

Emmanuel FRITSCH, C.S.Sp.

Ethiopia

THE LITURGICAL YEAR AND THE LECTIONARY OF THE ETHIOPIAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEMPORAL

This article constitutes an introduction to the Ethiopian liturgical year and lectionary. We wish to expose here the liturgical year of the Ethiopian Church, its arrangement and meaning, as well as the system employed in the lectionary.

I. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR: THE YEAR, THE MONTH, THE ERA

1. The Alexandrian Year

"Through Coptic influence¹, the Alexandrian year is used in Ethiopia. It had become the civil year in Egypt in 30 or 26 B.C., shortly after the Roman conquest of Egypt [...] The Alexandrian year is the ancient Egyptian solar year, co-ordinated with the year in the Romans' Julian calendar, which is itself the Egyptian solar year, but with a different date for the beginning of a new year and a different division of the days into twelve months. The Alexandrian year retains the ancient Egyptian division of the year into twelve months of thirty days each, plus five more days, called *epagomenai*, at its end, as well as the extra day whose intercalation at the end of every fourth year as a sixth epagomenal day was ordered by Ptolemy III Euergetes in 238 B.C., in order to rectify the old discrepancy between the calendar year of 365 days and the natural solar year.

"The Alexandrian year's co-ordination with that of the Julian calendar [...] was rectified, so that from A.D. 5 on, the Alexandrian new year begins on the Julian 29 August, unless it is a year in which the Julian calendar will intercalate a 29 February. In that

¹ These notions, which have been studied by Marius Chaine (M. CHAINE, *La Chronologie des Temps Chrétiens de l'Égypte et de l'Éthiopie*, Paris, 1925) and others (esp. V. GRUMEL, *La Chronologie (Traité d'Études Byzantines*, 1, publié par P. Lemerle), Paris, 1958), have been clearly summed up recently by A. CODY, (*The Coptic Encyclopedia*, [=C.E.] published by Ph. FRIEDMAN, New York, 1991, vol. 2, pp. 433 to 438). We feel it is preferable to follow his exposition here.

case, the Alexandrian year begins on the Julian 30 August, because in the Alexandrian system the extra day is intercalated at the very end of the Alexandrian year preceding the one in which the Julian calendar's 29 February will occur. The Alexandrian intercalary day thus falls on the Julian 29 August, with the new Alexandrian year then beginning on 30 August and that year's corresponding days in the Julian calendar continuing to be the normal ones plus 1 until the Julian year's own intercalations made on 29 February, after which the corresponding days are those of ordinary years."

2. The Four Year Cycle

Therefore, the year includes 365 days; every four years, one supplementary day is added at the very end of the year. The years are counted by groups of four inside of which each year, called *zaman*, i.e. "time", or "era", or even "year" in this context, receives the name of an evangelist. The Year of Matthew (*Zamana Mātēwos*) is first within this series, followed by that of Mark (*Zamana Mārḳos*). Then comes the year of Luke (*Zamana Luqās*) or leap-year, at the end of which the supplementary day is attached. The year of John (*Zamana Yoḥannes*) ends the four-year cycle. For example, 1983 E.C. was a Year of Luke (leap-year), 1984 a Year of John. 1985 -Year of Matthew- starts a new cycle, 1986 is a Year of Mark, etc...

3. The Months

The year is divided into twelve months or moons (**ⲱⲈⲩ**: *warḥ*) of thirty days. This totals 360 days, complemented by a group of five (six during the leap-year of Luke) supplementary days bringing the total to 365 (366 in a leap year) days. This group of five or six days is the well-known "thirteenth month of sunshine" of the tourist advertisements. It is called *Ḥāg"emēn*, from the Greek *Epagomenai hēmerai*, i.e. 'supplementary days'.

The names of the months are shown below with the initial corresponding day according to the Julian calendar in the second column and according to the Gregorian reform of the Julian calendar² in the third and fourth columns (there is at present a difference of thirteen days between the two calendars; it will be the case up to the year 2100 A.D. Then the difference will be fourteen days):

² Pope Gregory XIII promulgated the reform of the Julian calendar, which bears his name in his bull *Inter gravissimas* of 24 February 1582. "At the time of its introduction, Aelred Cody explains, ten days (5-14 October 1582) were dropped from the solar calendar, nine of them so that the mean vernal equinox would occur 20 March instead of 11 March, as it did at the time of the reform, and the tenth so that the calendar corrections necessary from year to year in a 400 year cycle could be diminished by one day. By placing the mean vernal equinox on 20 March, the reformers made sure that the true equinox would never occur later than 21 March, the fixed equinoctial date established in the fourth century, when Easter was defined as the Sunday after the fourteenth moon on or after (never before) the vernal equinox (*C.E.*, Vol. 2, p. 436). "The person interested in the correspondance between the calendars of different Churches, e.g. to compare their Sanctorals, should refer to the Julian correspondance shown in the second column.

