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Article

*An Early Ethiopic Manuscript Fragment (Twelfth–Thirteenth Century)
from the Monastery of St Antony (Egypt)*

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the ‘19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies’, held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt’s own will, to a pool of younger scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

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.
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).
EI² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
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.
*PICES*⁹ A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).
RSE *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

An Early Ethiopic Manuscript Fragment (Twelfth–Thirteenth Century) from the Monastery of St Antony (Egypt)

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Introduction

The dating of the earliest Ethiopic (Gəʿəz) manuscripts remains disputed. This is nowhere more obvious than with the famous gospel manuscripts from ʿĒnda Abba Gärīma (I, II, and III). In his monumental analysis of Ethiopic palaeography, Uhlig suggested that Abba Gärīma I and III stem from the twelfth or thirteenth century.¹ Alternatively, a much earlier date, ranging from 330–650, has been proposed based on radiocarbon dating.² There is not yet a consensus on how such vastly different dates are to be reconciled.³ Questions about dating are not restricted to Abba Gärīma I and III, even if they are most acute here, but extend to other Ethiopic manuscripts that could potentially date to the thirteenth century or earlier, some of which have long been known and so were included by Uhlig in his Period I and others of which were more recently discovered, such as the manuscript containing the so-called *Aksumite Collection*.⁴ Thus, it is of considerable interest that a single fragmentary folio securely datable to the twelfth or thirteenth century, more specifically 1160–1265 according to radiocarbon dating, has recently been uncovered in excavations at the Monastery of St Antony at the Red Sea. This article presents this recent Ethiopic find.

* We would like to thank the following people for their help with this study: Monica Blanchard, Jeremy Brown, Julie Dietman, Ted Erho, Janet Timbie, and Lucas Van Rompay. Research on this article has been supported by a Grant-in-Aid award from the Catholic University of America.

¹ Uhlig 1988, 146–176, with further literature cited there. A similar dating was also maintained, *inter alios*, by Zuurmond (1989, 44–52); for Abba Gärīma II, see Uhlig 1988, 116–118.

² See Mercier 2000, esp. 40.

³ For a balanced discussion, see Bausi 2011.

⁴ Uhlig's Period I manuscripts are analysed in 1988, 73–176; for the *Aksumite Collection*, see Bausi 2006a, among his many publications on the text.

Archaeological Context and Date

According to tradition, the Monastery of St Antony at the Red Sea is the first Christian monastic community, founded by St Antony himself sometime before his death in 356.⁵ The monastery is still in use today, but little is known with certainty about the chronology and development of the site, and many of its early stages are obscured by the lack of historical records. Some twelve years ago, the first archaeological investigations were conducted inside the old monastery under the direction of Fr. Maximous el-Antony. These excavations unearthed a number of buildings and finds, which have given us a clearer idea of the medieval history of the monastery. The analysis of these excavations has recently been published.⁶

The archaeological investigations were conducted between 2004 and 2006 inside the Church of the Holy Apostles in connection with extensive restoration work being carried out on the building. The soundings unearthed an imposing sequence of ancient constructions hidden under the floor of the current church. The earliest phase dates back to the eighth or ninth century and consists of a complex of small rooms, which are in many ways characteristic of monastic cells of a type that is well known elsewhere in Egypt.⁷ From the archaeological sample, it is possible to distinguish different utilities in the rooms, which included, for instance, both a bakery and a monk's private chamber, complete with a podium for sleeping and installations for running water. These cells were used with minor structural modifications across a period of maybe as much as four and a half centuries before being abandoned sometime during the twelfth century. After the abandonment, the area was used as a rubbish dump, rapidly filling with a wide variety of unwanted objects from the monastery. This waste deposit is an important find context as it contained a number of fragmentary manuscripts made from both parchment and paper in no fewer than four different languages, viz., Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, and Judaeo-Arabic (i.e., Arabic language in Hebrew script). These finds attest to a multilingual, intellectual milieu at the monastery that was previously unknown. The manuscript written in Ethiopic is also a clear witness to an Ethiopian presence at this time—a point to which we return in the conclusion below.

⁵ Recent archaeological fieldwork closer to the Nile has, with good reason, come to question the identification of the Monastery of St Antony as the first monastic establishment (the term 'monastery' is used here, as in ancient sources, in the general sense of a monastic settlement regardless of architectural design or the number of monks staying at the place). However, the Monastery of St Antony can surely claim to be the oldest monastery still in use today as it has been inhabited almost continuously since the fourth century.

⁶ See Blid et al. 2016.

⁷ Seen, for instance, at the late antique hermitages of Kellia and Naqlun.

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The excavated area was again resettled, presumably during the second quarter of the thirteenth century, by the construction of a three-aisled church. Radiocarbon dating of wooden reinforcements from the substructures of the building point to the period of 1030–1270 (which chronologically matches the time that the trees were felled), while studies of preserved wall paintings from the church indicate that they are identical to the extant murals inside the adjacent Church of St Antony, which preserve the remarkable signature of a painter named Theodore, and even the year 1232/1233. It seems plausible, therefore, that the excavated church was constructed around this time, as the material from the stratum directly below excludes an earlier date. The church was, however, poorly constructed, and a severe, partial collapse in the north-western section of the substructures probably led to the abandonment of the building but the date for this is unknown. The current church at the site is believed to date from the sixteenth century.

The Ethiopic folio, which is the focus of this article, was discovered during the first year of excavations in the north-western corner of the trench at a depth of about 50 cm under the current church floor (Fig. 1). The circum-

