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Malkə`a`Arsimā (‘Image of Hripsime’): An Ethiopic Hymn for an Armenian Saint*

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Introduction

Hripsime, the popular Armenian martyr of Roman origin persecuted under Diocletian, is the subject of widespread devotion among Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia and Eritrea, her name being rendered in Ethiopic as *’Arsimā* or *’Arsemā* (አርሲማ: or አርሴማ: respectively). As noted by Marcin Krawczuk, at least nine Ethiopic manuscripts of *Gadla Samā`iāt*,¹ the collection of martyrdoms, contain the martyrdom of Hripsime² and she also receives two entries in the Ethiopic translation of the Synaxary, 29 Maskaram and 6 Tāhšās.³ Important centres for her cult in Ethiopia include Daq Island (Lake Tānā) and *’Ambā Gəšan* (Wallo) which, according to local traditions, date as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively.⁴

A key component of any saint’s liturgical commemoration within the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches is the composition of a *malkə`*-hymn.⁵ The existence of a *malkə`*-hymn for Hripsime is confirmed in a list of *malkə`*-hymns present in four manuscripts, the earliest of which likely dates to the second half of the seventeenth century (thus giving a *terminus ante quem*): MS London, British

* I am thankful to Jonas Karlsson and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments in preparing this edition and translation.

¹ While an extensive study on the manuscript and textual tradition of *Gadla Samā`iāt* remains a desideratum, some notable studies include Bausi 2014, Bausi 2019; Brita 2020; Villa 2018.

² Edited and translated in Krawczuk 2012.

³ Colin 1986, 496–501; Grébaut 1926, 626–629; Krawczuk 2014, 177–179.

⁴ Krawczuk 2014, 176–177.

⁵ Literally translated, *’malkə`*” means ‘image’ or ‘effigy’ though, as a technical term denoting a poetic genre, I have left it untranslated. A standard translation of the title *Malkə`a`Arsimā* would thus be ‘Image of Hripsime’.

Library, Or. 574 (Wright 189), fols 137ra–vb;⁶ MS Dabra Zammado, EMLL⁷ 6993, fols 205rc–206rb;⁸ MS Gundā Gunde 144, fols 2ra–va;⁹ and MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticani Etiopici 276, fol. 233r–v.¹⁰ The version of the list found in the latter two manuscripts further gives an indication that the text has seventeen stanzas. Despite its inclusion in this list, there are only two extant witnesses of this *Malkə`a`Arsimā*, namely, MS London, British Library, Or. 577 (Wright 191) and MS Dabra Zammado, EMLL 6993. Marius Chaïne in his ‘Répertoire des salam et malke`e’ assigned it number 181¹¹ while in the *Clavis Aethiopica* it was designated CAe 2900.¹² This article will present an edition of the Ethiopic text, hitherto unpublished, based on the two extant manuscript witnesses alongside an English translation. It should be noted that the *malkə`*-hymn for Hripsime now found in printed collections,¹³ which is considerably longer at thirty-four stanzas, seems to have no manuscript witnesses. Aside from these two, no other *malkə`*-hymns for Hripsime are attested, either in manuscripts or in printed books, though there is also a sort of hymn, or rather a set of antiphons—one ‘without parallel’ according to Paolo Marrassini—titled *Mawāšə`t za-`Arsimā bəšə`t* (‘Antiphons for Blessed Hripsime’), extant in a single fifteenth-century manuscript, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Palatino Orientale 148 (Marrassini 16).¹⁴ Unlike a *malkə`*-hymn, its stanzas have no common headword and consist only of three rhymed lines.

⁶ Wright 1877, 122–126. It is a composite manuscript, with various quires having been added at different times, and since the list of titles and the list of dates are written on a separate quire at the end of the manuscript they may, in fact, be later additions. The contents of the manuscript itself hardly relate to either list.

⁷ EMLL is the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, deposited at Addis Ababa, National Archives and Library of Ethiopia, and at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John’s Abbey and University, Collegeville, MN.

⁸ While uncatalogued, the manuscript was described in Getatchew Haile 2013, 6.

⁹ Uncatalogued, but it can be dated based on the presence of many supplications for King Yoḥannəs I (r.1667–1682) and his wife Sabla Wangel (d.1690), most (though not all) of which have been erased and then rewritten with the addition ‘አዕርፍ፡ ነፍሳተሆሙ፡ ለንጉሥነ፡ [...]’ (‘Give rest to the souls of our king [...]’), presumably done after they both had died.

