

ORIENTALIA CHRISTIANA ANALECTA

298

AETHIOPIA FORTITUDO EJUS

Studi in onore di Monsignor Osvaldo Raineri
in occasione del suo 80° compleanno

EXTRACTA

a cura di

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PONTIFICIO ISTITUTO ORIENTALE
PIAZZA S. MARIA MAGGIORE, 7
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2015

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MASTER WÄLDÄ GIYORGIS OF ҢAMSEN AND HIS TWO PAINTED PANELS*

Among Ethiopian art object preserved in the British Museum there is an artefact deserving especial attention due to its high artistic value and its great importance as a historical record. It is a painting composed of two panels executed by the same hand but currently not connected¹ (Fig. 1). Each of the panels contains three scenes and on three sides has slanted edges highlighted by a painted pattern of reciprocating red-green triangles.

In the upper register of the left panel St George the dragon-killer is represented. He sits on a galloping mount and is armed with two spears. His head is encircled by a large rayoned halo. In front of him in a high tree the small figure of the half-nude princess of Beirut (Birutawit) is represented and below is the dragon, with twisted body, raised tail and open jaw, his neck pierced by a spear topped by a cross.² The inscription above states: "How the Megalomartyr Mar Giyorgis killed the dragon."³

St George is represented again in the middle register, this time on a trotting horse, which is almost entirely covered by an embroidered cape decorated with metal ornaments. The saint, armed with a spear, is wearing a high crown surmounted by a cross and holds the elaborately decorated rains.

Around the saint three small scenes are depicted: to the left a church building emerges from overhanging drapery and to the right an angel accompanying a winged male figure wearing a crown and holding a staff cross. He is represented twice, once standing upright and once deeply bowing. The inscriptions identify him as *abba* Abib. The saint was a Coptic ascetic famous for the extreme and self-destructive practices he performed

* Photographs of several artefacts quoted in the paper are to be found in the database Mäzgäbä Se'elat (hereafter MS), <http://128.100.218.174:8080/about.html>; ID and password: student.

¹ Tempera on gesso-primed wood; the painting entered the collection in 1979; inv. nr. for left wing, 1979 Af 01.3129 and right wing, 1979 Af 01.3130; measurements of each wing: 109 × 37 cm.

² On this iconographical type of St George in Ethiopian painting cf. S. Chojnacki, "The Iconography of St George in Ethiopia: part II," JES 11/2 (1973), pp. 51-92; Id., *Ethiopian Icons. Catalogue of the Collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Addis Ababa University*, Milano 2000, pp. 301f.

³ ማሐላ፡ ቀተሎ፡ ለጳጳሳን፡ ለቃ፡ ሰማዕታት፡ ማር፡ ጊዮርጊስ።



Fig. 1. Painted panels; London, British Museum.

in commemoration of Jesus' passion. He also became a martyr, and was healed several times and raised from the dead by the archangel Michael. For his suffering, Abib was rewarded with the martyr's crown and a high rank among martyrs.⁴ In the Synaxary Abib is also called Būlā and the text of his commemoration suggests that he was considered to be the same person as another Egyptian monk, Paul of Tamma (Anbā Būlā), who also endured several death due to his exaggerated ascetism.⁵ Juxtaposition of Abib and the Megalomartyr in the Ethiopian tradition is a consequence of this mistake added to a story known from the encomium to St George attributed to Theodotos of Ancyra, and also translated into Ethiopic.⁶ It tells of how a certain bishop had a vision of heaven in which he saw St George in the guise of a shining rider wearing royal attire and being received by the enthroned Trinity. There was also St Būlā, who told the bishop how he, proud of his mortification and martyrology, questioned St George's superiority among martyrs. Such arrogance aroused God's anger, and God commanded the archangel Michael to chastise the disdainful monk and force him to pay homage to the Megalomartyr.⁷ The inscriptions accompanying the scenes directly relate to the story. Thus, the church building symbolising heaven is labelled "the room of the highest," St Abib-Būlā's act of reverence is described as "How *abuna* Abib having prostrated extolled," and Abib bowing as "How [he] prostrated," while the text above the picture states "How the Holy Trinity made Mar Giyorgis king and appointed him the chief of the martyrs."⁸

