



Aethiopia 18 (2015)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Article

*Searching for the Appropriate Editorial Technique:
The Case of Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*

Aethiopia 18 (2015), 128–144

ISSN: 2194–4024

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

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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; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES* 8 TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
- PICES* 10 C. LEPAGE and É. DELAGE, eds, *Études éthiopiennes: Actes de la X^e Conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988* (Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, 1994).
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *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, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

Searching for the Appropriate Editorial Technique: The Case of *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*

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Sicher ist, dass nichts sicher ist. Selbst das nicht
Joachim Ringelnatz

In this article I would like to present my preliminary ideas on the edition of the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*, which forms the main part of my forthcoming PhD dissertation at Hamburg University. This edition is necessarily based on a single textual witness.¹ After a brief introduction to the primary sources on which the edition will be based, I want to focus on my approach to the text and to point out specific problems that occurred while working on the edition. For this, the content—though of great interest—will be neglected here in favour of methodology. However, I hope the article will also be useful for young philologists who have difficulties in finding the right editorial technique. The article may also be of interest to scholars of other disciplines who are working on a critical text edition. After all, no historian or linguist should blindly trust any edition of a given text and extract information from it without being aware of the editorial steps undertaken.

The focus of my study is the text *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*, which is rather unknown within the field of Ethiopian studies.² This text seems to have survived only in a unique late-nineteenth-century manuscript (both leather boards are elaborately decorated with silver plate) kept in the monastery of Däbrä Wärq, located in Eastern Goḡḡam. It contains an indigenous hagiographic biography of the monk Šäršä Peṭros (*gädl*, c.50 folia), a collection of his miracles (*tä³ammər*, c.15 folia) and a *mälkə⁶*-hymn in his honour (52

¹ This is typically the case of a *codex unicus*; a text that has survived in a single manuscript only; cf. Ehlers (2003, 31) and Hahn (2001, 49). This is also the case of the extant archetype of a given textual tradition, where all witnesses dependent on the archetype must, as a rule, be disregarded on the basis of the principle of the *eliminatio codicum descriptorum*.

² To the best of my knowledge, only Tadesse Tamrat has consulted the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros* in Däbrä Wärq for his outstanding work *Church and State* (Tadesse Tamrat 1972, 202, note 5, 203, note 1, 217, note 1). I would like to express my sincere thanks to Anaïs Wion, who drew my attention to this text.

strophes).³ Until today, the protagonist is venerated as a saint in the monastery of Däbrä Wärq and commemorated as its re-founder.⁴ According to his *gädl*, St Šäršä Peṭros lived during the reign of King Dawit II (r. 1379/80–1413) and died in the time of King Bāʿädä Maryam (r. 1468–1478). It is recorded that St Šäršä Peṭros also founded the monasteries of Getesemani, close to Däbrä Wärq, and Mäqdäsä Maryam,⁵ located on the other side of the Blue Nile in Bägemdär. In Getesemani the memory of the saint is still alive. St Šäršä Peṭros (together with his spiritual brother Robel) is still remembered as founder but is no longer commemorated. Mäqdäsä Maryam houses a manuscript containing the text *Haymanotä Abäw* which includes a recent note, written in crude Amharic, mentioning St Šäršä Peṭros as its founder.

The narrative structure of the saint’s biography and the collection of his miracles is fairly complex. These texts contain not only accounts of the saint’s life and achievements—as we generally expect in hagiographic works—but they also embrace religious teachings and historiographical accounts of different epochs of Ethiopian history. While the main action of the *gädl* takes place in the fifteenth century, the *täʾammär* brings us up to the Era of the Princes (1769–1855). The following brief overview of the content may give an idea of the complexity of the text to be edited:⁶

Gädl

1. Prologue (f. 5^{ra}–5^{va})
2. Ancestry and childhood (ff. 5^{va}–8^{va})
3. Education and beginning of the spiritual life (ff. 8^{va}–13^{rb})
4. Divine assignment and prehistory of Däbrä Wärq (ff. 13^{rb}–14^{rb})
5. King’s directive and re-foundation of Däbrä Wärq (ff. 14^{rb}–16^{rb})
6. Laudatio for Šäršä Peṭros (ff. 16^{rb}–30^{va})
7. Receiving the monastic habit (ff. 30^{va}–31^{vb})
8. Completion of the re-construction of Däbrä Wärq (ff. 31^{vb}–32^{ra})

³ Furthermore, the manuscript contains the following texts: *Mälkäʿa qʿwərban* (ff. 1^v–2^r) two genealogies listing the saint in the seventh generation after Ewošatewos (ff. 3^r, 79^{va}–^{vb}), a miracle of St Mary (f. 3^{r-v}), a *mälkäʿ*-hymn for King Dawit II (27 strophes, ff. 76^{va}–79^{rb}), a short historiographical text about Matewos of Däbrä San and King Dawit II (ff. 79^{vb}–80^{rb}) as well as two short notes (ff. 4^r, 76^{ra}).