¹⁰ Lantschoot 1962, 479–482.

¹¹ Chaïne 1913, 337.

¹² Bausi et al. 2017.

¹³ Ḥayla Mikā`el Tasfā`Iyasus and Zaybe Mikā`el n.d., 191–197; Henok Walda Mikā`el 2017/2018, 600–609. The incipit for this *malkə`*-hymn is ‘ሰላም፡ ለፅንሰትኪ፡ ለሊቀ፡ ጳጳሳት፡ በጸሎቱ፡’ (‘Salutation to your conception through the prayer of a patriarch.’).

¹⁴ The manuscript was described in Marrassini 1984–1986, 90–97. The text was translated by Enrico Cerulli in Cerulli 1968, 213–214.

While the primary feast day assigned to Hripsime in the Synaxary is 29 Maskaram, the date of her martyrdom, there is a second feast on 6 Tāḥsās commemorating the consecration of her church and the translation of her relics, which is also the date indicated in manuscripts of *Gadla Samā`tāt*.¹⁵ It is the latter feast which is indicated for the recitation of *Malkə`a`Arsimā* in the list of feast days found in three *Malkə`a`Gubā`e* manuscripts: MS London, British Library, Or. 574, fols 137vb–139rc; MS Dabra Zammado, EMMML 6993, fols 204va–205rb; and MS Gundā Gunde 144, fols 2va–3rb. That its recitation is assigned to 6 Tāḥsās explains why the *malkə`*-hymn incorporates references to the Virgin Mary, the flight to Egypt and Mount Koskam (stanzas 4, 7, 8 and 11) since the feast day commemorating the consecration of Mount Koskam is 6 Ḥədār and thus is observed monthly on the sixth day of the month. In addition to this calendrical link between the consecration of Mount Koskam and the consecration of Hripsime's church there is also a thematic link, as both Hripsime and Mary fled persecution amid great distress.

It is clear from the text that the composer of the *malkə`*-hymn could not have relied solely upon the two Synaxary entries concerning the events of Hripsime's martyrdom but must also have consulted the account found in *Gadla Samā`tāt*. While the Synaxary only describes her being pulled by ropes, beheaded, and dismembered,¹⁶ the *malkə`*-hymn also references her standing in a fiery furnace (stanza 3) and an outpouring of blood and milk from her severed neck (stanza G), details which are only given in *Gadla Samā`tāt*.¹⁷ The text also juxtaposes Hripsime with heroic female figures from the Bible, namely, Judith who killed the Assyrian general Holofernes (stanza 4) and Esther who defeated the Persian vizier Haman (stanza 6).

Description of Manuscripts

MS London, British Library, Or. 577 (MS A) is a *Malkə`a`Gubā`e* manuscript which, according to its colophon, was commissioned by King Bakāffā and thus can be dated to 1721–1730.¹⁸ It is a smaller manuscript, measuring 181 × 149 mm with 196 folios and having rather small writing.¹⁹ The manuscript contains solely *malkə`*-hymns dedicated to prophets, apostles, righteous (monastic) saints and

¹⁵ For example, this date is given in the upper margin of MS London, British Library, Or. 686, fol. 92v; MS London, British Library, Or. 687/688, fol. 131r; and MS London, British Library, Or. 689, fol. 155r.

¹⁶ Colin 1986, 496–501; Grébaud 1926, 626–629.

¹⁷ Krawczuk 2012, 77, 165.

¹⁸ Wright 1877, 128–129.

¹⁹ Wright 1877, 128–129.

martyrs and has no other liturgical texts or prayers. Excluding *malkə*'-hymns for the Trinity, for Mary and for angels, the selection of texts is largely consistent with those specified in the aforementioned list.²⁰

MS Dabra Zammado, EMMML 6993 (MS B) is a nineteenth or twentieth century *Malkə*'a *Gubā*'e manuscript from the monastery of Dabra Zamaddo measuring 320 × 280 mm with 208 folios.²¹ It contains a diverse selection of *malkə*'-hymns that closely follows the list of titles given at the end of the manuscript, although it does not contain every single one, as well as some additional liturgical prayers, including the *Mystagogia* (*Təmhərta Həbu*'āt) and 'Āgzi'abəher za-bərhānāt which is not uncommon in *Malkə*'a *Gubā*'e manuscripts. This manuscript lacks the *tarafa malkə*'²² that accompanies *Malkə*'a 'Arsimā in MS A.

