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Ethiopic Colophons: An Update*

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Ethiopic colophons are still an understudied subject among the broader field of the codex manuscript cultures of East and West. The Christian Ethiopian and Eritrean manuscript tradition in Gə'əz language provides a rich, still unsystematically studied documentation of colophons. While the earliest extant colophons date to the thirteenth century, the phenomenon is certainly older. In some periods and monastic environments it has enjoyed a particular fortune and shows a tendency to the expansion. As marker of material and/or textual production, the colophon is related and at times overlaps with the phenomenon of the title and supplication.

Introduction

In a 2016 contribution dedicated to Ethiopic¹ colophons I underlined that colophons, subscriptions, and end notes—to use a comprehensive category—of

- * This article resumes a paper published a few years ago in Italian (Bausi 2016a) and provides a few updates and additions that take into account contributions of the last years. The research was funded by the Langzeitvorhaben im Akademienprogramm (long-term project in the program of The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities), through a project of the Academy of Hamburg, ‘Beta masāḥaft: Die Schriftkultur des christlichen Äthiopiens und Eritreas: eine multimediale Forschungsumgebung’ (Bm), at Universität Hamburg (UHH) (2016–2040); by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany’s Excellence Strategy, EXC 2176 ‘Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Cultures’, project no. 390893796 at UHH (2019–2025); by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC, at University of Oxford and at University City, London), by the DFG (at UHH), project no. 672619, ‘Demarginalizing Medieval Africa: Images, Texts, and Identity in Early Solomonic Ethiopia (1270–1527)’, at UHH (2020–2024); and by the DFG (within the framework of the Forschungsgruppe 5138 ‘Geistliche Intermedialität in der Frühen Neuzeit’, at UHH), project no. 680753, ‘Der mediale Status des Körpers – Körper im Bild und Körperbild. König Käleb und andere äthiopische Heilige in Portugal und Brasilien im 18. Jahrhundert’, at UHH (2022–2025). The research was conducted within the scope of the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies (HLC EES) and of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), at UHH. On *Clavis aethiopica* (CAe), see <<https://betamasaheft.eu/#texts>> (last accessed 24 October 2022); for a glimpse at the paratexts encoded by the Bm project, including colophons, see <<https://betamasaheft.eu/paratexts>> (last accessed 24 October 2022).
- 1 As usual, by Ethiopic I essentially refer here to the Christian Ethiopian and Eritrean manuscript tradition in Gə'əz language, this latter also indicated as Ancient Ethiopic, Classical Ethiopic, Old Ethiopic, or simply Ethiopic; to this tradition is strictly related the Christian tradition of Amharic language.

Ethiopic manuscripts had not yet received the attention of any specifically dedicated study, either from the point of view of Ethiopian studies or from multidisciplinary contributions on colophons. Several years later, I am afraid I can say that not much has changed and that my modest contribution still remains one of the few comprehensive attempts at delineating some features of colophons in Ethiopic manuscripts.² If it is probably no longer the right time for collections of colophons published, translated, and commented in print, as the experience of several projects in related fields clearly shows,³ yet the fact remains that such undertakings were never attempted for Ethiopic manuscripts, and it is not possible to take them as a reference point. On the other hand, it is undeniable that there has been a substantial growth of the accessible material and that several initiatives have laid down the basis for a fundamentally new understanding of the phenomenon of the colophon as such, including its function of paratext or paracontent.⁴ Moreover, there are many points where the research has benefited from recent contributions, not only in the case of the 'Abbā Garimā Gospels, to give one example, but also in several others.⁵ If the quantitative analysis of the phenomena does not yet appear any more an impossible task even for traditions, like the Ethiopic one,

2 Just to remind what has *not* been done in the past, there was no contribution dedicated to Ethiopic manuscripts in the well-known 1993 conference on scribes and colophons that opened up a fertile path of investigation (see for all Cavallo et al. 1991), to some extent, continued also physically (considering the decisive role in all of them of a scholar like Marilena Maniaci) in the 'Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies' (COMSt) project, see n. 13. One may also note that the same isolation and lack of consideration of the Ethiopic evidence happened for the earliest comparative studies of the liturgical homiliaries, see for example Grégoire 1968, where the Ethiopian tradition is completely neglected.

3 See the experience of the project 'PATPhs: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature', European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant (2015–2021), headed by Paola Buzi at Sapienza University of Rome, <<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons>> (last accessed 17 October 2022) for Coptic manuscripts. For the Bm project, see above n. *.

4 According to approaches and definitions; see Andrist 2018; Ciotti et al. 2018.

5 See Nosnitsin 2020 for the most updated and reliable general overview; see also recent publications, like the large and detailed catalogue by Zarzecny et al. 2020, that considers 175 manuscripts from two private collections: of these, colophons are mentioned for twenty manuscripts and thirteen are fully edited and translated; see pp. 107 (ed.), 154, 162, 209 (ed.), 253 (ed.), 281, 295 (ed.), 452 (ed.), 493, 528 (ed.), 552–553 (ed.), 575, 641, 649 (ed.), 704 (ed.), 722 (ed.), 768 (ed.), 780 (ed.), 789 (ed.), 791 (ed.); or the printed and electronic online catalogue of the twenty-four manuscripts of the Dayr as-Suryān collection by Nosnitsin and Reule 2021, where colophons are recorded for three manuscripts; see pp. 25–26 (two colophons for the same manuscript), 40–41, and 59; see also there the pragmatic definition of colophon,

where the estimated number of extant manuscripts varies between 100,000 and 1,000,000, we must admit that the statistic distribution of phenomena and a comprehensive understanding of the features of Ethiopic colophons is still to come. It appears nonetheless reasonable, at the cost of some repetitions, to update the discourse on Ethiopic manuscripts integrating new data, providing corrections and additions, and adding a few more examples, with full awareness that this is still far from a comprehensive organic presentation.

An essential starting point is the attempt at defining the colophon and other related elements (titles and supplications) as has been done within the scope of the Bm project,⁶ where the colophon in the narrow sense is understood as follows: ‘A colophon refers to production stages of the entire manuscript only and is usually found to the end, in rare cases to the beginning of the manuscript. Even if this is short and contains no date, it is still a colophon’.⁷ This definition is aimed at a consistent encoding and considers in particular the special connection of the subscription and end note to the titles, as an apparent feature in texts belonging to what I have called ‘the earlier layer’ of the Ethiopic tradition.⁸ This appears to be a particularly prominent feature in the case of multiple-text manuscripts that are the result of an assemblage of pieces created, received, translated, collected, and transmitted in the course of centuries, like hagiographic and homiletic collections, which—very importantly—preserve texts of pre-medieval transmission created in late antiquity.⁹

The necessity of not forgetting the work already done is still an urgent need. The assumption that all essential publications and contributions to be considered are in English is false and misleading, and besides what has been published in other European languages (French, German, Italian, Russian, and possibly others), also the production in Amharic cannot be disregarded.¹⁰ In some cases, the predominant interest for a materiality too radically considered

p. xxvii: ‘A record concerning the process of the manuscript production, usually attending its completion, with the date of completion and/or the name of the scribe’.

6 See <<https://betamasaheft.eu/Guidelines/?q=colophon&id=ColophSupplTit>> (last accessed 17 October 2022). I will only quote the beginning: ‘Colophons, Titles and Supplications. These three concepts and their encoding in manuscript and work records are treated together here as they tend to overlap in discussion. In this page, we will try to clarify our understanding and the way in which we encode each case’. What follows is too long to be quoted, but provides a useful practical guide on how to deal with the subject.

7 See <<https://betamasaheft.eu/Guidelines/?id=colophon>> (last accessed 17 October 2022).

8 See Bausi 2017a.

9 See below for references.

10 See for example the interesting catalogues, Tasfaye ደንብ and አላሙ ዳይል 2010; Salomon Massala and አላሙ ዳይል 2011.

as opposed to the textual, or better said: philological (text-critical) approach, has affected the quality of some contributions which give the impression of ignoring essential aspects of the past philological research.¹¹

In my 2016 contributions I mentioned three initiatives which appeared to be on the forefront of the research, that is, the project ‘Ethio-SPaRe’,¹² the ‘COMSt’ networking programme with the publication of a handbook in 2015,¹³ and the activities promoted, still at UHH, by the CSMC,¹⁴ that serves

- 11 Some reservations I had expressed towards the contributions collateral to the gigantic project of manuscript digitization undertaken by Steve Delamarter, Ethiopian Manuscript Imaging Project—see one of its earliest outcome, Delamarter and Demeke Berhane 2007—must be nuanced in the light of adjustments in successive catalogues; see Delamarter and Melaku Terefe 2009; Six et al. 2011; Melaku Terefe, Kesis et al. 2011; Getatchew Haile et al. 2009; and also the reviews by Bausi 2010a; Marrassini 2010a.
- 12 ‘Ethio-SPaRe – Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia. Salvation, Preservation, Research’, European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant (2009–2014), headed by Denis Nosnitsin; for this cooperative project, see at least Nosnitsin 2013a; Nosnitsin 2013b; Nosnitsin 2015; and the specific study on a manuscript from Dabra Ma’so, see Nosnitsin 2012; Nosnitsin 2013c.
- 13 ‘COMSt: Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies’, European Science Foundation (ESF) Networking Programme (2009–2014); see Bausi et al. 2015; on Ethiopic colophons there, see Balicka-Witakowska et al. 2015, 170–171.
- 14 Initial activities centred on the ‘Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 950 – Manuskriptkulturen in Asien, Afrika und Europa’ (2011–2020), funded by the DFG (at UHH) whereas since 2019 the Cluster within the framework of Germany’s Excellence Strategy, EXC 2176 ‘Understanding Written Artefacts’ (see above) has been established. The SFB 950 also included the project ‘Cross-Section Views of Evolving Knowledge: Canonico-Liturgical and Hagiographic Ethiopic Christian Manuscripts as Corpus-Organizers’ (2011–2015) and “Parchment Saints” – The Making of Ethiopic Hagiographic Manuscripts: Matter and Devotion in Manuscript Practices of Medieval and Pre-Modern Ethiopia’ (2015–2019) directed by myself and with participation of Antonella Brita. An exploration of colophons, also in Ethiopic manuscripts, was undertaken as part of a research on manuscript terminology in a broadly comparative perspective, already in the ‘Forschergruppe 963 – Manuskriptkulturen in Asien und Afrika / Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa’ (2009–2011), funded by the DFG (at UHH). The research included the drafting of a preliminary, unpublished glossary (*Glossary of Manuscript cultures in Asia and Africa*) sorted by key terms (‘binding, book formats, colophon, composite manuscript, copying, corrections, dating, illustration, layout/mise en page, lines, margins/marginalia, multiple-text, navigation aids, scriptorium, segmentation marks’, and others), and also including everything that can be understood under the notion of ‘colophon’. A work-in-progress version updated to 2011 was accessible to members of the SFB 950 on the Intranet of UHH; see Wion 2007; Anaïs Wion herself dealt with Ethiopic colophons in a communication—which followed the glossary note, later supplemented *ex post facto*—at the meritorious international confer-

as a general umbrella for globally comparative research—now expanded to include the Cluster of Excellence ‘Understanding Written Artefacts’. This was not meant to exclude the many other ongoing researches in terms of field works and documentation, but to give the importance it deserved to the consideration of theoretical questions that to some extent are at the centre of the work on colophons. It goes without saying that every project working on cataloguing and documenting manuscripts implicitly contributes to the research. Therefore, the well-established cataloguing team at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML), at Collegeville, MN;¹⁵ the French school that has worked at every level—archaeological, art-historical, historical, manuscriptological—in the central and northern highlands of Ethiopian historical regions (Lake Tāna and Lāstā in particular) with results of great impact;¹⁶ new projects at the University of Toronto¹⁷ and at Princeton University,¹⁸ as well as newly launched initiatives from the last years, like the Italian CaNaMEI,¹⁹ all are directly and indirectly contributing to the topic. Other initiatives have also made important contributions.²⁰ Yet, we have to remark once more that

ence ‘On Colophons’ (Hamburg, 3–5 December 2009) promoted at the time by the aforementioned Forschergruppe 963, and coordinated by Jörg B. Quenzer, where papers on the Latin, Hebrew, and Islamic manuscript traditions were followed by others on the Central and Eastern Asian, and Islamic *‘ağamī* traditions of Africa and South America. The conference proceedings unfortunately remained unpublished.

- 15 See <<https://hmml.org/collections/eastern-christian/>> (last accessed 27 October 2022) and the several contributions by Ted Erho, for example Erho 2017.
- 16 See Bosc-Tiessé 2008; Bosc-Tiessé 2009; Bosc-Tiessé 2010; Bosc-Tiessé et al. 2010; Bosc-Tiessé 2014; Derat 2018; Bausi 2018a; Bosc-Tiessé 2019. In this connection, the dissertation by Martina Ambu has focused on colophons as a privileged viewpoint on the activity of the metropolitan Salāmā and as sources for the study of Egyptian-Ethiopian relationships in the early-Solomonic period, see Ambu 2022.
- 17 See, besides the well-established ‘Mäzgäbä Sœlat’ project, <<http://ethiopia.deeds.utoronto.ca/about.html>> (last accessed 17 October 2022), the new project ‘Ethiopian Manuscripts and the Global Textile Trade’, headed by Michael Gervers and Sarah Fee.
- 18 See the ‘Princeton Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Egyptian Miracles of Mary Project’, Princeton University, headed by Wendy Laura Belcher, <<https://cdh.princeton.edu/projects/princeton-ethiopian-miracles-mary-project/>> (last accessed 17 October 2022).
- 19 For the project ‘Catalogo Nazionale dei Manoscritti Etiopici in Italia’, see Lusini 2020a; Villa 2022a; and the website with further references and downloadable reports, <<https://www.unior.it/ateneo/20625/1/the-canamei-project.html>> (last accessed 17 October 2022).
- 20 See Heldman and Devens 2005, which remains one of the most valuable contributions on colophons, carried out by a scholar like Marilyn E. Heldman who belongs to a period and a generation that cannot be reproposed in our period. For her legacy,

the manuscripts in Eritrea, notwithstanding various attempts, are still almost completely out of reach.²¹

Included traditionally in the field of palaeography, before being launched as one of the essential sources of the *archaeology of manuscript* approach,²² as a mere appendix to his own palaeographic work, Siegbert Uhlig²³ gave an initial classification of *notes* or *annotations*—thus not only colophons and/or subscriptions—distinguishing on the one hand annotations of any kind bearing chronological data, both internal—eulogies, dedications to the patron, and even subscriptions with indications of data on translation (on which more below)—and external to the texts—properly definable, also from a stratigraphic point of view, as *additiones* or *additional texts*,²⁴ and, on the other hand, the colophon in the strict sense, exclusively concerning the copyist and the time of manuscript production. While for the study of the former—all of which are valid to establish *termini ante quem*—and in particular for the category of documentary texts,²⁵ despite the inevitable divergence of views, there has been a growing interest and progress, research on the colophons and subscriptions of Ethiopian manuscripts has registered great advances,²⁶ but not yet any overall systematic synthesis.

still to be fully exploited, see here below the documents from Gʷənāgʷənā; on the great scholar, see Shelemyay 2019. On the process of copying, see now also Lusini 2020b; and the interesting cases studied by Villa 2021.

- 21 The little and best still goes back to initiatives of the 1990s that could only partially document a few selected manuscripts, for which see Bausi 1994; Bausi 1995; Bausi 1997; Lusini 1998. Recent attempts have not given any substantial output; for the good proposals, see Bausi and Lusini 2018; Villa 2018. For a recently newly documented ancient manuscript from Eritrea see Bausi 2022a. The Golden Gospel of Dabra Libānos has been studied by Marie-Laure Derat and lastly by Nafisa Valieva and Pietro Maria Liuzzo within the framework of a joint cooperation between Hamburg and Paris; see Derat 2018; Valieva and Liuzzo 2021. For an extremely archaic manuscript from Eritrea, the Computus of Gʷənāgʷənā, see below.
- 22 See the prophetic contribution by Beit-Arié 1995; and the always path-breaking overview by Maniaci 2002, 124, with references to essential contributions by Reynhout 1988; Reynhout 2001; and then Reynhout 2006.
- 23 Uhlig 1986; Uhlig 1988; Uhlig 1990.
- 24 One should remark that the term *additiones* has exclusively a meaning within a descriptive and (pre-)stratigraphic approach; it does not predicate anything on the actual contents of the note itself. With this in mind, the term has been at times misused in some cataloguing descriptions.
- 25 See Bausi 2010b; Fiacchadori 2014; Bausi 2014–2015; Wion 2019.
- 26 See for example the recent already quoted overview by Nosnitsin 2020; and the categorization introduced in Brita and Karolewski 2021, also at the example of Ethiopic manuscripts.

As I have had the opportunity to say on another occasion (providing an overview on cataloguing of Ethiopic manuscripts), the impact of Ethiopian manuscript catalogues compiled between the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century on the history of studies is truly impressive.²⁷ The cataloguers were at the time faced with a largely unpublished body of writing; it was the information that could only be obtained from the catalogues that provided the data for the development of the first syntheses on Ethiopian factual, cultural, and literary history based on written documents, which are still admirable for their sagacity and acumen. Exceptional scholars were able to make the best of at times nothing more than a short *incipit*, notes of *explicit*, at best more or less extensive excerpts, but most of all of colophons and subscriptions attesting copying, translating, and redacting, at times with attributions of names and details on places and institutions. A special role in this held dated inventories—essential for establishing *termini ante quos*—as well as a myriad of additional and documentary texts as evidence of historical importance and essentially used for dating.²⁸ Which means that the pioneering catalogues of the major Ethiopian manuscript collections in Europe edited by August Dillmann from 1847 onwards, then by William Wright and Hermann Zotenberg in 1877, by Boris A. Turaev in 1906, to name just the most important, have very often quoted colophons and subscriptions of Ethiopian manuscripts in full, thus allowing the first comprehensive sketch of the history of literature and literary practice, and still constitute, considering that they catalogued historical funds dating to a few centuries earlier, a documentation of primary importance.²⁹ In addition to these, there are of course

27 See Bausi 2007; Witakowski 2015.

28 For the careful use of ancient and modern inventory lists to trace manuscripts and textual witnesses, see the contributions by Erho 2015; Erho 2017. Note that the pioneering Missione Italiana in Eritrea, besides publishing some ancient ones from the medieval period, has also collected a number of modern inventories from Eritrean churches and monasteries; see for example the reports by Bausi et al. 1993; Bausi et al. 1995. Yet, more are now available.

29 See Dillmann 1847; Dillmann 1848; Wright 1877; Dillmann 1878; Zotenberg 1877. In my 2016 contribution I had also included the catalogue of the Vatican collection—the only analytical catalogue of Ethiopic manuscripts—by Sylvain Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant (Grébaut and Tisserant 1935–1936), which however postdates the first analytical sketch, the very first attempt of which is no doubt Carlo Conti Rossini's list of manuscripts and works, see Conti Rossini 1899a and Conti Rossini 1899b; all subsequent histories of literature (for example Nöldeke 1906; Littmann 1907; Littmann 1909; Harden 1926), including the literature by Ignazio Guidi (Guidi 1932, who made good use of the evidence from Turaev 1906; for one important golden Gospel, see Bausi 2020, 231, n. 40), are tributary to Conti

subsequent cataloguing efforts, some of which have sufficiently documented this phenomenology.³⁰

The only existing collections of colophons and subscriptions, however, originate with an entirely different purpose, and with historical objectives: That of documenting the vicissitudes of Ethiopian communities in Egypt, Palestine, and the Mediterranean, in Enrico Cerulli's classic work *Etiopi in Palestina*,³¹ where colophons and subscriptions are thus brought together with annotations of a completely different kind,³² or that of documenting the process of the acquisition of translation works in literary history, as in Arnold van Lantschoot's contribution dedicated to the notes attesting to translations from Arabic into Ethiopic attributed to Metropolitan Salāmā (1348–1388).³³

The notion of 'colophons' or 'subscriptions' in Ethiopic manuscripts first starts from the assumption of their collocation at the end of a text, yet not necessarily in a separate space below the written area, since in most cases, the Ethiopic colophons, albeit often distinct by graphic devices—lines or dotted lines—continue the layout of the text that precedes them. We could also call them: end notes. Among these texts, essentially defined on material grounds, we can distinguish based on their content those related to the production of the text and those related to the production of the actual manuscript.³⁴ This

Rossini's sketch. On the French historical collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, see Bosc-Tiessé 2022.

30 Most of the catalogues for the Ethiopian Microfilm Manuscript Library (see Macomber 1975; Macomber 1976; Macomber 1978; Getatchew Haile 1979; Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1981; Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1982; Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1983; Getatchew Haile 1985; Getatchew Haile 1987; Getatchew Haile 1993) and the series of the Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (see Hammerschmidt 1973; Hammerschmidt 1977; Hammerschmidt and Six 1983; Six 1989; Six 1994; Six 1999), for an evaluation of which see Bausi 2007, 94–95 and 97–100.

31 Cerulli 1943–1947, II, 380–432.

32 Documents of this collection are going to be re-examined in the forthcoming work by Samantha Kelly on the Ethiopian Roman community, see Kelly in print.

33 van Lantschoot 1960; Marrassini 2010b; to integrate for the hagiographic texts with Bausi 2002, 8–12; see also Kaplan 2008; Brita 2020; and now the fresh examination by Ambu 2022.

34 For instance, the above-mentioned note by Anaïs Wion, confirmed in her 2009 paper, proposed a classification of Ethiopic colophons into these two types, that is, those that provide information on the tradition of the text, that is, name of the author/pseudo-creator, or pseudo-author/pseudo-creator, translator, commissioner, dating, and other elements relating to the production of the text, independently from its material realization; and 'copy colophons' or 'internal colophons', relating to that single manuscript copy on which they provide information on production, name of the copyist, place and date of execution, time of copying, and other ele-

essential distinction must be complemented keeping in mind some essential aspects of the Ethiopic manuscript culture and manuscript tradition.

The late antique background

Even in the Ethiopian tradition—as in the Greek and Mediterranean traditions, to which the Ethiopian and the Eastern Christian traditions obviously belong, and this belonging, we should never forget, is the very reason for the existence of colophons in Ethiopic manuscripts³⁵—the colophon is a variable, optional and non-mandatory element, quite distinct from the text: its optionality in the Ethiopian tradition is evidenced historically by the absence of the colophon in Ethiopian manuscripts universally recognised as the oldest, such as the three, and particularly the two older Gospels preserved at the monastery at 'Adwā, Dabra Madarā, ወንደ አበባ ጽጓሜ,³⁶ as well as from other manuscripts of remarkable age, yet undated.³⁷ The purported existence of a ‘colophon’ in one of the Gospels of ’Abbā Garimā must be dismissed as due

ments. Anaïs Wion notes that both types of colophons obey the same graphic model: they are copied at the end of the text, sometimes separated from it by a simple line, and are written in the same language as the text.

