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**Article**

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## Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995.
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011; 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG, *ibid.*, 2011f.; 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI, *ibid.*, 2012ff.
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"*, Napoli: Università di Napoli "L'Orientale" (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London 1917ff.
- CSCO* *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003; II: D–Ha, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005; III: He–N, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007; (in cooperation with A. BAUSI), IV: O–X, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010; A. BAUSI (ed. in cooperation with S. UHLIG), V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014.
- EFAH* Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung, Epigraphische Forschungen auf der Arabischen Halbinsel, herausgegeben im Auftrag des Instituts von NORBERT NEBES.
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- IJAHS* *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston, MA – New York 1968ff.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
- NEASt* *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig – Roma – Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- OrChrP* *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, Roma 1935ff.
- PICES 15* S. UHLIG – M. BULAKH – D. NOSNITSIN – T. RAVE (eds.) 2005, *Proceedings of the XV<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20–25, 2003* = *AethFor* 65, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PICES 16* H. ASPEN – BIRHANU TEFERRA – SHIFERAW BEKELE – S. EGE (eds.) 2010, *Research in Ethiopian Studies: Selected papers of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Trondheim July 2007* = *AethFor* 72, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND – A. J. DREWES – R. SCHNEIDER 1991, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches*, Paris: [Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres] Diffusion de Boccard.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma 1941–1981, Roma – Napoli 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.
- ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig – Wiesbaden – Stuttgart 1847ff.

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## On the History of the Library of Mäqdäla: New Findings

STÉPHANE ANCEL – DENIS NOSNITSIN, Universität Hamburg

In 1868, the British expeditionary force led by Lord Napier captured King Tewodros II's stronghold at Mäqdäla. After the battle, the place was looted and numerous parchment manuscripts gathered by Tewodros II for his main church Mäqdäla Mädhane ʿAläm fell into the hands of the British as booty. The precise number of manuscripts which were housed at Mäqdäla when Napier's army captured the place is still uncertain, but it is thought to have been at least 989.<sup>1</sup> A part of these manuscripts subsequently entered European collections (mainly the British Library)<sup>2</sup> where they enjoyed full scholarly attention over many years. Not much is known about the other, larger part of the Mäqdäla booty, comprising ca. 600 manuscripts, which stayed in Ethiopia. In the official records of the expedition published in 1870, James Holland and Henry M. Hozier report that the manuscripts were brought by the British expedition as far as Chelikot [Çäläqot Šöllase in ʿEndärta], where about 600 manuscripts were delivered to the local priests.<sup>3</sup> In 1970, in search of information about the fate of these manuscripts, Rita Pankhurst visited the church of Çäläqot. She could only identify three manuscripts as those which might once have been in the Mäqdäla library. The local clergymen told her that manuscripts from Mäqdäla might be found in various churches founded by King Yoħännəs IV (r. 1872–1889) around Mäqälä, but this could not be verified at that time.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, no new evidence concerning the Mäqdäla manuscripts which stayed in Ethiopia has come to light.

Some new information on the Mäqdäla manuscripts in Ethiopia was recently gathered by the team of the project *Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia – Salvation, Preservation and Research*. The team

<sup>1</sup> See PANKHURST (1973: 40), with numbers 1.007 as “probable” and 1.075 as “maximum possible”. Later she estimated that the Mäqdäla library might have had some 1.300 volumes, because, in addition to her first estimate, she took into account witnesses reporting that a significant number of manuscripts was destroyed in the course of the battle and subsequent devastation of the place (PANKHURST 1990: 228). However, the estimate of ca. 1.000 manuscripts appears to be plausible and commonly accepted today (cf. PANKHURST 2007: 764b).

<sup>2</sup> 349/350 manuscripts, see PANKHURST 1973: 40.

<sup>3</sup> HOLLAND – HOZIER 1870, II, 396; PANKHURST 1973: 40.

