Syriac in Ethiopic Manuscripts, Ethiopic in Syriac Manuscripts— Part I: ms Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148

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Abstract

With this article, I inaugurate a series that will unveil intriguing cases of Syriac writing found in Ethiopic manuscripts and of Ethiopic writing in Syriac manuscripts. These findings, which have been mainly overlooked, offer tangible evidence for the connected histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity. I begin the series here with a line of Syriac found in ms Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. This composite Ethiopic manuscript, most, if not all, of which can be dated to the fifteenth century, is among the oldest and most important sources for the synodical literature of Ethiopic Christians. In addition to containing a line of Syriac, this manuscript is also—seemingly unrelated—a unique witness to the Ethiopic version of the Syriac Demonstration 8 associated with Aphrahaṭ (fl. 336–345).

INTRODUCTION

The "BeInf—Beyond Influence: The Connected Histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity" project commenced at the Universität Hamburg on 1 September 2022.[1] Through a series of case studies, BeInf charts a new and exciting path, moving *beyond influence* as the primary analytical category for exploring connections, contacts, exchanges, and the actors and cultural brokers responsible for them.[2] Its methodological and theoretical stance is inspired by "connected history," in the sense of *histoire croisée*, as developed by Werner and Zimmermann and as adapted by others, including especially Ghobrial's ERC-funded project "Stories of Survival: Recovering the Connected Histories of Eastern Christianity in the Early Modern World."[3] BeInf

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[1] See Aaron M. Butts, "Academic News," *Aethiopica* 25 (2022): 223–25.

[2] See the project website at <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/beinf.html> (accessed 12 December 2023).

[3] For the former, see Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, eds., *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*, Le Genre humain 42 (Paris: Seuil, 2003); Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Penser l'histoire croisée: Entre empirie et réflexivité," *Annales Histoire Sciences Sociales* 58 (2004):

focuses on the connected histories of Christians in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly Ethiopic and Syriac Christians.[4]

BeInf takes a long-standing debate about so-called Syriac "influences" on Ethiopic Christianity as its impetus. This debate has its origins with Guidi and Conti Rossini, who argued that Syriac Christians exerted significant influence on Ethiopic Christianity during Late Antiquity as foreign missionaries who fled the Chalcedonian Empire for Aksum, where they, *inter alia*, introduced monasticism, translated the Bible into Ethiopic, and more broadly brought about a "second-Christianization" of Aksum.[5] The association of the foreign missionaries with Syriac-

7–36; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 30–50. For the latter, see <https://storiesofsurvival.history.ox.ac.uk/> (accessed 12 December 2023).

[4] Throughout this article, as throughout the BeInf project more generally, I use "Syriac" to refer to the cultural tradition that developed historically in the Middle East among Christians who spoke primarily the Syriac language but that grew to encompass a number of communities from different backgrounds, cultures, and languages (for precedent, see Sebastian P. Brock. Aaron Michael Butts, George Anton Kiraz, and Lucas Van Rompay, eds., *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011], ix). Following the same logic, I use "Ethiopic" to refer to the language (i.e., Gəʿəz) as well as to the related but broader cultural tradition associated with this language (e.g., Ethiopic Christians).

[5] Ignazio Guidi, *Le traduzioni degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico. Memoria del socio Ignazio Guidi,* letta nella seduta del 18 marzo 1888, *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Memorie, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Serie quarta, 4 (Roma: Tipografia della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1888), 33–34 with fn. 1; Ignazio Guidi, *Storia della letteratura etiopica*, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto per l'Oriente (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1932), 13–15; Carlo Conti Rossini, *Storia d'Etiopia, Parte prima: Dalle origini all'avvento della dinastia salomonide*, Africa Italiana 3 (Bergamo: Istituto

speaking areas was based on a series of arguments, all of which have been justifiably challenged in subsequent scholarship.[6] It turns out that no evidence connects any purported "second-Christianization" of Aksum to Syriac Christians.[7] Moreover, even the "second Christianization" itself has rightly been

italiano d'arti grafiche, 1928), esp. 155–165. See also Witold Witakowski, "Syrian Influences in Ethiopian Culture," *Orientalia Suecana*, no. 38–39 (1989–1990): 191–202, which is reprinted in Alessandro Bausi, ed., *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Ethiopian*, The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300–1500 4 (Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), as chapter 12.

[6] See, e.g., Hans Jakob Polotsky, "Aramaic, Syriac, and Geʿez," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 9 (1964): 1–10; Paolo Marrassini, "Some Considerations on the Problem of the 'Syriac Influences' on Aksumite Ethiopia," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 23 (1990): 35–46; Paolo Marrassini, "Ancora sul problema degli influssi siriaci in età aksumita," in *Biblica et semitica: Studi in memoria di Francesco Vattioni*, ed. Luigi Cagni, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, Series Minor 59 (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1999), 325–37; Martin Heide, "Zur Vorlage und Bedeutung der äthiopischen Bibelübersetzung," in *Studien zum Text der Apokalypse*, ed. Marcus Sigismund, Martin Karrer, and Ulrich Schmid, Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Instituts für Neutestamentliche Textforschung der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster/Westfalen 47 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 289–313. The first and third—the third in English translation—are reprinted in Bausi, *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Ethiopian*, as chapters 11 and 13, respectively.

[7] Marrassini judiciously summarizes that the hypothesis of Guidi and of Conti Rossini can "be considered to be nothing but a modern story, created accidentally in the West, after a series of mistakes and misunderstandings of some of the most authoritative scholars of that time" (Paolo Marrassini, "Frustula Nagranitica," *Aethiopica* 14 [2011]: 14).

questioned.[8] Thus, despite its remarkable resilience, the long-lived yet ultimately untenable hypothesis of Syriac Christians playing a role in an alleged "second-Christianization" of Aksum should be laid to rest once and for all.[9] BeInf is not, however, primarily a project of historical deconstruction and minimalism. Instead, it aims to highlight the many contacts and connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity that have unfortunately been overshadowed up to this point by the ill-fated hypothesis of Syriac involvement in an alleged "second-

[8] The "second-Christianization" is based on hagiographic texts related to the so-called Nine Saints. Through a meticulous philological analysis, Brita has convincingly shown that these hagiographies are all medieval productions, the earliest from the fourteenth century and some not written until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; see Antonella Brita, *I racconti tradizionali sulla «Seconda Cristianizzazione» dell'Etiopia. Il ciclo agiografico dei Nove Santi*, Studi Africanistici, Serie Etiopica 7 (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, 2010). Thus, these hagiographies are many centuries removed from the time of the alleged "second-christianization" in the sixth century and, more to the point, are of dubious historical value for this much earlier time.

[9] I plan to return to this topic in more detail in a future article, since Guidi's and Conti Rossini's hypothesis unfortunately continues to be invoked; see, e.g., David W. Phillipson, *Foundations of an African Civilisation: Aksum & the Northern Horn, 1000 BC–AD 1300*, Eastern Africa Series 13 (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012), 91–106; Ralph Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopic and Early Syriac Literature*, Eastern Christian Studies 24 (Louvain: Peeters, 2017), 7–8; Afework Hailu, *Jewish Cultural Elements in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2020), 75–79, esp. fn. 118; Valentina A. Grasso and Michael Harrower, "The Basilica of Betä Säma'ti' (*sic*) in its Aksūmite, Early Christian, and Late Antique Context," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 82 (2023): 59–76; Valentina Grasso, *Pre-Islamic Arabia: Societies, Politics, Cults and Identities during Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 114.

Christianization" of Aksum, as well as more broadly by the ultimately unhelpful paradigm of influence.

Many of the connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity are indirect. It is perhaps easiest to illustrate what I mean by indirect with an example: the Ethiopic reception of Syriac literature. A number of Syriac texts were transmitted into Ethiopic during the medieval period via Arabic.[10] This includes Ethiopic versions of works by Syriac authors, such as Aphrahaṭ (fl. 336–345), Ephrem (d. 373), Jacob of Serugh (d. 521), Philoxenos (d. 523), Isaac of Nineveh (seventh century), Dadishoʿ Qaṭraya (seventh century), John of Dalyatha (eighth century), Theodore bar Koni (eighth century), Ishoʿdad of Merv (ninth century), and more. There are also anonymous Syriac texts, including exegetical homilies, wisdom literature, and hagiography, to name only a few genres, which were transmitted into Ethiopic. In all these cases, save one, Arabic served as the bridge by which Syriac texts reached Ethiopic.[11] Thus, with the Ethiopic reception of Syriac literature, we are not dealing with *direct* transmission of texts from Syriac to Ethiopic, much less with *direct* interactions between Syriac Christians and Ethiopic

[10] A preliminary inventory of such texts is available in Aaron M. Butts, "Syriac Contacts with Ethiopic Christianity," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, 148–53. For more details on this transmission trajectory, see Aaron M. Butts, "From Syriac to Arabic to Ethiopic: *Loci* of Change in Transmission," in *Circolazione di testi e superamento delle barriere linguistiche e culturali nelle tradizioni orientali*, ed. Rosa Bianca Finazzi et al., Orientalia Ambrosiana 7 (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana–Centro Ambrosiano, 2020), 21–57.