The top register of the second panel is occupied by a picture of Mary-

⁴ F. Caraffa, "Abibo," BS 1, 82; commemoration in Ethiopia at 25 *Ṭəqəmt*, cf. E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church: A translation of the Ethiopic Synaxarium* መጽሐፈ ስንክሳር : made from the manuscripts Oriental 660 and 661 in the British Museum, Vol. I. *Maskaram Ṭəḳəmt Khēdār (September 8 – December 6)*, Cambridge 1928, pp. 189-191; G. Collin (ed., tr.), *Le Synaxaire éthiopien. Mois de ṭeqemt (PO 44/1 [197])*, Turnhout 1987, pp. 138-143.

⁵ Cf. Wadi Abuliff, "Paolo di Tama," *Enciclopedia dei Santi. Le chiese orientali*, vol. 2, Roma 1999, pp. 782f. In the Ethiopic Synaxary an account about St Paul was also interpolated to the text commemorating St Latsūn, cf. D. Bumazhnov, "Ascetic Suicides in the Vita of St Paul of Tamma: an Egyptian Drama and its Ethiopian Continuation," in D. Nosnitsin (ed.), *Veneration of Saints in Christian Ethiopia: Proceedings of the International Workshop Saints in Christian Ethiopia: Literary Sources and Veneration, Hamburg, April 28-29, 2012* (Supplement to Aethiopica, 3), Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 1-13.

⁶ E.A. Wallis Budge (tr.), *The History of George of Lydda the Patron Saint of England: A Study of the Cultus of St. George in Ethiopia*, London 1930, pp. 169-276, part. 267-272.

⁷ In the text, Būlā is reprimanded by *abba* Nob, the spiritual father of the Egyptian monks to whom he is taken by the archangel, but in the pictorial version of the story Michael does the chastising; the wall-painting in the church of Maryam Addi Wāfārti shows the archangel forcing the monk to bow by pushing his head down, cf. MS, 2004.024:015.

⁸ ጽርሐ : አርያም ፡ ዘክመ ፡ ዓባየ ፡ ሰጊዶ ፡ አቡነ ፡ አቢብ ፡ ; ዘክመ ፡ ሰገደ ፡ አቢብ ፡ ; ዘክመ ፡ አንግሥዎ ፡ ወዚምዎ ፡ ላዕለ ፡ ኩሉሙ ፡ ሰማዕታት ፡ ሥሉስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ለሊቀ ፡ ሰማዕታት ፡ ማር ፡ ጊዮርጊስ ፡

Hodigitria. She sits on a large throne and holds on her arm the Child Jesus blessing and holding the Gospel book. Their heads are encircled by large rayoned halos. Behind the throne a large drapery is being spread by two angels.

In the middle register the archangel Michael with widely spread wings is enthroned, armed with two swords and holding a sceptre topped and ended with a cross. The inscription above his head reads “How the Lord appointed St Michael the chief of the thousands of angels.”⁹

The lower registers of both panels are reserved for four suppliants, all identified by inscriptions. On the left panel, accompanied by attendants, stand *abeto* Tāwäldä Mādḥən¹⁰ and *däggazmač* Täsfa Şəyon,¹¹ each holding a rosary and making the gesture of prayer (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Left panel, detail: *abeto* Tāwäldä Mādḥən and *däggazmač* Täsfa Şəyon.

On the right panel is represented “lord of Ḥamasen” *däggazmač* Ḥaylu¹² surrounded by his courtiers. Behind him is his wife Warka,¹³ assisted by female, mostly black-skinned, servants (Fig. 3).

⁹ ስከመ : ሢሞ : እግዚእ : ለቅዱስ : ሚካኤል : ይኩን : ለቃ : አዕላፍ : መላእክት ።

¹⁰ ስከመ : ተማጎፀነ : አቤተ : ተወልደ : መድኅን : “How *abeto* Tāwäldä Mādḥən asked for protection.”

¹¹ ስከመ : ተማጎፀነ : ደጃዝማች : ተስፋ : ጽዮን : “How *däggazmač* Täsfa Şəyon asked for protection.”

