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### Article

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## The Gəʿəz Version of Philo of Carpasia's *Commentary on Canticle of Canticles* 1:2–14a: Introductory Notes

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### Premise

The fragment with Philo of Carpasia's explanation of *Canticle of Canticles* 1: 2–14a bears the title ትርጓሜ ፡ ስሎሞን *Tərg<sup>w</sup>ame Sälomon* “Interpretation of Salomon”. In his shelf list of the Ethiopian manuscripts kept at the Ethiopian archbishopric in Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> Ephraim Isaac makes the following remarks in relation to the manuscript JE300E (MS 119 at the Ethiopian archbishopric in Jerusalem):

This is the title given to the work which contains, beside other composite monastic works, a commentary to Song of Songs 1: 2–14a (fols. 3a–20a). This commentary is the work of Philo of Carpasia (Philon Philgos) (c. 400). I thank Prof. Sebastian Brock who helped to identify this work with the help of Rev. Roger Cowley.<sup>2</sup> The commentary incorporated into the catena of Procopius is published in *PG* KL. (In Latin, see Epiphanius of Salamis). As far as I know this is the only known Ms of this work in Geʿez.

Ephraim assigns the manuscript to the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup> and it is the only manuscript in the shelf list that has been commented. While this clearly

<sup>1</sup> It would be logical to seek an explanation of how those manuscripts in Gəʿəz and Amharic got to Jerusalem, especially in the case of the particularly rare specimen dealt with in this paper. A likely setting of our manuscript's location is described in the following historical overview: “From the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. on, a variety of sources report of the Ethiopian community: dedication in books sent as gifts to the community from Ethiopian rulers; letters from Ethiopian kings and nobles; marginal notes in manuscripts; descriptions by foreign historiographers and in numerous itineraria of foreign pilgrims; documents from legal processes; letters from foreign missionaries in Jerusalem; two historiographic manuscripts in Amharic written by members of the community in the late 19<sup>th</sup> cent.; books published by members in the late 20<sup>th</sup> cent. From these writings it becomes clear that the community flourished in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> cent.”, STOFFREGEN PEDERSEN 2007: 274; cf. also, VAN DONZEL 1983: 93–101.

<sup>2</sup> The manuscript appears in Cowley's shelf list, cf. COWLEY 1988: 437.

<sup>3</sup> The above observation appears in a footnote in ISAAC 1987: 67–68. For more information, cf. MACOMBER 1995, on Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem, Roll 3, Item 14,

helps to attract the attention of researchers, Ephraim's description which has been fully reproduced here, does contain a few minor lapses.<sup>4</sup>

In PG 40, the title of the commentary to the Canticle reads: ΦΙΛΟΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΑΣΙΟΥ ΣΥΝ ΘΕΩ ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΑ ΑΣΜΑΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ Πρὸς Εὐστάθιον πρεσβύτερον καὶ Εὐσέβιον διάκονον, followed by the Latin translation: *Philonis episcopi Carpasii, Deo iuvante, Enarratio in Canticum Canticorum, Ad Eustathium presbyterum et Eusebium diaconum*. Thus, the commentary in PG 40, coll. 27–154, is not a *catena*<sup>5</sup> but rather the production of a single hand: Philo of Carpasia.<sup>6</sup> It is true that there is a *catena* of Procopius of Gaza (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century) in PG 87/2, coll. 1545–1753. In the collection of Procopius there are 48 passages of the commentary to the Canticle by Philo of Carpasia. Moreover, in the *catena* of Pseudo-Eusebius (end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century/beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century), Philo's commentary is quoted thirty seven times, and there are three references in the *Topographia Christiana* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (mid-6<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>7</sup> Ephraim identifies Philo of Carpasia with “Philon Philgos” without any explanation. Perhaps he has taken for granted that the author of the Commentary of the Canticle is the same as the interpreter of the Pauline Corpus known as *Tərgʷame Felon Felgos*.

### The manuscript

JE300E is a small size parchment: 15 x 11 x 5 cm with 120 leaves, of which fol. 120v is blank. It is written on a single column with an average of 16/17 lines. In fols. 117–120 there are rudimentary drawings of horses, in fol. 117rv two horses, the one in the *verso* with a rider. Apart from a rough geometrical drawing in the upper margin of fol. 3v, the manuscript does not have any ornamental motif, nor a particularly elaborate sign system in the punctuation. In fol. 1v there is a seal that is green in colour, unfortunately so fuzzy that it is impossible to decipher the *legenda*. The only recognizable

MS no. JE300E: “1) Ff. 4a–20a: from Philo of Carpasia's commentary on the Song of Songs. It includes the introduction and the commentary up to Cant. 1:14. Incomplete at the beginning; the Greek text is found in MIGNE, *Patrologia graeca*, t. 40, cc. 23B: 3–56B: 4”, with a careful three-page long description of the manuscript.

<sup>4</sup> The shelfmark is PG XL (i.e. 40) rather than “PG KL”. The statement that the “commentary incorporated into the catena of Procopius is published in PG KL” does not seem accurate.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary on the meaning of *catena*, cf. CURTI 2006: 960–963.

<sup>6</sup> For a list of the Greek fragments of Philo's Commentary on the Canticle, cf. CERESA GASTALDO 1979: 15–20.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. WOLSKA-CONUS (éd.) 1973. Philo's passages are the comment to Canticle 1:2,4, on pp. 295–297; Canticle 7: 6–7, on p. 297.

element is the cross in the middle. The palaeographic characteristics place the manuscript in the category of the so-called “Monumentalschrift”.<sup>8</sup>

The manuscript is in good condition. The binding consists of two wooden plates, without any additional cover. The upper plate was torn but it has been repaired again. The upper borders have been partially damaged, presumably by rats; the written parts though have survived.

Some of the leaves are thick and hard, others are thinner. The script, except for the first leaf, is homogeneous throughout the manuscript. It is archaic but clear and easily readable. The letters are bulky and often angular. The codex displays the orthographic exchange between **ሐ/ኀ; አ/ዐ; ሠ/ሰ**, common to all Gəʿəz manuscripts. The interchange between the first and fifth order (for example, fol. 2r **ወደቤሌኒ**; fol. 2v **ኒኬ**) is so frequent that it allows us to believe that this is a scribal habit. There are exchanges between the first and fourth (fol. 9r **አለ** for **አላ**), as well as between the first and seventh order (fol. 9r **ደም** for **ደም**). Hybrid letters are also featured, for instance in fol. 3v, where the letter **ደ** has a double hook; it looks like an overlap of the second and third order. It is difficult to distinguish the **ሰ** from **ሰ**. There are instances in which a fusion of two voices occurs, such as **ወሰተ ፣ ሐውዘ** for **ወሰተ ፣ ሐውዘ** in fol. 12v.

Philo’s commentary begins abruptly and is preceded by an alien text (from fol. 2r to two words in fol. 4r).

### Philo of Carpasia

Philo, the abridged form of Philemon, bishop of Carpasia in the island of Cyprus, was a contemporary of Epiphanius of Salamis († 403?). In fact it was the latter who ordained him bishop (*Vita S. Epiph.* II, 49). There has been skepticism on the reliability of the information about Philo, similar to that on the more famous Epiphanius. Philo died in Carpasia at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and was buried in his church in the town of Rizocarpaso.<sup>9</sup> The *Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles* is the only work of Philo Carpasianus registered in *CPG* (no. 3810).

### Philo’s commentary on the Canticle

The aim of the present paper is not to reopen a discussion on the authorship of the commentary. I will rather summarize the data of researches conducted so far. Philo composed a *Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles* in Greek (*PG* 40, 28–153, from now on = G) which has survived in an epitome published by Michelangelo Giacomelli in 1772, and in a Latin version edited by Epiphani-

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. UHLIG 1988: 73ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. CERESA GASTALDO 1984: 1374.

us Scholasticus (6<sup>th</sup> century), who was an expert in translations from Greek to Latin and worked as a secretary (*scholasticus*) of Cassiodorus at Vivarium (Calabria). It was on the orders of the latter that Epiphanius has carried out the translation of Philo's commentary. In 1750, Pietro Francesco Foggini published the *editio princeps* of the Latin version in Rome: *S. Epiphaniū Salaminis in Cypro episcopi commentarium in Canticum Canticorum prodit nunc primum ex antiqua uersione latina opera et studio P.F.F.* (from now on = L.). The edition was performed on the Latin manuscript Vaticanus lat. 5704 (probably belonging to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century), the only witness of the Latin version. Scholars maintain that L is closer to the original. The Commentary has been edited again more recently.<sup>10</sup> In antiquity Philo's authorship of the Commentary to the Canticle was questioned. Cassiodorus, in a plausible attempt to enhance the prestige of the work, ascribed it to Epiphanius of Salamis (*Institutiones* I, 5,4). Pietro Foggini shared the same view. The issue of authorship was laid to rest after Giacomelli, unanimously followed by subsequent researchers, denied that Epiphanius of Salamis had written the *Commentary to the Canticle*. Since then, it has been firmly established that albeit there are some discrepancies, L is simply a translation from Greek.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning the language of the commentary Ceresa Gastaldo says: "Il testo greco filoniano, quale si legge nell'edizione del Giacomelli, non presenta molte difficoltà, dato lo stile estremamente semplice richiesto dalla spiegazione letterale di ogni singolo versetto al *Cantico*. Solo saltuariamente compaiono vocaboli di uso postclassico".<sup>12</sup> Scholars have expressed various and not always flattering views on the quality of Philo's Commentary on the Canticle. Indeed, it has often been dismissed as mediocre and a compilation in character. Siegmund's verdict on the work is sharp: "... ziemlich wertlos".<sup>13</sup> One of the most important features of Philo's exegesis is the traditional identification of the bridegroom with Christ and of the bride with the Church.

### Philo in Gəʿəz literature

There are at least three works in the Gəʿəz language that are associated with the name of Philo,<sup>14</sup> a Paschal homily, a fragment of the *Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles*, and a vast commentary on the Pauline Corpus. Even

<sup>10</sup> CERESA GASTALDO 1979; SAGOT 1981.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. GIACOMELLI 1772, *Praefatio*, col. 15.

<sup>12</sup> CERESA GASTALDO 1979: 13.

<sup>13</sup> SIEGMUND 1949: 128.

<sup>14</sup> Neither Philo nor Carpasia are registered in the section of Dillmann's Lexicon reserved for *nomina propria*, cols. 1408–1423. There is no mention of them in KIDANÄ WÄLD KƏFLE 1948 °A.M.

though it can be safely excluded that the trilogy belongs to Philo of Carpasia, nonetheless, there is a multifaceted common thread shared by the three works that carry the name of Philo. The similarities range from an apparently peculiar translation strategy to linguistic characteristics as well as a common *Weltanschauung* which seems to privilege an ascetic/monastic life style. The three works contain passages with anti-Judaic polemics and seem to be fond of the so-called “Theology of Substitution”.<sup>15</sup>

### Paschal homily

In one of the three ancient manuscripts, the same text of a Paschal homily is ascribed to Philo (or Theophilus) bishop of Carpasia. The title in EMMML 1763, no. 64, fols. 201v–204v, reads: “Homily of Felon, bishop of the town of Qerpesyas for Easter Wednesday”.<sup>16</sup> The text is part of a large “collection of homilies for the year” and has been dated at around 1336/37 or 1339/40. Bausi maintains that EMMML 1763 “contains traces” of what he calls “The Aksumite collection”.<sup>17</sup> The Paschal homily has elements that confirm the antiquity of the homiliary’s language.

