

PHILOXENUS OF MABBUG IN ETHIOPIC

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ABSTRACT

Philoxenus of Mabbug is one of the few relatively well-known Syriac writers in the Ethiopic tradition, since the widely disseminated translation of Dadisho' Qaṭraya's Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers circulates under his name. Although the origins of this version of that text have customarily been placed in the fourteenth century, a careful evaluation of its colophons and the body of manuscript evidence instead suggests that it most likely emerged in the sixteenth century alongside translations of other monastic writings, such as the treatises and letters of John of Dalyatha. Two other lesser-known works attributed to Philoxenus also exist in Ethiopic, the pseudonymous prayer "Glory to you, God" and a previously unidentified portion of his authentic Commentary on Luke.

Long understood as an essential figure in the history of Syriac literature, the late-fifth/early-sixth-century bishop of Mabbug, Philoxenus, and his thought and writings, have attracted

considerable scholarly attention within Syriac Studies and cognate fields of Late Antiquity.¹ Relatively scant heed has been paid to this author and his literary output beyond this milieu, however, despite, in particular, André de Halleux's noteworthy efforts in integrating broader evidence for his non-Syriac reception into his 1963 tome *Philoxène de Mabbog*.² For example, in Ethiopic – a tradition that derives its Philoxenian and pseudo-Philoxenian materials from Arabic intermediaries (not directly from Syriac) – an enormous expansion in the corpus of accessible manuscripts since then has been paired in this subfield with a widespread disinterest in writings associated with this figure, who like most other Syriac authors seems to be perceived as too exotic for its specialists. Indeed, no full academic edition or translation of any relevant work has appeared, and little else in terms of secondary literature.³

¹ On Philoxenus generally, see especially David A. Michelson, “A Bibliographic Clavis to the Works of Philoxenos of Mabbug” (*Hugoye* 13 [2010]), 273–338 and idem, “Philoxenos of Mabbug,” in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, and Lucas Van Rompay (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2011), 332–33. The research for this article was funded by the European Union (ERC, consolidator grant agreement no. 101044300, project ‘BeInf – Beyond Influence: The Connected Histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity’, at Universität Hamburg [2022–2027]). I am grateful to Aaron Butts, James Hamrick, Michael Hensley, Wolfgang Schmitt-Garibian, and Nafisa Valieva for their collegial help at various points in the preparation of this study, as well as to Michael Erdman for facilitating access to several manuscripts in the British Library, most notably Orient. 558 and 736.

² André de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: Sa vie, ses écrits, sa theologie*, Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis Dissertationes ad gradum magistri in Facultate Theologica vel in Facultate Iuris Canonici consequendum conscriptae ser. 3, vol. 8 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1963).

³ Selections from Dadishoʿ Qaṭraya's *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* appear in Robert Kitchen, “Introduction to Selections from the Geʿez *Filekseyus*: Questions and Answers of the Egyptian Monks Ethiopian

Nowhere, perhaps, is the lack of progress illustrated better than in the recent five-volume *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, which does not even contain an entry on Philoxenus of Mabbog proper, placing only some cursory details under ‘Filkesyos’ and thereby completely failing to reference in any fashion another relevant work already investigated by de Halleux more than forty years before.⁴ In fact, in view of a notable misunderstanding that in recent decades has crept into the specialist scholarly literature,

Monastic Manuscript Library No. 1387 (ff. 1a-81b),” in *An Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar in the Seventh Century*, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 39, ed. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2015), 189–252, but these translations are beset by problems, methodological and otherwise. It is generally understood that diplomatic translations and editions of Ethiopic texts should not be undertaken whenever multiple witnesses are available due to the idiosyncratic characteristics and other issues individual exemplars attest, making the singular dependence on EMM 1387 highly questionable; see the salient comments in Alessandro Bausi, “On Editing and Normalizing Ethiopic Texts,” in *150 Years after Dillmann’s Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of Gə’əz Studies*, Supplement to *Aethiopica* 5, ed. Alessandro Bausi (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 43–102. Beyond this matter, a comparison of Kitchen’s rendering of the colophon to the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* with that offered below in this article suggests that this attempt at a translation of selected passages cannot be considered reliable.

⁴ Witold Witakowski, “Filḳəyos,” in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. Volume 2: D–Ha*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 541–42. Only Robert A. Kitchen, “The Book of Monks: Ethiopian Monasticism via Beth Qatraye,” in *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century*, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 38, ed. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 231–248, at 232 mentions the three works explored here, but fails to treat them meaningfully. For example, only two copies of the prayer “Glory to you, God” are noted without consideration of its *Vorlage*, whereas de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 300 had already published the correct identification together with a much larger list of Ethiopic witnesses. Fragment 43 of Philoxenus’ *Commentary on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* is regrettably dismissed as “a homily of questionable authenticity” and implied to be pseudonymous in character.

including the aforementioned *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* article, in many respects the study of this author in Ethiopic stands today on a footing inferior to that presented sixty years ago in de Halleaux's *Philoxène de Mabbog*. The aim here is therefore to correct this neglect, updating and moving the study of Philoxenus' classical Ethiopic reception beyond that pioneering volume.⁵

THE COMMENTARY ON THE PARADISE OF THE FATHERS OF DADISHO' QATRAYA (*FILKESYUS*)

No source contributed more to the basic knowledge of Philoxenus in the Ethiopic tradition than the *Filkesyus*, a major monastic question-and-answer text whose title bears a form of his name.⁶ As is now relatively well-known, this writing does

⁵ Amharic documents pertaining to Philoxenus, very few in number, are not covered here.

⁶ The title regularly appears as *Filkesyus* and not *Filkesyos* despite the adoption of the latter in Witakowski, "Filkāyos", with more correct renderings appearing in Witold Witakowski, "*Filekseyus*, the Ethiopic Version of the Syriac Dadisho Qatraya's *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*," in ወለተ ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ Wälättä Yohanna: *Ethiopian Studies in Honour of Joanna Mantel-Niećko on the Occasion of the 50th Year of Her Work at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Warsaw University*, Rocznik Orientalistyczny 59, ed. Witold Witakowski and Laura Łykowska (Warsaw: Komitet Nauk Orientalistycznych PAN, 2006), 281–96. Many spelling variations exist for the name, however, in addition to the phonetical ones rightly noted in *ibid.*, 285. Nonetheless, the "Ethiopian (full) title: ተስፋሎታተ ፡ ዜናሆሙ ፡ ለአበው ፡ መካከት ፡ ግብጻውያን ፡ ወጸሐፎ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ፊልክስዮስ ፡ ሶርያዊ ፡ ኤጲስ ፡ ቆጶስ ፡ ዘመንበግ ፡ - "The Questions concerning the stories of the Fathers, Egyptian monks. Holy Filekseyus, the Syrian, bishop of Mänbäg, wrote it" Witakowski supposes to exist (*ibid.*, 285; cf. *idem*, "Filkāyos," 541) comprises a case of misplaced scholarly ingenuity. While such might represent a title in other traditions, it cannot according to Ethiopic practice, which creates and utilizes only very short titles for selected works consisting of one, two, or a few words, most often pertaining to the purported author's name. Cf. Ted M. Erho, "A Fourth Ethiopic Witness to

not constitute an authentic work of the West Syriac writer, but rather a form of Dadisho‘ Qaṭraya’s commentary on his seventh-century East Syriac contemporary Enanisho’s *Paradise of the Fathers*. While the text ultimately goes back to Syriac, therefore, a significant portion of Philoxenus’ fame in the Horn of Africa might be considered undeserved.

Nonetheless, the ubiquity of this work, which became a standard monastic text in the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox traditions, spread his name in a very overt fashion to all of the major monasteries and churches throughout this region and remains a foundational pillar in knowledge of him there. Scholarly listings of known exemplars, while useful in other respects, arguably undersell its profusion: Conti Rossini recorded eight known copies in 1899, to which de Halleux added only one, and more recent tabulations by Witakowski and Bausi have not exceeded two dozen.⁷ A more thorough

the *Shepherd of Hermas*,” in *Caught in Translation: Studies on Versions of Late Antique Christian Literature*, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 17, ed. Madalina Toca and Dan Batovici (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020), 241–66, at 244–46. The *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* is only known in the Horn of Africa via the single word entitulation *Filkesyus* (and its corruptions) derived from the purported author’s name in keeping with the general practice in the Ethiopic scribal tradition. Even the example of a so-called “short title” rendered as “ፈልክስዩስ ፡ ዘቅዱስ ፡ መድኃኒ ፡ ዓለም ።” = “Filekseyus of the Holy Saviour of the World” by Witakowski, “*Filekseyus*, the Ethiopic Version of the Syriac Dadisho Qaṭraya’s *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*,” 285 attests a misunderstanding, as this in fact represents an ownership note for the collection of Church of the Saviour of the World commonly found on those manuscripts which Emperor Tēwodros II looted and assembled at his fortress of Magdala. The first word alone encompasses the full and exclusive title.

⁷ Carlo Conti Rossini, “Manoscritti ed opere abissine in Europa” (*Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* ser. 5, vol. 8 [1899]), 606–37, at 615; de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 291; Witakowski, “*Filekseyus*, the Ethiopic Version of the Syriac Dadisho Qaṭraya’s *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*,” 289–90 (17

search of accessible manuscript collections reveals an amount roughly three times greater, sixty-seven complete or slightly imperfect exemplars supplemented by a handful of fragments and excerpts. Such numbers would be augmented somewhat if other photographic collections, lamentably wholly or substantially inaccessible, could have been included in this study.⁸ Even the integration of these would not, however, offer anything close to a complete portrait, as only a fraction of existing Ethiopic manuscripts have been encountered by the scholarly community in any form: several hundred handwritten Ge'ez copies of Dadisho' Qaṭraya's commentary are doubtless extant at present.