¹² ስከመ : ተማጎፀነ : ደጃዝማች : ኃይሉ : እግዚእ : ሓማሴን : “How *däggazmač* Ḥaylu, the lord of Ḥamasen, asked for protection.”

¹³ The inscription also gives her Christian name as Wälättä Mika’el: ስከመ : ተማጎፀነት : ወይዘሮ : ዋርካ : ስስመ : ጥምቀታ : ወለተ : ሚካኤል ። “How *wäzero* Warka, whose baptismal name is Wälättä Mika’el, asked for protection.”



Fig. 3. Right panel, detail: *däggazmač* Ḥaylu and his wife Warka.

Ḥaylu, a rosary in his hand, submits himself to the protection of St Michael depicted above, by grasping the edge of the archangel's throne. Warka, who also holds a rosary, keeps the lower part of face covered with a shall, an Ethiopian expression of reverence made among others in the presence of holy patrons.

The main figure in the assembly is Ḥaylu Tāwäldä Mädhən, who from the 1830s to 1876 was the governor (*däggazmač*) of the province of Ḥamsen in northern Eritrea. His successful political career depended heavily on his maintaining good relations with King Tewodros II, and after his downfall, with Yoḥannəs IV.¹⁴ Two other men are Ḥaylu's direct ancestors, namely his grandfather Täsfa Şəyon and father Tāwäldä Mädhən, who successively governed the province at the end the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.¹⁵

The depiction of these historical figures deserves attention, because it reveals how by purely artistic means several ideological and political messages can be expressed. In the first place we note that Ḥaylu, who was the

¹⁴ S. Chernetsov, "Ḥaylu Tāwäldä Mädhən," EAe 2, 1070b-1071a.

¹⁵ W. Smidt, "Şä'zzäqa [seat of Ḥamsen dynasty]," EAe 4, 426b-427a. Id., "The Governors of Ḥamsen, Akkalä Guzay and Bogos" [manuscript], Hamburg 2003.

donor of the painting,¹⁶ was placed as the most important person on the right, i.e., more honourable panel. Secondly, his court is the largest one, because in addition to soldiers and courtiers the governor is followed by his wife and her attendants. Also, according to the principle of hierarchy applied in Ethiopian painting, Ḥaylu is depicted as the largest figure, dominating all the others.¹⁷ Finally, only he has contact with the supramundane world since only he is worthy of touching the archangel Michael's throne. The most ingenious aspect, however, is the presentation in the painting of three generations of Ḥamasen's rulers, undoubtedly an expression of Ḥaylu's dynastic ambitions, his strong political position and his claims for the autonomy of the province. In this context, it is not surprising that the noble suppliants, although they are smaller than the holy figures, stand before them instead of bowing or prostrating themselves, contrary to the rules followed by the Ethiopian painters.¹⁸

In other respects the iconography of the panels generally corresponds with the schemes current in 19th century paintings. The scene of St George slaying the dragon and rescuing the princess of Beirut¹⁹ was introduced to Ethiopia from the European models, and gained particular popularity in the 17th century. The version in our painting depicts the saint clothed and riding a galloping mount in the manner of an Ethiopian noble. The winged, two-legged dragon with triple-twisted body, and the princess perched in a tree grasping its branches, appears at the end of the 18th century in connection with the Second Gondarene style of painting.²⁰ An invention that should be ascribed to the panel's painter is the multiplication of the saint's weapons, namely a lance and two spears, one already piercing the neck of the dragon.

Also connected with the Second Gondarene style is the representation of St George Megalomartyr, who is depicted as an Ethiopian royal figure, thereby personifying the epithet "king," that is often applied to St George, and the expression "king of the martyrs," that appears in several invocations directed to the saint.²¹ St George Megalomartyr is represented very rarely in painting on wood but turns up frequently in murals²² and in the

¹⁶ See *infra*, p. 104.

¹⁷ Since the principle is universal, it was also applied to three other nobles.

¹⁸ Cf. also E. Balicka-Witakowska, "Donors," EAe 2, 191b-193a.

¹⁹ Cf. the triptych in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, inv. nr. 4191 attributed to Nicolò Brancalone, cf. St. Chojnacki, *Ethiopian Icons*, 169, nr. 151.