[11] The proverbial exception that proves the rule is a recently-discovered Ethiopic version of the *Life of Abraham of Qidun* (CPG 3937), which seems to have been transmitted from Syriac into Ethiopic via Greek in Late Antiquity; see Aaron M. Butts and Ted Erho, "An Ethiopic Version of the *Life of Abraham of Qidun* (CPG 3937)," in progress.

Christians; rather, the connections between Syriac and Ethiopic Christians are in this case *indirect*, having been mediated by Arabic-speaking Christians, mostly though not exclusively in Egypt.[12] Most connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity are *mutatis mutandis* similarly indirect.

There are, however, some cases of direct connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christians. The best known is undoubtedly the so-called Nagran Episode. Sometime in the early decades of the sixth century, the Aksumite ruler Kaleb crossed the Red Sea and intervened against the king of Ḥimyar on behalf of Christians persecuted in Nagran.[13] This event is evidenced not only by Ancient South Arabian inscriptions from the Ḥimyarite perspective but was also widely remembered across the broader Mediterranean world in Christian

[12] In the context of BeInf, Martina Ambu and I will be exploring Egypt as a location for connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christians. For Ethiopic Christians in Egypt, see Martina Ambu, "Du texte à la communauté: Relations et échanges entre l'Égypte copte et les réseaux monastiques éthiopiens (XIII^{e}–XVI^{e} siècles)" (Ph.D. Thesis, Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2021), especially 356–68. For Syriac Christians in Egypt, see the overview in Lucas Van Rompay, "Syriac Contacts with Coptic Christianity," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, 103–6, where additional references can be found.

[13] The bibliography on the Nagran Episode is relatively large. For a general historical outline, see Norbert Nebes, "The Martyrs of Najrān and End of the Ḥimyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century," in *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 27–59. For more detail, see Christian Julien Robin, "Joseph, dernier roi de Ḥimayr (de 522 à 525, ou une des années suivantes)," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008): 1–124; George Hatke, "Africans in Arabia Felix: Aksumite Relations with Himyar in the Sixth Century C.E." (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2011). See also Glen Warren Bowersock, *The Throne of Adulis: Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*, Emblems of Antiquity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

hagiographic sources in various languages, including Arabic, Ethiopic, Greek, and Syriac.[14] The Nagran Episode is of particular interest to the BeInf project because at least some of the Christian communities in Nagran seem to have belonged to the Syriac tradition. In his *Letter on the Ḥimyarite Martyrs*, which is the earliest hagiographic account of the Nagran persecution, the Syriac Miaphysite leader Simeon of Beth Arsham (d. before 548) presents the Christians of Nagran as co-religionists.[15] Similarly, the Syriac Miaphysite poet and bishop Jacob of Serugh (d. 521) wrote a letter to the Christians in Ḥimyar to console them

[14] In general, see Joëlle Beaucamp, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, and Christian Julien Robin, eds., *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux V^e^ et VI^e^ siècles: Regards croisés sur les sources*, Collège de France–CNRS, Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 32, Le massacre de Najrân, 2 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010).

[15] The letter is edited in Ignazio Guidi, "La lettera di Simeone vescovo di Bêth-Arśâm sopra i martiri omeriti," *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Memorie della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, Serie terza* 7 (1881): 471–515. English translations are available in Arthur Jeffery, "Christianity in South Arabia," *The Muslim World* 36:3 (1946): 193–216 and more recently J. Edward Walters, "Simeon of Beth Arsham, Letter on the Ḥimyarite Martyrs," in *Eastern Christianity: A Reader*, ed. J. Edward Walters (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2021), 88–103. See also the important study in David G. K. Taylor, "A Stylistic Comparison of the Syriac Ḥimyarite Martyr Texts Attributed to Simeon of Beth Arsham," in *Juifs et chrétiens en arabie aux V^e^ et VI^e^ siècles. Regards croisés sur les sources*, ed. Joëlle Beaucamp, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, and Christian Julien Robin, Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 32; Le massacre de Najrân 2 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010), 143–76.

in the face of (presumably an earlier) persecution.[16] In addition, Syriac inscriptions have emerged from the environs of Nagran (see Figure 1),[17] all but assuring that at least some Christians there belonged to the Syriac tradition. Thus, in the Nagran episode, we have a case of a direct connection between Syriac and Ethiopic Christians.

There are also cases of direct connections between Syriac and Ethiopic Christians in the medieval period.[18] The best known, perhaps, is the reported appointment of Syriac metropolitans in the time of Yāgbā Ṣəyon, who ruled the medieval successor of the Aksumite kingdom from 1285 to 1294.[19] These purported Syriac metropolitans have long been known from a series of Arabic correspondences preserved in the chancellery

[16] The letter is edited in Gunnar Olinder, *Iacobi Sarugensis Epistulae quotquot supersunt*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 57 (Paris: Typographeo Reipublicae, 1937), 87–102. A French translation is available in Micheline Albert, *Les lettres de Jacques de Saroug*, Patrimoine syriaque 3 (Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 2004), 129–44. For discussion, see Philip Michael Forness, *Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East: A Study of Jacob of Serugh,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 115–31.

[17] See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, George Kiraz, and Alessia Prioletta, "A First Syriac Inscription from the Area of Ḥimā (Najrān Province, Southern Saudi Arabia)," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenländisches Gesellschaft* 112 (2022): 37–49; Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, "Écriture en pays de mission : à propos des inscriptions syriaques d'Arabie," in *Arabie—Arabies. Volume offert à Christian Julien Robin par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis*, ed. Iwona Gajda and Françoise Briquel Chatonnet (Paris: Geuthner, 2023), 231–38.

[18] For Ethiopia and Eritrea in the medieval period, see the important new handbook Samantha Kelly, ed., *A Companion to Medieval Ethiopia and Eritrea* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

[19] For a historical account, see Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270–1527*, Oxford Studies in African Affairs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 69–72.

of Cairo.[20] The presence of Syriac metropolitans in Ethiopia in the late thirteenth century may provide the context for a recent discovery of great importance for the connected histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christians: a *ṭaḇliṭā*, documented from a church in the vicinity of Asmara in Eritrea, which contains a Syriac inscription, dated to 1295/6, mentioning "Athanasius bishop of Kush" (see Figure 2).[21] As rightly noted by Bausi and Desreumaux, this *ṭaḇliṭā* represents the only ancient or

[20] For the chancellery in Cairo, see Alessandro Gori, "Sugli 'incipit' delle missive inviate dalla cancelleria mamelucca ai sovrani d'etiopia nel xiv e xv secolo," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* n.s., 1, no. 1 (2002): 29–44; Julien Loiseau, "Chrétiens d'Égypte, musulmans d'Éthiopie: Protection des communautés et relations diplomatiques entre le sultanat mamelouk et le royaume salomonien (*ca* 1270–1516)," *Médiévales* 79 (2020): 37–68. For these particular Arabic sources, see Étienne Quatremère, *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte, et sur quelques contrées voisines. Recueillis et extraits des manuscrits coptes, arabes, etc., de la Bibliothèque Impériale*, vol. I–II (Paris: F. Schoell, Libraire, 1811), vol. II, 267–283; Gaston Wiet, "Les relations égypto-abyssines sous les sultans Mamlouks," *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 4 (1938): 119–22; Joseph Cuoq, *L'Islam en Éthiopie des origines au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1981), 105–14; Stuart C. Munro-Hay, *Ethiopia and Alexandria: The Metropolitan Episcopacy of Ethiopia, Mit einem Vorwort von Manfred Kropp*, Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica 5 (Warszawa–Wiesbaden: ZAŚ PAN, 1997), 199–203; Loiseau, "Chrétiens d'Égypte, musulmans d'Éthiopie," 41–42; Alessandro Bausi and Alain Desreumaux, "Une *ṭablītō* syriaque orthodoxe en Érythrée datée de 1295/1296 : un témoin des « métropolites syriens » ?," *Aethiopica* 24 (2021): 233–37.

