Historical Overview of the Church of ʿAddiqāḥarsi Pāraqlīṭos (Gulo Māḵāda): Site, Traditions and Library

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In 2010 and 2011, the team of the project *Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia – Salvation, Preservation and Research* carried out four field missions. From its base in ʿAddigrat, the team explored the ecclesiastical landscape of the Gulo Māḵāda wārāda (East Ṭǝgray Zone, see map 1). Within some weeks of intensive work, the team visited numerous historical sites, many of them completely unknown or little known to scholars. Among the latter, there was the church of ʿAddiqāḥarsi Pāraqlīṭos, visited twice, in May 2010 and May 2011.

At a first glance, the site of ʿAddiqāḥarsi (ʿAddāqäḥarsi) Pāraqlīṭos appears absent in historical sources and practically unknown before. However, it deserves close attention for a number of reasons. First, some remains at the site bear witness to its ancient tradition of religious veneration. Second, its relatively rich and extensive manuscript collection, with sixty five books dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, places the church of Pāraqlīṭos among the important centres of manuscript culture in the region. Of particular scholarly interest are the testimonies of a previously unknown hagiographic tradition of the group of saints called Ṣadāqan zā-Pāraqlīṭos “the Righteous ones of the Paraclete” or Sāmaʿatātā Pāraqlīṭos “the Martyrs of the Paraclete”. Six manuscripts of their Vita (ḡādl) accompanied by a set of miracles (tāʾamrat) and poetry (mālkā) attest to this tradition. They have been recorded alongside the larger part of the entire collection. It shall be thus possible for the researchers to reconstruct the evolution of the collection and to study the previously unknown hagiographic corpus.

In the course of the field research, the project team had the chance to collect oral traditions concerning the site. On analysing the available different sources, written or oral, I would like to propose a historical overview of the church of ʿAddiqāḥarsi Pāraqlīṭos, bringing to light some previously unknown facts about its history and hagiographic tradition.

Oral tradition, material testimonies and historical references

The full name of the church of Pāraqlīṭos is ʿAddiqāḥarsi Mākanā Ḥaywāt Pāraqlīṭos, “ʿAddiqāḥarsi, the place of life, Paraclete”.¹ The church is lo-

¹ Both the first-order and the fourth-order variants, Pāraqlīṭos and Paraqlītos (cp. LESLÀU 1987:415), have been locally used. The former seems to dominante today (the
cated in the Gulo Mäḵäda ṭäräda. From ‘Addigrat, it is possible to reach
the church after a drive of approximately fifty minutes, first along the main
‘Addigrat–Zäla Ṭambäsä road until the church of Qäsäbär, and then turning
next on a secondary road linking Qäsäbär to Däbrä Dammo and Bazät (s.
maps 1–2). The church is well visible from the road. The church compound
lies at an altitude of 2,440 meters above sea level and overlooks a deep gorge.
It includes several buildings, and the construction of a new huge church
building outside the main compound is underway [fig. 1]. The church of Ṭaraqlitos itself is relatively recent, built in the traditional Ṭägrayan style
and painted with the colours of the Ethiopian flag. It stands on a podium,
with stairs leading to the west entrance of the church. It is a rectangular stone
church with metal doors and window frames [fig. 2]. This church is a däbr
with seven tabots: Sämätätä Ṭaraqlitos (the Martyrs of Ṭaraqlitos), ʾIyäsus
(Jesus Christ), Śellase (Trinity), Maryam (St. Mary), Gabrǝʾel (St. Gabriel),
Mikaʾel (St. Michael) and Kidänā Mǝḥrät (Covenant of Mercy). The clergy
consists of five priests, thirty deacons and two teachers. A monastic com-
monastery is said to have existed at ‘Addiqâharsi, but to have disappeared out
long ago. Today, no trace of a monastic settlement can be discerned in the
compound of the church.

