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Review of

GETATCHEW HAILE with MELAKU TEREFE – ROGER M. RUNDELL –
DANIEL ALEMU – STEVE DELAMARTER, *Catalogue of the
Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project, Volume 1: Codices 1–105,
Magic Scrolls 1–134*

STEVE DELAMARTER – MELAKU TEREFE, *Ethiopian Scribal Practice 1:
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GETATCHEW HAILE with MELAKU TEREFE – ROGER M. RUNDSELL – DANIEL ALEMU – STEVE DELAMARTER, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project*, Volume 1: *Codices 1–105, Magic Scrolls 1–134* = Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts and Studies Series Volume 1, Eugene, OR: Picwick Publications, 2009. Pp. 1 + 446. Price: US-\$ 65,-. ISBN-10: 1-60608-871-8; ISBN-13: 978-1-60608-871-5.

STEVE DELAMARTER – MELAKU TEREFE, *Ethiopian Scribal Practice 1: Plates for the Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project* = Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts, and Studies Series Volume 2, Eugene, OR: Picwick Publications, 2009. Pp. xvi + 194 (including 116 colour plates). Price: US-\$ 67,-. ISBN-10: 1-60608-872-6; ISBN-13: 978-1-60608-872-2.

To state that the two volumes of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project (henceforth: EMIP) are one of the remarkable results out of the multifarian efforts in the Ethiopic manuscripts digitization and cataloguing domain tirelessly carried on now for about five years by Steve Delamarter (Professor of Old Testament at George Fox University, Portland, OR, also editor of the newly founded series “Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts and Studies”, henceforth: EMTS), within the frame of various interrelated research projects (for which cp. EMTS 1, p. xxiiif.), is certainly no prejudice to the other four co-authors, whose merits are clearly stated in the preface (*ibid.*, pp. xiiif.). Roger Rundsell and Daniel Alemu worked (with others) in physical description, image processing and preparation of catalogue entries, while the core of the cataloguing processes and textual analysis relied on Prof. Getatchew Haile, who thus gained the honor of figuring first in the authors’ list. Finally, *qäsis* Melaku Terefe especially analysed the recensions of Song of Songs in the numerous Psalter mss. of the collection (*Mäzmurä Dawit*, 42 entries, i.e. exactly 40 % of the codices).

There is no better way to represent the different stages of the work carried on and coordinated by Delamarter than by quoting his own words (*ibid.*, p. xiii): “The purpose of the EMIP is to locate, digitize, and catalogue Ethiopic manuscripts and to make the images and catalogues widely available for research by scholars. The work involves many distinct operations [...] a preliminary physical description, a detailed mapping of the architecture of the codex, digitization of the manuscript (one pass for ‘down shots’ of the content, another pass for details of scribal, codicological, and artistic practice), digital foliation of the images, processing of two different sets of digital images (one for bundling into PDF files, another for posting on the internet), analysis and documentation of scribal practices, the general layout of a catalogue entry based on a template, the detailed cataloguing of content

and determination of the date of the manuscript, and, finally, the editing, indexing and preparation of the catalogue volume for publication and the posting of the images online”.

Up to the present publications, the EMIP, started in the Spring of 2005, has digitized 700 mss., of which the two volumes under review present the first set of catalogued mss. consisting of 105 codices and 134 magic scrolls photographed between 2005 and 2006, for a total number of 239 items. Pictures of the entire collection of digitized mss. (655 mss. on 25th January, 2010, either codices or magic scrolls) are available on line on the web site *Vivarium* of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, Collegeville, Minnesota (<http://www.hmml.org/Vivarium/sgd.htm>).

The mss. covered in this first two-volume catalogue comprise various larger private collections (dealers, such as Eliza Bennett, Blake and Claire Marwick, Gerald Weiner, Mohammad Alwan etc., and private individuals), as well as those of a few small university libraries collections (*ibid.*, pp. xviif.). Many mss., however, “have changed hands” (*ibid.*, p. xxiii) since they were catalogued, what implies the rigorous virtual character of the EMIP collection. The codices are noted with “EMIP”, and scrolls with “EMIP MagSc” progressive numbers (e.g., EMIP 1, EMIP 2, EMIP MagSc 1, etc.).