[21] *Editio princeps* in Bausi and Desreumaux, "Une *ṭablītō* syriaque orthodoxe en Érythrée datée de 1295/1296 : un témoin des « métropolites syriens » ?" See also the response in Michael Waltisberg, "Nachträge zur Edition einer syrischen *ṭaḇliṭo* in *Aethiopica* 24 (Bausi und Desreumaux 2021)," *Aethiopica* 25 (2022): 215–19 as well as the rejoinder in Alain Desreumaux, "Le texte syriaque de la *ṭablītō* éthiopienne : une réponse aux remarques du Pr. Dr. Michael Waltisberg," *Aethiopica* 25 (2022): 220–22.

medieval object with a Syriac text that has been found in Ethiopia or Eritrea.[22]

Figure 1 Syriac inscription, together with Old South Arabian inscriptions, from the desert region of Ḥimā, ca. 100 km north of Nagran. © Mission archéologique et épigraphique franco-saoudienne de Najrān (MAFSN).

Figure 2 Syriac *ṭaḇliṭā* from Eritrea, containing an inscription dated to 1295/6 mentioning "Athanasius bishop of Kush." Image reproduced from *Aethiopica* 24 (2021): 238.

[22] Bausi and Desreumaux, "Une *ṭablītō* syriaque orthodoxe en Érythrée datée de 1295/1296 : un témoin des « métropolites syriens » ?," 244.

With the present article, I inaugurate a series that will present additional cases of direct connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity in the form of Syriac writing found in Ethiopic manuscripts and Ethiopic writing in Syriac manuscripts.[23] Some of these cases are already known.[24] Meanwhile, others have been unrecorded in scholarly literature.[25] For each case, an edition of the text in the occasional language will be presented, along with English translation and commentaries (paleographic and general). In addition, information about the

[23] The series concentrates on manuscripts that are primarily monolingual (Syriac or Ethiopic) with occasional writing in the other language; the focus is not on polyglots, such as MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Barb. Or. 2 (before mid-14th century), which contains the Psalms and biblical Odes in Syriac and Ethiopic alongside also Coptic, Arabic, and Armenian; see Delio Vania Proverbio, "Barb. or. 2 (Psalterium pentaglottum)," in *Coptic Treasures from the Vatican Library: A Selection of Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic Manuscripts. Papers Collected on the Occasion of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies* (*Rome, September 17th–22nd, 2012*), ed. Paola Buzi and Delio Vania Proverbio, Studi e Testi 472 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2012), 163–74; Alin Suciu, "A 'Spiritual Treasure in Five Languages': Pentaglot Biblical Manuscripts from Egypt in a Global and Transregional Perspective," in *Manuscript Treasures from Afro-Eurasia: Scribes, Patrons, Collectors, Readers*, ed. Sophia Dege-Müller et al., Studies in Manuscript Cultures (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

[24] Such as the case of Syriac writing in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 70, f. 204r, recently discussed in Rafał Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," *Parole de l'Orient* 48 (2022): 286–97 and of Ethiopic writing in MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in Scrin. 100, p. 311, discussed in Grigory Kessel, "Moses von Mardin (gest. 1592) / Moses of Mardin (d. 1592)," in *Ausstellungskatalog "Wunder der erschaffenen Dinge: Osmanische Manuskripte in Hamburger Sammlungen" / "Wonders of Creation: Ottoman Manuscripts from Hamburg Collections,"* ed. Janina Karolewski and Yavuz Köse, Manuscript Cultures 9 (Hamburg: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, 2016), 147–51.

[25] See fn. 52 below.

manuscript, especially its provenance, will be provided, hoping to shed light on when and where the writing in the occasional language could have been added to a manuscript, primarily in a different language. I begin the series with a line of Syriac found in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148.

MS FLORENCE, BIBLIOTECA MEDICEA LAURENZIANA, OR. 148

Among specialists of Ethiopic, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 is relatively well-known for being one of the earliest and most important witnesses to the Ethiopic *Synodicon*, a collection of canonico-liturgical texts.[26] Since this manuscript has been described in detail several times in the past,[27] I will give only a general overview here, highlighting

[26] See the overview in Alessandro Bausi, "Senodos," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. IV, ed. Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 623a–625a as well as, with more detail, Alessandro Bausi, *Il Sēnodos etiopico. Canoni pseudoapostolici: Canoni dopo l'Ascensione, Canoni di Simone il Cananeo, Canoni Apostolici, Lettera di Pietro*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 552, 553 (Lovanii: In aedibus Peeters, 1995).

[27] For previous descriptions, see Stefanus Evodius Assemanus, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mms. orientalium catalogus* (Florentiae: Ex Typographio Albiziniano, 1742), 96–97 (no. LVIII); Paolo Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze (2)," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 31 (1987): 90–97; Alessandro Bausi, "I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 33 (1989): 5–33; Bausi, *Il Sēnodos etiopico*, vol. I, xvii-xviii (text); Alessandro Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," in *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple Text Manuscripts*, ed. Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke, Studies in Manuscript Cultures 9 (Berlin: De

some details that may be of particular interest to the connected histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity. MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 is a composite manuscript containing multiple codicological units:[28]

- ff. 1–4, which contain a short text of rules for the monastic community of Jerusalem dated to 1336/7 (or less likely 1339/40),[29] along with a couple of even shorter

Gruyter, 2016), 116–18; Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 304–15. See also the description in Beta maṣāḥəft 'Schriftkultur des christlichen Äthiopiens und Eritreas: Eine multimediale Forschungsumgebung' at <https://betamasaheft.eu/BMLor148> (accessed 12 December 2023). For the *Maiestas Domini* in this manuscript, see also Ugo Monneret de Villard, "La majestas domini in Abissinia," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 3, no. 1 (1943): 36–45; Jules Leroy, "Objectifs des recherches sur la peinture religieuse éthiopienne," *Annales d'Éthiopie* 1 (1955): 130–31; Lanfranco Ricci, "Note marginali," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 15 (1960): 106–13.

[28] Images of the manuscript are available online at <https://betamasaheft.eu/manuscripts/ BMLor148/viewer> (accessed on 12 December 2023). For composite and multi-text Ethiopic manuscripts more broadly, along with comments on this specific manuscript, see Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence."

[29] An edition with Italian translation is found in Enrico Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme*, vol. I–II, Collezione scientifica e documentaria a cura del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana 12, Collezione scientifica e documentaria a cura dell'Ufficio studi del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana 14 (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1943–1947), vol. II, 380–382. For a re-edition with French translation of part of the text, see Ambu, "Du texte à la communauté," 407–411, with additional commentary on pp. 426–429. The date is not entirely certain. Most scholars have read Year of Mercy 524; see, e.g., Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme*, vol. II, 381 fn. 1; Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze (2),"

91. More recently, Ambu and—seemingly independently—Zarzeczny have proposed to read Year of Mercy 521 (Ambu, "Du texte à la communauté," 409 with fn. 34; Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 306 with fn. 14). The question revolves around whether to read the single digit as 1 or 4, which can look quite similar in the Ethiopic script. To complicate the matter further, elsewhere in this manuscript these two numbers have irregular forms (see Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze [2]," 90), though the forms elsewhere in the manuscript should not necessarily influence the reading here in a different codicological unit with a text written in a different hand. Personally, I prefer to read 1, following Ambu and Zarzeczny and against other scholars: the number in question comes to a slight point at the top, in line with the writing of 1, and can be contrasted with the writing of 4 (an example several lines below), which comes to a slight point at the bottom. It should be noted that the same exact difficulty between reading 521 or 524 is found with MS EMML 1763; see Getatchew Haile and William F. Macomber, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville*, V. *Project Numbers 1501–2000* (Collegeville, MN: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, St. John's Abbey and University, 1981), 218, 231. Beyond the reading, there is also a problem with converting from the Year of Mercy. Cerulli calculated that Year of Mercy 524 was 1331/2 CE (Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme*, vol. II, 381 fn. 1), and his calculation has been followed by others, e.g., Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze (2)," 91; Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 116. See also Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 306. Year of Mercy 524, however, actually corresponds to 1339/40 CE, as per Marius Chaîne, *La chronologie des temps chrétiens de l'Égypte et de l'Éthiopie* (Paris: Libraire orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1925), 207. See also Getatchew Haile and Macomber, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville*, vol. V. *Project Numbers 1501–2000*, 218. Moreover, Ambu's and Zarzeczny's new reading of Year of Mercy 521, which I follow, corresponds not to 1337/8 CE, as Zarzeczny has it, but

texts, including *zəmmāre*-type antiphons for Palm Sunday and the Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast and a set of *mawāśə't* antiphons for Hripsime.[30]

- ff. 5–165, which consist of the *Synodicon*.[31]
- ff. 166–173, which is the unique witness to the Ethiopic version of *Demonstration 8* associated with Aphrahaṭ (fl. 336–345).[32] Two other *Demonstrations* are also known in Ethiopic: *Demonstration* 5 was edited by

actually to 1336/7 CE, as again already in Getatchew Haile and Macomber, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville*, vol. V. *Project Numbers 1501–2000*, 218 and especially in Ambu, "Du texte à la communauté," 409 with fn. 34, who is writing precisely on MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. I would like to thank Ted Erho for the reference to MS EMML 1763 as well as for helping to sort out the conversions.