- 35 Among the most interesting contributions on colophon from the codex area, see the essential Brock 2015, who traces back some peculiarities of scribes' colophons in Syriac manuscripts to the background of the cuneiform tablets manuscript culture.
- 36 See now McKenzie et al. 2017, which supersedes all previous studies; for a few integrations see Bausi 2017b; and now also Kim 2022, with important updates. The radiocarbon dating evidence of two of the 'Abbā Garimā manuscripts has been finally published by Jacques Mercier (see Mercier 2021), reporting only the highest percentage probabilities: MS I: Canon 10: 427–570 CE (95.4 %); text: 542–650 CE (95.4 %); MS III: Letter of Eusebius: 528–643 (75.1 %); Luke: 335–475 CE (76.7 %); text: 397–548 (95.4 %); the same essay also provides a fundamental and convincing study on the interpretation of the enigmatic building in MS 'Abbā Garimā III. On the canon tables see also Gnisci 2020; and on the text, Wallraff 2021. Several different sets of digitizations are freely available for the 'Abbā Garimā MSS, which does not make their accessibility to non-experts easy, at the HMML, Bm, and Mäzgäbä Sœlat websites.
- 37 See below for the manuscript of the *Aksumite Collection*. Quite to the point is the observation by Stuckenbruck and Erho 2022, 428: ‘The scarcity of colophons in early Ethiopic manuscripts may reflect a widespread scribal reluctance to add anything to their copies not found in the source manuscripts. This might even be extended further to patterns of copying books. There are indications that in earliest times the Ethiopian scribal duty was to copy a manuscript from its beginning to its end, and a general lack of interest in combining or excerpting texts, practices that seem relatively common in other traditions. [...] It seems to have been the scribal duty to reproduce source material as accurately as possible, that is, not to interfere with it even if they considered it to be wrong’.



Fig. 1. MS Ethiopia, Tegrāy, ‘Adwā, ’Endā ’Abbā Garimā, Dabra Madarā, Four Gospel ’Abbā Garimā I (correct therefore what is stated in Bausi 2016a, 256, pl. I), ff. 2v–3r according to the foliation by Donald Davies (Davies 1987, 303, fig. 6); after the 2006 restoration, the leaf has become f. 10vb in the same manuscript, ’Abbā Garimā I; originally, it had belonged to ’Abbā Garimā II. Photo by Donald Davies; microfilm copy by Marilyn E. Heldman; personal archive of Alessandro Bausi, Florence; digital elaboration by UHH 2013; <<https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/AG00001/viewer>> (last accessed 1 November 2022).

to terminological confusion: there is no such colophon; there is instead a note of donation attributed to a King ’Armaḥa, identified with a seventh-century Aksumite king (fig. 1).³⁸

38 See Davies 1987, 293; Kropp 1992, 263; <<https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/AG00001/main>> (last accessed 1 November 2022). The possibility that the additional note is ancient, advanced by Getatchew Haile on the occasion of the Oxford 2013 conference on the ’Abbā Garimā manuscripts and eventually formulated also in his edition and translation of all additional notes from the ’Abbā Garimā manuscripts (Getatchew Haile 2016, 14–15) must be dismissed, at least in the sense that the note, albeit possibly ‘true’, is not ‘authentic’ for codicological reasons: the present f. 10v of the MS ’Abbā Garimā I, containing the documents nos 14–15, originally belonged to the latest of the three ’Abbā Garimā manuscripts, that is ’Abbā Garimā II; it was once displaced in ’Abbā Garimā I already at the time when the man-

The medieval development

In the absence of any analysis carried out on the catalogued collections of Ethiopic manuscripts, it is not possible to establish any relationship between the phenomenology of the Ethiopian tradition and that of the complex Christian Arabic tradition,³⁹ for which, however, an initial study carried out on the manuscript collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France is available,⁴⁰ and above all whether the Ethiopian tradition retains traces of an independent and earlier tradition of its own.

The note of explicit of the Aksumite Collection (MS ‘Urā Masqal, C₃-IV-71/C₃-IV-73, Ethio-SPaRe UM-039)

The canonical-liturgical manuscript of the *Aksumite Collection*,⁴¹ which is presently if not the oldest, definitely one of the oldest and most interesting non-biblical Ethiopic manuscripts,⁴² has a note of *explicit* by the same hand of the copyist on f. 162vb, ተፈጻሚ፡ ስናዶስ፡, *tafaṣṣma* (sic, instead of *tafaṣṣa-ma*) *sinodos*, ‘It is completed the *Sinodos*’. The note, simple and elegant, is enclosed in a box below the text, tapered downwards⁴³ and ended by a dotted line.⁴⁴ This note by the first hand is followed by a further note of *explicit* by

uscripts were microfilmed for the first time entirely by Donald Davies; the document was at the time on f. 3r according to Macomber’s numbering (see Macomber 1979, 2). In this case the 2006 restoration has unfortunately placed the leaves in the wrong order, inverting recto and verso; thus, recto and verso of the present f. 10 should be reversed; see Bausi 2017b, 290, n. 2, also for further corrections on the original location of the additional notes.

39 Obviously, for the Coptic as well, for which see Van Lantschoot 1929 (= 1973); already Hyvernat 1903; for the titles Buzi 2005; and the contribution in this issues.

40 See Troupeau 1997; see also Vollhardt 2012 with the remarks by Gumbert 2012.

41 MS Ethiopia, north-eastern-Tigray district ('East Tigray Zone') of Gulo Maḳadā, 'Urā Masqal, C₃-IV-71/C₃-IV-73, Ethio-SPaRe UM-039 (<<https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/ESum039/main>>, last accessed 1 November 2022). A general description of the physical and codicological features of the manuscript, including an analysis of the ink, along with its content with references to the *Clavis Aethiopica*, is available in a previous collective contribution of this journal, see Bausi et al. 2020, where further references are available. More updates and new stuff provide two contributions, that is Bausi 2021a; and, still in print, Bausi 2022b.

42 For other such manuscripts, see also Nosnitsin 2022; and now the fragment studied by Knibb 2022.

43 See for the most complete elaboration on this motif, Piemontese 1995. See also Hāshemi-Minābād 2000; Afshar 2007–2008; Gholami and Pouladi 2019.

44 Note that a comparable frame is also found in the Octateuch, MS Ethiopia, north-eastern-Tigray district ('East Tigray Zone') of Gulo Maḳadā, 'Urā Masqal, C₃-IV-69, Ethio-SPaRe UM-040 (<<https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/ESum040/>>).

a second hand, the syntax of which is not perfectly clear, but where the place name of Qəfrēyā appears: **ተፈጋመ፡ መስተ፡ መከተል፡ ስምዬ፡ መለያ፡ ክፍል፡ ማጽዬ፡ ቅስተ፡**, *tafaṣṣama zabeta masqal zaqəfrēyā wəludu kəfla māryām qasis*, ‘It is completed (the book) of the Church of the Cross of Qəfrēyā,⁴⁵ his sons, the priest Kəfla Māryām’ (fig. 2). It is very important to remark that such graphic arrangement has a precise correspondence in the oldest Coptic titles.⁴⁶ This possible connections of some of the Ethiopic colophons with the titles is one of the novelties emerged in the last years in the research on Ethiopic colophons, particularly at the examples of texts embedded in the most ancient hagiographical collections.⁴⁷ This imposes a reconsideration of the evidence for colophons taking into account also the evidence for titles.

main>, last accessed 1 November 2022), f. 137va (virtual pagination according to the 1999 microfilming by Jacques Mercier, which provides the only complete documentation of this manuscript; the manuscript was eventually digitized by Antonella Brita in 2006 and by the Ethio-SPaRe project in 2010).

45 On the place name and site of Qəfrēyā, see Bausi et al. 2020, 130–134.

46 As communicated by Paola Buzi (15 August 2012): ‘la nota trova puntuale riscontro (anche grafico: il riquadro, l’uso della stessa scrittura del testo, ecc.) nei titoli copti più antichi (ἀρχαὶ εὐολ). Perché di titolo a mio parere si tratta e non di colofone. Mi vengono in mente molti casi di opere (contenute in mss. antichi) introdotte da un titolo premesso consistente in una o due parole e concluse appunto dalla formula “è terminato il libro...”. Io credo—almeno per quel che concerne l’Egitto—che un certo tipo di colofone, si sviluppi proprio da questo genere di titolo, quando la *subscriptio* cessa di avere una funzione fondamentale’. The *explicit* note closes the *Canonical answers of Peter of Alexandria* (CAe 2693 actually by Timothy I) on ff. 160v–162v, see critical edition and translation in Bausi 2006a, 56–57, § xiv, from whose apparatus it can be seen that besides the *Aksumite Collection*, indicated there with the siglum σ, four of the other five witnesses transmit the explicit note (further witnesses of this text are known to me in the meanwhile). See already Bausi 2016a, 240 and 257, Pl. 2.

47 This feature was indicated for the first time in Bausi 2016a, 242, n. 36, on the basis of the research carried out by Antonella Brita and myself in the SFB 950 (see above), which has evidence that even in Ethiopic texts, as is also the case in the Coptic tradition, the placement of the title at the beginning is by no means taken for granted; on the contrary, a placement at the end is an important marker of the traditional history of the text; see Bausi 2017a, 223–224; Brita 2020, 265–268, particularly n. 43. For these collections, see Bausi 2017c; Bausi 2019; on one more interesting manuscript witness recently described see Lusini et al. 2022, in particular Villa 2022b.

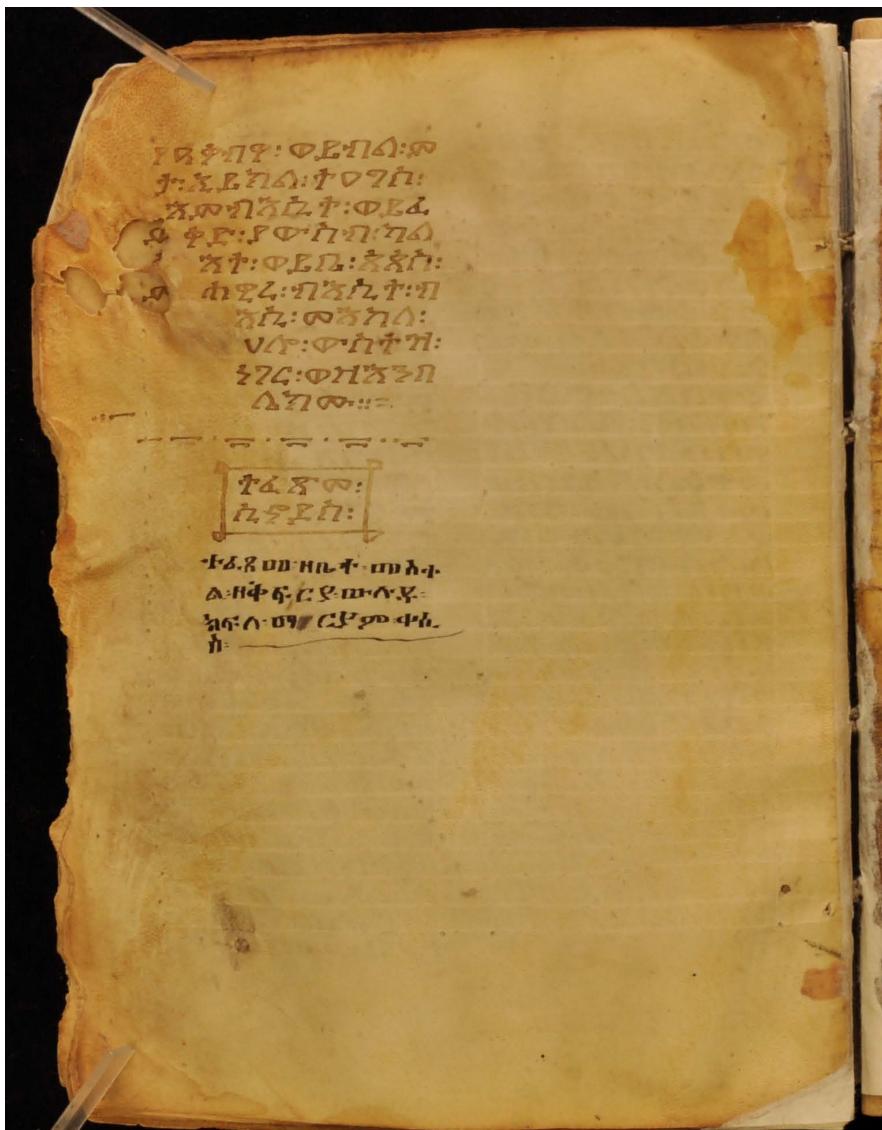


Fig. 2. MS Ethiopia, north-eastern-Tegrāy district ('East Tigray Zone') of Gulo Maḳadā, 'Urā Masqal, C₃-IV-71/C₃-IV-73, Ethio-SPaRe UM-039, thirteenth century or earlier, Aksu-mite Collection, f. 162v. Photo by the Ethio-SPaRe project, UHH 2012 (see already Bausi 2016a, 257, pl. II).

The Four Gospel manuscript of Lālibälä (MS EMML no. 6907)

The Gospel manuscript preserved in the church of Lālibälä, Beta Madhane ‘Alam, digitized as MS EMML⁴⁸ no. 6907, contains a donation note by King Lālibälä, who reigned at the latest in the earliest decades of the thirteenth century. This note dates the manuscript *non post* the king’s reign. The authenticity of the donation is corroborated by the archaic form of the name of the king, that is ‘Lālibälä’ against the ‘Lālibälä’ later adopted in the hagiographical and historiographical tradition. The note that precedes on f. 208rb, by the same hand of the copyist of the main text of the manuscript (the Four Gospels), is partly damaged by the material loss of the parchment, but it can be reconstructed as follows: ተፈጋዬ፡ መጽሐፈ፡] ላብት፡ (sic, but reading uncertain, could also be, as expected, ላብት፡) መንፈ፡] በፈጻሁ፡ (but vowel stroke not readable) እኩሻ፡] እየ[እኩ፡ ክርስቶ፡ መቆልም፡ ላይ፡] ጥበቃ[መ፡ …] taf-aṣṣa[ma maṣḥafa] rabə ‘t[wangel] baṣaggāh[u la ’əgzi]’əna ’iya[sus krəs]tos waṣa[lləyu lā]la gabrəkkə[mu …], ‘It is finished the book of the fourth gospel thanks to the grace of our Lord Christ. Pray for your servant …’.⁴⁹ This note appears to be the oldest subscription note of an Ethiopic manuscript, datable probably within a range of decades, to *non post* the reign of King Lālibälä, in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The supplications in the Computus of Gʷənāgʷənā

Extremely important are subscriptions in an archaic manuscript recently studied by Denis Nosnitsin. The manuscript, consisting of only twenty leaves and probably fragmentary, is only known from two distinct series of pictures, and its present whereabouts are unknown. The first series is preserved in Addis Ababa, in the ‘Comboni House’, among the papers of the fund of pictures that belonged to father Emilio Ceccarini; Denis Nosnitsin digitized these pictures and indicated the corresponding manuscript as the ‘Comboni Fragment’. A second series, still unpublished, consists of pictures done *ante* 1994 by Marilyn E. Heldman, who delivered a copy of them to me for study: I indicate the manuscript as the Computus of Gʷənāgʷənā, from the place of conservation

48 Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and Collegeville, MN, Hill Museum and Manuscript Library. The EMML manuscripts can be also consulted, along with manuscript from many other collections, in the Reading Room (<<https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/>>) of the HMML, where they are provided with permanent links (here see <<https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/200535>>, last accessed 1 November 2022).

49 See Derat 2018, 59–61 (‘Une donation du roi Lālibälä dans l’évangile de Bēta Madhanē ‘Alam’), where Marie-Laure Derat disposes of wrong interpretations and provides stimulating proposals. For the integration of the colophon, see already Bausi 2018a, 440.

where Marilyn E. Heldman saw it *ante* 1994.⁵⁰ As noted by Denis Nosnitsin, the manuscript is remarkable for its contents—a treatise on computus and chronography—as well as for its palaeography. On ff. 18rb (fig. 3) and 19ra appears the name of the compiler, that is, Bishop 'Aliyās or 'Aleyās,⁵¹ in two ‘supplications’, as Nosnitsin styles them, which could also be understood as subscriptions:⁵²



Fig. 3. MS Eritrea, 'Akkala Guzāy, Šemazānā, Gʷənāgʷənā, የEndā Masqal 'Iyasus, with no shelfmark, thirteenth century or earlier, Computus of Gʷənāgʷənā, f. 18r. Photo by Marilyn E. Heldman *ante* 1994; personal archive of Alessandro Bausi, Florence; digital elaboration by Karsten Helmholz, UHH 2022.

- 50 The manuscript contains a series of Greek numerals from 1 to 1000, with few omissions and one repetition; see Bausi 2021b, 20; also *apud* Nosnitsin 2022, 49–50, n. 33. On the important historical site of Gʷənāgʷənā see Bausi 2005.
- 51 As noted by Denis Nosnitsin, this is likely to be identified with the author (Bishop 'Elyās of Aksum) of the homily on Saint Maṭā' or Libānos, see for details Bausi 2003, index s.v.
- 52 See Nosnitsin 2022, whose indication of the leaves as ff. 19rb and 20ra for the two first subscriptions (instead of 18rb and 19ra) is corrected; a few readings are also emended based on the evidence of the second series of pictures. The second and third supplications are published here for the first time.

(f. 18rb) መԱՀՆՈՅ: ԱԴՅՒ: ՄՋԺԻՖ: ԵԶԼ: ՈՀՅԵԽՅ: ՈՀՅԴ: ԴԿՒԴ: ՄԳՄԴ:
Ն: ՀՃ.ՔՌ: ՀՃ.ԾՔՀ: ՈՂԹՅ: ՄՋԺՎ: ՀՊՄՅՈ: ՀՊԱԼՀ: ՈՒԵՍ: ՄՍՍԱ: Ա
Խ: ԶԺԵՎՀ: ՄԱԽ: ՔՆՈՎ: ՄԱԽ: ԵԴՄԱՍԸՎ: ԱԳԱԹՅ: ԳՂԹՅ: ՀՊՅՀ: ՈՀՅԵ:
ԱՊԵՔԻ: ՀՊՅՀ:

(f. 19ra) ՄԱՅՐՈՈՎ: ԵԶԼ: ՈՀՅԵԽՅ: ՈՀՅԴ: ԴԿՒԴ: ՀՃ.ՔՌ: ՀՃ.ԾՔՀ:
ՄՆՊԱԼՀ: ՈՒԵՍ: ԲՍՈ: ԱԳԱԹՅ: ՈԽ: ՅՈԶԽ: ՀՊՅՀ: ԵԾԻՒՅ: ԵԾԻՒՅ: ՈՂԹՅ:
ՄՍՍԱ: ՄՋԺՎ: ՀՊՄՅՈ: ՀՊԱԼՀ: ՈՒԵՍ: ԱԾՈ: ԱԽԺԵՎՀ: ՄԱԾՈ: ԱՄՊՈՎ:
ՄԱՅԵԴՄԱՍԸՎ: ՈԽ: ՄՋԺԻՖ: ՀՊՅՅԱԽ: ՄՃՈՒ: ԱԳԱԹՅ: ՈՀՅԵ: ՈՅՅԸՈՅ:

(f. 20va) ԵՌ: ՀՊԱԼՀՆ: ՀԾՈ: ԽԾՈ: ՈԾԽԾՈ: ԵՆՄՀ: ՄԱԿՄԱ: ԵԾԻՒՅ: Մ
ԱԽՅ: ԴԵԴԴՅ: ՔԾԿՄՎ: ՈՂԹՅ: ՄՍՍԱ: ՄՋԺՎ: ՀՊՄՅՈ: ՀՊԱԼՀ: ՈՒԵՍ:
ԱԽ: ԶԺԵՎՀ: ՄԱԾՈ: ԱՄՊՈՎ: ՄԱՅԵԴՄԱՍԸՎ: ՈԽ: ՄՋԺԻՖ: ԱԳԱԹՅ: ՀՊՅՀ:

(f. 18rb) And who read this book let him pray for me, for the humble and contemptible Bishop 'Aliyās. Peace, clemency, and justice from the Lord to him who wrote it, who reads it, and who teaches it, forever and ever, amen. Forgive me for what I discarded, amen.⁵³

(f. 19ra) And who reads it, let him pray for the humble Bishop 'Aleyās and let Lord give (him) as much as is enough, amen, let it be, let it be. Peace, clemency, and justice from the Lord on him who wrote and on him who reads it and who interprets this book, from now and until forever, forgive (them), *sankorəson* (συγχώρησον, that is 'forgive').

- 53 As an interesting archaic parallel, let us mention here a subscription note in MS EMML no. 8509, a well-known and still scarcely studied archaic homiletic collection; see the essential references in Bausi 2019. On f. 155va, at the end of a so-far unnoticed fragment of the *Gadla 'Azqir* (ff. 154ra–155ra, for which see Bausi 2017c, § 21 to the end) placed between the texts numbered 53 and 54 by Sergew Hable Selassie 1987–1988, 17—who also notes (p. 10): ‘The largest gap is between folios 153v–154r. Here the beginning of a chapter and a good portion of it is missing’—the following subscription is found (here reproduced without marking the many orthographic peculiarities and giving a transcription): ՈՀՅԵ: ՄԱԾՈՒՀՅԵ: ՈՀՅԵԽՅ: ՄՎԱԽ: ԻԽ: ԵՆԾՈՒ: ՄԻՒԾԱԽՄՅ: ԱԳԱԴՅՅ: ՈՊՅԵԴՅ: ԱՊԵՔԻ: ՄԱՄՈՒՅ: ՈՀՅԵ: Ա.Դ: ՄՎԱԽԿՀ: ՈՀՅԵՒԽՄՅ: ՄՈԾԵՒՀ: ՄՈԾԵՒԽՄՅ: ԵԱՐԵՒՅ: ՈՀՅԵ: Ա.Դ: ՄՎԱԽՄՅ: ՀԱ.ԱՐ: Ա.Ի.Ն, ‘Forgive and let (others) forgive us, and remember in your prayers and pray so that they make us part of the saints martyrs; forgive me for what I have omitted and added, and forgive me in your prayers, and bless me; and let your benediction reach me. Forgive me, I, your servant Hə'izya Bəsus’. The name of the scribe Hə'izya Bəsus (հա.ԱՐ: Ա.Ի.Ն:) is given in a cryptic form—such name does not exist—by alternating the syllabographs of the first and second parts of the name, that certainly was Həzba 'Iyasus (հա.ԱՐ: Ա.Ի.Ն:). The point was completely misunderstood by Sergew Hable Selassie 1987–1988, 25 (placing the colophon on f. 151) and 27, who elaborates on a non-attested name. I am very grateful for this information and the excellent photographic documentation of MS EMML no. 8509 to Brook Abdu, and to Yikunnoamlak Mezgebu as well.

(f. 20va) Our Lord said: ‘For every one who asked receives, who seeked finds, and to him who knocked, they will open’ (Mt 7:8). Peace, clemency, and justice from the Lord on him who wrote (it), on him who reads it, and (on him) who teaches this book, forever, amen.