The more limited accessible corpus is nevertheless sufficiently large to offer a likely representative set of exemplars, offering insights into the production of manuscripts

copies, including one comprised of only a fragment); Alessandro Bausi, "Monastic Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. Volume 3: He–N*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 993–99, at 998 (22 copies and two fragments, though it must be noted that Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli.et. 135 does not contain any of the text, while Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. et. 79 is falsely printed for the fragment with Amharic translation in Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli et. 79). Kitchen, "The Book of Monks," 236, 248 offers a much smaller listing of eight witnesses while indicating the existence of more in other collections.

⁸ I have abided by the principle that only manuscripts and collections straight-forwardly consultable in totality should be incorporated lest others be unable to verify or otherwise use the data presented fully or scattered references lead future researchers to incorrectly assume comprehensive examination of additional archives. This has the result of emphasizing materials physically outside of the Horn of Africa, which are customarily at worst consultable autotopically, and the microfilm and other photographic collections of the National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, whose institutional policies ensure fair and open access. While this principle results in a very few exclusions from the lists of witnesses, none of these skews the findings in any noticeable way.

containing this work. Almost half of the time, *Filkesyus* appears alone or with only other minor works, a strong plurality indicating that the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* was principally understood as an independent textual unit:

Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli et. 220 (17th c.);⁹ *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana,¹⁰ Vat. et. 294 (late-18th/early-19th c.); British Library, Or. 761 (18th c.); EMDA 5 (19th c.); EMDA 200 (late-17th/early-18th c.); EMDA 378 (18th c.); EMDA 380 (early-18th c.); EMDA 526 (19th c.); EML 418 (late-18th/early-19th c.); EML 1848 (1951/2 CE); EML 2127 (late-19th/early-20th c.); EML 2157 (19th c.); EML 2197 (18th c.); EML 2837 (late-17th/early-18th c.); EML 6588 (19th c.); EML 7314 (19th c.); EML 8134 (19th c.); EML 9051 (late-17th/early-18th c.); Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, JE 617E (late-17th/early-18th c.); GG 115 (19th c.); MK-20 (18th c.); National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 217 (late-18th/early-19th c.); National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 218 (late-19th/early-20th c.); National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 220 (19th c.); National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 221 (late-19th c.) [=UNESCO 2.73]; National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 299 (late-17th/early-18th c.); Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Petermann II Nachtrag 44 (18th c.); Trinity College Dublin, MS 2711 (17th c.); Tübingen Universitätsbibliothek, M.a. IX 15 (18th c.); UCLA Libraries Special Collections, Ethiopic Ms. 41 (17th c.); *Uppsala Universitet Bibliotek, O Etiop. 7 (18th c.); Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod.orient.quart.42 (18th c.).

Elsewhere, other significant works are placed alongside the text, with a decided tendency towards two other East Syriac monastic writings, a cluster of ascetic treatises and letters of John of Dalyatha (8th c.) entitled *Aregāwi manfasāwi* and a set

⁹ Although the so-called *Collectio Monastica* (cf. Victor Arras, *Collectio Monastica*, CSCO 238–239 [2 vols.; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1963]) follows, it comprises a discrete layer of this composite manuscript and so can only be considered on a secondary level.

¹⁰ Asterisks denote clearly imperfect copies. Full collation would likely place further manuscripts into this category.

of thirty-five homilies of Isaac of Nineveh (7th c.) called *Mār Yesḥaq*.¹¹ Approximately one-sixth of the time, all three appear together, occasionally with other works, a relatively uncommon grouping now often dubbed “*Maṣāḥefta manakosāt*” in the secondary literature, a designation for which there is essentially no warrant:¹²

¹¹ For the latter, see Dawit Berhanu, *Das Mashafa Mar Yeshaq von Ninive: Einleitung, Edition und Übersetzung mit Kommentar* (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 1997), and for the former the partial edition and translation of Michel Nicolas, *La version éthiopienne de la collection des Lettres de Jean de Dalyatha dit « Aragawi Manfasawi »* (Saint-Denis: Publibook, 2016). The title assigned to *Mār Yesḥaq* by Dawit Berhanu is somewhat erroneous, as the traditional standard Ethiopic form lacks the antecedent *maṣḥafa*. This authorial choice is rendered all the more curious by his correct rendering of the accompanying works *Aregāwi manfasāwi* and *Filkesyus* without the same interpolated term throughout (e.g. 28–29, 31–33) and the dominant alternative use of *Mār Yesḥaq* in one section (31–33), sharply demonstrating its misapplication in this context. For additional examples of the inappropriate affixation of *maṣḥafa* to Ethiopic titles by modern scholars, see Ted M. Erho, “James Bruce’s Illusory “Book of Enoch the Prophet,”” in *Rediscovering Enoch? The Antediluvian Past from the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 27, ed. Ariel Hessayon, Annette Yoshiko Reed, and Gabriele Boccaccini (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023), 183–208, at 206 n. 89.

¹² The implausibility of this being a title in the indigenous tradition is readily apparent from the use of the plural *maṣāḥefta*. Moreover, *Maṣāḥefta manakosāt* does not appear in the most comprehensive twentieth-century lists of Ethiopian church book titles compiled by traditional scholars found in EML 1601 and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele, Ms. orientale n. 134, with *Aregāwi manfasāwi*, *Mār Yesḥaq*, and *Filkesyus* even being categorized under the dissimilar heading ‘Books of the elders’ (የሊቃውንት ፡ መጻሕፍት) in the former (EML 1601, fol. 3r). This rendering probably originated with the 1927/8 CE edition in which the three works were collected and printed together for the first time as *Maṣāḥefta manakosāt Mar Yesḥaqenna Filkesus Aragāwi manfasāwim* (s.n.: 1920 EC), with modern scholars then uncritically or mistakenly adopting this virtually unattested form against the overwhelming evidence presented in

British Library, Orient. 759 (late-17th c.); British Library, Orient. 760 (18th c.); EMDA 38 (18th c.); EMDA 107 (between 1755–1769 CE); EMLL 15 (late-17th/early-18th c.); EMLL 2100 (17th c.); EMLL 6246 (between 1775–1808 CE);¹³ EMLL 6261 (18th c.); EMLL 6836 (between 1775–1808 CE); EMLL 8551 (late-18th/early-19th c.); Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Ethiopic 1 (17th c.).

Though still not as widespread as being found by itself, *Filkesyus* collocates with either *Aregāwi manfasāwi* or *Mār Yesḥaq* more often than with both. A stronger preference for the latter is attested, with manuscripts containing Dadisho‘ Qaṭraya and Isaac of Nineveh (sometimes combined with additional major and minor texts of varying types) and not John of Dalyatha outnumbering those with all three:

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 37 (18th c.);
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 172 (late-18th/early-

the centuries-long indigenous manuscript tradition. For instances of *Maṣḥāḥfta manakosāt* in secondary literature, see e.g. Dawit Berhanu, *Das Mashafa Mar Yeshaq von Ninive*, 28–29, 31–32 (as *Maṣḥāḥfa manakosāt*, and applied to both the trio of *Aregāwi manfasāwi*, *Mār Yesḥaq*, and *Filkesyus* and another discrete monastic work), Witakowski, “*Filekseyus*, the Ethiopic Version of the Syriac Dadisho Qaṭraya’s *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*,” 288, Bausi, “Monastic Literature,” 997–99, and A. M. Butts, “Ethiopic Christianity, Syriac contacts with,” in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, and Lucas Van Rompay (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2011), 148–53 (at 150–51 as *Maṣḥāḥfa manakosāt*). *Maṣḥāḥfa manakosāt* is conversely offered as a title in the manuscript tradition occasionally for monastic codices with varying contents, but does not simply comprise a slightly variant form of an encompassing moniker for *Aregāwi manfasāwi*, *Mār Yesḥaq*, and *Filkesyus* as a tripartite unit; cf. e.g. W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1847* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1877), 175 (British Library, Orient. 763, containing the *Geronticon* and *Apocalypse of Nabyud*). (Michael Hensley kindly provided this final reference.)

¹³ This manuscript includes the beginning of a second copy of *Filkesyus* at its end.

19th c.); EML 1836 (17th c.); EML 6586 (18th c.); EML 7108 (19th c.); EML 8143 (1705–1706 CE); EML 8554 (late-18th/early-19th c.); EML 8873 (late-19th/early-20th c.); GG 35 (18th c.); ¹⁴ GG 93 (late-17th/early-18th c.); Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. quart. 344 (18th c.); UNESCO 10.40 (late-17th/early-18th c.).

Still, in around 10% of cases *Aregāwi manfasāwi* and not *Mār Yesḥaq* appears with *Filkesyus*, including in the earliest dated manuscript containing the latter:

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 23 (late-17th/early-18th c.); EML 1387 (18th c.); EML 8473 (17th c.); EML 8536 (18th c.); EML 8797 (late-17th/early-18th c.); National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 240 (1621 CE) [=UNESCO 2.72].

In the final 10% of exemplars, the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* collocates with an assortment of other major indigenous and translated writings, among them *Mazgaba hāymānot* and the amorphous 'Ordering of the Church' compendium:¹⁵

¹⁴ An attempt to detail the contents of this manuscript by 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. dissertation, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2022), 244–45 heavily obscures reality since the vast majority of texts are incorrectly described or overlooked altogether, including *Mār Yesḥaq* (fol. 47r–115r), a homily of Isaac on seeking God and keeping away from the world (fol. 181v–184v), and excerpts of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* ([CPG 5620] fol. 186v–189r [§1.32–63]) and *Historia Lausiaca* ([CPG 6036] fol. 185v–186v [§16] and 196v–200r [§17.1–18.25]). For further Ge'ez fragments of the *Lausiaca History*, see Rafał Zarzeczyński, "The Story of Paul the Simple from the *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladius in its Ethiopic recension" (*OCP* 82 [2016]), 127–78 and Aaron Michael Butts, "Syriac in Ethiopic Manuscripts, Ethiopic in Syriac Manuscripts — Part I: MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 148" (*Hugoye* 27 [2024]), 43–99, at 59.