The second witness is Or. 8192 of the British Library,<sup>18</sup> and presumably belongs to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The title is: **ድርሳን ፡ ዙቴዎፍሎስ ፡ ጳጳስ ፡ ዘብሔር ፡ ቀርኔሎስ ፡ በእንተ ፡ በዓለ ፡ ፋሲካ ።** In his catalogue, Strelcyn translates: “Homily by Theophilus, Patriarch of Qärnelos,<sup>19</sup> at Easter, for Wednesday in Easter-Week”.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> One example of the “Theology of Substitution” which advocated the idea that the Old Testament and Israel have been replaced by the New Testament and by the Church is the *Epistle of Barnabas* (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. GETATCHEW HAILE – W. F. MACOMBER 1981: 227.

<sup>17</sup> BAUSI 2006a: 54, n. 21. With regard to the place and time of the “Aksumite collection”, Bausi states: “La *Collezione aksumita*, almeno il suo nucleo principale fu verosimilmente redatta in Egitto, come provano i documenti di origine alessandrina in essa incorporati, e in lingua greca. La data probabile della sua costituzione non è anteriore alla seconda metà del V sec.: il *termine post quem* è il 477 d.C., data della morte di Timoteo Eluro, il più tardo degli autori identificati i cui scritti vi siano compresi; come termine assoluto *ante quem* vale probabilmente il 686/87, come si evince da probanti elementi filologici”, *ibid.*: 45.

<sup>18</sup> Catalogued in STRELCYN 1978: 90, ms. 56, no. 19 (fols. 72va–77ra).

<sup>19</sup> The toponym is written in five different Gəʿəz syllabic signs, of which the third is partially stained (-ne-?; -me-?). Perhaps Qärnelos could have been a more obvious choice of the copyist.

<sup>20</sup> This is a free translation. “Wednesday in Easter-Week” is not part of the title. **በረቡዕ ፡ ፋሲካ ።** “Wednesday in Easter-Week” is a liturgical indication placed in the upper margin.

Among the texts of EMMML 8509, no. 40 (fols. 99r–102r) is a “homily for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter”, ascribed to “Theophilos Bishop of Carpathias”.<sup>21</sup> Sergew dates it “not before the 10<sup>th</sup> and not after the 13<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>22</sup>

The variant “Theophilos”, a name more familiar than Philo<sup>23</sup> to Ethiopian ears, can be explained as an adjustment of “Philo”, which perhaps looked awkward to the copyists. The difference in the spelling of names in the above Gəʿəz manuscripts, and especially the identification of the text behind the Gəʿəz version have been a great challenge to the editors and translators into Italian of the homily.<sup>24</sup> The daunting task of searching for the *Vorlage* and retrieving it, an enterprise that at that time appeared beyond reach, did not discourage me from dealing with the Gəʿəz text which I found extremely puzzling and irresistible at the same time. The publication of the homily with its translation into Italian was rightly criticized for its failure to hunt out the *Vorlage*,<sup>25</sup> but it is also true that the Italian translation has been decisive in tracing the presumed Greek text behind the Gəʿəz version of the homily.<sup>26</sup> The “provisional conclusions” of Professor Voicu, formulated in

<sup>21</sup> Cf. SERGEW HABLE-SELASSIE 1987: 17. Sergew has republished this article *verbatim* in *Ostkirchliche Studien* 40, 1991, pp. 64–80. Our homily is listed on p. 73 as “Fourth Sunday of Eastern” (sic). It is said to belong to Ṭana Qirqos and its contents are almost the same as EMMML 1763, *ibid.*: 9. Referring to the language from which the Collection of the homilies has been translated, Sergew states: “It is out of the question to expect translation from Greek in this time because, as we find in this text, some of the Greek words which became *technical terms* in the Christian world, such as Pentecost, are written in a distorted way. Coptic words such as Tut and Hetur are indicated as Greek words. So most probably the bulk of the homilies, if not all, must have been translated from Syriac and Coptic”, *ibid.*: 20–21. At present, most scholars are skeptical of translations from Syriac or Coptic into Gəʿəz.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.

<sup>23</sup> In the Gəʿəz Synaxarium there is no mention of anyone by the name Philo.

<sup>24</sup> RAINERI – TEDROS ABRAHA 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. BAUSI 2006b: 45, n. 14; 2007a: 36. Voicu’s praise too, at the beginning of his paper sounds like an implicit criticism: “Ai due curatori [Raineri – Tedros Abraha] va riconosciuto subito un coraggio eccezionale”, VOICU 2004: 5. There have been complaints about the omission of EMMML 8509 in the collation. I tried hard to gain access to this codex. I applied for a microfilm of the manuscript at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa and at HMML (Minnesota). Both institutions told me that they do not have it. I found the manuscript somewhere else only very recently. Seeing the script (finely described by Sergew and with the reproduction of the most striking letters) is a satisfaction in its own right. Nothing new though has emerged that can change the textual data presented in the 2003 publication. Sometimes it is much easier to point out an omission than to pursue and to consult the document itself.

<sup>26</sup> In the entry “Filone di Carpasia”, E. Prinzivalli writes: “In etiopico sussiste una omelia pasquale che in larga misura si ispira all’*In sanctum pascha* dello Ps. Ippolito”, cf.

eight concise points raise some of the core issues<sup>27</sup> and yet it seems that they are far from sorting out the question of the *Vorlage* of the Gəʿəz version.

### Commentary on the Pauline Corpus

The *Tərgwame Felon Felgos* is a bulky commentary of the *Corpus Paulinum* in which each Pauline pericope is followed by explanations ascribed alternately to Felon and to Felgos.<sup>28</sup> The manuscripts inspected so far do not provide any additional information about the plain names of the two presumed commentators. The commentary<sup>29</sup> is preserved in at least four manuscripts:

- 1) Vatican Library, Raineri 127,<sup>30</sup> a parchment of 81 large folios, belonging approximately to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century;
- 2) British Library, Or. 13,964,<sup>31</sup> a copy on paper by a very recent hand;
- 3) British Library, Cowley 35, a replica of Or. 13,964;
- 4) Giustino de Jacobis (1800–1860) in his letter, dated 11 September 1846 gives an account of his visit to Däbrä Bizän (Eritrea) where he was allowed to see the manuscripts of the monastery. Among the texts he saw, he mentions: “Un’esposizione rimarcabile di S. Paolo; opera, come dice l’autore della prefazione premessa al libro, di *Filone e di Fileguos*”.<sup>32</sup>

In the first three manuscripts parts of the commentary are missing. Raineri 127, which is much older than Or. 13,964, has many gaps on several accounts and the manuscript is in a poor state. The present order of the leaves is generally messy. The original binding has fallen apart for reasons difficult to under-

DI BERNARDINO (a. c.) 2007: 1961. In the bibliography at the end of the entry, there is no mention of the Gəʿəz text of the homily either in the manuscripts or in the publication by RAINERI – TEDROS ABRAHA 2003.

<sup>27</sup> VOICU 2004: 23.

<sup>28</sup> An edition of this commentary with an annotated translation by the undersigned is well underway.

<sup>29</sup> ትርጓሜ ፡ ፊሎን ፡ ፊልጎስ “*Tərgwame Felon Felgos*” is registered in the list of: ሊቀ ፡ ጠባብት አክሊለ ብርሃን ወልደ ቁርቆስ ፡ መርሀ ፡ ልቡና ፡ ሚያዝያ ፳፩ ቀን ፲፱፻፵፮ ዓ.ም., p. 81. Among the list of 652 books in EMMML 1601, no. 206 is: *Tərgwame Pāwlos za-Fēlon Fēlgos*. In the introductory note to this microfilm the cataloguers say that “the original composer of this list is most probably Liqa Ṭabbabt Aklila Berhān Walda Qirqos”, cf. GETATCHEW HAILE – MACOMBER 1981: 81. In the same manuscript, the reference in f. 201b apparently points to a further witness of “*Tərgwame Pāwlos za-Fēlon Fēlgos* is ambiguous”. Fol. 201v is the first leaf of the Paschal homily ascribed to Philo of Carpasia.

<sup>30</sup> Registered in RAINERI 2004: 641.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. COWLEY 1988: 445. Cowley acknowledges that the commentary’s lemmas “represent an old Geez text-type” but he dismisses the commentary as “somehow flat and pedestrian” (ibid.: 282). I doubt that Cowley has read the whole commentary, otherwise his judgement would have perhaps been different.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. SAN GIUSTINO DE JACOBIS 2003: 823.



stand. The fatal result is the irretrievable loss of several parts of the original manuscript.

The text is clearly a servile translation from author(s) and text(s?) that so far remain unknown. Nonetheless, the commentary is of huge interest, among several other aspects, due to the amount of Gəʿəz *hapax legomena* and to entries attested only once or twice elsewhere. I am skeptical though that the *Tərgʷame Felon Felgos* has been translated directly from Greek. The comment on Heb 7:1-3 clears ground. Philo of Carpasia at any rate cannot be the author. It says:

ፌልጎስ ፡ ተርጎሙ ፡ ወይቤ ፡ ወመልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ሰላም ፡ ውእቲ ፡ ካህ  
ኑ ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር ፡ ልዑል ። ዘንተ ፡ ሶበ ፡ ይብል ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ሳሌም ፡ እስመ ፡  
ለባሕቲቲ ፡ ሢሞ ፡ ኅበ ፡ መቃብረ ፡ አቡነ ፡ አዳም ፡ ወስማ ፡ ሳሌም ፡ ወአልቦ ፡  
ዘነበረ ፡ ቅድሚሁ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ሀገር ። ወበእንተዝ ፡ ተሰምየ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ እስ  
መ ፡ ባሕቲቲ ፡ ይትከህን ፡ በውስቴታ ። ዛቲ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ኢየሩሳሌም ፡ ትንቢት ፡  
ለዘሀለዎ ፡ ይመጽእ ፡ ኢየሱስ ፡ መድኃኔ ፡ ዓለም ። ወለአብርሃምኒ ፡ ተራከቦ ፡  
መልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ተመይጦ ፡ እምቀትለ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ አመ ፡ ቀተሎሙ ፡ ለነገሥ  
ተ ፡ አማሌቅ ፡ እስመ ፡ ነቢይ ፡ ውእቲ ፡ አእመረ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይፌኑ ፡ ቃሎ ፡ እግዚ  
አብሔር ፡ በምድር ፡ ወይቤ ፡ በመዋዕልየኑ ፡ ትፌኑ ፡ ቃለክ ፡ ዲቦ ፡ ምድር ።  
ወአስተርአዮ ፡ ለአብርሃም ፡ ዘተውህበ ፡ ሎቲ ፡ ቃለ ፡ ትንቢቲ ፡ ወይቤሎ ፡ ኢኮ  
ነ ፡ ይእዜ ፡ ወባሕቲ ፡ አስተርእየክ ፡ ዕዱ ፡ ዮርዳኖስ ። ወነገሮ ፡ ከመ ፡ ኢይረክ  
ቦ ፡ ለመልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ወከመሂ ፡ ይባርኮ ። ወባረኮ ፡ መልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ለአቡነ ፡  
አብርሃም ፡ ወወሀቦ ፡ አምሳለ ፡ ሥጋሁ ፡ ወደሙ ፡ ለክርስቶስ ። ርእዩኬ ፡ አብር  
ሃም ፡ በትንቢት ፡ በእደ ፡ መልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ወተፈሥሐ ፡ አብርሃም ፡ ወአሠረ ፡  
ኩሎ ፡ ዘነሥአ ፡ ወወሀቦ ፡ ዓሥራተ ፡ ለመልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ቀዳሚ ፡ ትርጓሜሁ ፡  
ንጉሠ ፡ ሰላም ፡ ብሂል ፡ ዘአልቦ ፡ አበ ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ እመ ፡ ወኢይትወወቅ ፡ ልደ  
ቲ ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ ማሕለቅተ ፡ ሕይወቲ ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ ጥንተ ። ዘንተ ፡ ሶበ ፡ ይብል ፡  
አልቦቲ ፡ አበ ፡ ወአልቦቲ ፡ እመ ፡ ኢታስሕት ፡ ልበክ ፡ ከመ ፡ ሳዊሮስ ፡ ዘአንጾ  
ኪያ<sup>33</sup> ፡ ወይቤ ፡ ውእቲ ፡ እምህላዌ ፡ መለኮት ፡ ወመልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ውእቲ ፡  
መንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ። ወበእንተዝ ፡ ዐቢየ ፡ ስሕተተ ፡ ስሕተ ፡ አልቦ ፡ አበ ፡ ወአል  
ቦ ፡ እመ ፡ ሶበ ፡ ይብል ፡ እስመ ፡ አቡሁ ፡ ወእሙ ፡ መምለክያነ ፡ ጣዖት ፡ ወኢ  
ይፈርህዎ ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር ። ወበእንተዝኬ ፡ ሴመሂ ፡ ሠራቆ ፡ እምአቡሁ ፡ ወእ  
ሙ ፡ በከመ ፡ አዘዘ ፡ አቡሁ ፡ ኖኅ ፡ እስመ ፡ አእመረ ፡ በመንፈስ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይከው  
ን ፡ ካህኑ ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር ፡ ልዑል ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሳሌም ። አእሚሮ ፡ ይሰቀል ፡  
ክርስቶስ ፡ በህየ ፡ በቀራንዮ ፡ መካን ፡ ወበህየ ፡ ቀበሮ ፡ ለአቡነ ፡ አዳም ፡ ወሢ  
ሞ ፡ ህየ ፡ ለመልክ ፡ ጼዴቅ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይሰብሕ ፡ ወይዘምር ፡ ወይዕጥን ፡ ወይትከህ  
ን ። ወንጉሠ ፡ ጽድቅ ፡ ዘይቤ ፡ እስመ ፡ ባሕቲቲ ፡ ይነብር ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ ዘገብረ ፡  
ኃጢአተ ፡ ወንጉሠ ፡ ሰላምሂ ፡ ዘይቤ ፡ እስመ ፡ ባሕቲቲ ፡ ነበረ ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ ምስ  
ለ ፡ ዘተባአስ ፡ ወአልቦ ፡ ማኅለቅተ ፡ ለኑኅ ፡ መዋዕል ፡ እስከ ፡ ምጽአቲ ፡ ለክርስ

<sup>33</sup>The first explicit quotation in the *Tərgʷame Felon Felgos*.

**ቶስ ፡ ዳግመ ፡ ይነብር ፡ በከመ ፡ ሠወሮ ፡ ወኅብኦ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለፈቃዱ ፡  
እስከ ፡ አመ ፡ ይመውት ፡ ጊዜ ፡ ፈቀደ ፡ በደሀሪ ።**

*Felgos* interpreted and said: And Mälkä Şedeq [Melchizedek] is the King of Peace, priest of the high God. When he says, ‘King of Salem’, it is because he (God) appointed only him to the grave of our father Adam and its name is Salem, no one else before him resided in that town. Because of this he was named king, for he alone did priestly ministry within her.<sup>34</sup> That is Jerusalem, a prophecy of the one who was to come, Jesus, Saviour of the world. And Abraham held a meeting with him as he returned from the battle against the kings, when he killed the kings of Amalek, since he is a prophet, he knew that God would have sent his Word on earth and he said: ‘Will you send your Word on earth during my days?’. And he manifested himself to Abraham to whom the word of prophecy was given, and told him: ‘It is not now, but cross the Jordan and I will manifest to you’. And he told him that he encountered Melkisedek and he blessed him. And Mälkä Şedeq blessed our father Abraham and gave him the *typoi* of the flesh and blood of Christ. Thus Abraham saw in prophecy through the hands of Mälkä Şedeq, and Abraham rejoiced and gave the tenth from all he received, and gave a tithe to Mälkä Şedeq, his first interpretation means ‘king of Peace’, who did not have a father and who did not have a mother and whose birth is unknown, and whose life has no end and has no beginning. When he says this, ‘he has no father and he has no mother’ do not mislead your heart as Severus of Antioch, and he said: ‘He is from the essence of the divinity and Mälkä Şedeq is the Holy Spirit’. And for this reason he committed a great mistake. If he says: ‘He has no father and he has no mother’ it is because his father and his mother were idol worshippers who did not fear the Lord. And for this reason Sem too, after stealing from his father and mother, as his father had ordered, because Noah knew from the Holy Spirit, that he would have become priest of the high God inside Salem.<sup>35</sup> With this knowledge he was crucified there in Kranio<sup>36</sup>, where our father Adam was buried,<sup>37</sup> and there appointed Mälkä Şedeq that he may praise, sing, incense and do priestly ministry. When he said ‘king of righteousness’, it was because only he lived and did not commit sin; when he said ‘king of peace’, it was because only he lived and there was nobody with whom he quarrelled, and no end to the

<sup>34</sup>There is abundant material covering “Melkisedek”, cf. BAUSI 2007b: 914b–916b; GIANOTTO 1984; HORTON 1976 [repr. 2005]; MANZI 1997: 61–70; STORK 1928.

<sup>35</sup> Anacoluthon.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Jn 19: 17–18.

<sup>37</sup> For sources on Golgotha as the place of Adam’s burial, cf. SU-MIN RI 2000; ANDERSON – STONE – TROMP (eds.) 2000.

length of his days. Until the coming of Christ again, he will live as God has hidden and concealed him, until he dies, according to his (God's) will.

This is a literal translation which is meant to be faithful to the Gəʿəz and also to allow the reader to have an insight into the nature of the text. The background of this comment will be discussed in due course in the edition of the commentary. For our purpose now, it is sufficient to observe that Severus of Antioch died one century after Philo, in 540 ca.

## The Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles

### Premise

In the introduction to his seminal work on the *Tərg<sup>w</sup>ame* and *Andəmta* of St. John's Apocalypse, Roger Cowley divides Gəʿəz commentaries into three categories:

- 1) translations representative of an earlier period of Greek sources;
- 2) translations representative of a later period of Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic sources, principally of Ibn at-Ṭayyib and various Syriac writers, or of substantial reworking of earlier sources, as in the "Coptic-Arabic gospel catena";
- 3) original Gəʿəz compositions.

Cowley places our fragment of Philo's commentary on the Canticle among the translations of the earlier period.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the commentary is introduced as an "Interpretation of Solomon". The Gəʿəz version is anonymous. There are several elements shared by the aforementioned texts associated with Philo that I could not observe in other Gəʿəz texts translated from Greek. As a general term of comparison between "Philo's" Gəʿəz versions and literature rendered from Greek, I have taken into consideration three homilies in EMMML 1763 published by Getatchew Haile,<sup>39</sup> the *Qerlos*,<sup>40</sup> the *Fəsalgos*,<sup>41</sup> the *Anti-Christ of Pseudo*

<sup>38</sup> COWLEY 1983: 35–36.

<sup>39</sup> They are: (1) GETATCHEW HAILE 1979: 309–318; Getatchew Haile in his remark that introduces the text of the homily states that "the story of Frumentius was composed by Rufinus in Latin, retold by Socrates in Greek, translated anonymously as a homily into Gəʿəz, perhaps during the Axumitic period, and finally re-edited for the Synaxary by someone (sic) with good command of Gəʿəz, but who misunderstood and 'rectified' the homily in several places". The connection with Latin and Greek texts is not demonstrated. (2) ID. 1981: 117–134. (3) The other homily is contained in fols. 110r–113v, cf. ID. 1990: 29–47. The vocabulary and especially the grammar of the Paschal homily is considerably different from the language of these homilies.

<sup>40</sup> The *Qerlos*, a compendium of patristic and theological works, gathers together writings which were not all written by Cyril of Alexandria. It includes: a) *Ἰσταγəbu'ə*

*Hyppolytus*<sup>42</sup> to mention a few. In the search for models that can help to figure out translation patterns that could eventually shed light on Philo's version, it is essential to keep a close eye on the Bible, especially on the critical editions of the Gospels. There is an important difference though between the "Philonian" writings and the texts of Sacred Scripture. The aim of the biblical translators was to allow readers and listeners to grasp the message while in "Philo's" versions the purpose seems to be to reproduce a spitting image of the original. It is the classical case in which "... ancient translators were satisfied with their work at a point where a modern translator would begin to manipulate his, not to change the meaning but to create the proper aesthetic effect".<sup>43</sup>

"Philo's" Gəʿəz versions have a syntax which differs from the early Gəʿəz texts and reflects a translation technique of their own. The linguistic harshness and the hermeneutic system are basically the same in the three "Philonian" texts. There is a consistent number of terms not found elsewhere, or rarely attested outside these scarcely copied and virtually unknown works. Even though, at least for the time being, it is difficult to reconstruct the identity of the translator and of his *milieu*, there is no doubt that the trilogy contributes to the knowledge of archaic Gəʿəz as well as to a particular brand of translation technique.

### The translator and the translation

The present paper does not pretend to engage in a full-fledged speculation about the translation strategy at the heart of the Gəʿəz version, whose texture is elusive in its kind. Instead of providing an essay on translation techniques that elaborate on theories about a hypothetical school training translators, the scope is limited to highlighting the more evident elements of renderings that do not have (known) equals in Gəʿəz literature. The linguistic hurdles, the paleness of the comments that do not match exactly with the

(Compilation) in which we find the *De Recta Fide* and the *Propheticus ad Reginas*; b) *Pälladyos* or *gəṣṣawe darsan*, that is, *Quod Christus sit unus*; c) *Täräfä Qerlos* 'The Rest of Cyril' is a collection of homilies and extracts, eight by Cyril himself, fourteen by other writers, one epistle of the Council of Ephesus and one passage of the Council of Nicaea. Most of this material has been critically edited and translated by Manuel Bernd Weischer; cf. BAUSI 2010: 287a–290a.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. HOMMEL 1877.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. CAQUOT 1965 : 165–214.