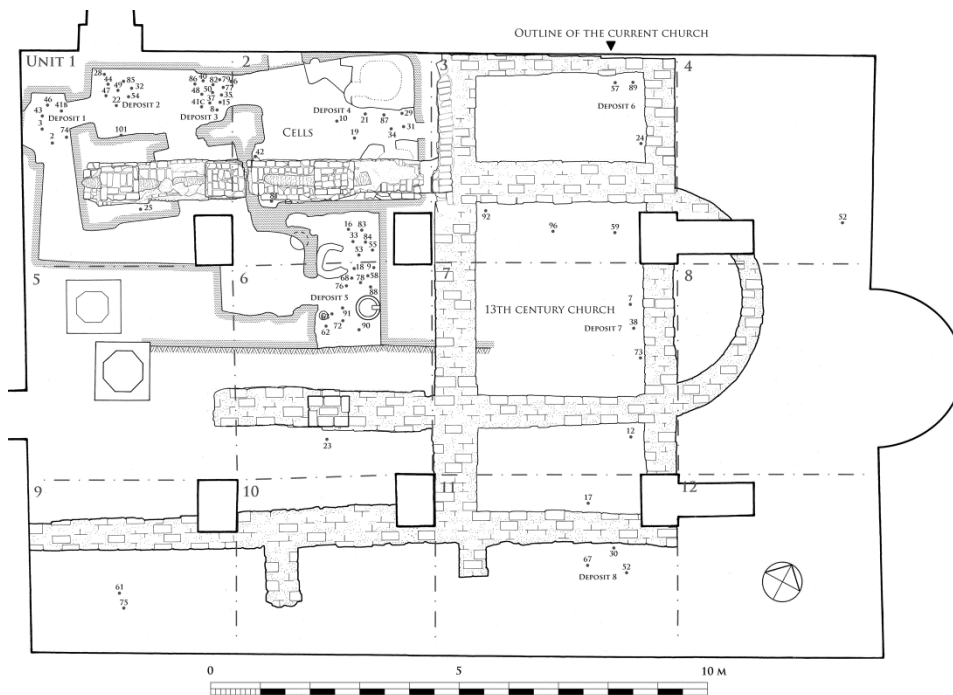
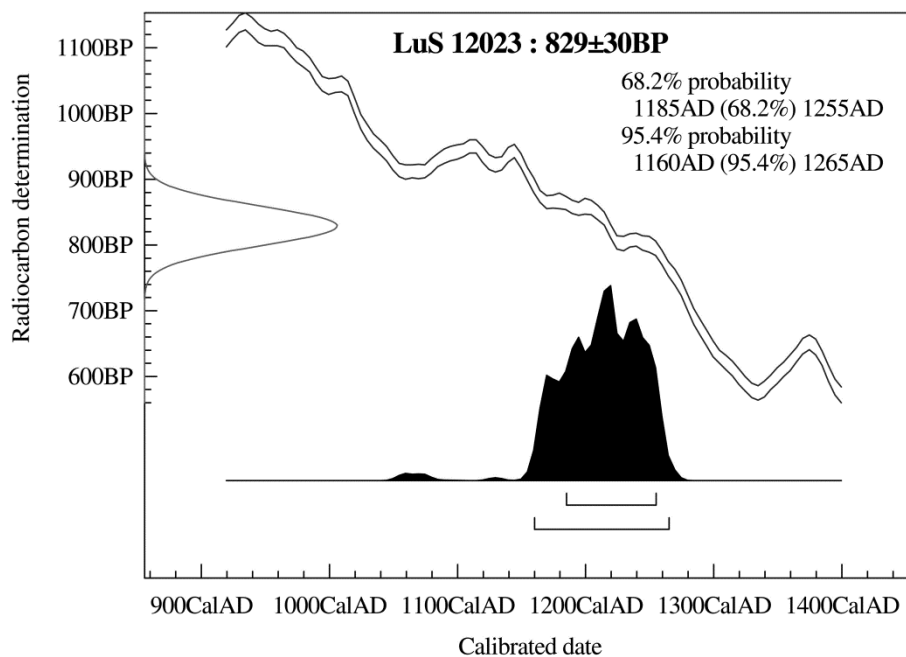


Fig. 1: Post-excavation plan of the Church of the Holy Apostles. The Ethiopic folio was excavated in the archaeological zone labelled Unit 1, in the north-western section of the trench

stances of this stratum are clearly related to the task of erecting the thirteenth-century church, as construction trenches for the substructures of the building were dug into the waste deposit below. In doing so, a number of previously buried objects were unearthed, which led to a secondary deposit with a reversed layer order by the foundations of the church. All of this material thus came from the rubbish heap that had formed during the transitional period between the abandonment of the cells below and the construction of the thirteenth-century church on top.

A recently conducted radiocarbon dating of the Ethiopic paper folio returned a date of 1160–1265, with a reliability of 95.4 % (Fig. 2).⁸ As it is not possible to pinpoint a specific period within this time span of a little more than a century, we must turn to more circumstantial evidence to narrow down the possible production date of the folio (presumably the same as when it was written). Perhaps the most important piece of evidence is that the church on top of the find-spot was decorated with wall paintings during the 1230s (and was most likely newly constructed at that time), which gives a definitive *terminus ante quem* for the manuscript in question. The folio was



Atmospheric data from Reimer et al (2013); OxCal v3.10 Bronk Ramsey (2005); cub r:5 sd:12 prob usp[chron]

Fig. 2: The results of the radiocarbon dating of the Ethiopic folio

⁸ Lab. no. LuS 12023; conducted at Lund University in May 2016.

found in a fragmentary state as a unique object, and no related parts were later recorded. The damage to the folio could have been inflicted during the construction of the church, but, since other manuscripts from this area have similar characteristics, it is far more likely that the folio was in fact deposited in the same state as that in which it was later found. Hence, we are dealing with a rubbish heap. All of the manuscripts from this area are very fragmentary, containing only a single folio. Among the four languages represented, there are a number of different literary genres, ranging from biblical texts to lists of economic transactions. Studies of the Coptic and Arabic manuscripts have noted a great diversity among the sample in terms of genre, level of skill, and materials used. Together, these characteristics suggest that the manuscripts do not all originate from the same place of production. One Arabic manuscript even deals with the cost of transcription copies, consequently revealing the transmission of manuscripts during this time in the history of the monastery.⁹

We cannot specify exactly the length of the transitional period between the use of the cells and the construction of the church on top. Yet, finds such as the Ethiopic folio can assist us with the chronology and, at the same time, highlight some interesting details about the folio itself. If we posit a *terminus ante quem* for the making of the folio in the 1230s and a *terminus post quem* in the 1160s, we are dealing with a 70-year period.¹⁰ The folio was most likely deposited some time before the construction of the church, but how long before, we simply do not know. As will be demonstrated later in this article, the text of the folio was not intended for a single-instance use, such as for a ‘shopping list’, the likes of which were in fact found among the Arabic folios of this stratum. It seems therefore more likely that the Ethiopic manuscript was used for some time before being discarded. Once these aspects are taken into account, very little of the 70-year period remains before the secondary deposit in the construction trench of the church. Hence, it seems probable that the manuscript was produced close to the initial period proposed by the radiocarbon dating, perhaps as early as the 1160s. Even so, this gives the Ethiopic manuscript a relatively short lifespan.

As for the waste deposit, which is the archaeological context of concern here, it was of course filling gradually during a period demarked by the construction of the church, on the one hand, and the final use of the cells below, on the other hand, and most probably during the ‘lifetime’ of the Ethiopic manuscript. Two of the bread ovens inside the bakery in one of the rooms of the cells have been radiocarbon dated to 1115–1260 (the same problem re-

⁹ Blid et al. 2016, Cat. no. 31 (inventory no. 100: Ms5).

¹⁰ This requires the paper sheet of the Ethiopic folio to have been just newly made at the time that it was inscribed.

mains: we cannot pinpoint an exact date). The dated carbonised wood found inside the ovens probably represents the very last period of use. This leaves us with a possible time frame of between 1115 and the 1230s. This must also include enough time for the accumulation of debris in the stratum above. Thus, the cells were most likely abandoned during the first half of this period. The manuscripts of the waste layer above the cells were excavated together with much organic material such as palm leaves and baskets made from the latter. There were also large quantities of broken pottery.

