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***Malkə'a 'ālam* ('Image of the World'):
An Ethiopic Hymn in Praise of Monasticism***

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Introduction

Monasticism—and the institutions, practices, and individuals associated with it—has long played a central role in the religious and political life of Ethiopia and Eritrea.¹ It is, therefore, no surprise that it features prominently in both translated and original literature from the region. There are, for instance, countless hagiographical and liturgical texts about monks and nuns, abbots and abbesses, as well as a great number about monasticism and monastic life in general.² The same individuals and topics also appear in *malkə'*, a type of rhymed and metered five-

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¹ For an overview of monasticism in Ethiopia and Eritrea, see 'Monasticism', *EAE*, V (2014), 443b–447b (S. Kaplan), as well as the more recent Lusini 2020. On the political importance of monasteries, especially in the early Solomonic period (1270–1527), see Derat 2003.

² For a succinct overview of this sort of literature, see 'Monastic literature', *EAE*, III (2007), 993a–999b (A. Bausi).

line stanzaic poetry that praises different subjects by addressing their body parts.³ In this article, we present an edition of one such monastic text from this genre, the title of which is *Malkə'a ʿālam* ('Image of the World', CAe 6911).⁴ This text is presently known from a single witness, a nineteenth- or twentieth-century *Malkə'a gubā'e* manuscript from the library of Dabra Zammado: EMMML 6993, fols 151_{bis}vb–155_{bis}ra.⁵ It is also attested in four *malkə'*-lists, based on which we can deduce that it was composed no later than the second half of the seventeenth century.⁶ Despite its limited reception, this text has much to offer for both the study of *malkə'* and monasticism in general. Before moving to the edition and translation, we will situate it in both domains in turn.

Malkə'a ʿālam* and its Place in the Genre of *Malkə'

From the point of view of *malkə'*, this text is valuable because it challenges the well-established norms of the genre. Marius Chaîne's 'Répertoire des Salam et Malke'e', for example, states that it 'consiste à décrire les principaux membres et organes du corps d'un saint, en exaltant, au cours de cette peinture, les vertus et

³ For the genre of *malkə'* and its manuscripts, see Chaîne 1913, 'Mälkä', *EAE*, III (2007), 700b–702b (Habtemichael Kidane), Habtemichael Kidane 2024, and especially Dickinson forthcoming.

⁴ While there has been a tendency in previous scholarship to attribute titles to texts and vice versa without concrete evidence, there is good reason to believe that *Malkə'a ʿālam* is indeed the proper title of this composition. Aside from its subject being the 'World' (*ʿālam*), this connection can be determined based on *malkə'*-lists that give names of texts and the number of stanzas that they have. Based on these two details, the title of *Malkə'a ʿālam* in these lists almost certainly refers to this particular text. While more could be said about titling practices in the Ethiopic context, this is not the place for it. At present, some relevant studies on the titling practices of specific texts and corpora within the Ethiopic tradition can be found in Erho 2015; Valieva 2021, 154–170; Bausi 2022, 132 (especially fn. 47); Erho 2023; Erho 2024, 321–323; Brita forthcoming; and Dickinson forthcoming (for *malkə'* in particular). Hensley is currently writing a dissertation that studies titling practices in the Ethiopic tradition in general from the perspective of book inventories.

⁵ Microfilmed by EMMML, this manuscript and the texts therein first received attention in Getatchew Haile 2013. Different texts and aspects of it were studied subsequently in Getatchew Haile 2018, Habtemichael Kidane 2024, and Dickinson forthcoming. The manuscript can be consulted at: <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/200618>, accessed on 23 July 2025.

⁶ More aspects concerning these lists, including their relationship to the manuscripts in which they are housed, is discussed below.

les dons merveilleux dont ces membres ou organes furent le siège ou l'instrument'.⁷ In the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, the entry on *malkə'* similarly describes the genre as 'a poetic composition in Gə'əz praising different parts of the body of a saint or a member of the Trinity'.⁸ Even though there are well-attested examples of *malkə'* that go beyond addressing saints or the Trinity and instead address abstract subjects, these are still compositions meant for praise. For an extreme example, the infamous *Malkə'a Sāṭnā'el* (CAe 6666), addressed to Sāṭnā'el, the 'chief of demons', is again a hymn of praise despite its satanic subject. Although it is important to note that it is not accepted within the Church, *Malkə'a Sāṭnā'el* at any rate illustrates that, whatever the subject, composers of *malkə'* typically used the medium for praise.

At least based on the name of the composition and on well-known patterns in the genre of *malkə'*, *Malkə'a ʿālam* should be a hymn of praise for the World (*ʿālam*). Upon closer examination, however, it becomes obvious that *Malkə'a ʿālam* is not a hymn of praise; rather, it was written to condemn the vices and errors of the World. This rhetorical pivot is clear already in the first two stanzas of the composition, where the composer discloses his discomfort with the dedication of a *malkə'* to the World, an entity that from his perspective should rather merit scorn:⁹

Lo, the time has provoked my heart
To write the story of your image, World, in each of its parts.
But in order that I do not introduce any error in its composition,
May Jesus Christ, the right hand of God,
Send down the grace of the Holy Spirit upon me.
Salutation to the memory of your name, sweet in the mouth of the foolish,
World, but a wicked invocation in the mouth of the prudent.
Those who are secluded from your community of flesh and blood,
May they not revile my song when they say to you, 'Salutation',
For in it there is reproach and many curses.

⁷ Chaîne 1913, 184. For a detailed discussion of the history of scholarship on *malkə'*, along with some evidence-based proposals for classifying the different texts subsumed regularly under the label of '*malkə'*', see Dickinson forthcoming.

⁸ 'Mälkə', *EAE*, III (2007), 700b–702b, 700b (Habtemichael Kidane).

⁹ All translations of *Malkə'a ʿālam* are taken from our English translation below. We have opted not to include the Gə'əz text here due to space (for the Gə'əz text, however, see the edition of it included below).

As can be seen immediately, the composer laments his role in the creation and performance of this *malkə*’, appealing to Jesus Christ to prevent him from accidentally praising the World. It is also worth noting that the composer explicitly shifts blame from himself for the composition and performance of the *malkə*’; after all, it was the time (*zaman*) that provoked his heart. Furthermore, the composer speaks directly to the audience, urging their cooperation and participation in a *malkə*’ that admittedly contains ‘reproach and many curses’ (2.5).¹⁰ After only two stanzas of the composition, the peculiarities of this *malkə*’ are clear and striking.

The composer’s condemnation of the World is reinforced throughout the entire composition in each stanza, where he invokes (extra-)biblical and hagiographic references to corroborate his verbal assault. Casting aside any doubt about the composer’s intentions, the final stanza emphatically reaffirms that the text’s objective was not to praise the World but to rebuke it:

[...] my beloved, I have greeted you with a greeting of deceit,
Like Judas, your helper,
And I have included in it a word of reproach as I rebuke you.
But if you harden your heart and do not repent,
You will store up punishment and judgment for yourself.

Lines 1–2 are undoubtedly a reference to the kiss (or: greeting) given by Judas Iscariot to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, the act by which Judas identified Jesus and betrayed him to the crowd (Mark 14:43–45; Matthew 26:47–50). Just as Judas marked Jesus for death with his greeting, so too does the composer mark the World with a ‘greeting of deceit’. The reason that the composer can refer to *Malkə’a ‘ālam* in this way is because he quite literally greets the World throughout the composition with *salām* (‘greetings’) but is critical of it.

In Praise of Monasticism

The unusual procedure of the text raises questions about when, where, and why one would compose it. Due to the limitations of the extant evidence, it is difficult, or even impossible, to offer definitive statements on its date of composition or place of origin. Yet at least regarding the question of why one would compose *Malkə’a ‘ālam*, we suggest that text’s condemnation of the World serves as a rhetorical device to promote a mode of life that is antithetical to that of the anthro-

¹⁰ Whenever we quote from the text and translation, we refer to it by giving first the stanza number and then the line number. Thus, the notation, (2.5), refers to stanza 2, line 5.

pomorphized World, namely, monasticism. The composer's insistence on the adoption of monastic life can be found throughout *Malkə'a ʿālam*. Such examples include the repeated critique of the 'community' of the World and its ephemerality. Furthermore, numerous monastic figures in the Ethiopian and Eritrean traditions appear quite frequently throughout the text, including ʾAbbā Barsauma (22.4–5), Garimā (26.4–5), and Anthony and Macarius (34.4–5).¹¹ Finally, in case of any lingering doubts, the penultimate stanza of the composition plainly emphasizes the importance of monasticism:

Salutation to the translation of your body, from this place to that place,
Without you fulfilling the extent of the desire of the man who loves you.
Alexander, the king of the four corners of the world,
Seeking desires, like one without a monastery,
His life left him before he had been satisfied by you.

Interestingly, the composer evokes none other than Alexander the Great, the so-called 'king of the four corners of the world'. Remembered rather positively as a pre-Christian saint in the wider Christian tradition, including in the Ethiopic one, the composer's perspective on him as a figure is probative not only in context of the wider literary tradition but especially for elucidating the overarching argument of *Malkə'a ʿālam*.¹² While conveying the greatness of Alexander's earthly domain in line 3, the composer immediately undercuts it by pointing out the irony of his kingship: Alexander, though he ruled over the four corners of the world, still yearned for more, and even the World could not satisfy him. Thus, the composer compares Alexander to someone 'who has no monastery (*mānet*)'. This example, more than any other in the composition, highlights how monasticism, not life in the secular world, is the key to finding fulfillment. In this way, while individual *malkə'* exist for different monastic figures, *Malkə'a ʿālam* is meant to praise monasticism itself. Quite fittingly, *Malkə'a ʿālam*, while unusual in the context of *malkə'*, is at home within the larger body of monastic-related literature in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Likewise, it quite nicely parallels other compositions that explicitly condemn the 'World' and its pleasures (*Contemptus Mundi*).¹³

¹¹ More information related to these monastic figures and others within the Ethiopian and Eritrean context can be found in the relevant stanzas in the edition and accompanying translation below.

¹² For more on the reception of this figure in this text and in the wider literary tradition, see footnote 89.

¹³ Some other poetic compositions that dwell on this theme can be found in Getatchew Haile 2005, Getatchew Haile 2014, and Bulakh and Nosnitsin 2019. It should be stressed once again, however, that the theme of *Contemptus Mundi* is not unique to them but is present in many literary and documentary texts that hail from the monastic context.

The theme of *Contemptus Mundi* is by no means unique within the literature of the Horn of Africa, especially in monastic contexts. However, while many such texts condemn the World abstractly, *Malkəʿa ʿālam*, by virtue of its genre, must give it a body. In turn, we can ask what sort of body the World has and why. The inclusion of body parts such as the bosom, breasts, and womb, along with consistent use of feminine grammatical agreement and references to the World as a sister and mother, make it clear that the composer envisioned the World as a female figure. Furthermore, from stanza 3 onward, the World is depicted in terms that highlight its outward beauty: it is fragrant (3.1), spotless (5.1), unwithered (40.1), tender (45.1), adorned (9.1; 46.1), and radiant (47.2). Yet even as the composition stresses its outward beauty, it insists that its appearance is deceptive: beneath the surface lies wickedness. The World's aesthetic appeal, the composer stresses, serves a functional purpose—namely, to ensnare the foolish (9.2), who are drawn in by 'the delights of food and adornment' (49.3). But the World's deceit ultimately leads to its own undoing. While it captures the foolish, it simultaneously ensures its own downfall.