<sup>43</sup> MILES 1985: 2. For a more recent and useful work, see, VAN DER LOUW 2007, especially chapters 2 and 3 which deal with "Translating and translations in Antiquity", "Inventory of Transformation", pp. 25–92.

hermeneutic taste of the Ethiopic tradition,<sup>44</sup> engender a couple of obvious questions: why Philo, a commentator who did not enjoy fame even in his own *milieu* was translated into Gəʿəz? The morphology, syntax and vocabulary of this commentary are similar to those of the Paschal homily attributed to the same author about which I made the following assessment: “... as it stands, the language of this homily is linguistically untenable. In fact, rather than a sequence of orderly thoughts, the text presents a pile of words, put side by side without any care to provide a logical connection among them. The morphology and syntax do not correspond to the most elementary rules of Gəʿəz grammar which in this text appears to be visibly disfigured. This text is a test bed, a unique challenge even to people who are familiar with Gəʿəz”.<sup>45</sup> This evaluation suits perfectly the *Commentary on the Canticle* and the *Tərgwame Felon Felgos*.

Having the original in front of you though, makes a difference. This is the case with the *Commentary on the Canticle*. Nonetheless, unanswered queries remain: who took upon himself the herculean task of producing such a translation that demanded, not only relentless discipline in strictly adhering to the Greek copy but also a great deal of creativity? Why did the translator deliver such a thorny text? Who was the target reader, if there was one at all? It is the virtually inaccessible character of the Gəʿəz version in its totality, that elicits these questions and more, like for instance through the vocabulary, that is often apparently created *ad hoc* to reproduce the original faithfully.<sup>46</sup> The phrasing as well is extremely difficult to understand and to handle. Some token examples will help us see these difficulties for ourselves.

Fol. 6v: ወዕፍረት ፡ አጋዊነ ፡ ለመንግሥት ፡ ወሢመተ ፡ ክህነት ፡ ተሠርዐ ፡ አምነ ፡ ቅዱሳት ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ይትወወቀነ, renders the Greek: Τὸ μύρον, ἀδελφοί, ἐπὶ βασιλικῆς τε καὶ ἱερατικῆς ἀξίας τετάχθαι ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἠσθήμεθα Γραφῶν. Such a slavish translation is doomed because it fails to make sense. The phrase would have been easier to understand if it were formulated differently: አጋዊነ ፡ ይትወወቀነ ፡ አምነ ፡ ቅዱሳት ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ከመ ፡ ዕፍረት ፡ ለመንግሥት ፡ ወሢመተ ፡ ክህነት ፡ ተሠርዐ. Of course, the issue at stake here is only the sequence of the words. The sentence suggests that the translator must have had a good grasp of both languages, because for instance, the verb ἠσθήμεθα, perfect indicative of αἰσθάνομαι “to perceive, understand” ..., has

<sup>44</sup> Usually Ethiopic hermeneutics is generous in offering lengthy explanations, in resorting to symbolism, analogy and multiple interpretations of the same item, whenever it is possible to do so.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. RAINERI – TEDROS ABRAHA 2003: 386.

<sup>46</sup> Perhaps this is one of the reasons that can explain the “death” of the text that did not have either circulation or resonance.

been rendered with **ይትዐወቀነ** from **ተዐውቀ** “*mente percipere, sentire, sibi consciunt esse*” (Dillmann 1865, col. 997.3).

A comparison between the Greek and the Gəʿəz leads to conclude that the technique followed by the translator seems to be the “mirror type” translation: a paratactic rendering, totally subservient to the language the translator had before his eyes and at the expense of the reader. It seems that the latter is excluded from the translator’s horizon.<sup>47</sup> A few illustrative cases allow us to see the pattern: fol. 4v **ዘኢይትነከር** for ἄρρητος = ineffable; fol. 4r, **ሰርቀ ፡ ሰብሳብ** “marriage of theft” for κλεψιγαμία.<sup>48</sup> Even for a pedantic translation, **ሰብሳብ ፡ ዘሰርቀ** would have been more tolerable than **ሰርቀ ፡ ሰብሳብ**, an apposition behind which we can see the verbs κλέπτω and γαμέω.<sup>49</sup> Instead of the artificial **ሰርቀ ፡ ሰብሳብ**, attested nowhere else except in this text, **ዘሙት** “adultery, fornication” could have easily cut the Gordian knot.

There is a passage in the Gəʿəz version which in my opinion, can be perceived as a glimpse of the translator’s identity. Fol. 13r reads: **እንተ ፡ ትመጽእ ፡ እምነ ፡ ጸሊም ፡ ሰባኪ ፡ ስብሐት ፡ እንዘ ፡ ትትዌከፍ ፡ ለዋሕድ ፡ በፊልጶስ ፡ ሐዋርያ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይብል ፡ ኢትዮጵያ ፡ ታብጽሕ ፡ እደዊሃ ፡ ኅበ ፡ እግዚአብሔር** = “... which comes from the black preacher of glory, who receiving the Only-Begotten through Philip the Apostle saying: ‘Ethiopia stretches her hands towards God’” (Psalm 67:32),<sup>50</sup> for: ἐναρξομένην ἀπὸ τοῦ Αἰθίοπος τοῦ εὐνοῦχου τὸ κήρυγμα δέχεσθαι τοῦ Μονογενοῦς διὰ Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀποστόλου. While it cannot be excluded categorically, the question is whether an Ethiopian would have translated Αἰθίοπος with **ጸሊም** “black” because the predicate “black” is usually derogatory.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, if the proper noun Ethiopia is of Greek origin,<sup>52</sup> as many scholars support, the term αἰθίοψ from αἶθω “burn”,

<sup>47</sup> BROCK 1983: 4–5.

<sup>48</sup> The Latin translation in PG 40, col. 34B, reads *furtivo concubitu*. Κλεψιγαμία means “illicit love”; κλεψιγαμος “adulterous”, LAMPE 1961: 756.

<sup>49</sup> The method of translation in rendering Philo’s works into Gəʿəz is also featured in the so-called *Yownaban dproc* ‘Armenian “Hellenistic School”, which flourished between the fifth and sixth centuries. The translators (*t’argmanic’k*) carried out translations from Greek to Armenian: “... puntigliosamente sotto forma di vera e propria ‘glossa continua’. Ne consegue una lingua armena artificiale, una sorta di ‘metalingua’, costruita interamente sulla base di commutazioni automatiche”, SGARBI 2001: 115–122. In the same volume, cf. ULUHOGIAN 2001: 315–323.

<sup>50</sup> “Ethiopia” is according to the text of the LXX: Αἰθιοπία προφθάσει χεῖρα αὐτῆς τῷ θεῷ. The Massoretic text (68: 32) reads: בְּיָמֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. MAYERSON 1978: 304–311; JACOB 2007: 7–28; LETSIOS 2009: 185–200; Jerome’s interpretation is: *Aethiopiae tenebrae vel caliginis*, cf. *Hieronimi liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, 2.16, in DE LAGARDE (ed.) 1887: 27.

<sup>52</sup> For the confusion around the nomenclature “Ethiopia (Abyssinia), Nubia and India”, cf. MUNRO-HAY 1997: 11–14. Levine states: “For the early Greek writers Ethiopia

and ὄψις “face”, would mean “scorched face, black”, thus conceding a scope of possibility that **ጸሊም** is, if not a translation, perhaps an interpretation of Αἰθίοπος.<sup>53</sup> In the New Testament Αἰθίοψ occurs twice in Acts 8: 27 and there is no evidence so far that it has ever been rendered with **ጸሊም**.<sup>54</sup> The LXX uses Αἰθίοψ 28 times where the Hebrew reads יַשְׁכַּח.

### Relationship between the Greek text and the Gəʿəz version

It is a well established fact that there has been an interaction between the two languages. Numismatics, inscriptions, the first translations of the Bible and of other Christian writings into Gəʿəz express Greek as an undisputed witness that has been a source language.<sup>55</sup> There are a good number of Greek terms that have made their way into Gəʿəz, directly or through other languages.<sup>56</sup> Some of them are still used in the liturgy.<sup>57</sup> The divide between the two languages can hardly be exaggerated. Translating from Greek, a language with an incomparably wider vocabulary, and a more complex syntax, must have been a unique challenge. The intricate web of the Greek verbal system, with its subtleties and nuances is impossible to transfer effectively not only into Gəʿəz but also into other Semitic languages. The Gəʿəz version of Philo's commentary is a meaningful example that confirms the distance separating the two languages and how troublesome their encounter can be.

was less a geographical location than a state of mind. For Greeks and Romans generally, Ethiopian meant dark-skinned peoples who lived south of Egypt” LEVINE 2000: 1. According to Ethiopian tradition, Ethiopia is the name of Aethiopia, who reigned from 1856 to 1800 B.C., cf. የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ ከልደተ ክርስቶስ እስከ ፳፻ ዓ.ም. 2000 °A.M.: 5. For a summary of the meaning of Ethiopia, cf. VOIGT 2003: 162b–165a.

<sup>53</sup> It is wise to leave this question open, taking into account the fact that until the Middle Ages the country identified itself as *Bəḥerä Agʿəzəyan*. Dillmann states: “Die Abessinier des Mittelalters haben ... den Namen [Äthiopien] für sich und ihr Land ... adoptiert”, cf. DILLMANN 1878: 179.

<sup>54</sup> It is worth mentioning the passage in the (pseudo-)Clementine literature which says: ከጉሎሙ ፣ ኢትዮጵያ ፣ ዘጸሊም ፣ ሥጋሆሙ = ‘all Ethiopians whose body is black’, cf. DILLMANN 1865, col. 1259. Hagiography knows the 4<sup>th</sup> century monk ሙሴ ፣ ጸሊም ፣ ‘Moses “The Black”’, cf. ZANETTI 2007: 1025.

<sup>55</sup> There is no point in giving a bibliographical list on this subject which has been extensively studied. In the entry “Gəʿəz Literature”, Getatchew Haile begins the periodization of Gəʿəz literature with the “Greek Period”, cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 2005: 736b–737a; cf. also LUSINI 1988: 469–493.

<sup>56</sup> Indirectly, especially via Arabic.

<sup>57</sup> The Ordinary of the Eucharistic celebration reads: አውሎግዮስ ፣ ጌርዮስ which corresponds to εὐλογητὸς κύριος; አግዮስ ፣ ማንጦስ ፣ ፓንዋማንጦን = ἄγιου πνεύματος; አሉቲኖን = ἰληθινός, cf. መጽሐፈ ፣ ቅዳሴ ፣ በግእዝና ፣ ባማርኛ 1918 °A.M.: 19.

It has already been mentioned that so far, there is no critical edition of Philo's Greek commentary to the Cantic of Canticles based on the whole of the manuscript tradition<sup>58</sup>. While waiting for the production of such a work, a comparison of the Gəʿəz version with the available printed material can be a starter to put forward a preliminary evaluation. The Gəʿəz translation is closer to the Greek and in several places distant from the Latin.<sup>59</sup> This will be highlighted in the footnotes of the translation.

