genealogy of Däbrä Libanos monks (from Anthony the Great to the early 17<sup>th</sup>-cent. abbot Abṛəham) from the manuscript of the Catholic mission in Kärän (CONTI ROSSINI 1904:238–240): here Iyäsus Moʼa comes to Däbrä Dammo and receives from Yoḥanni the monastic cap and scapular; then Täklä Haymanot comes (ሐብሶ : ሐብሶ : ሐብሶ, s. above) and also receives the monastic cap and scapular; then Täklä Haymanot comes to Iyäsus Moʼa, and, following the request of the latter, hands the monastic cap and scapular over to his

## III

We have been tracing the episode which constitutes the «controversial point» of Ethiopian Church history through a number of sources. Indeed, this episode is also recorded, among others, in old traditions — a fact which speaks for its historicity. However, having studied it from different points of view, we are less certain than before as to what degree the episode reflected in the relevant texts is «controversial». Between the earliest attestation of the story and the time it could have taken place there remains a gap of more than 100 years. As the story took the form of a written account, it started to change its shape, but, apparently, very little of actual «ideological revision» can be found in any of its alterations. By the time of the creation of the Waldəbba recension of the Vita of Tāklā Haymanot, it was already a remembrance of the honourable past of Ethiopian monasticism shaped as a hagiographic account — shared by all sides involved — Däbrä Libanos, Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos, Däbrä Dammo; this is supported by the story of monastic career of Tāklā Haymanot as presented in EMMML 1834 of the Däbrä Ḥayq and EMMML 8742 of the Ṭana Qirqos. The tradition of Däbrä Dammo contributed an important element to the hagiographic representation of the episode some time in the late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> cent.; the fact that the author of the Däbrä Libanos recension took from the Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi one particular interpretation of the story, is possibly an example of the biased approach of hagiographers. As to the rest, the pieces of evidence, which are extracted from sources prior to the creation of the lengthy recension of the Vita of Iyäsus Moʾa, can hardly be interpreted as reflecting the rivalry between Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa and Däbrä Ḥayq ʾEṣṭifanos, especially if they are looked at in a broader literary (hagiographical)<sup>106</sup> and hi-

spiritual father. Finally, cp. a brief account about Tāklā Haymanot's wanderings in the Vita of Tadewos, the founder of Däbrä Maryam on Ṭana lake (in fact, this work narrates the deeds of Tadewos in southern Ethiopia; Six 1975:136–139). Cp. a very peculiar genealogy from MS EMMML 5117: «Yosef begat Mäsqäl Bezanä, and Mäsqäl Bezanä (begat) Mādhaninä ʾEgziʾ, and Mādhaninä ʾEgziʾ (begat) Mäsqäl Mäwaʾi, and Mäsqäl Mäwaʾi (begat) Yohānni of the Desert [ዮሐንስ : ዝገዳም]. And Yohānni begat Iyyäsus Moʾa, the Leaf of Sabbath; Arsesayus, the Grass of Sabbath [ወለደሙ : ለእደሱስ : ሞላ : ቁጽለ : ሰንበት : ወኤርሴሳዮስ : ግዕረ : ሰንበት]; Tāklā Haymanot, the Father of Kings; and Danəʾel, the Rock of Sabbath — in habit and belt [እሙንገለ : ቀግረ : ወቅንግት]...» (GETATCHEW HAILE 1992:235–236).

<sup>106</sup> Within the scale of the present study it is difficult to assess how far hagiographers could or wanted to go in depicting or alluding to conflicts or controversies with other communities, which certainly could have taken place. An answer may to be looked for in defining the general aesthetic principles of Ethiopian hagiography as a literary genre (this being linked to a larger problem, particularly important for Ethiopian studies: elaborating reasonable criteria for critical approach to hagiographic

historical context,<sup>107</sup> including considerations as to the role and position of the monastic investiture in traditional monastic culture.