What we see between the abandonment of the cells, sometime in the twelfth century, and the construction of the thirteenth-century church above is an accumulation of cast-offs from the monastic community, whose followers lived, worked, and worshipped in the direct vicinity. Discarded palm leaves and baskets were mixed with more 'precious' materials such as scraps of parchment and also paper folios. There are signs of reuse on some of the Arabic paper manuscripts with added notes in the margins, but it seems, generally, that, when a manuscript or a single folio was no longer needed for some reason, it was simply thrown away, together with the other waste from the monastery, with little care for reuse. This is not only characteristic of the Arabic texts; the Coptic, Judaeo-Arabic, and Ethiopic manuscripts were treated similarly, regardless of genre or quality of the craftsmanship. From this discovery, we can conclude that both parchment and paper were available in abundance in the monastery at the time, and that there was simply no need for reuse. Possible ethno-cultural diversity did not indicate deviations in consumption habits, nor a desire to treat biblical texts differently from, for instance, notes containing everyday transactions. This was doubtlessly a period of intellectual as well as material opulence at the monastery, creating a multilingual ambience for both the production and the acquisition of a vast variety of manuscripts.

Edition

The recently discovered Ethiopic fragment measures 9.5 cm x 7 cm (see Fig. 3). It is what remains of a single paper folio and is heavily damaged. Two independent pieces are preserved: one larger and the other much smaller. The smaller piece makes a clear join with the larger piece, and thus the two pieces are treated as a single item in the edition below.¹¹ The reconstructed text suggests that each line held c.12 characters. Finally, it should be stressed that the folio is of paper, and therefore it is almost certainly a product of Egypt.

Though heavily damaged, one side of the folio contains enough information to identify the text as 'On Silence' attributed to John Bishop of

¹¹ Text from the smaller piece is cited by recto or verso and line number plus 'add'.

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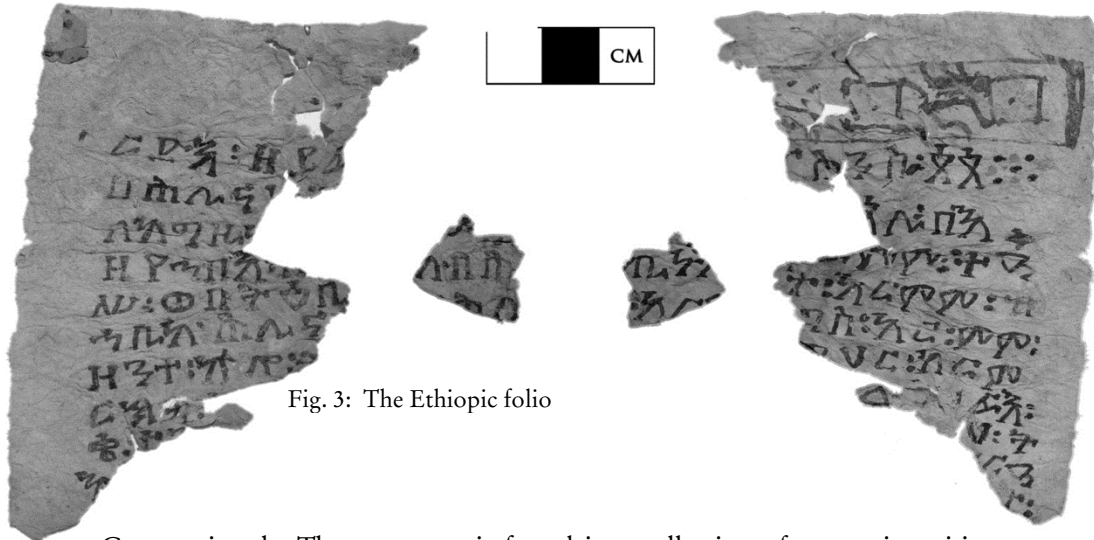


Fig. 3: The Ethiopic folio

Constantinople. The same text is found in a collection of monastic writings that is preserved in late manuscripts, often from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was termed *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)* by its editor V. Arras.¹² This John bishop of Constantinople would seem to be John Chrysostom, who is usually called **ዮሐንስ ፣ አፈ ፣ ወርቅ ፣**, literally ‘John, mouth of gold’, in Ethiopic.¹³ Dozens of texts are attributed to John Chrysostom in Ethiopic.¹⁴ While a few of these may be authentic, the majority are probably spurious.¹⁵ The Ethiopic ‘On Silence’ under consideration here should tenta-

¹² For this specific text, see Arras 1963, 174 (Ethiopic), 127–128 (Latin translation) (no. 29).

¹³ There is precedent in Ethiopic studies for identifying John bishop of Constantinople with John Chrysostom: 1. Wright (1877, 162 [s.v. no. 7]) make this identification with a homily ‘On the Four Beasts’ found in MS Brit. Libr. Orient 619 (18th cent.) as do Getatchew Haile and Macomber (1981, 304) with the same homily in MS EMMML no. 1833; 2. Getatchew Haile and Macomber (1982, 505) make this identification with a homily ‘On the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt’ found in MS EMMML no. 2461, though it should be noted that Getatchew Haile (1987, 200) is more tentative with the same text found in MS EMMML no. 3873. In addition, both of these homilies, which in the manuscripts are only attributed to John bishop of Constantinople, are included in the entry on ‘John Chrysostom’, in *E Ae*, III (2007), 293a–295b (W. Witakowski).

¹⁴ See the overview in ‘John Chrysostom’, *E Ae*, III (2007), 293a–295b (W. Witakowski).

¹⁵ To take one obvious example, the Ethiopic biblical commentaries preserved in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth BnF), Éth. d’Abbadie 28, ff. 2r–86v and MS EMMML no. 1839, ff. 1r–48v are both attributed to John Chrysostom, though they are actually Ethiopic translations of the two parts of *The Paradise of Christianity (firdaws al-naṣrānīya)* by Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043) (see the discussion in Butts 2013–2014, 140–149, with further references). For another example, see Proverbio 1998.

tively be assigned to this latter group, until a plausible Greek *Vorlage* can be identified. Most, if not all, of the Ethiopic texts attributed to John Chrysostom were translated from Arabic.¹⁶ This may well also be the case for Ethiopic ‘On Silence’, but it has not (yet) been possible to identify a potential Arabic *Vorlage*.¹⁷

The text on the other side of the folio of the fragment does not correspond to ‘On Silence’ by (Pseudo-)John Chrysostom, as is attested in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*. Thus, the unidentified text should be the recto, and ‘On Silence’ by (Pseudo-)John Chrysostom begins the verso. This orientation is adopted in the edition below and differs from the *editio princeps*.¹⁸ Though admittedly limited, the surviving vocabulary of what we identify as the recto, especially the repetition of ሕሊኛ ‘thought’, suggests that it is also a monastic text, like the verso. Given its early date combined with its monastic content, the folio likely comes from the collection known as the *Zena Abäw* ‘History of the Fathers’, as we discuss further in the conclusion.

