



## Aethiopica 13 (2010)

International Journal of Ethiopian and  
Eritrean Studies

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VERONIKA SIX, Katalogisierung der orientalischen Handschriften in  
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Aethiopica 13 (2010), 163–175

ISSN: 1430–1938

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Published by

Universität Hamburg

Asien Afrika Institut, Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

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## A Psalter from Tübingen: Although Inconspicuous the Text, Nevertheless a Treasure for Manuscriptology<sup>1</sup>

VERONIKA SIX, Katalogisierung der orientalischen  
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The Psalter was acquired by the University Library of Tübingen in the year 2007<sup>2</sup> and is registered with the signature: Ma IX 31 (2007/687). The manuscript is written in Gəʿəz. Though not outstanding on account of age or content, it entirely has preserved the manuscript tradition. It is a classic example to demonstrate the many aspects, under which one may look at Ethiopian handwritten books: there is for example the codicological aspect like the technique of binding etc., the rules how a *Mäzmurä Dawit* was and still is written and used for daily readings and in individual life; one may notice the owner's veneration and devotion of the Virgin Mary. Concerning the iconography, one may reveal general and unusual aspects as well. There is a layer of magic perception. And finally we find some hints to history.

### Codicology

The manuscript is kept in a one-piece leather box: *maḥdär*.<sup>3</sup> The bag has a long and strong leather strap for carrying the manuscript upon the shoulder. A *maḥdär* has the function to save the manuscript from any damage. But the main purpose is naturally the option to carry a book (see, below). After removing the manuscript from the leather box, one will encounter the bookbinding at first, while in the manuscript production it is the final process. This Tübingen manuscript is a fine piece to demonstrate the long-established technique, which still today is practised one way or another. The diligent craftsmanship becomes visible looking at the book cover. The boards are completely covered with fine red brownish leather, which is stretched and overlaps the inner parts of the boards. The leather is deco-

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviated version was held at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa (2009), section: art history.

<sup>2</sup> See, VERONIKA SIX, "Aufstockung des äthiopischen Handschriftenbestandes zweier deutscher Bibliotheken", *Aethiopica* vol. 12 (2009), pp. 172–189: pp. 183–187.

<sup>3</sup> The leather case can be constructed as a one-piece box with flap and a leather strap or consisting of two units, one part kept in the slipcase with flap and when put together it is closed and ready for carrying the manuscript on the shoulder with the strap.

rated and even at the spine of the manuscript and at the inner parts of the boards the decoration is done with the similar meticulous skill.<sup>4</sup> The space in the middle of the reverse wooden cover is lined up with a piece of patterned silk in yellow and red; remains of silk are also fixed on the inner side of the front cover. Here we don't have a precious piece of silk. But those kinds of textiles might give an insight to the trade and commercial relationships between Ethiopia and the neighbouring Oriental countries.<sup>5</sup>

In the middle of the inner part of the front cover, a square hole is carved, what perhaps was designed for a mirror (see below).

What seems to be more or less unique, is the special carving of the wooden boards, which I haven't come across ever since with Ethiopian manuscripts: the board edges are bevelled at each side.<sup>6</sup>

The next aspect of codicology relates to the writing material. The text of the Psalter is of course written on parchment. The size of a manuscript can be seen from the quires. The clearly written quire-signature of the Tübingen manuscript gives the information how many leaves the manuscript contains, and how the manuscript is put together. The quire order of the Tübingen manuscript follows the common type: one quire consists of five bifolia, and the first quire begins with folio 3. The first written number is ፩ on folio 14 recto. The quire reading regularly is inscribed in the left upper corner of the recto side of the leaf. The last number is ፲፮ on folio 144 recto. This agrees with the accepted rule that a manuscript should not exceed fifteen quires for the sake of solidity. The number of the leaves of this manuscript in total is 149; there is a bifolium at the beginning, which is used for further purposes (see below). The last quire is irregular. The vellum is bound with a cotton string, the holes for the binding number four.<sup>7</sup>

Another top of codicological discussion is the preparation to insert the text on the parchment, what still remains visible after the completion of a manuscript. When the scribe has finished the preparation of the skin that

<sup>4</sup> Cf. SERGEW HABLE SELLASIE, *Bookmaking in Ethiopia* (Leiden 1981), pp. 25f.: the description of the tools and the ten types of ornaments.

<sup>5</sup> See, RICHARD PANKHURST, "Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Manuscript Bindings in Britain", *Azania* vol. 15 (Nairobi – London 1980), pp. 43–55; ID., "Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Eighteenth Century Manuscript Bindings in Britain", *Azania* vol. 16 (Nairobi – London 1981), pp. 131–50.

