



An Early Medieval Ethiopian Chronological Treatise: Presentation of the Document

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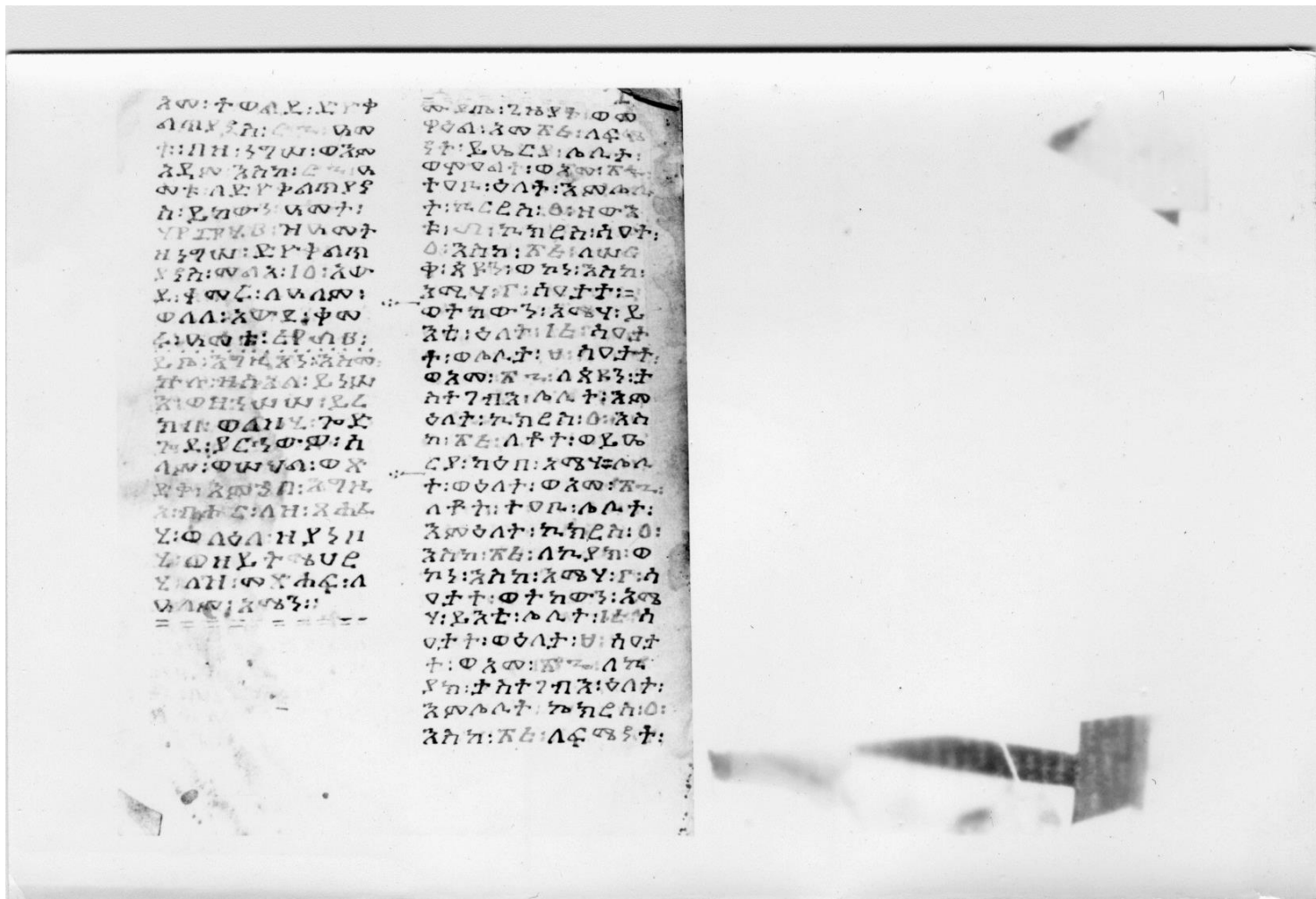
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

Ethiopia



[illegible]

“Comboni fragment”, ff. 20v-21r



Palaeographical evaluation possible?

Ancient shapes of the numerals

- Numerals without dashes (with the exception of the „tabularic arrangement“, f. 11v)
- Ancient shapes of \bar{d} , \bar{e} , \bar{o} , \bar{b} , \bar{z}
- Most of the numerals' combinations for thousands and hundrends are linked together: $\bar{f}\bar{e}$, $\bar{o}\bar{e}$, $\bar{z}\bar{e}$, $\bar{z}\bar{e}$ $\bar{o}\bar{n}$ (533), $\bar{i}\bar{e}$ $\bar{z}\bar{e}$ $\bar{z}\bar{z}$ (1596) usw.