¹⁵ For *Mazgaba hāymānot*, see Enrico Cerulli, *Scritti teologici etiopici dei secoli XVI–XVII. Volume 2: La Storia dei Quattro Concili ed altri opuscoli monofisiti*, Studi e Testi 204 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,

Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli.et. 237 (17th c.); EMDA 141 (17th c.); EMLL 7119 (early-19th c.); EMLL 7590 (early-18th c.); EMLL 9061 (19th c.); Leiden University Library, Or. 26.339 (17th c.).

Additional evidence for the copying and use of the book can be found in various fragments and excerpts:

Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli.et. 79 (20th c.); Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 157 (17th c.); Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 136 (17th c.); British Library, Orient. 735 (18th c.);¹⁶ Leiden University Library, Or. 20.972 (19th c.); Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, Cod. orient. 412 (18th/19th c.); St. Petersburg, Духовная академия, СПбДА Б II / 19 (19th c.); Tānāsee 53 (17th c.).

While the foregoing exemplars could be subject to further examination with respect to particular elements, such as variations in the textual numbering and the inclusion of an index,¹⁷ a detailed analysis of this sort lies outside the scope of a general study on the reception of Philoxenus in the Ethiopic manuscript tradition. Of direct relevance, however, is the age of the Ge'ez translation of Dadisho' Qaṭraya's *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*, a topic riddled with misinformation ancient and modern.

Notwithstanding mutilous exemplars, every copy of *Filkesyus* contains a translation colophon, but these are not all the same and have been subject to inexplicable scholastic misinterpretation. The initial section of the colophon,

1960), 1–101. The origins and permutations of the so-called 'Ordering of the Church' materials, a virtually unstudied set of texts, are poorly understood, though at least a core was translated already in the medieval period, attested in the fifteenth-century manuscripts EMLL 8081, EMLL 8487, and GG 184 (none of which have been properly catalogued).

¹⁶ The extracts in this manuscript are not limited to the section noted by Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 203.

¹⁷ Cf. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 291.

doubtless derived from the Arabic manuscript being translated and hence original to the Ethiopic version, reads as follows:

ወመልአ : ዘሕፀር : እመጽሐፈ : ትርጓሜ : ገነት : ዘተጽሕፈ : እስከ :
 ተፍጻሜተ : መጽሐፍ :: አኅፀረ : ውኣቱ : ጽሕፈተ : ዘፅንሰት : ጥቀ :
 አውፅኦታ : አልቦቱ : ልማደ : ዘለዝሉፉ : ለተናብቦ : በልሳነ :
 አረባዊት : እምልሳነ : ሲርያ : ኀበ : ዐረቢ :: ወኮነ : ፍጻሜ : እምኔሁ :
 በወርቃ : ሰኔ : በዓመት : ፲፻፳፯ ወጀእምሰማዕታት : ንጹሓን ::

And the abridged version of the book of the *Commentary of (the book of) Paradise* is completed, which has been written until the end of the book. He abridged the writing that was conceived a lot, removing nothing (of relevance) in his continual habit, in order to put it into the Arabian language – from the Syrian language into Arabic. And the process was finished in the month of Sanē in the year 1021 of the pure martyrs [=May/June 1305 CE]...

A form of this was published by the *éthiopisant* and biblical scholar August Dillmann in his 1878 catalogue of the Ethiopic manuscripts in Berlin,¹⁸ and the topic of the colophon garnered no particular interest for nearly a century. However, while describing a *mutilous* exemplar of the text for his 1974 Uppsala catalogue, Oscar Löfgren speculated that this date must be wrong, since the Ethiopic translation was assigned to *abbā* Salāmā, who was metropolitan only later in the fourteenth

¹⁸ A. Dillmann, *Verzeichniss der abessinischen Handschriften*, Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin 3 (Berlin: Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1878), 41. A few decades later, a version from another manuscript was published and translated into French by C. Conti Rossini, "Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection d'Abbadie" (*Journal Asiatique* ser. 11, vol. 6 [1915]), 189–238, at 210. Both scholars' renderings accurately and clearly indicate that the 1305 CE date pertains to the translation of this particular abridged Arabic version from Syriac.

century.¹⁹ Since that time, scholars such as Getatchew Haile, Witold Witakowski, and Alessandro Bausi have followed Löfgren in indicating or correcting a problem that does not exist, as the 1305 CE date in the colophon unambiguously refers to the date of the Arabic – not Ge'ez – translation.²⁰

The matter of the latter is rather more complicated. Although most exemplars include a second translation colophon attributing the Ge'ez version to an archbishop Salāmā, not all do, in contrast to the ubiquitous Arabic one:

አስተሐመመ : አዕልዎቶ : ለግዕዝ : ጽሑፍ : አቡነ : ሊቀ : ጳጳሳት :
 ዘአዜብ : አባ : ሰላማ : ዘእግዚእ : ሶቆ : ዘእመገቦ : እምታሕቴህ :
 ዘሰማየ : ሰማያት : ወዘምድር : ለዕመቀ : ዕመቆ : ዘኢይክል : ኃጥእ :
 ተዳድቆ : ከመ : ንርባሕ : እምኔህ : ሕቆ : ይጸወን : ኪያነ : ጸሎቱ :
 ከመ : ኢንደቆ : ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አማን ::

Our father, the archbishop of the south, *Abbā* Salāma, devoted himself to his desire to translate it into Ge'ez – the one who the Lord helped, the one who he appointed

¹⁹ Oscar Löfgren, *Katalog über die äthiopischen Handschriften in der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala*, Acta Bibliothecae R. Universitatis Upsaliensis 18 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1974), 106. The classic contribution on translational activity under Salāmā is A. van Lantschoot, “Abbā Salāmā, métropolitte d’Éthiopie (1348-1388) et son rôle de traducteur,” in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici (Roma 2-4 aprile 1959)* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei), 397–401, with the topic recently updated in Ambu, “Du texte à la communauté,” 111–203.

²⁰ Getatchew Haile, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville. Vol. IV: Project Numbers 1101–1500* (Collegeville: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, 1979), 450; Witakowski, “Filekseyus, the Ethiopic Version of the Syriac Dadisho Qatraya’s Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers,” 287–288; Bausi, “Monastic Literature,” 998. Conversely, de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 292 n. 11 interprets the colophon correctly, as does Conti Rossini, “Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection d’Abbadie,” 210, who is followed by Ambu, “Du texte à la communauté,” 125–28.

guardian (over the things) under him, (from) the highest heavens down to the deepest depths of the earth, the one who the sinner is unable to waylay so that we might profit from him a little; his prayer will protect us so that we will not fall forever, Amen.

Among the manuscripts lacking it are the seventeenth-century *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, Cerulli. et. 220 and 237, Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Ethiopic 1, and UNESCO 10.40, which lie in the earliest part of the surviving textual tradition, though more modern ones like EMM 6588 (19th c.) sometimes present the same scenario. Fundamentally analogous is National Archives & Library Agency of Ethiopia, MS 240, the earliest precisely dated *Filkesyus* manuscript from 1621 CE,²¹ in which the Salāmā colophon has been appended in a hand some two centuries posterior to the main text.

This observation might be dismissed as gratuitous were there not an utter absence of corroborating evidence linking the Ethiopic translation to the medieval era. More than twenty manuscripts can plausibly be assigned to the seventeenth century, while none antedate this timeframe. Even after accounting for the usual decline in surviving material evidence from earlier periods, such a statistical wall presents a

²¹ A colophon at the end of *Aregāwi manfasāwi* written by the same scribe as the principal text declares that copying began on 21 Hedār and ended on 12 Yakkātīt of the year 6657. Insofar as this hand palaeographically belongs to the late-16th or early-17th century, this seemingly constitutes use of an obscure chronological system whose origins remain murky, with the dates of copying corresponding to November 30, 1620–February 19, 1621 CE. While sporadically attested in Ethiopic materials composed in Rome (cf. Butts, “Syriac in Ethiopic Manuscripts, Ethiopic in Syriac Manuscripts,” 71), this represents the only known use of the system from the Horn of Africa. Perhaps its appearance should be linked somehow to the brief official conversion of the Ethiopian kingdom to Roman Catholicism under Emperor Susenyos (r. 1607–1632 CE) and the strong influence of the Jesuits around this time.

remarkable boundary, especially when early inventory lists are taken into account. Indeed, the title *Filkesyus* appears to be completely unknown in the medieval period.²² This situation further implies that the Salāmā colophon should be understood as a secondary, albeit relatively early, textual accretion.

