DENIS NOSNITSIN

Article

Mäṣḥafā ḫısātu ḥā-būnā Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study

Aethiopica 6 (2003), 137–167

ISSN: 1430–1938

Published by

Universität Hamburg
Asien Afrika Institut, Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
Relics and Translations

The veneration of relics is an important component of the cult of saints. It is officially recognized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and has a very long history in the Ethiopian Christian tradition. The discovery and subsequent veneration of a saint’s relics were closely connected with the tradition of the Ethiopian monastic movement. The remains of a saint were usually kept in the monastery he was believed to have founded and lived in. The spiritual centre of the monastery could have been represented by the grave (or graves) containing the relics. It was essential for a monastic community to dispose of such relics. Through them it had a better chance of attracting new believers and pilgrims who came seeking the saint’s help and protection, and was thus able to compete more successfully with other monasteries. All of these increased the cloister’s prestige, influence and wealth. In hard times the presence of relics helped to consolidate and inspire the community.

An earlier version of this paper was read at the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, November 6, 2000.

1 See EOTC 43–44 [Amharic], 41–42 [English]. The role this kind of worship played needs to be studied more thoroughly. There is no credible evidence of the veneration of relics of the Ethiopian saints from the times before the Zagwe dynasty came to power. All the cases when such veneration is mentioned date from the time after the re-establishment of the Solomonic dynasty (ca. 1270).

Generally accepting the veneration of relics, the present Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition is somewhat cautious regarding its necessity. As an example of the restraint needed in this respect, one usually refers to the Synaxarium reading for the 8th of Maskârâm commemorating Moses (Amharic Church Dictionary V, 390). There it is emphasized that God hid the body of the Patriarch, so that the Israelites could not find or start worshipping it (cp. Budge 1928:32). At the same time, the veneration of relics (both remains of the body and the objects “substituting” for them, like pieces of clothes, crosses etc.) has clearly been a common practice at least in some regions of Ethiopia (cp. Kaplan 1986:5).

2 Cp. Kaplan 1986:6–8. One should emphasize that the presence of the remains of a saint was not obligatory for a monastic community to exist. Many cloisters did not possess any relics, neither did a monastic community cease to exist if the relics were lost. The tabot of the monastery church appears to have been much more important. The best instance could be the famous cloister of Dâbrâ Libanos. As the monastic

DENIS NOSNITSIN
The role played by the veneration of relics was important enough to find its reflection in Ethiopian hagiography. The Gādlät (Lives or Acts) of Ethiopian saints contain numerous accounts of the magic power emanating from the saint’s grave or remains, pieces of shroud, ashes from his tomb etc. In addition, the Acts often contain narratives of the translation of the saints’ relics, of the competition over the relics between several monasteries and similar themes. Such text fragments did not develop into a separate type of text in Ethiopian literature. They never even form parts of the Gādl, which would be independent or complete in its composition. These accounts were evidently not differentiated from the rest of the text of the corresponding Gādl; the miracles connected with the relics or the burial of a saint were read together with other miracles. This was obviously caused by the fact that, widespread as the veneration of saints in Ethiopia might have been, there are hardly any known feasts devoted to the discovery or the translation of their relics, so that there evidently existed no necessity to create any special texts. Numerous texts for the feasts of the translation or discovery of relics, which became known in Ethiopia thanks to the Synaxarium, seem

community was endangered by the Oromo onslaught in the second half of the 16th cent., it moved to the region of the lake Tana and established itself in the vicinity of Gondär. In the subsequent years the connection with the original site of the monastery (in the Zeqā Wādām gorge, Sāwa) was forgotten and the members of the “house of Tākāl Haymanot” did not have the Saint’s remains at their direct disposal for more than 150 years. The place of Tākāl Haymanot’s grave was forgotten. The remains of the Saint were “rediscovered” only in the 1870s in the time of Yoḥānnas IV. The tradition of Dābrā Libanos claims at the same time that the original tabot of the Saint was never lost and is still preserved in the church of the community (see Campbell 1994:4, 7).

4 Cp. Marrassini 1981:CVII “La traslazione non è elemento frequente nell’agiografia etiopica”. The biography of a saint as narrated in his Gādl was obviously considered complete, even if there was no detailed story of what happened to his remains. Thus, according to the Acts of the famous abba Gābrā Mānfās Qddus, the relics of the Saint were kept far from his adherents: following God’s order, the body of the Saint was transported to Jerusalem and buried there (s. Budge 1928:772, Bezdold 1916:75). Not having been included in his Gādl, the motif of the return of the Saint’s relics was developed in folk legends. According to some of them, the Saint ascended to Heaven, but left his rib, which is still lying in his tomb near the church on the mountain of Zaqqāla, his sanctuary (Kriss & Kriss-Heinrich 1975:13).

5 So far only rare exceptions have been found, e.g., a narration about the translation of the remains of Tākā Hawaryat (Getatchew Haile 1994), or an account from the Gādlā Yohannes Marraqwāwi which was meant to be read on 18 Māggabīt (Marrassini 1981:318–37).
to have lost their importance in the Ethiopian context and did not become as popular as in Egypt.\footnote{The Ethiopian Synaxarion contains all in all nearly twenty commemorations of the finding or translation of the relics of early Christian martyrs (see, e.g., BUDGE 1928:52–54, 177, 229–10, 274, 354–55, 388–89, 515–16, 548, 591, 596, 641, 656, 658–60, 754–55, 958–60, 1061, 1171, 1263–65, cp. MEINARDUS 1968:138–41). The question remains open as to whether the texts meant to be read on these feasts influenced the Ethiopian hagiographic tradition (since the Ethiopian hagiographers could find in them examples of how to narrate what happened to the martyr’s remains after his death).}

**The tradition of Däbrä Libanos**

The tradition of Däbrä Libanos is unique in this respect: here we find at least two feasts devoted to the translation of the relics of two holy fathers of the monastery: the 12th of \(\text{Gänbot}\), the day of the translation of the holy relics of \(\text{abunà Täklä Haymanot}\), and the 23rd of \(\text{Mäggabít}\), the day of the translation of the holy relics of one of his followers, the famous abba Filappos. There are special texts meant to be read on these days. The translation of the relics of Filappos (the third abbot of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos, who died in exile) must have taken place during the tenure of Märtə Krəstos (ca. 1488).\footnote{See KUR 1972:91–92.} The event was considered so important that the 23rd \(\text{Mäggabít}\) was made a feast and a text was compiled to be read on it – in all probability in the early 16th cent., during the tenure of the abbot Petros (1496–1523).\footnote{See GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:76–77.} The commemoration of this day must, however, have lasted for a fairly short time, and even then only within Däbrä Libanos. It is not mentioned in any of the known copies of the Ethiopian Synaxarium; the \(\text{Zena Däbrä Libanos}\), which is the monastic chronicle of the history of Däbrä Libanos up to Ahmad Grañ’s invasion, presents no account of the translation of Filappos’s relics. Therefore it is not surprising that the *Book of the Translation of the Relics of Filappos of Däbrä Libanos* remained little known. But the second feast, on the 12th of \(\text{Gänbot}\), which is devoted to Täklä Haymanot, the founder of Däbrä Libanos and one of the most famous Ethiopian saints, retained its importance till today.\footnote{Currently there are three major feasts of Täklä Haymanot that draw great numbers of pilgrims to Däbrä Libanos: 24th \(\text{Taḥṣas}\) (the day of the Saint’s birth), 24th \(\text{Näbase}\) (the day of his decease) and the 12th of \(\text{Gänbot}\) (the day of the relics’ translation). Besides, there is a monthly commemoration day on the 24th of each month.} Consequently, the text commonly called \(\text{Mäshaʃaʃa falsaʃu lə-Täklä Haymanot}\), or *The Book [of the History] of the Translation [of the Body] of Täklä Haymanot* (further referred as BHT), which was composed to be read on the 12th of...
Denis Nosnitsin

