Ethiopian Manuscript Studies
Yesterday and Today

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

Denis NOSNITSIN
Hamburg University
Ethiopia: geography
Statistics for 2007:
Population 73,700,000
Number of languages 89

Ethio-Semitic languages:
Tigrigna - 4,320,000 speakers
Amharic - 21,600,000 speakers
Ge´ez (Ethiopic) – exinct language of liturgy and church literature

(http://www.ethnologue.com)
Ethiopia: a brief history

Ethiopia: a brief history

The oldest Ethiopian manuscript: The Gospels of Enda Abba Garima (http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Saving-the-Garima-Gospels/21266)

The Bible and the Birth of the Manuscript Culture
Ethiopia: a brief history

The Zagwe dynasty and the Early “Middle Ages”

Four Gospels Book of Iyasus Mo‘a (before 1293?)
(Mazgaba seelat, MG-2000.003:028)

Rock-hewn church of St. George, Lalibala
Ethiopia: ancient written culture

Presumably up to 200,000 manuscripts exist

The persistence of the medieval manuscript culture.
Ethiopia: ancient written culture

Church literature: Bible (esp. Gospels); Liturgical texts; Hagiographies, Devotional texts (prayers, hymns); Theological treatises, Monastic literature
“Secular” literature: Protective texts; Historical texts; Legal documents

Text genres and types of manuscripts.
Research in Ethiopian manuscripts

Philology and text studies

Texts studied since the 16\textsuperscript{th} century
Text editions and critical editions
Overviews of the history of literature
all on the basis of the texts available in the manuscripts preserved in European collections

Cataloguing

Since the 19\textsuperscript{th} century
mostly: attention on texts

Codicology, palaeography
Ethio-SPaRe: concept

Research in the Ethiopian manuscript culture in its original context; application of methods of the modern manuscript studies

Interviewing of priests from Däbrä Mä’so Yohannes, 2010
Ethio-SPaRe: main aims

Systematic research of manuscript collections in Ethiopia
Digitization; physical preservation
Study of the newly discovered texts and objects
Development of new standards in Ethiopian manuscript studies
Research into the local history and traditions
Interdisciplinary work, academic exchange and education
Ethio-SPaRe: field work

6 research and digitalization missions in 2010-2012
Ethio-SPaRe: field work

6 research and digitalization missions in 2010-2012, over 100 ecclesiastic sites of Tegray (North Ethiopia) surveyed
Findings: new or undocumented sites

‘Addäqäharsi Paraqlitos
Findings: new texts

The Acts of the Martyrs of Paraqlitos

Left: ms. AP-046, 16th century, 
Below: ms. AP-022, 19th century
Findings: valuable manuscripts

Left: Fragment of pre 13th-century Four Gospels in a 15th-century homiliary (MY-002)

Below: lavishly illuminated Homiliary for the Feasts of St. Michael, late 18th/early 19-century (NSM-004)
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Cataloguing as basis of research

New standards in manuscript description.

Systematic study of the codicological features.

Catalogued collections – the main product of the project.
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Codicological studies

Borders of “codicological units” in a manuscript Miracles of Mary, 18th and 16th centuries (DD-006)

Stratigraphy of the manuscript; composite manuscripts

14th-century miniatures infixed in a 19th-century “Miracles of Mary“ (DZ-014): A(fols. 1r-2v) – I(12/s.l.: {5, 6} /fols. 3r-14v)...

...III(6/fols. 8r-13v) – <IV(12/fols. 14r-25v)> – V(8/fols. 26r-33v)....
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Codicological studies

1A-1A-1A1A/0-0/0-0/C

Ruling and Pricking
MY-008,
Four Gospels,
early 15th century
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Codicological studies

First and last leaves pasted down on the boards

Systematic analysis of physical features

Coloured endbands

“Tackets” on quires prepared for binding
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis

Palaeographical studies

Support for dating
Distinguishing scribal hands

Identification of individual scribes

650 manuscripts: ca. 100 scribes known by name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>MY-008</th>
<th>MR-023</th>
<th>UM-023</th>
<th>MR-007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ዋ (wā)</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="3" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>2. ል (mā)</td>
<td><img src="5" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td><img src="7" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>3. ቤ (bā)</td>
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<td><img src="11" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>4. ዋ (‘a)</td>
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<td><img src="15" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>5. አ (ha)</td>
<td><img src="17" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="18" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="19" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>6. ሉ (la)</td>
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<td>7. ዓ (da)</td>
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<td>8. ዋ (ya)</td>
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<td>9. ዋ (ye)</td>
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<td>10. ligature</td>
<td><img src="37" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td><img src="39" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. ዓት (‘twzā)</td>
<td><img src="41" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="42" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="43" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. እрам (kamā)</td>
<td><img src="45" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="46" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="47" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>13. divider</td>
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Scribe Wäldä Muse: active in 1865-90s around Addigrat, East Tigray (at least 15 manuscripts identified)
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Restoration

New standards in manuscript restoration: cooperation of book conservators (N. Sarris, M. Di Bella) with philologists (A. Brita, A. Bausi). Study of texts before intervention, in order to restore the original page sequence.
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis
Restoration

a: Ms. MY-004, humidifying and stretching leaves
b-c: Mss. UM-039, UM-018: reconstruction of quires, leaves repair with Japanese paper
Ethio-SPaRe: analysis