[30] I am grateful to Jonas Karlsson for clarifying details about these texts. The former is unedited; the latter is edited with an Italian translation in Enrico Cerulli, "L'Oriente Christiano nell'unita delle sue tradizioni," in *L'Oriente Cristiano nella storia della civiltà* (Roma: Accad. Nazionale dei Lincei, 1964), 34–40. See also Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica*, Thesaurus litterarum 1, Storia delle letterature di tutto il mondo, 11 (Milano: Nuova Accademia, 1956), 213–20. For Hripsime in Ethiopic Christianity more broadly, see Marcin Krawczuk, "Some Remarks on the Ethiopic Martyrdom of St. Hripsime," in *Current Research in African Studies: Papers in Honour of Mwalimu Dr. Eugeniusz Rzewuski*, ed. Iwona Kraska-Szlenk and Beata Wójtowicz (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 2014), 175–83 (the present text is mentioned on 177–178).

[31] For more information, see fn. 26 above.

[32] This homily was edited with an Italian translation in Enrico Cerulli, "De resurrectione mortuorum, opuscolo della Chiesa etiopica del sec. XIV," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant,* I: *Écriture sainte. Ancien orient*, Studi e Testi 231 (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964), 1–27. Subsequently, the text published by Cerulli was identified as an Ethiopic version of the Syriac *Demonstration 8* in Tjitze Baarda, "Another Treatise of Aphrahat the Persian Sage in Ethiopic Translation," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980–1981): 632–40.

Esteves Pereira.[33] More recently, Walters and Erho have identified an Ethiopic version of *Demonstration* 6 in MS EMML 7469; this text remains unedited.[34]

- ff. 174–203, which contain a series of chronological treatises along with related tables.[35] It is in this codicological unit, on f. 182r, that the Syriac writing is found. Between the chronological texts and tables, on ff. 196r–199r, is a fragment from the Ethiopic version of Palladius's *Lausiac History* (47.4–14, with the beginning and end of the relevant sections not preserved).[36]

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[33] Franciscus Maria Esteves Pereira, "Jacobi, episcopi Nisibeni, Homilia de adventu regis Persarum adversus urbem Nisibis," in *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (2. März 1906)*, ed. Carl Bezold, vol. II (Gieszen: A. Töpelman, 1906), 877–92.

[34] In the BeInf project, Ted Erho and I plan to (re-)edit and translate into English the extant Ethiopic *Demonstrations*.

[35] For the broader context of these texts, see recently Denis Nosnitsin, "An Ancient Ethiopic Treatise on *Computus* and Chronology: A Preliminary Evaluation," in *Africa in the World, the World in Africa. L'Africa nel mondo, il mondo in Africa*, ed. Alessandro Gori and Fabio Viti, Accademia Ambrosiana, Africana Ambrosiana 5 (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Centro Ambrosiano, 2022), 41–70.

[36] For the Greek text, with German translation, see Adelheid Hübner, *Palladius. Historia Lausiaca. Geschichten aus dem frühen Mönchtum*, Fontes Christiani 67 (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 274–81. I happily credit Ted Erho with the identification of this text, which has hitherto remained unidentified (see, e.g., Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze [2]," 96; Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 118; Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 311). For a useful overview of the *Lausiac History* in Ethiopic, see Rafał Zarzeczny, "The Story of Paul the Simple from the Historia Lausiaca by Palladius in its Ethiopic Recension," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 82 (2016): 127–78.

Though it is perhaps possible that these multiple units are solely textual (in which case we would be dealing with a multiple-text manuscript and more specifically with a multiple-text manuscript consisting of a single physical unit to which different—and, in some instances, unrelated—texts have been added over the course of time, i.e., a recycled multiple-text manuscript), it is more likely that MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 is a composite manuscript consisting of different physical units that were bound together.[37] In this regard, it should be noted that the manuscript does not have an Ethiopic binding but a European parchment binding.[38]

In the fourth and final codicological unit, a note is found with the date of 6462 from the foundation of the world (= 1426 CE). As rightly stressed in more recent scholarship, this date should apply only to the codicological unit in which it is found.[39] For the dating of the rest of the codicological units, we must defer to paleography: a number of different scribal hands have been differentiated in the manuscript, and though they

[37] On this point, see especially Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 116–18. For multiple-text manuscripts, see Antonella Brita and Janina Karolewski, "Unravelling Multiple-Text Manuscripts: Introducing Categories Based on Content, Use, and Production," in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods, and Concepts*, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 459–90.

[38] Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze (2)," 90; Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 118; Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 305.

[39] So Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 118, against his earlier practice in Bausi, *Il Sēnodos etiopico*.

seem consistent with the fifteenth century, such paleographic dating is naturally less secure.[40]

SYRIAC TEXT

On f. 182r of MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, a single line of Syriac is found. This line of Syriac is not connected to its Ethiopic context. The Ethiopic writing on this folio consists of a chronological treatise.[41] In one of the lines mostly left blank, the Syriac line was secondarily added, entirely disconnected from the content of the Ethiopic manuscript. It is not clear why there is a blank space in the Ethiopic text at this point.[42] However, the writer of the Syriac took advantage of this

[40] For the most recent paleographic analysis of this manuscript, see <https://betamasaheft.eu/BMLor148> (accessed 12 December 2023), where seven hands are distinguished, and all are dated to the fifteenth century. For Ethiopic paleography more broadly, see Siegbert Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, Äthiopistische Forschungen 22 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988).

[41] An English summary of the chronological treatise is available in Nosnitsin, "An Ancient Ethiopic Treatise on *Computus* and Chronology: A Preliminary Evaluation," 56–57 with fn. 51 and 52. See also Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze (2)," 96.

[42] In this regard, it should be noted that there is not a blank space at this point of the text in the earliest witness to the chronological treatise, namely the so-called "Comboni Fragment," which Nosnitsin dates no later than the second half of the thirteenth century based on paleography; see the image in Nosnitsin, "An Ancient Ethiopic Treatise on *Computus* and Chronology: A Preliminary Evaluation," 66. For the date, see p. 47 in the same article. For a different documentation of the "Comboni Fragment," see Alessandro Bausi, "«Lingua franca notarile bizantina» in Etiopia? Su un tratto linguistico nel più antico testo documentario etiopico (le

blank space to add a line that is entirely detached in content from the surrounding Ethiopic text. It is perhaps worth pointing out that this is not the only secondary addition on this folio: in the first line of the folio, a secondary addition has been made in Ethiopic that ascribes the chronological treatise to a certain "Yāred, the priest" (ያሬድ፡ቀሲስ).[43] This secondary addition in Ethiopic is thus connected to the primary text, and so it differs from the secondary addition in Syriac, which is entirely detached from the primary text in Ethiopic.

The Syriac is written in a crude Esṭrangela hand with some Serṭo and some East-Syriac features, which is not uncommon in medieval Syriac manuscripts. There are ill-formed letters (discussed in the PALEOGRAPHIC COMMENTARY below) and mistakes

costruzioni del tipo *ʾəmfalaga falagu*, «lungo il fiume»)," in *Documenti scartati, documenti reimpiegati. Forme, linguaggi, metodi per nuove prospettive di ricerca*, ed. Giuseppe De Gregorio, Marta Luigina Mangini, and Maddalena Modesti, Notariorum Itinera, Varia 7 (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2023), 324 fn. 47.

[43] See already Nosnitsin, "An Ancient Ethiopic Treatise on *Computus* and Chronology: A Preliminary Evaluation," 56 fn. 51. Note that the attribution to the priest Yāred is not found in the earlier "Comboni Fragment" (for this witness, see the previous footnote). Given the title "priest" (ቀሲስ), it is unlikely that this Yāred is to be identified with the well-known saint by that name; on whom, see Antonella Brita, "Yared," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 5, ed. Alessandro Bausi in cooperation with Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 26b–28b; Marilyn E. Heldman and Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "Concerning Saint Yared," in *Studies in Ethiopian Languages, Literature, and History: Festschrift for Getatchew Haile Presented by His Friends and Colleagues*, ed. Adam Carter McCollum, Aethiopistische Forschungen 83 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 65–93; Sophia Dege-Müller and Bar Kribus, "The Veneration of St. Yared—A Multireligious Landscape Shared by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and the Betä Ǝsraʾel (Ethiopian Jews)," in *Geographies of Encounter: The Rise and Fall of Multi-Religious Spaces*, ed. Marian Burchardt and Maria Chiara Giorda (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 255–80.

