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**SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATIONS
IN
ETHIOPIC
AND
EPHREMIC LITERATURE.**

Ralph Lee

Thesis submitted for Degree of PhD in the Study of Religions

2011

**Department of the Study of Religions
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Declaration for PhD thesis

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Abstract

The palimpsest of Ethiopian Christianity reveals the impact and influence of several hands: Judaic, Egyptian, and Syrian. The origins of Ethiopian Christianity are uncertain; early proselytisers may have found traces of paganism; of Christianity derived from the Ethiopian eunuch's encounter with Philip; and of Judaic religion adopted, according to Ethiopia's national epic, the *Kəbra Nagašt*, a millennium before Christ. The apparent imprint of pre-Christian Judaic religion in Ethiopia is epitomised by the devotion to the Ark of the Covenant, or *tābot*. Syriac influence arrived much later, conveyed by Syrian missionaries between the fourth and the sixth centuries CE whose activities cemented Ethiopia's staunch miaphysite position. This thesis investigates the influence of Syrian Christianity upon the trajectory of Ethiopian Christianity, proposing that many of the so-called 'Judaic' practices may have arisen through interaction with Judaeo-Christian Syriac Christianity, rather than being directly derived from an Old Testament context as proposed by Edward Ullendorff. To do so, it explores the links between Ethiopic and Syrian literature using Ge'ez, Amharic and Syriac literary sources to show how Syrian imagery shaped Ethiopic traditions. The Ethiopic texts, each with origins in the sixth century, encompass the hymnody or *Dəggwā* of St Yared, the *andāmtā* Bible commentaries, and the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The works of the seminal fourth century Syriac theologian-poet Ephrem, his later devotee Jacob of Serugh, and the earlier Syriac *Odes of Solomon* represent the Syrian trajectory. From the rich repertoire of symbols contained within these works, three have been specifically selected: the Ark and the Cross, as well as the perception of Paradise. The wealth of material common to both Ethiopic and Syriac literature demonstrates the complexity of the Judaeo-Christian thought-worlds from which they derived, implying more nuanced influences than have been previously been postulated.

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Introduction

Ethiopia was one of the first Christian nations, and its Christianity is a palimpsest bearing traces of the hands of different cultural influences: Egyptian, Greek, Syrian, and Judaic. Little is known about pre-Christian religion in Ethiopia, and the forces that formed its distinctive expression of Christianity, the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church. The Judaic legacy of Ethiopian Christianity is articulated in the national epic, the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which embodies the legend of Ethiopia's acquisition of the original Ark of the Covenant, fashioned by Bezalel and Oholiab according to the plan divinely revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the country's conversion to Judaism a millennium before Christ. The Ark, which many Ethiopians believe to reside in a small chapel in Aksum in the northern Tigre province, has become not only a source of national honour, but also its ceremonial, Eucharistic and theological functions remain one of the unique aspects of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church. Whilst the historicity of the *Kəbra Nagašt* remains the topic of much conjecture, the claim promoted by Ethiopian Christianity of its Judaic descent has been supported by prominent scholars, most notably by Edward Ullendorff, whose Schweich Lectures '*Ethiopia and the Bible*' were delivered at the British Academy in 1967⁵. In these lectures, Ullendorff considered many aspects of Ethiopic Christianity that are alluded to in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, including the devotion to the Ark of the Covenant, the unusual threefold divisions of Ethiopian Churches, and the application of Levitical laws, concluding that they evinced direct Judaic influence on the Ethiopian Church.

Another, albeit less publicised, imprint belongs to Syrian Christianity. Inscriptions supply material evidence for the conversion to Christianity of the fourth century monarch, Ezana, and the subsequent penetration of Christianity into the Aksumite court, under the direct influence of Frumentius, a Syrian missionary, whose ordination by Athanasius forged strong Egyptian ecclesiastical connections. In the fifth century, the 'Nine Saints', some of whom may have been Syrian, came to Ethiopia probably fleeing Byzantine persecution. The accounts of their lives portray them as great missionaries, who consolidated Christianity's hold on the Ethiopian population, and established influential monasteries that are still thriving communities today, the most renowned being the *Dabra Dāmo* monastery in Tigre that was founded by *Abuna Aragāwi*. There is little evidence substantiating these events and persons, leading some scholars to be sceptical about the impact of this early Syrian influence in Ethiopia. The story of the 'Nine Saints' is, however, deeply embedded in the national consciousness and their arrival raises the distinct possibility that they may have introduced the hymns and prose works of Ephrem Syrus whose writings represent the acme of Syriac Christianity.

⁵ These lectures were re-published in the book: E. Ullendorff (2006). *Ethiopia and the Bible*

In the decades since Ullendorff presented his Schweich lectures, new developments have taken place, especially within the field of Syriac studies. The seminal works of scholars, notably Robert Murray and Sebastian Brock, have led to an appreciation of how Ephrem expressed his theology in poetry, and the recognition of his eschewal of the theological definitions of Greek speaking Christianity. Studies of Ephrem's works have revealed a rich and distinctively Judaeo-Christian approach to theology, with an overriding preference for poetic rather than prose forms. Ephrem himself, when urged to write commentaries, explained that he preferred to express theology in hymns⁶. Many of his works, both critical editions of Syriac texts and scholarly English translations, are now available providing a wealth of material for detailed studies of the works of Ephrem the Syrian and the 'Ephremic' school, the most notable later exponent being Jacob of Serugh. The scholarly English translations of these Syriac works are the primary sources of comparison used in this study.

By contrast, as the literature survey of chapter 2 reveals, the important Ethiopic texts have been only the subject of a handful of detailed studies. Around a century ago, a series of studies on the *Kəbra Nagašt* followed the publication by Carl Bezold of a critical edition of the text⁷, although little attention was given to any theological content in the work. Sir E. A. Wallace Budge's 1922 translation of Bezold's critical text⁸ was a landmark, in that it allowed access to the *Kəbra Nagašt*, but contained some significant errors. Translations of the *Kebra Negast* in this study have been made directly from Ge'ez critical edition. More recently, Roger Cowley conducted a series of highly acclaimed studies on the Ethiopic Bible commentaries known as the *andəmtā*⁹. His advances in the understanding of the *andəmtā*'s provenance were ground breaking, and he made detailed studies of the Ethiopic understanding of the Creation, and Christology presented therein, as well as assessing their hermeneutical approach. Only a few of the *andəmtā* have critical editions¹⁰, however in recent decades the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church has printed many of these commentaries. This study has used these Ethiopian editions, translated from Amharic and

⁶ E.G. Mathews (1994). *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Prose Works (Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Exodus, Homily on our Lord, Letter to Publius)*: 67.

⁷ C. Bezold (1909). *Kebra Nagast: Die Herlichkeit der Könige nach den Handschriften in Berlin, London, Oxford und Paris zum ersten mal im äthiopischen Urtext herausgegeben und mit deutsche Übersetzung versehen. Abhandlung der Philosophisch-Philologischen Klasse der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. 23

⁸ E.A.W. Budge (2004). *The Kebra Nagast*

⁹ See primarily R.W. Cowley (1983). *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*; R.W. Cowley (1988). *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*.

¹⁰ Those with English translation include Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*; K.S. Pedersen (1995). *Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis of the Book of Psalms*; M.A. Garcia (1999). *Ethiopian Biblical Commentaries on the Prophet Micah*. There are extensive excerpts in English in Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*. In Italian see W. Ande Berhan (1994). *Commentari Etiopici sul Libro del Profeta Osea, Edizione critica da MSS inediti, Principi Ermeneutici, Temi Teologici*; T. Abraha (2001). *La lettera ai Romani, Testo e commentari della versione Etiopica*.

Ge'ez. The *Dəggwā*, the hymnody of the Ethiopian Church, for which there is strong evidence that it was written in the sixth century CE by St Yared, is the third major text used in this study. Largely overlooked, perhaps for the same reasons that in earlier decades the poetic works of Ephrem the Syrian were regarded as less important by some scholars, the *Dəggwā* has no critical edition. Since there is virtually no material from the *Dəggwā* in English translation¹¹ the passages cited in this study come from a fifteenth century edition (written before the text underwent significant revisions), in conjunction with a contemporary printed edition¹².

The rich repertoire of Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature reveals many symbols of which only a handful could be studied. The three primary symbols that have been selected are the Ark, the Cross and Paradise. In Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature, these three are united as expressions of divine immanence, often elaborately woven together, and they form a natural set for this investigation. The first symbol, which is investigated in chapter 3, the Ark, or *tābot*, was selected not only because of its consummate position in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, but also because it has been advanced by Ullendorff and other scholars as the most compelling evidence of Judaic influence. As might be expected, the Ethiopic literature is replete with expressions of the Ark and related symbolism. The *Kəbra Nagašt*, wherein the Ark of the Covenant is the primary focus, is also a rich source of symbolic interpretation, and its themes expand far beyond the Ark of the Covenant; such symbolic interpretations also feature in the *Dəggwā* and the *andəmtā*. Ephrem regarded the Ark narrative arising from the Sinai Theophany as a key revelation of the Creator, and exploits the symbolism of the Ark extensively.

Chapter 4 focusses on the second symbol, the Cross, which is closely connected with the Ark in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, as one of a set of symbols that narrated the formation of God’s salvation plan. Both the Cross and the Ark are made of wood, a medium that was considered to be a means of salvation: the *Kəbra Nagašt* extends this symbolism to the shape and sign of the Cross. The *andəmtā* draws similar significance, but interestingly the *Dəggwā* places only minor emphasis on these symbols. Events, primarily in the lives of Old Testament Patriarchs that involve wood, are interpreted symbolically and others are embellished with the signing of the Cross or the interpretation of a standing prayer posture as making this sign. As heirs to a Judaeo-Christian tradition that is already attested in the first century *Odes of Solomon*, Ephrem and Jacob of Serugh also employ such interpretations in relation to the Patriarchs. A

¹¹ A short excerpt by this author is shortly to be published in: *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project Volume 7 – Codices 601 – 654: The Meseret Sebhat Le-Ab Collection of Mekane Yesus Seminary*, Addis Ababa, by Kesis Melaku Terefe, Steve Delamarter, Eugene Oregon, Pickwick Publications, and there is another in the entry under Ethiopian Hymns in J. Julian (1907). *A dictionary of hymnology : setting forth the origin and history of Christian hymns of all ages and nations*.

¹² Yared (15th Century). *Dəggwā*. EMMML 2542; Yared (1997). *ጸመ ድንጋ*; Yared (1999 EC). *መጽሐፈ ድን ስቅዱስ ያሬድ*.

long homily, written by Jacob of Serugh that expounds Moses' prayer posture during the Israelites' battle with the Amalekites provides the most detailed extrapolation of this tradition.

The *Kābra Nagašt*, *Dəggwā* and *andəmtā* all construct robust connections between Paradise and both the Ark and the Cross, each symbol being closely associated with the Sinai Theophany. Chapter 5 explores the extent to which Jewish texts, such as 1 Enoch, have contributed to the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' understanding of Paradise. It analyses the perception of Paradise, the nature of its threefold division elucidated in these texts, and the Eucharistic function of the Tree of Life, access to which was opened up by the Cross. This distinctive association between the Ark, the Cross and Paradise is also mirrored in Ephrem, who regarded Moses' vision on Sinai as fundamental to the understanding of Paradise. As with the Ethiopic sources, Ephrem regarded Paradise as a pre-existent reality and the focus of eschatological hope. This perception of Paradise drawn from 1 Enoch, and the centrality of the Sinai Theophany are elements also fundamental in Jewish *merkabāh* mysticism. This correlation is indicative of a dynamic interaction between the Jewish proponents of this mysticism and both Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' scholars that is further evidence for the Judaeo-Christian trends in these Christian traditions.

Recent critical studies on the text of several books of the Ethiopic Bible¹³, follow a long gap from previous attempts that were made in the early and mid-nineteenth century¹⁴. These critical editions offer much potential to reveal early influences on Ethiopic Christianity, although some data is obscured because of later revisions and the paucity of Ethiopic manuscripts before the thirteenth century CE. A tangential approach, taken by this study, is to identify the theological mark of other important Christian literature. The imprint of the distinctive 'Ephremic' approach in Ethiopic literature, identifiable through their utilisation of symbolic motifs, provides strong evidence not only for interaction with Syrian Christianity at an early date, and suggests that Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' scholars shared parallel thought-worlds. The correlation with *merkabāh* mysticism indicates not only the employment of the text, but a parallel interpretative tradition. These combined strands of evidence present an argument for associating Ethiopic Christianity with the Judaeo-Christian world characteristic of early Syrian Christianity.

¹³ J.A. Montgomery (1934). *The Ethiopic Text of the Acts of the Apostles*. *Harvard Theological Review* 27: 169-205; J. Hofmann (1967). *Die Äthiopische Übersetzung des Johannes-Apokalypse*, *CSCO* 281, *Scriptores Aethiopici* 55; M.E. Boismard and A. Lemouille (1984). *Le Text occidental des Actes des Apôtres* (2 vols.; *Synthèse* 17); H. Maehlum and S. Uhlig (1992). *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice: Die äthiopische Version der Gefangenschaftsbriefe des Paulus*, *Äthiopistische Forschungen* 33; J. Hofmann and S. Uhlig (1993). *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice: Die Katholischen Briefe*, *Äthiopistische Forschungen* 29; R. Zuurmond (1995). Chapter 9: The Ethiopic Version of the New Testament. *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. B.D. Ehrman and M.W. Holmes

¹⁴ T.P. Platt (1830). *Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi Aethiopice*; A. Dillmann (1853). *Veteris Testamenti Aethiopici Tomus Primus, sive Octateuchus Aethiopicus*.

Chapter 1: Ethiopian Christianity: Judaic or Judaeo-Christian? The 'Judaic' Features of Ethiopic Christianity

Introduction

The Ethiopians make the startling claim that Christianity came to Ethiopia about three thousand years ago, associating the foundations of Christianity with the claims of the *Kəbra Nagašt*¹⁵. This Ethiopian national epic relates how Ethiopia converted to Judaism after the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon, perceiving Judaism and Christianity as a continuum, and so identifying the Queen's visit as the advent of Christian faith in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopians also treasure the encounter between the Apostle Philip and the 'Ethiopian' eunuch recorded in Acts 8:27-40 as the earliest recorded connection between Ethiopia and Christianity:

Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."¹⁶ The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.¹⁷

What happened next is unknown, although Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies* III:12, states that on his return he was '...sent into the regions of Ethiopia, to preach what he had himself believed'¹⁸. The references to Ethiopia in these passages are, undoubtedly, to Meroë otherwise known as Nubia, and to its queen or 'Candace'¹⁹, but from early in the Christian

¹⁵ The ክብረ ነገሥት, *Kəbra Nagašt*, or the Glory of the Kings. A critical edition of the Ge'ez text was prepared by Bezold and an English translation was made in 1922, available in a reprinted version: Budge: reprinted. There are also French translations G. Colin (2002). *La gloire des rois (Kebra Nagast). Épopée nationale de l'Éthiopie*; R. Beylot (2008). *La gloire des rois, ou, L'histoire de Salomon et de la reine de Saba*

¹⁶ Quotation of Isaiah 53:7-8.

¹⁷ Acts 27:27-28.

¹⁸ P. Schaff (2001). *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus: 433*. No other ancient sources give this information.

¹⁹ Eusebius noted that Ethiopia (Meroë) was ruled by a woman. See P. Schaff (1890a). *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine: 105*. There is

era the Ethiopians have adopted the Candace for themselves, and have identified her with both the Queen of Sheba and the ‘Queen of the South’²⁰. The appropriation of the Acts account by the Ethiopians hints at an enigmatic religious relationship between Ethiopia and Israel. Furthermore, it opens up the possibility of much older connections between Ethiopia and Israel, which Ethiopian traditional accounts exploit.

The scant evidence of pre-Christian religion in Ethiopia perhaps reflects the thoroughness of the eventual conversion²¹. An early tradition recalls possible animist serpent worship in Ethiopia²². In contrast the *Kəbra Nagašt* claims that Queen of Sheba’s people principally worshipped the sun as ‘the king of gods’, with others worshipping stones, trees or woodland, carved images and images of gold and silver²³. These idols may be consistent with the broadly polytheistic religions derived from Southern Arabia, which appeared to dominate in the centuries prior to the advent of Christianity²⁴, represented by a crescent-and-moon symbol found on early Aksumite coins, carvings and monuments²⁵. Little is known of Ezana’s paganism, although in inscriptions from before his conversion he described himself as ‘the son of Mahrem’²⁶ and invoked *Astar* the god of heaven²⁷, and *Baher*²⁸ and *Meder*²⁹. The monumental stelae in Aksum that mark the tombs of pre-Christian kings were also probably associated with paganism. The largest appear to be carved to represent multi-storeyed buildings, and had metal plaques inset at their apexes, oriented to face the rising sun. After Ezana’s conversion their use was discontinued³⁰.

The first clear historical evidence for Christianity surfaces at the end of the second quarter of the fourth century CE³¹, when the Ethiopian ruler, King Ezana, adopted the Christian faith

significant recorded evidence of the Candace, or queen of Meroë, see C. Fluehr-Lobban (1998). *Nubian Queens in the Nile Valley and Afro-Asiatic Cultural History*. Ninth International Conference for Nubian Studies August 20-26, 1998; Ullendorff: 10.

²⁰ The connection between the Candace and the Queen of the South mentioned in Matthew 12:42 and Luke 11:31 is made in the *Kəbra Nagašt*. See Bezold: 29a 10-19; Budge: 40.

²¹ D.W. Phillipson (1998). *Ancient Ethiopia*: 112.

²² E. Littmann (1947). *La leggenda del dragone del Aksum in lingua Tigrāi. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 6: 42-45. See also Phillipson: 112.

²³ Bezold: 20a 24-b 5; Budge: 28.

²⁴ Phillipson: 112.

²⁵ D.W. Phillipson (2009). *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia*: 21.

²⁶ E. Littmann (1913). *Deutsche Aksum-Expedition (DAE), Band IV, Inscriptions 8-10, 18-28*.

²⁷ Surprisingly the use of this name continued after Ezana’s conversion, evinced by a Ge’ez translation of Sirach 37:21, which contains the phrase እስመ ኢይሁዳ አስታረ ሞገስ, ‘for God did not give *Astar* honour’. See A. Dillmann (1970). *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicæ (1865)*: 750.

²⁸ ብሔር, *bəher*, ‘land, country, nation, world’ also occurs in እግዚአብሔር, ‘əgzi’abəher, the Christian name for God, which literally means ‘Lord of the world’. See Leslau: 91.

²⁹ ሞድር, *mədr*, ‘earth, ground, soil’. See Ibid.: 330.

³⁰ Phillipson *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia*: 13-14.

³¹ This dating is based on the assumption that Frumentius, the first bishop of Ethiopia, was ordained by St Athanasius after his second return from exile to Alexandria in 346 CE. See T. Tamrat (1972). *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*: 22 note 5; M.A. Knibb (1999). *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament*: 12 note 4.

under the influence of two shipwrecked Syrian³² travellers. The elder of these two, Frumentius, became Ethiopia's first bishop³³. Ezana's conversion from paganism is attested by the appearance during his reign of Christian language and symbolism in inscriptions³⁴ and by numismatic evidence, with the Cross replacing the crescent-and-moon symbol on coins³⁵. Although his conversion meant that Christianity was introduced into the circles of the court, it probably became more widespread in the late fifth century CE with the advent of the 'Nine Saints' from the Eastern Roman Empire, some of whom may have been Syrian³⁶. These monks were evangelists and their arrival probably gave stimulus to complete the translation of the Scriptures³⁷. Their arrival consolidated the connection of Ethiopia with the major currents in the fifth century, which saw the emergence of the non-Chalcedonian group of Miaphysite churches. As part of this group, the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido*³⁸ Church developed an independent trajectory that remained largely outside the direct influence of the Roman Empire and Hellenism³⁹, although there was undoubtedly Hellenistic influence through the Coptic Church.

In discussing the uniqueness of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, many scholars have highlighted its 'Jewish' aspects. Its incorporation of various 'Judaic' features has been used to conclude that there was strong Jewish influence on its development. In particular, the presence of the Ark, or *tābot*⁴⁰, in each church has been cited as strong 'proof' of the Judaic origins of Ethiopian Christianity. The Judaic imprint of Ethiopian Christianity has been propounded by several scholars⁴¹ but perhaps the foremost and most vehement scholar

³² Here Syria should be taken to refer to greater Syria, which in ancient times incorporated modern-day Lebanon, Jordan, and parts of Israel, Palestine, Turkey and Iraq Phillipson *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia*: 208.

³³ *Ibid.*: 29. See S. Munro-Hay (1991). *Aksum: An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity: 202-206* for a detailed set of references.

³⁴ Knibb: 12.

³⁵ Phillipson *Ancient Ethiopia*: 113.

³⁶ Knibb: 13-14; D. Crummey (2006). The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahedo* Church. *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 5: Eastern Christianity*. M. Angold. Knibb states that 'it has been argued that these monks were monophysites who fled to Ethiopia to escape the persecution after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but it has also been suggested that the Aksumite kings may have officially encouraged them to come to Ethiopia. See also Tamrat: 29-30.

³⁷ Knibb: 15.

³⁸ The word ተዋሕዶ, *tawāḥədo* means 'fusion' or 'unity'. See Leslau: 609. Here ተዋሕዶ, *tawāḥədo* refers to the fusing of humanity and divinity in the person of Christ and is a reflection of the non-Chalcedonian miaphysite Christology of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

³⁹ Unlike Alexandria and the Delta region of Egypt, which were imbued with Hellenism, there are only a few traces of numismatic and epigraphic evidence in Ethiopia, showing that there were scholars at in Axum who knew Greek. See Munro-Hay: 245-247; Knibb: 29.

⁴⁰ 'the tabot takes the form of a large tablet of wood carved with a cruciform design, the text of the Ten Commandments, and the dedication to the saint in whose name the church is consecrated...the tabot sits on a stand, known as the manbara tabot or 'Seat of the Tabot', within the Sanctuary' D. Appleyard (2007). Chapter 6: Ethiopian Christianity. *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*. K. Perry: 134.

⁴¹ Amongst them: T. Nöldeke (1910). *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*; C. Conti Rossini (1929). *L'Abissinia*; D.A. Hubbard (1956). *The Literary Sources of the Kebra Nagast*. **PhD**; H.J. Polotsky (1964). *Aramaic, Syriac, and Ge'ez*. *Journal of Semitic Studies* **9**: 1-10; E.

holding this view is Edward Ullendorff. In his monograph, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, he wrote, 'the concept and function of the *tābot* represent one of the most remarkable areas of agreement with Old Testament forms of worship'⁴².

If the legend in the *Kābra Nagaśt* is to be believed Judaism may have been introduced to Ethiopia as early as the time of the Queen of Sheba, although its physical presence has been hard to substantiate, leading the distinguished archaeologist, David Phillipson, to be sceptical about any pre-Christian Judaic religion⁴³. Despite this lack of material evidence, there were opportunities for Judaic influence. The presence of Jewish military colonists on the island of Elephantine at Aswan in Egypt circa the seventh century BCE may have been accompanied by trade⁴⁴, but the possibility of contact with Ethiopia is extremely unlikely⁴⁵. The Jewish diaspora was widespread, with important concentrations in North Africa especially in Alexandria⁴⁶. With Ethiopia's historical ecclesiastical connections with Alexandria⁴⁷, the Jews of Alexandria and Berenice in Cyrenica may have been sources of influence. Their overtly Hellenised expression of Judaism was, however, quite different from the Ethiopian context, and there is no clear evidence of any connection⁴⁸. The principal route connecting Aksum with the outside world was not the Nile Valley but the Red Sea coast⁴⁹, leading to an

Hammerschmidt (1965). *Jewish Elements in the Cult of the Ethiopian Church*. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* III(2): 1-12; Dillmann *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae* (1865): XXI; E. Isaac (1972). *An Obscure Component in Ethiopian Church History*. *Le Muséon* 85(1-2): 225-258; S. Kaplan (1992). *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia*; Appleyard.

⁴² Ullendorff: 82. Maxime Rodinson challenges Ullendorff's view suggesting rather that Hebrew and Old Testament influences came after the introduction of Christianity out of a desire to imitate the Old Testament and to be associated with Israel. See M. Rodinson (1964b). *Sur la Question des 'Influences Juives' en Ethiopie*. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 9: 11-19; M. Rodinson (1964a). *Edward Ullendorff, The Ethiopians, an Introduction to Country and People*. London Oxford University Press, 1960 (review). *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XXI(3/4): 238-45. Ullendorff conceded that he 'may well have underestimated the force and importance of the *imitatio Iudaeorum et Veteris Testamenti*' but clarified that he did not have in view mass migrations, but small groups bringing such influences. See Ullendorff: 15 note 1.

⁴³ Phillipson *Ancient Ethiopia: 140-3*.

⁴⁴ T. Rajak (2006). *The Jewish Diaspora*. *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume I, Origins to Constantine*. M.M. Mitchell and F.M. Young: 55.

⁴⁵ In the time of the Pharaohs myrrh and other products were sought from Ethiopia via Red Sea trade links rather than along the Nile. See R. Pankhurst (2001). *The Ethiopians, A History: 9*. It is unlikely that the Nile provided such a link, as it is not easily navigated all the way to Ethiopia. Conti Rossini has commented that the evidence from the Elephantine papyri shows that the expression of Judaism found there was markedly different from that found either with the Falashas or within the Ethiopian Church. In particular the papyri do not mention the Sabbath, and members of the Jewish military garrison there intermarried and lived on equal terms with the indigenous population those native there, in contrast to Ethiopian custom. See C. Conti Rossini (1928). *Storia d'Etiochia, Parte prima: Dalle origini all'avvento della Dinastia Salomonide: 144*.

⁴⁶ H. Hegermann (1989). *The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age*. *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 2*. W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein: 308-377.

⁴⁷ From the ordination of Frumentius in Alexandria by St Athanasius in the fourth century, until the ordination of the first Ethiopian Patriarch, Archbishop Beseleyos, on 28th of June 1959, Ethiopia's bishops were appointed by the Patriarch in Alexandria. See Crummey: 457, 486.

⁴⁸ Rajak: 60.

⁴⁹ W. Raunig (2004). *Adulis to Aksum: Charting the Course of Antiquity's Most Important Trade Route in East Africa*. *Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region, Proceedings of Red Sea Project I*,

alternative, and perhaps more attractive, possibility of Judaic influence from Arabia. References to encounters between Jews and people of South Arabian kingdoms of Seba and Hazarmaveth are found in Genesis 10:7, and Genesis 10:26. Solomon had trade activities connected with Ophir⁵⁰ in 1Kings 9:27-28, whilst 2Kings 14:22 describes his access to the Red Sea at Elath. 1Chronicles 4:41 mentions contact with the South Arabian Meunim⁵¹.

Richard Pankhurst, the distinguished chronicler of Ethiopian history, has stated that, '*Trade across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden probably dates to the dawn of history and, being governed by the largely unchanging facts of geography, maintained a remarkable degree of continuity over the centuries*'⁵². Archaeological evidence indicates interchange between Africa and Arabia between the fifth and the first millennium BCE, consolidating into trade and cultural exchange with northern Ethiopia in the first millennium BCE⁵³, probably connected with the port of Adulis, on the Eritrean coast, which was the principle port of the Aksumite Empire. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*⁵⁴, a Graeco-Egyptian trade manual from the first century CE, provides primary evidence for trade that continued into the sixth century, as attested in the *Christian Topography* of Kosmas Indicopleustes⁵⁵. This cumulative evidence indicates that trade would have provided ample opportunity for encounters between Ethiopians and the Jews of Arabia, and also lends support to the possibility of the migration to Ethiopia of Semitic people from southern Arabia in the millennium before Christ⁵⁶.

Other evidence from the early centuries CE consolidates the proposed Jewish connections with Arabia and Ethiopia. The Midrash *Bemidbar Rabba* indicates that Rabbi 'Aqiba travelled to South Arabia around 130 CE, where he encountered an Ethiopian ruler⁵⁷. His long journey appears to have been prompted by the presence of a large Jewish community there seeking his teaching. This Midrash demonstrates both an Ethiopian presence in Southern Arabia in the second century CE, and an Ethiopian-Jewish encounter. By the late

British Museum, October 2002, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 2: 87-91; Phillipson Ancient Churches of Ethiopia: 20.

⁵⁰ Ophir is believed either to be in South Arabia, or on the Somali coast. See Ullendorff: 8.

⁵¹ Ibid.: 17.

⁵² R. Pankhurst (2004). *Arabian Trade with Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: From Ancient Times to the Sixteenth Century. Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region, Proceedings of Red Sea Project I, British Museum, October 2002, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 2: 19-24: 19.*

⁵³ R. Fattovich Ibid. *The 'Pre-Axumite' State in Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea Reconsidered.* 71-78: 71.

⁵⁴ For the English translation see: L. Casson (1989). *The Periplus Maris Erythraei.*

⁵⁵ Pankhurst *Arabian Trade with Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: From Ancient Times to the Sixteenth Century.* : 19.

⁵⁶ E. Ullendorff (1956). *Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity. Journal of Semitic Studies* 1: 216-256; A. Grillmeier (1996). *Christ in Christian Tradition, Volume 2: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604), Part Four: The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451:* 293; Phillipson *Ancient Ethiopia: 37-39; Ullendorff Ethiopia and the Bible: 117; Phillipson Ancient Churches of Ethiopia: 11.*

⁵⁷ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 17.*

second or early third centuries CE the Aksumite kingdom had extended military influence into Southern Arabia where the rulers of the opposing kingdoms Saba and Himyar appear to have called on the Aksumites as allies at different times, witnessed to by inscriptions of the Arabians whom they fought⁵⁸. During the third century CE political alliances with Arabian kingdoms developed, probably in the interest of trade in the region, although the rôle of the Aksumites is not clear⁵⁹. By the middle of the third century CE, however, Aksum had reached a new peak in its power, occupying some territory in Arabia and with its political and military influence extending from the kingdom of Hadhramawt to Najran⁶⁰. This involvement would have brought Ethiopians into contact with Jews in Arabia. By the fourth century CE both Christianity and Judaism were well established in southern Arabia. Najran was a waxing Jewish power from 350 CE, and by the end of the fourth century CE it was also a strong Christian centre, as a consequence of its place on the trade route from South Arabia to Syria, known as the ‘Kings Highway’⁶¹. Christian and Jewish communities were, however, destined for conflict when early in 519 CE Dhu Nuwas, the Jewish ruler of the Himyarites, captured Najran, plundered churches, and massacred many Christians⁶². The ensuing campaign by King Caleb of Ethiopia, which led to Najran being governed by Ethiopia from 525 CE, is recorded in the *Book of the Himyarites*⁶³, and also in the *Kəbra Nagaśt*⁶⁴. The events in Najran brought Ethiopians once again face to face with Jewish communities in Arabia.

This scattered evidence from Egypt and South Arabia may point to possible sources of ‘Judaic’ elements in Ethiopian Christianity, and even of the unique Falasha Judaism⁶⁵. The imprint of these influences may also have attracted the Ethiopians to any traces of Judaeo-

⁵⁸ Munro-Hay: 71-72; S. Munro-Hay (2003). *Arabia*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopia. S. Uhlig. **1**: 295-300.

⁵⁹ Munro-Hay *Aksum: An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity*: 72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: 73.

⁶¹ I. Gillman and H.-J. Klimkeit (1999). *Christians in Asia before 1500*: 78.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 79.

⁶³ A. Moberg (1924). *The Book of the Himyarites*, is an incomplete, but authentic first-hand account of Caleb’s expedition to Najran written probably written by Simeon Beth-Arsham (d. c. 540 CE) a bishop of Persian origin who was deeply involved with the tribulations of the miaphysite church in southern Arabia from c. 520-540 CE. See I. Shahid (1971). *The Martyrs of Najran: New Documents: 131-159*.

⁶⁴ Chapter 117 of the *Kəbra Nagaśt* contains the account, which was probably added at the time of the latest recension of the book, in the late thirteenth century. See Hubbard: 410. See page 59 for a more detailed discussion of the recension history of this book.

⁶⁵ The enigmatic Falasha religion may reflect a Judaic religion associated with Semitic migrants that developed along a different trajectory from other forms of Judaism. See Phillipson *Ancient Ethiopia*: 20. The history of the Falasha is obscure, whilst they may be an ancient Jewish community there is a possibility that they are a converted Judaizing sect of Orthodox Christianity emergent in the medieval period. See Kaplan: 77-8; Appleyard: 127. For further information see D. Kessler (1996). *The Falashas : a short history of the Ethiopian Jews*. See also *Excursus on the Falashas* in Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 115-118*, where he points out that the Falashas know nothing of the Mishnah or the Talmud, and also have no knowledge of Hebrew, using instead Ge’ez. He also states that there is no historical basis for them being regarded as the descendents of Jewish migrants from either Egypt or South Arabia, regarding them, rather, as a remnant community in Axum who resisted conversion to Christianity.

Christian nuances in the Syrian Christianity which came with the arrival of monks known as the ‘Nine Saints’⁶⁶, in the sixth century CE⁶⁷. Some apparently ‘Judaic’ elements may have arisen from this connection. Although some scholars are sceptical about these early Syrian connections⁶⁸, this event is embedded in the Ethiopian psyche, and may have strengthened subsequent ecclesiastical connections with the Syrian Church⁶⁹. The Syrian origin of the Nine Saints was supported by Ignazio Guidi⁷⁰ by Carlo Conti Rossini⁷¹, but the origin of their names has been queried on philological grounds by Paolo Marrassini⁷²; ጉብ, *gubā* being, in his opinion, the only appellation of definite Syriac origin⁷³. Guidi and Conti Rossini also argued that the names of the Nine Saints betrayed evidence of Aramaic or Syriac transcriptions from Greek, but Marrassini has claimed that transcription into any Semitic language would produce the same result⁷⁴.

The Ethiopic Bible provides further, albeit inconclusive, evidence of connections with Syria. Arthur Vööbus proposed that the Syrian monks used Syriac versions of the Bible to produce the Ethiopic Bible⁷⁵. The Septuagint was, however, a primary source for the Ethiopic Old Testament, which follows its word order very closely in many places⁷⁶ and includes transliterations from the Greek⁷⁷. The Ethiopic text contains mistakes explicable only if the

⁶⁶ Namely *Garima, Afṣe, Matta ‘ə, Yohanni, Aragāwi, Alef, Liqanos, Guba, and Pantelewon.*

⁶⁷ Isaac: 242; Gillman and Klimkeit: 61.

⁶⁸ See for instance S. Munro-Hay (2006). *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant.*

⁶⁹ Isaac: 240-245; W. Witakowski (1989-1990). *Syrian Influences in Ethiopian Culture. Orientalia Suecana* 38-39: 191-202.

⁷⁰ I. Guidi (1888). *La traduzione degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico. Memoria della R. Accademia dei Lincei ser vi* 4: 33-34.

⁷¹ C. Conti Rossini (1899). *Note per la storia letteraria abissina. Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei: Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche VIII*: 197-220 especially pages 199-201.

⁷² P. Marrassini (1990). *Some Considerations on the Problem of the 'Syriac Influences' on Aksumite Ethiopia. Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 23: 35-46: 36-38. He suggests that ገሪማ, *garimā* is Arabian, አፍሼ, *afṣe* and መጣዕ, *maṭā‘ə* are Arabic, ዮሐን, *yohāni* is Coptic, and that አረጋዊ, *aragāwi*, አሌፍ, *alef*, and ሊቃኖስ, *liqānos* are not necessarily Syriac. See also Polotsky.

⁷³ Sebastian Brock has suggested that the name ጉብ, *gubā* is connected with *Gubba Barraya*, a prominent monastery of the sixth and seventh centuries, of uncertain location. See Knibb: 26 note 3, citing a personal communication with Dr S. P. Brock.

⁷⁴ Marrassini especially pages 39-41.

⁷⁵ A. Vööbus (1954). *Early Versions of the New Testament: 246-265.*

⁷⁶ See for instance Ezekiel 13:5 (LXX) οὐκ ἀνέστησαν οἱ λέγοντες ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κυρίου, (Ge‘ez) ወኢተንሥኡ አለ ይብሉ በዕለተ እግዚአብሔር. See Knibb: 60 note 1, although the ‘scholars’ text’ (see page 53) in the *andāmtā* for Ezekiel has ኢዐረግሙ ንበ ዘተነሥተ፡፡ ወኢተነጽክሙ ቅጽረ ለቤተ እስራኤል ከመ ቁሙ ውስተ ቀትል በዕለተ እግዚአብሔር which is closer to the Hebrew, Anonymous (1990 EC). መጽሐፈ ሕዝቅኤል አንድምታ ትርጓሜ: 125-126. But see also page 47 for further details on this commentary.

⁷⁷ For instance the names of precious stones in Ezekiel 28:13 καὶ ἀγάθην καὶ ἀμέθυστον are rendered ወአኪጤን ወአሜተስጦን, *wa’akiṭer wa’ametaston*; various architectural terms such as ἑξέδρα in Ezekiel 40:45 is rendered ኤክስድራ, *eksədrā*; ἑξέδραι in Ezekiel 40:44 is rendered ኤክስድራ *eksədre*; and ἑξέδρων in Ezekiel 41:10 is rendered ኤክስድርን, *eksədrōn*. See Knibb: 95 notes 2-6. The *andāmtā* renders these ወመረገድ ወአሜተስጦን, *wamaragəd wa’ameteston*; ኤስኪዴሬ, *eskedere*, ኤስኪዴሬያት, *eskedereyāt* ኤስኪዴሬያት, *eskedereyāt* respectively Anonymous: 288, 411, 411, 416.

source were a Greek text⁷⁸. The Amharic *andəmta* on Genesis 22:5 identifies the mountain on which Isaac was to be sacrificed as ቅራንዮ, *qərānəyo* a transliteration of the Greek κρᾶνίου the, ‘Place of the Skull’. The older Ge’ez *andəmta* identifies the mountain as the same but uses the Hebrew name Golgotha. This detail suggests that some Greek transliterations may have been introduced later⁷⁹. There seems to be no clear evidence for one source, and indeed, ‘*work on one single linguistic Vorlage was, perhaps, the exception rather than the rule in the peculiar circumstances that obtained in the Aksumite kingdom of the fourth-sixth centuries*’⁸⁰. Mindful of this, ‘*the evidence certainly encourages the opinion that, with the advent of the Syrian missionaries in the fifth and sixth centuries, Syriac translations were employed in conjunction with the Greek text*’⁸¹. Witold Witakowski has suggested a more complex process may have taken place, in which different books had different sources⁸². On this basis, each Biblical book would need to be analysed to identify its sources and any changes arising from later revisions. Some books may have been translated from two languages, and in transmission ‘*mutual contamination of the manuscripts*’ could have occurred⁸³.

In discussing Syrian influence on the Ethiopic Bible translation, Carlo Conti Rossini and Ignazio Guidi initiated the search for Syriac loan words⁸⁴, that were basically Biblical or spiritual. Guidi drew particular attention to the noun ሃይማኖት, *hāymānot*, ‘belief, creed, faith, religion’⁸⁵, maintaining that the use of ሃይማኖት, *haymānuṭā* for πιστις is peculiar to Syriac after the introduction of the New Testament and which, in his opinion, indicated that the word must have been introduced by Syrians⁸⁶. Hans Jacob Polotsky, however, in his study of the use of ሃይማኖት, *hāymānot* maintained its derivation from Judaism:

I am not positively contending that haymanot must be of Jewish origin. There is no positive evidence to that effect. All I do contend is that the arguments which have been brought forward in favour of a Christian-Syriac origin fall short of proving what they are intended to prove. The evidence seems to me to favour

⁷⁸ For instance Ezekiel 48:1 contains the words Δαν, μῖα in the LXX, meaning ‘Dan, one portion’, and the Ethiopic has ዳንሞያ, *dānmyā* as if it were the name of a country. See Knibb: 19. The *andəmtā* for this verse renders it, however ለዳን ከሐዳ, consistent with the Hebrew and Greek. An interesting perspective on this arises in chapter 4 of this study.

⁷⁹ For more details see chapter 4, page 131.

⁸⁰ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*:56.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: 56.

⁸² Witakowski: 193.

⁸³ *Ibid.*: 193. This idea was also proposed by Cowley, who suggested that there may be more than one source for Genesis 1:1-2:4. See Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 234. Ullendorff also understood Greek to be the source *par excellence*, but did not consider the discrepancies from Greek to arise only from fourteenth or fifteenth century CE revisions using the Syro-Arabic version of the Bible. See Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 57.

⁸⁴ Conti Rossini *Storia d’Etiopia, Parte prima: Dalle origini all’avvento della Dinastia Salomonide*: 155; I. Guidi (1932). *Storia della letteratura etiopica*.

⁸⁵ Leslau: 221.

⁸⁶ Guidi *Storia della letteratura etiopica*: 14.

*the conclusion that ...its use in the Ethiopic Bible is actually easier to understand, if it was in the first instance borrowed as a Jewish word.*⁸⁷

In a similar vein, Ullendorff examined thirty five loanwords in Ethiopic, concluding that the majority were of Jewish-Aramaic origin or dialectically neutral, with only four words being characteristically Syriac and distinctively Christian⁸⁸. He classified a further thirteen words as being either Syriac or Jewish-Aramaic⁸⁹. Ullendorff concluded that these ‘reflect either the Judaic leaven in Abyssinian civilisation or...are expressive of specifically Christian ideas’⁹⁰. Ullendorff’s and Polotsky’s conclusions, however, seem to rest on the assumption of vigorous pre-Christian Judaic influences. Paolo Marrassini also concluded that only six words⁹¹ used in connection with Christianity were clearly of Syriac origin. A further fifteen words with more secular connotations have provided some evidence for direct Syriac religious influences, as well as overall cultural influences⁹². Witakowski has suggested that the list is incomplete, and that further research may, for instance, confirm a further list of five words that may also turn out to be of Syriac origin⁹³. Summing up the state of research Michael Knibb has concluded, with regard to the Biblical text, ‘what is clear is that the arguments used in the past provide no justification for the assumption that the translators must have been Syrian’⁹⁴.

⁸⁷ Polotsky: 7.

⁸⁸ The words are ሐናፊ, *hanāfi*, ‘pagan’, cf ሐናፊ, *hanpā*; ቀሲስ, *qasis*, ‘priest’, cf ሐሻሻሻ, *qaššišā*; ተጸልበ, *tašalba*, ‘crucify’ cf ሻለብ, *šalab*; ቀርባን, *q’arbān*, ‘sacrifice, eucharist’ cf ባርባን, *qurbānā* Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 123-124*.

⁸⁹ These being: ሃይማኖት, *hāymānot*, cf ስላሙን, *haymānutā*, ‘faith’; ኦሪት, ‘orit, cf ስላሙን, *’ōrāytā*, ‘the Law, Torah’; ሰላሳ, *si’ol*, cf ሻይዕላ, *šəyōl*, ‘Sheol, nether world’; መሲሕ, *masih*, cf ሠላሳ, *māsihā*, ‘messiah, the anointed’; ነቢይ, *nabiyy*, cf ነቢያ, *nəbiyā*, ‘prophet’; ገጥሐ, *haṭ’a* ገጠሐት, *haṭi’at*, cf ስጦታ, *ḥəṭā*, ‘to sin, sin’; መለኮት, *malakot*, cf ስላሙን, *malkūtā*, ‘divine rule, divinity’; ጸላየ, *šalaya*, ጸሎት, *šalot*, cf ሻለላ, *šallī*, *šəlōtā*, ‘to pray, prayer’; ጸም, *šom*, cf ሻሙ, *šawmā*, ‘fasting’; ገላራ, *gazara*, cf ገላራ, *gəzar*, ‘to circumcise’; ሰገዳ, *sagada*, cf ሻገዳ, *səgad*, ‘to prostrate oneself’; ቆብዕ, *qob*, cf ቆብዕ, *qub(bə)‘ā*, ‘priestly headgear’. See Witakowski: 192; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 119-125*.

⁹⁰ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 119*.

⁹¹ The six are ዕለዋ/ዕለዋ, ‘*alwā/’alwā*, ‘aloe’, cf ላላ, *’alwā*; ቀሲስ, *qasis*, ‘priest’, cf ሐሻሻሻ, *qaššišā*; ተፋሰስ, *tafāsasa*, ‘draw by lot’, ስላሳ, *pasā*; ብርያሚን, *bəryāmin*, ‘Books of Chronicles’, ልባሚን, *dəbaryāmin*; ዳዊት, *dāwit*, ‘David’, ዳዊት, *dawid*; ፊቃር, *fiqār*, ‘belt of priests’, ስላሳ, *paqirā* Marrassini: 38-39.

⁹² Ibid..

⁹³ መዝከር: መዝከር, *mazkar*, *mazakar*, ‘keeper of records’, from ስላሳ, *madkərānā*, ‘recorder, chronicler’; ሐራዊ, *harāwi*, ‘soldier’, or ‘freeborn, nobleman’, from ስላሳ, *hīrāyā*, ‘free, well-born, noble’; ስታፊ, *sutāfi*, ‘companion’, from ስላሳ, *šawtāpā*. Or possible Syriac calques ብስራት, *bəsrāt*, ‘Gospel, good news’, metathesis from ስላሳ, *səbartā*, ‘Gospel, good news’; and ተሰብሐ, *tasab’a*, ‘to become man’, a passive-reflexive verb which derives from the noun ሰብሐ, *sab*, ‘man’ in the same way that the passive-reflexive verb ስላሳ, *etbarnaš* derives from ስላሳ, *barnāšā*. See Witakowski: 192.

⁹⁴ Knibb: 29.

Further addressing the question of Syrian influence Knibb also searched for syntactical, lexical and textual evidence in Ezekiel⁹⁵. He found that the Ethiopic and Peshitta versions of Ezekiel agree syntactically with the use of the imperative when the Greek uses the future tense⁹⁶; and with the use of perfect or imperfect forms when the Greek has τού+infinitive⁹⁷. He also noted their use of ከመ, *kama*, ‘that’, or ከመ ከ, *kama ’i* ‘that not’ in the same manner as the Syriac ܩ, *dā* or ܩܐ, *dālā* in oath formulas, rather than the Greek or Hebrew ‘if not’ or ‘if’⁹⁸. Furthermore, some Greek words are rendered similarly in both the Ethiopic and Peshitta versions of Ezekiel⁹⁹. On some occasions the Ethiopic and Peshitta text correspond but differ from both the Greek and Hebrew versions¹⁰⁰. Knibb found further examples of Syriac influence on the Ethiopic Bible in his studies on Micah and Hosea¹⁰¹, leading him to conclude that, ‘*the evidence as a whole makes it clear that there was influence of some kind from the Syriac version on the Ethiopic version of Ezekiel*’¹⁰².

Knibb prefers, however, to see the Syriac influence as arising from later Syro-Arabic sources used in revisions that took place in the fourteenth century CE, rather than from earlier influence¹⁰³. On the contrary, however, arguments from inscriptions from the Aksumite period suggest that, ‘*in the case of the Psalms the Ethiopic version essentially in the form known to us from the oldest manuscripts was already in existence by the first half of the sixth century*’ but such evidence is not available for other biblical books¹⁰⁴. Knibb’s study provides important evidence, but it cannot be regarded as conclusive for the whole text of the Old Testament. Another view was expressed by Ullendorff’s that ‘*work on one single linguistic Vorlage was, perhaps, the exception rather than the rule*’¹⁰⁵ in the Aksumite Kingdom. Furthermore Ullendorff asserted that Arabic influences alone explained the later thirteenth and fourteenth century CE revisions, but that there must have been further influences from Syriac and from Hebrew that could only be accounted for between the fourth

⁹⁵ Ibid.:29-35. See also M.A. Knibb (1988). *Hebrew and Syriac Elements in the Ethiopic Version of Ezekiel?* *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23(1): 11-35; M.A. Knibb (1989). *The Ethiopic Text of Ezekiel and The Excerpts In Gəbrä Həməmat*. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 24(2): 443-458.

⁹⁶ For example see Ezekiel 13:18, and 14:4.

⁹⁷ For example see Ezekiel 16:26, 17:15, 18.

⁹⁸ For example see Ezekiel 14:16, 20:3, 33:11.

⁹⁹ For numerous examples see Knibb *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament: 30-32*, for instance the use of ከለ ተርፋ, ‘*əla tarfā* which is the exact counterpart of the Peshitta use of Eshtaph‘al of the root ܩܐ with ܩ, both meaning literally ‘those who are left’ and are used in Ezekiel 5:10, 9:8, and 17:21 for ‘the remnant’; the use of ረከብኩ, *rakabku*, ‘I found’ meaning ‘I saw, perceived’, in the same way that the Peshitta uses ܐܫܩܝܬ, ‘*eškəḥeṭ* to render the Greek ἰδοῦ, ‘behold’.

¹⁰⁰ For instance in Ezekiel 1:9 both Ethiopic and Peshitta read ‘and when they (the living creatures) moved, they moved straight forward and did not turn’, a simplification which follows neither the Greek or Hebrew Ibid.:30-32.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.: 32.

¹⁰² Ibid.: 32.

¹⁰³ Ibid.: 32-35.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: 54.

¹⁰⁵ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible:56*.

and seventh centuries CE¹⁰⁶. If Ullendorff is correct, then it would be difficult to extend Knibb's conclusions to other books of the bible.

Additional evidence for Syriac influence may be found in the Ethiopic New Testament. Following ideas laid down by Guidi¹⁰⁷, an early study by Ludwig Hackspill analysed the first ten chapters of Matthew and concluded that whilst the source was Greek, made in the fourth or fifth century CE, it was not the Alexandrian recension, but rather the Syro-Western or Byzantine recension, which he considered Syrian monks had brought from the patriarchate of Antioch¹⁰⁸. Rochus Zuurmond, has summarised the more recent state of research¹⁰⁹, and confirms the Byzantine origin of the text through his studies on Mark's Gospel¹¹⁰, John's Gospel¹¹¹, and on Acts¹¹², the Apocalypse¹¹³, the Catholic Epistles¹¹⁴, and the Pauline corpus¹¹⁵. Notwithstanding the Greek origin, there are Jewish-Aramaic or Syriac modifications, although Zuurmond was sceptical of the traditions surrounding the Nine Saints. Instead, he preferred to attribute Syrian influence to the possible presence of Syrian metropolitans during the Zagwe dynasty¹¹⁶. There is also evidence of revisions based on Arabic versions of the New Testament, but these date most probably after the fourteenth century CE¹¹⁷.

¹⁰⁶ For Syrian influence these earlier dates correspond to the period of possible Syrian missionary activity. Hebrew influence could be accounted for from Judaised immigrants from Southern Arabia, in the period up to the seventh century CE but such influences are not credible in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries Ibid.: 57.

¹⁰⁷ Guidi *La traduzione degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico*.

¹⁰⁸ L. Hackspill (1896). *Die Äthiopische Evangelienübersetzung (Math. I-X), Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete, Volume 11: 117-196, 367-388*.

¹⁰⁹ Zuurmond: 142-156.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: 144.

¹¹¹ Ibid.: 150.

¹¹² Montgomery; Boismard and Lemouille.

¹¹³ Hofmann *Die Äthiopische Übersetzung des Johannes-Apokalypse, CSCO 281, Scriptorum Aethiopicum 55*.

¹¹⁴ Hofmann and Uhlig *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die Katholischen Briefe, Äthiopistische Forschungen 29*.

¹¹⁵ H. Maehlum and S. Uhlig (1992). *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die äthiopische Version der Gefangenschaftsbriefe des Paulus, Äthiopistische Forschungen 33*.

¹¹⁶ The Solomonic King Yagba-Siyon (1285-1294 CE) complained to Patriarch John VII of Alexandria (1262-8, 1271-93) about the difficulties arising from the presence of those he termed 'Syrian metropolitans'. See Tamrat: 69-72. The Syrians may have come as a result of the disagreement between the Coptic Patriarch and the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in 1238, and Zuurmond speculates that when Syrians fled to Egypt in 1099 when the crusaders conquered Jerusalem, some of them may have come also to Ethiopia. See Zuurmond: 148 note 33.

¹¹⁷ Zuurmond: 154.

Ullendorff's Synopsis of the 'Judaic' Elements of Ethiopian Christianity

Irrespective of their origins the 'Judaic' features of Ethiopian Christianity are manifest. In his seminal study, *'Ethiopia and the Bible'*¹¹⁸ Ullendorff identified the most important of these features as:

- The *Kəbra Nagašt*, which focuses on the Ark of the Covenant and connects Ethiopia with Jewish heritage.
- 'Vernacular Prayers' which attach great importance to the 'name', and the power that knowing it gives over someone.
- The structure of Ethiopian churches that appears to be derived from the threefold division of the Hebrew Temple.
- Similarities in musical style, notation, and instruments with those in the Old Testament, are identified, although the musicological studies suggest the primary similarities as being with ancient Syrian, Egyptian and particularly Armenian¹¹⁹.
- There is a widespread influence of the liturgy of the Jewish Temple and synagogue on Christian liturgy. Ullendorff opined that the place of the reading of the Scriptures and their exposition '*occupies a rather more central place and is strongly reminiscent of synagogal arrangements*'¹²⁰.
- Observance of the 'Law', namely dietary prescriptions, ritual cleanness, circumcision, and Sabbath observance. Circumcision was widely practiced in the region, but the Ethiopian practice of performing it on the eighth day is peculiarly Hebraic.
- Of all the Judaic features, the *tābot*, representing the Ark of the Covenant is considered the most distinctive. Ullendorff suggested that '*the concept and function of the tabot represent one of the most remarkable areas of agreement with Old Testament forms of worship*'¹²¹.

The source *par excellence* on the *tābot* and other 'Judaic' elements is the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which roots Ethiopian Christianity within Old Testament Judaism, and makes *tābot* centred worship its focus. It claims that Ethiopia inherited the faith of the Hebrews and the Ark of the Covenant in the time of King Solomon a millennium before Christ, and links Ethiopia's possession of the Ark with *tābot* centred worship. The *Kəbra Nagašt* also details some aspects of the observance of the 'Law' such as the understanding of ritual cleanliness, the

¹¹⁸ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 73-118.

¹¹⁹ M. Mondon-Vidailhet (1922). *La Musique Ethiopienne*, p 3178-3196. *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire, Première Partie: Histoire de la Musique*. A. Lavignac and L. de la Laurence: 3189.

¹²⁰ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 98. See also his more extensive discussion of the liturgy on pages 97-100.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*: 82.

observance of Saturday and Sunday as Sabbaths, and some specific food prohibitions, customs that endure to this day in the Ethiopian church. Chapter 91 of the *Kəbra Nagašt* details many of the dietary prescriptions which are typically ‘Judaic’, except for the specific prohibition of the eating of camels. The concept of ritual cleanness is described in chapter 101. As David Appleyard suggests, these and other practices might be seen, however, as part of a broader Semitic culture rather than specifically ‘Judaic’¹²².

In the opinion of David Hubbard, however, the text is in itself specific evidence of ‘Judaic’ or ‘Judaean-Christian’ connections. He maintains that, ‘*the Old Testament may well be called the primary source of the Kəbra Nagašt*’¹²³ leading to the conclusion that:

*There can be little doubt that the Ethiopians were acquainted with substantial portions of the Old Testament before they knew anything about the New Testament. This early deposit of Old Testament material on Ethiopian soil is reflected in the vast preponderance of Old Testament quotations and references, especially in the collections of Old Testament commandments.*¹²⁴

Hubbard’s conclusion perhaps does not make enough concession to the fact that many Christian writers, particularly those of the Syriac tradition with roots in the Judaean-Christian thought-world, saw the mysteries of the Old Testament as revealed in the New, hence they focussed on expounding the Old Testament¹²⁵.

Although the Ethiopic understanding of *tābot* focuses on its connection with the Ark of the Covenant, the object referred to as the *tābot* is an altar slab made from a rectangular piece of wood, or occasionally stone, kept in the central Holy of Holies of an Ethiopian church. The slab is generally 6cm or more thick varies from about 15cm by 13cm to as large as 40cm by 25cm. It is usually engraved with crosses, or Christ in the form of a lamb, or the Virgin and Child. The *tābot* usually has a Ge’ez inscription indicating the biblical character or saint to whom the *tābot* is dedicated. The *tābot* is removed from the church on important festivals, most notably *ṭəmṣat* the Epiphany celebration of the baptism of Christ, during which the liturgy is celebrated in an open field¹²⁶. Similar such altar slabs were also known in early Byzantine churches, where they were termed ‘*antimension*’ and served as a portable altar, although only witnessed to as late as the eleventh century CE. Other Oriental traditions also used similar altar slabs, including the Armenians where there is evidence of the used of wooden ‘*vem*’ for this purpose, witnessed to in the eighth century CE; and the Syrians who as early as the sixth century CE employed the ‘*tablit*’, which sometimes referred to the

¹²² Appleyard: 127.

¹²³ Hubbard: 14.

¹²⁴ Ibid.: 112.

¹²⁵ S.H. Griffith (1997a). ‘*Faith Adoring the Mystery*’: *Reading the Bible with St. Ephrem the Syrian*:35.

¹²⁶ R. Pankhurst (1987-88). *Some Brief Notes on the Ethiopian Tabot and Mänbärä Tabot. Quaderni di Studi Etiopici* 8-9: 28-32.

portable central part of the altar table. The Church of the East also is known to have used the *'tablit'* as a portable wooden altar, possibly originating from the time of the persecution of the Sasanian ruler Shapur II (309-379 CE). Furthermore, the Coptic Church also used a portable central wooded board in their altars known as *'thusiasterion'* or *'antimension'*, and witnessed to as early as the sixth century CE¹²⁷. The broader use of such wooden altar slabs perhaps suggests that the Ethiopian *tābot* is a similar device that has adopted the symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant.

Conclusion

The 'Judaic' elements of Ethiopian Christianity are clearly attested, but whilst there was ample opportunity for encounters between Ethiopians and Jews, particularly in Arabia, at various points in history, whether these gave rise to such elements is ambiguous. The linguistic evidence is complex and, as conceded by Polotsky, does not point decisively either to Syriac or Jewish-Aramaic influences, signalling an urgent need for further critical studies of Old and New Testament books and other ancient Christian texts¹²⁸. Following the lead of Ullendorff, scholars have presented robust arguments for Jewish influence evinced by 'Judaic' practices, but this evidence is not *per se* decisive since practices such as circumcision and dietary prohibitions could equally point to broader Semitic or even African influences. Amongst these 'Judaic' features of Ethiopian Christianity Ullendorff accurately characterised the concept and function of the *tābot* as the most convincing aspect of Jewish influence, although other evidence might also suggest that originally the *tābot* was a portable altar slab, that later derived a symbolic connection with the Ark of the Covenant. Ullendorff also identified the Ethiopian national epic, the *Kəbra Nagašt*, as the treasure house of information on the Ethiopic understanding of the *tābot*.

The *tābot's* ceremonial function and its political significance to Ethiopia in legitimising the Solomonic dynasty' are central features of the *Kəbra Nagašt*¹²⁹. The *Kəbra Nagašt* also contains a wide spectrum of symbolic theological interpretations connected with the *tābot*. Since the *tābot* features strongly in the Ethiopian national religious and political psyche its understanding is not just restricted to the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The broader application of wooden altar slabs in the early Church raises doubt as to the 'Judaic' origin of the *tābot*. The function of the *tābot* is implicit in some of the hymns of St Yared's *Dəggwā*, and numerous interpretations relating to it can be found in the *andəmtā* Bible commentaries. These three major sources provide a robust understanding of the *tābot* that is not derived from more external ceremonial and political functions, but from the significance attached to it as a symbol of the Incarnation, and of divine immanence and indwelling.

¹²⁷ A. Raes (1951). *Antimension, Tablit, Tabot. Proche-Orient Chrétien* I: 59-70.

¹²⁸ Polotsky: 7.

¹²⁹ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 83.

Chapter 2: Surveying the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ Sources

The Ethiopian Literature

Accounts of the history of Ethiopian literature have been written by Carlo Conti Rossini, J. M. Harden, Ignazio Guidi, Lanfranco Ricci and Enrico Cerulli¹³⁰. They are in general agreement in identifying four major periods, although Cerulli further divided the golden age to emphasise the importance of *Zar’a Yaqob*:

- Three centuries commencing from the introduction of Christianity in the fourth century followed by a period of six hundred years from which no literary activity is known
- A period of renaissance from the time of kings *Yekuno Amlak* and *Amda Tsion* beginning at the end of the thirteenth century CE;
- The golden age associated with the reign of *Zar’a Yaqob* and his successors, between about 1430 to 1520 CE,
- A period of decline in activity up to the end of the seventeenth century CE.

Before the advent of Christianity there is only scant epigraphic evidence. The most ancient inscriptions date from before the fifth century BCE and are written in Sabean, and are found in the temple at *Yeha* dedicating the altar to pagan goddesses¹³¹; a second or third century CE inscription in Greek found near to Aksum identifies an otherwise unknown King of Kings of Aksum¹³²; and fourth century trilingual inscriptions in Greek, Sabean and Ge’ez are known in the name of King Ezana, the first Christian monarch of Ethiopia, one of which clearly identifies him as Christian¹³³. Of these mid fourth century CE inscriptions one inscription ambiguously invokes ‘*the Lord of heaven*’¹³⁴, but a later one opens with ‘*In faith in God and in the power of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, in the one who preserved my kingdom through faith in his Son Jesus Christ...*’¹³⁵.

Ezana’s conversion in the fourth century was the catalyst for intense literary activity, and instigated the translation of Bible. Thus, August Dillmann claimed that the Ethiopic Bible was ‘*the foundation of all Abyssinian literature and the standard to which all other writers conformed their style of writing*’¹³⁶. Typically the literary works of this period embrace

¹³⁰ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*; J.M. Harden (1926). *An Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature*; Guidi *Storia della letteratura etiopica*; E. Cerulli (1968). *La letteratura etiopica*; L. Ricci (1969). *Letterature dell’Etiopia*.

¹³¹ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*. : 199; Cerulli: 14.

¹³² Cerulli: 14.

¹³³ Ibid.: 14-15.

¹³⁴ Inscription 11 in E. Littmann (1950). *Äthiopische Inschriften. Miscellanea academica berolinensia*: 97-127.

¹³⁵ P. Anfray, A. Caquot and P. Nautin (1970). *Une nouvelle inscription grecque d’Ézana. Journal de Savants*: 270-74. This English translation in Grillmeier: 297.

¹³⁶ Dillmann *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicæ* (1865): vi.

translations of Greek texts, including the Septuagint and New Testament; books such as Enoch and Jubilees¹³⁷; as well as monastic works including the *Life of Paul the Hermit*, the *Life of Antony*, and the *Rule of Pachomius*¹³⁸. To this period also belongs the so called ቁርሎስ, *qerlos*, which is a compilation of three works of Cyril of Alexandria¹³⁹, as well as other Greek Fathers including Theodotus of Ancyra, Severus of Synnada, and Juvenal of Jerusalem¹⁴⁰, made after the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE to affirm Cyril's Miaphysite aphorism 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'¹⁴¹. Although lacking extant manuscripts it is likely that the translation of the liturgy also dates to this period¹⁴². The original Ge'ez hymnody of *Yared*, the ደግ, *Dəggwā*, containing chants for each day of the year, may also be placed in this period¹⁴³.

There is virtually no literary evidence from the period following, which was dominated by the Zague dynasty. Indeed it is period about which very little is known¹⁴⁴, possibly reflecting the fact that the Zague were perceived as usurpers by the following dynasties, reflected in the language of the colophon to the *Kəbra Nagast*¹⁴⁵. The *vitae* of some *Zague* kings written down in fourteenth century, however, may originate in this period¹⁴⁶.

In contrast, the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a new period of literary activity that was characterised principally by Ge'ez translations of Arabic texts, originating in Egypt. As well as further liturgical texts, this material includes the ወዳሴ ማርያም, *waddāse māryām*, the *Veneration of Mary*, attributed to Ephrem¹⁴⁷. Still used by many devout Orthodox Christians today, this is a translation of a work dating at least to the seventh century CE which appears to have used both Arabic and Coptic sources¹⁴⁸. Probably the most important work from this period, however, is the earliest known recension of the

¹³⁷ Cerulli: 20-21. As already noted it is clear that the Old Testament, at least, was not translated by one person, see Cerulli: 20 for a further discussion of this. Cerulli also identifies the text of the New Testament as that of Lucian, which may have come through contact with the 'Nine Saints' and other Syrians in the fifth and sixth centuries.

¹³⁸ The Ge'ez text of the *Rule of Pachomius* is published in A. Dillmann (1866). *Chrestomathia Aethiopica: 57-69*, with an English translation in G.H. Schodde (1885). *The Rules of Pachomius Translated from the Ethiopic. Presbyterian Review: 678-689*.

¹³⁹ Cerulli: 26-27. The works are *De recta fide ad Theodosium imperatorem; Prosphonicus ad Reginas; Quod Christus sit unus*.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: 27.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.: 27.

¹⁴² Harden: 22-23.

¹⁴³ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina.* : 203. Cerulli places the *Dəggwā* in the twelfth century, based on the fact that the revised texts date from this period, rather than discussion their original composition Cerulli: 163.

¹⁴⁴ Harden: 21-22.

¹⁴⁵ See page 61

¹⁴⁶ Cerulli: 30.

¹⁴⁷ Harden: 26. Cerruli was certain that this work had Ephremic sources, and places it in the earlier period of literature, see Cerulli: 28

¹⁴⁸ G. Gharib, E.M. Toniolo, L. Gambero and G. di Nola (1991). *Testi Mariani del Primo Millennio IV. Padri e altri autori orientali: 851*.

national epic ክብረ ነገሥት, *Kəbra Nagast*¹⁴⁹. A thirteenth century manuscript includes a colophon¹⁵⁰ claims that it was a translation into Ge'ez from an Arabic translation of a Coptic original¹⁵¹. Another important original work is the Ge'ez *Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth*, that dates from the end of the fourteenth century CE. Written by a monk called Isaac, it details the Ethiopic theological symbolism of the pearl¹⁵². Other significant Christian works belonging to this period, are ሲኖዶስ, *sinodos*, a collection in eight books of ecclesiastical constitutions and canons that is canonized in the Ethiopian Church, and a Ge'ez translation from Arabic of the *Didascalía*¹⁵³. The *Synaxarium* of the Coptic Orthodox Church, also translated from Arabic at the end of fourteenth century, was subsequently greatly enlarged with Ethiopian additions¹⁵⁴. Notable historical works from this period include the *Chronicle of the Wars of Amda Tsion*, written before the monarch's death in 1344 CE, that relates the king's successful exploits against the Muslim Sultan *Sabr ad-din*¹⁵⁵.

The 'Golden Age' of Ethiopic ecclesiastical literature began in the fifteenth century. Many *vitae* were written, including those of the aforementioned *Zague* kings, and many important Christian figures such as *Iyasus Moa*, and *Takla Hāymānot* who founded the great monastery of *Dabra Libānos*¹⁵⁶, and of the hymn writer *Yared*¹⁵⁷. Significant figures from more southern parts of Ethiopia also feature, including the enigmatic *Abuna Gabra Manfas Qedus* who is reputed to have founded the southern Shoan monastery on mount *Zuq'ālā*. The *Miracles of Mary*¹⁵⁸, a Ge'ez text with a Copto-Egyptian *Vorlage* was translated from Arabic, but editions of the work contain many additions from Greek, Ethiopian and other sources¹⁵⁹. This book has inspired many later Mariological writings in Ethiopia¹⁶⁰. The works of King *Zar'a Yaqob* also belong to this period, including the *Book of Light*¹⁶¹. This

¹⁴⁹ See page 59 for a detailed discussion of this text.

¹⁵⁰ See translation on page 61.

¹⁵¹ H. Zotenberg (1877b). *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 146 No. 1, Éth. 123*. N.L. Paris. The recension history of this book is complex, and is discussed in detail starting on page 61.

¹⁵² Cerulli: 42-45.

¹⁵³ Harden: 26.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 29. In English translation E.A.W. Budge (1926-28). *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Vols. I-IV*. The translation was possibly intended to assuage dissident tendencies in Ethiopian monasteries by bringing them more into line with the Egyptian tradition. See Cerulli: 55.

¹⁵⁵ Cerulli: 32.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 73.

¹⁵⁷ Harden: 29.

¹⁵⁸ This work originated in twelfth century CE France, but came to Ethiopia from the Egyptian Church Cerulli: 81-82.

¹⁵⁹ E. Balicka-Witakowska and A. Bausi (2010). *Tä'ammärä Maryam*. Encyclopaedi Aethiopica. S. Uhlig. **4: O-X**: 789-793

¹⁶⁰ Cerulli: 82.

¹⁶¹ Harden: 27. A critical edition has been prepared by C. Conti Rossini and L. Ricci, Eds. (1964). *Il Libro Della Luce del Negus Zar'a Ya'qob (Mashafa Berhan) I, CSCO 251 252, Scriptorum Aethiopicum 47 48*; C. Conti Rossini and L. Ricci, Eds. (1965). *Il Libro Della Luce del Negus Zar'a Ya'qob (Mashafa Berhan) II, CSCO 261 262 Scriptorum Aethiopicum, Tomus 51 52.*, and further critical study and partial translation has been made by E. Isaac (1973). *A New Text-Critical Introduction to Mashafa Berhan, With a Translation of Book I*.

book formed part of his campaign against magic and superstition. It also outlines debates which took place about Saturday as a Sabbath perhaps betraying increasing ‘Judaizing’ tendencies amongst some Ethiopians, connected with either the influence of or the establishment of the Falasha Jews¹⁶². This period also saw the revision of the *Dəggwā* of St Yared into its current form by *Giyorgis of Gasəčča*, including the addition of musical notation to the text¹⁶³. St John Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* and a gospel commentary attributed to Dionysius were also translated from Greek¹⁶⁴.

The fourth and final period, starting in the sixteenth century CE, characterised by wars and unrest, was not conducive to literary activity. Much of what was written was probably destroyed when monasteries and churches were attacked and burned during wars with Muslims, and the violent attacks of the Galla tribes. Original works from this time concentrate on the defence of the Miaphysite faith, and include King Claudius’ *Confession of Faith*, and a treatise called the *Refuge of the Soul*¹⁶⁵. Translated works from Arabic, with similar aims, include the *Exposition of the Godhead* and the *Faith of the Fathers* a Miaphysite Christological *florilegium*¹⁶⁶. One significant literary figure who emerged at the end of the sixteenth century CE is *Enbakom*, a Yemeni convert from Islam, who ended his life as the head of the *Dabra Libanos* monastery. He either wrote or instigated the writing of two books, the *Superiority of the Christian Faith* and the *Gate of Faith*, both aimed at winning back those who had converted to Islam during the Muslim invasions¹⁶⁷. The current recension of *andəmtā* Bible commentaries, which undoubtedly contain material from earlier periods, also date from this time¹⁶⁸.

From within this rich range of literature three major works have been selected as primary sources, the *Dəggwā* of St Yared, the *andəmtā* Bible commentaries, and the *Kabra Nagast*. Noted above was the fact that much of the early Ethiopic literature was translated from Greek. The sixth century CE *Dəggwā* of St Yared stands out amongst the works from the first period of literature as a substantial, original and indigenous theological work. The current recension of the *andəmtā* commentaries dates from the fourth period, after the sixteenth century CE, but contains a wide range of sources, some of which date from the early years of Christianity in Ethiopia. Importantly sources have been identified from both

¹⁶² Harden: 27; Isaac *A New Text-Critical Introduction to Mashafa Berhan, With a Translation of Book I*.

¹⁶³ Harden: 30; L.W.G. Giyorgis (1997). *Tentawi ser'ata mahlet za-Abuna Yared (A study of the ancient musical system of Yared - In Amharic)*: xvii.

¹⁶⁴ Harden: 30.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.: 30.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.: 31.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.: 31; Cerulli: 125.

¹⁶⁸ R.W. Cowley (1974). *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition. Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XII(1): 133-175; Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 31. See page 40 for a detailed discussion of these commentaries.

East and West Syriac traditions, and these combined with the undoubted indigenous input will provide evidence of any Jewish Christian¹⁶⁹ influence on the interpretative tradition. Finally the *Kəbra Nagašt*, whose content is embedded in the Ethiopian psyche, dates from the thirteenth century CE in its current recension, but contains substantial material from the sixth or seventh centuries CE. It is replete with *tābot* symbolism, and broadens this out to incorporate wooden material and the Cross. This added symbolism also correlates with ‘Ephremic’ and Jewish Christian traditions.

The *Dəggwā* and Saint Yared

In the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church the *Dəggwā* and the seminal figure of St *Yared* cannot be separated. *Yared* was a priest and later a monk and hermit, and is one of the most important saints in Ethiopia, with many churches dedicated to him, and frequent representations of him in paintings¹⁷⁰. Little is known about the life of *Yared* except what is recorded in his hagiography, the *Acts of Yared*¹⁷¹, and the Ethiopian *Synaxarium*¹⁷². The *Acts of Yared* connect him with the enigmatic King *Gabra Meskel* placing him in the first half of the sixth century CE¹⁷³, a date consistent with the theological style of his writing. The Ethiopian *Synaxarium* celebrates *Yared* on the 11th of *Gənbət*, which it records as the date of his death¹⁷⁴.

The *Acts of Yared* relate that he was trained in the Psalms of David by one Abba Gideon. Initially a poor pupil, he was beaten for his lack of aptitude. Inspired by the perseverance of a caterpillar repeatedly attempting to climb a plant to gain food, he repented and learned the books of the Old and New Testaments in a day¹⁷⁵. Later he was taken on a heavenly ascent led by three birds to Paradise after which he returned to the cathedral in Axum, at the third hour he sang Hallelujah to the Trinity, attracting the attention of the king, queen, bishop and notables for the rest of the day¹⁷⁶. He developed the three modes of chant, in such a way that they did ‘not lack ... any of the sounds that are made by men, and birds, and beasts’¹⁷⁷. Also it is told that while singing before King *Gabra Masqal*, *Yared*’s beautiful singing so absorbed the king that he unwittingly drove his spear into *Yared*’s foot, who was so taken up

¹⁶⁹ The term ‘Jewish Christian’, but the use of the term for the purpose of this thesis is discussed in detail in the introduction to Chapter 4, as ‘the expression of Christianity in the thought-forms of Later Judaism’, a thought form that most clearly left its imprint on early Syriac literature.

¹⁷⁰ A. Mekarios (1996). *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations*: 47-8.

¹⁷¹ C. Conti Rossini (1904). *Gadla Yared Scriptores Aethiopicus Textus Series Altera - Tomus XVII*. C. Conti Rossini.

¹⁷² E.A.W. Budge (1928). *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III*: 875-7.

¹⁷³ Crummey: 461.

¹⁷⁴ Budge *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III*: 503.

¹⁷⁵ Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 89 – 98.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 1030 – 117.

¹⁷⁷ Budge *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III*: 504.

in the ecstasy of the song that he did not realise what had happened. In recompense the King granted *Yared's* wish to retire from the world¹⁷⁸.

Yared's Syrian connections are intimated in the Ethiopic account of the life and works of one of the 'Nine Saints', the *Acts of Abuna Aragāwi*, which supplies an account of a meeting between them when he appreciated *Yared's* compositions¹⁷⁹, although the account suggests that *Yared* had written most of his hymns before the meeting¹⁸⁰.

The *Dəggwā* is a significant Ethiopian development, seeking to establish a style of hymn distinct from that in Egypt. The *Acts* states that 'at that time there was no *qəne*¹⁸¹ with a high tune, rather [it was] with a soft whisper and in the throat, like the Egyptians, because among the Egyptians there is nobody who praises with a sound like the praise of *Yared*'¹⁸². *Yared* was said to speak with 'sweet words' or with a sounds 'sweet like honey' and he called upon all believers to glorify God with a 'great sound like the Seraphim'¹⁸³. The *Acts of Yared* stresses the divine inspiration of his music given to him through a mystical ascent into Paradise¹⁸⁴, which places *Yared* alongside the biblical characters of Enoch, Moses, Ezekiel, Zechariah and Ezra whose visions he interprets in the same mystical pattern in the *Dəggwā*¹⁸⁵:

*And when God understood his heart, he sent three birds to him from the Garden of Paradise, in the likeness of the Trinity....He [Yared] lifted up his eyes to heaven and saw the three birds, and Yared said to them, 'Where did you come from? From the Garden of Paradise?' The one who spoke in the language of a man said, 'We were sent to you from the Garden of Paradise, so that we might tell to you and declare to you how the praise of the twenty-four heavenly priests is lifted up.' And while he was speaking with her, Yared was carried away, and also the birds, and he entered the Garden of Paradise and she was hidden from his eyes, and Saint Yared stood there, and after them entered into Jerusalem...'*¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 11 15-31; Budge *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III*: 875-7.

¹⁷⁹ I. Guidi (1895). *Il Gadla Aregawi. Memorie della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe Scienze Morale, Storiche e Filologiche* 2:1: 77 See also M.A. van den Oudenrijn (1939). *La vie de Saint Za Mika'el Aregawi*; S. Habteselassie (1997). *Yared (Saint), 6th century, Orthodox, Ethiopia*. The Encyclopaedia Africana Dictionary of African Biography (in 20 Volumes): Volume I Ethiopia-Ghana. L.H. Ofosu-Appiah.

¹⁸⁰ The degree to which Syrian influence actually affected *Yared's* writings still remains to be ascertained.

¹⁸¹ The name for Ethiopic religious poetry. See Leslau: 437.

¹⁸² Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 9 4-7. See also the reading for *Gənbət 11* in Budge *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III*: 504.

¹⁸³ Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 4 24-31, 10 31, 12 31-13 2.

¹⁸⁴ The ascent story is perhaps resonant with *Merkabah* mysticism of the early centuries CE, which infused Judaeo-Christian thought of the same period. See chapter 5 page 167 for a further discussion of this aspect.

¹⁸⁵ See chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of this in the *Dəggwā* as well as in Ephrem and other Syrian writers.

¹⁸⁶ Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 9 14-33.

In the Ethiopian and other Eastern traditions, hymns are not only for worship but are the primary mode of expressing theology. St Ephrem the Syrian, the foremost exponent of this method and the inspiration for many others, such as Jacob of Serugh, regarded the more Western approach of expressing theology in philosophical definitions which, *'have a fossilizing effect on any theological enquiry'*¹⁸⁷. He rather developed a poetic approach that expressed the limited human understanding of the limitless God through poetry¹⁸⁸. In style and content *Yared's* writings resemble, in many ways, those of St Ephrem¹⁸⁹, as well as his fifth and sixth century CE devotee, Jacob of Serugh. In common with these two Syriac writers, *Yared* expresses theological ideas in poetry, and uses extensive Old Testament motifs to express the Incarnation through analogies with both Mary and Christ. *Yared* was described in the *Acts of Yared* as መንፈሳዊ አርጋኖን, *manfasāwi 'ārgānon*¹⁹⁰, or a *'spiritual harp'*¹⁹¹ an appellation resonating with the epithet *'the Harp of the Spirit'*¹⁹² by which Ephrem was known.

The complete *Dəggwā* or hymnody is attributed to *Yared*. Little has been written about the text of the *Dəggwā*, and there is no detailed study of later additions or revisions. The text also represents an unexplored treasure-trove of information about the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, its theological expression and its connections, as well as presenting poetry of exceptional beauty. A further four books are also attributed to *Yared* making a collection known as ጎምስቱ ጸዋት-ወ ዜማ, *ḥamməstu şawātewa zemā*, 'the five parts of chant'. The other books are: the complement to the *Dəggwā* used in the fasting season, ጸመ ድን, *şoma Dəggwā* which was separated from the main *Dəggwā* in the eighteenth century¹⁹³; ዝማሬ, *zəmmāre*, containing hymns used during the celebration of the Eucharist; መዋሥኢት, *mawāšə'ət* is the book of antiphons for specific feasts and for funerals; ምዕራፍ, *mə'ərarāf* is the Common part of the Divine Office¹⁹⁴.

The *Dəggwā* contains the prescribed songs for all seasons, festivals, and common days of worship at all times of day¹⁹⁵. A common introductory inscription¹⁹⁶ lists the various types

¹⁸⁷ S.P. Brock (1990). *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 40*.

¹⁸⁸ K. den Biesen (2006). *Simple and Bold: Ephrem's Art of Symbolic Thought: 4*.

¹⁸⁹ Julian: 8.

¹⁹⁰ Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared* : 3 5.

¹⁹¹ *Yared* is also mentioned as the father of Enoch in Genesis 5:18 , perhaps significantly as the father of the very Enoch whose heavenly visions are the inspiration for the vision of Paradise developed in chapter 5, an association which is possibly deliberate.

¹⁹² S.P. Brock (1983). *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition): 16-17*.

¹⁹³ A critical edition of this part of the text has been prepared, see B. Velat (1969). *Şoma Deggua : antiphonaire du Carême, quatre premières semaines, Patrologia Orientalis tome 32*.

¹⁹⁴ H. Kidane (2005). *Dəggwā*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. S. Uhlig. **2: D-Ha**: 123-124; T. Abraha (2009). *Quotations from Patristic Writings and References to Early Christian Literature in the Books of St. Yared. Le Muséon* **122**(3-4): 331-404: 333, 341-342.

¹⁹⁵ Kidane.

of songs which are written and states their purpose, which is, *‘for the feasts and Sabbaths, and the season of flowers¹⁹⁷ and the harvest season¹⁹⁸, of the rainy season¹⁹⁹ and the dry season²⁰⁰’*. The emphasis on the passing of seasons and the calendar may relate to the book of Enoch²⁰¹, and the agricultural tone in its stated purpose perhaps betrays the rural lifestyle of many of its hearers. It is considered an original Ethiopian work, not a translation or adaptation, and it is believed that the basic text has not changed significantly, apart from revisions made by *Giyorgis of Gasäčča* in the fifteenth century CE²⁰². The musical notational system was fully developed by the sixteenth century CE²⁰³.

The text of the *dəggwa* has the potential to reveal the meaning of many aspects of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. One example is from the *Dəggwā* for the twenty first of the Ethiopian month *Hidar* entitled the *‘Teaching of Zechariah’*, translated here from the fifteenth century manuscript EMMML 2542:

*The King of Israel danced before her,
 behold her, Zion, our mother, our Lady,
 behold her Zion, our mother, our Lady.
 This is Mary whom the holy prophets compared with the Ark of Noah²⁰⁴

 who had Manna concealed inside her,
 All the prophets prophesied
 Concerning Mary,
 Holy Ark of Noah,
 Who had manna concealed inside her.
 Wondrous white fleece of David,
 Lampstand of Zechariah the priest.
 Pure bridal chamber,
 Perfect Tabernacle,*

¹⁹⁶ Here taken from MYS022 from the *Mekane Yesus* collection. The *Mekane Yesus* Church is of the Lutheran tradition, and has a collection of manuscripts at its seminary in Addis Ababa for which a catalogue is soon to be published.