Method of Edition

The edition and translation below are based on the only two extant witnesses, MS London, British Library, Or. 577 (fols 167vb–169vb) and MS Dabra Zammado, EMMML 6993 (fols 125vc–126vc), assigned the sigla A and B respectively. In editing the text I have normalized the punctuation, keeping only the standard two-dotted word separator (:) between words and a nine-dotted asterisk (:*) at the end of each line. The orthography has been normalized as well. Variations in punctuation and orthography found in the manuscripts are not indicated in the apparatus as they do not substantially affect the text. For the translation, the order of the lines has been preserved as much as possible; instances where the lines have been reordered in order to make sense have the original line number given in parentheses at the start of the line. While many manuscripts containing *malkə*'-hymns number the stanzas in the margin, neither MS A nor B includes such numerals and so Arabic numerals have been added to aid the reader. Words which are implied and need to be supplied in the translation are also given in parentheses.

²⁰ In fact, this manuscript is the only extant witness to two titles from the list, namely, *Malkə*'a *Yā*'qob za-gəṃud and *Malkə*'a *Gerəllōs*. For those saints who have two or more *malkə*'-hymns dedicated to them, the one found in the manuscript conforms to the numbers of stanzas specified in the list.

²¹ The manuscript was described in Getatchew Haile 2013, 6.

²² The *tarafa malkə*' (lit. 'remainder of the *malkə*') is a shorter composition, typically having fewer than ten stanzas, each with only three or four rhymed lines, that accompanies a *malkə*'-hymn.

Text

- 1 | ሰላም፡ ለዝክረ፡ ስምኪ፡ ዘሆህያቲሁ፡ አርባዕ።
 ከመ፡ ግጻዌሁ፡ ግቡር፡ ለመስቀለ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ እግዚእ።
 አርሲማ፡ ብፅዕት፡ ዕግሥተ፡ መከራ፡ ወስምዕ።
 ውግዕኒ፡ እምአጥባትኪ፡ ሐሊበ፡ ፍሥሐ፡ ወፍግዕ።
 ነገረ፡ ውዳሴኪ፡ እንብብ፡ በልሳን፡ ጥእጡእ።
A fol. 167v
B fol. 125v

- 2 | ሰላም፡ ለሥዕርተ፡ ርእስኪ፡ ወለርእስኪ፡ ክሉል።
 ወለገጽኪ፡ ቀይሕ፡ ከመ፡ ጽጌ፡ ሮማን፡ ወኮል።
 አርሲማ፡ መዋኢት፡ መኳንንተ፡ ስሕተት፡ ወሐጉል።
 ጸግወኒ፡ ዝቀ፡ አእምሮ፡ እምውዳሴኪ፡ ምዕቃል።
 ንስቲተ፡ እቅዳሕ፡ ወእክዐው፡ በዔል¹።

- 3 | ሰላም፡ ለቀራንብትኪ፡ ወለአዕይንትኪ፡ ወርኅ፡ ገሃህ።
 ወለአእዛ|ንኪ፡ ጽልዋት፡ ኅበ፡ ቃለ፡ መልአክ፡ ፍሡሕ።
 ገሊላዊት፡ አርሲማ፡ ለባሲተ፡ አ|ሚን፡ ስቡሕ።
 እፎ፡ ኢያፍርሀኪ፡ እቶነ፡ ነበልባል፡ መፍርሀ።
 ወኢያደንገፀኪ፡ ምንተ፡ ጤገኑ፡ ፍሉሕ።
A fol. 168r
B fol. 126r

- 4 | ሰላም፡ ለመላትሕኪ፡ እለ፡ ተጸፍዓ፡ ወተሰትራ።
 ሶበ፡ በአእናፍኪ፡ ቦአ፡ ለመርዓተ²፡ ቍስቋም፡ መዓዛ፡ ፍቅራ።
 ርእስ፡ ፀርየ፡ ምትራ፡ አርሲማ፡ ወስቅሊ፡ ውስተ፡ ደብተራ።
 ወለተ፡ ሜራራ³፡ ለሆሎፎርኒስ፡ ፀራ።
 ዲበ፡ ርእስ፡ ተድባብ፡ ከመ፡ ሰቀለት፡ ክሳዶ፡ መቲራ።