⁴ As in other traditions (e.g., of Märṭulä Maryam), it is believed that Däbrä Wärq had originally been founded during the Aksumite era; namely by Asfaḥ, son of Ašbəḥa, and then rebuilt during the reign of King Dawit II.

⁵ In the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros* this monastery is referred to as Iyārusalem zä-Ityopya (f. 34^{rb}). In the 10th miracle-story (f. 63^{rb}) it is named Mäqdäsä Maryam.

⁶ I divided the *gädl* into chapters. This division and also the titles given to the sections as well as to the miracles shall be considered as preliminary.

9. Pilgrimage of Šāršä Peṭros and Robel (ff. 32^{ra}–33^{rb})
10. Foundation of Getesemani (ff. 33^{rb}–34^{ra})
11. Foundation of ‘Jerusalem of Ethiopia’ (f. 34^{ra}–34^{vb})
12. Appeal to King Dawit II (ff. 34^{vb}–36^{va})
13. Teachings of Šāršä Peṭros (ff. 36^{va}–47^{va})
14. Journey of King Dawit II to Egypt and the allocation of a piece of the True Cross and the Marian icons of St Luke (ff. 47^{va}–51^{rb})
15. King Zär’a Ya’qob defeating Bädlay (ff. 51^{rb}–52^{ra})
16. Appeal to King Bä’ädä Maryam (ff. 52^{ra}–52^{vb})
17. Death and *kidan* (ff. 52^{vb}–54^{rb})

Tä’ammər

- 1st miracle: Two stones serving as a resting place for the saint (ff. 55^{ra}–56^{ra})
- 2nd miracle: A fig tree as a source of food for believers (f. 56^{ra}–56^{vb})
- 3rd miracle: The saint’s spiritual journey to Jerusalem (ff. 56^{vb}–57^{vb})
- 4th miracle: The saint’s holy water (ff. 57^{vb}–58^{va})
- 5th miracle: A cloudy mantle protecting Däbrä Wärq against Grañ (ff. 58^{va}–59^{vb})
- 6th miracle: The saint’s chair (ff. 59^{vb}–60^{va})
- 7th miracle: King Zär’a Ya’qob defeating Bädlay with help of the Marian icon Wäynut (ff. 60^{va}–61^{vb})
- 8th miracle: The saint’s weeping cross (ff. 61^{vb}–62^{rb})
- 9th miracle: Marta returning the saint’s dead body to Däbrä Wärq (ff. 62^{rb}–63^{vb})
- 10th miracle: Healing of a blind man (ff. 63^{vb}–64^{ra})
- 11th miracle: The saint’s disciple Säbänä Peṭros raising King Gälawdewos and taking Minas to Rome in exchange for weapons; king’s victory over Grañ (ff. 64^{ra}–67^{vb})
- 12th miracle: A cloudy mantle protecting Däbrä Wärq against prince Hjäylä Maryam (ff. 67^{vb}–69^{rb})
- 13th miracle: The saint’s disciple Pilupader founding the monastery of Awban (ff. 69^{rb}–70^{vb}).

Due to the complex structure of the text one may assume that the *gädl* is not a homogeneous text but a compilation based on different sources. Likewise, the account of the miracles was probably composed at different times.

It seems that the text of the *gädl* includes several in-texts.⁷ This is, in terms of content, quite obvious for the story of King Dawit II’s journey to

⁷ I will apply the term ‘in-text’ for embedded text-pieces that might originate from other literary works and, as a result, appear within the text structure independently in terms of content; their particular functions will be discussed in the introductory part of my forthcoming PhD dissertation. Also, some of them show distinct linguistic features. For a broader understanding of this term see Nord 2005, 112.

Kush (located in ‘Upper Egypt’) where the king received seven Marian icons attributed to St Luke and a piece of the True Cross as a tribute. These holy items were given by several rulers fearing the power of King Dawit II who diverted the Nile back to Ethiopia and deprived them of their livelihood. This episode has been incorporated into the *gädl* to explain how the Marian icon Wäynut⁸ arrived in Däbrä Wärq while the protagonist himself disappears from the scene. Other in-texts occur in the long laudatio (that contains, e.g., a cosmological description of the universe) and in the theological teachings (which unexpectedly present an unknown account of the Coptic monk St Lätšun⁹).

In-texts are also found in the collection of miracles where we find both typical stories of a saint’s action (healing a blind man and the like) and accounts barely related to the saint’s life and works. A few miracles deal with prominent historical events (e.g., Grañ’s devastating invasion of Eastern Goḡḡam or the power struggles in Goḡḡam during the Era of the Princes). Two other miracles resemble in form and content typical *Sankassar*-entries. They are dedicated to two disciples of St Šäršä Peṭros: to Săbănă Peṭros and to Pilupader; the latter founded another, still existing, church in Goḡḡam named Awban. The 7th miracle is also of particular interest; it is a different version of a known Marian miracle¹⁰ attributed here to St Šäršä Peṭros and the Marian icon Wäynut.¹¹

Some of the in-texts included in the *gädl* show notable linguistic and lexical differences in comparison to their textual environment. This leads to two possible assumptions: either the author(s) may have used different sources at the same time to compose the *gädl* or a compiler might have enriched a core text with additional material at a later stage. The latter possibility seems to me more likely at the moment. But I still need to complete the linguistic and lexical analysis of the *gädl* and I may arrive at a different conclusion.