<i>Ethiopian</i>	<i>Julian</i>	<i>Gregorian Months in the Years</i>	
<i>Months</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Mt, Mk, Lk,</i>	<i>of John</i>
1. Maskaram 1st	August 29	September 11	September 12
2. Ṭeqemt 1st	September 28	October 11	October 12
3. Ḥedār 1st	October 28	November 10	November 11
4. Tāḥśās 1st	November 27	December 10	December 11
5. Ṭerr 1st	December 27	January 9	January 10
6. Yakkātit 1st	January 26	February 8	February 9
7. Maggābit 1st	February 25	March 10	March 11
8. Miyāzyā 1st	March 27	April 9	April 10
9. Genbot 1st	April 26	May 9	May 10
10. Sanē 1st	May 26	June 8	June 9
11. Ḥamlē 1st	June 25	July 8	July 9
12. Naḥasē 1st	July 25	August 7	August 8
13. Pāg ^w emēn 1st	August 24	September 6	September 7

4. The Coptic Months

In order to establish easily the relation with the Coptic months, useful particularly for the Sanctoral, we give their names, both in Coptic (Bohairic) and in Arabic:

1. Thôout or Tût. 2. Paopi or Bâbah. 3. Athôr or Hâtûr. 4. Choiak or Kiyahk. 5. Tôbi or Tûbah. 6. Mechir or Amshîr. 7. Phamenôth or Baramhât. 8. Pharmouthi or Baramûdah. 9. Pachôn or Bashans. 10. Paôni or Ba'ûnah. 11. Epêp or Abîb. 12. Mesôrê or Misrâ. 13. Pikougi enabot or Khamsat Ayyâm al-Nasî.

5. New Year's Day

As we have seen above, the beginning of the Coptic and Ethiopian year takes place one month before the Autumn equinox according to the Julian calendar. As can be seen on the table above, it corresponds presently to August 29 of the Julian calendar (September 11 of its Gregorian reform) for the three first years of the fourfold series, i.e. from Matthew to Luke, and to August 30 (September 12) for the year of John. Let us recall that the Churches of the Byzantine tradition start the year on 1 September.

6. The Era

The Ethiopians generally calculate their dates according to the Era of the Incarnation, which is called ጥመተ፡ ምስረቲ፡ 'āmata meherat, that is to say "Year of Mercy." It is what the abbreviation (ጥ.ም.) indicates when it is written after dates.

The difference of 7 (from Maskaram to Tāḥśās incl., that is through 31 December) or 8 (from Ṭerr, or 1 January, to Ṕāḡ^wemēn) years between the Ethiopian Incarnation Era on the one hand, and either the Julian or the Gregorian Incarnation Era on the other hand, is due to the fact that Ethiopia never received the reform of the earlier Alexandrian computation of the date of the Nativity of Jesus Christ that used to be in general use throughout Christendom. It is therefore behind the so-called Dionysian Era of the Incarnation³, "or according to the Era of the World of Ammianus, with the birth of Christ placed in the year of the world 5500"⁴

The years B.C. (before Christ) are called ግመተ: ግለጾ: 'āmata 'ālam, i.e. Era of the World, or ግመተ: ፍጥረት: 'āmata Feṫrat, i.e. Era of the Creation, or ግመተ: አዳጾ: 'āmata Addām, i.e. the Era of Adam, or ግመተ: ፍዳ: 'āmata Feddā, i.e. the Era of the Punishment.

7. The Hours of the Day

The hours are counted roughly according to the Roman system of 12 night hours and 12 day hours. The Romans had an invariable number of 12 hours either of night or day time. In turn, the day hours were all of equal length, as also were the night hours. But the day or night hours could become very different according to the seasons: the nights becoming shorter in summer and longer in winter, entailing the opposite for the length of the day hours. In simple fact, seven o'clock in Western time is one o'clock in Ethiopian time.