- 5 | ሰላም፡ ለከናፍርኪ፡ ወለአፉኪ፡ ወለአስናንኪ፡ ሥነ፡ እብላ።
 ለልሳንኪ⁴፡ ምስለ፡ እስትንፋሳ፡ ወቃላ።
 ተመየጥኒ፡ አርሲማ፡ ለነዳይ፡ ኅሣሤ፡ ተድላ።
 ከመ፡ ተሀብኒ፡ ለኅብስተ፡ ጸጋኪ፡ ክፍላ።
 ወለኒፋትኪ፡ ከዋኒት፡ ብዕላ።

APPARATUS | ¹ በዔል፡ B] በዔል፡ A | ² ለመርዓተ፡ A] በመርዓተ፡ B | ³ ሜራራ፡ B] ሚራራ፡ A
⁴ ለልሳንኪ፡ A] ለልሳንኪ፡ B

Translation

- 1 Salutation to the memory of your name which has four letters¹
 Like the four fashioned parts of the Cross of Christ the Lord.
 Blessed Hripsime, patient through trial and martyrdom,
 Feed me from your breasts with the milk of joy and gladness
 So that I may read the words of your praise with an eloquent tongue.
- 2 Salutation to your hair and your crowned head
 And to your face, red like a pomegranate or an apple.
 Hripsime, victorious over the judges of error and perdition,
 Give me a waterskin of knowledge from the pool (of) your praise
 So that I may draw a little and pour out a fountain.²
- 3 Salutation to your eyelashes and your eyes (which are like) a full moon,
 And to your ears which were inclined to the words of the glad angel.
 Galilean³ Hripsime, dressed in glorious faith,
 How were you not afraid of the frightening furnace of flames?
 And how were you not terrified at all by its boiling pot?
- 4 Salutation to your cheeks which were beaten and lacerated
 When the fragrance of the Bride of Koskam's⁴ love entered your nostrils.
 Cut off the head of my enemy, Hripsime, and hang it in the tent
 (Like) the daughter of Merari did to Holofernes, her enemy,
 When, having cut his neck, she hung his head upon the top of his bed's canopy.⁵
- 5 Salutation to your lips, your mouth and your teeth, the beauty of 'Āblā,⁶
 Also to your tongue with its breath and voice.
 Hripsime, turn to me, a poor seeker of happiness,
 So that you will give me a portion of the bread of your grace
 And the richness of your existing goodness.

¹ In Gə'əz, Hripsime is called 'Arsimā (or 'Arsemā) which is written with four characters (አርሲማ: 'A-r-si-mā).

² The Gə'əz word used here, *ba-'il* (MS A) or *ba-'el* (MS B) is unclear, but may be understood to mean 'elā, a well or fountain, which closely fits what is clearly the intended meaning of the composer.

³ I.e. Christian. In the martyrdom account, Hripsime's persecutors refer to the Christians as 'Galilean magicians' (ገሊላውያን: መሠርያን:) and this usage of 'Galilean' could be found elsewhere in Antiquity (e.g. the polemic of Julian the Apostate, Against the Galileans).

⁴ I.e. the Virgin Mary.

⁵ Judith, the daughter of Merari, cut off the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes, leading the Assyrians to retreat from Israel (Judith 13).

⁶ The second of the four names of the moon (Enoch 78:2).