Two details within the colophon itself endorse such an interpretation. In contrast to the immediately preceding material, the Salāmā pericope takes on a rhyming character, with phrases ending in the vowel *-o*.²³ While not, of course, precluding that this could have been an appendage added to the end of the text at the point of its original rendering into Ethiopic, such distinctly demarcates this section from the

²² Cf. the published and unpublished medieval booklists in e.g. Boris Turaev, *Ėftopskija rukopisi v S.-Peterburgě*, Pamjatniki ėftopskoj pis'mennosti 3 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografija imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, 1906), 12; Sergew Hable-Selassie, "The Monastic Library of Däbrä Hayq," in *Orbis Aethiopicus: Studia in honorem Stanislaus Chojnacki natali septuagesimo quinto dicata, septuagesimo septa oblate*, Bibliotheca nubica 3, ed. Piotr O. Scholz et al. (Albstadt: Karl Schuler, 1992), 243–58, at 246–47, 253–54; Marie-Laure Derat and Deresse Ayenachew, "Annexe 1. Documents de l'évangile de l'église de Meshāla Māryām (Ms. 2850, Collection Schøyen, Londres et Oslo)," in *Gabriel, une église médiévale d'Éthiopie: Interprétations historiques et archéologiques de sites chrétiens autour de Meshāla Māryām (Manz, Éthiopie), XV^e–XVII^e siècles*, ed. Marie-Laure Derat and Anne-Marie Jouquand (Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 2012), 323–29, at 329; Ted Erho, "The Shepherd of Hermas in Ethiopia," in *L'Africa, l'Oriente Mediterraneo e l'Europa: Tradizione e culture a confronto*, Africana Ambrosiana 1, ed. Paolo Nicelli (Milan: Bulzoni, 2015), 97–117, at 108–13; British Library, Orient. 481, fol. 208v; British Library, Orient. 706, fol. 2r; Cambridge University Library, British and Foreign Bible Society Mss 169, fol. 253v; Tānāsee 59, fol. 59v–60r; EML 6947, fol. 125v; EML 6954, fol. 3v. A dissertation on medieval Ethiopic booklists by Michael Hensley is currently in progress (Universität Hamburg).

²³ The poetic character was first noted by C. Conti Rossini, "Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection d'Abbadie" (*Journal Asiatique* ser. 11, vol. 2 [1913]), 5–64, at 6.

adjacent Arabic translation colophon. Far more decisive for the matter of its lack of authenticity and originality is the name and identity of the supposed Ge'ez translator. Although modern scholars have universally construed the fourteenth-century metropolitan Salāmā II as the referent, there is good reason to doubt such an equation. Indeed, the curious epithet “of the south” (ዘአዚብ) applied to this individual is not found in any other colophon recorded by van Lantschoot or Ambu,²⁴ but conversely forms an essential part of the description of an entirely different metropolitan. As Munro-Hay details, some branches of Ethiopian tradition locate a Salāmā Za-Azēb (Salāmā of the South) as metropolitan in the late first or early second millennium, and, notwithstanding the historical incompatibility, this name accords well with that found in the colophon appended to *Filkesyus*.²⁵ Since the Era of the Martyrs was seldom used in the Horn of Africa, and probably not precisely understood by most there, it may be that the composer of the fictitious Ethiopic attribution interpreted the date 1021 according to the Ethiopian calendar and sought then to utilize a figure of that approximate timeframe, laying hold of the enigmatic Salāmā Za-Azēb.²⁶ Regardless of the precise

²⁴ Cf. van Lantschoot, “Abbā Salāmā, métropolitte d’Éthiopie (1348-1388) et son rôle de traducteur,” 399–401; Ambu, “Du texte à la communauté,” 150–70, 175–79.

²⁵ Stuart C. Munro-Hay, *Ethiopia and Alexandria: The Metropolitan Episcopacy of Ethiopia*, Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica 5 (Warsaw and Wiesbaden: ZAŚ PAN, 1997), 140–42, 171–73. Another possible colophonic reference to Salāmā Za-Azēb appears in EMMI 7469, fol. 90v at the end of an otherwise unattested homily on the descent of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Salome to Egypt attributed to Zacharias, bishop of Sakha.

²⁶ The Era of the Martyrs is conversely very well attested in both Egypt and Nubia: see Roger S. Bagnall and Klaas A. Worp, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (2nd ed.; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 63–87 and Grzegorz Ochoła, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia* (The Journal of

Juristic Papyrology Supplements 16; Warsaw: Fundacja im. Rafała Taubenschlaga, 2011), 31–97. Its initial Ethiopic usage emerges in the second half of the fourteenth century, but the earliest dates, belonging to translation colophons, often do not accord with the other information presented, indicating apparent difficulties with calculating this era accurately. The Ge‘ez version of the *Life of Basilides* (BHO 162) is given the dual conflicting dates 6889 *anno mundi* (1396/1397 CE) and 1230 *anno martyrum* (1514 CE) for example (see Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 187), while the *Kitāb al-Īdāh* of Sawīros ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is assigned to 1388 of the Ethiopic calendar (1395/1396 CE), 6888 *anno mundi* (1395/1396 CE), and 1412 *anno martyrum* (1696 CE). As Getatchew Haile, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville. Vol. IV*, 152 suggests, the latter discrepancy might stem from the numeral 1 (ḫ) being mistaken as a 4 (ḡ) (the same alleged interchange in a gospelbook from Tigray instead represents the misreading of Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, “The ‘Golden Gospel’ of Agwāza and its Historical Documents,” in *Studies in Ethiopian Languages, Literature, and History: Festschrift for Getatchew Haile*, Aethiopistische Forschungen 83, ed. Adam Carter McCollum [Wiesbaden, 2017], 187–220, at 200–201), creating a three hundred year difference, but these incongruities nonetheless uphold the general notion that scribes in the Horn of Africa often experienced difficulties in correctly formulating this unusual era, despite sometimes achieving the proper result (cf. Manfred Kropp, “Die ältest bekannten äthiopischen Sammlungen der Marienwunder im *Codex Aureus* der Marienkirche von Amba Gəšen und der Bethlehemkirche bei Däbrä Tabor” [*OrChr* 100 (2017)], 57–103, at 71–72). While *anno martyrum* dates before the final decade of the fourteenth century exist in Ethiopic, these appear to either derive directly from Arabic antigraphs, such as with the first translational colophon for the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*, or represent scribal innovations or corruptions. Both possibilities feature in a fluid section of the colophon to pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem’s *In Mariam virginem* (CPG 3603). While a majority of manuscripts and the version published in Victor Arras, *De Transitu Mariae Apocrypha Aethiopice II*, CSCO 351; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1974), 1–33 immediately follow a periscope concluding the work itself (§87) with one devoted to the Ge‘ez translation from Arabic (§88), one important early witness (Tānāsee 151) includes an

elongated section in between stating that it was completed in *anno martyrium* 1093 (1376 CE). This codex's cataloguer, Veronika Six (*Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tānāsee Teil 3, Nebst einem Nachtrag zum Katalog der äthiopischen Handschriften deutscher Bibliotheken und Museen*, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XX,3 [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999], 181) seems to construe this date as being of Ethiopic origin, pertaining to Ge'ez translation or standing for the production of the manuscript itself. However, given the broader parallels with the dual colophons for *Filkesyus*, since the volume belongs to the opening decades of the fifteenth century palaeographically and the date lacks the accompanying *anno mundi* equivalent found with all certain early Ethiopic uses of the *anno martyrum* system, if original this reference should be understood as having been imported from the Arabic antigraph into Ge'ez. Its authenticity is nevertheless complicated by the fact that two other medieval exemplars (EMML 8897; MK-026) present a longer textual version at the same juncture, but neither includes mention of a specific year. A late cluster of witnesses (EMML 543; EMML 2461; EMML 3873; EMML 6670; EMML 8702), none antedating the eighteenth century, contains a much lengthier section with a different *anno martyrum* date (1085) accompanied by the corresponding Hijri year 770 (=1368/1369 CE). Effectively unknown in Christian Ethiopia, the incorporation of the Islamic calendar is decidedly strange, though Christian Arabic manuscripts make use of these systems jointly on occasion; cf. e.g. Gérard Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Première partie: Manuscrits chrétiens. Tome I: N^{os} 1–323* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1972), 69, 71, 135, 141 and Stephen J. Davis, *Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān. Volume 2: Arabic Commentaries and Canons*, CSCO 678 (Louvain: Peeters, 2021), 31–32, 55, 57–58, 65, 99–100, 107, 110, 117–18, 157. In theory, therefore, this portion of the original colophon translated from Arabic was excised piecemeal by Ethiopic scribes due to the unfamiliar chronological systems, with remnants occasionally preserved or updated, a possibility further suggested by the presence of a curious blank line at precisely this juncture in Tānāsee 45, fol. 94r. Translational colophons with other fourteenth-century *anno martyrum* dates are also difficult to assess. The earliest copy of the *Passio Abraham Lapicidae* (EMML 1827, fol. 30r) concludes with the statement that its translation from Arabic was completed on Maggābit 10 of the eleventh year of mercy and 1075 *anno martyrum* (=March 6, 1359 CE). If true, this would constitute the earliest

means through which the name was selected, this historically incongruous association clearly reveals the spurious character of the Ge'ez translation colophon.

Although the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Ethiopic version of Dadisho' Qataya's *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* hail from the seventeenth century, it seems reasonable to suggest that its translation took place up to one hundred years earlier. Underlying such a hypothesis is not merely that the near-instantaneous explosion of textual evidence would be otherwise difficult to fathom, but that the character of the work fits well in the context of others that can be more straightforwardly assigned to this period. As indicated above, *Filkesyus* often collocates with *Aregāwi manfasāwi*, another major Syriac monastic work, one whose entrance into Ethiopic can be quite definitively linked to the reign of Emperor Lebna Dengel (1508–1540 CE).²⁷ Nikon of the Black Mountain's

Ethiopic use of this system, but the other two witnesses lack this pericope (cf. Iohannes Simon, "Passio S. Abraham lapicidae ex apographo aethiopico" [*Analecta Bollandiana* 49 (1931)], 313–52). Exemplars of the *Life of Anub* (cf. Osvaldo Raineri, "Gli Atti etiopici di Abbā Nob, martire egiziano" [*Ethiopian Review of Cultures* 14 (2011)], 223–82) are more consistent in transmitting the date of 1079 *anno martyrum* (1362/1363 CE) alone at their ends, but there are textual problems and it remains unclear as to what precisely this pertains. Amongst other issues, Ambu, "Du texte à la communauté," 155–60, 163, 170–73 does not fully explore the available manuscript evidence for these texts, thereby neglecting critical data regarding variant incarnations or absences of the colophons, elements crucial to their authenticity or lack thereof.