Ancient letters' shapes:

- \mathfrak{T} the lateral strokes reach the ruled line
- \mathfrak{w} angular
- \mathfrak{e} with two horizontal lines
- \mathfrak{o} the vowel marker in the middle of the letter's body

Palaeographical evaluation possible?

- ᐱ the vowel marker attached directly
- ᑭ, ᑬ the vowel marker attached without overhanging line
- ᐱ, ᐱ, ᐱ, ᐱ, ᐱ, ᐱ etc., the right “leg” with the vowel marker is shorter
- ᐱ, ᐱ opposition of the “ancient type”
- scribe’s tendency to direct strokes
- ᐱ, ᐱ; ᐱ, ᐱ etc. not always well distinguishable
- The word ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ is written in two words: ᐱᐱᐱᐱ : ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
- In many cases the numbers are written out as words

Arrangement of the text

- Sense divisions: mostly through the sign := followed by blank space
- no paragraph signs
- simple sections dividers
- “old” arrangement of the titles
- simple *coronis*-signs, crosses
- Small arches filled with the text – ancient feature?
- Scribal corrections: over erasures, the wrong word is “dotted out” (f. 11vb)

Conclusion: prior to mid-14th century?

(Period of the “monumental script” after S. Uhlig)

Cross in the “Comboni fragment”, f. 3v



Foqada Maryam, cross on a stone slab, late-Aksumite time (?)



ṢAddi Qolq^wal Giyorgis, Acts of the Martyrs, second half of the 15th cent.

Qälaqel Şəyon, MS QS-007, at least 14th cent. (?)



ṢAddigrat Bet Marya, cross in the shaft of a grave, late-Aksumite time (?)

Enda Abba Garima 1, front board



Däbrä Libanos of Ham (Eritrea), Four Gospel book, 13th cent.



Content: collection of texts on computus and chronology

1. Clarifications of the computus basic elements
 2. Guidelines and principles for calculating the feasts
 3. Chronological treatises: up to **1065** year of Diocletian (**1349** AD?)
 4. Others (passages in big arches, explanations concerning climate, ff. 14va-15ra, etc.)
- Tables for calculating the dates of the Easter of the Christians and the Passover of the Jews, from **369** to **532** year of Diocletian (**653** to **816** AD)

Content: chronological treatises

- I) f. 14ra-b: ተዝካረ: አውደ: ዓመታት (related to Esdras “the mathematician”)
- II) f. 16r: ዓመቱ: ለዓለም (counting in cycles of 1596 years)
- III) ff. 16va-19ra: መጽሐፈ: ሐሳብ: ዘእምአመ: ተፈጥረ: ዓለም
- IV) f. 19rb-va: (Calculation of the 13 cycles) እምቀዳማይ: ዓመቱ: ለአዳም: እስከ: ፻፯: ዓመቱ: ለሄኖስ: ይከውን: ዓመት: ፳፻፴፪: ፩: አውደ: ቀመር:...
- V) ff. 20rb-21va: (World chronology) ዓመቱ: ለዓለም: እምአዳም: እስከ: ይትወለድ: ሄኖሳ: ወማቱሳላ: ወሐይወ: ሄኖሳ:...

Chronological treatise V

- From Adam to Methuselah /Enoch who “lived in the inside of the earth” - **365** years.
- Adam to when God concealed Enoch - **1454** years.
- Adam to Flood - **2242** years.
- Adam to the Tower, the division of 72 languages - **2600** years.
- Adam to when Abraham became 75 years old - **3385**.
- Adam to the birth of Isaac - **3413** years.
- Adam to the birth of Jacob - **3473** years.
- Adam to the birth of Lewi - **3556** years.
- Adam to the birth of Moses - **3736** years.
- Adam to Moses’ 80 year - **3815** years.
- Adam to Israel’s 30th year in the desert - **3856** years.
- Adam to King Käs - **3913** years.
- Adam to Judge Gäton’el - **3958** years.
- Adam to Judge Gideon - **4161** years, etc.

Time of the composition and author?