<sup>4</sup> PANKHURST 1973: 23 (cp. a slight difference in PANKHURST 1990: 227, “Three had probably, and one had certainly come from Mäqdäla”).

carried out six field research missions in 2010–12<sup>5</sup> and aimed at exploring the ecclesiastical landscape of Təgray, visiting around 100 historical churches and monasteries<sup>6</sup> and recording numerous manuscripts. In terms of quality some of them appear to be remarkable, and share some features rather uncommon for the majority of the books found in Təgray. These manuscripts also provide some clear indications of their provenance, the library of Mäqdäla Mädhane ʿAläm.<sup>7</sup> Until now, 19 such manuscripts have been identified in six ecclesiastic collections of Central and East Təgray: Qäqäma Maryam, Tägoga Yoḥannəs, Koholo Yoḥannəs, Agula ʿ Kidanä Məḥrät, G<sup>w</sup>ahgot Iyäsus and Čähat Mädhane ʿAläm.<sup>8</sup>

Holland and Hozier reported that the manuscripts of the Mäqdäla library were examined by Werner Munzinger, the acting British and French consul since 1864 who accompanied the British expeditionary force. In addition, they say that Munzinger supplied each volume with a brief note on its content.<sup>9</sup> Out of the 19 manuscripts mentioned, 11 contain probable traces of Munzinger’s examination. They have a number written in black ink by a European hand in one of their fly-leaves. In three of these 11 manuscripts, the title of the book in English or French is added to the number in the same hand. For example, in a manuscript of the Four Gospels found in Tägoga Yoḥannəs, one can read in the first folio the (French) word “*Evangiles*” and the number “841” (fig. 1a–b).

In other books, only the title is discernible (fig. 2: “*Old Testament; Orit*”).

<sup>5</sup> See mission reports at <http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE>. The issue discussed in the current article has already been touched upon in NOSNITSIN 2013. Some new data were uncovered by Stéphane Ancel and presented in the talk “Travelling Books: Change of Owner and Library in Ethiopian Manuscript Culture”, at the workshop “The Second(ary) Life of Manuscripts” (July 12, 2013, Hamburg University, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures), and accordingly, it was decided to summarize the present stage of research in a short article. For more detailed information on the sites and their collections, NOSNITSIN 2013 should be consulted.

<sup>6</sup> In the districts (*wärädas*) of Gulo Mäkäda, Ganta Afäšum, Saʿsi Šäʿada Īmba, Īndārta, Kələttä Awlōʿalo, Dägʿa Tämben, and in the city of ʿAddigrat.

<sup>7</sup> Useful advice also came from Ted Erho (Munich University) during his visit to the project on 8 April 2013.

<sup>8</sup> PANKHURST 1973: 23 transmits local information that some of the Mäqdälä books are to be found in the churches: “Agulaʿe Kidana Meherät, Arra Mikaʿel, Tägogwa Johannes, Mälfa Maryam, Qäqäma Maryam, Čeh Kidanä Meherät, Mäqäle Kidana Meherät”. Out of them, the project team could visit three sites (Agulaʿ Kidanä Məḥrät, Tägoga Yoḥannəs, Qäqäma Maryam).

<sup>9</sup> HOLLAND – HOZIER 1870, II, 397.

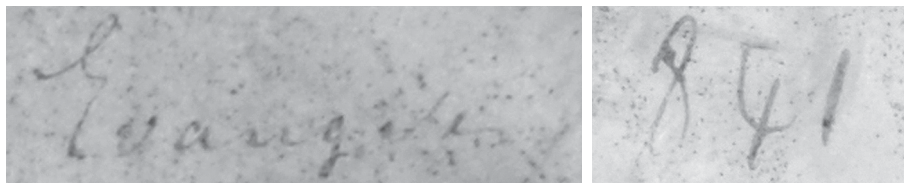


Fig. 1a–b: Tägoga Yoḥannəs, Four Gospels, fol. 1r

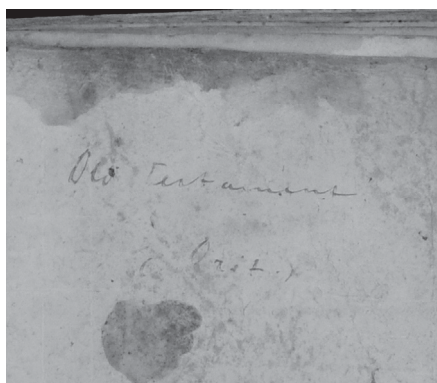


Fig. 2: Agula Kidanä Məhrät, Octateuch, fol. 1r

Moreover, 15 out of the total of 19 manuscripts include ownership notes in Gəʿəz, usually written in the upper or outer margin of one of the first text folios. The notes are remarkably uniform: they all mention the title of the book and that it is in the custody of Mädhane ʿAläm church. E.g., in a manuscript containing the “Faith of the Fathers” (*Haymanotä abäw*), found in Tägoga Yoḥannəs, the note in fol. 3r reads: ኃይማኖተ ፡ አበው ፡ ዘቅዱስ ፡ መድኃኔ ፡ ዓለም ። (“The book of *Haymanotä abäw* of the holy

Mädhane ʿAläm” (fig. 3). In some manuscripts the ownership notes are partly erased.

