



Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation and Research



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

“The Second(ary) Life of Manuscripts”
Hamburg University
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures
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An Ethiopian Manuscript after its Completion: Typologies of Reuse

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Functions of Ethiopic Manuscripts

- Functions of texts
- Functions of carriers (codex: textblock + binding)
- Functions of illuminations/decorative aspects

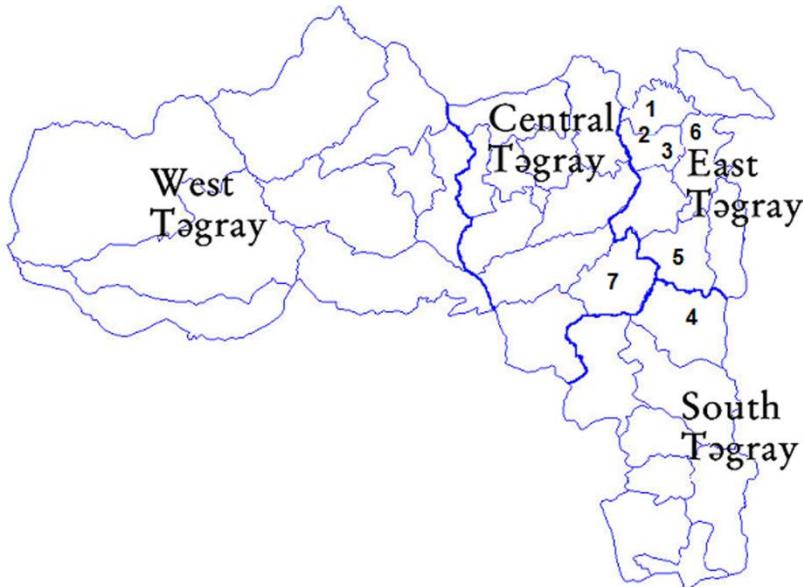
Functions of Ethiopic Manuscripts: Text

- Liturgy and church rituals
- Theological discourse
- Personal devotion
- “Magical” practices
- Computus/calendar
- Monastic life
- Preaching
- Legal procedures
- Records: history
- Records: transactions
- Education
- Entertainment

Functions of Ethiopic Manuscripts: (Text +) Textblock/Binding

- Carrier of text and images
- Object of prestige and luxury
- Object of display (e.g., in processions)
- Object of particular reverence
- Repository of records

Areas of the Ethio-SPaRe Activity



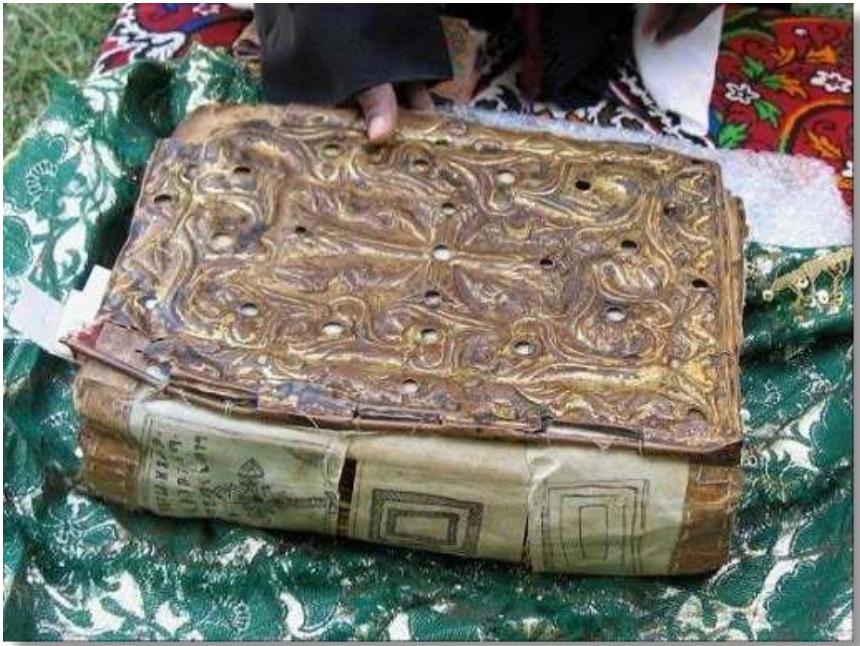
Tigray National Regional State. The main *wääräda*-districts of the Ethio-SPaRe project activity: 1. Gulo Mäkäda; 2. 'Addigrat; 3. Ganta Afäšum; 4. Endärta; 5. Keletta Awla'lo /Weqro; 6. Sa'si Sha'da Emba; 7. Däg'a Tämben

Ca. 100 manuscript collections studied

Ca. 2,000 mss digitised

Ca. 530 catalogued.