***The supplications in the Gadla qeddusān, Acts of the Saints, of Zwāy* (MS EMML no. 7602)**

Subscriptions commemorating the commissioning—yet not strictly the copying—of a manuscript are very common. In a manuscript of *Acts of the Saints*, MS EMML no. 7602, from Zwāy, supplications appear at the end of several texts, for example (f. 6vc):

ለ፡ አገልግሎ፡ ለተም፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ዓቃቤ፡ ጉተሙ፡ ይጋቀፍ፡ ስም፡ አጋዥአብከር፡
መስማት፡ አይዥም፡ መለ፡ የአጋድ፡ መለዘኝበ፡ መለዘኝበ፡ መለ፡ ስም፡
ቁጥሩ፡ ቀነ፡ የምርመራ፡ አጋዥአብከር፡ በመንግሥት፡ ስም፡ አሰ፡
ለዓለም፡ ዓለም፡ አጋድ፡

To King Dāwit, who commissioned this book, may the Lord write his name in the Book of Life. Of those who wrote it, of those who read it, of those who interpreted it, and of those who heard its words, may the Lord have mercy on them in the kingdom of heaven, forever and ever, amen.⁵⁴

The Four Gospel manuscript of Gʷənāgʷənā

The historical place of Gʷənāgʷənā would deserve to be fully explored. Among the other interesting manuscripts which are preserved in the local church, there is a Four Gospel manuscripts from the time of King Dāwit (r. 1379/1380–1413), the colophon of which I owe again to the documentation transmitted to me and to other researchers (I know of Manfred Kropp), by the late Marilyn E. Heldman. I had provided a partial transcription and commentary on the colophon, but I take the opportunity to provide here a complete edition and tentative translation (fig. 4):⁵⁵

54 Similar subscription from the same manuscript also in Wion 2007, here with correct translation. The diversity and variability of the subscription formulas can certainly be explained, at least in some cases, by the *horror vacui* and the solutions adopted by virtue of residual space. Note that in one case (f. 130va) the subscription refers to more scribes: *laza አሻዑ lazantu ማሻዑ nəguš Dāwit yaሻዑ samo ንግዑ abəher wəsta ማሻዑ həywət walaሻāfzyānihi hātə ’an wa ’abbāsəyān*, ‘To King Dāwit, who made write this book, let God write his name in the Book of Life, and to his scribes, sinner and slippery’. See <<https://w3id.org/vhmml/read-ingRoom/view/201129>> (last accessed 1 November 2022).

55 See Bausi 2003, xxviii (translation), n. 22; see also Kropp 2012, 211–214, who provides important complementary pieces of information on documents from the same manuscript, received from Marilyn E. Heldman. I cannot give the leaf number of the manuscript.



Fig. 4. MS Eritrea, 'Akkala Guzāy, Šemazānā, Gʷənāgʷənā, Endā Masqal 'Iyasus, with no shelfmark, Four Gospel Manuscript of Gʷənāgʷənā, fourteenth/fifteenth century (reign of Däwit II, 1379/1380–1413). Photo by Marilyn E. Heldman *ante* 1994; personal archive of Alessandro Bausi, Florence; digital elaboration by Karsten Helmholz, UHH 2022.

(col. a) ወተክስለት፡ ብቻ፡ ወንደል፡ በጥናጥና፡ መካን፡ ለመሰቀል፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ወዘ
እዕቅኩም፡ እነ፡ የብርክስለቶ፡ ይጥለ፡ መሳሰ፡ በእንተ፡ ፍቅር፡ ለመሰቀል፡ ከርስቶስ፡
ወካኂሬ፡ እንዘ፡ እነበር፡ መከና፡ መማድ፡ መሰቦ፡ ጉባኤ፡ ወርኢ፡ ከፃ፻፡ ሁ
ርዎታ፡ መግም፡ እኩወቻ፡ እኩወ፡ በታ፡ የምሥራራ፡ ይ፡ ወጋብ፡ በታ፡ መቅረብ፡ ይ፡ ወ
ለከና፡ እንቀጽ፡ ደንገ፡ ይመቀ፡ እኩወ፡ መሰቦ፡ ስኢ፡ ከከልጣ፡ መገመሰቦች፡
ወካልጣ፡ ለብስ፡ ለለከና፡ እኩወ፡ የበ፡ የጥና፡ ወጥለ፡ ለይፈ፡ ከርዎታ፡ ደረሻ፡
አዋዕለሰር፡ ከርቻለ፡ ወንደል፡ በረከትኔ፡ ደንጋፍ፡ ይጋፍ፡ መሰቦ፡ ለምዕ፡
የጥና፡ በታ፡ እምጾ፡ ይ፡ መዝዘለ፡ መቅጥባ፡ መሰብስ፡ ተጠት፡ መብ፤ኑር፡ (col. b)
መሰቦ፡ እብጀሁ፡ ተከኂሬ፡ ይለያ፡ ለው፡ የሙሉ፡ እለ፡ ለለወ፡ የሙሉ፡ መካከለ፡ ወ
ንበ፡ ይህበ፡ እዋዕለሰር፡ መንግሥት፡ ለማያች፡ ወጥን፡ መዋልሁ፡ በእብ፡ የሙሉ፡
ወካመ፡ ላላቱ፡ ወጥኔ፡ የይምሮ፡ የሙሉ፡ ተራሽ፡ የጥና፡ ተጠት፡ ቅዱጂጂጂጥ፡ ወክፍርዎ፡
ወለከናኝር፡ እኩን፡

ወካኂሬ፡ ጉባኤ፡ መገመሰቦች፡ መዘተረፈ፡ ይተክስ፡ በንተ፡ ወንደል፡ ከመ፡ ይከን፡ ተ
ዘነሩ፡ ለጥና፡ ወካኂሬመሬ፡ ከሆኖ፡ ወደቀቀፍ፡ ይለየ፡ ለው፡ ለንበ፡ መሰበን፡
መመሥዋዕ፡ ሰር፡ መጣሁ፡ ተቻ፡ መሰበ፡ መለተኔ፡ ለይጥለ፡ የበ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ በ
ኩኔ፡ ይዕቅኩ፡ በንተ፡ ወንደል፡ መሰብስ፡ ብቻ፡ መካን፡ ከሆኖ፡ ወደቀቀፍ፡ ወ
መካከለ፡ ያደገጥሙ፡ እምጾ፡ ይ፡ መተካነ፡ ለዓለመ፡ የለም፡ እኩን፡

(col. a) And this Gospel was written in Gʷənāgʷənā, place to the (Church of the) Cross of Christ.⁵⁶ Who wrote it is me, Gabrakrēstos, sinner and guilty, for the love of the Cross of Christ. When I was in the place of Maṭā' and when I went into (the church), I saw the ‘Arrangement of the Order (*nubāre sōr'at*)⁵⁷ and its Water of Life, one from the Church of *Məśrā'*, and one at the Church of the Cross, and until the entrance of the compound, 12 springs of water. When I saw that it did not have curtains and clothes, I sent to King Dāwīt, son of Sayfa 'Ar'ada, who fears God, having written a document and as for benediction, the Homiliary of Pentecost (*Dərsāna Pantaqʷaste*). (col. b) And when the king heard this, he brought  *manzule*,⁵⁸ and the wrapper of the ark (*qənqəb*), clothes for the *tābot*, and silver. When he brought (these things), we prayed for him, with the monks who were with me, and we said: ‘Let the Lord give him the kingdom of heaven and let him prolong his days on earth, and on the day of his death, let him rejoin him with the pious kings Constantine (Qʷastantīnos),⁶⁰ Honorius ('Anoryos),⁶¹ and Alexander ('Eskəndər),⁶² amen’.

- 56 I had tentatively supposed that Masqala Krēstos could be the name of a disciple of the Saint Maṭā' or Libānos, to which the place is certainly related, yet without excluding the possibility that Masqala Krēstos had to be understood as a place name ('santuario della Croce'); I agree with Kropp 2012, 212, that reference is here to the Church of the Cross.
- 57 This appears to be an allusion to the miniature of the Tempietto that closes the Canon Tables in the Four Gospels; see Gnisci 2020, 90. This is evidence that the painting was considered an object of veneration and admiration.
- 58 Character not readable, but certainly a rubricated digit.
- 59 Terms obscure; probably a reference to a kind of fabric or textile.
- 60 On Constantine in the Ethiopian tradition, see Buzi and Bausi 2013.
- 61 On Honorius in the Ethiopian tradition, see Cerulli 1974.
- 62 On Alexander in the Ethiopian tradition, see Lusini 2003.

And I did the curtains and the rest, I wrote this Gospel that it be commemoration (*tazkār*) for the king. And you, priests and deacons, pray for him, in the time of incensing and sacrifice, evening and dawn, day and night. And to me, the sinner Gabra Krəstos, remember me, who wrote this Gospel, and the people of this place. Priests, deacons, and monks, let him heal them from the sorrow and pain, forever and ever, amen.

The Four Gospel manuscript of Dabra Ḥayq ’Eṣṭifānos (MS EMML no. 1832)

The most ancient precisely dated subscription note is probably found in a well-known Gospel manuscript from the collection of Dabub Wallo, Dabra Ḥayq ’Eṣṭifānos monastery, digitized as EMML no. 1832, on f. 24v. The note, written in the first person, states that the abbot, later a saint, ’Iyasus Mo’ā, commissioned the production of the manuscript in 1280/1281 CE and that he made a gift of it to the monastery.⁶³

The colophon and subscription of the Golden Codex of ’Ambā Gəšan (MS EMML no. 9002)

Before the time of Zar’ā Yā’qob (r. 1434–1468), extensive colophons already appear in the time of King Dāwit. The most remarkable example, made known only recently in its integrity through a publication by Manfred Kropp,⁶⁴ is the subscription to the *Codex Aureus, Golden Codex*—so called due to the use of gold ink—of ’Ambā Gəšan, digitized as MS EMML no. 9002. The extensive colophon closes the earliest known collection of seventy-five *Ta’ammora*

63 Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1981, 293–301, at 295–296, no. 1832; see <<https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/203663>> (last accessed 1 November 2022). The note was partially published, translated and discussed by Tadesse Tamrat 1970, 90–91; then in full by Sergew Hable-Selassie 1992, 245–246; then again by Bosc-Tiessé 2010, 202 and *passim*, in a contribution that raises serious questions but is also unfortunately marred by several errors, from the transcription of the king’s name Yāgbā Ṣeyon (see Nosnitsin 2014), as is always the case in the earliest Ethiopian tradition and in the notes themselves discussed and published, rendered instead always ‘Yāgbē’ā Seyon’, to the misunderstanding the nature of some texts (*Acts of Peter of Alexandria*, CAe 6522, and *Acts of Mark*, CAe 4853) elaborated in Dabra Ḥayq ’Eṣṭifānos, also completely misunderstanding (p. 224, n. 103) what I wrote on the subject (see Bausi 2006b, 541 = Bausi 2012a, 120).

64 See Kropp 2017, 71–72 (text), 72–74 (German translation). This and the following text and translation have been entirely reedited and checked against the microfilm evidence; see <<https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/201729>> (last accessed 1 November 2022).

Mārīyam, Miracles of Mary (CAe 2384),⁶⁵ and precisely dates the duration of the work from 1 Maskaram to 12 Tāḥsās 1393 Ethiopian Calendar, that is from 29 August to 8 December 1400 CE:⁶⁶

(f. 281vb) በእነዚት፡ ሥነዚ፡ ቁጥር፡ መብቻ፡ እግዢት፡ ቁድስት፡ ደንገል፡ ማ
 ሚያም፡ ማረጋገም፡ ጥም፡ ደንገልፍ፡ ፕመር፡ ቁጥር፡ እግዢ፡ ደዋት፡ የተሠ
 ዘተሰም፡ ቁስበትበጥ፡ በንተ፡ መቆክፍ፡ ተአምጥ፡ መውቅድቻቸ፡ መሰሳቻቸ፡ ወ
 መቆለታቸ፡ መተአምራቸ፡ መከተላቸ፡ በንተ፡ ትኩ፡ በእስተካምም፡ መስተ፡ ቃ፡
 መቆክፍ፡ እንዘ፡ ይለፈ፡ ጥሩክ፡ (f. 282ra) በእያ፡ መነ፡ ተንተ፡ ዓሳፏ፡ ለዘተ፡
 መቆክፍ፡ በርከት፡ እምአማራ፡ ለወርጥ፡ መሰከም፡ እውእቱ፡ ሪሳ፡ ዓውድ፡ ዓመት፡
 በፊደት፡ እኩድ፡ እንተ፡ ይከተ፡ በተረ፡ ይለቻ፡ በቃድ፡ ወቃድ፡ ወቃ፡ እምዓመት፡
 እየነ፡ እምም፡ ቁጥር፡ ዓጥቻ፡ መበቃ፡ መከቶ፡ ይ፡ ታወቃ፡ እምዓመት፡ ለማስታ፡
 መነ፡ ቁጥሮም፡ እምይ፡ ለወርጥ፡ ተአምጥ፡ በበባለ፡ ማቅረብ፡ ለአ፡ መለከት፡ ወ
 እተቆክፍ፡ መስተ፡ ቃ፡ መቆክፍ፡ ነበ፡ ትኩ፡ ዘተዴበ፡ ትኩ፡ ለአጊዢት፡
 ቁድስት፡ ደንገል፡ ማርያም፡ ማረጋገም፡ (f. 282rb) በም፡ እውእቱ፡ እንበለ፡ በቀለሙ፡
 መቆቅ፡ መበዚ፡ በእያ፡ እንዘ፡ ቁለጥ፡ መሥራቸ፡ እምሱ፡ በአጊዢ፡ በመንከር፡ ባንደት፡ እ
 ሰርጻዊ፡ በቀለሙ፡ መቆቅ፡ እነበ፡ የነቱ፡ በርሆም፡ ከመ፡ ለርሆም፡ ከወከት፡ ወከመ፡ ዕ
 ዓቂ፡ ባኬርድ፡ በወሰት፡ ይልማት፡ መሀምት፡ እክዢ፡ መከራበ፡ እምሱ፡ በዘ፡ ከ
 መዘ፡ ዝሁቅ፡ መከተላቸምም፡ ከሚሱ፡ ይለኩ፡ ተጋዜኩ፡ ስም፡ በእግበሮ፡ ቁጥር፡
 ነበ፡ ዓውድ፡ መቆቅ፡ በእየኩለም፡ ሰማያዥ፡ እንተ፡ እይከለ፡ ሪፖታ፡ ለረዳም፡ እንደርቻ፡
 እንደርቻ፡ መከይከለ፡ ቁጥር፡ (f. 282va) ይቁቅ፡ በሁራን፡ በትግራይል፡ በእነዚ፡ ዓ
 መራ፡ እንደ፡ ተስቦት፡ መተሙዓል፡ መአከቦ፡ ገ፡ በምኑ፡ ማህሳ፡ ለውልድ፡ የቆር፡ ወ
 ተርፍቅ፡ ነበ፡ ተመር፡ የልአ፡ የሰጠር፡ ከወመር፡ የልአ፡ ዓመት፡ በደብረ፡ ወጥን፡
 ቁድስት፡ ህገ፡ መተረሰ፡ ከፍሎ፡ እምዕስ፡ ሁይወት፡ መከተላቸ፡ እንተ፡ ይድቃሙ፡ ለለለ፡
 ዓመሙ፡ በደቡ፡ የልር፡ መታዘዘር፡ እነላለ፡ ዓበ፡ ሪሳ፡ እክምዓመ፡ ከወር፡ እስመ፡
 ነቱ፡ ይደለ፡ ቁጥር፡ መውቅድ፡ መሰባቻቸ፡ መግዢሙ፡ እምአድ፡ ትኩ፡ (f. 282vb) በ
 ውጤር፡ መበዚ፡ ይለኩ፡ መከራይ፡ መበለሙ፡ ዓለም፡ እምን፡ መዘ፡ ተአምሮ፡ ለ
 እግዢት፡ ቁድስት፡ ደንገል፡ ማርያም፡ ማረጋገም፡ ይወቅ፡ መቆክፍ፡ ተደረገኩ፡ በ
 ከመ፡ እኩነቶ፡ ለማትዶ፡ ይደለ፡ በውሰት፡ ህገ፡ በርቁ፡ እተከሆተ፡ ቁጥሙ፡ በ
 መሰተ፡ የልር፡ እተሞቹ፡ እንዘ፡ የገመሮ፡ መደረቻ፡ በዘዴ፡ የገመ፡ መጀት፡
 ቁደም፡ ከመ፡ ይረዳ፡ መደምዥ፡ መከራበ፡ እምድረ፡ ማስ፡ በትግራ፡ ወልድ፡ የቆር፡
 እግዢአ፡ እየሰለ፡ ከርድ፡ እንዘ፡ ይከተ፡ በኩረ፡ መከተላማ፡ እምዕስ፡ ለለለ፡ እኩነ፡
 ለለለ፡ በአመሙ፡ እግዢአበበር፡ እምን፡
 እግዢባለት፡ መመድ፡ እንተ፡ (f. 283rb) ሆኖም፡ በእስተካምም፡ ለእግዢ፡ ተ
 እምር፡ መግዢ፡ ይከተ፡ ስም፡ መስተ፡ ይረዳ፡ እርም፡ መፈጸም፡ የሰለ፡ እኩ፡ መ
 መሰለ፡ መግለሰ፡ ነበ፡ የገደር፡ ህገ፡ ለገመ፡ የረተ፡ ብር፡ ከመ፡ ይደበ፡ እ
 ይኩል፡ የልር፡ መምጫ፡ እምገሁ፡ ተኩባለ፡ እምብበ፡ መእምበ፡ መደት፡ የቆር፡
 ለመ፡ ለበለ፡ ማጭ፡ መምስር፡ ለስ፡ የማም፡ ዓበ፡ ለለ፡ ዓለመም፡ ከመ፡ ገድብ፡
 ለይፈጻር፡ መከመ፡ መፍቅኩ፡ መብር፡ መተጥጥ፡ በይመት፡ መደጋበ፡

65 For every reference to the collection, see the crystal clear and informative article by Reule 2022.

66 See Kropp 2017 for a more detailed commentary.

(f. 283va) በመዋልሁ፡ ወምረ፡ ገራሱ፡ ወፍረቻ፡ የዚር፡ መደትካው፡ አስራብ፡ ፊ
ለብ፡ ወመኖር፡ ታስኅሁ፡ ወሰራቻ፡ አስርግዊ፡ በጥቅር፡ ወለተሰ፡ ካላሪ፡ በወልታ፡
ሥመር፡ አስበ፡ ሰስተቶ፡ ወከንጂአየ፡ እግማውር፡ ወካምዕሉ፡ ሥርሁ፡ ክሙ፡ ምስክ፡ ወ
ጂነ፡ ለፃ፡ ወዓምበር፡ አርመፍ፡ ገርሃሁ፡ በወይና፡ የወጪር፡ ባሙታ፡ የወጪት፡ ገ
አየ፡ እግመልካ፡ ቴር፡ ክሙ፡ ክብካቦ፡ መርግ፡ አስማጥ፡ በጥማንቱ፡ ክሙ፡ ይጋር፡
በመገልያ፡ ወልድ፡ አሳይ፡ ወሰሰበስ፤ ታተ፡ (f. 283vb) መገመር፡ ምስለ፡ ማገበረ፡ በተ
ርክ፡ ሰባክ፡ ክሙ፡ ይጋር፡ እንጂር፡ እዳከ፡ ይጋብ፡ እንዘ፡ ትብለ፡ ትዝቢአ፡ ቤ
ዘረቅ፡ በእግዚአ፡ ሆም፡ ቦንጂ፡ ተዝዘር፡ ወዘክአል፡ ተክምር፡ እመሏ፡ አበበ፡ ወክ
መሏ፡ ቤኖ፡ እመሏ፡ ለሰብ፡ ወተጋብለ፡ ለረዳ፡ ለመ፡ እወልቻ፡ ተዘክረክ፡ ክያየ፡ በ
እንተ፡ በጽረተክ፡ ክርመዋ፡ መበኑት፡ እለ፡ ለቀማ፡ ክፍፍር፡ መበኑት፡ እለ፡ አወሻ፡
አጥባት፡ መበኑት፡ እለ፡ ተቀኑ፡ እድዋ፡ መበኑት፡ በእንጂር፡ ይበ፡ አብራካ፡ መ
በኑት፡ አብላለ፡ በጥም፡ መበኑት፡ እለ፡ (f. 284ra) እንሰዋ፡ የሚለብ፡ እኩር፡ ጉ
ዳ፡ በእሁ፡ ሌሎ፡ ተስቦም፡ ቤት፡ እንዘ፡ ትብለ፡ እለግብአት፡ ቅድስት፡ ይጋል፡ ማ
ርማ፡ ማርማ፡ ተዝበለ፡ በእንተእሁ፡ ወሰኢ፡ በበርሃነ፡ ወልድ፡ ይጋሁ፡ ክአለ፡
በዘዴ፡ ይጋማጥ፡ ሥርሁ፡ እጥል፡ ወቀመ፡ ማመክሁ፡ እንሰለ፡ ወዕበ፡ ልቦ፡ እቅዕለ፡
ወሰድ፡ ወሰድ፡ ሥም፡ እድድለ፡ ሰባክ፡ ለሰብ፡ እወሻ፡ ቤት፡ እወልቻ፡ እግዚአ፡ ቤት፡ እ
ከብት፡ ወከብር፡ ለአብ፡ ለሰብ፡ እቅዕለ፡ ሰባክ፡ ለሰብ፡ እወሻ፡ ቤት፡ (f. 284rb) ወዘዕል፡
ወለዓለሙ፡ ዓለም፡ እመን፡ እመን፡ እመን፡

(f. 281vb) In praise of the Holy Trinity and in love of our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary Mārihām, vessel of virginity, new ark! King Dāwit, who is called (with throne name) Constantine (Qʷəstantīnos), has had this book of her greetings-hymns (*ta 'amməħoħi*), her praises (*waddāseyāt*), and glorification hymns (*sabbāħayāt*) written, as well as (various) prayers to her and her miracles. He brought all this together in this book with diligence and hoping in her help. (f. 282ra) The beginning of the writing of this blessed book was from the first day of the month of Maskaram, which is the beginning of the annual cycle, on a day of Sunday, which is the first-born of weekdays, in 6893 from the year of our (primordial) father Adam, the first of creation; and in 1117 from the year of the Martyrs. Its completion was on the 12th of the month of Tāħsās, on the feast day of the Archangel Michael. In this book, wherever the mention of the name of our Lady (f. 282rb) the Holy Virgin Mary Mārihām is found, it is not written with soot ink (*māya ħəmmat*),⁶⁷ but with gold ink, and also with different colours of ink for each of them. He also had her pictures made in wonderful work, having decorated (them) with gold ink until its light shone like the rising of stars, and like a precious pearl that shone in the darkness. For having had this written and painted with such effort and zeal, so let her write his name with her sacred fingers on the golden column in the Heavenly Jerusalem, which even eagles cannot see in flight, and which even arrogant human children cannot approach (f. 282va) by force, and which a foot of pride definitely cannot step on. Let her paint the image of his (King Dāwit) face by the right (hand) of clemency of her beloved Son. So let her

67 On this term for the black soot ink and the possibility that *Qāla ħəmmat* (but *ħəmmāt* in the manuscript), ‘Voice (that is ‘speaker’) of soot’ in the Golden Gospel of Dabra Libānos refers to an officer in charge of the chancery, see Bausi 2008, 523–524; Bausi 2014, 50; tentatively accepted by Derat 2018, 52, n. 87.

make him sit where the banquet of the mystery of 1000 year on Dabra Ṣeyon,⁶⁸ the Holy City, is prepared; and let her make him take part of the Wood of Life, which is the hope of justice of those who laboured on earth. And let her place on his head the crown of precious stones. To her is due sanctification, praise, and hymns of praise of the Psalms, from the mouth of every (f. 282vb) creature and created one, now and forever, forever and ever, amen. This, miracles of our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary Mārihām, 75 (miracles), and the book also of her powerful deeds, that is how she saved the disciple Matthias (Mātiyās) in the city of the Parthians (Bārtos), had not been revealed before in the land of Ethiopia, when many previous kings and metropolitans (*pāpāsāt*) sought and desired to see and hear (it), and they did not find (it). As our Lord has said in the Gospel: ‘Many prophets and righteous sought to see what you see and did not see, and heard what you heard and did not hear’ (cf. Lk 10:24). But now it pleased the Lord God, for the strength of his (the king’s) faith and the abundance of his love with which he loves our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary Mārihām, with a strong heart and burning love, that it was revealed to King Dāwit. They brought to him this book from the land of Egypt (Gēbs) at the behest of her beloved son our Lord Jesus Christ, while it was written in Arabic; and he had it translated from Arabic into Ge’ez, in the peace of the Lord, amen.