Gänbot, became well known, first of all as an integral part of the Acts of the Saint, Gãdlã Taklã Haymanot (hereafter referred to as GTH).10

The Book of the History of the Translation and other traditions

The text of the GTH in the version of Dãbrà Libanos as it was edited by Budge (1906), includes, after the story of the life of the Saint, two separate large chapters, to which the translator gave the titles The Book of the History of the Translation of the Body of our Father, the Holy Man Takla Háymánót and The Book of the Miracles of our Father the Holy Man Takla Háymánót.11 The first one is of central importance for my research.12 Not only does it form a separate part of the Acts, along with the story of the life

10 As is widely recognized, there are at least three versions of the GTH. The so-called Waldsßaba version is the shortest and probably the earliest (first half of the 15th cent., see CONTI ROSSINI 1896:100). As to the date of the composition of the so-called Hayq version, there is a suggestion made on the basis of the ms. Êth. 697, according to which the text could have been written about 1425–26 (DERAT 1998:77; see also his comments on the ms. EMML 1834, 2134). The best-known and perhaps the latest version of Dãbrà Libanos is believed to have appeared around 1515 (CERULLI 1968:93; CONTI ROSSINI 1899:29). This large and complex work of hagiography was compiled over two centuries after the death of Tãklã Haymanot (ca. 1313) on the initiative of eM.-L.Derat used the BHT for historical reconstruction, demonstrating the development of the monastic congregation of Dãbrà Libanos in the 15th–17th cent. (DERAT 1998:193–98). These, and some other scholars, studied the BHT mostly as a document providing important information on the history of Dãbrà Libanos and the cult of the Saint. So far little attention has been paid to the analysis of the text itself.

12 TURAIEV translated a part of the BHT from the ms. Ad.16,257/Br. Mus. 45 into Russian (TURAIEV 1902:13–16; for the description of the ms., see DILLMANN 1847:50). An important note was written by E.Cerulli, who made some conjectures on the purpose and the time of creation of the BHT (CERULLI 1944:142): “Probabilmente lo scopo di questa composizione era soltanto quello di dare una lettura commune di occasione sulla festa che si teneva il 12 genbot in commemorazione della trasmigrazione; tanto più perchè quella festa era una delle tre ricorrenze annuali nelle quali si radunavano a capitolò in Dabra Libanos gli abbatì dei monasteri scioani collegati. Ciò mi sembra, del resto, provato non solo dall’analogia con usanze ben note dei conventi etiopi in simili occasioni, ma anche dal fatto che la trasmigrazione della ossa non parla ap-punto che del primo trasferimento (quello proprio che si commemorava il 12 genbot) e non già del secondo, che invece era quello più recente e più direttamente collegato con l’opera personale dell’abbate Giovanni Kamã”. M.-L.Derat used the BHT for
of the Saint and his Miracles, it is also further divided into subchapters, as is the history of the life of the Saint. The editor's title does not fully correspond to the definition given by the hagiographer himself, which is Māshafā zenabu la-Tāklā Haymanot, i.e., `The Book of the History [Story] of Tāklā Haymanot', meant especially to be read on the 12th of Ḡenbot, the day of the translation of the Saint's relics.14

In the GHT ms. tradition, the BHT is usually attached to the narrative of the Saint's life as a separate text. I have not, however, been able to find any ms. where this text would be presented without the biography or the Miracles of the Saint, as his monastic genealogy sometimes is.15 Most of the mss. containing the GTH, whether in the Dābā Libanos version or in the Hayq version, also contain the BHT.16 This undoubtedly illustrates the importance of the feast and of the corresponding text for the cult of the Saint.17

The accounts of the translation of the relics of Tāklā Haymanot can be found in several other sources. The narrative in the Wāldśba version of the GTH18 could be the earliest one, and the text in the Ethiopic Synaxarium is
probably one of the latest traditions. The other known sources are one of the “Short Chronicles” and the Acts of Anorewos, an Ethiopian saint and Tklà Haymanot’s pupil.

Most sources containing an account of the translation of Tklà Haymanot’s body concentrate on the first translation. They do not specify the exact year of this event. As the dating was essential for such narratives to confer credibility on them, the hagiographers refer to other historic events, supposed to have taken place around the time of translation, or to the author’s contemporaries – well-known officials in charge. Traditionally, the date of the Saint’s death was used as the reference point, and some texts mention that the relics of Tklà Haymanot were translated on the 12th of Gnbót, 56/57 years after the Saint’s death (an interval which was set by godly providence). The note in the Synaxarium hardly mentions any real details of the event, but keeps the number of years. The Waldobba version of the GTH refers to Hszqyas [Hezekiah], the then abbot of Dbrà Asbo/Libanos. The Zena Dbrà Libanos, being a later source, contains both the dating systems, mentioning the “56 years” and Hszqyas. The “Short Chronicle” has the most developed chronology, placing the event in the 25th year of Sâyfa Ar’ad’s reign (1344–71), i.e. approx. 1370. This date is,

\[\text{His honoured body was covered by a beautiful shroud and put into the new coffin and buried in the church with great honours, with praises and hymns} \] (Conti Rossini 1896:121, 141). On the other hand, the biography of the Saint is followed by a narrative of the discovery and translation of the Saint’s relics. According to this tradition, abbot Filapos was followed by Hszqyas: the latter had a vision of Tklà Haymanot announcing that the time to translate his bones had come. The saint also demanded that Hszqyas should fulfil this task himself (in order to obtain my blessing) (Conti Rossini 1896:123, cp. Cerulli 1944:137–38). The bones of Tklà Haymanot were festively translated from the cell (hęp), where the Saint had spent the last years of his life in seclusion and constant contending, to the church (of the monastery?). No sooner are the bones translated than the cell of Tklà Haymanot collapses (hęp). The narrative is continued by accounts of a few miracles that accompanied this event (Conti Rossini 1896:122–23, 142).

19 In the readings on the 12th of Gnbót (Budge 1928:885, and Colin 1997:256–57). The Synaxarium had been introduced into Ethiopian tradition in the late 14th–early 15th cent. The mss. in which the note appears are not the oldest ones (the signature “P” appears in mss. Éth. 126 and Éth. 128 of the 19th and 18th cent. respectively, cp. Colin 1997:5).

20 56 years in Budge 1928:885, 57 years in Colin 1997:256. In these and some other sources, numbers 56 (%6) and 57 (%7) interchange, possibly as a result of the unclear writing of numbers in mss.; the Ethiopian figures 6 (6) and 7 (7) look very much alike.


22 See Turaiev 1906:8–9.
however, obviously based on the same number of “56/57 years”, as perhaps also the further calculation of the “Short Chronicle”, which states that Täklä Haymanot died in the 14th year of Wodim Rä’ad’s rule (1299–1314).\textsuperscript{23}

Some relevant text fragments are also included in the Saint’s biography in the Dâbr Libanos version of the GTH. For instance, in the scene at the conclusion of the testament (\textit{kidan}), God is reported as predicting the translation of the Saint’s bones from his “cell” in 57 years.\textsuperscript{24} The narrative of the miracles is sometimes followed by a short extract devoted to the history of the monastery, which places the first translation in the time of Säyfä Ar’ad’s reign, as the “Short Chronicle” does, but includes a different chronology.\textsuperscript{25} At the very end of the text, at least in some mss., we find still another piece which is obviously taken from the Wâldâbba version of the GTH.\textsuperscript{26} As one can see, it is predominantly the first and the earliest transla-
tion of Tāklā Haymanot’s remains that receives most of the hagiographers’ consideration. One gets the impression that it was this event that was perceived as the beginning of the sacral history of the monastic community, not the actual foundation of Dābrā Asbo/Libanos, which remains mostly unmentioned.