sources) and in a careful study of each single case. It is, indeed, striking that the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>-cent. controversies between the *Täwähädo* and *Qəbat* religious fractions, in which many monasteries took an active part, left relatively few direct traces in the hagiographies known so far. At the same time, most remarkable in this respect is the Vita of Zä-Mika'el Arägawi, which ascribes to the Saint such a central role in Kaleb's campaign as is played, in fact, by his «twin» *abba* Pāntälewōn — according to the latter's Vita. We can only speculate how this alternative description of Kaleb's campaign to Yemen was perceived by representatives of Betä Pāntälewōn (the political decline of which was also accompanied by the transfer of economic benefits to Däbrä Dammo). These transformations may find typological correspondences in some other cases (one can remember, e. g., that the leading role in the confrontation of monks with King ʿAmdä Šəyon I is also contested by several hagiographic traditions), yet the accounts of the monastic initiations of the saints seem hardly ever to have been exploited in this respect. The most peculiar «deviation» from the common patterns that could have caused concerns may be the motive of receiving of the monastic habit or its part from God, but it appears in only a very few hagiographies, though in those of the most venerated monks (Gäbrä Mānfäs Qəddus, Zär'a Buruk, Filəppos of Däbrä Bizān, and also Täklä Haymanot), and remains «closed» — the hagiographers did not pick this element for promoting any claims.

<sup>107</sup> The idea of the controversy between Däbrä Libanos and Däbrä Ḥayq ʿƏstifanos, and the mutual attempts at limiting the respective influence by means of reversing the spiritual filiation (DERAT 2003:108) should be attenuated. It is not the place here to discuss in details the history of either Däbrä Libanos or Däbrä Ḥayq; but it is difficult indeed to find direct references to any serious controversy of an economic, political or religious nature (e. g., transfer of land possessions and titles; different positions in theological controversies etc.) between Däbrä Ḥayq and Däbrä Libanos. The rise of Däbrä Libanos happened long after Däbrä Ḥayq became an established royal sanctuary. In the 15<sup>th</sup> cent., in particular during the reign of Zär'a Ya'əqob, both monasteries passed through periods of royal favour and disfavour, which had immediate impact, first of all, on the situation of their abbots, ʿ*aqqabe sä'at* and ʿ*əččäge* respectively, who spent much time at the court (with the consequence of weakening direct links to their communities). From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent. at least, the ʿ*əččäge* was nominated the head of all Ethiopian monks; however, the ʿ*aqqabe sä'at* undoubtedly enjoyed high prestige and influence as well (in fact, differences could occasionally appear between them). In the 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> cent., the economic situation of Däbrä Ḥayq was improving thanks to donations (s. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970). The spheres of direct influence of both monasteries hardly overlapped due simply to the considerable distance separating them. Däbrä Libanos's religious and administrative presence was substantial in particular in the southern regions of the Kingdom, where it administered missionary activities and ecclesiastic matters. Possibly, these constraints contrasted with the meditative asceticism of Däbrä Ḥayq (the ideal reflected in the Homily of Iyäsus Mo'a, Acts of Bäggo' and elsewhere). In fact, the reconstruction of the «monastic network» of Däbrä Ḥayq ʿƏstifanos — the ecclesiastic organization thought to be a rival of Däbrä Libanos — is mostly based on the in-

The «lengthy» recension of the Vita of Iyäsus Moʼa, containing numerous «testaments» between the Saint and King Yəkunno Amlak, is a unique piece of evidence. Certainly, it may have been a response to the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup>-cent. «Riches of the Kings» of the «house of Täklä Haymanot» and the claims of Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa. But, in view of its complex textual history and its possible historical context, the work appears to be of a more recent origin than has been suggested before: it was created after the «intermediary recension» of the Vita (or «the short Vita») attested in MS Ṭānāsee 164 = Dāgā Eṣṭifānos 53 which was the continuation of the textual tradition of the Homily. The fact that the «lengthy» recension of the Vita of the Saint is hitherto known only from two 19<sup>th</sup>-cent. manuscripts betrays the rather late and local character of the «controversy». Thus, the latter's possible causes should be looked for in the recent history of Däbrä Ḥayq,<sup>108</sup> in particular, in the age of Yoḥannes IV and Mənilək II, when the gradual movement towards a centralized state began to take shape. By then, the ancient sanctuary of Däbrä Ḥayq Eṣṭifanos attracted the attention of the Ethiopian lords. At some point during this period, intending to use the opportunity and resume its high position in the national Church hierarchy, the community of Däbrä Ḥayq Eṣṭifanos may have compiled and presented a new complete version of the Vita of Iyäsus Moʼa, the most prominent monk of the community, producing new evidence about the valuable services he rendered to the Solomonic rulers, ascertaining his fame, and denouncing old rumours which could have cast doubts upon his fame.

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formation from the Vita of Iyäsus Moʼa; yet the claims made in this Vita usually find no confirmation in local monastic traditions; it is unknown how such a «monastic network» could have been organized (DERAT 2003:110–119).