In the edition below, square brackets indicate a physical break in the paper. A sub-linear dot indicates that traces of ink are visible, but that the reading is uncertain. A dot below a space indicates that not enough can be read to conjecture a reading. The **Commentary** following the edition discusses readings, reconstructions, and, in the case of the verso, comparisons with the text in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.

Recto

1	ርድእ ፡ ዘይፈ[...]	help that ? [...]
2	በሕሊኛሁ[...]	in his(?) thought [...]
3	ለእግዚአብሔር[...]	to God [...]
4	ዘየጎብእ ፡ ሕሊኛ[...]	which hides thou[ght ...]
5	ሥ ፡ ወበትዕቢ[ት...]	? and in prid[e ...]
6	ጎቢእ ፡ ሕሊኛ[...]	to hide thought[...]
7	ዘንተ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ [...]	all of this ? [...]
8	ርክ ፡ [...]	? [...]
9	ቁ ፡ ተ[...]	? [...]
10	እ[...]	? [...]

¹⁶ For texts attributed to John Chrysostom in Arabic, see the overview in Graf 1944–1952, 1, 337–354.

¹⁷ A different Arabic text ‘On Silence’ attributed to John Chrysostom is preserved in MS Sbath 987, no. 3 (seventeenth century), which is now found with the same shelf-mark at La Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem in Aleppo, Syria (for the manuscript, see Sbath 1982, 2, 108–109).

¹⁸ The *editio princeps* is by Mengistu Gobezie Worku, *apud* Blid et al. 2016.

Commentary

- 2 The reading of **ሁ** at the end of **በአሊኛሁ** is uncertain. The left-most vertical bar can be seen on the larger piece of paper. The smaller piece contains what could be read as the lower-right curve of the letter.
- 3 Most of **ሐ** can be read apart from the vowel marker.
- 4 The reading of *bet* as sixth-order is not certain, and first-order seems equally possible. This depends on whether one takes the mark to the left of the letter as a vowel-marker or as a smudge. Grammar argues for the former, and letter-spacing for the latter.
- 4 Most of **ሊ** can be read apart from the vowel marker.
- 8 There is ink for a letter after **ርክ**, but the paper is quite damaged. The *editio princeps* read a sixth-order *bet*. This is not impossible, but it is difficult to make grammatical sense out of this reading, unless we suppose that the root *vrkb* ‘to find, acquire’ can have a theme vowel of *a* in the subjunctive/imperative.
- 9 The vowel order of **ተ** is uncertain; this could equally well be fourth-order, but without the word divider.
- 10 Enough of **እ** can be read to identify the letter.

Verso

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 [...]፪ሐገስ ፣ እእ ። 2 [...]ጢነእሊ ፣ በእ 3 [...]አርምም ፣ ትዓ 4 [...]ት ፣ አርምም ፣ ብ 5 [...]ገስ ፣ አር { ፣ } ምም ፣ 6 [...]ሚሀር ፣ አርም 7 [...]ዓ...ፈእ ፣ 8 [...]ሀ ፣ ት 9 [...]ርዓ 10 [...]ኛ ፣ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [...]ohn, bish- [op of Constan]tinople conc- [erning...] silence gua- [rds the fai]th. Silence gre- [atly exercises pati]ence. Silence [... te]aches. Silen- [ce ...] ... |
|---|---|

Commentary

- 1 The vowel marker of **፪** is still visible.
- 1 In both cases, **እ** is written with a first-order vowel. In the standard orthography of Ethiopic, this should be fourth-order, i.e. **እእስ** ‘bishop’ (< *πάππας*).
- 2 There does not seem to be any clear vowel-marking for what is read as first-order *päyt*; this could, however, conceivably also be seventh-order.
- 3 There is little to no difference between the sixth- and seventh-order *may* in what is read here as **አርምም**. Thus, the form could be either the verbal noun **አርምም** ‘silence’, as here, or the imperative **አርምም** ‘Be silent’, as the *editio princeps* has it. The selection of the former is based on the witness of the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopia)*. The same is true for occurrences of this writing in ln. 4, 5, and 6 below.

- 3 The reading of the sixth-order *tawi* in ትዓ[ትዓ] is clear. The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*), however, reads here ተዐትዓ ‘it watches over’, as is expected, at least in the standardized form of the language. The difference between the sixth-order vowel of *tawi* in the former and the first-order vowel in the latter could be explained in various ways, including: 1. it could be a mistake; 2. it could reflect an earlier form of the word before the assimilation of vowels across gutturals, i.e. earlier **tä’äqqəb* > later *tä’äqqəb*; 3. it could represent an early orthographic confusion between the first- and sixth-order vowels.
- 4 The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) indicates that the lacuna that begins the line should read ሃይማኖት ‘faith’ in the accusative. The first-order vowel of the *tawi*, however, differs from the sixth-order that is preserved in the fragment from St Antony’s. This difference could be explained: 1. grammatically, i.e. a different case or a mistake in the case; or 2. orthographically, i.e. an early orthographic confusion between the first- and sixth-order vowels (see the previous comment).
- 4 On አርምሞ, see the note to ln. 3 above.
- 4 The reading of ብ at the end of the line is not entirely certain. The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) has ብዙኅ ‘greatly’. Reading ብ as is done here, however, necessitates that the sixth-order vowel marker is placed very high on the letter. The *editio princeps* reads ከ, but even without the *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) this reading is difficult.
- 5 The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) indicates that the lacuna that begins the line should read [ትትዒ]ገስ ‘it exercises patience’.¹⁹ It should be noted that the final root consonant of the verb in the *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) is *śawt* (i.e. ትትዒገሥ), as is more common in Gəʿəz, instead of the *sat* in the fragment from St Antony’s.
- 5 On አርምሞ, see the note to ln. 3 above. Note also that the word divider interrupts the word.
- 6 The reading of the first-order vowel in the *boy* seems certain. The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*), however, has here ትዒህር ‘it teaches’, as is expected, at least in the standardized form of the language. The difference between the sixth-order vowel of *boy* in the former and the first-order vowel in the latter could be explained in various ways, including: 1. it could be a mistake; 2. it could represent an early orthographic confusion between the first- and sixth-order vowels (see the comments to ln. 3 and 4 above); or 3. the verb could be in the T-stem, though this does not fit the context.
- 7 There are traces of ink for two or maybe three letters. The *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) reads here ብልሐ ፣ መዐት ፣ ታከፍእ ። (silence) makes the sharp point of anger dull’. It is difficult to match the traces of ink to any of these letters, with the exception of the *ʿayn* (fourth- or possibly first-order), which is the clear triangle of ink on the fragment from St Antony’s. In addition, the first-order *ʿaf* in the fragment from St Antony’s is difficult to reconcile with the sixth-order one in the *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*).

¹⁹ A different reading—and thus potentially a different reconstruction—is found in MS EMMI no. 4447, a manuscript of the *Collectio Monastica* (*Aethiopica*) not consulted by Arras (for this manuscript, see Getatchew Haile 1993, 159–162 [s.v. no. 29]): ታስተዒገሥ.

