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**Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia:  
Salvation, Preservation and Research**

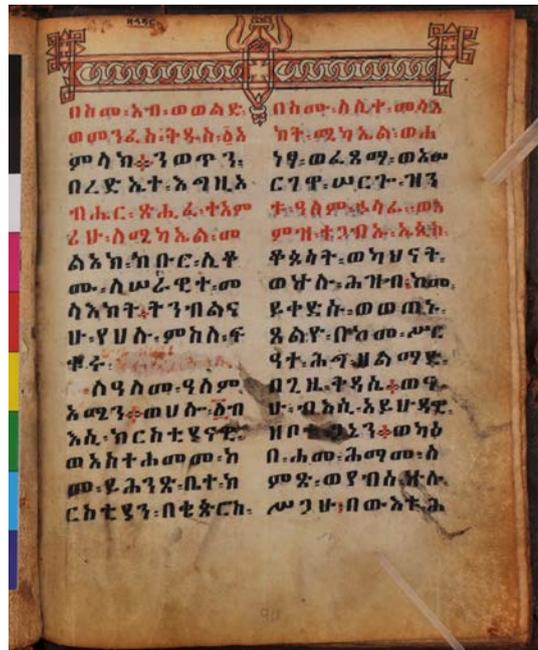


**Seventh and Eighth Mission**

**2014**

**Report Part 1**

(by Denis Noslitsin, PI)





**ERC Research Field Missions Seven and Eight  
(January - February and May - June 2014)  
Public Report. Part I. Churches visited**

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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 ʿAddigrat, 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 ʾAraʿro Tāklä Haymanot (*wäräda* Gulo Mäḳäda). 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 ʿUra 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 Təgray Culture and Tourism Agency (Mäqäla) and in the Eastern Təgray Diocese (ʿAddigrat). In the following report, all datings and conclusions should be considered as preliminary.

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\* 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; Käbbädä ʾAmarä (project coordinator), Mäsärät Haylä Səllase (field coordinator), Yirga Asäffa (field assistant) from the Təgray Culture and Tourism Agency; Fəṣṣum Gäbru, the representative of the Eastern Təgray Diocese; *māmḥər* Haylä Maryam, the head of the church office of Kələttä Awlaʿlo *wäräda*; *mälakä sälam* Bərhanä Kidanä Maryam, the head of the church office of Gulo Mäḳäda *wäräda*.

## 1. Gwaḥtārat Qirqos

The church of G<sup>w</sup>aḥtārat Dābrā Şāḥay Qirqos is located in Kələttā Awla<sup>o</sup>lo *wārāda*, in the remote area of *ḫabiya* Mahbārā Wāyini. Having passed the church of Qaḥen ʔḔnda Şadəqan<sup>1</sup>, 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 Yoḥannəs IV, thanks to the efforts of *wāyzero* ʔAmlasu, a wife of the famous *ras* ʔAlula ʔEngəda (d. 1897)<sup>2</sup>. The priests stated that the church is ancient and existed long before the 19<sup>th</sup> cent., but were not able to tell anything about the founder. The monks went away long ago and the church owns only three *tabots*<sup>3</sup> but is still considered as *gādam*.

The church of G<sup>w</sup>aḥtārat 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)<sup>4</sup>. 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 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> cent. According to marginal notes, it is a donation of *marigeta* Kidanā Maryam, a native of Şāḥalo Maryam<sup>5</sup>. Despite the small size of the collection, it does possess several remarkable books. The church owns a late 17<sup>th</sup>- or 18<sup>th</sup>-cent. nice Psalter manuscript of somewhat unusual content, at least if compared with other Psalters recorded by the project in East Təgray. In the case of that G<sup>w</sup>aḥtārat 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 [*mālkə*ʔ] of the Guardian Angel”<sup>6</sup>. 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 *Nägārā wäg* or *Şərʿatā māngəšt* (fig. 6), i.e. texts dealing with regulations for the court life, hierarchy of dignitaries, etc.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the report of the 5<sup>th</sup> mission, and Nosnitsin 2013:286-90.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> One of St. Mary and one of Qirqos; one more *tabot* is, according to the priests, *ʕəmnā 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 Gābrā Mānfās Qəddus, 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 *ʕəmnā bārād*, on account of the material different from the later (?) *tabots* which are usually made of wood.

<sup>4</sup> The school is led by *māmhər* Māngəstu Haylā Maryam, ca. 60 years old, who studied in Gondār and now teaches the subjects up to *ʔaqqʷaqqʷam* (“liturgical dance”). The number of students is said to be ca. 20,

<sup>5</sup> Probably, it is the small church of Şaḥəlo Dābrā Şāḥay Qəddəst Maryam, in Gāmad district, not far from the famous church of ʔAbrəha and ʔAşbəha (see the report of the 6<sup>th</sup> mission).

<sup>6</sup> Cp. EMMI nos. 178, 374, 659, 983, and 5364 (a 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> Psalter fragment).

<sup>7</sup> See EAE IV, 632b-634b.