There is much to unpack here, but one point worth investigating is why the World appears as a woman in *Malkəʿa ʿālam*. One reason is surely related to long-standing norms in the genre of *malkəʿ*. Elsewhere in the tradition, abstract entities routinely take feminine agreement.¹⁴ Another reason is likely related, once again, to the broader theme of *Contemptus Mundi*, as it frequently depicts women in a negative or cautious light. Indeed, some of the models that inform this composition portray women in this way.¹⁵ Against this backdrop, the decision to personify the World as a woman would have likely been both normative and intuitive for the composer. Still, while the feminization of the World might be somewhat expected, *Malkəʿa ʿālam* can emphasize this theme with unusual intensity, precisely because—as a *malkəʿ*—it can dwell upon the World's body and other features. Of course, this representation is complicated in a context where female entities are

¹⁴ Two such examples are *Malkəʿa fəqr* (CAe 0417) and *Malkəʿa beta krəstiyān* (CAe 0420), although it should be noted that the feminine gender of the latter is partially derived from biblical models. Nevertheless, the use of feminine gender in the former strengthens the hypothesis that it was standard usage for abstract entities.

¹⁵ It is especially telling that the composer deliberately chose to reference several women who are portrayed negatively, including Herodias (stanza 28), Pharaoh's daughter (stanza 38), and Oholibah (stanza 47) instead of other, more positively received ones. One exception in this composition appears in stanza 24, where Martha is mentioned positively—though this is primarily because she has repented for her past behaviour.

praised highly elsewhere and women themselves could pursue the monastic vocation—this dimension, while beyond the scope of this edition, merits further consideration.¹⁶

Rhetoric, Performance, and Transmission: A Victim of Its Own Success?

As we have suggested in the preceding, *Malkəʿa ʿālam* has something to offer for the study of both *malkəʿ* as a genre and monastic literature and monasticism in general. Before concluding, however, there is one final matter to ponder: why does this text only survive in one copy? Answering such a question, at least based on its sole manuscript witness alone, is impossible. Yet there are important clues elsewhere, especially in the aforementioned *malkəʿ*-lists. Numbering no less than six, not every list mentions *Malkəʿa ʿālam*—the following four, however, do:¹⁷

- MS London, British Library, Or. 574 (Wright 189), fols 137ra–vb (henceforth BL Or. 574);¹⁸
- MS Dabra Zammado, EML 6993, fols 205rc–206rb (henceforth EML 6993);¹⁹
- MS Gundā Gunde, GG-144, fols 2ra–va (henceforth GG-144);²⁰
- MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. et. 276, fol. 233r–v (henceforth Vat. et. 276).²¹

Before considering what the attestation of *Malkəʿa ʿālam* in these lists might suggest about its reception, it is worth clarifying their nature and function. First, these rich documents, found exclusively among a subset of Dickinson's 'Group A'

¹⁶ For more on female monasticism in the Ethiopian and Eritrean context, see Ambu 2025a; Ambu 2025b.

¹⁷ The following information about these manuscripts is re-purposed here from Dickinson 2023, 232–233 for the reader's convenience. For more information on all six lists, see Dickinson forthcoming.

¹⁸ Wright 1877, 122–126. It is a composite manuscript and since the list of titles and its accompanying 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 are not closely related to either list.

¹⁹ A description of this manuscript is given below but it was also described in Getatchew Haile 2013, 6.

²⁰ While the manuscript is uncatalogued, it can be dated based on the presence of many supplications for King Yohānnas 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 [...]'). These additions were presumably done after they both had died.

²¹ Lantschoot 1962, 479–482.

Malkəʾa gubāʿe manuscripts, likely stem from a common archetype.²² Furthermore, even though they are found in *Malkəʾa gubāʿe* manuscripts, they are not tables of content or indices—they contain texts that are found not in their respective manuscript and vice versa. Instead, the original *malkəʾ*-list likely reflected the genre as known by its maker, which was then modified in different ways in subsequent copies. Thus, they should be viewed as texts in their own right with their own production, transmission, and reception.

These lists are undoubtedly valuable for the study of the *malkəʾ*-genre and list making in general. But what can a handful of lists that descend from a common ancestor and stand somewhat apart from the manuscripts in which they are housed offer for the study of texts? At least in the case of *Malkəʾa ʿālam*, we suggest that we can derive information from them that can complement our study of the text.²³ First, because of its mention in the *malkəʾ*-list found in GG-144, the text was composed no later than the second half of the seventeenth century—thus, the text found in EMMML 6993 cannot be the autograph. Furthermore, even if these lists descend from a common ancestor, they differ in several (and important) ways, including in content and order, that can help us glean additional details about the reception of *Malkəʾa ʿālam*. For example, based on its placement in BL Or. 574 and GG-144 after *malkəʾ* for righteous—predominantly monastic—saints, we can also be confident that *Malkəʾa ʿālam* was viewed by some as a monastic text within the tradition. On the other hand, it is listed in Vat. et. 276 with other compositions for abstract entities, which also fits quite nicely with the profile of the text. Finally, its appearance in only four of the six lists is significant, although what this means is impossible to say definitively at the moment. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that the text is present in one of the earliest lists, included in two subsequent ones, and then disappears in (arguably) the latest one. This pattern could offer clues to the origin and reception of *Malkəʾa ʿālam*, though, once again, too many uncertainties remain to draw firm conclusions. At present, however, it is worth reiterating that the text seemingly emerged in the seventeenth century at the height of the genre’s popularity.²⁴

²² For more on these proposed groupings of *Malkəʾa gubāʿe* manuscripts, including ‘Group A’, see Dickinson forthcoming.

²³ The importance of studying lists, manuscripts, and texts in tandem has been demonstrated on a number of occasions, including Bausi 2002, Erho 2015, Erho 2024, and Karlsson 2024. Such an approach is also used and explored in Hensley’s in-progress dissertation (see fn. 4 above).

²⁴ Such a dating would also partly explain its atypical nature in relation to other *malkəʾ*, since it is usually at the height of an art form’s popularity when subversive expressions of it emerge. That is, it would be surprising for someone to compose *Malkəʾa ʿālam*

Aside from the order and presence of titles, *malkə'*-lists can also offer important details about the reception of texts in other ways. For example, these lists also contain dates indicating when each *malkə'* should be recited. While they usually only indicate the feast day of the saint to whom the hymn is addressed, they sometimes offer more detailed instructions. Three texts, namely, *Saḳoqāwa nafs* ('The Lamentation of the Soul', CAe 6192), *Malkə'a malā'əkt* ('The Image of the Angels', collectively for all the angels, CAe 0339), and *Malkə'a samā'tāt* ('The Image of the Martyrs', again collectively for all martyrs, CAe 3114), bear a vague instruction that they should be recited 'on all days' (በኩሉን ሰለታት።) without any clarification. By contrast, the list ends with the instruction that 'there is no day (on which) *Malkə'a fəqr* and *Malkə'a 'ālam* (must be recited)' (ለመልክ፡ ፍቅር፡ ወለመልክ፡ ዓለም፡ አልቦቱ፡ ሰለት።). A similar instruction is given for the hymn *Ṭabiba ṭabibān* ('The Wisest of the Wise', CAe 2393), here referred to by an alternate title, *Ṣalota 'adhəno* ('The Prayer of Salvation'): 'There is no day (on which) *Ṣalota 'adhəno* (must be recited; it may be recited) at any time' (ጸሎተ፡ አድኅኖ፡ አልቦቱ፡ ሰለት፡ በኩሉ፡ ጊዜ።). In EMMML 6993, this instruction is simplified to '*Ṣalota 'adhəno* (may be recited) at any time' (ጸሎተ፡ አድኅኖ፡ በኩሉ፡ ጊዜ።), while the instruction concerning *Malkə'a fəqr* and *Malkə'a 'ālam* is omitted, leaving only the titles with no further details.

The lack of a specific date for the recitation of *Malkə'a 'ālam* is quite probative here. That is, with no need to read *Malkə'a 'ālam*, it was likely unnecessary to copy it, and so it only became more obscure over time—this resulted in a positive feedback loop of sorts. But what caused the text to receive no obligatory day for its performance in the first place? We speculate that there were likely two reasons. The first is the atypical framing and rhetorical strategy of the text, of which even its composer was aware. While certainly effective, if a *malkə'* in praise of monasticism that is nominally dedicated to 'the World' made the composer uncomfortable, one can imagine the effect it would have had on listeners. A second reason is related to more pragmatic considerations. Given that *Malkə'a 'ālam* is, in effect, a text about monasticism, when should it actually be performed? Theoretically, it could be assigned a set day, although this seemingly never took place. Or it could have been read for the feast day of a monastic figure who lacked an explicit *malkə'*, although the composition *Malkə'a Ṣādqān* (CAe 3054) presumably already fulfilled this role. In short, we suggest that the unconventional framing of *Malkə'a 'ālam*, as well as the absence of any compelling reason or occasion to recite it, led to its almost complete demise.

before the genre gained traction or after it began to diminish. Thus, alongside the textual and manuscript evidence, the composition's genesis in the seventeenth century seems the most probable.

Method of Edition

The present edition is based on the microfilm of EML 6993, a *Malkəʾa gubāʾe* manuscript from Dabra Zammado and the only known witness to this text (fols 151_{bis}vb–155_{bis}ra). The manuscript measures 320 × 280 mm and has 208 folios, with its text area is divided into three columns of 23 lines each. While the photographic reproductions of the microfilm are greyscale, they are generally of a high quality and are readable. There are, however, some places in the manuscript where otherwise anticipated words or lines are absent. We mark these missing words or lines with [...] to signal that these are lacunas in the manuscript. We have normalized the spelling and orthography of the text according to Wolf Leslau’s *Concise Dictionary of Geʿez*.²⁵ Furthermore, we have also normalized the punctuation, keeping only the standard two-dotted word separator (:) between words and a nine-dotted asterisk (:#) at the end of each line. Differences in punctuation and orthography found in the manuscript are not indicated in the apparatus as they do not substantially affect the text. Whenever we offer an emendation in the text, such as changing the case of a noun, we note this in an apparatus.²⁶ We have also received several helpful suggestions for textual improvements from *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikāʾel based on his knowledge of *qəne*. We have also noted these in the apparatus.

²⁵ Leslau 2010.

²⁶ Naturally, a reconstructive method would be preferred when multiple witnesses of a text are available. A *unicum*, however, presents a sort of editorial conundrum, especially when it (presently) serves as the remaining vestige of what was once a larger pool of evidence. How should an editor approach such a text and how much can one intervene? Of course, these questions partially hinge on the nature of the text itself, including its transmission and state of preservation and its indirect witnesses. In the case of translated texts, for example, an editor of a *unicum* in one language can appeal to the *Vorlage* for correct readings, as Butts et al. 2024, 290 do quite convincingly. Likewise, editors of texts that have indirect witnesses can appeal to those to adjudicate between possible readings, as Bausi and Camplani 2016 capably do (although it should be noted that this text is now attested elsewhere, as indicated by Erho in a talk given in the Text and Transmission Research Seminar on 15 January 2025). *Malkəʾa ʾālam*, however, is an indigenous Ethiopic text with no (known) indirect witnesses. While it is fortunately well preserved with few errors or omissions, there are still some places that needed editorial intervention. Most instances were straightforward, such as changing the case of a noun, but some problematic passages remain. We have offered adjustments and corrections when necessary, while noting them in the apparatus. For further and more detailed reflections on editing a *unicum* in the Ethiopian and Eritrean context, see Hummel 2015.

We have aimed to produce a translation that is readable but faithful to the text. To that end, we have maintained the order of the lines within stanzas as much as possible and always preserved the integrity of the lines. Additionally, though *malkə'* are traditionally written in *continuo*, we have printed the text and translation according to a stichometric layout, that is, having each line of verse in a single printed line, and added Arabic numerals to stanzas to make the text more navigable. This has not, however, altered the meaning of the text since stanzas, even though written in *continuo*, clearly function as well-established logical units within the composition.