O, our Lady and our salvation, (f. 283rb) for having laboured in zeal for letting write down these wonderful miracles of yours, write his name in the heavenly palace of your Son, where he dwells with his Father and his (Holy) Spirit. Grant his dominion the prostration of the enemy, that to his majesty may submit the ends of the earth, and that the Muslims from land and sea may pay the tribute (they owe to him); that the peoples of Rome (Rome) and Egypt (Mōsr) may serve him. Make his right (hand) over those who rose against him a splitting axe, a crushing hammer, and a cutting sword! (f. 283va) Let the crops of the fields and the fruits of the earth grow abundantly in his days and streams of milk and honey be poured. In love adorn his court camp (*tā’kā*) and his army! Surround him with an appreciated shield; wash his uncleanness and cleanse him from stains; give his body the fragrance of musk, rose petals, and amber; fill his throat with the wine of mystery; obtain for him the thines of grace from your excellent Son, so that he may sit at your right hand in heaven at the time of the wedding feast, amidst the songs of the son of Jesse (’Esey) and the praises (f. 283vb) of the Psalms, in the assembly of your first-born that he may join the praising! Lay your hand on him while saying: ‘This is mine, this is mine, who has loved my name, who has held my commemoration (*tazkār*), and who has had my miracles written. If he does wrong, if he falls into error, if he is defiled or crumbles into dust, forgive him, O my son, in remembrance of me, for the sake of my body that bore thee, for the sake of my lips that kissed thee, for the sake of my breasts that fed thee, for the sake of my hands that embraced thee, for the sake of my knees on which I made thee sit, for the sake of my back which bore thee, for the sake of my feet that (f. 284ra) walked with thee, make his error a compassionate forgiveness!’ While you say this, O our Lady Holy Virgin Mary Mārihām, intercede for him and intercede (for him)! Crown his head with the light of your Son; anoint his flesh with the oil of faith; tear down the wall of his sins and soften the hardness of his heart;

68 See below for the occurrence of the same concept in another text.

lead him into your palace that does not fall apart; spread your clothes over him; and in the splendour of your Son let his beauty shine forth! Praise be to you, O Bearer of the Lord of all, praise and glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (f. 284vb), now and for the eternity, forever and ever, amen, amen, amen.

This colophon was later integrated by a document, also published by Manfred Kropp, concerning a well-known miracle at the time of King Zar'a Yā'qob, related to the gold ink. The note is by a different, less elegant hand, the same hand that also wrote the fascicle added at the beginning of the codex, containing the so-called Canon of al-Mu'allaqah: therefore the codex, as non infrequently happens with manuscripts of the *Miracles of Mary*,⁶⁹ is a composite:⁷⁰

(f. 284rb) ԱԴԵՒ: ՄՈՃԻՔ: ՏՀԹՇԿ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆ: ՊՂԸՔՄ: ՄԹ-ՔԸԿ: ՀՅԴ: Ա
ՑԺԿ: ԱԽԲ: ՔՎԴ: ՄԽՄ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ՓԸՄՌՄԸԳ: ՀՅՀ: ՔՄԷ: ԿԻՀ: ՈՄ:
ՄՈԾԼԵ: ԱԽՈ: ՄԸԸ: ՈՓԼՄ: ՄԸՎ: ՄՔԸՀ: ԽԸՀՐ: ԻՄԿ: ՏՀԹՇԿ: ՑԽՕ:
ՈՒՆՊԱԾՄ: ԱՄԽՄԸԳ: ՄԳ-ՔԸԿ: ԱՄԸՀ: ԽԸՀՐ: ՏՀԹՇԿ: ՑԽՕ:
ՈՒԽ: ԻՄ: ԵՒԽԱԴ: ԾՈՅ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆ: ԻՄ: ՈԱՄ: ՊՂԸՔՄ: ՏՎԸՀ: ՓԸՄ:
ՄԸՎ: ԱԵԶԺԿ: ԱՒ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ՄՔԸՀ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: (f. 284va) ՄԵԿ:
ԱՆԴՄ: ՄԽԿ: ԱԽՈ: ԻՄ: ԺԱՓ: ՓԸՄ: ՄԸՎ: ՄԽՄ: ՅԴՄ: ՄԹԱԸՐ: Պ
ՈԸ: ԿԱԼ: ԳՈՒ: ԱԽՄ: ԱՅՐԱ: ԱԿԵԲ: ՄՔԸՀ: ԱՄԿ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՄԽՀ: Մ
ԽԿ: ԻՆՔՄ: ԱՓԼՄ: ՄԸՎ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՍԻԱ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ՅՎԲ: ԿՊԸ: ՄԻՒ: ԱԿԵԶՄ:
ԱՓԼՄ: ՄԸՎ: ԻՄ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՄԸՎ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՍԻԱ: ՅՎԲ: ԿՊԸ: ՄԻՒ: Ա
ԲԿՀ: ՄՈՒՔ: ԿՈ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆ: ԻՄ: ԲՈԱ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆ: ՈՂՆԴ: ԿՈՒՒՐ: ԻՒ:
ԿՊԸԿ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ԱՄՄԸՆԵ: ԵՒԽԱԸ: ՄՊԵՒԵ: ԱՆԴ: ԱՌԵՉԵՐ: ԼՄ-ԽԿ:
ՈՒԽ: (f. 284vb) ՈՒԽԱԸ: ԸՊՎ: ԴՇ: ՄԸԸ: ՄԵՌԱԼ: ԱՄՆԴՄ: ԵՒԽԱԸ:
ՅԴՄ: ՀՅՀ: ՄԽԿ: ՔՎԴ: ԱՄԸՔՄ: ՄԸՀՈՒ: ԱԽՈ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ԻՄՄ: ՄԻՒ:
ԺԱՓ: ԱԲԿՀ: ԱԽՈ: ԱԽՄ: ՅԸԸ: ՄԽՎՀՄ: ՈՄԸԳՓԵՒ: ԱԲԸՀ: ՄԸՎ:
ՄԸՎ: ՄԽԿ: ՔՎԴ: ՄԽԿ: ԱԽՈ: ՄԵԽԱԴ: ԿԱՄ: ՄԸՎ: ԻՄՄ: ՄԻՒ:
ՄԵԶՄ: ԿՊԸ: ԱԽՈ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՄԸՎ: ՍԻԱ: ՅՎԲ: ԿՊԸ: ՄԻՒ: Ա
ԲԿՀ: ՄՈՒՔ: (sic) ԱԲՎԸԿ: ՊՂԸՔՄ: ՄԽՀ: ՄԱԸ: ԱԸՀ: ՖԸ|ԳՈ: (f. 285ra)
ԱԵԶԺԿ: ՀՅՈՒ: ՔՈ: ՄՊԱԾՄ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ՄԽԸՄԵ: ՈՒՄ: ԱԽՄ: ՓԸՄՌՄԸԳ:
ՄՍՊՈՒ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ԱՈ: ԻՄ: ԵՒԽԱԸ: ԿՊԸՀ: ԱԴՄ-ԱԸ: ԱԸՒ:
ԿԱՓ: ԿԸՐ: ԱԽՄ: ՄԽԿ: ՄԸԽՓ: ՄԸԽ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ՄԸՎ: ԱՆԴ: ԱԸՀ:
ԱԴՔՀ: ՍԿՀ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ՈՄԸԳԸՆՄ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽԸԴ: ՅՎԲ: ԿՊԸՀ: Ա
ԿԸՐ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԾՈՅ: ԿԸՐ: Ա
ԿԸՐ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԾՈՅ: ԿԸՐ:
ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԾՈՅ: ԿԸՐ: Ա
ԿԸՐ: ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԾՈՅ: ԿԸՐ:
ՄԵՎՐՄԿ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԱՆՊԱԼԻՆԿ: ՈԿՄՄ: ԱԽՎՀՄ: ԾՈՅ: ԿԸՐ:

69 See Bausi 2016b, 123–126.

70 See Kropp 2017, 76 (text), 76–77 (German translation), who rightly notes on p.75: ‘von späterer Hand hinzugefügt nach dem Schlußparagraphen der Marienwundersammlung. Die Schrift ist die gleiche wie die des Mu'allqa-Kanons am Anfang der Handschrift auf einem später vorgehefteten Faszikel’.

{መወጥ፡ የከን፡ በእራ፡ አብ፡ መወልድ፡ መመገለስ፡ ቅጽ፡ መበእ፡ እጥርስ፡ ወአ
መላሽ፡ ለወለሙ፡ ዓለም፡ እሆን፡}

(f. 284rb) This book of the miracles of our Lady Māryām, as well as her praises, my father Dāwit, and his throne name was Constantine (Qʷastantīnos), had made write it while he embellished the memory of her name and the decoration of the clothes of her picture by gold ink.⁷¹ And also she showed at that moment (one of her) mighty miracles through the intercession of her trusted and beloved Son, the Lord (Jesus Christ). At that time it was a hidden decision that the greatness of the Lady of the whole world, Mary, would be revealed: the gold ink, with which this book was written, was used up before the completion of this book. (f. 284va) So the man reported to the king that the gold ink had run out. The king commanded and said to him: ‘Make other (ink) quickly, for I am in haste to see the completion of this book’. Then the craftsman of the gold ink went and made it with inappropriate means. The ink then looked like (dull) dust of the earth. When the king saw that the ink was spoiled, he was very sad and lamented to his mistress (Mary) crying: ‘O my mistress, is it because of my sin that this has happened? Or has it not pleased thee that (this work) is done?’ That night someone who resembled a Roman (*romāwi*) painter (*gabāre šō l*) appeared to the man (scribe) and said to him: ‘Why then is the king sad, when he loves Mary very much, and she loves him very much?’ He took a white stone from his robe, crushed it in a mortar, brought gold (solution) to the boil, and put the crushed stone inside. Then the dull color lifted off and it was pure shiny gold ink. Later, the scribe woke up from his sleep, found the stone, and did the same, and it became pure bright gold ink. When the king saw this, he rejoiced greatly and praised much his beloved Mary. Also I, his son Zar'a Yā'qob, who was found worthy to sit on the royal throne and my (throne) name is also Constantine (Qʷastantīnos), made a donation (to the Church on 'Ambā Gəšan) to God the Father, so that it would be for me a commemoration (*tazkār*), for the generation of generation, until the end of the world. Actually, also the (relic of the) cross came from Greece (Şər') to the country of Ethiopia, country of his kingdom, precisely in the period when he took over the reign, because the power of his reign was from God; just as the Patriarch (of Alexandria) Mātewos had previously foreseen in a vision the change of reign. But whoever picks up (this book) for anything other than reading it, whether low or high, let him be cast out of the court of the house of God and separated from the assembly of his saint servants, just as the Devil (Diyābələs) went out and was separated from the assembly of the watchful angels, amen.

{And let him be accursed by the mouth of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and by the mouth of Peter and Paul, forever and ever, amen.}

Colophons of translation: embedded colophons

The two categories of end notes—colophons and subscriptions—are subject to the same phenomena for structural reasons, linked to the material modality

71 This apparently ungrammatical sentence is in all likelihood a cleft sentence, with '*ənza yāsenni*' as subject sentence and '*ənta 'aṣḥafā*', as relative verb; there is nothing missing.

ties of the Ethiopian scriptural tradition and the nature of the ‘codex syntax’:⁷² an end note can easily be ‘embedded’ and integrated into the text, becoming part of it and being transmitted with it, either through compositional phenomena or for other reasons, as can be seen in the actual distribution in the manuscripts. A typical case for this phenomenology is that of the collection of the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (*Gadla hawāryāt* in Ethiopic, CAe 1461): some manuscripts of an extended recension of the collection have preserved an actual colophon, and one of considerable extent,⁷³ which must have originally marked the end of the oldest recension. Following this, other new texts, at first circulating in isolated form, were later added. Some manuscripts have an ‘embedded colophon’⁷⁴ underneath the text it originally followed, while others have placed it at the end of the collection.⁷⁵

Colophons of translation: authentic and true colophons

There is no formal criterion for determining with certainty that a colophon is ‘authentic’ or even only ‘true’ (the distinction, as is well known, is essential in philology)⁷⁶—that is, to refer historically to the manuscript support on which it would provide information—other than the exhaustive analysis of the manuscript tradition as a whole on the one hand conducted according to the set of operations of the philological method, and codicological analysis on the other, which alone can provide the elements useful to establish, for example, whether or not the colophon was copied from the antigraph; whether the formula follows that of the antigraph colophon with updates; or whether both the formulation and the content data—prosopographical, geographical, chronological—of the colophon are an original innovation; or whether the colophon is a forgery.

72 See the fundamental Andrist et al. 2013.

73 See Budge 1899, VII–VIII and 305–306.

74 Or ‘fossil colophon’, as suggested by Marilena Maniaci as appropriate term to define the phenomenon, still noting that ‘un colophon rimane tale, formalmente, anche se perde la sua funzione originaria e finisce con l’essere più o meno volontariamente incorporato al testo in una fase ulteriore della sua tradizione’ (personal communication). This, however, implies a formal definition of colophon, which is not easy to delimit.

75 See Bausi 2000–2001, 83. In the Bm project all recensions will receive a distinct clavis number, but not all have been yet implemented; the sixth recension is CAe 5818.

76 See Bausi 2016c, 63–64, n. 57.

Colophons of translation: title and colophon

The indication of the author pertains more properly to the titling, usually placed at the beginning and not at the end of the text⁷⁷—typical is the case of the homilies—in contradiction therefore with the general definition of colophon as end note to the text or to the manuscript. Rather, it can be said that such an indication—at least in the Ethiopic tradition, and in the phase that has come down to us—tends to become an integral part of the text and as such is subject to the subsequent process of tradition, thus tending to be invariable and obligatory: it should therefore be kept quite distinct from the phenomenology of the colophon.

Colophons of translation: resilient and removed colophons

End notes referring to translation—that is, as a rule, those indicating the last traditional step of the translation into Ethiopic, since end notes with translation indications in other languages upstream of the Ethiopian tradition are also attested⁷⁸—are frequently embedded and become *de facto* part of the text, not unlike the title; however, it is also the case that the end note is subject to a different interpretation in the manuscript tradition, that is, as a variable element, and as such it is subsequently removed in the copying process. What has already been said applies here, namely that only the combined analysis of philological and codicological data can provide the useful elements for exact historical understanding. Here follows a couple of examples:

(a) The Ethiopian version of the *Gadla Bsøy*, *Acts of Bsøy* (CAe 6537), edited from the two MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, d'Abbadie 126, ff. 51ra–73ra, and London, British Library, Oriental 692, ff. 174ra–202vb, mutilated, is also known from the MS EMML no. 7602, ff. 39ra–56ra, and also from a fourth manuscript attributable to the fifteenth century at the monastery of Beta Pantalewon, near Aksum:⁷⁹ of the four manuscripts, only the last, which I had the opportunity to examine during a mission to Aksum in 2001 by photographing its final folio, contains the footnote, absent from the other witnesses, attesting to the translation and naming its author, Bartalomewos:

መአክ፡ ወተተርጻዣ፡ እምጣብናዊ፡ ለግዳነ፡ በእራ፡ የጥል፡ በርተሎሚያዢ፡ በእንተ፡
ፍቅር፡ ጽሑፍ፡ መገደለ፡ ለአዲ፡ በስድ፡=፡

The translation from the Egyptian (*gəbšāwi*) language into Ge'əz was completed according to the dictation (*ba 'afä*) of the sinner Bartalomewos, for the sake of virtue and the spiritual struggle of 'Abbā Bsøy.

77 See above.

78 See the cases indicated in Proverbio 1998, 38–43.

79 See Colin 2002; see my review, Bausi 2004, 237.

The expression rendered as ‘the dictation’ can be literally translated as ‘by (word of) mouth’, and could allude to the process of translation performed orally by Bartalomewos and put in writing by others.

(b) Quite different is the case with the end note in the *Gadla Nob, Acts of Nob* (CAe 5631), attested, among others, by the MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Et. 264, f. 46r:

ተፈፀመ፡ ገጽ፡ ለበኩ፡ ወተተርጻም፡ እምዕረሰ፡ ለማስ፡ እምንዋያ፡ አቦነ፡ ተኩፍ፡ ከከብ፡ ስራሁ፡ አቦነ፡ ለለመ፡ (sic) ሲኢትዮጵያ፡ እኩ፡ መአገሳ፡ ተግባር፡ ቅቅሬ፡ አዲ፡ ዓዲ፡ ካሙ፡ ተከም፡ ለተ፡ ተግባር፡ ለወለመ፡ ልላም፡ እምን፡ በታችውሃዎሙ፡ እመዋል፡ ለማድት፡ ገዳኑ፡ ዘሎተሙ፡ ተህለ፡ የወለ፡ ከጋነ፡ እኩ፡ ለወለም፡ ለለመ፡ እምን፡

The *Acts* of the blessed are finished and have been translated from Arabic ('arabi) into Ethiopic at the expense of our Father, abundant star of light, our Father Salama (*sic*, for Salāmā), metropolitan of Ethiopia. He had the commemoration (*tazkār*) (for) love of 'Abbā Nob written down, that it might be a commemoration (*tazkār*) for him, forever and ever, amen: in the year 1079 from the era of the pure Martyrs (1362/1363 CE). May their prayer be with us all forever and ever, amen.

This end note with indication of translation was embedded into the transmitted text and is found in several manuscripts of the *Acts of Nob*, but not in all of them. In the absence of other elements, it is of no value for dating the manuscript to 1362/1363 CE, as Arnold van Lantschoot and others with him believed.⁸⁰

(c) An even more striking case is that of the biblical Book of Sirach, the translation of which was long dated to 678 CE, on the basis of an end note text found in several manuscripts, probably corrupted, but embedded and transmitted unchanged in the manuscript tradition.⁸¹

80 See Bausi 2012b, 119–121. On this and other subscriptions related to 'Abbā Salāmā see now the detailed analysis by Ambu 2022, 110–263. The text was edited by Rainieri 2011 from MSS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Et. 264 and London, British Library, Oriental 686.

81 See Rahlf 1965, 679–681, who demonstrated that the date of 678 CE must be interpreted in a different way and attests in fact only the much later accomplishment of a medieval exemplar. Already August Dillmann had expressed his doubts and suggested the right solution (see Dillmann 1894, 114, with references to Wright 1877, 17, and Zotenber 1877, 10): ‘Sententiam Zotenbergi, qui huic anno annum mundi 7170 (vel Christi 1678) substituendum esse censem, equidem non approbaverim; facilius crediderim, anno 678 Ecclesiasticum in Geez versum esse. At in codice Musei Brit. Oriental 494 (in Wrightii cat. p. 17) legitur: በታችውሃዎሙ፡ i.e. anno mundi 6970 (Christi 1478), quam lectionem si quis potiorem habuerit, illo anno aut archetypum quorundam recentiorum apographorum exaratum, aut priscam versionem ex auctoritate libri Graeci relectam esse existimat’. See also Marrassini 2014, 45–46; Bausi 2018b, 81.

The colophon as a production marker (MS Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, Martini etiop. 2)

In short, it is clear that if one wants to look at the phenomenon of the colophon and end note beyond the historical, cultural, and chronological data that the text—occasionally or even systematically—conveys, as a more general codicological phenomenon, one must consider the dynamics connected to the stratigraphy of the codex,⁸² considering both the colophons and the end notes in relation to the various codicological units that make up the manuscript and to the series of manuscripts that contain the same texts or discrete units. It is also clear that, unlike the titling (whether placed at the beginning or the end of the text), colophons and end notes are identified by sharing exclusively the function of production markers, either of the material artefact and/or of the text.

One of the most emblematic colophon as production marker is that of the MS Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, Martini etiop. 2 (previously indicated as no. 5), dated to 1438 CE (the manuscript was produced from the month of Yakkātit to the month of Nahāsi of the ninetieth year of Mercy, that is 1430 of the Ethiopian Calendar): the colophon defines the portions of the Octateuch written by two distinct scribes who cooperated for the realisation of the codex, and a word of gratitude is also spent for the makers of parchment, who clearly appear to be distinct from the scribes (fig. 5).⁸³

(f. 195rb) ተፈጋሚ፡ አደት፡ ስተት፡:::
ወተኩስፎት፡ ልት፡ መጽሐፍ፡ በቻቀመጥ፡ የጠኑረት፡ መተወጪነት፡ በመየከታት፡
 (sic) **ወተኩስፎት፡ በወርድ፡ ካሰሳ፡ ወንገለሁ፡ ቴርከያቸብ፡ መጀት፡ (sic) እባ፡ በ**
ርተሞስፎም፡ መዘከዕዬ፡ እበነ፡ ጉበረማርያም፡ ይጋሕፍ፡ ስም፡ እግዢእበራር፡ ን
ቢ፡ ዓምድ፡ ወርቁ፡ በቀላው፡ ይገዢ፡ መሰት፡ እየፍሰሰውም፡ ስማያዊት፡ የሰላለ፡ ኮ
ሎሙ፡ ይችቁ፡ ዓለለ፡ ዓለም፡ እመን፡፡ ዓልዋ፡ መዘዳግም፡ እግ፡ መጥፊ፡ መ
አከ፡ ዘይቅ፡ ዘረሳ፡ መዝላእንስ፡ እና፡ ድውሉ፡ ለለሙ፡ ወውስት፡ ወከራልን፡ እ
ሙሃ፡ በእእምር፡ መእሙ፡ በእግዢምር፡ ስረፍ፡ መስከካ፡ ለዓለም፡ ዓለም፡ (sic) እ
ማን፡ መለሰራሁት፡ በራፍ፡ ቤርክምሙ፡ እስዱ፡ ዓሙ፡ ስሙ፡ በዘር፡፡:::

(f. 195rb) The Book of Ruth from the Octateuch has been finished.

And this book was written in the 90th year of Mercy: it was started in the month of Yakkātit and finished in the month of Nahasi, (while) our king (was) Zar'ayā'qob

- 82 See Gumbert 2004, and in the same volume, Maniaci 2004; see also Ronconi 2007; Bausi 2010c; Andrist et al. 2013; Orlandi 2013, with a comprehensive proposal of taxonomy from bibliographical to textual units; the relevant sections in Maniaci 2015; Andrist 2015; Friedrich and Schwarke 2016; Bausi et al. 2019; Brita and Karolewski 2021.
- 83 See Fiaccadori 1993, 162–163; Lusini 2002, 161–163; see also for further details on the manuscript Bausi 2008, 522, n. 49; and for the codicological information we can draw on it, see Bausi 2014, 42–43; Bosc-Tiessé 2014, 12; Bausi 2016b, 119–120.