The quality of the Gəʿəz version of Philo's commentary is not completely homogeneous. Sometimes it seems to stick meticulously to its *Vorlage*, while elsewhere the impression is that it is a loose translation. In the comparison between the Gəʿəz text with the Greek the following aspects deserve particular attention:

### Punctuation of the Gəʿəz version in JE300E

Generally the four dots appear fairly often after short units which in many cases do not represent a full concept, and rather than helping to understand the text they often throw it into darkness. As we do not know which Greek text was used to translate the Commentary into Gəʿəz it is difficult to get to the origin of the messy punctuation. It is also impossible to establish whether the punctuation belongs to the first draft or more likely to a subsequent copyist. We have an example of absolute anarchy in the punctuation of *Tərgʷame Felon Felgos* in the copy of Or. 13,964, which is very different from that of Raineri 127. The passages below have been selected to show the phenomenon:

fol. 4v: **ዘጽገፈ ፡ አልዐ ፡ መዐዛ ፡ እንተ ፡ ትምዕዝ ፡ ዘኢይትነከር ፡ ክብረ ፡ እንተቦ ፡ እንተ ፡ መላእክት ፡ ለክብር ፡ እንተ ፡ ታቦጽሕ ፡ ...** “which perfumes a perfume without limits, which has a glory that is not amazing, of the angels. Which leads to honour ...”. The punctuation does not correspond to the Greek: ἀπερῶντους τὰς εὐωδίας πνέουσα, ἀρρηίτους τὰς δόξας ἔχουσα, ἰσαγγέλους τὰς τιμὰς φέρουσα ... “which inspires fragrances without limits, which has ineffable glories, which carries honours equal to those of the angels”;

fol. 5r: **ወፍኖተ ፡ እሬኢ ፡ እንተ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ገነት ፡ ካዕበ ፡ እንተ ፡ ትመረሐኒ ፡ ይትዐደው ፡ ሕገ** “and I will see a way which is in Paradise. Again it will lead me [where] they disobey the law”. The Greek says: ὁδὸν ὀψομαι τὴν εἰς παράδεισόν με πάλιν ὀδεγηῆσαν “I will see the way leading me again to Paradise”. The Gəʿəz punctuation needs to be emended accordingly: **ወፍኖተ ፡ እሬኢ ፡ እንተ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ገነት ፡ ካዕበ ፡ እንተ ፡ ትመረሐኒ ፡ ይትዐደው ፡ ሕገ;**

<sup>58</sup> For a list of the Greek fragments of the *Catena*, cf. CERESA GASTALDO 1979: 14–20.

<sup>59</sup> The translator has often faithfully rendered the passive forms of the Greek verbs, which is not a frequent habit in Gəʿəz literature.



fol. 6r: እስመ ፡ ኢያተነትነኒ ፡ ከመ ፡ ስኩር ፡ ገሰቴ ፡ ትብል ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን  
“For it will not make me totter like a drunk. This drink says the Church”.  
The Greek says: οὐ γὰρ λύει με ὡσπερ ἡ μέθη τοῦτο τὸ πόμα, φησὶν ἡ Ἐκκλησία “for it does not loosen me like drunkenness this drink, says the Church ...”. The Gəʿəz punctuation has to be slightly modified: እስመ ፡ ኢያ  
ተነትነኒ ፡ ከመ ፡ ስኩር ፡ ገሰቴ ፡ ትብል ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን;

fol. 7rv: ወምኩናኖ ፡ ወኩሉ ፡ በኩልሂ ፡ ይምዕዝ ፡ ብሩህ ፡ ናሁ ፡ በዝ ፡ ወፈድፋ  
ደ ፡ ... The four dots should have been placed three steps before, namely: ወም  
ኩናኖ ፡ ወኩሉ ፡ በኩልሂ ፡ ይምዕዝ ፡ ብሩህ ፡ ናሁ ፡ በዝ ፡ ወፈድፋደ ፡ “... and his rule  
all and everywhere perfumes. Behold in this is bright and moreover ...”;

fol. 8r: ተሰዊጦ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ በፍርሀተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ወመጣ ፡ ዓለም ፡ በከመ ፡  
አሓዱ ፡ እምኔሆሙ ፡ ይብል ፡ ጳውሎስ ፡ ሐዋርያ... The passage has to be split  
differently: ተሰዊጦ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ በፍርሀተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ወመጣ ፡ ዓለም ፡ በከመ ፡  
አሓዱ ፡ እምኔሆሙ ፡ ይብል ፡ ጳውሎስ ፡ ሐዋርያ... “everyone was poured of  
with the fear of God and the perfume of the world. Like one of them, the  
Apostle Paul said: ...”;

fol. 8v: በኅበ ፡ ተሰብከዝ ፡ ወንጌል ፡ በኩሉ ፡ ዓለም ፡ ይትነገር ፡ ዝኒ ፡ ኅብረት ፡  
ለተዝከረ ፡ እሎንተ ፡ ክልኤተ ፡ ሥርዐተ ፡ እትሐዘብ ፡ ትኤምር ፡ ዘመጽሐፈ ፡ እግዚ  
አብሔር ፡ እንተ ፡ ትብል ፡ ዕፍረት ፡ ... “where this Gospel is going to be  
preached [,] in the whole world will be told also this she has done to the  
memory of these two Testaments I consider she indicates God’s book.  
Which says the perfume ...”. This version displays a number of syntactic  
problems and differs remarkably from the Greek, as far as punctuation and  
contents are concerned. The Greek reads: ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῆ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον  
τοῦτο ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, λαληθήσεται καὶ ὁ ἐποίησεν αὕτη εἰς μνημόσυνον  
αὐτῆς. Τούτους τοὺς δύο τρόπους οἶμαι ὑποσημαίνειν τὴν θεῖαν ταύτην  
Γραφήν, φάσκουσαν “‘wherever this Gospel will be proclaimed in the whole  
world, it will be said also in her memory what she did’. I consider that these  
two figures want to indicate this divine Scripture which says: ...”;

fol. 12r: እስመ ፡ ጅውእቱ ፡ ሠራዔ ፡ ሕግ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ክልኤሆን ፡ አዘዘ ፡ ሥርዐታተ ፡  
ወእምአሐቲ ፡ እንተ ፡ ኢትመውት ፡ ፈልፈለ ፡ ሐውት ፡ ወሐሊበ ፡ መንፈስ ፡ እለ ፡  
ቦን ፡ ... This passage is marred by a misplaced punctuation, and once the four  
dots are removed the sentence becomes clearer: እስመ ፡ ጅውእቱ ፡ ሠራዔ ፡ ሕግ ፡  
ውስተ ፡ ክልኤሆን ፡ አዘዘ ፡ ሥርዐታተ ፡ ወእምአሐቲ ፡ እንተ ፡ ኢትመውት ፡ ፈልፈለ ፡  
ሐውት ፡ ወሐሊበ ፡ መንፈስ ፡ እለ ፡ ቦን ፡ It is a single phrase to be rendered in the  
following terms: “For one is the legislator,<sup>60</sup> in the two of them he ordered  
rules and from a source that does not die [laws] which have life and milk of  
the spirit”. The Greek says: εἷς γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς νομοθέτης ἐκατέραις διετάρτετο  
Διαθήκαις. Δύο τοίνυν μαστοὶ αὐτοῦ αἱ δύο κέκληνται Διαθήκαι· καὶ ἐκ μιᾶς τῆς

<sup>60</sup> ሠራዔ ፡ ሕግ ፡ literally means: the one who arranges/establishes the law.

ἀθανάτου πηγῆς τὴν ἐπιρροὴν τοῦ πνευματικοῦ γάλακτος ἔχουσαι. “for there is one and the same legislator, who was disposed, in each alliance. Her two breasts are called two alliances and from the only immortal source have the flow of spiritual milk”.

The examples above are only a few of the many twists, difficult, if not impossible to sort out without the help of the Greek original.

### The difference between G and the G<sup>ᵉ</sup>ᵃᶻ: omissions

The textual vacua in the G<sup>ᵉ</sup>ᵃᶻ version can be interpreted in various ways, starting perhaps with the textual type the translator used namely, a translation carried out on an inadequate specimen. Parts could have been left out, due to the translator’s insurmountable linguistic difficulties. As a matter of fact, some of the Greek terms are impossible to render literally into G<sup>ᵉ</sup>ᵃᶻ. Either the translator needed to be gifted with extraordinary creativity and resilience, otherwise, and this is the more common situation, it was necessary to resort to paraphrasing. There are instances in which gaps seem to have occurred involving terms and grammatical constructions within the range of the translator’s capacity, due to distraction or perhaps sheer negligence. A few token examples of one or more terms that disappeared in the translation will be listed here-after:

fol. 4v: ἐσοπτρίζουσα from ἐσοπτρίζω “to show as in a mirror, reflect”;

fol. 4v: καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς “and on earth”;

fol. 5r: ποτὲ “sometimes”;

fol. 5r: ὑπερβολῆ [τῆς λαμπρότητος] “excess of [brightness]”;

fols. 6v and 7r: φησὶν “says”;

fol. 8r: the translator gets rid of: ἐν ταυτῷ δὲ προφητικὸν σημαίνει τρόπον “for in that he indicates a prophetic figure”, with two words only: **ወበዝ ፣ ያዐውቅ** “and in this makes known”;

fols. 8v–9r: Βλέπε νεάνιδα ἐκείνην τὴν τῷ σώματι ἀσθενεστέραν, ψυχῆς δὲ πίστει ἰσχυροτέραν “Watch that girl very weak in the body, but stronger in the soul for the faith”. The G<sup>ᵉ</sup>ᵃᶻ version reads: **ዘበሃይማኖት ፣ ደናግል ፣ ወኢ ደንግል ፣ እንተ ፣ እንታክቲ ፣ እንተ ፣ በሥጋ ፣ ድክምት ፣ ወመንፈስ ፣ በሃይማኖት ፣ ጽንዕት** “the virgins in the faith, but not a virgin that which is weak in the flesh but the spirit is firm in the faith”. The omission of the initial verb βλέπε, has a fatal consequence for the whole period: it strips off its meaning;

fol. 10v: καὶ περὶ τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἀγαλλομένη νυμφίον “and rejoicing in her groom”.