²⁰ Chojnacki, "Iconography," 56ff, 82ff.

²¹ Cf. for instance the inscription accompanying the painting in the church Qwororo Mika'el; cf. MS, 2000.077:017, or on the diptych in the private collection in London, see *infra*, note 42.

²² On the northern wall, as the most prominent rider among the group of equestrian

manuscripts containing his vita and miracles.²³ The same is true of depiction of the self-important Abib-Bülā. Absent in paintings on wood, his story appears in manuscripts which depict the monk humbly welcoming St George to the community of martyrs²⁴ and in wall-paintings,²⁵ where the episode is often completed by scene of the saint performing one of his extreme acts of mortification, such as jumping from a tree on to pointed objects (a sword in his Synaxary vita), which pierce his body.²⁶

Our painter, however, closely followed the narrative of the encomium. Thus, St George is “like unto a King... wearing a helmet of gold with crowns... mounted upon a white horse which shone with a light which was ten thousand times brighter than the sun”; he is “arrayed in royal apparel... holding swords and the weapon of war of kings, and his royal ornaments particularly were unusual and incomparable,” while Abib-Bülā is depicted “with wings like an angel of God... wearing a royal crown on his head... arrayed in fine linen with which no apparel of king could be compared.”²⁷ On the other hand, the church imagining the heavenly Jerusalem is drawn from life. The circular building rises on a stepped platform and its roof is surmounted by a large silver cross surrounded by seven ostrich’s eggs symbolising the cardinal sins.

The picture of Mary with the Child Jesus relates to the standard Ethiopian iconography of Mary reproducing the famous Roman icon of Santa Maria Maggiore. The textile screen supported by two angels and the rich dress of Mary and Jesus the details modelled on Western devotional pictures were introduced by Ethiopian painters about the middle of 18th century.²⁸

The depictions of the enthroned archangel Michael turned up in the

saints, cf. for instance the church of Emmanuel Balči, MS,1993.003:018 or Maryam Addi Wäfarti, MS, 2004.024:015.

²³ In the form of an iconic picture often facing the depiction of Mary with the Child Jesus, for instance in the manuscript *Dərsanä Mika’el*, Gondär, Däbrä Bərhan Səllase, cf. MS, 1993.051:003 and as the frontispiece to a separate collection of the saint’s miracles, cf. V. Arras, “La collection éthiopienne des Miracles de saint Georges,” [E. Cerulli (ed.),] *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici (Roma 2-4 aprile 1959)*, Roma 1960, pp. 282f; cf. for instance the manuscripts in Ṭara Giyorgis *gādam*, MS,1993.043:037 or London, BL, Orient. 713.

²⁴ Gädlä Giyorgis from Mäqälä Museum of Yoḥannəs IV, cf. MS, 2006.002:015; manuscript of Ṭara Giyorgis *gādam*, cf. MS,1993.043:037.

²⁵ Emmanuel Balči, MS,1993.003:018; Maryam Wadi Wäfarti, MS, 2004.024:015; Giyorgis Bəčäna, cf. MS, 2007.002:024.

²⁶ Maryam Pappašäyt, cf. MS, 2000.059:028 & 029. This scene is also represented separately, close to the martyrdom of the apostles, e.g. Giyorgis Ruba Kwəsa, cf. MS, 2002. 062:026.

²⁷ Budge, *George of Lydda*, pp. 268f.

²⁸ S. Chojnacki, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting: Indigenous Developments. The Influence of Foreign Models and their Adaptation. From the 13th to the 19th Century* (AeF 10), Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 240-247.

second half of the 18th century, in the illustrated manuscripts of *Dərsanä Mika'el* as the frontispiece miniature.²⁹ The archangel, flanked by two angels armed with swords, is wearing a crown and holding a *mappula*, sometimes a sword.³⁰ On the panel, he is depicted with a sceptre, possibly an innovation by our painter, because this symbol of authority first became common at the beginning of the 20th century, when the picture of the enthroned Michael joined the extensive programmes of wall-paintings.³¹