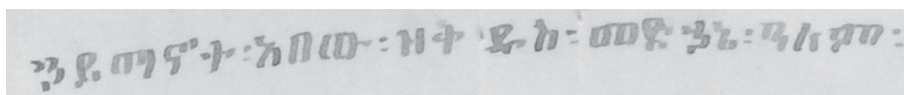


Fig. 3: Tägoga Yoḥannəs, “Faith of the Fathers”, fol. 2r, upper margin

Very similar notes in both European and Ethiopian hands, identical in format, are found in many of the Mäqdäla manuscripts which are now kept in the British Library (figs. 4, 5).<sup>10</sup> This argues that the 19 manuscripts also come from Mäqdäla.

Nearly all of the 19 manuscripts are in large format, carefully written and bound, but with no illuminations. Seven manuscripts can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>, ten to the 18<sup>th</sup>, and two to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With a few exceptions (*Gʷahgot Iyäsus*), most of the manuscripts are still in fairly good condition.

For a number of other manuscripts, a link to Mäqdäla may be assumed on the basis of the palaeographical, codicological and historical evidence, even though it cannot be ascertained since the crucial notes (esp. in Gəʿəz)

<sup>10</sup> WRIGHT 1877: xi, and the following descriptions therein.

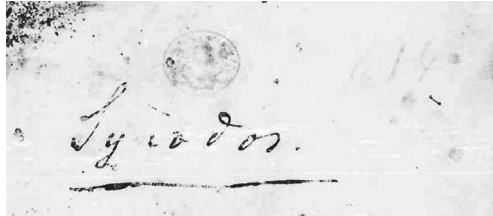


Fig. 4: British Library, Orient. 794 (Wright 1877: 269f., no. 360)

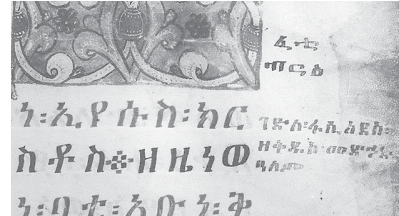


Fig. 5: British Library, Orient. 706 (Wright 1877: 186f., no. 281, pl. iii)

are missing – erased, overwritten, or gone with the absent guard leaves. For sure, there are more Mäqdäla manuscripts among those recorded by the project team, which will certainly be identified in the future.

It is significant to see how the six aforementioned sites are located in relation to the route that the Napier expedition took in North Ethiopia on its way back.<sup>11</sup>

The church of Koholo Yoḥannəs (ፎንዳርታ *wäräda*) is located to the west of Mäqälä, in the district of May Anbäsa. The church's collection includes at least one book from Mäqdäla, a collection of New Testament texts (Apostolic Epistles, Acts of the Apostles, and Revelation of John). Koholo Yoḥannəs is located some four hours' walk from the route of the Napier expedition.

The church Agula<sup>c</sup> Kidanä Məḥrät (Kələttä Awla<sup>lo</sup> *wäräda*) is located to the north of Mäqälä, on the outskirts of the town of Agula<sup>c</sup>.<sup>12</sup> Agula<sup>c</sup> was a prominent place in the early career of Yoḥannəs IV (until 1872: *däggazmač* Kasa of Təgray); there he established his residence and his "political centre", and a monastic community at the church. Four manuscripts from Mäqdäla have been identified in Agula<sup>c</sup> so far: an Octateuch, the Four Gospels, and two collections of religious poetry (*Mälkä'a guba'e*). Agula<sup>c</sup> is located on the route that was used by the Napier army.

The church G<sup>w</sup>aḥgot Iyäsus is located further to the north, in Ganta Afäšum *wäräda*, west of the town of ፎደገላ ሸሙስ, on the slopes of the ሸሙስ mountain range. The church has a small manuscript collection including three manuscripts which had been in the Mäqdäla library: the Four Gospels, a Book of the Rite of the Holy Week (*Gəbrä ḥəmmamat*), and a Synaxarion. The church is situated not far (some three hour's walk) from the Napier expedition route and is not located directly on the route.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., map in MATTHIES 2012: xx.