The narratives of the first translation of the relics of Tāklā Haymanot often differ in detail or even contradict each other. This allows one to suggest that there also existed other traditions apart from the above-mentioned and best-known ones. The compilers interpreted historical events and existing traditions in conformity with their purposes or were guided by some other oral or written sources, which are unknown to us. For example, the author of the Acts of Anorewos (ca. 1478) tries to use the story of the translation to prove the superiority of his saint over others and ascribes to him the leading role in the discovery of Tāklā Haymanot’s relics; he does not mention Hazqyas, the discovery is said to have taken place under Filappos.

All in all, we can count at least ten traditions of this sort, narrating the first translation of the body of the Saint. One should mention that the earliest account, whatever text it might be, must have been written down more than 50 years after the translation took place. At that time, the real circumstances of the translation could be remembered only vaguely. However, the hagiographic canons did not require from the author an historic description of the event: half of the whole account in the Waldabba version of the GTH was devoted to the miracles which accompanied the translation. Consequently, few basic narrative elements passed, together or separately, from one text to another, acquiring each time new details and interpretations. It goes without saying that the additional details can hardly be considered they carried his bones and placed them in the shrine of the holy church, there fell this mighty rock to fulfil the prophecy he made in his lifetime”.

Some of the sources also contain information on later translations. The Zena Dābrā Libanos mentions the translation of the Saint’s bones to a wooden church during the tenure of Tewodros, in the reign of Dawit II (1382–1411/12; see TURAIYEV 1906:8, CERULLI 1944:139). According to the Waldabba version of the GTH, the remains were later translated again under abbot Yohannas Kamā, during the reign of Yosḥaq (1414–29), who ordered a new stone church to be built for the Saint’s relics (CONTI ROSSINI 1896:123, the narrative also mentions the miracles that accompanied this translation; s. above, note 12). Among the numerous Miracles of the Saint, a group of 22 wonders is prefaced by a homily on the transfer of the relics into a “shrine of gold”, which took place in 1495, during the reign of the emperor Na’a’d (1494–1508) and the tenure of abbot Xēgē Petros – and again on the 12th of Ḏnbot (e.g., EMML 2134 ff. 151b–54a; Ef. 18ff. 123rc–24ra).

CONTI ROSSINI 1905:62.

CONTI ROSSINI 1905:99.
historical as well; the additional accounts were far more a result of the hagiographers’ literary work. It is as such that they present a special interest.

The Versions Compared

Careful study of even a few copies of the GTH in the Dabrä Libanos version and of catalogue descriptions of some other mss. allows us to conclude that there exist at least two distinct versions of the BHT: one identical with the Budge edition (BHT¹) and one distinctly different from it (BHT²). The comparison between the two clearly shows that the latter presents an independent original tradition, used for the composition of the former (edited by Budge):

30 The existence of different versions of the BHT correlates with the fact that the narratives of the Saint’s life in the version of Dabrä Libanos also fall into two somewhat distinct types. The deviations between them had already been observed (see Grébaut & Tisserant 1935:404, no. 110; cp. Conti Rossini 1914:192). Though catalogues usually define the GTH in the version of Dabrä Libanos as such, without providing any additional comments, closer analysis of the descriptions and the mss. themselves allows us to conclude that there exist (at least) two types of the GTH within the Dabrä Libanos version. The texts of the first type are presented, e.g., in the following mss.: Grébaut & Tisserant 1935:403, no. 110; Ef. 18, see Turaiev 1906a:84–85, no. 43; Zotenberg 1877:206, no. 138; etc. The second text-type is represented by the Budge edition (after ms. Orient 300, see Wright 1877:195), and also by some other mss., see Zotenberg 1877:204, no. 137; Grébaut 1941:20–25, Êth. 343/Griaule 39; Dillmann 1847:49–50, no. 45; Ullendorff 1951:18, Aeth.3 etc. The first type of the text was the Vorlage of the Arabic translation of the GTH, which was produced during the reign of the Emperor Gälädewos (1540–59) and sent to the Coptic patriarch Gabriel VII (see Graf 1934:25, no. 66; 186, no. 483, also Zotenberg 1877:205). The year 1515, usually mentioned as the date of the creation of the GTH in the version of Dabrä Libanos (Conti Rossini 1899:29, Cerulli 1968:73), seems to have been related to the composition of the GTH of the first type. The texts of the second type must have been composed long after, probably in the late 17th or early 18th cent. (for further discussion see Nosnitzen 2000). It was possibly during the period of transformation of the first-type text into the second type that the BHT¹ was edited and acquired the form we know from Budge’s edition (BTH²). However, in the ms. tradition the distribution of the BHT¹ and the BHT² does not coincide exactly with that of the first and second type of the GTH, even though one could suggest that the BHT² is usually attached to the later version of the GTH, that is, to the GTH of the second type. The BHT² seems to be much more known, than the BHT¹; the Ethiopian editions of the GTH (e.g., Ḗḥā Ḗḥā Ḗḥā “The Acts of T הקל Haymanot”, Addis Ababa 1973 A.M. [1980/81 A.D.]) present a text very close to the one edited by Budge, and that attached to the BHT (pp. 189–200) is the same text as the BHT².
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BHT¹ (Ef. 18ff. 90ra–94vb; EMML 2582, ff. 84rb–88va; EMML 2134, ff. 107a–114b)</th>
<th>BHT² (BUDGE 1906)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rhymed preface: “(90ra) In the name of the triple holy one God, one Son and one Holy Ghost, one Deity and one Lord ...”; a praise of God.</td>
<td>1. (32) Rhymed preface: “In the name of the triple holy one God, one Son and one Holy Ghost, one Deity and one Lord ...”; a praise of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. History of the last days Moses, to whom God reveals how He takes care of all the creatures. History of Moses</td>
<td>a. History of the last days Moses, to whom God reveals how He takes care of all the creatures. History of Moses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduction (“Hearken, o hearken ye, o my beloved ...”). Discourse on the date of the 12th of Ganbot.</td>
<td>2. Introduction (“Hearken, o hearken ye, o my beloved ...”). On the date of the 12th of Ganbot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The “Garden” of Täklä Haymanot; “(90vc) ... and he watered all the land of Šäwa, and freed it from its curse [of sin] ...”</td>
<td>3. The “Garden” of Täklä Haymanot; “... and he watered all the land of Šäwa, and freed it from its curse [of sin] ...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The “palace” of the Saint and its 44 thousand “pillars of gold” and 45 thousand “pillars of fire” (91rb–rc). The insufficiency of the weak human mind to understand the construction of the “palace”.</td>
<td>4. The “palace” of the Saint and its 44 thousand “pillars of gold” and 45 thousand “pillars of fire”. The insufficiency of the weak human mind to understand the construction of the “palace”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The testament of Täklä Haymanot; conversation of the Saint with God.</td>
<td>5. The testament of Täklä Haymanot; conversation of the Saint with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Täklä Haymanot begs that the archangel Michael be not be separated from his soul and that all the Saint’s true believers be remembered and awarded.</td>
<td>6. Täklä Haymanot begs that the archangel Michael be not be separated from his soul and that all the Saint’s true believers be remembered and awarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Täklä Haymanot asks where his bones should be buried after his death. God says that they should be buried in his cell.</td>
<td>7. Täklä Haymanot asks where his bones should be buried after his death. God says that they should be buried in his cell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. God tells the Saint that his body shall be translated in 57 years by his sons coming “from afar off and near”.</td>
<td>8. God tells the Saint that his body shall be translated in 57 years by his sons coming “from afar off and near”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. On the benefits of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Täklä Haymanot. Instruction for the monks not to “go round in the world” and not to forget the testament of the Saint.</td>
<td>9. On the benefits of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Täklä Haymanot. Instruction for the monks not to “go round in the world” and not to forget the testament of the Saint.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31 Numbers 1–11 are used for the passages shared by both the BHT¹ and BHT², letters a–k for those appearing in only one version (BHT¹ or BHT²).