The painting principles formulated during the development of the Second Gonderene style included the realistic representations of objects and accessories from daily life, mostly those used by royalty and the aristocracy. Furniture, weapons, clothes, textiles and jewellery reflecting the fashion at court were rendered with amazing precision and a feeling for detail. In this respect as well our painter followed tradition, showing extraordinary skill. The qualiteis of textiles painted by him are easily recognisable, for instance the heavy velvet of Mary's mantel and St George's and St Michael's robes of honour³² — all royal blue, but each differently patterned; the silk of St George's rock; Mary's and Jesus' robes with sleeves decorated with golden lace, needlework and rows of round buttons; the white cotton tunics (*šamma*) with embroidered bands of the nobles; the brocades with patterns of rosettes and flowers covering the seats and cushions. Obviously drawn from life are the elaborated hilts and scabbards of swords and sabres, the metal ornamentation of the spears and the shields lined with velvet and studded with silver decorations. Sumptuously ornate are the harnesses and trappings, including the cuffs for the horse's legs, and a horse cape with bonnet. Particularly spectacular is the jewellery made of gold and silver: the hair decorations, necklaces in various forms, bracelets and brooches or clasps, rosary beads, chains and small bell pendants. Various techniques of metalwork bearing witness to the mastery of local silver and goldsmiths can be recognised in the painting: repoucé and ajouré pieces, chiselling, punching and filigree with metal drops and twisted wire.

The picture of the noblewoman Warka can be taken as an example of this artistic trend typical of the Second Gonderene style and skilfully developed by our painter (Fig. 4). She is wearing a white cotton tunic with a large band, patterned in green, red and yellow. Her mantel is of dark blue velvet bordered with red and gold embroidery and decorated with two rows of silver pendants to the end of which are attached small bells and silver

²⁹ G. Lusini, "Dərsanä Mika'el," EAe 2, 139a-140a.

³⁰ Cf. Gädlä Giyorgis in Mandaba Mädhane Alām, MS, 1993.055:009.

³¹ Cf. for instance the church of Ara Mika'el, MS, 2000.084:013.

³² It is a kind of cloak called *lämd*, which imitates an animal skin with the paws hanging over the shoulders.

rosettes. The shawl covering the lower part of her face is of thin white cotton. At the top of her elaborately styled hair is a golden spire-like ornament. She holds a rosary of silver and golden beads and her fingers are covered in rings.

The painterly conventions characteristic for the Second Gondarene style are omnipresent in our painting.³³ Most of the scenes take place against a shaded background changing from light yellow to dark green or intensive red, an attempt to create an effect of depth. Simple perspective is achieved by representing the human figures and objects not side by side but one behind the other. This technique is particularly successfully, when applied to the crowd of people: only those in the first row are depicted in full, while the figures behind are reduced to faces and gradually to the tops of heads. Faces and uncovered parts of bodies are modelled in a soft brown, the necks accentuated by curved lines. A relatively large range of colours is used and they are unevenly distributed in order to evoke the three-dimensionality of figures and objects. To the same effect a kind of chiaroscuro is also applied.

Although our painter generally followed current trends and principles, he was able to create a style of his own and very personal forms of expression. Advanced stylisation, meticulously rendered details and particular feeling for the decorativeness seems to be his signature, which is visible,



Fig. 4. Fig. 4. Right panel, detail: *wäyzäro* Warka.

³³ J. Leroy, *Ethiopian Painting in the Late Middle Ages and during the Gondar Dynasty*, London 1967, pp. 34-41.

both in the composition of scenes and in the treatment of single elements. Instead of applying the standardised background of regular yellow-green-red bands, he distributed the colours in irregular spots following the shapes of the figures and objects, thereby bringing them closer to the observer. By painting all the textiles double-sided, so that swirling garments show an inner-side patterned differently from the outer surface, he ingeniously enlarged the area to be covered by ornament, suggesting at the same time the volume of the costumes and their organic fit.³⁴ The fluid distribution of lines marking the folds served the same purpose. The painter applied three kinds of drapery folds: the parallel, conch-formed folds, softly falling at the edges of the screen and supported by angels; the curved folds of the garments, which outline the shapes of the bodies; and the radiant folds visible on the flying mantel of St George and on the dress of St Michael, which is decoratively spread over his seat. Due to the advanced stylisation adopted, these two pieces of cloth retain the appearance of a seashell or open fan. Also clearly stylised are the tricoloured wings of the dragon and angels, displaying elaborate plumes. The colours are subtly graded and the palette enriched by several shades of green.

