Ethio-SPaRe

Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia:
Salvation, Preservation and Research

Seventh and Eighth Mission
2014
Report Part 1
(by Denis Nosnitsin, PI)

Hamburg University
2014
# ERC Research Field Missions Seven and Eight

(December - February and May - June 2014)


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Introduction

In January – February and May – June 2014 the team of the Ethio-SPaRE carried out two minor field missions, aiming at several multidisciplinary research tasks*. Basing in Mäqälä and Addigrat, the project team visited a few ecclesiastic sites and recorded manuscript collections, mostly those already noticed before, which had remained out of reach of the project team due to various technical reasons. In February 2014, M. Barbarino (Naples) joined the project team for making a 3D model of the church of ṣAraḥro Täklä Haymanot (wäräda Gulo Mäkäda). The manuscript conservators collaborating with the project – N. Sarris, M. Di Bella, D. Domec and N. Pantazidou – continued conservation work in January – February and completed it in June 2014. Also In June 2014, the project team was accompanied by a specialist in spectrometry, I. Rabin (Berlin), and philologists Prof. A. Bausi and A. Brita (Hamburg), for diverse research activities and for participation in the concluding phase of the manuscript conservation work at ṣUra Mäsqäl (see Part II). Besides, on June 11 the project team held a concluding workshop at the University of Mäqälä (see Workshop Report). The full-scale evaluation of the results is being underway at the Hiob Ludolf Center for Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg. As usual, digital copies of the collected materials may be consulted on the premises of Ethio-SPaRe (Hamburg), in the main office of the Tegray Culture and Tourism Agency (Mäqälä) and in the Eastern Tegray Diocese (‘Addigrat). In the following report, all datings and conclusions should be considered as preliminary.

* Apart from the PI, the following persons were involved in the project work: research assistants M. Krzyzanowska, V. Pisani and S. Hummel (in January – February 2014), S. Ancel, S. Dege and V. Pisani (in May – June 2014) from Hamburg University; Kabbädä ṣAmarā (project coordinator), Mäšärät Ḥaylä Sallase (field coordinator), Yirga Asāffā (field assistant) from the Tegray Culture and Tourism Agency; Feṣṣum Gäbru, the representative of the Eastern Tegray Diocese; mäหมær Ḥaylä Maryam, the head of the church office of Keletṭā Awla’lo wäräda; mäλakukan ṣäla’m Barhanā Kidanā Maryam, the head of the church office of Gulo Mäkäda wäräda.
1. Gwaḥtārat Qirqos

The church of Gwaḥtārat Däbrä Ṣḥay Qirqos in located in Keletta Awla’slo wäräda, in the remote area of ṭabiya Mahbārā Wäyni. Having passed the church of Qaḥen Ṣnda Ṣadeqan¹, one has to drive at least one hour along a very rugged road gradually descending into a hot valley. The monastic community was established here in the time of King Yoḥannes IV, thanks to the efforts of wāyzaro Ṣamlasu, a wife of the famous ras Ṣalula ṢEngeda (d. 1897)². The priests stated that the church is ancient and existed long before the 19th cent., but were not able to tell anything about the founder. The monks went away long ago and the church owns only three tabots³ but is still considered as gādam.

The church of Gwaḥtārat Qirqos appears to be a recent, unremarkable rectangular building (figs. 1, 2, 3). The church yard is adjacent to the wide compound of the church school with small huts of the students (fig. 4)⁴. In the yard, there is a small elevation, and mysterious “chambers” are said to be hidden under the layer of soil.