The first of the volumes (EMTS 1) is composed as follows. The proper catalogue is preceded by a short list of Abbreviations (p. xxif.), and—most important—by two longer introductions, one “Introduction to the Collection and Its Codicology” by Delamarter, where general criteria and methodological issues of the description are dealt with (pp. xxiii–xxxii), and a second “Introduction to the Scrolls of Ethiopian Spiritual Healing” by Getatchew Haile (p. xxxiii–l), which is an original, overarching presentation of the so-called “magic scrolls” literary genre, with plenty of interesting observations on the magical (but also religious, as Getatchew rightly points out) aspect of the magic scrolls literature, also furnished with a selection of relevant passages both in Gəʿəz and in translation. Then follow the “Catalogue of the Codices” (pp. 1–269) and the “Catalogue of Scrolls of Ethiopian Spiritual Healing” (pp. 271–398). The rich final indexes apparatus comprises “List of the Manuscripts by EMIP Number and Owner Number” (pp. 399–402), “List of Dated or Datable Manuscripts” (p. 403), “List of Undated and Composite Manuscripts” (p. 405), “Bibliography” (pp. 407–10), “Index of Works in the Codices” (pp. 411–18), “Index of Names and Places in the Codices” (pp. 419–21), “Index of Miniatures in the Codices” (pp. 422–25), “Index of Scribal Practices in the Codices” (pp. 427–29), “Index of Works in the Scrolls of Spiritual Healing” (pp. 430–41), “Index of Names in the Scrolls of Spiritual Healing” (pp. 443–46).

The second volume (EMTS 2), authored by Steve Delamarter and Melaku Terefe, is formally “A Companion to EMIP Catalogue 1”. Yet, more than a simple companion with magnificent colour plates, it is intended to illustrate at best peculiar material features of the Ethiopian scribal practice as applied to codices – not scrolls – for each of which at least one colour plate is given (113 plates for 105 codices). Plates section (pp. 1–177) is preceded by “Abbreviations” (p. xi), “Preface” (pp. xiii f.) and “Introduction” (pp. xv f.), and followed by a rich apparatus including “List of the Manuscripts by EMIP Number and Owner Number” (pp. 179 f.), “List of Dated or Datable Manuscripts” (p. 181), “List of Undated and Composite Manuscripts” (p. 183), and a general bibliography on paleography and codicology of various cultural and ms. traditions (Arabic; Armenian; Ethiopian Art; Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition and General; Ethiopian Scribal Practice; General, Scribal Practice and Illuminations; Greek Manuscript Tradition; Hebrew Manuscript Tradition; Latin Manuscript Tradition; Samaritan Manuscript Tradition; Syriac Manuscript Tradition, pp. 185–92), where, if I am right – with the only exception of Merian, *Iconum Biblicarum* (1st ed. 1627), in Latin (p. 189) – only English titles are to be found; finally, an “Index of Scribal Practices”. (That languages other than English are a bit exotic to the authors seems to appear from the curious *lapsus* occurring on p. xxvii, where Delamarter states that: “To enable the comparison of similar prayers in the scrolls, Professor Getatchew has provided implicits for most of the prayers”, where “implicits” is obviously to be corrected into *incipits*, i.e. the initial words of a text, normally quoted so as to identify it. Similarly on p. xlix, 2nd par., last l. : “in *extensio*” [sic] instead of: “in *extenso*”. Extraordinary rapidity in accomplishing the catalogue is to be considered as extenuating circumstance.)

The catalogue (EMTS 1) gives seven sections for codices description (occasionally also followed by additional section on “navigation system”): “1) number, name and title; 2) physical description and dating; 3) list of contents; 4) list of miniatures; 5) varia (including additional, i.e. not originally constituent, literary texts); 6) notes (i.e. additional, not literary, notes); and 7) quire maps” (pp. xxvff.). “Physical description” is by far the most detailed section, including in turn, besides “usual” information – material (1); external dimension of the codex (2); the number of folios (6); the number of columns of text (8); the language (in other catalogues, however, not given in the physical description section) (9); the number of lines in a typical folio (10); the date (11) – also: a description of the binding (3); a description of the covers (4); the number of the quires (and their balance), i.e. if the quires are constituted only with entire folded up sheets, or also with half-sheets, resulting in adjusted balanced or in unbalanced quires structure (p. xxviii),