¹⁹⁷ The season after the end of the rainy season from September until December.

¹⁹⁸ The short rainy season and harvest time from April till July.

¹⁹⁹ The rainy season from July till September.

²⁰⁰ The dry season from January till March.

²⁰¹ See R. Elijor (2006). *The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the Merkabah. Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. A.D. DeConick: 92-93.

²⁰² *Giyorgis of Gasäčča* and *Giyorgis of Säglä* are generally believed to be the same person. *Giyorgis* was one of the most prolific authors of Ge’ez religious texts, including liturgical and pastoral works, and doctrinal tracts. Venerated as a saint, his *Acts* were written in the fifteenth century CE, shortly after his death. He was the head of the *Dabra Damo* monastery. His principle work is the መጽሐፈ ግሥጢር, *maṣḥafa məstir*, the ‘Book of Mysteries’ which was written in 1424 CE, and is has been described as the Ethiopian *Summa Theologica* G. Colin (2005). *Giyorgis of Säglä*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopia. S. Uhlig. **2: D-Ha**: 812. A critical edition of the work is available: Y. Beyene (1990). *Giyorgis di Sagla. Il libro del Mistero (Mashafa Mestir), I, CSCO 515 516, Scriptorum Aethiopicum 89 90*; Y. Beyene (1993). *Giyorgis di Sagla. Il libro del Mistero (Mashafa Mestir), II, CSCO 532 533 Scriptorum Aethiopicum 97 98*.

²⁰³ *Giyorgis*: xvii

²⁰⁴ This section has only been identified in a printed edition of the *Dəggwā Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያራድ*: 143 a 6-7.

*Dwelling place of divinity,
Adorned with holiness
Sealed in virginity.
She is wrapped in golden clothes
In a single piece.*²⁰⁵

...

These few words encapsulate a multiplicity of symbolism, connecting various Old Testament ideas, including:

- The Ark, before which David danced in 2 Samuel 6:14;
- The heavenly city, Jerusalem or Zion, of which the Tabernacle is seen as a representation.
- Mary, the '*dwelling place of divinity*', conjures up memories of the temple, and John 1:14 where the Word is said to *dwell* amongst us; and of the Jewish mystical concept of the *shekinah*, a symbol of divine imminence;
- Mary is symbolised as Noah's Ark, which is perceived symbolically in the same way as the Ark of the Covenant; and of Christ is connected with Manna, which in the Syriac and Ethiopic traditions symbolises the heavenly Eucharist celebrated in Paradise on which the faithful feast for eternity.
- The connection here is also made with the fleece of Gideon, which the Ethiopian *andämta* Bible commentaries also link with the LXX version of Psalm 72 (71):6, '*He shall come down as rain upon a fleece; and as drops falling upon the earth*'. This verse is seen as interpreting the sign of the fleece given to Gideon in Judges 6, the fleece symbolizing Saint Mary, and the dew Christ, so the two together symbolize the incarnation²⁰⁶.
- Finally the lampstand of Zechariah 4 is interpreted as Mary, with the light as Christ, by implication.

The following quotation, from the *Dəggwā* for the seventeenth of the Ethiopian month *Mäskäräm*, celebrates Helena's finding of the true Cross, and reveals at least part of the understanding of the Cross:

*The Cross is the Tree of Life
The Cross is the Tree of Salvation.
The Cross of the Word
Tree of Life
To the Jews it became expulsion,
Those who believe in the Cross
His grace will come to us.*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ This section is found in both the printed edition, and the older manuscript, see *Ibid.*: 143 a 8-15 and also Appendix B page 214 lines 186-198 for a transcript and translation of the fifteenth century manuscript EMMML 2542.

²⁰⁶ See chapter 3, page 107 for a detailed discussion of this imagery.

²⁰⁷ Appendix D page 231, lines 55-62.

*The wood of the Cross of the Son restored His flock
 With the cross He opened up Paradise,
 The Cross worked salvation,
 Our redemption
 The Cross is salvation
 to those who believe
 The Cross will be for us a guide.
 The Cross is the light
 of the whole world
 The foundation of the Church.
 The Cross redeemed us,
 The Cross is the salvation of our souls,
 The power of the Cross of Christ liberated us from death
 It proclaimed to us our freedom
 The tranquillity of the sea
 And the anchor of ships, the Cross.²⁰⁸*

Here the Cross is simultaneously the key to Paradise, the means of access for believers, and is also identified with the Tree of Life, which is symbolically Mary, with Christ as the fruit on which the faithful feast.

The writings of Ephrem resonate with much of the symbolism of the *Dəggwā*. The relationship between the Cross and Paradise is seen in the following *Hymn on the Resurrection II:1*:

*Your law has been my vessel
 revealing to me something of Paradise,
 Your Cross has been to me the key
 which opened up this Paradise.
 From the Garden of Delights did I gather
 and carry back with me from Paradise
 roses and other eloquent blooms
 which are here scattered about for Your feast
 amid songs as they flutter down on humanity.
 Blessed is He who both gave and received the crown!²⁰⁹*

The few studies on the *Dəggwā* have principally focussed on indentifying sources of influence on its musical style²¹⁰. A recent study by Tedros Abraha, however, examined patristic and other references to early Christian literature in the writings of St Yared, and

²⁰⁸ Appendix D page 231, lines 87-102.

²⁰⁹ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 73.

²¹⁰ See Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 90-91* where he associates the falsetto sounds of the *deggwas* commented on in an unpublished note by Professor Gavino Gabriel with those in the Hebrew Temple services. See, also Mondon-Vidailhet; K.K. Shelemay (1982). *Zemā: A Concept of Sacred Music in Ethiopia. The World of Music* 24(3): 52-64; K.K. Shelemay (1992). *The Musician and Transmission of Religious Tradition: The Multiple Roles of the Ethiopian Dābtāra. Journal of Religion in Africa* 22(3): 242-260. Possible connections with the synagogue have perhaps been overplayed, but Yared's style of plainsong shows general similarities to that of the Egyptian tradition, with closer similarities to that of Syria. The manner of embellishment of the notes bears closest similarity to the Armenian ecclesiastical plainsong tradition, pointing to an interesting spectrum of possible influences Mondon-Vidailhet: 3189.

importantly highlighted the usage in the *Dəggwā* of material from as early as the second and third centuries CE²¹¹. In particular Abraha examined Jesus being addressed as ‘mother’ and ‘father’ and the idea of the hidden descent and concealment of the son. The epithets ‘mother’ and ‘father’ for Christ occur in the *šoma Dəggwā* for the first and fifth weeks of Lent, for Holy Week, in the *Dəggwā* for *Hidar Michael*, and in the *Dəggwā* for *Ṭər Maryam*²¹². Such ideas are rare in the patristic literature, with only a handful of occurrences in the second and third centuries CE²¹³, and appear to have died out with the evolution of comprehensive Trinitarian theology in the fourth century CE²¹⁴. Ephrem makes no clear use of these epithets for Christ, but he does employ feminine birthing imagery of Christ²¹⁵. Abraha also discussed the hidden descent and concealment of the Son in His incarnation, an idea already found in Ignatius of Antioch’s letter to the Ephesians 19:1²¹⁶. He identified three instances in the *Dəggwā*: the Transfiguration, the feast of St. Mary for the rainy season, and the 22nd of *Ṭər* feast of Mary²¹⁷. Abraha also valuably identified specific quotations in the *Dəggwā* from a variety of fourth and fifth century Fathers: Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, Gregory Nazianzus, Mercurius of Caesarea, Severianus of Gabala, Patriarch Proclus of Constantinople, Basil of Caesarea, and from the Jewish-Christian Shepherd of Hermas²¹⁸. He conceded that much of *Yared’s* imagery has ‘an Ephraemian (Syrian) flavour’²¹⁹ but did not pursue this trajectory, but rather advocated that ‘in the footsteps of the Alexandrian exegetical tradition, including Origen, “Yared” approaches the Old and New

²¹¹ Abraha *Quotations from Patristic Writings and References to Early Christian Literature in the Books of St. Yared*.

²¹² *Ibid.*: 349-351.

²¹³ G.W.H. Lampe (1961). *A Patristic Lexicon: 1051*. The references are: in the Acts of Thomas 97 ‘merciful father, saviour Christ’, the *Martyrium Matthaei* 3, ‘I am the father of all these ages’, and in Theodoret’s commentary ‘..as Adam is called the father of the present age, thus he is of the coming (one)’ Abraha *Quotations from Patristic Writings and References to Early Christian Literature in the Books of St. Yared*. : 346-347. Raniero Cantalamessa’s study of the use of ‘father’ for Christ identified several other second and third century CE sources as well as the fifth century CE Cyril of Alexandria, see R. Cantalamessa (1967). *Il Cristo ‘Padre’ negli scritti del II-III sec. Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa III*: 1-27. These include the *Acts of Peter*, the *Acts of John*, the *Acts of Andrew*, the *Acts of Thomas*. The *Acts of Peter* is striking, stating, ‘you [are] father to me, you [are] mother to me, you [are] brother to me, you friend, you servant, you steward, you are everything and everything is in you’ Cantalamessa: 2. Cyril states ‘Have mercy on your little children, o Pedagogue, Father, Chariot of Israel, Son and Father, both one thing’ Abraha *Quotations from Patristic Writings and References to Early Christian Literature in the Books of St. Yared*. : n 64.

²¹⁴ Cantalamessa: 20.

²¹⁵ In *Hymns on the Nativity XVI:9* K.E. McVey (1989). *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns: 150* 9. McVey comments on this ‘although mwld, here translated “Who brought forth,” is used of men as well as women, the immediate context is more appropriate to birth than to begetting’ McVey: 150 n 360.

²¹⁶ See J. Daniélou (1978). *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea, Volume 1: The Theology of Jewish Christianity: 207*; J.N. Sparks (1978). *The Apostolic Fathers: 83*.

²¹⁷ Abraha *Quotations from Patristic Writings and References to Early Christian Literature in the Books of St. Yared*. : 352-360.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 373-384.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 385.

Testaments as a single book corresponding to the one Logos²²⁰, an idea that could equally be associated with Ephrem²²¹.

The *Andāmta* Corpus: History and Method

The *andāmta* corpus of Amharic commentary on Ge'ez biblical and patristic texts derives its name from the repeated use of 'andām', meaning 'and (there is) one (who says)', to introduce different interpretations, illustrated below in the *andāmta* on the Apocalypse of St John 6:2:

- A. ²²²White horse – it is the time of the false Messiah. He calls it white because the Jews were please when he reigned over them....
- A. White horse – it is the time of the false Messiah. He calls it white because in his time the believers will rejoice...²²³

Roger Cowley's initial studies showed that, 'the essential integrity of the corpus is demonstrated by its unity of style, provenance and outlook, and by the many cross-references it contains.'²²⁴. The corpus is in four parts: Old Testament, New Testament, The Books of the Scholars, and The Books of the Monks. It represents a long running Ethiopian oral tradition, possibly originating from the Aksumite Kingdom between the advent of Christianity, and the ninth century CE²²⁵, now written down and recently partly published, although important commentaries remain unpublished.

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies, at the University of Addis Ababa holds the most significant number of manuscripts. Available published material includes:

- The Pentateuch²²⁶.
- Isaiah²²⁷.
- Psalms²²⁸.
- The Books of Solomon and Sirach²²⁹.

²²⁰ Ibid.: 384-385.

²²¹ Griffith: 20, 21. One questionable conclusion is that a direct correspondence between the use of the epithet 'New Heifer' for Mary in the *Dəggwā* and in the ሰዓታት, *sa'ātāt* or *Horologium* of *Giyorgis of Gassāčča* suggests that fifteenth century material is present in a work supposedly written in the sixth century CE. It seems rather that either *Giyorgis* is quoting *Yared*, or that this is a later interpolation into the *Dəggwā*, particularly in the light of his work in revising the *Dəggwā*. See Appendix C note 8 on page 223 for a discussion of this epithet's use in Ephremic literature.

²²² Cowley abbreviates the repeated *andām* with 'A'.

²²³ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 229

²²⁴ Ibid.: 3.

²²⁵ Wäraqnäh, Habtä Maryam in Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*; Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 31, 77 note 5.

²²⁶ Anonymous (1999 EC-b). መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘዐለት, Anonymous (1999 EC-a). መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘሌዋወያን፣ ኦሪት ዘኑልቀ፡ ኦሪት ዘዳግም።

²²⁷ Anonymous (1997 EC). ትንቢት ኢሳይያስ.

²²⁸ Anonymous (1998 EC-a). መዝሙረ ዳዊት ንባብ ከነትርጓሜው.

- Ezekiel²³⁰.
- The Gospels²³¹.
- The Pauline Epistles²³².
- The Catholic Epistles, and Revelation²³³.
- The Book of Enoch²³⁴.
- The Books of the Monks²³⁵.

English translations have been made of the commentaries on the Apocalypse of St. John²³⁶, parts of Genesis and Hebrews²³⁷, the Book of Micah²³⁸, and some Psalms²³⁹.

The precise geographical and chronological origins of the *andamta* literature are unknown, but traditionally it is believed that the Pentateuch came to Ethiopia along with the arrival of Ark of the Covenant and a cohort of Jewish priests and nobles in the 10th century BCE as related in the *Kəbra Nagašt*²⁴⁰. At some point after this, tradition states that the Pentateuch was translated from Hebrew into Ge'ez, along with its ancient commentary. In the Christian era other commentaries are thought to have arrived along with the books of the Old and New Testaments, when translated from Greek²⁴¹.

The written versions of the commentaries may have their origin at some point during the Axumite kingdom (10th century BCE – 9th century CE), but the current form was settled upon during the Gondar Kingdom (16th-18th century CE)²⁴². In the eighteenth century CE *Māmhər Esdros* refined the commentaries and sought to establish the definitive Ge'ez text. His new school of teaching resulted in a division into the 'upper house' and the 'lower house'. The 'upper house' rejected his refinements, whilst the 'lower house' or 'Gondar

²²⁹ M.a.G. Kefle, Ed. (1917 EC). *መጻሕፍተ ሳሎሞ ወሲራክ*.

²³⁰ Anonymous *መጻሕፍ ሕዝቅኤል አንድምታ ትርጓሜ*.

²³¹ Anonymous (1988 EC-a). *ወንጌል ቅዱስ*.

²³² Anonymous (1988 EC-b). *የቅዱስ ጳውሎስ መጻሕፍት*. Including the book of Hebrews.

²³³ L.L.M. Terfe, Ed. (1951 EC). *መጻሕፍተ ሐዲሳት ሦስቱ*.

²³⁴ Anonymous (2003 EC). *መጻሕፍ ሄኖክ*.

²³⁵ Anonymous (1988 EC-c). *ሦስቱ መጻሕፍተ መነኩሳት 1) ማር ይስሐቅ 2) ፊልክሶስ 3) አረጋዊ መንፈሳዊ*. The Books of the Monks contain commentary on translations from Arabic of three sixth century Syriac works: two texts of John Saba called 'Arägāwi Mānfsāwi', Isaac of Nineveh's 'Tractate on Asceticism', and a work attributed to Philoxenus of Mabbug that is actually the 7th century East Syriac writer Dadisho of Qatar's *Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers* Grillmeier: 334-335; W. Witakowski (2005). *Filkəsyos*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopia. S. Uhlig. **2, D-Ha**: 541-542.

²³⁶ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*.

²³⁷ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*.

²³⁸ Garcia.

²³⁹ Pedersen.

²⁴⁰ See chapters 48-55 of the *Kəbra Nagašt* Budge *The Kebra Nagast*.

²⁴¹ Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*; S. Selassie (2008). *Personal communication on the Kebra Nagast*.

²⁴² Wärqnäḥ, Habtä Maryam in Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*; Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 31.

School’, which is most commonly taught today, accepted them²⁴³. Some differences between the ‘houses’ are recorded in the *andəmta* themselves, but Cowley saw few real differences between them compared with the material they have in common²⁴⁴. Two generations after *Mämher Esdros*, *Aläqa Wäldä Ab*, in the nineteenth century²⁴⁵, further refined the style, and he is probably responsible for the definitive shape of the commentaries today²⁴⁶.

Primary sources, and Dating

Primary sources cited by name in the *andəmta* include John Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Ephrem. The *Tərgwame Qälämsis*, a Ge’ez commentary which is named as a source of the Amharic *andəmta* commentary in its commentary on Revelation 20:4, ‘Behold, John Chrysostom commented in his homily which is read of the day of Palm Sunday that he sat on clothes which were upon the ass and her foal without being help by a strap or binding’²⁴⁷; and on Revelation 19:16, ‘as Basil pillar of the faith said, “By the coming of your unique one, you have abolished death, which entered first into the world by the jealousy of Satan”’; the *andəmta* commentary on the ውዳሴ ማርያም, *wəddāse māryām* the ‘Veneration of Mary’ comments that, ‘the “tree of life” has been interpreted by Severus and by John of the resurrection, by Mar Yəshaq of love, and by Ephraim of the eucharist’²⁴⁸. This selection of authors demonstrates that the *andəmtā* surpassed the divisions of the church. Authors from both Chalcedonian and Miaphysite traditions are cited, as well as less well known authors such as *Abu Färäg*, identified as *Abu’l-Faraj ‘Abdallāh ibn at-Ṭayyib al-‘Irāqī* an 11th century CE Church of the East commentator who wrote commentary on the whole Bible²⁴⁹. Ethiopian scholars have also made contributions and corrections. Some of those named include *Mämhər Esdros*, *Aqabe Sä’at Kābte*, *Mäl’akä Gannet Täklä Haymanot*,

²⁴³ Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*; R.W. Cowley (1980). *Mämhər Esdros and his interpretations. Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. G. Goldenberg: 41-69.

²⁴⁴ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 5.

²⁴⁵ It is believed that *Aläqa Wäldä Ab* died during the reign of Emperor *Tewodros* 1855-1886 CE.

²⁴⁶ *Wärqnäh, Habtä Maryam* in Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*.

²⁴⁷ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 145.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 49.

²⁴⁹ Cowley *Ibid.*: 69, 76 cites MS Berlin (Dillmann) 63, fol. 78v of Ge’ez commentary on Revelation 2:2, which states regarding the ‘deceivers’ mentioned in this verse, ‘and their names are written in the *Didascalía*,and we found this from the word of *Abbä Fəssəḥa wäldä sännay* in the preface to *Paul*’ which Cowley states is ‘doubtless referring to *Ibn at-Ṭayyib*’. See G. Graf (1948). *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur: Zweiter Band: Die Schriftsteller Bis Zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts: 160-69* for details of *Ibn at-Ṭayyib*. A critical edition and translation of *Ibn at-Ṭayyib*’s commentary on Genesis is available: J.C.J. Sanders, Ed. (1967). *Commentaire sur la Genèse / [par] Ibn at-Tayyib*, CSCO 274-5, *Scriptores Arabici* 24-25.. He is also one of the sources in the Ge’ez *Tərgwame Orit*, the commentary on the Ocatateuch, see M.A. Garcia (2010). *Tərgwame*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. S. Uhlig. **4**: 921-923.

Ato Adärahän, and *Azzaž Lamēh*²⁵⁰. Specific contributions from any source are rarely acknowledged.

Cowley was unable to substantiate the traditional view that Ethiopian Bible commentary started in pre-Christian times²⁵¹. His investigation into Ethiopian exegesis and hermeneutics, based on a limited amount of material that was available to him at the time, concluded that the corpus stands in fundamental continuity with earlier commentaries, especially those of the 'Antiochene' tradition, associated primarily with Lucian, Paulinus, Diodore, Eustathius, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia²⁵². The connection with Theodore of Mopsuestia has also been confirmed in a study of the commentary on selected Psalms²⁵³, although this may arise from Theodore's seminal influence on the East Syriac tradition, and in particular on Arab Christian writers such as *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*²⁵⁴, who has been identified as an important influence through his commentaries on the Pentateuch on the Gospels²⁵⁵. What is surprising, given the historical links with the Egyptian church, is the apparent lack of association with Origen, Clement of Alexandria and others from the Alexandrian school. The language, references to rulers, other historical data, geography, and teachers named in the commentaries, along with their general outlook and manuscript evidence demonstrate clearly that the Gondar kingdom (16th-18th century CE) is the temporal and geographical source of the definitive form of the *andämta* corpus²⁵⁶. Cowley concluded that:

*The internal evidence of the Andämta Commentary itself...conclusively demonstrates that the Gondar kingdom is the temporal and geographical provenance of the definitive formulation of the Andämta Commentary, but it leaves open the question of its earlier development, for which no direct evidence appears to be available at present, and which in addition raises problems not yet answered by archaeology, such as the possibility of the existence of O.T. texts in Ethiopia in pre-Christian times.*²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ *Mämhər Esdros* was a prominent teacher in the mid-eighteenth century who is credited with correcting the Old Testament commentaries during his retirement at a monastery on Lake Tana Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*. : 164-5; Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 5; *Aqabe Sä'at Käbte* was a native of the Gojjam province of Ethiopia, and a pupil of *Mämhər Esdros* who taught in Gondar and died in about 1780 EC; *Mäl'akä Gannet Täklä Haymanot* was an Old Testament teacher in the eighteenth century Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 20; *Ato Adärahän* was a pupil of *Mäl'akä Gannet Täklä Haymanot*; and *Azzaž Lamēh* is listed as one of the authorities on the New Testament in Gondar, but of uncertain date Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*. : 167.

²⁵¹ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 375-7.

²⁵² *Ibid.*: 375.

²⁵³ Pedersen: 292-5.

²⁵⁴ See page 49 for a detailed discussions of this writer's contribution.

²⁵⁵ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 36, 39.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 23-34.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: 23

Most of the material used to compile the *andāmta* has come from Ge'ez texts which Cowley provisionally divided into three major groups²⁵⁸.

- Translations of early Greek patristic sources such as John Chrysostom and Basil of Caesarea;
- Translations of a later Syriac, Coptic and Arabic material, in particular *Abu Fāräg*, and major rewritings of earlier works in these languages;
- Original Ge'ez compositions.

Cowley²⁵⁹ gives the following as an 'incomplete and provisional' list, and states that 'no doubt there is much more material to be discovered, so I have only made definite statements about works that I have personally investigated'²⁶⁰, however even this incomplete list illustrates the diversity and extent of material in Ge'ez:

1. Translations representing earlier periods:
 - a. Ge'ez translations of works or parts of works by Philo of Carpasia on the Song of Songs²⁶¹;
 - b. The commentary of Gregory of Nyssa on Song of Songs 3:7 contained in chapter 66 of the *Kəbra Nagast*²⁶²,
 - c. Excerpts contained in the *hāymānota 'abaw*²⁶³ from
 - i. Basil of Caesarea on Proverbs²⁶⁴.
 - ii. Gregory of Nyssa on Song of Songs and on Philippians²⁶⁵.
 - iii. John Chrysostom on Matthew, John, Psalms, 1Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews²⁶⁶.
 - iv. Cyril of Alexandria on 1Corinthians²⁶⁷.
 - d. Excerpts in the *Məṣḥafa ḥawi*²⁶⁸

²⁵⁸ Ibid.: 35.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.: 35-40

²⁶⁰ Ibid.: 36-38.

²⁶¹ Contained in fols 3a-20a of MS. 119 of the library at the Ethiopian archbishop's residence in Jerusalem Ibid.: 36.

²⁶² See Bezold: 78 a 15- b 4 and Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 105-106*.

²⁶³ The *hāymānota 'abaw* or 'Faith of the Fathers' is a patristic florilegium on the Trinity, the incarnation and the nature of Christ, assembled and written in Arabic around 1078 CE, and translated into Ethiopic in the 16th century CE. See Grillmeier: 347 n 30. The Ge'ez text and Amharic translation is published by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: Anonymous (1986 EC). *ሃይማኖት አበው; hāymānota abaw*.

²⁶⁴ Anonymous *ሃይማኖት አበው; hāymānota abaw: 106ff*.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.: 119ff.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.: 210ff.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.: 253ff.

²⁶⁸ This book, the *Book of Compilations*, was translated in the late sixteenth century by a monk called Salik, and it is a translation of Nicon's religious encyclopaedia which treats various subjects taken from the Church Fathers, on the necessity of knowledge of Holy Scripture, the commandments of God, the monastic life, confession, fasting, etc. See Harden: 31.

- i. Basil of Caesarea of Psalms and Proverbs
 - ii. John Chrysostom on Psalms, Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, 1Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Philemon and Hebrews;
 - iii. Theodoret on the Pentateuch, Psalms, Isaiah and Hosea and fragments of his commentary on *Sinodos*²⁶⁹.
 - e. Excerpts contained in *Talmid*²⁷⁰
 - i. Basil of Caesarea on Matthew
 - ii. John Chrysostom on John and Pauline epistles
 - iii. John *lāsāna warq*²⁷¹
2. Later Ge'ez works, some of which are reworked versions of older books:
- a. A Ge'ez translation of *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*'s commentary on the Pentateuch entitled '*Tərgwāme orit of John Chrysostom*²⁷²,
 - b. A Ge'ez translation of *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*'s commentary entitled *Questions on the Torah of John Chrysostom* which draws heavily on the *Questions of Išo'bar Nun* and the *Book of Scholia* of Theodore bar Koni;
 - c. An unidentified commentary on Genesis 1-11 mostly concerned with the creation²⁷³;
 - d. A commentary on Daniel and the minor prophets attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, Gregory Nazianzus, and Theodoret of Cyrus;
 - e. A further commentary on the minor prophets with a different and unnamed source²⁷⁴;
 - f. the '*Coptic-Arabic gospel catena*', of which at least the Ge'ez translation of the commentary on Matthew is extant, and which has contributions attributed to Severus of Antioch, Cyril of Alexandria, Eusebius, John Chrysostom, Titus of Bostra, Epiphanius, Hippolytus of Rome, Gregory Nazianzus, Clement of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Athanasius, Didymus the Blind, Theophilus of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Severianus of Gabala, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Timothy Aelurus, Isaiah the Hermit, and Simeon Stylites;
 - g. *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*'s commentary on the four gospels²⁷⁵;

²⁶⁹ See page 31.

²⁷⁰ This work, the *Pupil*, takes its unusual title from the fact that its original author was George, a pupil of Anthony the Syrian. The work was translated around the end of the sixteenth century. See Harden: 31.

²⁷¹ The identity of this author is unknown, but Cowley suggests John of Damascus. See Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 36.

²⁷² *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib* is sometimes known in Ethiopia as 'John Chrysostom of the East'. See page 50.

²⁷³ British Library Orient 503 fols. 1a-4b Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 36.

²⁷⁴ Berlin MS Or. Quart. 986, and Paris d'Abbadie 156, fols. 108a-130b Ibid.: 37.

- h. an anonymous commentary on most of Matthew²⁷⁶;
 - i. further comment on the four gospels contained in *Gəbrä hāmamat*²⁷⁷ with the heading *dəhrä wāngel*;
 - j. *Tərgwame Pawlos*, a commentary on Paul’s epistles, which is possibly a translation of Arabic commentary on Paul tentatively ascribed to *Ibn Kātib Qaiṣar*²⁷⁸, with named sources as ‘*mätārgwəm*’, *Qəryaqos* (probably Cyriacus of Nisibis), John Chrysostom, Athanasius, *Ayləyayus*, Ephraim, Hanan (probably Hanan of Hedhaiyabh), ‘*māšafqan*’ (Theodore of Mopsuestia), *Wäldä Nəharayn*, and Agob (probably Aḥob of Qaṭar)²⁷⁹;
 - k. A further commentary on Paul, with comments by ‘*Felon*’ or ‘*Felgos*’, who is of unknown identity²⁸⁰.
3. Original Ge’ez works,
- a. A *Tərgwame Orit* of unknown author, which contains comment on the Octateuch and explains difficult words²⁸¹;
 - b. A second *Tərgwame Orit* ‘compiled and improved from Arabic and Ge’ez’ by one *Məharka Dəngəl* helped by *ənbaqom*, dated 1603 EC²⁸², which draws on that of *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*;

²⁷⁵ According to Cowley ‘*In the Geez translation of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib’s commentary on John, the following are named sources of sections of the commentary: Mätəgwam, Mar Yohannəs, Mar Efreem, Aš, ‘adad, Agob and Tewogolos. The passages attributed to John and Ephraim bear little resemblance to their writings, whereas those attributed to Išo’dad are almost identical with the text of his Gospel commentary*’ R.W. Cowley (1980). *Scholia of Ahob of Qatar on St John’s Gospel and the Pauline Epistles. Le Muséon* 98(3-4): 329-343: 333. Cowley’s later study identifies Moše bar Kepha (833-903CE) as a source of *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*’s gospel commentary. See Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 49.

²⁷⁶ British Library MS Orient 731 and 732 Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 37. The sources of MS Orient 731 are believed to be the ninth century CE East Syriac writer Išo’dad of Merv, and the West Syriac writer Moše bar Kepha (833-903CE). See Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 39.

²⁷⁷ This book, the *Acts of the Passion*, is a collection of lessons and homilies for the days of Holy Week from the Sunday of Hosannas (Palm Sunday) to Easter Eve and is of uncertain date Harden: 56-57.

²⁷⁸ A mid-thirteenth century CE Egyptian writer in Arabic. See Graf: 379.

²⁷⁹ This obscure figure is identified by Cowley as probably ‘*Ayyub* the interpreter of Seleucia’ candidate for election as catholicos in 581 CE, as he regards the attribution to a tenth century Job/Ahob of Qatar as dubious. See Cowley *Scholia of Ahob of Qatar on St John’s Gospel and the Pauline Epistles.* : 338. The comments found by Cowley in the commentary on the Gospel of John and the Pauline Epistles are also quoted in substantially the same words by Išo’dad of Merv, which are found in *Horae Semiticae Volume I* M. Gibson (1903). *Horae Semiticae Volume I*: 225. See Cowley *Scholia of Ahob of Qatar on St John’s Gospel and the Pauline Epistles.* : 333-338.

²⁸⁰ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 38.

²⁸¹ This is contained in Paris d’Abbadie 156 fols. 3a-19a. See Ibid.: 38.

²⁸² This is contained in EMMML 2101 fols 63a-148b at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa. See Ibid.: 38.

- c. comments on parts of Isaiah, Job, Daniel, Proverbs, Hosea, Jeremiah, prophecy against Pashhur, Wisdom, and Zechariah contained in *Gabrä hāmamat*, and attributed to *Abba Sälama*²⁸³
- d. the *Tərgwame Qälämsis* on Revelation²⁸⁴;
- e. commentary on parts of the Octateuch, Enoch, Kings, Job, Ezra, and Maccabees, Song of Songs, major and minor prophets, gospels, Revelation, and *Sinodos*²⁸⁵.

In addition there are other Ge'ez works, including introductions to New Testament books, fragments of other commentary in the *andämta* and some other minor fragments²⁸⁶. Cowley found that the original sources were interpreted to such an extent in the *andämta* that often their literary affinities cannot be identified, However he was convinced that the original sources named are indeed the actual sources but that '*the andämta commentary has usually digested them to the points at which analysis of the precise literary affinities is impossible*'²⁸⁷. Regarding *ibn at-Ṭayyib* he concluded that he is a clear and strong influence, although no single source of the material either in Ethiopic or other languages has survived, and the likelihood of an indigenous compilation of the sources may be proposed²⁸⁸.

Further sources for the *andämta* include hagiographies from the Ethiopian Synaxarium, the Miracles of Jesus, and the Miracles of Mary; secular historical works of either Ethiopian origin or sometimes from outside; some other theological works in Ge'ez translation including unspecified works of Jacob of Serugh translated into Ge'ez; Ge'ez prayers and chants; natural history derived principally from a book called *Fisalogos*; grammatical comments from traditional Ethiopian works; philosophical sayings from *Mäṣhafä fälasfa*; unattributed sources on astronomy and medicine; and writings of Cyril *ibn Laqlaq* a 13th century CE patriarch of Alexandria. There are also some rabbinic sources, found only in the commentary on Ezekiel²⁸⁹, whose compiler may have added material after a visit to Jerusalem between 1882 and 1912 EC²⁹⁰.

²⁸³ Cowley identifies this figure as the 'second', so not the Ethiopic name for Frumentius, but an Ethiopian Metropolitan from 1348-1388. See *Ibid.*: 17 n 5.

²⁸⁴ A full translation of this work is given by Cowley, see *Ibid.*: 63-156.

²⁸⁵ On *Sinodos* see page 31. This work is in British Library Or. 743. See *Ibid.*: 38.

²⁸⁶ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 38-40.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: 41.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 41.

²⁸⁹ Anonymous መጽሐፈ ሕዝቅኤል ኦንድምታ ትርጓሜ.

²⁹⁰ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 41-45.

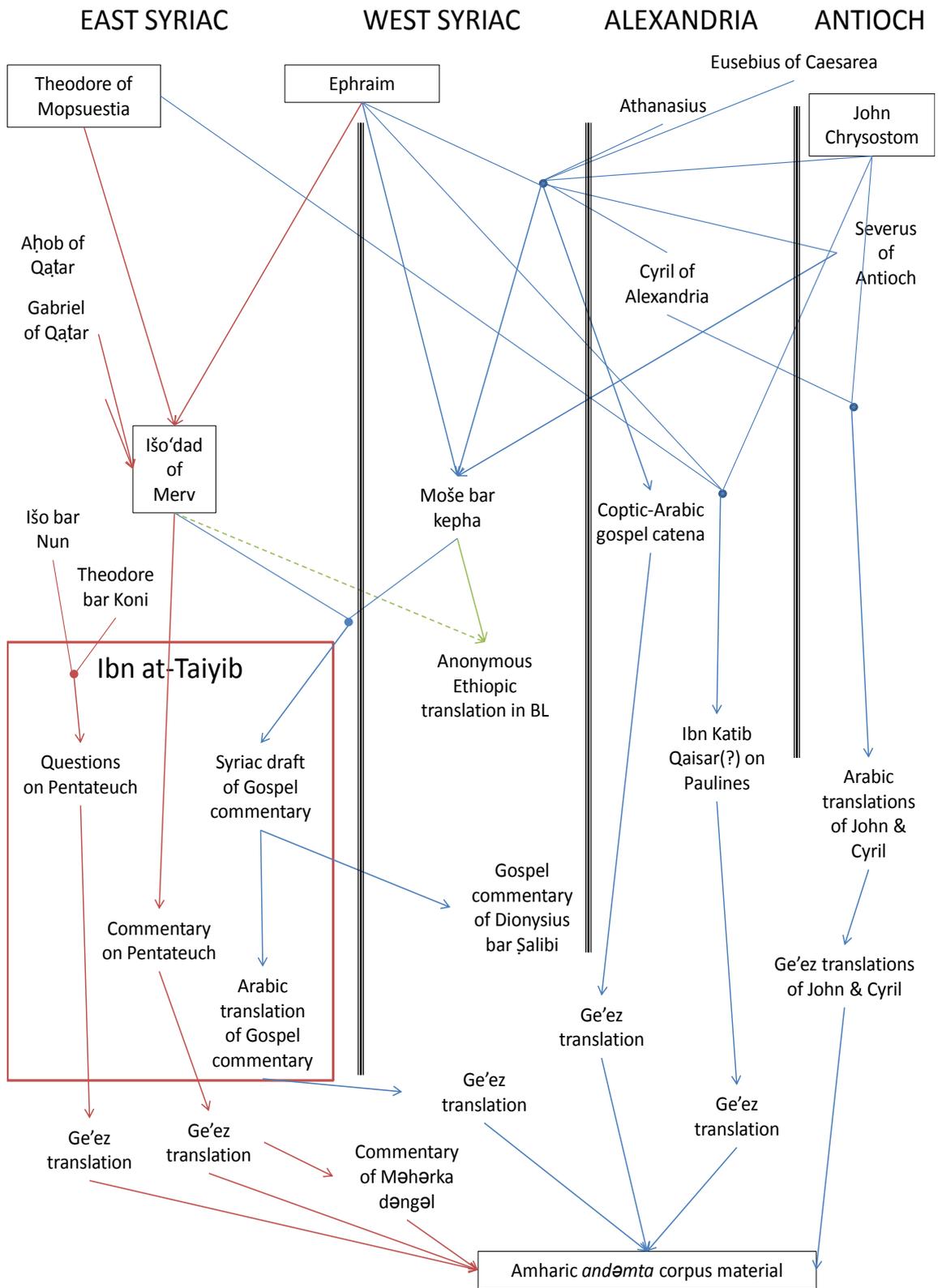


Figure 1: Provenance of *Andəmta* Corpus according to Cowley (1983)²⁹¹

²⁹¹ More certain sources marked in boxes.

The Contribution of *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib* and East Syriac Writers to the *Andāmta* Corpus.

It is of particular interest that writers from the Church of the East, including Theodore bar Koni, Išo‘bar Nun, *ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*, Aḥob of Qatar²⁹², and ‘The Interpreter’, Theodore of Mopsuestia are identified as sources for the Ethiopic *andāmta* commentaries, demonstrating that they incorporated significant influences from the East as well as the West Syriac traditions. Cowley commented that, ‘*It seems that the Ethiopian church was able to reject the formula in which the teaching of Nestorius was encapsulated ...while accepting much of the exegetical work of writers who were Nestorians*’²⁹³. The primary identified source of their transmission is *Abu’l-Faraj ‘Abdallāh ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-‘Irāqī*, who is an important influence through the use in the *andāmta* corpus of his commentaries on the Pentateuch on the Gospels²⁹⁴, a scholar of the ‘Antiochene’ school drawing strongly on Theodore of Mopsuestia²⁹⁵.

Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib (d. 1043) studied and practiced medicine; he also studied Aristotle and Porphyry. He wrote on the works of Hippocrates, and wrote extensive Christian works, the most important of which is his commentary on the whole Bible, ‘*Paradise of Christianity*’. He has been described as ‘*one of the major figures in Christian Arabic literature*’ and his *Commentary on the Gospels* ‘*is the most influential work of Gospel exegesis in Arabic*’²⁹⁶. His commentaries passed into the Miaphysite repertoire where they influenced later Coptic tradition from the thirteenth century onwards²⁹⁷. Julian Faultless has identified two manuscript traditions of his Gospel commentary, one representing his original writing, and a second revised in Egypt, and reflecting more Miaphysite views²⁹⁸. The sixteenth century CE Ethiopic manuscript of the Gospel commentary²⁹⁹ appears to follow the Miaphysite recension produced in Egypt³⁰⁰.

²⁹² For more details on Aḥob see note 279. Unusually he is quoted by name in the *andāmtā* on John and on I and II Corinthians. Cowley *Scholia of Ahob of Qatar on St John's Gospel and the Pauline Epistles*.

²⁹³ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 378.

²⁹⁴ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 36, 39. See also figure 1 p 48.

²⁹⁵ Graf: 160-169.

²⁹⁶ J. Faultless (2003). The Two Recensions of the Prologue to John in Iban Al-Tayyib's Commentary on the Gospels. *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule : church life and scholarship in ‘Abbasid Iraq*. D. Thomas: 177-198: 177-178.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 187. The existence of such a recension was acknowledged in the fourteenth century by the Copy *Shams al-Ri’āṣa Abū al-Barakāt* (d.1324CE) who wrote, ‘*there is to [Ibn al-Tayyib’s name] a collection of commentaries on the holy Gospels, which a certain Jacobite, ba ‘d al-Ya ‘āqiba, revised and from which he removed phrases which were in accordance with the beliefs of the Nestorians. After that, a number of copies were made of it for the sake of the excellent passages in it, and the meanings which its compiler laboured over*’. See Faultless: 182.

²⁹⁸ Faultless: 187-188.

²⁹⁹ BL Or. 732.

³⁰⁰ Faultless: 188.

Consolidating Cowley’s conclusions, further evidence of *ibn at-Ṭayyib*’s influence appears in unusual messianic and historical connections in his commentary on the Psalms, found also in the *andāmta*.

- *ibn at-Ṭayyib* designates Psalms 20 and 28 as dealing with the struggle between Hezekiah and the Assyrians³⁰¹;
 - The *andāmta* on Psalms 21 (20):1 and 28 (27):1 reads ‘it is said concerning Hezekiah’³⁰²;
 - The *andāmta* on Psalm 21 (20):3 reads ‘and when Sennacherib heard the Lord, the sound of thunder and lightning, Hezekiah said, ‘He has come against me’ and when he fled his crown fell, and his prophets and priests fell’³⁰³;
 - The *andāmta* on Psalm 30 (29):3 reads, ‘ANDM: they died and from those who went down to the grave, from Sennacherib you separated yourself and saved me’³⁰⁴.
- *ibn at-Ṭayyib* identifies the ‘Kings of the earth’ of Psalm 2:2 as Pilate, Herod, and the leaders of the Jews³⁰⁵ as does the *andāmta*³⁰⁶.
- *ibn at-Ṭayyib* identifies Psalm 8:4-8 as referring to the humanity of Christ³⁰⁷;
 - The *andāmta* on this verse states, ‘his title is Son, he fused himself with man, to think this a very serious thing’ and is interpreted as describing the Incarnation of Christ³⁰⁸.

Despite the influence of *ibn at-Ṭayyib*’s works, his Arabic name is little known in Ethiopia³⁰⁹, where he was called **ዮሐንስ አፈ ወርቅ ምስራቃዊ**, *Yohannās afä wäraq mäsraqawi*, or ‘John Chrysostom of the East’, or **አበ ፍስሐ ወልደ ሰናይ**, *Abbä fässəḥa wäldä sännay*, ‘Father of joy, son of goodness’³¹⁰. Only one known document, probably from the 16th-18th centuries CE, mentions controversy over his interpretations³¹¹. ‘*Abuferej*

³⁰¹ Graf: 165.

³⁰² Anonymous መዝሙረ ዳዊት ንባብ ክነትርጓሜው: 131, 165.

³⁰³ Ibid.: 132.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.: 168.

³⁰⁵ Graf: 164.

³⁰⁶ Anonymous መዝሙረ ዳዊት ንባብ ክነትርጓሜው: 26.

³⁰⁷ Graf: 164.

³⁰⁸ Anonymous መዝሙረ ዳዊት ንባብ ክነትርጓሜው: 67-8.

³⁰⁹ His name is mentioned in MS B.L. Orient 735 f. 21a as **ገብረ እግዚአብሔር ምስራቃዊ አቡ እልስሩር ወልደ ጠይብ ወልደ አበዳላ**, *gäbrä ’ägzi’abəḥer mäsraqawi abu ’əlsərur wäldä tāyāb wäldä abdalla*, and in f.230a as **ወልደ ጠይብ አበ ፍስሐ**, *wäldä tāyāb abä fässəḥa*. See R.W. Cowley (1987). *A Ge’ez Document Reporting Controversy Concerning the Bible Commentaries of Ibn at-Ṭayyib Rasseгна di Studi Etiopici XXX(1): 5-13.*

³¹⁰ Cowley has identified these respectively in manuscripts in the British Library (Orient 732 f. 206a), and Berlin (Dillmann, 63 f. 78b), Ibid..

³¹¹ EMM 7122 f. 51a-b, a microfilm of a 138 folio manuscript, which is the property of the Järr Səllase monastery in Sälale Ibid.

əbnä.täyāb 'the Nestorian' is criticised because 'the greater part of his interpretation agrees with the interpretation of the Jews in the interpretation of the book of the prophets'³¹², for his interpretations about Zerubbabel, *Yəhuda*³¹³ and Hyrcanus, and for his book *Gännät*³¹⁴, because 'all his word is the outpouring of his heart', and he does not use the phrase 'mother of God'³¹⁵. Cowley suggested that his works were not always accepted either because they were translated after the Amharic tradition was partly formed, or because his works also were popular with the Falashas³¹⁶.

Whilst it is difficult to form an overall picture of how *ibn at-Ṭayyib* used his sources, Cowley's study on Ethiopian hermeneutics specifically identifies a Ge'ez book of questions and answers³¹⁷ which is a translation of part of *ibn at-Ṭayyib*'s own compilation³¹⁸. Sections of the Ge'ez text corresponds closely to Theodore's *Scholion*, *məmrā* I-III & V. From his study of the text Cowley concludes that *ibn at-Ṭayyib* may have had a copy of the *Scholion*, from which he: took material beginning with creation, continuing with questions of Genesis-Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Ruth. He omitted and shortened some sections, sometimes deleting questions but retaining the answers, with an apparent preference for material similar to Išo'bar Nun³¹⁹; and he omitted much of the philosophical and chronological material, as well as explanations of difficult words³²⁰. The same Ge'ez text includes material from the Questions of Išo'bar Nun from which *ibn at-Ṭayyib* has removed some questions, and has edited others, without seeking to harmonise the answers with other sources.³²¹ *Ibn at-Ṭayyib* follows Išo'bar Nun's interpretation of Genesis 1:2 stating, 'the "spirit which was hovering over the water" he does not say concerning the Holy Spirit, but concerning the wind, according to the word of David the prophet which says, "the winds blow and the water flow"³²² The *andəmta* on Genesis 1:2 cites Theodore of Mopsuestia³²³ to support this view³²⁴.

³¹² Ibid..

³¹³ Cowley suggests this is most likely Judas Maccabeus Ibid.: n 26.

³¹⁴ 'The Paradise of Christianity', for more details see Graf: 162.

³¹⁵ Cowley *A Ge'ez Document Reporting Controversy Concerning the Bible Commentaries of Ibn at-Ṭayyib*.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ EMMML 1839 f. 1a-48b Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics: 119*.

³¹⁸ Identified in MS Vat. Arab. 36 Ibid.: 119.

³¹⁹ Cowley refers to Išo'dad here, but this does not make sense in the context in which he is talking about a work compiled from two sources, namely the *Scholion* of Theodore bar Koni, and the Questions of Išo'bar Nun. The index entry also implies that it should be Išo'bar Nun Ibid.: 120.

³²⁰ Ibid.: 120.

³²¹ Ibid.: 119-120.

³²² Ibid.: 121.

³²³ Theodore is known as **ܡܘܨܥܘܨܝܐ**, *masāfqān* or *masāffəqān* in the *andəmta* commentaries. See Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: 37*. This is from the Syriac **ܡܘܨܥܘܨܝܐ** *məphaššəqānā* 'interpreter' by metathesis, see R. Payne Smith and

The transmission of works from the Church of the East into other Christian traditions is not without precedent. The seventh century CE ascetic writer of the Church of the East, Isaac of Nineveh, has been translated into many languages, including Ge'ez³²⁵. The East and West Syriac traditions shared common roots in the golden age of Syriac literature, between the third and seventh centuries, with the seminal figures of Ephrem and Aphrahat and later writers, including Jacob of Serugh (d. 521CE) and Narsai (c.399-c.502CE). The latter two were both strongly influenced by the famous Persian School at Edessa, which was closed by Emperor Zeno in 489CE, when it moved across the border into Nisibis, in the Persian Empire, and became the intellectual centre for the Church of the East³²⁶. Narsai became its head, whilst Jacob eschewed its Christological teaching, evincing the divergence of the two traditions³²⁷. Interaction between the East and West Syriac traditions continued, however, as demonstrated by later figures: the ninth century CE Išo'dad of Merv from the East and Dionysius Bar Salibi (d.1171) from the West³²⁸. Brock has commented that, '*comparison of their two works and their sources will show that, despite theological differences, there was a good deal of mutual interaction as far as the history of exegesis is concerned*'³²⁹.

Later in the eighth and ninth centuries CE, with the rising challenge of Islam, scholars who drew on the Greek and Syriac intellectual traditions of cities such as Edessa, Harran, Nisibis, Takrit and Gundeshapur³³⁰, addressed Muslims using new methods and adopted the new *lingua franca* of Arabic in place of Greek and Syriac³³¹, drawing on their roots in the Syriac and Greek philosophical traditions, and laid the foundation for later scholars such as *ibn at-Ṭayyib*. The common ground and interaction between the East and West traditions is an important observation in the light of the presence of writers fundamentally connected with the East Syriac tradition in the Ethiopic Bible commentaries. *Ibn at-Ṭayyib* compiled his

J.P.S. Margoliouth (1994). *A compendious Syriac dictionary : founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith*: 293.

³²⁴ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 243.

³²⁵ S.P. Brock (2006d). *The Wisdom of St. Isaac of Nineveh*: vi. ማር ይስሐቅ, *mār yəshāq* is one of the three *Books of the Monks* used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Anonymous ሦስቱ መጻሕፍታት መነኩሳት 1) ማር ይስሐቅ 2) ፊልክስሶስ 3) አረጋዊ መንፈሳዊ.

³²⁶ See A. Vööbus (1965). *History of the School of Nisibis*, CSCO 266, *Subsidia* 26; A.H. Becker (2006). *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom. The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia*: 78-97.

³²⁷ S.P. Brock (1997). *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*: 36-37; S.P. Brock (2006c). *An Introduction to Syriac Studies*: 13.

³²⁸ Brock *An Introduction to Syriac Studies*: 14-15.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*: 15.

³³⁰ Including the notable figures of Theodore Abu Quarrah, a Melkite (c.755 – c. 830 CE); Habib ibn Khidmah Abu Ra'itah, a Miaphysite (d. c. 855 CE) and 'Ammar al-Basri, from the Church of the East (d. c. 845 CE)

³³¹ S.H. Griffith (1980). *Habib ibn Hidmah Abu Ra'itah, a Christian mutakallim of the First Abbasid Century. Oriens Christianus* 64: 161-201; J. Binns (1994). *Ascetics and ambassadors of Christ : the monasteries of Palestine, 314-631*; S.H. Griffith (1997b). *From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods. Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51: 11-31; S.H. Griffith (1997). *Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam: Constantinople and the Church in the Holy Land in the Ninth Century. Medieval Encounters* 3(3): 231-265.

from many sources³³², including the *Scholion* of Theodore bar Koni³³³, and the Questions on both the Old and New Testaments of Išo'bar Nun (c.744-828CE) from the Church of the East³³⁴. Although more isolated geographically from this interaction, Ethiopian monks travelled and possibly engaged in the same debates and discussions with scholars from the Church of the East.

Exegetical and Hermeneutical Approach

Exegetical Technique

Throughout the *andāmta* corpus a commentary on a particular verse consists normally of three, and sometimes two parts³³⁵, namely:

1. The Ge'ez text, known as 'the scholars' text', regarded as authoritative, although sometimes different from other Ge'ez Bible texts. This may also contain variant readings, and notes from the margins of manuscript sources. The commentary gives alternative titles and headings, corrections to the text, and has its own subdivisions of the text.
2. One or more idiomatic Amharic translations of the text, different versions emphasising important meaning.
3. More detailed explanations, illustrative stories, and quotations. This part is sometimes omitted, or may be contained in more extensive commentary collected together after several associated verses.

The following is a brief example from the *andāmta* on Numbers 21:9

(Ge'ez) And Moses made a serpent out of bronze and raised it up to be shown as a sign and whenever a serpent bit a man he would look to that bronze serpent and he would be saved.

(Amharic) Moses made a serpent of bronze and he raised it up in a place where it could be seen, whenever a snake bit a man he would look at that serpent and would be saved; this is a symbol: the snake of the devil; the bronze serpent of the Lord; with a living animal the snake which bit them the bronze serpent would save them; the devil who is living by nature and who harmed them, the Lord suffered and died in his body for salvation, this is a symbol.

ANDM: the snake which has poison which bit them, the bronze serpent saved them – the devil who has the poison of sin bit them, the Lord who is pure in nature saved him, this is a symbol.

³³² Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 35-40 and Figure 1 page 48. In particular for *ibn at-Tayyib's* sources see Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 36-37.

³³³ A late eighth century CE writer from the Church of the East. The *Scholion* is a set of questions on Old and New testaments which serves as an introductory text on theology and philosophy with the Bible as its basis Brock *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*: 63.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*: 65.

³³⁵ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 3-5.

ANDM: the snake [is a symbol] of Adam, the bronze serpent of the Lord; this is a symbol of those who were bitten by the poison of the snake, the bronze serpent saved them – Adam was bitten by sin, the Lord by his goodness saved them.

ANDM: bronze is pure, and the nature of the Lord is pure

ANDM: bronze is red, for the Lord having broken his flesh, and poured out his blood, he saved the world.

ANDM: The sound of bronze is heard from far off, for the suffering and death of the Lord from one border to another is heard.

*ANDM: bronze is found in hot lowlands and in temperate highland; the Lord will beget children from the Nation (the Jews) and from the Nations (the Gentiles) and the Apostles are those who were saved having heard his voice and seen his face; those saved having just heard his voice are the believers who are raised up until the day of his coming.*³³⁶

Often the commentary includes highly contextualised explanations clearly pointing to its origin in Ethiopia. Thus the Exodus 27:21 *andämtä* offers the following explanation of the hooks and rings uses to suspend the curtains of the Tabernacle:

ANDM: The hooks are like the fastening of a däbälo³³⁷, and the rings are like the leather strap, spread out [along the hem] they hold [the curtain].

*ANDM: The hooks and rings are like [on] a sähafi koräḡo³³⁸, sown in several places from the top to the bottom they catch each other. When you hang them up people call them curtains. The breadth of the cloth is forty cubits.*³³⁹

The *andämtä* explain the exegetical techniques used throughout the corpus the introduction to the commentary on the Pauline Epistles. The interpretation opens with a colloquial Amharic translation, often with alternatives that may reflect textual variations. Other techniques employed include: grammatical analysis including the discussion of alternative punctuation; clarification of ambiguous or unclear Ge'ez words; illustrate homophones or situations where gemination of a consonant alters the meaning; elucidation of the meaning through poetical rearrangement; the supplying of words implied in the text; the identification of other biblical passages with similar meaning; the explanation of important details that might not be understood well by the listener; the retelling of related biblical stories; the reconciliation of the meaning with other apparently contradictory biblical passages often employing diverse authorities; and the explanation of the mystery or hidden meaning of the text, often utilising the classical Ethiopic 'wax and gold' method for conveying meaning³⁴⁰. Although not articulated in the explanation in the Pauline Epistles the *andämtä* interpretations frequently employ typology, and may utilise diverse authorities may be used

³³⁶ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት: ኦሪት ዘሌዋውያን፣ ኦሪት ዘኵልቶ፣ ኦሪት ዘግግጦ፡ ዘኵልቶ 129.

³³⁷ The *däbälo* is a 'cloak made of tanned sheep or goatskin with the hair left on, formerly part of the standard attire of a traditional religious student'. See T.L. Kane (1990c). *Amharic English Dictionary Volume II: 1776*.

³³⁸ This is 'the small goatskin bag in which writing materials are kept'. See Ibid.: 1399.

³³⁹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት: ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት)፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት: ዘፀሐት 175.

³⁴⁰ R.W. Cowley (1971). *Preliminary Notes of the baläandämtä Commentaries. Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9(1): 9-20; Anonymous የቅዱስ ጳውሎስ መጻሕፍት: 2-3. See also Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: 47-8*.

to show their agreement over particular matters. The corpus interprets prophecy as having significance in the historical period in which it was spoken, with true fulfilment in Christ, and may also give further meanings³⁴¹. These methods serve a much wider purpose, which is primarily to illustrate the ‘true’, that is received, meaning of a text, and resolve any dispute over its meaning.

Discussing exegetical methodology Cowley commented that *‘the terms midraš and targum have occasionally been used in description of the Andāmta Commentary. If such categorisation is proper, it might be suggested that there are parallels between the situations and processes in which the Jewish and Ethiopian materials were produced’*³⁴². The midrash bear similarity to the allegorical and typological approach of early Christian theology in general, suggesting early Christian influence on the *andāmta*. The targumic use of paraphrases and explanatory expansions to illuminate the Old Testament³⁴³ is reminiscent of the *andāmta*. Cowley is, however, cautious about direct links:

*‘certainly the Andāmta Commentary shares features with the midrašim and targumim (concern for literalism, expansionist and anti-anthropomorphic tendencies, for example) but as midraš and targum are essentially Jewish categories, and even within Jewish they are described rather than defined, it must be concluded that these terms should not be used in the analysis of the Andāmta Commentary, and it should not be assumed that the Jewish and Ethiopian materials have been produced as a result of similar processes.’*³⁴⁴

Brock has concluded similarly regarding Ephrem’s and the Syriac interpretative method. Referring to the interpretation of Sarah’s rôle in the events surrounding the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 he stated,

*...while the silence of the biblical text on this particular subject has given rise to haggadic expansions of the story in both Jewish and in Christian tradition, each of these goes its own way in elucidating the scene, and it is the Christian homilists and poets who actually exploit the situation to the full; in doing so, however, their methods turn out to be very similar to those of their Jewish counterparts in their treatment of similar situations elsewhere in scripture.....Whether this Christian haggadah is here ultimately based on Jewish sources now lost, or whether it was the independent product of a general method of exegesis taken over by Christianity from Judaism, does not seem to be a question capable of firm answer, although my own opinion is that the latter is more likely to be the correct explanation.’*³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 48-53.

³⁴² Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 381.

³⁴³ The targum were an officially accepted Aramaic translation of the Hebrew OT, and extensively used paraphrases, and explanatory expansions Daniélou: xiii.

³⁴⁴ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 381.

³⁴⁵ S.P. Brock (1974). *Sarah and the Aqedah. Le Muséon* **87**(1-2): 67-77: 76.

In the Syriac tradition, Brock has identified elements of the *targum* tradition in the Peshitta and other literature such as Ephrem's commentary on Genesis. These include both cases where the texts follow the *targum*, and others where *targumic* style is used but where the detail is not present in the *targum*³⁴⁶. It is tempting to apply similar conclusions to the Ethiopic material and suggest that Ethiopian theologians similarly drew on a wider Jewish Christian³⁴⁷ approach because of early association with such thinking. The style may, however, reflect a more general cultural approach to analysing the Scriptures, perhaps arising out of Judaic influences on Ethiopian culture from an early date.

Although Cowley claims that the *andāmta* corpus shows little awareness of theological dispute³⁴⁸, the outcomes of early controversies in the Christian Church are frequently mentioned, presumably reflecting the sources originally used, and the issues regarded as significant by Ethiopian clerics who may have made later additions. The following is an example of this from the commentary on John 15:2:

'ANDM: 'And every branch which does not bear fruit' if you answer: Everyone who having believed in me and does not do good work the Trinity will separate his soul from his flesh. 'And to every branch which bears fruit': to he who does good work, to the faithful, but the heretics after being excommunicated they will [also] be separated: the 300 [Bishops at Nicea] [excommunicated] Arius, the 150 [Bishops at Constantinople] [excommunicated] Macedonius, the 200 [Bishops at Ephesus] [excommunicated] Nestorius'³⁴⁹

The commentary on Matthew 1:16 has a long discussion on the timing and nature of the anointing of the Messiah, betraying an awareness of the eighteenth century CE 'unctionist' controversy in Ethiopia which focussed on this matter³⁵⁰.

And concerning the one who was born of Our Lady Mary it is said concerning his union which was with divinity on account of being incarnate from a virgin. If they say by reason of an anointing of oil they destroy it. If it was like this then even if one person had seen it they would say so. The name which Gabriel gave to Mary has the meaning 'He is God', [he did so] when he saw God. This God when He became a man it is the name that was given to him. "And his name is 'Christ' and its meaning 'anoint with' because he uniquely received humanity. He is honoured by his saying, 'in it is in the flesh'. And his anointing which he received was in his humanity and it was not the anointing together with the anointed ones (e.g. the prophets) because those who are anointed they wanted to approach to be near to him - for He is Son He is God in his nature, without [needing] will. There are those who say [his anointing was] before union and those who say after union. The craftsman of his flesh

³⁴⁶ S.P. Brock (1979). *Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources*. *Journal of Jewish Studies* XXX(2): 212-232. See also T. Kronholm (1978). *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with particular reference to the influence of Jewish exegetical tradition: 215-224*.

³⁴⁷ See note 169 on the definition of Jewish Christian.

³⁴⁸ Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 46.

³⁴⁹ Anonymous *ወንጌል ቅዱስ*: 531.

³⁵⁰ For a discussion of this controversy see G. Haile (1990). *The Faith of the Uctionists in the Ethiopian church (Haymanot mäsihawit)*.

was the Holy Spirit because he anointed him, and he was unified in divinity with him. This is to say that the Word took what he had and having been anointed was unified. Having taken on flesh he took up an anointing, with his becoming man he was anointed. That which he had he too and became man, meaning that he was anointed and united. But it is not like this - when he was anointed and when he was united were at the same time, like the blinking of an eye. Those who believe the Orthodox faith they will teach that the Word was anointed with His flesh, from when the Word became flesh at that time, revealed by the Holy Spirit.³⁵¹

Diverse opinions which perhaps represent diverse traditions on matters are also discussed and not always resolved, as in the case of the commentary on Matthew 1:16, that discusses Joseph's relationship with Saint Mary:

Two scholars indicated the will of Joseph and three scholars indicated the will of the Trinity it says. It seemed to the two scholars that Joseph said 'for the time being I will marry' they who wrote this were Severus of Al'Ashmunein³⁵² and Jacob of Roha (Edessa)³⁵³. It seemed to the three scholars that knowing his chastity the Trinity would have guarded it, they who wrote this were Athanasius the Apostle, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom.³⁵⁴

Cowley's investigation into exegetical and hermeneutical methods in Ethiopia³⁵⁵, based on a relatively small amount of material, found that that the Antiochene exegetical method³⁵⁶ did not pass to Ethiopia, but rather the fruit of that method, so that *'it cannot be claimed that Antiochene exegetical theory is generative of Ethiopian Bible commentary – it is rather that Antiochene theory has generated Antiochene exegesis, and that this has been transmitted to Ethiopia.³⁵⁷* The *andāmta* commentaries have interpreted transmitted material in a uniquely Ethiopian manner.

The presence of allegorical material in the *andāmta* commentaries also requires explanation. The *andāmta* to the Liturgy of St Mary interprets the person of Isaac, the son of Abraham as follows:

'Isaac is a likeness of this world, the sheep is a likeness of the Lord

³⁵¹ Anonymous ወንጌል ቅዱስ: 66.

³⁵² This is Severus *ibn al-Muqaffa* (d.987), a Coptic Bishop, author and historian. See Graf: 309-11. His *kitāb al-īdāh* has been translated into Ge'ez under the titles መጽሐፈ ሳዊሮስ, *maṣḥafa sāwiros*, መጽሐፈ ጎዳር, *maṣḥafa ḥadār*, ክብረ ሃይማኖት, *kəbra hāymānot* Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics: 130.*

³⁵³ (c.640-705CE), West Syriac writer.

³⁵⁴ Anonymous ወንጌል ቅዱስ: 65-66.

³⁵⁵ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics: 375-382*

³⁵⁶ Cowley comments that this statement requires clarification, as the term 'Antiochene' is not necessarily clear, and in his study it *'is understood to mean the Biblical interpretation which characterised the church of Antioch and is associated principally with the names of Lucian, Paulinus, Diodore, Eustathius, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia'* Ibid.: 375.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.: 376.

Isaac is a likeness of the godhead, the sheep a likeness of the manhood, the knife is a likeness of the authority of God, and the blade a likeness of suffering and death...

The thought of Abraham is a likeness of the grave, Isaac is a likeness of the Lord...

The fire is a likeness of the Holy Spirit, the wood a likeness of the cross, and the two servants are likenesses of the two brigands....³⁵⁸

Similar material is found in the *andāmta* on Genesis 22:5,

ANDM: The ram is a symbol of the Lord, Isaac is a symbol of the believers. The ram became a substitute for Isaac, and the Lord became a substitute for believers. That they say the ram descended from heaven, the Lord was to descend from the heaven of heavens. That they say it was found from the Wood of the Thicket, that he would be born from sealed virginity, from Our Lady. It is a symbol that because he came from the flock of Abraham, he would be born from the tribe of Abraham.³⁵⁹

The incorporation of two contrary views, one that the ram may have appeared miraculously, the other that it came from Abraham's flock, demonstrates that the use of allegory does not, unlike Origen³⁶⁰, imply that the original events did not happen, or that their historicity is of no importance. Rather the commentary allows that actual events may also have a deeper spiritual significance. Commenting on similar approaches in Syriac writing on this passage, Sebastian Brock has stated that:

It was probably typological reasoning that gave rise to the opinion...that only the ram had a miraculous birth. Yet further reflection on the unsuitable implications of such typology, as far as Antiochene theology was concerned, led late East Syrian writers to reject the entire tradition, and to assert instead that an angel took an ordinary ram from Abraham's flocks...³⁶¹

The results of this difference of opinion appear have to have penetrated the *andāmta* commentaries, providing further evidence of the influence of the East and West Syriac traditions.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.: 376.

³⁵⁹ See appendix F, page 242, lines 53-59.

³⁶⁰ For instance Origen regards the idea that Solomon's temple could be built without noise, mentioned in 1Kings 6:7 as nonsensical, and comments, 'And again I would ask those who are in bondage to the letter how it is possible that there should be eighty thousand stone-cutters and that the house of God should be built out of hard white stones without the noise of hammer or axe or any iron tool being heard in His house while the building was going on?' P. Schaff (2004). *The Gospel of Peter, The Diatessaron of Tatian, The Apocalypse of Peter, the Vision of Paul, The Apocalypse of the Virgin and Sedrach, The Testament of Abraham, The Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, The Narrative of Zosimus, The Apology of Aristides, The Epistles of Clement (complete text), Origen's Commentary on John, Books 1-10, and Commentary on Matthew, Books 1, 2, and 10-14. (electronic edition): 404.*

³⁶¹ S.P. Brock (1981a). Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition. *Mélange Dominique Barthélemy: études bibliques offertes a l'occasion de son 60^e anniversaire, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 38.* P. Casetti, O. Keel and A. Schenker: 1-30: 17.

The *andāmta* corpus apparently makes little attempt to reinterpret the Scriptures and other books into the Ethiopian context, and in this sense the commentary appears to be unaware of the ‘horizon’ of its audience. Cowley concludes:

*..as the traditional Ethiopian world-view has been moulded by the Bible, and Ethiopian material culture is not unlike that of Biblical times, the question of ‘horizon’ does not present itself to the Ethiopian commentator. Because the cultural and situational gap is seen to be slight, or is not perceived at all, the theoretical problem, that the horizon of the exegete is not the horizon of the text, remains unfelt, and is therefore not one of the factors generative of commentary.*³⁶²

The *Kəbra Nagašt*:

Background

The *Kəbra Nagašt* is the Ethiopian national epic, regarded as ‘a great storehouse of legends and traditions’ which combines various source materials including: folklore, the Old Testament; later rabbinic writings, Egyptian (pagan and Christian), Arabian, and Ethiopian sources. It is partly based on traditions extant in Syria, Palestine, Arabia and Egypt during the first four centuries CE³⁶³, which have been amalgamated with uniquely Ethiopian components.

At the core of this complex book is the Sheba Legend that recounts the liaison between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon followed by the abduction of the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia, through *Menelik*, their son. Woven around this legend are extensive passages seeking to bring theological significance to the Ark in Christian worship, and also addressing broader themes of salvation, God’s covenants, and sacred kingship. The Ark is given a place in a threefold plan of salvation involving the Pearl, the Ark of the Covenant and the Wood of the Cross. These provide the basis for the imagery as presented in the *Kəbra Nagašt*.

The literary structure of the *Kəbra Nagašt* has been discussed briefly by Bezold³⁶⁴ and Cerulli³⁶⁵, who essentially agree that it has three main parts, although Cerulli divides the first part into two. David Hubbard’s more detailed analysis of its literary structure³⁶⁶ agreed on the same outline:

- Part I: containing the Sheba-*Menelik* Cycle, the core legend, chapters 1-63A³⁶⁷, 84-94, 113-117;

³⁶² Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 382

³⁶³ Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: vii-viii.

³⁶⁴ Bezold: XXXIX-XL.

³⁶⁵ Cerulli: 36-37.

³⁶⁶ Hubbard: 409-11.

³⁶⁷ Cerulli divided this part into two at chapter 33, where the account of Menelik’s return to Jerusalem begins. See Cerulli: 36.

- Part II: this section has two parts, one dealing with Solomon's later life, and his place in the genealogy of Christ and Mary, and then a section on his ancestry of the kings of Rome, and many other kingdoms, chapters 63b-83;
- Part III: An anthology of Christian Prophecies, chapters 95-112.

Scholars have queried the historicity of the work, crucially the attribution of the Kingdom of Sheba to Ethiopia, and Ethiopia's claim to possess the Ark³⁶⁸. Until recently, the earliest witness to the connection between Ethiopia and Sheba was the eleventh century CE Michael of Tinnis, chronicler of the Patriarchs of Alexandria in the time of Patriarch Christodoulos (1047-1077 CE)³⁶⁹. As Michael claimed sources from the reign of Patriarch Cosmas (921-933 CE), this may even represent a tenth century CE witness. Later, a work compiled between the mid-twelfth and mid-fourteenth centuries CE states that, '*Abyssinia is the same as the kingdom of Sheba, from which the queen of Al-Yaman came to Jerusalem, to hear words of wisdom from Solomon*'³⁷⁰. More recently, however, epigraphic evidence from the first millennium BCE refers to the '*mukarrib of Daamat and Saba*'. *Mukarrib* is South Arabian royal or religious title, and the inscription refers to the Ethiopian-Sabean polity of *Daamat* as well as the South Arabian kingdom of *Saba*³⁷¹, demonstrating that some Ethiopians identified themselves with Sheba (Saba) at this time³⁷².

³⁶⁸ See for instance Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant: 63-66*; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 131-145*.

³⁶⁹ A.S. Atiya, Y. 'Abd al-Masih and O.H.E. Burmester (1948). *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, by Sawirus ibn al-Mukaffa, Volume II, Part II, Khaël III-Shenouti II (A.D. 880-1066): 118*; A.S. Atiya, Y. 'Abd al-Masih and O.H.E. Burmester (1959). *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church by Sawirus ibn al-Mukaffa, Volume II, Part III, Christodoulos-Michael (A.D. 1046-1102): 260*.

³⁷⁰ B.T.A. Evetts and A.J. Butler (1895). *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries, attributed to Abu Salih, the Armenian: 284-5*. This work has been attributed to *Abu Šālih*, the twelfth century CE Armenian traveller, and the text was translated by Evetts Evetts and Butler. It appears, however, that he was only the owner of one of four manuscripts that comprise the work, and that the work was composed between the mid twelfth and the mid fourteenth centuries. See forthcoming article by Witakowski in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400-1400*.

³⁷¹ M.C. Curtis (2004). *Ancient Interaction Across the Southern Red Sea: New Suggestions for Investigating Cultural Exchange and Complex Societies During the First Millenium BC. Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region, Proceedings of Red Sea Project I, British Museum, October 2002, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 2: 57-70: 62*. Although mentioned in inscriptions the location of *Daamat* is not known. See A. Caquot and A.J. Drewes (1955). *Les monuments recueillis à Maqallé. Annales d'Ethiopie 1: 17-41*; J. Pirenne (1956). *Paléographie des Inscriptions Sud-Arabs I*; R. Schneider (1961). *Inscriptions d'Enda Cerqos. Annales d'Ethiopie 4: 61-65*; A.J. Drewes (1962). *Inscriptions de l'Ethiopie Antique*; R. Schneider (1973). *Deux inscriptions sudarabiques du Tigré. Bibliotheca Orientalis 30: 385-389*; R. Fattovich (1990). *Remarks on the Pre-Aksumite Period in Northern Ethiopia. Journal of Ethiopian Studies 23: 3-33*; R. Fattovich (2000). *Aksum and the Habashat: State and Ethnicity in Ancient Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, Working Papers in African Studies, No 228; Curtis: 60*. A total of four rulers of *Daamat* and *Saba* are mentioned in inscriptions from several sites in northern Ethiopia and Eritrea. These include *Addi Galamo* Caquot and Drewes, *Enda Chergos* Schneider *Inscriptions d'Enda Cerqos.*, *Melazo* R. Schneider (1978). *Documents épigraphiques d'Ethiopie. Annales d'Ethiopie 11: 129-132*, *Abuna Garima* Schneider *Deux inscriptions sudarabiques du Tigré*; R. Schneider (1976). *L'inscription chrétienne d'Ezana en écriture sudarabe. Annales d'Ethiopie 10: 109-117*, *Matara* R. Schneider (1965). *Notes épigraphiques sur les*

Date and Authorship

The current recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt* is a thirteenth century CE compilation³⁷³. Carl Bezold prepared the first critical edition of the Ge'ez text of the *Kəbra Nagašt* in 1909³⁷⁴, using as his basic text one of the oldest known Ethiopian manuscripts in Europe, housed in the Paris National Library, that was dated to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century CE³⁷⁵, and ten other manuscripts to make his collation³⁷⁶. The date and authorship of the different parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt* raise complex and yet unresolved issues, nevertheless there is important evidence found in the colophons attached to several manuscripts; in the text of the *Kəbra Nagašt* itself; and from the literary sources which have been identified. Three of the manuscripts each have an important colophon describing the history of the *Kəbra Nagašt*³⁷⁷. The colophons, which differ only in minor details, supply direct evidence for the date and authorship of the *Kəbra Nagašt*. They ascribe the origin of the work in its present form to the thirteenth century CE, during the reign of *Gabra Masqal*, otherwise known as *Lālibelā*, one of the last *Zagwe* kings of Ethiopia. The oldest version of the colophon, dated to the seventeenth century CE, from the Paris National Museum states:

And it is written in an Arabic letter, 'we have produced this book in Arabic from a book in Coptic which we removed from the tomb of Mark, evangelist, teacher, father of us all in the 409th Year of Mercy and brought it to the country of

découvertes de Matara. Annales d'Ethiopie 6: 88-92; A.J. Drewes and R. Schneider (1967). Documents Epigraphiques de l'Ethiopie. Annales d'Ethiopie 7: 89-102, Yeha and Kaskase Schneider L'inscription chrétienne d'Ezana en écriture sudarabe.

³⁷² These inscriptions may support the idea of migration from South Arabia as the origins of the sophisticated pre-Aksumite society, or they may suggest that the titles were used to add prestige to the society, and to legitimise its rulers. See Curtis: 62; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible: 117*.

³⁷³ P. Marrassini (2007). *Kebrā Nagast*. Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. S. Uhlig. **3**: 364-8.

³⁷⁴ Bezold.

³⁷⁵ H. Zotenberg (1877a). *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 5 No. 3, Éth. 94*. N.L. Paris.

³⁷⁶ These were: two eighteenth century manuscript from the Bodleian Library, A. Dillmann (1848a). *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniesnsis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopicis, Bodl. Bruce 87, Cod. XXVII, p. 72*. B. Library; A. Dillmann (1848c). *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniesnsis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopicis, Bodl. Bruce 93, Cod. XXVI, p. 68*. B. Library; a seventeenth century manuscript from the Paris National Library Zotenberg *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 146 No. 1, Éth. 123*; an eighteenth century manuscript from the British Library W. Wright (1877a). *Catalogue of the Ethiopic manuscripts in the British museum acquired since the year 1847, entry CCCXCI, Orient. 818, p. 297*; an eighteenth century manuscript from the Kgl. Library in Berlin A. Dillmann (1878). *Die Handschriftenverzeichnisse der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin, Nr. 76, Berol. Orient. 395*; an eighteenth century manuscript from the *Magdala Collection*, Orient. 819; and an eighteenth century manuscript from the d'Abbadie collection A. d'Abbadie (1859a). *Catalogue raisonné de manuscrits éthiopiens appartenant à Antoine d'Abbadie, No. 97*; a 'modern' presumably nineteenth century manuscript from the d'Abbadie collection A. d'Abbadie (1859b). *Catalogue raisonné de manuscrits éthiopiens appartenant à Antoine d'Abbadie, No. 132*; two undated manuscripts from the d'Abbadie collection A. d'Abbadie (1859c). *Catalogue raisonné de manuscrits éthiopiens appartenant à Antoine d'Abbadie, No. 152*; A. d'Abbadie (1859d). *Catalogue raisonné de manuscrits éthiopiens appartenant à Antoine d'Abbadie, No. 225*. For further details see Bezold: IX-X.

³⁷⁷ Dillmann *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniesnsis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopicis, Bodl. Bruce 87, Cod. XXVII, p. 72*; Wright; Zotenberg *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 5 No. 3, Éth. 94*.

*Ethiopia in the days of Gabra Masqal, The King also known as Lalibela and in the days of George the good Metropolitan. God neglected to have it produced or translated into the speech of Ethiopia.’ And when I thought ‘why did (Abal-) Iz and (Abal-) Fereg who produced it not translate it, and I thought that this is because it was produced in the days of the Zagwe that they did not translate it because the book (i.e. the Kəbra Nagašt) says that the Law is transgressed if they who rule are not Jews. And the Government of Israel (i.e. the Solomonids) came to rule they produced it and it was found in Nazareth. Pray for your servant and for those who laboured with me to produce this book, because we had many difficulties: I and Yimeharene Ab, and Hizba Kristos, and Andrew, and Philip and Mahari Ab, may God have mercy on them in the Kingdom of Heaven with all the saints and martyrs their beloved Zena Gabriel and their beloved Zion Mofesa (the healer) forever and ever amen.*³⁷⁸

The supplied details are somewhat enigmatic in various ways. The final recension in Ge’ez is attributed to Isaac, and the Arabic version to *Abal-Iz* and *Abal-Fereg*, however none of these figures is clearly identified. The reference to the production of a book ‘*in Arabic from a book in Coptic*’ is equally baffling; there are no extant Arabic or Coptic manuscripts of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, and a Coptic original seems highly unlikely. The date of ‘*the 409th Year of Mercy*’ may refer to the finding of the Coptic version, or to the preparation of the Ge’ez or Arabic ones, although the above reading of the colophon suggests that it is the date of the Arabic version.

The reference to *Abal Fereg* as one of the writers of the Arabic version of the book raises possible insight into its dating. One possible candidate is the eleventh century CE *Abu’l Faraj ‘Abdallah ibn at-Ṭayyib al-‘Iraqi*³⁷⁹, who has already been identified as a significant influence on the Ethiopian Bible commentary tradition³⁸⁰. If the date recorded in the colophon to the *Kəbra Nagašt* has been misread by the Ethiopian translator, and actually referred to the Islamic Calendar, then the year 409 would correspond to 1018 CE, placing it in the early productive period of this *Abu’l Faraj*. There is no evidence of him having any knowledge of Ethiopia, and the symbolic and allegorical style of much of the *Kəbra Nagašt*’s theology does not accord with his background in the Church of the East, but his commentaries were influential and it is possible that a ‘transferred’ identification was made in his name³⁸¹. The identity of *Abal Iz* is also unknown. Ethiopian tradition simply identifies

³⁷⁸ Zotenberg *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale*, entry 146 No. 1, *Éth.* 123: 222 a,b. There is no substantial difference between this colophon, and those found in the British Museum W. Wright (1877b). *Catalogue of the Ethiopic manuscripts in the British museum acquired since the year 1847*, entry CCCXCI, *Orient.* 818. *Colophon text*, p. 300 and the Bodleian Library A. Dillmann (1848b). *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniensis*, Pars VII: *Codices Aethiopici*, *Bodl. Bruce* 87, *Cod.* XXVII, p. 74. B. Library, except the latter omits the identification of King Gabra Masqal with Lalibela.

³⁷⁹ Graf: 160-9.

³⁸⁰ Cowley *Old Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition*. : 163 n 25; Cowley *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*: 35-40.

³⁸¹ *Abu al-Faraj* may otherwise be identified with the renowned West Syriac polymath Gregory bar Hebraeus (d. 1286 CE). His life coincides with the rule of *Yekuno Amlak*, the first of the so-called ‘Solomonic line’ in 1270 CE, but there appear to be no other significant reasons to link him to

both *Abal Iz* and *Abal Fereg* as Egyptian clerics³⁸², although their names might suggest otherwise.

Zotenberg regarded the colophon as genuine, leading him to affirm the source as an ancient Coptic original of unknown date, which Zotenberg suggested was around the sixth century CE³⁸³. A Coptic origin for the work would favour an early date for the original composition of the book as it was a dominant language in the Nile Valley in the sixth century CE³⁸⁴, nevertheless there is no trace of Coptic in the current recension. Budge, Shahid, Hubbard and Johnson³⁸⁵ concurred with this dating³⁸⁶, but suggested that the Sheba legend may contain some older elements³⁸⁷. The suggestion of a sixth century CE date arises primarily from the *Kābra Nagašt's* reference to the Christian martyrdoms at *Najran* in Southern Arabia, and subsequent expeditions by King Kaleb to defend the community and establish a Christian kingdom in *Himyar*, witnessed also in *The Book of the Himyarites*³⁸⁸. The possibility that Kaleb's legendary son *Gabra Mesqal* and the later *Lalibella*, also known as *Gabra Masqal* could have been confused in the colophon must also be considered³⁸⁹, an argument strengthened by the fact that the Bodleian Library version of the colophon³⁹⁰ does not include 'otherwise known as *Lalibellā*' after the mention of *Gabra Masqal*³⁹¹.

Anti-Semitic elements have been identified³⁹², but the focus of the anti-Jewish arguments of the *Kābra Nagašt* is on the Jews' rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah. Other elements of Judaic tradition, however, such as Levitical food regulations, the need for ritual cleanliness, and a place for the Ark of the Covenant are affirmed. This approach is consistent with that of the early church, demonstrating differentiation between Christianity and Judaism³⁹³. If the *Kābra Nagašt* had been written shortly after the martyrdoms in *Najran* then this might give a

Ethiopia, or the *Kābra Nagašt* Tamrat: 68; Gillman and Klimkeit: 71; S. Munro-Hay (2005). *Abu Al-Faraj and Abu Al-Izz. Annales d'Ethiopie XX*: 23-28; Marrassini *Kebrā Nagast*.

³⁸² Selassie.

³⁸³ Zotenberg *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 146 No. 1, Éth. 123*.

³⁸⁴ I. Shahid (1976). *The Kebrā Nagast in the Light of Recent Research. Le Muséon 89*: 133-178: 142.

³⁸⁵ Ibid; D.W. Johnson (1995). *Dating the Kebrā Nagast. Peace and war in Byzantium: essays in honor of George T. Dennis, S.J. T.S. Miller and J. Nesbitt*: 197-208; Budge *The Kebrā Nagast*.