While the civil day begins in the morning, as did that of the ancient Egyptians and the Romans, the liturgical day begins on the eve at sunset, like the Jewish and Greek days. Fasting days are counted according to the civil days.

The seven-day week was adopted from the Jews.

II. THE LITURGICAL YEAR, THE LITURGY OF THE WORD AND THE LECTIONARIES

A - The Liturgical Year

While depending in particular on the traditions of the Syriac and Coptic Churches for many inputs, the daughter Church of Alexandria has built up her own liturgical tradition. Most of the history of liturgy remains unknown up to the 13th c. when we may witness the "coptisation" of the Ethiopian Church. The result is obvious when one examines the present-day liturgy of the Mass and the sacraments, where ecclesiastical order is rather strict. On the contrary, the liturgical year and the Divine Office, in its "cathedral" expression, are examples of places where the Ethiopian liturgists

³ Due to the monk Dionysius Exiguus (+ ca. 545).

⁴ A. CODY, *op. cit.*, 434.

have more freely developed their own religious and liturgical genius in a particularly interesting way.

In the lectionary we find a combination of the two aspects: a liturgy of the Word which respects the structure received from the Coptic Church, and the insertion of this liturgy of the Word into a liturgical year enriched with the Ethiopian genius.

Contrary to the present-day Coptic tradition⁵ but according to the tradition of the Syriac-speaking Churches, the Ethiopian Church has developed fixed liturgical periods with variable sizes that may be as short as only one day, except for the Easter Cycle, which is mobile and the total length of which is fixed.⁶

The liturgical year is made up of two major parts: the Temporal and the Sanctoral.

The Temporal includes:

1. The liturgical seasons, whether mobile (the cycle of Easter) or fixed.
2. The Sundays of the year.
3. The mobile festivals.
4. The fasts.

The **Sanctoral** includes the commemorations (of saints, mostly) made on fixed days of the months throughout the whole calendar year. The fixed seasons of the Temporal as well as the coincidence of fixed festivals from the calendar with Sundays or some fasts, entail a close relationship between the Temporal and the calendar or Sanctoral. An introduction to the latter will therefore be necessary in section III of this Introduction.

B - The Liturgy of the Word

The Church organizes the reading of the sacred texts according to a system of both worship and teaching, developed respectively by the liturgical books, which govern the celebrations, and by the lectionaries, in the context of the liturgical year. Before we deal with the lectionaries, it is relevant to examine the services which include a liturgy of the Word where the lectionaries are used, and how this liturgy of the Word is performed⁷

1. The Services with Readings

The lectionaries know two types of services: of the morning (ዘኅገሀ: *za-nageh*) of certain solemnities of the Sanctoral, and of Mass (ዘቅዳሴ: *za-qeddāsē*). To these two, we shall add a mention of the *Wāzēmā*.

⁵ But maybe not without any relation with it.

⁶ Unless we take into account the last element attached to it.

⁷ For a description of the Divine Office in the Ethiopian tradition, see R. TAFT, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West. The Origins of the Devine Office and its Meaning for Today*, chap. 16: *The Ethiopian Rite*, Collegeville, Minnesota: St John's Abbey 1984, pp. 261-271, as well as HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *L'Ufficio divino etiopico: Studio Storico-critico con particolare riferimento alle ore cattedrali* (Tesi dottorale al PIO non pubblicata), Rome 1989.

a - The **Wāzēmā** (ዋዜማ:) is a service of vigil which is ordinarily performed during the afternoon of the eve of an important feast, at around 3 p.m. When, however, the feast and its service of vigil take place in a fasting period when Mass is not celebrated before 12 o'clock (it is the case, for instance, for the Transfiguration, which falls during the fast of the Assumption), then the *Wāzēmā* of the feast will be performed in the morning of its eve, followed at 12 o'clock by the Mass of the day, eve of the feast. The *Wāzēmā*, therefore, cannot too simply be equated with Vespers.