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- 8 The letters in this line correspond to አርምሞ : የዋሀ : ትሬሲ. ‘Silence establishes meek(ness)’ in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.
- 9 The letters in this line correspond to ሥርዐት in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.
- 10 The reading of the single letter in this line is very uncertain. The suggestion of ና (instead of, for instance, ር, as in the *editio princeps*) is based on the assumption that this corresponds to ጽሙና ‘toil’ in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.

Collation with the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*

For comparison, we present here the first part of ‘On Silence’ by (Pseudo-) John Chrysostom, as is edited in Arras’ *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.²⁰ After the text and translation, we provide a systematic collation of the words that are preserved, even if only partially, in the fragment from the Monastery of St Antony with the text of the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.

Edition

ጾወ፱ : ዘዮሐንስ : ጳጳስ : ዘቁስጠንጢኖስ : ጳሊስ : በእንተ : አርምሞ : ዘተናገረ ።
አርምሞ : ተዐቅብ : ሃይማኖተ ። አርምሞ : ብዙኅ : ትትዔገሥ ። አርምሞ : ጽሙ-
ና : ትሚህር ። አርምሞ : ብልሐ : መዐት : ታከፍእ ። አርምሞ : እኒዘ : ትሚህር ።
አርምሞ : የዋሀ : ትሬሲ : ወተዐቅብ : ስነ : ሥርዐት : ወሥነ : ተግሣጽ : ውስተ :
ጽሙና : እንከ : ወውስተ : ሥርዓት : ህየ : የኅድር : መንፈስ : ቅዱስ ። ...

Translation

‘29, of John, bishop of Constantinople, concerning silence, which he spoke. Silence guards faith. Silence exercises great patience. Silence teaches hardship. Silence makes the sharp point of anger dull. Silence teaches power. Silence establishes meek(ness), and it guards the beauty of order and the beauty of discipline. In hardship and in discipline, there, the Holy Spirit dwells ...’

Collation

1 ዮሐንስ : ዮሐንስ | 1-2 ጳጳ[ስ] : ጳጳስ | 2 [...]ጢነጳሊ : ቁስጠንጢኖስ : ጳሊስ | 2-3
በእ[ንተ] : በእንተ | 3 አርምሞ : አርምሞ | 3-4 ትዓ[ቅብ] : ተዐቅብ | 4 [ሃይማኖ]ት :
ሃይማኖተ | 4 አርምሞ : አርምሞ | 4-5 ብ[ዙኅ] : ብዙኅ | 5 [ትትዔ]ገስ : ትትዔገሥ | 5
አር[ም]ሞ : አርምሞ | 6 [ት]ሚህር : ትሚህር | 6-7 አርም[ሞ] : አርምሞ | 7
[መ]ዓ[ት] : መዐት | 7 [ታከ]ፈእ : ታከፍእ | 8 [የዋ]ሀ : የዋሀ | 8 ት[ሬሲ] : ትሬሲ | 9-10
[ሥ]ርዓ[ት] : ሥርዐት | 10 [ጽሙ]ና : ጽሙና

Paleography

Given its importance, even in its fragmentary state, for the study of Ethiopic palaeography, the following section provides a *preliminary* analysis of the

²⁰ Arras 1963, 174 (Ethiopic text), 127–128 (Latin translation) (no. 29).

letter forms attested in this early folio from the Monastery of St Antony. In general, the script is similar to several manuscripts that Uhlig includes in his Period I.²¹ The letters are tall with narrow pen strokes and with little contrast between thicker and thinner strokes. There is broad spacing between the letters. The bodies of letters tend toward triangular shapes. In cases where vowel markers appear on the right side of a letter, they tend to be placed toward the top of the body (see especially the seventh-order *lawi* and sixth-order *dänt* below). Specific comments are given below, following the order of the Ethiopian *fidäl* and organized by order of vowel:

ሆይ :

first



V.6



V.8

The bottom of *hoi* is sharply angular.

ሎዊ :

first

third

seventh



R.3



R.2



R.6



R.4add



V.2



R.7

The *lawi* is, in general, very angular and geometric.²² The right leg of *lawi* is sometimes shortened with the third order vowel (especially in R.6 and V.2), as is characteristic of some manuscripts from Period I.²³ The vowel marker of the seventh order is placed at the very top of the letter, a regular feature of many manuscripts in Period I (though it also occurs in Period II).²⁴ It should also be noted that there is not a connecting-stroke.²⁵ The vowel marker is very similar to that of Abba Gärima III.²⁶

²¹ See Uhlig 1988, 73–176.

²² *Ibid.* 85.

²³ *Ibid.* 95–96 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 111 (Addis Abäba, National Archives and Library of Ethiopia (henceforth NL), MS 226), 123 (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Conti Rossini (henceforth ANL CR), 135.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 79 (general), 95 (general), 118 (Abba Gärima II), 123 (ANL CR 135; though there is a connecting-stroke), 140 (BnF, Éth. 7).

²⁵ See the discussion in *ibid.* 100.

²⁶ For an example, see *ibid.* 154.

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ሐወት : first

sixth



V.1



R.2



R.6



R.3add



R.4add

Several of these examples are strongly angular (especially R.2). In addition, and perhaps more probative, is that the legs are set very high in the letter shape, as is common in manuscripts in Period I.²⁷ The first-order *ḥawt* is distinguished from the sixth-order by the arc that extends left from the top of the letter in the latter, as is characteristic of manuscripts from Period I.²⁸

ማይ :

sixth

seventh



V.3



V.4



V.5



V.6



V.3



V.4



V.5

The letter *may* is marked by the triangular shapes of its two bodies, as is common in manuscripts in Period I.²⁹ As noted in the *Commentary* above, the differentiation between the sixth- and seventh-order *may* is based primarily on grammatical analysis, i.e. a preference for the verbal noun አርምም ‘silence’ instead of the imperative አርምም ‘be silent’, as corroborated by the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.

ሣወት :

sixth



R.5

The single example of *śawt* is relatively angular.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 97 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 106 (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana (henceforth Vat.), Aeth. 3), 111 (Addis Ababa, NL, MS 226), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 149 (Abba Gäräma I), 154 (Abba Gäräma III).

²⁸ *Ibid.* 94 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 106 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 129 (BnF d’Abbadie 134), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 149 (Abba Gäräma I).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 85.

ርእሰ :

sixth



R.1 R.8 V.3add V.4 V.5 V.6 V.6 V.9

All the examples of sixth-order *ra's* are sharply angular.