However, for a saint’s collection of miracles it seems common that new stories are added later,¹² because saints still perform miracles after their passing from earthly life. Oral narratives may be put into writing at a certain time to refresh the memory of a saint or to reaffirm the importance of the monastery. For this reason, differences in style and language in the accounts of miracles attributed to St Šäršä Peṭros are not as remarkable as those within his hagiographic biography as such differences may indicate a horizontal transmission).

⁸ The holy Marian icon Wäynut is still kept and well protected in Däbrä Wärq. It is believed that the icon (as with other icons attributed to St Luke) performs miracles.

⁹ For the edition and translation of this remarkable story see Hummel 2015, 67–93.

¹⁰ This miracle-story has been edited by Cerulli 1933, 88–89.

¹¹ A short version of this story is also given in the *gädl*.

¹² One may only think of the vast collection of miracles attributed to St Mary.

Unfortunately, the author or compiler does not reveal the sources of the in-texts and particular miracles stories. The same is true of the numerous quotations throughout the texts. The *gädl* under discussion contains many quotations from various works of (Ethiopian) Christian literature; but references are given only in rare cases, mainly for biblical books. For this reason, a philological analysis that seeks to detect the sources of the composition, is of particular relevance. It may not only provide reasonable answers concerning the production and function of the text but may also offer more information about the author(s) and his or their educational background. Furthermore, a close examination of the text may indicate a more reliable date of its composition (at least of its parts).¹³ Tracing back the sources of the composition may also be useful in verifying or falsifying the historical information contained in the saint's biography and his miracles. Then indeed, we also have to take into account the fact that the codex containing his biography and miracles was produced (late nineteenth century) many years after the saint's earthly life (mid-fifteenth century) had elapsed.¹⁴ This long time-span together with the uniqueness of the witness complicates the study of the historicity of the text to be edited. This is even more so, given the fact that external evidence (outside the tradition of Däbrä Wärq) on the very existence of St Šäršä Peṭros and on the foundation of the monastery of Däbrä Wärq is scarce.¹⁵

Therefore, I have tried to collect additional material from the saint's home region and have travelled several times to Eastern Goḡgam visiting different monasteries.¹⁶ Däbrä Wärq and Märtulä Maryam house remarkable collections of manuscripts but they are difficult to access. However, with the help of a local priest¹⁷ and with the patience of a saint I was eventually able to collect some material related to St Šäršä Peṭros respectively to

¹³ The *gädl* provides only vague hints as to when it might have been composed. The mention of Ethiopian kings provides only a *terminus post quem*, while the *terminus ante quem* is fixed by the date of the production of the codex.

¹⁴ As I stated above, it is possible that parts of the extant text of the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros* is based on an older (lost) text witness. The text transmission still needs to be examined.

¹⁵ The earliest reference to the monastery of Däbrä Wärq is found in the chronicle of King ʿEskändər (r. 1478–1494) who had first been buried there (Perruchon 1894, 343 (ed.), 359 (tr.)). The monk Šäršä Peṭros is mentioned in genealogies as being in the direct line of descent from Gäbrä Iyäsus, disciple of Ewoṣtatewos (Lusini 2004, 263–264, 266–267, 269–270).

¹⁶ Thus far I have visited: Däbrä Wärq, Getesemani, Dima Giyorgis, Märtulä Maryam, Däbrä Šəmmuna, Awban (all located in eastern Goḡgam) and Mäqdäsä Maryam (Bägemdər).

¹⁷ I want to thank Qäsis ʿAlämnäw Azzänä for his invaluable help not only for accompanying me several times during my trips but also for sharing his knowledge with me.

the early history of his monastery Däbrä Wärq, which I can only briefly present here.¹⁸

The most important additional source is a shorter version of the saint's biography contained in the local *Sənkəssar* of Däbrä Wärq under the 12th of *Təqəmt*, the day of his death. The commemorative notice comprises some four folia (twenty-five columns). Notably enough, this *Sənkəssar*-entry includes some of the episodes found in the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros* worded almost identically though with a few distinctive variances. I still need to examine in detail the genetic relationship between both texts. Then again, the short hagiographic account contains one, and only one, story about St Šäršä Peṭros that is not included in the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*. This episode, in which it is narrated how St Šäršä Peṭros resurrected the king's daughter Marta at the request of another monk named *Abba Eləyas*, is also included in a rare text known as *Zenahu lä-Abba Eləyas*¹⁹.