Most remarkable, however, is the almost manneristic rendering of the human figures. The painter rejected the stocky bodies and round heads of the Second Gondarene style, introducing slender figures, elongated faces, thin necks, long noses, small mouths and enlarged eyes, their outer corners protruding beyond the outline of the facial oval. The faces are delicately modelled in white and brown which sometimes appear as pink carnation because the modelling is so advanced. Long hairs are undulated carefully ending in a volute-like swirl.

* * *

Unlike most Ethiopian artists, the painter of the panels is not anonymous. He added his name to the dedicatory inscription and inserted into the scene representing St George and the dragon information concerning the origin and purpose of the work. The text reads: "This is picture that *däggazmač* Haylu commissioned and gave to the holy *tabot* of St George of Šazzäga that it may be for him a helper to [keep at bay] the enemy of the body and the soul. And its painter [is] *aläqa* Wäldä Giyorgis, an official of the king."³⁵

³⁴ For instance the inside of the large sleeves or the lower parts of the robes and mantels are exposed.

³⁵ ለዝ፡ ሥእል፡ ዘአም[sic! for መ]ሰሎ፡ ደጃዝማች፡ ኃይሉ፡ ወወሀቦ፡ ለታቦተ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ ዘዳዘጋ፡ ከመ፡ ይኸኖ፡ ረዳዒ፡ እምአጽራሬ፡ ሥጋ፡ ወነፍስ፡ ወሰዓሊሁ፡ አለቃ፡ ወልደ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ ወዓሌ፡ ንጉሥ።

The content of the dedication sheds light on the choice of the subjects appearing on the panels. While the side-by-side representation of Mary and St George was a standard solution in Ethiopian painting from the 15th century,³⁶ the focus on St George, who is depicted twice, may be explained by his importance in this particular context: on one hand the church for which the painting was executed was consecrated to the saint, and on the other he was the patron of the painter. As to the archangel Michael, he most probably entered the painting as the patron of Ḥaylu's wife, whose Christian name was Wälättä Mika'el.

Furthermore, the inscription links our painter to another extraordinary artefact, kept in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It is a set of 11, partly coloured drawings on seven parchment sheets, presently loose.³⁷ Attribution of both works to the same artist relies on the unquestionable uniformity of the style and the sophisticated interpretation of the depicted subjects by a highly educated intellectual,³⁸ but primarily on the inscription, which allows us to identify him as the same person.³⁹ As with the dedicatory note in the painting, this text is very informative. What is more, the two inscriptions complete each others. Thus, beside the name of the painter, which is the same in both cases, the king mentioned in the painting turns out to be *aše* Tewodros II and the office occupied by Wäldä Giyorgis is chief of the royal council. Moreover, he was the head (*aläqa*) of the major church or monastic community (*däbr*) of St George in the capital of Ḥamasen, Šazzäga.⁴⁰ Additional elements confirming the connection between the two

³⁶ Based on the tradition ascribing to both the same day of translation (16 Nāhase). The recommendation for such a connection was transmitted among others by the Synaxary: "The translation of his [George] body took place at the same time as the translation of the body of our Lady Mary, and therefore those who know how to love her, paint his picture with her picture," cf. Budge, *Book of the Saints* IV. *Sanê Ḥamlê Naḥasê Pāguǧmēn*, 1224; O. Raineri, "Geroge of Lydda: Cult and Hiagiography of St. George," EAe 2, 763b-764b.

³⁷ S. Delamarter – Demeke Berhane, *A Catalogue of Previously Uncatalogued Ethiopic Manuscripts in England: Twenty-three Manuscripts in the Bodleian, Cambridge University and John Rylands University Libraries and in a private collection* (Journal of Semitic Studies. Supplement, 21), Oxford 2007, pp. 1f. The folios are paginated in a second hand; in the catalogue, the original order of the pictures is not reported.