ሳት :

sixth



V.1 V.5

The sixth-order vowel marker of *sat* is pronounced, though perhaps not as much as some other manuscripts from Period I.³⁰

ቃፍ :

fifth



R.8

ቤት :

first

third

sixth



R.2 R.5 V.2 | R.5 R.6 | R.3add R.4 V.4
(uncertain)(uncertain)

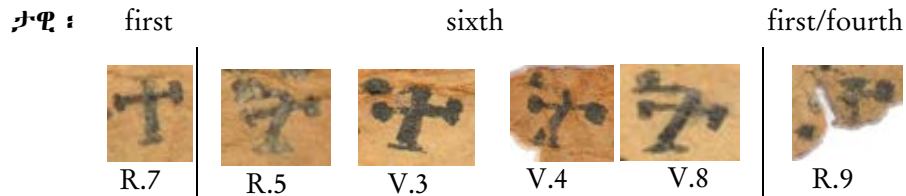
The *bet* is very angular and geometric, as is common in manuscripts in Period I.³¹ The right leg of *bet* is shortened with the third-order vowel, as is characteristic of some manuscripts from Period I.³²

³⁰ *Ibid.* 95 (general), 124 (ANL CR 135), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 149–150 (Abba Gärima I), 158 (general).

³¹ *Ibid.* 85.

³² *Ibid.* 95–96 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 111 (NL 226), 121 (Gospel from Däbrä Libanos in Ham), 123 (ANL CR 135), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 142 (BnF Éth. 85), 150 (Abba Gärima I).

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The sixth-order vowel marker of *tawi* extends to the left with a relatively long stroke, as is characteristic of manuscripts from Period I.³³ The stroke is noticeably extended.



The sixth-order form of *nahas* is well attested in manuscripts in Period I.³⁴ It differs, however, from the earlier form found, e.g. in Abba Gärima I.³⁵



³³ *Ibid.* 94 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 106 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 111 (NL 226), 123 (ANL CR 135), 123 (ANL CR 135), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 134 (Vat. Barb. Orient 2), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 140 (BnF Éth. 7), 142 (BnF Éth. 85), Abba Gärima I (149)

³⁴ *Ibid.* 101 (general), 107 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 111 (NL 226), 124 (ANL CR 135), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25).

³⁵ For the early form, see *ibid.* 150, 159.

sixth



The sixth-order ^oalf is characterized by a long stroke to the left, as is typical of the earliest manuscripts.³⁶ The forms are, however, less horizontal than some of those found in Period I manuscripts.³⁷ Nevertheless, similar forms, which are more vertically and less horizontally oriented, can be found in Period I as well.³⁸

ከፍ :

sixth

k^w sixth



The sixth-order *kaf* does not exhibit the early form found, e.g. in Abba Gäräma I and III.³⁹ The vowel-marker of *k^w* is placed at the very top of the letter, as is typical of manuscripts from Period I.⁴⁰

ዋዊ :

first



R.5

The *wawi* is very round and only barely witnesses the slightly pointed right side that is found in some manuscripts from Period I.⁴¹

³⁶ *Ibid.* 79, 94, 100–101.

³⁷ For the more horizontally-oriented forms, see *ibid.* 100–101 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 111 (NL 226), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 142 (BnF Éth. 85), 149 (Abba Gäräma I), 154 (Abba Gäräma II).

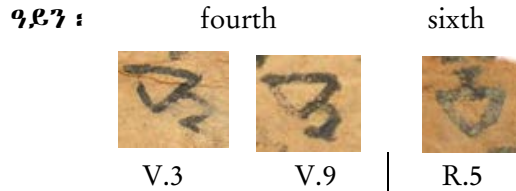
³⁸ See *ibid.* 107 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 113 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 21), 118 (Abba Gäräma II), 121 (the gospel from Däbrä Libanos in Ham), 127 (Vat. Aeth. 263), and 143 (Vat. Aeth. 61).

³⁹ For the early form, see *ibid.* 150, 154, 158–159.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 95 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 118 (Abba Gäräma II), 124 (ANL CR 135), and 128 (Vat. Aeth. 263).

⁴¹ See *ibid.* 97 (general), 111 (NL 226), 123 (ANL CR 135).

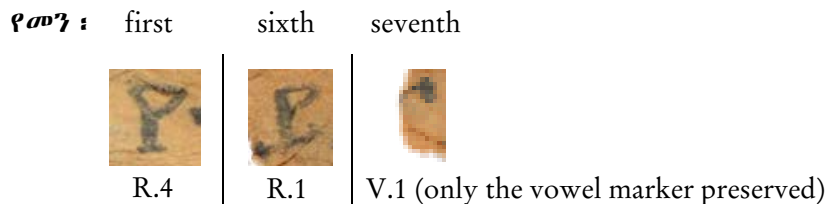
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The ^cayn is sharply triangular, as is common in manuscripts in Period I.⁴² The sharply angular lower section of the letter should be noted as especially marked.⁴³ In addition, with the fourth-order vowel, the body of the letter rests on the line, at least in V.9, as is characteristic of most manuscripts in Period 1.⁴⁴



The right leg of *zäy* is shortened with the third-order vowel, as is found in some manuscripts from Period I.⁴⁵



The head of *yämän* is of a triangular shape, as is common in manuscripts of Period I.⁴⁶ In the sixth-order form, *yämän* does not exhibit the wide curve at the bottom right that is found in manuscripts from Period I.⁴⁷

⁴² *Ibid.* 85.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 96.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 98–99 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 106 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 113 (Vat. Aeth. 21), 118 (Abba Gärima II), 127 (Vat. Aeth. 263), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 132 (Vat. Aeth. 25), 134 (Vat. Barb. Orient 2), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 140 (BnF Éth. 7), 143 (Vat. Aeth. 61), 149 (Abba Gärima I), 154 (Abba Gärima III).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 95–96 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 127 (Vat. Aeth. 263), 129 (BnF d'Abbadie 134), 142 (BnF Éth. 85), 155 (Abba Gärima II).

ደንት :

sixth



R.1

The head of *dänt* is of a sharply triangular shape, as is common in manuscripts of Period I.⁴⁸ The sixth-order vowel marker is placed toward the top of the letter, as is again common in early manuscripts.⁴⁹

ገሞል :

first

sixth



V.5



R.3

ጣይት :

third



R.8

ጸይት :

first/fourth

first/seventh



V.1



V.1



V.2

The head of *päyt* is sharply triangular, as is common in manuscripts of Period I.⁵⁰ The right leg in the first two examples is the same length as the left implying a first-order vowel. Context, however, suggests that both should be fourth-order, i.e. ጸጸስ ‘bishop’ (< πάππας).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 85.

⁴⁷ For an example, see *ibid.* 107 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 85.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 95 (general), 104 (MS EMMML no. 6907), 106 (Vat. Borg. Aeth. 3), 123 (ANL CR 135), 134 (Vat. Barb. Orient 2), 136 (BnF Éth. 167, frag. 3), 142 (BnF Éth. 85), 143 (Vat. Aeth. 61).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 85.