(discussed in the GENERAL COMMENTARY below). The Syriac is not that of an experienced scribe and seems to have been written by someone who did not (completely) know Syriac. One of the mistakes may indicate that the person writing the Syriac text was an Ethiopic Christian, as discussed below. Moreover, it seems possible that we are dealing with a case of imitation in which someone without (complete) knowledge of Syriac was imitating some Syriac words that happened to be at hand—the content of the Syriac line is reminiscent of scribal notes and short colophons that are fairly common in Syriac manuscripts. Regardless of the exact circumstances, that this single line of Syriac contains multiple mistakes and ill-formed letters is noteworthy.

Note the use of the following symbols:[44]

< … > *addendum* should be added to the text

{…} *delendum* should be deleted from the text

[44] See Paul Maas, *Textkritik*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1960), §23.

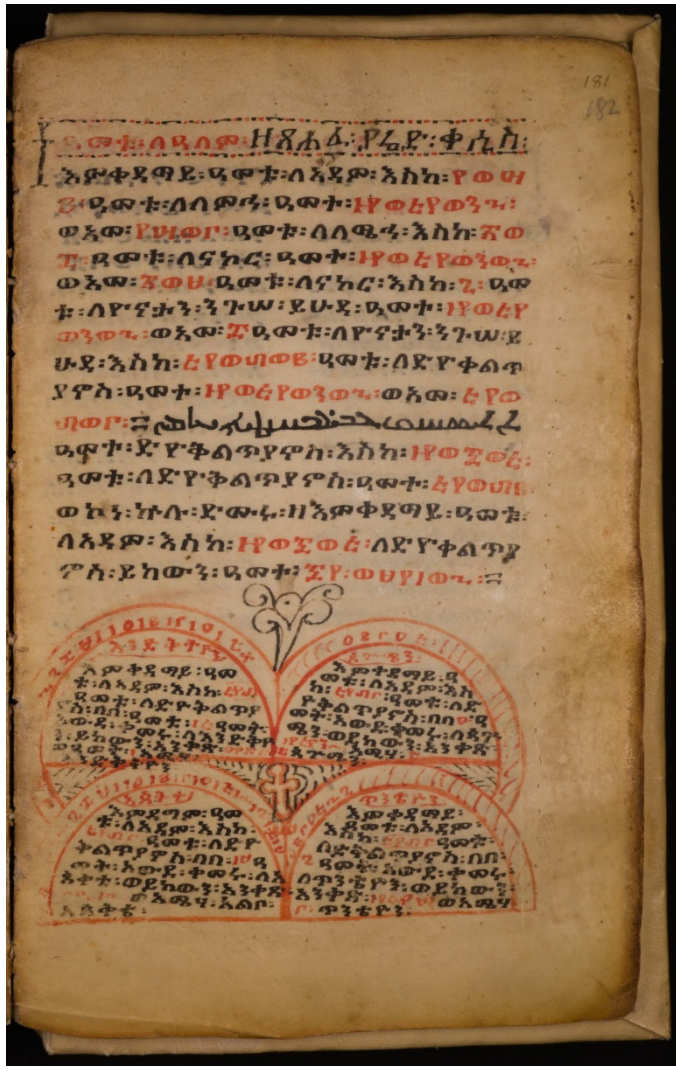

Figure 3 MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, f. 182r. Courtesy of MiC. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

TEXT

ܐܢ<ܐ> ܐܝܣܚܩ ܓܒܪܐ{ܕ}ܚܛܝܐ {ܗܘ}ܐܡܝܢ

TRANSLATION

I, Isaac, a sinful man, amen.

PALEOGRAPHIC COMMENTARY

ܐܢ<ܐ>

The initial *ʾālap̄*, with a short horizontal stroke extending to the right from the bottom of the vertical stroke, resembles the free-standing form of the letter in some medieval East-Syriac manuscripts, such as MS London, British Library, Add. 7,177 (dated to 1484) and especially MS London, British Library, Add. 7,175 (dated to 1574).[45]

ܐܝܣܚܩ

For the initial *ʾālap̄*, see the previous remark. The *ḥēṯ* has an extra tooth (three instead of two). The same form of *ḥēṯ* is attested in {ܕ}ܚܛܝܐ.

ܓܒܪܐ

The initial *gāmal* hardly dips below the line, giving it the appearance of a slightly exaggerated *ʿē*, but the interpretation as *gāmal* is not in doubt. Moreover, a similar letterform is again found in the East-Syriac MS London, British Library, Add. 7,175.[46]

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[45] See William Henry Paine Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts*, Monumenta Palaeographica Vetera, 2nd Series (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1946), 229 (Plate CLXXVIII) and 233 (Plate CLXXXII), respectively.

[46] See Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts*, 233 (Plate CLXXXII).

I read the final letter of this word as a Serṭo *ʾālap̄*,[47] but it admittedly looks more like a *lāmad̲*, and seems to connect to the following letter, which I take to start another word. A different option, but admittedly more drastic, would be to understand what I read as a Serṭo *ʾālap̄* followed by *bēṯ* in ܠܒܪܐ{ܒ}ܚܠܝܐ as instead a badly misformed Esṭrangela *ʾālap̄*: In such a case, the angled ascending line after *rēsh* would represent the right side of an Esṭrangela *ʾālap̄*, admittedly misformed, and what looks like *bēṯ* would be the left side of an Esṭrangela *ʾālap̄*, again misformed. I do not, however, think that the scribe intended to write an Esṭrangela *ʾālap̄*, and so I have read ܐ{ܒ} here. Still, I do believe it is possible, and perhaps even likely, that our inexperienced scribe has misread his antigraph, which had ܠܒܪܐ ܚܠܝܐ, mistaking an Esṭrangela *ʾālap̄* at the end of ܠܒܪܐ for a Serṭo *ʾālap̄* followed by *bēṯ* and writing in this way. That *bēṯ* does not make sense here (see GENERAL COMMENTARY below) may further bolster such a proposal.

{ܒ}ܚܠܝܐ

As above in ܐܘܣܚܣ, the *ḥēṯ* is written with three teeth instead of two.

{ܝܒ}ܐܕܘܡ

Instead of {ܝܒ}, one could perhaps also read a single letter *ḥēṯ*, though this letter is written twice in this line with three teeth instead of what would be two here (two teeth is, of course, the expected form in Syriac). See also the GENERAL COMMENTARY below.

[47] Compare the rounded form in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marshall 664 (dated to 1425); for which, see Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts*, 198 (Plate CXLVII).

GENERAL COMMENTARY

ܐܢ<ܐ>

I understand the initial two letters to represent the independent first-person subject pronoun 'I', typically written ܐܢܐ in Syriac. A shortened form of this pronoun, lacking the final *ʾālap̄*, is rarely attested in Syriac, e.g., ܩܪܝܢ for expected ܩܪܐ ܐܢܐ 'I call', but such reduced forms of the pronoun seem to be limited to enclitic subject pronouns attached to participles of III-weak roots.[48] A more compelling motivation for the proposed shortened writing of the pronoun can be found by comparing the corresponding Ethiopic pronoun: አነ *ʾana* 'I'.[49] In contrast to Syriac, Ethiopic does not generally employ *matres lectionis*,[50] and so the same pronoun in Ethiopic does not have a final *ʾālap̄*. Thus, the proposed shortened writing of the Syriac pronoun ܐܢܐ as ܐܢ could have been due to interference from the orthography of the corresponding Ethiopic pronoun አነ.[51] If that is the case, then it has important implications since it would suggest that an Ethiopic Christian wrote the Syriac line.

Alternatively, these two initial letters could represent a false start. Intending to write ܐܝܦܣܡ, the scribe could have

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[48] See Theodor Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1880), §64B.

[49] For an overview of Ethiopic morphology, see Aaron Michael Butts, *Ethiopic Paradigms: A Summary of Classical Ethiopic* (*Gəʕəz*) *Morphology* (Leuven–Paris–Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2022).

[50] For rare exceptions, see Jonas Karlsson, "Traces of *Matres Lectionis* in an Early Geez Manuscript," in progress.

[51] I mean "interference" in the technical, linguistic sense: non-native speakers of the recipient language transfer features of their native language into the recipient language. See, e.g., Sarah Grey Thomason and Terrence Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 38–39.

begun with *ʾālap̄* and then accidentally written *nun* instead of *yod̲*. The scribe could have stopped writing and begun again with the next word. Such false starts are well-attested across scribal cultures. They are also found more specifically in other examples of Syriac writing in Ethiopic manuscripts, such as MS Saint Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Dorn 609, f. 200r, where the scribe made not one but two false starts: ܡܒܒܪ. ܡܒܒܪܘܬ ܡܒܒܪܘܬܐ.[52] A false start is also found in the inverse situation, i.e., the writing of Ethiopic in a Syriac manuscript, in MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in Scrin. 100, p. 311: ጸሎት፡ ዘጸለ ዘዕለት፡.[53] Such false starts likely reflect the inexperience of at least some people writing the occasional language in these manuscripts. Though a false start is a possible explanation for the writing ܐܢ̄ here, I find it more likely that ܐܢ̄ is a shortened-form of ܐܢܐ due to interference from the orthography of Ethiopic አነ.