³⁸⁶ Hubbard: 355; Shahid *The Kebrā Nagast in the Light of Recent Research.* : 139; Johnson: 206; Budge *The Kebrā Nagast*: viii.

³⁸⁷ See Hubbard: 410.

³⁸⁸ *The Book of the Himyarites* provides independent confirmation of these events in the sixth century CE. Moberg.

³⁸⁹ Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant*: 66.

³⁹⁰ Dillmann *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniensis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopici, Bodl. Bruce 87, Cod. XXVII, p. 72*.

³⁹¹ See line 4 of the translation of the colophon on page 61.

³⁹² Shahid *The Kebrā Nagast in the Light of Recent Research.* : 139-140; Johnson.

³⁹³ M. Simon (1986). *Versus Israel*; J. Lieu (2006). Self-definition vis-à-vis the Jewish matrix. *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume I, Origins to Constantine*. M.M. Mitchell and F. Young; R. Murray (2006). *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition)*: 18-19; F. Young (2007). *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*: 9-28.

stronger context for anti-Jewish polemic³⁹⁴. Shahid also saw the lack of reference to later issues such as the rise of Islam, the legendary anti-Christian Queen Gudit³⁹⁵, and later ‘Solomonic’ rulers as evidence of an earlier date³⁹⁶. He also suggests that references in the *Kəbra Nagašt* to Byzantium as a major world power are consistent with the period from the fourth to the sixth centuries CE rather than the later period when the Byzantine Empire was in decline³⁹⁷.

The *Kəbra Nagašt* also contains, in chapters 113-117, a brief apocalyptic section woven around the historical events at Najran, ending with the King of Rome and the King of Ethiopia dividing up the kingdoms of the world between them. One obscure element in this apocalyptic section connects with seventh century CE Syriac apocalypses, whose distinctive texts emerged in the period of growing Islamic dominance in the Middle East, making a case for an earlier date at least for this section. The relevant texts are the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, a product of north Mesopotamia in the second half of the seventh century CE³⁹⁸, and a second apocalyptic fragment from Edessa, which has the same basic themes as Pseudo-Methodius and was probably written in the last couple of decades of the seventh century CE³⁹⁹. Chapter 113 of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁴⁰⁰

And the Kings of Rome also have become great because of the nails [of the Cross] that Helena made into a bridle, which hath become the vanquisher of the enemy for the King of Rome....

This unusual mention of the nails of the Cross is also found in the Edessene fragment:

When the said (number of years), that week and a half, has passed, at the end of 694 years, then the king of the Greeks will come forth, having a sign in the city of Rom [concerning] the nails which were in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the hands of the thief: they were mixed together and no one knew those of our Lord from the others. Then they cast them into the fire all together and forged a bit or bridle, which they suspended in a church⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁴ Johnson: 205-6.

³⁹⁵ Legend has it that Gudit, or Judit, a Jewish queen ruled in Axum around the ninth century CE and destroyed the ancient churches of Axum. There is little direct evidence for her existence but the legend has strong currency in Ethiopia. See Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible* and S. Habte-Selliasie (1972). *The problem of Gudit*. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* **X**(2): 113-22 for more information.

³⁹⁶ Shahid *The Kebra Nagast in the Light of Recent Research*.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 140-141.

³⁹⁸ A. Palmer, S. Brock and R. Hoyland (1993). *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*: 222.

³⁹⁹ G.J. Reinink (1990). *Der edessenische 'Pseudo-Methodius'*. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* **83**: 31-45; Palmer, Brock and Hoyland: 243.

⁴⁰⁰ Apparently part of the later additions, see Hubbard: 410-11.

⁴⁰¹ Brock in Palmer, Brock and Hoyland: 245.

Bowersock has used this obscure connection to argue strongly for a seventh century CE date for the *Kəbra Nagast*⁴⁰². 'The 409th Year of Mercy' mentioned in the colophon would be 693 CE if it were in the first Great Paschal Cycle, a dating consistent with the dates of the Syriac apocalypses.

Later the same chapter of the *Kəbra Nagast* prophesied that *Marqyānos* 'the Apostate'⁴⁰³ ruler of Byzantium would be overthrown by the King of Persia, because of his deviance from the Orthodox, non-Chalcedonian, faith:

*And the King of Persia, whose name is Hārenewos, shall humiliate him [Marcian the King of Rome], and the King will take him away together with his horse, and by the will of God the horse, the one who has [on him] the Vanquisher of the Enemy, will be stirred up, and he will go into the sea, and there he will perish, and the nails will shine there in the sea until Christ comes again with great glory, with power on a cloud of heaven.*⁴⁰⁴

The implicit mention of the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) and the annihilation of Sassanid Persia early in the seventh century CE infer and early dating for this passage⁴⁰⁵. Similarly the overthrow of the Byzantine kingdom is prophesied in *Pseudo Methodius* although here it is by the 'Children of Ishmael'⁴⁰⁶.

Perhaps most significantly both the *Apocalypse of Pseudo Methodius*, and the Edessene fragment ascribe Ethiopian ancestry to the King of Rome:

*Now this king of the Greeks shall be descended from Kushyat, daughter of Kushyat, of the kings of Kush; they are (also) called Nub(ians).*⁴⁰⁷

Discussing this attribution Witakowski suggested the Ethiopian heritage ascribed to the Roman Emperor alludes to the contact in the sixth century CE arising from the arrival of the 'Nine Saints', which gave the Syrians a positive perception of Ethiopia⁴⁰⁸.

Contrary to Zotenberg, Dillmann⁴⁰⁹ regarded the colophon as spurious and favoured, along with Conti Rossini, Littmann, Bezold, Cerulli and Munro-Hay⁴¹⁰, a later date in the twelfth

⁴⁰² G. Bowersock (2007). 'Helena's Bridle, Ethiopian Christianity, and Syriac Apocalyptic', lecture given on 7th August 2007, at the XV International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, and electronic PDF copy of the lecture provided to this author.

⁴⁰³ Most probably this figure is the Emperor Marcian (450-457CE) who oversaw the Council of Chalcedon, who would therefore have been considered 'apostate' by the miaphysite Ethiopians. See F.W. Norris (2007). Greek Christianities. *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 2: Constantine to c. 600*. A. Casiday and F.W. Norris: 90.

⁴⁰⁴ Bezold: 167b 23-168a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 222.

⁴⁰⁵ Shahid *The Kebra Nagast in the Light of Recent Research*; Gillman and Klimkeit: 127.

⁴⁰⁶ Brock in Palmer, Brock and Hoyland: 230.

⁴⁰⁷ Brock in *Ibid.*: 249. See also G.J. Reinink, Ed. (1993). *Die Syische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, CSCO 540, Scriptorum Syri 220*: 17 1-5.

⁴⁰⁸ W. Witakowski (1999). *The Eschatological Program of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, November 1999*. 25th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference.

⁴⁰⁹ Dillmann *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniensis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopici, Bodl. Bruce 87, Cod. XXVII, p. 72*.

or early thirteenth century CE, a time when many works were translated from Arabic, the source language preferred by some notable scholars⁴¹¹. Whilst there appears to be no trace of Coptic in the text of the *Kəbra Nagast* there is ample evidence of Arabic sources⁴¹². The date of ‘the 409th Year of Mercy’ mentioned in the colophon could then be 1225 CE, in the second Great Paschal Period, just before the reestablishment of the so-called ‘Solomonic dynasty’ in 1270 CE, and consistent with the mention of *Lalibela* who reigned in this period⁴¹³. The lack of any records or references to the *Kəbra Nagast* anywhere until 1270 CE endorses this argument⁴¹⁴.

Supporting a thirteenth century CE dating, Munro-Hay⁴¹⁵ has pointed out several apparent anachronisms in the *Kəbra Nagast* to argue against an early date. A closer inspection, however, sheds doubt some of these objections:

- Chapter 59 states, ‘I came to Kahera (Cairo), the city of the King’⁴¹⁶, in a passage clearly referring to the time of King Solomon. Cairo was named in 973/4 CE, suggesting that this chapter was written later than this date⁴¹⁷. The text, however, actually reads ‘and I came to qāhrā⁴¹⁸ in the City of the King’⁴¹⁹, which could refer to ‘a place of victory’ in a city;
- Chapter 90, ‘they destroyed the region of Zawi with Hadya because there was enmity between them from earlier times’⁴²⁰ might refer to the Muslim kingdom of Hadya with which Amda Seyon fought a successful battle in 1316-17 CE. The translator

⁴¹⁰ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*; E. Littmann (1904). *The legend of the Queen of Sheba in the tradition of Axum*; Bezold; Il secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli; Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant*.

⁴¹¹ Dillmann *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniesnsis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopici*, Bodl. Bruce 87, Cod. XXVII, p. 72: note n; F. Praetorius (1870(?)). *Fabuyla de Regina Sabaena apud Aethiopes. Dissertatio inauguralis*; C. Conti Rossini (1921-23). *Review: E. A. Wallis Budge - The queen of Sheba and her only son Menyelek... a complete translation of the Kebra Nagast with introduction. Rivista degli Studi Orientali IX*: 606-8; Il secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli: 36-39.

⁴¹² Bezold: XXXV-XXXVII; Shahid *The Kebra Nagast in the Light of Recent Research*. :142; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: xxxi. Bezold lists many words directly transcribed from Arabic, and also words including place names like ቃህራ, qāhrā; words using Arabic plural forms such as መባርዳን, mabārdin for ‘messenger’, unusual plurals like አክሚት, ‘akmimāt, meaning clothing which is a double plural, with both Arabic and Ge’ez endings, along with many other examples.

⁴¹³ Tamrat p 119.

⁴¹⁴ Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant*: 64.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*:65.

⁴¹⁶ Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 88.

⁴¹⁷ Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant*: 65.

⁴¹⁸ Whilst this is the Arabic form of Cairo, with the correct translation is could also mean ‘place of victory’ which is the meaning of the Arabic word.

⁴¹⁹ Bezold: 65 b 12.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*: 127 b 9-11.

Isaac could then be the *nebura'ed*, or administrator of the church in Aksum mentioned in a 1318 CE land grant⁴²¹. This may be a later accretion;

- The translation of the colophon states that *'the Law is transgressed if they who rule are not Jews'*⁴²², an idea repeated in chapter 34⁴²³. In the colophon this clearly applied to the *Zagwe* dynasty, but the reference in chapter 34 could be to a broader argument about Jewish kingship. This section at the end of chapter 34 is part of the latest, probably thirteenth century CE, section of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁴²⁴. The section discussing the Jewish ancestry of many kings is probably from the sixth century CE⁴²⁵, and so could not refer to the *Zagwe*;
- Chapter 39 states, *'blessed be your seed on the earth, and from Sewa in the South to the East of India'*⁴²⁶. *'Sewa'* may refer to the region of Shewa, which became part of the Ethiopian state only at the time of the early new 'Solomonic' rulers⁴²⁷. The reading ሴዋ, *sewā* is doubtful, and Bezold offers ሴምዎ⁴²⁸, *semwo* or ሴዎ⁴²⁹, *sewo* which allows the possibility that it refers to something else unknown⁴³⁰.

The *Kəbra Nagašt* in its current format is, then, a thirteenth century CE compilation of many sources, reflecting a long line of recensions, and raising the possibility of variant sources and amalgamations before this final recension. Hubbard's detailed analysis of written and oral sources, and structure of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁴³¹, made important conclusions about the recension history and dating of its three parts. He identified the following divisions in Part I:

- A. Introduction on the ancestry of Solomon, and the importance of the Ark, chapters 1-21, not originally part of the Sheba story.
- B. Visits of Tamrin and the Queen to Solomon, chapters 22-28a.
- C. Interruption, chapters 28b-29a excusing Solmon's polygamy.
- D. Seduction of Sheba and birth of Menelik, chapters 29b-43, with a brief interruption at the end of chapter 34.
- E. Interruption, chapter 44, defending the authority of kings and priests.

⁴²¹ Il secolo XIV: l'eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli; Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant: 65*.

⁴²² See translation on page 61.

⁴²³ Bezold: 30 b 6-8; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 41-42*.

⁴²⁴ Hubbard: 410-11.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.: 410-11.

⁴²⁶ Bezold: 38 b 4-6; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 53*.

⁴²⁷ Munro-Hay *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant: 65*.

⁴²⁸ Attested in the oldest manuscript Zotenberg *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens (Gheez et Amharique) de la Bibliothèque nationale, entry 5 No. 3, Éth. 94*, and in one later one Dillmann *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniensis, Pars VII: Codices Aethiopici, Bodl. Bruce 93, Cod. XXVI, p. 68*.

⁴²⁹ Attested in one manuscript Dillmann *Die Handschriftenverzeichnisse der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin, Nr. 76, Berol. Orient. 395*.

⁴³⁰ Bezold: 38 note 26.

⁴³¹ Hubbard: 392-411.

- F. Abduction of the ark, chapters 45-63a.
- G. Establishment of Menelik's kingdom, chapters 84-93a, 94
- H. Interruption, chapter 93b, condemning heretics.
- I. Conclusion, chapters 113-117, the triumph of Ethiopia in the faith, not originally part of the Sheba story.

Hubbard regarded the interruptions as later interpolations into Sheba-*Menelik* cycle in Part I⁴³², arguing that their removal left material from an early, possibly original narrative of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁴³³, leaving material from an original narrative that is the earliest in the *Kəbra Nagašt*. In Hubbard's opinion some of this material may have dated from the migration of Semitic peoples to Ethiopia in the first millennium BCE⁴³⁴.

Part II (chapters 63b⁴³⁵ to 83) appears to have been an addition to Part I⁴³⁶. The first three chapters discuss Solomon's idolatry instigated by Pharaoh's daughter, material that is similar to that found in the Rabbinic Tannaim, and the Jerusalem Talmud amongst other sources⁴³⁷. Patristic material, most of which Hubbard considered to be of Alexandrian origin⁴³⁸, is found in Chapters 66-69 contain what appears to be patristic material, with chapter 68 containing the Ethiopic version of the legend of the Pearl⁴³⁹. Hubbard considers most of this material to be of Alexandrian origin. The insertion of Part II appears to have taken place after the Sheba Menelik Cycle was completed, but before Part III and the introduction and conclusion were added⁴⁴⁰. Although its contents appear consistent with a dating in the sixth or seventh centuries CE, Hubbard was unable to identify whether this material was composed for insertion into the *Kəbra Nagašt* or whether it was compiled initially for another purpose⁴⁴¹.

Part III (chapters 95-112), is based almost entirely on patristic explanations of Old Testament passages which appear unconnected with the other parts of the book, and are generally strongly pro-Ethiopian⁴⁴². The tenor of their contents led Hubbard to conclude that

⁴³² Ibid.: 393-399, 410.

⁴³³ Ibid.: 392-399.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.: 337; Grillmeier: 295; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 117.

⁴³⁵ Bezold: 74b 11.

⁴³⁶ Removing this section would connect the sentence talking of Solomon's relationship with the daughter of Pharaoh, in the middle of chapter 63 'and he would go and sit there because of his love for his house and his wife Maqšārā the daughter of Pharaoh the King of Egypt' Ibid.: 74b 25 – 75a 2 with the beginning of chapter 84 which reads, 'and the King of Ethiopia returned to his country with great joy and gladness....' Bezold: 110a 1-2.

⁴³⁷ E.G. Hirsch (1905). *Solomon's Marriage*. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume XI. C. Adler, W. Bacher, Deutsch, Gottheil, E.G. Hirsch, J. Jacobs, K. Kohler, H. Rosental, I. Singer and C.H. Toy: 441; L. Ginzberg (1998). *The Legends of the Jews, vol VI: From Moses to Esther, notes for volumes three and four*: 294-295.

⁴³⁸ Hubbard: 218-242.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.: 400-401.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.: 410.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.: 404.

⁴⁴² Ibid.: 405, 408.

they are later than parts than Parts I and II, probably dating from the time of the latest redaction, in the late thirteen or early fourteenth centuries CE.

Hubbard may have surmised correctly that the date of the final recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt* was as late as the thirteenth century CE⁴⁴³, with the vast bulk of the material added to the Sheba legend naturally emanating from the sixth or seventh centuries CE. His analysis of the transmission history of the *Kəbra Nagašt* accords with traditional view in the Ethiopian Church⁴⁴⁴ which maintains that the first parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt* were written down by Jewish clerics who came to Ethiopia with the Ark. This original written in Hebrew probably corresponds to Part I but was translated into Ge'ez at some unknown date, then in around 400 CE into Coptic. Ethiopian tradition also maintains that around 700 CE this Coptic version was translated into Arabic, presumably with the material from Hubbard's Part II being added at this time. During the reign of *Lalibela* Ethiopian tradition contends that the Arabic version was translated into Ge'ez, at which point the material in Hubbard's Part III was appended. These complex issues surrounding the transmission history obfuscate questions about its audience and intent. Whilst the final redaction of the *Kəbra Nagašt* can be dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, its *Sitz im Leben* points to the sixth or seventh centuries CE. In truth the *Kəbra Nagašt* is so complex that its transmission history may never be unravelled without the discovery of earlier recensions. It may, however, be concluded that the *Kəbra Nagašt* cannot be associated with a single date.

Purpose and Intent

The complex issues surrounding the transmission history obfuscate questions about its audience and intent. Around the time of the publication of Bezold's critical edition of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁴⁴⁵ several scholars analysed its content to identify its purpose⁴⁴⁶. Whilst Conti Rossini thought it may have been a fake⁴⁴⁷ Praetorius and Budge, originally writing in 1922, considered it a great work of Ethiopian literature⁴⁴⁸. Despite their differences, all scholars agreed that the major aim of the *Kəbra Nagašt* in its final recension was political, the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century version being used to glorify and justify the new 'Solomonic' dynasty in Ethiopia established from 1270 CE, and was probably redacted by a priest in Aksum, primarily for an Ethiopian audience⁴⁴⁹.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.: 410-411.

⁴⁴⁴ Selassie.

⁴⁴⁵ Bezold.

⁴⁴⁶ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*. : 213-214; T. Nöldeke (1905). *Review: Carl Bezold, Kebra Nagast. Vienna Oriental Journal* **19**: 397-411: 397-411; F. Praetorius (1905). *Kebra Nagast. Literarisches Zentralblatt für Deutschland* **46**: 1528-1531: 1528-1532; J.A. Crichton (1906). *Kebra Nagast. Review of Theology and Philosophy* **I**: 225-229: 225-229.

⁴⁴⁷ Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*.

⁴⁴⁸ Praetorius *Kebra Nagast*; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*.

⁴⁴⁹ Praetorius *Fabuyla de Regina Sabaea apud Aethiopes*; Conti Rossini *Note per la storia letteraria abissina*. : 213-214; Nöldeke *Review: Carl Bezold, Kebra Nagast*. : 398; Praetorius *Kebra Nagast*. :

As to the purpose of the *Kəbra Nagašt* there is little doubt that it served the purposes of the new ‘Solomonic’ rulers. Given the various stages involved in the composition of the *Kəbra Nagašt* it would perhaps be naïve to state a political agenda as the only purpose of the book, and broader themes should be sought. The early date of much of the material contained in the *Kəbra Nagašt* suggests that it had a multiplicity of purposes. Apart from the immediate political aims, its purpose seems to be primarily theological, mapping out a plan of salvation which employs divinely ordained rulers and instruments, clearly with Ethiopia at the centre of events.

Praetorius, who had published parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt* prior to Bezold’s critical edition⁴⁵⁰, also discerned a wider theme. Criticising Bezold’s view that the work lacks literary unity, he saw the book as a ‘*literary unit*’⁴⁵¹ with an overriding theme following the fate of the three sons of Solomon who were the ancestors, according to the *Kəbra Nagašt*, of the rulers of the great Christian empires of Ethiopia and Rome, and also of Christ himself, and whose inheritances were guarded respectively by the archangels Michael, Uriel, and Gabriel. Praetorius concluded:

*One cannot say that Solomon is in the centre, but in the background of the entire book, and his founding of three Israelite kingdoms. The book is missing a specific centre, but that is not proof against his literary unity. The ancient Ethiopian legend is only a part of the plan of the author, but through the purposes of the author, the legend has moved very much into the foreground.*⁴⁵²

Praetorius also focussed on the *Kəbra Nagašt*’s tracing of the Jewish ancestry of many rulers of the world. On this basis he saw the title, ‘*The Glory of the Kings*’ as referring to all true rulers, and the overarching theme as the propagation of what he termed ‘Semiticism’, a view perhaps coloured by the political climate of his native Germany in his time, but this view was also supported later by Cerulli⁴⁵³.

Cerulli focussed on the use of Scripture and saw the recounting of Old Testament prophecies of redemption in the *Kəbra Nagašt* as showing the mark of the Ethiopian Ge’ez *tergwame* or interpretations of Scripture⁴⁵⁴. The prophecies are collected to show the final victory of the King of Ethiopia, which Cerulli saw as evidence of the prolonged fight Ethiopia had against Muslims⁴⁵⁵, an enigmatic assertion since Muslims are not mentioned in the *Kəbra Nagašt*. Cerulli suggests ‘*perhaps a little too ingenious solution*’⁴⁵⁶ that the *Kəbra Nagašt* may have

1532; Hubbard: 394; Il Secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli: 36-39; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: xxx-xxxi; Marrassini *Kebra Nagast*: 365-366.

⁴⁵⁰ Praetorius *Fabuyla de Regina Sabaea apud Aethiopes*.

⁴⁵¹ Praetorius *Kebra Nagast*. : 1530.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*: 1530.

⁴⁵³ Il secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli: 36-39

⁴⁵⁴ Il secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in *Ibid.*: 36-39.

⁴⁵⁵ Il secolo XIV: l’eta di Amda Sion in *Ibid.*: 37.

⁴⁵⁶ Shahid *The Kebra Nagast in the Light of Recent Research*. : 142.

been written by an Egyptian cleric, in Arabic, who lived in Ethiopia⁴⁵⁷, and that the idea of a Coptic original was a fabrication to give the work extra kudos⁴⁵⁸. His philological-historical approach pointed to facts such as Armenia mentioned as a province of the Roman Empire⁴⁵⁹; the events at *Najran*⁴⁶⁰; the mention of a document found in Saint Sophia in Constantinople⁴⁶¹; and the mention of Saint Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia⁴⁶² as revealing that many of the sources must date from before the sixth century CE⁴⁶³. In contrast the possible mention of war with the *Hadya* suggests a fourteenth century CE date, which for Cerulli simply demonstrated the heterogeneity of the *Kəbra Nagast*⁴⁶⁴.

Budge, describing the work as a compilation dating from several periods, considered colophonic material to be authentic⁴⁶⁵. He regarded the internal evidence as showing that the core story of the Solomonic ancestry of the Ethiopian kings was an ancient Ethiopian legend, supplemented with other legends and additions of Coptic and Syrian origin. He regarded the final version, in line with the colophon, as being prepared during the *Zagwe* period, with the final translation into Ge'ez being made in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century CE⁴⁶⁶. Budge saw the object of the work as the glorification of Ethiopia through its association with the Ark of the Covenant, thus showing Ethiopians that their country was chosen by God to be the new home of the Ark, and that they were God's chosen people⁴⁶⁷. In his view the author affirms to a wider non-Ethiopian audience that Ethiopia was ruled by kings of Solomonic descent from the tenth century BCE until about the tenth century CE, and that their religion, laws, and social customs were essentially the same as those of the Hebrews of Palestine⁴⁶⁸. At the same time the author, with '*much falsified history and bad philology*' affirms the Jewish ancestry of the kings of the Moabites, Philistines, Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians and the Byzantines, which Budge took to imply that the author was a Jew⁴⁶⁹.

In contrast Nöldeke advocated the author to be '*the Church*' which lies at the heart of both the country and the ruling dynasty. In his opinion the focus of the book was the story of the Ark of the Covenant and its coming to Ethiopia, giving authority both to the 'Solomonic' rulers, and also to the clergy of Ethiopia, who according to chapter 44 of the *Kəbra Nagast*

⁴⁵⁷ Il secolo XIV: l'eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli: 36.

⁴⁵⁸ Il secolo XIV: l'eta di Amda Sion in Ibid.: 36.

⁴⁵⁹ Bezold: 170a 3; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 225.

⁴⁶⁰ Bezold: 171a 6 - b 15; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 226-227.

⁴⁶¹ Bezold: 11b 1; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 16.

⁴⁶² Bezold: 2a 9-10; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 2.

⁴⁶³ Il secolo XIV: l'eta di Amda Sion in Cerulli: 38.

⁴⁶⁴ Il secolo XIV: l'eta di Amda Sion in Ibid.: 36-39.

⁴⁶⁵ Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: xxiii-xxxix.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.: xxv.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.: xxvi-xxvii.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.: xxx-xxxii.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.: xxxi.

have authority even to rebuke kings⁴⁷⁰. Nöldeke saw the *Kəbra Nagašt*'s focus on the salvific importance of the Ark or *tābot*, a representation of which is found at the centre of every Ethiopian Orthodox Church, an important theme overlooked by others,⁴⁷¹ as a parallel theme of justifying *tābot* centred worship in the Ethiopian church⁴⁷².

Several decades after the publication of the critical text by Bezold, Hubbard, working under the direction of Edward Ullendorff, acknowledged the political motive of the final redaction, which was to reject the *Zagwe* rulers in favour of a 'purer Jewish' line⁴⁷³, which is implicit in the text but explicit in the colophon⁴⁷⁴. Hubbard also identified another anti-*Zagwe* element arising from the resistance of Aksumite clergy to the *Zagwe* moving the capital from Aksum to Roha (now Lalibela)⁴⁷⁵. In addition to the political motivation, he also identified an aim to express the national consciousness of the Aksumite Kingdom as the new chosen people of God, validated by the possession of the Ark of the Covenant⁴⁷⁶. Lastly, Hubbard concurred with Nöldeke in identifying a religious motive to justify the *tābot* centred worship of the Ethiopian church⁴⁷⁷.

Consistent with Nöldeke, Budge and Hubbard modern Ethiopian ecclesiastical scholars identify two main purposes of the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The first is to teach about Ethiopia's unique worship centred on the *tābot*, and implicitly that Ethiopian Christians are a people chosen by God for this privilege. The second is to teach about the honour power and authority given from God to all kings, and to the Ethiopian king in particular⁴⁷⁸, which perhaps implicitly also indicates a desire to validate the 'Solomonic' dynasty.

The 'Ephremic' Tradition

One of the distinctive characteristic of early Syriac literature is a preference to express theology in symbolic and poetic form. Saint Ephrem, writing in the fourth century, was the foremost exponent of this pattern that was also pursued on a grand scale by many of his devotees, the most notable being Jacob of Serugh. For the purpose of this study this symbolic-poetic approach in the early Syriac literature is referred to as 'Ephremic'.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian

Ephrem, born around 306 CE in the region of Nisibis, probably of Christian parents, lived all but the last ten years of his life around Nisibis, serving as a deacon⁴⁷⁹. In 363 CE, as part of

⁴⁷⁰ Bezold: 46b 13-48a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 64-5.

⁴⁷¹ Nöldeke *Review: Carl Bezold, Kebra Nagast*. : 397-411.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*: 400.

⁴⁷³ Hubbard: 360-361.

⁴⁷⁴ See page 61.

⁴⁷⁵ Hubbard: 363.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 364.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: 368.

⁴⁷⁸ Selassie.

⁴⁷⁹ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 7.

a peace treaty between the Persian and Roman Empires, Nisibis became part of the Persian Empire, and most of its Christian population, including Ephrem, moved West, and settled in Edessa, where he died on the 9th of June 373. It is probably here that he was confronted by the full force of the heresies of Bardaisan, Marcion, Arius and Mani, and where he probably wrote most of his known works⁴⁸⁰.

The city of Edessa, strategically located in the border lands between the empires of Rome and Persia, was subject to great political change during its history⁴⁸¹, bringing varying cultural influences on the city. Early in the Christian era its Jewish population was allied with Persia against Rome. Having resisted Trajan's invasions in 114-115CE, by 164CE Edessa was surrounded by Roman territories, and around 213-214CE Edessa was proclaimed a Roman *colonia*. Subsequent to the defeat of Valerian by Shapur I, Persia dominated the region as far west as Antioch from about 260CE, until 297CE when Rome re-took Nisibis and retained it until 363CE, leaving Edessa on the frontier between the two empires. Julian's defeat in 363CE saw Nisibis pass again into Persian hands, and many Christians from Nisibis moved west to Edessa, including Ephrem⁴⁸².

These political changes left their mark on the distinctive Christian tradition to which Ephrem was an heir. The Targumic approach that occurs in parts of the Peshitta Old Testament⁴⁸³, indicates that the Christianity of fourth century CE Syria emerged from a complex assortment of Judaeo-Christian groups⁴⁸⁴. Edessa's Christian roots are integrally connected with Judaism, as seen in the Abgar legend⁴⁸⁵, and possibly lie in the converted Jewish population of the region of Adiabene. These Jews were influenced by the pious Jews and Jewish-Christians of Palestine, and so Christianity developed with a distinctive Jewish-Christian hue⁴⁸⁶. Edessa is the source of important early Syriac literature such as the Judaeo-Christian *Acts of Thomas* and the *Odes of Solomon*⁴⁸⁷. With its geographical position, and its political changes Edessa was not isolated from Western culture, and Hellenised influences can also be identified, perhaps associated with converts from paganism⁴⁸⁸. Many citizens of

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.: 6-8.

⁴⁸¹ Gillman and Klimkeit: 34.

⁴⁸² Vööbus *History of the School of Nisibis*, CSCO 266, *Subsidia* 26: 7-8; Gillman and Klimkeit: 34.

⁴⁸³ S.P. Brock (1995). *A Palestinian Targum Feature in Syriac*. *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46(1-2): 271-282; S.P. Brock (2006a). *The Earliest Syriac Literature*. *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. F. Young, A. Ayres and A. Louth: 165.

⁴⁸⁴ Mathews: 11

⁴⁸⁵ For an account of this legend see G. Phillips (1876). *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, now first edited in a complete form in the original Syriac with an English Translation and Notes*. A French translation of the *Doctrine of Addai*, accompanied by a translation of an Ethiopic version is found in A. Desreumaux (1993). *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus*. For comments on the significance of this legend, see Gillman and Klimkeit: 32-36.

⁴⁸⁶ Gillman and Klimkeit: 33.

⁴⁸⁷ Daniélou: 24-25; Brock *The Earliest Syriac Literature*: 166-168. See chapter 4 page 120 for further explanation of this literature.

⁴⁸⁸ Brock *The Earliest Syriac Literature*: 164.

Edessa were bilingual, and Christian writings appear from Edessa in both Greek and Syriac⁴⁸⁹, making the city a fault-line between Greek and Syriac culture.

Ephrem, known as the ‘Harp of the Spirit’⁴⁹⁰ has always been highly regarded in the Syriac tradition, but his reception in the West has not always been favourable with J. B. Segal concluding that his works show ‘*little profundity or originality of thought*’⁴⁹¹. In recent decades, however, his work has been highly praised, and comprehensive studies by notable scholars such as Robert Murray⁴⁹² and Sebastian Brock⁴⁹³ have led to a deeper appreciation of his symbolic theological method. The increasing awareness of the importance of Syriac language and culture as the *lingua franca* in the Middle East in the fourth to seventh centuries CE has developed the view that, ‘*unquestionably the greatest writer in the history of the Syriac-speaking church, Ephrem stands as the pillar of Syriac Christian literature and culture*’⁴⁹⁴.

Until recent decades English translations of Ephrem’s Works have been few and used unreliable manuscripts prior to the seminal work of Dom Edmund Beck who, starting in 1955, compiled critical editions of all Ephrem’s genuine Syriac works. Ephrem’s genuine works are either in poetry or in prose. The poetry is in two forms: *madrāše*, or hymns; and *mimre*, or metrical homilies. The hymns have been edited under subject headings including: *On Faith, On Fasting, Against Heresies, On Virginity, On the Nativity, On the Church, On Paradise, Against Julian, On Nisibis, On Holy Week, On the Paschal Feast with the Hymns on Abraham Kidunaya and Julian Saba* probably being unauthentic⁴⁹⁵. His prose works include *Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus, Commentary on the Diatessaron*⁴⁹⁶ and the *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan*. There is one known prose homily, the *Homily on our Lord*, and one *Letter to Publius*. Scholarly English translations of his works are now widely available⁴⁹⁷.

Ephrem’s Works were popular, and were translated perhaps beginning in his lifetime into Greek, Armenian, Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Slavonic, Georgian, and Syro-

⁴⁸⁹ Gillman and Klimkeit: 34.

⁴⁹⁰ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 16; Mathews: 3.

⁴⁹¹ J.B. Segal (1970). *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'*: 89

⁴⁹² Murray.

⁴⁹³ S.P. Brock (1992). *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*.

⁴⁹⁴ Mathews: 3-5.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: 41.

⁴⁹⁶ Complete only in Armenian translation.

⁴⁹⁷ Including: P. Schaff (1885). *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series, Vol XIII: Gregory the Great (II), Ephraim Syrus, Aphrahat*; Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*; McVey; Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*; Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*; S.P. Brock (1994). *The Bride of Light*; S.P. Brock, Kiraz, George A (2006). *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*; Murray; J.B. Morris (2008). *Rhythms of Saint Ephrem the Syrian: Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian*.

Palestinian⁴⁹⁸. Most of the Greek works are not known in Syriac and were doubtless not written by him. The ascetic milieu from which these arose contributed to the hagiographical view of Ephrem found in the Byzantine tradition⁴⁹⁹. Aside from the Armenian works most of the other translations can be traced to spurious Greek works. Parts of the vast Armenian corpus, which is mostly biblical commentary and a few hymns, appear genuine, but apart from the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* and fragments of the *Hymns on Nicomedia* none is known in Syriac⁵⁰⁰.

Ephrem preferred to express theology in poetic form⁵⁰¹. When asked to produce a prose commentary on Genesis he wrote,

*I had not wanted to write a commentary on the first book of Creation, lest we should now repeat what we had set down in the metrical homilies and hymns. Nevertheless, compelled by the love of friends, we have written briefly those things of which we wrote at length in the metrical homilies and in the hymns.*⁵⁰²

Nevertheless, although only the *Commentary on Genesis* alone survives in full in Syriac, it is believed that he wrote commentaries on most books of the Bible⁵⁰³, although existing works show that Ephrem did not provide continuous commentary on each verse of the Bible, but rather he elucidated texts that were theologically important⁵⁰⁴.

Ephrem's symbolic theology is typically Semitic, although not unaware of Hellenised thought. Ephrem was the heir not only to the Jewish Bible, but also indirectly to a cultural approach to the interpretation of Scripture typified by the post-biblical Jewish Targumim and Midrashim⁵⁰⁵. Ephrem's style, then, makes him a key source in identifying Judaeo-Christian elements in other traditions. He was also the heir to two other cultural traditions: that of ancient Mesopotamia, typified by his use of the genre of dispute poems, and through some of his symbolism, exemplified by terms such as Medicine of Life; and that of Greece, of whose theological climate he was well aware despite not reading Greek⁵⁰⁶.

Ephrem's theology is essentially pastoral, and he wants the listener to understand the profound ontological divide between the creation and the Creator. This divide means that all that mankind can understand about God is that which He has revealed, and hence it is improper to investigate too deeply into the mysteries of God, *'In the case of the Godhead,*

⁴⁹⁸ Mathews: 39.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.: 39.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.: 40.

⁵⁰¹ den Biesen: 36.

⁵⁰² Mathews: 67.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.: 42.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.: 43.

⁵⁰⁵ There is no evidence that he drew directly on these sources, but probably encountered them through oral tradition. Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 20.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.: 21.

what created being is able to investigate Him? For there is a great chasm between him and the Creator⁵⁰⁷. Although this verse does not mention Arius explicitly, Arianism was perceived as the primary threat to the Church in Ephrem's lifetime, and Ephrem's view was that:

...the various Arian factions had not only located the Son on the wrong side of the ontological gap, but they had then been led on by this initial error into attempting a rational definition of the Son's Generation from the Father⁵⁰⁸

Furthermore, God gave symbols that help mankind to appreciate aspects of God's nature, and to marvel at them and worship Him, through faith. Hence, Ephrem delved deeply into the Old Testament drawing out images to be interpreted symbolically and help understand what took place in the New Testament. The prophetic revelations of the Old Testament are fundamental to his theology, but he avoided the Hellenised approach of theological definitions and categories. Whilst his method used symbolism expressed in poetic images, it was not allegorical in the Alexandrian style, but looked to the plain sense of Scripture in closer proximity to the Antiochene approach⁵⁰⁹, although he was critical of those who were rigid and literal in the exegesis⁵¹⁰, exclaiming 'you must not seek the power of words which cripple discourse outwardly. Rather you must attend to their meanings, as to how they are fulfilled, and to whom they refer'⁵¹¹. Ephrem regarded symbols as a superior expression of theology, since it was in this way that God chose to reveal himself⁵¹². His symbolic theology not only employed specific Old Testament ideas as pointers to the coming of Christ, but also used poetic method, in particular using polar opposites to describe aspects of the divine nature, scoping out an area of thought, rather than defining a specific point⁵¹³.

Ephrem's symbolic approach was not a simple typological system, but the expression of the harmony and unity of revelation in Scripture and Creation founded by its Creator, and he applied symbolism to articulate the profound paradoxes of Christianity⁵¹⁴. His imagery covered many themes that have been summarised by several authors⁵¹⁵. Brock identified some of his most preferred images⁵¹⁶ that include: the characterisation of divinity as fire, as a symbol of purification and sanctification; the elucidation of the Incarnation through clothing

⁵⁰⁷ *Hymns on Faith LXIX:11* in *Ibid.*: 67.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*: 24.

⁵⁰⁹ Mathews: 48.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 48.

⁵¹¹ *Commentary on the Diatessaron XXII:3* C. McCarthy (1993). *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: an English translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes*: 334.

⁵¹² Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 26-36.

⁵¹³ den Biesen: 54-5.

⁵¹⁴ Mathews: 48.

⁵¹⁵ See, for instance, Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*; Mathews: 45-56; Griffith 'Faith Adoring the Mystery': *Reading the Bible with St. Ephrem the Syrian*; Murray.

⁵¹⁶ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 38-40.

imagery; conception and birthgiving imagery used to describe baptism; mirrors used to illustrate spiritual perception; and medical imagery portraying Christ as a physician.

The prophetic revelations of the Old Testament are fundamental to his theology, and he saw a close relationship between the Sinai Theophany and Paradise⁵¹⁷. Ephrem also connected his perception of Paradise with the symbols of the Arks and the Cross, themes that assume particular importance in this study. His *Hymns on Paradise*⁵¹⁸ demonstrate that Ephrem understood Paradise as, 'both the primordial and the eschatological state at the end of time, for it has now also become the abode of the righteous'⁵¹⁹, an idea found in Judaism in the early centuries CE and possibly sourced in the book of Enoch⁵²⁰, meaning that Paradise for Ephrem was equated with the Kingdom of Heaven⁵²¹. The concept of Paradise illustrates a fundamental aspect of Ephrem's theological vision, that of sacred time. Paradise belongs to a 'different order of reality'⁵²² located neither on this earth nor within time. A more detailed understanding of Ephrem's conception of Paradise will be developed in chapter 5 of this study, and here it will suffice to demonstrate the connection between the Arks, the Cross and Paradise. The following quotation from *Hymns on Paradise* II:13 shows that Ephrem links the Arks and Paradise symbolically:

*A symbol of the division in that Garden of Life
Did Moses trace out in the Ark⁵²³ and on Mount Sinai too;
He depicted for us the types of Paradise with all its arrangements⁵²⁴*

And also in the same cycle of hymns, here from XII:10, Ephrem links the Cross to Paradise:

*Because Adam touched the Tree he had to run to the fig;.....
Then he came to that glorious tree of the Cross,
Put on glory from it, and acquired radiance from it...⁵²⁵*

Jacob of Serugh (451-521 CE)

Jacob of Serugh's life is not well documented, and only a few historical documents give reliable information about him. His writings nevertheless had a strong influence on Syriac Christian tradition. Born in Kurtam⁵²⁶, in Mesopotamia Jacob was raised at Hawra, a village dear to Edessa in the district of Serugh. His father was a priest of the village⁵²⁷. His date of birth can only be surmised from his age and the date of his death. Jacob mentions his studies

⁵¹⁷ This idea is implied in many hymns, but is explicit in *Hymns on Paradise* II:13 Brock St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Hymns on Paradise*: 89.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid..

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.: 49.

⁵²⁰ For more detail on Enoch see chapter 5 page 89.

⁵²¹ Brock St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Hymns on Paradise*: 50-51.

⁵²² Ibid.: 51.

⁵²³ Here, Noah's Ark.

⁵²⁴ Brock St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Hymns on Paradise*: 89 13.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.: 164 10.

⁵²⁶ Known now as Kurtak.

⁵²⁷ T. Kollampampil (1997). *Jacob of Serugh: Select Festal Homilies*: 2.

at the Persian School of Edessa in a letter that indicates that he was present there around 470CE when the works of Diodore of Tarsus were translated into Syriac⁵²⁸. In Edessa he received a theological and philosophical education, whilst reacting against the School's Christological teaching. During his studies it is believed that he started prolific writing career, and his *mimrā* 'On the Vision of Ezekiel' is thought to have been written when he was only twenty-two years old. He was somewhat of a recluse, and eschewed theological controversies that emerged following the Council of Chalcedon in 451CE, although he was a strong proponent of Miaphysite Christology⁵²⁹. It is unclear whether Jacob ever took monastic vows, but he would have had to follow a monastic style of life at the school of Edessa, and he certainly had many close associations with various monastic groups to whom he gave spiritual guidance⁵³⁰

He was appointed Chorespiscopus at Hawra between 502 and 503CE, a testimony to his gift in teaching and spiritual guidance⁵³¹. During his Chorespiscopate he composed the greater part of his *mimre* or metrical homilies⁵³². As he was promoted in the ecclesiastical hierarchy he was obliged to be involved the theological controversies of the time, and perhaps against his personal feelings he demonstrated a greater emphasis on specifically Miaphysite Christology in his writings, and he collaborated with others of the same view including Severus of Antioch (512-518CE) and Philoxenus of Mabbug (d.523CE)⁵³³. He served at Hawra until 519CE when he was consecrated Bishop of Batnan, close to Edessa, also in the district of Serugh, and he died shortly after⁵³⁴. Jacob was possibly ill even at the time of his appointment. In a letter Jacob wrote only shortly after his appointment as Bishop addressed to Paul of Edessa⁵³⁵ he mentions that he is ill, and unable to visit Paul when he returned from exile in 520CE⁵³⁶. His appointment as bishop so close the end of his life has been claimed as a victory for both Miaphysite and Diophysite parties. Diophysites have claimed that his appointment at the time of Justin I evinced a change of allegiance, whilst Miaphysites have claimed that he was appointed to defend the Miaphysite view when other leaders were in exile⁵³⁷. He died on the 29th of November either in 520 or 521CE⁵³⁸.

Against a background of resentment in both Syria and Egypt towards Byzantine rule ecclesiastical and international political affairs framed much of the life of Jacob. The period

⁵²⁸ J.P.P. Martin (1876). *Lettres aux moines du Convent Mar Bassus et à Paul d'Edesse. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* **30: 355-370**.

⁵²⁹ Kollampampil: 2-3.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.: 3.

⁵³¹ J. Puthupampil (2005). *Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh (451-521): 25-86*.

⁵³² Kollampampil: 4.

⁵³³ Ibid.: 4.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.: 4-5.

⁵³⁵ Martin: 241-246.

⁵³⁶ Kollampampil: 5.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.: 4.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.: 5.

of greater sympathy for the Miaphysite view following Emperor Zeno's (d. 491CE) promotion of the *Henoticon* in 482CE would have been attractive to Jacob, not only because of its Christological emphasis, but because of its promotion of harmony between factions, and its promotion led to a period of strengthening of the Miaphysite view in Syria⁵³⁹. Also in Jacob's lifetime the flourishing School of Edessa suffered due to the theological controversies arising out of the Council of Chalcedon. The school had been '*sensitive to both Greek and Syriac traditions and emphases*'⁵⁴⁰ but '*Greek theology did not fit easily into the exuberant, non-dogmatic Syriac outlook*'⁵⁴¹. This independent streak came under pressure when Bishop Rabbula (d. 435CE) tried to bring Edessa into conformity with the Graeco-Latin approach of the broader church, and these tensions led ultimately to the closure of the school by Emperor Zeno in 489 CE, and its relocation back to Nisibis. The *Henoticon* ultimately led to the estrangement of factions, and Emperor Justin I (518-527CE) attempted reunion by enforcing the decrees of Chalcedon through imperial order, resulting in the condemnation of Severus of Antioch, and the exile of many other bishops in 518CE⁵⁴². There were periods of tolerance towards the Miaphysites, and Justin allowed Bishop Paul of Edessa to return from exile, for which Jacob praised his kindness⁵⁴³, although it seemed that this failed, and Paul was returned to exile in 522CE.

Despite the political consequences of Chalcedon and the *Henoticon* his Christology was rooted in the historically established view, leading T. Jansma to comment that, '*Jacob in his Christology had not written a single word that is not found in Cyril of Alexandria as well*'⁵⁴⁴. Even with his adherence to the form of Cyril

*Jacob is primarily a Cyrillian and has no intrinsic relationship either to Chalcedon or to the Henoticon or even to the creed of Severus from the beginning of his patriarchate. He remains true to himself in his conceptions.*⁵⁴⁵

Notwithstanding this, Jacob was prepared to use both Severian expressions, and also to see the *Henoticon* in a positive light for the sake of the unity of the Church, perceiving Chalcedon as a return to Nestorianism, as demonstrated in his second letter to the monks of Mar Bassus:

...it is proper for everyone who is a believer to speak openly, without shame, while adhering to the document Henoticon which rejects the Council [of

⁵³⁹ Gillman and Klimkeit: 31.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.: 36.

⁵⁴¹ L.W. Barnard (1968). *The Origins and Emergence of the Church in Edessa during the First Two centuries A.D. Vigiliae Christianae* **22**(3): 161-175: 175.

⁵⁴² A. Grillmeier (1986). *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume 2, Part One: From Chalcedon to Justinian I: 320-321*; Kollampampil: 7-8.

⁵⁴³ Martin: 241-246.

⁵⁴⁴ T. Jansma (1962). *The Credo of Jacob of Serugh: A Return to Nicaea and Constantinople. Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* **44**: 18-36.

⁵⁴⁵ Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume 2, Part One: From Chalcedon to Justinian I: 286 n 180.*

Chalcedon] covertly and with a hint...And [one] also adheres now to the public confession that was proclaimed at the Oriental Synod⁵⁴⁶ which was gathered around the great, holy and blessed Severus, when the Council [held] in Chalcedon was anathematised....

For myself...neither have I learned from the document Henoticon something I did not [already] know nor have I added anything to my faith from the confession of Severus. For I am now what I was before, all the time anathematising with the whole Church Nestorius and his teaching, those of his opinion and the Council of Chalcedon, because this [Council] also employed words which accord with the opinion of Nestorius, the anathematised [one].⁵⁴⁷

Jacob's position on the *Henoticon* was not, however, partisan but rather he understood it as proclaiming fundamental truths of the faith, and so it was an instrument of union:

Its mere name already, Henoticon, was bound to appeal greatly to Jacob....His whole theological activity was in the spirit of this document; it was only vi coactus that he openly professed it. In a sense even the Henoticon was superfluous. Indeed, in Nicaea and Constantinople everything that could be said on the creed had already been said.⁵⁴⁸

Jacob's independent view is best understood in the mode of symbolic reflection, which he inherited from Ephrem the Syrian⁵⁴⁹. He regarded only the councils of Nicaea (325CE) and of Constantinople (381CE) as having contributed to the solid understanding of Christology, whilst the later councils arose out of disputes, and added nothing to the discussion⁵⁵⁰. He expressed his view thus:

The search of the Scribes to investigate all has failed; and all the wise were agitated as they sought to explain him, but he was unexplainable. They made an assault so as to investigate him, but he was uninvestigable. They dared to trace him out, but he was unsearchable. This one said thus and that one said thus. They despised themselves by speaking about the inexpressible Word.⁵⁵¹

Jacob had a strong pastoral heart, and was deeply concerned about the consequences of disputes for the faith of Christian communities, and this tempered his involvement in such controversies⁵⁵². Jacob's views are well summarised by Thomas Kollampampil:

He is a Cyrilline Miaphysite avowed to preserve the unity in Christ. It is out of this conviction that he condemned all extreme groups, both Dyophysites and Eutychians/Monophysites. In the context of the Church at Edessa and Antioch he holds the type of Christology proposed by Severus of Antioch, that is basically Cyrilline in outlook. He found the powerful hierarchy of Severian Miaphysites more congenial to the unity in the Church. Hence, Jacob's 'Monophysite' views are Severian in type, but more moderate in the social aspects, and he is deeply hesitant in making dogmatic statements and

⁵⁴⁶ This Synod was held in 513CE was presided over by Severus of Antioch condemned Chalcedon, and accepted the *Henoticon* see Ibid.: 282-284.

⁵⁴⁷ Jacob in Ibid.: 287. See also Martin: 262-265.

⁵⁴⁸ Jansma.

⁵⁴⁹ Kollampampil:12.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.: 13.

⁵⁵¹ Jacob of Serugh in Ibid.: 13.

⁵⁵² Ibid.: 13.

*definitions, at the same time extremely afraid of theological quarrels and ecclesiastical scandals that can cause real damages to the Faith of the community.*⁵⁵³

Complementary to Ephrem, he was known as ‘the Flute of the Spirit’ and like Ephrem he wrote in *mimre*, or metrical homilies, expressing *theological* thoughts in symbols, predominantly drawn from ‘Ephremic’ tradition⁵⁵⁴. Jacob admired his predecessor, ‘The Teacher’ greatly⁵⁵⁵, and described him as ‘*an architect who built on the foundation of truth; he completed his structures with gold and precious stones*’⁵⁵⁶. Jacob is believed to have written seven hundred and sixty three *mimre*, or metrical homilies, nearly four hundred of which survive⁵⁵⁷, forty three letters, eight festal homilies, two lives of saints, an anaphora and a baptismal liturgy⁵⁵⁸. His homilies cover primarily biblical topics but also include ascetic, liturgical and eschatological themes. Several *mimre*, especially those on the Six Days of Creation, show aspects of the exegetical style of Theodore of Mopsuestia, bearing witness to Jacob’s education at the Persian School⁵⁵⁹. Jacob’s encounter with Greek writers, including Theodore, in Syriac translation, during his education left its mark on his writing but otherwise he lived without the outward influence of the Greek world⁵⁶⁰. He also held out against the trend in the fifth century CE for the Syriac literature increasingly to follow Greek thought-patterns and models⁵⁶¹.

Jacob was particularly attracted to the theme of the Incarnation, which he saw symbolised in the Old Testament, on the form of Moses’ veil⁵⁶². He perceived the Incarnation with three focal points, or three ‘wombs’: that of Mary, the womb of the Jordan symbolising the baptismal font, and the womb of death from Sheol from death, and demonstrated these as prefigured in the Old Testament⁵⁶³. Jacob’s focus on the Incarnation becomes evident in this study in the *Homily on the Nativity of our Lord*⁵⁶⁴, in which he symbolically connects stone hewn without hands; Elisha’s new pitcher, the Star of Jacob; the closed door of the Temple

⁵⁵³ Ibid.: 14.

⁵⁵⁴ Puthuparampil: 25-86.

⁵⁵⁵ J.P. Amar (1995). *A Metrical Homily on Holy Mar Ephrem by Mar Jacob of Sarug*, *Patrologia Orientalis*; t. 47, fasc. 1, no. 209; Griffith ‘Faith Adoring the Mystery’: *Reading the Bible with St. Ephrem the Syrian*: 12-13.

⁵⁵⁶ Amar: 31 28.

⁵⁵⁷ S.P. Brock (2009). *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Veil on Moses' Face*: vii.

⁵⁵⁸ F.L. Cross (2005). *Jacob of Sarug*. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. F.L. Cross: 861; Puthuparampil: 26-27.

⁵⁵⁹ Brock *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*.

⁵⁶⁰ S.P. Brock (1994a). Greek and Syriac in Late Antiquity Syria. *From Ephrem to Romanos*. S. Brock: 157.

⁵⁶¹ S.P. Brock (1994b). The Syriac Background. *From Ephrem to Romanos*. S. Brock: 32.

⁵⁶² S.P. Brock (1981b). *Jacob of Serugh on the Veil of Moses*. *Sobornost* 3:1: 70-85.

⁵⁶³ S.P. Brock (1978). *Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh*. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 205: 325-347.

⁵⁶⁴ See chapter 3 page 99.

in Ezekiel's vision; the dew falling on Gideon's fleece⁵⁶⁵, several of which appear in the Ethiopic literature.

⁵⁶⁵ The allusions are to 1Kings 6:7 and the building of the Temple; 2Kings 2:20 where a new cup of salt miraculously purifies water; Numbers 24:17 where Balaam about the star; the closed gate of the Temple seen in Ezekiel 44:1; and the miraculous fall of dew in Judges 6. Kollampampil: 115

Chapter 3: The Symbolic Interpretation of the Ark

In the threefold division of Ethiopian churches, a layout that naturally evokes the corresponding arrangement of the Tabernacle and Temple, the *tābot* or Ark occupies the central, most holy place⁵⁶⁶. The association of the *tābot* with these Old Testament places of worship has been interpreted by many scholars as evidence of Judaic roots in Ethiopian Christianity, most notably by Ullendorff who maintained that *'the concept and function of the tabot represent one of the most remarkable areas of agreement with Old Testament forms of worship'*⁵⁶⁷. Ullendorff drew a connection that was upheld by the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which associated the Ark's acquisition with a conversion to Judaism⁵⁶⁸. His subsequent analysis discussed the veneration accorded to the *tābot* during festivals, when it is *'carried in solemn procession accompanied by singing, dancing, beatings of staffs or praying sticks, rattling of sistra, and sounding of other musical instruments'*⁵⁶⁹; and its function in the liturgy, where it takes the place of the altar and *'symbolizes the tablets of the Covenant and the scrolls of the law'*⁵⁷⁰. The earliest independent account of Ethiopia's strong claim to possess the Ark is found in the *History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*⁵⁷¹ by *Abu Ṣāliḥ*, the twelfth century CE Armenian traveller, evokes an image of the Ark similar to Ullendorff's contemporary view, and connects it with Israeli heritage in Ethiopia:

*The Abyssinians possess also the Ark of the Covenant, in which are the two tables of stone, inscribed by the finger of God with the commandments which he ordained for the children of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant is placed upon the altar, but is not so wide as the altar; it is as high as the knee of a man, and is overlaid with gold; and upon its lid there are crosses of gold; and there are five precious stones upon it, one at each of the four corners, and one in the middle. The liturgy is celebrated upon the Ark four times in the year, within the palace of the king; and a canopy is spread over it when it is taken out from [its own] church to the church which is in the palace of the king: namely of the feast of the great Nativity, on the feast of the glorious Baptism, on the feast of the holy Resurrection, and on the feast of the illuminating Cross. And the Ark is attended and carried by a large number of Israelites descended from the family of the prophet David, who are white and red in complexion, with red hair. In every town of Abyssinia there is one church, as spacious as it can possibly be.*⁵⁷²

Although Ullendorff's work influenced a generation of scholars, he did not venture to explore the theological concepts and the wider symbolism of the *tābot* in Ethiopic literature,

⁵⁶⁶ Appleyard: 134.

⁵⁶⁷ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 82.

⁵⁶⁸ See *Kəbra Nagašt* chapter 28.

⁵⁶⁹ Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 85.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: 85.

⁵⁷¹ This work has been attributed to *Abu Ṣāliḥ*, the twelfth century CE Armenian traveller, and the text was translated by Evetts Evetts and Butler. It appears, however, that he was only the owner of one of four manuscripts that comprise the work, and that the work was composed between the mid twelfth and the mid fourteenth centuries. See forthcoming article by Witakowski in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400-1400*.

⁵⁷² Evetts and Butler: 287-8.

nor did he attempt to investigate mutual influences that may have shaped the unique concepts that were associated with it⁵⁷³.

The Ark is an expression of eschatological hope for both ‘Ephremic’ and Ethiopic writers. This arises through the Ark’s symbolic connection with the heavenly Jerusalem or Zion, and with Paradise. Jewish mystical traditions originating after the destruction of both the First and Second Temples and attaching great significance to the prophetic revelations about Paradise expounded this heaven-centred eschatology; developing concepts that had been expressed in the books of Ezekiel and Enoch⁵⁷⁴. Similar ideas have also emerged in the writings of Ephrem, who believed that the Law or Torah as revealed to Moses during the Sinai Theophany, particularly the Paradise and Ark narratives, were key revelations of the Creator, which were to be interpreted in the light of Christological doctrine⁵⁷⁵. His *Hymns on Paradise VI:1* broadly demonstrates how the Torah, particularly the Ark, frames Ephrem’s understanding of Paradise through his understanding of Christological doctrine:

*The keys of doctrine which unlock all of the Scripture's books,
Have opened up before my eyes the book of creation,
The treasure house of the Ark,
The crown of the Law.
This is a book which, above its companions, has in its narrative
Made the Creator perceptible and transmitted His actions;
It has envisioned all His craftsmanship made manifest His works of art.*⁵⁷⁶

Such heavenly eschatological hope was held by Christians and by Jews. Although many Jews placed their eschatological hope in the restoration of the City of David in this world, others also anticipated a heavenly Jerusalem coming down from above⁵⁷⁷.

This chapter will investigate the theological symbolism of the Ark in both the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ traditions, seeking to demonstrate how these traditions have built an understanding of the Ark of the Covenant as a symbol of divine indwelling and immanence,

⁵⁷³ Ullendorff’s analysis of the *tābot* is found in Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 82-87.

⁵⁷⁴ C.R.A. Morray-Jones (1993a). *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources. The Harvard Theological Review* **86**(2): 177-217; K. Coblenz Bautch (2006). *Situating the Afterlife. Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. A.D. DeConick; A. Lieber (2006). *Jewish and Christian Heavenly Meal Traditions. Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. A.D. DeConick; C.R.A. Morray-Jones (2006). *The Temple Within. Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. A.D. DeConick; R. Elior (2007). *Jewish Mysticism: The Infinite Expression of Freedom*. See chapter 5 for examples of this.

⁵⁷⁵ Kronholm: 68. The key doctrines are that the original Paradise occupied by Adam and Eve is firstly the present Paradise, reopened to Adam and all mankind through the word of the pre-existent Christ to the robber crucified with Him at Golgotha (Luke 23:43); and secondly the final paradise of eternal joy and pleasure, expressed, for instance, in Hymns on Paradise VII:3, ‘*Bear up, O life of mourning, so that you may attain to Paradise.....*’ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 119.

⁵⁷⁶ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 108-9.

⁵⁷⁷ E. Lohse (1971). *Zion, Jerusalem*. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. G. Friedrich. **VII**: 292-338: 325.

linked with the Incarnation and Paradise. After an aside on the Ethiopic use of ‘Zion’, the Ark as the bearer of manna, a symbol of divine immanence, will be discussed. This will be developed by considering how Noah’s Ark, and other symbols are incorporated into this symbolism. Connections between the interpretation of the Ark and the analogous rabbinic idea of *shekinah* are also examined. Finally the development of Ethiopic symbolism is explored which starts in the *Dəggwā* with a broad range of symbols being associated with the Ark and develops into a later specific devotion to the Ark of the Covenant, as articulated in the *Kəbra Nagast*.

Mary the ‘Second Zion’: Connecting Mary, Zion and the Ark

The Ethiopic literature employs an unusual application of the word ‘Zion’. In the *Dəggwā*, for instance, ‘Behold, in our midst, our mother, Zion!’⁵⁷⁸ may refer to the Church, to the Ark or to Mary, and in the *Kəbra Nagast* Mary is declared ‘the Second Zion’⁵⁷⁹, in an expression that connects her with the Ark. The following brief survey of the use of ‘Zion’ in biblical and patristic literature will show how unusual this appellation is in the Christian literature, and will explore the roots of the idea in the Ethiopic interpretation of 4Esdras.

‘Zion’ is of uncertain etymology, but it is probably pre-Israelite and the root may be connected with the terrain⁵⁸⁰. Its one hundred and fifty four occurrences in the Old Testament mostly apply to a geographical and topological location either without qualification, or as the designation ‘Mount Zion’⁵⁸¹. This use of ‘Zion’ continued in post-Biblical Judaism⁵⁸² but the term could sometimes refer to the whole population of Jerusalem, hence in Sirach 48:24 Isaiah ‘comforted the mourners in Zion’. 4Esdras 9:38-10:24

⁵⁷⁸ Appendix B, page 213, line 121.

⁵⁷⁹ Bezold: 1b 20; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 2.

⁵⁸⁰ Its meaning may be inherent in the Hebrew *צִיּוֹן, ‘to protect’, see P. Haupt (1909-10). *Critical Notes on Micah. The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 26: 219; or צִיּוֹן, ‘pillar’ implying a fortress or high mountain; with barren land, and Delitzsch connected the meaning with צִיּוֹן, ‘establish firmly’, or ‘set up’ linking it to ‘pillar’, see F. Delitzsch (1887). *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, Volume I*: 123. c.f. also the Syriac ܘܫܝܘܢ, *shehyun* for Zion connected with ܫܗܐ, *ṣahā* ‘to be dry’, Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 474; and also ܫܗܐ, ‘dryness’ and ܫܗܐ, ‘ parched ground’, see F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs (1906). *The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic*: 851.

⁵⁸¹ e.g. 2Kings 19:31, or Psalm 48 (47):2. On other occasions designations such as ‘daughters of Zion’ are used in reference to the population, e.g. Song 3:11, and Isaiah 3:16. The topographical use of ‘Zion’ originally applied to the southeast hill, the site of a Canaanite settlement and the later city of Jerusalem. The settlement on the hill of Zion was from early times known also as Jerusalem, and under David this became known as the City of David. From Solomon onwards, however, ‘Zion’ hardly occurs as a topographical term, and the extended city area is called Jerusalem, with ‘City of David’ used for the older part of the city. During the later monarchy the usage of ‘Zion’ emerged with renewed significance, used now of the whole east hill, or for the whole city, and also for the northeast hill where the temple was located. It is much less common than its complement, Jerusalem, which is used six hundred and sixty times in the Old Testament, and whilst Jerusalem is often used of the whole extended settlement, Zion is used in a more limited sense. See Lohse: 295.

⁵⁸² For instance in 1Maccabees 5:54, ‘So they went up to Mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered burnt offerings, because they had returned in safety; not one of them had fallen’.

personified 'Zion' as a weeping woman bewailing the destruction of Jerusalem, a image prominent in the Ethiopic literature. Following the destruction of the Temple both Zion and Jerusalem were often mentioned together, the holy place and the city having become inseparable⁵⁸³.

Apart from this topographical use, 'Zion' was most commonly used to denote the city of the eschatological age of salvation⁵⁸⁴. It also denoted the seat and the city of God, a cultic centre and temple city⁵⁸⁵. Less commonly 'Zion' denoted the royal residence, and capital city⁵⁸⁶, or was used as a symbol of the people or community⁵⁸⁷, the city of sin and judgement⁵⁸⁸, or as a designation of court and sacrifice⁵⁸⁹. On rare occasions, 'Zion' expressed mythical ideas such as 'the highest mountain', and the source of the water of life, as in Isaiah 2:2, and Ezekiel 47:1-12. Unlike 'Jerusalem', however, 'Zion' was never used for the city of theocracy, perhaps because of its strong eschatological meaning⁵⁹⁰.

Psalms and Isaiah developed a 'Zion' theology particularly associated with the idea of streams of living water, for instance in Psalm 46 (45):4 *'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High'*. This idea is connected with the vision of water flowing from the heavenly temple in Ezekiel 47:1-5. Psalm 78 (77):68-69 articulated how 'Zion' became God's chosen mountain, *'but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves. He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever'*. 'Zion' as the place of eschatological hope, the place where God rules and lives with those whose standard of righteousness means they are ready to live with Him eternally⁵⁹¹, was exemplified in Psalm 24 (23):3-4, *'Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully'*.

In the New Testament, by contrast 'Zion' is only mentioned seven times, commonly quoting Isaiah 46:13 or Psalms 14 (13) and 53 (52)⁵⁹², Old Testament references that invoke 'Zion' as

⁵⁸³ e.g. 1Maccabees 6:48.

⁵⁸⁴ Found throughout Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, in Micah 4 and Zechariah 1-9e.g. Zechariah 2:10, 8:3, or Joel 3:17.

⁵⁸⁵ This application is prevalent in Psalms, e.g. Psalm 65 (64):1, and Psalm 48 (47). It also occurs in Isaiah 8:18, and in Ezra 5:15.

⁵⁸⁶ e.g. 1Kings 8:1.

⁵⁸⁷ Found particularly in Deutero-Isaiah, Psalms and Lamentations e.g. Psalm 97 (96):8.

⁵⁸⁸ See Lamentations 1:17.

⁵⁸⁹ e.g. Psalm 110 (109):1-4.

⁵⁹⁰ Lohse: 300.

⁵⁹¹ J.J.M. Roberts (2002). Zion in the Theology of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. J.J.M. Roberts: 331-347; J.L. Walls, Ed. (2008). *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*: 26.

⁵⁹² Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15 use 'daughter of Zion' to refer to the people of Jerusalem. Romans 9:33 and 1Peter 2:6 mention 'Zion' when referring to the Jewish people, both citing Isaiah 46:13 or Psalms 14 (13) and 53 (52), each of these being passages which invoke 'Zion' as the source of salvation. 'Zion' is also identified as the source of salvation in Romans 11:22, Hebrews 12:22 and Revelation 14:1.

the source of salvation. Other passages identify ‘Zion’ as the source of salvation⁵⁹³ and as a heavenly place in a manner which, as will be shown, resonates with the *Kəbra Nagašt*.

In the post-apostolic age the use of ‘Zion’ is rare, being found only once in the Epistle of Barnabas 6:2, in a quotation of Isaiah 28:16 ‘*See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone*’⁵⁹⁴. The term occurs rarely in patristic literature it is mentioned rarely, most commonly referring to the place⁵⁹⁵, but unusually, commenting on Psalm 9:11 Theodoret of Cyrus (393-460[or 457/8 or 466 CE]) stated, ‘*Sing to the Lord dwelling in Sion (v.11). The inspired author said this according to the ancient belief of the Jews, whereas we have learned on the contrary from the apostolic teaching that it is a heavenly Zion*’⁵⁹⁶ employing ‘Zion’ to refer to the heavenly church.

In the light of the scarcity of occurrences of ‘Zion’ in the New Testament and the patristic literature, its prolific usage in Ethiopic Christian literature is remarkable. The name is also often used in naming churches, including the Church of Zion in Late Antique Jerusalem. The *Kəbra Nagašt* cites ‘Zion’ two hundred and eight times in reference to Mary and to the Ark of the Covenant, overwhelmingly referring to a spiritual place where the Trinity converses, or to the source of salvation, in a manner similar to the synonymous use of ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ in the New Testament. Verses such as Revelation 21:2, ‘*And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*’ which express the idea of the heavenly place descending appear to have inspired the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which refers to the coming down or descent of Zion⁵⁹⁷. In the *Kəbra Nagašt*, however, this is not a prophecy, but something fulfilled. The eschatological hope of the *Kəbra Nagašt* is linked to these Christian texts, but a more direct link is found in 4Esdras, which narrates Ezra’s vision of a woman that will be discussed below⁵⁹⁸.

The explanation for the repeated used of ‘Zion’ in the Ethiopic literature, however, lies in the *Dəggwā*, where Yared clearly forges a connection between the person of Mary and Zion. The *Dəggwā* for *Hidār 21* entitled ‘*The Teaching of Zechariah*’ draws together several themes from the prophets in a hymn aimed at demonstrating that all of the Old Testament Prophets prefigured Mary and Christ. In several places Yared states that a vision which Ezra

⁵⁹³ Romans 11:22, Hebrews 12:22 and Revelation 14:1

⁵⁹⁴ Lohse: 338.

⁵⁹⁵ As a synonym for Jerusalem in Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures XVI:18*, ‘*Esaias ...beheld Zion as a booth. The city was still standing, and beautified with public places*’. As a metaphor for the church, for instance in Clement of Alexandria (c.375-444 CE), *Exhortation to the Heathen:1*, where he urges people to ‘*abandon Helicon and Cithæron, and take up their abode in Sion*’. Methodius of Olympia (d.c. 311 CE) also employs this metaphor in *Symposium 8.7*, stating, ‘*From whom did he flee? Surely from the dragon, that the spiritual Zion might bear a masculine people, who should come back from the passions and weakness of women to the unity of the Lord, and grow strong in manly virtue*’.

⁵⁹⁶ R.C. Hill (2000). *Theodoret of Cyrus : commentary on the Psalms: 91*. See also Lampe: 1234.

⁵⁹⁷ For instance Bezold: 6a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 8*.

⁵⁹⁸ See page 90.

had of a weeping woman was a female entity known as ‘Zion’, which he then connects with Mary and also with the Church:

*Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
and when he saw her she was not a woman but a shining **constructed city**.⁵⁹⁹
Ezra saw her in the form of a woman, She is our mother, the Church.⁶⁰⁰
Ezra saw holy and peaceful Zion.⁶⁰¹
Ezra saw her in the form of a woman, who encompassed the Sun of
Righteousness...
She is Mary, her honour secret.⁶⁰²
...
Suddenly her face shone more than the sun,
Ezra feared to approach her.⁶⁰³*

The specific mention of the woman’s transformation into a ‘*constructed city*’ draws on 4Esdras, which recalls the same vision, interpreted by the archangel Uriel⁶⁰⁴:

*The woman whom you saw today she has become like **a constructed city**, and
county, she whom you see is Zion.⁶⁰⁵*

In the *Kəbra Nagašt*, ‘Zion’ is synonymous with Mary, primarily in the sections that probably date from the late thirteenth century CE⁶⁰⁶ such as the following from chapter 1:

*‘...in the last days by His good will the Second Adam was born in the flesh from
the Second Zion, that is to say our Saviour, Christ, this is our glory and our
faith and our hope and our life, the heavenly⁶⁰⁷ Zion⁶⁰⁸*

The use of ‘Second Zion’ is unusual, but echoes the Ephrem’s idea of the Second Eve, demonstrated in the *Hymns on the Church XLIX:7* where Mary is seen as counteracting the deeds of Eve:

*Just as from the small womb of Eve’s ear
Death entered in and was poured out
So through a new ear, that was Mary’s,
Life entered and was poured out.⁶⁰⁹*

The connection between Mary and Zion is expanded in chapter 11 of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, in which the descent of the Heavenly Zion to earth and the incarnation are both presented as central to God’s salvation plan⁶¹⁰:

⁵⁹⁹ Appendix B page 211, lines 32-35.

⁶⁰⁰ Appendix B page 211, lines 37-38.

⁶⁰¹ Appendix B page 212, lines 62-63.

⁶⁰² Appendix B page 212, lines 82-83, 86.

⁶⁰³ Appendix B page 214, lines 183-185.

⁶⁰⁴ Uriel is not mentioned in the Bible. His name appears to be a feature of post exilic Judaism, and he appears in 1Enoch as Enoch’s guide in his ascension as well as in 4Esdras Daniélou: 117.

⁶⁰⁵ Appendix A page 209, lines 30-31.

⁶⁰⁶ Hubbard:410.

⁶⁰⁷ Budge mistakenly has ‘heavenly Zion’ instead of ‘second Zion’. See Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 2.

⁶⁰⁸ Bezold: 1b 19-2a 3; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 2.

⁶⁰⁹ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 33.

*And if the heavenly Zion had not descended and if he had not put on the flesh of Adam then the Word of God would not have appeared and our salvation would have been, the evidence is in the symbol, the heavenly Zion is likened to the Mother of the Redeemer, Mary, for the **constructed Zion** also contains in her the Ten Commandments of the Law which were written by His hand, and He himself, the Creator, dwelt in the womb of Mary, through whom all things came into being.⁶¹¹*

In this passage Mary is symbolised as the Heavenly Zion, and Christ as the Tablets of the Law inside the Ark, demonstrating how the *Kəbra Nagast* also makes the Ark of the Covenant synonymous with both Mary and Zion. The phrase ‘constructed’ describing Zion connects the imagery with the vision in 4Esdras. The application of the name ‘Zion’ to the Ark is further demonstrated in chapter 54 of the *Kəbra Nagast*, where the King of Ethiopia stands before ‘Zion’ the Ark proclaiming, ‘and salvation will come to us out of Zion, and He will remove sin from His people’⁶¹² thereby quoting Isaiah 46:13, and Psalms 14 (13) and 53 (52). Later in the same chapter the King proclaims, ‘Behold Zion, Behold salvation!’⁶¹³. Zion, the Ark made by Moses, has now become the source of salvation. The *Kəbra Nagast* does not offer any explanation regarding this use of ‘Zion’, nor does the *andəmta* shed any light on this matter.

Both the *Dəggwā* and the *Kəbra Nagast* have referred to 4Esdras⁶¹⁴, a Judaeo-Christian apocalypse⁶¹⁵ canonised in the Ethiopic Bible as መጽሐፈ ዕዝራ ሱቱኤል, *mashafa ‘əzrā sutu’el*⁶¹⁶. መጽሐፈ ዕዝራ ሱቱኤል, *mashafa ‘əzrā sutu’el* 8:37-9:60⁶¹⁷ recalls how Ezra

⁶¹⁰ This refers to the Council of Nicea. Some tradition has it that there were 318 bishops present at the Council of Nicea, see, for instance Theodoret’s Ecclesiastical History P. Schaff (1892b). *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, & Rufinus: Historical Writings: 43, 48* and Athanasius’ Synodical Letter to the Bishops of Africa P. Schaff (1892a). *Athanasius: Selected Works and Letters: 489-94*.

⁶¹¹ Bezold: 6a 5-14; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 8*.

⁶¹² Bezold: 59a 24-b 1; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 80*.

⁶¹³ Bezold: 60b 5-6; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 82*.

⁶¹⁴ 4Esdras is incorporated as chapters 3-14 of 2Esdras in the NRSV. See Anonymous (1992). *The Apocrypha: The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, New Revised Standard Version: 204*.

⁶¹⁵ Daniélou: 37.

⁶¹⁶ Anonymous (2000 EC-b). መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የበሉይ የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጻሕፍት: *The Amharic Bible with the Old Testament based on Septuagint: 597-618*. The original Hebrew version of 4Esdras is lost, but an incomplete Ancient Greek translation survives, with secondary versions known in Ethiopic and Syriac M.E. Stone (1990). *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra:1-2*. The Ethiopic and Syriac versions come from the original Hebrew via two different routes. The Ethiopic version was once considered merely idiosyncratic, but a more recently discovered Georgian version corroborates it, with the evidence pointing to a Greek source for both, Stone: 6. The Coptic version is also a translation from the Greek Stone: 7. The Syriac version originates from a Latin translation, and provided the source for the NRSV English translation, Stone: 3. The only external dating evidence of this book is Clement of Alexandria’s quotation of the Greek version in *Stromateis* thus giving it a *terminus ante quem* of 190 CE. An earlier date at the beginning of the second century CE is possible if, as some scholars suggest, it is quoted in the Epistle of Barnabas, Stone: 9. The internal evidence is that the focus of the book is on the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Stone suggests that the most persuasive argument relates the vision of an eagle with three heads (starting at 11:1 in the NRSV, 8:38 in the Ethiopic) to the emperors Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, as the details suit the contemporary knowledge of these three. This would date the book originally to the time of Domitian, 81-96 CE,

encountered a weeping woman, who was been barren for thirty years, and then had a child. Having raised the child, he fell and died on his wedding day. She mourns in the wilderness, refusing to eat and drink until she dies. Ezra reprimands her that she should rather be weeping for the suffering of ‘Zion’, the ‘mother of us all’⁶¹⁸, and tells her to return to her own country. He then challenges her because of the devastation of Jerusalem, and the ending of worship there, and mentions the disappearance of Zion:

*More than all this, Zion has disappeared, and her honour has gone with her, we have fallen at the hands of our enemies.*⁶¹⁹

At this point the woman is transformed into a fearful shining vision, which appears like a ‘constructed city’:

*When I looked at her, behold she was no longer a woman, but rather she was an honoured **constructed city**, I saw the place where her deep foundations were. I was afraid, and cried out with a loud voice. I spoke thus, ‘Where is Uriel, the angel who came to me before, where are you? Why have you made me enter many trials, why have you made my end in emaciation, why have you made my prayers to be a reproach?’⁶²⁰*

The vision is then interpreted by Uriel, who explains that the woman is Zion, with a second reference to her being ‘a constructed city’:

*...The woman whom you saw before as a mourner, the one whom you started to console she is not now a woman as you saw her, rather she is a constructed city. She has told you about the affliction of her son. The woman whom you saw today she has become like a **constructed city**, and county, she whom you see is Zion.*⁶²¹

Particularly noteworthy is the occurrence of the adjective ‘constructed’ in the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā*⁶²² and chapter 11 of the *Kəbra Nagāst*⁶²³ to describe ‘Zion’. This word appears again in 9:23 and 27 describing the transformed woman⁶²⁴. The word is not used elsewhere

probably composed in Israel. See Stone: 10. For further information see also J.C. Haelewyck (1998). *Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti: 131-139*.

⁶¹⁷ This is 2Esdras 9:38-10:59 in the NRSV translation, although there are some important differences. A translation of the 9:18-50 of the Ethiopic version is given in Appendix A, which contains the most important allusions.

⁶¹⁸ This is a phrase that would naturally correlate with the broader Christian idea of Mary as ‘Our Mother’, or ‘Our Lady’.

⁶¹⁹ መጽሐፈ ዕብራ ስቴኤል, *mashafa ‘əzrā sutu’el*, 4Esdras 9:23.

⁶²⁰ መጽሐፈ ዕብራ ስቴኤል, *mashafa ‘əzrā sutu’el*, 4Esdras 9:27-28.

⁶²¹ መጽሐፈ ዕብራ ስቴኤል, *mashafa ‘əzrā sutu’el*, 4Esdras 9:31-34.

⁶²² See page 88.

⁶²³ See page 89.

⁶²⁴ See Appendix A page 209 lines 23 & 28.

in biblical literature, and is not found in the Latin text of 4Esdras, but is found in both the Peshitta and Ethiopic versions of 4Esdras⁶²⁵.

One further verse differentiates the Ethiopic text from the Latin version of 4Esdras, 9:23. The Ethiopic version states *'Zion has disappeared'*⁶²⁶, whereas the Latin version 2Esdras 10:23 reads *'the seal of Zion has been deprived of its glory'*⁶²⁷. The Latin expresses the desolation of Zion through its loss of glory, but the Ethiopic version expresses it through the disappearance of Zion herself. The implicit idea is that Zion herself is portable, and allowing the term to be applied to a removable object such as the Ark. This is exploited particularly by the writers of the *Kəbra Nagaśt* in a manner which Hubbard regards as a distinctive feature of the *Kəbra Nagaśt*⁶²⁸.

In the 'Ephremic' tradition, as demonstrated later⁶²⁹, Mary is symbolically linked to the Ark, a connection completing the triad of Mary, the Ark, and Zion found in the Ethiopic literature, and illustrated in the following diagram.

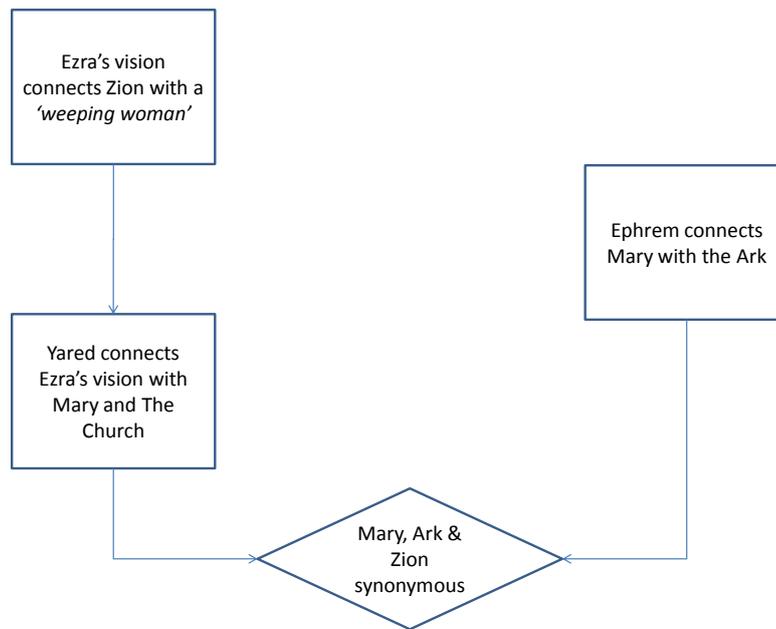


Figure 2: The Connection between Mary, the Ark & Zion from 4Esdras, the *Dəggwā* and Ephrem

⁶²⁵ Anonymous *The Apocrypha: The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, New Revised Standard Version*: 222 note z. The Latin version has *'a city was being built'* Anonymous *The Apocrypha: The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, New Revised Standard Version*: 222 v27. For the Peshitta see R.J. Bidawid, Ed. (1973). *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version: Part IV, fascicle 3, Preface, Apocalypse of Baruch, 4Esdras*: 34.

⁶²⁶ See Appendix A line 14.

⁶²⁷ Anonymous *The Apocrypha: The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, New Revised Standard Version*: 222.

⁶²⁸ Hubbard: 338.

⁶²⁹ See page 96.

Divine Immanence: Mary as the Ark Bearing Manna

Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ sources express the paradox of the uncontainable, omnipresent, and consuming divinity being contained in the Ark as a *‘dwelling place of divinity’*, and mediating divine presence to believers, in the form of the divine Word and manna emphasising the Ark’s central importance in the Eucharist. The comparison is also made with Mary and the Incarnation. The *Dəggwā* notably blends Noah’s Ark with the symbolism of immanence. The burning bush similarly symbolises the paradox of the fire of divinity not consuming Mary’s womb. Mary is also compared to the chariot which bore the Ark, yet another symbol of the bearing of the divine to the faithful. Further symbols appear much less frequently, but all share the theme of divine immanence, an idea closely linked to the rabbinic concept of the *shekinah*. The sustaining function of the Ark continues in Paradise and it is not always clear whether a given passage refers to this world or to Paradise, showing that the Ark and connected symbols are understood as links between this world and Paradise. The functions are not identical, and the symbolic domain of Paradise will principally be discussed in chapter 5. The use of a wide range of symbols to express the idea of divine indwelling, most potently the Ark, features strongly in the *Dəggwā*, and in Ephrem’s hymns and to a certain extent in the *andəmta*, and this correlation is discussed firstly. Whilst maintaining the same basic ideas, parts of the *andəmta* and the *Kəbra Nagaśt* focus on the Ark and its connection with Mary to the exclusion of other symbols, and place less focus on the paradox of the Incarnation and divine immanence, developments that are discussed secondly.