According to the local oral tradition, the site was already a sanctuary in
pre-Christian times (“ḥäʾ-ʾOrit gize”). During the Aksumite time, a group of
the ‘Righteous Ones’ (Ṣadǝqan) came to Ethiopia from the Middle East and
started to evangelise the region. They were martyred by those who opposed
the new religion: it is said that they died on the very site of the actual church.
A stone platform at the southern side of the church, with a curious surface
showing traces of ancient volcanic activity [fig. 3], is believed to be the burial

preference cannot be clearly established for the past as the two orders are difficult to
distinguish in writing).
place of the group of saints. It is a sacred area that is inaccessible to females. Some years after the martyrdom, the Aksumite King ʿĔllā ʿAmida (called here ʿAlʿameda) established a church, donated lands and dedicated it to the sämaʿtatä ʿāraqṣiṭos, “the Martyrs of the Paraclete”. The church was then re-established in the sixteenth century by King Lēbnā Dēngāl (r. 1508–1540).

The Gulo Māḵā ṭāʾēda is known as an important historical area with many remains from pre-Aksumite and Aksumite times. A testimony of the Sabean presence in Ethiopia, an inscription in Epigraphic South Arabian from ʿAddiqāḥarsi ʿāraqṣiṭos is engraved on a flat stone slab, of approximately 30–32 centimetres [fig. 4]. This inscription was photographed by Paul Henze in 2005 and subsequently translated by Stefan Weninger. This inscription mentions the supreme deity of the Sabean pantheon ʿAlmaqah. Also, it possibly mentions the site of Yōḥa, where a temple dedicated to this deity was located. The presence of this inscription might bring the history of the place back to the eighth or seventh century B.C. However, there is no hint elucidating the

relationship between the inscription and the site; the local tradition does not offer any explanation for the presence of the inscription at the church.

There are other remains found on the site that might well originate from the Aksumite period. Among them there are three recently painted stone pillars, approximately 2.5 meters high on the average. The first one, standing on the left side of the podium [fig. 5], bears an anthropomorphic relief on one side [fig. 6], and a relief of a cross on the other [fig. 7]. The second pillar, on the right side of the podium, bears no decoration; it is included in the wall recently built around a water cistern [fig. 8]. The third pillar stands in the doorway of the dágğá sælám of the church, the western door of the churchyard [fig. 9]. Despite the presence of the cross, local tradition connects these remains to the pre-Christian Aksumite times. The anthropomorphic relief has gender identification, seen by the local population as a testimony of pagan beliefs.

So far only one, though important, reference to the church of PARATORLITOS has been identified in historical sources. The sixteenth-century narrative of the Portuguese embassy to Ethiopia, written by Francisco Alvares, mentions, in chapter 44, “a monastery on a river, called Paraclitos”⁴ that the embassy passed after leaving ʿAdwa in August 1520 and before arriving in “Agroo”.⁵ According to Alvares, the monastery was inhabited by 20 or 25 monks and was a place of great sanctity and good agricultural production. The translators, Beckingham and Huntingford, could not identify the site. They tentatively placed it in the vicinity of the actual towns of Waqro (“Agroo”) and ʿAšbi.⁶ According to them, the Portuguese embassy left ʿAmba Sännayt,

⁵ “A town named Agroo, where the Tigrmahom has a Beteneguz” Beckingham – Huntingford 1961:176.
Historical Overview of the Church of ʿAddiqāḥarsi ʿĀraqlītos

went by the ʿAlāqwa pass (near today’s ʿAddigrat) and then went directly southward to Wǝqro, making a halt at “Paraclitos” (see map 3). However, the translators apparently confused Wǝqro Qirqos, a rock hewn-church in today’s town of Wǝqro, with Wǝqro Maryam church of ʾAmba Sännayt, near the town of Ngäbbälä, and thus overestimated the distance covered by the embassy. Today, we can propose another hypothetical reconstruction of the itinerary that is more in line with the information given by Alvares. Coming from ʿAdwa, the Portuguese embassy passed by the ʿAlāqwa pass and went to the monastery of ʿĀraqlītos in Gulo Mākädā, northwards. After that, they went in the opposite direction, to the church of Wǝqro Maryam of ʾAmba Sännayt. It seems quite plausible that the monastery of “Paraclitos” described by Alvares was indeed ʿAddiqāḥarsi ʿĀraqlītos, even though the description is difficult to match with the current situation of the site; the mention is also a hint to the importance of the church of ʿĀraqlītos during the reign of King Lāmnā Dāngal.