Finally, a few words should be said about the edition of *Malkə'a ʿālam* that was done by Gabra Śəllāse, as found in his two-volume printed anthology published in 2016 EC.²⁷ The present authors were alerted to its existence after submitting this article for publication, and we were initially optimistic that it might offer a second witness to the text.²⁸ It was clear as soon as we received images of it, however, that Gabra Śəllāse relied upon the same manuscript (EMML 6993) as we have. Aside from the inclusion of several texts in his two-volume work that are only attested in this manuscript (or having few witnesses generally), the lacunae and other scribal errors in *Malkə'a ʿālam* from EMML 6993 are also maintained in his printed text. Even though we each rely upon the same manuscript evidence, we have decided to publish the present edition for two reasons. The first is that while Gabra Śəllāse offers an Amharic translation, it seems not to have been done carefully. Taking just one example, the somewhat obscure word ʾanāsəḥ ('corners of the world') in stanza 54 is translated as *nəśročč* ('eagles'), mistaking the word as a plural of *nəsr* ('eagle').²⁹ Furthermore, no annotations or comments are made on the text. Thus, while this article is not the *editio princeps* strictly speaking, it does have the virtue of being the first annotated edition and translation of the text.

²⁷ Gabra Śəllāse 2023–2024, II, 3157–3166.

²⁸ We would like to thank Mersha Alehegne Mengistie for sharing photos of the text from the edition and translation of Gabra Śəllāse.

²⁹ Gabra Śəllāse 2023–2024, II, 3166.

Text

- 1. | ናሁ፡ ለልብየ፡ አስተናሥኦ፡ ዘመኑ። fol. 151^{bisV}
 ዜና፡ መልክእኪ፡ ዓለም፡ ከመ፡ እጽሐፍ፡ ዘበበ፡ በይኑ።
 ባሕቱ፡ ሐሰተ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይቶሰሕ፡ ውስተ፡ ድርሳኑ።
 ኢየሱስ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ የማኑ።
 ጸጋ፡ መንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ላዕሌየ፡ ይፈኑ።

- 2. ሰላም፡ ለዝክረ፡ ስምኪ፡ ውስተ፡ አፈ፡ አብዳን፡ ጥዑም።
 በአፈ፡ ማእምራን፡ እኪተ፡ ጽዋዔ፡ ዓለም።
 እለ፡ ግሑዛን፡ እማኅበርኪ፡ ዘሥጋ፡ ወደም።
 ኢየሐምዩ፡ ማሕሌትየ፡ ሶበ፡ ይብሉኪ፡ ሰላም።
 እስመ፡ በውስቴቱ፡ ዘለፋ፡ ውብዙኅ፡ መርገም።

- 3. ሰላም፡ ለሥዕርተ፡ ርእስኪ፡ እለ፡ ተቀብኦ፡ መዐዛ።
 ለነፍሰ፡ አብዳን፡ ዘይሔውዛ።
 አረጊት፡ ዓለም፡ ዘታስተሐውዚ፡ ፍቅረ፡ ወሬዛ።
 ኢይኩን፡ ድዉየ፡ ወሕሙመ፡ ለሥራይኪ፡ በሕምዛ።
 ዐቃቢተ፡ ሥራይ፡ ማርያም፡ ትኩነኒ፡ ቤዛ።

- 4. ሰላም፡ ለርእስኪ፡ እንተ፡ እምኔሁ፡ አስተርአዩ።
 ለሥጋ፡ ኃጢአት፡ መለያልዩ።
 ማኅደረ፡ እኩያን፡ ዓለም፡ ወ|ለመልአኮሙ፡ ቤተ፡ እከዩ። fol. 152^{bisr}
 ጻድቃንሰ፡ እለ፡ እማሕፀን፡ ተኅርዩ።
 ከመ፡ ኢየሀልዉ፡ ውስቴትኪ፡ ማኅደረ፡ ሌላዩ።

- 5. ሰላም፡ ለገጽኪ፡ እንተ፡ አፍአሁ፡ ንጹሕ።
 ወውሳጤሁ፡ ርሱሕ።
 ረዳኢተ፡ ዲያብሎስ፡ ዓለም፡ ወንዋየ፡ ሐቅሉ፡ መፍርህ።
 ዘኢቈስለ፡ በሐጽኪ፡ ወመጥባሕትኪ፡ በሊኅ።
 አልቦ፡ ጠቢብ፡ ወአልቦ፡ የዋህ።

³⁰ Lit. ‘keeper of medicine’ (*‘aqābīta šērāy*), but the gloss as *physician* is supported by its use in Matthew 9:12: ‘After Jesus Christ heard (this), He said to them, “The sick desire

Translation

1. Lo, the time has provoked my heart
To write the story of your image, World, in each of its parts.
But in order that I do not introduce any error in its composition,
May Jesus Christ, the right hand of God,
Send down the grace of the Holy Spirit upon me.
2. Salutation to the memory of your name, sweet in the mouth of the foolish,
World, but a wicked invocation in the mouth of the prudent.
Those who are secluded from your community of flesh and blood,
May they not revile my song when they say to you, 'Salutation',
For in it there is reproach and many curses.
3. Salutation to the hairs of your head, which are anointed (with)
a fragrant aroma
That is pleasing to the souls of the foolish.
Decrepit World, you who delights in the love of the youthful,
Lest I become sick or ill by the poison of your medicine,
May Mary, the physician,³⁰ be for me a substitute.³¹
4. Salutation to your head, from which are manifest
The members of the body of sin.
You are the dwelling of the wicked, World, and the house of
their angel's wickedness,
But the righteous, who are chosen from the womb,
They set apart (their) dwelling so as not to be within you.
5. Salutation to your face, the exterior of which is spotless,
But its interior polluted.
Disciple of the Devil, World, and his fearsome weapon,
There is no one wise or meek
Who is not wounded by your arrow or sharp sword.

a physician, not the healthy” (ወሰግዳ: እግዚእ: ኢየሱስ: ይቤሎሙ: ሕሙማን: ይፈቅድዎ: ለ
ዐቃቤ: ሥራይ: ወአኮ: ጥዑያን።). The use of the term here sets up a contrast with the
World's poisonous 'medicine' (*śarāy*—a term equally as ambivalent as the Greek word
it renders, το φάρμακον).

³¹ Or a 'rescuer', 'redeemer'.

- 6. ሰላም፡ ለቀራንብትኪ¹፡ ዘነበሰባሶን፡ አዶቀ።
 ምግባረ፡ ዘማዊት፡ ብእሲት፡ ማእከለ፡ ወራዙት²፡ ረፈቀ።
 ማኅደረ³፡ አብዳን፡ ዓለም፡ እንተ፡ ለመድኪ፡ ስላቀ።
 ምስሌኪ፡ ሰብእ፡ ማእምራን፡ ኢሀለወ፡ ልጹቀ።
 ነበሩ፡ በገዳም፡ ወቀነቱ፡ ሠቀ።
- 7. ሰላም፡ ለማኅቶተ፡ ሥጋኪ፡ እንተ፡ ኅረየ፡ ወአብደረ።
 መትሕተ፡ ዐራት፡ ይንበር፡ ወይከድንዎ፡ ከፈረ።
 ዕውርተ፡ አዕይንት፡ ዓለም፡ ዘትመርሒ፡ ዕዉረ።
 ክልኤክሙ፡ ትትዐቀፋ፡ ወትትወደቁ፡ ኅቡረ።
 ከመ፡ ዜናክሙ፡ አማናዊ፡ በወንጌል፡ ተነግረ።
- 8. ሰላም፡ ለአእዛንኪ፡ ዐውያተ፡ ነዳያን፡ ዘይጸመማ።
 ወእለ፡ ይሰምዓ፡ በጻህቅ፡ ውስተ፡ ቤተ፡ ተውኔት፡ ማሕሌተ፡ ዜማ።
 ዓለመ፡ ሥጋ፡ ርግምት፡ ኅብስተ፡ ዕለትኪ፡ በሐፈ⁴፡ ጸማ።
 ለምረርኪ፡ ደኃራዊት፡ ሶበ፡ አእመሩ፡ አቅማ።
 መነኑ፡ ጠቢባን፡ ለተድላኪ፡ ጣዕማ።
- 9. ሰላም፡ ለመላትሕኪ፡ ዘአሠነያ፡ ቂሐተ።
 ከመ፡ ያሠግራ፡ ነፍሳተ።
 እመ፡ ዘማውያን፡ ዓለም፡ ዘታፈቅሪ፡ ዝሙተ።
 እምግባርኪ፡ ሰይጣናዊ፡ ዘነፍሰ፡ ንጹሓን፡ አስሐተ።
 መንፈሰ፡ ቅዳሴ⁵፡ ጳራቅሊጦስ፡ ይዕቀበኒ፡ ሊተ።
- 10. ሰላም፡ ለአእናፍኪ፡ እመዐዛ፡ አምበር፡ ወምስክ።
 እለ፡ ይረውጸ፡ ዘልፈ፡ ውስተ፡ ፍናወ፡ ሞት፡ ድሩክ።
 እኅተ፡ አርጭ፡ ምድር፡ ዓለም፡ ዘረገመኪ፡ አምላክ።
 ኢይክሀል፡ አውድቆትየ፡ እከየ፡ መስሐቲ፡ መልአክ።
 ከመ፡ አውደቀኪ፡ ቅድመ፡ እምሣልስ፡ ፈለክ።

APPARATUS | ¹ MS ግድኪ፡ | ² MS ግድት፡ | ³ MS ግበረ፡ | ⁴ MS አፈ፡. *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikā'el suggested the reading of ሐፈ፡, which makes more sense in context. Such an emendation could be reached by appealing to the change of ሕ > ሐ > ግ in pronunciation.
⁵ MS ግዳሴ፡

³² MS 'Fellowship'.
³³ That is, the eye(s), which would normally be saluted here (ሰላም፡ ለአዕይንትኪ፡ ...). For the phrase 'lamp of the body', see Matthew 6:22: 'Your eye is the lamp of your body. As soon as your eye is luminous and stretched open, your body becomes luminous'

6. Salutation to your eyelashes, whose fluttering makes apparent
The deeds of an adulterous woman reclining amongst youths.
Dwelling³² of the foolish, World, you who is accustomed to deride,
Prudent men do not associate themselves with you,
Rather, they dwell in the desert and gird themselves with sackcloth.
7. Salutation to the lamp of your body,³³ which chose and preferred
To rest under a bed, being covered with a basket.³⁴
Blinded of eyes, World, you who leads the blind,
The two of you stumble and are thrown down together
As in your reliable story told in the Gospel.³⁵
8. Salutation to your ears, which are deaf to the cries of the poor
But listen eagerly to music in the house of merriment.
World of flesh, your daily bread is cursed by the sweat of labour:
When they realize the extent of your bitter after(taste),
The wise reject the taste of your delight.
9. Salutation to your cheeks, which adorn themselves with blush
So that they might ensnare souls.
Mother of fornicators, World, you who love fornication,
From your satanic deeds, which lead astray the souls of the pure,
May the Paraclete, the spirit of sanctification, protect me.
10. Salutation to your nostrils, which, away from the fragrance of ambergris
and musk,
Always run on the paths of harsh death.
Sister of the serpent, World, you whom God has cursed,³⁶
May the wickedness of the deceiving angel be unable to cause me to fall
Like he once made you fall from the third celestial sphere.³⁷

(ማኅተቱ፡ ለሥጋክ፡ ዐይንክ፡ ውእቱ፡ እምከመ፡ ዐይንክ፡ ብሩሀ፡ ወስፉሕ፡ ውእቱ፡ ከሱ፡ ሥጋክ፡ ብሩሀ፡ ይከ
ውን።).

³⁴ Mark 4:21; Matthew 5:15; and Luke 11:33.

³⁵ Matthew 15:14: 'Leave them, for they are blind and guides for the blind! If the blind lead blind, the two of them will fall into a pit!' (ኅድግዎሙ፡ ለእሉ፡ እስመ፡ ዕዉራን፡ እሙ
ንቱ፡ ወእምርሕተ፡ ዕዉራን፡ ዕዉር፡ ዕዉረ፡ ለእመ፡ መርሐ፡ ክልኤሆሙ፡ ይወድቁ፡ ውስተ፡ ግብ።).