²⁷ Cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 37, 177; Dillmann, *Verzeichniss der abessinischen Handschriften*, 43–44; Enno Littmann, "Die äthiopischen Handschriften im griechischen Kloster zu Jerusalem" (*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 15 [1900]), 133–61, at 136. Kitchen, "The Book of Monks," 233 implies that the so-called "Book of Monks" coalesced in late-medieval Ethiopia, a theory overtly contradicted by the translational colophon affixed to *Aregāwi manfasāwi*.

Pandects, an even more voluminous monastic compendium, was translated into Ge'ez in 1582 CE,²⁸ and a series of excerpts from this text occasionally accompanies the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*.²⁹ So too does the “new” version of Evagrius’ *De octo spiritibus malitiae* (CPG 2451), a 1553 CE translation from Arabic of another writing principally aimed at monks.³⁰ The emergence of several other major monastic works

²⁸ Cf. H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (gheez et amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1877), 106; Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 235, 253–54.

²⁹ As in e.g. Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Ethiopic 1, fol. 215r–225r (foliation different than catalogue). Neither Littmann, “Die äthiopischen Handschriften im griechischen Kloster zu Jerusalem,” 138, Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 223, nor Franz Praetorius, “Aethiopisch,” in *Die orientalischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha, mit Ausnahme der persischen, türkischen und arabischen*, ed. Wilhelm Pertsch (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1893), 1–6, at 2, identified the source of these extracts, nor could Bausi, “Monastic Literature,” 995, who assigned them the pseudo-Ethiopic title *Nagara manakosāt*. According to standard practice and need, they, of course, possess no individual title within the tradition, despite being encompassed by that of *Ḥawi* in full exemplars of Nikon’s *Pandects*, since they never open nor form the principal contents of a codex.

³⁰ The “new” version was edited, translated, and studied in depth in Johannes Bachmann, *Aethiopische Lesestücke. Inedita Aethiopica für den Gebrauch in Universitäts-Vorlesungen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1893), 26–33, Sylvain Grébaut, “La mauvaise passion de la colère selon Évagrius” (*Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 18 [1913]), 213–15, idem, “La mauvaise passion de l’avarice selon Évagrius” *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 18 [1913]), 427–29, and Otto Spies, “Die äthiopische Überlieferung der Abhandlung des Evagrius περὶ τῶν ὀκτὼ λογισμῶν” (*OrChr* ser. 3, vol. 7 [1932]), 203–28. Only a minority of the nearly forty copies of this Ethiopic text now known include a translation colophon (as in e.g. N. Rhodokanakis, *Die äthiopischen Handschriften der K. K. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Sitzungsberichte der Kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 111 [Vienna: Adolf Holzhausen, 1906], 7),

should probably be placed alongside these firmly dated translations in the sixteenth century, including *Mār Yesḥaq* and the *Quadráginta Historiae Monachorum*.³¹ Dadisho‘ Qaṭraya’s

but those which transmit it consistently assign this action to the thirteenth year of Emperor Galāwdēwos (r. 1540–1559 CE, so ca. 1553 CE), and no reasonable grounds exist upon which to call into question this statement. This version differs from an more ancient Ge‘ez translation of *De octo spiritibus malitiae* effected from a Greek *Vorlage* in the early Byzantine period, seven of the eight sections of which have now been identified: on gluttony in Arras, *Collectio Monastica*, 1:51–53; on avarice in *ibid.*, 1:168–69; on sadness in EMMML 7469, fol. 612r–613r; on anger in EMMML 7469, fol. 611v–612r; on torpor in Arras, *Collectio Monastica*, 1:170–71; on vainglory in *ibid.*, 1:239–40; on pride in EMMML 7469, fol. 613v–615r; the section on fornication has yet to come to light. For Evagrius Ponticus in Ethiopic generally, see especially Alessandro Bausi, “Evagrius,” in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. Volume 2: D–Ha*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 457–59. To the list of Evagrian works enumerated there can now be added *Ad virginem* (CPG 2436), uniquely found in EMMML 7469, fol. 610r–611v.

³¹ For these texts, see Dawit Berhanu, *Das Mashafa Mar Yeshaq von Ninive* and Victor Arras, *Quadráginta Historiae Monachorum*, CSCO 505–506 (2 vols.; Louvain: Peeters, 1988). The close relationship of the latter, possessing the Ethiopic title *Arbe’ā zēnā*, to the Arabic version was elucidated by W. E. Crum, “A Nubian prince in an Egyptian monastery,” in *Studies presented to F. LL. Griffith* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932), 137–48, and since no evidence exists for its presence in the tradition prior to EMDA 68, from the reign of Emperor Śarḍa Dengel (r. 1563–1597 CE), its entrance probably does not predate this century. In fact, only two major monastic compendia, the apophthegmata collections known as *Zēnā abaw* or *Patericon* (cf. Victor Arras, *Patericon Aethiopice*, CSCO 277–278 [2 vols.; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1967] and EMMML 7012) and *Gadla* (or *Nagara*) *abaw* or *Geronticon* (cf. Victor Arras, *Geronticon*, CSCO 476–477 [2 vols.; Louvain: Peeters, 1986] and EMMML 8122), indubitably antedate the modern period in forms akin to their published versions. For the use of these titles already in a medieval Ethiopic inventory list, see Erho, “The *Shepherd of Hermas* in Ethiopia,” 109. The erroneous entitulation of these as *Maṣḥafa zēnāhomu la-abaw* and *Gadla abaw qeddusān* respectively by Bausi, “Monastic Literature,” 994–95

text fits rather naturally into this enormous expansion of Ethiopic monastic literature, one to which it remained broadly conjoined in the later manuscript tradition, and it should therefore almost certainly be located therein.

THE PRAYER “GLORY TO YOU, GOD”

One of the most popular Philoxenian prayers in the West Syriac tradition, “Glory to you, God” briefly dotted the Ethiopic literary landscape for around two centuries in the early modern period. Whereas de Halleux could only supplement Conti Rossini’s list of approximately ten copies with a single exemplar in the Bodleian Library,³² no less than thirty are now known, effectively a threefold expansion:

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.aethiop. 362 (late-18th/early-19th c.); Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli et. 285 (17th c.); Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Comb. D 7 (late-18th/early-19th c.); Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 91 (17th c.); Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d’Abbadie 4 (late-17th/early-18th c.); Bibliothèque nationale de

emanates from the derivation of ostensible titles from works’ *incipits* and rubrics rather than from the voluminous and quite homogenous indigenous evidence provided via manuscript ownership notes, colophons, and book lists. Earlier Ethiopic translations of ascetic writings do exist, such as in the so-called *Collectio Monastica*, but there is no evidence for this or any other such established collection circulating as a unit in the medieval era, only for the individual treatises and anecdotes; cf. e.g. Maximous el-Antony, Jesper Blid and Aaron Michael Butts, “An Early Ethiopic Manuscript Fragment (12th–13th cent.) from the Monastery of St. Antony (Egypt)” (*Aethiopica* 19 [2016]), 27–51 and Biblioteca Palatina, Parm. 3847, fol. 52r–59v, 75r–130r (15th c.).

³² Conti Rossini, “Manoscritti ed opere abissine in Europa,” 615; de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 300. Conti Rossini situates a second exemplar in Tübingen, but that codex lacks this prayer. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Discourses of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh, A. D. 485–519* (2 vols.; London: Asher & Co., 1894), 2:lxv–lxvi incorrectly suggests that four of the copies now in the British Library constitute discrete texts.

France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 5 (late-18th/early-19th c.); Bodleian Library, Aeth. f. 16 (late-18th/early-19th c.);³³ British Library, Add. 19,658 (late-17th c.); British Library, Or. 539 (late-17th c.); British Library, Or. 558 (17th c.);³⁴ British Library, Or. 578 (dated 1645/6 CE); British Library, Or. 594 (17th c.); Cambridge University Library, British and Foreign Bible Society Mss 180 (17th c.); Cambridge University Library, Or. 185 (17th c.); EML 1867 (17th c.); EML 2213 (18th c.); EML 2793 (17th c.); EML 7715 (late-18th/early-19th c.); EML 8147 (18th c.); EML 8168 (18th c.); EML 8220 (17th c.); MM-023 (18th c.);³⁵ Российская академия наук, ЭФ.40 (?); Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. orient. oct. 1265 (late-18th/early-19th c.); Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. orient. quart. 1009 (18th c.);³⁶ Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Petermann II Nachtrag 30 (18th c.); *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Petermann II Nachtrag 39 (late-18th c.); Tānāsee 14 (late-17th/early-18th c.); Tübingen Universitätsbibliothek, M.a. IX 11 (17th c.); UNESCO 10.32 (18th c.); Uppsala Universitet Bibliotek, O Etiop. 8 (late-17th/early-18th c.).

Many others are doubtless to be found in both inaccessible collections and unstudied ecclesiastical libraries in the Horn of Africa, akin to *Filkesysus*. However, it remains notable that the

³³ Despite the remark of Edward Ullendorff, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Volume 2*, Catalogi Codd. Mss. Bibliothecae Bodleianae Pars VII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 15 that “something is missing”, the full text appears on fol. 57r–58v, 42rv, 59r–76v of the manuscript. As recorded above, this codex is also slightly later in date than Ullendorff posits.