I was surprised to learn about the existence of a direct copy (*codex descriptus*) of the *gädl* and *tä'ammər* because the parchment exemplar is still in a very good condition. Reportedly, the copy was made recently onto a paper account book, probably by different hands, to protect the precious parchment manuscript and the copy shall now be used for reading. As it depends solely on the known single witness this copy has to be disregarded for the purpose of attaining the oldest retrievable text in the edition of *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros*.²⁰ Yet, I still need to examine this text witness in detail and hope it might be helpful for the understanding of problematic readings and for the local interpretation of particular passages.

During my different field trips I interviewed priests and monks from different monasteries, mainly from Däbrä Wärq, about St Šäršä Peṭros and the foundation of his monastery. Though the information I received during these interviews does not differ notably from the written sources, it should be considered as a secondary source for the hagiography of St Šäršä Peṭros. Also the wall-paintings (nineteenth century) in the church of Däbrä Wärq, where extraordinary episodes of the saint's life are depicted, have to be regarded as secondary sources. In addition, relevant information for the understanding of the text to be edited are provided in historiographical accounts

¹⁸ As I have not been able to get access to the manuscript collection of Däbrä Wärq (having seen only a very few manuscripts), the possibility is left open that other relevant sources might still exist. But reportedly, no older manuscript witness of the *Gädlä Šäršä Peṭros* exists.

¹⁹ The text is preserved in MS EMMML no. 1126, ff. 37^{rb} l. 10–40^{vb} l. 14 and MS EMMML no. 6337, ff. 17^v l. 10–21^v l. 6; see Getatchew Haile 2011, 114–115 (ed.), 134–135 (tr.).

²⁰ According to the principle of *eliminatio codicum descriptorum* (Maas 1960, 5).

contained in two manuscripts of Däbrä Wärq and in two publications locally produced by the monasteries of Däbrä Wärq and Mäqdäsä Maryam. Furthermore, genealogies of Ewoṣṭatean monks, which I collected from several manuscripts of the monasteries visited, may serve as additional material and may enrich the edition.

When it comes to the question of how to edit the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros*, for which only a single manuscript witness has to be used, no easy solution is in sight. The existing editorial methods, mainly developed in the academic fields of Classical Philology and Romance Philology, range from the complex ‘reconstructive method’²¹ over the ‘best manuscript method’²² up to a mere literal transcription. Within the field of Ethiopian philology no unified standard for editing Gəʿəz texts seems to exist, while highly experienced scholars such as Paolo Marrassini and Alessandro Bausi strongly recommend the ‘reconstructive method’, at least when dealing with several text-witnesses.²³

But which technique applies to an edition with a single witness? Along with the fact that in most manuscript traditions, as in the Ethiopian one, the

²¹ This method, based on the assumption of a singular transmission, seeks to establish the oldest form of a text (the so-called archetype) that lies beyond the extant individual text carriers. Through *collatio* and *recensio* (comparing and evaluating the variant readings of the surviving witnesses) the genealogical relationship between them can be established and presented in the form of a *stemma codicum*. The hypothetical ancestor, i.e. the archetype (not to be confused with the original), shall be reconstructed by choosing the equivalent and concurrent variances and finally by *emendatio* (correcting mistakes); for a brief explanation of this technique see Maas 1960 and West 1973.

This editing technique is closely associated with the German scholar Karl Lachmann (1793–1851) though his method had already been anticipated by other scholars, such as Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) or Carl Gottlob Zumpt (1792–1894); see Timpanaro 1971.

²² The French scholar Joseph Bédier (1864–1938), a medievalist working in vernacular (French) traditions with heavily contaminated transmissions, has rejected the ‘reconstructive method’ for his field and recommended an editorial technique in which the editor should choose a single best manuscript and reproduce it with as little emendation as possible in order to present a genuine text.

²³ See Bausi 2008, 13–46. The tradition of the Gəʿəz text transmission appears to be similar to that of Classical texts rather than to medieval texts of Europe. It is generally assumed that Gəʿəz texts were mechanically and vertically transmitted, faithfully copied throughout the past centuries. Presumably, scribes did not systematically change their texts or corrected what they perceived to be mistakes, but made unintentional errors. Since the vast majority of texts are of religious content or strongly linked to Christian life, scribes considered their received texts as sacred. Therefore, the Gəʿəz manuscript tradition cannot be compared with vernacular traditions, in which copyists frequently make deliberate changes (such as shortening or expanding the text) and where texts show a high degree of variance in content and in language (see *ibid.* 31–33).

majority of works have come down to us in more or even many copies, to be more precise in copies of copies, most of the literature on editorial techniques focuses on approaches to problems resulting from the multiplicity of manuscripts. At the same time, practical advice for dealing with single witnesses is very limited.²⁴ And indeed, editing a work preserved in a large number of accessible manuscripts causes different problems to those faced when working with a single witness.