³⁶ Genesis 3:14.

³⁷ Compare the fall of Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12–17 and the war in heaven in Revelation 12:7–10.

- 11. ሰላም፡ ለከናፍርኪ፡ እለ፡ ኢይቶስሐ፡ ሕቀ።
 ውስተ፡ ንባቦሙ፡ ጽድቀ።
 መፍቀሪተ፡ ንዋይ፡ ዓለም፡ እንተ፡ ታስተጋብኢ፡ ወርቀ።
 ጻድቃንሰ፡ ለመዝገብኪ፡ ሰባ፡ አስቆረርዎ፡ ጥቀ።
 ኢነሥኡ፡ እምኔሁ፡ አሐተ፡ ጸሪቀ።

- 12. ሰላም፡ ለአፉኪ፡ ዘኢተዐቅብ፡ በሕግ።
 እስመ፡ አምሳለ፡ ቤት፡ ውእቱ፡ እንተ፡ አልባቲ፡ መንሠግ።
 ማሳፈደ፡ ጥፍ፡ ዘይገፍዑኪ፡ አፍላግ።
 ይባልሓ፡ በጸሎቱ፡ እምድቀትኪ፡ ፀዋግ።
 አብ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ዘሥሩግ።

- 13. ሰላም፡ ለአስናንኪ፡ ዘበእንቲአሆን፡ ተጽሕፈ።
 አሌ፡ ሎሙ፡ እንዘ፡ ይብል፡ ለእለ፡ ይሥሕቁ፡ ዘልፈ።
 መሥገርተ፡ ኃጥአን፡ ዓለም፡ ዘትሰመዪ፡ ገሪፈ።
 ወቦ፡ ጊዜ፡ አመ፡ ትትመሰሊ፡ ጻድፈ⁶።
 ውስተ፡ ፍናዌሆሙ፡ ለጻድቃን፡ ትኩኒ፡ ማዕቅፈ።

- 14. ሰላም፡ ለልሳንኪ፡ እንተ፡ ትቀልል፡ እምኔሃ።
 ማሳደረ፡ ኃጥአን፡ ሲኦል፡ ዘጽልመት፡ መናሥግቲሃ።
 ዐማፂት፡ ዓለም፡ ለምኸናንኪ፡ በዐውደ፡ ፍትሓ።
 እንዘ፡ ጻድቀ⁷፡ ትኩንኒ፡ ወትረስሒ፡ ንጹሐ።
 ጎንደየ፡ መዋዕል፡ ወዘመን፡ ጥሳ⁸።

fol. 152_{bis}v

APPARATUS | ⁶ MS ጽድፈ፡ | ⁷ MS ጽድቅ፡ | ⁸ MS ኑኃ፡

³⁸ Psalm 140:3.

³⁹ Matthew 7:26–27. The same imagery is evoked again in stanza 42 of this composition.

⁴⁰ Jacob of Serug (ca. 451–521), known as ‘the Flute of the Holy Spirit and the Harp of the Church’, is one of the most influential Syriac authors, with an impressive *œuvre* including prose and poetic compositions. Jacob is perhaps best remembered as the author of reportedly 760 metrical homilies (*mēmre*), of which at least 400 are extant and survive in a variety of languages, including Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic, and Gəʿəz (as mediated by Arabic). The mention of Jacob of Serug in this

11. Salutation to your lips, which do not introduce even a little
Righteousness in their utterance.
Lover of wealth, World, you who hoard gold,
But the righteous, having come to loathe greatly your treasure,
Do not take even a single copper from it.
12. Salutation to your mouth, which was not protected by the Law,
For it is like a house with no lock.³⁸
You, a tower of sand which rivers oppress,³⁹
The holy father Jacob of Serug
By his prayer frees it (= his soul?) from your abominable ruin.⁴⁰
13. Salutation to your teeth, about which it is written,
Saying, 'Woe to them who always laugh'.⁴¹
The snare of sinners, World, you who are called a net,
There is a time when you shall appear as a chasm
To be a hindrance in the path of the righteous.
14. Salutation to your tongue, compared to which is better
Sheol, the dwelling of sinners, the locks of which are darkness.⁴²
Unjust World, in the court of your tribunal
As you judge the righteous and defile the pure,
The days lengthen and the time grows long.

stanza, however, likely does not stem from a genuine work of his, but rather from a spurious attestation: the 'Rite of taking on the habit' (*Šər'ata šimata mənək"əsənnā*). It seems likely that this 'prayer' of Jacob of Serug, as mentioned in this stanza, is the final part of the text, the so-called 'Prayer of Blessing' (*Šalota burāke*), which follows the principal rite and homily. For a brief overview of this text, see 'Jacob of Serug', *E Ae*, III (2007), 262a–263b, 263b (W. Witakowski). On the identification of the Arabic version of this text, albeit without Jacob of Serug's name attached, see Tarras 2024. It remains to be seen whether the attribution of this text to Jacob of Serug occurred in the Arabic or Ethiopic node (or elsewhere), but it seems probable that its appearance in Ethiopic is an inheritance from Arabic. For the wider reception of Jacob of Serug in Ethiopic see Uhlig 1999, 13–15; 'Jacob of Serug', *E Ae*, III (2007), 262a–263b (W. Witakowski); Tedros Abraha 2015; and the updated, forthcoming treatment by Aaron Michael Butts and Ted Erho that was recently announced in Butts and Erho 2023, fn. 16.

⁴¹ Luke 6:25.

⁴² Sirach 28:21–22.

- 15. ሰላም፡ ለቃልኪ፡ እምብሂለ፡ ነገር፡ ዘኢያርመመ።
 ንብላዕ፡ ወንስተይ፡ እስመ፡ ንመውት፡ ጌሰመ።
 መፍቀሪተ፡ ሀከክ፡ ዓለም፡ ዘትጸልኢ፡ ሰላመ።
 እምታው፡ ፀኢ፡ ዘንተ፡ እምአፋኪ፡ ቃለ፡ አእምሮ፡ ሕሡመ።
 ይኼይስ፡ እምውስቴቱ፡ ትደደደ፡ ልጓመ።
- 16. ሰላም፡ ለእስትንፋስኪ፡ ለነፍሰ፡ ፀጋም፡ ዘይመስሎ።
 እስመ፡ ንፍጎቱ፡ ዕሩቅ፡ እምጥዲና፡ ሰብእ፡ ወተሳህሎ።
 ኦሳለም፡ ሀገረ፡ ጽልሑት፡ ወተበቅሎ።
 ተብህለ፡ በእንቲአሁ፡ አሌሎ፡ አሌሎ።
 ውስተ፡ ዐጸድኪ፡ ዐጸደ፡ ሀጉል፡ ለብእሲ፡ ዘሀሎ።
- 17. ሰላም፡ ለጉርዔኪ፡ ዘጥዑመ፡ ኮነ፡ በጎቤሁ።
 እምነ፡ ከሎ፡ ጣዕማት፡ ፍቅረ፡ ወራዙት፡ አዕርክቲሁ።
 ለዕለተ፡ ፍዳኪ፡ እመ፡ ተጎናደየ፡ መዋዕሊሁ።
 ኢይመስለኪ፡ ዘትድጎኒ፡ ወታመሥጢ፡ እምፍትሑ።
 በመድረክ፡ ጥጎት፡ ቀዊሞ፡ ናሁ።
- 18. ሰላም፡ ለክሳድኪ፡ ዘመልዕልተ፡ መትከፍ፡ መንበሩ።
 ወእደ፡ ወራዙት፡ መጸሩ።
 ዘማዊት፡ ዓለም፡ ለሰይጣን፡ ዝሙት፡ ማጎደሩ።
 ጸድቃንሰ፡ እለ፡ ጥበበ፡ መከሩ።
 ከመ፡ ኢይርአዩኪ፡ ውስተ፡ ጸድፍ፡ ርእሶሙ፡ ወገሩ።
- 19. ሰላም፡ ለመታክፍትኪ፡ እለ፡ ገደፋሁ፡ በትዕቢት።
 ለቀሊል፡ ጸር፡ ወለሠናይ፡ አርዑት።
 ገፋዲት፡ ዓለም፡ በዓልተ፡ አባጣዕ፡ እሞት።
 እፎ፡ ሄድከኒ፡ ለዘአልብየ፡ እንበለ፡ አሐቲ፡ በጣዕት።
 ለምንትኑ፡ ላዕሌኪ፡ ኢይዘንም፡ እሳት።

⁴³ Isaiah 22:13.

⁴⁴ The pejorative sense of the left hand of Christ is well-known in the New Testament, especially in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Note that the words ‘breath’ (‘*astanfās*’) and ‘soul’ (*nafs*) have a common root (Leslau 2010, 130b–131a).

Malkə'a ālam ('Image of the World'): An Ethiopic Hymn in Praise of Monasticism

15. Salutation to your voice, which is not silent from saying the phrase,
'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'.⁴³
Lover of chaos, World, you who despise peace,
Rather than you bringing forth this wicked word of wisdom
 from your mouth,
It is better that you put a halter on it.
16. Salutation to your breath, which resembles the soul to the left (of Christ),⁴⁴
For its blowing is devoid of the wellness of men or mercy.
O World, the place of deceit and vengeance,
About him it is said, 'Woe! Woe to him',
'Who is in your court, the court of perdition!'⁴⁵
17. Salutation to your throat, in which becomes tasty
Beyond every other taste the love of youths, its friends.
If the days of your time of judgement are delayed,
Do not think that you are safe and freed from its judgement:
Behold, it is standing at the threshold of the gate.
18. Salutation to your neck, whose seat is atop the shoulders,
And whose litter is the hands of youths.
Promiscuous World, the dwelling of Satan is fornication,
But the righteous, those who counsel wisdom,
Lest they see you, they cast themselves into a chasm.
19. Salutation to your shoulders, which arrogantly cast off
A light burden and a nice yoke.⁴⁶
World, master of sheep more oppressive than death,
O how you plunder me, I who have nothing except for a single ewe!⁴⁷
Why will fire not rain down upon you?

⁴⁵ Or: (Lines 4–5) "Woe! Woe to him", is said about / The man who is in your court, the court of perdition!'.
⁴⁶ That is, the yoke and burden of Christ (Matthew 11:30).

⁴⁷ Compare Nathan's rebuke of King David in 2 Kings 12:1–14, especially because of the mention of a 'single ewe'.

20. ሰላም፡ ለዘባንኪ፡ ሞጣሕተ፡ ዘማ፡ ተዐጺፎ።
ለምግባረ፡ ዝሙት፡ ተሳተፎ።
እንተ፡ ኢተአምሪ፡ ዓለም፡ ጊዜ፡ ተራሕቆት፡ ወተሐቅፎ።
ላዕለ፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ንጹሐ፡ ነፍስ፡ ተሐበልኪ፡ እፎ።
እስከ፡ ጎዮ፡ አልባስኪ⁹፡ በእደኪ፡ ገዲፎ።

21. ሰላም፡ ለእንግድዓኪ፡ እንተ፡ ወለጠ፡ ሕበሪሁ።
በኪነ፡ አብዳን፡ አንስት፡ እመልክአ፡ ፍጥረት፡ ዘቀዳሚሁ።
ኅዳጊተ፡ ፍቅር፡ ዓለም፡ ወወላጢተ፡ ዐርክ፡ ለለ፡ ጽባሑ።
እምነግህ፡ እስከ፡ ሠርክ፡ ከመ፡ ተጽሕፈ፡ ዜናሁ።
ይትዐለው፡ መንበርትኪ፡ ወይትፋለስ፡ ናሁ።

22. ሰላም፡ ለሕፅንኪ፡ |እንተ፡ ውስቴቱ፡ ረፈቁ።
ማኅበረ፡ ኃጥአን፡ ሰብእ፡ እለ፡ በኃጢአት፡ ልህቁ¹⁰።
ዐላዊተ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ዓለም፡ ወመስተቃርንት፡ ምስለ፡ ደቂቁ።
ኅዲጎ፡ አልባስ፡ ዘሥሩዕ፡ ሶበ፡ ጸላዕኪ፡ በሕቁ።
አባ፡ በርሱማ፡ ነበረ፡ ዕራቁ።

fol. 153^{bisr}

23. ሰላም፡ ለአእዳውኪ፡ እለ፡ ኢስፋሐት፡ እማንቱ።
ከመ፡ ይምሐራ፡ ነዳየ፡ ወከመ፡ ይሠህላ፡ ላዕለ፡ ንደቱ።
ድንጻዊት፡ ዓለም፡ ወኢመሓሪት፡ ለዘአልቦቱ።
ለምንት፡ በከ፡ ትተግሂ፡ ወትጻምዊ፡ በከንቱ።
እንዘ፡ ይወርሶ፡ ካልእ፡ ለብዕልኪ፡ ዝንቱ።

APPARATUS | ⁹ MS አልብስኪ፡ | ¹⁰ *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikāʿel has suggested reading ለፈቁ፡ instead.

