Vignette:
Gold coin of King Aphilas, early third century CE, as drawn by A. Luegmeyer after the coin in Rennau collection. Weight 2.48 grams, diameter 17 mm.

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA is the twenty-fifth since the journal’s founding in 1998. It is also the thirteenth issue I have worked on as editor-in-chief, one more than that of founder Siegbert Uhlig. The present time, however, does not lend itself to celebrations of any sort. The global political crisis and the situation in the Horn of Africa are having a deep impact on the scholarly community, which appears divided and radicalized on opposite or increasingly diverging positions as never before. The growing influence of diaspora communities is at times marked by waves of resurgent nationalism. The challenge posed by main-stream policy in countries of established scholarly traditions gives less and less space to small fields—as is the case of Ethiopian and Eritrean studies. The consequent lack of resources triggers the fragmentation of the scholarly scene. New balances based on mutual legitimation and acknowledgement of a common scholarly method are not obvious. The consequence of this complex situation, which reflects global changes, is that scholarly and academic freedom can be put at risk. Of all priorities envisaged in the mission of AETHIOPICA, preservation of academic freedom along with scholarly quality has been, is, and will remain the top priority of the journal. I regret that in the past, and still now, the lack of available qualified authors has prevented AETHIOPICA from duly commemorating distinct colleagues and researchers recently passed away who were more than deserving of an obituary. I would like to remember at least some of them here, by name, as a very modest tribute to their work and memory: Johannes Launhardt (1929–2019), Mesfin Wolde Mariam (1930–2020), Steffen Wenig (1934–2022), Girma Fisseha (1941–2020).

To end on a positive note, three colleagues active in Ethiopian and Eritrean studies have received important awards this year, and we would like to mention them here: Samantha Kelly (Professor of Medieval History at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, also on our International Editorial Board), has won the Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2020, and the African Studies Review Prize for the Best Africa-focused Anthology or Edited Collection 2021, for her A Companion to Medieval Ethiopia and Eritrea (Leiden–Boston, MA: Brill, 2020); Verena Krebs (Junior-Professorin für Mittelalterliche Kulturräume at Ruhr-Universität Bochum) has received the Dan David Prize for her Medieval Ethiopian Kingship, Craft, and Diplomacy with Latin Europe (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); and Massimo Zaccaria (Professore Associato in Storia e Istituzioni dell’Africa at Università degli Studi di Pavia) has received the Giorgio Maria Sangiorgi award of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei ‘per la Storia ed Etnologia dell’Africa’. To all of them—the warmest congratulations from AETHIOPICA!

Despite their frequent and early attestation in manuscripts, Ethiopic collections of liturgical chants have hitherto received little scholarly attention. This PhD dissertation sets out to trace the textual and manuscriptological development of the *Dǝggʷā*, the main antiphonary of the Ethiopic Christian tradition. The *Dǝggʷā* is a large collection of antiphons intended for use in the (cathedral) Divine Office, which in its post-fifteenth-century configuration is organized according to the liturgical year. It is attested in several hundred catalogued manuscripts, each typically containing thousands of antiphons. Based on a corpus of manuscripts reflecting the entire attested history of such collections, from before the mid-fourteenth century up to the modern era, this dissertation focuses on three aspects of the *Dǝggʷā*’s diachronic development: (1) developments in the text, (2) developments in the *mise en texte* (concretely, how textual divisions are marked in the layout), and (3) developments in the representation of musical features.

The dissertation begins with an extensive introduction to the topic (Chapter 1), discussing previous research and introducing the indigenous terminology that characterizes *Dǝggʷā*-type antiphon collections. The first chapter also provides a brief introduction to the traditional accounts of the history of the *Dǝggʷā*, including the story of St Yāred, whom the Ethiopic tradition venerates as the sixth-century author of the corpus of antiphons.

Chapter 2 provides descriptions of the forty-seven manuscripts and two printed editions that serve as the main corpus of the study. Included are all but one of the known *Dǝggʷā*-type antiphon-collection manuscripts predating 1600, as well as a selection of manuscripts from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. The earliest manuscripts, most of which derive from the recent find in ʾAgʷazā Darba Śāhl (Tagrāy) and were made available by Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, are of special interest. They display archaic features, including extensive use of so-called ‘non-standard vocalization’ and a few exceptional cases of what could be interpreted as *matres lectionis* (e.g. *አበወነ፡ ስበ፡ እማያት፡*, presumably for ‘*abuna za-ba samāyāt*, ‘our father in heaven’).