A note preserved in manuscript London, British Library, Oriental 481, might provide a second reference to the site. According to this note (f. 132vb), King Lāmnā Dāngal (regnal names Dawit and Wāng Sāgād) granted lands to a church called ʿĀraqlītos. Unfortunately, the note is not very clear, and none of the other toponyms mentioned in that document has been identified. Thus, one cannot be sure, at least for the moment, that the church of the land grant is the same as our church of ʿĀraqlītos.

Manuscript collection of ʿAddiqāḥarsi ʿĀraqlītos

In the ʿǝqa bet of the church, sixty five manuscripts are preserved in a cupboard and two chests [fig. 10]. Of these, the Ethio-SPaRe team could completely digitise fifty two.

As one could expect from a ḏābr-church, the main part of the collection is represented by liturgical texts. Sixteen manuscripts were recorded: two Māṣḥafā qaddase (Missal), two Fǝṭḥat zā-wāld (“Absolution of the Son”), a complete Sǝnkǝssar (Synaxarion, divided in two manuscripts), two Māṣḥafā ʾāstan (“Book of Incense”), two Māṣḥafā gǝnzät (“Book of the Funeral [Rite]”), two Māṣḥafā gǝṣṣawe (Lectionary for the year), a Gǝbrä ḥǝmamat (“The Rite for the Passion Week”), a Māṣḥafā ṭǝmqät (“Book of Baptism [Rite]”), a Māṣḥafā täklīl (“Book of Marriage [Rite]”), and a Māṣḥafāʾ ʾaslǝṭi (Scriptural readings for the feast of the year).

8 See Wright 1877:1–6, no. 2; the purported copy of the Māṣḥafā ṭǝfut preserved at ʿAmba Gǝšān, it contains the Octateuch, the Four Gospels and the Senodos, and a number of documents.
Sixteen manuscripts contain hagiographic texts: three copies of the Vita (gādl) of St. Gäbrä Mānfiä Qəddus, two copies of the Vita of St. Kiros, two copies of the Vita of St. Täklä Haymanot, a Vita of ’abunä ’Arğawi, a Vita of St. George of Lydda, and the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (Gādlä hawaryat). The hagiographic tradition around the Martyrs of Pāraqliṭos (Gādlä Ṣadqān zä-Pāraqliṭos) is attested in six manuscripts.

Eleven manuscripts contain other literary works: three copies of the Tāʾamrā Maryam (”Miracles of Mary”), a copy of the Tāʾamrā Iyäsus (”Miracles of Jesus”), several homiliaries — two manuscripts of the Dōrsanä Mika’el (”Homily of St. Michael”), a collection of homilies (Dōrsanat), a Dōrsanä sānbāt (”Homily on the Sabbath”) and a Dōrsanä māδhane ‘alām (”Homily of the Saviour of the World”), – a Zenä sōllase (”The Story of the Trinity”), a Nāgārā Maryam (”The Story of Mary”).

Biblical books are represented by at least three manuscripts: the Four Gospels (Arba’tu wängel), the Pauline Epistles (Mälʾǝktä Pawlōs), a manuscript with the Epistles, the Revelation of John and the Acts of the Apostles (Gǝbrä hawaryat). Books of liturgical chants and a recent copy of the Kǝbrä någāśt (”Glory of the Kings”) complete the collection. Curiously, no copy of Psalter (Dawit) was found.

The great majority of the manuscripts (thirty-five circa) were written during the twentieth century. At least ten date from the nineteenth century. Only one manuscript could be dated to the eighteenth century. There is no manuscript from the seventeenth century, and five manuscripts can be dated to the sixteenth century. From a closer look at these manuscripts – with a particular attention paid to the copies of the hagiography of the Martyrs of Pāraqliṭos – a first overview of the evolution of the manuscript collection of the church becomes possible.

Late 15th–16th century witnesses

The older part of the collection of Pāraqliṭos goes back probably to the late fifteenth – the first half of the sixteenth century. The five surviving manuscripts from that time are of impressive quality and hint at a possible significance of the collection during that period. The first impressive witness is the collection of homilies AP-005\(^9\) [fig. 11]. This well preserved manuscript is directly connected to another codex, the Tāʾamrā Maryam (AP-035),\(^10\) also in good condition [fig. 12]: in fact, both of them were copied by the same scribe,

\(^9\) Manuscript shelf marks quoted below are the call numbers assigned by the Ethio-SPaRe cataloguing database. Manuscript AP-005 measures 31 x 24 x 8cm (height x width x thickness), 119 ff., 16 quires.