The investigation of the symbolism of immanence starts with in *Dəggwā*, which distinctively merges the two Arks into one symbol of divine immanence, the poetry sometimes switching from the Ark of the Covenant to Noah’s Ark: *‘Holy Ark of Noah who had Manna concealed inside her’*⁶³⁰. Similarly the *andəmtā* for Genesis 8:19: *‘the boat is a symbol of Our Lady, Noah of the Lord’*⁶³¹ clarifies that the righteous Noah is seen as a symbol of Christ so his Ark is symbolically the same as that of the Covenant conveying the same idea of divine indwelling and immanence. The Ge’ez word ታቦት, *tābot*, is used for both Arks, derives from the Hebrew תְּבֵאִתְּ *tebā*, ‘chest, box’⁶³² which is probably of Egyptian origin⁶³³. In the Hebrew Old Testament this word is used of Noah’s Ark, and of the basket in which the infant Moses was placed, but not the Ark of the Covenant which is rather אֲרוֹן *‘arōn*,

⁶³⁰ Appendix B page 214, lines 188-189.

⁶³¹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘዐለት፡ ዘፍጥረት 67.

⁶³² Brown, Driver and Briggs: 1061 Strong’s no. 8392. Ullendorff and others consider the derivation to be via Palestinian Aramaic. See Nöldeke *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*: 37, 49; C. Rabin (1951). *Ancient West-Arabian*: 109-110; Polotsky: 6; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 82.

⁶³³ Leslau: 570; Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 82.

‘chest, ark’⁶³⁴. The LXX employs κιβωτός ‘sea faring vessel, sacred depository’⁶³⁵ for both, pointing to the influence of the LXX on the development of Ethiopic imagery.

The choice of words for the Arks is more complex in Syriac. The Peshitta, in keeping with the LXX and Ge’ez, uses ܩܒܘܬܐ, *qibuṭā*, ‘ark’⁶³⁶ derived from the Greek κιβωτός for both Noah’s Ark⁶³⁷, and the Ark of the Covenant⁶³⁸. In Ephrem, however, ‘it is highly significant that there is an absolute lexical difference between the hymns of Ephrem and his CGen’⁶³⁹ concerning the instrument of salvation that Noah, according to the Biblical text, was ordered to construct⁶⁴⁰. In his *Commentary on Genesis* Ephrem uses ܩܒܘܬܐ, *qibūṭā* for Noah’s Ark and the Ark of the Covenant, in line with the Peshitta, Ge’ez and LXX, with one exception. In his commentary on Genesis 6:13-16⁶⁴¹, Ephrem employs ܩܘܘܠܐ, *kewe(y)lā*, ‘ark’⁶⁴² for Noah’s Ark⁶⁴³, as he does predominantly in his hymns. Since the *Commentary on Genesis* was probably written towards the end of Ephrem’s life, when he lived in Edessa, this change in word choice may reflect the influence of the LXX on Ephrem’s exegesis. It may also demonstrate a desire to enhance the symbolic connection between the two Arks.

The spectrum of meaning of ታቦት, *tābot* is extended further in the Ethiopic 1Peter to include the idea of God dwelling in believers. 1Peter 2:5-6 also incorporates ‘Zion’ with the same meaning:

ወእንት-ሙኒ ጽንዑ ከመ እብን መንፈሳዊ ወከነ ታቦተ መንፈሳዊ ለክህነት
 ቅድስት ወንጽሕት ከመ ታቅርቡ ወታዕርጉ መሥዋዕተ መንፈሳዊ
 ዘይሰጠወክሙ እግዚአብሔር በእደዊሁ ለኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፡፡ እስመ ከመዘ
 ጽሑፍ ናሁ እሠይም ውስተ ጽዮን እብነ ማእዘንት ኅሪት ወከብርት፡፡⁶⁴⁴

The Greek has οἶκος, ‘house’ where the Ge’ez has ታቦት, *tābot*, and this translates literally as:

⁶³⁴ Brown, Driver and Briggs: 75 Strong’s no. 727.

⁶³⁵ F.W. Danker, Ed. (2000). *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition.*, entry 4236.

⁶³⁶ Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 485.

⁶³⁷ Throughout Genesis 6-9 ܩܒܘܬܐ, *qibuṭā* is employed for Noah’s Ark. See R.J. Bidawid, Ed. (1977). *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version: Part I, Preface, Genesis-Exodus.*: 10-17

⁶³⁸ For example throughout Exodus 25, see: Ibid.: 174-176.

⁶³⁹ Commentary on Genesis.

⁶⁴⁰ Kronholm: 182-183.

⁶⁴¹ R.M. Tonneau (1955). *Sacti Ephraem Syri In Genesis et in Exodum Commentarii, CSCO 152, Scriptorum Syri 71: 59 12.* See also Kronholm: 183; Mathews: 138 n 280.

⁶⁴² Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 207.

⁶⁴³ For instance in *Hymns on Paradise I:10 6, II:13 2, XIV:5 2* E. Beck (1957). *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum, CSCO 174, Scriptorum Syri 78: 3 17, 8 8, 59 20.* Also *Hymn XLIX on Faith* entitled *The Symbols Depicted by Noah in the Ark* Brock Ephrem the Syrian: *Select Poems*: 28-37 which uses ܩܘܘܠܐ, *keweylā* throughout.

⁶⁴⁴ Hofmann and Uhlig *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die Katholischen Briefe, Äthiopistische Forschungen 29: 106.* See also Anonymous (1996 EC). *ወንጌል ቅዱስ ዘእግዚእነ ወአምላክነ ወመድኃኒነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፣ ግብረ ሐዋርያት ወመልእክታተሆሙ ለሐዋርያተሁ ቅዱሳን፡፡* 403-404.

And you, be firm like a spiritual stone, and be a spiritual dwelling place⁶⁴⁵ for a holy and pure priesthood so that you present and offer a spiritual sacrifice which God receives through Jesus Christ. Because as it is written, ‘Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a chosen and honoured cornerstone.’

1Peter 2:9 reads, «ወእንትሙስ ፍጥረት ገሩያን ወታቦት ለንጉሥ»⁶⁴⁶, translated literally as, ‘*And you are a chosen creation, and a dwelling place for the King*’. The Greek has ‘βασιλείου ἱεράτευμα’, ‘royal priesthood’. This use of ታቦት, *tābot* is unlikely to have been the result of fourteenth century CE revisions based on Syro-Arabic sources⁶⁴⁷, and therefore suggests that the concept of the ታቦት, *tābot* symbolising divine indwelling and immanence was present when the Ethiopic New Testament was translated, probably in the fifth century CE⁶⁴⁸.

Ephrem also extends the idea of divine indwelling to believers, demonstrated in the following quotation from *Armenian Eucharistic Hymns XLVII:27-30*, although no specific mention is made of the Ark:

*The Medicine of Life flew down from on high to reside in those worthy of it.
Let us make holy our souls and thoughts in honour of His glory
We hold God in our hands: let there be no blemish in our bodies.
Once He has entered, He takes up residence with us, so let us make ourselves
holy within.*⁶⁴⁹

This spectrum of meaning of ታቦት, *tābot* is employed in the *Hidār 21 Dəggwā*, ‘*The Teaching of Zechariah*’ in which Yared draws together several symbols in a passage pointing to Mary and Christ; one important symbol being the Ark. The passage seeks to convey the idea of divine immanence and teaches that all prophets foretold the Incarnation. It recalls

⁶⁴⁵ Here it seems logical to translate ታቦት, *tābot* as ‘dwelling place’, although this is not in the spectrum of meanings given by Leslau Leslau: 570.

⁶⁴⁶ Hofmann and Uhlig *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die Katholischen Briefe, Äthiopistische Forschungen 29*: 108. See also Anonymous ወንጌል ቅዱስ ዘእግዚእነ ወአምላክነ ወመድኃኒነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፣ ግብረ ሐዋርያት ወመልእክታቲሆሙ ለሐዋርያቲሁ ቅዱሳን፡፡ 404.

⁶⁴⁷ See chapter 1, page 24.

⁶⁴⁸ The Ethiopic New Testament lacks a complete modern critical edition, although a version was prepared, see Platt, on which this contemporary printed edition appears to be based. 1Peter has a critical edition in Hofmann and Uhlig *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die Katholischen Briefe, Äthiopistische Forschungen 29*. The New Testament is believed to have been translated not long after the introduction of Christianity in the second quarter of the fourth century CE, probably at the instigation of the ‘Nine Saints’ who arrived in the fifth century CE. See J.N. Birdsall (1970). *The New Testament Text. The Cambridge History of the Bible, Volume 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome*. P.R. Ackroyd and E.G. F: 308-377 particularly p. 369; Knibb *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament*: 12. As noted in notes 644 and 646 the critical edition contains this reading, as does edition has the same reading of 1Peter 2:5,9; also a version of the Ge’ez New Testament published in Asmara by Catholic missionaries that claims to have consulted a wide range of ancient manuscripts contains this use of ታቦት, *tābot* in 1Peter 2:5,9, Anonymous (1926 EC). ሐዲስ ኪዳን. The earliest manuscript identified for this study also contains this usage Anonymous (17th Century). *New Testament*. Institute of Ethiopian Studies: 90b, 18-19. Hofmann and Uhlig *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: Die Katholischen Briefe, Äthiopistische Forschungen 29*: 78, however, suggests that this may have arisen from an Arabic version that reads ‘you are a spiritual temple’.

⁶⁴⁹ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 112-113.

David's dancing before the Ark in 2Samuel 6, but refers to the Ark as 'Zion', and 'Our Lady' instead, and further compares Mary with Noah's Ark showing that Yared regarded these four symbols as synonymous:

*The King of Israel danced before her,
 behold her, Zion, our mother, Our Lady,
 behold her Zion, our mother, Our Lady.⁶⁵⁰
 This is Mary whom the holy prophets compared with the Ark of Noah
 who had Manna concealed inside her,⁶⁵¹*

The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* for the eve of the feast of the Assumption develops the imagery a further stage by stressing not only the symbolic connection with the Arks but addressing Mary as 'Perfect Tabernacle'⁶⁵², another symbol of divine immanence. A later edition of this *Dəggwā* expands the symbol to the detailed construction of the Ark: the gold which adorned the Ark, a symbol of purity and so virginity; the clothes in one piece, referring to the cover of the Ark, comprising the mercy seat and the cherubim, being of one piece of wood⁶⁵³ indicated unbroken signs of virginity. Here Mary is also portrayed as the bearer of the stone tablets, which symbolise Christ:

*Mary is the Ark of Noah, Broad Tabernacle, sealed in virginity.
 Who is like you who was chosen from among women,
 Holy Mary luxuriously adorned,
 wrapped with clothes of gold in one piece
 whom they will not humble, Tabernacle of the Testament,
 Ark which has the Ten Commandments in her.
 Daughter of light, servant of our salvation,
 in our bridal chamber your Son surrounded with glory.⁶⁵⁴*

The analogy of Christ with the stone tablets is also found in the older manuscript:

*I compared her to the Chariot of Ami[na]dab
 Her neck is like the tower of David
 Her tablets [are] of the Law,
 Glory surrounds her.⁶⁵⁵*

Furthermore, the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* describes Christ as the 'new commandment' carried in the womb of Mary, the symbolism of the New Testament superseding the Old, with the tablets symbolising the 'Word of the Father' as divine presence:

*The beauty of her face, completely pleasing,
 The opening of her mouth from fragrant paradise
 The new commandment was carried in her womb
 For our lame heart he is a staff.*

⁶⁵⁰ This is only found in the printed edition, Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 143 a 6-8.

⁶⁵¹ Appendix B page 215, lines 199-203.

⁶⁵² Appendix C page 223, line 137.

⁶⁵³ See Exodus 25:19.

⁶⁵⁴ Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 520 b 17-26.

⁶⁵⁵ Appendix C page 225, lines 236-240.

*The dwelling place of the Word of the Father,
For the Holy Tabernacle, which the hand of man did not make,
Whom Ezra saw, the heavenly hosts looking on her [saying],
'let us bow down to her, and let us give thanks for her honour.'*⁶⁵⁶

Likewise, the Ark and Tabernacle appear as symbols of divine immanence in the 'Ephremic' literature. Although Ephrem rarely utilises Noah's Ark, in *Hymns on Paradise, II:12* Noah's residing in the Ark symbolises the indwelling of God.

*Noah made the animals live in the lowest part of the Ark;
In the middle lodged the birds,
while Noah himself, like the Deity resided⁶⁵⁷ on the upper deck.*⁶⁵⁸

The symbolic connection between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant is also described in *Hymns on Virginity XIX: 4, 5*, where Mary is likened to both the Ark of Moses, and the Tabernacle as symbols of divine indwelling and immanence:

*Among your tribe the Ark was set up again.
The Gentiles saw, but frightened and angry were
The circumcised; they persecuted their king, and He went out
And came to Shechem, full of Gentiles.*

.....

*Among your tribe was pitched the meeting tent,
And all its festivals resounded in your land.
Who will raise you to greater honour than this
That God Himself should dwell in you?
Israel was envious of how greatly you were magnified,
For the Ark was among your tribe.*⁶⁵⁹

As in the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā*, Ephrem portrays Christ as dwelling in Mary symbolised by the tablets of stone in the Ark in his *Hymns on Virginity XXV: 11*

*Your mother's womb is symbol.
It is the symbol of the Tabernacle, the temporal Tabernacle,
In which Emmanuel was dwelling.
Both of them persist in admonishing us not to belittle God in His temples.*⁶⁶⁰

In *Hymns on the Nativity XVI: 16, 17* Mary is also imaginatively seen as the 'pure tablet' written on by the hand of God expressing the act of the Incarnation. Here also Mary is connected with the Tabernacle symbolising divine indwelling and immanence.

*Woman serves in the presence of man
Who is her head. Joseph rose
To serve in the presence of his Lord
Who was within Mary. The priest serves*

⁶⁵⁶ Only found in the newer printed version, Yared መጽሐፈ ድንዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 520 a 25-b 2.

⁶⁵⁷ To emphasise the divine presence Ephrem employs the word ܫܪܐ, šra here for 'resided', see Beck: 8 3. See page 101 for a detailed discussion of the significance of this word.

⁶⁵⁸ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 89.

⁶⁵⁹ McVey: 342.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: 373.

*In the presence of Your Ark because of your holiness
Moses bore the tablet of stone
That His Lord had written. And Joseph escorted
The pure tablet in who was dwelling the Son of the Creator.
The tablets were left behind
Since the world was filled with Your teaching.*⁶⁶¹

An obscure allusion to the destruction of the idol Dagon⁶⁶² extrapolates the symbolism surrounding the Ark. Yared, in the *Hidār 21 Dəggwā*, mentions the Ark in Dagon's temple in 1Samuel 5:3:

*Behold her Zion our mother, our innocent Lady,
Dagon whom she swiftly cleansed,
and grieved Ezra whom she truly consoled.*⁶⁶³

The same allusion occurs in Ephrem's *Hymns on the Nativity* IV:112,114, which also extrapolates the idea of Christ symbolised by the tablets of stone, referred to here as 'scripture':

*There shone forth from the rib the hidden Power
Who cut down Satan as [He did] Dagon,
For in that Ark was hidden scripture
That cried out and proclaimed the Conqueror.*⁶⁶⁴

The Ark of the Covenant is a vigorous symbol of divine immanence in Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature, but it is not exclusive, since several other symbols also signify divine immanence. The *Hidār 21 Dəggwā* links Zechariah's vision of the lampstand in Zechariah 4:2 with symbolic references to visions or symbolic events in the lives of Ezekiel, David, Gideon and Elisha. In this passage the Ark is given no special significance over and above Zechariah's lampstand, which symbolises Mary and its light Christ. This interpretation expresses Mary bearing Christ to believers, and divine immanence, akin to the Ark of the Covenant. The same is true for the the closed east door, the water pot and the fleece, other symbols that are coupled with Zechariah's vision in this *Dəggwā*:

*Ezekiel calls her closed east [door]*⁶⁶⁵
....
*Joshua's testimony of the column*⁶⁶⁶,
The fleece of David,
Elisha's water pot,

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.: 151-2.

⁶⁶² Dagon, the Hebrew form of the god Dagan, was an important Mesopotamian and West Semitic deity, who appears in the Bible as a Philistine deity, whose worship persisted at least into the inter-testamental period, and is mentioned in 1Maccabees 10:83-84. See J.F. Healey (1999). *Dagon*. Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P.W. van der Horst.

⁶⁶³ Found only in the modern printed version Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 143 a 4-5.

⁶⁶⁴ McVey: 98.

⁶⁶⁵ Appendix B page 212, line 84.

⁶⁶⁶ It is not clear to what this refers. It could be a reference to Joshua 4:9, 'Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day' but no further explanation of this symbol has been found.

*Of Zechariah the priest, the lampstand.*⁶⁶⁷

The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* develops the spectrum of symbolism and expresses immanence through a juxtaposition of Mary with Gideon's fleece, and the 'bare cloud'⁶⁶⁸, a reference to Isaiah 19:1 'An oracle concerning Egypt. See, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt'. The cloud which bore God into Egypt symbolises Mary bearing Christ, thereby being an expression of the Incarnation and divine immanence.

*She has no corruption in her,
White Fleece,
Bare cloud
Seraphim and cherubim surround her.*⁶⁶⁹

These symbols also appear in both Ephrem's hymns and in the works of Jacob of Serugh, but make less overt reference to the Incarnation and divine immanence than the Ark:

- Zechariah's Lampstand is mentioned in Ephrem's *Hymns on Virginity*, V:3, 'The seven-[branched] candlestick brought forth the light of its seven brightnesses which the temporal Tabernacle enlightens. Mary brought forth the Luminary of the seven holy brightnesses that illuminated for us all creation'⁶⁷⁰.
- Ephrem uses the same vocabulary for the sealed east door in *Hymns on Mary*, VII:6, 'Isaiah the prophet proclaimed 'A virgin shall conceive and give birth'. Come, Isaiah, and look on me; let us rejoice together, for I have given birth, with my virginity still sealed' *Hymns on Mary*,⁶⁷¹ but does not specifically mention the door or gate in Ezekiel 44.
- Ephrem's *Hymns on Virginity* VIII, employs the image of Gideon's fleece to refer to the teaching of Christ, 'In the sings [sic]⁶⁷² and the dew of Gideon Your teaching was portrayed, for it fell in drops and came down and moistened the dryness of the peoples'⁶⁷³, and also in his *Hymn against the Jews*, '...and Mary again he shadowed forth in a Fleece comely and pure'⁶⁷⁴.
- Ephrem alludes to the cloud in *Hymns on the Pearl*:1:1, 'the cloud was the likeness of her that bare Him'⁶⁷⁵.

⁶⁶⁷ Appendix B page 213, lines 112-115.

⁶⁶⁸ In the Ge'ez 'swift' is here **ዕራቁ**, 'arāqu meaning 'naked, bare, empty', with a possible second meaning of 'reconciling' perhaps suggesting Mary's intercessory rôle. See Leslau: 70-71. In other parts of the *Dəggwā* **ቅለል**, qəlil meaning 'swift' is used for instance in the same *Dəggwā*, 'I will say she is greater than heaven, [for] The Man was born in her, White Fleece, **Swift** Cloud, which carries manna, she is Mary, pure in virginity'. See Leslau: 428.

⁶⁶⁹ Appendix C page 223, lines 112-115.

⁶⁷⁰ McVey: 282.

⁶⁷¹ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 60.

⁶⁷² Should probably be 'signs'.

⁶⁷³ McVey: 300.

⁶⁷⁴ Morris: 68.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: 85.

Ephrem appears to make no specific reference to Elisha's water pot, but the symbol occurs in Jacob of Serugh's *Homily on the Nativity of our Lord* III:91-108, where Elisha's water pot and salt together with the closed gate of Ezekiel, Gideon's fleece and cloud in Isaiah 19 are all interpreted as symbols of the Incarnation, although the Ark of the Covenant is not included here:

The Disclosure of the Hidden Mystery and the Fulfilment of the Prophecy

*All the words of prophecy have come into effect
And the Hidden Mystery has appeared openly to show itself.*

*We have seen that stone which was hewn without the hands,
Which is Christ who came to the birth without marital union*

*The new pitcher of Elisha has been explained to us
Because it is the young virgin girl in a symbol that sets the earth in order.*

*Also that salt which was cast into the fountain
Is the Son of God who has imparted taste to our insipid state.*

*And as it was said that a Star shall shine forth from the house of Jacob;
Behold, the Heir has stood up to become the head of the peoples of the earth.*

*That closed door of which Ezekiel has spoken
Is the virgin whose virginal seal is preserved.*

*Mary is the comely cloud that entered into Egypt
Who carried the Lord in her arms to visit the place.*

*The ass and the ox which, as it is written, 'knew the manger of its Lord,'
Behold, the world has seen its Lord in the manger in the swaddling clothes*

*The dew that Gideon found in the bowl when he prayed
Depicted the symbol of him who came down upon the fleece like rain.⁶⁷⁶*

The symbolic interpretations in the *Dəggwā* exhibit significant overlap with those in Ephrem and Jacob, indicating a rich and shared tradition regarding the Incarnation, and hence divine indwelling and immanence.

The theme of divine immanence is developed through the use of a highly significant term 'dwelling place of divinity'. The following quotation, from the printed edition of the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā*, makes an explicit reference to Mary as the 'dwelling place of holiness'

*Our Lady, perfect Tabernacle of Paul
and dwelling place of holiness, which made her potent,
she was transformed from that which grows old to that which does not grow
old,*

*.....
The dwelling place of the Word of the Father,*

⁶⁷⁶ Kollamparampil: 115.

*for the Holy Tabernacle which the hand of man did not make whom Ezra saw⁶⁷⁷,
the heavenly hosts looking on her [saying],
'let us bow down to her, and let us give thanks for her honour.'⁶⁷⁸*

In his description of Mary, Yared uses another symbol of divine immanence and indwelling, 'perfect Tabernacle of Paul' thereby making an allusion to Hebrews 9:11 'But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (or tabernacle) (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)'. The explicit connection between Mary and the perfect Tabernacle⁶⁷⁹ of Paul denotes the idea of Zion as a heavenly place, making a seamless connection between the creation and paradise. Yared interprets this perfect place as Mary herself, perfect in virginity who through the holiness dwelling in her is made potent, and eternal.

Another passage from the *Nahāse 16 dāggwā* focuses on divine indwelling in Mary without recourse to the Ark or other symbols:

*Pure bridal chamber,
Bringer of freedom,
Dwelling place of divinity.
He makes glory surround Holy Mary.⁶⁸⁰*

The *Dāggwā* qualifies Mary by the epithet 'dwelling place of divinity', and in doing so recalls the rabbinic idea of the *shekinah*. The word *shekinah* does not occur in the Old Testament, but is derivative of the verbal root, שָׁכַן, *šākan*, 'dwell', or 'tabernacle' is common, with the cognate noun מִשְׁכָּן, *miškān* 'tabernacle'⁶⁸¹ denoting the dwelling place of God after the Sinai theophany. In Targumic and Talmudic literature⁶⁸², שָׁכַן, *šākan*, is commonly used predominantly in relation to God dwelling in a certain place⁶⁸³. The idea developed and the meaning gradually changed to be interpreted as God Himself, although no single consistent view emerged⁶⁸⁴. The rabbinic concept of divine indwelling seems to have entered New Testament thinking, especially in John 1:14 which states that the Word

⁶⁷⁷ This is a further allusion to 4Esdras (see page 89) with Yared having making the further connection that 'Zion' whom Ezra saw is also the Heavenly Tabernacle.

⁶⁷⁸ Yared መጽሐፈ ድንዘቶዳስ ያፌድ: 519 b 27-30, 520 a 28- b 2.

⁶⁷⁹ The Ge'ez New Testament has ትኩረት ደብተራ, *təḥeyyas dabtarā*, 'a better Tabernacle', rather than 'perfect' used here by Yared, and in the Greek, and Peshitta versions of the New Testament, suggesting that Yared used a different version of the New Testament.

⁶⁸⁰ Appendix C page 222, lines 79-82.

⁶⁸¹ Brown, Driver and Briggs: 1015 Strong's no. 7931; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (2000). *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, CD-ROM Edition: entry 9597*. See for instance Exodus 26 where the word appears several times.

⁶⁸² These texts date from at least the fourth and fifth centuries CE, but elements may have been established as early as the first century CE, see R. le Déaut (1999). *The Pharisees The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 2: The Hellenistic Age*. L. Finkelstein and W.D. Davies: 562-590, especially 564-568.

⁶⁸³ M. Jastrow (1886-1903). *A dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic literature: 1575*.

⁶⁸⁴ J. Abelson (1912). *Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature: 78-9*.

‘ἔσκηνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν’ or ‘dwelt among us’. The Greek word σκηνή, itself linked to the Hebrew root, here seems to refer to the *shekinah*. Indeed there are further allusions in John 1:14 to light, world, son, and glory which the Rabbis also associated with *shekinah*⁶⁸⁵.

In the Ethiopic Bible ማኅደር, *māḥdar*, ‘dwelling place’, is used to translate ܡܝܫܩܢܐ, *miškān*. In the *andāmta* on Leviticus 26:11 the Ge’ez biblical text reads «ወእተክል ማህደር»⁶⁸⁶ ጎቤክሙ ወኢታስቆርረክሙ ነፍሰየ»⁶⁸⁷, ‘And I will place my *dwelling place* amongst you, and I myself will not abhor you’. The root of ማኅደር, *māḥdar*, is ጎደረ, *ḥadara*, which is used in John 1:14, a verse that has already been connected with the *shekinah* «ወውእቱ ቃል ሥጋ ኮነ ወጎደረ ላዕሌነ ወሠወሮ እምነነ ወርኢነ ስብሐቲሁ ከመ ስብሐተ አሐዱ ዋሕድ ለአቡሁ ዘምሉእ ጸጋ ወጽድቀ ወሞገስ»⁶⁸⁸, ‘And the very Word became flesh and *dwelt* among us, and he was hidden from us, and we saw his glory, like the glory of the one and only son of the Father, who was full of grace, truth and benevolence’.

Unlike Yared and the *andāmta*, the Peshitta uses ܐܓܢ ܒܢܐ, *agen ban*, for ‘he dwelt among us’ in John 1:14⁶⁸⁹ to describe the dwelling of Christ in our midst⁶⁹⁰. In alluding to this verse, however, Ephrem frequently uses ܫܪܐ, *šra*, particularly the intransitive form ‘take up residence, dwell’⁶⁹¹ as seen in *Hymns on the Resurrection I:7*

⁶⁹² ܥܘܫܪܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ
*Blessed is he who resided in us*⁶⁹³

Exploring the significance of Ephrem’s choice this verb, in particular its Jewish Aramaic usage in connection with the *shekinah*⁶⁹⁴, Brock has suggested that ܫܪܐ, *šra* is an archaism

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.: 80.

⁶⁸⁶ This is equivalent to ማኅደር as there is no consistency in the use of ሀ, *ha* versus ጎ, *ḥa* in Ge’ez. See Leslau: XIX-XX.

⁶⁸⁷ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይ-ጳጳስ፡ ኦሪት ዘሌዋውያን፣ ኦሪት ዘጉልቶ፣ ኦሪት ዘዳግም፡ ዘሌዋውያን 153. The same reading is found in Leviticus 26:11 in Dillmann’s edition of the Biblical text, Dillmann *Veteris Testamenti Aethiopicum Tomus Primus, sive Octateuchus Aethiopicus*: 224.

⁶⁸⁸ Anonymous ወንጌል ቅዱስ ዘእግዚእነ ወአምላክነ ወመድኃኒነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፣ ግብረ ሐዋርያት ወመልእክታቲሆሙ ለሐዋርያቲሁ ቅዱሳን፡፡ 1. The same reading is found in Platt’s early printed edition, see John 1:14 in Platt.

⁶⁸⁹ Anonymous (1905-1920). *The New Testament in Syriac: Gospel of John page 1*.

⁶⁹⁰ P.E. Pussey and G.G. G (1901). *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum: Juxta Simplicem Syrorum Versionem ad Fidem Codicum, Massorae, Editionum Denuo Recognitum*: 484.

⁶⁹¹ Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 596. ܐܓܢ, ‘to dwell, untie, release, permit, absolve’, is used especially of the Divine presence, e.g. ‘the Divine presence did not dwell (on Mt. Sinai) until the morning of the Sabbath’, the verb is ܫܪܐ from the *Šabbat* of the Babylonian Talmud 87a(15) M. Sokoloff (2002). *A dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic periods*: 1178.

⁶⁹² E. Beck (1964). *Des Heiligen Ephrem des Syrerers Hymnen de Ieiunio, CSCO 247, Scriptores Syri 107: 79*

⁶⁹³ S.P. Brock (1989). The Lost Old Syriac at Luke 1:35 and the Earliest Syriac Terms for the Incarnation. *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century*. W.L. Petersen: 122.

⁶⁹⁴ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 110-14.

Mary bore Christ in the same way that God was present in the Ark, for both concealed his mighty power. The later printed edition of this *Daggwā* extends this symbolism:

*The womb (karś) did not contain him,
it did not confine him in the womb⁷⁰⁴ of the virgin,
who concealed the lightning of our Lord,
revealed rising from the House of Judah.⁷⁰⁵*

The meaning of the connected Syriac word⁷⁰⁶ ܟܪܫܐ, *karsā*, ‘womb’⁷⁰⁷ is more restricted, suggesting that the association of the Ark entered into Ge’ez through its symbolic interpretation⁷⁰⁸. It is intriguing, however, that Ephrem uses a similar motif to marvel at the paradox of indwelling in *Hymns on the Nativity, IV: 159-191*, which contrasts the passive nature of the foetus and child with His omnipotent divine power:

*He was entirely in the depths and entirely in the heights; He was entirely in all
and entirely in each one.*

*While His body in the womb was being formed, His power was constructing all
the members.*

*While the foetus of the Son was being formed in the womb, He Himself was
forming babes in the womb.*

*Ineffectual as was His body in the womb, His power in the womb was not
correspondingly ineffectual.*

.....

*Thus although all of Him was dwelling in the womb, His hidden will was
supervising all.*

.....

*In the same way He had been entirely in the womb, while yet He remained
entirely everywhere.*

*While indeed He was on the cross, He revived the dead; just so, while He was a
babe, He was forming babes.*

*While He was dead, He was opening graves; while he was in the womb, He was
opening wombs.*

*Come and hear, my friends, about the hidden Son Who was revealed in His
body, yet hidden was His power*

*For the power of the Son is a fluid power; the womb did not confine it as [it
did] the body.*

For while the power dwelt in the womb, it was forming babes in the womb.

*His power embraced the one who embraced Him, for if His power were
curtailed all would collapse.*

⁷⁰⁴ Here ማሕፀን, *māhəḍan* which also means ‘womb’.

⁷⁰⁵ Yared መጽሐፈ ደንበቅዱስ ያሬድ: 520 c 25-27.

⁷⁰⁶ see Leslau: 294.

⁷⁰⁷ Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 228.

⁷⁰⁸ This is an example of the ሰምና ወርቅ, *sāmännā wärq* ‘wax and gold’ idea in Ethiopic literature. Donald Levine explained that the plain meaning, the ‘wax’, whilst the ‘gold’ was hidden as a double meaning, D.N. Levine (1965). *Wax & gold: tradition and innovation in Ethiopian culture: 5*. Conversations with Ethiopian scholars have led me to believe that this is not precisely what is meant by this, at least in the church. These scholars prefer to think of it as a method of conveying meaning through symbolic connections, rather than concealing it, and it is commonly associated with the New Testament fulfilment of the Old Testament. See also Kane *Amharic English Dictionary Volume I: 465*.

Indeed the power that contained the creation, while He was in the womb, did not desert all.

He formed His individuality, the Image, in the womb, and He formed in all wombs all persons.

.....

While again she who anointed Him, was anointing Him, with His dew and His rain He anointed the universe.

.....

By power from Him Mary's womb became able to bear the One who hears all. From the great treasury of all creation Mary gave to Him everything that she gave.

.....

She wove it and clothed in it Him Who had taken off His glory; she measured and wove for Him Who had made Himself small.

.....

The Womb of Sheol conceived Him and burst open; and how did the womb of Mary sustain Him?⁷⁰⁹

Just as Yared has made much of the idea of the uncontainable being contained, so in this hymn Ephrem has elaborated precisely this theme, describing the limitations of the humanity of Christ, yet contrasting the boundless omnipresence of his divinity. This extended use of paradox to make the point, reflects on many different angles of the paradox of the Incarnation, through the limitation of Mary's womb.

The idea of the unrestrained divine omnipresence being restrained also emerges in rabbinic thinking, as seen in the following excerpt from the rabbinic commentary on Song of Songs :

Why does he compare the Holy One to a bundle of myrrh? Because the whole world is not large enough to contain Him, yet He can compress the Shekinah into the narrow space between the two staves of the ark.⁷¹⁰

In this instance rabbinic understanding links the Ark and Tabernacle with *shekinah*, the immanence of God, and the commentator marvels at the uncontainable God being contained in 'the narrow space between the two staves of the ark'. In doing so this idea is reminiscent of Yared's and Ephrem's ruminations on the Incarnation.

In addition to the various ways in which Mary is symbolised by the Arks, the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* makes a further vigorous expression of divine indwelling by comparing the paradox of the Incarnation with that of the burning bush of Exodus 3:2, which 'was blazing, yet it was not consumed'. The paradox of the presence of divine fire not consuming the bush symbolises the divine presence, which consumed neither the Ark nor Mary:

*She is the Wood of the Bush,
Whom truly they call Holy of Holies.⁷¹¹*

...

You, the Wood [of the bush]

⁷⁰⁹ McVey: 101-103.

⁷¹⁰ Commentary Song of Songs 1:13 in Abelson: 94.

⁷¹¹ Appendix C page 221, lines 15-16.

*Who gives understanding.*⁷¹²

Representing divinity as fire was a favoured symbol of Ephrem⁷¹³, who likewise uses the burning bush to express the paradox of divine indwelling in *Homily on the Nativity*: 1-16:

*It is a source of great amazement, my beloved,
that someone should enquire into the wonder
of how God came down
and made His dwelling in a womb,
and how that Being
put on the body of man,
spending nine months in a womb,
not shrinking from such a home;
and how a womb of flesh was able
to carry flaming fire,
and how a flame dwelt
in a moist womb which did not get burnt up.
Just as the bush on Horeb bore
God in the flame,
so did Mary bear
Christ in her virginity.*⁷¹⁴

A final image of divine immanence connects Mary with the chariot of Aminadab⁷¹⁵, this being an allusion to 2Samuel 6, where the Ark residing at Aminadab's house, is removed to Jerusalem: *'They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill'*⁷¹⁶. *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* applies the image in two ways. The first, found only in the more recent printed edition, depicts the chariot as Mary's dwelling place:

*Our Lady Mary chose the good portion,
which will not be taken from her,
she is the Fleece, the White Fleece from the Tribe of Judah,
the Chariot of Aminadab [is] her dwelling place.*⁷¹⁷

In this quotation Mary is implicitly the Ark carried by the chariot, this being a natural extension on the interpretation of the Ark imagery. The second, found also in the more ancient version, likens Mary herself to the Chariot of Aminadab:

*The fragrance of her mouth is like apple,
Like the skin of a pomegranate.
I compared her to the Chariot of Ami[na]dab
Her neck is like the tower of David
Her tablets [are] of the Law,
Glory surrounds her.*⁷¹⁸

⁷¹² Appendix C page 222, lines 88-94.

⁷¹³ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 38-39.

⁷¹⁴ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 62.

⁷¹⁵ Aminadab in the Ethiopic and in the LXX, Abinadab in the Hebrew and English translations.

⁷¹⁶ 2Samuel 6:3.

⁷¹⁷ Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 519 c 2-5.

The connection is made in various ways. Firstly the Chariot of Aminadab is directly associated with the Ark, and so with divine immanence. Secondly 2Samuel 6:3 refers to the chariot a ‘*new cart*’ which Yared may have taken as a reference to the virgin birth.

The chariot motif is continued in the later printed edition of the *Hidār 21 Dəggwā* where it occurs in a reference to vision of the Chariot Throne of God in Ezekiel 1.

*Zechariah saw the lampstand,
which was all of gold on the right and on the left were the branches of olive
trees,
which had seven lights and seven covers on her.
This is the Holy Church,
and as for this it is the seven eyes of the Father
who sits above the chariot of the Cherubim.⁷¹⁹*

Recalling the symbolism that connects Mary with the lampstand and the Church⁷²⁰, now it is the ‘*Holy Church*’ which rides above the chariot; by extrapolation the church is symbolically connected with Mary. In this vein, the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* also cites a chariot as the conveyor of Mary:

*The years of the Virgin were eighty [she passed] from this world,
And after her assumption.
On a chariot⁷²¹*

Recalling that the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* celebrates the assumption of Mary the Synaxarium reading for the same narrates that Mary, ‘*sat down at the right hand of the Son of God, with great glory, and she went up into the heavens sitting upon the chariot of the Cherubim.*’⁷²². The mention of a chariot is clearly connected to the Synaxarium account, but it also resonates with the assumption of the prophet Elijah on a chariot of fire in 2Kings 2:11.

Neither Ephrem nor Jacob have made any specific reference to the Chariot of Aminadab, but Ephrem does compare Mary to the heavenly chariot in Ezekiel 1, proclaiming in *Hymns on Mary*, VII:4-5:

*...let Ezekiel come and see You on my knees;
Let him kneel down and worship You, and acknowledge
It was You he saw there lifted up by the cherubim
Above the chariot, and let him call me blessed
Who carry you now.*

*The very chariot stops amazed
That I carry its Master;
The cherubim cry out with trembling:*

⁷¹⁸ Appendix C page 225, lines 233-240.

⁷¹⁹ Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ:141 a 11-17.

⁷²⁰ See pages 97 and 107 for discussion of this symbol.

⁷²¹ Appendix C page 224, lines 156-159.

⁷²² Budge *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church, Volume III: 703.*

*'blessed is Your splendour in Your place'
 -that place is with me, by bosom is your home!
 Your radiance rests on my knees,
 The throne of Your Majesty is held in my arms.
 Instead of chariot wheels,
 My fingers clasp You. I too will cry out
 'blessed are You in Your place'.⁷²³*

This quotation clarifies the association of Mary with the Chariot Throne of God, a symbol central to Jewish *merkabah* mysticism⁷²⁴. The extensive use of the chariot motif in connection with Mary and her role in bearing divinity in the manner of a Chariot begs the question as to what extent may aspects of Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' symbolism be indebted to this Jewish mystical tradition⁷²⁵.

The Development of the Symbolism in the *Andāmta*

The *andāmta* exhibits a robust continuation of the aforementioned symbolic interpretations of divine indwelling. Zechariah's lampstand, Ezekiel's closed door, Gideon's fleece, and Elisha's water pot are all elucidated in *andāmtā* along similar lines the *Hidār 21 Dəggwā*, although enigmatically the *andāmta* on Isaiah 19:1 does not mention the symbolism of the 'bare cloud'⁷²⁶.

- The *andāmta* on Zechariah 4:3 explains, *'the lampstand [is a symbol of] Our Lady, the gold of her purity and her holiness, the bowl for the wick of her womb, the cover of her virginity, the fire of divinity, the wick of the Incarnation, the oil of the Holy Spirit...'*⁷²⁷
- The *andāmta* on Ezekiel 44:2 interprets *'The closed East [Door]'* contained in the Ezekiel 44vision of the temple, stating, *'having become pregnant without a seed, [it is a symbol] that he be born with sealed virginity, it proves that his mother will live without [the signs of virginity being] being opened after his birth'*⁷²⁸.
- The *andāmta* on Psalm 72:6 (71:6) explains the reference to the 'fleece of David' in Judges 6:36-40, where Gideon lays out a white fleece which collects dew, and also to the LXX version of this Psalm, *'He shall come down as rain upon a fleece; and as drops falling upon the earth'* (hence the connection with David) thus: *'ANDM: Dew falls from heaven and it goes well with a fleece, the Lord will dwell in the Mary's womb. ANDM the dew being His symbol, and the fleece her symbol in Our Lady's womb he will dwell. The fleece means that of Gideon (Judges 6)'*⁷²⁹.

⁷²³ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 60.

⁷²⁴ See chapter 5, page 167 for a more detailed discussion of this aspect.

⁷²⁵ This connection will be explored in chapter 5.

⁷²⁶ Anonymous *ትገቢት ኢሳይያስ*: 136.

⁷²⁷ Anonymous (1998 EC-b). *ዳንኤልና አሥራ ሁለቱ ደቂቅ ነቢያት*: 389.

⁷²⁸ Anonymous *መጽሐፈ ሕዝቅኤል አንድምታ ትርጓሜ*: 447.

⁷²⁹ Anonymous *መዝሙረ ዳዊት ንባብ ከነትርጓሜው*: 356-7.

- The *andāmta* on 2Kings 19:22, states, ‘As Elisha said, starting from that day until today the water was changed from bitterness to sweetness. For the time it was said like this, but for later it is a symbol. The new pitcher of Our Lady, meaning it is the handiwork of Elisha; the salt [is a symbol] of the Lord, meaning the salt which makes sweet the insipid; the water [is a symbol] of baptism; the bitterness is a symbol of wages of sin, of the curse on Adam and Eve; the bitterness comes from outside, rather than from the water; the wages of sin, and the curse of Adam are not from baptism; that the water became sweet because of the pitcher and the salt is a symbol that it is because of the Lord, because of Our Lady that sonship is to be gained’⁷³⁰.

In its treatment of Ark symbolism, however, the *andāmta* places less focus on divine indwelling and immanence than the *Dəggwā*, disassociating Ark imagery from other related symbols. The Ark is interpreted in a unique manner, rather than as part of a set of symbols. Whilst specific references to symbols such as Christ as the tablets of the Law, Mary as the Chariot of Aminadab, or to Ezekiel’s vision of the Chariot throne do not occur in the *andāmta*, it does, however, attach special potency to the Ark of the Covenant and its connection with Mary. A similar trend can also be detected in the *Kəbra Nagašt* particularly in the later sections that appear to date from the thirteenth century⁷³¹.

The *andāmtā* interprets key biblical passages: the story of Noah and the Ark in Genesis 6-8, Moses’ encounter with the burning bush in Exodus 3:2 and the details of the construction of the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25:10-22.

The *andāmta* for Genesis 8:19, towards the end of the flood story when the animals leave Noah’s Ark, narrates a rich interpretation that connects the Ark and Noah with various New Testament themes:

- The Ark as Mary, Noah as Christ;
- The Ark as the Cross, Noah as Christ;
- The Ark as baptism, Noah as the baptised;
- The Ark as the Church, Noah as the believers;
- The Ark as the resurrection, Noah the dead who are raised.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of Our Lady, Noah of the Lord, those to the right and left those who believe in the promise of Our Lady, a symbol of the People (the Jews) and the Gentiles.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the Cross, Noah of the Lord, those to his right and left a symbol of the thief crucified on the right and the thief crucified on the left.

⁷³⁰ Anonymous (2000 EC-a). መጽሐፈ ነገሥት ራብዕ. መጻሕፍተ ነገሥት ኦርባቲ፡ 10.

⁷³¹ Hubbard: 410

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of baptism, Noah together with his children of the baptised, her [the Ark] being in three divisions a symbol of the fact that baptism is in the three names of the Trinity.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the Church, and her being in three divisions is a symbol of the three divisions of the church. Noah together with his children is a symbol of the believers.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the resurrection, Noah together with his children of the dead, her being in three divisions is a symbol of our resurrection. The First Born, Christ rose on the third day, and we will rise on the sound of the third trumpet. Because 'he beat us, but he will heal us and he wounded us, but he will cure us and he will restore life to us on the second day, and on the third day we shall arise and we will live before him' as it says (Hosea 6:2).⁷³²

Whereas the primary imagery of Noah's Ark in the *Dəggwā* is one of divine immanence, associated with the Ark of the Covenant, exploiting the meaning of ታቦት, *tābot* that is used for both Arks, in the *andāmta* there seems to be a trend away from this. Divine immanence is expressed through the analogy with Mary and Christ, but now it is only one of a group of symbolic interpretations that focus on themes of redemption and salvation.

The Ark as a symbol of the resurrection identified in this *andāmta* does not occur in the *Dəggwā* but it does occur in Ephrem's *Hymns on the Resurrection*, II:4:

*It was in a similar way that in the Ark all voices cried out:
outside [the Ark] were fearsome waves, but inside, lovely voices;
tongues, all in pairs, uttered together in chaste fashion,
thus serving as a type for our festival⁷³³ now when unmarried girls and boys
together in innocence sing praise to the Lord of that Ark.⁷³⁴*

The *Dəggwā* and Ephrem express divine indwelling in Mary through the symbol of the burning bush in Exodus 3:2⁷³⁵. Here the symbol of divine presence is the fire, and the miracle of the Incarnation, the divine indwelling in Mary's womb is symbolised by the bush not being consumed. This association leads, in the *Dəggwā* to Mary being given the epithet *Wood of the Bush*. Fire also features as a symbol of divine presence in the Exodus 3:2 *andāmta*, and interpreted in several ways.

Moses saw fire on the bush, he saw the bush without it being destroyed by the fire. EXPLANATION: fire together with life⁷³⁶, fire united with life, the fire not destroying the life, he saw the fire not destroying the life. This is a symbol: the life of Israel, the fire of their hardship; as the fire did not destroy the life, so Israel the hardship of Egypt, it is a symbol of them not saying, we mourned, we were sad, we became slaves, we are distant from Him. For as the fire did not destroy the life, so Israel having finished with the hardship of Egypt was not destroyed. For the time [the symbol] was this. The fulfilment, however, [is] the

⁷³² Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት: ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘዐክት: ዘፍጥረት 67-68.

⁷³³ The festival was the Feast of the Resurrection.

⁷³⁴ Brock *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*: 173.

⁷³⁵ See page 104.

⁷³⁶ The Ge'ez word used here means 'green' but it is used to express the idea that the bush still lived, so it has been translated as 'life'.

fire is divinity, and the life is humanity, as the fire did not destroy the life, so divinity without leaving its fullness, its extent, its remoteness, the flesh without leaving its bulk, its corruption⁷³⁷, its limitation it is a symbol of them, with great care being made one. ANDM: the fire is a symbol of Our Lord, and the life of our Lady. For as the fire did not destroy the life, so our Lord became man the nature of divinity did not change her.⁷³⁸

The *andāmta* firstly interprets the bush as Israel enduring the fire of suffering, a symbol that is fulfilled in the fusion of humanity and divinity in the person of Christ. The second interpretation incorporates the burning bush as a symbol of the Incarnation but the emphasis has shifted to the person of Mary. Rather than marvelling at the paradox of the divine being borne in Mary, as has been seen in the *Dəggwā* and in Ephrem, the focus has shifted to draw attention to Mary's unchangeable nature.

The *andāmta* for Exodus 25:20 supplies a complex interpretation which emphasises the connection with Mary as well as divine immanence expressed in the Incarnation. The first section gives three different Amharic renditions of the Ge'ez text each one expressing the divine immanence associated with the Ark. This is expressed through the giving of the commandments, through God's presence in the Ark, and through God's conversing with the High Priest:

(Ge'ez) And I will make myself known to you there and I will speak in the midst of the canopy, between the two cherubim which are one, the Tābot of the Testimony all of the commandments which I will command you concerning the children of Israel.

(Amharic) I being there will reveal myself to you above the place where they meet, place the two tablets of stone on which I wrote the 10 commandments which I spoke to you inside the tābot

ANDM: Place the two tablets on which are the 10 commandments which I gave to you in the tābot and because I am there I will be revealed to you, near the people of Israel.

ANDM: to the children of Israel I said, 'All the commandments which I commanded you, over the rectangular tābot where the two cherubim are, in between them over where they meet while saying this I will converse with you' he said.⁷³⁹

The *andāmta* then moves to symbolic interpretations of the Ark, differing in places from Yared. As in the *Dəggwā* gold is a symbol of Mary's purity, and hence virginity, but the gold carrying rings, which are not mentioned in the *Dəggwā*, now symbolise of the Virgin's four-fold purity. The 'hammered gold'⁷⁴⁰ symbolising purity in the *Dəggwā*⁷⁴¹, is now interpreted as the unceasing spiritual fervour of Mary.

⁷³⁷ The Amharic word here means 'dung'.

⁷³⁸ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 12-13.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.: ዘፀሐት 156.

⁷⁴⁰ Or possibly 'plated gold'.

⁷⁴¹ See page 95.

*This is a symbol:
The tābot of Our Lady;
The gold of her purity and her holiness;
The river of her mind;
The hammered gold [is a symbol of] the furore of the Spirit, for as that furore will not be settled the spiritual furore from the mind of Our Lady will not disappear;⁷⁴²
The stand underneath is the purity of woman [Mary],
The place where [the wings of the cherubim] meet above [is a symbol of] the purity the Father,
The two wings of Hanna and Joachim;
That which is put between [them] of Our Lady, being in between them, it is a symbol of her being found from the union of Hanna and Joachim;
.....
The four rings, for she is pure in four ways, in sight, in touch, in hearing and in thinking.⁷⁴³*

As was the case with Noah's Ark, the symbolism shifts from that which conveys divine immanence towards the veneration of Mary. The *andāmta* continues with a chronological interpretation of the dimensions of the Ark:

*The two cubits and a span length are the years from Adam to Noah, if they are counted they are two thousand two hundred and fifty six years, in two thousand two hundred and fifty six years the Tābot of Noah was found as a sign of the Virgin;
The cubit and a span width are the years from Noah to Moses, if these are counted there are one thousand six hundred and twenty two years, in one thousand six hundred and twenty two years the Tābot of Moses was found as a symbol of the Virgin;
The height of a cubit and a span are the years from Moses to the True Virgin, if they are counted they come to one thousand six hundred and twenty two years, in one thousand six hundred and twenty two years the Tābot of Noah, a symbol of the Virgin, and the Tābot of Moses, a symbol of the Virgin, because they are her symbol, in five thousand five hundred years the True Virgin was found, and this is a symbol;⁷⁴⁴*

This interpretation which interprets each of the Arks as marking the approach of the Incarnation resonates with the merging of the symbolism of the two Arks in the *Dəggwā*⁷⁴⁵, although here the emphasis is on Mary, rather than divine immanence.

At the end of this extensive commentary a further symbol of the Incarnation is expressed by means of the High Priest approaching the divine presence of the Ark on the Day of Atonement. In an unusual interpretation of divine immanence, Mary is represented by the High Priest, and the divine presence by Gabriel, an encounter that results in the Word entering Mary:

⁷⁴² Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 157.

⁷⁴³ The parents of Mary.

⁷⁴⁴ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 157.

⁷⁴⁵ See page 94.

*Over the place where they join the cherubim, which are carved like two chickens, will fight each other meaning each year the High Priest entered from the place of entreaty with the precious stones (the Urim and the Thummim), and having heard the word, he come out; Our Lady having heard from her guardian angel, from Gabriel, gave birth to the incarnated Word who taught with human words. This is a symbol.*⁷⁴⁶

The *andāmta* does not make the association between Mary and the Tabernacle that was found in the *Dəggwā*⁷⁴⁷, but rather focuses the symbolism on the Ark of the Covenant. Overall, there appears to be a tendency for the symbolism to narrow from the wide range found in the *deggwa*, a trend that seems to be accompanied by the development of a specific devotion to the person of Mary, over and above her rôle in the Incarnation.

The Development of Symbolism in the *Kəbra Nagašt*

In the *Kəbra Nagašt* symbolic interpretations of the Ark occur mostly in the third section, which Hubbard identified as belonging to the latest recension, dated to the late thirteenth century CE⁷⁴⁸. The development of the symbolic approach from the early literature of the *Dəggwā* into some parts of the *andāmta* has already been seen. The *Kəbra Nagašt* material shows further developments that are consistent with a later date of composition. Although the ideas in the *Kəbra Nagašt* are clearly rooted in the symbolic theology of Yared, the focus is almost predominantly on the Ark of the Covenant and its connection with Mary. Embellished symbolism, coupled with specific potency, expand the significance of the Ark to be a focus of Christian worship. In support of the Ark's central rôle the *Kəbra Nagašt* uses supplementary symbols apart from the Ark of the Covenant. In contrast with Yared and the *andāmta* Noah's Ark is mentioned only briefly⁷⁴⁹. The burning bush has no place in the *Kəbra Nagašt* as a symbol of divine presence. Instead it is specifically connected with the Cross, not only symbolically as potent wooden material⁷⁵⁰, but as the wood of the Cross itself, a development that is encapsulated in the statement, '*Uriel will protect the wood of the thicket which will be the Cross of the Saviour*'⁷⁵¹.

The *Kəbra Nagašt* mentions Noah frequently, but the Ark is largely absent, probably because Noah's Ark is not equated with the Ark of the Covenant. In chapter 100, '*Concerning the Angels who Rebelled*', which traces the fall and redemption of man, Noah's Ark appears to emphasise the theme of redemption through the material of wood, a dominant theme throughout the book⁷⁵²:

⁷⁴⁶ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 157

⁷⁴⁷ See page 95.

⁷⁴⁸ Hubbard: 410.

⁷⁴⁹ See page 94 for the discussion of Noah's Ark in the *Dəggwā* and Ephremic literature.

⁷⁵⁰ See the uniting of the covenants, chapter 4 page 146.

⁷⁵¹ Bezold: 84a 5 - 7; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 113.

⁷⁵² See chapter 4, in particular page 128.

*And Noah said, 'Lord I have believed your word, but make known to me by what I will be saved.', and He [God] said to him, 'By wood you will be saved from the water.' And he [Noah] said, 'How, my Lord?' He [God] said to him, 'Make a four-sided Ark (tābot), and hew her and make her inside chambers three, and go into her with all your house.'*⁷⁵³

A further explanation, a few lines later, portrays the four-sided shape of Noah's Ark as symbolising the Cross⁷⁵⁴, and the altar, imagery which is removed from the symbolism of divine indwelling that is found in the *Dəggwā*.

*He [God] said to him, 'Make the things by which you will be saved,' that is the Ark (tābot) of the Church, and when he said, 'Make it four-sided,' He showed that the symbol of the Cross is fourfold. And the four corners of the Ark (tābot) are the four corners of the altar...*⁷⁵⁵

This chapter of the *Kəbra Nagašt* continues with a discussion of the construction of the Ark of the Covenant. The two Arks being so closely associated is, perhaps, a remnant of more ancient connections made between the two symbols, but at this juncture any idea of divine indwelling seems to have been removed from Noah's Ark. The threefold division of Noah's Ark referring to the Church is also mentioned in the *andəmta* as discussed above, but further details regarding the significance of the shape of the Ark have been added.

Chapter 104, 'More Concerning the Ark and the Talk of the Wicked', makes a further reference to Noah's Ark, starting with a list of different ways in which God has worked salvation, through the medium of wood. These include the Arks, and also the meeting of God with Abraham under a tree; Jacob's use of wood to make himself rich; Isaac's blessing of Jacob with a wooded staff; and David's moving of the Ark of the Covenant from Samaria. Here, notably, two Arks are mentioned together as symbolic of salvation. As in the previous passage in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, Noah's Ark is mentioned specifically in the context of it symbolising salvation, rather than divine immanence.

*And concerning the Ark (tābot) He saved Noah with the Ark (tābot)and to Moses he said, 'Make an Ark (tābot) from wood which will not rot, in the likeness of Zion, the Ark (tābot) of the Covenant'*⁷⁵⁶

All other references to Noah make no mention of the Ark which he built, a finding consistent with Hubbard's view that these portions of the *Kəbra Nagašt* were added at a later date⁷⁵⁷, and the idea that the *Kəbra Nagašt* aims to emphasise the potency of the Ark of the Covenant over and above symbolism of divine immanence and indwelling which is attached to the two Arks in the *Dəggwā*.

⁷⁵³ Bezold: 145b 6-11; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 188.

⁷⁵⁴ For a more detailed discussion of this see chapter 4 page 127.

⁷⁵⁵ Bezold: 146a 5-10; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 189.

⁷⁵⁶ Bezold: 151a 10-11, 17-19; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 196.

⁷⁵⁷ Hubbard: 410-11.

The oldest part of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, the Sheba Cycle⁷⁵⁸, frequently refers to the Ark of the Covenant as ‘Heavenly Zion’, an appellation that is usually qualified by the phrase ‘the Ark of the Law of God’⁷⁵⁹. This serves to preserve the indistinct boundary between this world and Paradise. Attention falls on the *Kəbra Nagašt*’s interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant as a sign of God’s promise and source of salvation, but the theme of divine immanence does emerge in chapter 98 where the Ark is described as a ‘dwelling place of the Heavenly Zion’⁷⁶⁰. This term is explained in the following quotation from the opening of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, as the dwelling place of the glory of the Trinity from before creation.

*‘The explanation and pronouncement of the 318 Orthodox ones concerning honour, greatness and glory, and how God gave them to the children of Adam, and especially concerning the greatness and honour of Zion, the Ark of God’s Law, of which he is the maker and the fashioner, in the fortress of His temple, before all creation, both angels and men. For the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in unison and with agreement and with equality made the Heavenly Zion as the dwelling place of their glory. And then the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, “Let us make man in our image and in our likeness,” and they were in accord and they agreed on this plan. And the Son said, “I will put on the flesh of Adam,” and the Holy Spirit said, “I will dwell in the heart of the prophets and the saints,” and this agreement and covenant was made in Zion the dwelling place of their glory. And David said, “Your agreement was remembered which you made before the creation for the salvation of the rod of your inheritance, in Mount Zion in which you dwell.’*⁷⁶¹

The phrase ‘dwelling place’ used of the Ark evokes the *shekinah* although the usage is distinct from Yared and Ephrem. The phrase **ማኅደረ መለኮት**, *māhdara malakot*, ‘dwelling place of divinity’ favoured by Yared occurs once in the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁷⁶². There are a further nineteen occurrences of **ማኅደረ**, *māhdara*, ‘dwelling place of...’ used to describe the Ark, the most frequent being **ማኅደረ ስብሐቲሁ**, *māhdara səbəhatihu*, ‘the dwelling place of His glory’⁷⁶³, and the remaining being similar in meaning⁷⁶⁴. ‘Dwelling place’ is found in all three parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, although it is most common in Part III, probably added in the late thirteenth century CE⁷⁶⁵. Although the phrase probably originates from the same influences that were on the *Dəggwā*, its usage appears to be distinct. In the *Dəggwā* it conveyed the idea of divine immanence, but in the *Kəbra Nagašt* the phrase seems rather to be a title that stresses the honour and glory brought to the place where the Ark is found,

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.: 410-11.

⁷⁵⁹ Mistranslated by Budge as ‘the Tabernacle of the Law of God’

⁷⁶⁰ Bezold: 137b 13; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 178.

⁷⁶¹ Bezold: 1a 5-b 8; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 1-2.

⁷⁶² In Chapter 17, in a description of the ‘glory of zion’, Bezold: 9b 9-10. Budge translates this as ‘a habitation of the Godhead’ Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 13.

⁷⁶³ Bezold: 1a 19-20, 6a 2-3, 9a 13, 9b 6-7, 10b 2-3, 10b 22, 66b 18-19, 113b 12, 115b 3, 116b 15-16, 124b 14-15, 137b 6-7.

⁷⁶⁴ ‘My dwelling place, Ibid.: 5b 3-4; ‘dwelling place of the God of heaven’, Bezold: 60b 22; ‘His dwelling place’, Bezold: 128a, 24; ‘habitation of God’, Bezold: 129a 1-2, 130a 14; ‘dwelling place of God...in Ethiopia’, Bezold: 80b 1.

⁷⁶⁵ See chapter 2, page 68.

exemplified by the following from chapter 60, from the Sheba legend, the oldest part of the *Kəbra Nagast*:

*You caused the Ark of the Law to come down from heaven upon the earth for the children of Jacob, your inheritance together with your Law and your Commandments, in the pattern of the precepts of angels, because you had already established Zion as your dwelling place on the mountain of your sanctuary.*⁷⁶⁶

In Chapter 98 the *Kəbra Nagast* gives an interpretation of the adornment and contents of the Ark, which can be compared to that in the *andəmta*⁷⁶⁷. Gold symbolises purity in both the *andəmta* and the *Kəbra Nagast*, but whereas the former interprets it as Mary's purity, and also uses gold to symbolise the furore of the Spirit in Mary, in the latter the purity is that of the Godhead:

*The gold is the purity of the Godhead which came down from heaven, because the Godhead understands the whole of heaven and earth, and likewise the Ark, the dwelling place of the Heavenly Zion, is plated with gold. And the Ark is to be interpreted as Mary, and the wood which will not rot is to be interpreted as Christ Our Saviour, and the Gomor which is the gold container which is inside the Ark is to be interpreted as Mary, and the Manna which is in the container is interpreted as the flesh of Christ which came down from heaven, and the Word of God which is written on the Two Tablets is to be interpreted as Christ the Son of God, and the spiritual Zion is to be interpreted as the light of the Godhead.*⁷⁶⁸

This quotation notably includes three images of the Ark bearing Christ to the faithful. Christ is portrayed by the familiar symbols of manna and the stone tablets, with an additional symbol, i.e. 'wood which will not rot' representing the incorruptible flesh which he took from Mary. This symbol is absent in both Yared and the *andəmta*⁷⁶⁹.

Mary is symbolised as the Ark, but also as the Gomor⁷⁷⁰ which contained manna, but her connection with the Ark of the Covenant is further emphasised in Chapter 11, 'The Unanimous Declaration of the 318', where the text moves the focus from the Ark in this world to the heavenly one. Now Mary symbolises the eternal dwelling place of the Godhead, representing a significant development from the earlier literature. Mary is no longer the fulfilment of the symbolism found in the Old Testament, she is connected with something understood to have existed before the creation of the world, so taking on eternal significance.

And if the heavenly Zion had not descended and if he had not put on the flesh of Adam then the Word of God would not have appeared and our salvation would

⁷⁶⁶ Bezold: 66b 14-19; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 90.

⁷⁶⁷ See the *andəmta* for Exodus 25:20 on page 110.

⁷⁶⁸ Bezold: 137b 9-24; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 178-9.

⁷⁶⁹ This will be discussed further in the next chapter on Cross symbolism.

⁷⁷⁰ Use of the world Gomor represents a departure from the *Dəggwā* which used the phrase 'Golden Basket' see Appendix C page 224, line 153.

*not have been, the evidence is in the symbol, the heavenly Zion is likened to the Mother of the Redeemer, Mary, for the constructed Zion also contains in her the Ten Commandments of the Law which were written by His hand, and He himself, the Creator, dwelt in the womb of Mary, through whom all things came into being.*⁷⁷¹

These passages all evoke the portrayal of Wisdom in Sirach⁷⁷² 24:1-12, in particular verses 9-10, 'Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent⁷⁷³ I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion'.

The Significance of the Interpretation of the Ark(s)

In the Old Testament the Ark of the Covenant was the place where the High Priest came into the presence of God once a year, and was understood to be the place where God Himself dwelt. This background gives rise to the primary symbolism connected with the Ark of the Covenant, which is that of divine immanence and indwelling.

Both Ephrem and the *Dəggwā* articulate the Ark of the Covenant as the primary symbol to express divine immanence in the created world. Their particular choice of phrases such as 'dwelling place of divinity' resonates with the rabbinic idea of the *shekinah*, itself rooted in the Old Testament passages connected with the Ark of the Covenant. Noah's Ark, although interpreted symbolically as dwelling place for God in the 'Ephremic' tradition, is prominent in the *Dəggwā*. Because in Ge'ez the same word is employed to describe both Arks, various passages merge the motifs of the two Arks into one symbol of immanence. Yared uniquely enhanced the symbol of the Ark in his exploitation of the noun ካርሶ, *karś*, whereby he simultaneously associated Mary's womb with the interiors of the two Arks. By contrast, this association does not occur in the 'Ephremic' tradition despite its use of كارسا, *karsā*, whose meaning is restricted to 'womb'.

Ephrem and Yared employ the imagery of the Ark to incorporate a variety of symbols denoting divine immanence including the Tabernacle, as well as Isaiah's swift cloud, Zechariah's lampstand, Ezekiel's closed gate, David and Gideon's fleece, and Elisha's pot of salt. This group of symbols suggests their collective purpose is to symbolise divine immanence, rather than attaching especial significance to any one symbol. In Ge'ez the interpretation of the Ark has been extended to identify believers, who become dwelling places of divinity through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Despite this rich variety of symbols, the Ark of the Covenant retains its prominence as the supreme manifestation of

⁷⁷¹ Bezold: 6a 5-14; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 8.

⁷⁷² Sirach or Ecclesiasticus was written in at the start of the second century BCE by Jesus Ben Sira. The book was in wide circulation, with copies found at Qumran and Masada, and it is canonised in the Ethiopian Bible. See G.W. Anderson (1970). Canonical and Non-Canonical. *The Cambridge History of the Bible, Volume 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome*. P.R. Ackroyd and P.F. Evans. 1: 113-159, particularly pages 128, 154, 156.

⁷⁷³ Greek σκηνη.

divine immanence because of its intrinsic association with the supreme revelation during the Sinai Theophany.

Later Ethiopic literature engages a subtly different emphasis. The *andāmtā* features the full range of symbols to express divine immanence, including Noah's Ark, but employs a diverse interpretation of these, reflecting its wide range of sources. In this context Noah's Ark can also express the Cross, baptism, the Church and the resurrection - in addition to divine immanence. The *andāmtā* also reveals a shift away from the broader concept of divine imminence to a more focussed application where the Ark of the Covenant primarily symbolises the person of Mary. The *Kəbra Nagašt* develops this idea further by emphasising the Ark as a symbol of Mary, who takes on eternal and heavenly significance through her connection with the Heavenly Zion, the pre-existent prototype of the Ark of the Covenant. The *Kəbra Nagašt* emphasises Mary's rôle as mediator of divine presence, but does not employ the comprehensive range of symbols, including that of Noah's Ark. The paradox of divine indwelling and the uncontainable God being contained is not elucidated, a shift of emphasis that is consistent with the *Kəbra Nagašt*'s main purpose to emphasise the status of Ethiopia as the possessor of the *tābot*.

In the face of suggestions by some scholars that Syrian influence in Ethiopia arose in the fourteenth century, particularly through the use of Syro-Arabic Bible versions and other texts translated from Arabic⁷⁷⁴, important conclusions regarding the date of this influence emerge from the application of the Ark symbolism. In both Yared and Ephrem, the focus on divine immanence is conveyed principally through the symbolic link that is forged between Mary and the Ark, with an accompanying spectrum of symbols. In these works, the Ark, as the prime symbol of divine immanence, contrasts with the shift to the person of Mary that characterises the *andāmtā* and the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The shared symbolism of the 'Ephremic' traditions and the *Dəggwā* points to the two writers belonging to similar thought-worlds, with the Syrian traditions enhancing and inspiring the interpretation of the *tābot* as a 'dwelling place of divinity' that appears to have been already embedded in Ethiopic culture when the Bible was translated, possibly as early as the fourth century CE⁷⁷⁵. The close links that have been demonstrated between Yared and Ephrem place the Ethiopic understanding of the Ark within the confines of Syriac Judaeo-Christian symbolic approach to theology and in doing so point to contacts in the fifth and sixth centuries that reinforce the traditions associated with the advent of the 'Nine Saints' to Ethiopia.

⁷⁷⁴ See chapter 2, page 24.

⁷⁷⁵ c.f. the Ge'ez New Testament use of ታቦተ, *tābot* to convey the concept of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. See Anonymous ወንጌል ቅዱስ ዘእግዚእነ ወአምላክነ ወመድኃኒነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፣ ግብረ ሐዋርያት ወመልእክታተሆሙ ለሐዋርያተሁ ቅዱሳን፡፡403-404, and also page 93.

Chapter 4: The Symbolic Interpretation of the Cross.

The discussion of symbolism connected to the Ark in the previous chapter made allusions to the potency of wood, a theme that the *Kəbra Nagašt* employs to link Ark symbolism with the next symbol considered in this study, the Cross. Attending any ceremony in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church would lead to the impression that the Cross is the primary icon of the Ethiopian tradition; moreover, moreover the Ethiopic literature contains many allusions to the Cross, through signs, shapes, or wooden material. The pervasiveness of Cross symbolism in Ethiopia, however, demonstrates an understanding that extends far beyond the crucifixion to a current, potent and material reality. In his seminal study of the theology of Jewish Christianity, Jean Daniélou concluded that to *'the Jewish Christian... the Cross is something more than the wood on which Jesus was crucified. It is a spiritual, mysterious, living reality which accompanies the risen Christ'*⁷⁷⁶, suggesting that it is in the world of the Judaeo-Christians that the roots of this potent/influential Ethiopic symbol might be found. Daniélou's comprehensive study of the typology of the Cross in early Christian literature⁷⁷⁷ has provided the foundation for the comparative analysis of Cross symbolism in this chapter, his work valuably identifying precursors in the earliest Syriac literature.

This chapter outlines Daniélou's framework, and develops a definition of Judaeo-Christianity that is applied to demonstrate the continuity and connection of symbols in Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature with early Syriac literature, in particular the *Odes of Solomon*. Daniélou identified four pertinent categories of symbols relating to: the shape or sign of the Cross; wooden material; the vivifying action of the Cross; and the global nature of redemption through the Cross. This framework will be applied to Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' accounts of events in the lives of the Old Testament Patriarchs: Noah, Abraham and Moses. Particular attention will be given to the multi-semiotic usage of **ܐܕ**, 'ad, and **ܩܝܫܐ**, *qaysā*, meaning 'wood', 'tree' or 'cross', and how it invites salvific significance to be attached to many items made of wood, or actions performed in the shape of the Cross used to enhance symbolism in many cases. Such symbolic interpretations are rare in the *Dəggwā*, but this chapter will illustrate how a diverse set of symbols found in the *andəmtā* are and in the 'Ephremic' tradition are unified in the *Kəbra Nagašt* through the potency of wood.

Daniélou's findings were groundbreaking, but queries have been raised over his term 'Jewish-Christian' as well as his claim that there was an early period overlapping with the

⁷⁷⁶ Daniélou: 270.

⁷⁷⁷ Daniélou: 265-92. Other major topics covered are: the Trinity and Angelology; the Son of God; Jewish Christian apocalyptic, the theology of the Incarnation; the theology of redemption; the Church; baptism and the Eucharist; the organization of the community; personal holiness; and millenarianism Daniélou: v-vi. It does not cover material on the Ark of the Covenant. Noah's Ark is significant because of its wooden material, as discussed later in this chapter.

Apostolic Fathers when theology was expressed primarily in Jewish-Semitic terms⁷⁷⁸. Several scholars including Robert Murray, Marcel Simon, Stanley Riegel and James Carleton Paget, have asserted that it is almost impossible to define such a general distinct entity as the ‘Jewish-Christian’ church, and have challenged the limitation that he placed on the time-period of Jewish influence⁷⁷⁹. Furthermore, they have also criticised the scope of literature defined by Daniélou as Jewish-Christian, which excluded amongst other texts the New Testament⁷⁸⁰. Much discussion has revolved around the application of the term ‘Jewish Christianity’⁷⁸¹ which Daniélou defined as ‘*the expression of Christianity in the thought-forms of Later Judaism*’⁷⁸². He opined that the thought-form of the period of Later Judaism, of the Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots contemporary with Christ was the most important influence on Judaeo-Christian thought⁷⁸³ whereas the thought of rabbinic, legalistic Judaism that arose after the Fall of Jerusalem and which was in continual conflict with Christianity offered lesser influence⁷⁸⁴. Following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, which led to the dispersal of the Jews and a breakdown of the Temple cult, various groups emerged

⁷⁷⁸ Daniélou: 10.

⁷⁷⁹ See R. Murray (1974). *Defining Judaeo-Christianity*. *Heythrop Journal* **15**(3): 303-310; M. Simon (1975). *Réflexions sur le Judéo-Christianisme*. *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults; Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, Vol. 12, part 2, Early Christianity*. J. Neusner; S.K. Riegel (1978). *Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology*. *New Testament Studies* **24**(3): 410-415; R. Murray (1984). *Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions*. *Novum Testamentum* **XXIV**(3): 194-208; J. Carleton Paget (1999). *Jewish Christianity*. *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*. W. Horbury, W.D. Davies and J. Sturdy: 402-427.

⁷⁸⁰ Robert Murray strongly argued that ‘*the supreme monument of Jewish Christianity is the New Testament itself*’. See Murray *Defining Judaeo-Christianity*. : 308. See also Simon *Réflexions sur le Judéo-Christianisme*: 62, 67-68; Murray *Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions*. : 202-204. Daniélou also excludes Philo from his definition Daniélou: 87, although he does refer to Philo in detail. See for instance see Daniélou: 38, 50, 87, 107, 108, 118, 137-139. Nevertheless Murray contends that Philo, despite reflecting the peculiarities of Egyptian Judaism ‘*remains essentially a Jew who looks to Jerusalem as his focus*’ and so should clearly be incorporated into any corpus of Jewish-Christian literature in the terms that Daniélou defines. See Murray *Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions*. : 202, and also Carleton Paget: 738 and Simon *Réflexions sur le Judéo-Christianisme*: 68.

⁷⁸¹ See, for example, Carleton Paget: 740, who offers a definition based solely on Christians who adhere to Jewish customs. For the difficulties in defining the degree of adherence which defines Jewish Christianity see Simon *Réflexions sur le Judéo-Christianisme*: 56-57; J. Marcus (2006). *Jewish Christianity*. *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 1: Origins to Constantine*. M.M. Mitchell and F.M. Young: 89-90.

⁷⁸² Daniélou: 10.

⁷⁸³ The Pharisees, or ‘separated ones’ were characterised by separation from all forms of uncleanness and illegality, and scrupulous observance of the Law. They were in opposition to the Priestly Sadducees, D. Bridger and S. Wolk, Eds. (1996). *The New Jewish Encyclopedia*.: 376; J. Schaper (1999). *The Pharisees* *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*. W. Horbury, W.D. Davies and J. Sturdy: 402-427. The Zealots were vehement defenders of the Law and the national life of the Jews, who opposed attempts to bring Judea under the dominion of Rome; they took the central theme of the Pharisees, the rule of God, and interpreted it to exclude all secular rulers Bridger and Wolk, Eds.: 535; Schaper. The Essenes were a reclusive group related to the Pharisees who closely followed Levitical regulations, and aspired to personal holiness. They lived solely by the work of their hands, and sought to avoid conversation, and sensual pleasures Bridger and Wolk, Eds.: 134; O. Betz (1999). *The Essenes* *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*. W. Horbury, W.D. Davies and J. Sturdy: 444-470.

⁷⁸⁴ Daniélou: 9-10.

within and without Judaism. The early to mid second century CE saw the emergence of works, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Odes of Solomon*, which displayed characteristics that were symptomatic of Judaeo-Christianity⁷⁸⁵. The *Odes of Solomon*, elegant but mysterious poems surviving almost complete in Syriac, probably originate from the Syriac Christian Church at Edessa⁷⁸⁶. Their imprint on later Syriac literature is unclear, although *Ode XII* is alluded to in Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise*⁷⁸⁷. Daniélou wrote, '*they are so markedly Semitic in character that it has proved possible to make out a case for their Jewish origin. But it is impossible not to recognise that they come from a Christian background: everything in them speaks of Jewish Christianity*'⁷⁸⁸.

Aramaic speaking Christianity was emergent in eastern Syria and northern Mesopotamia, particularly in the cities of Edessa, Nisibis and Adiabene that straddled the East Roman frontier⁷⁸⁹. As Marcel Simon pointed out, these Christians – whose language and thought was distinctly Semitic – should be included in any definition of Jewish Christianity⁷⁹⁰. This viewpoint was upheld by Robert Murray who asserted that non-Hellenised elements of Judaism flowed into Syriac-Speaking Christianity, which he acknowledged was the principal focus of Daniélou's study⁷⁹¹. Although Hellenism came to dominate Christianity in the Roman Empire, in northern Mesopotamia Semitic forms endured well into the fourth century, the time of Ephrem's sojourns at Nisibis and Edessa⁷⁹². This was the environment that produced much of the literature of 'Jewish Christianity' defined by Daniélou as '*the expression of Christianity in the thought-forms of Later Judaism*'⁷⁹³. He acknowledged that Syriac literature supplied some of its most vigorous expressions⁷⁹⁴, most notably the Peshitta

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.: 10; Marcus: 96.

⁷⁸⁶ Daniélou: 10; Brock *The Earliest Syriac Literature: 166-167*; S.P. Brock (2008). *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition: 34*. Suggested dates have ranged from the first century CE, through comparison with the Qumran texts to a third century date based on conclusions of polemical thrust against Marcion and Manichaeism. Brock *The Earliest Syriac Literature: 166*; Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition): 25*. Aune examined the nature of the prophetic elements in the *Odes*, and concluded that they dated from the early second century CE, see D.E. Aune (1982). *The Odes of Solomon and Early Christian Prophecy. New Testament Studies* 28(4): 435-460.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ode XII 'could as well be Jewish as Christian'* confirming the Jewish-Christian nature of the *Odes*. Ephrem states '*nothing there in Paradise is useless*' in *Hymns on Paradise VII:21*, which is reminiscent of *Odes of Solomon XII:23 'For there is much space in Your Paradise, and there is nothing in it that is useless'* Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition): 255*; Brock, 1990 #285: 126, 193.

⁷⁸⁸ Daniélou: 30.

⁷⁸⁹ Gillman and Klimkeit: 28-36, 109-152; S.P. Brock (2006b). Ephrem and the Syriac Tradition. *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. F. Young, A. Ayres and A. Louth: 362

⁷⁹⁰ Simon: 76.

⁷⁹¹ Murray sought to distinguish between the Jews of Judaea, and other groups such as the Samaritans who were heirs of '*Israelite Yahwism*' but a distinct group, focussed neither on Jerusalem nor the Temple. This broader group he termed '*dissenting Hebrews*' and he argued that it was principally these groups who possibly exercised the greatest influence on Syriac-speaking Christianity. See Murray *Jews, Hebrews and Christians: Some Needed Distinctions*. : 198-200, 206.

⁷⁹² Brock Ephrem and the Syriac Tradition: 361.

⁷⁹³ Daniélou: 10.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid.: 10. The Judaeo-Christian expression was not confined to the Syriac speaking world. George Strecker analysed the *Kerygmata Petrou*, an early third century CE text emanating from Greek

Old Testament, with clear Targumic and rabbinic elements that evinced the imprint of Jewish thought on the Syriac Christian tradition. The Peshitta Old Testament was clearly translated directly from Hebrew, with the earliest books being translated in the second century CE, making them the earliest of Syriac literature. The most likely scenario is that the first books were translated by Edessene Jews, evinced by their inclusion of rabbinic exegetical style, and of phraseology characteristic of the Targum⁷⁹⁵. If later translation were done by Christians, then they must have belonged to ‘a Christian community that still maintained close ties with its Jewish roots’⁷⁹⁶. Similarly, the biblical exegesis of the fourth century CE Syriac writers Ephrem and Aphrahat employed approaches which in places correlate with those of the Targumim and Midrash⁷⁹⁷. The *Diatessaron*, written in the second century by Tatian, a native of Adiabene, also makes an apparent reference to the *Gospel of the Hebrews* suggesting a Judaeo-Christian influence on this important Gospel harmony⁷⁹⁸.

Daniélou proposed that *testimonia* were one of the defining characteristics of Judaeo-Christian thought⁷⁹⁹. Although not unique to the Judaeo-Christian literature ‘*Jewish Christian theology, however, detaches the testimonia from their historical reference, using their images, but transforming them into mythic categories through which it expresses its conceptions*’⁸⁰⁰. This approach was particularly vigorous when applied to the Cross⁸⁰¹, and

speaking Syria. See G. Strecker (1971). On the Problem of Jewish Christianity (English Translation of Second German Edition). *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. G. Strecker, W. Bauer and R.A. Kraft (Translator). He concluded that it had a distinct Jewish-Christian expression of the significance of the waters of baptism, and that rather than this representing a sectarian group ‘it is much more probable that in the world from which the *Kerygmata* derives, Jewish Christianity was the sole representative of Christianity and the problem of its relationship to the “great church” had not yet arisen’ Strecker: 271.

⁷⁹⁵ Brock *A Palestinian Targum Feature in Syriac*.

⁷⁹⁶ Brock *The Earliest Syriac Literature*: 163.

⁷⁹⁷ Brock *Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources*.

⁷⁹⁸ For more information on *Tatian’s Diatessaron*, which may be of Greek or Syriac origin and was used widely in the Syriac speaking Church, see W.L. Petersen (1995). Chapter 5: The *Diatessaron* of Tatian. *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. B.D. Ehrman and M.W. Holmes. The presence of light at Jesus baptism is mentioned in the *Diatessaron*, see Petersen: 84. The reference to light at Jesus’ baptism is in Epiphanius of Salamis’ *Panarion 30:18*, where he attributes it to the ‘*Hebrew Gospel*’, which is probably the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. See Petersen: 84. Epiphanius of Salamis (c.315-403CE) lived his earlier life in Palestine, before he was made bishop of Salamis in Cyprus in 365CE. Amongst his works is the *Panarion* or *Adversus Haereses* is a refutation of eighty heresies. See A. Louth (2004). Palestine: Cyril of Jerusalem and Epiphanius. *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. F. Young, L. Ayres and A. Louth: 286-288. For more details on the *Gospel of the Hebrews* see A.F.J. Klijn (1992). *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, Vol. 17: 27-46*. Daniélou comments on the marked Jewish-Christian nature of this Gospel, in particular the Holy Spirit is referred to as ‘*Mother*’, see Daniélou: 23.

⁷⁹⁹ *Testimonia* is ‘the term used to denote those OT passages held by the Early Church to be particularly prophetic of Christ, and which, in the view of some scholars, were at one time collated in handbooks for the benefit of the preaching, teaching and apologetic ministries, though no such books are extant’ Daniélou: xiii.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: 271.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*: 271.

his categorisation of Cross symbolism proves useful for this study. It will also be demonstrated that his description of the Judaeo-Christian application of testimonia seems particularly reminiscent of the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ traditions. This distinct approach will be explored in the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature⁸⁰².