{ܒ}ܚܛܝܐ

I understand ܚܛܝܐ to be an adjective 'sinful' modifying ܓܒܪܐ 'man', as is common in such paratexts in Syriac. This, however, requires deleting *bēt̲*. An alternative would be to read ܓܒܪܐ ܒܚܛܝ̈ܐ (adding *syāmē* to the second word) 'man among sinners'. A different alternative would be ܓܒܪܐ ܒܚܛܝ<ܬ>ܐ 'a man in sin', which would preserve *bēt̲* but require adding *taw*.

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[52] For this manuscript, see Boris Turaev, *Ėfiopskija rukopisi v S.-Peterburgě*, Pamjatniki ėfiopskoj pis'mennosti 3 (Sanktpeterburg: Tipografija imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, 1906), 5–10. The Syriac writing in MS Saint Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Dorn 609 will be treated in a future article in this series.

[53] See the image in Kessel, "Moses von Mardin (gest. 1592) / Moses of Mardin (d. 1592)," 150. The Ethiopic writing in MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in Scrin. 100 will also be treated in a future article in this series.

For yet a different solution, see the PALEOGRAPHIC COMMENTARY above.

ܐܡܝܢ{ܐ}

It is difficult to explain the initial two letters, though perhaps we are (again) dealing with a false start. An alternative, though admittedly more drastic, option here would be to read ܡܢ<ܠ>{ܥ}ܕ<ܠ>{ܐ}, producing the common concluding element ܠܥܠܡܝܢ 'forever'. In such a case, the initial *yoḏ* would again make no sense in context. In addition, the letter that comes after *ʿē*, which looks like a Serṭo *ʾālapē* given its strongly vertical orientation and lack of connection to the following *mim*, would need to be read as *lāmaḏ*. If such a reading is accepted, then 'forever' would need to be disconnected semantically from the previous words 'a sinful man' (or the like). In the end, the reading ܐܡܝܢ{ܐ} 'amen' is a simpler solution—and therefore to be preferred.

EXCURSUS: MS VATICAN, BIBLIOTECA APOSTOLICA, VAT.ET. 1

There are three *codices descripti* partially dependent upon MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148:[54]

[54] For the genealogical relationship, see Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 116 fn. 13. See also already Bausi, "I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze," 8–11; Alessandro Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts. An Update," in *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies. Proceedings of the International Conference Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: The Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa, Hamburg, 17–19 July 2014*, ed. Alessandro Bausi et al., Supplement to Aethiopica 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 215.

MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1[55]
MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 2[56]
MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. III, 2[57]

The first listed manuscript is of more importance for this article, and thus it is useful to say a few additional words about it.[58] MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 was copied by Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre and two colleagues.[59] Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre was prior (*rāyəs*) of Santo Stefano degli Abissini (or dei Mori), the well-known Ethiopian pilgrim hostel-cum-monastery, in Rome by Year of Mercy 184 (= September 1531–August 1532).[60] It is

[55] See Sylvain Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant, *Bybliothecae apostolicae Vaticanae codices manu scripti recensiti iussu Pii XI Pontificis maximi. Codices Aethiopici Vaticani et Borgiani, Barberinianus orientalis 2, Rossianus 865*, I: *Enarratio codicum* (Città del Vaticano: In Bybliotheca Vaticana, 1935), 1–11; Samantha Kelly and Denis Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano degli Abissini, Rome. Reconstructing Biography and Cross-Cultural Encounter Through Manuscript Evidence," *Manuscript Studies. A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies* 2/2 (2017): 422–25.

[56] See Grébaut and Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici*, 11–12; Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano," 422.

[57] See Bausi, "I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze," 10–14, 20–23; Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts. An Update," 216–20.

[58] Images of the manuscript are available online at <https://digi.vatlib.it/view/ MSS_Vat.et.1> (accessed on 12 December 2023).

[59] For the initial identification of the scribe as Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre, see Grébaut and Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici*, xv, 862. For more detail, see now Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano," esp. 423 fn. 80.

[60] Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano," 407. For Santo Stefano, see the magisterial new treatment in Samantha Kelly, *Translating Faith. Ethiopian Pilgrims in Renaissance Rome* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2024).

unclear when Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre stopped being associated with Santo Stefano, whether through death or otherwise, but there is a reference seemingly to him—though to be noted, simply "prior Yoḥannəs" lacking Qanṭorāre—as late as 1 September 1551.[61] Moreover, on f. 198r of MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1, after the text of the *Sinodos*, there is a note stating that the copying of the *Sinodos* was completed in the month of Gənbot in the Year of Adam 6585.[62] Though the dating system is unusual for Ethiopic manuscripts, the date seems to correspond to 1549 CE.[63] Thus, given that Yoḥannəs of

[61] See Marius Chaîne, "Un monastère éthiopien à Rome au XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècle. San Stefano dei Mori," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 5, no. 1 (1911): 20 (Ethiopic), 23 (French translation). This Yoḥannəs is understood to be Yoḥannəs Qanṭorāre in Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano," 407–8.

[62] See Grébaut and Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici*, 10.

[63] Note that a similar dating system, albeit with a different designation, is likely found in the Roman *editio princeps* of the Ethiopic New Testament, which was also associated with Santo Stefano, especially through the activities of Tasfā Ṣəyon (d. 1550). In a letter at the conclusion of the edition, Tasfā Ṣəyon gives the date as year from the creation of the world 6586 (in the Latin version, it is called simply *secundum uero Ætyopicam supputationem*). That date is correlated there in the Latin version with 1549 CE (*Anno Domini M. D. XLIX*). Therefore, we seem to have an almost exact equivalent to the dating in MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 (separated only by a few months), even if the names of the dating systems are admittedly different. For more details on this atypical dating system, see Mauro da Leonessa, "Un trattato sul calendario redatto al tempo di re ʿAmda-Ṣyon I," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 3, no. 3 (1943): 316–18. The dating of MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 to 1549 was first proposed in Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano," 409 fn. 56, with thanks to Alessandro Bausi. For Tasfā Ṣəyon, see Alessandro Bausi and Gianfranco Fiaccadori, "Täsfa Ṣəyon," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol.

Qanṭorāre was prior of Santo Stefano at least until 1551, it is quite likely that MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 was copied there in Rome.[64] Such a hypothesis can perhaps be corroborated by the fact that the manuscript seems to be made of Italian materials.[65] Alternatively, if the manuscript was produced in Jerusalem, as is sometimes stated,[66] then it will have to have been when Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre was traveling as a pilgrim between Rome and Jerusalem, perhaps carrying Italian materials. But, in the end, it seems much more likely that Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre and colleagues copied MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 in Rome at Santo Stefano, completing at least the copying of the *Sinodos* in 1549.[67] Therefore, its antigraph MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 will also have been in Rome at Santo Stefano in 1549—a point that will be important for the discussion of historical context in the next section. In fact, based on other evidence, it is likely that

V, ed. Alessandro Bausi in cooperation with Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 525a–528b, with many additional references, to which can now be added Matteo Salvadore and James De Lorenzi, "An Ethiopian Scholar in Tridentine Rome: Täsfa Ṣeyon and the Birth of Orientalism," *Itinerario* 45 (2021): 17–46.

[64] The same is implied throughout Kelly and Nosnitsin, "The Two Yoḥannəses of Santo Stefano."

[65] At least according to the cataloguers: "Fasciculi, ex membranis italicis" (Grébaut and Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici*, 10).

[66] See, e.g., Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts. An Update," 215 fn. 64.

[67] One other relevant datum is a note on f. 219v mentioning both Jerusalem and Rome; see Grébaut and Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici*, 11. The text is, however, damaged, and what can be read could be related to the movement of any number of things between Jerusalem and Rome, including pilgrims or even MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1's antigraph, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, which is known to have moved from Jerusalem to Rome (see Historical Contextualization below).

MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 arrived in Santo Stefano several years before, as will be discussed below.

Out of the three *codices descripti* listed above, only MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 contains the fourth textual unit in which the Syriac writing is found in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. In the place in the text where MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 has the line of Syriac, its *codex descriptus* MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 does not: the text of the latter proceeds continuously in Ethiopic without interruption by a line of Syriac.[68] That could mean that the Syriac line was not yet in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 when MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 was copied from it in the mid-sixteenth century by Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre and his colleagues or, alternatively, that it was not copied, even if it were there. In any case, it is interesting to note that though MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 is dependent on MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 for its text of the chronological treatises, it does not contain the line of Syriac.