### Peculiarities of some of the translations

Fol. 4v: παρρησίαν προξενούσα “providing firmness”. Προξενούσα is a present participle, feminine, singular of the verb προξενέω “to procure, secure for”.<sup>61</sup> In theory there is no identical verbal form in Gəʿəz. **እምነት ፡ እንተ ፡ ትሁብ** “faith which gives”, is the way our translator renders the Greek expression. The translation does not represent the Greek perfectly but it is an acceptable adaptation. Παρρησία can mean “confidence, trust, frankness in speech”.<sup>62</sup> The choice of the verbal noun **እምነት** (from **አምነ**) meaning “*fides* a) *quae creditur, religio*; b) *confessio*”,<sup>63</sup> cannot pass unnoticed. The entry **እምነት** does not occur in the Bible.<sup>64</sup> The usual form is **ሃይማኖት** “1) *fides qua creditur; fidelitas*; 2) *fides quae creditur (religio, confessio)*”.<sup>65</sup> In the New Testament there is no uniformity in the rendering of παρρησία.<sup>66</sup> In Mk 8: 32; Acts 4: 31 it is translated with **ዝዳ**; in Jn 7: 13; Acts 2: 29 with **ክሁተ**. Both entries correspond to the meaning of the Greek. However there is no notable occurrence of **ሃይማኖት/እምነት** translating παρρησία.

In the Gəʿəz version of Philo's commentary there is a twofold rendering of διαθήκη: in fol. 5v δύο Διαθήκας is read as: **፪ ሕግ** “two laws”. In fol. 11r: **ክልኢሆን ፡ ሥርዐት** “two statutes” for δύο Διαθήκας.

The term τῶπος which means: a) direction; b) mode, manner; c) character, nature; d) style, in Gəʿəz (fol. 7v) is rendered with **ፍላጤ** *discrimen, differentia*,<sup>67</sup> a rare word indeed, attested in Wis 7: 20.

In fol. 6r **ዘመንፈስ ፡ ስቴ** “drink of the spirit” is an example of a common pattern which instead of an adjective makes use of the apposition of proper nouns. None of the Gəʿəz witnesses of 1 Cor 10: 4 reads **ዘመንፈስ ፡ ስቴ** for πνευματικὸν ἕπιον. The more obvious rendering is: **ስቴ ፡ መንፈሳዊ**. Likewise the translator renders θεία γρῶφή with **መጽሐፈ ፡ እግዚአብሔር** (fol. 7v) instead of the more common expressions like **መጽሐፍ ፡ አምላካዊ** or **መጽሐፍ ፡ አምላካዊት**.<sup>68</sup>

Fol. 8r reads: **ፍርሀተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር** “fear of God”, but also **ጽድቅ** (f. 17r) for εὐσέβεια.

<sup>61</sup> LAMPE 1961: 1159.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 1045, III.

<sup>63</sup> DILLMANN 1865, col. 738.

<sup>64</sup> As a matter of fact, traditional Gəʿəz language teachers describe the word with the derogatory amharic epithet, **ብትክ** “incorrect, useless”.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 14. There has been a long-standing discussion on the origin of **ሃይማኖት** which is close to the Syriac **ܕܠܘܠܐܘܬܐ**. Re-opening the debate on this issue is not relevant to our purpose here.

<sup>66</sup> Heb 10: 19.35 has **ዋገሥ** for παρρησία even though the former means “grace, gentleness ...”, cf. *Ibid.*, col. 937.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1346.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* col. 153.

Fol. 5v: σκοπός “contemplation” is adequately translated with ገሊፍ “mind, thought”.

Fol. 10v: πληθυντικῶς λέγει “it speaks at the plural”. It is likely that the expression was too difficult to translate, therefore it is reduced to: ከመ፣ ብዙኃን “like many”.

Fol. 13r: ርኢ፣ ዘንተ፣ ከመ፣ ጸላም፣ ይእቲ፣ አማን ። ወሠናይት፣ እንተ፣ ትመጽእ፣ እምነ፣ ጸሊም፣ ሰባኪ፣ ስብሐት፣ እንዘ፣ ትትዌከፍ፣ ለዋሕድ፣ በፊልጶስ፣ ሐዋርያ፣ እንዘ፣ ይብል፣ ኢትዮጵያ፣ ታብጽሕ፣ እደዊሃ፣ ኅበ፣ እግዚአብሔር ። There is a needless stop after አማን as well as a confusion between έναρχουμένη, from έναρχω “to begin”, with ἔρχομαι “to come, go”.

As already said, the translation of Αἰθίοπος with ጸሊም is curious. The Gəʿəz omits εὐνούχου “eunuch”.

The translator always reads νεᾱνις, νεανίδος “young woman, girl, virgin”, ድንግል, a term which has a monastic overtone. But Philo’s commentary is not an exception in this choice of translation. In fact in the text of the Canticle of Canticles 1:4, νεᾱνις is rendered with ድንግል.<sup>69</sup> The Greek equivalent of ድንግል is παρθένος. In Gəʿəz there are terms to translate νεᾱνις adequately, namely ወለት, ነአስ,<sup>70</sup> or ወለት together with ነአስ *puella*.<sup>71</sup> From the general treatment reserved to νεᾱνις in the Gəʿəz versions, it is difficult to establish why Philo’s commentary has opted for ድንግል.

### Free translations (?)

On fol. 11r we read: ወትቤ፣ ንጉሥ፣ ኅበ፣ ይነብር፣ ኩሉ፣ መዛግብት, a sentence that needs to be fixed again as follows: ወትቤ፣ ኩሉ፣ መዛግብት፣ ኅበ፣ ይነብር፣ ንጉሥ፣ and she says: “All treasures are found where the king lives”. The Gəʿəz version does not correspond perfectly to the Greek: ταμείον δὲ βασιλέως, ὅπου πάντα ἀπόκειται τὰ θησαυρίσματα “treasury of the king is thus, where all treasures lie”.

### Compound terms translated literally

This is a frequently used translation technique in Philo’s commentary. There is an impressive strict adherence to the original, quite bold indeed, but the result seems to be a parody of the Gəʿəz language. A few illustrative examples will follow:

<sup>69</sup> Also Ex 2:8 renders νεᾱνις with ድንግል, cf. BOYD 1911: 3.

<sup>70</sup> Sunday’s *Mälkä’ā Wəddase* reads: ተሰመይኪ፣ ፍቅርተ፣ አ፣ ቡርካት፣ እምአእነሰ = ‘you have been named: “beloved” o blessed among the young girls’, cf. መልክአ፣ ወዳሴ፣ ዘእሐድ 1983 ‘A.M.: 17.

<sup>71</sup> DILLMANN 1865, col. 664.

The Gəʿəz Version of Philo of Carpasia's *Commentary on Canticle of Canticles* 1:2–14a

- fol. 4r: ስርቀ : ሰብሳብ κλεψιγάμοις;  
fol. 6r: ከለእያተ : ሐዘነ παυσιλύπους;  
fol. 12r: ሥርዐት : ያጸንፀ : ሕሊና : διαθήκαι στηριζουσι τὸ φρόνημα;  
fol. 12r: ወእምርሕተ : ብርሃንሰ : αἱ δὲ φωταγωγοί;  
fol. 12r: ያጸንፀ : ሃይማኖተ : στερεοῦσι πίστιν;  
fol. 13r: ቁዳር : ይተረጎም : ናሁ : እንተ : ልሕሰት Κηδὰρ ἐρμηνεύται Ὀστροακίην.

The translator renders the Greek word for word, but some of these versions remain dead because the Gəʿəz fails to make sense. On the other hand, there are “mirror type” translations the grammar of which is acceptable and the meaning perfectly understandable. Here is a short list of examples:

- fol. 9r እንተ : ደም : ይውሕዝ τὴν αἰμορροοῦσαν;  
fol. 15r ወይብል : በእንተ : ዛቲ እንተ : ያእምር : መርዓተ :<sup>72</sup> ለእንተ : በማኅይ :<sup>73</sup> ትት ናገሮ καὶ λέγει περὶ ταύτης ἧς οἶδε νύμφης τῆς ἐν Αἰσμασιν αὐτῶ προσομιλοῦσης.

#### The Latin version and the Gəʿəz text

The Gəʿəz version has been performed on a Greek text. There are occasional connections though with the L. Obviously this does not suggest that there has been an interaction between L. and the Gəʿəz version. The traces of L. in Gəʿəz indicated in the footnotes of the translation, derive from the relationship between the Greek Vorlage and L.

#### The Gəʿəz text of the Commentary to the Canticle

In the edition of 2008<sup>74</sup> the choice was to publish the text as it appears in the Jerusalem manuscript with a literal Italian translation. As already stated, the vocabulary, grammar, and the type of translation of the Gəʿəz version do not suit Gəʿəz linguistic schemes.<sup>75</sup> They will be discussed briefly hereafter.

#### Vocabulary

##### Verbal forms apparently created by the translator

There are several instances with the uncommon fourth (reciprocal) form<sup>76</sup> of the Gəʿəz verbal root. In fol. 4r we find **ዘይትማሰኩ**, employed to render

<sup>72</sup> ያእምር : መርዓተ has to be emended with ታእምር : መርዓት.

<sup>73</sup> A defective form for በመገልይ.

<sup>74</sup> TEDROS ABRAHA 2008: 71–119.

<sup>75</sup> I tried to read some parts of this manuscript to two native scholars of Gəʿəz language. One of them listened for a few minutes and rejected the text, complaining that the idiom cannot qualify as Gəʿəz. The reaction of the second scholar was not much different.

<sup>76</sup> Traditionally known as **አዕማድ** ‘pillars’ or basic verbal forms. For a detailed description on the meaning of *aʿamad*, cf. KIDANÄ WÄLD KĚFLE 1948 °A.M.: 59; cf. also GUIDI 1906: 915.

ἔλκονται, from ἔλκω, to drag, draw.<sup>77</sup> It would be the reciprocative form of መስከ = *traxit*.<sup>78</sup> I have not been able to trace any other occurrence of ዘይትግስኩ. In the same fol. 4r the text reads ይትግርዑ, the reciprocal form of the verb መርዑ = *libidine corrumpere*.<sup>79</sup> Once again, ይትግርዑ ፣ በዝሙት which is meant to render δεινότητι φιλικῶ οἰστορηλατούμενοι,<sup>80</sup> is not attested elsewhere. In fol. 19r the translator presents ተስተክቱ from አስተክተዎ, an otherwise unattested reciprocal form of ክተዎ.<sup>81</sup>

### Verbal nouns apparently coined by the translator

In fol. 17r we read ምስትቡዳር of which there is no other witness. The translator has obtained it from the verb በደረ. There is በድር<sup>82</sup> but ምስትቡዳር is unheard of. It should be acknowledged though, that in theory the translator has followed a legitimate path in his effort to produce the new entry. The root ገብአ will be picked up to show how a Gəʿəz verb is processed until nouns and adjectives are derived from it; it will help to try to figure out the itinerary followed by the translator to get to the form ምስትቡዳር.

ገብአ ፣ *recedere*; አግብአ ፣ *revertere*; ተገብአ ፣ *in unum redire*; ተጋብአ ፣ *se contrahere*; አስተጋብአ ፣ *ad se recipere*; ግቡእ ፣ *comprehensus*; ግብአት ፣ *reditus*; ገባኢ ፣ *mercenarius*; ጉብኤ ፣ *collectio*; ጉብኤያዊ ፣ *synodicus*; ምግባእ ፣ *locus quo quis se convertit*; ምጉባእ ፣ *locus quo aquae confluent*; አግባኢ ፣ *traditor*; አስተጋባኢ ፣ *compiler*; እስትጉቡእ ፣ *collectus*; ምስትጉባእ ፣ *congregatus*; መስተጋብእ ፣ *collectas*.