<sup>108</sup> This is not an easy task, for the history of the monastery during the late 17<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> cent. — the time it kept out from big events — remains less well known. In the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., Däbrä Ḥayq did not suffer a complete devastation like Däbrä Libanos. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., Däbrä Libanos revived and occupied the leading role in the kingdom, but already in the early 17<sup>th</sup> cent. a major part of its community moved to the region of lake Ṭana, to settle later in Azäzo, whereas the original Däbrä Libanos remained in decline until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. Both the *‘aqqabe säʿat* and the *əččäge* resided in Gondär, and were separated from their communities and involved in theological controversies and political intrigues. In the 18<sup>th</sup> cent., the titles were sometimes bestowed upon the representatives of other monasteries (under Bäkäffa, re. 1721–1730, the title of *‘aqqabe säʿat* was given to the head of Däbrä Məṭmaq). Since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> cent., while «the house of Täklä Haymanot» retained importance, Däbrä Ḥayq was constantly endangered by Oromo Marawwa and Wällo, and later by Wällo's Islamic rulers. The Christian population remained only in the vicinities of the monastery. Only from the time of Yoḥannəs IV (1872–1889) did the monastery gain support again, and favour by the kings and nobles (as appears from land charters registered in MS EMMML 1940).

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## Appendix

1) The famous Gäbrä Mānfäs Qəddus was 12 years old when *abba* Zāmädä Bərhan «gave him the holy scapular, like Anthony, and girded his loins with «hair sackcloth» (ጸጉረ : ሠቅ) as «one girdes with the girdle» (ዘከመ : ይቀንቱ : ቅናተ, MARRASSINI 2003:12–13[text]; cp. also XL–XLII), whereas in the lengthy Synaxarion note on Gäbrä Mānfäs Qəddus any indication of the assumption of the monastic habit is missing (30 *Mäggabit*, COLIN 1994:440–467, BUDGE 1928:755–772).

2) Ewostətewos was clad with the monastic habit by *abba* Danəʾel (ወአለበሶ : አልባሶ : ምንኩስና...), on which occasion he also obtained his monastic name (TURAIEV 1902:303; TURAIEV 1905:22–23).

3) Having reached the monastic community of *abba* Pāntālewōn, Yəśhaq/ Gärīma immediately asks for the scapular: አባ : አልብሰኒ : አስኬማ : ዘመነካሳት. After Pāntālewōn's question as to whether he is ready for the scapular — i. e. the monastic life (ትክልት : አወልድዮ : አስኬማ : መነካሳት) — and Gärīma's convincing response, Pāntālewōn confers the scapular upon him: ...ነሥኦ : አስኬማ : መነካሳት : ወአልብሶ : ወባረኮ : ሳዕሌሁ... What follows seems to be an excerpt from the ritual of the monastic consecration (CONTI ROSSINI 1897:152).

4) Zä-Mikaʾel Arāgawi assumed the monastic habit at the age of 19, from the hands of Pachomius the Great, after a short interrogation to prove the seriousness of his intention (ትክልት : ከዊነ : መነኩስ...). After some time Pachomius clad him with the monastic clothes (አለበሶ : አልባሶ : ምንኩስና) and proclaimed the formula: «May God bless your scapular as He blessed *abba* Anthony and *abba* Macarius, my fathers» and conferred upon him the new name — Zä-Mikaʾel Arāgawi (GUIDI 1895:6–7). The same procedure is carried out when Liqanos, Yəməʾata, Šəḥma, Guba, Afše and Pāntālewōn (cp. *DEB* 209–210) come to him, with slight deviations in wording (e.g., አልብሰኒ : አስኬማ : ዘመነካሳት...; ትክልት : ጸዊረ : አርዑተ : ምንኩስና...ወሶቤሃ : አልበሶሙ : አልባሶ : መነካሳት, s. GUIDI 1895:7–8).

5) The *Vita* of Libanos/Māṭṭā reports that he accepted the scapular from Pachomius before leaving for Ethiopia (BAUSI 2003, §26; cp. also *ibid.* [tr.], 9, n. 35;

the Vita most probably repeats what the ancient Homily [in honour of] Mätṭa<sup>c</sup> tells, s. GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:36–37: «There, he took the monastic habit [ኃሥኦ : አስኪማ] from the man of God»).