⁴⁸ Ecclesiastes 3:5.

⁴⁹ Compare the language of Joseph escaping from Potiphar’s wife in Gen. 39:12.

⁵⁰ Sirach 18:26. Note that the verse that follows (Sirach 18:27), while not explicitly referenced here, begins with the juxtaposition, ‘But the wise man ...’ (ወብእሲስ፡ ጠቢብ፡ ...), which is like the juxtapositions made throughout the hymn.

⁵¹ Or if one accepts *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikāʿel’s suggestion of ለፈቁ፡, ‘Those who have clung to sin’.

⁵² An Egyptian saint who lived in the twelfth–thirteenth century and, having lost his inheritance left to him by his wealthy parents, preferred to live naked. The saint’s *vita*

Malkəʿa ʿālam ('Image of the World'): An Ethiopic Hymn in Praise of Monasticism

20. Salutation to your back, having been robed in a fornicator's vestment,
To engage in acts of fornication.
World, you who do not know the time for separating and that
for embracing,⁴⁸
O how you bound Joseph, pure of soul,
Until he fled, having left your clothes in your hands.⁴⁹
21. Salutation to your chest, which changed its colours
From its earlier, natural appearance in the manner of foolish women.
Neglecting love, World, and changing friends each morning,
'From morning until evening,' as its description is written,
Behold, 'your condition is perverted and transferred.'⁵⁰
22. Salutation to your bosom, on which reclines
The fellowship of sinners, those who have grown in sin.⁵¹
Perverter of Christ, World, and adversary of His children,
When you were wounded a little, having neglected his customary clothes,
'*Abbā* Barsauma sat naked.'⁵²
23. Salutation to your hands, which are not outstretched
To show compassion to the poor or to take mercy on their poverty.
Avaricious, World, and unmerciful to those with nothing,
Why do you pointlessly keep vigil and toil in vain
As another inherits this, your wealth?⁵³

may be found both in the *Synaxarium* on 5 Päg^wəmen and in collected *vitae*, such as MS EMMML 1834, fols 106va–131rb (CAe 6547). In both, he admonishes himself to follow the words of the Gospel (quoting Mark 8:35–38; Matthew 16:25–27), the most relevant part of which (Mark 8:36; Matthew 16:26) reads, 'What does it benefit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?' (ደብቅዖ፡ ለሰብእ፡ ለእመ፡ ኩሎ፡ ዓለመ፡ ረብሐ፡ ወነፍሶ፡ ሆኑለ፡). In the longer version from MS EMMML 1834, he also paraphrases James 4:4 while informing his relatives that he will not fight for his inheritance: 'And the one who loves this world is an enemy of God' (ወዘሰ፡ አፍቀሮ፡ ለዝንቱ፡ ዓለም፡ ጸላኢ ሆ፡ ውእቱ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡). The Arabic *vita* on which the Ethiopic is based was published and translated by W. E. Crum (Crum 1907). For an updated study, see Swanson 2013.

⁵³ Mark 8:36.

- 24. ሰላም፡ እብል፡ ለመዛርዕኪ¹¹፡ መንታ።
 እለ፡ ይትዐገላ፡ ዘልፈ፡ ንዋየ፡ ምስኪን፡ ወእጓለ፡ ማውታ።
 ከማኪ፡ ዓለም፡ እስመ፡ ይትዐጸ፡ አንቀጸ፡ ቤታ።
 ዘተወከፈት፡ አንጋደ፡ በመዋዕለ፡ ኩሉ፡ ሕይወታ።
 ብፅዕት፡ ይእቲ፡ መሓሪት፡ ማርታ።

- 25. ሰላም፡ ለኵርናዕኪ፡ በቅሩባኒሁ፡ ዘተኅየለ።
 ለነኪራንኪሰ¹²፡ መዊኦቶሙ፡ ኢተሐበለ።
 ጸላዒተ፡ ነዳይ፡ ዓለም፡ ዘታፈቅሪ፡ ባዕለ።
 ኅጣእኩ፡ በእንቲኦኪ፡ ወኢረኩብኩ፡ አምሳለ።
 እንበለ፡ ሰይጣን፡ ወሞት፡ ዘነሥኡኪ፡ ክፍለ።

- 26. ሰላም፡ ለእመትኪ፡ መስፈርተ፡ ዐመፃ፡ ወአድልዎ።
 ዘአረፋቲ፡ ሰፈረ፡ ለማኅፈደ፡ ፍትወት፡ ወዘምዎ።
 ግሕሥተ፡ ህላዌ፡ ዓለም፡ እምፍኖተ፡ ፍቅር፡ ወተአኅዎ።
 ሌሊተ፡ ወፅአ፡ ገሪማ፡ ምግባራተኪ፡ ለቢዎ።
 ወአንቀጸ፡ ቤቱ፡ ክብርት፡ ኅደገ፡ አርኂዎ።

- 27. ሰላም፡ ለእራሓትኪ፡ እንተ፡ ዲቤሁ፡ ተለክአ።
 ኃጢአት፡ ለሞት፡ ቀኖቱ፡ እምቀኖተ፡ ኅጺን፡ ዘጸንዐ።
 እፎ፡ ዓለም፡ ኢተሐውሪ¹³፡ ርቱዐ።
 እምፈሪሳውያን፡ ኅብስተ፡ ትትዐቀቢ፡ ወእምስዱቃውያን፡ ብሑአ።
 አኮኑ፡ መምህረ፡ ሕግ፡ ላዕሌኪ፡ ሠርዐ።

APPARATUS | ¹¹ MS originally had "ዲኪ፡", but this was later changed to "ዕኪ፡ | ¹²
 MS "ስ፡ | ¹³ *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikā'el has suggested *ዘኢተሐውሪ*: here.

⁵⁴ Seemingly a reference to the Martha mentioned in the *Synaxarium* entry for 3 Sane, see Guidi 1906, 536–538. A rich Egyptian woman who frequently engaged in acts of fornication, she repented after being denied entry to a certain church. Taking on a monastic life, she barricaded herself in a house for virgins and remained there until her death. The composer is playing on the irony of the fact that, while the World is

24. 'Salutation', I say, to your twin arms
Which continually rob the money of the poor and orphans.
Since the gate of her house was locked like you are, World,
Blessed is Martha the merciful,⁵⁴
She who had received kin all the days of her life.
25. Salutation to your elbows, which oppressed their neighbours,
But did not dare to conquer others.
Opponent of the poor, World, you who love the wealthy,
I sin because of you and I have not found anything comparable
Except Satan and Death who receive you as their portion.
26. Salutation to your forearms, measures of injustice and hypocrisy,⁵⁵
Which measured the walls of the tower of desire and fornication.
World, detached from the path of love and fraternity,
Garimā, having understood your works, went out at night
And neglected to open the doors of his honoured house.⁵⁶
27. Salutation to your palms, on which is inscribed
Sin, the sting of death,⁵⁷ which is stronger than a nail of iron.
How, World, do you not walk uprightly?
Is it not that the Teacher of the Law ordained for you
That you beware the bread of the Pharisees and the leaven
of the Sadducees?⁵⁸

cursed because it is locked to the poor (see stanza 53), Martha was blessed for locking herself inside to repent.

⁵⁵ In the sense that one customarily uses the forearm as a unit of measure, as was the case for the cubit. This connection is reinforced by the fact that the words for 'cubit' and 'forearm' are the same in Gə'əz (*'əmat*, per Leslau 2010, 135b).

⁵⁶ Likely a reference to the *Dərsāna Garimā* (CAe 1285), attributed to Yoḥannəs of Aksum and edited in Conti Rossini 1898, and not Garimā's entry in the *Synaxarium* since the *Synaxarium* entry does not mention 'the doors' specifically (although it is important to note that the *Synaxarium* entry itself is likely dependent upon the *Dərsāna Garimā*. For the dating of the text, see Brita 2010, 22 with an updated analysis of this text and relevant bibliography).

⁵⁷ As in 1 Corinthians 15:56. Note that the words for 'sting' and 'nail' here are the same in Gə'əz (*qannot*, per Leslau 2010, 87b), hence the comparison.

⁵⁸ Matthew 16:6.

- 28. ሰላም፡ ለአጻብዕኪ፡ እለ፡ ጠፊሐ፡ ለመዳ።
 በሕገ፡ ሰፋኒት፡ ብእሲት፡ ወለተ፡ እጎትኪ፡ ሄሮድያዳ።
 ቀታሊተ፡ ፍቅር፡ ዓለም፡ ወተመያኒት፡ እመ፡ ይሁዳ።
 እፎ፡ ይከውን፡ ፍርሀትኪ፡ አመ፡ ዕለተ፡ ግሩም፡ ፍዳ።
 ሶበ፡ መኳንንት፡ ላዕሌኪ፡ ይፈትሑ፡ ዕዳ።

- 29. ሰላም፡ ለአጽፋረ፡ እዴኪ፡ እለ፡ ወለጣሁ፡ ለሥራይ።
 [...] ¹⁴
 ዘመደ፡ አብዕልት፡ ዓለም፡ ወኢሕዝብኪ፡ ነዳይ።
 እስመ፡ አንቲ፡ ተመሰልኪዮ፡ ለመምህርኪ፡ ዕቡይ።
 ከመ፡ አውደቂዮ፡ አውደቁኪ፡ እምሣልስ፡ ሰማይ።

- 30. ሰላም፡ ለአጥባዕትኪ፡ እለ፡ ሐፀናሁ፡ እምናእስ።
 ለግዙፍ፡ ሕሊና፡ ወለዕቡይ፡ መንፈስ።
 አዓለም፡ ሐመረ፡ | ኃጢአት፡ ወርኸስ።
 መኑ፡ ይጌሥጽ፡ እምቅድሜየ፡ መዋግደ፡ ባሕርኪ፡ ባእስ።
 ወያበጽሕ፡ ኅበ፡ ዛሕን፡ ወመርስ።

- 31. ሰላም፡ ለገቦኪ፡ ነጺፈ፡ ዘርቤታት፡ ዘአደሞ።
 እንተ፡ ላዕሌሁ፡ ነስነሱ፡ መጽርየ፡ ወቀናንሞ።
 አመ፡ አቤሜሌክ፡ ጸለየ፡ በጥብዕተ፡ ልብ፡ አስተሐሚሞ።
 ተዋልጦትኪ፡ ዓለም፡ እስመ፡ ፈድፈደ፡ ገሪሞ።
 መዋዕለ፡ መቅሠፍትኪ፡ ዘአሜሃ፡ አኅላፈ፡ ነዊሞ።

- 32. ሰላም፡ ለከርሥኪ፡ እንተ፡ ህላዌሁ፡ አርኅበ ¹⁵።
 ለድዉየ፡ ሕሊና፡ ከመ፡ ይኩኖ፡ ምስካበ።

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APPARATUS | ¹⁴ This line is lacking in the MS. *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikā'el has suggested that the missing line could be ኅበ፡ ኅላፈ፡ ንዋይ። | ¹⁵ MS ግበ፡

⁵⁹ Herodias was the wife of Herod Antipas and was previously the wife of his brother Philip. Due to John's criticism of their marriage, Herodias was vengeful of him and, after her daughter's dancing moved Herod to offer her anything she wanted, she convinced her daughter to request John's head (Mark 6:22–28; Matthew 14:6–10).