<sup>6</sup> See, <http://vocabulary.irht.cnrs.fr/pages/vocab1.htm>, entry: Board, bevelled: figure 300 A.

<sup>7</sup> For more details concerning the quire binding etc. see, ALESSANDRO BAUSI, "La tradizione scrittoria etiopica", *Segno e testo* vol. 6 (Università degli Studi Cassino 2008), pp. 507–557, particularly pp. 543f.

has become the wanted parchment to write on,<sup>8</sup> he marks the lines for scribing. The neat outlook of the text layout is achieved by pricking the beginning and the end of a line with a needle – that makes the fixing of the number and the lines of one page. Here we count regularly 25 lines. The scribe draws the lines with a sharp tool according to the *Vorlage*. The content of the manuscript is the *Mäzmurä Dawit*. This text always is written in a distinguishing manner.<sup>9</sup> It is even adopted by the modern printed samples with the exception of the last part: the hymns to the Virgin for the days of the week. In the manuscript tradition, this part is written in two columns, in printed texts it is presented in one column probably due to technical reasons: the tiny format of some printed volumes prohibits the design of two columns when using the same size of the typeset of the first part of the manuscript. A *Mäzmurä Dawit*, i.e. Psalms of David, in the Ethiopian reading consists of Psalm 1–150 and the so called apocryphal Psalm 151, the Canticles of the Old and New Testament and the Song of Solomon. That part of the *Mäzmurä Dawit* may be recognized even by Non-Ethiopianists being the Book of Psalms just by looking at the writing and arrangement of the text: The ruling on the recto side of each leaf presents the shape of one column and has a rectangular pattern, but the text lines of one page do not end at the right margin regularly. There is an unjustified right margin compared to the custom of the fairly accurate column writing of Ethiopian manuscripts. Often some lines/verses are completed with smaller sized characters. That is preserved in the printed versions as well.<sup>10</sup>

The *Mäzmurä Dawit* is divided into 18 sections.<sup>11</sup> Some Psalms of the Tübingen manuscript are separated from the next one by the insertion of: **፳፯፮ ፡ መዝሙር ፡ ዘዳዊት ።** = “end of the Song of David” what according to

<sup>8</sup> There are not many natural holes in the parchment, but then they were carefully sewn with tiny stitches.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. VERONIKA SIX, “Bemerkungen zur äußeren Form der Textgestaltung äthiopischer Handschriften”, *Proceedings of the XXXII International Congress for Asian and North African Studies, Hamburg, 25<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> August 1986* = *ZDMG Supplementa* vol. 9 (Stuttgart 1992), pp. 243–248; p. 246.

<sup>10</sup> In European manuscript collections, there are just very few examples of Psalters without the characteristic additions with smaller sized letters. Besides the Tübingen Psalter, what has only some additions (for example folio 53 recto), there is Hs. or. 14098 of the State Library in Berlin: see, *Aethiopia* vol. 12 (2009), pp. 182f.

<sup>11</sup> See, KIRSTEN STOFFREGEN PEDERSEN, *Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis of the Book of Psalms* = *AethFor* vol. 36 (1995), pp. 9–14 and, particularly, p. 11f. also p. 13f. presenting the table of the distribution of the reading during one week and the remarks on the private prayers.

M. Devens designates the “intro” to some Psalm verses.<sup>12</sup> The division of 18 sections is underlined by decorations. Modern printed versions show the same manner of separation (see, also below the section: Iconography and painting). The scribe is diligently using the black ink alternating with red ink, for example, when setting off names or inserting clusters of dots for underlining a break or filling a lacuna. Sometimes he creates the impression of a decorative design.

### The Owner’s commitment to the Virgin Mary

The commitment of the manuscript owner to the Virgin Mary is manifested by some additional items: folio 3 verso has a drawing of the crowned Virgin Mary standing in front of a building: probably, it is the depiction of the church Maryam Şəyon in Aksum. The type of the crown of the Virgin is the open one what relates to her regal origin from the House of David.<sup>13</sup> The thematic circle of the Virgin and Aksum as focus of Ethiopian-Orthodox-Christianity and belief is also embedded in the legend that the Holy Family during the flight spent some time in Aksum. The close ties to Jerusalem and the Solomonic descent therefore are expressed by simple symbols.