Thus the form ምስትቡዳር from በደረ *velocem esse* or rather from ተባደረ *alium alium praevenire studere*,<sup>83</sup> corresponds to ምስትጉባእ “congregation” of the verb ገብአ.

### Voices impossible to decipher

In fol. 4v there is መዐርዓራብ, a non-existent term which does not express anything. If the translator’s intention was to render γλυκύτητα, he should have used ምዕርዕርዕ.<sup>84</sup> In fol. 5r we have ትጹሊ, instead of ትጹሊ, which can be taken as an orthographic error. There are more of such cases and they will be indicated in the footnotes of the upcoming edition and translation of the text.

<sup>77</sup> LIDDELL – SCOTT 1968: 534.

<sup>78</sup> DILLMANN 1865, col. 179.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., col. 168.

<sup>80</sup> From οἰστορηλατέω = ‘to be maddened, to be driven mad’, LAMPE 1981: 946.

<sup>81</sup> DILLMANN 1865, col. 764.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., col. 541.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., col. 540.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., col. 207.

### Morphology and syntax

From what has been said so far, it has become clear that the Gəʿəz version of the commentary offers a number of new and sometimes awkward entries. There are also forms that occur rarely in Gəʿəz, such as **ወባሕቱማ** in fol. 5r: *rarissime* is Dillmann's (col. 141) comment on the enclitic particle **ማ**, the regular form is **መ**. The manuscript always has **ሒወት** instead of the more common **ሕይወት**; fol. 6r **ከመ ፣ እቁም ፣ እንዘ ፣ ኢያጸንን**, as it stands, remains an anacoluthon: it would demand a complement, otherwise it was necessary to use the intransitive **ኢያጸንን**; fol. 7v reads: **እንተ ፣ ታመጽእ ፣ መጽሐፈ** instead of **እንተ ፣ መጽሐፍ ፣ ታመጽእ**. The objection is to the undue employment of the accusative; fol. 9r reads: **ዘድንግል ፣ ሰሐቦቶ** instead of **ዛድንግል ፣ ሰሐቦቶ**; fol. 10r reads **እስመ ፣ ሕማማ ፣ ሥጋ** instead of the usual: **እስመ ፣ ሕማማ ፣ ለሥጋ** or **እስመ ፣ ሕማመ ፣ ሥጋ**; fol. 10v reads: **ዘሐዋርያት ፣ ያልዕሉ ፣ ቃሉ** instead of **ዘሐዋርያት ፣ ያልዕሉ ፣ ቃለ** or better **ዘሐዋርያት ፣ ያልዕሉ ፣ ቃሎም**; fol. 18r reads: **አኮ ፣ ካልኦ ፣ እትሐዘብ**. From at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards the use of the accusative with **ቦ**, **አልቦ**, **አኮ**, will be abandoned. Disagreement in number and gender, an aspect that does not only belong to this text, is very widespread here.

### Impossible cases

These are passages that resemble inaccessible fortresses. An example of such desperate cases is the passage in f. 10r: **አኮ ፣ ከመ ፣ እለ ፣ ተፈወሰ ፣ በውርዘተ ፣ ጥቡብ ፣ ሕሊና ፣ ዘበሃይማኖት ፣ አንስት ፣ እለ ፣ ዓዲ ፣ ጠቢባን ፣ ወእለ ፣ የዐቢያ ፣ እምእለ ፣ ተብህለ ፣ ወእምእለ ፣ ይጸነዓ ፣ ወእምእለ ፣ ተፈወሰ ፣ ነፍሳቲሆም ፣ ለጸድ ቃን ፣ ሰማዕት ፣ እለ ፣ ይጸንፀ ፣ ጽንፀ ፣ ላዕሌሁ ፣ ለጸዋግ ፣ እንዘ ፣ ያወፅኦ ፣ ሥጋ ፣ ልብሶም ፣ በትዕግሥተ ፣ ሕሊና ፣ ኅይለ ፣ ዘኢይወድቅ ።** The first casualty of this version, impossible to translate into English, is Gəʿəz syntax. The only aim of the translator seems to be to render the Greek (harsh in the original too) faithfully. The positive score of the Gəʿəz version is that it manages to preserve the substance of the Greek.

### Biblical quotations

Almost all of the biblical quotations in this manuscript differ considerably from the known Gəʿəz textual tradition. The biblical references look like translations carried out together with the rest of the commentary without reference to existing biblical texts:

fol. 9r Mt 9:23 reads: **ወአርዳእሰ ፣ ይቤሉ ፣ ፈንውዋ ፣ እንተ ፣ ትጸርሕ ፣ ድጎ ሬነ ።** = But the disciples said: “Send away the one that is crying behind us!”. The earliest available witnesses read: **ወመጽኡ ፣ አርዳኢሁ ፣ ወይቤልዎ ፣**

**ፈንወዋ ፣ እስመ ፣ ትጸርሕ ፣ ድጎሬነ ።** = And his disciples came and told him: “Send her away for she is crying behind us!”;

in fol. 10v. 2Tm 4:7-8 is quoted: **ፈጸምኩ ፣ ረዊጾ ። ወዐቀብኩ ፣ ሃይማኖተ ፣ ወይእኔስ ፣ ፅኑኅ ፣ ሊተ ፣ አክሊለ ፣ ጽድቅ ፣ ዘይሁበኒ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ በይእቲ ፣ ዕለት ። መኩንነ ፣ ጽድቅ ፣ አኮ ፣ ሊተ ፣ ከመ ፣ ዓዲ ፣ ለኩሎሙ ፣ እለ ፣ ያፈቅሩ ፣ ትምህርቶ ።** = “I have finished the running. And I have kept the faith, and now for me is ready the crown of justice that God will give me on that day. The judge of righteousness, and not only to me, but also to all of those who love his teaching”. This quotation displays several peculiarities. The voice **ረዊጾ** a gerund which here, together with **ፈጸምኩ** seems to have the function of an infinitive<sup>85</sup> is not attested elsewhere. The form for “race” is **ሩጸት**.<sup>86</sup> The oldest available witnesses<sup>87</sup> of these verses read: **በድርዮኒ ፣ ፈጸምኩ ፣ ወሀይማኖትየኒ ፣ ዐቀብኩ ፣ እንከሰ ፣ ፅኑሕ ፣ ሊተ ፣ አክሊለ ፣ ጽድቅ ፣ ዘየዐስየኒ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ይእተ ፣ ዕለተ ፣ መኩንነ ፣ ጽድቅ ። ወአኮ ፣ ለባሕቲትየ ፣ አላ ፣ ለኩሎሙ ፣ ለእለ ፣ ያፈቅሩ ፣ ምጽአተ ፣ ዚአሁ ።** “And I have indeed finished my race and I have kept my faith, and now for me is ready the crown of justice that God will give me on that day, the judge of righteousness. And not to me alone, but to all of those who love his coming”;

fol. 11v: **እለ ፣ የሐሙ ፣ ወጸባብ ፣ አንቀጽ ፣ ወጽዕቅተ ፣ ፍኖተ ፣ የሐውሩ** “those who suffer and walk the cramped gate and the narrow way” is an allusion to Mt 7:14. In the earliest manuscripts Mt 7:14 reads: **ጥቀ ፣ ጸባብ ፣ ወመቃዕን ፣ ፍኖት ፣ እንተ ፣ ትወስድ ፣ ውስተ ፣ ሕይወት ፣ ወሕዳጣን ፣ እሙንቱ ፣ እለ ፣ ይበውእዋ** “Very narrow and crammed is the way that leads to life and few are those who enter it”. There are old witnesses that read (and add) **ጽዕቅተ** “hard” instead of **መቃዕን** “crammed”;

fol. 12r quotes Mt 5:44: **አፍቅሩ ፣ ጸላእትክሙ ፣ ወካዕበ ፣ አሠንዩ ፣ ለእለ ፣ ይጸልኩክሙ ።** “Love your enemies and again do well to those who hate you”; the Greek reads: **ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς** “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”. There are several G<sup>o</sup>az versions of this passage: the A-Text:<sup>88</sup> **አፍቅሩ ፣ ጸላእትክሙ ፣ ወባርክዎሙ ፣ ለእለ ፣ ይረግሙክሙ ፣ ወሠናየ ፣ ግበሩ ፣ ለእለ ፣ ይጸልኩክሙ ፣ ወጸልዩ ፣ ላዕለ ፣ እለ ፣ ይትኤገሉክሙ ፣ ወይሰድዱክሙ** “Love your enemies and bless those who curse you and do well to those who hate you and pray for those who do violence to you

<sup>85</sup> The proper form of the infinitive though is **ረዊጽ**.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., col. 308.

<sup>87</sup> E.g., Pentaglotto Ambrosiano B. 20 *inf.* (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century); Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Éth. 29 (compiled in 1419).

<sup>88</sup> The references “A-Text”, “B-Text” are Zuurmond’s classifications of the textual types according to their antiquity.



and persecute you”. B-Text: አፍቅሩ ፡ ጸላኤክሙ ፡ ወጸልዩ ፡ በእንተ ፡ እለ ፡ ይሰድዱክሙ ። “Love your enemy and pray for those who do violence to you and persecute you”;

fol. 12r quotes Ex 23:5: ለእመ ፡ ረከብከ ፡ አድገ ፡ ጸላኢከ ፡ ዘወድቀ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይጸውር ፡ ኢትትዐደው ፡ አሥተናሥኦ ። “If you find your enemy’s donkey that fell down while loaded do not pass by, raise it”. The oldest available text reads: ለእመ ፡ ርኢከ ፡ አድገ ፡ ጸላኢከ ፡ ወአሐየለ ፡ ፀሮ ፡ ወኢትትጎሎ ፡ አላ ፡ ተራድኦ ፡ ምስሌሁ<sup>89</sup> ፡ “if you saw the donkey of your enemy and has strengthened his adversary do not oppress it but help it”. In most of the other texts collated by Boyd there is ጸሮ “its load” instead of ፀሮ “its adversary”. The LXX reads: ἐὼν δὲ ἰδίης τὸ ὑποζύγιον τοῦ ἐχθροῦ σου πεπτωκὸς ὑπὸ τὸν γόμον αὐτοῦ οὐ παρελεύσῃ αὐτό, ἀλλὰ συνεγερεῖς αὐτὸ μετ’ αὐτοῦ “if you see the donkey of your enemy fallen under his freight, do not pass it by, but you shall lift it”. Philo’s quotation seems to be closer to the LXX than the Gəʿəz version;