- 6 ሰላም፡ እብል⁵፡ ለጉርዔኪ፡ ወለክሳድኪ፡ እሳለማ⁶።
 ለመታክፍትኪ፡ ሰላም፡ ወለዘባንኪ፡ ዑጽፍተ፡ ግርማ።
 ለድክምት፡ ወለትኪ፡ ለባሲተ፡ አጥናን፡ አርሲማ።
 ንጽሑ፡ ፀረ፡ ነፍስየ፡ ውስተ፡ ጸድፈ፡ ሕማም፡ ወጸማ።
 ከመ፡ አስቴር፡ እመንበሩ፡ ነጽሐቶ፡ ለሐማ።
- 7 ሰላም፡ ለእንግድዓኪ፡ ወለሕፅንኪ፡ ክቡር።
 ወለአእዳውኪ⁷፡ ምስለ፡ መዛርዒሁ፡ ጽዑር።
 ዓዲ፡ አርሲማ፡ ለእግዝእትኪ፡ መጸር።
 ሰላም፡ ለንግደታ፡ ወዜና፡ ግፍዐታ፡ መንክር።
 እንዘ፡ ንግሥት፡ ይእቲ፡ በሰማይ፡ ወምድር።
- 8 ሰላም፡ ለኮርናዕኪ፡ ወለእመታትኪ፡ ወለእ|ራኅኪ፡ ሰላም፡ እብሎን። A fol. 168v
 ለአፃብዕኪ፡ ዐሥሮን፡ ወለአጽፋሪሆን⁸።
 አርሲማ፡ ለድንግል፡ በእንተ፡ ንግደታ፡ ማኅዝን።
 ሐድሲ፡ ላዕሌየ፡ መዋዕለ፡ ዝንቱ፡ አዝማን።
 እስመ፡ በኅቤየ፡ አኅዞ፡ ርስዓን
- 9 ሰላም፡ ለአጥባትኪ፡ ወለገቦኪ፡ ዘሐመልማለ፡ ወርቅ፡ ትርሲቱ።
 ለከርሥኪኒ፡ ዘምስለ፡ ልቡ፡ ወኮልያቱ።
 በእንተ፡ ንግደታ፡ ለማርያም፡ ወስደተ፡ ወልዳ፡ ባሕቱ።
 ኪያየ፡ ኃጥአ፡ ወምኑነ፡ ከመ⁹፡ ታጽድቂ፡ በከንቱ።
 አርሲማ፡ ለአምላክኪ፡ ሰአሊዮ፡ ሎቱ።
- 10 ሰላም፡ ለሕሊናኪ፡ እንተ፡ ይሔሊ፡ ሠናየ።
 ወአማዑትኪኒ፡ ወለንዋየ፡ ውስጥኪ፡ ዕሩየ።
 ንቅሑ፡ እንከ፡ ለንስሐ፡ ከመ፡ ታንቅሂ፡ ልብየ።
 እፎ፡ ይደፍን፡ አርሲማ፡ ጽልመተ፡ ኅጢአት፡ ኪያየ።
 እንዘ፡ ማኅቶትኪ፡ የሐውር፡ ቅድሜየ።
- 11 ሰላም፡ ለሕንብርትኪ፡ ወለድንግልናኪ፡ ሕቱም።
 ለሐቆኪኒ¹⁰፡ ወለአቅያጽኪ፡ አዳም።
 | ሰላም፡ እብለኪ¹¹፡ አርሲማ፡ ዘበሐዋዝ፡ ስዒም።
 ዓዲ፡ ማኅደራ፡ ለቅድስት፡ ማርያም¹²፡ ሰላም።
 ሰላም፡ ሰላም፡ ለኪ፡ ቍስቋም።
- 12 ሰላም፡ ለአብራክኪ፡ በሰጊድ፡ ለልዑል፡ ዘጸመዋ።
 ምስለ፡ አእጋር፡ ወሰኩና፡ ዘቅሩቦን፡ ሀለዋ።
 አርሲማ፡ ክፍልኒ፡ ምስሌኪ፡ ውስተ፡ ፍናዋ።
 ለገነተ፡ ጽባሕ፡ እትለሀይ፡ ወአንፈርዕ¹³፡ በነሶሳዋ።¹⁴
 ከመ፡ እጉለ፡ ላህም፡ ዘይሰመይ፡ ጣዕዋ።

APPARATUS | ⁵ እብል፡ A] omitted in B | ⁶ እሳለማ፡ A] አርሲማ፡ B | ⁷ ወለአእዳውኪኒ፡ A] ወለአእዳዊኪኒ፡ B | ⁸ ወለአጽፋሪሆን፡ A] ወአጽፋሪሆን፡ B | ⁹ ከመ፡ B] omitted in A
¹⁰ ለሐቆኪኒ፡ A] ለሐውቆኪኒ፡ B | ¹¹ እብለኪ፡ B] እብል፡ A | ¹² ማርያም፡ A] omitted in B
¹³ ወአንፈርዕ፡ A] እንፈርዕ፡ B | ¹⁴ በነሶሳዋ፡ A] በአንሶሳዋ፡ B