In principle, and according to the book of the *Me'erāf*, the readings indicated for the Mass of a Sunday or of a feastday should be read a first time during the service of the Vigil.⁸ Frequently, however, only the Gospel is read and commented at the very end of the service, generally without any ceremony.

b - The **morning service** (ነገሀ: *nageh*) takes place before the Eucharistic liturgy on the feast days of the Sanctoral. It is commonly known as the ማገሌት: *Māhelēt*, i.e., literally, "praise." In practice, it is a kind of Matins. From the point of view of the lectionary, it includes both a Psalm-versicle (or Psalm gradual) and a Gospel which are chosen to match the principal commemoration of that particular day.⁹ The Psalm-versicle (Ps) is called ምስባክ: *Mesbāk* (from *Sabaka*, "to preach"), which may refer to its being proclaimed, or perhaps to the elevated place from which it is fitting to proclaim it¹⁰ in order to herald the Gospel reading. It is also adequately called ቅድመ: ወንጌል: *Qedma Wangēl*, according to its position "before the Gospel"¹¹

The text of the *Mesbāk* consists of a verse and a half from a Psalm of David, distributed in three sections, and which is sung always on the same melody. The deacon proclaims it first, then the assembly repeats it. The same thing is done a second time. The third time, however, somewhat differs: the deacon sings aloud ሃሌ: ሉዎ *Halleluyā!*¹² before the assembly sings the versicle for the last time.

The execution of the *Mesbāk*, therefore, goes like this:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 - Deacon: | versicle. |
| 2 - Assembly: | versicle. |
| 3 - Deacon: | versicle. |
| 4 - Assembly: | versicle. |
| 5 - Deacon: | <i>Alleluia</i> . |
| 6 - Assembly: | versicle. |

⁸ Cf. B. VELAT, *Me'erāf, Commun de l'Office divin éthiopien pour toute l'année*, [=BVM], PO 34, fasc. 1-2 (= Nr. 159-160), Paris 1966, p. 305, XIV.

⁹ See the presentation of the Sanctoral below, section III, C.

¹⁰ The step of the ambo or *Qeddest* of the church, before the central doors of the sanctuary.

¹¹ For the word *Mesbāk*, see BVM p. 56. In the context of the present work, the *Mesbāk* is always understood as the Psalm-versicle which precedes the liturgical proclamation of the Gospel. In the context of the cathedral Divine Office, the same term also refers to a kind of hymn.

¹² A sign that the *Mesbāk* is nothing other than the *Alleluia* verse of other liturgies.

The Psalm-versicle is sung five times¹³ in view of the figure 5500, which is the number of years which elapsed between the Creation of the world and the coming of Jesus Christ, who brings the world to completion. In a similar way, the Psalm (which stands for the Old Testament's longing for the coming of the Messiah) announces the Gospel which fulfils it.¹⁴

The Gospel is never proclaimed in any liturgical setting without being preceded by the solemn singing of this Psalm-versicle by the deacon (or deacons) holding his cross¹⁵ and standing under an umbrella, turned towards the East. At Matins on a feast day, the drum lying on the ground is solemnly beaten.

c - Mass (ቅዳሴ: Qeddāsē, lit. "Hallowing") always follows the Morning office when the latter is performed. On a fast day, Mass is celebrated around 12 o'clock. It includes four lessons read facing the four cardinal directions.

The Missal (መጽሐፈ: ቅዳሴ: *Maṣḥafa Qeddāsē*) contains the whole service of the Mass with 14 anaphoras¹⁶ which, like the readings, vary according to the commemorations of the day.

The Missal also includes rubrics which should be understood in relation to the Temporal. For example, the Ge'ez mode is employed if there is a fast or if the overtones of the time are those of a fast.¹⁷

It is to be noted that Mass may always be celebrated¹⁸, whether or not the Divine Office has taken place. The ማኅሌት: *Māḥelēt* may be celebrated before Mass, according to the circumstances (occurrence of a feast, presence of a *tābot* matching the commemoration) and the competence of the participants (availability of at least one *marigētā* or choir director, singers, etc.). The *Wāzēmā* is considered less obligatory, though proper on the great occasions. If a *Wāzēmā* is celebrated, both ማኅሌት: *Māḥelēt* and Mass must follow. If the *Māḥelēt* is celebrated, Mass must follow.

d - Selection of the Readings

The readings will be taken from the lectionary. The Sanctoral is organised so as to attribute to each of the saints commemorated on a certain day part of the readings. The *Mesbāk* and Gospel of Matins, which are different from those of Mass, focus on the main commemoration.¹⁹

¹³ In reality, many communities simply sing the *Mesbāk* six times as the deacons do not proclaim the *Hällēluyā* but the text of the versicle instead.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Abba Habtemichael-Kidane, OFM Cap, who gave me this piece of information.

¹⁵ See below n. 30.