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. On the veneration of Taklā Haymanot and faith in his covenant.</td>
<td>b. Instruction compiled from the sayings of apostle Paul (“as Paul the Apostle saith, ‘Without faith [men] cannot please God ...’&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. On the observance of the testament of Taklā Haymanot (93vb); the conveyance of the prophecy on the translation of his body in 57 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. (33) Appearance of Taklā Haymanot to abbot Hzaqyas, instruction to gather all his “children” and translate the relics on the 12th of Ganbot, as 57 years have passed. Taklā Haymanot promises to appear during the translation and manifest his coming by lighting the extinguished lamp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. (34) Hzaqyas gathers the “children” of Taklā Haymanot; 12 mānhran arrive. Names of all the mānhran are mentioned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The coincidence of the day of translation (12th Ganbot) with the feasts of the archangel Michael and the day of ṭak‡́.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. (35) The mānhran discover the Saint’s bones in his cell; they carry them to the church. The miracle of the lamp, lit when Taklā Haymanot comes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. (36) On how the book was revealed and interpreted “through the prayers of the company of the Saints”. Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter V: “How the history of Taklā Haymānōt was written down and then was lost and forgotten ...” (BUDGE 1906: t.105, v.262).
The comparison between Tàklâ Haymanot's place and Zion. "Twelve shepherds who ruled the word of faith by the sermon of the new gospel". The vision of Nàgàdà Kràstos on Dàbrà Asbo; Zion is in Dàbrà Asbo. Conclusion.

Certainly, one cannot exclude the possibility that there also exist other versions of the BHT which have not yet been properly investigated.

The First Version

The BHT hardly mentions any specific details on the translation of the remnants of the Saint. This text, styled by the hagiographer as the Book of the History of Tàklà Haymanot, was only meant to be read during the celebration of the translation, which, however, was not and did not have to be the work's main and only theme. The BHT is principally devoid of the

---

37 The author of the BHT speaks mainly about the covenant (kidan) between Tàklà Haymanot and God and his wish to interpret it properly, but he has no intention to describe the translation of the relics (Ef. 18 f. 93vb–vc, cp. EMML 2582 f. 87rb–rc, EMML 2134 ff. 112vb–113rb): "We tell ye, o brethren. For our Lord said when the end time came (of the Saint's life): 'After fifty-and-seven years your bones shall be removed from here, and there will be a great gathering for the great number of your children'. And they lived and kept this prophecy. And such was the testament his Lord concluded (with the Saint), saying 'He who remembered thee and who is buried in thy place, he shall never ever be judged'. In keeping this prophecy and this testament his children lived until this day. And they did not realize other, hidden things written down in this book. For we did not write down everything, but concealed much from his testament and from the wonders of our blessed Holy Father Tàklà Haymanot. But so [he explained to us] one night, saying: [Write down] the concealed too, and do not disclose it to (anyone) except the few who [have the knowledge]. But they, our fathers, lived, keeping this testament and the prophecy without writing it down in the book, (90ra) but rather passing it as a prophecy from generation to generation." Cp. the beginning of the text devoted to the translation of the body of Filàppos of Dàbrà Libanos, where the author stresses his intention to write about the event the feast is devoted to (cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:79, 99).
literary features which would have been expected from a translation report. It is a compilation of praises to the Saint and loosely connected narratives (see table 1).

The BHT\(^1\) was meant for an audience which consisted exclusively of the members of a monastic community\(^3\). The opening rhymed praise of God is followed by a passage missing in the BHT\(^2\), which narrates a parable of the biblical Moses (see table 1, a). This fragment deserves special attention and I will return to it later in this article. Further on, the hagiographer considers the importance of the day of the 12\(^{th}\) of Ganbot: the 12\(^{th}\) of each month is devoted to the archangel Mika’el, and it is the month of Ganbot when the days of the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ are celebrated (table 1, no. 2). This coincidence is not occasional, but divinely ordained. Then, in few sentences the biography of Tàklà Haymanot is metaphorically described. The saint is compared to a fountain watering a garden (i.e. the land of Shàwa), making it flourish and bringing forth fruit (the souls of the faithful people); he is also compared to John the Baptist and Anthony the Great. The hagiographer then describes Tàklà Haymanot’s heavenly place and his “palace” containing 44,000 “pillars of gold” and 45,000 “pillars of fire” (the symbol for the monks’ spiritual children) and proves that one cannot doubt the existence of this “place” and this “palace” (table 1, no. 4). After this the hagiographer turns to the interpretation of the Saint’s testament on the day of his death. In the discourse about the archangel Mika’el (table 1, no. 6), “the prince of Hell” ‘Abdalmakos is mentioned, who will not endanger the soul of the Saint on its way to the Heaven.\(^4\) Fi-

\(^3\) Cp. CERULLI 1944:142.

\(^4\) This personage occurred in the Mâshfâfà Mòsitir (Book of the Mystery), written by Giyorgis of Sàgla about 1424 A.D.: ḳàài ámbàlám: ḳàài ámbàlám (“Abdalmakos the Angel of Hell”) is the name of the “Prince of Hell” (see YAQOB BEYENE 1993:197); the Book of the Mystery refers thereby to an episode from the Acts of Làtesh (Latson), an Egyptian saint, where ‘Abdalmakos (or Abdalmalekos, cp. EMML 1939, vol. V, 429) appears as “the angel of the punishment” ( ámbàlám : ḳàài ámbàlám) in the monastic context, namely, in the story about a peccant abbot of a monastery (MARRASSINI 1987:137, 157). The relationship between the traditions of the Mâshfâfà Mòsitir and the BHT\(^1\) is further corroborated by yet another testimony: the Mâshfâfà Mòsitir and the GTH in the Hayq version share a similar episode relating the resurrection of the dead and describing Hell (in these texts, abba Giyorgis and Tàklà Haymanot, respectively, are the main characters and the workers of the miracle, cp. YAQOB BEYENE 1993:194–96; the same episode, slightly changed, can be found also in the GTH in the version of Dàbrà Libanos, see BUDGE 1906:v.77–82, ch. “How Takla Hàymànot raised the dead …”); the mention of “the angel of the Hell” suits well into this context.
nally, the translation of Täklä Haymanot’s relics is predicted to take place in 57 years (table 1, no. 8).

The next account instructs the listeners in the rules of monastic life and the monastic ethical norms (table 1, no. 9). The author once again returns to Moses, to whom he compares Täklä Haymanot since the Saint’s tomb is similar to the Promised Land (consequently, his community is similar to the Israelites). The comparison of a wandering monk with a fish that is caught and taken out of the water could be inspired by a quotation from the Zena Abëw, a piece of ascetic literature. The piece about the vineyard is similar to another passage from the same work, which is well known in the Ethiopic tradition.