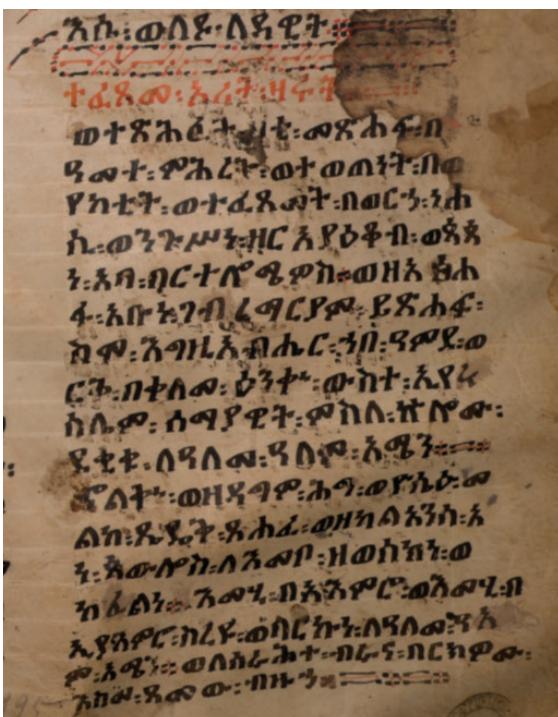


Fig. 5. MS Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, Martini etiop. 2, 1438 CE, Octateuch, f. 195rb. Photo by the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, UHH 2018.

(sic) and our Metropolitan *'Abbā* Bartalomewos. It was our Father Gabramāryām who had it written: let God write his name on the golden pillar by a bejewelled pen in the Heavenly Jerusalem with all his (spiritual) sons forever and ever, amen. Malka Šedeq wrote the Book of Numbers, Deutoronomy and Joshua, while I myself, Pāwlos, wrote the other (books). If we added or omitted anything, either wittingly or not, forgive and bless us forever and ever, amen. And bless the makers of parchment (*śarāḥta bərānnā*), because they laboured much.

The reliability of the colophon: colophon of text and colophon of codex

It is worth saying a few more words about the problem of translation: in many cases, the length of the translated texts for which an end note is attested in no way authorises the supposition that that text ever occupied a codex in its entirety on its own; nor is there any certainty that the end notes, in the absence of *explicit* indications, ever referred only to that particular text to which they follow and not to several other texts. In essence, it is not at all clear how and where—in Egyptian monasteries frequented by Ethiopians? in Ethiopia

with the help of Egyptian monks?—took place materially the process that from the *Vorlage*—always Arabic from the medieval period—led first to the translation, perhaps performed orally, then or contextually put in writing by a copyist to whom the translator dictated, and perhaps distinct from him, and finally to the material realisation of a codex, often multi-textual, where texts of different origin, provenance and *Vorlage*—ancient translations from Greek and more recent ones from Arabic—were assembled and organised.⁸⁴ Let us look at two examples:

(a) In the MS London, British Library, Oriental 691, f. 241vb (figure 3), we read for instance:

መአክ፡ መጽሐፎ፡ እንበቅም፡ በበይ፡ እሙ፡ የወጪ ለጥቅምት፡ ክፍል፡ ዓመታ፡
የአረት፡ በመዋል፡ የግብ፡ ያግኘ፡

The great *Book of Habakkuk* (*Ἐνβα ἐγομ*) was completed on the 18th of ታቅዬት of the year of Mercy 477, in the time of King Yāgbā Ṣeyon (r. 1285–1294 CE).

The date corresponds to 15 October 1292.⁸⁵ The *Book of Habakkuk* is the first text in the manuscript, which contains several other hagiographical texts—on Eustathius; Cosmas and Damian; George; Mercury; Menna; James the Intercessed—but the final end note text must apply to all the texts included in the manuscript, identified as a whole as the *Book of Habakkuk* by the first text in it.⁸⁶

(b) A footnote following an *explicit* note in the *Acts of Caleb* in the MS Zwāy, *Gadla samā tāt, Acts of the Martyrs* (different from the manuscript of the *Acts of the Saints* seen above), f. 36va-b (figure 4), which has recently come to the attention of scholars as a witness to a new Ethiopian version of the Greek-Arabic *Martyrdom of Arethas*,⁸⁷ reads as follows (fig. 6):

84 To these complex questions, which can only be mentioned here, see Maximous el-Antony et al. 2016; Bausi 2018b; Butts and Erho 2018; Bausi 2019; Bausi 2020; Brita 2020; Lusini 2020b; Bausi 2021a; Nosnitsin 2022.

85 See also Mauro da Leonessa 1934, 102, who wrongly indicates 1293 CE instead of 1292 CE.

86 See Bausi 2002, 8–9. On the dating of the manuscript to the end of the thirteenth century agrees also Eyob Derillo 2019, 106. See <<https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/BLorient691/main>>; <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_691_f001r> (last accessed 1 November 2022).

87 See Bausi 2010d, 249–251; Marrassini 2011a, *passim*; Marrassini 2014, 112 and 356, and *passim*. The manuscript was first noted by Sergew Hable Selassie 1972a (unpublished manuscript), 42a ('Expedition of Caleb & Nagran': I owe this reference to Ted Erho); then by Sergew Hable Selassie 1972b, 127; first used by Yohannes Gebre Sellassie 2009. With the siglum 'Et1' is referred from my unpublished edition in La Spisa 2021, see also Bausi 2021c. The manuscript belongs to the church of Qəddəst Māryām from the monastery of Dabra Ṣeyon on Lake Zwāy, see Buruk Wolde-Michael 2015, 55–56.



Fig. 6. MS Ethiopia, Lake Zwāy, church of Qəddəst Māryām from the monastery of Dabra Ṣeyon, fifteenth century, *Gadla samā'tāt*, *Acts of the Martyrs*, f. 36va-b, explicit and end note to the *Gadla Kāleb*, *Acts of Kāleb*. Photo by Addis Ababa University 2009 for Paolo Marrassini; personal archive of Alessandro Bausi (see already Bausi 2016a, 259, pl. IV).

ተፈጋዣ፡ ገጽል፡ መሰምድ፡ አረኞት፡ ቅጽሰ፡ መዘቅጽሳን፡ ለማስታት፡ ዘናገራን፡ ወዘከለብ፡
የተመ፡ እተዋቁም፡ መጽቀፍ፡ ካርስቶስ፡ በመዋል፡ የነተማኖስ፡ (f. 36vb) ገተመ፡ ፈጻ፡ ወ
ጠዋጥሞስ፡ ለቁ፡ እኩስታት፡ በእልዕዝድር፡ መዋርያስ፡ ለቁ፡ እኩስታት፡ ዘናገዘካለም፡=፡
መተክለት፡ ባቱ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ እምጽር፡ ለማስከ፡ ለበስት፡ ለብስታት፡ ለእግዢአብዕር፡ ወላዕሉ፡
ይሁን፡ የጊዜቶ፡ እኩን፡

The Acts and the Martyrdom of Saint Arethas (Hirut), of the saint martyrs of Nāgrān, and of Kāleb king of Ethiopia, devoted to Christ, in the days of Justin (Yostēnos), king of Rome (Rome), and of Timotheus (Timotewos) patriarch of Alexandria, and Euphrasios (Qʷərəsyos) patriarch of Antioch, are finished. This book was translated from Greek (*ṣər'*) into Ge'əz. Glory to God and let his mercy be upon us, amen'.

The veracity of the end note to the text is in this case highly doubtful, because there is indubitable evidence of an Arabic *Vorlage* upstream of the Ethiopic: it could be a translation with adaptation of the Arabic *Vorlage*.

The colophon as an opuscule: the Acts of Dabra Māryām

Without ever becoming a mandatory element of the Ethiopian scriptural tradition, a particular flowering of long colophons and subscription notes occurs in the time of King Zar'a Yā'qob,⁸⁸ with detailed indications of the year of the reign in which they were composed—which does not exclude that long or even very long colophons and end notes also occur later. Already identified in its historical and cultural importance, but still to be studied codicologically, is the phenomenon of colophons elevated to the level of small literary works of hagiographic and celebratory character, in elevated style and sometimes even in rhymed prose. Precise examples can be found in manuscripts produced within the 'Ewostātean communities of medieval Eritrea,⁸⁹ although the lack of statistical data, as well as indications to identify colophons and footnotes belonging to particular scriptoria—if scriptoria are to be postulated, at least in some cases, in Ethiopia—invite caution.⁹⁰

The colophon that occupies approximately four final folios of one of the first quires of a codex (ff. 32va–36ra) of the *Acts of the Martyrs* from the monastery of Dabra Māryām, Qʷahayn, Eritrea, consists of a long note, with large sections in rhymed prose, written at the completion of the material redaction of the manuscript, on 21 Ḥamlē 1445 of the Ethiopian calendar, that is 15 July 1453 CE. In this subscription the copyist, who is its author (an unidentifiable Yohannes of Dabra Māryām), retraces the history of the community and its abbots with great tension and narrative effectiveness, recalling its alternating events. Length, formal register, style, and also the material accuracy of the text—the name of Yohannes, the name, appellations, and feasts of Mary, the names of the monks of the order, the divine names, the name of Zar'a Yā'qob, and the numeral signs are rubricated—reveal the particularly high tone and

88 As rightly also noted by Wion 2007.

89 On the monastic 'Ewostātean movement, see Lusini 1993; Fiaccadori 2005; Tedros Abraha 2007; Tedros Abraha 2008; Tedros Abraha 2009; Gervers 2013; Adankpo 2015a; Adankpo 2015b; Adankpo Labadie 2016; Adankpo Labadie 2017; Bausi and Lusini 2018.

90 See below concerning the 'Ewostātean monastic communities. Perhaps the evaluation of hagiographical evidence for the definition of a practice of monastic scriptoria in Derat 2012 is overly generous and trusting, using above all Lusini 2004; see for similar examples outside the context of 'Ewostātean communities Bausi 2009, 184. An important conceptual contributions on *scriptoria* has now been provided by Bosc-Tiessé 2014.

strong literary intentions of the colophon, which among other things—which is not unusual—also includes an inventory of manuscripts and assimilated goods.⁹¹ The last leaf (f. 36) consists of only one column, either because of a vertical cut from top to bottom, or, perhaps more likely, because the parchment sheet was already originally smaller in size. Unfortunately, there is a lack of codicological data that could have said more about the structural placement of the colophon, whether the well-known *horror vacui* or any other material factors played any role here. Since the note was edited, but only an Italian translation was available, I repropose here the text, with minor revisions and with rubrications underlined (except punctuation marks that follow non-rubricated names), with an English translation (fig. 7a–b):

(f. 32va) ԱՀԴԴՄ: ԽԱՒԹՈ: ԾՐԺԵՒԴ: ԱՎԵ: ԾՊՅՈ: ԵՔԱՒԹՈ: ՀՆ: ՇԴԱ: ԴՐ
ԾԽՈ: ԾԿԴՆ: ՈՀԽԾՅ: ԱԱ: ԶԺԲՒԹՈ: ԵՄՊԱՀԴԻ: ՈՒԽԵՒԴ: ԾԳՍԻՄՈ: ՈՒԳԸՐ:
 ԻՄ: ԴԵՔՈՎՈ: ՄՈԽԴԴ: ՇՈԽԵՒ: ԻՄ: ՀՆՄԱՅՅՎ: ՀՄԴՐԵԼ: ԶՃԱ: ԾՃՎԵ
 ԻՄ: ԴՄՊՈՎՈ: ՄՆՅԱՀԿՄ: ՀԴԻՌԱ: ԻՄ: ՖՄՈՒԹՈ: ՄՆՅԻՌԱ: ԱԲԴՎԵԳ:
 ԻՄ: ԴՃՎԴՎՈ: ՄԻՋՈՒ: ՀԵԴՄԱՅԹԻՄՈ: (sic, for ՀԵԴՄԱՅԹԻՄՈ:) ԱՆՊԱՀԴՐ:
ՊԿԾԳՅՈ: ՈՀՆԴԵԽՅ: ԻՄ: ԴՈԽԱՎՈ: ԻՄ: ԴՈԽԱՀԱ: ԸԴ: ԴՈ: ՄԱԶ: Ի.ԶԻ:
 ՊԱՀԵՐԴ: ԱԽՈՎՐՎ: ՊՈՀ: ՉՈՒԿ: ԻՄ: ԾՃՊՎ: ՄԶՀ: ՀԵԴՄԱՅԹԻՄՈ: ՈՂԱ: Գ
 ԱՅ: ՊԴԱՅԴԴ: ԻՄ: ԴՈԽԱՎՈ: ՄՈԱՅՏՈՃՀՆ: ԳԼՅՈ: ԳՐԸՐԴ: ՊԱՀԵՐԴ: ԻՄ: Դ
 ՅՄՆԱՎ: ՄՄՈՒԴ: ԸՆԴԻՒԹՈ: ԱՌԵՐԴ: ԻՄ: (f. 32vb) ՖՈԽՎՈ: ԱԶԼՄ: ԳԼՅՈ:
 ՀԿՅԴ: ԱՄՅԴ: ՄԻՄԴ: ԼԵՒԴ: ԼԵՒԴ: =

(Dotted line.)

ԴՎՈՒՆ: ՄՎՃՃՄ: ԱԴՒ: ՄԶԺԿԲ: ՈԾՈՀ: ՊԿԾԳՅՈ: ՈՄԻՒ: ԱՀՈՒՆ: Հ
ԹՈՊԵՔԸՆ: ԿՄԴ: ՔԲԸ: ՓԿԳՅ: ՈԾՀԴԱ: ՈԾԿՅ: ՄՊԱԴՀ: ԱՀՈՒՆ: ՀԱՌՅՅ:
 ՄԳՄՍՀՀ: ՀՊ: ԱԽՈՄԴ: ՉՊՈ: ՀԿՄՎ: ՅՄ-ԾՈ: ԻՄ: ՃՆ: ՄՅԵ: ՄԾՊՄՅ: ՄԽՈՒ:
ԱԽԾՅՈ: ՈԾՈՒՈ: ՔՎՄ: Ի.ՃԴ: ՀՈՒ: ՊԿԸ: ՊԱՀՄԴՅՀ: ՄԽՈՒ: ԾՊԴՅՈ: ՄԳՄՍՀՀ:
 ՔԲԸՈՅ: ՃԱՅ: ՔԼԱՄ: ԱՅՄԴՆԱՊԲՅՆ: ՄԽՈՒ: ԴՎԱՀ: ՄԾՊՄՅ: ՄՎՖԿ: Ա
 Դ: ԻԾԸԵՔՅ: ՄԳՅ: ԸՆՀՅ: ՈՒԽԾՀԱ: ՄԿԴԱԸ: ՈԾՀԸ: ԻՄ: ԴԴԿՅ: ԸՈ: Ա
 ՃՃԲ: ՃՃԱ: ՅՃԸ: ԻՄ: ԾՊՅ: ԱՅՃԸ: ՄԽԾՀԸ: ՔԲԸՈՅ: ՀՈՒՆ: ՄԽԾՀԸ: Վ
 ԵԱՄ[.] | (f. 33ra) ԻԾԲԸ: ՄՎԱԴՅ: ՈՊԻ: Պ<Ծ>ՊՅ: ՈՎԲՃՄ: ԴՐԱՀՅ: ԱԻ: Ա
 ՊԵՒԴ: ՈՀԴԴ: ՊԱՀԱ: ԱԾՈՒ: ՅՃՅ: ՈՎԲՃՄ: ԴՐԱՄ: ՄՎՕԲՅ: ՈՒ: ԳՄՄ:
 ՄՄԾՄ: ԱՀՈՒՆ: ՊՈՀ: ԻԾԸԻՒ: ՈՊՐՄՄ: ՄԽՖ: ԱՀՈՒՆ: ՊԵՒԴ: ՔԲԸՈՅ: Հ
 ԱԿՐՅ: ՄԳՄՍՀՀ: ՄՎՖԿ: ՔԼԱՄ: ԱԽԸ, ԾՊԴՅՈ: ՈՊԻ, ԾՊԴՅՈ: ՄԼԺՎԾՅԴՅ: ԳՎՊՅ: Մ
 ԲԸՆ: ԳՅ: ԴԵՊՐՄՎՄ: ՄԽՈՒ: ԵԾԽՄՄ: ՈԾՊԸՈՅ: ՄՎՔՅՅ: ՄԽՄԿԴՅԴՅ: Մ
 ՈՒԴՎԵՐԴՅ: ԱԽԾԸՆԴՅ: ԿՄԴ: ԱԽԾԿՄ: ՈՎԲՈՒ: ՄԿԸ: ԱՎԳԴՅ: ՃՄ-ՅՅ: Հ
 Ո: ՊՈՒՄՅ: ՈՀԴԴ: ԻՊՈՒ: ՄԳՖԸ: ՄՈՒՄ: ԵՐԿՄԴՅ: ՀՄ: ՊԿԿՅ: ՃՊԸՐԴ: Ի
 ՊԵՒԴ[.] ԸՆՀՅ: ՊԱՀԱ: ՃԸ: ՄԸՅ: ՄՎՃԴ: ՀՄԱՀՅ: ՄԾՊՄՅ: ՈԴՆՈԱԳՅ: Ի
 ՊԳՅ: ՃՎՅ: ՔԱՈՈ: ԵՐՎՅ: ՔՅՊՅ: ԾԿՊՅ: ՄՔՀՎ: ՃՄ-ՀՅ: ՄՔԾԵՐՄՀ[.]
 ՆՅՅՅ: ՄԵՀԵՀ: ՊԵՀՅՈՅ: ՄԵՀԵ: ՔՆՊԱ: ՀՆԴ: ՔՎԸՐ: (f. 33rb) ՈՒՆ: Ա
 Բ: ԴԻՄ: ԱՈՈ: ՄԻՄԴ: ՈՄԲԸՀ: ՊՈՂՄՅ: ՆԲՈ: ՄՄՀՄ: ԴԴՄԿՅՀ: ՄՈՒ:
 ՄԾՊՄՄ: ՄՎՊՐՄ: ԱԽԾՅ: ՔԸՖՈ: ՄՎՖԿ: ԱԿԱԽԱՌԿԱ: ԾԿՕ: ԿՅՊԳՅ:

91 See Bausi 1994, 47–57 (introduction and annotated Italian translation with further details) and 63–65 (text).

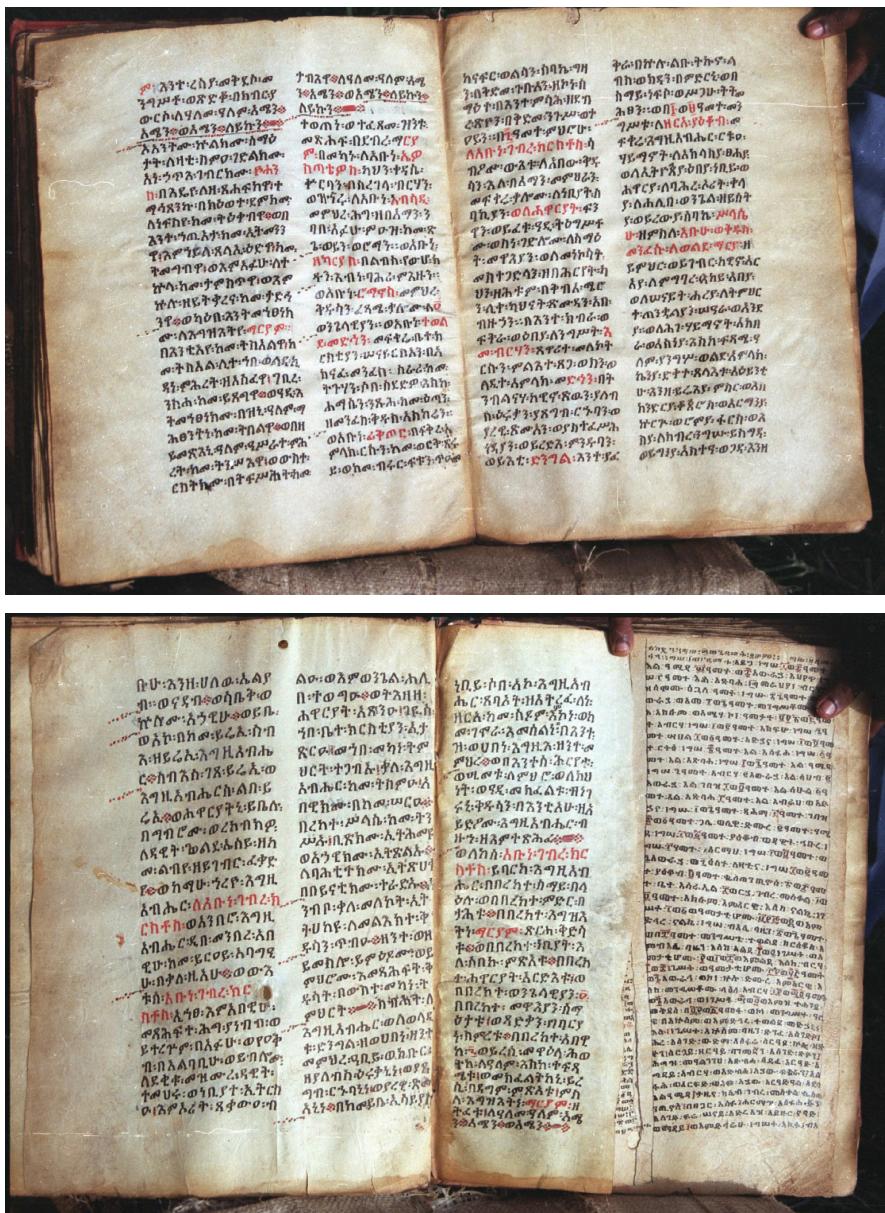


Fig. 7a–b. MS Eritrea, Qohayn, Dabra Māryām, 1453 CE, *Gadla samā 'tāt, Acts of the Martyrs*, ff. 32v–33r and 35v–36r. Photo by Alessandro Bausi for the Missione Italiana in Eritrea (MIE), Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche and Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna 1993

(Here follow three blank lines until the end of the column.)