³⁴ Unmentioned by Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 102, this exemplar lies on fol. 169v–175v at the end of the codex.

³⁵ This manuscript is one of those that the British Army took from the fortress at Magdala in April 1868 and turned over to church authorities in Tigray during their return march.

³⁶ Via autopsy the codex was redated to the 18th century from the untenable 16th/17th century proposal found in Ernst Hammerschmidt and Veronika Six, *Äthiopische Handschriften 1: Die Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XX,4* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), 237–42.

foregoing list consists wholly of manuscripts assignable in some form to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in roughly equal measure.³⁷ This suggests not only that the Ethiopic version of this prayer was probably translated in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, perhaps as part of the significant movement of originally Syriac writings into the tradition via Arabic around that time, but that its apparently popularity was short lived, with the text having played little role in the Horn of Africa during the last two hundred years.

This prayer's association with Syria in the Ethiopic manuscript tradition is not directly linked with the Syriac language in a colophon or any other overt fashion as occurs with *Filkesyus*. Nonetheless, despite its brevity and generic qualities, which allow this short text to appear in relatively diffuse contexts, a tendency towards copying alongside materials related to Syriac Christianity persists. Approximately one-third of the time, "Glory to you, God" lies in the same codex as the prayers of pseudo-Simeon Stylites, an attribution most likely interpreted in Ethiopia and Eritrea as pertaining to the Elder (390–459 CE), an ascetic who died in Aleppo.³⁸ Another

³⁷ Ephraim Isaac, "Catalogue of the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) Mss in the Manuscript Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem" (*Muséon* 89 [1976]), 179–94, at 190 assigns another codex with this prayer to the 1500s, but given his myriad inaccuracies in dating Ethiopic manuscripts, this should not be construed as firm evidence for the existence of the text prior to the year 1600.

³⁸ E.g. Hammerschmidt and Six, *Äthiopische Handschriften* 1, 237–42 (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. orient. quart. 1009), Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 109–10 (British Library, Add. 19,658), and Löfgren, *Katalog über die äthiopischen Handschriften in der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala*, 43–45 (Uppsala Universitet Bibliotek, O Etiop. 8). An edition of the particular set of prayers of pseudo-Simeon Stylites in question was published in P. Leander, "'Astabq"e'ōt 'ebta za-Sem'ōn 'amdāwī" (*Le monde oriental* 11 [1917]), 81–130. Familiarity with the Synaxarion account of Simeon Stylites the Elder for 3 Naḥasē (9 August; see Ignazio Guidi and

common collocation is with the compendium of prayers for the seven days of the week, entitled *Weddāsē Amlāk* ('Praise of God'), in which both Ephrem (Tuesday and Wednesday) and John of Dalyatha (Thursday) feature prominently alongside other Greek and Coptic figures.³⁹

Given the likely more circumscribed monastic circulation for Dadisho' Qaṭraya's work, this wider diffusion of contexts probably contributed to further expanding knowledge about the existence of a Syriac writer named Philoxenus in the Horn of Africa during the two centuries in which this short text was being actively copied. Since the prayer seemingly derives from the West Syriac milieu,⁴⁰ this was, in certain respects, more faithful than the *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers*, but the two shared one key internal development within the Ethiopic tradition that certainly aided their overall impact in this area. Indeed, "Glory to you, God" also took its putative

Sylvain Grébaud, *Le synaxaire éthiopien: Les mois de Sanê, Hamlē, Nahasê et Pâgumên. III: Mois de Nahasê et de Pâgumên*, PO 9.4 [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1913], 256–61], which places the saint in Syria, would allow for this figure to be readily linked in the Horn of Africa to this locale even without an explicit notation to this effect in the prayers. On the reception of Simeon in Ethiopic, see Aaron Michael Butts and Ted Erho, "Simeon the Stylite in the Horn of Africa" (forthcoming).

³⁹ E.g. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 108–109 (British Library, Orient. 594), 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), 66–121, at 97–99 (Cambridge University Library, British and Foreign Bible Society Mss 180), and Löfgren, *Katalog über die äthiopischen Handschriften in der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala*, 43–45 (Uppsala Universitet Bibliotek, O Etiop. 8). Despite a suggestion by Ugo Zanetti, "Boharic Liturgical Manuscripts" (*OCP* 61 [1995]), 65–94, at 92 n. 95, the precise *Vorlagen* for *Weddāsē Amlāk* remain to be ascertained, as the proposed materials do not fully match the Ethiopic text.

⁴⁰ de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 299–300.

author's name – at least in some cases – as a title, albeit as *Falaskinos*, a different rendering than *Filkesyus*. Although this moniker, derived from the adscription and then employed in the usual Ethiopic fashion of naming compositions after their supposed authors,⁴¹ was not commonly applied or otherwise used, it occasionally makes appearances above the head of the text or in lists of hymns and related works.⁴² As such a short text does not typically require or receive a title in the Ethiopic tradition since such are strictly unneeded for manuscript inventory purposes, this somewhat unusual application was probably generated via the prayer's inclusion on occasion in codices transmitting assortments of indigenous hymns (*malke'a gubā'ē*).⁴³ Why such hymns began to be titled and indexed when this form of literature grew massively in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remains enigmatic, but the seemingly interrelated entitulation of "Glory to you, God" with the name of Philoxenus, even though in limited use, certainly expanded his presence in the Horn of Africa.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS (FRAG. 43)

Many areas in which the two previously discussed works align differ from those of a third Philoxenian text extant in Ethiopic, which has not been properly identified to date. Uniquely

⁴¹ Cf. e.g. Erho, "A Fourth Ethiopic Witness to the *Shepherd of Hermas*," 245–46 and Aaron Michael Butts and Ted Erho, "The Ethiopic *Homily on Holy Easter* attributed to John Theologus and its Arabic *Vorlage* (CPG 4163[2])" (*Aethiopica* 26 [2023]), 246–60, at 246 n. 1.

⁴² As in e.g. Uppsala Universitet Bibliotek, O Etiop. 8, fol. 86r and EML 6993, fol. 205v. (I am grateful to Augustine Dickenson for the latter reference.)

⁴³ Cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 120–22 (British Library, Orient. 578). On the *malke'a gubā'ē*, see now Augustine Dickinson, "Malke'a Gubā'ē Manuscripts and the Development of Malke' Anthologies" (Ph.D. dissertation, Universität Hamburg, 2024).

transmitted in EML 1763 (fol. 129r–132v), a well-known Ethiopian manuscript dating to the fourth decade of the fourteenth century,⁴⁴ the rubric of this text presents it as “a homily of the holy and blessed Philoxenus, metropolitan of the city of Mabbug, on Simeon the aged who received Jesus in his lap” (ድርሳን : ዘቅዱስ : ወብፁዕ : ፍልክሊኖስ : ዘሀገረ : ምንብግ : ጳጳስ : በእንተ : ዘተወከፎ : ስምዖን : አረጋዊ : ለኢየሱስ : ውስተ : ሕፁኑ), and a form of this description has hitherto been adopted in

⁴⁴ Getatchew Haile, *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* (Collegeville: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, 1981), 218–31. For published texts edited from this manuscript see Getatchew Haile, “The homily in Honour of St. Frumentius bishop of Axum (EMML 1763 ff. 84^v–86^r)” (*Analecta Bollandiana* 97 [1979]), 309–18; idem, “The Martyrdom of St. Peter archbishop of Alexandria (EMML 1763, ff. 79^r–80^r)” (*Analecta Bollandiana* 98 [1980]), 85–92; idem, “An anonymous homily in honor of King ሂለ ላሳባሳ of Axum, EMML 1763, ff. 34v–35v” (*Northeast African Studies* 3 [1981]), 25–37; idem, “A new Ethiopic version of the Acts of St. Mark (EMML 1763, ff. 224^r–227^r)” (*Analecta Bollandiana* 99 [1981]), 117–34; idem, “The homily of Luləyanos, bishop of Axum, on the holy Fathers” (*Analecta Bollandiana* 103 [1985]), 385–91; idem, “The homily of Abba Eləyas, bishop of Aksum, on Mäṭṭa” (*Analecta Bollandiana* 108 [1990]), 29–47; idem, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s Tradition on the Holy Cross, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity* 10 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 106–87; Osvaldo Raineri and Tedros Abraha, “Filone di Carpasia: un’omelia pasquale trasmessa in etiopico,” in *EYKOΣEMIA: Studi miscellanei per il 75° di Vincenzo Poggi S.J.*, ed. Vincenzo Ruggieri and Luca Pieralli (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2003), 377–98; Tedros Abraha, “The Gəʾəz Version of Jacob of Serugh’s Homily on the Annunciation: A Critical Edition and Translation” (*OrChr* 102 [2019]), 63–125; Gianfrancesco Lusini, “Gli Atti apocrifi di Marco” (*Aethiopica* 12 [2009]), 7–47; Ted M. Erho, “A Short Aqedah Apocryphon in Ethiopic,” in *Parabiblica Aethiopica: Editiones et Studia*, Parabiblica 4, ed. Jan Dochhorn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025), 107–18.

scholarship without further contemplation.⁴⁵ However, although the authorial attribution is accurate, the ostensible homily actually consists of fragment 43 of his *Commentary on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, previously known exclusively from two thirteenth-century Syriac manuscripts in the British Library (Add. 14,727 and Add. 17,267).⁴⁶ Insofar as EMMML 1763, belonging to the illustrious monastery of Ḥayq Estifānos, only came to scholarly attention after its microfilming in the mid-1970s, this Ethiopic witness to another of Philoxenus' writings was naturally unknown to de Halleux, but this aspect supplies only one of many contrasts to its counterparts.⁴⁷ For example, whereas yet another transliterated form of Philoxenus appears in the rubric (*Feleksinos*), the text lacks an Ethiopic title and nothing suggests that it ever received one. Likewise, while Dadisho' Qaṭraya's work and the prayer "Glory to you, God"

⁴⁵ Despite stringent efforts in making numerous *Vorlagen* identifications for exegetical materials extant in Ethiopic, even Roger W. Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation: A Study in Exegetical Tradition and Hermeneutics*, University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 45 does not identify the Philoxenus homily as being a fragment of the *Commentary on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*.