Applying the symbolism derived from *testimonia*, Daniélou’s study on the Cross isolated four categories:

- That related to the shape or sign of the Cross;
- That relating to the material of wood;
- That expressing the vivifying action of the Cross;
- That portraying the global nature of redemption through the Cross.

The first category, i.e. symbolism related to the shape or sign of the Cross⁸⁰³, was widespread in early Christian literature⁸⁰⁴, where the interpretation was applied to specific Old Testament events, the most important being in Exodus 17. The posture of Moses prayer when the Israelites fought the Amalekites being taken to symbolise the Cross, an interpretation exemplified by the *Epistle of Barnabas*⁸⁰⁵: ‘*The Spirit speaketh to the heart of Moses, inspiring him to perform a type of the Cross and of him that was to suffer upon it*’⁸⁰⁶. The Sibylline Oracles⁸⁰⁷, described the virtues of the Cross, by way of reference to Old Testament paradigmatic figures:

Immortal King, who suffered for our sake;

⁸⁰² The antiquity of this approach is demonstrated by symbolic interpretation found in John 3:14, ‘*and just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up*’. It is quite possible that the symbolism of the brazen serpent, and other symbolic interpretations described in this chapter, such as Moses’ praying ensuring the Jews’ victory, were part of the Apostolic *testimonia*, and it may only be chance that meant that one appeared in the Gospel and another did not. See T.W. Manson (1945). *The Argument from Prophecy. The Journal of Theological Studies* XLVI: 129-136: 132; Daniélou: 271. This would explain why the imagery is common, although the Judaeo-Christian approach remains distinctive as it was developed from these early times.

⁸⁰³ Daniélou: 271-76.

⁸⁰⁴ The idea appears to be rooted in the interpretation of Isaiah 65:2 ‘*I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people*’ and is used by writers such as Barnabas, Irenaeus, Cyprian and Justin Ibid.: 272.

⁸⁰⁵ Daniélou sees the Epistle of Barnabas as direct evidence of the Jewish Christian church. Despite its anti-Jewish tone, the *midrashim* of the minor prophets discovered at Qumran prove that, ‘*there existed among the Essenes a literary genre which is precisely that of which the Epistle of Barnabas gives us the first Christian example*’. The principle difference between these *midrashim* and *Barnabas* is that, ‘*the Epistle applies the method not to one continuous text, but to a collection of testimonia*’ Ibid.: 33-4.

⁸⁰⁶ Barnabas 12:2 in Ibid.: 272

⁸⁰⁷ These are Jewish Christian texts, with the early parts being Jewish, later parts being Christian remodelling of Jewish works, and the later ones being Jewish Christian. These works are sourced in the Jewish community of Alexandria and around 70 CE, A. Grillmeier (1975). *Christ in Christian Tradition, Volume 1: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*: 39; Daniélou: 13, 17, 30. An English translation of the whole text has been made by Milton Terry M.S. Terry (1899). *The Sibylline Oracles*, and more recently Books I & II in J.K. Lightfoot (2007). *The Sibylline Oracles: with Introduction, Translation and Commentary on the First and Second Books*, and Book III in R. Buitenwerf (2003). *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting*.

*Him Moses typified when he stretched out
Holy arms, conquering Amalek by faith,
That the people might know him to be elect
And honorable before his Father God,
The rod of David and the very stone
Which he indeed did promise, and in which
He that believes shall have eternal life.⁸⁰⁸*

Likewise in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho:XC* it is the very image of the Cross portrayed in Moses' pose which adds potency to his prayers⁸⁰⁹. For Daniélou, however, '*the Jewish Christian origin of this particular theme is confirmed by the Odes of Solomon*⁸¹⁰ where the imagery of the shape of the Cross made in prayer occurs on several occasions, including *Ode XXVII:1-3*:

*I extended my hands
And hallowed my Lord,*

*For the expansion of my hands
Is his sign*

*And my extension
Is the upright cross.
Hallelujah⁸¹¹*

The second category comprises symbols relating to the wood from which the Cross was made⁸¹². The interpretation is applied to a wide range of wooden items, and already had its origins in biblical texts: Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29; and 1Peter 2:24 all make reference to a tree in relation to the cross, as does Galatians 3:13: '*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"*'. In these cases the allusion is to Deuteronomy 21:23 '*...for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse*' rather than there being a specific reference to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. In reality, the symbolism of the second category was often inseparable from the third category, which connects wood with the waters of baptism. The *Epistle of Barnabas:11:6,8* also makes this allusion to the cross and baptism:

...And he who does these things will be like the tree planted by springs of waters,

⁸⁰⁸ Terry:59; see also Daniélou: 272.

⁸⁰⁹ '*For it was not because Moses so prayed that the people were stronger, but because, while one who bore the name of Jesus (Joshua) was in the forefront of the battle, he himself made the sign of the cross*', Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 244.

⁸¹⁰ Daniélou: 275.

⁸¹¹ J.H. Charlesworth (1977). *The Odes of Solomon: The Syriac Texts: 106*. It appears again in *Ode XLII:1-2*, Charlesworth: 145. There is also an allusion to this symbol in *Ode XXXV:7* Charlesworth: 125.

⁸¹² Daniélou: 277-278

...Perceive how he referred to the water and the cross together. For this is what he is saying: 'Blessed' are those who, having placed their hope in the cross, descend into the water⁸¹³

The same association is expressed in the *Odes of Solomon* XXXIX:10,

*Because the sign on them [raging rivers] is the Lord
And the sign is the Way for those who cross in the name of the Lord.*

...
*And His footsteps stand firm upon the waters, and were not destroyed;
But they are like a beam of wood⁸¹⁴ that is constructed on truth.⁸¹⁵*

The ideas articulated in the *Odes* and in the *Epistle of Barnabas* linking the tree and the Cross with water emphasise a connection with baptism that became embedded in 'Ephremic' and Ethiopic literature. Importantly, as Daniélou pointed out, these were already represented in earlier Jewish traditions. Ezekiel 47:12 connected trees and water with salvation, and 1Enoch 25:5 interpreted the Tree of Life as nourishment for the elect⁸¹⁶. The *Dialogue with Trypho* LXXXVI also articulated the widespread connection between the Cross and the Tree of Life:

'Hear, then, how this Man was symbolized both by the tree of life, which was said to have been planted in paradise, and by those events which should happen to all the just. Moses was sent with a rod to effect the redemption of the people; and with this in his hands at the head of the people, he divided the sea...even as our Christ, by being crucified on the tree, and by purifying [us] with water, has redeemed us, though plunged in the direst offences which we have committed, and has made [us] a house of prayer and adoration.'⁸¹⁷

Justin's interpretation of Noah's Ark also sees its wooden construction as signifying the Cross. For instance *Dialogue with Trypho* CXXXVIII, 'as was previously demonstrated by all the symbols of the deluge; I mean, that by water, faith, and wood, those who are afore-prepared, and who repent of the sins which they have committed, shall escape from the impending judgment of God'⁸¹⁸. Although the significance of these symbols would evolve, notably the Tree of Life came to represent Christ, as does the stem or root of Jesse; the staff of comfort became a type of the Holy Spirit⁸¹⁹, the early symbolism continued to be used by Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature.

⁸¹³ Sparks: 288.

⁸¹⁴ 'Beam of wood' here is a translation of **قوس**, *qaysā*. This idea of the Cross as a bridge is rare, but is traceable in Ephrem's Homily on our Lord IV, 'Since humanity fell into Sheol because of a tree, it passed over to the place of life upon a tree....., Praise to you who suspended your cross over death so that souls could pass over on it from the place of the dead to the place of life.' Mathews: 280.

⁸¹⁵ Charlesworth: 136.

⁸¹⁶ This idea is developed in chapter 5 page 161.

⁸¹⁷ Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 242.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 268.

⁸¹⁹ Daniélou: 277. Irenaeus of Lyons is another writer whom Daniélou cites as a witness to Judaeo-Christian ideas Daniélou: 11. Although not mentioned in his study, there are two references in his works to the connection between Isaac and Christ, and the wood he carried representing the Cross,

The third category comprising symbolism expressing the vivifying action of the Cross is closely linked to the second and is often expressed through the association of wooden material with water⁸²⁰. Again paradigms were drawn from the Old Testament, in particular Noah's Ark saving him and his family from the waters of the deluge (Genesis 7-8); the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14); and the purification of the bitter water at Marah (Exodus 15:22-27). Drawing on Psalm 1:3, *'They are like trees planted by streams of water'* The *Epistle of Barnabas* 11:1 concluded that the Psalmist was referring to both the Cross and the waters of baptism. In Daniélou's opinion this extrapolation of the significance of wood, was an attempt to identify the Cross, symbolised by wood, as the active power in baptism⁸²¹. The Jewish-Christian *Sibylline Oracles* VIII:320-26 also exemplified this potency when speaking of the sign of the Cross:

*But for all mortals then
Shall there a sign be, a distinguished seal,
The Wood among believers, and the horn
Fondly desired, the life of pious men,
But it shall be stumbling block of the world,
Giving illumination to the elect
By water in twelve springs;*⁸²²

The vivifying action of the Cross was also expressed using a range of symbols. Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Ephesians* 9:1 employed an architectural image⁸²³, when he likened the cross to a crane raising people to great heights, *'...you are stones of the Father's temple, made ready for the edifice of God the Father, raised to the heights by the crane – the cross – of Jesus Christ, and using the Holy Spirit as a rope'*⁸²⁴.

The fourth category identified by Daniélou comprises examples portraying the global redemption that the Cross offered⁸²⁵. The earliest witness to this is Irenaeus of Lyons (c.115-c.202CE). *Against Heresies* V. 17:4, *'for as we lost him by means of a tree, by means of a tree again has been manifest to all...reuniting the two peoples in one only God by the stretching forth of his hands'*⁸²⁶ This idea was articulated by Athanasius in *On the Incarnation*, *'for it is only on the cross that a man dies with arms outstretched? Here, again,*

'Righteously also do we, possessing the same faith as Abraham, and taking up the cross as Isaac did the wood, follow Him' Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV: 5 4Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 467; *'For it is He who sailed [in the ark] along with Noah, and who guided Abraham; who was bound along with Isaac, and was a Wanderer with Jacob'* Irenaeus, *Fragments from Lost Writings* LIII Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 577. These too may be Judaeo-Christian remnants, and they occur in the Ethiopic literature.

⁸²⁰ Daniélou: 277-278

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*: 277.

⁸²² Terry:59; see also Daniélou: 278.

⁸²³ Daniélou: 40 cites the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch as a witness to early Syrian Christianity, borrowing its modes of expression from Jewish gnosis, again this is despite some strong statements in the epistles on Judaizing tendencies.

⁸²⁴ Sparks: 80.

⁸²⁵ Daniélou: 279-92.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*: 279.

*we see the fitness of His death and of those outstretched arms: it was that He might draw His ancient people with the one and the Gentiles with the other, and join both together in Himself*⁸²⁷.

The Symbols of the Cross in the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ Literature

In keeping with Judaeo-Christian symbolism, ‘Ephremic’ and Ethiopic literature interpret the Cross in the four distinct ways outlined above. The Syriac and Ge’ez literature used in this study utilises a single word **ḏḏ**, ‘əḏ⁸²⁸, or **سُوم**, *qaysā* to mean ‘wood’, ‘tree’ or ‘cross’⁸²⁹. This multi-semiotic application allows wooden items in the Old Testament to be interpreted with symbolic significance through connection with the Cross, thus opening up a rich range of interpretations. The use of the Greek **ξύλον** in the literature of the early centuries CE also has a similar spectrum of meanings, but the meaning is distinct⁸³⁰. These interpretations do often merge and overlap, so an event interpreted in one instance as showing the shape of the Cross might, in another, be interpreted in relation to the potency of wood. The sweetening of the bitter waters of Marah in Exodus 15:22-27 is interpreted by the *andəmta* as a sign of the potency of wood. The *Kəbra Nagašt* however, locates the potency in sign of the Cross made by Moses⁸³¹. This variation does not, however, negate the value of any particular interpretation as a witness to the Judaeo-Christian imprint in Ethiopic literature, since as Daniélou comments, ‘*the important point here is not the types themselves...but the desire to make them express the vivifying action of the Cross; for it is this that seems to be Jewish Christian*’⁸³². In other words, it is the underlying idea that is linked to Judaeo-Christian roots.

Ethiopic literature is rich in such interpretations, although these occur primarily in the *andəmta* and in the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The *dəggwā*, only makes occasional references, however one does deserve special mention. The *Meskerem 17 Dəggwā*, incorporates one such interpretation, which is not attached to any particular biblical event, but describes the wood of the Cross as a source of blessing on churches:

*[Churches] that are built in his name
And that are consecrated by his blood
And who are blessed with the seal of the wood(ḏḏ ‘əḏ) of the Cross
The dwelling place of the glory of God
The Church made holy,
Fair and beautiful,
Pure and beautiful Tabernacle which is not made by the hand of man....*

⁸²⁷ Athanasius (1974). *On the Incarnation (De Incarnatione Verbi Dei)*:27 25.

⁸²⁸ Leslau Leslau: 57 gives the meaning of the Ge’ez word as ‘tree, shrub, bush, wood, stick, staff’, but a brief reading of the *Dəggwā* for *Meskerem 17* will confirm that the Ge’ez word shares the same spectrum of meaning as the Syriac.

⁸²⁹ Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 504; Leslau: 57.

⁸³⁰ Danker, Ed.: entry 5175.

⁸³¹ See page 139 for more detail on these examples.

⁸³² Daniélou: 277.

*By the Wood of his Cross the Church is sanctified*⁸³³

The sign of the Cross made on the Church is linked to it being ‘*the dwelling place of the glory of God*’ and the ‘*Perfect Tabernacle*’, ideas that are rooted in the association of the Ark with divine immanence and indwelling, as discussed in chapter 3⁸³⁴. The Church now becomes the dwelling place of God through the potency wood that is naturally linked to the divine presence and the person of Mary. This idea extends the symbolism of the vivifying action of the Cross, and the unfolding of this interpretation exemplifies Daniélou’s idea that Judaeo-Christian theology transforms examples ‘*into mythic categories through which it expresses its conceptions*’⁸³⁵.

The Cross and the Patriarchs in the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ Literature

The Old Testament Patriarchs: Noah, Abraham and Moses each participate in events that are interpreted as symbolising the deliverance of God and ultimately the Cross. In Genesis 6-9 the Ark delivered Noah and his family from the flood because of his righteousness. In Genesis 9:1-18 God makes a covenant with Noah not to destroy the world again. In Genesis 15 God makes a covenant with Abraham that his descendents will be numerous, and then in Genesis 18 appears to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre to promise a son. Genesis 22 recounts the command to Abraham that he is to sacrifice his son Isaac, although eventually a ram is substituted. Exodus is largely taken up with accounts of God leading His people through Moses, the most graphic and symbolic being the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14, God ultimately makes a covenant with Moses, through the giving of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 31. These three Patriarchs also feature prominently in Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature, their actions being interpreted as symbolic of the Cross. The potency of wood is further emphasised through its connection with covenants made by God with each of these Patriarchs, a theme that runs strongly through the *Kəbra Nagāst*⁸³⁶. Following the precedent in Judaeo-Christian literature, many of these potent symbols of the Cross are also linked with water, pointing to the vivifying action of the Cross in relation to baptism⁸³⁷.

Noah’s Ark

The Genesis 8:19 *andəmta* offers a wide set of interpretations, including connections between the Ark and: Mary and Christ; the Cross; baptism; and the Church.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of Our Lady, Noah of the Lord, those to the right and left those who believe in the promise of Our Lady, a symbol of the People (the Jews) and the Gentiles.

⁸³³ Yared መጽሐፈ ድንበቅዱስ ያሬድ: 29 c 12-17, 30 a 4.

⁸³⁴ See chapter 3 page 91.

⁸³⁵ Daniélou : 271.

⁸³⁶ See page 146 for a detailed discussion of this.

⁸³⁷ Daniélou: 277.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the Cross, Noah of the Lord, those to his right and left a symbol of the thief crucified on the right and the thief crucified on the left.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of baptism, Noah together with his children of the baptised, her [the Ark] being in three divisions a symbol of the fact that baptism is in the three names of the Trinity.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the Church, and her being in three divisions is a symbol of the three divisions of the church. Noah together with his children is a symbol of the believers.

ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the resurrection, Noah together with his children of the dead, her being in three divisions is a symbol of our resurrection. The First Born, Christ rose on the third day, and we will rise on the sound of the third trumpet. Because 'he beat us, but he will heal us and he wounded us, but he will cure us and he will restore life to us on the second day, and on the third day we shall arise and we will live before him'⁸³⁸ as it says (Hosea 6:2).⁸³⁹

Each of these *andämta* relates to the Judaeo-Christian categories outlined at the opening of this chapter accompanied by some wider allusions. The first *andämta* connects the Ark with Mary, and Noah with Christ, in a symbolic interpretation of divine immanence and indwelling⁸⁴⁰. The redemption through 'the promise of Our Lady' is for both Jews and Gentiles, a typical Judaeo-Christian emphasis on global redemption. The second *andämta* explicitly connects the Ark with the Cross, although it is not explicitly stated that this connection is through wood. In the third *andämta* the Ark symbolises baptism, an example of the Judaeo-Christian pattern of linking wood with the Cross and expressing it as the vivifying action in baptism. The fourth *andämta* connects the Ark with the Church and with the presence of the Trinity in the Church, thus extrapolating the idea of divine immanence and indwelling. The fifth *andämta* is an Ethiopic development of the Judaeo-Christian idea of the vivifying action of the Cross, linking the Ark with the resurrection of the dead and interpreting the resurrection of Christ as a pledge for the faithful.

Chapter 100 of the *Kəbra Nagäst*, by contrast, only makes a brief reference to the connection between Noah's Ark and the Cross:

And He said, 'Make that by which you will be saved, that is the Ark of the Church.' And when he said, 'Make it four sided!' He showed that the sign of the Cross was four fold.⁸⁴¹

The four-sided structure signifies the Cross, an interpretation which merges the Judaeo-Christian symbols of wooden material and the shape of the Cross.

⁸³⁸ This is a rather free rendition of this verse, which is rendered in the LXE, 'After two days he will heal us: in the third day we shall arise, and live before him, and shall know him'. This free rendition is the same as the text given in the *andämta* on Hosea.

⁸³⁹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፍጥረት 87-88.

⁸⁴⁰ See chapter 3 page 91, recalling that in the Ethiopic literature the Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant often merge in meaning, as the same word ታቦት, *tābot* is used for both.

⁸⁴¹ Bezold: 146a 5-9.

The association between Noah, his Ark and the Cross also occur in Ephrem who writes in *Hymns on Virginity VIII:14* 'in Noah is portrayed your Church'⁸⁴². The safety of the Ark in *Hymns on the Nativity I:45* symbolises 'the holy church in which souls take refuge'⁸⁴³. Emphasising the tranquillity inside the Ark⁸⁴⁴, this echoes the allusion to the Ark representing the Church in the *andāmta* quoted above. For Ephrem, however, it is of the 'utmost significance' that the Ark is made of wood⁸⁴⁵. It is the material of construction linking the Ark to the salvific work of the Ark and the Cross. The Ark is termed 'a [substitute] earth of wood' or 'the wooden habitation' in the first of the Nisibene Hymns⁸⁴⁶, this allusion arising out of the multiple meanings of *قَيسَا*, *qaysā*⁸⁴⁷.

In *Hymns on Faith XLIX:3*, 1-3; and 4, 1-2 to avoid repetition and for poetic balance, Ephrem uses *شَلْبَا*, *šlibā*, 'cross'⁸⁴⁸ to express the 'Cross of its Steersman' in conjunction with *قَيسَا*, *qaysā*, for the 'Wood of its Sailor'. Both terms clearly symbolise the Cross of Christ in Noah's Ark:

*Over the Flood the ship of the Lord of all flew:
It departed from the east, it rested in the west,
It flew off to the south, and measured out the north;
....
[The Ark] marked out by its course the sign of its Preserver
-the Cross of its Steersman, and the Wood of its Sailor
Who has come to fashion for us a Church in the waters [of baptism]:
With the threefold name He rescues those who reside in her.*⁸⁴⁹

As well as exploiting the multi-semiotic meanings of *قَيسَا*, *qaysā*, the Ark's course, as it floated on the sea, is taken to symbolise the Cross, thus resonating with the *Kābra Nagašt* wherein the square shape of the Ark represents the Cross. The waters of the deluge also signify baptism, and in doing so correlate with the *andāmta*. There is also a reference to the vivifying action of the Cross in baptism. In these short lines, therefore, Ephrem has combined all four of Daniélou's Judaeo-Christian categories of Cross symbolism. In his prose commentary on Genesis, however, Ephrem makes no mention of the link between the Cross and Noah's Ark⁸⁵⁰.

⁸⁴² McVey: 299.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.: 69 45.

⁸⁴⁴ Kronholm: 185.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.: 184.

⁸⁴⁶ Brock *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*: 235, 239.

⁸⁴⁷ See page 126.

⁸⁴⁸ Payne Smith and Margoliouth: 479.

⁸⁴⁹ Brock *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*: 33-5.

⁸⁵⁰ Whilst any further reference would be of interest, in many ways the commentaries of Ephrem are his least important works, his hymns and metrical homilies being the most important works. Ephrem himself states in the introduction to his commentary on Genesis, 'I had not wanted to write a commentary on the first book of Creation, lest we should now repeat what we had set down in the metrical homilies and hymns. Nevertheless, compelled by the love of friends, we have written briefly of those things which we wrote at length in the metrical homilies and in the hymns' Mathews: 67.

Abraham

Abraham is a towering figure in the Old Testament with various episodes in his life providing rich opportunities for symbolic interpretations in both Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature.

Abraham Meets God at the Oaks of Mamre

This event is referred to in the *andāmta* on Genesis 18:1.

*(Ge’ez) And God revealed himself to Abraham near the Trees(ዕዕ’əd) of Mamre while he was sitting at the door of his tent, it was midday.
(Amharic) Mamre means olive [or] acacia. When Abraham was at the door of his tent at midday, God was seen next to the olive and acacia conversing.
ANDM when sitting on a wooden seat at the gate of his tent he was seen conversing.⁸⁵¹*

This *andāmta* implicitly draws attention to wooden material in a variety of symbols: the tree next to which God appears, and the wooden seat on which Abraham sat. The tree is identified as an olive or acacia tree, the reason for not calling it an oak is not clear, however, the word used for ‘tree’ is ዕዕ, ‘əd with its triple meaning pointing to the Cross.

Kəbra Nagašt Chapter 104 makes the same connection between this event and the Cross by reference to wood, as well as associating it with several other events which involved wood. A reference to the ‘*Trees of Manbar*’, could be a misprint for *Mamre* but it could relate to the *andāmta*’s reference to Abraham’s seat or throne made of wood, መንበር, *manbar* being the Ge’ez for seat or throne⁸⁵². The *Kəbra Nagašt* enhances the link with the Ark through the reference to wood that will not rot.

‘And concerning the Ark of the Covenant He saved Noah with the Ark; and He spoke with Abraham in the Trees (ዕዕ’əd) of Manbar, which is wood which will not rot; and He saved Isaac a by means of the sheep caught⁸⁵³ in a thicket of wood; and He made Jacob wealthy with three rods of wood⁸⁵⁴ which he lay in watering troughs; and through the top of Jacob’s staff Joseph was blessed⁸⁵⁵; and He said to Moses “Make the Ark from wood which will not rot, in the likeness of Zion, the Ark of the Covenant’; and when David took her (the Ark) from the country of Samaria he placed the Ark of the Law in a new case⁸⁵⁶ and rejoiced before it; because He had declared the Ark as salvation from long ago, and many miracles and wonders were done by it by its form and likeness. Listen to me and I will reveal precisely to you how God gave salvation through

⁸⁵¹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘዕለት፡ ዘፍጥረት 114.

⁸⁵² Leslau: 384.

⁸⁵³ The verb ተክህዘ, *təḥəza* Bezold : 151a 13 might also be taken here to mean ‘taken as a pledge’, which would mean that this was also the pledge of salvation through the Lamb of God.

⁸⁵⁴ Genesis 30:37 ‘Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods.’

⁸⁵⁵ Hebrews 11:21

⁸⁵⁶ The word in the Ge’ez text is *tābot*. The passage refers to 2Samuel 6:3 where on its return from the Philistines the Ark is placed in a new cart. It appears that this use of the word *tābot* is in the more general sense of it being a case or container.

*the wood of the His Cross, and through the Ark of His Law, from the beginning to the end. And through wood salvation came to Adam because Adam's first transgression was by means of wood, and from long ago He instituted salvation for him through wood because He alone is Lord, Creator, Giver of life and death, and everything is done through his Word.*⁸⁵⁷

This interpretation of Genesis 18 does not appear to feature in the 'Ephremic' tradition, but is mentioned by Justin Martyr⁸⁵⁸.

Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22 relates how God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his Son, an event to which the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' traditions attach great symbolic significance. Although the *Dəggwā* does not make any reference to this event, the *andəmta* on Genesis 22:5 first identifies the place of this event as κρᾶνίου the Greek for Golgotha, the place of the skull, the location of the Crucifixion:

(Ge'ez) My son and I will go as far as the mountain, we will worship and return to you here

(Amharic) My child and I will go up the mountain, we will worship and return, he said to them.

*EXPLANATION: the mountain was called qrānyo.*⁸⁵⁹

A rare copy of a Ge'ez *andəmta* found at St Gabriel's Monastery in Zway, Ethiopia, also makes the same connection, although this time preferring to use the Hebrew name for the place of crucifixion:

*And the mount which he sought is Mount Zion, which is the place Golgotha, the tomb of Our Lord, and the two young men who accompanied Abraham are a symbol of the two thieves who were crucified with Our Lord.*⁸⁶⁰

This detail is not found in the 'Ephremic' sources⁸⁶¹, but another early Syriac writer, Aphrahat⁸⁶², in *Demonstration XXI on Persecution:5* identifies the location of Abraham's trial as the threshing floor of Araunah⁸⁶³ and the site of the Temple⁸⁶⁴. The same specific connection is made by Jacob of Serugh in *Homily LXXX*, on *The Mysteries, Types and Depictions of Christ*.

Golgotha, as they say, was the mountain of Isaac,

⁸⁵⁷ Bezold: 151a 10 - b 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 196-7.

⁸⁵⁸ Justin Martyr in the *Dialogue with Trypho* LXXXVI mentions God's appearance to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre, in Genesis 18, as signifying the Cross Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 242.

⁸⁵⁹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፍጥረት 140.

⁸⁶⁰ Appendix E, page 240, a 24-28.

⁸⁶¹ Brock Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition: 7.

⁸⁶² For details about Aphrahat 'the Persian Sage' and his works that are characterised as amongst the least Hellenised of Syriac prose literature, see Brock *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*: 21-22; Brock Ephrem and the Syriac Tradition: 362-363.

⁸⁶³ See 2Samuel 24 where David buys this threshing floor and sets up an altar for sacrifice.

⁸⁶⁴ K. Valavanolickal (2005b). *Aphrahat Demonstrations II*: 20.

*In that place of crucifixion, his father bound him.
The tree which carried the symbol, sprung in the same place where Zion
planted the Wood to crucify the Son.
Mysteriously, He indicated to him to sacrifice Isaac on Golgotha; in order for
the symbol to take place on the mountain of the crucifixion.⁸⁶⁵*

Emphasising the actual connection between Golgotha and Moriah serves to emphasise the symbolic connection between Isaac's ordeal and the crucifixion itself.

After elucidating the significance of the location of Abraham's trial, the *andāmta* turns to the events on Mount Moriah, in a lengthy commentary on Genesis 22:13⁸⁶⁶. It contains two separate sets of symbolic interpretations, firstly relating to the journey to Moriah, and secondly in relation to the sacrifice.

The first set of interpretations surround the journey to Moriah in which Abraham symbolises God the Father, and Isaac God the Son, with the fire being the Holy Spirit. The small knife represents the power of God for separating the soul and the flesh. Collectively the symbols point to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, and the motif is used to show that God would be willing to sacrifice His own son. The symbolism is further elaborated to picture the crucifixion scene, with the two young men accompanying Abraham and Isaac representing the thieves crucified with Christ, and the donkey recalling Palm Sunday.

This is a symbol. Abraham is a symbol of the God the Father, Isaac of God the Son. Abraham in his mind sacrificed his son; God the Father sacrificed his son in the flesh. So that Abraham would be a symbol, he made Abraham first. So that they don't say that God the Father would not sacrifice his son. That, even inasmuch as they know God's habit of goodness, when they say to them that Abraham even sacrificed his only child, they might lack a reply. The two young men are a symbol of the thief on the right and the thief on the left; the donkey is a symbol of the donkey of Palm Sunday, the wood is a symbol of the Cross, the fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the small knife is a symbol of the power of God, the small knife that separates bone and flesh; and the Lord said, 'Father I commit my soul into your hands' and by his own power he separated his soul from his flesh; they travelled three days in order to sacrifice him, and the Lord's judgement on death was completed on the third day, it is a symbol of the Cross. This was the thing that saved Isaac from death rather than the thing by which he died. The mind of Abraham is a symbol of the tomb: Isaac was sacrificed in the mind of Abraham and on the third day he was saved, the Lord dwelt three days and three nights in the belly of the tomb, it is a symbol of his resurrection.⁸⁶⁷

The *andāmta* attaches much significance to many details, and in the narrative account it enhances the connection with Christ, by making Isaac a willing sacrifice with the following addition to the biblical text:

⁸⁶⁵ C.A. Karim (2004). *Symbols of the Cross in the Writings of the Early Syriac Fathers*: 55.

⁸⁶⁶ Translated in full in Appendix F, page 242.

⁸⁶⁷ Appendix F, page 242, lines 36-52.

It seems to me that you are to sacrifice me! So that your hands and feet are not cut off by my thrashing around tie my hands and feet for me!’ he said, and he tied him. ‘So that you are not abandoned by your creator when our eyes meet and you are compassionate on me and leave me, bow your head and lie me down!’⁸⁶⁸

Brock comments that *‘for Jewish tradition it was of particular importance that Isaac should realize what was about to take place and that he should thus be a willing sacrifice’⁸⁶⁹*, but most of the Syriac writers attach no particular importance to Isaac’s willingness⁸⁷⁰. Jacob of Serugh, however, in his homily CIX *On Abraham and his Types* attributes similar words to Isaac, making him a willing offering:

*Perform your will: If the knife is sharpened against me I will not draw back;
If the fire has been kindled for me, I will hold my ground,
If the lamb is to go up bound, here are my hands,
But if you are going to slaughter me unbound, I have no objection.⁸⁷¹*

These details enhance the core symbolism associating the wood that Isaac carried for the sacrificial fire with the wood of the Cross. The wood carried by Isaac was not merely a pointer to the Cross, but its vivifying action is emphasised as it is *‘the thing that saved Isaac from death’*. This resonates with Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns XIV:8*, which juxtaposes the death produced by the Tree of Knowledge with the Cross which produces life:

To the first Tree that which killed,—to it grace brought forth a son.—O Cross offspring of the Tree,—that didst fight against thy sire!—The Tree was the fount of death;—the Cross was the fount of life.⁸⁷²

The Zway Ge’ez *andāmta* offers the following interpretation of the journey to Moriah, showing some common ground with the Amharic *andāmta*. The wood of the sacrifice symbolises the Cross; the two young men symbolise the thieves crucified with Christ:

*But also He causes us to understand that he would sacrifice his son on wood He who truly is immortal in his divinity.
And on account of this the Holy Gospel said, ‘because your father Abraham desired that he might see my day, and he saw it and was glad.’ And this Abraham did not disclose the sacrificing of his son to anyone, and not to Sarah his wife, because of his righteous affection for God and for Sarah, he concealed because he knew her natural disposition, the delicacy of woman. And ʿĪlfadās the Hermit said, ‘Sarah knew and she shared together with Abraham this gift.’
And the making ready of the wood which was for the fire of the sacrifice is a symbol of the wood on which Our Saviour was crucified.
And the mount which he sought is Mount Zion, which is the place Golgotha, the tomb of Our Lord, and the two young men who accompanied Abraham are a symbol of the two thieves who were crucified with Our Lord.*

⁸⁶⁸ Appendix F page 242, lines 26-30.

⁸⁶⁹ Brock Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition: 12.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: 12.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 12; P. Bedjan and S. Brock (2006b). *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume IV*: 69 4-7.

⁸⁷² P. Schaff (1890b). *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series, Volume XIII: Gregory the Great (II), Ephraim Syrus, Aphrahat*: 182.

And the three days are a symbol of the three days which the Jews formed the plan of the killing of Our Lord, from Wednesday until Friday.

And they saw the place from afar; this even shows the way to the work which was completed in a distant age, and the mount on which he sacrificed Isaac.

And God instituted in Abraham's understanding and he asked of him a question of his understanding, and there are those who said he was led to this place so that he saw the fire being established, a symbol of the column which reaches from the earth to heaven⁸⁷³. And there are those who say he saw a column being established a symbol of the Wood(ܕܘ ܐܕ) of the Cross. And his ordering the two young men that they stay at a distance this causes to understand that they will not abandon the child, and they will not abandon him at the time of his sacrifice, and the child demanding about the lamb of sacrifice because it was Abraham's habit when he wished to sacrifice to take his son with him, to accustom him to delight in sacrifice.⁸⁷⁴

Ephrem, in typically poetic form, recalls the journey to Mount Moriah with oblique references that are quite distinct from the verse-by-verse analysis of the *andamta*. The following two short quotations do, however, do refer to the journey to Mount Moriah. *Hymns on Virginity, VIII:16* equates the wood of the sacrifice that Isaac bears refers to the Cross, '...in Abraham your joy, Isaac bore Your cross...'⁸⁷⁵. *Hymns on the Nativity, VIII:13*, referring to the same biblical passage, connects the wooden burden with the Cross, and his bonds and pain to the nails:

*When Sarah sang lullabies to Isaac
As to a servant who bore the image
Of the King, his Lord: upon his shoulders
The sign of the cross, also upon his hands
Bonds and pains, a symbol of the nails.⁸⁷⁶*

Ephrem, writing in his prose *Commentary on the Diatessaron XXI:9*, interprets Abraham's trial as an event that clarifies the potency of wood, and links it with water:

From Abraham [onwards], the symbol of the wood and the lamb began to be delineated. For Isaac was a symbol of the lamb [caught] in the tree. While Jacob showed [that] the wood can vivify water. Wood therefore was worthy that he be suspended from it, since no bone in him was broken. The fruits of the earth are stimulated by wood, and the treasures of the sea are grasped by means of wood. So too, in the case of the body and the soul.⁸⁷⁷

The journey to Moriah also features in Jacob of Serugh, *Homily LXXX, The Mysteries, Types and Depictions of Christ*. Jacob interprets the three day journey made by Abraham and Isaac

⁸⁷³ This column could be Jacob's ladder, but the normal word used in Ge'ez is ሰዋሰው, *sawāsaw*.

⁸⁷⁴ Appendix E a2 – b29.

⁸⁷⁵ McVey: 299-300. See also Jacob of Serugh Homily LXXX, *The Mysteries, Types and Depictions of Christ* P. Bedjan and S. Brock (2006a). *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume III: 312 9* which makes the same allusion.

⁸⁷⁶ McVey: 121-22.

⁸⁷⁷ McCarthy:321.

as symbolising the three days between the death and resurrection of Christ as does the *andāmta*:

*Isaac was attended by his father for three days,
To draw an image of the death of the Son.
On the third day he conquered death and escaped,
Like the Son who on the third day rose from the dead.*⁸⁷⁸

The Ge'ez *andāmta* speculates as to whether or not Sarah knew about God's command to sacrifice Isaac. One view expressed is that Sarah was not told, because of her feminine frailty, a view shared by Jacob of Serugh⁸⁷⁹. A second view, that Sarah shared in the event, which is attributed to 'ālfadās the Hermit⁸⁸⁰ has a counterpart in Ephrem, who considered that if she had been told 'she would have persuaded him to let her go and participate'⁸⁸¹.

The second set of interpretations in the Genesis 22:13 *andāmta* relate to the sacrifice itself. The ram substituting for Isaac is a symbol of Christ substituting for believers. Further details, however, point clearly to a Judaeo-Christian and 'Ephremic' thought world. The Wood of the Thicket symbolises Mary bearing Christ in virginity, and there is a brief reference to the Wood of the Thicket being a 'vine' in the Amharic translation of the verse. This connects Mary with a vine, which relates subtly to the idea of Christ as the Grape⁸⁸². Additionally the Wood of the Thicket is interpreted as the Cross, whose potency is emphasised by being called the Wood of Atonement:

(Amharic) When Abraham looked around behold he saw a sheep whose two horns were caught in a vine which is called the wood of the thicket.

....

ANDM: The ram is a symbol of the Lord, Isaac is a symbol of the believers. The ram became a substitute for Isaac, and the Lord became a substitute for believers. That they say the ram descended from heaven, the Lord was to descend from the heaven of heavens. That they say it was found from the Wood of the Thicket, that he would be born from sealed virginity, from Our Lady. It is a symbol that because he came from the flock of Abraham, he would be born from the tribe of Abraham.

*ANDM: The Wood of the Thicket is a symbol of the cross: meaning The Wood of the Thicket in order to mean the Wood of Atonement.*⁸⁸³

The *Kābra Nagāst* adopts a similar line of interpretation, where in chapter 96, 'Concerning the prophecy of Christ' the figures of Abraham and Isaac are the Father and the Son and the

⁸⁷⁸ Karim: 54; Bedjan and Brock *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume III: 312 5-8*. Brock notes that Ephrem, Aphrahat and Jacob of Serugh also interpret the three day journey as ensuring that Abraham's had time fully to reflect on what he was about to do Brock Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition: 10.

⁸⁷⁹ Homily CIX, *Abraham and his Types* Bedjan and Brock *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume IV: 69 1-2*

⁸⁸⁰ See line 7 of the translation on page 133.

⁸⁸¹ Mathews: 168.

⁸⁸² This idea is considered by Robert Murray to be uniquely Syrian, and is discussed in more detail in chapter 5, page 190. See also Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition): 113-29*.

⁸⁸³ Appendix F, page 242, lines 3-4, 53-61.

whole sacrificial event is interpreted as symbolic of the crucifixion. The location of the event has, however, has been inexplicably transplanted from Mount Moriah to Mount Carmel:

When Abraham took his son up Mount Carmel He caused a ram, redemption for Isaac, to come down from the heavens and Isaac was not sacrificed but the ram which came down from the heavens was sacrificed, because Abraham is interpreted as God the Father, and Isaac is interpreted as the likeness of Christ, the Son, and when He came down from the heavens for the salvation of Adam and his children his divinity which came down from the heavens was not sacrificed but His flesh with which He clothed himself for our sake, that earthly one with which He clothed himself from Mary [was sacrificed]...⁸⁸⁴

Like the *andəmta* the *Kəbra Nagast*, in chapter 112 also features Isaac commanding his father to bind him⁸⁸⁵. Chapter 104, *More Concerning the Ark and the Talk of the Wicked* in a passage demonstrating the potency of wood in salvation also describes the Wood of the Thicket as a means of salvation, ‘and He saved Isaac a by means of the sheep caught in a thicket of wood’⁸⁸⁶. This event will be revisited later in a discussion of how the *Kəbra Nagast* unites the major biblical covenants through the material of wood⁸⁸⁷.

The origin of the ram is also important in the interpretations. The *andəmta* on Genesis 22:5 gives two options, one attributing miraculous origins to the ram, and another stating that it was from Abraham’s flock:

ANDM: The ram is a symbol of the Lord, Isaac is a symbol of the believers. The ram became a substitute for Isaac, and the Lord became a substitute for believers. That they say the ram descended from heaven, the Lord was to descend from the heaven of heavens. That they say it was found from the Wood of the Thicket, that he would be born from sealed virginity, from Our Lady. It is a symbol that because he came from the flock of Abraham, he would be born from the tribe of Abraham.⁸⁸⁸

Ephrem, *Commentary on Genesis 22:13*, deals with the sacrificial scene. Using the multiple meaning of the word tree, the wood of the thicket is connected with the Cross and the ram with Christ in the same manner as is found in the *andəmta* and *Kəbra Nagast*:

The question that Isaac had asked about the lamb attests to the fact that there had been no ram there. The wood that was on Isaac’s shoulders proves that there had been no tree there. The mountain spit out the tree and the tree the ram, so that in the ram that hung in the tree and had become the sacrifice in the place of Abraham’s son, there might be depicted the day of Him who was to

⁸⁸⁴ Bezold: 132b 19-133a 7; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 172-173.

⁸⁸⁵ Bezold: 185a 9-10; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 218.

⁸⁸⁶ Bezold: 151a 12-14; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 196.

⁸⁸⁷ See page 146 on the uniting of biblical covenants in the *Kəbra Nagast*.

⁸⁸⁸ See appendix F, page 242, lines 53-59.

*hang upon the wood like a ram and was to taste death for the sake of the whole world.*⁸⁸⁹

Ephrem is clear that the ram had miraculous origins, which he sees as proven by Isaac's question about the lamb. He also attributes miraculous origins to the wood. Jacob of Serugh also upholds the miraculous view with Abraham being specifically instructed, 'do not slay Isaac who was born in intercourse; sacrifice instead the lamb born out of intercourse'⁸⁹⁰, in a clear allusion to the Virgin Birth. Discussing these two contrary views in Syriac literature Brock has commented that:

*It was probably typological reasoning that gave rise to the opinion...that only the ram had a miraculous birth. Yet further reflection on the unsuitable implications of such typology, as far as Antiochene theology was concerned, led late East Syrian writers to reject the entire tradition, and to assert instead that an angel took an ordinary ram from Abraham's flocks...*⁸⁹¹

The presence of two contrary views in the *andāmtā*⁸⁹² suggests that both East and West Syriac interpretations were utilized.

Moses

Moses is another major figure of the Old Testament, with five major events from his life providing being exploited symbolically because of their connections with potent wood⁸⁹³: the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) ; the bitter water at Marah made sweet (Exodus 15); the rock producing water and the battle with the Amalekites (both Exodus 17); as well as the budding of Aaron's staff (Numbers 17). Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* LXXXVI provides early testimony of the interpretation of several of these events, 'Moses was sent with a rod to effect the redemption of the people; and with this in his hands, at the head of the people, he divided the sea. By this he saw the water gushing out of the rock; and when he cast a tree into the waters of Marah, which were bitter, he made them sweet'⁸⁹⁴ with the crossing of the Red Sea also being dealt with in the *Dialogue with Trypho* CXXXVIII⁸⁹⁵. Discussing this episode, Daniélou considered that Justin was reproducing a more ancient Judaeo-Christian *testimonia*, suggesting that since they seek to emphasise the potency of wood connected with water, 'that there had been a search for passages which might pre-

⁸⁸⁹ Mathews: 169. See also Griffith *Faith Adoring the Mystery*: *Reading the Bible with St. Ephrem the Syrian*: 34 who considers this as typical of Ephrem's style of indicating 'the spiritual sense almost *en passant*'.

⁸⁹⁰ Brock *Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition*: 16; Bedjan and Brock *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume IV*: 103 1-2.

⁸⁹¹ Brock *Genesis 22 in Syriac Tradition*: 17.

⁸⁹² See chapter 2 page 42, in a discussion regarding the provenance of the *andāmtā* material.

⁸⁹³ A further event in Moses' life connected with the sign of the Cross is the bronze serpent in Numbers 21:4-9 that was held up and saved those who looked to it. Since the connection of this with the Cross is made by Jesus Christ himself in John 3:18 it is difficult to draw any specific connections through this interpretation.

⁸⁹⁴ Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*: 242.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: 268.

figure the present operation of the Cross as the active *δυναμις* in baptism⁸⁹⁶. This *testimonia* penetrated both the ‘Ephremic’ and Ethiopic traditions.

Crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)

The *Dəggwā* makes a brief mention of Moses signing the Cross when he is about to cross the Red Sea in the *Meskerem 17 Dəggwā*, which celebrates the finding of the true Cross, and interprets Joshua crossing the Jordan in the same manner:

*In the Sea of Eritrea*⁸⁹⁷ Moses made the sign of the Cross
Awsey⁸⁹⁸ struck the water of the Jordan⁸⁹⁹

Surprisingly this significant event is mentioned neither in the *andəmta* nor the *Kəbra Nagašt*, however Ephrem makes the same allusion in the *Commentary on Exodus XIV:3*:

*The Lord said to Moses: ‘.....Lift up your staff,’ which is a sign of the cross,
‘and strike the sea, and divide it.’*⁹⁰⁰

The same symbolism appears in Jacob of Serugh’s *Homily LXXX on The Mysteries, Types and Depictions of Christ*:

*Moses was carrying the rod of his mysteries all along his way,
And in the shadow of the crucifixion he did glorious things.
He made the sea a dry land by the Cross which was formed on it,
And by that he opened a great road for the forces.*⁹⁰¹

The *Dəggwā* coupling of the signing of the Cross with the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua’s leadership, Joshua 3-4 is not found in Ephrem, but does occur in Aphrahat’s *Demonstration IV, on Prayer*:

*‘He crossed the Jordan only with his staff’, a wonderful symbol he held in his
hand beforehand – the sign of the Cross of the Great Prophet.*⁹⁰²

Commenting on this, Cyril Aphrem Karim claims that, ‘Aphrahat then, must have borrowed it from a Jewish tradition, or added it depending on the similar story of Moses dividing the Red Sea by his staff’⁹⁰³. The association with Moses’ staff is clear from the mention of ‘the Great Prophet’ a connection also made in the *Dəggwā*.

⁸⁹⁶ Daniélou: 276-277.

⁸⁹⁷ The Red Sea.

⁸⁹⁸ Traditional Ethiopian Scholars consider that this was the man who accompanied Joshua as did Aaron with Moses.

⁸⁹⁹ This has only been identified in a more recent printed version of the *Dəggwā*, see Yared መጽሐፈ ጵጌ ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 30 15-16.

⁹⁰⁰ Mathews:249.

⁹⁰¹ Karim: 70; Bedjan and Brock *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume III: 306 17-20*.

⁹⁰² K. Valavanolickal (2005a). *Aphrahat Demonstrations I: 81*.

⁹⁰³ Karim: 83.

Waters at Marah (Exodus 15:22-37)

The event when Moses is instructed by God to use a piece of wood to sweeten bitter water for the Israelites to drink at Marah is expounded in the *andəmta* on verse 25:

Exodus 15: 25:

(Ge'ez) And Moses wailed to the Creator, and the Lord showed him a [piece of] wood(ዕፀ'əd), and he put it in the water, and the water was sweet, and there is showed them righteousness/justice and judgement and he counselled him (Amharic) When Moses heard that then he called out and begged the Creator, the Lord. The Creator, The Lord showed him a bitter wood called ebony, and straight away he told him, 'cut it and throw it into it [the water]!' He cut the ebony wood and threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. Righteousness and judgement are one group, in that place He revealed true judgement to him. ANDM: 'Do not worship righteousness' and the precept of the nine laws He revealed to him. By this everything is challenged. This is a symbol. The earth of Adam, the bitterness of the water, of the recompense of the curse. Moses is a symbol of the Lord, the people of the believers, the wood a symbol of the Cross. As the bitter water was made sweet with bitter wood, the recompense for the curse which came by the Tree of Knowledge is by the wood of the Cross it is a symbol of its destruction.⁹⁰⁴

This rich *andəmta* further extrapolates the symbol by linking the bitterness of the water with the curse on humankind. The specific mention of ebony, considered a bitter wood, to represent the Cross, represents the bitterness of the suffering of the Cross. The recompense of the curse put on Adam also indicates global redemption, in keeping with the Judaeo-Christian approach.

The account in the *Kəbra Nagaśt*, Chapter 98, differs slightly in its attribution of potency, as it interprets Moses as making the sign of the Cross rather than attaching significance to the wood itself; and no mention is made of the intrinsic bitterness of the wood. The sign, however, is directly linked to the lifting of the curse, with the same global redemptive implications:

And again when Israel went out from Egypt they went up to bitter water, and lacked something to drink due to the bitterness of the water, and first of all they murmured because of the bitterness of the water, and God said to Moses, 'Lift up your rod, and cast it into the water, and sign it to the right and the left with the sign of the Cross!' And pay attention to this, if God said, 'Let it be sweet!' then would it not have become sweet? But he showed that it is by the sign of the Cross that all becomes good, and bitter water will become sweet, and all polluted things become good and fair by the power of His Cross.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰⁴ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 94.

⁹⁰⁵ Bezold: 140b 13- 141a 5.

Ephrem, in *Commentary on Exodus XVI:1* interestingly concurs with the *andəmta* in his interpretation, directly connecting the potency with wood rather than the signing of the Cross⁹⁰⁶:

*Once they crossed the sea, God decided to test them by depriving them of water. At Marah they complained about [the lack of] water. God showed Moses a piece of wood. When he threw it in the water, the water became sweet. The wood is a type of the cross which sweetened the bitterness of the nations.*⁹⁰⁷

Bitter wood emphasising the bitterness of mankind without redemption is a motif in Jacob of Serugh, *Homily LXXX, The Mysteries, Types and Depictions of Christ*:

*The wood which he threw in the water of Marah was it not a figure of the cross which sweetened the bitterness of the whole world?*⁹⁰⁸

Both the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ sources draw symbolic significance from the potency of wood in connection with water. This typology accords with Daniélou’s observation that it is typically Judaeo-Christian to draw unusual significance from events where wood and water are linked, as the symbolism emphasises the potency of the Cross in baptism⁹⁰⁹.

Rock producing water (Exodus 17:1-7)

In Exodus 17:1-7 Moses strikes a rock with his rod to produce water, providing a further opportunity to express symbolism associated simultaneously with water and wooden material. Neither the *Dəggwā* nor the *andəmta* make reference to this, but the *Kəbra Nagašt* Chapter 98 employs symbolism both in the shape of the Cross, signed by Moses as he struck the rock to produce water, and in the potency of the wood of Moses’ rod.

*‘And again when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt they thirsted for water in Kadesh and they complained and they wept before Moses, and Moses went before God and told this to God. God said, ‘Take your rod and strike this hard stone!’ Moses struck it lengthwise and breadthwise in the likeness of the sign of the Cross, and the water flowed out [in] twelve rivers. And their people and their livestock drank from it and were satisfied with drink, and having drunk that rock followed after them. The rock is to be interpreted as Christ, and the rivers the Apostles, and what they drank is the teaching of the Apostles, and the rod is the Wood(ḏθ‘əḏ) of the Cross.....’*⁹¹⁰

Ephrem applied the same symbolism in several of his works, notably the *Hymns on Paradise*, V:1 where he associates water from the rock is associated with the general idea of redemption that is linked to the Cross.

I considered the word of the Creator

⁹⁰⁶ Ephrem does not mention ebony. Ebony is common in Ethiopia, so this may be a local interpolation.

⁹⁰⁷ Mathews: 254-255; see also Karim: 70.

⁹⁰⁸ Karim: 70; Bedjan and Brock *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume III: 306 21-307 2*.

⁹⁰⁹ Daniélou: 277.

⁹¹⁰ Bezold: 138a 17 – b6.

*comparing it
to the rock that marched
with the people of Israel in the wilderness;¹
it was not from the stores of water
contained within it
that it poured out for them glorious streams:
there was no water in it,
yet oceans sprang forth from it.
Like the Word, it led
the Hebrews out of nothingness.⁹¹¹*

In *Armenian Hymns*, XLIX:8 Ephrem articulates a more direct link with the Cross.

*For the People water gushed forth from the rock
and they drank and were strengthened,¹
but from the Tree that was on Golgotha
for the Peoples a fountain gushed forth.⁹¹²*

The Battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17)

The Israelites' battle with the Amalekites during which Moses prays on a mountain, supported by Aaron and Hur provided another popular source of symbolic interpretation. This interpretation featured in early Judaeo-Christian literature⁹¹³, but these interpretations are distinct from those seen in this study; Barnabas, Irenaeus and Tertullian mention only Moses as significant⁹¹⁴, and Justin has Joshua as signifying Christ on the Cross⁹¹⁵. It is unlikely, however, that Ephrem or the Ethiopic writers knew any of these sources. More probable is that the root of its inspiration lies in the *Odes of Solomon XXVII*⁹¹⁶, an ancient witness to the standing prayer posture representing the Cross.

The *andāmtā* on Exodus 17:8-16 interprets the trio of Moses, Aaron and Hur standing on the hill, with Moses reaching out his hands in prayer as symbolic of the scene at Golgotha where Christ stretched out his hands on the Cross with the two thieves on either side. As with Abraham's trial it is not only the sign or material of the Cross that is interpreted symbolically, but significance is attached to the location of the event on a mountain. In Exodus, Moses extends his hands in prayer until sunset, seen by the *andāmta* as signifying the darkness that fell on the earth during the crucifixion. The unnamed mountain on which the three figures stand is also linked to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

⁹¹¹ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 21.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*: 81 8.

⁹¹³ Moses' stretching out his hands is interpreted as a sign of the Cross is symbolised in: *The Epistle of Barnabas* 12:2; the *Sibylline Oracles* VIII:330-37; and the *Dialogue with Trypho* XXIV, XC:5, XCI:1 and CXIV, Irenaeus *Demonstration* 46, Tertullian *Against Marcion* 3:18. See Daniélou: 272; Karim: 78.

⁹¹⁴ A. Robinson (1920). *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching by St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon:111*; Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus: 145*; P. Schaff and A. Menzies (2006). *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian I. Apologetic; II. Anti-Marcion; III. Ethical: 337*.

⁹¹⁵ Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus: 244*.

⁹¹⁶ See page 123.

(Ge'ez) *And Moses built an altar to God and called it place of forgiveness and said, 'Because with a concealed hand God will make war on Amalek for all generations.'*

(Amharic) *This was stacked up in [his] mind. For the Father, for He who will judge; for women for the bride of the sheep; for the priests, for the children of Aaron; for Israel for the upright in heart, that they said, he said it. For the perfect relative of Israel, the Amalekites, God destroyed with His hidden (with his subtle) power He destroyed them. Because this was done for him, Moses built an altar to the LORD (with stones). He gave it the name The Lord's Comfort. He said for all generations for the Amalekites are Esau's descendents.*

ANDM: *To the relative of Amalek, he says, 'by a relative' for by a relative, by Joshua, He will destroy them.*

ANDM: *To all generations he says, for by Joshua He will destroy them, he called Joshua all generations. He is from the tribe of Ephrem and this is a symbol. Moses is a symbol of the Son of God, Joshua is a symbol of Adam, Israel of the souls, the Amalekites of the demons, the mountain is a symbol of the Place of the Skull. The stones⁹¹⁷ are a symbol of the Cross, Aaron is a symbol of the thief on the right, Hur is a symbol of the thief on the left. When Moses flexed his arms Israel gained their victory. The Lord reached out his hands on the Cross until he was lifted up. Spiritual Israel fell into the bottom of Sheol and was trampled by the feet of demons, it is a symbol of their existence. When Moses reached out his hand, the Amalekites were defeated this is a symbol of the Lord on Friday, reaching out his hands on the Cross, when he was crucified the demons were defeated. Until the sun set, for the whole day Moses reached out his hands, it says. The Lord reached out his hands on Friday from the sixth until the ninth hour, for when he was crucified it became dark, (Ge'ez) and from the sixth until the ninth hour the whole world was dark as it says. The demons for the generation of generations he said to them, naturally – (Ge'ez) and this kind will not come out without fasting and prayer' as it says.*

ANDM *to all generations it says. It is by the relation of Christ.*

ANDM *By all generations it says – By Christ he destroyed them. Christ has relations by his putting on flesh!*⁹¹⁸

The *Kəbra Nagaśt* chapter 98, 'Concerning the Rod of Aaron' features a similar interpretation along with a set of other Old Testament events that are all interpreted in relation to the Cross. There are only minor differences from the *andəmta* account, for instance here the Amalekites signify Satan specifically rather than the demons.

And when Amalek with Israel, Moses went up a mountain, and Aaron with him, they went up to pray, because Amalek was strong, and God ordered Moses, saying, 'Stretch out your hand until Israel receives power' and it says in the Law that the hand of Moses was held out until sunset, but the Moses' hands became heavy, and when he tired he dropped his hands which he had spread out, and Israel stopped prevailing and their enemies overcame them. And when he put up his hand and stretched out straight Amalek was overcome, and Israel routed them and they overcame their enemy Amalek. And when Aaron and Hur

⁹¹⁷ The Amharic word አብ is written here, which appears to be a misprint, as it makes little sense. The only part of the picture lacking a symbolic interpretation is the stone altar, so it has been corrected it to አእባን, 'a'əbān the Ge'ez for 'stones', which is consistent with the interpretation in the *Kəbra Nagaśt* that follows. See Bezold: 140b 5.

⁹¹⁸ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፀሐት 108-109.

saw they piled up stones on Moses' right and on his left and they rested Moses' hand on the stones which they piled up, and Aaron on his right, and Hur on his left and they held up Moses on their shoulders so that his hands might not drop from their stretching out.

And I will explain this to you: the fight of Amalek with Israel is the fight of believers with demons, and before Christ was crucified they overcame the former, and when he stretched out his hand on the wood of the Cross because of the sin of Adam and his children, and when he stretched out his hand and his palm was pierced those marked with the sign of the Cross overcame them. The stretching out of Moses' hand is interpreted as the crucifixion of Christ, and the stone which Aaron and Hur piled up are interpreted as the wood(ḏḏ 'əd) of the Cross and the nails, and Aaron is interpreted as the thief on the right, and Hur as the thief on the left, and Amalek is to be interpreted as the demons, and the king of Amalek is to be interpreted as Satan, and when they were overcome, [it was] by the resurrection of Christ and by His Cross we overcame the demons and Satan.⁹¹⁹

Ephrem's *Commentary on Exodus XVII:2* shows a striking correlation with the Ethiopic accounts, but expounds the additional idea that the miracle is linked with Moses' use of his rod:

After these things, Amelech came to do battle with them. Joshua went out to meet him, while Moses went up the mountain with the staff of God in his hand. Moses held the staff only at the time of mighty works and wonders, so that you should know that it is a type of the cross, whose power effects all wonders. Aaron and Hur, who, as they say, was the brother-in-law of Moses, went up with Moses. [As long as] he kept his hands aloft, Israel had the advantage, and waged war against the boldness of the nations that threatened to wage war with the people. And when [Moses] lowered [his hands], the nations gained the advantage over those who constantly complained against the Lord and Moses. With Moses' hands raised up, and with the staff lifted at his side, the sign of the cross was seen clearly in him. Joshua contended on the plain, and Moses [contended] on the mountain. When the people saw that he rested his hands, they became frightened [and started] to retreat before their enemies, but when he raised them, they were encouraged to advance against their adversaries.⁹²⁰

Jacob of Serugh embellishes the account further, with the seventeen pages of his Homily CLVIII, *Moses' Extended Hands During Battle* devoted to this battle⁹²¹. His account contains many more details than any of the above, but the important correspondences are: the whole event clearly portrays the crucifixion; the mountain is named as Golgotha, as in the *andəmta*; the trio on the mount is associated with Christ and the two thieves who were crucified with him:

*Until now these were said in a symbolic way,
But here, Moses has openly painted the crucifixion.*

...

*The meek one ascended to the high mountain to mark the mystery
Taking up with him Aaron and Hur,*

⁹¹⁹ Bezold: 139b 18-140b 13.

⁹²⁰ Mathews:255-256; Karim: 78.

⁹²¹ P. Bedjan and S. Brock (2006c). *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Volume V: 290-306.*

*To resemble the three Crucifixes on Golgotha.
 He put on his breast a cross of power and extended his hands
 So that by his appearance he will literally paint the Son...*

...

*The miserable Amalek did not know where to fight,
 The cross is against them and they are hoping for victory.*

...

*Had the blind touched Moses while he was standing,
 He would have learned that it was really the crucifixion.
 Had the deaf seen him, he would have understood it by sight...*

...

When he painted the image of the crucifixion, Amalek was defeated...

...

*The glorious Aaron and the noble Hur came closer to him,
 To serve the old man's hands which were trembling.
 They too, extended their hands in the form of crucifixion,
 In order that the Trinity on Golgotha be not annulled.
 In their desire to serve the hands of Moses
 They lifted up their hands, to left and right.
 Whoever looks at the hill of Moses and the Golgotha of the Son,
 And exchanges their crosses, he will find
 Three in Moses' case, and three in the Son's case.
 There it is the shadow, and here is the body which reveals reality*

...

*The mystery of the servant worked only in one valley,
 While the truth of the Lord established its reality in the four sides.⁹²²*

Jacob of Serugh's account is much more elaborate, but its core symbolism is the same as that in the *andəmtā*, the *Kəbra Nagašt* and Ephrem.

The staff of Moses and the budding of Aaron's staff (Exodus 4, 7, 10, 17; Numbers 17)

Kəbra Nagašt chapter 98 – which was written in the last phase of this work's redaction⁹²³ – provides a particularly important source on the function of Moses' staff during its account of various episodes that occurred during the flight from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea: Moses striking the water with his rod and turning it into blood, Exodus 7:19⁹²⁴; Moses waving his staff and the land becoming dark (Exodus 10:22); Moses staff becoming alive (Exodus 4:2-3); Moses striking a rock to produce water (Exodus 17:1-17):

And the rod of Moses with which he performed the miracle is to be interpreted as the wood(ܕܐܘܠܘܢ) of the Cross by which He saved Adam and his children from the punishment of devils, and just as Moses struck the water with it, and turned it into blood and slew their fish, likewise Christ, with his Cross slew death, and brought them out from Seol. Also just as Moses waved his rod in the air, and the whole land of Egypt became dark for three days and three nights, a darkness that could be felt so that they could not rise from their couches, likewise Christ was crucified on the Wood(ܕܐܘܠܘܢ) and lit the darkness of the

⁹²² Karim:80-81.

⁹²³ Hubbard: 409-11.

⁹²⁴ In the biblical account this is actually Aaron's rod.

hearts men, and He rose from the dead on the third day and the third night. Also just as the rod of Moses became changed and transformed by the word of God, being dry it became living, and also being alive it became dry, likewise Christ by the Wood(ḏṑ‘əd) of the Cross made life for Christian people, to those who believed in Him, and caused them to drive away the spirit of devils by the sign of the Cross, because the devils and the Christians were changed, those that were spiritual became reprobates, and by transgressing the command of their Lord became exiles by the power of the Cross, and we became spiritual by taking up his flesh and his blood in the place of the exiled spiritual beings, and we became glorious, those who believed in His Cross, and in His holy resurrection. Also just as Moses struck the mountains and brought forth punishment, by the command of God he stretched out his hand with his rod, likewise Christ drove out the demons from men, by the power of the Cross, He stretched out his hand on the Wood(ḏṑ‘əd) of the Cross. When God said to Moses, ‘Strike with your rod!’ this means, ‘Make the sign of the Cross of Christ!’ And when God said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ this means that by the stretching out of His hands Christ saved use from the servitude of the enemy, and He gave us life by the stretching out of his hand on the Wood(ḏṑ‘əd) of the Cross.⁹²⁵

In each instance, the staff dispels potency through its conveyance as a ‘sign of the Cross’. Although this symbolism does not occur in either Ephrem or the *Dəggwā*, both works do mention the miraculous blossoming of the rod of Moses’ brother Aaron, during their affirmation of Aaron’s authority in Numbers 17. This theme is extrapolated in the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* to encompass the Virgin Mary, the blossoming without water symbolising the virgin birth, with Christ as the blossom⁹²⁶, and in this context the Rod is interpreted in a different manner, since the blossom of the Rod is taken to symbolise the fruit amongst the Gentiles:

*Mary, our mother, and mother of our Lord,
the Holy Word dwelt in her, Christ.
The Rod of Aaron which blossomed
and in her he worked a miracle amongst the Gentiles,
because she is a symbol of the Cross.⁹²⁷*

Both the *Kəbra Nagašt*, chapter 98, and this *Dəggwā* represent the global redemption of the Cross through the inclusion of the Gentiles, in keeping with Judaeo-Christian symbolism. The *andəmta* makes this same association in its interpretation of Numbers 17:8:

*(Ge’ez) And when it was the next day, Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the tabernacle
(Amharic) And the next day it was like this: Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the tabernacle
(Ge’ez) And behold the rod of Aaron had blossomed for the House of Levi, and produced leaves, blossomed flowers, and bore almonds*

⁹²⁵ Bezold: 138b 19-139b 17.

⁹²⁶ This symbolism is also linked to the Tree of Life, and will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁹²⁷ Yared መጽሐፈ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያሬድ: 521b 3-4.

(Amharic) *Behold the rod Levi, Aaron's rod had blossomed, it produced flowers, it produced almonds, nuts⁹²⁸, and orange. ILLUSTRATION: for that time the office was given to him, being done like this he caused them to be distinguished. For later, however, it is a symbol. The rod is a symbol of Our Lady, the fruit of the Lord. ANDM: the rod is a symbol of the Lord, the fruit is a symbol of his virtue. ANDM: the rod is a symbol of the cross, the fruit is a symbol of its value – of his flesh and his blood it is a symbol.*

The *Kəbra Nagašt*, chapter 98, interprets the Rod of Aaron in the same manner; its blossoming without water being taken as a symbol of Mary's virginity. In chapter 114 the Rod of Aaron is cited as a witness against the Jews, 'And the rod is Mary, which without water burst into bloom, and she without the seed of man she gave birth to the Word of God⁹²⁹'; 'And they will show to the Jewsthe rod of Aaron which blossomed like Mary'⁹³⁰.

Ephrem also attests the same specific connection between the staff of Aaron and Mary's virginity in *Hymns on the Nativity* I:17, 'The staff of Aaron sprouted, and the dry wood brought forth; His symbol has been explained today – it is the virgin womb that gave birth'⁹³¹.

Wood and the Uniting of the Covenants in the *Kəbra Nagašt*

The *Kəbra Nagašt* expounds a threefold salvation plan expressed through three items: the Ark of the Covenant, the wood of the Cross, and the Pearl⁹³². These three items are entrusted to three royal lines: David, also known as *Menilik*, in Ethiopia, *Adramis* in Rome, and Rehoboam in Israel respectively, under the guardianship of three archangels: Michael, Uriel and Gabriel. The focus of the *Kəbra Nagašt* is on the Ark of the Covenant, but attaches great importance to wood of the Cross because of the unifying theme of potent wood. As the aforementioned episodes in the lives of Noah, Abraham and Moses have indicated, there is a continuity of the Judaeo-Christian idea of the potency of wood in salvation in both the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literary traditions, and the *Kəbra Nagašt* has extrapolated this symbolism. It seeks to attach potency to wooden materials, but also identifies wood as the fabric connecting all the biblical covenants that God made with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses in the Old Testament with the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. In the development of this idea, however, particularly relating to the Ark of the Covenant, the Judaeo-Christian tendency to link wood with water, and *ab extensione* to baptismal symbolism, is not evident.

⁹²⁸ or ገዕዝ ለዕዝ which is 'a rare fruit to be served in Paradise' Kane *Amharic English Dictionary Volume II: 2023*.

⁹²⁹ Bezold: 137 3-6; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 177*.

⁹³⁰ Bezold: 168b 21 - 22, 169a 4 - 6; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 224*.

⁹³¹ McVey: 65.

⁹³² The legend of the Pearl expressed in chapter 68 of the *Kəbra Nagašt* bears some resemblance to the Ephremic idea of the Pearl, although whilst the Pearl represents Christ for Ephrem, in the *Kəbra Nagašt* it is Mary, although this connection may be related to the idea that the Pearl expresses pure human nature.

It may be suggested that this unifying of the covenants is a later development, supported by the earliest sections of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, dated to the sixth century CE, in which there are two references to the potency of wood⁹³³. The remaining passages all come from the sections of the *Kəbra Nagašt* that probably originated from the time of the latest recension in the thirteenth century CE⁹³⁴.

The *Kəbra Nagašt*, chapter 68, which probably dates from the sixth century CE⁹³⁵, states, 'Uriel will protect the wood(**ḏθ** 'əḏ) of the thicket which will be the Cross of the Saviour'⁹³⁶. The *Kəbra Nagašt* claims that the 'wood(**ḏθ** 'əḏ) of the thicket', the bush wherein the ram that was a substitute for Isaac was caught, was protected by Uriel, and supplied the material for the Cross on which Christ was crucified. Interestingly, Uriel's guardian rôle is not mentioned again⁹³⁷. In a passage dated to the thirteenth century CE⁹³⁸, however, the *Kəbra Nagašt* proffers a specific claim that the wood of the Cross is 'the third salvation which was sent to the earth' and the final piece in God's salvation plan⁹³⁹. In chapter 98, again probably dating from the latest recension⁹⁴⁰, the Cross assumed a variety of roles. In what might be considered to be a secular interpretation, it was the source of honour for the King of Rome⁹⁴¹; as well as being the means by which God 'saved Adam and his children from the torture of devils'⁹⁴² the means by which 'Christ slew death and brought them [Adam and his children] out of Sheol'⁹⁴³ and the means by which Christ 'lit up the darkness of the hearts of men'⁹⁴⁴. It was also attributed to be the source of life for Christians⁹⁴⁵.

The *Kəbra Nagašt*, chapter 113, concludes the book and probably dates from the latest recension⁹⁴⁶. In this chapter, without any explanation, the Wood of the Cross, previously identified as the source of honour for the King of Rome⁹⁴⁷, is replaced by another motif: the nails of the Cross that were made into a bridle⁹⁴⁸, and remain as a testimony against the

⁹³³ Hubbard: 409-411.

⁹³⁴ Ibid. 409-411.

⁹³⁵ Ibid.: 409-11.

⁹³⁶ Bezold: 84a 5 - 7; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 113*.

⁹³⁷ Including in chapter 93, which narrates Helena's finding of the true cross. According to Eusebius Helena, the mother of Constantine, mounted a successful expedition to find the True Cross Schaff *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine: 444-5*, presumably at some point in the fourth century CE. Chapter 93 is from Hubbard's earliest period Hubbard: 409-11, which would suggest that at least this small part of the section was also added later, perhaps woven in at the latest recension.

⁹³⁸ Hubbard: 409-11.

⁹³⁹ Bezold: 84a 11-14; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 113*.

⁹⁴⁰ Hubbard: 409-11.

⁹⁴¹ Bezold: 129a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 167*.

⁹⁴² Bezold: 138b 21 - 22; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 180*.

⁹⁴³ Bezold: 138b 25 - 139a 1; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 180*.

⁹⁴⁴ Bezold: 139a 7 - 8; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 180*.

⁹⁴⁵ Bezold: 139a 14-15; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 180*.

⁹⁴⁶ Hubbard: 410.

⁹⁴⁷ Bezold: 129a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 167*.

⁹⁴⁸ Bezold: 167a 11 - 12; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 221*.

Jews, who crucified Christ, until his return⁹⁴⁹. Glen Bowersock⁹⁵⁰ has connected this with a fragment of an apocalypse written in Edessa towards the end of the seventh century CE, containing this same unusual bridle made from the nails used in the crucifixion⁹⁵¹. This connection most probably suggests that this portion of the *Kəbra Nagašt* was borrowed from this Edessene apocalypse, although it is just possible that earlier versions of the *Kəbra Nagašt* could have reached Edessa.

The *Kəbra Nagašt* features God's covenants with the Patriarchs, arguing that they are unified through the medium of wood and its connection with salvation. The covenant with Noah is elaborated specifically in chapters 9 and 10; that with Abraham in chapter 14, which hints at its renewal with Isaac and Jacob. Each of these chapters comes from a section that is thought to have been composed at the time of the latest recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁹⁵². The covenant with Moses runs through many chapters in the work because of the Ark's place in the *Kəbra Nagašt*⁹⁵³.

It broadens the significance of the Ark beyond the Mosaic Covenant, however, through association with other biblical covenants, especially that which was made with Noah after the flood. This is consistent with the idea, already discussed in chapter 3, of the symbolic connection of the Arks in Ethiopic literature. The *Kəbra Nagašt*, however, distorts the idea, linking various ideas with the covenant made with Noah, but not focusing on his Ark. Whilst the *Kəbra Nagašt* elevates the importance of the Ark of the Covenant, it still cements its place in a connected set of covenants.

Thus it embroiders the Biblical account of the covenant made with Noah in order to link it with the Ark of the Covenant⁹⁵⁴. *Kəbra Nagašt*, chapter 9⁹⁵⁵, recalls God's promise to Noah in Genesis 9:11 that He would never destroy the earth again. Chapter 10 then develops this link with the Ark through the appearance of the rainbow:

And I swear by myself and by Zion, the Ark of My Covenant, which I have created as a mercy-seat and for the salvation of men, and in the last days I will make it descend to your seed, and I will delight in the sacrifices of your children on the earth, and the Ark of My Covenant will be with them forever. And when clouds come, so that they will not fear, and so that it will not seem to them a flood [is coming], I will cause to descend from My dwelling place of Zion the

⁹⁴⁹ Bezold: 168a 1 - 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 222.

⁹⁵⁰ Bowersock.

⁹⁵¹ Reinink *Der edessenische 'Pseudo-Methodius'*. For a more detailed discussion of this component, and its connection with Syriac Apocalyptic literature see chapter 2 page 64.

⁹⁵² Hubbard: 410.

⁹⁵³ Appendix G summarises the great covenants of the Bible starting with that made with Noah through to the establishment of the New Covenant.

⁹⁵⁴ See chapter 3 for more details.

⁹⁵⁵ Bezold: 4b 15 - 5a 18; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 6-7.

*Bow of My Covenant, that is to say the rainbow which will surround the Ark of My Law*⁹⁵⁶

The rainbow is the seal of God's covenant with Noah⁹⁵⁷, but it is also connected here with the Ark, which it surrounds, in an apparent interpretation of Revelation 4:3 where a rainbow surrounds the throne of God in heaven.

Kəbra Nagašt, chapter 14, deals with the second covenant made with Abraham, where it is linked directly with the sending down of the Ark, and the coming of Christ:

*Do not fear. From this day you are my servant, and I will establish My Covenant with you and with your seed after you and I will multiply your seed, and I will make your name very great, and I will cause the Ark of My Covenant to descend on the earth seven generations after you and it will go around with your seed and it will be salvation for your race, and afterwards I will send My Word for the salvation of Adam and his children forever.*⁹⁵⁸

Here the status of the Ark is elevated by its association with the Mosaic Covenant, but also with the ones previously made with Noah and Abraham. In this quotation, the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned explicitly, but all three elements of the salvation plan are present. The Pearl is implicit in the seed of Abraham, the Ark and the Cross are implied in the coming of salvation through Christ.

The broader covenantal theme returns much later in the *Kəbra Nagašt* when the idea that all of the covenants are linked by items of wood is addressed. Thus chapter 100, in relation to a discussion of Noah, his Ark and the flood, states:

*Listen, I will explain to you, when God commanded He could have given him [Noah] wings like an eagle, and He could have transported him to the land of the living together with all his household, until His anger over sinners who had not believed in the word of God and the word of their fathers cooled; or He could have lifted him into the air; or He could have commanded the water of the Flood like a wall, not to approach one mountain on which he put Noah and his children, and the animals and beasts which He wanted, in order that it (the Flood) did not submerge them. Know this, however, that God was pleased that the salvation of His creation was through wood(𐩃𐩣'əḏ) which was sanctified, these are the Ark (of Noah) and the wood(𐩃𐩣'əḏ) of the Cross.*⁹⁵⁹

Here only Noah's Ark and the Cross are mentioned, which are the first and the last in a longer list contained in chapter 104 where God made a covenant or promise in relation to salvation connected with wood:

⁹⁵⁶ Bezold: 5a 21 - b 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 7

⁹⁵⁷ See Genesis 9:13.

⁹⁵⁸ Bezold: 7b 18 - 8a 3; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 10-11.

⁹⁵⁹ Bezold: 145b 13-146a 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 188-9.

And concerning the Ark of the Covenant He saved Noah with the Ark; and He spoke with Abraham in the Trees of Manbar⁹⁶⁰, which is wood(ḏṓ‘əd) which will not rot; and He saved Isaac a by means of the sheep caught⁹⁶¹ in a thicket of wood(ḏṓ‘əd); and He made Jacob wealthy with three rods of wood(ḏṓ‘əd)⁹⁶² which he lay in watering troughs; and through the top of Jacob’s staff Joseph was blessed⁹⁶³; and He said to Moses “Make the Ark from wood(ḏṓ‘əd) which will not rot, in the likeness of Zion, the Ark of the Covenant’; and when David took her (the Ark) from the country of Samaria he placed the Ark of the Law in a new case⁹⁶⁴ and rejoiced before it; because He had declared the Ark as salvation from long ago, and many miracles and wonders were done by it by its form and likeness. Listen to me and I will reveal precisely to you how God gave salvation through the wood(ḏṓ‘əd) of the His Cross, and through the Ark of His Law, from the beginning to the end. And through wood(ḏṓ‘əd) salvation came to Adam because Adam’s first transgression was by means of wood(ḏṓ‘əd), and from long ago He instituted salvation for him through wood(ḏṓ‘əd) because He alone is Lord, Creator, Giver of life and death, and everything is done through his Word.⁹⁶⁵

In this passage the theme of salvation and wood is united through the promises made to a concatenation of Old Testament figures: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and David that link them also with the wood of the Cross, making it plain that salvation through wood is the overarching theme of God’s salvation plan. The writer also extends his argument to Adam, arguing that it was through wood, *i.e.* The Tree of Knowledge, that he and his race both fell and were redeemed.

The theme of the salvific qualities of wood can also be detected in the older parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The Sheba legend, Hubbard’s Part I chapters 1-63A, 84-94, 113-117⁹⁶⁶; emphasises the incorruptibility of the wood with which the Ark of the Covenant was to be made; making a clear reference to the LXX which stipulated that the Ark was to be made with ‘*incorruptible wood*⁹⁶⁷, rather than ‘*acacia wood*’ as decreed in the Hebrew Old Testament⁹⁶⁸. The writer may have used this motif of an incorruptible medium to trace a connection between all of God’s covenants, that are elucidated in chapters 100 and 104.

⁹⁶⁰ This most probably refers to the Oaks of Mamre mentioned in Genesis 18 where Abraham meets with three visitors, who are regarded traditionally as the Trinity. In this passage Abraham is promised his son Isaac through Sarah, the first stage in the fulfilment of God’s covenant with Abraham.

⁹⁶¹ The verb *t’əhəza* might also be taken here to mean ‘taken as a pledge’, which would mean that this was also the pledge of salvation through the Lamb of God.

⁹⁶² Genesis 30:37 ‘*Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods.*’

⁹⁶³ Hebrews 11:21.

⁹⁶⁴ The word in the Ge’ez text is *tābot*. The passage refers to 2Samuel 6:3 where on its return from the Philistines the Ark is placed in a new cart. It appears that this use of the word *tābot* is in the more general sense of it being a case or container.

⁹⁶⁵ Beza: 151a 10 - b 5; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 196-7*.

⁹⁶⁶ Hubbard: 409-11.

⁹⁶⁷ See Exodus 25:10 in the LXX.

⁹⁶⁸ See Exodus 25:10 in the NRSV, which is translated from the Masoretic text.

Although not explicit in this episode, the *Kābra Nagast* may have used this emphasis on the incorruptibility of wood to reinforce its presentation of the eternal nature of the Ark of the Covenant. Ultimately the significance of this incorruptible wood is articulated in chapter 98 which states that *‘the wood(ḏḏ ‘əd) which will not rot is to be interpreted as Christ Our Saviour’*⁹⁶⁹, referring, of course, to the incorruptibility of His flesh.

The *Kābra Nagast* affirms the argument of chapter 104, the uniting of many covenants, by attributing it to *‘Archbishop Cyril’*⁹⁷⁰. Budge claims this to be Cyril of Alexandria, and the chapter an unidentified homily by him⁹⁷¹. Cyril is quoted as talking of the Jews as blind hearted because they did not understand the significance of the Ark⁹⁷², an assertion repeated in chapter 105, because the Jews did not follow Abraham in partaking of the sacraments as given by Melchizedek⁹⁷³. This rebuttal of the Jews is *‘a common patristic attitude toward the Jews, such as is found in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria and Chrysostom’*⁹⁷⁴ but is also in keeping with many early Judaeo-Christian writers⁹⁷⁵. Ethiopian tradition claims this Cyril is an Ethiopian bishop and provides no further identification⁹⁷⁶, but the theme that salvation is connected with wood is traceable to another writer of the same name, Cyril of Jerusalem⁹⁷⁷:

*In Noe’s time salvation and the beginning of a new generation came to men through wood and water; the dove returned at evening carrying a bough of an olive tree*⁹⁷⁸

Cyril of Jerusalem’s concept, possibly reiterated in the *Kābra Nagast*, may derive from a variant reading of Psalm 96 (95):10 in the LXX, occurring in a manuscript dating from the sixth century CE:

‘εἰπατε ἐν τοῖς ἐθνεσιν Ὁ κυριος ἐβασιλευσεν ἀπο ξυλου’
*‘Say among the nations, “The Lord Reigns from wood”’*⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁶⁹ Bezold: 137b 14-16; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 178.

⁹⁷⁰ Bezold: 152a 14; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 198.

⁹⁷¹ Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: lxxxviii.

⁹⁷² Bezold: 152a 26; Hubbard: 407-8.

⁹⁷³ Bezold: 153b 23, 154a 1, 154a 10.

⁹⁷⁴ Hubbard: 408

⁹⁷⁵ Daniélou: 7-54; R.A. Norris (2006). *The Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Writings: the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers. The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. F. Young, A. Ayres and A. Louth. Ignatius of Antioch for instance specifically criticises ‘judaising’ in his letter to the Magnesians Sparks: 88-9

⁹⁷⁶ Selassie.

⁹⁷⁷ Little is known of Cyril’s life, except that he was bishop of Jerusalem from early 349 CE to the 18th of March 387 CE. He was deposed and banished several times, and resisted the Nicene expression of ‘consubstantial’. He attended the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, and authored the first of the two volumes of Catechetical Lectures which are attributed to him L.P. McCauley and A.A. Stephenson (1969a). *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Volume 1*: 12. Daniélou cites him as having Judaeo-Christian influence Daniélou: 32.

⁹⁷⁸ *Lecture XVII:10 Continuation of the Discourse on the Holy Ghost* in L.P. McCauley and A.A. Stephenson (1969b). *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Volume 2*: 102.

