

Denis Nosnitsin  
Churches and Monasteries of Təgray

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1

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A Survey of Manuscript Collections

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# Churches and Monasteries of Təgray

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## Preface

One of the main scopes of the Ethio-SPaRe research initiative is to achieve a new and a more comprehensive picture of the Christian Ethiopian written heritage and Ethiopian manuscript culture. For this purpose, considerable efforts and funds have been invested in the field work in North Ethiopia. During the years 2010–12, the team conducted six field missions, identifying historical manuscript collections and documenting them *in situ*. Besides, the team recorded the local cultural context in which manuscripts were produced and used and the manuscript collections emerged. This knowledge is fundamental for further study of each separate manuscript and each text transmitted in it. This volume presents the first observations concerning the sites, their collections, and selected data gained through the preliminary analysis of some of the recorded manuscripts.

In its attempt to document the Ethiopian manuscript culture in its original context, the Ethio-SPaRe project follows, in one way or another, in the methodological footsteps of such major endeavours as the Deutsche Aksum Expedition (1906)<sup>1</sup>, the Lake Tana expedition of Ernst Hammerschmidt (1968)<sup>2</sup>, Oxford British Expedition (1974)<sup>3</sup>, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library microfilming enterprise (1970–90s)<sup>4</sup> and several more regionally centred initiatives or case studies, such as the series of research initiatives of the French scholars focusing on the antique and medieval sites (in particular rock-hewn churches)<sup>5</sup>, the manuscript recording project of the Universities of Illinois

- 1 The expedition led by Enno Littmann (EAE II, 145a–46a) is particularly famous for the very important first-hand descriptions of the ancient archaeological monuments but also medieval churches (see the volumes of DAE; activities of the expedition dedicated to Ethiopian manuscripts are less known, but see WION 2011).
- 2 See HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973, 1977; the cataloguing of the collections continued also after those publications.
- 3 JUEL-JENSEN – ROWELL 1975, the undertaking which greatly advanced our knowledge of the sites around the town of ᵀAṣbi (the then ᵀAṣbidāra *wärāda*), including their manuscript collections.
- 4 It resulted in microfilming of more than 7,000 manuscripts during over thirty years; cp. EAE II, 413a–14a; <http://www.hmml.org/centers/ethiopia10> (accessed April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013).
- 5 The original research was conducted under the aegis of the French archaeological mission to Ethiopia and R.C.P. 230 “Les Civilisations éthiopiennes de la préhistoire au Moyen Age” of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. As a result, a number of important contributions appeared in the journals *Abbay* and *Annales d’Éthiopie* (LECLANT – MIQUEL 1959; SAUTER 1963, 1976; GODET 1977 etc.). In recent years, the work has been continued, in the context of different undertakings, by Jacques Mercier, Marie-Laure Derat and others.



and Addis Ababa in Goḡgam and Gondär (1980s–90s)<sup>6</sup>, Eritrean monastery and manuscript survey by Alessandro Bausi and Gianfrancesco Lusini (1992–94)<sup>7</sup>, as well as recent examples of project run by other colleagues, inside and outside the field of Ethiopian Studies.

All the aforementioned – especially more recent – undertakings have proven that, on one hand, we still know too little about Ethiopia’s Orthodox Christian written heritage and manuscript culture; and, on the other hand, recording the manuscript heritage of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and taking measures towards its preservation will remain one of the urgent tasks of the Ethiopian Studies for quite a number of years to come. Methodologically, the experience shows that in the course of study, the material should preferably not be detached, physically or intellectually, from its original environment, which is represented by the respective manuscript collection and by the ecclesiastic institution hosting it. If no information on the original context is available – which is frequently the case with manuscripts kept in

6 A less known undertaking which, however, gained a lot of significant material processed in a number of important publications, mainly on Ethiopian historical land ownership system (see, e.g., CRUMMEY 2000).

7 Cp. BAUSI – LUSINI 1992 and a series of subsequent articles on the basis of that undertaking, all published in the *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*.

European libraries – manuscript witnesses, even if ancient or obviously valuable, will ultimately yield far fewer clues as to the role they and their texts once played, and present an additional challenge for researchers instead.