⁴⁶ W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838. Part II* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1871), 884–87; de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 144; J. W. Watt, *Philoxenus of Mabbug: Fragments of the Commentary on Matthew and Luke*, CSCO 392–393 (2 vols.; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1978), 1:11*, 40–47 and 2:34–41. *Contra* Kitchen, "The Book of Monks," 232, the Ethiopic text is in fact an authentic Philoxenian fragment.

⁴⁷ On the microfilming of Ḥayq Estifānos manuscripts in 1974–1975 and the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library project more broadly, see respectively Sergew Hable-Selassie, "The Monastic Library of Dābrā Ḥayq," 255 and Columba Stewart, "A Brief History of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML)," in *Studies in Ethiopian Languages, Literature, and History: Festschrift for Getatchew Haile*, Aethiopistische Forschungen 83, ed. Adam Carter McCollum (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 447–72.

Beyond offering the earliest Ethiopic evidence for Philoxenus and his literary corpus, the close chronological proximity of this version to the extant Syriac testimony suggests *inter alia* that it should be considered an important witness to the reconstruction of this portion of the *Commentary*. Of particular note, therefore, may be that although much of the middle portion of the text corresponds quite faithfully in Ge'ez, the beginning and end diverge significantly. The section covering the third paragraph of Watt's translation of fragment 43, for example, reads as follows in Syriac and Ethiopic:

[illegible]

⁴⁸ Watt, *Philoxenus of Mabbug*, 1:42-43 and 2:36-37 (some stylistics of the translation have been changed).

ገና ጠጪ፣ ጠጪ፣ ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና ገና	እስመ : ስምዖን : ባርኮ : ለእግዚአብሔር : ለዘ : ጸሮ : ዲባ : መዝራዕቱ :: ዕልዋነ : ሃይማኖትህ : ይናፍቁ : እንዘ : ይብሉ : ኢይደልዎ : ለሕፃን : ይትባህል : አምላክ :: ይምጽኡኩ : ይስምዑ : ቃለ : መልአክ : ዘይቤ : በእንተ : ሕፃን : እስመ : አምላክ : ውኣቱ : ሰባ : ዜነዎሙ : ለኖሎት : እንዘ : ይብል : ተወልደ : ለከሙ : የም : መድኅን : እግዚእ : ኢየሱስ : ክርስቶስ ::
Therefore, when Simeon took Jesus in his arms he blessed God and said, “Now release thou thy servant according to thy word in peace; for behold, mine eyes have seen thy favour which thou hast prepared in the face of all peoples, light for revelation of the nations and glory of thy people Israel”. Therefore be it to God the Father or to Jesus his Son, whom Simeon was bearing, (that) we understand these words to be spoken, both may fit the truth. But to the heretics there is no doubt about (the fact) that (they are spoken only) to God the Father. For they say that Simeon was praying to him and petitioning him, because about these words they contend they do not fit him whom he was bearing, the babe in his arms. Let us ask them why they are not appropriate to Jesus. Surely not because he said, “Now release thy servant, my Lord?” Yet look, the	And then Simeon took him upon his arm. He blessed God and said, “Now release your servant according to your word in peace, O Lord! For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before all your people in order to disclose light to the nations and glory to your people Israel.” And now then (it was) towards God the Father and towards Christ his son whom Simeon was bearing, because this thing was spoken about him, as it has become evident that it is true. But this word is not allotted to God the Father (alone), though they say to the heretics, “Is it not to him Simeon prayed and him whom he petitioned? Is it not appropriate for the child which he bore on his arm?” By these words they are confounded and disgraced. Let us answer and say to them, “(Why) is this not

apostle called himself his servant at the beginning of his book: "Paul, servant of Jesus Christ". And if (that is) not (the reason), does (the fact) that he (-Simeon-) was seeking that he might release him from life not accord with him (-Jesus)? Yet how could he who by his command authoritatively restored and restores men from death to life not have had the authority to release from life? But if not (that), is "Behold, mine eyes have seen thy favour" not of him? Yet look, Zechariah said about him, "He has done favour with our Fathers and has remembered his holy covenants." And if not (that), do they say that (the fact) that he called him light which was given to the nations for revelation is not right for him? Yet how did prophecy fore-proclaim him light? But if they should say that he is not the Lord, the God of Israel, (behold) the word of Zechariah which confutes their opinions, for he prophesied about his son, "You, child, will be called the prophet of God. You will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way, that he might give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins." And the angel said, "She will give birth to	appropriate for Jesus when Simeon says to him, 'Now release your servant, O Lord?'" And furthermore, a messenger is himself evidence, and says in his book, 'Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ'. Is it not appropriate for Simeon to ask him to release him from life? For what reason is it not appropriate for Jesus to release (someone) from life whereas from death he diverted men to life, and also diverts them? Is it not appropriate when he says to him, 'My eyes have seen your salvation'? Even Zechariah says, 'He performed mercy with our fathers and he has remembered his holy covenant', since he was called a revealed light which was given to the nations." And they would say of it, "It is not appropriate for him since the prophet preceded news of him and said 'the light shines forth for the righteous'. He is not God, the Lord of Israel." For they remember for themselves the word of Zechariah in order to be confounded, the one he prophesied about his son saying, "And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go before the face of God in
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a son and you shall call his name Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins." But if they are doubtful about (the fact) that he blessed God whom he was bearing in his arms as it does not fit that babe [that he should be believed God, an angel called that babe God,] for after he announced to the shepherds, "To you has been born a Saviour, (he continued,) who is the Lord Christ."	order to pave his path, so that he might give knowledge of salvation to his people for the absolution of sin." And the angel said, "You will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Jesus. He will save his people from their sins." Indeed, Simeon blessed God, who he bore on his arm. But the heretics have doubts, saying, "It is not appropriate for a child to be called 'Lord'." Then let it occur to them to listen to the word of the angel, which he spoke about the child, because he is Lord, when he announced to the shepherds saying "A saviour has been born for you today, the Lord Jesus Christ."
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Though not more than would be expected after having been translated twice, the text in this section differs phraseologically to some extent, but at the same time remains quite congruous, with only a few short clauses apparently lost in the overall process. Greater fluidity appears towards the end of frag. 43, where, despite being surrounded by a rather literal translation, a long section not found in the surviving Syriac witnesses doubles the length of Simeon's speech:

	ለሕዝብ : አሰራራል :: አንተ : እግዚአ : ዘትሁብ : ለኩሉ : ነፍስ : ሕይወት : ወኪያየሰ : አሰርከኒ : ከመ : ኢይጥዓም : ለሞት : እስከ : እፌኢየከ : ውስተዝ : ሕይወት :: ይእዜኬ : ፈጸምከ : ሎቱ : ለገብርከ : ኪዳነከ : ቅዱስ :: ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : እምይእዜሰ : እስመ : ርእያ : አዕይንትየ : ተስፋሆሙ : ለኩሉሙ : አሕዛብ :: ፍትሐኒ : እግዚአ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንዎ : ለአብርሃም : ፍቁርከ : ዘረሰይኮ : አበ : ለአሕዛብ :: ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንዎ : ለይስሐቅ : ገብርከ : ዘረሰይኮ : ምስጢራ : ለመሥዋዕትከ : ቅዱስ :: ይእዜ : ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወአይድያ : ለአስራኤል : ቅዱስከ :: ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንዎ : ለኣዳም : ርእሶሙ : ለኩሉ : ፍጥረት : ዘአሰፈውከ : ወትቤሎ : በኃምስቱ : መዐልት : ወበመንፈቀ : መዐልት : እወርድ : ወአድኅነከ :: ይእዜ : ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንወ : ለአቤል : ጻድቅ : ዘሠመርከ : መሥዋዕቶ : ወሰመይኮ : በኩረ : ቅዱስ :: ይእዜ : ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እርእዮሙ : ወእዜንዎሙ : ለሴት : ወለሄኖስ : ዘአልበሰኩሙ : ሥነ : ላሕየ : መንፈሳዊ : ወረሰይኩሙ : አበወ : ለፍጥረተ : እጋለ : እመሕያው :: ይእዜ : ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንዎ : ለኖኅ : ገብርከ : ዘአድኅነኮ : እምአይኅ : ምስለ : ደቂቁ : ወሰመይኮ : ዳግማይ : ኣዳም :: ይእዜ : ፍትሐኒ : እግዚእየ : በሰላም : ከመ : እረድ : ወእዜንዎ : ለሙሴ : ዘተናገርኮ : በደብረ : ሲና : ገጸ : በገጽ : ወወሀብኮ : ኀይላተ : ወመንክራተ : ውስተ : እዴሁ : ወወረድከ : ወአድኅነኩሙ : ለደቂቁ :
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	እስራኤል ፡ እምእደ ፡ ፈርዖን ፡ ወጥነኔሁ ። ይእዜ ፡ ፍትሐኒ ፡ እግዚእየ ፡ በሰላም ፡ ከመ ፡ አረድ ፡ ወእዜንዎሙ ፡ ለነቢያት ፡ ወእበሎሙ ፡ በጽሐ ፡ ዘትሴፈውዎ ፡ ወተፈጸመ ፡ ትንቢትከሙ ፡ ዘተነበይከሙ ፡ በእንተአሁ ፡ ወእሙነ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ነገርከሙ ። ርኢከዎ ፡ በአዕይንተየ ፡ ወጾርከዎ ፡ በመዝራዕትየ ። ወዓዲ ፡ ሐኖሂ ፡ ነቢይት ፡ ፈቀደት ፡ ትርኢይ ፡ አርአያ ፡ መለኮት ፡ ተንሥኣት ፡ በይእቲ ፡ ሰዐት ፡ ወሰብሐቶ ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር ። ወአውሥኣት ፡ በመንፈ[... (<i>explicit ex abrupto</i>)
“For behold, mine eyes have seen thy great favour which thou hast prepared in the face of all peoples. Release me, my Lord, in peace, because my soul has been satisfied by thy appearance. Now release me, because thou hast gladdened me by thy appearance. Therefore thou art the Christ of the Lord, therefore thou art the hope of Jacob and the confidence of Israel, thou art the light of the nations and glory to thy people, thou art the expectation of all. Now release me, because behold, mine eyes have seen the hope which ages and generations expect. Release me, because thou hast bound me to life that I may be made worthy to thy divine appearance. I confess to thee that thou hast fashioned for me hands that I may bear thee, my Lord, thee who bearest all.	“Give me rest from this life, because my eyes have seen the greatness of your salvation which you have established before every people! Release me from now on because I have seen your salvation! Release me from now on because you have gladdened me through your manifestation! From now on, release me, my Lord, in peace because my soul has found rest through your appearance! You are my Lord, the messiah of God. You are my Lord, the hope of Jacob. You are my Lord, the confidence of Israel. You are my Lord, the light of the nations. You are my Lord, the glory of your people Israel. You are my Lord, whom all creation expects. From now on, release me, my Lord, because my eyes have seen the hope of generations and of the nations! From now on, release me, my Lord,