the two latter appearing far more common than is usually believed (5). The analysis of 1,320 quires allows Delamarter to provide quite new and useful statistics concerning average Ethiopic mss. quire structure, including, separately, protection quires (or “guard leafes”, as they are more commonly known, pp. xxviii–xxx) too. It emerges that five-sheet quires (49.7 %) and four-sheet quires (33 %) are by far the most common structures, and that they are not equally distributed across time, as four-sheets quires structure seems to prevail in earlier mss. Only a very minor part of the illuminations are original (15 %), what is due to the practice common among Ethiopian mss. dealers of superimposing pictures on text in order to make mss. appear more precious (p. xxvii): this is something peculiar to the kind of mss. collection considered and substantially affects the reliability of the presented data in terms of evaluation of the really traditional – not “traditional style”! – Ethiopic mss. production. Similar, although shorter analysis, applies to the magic scrolls (pp. xxxif.). On the niche carved out of the wooden cover to hold a mirror, also Marcel Cohen, “Sur la fabrication des livres manuscrits éthiopiens”, in: *Groupe linguistique des études chamito-sémitiques. Comptes rendus* 5 (1948–1951), pp. 90–91, should have been quoted. (A more comprehensive bibliography on Ethiopian scribal practice is to be found in my “La tradizione scrittoria etiopica”, in: *Segno e Testa* 6 [2008], pp. 507–57.)

The immediate forefather of the present catalogue is the one published by the same Delamarter with Demeke Berhane, *A Catalogue of Previously Uncatalogued Ethiopic Manuscripts in England. Twenty-three Manuscripts in the Bodleian, Cambridge, and Rylands Libraries and in a Private Collection* = *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement* 21, Oxford: Oxford University Press on Behalf of the University of Manchester, 2007 (describing 14 mss. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, 2 mss. in the Cambridge University Library, 3 mss. in the John Rylands University Library, Manchester and 4 mss. of Dr. Ian MacLennan’s private collection, London), on which I detailed in a recent contribution of mine on cataloguing Ethiopic mss., i.e. “La catalogazione come base della ricerca. Il caso dell’Etiopia”, in: Benedetta Cenni – Chiara Maria Francesca Lalli – Leonardo Magionami (a c.), *Zenit e Nadir II. I manoscritti dell’area del Mediterraneo: la catalogazione come base della ricerca. Atti del Seminario internazionale. Montepulciano, 6-8 luglio 2007* = *Medieval Writing. Settimane poliziane di studi superiori sulla cultura scritta in età medievale e moderna* 2, Montepulciano (Siena): Thesan & Turan S.r.l., 2007, pp. 87–108, esp. pp. 104–06. Like the new catalogue, and even much more – unfortunately, without Getatchew Haile! – the previous volume privileged the description of the material aspects, which in fact, with few exceptions and for a number of reasons, is usually under-

represented in Ethiopic mss. cataloguing. In that case, the “traditional” description of the 23 mss. (ch. I, pp. 1–35, including navigation system and ruling) was followed by an apposite chapter (ch. II, pp. 37–110) entirely devoted to every aspects of scribal practice (including interpunction, that unfortunately – *hélas!* – was given out of any textual context). Quire structure in particular was graphically represented by the same system which is adopted in the present EMTS 1, where “quire maps” of the 105 codices occupy approximately one page for each ms., roughly amounting to more than 100 pages (!). Although certainly clear and easy to understand, one may observe that to adopt a more economic representation system of the quire structure – as is commonly done in a number of related disciplines, cp., e.g., Bentley Layton’s *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts In the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1906*, London: The British Library, 1987, where a precise “collation” of the ms. is represented in few lines, on pp. lvii–lix (cp. also Armando Petrucci, *La descrizione del manoscritto. Storia, problemi, modelli* = Beni culturali 24, Roma: Carocci, 2001, pp. 82f.; and Maria Luisa Agati, *Il libro manoscritto. Introduzione alla codicologia* = Studia archaeologica 124, Roma: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2003 [repr. 2004], pp. 168–74, where various models are clearly exemplified) – would have spared a lot of paper, provided a more rational (and less awkward) description, and immediately shown the prevalent quires structures (three-, four- or five-sheet quires etc.). Moreover, no information is given on other major codicological issues, such as the hair- and flesh-side disposition of the leaves in the quires, and most of all the codicological units.