41 Ef. 18 f. 93ra, (cp. BUDGE 1906:t.102, v.253; EMML 2582 f. 86ra, EMML 2134 ff. 111vb–112ra):  "For Antony said: whensoever a monk goes from his place, he dies quickly, and he does not die in respect of his body only, but also in respect of his soul, like a fish when it is caught by the fisherman, for it dies speedily and is unable to live. Even so the monk is unable to live without abiding continually in his cell.”

42 Cp. ARRA 1967:1:  “For Saint Antony said: the monks are like fish on dry land: when they go from their place and prolong their stay in this world, their patience to hardship and there serenity decrease. You should know, that you have no other salvation and repose but to abide in your place, as a fish, which cannot live outside water. The monks are similar. If they abandon their place, they forget to take care about the soul”. Cp. a corresponding paragraph from Vitae Patrum suggested by E.A.W. Budge, ROSWEYDE 1615:563 [De Quiete II–1]: “Dixit abbas Antonius: Sicut piace, fì tardauerint in ficco moriuntur: ita & monachi tardantes extra cellam, aut cum viris secularibus immorantes, quàetis proposito revoluuntur. Oportet ergo sicut pisces in mari, ita & nos ad cellam recurrene; ne forte foris tardantes, obliuifcamur interioris cu

43 Ef. 18 f. 93ra–rb (cp. BUDGE 1906:t.102, v.253; EMML f. 86rc–va, EMML 2134 f. 112ra–rb):  "O man, think, if you remove your vineyard to another place every year will it be able to bear beautiful fruits? Without roots it will dry out because of the heat of the sun. It will dry out because it was moved every year.”

44 Arras 1967:26:  "The old man said: as the tree can not bring forth fruits, being
The last fragment of the BHT, in which the author states that Zion is in Dàbrà Asbo (table 1, k), is of great interest. A statement of this kind is not something unusual in the Ethiopian local monastic traditions, but the author chooses to prove his claim. He provides a narrative, in which a certain Nàgàdà Kràstos relates a vision before his death: he saw the Church in the semblance of a “woman clothed in light” (ǹdà: ǹjì : ǹsàmì)46, who pointed at Dàbrà Asbo as the “second Jerusalem of our father Tàklà Haymanot”.47 The hagiographer reports this event as having taken place at the same time as the translation. Among the monastic leaders of that period, Nàgàdà Kràstos can be immediately recalled, an abbot of the monastic community on the island of Kàbran (lake ɬànà), the fourth after Zà- Yöhnàss and a contemporary of kings Sàyfà Ar’àd (1344–71) and Dawit (1382–1411/12).48 In the concluding formula we read: ɬàlàn : ɬàlàn : ɬàlàn .49

removed early from one place to another, the monk cannot carry out his contending if he wanders choosing the places."

45 Cp. the Gàdlà Yöhnàss Msraqawì, in which the same quotation is used twice; the second time it occurs (perhaps accidentally) in the part of the Gàdl describing how the translation of the remains of the saint took place (MARRASSINI 1981:158–59, 324–25).


47 After EMML 2134 ff. 114 ra–vb (Ef. 18 f. 94rb–va, EMML 2582 f. 88ra–rc), “And I think that Zion is here, in accordance with the witness (of) the blessed Nàgàdà Kràstos, to whom seven lamps descended from Heaven on the day of his death. And there was witness that he said: ‘I am Nàgàdà Kràstos; and my beholder is the Holy Ghost. I wandered in all the countries and … [ǹdà: ǹsàmì: sic!] all the places, and did not see any sacred church, except Dàbrà Asbo, the second Jerusalem of our Father Tàklà Haymanot’. And I say unto thee: I, the sinful, regretted for many years that I did not see the church – the dwelling-(place) of the Deity. I stood in the church after midnight contemplating thus. And therewith the light shone like the light of the sun, and she appeared before me in the semblance of a woman clothed with flames and said unto me: ‘Dost thou know me?’ And I said unto her: ‘Who art thou, my Lady?’ And she said: ‘I am the Holy Church. Think not that it is only wood, and stone, and grass. For the Church means ‘I am the bride of the Father’”. And I said unto her: ‘Dost thou reside here?’ And she said: ‘So I do, this is the place of my rest forever’. Saying so, she disappeared from him. And I told ye about this, thou sinful brother, so do not leave this place’ And so saying he rested in peace …”.

48 See mss. Kebràn 6, 8, 19 (HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973:103, 106, 127, 214), see also SCHNEIDER 1972:v.38. Making Nàgàdà Kràstos confirm the sanctity of Dàbrà Libanos, the hagiographer treats him as a spiritual leader of high authority, whose witness cannot be false. Another possible interpretation would be that Nàgàdà Kràstos is a representative of a rival community, whom the author makes confirm the superiority of Dàbrà Libanos. In this case, the passage might have been a reference to complicated conditions which once existed between Dàbrà Asbo/Libanos and some representatives of the monastic movement of the lake ɬànà. Otherwise, later hagiographic sources of
Herewith the life [my italics – D.N.] of our father Tâklà Haymanot is concluded ...

There is no information, either in the introduction or in the conclusion to the BHT¹, that would indicate the time of the composition. As to the typology of the translation reports, there are no similarities either between the BHT¹, and, e.g., the History of the Translation of the Relics of Filapos, which must have appeared at approximately the same time as the Dâbrà Libanos version of the GTH. The BHT¹ contains some sentences probably recalling passages from the GTH in the version of Dâbrà Libanos, written around 1515. However, there is no single case where we can say with any high degree of probability that it is specifically the BHT¹ that uses the GTH as the source, and not vice versa. For example, the description of the heavenly “palace” of Tâklà Haymanot (Ef. 18, ff. 65rb–66rc) in the BHT¹, similarly to the GTH in the Dâbrà Libanos version, mentions that the “palace” had already been erected in the Saint’s lifetime, before the conclusion of the testament, and mentions the impressive 44,000 pillars supporting the “palace”. On the other hand, the BHT¹ provides details which were not mentioned in the GTH, specifying the pillars as “pillars of fire” (ሎስሎ : ሲሆን) and “pillars of gold” (ሎስሎ : ከንር Mistress). Besides, the interpretation of the “pillars” as symbols for the souls of Tâklà Haymanot’s “spiritual children” and adherents, which is central for GHT, is completely missing in the BHT¹. Another example would be the BHT¹’s long narrative of the plague which devastated the monastery (see table 1, j). Defending the trust in the power of the Saint’s guardianship, the author indicates that those who died of plague were rewarded as for martyrdom and that pestilence was followed by times of plenty. This account contains reminiscences on the epidemics as described in the GTH; both the texts draw parallels be-

Kâbran seek to connect the local monastic tradition to that of Dâbrà Libanos. E.g., it is reported, that Zâ-Youngana (KINEF-RIGB ZELLEKE 1975:101–2), predecessor of Nâgdâ Krâstos, was not only the disciple of Falippos of Dâbrà Libanos, but also one of the 12 mâmhoñan (as follows from a text, attached to the GTH in the version of Dâbrà Libanos, in the ms. Tânâsee 19, f. 137va, HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973:126–27; cp. also SCHNEIDER 1972:v–vi).

49 Ef. 18 f. 94vb, EMML 2582 f. 88rc.; cp. BHT² ዦት : መም[Unit 1] ኤኔ : ኣሹ : ያለ : እሶ : ዳሷ : ይአ : እሶ : ያለ ... “This is the Book of the Contending of our father the holy man Takla Háymán, the first man of the country of Shawā” (BUDGE 1906:v.105).