Glory (be) to thee, who hast placed in me breath and bound me to life until the revelation of thy coming to the world. Glory (be) to thee, who hast made me worthy that I may see thy glory. Now release me in peace at this time, for I have seen thee, the light of the nations and the glory of Israel. Thou, my Lord, givest life and breath to all, and thou hast bound me that I may not taste death until I see thee in this life. Now thou hast fulfilled with thy servant thy promise. Now release me in peace from this life, for behold, mine eyes have seen thy favour.	because you have bound me to this life so that I might see your divine form! I praise you, my Lord, the one who has borne you in a feeble arm, which you yourself created, you who bears all through your power. Glory be to you, my Lord, you who created and placed the spirit of life upon me and bound me to it until your coming into this world. Glory be to you, my Lord, because you considered me (so that) I might see your glory in this world. Release me, my Lord, in peace because I have seen you, the light of the nations and the glory of your people Israel! You, O Lord, who gives life to every soul and you bound me so that I would not taste death until I see you in this life. Now then, you have fulfilled your holy covenant to your servant. Release me, my Lord, in peace from now on because my eyes have seen the hope of all nations! Release me, O Lord, in peace so that I might go down and tell Abraham, your beloved, whom you made father of nations! Release me, my Lord, in peace so that I might go down and tell Isaac, your servant whom you made the secret of your holy sacrifice! Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I might go down and inform Israel, your holy
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	one! Release me, my Lord, in peace so that I might go down and tell Adam, the head of all creation, the one to whom you gave hope and said, 'In five and a half days⁵⁰ I will go down and save you!' Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I may go down and tell the righteous Abel, whose sacrifice pleased you and you called the holy first fruit! Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I may see and tell Seth and Enoch, who you clothed (with) beautiful spiritual excellence and made fathers to the creation of the living! Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I may go down and tell Noah, your servant who you saved from the Deluge with his children and you called a second Adam. Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I may go down and tell Moses, to whom you spoke face to face on Mount Sinai and to whose hands you gave powers and wonders! And you went down and saved the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh and his judgment. Now release me, my Lord, in peace so that I may go down and tell the prophets, and I shall say to them,
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⁵⁰ Denoting the 5500-year period between creation and the birth of Jesus; cf. Ps 90:4 and 2 Pet 3:8.

Also Anna the old prophetess has been made worthy of thy divine appearance.” And she came up at that very hour and praised the Lord and spoke by the Holy Spirit about the Saviour who was revealed in her days....	‘The one who you are expecting has arrived and your prophecy which you prophesied about him has been fulfilled and your pronouncement is true! I have seen him with my eyes and borne him in my arm’. And Anna the prophetess also has been made worthy to see your divine form.” At that hour she rose up and glorified God, and she responded through the spir[it]....
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It is virtually certain that the above differences do not derive from editorial interference in the work’s Ethiopic transmission, and, while most likely stemming from rewriting in the lost Arabic intermediary, their existence could alternatively be due to an underlying Syriac recension varying from that found in the British Library manuscripts.⁵¹ Such raises the possibility that the Ethiopic might preserve an ancient form of this portion of Philoxenus’ *Commentary*, one that has otherwise perished. It may therefore be particularly unfortunate that this solitary exemplar of the Ge’ez version is slightly mutilous.

As William Wright rightly noted, another Ethiopic manuscript purports to contain fragments of a gospel commentary by Philoxenus, namely British Library, Orient. 736, with interpretations of Matt 3:12 (fol. 36v–37r), 4:1 (fol. 41v–42r), and 5:17 (fol. 54r–55r) assigned to this Syriac writer.⁵² Even

⁵¹ On the various theoretical scenarios, see especially Aaron Michael 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*, Orientalia Ambrosiana 7, ed. R. B. Finazzi, F. Forte, C. Milani, and M. Moriggi (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2020), 21–57.

⁵² Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, 201–202.

though the first belongs to a portion of Matthew much commented upon by Philoxenus, these ascriptions are almost certainly spurious, since the work in which they are embedded is a copy of ibn al-Ṭayyib's gospel commentary, where these pericopes are customarily unattributed.⁵³ Insofar as none of the passages align with surviving Syriac material and towards the midpoint of this manuscript authorial ascriptions begin to appear only very sporadically in the text, suggesting an increasingly neglected scribal innovation, Philoxenus' exegetical oeuvre in Ge'ez probably did not extend beyond fragment 43.⁵⁴

⁵³ Cf. Watt, *Philoxenus of Mabbug*, 1:5–19 and 2:5–16. Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*, 443 identified British Library, Orient. 736 as a copy of ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary*, though Ignazio Guidi, *Le traduzioni degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico*, Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Memorie, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, ser. 4, vol. 4 (Roma: Tipografia della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1888), 20 mentioned the existence of the Ethiopic translation long before. On the Arabic version of the work, see now the recent case study in Davis, *Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān. Volume 2*, xiv–xx. A thorough treatment of ibn al-Ṭayyib's reception in the Ethiopic manuscript tradition will be prepared by Aaron Michael Butts and Ted Erho in the context of the 'BeInf – Beyond Influence: The Connected Histories of Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity' ERC project.

⁵⁴ Such work would have needed to exist in Arabic in Egypt during the early second millennium in order to enter the Ethiopic manuscript tradition, but there is little late-medieval evidence of any type for the *Commentary on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* beyond fragment 43. Although at least some other Ethiopic copies of ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary* contain similar attributions to British Library, Orient. 736 (cf. A. Dillmann, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium qui in Museo Britannico Asservantur. Pars Tertia, Codices Aethiopicos Amplectens* [London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici, 1847], 11 [Add. 16,248]), the extent to which these appear elsewhere and comport with those in this exemplar remain uncertain.

CONCLUSION

Although it cannot be precluded that further works attributed to or by Philoxenus of Mabbug might emerge in Ethiopic, even the limited corpus of three items attested thus far bespeaks a reception of a relatively unusual character.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding a single exception, Syriac texts reached the Horn of Africa in one of two periods, either between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, when homilies, hagiographies, and apocryphal works dominated Ge'ez translational activity, or at the very end of the medieval and beginning of the early modern periods, when theological and liturgical materials rose to the fore.⁵⁶ Most Syriac authors inhabit only one of these: the illustrious Jacob of Serugh, for example, is confined to the former, and John of Dalaytha to the latter. Unlike nearly all his patristic

⁵⁵ Butts, "Ethiopic Christianity, Syriac contacts with," 151 suggests that a form of Philoxenus' *Letter to Patricius* circulates as part of *Mār Yesḥaq*, but this epistle does not appear to be among the thirty-five items in the Ethiopic collection, nearly all of whose *Vorlagen* were isolated by Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens*, 131–34. A much broader selection of works circulated under Isaac's name in Greek and Arabic, with the letter included in at least the former assemblage; see Sebastian Brock, "Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of St. Isaac the Syrian," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 98, ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 201–208, at 204–205 and Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur. Erster Band: Die Übersetzungen*, *Studi e Testi* 118 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), 439–440.

⁵⁶ The exception being *In vitam beati Abrahamii et neptis eius Mariae* (CPG 3937), which although composed in Syriac was translated into Greek and from thence into Ethiopic in the mid-first millennium. A not wholly unrelated, though distinct, category concerns texts only extant in late-antique Syriac and Ge'ez translations of lost Greek originals. For one such example, the *Refutatio synodi Chalcedonensis et tomi Leonis* (CPG 5482), see Alessandro Bausi, "La Collezione aksumita canonico-liturgica" (*Adamantius* 12 [2006]), 43–70, at 69.

counterparts, Philoxenus traverses the boundary, as the fragment of his *Gospel Commentary* and the prayer “Glory to you, God” demonstrate his presence in both eras. As such, despite the diminutive nature of his literary corpus, the elongated reception of Philoxenus of Mabbug in the Ethiopic tradition places him in a fairly special position among Syriac authors.

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