The portrait of a lady on folio 149 verso represents a noble woman. However, the outlook is that of the common portraits of the Lady Mary as the celestial representative. Her dress has – analogue to the general pictorial representations of the Virgin – the blue colour that is the colour of the dress of people of high rank.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, there is an Italian picture postcard sewn on the reverse side of the first leaf. The picture is carefully fixed with a white cotton string. According to the print on the reverse side of the postcard, the portrait of the Virgin is the “Madonna bruna d’oltremare”. People of Naples venerate the Madonna in the Chiesa Santa Maria del Carmine. The “La Bruna” was said to have been created by St. Luke too.<sup>15</sup> The icons of St. Luke of the Virgin Mary are the main icons for veneration in Ethiopia though they are regarded as Ethiopian

<sup>12</sup> MONICA DEVENS, *A Concordance to Psalms in the Ethiopic Version* = AethFor vol. 59 (2001), p. 527.

<sup>13</sup> There are two types of crowns: the open one and the helmet like crown. The first one is representing the worldly sphere the second one the celestial; see, STANISLAW CHOJNACKI, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting* = AethFor vol. 10 (1983), pp. 354–356 and table 370–372.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. JACQUES MERCIER, *Le roi Salomon et les maîtres du regard. Art et médecine en Éthiopie* (Paris 1993), p. 150b.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GERTRUD SCHILLER, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst* vol. IV, 2 (Gütersloh 1980), p. 16b.

creations.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the “Madonna bruna d’oltremare” fits well into the perception. The postcard is sewn on the first leaf of the manuscript. Here-with, we have an ancient tradition, i.e. to insert into the beginning of a manuscript a full-page miniature as devotional icon that the faithful may address the prayers to the respective Saint.<sup>17</sup> And nowadays this practice is replaced by inserting imported prints.<sup>18</sup> However, at what time the postcard was fixed to this manuscript is unknown. Picture postcards like the one of the manuscript are in use ever since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A special criterion for a chronological order – though still vague – is the position of the description: whether the description of the print is posted on the picture side (old picture postcards) or on the side where the address should be noted down (like the print of this manuscript).<sup>19</sup> The origin of the postcard, of course, is clear. The Italian influence was already strong at the time of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (farmers particularly from the Mezzogiorno were looking for a new fortune in Ethiopia). Unfortunately, the way how the holder of the manuscript came into possession of the picture postcard is unknown. But the existence of the image of the Italian card in the manuscript underlines the owner’s devotion to the Virgin and, maybe, his attitude toward foreign influence.

### Iconography and painting

The separation of the sections of the Psalm readings<sup>20</sup> in the Tübingen manuscript is done by *haräg* ornamentation. The style of these decorations is the typical Mənilək style, what is observed by the imperial manuscript writing institution established by the Emperors, and still is practised until modern times.<sup>21</sup> The bright colours of the *haräg* ornamentations, which are

<sup>16</sup> For example *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia* (New Haven – London 1993), pp. 73f.

<sup>17</sup> See, MARILYN HELDMAN, “St. Luke as Painter: Post-Byzantine Icons in Early-Sixteenth-Century Ethiopia”, *Gesta* (2005) vol. XLIV 2, pp. 125–148, particularly p. 134.

<sup>18</sup> See, also the remark in: STANISLAW CHOJNACKI, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting* = *AethFor* vol. 10 (1983), p. 476: “... the present day insertion of printed devotional images in prayer books or missals ...”.

<sup>19</sup> It seems that this could become a topos of research. Picture postcards in general are objects of collectors only. There is not much literature about this subject so far (see, “*Wikipeda*”).

<sup>20</sup> See, above and note 11.

<sup>21</sup> CARLA ZANOTTI-EMAN, “Gli Haräg ‘geometrici’ e gli Haräg in ‘stile Menelik’ durante i secoli XVII–XIX”, *RSE* vol. XLII (1998), pp. 147–168, particularly fig. 13. ALESSANDRO BAUSI, “La tradizione scrittoria etiopica”, *Segno e testo* 6 (Università degli Studi Cassino 2008), p. 538.

outlined with black ink, are dark red, green and yellow. Sometimes there are tiny uncoloured fields. Thus, the colour of the parchment is used as a decorative element.