The manuscript collection of the church is small; its study was made difficult by the shortage of time and hard climatic and light conditions of the site. The books are kept in a small storage house, in a very dusty and hot room, in great disorder. The Four Gospels book of the church can be dated to late 18th or early 19th cent. According to marginal notes, it is a donation of marigeta Kidanä Maryam, a native of Ṣḥāhal Maryam⁵. Despite the small size of the collection, it does possess several remarkable books. The church owns a late 17th- or 18th-cent. nice Psalter manuscript of somewhat unusual content, at least if compared with other Psalters recorded by the project in East Tägray. In the case of that Gwaḥtārat Psalter, the Psalms of David are preceded by two compositions written in the main hand, laid out in three columns: the prayer “Behold, I take refuge in the letters of thy name…” and the “Image [mālka] of the Guardian Angel”⁶. The Psalms are accompanied by commentaries (fig. 5). The last endleaf has an extensive additio, which seems to be an excerpt from a text akin to Nágärrä wāg or Šar’atä mängäst (fig. 6), i.e. texts dealing with regulations for the court life, hierarchy of dignitaries, etc.⁷

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¹ See the report of the 5th mission, and Nosnitsin 2013:286-90.
² See EAE I, 211b-13b. The church possessed also some votive items (including crowns), but due to the lack of time inspecting them was not possible.
³ One of St. Mary and one of Qirqos; one more tabot is, according to the priests, ʾəmnä bārād, i.e. made of white stone (“marble”), with dedication names today unreadable. Some of the local people say that it might be dedicated to Gābrä Mänfäs Qeddar, some that it might be of St. Gabriel, etc. It seems that this is the oldest tabot of the church, brought in upon its foundation. It is not the first time that the project team collects information on “marble” tabots at sites, always mentioned by the local people separately, as ʾəmnä bārād, on account of the material different from the later (?) tabots which are usually made of wood.
⁴ The school is led by mämhr Mängastu Haylä Maryam, ca. 60 years old, who studied in Gondär and now teaches the subjects up to ṣaqq ṣaqq “liturgical dance”). The number of students is said to be ca. 20,
⁵ Probably, it is the small church of Ṣahal Däbrä Ṣḥay Qeddar Maryam, in Gämad district, not far from the famous church of ṢAbra and ṢAsbha (see the report of the 6th mission).
⁶ Cp. EMML nos. 178, 374, 659, 983, and 5364 (a 16th or 17th Psalter fragment).
⁷ See EAE IV, 632b-634b.
A modest manuscript with hagiographic works dedicated to St. Qirqos (Miracles and mālkuḥ-hymns) probably dates to the 19th cent. A manuscript of Haymanotä ʔabåw (“Faith of the Fathers”) is dated to 7190 “year of mercy” and year of Mark in the colophon (=1698 A.D.)⁸, the date which falls upon the reign of King ḥiyusu I (r. 1682-1706). The number 753 is made of Arabic numerals, written in a European hand on the first fly leaf; this and a half-erased possession note in the upper margin of the first text leaf (figs. 7, 8) indicate that the book was once a part of Mäqdäla collection⁹. The names of donors erased and substituted by other names, in various hands, are suggestive of the complex itinerary that the codex left behind.

A chant manuscript (datable to the late 17th or 18th cent.?) contains a combination of texts not attested before in the manuscripts recorded by the project, namely Mäwašə-et-chants and poetic composition Ǝgziʔabəḥer nagś (“The Lord reigns…”) (fig. 9)¹⁰. Among the other books of recent period, of particular interest is a manuscript containing Mäṣḥafä gənzät (“Book of the Funeral Ritual”) datable to the time not prior to the 19th cent., but with numerous elegantly drawn ornamental bands filled with zoomorphic motives, and fine cross designs (figs. 10, 11, 12).

Two manuscripts belong to the older period, even though it is difficult to say when they were acquired by Gwaḥtärat Qirqos. During the visit of the project team, they have been found damped in a corner of the storage room, in very poor condition; many leaves have been lost (a few have been found scattered on the floor of the room). One of the manuscripts is a collection of the works of the so-called monastic literature, Zena ʔabåw, Mar Yəṣḥaq, and some others¹¹. The manuscript is written in crude, but old (at least 15th-cent.) hand (fig. 13); a crude colophon written in a margin of a leaf refers to the connection of the scribe Wälďa Ḥiyäsus to Dābrä Ṣārabi (fig. 14), an important monastery of the area which adhered in the past to the Ḫewostatean movement¹². Another manuscript is also not a recent item, but its age is difficult to estimate. Locally it is designated ṢOrit, i.e. a collection of old testament texts. Its content is indeed remarkable and hints to the old layer of the Gezőt literature, as it apparently comprises such books as Leviticus, Genesis, Didascalia, Proverbs, Exodus, Enoch, Tobit, Isaiah, Ascension of Isaiah, Proverbs (with Admonition of Salomon set apart) and Ezra¹³. The handwriting is very peculiar: crude