It is additionally worth pointing out, even though it is probably ultimately unrelated, that MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 also does not attest the Ethiopic version of Aphrahaṭ's *Demonstration 8*, which comprises the third textual unit in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. The fourth textual unit immediately follows the second in the *codex descriptus* MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1,

[68] Thus, MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 looks exactly like the "Comboni Fragment" (see fn. 42 above) in not having the Syriac, even though it was copied from MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148.

with the third textual unit entirely absent.[69] Again, at least two explanations are possible: the third textual unit might not yet have been in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 when it was copied or, alternatively, Yoḥannəs of Qanṭorāre and colleagues could have decided (for whatever reason) against copying the text.

In summary, two Syriac features of MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148—a line of Syriac writing on f. 182r and an Ethiopic version of Aphrahaṭ's *Demonstration 8* on ff. 166–173, though it is to be stressed that the latter is not marked as Syriac in any way in the manuscript—were not reproduced in the *codex descriptus* MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1, possibly because they were not there when the latter was copied from the former in the mid-sixteenth century, though other reasons are equally possible and plausible.[70]

HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine with certainty when and where the line of Syriac found its way into MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. It is, however, unlikely that it was added to the manuscript in the Horn of Africa. It is not known with certainty where each of the codicological units of the manuscript was produced. In his catalogue

[69] See already Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 117.

[70] I should point out yet another Syriac feature of MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148: Some parts of the Ethiopic *Synodicon* that are witnessed there ultimately—though to be clear, not directly—go back to Syriac, such as the *Canons after the Ascension*, which Witakowski has connected to the Syriac *Teaching of the Apostles*; see Witold Witakowski, "The Teaching of the Apostles," in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, vol. 2, ed. Tony Burke (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2020), 607–22.

description of the manuscript, Marrassini reasonably suggests that the manuscript is from Jerusalem, based on the presence of the rules for the monastic community of Jerusalem in the first codicological unit and of the Syriac line in the fourth.[71] Others also invoke a Jerusalem provenance.[72] Nosnitsin has recently claimed that MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 was written in Ethiopia before having been taken to Jerusalem.[73] Erho has, however, criticized Nosnitsin's position, arguing that the "unconventional textual assembly" of the manuscript, among other things, points to an origin outside of the Horn of Africa.[74] In my view, nothing necessitates an origin in the Horn of Africa, and moreover, some evidence suggests production elsewhere, particularly in Jerusalem. Regardless, the Syriac writing is secondary, not belonging to the original production of the fourth and final codicological unit. Moreover, it should be recalled that the only instance of Syriac writing yet

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[71] Paolo Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 30 (1984–1986): 83. Note that a provenance in Jerusalem is certain for Marrassini: "L'Or. 148 è certo da Gerusalemme, avendo un documento di quella comunità ai ff 3v-4v, e scritta in siriaco al f. 182r."

[72] For instance, Beta maṣāḥəft at <https://betamasaheft.eu/BAVet1> (accessed 12 December 2023), citing Bausi, "I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze"; Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts. An Update."

[73] Nosnitsin, "An Ancient Ethiopic Treatise on *Computus* and Chronology: A Preliminary Evaluation," 44.

[74] Ted Erho, "Ethiopic Palimpsests," forthcoming. Moreover, Erho astutely raises the broader issue that too often the default assumption of the field has been that Ethiopic manuscripts come from the Horn of Africa, especially Ethiopia, when production elsewhere, including in Rome, Jerusalem, and especially Egypt, is often a possibility worth entertaining for manuscripts held in European collections, especially those that arrived prior to the eighteenth century.

found in Ethiopia or Eritrea is the Syriac *ṭaḇliṯā* recently discovered near Asmara in Eritrea. Thus, given our current state of knowledge, it is unlikely that the line of Syriac was added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 in the Horn of Africa, and there are more likely geographic candidates.

Regardless of its origins, it is likely that at some point in its history MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 was in Jerusalem where the first codicological unit containing the rules for the monastic community of Jerusalem was added.[75] A sizeable community of Ethiopic Christians is known to have resided in Jerusalem, including at Dayr al-Sulṭān since at least the sixteenth century.[76] Similarly, Syriac Christians are known to have had a presence in Jerusalem.[77] Thus, it is possible that the Syriac line was added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea

[75] For this hypothesis, see Bausi, "Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts: The Ethiopian Evidence," 116–17.

[76] For overviews, with additional references, see Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen, "Jerusalem," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. III, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 273–77 and eadem, "Dayr As-Sulṭān," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. II, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 117–19. Additional details can be found in Samantha Kelly, "Medieval Ethiopian Diasporas," in *A Companion to Medieval Ethiopia and Eritrea*, ed. Samantha Kelly (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 429–30 and Vitagrazia Pisani, "The Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox (Tawāḥədo) Church in Jerusalem During the Early Solomonic Period: Some Evidence from a Few Ethiopic Manuscripts," in *Manuscript Treasures from Afro-Eurasia: Scribes, Patrons, Collectors, Readers*, ed. Sophia Dege-Müller et al., Studies in Manuscript Cultures (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming), both again with additional references. Foundational—and also still quite useful—is Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme*.

[77] For a short overview, with many additional references, see George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, "Jerusalem," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 227–29.

Laurenziana, Or. 148 during its time in Jerusalem. In this regard, it should be recalled that Marrassini thought that the manuscript was produced in Jerusalem in part because of the presence of Syriac writing.[78]

From Jerusalem, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 made its way to Europe and, more specifically, to Rome.[79] Kelly has recently suggested that the manuscript may have been taken from Jerusalem to Rome by a certain Paulus, the prior of the community of Ethiopic Christians in Jerusalem,

[78] See fn. 71 above.

[79] MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 would not be unique in travelling from the Horn of Africa (if that is, in fact, where it was produced, as Nosnitsin maintains; see fn. 73 above; it should, however, again be stressed that the manuscript may have its origins outside of the Horn of Africa, perhaps in Jerusalem, as discussed above; see fn. 71, 72, and 74 along with the main text) to Europe by way of Jerusalem. To give just one example, MS Cambridge, British and Foreign Bible Society 169 contains a series of notes documenting that it was written in Aksum in the famous church of Aksum Ṣəyon (also known as Māryām Ṣəyon) and then donated to the community of Ethiopic Christians in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, it was taken, likely by pilgrims, to Rome where it is known to have resided at Santo Stefano sometime in the seventeenth century, before being transferred to the Museo Borgiana. The manuscript was then apparently stolen and brought to London, before eventually making its way to the Cambridge University Library, where it is now housed. See Alfred Rahlfs, "Über einige alttestamentliche Handschriften des Abessinierklosters S. Stefano zu Rom," *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 1918, 161–203; Roger W. Cowley, "Ethiopic Manuscripts," in *Historical Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Bible House Library*, ed. M. Rosaria Falivene and Alan F. Jesson (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1982), 70–72; Jonas Karlsson, Jacopo Gnisci, and Sophia Dege-Müller, "A Handlist of Illustrated Early Solomonic Manuscripts in British Public Collections," *Aethiopica* 26 (2023): 164–68; Pisani, "The Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox (Tawāḥədo) Church in Jerusalem During the Early Solomonic Period: Some Evidence from a Few Ethiopic Manuscripts."

who is mentioned in a letter of Pope Paul III (d. 1549) in 1544–1545 as traveling from Jerusalem to Rome carrying letters.[80] Regardless, at least by 1547 MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 was, as Kelly has convincingly shown, at Santo Stefano in Rome, where it was being used by Tasfā Ṣəyon (d. 1550) and his collaborator Pietro Paolo Gualtieri (d. 1572) in their work on canons.[81] Fascinating in this regard is a letter of Cardinal Marcello Cervini (later Pope Marcellus II) from June 1547 that mentions Tasfā Ṣəyon reporting a "newly arrived book," which Kelly has intriguingly suggested is none other than MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148.[82] As discussed above, the manuscript then served as the antigraph for the *codex descriptus* MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1, with the copying of the *Sinodos* being completed in April 1549, likely at Santo Stefano. Thus, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 can be located at Santo Stefano in Rome in the late 1540s and possibly as early as 1545.

[80] Kelly, *Translating Faith. Ethiopian Pilgrims in Renaissance Rome*, 247, 320. For the letter, see Osvaldo Raineri, *Lettere tra i pontefici romani e i principi etiopici* (*sec. XII–XX*)*: Versioni e integrazioni*, Collectanea Archivi Vaticani 55 (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2005), 84–86.