\(^10\) AP-035: 24 x 19 x 8cm, 190 ff., 26 quires.
Habtä Ḥiyasus [fig. 13ab]. A well-preserved copy of the Gädlä ḥawaryat (AP-016) [fig. 14] and a finely decorated book of Gǝbrä ḥomamat (AP-009) [fig. 15] can also be tentatively dated to the same period.

One of the oldest manuscripts of this part of the collection is the Vita and Miracles of the Martyrs of Pāraqlîṭos (AP-046). The manuscript is bound between two wooden boards with two pairs of sewing stations. The first folium of the introduction to the Vita (f. 11r) has an elaborate ḥaräg ornamental band; rubrication is applied, as usual, to the lines of the incipit (f. 13v) [fig. 16ab]. The manuscript’s extensive and complex colophon (ff. 84rb–87rb) is of great interest as it provides exceptionally many details concerning the production of the manuscript.

At the beginning of the colophon (f. 84rb), the precise date of writing can be found [fig. 17a]: 175 “year of mercy” (= 1523 A.D., only three years after the visit of Alvares). The scribe further defines the time (f. 84va) as that of King Labnä Dongal (r. 1508–1540), Metropolitan Marqos (d. 1529/1530), Archbishop Yohannäs (John XIII) of Alexandria (1483–1555) and the governor of ‘Agamä (ṣyyum ‘agame) Natan [fig. 17b].

Another part of the colophon (f. 85rb) gives us the names of the scribe, Täsfa Soyon [fig. 17c], and of the translator (zāʿa ḍāwkkəwwa), a certain fälasi Dānæl (f. 85va) [fig. 17d], as well as of the name the person who, apparently, had furnished the parchment for the manuscript (f. 87ra, bā ṣla branna), a certain Tāklä Giyorgis [fig. 17e].

The mention of a translator apparently indicates that the Göʿaz text of the Vita (or at least of the Miracles, that the colophon follows upon) is a translation from another language. The first quick check of the text, however, does not seem to support this claim of the scribe.

The first two quires were added later, making it a composite manuscript. The first quire provides an addition (ff. 2ra–5vb): it is a (sixteenth-century?) long note listing the names of the individuals who commemorated the Martyrs of Pāraqlîṭos [fig. 18a]. The second quire has the mālks’-hymn in honour of the Martyrs of Pāraqlîṭos (ff. 7ra–10vb). Written by a crude hand, it is the earliest version of this mālks’; however, this part is significantly more recent than the part with the Vita [fig. 18b]. The hand of the main part of the manuscript is similar to that of Habtä Ḥiyasus of mss. AP-005 and AP-035.

11 AP-016: 36 x 24 x 10cm, 182 ff., 23 quires.
12 AP-009: 51 x 37 x 11cm, 218 ff., 28 quires.
13 AP-046: 18 x 15 x 4cm, 88 ff., 14 quires.
14 The term fälasi means in Göʿaz “foreigner, stranger, wanderer, etc.”, LESLÁU 1987:160; also “hermit”, Kidanā Wald Käfle 1948 A.M.: 724. Possibly, the first meaning is intended here, as a further substantiation of the claim that the text is a translation.
18\textsuperscript{th} century witnesses

The collection has no manuscript from the seventeenth century, and only one dates to the eighteenth century. It is difficult to suggest an explanation to this fact; it could well be that the older manuscripts were still in use and seemed sufficient, without need of new or additional manuscripts. Or the economic factor may have played a role: possibly, after the reign of Lǝbnä Dǝngǝl, the church of Pāraqliṭos became a second-rank institution.