⁸ Chaîne 1925:168.
⁹ See Nosnitsin 2013, index; Ancel – Nosnitsin 2015. As in the case of many other Mäqdäla books, a good quality of the manuscript is well noticeable; the manuscript keeps evidence of extensive intellectual work with the text (numerous Amharic commentaries).
¹⁰ Even though, the manuscript is possibly a composite one, Ǝgziʔabəḥer nagś having been added later (by the scribe called Şège Wängel). I was not able to securely identify the Ǝgziʔabəḥer nagś version in the Gwaḥtärat manuscript (a quotation in Getatchew Haile 1983:30 coincides with a passage from the beginning of the Ǝgziʔabəḥer nagś of Gwaḥtärat, but the latter does not contain “the hymn of Nägs for the Archangel Michael”). However, its incipit is the same as recorded for a Ǝgziʔabəḥer nagś in manuscript Vatican Library, manuscript Aethiop. 166, fols. 50-70 (Grébaut – Tisserant 1935:615-16; cp. also Getatchew Haile et al 2009:148, manuscript EMIP 53, fols. 1r-27v).
¹¹ Cp. EAE III, 993a-999b.
¹² See Gervers 2013.
¹³ The incipit pages for those books are present. Most probably, in the present condition of the manuscript all these texts are incomplete, and many pages are misplaced.
and clumsy, uneven, with practically no difference in thickness between the vertical and horizontal lines (fig. 15)\(^{14}\). Small designs of Greek cross in the margin of some leaves appear to be unusual (fig. 16). The parchment leaves of the book are prepared, pricked and ruled in a very crude way; some leaves are of irregular shape, and some are definitely re-used, since it is possible to see the former writing that had been washed out (fig. 17). This recalls the phenomenon of palimpsest, usually considered to be quite rare in Ethiopia\(^ {15} \). The colour of the inks is not black, but rather tends to brown; the tone of ink used for *rubrica* ranges from very light red to orange (fig. 18).

2. ዃንዳሞሳ ዳብረ ሳላም መዘጋበ ምልሳ

The church of ዃንዳሞሳ\(^ {16}\) ዳብረ ሳላም መዘጋበ ምልሳ is located in the ዋራዳ ዳሱብ, and can be reached after ca. one hour of driving after the church of ዃራይሬ ፈክልለ ከይማኖት. From ዃንዳሞሳ the road continues upwards north-east, leading to the Eritrean border; descending in the opposite direction, south-east, one can reach the famous monastery of Gundä Gunde reportedly after ca. 5-6 hour walk.

   The large church of ዃንዳሞሳ is a recent structure; at its side, there is a deserted but still intact old church (figs. 19-25), purportedly constructed in the time of ወቡኔ መዘጋበ ምልሳ\(^ {18}\). The church shows no Gondärine influence and deserves a closer look by the relevant specialists. መዘጋበ ምልሳ, the 17\(^{th}\) and early 18\(^{th}\)-abbot of Gundä Gunde, is well known and widely venerated in East Təgray\(^ {19}\). Local tradition recounts that a sanctuary is old and existed at the site before the time of መዘጋበ ምልሳ. Mosa, or Musa (Muse) is the eponymous father of the local ዳሱብ people, hence the name of the place, ዃንዳሞሳ (in Təgray lit. “house of Mosa”). Local people point to a place located not far from the church, today called Bozzo, saying that this was the birth place of መዘጋበ ምልሳ\(^ {20}\). The latter’s connection to Gundä Gunde is well known, but the people stressed that they know neither monk ዃስጥኔውስ ምልሳ nor the ዃስጥኔውስsites.