A modest manuscript with hagiographic works dedicated to St. Qirqos (Miracles and *mälkə*<sup>6</sup>-hymns) probably dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. A manuscript of *Haymanotä ʔabāw* (“Faith of the Fathers”) is dated to 7190 “year of mercy” and year of Mark in the colophon (=1698 A.D.)<sup>8</sup>, the date which falls upon the reign of King ʔlyasu 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 collection<sup>9</sup>. 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 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> cent.?) contains a combination of texts not attested before in the manuscripts recorded by the project, namely *Mäwašəʔət*-chants and poetic composition *ʔEgziʔabəher nagś* (“The Lord reigns...”) (fig. 9)<sup>10</sup>. Among the other books of recent period, of particular interest is a manuscript containing *Mäšhafä gənzät* (“Book of the Funeral Ritual”) datable to the time not prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 G<sup>w</sup>aḥtārat 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 ʔabāw*, *Mar Yəšhaq*, and some others<sup>11</sup>. The manuscript is written in crude, but old (at least 15<sup>th</sup>-cent.) hand (fig. 13); a crude colophon written in a margin of a leaf refers to the connection of the scribe Wäldä ʔlyäsus to Däbrä Šārabi (fig. 14), an important monastery of the area which adhered in the past to the ʔEwoṣtatean movement<sup>12</sup>. Another manuscript is also not a recent item, but its age is difficult to estimate. Locally it is designated ʔOrit, i.e. a collection of old testament texts. Its content is indeed remarkable and hints to the old layer of the Gəʔəz 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 Ezra<sup>13</sup>. The handwriting is very peculiar: crude

<sup>8</sup> Chaïne 1925:168.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> Even though, the manuscript is possibly a composite one, *ʔEgziʔabəher nagś* having been added later (by the scribe called Şəge Wängel). I was not able to securely identify the *ʔEgziʔabəher nagś* version in the Gwaḥtārat manuscript (a quotation in Getatchew Haile 1983:30 coincides with a passage from the beginning of the *ʔEgziʔabəher nagś* of Gwaḥtārat, but the latter does not contain “the hymn of Nägs for the Archangel Michael”). However, its incipit is the same as recorded for a *ʔEgziʔabəher 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).

<sup>11</sup> Cp. EAE III, 993a-999b.

<sup>12</sup> See Gervers 2013.

<sup>13</sup> 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)<sup>14</sup>. 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<sup>15</sup>. 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. ʔEndamosa Däbrä Sälam Mäzgäbä Šəllase

The church of ʔEndamosa<sup>16</sup> Däbrä Sälam Mäzgäbä Šəllase is located in the *wäräda* ʔIrob<sup>17</sup>, and can be reached after ca. one hour of driving after the church of ʔAraʕro Täklä Haymanot. From ʔEndamosa 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 ʔEndamosa 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 ʔabunä Mäzgäbä Šəllase<sup>18</sup>. The church shows no Gondärine influence and deserves a closer look by the relevant specialists. Mäzgäbä Šəllase, the 17<sup>th</sup>- and early 18<sup>th</sup>- abbot of Gundä Gunde, is well known and widely venerated in East Təgray<sup>19</sup>. Local tradition recounts that a sanctuary is old and existed at the site before the time of Mäzgäbä Šəllase. Mosa, or Musa (Muse) is the eponymous father of the local ʔIrob people, hence the name of the place, ʔEndamosa (in Təgrəñña 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 Mäzgäbä Šəllase<sup>20</sup>. The latter’s connection to Gundä Gunde is well known, but the people stressed that they know neither monk ʔEšṭifanos nor the ʔEšṭifanosites.

<sup>14</sup> 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., ነ, ና, 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., m- (ጠ) in different orders with loops set one upon other, triangular and downwards oriented shape of ሰ (ሰ), numeral 6 (፩) looking like short or “compressed” 7 (፮), ጥ with lateral strokes descending down to the base line (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 -ግዚ- are bound, but also -ብሔ-.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> Pronounced also as ʔEddamosa.

<sup>17</sup> The team was said that the relatively small *wäräda* encompasses some (older) 16 Orthodox institutions, one of them being the monastery of Gundä Gunde.

<sup>18</sup> 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 Säwnä Maryam, see ibid. 310-312).

<sup>19</sup> Cp. EAE III, 893b-894a; Nosnitsin 2013a.

<sup>20</sup> This place name does not appear in the Vita of Mäzgäbä Šəllase, but ʔAwado, today the name of the *qušāt*, is indeed mentioned in the work as his birth place.

The manuscript collection of ʔḨndamosa 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 ʔIrob people with a link to the king of “Rom”<sup>21</sup>. A 18<sup>th</sup>-cent. Missal contains, apart from the recently added *Śarʕatā beta krəstiyan* (“Structure of the Church”) also one re-utilized leaf of a much older (at least 15<sup>th</sup>-cent.?) manuscript with the text completely washed out. Further on, the library possesses a late 16<sup>th</sup>- or early 17<sup>th</sup>-cent. (?) calligraphically written manuscript of the Vita of Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus (figs. 26, 27<sup>22</sup>); and a late 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-cent. manuscript of *Dərsanā Mikaʔel* (Homiliary for the feasts of St. Michael) (fig. 28). Also the latter shows a remarkable quality of handwriting and execution of decorative elements<sup>23</sup>.