አፍ :

first



R.1



V.7

The sharply angular form of ^ʾ*af* is very distinctive and is similar to that found in manuscripts of Period I.⁵¹ The similarity to Abba Gärima I and III should be noted.⁵²

Conclusion

The Ethiopic folio presented in this article provides important new information on several fronts. To begin, it provides precious data for the history of Ethiopic language, and especially the script. This fragment provides the only example of the Ethiopic script that is datable with some certainty to the twelfth or thirteenth century and more specifically to 1160-1265. Thus, its value for the study of Ethiopic paleography can hardly be overstated. It should, for instance, be noted that although the folio contains features similar to the Abba Gärima gospels (such as the first-order ^ʾ*af* [Abba Gärima I and III] and the seventh-order *lawi* [III]), the Abba Gärima gospels contain several earlier features not attested in the fragmentary folio (such as the sixth-order *nähas* [I] and the sixth-order *kaf* [I and III]). The latter features suggest that Abba Gärima I and III predate the fragment from the Monastery of St Antony, which is securely datable to the twelfth or thirteenth century. In addition, despite its small size, the fragment witnesses an interesting linguistic feature: differences in vowels compared with the later language. In two cases, the fragment from St. Anthony's attests a six-order vowel where one expects a first-order one.⁵³ The opposite phenomenon is also attested twice.⁵⁴ There are, in addition, two cases in a single word where a first-order vowel is found instead of the expected fourth.⁵⁵ Without further comparanda, it is difficult to provide a definitive explanation for this phenomenon.⁵⁶ Does the fragment

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 96 (general).

⁵² For Abba Gärima I and III, see *ibid.* 150 and 154, respectively. Compare also the form of this letter in MS Vat. Aeth. 25 (for an image, see *ibid.* 96).

⁵³ These are ትዓ[ቅብ] (V.3-4) for expected ተዐቅብ (or: ተዓቅብ) and [ሃይማኖ]ት (V.4) for expected ሃይማኖተ.

⁵⁴ These are [ት]ሚሀር (V.6) for expected ትሚሀር: and [ታከ]ፈእ (V.7) for expected ታከፍእ.

⁵⁵ The word is እእ[ስ] (V.1-2) for expected እእስ.

⁵⁶ It should be noted that this is not purely due to the writing system: that is, it is not simply that the difference between the first- and sixth-order form of a letter such as

represent a stage of the language when the orthography was not yet fully established? Or, was the manuscript copied from an earlier manuscript written in an ambiguous or semi-vocalized script?⁵⁷ Or, are these simply mistakes? Regardless of the answer, this fragment from the Monastery of St Antony provides important linguistic data for the Ethiopic language, especially script, given that is securely datable to the twelfth or thirteenth century.

The newly discovered fragment also prompts us to adjust slightly the regnant picture of Ethiopic literature. Ethiopic literature continues to be divided into two broad periods.⁵⁸ The first is the Aksumite period (c. fourth century–c. 900), which consists (almost?) exclusively of translations from Greek, such as the Bible, the body of texts known as *Qerällos*, and the more recently discovered group of texts now referred to as the *Aksumite Collection*.⁵⁹ The second is the Solomonic period (1270–1770), which is dominated by translations from Arabic, but also includes native compositions.⁶⁰ The fragment from the Monastery of St Antony, and especially its witness to ‘On Silence’ by (Pseudo-)John Chrysostom, prompts us to augment this picture. If ‘On Silence’ was translated directly from Greek, then it adds another text to the very small corpus of Ethiopic literature from the Aksumite period. If ‘On Silence’ was translated from Arabic, then it pushes the translations from Arabic into Ethiopic to before the Solomonic period. It is of course also possible that ‘On Silence’ is an Ethiopic composition, pseudonymously associated with John Chrysostom, which would make it the first such piece that could be dated to before the Solomonic period. More specifically, the Ethiopic fragment from the Monastery of St Antony likely comes from a manuscript of the *Zena Abäw* ‘History of the Fathers’. This title is applied to various diverse collections of monastic texts beginning in the early Solomonic period.⁶¹ Manuscripts of the *Zena Abäw* are known from as early as the fourteenth century, such as HMML 2071 from Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos.⁶² In addi-

tawi is not made in the writing system, which seems to be the case with some other early manuscripts, such as Abba Gärima III (see *ibid.* 153).

⁵⁷ We thank Ted Erho for suggesting this possibility.

⁵⁸ See recently ‘Gəʿəz: Gəʿəz literature’, *EAE*, II (2005), 736a–741a (Getatchew Haile).

⁵⁹ For the Ethiopic Bible, see Ullendorff 1968; Knibb 1999. For *Qerällos*, see ‘*Qerällos*’, *EAE*, IV (2010), 287a–290a (A. Bausi). For the *Aksumite Collection*, see Bausi 2006a.

⁶⁰ It should be noted that during the Solomonic Period some (many?) Aksumite works were revised against Arabic texts or retranslated. This is undoubtedly the case for the Bible, which was revised against the Arabic version. It also seems to be the case with other texts, such as the *Aksumite Collection* (see Bausi 2006b).

⁶¹ For an introduction to Ethiopic monastic literature, including the *Zena Abäw*, see ‘Monastic literature’, *EAE*, III (2007), 993a–999b (A. Bausi).

⁶² For this manuscript, see Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1982, 140.

tion, the *Zena Abäw* is mentioned in early lists of texts. The earliest is from the same Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos: a list records a donation said to have been made in 1292 that included a copy of the *Zena Abäw* among a number of other volumes.⁶³ Slightly later lists also mention the *Zena Abäw*, such as the list in a gospel manuscript from Kəbran Gäbrəʾel (MS Ṭānāsee 1), which can be dated to 1348–1371, though the list comes from a few decades later, as well as a list in a gospel manuscript from ʿUra Mäsqäl (MS UM-027), which is datable to c.1400.⁶⁴ The *Zena Abäw* served as a (perhaps: the) source for the later collection that Arras edited as the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*.⁶⁵ Thus, it would not be surprising—and in fact seems likely—that ‘On Silence’ by (Pseudo-)John Chrysostom, which is found in the *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*, goes back to the *Zena Abäw* and that, relatedly, the Ethiopic fragment from the Monastery of St Antony comes from the *Zena Abäw*. If this proves to be the case, then the Ethiopic fragment from the Monastery of St Antony pushes the *terminus ante quem* for the *Zena Abäw* even earlier than 1292, the date established by the list about Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos.

Finally, the Ethiopic fragment from the Monastery of St Antony provides new evidence for the presence of Ethiopians in Egypt. Ethiopic Christianity has a long association with Coptic Christianity. In the literary sources, this connection is projected back to the earliest days of Christianity in Ethiopia. This is most clear in the conversion story of the Ethiopian *nəgus* ʿEzana by Frumentius (known in the Ethiopic tradition as Abba Sälama Käšate Bərhan) in the middle of the fourth century, where it is Athanasius of Alexandria who appoints Frumentius as the first bishop of Ethiopia.⁶⁶ Notwithstanding the literary claims for the antiquity of a connection between Egypt and Ethiopia, concrete evidence for Ethiopians in Egypt is mostly, if not entirely, lacking

⁶³ Sergew Hable-Selassie 1992.

⁶⁴ For these two lists, see recently Erho 2015, 107–111, with further references.