6) According to the Vita of Samu<sup>2</sup>el of Däbrä Halleluya, when Nä<sup>2</sup>akwəto Lā-Ab (Samu<sup>2</sup>el's worldly name) came to the community of *abba* ʾEnṭonəs, he asked for monastic cap and scapular (መጻእኩ : ጎቤከ : ከመ : ተሀበኒ : ቆብዓ : ወአስኪማ), but was first interrogated by ʾEnṭonəs (ይትከሃለከኑ : አወልድዮ : ከመ : ትጽር : አርዑተ : ምንኩስና). As the Vita states, the ritual of conferrance of the monastic habit was performed according to the *Mäṣḥafä Mənkʷəsənnä*: the monastic cap and scapular were placed in front of the *tabot*, and the prayer was recited over them; the novice was blessed by all the «saints» (*qəddusan*), a prayer was performed over him, and he received the monastic cap and scapular and his new monastic name — Samu<sup>2</sup>el (COLIN 1990:8).

7) Yonas took on the monastic habit from *abba* Dəmyanos of Däbrä Sina, in Särawe; Dəmyanos clad the novice with the monastic clothes (አልቦ : አልባ : ምንኩስና) and gave him a new name (Yonas's worldly name was Habtä ʾEgzi<sup>2</sup>); as the Vita mentions, those who accepted the monastic cap, scapular and «sheep-skin» (ሐሜላት, s. n. 27) from *abba* Yonas will be saved (CONTI ROSSINI 1903:13–14).

8) Zä-Yoḥannəs of Kəbran assumed the monastic cap and scapular in Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, from *abba* Həzqəyas, who also clad him with the «clothes of the angels» after seven years of probation (SCHNEIDER 1972:9).

9) The Vita of Filəppos of Däbrä Bizan recounts in detail how Filəppos was called to take a monastic vow and to take on the monastic clothes and «the holy scapular» (አልባ : ምንኩስና : ወአስኪማ : ቅድስት) by the Holy Spirit, who told him to go to Bäkimos of Däbrä Šarabi. The Holy Spirit also informed Bäkimos about the one coming to him. Having performed the ritual according to the *Mäṣḥafä Mənkʷəsənnä*, Bäkimos lay upon Filəppos the monastic habit, speaking of «the garb of our Lady Mary», «the girdle of John [the Baptist]» and «the garment of angels» (ዓዕፈ : ዘመላእክት, s. CONTI ROSSINI 1900:77–78). Thereafter, the Vita relates, somewhat vaguely, how Filəppos went into the desert and received the monastic cap and scapular «from the hands of Jesus Christ, while the Saviour spoke to and conversed with him in the likeness of *abba* Ewostatewos» (ibid. 79). The Synaxarion of Däbrä Wärq, an Ewostatean monastery in Goḡḡam, repeats the story, yet in this document Filəppos received the cap and scapular in Betä ʾPäntälewön (near Aksum?), and Christ spoke to him in the likeness of ʾPäntälewön (SCHNEIDER 1978)!

10) *Abunä* Zär<sup>2</sup>a Buruk received the «angelic habit» (here meaning: the scapular) from God; he received the «spiritual [monastic] cap» the girdle from God as well, but through the hands of *abunä* Täklä Haymanot and Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus respectively; in addition, he assumed «the cloth of the chest» (ልብስ : እንግድዓ) from Ewostatewos (JAEGER 1912:168–169; RICCI 1979:108);

11) Anorewos received the monastic habit from Täklä Haymanot, who invested him with monastic garb and girdle (ወእምድገረ : ጎዳጥ : መዋዕል : አልቦ : ወአቀነቶ : አቡነ : ተክለ : ሃይማኖት : ለአቡነ : አኖሬዎስ, CONTI ROSSINI 1905:

69); further on, it is related that Anorewos wore «the rope belt» (*zäḥabl qənat*; *ibid.*, 77).

12) Bāšälötä Mikaʿel received monastic garb (**አልባስ : ምንኩስና**) from *abba* Anorewos, at Däbrä Gʷäl (CONTI ROSSINI 1905:14).

13) The Vita of Həḍan Moʿa reports that this holy monk received «the monkish clothes» (**አልባስ : ምንኩስና**) from the head of the community of Däbrä Bäggoʿ (MS EMML 2353, fol. 6ra–va).

14) The Vita of Bäggoʿ, a monk from Däbrä Ḥayq ʿEṣṭifanos, does not relate how he assumed the monastic habit; after the report about Bäggoʿʿs entering the community, the author concentrates on the strictest abstinence of Bäggoʿ (he did not drink water for many years; MS EMML 1960, fol. 61va).