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

A manuscript with *Mäṣḥafä ʔəmḳät* (“Book of the Baptismal Ritual”) has been written by the same scribe as the Vita and Miracles of Mäzgäbä Śəllase of Taḩtay Ruba Maryam (fig. 30)<sup>24</sup>. The oldest manuscript of ʔḨndamosa is a well-preserved small-size codex dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> cent., containing a collection of protective texts<sup>25</sup> (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 ʔḨndamosa the team made a short trip eastwards and reached the church of Gäräbinno Mikaʔel. 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. Ləḩuṣa Maryam

In 2014 the team of the project had finally an opportunity to continue the research in the area between ʕAddigrat and Däbrä Dammo, and visited several churches located along the rural road ʕAddigrat – Bəzät<sup>26</sup>. The *gätär*-church of Ləḩuṣa Maryam<sup>27</sup> is

<sup>21</sup> The genealogy is exposed in a slightly different way as compared to EAE III, 127b, but similarly to the Vita of Mäzgäbä Śəllase, which starts with a historiographic discourse about the origin of the ʔIrob people.

<sup>22</sup> On fig. 27, a half-trimmed cue for rubricator is visible in the upper margin.

<sup>23</sup> 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).

<sup>24</sup> 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 Təgray in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> order vowel markers (for instance *ḩ*. or *ṭ*, etc.), letters like *ṣ*, *ḡ* or *Ṗ* with the body highly raised, with the heavy and long vowel marker.

<sup>25</sup> Prayer of St. Mary at Bartos, Prayer of St. Cyprian, Psalm 118, and prayer *Nəḡəränni səmākä* ... “Tell me your name ...”.

<sup>26</sup> During the first two field seasons, the team studied collections of the churches of Däbrä Zäyt Maryam and ʕAddiqāḩarsi Pəraqliṭos (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 Mārāta. 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 14<sup>th</sup>- or 15<sup>th</sup>-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 Maryam<sup>28</sup> 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)<sup>29</sup>. The second manuscript of the Miracles of Mary, dating to the 19<sup>th</sup>-cent., is exceptional as many of its leaves accommodate short poetic compositions (*qəne*-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. Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>ətäb Däbrä Gännät Maryam

The church of Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>ətäb Maryam is located on the same road as Ləḥuṣa, a bit closer to Däbrä Dammo. A church of *gätär*-type, Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>ətäb 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 Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>ətäb, 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 17<sup>th</sup> or first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. An unexpected find is a fine (17<sup>th</sup>-cent.?) manuscript with a collection of canon law texts, encompassing the poorly known work *Mäṣḥafä mægbarat šännayat* (“Book of the Good Deeds”) and the

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German Axum expedition approached Däbrä Dammo from the side of ʿAdwa, passing near “Amba Uger” and via ʿEntiččo (for ʿAmba ʿAwgär/ʿAwagir, 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 Gäläba, *ibid.* 123). Thus, by chance the German Axum expedition left without entering the aforementioned area between Däbrä Dammo and ʿAddigrat, which at that time must still have been full of historical evidence of different types.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, Ləḥuṣa (or Ləḥaṣa etc.), or even Zäḥosa which is the name attested in a few manuscripts; the contemporary colloquial pronunciation of the local is Dəḥuṣa.

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

<sup>29</sup> The year indicated in the colophon falls upon 1769/70 A.D., the second year of the reign of King Yoḥannēs I (r. 1667–82); the time spent for writing of the large manuscript was from the month of *Mäggabit* to the month of *Ḥedar*.

*Māṣḥafā fāws mānfāsawi* (“Book of the Spiritual Medicine”)<sup>30</sup> (fig. 46). A rare case is a manuscript of Synaxarion (for the first half of the year) dating possible to the 17<sup>th</sup> cent.<sup>31</sup> (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 Maʿətāb Maryam was founded (or renovated, e.g. through a big book donation) sometime in the 17<sup>th</sup> cent.

## 5. Mazabər Däbrä Šəllase

Māzabər Sellase is a small church located to the north-east from Däbrä Dammo, not far from the latter. The church is built in a picturesque place between two rocks, at the so-called Māzabər ridge<sup>32</sup>. 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 (*Šadəqan*) who had founded the church<sup>33</sup>. 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 Zä-Mikaʿel ʿArägawi with two colophons, one copied from the exemplar and the second one added by the scribe (fig. 51)<sup>34</sup>. One or two books of the collection might come from around the same time as well, like the manuscript with *Māṣḥafā ʿardəʿət* (“Book of the Discipels”) (fig. 52).

## 6. ʿƏmba Tākula Däbrä Gännät Mikaʿel

The church ʿƏmba Tākula<sup>35</sup> Mikaʿel, standing in a valley on the top of a peak, behind a seasonal river (Ruba ʿAmo), can be seen from the hill of Ləḥuša Maryam and appears to be not far, but cannot be approached directly. At least one hour of driving

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

<sup>31</sup> Small, broadly spaced script recalls the specimens of the so-called “compressed slender script” (cp. EAE IV, 103-104a).

<sup>32</sup> It is designated in this way also on 1997 map of the Ethiopian mapping authority; the same name Māzabər is used for the *ḥabiya*-district.

<sup>33</sup> 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 ʿAddiqāḥarsi Pāraqliṯos, with a *Šadəqan-legend* of its own.

<sup>34</sup> The first colophon refers, among others, to 251 year of mercy and the second year of King Yaʿqob (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 Däbrä 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).

<sup>35</sup> Also pronounced ʿAmba; and the second word the variants are Tähula or Tākula, Təḵula, Təḵula etc.

is necessary to reach it through a rugged rural side-road, passing a village with the church Qärsäraw Mikaʿel. 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 Mäsqäl”, before the time of Zä-Mikaʿel ʿArägawi of Däbrä Dammo. St. Libanos/Mätaʿ 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 *täkʷla* “wolf, jackal”<sup>36</sup>, as it would be tempting to suggest, but from Täklom, 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 *däqqi Täklom* (“children of Tāklom”) in the 12<sup>th</sup> generation.