Deluxe Gospel Bindings



Enda Abba Gärima. Ms. AG1: Four Gospels.
Front board, spine.



Enda Abba Gärima. Ms. AG2: Four Gospels. Front
board, spine.

From: Lester Capon, "Extreme Bookbinding: Preservation in Ethiopia", *Skin Deep* 26, Autumn 2008, 2-11.

“Golden Gospel”: Object of Prestige and Display. QDMG-049



Qäqäma Maryam. QDMG-049. Four Gospels, 173 fols., 20th cent.
Donated by *ras* Seyyum Mängäša, on 9 May 1935.
Silver gilded cover with incisions.

“Golden Gospel”: Object of Prestige and Display. QDMG-049



Qäqäma Maryam. QDMG-049. Four Gospels, 1926/27 (?).

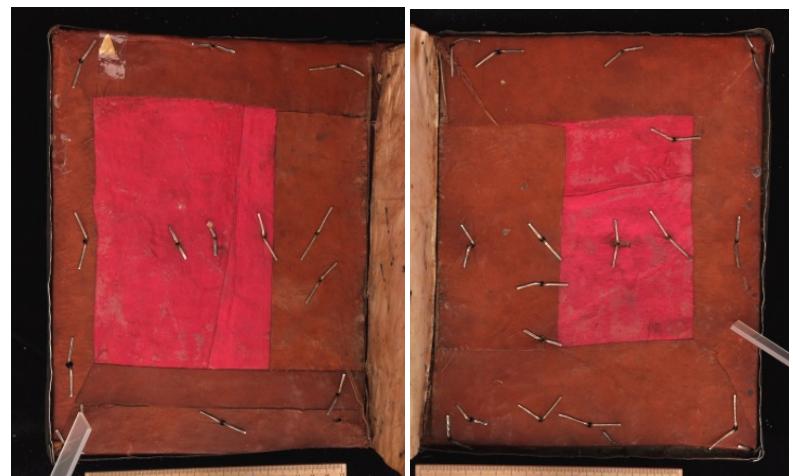
Fols. 84v-85r: donation statement (9 May 1935), Gospel of Luke.

“Golden Gospel”: Object of Prestige and Display. AP-003



Addäqaharsi Päraqlitos. AP-003, Four Gospels.
Second half of the 19th century.

Silver gilded cover with incisions, 20th century.



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Historical Bindings of Aksum



Abb. 276. Lautenschläger.



Abb. 277. Buchdeckel in Metall.



Abb. 278. Buchdeckel in Metall.



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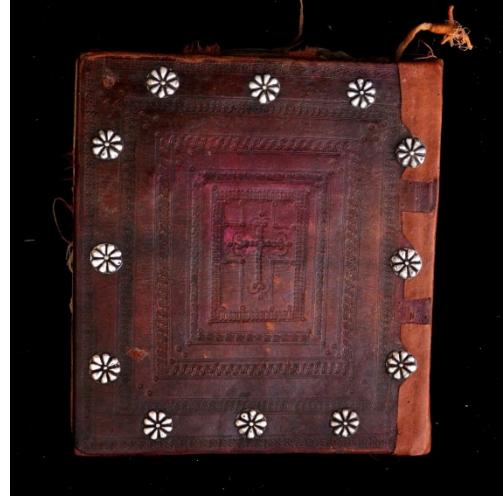
T. von Lüpke - E. Littmann - D. Krencker (eds.), *Deutsche Aksum-Expedition, III: Profan- und Kulturbauten Nordabessiniens aus älterer und neuerer Zeit*, Berlin 1913, p. 99.

Manuscripts as Objects of Display in Processions



T. von Lüpke - E. Littmann - D. Krencker (eds.), *Deutsche Aksum-Expedition, III: Profan- und Kulturbauten Nordabessiniens aus älterer und neuerer Zeit*, Berlin 1913, Tafel IX, Abb. 285. „Große Fest-Prozession im Vorhofe der Zionskirche zu Aksum“.