1) Tables go from 369 to 532 year of Diocletian

(**653** to **816** AD)

2) Treatises count chronology up to:

the end of the 13th circle

= 1065 year of Diocletian

= **1349** AD (?)

the 5th year of King Säyfä Arʿad (r. 1344-72)

or

6916 year from the creation of Adam

= **1424** AD (?)

the 10nd year of King Yəshāq (r. 1414–29)

Hints to an earlier composition time?

- Palaeographic features of the manuscript
- The name of the alleged author is *eppisqoppōs* Elyas:
 - (f. 19rb) ወዘአንበቦ፡ ለዝንቱ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ይጻፈ፡ በእንቲአየ፡ በእንተ፡ ትሑት፡ ወምኑን፡
አሊያስ፡ ኢጲስቆጶስ፡ ሰላም፡ ወጽድቅ፡ እምነበ፡ እግዚአ፡ ብሔር፡ ...
 - (f. 20ra) ወዘንተ፡ ጸሐፍነ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይሥርሐ፡ በዘ፡ ይረክቡ፡ ፋሲካ፡ ዘእግዚእነ፡ ...
ዘኅለፊሂ፡ ጸሐፍነ፡ ወዘይመጽእሂ፡ ጸሐፍነ፡ ወዘያነብሮሂ፡ ይጻፈ፡ በእንቲአየ፡ በእንተ፡ ትሑት፡
አሊያስ፡ ኢጲስ፡ ቆጶስ፡ ...
- Elyas, the Bishop of Aksum, has been assigned the authorship for hagiographical texts dedicated to St. Mäṭaʿ/Libanos
- Elyas is said to be a contemporary of Libanos

Linguistic evidence for foreign background of the text/author?

Month names in the last unit (*muyyaṭe gizeyat*):

- 25 *Fəmenot* (7th Coptic month, *phamenōt*)
- *Ḥayon* (10th Coptic month, *paōne*)
- 25 *Tot* (1st Coptic month, *thout*)
- 25 *Kiyak* (4th Coptic month, *koiahk*)

Transcribed non-Ethiopian month names in the round diagramm (f. 1r), poorly visible; mention of the calendars of Rom, Sor, Mäqedon, Gəbş, Aga^ʿəzi.

Secondary tradition? MS EMMML 2063

- MS EMMML 2063, Ḥayq Ḥṣṭifanos, second half of the 15th century; the so-called “Computus of King Zār’a Yaʿqob”:
 - a big part of the explanations for the basic elements are shared, mostly word by word
 - Part of III. መጽሐፈ: ሐሳብ: ዘእምላመ: ተፈጥረ: ዓለም (biblical) is shared
 - world chronology for the most part different
 - diagramms and tables are different
 - the name of *episqopos* Elyas is missing

Secondary tradition in MS Vat. aeth. 1

MS Four Gospels and other texts, 16th cent., including chronological treatises on ff. 198r-212r (nos. 7-8).

Interpolated texts of the “Comboni fragment”:

- I) obviously ff. 14ra-b: ተዝካረ: አውደ: ዓመታት
- II) F. 16ra: ዓመቱ: ለዓለም (preceded by mention of Gäbrä Mäsqäl/11th cycle end /year 6384)
- III) Ff. 16va-18ra: መጽሐፈ: ሐሳብ: ዘእምአመ: ተፈጥረ: ዓለም (at least a part)
- IV) F. 19rb-va: “Calculation of the 13 cycles” (with some changes)
- V) Ff. 20rb-21va: (World chronology) ዓመቱ: ለዓለም: ... (with shortenings and changes)
- Tables (?), some of the explanatory notes?

Parallel tradition in other MSS

- Berol 84 (Neuergebauer 1989, no. 5): “Computus for 13 cycles” (IV, some similarity)
- EMMML 215 (Neuegebauer no. 30): “Computus for 13 cycles” (IV, some similarity)
- The chronological treatise in Vat. aeth. 61, ff. 2-8 (14th cent.) is **dissimilar** from the texts in the “Comboni fragment”

Interpolation in the “Prophecy of Ezra”

- A version published in J. Halévy, *Te‘ezaza sanbat*.

Commandements du sabbat: “Ezra”, xviii-xxii, 57-79

- After a manuscript acquired from “un debtera falacha”, in Qabṭa, Wälqayt (West Tigray), in 1867

- Interpolated: somewhat revised *Treatise IV*, “Calculation of the 13 cycles” (Halévy, pp. 67-68, text)

- The author introduces counting of weeks

- The Greek names still recognizable: “Ṭəmlomeyos Filadulifa”, “Şə‘əkəl Ṭemloyos”



Thank you for your attention!



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