[81] Kelly, *Translating Faith. Ethiopian Pilgrims in Renaissance Rome*, 244–50. For Tasfā Ṣəyon in particular, see references in fn. 63 above.

[82] MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.lat. 6,178, f. 117r. See the discussion in Kelly, *Translating Faith*, 246.

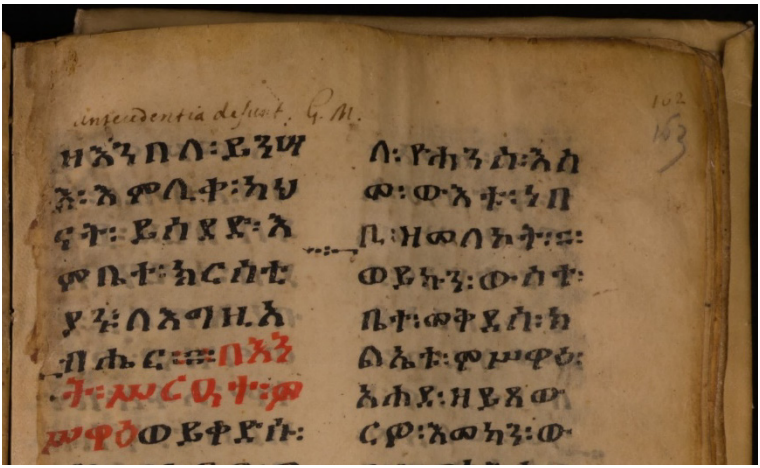

Figure 4 MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, f. 63r, with *antecedentia desunt* 'antecedents are missing' written in the top left and signed "G.M." for Giovanni Michele (Wanslebio), that is, Johann Michael Wansleben. Courtesy of MiC. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

At some later point, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 moved from Rome to Florence. This must have happened by 1665 since Johann Michael Wansleben (1635–1679) consulted it at that time in the Palazzo Vecchio.[83] A number of marginal notes in Latin are now found in the manuscript, including some explicitly signed "G.M." for Giovanni Michele (Wanslebio) (see Figure 4). Just as Wansleben made additions to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, so also

[83] Bausi, "I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze," 10–14; Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts. An Update," 214–18.

someone else could have added the Syriac writing to the manuscript once it was in Europe.[84]

Syriac writing could have been added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 at various times and in various places, including Jerusalem and Europe. One excellent candidate is Santo Stefano in the mid-sixteenth century since the Syriac Christian Moses of Mardin (d. 1592) is known to have been associated with Santo Stefano at precisely this time. Moses of Mardin is perhaps best known for collaborating with European scholars, such as Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter (d. 1557) and Andreas Masius (d. 1573), in producing the first Syriac printed books in Europe.[85] It should not, however, be forgotten

[84] Syriac Christians and, more to the point for the case at hand, Syriac manuscripts—the writing of which could have been imitated by anyone, including people who were not Syriac Christians—are known to have been in Europe by at least the sixteenth century. See, *inter alia*, Werner Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien in Europa*, Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971); Riccardo Contini, "Gli inizi della linguistica siriaca nell'Europa rinascimentale," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 68 (1994): 15–30; Pier Giorgio Borbone, "From Tur ʿAbdin to Rome: The Syro-Orthodox Presence in Sixteenth-Century Rome," in *Syriac in Its Multi-Cultural Context: First International Syriac Studies Symposium, Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Living Languages, 20–22 April 2012, Mardin*, ed. Herman G. B. Teule et al., Eastern Christian Studies 23 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 277–87; Robert J. Wilkinson, "Syriac Studies in Rome in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 6 (2012): 55–74; Robert J. Wilkinson, "The Early Study of Syriac in Europe," in *The Syriac World*, ed. Daniel King, Routledge Worlds (London: Routledge, 2019), 751–69.

[85] For Moses of Mardin, see Lucas Van Rompay, "Mushe of Mardin," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 300–301, with further references, to which can now be added Pier Giorgio Borbone, "'Monsignore Vescovo

that Moses also served as a scribe. Among the manuscripts he produced is MS London, British Library, Harley 5512, a truly extraordinary manuscript containing part of the Roman Missal in Latin written in Serṭo script, along with several Syriac anaphoras.[86] This manuscript contains a series of notes explaining, *inter alia*, that Moses completed copying it in 1549 at Santo Stefano for an Ethiopian (*al-ḥabašī*) whom he calls Ṣahyūn, who turns out to be none other than the previously-mentioned Tasfā Ṣəyon.[87] We know then that a Syriac Christian was copying a Syriac manuscript in Santo Stefano at precisely the same time as MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 was there. It will not, however, have been Moses himself who added this line of Syriac to the Ethiopic manuscript, given that the Syriac contains ill-formed letters and mistakes, whereas Moses was

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di Soria', also Known as Moses of Mardin, Scribe and Book Collector," *Khristianskiĭ Vostok* 8 [14] (2017): 79–114; András Mércz, "The Coat of Arms of Moses of Mardin," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 22:2 (2019): 345–93; Pier Giorgio Borbone, "Moses von Mardin, Lehrer der syrischen Sprache im Europa des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Morgen-Glantz. Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 32 (2022): 55–77. I will return to Moses of Mardin in a future iteration of this series when discussing the Ethiopic writing in MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in Scrin. 100, p. 311—this Ethiopic writing is likely that of Moses!

[86] William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1870–1872), vol. I, 214–216; Jules Leroy, "Une copie syriaque du Missale Romanum de Paul III et son arrière-plan historique," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 46 (1970–1971): 353–82; Sebastian P. Brock, "Greek and Latin in Syriac Script," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17:1 (2014): 45–47.

[87] Garshuni text in Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, 215–16. Images along with French translation and commentary in Leroy, "Une copie syriaque du Missale Romanum de Paul III et son arrière-plan historique," 361–67. For the identification of Moses's Ṣahyūn with Tasfā Ṣəyon, see already Bausi and Fiaccadori, "Täsfa Ṣəyon," 526b–527a.

an experienced Syriac scribe. Nevertheless, the presence of Moses, as well as of the Syriac manuscript(s) with him, at Santo Stefano in the mid-sixteenth century would have presented someone else—perhaps even an Ethiopic Christian—with an opportunity to add the line of Syriac imitating what was there at the time at Santo Stefano. Thus, Santo Stefano in the middle of the sixteenth century appears to be a particularly good candidate for when and where this line of Syriac could have been added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148, though this could have happened alternatively at other times and in other places, whether in Europe or Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

Previous scholarship on the connected histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity has gone down an unfruitful path in focusing on the ill-fated hypothesis of Syriac involvement in the alleged "second Christianization" of Aksum. No evidence supports this hypothesis and focus on it has overshadowed many of the actual connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity. Cases of Syriac writing in Ethiopic manuscripts—and of Ethiopic writing in Syriac manuscripts—have, for instance, been mostly neglected until now, even though they serve as tangible evidence for connections between Ethiopic and Syriac Christians. In the case discussed in this article, a line of Syriac has been secondarily added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. The Syriac writing has ill-formed letters as well as other mistakes. Thus, it seems possible, if not probable, that it is the product of someone who, without (complete) knowledge of Syriac, imitated some Syriac words at hand. One particular error may even suggest that an Ethiopic Christian wrote the Syriac line. Regardless, even if we learn nothing else from this case, we have discovered that someone with a

rudimentary knowledge of Syriac—and possibly an exemplar of Syriac to imitate—had access to an Ethiopic manuscript and made a secondary addition to it. But, I have aimed to push further. This line of Syriac could have been added to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 at any time after its production and in any number of places, especially in Jerusalem or Europe. One possible candidate for the addition of the Syriac line is in Rome at Santo Stefano in the mid-sixteenth century. Based on a note in MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat.et. 1 and other evidence, we can deduce that MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148 was at Santo Stefano in 1549. Moreover, based on a colophon in MS British Library, Harley 5512, we know that the Syriac Christian Moses of Mardin was also at Santo Stefano in 1549. Thus, in the mid-sixteenth century at Santo Stefano, someone—perhaps even an Ethiopic Christian—would have had the opportunity to add the line of Syriac to MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148. As additional cases are analyzed during this series of articles, it is hoped that it will be possible to narrow more definitively when and where occasional writing was added to various Syriac and Ethiopic manuscripts,[88] as well as perhaps to begin also to ask why this happened. For now, however, I have aimed only to introduce one small piece of evidence to the much larger puzzle that is the connected histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity.

[88] In this regard, I would be remiss not to mention that the Ethiopic manuscript MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 70, which also has Syriac writing in it (f. 204r), was also at Santo Stefano in the middle of the sixteenth century. For now, see Zarzeczny, "Ethiopic References in Assemanis' Works Reconsidered," 286–97, but I will return to this case in a future article in this series.

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