- 6** ‘Salutation,’ I say to your throat and your neck I salute;
Salutation to your shoulders and your back, clothed in magnificence.
For your weakened daughter⁷ you are a wearer of strength, Hripsime.
Toss the enemy of my soul into a chasm of pain and toil
Like Esther threw Haman from his couch.⁸
- 7** Salutation to your chest and your honoured bosom
And to your hands, also, with their tormented arms.
Hripsime, a litter for your Lady,
Salutation to her flight and the story of her wondrous oppression,⁹
As she is Queen in heaven and on earth.
- 8** Salutation to your elbows, your forearms and your palms; ‘Salutation,’ I say
To your ten fingers and their nails.
Hripsime, on account of the sorrowful flight of the Virgin,
Renew the days of this season for me,
For impiety has seized them from me.
- 9** Salutation to your breasts and your sides which are adorned with a verdure of gold
And to your belly with its heart and kidneys.
(5) Hripsime, intercede with your God
(3) On account of the flight of the Virgin and the exile of her only Son
(4) That you might freely make me, a worthless sinner, righteous.
- 10** Salutation to your mind which ponders good things
And to your intestines and your equal bowels.
Be vigilant, that you might awaken my heart to repentance!
O how the shadow of sin conceals me, Hripsime,
As your lamp goes before me.
- 11** Salutation to your navel and your sealed virginity
And to your hips and your pleasant thighs.
‘Salutation,’ I say to you, Hripsime, with a sweet kiss.
Salutation, also, to holy Mary's dwelling place:
Salutation, salutation to you, (Mount) Koskam.
- 12** Salutation to your knees which laboured in prostrating to the Most High,
With (your) feet and heels which are adjacent to them.
Hripsime, grant that I may traverse with you the paths
To the Eastern Paradise and leap for joy in wandering it
Like the young of an ox, which is called a heifer.

⁷ This seems to suggest that the reciter is female, as Hripsime was herself a virgin.

⁸ The Persian vizier Haman was killed by King Ahasuerus when he was found sitting on a couch with Esther (Esther 7:8).

⁹ I.e. the flight of the Virgin Mary to Egypt.

13 ሰላም፡ ለመከየድኪ፡ ወለአፃብ|ዕኪ፡ በመዐርይ።
ወለአጽፋርኪኒ¹⁵፡ ዘጽዕዳዌሆን¹⁶፡ ባሕርይ።
ሞቅሒ፡ ሊተ፡ አርሲማ፡ በልጓመ፡ መንፈስ፡ ሠናይ።
ኢይቅትለኒ፡ አሥጋሪሃ፡ በሕምዘ፡ ንባባ¹⁷፡ እኩይ።
ንስቲት፡ እምአባልየ፡ ወድምፃ፡ ዐባይ።

A fol. 169r

14 ሰላም፡ ለቆምኪ፡ ዘይመስል፡ በቀልተ።
ወለመልክዕኪ፡ ኩሉ፡ እንበለ¹⁸፡ እኅድግ፡ አሐተ።
አርሲማ፡ ሀብኒ፡ አምጣነ፡ ብየ፡ ተምኔተ።
ለክርስቶስ፡ በቋዔ፡ ተድላ፡ ምስለ፡ አሥምሮቱ፡ ሕይወተ።
እስመ፡ ፈድፋደ፡ እፈርህ፡ መዊተ።

15 ሰላም፡ ለፀአተ፡ ነፍስኪ፡ በዕለተ፡ መተሩኪ፡ ርእሰ።
ለበድነ፡ ሥጋኪ፡ ወለግንዘትኪ፡ ኅውሠ።
አርሲማ፡ ብዕልት¹⁹፡ ኢታርእይኒ፡ ተጽናሰ።
ሴስይኒ²⁰፡ እመዝገብኪ፡ እስመ፡ ኢይክል፡ ሐሪሰ።
ወስኢለሂ፡ አኅፍር፡ አንሰ።