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\(^{14}\) In many cases, where the scribe had to draw a thin connecting (usually horizontal) line he just raised the pen, leaving a small gap between the elements (in such letters as, e.g., ከ, ከ, ከ, ከ etc.); the punctuation signs (colons, black and dot asterisks) are drawn unproportionally big. For the rest, the hand is so peculiar that it is not easy to link it to any style attested in East Təgray by the project. Letter shapes reminding on the early period are, e.g., ም (መ) in different orders with loops set one upon other, triangular and downwards oriented shape of ም (መ), numeral 6 (፶) looking like short or “compressed” 7 (፷), እ with lateral strokes descending down to the base lane (however, as the practice shows the value of these indications can easily be relative, and they should be looked at in a broader context). An unusual ligature is attested in this manuscript. In the word እግዚአብሔር, written in one word, not only letters እ-ሔ- are bound, but also እ-ሔ-.

\(^{15}\) One would expect the remains of destroyed writing to show particularly ancient features, but, in the course of a quick look, we it could not be immediately confirmed.

\(^{16}\) Pronounced also as ዃድለመስ.

\(^{17}\) The team was said that the relatively small ዋራዳ encompasses some (older) 16 Orthodox institutions, one of them being the monastery of Gundä Gunde.

\(^{18}\) A rare case observed only at a few sites (for a structure of a similar type, cp. Wälwalo Qirqos, Nosnitsin 2013:312-318, esp. figs. 19a-c; for Sāwnä Maryam, see ibid. 310-312).

\(^{19}\) Cp. EAE III, 893b-894a; Nosnitsin 2013a.

\(^{20}\) This place name does not appear in the Vita of Mäzgäbä Šellase, but በአውዖ, today the name of the ቅሪት, is indeed mentioned in the work as his birth place.
The manuscript collection of የንዳመሳ turned out to be bigger than one would expect in a small rural church. The Four Gospels book is a recent copy, but contains at least one document (genealogy) relating the origin of የሔብ ምክንያት people with a link to the king of “Rom.” A 18th-cent. Missal contains, apart from the recently added ወሸል modelling beta k раsіティy (“Structure of the Church”) also one re-utilized leaf of a much older (at least 15th-cent.?) manuscript with the text completely washed out. Further on, the library possesses a late 16th- or early 17th-cent. (?) calligraphically written manuscript of Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddu (figs. 26, 27); and a late 18th- or 19th-cent. manuscript of Dersaŋä Mika’el (Homiliary for the feasts of St. Michael) (fig. 28). Also the latter shows a remarkable quality of handwriting and execution of decorative elements.

The church of የንዳመሳ possesses a nice illuminated manuscript of the Vita of Mäzgäbä ሰላስራ. It is not easy to date, but it can be probably attributed to the 18th cent. (fig. 29). Another, recent manuscript contains a wider collection of texts on Mäzgäbä ሰላስራ (Vita, Miracles and two poetic compositions).

A manuscript with ለክላል ናምናት (“Book of the Baptismal Ritual”) has been written by the same scribe as the Vita and Miracles of Mäzgäbä ሰላስራ of Tahtay Ruba Maryam (fig. 30). The oldest manuscript of የንዳመሳ is a well-preserved small-size codex dating to the 15th or early 16th cent., containing a collection of protective texts (figs. 31, 32, 33). Among the books in private possession, the most interesting is a collection of hymns for angels with numerous talismanic images (fig. 34).

From የንዳመሳ the team made a short trip eastwards and reached the church of Gäräbinno Mika’el. Situated under the overhanging cliff, the church has been said to be very old, but its manuscript collection turned out to be composed of exclusively recent manuscripts.