On folio 57 verso on the bottom of the page, there are tiny decorations in the style of the so-called Art of Šäwa. The pictorial style that was practised in the Šäwan region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fits perfectly to the given dating (see, below). Amongst several features of this style, there are the thin outlines with black ink, some red colour and the relatively fantastic outlook of the motive.<sup>22</sup> Inserted in the ornament on the right side is the reading: መንፈቁ ፡ ዝኖ ፡ = “here is half of it”. The ornament is separating Psalm 77, 12 from Psalm 77, 13 as it is the tradition.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, there are some sketchy pictures added on the front and reverse cover leaves. The motives are the traditional representation of the Virgin (see, above); the archangel Michael (folio 2 recto) wearing lace-up shoes and a dress like an Ethiopian noble man; the archangel Gabriel (folio 148 recto) wearing Turkish slippers; the Trinity (folio 2 verso); just outlines of an equestrian Saint (folio 3 recto); the presentation of Saint George as a young man<sup>24</sup> (included are the essential iconographic attributes<sup>25</sup> on folio 148 verso, the painting is partly coloured); Saint Täklä Haymanot (folio 149 recto); (folio 149 verso) the noble woman (see, above). Besides their respective attributes (for example Saint Täklä Haymanot: the three pairs of wings and the numb foot), most illustrations are also defined by an inscription done by a later (?) scribe. The colours of all these sketchy illustrations are imported synthetic pigments.

Added to the *Mäzmurä Dawit* is a loose bifolium. Whether it was planned to belong to the manuscript from the beginning, i.e. that the painting was done by order of the holder of the manuscript, is unknown. The theme of the double leaf is Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden.<sup>26</sup> The pictorial representation of Adam and Eve is generally rare in

<sup>22</sup> Cf. STANISLAW CHOJNACKI, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting* = AethFor 10 (1983), pp. 480f.

<sup>23</sup> For this phenomenon and the origin see, STEVE DELAMARTER – MELAKU TEREFE, *Ethiopian Scribal Practice 1. Plates for the Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project* = Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts, and Studies Series vol. 2 (Eugene, Oregon 2009), pp. 118f. (plate 73).

<sup>24</sup> VERONIKA SIX, “Der heilige Georg und das Mädchen: ein orientalisches Motiv und sein Weg nach Äthiopien”, *Afrika und Übersee* 77 (Hamburg 1994), pp. 9–30.

<sup>25</sup> See, STANISLAW CHOJNACKI, “The Iconography of Saint George in Ethiopia”, *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* vol. XI, 1 (1973), pp. 57–73, vol. XI, 2 (1973), pp. 51–92, vol. XIII, 2 (1975), pp. 39–51.

<sup>26</sup> An entry concerning Adam and Eve in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* is missing.

Ethiopian manuscript illuminations and icon paintings.<sup>27</sup> Their pictorial representation is habitually embedded in the theme of the Resurrection. The depiction of the Fall – like the one of the bifolium – most probably is borrowed from European models.

I would like to draw the attention to the not yet – as far as I know – analysed topos of the Fig tree and a few aspects of the pictorial presentation of the Fall in Ethiopian surrounding.<sup>28</sup> The Amharic inscription on top of the painting on the left page reads: **ዲያብሎስ ፡ ሔዋን ፡ ዕፀ ፡ በለስ ፡ እንደቆረጠኝ ።** = “Diabēlos – how Eve is picking from the fig tree”. The painting shows that Eve is touching the blossom of a tree. In the biblical text: the First Book of Moses 2,17 the designation fig tree is not there, it is “the tree of knowledge of good and evil”.<sup>29</sup> In the First Book of Moses 3, 3, just “the fruits of the tree in the centre of the garden” are mentioned. The expulsion from the Garden of Eden is part of the Book of the Cave of Treasures as well, which belongs to the first part of the Qāleməntos.<sup>30</sup> There we find the Tree (of Life), the Tree of violating the commandments, the Fruit of Disobedience or simply Fruit when referring to it.<sup>31</sup> In *EAE* the entry: **በለስ ፡** is explaining the botanical meaning and the import of the plant by Catholic Missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the northern parts of the country for cultivation.<sup>32</sup> There is no hint to Biblical sources. In Dillmann’s *Lexicon*<sup>33</sup> we find no reference relating to the First Book of Moses under the entry **በለስ ፡**. On top of the painting to the right, there is the Gəʿəz inscription: **ሱራፊ ፡ መልአክ ፡ ዘከመ ፡ አውፅአሙ ፡ እምነኑት ፡ ለአዳም ፡ ወለሔዋ ።** = “how the angel Surafe[l] is expelling<sup>34</sup> Adam and Eve from the garden”. Already in

<sup>27</sup> Cf. STANISLAW CHOJNACKI, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting* = AethFor vol. 10 (1983), p. 475.

<sup>28</sup> For the ongoing discussion in western art see for example: HILARIO FRANCO JÚNIOR, “Entre la figue et la pomme: l’iconographie romane du fruit défendu”, *Revue de l’histoire des religions* vol. 223, 1 (Paris 2006), pp. 29–70.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Lexicon der Ikonographie* vol. 1 p. 263b; EMIL KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* vol. II (Tübingen 1929, repr. 1968), p. 522.