28. Salutation to your fingers, which are accustomed to clap
In the manner of the governess, the daughter of your sister, Herodias.⁵⁹
Killer of love, World, the conniving mother of Judas,
How will your fear be on the dreadful day of judgement,
When the judges pronounce the debt against you?
29. Salutation to your fingernails, which exchange medicine,
[...]⁶⁰
Ancestor of the wealthy, World, the poor are not your people,
For you resembled your proud teacher
As you cast him down, they cast you from the Third Heaven.⁶¹
30. Salutation to your breasts which nurtured from youth
A stubborn mind and a proud spirit.
O World, the ark of sin and wickedness,
Who will rebuke the waves of your quarrelsome sea⁶² before me
And make me arrive at a calm (place) and a port.
31. Salutation to your sides, which took delight in spreading out carpets
Upon which they had sprinkled saffron and cinnamon.⁶³
When Abimelech, being anxious, prayed with devotion
Because he was greatly afraid of dealing with you, World,⁶⁴
He made the days of your torture pass by then, having fallen asleep.⁶⁵
32. Salutation to your stomach, the nature of which causes hunger
In order that it be a couch for one sick of mind.

⁶⁰ This line is lacking in the MS. If *Marigetā* Henok Gabramikā'el's suggestion is accepted, however, it would read as: 'Salutation to your fingernails, which exchange medicine for fleeting wealth'.

⁶¹ See stanza 10.

⁶² Mark 4:37–39.

⁶³ Proverbs 7:17.

⁶⁴ Jeremiah 46:5–8; see the note below.

⁶⁵ Abimelech 'the Ethiopian' (ὁ Αἰθίοψ), who miraculously slept for sixty-six years and thereby escaped the siege of Jerusalem, also being unaware of the Babylonian exile (4 Baruch 5).

ምግባር፡ አብዕል ትኒ፡ ይመስለኒ፡ ዕፁብ።
እፎ፡ ይዘግብ፡ አሐዱ¹⁶፡ ወኢይትራዳእ፡ ምንዱብ።
እንዘ፡ አሐዱ፡ ይመውት፡ ኅዲኅ፡ መዝገበ።

33. ሰላም፡ ለልብኪ፡ ዘኢይሄሉ፡ በሰማይ።
እስመ፡ ህላዌሁ፡ ረሰየ፡ ኅበ¹⁷፡ ሀሎ፡ ንዋይ።
በእንተ፡ ምግባርኪ፡ ዓለም፡ ማኅበረ፡ ክሉ፡ እክይ።
እግዚአብሔር፡ አጥፍኦ፡ ቀዳሜ፡ ፍጥረቱ፡ በማይ።
ወአውዐዩ፡ መላእክት፡ በእሳት፡ ወተይ።

34. ሰላም፡ ለክፍለ-ደቅኪ፡ ጊዜ፡ ፈተኖን፡ ፈጣሪ።
እንተ፡ ውስቴቶን፡ ረከበ፡ ምግባር፡ መሠርይ፡ ወተጠያሪ።
ዓለመ፡ ሥጋ፡ ዘይእዜ፡ ወአኮ፡ ዘደኅሪ።
ተግሕሡ፡ በእንተ፡ ዝንቱ፡ እምፍኖትኪ፡ መሥገሪ።
አባ፡ እንጦኒ፡ ወአባ፡ መቃሪ።

35. ሰላም፡ ለሕሊናኪ፡ ዘኢይሔሊ፡ አሠንዮ።
እስመ፡ ልማድኪ፡ ዓለም፡ ምግባር፡ ትምይንት፡ ወአእከዮ።
እግዚአብሔር፡ ታሕተ፡ አርዑትኪ፡ ሰበ፡ ርእዮ።
እንዘ፡ ይወድቅ¹⁸፡ እመንበሩ፡ በሃፈ፡ ገጹ፡ ሴሰዮ¹⁹።
ወመስተገብረ፡ ብእሴ፡ ለንጉሥ፡ ረሰዮ።

APPARATUS | ¹⁶ MS ግደ፡ | ¹⁷ MS ኅበ፡ ኅበ፡ | ¹⁸ MS ግደ፡ . One could alternatively emend the text to ያወድቅ፡ . | ¹⁹ MS ሴሰዮ፡ .

⁶⁶ Matthew 6:19–21, especially verse 21: ‘For where your treasure is, your heart will be also’.
⁶⁷ MS ‘Fellowship’.
⁶⁸ Seemingly a reference to the flood story from Genesis 6 (in particular, Genesis 6:17): ‘Lo, I will bring the water of the deluge upon the earth, and I will expunge everything of the flesh and spirit of life from the earth and that which is below heaven. Every fleshly thing will die’ (ወናሁ፡ አነ፡ አመጽእ፡ ማየ፡ አይኅ፡ ዲበ፡ ምድር፡ ወእደመስሰ፡ ክሉ፡ ዘሥጋ፡ ወ ዘመንፈሰ፡ ሕይወት፡ ላዕለ፡ ምድር፡ ወዘሀሉ፡ መትሕተ፡ ሰማይ፡ ወይመውት፡ ክሉ፡ ዘሥጋ።).
⁶⁹ Compare the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19, especially because of the mention of ‘fire and sulphur’ (*ʿasāt watay*), which is paralleled in Genesis 19:24.
⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 18:10. Those who practice magic (*mašarray*) and augury (*taṭayyāre baʿof*) are also explicitly excommunicated in the *Senodos* (Bausi 1995, 68–69), but the choice of phrase clearly makes it a reference to Deuteronomy.

The conduct of the rich seems astonishing to me,
How one hoards and does not help someone in distress
Even though he dies, leaving treasure behind.

33. Salutation to your heart, which is not in heaven,
For it set its nature where there is wealth.⁶⁶
World, the dwelling⁶⁷ of every evil, because of your deeds
The Lord destroyed His first creation with water⁶⁸
And angels burned it with fire and sulphur.⁶⁹
34. Salutation to your kidneys, which, when the Creator tested them,
He found in them deeds of magic and augury.⁷⁰
World of flesh which is for now and not for what is after,
ʾAbbā Anthony and ʾAbbā Macarius
Withdrew from your ensnaring path for this reason.⁷¹
35. Salutation to your mind, which does not ponder doing good,
For your habit, World, is to do works of deceit and evil.
When the Lord saw him (= Adam) beneath your yoke,
Falling from his throne, He fed him by the sweat of his brow⁷²
And He made the king a cultivator.⁷³

⁷¹ Anthony and Macarius are among the most esteemed early Christian monastics. There is a *malkə'* for Anthony (CAe 6483) found in two related manuscripts, BL Or. 574, fols 33rc–36rb and BL Or. 577, fols 73vb–76va, in which the corresponding stanza for the kidneys contains these thematically relevant lines: '... And to your kidneys, salutation, an offering of the Priest of Gabbatha. / Anthony, (like) Abraham, the husband of holy Sarah, / As you were separated from the order of the world (like Abraham was separated from) Terah, / Separate me from the world, whose path is crooked.' (... ወለኩልያቲክ፡ ሰላም፡ መሥዋዕተ፡ ካህን፡ ዘሊቶስጥራ፡፡እንጦንስ፡ አብርሃም፡ ብእሴ፡ ቅድስት፡ ሳራ፡ ፡ከመ፡ ተሌለይክ፡ እምሥርዐተ፡ ዓለም፡ ታራ፡ ፡ሌልየኒ፡ እምዓለም፡ ዘጠዋይ፡ ምሕዋራ፡ ፡). These lines also closely resemble the lines of a stanza from *Malkə'a Māryām* (CAe 2891): '... Virgin Mary, boast of the children of Sarah, / Free me, daughter of Qəsrā, from the anguish of the world of shadow, / For its path is narrow and crooked.' (... ማርያም፡ ድንግል፡ ትምክሕተ፡ ደቂቃ፡ ለሳራ፡፡ባልሕኒ፡ ወለተ፡ ቅስራ፡ ለዓለመ፡ ጽልመት፡ እምጻዕራ፡፡እስመ፡ መቅዕን፡ ወጠዋይ፡ ምሕዋራ፡ ፡).

⁷² Genesis 3:19.

⁷³ The kingship of Adam and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden (on account of which he was forced to farm for sustenance) is discussed in the *Kəbra nagašt* (*Glory of the Kings*), chapter 3. According to the text, '[the Lord] appointed under Him Adam as king over all He had created' (Bezold 1905, ፪).

36. ሰላም፡ ለአማራትኪ፡ እሳተ፡ ቅንኣት፡ ዘይበል።
መናኔ፡ መፍቅዳት፡ ብእሲ፡ ለጣዕመ፡ ተድላኪ፡ ሰበ፡ ይጸልኦ።
ለሕሊና፡ ዜአየኒ፡ ሰበ፡ አፍቅሮትኪ፡ አስተናሥኦ።
ጳራቅሊጦስ፡ ዜና፡ መንፈስ²⁰፡ ጽድቅ፡ ዜና፡ ስምኪ፡ ያርስ።
ከመ፡ ባህለ፡ ቅዱስ፡ አርሳኒ፡ ዘልቡ፡ ኢሞኦ።

37. ሰላም፡ ለንዋየ፡ ውስጥኪ፡ እንተ፡ እምኔሁ፡ ሠረጸ።
ትዕቢት፡ ወቅንኣት፡ ወሐሰት፡ ርእሰ፡ ዐመፃ።
ታስተድሳረኒ፡ ዓለም፡ ለነፍስ፡ እምርዋጻ።
ለዓለምየ፡ ደኃሪት፡ ዘነሣእክዋ፡ በዕፃ።
ዐጻዌ፡ ኅዋሳው፡ ቅድሜየ፡ ኢይዕጼ፡ አንቀጻ።

38. ሰላም፡ ለሕንብርትኪ፡ እስከ፡ በውዳሴ፡ ዘከሮ።
በዓለ፡ ማሕሌት፡ ሰሎሞን፡ ፍቅረ፡ ወለተ፡ ፈርዖን፡ ዘአገበሮ።
ኦዓለም፡ ምልእተ፡ እበድ፡ በኢያእምሮ።
ካልእሰ፡ ኢተዜነውኩ፡ ነገሮ።
አምሳለ፡ ካልኣት፡ መለያልይ፡ ከመ፡ እገክር፡ ነውሮ።

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39. ሰላም፡ ለማሕፀንኪ፡ እንተ፡ እምኔሁ፡ ተነክሩ።
ኃጥኣን፡ ዕደው፡ እለ፡ ኤሳው፡ ወማሳበሩ።
ለተድላ፡ መንበርትኪ፡ ዓለም፡ እንተ፡ ተመውኡ፡ በጣዕመ፡ ፍቅሩ።
ተብህለ፡ ቅድመ፡ እግሮሙ፡ አሕባለ፡ መሥገርት፡ ሠተሩ።
ወበፍኖቶሙ፡ የማናዊ²¹፡ ዕቅፍተ፡ አንበሩ።

APPARATUS | ²⁰ MS "ሰ፡ | ²¹ MS "ዌ፡

⁷⁴ Arsenius' decision to depart from the world in favour of an ascetic life is recounted both in his *Synaxarium* entry on 13 Gənbət and in the collection of monastic apophthegmata titled *Filkəsyus* (question 47), spuriously attributed to and named after the Syriac bishop Philoxenus of Mabbug. The version in the *Synaxarium* is more likely the version that underlies the reference here; compare the *Synaxarium*: 'Arsenius! Arsenius! Depart from this world and you shall be saved!' (አርሳኒ፡ አርሳኒ፡ ፃእ፡ እምዝንቱ፡ ዓለም፡ ወአንተ፡ ትድህን።; Colin 1997, 66–67, 258–259) and the *Filkəsyus*: 'O Arse-

36. Salutation to your intestines, which the fire of envy consumes
When a man, rejecting desires, detests the taste of your delights.
When your love compels my mind also,
May the story of the Paraclete, the spirit of righteousness, make
it (= the mind) forget the story of your name
Like the saying of Saint Arsenius, whose heart it could not conquer.⁷⁴
37. Salutation to your internal organs, from which sprouted
Arrogance, envy, and deceit, the chief of iniquity.⁷⁵
May the World delay me from the course of my soul,
I, who received my final world by lot,
Lest the gatekeeper close its gates before me.
38. Salutation to your navel, to the extent that he remembered it with (a song
of) praise,
The master of song, Solomon, whom the love of Pharaoh's daughter
coerced.⁷⁶
But I have not heard anything else,
O World, full of foolishness in ignorance,
(Other than) that I should remember (your navel's) fault like (those of) the
other body parts.
39. Salutation to your womb, from which were estranged
The sinful men of Esau and his fellowship:
World, they were defeated by the savour of the love of your ways' delight(s).
It is said, 'Before their feet they have stretched out ensaring ropes
'And they have set a stumbling block in their rightward path'.⁷⁷

nius, flee from men and you shall prosper' (አኦርሳንዮስ፡ ጉየይ፡ እምሰብእ፡ ወአንተ፡ ተሐ
ዩ።; MS Gondar, Fogarā Ḥannā, EMM 8797, fol. 123ra).