15) According to his Vita, Yoḥannəs Məsraqawi left his family at the age of 22 and spent many years in «the house of Isidor» (in Egypt) serving as *rädʿ* and *mäggabi*, but received the full monastic habit including the scapular (**እምቅናት : ዘአዲም : እስከ : አስኬማ : መላእክት : ዘእንጦንስ**) in Ethiopia, from *abunä* Tāklä Haymanot (MARRASSINI 1984:180–183). Another piece of the tradition, separate from the Vita, mentions his assumption of the habit (**አልባስ : ምንኩስና**) again, this time without details; here the hagiographer claims that, Yoḥannəs has a privileged position as compared to the other 12 pupils of Tāklä Haymanot, since he was the first to received the monastic habit from the latter (*ibid.*, 342–345; cp. also *ibid.*, LXVII–LXX, C–CI)

There are some examples from the traditions related to Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa:

16) According to the Waldəbba recension of the Vita of Tāklä Haymanot, the Saint accepted in his community Abel «a son of Zeb Däḥar» and, after an interrogation (**እፎ : ትክል : ከመ : ትጽር : አርዑተ : ምንተ** : [sic! እንተ? — *D. N.*] **ምንኩስና**...) and a period of noviciate, consecrated him monk (**ወእምድሃረ : ኅጻጥ : መዋዕለ : ረሰዮ : መነኮስ**...). When he assumed the scapular his ascetic conduct became so rigid that Tāklä Haymanot had to restrain him, but soon he allowed Abel to live «in the desert». It is reported that as soon as he took on the «scapular of the angels» (**አስኬማ : ዘመላእክት**) he stopped eating bread (CONTI ROSSINI 1895:118).

17) Märḥa Krəstos was vested with the «monastic garb» (**ልብስ : ምንኩስና**) by *abunä* Yoḥannəs Kāma, being of a young age, and after a certain time he received the monastic cap and scapular (KUR 1972:24–25).

18) Tāklä Hawaryat received the «monastic garb» (**ልብስ : ምንኩስና**) from Yoḥannəs Kāma, in Däbrä Libanos (CONTI ROSSINI 1910:71).

19) *Īččäge* ʿEnbaqom received the «clothes of the holyness» from *äččäge* Pēṭros («Egli disse: figlio mio, da questo momento sii monaco e indossa le vesti della santità [**አልባስ : ቅድስና**] dei padri nostri Antonio e Macario e degli altri Santi...»), after a period of noviciate and religious education (RICCI 1955–1958:81).

20) *Īččäge* Yoḥannəs assumed the monastic habit from ʿEnbaqom («e quindi gli vestì l'abito monastico e fece discendere su di lui le benedizione del Signore», RICCI 1969–1970:176), later on the Vita reports that ʿEnbaqom was also his father in respect of the scapular («gli era padre nei riguardi dello scapolare [*askiēmā*]», *ibid.*, 191).



21) Habtä Maryam, another representative of the community of Däbrä Libanos, assumed the monastic habit (አርዑተ : ምንኩስና) not in Däbrä Libanos (RAINERI 1990:37).

22) Samu'el, the founder of Däbrä Wägäg, assumed the monastic habit (አርዑተ : ምንኩስና) from Täklä Haymanot, who also taught him «the monastic rules» (ሥርዓተ : ምንኩስና; KUR 1968:7).

## SUMMARY

The study deals with an episode from the history of the Ethiopian Church that relates to Iyäsus Mo'a and his pupil Täklä Haymanot, both famous saints and 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup>-cent. abbots of Dabra Ḥayq Ḥstifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa respectively. Known mostly from the hagiographic documents and considered crucial for Ethiopian history, the episode centres on Iyäsus Mo'a's and Täklä Haymanot's assumption of the monastic habit, namely on the sequence in which they bestowed on each other the articles of the monastic attire. The episode has been analysed and interpreted by scholars in different ways, and has been thought to be important for the reconstruction of the history of the relationship between Dabra Hayq and Däbra Libanos — the most important centres of the Ethiopian monasticism. The present article continues this discussion and attempts to reach a better understanding of the sources and, consequently, the events they describe. The paper examines the episode in light of what we know about real Ethiopian monastic practices. Thereafter, it attempts to reconstruct the development of the event's representation in the hagiographic sources and its traditional perception, by clarifying the textual history of the most crucial hagiographic documents containing the episode (including, e. g., the discussion on the «short Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a» from MS. Ṭānāsee 164 = Dāgā Ḥstifanos 53), and by inquiring the references to this episode found in other sources.