(f. 34rb) հիմ: ՔՃՔ: ՈՒՐ: ԱՌ: ՎԵԴԻՄՈՎ: ՎԵԴՄԱԺԹԳ: ՎԵԿՊՈՅ: ՎԵ
ՆՎԻ: ՎԵՐԿ: ՀԻԽԱՅ: Ը<ՆՊ>ԱՇԵՂ: ԱՇՆՊԱԳ: ՄՇԿ: ՎԱԾՆՊԱԳ: Հ
ԱՇԿ: (in erased text) ՎԵԿՊՈՅ: ՄՌ: ՀՈՊԵՂ: ԱՊՈԾԾՒ: ԸՆԻ: ՀՈՒ:
ՔՇՀ: ՀՈՎԿ: ՎԵՆԱՌ: ՓՔՄ: հԵԴԻՈԾ: ՈՎԱԴԿ: ԱԽՈՂ: Ց ԾԱՌ: ԱՌԻ: Ց
ՄԱՀԱՆՅ: (sic, ՄՌ over erased letters) ՀԱԽԱՌ: ԻՄ: ԳԻՌԱՅ: ԱԼ: ՎԵԿԴ: ՄԻՐ:
ՈՎԱԴԿ: ՎԵԿ: ՎԵՐԿ: Ց ԾԱՌԴ: ԻՌԵՂ: ՈՎԱԴԿ: ԱՄՆԱՌ: ՓԿՇՀ:
ՄԵՋԱՌ: ՓԿՇՊՅ: ՈՒԺ: ՄԵՋ: ՈՒԺ: ՈՒ: ՄԵՋԲՈՅ: ՄԻՌԵՂ: ՊՄՀԱՌ: ԱԾՇ:
ՄԵՋԱՌ: ՄԵՋԲՈՅ: ՄԻՌԵՂ: ԱՄՀ: ԱՄՀ: ՄԵՋԲՈՅ: ՄԻՌԵՂ: ԱԾՇ:

ዶንግል፡ ታጀር፡ ገበያ፡ ወኪታጀርቁ፡ እምኬ፡ ትከድና፡ አልባይ፡ (f. 34va)
 መትኩር፡ በእኔያ፡ መተካምኑ፡ በእኔያ፡ እምኬ፡=፡
መውእቱ፡ አብነ፡ ገበያ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ እያዥር፡ መተረ፡ እምሰለማ ለለማዘክኑ፡ ማ
ይም፡ ነገሁ፡ መስር፡ ለለተ፡ መሞዕግልተ፡ (sic, for መዓልተ፡) ቅተረ፡ መዓልተ፡
መከበ፡ በሆኖሩ፡ መበገምኑ፡ መበረኻ፡ መበመንጭድኑ፡ እንዘ፡ ሆለ፡ እያዥር፡ እ
ንብበ፡ ተካምራቸ፡ መመዝቅራቸ፡ ለለማዘክኑ፡ ማርይም፡ በአረቁ፡ መቦግብስክ፡ በ
ንብረቁ፡ መበጥንሮስክ፡ እያዥር፡ ከነር፡ ለማ፡ ለለማዘክኑ፡ ማርይም፡ እስመ፡ ይ
እኩ፡ ተስፋሁ፡ መተወካልቱ፡ ወጪጋጥቱ፡ መከወወቱ፡ መቤት፡ ትከጥ፡ ለደኩቱ፡ ወ
መድኑኩቱ፡ እምኬ፡ መሰረት፡ ይለፈ፡ የነበረ፡ ቅድመ፡ ገብ፡ ለመሰለ፡ እምዘክኑ፡ ማ
ይም፡ መደሰዋድ፡ ስቱ፡ መለምግልፍ፡ ከልአቱ፡ መደብል፡ ቅድሰት፡ መሰዕዕት፡ ወ
በርክቡ፡ እንደ፡ መይይኝ፡ ስማ፡ ለበል፡ ይበል፡ መደሰት፡ እምዘክኑ፡ ወ
ማርይም፡ ሰነዱ፡ ገተመሳሙ፡ እስተ፡ መንቀዱ፡ (sic, for እወለ፡) ፍሰብ፡ በ
ምአረትኩ፡ እያስተ፡ ምኬ፡ ወለኩ፡ የስቴ፡ እንደ፡ ባለተክኩ፡ ድንግል፡ አኩ፡ በመዓልት፡
መበላቸ፡ የነውር፡ በስመ፡ በእኔ፡ ይነውር፡ መበለም፡ መልቅ፡ የቀር፡ መደብል፡ እ
ምዘክኑ፡ እመ፡ መለተ፡ እምኬኩ፡ እያስተ፡ መለምአበ፡ እያስተ፡ ትከድና፡ በ
መዘረዳቸ፡ መትኩር፡ በእኔዋዕ፡ ገብ፡ ወለኩ፡ ይከላለ፡ ከመ፡ ለመር፡ መልቻ፡
መሰባ፡ ይህ፡ ችግ፡ ለበት፡ ከርስቶየን፡ እው፡ ለነይሩ፡ እው፡ ለደቂቃ፡ ማንበ፡ ይ
በል፡ አብነ፡ ገበያ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ እኩ፡ እኩ፡ ችግያ፡ መተረኑ፡ እሉ፡ ችግ፡ መተረ፡
ለለመ፡ መለከተ፡ መሠጥ፡ ይሠጥ፡ እኩመ፡ ችግ፡ ለበል፡ መመዝገበ፡ ለዘላኝ፡ ወ
አግዥአነ፡ (f. 35ra) ከርስቶስ፡ ችግ፡ ይበል፡ በቻተ፡ ልበ፡ መበመንፈለ፡ የዋሁ፡
እለመር፡ ከመ፡ በበል፡ መከበር፡ እምኬ፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ መእቱ፡ በዘ፡ ፍቃድ፡ የነደ፡
መዘ፡ ፍቃድ፡ የሰበል፡ መወእቱ፡ ያስር፡ መከበር፡ ያስተ፡ መደሰል፡ መስጠት፡ ከሁት፡ ቁስክ፡
እኩፋ፡ በበት፡ መግምሮ፡ እፈጸም፡ መሠጥ፡ ለበል፡ መደሰ፡ ወለም፡ ወደፊት፡ መደሰል፡ ወ
ተርጓ፡ ወጀመጥ፡ (sic) እወለያ፡ ይለሰ፡ መደቀቻ፡ እብከተ፡ ለል፡ ከዛ፡ እ
ስለጠ፡ መከበ፡ በዘ፡ ይለየ፡ ለለ፡ ተካመና፡ እንበለ፡ እስተ፡ ትደግና፡ እምኬ፡ ይ
ለለኩ፡ መተሸቦ፡ ተግኝ፡ እኩ፡ ለበል፡ ይለኩ፡ እስተ፡ ወክልበቸ፡ ወክልበቸ፡ መ
(Dotted line.)

ወይዘኝ፡ እልምና፡ መለግዕ፡ (f. 35rb) መጠየቁ፡ እብቀያ፡ በዘ፡ እም
 ቅድመ፡ መቆዳለ፡ ከመ፡ ችግሥት፡ ለፊይሁመ፡ እኩ፡ ይቻቀቻክሙ፡ ወነሥሩ፡ ወቀ
 የ፡ ገዢውሮሁመ፡ ወሻእለሁመ፡ ወሻእለሁ፡ ከ፡ በመቆዳለሁ፡ ለእበነ፡ ገበያ፡ ከር
 ስቶስ፡ ትከተና፡ ወዳግና፡ ቅጥር፡ ወሰለም፡ ወሻእለሁሁመ፡ እሉ፡ ያስተቀፍናሁመ፡ ወ
 የፈቀድናሁመ፡ እሉ፡ ይሻእለሁመ፡ ወምግና፡ ለእመ፡ እሉ፡ ይሻእለሁ፡ ለእመ፡ የሰለ፡
 እምና፡ መከተና፡ እመ፡ መሁክሙ፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ መምሬ፡ ቅድለ፡ በቻተ፡ እምና፡ ወክልከተ፡
 ከዚ፡ ለሰይሁ፡ እለሁም፡ ወቅድ፡ ገረም፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ በዚ፡ ገረም፡ ለዳዋት፡ ተ
 በኩ፡ ይንገሥ፡ ለል፡ ሁዝቦ፡ እስራኤል፡ እኩ፡ ችግ፡ መእቱ፡ ወደፊት፡ መደሰ፡ እኩ፡ ለ
 እብሁ፡ (f. 35va) እኩ፡ ለለመ፡ እልምና፡ ወዳግና፡ መሰረቸ፡ ወክልመ፡ እድዋሁ፡ ወ
 ይበ፡ መከብ፡ ይራሱ፡ ለበራሱ፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ ለበራሱ፡ ገብ፡ ይራሱ፡ መ
 ለዘላኝ፡ ወጀመጥ፡ ወጀመጥ፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ ይበ፡ መግም፡ ለበል፡ በግብርመ፡ ወረከብከም፡ ለዳዋት፡
 መልቅ፡ እኩ፡ ወከመ፡ ለለ፡ ይቻቀቻ፡ ፍቃድ፡ ወከማሁ፡ ገረም፡ እግዥአበዕር፡
 ለእበነ፡ ገበያ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ወጀመጥ፡ እግዥአበዕር፡ ይበ፡ መግም፡ ለይሁ፡ ከመ፡
 ይመ፡ እምና፡ በቻለ፡ በእኔ፡ መውእቱ፡ እብነ፡ ገበያ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ድንግል፡ እምና፡ ወ
 ወሻእለሁ፡ መሻእለሁ፡ እኩ፡ ይሻእለሁ፡ እስተ፡ ወሻእለሁ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ድንግል፡ እምና፡

መ.በለመ፡ ለደቀቁ፡ መግመረ፡ የወጥ፡ ተመሆኑ፡ ወንበያ፡ እትርስዎ፡ እምእረት፡
 የቃወሙ፡ በልቦ፡ (f. 35vb) ወልምወንጻል፡ ካሉ፡ ተመግኝ፡ ወተኞች፡ አዋርያት፡ እ
 ድንጋጌ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ክርስታሪያ፡ እታክርስ፡ መኅብ፡ (sic, with *መ* deleted) መ
 ካ፡ ተምህርት፡ ተጋብኬ፡ ቅለ፡ እግዢአብዕር፡ ከው፡ ትሰምዎ፡ አበዋዕሙ፡ በከመ፡
 መርሱ፡ በረከት፡ ሥነበ፡ ከው፡ ትንሣኤ፡ ቤትወሙ፡ እትሻመቅ[፡] ወላድወሙ፡ እ
 ትጋልኩ፡ ለባከተተዕሙ፡ እትጀሁ[ቅ፡] በበደረቱዕሙ፡ ተረድኩ፡ እንበበ፡ ቅለ፡ መለ
 ካት፡ እትሆነ፡ ለመልካት፡ ቅዱሳን፡ የብዱ፡ በንት፡ መዘመስሳ፡ ይምዳድሙ፡ ወይ
 የወርሙ፡ እመዳቸው፡ ቅዱሳን፡ በመት፡ መከ፣ ተምህርት፡=፡
 ስባክት፡ ለአግዢአብዕር፡ መለማረቻ፡ ደንግል፡ ከወሁበ፡ በንት[፡] መምህረ፡ ዓቢይ፡ ወ
 ክዕር፡ ቤትራበ፡ ዕቅቃኩ፡ ወደግምብ፡ ሪተኞች፡ ወደረዊ፡ ደመኝኩ፡ በከመ፡ ይብ፡ እ
 እያደለ[፡] (f. 36ra) የበይ፡ ሰብ፡ እብ፡ እግዢአብዕር፡ ወባኤት፡ በእኔረፈ፡ ለን፡ ዘርኢ፡ ከ
 መ፡ ለደም፡ እምኬ፡ ወከው፡ የምሮ፡ እመልኬ፡ በእኔተ፡ ብ፡ ወሁበ፡ እግዢአ፡ በንት፡
 መምህረ፡ መበእኔተ፡ እርሱች፡ መሠመች፡ ለምወር፡ መለከሁነት፡ ወዳዲ፡ መከልልቻ፡ በ
 ነገሩ፡ ቅዱሳን፡ በእኔተአሁ፡ በእየደምሙ፡ እግዢአብዕር፡ በዘተ፡ በእምተጋስፊ፡=፡
 መለከሰ፡ እብ፡ የበረ፡ ክርስቶ፡ ወፃር፡ እግዢአብዕር፡ በበረከት፡ ሰማይ፡ በለሰ፡
 መበረከት፡ የምሮ፡ በታኂች፡ በበረከት፡ እግዢአት፡ ማርያም፡ ደርኢ፡ ቅዱሳኩ፡ ወ
 በበረከት፡ የበይ፡ እለ፡ ሰብ፡ የምሮቻ፡ በበረከት፡ አዋርያት፡ እርድእቻ፡ መበረከት፡
 መንፈላምኩ፡ ዕ፡ በበረከት፡ መዋእም፡ ለማደቻ፡ ወደድቻ፡ የበርሮ፡ ለምረቱ፡ በ
 በረከት፡ እበዋከ፡ ብ፡ ወይረሰ፡ መዋል፡ እ<ይ>ወቻ፡ ለዓለም፡ እስከ፡ ተፍጻማቻ፡
 መመልፈትኩ፡ ይረሰ፡ በምግም፡ የምሮቻ፡ ወሰል፡ እግዢአት፡ ማርያም፡ በንቱቻ፡ ለ
 ዓለም፡ እምኩ፡ እምኩ፡ ወአማ፡

(f. 32va) O all you martyrs, I, the sinner your servant Yohannès, who have written this testimony of your spiritual combat (*gadl*) with my own hand, have entrusted myself to the outpouring of your blood so that you may protect my soul,⁹² so that you may not reject it because of its sins, so that you may protect it from the power of its hater enemy, so that you may snatch it from the mouth of the wolf, and so that you may save it from everything that opposes it. And furthermore I entrust myself to you that you may implore my Lady Mary for me, that she may implore for me from her Son the Covenant of Mercy which he has promised her, that he may grant her (the soul) the grace to do penance; and again I entrust myself to you in this world that you may say ‘our care’ for her, and that also in the world to come you may receive for her the tithes of mercy and that you may make her enter (f. 32vb) into your inheritance in gladness. Forever and ever, amen and amen, so be it.

(Dotted line.)

This book was begun and finished in Dabra Māryām, in the place of our Father 'Ewostātewos, the consecrating minister of the Eucharist⁹³ on a chariot of light, and the burial place⁹⁴ of our Father 'Absādi, master (*mamhər*) of the law, the speech of whose mouth is truly fragrant like a vine and pomegranate flower; and our Father Zakāryās, clothed in a robe of persuasion,⁹⁵ a cornerstone of pearl;⁹⁶ and our Father Romānos teacher of saints,⁹⁷ compiler of the word of the 4 Evangelists; and our

92 Rhyme in *-wā*.

93 Rhyme in *-ān*.

94 For *zəħʷər* see Leslau 1987, 635.

95 Rhyme in *-un*.

96 For *mə'əzun* see Leslau 1987, 52.

97 Rhyme in *-ān*.

Father Tawalda Madḥən lover of the church, of good old age, traverser on the wings of the Holy Spirit like the Vigilants, when they drove him down to Ḥamāsen,⁹⁸ pure as incense, casket of the Holy Spirit; and our Father Fiqtor, burning⁹⁹ with the love of God, clean as gold and tried as silver, with tasty lips and tongue,¹⁰⁰ (f. 33ra) a preacher of liberty¹⁰¹ before those assembled in council, who was a witness at the banquet on Dabra Ṣeyon¹⁰² before the king and the troops; in the seventh year of the mastership of our Father Gabra Kr̄ostos, the seventh of the holy fathers who were in truth masters (*mamhərān*), a lover of the word of the prophets preachers and of the Apostles (who were) sent; and he also desires the endurance and beauty of the spiritual combat of victorious martyrs and fighting monks, minister by election, marked with *meron* oil, chief of pious ministers, father of many. For the honour, love, and greatness of the Queen Mother of Light¹⁰³ the bearer of the fiery divinity, full of grace and beauty, the parent of God the Saviour, by her intercession made safe,¹⁰⁴ clothe the naked, satisfy the hungry, quench the thirsty, make the poor rejoice, help the afflicted; and let that Virgin whom he loves (f. 33rb) with all his heart be for him a robe and mantle on earth and in heaven, take into his care his body and soul. And in the 19th year of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob, lover of the Lord, orthodox, sun of the Church¹⁰⁵ and greatness of Ethiopia ('Ityōpīā), prophet and apostle, who drinks and quenches his thirst from the abyss of the sea of the Octateuch ('orit) and the milk of the Gospel, preacher of the Trinity who is united with the Father and the Holy Spirit of the son of Mary,¹⁰⁶ having become a model what he teaches and works, he has rejected the work of wickedness and chosen that of goodness, he has made the doctrine of the sorcerers cease and reduced it to little, he has honoured and beautified the law of faith,¹⁰⁷ the son of God let him reign until the end of the world, the author of the

98 Rhyme in *-en*.

99 Rhyme in *-un*.

100 Rhyme in *-ān*.

101 If it has to be corrected to *gə'zān* for the transmitted *gəzān*.

102 This is probably an allusion to an occasion when millenarism was discussed; see Getatchew Haile 2005.

103 Rhyme in *-nə*.

104 *ṣawun* possibly as 'refuge, secure place', like *ṣawan*, see Dillmann 1865, 1300; Leslau 1987, 566.

105 '*aklāsyā* 'church', not attested in *Gə'əz*, but to be obviously reconnected to Greek ἐκκλησία, loanword attested in the form '*aqlesyā* or '*aqlasyā* (see Leslau 1987, 35), but the alternation is attested in Christian Arabic, see for example Graf 1954, 12 12 *'klīrs < κλῆρος*, and p. 11 *'qlīrs < κλῆρος*. Rhyme in *-yā*.

106 The form *Māryā* is required by the rhyme and is intentional. This is the form that is also found in ancient Gospels, see Lepage 1987, 176–177 (on the Gospels of Dabra Ma'ar and Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 32), who vaguely hypothesizes 'un modèl grec, copte ou nubien'; see also Zuurmond 1989, I, 93, n. 6 ('against the complete Syriac and Arabic tradition'), 98, and 103.

107 There is probably an allusion to the content of the second homily in the *Tomāra tasbə't*, which is cited shortly after in the list of books and in the parallel inventory of the Dabra Māryām Gospel Book (see Bausi 1994, manuscript 1, doc. VI). The *Tomāra tasbə't* (CAe 2474) is edited by Getatchew Haile 1991, 36–79 (text), 29–

fall of his enemies at the same instant as his eyes see, Egypt (Məşr) and Alexandria ('Eskəndəryā), Cyprus (Qopros) and Armenia ('Armānyā), Georgia (Kʷərgʷ)¹⁰⁸ and Byzantium (Romyā), Persia (Fārs) and Asia ('Esyā) prostrate themselves and submit to the nobility of his empire, delivering gifts and presents, (f. 33va) amen. At the time was the year of Mercy 6945, *matqə'* 21, epact 9 (= 1453 CE), from the 5 of *şalmat*, in the month of Hamlē, the 21, on the feast of our Lady Mary.¹⁰⁹ I, Gabra Krestos, gave this book *Gadla samā'*t, 2 Gospels, the Apostle, Paul, *Gəşşəw*, the *Concordance of Words*, the Book of Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Job, *'Afa warq* (Chrysostomos), *Gadla hawāryāt*, *Tomāra təsbə'*t, *Miracles of Mary*, *Gubā' e qānā*, Psalter, 7 images of our Lady Mary, 1 image of the Crucifixion, 11 *tābots*, 21 intact coloured cloths, 9 intact golden robes, 15 stoles of coloured cloths, 7 golden stoles and 2 *zanabo*, 4 silk sashes, 9 *wərād* tunics, 4 golden and 2 coloured cloth caps, 7 white robes, 7 belts, 5 carded clothes, 1 *doti*, (f. 33vb) 1 golden eucharistic veil, 5 other veils, 2 *māhbas*, 5 *bāraytā*, 1 golden tray, 1 golden chalice, 2 glass trays, 4 glass chalices, 3 metal trays, 1 metal chalice 2 silver eucharistic spoons, 4 beakers, 6 metal incense receptacles, 16 crosses, 15 thuribles, 2 curtains of coloured cloth and 2 of dowries, 2 fabric paintings, 2 carpets, 1 metal bell, 3 church bells, 2 metal *kʷəskʷəst* vessels, 7 pedestal lamps, 2 glass lamps, 2 ladders, 4 oil lamps, 5 iron bases, 11 straw mats, 7 clothes for the tabernacle, 9 stoles of coloured cloth thread, 2 Books of psalmody, 1 Book of Qʷəsqʷām, 1 Sirach, 4 umbrellas, 7 silk flyswatters, 1 metal *gayb* vessel, 1 metal cup.

(Here follow three blank lines until the end of the column.)

(f. 34ra) All this I have given for my Lady Mary,¹¹⁰ boast of the world, second heaven, marvellous frame, mother of divinity, bearer of embers,¹¹¹ daughter of David, daughter of Abraham, salvation of Adam, her limbs are marked¹¹² by virginity, the memory of her name is sweeter than honey, light that does not darken,¹¹³ in her the initial curse has ceased, salvation from the abyss, bridge of justice; my Lady¹¹⁴ and mother of my Lord, my hope from my childhood, my strength and my garrison, my rescuer in my affliction, my confidence and my boast; light for my eyes and helmet for my head, steadfastness for my legs and ringed seal for my hands, belt for my side, breastplate for my breast and necklace for my neck; she is my trust and my salvation,

63 (translation). For similar glorification of Zar'a Yā'qob, followed, however, by the explicit citation of the works attributed to him, *Maşhaşa bərhān* (CAe 1384) and *Maşhaşa milād* (CAe 1955), see Conti Rossini 1910, 612–613 (from the *Maşhaşa Kidāna Məhrat*, CAe 1939, in MS BnF, d'Abbadie 74).

108 This is the Georgia; the form *Kʷərgʷ* is attested as such in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, see Bezold 1905, text section, 22 and 109. See also Cerulli 1943, 147 (*Kurz*) and 196–197 (*Kʷərz*); see also the index in Cerulli 1943–1947, II, 518.

109 The Dormition of the Virgin is commemorated every 21 of each month.

110 Rhyme in -ām.

111 The text has *şawārīta fəħəm*.

112 Rhyme in -um.

113 Rhyme in -am.

114 Rhyme in -ya.

that she may save me from the hand of my hater and from the deceit of Satan, my enemy'. This said Gabra Kr̄stos, my father.

(f. 34rb) Verily, he loves her with all his heart, trusts in her, he commits himself to her, salutes her, glorifies her, and prostrates himself to her two virginities, virginity of body and virginity of mind, and salutes every part of her body, from the hair of her head to the nails of her feet. And whereas before we did not honour her feasts except 4 days a year, our Father commanded that we honour all her feasts every month, and further he added to them 4 honoured days, which are the Conception,¹¹⁵ the (Entrance to) Dabra Qʷəsqʷām, again her Entrance (to the Temple), and the day on which he granted her the Covenant of Mercy, and said: 'Let these four feasts of hers be as the feasts of her son, that is, Christmas and Baptism', and all this she has done is for the greatness and nobility of the mother of gladness, and may that Virgin bring him near her and not turn him away from her, may she clothe him with her garments, (f. 34va) bless him with her hand and kiss him with her mouth, amen.

Our father Gabra Kr̄stos never ceases from the *salām* to our Lady Mary: morning and evening, night and day, afternoon and vigils, and moreover while he is in the village¹¹⁶ and in lonely places, at home and on his travels, he does not cease to read the miracles and wonders of our Lady Mary, on his departure¹¹⁷ and on his return, while sitting and while he rises, he does not cease to remember the name of our Lady Mary, so that she may be his hope, his protection, his faith and his life, and may she be his help and his salvation, amen. Also when he prays he places the image of our Lady Mary before his face, prostrates himself to her and her two virginities and says: 'Holy, blessed and blessed are you', and remembers her name (f. 34vb) while he eats and while he drinks. O my Lady Mary, remove the filth of his sins and look upon him with your mercy, do not fail him, destroy the machinations of his enemies, you only virgin be present by night and day where he is present, and pass the night where he passes, amen.

And even when he psalms, he psalms in her name and in the name of her beloved Son, and says: 'O my Lady, mother of divinity', he does not remove her¹¹⁸ from his mouth or remove her from his heart, so that she covers him with her arm and blesses him with her finger, the strength of his prayer girds him with a crown as with a welcome shield. And when he gives the goods to the church or to the poor or to the children of the community our Father Gabra Kr̄stos says: 'These are not my goods and patrimony, but the goods and patrimony of the mother of divinity and a gift of her grace, for all wealth and treasure is hers and of her son our Lord (f. 35ra) Christ'. This he says with a humble heart and a meek spirit, knowing fully well that wealth and nobility come from the Lord: he who wills reduces to poverty and he who wills enriches, he immiserates and honours, he humiliates and exalts; and therefore he makes all his goods the property of the Mother of Light; for she magnified him,¹¹⁹ honoured and exalted him, and bestowed all his goods upon him, placed him on the

115 For *qʷəṣratā* see Leslau 1987, 451.

116 Rhyme in *-ni*.

117 Rhyme in *-tu*.

118 Rhyme in *-tā*.

119 Rhyme in *-to*.

seat of his fathers, raised him up to the mastership of souls, did not abandon him in the palace, anointed him with the office of the priesthood, gave him the authority of Peter and Paul, granted him to bind and loose, gave him authority over the congregation,¹²⁰ made him the father of many, saved without fail those who trusted in her from the machinations of her haters,¹²¹ and may she grant him every vow, amen.