1 The term *Doggʷā*, of uncertain etymology, is only attested from around the sixteenth century, and thus ‘*Doggʷā*-type antiphon collection’ is used here as a more neutral designation for collections of the types of antiphons presently found in the *Daggʷā*, regardless of how they are labelled in the manuscripts.
Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are dedicated to the aspects of diachronic development mentioned above. Chapter 3 focuses on the development of textual features, understood both as developments in the sets of antiphons (i.e. the corpus of antiphons for a certain commemoration attested in the manuscripts) and as developments in the wording of individual antiphons. The complete commemoration of Pāntalewon (6 Ṭeqamon) is used as a case study, complemented by a selection of antiphons from the commemoration of Ḍabbā Ḍaragāwi (14 Ṭeqamon). Each of these commemorations contains material related to two distinct saints: in the first case, Pāntalewon the Martyr (the fourth-century martyr Pāntaleon of Nicomedia) and Pāntalewon of the Cell (one of the so-called ‘Nine Saints’, said to have evangelized northern Ethiopia in the fifth–sixth centuries CE), and in the second case, Gabra Krestos (the common Christian saint Alexis, known as the ‘Man of God’) and Ḍabbā Ḍaragāwi (another of the ‘Nine Saints’).

Based on a survey of the sets of antiphons for Pāntalewon contained in the various manuscripts (in total eighty-two antiphons), it is shown that there are fluctuations in the corpus, with some antiphons falling out of use, while others appear to be added to the corpus. Still, a substantial number of antiphons (c.45 per cent of the studied corpus) is attested over the entire documented time span. As for the developments in the wording of individual antiphons, many of the phenomena usually characterizing textual transmission in manuscripts are encountered, although some—such as the ‘trivialization’ of details in antiphons consisting of quotations from other texts, unnecessary or incomprehensible in their new context—may be typical for this genre.

With regard to the manner in which source texts are used, the studied corpus suggests that Deggā-type antiphons for non-local saints (in this case, Pāntalewon the Martyr and Gabra Krestos) are regularly derived from their respective Lives. Conversely, antiphons for saints commemorated primarily in the Ethiopic liturgical tradition (here, Pāntalewon of the Cell and Ḍabbā Ḍaragāwi) seem to stand in a freer relation to their respective Lives. This distribution may perhaps suggest that the Lives for the latter postdate the formation of the corpora of antiphons. It is noteworthy that—in sharp contrast to later periods—no direct quotations from the Life of Pāntalewon the Martyr (CAe 3158) are found in the sets of antiphons attested in collections from before the fourteenth century, possibly implying that it was not used as a source text before.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to developments in the mise en texte of manuscripts containing Deggā-type antiphon collections. Several different levels of marking are studied: (1) how the beginning of an antiphon collection is marked, (2) how the beginning of a commemoration is marked, (3a) how the beginning of an individual antiphon is marked, and (3b) how the end of an individual antiphon is marked.
The marking of the beginning of an antiphon collection varies greatly over the studied time period, a development connected to a shift from smaller collections, containing only antiphons of one type, to larger collections. The beginning of a commemoration is often marked with a series of features, including rubrication. In the earlier layers, this rubrication is often semantically defined, in the sense that it coincides with an initial formula or a metatextual element. In manuscripts from after 1600, however, it is possible to detect an increased use of ‘symmetrical rubrication’, by which is meant rubrication defined ‘mechanically’ and covering typically a certain number of lines (regardless of their semantic content).

Throughout the studied time period, the beginning of an individual antiphon is also generally marked by a rubricated element, which can be either a rubricated metatextual element or a rubricated (portion of the) first word depending on the characteristics of the individual antiphons and its placement in the larger structure. Diachronically, there is an increasing use of (two-letter) abbreviations for metatextual elements, paralleled by a tendency to rubricate only the two first letters of initial words.

The end of an antiphon is marked by a ‘major’ punctuation mark of varying realization. In the earliest period, up to the fifteenth century, a cross-based form appears most frequently. In a transition period (fifteenth–sixteenth centuries), the common ‘dichromatic nine-dot asterisk’ is increasingly used, and from the seventeenth century onwards, it dominates completely, only varying with ‘smaller’ punctuation marks (such as a word divider with rubricated elements) in contexts where the scribe is especially prone to encounter problems of space (line breaks, right before rubrication, etc.). It is likely that some of these developments are not restricted to Doggā-type antiphon collections but reflect more common tendencies in the evolution of Ethiopic punctuation marks.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the development of the system of melodic families for ‘arbā’ antiphons. This is the earliest attested system for classifying Ethiopic antiphons based on musical characteristics, appearing in manuscripts from before the mid-fourteenth century. Taking a variety of sources into account (a selected corpus of antiphons as well as the lists of melodic families found, for example, in the ሀም ይአንት), developments in the Ethiopic terminology used to refer to individual melodic families are traced diachronically.

A central contribution of this dissertation is the survey of the earliest manuscripts containing Doggā-type antiphon collections, several of which predate the mid-fourteenth century. This will hopefully enable future researchers to make use of the extensive corpus of Ethiopic antiphons, which serve as a secondary line of textual transmission for excerpts of numerous texts, biblical as well as hagiographical.