Apart from looking at the Ethiopian manuscript culture in its indigenous context, one more significant methodological principle pursued by the Ethio-SPaRe project is that it strives to record and study Ethiopian ecclesiastic libraries in their integrity, keeping the notion of the library of provenance as a real category. As a result of such comprehensive approach, new opportunities appear. The history of each manuscript can be viewed and traced in relation to other manuscripts of the same collection, or to manuscripts of other collections which also can be recorded and studied. It may be possible to precisely follow the geographical distribution and historical spread of a text, adding a real-life geographical dimension to a text-critical study. Identifying local scribal styles and individual scribal hands adds significantly to our capacity to date the manuscripts and to our understanding of the vectors of textual transmission and the history of the manuscript collections in question. Accumulating data on historical binding structures collected on a regular basis greatly contributes to historical picture of Ethiopian manuscript production. Amassing historical information from additional notes in the manuscripts adds a new level to the study of the local and regional history.

A few words should be said on the working procedure applied by the Ethio-SPaRe project during field missions. The work on each collection embraced four domains: (1) identifying and recording manuscript collections proper; (2) recording paraphernalia; (3) recording the physical context; (4) recording the local narratives.

(1) Manuscript collections were in the focus of attention. Data on important churches and their libraries were collected from both the accessible historical sources and secondary literature. Information provided by the Ethiopian church and state authorities was of utmost importance. If necessary, a preliminary visit to the site was arranged; it was frequently important to contact the respective local community in advance to assure its cooperation, and obtain a rough estimation of the size and value of the collection. The first step in the work with the collection was to select the books for digitizing; for that, historical manuscripts had to be identified. Manuscripts datable to post-1940s, i.e. after the end of the Italian period, were often left out as too recent<sup>8</sup>. Before digitization, all manuscripts underwent a basic survey for

8 Basically, the team tried to avoid picking only a few selected (“oldest”, “the most interesting” etc.) items, aiming at a more holistic record of each collection. The historical part of the collection was in most of the cases digitized in full, while the recent – sometimes quite extensive – part was left largely unphotographed, or rather, for the more recent witnesses, the decision was taken on a case-by-case basis. Identifying the his-

content and physical structure, and a first set of metadata was created. For each manuscript, the complete text block<sup>9</sup> and all elements of binding were photographed and thoroughly documented; in many cases, additional (close-up) images of peculiar or important features were taken<sup>10</sup>. Besides the books formally belonging to ecclesiastic institutions, the project team digitized some manuscripts in private possession (both codices and protective scrolls).

(2) While church paraphernalia (crosses, liturgical vessels, votive images) were not the main focus, a number of them was registered and photographed, in some cases being a valuable addition to the manuscripts. Since the study of those items requires completely different methods, in this book they shall only be referred to in exceptional cases<sup>11</sup>.

(3) The team does not claim any particular competence in the field of archaeology. Nonetheless it found important to document the geographical setting of the sites and the features of the architectural structures. The volume includes photographs of the church buildings and compounds and their surroundings. Recording the local physical context also included, for instance, gathering information on the holy water sources (*ṣābāl*), graves, holy trees, etc. Sometimes, the presence of archaeological remains or old deserted structures came to light which were also inspected and documented alongside with explanations concerning their origins and functions offered by local people.

torical manuscripts *in situ* was the most serious challenge provided the difficult conditions of work and the many technical difficulties that often can prevent a researcher from having a chance to thoroughly check the entire collection.

- 9 The objective situation, in particular the constraints of travelling and *in situ* digitization, made photographing openings the only option. Only in rare cases, photos were taken page by page.
- 10 Where more information depth was needed, the team used macro photography with a high powered zoom lens. During the last two trips electronic microscopy was additionally introduced.
- 11 For some collections, such items as crosses may be the oldest pieces evidence preserved, by far antedating manuscripts and church building etc. (cp., below, Qəta Maryam, Gʷahgot Dābrā Šəge ʾIyāsus, Sāwnā Dābrā Sina Dābrā Gännāt Maryam). It should be noted that a number of art items from some of the sites visited by the project team has been known ever since, and in a few cases studied better than the respective manuscript collections. In some cases, references leading to the relevant bibliography have been included, but a complete repertory of all existing pieces of information has not been the aim at the current stage. To achieve a fuller picture of the historical heritage of one or another site, the reader is recommended to consult, in addition to the present monograph, the database *Mazgaba Seelat* (representing the long-year research work of Michael Gervers and Ewa Balicka-Witakowska) and such publications as, e.g., PLANT 1985, CHOJNACKI 2006, MERCIER – DANIEL SEYFEMICHAEL 2009 (alongside earlier publications by Jacques MERCIER), and of course EAE I–V.