⁶⁵ To take just one example, text 30 in Arras’ *Collectio Monastica (Aethiopica)*, which is attributed there to John Chrysostom (ጽሐፊት ጳጳስ ጳውሎስ), is found starting on f. 71b of HMML 2071, which, being datable palaeographically to the fourteenth century, is, as has already been mentioned, one of the earliest exemplars, if not the earliest, of the *Zena Abäw*. It should be noted that this text is unattributed in the earlier HMML 2071, which raises interesting questions regarding authorship and pseudepigraphy in these monastic collections as well as, more practically, makes the identification of the text even more difficult than is already the case with monastic collections (see ‘Monastic literature’, *E Ae*, III (2007), 994 (A. Bausi)).

⁶⁶ The main Ethiopic witnesses to this story are: 1. a homily preserved in MS EMMML no. 1763 (a facsimile edition with an English translation is available in Getatchew Haile 1979b) and 2. the entry in the synaxarion (edited with a French translation in Guidi 1911, 411–413). The story is also found, *inter alia*, in the *Ecclesiastical History* by Rufinus (d. 411) (edited in Th. Mommsen, *apud* Schwartz 1908, 971–973).

for Late Antiquity and does not begin to appear until the twelfth or possibly eleventh century.⁶⁷ In the case of the Monastery of St Antony, the earliest evidence for an Ethiopian connection comes from the thirteenth century.⁶⁸ In 1210, the Coptic patriarch John VI (1189–1216) is said to have appointed Isaac, a monk from the Monastery of St Antony, as metropolitan of Ethiopia (*al-Habašab*).⁶⁹ At the same time, John is said to have sent Joseph, another monk from the Monastery of St Antony, to Ethiopia as a priest.⁷⁰ The next connection chronologically between the Monastery of St Antony and Ethiopia comes from the end of the fourteenth century. At this time, a certain monk Səm^on from the monastery translated several works into Ethiopic.⁷¹ Among these is the Arabic synaxarion. The colophon to MS Paris BnF Éth. 66–66bis (fifteenth century), the most important witness to the earliest layer of the Ethiopic synaxarion, specifies that the translation was made from Arabic to Ethiopic by Səm^on from the monastery of St Antony.⁷² Further information about this Səm^on can be found in colophons of manuscripts that contain his translation of the *Gädlä Fasilädas*, which state that the translation was made from Coptic into Arabic in 1397.⁷³ Interestingly, the colophons from both the synaxarion and the *Gädlä Fasilädas* specify that Səm^on was an ‘Egyptian’ (ግ-ብጻዊ).⁷⁴ It is unknown whether these translations were conducted at the Monastery of St Antony, elsewhere in Egypt, or in Ethiopia.⁷⁵ The Monastery of St Antony, including its library, was destroyed in 1484. It is

⁶⁷ See the overview in ‘Egypt, relations with: Ethiopian monks in Egypt’, in *EAE*, II (2005), 243b–245a (O. Meinardus) as well as Meinardus 1962; 1965.

⁶⁸ Mengistu Gobezie Worku (*apud* Blid et al. 2016) references Meinardus (1999, 259–260) in claiming that there were Ethiopian monks at the Monastery of St Antony already in the eleventh century. The relevant pages in Meinardus do not, however, mention this.

⁶⁹ Khater and KHS-Burmester 1970, 191–192 (English translation), 114–115 (Arabic text).

⁷⁰ See the previous footnote for references to the text.

⁷¹ On Səm^on in general, see Conti Rossini 1913a, 371–372; Colin 1988, 300, 305.

⁷² The Ethiopic text of the colophon can be found in Conti Rossini 1913b, 30.

⁷³ See the colophon of MS EMMML no. 1479, which dates to 1459/1460 (Getatchew Haile 1979a, 593). A similar colophon is found in MS London, British Library, Orient. 686 (1755–1769), where, however, the *annum martyrium* is incorrect (see Wright 1877, 166). The correct date is, however, found in the earlier MS EMMML 1479: 1113 AM not 1230. The Ethiopic text of the *Gädlä Fasilädas* is edited with a Latin translation in Esteves Pereira 1907, 3–67 (Ethiopic), 3–59 (Latin); on Səm^on see also Getatchew Haile and Macomber 1981, 267 and 270, who seem to attribute to Səm^on also the translation of one more text, namely the Acts of Cornelius, preserved only in MS EMMML no. 1824.

⁷⁴ Note that Colin and Bausi describe Səm^on as ‘either a Coptic or an Ethiopian monk’ (‘Sənkəssar’, *EAE*, IV (2010), 621a–623a (G. Colin and A. Bausi), here 621a–b). The colophons, however, suggest that Səm^on himself identified as the former.

⁷⁵ Gawdat Gabra (2002, 176) implies the first, but does not provide evidence for this.

only after this time that we start to have concrete evidence for Ethiopians, or at least Ethiopic language, at the Monastery of St Antony. Several inscriptions dated or datable to the sixteenth century are still visible on the walls of the church at the monastery.⁷⁶ Or, to take another example, the Ethiopian king Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508–1540) donated an icon to the monastery, which is still held by the monastery today.⁷⁷ Numerous additional connections between the Monastery of St Antony and Ethiopia are known from this time and later.⁷⁸ The importance of the fragment presented in this article is that it provides the earliest evidence (twelfth- to thirteenth-century) for the presence of Ethiopic language—and so presumably also of Ethiopians—at the Monastery of St Antony. In fact, the recently discovered Ethiopic folio from the Monastery of St Antony is among the earliest surviving Aethiopica for the entirety of Egypt.⁷⁹

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⁷⁶ For a discussion with English translations of several of them, see Getatchew Haile, *apud* Griffith 2002, 189–190.

⁷⁷ See Strzygowski 1902–1903, 56 with pl. II, 3 and especially Leroy 1971.

⁷⁸ See Meinardus 1962, 68–69; 1965, 24–25; Gawdat Gabra 2002, 176.

⁷⁹ It should be noted that around this same time (thirteenth century) Ethiopian monks appear in Lebanon and Syria (see Butts 2011, 152, with further references).

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Summary

This article presents a single fragmentary folio that was recently uncovered in excavations at the Monastery of St Antony (Egypt). This folio was discovered in a secondary deposit below the foundations of a church which was in all likelihood constructed in the 1230s. A radiocarbon dating of the folio has returned a date of 1160–1265. Together, these two data make this fragmentary folio the earliest *securely* datable specimen of an Ethiopic manuscript. This find, thus, provides a new foundation for the analysis of the paleography of the earliest Ethiopic manuscripts, including the gospel manuscripts from Īnda Abba Gärīma, which contain paleographic features that seem to predate this fragmentary folio. In addition, this find has implications for the regnant periodization of Ethiopic literature and more specifically the history of Ethiopic monastic literature, especially the *Zena Abäw*. Finally, this folio is among the earliest surviving Aethiopica for the entirety of Egypt and thus provides new information on the relationship between Ethiopic and Coptic Christianity.