50 Ef. 18 ff. 82–83, BUDGE 1906v.228, ch. “How Takla Háymán fell sick and died ...”).

Aethiopica 6 (2003) 152
tween the death of the monks and their ascension to the “wedding feast” (kābkab). Here the author of the BHT1 does not go into details again and does not include the central eschatological concept of “the 1000 years feast on Mount Zion”51 which is present in the GTH in the Hayq version and much elaborated in the Dābrā Libanos version. Consequently, if the BHT1 mentions the “uncountable” dead and that all of them received the same “reward” as Tāklā Haymanot, the author of the GTH’s tendency to specification might have been secondary: in the Saint’s biography, eleven monks are reported to have died. It seems that both the traditions would be better characterized, not as interdependent, but as independent and originating from the common set of the legends about the Saint.

One can in any case suggest the time of the creation of the BHT1, since its author used the name Dābrā Asbo, and not Dābrā Libanos.52 The possible literary connections between the Book of the Mystery, the BHT1 and the GTH (see note 41) point to a relatively early period as well. Summarizing, one can draw a tentative conclusion that the BHT1 could have been composed some time after 1424, but prior to 1445. The ideology and mood expressed in the BHT1 are another reason to suppose that its time was distant from that of the Dābrā Libanos version of the GTH (that is, around 1515). The late 15th–early 16th cent. was the period when the monastery flourished; yet the content of the BHT1 definitely indicates a period when the monastery was either persecuted or was on the edge of complete demolition and, having survived the crisis, started gaining strength again. It is quite probable that the appearance of the BHT1 manifested the revival of the community and the establishment of the festive Mass on the 12th of Ganbot, or perhaps the re-establishment of the feast after a long period, or a considerable increase in the feast’s importance.

The Second Version

At some time the further development of the cult of St. Tāklā Haymanot required that the BHT1 should be revised in conformity with its needs. An unknown hagiographer revised and completed the BHT1 and thus created a new text (see table 1), which combined different sections: the introduction, together with homiletic and didactic parts from the BHT1, followed by the narrative part, depicting the occasion to be commemorated, and then by the discourses on the date of the 12th of Ganbot and the miraculous origin of the text. The text of the BHT2 was divided into chapters, so that a specific

51 See Beylot 1971–72.
52 The monastery was renamed in 1445 (Perruchon 1893:91, cp. Taddesse Tamrat 1972:236, 263).
portion of the text (the sermon, the narrative about the event etc.) could easily be found.

The hagiographer considered the description of the translation of the relics central to the new text. When structuring this account he used one of the most-common hagiographic patterns as the basis of the composition – one of the so-called “basic hagiologic situations”\(^{53}\), widely used in hagiographies (including the Wäldabba version of the GTH and the Synaxarium on 12 Gambot): the translation is preceded by an account of the vision Hazqyas, the main organizer of the translation, had the day before (table 1, d). He sees Takla Haymanot, who announces that the time has come to transfer his body. Thus, the Saint himself predicts and defines the ritual of the translation.

The narration devotes more attention to the timing information, so that the date of the vision of Hazqyas, 21 Yäkkattit, appears. There follows a discourse on the importance and symbolical meaning of the 12th of Gambot (table 1, e), the topic already touched (table 1, no. 2; this passage of the BHT\(^1\) appears in the BHT\(^2\) somewhat shortened). To “reconstruct” the description of the translation itself, the author compiled and processed the material he could find in other sources; the narrative of the opening of the tomb and the extraction of the bones of the Saint can be compared with the account of the *Acts of Anorewos* (Gädlä Anorewos), which most possibly influenced or inspired the author of the BHT\(^1\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ḫwâ b: ṣḥnḥ: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: And they took counsel together to translate the bones of saint Takla Haymanot, and after the counsel was over, they dug out his grave, and found the bones of their Holy Father …</td>
<td>ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: ḫwâ b: And it came to pass that after the twelve mamḥran were gathered together on the twelfth day of the month Gambot, they and their father Hazqyas rose up, and went into the cell of the holy man Takla Haymanot, and they dug up his grave, and they found his bones in the coffin, with all its funeral wrappings still upon it [sic; “… and they found his bones which adhered tightly to his wrappings …”] ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Aethiopica 6 (2003) 154
2. "And our father Anorewos was the first to go in and stood and exclaimed, and said, “Who is in front of me? There is no one in front of me and no one behind me!”"

3. "And, saying so, he stood at the foot (of his bed), and our father Filios stood at the head (of his bed), and they wrapped the bones of their Father in the shroud. And our father Anorewos took three crosses which were in the grave and gave one to our father Filios, and took two unto himself."

The polemics of the *Acts of Anorewos*, aimed against the spiritual domination of Dābrā Libanos over other monasteries, is, of course, missing in the BHT². Instead, Anorewos worships the remains of Tāklā Haymanot and kisses his wrappings. To make the narrative more convincing, the author introduces such important details as the names of the witnesses of the event. In contrast to the passages from the *Acts of Anorewos*, in which the participants of the translation are called “saints” (*qaddusan*, here meaning “monks”), but neither their number nor their positions are mentioned, the author of the BHT¹ (see table 1, e) calls the participant *māmbrān*, clearly referring to the tradition of the 12 *māmbrān* of Dābrā Libanos⁵⁴, and lists all the 12 names. Perhaps the author reached this conclusion, interpreting the source in the following way: as Anorewos was one of the 12 *māmbrān*, other saints participating in the translation of the relics could have been nobody else but his comrades, i.e., the other *māmbrān*, appointed to ad-

---

⁵⁴ The tradition about the 12 *māmbrān* (“teachers”, sometimes called also *naburānā sd*), pupils of Tāklā Haymanot who were sent to different regions of Ethiopia to convert their populations to Christianity, is considered important for the reconstruction of the Church history of Ethiopia of the early Solomonic period. This tradition, as preserved in the *Acts of Filippus of Dābrā Libanos* (see Turaiev 1908:198), seems to be the one most commonly referred to (cp. Taddesse Tamrat 1972; Kaplan 1984:92–100; Derat 1998:197–98 etc.).
minister other regions of Ethiopia. As an analysis of the passage in the BHT\(^2\) demonstrates, the hagiographer may have based his list of \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{ran}} on the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}} of Dâbrâ Libanos, probably intending to use the most ancient and the most "respectable" document and giving less credit to other sources, including the account in the GTH itself.\(^{55}\)

The description of the whole process of the translation amazes through the realism of the narrative; it is quite probable that the text follows the literary pattern based on the real ritual which used to be performed in a similar way. One can identify the distinct phases of the opening, elevation and re-burial of the remains. As the bones are unwrapped, a sweet odour comes from them – a miracle proving the sanctity of the relics. The funeral wrappings are immediately torn into small pieces and distributed among the participants. The \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{ran}} place the bones of the Saint in a "small chest" (\textit{rH}\textsubscript{\textordmasculine{H}}) and carry it to the church (the destination is, however, as vague as in the other traditions: the text only mentions that it was a church, but which church and where it was is not quite clear). The monks are followed by a crowd of people; one of them hurts his knee, but it heals as soon as he touches a piece of the Saint’s shroud (a detail can be found already in the Waldabba version of the GTH), which is another proof of the power of