(4) Interviews were conducted to collect local narratives about the ecclesiastic institutions. The most knowledgeable clergymen available at the moment were asked to respond, in Amharic or Təgrəñña, some standard questions concerning, e.g., the number of the *tabots*, the status of the institution, the name of the founder, the number of clergy and/or monks and so on.

The geographic scope of the project has been limited to the State (*kəlləl*) of Təgray in North Ethiopia (see maps 1, 2) – an area of central importance in Ethiopian Studies, as it is the area of the ancient Kingdom of ʾAksum, and thus of the beginnings of the Ethiopian Christianity in the fourth century.

Among the reasons for the exclusion of some of the areas four were the most prominent. First, the absence of significant manuscript collections and other expressions of the manuscript culture: some parts of Təgray are, due to different reasons, relatively poor in this respect (Kafta Humāra, parts of Wälqayt). Second, accessibility was sometimes a reason, as some areas are particularly difficult to reach (e.g., ʾIrob). Third, work conditions: in some areas the general conditions for the work have not been met yet (Šire). Fourth reason was the past research history: some areas have been already studied more than others or can be easily researched (esp. ʾAksum, ʿAdwa, Gärʿalta, ʾAšbi, places along the route from South Təgray to Mäqälä, etc.). The north-eastern part of East Təgray was selected as the primary area to work in, since the manuscript collections of the region including the town of ʿAddigrat have been lesser known than those of many other areas of North Ethiopia, and in some places have been particularly endangered because of the recent Ethio-Eritrean border conflict. Therefore, the primary area has been studied in most detail, whereas the others came in question for less extensive, sample research.

Several issues that emerged during the field missions should be referred to prior to the beginning of the actual material presentation.

From the very beginning, the project team had to deal with the problem of toponyms, church names and identities of the sites. During the past decades, a substantial amount of data on the Ethiopian churches have been gathered. However, the secondary literature does not identify the ecclesiastic institutions in a uniform way. Their names were not always written down carefully and correctly by means of transcription, and their locations were frequently described in the most schematic manner. Over time, the names of many ecclesiastic institutions and historical regions underwent transformations and alterations of different kinds<sup>12</sup>; in the twentieth century, the borders and

12 Typically difficult cases result, e.g., from a re-consecration of the church, usually through the introduction of a new *tabot*. On the *tabot*, or altar-table, the pivotal element of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity and everyday church life, which is preserved in the closed part of the church (*mäqdäs*) and may not be seen or touched by laics, see FRITSCH 2000:385–88, EAE IV, 802a–04a.

names of administrative units have also been subject to frequent changes. As a result, it is not easy to apply the data collected by the former researchers to the today's landscape of North Ethiopia (of course with the exception of the better-known places). It has been even more difficult to identify relevant information in the historical sources and to connect it with the actual sites<sup>13</sup>. The historical geographical research of the collected material is still far from completion<sup>14</sup>.

Names of the ecclesiastic institutions used in the titles of the sections of the chapters are full-length official variants, which should be distinguished from the shorter “colloquial” names, e.g., Qärsäbär Däbrä Säläm Qəddus Mikaʾel versus Qärsäbär Mikaʾel or Mikaʾel Qärsäbär<sup>15</sup>. All names were recorded and verified in place. One should note that the local usage tends to place the name of the locality at the end, i.e., Däbrä Säläm Qəddus Mikaʾel Qärsäbär, or Mikaʾel Qärsäbär. In the present volume, the locality name is always placed as the first element of the name of the institution in the titles of the paragraphs, for the sake of clarity and convenience, to make an institution in question immediately recognizable.