Daniélou considers this variant reading to be a Jewish Christian interpolation into this psalm⁹⁸⁰. In the *Dialogue with Trypho LXXIII* Justin Martyr says, ‘And from the ninety-fifth Psalm they [the Jews] have taken away this short saying of the words of David: “From the wood”⁹⁸¹, showing that the reading was known as early as the second century CE, but is not found in the Ge’ez version⁹⁸².

Continuing the idea of the potency of wood, the *Kəbra Nagast*, chapter 104, dating from the time of the latest redaction⁹⁸³, mentions the construction of Ethiopian churches from wood which, ‘when they are consecrated the Holy Spirit descends on them and changes the wood(ፊፀ፻፩) to be spiritual⁹⁸⁴. The structure of the church, through sanctification appears to be linked with wooden objects that bring about salvation, an interpretation consistent with the connection made in chapter 100 between sanctified wood and salvation⁹⁸⁵.

The Significance of Interpretations Relating to Wood

Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature express the potency of the Cross consistently with Jean Daniélou’s four categories of Judaeo-Christian Cross symbolism. The multi-semiotic application of both Ethiopic and Syriac terms for Cross, which can also mean ‘tree’ or ‘wood’, gives a wide scope for the application of this symbolism, and all four of these symbolic interpretations have been identified in both traditions. In Ethiopic literature, symbols of wood and of the vivifying action of the Cross are combined with striking results: the wooden fabric of Noah’s Ark is taken as evoking the Cross, but the combination of water with wood is also used to express the vivifying action of the Cross in baptism. This combination of symbols that is characteristic too of the *Odes of Solomon XXXIX*⁹⁸⁶ bears witness to the ancient Judaeo-Christian foundations of this interpretation.

Although Cross symbolism is widespread, already occurring in early writers such as Justin Martyr, certain features differentiate Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ material. Both have a tendency to equate the symbolism beyond the Old Testament context, offering a New Testament interpretation: hence the proximity of Mount Moriah (the scene of Abraham’s trial) with Golgotha (the site of the crucifixion); and the identification of the mountain upon which Moses prayed in Exodus 17, as Golgotha. That the process was organic and ongoing is illustrated in the *andəmtā* interpretation of the origin of the ram that was provided in Isaac’s stead. These draw simultaneously on East Syriac sources that give a rational

⁹⁷⁹ H.B. Swete (1907b). *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint: Vol. III Chronicles-Tobit: 342 n. 10*

⁹⁸⁰ Daniélou: 97.

⁹⁸¹ Schaff *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus: 235*; F. Young, L. Ayres and A. Louth, Eds. (2004). *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature.*: xxii-xxv.

⁹⁸² Anonymous መዝሙር ዳዊት ንባብ ከነትርጓሜው: 465.

⁹⁸³ Hubbard: 409.

⁹⁸⁴ Bezold: 152b 21 - 23; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 199*.

⁹⁸⁵ Bezold: 145a 2 - 4; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 189*.

⁹⁸⁶ See page 124.

explanation for its provenance from Abraham's flock; and West Syriac traditions that claim a miraculous origin. The East Syriac traditions may have resulted from the incorporation of the commentaries of the eleventh century CE *ibn at-Tayyib*⁹⁸⁷ from the Church of the East.

In their application of this symbolism, the different details that arise show the scope for individual interpretation. The sweetening of the water of Marah is taken as a sign of the potency of wood in both the *andāmtā* and Ephrem, whereas the *Kəbra Nagašt* interprets it as physically making a sign of the Cross. Whilst there is broad agreement on the interpretation of Moses holding out his hands in the shape of the Cross in his prayer during the Israelites' battle with the Amalekites⁹⁸⁸, Ephrem adds the detail that Moses' use of his wooden staff conveyed further potency. This seems to indicate, in line with the conclusion of chapter 3, that the interpretations belong to the same thought-world, without being constrained by identical interpretations of specific events.

The conventional significance of wood that is primarily connected with the Patriarchs, with whom God made or reiterated covenants in the Old Testament, is extrapolated in the sections of the *Kəbra Nagašt* that were written during its latest recension that sought to unify all biblical covenants through wooden material. The *Kəbra Nagašt* makes very limited use, however, of symbolic interpretations of Noah's Ark, a trend that is consistent with the conclusions of chapter 3 that this text seeks to attach an elevated significance to the Ark of the Covenant, and unlike Yared, avoids merging the symbolism of the two Arks. These developments associated with later material in the *Kəbra Nagašt* demonstrate how the Ethiopic tradition has developed and refined its own expression of these symbols.

In contrast with the *Kebra Negast* and *andāmtā* this type of Cross symbolism is almost absent in the *Dəggwā*. The *Meskerem 17 Dəggwā* does incorporate one such interpretation, which seems to link the Church being 'the dwelling place of the glory of God' and the 'Perfect Tabernacle' through the action of signing of the Cross over it. These ideas are rooted in the association of the Ark with divine immanence and indwelling⁹⁸⁹, but are also extrapolated to incorporate the potency of the sign of the Cross. The Church becomes the dwelling place of God through the potency of wood that is naturally linked to the divine presence and the person of Mary as discussed previously⁹⁹⁰. This concept extends the symbolism of the vivifying action of the Cross. Moses is also understood to have made the sign of the Cross before traversing the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the *Dəggwā* does not appear to utilise the symbolism in relation to the actions of the Patriarchs to the same degree as that found in the *andāmtā* and 'Ephremic' literature. The broader use of this symbolism might

⁹⁸⁷ See chapter 2, page 49.

⁹⁸⁸ See page 123.

⁹⁸⁹ See chapter 3 page 91.

⁹⁹⁰ See chapter 3 page 91.

emerge in a comprehensive study of the *Dəggwā*, but the evidence to date indicates that the application of this symbolism to the deeds of the Patriarchs is a later development in the Ethiopic tradition.

Chapter 5: Visions of Paradise and the Heavenly Eucharist.

Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature make an integral connection between Paradise and both the Ark and the Cross. The sources build a sacramental representation of Paradise from the Torah, and from later prophetic books, drawing also on Judaeo-Christian ideas. Their particular focus is primarily on the structure of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle derived from the account of the Sinai theophany, extending the imagery connected with the Ark and the Cross to Paradise as the focus of eschatological hope. Not only does the Ark represent divine indwelling and immanence, as demonstrated in chapter 3, but it actually manifestly brings about these phenomena through the Eucharist, and it connects the Church with the reality of an eternal paradisaal feast. This feast is understood to be on fruit from the Tree of Life, which is also connected with the Cross. Daniélou remarks that this connection between the Church and Paradise features strongly in Judaeo-Christian texts such as the *Odes of Solomon*, and comments that the continuation of this particular theology that connects Paradise with the Church recurs in Ephrem, but later was strongly characteristic only of Eastern Syria⁹⁹¹.

The source for ideas about Paradise is rooted in the Genesis creation account, which describes the Garden of Eden. In this early account, however, there appears to be no concept of this as a place for the elect to return to after Adam’s fall. ‘Paradise’ is a loan word from Persian meaning ‘verdant garden’⁹⁹², which the Septuagint used in order to translate the Hebrew for garden. This word became a technical term for the place for the elect, although the original Hebrew had no such connotation⁹⁹³. During the Second Temple Period Greek and Persian ideas of the immortality of the soul and of the paradisaal dwelling place of immortals⁹⁹⁴ laid the foundation for the interpretations found in the Jewish texts 1Enoch, Jubilees⁹⁹⁵, as well as in the New Testament⁹⁹⁶. 1Enoch and Jubilees were used as sources for numerous Jewish Christian texts⁹⁹⁷, and for later Christian apocalyptic literature such as

⁹⁹¹ Daniélou: 32

⁹⁹² J.E. Wright (2000). *The Early History of Heaven: 188: Desmaisons, 1910 #557: Jeremias, 1967 #559: 765-766.*

⁹⁹³ After Genesis the only traces of Paradise found in the Old Testament are found either in the passages in Ezekiel already mentioned, or in Job 15:7. Speculation about Paradise began only in later Judaism. See ‘paradise’ in C. Brown, Ed. (1976). *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Vol. 2.: 760-764*{Jeremias, 1967 #559.

⁹⁹⁴ Wright *The Early History of Heaven: 188.*

⁹⁹⁵ See pages 158 and 159 for details on these texts.

⁹⁹⁶ The New Testament mentions ‘paradise’ on three occasions: Luke 23:43 which was probably dependent on contemporary Jewish understanding; 2Corinthians 12:4 where St Paul describes his heavenly ascent; and Revelation 2:7 which is a promise to the Ephesian church to give the Tree of Life in Paradise. See Brown, Ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Vol. 2.: 761-763.*

⁹⁹⁷ Daniélou:12

the second century CE 2Baruch⁹⁹⁸, as well as in the Jewish mystical traditions, particularly *merkabah* mysticism^{999,1000}.

1Enoch and Jubilees are canonized in the Ethiopic Bible providing firm evidence for the transmission of ideas into Ethiopian tradition. In the Ethiopic as well as the 'Ephremic' literature, the understanding of Paradise draws on these Second Temple ideas, with the additional perception that the layout of Paradise is intimately connected with the revelation to Moses during the Sinai Theophany. The interpretation appears is also coloured, however, by books such as 1Enoch. The Tabernacle, whose design was shown to Moses at Sinai, is understood in Hebrews 8:5 to be after the pattern of the heavenly Tabernacle, with its three divisions signifying a similar division in heaven. The three divisions of the Tabernacle are:

1. The innermost Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place, where the Ark was to be placed¹⁰⁰¹.
2. The Holy Place separated by a veil from the Holy of Holies¹⁰⁰².
3. The outer division, for the altar, called the Court of the Tabernacle¹⁰⁰³.

The accounts of the building of Solomon's Temple in 1Kings and 2Chronicles essentially outline the same structure: the innermost place called the Holy of Holies¹⁰⁰⁴, also called the 'Inner House'¹⁰⁰⁵; the next division is the Holy Place¹⁰⁰⁶; and then an outer porch on the eastern side corresponding to the outer Court of the Tabernacle^{1007,1008}.

The connection between the earthly Tabernacle or Temple and its counterpart in heaven is stressed little in the biblical literature until the early sixth century BCE when due to the deportation of the Israelites to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar they were physically removed from the Temple¹⁰⁰⁹. This context framed Ezekiel's visions of a heavenly temple in Ezekiel 40-46, which mentions the 'holy of holies' for the first time after the Sinai theophany and the 1Kings and 2Chronicles accounts of the building of Solomon's Temple. In these chapters, Ezekiel is taken in a vision to Israel and is shown a new temple, sitting on

⁹⁹⁸ See page 159 for more details on this text.

⁹⁹⁹ See page 167 for more details on this tradition.

¹⁰⁰⁰ J.R. Davila (2006). *The Ancient Jewish Apocalypses and the Hekhalot Literature. Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. A.D. DeConick; Elio The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the *Merkabah*.

¹⁰⁰¹ See Exodus 26:33.

¹⁰⁰² See Exodus 26:33.

¹⁰⁰³ See Exodus 27:9.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See 1Kings 6:19 and 8:6, and also 2Chronicles 3:8

¹⁰⁰⁵ See 1Kings 6:27.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See 1Kings 8:8-10

¹⁰⁰⁷ See 1Kings 6:3.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See also 2Chronicles 3 for a further description of the Temple. The Ethiopic and Ephremic texts do not appear to refer to the Temple, but rather the Tabernacle.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Daniel 1:3-4 describes the first wave of deportations, the second wave followed Jehoiakim's revolt against Nebuchadnezzar in 2Kings 24:1, 12-13, and then with the fall of Jerusalem described in 2Kings 25.

a high mountain (Ezekiel 40:2)¹⁰¹⁰. The Temple and its surroundings are surrounded by a dividing them from the surroundings. Within the wall are outer inner courts containing the temple building. The Temple contains a nave and a holy of holies, or most holy place, being described as the place for God's throne¹⁰¹¹. The components of the Tabernacle are all present here, although there are more divisions.

The understanding of Paradise is also linked with Ezekiel's visions of the Chariot Throne of God in Ezekiel 1:15-16, 22-26, 28. Rather than being located on a hill the chariot is wheeled and mobile, showing that this sacred space can be simultaneously located and portable, allowing God to be present on the high mountain, an idea with ancient Mesopotamian roots¹⁰¹², whilst being omnipresent¹⁰¹³. Another feature of Ezekiel's first vision is the fiery cloud in Ezekiel 1¹⁰¹⁴ that evokes the Sinai Theophany. Ezekiel's visions are largely replicated in Revelation 4:1-11¹⁰¹⁵.

Yared, in the *Dəggwā* passages relating to the Ark¹⁰¹⁶, connected the Sinai theophany with Zechariah's vision of a golden lampstand with seven lamps (Zechariah 4:2), implicitly interpreting this as a reference to Paradise. This is paradoxical since Zechariah's vision mentions neither the Temple, nor a threefold division. Apart from being part of the furniture of the Tabernacle¹⁰¹⁷ and the Temple¹⁰¹⁸, mentions of a lampstand in the Old Testament appear only in Zechariah 4 and Daniel 5¹⁰¹⁹. Although the direct reference to Paradise is not clear, the lampstand appears to be a symbol of divine immanence, since Zechariah interprets the lamps on the lampstand as the eyes of God¹⁰²⁰. This understanding is consistent with

¹⁰¹⁰ The vision is not strictly a heavenly one, as it is located in Israel, although at the time of the vision there was no temple in Israel, perhaps prompting some interpreters to understand it as the heavenly one. This account is possibly the source of a divergence between eschatology which focussed on the reestablishment of the earthly temple, and one which focussed on heaven. See Morray-Jones *The Temple Within*: 147.

¹⁰¹¹ See Ezekiel 40:5, 40:17, 40:28, 41:23, 43:7.

¹⁰¹² Wright *The Early History of Heaven*: 27-28.

¹⁰¹³ There maybe parallels between this idea of space and the idea of sacred and ordinary time underlying Ephrem's theological approach. See Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 29-30.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ezekiel 1:4, 13, 27.

¹⁰¹⁵ Many commentators link this with Ezekiel's visions, for instance: H.B. Swete (1907a). *The Apocalypse of St John*: 70-71; R.H. Charles (1920). *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John: Volume I: 111*; G.B. Caird (1984). *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*: 63, 64. Wright links Revelation 4 with Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6, the vision of the throne room of God Wright *The Early History of Heaven*: 134.

¹⁰¹⁶ See chapter 3 page 91.

¹⁰¹⁷ Many references in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, but the original prescription is in Exodus 25:31.

¹⁰¹⁸ 1Chronicles 28:15

¹⁰¹⁹ The lampstand in Zechariah 4 and that in Daniel 5 appear to be quite different in many ways, and in the words used to describe them in Hebrew and in Greek are quite different. Nevertheless their function appears to be similar, in that the light either represents divine presence, or at least bears witness to it.

¹⁰²⁰ Zechariah 4:10.

4Esdras 10:42¹⁰²¹ which describes God's departure from the Temple with the phrase '*the light of our lampstand has been put out*'.

The biblical accounts form the basis for an understanding of the layout of Paradise, although interest in this appears to have been dormant for many centuries after the visions of Ezekiel and Zechariah were recorded. In exactly which period interest in Paradise and its layout arose again is not known¹⁰²² but, as mentioned above, further elaborations on this subject are found in 1Enoch and Jubilees and it is these two books which will assist in developing the background to the understanding of Paradise found in the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature.

1Enoch, translated by Charles¹⁰²³ and by Knibb¹⁰²⁴, is only known in its complete form in Ethiopic. Scholarly opinion is that it was translated after the introduction of Christianity in the fourth century CE, but before the end of the Axumite period in the sixth century CE, with Greek and possibly Aramaic texts utilised in translation¹⁰²⁵. There is no extant version of it in Syriac, but Brock has shown evidence that at least excerpts may once have been known¹⁰²⁶. The origins of 1Enoch are obscure and the current text has a complex transmission history¹⁰²⁷. The relevant sections of the book for this study, however, are located in the Book of the Watchers, which comprises 1Enoch 1-36, that was completed in the middle of the third century BCE¹⁰²⁸. 1Enoch was a very influential book in the development of Jewish mystical thought, and in particular on the development of the perceptions of the location and structure of Paradise¹⁰²⁹.

¹⁰²¹ The important connection between Ark imagery and Ezra's vision of a weeping woman was discussed in detail in chapter 3 page 90.

¹⁰²² Wright comments '*the earliest Jewish idea of the dead joining god in the heavenly realms emerges only in the Hellenistic period*' and he associates this with Daniel 12:2, 2Maccabees 7:9, 11, 14, 23, 1Enoch 51:1, 61:5, and 2Esdras 7:32 Wright *The Early History of Heaven*: 86.

¹⁰²³ R.H. Charles (1997). *The Book of Enoch*, originally translated in 1912.

¹⁰²⁴ M.A. Knibb (1978a). *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus*; M.A. Knibb (1978b). *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*.

¹⁰²⁵ Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 37-39, Ullendorff, 2006 #19: 61-62; E. Isaac (1983). *New Light upon the Book of Enoch from Newly-Found Ethiopic Mss. Journal of the American Oriental Society* **103**(2): 399-411.

¹⁰²⁶ S.P. Brock (1968). *A Fragment of Enoch in Syriac. Journal of Theological Studies* **19**: 626-31.

¹⁰²⁷ See Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 1-47; Charles *The Book of Enoch*: xiii-xv; Coblentz Bautch: 252-253.

¹⁰²⁸ G.W.E. Nicklesburg (2001). *1Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108*: 7; Coblentz Bautch.

¹⁰²⁹ Morray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 203-205; Coblentz Bautch; Morray-Jones *The Temple Within*.

The book of Jubilees was originally written in Hebrew¹⁰³⁰, but is now only known in full in the Ethiopic version¹⁰³¹. Evidence shows that the Hebrew original was translated into Greek, and thence into Ethiopic and Latin, with the possibility of a Syriac translation from the Hebrew¹⁰³². Based on internal evidence, Charles argued for a dating between 135 and 105 BCE¹⁰³³, whereas more recently VanderKam preferred a date between 163-1 and 152 BCE¹⁰³⁴. Goldstein has opted for a slightly earlier date of 175-167 BCE, and identifies the author as being a spiritual and even physical ancestor of the Qumran sect¹⁰³⁵. The book is based on the books of Genesis and Exodus, although it starts not with the creation story but with a general introduction that identifies the Sinai Theophany and Moses as the sources of the inspiration. Thus it is the earliest known source giving Moses as the author of Genesis and the narrative of Exodus¹⁰³⁶. The story is ‘encased in a theological chronology’¹⁰³⁷ breaking up history into ‘weeks of years’ and ‘jubilees of years’¹⁰³⁸.

The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch¹⁰³⁹ is a second century CE Syriac text, with theological connections to 4Esdras¹⁰⁴⁰. The text asserts that it was written in Palestine, but ‘there is no compelling evidence concerning location’¹⁰⁴¹. The Syriac is a translation from a Greek, although Charles, the author of the English translation, regarded it of Hebrew origin on the

¹⁰³⁰ It is only with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls that any Hebrew fragments were identified. Qumran revealed 13 manuscripts, and palaeographic evidence dates some of the fragments to close to the time of composition, see J.C. VanderKam (1989b). *The Book of Jubilees, CSCO 511, Scriptorum Aethiopicum* 88: VI.

¹⁰³¹ See J.C. VanderKam (1989a). *The Book of Jubilees, a Critical Text, CSCO 510, Scriptorum Aethiopicum* 87: IX.

¹⁰³² Ibid.: IX. No full translation is known, but it is cited in an anonymous Syriac chronicle dated to the twelfth century CE. For more details see J.C. VanderKam (1977). *Textual Studies in the Book of Jubilees: 8-10*; VanderKam *The Book of Jubilees, CSCO 511, Scriptorum Aethiopicum* 88: XIV-XIX.

¹⁰³³ R.H. Charles (1902). *The book of Jubilees, or, The little Genesis: xiii*.

¹⁰³⁴ The *terminus ad quem* has been determined from palaeographical analysis of the Qumran fragments to between 75 and 50 BCE. The *terminus a quo* is determined by the book’s apparent reference to Maccabean social and political issues or to battles fought with neighbouring groups. If these references are genuine then the book must have been written after 167 BCE, see VanderKam *Textual Studies in the Book of Jubilees: 215-254*; VanderKam *The Book of Jubilees, CSCO 511, Scriptorum Aethiopicum* 88: V-VI.

¹⁰³⁵ The arguments are complex, but are based on evidence in the text for conflict with gentiles apparent in Palestine, placing the book after about 175 BCE, the palaeographic evidence placing it before 100 BCE, the apparent lack of awareness in the text of the decree against the Jews made by Antiochus IV in 167 BCE. See J.A. Goldstein (1983). *The Date of the Book of Jubilees. Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 63-86.

¹⁰³⁶ J.C. VanderKam (2001). *The Book of Jubilees: 21-22*.

¹⁰³⁷ Ibid.: 26

¹⁰³⁸ i.e. seven and forty-nine year periods, Ibid.: 26.

¹⁰³⁹ This is to be distinguished from the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Baruch, which is quite different in content, for this see Leslau’s *Falasha Anthology* W. Leslau (1951). *Falasha Anthology: 57-76*. A section from it is discussed on page 201.

¹⁰⁴⁰ B. Violet (1924). *Die Apokalypsen des Esra und des Baruch in Duetscher Gestalt, mit Textvorshlägen für Esra und Baruch von H. Gressmann*; P. Bogaert (1969). *Apocalypse de Baruch, Sources chrétiennes no. 144, 145: 21*; W. Harnisch (1969). *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte*; F.J. Murphy (1985). *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch: 1-2*.

¹⁰⁴¹ Murphy: 2.

basis of its affinity with 4Esdras, and textual analysis¹⁰⁴². Bogaert¹⁰⁴³ as well as Toy and Ginzberg¹⁰⁴⁴, identified in it an eschatological dichotomy, with contrasting national messianic and more transcendent expectations, the latter being more important, with the opening of the book 4:2-7 expressing hope in a heavenly Temple, but later in 6:7-9 this is transferred to hope in a reconstructed earthly Jerusalem. This is similar to the conflict between what Daniélou perceives as material and earthly Judaeo-Christian eschatology focussing on reconstructed Jerusalem and a more transcendent eschatology that had associations with Greek thought¹⁰⁴⁵. Other scholars see this dichotomy arising within Jewish mystical movements, and associate it with developments following the destruction of the First and Second Temples that encouraged a focus on revelations given to the prophets about Paradise¹⁰⁴⁶. The dichotomy also points to some of the material in the book originating from before the destruction of the Second Temple, and other material from afterwards, placing its date in the late first century CE, shortly after the destruction of the second temple¹⁰⁴⁷. Charles identified some sixty-six passages of 2Baruch with connections to 4Ezra¹⁰⁴⁸, suggesting strong links between the two, but he rejected any suggestion that they were written by the same person¹⁰⁴⁹. He was uncertain as to which of 2Baruch and 4Ezra was written first, offering persuasive arguments for either case¹⁰⁵⁰.

The ideas of the structure of Paradise in 1Enoch are clearly connected with Ezekiel's vision, although in the former 1Enoch there is no confusion as to whether the vision is of a future place in this world, or in Paradise. Enoch's vision is clearly located outside this world, or at least on its periphery describing places that are inaccessible to humankind. By contrast Ezekiel's vision, which was influential for accounts of visionary journeys in the Second Temple period texts, focuses on the Temple mount and Jerusalem, 1Enoch greatly extends this idea, incorporating references to places in Upper Galilee, notably Hermon and Dan¹⁰⁵¹, extending the concept of sacred space to include such areas inhabited by common people¹⁰⁵². In the second part of the Book of Watchers the vision is of places that are on the edge of the

¹⁰⁴² R.H. Charles (1913b). *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English: Volume II Pseudepigrapha: 472-474.*

¹⁰⁴³ Bogaert.

¹⁰⁴⁴ C.H. Toy and L. Ginzberg (1906). *Baruch, Apocalypse of (Syriac)*. The Jewish Encyclopedia. C. Adler, W. Bacher and D. Gottard: 551

¹⁰⁴⁵ Daniélou: 377-408.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Morray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part I: The Jewish Sources*; Coblenz Bautch; Lieber; Morray-Jones *The Temple Within; Elixir Jewish Mysticism: The Infinite Expression of Freedom.*

¹⁰⁴⁷ Toy and Ginzberg; Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition)*: 286.

¹⁰⁴⁸ R.H. Charles (1929). *The Apocalypse of Baruch: With an Introduction by W.O.E Oesterley*: 170-71.

¹⁰⁴⁹ R.H. Charles (1913a). 2 Baruch The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch the Son of Neriah. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*: 481-524: 477. See also T.W. Willet (1989). *Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra: 121-125.*

¹⁰⁵⁰ Charles 2 Baruch The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch the Son of Neriah: 477.

¹⁰⁵¹ 1Enoch 13:7

¹⁰⁵² Coblenz Bautch: 250.

known world, and it is in the mountains located in these places that Paradise is to be found¹⁰⁵³.

1Enoch 14 reproduces the same basic idea of a threefold division of Paradise identified in Ezekiel, etc. First there is an outer wall around the Garden dividing an outer world from an inner one: *'And I proceeded until I came near to a wall which was built of hailstones, and a tongue of fire surrounded it, and it began to make me afraid'*¹⁰⁵⁴ the presence of fire also evoking the Sinai Theophany. Inside this wall there is a large house: *'And I went into the tongue of fire and came near to a large house which was built of hailstones, and the wall of that house (was) like a mosaic (made) of hailstones, and its floor (was) snow'*¹⁰⁵⁵. There is then a second house seen from inside the first, which contains the throne of God¹⁰⁵⁶: *'And behold, another house.....And I looked and I saw in it a high throne,And He who is great in glory sat on it,*¹⁰⁵⁷, in a reference which evokes Ezekiel 1.

In a further description of Paradise, found in 1Enoch 24-25, a tree covered mountain that has the Tree of Life at its middle is also identified with the Throne of God. In a threefold division, the land outside the mountain range is the outer area, the inner area is represented by seven mountains, with one special mountain at their centre:

*And (there was) a seventh mountain in the middle of these, and in their height they were all like the seat of a throne, and fragrant trees surrounded it. And there was among them a tree such as I have never smelt, and none of them nor any others were like it: it smells more fragrant than any fragrance, and its leaves and its flowers and its wood never wither; its fruit (is) good, and its fruit (is) like the bunches of dates on a palm. And then I said: 'Behold, this beautiful tree! Beautiful to look at and pleasant (are) its leaves, and its fruit very delightful in appearance.' And then Michael, one of the holy and honoured angels who was with me and (was) in charge of them, answered me.*¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵³ Ibid.: 251.

¹⁰⁵⁴ 1Enoch 14:9 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 98; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus*: 50. See also Charles *The Book of Enoch*: 41.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 1Enoch 14:10 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 98; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus*: 50. See also Charles *The Book of Enoch*: 41

¹⁰⁵⁶
¹⁰⁵⁷ 1Enoch 14: 15-20 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 99; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus*: 52-3. See also Charles *The Book of Enoch*: 41-2.

¹⁰⁵⁸ 1Enoch 24:3-5 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus*: 112-14; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*: 85-90. See also Charles *The Book of Enoch*.

The Book of Jubilees also identifies the Garden of Eden, which is also the future paradise of the righteous, with the heavenly sanctuary. In a brief statement Jubilees 8:19 mentions the Garden of Eden as the *'holy of holies'*, and also calls it the *'dwelling of the Lord'*:

He [Noah] knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and is the residence of the Lord; (that) Mt. Sinai is in the middle of the desert; and (that) Mt. Zion is in the middle of the navel of the earth. The three of them – the one facing the other – were created holy (places).¹⁰⁵⁹

2Baruch does not specify the divisions of Paradise, but maintains the idea that the Ark and other furniture in the Tabernacle are replicas of heavenly things, akin to Hebrews 8:5 and 9:23. In Exodus 25:40 Moses is warned that the furniture is to be made according to the plan that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. 2Baruch states that Moses was given a vision of Paradise¹⁰⁶⁰, and also demonstrates the perception of Paradise as a pre-existent reality that Daniélou has pointed out as being typical of Judaeo-Christian thought¹⁰⁶¹:

And the Lord said unto me: 'This city shall be delivered up for a time, And the people shall be chastened during a time, And the world will not be given over to oblivion. Dost you think that this is that city of which I said: "On the palms of My hands have I graven you"? This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with Me, that which prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed Adam before he sinned, but when he transgressed the commandment it was removed from him, as also Paradise. And after these things I showed it to My servant Abraham by night among the portions of the victims¹⁰⁶². And again also I showed it to Moses on Mount Sinai when I showed to the likeness of the tabernacle and all its vessels. And now, behold, it is preserved with Me, as Paradise. Go, therefore, and do as I command you.'¹⁰⁶³

This passage resonates with the opening of the *Kābra Nagašt* where the members of the Trinity gather to discuss salvation, a passage which also links this place with the revelations that were given to Abraham and in particular to Moses¹⁰⁶⁴. Later in 2Baruch the following reference to the Heavenly Zion is found:

'And the bright fourth waters which you have seen are the advent of Moses and Aaron and Miriam and Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb and of all those like them. For at that time the lamp of the eternal law shone on all those who sat in darkness, which announced to them that believe the promise of their reward, and to them that deny, the torment of fire which is reserved for them. But also the heavens at that time were shaken from their place, and those who were under the throne of the Mighty One were perturbed, when He was taking Moses

¹⁰⁵⁹ Jubilees 8:19. VanderKam *The Book of Jubilees, CSCO 511, Scriptorum Aethiopicarum 88: 53*. See also Charles *The book of Jubilees, or, The little Genesis: 71-2*

¹⁰⁶⁰ 2Baruch 4:6, Charles 2 Baruch *The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch the Son of Neriah*.

¹⁰⁶¹ Daniélou: 297.

¹⁰⁶² This appears to be a reference to Melchizedek bringing out bread and wine to Abraham after his victory over the captors of Lot in Gen 14. The *andāmta* on Gen 14 does not pick up this allusion.

¹⁰⁶³ 2Baruch 4:1-7 Charles 2 Baruch *The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch the Son of Neriah*.

¹⁰⁶⁴ See page 114.

*unto Himself. For He showed him many admonitions together with the principles of the law and the consummation of the times, as also to you, and likewise the pattern of Zion and its measures, in the pattern of which the sanctuary of the present time was to be made.*¹⁰⁶⁵

In this passage, the connection made specifically to ‘Zion’ resonates with the Ethiopic material. The pattern is not only of a heavenly sanctuary but of a place called ‘Zion’ which was revealed to Moses. It is this very idea that Yared conveys when he says of Zion, ‘*Moses also saw her on the mountain*’¹⁰⁶⁶. The literary affinities that exist between 2Baruch and 4Esdras¹⁰⁶⁷ indicate that the former does not constitute an independent source for the idea of the Heavenly Zion.

The Jewish mystical literature, discussed later in this chapter¹⁰⁶⁸, draws on 1Enoch to maintain the idea of the division of heaven, although in some later literature the threefold division develops into a more elaborate sevenfold schema¹⁰⁶⁹.

The Judaeo-Christian perception of Paradise envisages a pre-existent eschatological reality guarded by God, concepts that are articulated in 1Enoch, and 2Baruch:

*Thus the holy city, like Paradise, belongs to those realities which were first to be created, and which God holds in safe keeping in his presence. This is exactly the case with Paradise in 1Enoch.....Thus the Son of Man, Paradise and the Holy City all belong to a group of realities created in the very beginning, the memory of which was to be persevered in Jewish tradition: ‘Seven things were created before the creation of the world: the Law, Repentance, Paradise, Hell, the Throne of Glory, the Sanctuary and the Name of the Messiah’ The pre-existence of the Sanctuary is manifestly a Jewish apocalyptic theme which Christian apocalyptic later applied to the Church.*¹⁰⁷⁰

The Tree of Life

1Enoch also features a high mountain, on which is located a significant tree, which is connected with the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life, originally planted in Paradise¹⁰⁷¹, and the

¹⁰⁶⁵ 2Baruch 59:1-4 Charles 2 Baruch The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch the Son of Neriah.

¹⁰⁶⁶ See Appendix B, page 212, line 81.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See page 160.

¹⁰⁶⁸ See page 167.

¹⁰⁶⁹ The threefold division being: ‘within the *soreg*’ (the *soreg* being the wall around the inner temple), the sanctuary building and the Holy of Holies. The more complex system adds the Court of Women, the Court of Israel, the Court of Priests, and ‘Beyond the altar’ between the *soreg* and the sanctuary building. Morray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 205. The three levels of heaven occur in Zoroastrianism, whereas the Greek and Romans traditions imagined seven levels, probably corresponding to the seven planetary spheres. See Wright *The Early History of Heaven: 108*. Morray-Jones argues that the earlier threefold division of Paradise is affirmed by Paul when he states in 2Corinthians 12:2 that he was ‘*caught up to the third heaven*’. See C.R.A. Morray-Jones (1993b). *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance. The Harvard Theological Review* **86**(3): 265-292.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Daniélou: 297-298.

¹⁰⁷¹ Genesis 2:9.

cause of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise¹⁰⁷², is only mentioned in the Bible in the Genesis account and in Revelation¹⁰⁷³, where it is again located in Paradise, with its fruit serving as food that is a reward for the faithful¹⁰⁷⁴, and also having with therapeutic properties¹⁰⁷⁵. References to the Tree of Life as the source of sustenance in Paradise are sparse in the Church Fathers, but do occur in 1Enoch, where the following quotation talks of a fragrant tree in Paradise, which is to be given as food for the elect. In doing so it bears a startling resemblance to the Eucharistic ideas expressed in the literature used in this study:

*And said to me: 'Enoch why do you ask me about the fragrance of this tree, and (why) do you inquire to learn?' Then I, Enoch, answered Him, saying: 'I wish to learn about everything, but especially about this tree.' And he answered me, saying: 'This high mountain which you saw whose summit is like the throne of the Lord, is the throne where the Holy and Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit when he comes down to visit the earth for good. And this beautiful fragrant tree - and no (creature of) flesh has authority to touch it until the great judgement when he will take vengeance on all and will bring (everything) to a consummation for ever - this will be given to the righteous and humble. From its fruit life will be given to the chosen; towards the north it will be planted, in a holy place, by the house of the Lord, the Eternal King.'*¹⁰⁷⁶

The symbolism of the Tree of Life needs special attention since, although it features in the schemes for the layout of Paradise, in the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature it is connected with the Cross. The *andamta* on 1Enoch makes this connection explicit, stating that the Tree mentioned in 1Enoch 25 is the Cross which will give life to the elect¹⁰⁷⁷. 1Enoch appears to be the primary source of this understanding of the paradisaic feast, leading Charles to suggest that the imagery of Revelation is linked to 1Enoch¹⁰⁷⁸. In Jewish mystical thought, inspired by 1Enoch, what is now and fallen is linked with the Tree of Knowledge, whereas direct contact with God in the future is connected with the Tree of Life¹⁰⁷⁹. 1Enoch's perception of the mountain of paradise, on which is found both God's throne and the Tree, describes it

¹⁰⁷² Genesis 3:22,24.

¹⁰⁷³ There is an elaborate description of a great tree in Eden amongst other smaller trees in Ezekiel 31. This tree is, however, identified as a source of evil influence, and a symbol of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Revelation 2:7, Revelation 22:14

¹⁰⁷⁵ Revelation 22:2

¹⁰⁷⁶ 1Enoch 25:1-5 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary: 113-114*; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus: 88-89*. See also \Charles, 1997 #361}.

¹⁰⁷⁷ d'Abbadie 161 M. Chaîne (1912). *Catalogue des Manuscrits Éthiopiens de la Collection Antione d'Abbadie: 97*. The commentary has 24:3 «ወሳብዕ ደብር ማእከሉም ለእሎንቱ። ሰባተኛው ተራራ ደብረ ሲና ነው አንድም ቀራንዮ ነው», 'And the seventh mountain was in the midst of them. The seventh mountain is Mount Sinai; ANDM it is *qarānāyo*', and 24:4 «ወሀሉ እምወስቱቶሙ ዕዕ ኢታምልክ በርሳቸው ይፀናል አንድም መስቀል በርሳቸው ይፀናል», 'and there was in their midst a tree, do not worship [it], it is one strong amongst them; ANDM the Cross is strong amongst them', on page 35 of the manuscript.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Charles *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John: Volume I: 107*.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Elior *Jewish Mysticism: The Infinite Expression of Freedom: 18, 98*.

as *'burning day and night'*¹⁰⁸⁰ thus evoking the Sinai Theophany¹⁰⁸¹, as Coblentz Bautch, stated, *'whilst this particular [Enochic] tradition with allusion to a tree of life might bring to mind first the garden in Eden of Genesis, the Enochic authors also seem to have in mind Sinai traditions from Exodus'*¹⁰⁸². This unique association between the Tree of Life and the Mosaic understanding of Paradise also occurs in the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature intimating potential influence from Jewish mystical traditions.

The Judaeo-Christian *Odes of Solomon* provide a further important source of understanding of the place and function of the Tree of Life¹⁰⁸³. Daniélou articulates a seminal connection between them and the 'Ephremic' understanding of Paradise, stating that *'the Odes attach great importance to descriptions of Paradise'* and *'this theology of Paradise was to remain a characteristic of Eastern Syria; it recurs in Ephraem'*¹⁰⁸⁴. The *Odes'* complex imagery involves many oblique references to trees, and nourishment. Thus *Ode I* mentions that the Lord's fruits bring salvation:

*The Lord is on my head like a crown,
And I Shall never be without Him.
Plaited for me is the crown of truth,
And it caused Thy branches to blossom in me.
For it is no like a parched crown that blossoms not;
But Thou livest upon my head,
And have blossomed upon me
Thy fruits are full and complete;
They are full of Thy salvation.*¹⁰⁸⁵

Ode XI's specific reference to Paradise, in what appears to be an account of a heavenly ascent, is one of the earliest references in Christian literature to it being a place of eschatological hope¹⁰⁸⁶. The description of Paradise as a place rich with fragrant fruit-bearing trees providing nourishment for the elect resembles 1Enoch 25:

*And He took me to His Paradise,
wherein is the wealth of the Lord's pleasure.
I beheld blooming and fruit-bearing trees,
And self-grown was their crown.
Their branches were sprouting
And their fruits were shining.
From an immortal land were their roots.*

¹⁰⁸⁰ 1Enoch 18:6 Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 2: Introduction, Translation and Commentary: 104*; Knibb *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments. 1: Text and Apparatus: 68*.

¹⁰⁸¹ For instance Exodus 19:18, *'Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently'*.

¹⁰⁸² Coblentz Bautch: 259-60.

¹⁰⁸³ For the background to these see chapter 4 page 120.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Daniélou: 32.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Charlesworth: 17.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition): 254*.

*And a river of gladness was irrigating them,
 And round about them in the land of eternal life.
 Then I worshipped the Lord because of His magnificence.
 And I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they
 Who are planted in Thy land,
 And who have a place in Thy Paradise;
 And who grow in the growth of Thy trees,
 And have passed from darkness into light.
 Behold, all Thy labourers are fair,
 They who work good works,
 And turn from wickedness to Thy pleasantness.
 For they turned away from themselves the bitterness of the trees,
 When they were planted in Thy land.
 And everyone was like Thy remnant.
 Blessed are the workers of Thy waters,
 And the eternal memorial of Thy faithful servants.
 Indeed, there is much room in Thy Paradise.
 And there is nothing in it which is barren,
 But everything is filled with fruit.
 Glory be to Thee, O God, the delight of Paradise for ever.¹⁰⁸⁷*

Although the Eucharist is not mentioned, the implication of this *Ode* is that the fruits of Paradise are eternal food for those who enter. Jewish literature in the early Christian era maintained the idea of the elect being nourished by the Tree of Life, a concept that probably drew on 1Enoch¹⁰⁸⁸. 4Esdras 8:52 mentions the Tree being shown to Ezra, implying that it is planted for the future sustenance of the elect¹⁰⁸⁹. The rabbinic literature also alludes to a heavenly meal, which signifies the breaking down of boundaries between mankind and God, where the participants were understood to feast on the *shekinah* itself. These ideas probably derived from an exegesis of Exodus 24:11, where the chief men of Israel see God on Sinai and eat and drink, but no direct connection is made with the Tree of Life¹⁰⁹⁰.

The location and the function of the Tree are closely linked in 1Enoch, 4Esdras, Revelation and the *Odes of Solomon*. Its imagery shows a transition beginning in the Jewish literature, progressing in Revelation and transferring into an early Judaeo-Christian source. This sequence perhaps underpins the conjecture that the transmission of these ideas into Judaeo-Christian literature was not through direct contact with Jewish writers. Instead, a shared intellectual environment stimulated both Jewish and Christian writers in the early centuries CE to produce a variety of interpretations. The Judaeo-Christian literature sought to

¹⁰⁸⁷ *The Odes of Solomon XI:16-24* Charlesworth.

¹⁰⁸⁸ These Jewish texts include the *Testament of Levi 18:11*, the *Apocalypse of Moses 28:4* and the *Apocalypse of Elijah 5:6*, D.E. Aune (1997). *Word Biblical Commentary: Volume 52A, Revelation 1-5: 152-153*.

¹⁰⁸⁹ 4 Esdras 2:12, 'The tree of life shall give them fragrant perfume, and they shall neither toil nor become weary.' 4 Esdras 8:52, 'because it is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand.'

¹⁰⁹⁰ Lieber: 336-339.

associate the Tree of Life with the Cross, employing the multi-semiotic meaning of words connecting the Tree, wood, and the Cross¹⁰⁹¹.

The Throne of God

The throne of God is another important feature located in Paradise. The concept of the Chariot Throne of God was developed in the Jewish *merkabah* mystical system¹⁰⁹², from several foundational Old Testament texts, including Exodus 25, Ezekiel 1, and 1Chronicles 28:18¹⁰⁹³. Details of the design for the Ark of the Covenant are given in Exodus 25:18-21. There is no specific mention of a chariot, but the construction is described like a seat or throne with the mercy seat on top, flanked by Cherubim. The same information is given in 1Chronicles 28:18 regarding the design of Solomon's Temple, which is now described as *'the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD'*. God's throne in the Temple appears again in Isaiah 6:1 *'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple'* here accompanied by Seraphim. As Jon Levenson pointed out, an important feature of Isaiah's visions is that, *'Isaiah is privileged to see the difference between the earthly antitype and the heavenly archetype disappear: iconography becomes the reality it symbolizes'*¹⁰⁹⁴. This merging of identity is also characteristic of the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature, where it is frequently unclear whether a passage is referring to this world or to Paradise. The vision in Ezekiel 1 of a fantastic wheeled vehicle surrounded by winged creatures¹⁰⁹⁵ completes the final part of the Old Testament picture of the Chariot Throne. The graphic imagery evokes a chariot, but the interpretation is only made explicit in Sirach 49:8 which explains that *'it was Ezekiel who saw the vision of glory, which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim'* identifying the mysterious vehicle with a chariot, and the creatures with the Cherubim. Sirach's interpretation implies that God's throne in Ezekiel's vision is mirrored by the Ark on its chariot throne surrounded by cherubim in the Temple or Tabernacle¹⁰⁹⁶.

The Old Testament references to the Chariot Throne of God, particularly in Exodus 25, 1Chronicles 28¹⁰⁹⁷ Ezekiel 1 also point to a further highly significant connection. These passages, in particular Ezekiel's vision of the chariot throne of God, provided the primary inspiration for the Jewish *merkabah* mystical tradition¹⁰⁹⁸, that was also associated with the

¹⁰⁹¹ See chapter 4, page 126, for further details.

¹⁰⁹² See page 167 for a discussion on this.

¹⁰⁹³ Elior *The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the Merkabah*: 83. See also Wright *The Early History of Heaven*: 84-85

¹⁰⁹⁴ J.D. Levenson (1986). The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience'. *From the Bible through the Middle Ages (vol. 1 of Jewish Spirituality)*. A. Green: 54.

¹⁰⁹⁵ In particular Ezekiel 1:15-16, 22-26, 28.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Wright *The Early History of Heaven*: 85; Elior *The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the Merkabah*.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See page 167.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Elior *The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the Merkabah*: 83.

mystical ascent of Enoch as described in 1 Enoch 14 and 15¹⁰⁹⁹ and with Moses' vision on Sinai¹¹⁰⁰. Gershom Scholem dated the *merkabah* texts to the late talmudic and post-talmudic period¹¹⁰¹, after the late fourth or early fifth centuries CE¹¹⁰². His views prevailed in the study of Jewish mysticism throughout the second part of the twentieth century¹¹⁰³, but were revised in light of the discovery, in 1947, of the Dead Sea Scroll literature, which placed the origin of *merkabah* texts in the last few centuries BCE¹¹⁰⁴. In particular the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (Shirot 'Olat Hashabat)*¹¹⁰⁵, a previously unknown text, was considered to be 'part of an ancient priestly library that revealed the mystical-liturgical-angelic foundations of the *merkabah* tradition and illuminated its links to Ezekiel's vision and to priestly-angelic ritual'¹¹⁰⁶. On seeing the text of the *Songs*, Scholem himself acknowledged that 'these fragments [of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*] leave no doubt that there is connection between the oldest Hebrew *Merkabah* texts preserved in Qumram and the subsequent development of *Merkabah* mysticism as preserved in the *Hekhalot*¹¹⁰⁷ texts'¹¹⁰⁸.

This radical shift in the dating of the antiquity of *merkabah* literature has direct implications for this study on 'Ephremic' and Ethiopic literature. Whereas Scholem's original dating would provide little bearing on the development of Ethiopic literature, and would be of no significance to Ephrem, the revised dating opens up two possible trajectories: one indirect and one direct. The subsequent development of the Jewish mystical traditions in the early centuries CE may have arisen in an environment that led to it exhibiting similarities and shared influences with the Syriac and Ethiopic Christian traditions. On the other hand, that the *merkabah* tradition may itself have been a direct influence on these Christian traditions.

Merkabah texts exhibit several distinctive characteristics, which are also present in the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' traditions. Firstly the reference to Ezekiel's vision of the chariot

¹⁰⁹⁹ Elijah *Jewish Mysticism: The Infinite Expression of Freedom*: 25.

¹¹⁰⁰ Morray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 180.

¹¹⁰¹ G. Scholem (1941). *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*: 40-79.

¹¹⁰² This view was probably formulated on the basis of the documentary evidence that was available at the time of his research. For further information on the redaction of the earliest editions of the Talmud, the Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud (probably redacted in Tiberias in the late fourth and early fifth centuries CE), and the Babylonian Talmud (probably redacted in Persia at between the late fifth and late eighth centuries CE) see C.E. Fonrobert and M.S. Jaffee (2007). *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*: xix.

¹¹⁰³ Elijah The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the *Merkabah*: 84.

¹¹⁰⁴ Morray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources*; Elijah The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the *Merkabah*: 84.

¹¹⁰⁵ For the English translation, see C. Newsom (1985). *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, Harvard Semitic Studies No. 27.*

¹¹⁰⁶ Elijah The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the *Merkabah*: 87-88.

¹¹⁰⁷ These texts are later Jewish mystical works composed in Israel during the Mishnaic and talmudic era, and also in the Roman-Byzantine period. See *Ibid.*: 84.

¹¹⁰⁸ G. Scholem (1965). *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition (2nd ed.)*: 128.

throne of God, which is seen in both the *Dəggwā* and in Ephrem¹¹⁰⁹. Secondly, as Rachel Elior states, ‘they are replete with references to angels and cherubim fulfilling a liturgical role’¹¹¹⁰, characteristics also shared with the *Dəggwā* and Ephrem’s hymns. Thirdly, the *merkabah* texts have a distinct chronological framework, based on the calendar attributed to Enoch, with its divisions of Sabbaths and seasons¹¹¹¹. This characteristic emerges also in the *Dəggwā* in its overall statement of purpose: ‘for the feasts and Sabbaths, and the season of flowers’¹¹¹² and the harvest season¹¹¹³, of the rainy season¹¹¹⁴ and the dry season^{1115, 1116}. The *Dəggwā* contains all the prescribed songs for all seasons, for all festivals, and all common days of worship. This arrangement was possibly also true of Ephrem’s hymns in their original format, although the versions now available group his hymns thematically rather than based around the liturgical calendar¹¹¹⁷. Fourthly the rabbinic idea of the *merkabah* in talmudic and midrashic literature, is identified with the chariot vision in Ezekiel 1 as well as with the Sinai theophany, and hence with the revelation of the Torah¹¹¹⁸. In this light, Peter Schäfer has explained, ‘we are dealing with a [rabbinic] tradition that associates the “original” revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai with any successful interpretation of the Torah (in the widest sense of the word)’¹¹¹⁹. This propensity to associate revelations with the Sinai Theophany is also a feature of the ‘Ephremic’ literature and the *Dəggwā*¹¹²⁰. These four elements suggest that the *Dəggwā* and ‘Ephremic’ literature display significant parallels with *merkabah* texts, perhaps indicating that the traditions evolved out of similar Judaic interpretative traditions.

Murray-Jones’ detailed study of the rabbinic *ma’aseh merkabah*¹¹²¹ provided evidence of more direct interaction, leading him to conclude:

...the data suggests that esoteric traditions associated with the vision of God’s *kabod*¹¹²², including the mystical practice of “heavenly ascents” were inherited

¹¹⁰⁹ See page 181

¹¹¹⁰ Elior *The Emergence of the Mystical Traditions of the Merkabah: 90-91*.

¹¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: 92-93.

¹¹¹² The season after the end of the rainy season from September until December.

¹¹¹³ The short rainy season and harvest time from April till July.

¹¹¹⁴ The rainy season from July till September.

¹¹¹⁵ The dry season from January till March.

¹¹¹⁶ This quotation is found as a prologue in several *Dəggwā* manuscripts including MYS022

¹¹¹⁷ The available editions of Ephrem’s hymns were compiled under various subject titles in the sixth century so the chronology of his hymns remains unknown, see Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian: 18*.

¹¹¹⁸ Murray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources*.

¹¹¹⁹ P. Schäfer (2009). *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism: 189*.

¹¹²⁰ See chapter 3 page 84.

¹¹²¹ ‘The Deed of the Chariot’ or the ‘The Work of the Chariot’ which is a theme in the Rabbinic literature Murray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 179.

¹¹²² The *kabod*, with its root in the Hebrew for heavy, is associated with God’s glory and divine essence C.R.A. Murray-Jones (1992). *Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah*

*from apocalyptic circles and enthusiastically developed by some Tannaim but opposed by others, mainly because these traditions were also being developed by groups whom they regarded as heretical (including Christians and Gnostics).*¹¹²³

He identified specific Jewish texts connected with the *merkabah* tradition, which Christians interpreted as referring to the person of Christ, an interpretation that Jews would have considered controversial¹¹²⁴. In the book of 3Enoch¹¹²⁵, the man Enoch is transformed into a glorious figure, who is directly associated with the *kabod* and functions as an intermediary power in heaven, along with YHWH, in a manner reminiscent of Christian writings:

I was enlarged and increased in size till I matched the world in length and breadth. (9:2)

...the Holy One, blessed be He, fashioned for me a majestic robe, in which all kinds of luminaries were set, and He clothed me in it. He fashioned for me a glorious cloak in which brightness, brilliance, splendour, and lustre of every kind were fixed, and He wrapped me in it. He fashioned for me a kingly crown... and He called me 'The Lesser YHWH' in the presence of His whole household in the height, as it is written, 'My name is in him'. (12:1-5)

*When the Holy One, blessed be He, took me to serve the Throne of Glory, the wheels of the Merkabah and all the needs of the Shekhinah, at once my flesh turned to flame, my sinews to blazing fire, my bones to juniper coals, my eyelashes to lightning flashes, my eyeballs to fiery torches, the hairs of my head to hot flames, all my limbs to wings of burning fire, and the substance of my body to blazing fire. On my right – those who cleave flames of fire-on my left – burning brands – round me swept wind, tempest and storm; and the roar of earthquake upon earthquake was before and behind me. (15:1f)*¹¹²⁶

Murray-Jones opined that, '*this seems to be a theologically sanitized version of a tradition according to which the ascending hero becomes identified with the kabod*', i.e. God's glory¹¹²⁷, and as such could be Christ, incorporating both human and divine nature. The same interpretation may occur in Pauline and Johannine New Testament literature where Christ himself becomes directly associated with God's glory, viz: John 1:14, a text already associated in this study with the *shekinah*, '*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth*' ; 2Corinthians 4:4, '*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the*

Tradition. Journal of Jewish Studies 43: 1-31: 3; Murray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 179-180

¹¹²³ Murray-Jones *Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources.* : 184.

¹¹²⁴ Murray-Jones *Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition.*

¹¹²⁵ 3Enoch, or *Sefer Hekhalot* ('The Book of the Palaces') is 'a late fusion of Hekhalot and apocalyptic narrative traditions' although the precise date is not known M.D. Swartz (2007). *Jewish Visionary Tradition in Rabbinic Literature. The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature.* C.E. Fonrobert and M.S. Jaffee: 208.

¹¹²⁶ 3Enoch in Murray-Jones *Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition.*

¹¹²⁷ *Ibid.*: 11.

image of God ; and Colossians 2:9, *'For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily'*. The following passage from Hebrews 1:2-4 seems to emphasise all of these elements:

...but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the Name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

The aforementioned passages from 3Enoch 9, 12 and 15 also have a name-theology, that associates Christ with the name YHWH in a similar manner to Hebrews 1. Discussing this theology, Daniélou considered it to be:

*... connected with the stream of Jewish apocalyptic, but it is important to notice that the documents in which the Name assumes the character of a true hypostasis are fairly late, the most notable examples being III Enoch and the Apocalypse of Abraham.*¹¹²⁸

This name-theology is also subtly evident in the *Odes of Solomon XXII:6*: *'Thou wert there and helped me, and in every place Thy name surrounded me'*¹¹²⁹ where the 'name' is associated with the presence of Christ.

Murray-Jones¹¹³⁰ argues that it is this very similarity with Christian thought regarding the theology of the Name, and the glory or *kabod* of God associated with the developments of the *merkabah* tradition that led some Jewish authorities to be cautious of the tradition. It seems possible that developments in *merkabah* mysticism and those in the Syriac and Ethiopic Christianity regarding the interpretation of paradisaic visions drew simultaneous inspiration from a common environment; there may have been some direct interaction.

Both Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' traditions appear to draw heavily on the ascent tradition. *Hymns on Paradise V:5* contains a rare description by Ephrem that appears to be an ascent to Paradise:

*Both the bridge and the gate of Paradise did I find in this book.
I crossed over and entered;
My eye indeed remained outside but my mind entered within.
I began to wander amid things not described....*¹¹³¹

Some important pieces of background information about Yared also indicate that it was understood that he took part in a heavenly ascent¹¹³², connecting him with this same tradition.

¹¹²⁸ Daniélou: 148.

¹¹²⁹ Charlesworth: 90.

¹¹³⁰ Murray-Jones *Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition*.

¹¹³¹ Brock St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Hymns on Paradise: 103-104*.

In the following sections, therefore, this chapter seeks to outline the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ understanding of Paradise, seeking to demonstrate how this Judaeo-Christian perception of Paradise has shaped that of the ‘Ephremic’ and Ethiopic traditions. Firstly, the perception of Paradise as a pre-existent eschatological reality will be outlined, demonstrating how it correlates with the Jewish thought of the early centuries CE. Secondly, the geography of Paradise, including its location relative to this world and its threefold division as described in the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature will be presented, leading to conclusions regarding the design of Ethiopic churches. Thirdly Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ descriptions of the Chariot Throne will be used to link Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature with the *merkabah* mystical tradition. Fourthly, the function of the Tree of Life as the prototype for the Eucharist feast, both in this world and in Paradise will be discussed, again linking it with the Enochic literature. Finally, the manner in which these ideas have developed in the *andāmtā* and in the *Kəbra Nagaśt* will be discussed, to demonstrate how paradisaic understanding has developed in tandem with the increasing focus on the Ark of the Covenant demonstrated in chapters 3 and 4, resulting in the Ark being perceived as a concrete reality that brings salvation, rather than merely as a symbol.

The Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ View of Paradise

Ethiopic tradition preserves the Jewish-Christian idea of Paradise as a pre-existent eschatological reality. The *some deggwā*¹¹³³, in the reading for Mondays, makes an oblique reference to Zion as a heavenly place, implying that Zion was made shortly after the establishment of Heaven, but before other things in the creation. Yared also connects Zion with the vision of the Tabernacle shown to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24); with Jacob’s vision of a heavenly ladder in Genesis 28:10-22); and with Psalm 132 (131):8-14 where God tells David of Zion, His eternal resting place. Each of these is presented as a vision of Paradise, and the Zion mentioned in this *Dəggwā* is not on earth but in heaven:

*Before Zion He established Heaven,
and then He showed Moses the service he should perform for the Tabernacle.
Jacob also said, ‘I saw a heavenly ladder, and the house of God is built here,
the sanctuary was built in the highest heaven.
David also said: This is my resting place forever, in this place I will dwell,
because I have chosen her.’*¹¹³⁴

Chapter 1 of the *Kəbra Nagaśt* also talks of the creation of the *Heavenly Zion* before the creation of man, so the model for the Ark is such a pre-existing reality:

*For the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in unison and with agreement and
with equality made the Heavenly Zion as the dwelling place of their glory. And*

¹¹³² See discussion in chapter 2, page 33. For a critical edition of the ገደል ያራድ, *gadla yāred*, or *The Acts of Yared* see Conti Rossini *Gadla Yared*.

¹¹³³ This is part of the *Dəggwā* written for use during fasting seasons.

¹¹³⁴ Anonymous (?). ጸመ ድን ዘቅዱስ ያራድ, *some deggwā*: 18

*then the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness,"*¹¹³⁵

The connection between the Paradise of the elect and the Garden of Eden is enhanced in the Syriac tradition by the Peshitta translation of Genesis 2:8¹¹³⁶, and in the Targumim, as Brock has pointed out:

*The Septuagint (followed by all the standard modern translations) renders the Hebrew miqqedem as "to the East," the Peshitta and the two Targum traditions, Palestinian and Babylonian, take the word as having temporal, rather than spatial reference, "from the beginning," that is, belonging to primordial or sacred time.*¹¹³⁷

This ontological perspective is reflected in Ephrem's Commentary on Genesis 2:5 where the text reads, 'the Lord had **previously** planted Paradise in Eden and there He placed Adam whom He had fashioned'¹¹³⁸. Ephrem elucidates that, 'Eden is the land of Paradise and [Moses] said **previously** because God had [already] planted it on the third day'¹¹³⁹. Although this idea clearly underlies Ephrem's perception of Paradise, it is not explicit in the hymns. *Hymns on Paradise* VIII:9 articulates that the original garden from which Adam was expelled is the same as the one to which he and others will return:

*When Adam was in all things complete,
Then the Lord took him and placed him in Paradise.
The soul could not enter there of itself and for itself,
But together they entered body and soul,
Pure and perfect to that perfect place-
And together they left it, once they had become sullied.
From all this we should learn that at the Resurrection they will enter again
together.*¹¹⁴⁰

Yared emphasises the pre-existent eschatological nature of Paradise through connections forged with major prophetic visions and revelations. This association of a diverse set of revelations to prophets such as Moses, Zechariah, Ezekiel and Ezra implies a continuity of God's revelations of Paradise from Genesis to Revelation, and is a logical development of the understanding that the original Paradise and the Kingdom of Heaven are one and the same. The *Hidar 21 Dəggwā* interprets Ezra's heavenly vision of Zion, the weeping woman, as Mary and as the Church. This is not, however, the humble Mary on earth, neither is it the church on earth, rather it is a heavenly exalted Virgin, and a heavenly Church or at least a Church mysteriously connected with Paradise. Ezra's vision is linked to New Testament revelations, in the form of Mary and the Church:

¹¹³⁵ Bezold: 1a 5-b 8; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 1-2*.

¹¹³⁶ ܡܝܩܩܕܝܡ ܕܥܕܝܢ ܕܥܕܝܢ ܕܥܕܝܢ ܕܥܕܝܢ Bidawid, Ed. *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version: Part I, Preface, Genesis-Exodus.: 3*

¹¹³⁷ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 50*. See also Mathews: 99 n120

¹¹³⁸ Mathews: 99.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*: 99.

¹¹⁴⁰ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 134*.

*Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
And when he saw her
She was not a woman
But a shining constructed city.
Zechariah saw the lampstand¹¹⁴¹*

The same *Dəggwā* shows how Zion, the heavenly place that was revealed to Ezra was also shown to the high priest Zechariah, and to Moses at Sinai, when the design of the Ark and the Tabernacle was also revealed to him:

*And the blessed high priest who saw the lampstand,
Moses also saw her on the pure mountain,
and Ezra saw her in the form of a woman.¹¹⁴²*

Yared's paradisaical interpretation the other prophets' visions is developed further in the *Hidar* 21 *Dəggwā*:

*The lampstand of Zechariah,
Pure bridal chamber,
freedom of all who live.
To tell of her greatness
It is proper to sing hymns.
He will bring her prayers for us
To the tranquil place and the harbour.
Of Zechariah the stand of gold
Of Ezekiel the prophet, the closed East [door],
Pearl shines for your foundation.¹¹⁴³
.....
Joshua's testimony of the column¹¹⁴⁴,
The fleece of David¹¹⁴⁵,
Elisha's the water pot
Of Zechariah the priest, the lampstand.
I will tell of the greatness of Mary
Wood which flames will not consume, which Moses saw.
Lampstand, which
The hand of a craftsman did not make.
Behold, in our midst, our mother, Zion!
Zechariah saw the lampstand all of gold and jacinth
One her right and on her left olive branches
Of the Holy Church.¹¹⁴⁶
.....
Pure bridal chamber,
Perfect Tabernacle,
Dwelling place of divinity,
Adorned with holiness,*

¹¹⁴¹ Appendix B, page 211, lines 32-38.

¹¹⁴² Appendix B, page 212, lines 79-82.

¹¹⁴³ Appendix B, page 212, lines 87-97.

¹¹⁴⁴ To what this refers is unclear.

¹¹⁴⁵ The fleece is normally that of Gideon in Judges 6, but the Ethiopian *andəmtā* associates the 'fleece' in Psalm 71:6 (LXX) with the same thing, hence the appellation of the fleece of David. See chapter 3 page 97.

¹¹⁴⁶ Appendix B, page 213, lines 112-126.

*Sealed in virginity,
 She is wrapped in golden clothes,
 In a single piece.
 This is Mary
 Whom the holy prophets likened to
 The Ark of Noah
 Which has manna concealed inside her.
 Wondrous white fleece of David,
 Lampstand of Zachariah the priest,
 Closed paradise,
 Sealed pit,
 Whom the prophets saw in golden clothes in one piece.¹¹⁴⁷*

The symbols that have been employed include both Arks, and the lampstand of Zechariah, as well as the closed East door in Ezekiel's vision of the temple in Ezekiel 44:1, the fleece of Gideon, the water pot of Elisha. All of these symbols have previously been identified with the Incarnation¹¹⁴⁸. Yared assimilates all of them, interpreting them as representing the same Heavenly Tabernacle in Paradise. The presence of manna in the Ark here points to the Eucharist, and so to the ultimate revelation, the Incarnation. Its presence in Paradise alludes to the paradisaic feast.

The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* makes a further reference that explicitly connects Mary, the Tabernacle and Paradise. Here, after her assumption, Mary resides in Paradise, veiled in the 'inner place' by angels, and is called 'the Holy of Holies':

*She is the Wood of the Bush,
 Whom truly they call Holy of Holies.¹¹⁴⁹*

The later printed version of the *Dəggwā* expresses it thus:

*The angels surround her in the inner place,
 the Veil for Holy Mary,
 the Prophets and Apostles, and Martyrs rest in her,
 the Holy Church,
 they call you Holy of Holies,
 the dwelling place of the Most High.¹¹⁵⁰*

The *Dəggwā* does not articulate the location of Paradise, but the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* also describes Mary as 'My Lady, treasury of the Word, the halo of the moon, the warmth of the sun'¹¹⁵¹; the same motif features in Ephrem, *Hymns on Paradise I:8*, where he compares Paradise itself to 'that halo which surrounds the moon'¹¹⁵². Kronholm interprets this allusion as reflecting Ephrem's idea that Paradise is 'highly spanning the terrestrial world'¹¹⁵³,

¹¹⁴⁷ Appendix B, page 215, lines 192-209.

¹¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of these symbols see chapter 3 page 97.

¹¹⁴⁹ Appendix C, page 221, lines 15-16.

¹¹⁵⁰ Yared መጽሐፈ ድንበቶች: 521 a 21-26.

¹¹⁵¹ Appendix C, page 222, lines 88-90.

¹¹⁵² Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 80*.

¹¹⁵³ Kronholm: 68.

reiterating the idea of Paradise being situated on a high mountain that occurs in Ezekiel and 1 Enoch. Ephrem perceives this high mountain as being far above any other on earth, as he states in *Hymns on Paradise* I:4:

*With the eye of my mind I gazed upon Paradise;
The summit of every mountain is lower than its summit,
The crest of the Flood reached only its foothills;
These it kissed with reverence before turning back
To rise above and subdue the peak of every hill and mountain
The foothills of Paradise it kisses while every summit it buffets.*¹¹⁵⁴

Ephrem further illustrates this perception by comparing Paradise to a crown or wreath of gold encircling the whole of creation¹¹⁵⁵, or a belt around the world, standing alongside the heavenly beings¹¹⁵⁶. *Hymns on Paradise* I:8 provides a third image when Paradise is described as ‘being circular too, having both sea and dry land encompassed within it’¹¹⁵⁷.

The description of the heavenly vision of Zechariah as ‘perfect Tabernacle’ in the aforementioned *Hidar 21 Dəggwā* implies a threefold division present in Paradise, perhaps simulating Moses’ Tabernacle. The *Dəggwā* provides no further details of the divisions of Paradise, but discussion of the ‘Ephremic’ material demonstrates that the layout of Ethiopian churches is connected with the understanding of the blueprint of Paradise. The Ethiopic material makes one clear correlation between the symbol of Paradise and the division of its structure. The Genesis 8:19 *andəmta* equates the threefold vision of Noah’s Ark with the division of the church¹¹⁵⁸.

*ANDM: the boat is a symbol of the Church, and her being in three divisions is a symbol of the three divisions of the church. Noah together with his children is a symbol of the believers.*¹¹⁵⁹

Recalling that the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā* compares the Tabernacle and St Mary with Noah’s Ark¹¹⁶⁰ showing the association between the Ark’s structure, the Tabernacle’s structure and the layout of Paradise:

*This is Mary
Whom the holy prophets likened to
The Ark of Noah
Which had manna concealed inside her.
Wondrous white fleece of David,
Lampstand of Zachariah the priest,
Closed paradise,*

¹¹⁵⁴ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 78-79.*

¹¹⁵⁵ *Hymns on Paradise* I:9 Ibid.: 81.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Hymns on Paradise* II:6 Ibid.: 87.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid.: 80.

¹¹⁵⁸ See page 108 where this *andəmta* is used to illustrate the Ark as a symbol of divine immanence and indwelling.

¹¹⁵⁹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት፡ ዘፍጥረት 68.

¹¹⁶⁰ Appendix B, page 215, lines 200-202.

*Sealed pit,
Whom the prophets saw in golden clothes in one piece.*¹¹⁶¹

Ephrem develops a more complete picture of the Heavenly Tabernacle, and its relationship with the Arks in *Hymns on Paradise* than occurs in the *Dəggwā* but its symbolism is closely related. *Hymns on Paradise I:1* clearly shows his understanding that Moses' vision on Sinai was that of Paradise, in the same way as Yared has done:

*He, the master of the Hebrews,
Has instructed us in his teaching –
The Law*¹¹⁶², *which constitutes
a very treasure house of revelations,
Wherein is revealed the tale of the Garden –
Described by things visible,
but glorious for what lies hidden.*¹¹⁶³

In the fourth of the *Hymns on Paradise* IV:2 the Garden of Eden itself is perceived as a Heavenly Tabernacle:

*Adam in all his filth sought to enter
that Holy of Holies which loves only those who resemble it;
And because he made bold to enter that inner tabernacle,
God did not allow him to enter the outer one either
When that sea full of life saw a corpse in its midst,
It did not leave it there but cast it forth.
RESPONSE: Deem me worthy that through Your grace we may enter Your
Paradise.*¹¹⁶⁴

This hymn describes the Fall of Adam, whose sin was to seek to enter the 'Holy of Holies' or 'inner tabernacle', when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, and then sought to eat from the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life was perceived as located in the 'inner tabernacle' and the 'outer' was the broader garden where Adam had already been. Having failed to obey God's command, Adam was prevented from entering the inner place, wherein he would find eternal life¹¹⁶⁵, by partaking of the Tree of Life¹¹⁶⁶. *Hymns on Paradise*, IV:4 describes Paradise in more elaborate terms than Yared¹¹⁶⁷:

*Adam had been most pure in that fair Garden,
But he became leprous and repulsive
Because the serpent had breathed on him.
The Garden cast him from its midst;
All shining, it thrust him forth.
The High Priest, the Exalted One, beheld him cast out from Himself:*

¹¹⁶¹ Appendix B, page 215, lines 199-209.

¹¹⁶² Here the Law refers to the Torah which includes the accounts of both Arks.

¹¹⁶³ Brock St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Hymns on Paradise: 77*.

¹¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 97-8.

¹¹⁶⁵ In the broader picture of Ephrem's spiritual vision, this itself was an act of kindness, because otherwise Adam's race would have found itself eternally in sin.

¹¹⁶⁶ See page 185 for the discussion of the significance of the Tree of Life itself.

¹¹⁶⁷ For a wider analysis, beyond the correlation with the Ethiopic view see Kronholm: 67-81

‘dwelling place’ is also derived, again evokes the rabbinic idea of the *shekinah*, the inner place being the most holy place where God himself dwells:

*Their eyes were open –
Though at the same time they were still closed
So as not to see the Glory
Or their own low estate,
So as not to see the Glory
Of that inner **Tabernacle**....¹¹⁷⁵*

Ephrem’s hymns, on occasion, designate the divisions of Paradise as ‘*inner Tabernacle*’ and ‘*outer Tabernacle*’ with a further area outside designated as the ‘*hedge*’ or ‘*fence*’¹¹⁷⁶ thus indicating a threefold division. References to all three divisions are found in *Hymns on Paradise IV:7*:

*The tongue cannot relate the description of **innermost** Paradise,
Nor indeed does it suffice for the beauties of the **outer part**;
For even the simple adornments by the Garden’s **fence** cannot be related in an
adequate way.¹¹⁷⁷*

The first term recalls the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* wherein Mary is described as residing in the ‘*inner place*’¹¹⁷⁸. Elsewhere in Ephrem, however, the outer area of the tabernacle is called the *ܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ* *beyt qudāšā* or just *ܩܘܕܫܐ* *qudāšā*, ‘*the holy place*’ or ‘*sanctuary*’ as occurs in the quotation above from *Hymns on Paradise III:5*¹¹⁷⁹. The inner veiled part of Paradise designated *ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ* *qaduš qudāšā*, or ‘*holy of holies*’, in *Hymns on Paradise IV:2*¹¹⁸⁰ and also in *Hymns on Paradise III:14*:

*In the midst of Paradise God had planted
The Tree of knowledge
To separate off, above and below,
Sanctuary from **Holy Holies**.¹¹⁸¹*

¹¹⁷⁵ Brock St. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 92*. *ܡܫܟܢܐ*, *maškānā*, is also used in the Peshitta for the Hebrew *מִשְׁכָּן*, *miškān*, ‘dwelling place, tabernacle’ in Exodus 25:9: *כַּכֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה* *‘In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so you shall make it’* Bidawid, Ed. *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version: Part I, Preface, Genesis-Exodus: 174*. *ܡܫܟܢܐ*, *meškānā*, is used to translate σκηνη in Hebrews 8:5, ‘they offer worship in a sanctuary that is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one; for Moses, when he was about to erect the tent, was warned, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain”’ Kronholm: 72.

¹¹⁷⁶ Kronholm: 72.

¹¹⁷⁷ Brock St. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 99-100*.

¹¹⁷⁸ Yared *ܫܘܚܘܬܐ ܕܥܝܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ*: 521 a 21-22.

¹¹⁷⁹ See also Kronholm: 72

¹¹⁸⁰ See page 177 for the quotation.

¹¹⁸¹ Brock St. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 95*.

Later in verse 17 the two sanctuaries are mentioned, revealed to Moses during the Sinai theophany:

*The symbol of Paradise was depicted by Moses
Who made the two sanctuaries, the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies;
Into the outer one entrance was permitted,
But into the inner only once a year.
So too with Paradise, God closed off the inner part,
But He opened up the outer wherein Adam might graze.*¹¹⁸²

Hymns on Paradise, III:16 describes the inner Tabernacle as ‘veiled’ or ‘hidden’, its terminology perhaps recalling the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* which describes Mary, the ‘Holy of Holies’ as being ‘protected’ by angels¹¹⁸³.

*Adam’s keeping of the commandment
Was to be his censer;
Then he might enter before the Hidden One
Into that **hidden** Tabernacle.*¹¹⁸⁴

Furthermore, in *Hymns on Paradise*, II:12, Ephrem regards Noah’s Ark as having this same threefold division as does the *andāmta* on Genesis 8:19, and as is implied by references to the Tabernacle in the *Dəggwā*¹¹⁸⁵:

*Noah made the animals live in the lowest part of the Ark;
In the middle lodged the birds,
while Noah himself, like the Deity resided on the upper deck.
On Mount Sinai it was the people
Who dwelt below,
The priests round about it,
And Aaron halfway up,
While Moses was on its heights,
And the Glorious One on the summit.*¹¹⁸⁶

The *Dəggwā* and Ephrem share the same view of the threefold division of Paradise, using similar or sometimes identical terminology to describe each division, and connecting this understanding with the Sinai Theophany.

Another parallel that emerges with the ‘Ephremic’ literature is the connection made by the *Dəggwā* between Paradise and the Church, as illustrated in the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā*:

*Zechariah saw the lampstand all of gold and jacinth
One her right and on her left olive branches
Of the Holy Church.*¹¹⁸⁷

¹¹⁸² Ibid.: 96.

¹¹⁸³ See Appendix C, page 226, line 236.

¹¹⁸⁴ Brock St. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 96.

¹¹⁸⁵ See page 176

¹¹⁸⁶ Brock St. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 89.

¹¹⁸⁷ Appendix B, page 213, lines 122-126. See also page 174 and Appendix B, page 211, lines 19, 38, 54, 67, for instance.

In *Hymns on Paradise* VII:7 Ephrem writes:

*God planted the fair Garden,
He built the pure Church; upon the Tree of Knowledge
....
In the Church He implanted the Word which causes rejoicing with its
promises.*¹¹⁸⁸

Ephrem intertwines the concepts of the Garden and of the Church as in the *Dəggwā*, so just as the Ark is sometimes located in this world, and sometimes in Paradise so the earthly Temple and Church merge with the sacred place in Paradise.

Hymns on Paradise, VII:10 implies that the presence of God is experienced in the same way in the Church as it was in Paradise before the fall:

*The effortless power, the arm which never tires,
Planted this Paradise, adorned it without effort.
But it is the effort of free will that adorns the Church with all manner of fruits.
The Creator saw the Church and was pleased;
He resided in that Paradise which she had planted for His honor,
Just as He had planted the Garden for her delight.*¹¹⁸⁹

The Church freely choosing to obey and restored through salvation, now recreates Paradise, and God resides in this place.

The study of Ark imagery in chapter 3 ended with a small set of symbolic interpretations from the *Dəggwā* that associate Mary with a Chariot¹¹⁹⁰. In the context of the symbolism analysed in chapter 3 this was understood to be a symbol of conveyance, bearing the divine presence to the Church, as in the *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* where Mary is compared to the chariot of Aminadab, which carried the Ark to Jerusalem (1Chronicles 13:7):

*Her mouth is like apple, like the skin of a pomegranate,
I compared her to the Chariot of Am[in]adab,
Her neck is like the Tower of David
Her tablets [are] of the Law,
Glory surrounds her.*¹¹⁹¹

This interpretation appears to be uniquely Ethiopian, but other chariot imagery, to which this example is clearly linked, associates Mary with the Ezekiel's vision of the chariot throne of God (Ezekiel 1). The later printed version of the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā* combines this vision with Zechariah's visions of the lampstand:

*Zechariah saw the lampstand,
which was all of gold on the right and on the left were the branches of olive
trees,*

¹¹⁸⁸ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise: 111*.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: 112.

¹¹⁹⁰ See page 181.

¹¹⁹¹ Appendix C, page 225, lines 233-240.

*which had seven lights and seven covers on her.
This is the Holy Church,
and as for this it is the seven eyes of the Father
who sits above the chariot of the Cherubim.*¹¹⁹²

Recalling that the lampstand and the Church are connected with Mary, the reference here is to the 'Holy Church' that rides above the chariot. The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* also refers to Mary's spirit being carried to heaven on a chariot:

*The years of the Virgin were eighty [she passed] from this world,
And after her assumption,
On a chariot*¹¹⁹³

These examples all have one idea in common: that the distinction between heaven and earth disappears. This approach is also adopted by Ephrem, when he compares Mary with the chariot throne of God (Ezekiel 1) in *Hymns on Mary* VII:4-5:

*...let Ezekiel come and see You on my knees;
Let him kneel down and worship You, and acknowledge
It was You he saw there lifted up by the cherubim
Above the chariot, and let him call me blessed
Who carry you now.*

*The very chariot stops amazed
That I carry its Master;
The cherubim cry out with trembling:
'blessed is Your splendour in Your place'
-that place is with me, my bosom is your home!
Your radiance rests on my knees,
The throne of Your Majesty is held in my arms.
Instead of chariot wheels,
My fingers clasp You. I too will cry out
'blessed are You in Your place'.*¹¹⁹⁴

The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* employs the same symbolic link between Mary and the throne of God in its description of Mary as 'the throne of the Cherubim' and 'dwelling place' terminology that directly associates her with the Chariot Throne of God:

*For myself and by my own hand I created the Virgin
from whom I was incarnated said God.
The throne of the Cherubim of the highest heaven
His dwelling place which word cannot tell dwelt on her.*¹¹⁹⁵

The *Dəggwā* makes the particular association with the Chariot of Aminadab, with Mary being either the chariot itself, or being borne on the chariot. Both of these are symbols of Mary bearing divine presence, and the specific connection with the Chariot of Aminadab

¹¹⁹² Yared መጽሐፈ ድንበቅዱስ ያሬድ: 141 a 11-15.

¹¹⁹³ Appendix C, page 224, lines 156-160.

¹¹⁹⁴ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 60.

¹¹⁹⁵ Yared መጽሐፈ ድንበቅዱስ ያሬድ: 521 c 2-6.

serves to link the chariot clearly with the Ark, rather than any other chariot mentioned in the Old Testament. These symbols, however, do not relate only to the idea of bearing divine presence, since Mary is portrayed in this *Dəggwā* as a vision of Paradise itself. This imagery is explored, in the following section, in connection with the Ark, to impart a more comprehensive understanding of the Ethiopic perceptions of the Ark's significance.

The connection between Mary and the Ark as a symbol of the *shekinah*, the divine presence, expressing the paradox of God being contained in the Incarnation has already been discussed¹¹⁹⁶. A further significant aspect is articulated in the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā* where Mary, as the Ark, bears manna to the faithful, imagery that is connected to the Eucharist:

*This is Mary
Whom the holy prophets likened to
The Ark of Noah
Which had manna concealed inside her.
Wondrous white fleece of David,
Lampstand of Zachariah the priest,
Closed paradise,
Sealed pit,
Whom the prophets saw in golden clothes in one piece.*¹¹⁹⁷

The phrase 'manna concealed inside her' is an allusion to Revelation 2:17 'To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna'. The 'hidden manna' is Christ's body, which he identified himself in John 6:51 as the 'living bread that came down out of the heaven', an allusion both to manna which came down from heaven¹¹⁹⁸ and also to salvation and eternal life. The *Nahāse 16 Dəggwā* also refers to manna placed inside the Ark¹¹⁹⁹ to illustrate Mary's rôle in bearing Christ. This *Dəggwā* also expresses the idea of Mary bearing salvation to the faithful in various ways: Mary reflects Paradise, and her fruit, Christ, is eaten through the Eucharist. The divine presence in the Eucharist is emphasised through a repetition of the idea of divine indwelling, expressed through the symbolism of the burning bush. Two further symbols, Mary as the 'Golden Basket' and the 'vessel of Manna', lead naturally to the Eucharist. The Gee'z phrase for the 'Golden Basket' is መሶበ ውርቅ, *masoba wərq*. The *masob* is a basket used for eating food, or the basket used for the Eucharist. The 'Golden Basket' is the golden urn mentioned in Hebrews 9:4 as containing the manna in the Ark:

*My Lady, treasury of the Word,
Halo of the moon,
Warmth of the sun,
Those who eat your fruit will gain wisdom,
You, the Wood [of the bush]*

¹¹⁹⁶ See chapter 3, page 100.

¹¹⁹⁷ Appendix B, page 215, lines 199-209.

¹¹⁹⁸ See Exodus 16.

¹¹⁹⁹ See Hebrews 9:4.

*Who gives understanding.*¹²⁰⁰

Ark of the sanctuary, Halleluiah
The bride of the King
Mary, the new boat
The dry earth of Isaiah
She is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.
My Lady, Mary,
Golden Basket of manna.
*Whom the great prophet, saw on Sinai*¹²⁰¹

In this symbolic interpretation Mary brings heavenly bread, the flesh of Christ, to believers in the Eucharist, just as the Ark contained the manna, bread that came from heaven. The Eucharist is to be a continual remembrance of Christ¹²⁰², and the manna in the Ark likewise symbolises salvation¹²⁰³. In this way Yared links the Eucharist, the Ark, and the Incarnation through the association of various symbols.

Ephrem also articulates the connection between the manna which was placed in the Ark and the person of Christ in *Hymns on the Nativity*, IV:88-91.