In the case of a single witness, the editor naturally cannot choose a ‘best’ manuscript for his edition. He cannot rely on evidence found in other extant witnesses when filling textual gaps or reconstructing illegible readings. The same is true when the editor needs to solve problematic textual passages. What should he propose if there is no immediately obvious answer? Then again, in many cases several correct forms (grammatical or lexicographical) are possible: which solution should be favoured when no further evidence is available?²⁵

All editorial decisions are based on the unique text witness only. Therefore, the quality of the edition depends crucially on the knowledge and ability of the editor, on his understanding of the text, on his familiarity with the given language, the literary genre and the context within which the text has been produced.²⁶ As a consequence, the editor carries a greater responsibility and has to be highly sensitive to the particularity of the unique text witness. Then again, the editor has to meet the needs and expectations of the edition’s recipients. At this point it is worth recalling the aims and basic principles of a scholarly edition. The main objective of each scholarly edition is to make a given text accessible to the academic field. Firstly, this means presenting a text in a way that makes it clearly readable and comprehensible for its recipients. Secondly, but equally important, it requires that each edition should serve as a reliable source for further research. Since editorial work has to be acknowledged as a very interpretative process and two editions of the same work will never be the same,²⁷ the editor has to present his work (the result as well as the process) in a transparent and verifiable way. The recipient should be able to identify easily and with absolute cer-

²⁴ The article of Michael Hahn ‘On Editing Codices Unici’ (2001, 49–62) can definitely be recommended here, though it deals with a different manuscript tradition, remote in space and time, namely with Sanskrit manuscripts dating back to the tenth and eleventh centuries.

²⁵ All these questions seem obsolete when a rather homogenous text is to be edited. In this case, the editor can base such corrections on text-internal criteria, like the writing style of the author—independent of how many text witnesses are accessible.

²⁶ See also Hahn 2001, 49.

²⁷ Kelemen 2009, 80–81.

tainty all editorial decisions and interventions without having to consult the manuscript witness(es). This implies a strict distinction between evidence and interpretation in the edition. Finally, the applied editorial method and its reasoning should be adequately explained in the introductory part (although this may seem obvious, there are editions which do not provide such basic information).

Regarding the particular characteristics of working with a single witness and taking into account the objectives of a scholarly edition, a leading question concerning the editorial technique arises: shall the text be presented as it is (due to the lack of other witnesses) or shall the text be emended (to reconstruct the original reading)?

Before answering this question the editor needs to analyse all kinds of errors occurring in the text to be edited.²⁸ It seems likely that every copied text contains scribal errors. Everyone who has ever transcribed a text had to face the fact that the reading in order to copy is different from the reading in order to understand. It may happen that a scribe takes the sense into memory but not the exact wording (errors of transposition) or that he writes characters or words only once when they should have been written twice (haplography or eyeskip, when whole lines are omitted). Scribes may unintentionally copy words or even whole lines twice (dittography). But how can even these common errors be detected from a single witness? Apart from scribal corrections, when a scribe himself corrected his own mistakes, unintended errors can be identified reliably in cases of evident spelling errors (see examples below). Other errors, resulting in doubtful readings with too many or too few words in a given passage or what we might perceive as grammatical errors, can only be detected when the sense of the text is violated. But since such evaluations are based on the interpretative process of understanding the text, the scribe's writing intention is safely discernable only in cases of pure mechanical errors, where any other reasonable possibility can be excluded. Texts may have their specific characteristics depending on the time and place of their composition. What today appears wrong might have been justified earlier. In the case of a single witness of a rather heterogeneous text (which is possibly a compilation based on several texts or text-pieces from different epochs), only corrections of mechanical errors can truly be justified, because variant readings or textual evidence do not exist on which any other correction could be based. Other

²⁸ A useful overview on different kinds of scribal errors is given in Gacek 2007, 222–225 and Kelemen 2009, 59–69.

emendations could lead to too far-reaching editorial intervention and the risk of presenting a text that never existed in the reconstructed form.²⁹

For these reasons, an editorial technique with as little emendation of the text as possible but with explanatory notes and commentaries on the text seems to be more appropriate. It is important to notice here that the *Gädlä Śārśä Petros*, written neatly and carefully, is not badly corrupted by grammatical, orthographical or lexicographical errors. The uniqueness and also the reliability of the source justify an editorial technique with a minimum of interference. That does not mean that the editor will disappear from the scene. Problematic readings and doubtful forms will be indicated and commented in the apparatus. While the reconstructive method, aiming to edit a text close to the author's intention (discernible through text-internal criteria and/or from the evidence of several witnesses), is more author-centred, the editorial method I intend to employ for the single witness is rather source-centred. It emphasises the uniqueness of the text which, as mentioned above, has possibly been composed by more than one author.

In conclusion, my inclination is to edit the *Gädlä Śārśä Petros* in a diplomatic way. The edition shall be guided by the main principle of presenting the text unchanged with all its particular characteristics. The original orthography of the single text witness shall be kept (also: proper names³⁰ will not be normalised). Corrections shall be done in very restricted and defined cases (and carefully documented) that rely only on the source itself as the following examples will illustrate.

Scribal corrections

A few scribal corrections are marked with thin lines both above and below every single character to be cancelled (a). Occasionally, omissions or corrections are placed interlineally or in the margins (b) and in a very few cases written over erasures (c). These corrections will be adapted to the edition and documented in the text as well as transcribed in the apparatus.