- 13 Two important Ethiopian sources were consulted for historical references in a more consistent way: the *Liber Axumae* (CONTI ROSSINI 1909, 1910) and the additional notes in the “Golden Gospel” book of the Däbrä Libanos of Ham (geographically close to Gulo Mäkäda, one of the main areas of research covered in the present volume; see CONTI ROSSINI 1901). I cannot claim to have found all relevant references, but the indices to both sources, published in BAUSI 2006 and 2007, proved very helpful. In addition, I have to underline the usefulness of the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (EAE) which provides concise and clear definitions and explanations, and a well-selected bibliography for terms, localities, historical events and figures, and therefore is frequently referred to in the discussion below.
- 14 In a number of cases, the historical name of the church deviates from its present name, but the alterations can be ascertained usually after a profound study of the local tradition and respective manuscript collection. On the whole, differences in church names as they appear in local written and oral traditions may hint to important developments in the history of the relevant areas, libraries and individual manuscripts.
- 15 In both cases, the name variants usually contain indications to the location of a church or monastery (Qärsäbär) and its main dedication (the dedication of its main *tabot*, St. Michael; cp. above), or sometimes also the name of its founder. The full variant comprises also what can be called “ceremonial name” of the institution which frequently includes the term *däbr* (like Däbrä Säläm, Däbrä Mädhānit, Däbrä Libanos etc.) and is supposed to reveal the religious symbolism embedded in the foundation. The “ceremonial names” seem to be less commonly used in the everyday life (and therefore were sometimes not easy to obtain), but reserved mostly for the solemn contexts or written discourse. The word *qəddus* or *qəddəst* “saint” is included in most (but not all) names. Also, some other irregularities can be observed in the structures of church names.



Today, four types of ecclesiastic institutions are formally distinguished in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, of which three are relevant here. Most of the individual churches are registered as *däbr* (“church, cathedral”), some others as *gätär* (“chapel”). Monastic communities which are formally recognized as such are referred to as *gädam* (“monastery”). However, today the status of *gädam* may be purely formal. If the monastic community got dissolved, its church can be overtaken by local people and served by the secular clergy; having become a common rural church, the institution can still retain the status of *gädam*<sup>16</sup>. Further in the report, unless an additional remark on the status of an institution is provided, it is of *däbr*-type.

Most of the manuscript collections are of relatively small size. The number of historical manuscripts they comprise is usually not high, and in most cases does not exceed fifteen or at most twenty codices<sup>17</sup>. At least one third of each collection is usually composed of very recent (post-1940s) manuscripts<sup>18</sup>. Monastic collections usually stand apart for their quality, diversity and size.

The monograph does not aim at providing comprehensive descriptions of complete manuscript collections. Rather, the main objective has been to introduce (or re-introduce) the collections and their respective hosting institutions – churches and monasteries – into the scholarly discussion, and present some of their most interesting (in most cases hardly known) items, with the hope that it may provide an inspiration for the Ethiopian manuscript studies. A broad goal of the present work is, of course, to show the richness, uniqueness and creativity of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian culture.

It goes without saying that the present volume reflects work in progress. All conclusions and dating attempts offered in this survey should be considered as preliminary at best, based on brief evaluation of the palaeographic and codicological features, and quick analysis of the internal information gained from texts, subscriptions and additional notes. In the course of the on-going cataloguing work, new data constantly emerges that forces to adjust or change completely the previously reached conclusions. Occasional mistakes and misinterpretations are being constantly identified and corrected. How-

16 For the historical definitions and etymologies, s. EAE II, 6a–7a; 641b–42a; 714b.

17 A remark is made if the collection is exceptionally extensive. Due to different reasons, the exact number of the books recorded in each collection is not provided.

18 The frequently quoted estimation of SERGEW HABLE SELASSIE (1981:35) about as many as 200,000 manuscripts still located in Ethiopia should be considered critically. That, however, not from the sheer statistical point of view: the number 200,000 is indeed not unrealistic. However, one should ask how many of those manuscripts are indeed historical and predate the twentieth century. The number of historical – most valuable – manuscripts is diminishing at a quick pace as they are gradually substituted for the newly produced ones, which are of a rather limited value for research.



ever, at the current stage it is important to make a first-hand review of the visited sites and their material, which will hopefully be up-dated and diversified in future essays.

Names of donors and commissioners are frequently mentioned in the manuscripts, but one should take into consideration that they are mostly the so-called baptismal names, and, without auxiliary information, are less elucidating than one might assume. The same is also valid for other categories of individuals appearing in the manuscripts.