(Dotted line.)

And now know, understand, (f. 35rb) and seek to know, my fathers and my brethren, what happened before these days: that they rose up against you, those who were under you, and took the beauty of your fields and reviled you; and then in the days of our Father Gabra Krəstos there was humility and security, love and peace, and those who despised you honoured you, those who hated you loved you, those who insulted you benefited you with regalia and gifts, because the Lord granted you a holy master (*mamhər*), who was chosen from the womb of his mother, as Jeremiah the prophet, as he said: ‘From your mother’s womb I sanctified you, I made you a prophet to the nations’ (Jer 1:5). And furthermore, the Lord chose him as he chose David his servant to reign over Israel his people, while he was little and was shepherding (the flock of) his father,¹²² (f. 35va) while there were ‘Elyāb, Nādāb, Sābeq and all his brothers, and he said: ‘The Lord does not see as man sees, man sees the outward appearance and the Lord sees the heart’ (1 Sam 16:11), and also the Apostles said in their Acts: ‘I have found David the son of Jesse (‘Esay) according to my heart, who will do my will’ (Ac 13:22). In the same way the Lord chose our Father Gabra Krəstos, and the Lord placed him in the seat of his fathers to shepherd his sheep by his word. And that our Father Gabra Krəstos was not inferior to his fathers, he reads and interprets with his mouth the books of the law, he watches with his intellectual faculties¹²³ and says to his sons: ‘Learn the Psalter of David, do not forget¹²⁴ the prophets, eat honey from the honeycomb from the Octateuch (*’orit*), (f. 35vb) drink milk from the Gospel, hold fast the order of the Apostles, do not fail to go early in the morning to church, and gather in the place of instruction to hear the word of the Lord, as your fathers established, to receive the blessing of the Trinity; do not slander your neighbour and do not hate your brothers; do not care only for yourselves, help one another; do not be slothful in reading the word of the Godhead, lend yourselves to the service of the saints’: this and similar things admonishes and teaches them from the sacred scriptures in the place of teaching.

Glory be to the Lord and his virgin Mother, who has granted us this great and noble teacher, who clothes our nakedness, satisfies our hunger, quenches our thirst; as Isaiah (f. 36ra) the prophet said: ‘If the Lord of hosts had not left us a remnant, we would be like Sodom and like Gomorrah’ (Is 1:9): and for this the Lord has given us this master (*mamhər*). And concerning his election, his appointment to the master-

120 The term is the *kanisā*, an Arabic loanword.

121 The form *ṣalā’to* for *ṣalā’tu* could be due to the necessity of the rhyme.

122 The word ‘flock’ is probably to be integrated, or, alternatively, we can connect ‘*abuhu* to what follows, ‘while there were his father, ‘Elyāb’ and so on.

123 The text has *ba ’albābihu*.

124 Rhyme in - ‘u.

ship and the priesthood, and still his fate much could be written about what the Lord made known to the saints about him, which they have told me.

And you, our Father Gabra Kr̄stos, may the Lord bless you with the blessing of heaven above and the blessing of earth below, with the blessing of our Lady Mary, the cenacle of his holiness, with the blessing of the prophets who preached his coming,¹²⁵ with the blessing of his Apostles his disciples and with the blessing of the 4 Evangelists, with the blessing of the victorious martyrs and the righteous who fulfil his favour, with the blessing of your 6 fathers, establish the days of your eternal life until its fulfilment and also establish your lot at his second coming with our Lady Mary whom you love, forever and ever, amen, amen.

Similar cases are attested for the short work by 'Arkāledəs¹²⁶ and for the short work of Yostinos,¹²⁷ according to a terminology (*operetta*) that could perhaps be improved upon to indicate the phenomenon of an expanded colophon, grown to a consciously literary dimension.

The colophon as an opusculum: the pandectae of Dabra Bizan

An idea of the literary endeavour and the importance attributed in the Ethiopian tradition to the production of the book can also be gleaned from the unusually long and monumental colophon of a *pandectae* volume from the monastery of Dabra Bizan, in Eritrea, f. 574va–b, dated 1492 CE, whose text and translation I reproduce here (fig. 8):¹²⁸

(f. 574va) በእከውተት፡ እብ፡ መወልድ፡ መመንፈስ፡ ቅጽስ፡ ተፈጻሚት፡ ካቱ፡ መቆክኩ፡
 ቅጽአዊ፡ ቅጽዬ፡ መመቆክኩ፡ ዓምኩ፡ መሰጥተ፡ እሳይያስ፡ መብየት፡ ገቢያት፡
 መመቆክኩ፡ ከግኝ፡ መዳሪስቃለያ፡ መሰጥኩ፡ ዘላጥኩ፡ ዘመንጥኩ፡ ቅዱስአምአበነት፡
 እያም፡ በገዢዕቅመር፡ እመ፡ ካብ፡ ዓመታት፡ ይሸጪዬ፡ መሰንበት፡ ዓምኩ፡ ይሸጪዬ፡ ወ
 እያጊልሮ፡ ይሸጪዬ፡ መሰባዊ፡ ይ፡ መሰንበት፡ ለቃድሮ፡ ይሸጪዬ፡ መሰንድቃትኩ፡ ይ፡ ወ
 እያጊልሮ፡ ይ፡ መተንተኩ፡ ይ፡ መሰለት፡ የአንድ፡ ይ፡ መአቅቂቻ፡ ይሸጪዬ፡ መአማካ፡ ይች፡
 እብ፡ ይሰረቻ፡ በገዢ፡ ቁመት፡ መንግሥቱ፡ ለአዲነንድር፡ መሰረት፡ እግዢአብዕር፡ በ
 ተፈጻሚ፡ ቁሰጠንጠጥ፡ መዘክአቅኩ፡ እብ፡ ተመልደ፡ መደግኩ፡ መወልድ፡ ገቢረ፡
 ማርያም፡ በዓሰር፡ ዓመት፡ የወርሱ፡ ለአቦነ፡ ተመልደ፡ መደግኩ፡ በእምአበነት፡ እ
 ባሕአብዕር፡ የወልት፡ መበግዢጥ፡ ውጋም፡ በእንተ፡ የቅረ፡ ሆለሰ፡ ቅጽስ፡ መቀዋይ፡
 በእንተ፡ የቅረ፡ ማርያም፡ እመ፡ በርሃን፡ መወልድ፡ የቅረ፡ ሆለየ፡ ቅጽአዊ፡ ወ
 እለ፡ ተጋብለ፡ መሰተ፡ ካቱ፡ መቆክኩ፡ መሰንበት፡ የቅረ፡ እብወያ፡ ልልቻ፡ ወ
 እወጣጥቃዮ፡ መአቅቂቻ፡ መአቅቂቻ፡ በርሃን፡ መቃጥር፡ ወተጥሙ፡ ይቃሞ፡ ወ
 በእንተ፡ የቅረ፡ ተስጠመ፡ ተስጠመ፡ እብ፡ መወልድ፡ መመንፈስ፡ ቅጽስ፡ መብየት፡ እነ፡
 ተመልደ፡ መደግኩ፡ ለመከኩ፡ ይጠረ፡ በገዢ፡ ለበተ፡ ከርከተኛ[ን]፡ ማርያም፡ እመ፡

125 The text has *məš'atu* instead of the expected *məš'ato*, probably due to the rhyme.

126 See Conti Rossini 1927, 512–516.

127 See Lusini 1993, 10 and 11–12; Lusini 1996, 79–92 (text), 56–67 (translation).

128 See Bausi 1995, 35–36 (Italian translation), 39 (text). Contrary to what I stated in Bausi 2016a, 248, the content of this manuscript is not limited to the Octateuch. It was impossible also in this case to carry out the codicological analysis that would be desirable in such cases; for the Greek *pandectae*, see now Andrist 2020.



Fig. 8. MS Eritrea, Dabra Bizan ('Endā 'Abuna Filəpos), 1492 CE, pandectae manuscript (Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Enoch, Ascension of Isaiah, Testament of Our Lord, Didascalia, and Sinodos), f. 574v. Photo by Alessandro Bausi for the Missione Italiana in Eritrea (MIE), Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche and Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna 1993.

ይኬን፡ ታግና፡ ለአያዥ፡ ወለምው-ታን፡ ወለተኩ፡ ለተጠካርያ፡ አለሚርያ፡ ከመ፡ የ
ገልፋ፡ ኮሉ፡ ወውሰት፡ መድር፡ ወቻለ፡ እግዢእብዕር፡ ቅዱሳ፡ እስከ፡ ለዓለም፡ ወ
ይትበደር፡ እምዥርቁ፡ ወለምብሩር፡ ወለምክላ፡ ፍትዥት፡ እስመ፡ መካን፡ ገበ፡ ይ
ዘዘኝ፡ መለከት፡ (sic) ሆኖ፡ ለለሁ፡ እግዢእብዕር፡ እምክላ፡ ከበር፡ ይዘበር፡ ቅል፡ እ
ግዢእብዕር፡ ወይተቁደለ፡ ቅቻለ፡ (f. 574vb) እግዢእብዕር፡ ወይተኩ፡ መግባራ፡ ወሰት፡
በተ፡ ከርስተኛ፡ ወሰት፡ ከርመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡ ቅመ፡
በተ፡ እዝ፡ እግዢእብዕር፡ እምለከ፡ ከመ፡ ይሰማ፡ እግዢእብዕር፡ ስእነወተ፡ በተ
ለ፡ ገበ፡ ወጠሪ፡ ተማህላል፡ በጋቢ፡ መግዳበ፡ ወይተኩ፡ ወተኩ፡ መሥዋዕት፡ ወ
ዶማን፡ ወጠፈት፡ ወይዘዘሩ፡ እግዢእ፡ እምለከመ፡ ለእበዕ፡ እትከላለ፡ ቅዱሳ፡
(sic) ለበተ፡ ጉባር፡ ፍላቂ፡ ለዥቅ፡ ተእማዕ፡ ወይቀው-ም፡ ቅድመ፡ ጉክ፡ ወ
አታዕጥኑ፡ ለይሁ-ብ፡ ለማየበር፡ ለሳየ፡ ሚዛ፡ ወንቀል፡ መጠሪ፡ ሚዛ፡ መጠሪ፡ መን
ፈ፡ ቅድ፡ ማስ፡ ማስ፡ ገይል፡ ከመ፡ የሰምር፡ ወንቀቀል፡ ተእማዕ፡ ወምለእ፡ ቅዱሳ፡
ወሰት፡ እላባጋነ፡ መሆነ፡ ከመ፡ ጉተኞች፡ በደረፍኩ፡ ወይፈፋድለ፡ ሆኖ፡ ቅዱር፡ ማ
እከለ፡ የአዋ፡ መመርዓት፡ ወኢትማስለ፡ እምክላ፡ ፍድዋ፡ መለመ፡ ተግስቦ፡ ቅ
ጠ፡ ሚጠ፡ መሰት፡ ጉሰ፡ ቅት፡ መግአፍ፡ መሆነ፡ የሰቅበኩ፡ ለእግዢእብዕር፡
ወለምርያም፡ ወላደቱ፡ ወለተለሙ፡ ተደጋነት፡ መለከት፡ ወለተለሙ፡ እስ
ቃ፡ እያዥ፡ መመታን፡ ወለቀ፡ ቤተ፡ ከርስተኛ፡ ከመ፡ ይቆበበዋ፡ መካን፡ ቅል፡
እግዢእብዕር፡ ይቆበ፡ ለቀ፡ ቤተ፡ ከርስተኛ፡ ወለቀ፡ ማገበር፡ እምዥያቶ፡ እ
ሳት፡ ወለምድልፈልቅ፡ ወለመፈድ፡ የአለ፡ ወለምንፈልፈልቅ፡ የፋሳ፡ ወለሙረቅ፡
ወገተድናድ፡ ወለምክላ፡ ተጀክላወ፡ የአለ፡ ወለሙ፡ መግአፍ፡ የሚከ፡ ወለቱ፡ ወ
ቀ፡ መቅናት፡ እይተረከብ፡ ይቆበዋ፡ በተጠቀቁ፡ መበከብር፡ መለበኩ፡ ተውልድ፡
መድ-ገን፡ ለእግዢይ፡ በተከምኩ፡ ይ-ገም፡ ወገመ፡ በቀድመ፡ እግዢእብዕር፡ መለበኩ፡
ወተተቁዥም፡ የሰለ፡ ኮሉ፡ ወይተቁዥም፡ ወተምርአ፡ ወሰት፡ ኮሉ፡ ፍድዋሁ፡ በከመ፡
መርአቶሙ፡ ለእሰራኬል፡ ቅበት፡ አገ፡ ለእግዢእብዕር፡ በከመ፡ ይበ፡ መግአፍ፡ ወ
ተቀድም፡ የአዋ፡ ለለኩ፡ ወተተቁዥም፡ ለለሙ፡ ወለሙ፡ የአዋ፡ ለለሙ፡ ወለሙ፡

(f. 574va) In praise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This book is finished: (comprising) the number of the 81 (*Canonical Books*), the *Book of Enoch*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the houses of the Prophets, the book of the Testament (of our Lord), the *Didascalia* and the *Sinodos* of the Doctors, in (the year) 6758 since our Father Adam; in the 13th cycle (*qamar*) when the years were 374; Sabbath of Enoch 458th (year); Jubilee interval 138th; week 3rd; Sabbath of Luke 108th (year); indiction (*’andaqtyon*) 8th (year); *pāg’men* 5; *təntəyon* 2; John’s day 1; epact 12; and then metropolitan was *’Abbā Yēshaq*; in the 14th year of the reign of ’Eskandar, called Qʷastanṭinos by the grace of the Lord; and the one who had it written is our Father Tawalda Madḥeñ and his son Gabra Māryām, in the 10th year of our Father Tawalda Madḥeñ’s mastership. With full devotion for the Lord and with perfect faith, for the love of the holy Trinity, for the love of Mary the Mother of Light, for the love of the Prophets and Apostles who are gathered in this book, and for the love of my fathers Filēpos, ’Ewostātewos, Yohannas, Saraqa Bərhān, Petros and all their children, and for the love of all the hosts of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I Tawalda Madḥeñ gave it to the place of Dabra Bizan, to the church of Mary so that it might be a commemoration (*tazkār*) for the living and the dead, and a commemoration (*tazkār*) for me, knowing that everything in the earth passes away and that the word of the Lord endures for eternity, and it is better than gold, silver, and every desirable

thing, because in the place where the divinity is remembered there is the Lord. The word of the Lord is more precious than any nobility and everything was made by the word of the Lord, everything consists by the word of the Lord and is sanctified by the word (f. 574vb) of the Lord. Let its seat be in the church, in the womb of the *tābot* according to the ten commandments that Moses established as the Lord commanded, so that the Lord may hear our request at all times, in the time when we shall plead, in the time of our distress, and our offering, our incense and our prayer may be well received. And now, Lord, God of our fathers, do not hinder the patron of the house of your servant Filōpos, who keeps your order and stands before you, and do not let him lack the food of body and soul, the bodily garments and the garments of the Holy Spirit, which he provides for your community. Give us the strength to please you and observe your order and fill our hearts with your love. Grant us to love one another, and especially grant us the love between shepherd and flock, and do not cause us to stray from all your ways, and if we have strayed turn us at once to repentance. We have given this book into the custody of the Lord, to Mary his parent, to all the angelic and human hosts, to all our fathers living and dead, and to this church that they may guard it. May this word of the Lord guard this church and this community from the burning of fire, from the earthquake and the raging of the enemy, from the shaking of the winds, from the thunderbolt and thunder, and from every fraudulent snare of the enemy. As for this book, it is a source of pride, and it is not found (one like it) in any (other) places. Guard it carefully and with respect. Having faith in our Father Tawalda Madḥen who had it written may they be of favour to him before the Lord and men, and may it (the book) counter anyone who opposes it, and may it guide him in all his ways, as the ark of the law of the Lord guided Israel, as the scripture said: '(The Ark of the Covenant) went before them during the three days' journey and sought for them the resting place' (Nm 10:33).

The long chronological determination fixes the date of completion of the copying of the manuscript at 1491–1492 CE, as the reference to the fourteenth year of King ’Eskendør’s reign decides.¹²⁹ Examination of the other determinations yields the following results: the year ‘since our father Adam’ 6758 corresponds in ordinary computation to the year 1266 CE,¹³⁰ a figure entirely consistent with the year 374 of the 13th cycle ($532 \times 12 = 6384 + 374 = 6758$), with the 458th ‘Sabbath’ of Enoch ($700 \times 9 = 6300 + 458 = 6758$), with the 138th jubilee interval of 49 years (6713 to 6762) with the 3rd of the 4 ‘weeks’ of the 532-year cycle (266–399), 108th year of the ‘week’ (cycle) of Luke ($266 + 108 = 374$), with the 8th year of the Indiction ($6758 - 8 = 6750 : 15 = 450$), with the epact 12, and the intercalary month of five days; the *təntəyon*,¹³¹ which for the year 1266 here appears to be 2—moreover contradicting the ‘day of John’ 1—should instead be 4. But the year in which the manuscript was finished is undoubtedly 1491–1492 CE, as can be seen from the reference

129 See Bausi 1995, 37–38.

130 See Chaîne 1925, 159.

131 See Sokolinskaia 2010.

to the 14th year of ’Eskendär (r. 1478–1494) and Metropolitan *Abbā Yəṣhaq*. It is certainly difficult to think of an error of a few figures in a text that is so carefully edited and especially in which so many chronological references are so consistent with each other. That at the monastery of Dabra Bizan, at least at certain times, a particular computation was in force, consisting of counting the years from the beginning of the era of Diocletian, has been supposed by several authors,¹³² but the text edited here does not seem to be traceable to it. The different chronological determinations would instead agree with the references to the year of ’Eskendär’s reign and the metropolitan Yəṣhaq, assuming that at Dabra Bizan the year of the creation of the world was not 5500 BCE, but a date 226 years later: 5274 BCE.¹³³ The existence of a mighty treatise on computation in Dabra Bizan’s library, the *Maṣḥafa Ḥarəgrāg* or *Hassāba Bərhān*¹³⁴—which explicitly declares its originality and specificity—should warn us against hasty conclusions and make us aware that too many essential sources still elude us.

132 See Mauro da Leonessa 1943, 315, with only one example from MS London, British Library, Oriental 754. Otto Neugebauer (Neugebauer 1979, 26, and 123, n. 29), establishes the correspondence between the current Ethiopian era and that of Dabra Bizan with the formula: B[izan] 6674 = W[orld] 7130, that is B 0 = W 456, which is a well-known equivalence, not limited in fact to Dabra Bizan; see Mauro da Leonessa 1934, 94–103; Otto Neugebauer also notes two further attestations, one that presupposes a correction and another one certainly wrong. Following Otto Neugebauer, see also Uhlig 1988, 377 and 487; Uhlig 1986, 315. See also Neugebauer 1989, 56, uncertain whether to consider the chronology of Dabra Bizan an innovation of the monastery or pre-existing to it. The statement by Siegbert Uhlig (Uhlig 1993, 60) that a computation existed in Dabra Bizan ‘from the foundation of the influential monastery’ is inaccurate. There is no mention of the Dabra Bizan era in Getatchew Haile 2000.

133 I do not know how to justify the choice of this date according to the internal logic of the counting system, but it would perfectly account for the date of birth attributed to Filəpōs of Dabra Bizan in his *Gadl*, that is 6591 from the creation of the world, during the reign of King ’Amda Ṣeyon (r. 1314–1344), see Conti Rossini 1900, 63, 74 col. a, l. 25, and 154. According to the ordinary date from the creation of the world we get the year 1098–1099, but according to this particular hypothetical date we get 1325–1326, which would fit perfectly. For discussion of Filəpōs birth date according to other sources see Schneider 1978, 138; Lusini 1993, 97.

134 See Bausi 1995, 40–42, MS no. 7, with *incipit*.

The colophon of the Book of the mystery by Giyorgis of Saglā

Comparable in terms of complexity of the chronological determination is the colophon that closes the *Maṣḥafa māšṭir*, *Book of the mystery* (CAe 1952), by Giyorgis of Saglā:¹³⁵

መጽመሬት፡ ለዚ፡ መጽሐል፡ በለኩምሙ፡ ካን፡ በቃቃዎችቃጥዎች፡ ዓመተ፡ ጥስረት፡
በአዲበ፡ ሪማውያን፡ በቃቃዎችቃጥዎች፡ መሻ፡ በአዲበ፡ አፍራቅና፡ እንተ፡ ይእቴ፡ ቁጥሮታ፡
ሮ፲፡ በሰብከተ፡ ድጥርስ፡ ወቂወላባዎ፡ በቃቃ፡ ወቃቃዎች፡ በአዲበ፡ ጥብጻውያን፡ በ
መአቶሙ፡ እም፡ ስብከተ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ወንጻላዊ፡ በሰብከ፡ ለመ፡ እመ፡ ስብድ፡ ዓመተ፡
መንግሥቱ፡ ለረሱን፡ መሆሙ፡ ለመ፡ እንደገኝነሱ፡ እሳሰቂሰዎ፡ በቃቃዎችቃጥዎች፡ በ
አዲበ፡ እትቶቃና፡ እንተ፡ ይእቴ፡ ቤተ፡ መቆዳለ፡ ለአዋላእበዕር፡ እንተ፡ እምነቶ፡
ዘለንበለ፡ ፊወርያ፡
ተፈጻሚት፡ ባቴ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ በማልበ፡ ወርገ፡ ተሰበ፡ የብረውያን፡ ወበአዲበ፡ ዓ
በጻውያን፡ በዕምር፡ ወርገ፡ እመ፡ ዘ፡ ዓመተ፡ መንግሥቱ፡ ለይሰሳቅ፡ እመ፡ ይ
መሻ፡ ለወርድ፡ ድሞን፡ ለወአቅ፡ ሰረ፡ ወክመሻ፡ በለፈት፡ ወክመ፡ ይመሻ፡ ለወርድ፡
ሻዘረኛ፡ እም፡ ቁድሙ፡ ተሰድ፡ መዋል፡ ለቦከተ፡ ተመዝ፡ ወሰሙ፡ ወርገበ፡ የል
የን፡ በአውርድ፡ ሮ፲፡ ነብረ፡ ወርቅ፡ የልለ፡ አዕብራውያን፡ በቃቃ፡ አበቅቴ፡ በቃ፡
ጥንትየን፡ በቃ፡ እንደከተተየን፡ በቃ፡ ይትመት፡ (sic) በቃ፡ ይለት፡ ይለት፡ ወመድ፡ በ
መዋል፡ የአንድ፡ ወንጻላዊ፡ እንዘ፡ ለአየ፡ በሁር፡ ለአየ፡ ለበለት፡ ለየዕ፡ ገብ፡ ዘ፡
አድ፡ ለመዕልት፡ መልእ፡ መጽሐል፡ የምዕር፡ ለይንጻ፡ ህይማኖት፡ በእንተ፡ ለ
አይ፣ ወከበበሙ፡ በእንተ፡ መልእ፡ እግዢልእበዕር፡ ለክመ፡ ካን፡ በእኔ፡ ለተ፡ ይደለ፡
ስብከተ፡ ለምስለ፡ ለዓለሙ፡ ዓለም፡ እሱን፡ ወመሻ፡

This book refuting their doctrine was accomplished in 6932 of the year of Mercy according to the Roman calendar; in 6924 according to the African calendar, which is the ancient calendar of Rome of the preaching of Peter and Paul; in 6917 according to the calendar of the Egyptians, who are the diocese of the Evangelist Mark, where he preached to them in the seventh year of Nero, and made 'Anyānos their bishop; in 6992 according to the calendar of Ethiopia, which is the temple of God, in which he believed without any apostle. This book ended in the third month according to the Hebrew calendar; in the tenth month according to the Egyptian calendar; in the tenth year of the reign of Yəshaq, and on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Pəyon, which is Sane, corresponding to the night of the twentieth day from the beginning of the month; in the twenty-first day of the month of Ḥāzirān; nine days before the beginning of Tamuz, the month called Yolyon according to the Roman calendar, which agrees in the beginning of the first day of the month with the Hebrew calendar; with epact 18, *təntyon* 7, indiction ('əndəkata'yon) 3rd, *pāgʷəmit* 6, the second day of the cycle of the year of John the Evangelist, while we were in the land of Säglä, on the Wednesday, at the ninth hour of the day. The *Book of Mystery* is finished, which speaks of faith in the Trinity and, again, in the incarnation of the Son of God who became man, to whom be glory and praise is due; forever and ever, amen and amen.