<sup>30</sup> It is exactly part of chapter IV of book 1; cf. the introduction in: ALESSANDRO BAUSI, *Il Qāleməntos etiopico. La rivelazione di Pietro a Clemente. I libri 3-7* = Studi africanistici. Serie etiopica (Napoli 1992) p. 18. SYLVAIN GRÉBAUT, “Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-clémentine”, *ROC* vol. 16 (1911), here p. 167f.; see also, SU-MIN RI, *La Caverne des Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques* = *CSCO* vol. 487 (only the reference to the translation volume is cited) pp. XIX and 12–17.

<sup>31</sup> CARL BEZOLD, *Die Schatzhöhle*, vol. I (Leipzig 1883), p. 6; and p. 62: “Frucht der Bitterkeit des Todes”.

<sup>32</sup> See, vol. I pp. 453f.

<sup>33</sup> See, DL p. 487.

<sup>34</sup> See, DL p. 945: Gen 3, 23.



the first scene, in their state of innocence and light, both are dressed with a skirt made of leaves and not after the moment “he, together with his wife, had become stripped of the clothes of light”.<sup>35</sup> The skirt of Adam and Eve made of leaves is the reference to the First Book of Moses 3, 7 and to the Homily in Honour of the archangel Gabriel where it is mentioned that “they sewed fig leaves together for themselves and were covered”. This is also reported in the Book of the Cave of Treasures: after having lost their innocence, they fabricate a dress “from leaves of figs”.<sup>36</sup> The name of the angel, who is expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden according to the inscription of the painting, is Surafe<sup>37</sup> i.e. Seraph, and it is not Gabriel, as expected in relation to the reference to the Homily in Honour the Archangel. According to the First Book of Moses 3,24, one of the Cherubim is watching the tree of Life. It seems that the painting presents a hybrid form. The style of the painting is the modern traditional style.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, any theological or doctrinal discussions are surely beyond the motivation of the painter; he is probably using European devotional pictures as *Vorlage*.<sup>39</sup> The artist seems to have had in mind the decorative aspect, more than a spiritual debate (cf. the divergence of a fig and the blossom: the blossom of a ብሉት ፣ is attractive, but the painting clearly does not represent the shape of the ብሉት ፣ plant. In the same style blossoms are depicted in an Amharic modern version of the Queen of Šeba<sup>40</sup> or even similar paintings of the traditional art).

### The layer of magic perception

As mentioned in the beginning, the inner side of the initial wooden board has a carved empty square space what presumably was intended for a mir-

<sup>35</sup> Cf. GETACHEW HAILE, *The Mariology of Emperor Zär'a Ya'qob of Ethiopia* = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* vol. 242 (Roma 1992), p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> See, the Arabic version in: CARL BEZOLD, *Die Schatzhöhle*, p. 27, line 9: وتستروا باوراق التين.

<sup>37</sup> See, also the Amharic version of the legend of the Queen of Šeba edited by ALICE JANKOWSKI (Hamburg 1987), p. 145 = p. 256 (*Die Königin von Saba und Salomo. Die amharische Version der Handschrift Berlin Hs. or. 354*), where it is the Surafi too.

<sup>38</sup> See, ELISABETH BIASIO, *Heilige und Helden. Äthiopiens zeitgenössische Malerei im traditionellen Stil* (Zürich 2006) – to name just one example of the publications on this topic.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. EWA BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA, “Un psautier éthiopien illustré inconnu”, *Orientalia Suecana* vol. 33–35 (Uppsala 1984–1986), p. 22f. See, also the entry in *EAE* vol I, pp. 453, where the Catholic missionary activities of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are mentioned.

<sup>40</sup> See, ALICE JANKOWSKI, *Die Königin von Saba und Salomo. Die amharische Version der Handschrift Berlin Hs. or. 354* (Hamburg 1987), pp. 146f.

ror. One will preferably find mirrors in the front cover of manuscripts<sup>41</sup> thus referring to the initial part of the manuscript.<sup>42</sup> Manuscripts containing the space for a mirror are either (as far as I know) a *Mäzmurä Dawit* or the Gospel of St. John.<sup>43</sup> Some scholars assume that mirrors were added for cosmetic function.<sup>44</sup> But the majority of the holders of a Psalter or a Gospel seem to be male persons.<sup>45</sup> Most of them belong to the ecclesiastical or at least non secular group.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the explanation “that it is for cosmetic usage” is less acceptable.