- a) f. 36^{vb}: ወይጂሬሲ ፣ → ወይ|ሬሲ ፣, f. 40^{rb}: ከመ ፣ ያስተርእዩ ፣ ከሹሎ ፣ ከሹሎ ፣ ሠና ያተ ፣ → ከመ ፣ ያስተርእዩ ፣ | ፣ ከሹሎ ፣ ሠና ያተ ፣, f. 59^{rb}: አበውዮ ፣ ወአቢወዮ ፣ ወአጋውዮ ፣ → አበውዮ ፣ | ፣ ወአጋውዮ ፣

²⁹ Even though, it has become widely accepted that each scholarly edition should be considered as a working hypothesis (Bausi 2008, 22, n. 12) and presents the then state of the art.

³⁰ An index will guide the reader through the various spellings of proper names, e.g., for St Anthony (f. 5^{rb}: እንግዮስ ፣; f. 24^{vb}: እንግንስ ፣; f. 33^{va}: እንጦስ ፣; f. 55^{ra}: ዕንጦስ ፣).

- b) f. 5^{ra}: ጸለጦ[ቱ] ፤; f. 10^{vb}: እ[ሙ]ንቱ ፤; f. 26^{va}: ዕረ[ፍ]ተ ፤, f. 35^{ra}: በሀገረ ፤ [ሥጋ ከ ፤]
 c) f. 8^{ra}: {ሃይማኖ}ተ ፤, f. 10^{rb}: {ወሐነጸ ፤ ብ}ዙኃተ ፤.

Spelling errors

Under this category fall all errors caused by the unintentional skipping (a) or adding (b) of a character in a given word and other evident spelling errors (c):

- a) f. 8^{vb}: እግዚአብሔር ፤, f. 15^{ra}: በወንጌል ፤, f. 21^{ra}: ለዲያብሎስ ፤, f. 28^{ra}: እምብሔር ፤, f. 33^{ra}: ለኢየሱስ ፤, f. 43^{ra}: መስተጋድላን ፤, f. 48^{ra}: ለእሳብን ፤, f. 63^{rb}: ወእስከ ፤ <ይእዜ ፤>, f. 66^{rb}: አስተርአየቶ ፤, f. 70^{vb}: ውስተ ፤
 b) f. 11^{rb}: በጽድቅ ፤ → በጽድቅ||ከ ፤, f. 43^{ra}: ወዘንተ ፤ ምሥጢር ፤ አጠየቆ ፤ አጠየቆ ፤ እግዚእን ፤ → አጠየቆ ፤ || ፤ እግዚእን, f. 51^{vb}: ሐጎበ ፤ → ||ጎበ ፤, f. 52^{rb}: አእንብዑ ፤ → ||አንብዑ ፤, f. 66^{rb}: ምድድር ፤ → ም||ድር ፤, f. 67^{va}: ወመዘምዘም ራኒሃ ፤ → ወመዘም||ራኒሃ ፤, f. 68^{vb}: ለመስፍፍን ፤ → ለመስ||ፍን ፤
 c) f. 24^{vb}: ለዓለም ፤ → ለ«በለዓ»ም ፤, f. 51^{rb}: ወስተ ፤ → «ው»ስተ ፤, f. 53^{ra}: መቶ ሙ ፤ → «ጥ»ቶሙ ፤, f. 68^{vb}: ማዕከሌ ፤ → ማዕከ«ለ» ፤.

In contrast, the following examples I would consider as uncertain ‘errors’:

- f. 13^{ra}: ኢያማስኖ ፤ ወኢረክሶ ፤ → ወኢ<ይ>ረክሶ ፤, f. 22^{ra}: አዶከ ፤ → አ«ደው»ከ ፤, f. 25^{ra}: ኢኃብር ፤ → ኢ<የ>ኃብር ፤, f. 50^{rb}: ፈነው ፤ ላዕካነ ፤ → ፈነ«ዉ» ፤, f. 51^{ra}: ግምአደ ፤ → ግ«ማ»ደ ፤, f. 56^{rb}: መነኩሳት ፤ → መነ«ኮ»ሳት ፤, f. 59^{vb}: መኮንን ፤ → መ«ከ»ንን ፤, f. 60^{rb}: ወያወይዉ ፤ → ወ«የዐ»ወይዉ ፤, f. 62^{rb}: ይሀሉ ፤ → «የ»ሀሉ ፤, f. 64^{va}: መሬቶ ፤ → መ«ርዔ»ቶ ፤, f. 66^{rb}: ወእለ ፤ ተርፉ ፤ ተዘርው ፤ → ተዘር «ዉ» ፤.

Here, we cannot safely determine whether these words have been written in this way intentionally or unintentionally. When reading these examples a reasonable explanation comes immediately into mind: the scribe might have followed his pronunciation. The possibility of an intended writing cannot be ruled out. Such supposed errors may reflect particular historical or geographical linguistic features. Therefore, I prefer to provide the original writing annotated in the apparatus. To leave such features in the text might also facilitate a later linguistic analysis.