The bread that the first-born broke in the desert
Was consumed and passed away, although He multiplied it greatly.
Once again He has broken new bread
That ages and generations will not consume.
They consumed the seven loaves of bread that He broke,
And they finished also the five loaves of bread that He multiplied.
The one loaf of bread that He broke conquered the creation;
*For however much it is divided it multiplies all the more.*¹²⁰⁴

And also in *Hymns on Faith*, LXXXI:8:

Like Manna which of its own sufficed to fill the People,
In place of other foods, thanks to its tastiness,
So too has the Pearl filled me, replacing books and the reading and
*commenting on them.*¹²⁰⁵

The breakdown of the distinction between heaven and earth is important in this imagery, and is connected with two realities. Firstly, the reference is to the partaking of the Eucharist in the Church, which is a mystical link to Paradise, during which the faithful experience the presence of God in the same way as Adam and Eve before the Fall. Secondly, it may also refer to the Paradisal Feast, or heavenly Eucharist of which the faithful will partake for eternity. Recalling that the Ark itself is a mystical link between heaven and earth, these two realities merge into one. This leads on to the next symbol, which also has a strong

¹²⁰⁰ Appendix C, page 222, line 88-94.

¹²⁰¹ Appendix C, page 224, line 146-155.

¹²⁰² See for instance Luke 22:14-23.

¹²⁰³ See Exodus 16:32.

¹²⁰⁴ McVey: 96.

¹²⁰⁵ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 106.

connection with the understanding of the Eucharist and the heavenly feast, namely the Cross itself.

The Tree of Life

The crucifixion and the Cross are frequently mentioned in the *Dəggwā*. Various honours are given to the Cross, and praise for it is given to God, but these are not always associated with any symbolic interpretation. One set of images of particular relevance, however, occurs in the *Dəggwā* for *Meskerem 17*, the festival of the finding of the True Cross, where Yared compares the Cross with the Tree of Life, also calling it the *Tree of Salvation*. The Cross is also symbolised as the key with which God unlocked Paradise again. Both of these themes are reiterated in the ‘Ephremic’ literature. Paradisal allusions are found in the following phrases, which are repeated at various points in the *Dəggwā* mentioned:

The Cross is the Tree of Life
The Cross is the Tree of Salvation.
The Cross of the Word
*Tree of Life*¹²⁰⁶

Praise the God of Gods
Praise the Lord of freedom
Because He is the God of mercy
With His Cross He opened Paradise
With His Cross He opened Paradise
With His Cross He worked salvation
This is the Cross
Our salvation, our strength and our fortress
*May it always be with us.*¹²⁰⁷

From the root of Jesse
Honoured fruit shot forth
For our sakes the Tree of Life was planted,
*And on it Christ was crucified.*¹²⁰⁸

The multi-semiotic meaning of **ܥܘܕ**, ‘*əd*’, and **ܩܝܫܐ**, *qaysā*¹²⁰⁹ that covers the nouns tree, wood and cross in English is shared by the the ‘Ephremic’ and Ethiopic literature alike. The Tree/Cross that was the means of the fall of mankind in Eden, paradoxically becomes the means of his redemption. Ephrem emphasises this connection in *Nisibene Hymns XXXVI*, where Death proclaims, ‘*How can your cross conquer me, seeing that it was through the wood that I was victorious and conquered at the beginning?*’¹²¹⁰. Alternatively Ephrem uses **ܩܝܫܐ**, *qaysā*, in *Hymns on the Nativity IV:110* to explain that believers were delivered by the same material that caused their fall, ‘*By the wood with which he killed us, we were*

¹²⁰⁶ Appendix D, page 231, lines 56-59.

¹²⁰⁷ Appendix D, page 232, lines 123-132.

¹²⁰⁸ Appendix D, page 234, lines 215-219.

¹²⁰⁹ See chapter 4, page 126.

¹²¹⁰ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 42.

delivered¹²¹¹. The *Kābra Nagaśt* extrapolates this idea when uniting the biblical covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Moses and ultimately the New Covenant in Jesus Christ through the agency of potent wood¹²¹².

The *Dəggwā* and Ephrem express the idea of the Cross being the key, the means of admission to Paradise, as expressed in the *Meskerem 17 Dəggwā*:

*Praise the God of Gods
Praise the Lord of freedom
Because He is the God of mercy
With His Cross He opened Paradise
With His Cross He opened Paradise
With His Cross He worked salvation
This is the Cross
Our salvation, our strength and our fortress
May it always be with us.¹²¹³*

Likewise, the same idea emerges in Ephrem's *Hymns on the Resurrection II:1*:

*Your law has been my vessel
revealing to me something of Paradise,
Your Cross has been to me the key
which opened up this Paradise.
From the Garden of Delights did I gather
and carry back with me from Paradise
roses and other eloquent blooms
which are here scattered about for Your feast
amid songs as they flutter down on humanity.
Blessed is He who both gave and received the crown!¹²¹⁴*

Furthermore, once in Paradise, the Cross is also the means of sustenance for believers, a theme followed in the *andāmta*, which clearly identifies the Tree of Life and the Cross as symbolically connected, and identifying the fruit of this tree with the Eucharist:

*Genesis 2:9
(Ge'ez) And God caused to grow from the earth every beautiful tree which was good for eating and for looking at.
(Amharic) Again God made these plants which when they see and eat make them glad He made these plants. ILLUSTRATION: and if they ask why does it say their growth was on the Tuesday of the Creation? That which is good to eat to say it was repeated. ANDM to bring in that it is called the Tree of Life.
(Ge'ez) And the Tree of Life he planted in the middle of the garden.
(Amharic) He made the Tree of Life so that it would be found in the middle of the garden.
(Ge'ez) The Tree which shows and causes understanding of good and evil
(Amharic) He made the Tree of Knowledge¹²¹⁵ which if they eat it causes evil to be known and if they do not eat it causes good to be known that it might be*

¹²¹¹ McVey: 98 110.

¹²¹² See chapter 4, page 146.

¹²¹³ Appendix D, page 232, lines 123-132.

¹²¹⁴ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem (2nd Enlarged Edition)*: 73.

found. ANDM He caused the Tree of Knowledge to be found which, if they eat its gourd/fruit makes good to be known. Adam and Eve after they went out of Paradise, having seen their former honour and their later disgrace, 'If we did not eat this Tree of Knowledge how were we to live in disgrace (or live at all)?'¹²¹⁶ they said. EXPLANATION: The Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge were they not found on the third day? So if they ask why did He make them found now: they were found on the third day, but now he said this to Adam: 'Eat this, Do not eat this!' For He established a rule for him, if he sees this, He will reply telling him. HISTORY: Three trees were given to Adam. One for him to guard, one for him to eat, and one to renew him after living for a thousand years. When he ate the one which He said not to eat, the tree by which he would be renewed was removed. In place of the Tree of Life which would renew him today His flesh and His blood have entered into us. We receive his flesh and blood and we are renewed in our sonship (in Christ) and we become those who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.¹²¹⁷

In the connection that is made between the Eucharist and the Tree of Life, the fruit of the latter is now replaced by the elements of the Eucharist, with the underlying interpretation being that Christ represents the fruit of the Tree, and that Mary herself is the Tree. The Eucharist is implicitly the fruit of the Tree of Life in Paradise.

The *andāmta* on Genesis 3:22 compares Adam's reaching up to take fruit with the reaching out of Christ's hands on the Cross, this being a recurrence of the theme of reaching out symbolising the Cross¹²¹⁸. The taking of fruit from the Tree of Life, and new life in Christ are the same thing.

Genesis 3:22

(Ge'ez) And God said, 'Behold Adam has become like one of us, he knows good and evil.'

(Amharic) God said thus, 'Adam knows the difference between good and evil, and has become like one of us' he said, he is laughing at us on the side

(Ge'ez) from now he might, perhaps, lift and reach out his hand and take from the tree of life and eat, and he will live forever.

(Amharic) And perhaps today might lift up his hand and eat from the tree of life and might remain living, he said. And finally he put him out [of the garden].

ANDM: (Ge'ez) And God said in reply, 'Adam knows good and evil, and has become like one of us.' Now Adam might lift up his hand and take from the tree of life, and eat and live forever' he said. Put him out, you said, tie him up!

ANDM: Adam, flesh knows knowledge attributed to God alone, he has become like a son of ours, he will reach out his hands on the Cross, be crucified. Having received the suffering of the Cross he will live by resurrection.

(He will live) believers will live forever

ANDM: Adam having given birth to a true believer (he has become like one of us), in his childhood he will become a part of us (and from today) now by his

¹²¹⁵ According to Kane this is generally the fig tree, but it is also used of the Tree of Knowledge, and of the Tree of Life. *Ficus palamata* is a type of fig, which some scholars eat in the belief that it helps them learn more quickly. See Kane *Amharic English Dictionary Volume I*: 862.

¹²¹⁶ There is a pun here, because አንዋዋር/አነዋወር can either mean 'way of life' or 'shame'. See *Ibid.*: 1050.

¹²¹⁷ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት: ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት: ዘፍጥረት 23-4.

¹²¹⁸ See chapter 4, page 141, for a detailed discussion of this idea.

*wisdom he will reach out and he will repent, he will receive the flesh and blood [of the Eucharist] and he will live forever.*¹²¹⁹

In the Numbers 17 *andamta* the blossoming of Aaron's Rod is interpreted as symbolically connected with the Eucharist, the fruit of the Tree of Life:

Numbers 17: 8
(Ge'ez) And when it was the next day, Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the tabernacle
(Amharic) And the next day it was like this: Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the tabernacle
(Ge'ez) And behold the rod of Aaron had blossomed for the House of Levi, and produced leaves, blossomed flowers, and bore almonds
*(Amharic) Behold the rod Levi, Aaron's rod had blossomed, it produced flowers, it produced almonds, nuts¹²²⁰, and orange. ILLUSTRATION: for that time the office was given to him, being done like this he caused them to be distinguished. For later, however, it is a symbol. The rod is a symbol of Our Lady, the fruit of the Lord. ANDM: the rod is a symbol of the Lord, the fruit is a symbol of his virtue. ANDM: the rod is a symbol of the Cross, the fruit is a symbol of its value – of his flesh and his blood it is a symbol.*¹²²¹

This is a further interpretation of Aaron's Rod, discussed earlier as wood representing the Cross¹²²². Now the fruit of the Rod symbolises Christ, fruit which is also the Eucharist consumed by believers, symbolism that may be connected with the characterisation of Christ as the grape, and Mary as the vine in Syriac literature¹²²³. The *andamta* makes much of these symbols, but they are not alluded to by the *Kəbra Nagašt* where the focus is primarily on the potency of the Ark of the Covenant.

Ephrem specifically portrays Christ as the fruit of the Tree of Life in Paradise in *Hymns on the Resurrection*, I:6:

*From on high He flowed like a river,
from Mary He stemmed as from a root,
from the Cross He descended as fruit,
as the first-fruit He ascended to heaven.
Blessed is His will!*¹²²⁴

In a more oblique reference in *Hymns on Faith* VI:6, Ephrem employs the Tree of Life to represent Christ himself rather than its fruit.

*It was His Son Himself Who set and planted it:
By the Tree of Life¹²²⁵ alone,*

¹²¹⁹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘዐአት፡ ዘፍጥረት 38-9.

¹²²⁰ or ገውዝ ለውዝ which is 'a rare fruit to be served in Paradise' T.L. Kane (1990a). *Amharic-English Dictionary* (two volumes).

¹²²¹ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት፡ ኦሪት ዘሌዋውያን ፣ ኦሪት ዘጉልቶ ፣ ኦሪት ዘግግሞ፡ ዘጉልቶ 110.

¹²²² See chapter 4 page 144.

¹²²³ Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (Revised Edition): 125. See page 190 for other occurrences of this idea.

¹²²⁴ Brock *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem* (2nd Enlarged Edition): 28.

*The Planter shadowed out His own Likeness.*¹²²⁶

Ephrem's first *Hymn on the Resurrection*, which presents many paradoxes of the incarnation, has assembled miscellaneous ideas about Christ, in two verses which link Mary and the Cross *Hymns on the Resurrection I:6,9*. The first verse below, in a reference to Isaiah 11, symbolises Mary as the root of Jesse with Christ as the shoot. The second verse makes the link between Mary's bearing of Christ and the Cross, in a manner that is reminiscent to the Ark as a symbol of divine indwelling:

*From on high He flowed like a river,
From Mary He [stemmed] as from a root,
From the Cross He descended as fruit
As the firstfruit He ascended to heaven.
Blessed is His will!*¹²²⁷

*Mary carried Him as a child,
The priest [Simeon] carried Him as an offering,
The Cross carried Him as one slain,
Heaven carried Him as God.
Praise to His Father!*¹²²⁸

Ephrem further associates Christ with the Tree of Life in *Hymns on the Fast III:3*, where he cites the Tree of Knowledge as the cause of the Fall but simultaneously as a tree which points to the Tree of Life, and to its fruit:

*Who is there who can expound concerning that Tree which caused those who sought it to go astray?
It is an invisible target, hidden from the eyes, which wearies those who shoot at it.
It is both the Tree of Knowledge, and of ignorance:
It is the cause of knowledge, for by it a person knows
What is the gift that was lost, and the punishment that took place.
Blessed is that Fruit which has mingled a knowledge
Of the Tree of Life into mortals.*¹²²⁹

A similar idea is expressed in the following quotation from *Nisibene Hymns XLI:13* that links the fall through the Tree of Knowledge with redemption through the Cross/Tree of Life¹²³⁰:

*A tree caught Adam for me,
Blessed in the cross which has caught the son of David for me!*¹²³¹

¹²²⁵ In this instance the Syriac ܐܘܢܐ, ܐܘܢܐ is used for 'Tree of Life' so the multi-semiotic meaning does not apply.

¹²²⁶ Morris: 130. This early translation corresponds to the critical edition produced by E. Beck (1955). *Des Heilige Syrer Ephraem des Syrer Hymnende Fide, CSCO 154, Scriptorum Syri 73: 29 27-28.*

¹²²⁷ Brock *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems: 84,85.*

¹²²⁸ *Ibid.*: 86,87.

¹²²⁹ *Ibid.*: 101.

¹²³⁰ In this *madrash*e Death speaks, in dialogue with Satan, in a form of poetry that is a legacy of ancient Mesopotamian traditions. See Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian: 19* for further information on this connection.

In *Hymns on Paradise* VI:7 Ephrem articulates the connection between the Tree and the Eucharist, as well as that between the Church and Paradise.

*In the Tree of Knowledge
He established the commandment
He rejoiced, but they did not respond;
He warned, but they did not fear.
In the Church he set the Word,
Which causes joy by its promises
And fear by its threats.
The Assembly of the Saints
Is a symbol of paradise.
The Fruit of him who gives life to all
Is picked in her every day.
In her, my brethren, are pressed
The grapes of him who is the Medicine of Life.¹²³²*

The following brief quote from *Hymns on the Pearl* IV:1 also makes the same point:

The thief gained the faith which gained him, and brought him up and placed him in paradise. He saw in the Cross a tree of life; that was the fruit, he was the eater in Adam's stead.¹²³³

A closely related symbol that Murray claimed was 'virtually limited to the Syrians'¹²³⁴ is Christ as the Grape¹²³⁵, identifiable in Aphrahat and in Ephrem. Murray considers the Syriac symbol of Christ as the Grape to have a robust connection with the Tree of Life symbols¹²³⁶, with Christ as the fruit:

'Paradise is the type, as well as the eschatological goal, of the Church. The Tree of Life in it is the type of Christ as source of the Church's life, with reference both to the Eucharist and to the sacraments involving anointing, especially the pre-baptismal 'signing'... This means that the "Tree of Life" is represented simultaneously as vine and as olive'¹²³⁷

This Eucharistic symbol, found in the Ethiopic literature only in the *Hidar 21 Dəggwā*, addresses Mary as, 'My Lady, grape vine who bore fruit'¹²³⁸ also occurs in the previously quoted *Hymns on Paradise* VI:7, as well as in Eucharistic imagery of *Hymns on the Nativity* III:15:

*Blessed be the Shepherd, who became the Lamb for our atonement!
Blessed be the Vineshoot, which became the Chalice for our salvation!
Blessed be the Grape, the source of the Medicine of Life!*

¹²³¹ Brock *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*: 149.

¹²³² Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition)*: 129 see also Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 111.

¹²³³ Morris: 95. This early translation corresponds to the critical edition see Beck *Des Heiligne Syrens Ephraem des Syrens Hymnende Fide, CSCO 154, Scriptorum Syri 73: 257 15-19*.

¹²³⁴ Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition)*: 113.

¹²³⁵ *Ibid.*: 113-29.

¹²³⁶ *Ibid.*: 113.

¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*: 125.

¹²³⁸ Appendix B, page 214, line 163.

*Blessed be the Farmer, who became the wheat which was sown and the sheaf which was harvested.*¹²³⁹

In this example, Murray states that *'the Grape is seen as a source of the Eucharist which feeds the Church, and at the same time it is closely linked with other elements in the complex of vine-symbolism which have a directly communal reference.'*¹²⁴⁰

In keeping with the *Dəggwā*, Ephrem perceives Paradise as having a threefold division, as shown in the following quotation from *Hymns on Paradise* III:3, 5, 7, where this idea is amalgamated with the Tree of Life, which is planted in the innermost place, that is the Holy of Holies:

*In the very midst He planted the Tree of Knowledge,
Endowing it with awe, hedging it in with dread,
So that it might straightway serve as a boundary to the inner region of
Paradise.
Two things did Adam hear in that single decree:
That they should not eat of it and that, by shrinking from it,
They should perceive that it was not lawful to penetrate further, beyond that
Tree*

*When the accursed one learned how the glory of that inner Tabernacle,
As if in a sanctuary was hidden from then
And that the Tree of Knowledge, clothed with an injunction,
Served as the veil for the sanctuary,
He realized that its fruit was the key of justice
That would open the eyes of the bold – and cause them great remorse*

*But when Adam boldly ran and ate of its fruit
This double knowledge straightway flew toward him,
Tore away and removed both veils from his eyes:
He beheld the Glory of the Holy of Holies and trembled;
He beheld, too, his own shame and blushed, groaning and lamenting
Because the twofold knowledge he had gained had proved for him a torment.*¹²⁴¹

Furthermore the Tree of Life is linked to the Eucharist in *Hymns on Paradise* VI:7, 8. Here the fruit of the Tree is implicitly the communion, the flesh of Christ himself:

*God planted the fair Garden, He built the pure Church;
Upon the Tree of Knowledge He established the injunction.
He gave joy, but they took no delight, He gave admonition, but they were
unafraid.
In the Church He implanted the Word
Which causes rejoicing with its promises, which causes fear with its warnings:
He who despises the Word, perishes, he who takes warning lives.*

*The assembly of saints bears resemblance to Paradise:
In it each day is plucked the fruit of Him who gives life to all;*

¹²³⁹ Murray *Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Revised Edition)*: 119-20.

¹²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 121.

¹²⁴¹ Brock *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*: 91-3.

*In it, my brethren, is trodden the cluster of grapes, to be the Medicine of Life.
The serpent is crippled and bound by the curse,
While Eve's mouth is sealed with a silence that is beneficial
-but it also serves once again as a harp to sing the praises of her Creator.¹²⁴²*

The symbolism in Ephrem's hymns is richer than the *Dəggwā* when comparing the Eucharist with the fruit of the Tree of Life. By contrast, the *Dəggwā*'s preference lies in manna borne in the Ark. Ephrem and the *Dəggwā*, however, do use related ideas as they both depict the Ark and the Tree of Life as being symbolically present in the Holy of Holies in Paradise.

The 'Ephremic' literature also extrapolates the symbolic connection of the Eucharist with the *shekinah*. *Hymns on Faith*, X:12 and *Hymns on Faith*, X:8 associate divine dwelling with the bread and wine of the Eucharist: '*The Fire of compassion descended and took up residence in the Bread*'¹²⁴³, and '*In Your Wine there resides the Fire that is not drunk*'¹²⁴⁴. The *Armenian Eucharistic Hymns* XLVII:27-30 extent this concept to the communicant, just as the Ethiopic version of 1Peter 2:5 & 9 employs ታቦተ, *tābot* to refer to believers¹²⁴⁵:

*The Medicine of Life flew down from on high to reside in those worthy of it.
Let us make holy our souls and thoughts in honour of His glory.
We hold God in our hands: let there be no blemish in our bodies.
Once He has entered, He takes up residence with us, so let us make ourselves
holy within.¹²⁴⁶*

Ephrem creates a further link between God residing in Mary's womb, and in the believer in *Hymns on the Nativity*, IV:130:

*The Holy One dwelt in the womb in a bodily manner,
And behold, He dwells in the mind in a spiritual manner.¹²⁴⁷*

Through the association with the *shekinah*, Ephrem closely associates the Ark, the Eucharist and the Incarnation in a similar manner to that found in Yared, expressed through the imagery of manna borne in the Ark¹²⁴⁸.

Developments in Later Ethiopic Literature

The *Dəggwā* presents the view of heaven in terms of the visions of the prophets Ezra, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Moses. The focus this *Dəggwā* is the Zechariah 4 vision of a lampstand. The *andəmta* on Zechariah 4:3 explains that:

the lampstand [is a symbol of] Our Lady, the gold of her purity and her holiness, the bowl for the wick of her womb, the cover of her virginity, the fire of divinity, the wick of the Incarnation, the oil of the Holy Spirit....¹²⁴⁹

¹²⁴² Ibid.: 111.

¹²⁴³ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 112.

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid.: 112.

¹²⁴⁵ See chapter 3 page 93 for a discussion of this idea.

¹²⁴⁶ Brock *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*: 112-3.

¹²⁴⁷ McVey: 99.

¹²⁴⁸ See chapter 3, page 91.

The interpretation is refers specifically to Mary, and lacks the wider perspective wherein this vision is related to the Heavenly Tabernacle and to Paradise.

Similarly the interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision is that of the heavenly temple (Ezekiel 40-44), with the specific mention of the ‘closed East gate’ occurring in Ezekiel 44:1-4. The extended *andāmta* on Ezekiel 44:2, specifically interprets the sign of closed gate in the following manner:

*Its fulfilment [the vision’s], however – she became pregnant without a seed, so that he be born with sealed virginity, it proves that his mother would live without being opened after his birth.*¹²⁵⁰

Again the interpretation refers specifically to Mary, with no reference to either the Heavenly Tabernacle or to Paradise in this lengthy *andāmtā*.

The *andāmta* on Exodus 25:20¹²⁵¹ explains the interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant, a further passage focussing specifically on the person of Mary:

*This is a symbol:
The tābot of Our Lady;
The gold of her purity and her holiness;
The river of her mind;
The hammered gold [is a symbol of] the furore of the Spirit, for as that furore will not be settled the spiritual furore from the mind of Our Lady will not disappear;
The stand underneath is the purity of woman [Mary],
The place where [the wings of the cherubim] meet above [is a symbol of] the purity the father,
The two wings of Hanna and Joachim¹²⁵²;
That which is put between [them] of Our Lady, being in between them, it is a symbol of her being found from the union of Hanna and Joachim;
The two cubits and a span length are the years from Adam to Noah, if they are counted they are two thousand two hundred and fifty six years, in two thousand two hundred and fifty six years the Tābot of Noah was found as a sign of the Virgin;
The cubit and a span width are the years from Noah to Moses, if these are counted there are one thousand six hundred and twenty two years, in one thousand six hundred and twenty two years the Tābot of Moses was found as a symbol of the Virgin;
The height of a cubit and a span are the years from Moses to the True Virgin, if they are counted they come to one thousand six hundred and twenty two years, in one thousand six hundred and twenty two years the Tābot of Noah, a symbol of the Virgin, and the Tābot of Moses, a symbol of the Virgin, because they are her symbol, in five thousand five hundred years the True Virgin was found, and this is a symbol;*

¹²⁴⁹ Anonymous ዳንኤልና አሥራ ሁለቱ ደቂቅ ነቢያት: 369.

¹²⁵⁰ Anonymous መጽሐፈ ሕዝቅኤል አንድምታ ትርጓሜ: 447.

¹²⁵¹ This *andāmtā* is also referred to in chapter 3, page 110.

¹²⁵² The parents of Mary.

The four rings, for she is pure in four ways, in sight, in touch, in hearing and in thinking;

The two poles [are a symbol of] fraternal love and the love of God

ANDM of Joseph and Salome, for during her exile they went with her

ANDM of Orni and Sophia they are a symbol: for Basil said, 'do not abandon the things which I have vowed, while you are with me'

Over the place where they join the cherubim, carve them like two chickens will fight each other meaning each year the High Priest enters from the place of entreaty from the precious stones (the Urim and the Thummim) having heard the word, he came out; Our Lady from her guardian angel, with Gabriel having heard, she gave birth to the incarnated Word who taught with human words, this is a symbol.¹²⁵³

The *andāmta* on Exodus 27:21, describing the details of the construction of the Tabernacle, offers no detailed explanation of this, but does allude to Yared's oblique reference to the Heavenly Zion in the *some Dəggwā*:

*God, in order to prove that in the nature of His wisdom He made heaven and earth, likewise that He gave his wisdom and grace to men he dwelt in Bezalel and Oholiab and made the Tabernacle. **Before Zion he established the heavens, and secondly he showed to Moses that he might perform the service for the Tabernacle he says.***¹²⁵⁴

This *andāmta* appears to lack the interpretation of the heavenly church, and Paradise.

When Moses commands Aaron to put manna into the Ark as a memorial (Exodus 16:33), the *andāmta* on the verse 34 interprets this as referring to the Eucharist:

Exodus 16:34

(Ge'ez) and Aaron placed it before the testimony, so that it be preserved.

Aaron having heard Moses' word to keep it for the time of their grandchildren he took it [the Manna] and placed it before the Tabernacle of the Law. This is a symbol: that the current generation judge against them by the fathers means of judgement: they denied Him when He fed them with this measure of manna? Saying this, [the interpretation is]

ANDM: when He fed you with this which resembles manna, how did you deny Him? Saying this, they might judge against them by the means of judgement. The fulfilment is, however, the Golden Basket [is a symbol] of Our Lady, the gold of her purity and her holiness; manna [is a symbol] of the Son of God, which is without age. That [manna] when it remains for many ages without changing, it is a symbol of the unchanging of his divinity when the Lord he became a man.

This is a straightforward interpretation of the symbolism of the Golden Basket, and the manna, consistent with Yared, although the heavenly component is lacking. Whereas Yared emphasised the bearing of manna, and the believer's consumption, in the *andāmta* the emphasis has shifted to Mary, and no mention is made of the Eucharist.

¹²⁵³ Anonymous መጻሕፍተ ብሉይት: ኦሪት ዘፍጥረት (ዘልደት) ፣ ኦሪት ዘፀሐት: ዘፀሐት 156-157

¹²⁵⁴ Ibid.: 176b 29-177a 6. The highlighted section is a quotation from Yared ጸመ ደጌ: 18a 1-3.

The previously discussed connection between Zion, Mary and the Ark in the *Kəbra Nagast*¹²⁵⁵ was extrapolated in the *Dəggwā* to incorporate Ezra's vision of a weeping woman, which 4Esdras revealed as Zion. The *Kəbra Nagast* extensively employs symbolic links also elaborating Yared's theme of the Heavenly Zion, created before the world, but now the Godhead chose to let its glory dwell there, an idea resonating with 2Baruch¹²⁵⁶. The relevant passages arise primarily in the sections of the *Kəbra Nagast* that are woven around Sheba Legend at the time of the latest recension in the late thirteenth century CE¹²⁵⁷.

The phrase 'Heavenly Zion' mostly refers to the Ark made by Moses¹²⁵⁸, as the inside of this replica is mysteriously connected with this first Zion. In three instances, however, the Heavenly Zion is described as the place where the members of the Trinity have a dialogue before the Creation, forming their plan for the salvation of Adam and his race.

The first of these is at the very opening of the *Kəbra Nagast*:

*'The explanation and pronouncement of the 318 Orthodox ones concerning honour, greatness and glory, and how God gave them to the children of Adam, and especially concerning the greatness and honour of Zion, the Ark of God's Law, of which he is the maker and the fashioner, in the fortress of His temple, before all creation, both angels and men. For the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in unison and with agreement and with equality made the Heavenly Zion as the dwelling place of their glory. And then the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness," and they were in accord and they agreed on this plan. And the Son said, "I will put on the flesh of Adam," and the Holy Spirit said, "I will dwell in the heart of the prophets and the saints," and this agreement and covenant was made in Zion the dwelling place of their glory. And David said, "Your agreement was remembered which you made before the creation for the salvation of the rod of your inheritance, in Mount Zion in which you dwell.'*¹²⁵⁹

The second occurs in chapter 10, *'And I swear by myself and by Zion, the Ark of My Covenant, which I have created as a mercy-seat for the salvation of men, and in the last days I will make it descend to your seed'*¹²⁶⁰. Here the reference is to an Ark of the Covenant existing before the Ark made by Moses. The Trinity then send this Ark down to men on earth as part of the Mosaic Covenant. This Heavenly Zion has a heavenly mercy-seat¹²⁶¹.

¹²⁵⁵ See chapter 3 page 85.

¹²⁵⁶ See page 162.

¹²⁵⁷ Hubbard: 410.

¹²⁵⁸ See section chapter 3 page 114 for a detailed discussion of this.

¹²⁵⁹ Bezold: 1a 5-b 8; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 1-2*.

¹²⁶⁰ Bezold: 5a 21-24; Budge *The Kebra Nagast: 7*.

¹²⁶¹ The mercy-seat in the Bible is identified with the cover for the Ark in Exodus 25:21. LXX uses ἱλαστήριον for the 'mercy-seat', the that occurs in Romans 3:24-5 'Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον' (GNT), often translated as 'Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement' (Rom 3:24-5 NRSV). The NRSV indicates the alternative 'Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a place of atonement', which identifies Christ with the place of atonement, which is the 'mercy-seat' if the connection with Exodus in the LXX is made. This connection via the LXX may

The third mention of the Heavenly Zion is in Chapter 17, '*in the beginning He established heaven and He decided that she [Zion] should be the dwelling place of his glory on earth*'¹²⁶² so '*He decided He would cause her to descend to earth, and granted to Moses to make a likeness of her*'¹²⁶³. In this instance the boundary between the pre-existent Heavenly Zion, and the Ark made by Moses is obscure. Now, mystically, the Heavenly Zion is God's dwelling place on earth, and so is part of the Ark made by Moses.

The descent of Zion mentioned in these two short excerpts is clearly linked to the 'coming down' of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10: '*And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.*'¹²⁶⁴ It is not, however, limited to this as Moses is asked to make a likeness of her, referring to the Ark of the Covenant, rather than to a city or place.

A close reading of the *Kəbra Nagast* shows that it is unclear sometimes whether it is referring to the heavenly Ark, or that of Moses. The following description in chapter 17 is one example, where the inside of the Ark made by Moses is connected with the Heavenly in the following manner:

*'And inside the heavenly spiritual [Ark] ¹²⁶⁵ is beautiful and the work is wonderful, and she resembles jasper and sparkling stone and topaz and pearl and crystal and light, and she shines in the eyes, and she takes away and confuses the heart (mind), she was made by the mind of God and not by the hand of the craftsman of a man, but He Himself made her as the dwelling place of His glory. And it is spiritual and full of mercy, and it is heavenly and full of light, and it is a free thing and the dwelling place of the Godhead, who dwells in Heaven, and who moves about on the earth, and who dwells together with man and angels, the city of men, salvation and a dwelling for the Holy Spirit.'*¹²⁶⁶

Now the Ark of the Covenant is more than a replica of the Heavenly Zion, it is a direct link to the heavenly place. Whilst elaborated in greater detail, the understanding is based on Yared's statement that '*Before Zion he established the heavens*' as has been discussed above¹²⁶⁷.

have led to the idea expressed by the *Kəbra Nagast* that the mercy-seat is eternal, and linked with Christ.

¹²⁶² Bezold: 9a 17; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 13.

¹²⁶³ Bezold: 9a 18-20; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 13.

¹²⁶⁴ See also Rev 3:12, 21:2

¹²⁶⁵ Budge seeks to clarify '*inside the heavenly and spiritual [Ark]*' with the addition '*the heavenly and spiritual [original]*' Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 13, since the phrase is apparently talking about a heavenly place, and one made by God Himself. This is incorrect since the later part of the passage mentions about the contents of the Ark made by Moses, Manna and the Golden Gomer. The Heavenly Zion has now moved to earth, and is '*the dwelling place of His glory*'. This image of the Heavenly Zion is neither a reflection nor a copy; it is mysteriously the same thing.

¹²⁶⁶ Bezold: 9a 25-b 13; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 13.

¹²⁶⁷ See page 194.

Again, in chapter 10, the implication is that rather than the Ark of Moses being a mere replica, it is the heavenly Zion descended to earth:

*'And I swear by myself and by Zion, the Ark of My Covenant, which I have created as a mercy seat and for the salvation of men, and in the last days I will make it descend to your seed, and I will delight in the sacrifices of your children on the earth, and the Ark of My Covenant will be with them forever.'*¹²⁶⁸

The importance of the earthly Ark linked to the heavenly Zion in the plan of salvation is stressed by its eternal nature. In chapter 17, God's plan to make another Zion His earthly dwelling place, that is the Ark made by Moses, is developed:

*'And with regard to Zion the Ark of the Law of God, in the beginning He established heaven and He decided that she [Zion] should be the dwelling place of his glory on earth. Having decided this, He made her come down to the earth, and He granted to Moses to make a likeness of her, and He said "Make an Ark from wood which will not rot and overlay it with pure gold, and place inside Her the Word of the Law which is the Covenant which I wrote with my own finger in order that they might keep My Law, the two tablets of the Covenant. And inside the heavenly spiritual [Ark] is beautiful and the work is wonderful, and she resembles jasper and sparkling stone and topaz and pearl and crystal and light, and she shines in the eyes, and she takes away and confuses the heart (mind), she was made by the mind of God and not by the hand of the craftsman of a man, but He Himself made her as the dwelling place of His glory. And it is spiritual and full of mercy, and it is heavenly and full of light, and it is a free thing and the dwelling place of the Godhead, who dwells in Heaven, and who moves about on the earth, and who dwells together with man and angels, the city of men, salvation and a dwelling for the Holy Spirit. Inside it is the Golden Gomor'¹²⁶⁹ containing the Manna which came from heaven, and the Rod of Aaron, which blossomed after it was dry, without anyone watering with water, and this broke in two places and became three rods, whilst being one.'*¹²⁷⁰

This description of the Ark suggests links with three biblical references:

1. Ezekiel 28:13, describing the adornment of humans with precious stones in the Garden of Eden before the fall;
2. Revelation 4:3, describing John's vision of the last days, and the appearance of the one seated on the throne in Heaven surrounded by a rainbow;
3. Revelation 21:10-11, describing the heavenly Jerusalem adorned with jewels and precious stones.

¹²⁶⁸ Bezold: 5a 21-b 1; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 7

¹²⁶⁹ 'Gomor' is a transliteration of the Greek word γομορ used in the LXX for the 'omor' which measured the manna placed inside the Ark (see Exodus 16:33).

¹²⁷⁰ Bezold: 9a 16-b 19; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*.

These also equate with Yared's *Teaching of Zechariah*, whose golden lampstand's walls and sides are described variously as: pearl¹²⁷¹, jasper, jacinth, although in the book of Zechariah itself only the gold of the lampstand is mentioned (Zechariah 4:2).

The *Kəbra Nagašt* applies such references to the Ark to link together:

1. The dwelling place of man in Eden before the Fall,
2. The dwelling place of man in heaven after the Second Coming,
3. The beginning and the end of time,

These three emphasise the eternal nature of the Ark, and the sacramental nature of Eden before the Fall. The persistence of the Ark of the Law of God until end of the world is hinted at in this passage, an idea which re-emerges in chapter 114, where the return of the Ark to the Mount Zion is part of the culmination of God's salvation plan as presented in Revelation 14:

*And the Ark of the Law of God, the Holy Zion will remain here until that day when Our Lord will dwell on Mount Zion, and Zion will come and appear to all the worthy and pure,and Enoch and Elijah who are living to be witnesses, and Moses and Aaron from the dead, they will live with everyone, and they will open her (Zion's) seals and they will reveal the Jews, the crucifiers and they shall reproach them and accuse them because of all of their violation of the Word of God, and they will see what He wrote for them with His hand - the Words of His Commandment; and the Manna with which he fed them without toil, along with its measure the Gomor; and the spiritual Zion which came down for their salvation; and the rod of Aaron which blossomed in the likeness of Mary.*¹²⁷²

The Ark of the Law of God and its contents have become witnesses against those who crucified Christ, since together they show different ways in which God provided for the Jews, and yet they still crucified Christ. The placing of the Ark at the last judgement again affirms its place in the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. There is a small departure from the *Dəggwā* here, and some ideas in the earlier parts of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, since now the Heavenly Zion and the Ark of the Covenant, Zion, which is present on earth, appear to be distinguished.

Completing the picture of the Ark made by Moses in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, Chapter 104 affirms the place of the Ark in Christian worship, embedding it in the New Covenant of Jesus Christ:

And He makes righteous the one who worships in purity in the pure Ark of His Law; because it is called 'mercy seat', and also it is called 'refuge' and it is called 'place of sacrifice' and it is called 'place of forgiveness of sin', and it is called 'salvation' and it is called 'gate of life' and it is called 'glorification' and it is called 'city of refuge', and it is called 'boat' and it is called 'anchor of

¹²⁷¹ The Ge'ez word ሰንቀሳ, 'ənq', can also be translated as 'precious stone' and so could cover all of the stones described in the Revelation 21:10-11.

¹²⁷² Bezold: 168b 3-7, 17-169a 6; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 223-4.

*salvation', it is called 'house of prayer' and it is called 'place of forgiveness of sin to one who prays in purity in it', in order that people may pray in purity and they might not defile their flesh, because God loves the pure, because He is the dwelling of the pure. To those who enter into His dwelling and are held by the Holy Ark and who pray to him with all their hearts, He will hear them and He will save them from the day of their adversity, and He will do their will because He made the Holy Ark in the form of His throne.*¹²⁷³

Whilst salvation has come through the aegis Christ, the Ark is seen as key to God's salvation plan as the means through which forgiveness is granted and salvation received. In the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church the Ark is the place where forgiveness is granted, and where people can communicate with God in a special way. This seems to be a departure from the symbolism of the earlier literature, since here the Ark is no longer a symbol, but it is the very place where salvation is to be found. The Ark itself is to be a witness at the Last Judgement, and the physical Ark present in a Church is the mediator of salvation, through the Eucharist.

Whilst the *Kəbra Nagašt* has a clear heavenly vision of the Tabernacle, which is eternal, and relates to salvation, it has lost the breadth of expression found in the *Dəggwā*, which relates the ideas to a broad set of biblical visions. This is consistent with the idea that the *Kəbra Nagašt* in its latest recension has a specific purpose to elevate the status of the Ark in relation to salvation, emphasising its potency. This focus is consistent with 2Baruch¹²⁷⁴, which only mentions Moses' vision in relation to the Heavenly Tabernacle.

The culmination of the Ark imagery in the *Kəbra Nagašt* occurs in chapters 103 and 104¹²⁷⁵, which interweave the understanding of the Ark with New Testament themes, in particular the Eucharist reflecting the practice of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church today. Chapter 103 starts:

And the Ark is the horns of the altar where the holy priests offer sacrifice, and who place on it the table, the likeness of the grave, in Golgotha, in which he was buried, and what is on top of the table is the likeness of the first offering, that is the flesh of Emmanuel, Akratos¹²⁷⁶ pure, who has not in Him mixing, which our Saviour took from Mary, of which he said to his holy Apostles, "Eat my flesh and he who does not eat my flesh does not have a portion with me, and does not have everlasting life, and he who eats my flesh, if he dies, he will live forever, and he is joined in my body and my blood, and he has become my heir, and he will say to my Father, 'You! Our Father who is in heaven', and the Father will answer him, saying 'You! My son!' And the crown which is above the offering [Eucharist] is the likeness of the stone with which the Jews sealed up the grave. And when the priest says 'Send the Holy Spirit!' the Holy Spirit

¹²⁷³ Bezold: 151b 9-152a 3; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 197.

¹²⁷⁴ See quotation on page 162.

¹²⁷⁵ Arising primarily from sections woven around Sheba Legend at a later date, and possibly around the time of the latest recension in the late thirteenth century CE Hubbard: 410.

¹²⁷⁶ This is a transliteration of ἄκρατος, literally *unmixed, pure, undiluted*, as wine; figuratively, of God's anger *at full strength, very strong* (RV 14.10)

*will be sent, and it will become fully the flesh of our Lord, and when we have received we will become participators of the flesh and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God and the Holy Spirit, from now for eternity. Speak then to each other so that the Jews, who are blind in heart, may not boast over us, who are our enemies and the enemies of the Lord our God.*¹²⁷⁷

The *Dæg gwā* and *andāmta* have equated the Ark and the manna inside it with the heavenly Eucharist. The *Kābra Nagašt* now makes the same link with the Ark found in each a church, which is the place where the Eucharist is prepared and is transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ. The Ark of the Church ministers heavenly bread in the form of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is not explicitly mentioned in chapter 104, but the spiritual function of the Ark described in the following passage makes clear the function that it has in the process of partaking in the Eucharist, with a long list of titles given to the Ark:

*And He makes righteous the one who worships in purity in the pure Ark of His Law; because it is called 'mercy-seat', and also it is called 'refuge' and it is called 'place of sacrifice' and it is called 'place of forgiveness of sin', and it is called 'salvation' and it is called 'gate of life' and it is called 'glorification' and it is called 'city of refuge', and it is called 'boat' and it is called 'anchor of salvation', it is called 'house of prayer' and it is called 'place of forgiveness of sin to one who prays in purity in it'¹²⁷⁸, in order that people may pray in purity and they might not defile their flesh, because God loves the pure, because He is the dwelling of the pure. To those who enter into His dwelling and are held by the Holy Ark and who pray to him with all their hearts, He will hear them and He will save them from the day of their adversity, and He will do their will because He made the Holy Ark in the form of His throne.*¹²⁷⁹

This list, which resonates with that given in the *Dæg gwā*, connects the Old Testament ideas of the Ark as a mercy-seat, a refuge, and a place where the sacrifice for sin was made under

¹²⁷⁷ Bezold: 150a 15-b 19; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 195-6.

¹²⁷⁸ These titles for the Ark derive mostly from the Old Testament: The 'mercy-seat' is associated with the Ark, see Exodus 25:17; Isaiah 14:32 refers to Zion as 'refuge' and this may be the source also of the title 'city of refuge', which could also be a more metaphorical interpretation of the cities of refuge set up under the Mosaic Law; 'place of sacrifice' connects with the sacrifice of atonement which under the Mosaic Covenant was made before the ark, see Exodus 29:33-36; 'salvation' arises from the association of the Ark with the name Zion and the reference to salvation in Isaiah 46:13; 'anchor of salvation' draws on Hebrews 6:19 which describes Christ as 'the anchor of the soul'; 'house of prayer' recalls Isaiah 56:7, 'for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' quoted in the Gospels, for instance in Matthew 21:13; 'place of forgiveness of sin to one who prays in purity in it' is probably recalling Jesus saying 'for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matthew 26:28) as the Ark is now associated with this sacrifice according to the *Kābra Nagašt*. Two of the titles seem to derive from the *Kābra Nagašt* itself: 'gate of life' may be associated with the interpretation of Ezekiel's prophecy in relation to Mary given in chapter 96; 'glorification' may be rooted in the general idea of the glory of Zion expressed in the *Kābra Nagašt*; 'boat' probably relates to the description of the Ark as 'the belly of a ship' in the *Kābra Nagašt* itself. See Bezold: 10b 3-4; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 14, and the symbolic association of the Ark of the Covenant with Noah's Ark.

¹²⁷⁹ Bezold: 151b 9-152a 3; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 197.

the Mosaic Covenant with Mariological symbolism, as well as New Testament. This imagery makes a permanent place for the Ark in Ethiopian Christian worship, and in particular in the Eucharist.

The *Kəbra Nagašt* only offers oblique references to the link that exists between the original Ark and its representation or replica that found in each Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church building. First, at the end of chapter 100, during an explanation of the connection between salvation and wood: ‘(God) said (to Noah) that which will save you, that is the Ark of the Church’¹²⁸⁰. Secondly in the final sentence of chapter 102 before the two chapters devoted to the Eucharist: ‘the likeness of the throne of Holy Jerusalem is the Ark of the Church.’¹²⁸¹. These two brief references to ‘the Ark of the Church’ indicate that the *Kəbra Nagašt* associates the *tābot* in each Church with the original Ark, that is kept according to Ethiopian tradition in Axum. The implication of this is that the theological understanding developed in the *Kəbra Nagašt* also applies to these replicas.

Significance

Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature portray the Ark as an eternal symbol present at the Creation, and the eschaton. The Garden of Eden was established to mediate life through the Tree of Life. After the Fall, God’s plan was to recreate this Paradise, accomplished through the mediation of Christ, firstly physically through Mary bearing Christ in the Incarnation, and then metaphysically through the Eucharist. The Eucharist is associated with symbols of Paradise, namely the Ark(s) and Mary in heaven. The eternal nature of the Ark, and the Tabernacle, is stressed through their connection with Paradise, which they replicate. The model for the threefold division of the original Temple in Jerusalem, and now the Church, is the Garden of Eden, which Ephrem and the Ethiopic writers perceive as having the same threefold division.

This threefold division is reflected in the physical layout of Ethiopian churches that are divided into three parts: the ቅኔ መስሌት *qəne maḥlet*, the place where hymns are sung; the ቅድስት *qəddəst* or ‘holy place’, reserved for priests and the administration of the Eucharist; and the መቅደስ *maqdas* or ቅዱስ ቅዱሳን *qəddusa qəddusān*, or ‘holy of holies’, where only senior priests are admitted, and where the *tābot* stands¹²⁸².

Rather than deriving inspiration for their architectural blueprint from the Hebrew Temple, as Ullendorff proposed¹²⁸³, the construction of Ethiopian churches simulates the idea that the earthly Tabernacle and Temple, as well as Noah’s Ark, mirrored a heavenly place. In this way a connection is maintained between the Temple in Jerusalem and Ethiopian churches,

¹²⁸⁰ Bezold: 136a 5-7; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 189.

¹²⁸¹ Bezold: 150a 9-11; Budge *The Kebra Nagast*: 195.

¹²⁸² Ullendorff *Ethiopia and the Bible*: 88.

¹²⁸³ *Ibid.*: 86.

but they share the same inspiration, rather than a linear derivation. In this context, Ephrem's description of the threefold division of the Heavenly Tabernacle is striking, intimating a close connection between the Ethiopic perception of Paradise and the Judaeo-Christian milieu of the Syriac speaking church. It may even be possible that Ephrem's description of Paradise, which is reiterated in the *Dəggwā* is the inspiration for the round shape of Ethiopian churches¹²⁸⁴.

A further correlation occurs with the symbolic understanding of the Ark, which has been shown to be the bearer of manna, symbolising the Eucharist. In Ethiopian churches the ታቦት, *tābot* is the place in the church where the Eucharist is prepared, and it is located in the holy of holies, as is the Tree of Life in Paradise. Therefore, the Ark of the Church also makes the mystical connection with the heavenly Eucharist. Furthermore, the topographical location of Ethiopian churches on the top of hills may be significant, since in the Enochic and Ezekielic perception Paradise is located on a high mountain. Apart from giving a robust theological significance to the Ark, the symbolism articulates why in Ethiopian churches the Ark is such a focus of Christian worship. The Ark is an eternal mediator of salvation, through the symbolism of divine indwelling, and through this connection with Paradise.

Finally, the Cross is symbolised in both the Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' traditions as the Tree of Life, the source of the fruit used in the heavenly Eucharist, and residing in the most holy place at the centre of the Garden. The traditions are not simple copies of each other, instead they share intimately a symbolic framework of understanding this wide range of images. This symbolism is developed by the *andəmtā* and *Kəbra Nagašt*. Whereas Yared has stressed the Ark as a symbol of the paradox of divine indwelling, and through its association with Mary as a mediator of salvation to believers through the Eucharist, the *andəmtā* focuses more specifically on the connection between Mary and the Ark. The interpretation of the *Kəbra Nagašt* is more material: now the Ark of the Church is the mysterious link to the Heavenly Tabernacle.

¹²⁸⁴ See page 175.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

«ሰላም ለኪ፣ ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን፣ አምሳለ ሰማያዊ ኢየሩሳሌም»

‘Peace be to you, Holy Church, a symbol of the Heavenly Jerusalem’

This simple prayer repeated by devout Ethiopian worshipers as they make the sign of the Cross on themselves and enter the grounds of a church simply embodies the significance of the symbols discussed in this study. In a rural church, the worshipper will have climbed a tree covered hill to the gate to say this prayer. Then, they enter the outermost of the three divisions of the Church, whose layout is a mirror image of Paradise. Their path leads to the central most holy place, from where he or she receives the nourishment of the flesh of Christ, from the Golden Basket taken from the Ark, otherwise understood to be the fruit of the Tree of Life. In the background the mysterious chant of the *Dəggwā* is heard, and their humble posture indicates that they sense that they are approaching the ‘*dwelling place of divinity*’.

A synthesis of this study’s analysis of the Ark, the Cross and Paradise leads to the conclusion that they are united in symbolising the immanent presence of God. Divine immanence characterised the function of the Old Testament Ark, but the finding of this study contrasts with those offered by Ullendorff, who maintained the rôle of the Ark in Ethiopian Christian worship was in primary correspondence with its Old Testament forms. Instead this study has demonstrated how the symbolism of the Ark in Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature could be combined with that of the Cross and Paradise, to convey the immanent presence of God, that is often expressed through the Eucharist. Divine immanence is also directly linked to the Incarnation hence particularly in the Ethiopic repertoire, a direct connection is made between Mary and the Ark, both of which are conceptualised as the ‘*dwelling place of divinity*’. This concept lies at the root of the Ethiopian devotion to Mary, whilst the theological understanding of the Ark is rooted in the Syriac Judaeo-Christian perception of Paradise.

Paradise is the key to the interconnection between the symbols: the threefold breakdown of the Tabernacle centred on the Ark is understood, in Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature, to reproduce the threefold division of Paradise. Paradise and its replica each have a source of eternal nourishment located at their central, most holy place, the paradisaic feast being represented by the manna concealed inside the Ark. The Eucharistic function of the Ark is articulated by Ephrem and Yared, but is expressed more robustly in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which extrapolates the symbolism to a physical reality, through its intimation of the presence of a *tābot* replicating the Ark in every Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In the contemporary Ethiopian Orthodox liturgy, this replica is the place where the elements of the Eucharist are prepared, and transformed, an idea that dates - at least - from the time of the latest recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt*. The Tree of Life is an additional symbol of eternal nourishment, being symbolically linked to the Cross through the multi-semiotic application of ሐሐ, ‘*ad*’, or ܐܘܪܘܫܐܝܡ,

qaysā. Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ texts express the Cross as symbolising divine immanence, as does the Ark through the Eucharist, deriving from the understanding of this paradisaic feast on the fruit of the Tree of Life. The interweaving of these symbols leads to a further idea shared in the Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ sources, that the Church is mysteriously linked to Paradise, the door to which has been opened by the Cross. These combined results lead to the overall conclusion that there is a deep imprint of the ‘Ephremic’ interpretative tradition in Ethiopic literature.

Although Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature celebrate a close correlation of symbols, there are also significant differences. In their dynamic interaction with Syriac literature, over and above making duplicate copies, Ethiopian scholars formulated interpretative techniques and developed their own intrinsic traditions. The Ark symbolism was enduring and was not static; in the *Dəggwā* it is portrayed as a symbol of divine immanence and indwelling. It does not stand alone, however, but is primary amongst a rich repertoire of Old Testament symbols (including Zechariah’s lampstand, Ezekiel’s sealed east door, Gideon’s fleece, Isaiah’s swift cloud, Elisha’s pitcher, and Moses’ burning bush) that point to the Incarnation and convey the concept of divine immanence and indwelling. Similarly, Ephrem made extensive references to the Ark as a symbol of divine immanence in his rich collections of hymns. By way of contrast, Jacob of Serugh employed many of the subsidiary symbols to intimate the Incarnation, and hence divine immanence, rather than the Ark. This trend is consistent with the approach adopted by later Ethiopic works: the *andəmtā* and *Kəbra Nagašt*, although it is important to note that in these texts the Ark of the Covenant assumes a special significance.

Contrasting with its rich application of Ark symbolism is the restricted usage of Cross symbolism in the *Dəggwā*. The multi-semiotic application of ܩܝܣܐ, *qaysā* and the association between outstretched arms in a standing posture with the Crucifixion can, however, already be traced back to Judaeo-Christian writings from the first centuries CE, most notably the *Odes of Solomon*. Ephrem also assimilated these symbols, exploiting them in his interpretations of Old Testament events involving wood, and in other situations that he interpreted as Old Testament Patriarchs making of the sign of the Cross. Likewise, the *andəmtā* and the *Kəbra Nagašt* have incorporated many such motifs. By using the medium of wood to connect all the biblical covenants, a sequence that culminates in the Cross, the *Kəbra Nagašt* makes consummate use of this imagery. Its extrapolation from the symbolic to the physical in the claim that the Cross was made from the ‘wood of the thicket’ in which the ram - Isaac’s substitute - was trapped, perhaps best epitomises the innovative application of this symbolism in the Ethiopic tradition.

The *andəmtā* commentaries maintain the expression of divine immanence and indwelling associated with symbols such as Zechariah’s Lampstand, with a specific focus on the

Incarnation, but they isolate the symbolism of the *tābot* and its connection with Mary. This is further extrapolated in the *Kəbra Nagašt*, which develops its political theme of the *tābot* legitimising the ‘Solomonic’ line of Kings, and being a source of honour for Ethiopia. A more subtle trend emerges in the eschatology connected with the Ark of the Covenant in which the idea of divine immanence and indwelling becomes overshadowed by the portrayal of the Ark of the Covenant as the actual mediator of salvation, and the actual ‘*dwelling place of divinity*’ mystically connected with Paradise, and the focus of eschatological hope. Paradisal symbolism evolves to incorporate the Ark in an eschatology that is predominantly centred on this world. This idea is chiefly expressed in the sections dating from the thirteenth century recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt*. Symbolic interpretations that had a paradisal perspective in the *Dəggwā* lose this in the *andəmtā*, where they refer instead to Mary. This trend is accompanied by the development of the function of the Ark in the Eucharist; the *Kəbra Nagašt* being the only text that specifically articulates the *tābot* in each church as the place where the transformation of the elements of the Eucharist takes place.

The implications of the deep and evolving ‘Ephremic’ imprint on Ethiopic literature address three significant areas:

- the understanding of the extent of and periods of Syrian influence;
- the nature of ‘Judaic’ influence;
- indigenous innovation in the application of symbolism.

In its analysis of the Ark, the Cross, and Paradise symbolism in Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ literature, this study has considered the question of the imprint of Syrian literature, primarily via the ‘Ephremic’ tradition, on the distinct trajectory of Ethiopic Christianity. The pronounced correlation between the earliest Ethiopic work, the *Dəggwā* and Ephrem’s manifold writings suggests an early date for Syrian influence, stemming from the sixth century CE arrival of the ‘Nine Saints’ or possibly even beforehand. Whilst it is difficult to discern when ‘Ephremic’ influence actually penetrated Ethiopia, rather than confining the so-called Syrian influence to the restricted period of the Syrian ‘Nine Saints’, it is clear that its input continued over a much longer period, spanning six or seven hundred years, up to the thirteenth century, when the final recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt* was compiled. It is in the passages dating from the time of the final recension of the *Kəbra Nagašt*, that the Cross symbolism reaches its apogee, suggesting that this development may have been stimulated by the influx of Arab-Christian works, with Syriac origins, into Ethiopia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE. Although little work has been done on the transmission history of the *andəmtā*, its imagery is rich and varied absorbing and incorporating over the centuries a diverse array of sources - both East Syrian and West Syrian - over the centuries, the most notable being the works of the eleventh century CE writer, *ibn at-Ṭayyib*.

What is also apparent in the transmission of symbols is the dynamic evolution of symbolism within Ethiopic literature. The Ark, the Cross and Paradise each incorporate Judaic themes, but over and above any linear progression from Judaism to Christianity, their application points to an intellectual symbiosis linking Ethiopic, ‘Ephremic’ and Judaic scholars. The literature associated with Yared betrays his particularly close attraction towards Paradise: his *gadäl* recalls his ascent to Paradise, and claims that his music reproduces the very sounds that he heard there. The threefold division of the mountain of Paradise (Ezekiel 1 and 44), articulated by the division of the Tabernacle in Exodus 25-27, ultimately connects the Ark of the Covenant with the perception of Paradise, and the Eucharistic function of the Tree of Life found in 1Enoch. Whilst these features may have influenced the location and layout of Ethiopic churches, it is possible that 1Enoch was known outside Ethiopia in the early centuries CE, raising the corollary of its rôle in the development of Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ perceptions of Paradise, although there is no textual evidence for this. Yared’s special affinity for the connection between the Cross and the Tree of Life is based on the idea of the Tree of Life feeding the elect for eternity found in 1Enoch 25, and this connection may be one reason for its unique incorporation into the Ethiopic canon.

Further observations collectively intimate complex interactions with Judaic movements of the first centuries CE, particularly *merkabah* mysticism, and with the texts that were translated into Ge’ez during this early period. The Ethiopic application of the unique epithet ‘Zion’ to Mary and the interpretation of the Ark may be derived from an interpretation of the second century CE Jewish-Christian 4Esdras. The core symbolism of the Ark, i.e. of divine immanence and indwelling, resonates with the rabbinic idea of the *shekinah*. 1Enoch was also a foundational text in *merkabah* mysticism, which incorporates a similar paradisaic understanding. Appropriately, *merkabah* mysticism regards the Sinai Theophany as central, as do both Ethiopic and ‘Ephremic’ traditions, and it has a fascination with heavenly ascents, a feature observed in the hagiographic accounts of Yared that may also have infiltrated the writings of Ephrem, and especially Jacob of Serugh¹²⁸⁵. Research on *merkabah* mysticism has demonstrated a close association with Christian ideas that may have led some Jewish scholars to criticise its development. As such, these trends in *merkabah* mysticism provide strong evidence for a dynamic interaction between Judaic and Christian thought.

The significant trend from the *Dəggwā* contemplating Paradise, situated apart from this world, to the *Kəbra Nagašt* with its primary eschatological reality in this world reflects the tension observed in Judaic eschatology. Chapter 3 discussed the two trends in Judaism, one with an eschatological focus on Jerusalem, and another on a heavenly place, with the heavenly focus deriving from the destruction of the First and Second Temples, and the

¹²⁸⁵ A. Golitzin (2003). *The Image and Glory of God in Jacob of Serug's Homily, 'On That Chariot that Ezekiel the Prophet Saw'*. *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 47(3-4): 323-64.

Babylonian exile. This trend emerges after the period of Zague rule, when the ‘Solomonic’ dynasty sought validation. It seems that the potent symbol of the Ark, embedded in the Ethiopian psyche, provided the means for the new rulers to make Ethiopia Paradise on earth, the promulgation of such an idea becoming one purpose of the last recension of the *Kəbra Nagaśt*. It is not clear whether the political or theological aims led the trend, but with the growing importance of the Ark, which took on a similar significance to the Temple in Judaism, the idea of an eschatology focussed on this world seems to have developed. The Ark as a ‘*dwelling place of divinity*’ endures throughout Ethiopian Christian history, but its inherent potency has facilitated the shifting employment of the symbol. Saint Yared employed it to incite awe at divine immanence associated with the Incarnation; later it became the physical realisation of eschatological hope; and Ethiopian rulers exploited its potency to validate a political dynasty that endured into the twentieth century CE.

In inheriting the Jewish Scriptures, the Syrian and Ethiopian Churches stand with the rest of Christianity in their Judaic heritage. Sebastian Brock has identified the Judaic sub-stratum within Syriac Christianity, not only in the Peshitta’s utilisation of a Targumic exegesis to describe the presence of God, but also in Ephrem’s employment of various themes from the Jewish Targumim and Midrashim literary traditions. Roger Cowley commented that similar Targumic and Midrashic elements are thought to have been identified in the *andəmtā*, although the current state of research on this corpus does not allow clear conclusions¹²⁸⁶. The influence of 1Enoch, which is extant in its complete form only in the Ethiopic canon, is manifest, going beyond the mere adoption of the text. This suggests that Ethiopic scholars adopted concepts associated with *merkabāh* mysticism in a dynamic interaction with this tradition. The shared legacy of Jewish literature combined with an affinity for the ‘Ephremic’ approach to symbolic theology leads to the conclusion that Ethiopic Christianity has an inherent place within the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the early centuries CE. The corollary of this is that elements of Ethiopian Christianity that have been previously identified as ‘Judaic’ may have arisen from the interaction with Later Judaism characteristic of Judaeo-Christianity.

Recommendations

This study represents only a sounding of selected symbols within the *Dəggwā*, the *andəmtā* and the *Kəbra Nagaśt*. There is much scope for further research, particularly as the text of the *Dəggwā* and much of the *andəmtā* remains unstudied by Western scholars. There is also a pressing need for critical study of the *Dəggwā* to identify its textual history and to isolate any revisions of the text. A study of biblical allusions and quotations in the *Dəggwā* would be revealing, as they would shed light on the controversial issue of the influences on the Ethiopic Old and New Testaments - providing the potential to identify material obscured by

¹²⁸⁶ Cowley *Ethiopian Biblical interpretation : a study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*: 381.

later revisions of the Ethiopic biblical text. Furthermore, the spiritual vision expressed in its hymns needs a more extensive investigation in order to formulate a more complete picture of Yared's thought-world.

By comparison, the 'Ephremic' material has been the subject of much research. Sebastian Brock has made significant developments in the understanding of 'Judaic' influences in the 'Ephremic' tradition: for instance pointing out that the Palestinian Targum tradition expressed God's presence revealed 'over' rather than 'to' people, a usage reflected in the Peshitta. Appendix C has noted several instances where the corresponding Ge'ez preposition is used to convey the divine presence in the *Dəggwā*, suggesting that such influences may be more widely used within this early source. An investigation exploring the possibility of such influence arising from direct interaction with Jewish scholars, through the influence 'Ephremic' tradition, or independently would be fruitful.

The *andəmtā* also offers further potential to reveal its sources and to diagnose trends in symbolic thought. The few extant Ge'ez *andəmtā* might also be incorporated into such studies, in the light of their potential to identify earlier sources that were used. Since the *andəmtā* frequently records multiple readings, and textual variants it presents a valuable resource in understanding the transmission history of the Ethiopic biblical text. In short, the *andəmtā*'s wide-ranging symbolic interpretations of almost every biblical text offer many possibilities to reveal aspects of the history of the formation of the Ethiopic Christian tradition.

One of the symbols of *Kəbra Nagašt* that has been laid aside in this study is that of the Pearl. After the Ark and the Cross, it is the third component of the *Kəbra Nagašt*'s salvation plan - and in this capacity is also mentioned in the *Dəggwā*. Ephrem's *Hymns on the Pearl* offer an obvious point for comparative symbolism, but initial soundings show major differences. The Ethiopic Pearl refers to Mary, whereas the 'Ephremic' tradition refers instead to Christ. This interesting evolution of Pearl symbolism would be consistent with the idea that the Pearl represents pure human nature shared by Mary and Christ, an idea that is somewhat at odds with Ephrem's understanding of the Pearl representing the fusion of humanity and divinity in Christ. A study tracing the evolution of the interpretation of the Pearl in both Ethiopic and 'Ephremic' literature might identify the points of departure.

Appendix A. Ezra's Vision of a Weeping Woman.

Ezra's Vision of a Weeping Woman

And she said to me, 'I will not do so, I will not go to my country, rather I will die here.' And again I spoke to her, and said thus, 'Do not do this thing, say 'yes' to me, yourself suffer like Zion, and be consoled because of the city of Jerusalem. Do you not see how our sanctuary is destroyed, how our altar is broken? Do you not see how our thanksgiving has disappeared, how our praise has stopped, the chanting of our crown has fallen, how the light of our lamp has disappeared, how the Ark of our covenant has been captured, how our holy things have been turned upside down, how our name has been defiled, how our lords have been humiliated, how our priests have been burned, how our Levites have suffered adversity, how our virgins have been killed, how our wives have been taken away by force, how our righteous men (or holy ones) have been dragged along the ground, how our young men have been enslaved, how our sons have been taken away by force, how our warriors have been made weak? More than all this, Zion has disappeared, and her honour has gone with her, we have fallen at the hands of our enemies. Stop this, for the Most High and Mighty to forgive you, and for God to give you rest from your exhaustion, abandon your great mourning!'

*Afterwards, when I said this to her, suddenly her face shone more than the sun, her appearance flashed like lightning, and I was afraid to approach her, my mind was terrified, after this while I was thinking what this meant, she startled me. She cried out with a loud voice, a frightening voice which made the earth tremble. When I looked at her, behold she was no longer a woman, but rather she was an honoured **constructed city**, I saw the place where her deep foundations were. I was afraid, and cried out with a loud voice. I spoke thus, 'Where is Uriel, the angel who came to me before, where are you? Why have you made me enter many trials, why have you made my end in emaciation, why have you made my prayers to be a reproach?'*

The Interpretation of the Vision

*....The woman whom you saw before as a mourner, the one whom your started to console she is not now a woman as you saw her, rather she is **a constructed city**. She has told you about the affliction of her son. The woman whom you saw today she has become like **a constructed city**, and county, she whom you see is Zion. She who said that she had been barren for thirty years it is this, for there were three thousand years in the world before sacrifices were offered. After three thousand years Solomon built the city, and offered offerings. It was in that place that the woman gave birth. She who said, 'this son I raised with great effort' this was the period of time she lived in Jerusalem. She who said, 'this child when he entered his wedding chamber he fell and died, we suffered this affliction' this is the destruction of Jerusalem. You who saw how she wept for her son, and you who stared to console her that woman is Jerusalem. Because you were completely grieved because of her, and because you were deeply troubled in your mind when you saw her now the Most High God has shown you the adornment of her happiness and the revealing of her glory. For this is a hidden mystery.*

መጽሐፈ ዕገራ ስቴኤል, 4Esdras 9:18-50¹²⁸⁷

¹²⁸⁷ Translated from Anonymous *መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የሰባተኛው የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጻሕፍት*: The Amharic Bible with the Old Testament based on Septuagint: 611-12.

Appendix B. The Teaching of Zechariah

Text from EMMML2542 dated as 15th Century. According to the catalogue the musical notation was added to this manuscript later, which probably places it as written before the revisions of *Giyorgis of Gasəčča*. The manuscript has hand numbered pages, with four columns referred to here as a-d. The manuscript occasionally contains single letters, which are sometimes to indicate the repetition of the previous line. Sometimes what they indicate is not clear, and then they are marked with a question mark. The following is a transcript of this section of the manuscript and therefore includes some spelling inconsistencies, and may contain errors that need to be resolved through text critical studies. A few obvious omissions have been corrected, see for instance note 16 which does not make sense without the addition of **ИѦЗНА** which is contained in the biblical passage quoted.

1.	ዘካርያስ ¹ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
2.	ኩለንተሃ ወርቅ	all of gold,
3.	ጌቱ መጎትዊሃ ወጌቱ መሳውር	[and] the seven lights and seven covers
4.	ዘዲቤሃ	which were upon her ² .
5.	ሃሌ ሃሌ ሃሌ	Halleluiah, halleluiah, halleluiah
6.	ኢትፍራህ ዘካርያስ	Zechariah, do not be afraid,
7.	ተሰምዓ ጸሎትከ።	your prayer was heard.
8.	ኢጎደገ ለምድር	He did not abandon the earth
9.	እምቅድመ ዓለም ወእስከ ለዓለም	From before the world, until eternity
10.	ዘእንበለ ካህናት ወመላእክት፣	without priests and angels.
11.	ዘካርያስ ካህን ወሰማዕት	Zechariah priest and martyr
12.	ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት።	who saw the lampstand.
13.	ካህን ወክቢይ ወሰማዕት	Priest and prophet and martyr,
14.	ሊቀ ካህናት፣	high priest,
15.	ዘዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
16.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold
17.	አራፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀላ	Her walls of pearl,
18.	መሠረተ ዘወርቅ	Foundation of gold,
19.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Of the Holy Church.
20.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
21.	እንተ እግዚእ ጎረያ።	whom the Lord chose.
22.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
23.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold,
24.	አራፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀላ	Her walls of pearl
25.	ጌቱ መጎትዊሃ ወጌቱ መሳውር ዲቤሃ	Seven lights and seven covers on her
26.	ጸድቃን ወሰማዕት ይበውዑ ውስቴታ	Saints and martyrs enter into her
27.	በክብር ወበስብሐት።	With honour and with glory.
28.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
29.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold
30.	ዐረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀላ መሠረተ ዘወርቅ	Her walls of pearl, foundation of gold,
31.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	of the Holy Church.
32.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
33.	ወሶበ ርእያ	And when he saw her
34.	ኢኮነት ብእሲተ	She was not a woman
35.	እላ ሀገር ሕንጽት ወብርሃት።	But a shining constructed city ³ .
36.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
37.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
38.	እምነ ይዕቲ ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	She is our mother, the Church.
39.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
40.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	of the Holy Church.
41.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
42.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት	all of gold and jacinth
43.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	Of the Holy Church.
44.	አፍላገ ሕይወት	Rivers of life
45.	በየማና ወበጸጋማ	On her right and on her left
46.	አዕፁቅ ዘይት	olive branches ⁴ .
47.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand

¹ Page 33, Column c line 9 of manuscript. ² Zechariah 4:2. ³ 2Esdras 10:25, but the word ‘constructed’ is found in the Ethiopic, see: Anonymous (1992). *The Apocrypha: The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, New Revised Standard Version*. Cambridge, CUP: 222 note z. ⁴ Zechariah 4:3.

48.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት	all of gold and jacinth,
49.	ሀገሮሙ ለሰማዕት።	City of martyrs.
50.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand,
51.	ገንተ ትፍሥሕት መካነ ዕረፍት	Paradise of joy, place of rest
52.	እንተ ይእቲ ማኅደር ለካህናት	Which is the dwelling place for priests,
53.	እለ የሐውሩ በፈቃደ እግዚአብሔር	who enter by the will of God.
54.	ይእቲኪ ቤተ ክርስቲያን	She is the Church,
55.	በውስቴታ የዓርጉ ስብሐተ ካህናት	Inside her the praise of priests rises up,
56.	በብዙኅ ትፍሥሕት ወበሰላም።	With great joy and peace.
57.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
58.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold
59.	ዐረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀጥ	Her sides of pearl
60.	፯ቱ መጎትዊሃ ወ፯ቱ መሳውር	Seven lamps and seven covers
61.	ዘዲቤሃ	which were upon her.
62.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ	Ezra saw her,
63.	ለጽዮን ቅድስት ሰላማዊት።	Holy, peaceful Zion.
64.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ መጎቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
65.	መሠረተ ዘወርቅ	foundations of gold,
66.	ዐረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀጥ ወዘ ካርከዲን	Her sides of pearl, and of jasper
67.	ጽዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	Holy Zion, the Church.
68.	ወኩሉ ነገራ በሰላም።	And all her speech with peace.
69.	እግዚእትየ እብላኪ በል።	Say 'I call you My Lady'
70.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
71.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት	all of gold and jacinth.
72.	ዕዝራ ርእያ ⁵ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman.
73.	ካህን ወነቢይ ወሰማዕት	Priest and prophet and martyr,
74.	ሊቀ ካህናት	High priest,
75.	ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	who saw the lampstand
76.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	All of gold,
77.	አረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀጥ	Her sides of pearl,
78.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	of the Holy Church.
79.	ወበፀ-ዕ ሊቀ ካህናት	And the blessed high priest
80.	ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Who saw the lampstand.
81.	ሙሴኒ ርእያ በደንር	Moses also saw her on the Mountain ⁶ ,
82.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት።	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
83.	እንተ አግመረቶ	Who encompassed
84.	ለፀሐየ ጽድቅ	the Sun of Righteousness.
85.	ሕዝቅኤል ይቤላ ዕፁት ምሥራቅ	Ezekiel calls her closed east [door]
86.	ዘካርያስ ይቤላ ተቅዋም ዘወርቅ	Zechariah calls her lampstand of gold
87.	ማርያም ይእቲ ውዳሴሃ ዕሙቅ።	She is Mary, her honour secret.
88.	ተቅዋመ ዘወርቅ ዘዘካርያስ	The lampstand of Zechariah,
89.	ጽርኅ ንጽሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
90.	ግዕዛነ ኩሉ ዘነፍስ	Freedom of all who live.
91.	በነገረ ዕቢያ	To tell of her greatness
92.	ይደሉ ምድራሰ ⁷	It is proper to sing hymns.
93.	ያብጽሐነ ጸሎታ	He will bring her prayers for us

⁵ Page 33 column d. ⁶ Exodus 19, and more generally the Sinai Theophany ⁷ 'Hymn' seems more appropriate here, although Leslau and Dillmann give the meaning of ምድራሰ, *madrās* as 'treatise, commentary'. Leslau, W. (2006). *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic)*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag: 144; Dillmann, A. (1970). *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae* (1865). Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag: 1094.

94.	ንብ ዘኅን ወመርስ።	To the tranquil place and the harbour.
95.	ዘዘካርያስ ተቅዋም ዘወርቅ	Of Zechariah the stand of gold
96.	ዘሕዝቅኤል ነቢይ	Of Ezekiel the prophet,
97.	ዕፁት ምሥራቅ	the closed East ⁸ [door],
98.	ለመሠረትኪ የጎቱ ዕንቁ	Pearl shines for your foundation.
99.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
100.	በአሚን ንጽደቅ።	Surely let us be righteous.
101.	ዘበእንቴአሀ	Concerning whom
102.	ነቢያት ተነበዩ	the prophets prophesied:
103.	ለዳዊት ይእቲ ምኅላዩ	For David she is his place for singing,
104.	ተቅዋመ መጎቶት ዘዘካርያስ	The lampstand of Zechariah
105.	ወልደ በራኪዩ።	son of Berechiah.
106.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ	ማጎቶት Zechariah saw the lampstand
107.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት	all of gold and jacinth,
108.	አዳም ትርሲታ	Her clothes are fair,
109.	ከመ መርጎት ሰርጉት ለምታ	Like a bride adorned for her husband.
110.	ዕሃራኒ ርእያ ደንገፀ	Ezra saw her, he was terrified,
111.	ወፈርሐ ቀሪቦታ።	and feared to approach her.
112.	ይእቲ ተግቢ እምሊቃነ ጳጳሳት	She is greater than the archbishops.
113.	ዘኢያሱ ስምዐ ሐውልት	Joshua's testimony of the column ⁹ ,
114.	ፀምር ዘዳዊት	The fleece of David ¹⁰ ,
115.	ዘኤልሳዕ ቀሱት	Elisha's the water pot ¹¹ ,
116.	ዘዘካርያስ ካህን ተቅዋመ ማጎቶት።	Of Zechariah the priest, the lampstand.
117.	ለማርያም እነግር ዕብያ	I will tell of the greatness of Mary
118.	በነደ እሳት እፅ እንተ ኢትውኢ	Wood which flames will not consume,
119.	ሙሴ ዘርእዩ።	which Moses saw.
120.	ተቅዋመ ማጎቶት	Lampstand, which
121.	ዘኢገብራ ዕደ ኬንያ	The hand of a craftsman did not make.
122.	ማእከሊክሙ እምነ ጽዮን ነያ።	Behold, in our midst, our mother, Zion!
123.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ	ማጎቶት Zechariah saw the lampstand
124.	ኩለንተሃ ወርቅ ወያክት	all of gold and jacinth
125.	በየማና ወበጸገማ	One her right and on her left
126.	ኣዕፁቀ ዘይት	olive branches
127.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Of the Holy Church.
128.	ዘካርያስ ጸሊ በእንቴአነ	Zechariah, pray for us,
129.	ይኩን ሠናዩ ላዕሌነ።	Let goodness be upon us.
130.	ካህን ወነቢይ ሊቀ ካህናት	Priest and prophet, high priest,
131.	ዘርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማጎቶት	who saw the lampstand,
132.	ዘካርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ።	Zechariah son of Berechiah.
133.	ካህን ሊቀ ካህናት።	Priest, high priest.
134.	ዘርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማጎቶት።	Who saw the lampstand.
135.	ክ። ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold,
136.	ዐረፋቲሃ ዘዕነቁ።	Her walls of pearl.
137.	ክ። ጽዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Zion, Holy Church.
138.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማጎቶት።	Zechariah saw the lampstand.
139.	ካህን ዐቢይ ወነቢይ	Great priest and prophet
140.	ዘርእዩ በቀደማይ	Who first saw,

⁸ Ezekiel 44:1. ⁹ It is not clear to what this alludes. Possibly Joshua 4:3, and the pile of stones. ¹⁰ And indirect reference to Gideon's fleece in Judges 6, the Ethiopic and LXX refers to a fleece in Psalm 72:6, and the *andāmtā* commentary on this Psalm connects this with Gideon. ¹¹ 2Kings 2:20.

141.	ይበርህ ገጸ እምፀሐይ።	Her face shines more than the sun.
142.	አብርሂ አ[ብርሂ]	Shine! Shine!
143.	ጽዮን ዕንቁ ጳገዮን	Zion, pearl of topaz
144.	ዘነሰየኪ ሰሎሞን።	Of whom Solomon sang.
145.	ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	He saw the lampstand,
146.	ዘካርያስ ሊቀ ካህናት	Zechariah, the high priest,
147.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of Gold,
148.	ዐረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቁ	Her sides of pearl,
149.	እሞሙ ለሰማዕት ጽዮን ቅድስት	Mother of the martyrs, Holy Zion
150.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ በል።	Say 'Wood of the Thicket'.
151.	ዘዘካርያስ ተቅዋም	Of Zechariah the lampstand,
152.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
153.	ከመ ያድኅነኑ	That He might save us
154.	እምሲኦል ስርም	From the swamp of Sheol.
155.	ዘዘካርያስ ካህን ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Of Zechariah the priest the lampstand
156.	ዘወርቅ ወዘዕንቁ	of gold and of pearl
157.	ንጊረ ዕብያ	Speaking of her greatness
158.	ጥቀ ዕሙቅ።	exceedingly concealed.
159.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
160.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold
161.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
162.	ጽዮን ቅድስት መድኅኒት	Holy Zion, salvation,
163.	እንተ የአውደ ስብሐት።	Whom glory surrounds.
164.	እግዝእትየ አፀደ ወይን እንተ ፈረያት	My Lady, Grape vine which bore fruit
165.	ዘበኤፍራታ አድባረ	He who in the mountains of Ephrathah,
166.	ገዳም	[in] the wilderness
167.	ከደነ ጽላሎታ	covered her tabernacle.
168.	ተቅዋመ ወርቅ ዘጽዱል ማኅቶታ።	The golden stand of her radiant light.
169.	ዘካርያስ ካህን ወነቢይ	Zechariah, priest and prophet
170.	ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	saw the lampstand
171.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት።	all of gold and jacinth.
172.	ዘካርያስ ተቅዋም ዘወርቅ	Zechariah, the lampstand
173.	ነጊረ ዕብያ	Speaking of her greatness
174.	ጥቀ ዕሙቅ	exceedingly concealed.
175.	ዘሕዘቅኤል ጥገተ ምሥራቅ	Of Ezekiel the East Door.
176.	ማህደሩ ለክርስቶስ ለ ¹² ቅ	The dwelling place of Christ the Head
177.	ማርያም ሐዲስ ንድቅ።	[is] Mary the new building.
178.	ወብፀዕ ሊቀ ካንናት	And the blessed high priest
179.	ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Who saw the lampstand,
180.	እንተ ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	which was all of gold,
181.	ዐረፋቲሃ አዕማዲሃ ዕንቁ	Her walls and her columns of pearl
182.	ወያክንት	and jacinth.
183.	በቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	In the Holy Church.
184.	ግብተ በርህ ገጸ	Suddenly her face shone
185.	እምፀሐይ	more than the sun,
186.	ዕዝራኒ ፈርህ ቀሪቦታ።	Ezra feared to approach her.
187.	ተነበዩ ኩሎሙ ነቢያት	All the prophets prophesied
188.	በእንተ ማርያም	Concerning Mary,
189.	ቅድስት ታቦት እንተ ኖሳ	Holy Ark of Noah,

¹²Page 34 column a.