The issue of the poor preservation conditions and other factors endangering Ethiopian church libraries has been raised many times. In this respect, the team indeed witnessed serious problems at a number of sites, even though the storage conditions have been visibly improved here and there, over the last years<sup>19</sup>. Somewhat overshadowed by the general “preservation conditions concern” is the fact that a substantial number of historical manuscripts (i.e. old and valuable pieces) urgently require conservation measures or at least some simple repair, not to be lost in the next ten to fifteen years<sup>20</sup>. Further on, some of the surveyed collections are in the dangerous state of gradual “dissolution”<sup>21</sup>. The lack of awareness of the local communities as to what the historical heritage is useful for and how it should be taken care of continues to be a significant issue. As before, the authorities in charge lack sufficient resources and manpower for collecting comprehensive information on all the ancient or valuable manuscripts. The present survey shall hopefully serve as a further contribution to the cause of securing the manuscript heritage of North Ethiopia.

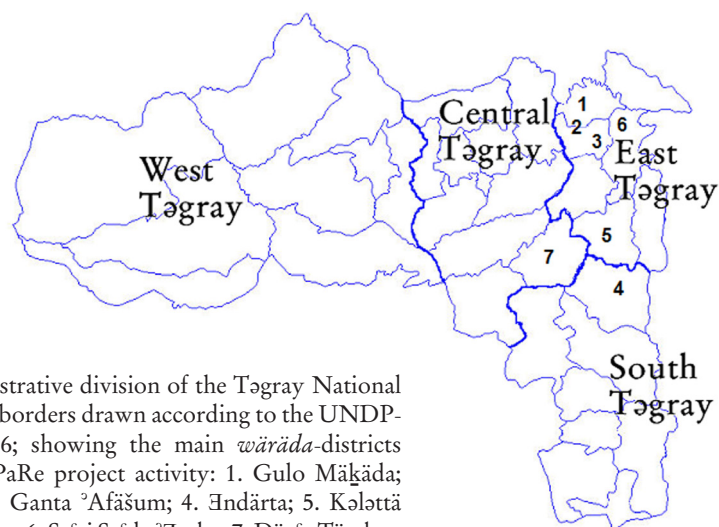
The names and terms in Ethio-Semitic languages are transliterated according to the system applied in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (see EAE I–V, preface; with the exceptions that the initial glottal stop is always specified (as ʾ) and that the consonant **θ** is rendered as *d*). When reproduced in transliteration on in Ethiopic script, the original spelling is left without corrections, even if it deviates from the standard grammar(s) and/or orthography.

The monograph briefly describes, in seven chapters, the first findings obtained from the eighty four collections scattered across seven administrative

19 Within the project framework, storage facilities were significantly improved at five ecclesiastic libraries (that included supply of preservation cupboards and archival boxes).

20 Conservation work is being conducted within the Ethio-SPaRe project framework, and will be addressed in other publications.

21 It happens when the members of a community decide to distribute manuscripts of the collection and keep them in their individual households.



Map 2. Administrative division of the Təgray National Regional State; borders drawn according to the UNDP-EUE map 1996; showing the main *wäräda*-districts of the Ethio-SPaRe project activity: 1. Gulo Mäḵäda; 2. ʿAddigrat; 3. Ganta ʾAfäšum; 4. ʾEndärtä; 5. Kələttä ʾAwlaʿlo / Wəqro; 6. Saʿsi Šaʿda ʾƏmba; 7. Däḡa Təmben

entities in Təgray: six *wäräda* districts and the town of ʿAddigrat<sup>22</sup> (see map 2). All of them are placed on the map 3<sup>23</sup>:

Chapter 1: Gulo Mäḵäda. I.1 ʿUra Qirqos / Qəfrəya ʾUrä Mäsḡäl; I.2 ʿAddäqäharsi Mäkanä Həywät Paraqlitos; I.3 Däbrä Zäyt Qəddəst Maryam; I.4 Däbrä Maʿšo Qəddus Yoḥannəs; I.5 May Čaw Qəddus Mikaʿel; I.6 Mədrä Ruba Däbrä Gännät Qəddəst

22 Today, the *wäräda* is a unit in the administrative system of Ethiopia in its turn subdivided into *ṭabiya* sub-districts; each *ṭabiya* is composed, in turn, of a number of *qušät*-units. The State of Təgray today comprises 35 *wäräda*-districts, distributed among the four “zones” of Təgray: the Western Zone (or West Təgray), the Central Zone (South Təgray), the Eastern Zone (East Təgray) and the Southern Zone (South Təgray). The most important cities have a special status. The project team worked in six *wärädas* each covering between 1,500 and 2,000 sq km, with the population from ca. 80,000 to 100,000 inhabitants and in the town of ʿAddigrat with its 60,000 inhabitants. A brief summary of the peculiar features in the culture and history of each of these administrative entities is offered in the introduction to the respective chapter.