The church seems to be indeed an old foundation. Two processional iron crosses of a typical pre-15<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup>-cent. Four Gospels book have been infixed as guard leaves in a small 19<sup>th</sup>-cent. manuscript containing *Mäftəḥe šəray* (“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 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup>- 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 Lalibäla (r. 13<sup>th</sup> cent.), written in a 17<sup>th</sup>-cent. (?) hand (fig. 58). A Missal of very rare small-size format contains only the Anaphoras, not the prefatory part (*Šəratä qəddase*). The main hand (fig. 59) can be dated perhaps to the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 Zä-Mikaʿel ʿArägawi (fig. 61) appears to be written by the same scribe, Zä-Wäldä Maryam, who produced both the manuscript of *Mäṣḥafä təmqät* of ʿEndamosa Maryam and *Gädlä Mäzgäbä Šəllase* of Taḥtay Ruba (TRM-023, s. above).

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<sup>36</sup> Leslau 1987:573b.

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Plates



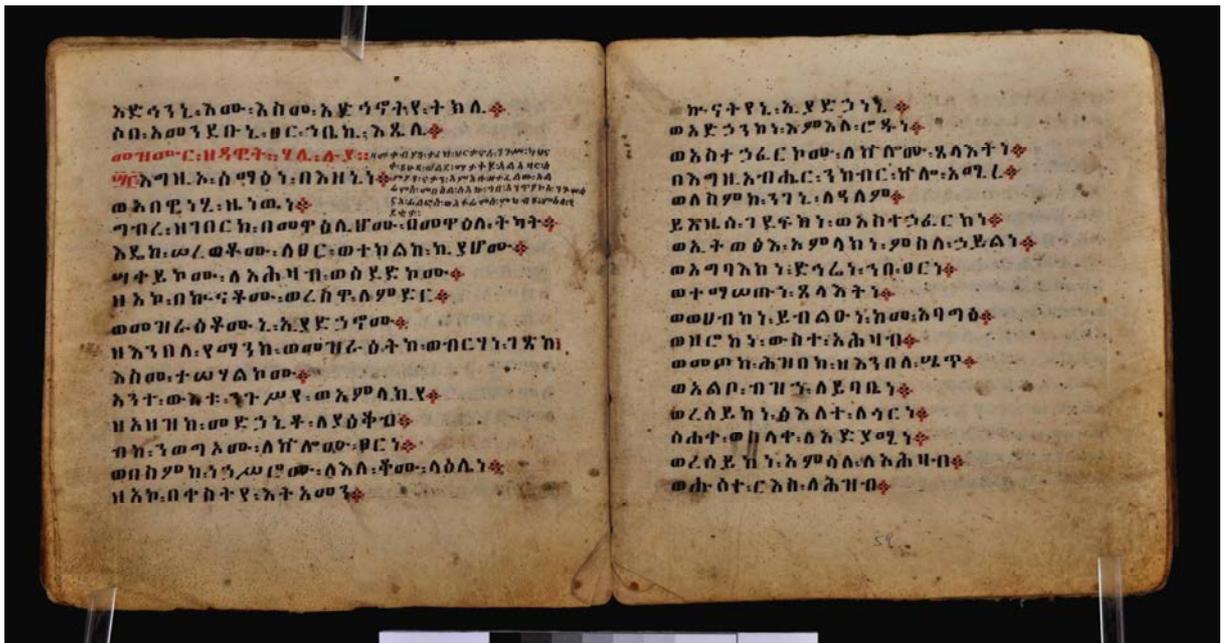
1. G<sup>w</sup>ahtärat Qirqos, view of the church



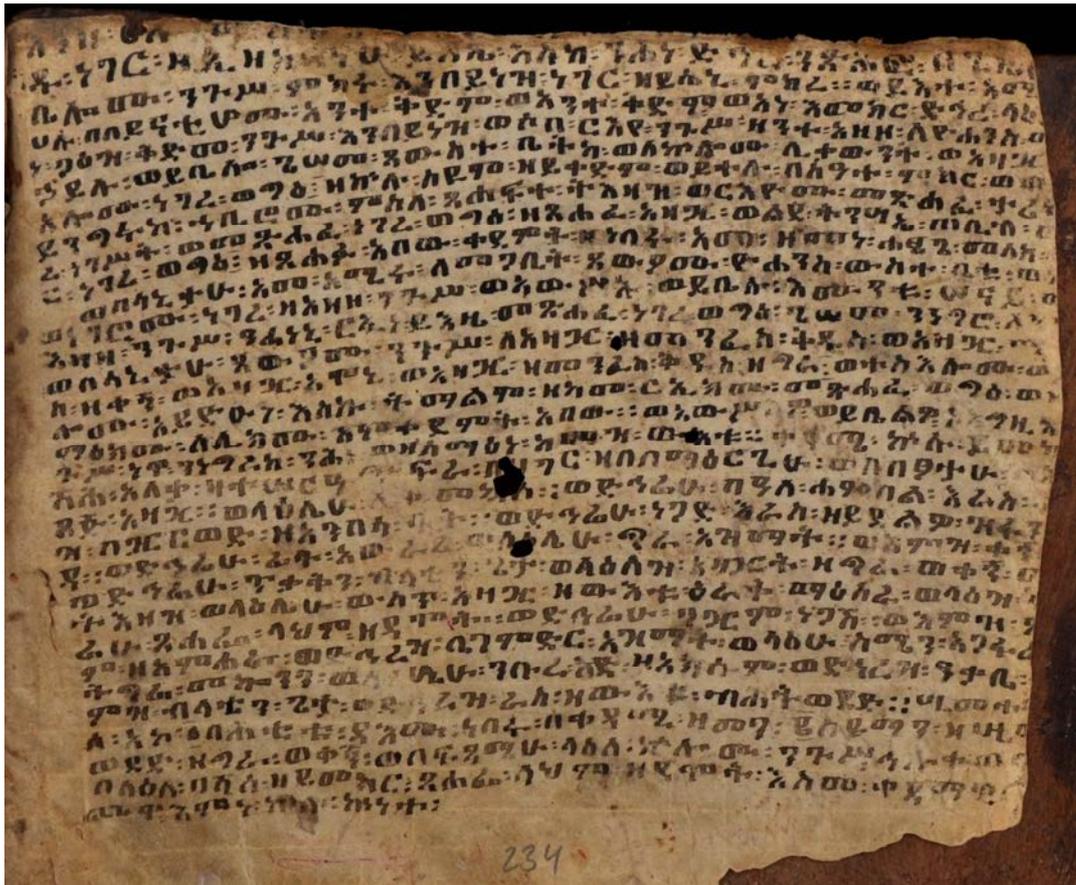
2. G<sup>w</sup>ahtärat Qirqos, view of the church