fol. 13rv quotes Jer 2:10: አንሰሰውኩ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ደሰዖተ ፡ ኪጥይም ፡ ወርእዩ ። ውስተ ፡ ቁዳርኒ ፡ ፈንው ፡ ለብው ፡ ጥቀ ፡ እመ ፡ ተገብረ ፡ ከመዝ ፡ እመ ፡ ይዌልጡነ ፡ አሕዛብ ፡ አማልክቲሆሙ ። “I moved in the islands of Kittim and look you! In Kedar too send, understand well whether anything like this was done, whether the nations change their gods”. This differs from the text edited by Schäfers: ኅለፉኬ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ደሰዖተ ፡ ሮም ፡ እስመ ፡ ዐደውክሙ ፡ እምነ ፡ ቀጥኤም ፡ ወርእዩ ፡ ወለአኩ ፡ ወፈንወ ፡ ኅብ ፡ ደቂቀ ፡ ቁዳር ፡ ወአእምሩ ፡ ወጠይቁ ፡ ባሕቲ ፡ እመ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ከምዝ ፡ እመቦ ፡ አሐዱ ፡ ዘገብረ ፡ ግብርክሙ<sup>90</sup> “Pass then in the islands of Rome for you have passed by from Kittim and look and dispatch and send to the children of Kedar and only know and enquire whether like this has happened, whether there is one that has done your work”. Francesco da Bassano’s edition reads: ዕድወ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ደሰዖተ ፡ ኪጥኤም ፡ ወርእዩ ፡ ወፈንወ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ቁዳር ፡ ወጠይቁ ፡ በሕቁ ፡ ወርእዩ ፡ እመ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ከመዝ ። እመ ፡ ይዌልጡ ፡ አሕዛብ ፡ አማልክቲሆሙ “Cross to the islands of Kittim and look and send to Kedar and examine thoroughly and look if [something] like this has happened. Whether the nations change their gods”,<sup>91</sup>

fol. 14v quotes Gal 2:14: በቅድመ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ እቤሎ ፡ ለኪፋሰ ፡ ዘእንተ ፡ ለሊከ ፡ እንዘ ፡ አይሁዳዊ ፡ አንተ ፡ ወከመ ፡ አረማዊ ፡ ወአኮ ፡ ከመ ፡ አይሁድ ፡ ሒወተከ ። እሮ ፡ ለአሕዛብ ፡ ታጌብሮሙ ፡ ይትሆዩዱ ። “Before all I say to Cefa: While you

<sup>89</sup> There are very minor differences among the Paris Codex and the other manuscripts collated by Boyd. ወኢትትዐደ “and do not pass over” is the one of the variants which is shared by our commentary, cf. BOYD 1911: 68.

<sup>90</sup> SCHÄFERS 1912: 3.

<sup>91</sup> ብሉይ ፡ ኪዳን ። ዘተሰናኸው ፡ ምስለ ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ቀደምት ፡ ዘብራና ፡ ወምስለ ፡ መጻሕፍተ ፡ ሶርያ ፡ ወጽርእ ፡ ወዓረብ ። መጽሐፍ ፡ ራብዕ ። ነቢያት ወመቃብያን ። አሥመራ ። ፲፱፻፲፰ ። 1918 A.M.: 89.

yourself being a Jew and you are like a pagan and your life is not like the Jews. How do you compel the nations to become Jews?”. The difficulties loom right at the beginning of the quotation which should have started off with በቅድመ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ or በቅድመ ፡ ኩሎሙ. The oldest available witnesses of this verse read: እብሎ/እቤሎ ፡ ለኪፋ ፡ በቅድመ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ሶበ ፡ አንተ ፡ እንዘ ፡ አይሁዳዊ ፡ አንተ ፡ በሕገ ፡ አረሚይ ፡ ትነብር ፡ ወአኮ ፡ በሕገ ፡ አይሁድ ፡ እርፍ ፡ እንከ ፡ ታጌብሮሙ ፡ ለአረሚይ ፡ ይትየሁዱ ። “I say to Cefa in front of everyone: If you, while you are a Jew live according to pagan law and not by the law of the Jews, how then do you compel the pagan to become Jews?”;

fol. 14v–15r quote Mt 21:40-41: ይመጽእ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለወይን ፡ ወበእኩይ ፡ ሞት ፡ ይቀትሎሙ ፡ ወወይን ፡ ወይነሂ ፡ ይሁብ ፡ ለካልአን ፡ ገበርተ ፡ እለ ፡ ይሁቡ ፡ ፍሬሁ ፡ በበጊዜሁ ። “The Lord of the vineyard will come and will kill them with an evil death and shall give the vineyard to other farmers who will give its fruit in due time”. The A-Text: ወመጸአ ፡ እንከ ፡ ባዕለ ፡ ወይን ፡ ምንተ ፡ ይሬስዮሙ ፡ ለዐቀብተ ፡ ወይን ፡ ወይቤልዎ ፡ በእኪት ፡ እኪተ ፡ ይሰርሮሙ ፡ ወወይኖሂ ፡ የሀብ ፡ ልካልአን ፡ አግብርት ፡ እለ ፡ ይሁቡ ፡ ፍሬሁ ፡ በበጊዜሁ ። “And coming, what shall the owner of the vine do to the keepers of the vine? And they told him: He will dismiss them very harshly and will give his vine to other farmers who will give its fruit in its time”. The B-Text: ወእምከመ ፡ እንከ ፡ መጽአ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ወይን ፡ ምንተ ፡ ይሬስዮሙ ፡ ለእልኩቱ ፡ ሐረስት ፡ ወይቤልዎ ፡ በሕሙም ፡ ወእኩይ ፡ ይቀትሎሙ ፡ ወወይኖሂ ፡ ይሁብ ፡ ለካልአን ፡ ዐቀብት ፡ ለእለ ፡ ይሁብዎ ፡ ፍሬሁ ፡ በበ ፡ አጋውሊሁ ። “And when the Lord of the vineyard has come, what is he going to do to those farmers? And they told him: cruelly and violently he will kill them and will give his vine to other keepers, to those who give its fruit in its appropriate time”. There is a broad difference between Philo’s version and the early Gəʿəz witnesses;

fol. 15r quotes Mt 21: 43: ትትነሃኡ ፡ መንግሥት ፡ እምኔክሙ ። “You will be stripped of the kingdom”. Philo’s version is close to ἀρῶσεται ἀπ’ ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you”. It reproduces the passive voice but on the other hand it omits τοῦ θεοῦ. The A-Text: ይነሥእዎ ፡ ለመንግሥተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ እምኔክሙ ። “They shall take the kingdom of God from you”; The B-Text: ይትሃዩድ ፡ እምኔክሙ ፡ መንግሥተ ፡ ሰማያት ። “The kingdom of heaven will be stripped from you”;

fol. 17rv quotes Mt 20:12: አሐተ ፡ ክመ ፡ ሰዐተ ፡ ክመ ፡ ተቀንዩ ፡ ዕሩዩ ፡ ዓስበ ፡ ጸገወ ፡ ምስሌሆሙ ፡ ለእለ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ክበደ ፡ ጸሩ “He gave the same wage to those who worked for one hour only, together with the ones that have borne the whole weight”. This text is different from the Greek and from the Gəʿəz versions. The A-Text: አሐተ ፡ ሰዐተ ፡ ተቀንዩ ፡ ወአዐርይኩሙ ፡ ምስሌነ ፡ ለእለ ፡ ጸርነ ፡ ክበዳ ፡ ለዕለት ፡ ወሐሩሩ “They worked for one hour and you equated them with us who have borne the weight of the day and its heat”; The B-Text: አሐተ ፡ ሰዐተ ፡ ተቀንዩ ፡ ወአስተአረይኩሙ ፡ ምስሌነ ፡ ለእለ ፡ ጸርነ ፡ ክበዳ ፡ ወላ

The Gəʿəz Version of Philo of Carpasia's *Commentary on Canticle of Canticles* 1:2–14a

**ህባ ፡ ለዕለት** “They worked for one hour and you equated them with us who have borne the weight and the flame of the day”. The Greek reads: *μίαν ὥραν ἐποίησαν, καὶ ἴσους ἡμῖν αὐτοὺς ἐποίησας τοῖς βασιτάσασι τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν καύσωνα* “They worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat”.

### Proper nouns

In fol. 8r there is **ማርያ**<sup>92</sup> for **ማርያም**; fol. 9r **ሲሮፊቂስ** “Syro-Phonicia”; fol. 13r **ኪጥይም**: Schäfers reads: **ቀጥኤም**.<sup>93</sup>

### Philo's commentary and the other Ethiopian commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles

There is no trace at all of this Commentary either in the *tərg<sup>w</sup>ame*<sup>94</sup> or in the *andəmta*.<sup>95</sup>

### Abbreviations:

A.D. = *Anno Domini*

°A.M. = °*Amäta Məbrät* (year in Ethiopian calendar)

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<sup>92</sup> **ከፊለ ፡ ስም** “name split” is the formula traditional morphology employed to indicate partial or defective forms of proper nouns, as in the present case. **ሐዋ** for **ሐዋን** is a further example of this scribal habit. The cut of the last letter, which is often intentional, is aimed at obtaining the rhyme, cf. “**ከፊለ ፡ ስም**” in TÄSÄMMA HABTÄ MIKAʿEL 1951 °A.M.: 890. **ማርያ** is a Greek calque, like **ሐዋ** or **ሐዋ** and more than anything else is a form close to the Syriac ܡܪܝܡ, Hebrew מרים, and Arabic حور.

<sup>93</sup> The context is Jer 2: 10.11a.

<sup>94</sup> There is no similarity with the edition of EURINGER 1937: 257–276, 369–382.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. KÄFLÄ (MÄLʾAKÄ GÄNNÄT) – *Aläqa* HAYLÄ SĔLLASE – *Blatta* W.Q. MÄRSʾE HĀZÄN (eds.) 1988 °A.M.: 197–201.

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- ብሉይ ፡ ኪዳን ፡ ዘተሰናኸው ፡ ምስሉ ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ቀደምት ፡ ዘብራሩ ፡ ወምስሉ ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ሰርያ ፡ ወጽርኢ ፡ ወዓረብ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ ራብዕ ፡ ነቢያት ወመቃብያን ፡ አሥመራ ፡ ፲፱፻፲፰ ፡** (*Bəluṅ Kidan zätäsänaʾawä məslä mäṣahəftä qäddämtä zäbranna wäməslä mäṣahəftä Sorya wäṢərʾ wäʿarəb. Mäṣhaf rabəʿ Nəbiyat wäMäqqabyan*) *Vetus Testamentum cum Antiquis Codicibus necnon cum Versione Syriaca, Graeca et Arabica Comparatum*, Vol. IV: *Prophetarum et Maccabaeoroum* 1918 ʿA.M. [1925/26 A.D.], Asmarā: Tipografia Francescana.
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#### Summary

The aim of the paper is to provide an overview of little known Gəʿəz texts ascribed to Philo, namely: fragments of a Paschal Homily, a bulky but incomplete commentary on the Pauline Corpus and a fragment of Philo of Carpasia’s commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. While concentrating mainly on the latter, the present article wants to draw attention to linguistic characteristics common to the trilogy which is associated with the name Philo. The Gəʿəz version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary is a rare example of a strictly paratactic translation which is keen to reproduce literally the Greek text from which it depended. The outcome is a hardly understandable Gəʿəz text which is however interesting as a unique witness of an ancient translation technique. The Philonian trilogy is among other aspects, a mine of unknown or little attested Gəʿəz terms.