23 In the church administration, each of those *wäräda*-districts encompasses up to 100 or more ecclesiastic institutions of all types. According to the data for 2013: 117 church institutions are registered in Gulo Mäḵäda; 112 in Ganta ʾAfäšum; 72 in ʾEndärtä; 106 in Kələttä ʾAwlaʿlo; 126 in Saʿsi Šaʿda ʾƏmba; 100 in Däḡa Təmben; significantly smaller number of churches in the town of ʿAddigrat. However, only a part of those institutions are old, and not all of those old have significant historical manuscript collections. The intensive process of building and consecrating new churches is underway in the entire Təgray. It creates additional difficulties for selecting institutions for survey. Chapter introductions provide short history for each research area and reasons behind the selection of the particular sites.

- Šəllase; I.7 Mənəbəyti Dəbrə Şəyon Qəddəst Maryam; I.8 Fəqada Dəbrə Bərhan Qəddəst Maryam; I.9 Səmaz Dəbrə Məṭmaq Qəddəst Maryam *gədam*; I.10 Səbəya Dəbrə Gənnət Qəddəst Maryam; I.11 Qərsəbər Dəbrə Səlam Qəddus Mika'el; I.12 'Agamyo Qəddus Mika'el; I.13 'Agərhəse Dəbrə Qəddusan 'Abunə Mamas *gədam*; I.14 'Ara'ro Təklə Haymanot; I.15 'Addi Qolq'wal Giyorgis; I.16 'Əmbəyto Təklə Haymanot; I.17 Məka'əlo Məkanə Lə'ul Kidanə Məhrət *gədam*; I.18 'Ambasət Kidanə Məhrət; I.19 Dəbrə Dammo 'Abunə 'Arəgawi *gədam*; I.20 'Aḫzərə Dəbrə Məhrət Qəddəst Maryam; I.21 'Addi Qiyahto Qəddəst Maryam Kudo Hawwəs; I.22 Səglat Qəddəst Maryam / Qəddus Mika'el; I.23 Səddəyto Dəbrə Gənnət Qəddus Mika'el; I.24 Taḫtay Ruba Dəbrə Bərhan Qəddəst Maryam; I.25 May Şa'da Qəddəst Şəllase; I.26 'Ənda Həwaryat Pətros wə-Pawlos.
- Chapter 2: 'Addigrat. II.1 'Addigrat Dəbrə Mənkərat Qəddus Qirqos; II.2 'Addigrat Dəbrə Mədhənit Mədhəne 'Aləm.
- Chapter 3: Ganta 'Afəşum. III.1 Nəḫbi Dəbrə Səlam Qəddus Mika'el *gədam*; III.2 Gənaḫti Dəbrə Gənnət Qəddəst Maryam; III.3 Betə Həwaryat Şərḫa Şəyon; III.4 Bə'atti Dəbrə Məhrət Qəddus Mika'el *gədam*; III.5 Məkan Maryam; III.6 Bet Məka'ə Dəbrə Şəhəl Qəddus Mika'el *gədam* / Gəbrə Mənfəs Qəddus; III.7 May 'Ab'a Maryam; III.8 Čəḫat Mədhəne 'Aləm; III.9 Ləqay Dəbrə Məhrət Kidanə Məhrət; III.10 Si'ət Dəbrə Gənnət Qəddəst Maryam; III.11 Qi'at Dəbrə Şəyon Qəddəst Maryam; III.12 Məkoḫ'ə Dəbrə Gənnət Kidanə Məhrət *gədam*; III.13 Mərgəḫəya Dəbrə Səlam Qəddus Mika'el; III.14 Dəbla Dəbrə Bərhan Yoḫənnəs Məṭmaq; III.15 'Andel Maryam; III.16 Soṭa Dəbrə Səlam Qəddus Mika'el; III.17 Dəndera Dəbrə Məhrət Qəddus Mika'el; III.18 Həwaşi Qəddus Gəbrə'el and 'Abrəqo Qəddəst Maryam; III.19 Gol'a Yoḫənnəs Məṭmaq; III.20 Qəta Maryam; III.21 Hərennət Maryam Gəbəzəyti; III.22 Qənda'ro Dəbrə Ḥayl Qəddus Qirqos; III.23 Mə'əsar Gwəhila Qəddus Mika'el; III.24 Mələkusaṭto Qəddəst Maryam; III.25 'Addimḫara Dəbrə Mədhənit 'Abba Yoḫənni; III.26 Məngəs Qəddəst Maryam; III.27 Dəbri Dəbrə Zakaryas Qəddus Giyorgis; III.28 'Af Məhyaw Qəddəst Maryam; III.29 Bəḫəra Qəddəst Maryam *gədam*; III.30 Gwəḫgot Dəbrə Şəge 'Iyəsus.