3. G<sup>w</sup>ahtärat Qirqos, view of the church



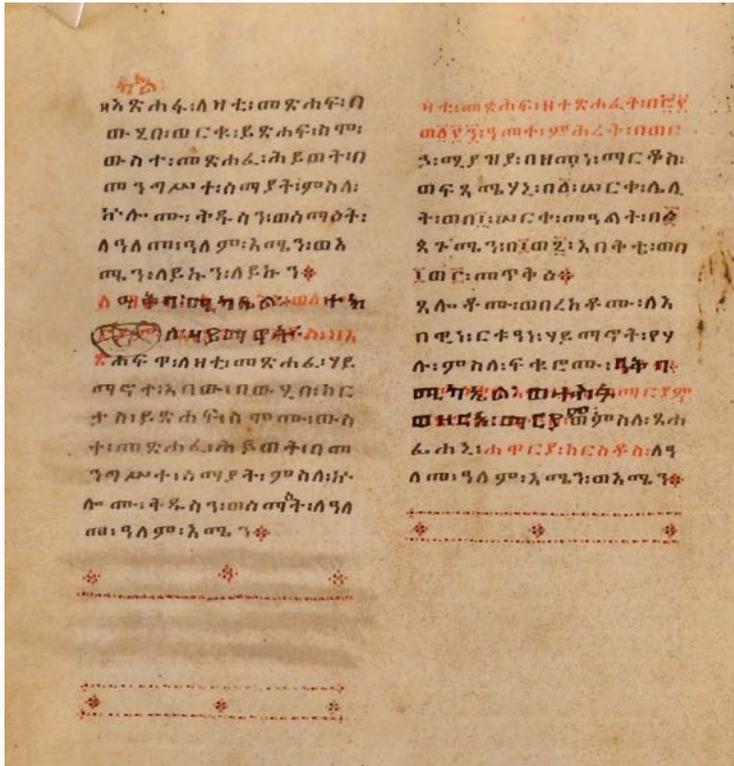
4. G<sup>w</sup>ahtärat Qirqos, huts of the church school students