<sup>12</sup> Known for its archaeological site, see CURTIS – O'MAHONEY 2003: 153a–b.

The church of Čäḥat Mädḥane ʿAläm is located to the north of ʿAddigrat (Ganta Afäšum *wäräda*), close to the main road towards Zäla Ambäsä. The small collection includes a fine Four Gospels book from the Mäqdäla library.

The other two sites are located in Täm̄ben, i.e. far from the route of the Napier expedition. Qäqäma Maryam (Dägʿa Täm̄ben *wäräda*) is a remote monastery located between the towns Hagärä Sälam and ʿAbiy ʿAddi. The monastery of Qäqäma was closely associated with King Yoḥannəs IV and has an extensive manuscript collection, but so far only one manuscript, an Octateuch, has been identified as having been in the Mäqdäla library.

The monastery of Tägoga Yoḥannəs is a monastic community located to the west of Mäqälä (Dägʿa Täm̄ben *wäräda*). It was a great favorite of King Yoḥannəs IV. As in the previous case, the collection of the monastery is very extensive. Among the manuscripts of the collection, nine have been identified as formerly belonging to the Mäqdäla library: the Four Gospels, “Faith of the Fathers” (*Haymanotä abäw*), a collection of Old Testament texts (Book of Enoch, Job, Proverbs and Kings), Pauline Epistles, “Major Prophets”, “The Story of Mary” (*Nägärä Maryam*), “The Spiritual Elder” (*Arägawi mänfäsawi*), and two Synaxarions.

The investigation of the Ethio-SPaRe team confirmed the role of Agulaʿ Kidanä Məḥrät, Qäqäma Maryam and Tägoga Yoḥannəs as repositories of the Mäqdäla manuscripts, but also brought to light new sites further north, Gʷahgot Iyäsus and Čäḥat Mädḥane ʿAläm. The role of Čäläqot Šellase in regard to the Mäqdäla manuscript heritage remains unclear.

At first glance, the presence of the Mäqdäla manuscripts in churches located along the route toward the north agrees with the information that some manuscripts were distributed by the British officers not only to Yoḥannəs,<sup>13</sup> but also sometimes directly to the clergy of the other local churches, on their way back to Zula.<sup>14</sup> There is still not much evidence as to exactly how the books entered the local collections. Out of the 19 manuscripts, only three have donation notes. The first note is found in the Octateuch of Qäqäma Maryam; it indicates King Yoḥannəs IV as the donor. The second, in the Pauline Epistles of Tägoga Yoḥannəs, contains an inventory of items donated by King Yoḥannəs IV to the monastery. This inventory mentions 18 manuscripts, including at least five which might be from Mäqdäla. The third note, in the Four Gospels of Čäḥat Mädḥane ʿAläm, says that the book was bought and donated by Wäldä Arägawi, during the time of *ras* Səbḥat Arägawi, the ruler of ʿAgamä region between 1875 and

<sup>13</sup> As suggested by J.M. Flad (see PANKHURST 1973: 22).

<sup>14</sup> See PANKHURST 1973: 21, CHOJNACKI 1968: 35; cp. also WRIGHT 1877: iii.

1914.<sup>15</sup> The last example shows that the Mäqdäla manuscripts, once spread in the region, could move from one collection to another, and be acquired and donated more than one time.

The identification of other Mäqdäla books will remain an issue for the further research in the ecclesiastic collections of Təgray. Besides, researches should take into account that the large-scale influx of high-quality manuscripts from the area of Gondär might well have influenced the local manuscript culture of North Ethiopia and certainly rendered it more complicated.

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### Summary

It has been known that only a part of the parchment manuscripts of Mäqdäla library seized by British expeditionary force in 1868 entered European collections. Many of those manuscripts stayed in Ethiopia but not much was known about them. New information on these manuscripts has been recently gathered by the team of the project “Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia – Salvation, Preservation and Research”. Among manuscripts registered in monasteries and churches of East Təgray, some could have been identified as manuscripts previously coming from Mäqdäla library. The article presents these manuscripts and some of their features.

<sup>15</sup> See TSEGAY BERHE 2010: 587b–589a; here Wäldä Arägawi is probably the baptismal name of *šum* <sup>c</sup>*agame* Kasa, a son of *ras* Səbḥat Arägawi.