16 ሰላም፡ ለመቃብርኪ፡ ወለፍልሰትኪ፡ ኅቡረ።
ከመ፡ እለ፡ አኅፍ፡ ሎቱ፡ እንዘ፡ አቋርብ፡ መዝሙረ።
አርሲማ፡ እግዝእት፡ እንተ፡ ትሰረገዌ፡ ክብረ።
ኢትሰድኒ፡ ዪዋ፡ እምኅበ፡ ፈጣሪ፡ ኢሠምረ።
ዘሕሊናየ፡ ሞቅሒ፡ አእጋረ።

17 እምንዴትየ፡ ዘአቅረብኩ፡ ንዋየ፡ ማኅሌትኪ፡ ዝንቱ።
ስብሐተ፡ መልክእኪ፡ ኩሉ፡ እንተ፡ ሀለወ፡ ውስቱ።
አርሲማ፡ ብዕዕት²¹፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ሰማዕቱ።
አዕርጊ፡ ቅድመ፡ ገጽኪ፡ ወተወከፈየ፡ ሎቱ።
ኅበ፡ ቅድመ፡ አምላክ፡ ዘዐርገ፡ ለአቤል፡ መሥዋዕቱ።

[ተረፈ፡ መልክእ፡]²²

A ሰላም፡ ለኪ፡ አርሲማ፡ ኅሪት።
አመተ፡ ማርያም፡ ቡርክት።
ዘኢያፍርሀኪ፡ እቶነ፡ እሳት።
ፅዕዱት፡ ሆፈ፡ ገነት።

A fol. 169v

B ሰላም፡ ለኪ፡ መዋግደ፡ ጽኑዕ፡ አዝማን።
አመ፡ አንሥኦ፡ ሰይጣን።
ዘኢያፍርሀኪ፡ እሳተ፡ እቶን።
አርሲማ፡ ሰማዕተ፡ መድኅን።

APPARATUS | ¹⁵ ወለአጽፋርኪኒ፡ A] ወለአጽፋርኪኒ፡ B

¹⁶ ዘጽዕዳዌሆን፡ B] ዘፅዕዳዌሆን፡ A | ¹⁷ ንባባ፡ B] ንባብ፡ A | ¹⁸ እንበለ፡ A] omitted in B

¹⁹ ብዕልት፡ A] ብጽዕት፡ B | ²⁰ ሴስይኒ፡ A] ሴስየኒ፡ B | ²¹ ብዕዕት፡ A] ብዕልት፡ B

²² This portion of the text is extant only in MS A

- 13** Salutation to the soles of your feet and your toes equally
 And to your toenails, whose whiteness (is like) a pearl.
 Bind me, Hripsime, with a cord of good spirit
 Lest (my tongue's) ensnarer kill me with the poison of its evil utterance,
 (For it is) a small (part) of my flesh (yet) its sound (is) loud.¹⁰
- 14** Salutation to your stature which resembles a date palm
 And to your entire image, lest I should forget a single part.
 Hripsime, give me, as much as I want,
 A life pleasing to Christ, the benefactor of delight,
 For I am exceedingly afraid to die.
- 15** Salutation to the departure of your soul on the day that they cut off your head
 And to the remains of your body and your shrouding together.
 Wealthy Hripsime, lest poverty come upon me,
 Feed me from your storehouse, for I am unable to cultivate (anything for myself)
 And I am ashamed to beg.
- 16** Salutation to your sepulchre together with the translation of your body,
 As I bring a psalm for it like those of Asaph.¹¹
 Hripsime, the lady adorned with honour,
 Do not cast me into exile from the Creator (because) He is displeased;
 Fetter the feet of my mind.
- 17** Out of my poverty I have offered you the wealth of this song
 In which is the praise of your entire image.
 Blessed Hripsime, martyr of the Lord,
 Make it ascend before your face and receive it
 In the place where the offering of Abel rose before God.¹²
 [*Tarafa Malkə*]
- A** Salutation to you, chosen Hripsime:
 Handmaiden of blessed Mary,
 You who did not fear the furnace of fire,
 A white bird of paradise.
- B** Salutation to you! When Satan aroused
 The waves of strong time,
 You were not afraid of a fiery furnace,
 Hripsime, the Saviour's martyr.

¹⁰ A reference to James 3:5–8.

¹¹ Twelve psalms (49, 72–82) are attributed to Asaph, who was a Levite appointed by David for the purpose of singing praises to God (1 Chronicles 15:16–17).

¹² God accepted the offering of Abel but disregarded that of Cain (Genesis 4:4).