Restoration

a-b: Ms. UM-039, spine before and after consolidation

c: Ms. UM-039 returning to the owner

d: Ms. MY-004, minor repairs of sewing and textblock
Interdisciplinary work

Philologists and Conservators

Philologists and Archaeologists

Here: archaeological findings from Mengas Qeddest Maryam, discovered by the team from the University of Naples
Interdisciplinary work

Philologists and Conservators

Philologists and Archaeologists

Natural Scientists

Ms. QDGM-010 (late 17th cent., collection of NT texts)

Spectral analysis on ARTAX-spectrometer (Federal Institute for Material Research and Testing, Dr. I. Rabin): Significant quantity of potassium (K) in parchment – a feature of the local water? Absent in the local contemporary parchment production
Teamwork

Research fellows

Dr. Stéphane Ancel (FR, Dec. 2009 - )
Sophia Dege, M.A. (DE, Jan. 2013 - )
Susanne Hummel, M.A. (DE, Sept. 2011 - )
Dr. Vitagrazia Pisani (IT, Dec. 2009 - ) (PhD acquired in the course of the project)

PhD fellows

Abreham Adugna (ET, since 2012)
Magdalena Krzyzanowska (PL, Sept. 2011 - )
Irene Roticiani (IT, since 2012)

External collaborators

Dr. Maria Bulakh, Moscow (Semitic linguistics)
Marco di Bella, Palermo (book conservation, codicology)
Dr. Nicolas Sarris, Zakynthos (book conservation, codicology)
Dr. Luisa Sernicola, Naples (archaeology)
Marco Barbarino, Naples (archaeology)
Dr. Ira Rabin (material analysis)
Verena Krebs, Konstanz (history of medieval art)
Cooperation

Ethiopia:

Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency
Käbbädä Amarä Bälay (head)
Mäsärät Hayle Sellase (heritage expert)

Church authorities
Abunä Mäqaryos, Bishop of East Tǝgray
Diocese of East Tǝgray, ʿAddigrat

District church administration
mälakä ḥeywät Bǝrhanä Arägawi
mälakä mehrät Täḵlay Gäbrä Ab
märigeta Hadära Tädla
mämher Ezra Gäbrä Mädhen

Local communities

Europe:

Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies network
Center for the Study of the Manuscript Cultures (Hamburg)
Conferences and Events

3 Ethio-SPaRe International Workshops (2011, 2012, 2013)
2 Bookbinding Analysis Workshops
25 papers at international conferences and workshops
Publications and Outreach

ETHIO-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation, Research

Ethiopia is one of the countries with the most ancient Christian history, and the only country in Africa where Christianity became an official religion as early as in the 4th century A.D. It is also one of the very few African regions where the history has been documented in written sources: manuscripts in possession of ca. 600 monasteries and 20,000 churches, some of which date back to early Middle Ages, have been estimated to number dozens of thousands.

Only a minor part of these archives have so far received scholarly evaluation, only less than one tenth of manuscripts have been microfilmed or digitalized, and only those that have come in possession of European libraries have been duly catalogued and are well protected. A great part of this unique heritage is on the verge of extinction, and urgent action needs to be taken to save it from complete disappearance.

New online: sixth mission report!

Presentations:
- October 2011: D. Nosnitsin, on Making of Ethiopic Book
- June 2012: D. Nosnitsin, DomLib/ETHIO-SPARE online catalogue
- October 2012: D. Nosnitsin, Different Books from East Tigray: Layouts, Organization of Text
- October 2012: D. Nosnitsin, Titles, Rubrics, Tables of Contents
- October 2012: D. Nosnitsin, Morphology of Ethiopian Binding
- October 2012: S. Ancal, Some Biblical and Liturgical Books
- October 2012: M. Krypczynska, Scribes of East Tigray
- November 2012: D. Nosnitsin, Lesser Known Features of the Ethiopian Codex
- July 2013: D. Nosnitsin, An Ethiopian Manuscript after its Completion: Typologies of Reuses
- July 2013: S. Ancal, Travelling Books: Change of Owner and Library in Ethiopian Manuscript Culture

http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIO-SPARE
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6 Mission Reports: Online and as Booklets

Hamburg University
2012
Publications and Outreach

ETHIO-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation, Research

Publications

Monographs:

Articles:
Stéphane Ancel, *Le sort de la mort dans les communautés chrétiennes en Éthiopie*, [Online], 03 | 2011, Online since 17 January 2012.
Stéphane Ancel, *Centralization and political changes: the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the ecclesiastical and political challenges in contemporary times*, Rassegna di studi etiopi n.s. 3, 2011, pp. 1-20.


2 Monographs, 1 Edited Volume, 12 Articles, 27 Encyclopaedia Entries
Conclusion. Outlook

Statistics:

Over 100 ecclesiastic institutions surveyed
Over 600 manuscripts catalogued

Planning:

Final restoration, digitalization and instruction missions
Publication of catalogue volumes
Publication of workshop proceedings
Finalization of study of the most important manuscripts, texts and paraphernalia
Final conference: July 2013
Ethio-SPaRe: A Milestone in Ethiopian Studies