The only eighteenth century manuscript is the second manuscript of the Vita of the Martyrs of Pāraqliṭos (AP-045). Its single production unit contains the Vita and eleven miracles. The first folia are missing, and with them, unfortunately, the introduction to the Vita and the beginning (the first two pages) of the Vita itself [fig. 19]. The binding has been repaired: only the back cover is a wooden board that may have been part of the original binding; the front board has been replaced by a piece of cardboard. The scribe of AP-045 has left us a colophon (ff. 49vb–50rb). Shorter than in AP-046, it still provides some information on the circumstances of writing. The date is given as Mäggabit 7229 “year of mercy” (March/April 1737 A.D.), during the time of King ʾIyasu [II] (r. 1730–1755) [fig. 20ab]. The colophon mentions the name of the commissioner – priest ʿAmdä Mikaʾel (his wife and children are also recalled) – but does not provide the name of the scribe.

19\textsuperscript{th} century witnesses

At least ten manuscripts in the library of Pāraqliṭos were written during the nineteenth century. Their number and content might indicate that the collection was largely re-shaped during that period, new manuscripts replacing those from the sixteenth-century original collection. Most of the nineteenth-century manuscripts contain liturgical and religious works absolutely necessary for running a church: a Māṣḥafā qaddase (AP-001), two Māṣḥafā gǝnzät (AP-031 and AP-032), a Målʾǝktä Pawlos (AP-008), a Täʾamrä Maryam (AP-028), a Täʾamrä ʾIyäsus (AP-038), a Nāgārā Maryam (AP-044) and a lavishly illuminated Dǝrsanä Mikaʾel (AP-011) [fig. 21]. The “Golden Gospel” of the church (AP-003) is also in this historical layer [fig. 22]. This Four Gospels manuscript can be dated to approximately the end of the nineteenth century. It is not illuminated but, as an exceptionally rare case, has a finely decorated metal covers over the common binding (wooden boards covered with reddish-brown leather). Images incised on the front cover represent the Holy Trinity, the Crucifixion and Christ in Majesty, images on the back cover

15 AP-045: 17.5 x 17 x 3.5cm, 51 ff., 7 quires.
16 AP-003: 28 x 23 x 8cm, 222 ff., 33 quires.
show the Virgin and Child, St. George of Lydda and ʿabunä Zā-Mikaʾel ʿArāgawi [fig. 23ab]. The historical circumstances of such a gift have not been clarified yet.

Another (third) copy of the Vita of the Martyrs of ʿArəqliṭos (AP-022) dates to the nineteenth century. This manuscript is a single production unit containing a complete version of the Vita, with the introduction, the Vita proper and eleven miracles. The wooden boards of the binding are covered with reddish-brown tooled leather. Like in the sixteenth century copy, the ḥaräg-decoration appears on the incipit page of the introduction [fig. 24a], and the incipit of the Vita is rubricated [fig. 24b]. A colophon at the end of the manuscript (ff. 30vb–31ra) mentions only the date of writing: 30 Gǝnbot 1885 “year of mercy” (6 June 1893 A.D.); it provides no information on the copyist or the circumstances of the production.

20th century witnesses

The section of the collection that was formed during the twentieth century is by far the largest; it contains at least thirty five manuscripts. Among them, many liturgical books can be found such as a Mäṣḥafä qǝddase (AP-004), a complete Synaxarion (in two volumes, AP-014 and AP-015), two copies of the Mäṣḥafä gǝṣṣawe (AP-026 and 037), a Mäṣḥafä ṭǝmqät (AP-021) and a Mäṣḥafä täklil (AP-027). Also prominent are hagiographies of national saints such as Gäbrä Mänfäs Qǝddus (three copies, AP-007, AP-010, AP-023) or Täklä Haymanot (two copies, AP-030, AP-047), a fact which shows us the late tradition of veneration of Ethiopian saints not immediately associated with the Tǝgray region.

The Vita of the Martyrs of ʿArəqliṭos is represented by three more manuscripts.

The first of these (AP-019, the fourth copy) has no colophon and provides no information concerning the date of production. One can estimate the time of writing as mid-twentieth century, mainly on the basis of handwriting and parchment quality. Wooden boards are covered with reddish-brown tooled leather. The manuscript is a single production unit containing the complete hagiographical dossier consisting of the gädl, the eleven miracles and the mälkǝʾ. There is no ḥaräg-decoration at the beginning, but the red colour is used for the rubrication in the incipits of both the introduction to the Vita and the Vita itself [fig. 25a]. The manuscript is the second witness in which the mälkǝʾ-hymns of the Martyrs of ʿArəqliṭos is preserved [fig. 25b]; it is the
same text as the one infixed into the sixteenth-century manuscript AP-046. The fifth available copy (AP-050) can be tentatively dated to the second half of the twentieth century. It is a single production unit containing the Vita (with the introduction [fig. 26]) and eleven miracles.