- Chapter 4: 'Əndərta. IV.1 Dərba Dəbrə 'Abunə Yasay; IV.2 Koholo Dəbrə Gəlila Dəbrə Betel Qəddus Yoḫənnəs Məṭmaq; IV.3 May 'Anbəsa Dəbrə Gənnət Kidanə Məhrət *gədam* / 'Ənda Məḫşun *gədam*.
- Chapter 5: Kələttə 'Awla'lo. V.1 Kədih Dəbrə Təwəḫədo Məhrət Qəddəst Maryam; V.2 Bələsa Dəbrə Gənnət Qəddus Mika'el; V.3 'Agula' Getesemani Kidanə Məhrət *gədam*; V.4 Qəḫen Dəbrə Şadəqan; V.5 'Addi 'Arba'a Dəbrə Səbḫat Qəddəst Maryam; V.6 Şəḫəlo Dəbrə Şəḫay Qəddəst Maryam; V.7 Dərəba Mədhəne 'Aləm; V.8 Mə'ago 'Amanu'el.
- Chapter 6: Sa'si Şa'da 'Əmba. VI.1 Mənəwət Giyorgis 'Ənda Maryam; VI.2 May Raza Təklə Haymanot; VI.3 Səwnə Dəbrə Sina Dəbrə Gənnət Maryam; VI.4 Wəlwəlo Dəbrə Bərhan Qirqos; VI.5 Qələqəl Şəyon Maryam; VI.6 Ḥangoda Dəbrə Məhrət Qəddus Mika'el; VI.7 Şəbəla Dəbrə Gənnət Maryam *gədam*; VI.8 Sənqəta Fəwəyini Dəbrə Şəge Qəddəst Maryam; VI.9 Bet Muḫa'ə Qəddus Mika'el.
- Chapter 7: Dəg'a Təmben. VII.1 Qorrrar Dəbrə Mədhənit Qəddəst Maryam *gədam*; VII.2 Kunale 'Arba'tu 'Ənsəsa; VII.3 Tənsəḫe Kidanə Məhrət *gədam*; VII.4 Təgoga Dəbrə Nazret Kidanə Məhrət *gədam*; VII.5 'Arəbay Qəddus Mika'el; VII.6 May Bə'atti 'Arba'tu 'Ənsəsa; VII.7 'Al'asa Qəddus Mika'el; VII.8 Qəqəma Qəddəst Maryam

Däbrä Gännät *gädam*; VII.9 Zala ʾĒnda ʾAmanuʾel *gädam*; VII.10 Rubakusa Qəddus Giyorgis *gädam*.

The survey represents the first stage of project work. The team continues now at the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg with the scientific description of manuscripts, completing the cataloguing database. The data shall be synthesized to reconstruct the history of collections and sites. Certain issues of codicology, palaeography and history receive extensive treatment: some of the first results have been presented during the two project workshops, *Ecclesiastic Landscape of North Ethiopia: History, Change and Cultural Heritage* (2011) and *Saints in Christian Ethiopia: Literary Sources and Veneration* (2012). The proceedings are underway.

Digital copies of the collected materials can be consulted in the main office of the Təgray Culture and Tourism Agency, in the Eastern Təgray Diocese (ʿAddigrat) and in the Southern Təgray Diocese (May Čäw) and in the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies (Hamburg).

Summing up, the Ethio-SPaRe project team has developed its own elaborate field research scheme, in which a strong emphasis is placed upon the study and detailed record of ecclesiastic libraries. With this volume, I would like to make the first notes accessible to other researchers, in the hope that the wide Ethiopianist community shall appreciate the effort.

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Hamburg, 31 December 2012