3. ሞሁሳ ማምያም

In 2014 the team of the project had finally an opportunity to continue the research in the area between ኢንወጥ and Däbrä Dammo, and visited several churches located along the rural road ኢንወጥ – ቤግጥ. The gätär-church of ሞሁሳ Maryam is

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21 The genealogy is exposed in a slightly different way as compared to EAE III, 127b, but similarly to the Vita of Mäzgäbä ሰላስራ, which starts with a historiographic discourse about the origin of the የሔብ ምክንያት people.
22 On fig. 27, a half-trimmed cue for rubricator is visible in the upper margin.
23 It is still used for liturgical purposes; a lectern stands near the house for the community meetings, on the southern side of the church (see fig. 25).
24 Ms. TRM-023; the name of the scribe is mentioned in this manuscript, Zä-Wäldä Maryam; Nosnitsin 2013:80 and fig. 20. The hand of Zä-Wäldä Maryam (one of a few scribes called by this name, who were active in East Tegray in 18th and 19th cent.), which in fact represents a certain difficulty for dating, is not well-trained but very remarkable, with uneven and irregular script (with axes of some letters strongly slanted in the direction opposite to that of the most other letters), long and pronounced 3rd order vowel markers (for instance እ, or እ, እ etc.), letters like እ or እ with the body highly raised, with the heavy and long vowel marker.
25 Prayer of St. Mary at Bartos, Prayer of St. Cyprian, Psalm 118, and prayer ከገርአንባኔ ናምናክ … “Tell me your name …”.
26 During the first two field seasons, the team studied collections of the churches of Däbrä Zäyt Maryam and ኢንወጥ-ርስል ሰላስራ (see Nosnitsin 2013) located along that road, and later reached Däbrä Dammo. Several churches in-between have been envisaged for work, but an opportunity came only later. In April 1906, the
located approximately half-way to Däbrä Dammo, in the area called Märäta. The present day building of the church, located on a windy hill, appears to be not old (figs. 35, 36); however, local people assure that the church is ancient, even though they cannot give any details on the founder and the time of the foundation.

The manuscript collection of the church has some peculiar books. The Four Gospels book appears to be a recent copy of an older manuscript. A miniature originating from an 14th- or 15th-cent. manuscript which did not survive, has been inserted into that Four Gospels manuscript in a typical way (fig. 37). Among other books, the church possesses a sizable manuscript with the Miracles of Mary (fig. 38), written in a hand similar to the Miracles of Mary of Qärsäbär Maryam28 and a Missal written in a nice hand, in which King Bäkaffa (r. 1721-30) is mentioned (fig. 39). A valuable Synaxarion manuscript (for the second half of the year), probably of Gondärine origin, has a colophon giving not only the usual date, but also the span of time which was needed for writing the manuscript (fig. 40). The second manuscript of the Miracles of Mary, dating to the 19th-cent., is exceptional as many of its leaves accommodate short poetic compositions (qene-poems?) written as notes in the upper margin (fol. 41). Among the manuscripts in private possession, there are some protective scrolls and a Psalter with directives as to how its texts (in particular Psalms) should be used (fol. 42).

4. Maˁətäb Däbrä Gännät Maryam

The church of Maˁətäb Maryam is located on the same road as Lehuṣa, a bit closer to Däbrä Dammo. A church of gäṯär-type, Maˁətäb Maryam stands on a slope, close to the road. The building of the church has been constructed recently (fig. 43), to replace the older one which was completely dismantled. Wooden parts of the former church building, of which otherwise no evidence has been preserved, have been piled at the gate tower. The church is said to be old, but the local people only could provide the date of the foundation, 407 year of mercy, with no further details as to how it was obtained. The Four Gospels book of Maˁətäb, of very modest quality and written by at least two hands (figs. 44, 45), is difficult to date, but possibly can be assigned to the 17th or first half of the 18th cent. An unexpected fund is a fine (17th-cent.?) manuscript with a collection of canon law texts, encompassing the poorly known work Māʃḥafā megbarat šānnayat (“Book of the Good Deeds”) and the German Axum expedition approached Däbrä Dammo from the side of ṚAdwa, passing near “Amba Uger” and via ṢEntiččo (for “Amba ḌAwgär”/Awagir, cp. Nosnitsin 2014, forthcoming); the way back can be reconstructed only roughly, on the basis of a very general map (see the map printed in Deutsche-Axum Expedition volumes) and E. Littmann’s diary (Voigt 2011). From Däbrä Dammo, the expedition went northeast, apparently using a “short-cut”, and soon entered Eritrea (at Gälāba, ibid. 123). Thus, by chance the German Axum expedition left without entering the aforementioned area between Däbrä Dammo and ṚAddigrat, which at that time must still have been full of historical evidence of different types.