³⁸ The drawing representing the Crucifixion based on a text of Dionysus the Areopagite was the subject of detailed iconological analysis, E. Balicka-Witakowska, "Pictorial Tərgwame on the Crucifixion: an Ethiopian Drawing in the Bodleian Library," in V. Böll et al. (eds.), *Studia Aethiopica in Honour of Siegbert Uhlig on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 431-442.

³⁹ For the text of the inscription cf. Böll, *Studia Aethiopica*, 441f and for the drawing see EAe 2, 620a.

⁴⁰ The place may be of Ewostaṭewian origin. In the drawing's set five scenes depict Ewostaṭewos's life and miracles and in one of them he is called the father of the Däbrä Giyorgis community.



Fig. 5. Drawing by Wäldä Giyorgis; *Kwər'atä rə'əsu* and *däggəzmač* Ḥaylu; Oxford Bodleian Library.



Fig. 6. Drawing by Wäldä Giyorgis; *abunä* Merqorewos and *wäyzäro* Warka; Oxford, Bodleian Library.

works and the identity of their donors is the depiction of suppliants, who are again *däggazmač* Ḥaylu and his wife Warka (Figs. 5 & 6).⁴¹

It seems that on stylistic ground we can enlarge the list of Wäldä Giyorgis's works by two more objects. The first is a diptych published in the catalogue of a private collection in London written for an exhibition in New York.⁴² As in the British Museum painting, the panels represent St George the dragon-killer (left), Mary with the Child Jesus (right) and below the holy figures the three suppliants,⁴³ but similar to the Bodleian set they are drawn in ink and sparsely coloured.⁴⁴

The second work, also published in a catalogue, this time composed for an exhibition in Paris, is a codex with full-page drawings, three of them reproduced in the book.⁴⁵ The pictures are coloured but much more extensively than in the drawn diptych and in the Bodleian set. In the catalogue entry, the manuscript is described as "the Explication of the Old Testament," but it is not clear whether the note is related to the text or the pictures, all of which are supplied with detailed explanatory inscriptions.⁴⁶ Perhaps it is the same type of work as the Bodleian drawings, a collection of pictures, which were either intended to complete a manuscript or be used as an independent piece.⁴⁷

Looking at the photographs of the diptych and the manuscript, one immediately notices several characteristics present in the signed works of Wäldä Giyorgis, but a closer examination of the two former would be required to better understand the interdependence of all his works. Particularly interesting would be to establish why the painter, who at some stage of his artistic career was reluctant to work in full colour, broke with this practice in the case of our panels to produce a perfectly completed painting.

⁴¹ The accompanying inscriptions are as follows: **ዘከመ ፡ ተማኅፀነ ፡ ደጃዝማች ፡ ኃይሉ ፡ መልአክ ፡ ሓማሴን ፡ ወሠራዌ ፡ በሥእለ ፡ መድኅን ።** "How *däggazmač* Ḥaylu, the angel of Ḥamasen and Śārawe, asked for protection of the image of the Saviour"; **ዘከመ ፡ ተማኅፀነት ፡ ወይዘሮ ፡ ዋርታ ።** "How *wäyzero* Warka asked for protection."

⁴² Pacewildestein, 18-19 October 2005; Catalogue: C. Griffith Mann et al. (eds.), *Art of Ethiopia*, London 2005, pp. 76f, nr. 32.

⁴³ A certain Gäbrä Amlak Gošu, his wife Wälättä Səllase and his father Gošu Ḥngəda, with the Christian name Gäbrä Mädhən. The main inscription is in praise of St George and contains a long list of his epithets, among others "martyr king," cf. Griffith Mann, *Art of Ethiopia*, 76.

⁴⁴ White is applied to the faces, necks, hands and feet of St George, Mary and Jesus, red on the nose of the horse, while blue and white are partially distributed on its body.

⁴⁵ J. Mercier (ed.), *L'Arche Éthiopien. Art Chrétien d'Éthiopie, 27 septembre 2000 – 7 janvier 2001*, Paris 2000, pp. 187f.

⁴⁶ The pictures represent: the parable of vanity based on the tale of Barlaam and Josaphat, ascension of Alexander the Great to Paradise and the labyrinth of King Solomon.

⁴⁷ The mostly devotional character of the Bodleian drawings suggests they belonged at the beginning or end of a manuscript, but is not the case for the very specific "Explications."