135 See ከሬይ ወርሃይስ [Hiruie Ermias] 2009, 485–486, which I follow here; see also, with almost no variant, Yaqob Beyene 1990–1993, III (text), 312–313, IV (Italian translation), 173–174.

It is quite remarkable that in this subscription resonates the passage of the beginning of the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria*, § 1, from the *Aksumite Collection*, where the preaching of Mark is placed in the seventh year of Nero: one more evidence that the *Aksumite Collection* was still quite present to Giyorgis of Saglā.¹³⁶

The colophon of the Kəbra nagašt

Among the most famous and most controversial colophons of the Ethiopian scribal tradition there is the embedded subscription transmitted in the manuscripts of the *Kəbra nagašt*, *Dignity of kings* (CAe 1709).¹³⁷

(p. 172a) ወተብሔለ፡ በከታበ፡ ሰረበ፡ እውቅናይ፡ እመግካል፡ ቅብጥ፡ ለዕረብ፡ እመንጠረ፡ ማርቃስ፡ ወገንላዋ፡ መምሃር፡ እብ፡ ካልነ፡ ወክዎቅናይ፡ በፌቃ፡ ወሸ፡ ዓመት፡ የሚፈጸም፡ ወሰት፡ ሆነ፡ ኦነ፡ እትቶች፡ በመዋል፡ ገብረ፡ ስአበተ፡ ዓግባእብአር፡ እውቆኬ፡ መተርጻዋዋ፡ ነበ፡ ክነ፡ አባይ፡ መሰብ፡ ለሰይነ፡ ክንተ፡ ለምንት፡ እተርጻዋዋ፡ እብ ልቦነ፡ ወአበልደግ፡ እለ፡ እውቆኬ፡ እብ፡ ክንተ፡ እስመ፡ ወዕካት፡ በመዋል፡ ባድ፡ ወአተርጻዋዋ፡ (p. 172b) እስመ፡ ታብሌ፡ ባድ፡ መግካፍ፡ እለብ፡ ይንቀመ፡ እለ፡ እከ፡ እስራኤል፡ ተወዳም፡ አባግ፡ ወሰብ፡ ይከውን፡ በመንግሥት፡ እስራኤል፡ እም እውቆኬ፡ ወተረከበት፡ በኋገል፡ ወሳይ፡ ለሰለም፡ ለተብርከመ፡ ይሰካም፡ ክሳይ፡ ወአተርጻዋ፡ በኋገል፡ እያርተም፡ ክነ፡ ለሳይ፡ እስመ፡ በዘተ፡ ይመስከ፡ በኋገል፡ ክበራ፡ ለሆነ፡ እትቶች፡ በኋገል፡ ወአቶ፡ ለአቶ፡ ለማያዊ፡ ወሰንተ፡ ክበራ፡ ክንአ፡ እተ የቶች፡ እስመ፡ እነዚ፡ ተስላልከም፡ ለመከንን፡ ሪቱ፡ የቅረ፡ ዓግባእብአር፡ ይሰብ፡ እግዢል፡ ወአቅዬ፡ ወይበለ፡ የበር፡ ወጠር፡ እንዘ፡ እግዢልብአር፡ ይረዳኝ፡ ወአፈ፡ በከመ፡ እስዳም፡ ለተብርከመ፡ ይሰካም፡ ወአይ፡ ወለሳለ፡ የመመ፡ ወሰለም፡ በዕቅ፡ ባድ፡ መግካፍ፡ እስመ፡ ተመንጋቢት፡ ወፈኝድ፡ እነ፡ ወይምሱን፡ እብ፡ ወአሁበ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ወአደረሰ፡ ወፈልስ፡ ወመሳድ፡ እብ፡ ይምአርመ፡ እግዢልብአር፡ በመንግሥት፡ (p. 173a) ለማያዊ፡ ምስለ፡ ክገመሙ፡ ዘዴሳይ፡ ወሰንበት፡ ይጋኝ፡ ወሰንበ፡ ለምመ፡ ወሰተ፡ መግካል፡ ሲይወተ፡ ለዓለመ፡ ዓለም፡ እሮን፡ ወአማን፡

(p. 172a) In the Arabic text it is said: ‘We have turned (this book) into Arabic from a Coptic manuscript (belonging to) the See of Mark the Evangelist, the teacher, the father of us all. We have translated it in the 409th year of mercy in the country of Ethiopia, in the days of Gabra Masqal the king, who is called Lālibalā, in the days of ’Abbā Giyorgis, the good bishop. And God neglected to have it translated and interpreted into the speech of Abyssinia’. And when I had pondered this—Why did not ’Abal’ēz and ’Abalfarag who edited (or, copied) the book translate it? I said this: It went out in the days of Zāgʷā, and they did not translate it (p. 172b) because this book says: Those who reign not being Israelites are transgressors of the Law.

136 See Bausi and Camplani 2016, 266–267; for the acquaintance of Giyorgis of Saglā with the *Aksumite Collection* see now Bausi 2021a. There is no reference instead to the precise year of preaching in the *Acts of Mark*, see Lusini 2009; see however the notion of the seventh year of Nero in the long version of the *Acts of Mark*, edited and translated by Andualem Ermias 2020, 192 (text), 293 (translation), § 100.

137 See Bezold 1905, I (text), 172a–173a.

Had they been of the kingdom of Israel they would have edited (or, translated) it. And it was found in Nāzret. And pray ye for me, your servant Yəṣhaq the poor man. And chide ye me not because of the incorrectness of the speech of the tongue. For I have toiled much for the glory of the country of Ethiopia, and for the going forth of the heavenly Zion, and for the glory of the king of Ethiopia. And I consulted the upright and God-loving governor Yā'bika 'Egzi', and he approved and said unto me, 'Work'. And I worked, God helping me, and He did not require me according to my sins. And pray ye for your servant Yəṣhaq, and for those who toiled with me in the going out (the production) of this book, for we were in sore tribulation, I, and Yəmharanna 'Ab, and Ḥəzba Krəstos, and 'Eñdəryās, and Filəpəs, and Maḥāri 'Ab. May God have mercy upon them and may He write their names in the Book of Life in the kingdom of heaven, with those of all the saints and martyrs, forever and ever, amen.¹³⁸

As is well known, on the interpretation of this subscription (always and still considered a *colophon* by anyone who has dealt with it)—complicated by the ambiguity of various expressions (the verb rendered here with *edited* (or, *copied*) could also be rendered otherwise)—if not rivers, torrents of ink have been poured: from those who completely denied its authenticity to those who considered it absolutely reliable and trustworthy, as in truth, from important cross-references, particularly on the historicity of Yəṣhaq and Yā'bika 'Egzi', it does not seem to be possible to deny.¹³⁹

The colophon of the pseudo-Clementine dossier containing the Apocalypse of Peter

It does not appear that the Ethiopian tradition has elaborated *explicit* reflections on the colophon or the subscription,¹⁴⁰ or even developed a corresponding specific terminology. The as yet unpublished¹⁴¹ *explicit* note that is published and translated below is peculiar for several notable features, the greatest of which is the strong literary allusiveness to the tradition of an arcane knowl-

138 See Budge 1922, 228–229, whose translation is here resumed with adaptations (partially already in Bausi 2020, 236–238).

139 See Marrassini 2007; Piovanelli 2013; Bevan 2014; Amsalu Tefera 2014. On Yā'bika 'Egzi' see also Heldman and Devens 2005, 98. See also Bausi 2016d, 102–106; Derat 2018, 200–204.

140 As far as can obviously be told from what is known. Mersha Alehegne 2011 mentions 'colophon' only for '*anqaṣ* (p. 148), literally 'gate, chapter'. 'Colophon' or 'subscription', however, never appear in the lexicon of Guidi 1901, always very attentive to scriptural phenomena in the broadest sense.

141 The masterly catalogue by Hammerschmidt 1973, 163–167 provides only a description, but not the text (p. 166). The microfilm of the Tānāsee collection from which the manuscript is generally known is not always perfectly legible. I am informed by Ted Erho, whom I thank here, that the same Tānāsee 35 manuscript was later photographed as EMML no. 8294, with better results.

edge not to be divulged, in tone with the strongly esoteric texts supporting the doctrine of universal final salvation (apocatastasis), including sinners, that the dossier appears to support.

The note is found in the multiple-text manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Tānāsee 35 = Kebrān 35, probably of the eighteenth century, at the end of a pseudo-Clementine dossier on ff. 46rb–70va. The dossier consists of the two treatises *The second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead* (CAe 1127), and *A speech on the glorious and arcane mystery of the judgment of sinners and a dispute concerning this speech* (CAe 2132). Within the former the Ethiopic version of the Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* is transmitted on ff. 46rb–51rc.¹⁴² It is an extremely rare text, transmitted by this and one more manuscript only, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, d'Abbadie 51, ff. 131ra–157vb, with the Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* on ff. 131ra–137rb.¹⁴³ This latter manuscript, however, which is certainly of later date (between fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and exhibiting almost exactly the same text as the other manuscript, was written by more hands and is mutilous probably due to the loss of one leaf, since it misses the portion corresponding to ff. 68vc–70va of MS Tānāsee 35, subscription included.

142 After Ernst Hammerschmidt's catalogue, it was Cowley 1985, albeit with some inaccuracies, who pointed out the importance of the unity of the pseudo-Clementine dossier.

143 It is not possible here other than to mention some of the problems posed by the extremely corrupt and worst-edited text, its witnesses and the entire dossier. The dossier was first published by Grébaut 1907a (preliminary analysis of the two treatises, from MS d'Abbadie 51), Grébaut 1907b and Grébaut 1908 (edition and translation of the second treatise: *A speech on the glorious and arcane mystery of the judgment of sinners and a dispute concerning this speech*), Grébaut 1910 (edition and translation of the first treatise: *The second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead*). In several fundamental contributions Montague Rhodes James identified part of the dossier with the Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* and provided further fragmentary witnesses to it, see James 1910a; James 1910b; James 1911a; James 1911b, James 1924; James 1931. Subsequently the *Apocalypse of Peter* alone was re-edited and translated and the first treatise retranslated from the first edition. To limit oneself to the most important works, where further bibliography can be found, see Bauckham 1988; Buchholz 1988; Marrassini 1994; Bauckham and Marrassini 1997; Marrassini 1999, 246–251 and 266 (no. 12); Marrassini 2010c; Marrassini 2011b. A re-edition with translation and commentary of the entire Ethiopic dossier is being prepared by the writer in collaboration with Enrico Norelli for the Greek text and commentary, for the 'Series Apocryphorum' of the 'Corpus Christianorum'; see Bausi 2016e. For further updates, see Beck 2019; Norelli 2020; Beck 2021; and the essays collected in the forthcoming Frey et al. 2022.

The note includes a recommendation to the reader of the account he or she will have to make of the *explicit* itself, which is precisely referred to as *mā'ze tafaşşamat* ‘(the text indicating) when (the book) has (been) finished’; and then also a very timely invitation to reread and reread again, that is, to read slowly:¹⁴⁴

(f. 70^{rb}) ԳՃՃԹԹ: ՈՒԹ: ՃԵԹ: ԿԿԸ: ԱՒԺՀԱՅ: ՃՄՑԸ: ՈՂԴԴ: ՇՄՀՅ: ԱԿԿՅ: ՀԿՀԿՄԸ: ՄՔԽԹԿ: ԴԿՃԹՄ: ՄԵՃԻՒ: ՈՐՒ: ՈՄՊԳ: ՃՄԶՋԱԲՀ: ԱՄՊԱՅ: ՄԺԽԸ: ՄՆԱԸ: ՔՄՊՈՒ: ՄՃԱ: ՀԵԼՎՈՄ: ԻՄ: ՄՅԱ: ԱԽԱԲ: ՄԵԴԱԸ: ՄԻՄ: ՃԱՊ: ԱԽԱԲ: ՊԵՐ: ԱԽԱԲ: ՊԵՐ: ՄԻՄ: ՄԻՄ: ՈՂԴՃԻՄԿ: (f. 70^{rc}) ՀՃԳԹԻ: ՇՆՃ: ՄԳՃԲ: ՀՈՄ: ԵՒՃՃՐ: ՀՈՄ: ԵՒՃԻՈՒ: ՊԵՐ: ԴՃԱՄ: ԴՃՍԻԵ: ՊՈՒ: ՄԱՅ: ՄԵՊՈՅ: ՀՕՄ: ԵՒՅԻՌ: ՄԵԼՎՈՄ: ԱԽԱՅ: ՀԵԼՎՈՄ: ՃԱՊ: ԱԽԴՏ: ԴՃՍԻԵ: ՊՈՒ: ՄԵՐԱՅ: ԱԽԱՅ: ԵՒՅԻՌ: ՄԵԼՎՈՄ: ԱԽԴՏ: ԴՃՍԻԵ: ՊՈՒ: ՄԵՐԱՅ: ԵՒՅԻՌ: ՄԵԼՎՈՄ:

(fol. 70rb) It is here accomplished the vision on the subject on which Peter asked Him (Jesus) concerning the sinners, the secret speech that he told him. Let them understand well its interpretation and let them find testimony from the Books of the Lord, the Old and the New (Testament). As to those who read it, those who do not understand it—like flesh without spirit and like a stream without water, like a city without men and like a leaf without fruits—even if you heard it, (fol. 70rc) do not hurry up to go further, (only) for the fact that the book is finished since in the book it is found (the text that indicates) when it was finished. If you found that the grace of the word takes time to be understood, (read) a third and a fourth time, until you will find and understand the intelligence of its word. Because there are arduous words there, which show what makes the heart rejoice and be comforted in the pain. But those who hurry up passing by and leave the book, without understanding the power of its contents, it is like (when one causes) to sleep one who is hungry: they bring him a good (potion), that causes to dream of tasty food;¹⁴⁵ he slews and eats in dream, and once he is satiated he wakes up from the sleep. (fol. 70va) Once he is awake, he finds himself hungry and thirsty. Likewise, who does not completely understand the

144 Naturally, one’s thoughts turn to the well-known ‘Man ist nicht umsonst Philologe gewesen, man ist es vielleicht noch, das will sagen, ein Lehrer des langsamen Lese-s’, by Nietzsche 1954 (1st edn 1881, but Vorrede only in 2nd ed. 1887), 1016.

145 The text is probably corrupt and the translation is interpretive and highly hypothetical.

power of the word—and does not understand completely—is exactly like him. And those who do (like this) and hide (the knowledge) from their neighbor and do not teach their neighbor, they are exactly like him. ‘A speech of wisemen by allusion’,¹⁴⁶ in the knowledge of the Lord. Forever and ever, amen. This book was commissioned by [REDACTED]¹⁴⁷ and ’Asma Giyorgis, the poor, wrote it. Let God have mercy upon them in the kingdom of heaven, amen and amen.

A cryptographic colophon

I conclude with the observation that the colophons and subscriptions of Ethiopian manuscripts represent an extremely promising field of study, with raw documentation immediately available in catalogues and real and virtual libraries that is respectable in terms of quantity and quality, but still in need of even a preliminary overall analysis. It also seems quite clear that no treatment of subscriptions can ignore the issue of titles.

It is clear that once the study has been deepened, this documentation may also reveal some surprises. I present one here, which originates from Antonella Brita’s field research activity. In November 2013, she came into possession of the photographic documentation of a colophon of a hagiographic manuscript from Tegrāy, the location of which unfortunately cannot be further specified (figs. 5–6). The colophon, elegantly inscribed at the end of a text on St George, is found on an unnumbered verso leaf, col. b, ll. 2–9 (fig. 9):

ብት፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ተጽኑፌ፡ በመዋል፡ የገመን፡ በካ፡ እምከመ፡ ገመ፡ በጀመት፡
በጀምት፡ የወቃዣመት፡ ዓለም፡ ተፈጻሚ፡ መጋቢት፡ በዕለተ፡ ለቦድ፡ ለዓለሙ፡ ዓለም፡ እ
ማን፡

This book was written in the time of our King Bakäffä, in the fourth year since he ascended the throne, in the 7018th year of the world. It was completed in the month of Maggäbit, on Wednesday. Forever and ever, amen.

The fourth year of Bakäffä’s reign (r. 1721–1730 CE) would correspond to 1725/1726 CE. The most economical proposal of correction to make unambiguous sense of the indication suggests the omission of a digit in the ‘year of the world’, conjecturing 7<2>18 for 7018, corresponding to 1726 CE.

On the verso of the same leaf, the last five lines of col. a, ll. 11–14, bear a text that continues and concludes with the word እምለክ ‘God’ on col. b, l. 1. Lines 11–14 of col. a are, however, written in a non-Ethiopian, apparently incomprehensible script, as are the last three letters of col. a, l. 6, on a partially erased line. This is undoubtedly a very rare case, to my knowledge, of cryp-

146 Proverbs 1,6 (LXX), νοίσει τε παραβολὴν καὶ σκοτεινὸν λόγον βίσεις τε σοφῶν καὶ αἰνίγματα.

147 The name of the original commissioner is erased and it is impossible to read that of the later one, as noted by Hammerschmidt 1973, 167: ‘Ein nachträglich eingefügter Besitzername ist in Spuren erkennbar, aber nicht zu entziffern’.

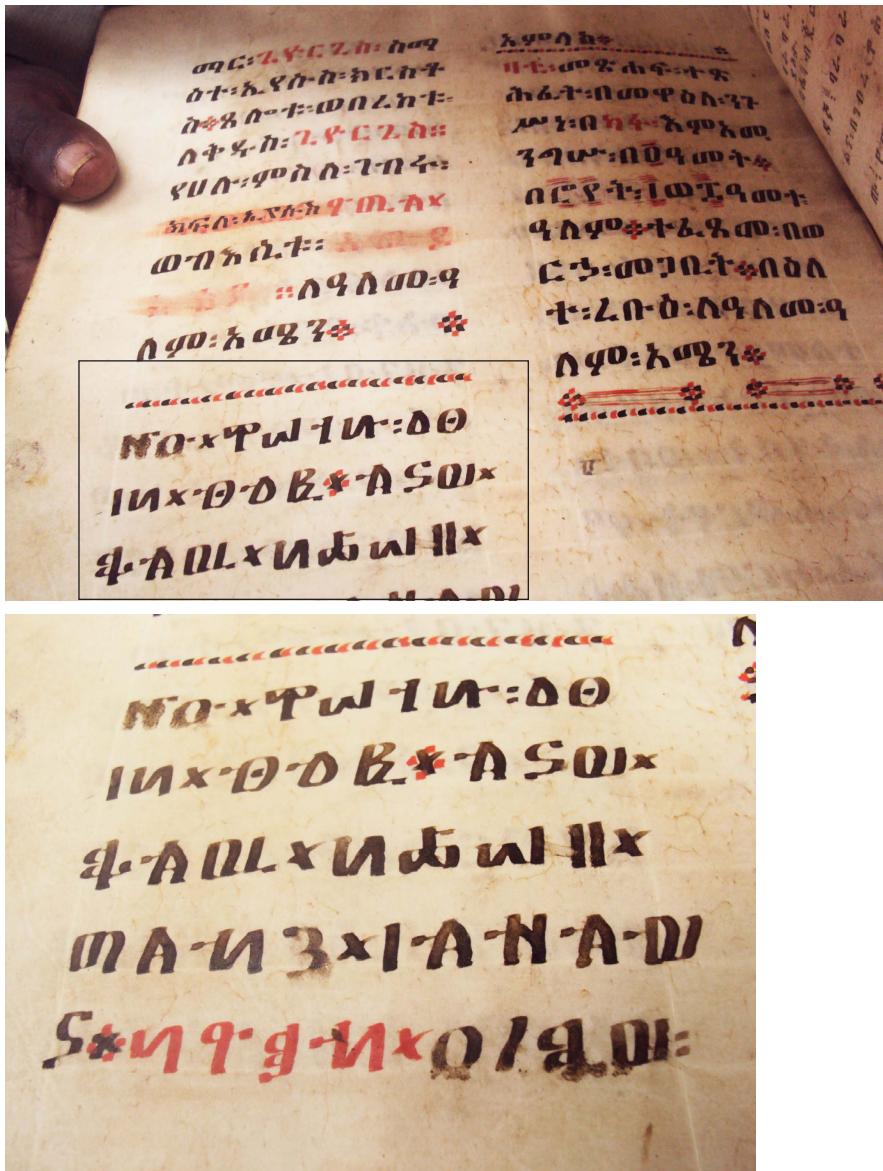


Fig. 9. MS Ethiopia, Tegräy, 1725/1726 CE, manuscript of hagiographic contents. Photo received from Antonella Brita 2013 (see already Bausi 2016a, 260, pls 5a–b).

tography in an Ethiopian colophon.¹⁴⁸ I propose to read the text as follows, with some uncertainties in the beginning of the first line and an interpretation that I would give as very probable in the others (in col. a, l. 6 it will accordingly read, ተተለ፡ *rətu* ‘right’, *scilicet* of faith); in l. 4, የዘ፡ is probably written with a monogram:¹⁴⁹

(col. a, from bottom, l. 5) ወ፡ የተለመ፡ በቀ(2)ለመ፡ ቅብጻ፡ እንተ፡ (3) ይእተ፡ መግኝ፩፡ (4) ታክምረ፡ ለእግዥእታ(5)፤ ማርያም፡ መላደተ፡ (col. b, l. 1) እምእከ፡
 ☰ ☱ *wu* dream (?)¹⁵⁰ in Coptic (*qebti*) script (*qalam*). Which is the Book of the Miracles of our Lady Mary, Mother of (col. b) God.

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148 There are very few examples of cryptography attested for pre-modern periods, see Conti Rossini 1927, 524–528.

149 The division of words is committed in two cases to the colon, in six to a black cross, in one to a rubricated cross, and in two to a black cross framed by four red dots.

150 Matching the letters in other words would give this word, which does not seem to offer an acceptable sense. I wonder if one should not consider the word an error for የዕለመ፡ that would give ‘write by signs, sign’, i.e. an acceptable sense in context. It cannot be ruled out at all that the cryptographic attempt was not conducted with the necessary precision and consequentiality and that there are inconsistencies.

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