27 In fact, Lehuṣa (or Leḥaṣa etc.), or even Zāḥosa which is the name attested in a few manuscripts; the contemporary colloquial pronunciation of the local is Dehuṣa.

28 QSM-017, dated to 1731 A.D. in the colophon (see Nosnitsin 2013:55-56 and fig. 57).

29 The year indicated in the colophon falls upon 1769/70 A.D., the second year of the reign of King Yohannes I (r. 1667–82); the time spent for writing of the large manuscript was from the month of Māggabit to the month of Ḥedar.
Mäṣḥafā fāws mānfāsawi (“Book of the Spiritual Medicine”) \(^{30}\) (fig. 46). A rare case is a manuscript of Synaxarion (for the first half of the year) dating possible to the 17\(^{th}\) cent. \(^{31}\) (fig. 47). It contains the common and most wide-spread version of the work but the text is laid out in two columns, not in three columns which is by far more common for that text. Some other manuscripts, including a collection of Pauline Epistles (fig. 48) confirms the first impression that the manuscript collection of Ma’etāb Maryam was founded (or renovated, e.g. through a big book donation) sometime in the 17\(^{th}\) cent.

5. Mazabər Dābrā Šellase

Māzaber Sellase is a small church located to the north-east from Dābrā Dammo, not far from the latter. The church is built in a picturesque place between two rocks, at the so-called Māzaber ridge \(^{32}\). The team had only a short time to conduct a survey of the site, which turned out to be quite interesting. The church looks relatively recent, but old deserted structures (former dwellings of monks?) have been found in the church compound (figs. 49, 50), an open burial, and graffiti and designs on the slopes of one of the two rocks. Currently, the church is dedicated to the Trinity, but local tradition tells about a group of the Righteous One (Ṣadaqan) who had founded the church \(^{33}\). The library of the church, apparently “renovated” some time ago, is very modest. The Four Gospels book is very recent; but a valuable fund is a manuscript with the Vita of Zā-Mikaˀel Arāgawi with two colophons, one copied from the exemplar and the second one added by the scribe (fig. 51) \(^{34}\). One or two books of the collection might come from around the same time as well, like the manuscript with Māṣḥafā ˀardəˀət (“Book of the Discipels”) (fig. 52).

6. ˀƎmba Tākula Dābrā Gännät Mikaˀel

The church ˀƎmba Tākula \(^{35}\) Mikaˀel, standing in a valley on the top of a peak, behind a seasonal river (Ruba ˀAmo), can be seen from the hill of Leḥuṣa Maryam and appears to be not far, but cannot be approached directly. At least one hour of driving

\(^{30}\) The first text is not very well-known, cp. British Library, Ms. Orient. 799 (Wright 1877:278, no. 365.3) and EMML nos. 417, 695; for the second, see EAE II, 509a-10a.

\(^{31}\) Small, broadly spaced script recalls the specimens of the so-called “compressed slender script” (cp. EAE IV, 103-104a).

\(^{32}\) It is designated in this way also on 1997 map of the Ethiopian mapping authority; the same name Māzaber is used for the ṭabiya-district.

\(^{33}\) It seems that formerly the church was dedicated to the Righteous Ones; only recently the main dedication was changed to the Trinity. On the above-mentioned map the church appears as “Mezabr Tsadkan”; thus it is the second church in the area, after Addiqāḥarsi Paraqītos, with a Ṣadaqan-legend of its own.