190.	እንተ ውስቴታ መና ኅቡዕ	Who had manna concealed inside her.
191.	ፀምር ፀዓደ ዘመንክር ዘዳዊት	Wondrous white fleece of David,
192.	ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት ዘዘካርያስ ካህን	Lampstand of Zechariah the priest.
193.	ጽርሕ ንጽሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
194.	ደብተራ ፍጽምት	Perfect Tabernacle,
195.	ማኅደረ መለኮት	Dwelling place of divinity,
196.	በቅድስና ስርጉት	Adorned with holiness
197.	በድንግልና ኅትምት	Sealed in virginity.
198.	በአልበስ ወርቅ ዑጽፍት	She is wrapped in golden clothes
199.	ወጉብርት ባቲ	In a single piece.
200.	ይእቲ ማርያም	This is Mary
201.	እንተ በላዕሌሃ አስተማሰሉ ቅዱሳን	Whom the holy prophets
202.	ነቢያት	likened to
203.	ታቦት እንተ ኖላ	the Ark of Noah
204.	እንተ ውስቴታ መና ኅቡዕ	Which had manna concealed inside her.
205.	ፀምር ፀዓደ ዘመንክር ዘዳዊት	Wondrous white fleece of David,
206.	ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት ዘዘካርያስ ካህን	Lampstand of Zachariah the priest,
207.	ገነት ዕፁት	Closed paradise,
208.	አዘቅት ኅትምት	Sealed pit,
209.	እንተ ርእይዋ ነቢያት	Whom the prophets saw
210.	በአልባስ ወርቅ ዑጽፍት ወጉብርት።	in golden clothes in one piece.
211.	ተሰሀሉ ከህናት በል።	Say, 'The priests pleaded'
212.	ዘከርያስ ርእዮ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
213.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold,
214.	እረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀፍ	Her walls of pearl,
215.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
216.	ግብተ በርሐ ገጸ	Suddenly her face shone
217.	እምፀሓይ	more than the sun,
218.	ወሶበ ርእየ	And when he saw her
219.	ኢኮነት ብእሲተ	She was not a woman,
220.	ሀገር ሕንጽት	[But] a constructed city,
221.	ይእቲ ጽዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	This is Zion, the holy Church.
222.	ከነፈ ርግብ በብሩር ዘግቡር ወገባዋቲሃኒ	The wings of a dove made with silver
223.	በሐመልማለ ወርቅ	and her sides of green gold
224.	ዘርእየ ዘከርያስ ካህን	Whom Zechariah saw
225.	፯ማንተዊሃ ወ፯ መሳውር ዘዲቤሃ	[With] seven lights and seven covers,
226.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	Of the Holy Church.
227.	ይእቲኬ እምነ ጽዮን	This is our mother, Zion,
228.	ትማኅፀነን	She cares for us
229.	ከመ ብንተ ዓይን።	Like the apple of the eye.
230.	ወልደ በራኪዩ	Son of Berechiah,
231.	ተሰምዓ ጸሎትክ	Your prayer was heard
232.	ዘከርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ	Zechariah son of Berechiah
233.	ትብጽሐነ ጸሎትክ	Your prayers will come to us
234.	ዘከርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ።	Zechariah son of Berechiah.
235.	ዘከርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw her, the lampstand
236.	ኩለንተሃ ወርቅ	All of gold,
237.	በየማና ወበጸገማ	On her right and on her left
238.	አዕፁቀ ዘይት።	olive branches

239. ዘካርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ Zechariah son of Berechiah,
240. ዘቀተልዎ በቤተ መቅደስ Whom they killed in the sanctuary¹³,
241. በእንተ ሰምዐ ሃይማኖት Because he was obedient to faith,
242. ይእኬሰ ሀሎ ይትፌሣሕ በሰማያት። Now he abides rejoicing in heaven.
243. ዘካርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ Zechariah son of Berechiah,
244. ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት who saw the lampstand
245. እንተ ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ all of gold.
246. ዘካርያስ ርእያ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት Zechariah saw her, the lampstand,
247. እምላማና ወእምፀገማ From out of her right and her left
248. አፅፁ ዘይት olive branches.
249. ደብተራ ፍጽምት Perfect Tabernacle,
250. ሀገር ቅድስት Holy city,
251. ነቢያት ይትፌሥሑ The prophets rejoice,
252. ይትፌሥሑ በውስቴታ They rejoice in her.
253. ሐዋርያት ይትገሠዩ በውስቴታ The apostles are glad in her,
254. ወዳዊት ይዜምር በውስተ ማኅፈዲሃ And David sings hymns in her towers
255. ዘበሰማይኒ ወዘበምድርኒ Those in heaven and on earth
256. በቃለ ዳዊት With the word of David,
257. ይሴብሑ ወይብሉ ኩሎሙ Glorify, all saying,
258. ሃሌ። ‘Halleluiah!’
259. ዘካርያስ ወነቢይ Zechariah prophet,
260. ወሰማዕት ሊቀ ካህናት martyr and high priest
261. ጸሊ በእንቲኣን ዕቀበነ Pray for us, keep watch over us,
262. ወተማኅፀነን qnd care for us,
263. ወባርክ ማኅበረኒ። And bless our assembly.
264. ?? ወነቢይ [Zechariah priest] and prophet
265. ወሰማዕት ሊቀካህናት and martyr and high priest
266. በርክነ አባ አንሣእ በረከትክ። Bless us, Father, raise up your blessing.
267. ቃል እምሰማይ ዘይብል A voice from heaven which says,
268. ዘካርያስሃ ቀተሉ ‘They killed Zechariah,
269. ወደሞኒ ደምሰሱ and extinguished his blood
270. ዘኢይደመሰስ [But] it will not be extinguished
271. እስከ ይገብዕ ፍትሕ እምሰማይ። Until judgement from heaven comes.
272. ዘከናው ደሞ They who spilt his blood
273. በቤተ መቅደስ in the sanctuary,
274. በእምሳለ መላእክት [He who is] the likeness of an angel,
275. ዘካርያስ ወልደ በራኪዩ። Zechariah son of Berechiah.
276. በከመ ነበበ እግዚአብሔር As God proclaimed
277. በአፈ ኩሎሙ ቅዱሳን ነቢያት Through the mouths of all
278. እለ እምዓለም the holy prophets of the earth,
279. በአፈ ኤርምያስ By the mouth of Jeremiah,
280. ወዘካርያስ ወልደ በረኪዩ። and Zechariah son of Berechiah.
281. ለቃልክ ወለምግባርክ For your word and your deeds
282. ሊቀ ካህናት ለመንገለ እግዚአብሔር High priest at the side of God,
283. ከሠተክ ለነ ቤተ ጸሎት You revealed to us the house of prayer,
284. ምስትሰራዩ ኩሎ ኃጢአት። the place of forgiveness of all sin.
285. ከመዝ ይቤሎ እግዚአብሔር Thus God said
286. ለኤርምያስ ነቢይ to the prophet Jeremiah,
287. ሀብ ዘዚአሃ ለቤተ ክርስቲያን ‘Give of what is hers to the Church,

¹³ The only biblical reference to this is in Matthew 23:35, and Luke 11:51. Zechariah is discussed in the *adāmta corpus*, and is identified as the murdered father of John the Baptist’s, see Cowley, R. W. (1985).

288.	መራጉተ አወፍዮ ለፀሐይ	entrust they keys to the sun.’
289.	ወካዕበ ይቤሎ እግዚአብሔር	Again God said
290.	ለኢሳይያስ ነቢይ	to the prophet Isaiah,
291.	እሰምዕ ሰብእ መሃይምናነ ኣርያሃ	‘I will hear faithful men, Uriah, and
292.	ወዘካርያስሃ ወለደ በሩኪዩ።	Zechariah son of Berechiah.’
293.	ይባርክም ነቢያተ ¹⁴ ሁ ለእግዚአብሔር	The prophets of God will bless him
294.	ኤርምያስ ወኤልያስ	Jeremiah, and Elijah,
295.	ወኢሳይያስ ወሶፎንያስ	And Isaiah, and Zephaniah,
296.	ወዘካርያስ ወልድ በሩክዩ	And Zechariah son of Berechiah.
297.	ይሱብሕም እንዘ ይብሉ	They will glorify him, saying,
298.	ንሱብሐ ለእግዚአብሔር	‘Let us glorify God,
299.	ኪዳነ ዘአቀመ ምስለ ኖሳ።	who decreed the covenant with Noah!’
300.	ማርያምስ ተሓቱ እምትካት	Mary, shone long ago
301.	ውስተ ከርሡ ለአዳም	in the belly of Adam
302.	ከመ ባሕርይ ¹⁵ ፀዓደ	Like a white pearl,
303.	እስመ በእንቲአሃ	Because ‘for her sake
304.	ወእንተ አዝማዲሃ	And for the sake of her race
305.	ተሰቀልኩ ዲበ ዕዕ	I was crucified on the wood.’
306.	ይቤ ከመ አውዕኑሙ አዳማሃ ወእቤለሃ	He said, ‘I brought forth Adam, Abel,
307.	አብርሃምሃ ይስሐቅ ወያዕቆብሃ	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
308.	ወባዕዳን ከነቢያት	And other prophets
309.	እለ ከመሆሙ ዐቀቡ ሕግዩ	who like them kept my law,
310.	ከመ በለዕሌሆሙ እሱባሕ	So that I will honour them
311.	እስከ ለዓለም ዓለም።	for eternity.
312.	ብእሲ ዘስመ ዘካርያስ	A man of the name Zechariah,
313.	ዘይቀውም ውስተ	Who stands in
314.	ሐዋሃዊሃ ኢይሩሳሌም	the gates of Jerusalem
315.	ዘያቀርቦሙ	Who administers Holy Communion
316.	ለካህናት በየማነ ምሥዋዕ	To the priests on the right of the altar,
317.	ወይቤሎሙ	And he says to them, ‘Clean your hands
318.	አንሥኡ እደዊከሙ ለቅድሳት	for the divine service’
319.	ብፁዕ ገብረ	The blessed service
320.	ከህነቶ	of the priesthood
321.	ዘየዓቅብ።	Which he protects.
322.	[ዘእንበለ ¹⁶] ያእምር ሕፃን ሰመ	The child, without knowing the name
323.	አቡሁ ወእሙ	of his father and mother
324.	ይነሥእ	He will take away
325.	ኃይለ ደማስቆ	the power of Damascus
326.	ወይትካፈል ምሕረካ ዘሰርያ	The spoils of Syria will be divided up
327.	በቅድመ ንጉሠ ፋርስ	in front of the King of Persia ¹⁷ .
328.	ወይቤሎ እግዚአብሔር	God said
329.	ለኢሳይያስ ነቢይ	to the prophet Isaiah,
330.	እሰምዕ ሰብእ ምእምናነ ኣርያሃ	‘I will hear faithful men, Uriah,
331.	ወዘካርያስሃ ወልድ በሩኪዩ።	And Zechariah son of Berechiah.’

¹⁴ Page 34 column b. ¹⁵ The word ባህርይ also means ‘nature’, a double meaning which is exploited in the Ethiopian version of this story. ¹⁶ The manuscript is unreadable here, but this is a quotation from Isaiah 8:4 which starts with ዘእንበለ. See Anonymous (1997 EC). ትንቢት ኢሳይያስ. Addis Ababa, ትንሣኤ ማሳተሚያ ድርጅት, and Anonymous (2000 EC). መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የብሉይ የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጻሕፍት፡ The Amharic Bible with the Old Testament based on Septuagint. Addis Ababa, The Bible Society of Ethiopia: 986. ¹⁷ Isaiah 8:4

332.	በከመ ይቤ እግዚእን በወንጌል	As our Lord says in the Gospel,
333.	እምደመ አቤል ጸድቅ	‘From the blood of righteous Abel
334.	እስከ ደመ ዘካርያስ	to the blood of Zechariah
335.	ወልደ በራኪዩ	son of Berechiah’
336.	ወኩሎሙ ቅዱሳን	And all the saints
337.	እለ እዕረፉ በእምነት ወበሃይማኖተ	Who rested in faith and in belief,
338.	ኣብ ጸውዖሙ	The Father calls out to them
339.	ከመ ይንሥኡ አስበ ዕሤቶሙ።	That they might raise up their reward.
340.	ዘካርያስ ወልደ በራክዩ	Zechariah son of Berechiah,
341.	ካህን ወሰማዕት	priest and martyr
342.	ዘርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት።	Who saw the lampstand.
343.	ካህን ወነቢይ ወሰማዕት	Priest and prophet and martyr
344.	ዘተከዕወ ደሙ	Whose blood was poured out
345.	ውስተ ቤተ መቅደስ	in the sanctuary.
346.	ወኮነ ሰማዕተ	He became a martyr
347.	ከመ ኢይጎድግ	That he might not abandon
348.	ግብረ ርትዕተ ሃይማኖተ	the work of the true faith.
349.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
350.	እንተ ኩለንተሃ ወርቅ	which was all of gold,
351.	ጽዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Zion, the Holy Church.
352.	ይቤሎሙ ኢየሱስ ለአይሁድ	And Jesus said to the Jews,
353.	መነሃ እምነቢያት	‘Whom from amongst the prophets
354.	ዘኢሰደዱ ወኢቀተሉ አበዊከሙ	Did your fathers not persecute and kill,
355.	እለ ይዜንዉ ምጽአቶ	They who announced the coming
356.	ለዋሕድ	of the One and Only?’
357.	እምደመ አቤል	From the blood of Abel
358.	እስከ ደመ ዘካርያስ	To the blood of Zechariah
359.	ወልደ በራኪዩ።	son of Berechiah.
360.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
361.	እንተ ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	which is all of gold
362.	በየማና ወበጸጋማ	On her right and on her left
363.	አዕቡቀ ዘይት	olive branches,
364.	ደብተራ ፍጽምት	Perfect Tabernacle,
365.	መድኅኒት ሀገር ቅድስት	Salvation, Holy City
366.	እንተ የአውደ ስብሐት	Whom glory surrounds,
367.	ሀገሮሙ ለሰማዕት።	City of the martyrs.
368.	ማኅደረ ሰላምነ በል።	Say, ‘Dwelling place of our peace’.
369.	ባርክነ አቡ በል።	Say, ‘Father bless us’.
370.	ይቤ ካህን	The priest says,
371.	በየማኑ ምክር ወሰላም	‘On his right hand counsel and peace,
372.	ማእከሊሆሙ አክሊለስ	in their midst the crown
373.	ለእሉ ይትኤግስዎ።	For those who endure.’
374.	ዘካርያስ ርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
375.	ሃሌ[ሉያ] ሃሌ[ሉያ] ሃሌ[ሉያ]	Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah
376.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ አረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቁ	All of gold, her sides of pearl
377.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	of the holy Church.
378.	ርእዩ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	He saw her, the lampstand
379.	እንተ ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	which is all of gold,
380.	አረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቁ። እ።	Her sides of pearl. ?
381.	ወመሠረተ ያክንት።	And foundations of jacinth.

382.	እንተ ኩ[ለንታሃ ወርቅ]።	Which is all [of gold]
383.	ጸዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Zion, the holy Church.
384.	እ።	?
385.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman
386.	ወሶበ ርእያ	And when he saw her
387.	ኢኮነት ብእሲተ	she was not a woman
388.	ሀገሩ ይእቲ	[But] His city,
389.	ሀገሩ ለንጉሥ ዐቢይ።	The city of the great king.
390.	ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Zechariah saw the lampstand
391.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ ወያክንት።	All of gold and jacinth.
392.	ዘካርያስ ካህን	Zechariah, priest
393.	ወነቢይ ወሰማዕት ሊቀ ካህናት	And prophet and martyr, high priest
394.	ዘያስተሰሪ ኅጢአተ ሕዝብ	Who forgives the sins of the people,
395.	ሰአል ወጸሊ በእንቲአነ።	Plead and pray for us!
396.	ወብፁዕ ሊቀ ካህናት	And the blessed high priest
397.	ዘርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Who saw the lampstand
398.	ኩለንታሃ ወርቅ	all of gold
399.	አረፋቲሃ ዘዕንቀ።	Her sides of pearl
400.	ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	Of the holy church.
401.	ሀቡ ዘካርያስ ርእየ ተቅዋመ ማኅቶት	Indeed! Zechariah saw the lampstand
402.	ዕዝራኒ ርእያ በርእየተ ብእሲት	Ezra saw her in the form of a woman,
403.	ለጸዮን ቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	[He saw] Zion, the holy Church.
404.	ወብዕዕት ይእቲ ማርያም	And blessed is Mary,
405.	በብሩህ ደመና ዘከለለ መልአክ	Swift cloud whom the angel protected,
406.	ተናገራ ሐደስዬ ጣዕዋ	He called her New Calf.
407.	በሐኪ ማርያም	Hail to you Mary,
408.	እንተ እግዚአ ጎረያ።	Whom the Lord chose.
409.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማ ¹⁸ ርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
410.	እሙ ለእግዚእነ በእንቲአነ	Mother of our Lord, to our Lord,
411.	በእንተ ኅጥአን	concerning sinners
412.	እስመ ረክብኪ ሞገስ	For you were found honoured
413.	በጎበ ልዑል።	by the Most High.
414.	እሞሙ ለሰማዕት	Mother of the martyrs,
415.	ወእኅቶሙ ለመላዕክት	And sister of the angels.
416.	ትዓቢ እምአንስት	She is great among women.
417.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይእቲ	She is the Wood of the Thicket
418.	እንተ በአማን	Who is truly
419.	መሶበ ወርቅ እንተ መና።	the Golden Basket of manna.
420.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይእቲ	She is the Wood of the Thicket
421.	እንተ በአማን	Who is truly
422.	ጽርሕ ንጽሕት	the pure bridal chamber.
423.	አግዕዚት	Bringer of freedom,
424.	አንቀጸ አድኅኖ	Gate of salvation,
425.	ጽድቅ ረሰያ።	Righteousness adorns her.
426.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይእቲ እንተ በአማን	Who is truly the Wood of the Thicket,
427.	እንተ በላዕሌሃ ተመርዐው ቃል	Through her the Word was married ¹⁹ ,
428.	ጽርሕ ንጽሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
429.	ደብተራ ፍጽምት	Perfect Tabernacle,
430.	እንተ ኢገብራ ዕደ ሰብእ።	Who was not made by the hand of man.

¹⁸ Page 34 column c. ¹⁹ This is a difficult sentence to interpret, but is perhaps an allusion to Revelation 21:9, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.'

Appendix C. The Assumption of Mary

Text from EMMML2542 dated as 15th Century. According to the catalogue the musical notation was added to this manuscript later, which probably places it as written before the revisions of *Giyorgis of Gasăčča*. The manuscript has hand numbered pages, with four columns referred to here as a-d. The manuscript occasionally contains single letters, which are sometimes to indicate the repetition of the previous line. Sometimes what they indicate is not clear, and then they are marked with a question mark. The following is a transcript of this section of the manuscript and therefore includes some spelling inconsistencies, and may contain errors that need to be resolved through text critical studies.

1.	¹ እግዝእትዮ እብለኪ.	I will call you my Lady,
2.	ወእሙ ለእግዚእየ እብለኪ.	and the mother of my Lord.
3.	ወተወልደ እምኒኪ.	Born from you was
4.	ቃለ ጽድቅ ለክብ	the holy Word of the Father
5.	ማርያምስ ተሐቱ ውስተ ከርሁ ለኣም	Mary, you shine in Adam's belly
6.	ከመ ባሕርየ ፀዓዳ	like a white pearl
7.	ጸረቶ እግዝእቱ ለኣም።	The Lady of Adam carried him ² .
8.	ሰእሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
9.	እንተ እግዚእ ጎረያ።	Whom the Lord chose.
10.	ትብርህ እምፀሐይ	You shine more than the sun,
11.	ወትትሌዓል እምኣድባር	You are greater than the mountains,
12.	እንተ በአማን ድንግል	Who is truly a virgin.
13.	ሰእሊ ለነ ኣስተምህሪ ለነ	Plead for us, seek mercy for us
14.	ቅድመ መንበሩ ለእግዚእነ።	before the throne of our Lord.
15.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይእቲ እንተ በአማን	She is the Wood of the Bush ³ ,
16.	ይብልዋ ቅድስተ ቅዱሳን።	Whom truly they call Holy of Holies.
17.	እግዝእትዮ በል።	Say, 'My Lady'.
18.	ጽርጎን ጸሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
19.	አግዓዚት	Bringer of freedom ⁴
20.	እንተ ኢያውዓያ	Whom the fire of divinity
21.	እሳተ መለኮት	does not consume
22.	ማርያም ታዕከ በምድር	Mary, a palace on earth,
23.	ወታዕከ በሰማያት።	And a palace in heaven.
24.	ርግብየ ይቤላ በል።	Say 'He calls her my dove.'
25.	ፀኢ ኣምሊባኖስ	Come out from Lebanon,
26.	ርቱዕ ኣፍቅሮትኪ	Your affection is righteous,
27.	ቡርከት ኣንቲ እምኣንስት	You are the most blessed of all women,
28.	ማኅደረ መለኮት።	The dwelling place of Divinity.
29.	ሰላም ለኪ ማርያም እመ ኣምላክ	Peace to you, Mary, mother of God
30.	ወልድኪ ይጸውዓኪ ውስተ ሕይወት	Your son will call you to life,
31.	ወመንግሥተ ክብር።	And the kingdom of honour.
32.	እግዝእትዮ እብለኪ.	I will call you my Lady,
33.	ወእሙ ለእግዚእየ እብለኪ.	I will call you Mother of My Lord
34.	ቃል ቅዱስ ጎደረ ለዕሌኪ።	The Holy Word dwelt in you.
35.	እግዝእትዮ እብለኪ.	I will call you my Lady,
36.	ወእሙ ለእግዚእየ እብለኪ.	I will call you the Mother of my Lord
37.	ቃል ቅዱስ ጎደረ ለዕሌኪ.*	The Holy Word dwelt in you.
38.	በኩሉ ትውልደ ትውልድ	In all generations
39.	ይሌባሕ ስምኪ።	He will glorify your name.
40.	ስብሐት ለእግዚአብሔር በሰማያት	Glory to God in the heavens
41.	ወላዕሌነ ይኩን ምሕረት	And may peace be upon us
42.	በጸሎተ ጊዮርጊስ	By the prayer of George
43.	ዐቢይ ሰማዕት	the great martyr,
44.	ወበማርያም ወላዲተ ኣምላክ።	and by Mary the bearer of God.
45.	ነያ ሠናይት	Behold her, beautiful,

¹ Page 113, column b, line 1. ² The Lady of Adam is Eve. Mary is present in Adam's belly, but the burden carried by Eve here is referred to with a masculine pronoun, suggesting that the reference is also to Christ. This would be consistent with the idea that in the Ethiopic literature the pearl represents perfect human nature, which is shared by both Mary and Christ. ³c.f. Exodus 3:3. ⁴ There is a probable play on words here. አግዓዘ/አግዐዘ can also mean banish, so Mary is 'the banished woman' and the 'bringer of freedom' in a parallelism between Mary and Eve.

46.	ወነያ አዳም	And behold her, fair
47.	ጽርጎን ገጽሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
48.	አግዓዚት	Bringer of freedom
49.	እሞሙ ይኢቲ ለሰማዕት	She is the mother of martyrs
50.	ወእናቶሙ ለመላእክት።	And the sister of angels.
51.	መዐዘሆሙ ለቅዱሳን	The fragrance of the saints,
52.	እፀ ጳጦስ	Wood of the Bush,
53.	እንተ በአማን ይብልዋ ቅድስተ ቀዱሳን።	Whom truly they call Holy of Holies.
54.	ኃይሉ ዘይፌትት በረደ	[He who by] His power sends ⁵ hail
55.	ድንግል በከርሣ አግመረት	The virgin encompassed in her womb,
56.	እምዕባዮ ግርማሁ	from His great glory,
57.	ሙሴ ዘርዕይ ከመ ወላዲቱ	Moses saw that His bearer
58.	ተሰምየት ገሀደ።	was manifestly named.
59.	ንዋያ ውስጠ እስከ ያስተርኢ	Until his bowels were seen
60.	ሰተሩ	They scourged him
61.	ሥጋሁ መተኑ	They cut his flesh,
62.	ውስተ ዐዘቅት ዐፅሞ	They threw his bones in the pit
63.	ቅዱስ ጎዮረጊስ ሞአሙ	Saint George vanquished his enemies
64.	በገድሉ።	by his death.
65.	እግዝእትዮ ለአብርሃም ገራህቱ	My Lady, the Field of Abraham ⁶
66.	ለሙሴ እናቱ	The sister of Moses
67.	ለዳዊት ወሰቱ	The daughter of David
68.	ዕንቁ ክቡር ውሰቴታ የሐቱ።	The honoured pearl ⁷ shines inside her
69.	ዔና አልባሲሃ አፈዋተ	He has the fragrance of her clothing
70.	ቦቱ።	of sweet herbs
71.	ኮከበ ክብር	The honoured star
72.	ዘያበርህ በምድር	Which gives light on earth.
73.	ገበራ ገበራ	Her deeds, her deeds
74.	ተአምር	They are made known
75.	በልዳ ሀገር	In the City of Lydda.
76.	እንተ ውኢቱ ጊዮርጊስ ኃይል	Who is Mighty George
77.	በጸሎትክ አድኅንኒ	By your prayers he will save me
78.	እምነይሉ ለፀር።	From the power of enemies.
79.	ጽርጎን ገጽሕት	Pure bridal chamber,
80.	አግዓዚት	Bringer of freedom,
81.	ማኅደረ መለኮት	Dwelling place of divinity.
82.	ያዓወደ ስብሐት ለማርያም ቅድስት።	He makes glory surround Holy Mary.
83.	ጽ[ርጎን ገጽሕት]።	(Repeat: Pure)
84.	ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይኢቲ	She is the Wood of the Bush
85.	እንተ በአማን ይብልዋ ቅድስተ ቅዱሳን	Whom they truly called Holy of Holies.
86.	ጸቃውዕ ይውኅዝ እምከናፍርኪ	Honey flows from your lips
87.	ቡረከት አንቲ እምአንስት።	You are blessed among women.
88.	እግዝእትዮ ለቃል መዝገቡ	My Lady, treasury of the Word,
89.	ለወርኅ ክበቡ	Halo of the moon,
90.	ለፀሐይ ለሕቡ	Warmth of the sun,
91.	ፍሬ ዚአክ እለ በልዑ	Those who eat your fruit
92.	ይጠቡ	will gain wisdom,
93.	አንቲ ዕፀ [ጳጦስ]	You, the Wood [of the bush]

⁵ Literally 'he breaks up/crashes hail'. ⁶ In Genesis 23 Abraham buys a field for Sarah's and his burial.

⁷The pearl is masculine see note 2.

94.	ዘያሌቡ።	Who gives understanding.
95.	ርግብየ ይቤላ	He calls her My Dove,
96.	በእንተ የዋሃተ ወሠናይት	Because of her humility and beauty,
97.	በእንተ አርምሞተ።	Because of her silence.
98.	ቦቱ ምልክና ለማርያም	He has the lordship over Mary,
99.	ዘፈተወ ስና።	He who desires her beauty.
100.	ወለተ ብርሃን	Daughter of light,
101.	ለአድጎኖትነ ረዲ	Servant of our salvation,
102.	ውስተ ጽርሕነ፤	In our bridal chamber
103.	በስብሐተ ወልድኪ ዑዲ።	Your Son surrounded with glory.
104.	አንቀጸ ከብርሃው ለቅዱሳን	The gate of the honour of the saints.
105.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
106.	እሙ ለብርሃን።	Mother of the Light.
107.	በሐኪ ማርያም ሐደስዮ ጣዕዋ	Hail to you, Mary, New Calf ⁸
108.	እኅትነ ይብልዋ	The angels call her our sister,
109.	መላእክት ይኬልልዋ።	And they surround her.
110.	ይሴብሐኪ ማርያም	They praise you, Mary,
111.	ንጽሕት በድንግልና	Pure in virginity.
112.	አልባቲ ሙስና	She has no corruption in her,
113.	ፀምር ፀዓዳ	White Fleece ⁹ ,
114.	ዕራቁ ደመና	Bare cloud ¹⁰
115.	ሱራፌል ወኪሩቤል ይኬልልዋ።	Seraphim and cherubim surround her.
116.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም	Plead for us, Mary,
117.	ይክሥት ለነ መንግሥቶ	And he will reveal to us His Kingdom,
118.	አመ ምጽእቱ ደግመ	When [is] His second coming.
119.	ያቁመነ ቅድሜሁ	He will cause us to stand before Him
120.	ያስተሳትፈነ	He will cause us to have fellowship
121.	ምስሌሁ	with Him,
122.	እግዚእነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ።	Our Lord Jesus Christ.
123.	ሰአሊ ለነ አስተምሕሪ ለነ ማርያም እምነበ	Plead for us, seek mercy for us, Mary,
124.	ወልድኪ	From your Son,
125.	ይትከዐው ሰላም።	Peace will be poured out.
126.	ነጽሩ ሊተ ድንግለ ኅትምተ	They sought the sealed Virgin for me,
127.	መዓዘ አፉህ	The fragrance of her mouth
128.	ይዌኑ ዕፍረተ።	Which is fragrant with perfume.
129.	ኃረያ እንዘ ስብሕት ¹¹	He chose her because of glory
130.	ወቡርከት በቅድሳና ወበንጽሕና	And blessing and holiness and purity.
131.	ሰአሊ ለነ	Plead for us,
132.	ኢንረክብ ሙስና።	That we might not find corruption.
133.	ነያ ሠናይት	Behold her beautiful,
134.	ወነያ አዳም	And behold her fair,
135.	እንተ በላዕሌሃ ተመርዐወ ቃል	Through her the Word was married,
136.	ቃል እግዚአብሔር	The Word of God.
137.	ደብተራ ፍጽምት	Perfect Tabernacle,
138.	እሞሙ ይኢቲ ለሰማዕት	She is the mother of the martyrs,

⁸ The reference to Mary as the 'new calf' is obscure, but a reference to a similar idea has been identified in a poem misattributed to Ephrem in Brock, S. (1994). *The Bride of Light*. Kottayam, India, St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute: 73-41, and also in Jacob of Serugh's first homily on the Nativity, Kollamparampil, T. (1997). *Jacob of Serugh: Select Festal Homilies*. Rome, Centre for Indian and Inter-religious studies: 79-839, and in both cases it appears to be a reference to the virgin birth. ⁹ Judges 6:36-40. Also connected with the LXX version of Psalm 72:6. ¹⁰ Isaiah 19:1. ¹¹ Column C.

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| 139. | ወእኅቶሙ ለመላእክት። | And the sister of the angels. |
| 140. | ርግብየ ይቤላ | He calls her My Dove, |
| 141. | በእንተ የዋሃታ ወሠናይት | Because of her humility and beauty, |
| 142. | በእንተ አርምሞት | Because of her silence |
| 143. | ሰአሊ ለነ ቅድስት | Plead for us, Holy one, |
| 144. | ኅብ ንጉሠ ስብሐት | To the King of Glory, |
| 145. | እኅቶሙ መላእክት። | Sister of the angels. |
| 146. | ታቦተ መቅደስ ሃ | Ark of the sanctuary, Halleluiah |
| 147. | መርዐተ ንጉሥ | The bride of the King |
| 148. | ማርያም ሐመር ሐደሰ | Mary, the new boat |
| 149. | ምድር ጽምዕት ዘኢሳይያስ | The dry earth of Isaiah |
| 150. | ማኅደሩ ይኢቲ | She is the dwelling place |
| 151. | ለመንፈስ ቅዱስ። | of the Holy Spirit. |
| 152. | እግዝእተየ ማርያም | My Lady, Mary, |
| 153. | መሶብ ወርቅ ዘመና | Golden Basket of manna ¹² . |
| 154. | ሊቀ ነቢያት | Whom the great prophet, |
| 155. | ዘርእያ በሲና | saw on Sinai |
| 156. | አመታቲሃ ለድንግል አመ ኮነ ፳ | The years of the Virgin were eighty [she |
| 157. | እምዝ ዐለም | passed] from this world, |
| 158. | እምድኅረ አፍለሳ | And after her assumption. |
| 159. | ካዕብ በሰረገላ | On a chariot |
| 160. | መሠጠ ነፍሳ። | Her spirit was also carried away. |
| 161. | ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም እምነ በእነቲአን | Plead for us, Mary, our mother, for us |
| 162. | በእንተ ኃጥአን | and for our sins, |
| 163. | እስመ ረከብኪ ሞገሰ | Because you have found honour |
| 164. | በኃብ እግዚአብሔር | before God |
| 165. | እስመ ኪያኪ ኅርየ ለታእካሁ በመንግሥተ | Because He chose you for His palace |
| 166. | ሰማያት | In the Kingdom of the Heavens. |
| 167. | ሰአሊ ለነ ቅድስት | Plead for us, Holy One, |
| 168. | ከመ ንድኅን እሞተ ኅጢአት። | That we be saved from the death of sin. |
| 169. | ስምዒ ወለትየ ወርእዬ | Listen, my daughter, and look |
| 170. | ወአጽምዒ እዝነኪ | And turn your ear! |
| 171. | ርስዒ ሕዝባኪ | Forget your people |
| 172. | ወቤተ አቡኪ | And your father's house |
| 173. | እስም ፈተወ ንጉሥ ሥነኪ | Because the King desires your beauty, |
| 174. | ቅዱስ ማኅደር | Holy dwelling place |
| 175. | ወይቤ ዝየ አኅድር | And he said, 'I will dwell here, |
| 176. | እስመ ኃረይከዋ። | Because I have chosen her.' |
| 177. | ወብፁዕስ ዘአፍቀሮ ለክርስቶስ በል። | Say, 'Blessed is he who loves Christ.' |
| 178. | ዕፀ ጳጦስ ይኢቲ | She the Bush of the Thicket, |
| 179. | እንተ በአማን እሳተ መለኮት | Whom truly the fire of divinity |
| 180. | ኢያውእያ | did not consume |
| 181. | ተንከተመ ጽድቅ | [As] the bridge of holiness |
| 182. | ርስያ። | He established her. |
| 183. | እብል ተዓቢ እምሰማይ | I will say, she is greater than heaven, |
| 184. | ብእሲ ተወልደ በውስቲታ | The man was borne within her, |
| 185. | ፀምር ፀዓዳ። | White Fleece. |
| 186. | እሞሙ ለሰማዕት | The mother of the martyrs, |
| 187. | እንተ ላቲ ይደሉ ስብሐት | To whom it is right to give honour, |

¹² Exodus 16:33, Hebrews 9:4. The Ethiopic Bible has 'basket' instead of 'jar' or 'urn'.

188.	ማርያምስ ከመ ፀሐይ ብርሀት።	Mary shining like the sun.
189.	ኃርያት መክፈልተ ሠናየ	He chose the portion of her beauty,
190.	ዘኢየጎይደዋ	Which will not be taken away,
191.	አንቀጸ አድጎኖ	[As] the gate of salvation,
192.	ረስያ።	He established her.
193.	እንተ ርእየ ሙሴ በደብረ ሲና	Whom Moses saw on Mount Sinai,
194.	ዕዕ እንተ ኢያውእያ	Tree whom the fire of divinity did not
195.	እሳተ መለኮት	consume,
196.	እጎትነ እግዝእትነ ይእቲ ማርያም።	Our sister, our Lady, she is Mary.
197.	ወልድ መለኮት ወፍቅር ጎደረ ላዕሌሃ*	Son, God, and Love dwelt in her
198.	ወይቤላ ርግብየ	And He calls her My Dove,
199.	ወይቤላ ሠናይትየ	And He calls her My Beauty,
200.	ፀቃውዕ ይውሕዝ እምከናፍሪሃ።	Honey flows from her lips.
201.	ደመና ቀሊል ትጸውር መና	Swift cloud, who carries manna
202.	ማርያም ይእቲ ንጽሕት በድንግልና	She is Mary, pure in virginity,
203.	እስመ እምከርሣ	Because from her womb
204.	ሠርፀ ፍራ ስብሐት	Her glorious fruit blossomed
205.	ዘበትርንጫሁ እግዚአብሔር መስሌን።	Which means, ‘God with us.’
206.	ማርያም ታብየ ነፍስየ ውእቱ	Mary, My soul magnifies Him,
207.	አምላኪየ ወመድጎንየ	My God and my Salvation.
208.	ወ አምላኮሙ ለአብውየ	And the God of my fathers,
209.	ኃይልየ ወፀወንየ ወ።	My strength and my refuge.
210.	ማርያም ነያ አመተ እግዚአብሔር	Behold her, Mary, maidservant of God.
211.	ይኩነኒ	He will judge me
212.	በከመ ትቤለኒ	In accordance with what you call me
213.	ያስተበዕዑኒ ሊተስ እም	Every generation
214.	ይእዜላ ኩሉ ትውልድ።	From now will consider me blessed.
215.	ጸርኃ ንጽሕት ማርያም	Pure bridal chamber, Mary
216.	ተፈሥሐ ሀገረ እግዚአብሔር	The City of God rejoiced
217.	ቃል ቅዱስ	The Holy Word
218.	ይወዕእ እምአፉኪ	comes out from your mouth
219.	አእላፍ መላእክት ይትለክኩኪ።	Myriads of angels will be sent to you.
220.	አነሰ ኃበጊዮርጊያስ በል፡	Say, ‘George raised up!’
221.	ሰአሊ ለነ ማርያም ቅድስት	Plead for us, Holy Mary,
222.	እጎቱ ለሙሴ	Sister of Moses
223.	አሞሙ ለሰማዕት	Mother of martyrs
224.	ማርያም ታዕካ በምድር	Mary, her palace is on earth,
225.	ወታዕካ በሰማያት።	And her palace is in the heavens.
226.	ትክዕወ ሞገስ እምከናፍርኪ	Honour flows from your lips
227.	አጎትየ መርዓተ ገነት	My sister, bride of Paradise
228.	ፍናዋ ዚአኪ ርግብየ ሠናይት	Your ways, my dove, [are] beautiful
229.	መዐዘ እፍረትኪ	The fragrance of your perfume is more
230.	እምኩሉ አፋው	than all mouths
231.	መዐዘ አፋሃ	The fragrance of her mouth
232.	ከመ ኮል።	is like apple,
233.	መዐዘ አፋሃ	The fragrance of her mouth
234.	ከመ ኮል	is like apple,
235.	ከመ ቅርፍተ ሮማን	Like the skin of a pomegranate.
236.	አስተማሰልክዋ	I compared her to the

237.	ሰረገላተ አሚዳብ	Chariot of Ami[na]dab
238.	ከመ ማኅፈደ ዳዊት ክሳዳ	Her neck is like the tower of David
239.	ወጽላታኒ ዘኦሪት	Her tablets [are] of the Law,
240.	ስብሐት የዓውዳ።	Glory surrounds her.
241.	ወአዘዘ ዲድያኖስ በል።	Say, ‘And Didyanos commanded.’
242.	ማርያም ድንግል	Mary, virgin,
243.	መካሆን ልደናግል	The magnificence of virgins
244.	ይኣቲኪ ቤተ ምስክል	She is a house of prayer
245.	ዘአስተፀሉ ¹³ ተቀልል	Who swiftly causes [God] to hear.
246.	በእንተ ኩሉ ፍጥረት	She pleads, she intercedes.
247.	ተስዕል ትተንብል	for the whole creation.
248.	በአክናፊ መላእክት	She is protected
249.	ትትኬለል	by the wings of angels
250.	ይኣቲ ተዐቢ እምኪሩቤል	She is greater than the cherubim
251.	ወትፈደፍድ እምሱራፌል	And she superior to the seraphim
252.	መንክር ወመድምም	Wondrous and astonishing,
253.	ዕባያ ወክብራ ለድንግል	The greatness and honour of the virgin
254.	ጽሕፋት ውስተ ወንጌል ¹⁴	is written in the Gospel
255.	ወዲበ ርእስት እክሊል	And on the chief crown,
256.	እምርት መስቀል።	The renowned Cross.
257.	??? ያዓውዳ ወጽጌረዳ	??? and roses encircle her
258.	በትእምርተ መስቀል	In the sign of the Cross
259.	እንተ ከርስቶስ በግዕት	Who is the Ewe of Christ
260.	እንተ ታስተርኢ እምረጉቅ ብሄር	Who is seen from the distant city
261.	ከመ መድባለ ማኅበር	Like the gathering of a crowd
262.	እንት ትሕውጽ እምአድበር	Which looks on from the mountains.
263.	እንተ ኮነት ምክህ ለኩሉን አናስት	Who became the glory of all women
264.	ኢያውአየ እሳተ	Whom the fire of divinity
265.	መለኮት	did not consume.
266.	ሱራኬል ወኪሩቤል ይኬልልዋ	Seraphim and cherubim surround her
267.	ንጽሕት በድንግልና	Pure in virginity,
268.	አልባቲ ሙስና	Who has no corruption in her.
269.	መድኅኒት ይኣቲ	She is salvation,
270.	ንብረታ ድሙና	The clouds are her dwelling,
271.	ፀምር ፀዓደ	White fleece
272.	እንተ አልባቲ ርስሐት።	Who has no impurity in her.
273.	ይኣቲ ተዓቢ እምአንስት	She is the greatest of women
274.	እንት ያዐውድ ስብሐት	Whom glory surrounds.
275.	ሰመያ	He named her
276.	ማኅደረ መለኮት	‘Dwelling place of divinity’
277.	ንጉሠ ጁኤል	The King of Israel
278.	ይወፅእ እምኔኪ	will come out from her,
279.	ማርያም እምካ	Mary our mother,
280.	ወእሙ ለእግዚአን	And mother of our Lord,
281.	ቃል ቅዱስ ኅደረ ሳዕሌሃ* ከርስቶስ።	The Holy Word dwelt in her, Christ.

¹³ The verb አስተጸለወ is not attested in other literature, and is not mentioned in Leslau, W. (2006). *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic)*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, or in Dillmann, A. (1970). *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae (1865)*. Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag. The manuscript appears to read thus, however. Although the አስተ- forms of the verb are not always easy to interpret, the logical meaning of this word would be ‘cause to hear/listen’. ¹⁴ Column D.

282.	እግዝእትየ እብለኪ.	I will call you, 'My Lady,
283.	ወእሙ ለእግዚእየ እብለኪ.	I will call you, 'Mother of my Lord'
284.	አነ ትእዛዘ ሐዲስ	A new commandment
285.	ዘእጽሕፍ ለኪ.	that I will write for you
286.	ቡርክት አንቲ እምአንስት	You are blessed above all women,
287.	እሞሙ ለሰማዕት	Mother of the martyrs
288.	እንተ ኮነት ምክሀ ለኩሎን አንስት	Who became the glory of all women.
289.	አዋልደ ኢየሩሳሌም ፃዓ	Go out, daughters of Jerusalem
290.	ትርአያ	And see her!
291.	ወአስተብዕዓሃ ለማርያም	Call Mary blessed!
292.	ረከብኪ ሞገሰ በገብ እግዚአብሔር	You have found honour before God
293.	ወአነሂ እትፌሳላክ በእንቲአኪ.	And I will rejoice in you,
294.	እስመ ረከብኩ እምወስተ ደቂቅኪ.	Because I found amongst your children
295.	እለ የሐውሩ በትእዛዘየ	Those who walk in my commandments
296.	አምኒ አ አ	Embrace, embrace, embrace
297.	ደቂቀ እኅተኪ ጎሪት።	The children of your chosen sister.
298.	ሠናይት ይእቲ እምአንስት	She is the most beautiful of women
299.	እንተ እምአፋሃ	From whose mouth
300.	ይወፅእ ቃለ ጽድቅ	The Holy Word comes out
301.	ዕፀ ሕይወት	Tree of Life
302.	ዕፀ መድኅኒት	Tree of Salvation
303.	እንተ ይትአመኑ ባቲ	Those who trust in her,
304.	ይዋድስዋ ሕዝብ ለማርያም	The people of Mary, will honour her.
305.	ዐፀደ ወይን ዘኢትጠፍእ	Grape vine who will not be destroyed
306.	ይእቲ ሥርወ	She is the root
307.	እንተ ሠረዐት ለሕይወት	That sprouted life
308.	ዘለዐለመ ዐለም።	for eternity.
309.	አብ ሥጋሃ ቀደሶ	The Father sanctified her flesh,
310.	ኪያሃ ???	[And] ??? her
311.	ጎደረ ቃል ለዕሌሃ	The Word dwelt in her,
312.	ወተወልደ እምኔሃ።	And was born from her.
313.	እኅትነ ይብልዋ	They will call her, 'Our sister'
314.	ወይኬልልዋ	And they will surround her
315.	ነያ ሐደስዩ ጣዕዋ	Behold her, New Calf! ¹⁵
316.	ጸቃውዕ ይወሕዝ እምከናፍሪሃ።	Honey pours out from her lips ¹⁶ .
317.	ከመ ቅርፍተ ሮማን	Like the skin of a pomegranate.
318.	መላትሂሃ።	[are] her cheeks.
319.	ልዑል ሰምራ	The Most High delighted in her,
320.	ዳዊት ዘመራ በቤተ	David sung of her,
321.	መቅደስ ተወክፍዋ።	In the sanctuary they received her
322.	ንዒ ርግብየ ወንዒ ሠናይትየ	Come, my dove, come my beauty!
323.	ንብብኪ አዳም	Your speech is fair,
324.	መዐዘ አፋሀ	The fragrance of her mouth
325.	ከመ ኮል	is like apple ¹⁷ .
326.	ወኩሎ ነገራ በሰላም	And all of her speech is with peace.
327.	በጸሎቱ ሙታነ አንሥኦ	By his prayers he raised the dead
328.	በጸሎቱ አጋንንተ አውፅኦ	By his prayers he drove out demons
329.	እለ ለምፀ አንጽሐ ብፀዕ ጊዮርጊስ	He purified lepers, blessed George
330.	ዘተጋደለ	Who was killed

¹⁵ See note 8. ¹⁶ Song of Songs 4:11. ¹⁷ Song of Songs 7:8.

331.	በእንተ ፍቅረ ክርስቶስ።	because of his love of Christ.
332.	ጸለየ ወሰከለ	He prayed and he pleaded,
333.	ቅዱስ ጊዮርጊስ ሰከለ	Saint George pleaded
334.	ወይቤ ወይቤ	And he said, he said
335.	በእንተ ሕዝብ	Concerning the people,
336.	ፈኑ ምሕረተክ ወሠሀለ	‘Send your mercy, and have mercy,
337.	አምላካ።።	our God!’
338.	ረገፀ ምድረ	He trampled the earth,
339.	አንሥኦ ሙታነ	He raised the dead
340.	ወይቤሎሙ	And he said to them,
341.	ባኡ ውስተ ገነቱ	Enter into Paradise!
342.	ጊዮርጊስ ኅያል መስተጋድል።።	Mighty George, champion!

*This marks the use of the preposition
ላዕለ *lā'la* to indicate divine presence.

Appendix D. The Finding of the True Cross

Text from EMMML2542 dated as 15th Century. According to the catalogue the musical notation was added to this manuscript later, which probably places it as written before the revisions of *Giyorgis of Gasăčča*. The manuscript has hand numbered pages, with four columns referred to here as a-d. The manuscript occasionally contains single letters, which are sometimes to indicate the repetition of the previous line. Sometimes what they indicate is not clear, and then they are marked with a question mark. The following is a transcript of this section of the manuscript and therefore includes some spelling inconsistencies, and may contain errors that need to be resolved through text critical studies.

1.	¹ እመ መድቅሐ ኢየሩሳሌም	When He consecrated Jerusalem
2.	ከረምት ውኃቱ	it was the rainy season
3.	አንሶሰው ኢየሱስ አየሩሳሌም	Jesus walked through Jerusalem
4.	በሕዋረ ሶሎሞን	In the portico of Solomon
5.	እንዘ ይገብር መንከረ	While performing wonders
6.	ወይት መረገው መስቀለ።	He leant upon the Cross.
7.	በዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ	Today the Cross is honoured
8.	ወአገው አብርሃ።	It enlightens the kindred today.
9.	መስቀል ቤዛነ	The Cross is our redemption,
10.	መ[ስቀል] ጽንዕትነ	The Cross is our strength,
11.	መ[ስቀል] መድኅኒተ ነፍስነ	The Cross is the salvation of our souls,
12.	አይሁድ ከሀደ ወሕነኒ አመነ	The Jews rejected but we believed
13.	እለ ጸመተ	Those who were perishing
14.	በመስቀሉ ድኅነ።	were saved by His Cross.
15.	በኃይለ መስቀሉ	By the power of His Cross
16.	ይዕቀበነ	Let Him protect us
17.	ወይከሥት	And let Him open
18.	እዕይንተ አልባቢን።	the eyes of our hearts,
19.	ጎበሩ ቃለ ነቢያት ወይቤሉ	The words of the prophets unite saying
20.	መስቀል ብርሃን	‘The Cross is the light
21.	ለኩሉ ዓለመ	of the whole world
22.	እስመ መስቀል ሞአ	Because the Cross vanquished
23.	ሞት ተሞአ	Death was vanquished,
24.	ኃይለ መስቀሉ አብርሃ።	The power of His Cross illuminates.
25.	እንተ ተሐንጸት	[Churches] that are built
26.	በስሙ	in His name
27.	ወተቀደሰት በደሙ	And that are consecrated by his blood
28.	ወተአትበት	And who are blessed with the seal
29.	በዕፀ መስቀሉ	of the wood of His Cross
30.	ማኅደረ	[Are] the dwelling place
31.	ሰብሐቲሁ ለእግዚአብሔር	of the glory of God
32.	ተቀደሰት ቤተ ክርስቲያን	The Church made holy,
33.	አዳም ወሠናይት	Fair and beautiful,
34.	ደብተራ ፍጽምት	Perfect Tabernacle
35.	እንተ ኢገብራ እደ ሰብእ።	Which is not made by the hand of man.
36.	ርእዩ በግዓ በል።	Say ‘The saw the ram’.
37.	ዮም በዐለ መስቀሉ	Today [is] the festival of His Cross
38.	በሰማያት በላዕሉ	In the heavens above
39.	ወዘነግሠ በምድር	And He who rules on the Earth
40.	ከመ ያብርሀ ለአሕዛብ	That He might illuminate the Gentiles
41.	ወለኩሉ ዓለም	and all the earth
42.	በፍሥሐ ወበሰላም	With joy and with peace
43.	ወትረ ይሴባሕ በቅዱሳን።	He is continually glorified by the saints.
44.	መስቀል ብርሃን በል።	Say, ‘The Cross is light’.
45.	መስቀል ዕፀ ሕይወት	The Cross is the Tree of Life

¹ Page 12, column c, line 12.

46.	ዕፀ መድኃኒት	It is the Tree of Salvation
47.	ብርሃኖሙ ለአሕዛብ	The light of the Gentiles
48.	መድኃኒቶሙ ለነገሥት።	The salvation of kings.
49.	መስቀል በርሃን	The Cross is the light
50.	ለኩሉ ዓለም	of the whole world,
51.	መሠረተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን	The foundation of the Church,
52.	መስቀልክ እግዚአ	Your Cross, O Lord,
53.	መንገድህ ሙታን።	Is the resurrection of the dead.
54.	ንዑ ንትፈላጊህ ዮም	Come let us rejoice today
55.	በዛቲ ዕለት በዐለ መስቀል	On this day, the festival of the Cross
56.	መስቀል ዕፀ ሕይወት	The Cross is the Tree of Life
57.	መ ዕፀ መድኃኒት።	The Cross is the Tree of Salvation.
58.	መስቀለ ቃል	The Cross of the Word
59.	ዕፀ ሕይወት	Tree of Life
60.	ለአይሁድ ኮነ ስደት	To the Jews it became expulsion,
61.	እለ አመነ በመስቀሉ	Those who believe in His Cross
62.	ይብጽሁን ሣህሉ።	His grace will come to us.
63.	መከነ	[That which was] barren
64.	አፍረየ	bore fruit
65.	አፍልፈለ ቀለየ	He made the ocean flow out
66.	አውሐዘ ለነ	Today He poured out for us
67.	ደመ ወማየ ዮም፤	blood and water
68.	ንዜኑ ዘመስቀል ዕበየ	Let us proclaim the Cross greatly.
69.	ሙሴ በጥንቁቅ ትንቢቱ	Moses in his careful prophecy,
70.	በወስተ ጽልመት ስነ የሐቱ	In darkness His goodness will shine,
71.	መዝገበ ሕይወት	The treasury of life
72.	ዘተጸልበ ቦቱ	on which He was crucified
73.	ዕፀ መስቀሉ ዝንቱ ውእቱ።	This is the wood of His Cross.
74.	አብዐለ መስቀሉ ክቡረ	He enriched His honoured Cross
75.	እነዘ ሀሎ ላዕለ	While He was on high,
76.	ከመ ይስለምዎ	That they might venerate it,
77.	ወረደ ምድረ	He came down to earth,
78.	ፍኖተ ሕይወት ከዊኖ መስመረ	The way of life became pleasant
79.	በቀራንዮ	On the Place of the Skull
80.	ኅፍረተ መስቀል ተዓገሰ	He endured the shame of the Cross
81.	ለጊዜ ስቅለቱ	for the time of His crucifixion
82.	አእረቅዎ ልብሰ	They stripped him of His clothes
83.	በአፈ ኩናት	With the point of a sword
84.	ረገዘዎ ክርሠ	they pierced His side
85.	ዕፀ መስቀሉ ለወልድ	The wood of the Cross of the Son
86.	መርኤቶ ሐደሰ።	restored His flock
87.	በመስቀሉ አርጋወ ገነተ	With His Cross He opened up Paradise,
88.	¹ ገብረ መድኃኒተ መስቀል	The Cross worked salvation,
89.	ቤዛነ	Our redemption
90.	መ[ስቀል] መድኃኒት	The Cross is salvation
91.	ለእለ አመነ	to those who believe
92.	መርሐ ይኩንን መስቀል።	The Cross will be for us a guide.
93.	መስቀል በርሃን	The Cross is the light

¹ Page 12 column D

94.	ለኩሉ ዓለም	of the whole world
95.	መሠረተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	The foundation of the Church.
96.	መስቀል ቤዛነ	The Cross redeemed us,
97.	መስ[ቀል] መድኃኒተ ነፍስነ	The Cross is the salvation of our souls,
98.	ኃይለ መስቀሉ ለርስቶስ	The power of the Cross of Christ
99.	እሞት ባልሐነ	liberated us from death
100.	ሰበክ ለነ ግዕዛነ	It proclaimed to us our freedom
101.	ዘሕኑ ለባሕር	The tranquillity of the sea
102.	ወመርሶ ለአሕማር መስቀል።	And the anchor of ships, the Cross.
103.	መስቀል በርሃን	The Cross is light,
104.	መስ[ቀል] መ[ድኃኒት]	The Cross is salvation
105.	መሠረተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን።	The foundation of the Church.
106.	በኦሪት ሙሴ	In the Law the goodness
107.	ዘተንግረ ስኑ	of which Moses spoke
108.	ዕፀ አንሕዮ	The wood of consolation
109.	ለባሕር ዛሕኑ።	The tranquillity of the sea.
110.	መስቀለ አልፋ ተረከበ ዮመ	The Cross of Alpha ³ was found today.
111.	በቅዱስ መካኑ አጽደለ	In the holy place its light shone
112.	ውስተ ዓለም በርሃኑ	in all the world
113.	መስቀል ዘሠምረ	[On] The Cross which bears fruit
114.	ተፀልቦ	He was crucified
115.	አራተ ሕማሙ በፈቃድ	[And] by will on a bed suffering
116.	ሰኪቦ።	He lay down.
117.	ዮም መስቀሉ	Today His Cross,
118.	ውስት አሚን ዘጼወወ ሕዝቦ	Which captures His people into truth
119.	በደሙ መነየዊ	By His life-giving blood
120.	ርስሐተ ሐፂቦ	washed away impurity
121.	በርሃነ ጽድቅ	The holy light,
122.	ዘዐቀበ ሕዝቦ።	which guards His people.
123.	ግንዩ ለአምላክ አማልክት	Praise the God of Gods
124.	ግንዩ ለእግዚአ ኦግዕዝት	Praise the Lord of freedom
125.	እስመ ውኃቱ አምላክ ምሕርት	Because He is the God of mercy
126.	በመስቀሉ አርኅ ወ ገነተ።	With His Cross He opened Paradise
127.	በመስቀሉ አርኅወ ገነተ	With His Cross He opened Paradise
128.	በ ገብረ መድኃኒተ	With His Cross He worked salvation
129.	ዝንቱ ውኃቱ መስቀል	This is the Cross
130.	ቤዛነ ኅዩልነ	Our salvation, our strength
131.	ወጸወንነ	and our fortress
132.	ወትረ የሀሉ ምስሌነ።	May it always be with us.
133.	በስመ ስላሜ	In the Name of the Trinity
134.	እትዓተብ	I make the sign of the Cross
135.	ዕፀ መስቀል	The wood of the Cross
136.	ዘወልደ አብ	of the Son of the Father
137.	ተረከበ ዮም	Was found today
138.	ከመ ያብርሀ ለአሕዛብ።	That it might illuminate the Gentiles.

³A symbolic reference to Christ see Revelation 1:8.

139.	ጽልመተ ኢያሕምሮ	The darkness of unknowing
140.	መስቀል ክብርሃ	The Cross shone
141.	ሙቁሐነ ፈትሐ	It released captives
142.	ጥቀ ተሰብሐ።	It is greatly honoured.
143.	ዘዕጣን አንጸረ	The incense turned
144.	ሰገደ ጢስ	The smoke bowed down
145.	መስቀለ ቃል ቅዱስ	The Cross of the Holy Word
146.	ዘተረከበ በነሢሥ።	which was found by pursuit.
147.	መስቀለ ቃል	The Cross of the Word
148.	ዕፀ ሕይወት	Tree of Life
149.	ዕፀ መድሐኒት	Tree of Salvation
150.	በጎለጎታ ዘደፈነ አይሁድ	Which the Jews buried on Golgotha
151.	ዘዕጣን አንጸረ	The incense turned
152.	ሰገደ ጢስ።	The smoke bowed down.
153.	ዮም በመስቀሉ ቀብፀኒ	Today by His Cross He anointed me
154.	ደሞ ማጎየዊ	His life-giving blood
155.	ወልደ አምላክ	The Son of God
156.	ዘኮነኒ ሰርዌ።	who became an army for me.
157.	መስቀሉ ትገብር ዮም	Today His Cross is brought forth
158.	በሰብሐት	with glory
159.	እራተ ሕማሙ	The bed of His suffering
160.	አሪገ መርዓት።	The gazelle of the bride ⁴ .
161.	በመስቀልክ	Through your Cross
162.	ርኢነ ብርሃነ	We saw the Light
163.	መስቀልክ ያነሥእ ሙታነ	Your Cross raises the dead
164.	በኃይለ መስቀሉ	By the power of His Cross
165.	አጋንንተ አውፅኦ	He drives out demons
166.	እለ ለምፀ	those who are leprous
167.	አንጽሐ።	He cleanses.
168.	አረጋዊ አትግሀ	The Ancient One woke up
169.	ጋይሰ ብእሲ	Shield, Man
170.	ዘስሙ ኪራኮስ	Whose name is the Church
171.	ዘዕጣን አንጸረ	The incense turned
172.	ሰገደ ጢስ	The smoke bowed down
173.	በጎለጎታ ዘደፈኑ አይሁድ	On Golgotha where the Jews buried
174.	ዮም ተረከበ ዕፀ መስቀል።	Today the wood of the Cross is found.
175.	መስቀልክ እግዚአ ብርሃን	Your Cross, Lord of Light,
176.	መሠረተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን	[Is] the foundation of the Church,
177.	ዛንኑ ለባሕር	The tranquillity of the sea,
178.	ወመርሶ ለእሕማር።	The anchor of ships.
179.	መስቀል ክብርሃ ለኩሉ	The Cross illuminated all
180.	በሰማያት በለዕሉ	In the heavens above
181.	ወዘነግሠ በምድር	And they who rule on the earth,
182.	ከመ ያብርሀ አሕዛብ	That they might illuminate the Gentiles
183.	መስቀል ዘወልደ አብ።	The Cross of the Son of the Father.
184.	ዘዮም መስቀል	Of today, the Cross
185.	ለመፀብሐዊ ሰሐቦ	He lead the tax collector
186.	ወለፈያታዊ በቅፅበት ቀፀ።	He beckoned with a nod the robber.
187.	በመስቀሉ ዐተበነ	He marked us with the Cross,

⁴ Possibly a reference to Song of Solomon 2:17, and 4:8-12.

188.	በመስቀሉ ቤዘወነ	He redeemed us with His Cross,
189.	ወበመስቀሉ	And by His Cross
190.	ኮነ ሕይወትን።	He became our life.
191.	ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ	Today the Cross is glorified
192.	ዮመ ለአሐው አብርሃ	Today it illuminated the brothers
193.	ወለእለኒ ውስተ ጽልምት	And for those in darkness,
194.	ብርሃኖሙ መ[ስቀል]	The Cross is their light
195.	ንሕነ ንቤከ ተማኅፀነ	We take refuge in you
196.	መ ርድኣነ	Our helper
197.	ወአድኅኒነ	And our saviour
198.	በእንተ ስምክ ቅዱስ	Because of your Holy Name
199.	ዘተስምየ በላዕሌን።	Which you were given over us.
200.	ዮም በዐለ መስቀሉ	Today the festival of His Cross
201.	በሰማያት በላዕሉ	In the heavens above
202.	ወዘነግሠ በምድር	And they who rule on the earth
203.	ከመ ያብርሀ ለአሕዛብ	That they might illuminate the Gentiles
204.	ወለኩሉ ዓለም	And all the earth.
205.	ዮም በዐለ መስቀሉ	Today the festival of His Cross
206.	በሰማያት ወበምድር።	In the heavens and on earth.
207.	መስቀል ንይልነ	The Cross is our strength and our
208.	ወፀወንነ	and our fortress,
209.	መድኃኒተ ነፍስነ	The salvation of our souls,
210.	ፍጽምነ ወከዋለነ	Our consummation and our rearguard.
211.	ምጽንዓተ ቅጽርነ	The firm foundation of our stronghold
212.	ዝንቱ ውእቱ መስቀል	This is the Cross
213.	ኃይልነ ወፀወንነ	Our strength and our fortress
214.	ዮም ፍሥሐ ለን።	Today joy [came] to us.
215.	እም ሥርወ እሴይ	From the root of Jesse
216.	ሠረፀ ፍሬ ስብሐት	Honoured fruit shot forth
217.	በእንቲአነ ተተከለ	For our sakes
218.	ዕፀ ሕይወት	the Tree of Life was planted,
219.	ወበላዕሌሁ ⁵ ተሰቅለ ከርስቶስ	And on it Christ was crucified.
220.	ለመድኃኒተ ዚአነ	For our salvation.
221.	ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ	Today the Cross is glorified
222.	ዮም መ[ስቀል]	Today the Cross
223.	ለአኅው አብርሃ።	illuminated the brothers.
224.	መስቀል ገብረ ሕይወተ	The Cross produced life
225.	መ ወበመስቀሉ ድኅነ።	?? And by His Cross he saved.
226.	መ።	???
227.	እንዘ ጽልመት ዓለም	While the world [was] in darkness
228.	ብርሃነ አርአየ ለአሕዛብ።	He showed the Light to the Gentiles.
229.	ወውእቱ በባሕር ያድኅን	And He keeps safe [those] in the sea,
230.	ውእቱ ዕፁብ ያቀልል።	He makes hardship light.
231.	መ[ስቀል]	The Cross,
232.	ውእቱ በበድው ይረድዕ	He helps [those] in the desert
233.	ውእቱ በጸገ ይበልሕ	He is quick with grace
234.	መ[ስቀል]	The Cross
235.	ደብረ ጽዮን ዘአፍቀረ ኪያሃ	Mount Zion who loves her
236.	ዘሠምረ ሀገረ	Who is well pleased with the land

⁵ Page 13, column a

237. መ[ስቀል]
 238. ኪያሃ ዘሠምረ
 239. ሀገረ ለጸድቃን
 240. ማኅደረ መ[ለኩት]።
 241. ዮም በዐለ መስቀሉ
 242. በሰማያት ወበምድር በታህቱ
 243. ስብሐት ሎቱ
 244. ሎቱ ይድሉ።
 245. ሀለዉ እል ይቤሉ
 246. ለዕዕኑ ታመልኩ
 247. ወለዕዕኑ በዐለ ትገብሩ
 248. ኢቀደሱን ደሙ ክቡር
 249. ለዕፀ መስቀሉ
 250. ወበእንተዝ
 251. ንሕነ ናመልኩ።
 252. ዝንት መስቀል ቤዛነ
 253. መድኃኒትነ
 254. ለአይሁድ ስደተ ኮነ።
 255. ወለነኒ ሕይወተ ኮነ።
 256. ዮመ መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 257. ዮም መስቀል
 258. በአኃው አብርሃ።
 259. ዝንቱ መስቀል ቤዛነ
 260. መድኃኒትነ።
 261. እንተ ተሐንጽት
 262. በእደ ካህናት
 263. ወተ[ቀ]ደሰት
 264. በአፈ ጳጳሳት
 265. እምነ ጽዮን ቅድስት
 266. እንተ የዓውደ ሰብሐት
 267. እሞሙ ይእቲ ለሰማዕት።
 268. ደብተራ ፍጽምት
 269. ማኅደረ መለኩት ዮም
 270. በዐለ መስቀሉ
 271. በሰማያት በለዕሉ
 272. ወበመድር በታሕቱ።
 273. ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 274. ዮም መስቀል
 275. ለአሐው አብርሃ
 276. ለእለ አመነ
 277. ዘኅነ ከነነ።
 278. ዝንቱ መስቀል ዘአስተዓፀቡ
 279. ያቀልል።
 280. መስቀል ረድኤት
 281. መርሕ በፍኖት

The Cross
 Who is well pleased with the
 Country of the saints
 The dwelling place of divinity
 Today is the festival of His Cross
 In heaven and on earth beneath
 Glory be to Him,
 It is proper for Him
 There are those who say
 Do you worship the Wood?
 And do celebrate the Wood?
 Did not his honoured blood sanctify
 the Wood of His Cross
 And it is because of this
 that we worship.
 This Cross is our redemption
 our salvation
 To the Jews it became expulsion.
 But to us it became life.
 Today the Cross is glorified,
 Today the Cross
 illuminated the brothers.
 This Cross is our redemption
 our salvation
 [Churches] that were built
 by the hands of priests,
 And were blessed
 by the mouths of bishops
 Our mother, Holy Zion
 Whom glory surrounds
 She is mother of the martyrs.
 Perfect Tabernacle,
 Dwelling place of divinity,
 The festival of His Cross
 In the heavens above,
 And on earth below.
 Today the Cross is glorified,
 Today the Cross
 illuminated the brothers
 To those who believe
 It became tranquillity for us.
 This Cross that they consider harsh
 Makes light.
 The Cross is help,
 A guide on the way,

282.	ጠዘ ቦቱ	There are demons
283.	ተሰዱ አጋንንት።	who were banished by it.
284.	ርእዩ አንትሙ ጾታ ነገር	Look! Shout out speech!
285.	ከመ ተረከበ ዕፀ	That the honoured Wood of the Cross
286.	መስቀል ክቡር።	was found.
287.	አኮ በወርቅ ጎላፊ	It was not with fleeting gold
288.	ዘተሣየጠነ	that He bought us back,
289.	በደሙ ክቡር	With his honoured blood
290.	ቤዘወ ኪየነ።	He redeemed even us.
291.	መስቀል አብርሀ	The Cross shone,
292.	አብርሀ ወተሰብሐ	It shone and was glorified,
293.	ለነገሥት ኮኖሙ መርሐ	It became a guide for kings,
294.	ዝንቱ መስቀል	This Cross
295.	ዘአስተአፀቡ	That they consider harsh,
296.	ያቀልል።	Makes light.
297.	በዐለ መስቀሉ	The festival of His Cross
298.	በሰማያት በለዕሉ	In the heavens above,
299.	ወበምድር በታሕቱ	And on the earth below
300.	ነአምን ቦቱ	We believe in it,
301.	ወንገኒ ሎቱ	And we give thanks for it,
302.	እስመ ውኃቱ ረድኝ ወአድኅኖ።	Because it is help, and salvation.
303.	ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ	Today the Cross is glorified,
304.	ዮም መ[ስቀል]	Today the Cross
305.	ለአኃው አብርሃ	gave light to the brothers
306.	ገብረ መድኃኒተ።	It worked salvation.
307.	ዮም መስቀል	Today the Cross
308.	ዘወልደ አብ	of the Son of the Father
309.	ዮም መ[ስቀል]	Today the Cross
310.	ዘበመድር ገብረ መድኃኒተ።	that worked salvation on earth
311.	ይቤሎሙ ኢየሱስ ለአይሁድ	Jesus said to the Jews,
312.	እመኑ ብየ ወእመኑ በአቡየ	Believe in me, and believe in My Father
313.	ዮም ሰ ለእሊአየ አብርሀ	Today give light to My own
314.	በመስቀልየ።	by My Cross.
315.	ዮም ተኬነወ	Today He skilfully worked
316.	በደሙ	with His blood,
317.	ቤዘወ ዘተጾወወ	He redeemed captives,
318.	እግዚአ ሕያዋን ወሙታን	The Lord of the living and the dead,
319.	ገብረ መድኃኒተ	He worked salvation.
320.	በማእከለ ምድር	In the middle of the land,
321.	በኢየሩሳሌም ሀገር	In the city of Jerusalem
322.	ስፍሐ እድዊሁ	He stretched out His hands,
323.	በቀራንዮ መካን	On the Place of the Skull
324.	ተጠብሐ ሥጋሁ	His flesh was sacrificed,
325.	ሰቀሉ ምድኅኔ	The crucified the Saviour
326.	ኩሉ ዘየሐዩ በቃሉ።	of all who live by His word.
327.	ትእምረተ እንዘ ትጽውሩ	The sign you are bearing
328.	፫ አስማተ	the three names.
329.	ዮም መላእክት ያርኅወከሙ	Today the angels opened for you
330.	ጐድጉዱ ጥኅቶ ለእግዚአክሙ	They struck the gate of your Lord

331. መስቀለ ከርስቶስ ይዕቀብከሙ
 332. መስቀለ ሞቶ ጹሩ
 333. ዘተአዝክሙ ግበሩ
 334. በተጥባብ ነገር ኢትሐሩ
 335. በከመ ይቤ ጳውሎስ ለሰብአ ቆሮንቶስ
 336. እንዘ ይሜህር በቃል ሐዲስ።
 337. ዮም መስቀል አስተርአየ
 338. እለ ማሰኑ
 339. ፍጥረተ አሰነየ
 340. ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 341. መስቀል ለአኅወ አብርሃ
 342. ዮም ተረከበ ዕፀ መስቀሉ
 343. ለወልድ
 344. ዮም ተረከበ
 345. በቀራ⁸ንዮ መካን
 346. ዘደፈኑ አይሁድ
 347. መስቀል ዕፀ ሕይወት
 348. ዕፀ መድኅኒት።
 349. እግዚአ ሰማያት ወምድር
 350. ዲበ ዕፅ ተሰቅለ
 351. ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 352. ለአሐው አብርሃ
 353. ዮም መ[ስቀል]
 354. እምፀሐይ ወእምከዋከት አብርሃ።
 355. ወእንቲኒ ቀራንዮ መካነ ጎልጎታ
 356. በጎቤኪ ተሰቅለ ኢየሱስ ከርስቶስ
 357. ህየ ህየ ንሰግድ ኩልነ
 358. ኅበ ቆመ እገሪሁ
 359. ኅበ ተረዝ ገቦሁ
 360. ዮም በዐለ መስቀሉ።
 361. መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 362. ዮም ለአኅወ አብርሃ
 363. ዮም መ[ስቀል]
 364. እምፀሐይ ወእምከዋከት አብርሃ።
 365. መስቀሉስ ለከርስቶስ
 366. ለነ ጽንዕ
 367. ለአግብርተ ግዕዛን
 368. መስቀል ዛሕን
 369. ዮም መስቀል ተሰብሐ
 370. ለአሐው አብርሃ
 371. ሞት ተሞአ
 372. መስቀል አብርሃ
 373. ገብረ መድኅኒተ
 374. መስቀል ዘወልደ አብ።
 375. በኢየሩሳሌም ሰቀልዎ
 376. በጎልጎተ ቀበርዎ

Let the Cross of Christ keep you safe,
 Bear the Cross of His death,
 Do what you were commanded
 Do not live by cleverness of speech
 As Paul said to the people of Corinth
 Teaching in the New Testament.
 Today the Cross is revealed,
 Those who were perishing,
 He made the Creation beautiful
 Today the Cross is glorified,
 The Cross illuminated the brothers,
 Today was found the Wood of the Cross
 of the Son
 Today was found
 In the Place of the Skull
 That which the Jews hid.
 The Cross is the Tree of Life
 The Tree of Salvation.
 The Lord of the heavens and earth
 On the Wood was crucified.
 Today the Cross is glorified,
 It illuminated the brothers
 Today the Cross Shines
 More than the Sun and stars
 And you, *qarānāyo*, place of Golgotha
 On you Jesus Christ was crucified
 There, in that place we will bow down
 Near to where His feet stood,
 Near to where His side was pierced,
 Today the festival of His Cross
 The Cross is glorified,
 Today it illuminated the brothers
 Today the Cross shines
 More than the Sun and stars.
 The Cross of Christ
 To us strength
 To the servants of freedom,
 The Cross is tranquility.
 Today the Cross is glorified,
 It illuminated the brothers,
 Death was vanquished
 The Cross shines
 It worked salvation
 The Cross of the Son of the Father
 In Jerusalem they crucified Him,
 On Golgotha they buried Him

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377.	የም መ አብርሃ አብርሃ	Today the Cross shines, it shines
378.	ወተሰብሐ	And is glorified.
379.	ለነገሥት ኮኖሙ መርሐ	It became a guide to kings,
380.	ሙቁሐነ ፈትሐ	It released prisoners
381.	ጥቀ ተሰብሐ።	Greatly it is glorified.
382.	በመስቀልክ ክርስቶስ ረደአክነ	By your Cross you came to our rescue
383.	ወሕይወተ ጸጎክነ	And you graciously gave us life
384.	የምስ በመስቀልክ	Today by your Cross
385.	አብርሃክ ለነ።	You illuminated us
386.	አርአየ ቈስጠንጢኖስ	You revealed to Constantine
387.	ትእምረተ መስቀል	The sign of the Cross
388.	ለአሕዛብ ወለነኒ	To the Gentiles and to us
389.	በዐልነ	Our festival
390.	መስቀል ጎይልነ	The Cross is our strength
391.	ወፀወንነ	And our refuge
392.	መድጎኒትነ	And our salvation
393.	ዝንቱ ውእቱ መስቀል።	This is the Cross.
394.	መዋዕል አስተርአዮ	On the day He revealed
395.	ትእምረተ መስቀል	The sign of the Cross
396.	ለቈጠኖስ	To Constantine
397.	የም ተሰብሐ	Today it is glorified.
398.	ንሕነ ነአምን	We believe
399.	ከመ ውእቱ ይክል ረድኦ ወአድጎኖ።	That He is able to help and to save.
400.	የም መስቀል አብርሃ	Today the Cross shone
401.	ፈድፋደ ተሰብሐ በሰማይ	It is greatly glorified in heaven
402.	አርአየ ፀሐየ ወወርኃ	It revealed the Sun and the Moon
403.	የም መ[ስቀል] አብርሀ	Today the Cross shines
404.	ፈድፋደ ተሰብሐ።	It is greatly glorified,
405.	የመ መስቀል ተሰብሐ	Today the Cross is glorified
406.	የም መ[ስቀል]	Today the Cross
407.	ለአጎወ አብርሀ	Illuminated the brothers,
408.	አብርሀ ወተሰብሐ መስቀል	The Cross shone and was glorified
409.	ለነገሥት ኮኖሙ መርሐ።	To kings it became a guide.
410.	ንወግዖሙ ለኩሎሙ ፀርነ ይቤ ዳዊት	We will defeat all our enemies
411.	በመንፈስ ትንቢት	Said David with the spirit of prophecy
412.	በእንተ ዝንተ ዕፀ መስቀል	Concerning this Wood of the Cross
413.	ዘተሰቅለ ዲቤሀ	On which was crucified
414.	ቃለ አብ	The Word of the Father.
415.	ወበስምክ ነሐስሮሙ	And by your name we will confound
416.	ለእለ ቆሙ ለዕሌነ	Those who stand against us.
417.	ወከዕበ ይቤ	And again He said
418.	ወሀብኮሙ ትእምረተ	He gave them a sign
419.	ለእለ ይፈርሁክ	To those who fear You
420.	ከመ ያምስጡ እም ገጸ ቀሰት	That they flee from the face of the bow
421.	ወይድጎኑ ፍቁራኒክ	And you beloved will be saved,
422.	ወንሕነኒ ንትፈሣሕ የም	And as for us we will rejoice today
423.	ወንግበር በዐለ	And let us celebrate a festival
424.	በዛቲ ዕለት	On this day,
425.	በዐለ እግዚአነ።	The festival of our Lord,
426.	ዝንቱ መስቀል ቤዛነ	This Cross is our redemption

Appendix E. Ge'ez Genesis *Andamta* from St Gabriel's Monastery, Zway.

ሥተ: ስኢ ስበደ: አላንዮቱ: ወ
 ተ: ማህዕብቱ: ወዓዲ: ጸሎብወ
 ነ: ከመ: ይ ሠ ሞዕ: ወልዲ: ሳፊ
 ለ: ፊፅ: ዘውክቱ: በአማን: ል
 መዋቲ: በመለክቱ: ወእንበ
 ይ: ዝንቱ: ይቤ: ለወንጌል: ቅ
 ዲ: ክስመ: አ ቦ: ክመ: አብር
 ሃም: ፈታወ: ከመ: ይርአዲ:
 ፅለቱ: ርክዳሂ: ወተረሥ
 ሐ: ወዝንቱ: አብርሃም: ስ
 ከሥተ: ሠዊዖተ: ወልዲ: ለ
 መተሂ: ወኤ ለሳፊ: በክሲቱ:
 ክንበዲ: ጽ: ዮ: ቀ: አዮ: ቅ ርቱ:
 ለእግዚአብሔር: ወለሳፊሂ:
 ዘኃብክ: ክስመ: አክመረ: ጠ
 ባዲ: ጽ: ክመ: ክንከቱ: ወክ
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Appendix F. The *Andamta* on Genesis 22:5

Translated from (Anonymous 1999 EC-b: ዘፍጥረት 141-43)

1 *(Ge'ez) And when Abraham looked behold he saw a ram*¹²⁸⁸, *and his horns*
2 *were caught in the wood of the thicket.* *(Amharic) When Abraham looked around*
3 *behold he saw a sheep whose two horns were caught in a vine which is called*
4 *the wood of the thicket.*
5 *(Ge'ez) And Abraham went and sacrificed it in the place of his son Isaac.*
6 *(Amharic) 'Abraham, he will be the sacrifice for me,' he said, and he left his*
7 *son and went and brought the ram and sacrificed it. HISTORY: If they ask,*
8 *'what is this like?': The Lords said to His angels, 'I have a friend Abraham, my*
9 *beloved, on the earth'. The angels heard this and they praised God saying,*
10 *'Blessed Abraham is the friend of God'. It means, that these words were heard*
11 *in the heavens. Satan heard this and said to God, 'if he is your beloved, he has*
12 *a son to whom he gave birth in his old age, will he sacrifice him?'*¹²⁸⁹ *'What will*
13 *he not sacrifice for me?' Now, Satan having found favour from God said this,*
14 *'Is there no reply to Satan who asks God thus?' On the contrary, it is to reveal*
15 *the mystery of the Lord's death to Abraham, and the history of Abraham's*
16 *virtue to men. After this the Lord said to him, 'Sacrifice your son whom you*
17 *love to me!' Abraham took Isaac and two young servants and he hastened for*
18 *three days. When he arrived at the foot of the mountain, he said to the young*
19 *men, 'Remain here, I and my son will worship and return to you' and it says,*
20 *'he loaded up Isaac his son.' He loaded the wood onto Isaac and he took the*
21 *fire and the small knife. They went and when they arrived half-way up the*
22 *mountain, 'where is the sheep, Father?' [Isaac said]. 'My father, I saw the*
23 *wood, the fire, and the small knife, [but] where is the sheep that will be for the*
24 *sacrifice?' he said. 'God knows the sheep', 'God knows the sheep' he said to*
25 *him. When they arrived at the top of the mountain he started to arrange the*
26 *stones, and to add wood to the fire. [Isaac said], 'You arranged the stones, and*
27 *added wood to the fire, where is the sheep? It seems to me that you are to*
28 *sacrifice me! So that your hands and feet are not cut off by my thrashing*
29 *around tie my hands and feet for me!' he said, and he tied him. 'So that you are*
30 *not abandoned by your creator when our eyes meet and you are compassionate*
31 *on me and leave me, bow your head and lie me down!' He said to him. He*
32 *bowed his head, and lay him down, he put the blade on him, and was about to*
33 *draw the knife, from behind him he heard a voice saying, 'Do not lay your hand*
34 *[on him]!' He turned and when he looked he saw a white ram caught in the*
35 *Wood of the Thicket, and said, 'This will be the sacrifice for me!' and he*
36 *released Isaac and sacrificed the ram.*
37 *This is a symbol. Abraham is a symbol of the God the Father, Isaac of God the*
38 *Son. Abraham in his mind sacrificed his son; God the Father sacrificed his son*
39 *in the flesh. So that Abraham would be a symbol, he made Abraham first. So*
40 *that they don't say that God the Father would not sacrifice his son. That, even*
41 *inasmuch as they know God's habit of goodness, when they say to them that*
42 *Abraham even sacrificed his only child, they might lack a reply. The two young*
43 *men are a symbol of the thief on the right and the thief on the left; the donkey is*
44 *a symbol of the donkey of Palm Sunday, the wood is a symbol of the Cross, the*
45 *fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the small knife is a symbol of the power of*
46 *God, the small knife that separates bone and flesh; and the Lord said, 'Father I*
47 *commit my soul into your hands' and by his own power he separated his soul*
48 *from his flesh; they travelled three days in order to sacrifice him, and the*

¹²⁸⁸ The word can mean either a sheep or a ram Kane Amharic-English Dictionary (two volumes): 940, but in the context it seems logical to translate it as a male.

¹²⁸⁹ See Jubilees 17:16 Charles *The book of Jubilees, or, The little Genesis: 120-121.*

49 *Lord's judgement on death was completed on the third day, it is a symbol of the*
50 *Cross. This was the thing that saved Isaac from death rather than the thing by*
51 *which he died. The mind of Abraham is a symbol of the tomb: Isaac was*
52 *sacrificed in the mind of Abraham and on the third day he was saved, the Lord*
53 *dwelt three days and three nights in the belly of the tomb, it is a symbol of his*
54 *resurrection.*
55 *ANDM: The ram is a symbol of the Lord, Isaac is a symbol of the believers.*
56 *The ram became a substitute for Isaac, and the Lord became a substitute for*
57 *believers. That they say the ram descended from heaven, the Lord was to*
58 *descend from the heaven of heavens. That they say it was found from the Wood*
59 *of the Thicket, that he would be born from sealed virginity, from Our Lady. It is*
60 *a symbol that because he came from the flock of Abraham, he would be born*
61 *from the tribe of Abraham.*
62 *ANDM: The Wood of the Thicket is a symbol of the cross: meaning The Wood of*
63 *the Thicket in order to mean the Wood of Atonement.*

Appendix G. The Biblical Covenants

Following is a list of biblical references referring to the covenants of the Old and New Testaments.

The Covenant with Noah, not to destroy the world again (Genesis 9:11-16)

'I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth"'

The Covenant with Abraham and his Offspring, of Land and of Descendants (Genesis 17:4-7)

'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you'

The Covenant with Abraham Renewed for Isaac, and Jacob (Leviticus 26:42)

Although the renewal of the covenant for Isaac is not mentioned in Genesis, later references show that it was understood to be so, for instance:

'then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; I will remember also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land'

The Covenant with Abraham renewed for Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15)

'And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you"'

The Covenant with Moses (Exodus 19:5)

'Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine'

Subsequently God gives Moses the Ten Commandments as part of this covenant.

The New Covenant (Luke 22:20)

In the New Testament, salvation, accomplished through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is termed the 'New Covenant' at the Last Supper:

'And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood"

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