\(^{55}\)Another register of the 12 \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{ran}} can be found in many copies of the GTH as a part of the monastic genealogy of Tâklâ Haymanot’s spiritual descendants within the Saint’s biography (Ef. 18 ff. 90rc–91vc: \textit{m\textordmasculine{H}\textordmasculine{H}\textordmasculine{r}} or "The [Book of the] Genealogy of our Fathers the Monks"; cp. EMML 2582 ff. 88va–89vc, GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:28). In the BHT\(^2\) the \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{ran}} Tadewos, Gâbrâ Krôstos, Yosef, Adhâni, Iyosyas and Qâwståsos are said to have come from the same regions as in the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}}. Anorewos ("the Elder", TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:176) is said to have come from Sagaâa, not from Wârâb, as the Gâdlâ \textit{Fil\textordmasculine{pos}} reports. It probably reflects the influence of some traditions tending to identify Sagaâa with Wârâb; the hagiographer could have found the reason for it in the \textit{Acts of Anorewos} (cp. CONTI ROSSINI 1905:100; see also TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:177, note 8; GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:28). Anorewos from Mârhabe is must have been a mistake for Marqorewos from Mârhabe. Instead of Anorewos from Morât, as in the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}}, Zena Marqos from Morât is mentioned, a recent tradition included in the GTH in the Dâbrâ Libanos version (see BUDGE 1906:198). As in the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}} (TURAIEV 1908:198), a \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{br}} bearing the name Matyan (\textit{\textordmasculine{M}\textordmasculine{t} \textordmasculine{R} \textordmasculine{N} \textordmasculine{y} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{h} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{b} \textordmasculine{r} \textordmasculine{h} \textordmasculine{r}}) from the region of Fatâgar can be found. The name Matyan is not attested in Go’az. It is certainly a mistake for Matyas (\textit{\textordmasculine{t} \textordmasculine{M} \textordmasculine{t} \textordmasculine{y} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{y} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{s} \textordmasculine{a} \textordmasculine{h} \textordmasculine{r} \textordmasculine{h} \textordmasculine{r}}), which could have been taken over from the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}} into the BHT\(^2\) (cp. GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:32, note 63). Both in the BHT\(^2\) and the \textit{Acts of Fil\textordmasculine{pos}}, Yohannos of Kâl’at is mentioned, a less-known \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{br}} who disappeared in some other traditions (cp. GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:29). The author of BHT\(^2\) compiled the fragment carefully and did not include in the list more than one region for each \emph{mâmh\textordmasculine{br}}.
the Saint and his remains. The māṃbhran bring the chest with the bones into the church and close the doors, leaving the people outside, and carry the chest three times around the tabot. The lamps, which have been extinguished by the presence of so many people, light up on their own, which is the manifestation of the miraculous appearance of Tāklā Haymanot, accompanied by abba Filapos (table 1, g). After that, the bones are buried.

The last passage (h) of the BHT² contains a concluding discourse, which can be considered the colophon of the work. In the very beginning it is briefly mentioned that Tāklā Haymanot received “the yoke of ascetic life” (kēdoṭ : ṭwpǒyγγ’ from Iyāsus Mo’a. Then, along with the traditional praise of Tāklā Haymanot and of other abbots of Dābrà Libanos, some information appears that helps us understand how the hagiographer perceived and understood the text he created. He did not consider himself the author in the full sense of the word, and presented the history of the creation of the text as including the following stages: the BHT² was “revealed” (t’hwo’t’h), “set forth” (wbrh’h), (later) “interpreted” (t’szxp-om’h) and “declared” (t’siπγ’h). The hagiographer understood his task as the implementation of the third stage – he wrote down what the Holy Spirit revealed and “interpreted” to him. Among the sources of the “interpretation”, he mentions hagiographic traditions related to the disciples of Tāklā Haymanot and the GTH. He also explains that the history of the translation itself initially remained unwritten and was forgotten, for the “fathers” did not write it down. Then it was again revealed, interpreted and written down. The author of the BHT² sees himself in the same situation as abba Yōḥannās Kāma, who tried hard to have accounts of the Saint composed (GTH in the Waldabba or the Hayq versions?) many years after the Saint's death, and was successful because the history of Tāklā Haymanot was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

56 In the discussion about the importance of the date of 12th of Gnbót the hagiographer draws a parallel between the appearance of Jesus Christ after His resurrection and the miraculous appearance of Tāklā Haymanot, to sustain the veracity of the latter.

57 BUDGE 1906:t.105, v.263 (the same in Eth. 627 ff. 81vb–82rb): “Hallelujah! This book of the translation of the honourable and blessed Takla Haymanyot ... was revealed, and sent forth, and was sealed in thanksgiving to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, and it was translated (t’szxp-om’h) in the faith of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and it was also declared in the Faith of the Father, and in the praise of the Son, and with the tongue of the Holy Spirit”.


version of the history (the one revealed and declared by the Holy Spirit) belongs to the circle of people to which he also belongs; all the other written traditions, including the BHT\textsuperscript{1}, are obviously considered to be “false interpretations”\textsuperscript{62}. In general, without providing any dating and without referring directly to the name of the commissioner, the passage does not appear as a usual colophon; it can not be excluded that the hagiographer styled this part of the text, following an older pattern\textsuperscript{61}.

As to the date of the composition, even though the BHT\textsuperscript{2} refers to Yohannas Kāma, it must have been composed after 1478, which is the supposed time of the composition of the \textit{Acts of Anorewos}. It seems reasonable to suggest an even later period for its composition, some time in the late 17\textsuperscript{th} or in the early 18\textsuperscript{th} cent.\textsuperscript{62} Being thus a relatively recent compilation of the...
elements of other traditions, the BHT\(^2\) indicates an interesting development in the written hagiographic tradition about Täklä Haymanot, but is obviously of secondary value as a historical source.

The Death of Moses

Most of the modifications one finds in the BHT\(^1\) as a part of the BHT\(^2\) are of decorative, purely literary character.\(^{63}\) At one place a long fragment was inserted by the hagiographer (table 1, b), who elaborated the biblical sayings “(And) as Paul said: without faith men cannot please God” (Heb. 11:6), and “the righteous shall live by faith” (Rom.1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38) into a lengthy sermon on the benefits of faith, with the use of numerous quotes and paraphrases from the Bible (Ps. 118:8, Mt. 3:7, Heb. 3:12, Rom. 14:23). But a few passages of BHT\(^1\) were revised more profoundly. E.g., at least in the text of the BHT\(^2\) as presented in Budge 1906, a few fragments of the earlier version, which became the main source of the new compilation, were omitted. Even although not all the criteria for the selection of the material can be defined, it is clear that the hagiographer was guided by his monastic community’s interests and by considerations of a religious and/or political nature. One of the fragments, which does not appear in the BHT\(^2\), is the narrative about Nágàda Kràstos’s vision in the BHT\(^1\) (see above); it was not taken over from the BHT\(^1\), perhaps due to the circumstance that in the first half of the 17th cent. the community of Däbrä Libanos was located near Gondár, in close proximity to the monasteries of lake Tanà. Another fragment is the account of the last days of Moses, which the author of the BHT\(^1\) possibly adopted from the work known as the Death of Moses (Motà
Muse). A widely known peculiarity of this text in the Ethiopian tradition is that it is usually ascribed to the religious literature of the Betà ăsra’el. The author of the BHT placed the fragment immediately after the opening praise of God. After a very short summary of the contents of the Motà Muse (God reveals to Moses that the day of his death will soon come. Moses is grieved and troubled, because he will have to leave his mother, wife and children), the hagiographer retells, it paraphrasing or sometimes even quoting phrases from it, possibly the ones he remembered best. The following table compares the fragment of the BHT and the source text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>BHT (Ef. 18, f. 90rb–va; EMML 2582 f. 83rb–rc, EMML 2134 f. 107va–vb.)</th>
<th>Motà Muse (ULLENDORFF 1961:430–31, 437)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. sūlūm: ṣ-b: ṣ-hūm: y-ūm: ḏ-lt: hūm: lūm: ḏ-h: ‘And the water was riven asunder and the dry land appeared. And He said to him: ‘Take this rolling stone!’ And the prophet took (it).’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ṣ-b: ṣ-hūm: y-ūm: hūm: lūm: ḏ-h: ṣ-lūm: ḏ-lt: ṣ-hūm: y-ūm: sūm: hūm: ‘And when he arose from the Sea he found a big rolling stone. And He said to him: ‘Strike that stone!’ He struck and the stone burst asunder, and he found in it a worm, and...’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 It is believed that the Vorlage of the Motà Muse was Arabic (see ULLENDORFF 1961:442, LESLAU 1951:106–07, KAPLAN 1999:106–7).