\(^{34}\) The first colophon refers, among others, to 251 year of mercy and the second year of King Yaˁqob (r. 1597-1603, 1604-06), i.e. 1599 A.D.; the second colophon mentions the date 7221 year of mercy (1729 A.D.) and King Bākaffa (r. 1721-30). It is possible that the text has been copied from a Dābrā Dammo exemplar, in which case the manuscript may be a valuable witness (manuscript Vatican Librari Borgiano 22 is the oldest known witness of the Vita, dated to 1559 A.D. and used for the edition Guidi 1896, but it is lost; for the survey of the manuscript tradition of the work, see Brita 2010:231-234).

\(^{35}\) Also pronounced ˀAmba; and the second word the variants are Tāhula or Tākula, Təkula, Teḵula etc.

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is necessary to reach it through a rugged rural side-road, passing a village with the church Qärsäraw Mikaʾel. A small stela stands on the way leading to the church; at the foot of the peak, a new church building is currently being built (figs. 53, 54, 55). On the right side, there are some burials in the small caves, partly closed by stone walls; on the other left side, hidden under the rock, there is a community house which hides a rock-hewn structure, which might be used as church in the past; the local people say that it was a “house of the monks”. Below the house there are a few caves and rock-hewn structures, partly collapsed and half-filled with earth. The church on the top can be accessed only through an improvised staircase made of wooden poles.

Local tradition tells that the church was founded in the time of “King Gäbrä Māsqāl”, before the time of Zā-Mikaʾel ʾArāgawi of Dābrā Dammo. St. Libanos/Māṭaʾ stayed in the area; many monks and hermits used to leave around the church in the past. The local monastic community disappeared long ago, but the institution is still considered gädam.

The local people say that the place name has been derived not from the word tākhʾa “wolf, jackal”36, as it would be tempting to suggest, but from Tāklom, the name of the eponymous father who is said to have brought the tabot of St. Michael to the church. The people who live today in the area are dāqqi Tāḵlom (“children of Tāḵlom”) in the 12th generation.

The church seems to be indeed an old foundation. Two processional iron crosses of a typical pre-15th cent. form are preserved in the sacristy. The books of the library are of considerable interest; most of them are in good condition, but the oldest layer of the manuscript collection is represented only by fragments. Four trimmed folios from an ancient 14th-cent. Four Gospels book have been infixed as guard leaves in a small 19th-cent. manuscript containing Māftehe šaray (“Undoing of charms) (fig. 56). Possibly being remains of the same ancient Four Gospels, four miniatures of Evangelists painted in an ancient “abstract” style have been included into a 15th/early 16th-cent. (?) Four Gospels book (fig. 57). The latter is well-preserved and contains interesting additional notes. One of them is exceptional; it is a short poetic composition dedicated to King Lalibāla (r. 13th cent.), written in a 17th-cent. (?) hand (fig. 58). A Missal of very rare small-size format contains only the Anaphoras, not the prefatory part (Šeṛʿatā qeddase). The main hand (fig. 59) can be dated perhaps to the 17th cent.; at least one more hand, or later time, can be discerned. The unusually small and thick (probably rebound) codex encompasses 29 quires, which show clear traces of tackets on the spine fold (small holes; fig. 60). A manuscript containing the Vita of Zā-Mikaʾel ʾArāgawi (fig. 61) appears to be written by the same scribe, Zā-Wāldā Maryam, who produced both the manuscript of Māšṭalā ṭeqmqāt of ʾEndamosa Maryam and Gādlā Māzgābā ʾṢallase of Taḥtay Ruba (TRM-023, s. above).

References


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Plates

1. Gʷaḥtārat Qirqos, view of the church

2. Gʷaḥtārat Qirqos, view of the church
3. ḡaṭār Qirqos, view of the church

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58. የписыва ፈቕእሎ, ዓንሪ ገዙልኝ, አድድነ

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