- C ሰላም : ለኪ : ለብፅዕት : አርሲማ።
 ሰማዕተ : ኢየሱስ : ፊማ።
 እቶነ : እሳት : ዘኢያሕመማ።
 ክልልት : በአክሊለ : ግርማ።
- D ሰላም : ለኪ : ለንጉሠ : ስሕተት : በዐውዱ።
 እንተ : ላዕሌኪ : ዕልዋን : ሥቃየ : ኩነኔ : አክበዱ።
 እስከ : አባልኪ : በእሳት : አንደዱ።
 ምዕዝት : እምናርዱ።
- E ሰላም : ለኪ : አርሲማ : ሥጋኪ : ሶበ : ሰተሩ።
 ወአዕፅምተኪ²³ : ሰበሩ።
 ክሳደኪኒ : መጦኪ : በመጥባሕት : ይምትሩ።
 ለክርስቶስ : በእንተ : ፍቅሩ።
- F ሰላም : ለኪ : አርሲማ : ባሕርይ።
 ለነፍስ : ኩሉ : ምስካይ።
 ከማኪ : አልቦ : እምታሕተ : ሰማይ።
 በሥን : ወበላሕይ።
- G ሰላም : ለኪ : ሶበ : መተሩ : ክሳዳ።
 ለስምዐ : ኩነኔ : በዐውዱ።
 ደም : ውሕዘ : ወሐሊብ : ፀዓዳ።
 ምዕዝት : እምጽጌ : ረዳ።
- H ሰላም : ለኪ : መጠነ : አማኅኩኪ : ሊተ : አርሲማ : እምየ።
 ልበ : መዋቲ : ዘኢሐለየ።
 ወዐይነ : ሰብእ : ዘኢርእየ።
 ለፍቁርኪ : ዘድንግል : ድልዊ : ዐስብየ።

- C** Salutation to you, blessed Hripsime:
Martyr of Jesus the Creator
Whom a furnace of fire did not harm,
Crowned with a crown of awesomeness.
- D** Salutation to you, Hripsime! In the king of error's court,
The unbelievers burdened you with a torturous judgement
Until they burned your flesh with fire,
More fragrant than nard.
- E** Salutation to you, Hripsime! When they lacerated your flesh
And broke your bones
You surrendered your neck that they might cut it with a sword
For the sake of the love of Christ.
- F** Salutation to you, Hripsime, a pearl
For the soul of every desolate person.
There is no one like you below heaven
In splendour and beauty.¹³
- G** Salutation to you! When they cut her neck
In the arena of martyrdom's suffering
Blood flowed with white milk¹⁴
More fragrant than a rose.
- H** Salutation to you! As much as I have greeted you, Hripsime my mother,
(4) Prepare for me, your beloved Zadəngəl,¹⁵ a reward
(2) Of which the heart of mortals cannot conceive
(3) And which the eye of men cannot see.¹⁶

¹³ It was on account of her beauty that Hripsime was forced to flee from Diocletian. See Colin 1986, 496–497.

¹⁴ This event is described in the martyrdom: Krawczuk 2012, 165.

¹⁵ According to the manuscript's colophon, MS A was copied for King Bakāffā and I did not find other references to Zadəngəl in the manuscript. Nonetheless, Zadəngəl may have been the scribe, a person connected to the production of the manuscript from which this was copied, or even the name of the composer himself.

¹⁶ A reference to 1 Corinthians 2:9.

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Summary

Despite the growth of a cult for the Armenian martyr Hripsime in Ethiopia during the Middle Ages, no *malkə*'-hymn dedicated to her can be found in manuscripts predating the eighteenth century. There are two extant witnesses, one from the early eighteenth century and one from the nineteenth or twentieth century, to a *Malkə*'a *'Arsimā* containing seventeen stanzas. Evidently this hymn is the one named in a list of titles of *malkə*'-hymns extant in four manuscripts, two of which indicate that the hymn should have seventeen stanzas. While shorter than most, the hymn skilfully incorporates allusions to biblical stories, including Esther and Judith, paraphrases of and references to verses from the Old and New Testaments, and references to the flight to Egypt and Mount Koskam. While the text seemingly fell out of use, there being no later manuscript witnesses or printed editions of it, a different, longer *malkə*'-hymn was at some point composed and is now widespread in printed collections.