Books with Metal Embellishments: Objects of Prestige. DD-001



Däbrä Dammo. DD-001. The Story of Virgin Mary. 18th cent. (fols. 105-132 of 19th cent.).

Silver studs: 19th-cent. (?)



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Expansion of Functions of Manuscripts

- Introducing new codicological units (leaves, quires)
(12.5% of the 530 described manuscripts are composite)
- Filling the blanks (introducing guest texts / marginal notes)
(72.2% of the 530 described manuscripts)

Composite Manuscripts: MKL-016: Added Liturgical Function



Läqay Kidanä Məhrät. MKL-016,
“Acts” and “Images” of St. Kiros.
First half of the 18th cent.



“Homily on the Four Living
Creatures”, for the feast of 8
Hedar, added at a later point (by
the same scribe, for the same
commissioner)

Composite Manuscripts: AP-005: Stressed Liturgical Function (?)



Addäqaharsi Päraqlītos. AP-005, apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, Miracles of St. Michael. Late 15th cent. Ff. 174v-175r, with the beginning of the added Homily on St. Michael by Timothy of Jerusalem (fols. 175r-180v, 16th cent.?) for the feast of 12 Tahsas.

Composite Manuscripts: Fragments from Other Manuscripts



Läqay Kidanä Məhrät. MKL-008.
Missal, 1650-60.

Old-Amharic poem “Refutation of Glory” (fols. 141r-143v) around the same or somewhat later time.



Çähat Mädhane Aläm. MAC-006.
Pauline Epistles, 18th cent.
End-leaves (fols. 155-156) from a 15th cent. lectionary (containing also excerpts from Apostolic Epistles)

Guest Texts: Theological Discourse



Säbäya Maryam. SM-003, Four Gospels. 1730-1800.

Anti-Catholic treatise “The Faith of Ancient Fathers” written on the fly-leaves by Gäbrä Høywät, late 19th-early 20th century

Guest Texts: Theological Discourse (?)



Andel Maryam. MA-001. Four Gospels, 1650-1750 (?).

Four theological treatises:

- 1) 1ra-4vb, 145va-146vb;
- 2) 104ra-vb, 12rb;
- 3) 282ra-283vb;
- 4) 284ra-vb, 281va-vb,
same period, different hands.



Additional Notes: Repository of Records

Addigrat Qirqos. AMQ-001,
Four Gospels, 1800-1830.

Additional notes, from the late 19th-cent. onward, increasingly in the second quarter of the 20th cent.



Additional Notes: Added Functions

- Legal notes
- Monastic rules
- Commentaries and glosses
- Writing and drawing exercise
- “Magical” texts and drawings
- Genealogies
- Poetry

The First “Death” of the Manuscript

- Damage or depreciation
- Theft
- Ideological reasons
- Aesthetical reasons
- Other reasons

The After-Life: Re-use in Other Manuscripts



Läqay Kidanä Məhrät.
MKL-001. Leaves of a recent manuscript re-utilized as guards for the “Book of the Rite of the Holy Week”, 1650-1750



Däbri Giyorgis. DQG-008. Leaves of an ancient manuscript re-utilized as guards for repair for the Miracles of Mary, 18th cent. (?)



Säbäya Maryam. SM-001. Boards of a manuscript re-utilized in the binding of the Miracles of Jesus, 19th-cent.

The After-Life: Re-use in Other Manuscripts



Enda Maryam Qorrar. EMQ-048. Leaves of a 15th-cent. Four Gospels book re-utilized as fly-leaves in the, Miracles of Mary, 19th cent.

MANUSCRIPT

TEXT

BINDING
and
TEXTBLOCK

IMAGES

- liturgy and ritual
- **theological discourse**
- **personal devotion**
- monastic life
- pious reading / preaching
- legal procedure (civil or ecclesiastical)
- political discourse
- calendar
- **recording history**
- **education**
- “magic” and medicine
- **entertainment**
- transactions

- hosting text and images
- **object of prestige and luxury**
- object of display
- object of particular reverence
- repository of records
- repair and maintenance of other manuscripts

- support of the narrative
- **object of prestige and luxury**
- **personal devotion**
- **theological discourse**
- **entertainment**
- decoration of other manuscripts
- **education**
- “magical” practices
- **recording history**



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Thank you for your attention!

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