One should consider the existence of a mirror in the front cover board in relation to the content of the respective manuscripts. Seen from this angle, one should have in mind that the first verses of the Psalms (Psalm 1, 1–6) and the first verses of the Gospel of St. John (John 1, 1–6) likewise are used as apotropaic or therapeutic means in either booklets containing magic texts or in scrolls.<sup>47</sup> Strelcyn edited the text of a manuscript containing treatises for healing and prescriptions in magic context. This manuscript mentions the different purposes for which the respective Psalm verses are used. The first Psalm is mentioned in connection with the infertility of a woman.<sup>48</sup> Also in Coptic surrounding and popular belief Psalm verses are used for

<sup>41</sup> There are also examples where either both covers (like Cod. aeth. 119, see, VOHD XX, 5, p. 169), or the reverse board (like Cod. aeth. 29, see, VOHD XX, 5, p. 49) have the space for a mirror.

<sup>42</sup> See, also above, the practice of inserting a devotional image in the front part of a manuscript what emphasizes the connotation of the initial part of a manuscript.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. some examples in German collections described in VOHD XX, 3, pp. 428f: Ms. 309 (Schloss Gottorf, Archäologisches Landesmuseum der Christian-Albrechts-Universität): Gospel of St. John; VOHD XX, 5 (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München), p. 46: Cod. aeth. 27, p. 110: Cod. aeth. 70, p. 169: Cod. aeth. 119 *Mäzmurä Dawit* and p. 49: Cod. aeth. 29 (the space for the mirror is in the centre of the inner side of the reverse board): Gospel of St. John; VOHD XX, 6 (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz), p. 158: Hs. or. 1361: *Mäzmurä Dawit*.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. ALESSANDRO BAUSI, “La tradizione scrittoria etiopica”, *Segno e testo* vol. 6 (Università degli Studi di Cassino 2008), pp. 507–557, particularly p. 546.

<sup>45</sup> See, VERONIKA SIX, “Aufstockung des äthiopischen Handschriftenbestandes zweier deutscher Bibliotheken”, *Aethiopica* vol. 12 (Hamburg 2009), note 7: the remark on the ownership of a *Mäzmurä Dawit*.

<sup>46</sup> In the actual case the holder of the manuscript at least was a pious man.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example VOHD XX, 6 (1994), p. 186 (no. 71.2) and p. 523.

<sup>48</sup> See, STEFAN STRELCYN, “La version Guèze des mystères des psaumes”, in: *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Maxime Rodinson g.l.e.c.s.* suppl. 12 (Paris 1985), pp. 369–380, particularly p. 373: Against infertility the first Psalm should protect. STEFAN STRELCYN, “Les mystères des Psaumes, traité éthiopien sur l’emploi des Psaumes en Éthiopie (amharique ancien)”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* vol. XLIV, 1 (Cambridge 1980), pp. 54–84.

medical healing.<sup>49</sup> According to a manuscript from the monastery of St. Menas in Old-Cairo, written in Arabic, the use of the first Psalm as well is intended to cure the infertility of a woman like in Ethiopian practice.<sup>50</sup> Parchment scrolls containing the prayers against infertility and for protecting the pregnant woman with the introductory first Psalm are for example: III A 2366 (no. 3),<sup>51</sup> SGD 160 no. 3 and 4, SGD 194 no. 5, SGD 197 no.5, SGD 220 no. 2 SGD 224 no. 4.<sup>52</sup> Now it might sound inconsistently to mention on the one hand the preponderance of male gender and on the other hand the purpose of healing female. But the predetermined idea can become a more general protecting function as described at another occasion.<sup>53</sup>

The first verses of the Gospel of John are even more frequently used in magic prayers. The first words of the gospel in magic surroundings are not restricted to prayers or protecting texts for women, but are included in scrolls written for both genders. There is for example the just mentioned North American collection: 36 scrolls are containing the first verses of the Gospel of St. John.<sup>54</sup> Aren't there some relics of magic belief by incorporating a mirror into a manuscript either the Gospel of St. John or a *Mäzmurä Dawit* to serve the protecting function? And persons carrying the manuscript with texts for daily recitation like a *Mäzmurä Dawit* kept in a *maḥdär* when travelling across the countryside, more likely are men than

<sup>49</sup> Cf. A. KHATER, "L'Emploi des psaumes en thérapie avec formules en caractères cryptographiques", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* vol. 19 (Le Caire 1967–1968), pp. 123–182.

<sup>50</sup> See, A. KHATER (no. 5), translation of Ms. 45 p. 149: "Le premier ps 'heureux l'homme ...' est écrit pour la femme qui ne retient pas d'enfants et pour le palmier qui perd ses dattes; on l'écrit au moment de la plantation des arbres, avec l'ordre de Dieu Très-Haut".