⁷⁵ Recontextualizing Psalm 26:12, 'And iniquity deceives herself' (ወሐሰወት፡ ርእሳ፡ ዐመፃ፡)
with an apparent misreading of 'herself' (*rə'sā*) for 'head of' (*rə'sa*).

⁷⁶ Song of Songs 7:3 (based on Gleave 1951, 32), 'Your navel is like a polished bowl that
is not wanting from its mixture ...' (ሕንብርትኪ፡ ከመ፡ ማዕከክ፡ ፍሑቅ፡ ዘኢየዐርቅ፡ እምቱስሐቱ
...). The connection between the woman in the Song of Songs and Pharaoh's daughter
whom Solomon marries in 1 Kings 3:1 has been argued for since at least Origen, an
interpretation that continues in Ethiopia up to today but was also widespread in the
past as attested by both this text and James Bruce (see Bruce 1790, I, 494).

⁷⁷ Psalm 139:5–6, 'The arrogant have hidden a snare for me; they have stretched ropes
(as) snares for my feet and laid stumbling blocks in my path' (ወኅብኡ፡ ሊተ፡ መሥገ
ርተ፡ ዕቡያን፤ / ወሠተሩ፡ አሕባለ፡ መሣግር፡ ለእገርየ፤ / ወአንበሩ፡ ዕቅፍተ፡ ውስተ፡ ፍኖትየ።).

- 40. ሰላም፡ ለሐቋኪ፡ ዘኢደግደገ፡ በጾም።
ከመ፡ ሐቋ፡ ጻድቅ፡ የሐንስ፡ እንተ፡ ቅናቱ፡ አዲም።
አምሳለ፡ ጎልፈቱ፡ ለዕለት²²፡ ወተፋልሶቱ፡ ለሕልም።
እምባቢሎን፡ እስከነ፡ ፋርስ፡ ዘተፋለስኪ፡ ዓለም።
ወእምህየኒ፡ ጎለፍኪ፡ ጎበ፡ ጽርዕ፡ ወሮም።

- 41. ሰላም፡ ለአቀፍጽኪ፡ ዘተመስሎ፡ በሐጺን።
አመ፡ አስተርአዩ፡ በሕልም፡ ሥዕለ፡ አርባዕቱ፡ ሥልጣን።
አዓለም፡ መሀደምተ፡ ላህይ፡ ወሥን።
ነሚኦ፡ ኪያኪ፡ በእዴሁ፡ ከመ፡ ሐጸ፡ እሳት፡ ርሱን።
ቀስቶ፡ ይዌስቅ፡ ወይነድፍ፡ ሰይጣን።

- 42. ሰላም፡ ለአብራክኪ፡ ዘኢተለዋ፡ ትምህርቶ።
ለመምህረ፡ ሕግ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ እምህላዌ፡ አርድእት፡ በተአትቶ።
ላዕለ፡ መዝራዕትኪ፡ ዓለም፡ ዘያሰምከ፡ መዝራዕቶ።
በመልዕልተ፡ ኖፍ፡ ከመ፡ ዘሐነጸ፡ ቤቶ።
በከ፡ ይተግህ፡ ወይጻሙ፡ ከንቶ።

- 43. ሰላም፡ ለአእጋርኪ፡ ዘየዐውዳ፡ መራሕብተ።
ወበቤትኒ²³፡ ኢየዐርፋ፡ ንስቲተ።
ሶበኒ፡ ፀርኪ፡ ወራዛ፡ እንዘ፡ የጎልፋ፡ ፍኖተ።
ነዓ፡ ናንገርግር፡ ትቤልዮ፡ ወናስተሐውዝ፡ ስዕመተ።
መሥዋዕተ፡ ሰላምየ፡ ለዓለም፡ ወእኑየ፡ አንተ።

- 44. ሰላም፡ ለሰኮናኪ፡ እለ፡ ልማዶን፡ ረዊጽ።
ውስተ፡ ፍና፡ ስሕተት፡ ወዳጎፅ።
እኪተ፡ ውሳጤ፡ ዓለም፡ ወሠናይተ፡ አፍኦ፡ በገጽ።

APPARATUS | ²² Changed in MS from "ቱ" since it was likely a scribal error due to the other ቱ in its vicinity. | ²³ MS ወበቤትኒ :

⁷⁸ A clear reference to John the Baptist, who wore a leather girdle (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6), a precedent set by the prophet Elijah (4 Kings 1:8). John's inclusion into this composition is apropos because of his (and Elijah's) association with (proto-)

40. Salutation to your hips, which did not wither in fasting
Like the hips of righteous John, whose girdle was leather.⁷⁸
Like the passing of a day and the meandering of a dream,
From Babylon to Persia you wandered, World,
And from there you passed to Greece and Rome.⁷⁹
41. Salutation to your thighs, which resembled iron
When the image of four kingdoms appeared in a dream.⁸⁰
O World, spectre of beauty and charm,
Having taken you in his hand like an arrow of red-hot fire,
Satan stretched his bow and let loose.
42. Salutation to your knees, which did not follow the teaching
Of the Teacher of the Law, Christ, in withdrawing from the presence
of the disciples.
World, he who leans his arms upon yours,
Like the man who built his house upon sand,⁸¹
Pointlessly keeps vigil and toils in vain.⁸²
43. Salutation to your feet, which go around the streets⁸³
And do not rest even a little at home.
As they pass along the road, when (you see) your young enemy,
You say to him, 'Come, let us roll around and enjoy a kiss
'As an offering of my peace forever' and 'You are my brother'.
44. Salutation to your heels, whose custom is to run
On the paths of error and stumbling.
Evil inside, World, yet outwardly beautiful in appearance,

monasticism and since earlier in the same manuscript (fols 64va–67rb) there is a *malkə'* for him (CAe 6724) with the lines, 'Salutation to your hips, which (were) girded willingly (with) / A cord of virginity inwardly and a leather girdle outwardly ...' (ሰ ላም፡ ለሐቆክ፡ እንተ፡ ዐጠቀ፡ ጥቡዐ፡ ሐብለ፡ ድንግልና፡ በውስጥ፡ ወቅናተ፡ አዲም፡ በአፍክ፡ ...). This association of John's girdle with virginity also stands at odds with the depiction of the World found throughout *Malkə'a ʿālam*.

⁷⁹ Compare the statue from Nebuchadnezzar II's dream in Daniel 2, which also appears in the next stanza.

⁸⁰ Daniel 2:33.

⁸¹ Matthew 7:26–27. The same imagery is evoked in stanza 12.

⁸² A similar choice of verbs and sequence is found in stanza 23.

⁸³ Literally, 'the wide places'.

ሰበ፡ ኢሀሎ፡ መንግሥትኪ፡ ወሥልጣንኪ፡ ሕፁፅ።
ፈታዌ፡ ክህነት፡ ኮነ፡ ምዘይን፡ ዘለምጽ።

45. ሰላም፡ ለመክየድኪ፡ እንተ፡ ልምላሜሁ፡ ሐዋዝ።
እምቅኔ፡ ሥጋ፡ ወነፍስ፡ እስመ፡ ውእቱ፡ ግዑዝ።
በዓልተ፡ ክሂል፡ ዓለም፡ ዘባሕርይኪ፡ ዐዚዝ።
እስመ፡ ኮንኪ፡ ከመ፡ ሰይጠን፡ መሠረተ፡ ሀክክ፡ ወጋእዝ።
እፎ፡ ነግእኪ፡ ፍጥረተ፡ ዘሕምዝ።

46. ሰላም፡ ለአፃብዐ፡ እግርኪ፡ እለ፡ ይሰረገዋ፡ ወትረ።
አክሊለ፡ ባሕርይ፡ ጸዐዳ፡ እንተ፡ ኢኮነ፡ ነኪረ።
ባሕርየ፡ ፍጥረትኪ፡ ዓለም፡ እንዘ፡ ያኤምር፡ ፈጠረ።
ሎቱ፡ ረሰየ፡ ፈጣሪ፡ ሰማየ፡ ሰማያት፡ መንበረ።
ወእንተ፡ ውስቴታ፡ አስዋክ፡ ወሀበኪ፡ ምድረ።

47. ሰላም፡ ለአጽፋረ፡ እግርኪ፡ መልዕልተ፡ ዐሠርቱ፡ መራናት።
እለ፡ ይጸድላ፡ ዘልፈ፡ ከመ፡ ማኅቶት።
እኅተ፡ ሐሊባ፡ ዓለም፡ ዘልማድኪ፡ ዝሙት።
ለወለትኪ፡ ኢሥህልት፡ ዘትእምርተ፡ ሰማ፡ መቅሠፍት።
መኑ፡ እምአድኅነኒ፡ ለብእሲ፡ ስሑት።

fol. 154^{bis}v

48. ሰላም፡ ለቆምኪ፡ እንተ፡ አርትዐ፡ አካሎ።
አካለ፡ ውሳጤኪሰ፡ ለጠዋይ፡ ይመስሎ።
መፍቀሪተ፡ ዝሙት፡ ዓለም፡ ጸላኢተ፡ ንጽሕ፡ ወተድንግሎ።
ሠናየ፡ መከሩ፡ ለበድሮሙ፡ ኢይቁሙኪ፡ ማእከሎ።
እእሩገ፡ ምኔት፡ ጠቢባን፡ ዘስማ፡ ሃሌሎ።

⁸⁴ 2 Chronicles 26:16–21.

⁸⁵ Ezekiel 23.

⁸⁶ Hosea 1:6. Later the Lord proclaims that He will show mercy to her (Hosea 2:23).