Aethiopica 6 (2003) 160
his food was some green grass sprouted in the interior of the stone. And Moses was astonished and praised God.

God said to Moses: ‘Strike that stone and roll that stone’ and he did as He commanded him. And the stone burst asunder and he found in it a worm eating some green grass and saying: ‘Blessed be God who has not forgotten me to this day I was in the depths of the Sea’ ...

On the one hand, the author of the BHT\textsuperscript{1} used this fragment as a continuation of the praise of God and as an element of the decorative rhetoric. On the other hand, the narrative became the richest in number of motifs and metaphors, comparing Tâklâ Haymanot with the biblical patriarch Moses. Further on in the text, Moses’s grave with its unknown location (Deut. 34:6) is juxtaposed to Tâklâ Haymanot’s burial, which was revealed by God so that the faithful could be saved. Later the testament (\textit{kidan}) of the Saint is compared to the testament of Moses, and in still another place the location of the Saint’s relics is compared to the refuge given to Israelites, i.e. the Promised Land. The author of the BHT\textsuperscript{2} did not try to erase all the literary parallels between Moses and Tâklâ Haymanot found in the BHT\textsuperscript{1}.

The fate of this text fragment demonstrates that in the early 16th cent. the \textit{Motâ Muse} was included in the literary environment in which the hagiographers of the monastic community worked, and that borrowed passages satisfied the tastes and norms of that time\textsuperscript{66}. But some time later, starting perhaps with the second quarter of the 16th cent., the place of the \textit{Motâ}
Muse in the Christian tradition changed, possibly after it was adopted by the literary and liturgical tradition of the Betā Īsra‘el. Therefore, by the time of the composition of the BHT² the Motā Muse might have been perceived as alien to the Christian literary tradition, so that its paraphrase in the text devoted to the founder of Dābrā Libanos became unacceptable, even as a decorative rhetorical element. This, however, does not allow an ultimate conclusion on how clearly the place of the Motā Muse was determined at that time. Neither does the fragment used in the earlier version of the BHT¹, small as it is, witness the existence of two distinct versions of the work – a Christian and a Betā Īsra‘el one. But it does prove that the Motā Muse could have reached the Betā Īsra‘el via Ethiopian Christian literature.

Conclusions
So far some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. A possible reconstruction of the textual history of the BHT involves two stages. The BHT¹ is an early text. Its literary form is very vague, possibly because the literary pattern of reports on the translations of relics was not well developed as yet. This text is much closer to a sermon than to a translation account, as the genre of the sermon was better known to the author and it suited well his purpose of creating an instructive text which could be recited at a festive meeting or liturgy of the members of the Dābrā Asbo/Libanos community. The BHT², being a much later work, included an important “historical” account of the translation and burial of the Saint’s relics, borrowed from a hagiography of a disciple of Tāklā Haymanot. The further revision of the BHT¹ consisted mainly in omitting passages, undesired for political or religious reasons, and including other, “neutral” ones. Both the texts were composed for the same occasion, but the BHT¹ was intended mostly for internal use in the monastic community, and the BHT² was meant for a much wider audience, where the majority consisted of the common faithful who did not know the monastic traditions and wished to hear an account describing how the translation of the remains of the Saint was carried out.

Abbreviations
CSCO – Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
Sae – Scriptores aethiopi
T. – text
V. – translation
Mäšḥafä falsätu lā-abunā Tāklā Haymanot: a Short Study

**Bibliography**


Amharic Church Dictionary – SÄRGWenn HABLá SELÀSSE (ed.), የአምርート እስከር አማርኛ እስከር ከማርennon እስከር ከማርennon ([Amharisches Kirchenlexikon], vol. 6: እስከር ለማርennon [Das Kirchenleben], Heidelberg 1981 A.M. [1989 A.D.])


CONTI ROSSINI 1905  –  CONTI ROSSINI, C., *Vitae sanctorum antiquiorum. II. Acta S. Basalota Mikā’ēl et Anorēwos*, Louvain 1905 (CSCO 28, 29 [SAe 11, 12]).


EOTC  –  *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical*
Mäshafä falsatu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study

Relations, Addis-Ababa 1996, [Amharic, English].

Fatlowitch 1906 – Fatlowitch, J., Mota Mûsî (La mort de Moïse), Paris 1906.


Hammerschmidt 1973 – Hammerschmidt, E., Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tänäsee 1, Wiesbaden 1973 (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XX–1).

Heinzelmann 1979 – Heinzelmann, M., Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes, Turnhout 1979 (Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental; 33 = A–VI.D.9).


165 Aethiopica 6 (2003)
KAPLAN 1999
KINEFE-RIGB ZELLEKE 1975
KRIS & KRIS-HEINRICH 1975
KUR 1972
LESLAU 1951
MARRASSINI 1981
MARRASSINI 1987
MEINARDUS 1968
NOSNITZYN 2000
PERRUCHON 1893
ROSWEYDE 1615
SCHNEIDER 1972
TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972
TURAIEV 1902

Denis Nosnitsin

Aethiopica 6 (2003)
Məşəfə falsətu lâ-abunâ Ṭəklâ Haymanot: a Short Study


TURAIEV 1906a – TURAIEV, B.A., Efiopskie rukopisi v Sankt Peterburge, St. Petersburg 1906 (Pamjatniki efiopskoj pismennosti IV).

TURAIEV 1908 – TURAIEV, B.A., Vitae Sanctorum Indigenarum. II. Acta S. Aaronii et Philippi, Louvain 1908 (CSCO 30, 31 [SAe 70, 71].


ZOTENBERG 1877 – ZOTENBERG, H., Catalogue des manuscrits Éthiopiens (Gheez et Ambarique) de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 1877.

Summary

The account of the translation of the relics of abunâ Ṭəklâ Haymanot, usually attached to his Acts, is one of the less-studied elements of the Saint’s hagiographic tradition. The article starts with a typology of translation reports in Ethiopian literature and deals in detail with the analysis of the textual tradition of the so-called Məşəfə falsətu lâ-abunâ Ṭəklâ Haymanot (‘Book of [the History] of the Translation [of the Body] of our father Ṭəklâ Haymanot’, BHT) and the problem of its sources. At least two stages can be distinguished in the development of the text (BHT1, BHT2), a long period of about two centuries separating them. The narrative of the first translation of the body of the Saint, which is said to have taken place in 1370, only becomes central in the later version of the work (BHT2). Among the literary relations around the BHT revealed in this study, the connection with the so-called Death of Moses, mostly known as a text affiliated to the literary tradition of the Betä Ìsra‘el, is the most interesting one.