As in many texts, suspicious grammatical forms appear also in the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros*, such as: a passive form is expected but an active one is written (f. 61^{va} ዘዓሠረ ፤ → ዘ<ተ>ዓሠረ ፤), a different verb stem or tense would be more appropriate (f. 56^{rb}: ኢተአምሩኑ ፤ → ኢ«ታ»አምሩኑ ፤; f. 61^{rb}: ያስተኤሪ ፤

→ **ያስተ«አ»ሪ ፤**), an object suffix seems to be missing or a different one would be more appropriate (f. 61^{va}: **አርአይዎ ፤** → **አርአ«ዮ» ፤**).

However, the following example will illustrate that even grammatical forms, appearing wrong at first glance, can cause some uncertainties in determining the scribe's intentions.

On f. 59^{rb} the text reads: **ወአዕመረ ፤ ኃይሎ ፤ ለእግዚአብሔር ፤ ወለአባ ፤ ሠርፀ ፤ ጴጥሮስ ፤** (*he recognized the power of God and of Śārṣä Peṭros*). From the grammatical point of view we would expect the possessive suffix for the 3rd pers. pl. masc.: **ኃይሎ» ፤**, because two possessors are stated. But the scribe might have wanted to avoid exactly this form, because it would consequently elevate the power of a saint to the level of the power of God.

For these reasons, I prefer to correct grammatical forms only in cases where no explanation other than a mechanical error is plausible. Sometimes, the textual context clearly shows that only one grammatical form can perform the function needed in a given text passage. Otherwise suspicious grammatical forms shall be kept in the text and a possible explanation will be suggested in the apparatus.

Another crucial point concerning the edition of the *Gädlä Śārṣä Peṭros* is its punctuation. Should punctuation be introduced according to the interpretation of the text or should the scribe's writing habits be retained?

The following punctuation marks are used in the text to be edited: double black dots = ‘ † ’, double black and three red dots in a vertical line = ‘ ‡ ’, two double black dots und five red dots = ‘ * ’ and, more rarely, two double black or red dots = ‘ # ’. As in many Gəʿəz texts the punctuation seems fairly arbitrary. The punctuation mark ‘ * ’, mostly indicating the end of a unit, is sometimes placed within a sentence or in some cases missing when expected. The function of the punctuation mark ‘ † ’ still needs to be resolved. Occasionally it may serve as an interrogation mark or to emphasise certain elements like *nomina sacra*; but it also occurs within sentences without marking any particular elements. All in all, it seems that I cannot rely on text-internal evidence because, throughout the text, the punctuation is not consistent. Even the common eternity formula at the beginning and end of each miracle: ‘Forever and ever. Amen.’—sometimes belonging to the previous unit, sometimes separated from it by a full stop—is written with various punctuation marks:

f. 55^{ra}: ... ፤ ለዓለመ ፤ ዓለም ፤ አሜን * †

f. 56^{ra}: ... # ለዓለመ ፤ ዓለም * አሜን * †

f. 58^{va}: ... ፤ ለዓለመ ፤ ዓለም ፤ አሜን * †

f. 67^{vb}: ... ፤ ለዓለመ ፤ ዓለም ፤ አሜን ፤ †

In a few cases the punctuation causes some uncertainties in understanding the text as in the following example.

Original punctuation

F. 66^{va}: ወበእንተዝ ፡ ጎዮ ፡ አጋንንት ፡ እለ ፡ የኃድሩ ፡ ውስተ ፡ አሕዛብ። ወይመው
ዕዎሙ ፡ ለምዕመናን ፡ በከመ ፡ ሞዓ ፡ ቈስጠንጢኖስ ፡ ጸላዕቶ ፡ በትእምርተ ፡ መስቀል።

Therefore, the demons that have taken abode in the unbelievers, fled away. They defeated the believers as Q^wäštänṯinos (Zär^a Ya^cqob) defeated his enemies with the sign of the cross.

Modified punctuation

F. 66^{va}: ወበእንተዝ ፡ ጎዮ ፡ አጋንንት ፡ እለ ፡ የኃድሩ ፡ ውስተ ፡ አሕዛብ(፡) ወይመው
ዕዎሙ ፡ ለምዕመናን ፡ በከመ ፡ ሞዓ ፡ ቈስጠንጢኖስ ፡ ጸላዕቶ ፡ በትእምርተ ፡ መስቀል።

Therefore, the demons that have taken abode in the unbelievers and [therefore used to] defeat the believers, fled away as Q^wäštänṯinos defeated his enemies with the sign of the cross.