⁸⁷ A shortened form of Dabra Hälleluyā, an alternate name for Dabra Dāmmo, the famous early monastic centre in Təgrāy. While the reference may simply be generic, taking the monastery as a symbol for monastic communities broadly, the context of this stanza strongly suggests that it is a reference to *Gadla Takla Hāymānot* (the *Vita of Takla Hāymānot*). Takla Hāymānot, although a thirteenth-century saint, besides being one of the most famous monastic figures in Ethiopia, is seen as a foundational figure in the Ethiopian and Eritrean monastic tradition. In the Dabra Libānos recension of the *Vita*, the saint ‘arrives in Təgre, at Dabra Hälleluyā, that is, Dāmmo, the place of ‘*Abbā*

Malkə'a 'ālam ('Image of the World'): An Ethiopic Hymn in Praise of Monasticism

When your kingdom and your diminished dominion were no more,
The usurper of priesthood, Uzziah, became a leper.⁸⁴

45. Salutation to your soles, whose tenderness is pleasant
For they are free from the labour of flesh and soul.
Lady of power, World, you whose nature is strong,
For you became like Satan, the foundation of turmoil and strife;
O how you received the venomous nature.
46. Salutation to your toes, which are always adorned
With crowns of white pearl, which is not unusual.
Knowing how to make your creation's nature, World,
The Creator made the heaven of heavens his throne
And he gave you the earth on which are thorns.
47. Salutation to your toenails, atop ten lampstands,
Which shine always like lamps.
Sister of Oholibah, World, you whose habit is fornication,⁸⁵
The sign of your daughter Unmerciful's name is punishment:⁸⁶
Who, then, would save me, the man led astray?
48. Salutation to your stature, which straightens its spine (outwardly),
But inside your spine appears crooked.
Lover of fornication, World, hater of chastity and virginity,
The wise elders of the monastery which is named (Dabra) Hällelo⁸⁷
Counselled well not to stop for you in the midst of their race.

⁸⁴*Aragāwi*, (ወበጽሐ፡ ትግሬ፡ ጎበ፡ ደብረ፡ ሃሌሉያ፡ እንተ፡ ይእቲ፡ ዳዎ፡ መካነ፡ አባ፡ አረጋዊ፡) where he receives the cowl (*qobə*) and schema (*'askemā*) from the abbot there, *'Abbā* Yohānni (Budge 1906, translation 178–179, text 73; the translation is our own). The *Vita* immediately continues by noting that Takla Hāymānot, while he was there, would frequently say, ‘... Let him follow the saying of the Apostle: “For I prefer spiritual love, on account of which I have rejected everything and set it (the World) as an enemy that I might gain Christ. For myself it seems to me that I have not yet received perfection, but I forget what is behind me and proceed to what is before me”’ (ወያተሉ፡ ባህለ፡ ዘሐዋርያ፡ እስመ፡ አብደርኩ፡ ፍቅረ፡ መንፈሳዊ፡ ዘበእንቲአሁ፡ ገደፍኩ፡ ከሉ፤ ወረሰይክዎ፡ ከመ፡ ዕዳው፡ ከመ፡ እርብሐ፡ ለክርስቶስ፤ ሊተሰ፡ ይመስለኒ፡ ዓዲየ፡ ኢነሣእኩ፡ ፍጻሜ፡ እስመ፡ ዘድኅሬየ፡ እረስዕ፡ ወዘቅድሜየ፡ እሜልዕ፤), quoting Philippians 3:8, 13–14 (Budge 1906, translation 178–179, text 73; the translation is our own). On the monastery, including its names, see Nonsitsin 2025 and Bausi 2020.

49. ሰላም፡ ለመልክእኪ፡ እለ፡ ዘከርነ፡ በምንታዌ።
ዘውሳጤሁ፡ ምግባረ፡ ወዘአፍአሁ፡ ግጻዌ።
መሥገርተ፡ አብዳን፡ ዓለም፡ በተድላ፡ መብልዕ፡ ወስርጋዌ።
ጠቢባንሰ፡ የኅሥሡ፡ እማኅበርኪ፡ ፅማዌ።
ወእምጥዒናኪ፡ ማእምራን፡ ያፈቅሩ፡ ደዌ።
50. ሰላም፡ ለፀአተ፡ ነፍስኪ፡ አመ፡ ምጽአቱ፡ ለእግዚእነ።
እምድኅረ፡ አብዳሕኪ፡ ዓለም፡ ዘአካለ፡ ርስዓን፡ መጠነ።
እስመ፡ አሜሃ፡ ትሰፍን፡ መንግሥተ፡ ሰማያት፡ ተስፋነ።
ወኢይክሉ፡ አድኅኖተኪ፡ እለ፡ ተብህሉ፡ ጻድቃነ።
ሱቱፋነ፡ ክብርኪ፡ ወብዕልኪ፡ ዘይማስን፡ ፍጡነ።
51. ሰላም፡ ለበድነ፡ ሥጋኪ፡ አምሳለ፡ ካልእት፡ አብድንት።
ዘኢይረክቦ፡ ትንሣኤ፡ አመ፡ ተነፍሑ፡ አቅርንት።
እኪተ፡ ርስዓን፡ ዓለም፡ ዘኅለፈኪ፡ ውርዙት።
እንዘ፡ አንቲ፡ እቤራይት፡ በዓልተ፡ ሰብአ፡ ክረምት።
ምስለ፡ ወራዙት፡ ማኅበረ፡ አጽናዕኪ፡ ለምንት።
52. ሰላም፡ ለግንዘተ፡ ሥጋኪ፡ ዘኢይዌስኩ፡ ባቲ።
እንበለ፡ ሰበን፡ አሐቲ።
መዋቲት፡ ዓለም፡ ወኅዳጊተ፡ ብዕል፡ ለመዋቲ።
እንዘ፡ ነአምር፡ ሙስናኪ፡ ወኅልፈተ፡ ብዕልኪ፡ ዛቲ።
እፎ፡ የኅይጠነ፡ ፍቅርኪ፡ መስሐቲ።
53. ሰላም፡ ለመቃብርኪ፡ ውስተ፡ ውሳጤ፡ ልብ፡ ቁቁይ።
ዘኢይክሥቶ፡ ርኅራኄ፡ እስመ፡ ማኅተሙ፡ እከይ።
አስከሬነ፡ ወርቅ፡ ዓለም፡ ወመዝገበ፡ ብሩር፡ ጽሩይ።
እስከ፡ ማእዜኑ፡ ተዐጽዊ፡ አንቀጸ፡ ኅላፊ፡ ንዋይ።
እንዘ፡ በአፍአኪ፡ ዘልፈ፡ ይግዕር፡ ነዳይ።

Malkə'a ālam ('Image of the World'): An Ethiopic Hymn in Praise of Monasticism

49. Salutation to your image, which we have remembered doubly,
Both inward deeds and outward appearance.
You are a snare for the foolish, World, by means of delights of food
and adornment,
But the wise seek solitude from your fellowship
And the prudent love illness more than your health.
50. Salutation to the departure of your soul at Our Lord's (second) coming
After you, World, have reached the height of godlessness,
For then the Kingdom of Heaven, our hope, would prevail
And those so-called 'righteous' will be unable to save you,
Those associated with your honour and your wealth which decays quickly.
51. Salutation to your bodily remains, like the other remains
Which resurrection will not befall when the horns are blown.⁸⁸
Wicked in godlessness, World, you whom the youth passed
While you were a widow, lady of the men of winter,
Why do you strengthen fellowship with a youth?
52. Salutation to the shrouding of your body, on which they did not add
Except for a single cloth.
Mortal World and the abandoner of wealth to a mortal,
As we have come to understand your defilement and the ephemerality of
this wealth of yours,
How will your seducing love deceive us?
53. Salutation to your tomb within the avaricious heart
Which compassion does not open, since its seal is evil.
Chest of gold, World, and treasure of pure silver,
Until when will you keep locked the gates of ephemeral wealth
While the poor cry continually on the outside of you?

⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:35–58, especially verse 52.

54. ሰላም፡ ለፍልሰተ፡ ሥጋኪ፡ እምዝንቱ፡ ውስተ፡ ዝንቱ።
ለዘያፈቅረኪ፡ ብእሲ፡ እንበለ፡ ትፈጽሚ፡ ዐቅመ፡ ፍትወቱ።
እስክንድርኒ፡ ንጉሠ፡ አናስር፡ አርባዕቱ።
እንዘ፡ የጎሥሥ፡ መፍቅዳተ፡ ከመ፡ ዘምኔት፡ አልቦቱ።
ወእንበለ፡ ይጸግብ፡ እምኔኪ፡ ፈለሰት፡ ሕይወቱ።

55. [...] ²⁴ ፍቅርትየ፡ በእምኃ፡ ጉሕሎት፡ አማኅኩኪ።
አምሳለ፡ ይሁዳ፡ ረድእኪ።
ወቃለ፡ ዘለፋ፡ ቶሳሕኩ፡ በውስቴቱ፡ እንዘ፡ እጌሥጽ፡ ኪያኪ።
እመ፡ ኢነሳ | ሕኪሰ፡ ወቃጸንዒ፡ ልበኪ።
መቅሠፍተ፡ ወኮነኔ፡ ትዘግቢ፡ ለኪ።

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APPARATUS | ²⁴ A blank space was left in the manuscript, presumably meant for a rubricated headword that was never filled. *Marigetā* Henok has kindly suggested that the missing word could be ግለም ('World'), which would fit the context nicely. Such a proposal must remain a hypothesis until further evidence emerges.

54. Salutation to the translation of your body, from this to that,
Without fulfilling the extent of the desire of the man who loves you.
Alexander, the king of the four corners (of the world),⁸⁹
Seeking desires, like one without a monastery,
His life left him before he had been satisfied by you.
55. [...] ⁹⁰ my beloved, I have greeted you with a greeting of deceit,
Like Judas, your disciple,⁹¹
And I have included in it a word of reproach as I rebuke you:⁹²
If you harden your heart and do not repent,
You will store up punishment and judgement for yourself.

⁸⁹ That is Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), who was (and still is) remembered widely in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim literature (and beyond). In Ethiopic literature, Alexander is generally depicted as a pre-Christian saint, including in the *Zenā 'Eskāndār* ('History of Alexander the Great', CAe 2616). For a wider look at the reception of Alexander the Great, see Moore 2018. For the reception of Alexander in Ethiopic literature in particular, see 'Alexander the Great', EAe, I (2003), 195a-195b (G. Lusini). The Amharic translator mistook 'anāsər ('four corners') as a plural form of *nəsr* ('eagle'), leading to the translation, የአራቱ ንሥሮች ንጉሥ እስክንድርም ('Alexander, the king of four eagles') (Gabra Šəllāse 2023, II, 3166). According to the Ethiopic *Zenā 'Eskāndār*, Alexander 'made himself small and flew through the air on [the back of] an eagle' (Budge 1896, [II], 277–278) and later while at sea sent three eagles to find land (Budge 1896, [II], 281–282), but there is no association of him with four eagles. The form 'anāsər is, in any case, unattested as a plural of *nəsr* (rather 'ansərt, per Leslau 2010, 121a).

⁹⁰ See apparatus, n. 20.

⁹¹ The word 'greeting' in the first line (*'amməhā*) may generally refer to a greeting but also denote more specifically an offering or a kiss in greeting. There are many examples of *malkə'*-hymns whose final stanza begins with the phrase 'An offering of salutation have I brought you ...' (አምኃ፡ ሰላም፡ አቅረብኩ፡ ...) or similar, in which case the offering/greeting (*'amməhā*) is the entire hymn (whose stanzas each begin with 'salutation'). In this case, the offering/greeting (the entire hymn) is likened to the deceitful kiss of Judas which led to Christ's capture (Mark 14:43–45; Matthew 26:47–50).

⁹² The composer shows that he has followed through with his claim in stanza 2 that this hymn would be one of reproach and not of praise.

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Summary

This article presents an annotated edition and English translation of *Malkə'a ʿālam* ('Image of the World', CAe 6911), a monastic *malkə'*-poem attested in a single manuscript (EMML 6993, fols 151_{bis}vb–155_{bis}ra), the title of which is also transmitted in four *malkə'*-lists. Although little known, the text offers valuable insights into both the genre of *malkə'* and the broader literary tradition surrounding monasticism in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The article contextualizes *Malkə'a ʿālam* within these literary and historical frameworks, discussing how the World is depicted in the text and providing a hypothesis for why it never came to enjoy more popularity within the tradition.