The most recent witness (AP-034) was completed in 1979 E.C., i.e. 1986/87 A.D., according to the date mentioned at the end of the manuscript. It is a single production unit with the Vita (with the traditional introduction [fig. 27]), and twelve (sic!) miracles. The quality of both the handwriting and binding is poor.

The tradition of the Martyrs of Paralito is completed by a commemorative notice dedicated to them in the local copy of the Synaxarion (AP-015) for the 4th of Sane [fig. 28]. This Synaxarion is a recent one, copied in 1968 E.C. (1975/76 A.D.). The notice seems to be an abbreviated version of the Vita, without the miracles.

Gāḍlā Ṣadǝqan zā-Paralito: features of the tradition

As shown above, the manuscript collection of Addiqāharsi Paralito preserves six manuscripts of the previously unknown Gāḍlā Ṣadǝqan zā-Paralito from different periods – AP-046 (16th cent.), AP-045 (18th cent.), AP-022 (19th cent.), AP-019 (first half of the 20th cent.), AP-050 (second half of 20th cent.) and AP-034 (1996/97 A.D.) – as well as a manuscript of the Synaxarion containing a commemorative notice for the Martyrs of Paralito for the 4th of Sane (20th cent.). Table 1 summarises the most general characteristics of the seven witnesses. The relatively constant number of folia and quires used for manuscripts (with the exception of the oldest copy which uses a format totally different from the others) indicates that the size of the text did not greatly vary with time. The number of the miracles is also constant. Only the most recent copy has twelve in place of eleven miracles (see p. 102 below for details).

A previously unknown group of the Ṣadǝqan

According to the story narrated in the Vita (which somewhat differs from the oral tradition mentioned above), a group of the “Righteous Ones” (Ṣadǝqan) left Tiberias (Taboryados) because of a conflict with the king. They came to Ethiopia in the region of Paralito and started preaching Christianity to

19 AP-050: 27 x 18.5 x 4 cm, 59 ff., 8 quires.
20 AP-034: 25.5 x 20 x 4 cm, 32 ff., 6 quires.
21 AP-015: 36.5 x 28 x 8.5 cm, 186 ff., 24 quires.
the local population. Finally, the “Righteous Ones” and their followers (777 persons in total) were killed by the “Jews”. But two priests and one deacon survived and continued preaching Christian faith. When the Aksumite King ṢAlʿameda fell ill, the angels brought him to the place where the “Righteous Ones” had died. Cured, the King decided to dedicate a church to the martyrs. The Vita incorporated the list of lands donated by the King to the church. This synopsis shows that the Martyrs of Ṣāraqlīṭos seem to be a previously unknown group of the Ṣadǝqan – saints credited with the early evangelisation of Ethiopia. Several hagiographic traditions dealing with groups of Ṣadǝqan preaching Christian faith during the Aksumite times exist. According to these traditions, some saintly monks of Byzantine origin arrived in Ethiopia in groups. They split into smaller groups and spread throughout the highlands of Tǝgray and Eritrea. Each group is named after the place in which they settled. The hagiographic tradition keeps the memory of at least five groups with some commons characteristics (names and number of the members of the group is unknown and they lived and died in group) that form a hagiographic “cycle”: Ṣadǝqan zä-Baräknaha, Ṣadǝqan zä-Kädiḥ, Ṣadǝqan zä-Däg’e, Ṣadǝqan zä-Qaḥen, Ṣadǝqan zä-Hāwzen etc. Accordingly, the Ṣadǝqan zä-Pāraqlīṭos should be added to the list.