<sup>51</sup> VOHD XX, 6 (1994), p. 186: Ethnographic Museum (Berlin): introduction to a prayer against hemorrhage.

<sup>52</sup> See, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Scrolls of Spiritual Healing in North America* Vol. Two (forthcoming).

<sup>53</sup> Paper held at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Enno Littmann Conference in Berlin (April 2009): "Äthiopische Pergamentrollen: ihre Schutzfunktion und der Wandel". Particularly, scrolls containing the so-called Legend of Saint Susānyos, a text to protect women during their pregnancy and after having given birth to protect the child, changed into the possession of male persons by erasing the name of the female owner and inserting the name of a man (in the respective invoking formulas).

<sup>54</sup> SGD 150, 153, 156, 160, 168, 170–174, 176, 180f., 184f., 190, 192, 200, 204, 207f., 210f., 214f., 220, 224, 252, 264f., 270, 273, 276, 280, see, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Scrolls of Spiritual Healing in North America* vol. Two (forthcoming).

women. Men rarely use mirrors to the same extent as women, but an instrument for protection might be useful.

In addition, one should point at the significance of the mirror in relation to magic-religious belief as it is expressed for example also in Ethiopian titles. The best known text is called: መጽሐት ፡ ሰሎሞን ፡ ። = “mirror of Solomon”, a prayer text found in parchment scrolls.<sup>55</sup> Scrolls are part of the daily protection of an individual person and his or her household respectively. Further prayers and texts with the expression *Mäšbet* in the title are: መጽሐት ፡ ብርሃን ፡ ።<sup>56</sup> = “mirror of light” and መጽሐት ፡ ጥበብ ፡ ዘክርስጣጣሊስ ፡ ።<sup>57</sup> = “mirror of the wisdom of Aristoteles”. Both are used for protection as well.

The connotation of mirrors and their use in therapeutic treatment was widely practiced in the Mediterranean area introduced by Arab<sup>58</sup> medical prescription: there is the so-called “therapy by reflection”.<sup>59</sup> Concerning the Ethiopian aspect, there are M. Griaule's records of the use of mirrors for prediction;<sup>60</sup> M. Rodinson's account of magic practices that people are convinced spirits may appear in the mirror.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> SEBASTIAN EURINGER, “Der Spiegel Salomons. Ein abessinisches Amulett”, *ZDMG* vol. 91 (1937), pp. 162–174; he notes: “Die apotropäische Wirkung des Amuletts hat man sich nach der Analogie eines Brennsiegels vorzustellen. Wie ein Spiegel die Lichtstrahlen auffängt und im Brennpunkt sammelt, um sie dann in den Luftraum zurückzuschleudern und zu zerstreuen, so soll der Salomonspiegel die feindlichen Dämonen ... ablenken ...”. The same effect one might expect when the manuscript will be opened. OSCAR LÖFGREN, “Der Spiegel des Salomo. ‘Ein äthiopischer Zaubertext’”, in: JAN BERGMAN – KAARINA DRYNJEFF – HELMER RINGGGREN (eds.), *Studies in the History of Religions: Supplements to Numen XXI*, 1 (Leiden 1972), pp. 208–223.

<sup>56</sup> See CARLO CONTI ROSSINI, “Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection d’Abbadie”, Extrait du: *Journal asiatique* (1912–1914) (Paris 1914), p. 116, no. 82: “miroir de lumière (መጽሐት ፡ ብርሃን ፡ ።) d’Abrehām”.

<sup>57</sup> OSVALDO RAINERI, *Codices Comboniani Aethiopici* = Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Codices Manuscripti Recensiti iussu Ioannis Pauli II Pontificis Maximi (Città del Vaticano 2000), p. 214f., no. 214.13: መጽሐት ፡ ጥበብ ፡ ዘክርስጣጣሊስ ፡ ።.

<sup>58</sup> The Arab influence in Ethiopian magic practices still can be seen by using the word: Ṭəlsəm of Arab origin for special illustrations in parchment scrolls. For details concerning the ancient heritage of magic belief see, for example JACQUES MERCIER, *Le roi Salomon et les maîtres du regard. Art et médecine en Éthiopie* (Paris 1993), pp. 126f.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. LENZ KRISSE-RETTENBECK, *Bild und Zeichen religiösen Volksglaubens* (München 1963), p. 99: “Sympathetische Beziehung”.

<sup>60</sup> “Le livre de recettes d’un däbtärä abyssin” (Paris), pp. 45f.

<sup>61</sup> MAXIME RODINSON, *Magie, médecine et possession en Éthiopie* (Paris 1967), p. 45.