Due to such problems, I tended at first to introduce new punctuation to facilitate the reception of the text and to present the original punctuation in the apparatus. Since the rules for Gəʿəz punctuation are not standardised and have not been studied thoroughly so far, I have had to follow my own interpretation of the text. But while working on the edition, I felt somewhat lost because the formal division of a text into sentences is, crucially, culture-specific.³¹ I even caught myself trying to introduce punctuation according to German rules. Eventually, wondering why the scribe who wrote in a fine hand and who made a considerable effort to present a clear text should be oblivious to or careless about the punctuation? Since the vast majority of Gəʿəz texts have not been composed to be read silently but for an audience, it seems possible that punctuation in spoken texts follows other rules. Due to the oral performance of the text, punctuation marks may not only serve to divide the text content into information units but (also) into breath and intonation units. For these reasons, it might be more appropriate to keep the original punctuation and to intervene only in cases where the original punctuation leads to meanings that were obviously not intended. In any case, the original punctuation will be given either in the text or, when corrected, in a special apparatus to the edition.

³¹ Nord 2005, 115, note 37.

In order to provide a more complete picture of the protagonist and his complex biography and miracle-stories, I would like to enrich the edition with further material. The shorter version of the saint's biography contained in the *Sənkəssar* shall be edited parallelly to the corresponding text passages of the main text. The full *Sənkəssar*-entry will be given in the annex. The genealogies found in different monasteries according to which the monk Šäršä Petros belonged to the Ewostatean line of descent may also be of interest. Other information gained from different sources (e.g., other texts and interviews) that are valuable to understanding the text will be given in the commentary to the translation.

Though it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the strategies and principles of my translation into German, I would like to point out that the translation serves first of all for the reader as a comment to the text and as a witness of the editor's interpretation of the text. Employing the described editing technique, the translation and the edition will, in a few cases, correspond only via the apparatus (where the uncorrected errors are indicated and commented). However, due to fundamental differences between the source language Gə'əz and the target language German, a readable translation never presents a one-to-one-correspondence; this can only be achieved with an interlinear translation (the so-called word-for-word translation). Furthermore, the translation serves as an editorial tool. Because only the intense process of a faithful translation, requiring a deep involvement with the text, leads to a close reading, i.e. to an immersion in the text that cannot be accomplished in other ways. Only then the aim 'to achieve an objective, conscientious, and verifiable comprehension of the text'³² as a basic precondition of each edition can reach a reliable level.

This is another reason for the decision to translate the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros* into my mother tongue, German. A faithful translation that seeks to provide the right equivalent in the target language requires, for example, to keep the synonyms apart and to preserve their distinct meanings (avoiding a translation of two different words in the source language with only one in the target language and vice versa)—at least in the same portion of the text. I can only achieve such linguistic subtleties in my mother tongue without being at risk of using an expression while being unaware of its connotations or of double meanings within a specific context.

Finally, I would like to briefly summarise the editing principle I intend to employ for the forthcoming edition of the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros*. The main principle is to edit the text with great caution and with minimal editorial interference due the uniqueness and reliability of the source. The diplomatic

³² Nord 2005, 18.

edition aims to offer a text that largely corresponds to the single text witness, recording all its grammatical, orthographical or lexicographical characteristics. Corrections will be justified according to the source itself (scribal corrections and emendations of mechanical errors) whereas uncertain mistakes and critical readings will be noted and commented in the apparatus. The edition's recipient will be able to recognize and easily evaluate all editorial decisions and will be free to make his or her own interpretation. The critical apparatus and the commented translation will reflect the editors' interpretation. Given the strict distinction between evidence and interpretation, the edition will hopefully serve as a reliable source for further research.

Addendum

After completion and submission of this article I conducted another interview with Qäsis ʿAlämnäw Azzänä in Addis Abäba (February 2014) about the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros* that may change the methodological considerations discussed in this article completely. After an intense discussion about function and ritual use of the paper as well as of the parchment manuscript, he eventually revealed the existence of an 'old' parchment manuscript in Däbrä Wärq containing the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros*. But this codex seems to contain other texts of such sensitive content that no one is allowed even to see it. As the monastery needs the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros* for the liturgy, only this text was copied from the 'old' manuscript by a trustworthy person on an accounting book. Against all previous statements, the paper manuscript in turn served as a *Vorlage* for a professional scribe who then produced the known codex—the one so far considered as the single witness (now to be eliminated as *descriptus*?).

As already stated above, I still have to examine the paper manuscript thoroughly in order to evaluate this new information. A contrary indication is the fact that the parchment manuscript contains much more text than the paper manuscript. However, the paper manuscript as *Vorlage* for the (compiled) parchment manuscript or as a different text witness now requires at least the same attention for the edition of the *Gädlä Šäršä Petros* as the parchment manuscript.

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Summary

This article shows the development of a method of editing a hagiographic work at first known by a single text witness only. The protagonist, the monk Šāršā Pētros, lived in the fifteenth century and founded the monastery of Dābrä Wärq (eastern Goğğam) where he is still venerated as saint. The work is named *Gädlä Šāršä Pētros* and contains the saint's *Vita*, his miracles and a *mälkä*-hymn. After a brief introduction to the work's content and its narrative structure, the article reflects the first considerations and ideas on how the work could be edited taking into account the main principles of a scholarly edition and the challenges of working with a single text witness. The article presents the then current state of research while the Addendum outlines substantial changes surfaced soon after the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Dərre Dawa 2012.