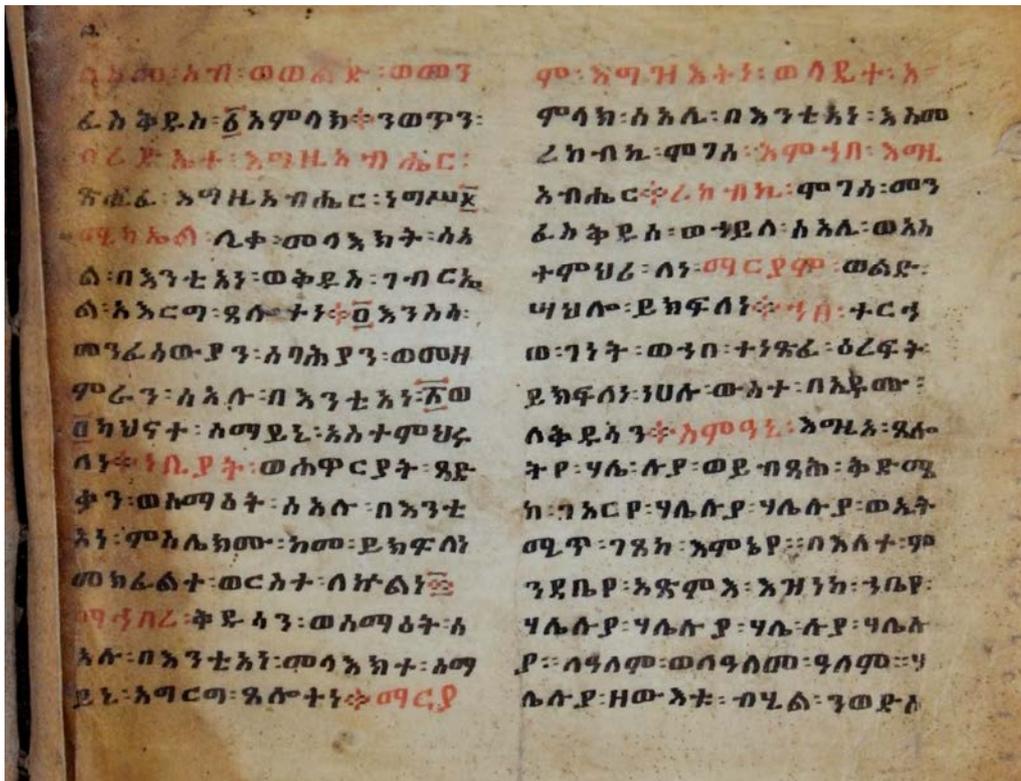
5. G<sup>w</sup>ahṭārat Qirqos, Psalter



6. G<sup>w</sup>ahṭārat Qirqos, Psalter, added text



7. G<sup>w</sup>ahṭärat Qirqos, Haymanotä ʾabäw



8. G<sup>w</sup>ahṭärat Qirqos, Haymanotä ʾabäw, colophon



9. Gʷahtärat Qirqos, ?Egzi?abəher nägs

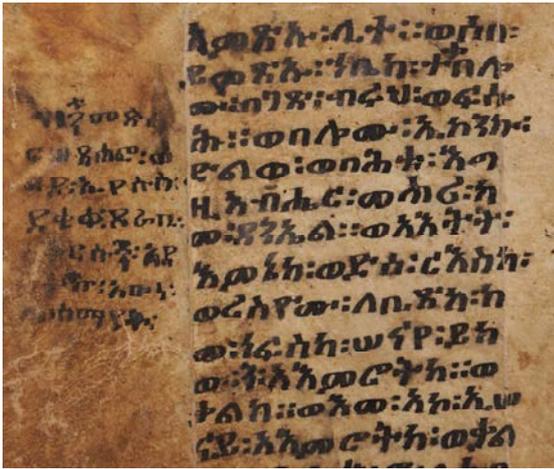


10. Gʷahtärat Qirqos, Mäşhafä gənzät, ornamental band



11. Gʷahtärat Qirqos, Mäşhafä gənzät, ornamental band





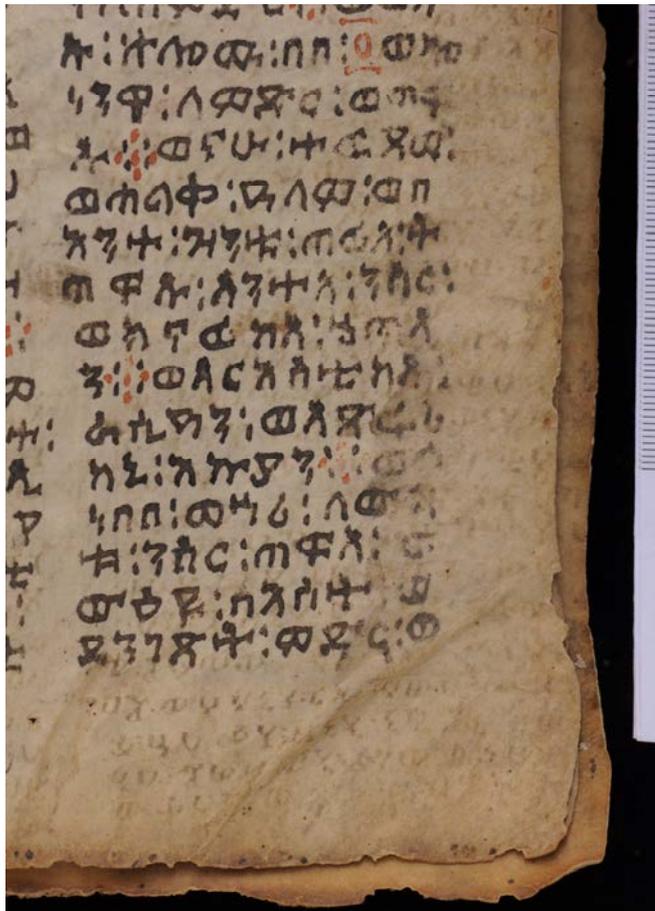
14. Gʷahṯārat Qirqos, Zena ʿabāw, colophon



15 Gʷahṯārat Qirqos, ʿOrit



16 Gʷahtārat Qirqos, ʿOrit, design of the cross



17. Gʷahtārat Qirqos, ʿOrit, text washed out



18. G<sup>w</sup>ahṭārat Qirqos, ʾOrit, rubrication



19. ʾEndamosa, view of the churches



20. ʾEndamosa, view of the churches



21. Endamosa, view of the old church



22. Endamosa, view of the old church



23. ?Endamosa, dome of the old church



24. ?Endamosa, old church, the dome from inside



25. ?Endamosa, community building, lectern

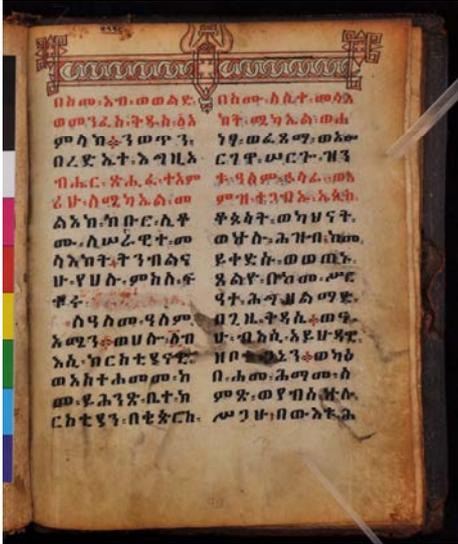
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26. ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን

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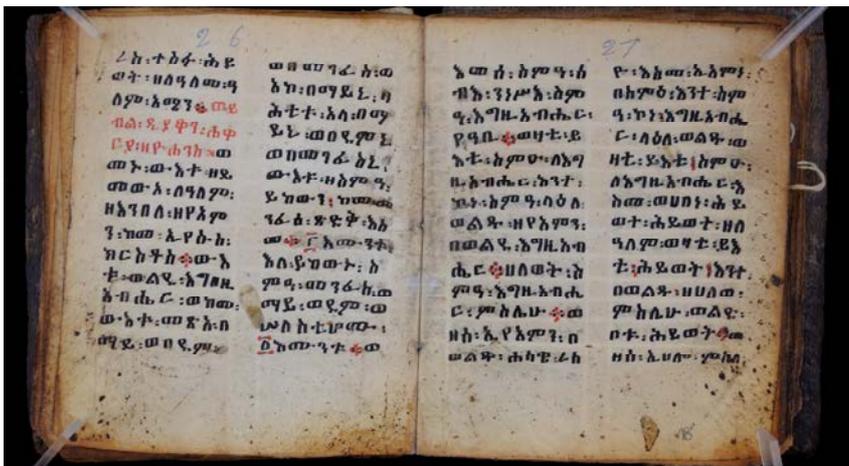
27. ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን ጳጳስዳሙያን



28. ʿEndamosa, Dersanä Mikaʿel



29 ʿEndamosa, Vita of Mäzgbä Šellase



30. ʿEndamosa, Mäšhafä ʾəmqät







35. Ləhüşa Maryam, view of the church



36. Ləhüşa Maryam, view of the church



37. Ləhüşa Maryam, Four Gospels book, infixed old miniature



38. Ləḥuṣa Maryam, Miracles of Mary



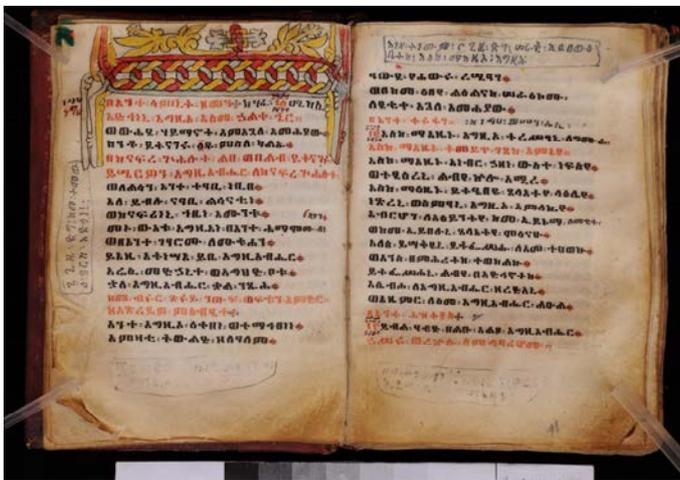
39. Ləḥuṣa Maryam, Missal



40. Ləḥuṣa Maryam, Synaxarion, colophon



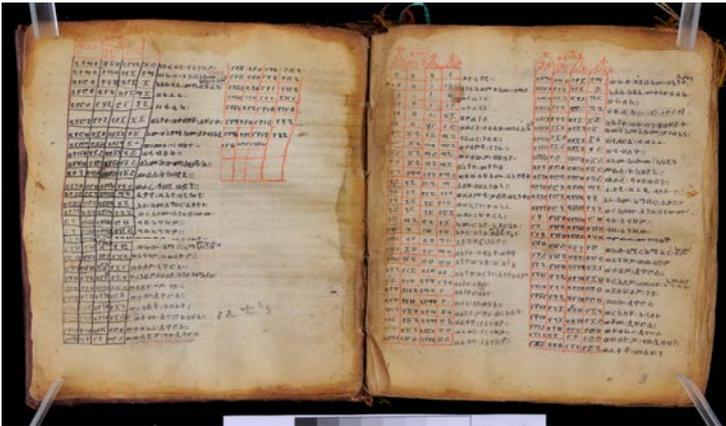
41. Leḥuṣa Maryam, Miracles of Mary, marginal notes