In Ethiopian popular imagination, the mirrors are involved in legends. In the legend of the visit of the Queen of Šeba to Solomon,<sup>62</sup> a mirror is mentioned: The Queen gives it to her son Mənilək that he could recognize who his father is.<sup>63</sup> A mirror has the special function in the Book of the Cave of the Treasures (see, above note 30).<sup>64</sup> There the method is mentioned, how one may deceive someone by using a mirror and how one teaches a bird to speak the Greek language.<sup>65</sup>

### Historical information

Besides the already mentioned colonial Italian aspect, there are some few historical details. On folio 146 verso, in the respective formula, the owner of the *Mäzmurä Dawit* is mentioned: *Grazmačč* ʿAläme G<sup>w</sup>alu. Appointed as governor of Mäqdälä by Tewodros II in 1857–1859, *Grazmačč* ʿAläme G<sup>w</sup>alu was a strong supporter of the emperor's politics and his campaigns against the Oromo in the year 1857. The Chronicles, however, report that one year later he abandoned the political views of the ruler.<sup>66</sup> The manuscript is dated on folio 146 recto: the Amharic note mentions the completion of the writing of the manuscript. It was the year 7350 ʿAmätä ʿaläm what corresponds to the year 1850 A. Mis. = 1857–58 A.D. And that means that during this crucial period, there was time or maybe better to say a need for writing a *Mäzmurä Dawit* what also underlines the presumption that manuscripts sometimes are equipped with some apotropaic tools like a mirror.

<sup>62</sup> ALICE JANKOWSKI, *Die Königin von Saba und Salomo. Die amharische Version der Handschrift Berlin Hs. or. 3542. Text, Übersetzung und Erläuterungen* (Hamburg 1987), pp. 58f.

<sup>63</sup> ALICE JANKOWSKI, *Die Königin von Saba und Salomo. Die amharische Version der Handschrift Berlin Hs. or. 3542. Text, Übersetzung und Erläuterungen* (Hamburg 1987), p. 298.

<sup>64</sup> See for example, the translations in: ROC 16, pp. 167f.; CSCO 487, pp. 14f.; CARL BEZOLD, *Die Schatzhöhle* vol. I (Leipzig 1883), p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> The function of a mirror in folk belief in general is mentioned in: CHRISTOPH DAXELMÜLLER, *Aberglaube, Hexenzauber, Höllenängste. Eine Geschichte der Magie* (München 1996), pp. 211, 213, 215, 277.

<sup>66</sup> See, *EAE* vol. I, p. 190; also the listing of EVGENIA SOKOLINSKAIA, “From Q<sup>w</sup>ara to Mäqdälä. Index of Proper Names from the Three Chronicles of Emperor Tewodros II's Reign”, in: VERENA BÖLL et al. (eds.), *Studia Aethiopica: In Honor of Siegbert Uhlig on the Occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Wiesbaden 2004), p. 271. MARTINO MARIO MORENO, “La cronaca di Re Teodoro attribuita al Dabtarà ‘Zaneb’”, *RSE* vol. II (1942), pp. 143–180), particularly note 3 and pp. 178f.; also see, SVEN RUBENSON, *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Oxford 1966), pp. 75, 77.

## A Psalter from Tübingen

To conclude: the manuscript of the University Library of Tübingen compiles nearly every single aspect for studies concerning manuscript researches. Nevertheless, being a relatively new manuscript, it is an appropriate item in showing the long established manuscript tradition. It illustrates the many facets what a manuscript is used for, and it points at some cultural and historical aspects of the Ethiopian society as well.

### Abbreviations

AethFor	Aethiopistische Forschungen (Wiesbaden-Stuttgart)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DL	AUGUST DILLMANN, <i>Lexicon linguae Aethiopicae</i> (Lipsiae 1865)
EAE	Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), <i>Encyclopaedia Aethiopica</i> , vol. 1: A–C (Wiesbaden 2003)
ROC	Revue de l’Orient chrétien (Paris)
RSE	Rassegna di Studi etiopici (Napoli-Roma)
VOHD	Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (Wiesbaden)
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (Leipzig – Wiesbaden)

### Summary

The University Library of Tübingen, Germany, has acquired a manuscript with the text of a *Mäzmurä Dawit*. The manuscript is dated. At first glance it seems to be the standard Psalter. But there are several criteria, which give insight into the manuscript culture, and which has not changed during centuries. The modern printed editions of a *Mäzmurä Dawit* exactly follow the scheme of the long tradition. Besides being a perfect witness to the traditional manuscript culture and individual use of a *Mäzmurä Dawit*, the Tübingen manuscript contains elements, which open the window to different aspects, as for example, worship and belief, iconography, or history.