Variance among the witnesses

The hagiographic tradition of the Martyrs of Pāraqlīṭos preserved its purely local, closed character and did not spread in other areas. All witnesses of the

<table>
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<th>Ms Date</th>
<th>AP-046 1523</th>
<th>AP-045 1737</th>
<th>AP-022 1893</th>
<th>AP-019 mid 20th cent</th>
<th>AP-050 2nd half 20th cent.</th>
<th>AP-034 1996-97</th>
<th>AP-015 Synaxarion 1975-76</th>
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<td>51 / 7</td>
<td>32 / 6</td>
<td>48 / 7</td>
<td>59 / 8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Long version, incomplete</td>
<td>Long version, complete</td>
<td>Long version, complete</td>
<td>Long version, complete</td>
<td>Short version</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>no</td>
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22 Brita 2010:3; see EAE IV: 446.
Vita of the Martyrs of Pāraqlītos contain the same recension of the text, and there are relatively few textual variations that I will deal with below.

Non-textual variance is clearly visible. The most obvious aspect is the layout: size of page, decoration, rubrication and punctuation. Comparing manuscripts AP-046 (16th cent.) and AP-022 (19th cent.) one establishes that while in ms. AP-046 the numbers are in red whereas the name Pāraqlītos is not [fig. 29a], in ms. AP-022, on the contrary, numbers are in black, but the name Pāraqlītos is rubricated [fig. 29b]. As the chapter divider, ms. AP-046 uses the nine-dot asterisk and a chain of black and red dots [fig. 29c]. The copyist of ms. AP-022 preferred to use the double nine-dot asterisks without dashes in-between [fig. 29d]. The stylistic innovations introduced by the scribe of ms. AP-022 were followed by the copyists after him (the earlier AP-045 has the same features as AP-046).

Another distinct non-textual variance concerns the arrangement of the miracles. In all manuscripts, the last miracle is numbered “12”. However, nearly all manuscripts have eleven miracle stories, skipping number “10” (miracle 9 is followed by miracle 11). Only the most recent manuscript, AP-034, has twelve miracles, numbered correctly. However, there is no new text. The copyist solved the problem by dividing one of the already existing stories (miracle 3) into two, numbering each part separately (miracles 3 and 4 in AP-034). This story indeed contains two distinct, though similar, miraculous situations. In both cases, the Martyrs of Pāraqlītos help a woman. The earliest manuscripts (AP-046 and AP-045) handle the text as a single story (no rubrication and no chapter dividers) [fig. 30]. In the nineteenth-century manuscript AP-022, as well as in the copies AP-019 and AP-050, the beginning of the second part is marked by a rubricated incipit, but no number is assigned [fig. 31]. It was only the copyist of AP-034 who decided to use the rubricated incipit but also give a separate number (4) to this story [fig. 32], finalising the creation of a new unit in the series of the miracles.

Most of the textual variations seem to be of stylistic nature. As an example, here is the incipit of miracle 7 in manuscript AP-046 (16th cent., f. 63vab): ቍክበ፡ ስምዑ፡ ኦአኃውየ፡ ወገብረ፡ ወመንክረ፡ ጰራቅሊጦስ፡ መንፈሰ፡ ሕይወት (...), “Furthermore, O my brethren, listen to the sign(s) and miracle which the Paraclete, Spirit of Life, worked (…)”. Manuscript AP-045 (18th cent., f. 34vab) has the same phrasing. But in manuscript AP-022 (19th cent., f. 23rb) the text runs: ቍክበ፡ ስምዑ፡ አኃውየ፡ ወገብረ፡ ወመንክረ፡ ጰራቅሊጦስ፡ መንፈሰ፡ እይወት. The copyist dropped the emphatic article of “O my brethren” and omitted the word ወርምር (“sign”), that he probably saw as an unnecessary repetition of መንከር (“miracle”). The twentieth-century copyists preserve the original phrase (AP-019, f. 31vb, and AP-050, f. 40vab); only the most recent AP-034 follows the suit of AP-022 (f. 23rb).
Another example is an extract from the incipit of miracle 10 from AP-046 (f. 73ra): ስምዑኬ፡ ኦአኃውየ፡ ከመ፡ ናብጽሕ፡ ለክሙ፡ በዐቅሙ፡ ኵሎ፡ ዘይገብሩ፡ በታሕተ፡ ሰማይ፡ ወዘይትገበር፡ ሎም፡ በዲበ፡ ምድር (…), "Listen, O my brethren, as to how we shall explain you, according to the capacity, everything they did under the sky and what was done for them on the earth (…)". Once again, this is faithfully copied in the eighteenth-century AP-045 (f. 41ra). In the nineteenth century, the copyist of AP-022 (f. 26vb) dropped a part of the sentence: "they did under the sky". The copyist of AP-019 uses the phrasing of the first manuscripts without omissions, but introduces a change of his own (ff. 36vb-37ra): ስምዑኬ፡ ኦ፡ አኃውየ፡ ከመ፡ ናብጽሕ፡ ለክሙ፡ በዐቅሙ፡ ኵሎ፡ ዘይገብሩ፡ ወዐስ፡ እስለከኬ፡ በታሕተ፡ ሰማይ፡ ወዘይትገበር፡ ሎም፡ በዲበ፡ ምድር, "Listen, O my brethren, as to how we will explain you, according to the capacity, everything they did upon you under the sky and what was done for them on the earth (…)" – "upon you" is added. The copyist of AP-050 (f. 47va) followed the first version, while the copyist of AP-034 (f. 26vb) followed the correction made in AP-022 during the nineteenth century.