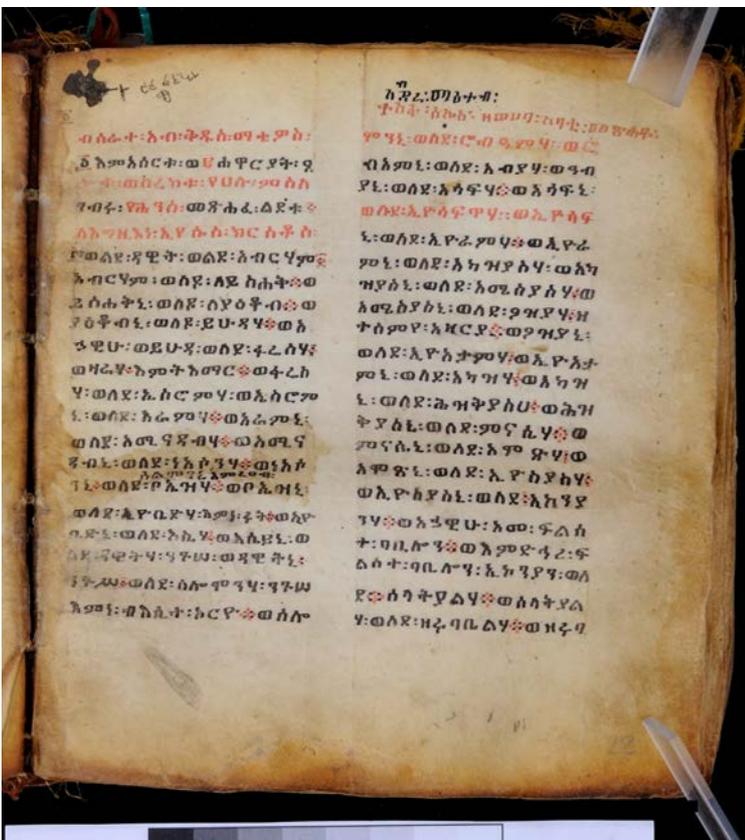
42. Leḥuṣa Maryam, Psalter with directives



43. Maṣṭāb Maryam, view of the church



44. Maṣṭāb Maryam, Four Gospels, canon tables



45. Maṣṭāb Maryam, Four Gospels, main text



46. Maʿetāb Maryam, Collection of canon law texts



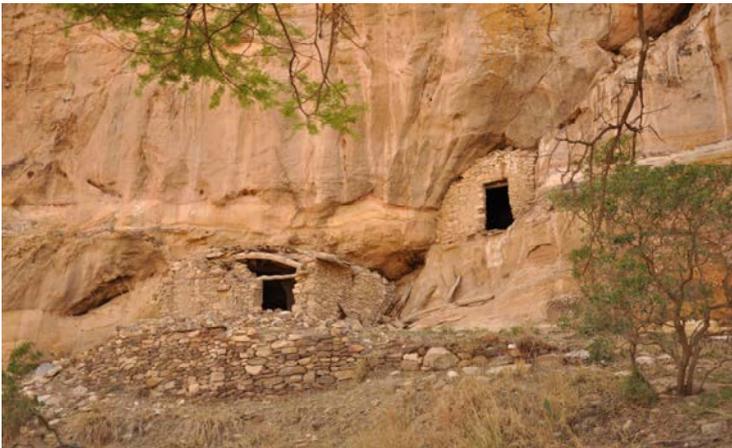
47. Maʿetāb Maryam, Synaxarion



48. Maʿetāb Maryam, Pauline Epistles



49. Mäzaber, view of the church



50. Mäzaber, structures near the church



51 Mäzaber, Vita of Zä-Mika'el 'Arägawi, colophons



52. Mäzabər, Book of the Disciples



53. ?Emba Täkula, View of the church



54. ?Emba Täkula, View of the church



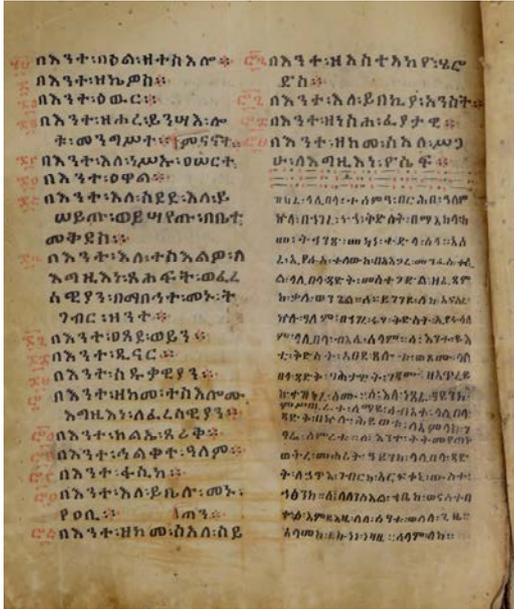
55. ?ጤmba Tākula, view of the stela



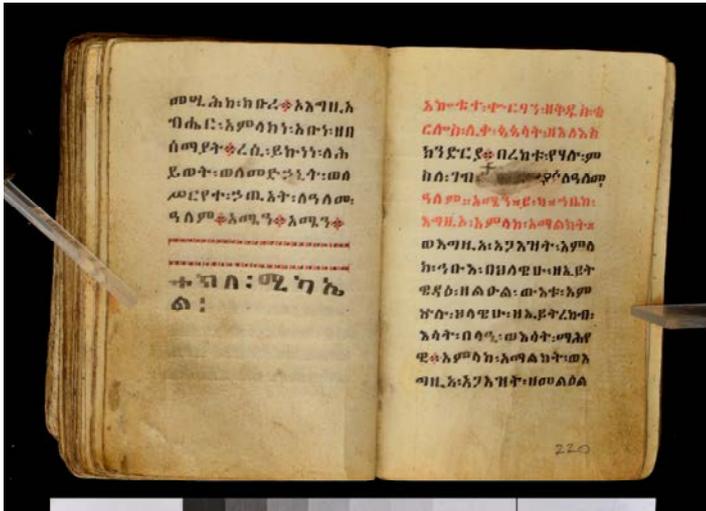
56. ?ጤmba Tākula, Mäftəḫe šəray, fragment of ancient Four Gospels book



57. ?ጤmba Tākula, Four Gospels, infixed old miniature



58. ?Emba Täkula, Four Gospels, *additio*



59. ?Emba Täkula, Missal







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