Transcriptions are usually correct, but too many misprints still frequently occur, e.g., p. xxxiv, l. 1: “*bä’atä*” instead of: “*bä’antä*” (also p. xlix, l. 3); *ibid.* l. 8: “*Hexemerom*” instead of: “*Hexameron*”; *ibid.* ll. 8–9: “*Mähafä İla’atqäarfa*” instead of: “*Mäşhafä Al’a Təqärfa*”; p. xxxix, ll. 3 and 1 from the bottom: “*mäk^wanənt*” instead of: “*mäk^wannənt*”; p. xli, l. 12 from the bottom: “*Təmhətä*” instead of: “*Təmhərtä*”; p. xlv, 2nd par., ll. 2, 8: “*Nägrä Maryam*” instead of: “*Nägärä Maryam*”; p. xlvi, 3rd par., l. 4: “*zätäqäha*” instead of: “*zätäqädha*”; p. xlix, 3rd par., last l.: “*säytanot*” instead of: “*säytanat*”; *ibid.*, 4th par., last l.: “I are certain” instead of: “I am certain”. Some references are wrong (unfortunately, I could check but very few ones), e.g., the quotation of the Gə‘əz text on p. xli (ⲄⲔⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ) from the *Mystagogia* is to be found in Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Äthiopische liturgische Texte der Bodleian Library in Oxford* = Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung Veröffentlichung Nr. 38, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960, p. 54 (where ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ is certainly to be corrected into ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛ as in Getatchew), not on p. 48; and in Deborah Lifchitz, *Textes éthiopiens magico-*

religieux = Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie 38, Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1940, p. 44, with important commentary on p. 61 (the translation of the passage ተገቢእ ፡ ለኩሉ ፡ ገድል ፡ እለ ፡ በሰማያት ፡ ማኅደር ፡, both in Hammerschmidt: “indem er verborgen war jeder Kraft, deren Wohnsitz in den Himmeln ist”, and in Getatchew: “hidden from all powers who are in heavenly dwelling”, ignores important grammatical difficulties), and not on p. 42.

In conclusion, notwithstanding minor remarks, one must positively evaluate Delamarter's and generally EMIP contribution to the study of Ethiopic mss. The mss. collection as such is of no great intrinsic value: besides 42 Psalters and the scrolls, we might single out as major items: 5 mss. of the Gospel of John (EMIP nos. 3, 23, 38, 64, 78); 1 ms. of the Revelation (EMIP no. 13); 2 mss. of the *Miracles of Mary* (EMIP nos. 31 and 36, the second one also including miracles of St. Mercurius, Täklä Haymanot, and Jesus); 2 mss. of the *Darsanä Mika'el* (EMIP no. 16, described very much in detail on pp. 42–49, and no. 102); 2 mss. of the *Horologium* (EMIP no. 42, miscellaneous, also including some fols. dating back to 16th cent., and no. 105); 1 ms. of the hymnological collection *Egzi'abəher nägsä* (EMIP no. 53); and more common texts. Yet, out of an average mss. collection, the catalogue and the companion volume mark an important step towards the establishing of a better standard in Ethiopic codicology, where quantitative evaluation comes to play a more central role: not to say that the EMIP project as a whole has made a huge stuff of material easily accessible to scholars.

It is to be hoped, as a final remark, that whatever new scientific approach shall be used, the necessary phase of the textual evaluation and that both – material- and text-oriented description – shall be integrated into a wider comparative perspective. In fact, there is only one real peril implied with the new approach, i.e. that this apparent attempt at “redeeming” Christian civilization of Ethiopia through investigation of its “material evidence” from the purportedly subordinate status where historical and philological investigation has confined it to (as one out of the several components of Christian Orient) will end by underestimating undeniable historical connections and comparative aspects, which remain so important for both “manuscript archaeology” on the one hand, and for “textual history” (or “prehistory”) on the other hand.

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