The last example is particularly interesting. Here is an extract from the incipit of the miracle no. 8 [fig. 33], according to the first manuscript, AP-046 (f. 68rb): ወሀለወት፡ አሐቲ፡ ብዕሲት፡ ዕውርተ፡ ዐይን፡ እምጕንዱይ፡ መዋዕል፡ ወመጽአት፡ እንዘ፡ ይመርሕዋ፡ በሐልፍ፡ (…), "There was a woman, blind since a long time, and she came while (the people of ጋራራኩስ) were leading her [ bä-ḥalf]…". The main problem is the expression bä-ḥalf which is not clear, and was not clear also for the copyists. Ms. AP-045 (f. 37v) has the phrase without any change, but manuscript AP-022 (f. 24v) adds a clarification: ወሀለወት፡ አሐቲ፡ ብዕሳት፡ ዕውርተ፡ አይን፡ እምጕንዱይ፡ መዋዕል፡ ወመጽአት፡ እንዘ፡ ይመርሕዋ፡ በሐብል ፡ (…), “There was a woman, blind since a long time, and she came into the land of the throne while (the people of ጋራራኩስ) made her pass through leading her with a rope…”. The copyist specified the location as "land of the throne" (of the tabot dedicated to the Martyrs?), and "corrected" the difficult reading bä-ḥalf as bä-ḥabl ("with a rope"). Once again, the first twentieth-century manuscript, AP-019, does not consider the corrections suggested by the nineteenth-century AP-022 (f. 34rb). It follows quite closely the text of the original, correcting however bä-ḥalf into bä-ḥabl: ወሀለወት፡ አሐቲ፡ ብዕሳት፡ ዕውርተ፡ ዐይን፡ እምጕንዱይ፡ መቻፋሉ፡ ወመጽአት፡ እንዘ፡ ይመርሕዋ፡ በሐብል፡ (…). It cannot be determined with certainty whether this was a spontaneous correction while copying from the original, or whether at least this idea of the “rope” was inspired by AP-022. AP-050 (f. 43vb) follows the more faithful AP-019. While in the previous cases AP-034 seemed to follow AP-022 quite literally, in this case the copyist, while certainly basing as usual on the nineteenth century exemplar, did not follow it word for word (ff. 24vb-25ra). He kept the idea of the place ("the
land of the throne”) and replaced bā-half with bā-habl, but did not take over the verbal form yāhallaḥawwa.

These few examples may suggest a reconstruction for the relationships possibly existing between the available manuscripts of the Vita. Manuscript AP-045 seems to be an exact copy and direct descendant of the oldest manuscript AP-046. The nineteenth century copyist of AP-022 introduced several innovations (new rubrication, chapter dividers, and corrections in the text). The early twentieth century AP-019 is closer to AP-046 and AP-045; it is not clear whether its copyist consulted AP-022. The copyist of AP-050 used the older text of AP-046 and AP-045, but also AP-019. Finally, AP-034 is a nearly exact copy of AP-022, with a few innovations (the new numbering of miracles). It is the most distant from the earliest witnesses.

Bibliography