¹⁶ The Missal printed in Rome for the branch of the Ethiopian Church which is in communion with Rome includes 17 anaphoras.

¹⁷ See below Section IV, B, 3: Rubrics Concerned with Fasts.

¹⁸ Except on the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and, generally, Saturday of the Holy Week.

¹⁹ See below, section III, C: Commemorations and Lectionary

2. The Liturgy of the Word at Mass

The first half of the Eucharistic liturgy is commonly known as ሥርዐተ፡ ቅዳሴ *Ser 'ata qeddāsē*, which means: "the service of the Mass," not the service of the first half only.²⁰ The expression is used to speak not only for Mass, but also for the liturgy of the Word, which is performed in the celebration of the Sacraments and the different services, which constitute the Ritual.

This first part of the service follows the liturgy of the Coptic Church in its main lines.²¹ It includes the following elements: the preparation of the ministers and of the oblation; the prayer of thanksgiving attributed to St. Basil and other prayers for those who bring an offering as well as a prayer to complete the offertory; the penitential prayer of the Absolution of the Son; the prayer of the faithful; the censuring. Then the liturgy of the Word properly speaking takes place.

As in Egypt, each Mass includes three "epistles." Each of these is introduced by a dialogue by the deacon, the priest and the people. Each is also prepared by a priestly prayer and concluded with a hymn sung by the assembly.

The first reading is a pericope from the Pauline corpus and is therefore called ጳውሎስ፡, *Pāwelos*. The deacon reads it as he turns towards the West, for it is said that the West was the Apostle's territory of preaching, according to the explanation given by the Missal.²²

The second reading is chosen from among the seven Catholic epistles and is simply called ሐዋርያ፡ *Hawāryā*, the "Apostle." The second reading may also be drawn from the Apocalypse of John, ቀለምሲስ፡ *Qalamsis*, a short form of አቡ-ቀለምሲስ፡ *Abu-qalamsis*, often called ራእዮ፡ ዮሐንስ *Rā'eya Yohannes*, "Vision of John." This text is read by the assistant deacon turned towards the North.

The third reading is from the ገብረ፡ ሐዋርያት፡ *Gebra hawāryāt*, the Acts of the Apostles. The assistant priest reads it facing the South. Only priests qualify to read the Acts, because their priestly ordination gives them a share in the apostolic ministry.

After these three readings, the celebrants offer supplications while going in procession around the altar,²³ the priest chants the *Theotokia*,²⁴ the clergy and faithful alternate the Hymn of the incense,²⁵ and the priest begins the Christological *Tri-*

²⁰ See the Missal ch. II, n° 58 (M. DAUD, *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, [=Lit.] Cairo, 1959 <A translation of the Ethiopian Mass book, i.e. *Mashafa qeddāsē* (መጽሐፈ፡ ቅዳሴ፡) in Ge'ez and Amharic, Addis-Ababa, 1942 E.C./1950A.D.>, p. 17).

²¹ See O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church. A Detailed Description of Her Liturgical Services and the Rites and Ceremonies Observed in the Administration of Her Sacraments*, [=Lit. Serv.], (Publications de la Société d'Archéologie Copte. Textes et Documents, 10), Cairo, 1967, pp. 46 sq.; W. MACOMBER, "Ethiopian Liturgy", *C.E.*, III, pp. 987-990.

²² Cf. M. DAUD, *Lit.*, III, 136.

²³ Cf. M. DAUD, *Lit.* ch. III, n° 111-117.

²⁴ Praises to the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. Cf. M. DAUD, *Lit.* ch. III, n° 155-159.

²⁵ Cf. M. DAUD, *Lit.* ch. III, n° 160.

shagion, understood as the introduction to the most revered Prayer of the Covenant (*Kidān*).²⁶ This prayer is concluded by the collective Our Father and Hail Mary²⁷ recited after the short intentions formulated by the priest.

The priest proceeds to say aloud the "Prayer of the Gospel" and the Gospel is then announced by the *Mesbāk* sung by the deacons. Meanwhile, the priest blesses the four corners of the universe and incenses the Gospel held by the assistant priest. The latter will previously have put one of the five grains of incense specially blessed in the previous stage of the service into the censer.²⁸

Then a procession is formed. The ministers go around the altar, preceding the priest who carries the book of the Gospels open and proclaims: "The holy Gospel, the Word of the Son of God proclaimed by N. [Matthew, Mark, or Luke] [or preached by John]." They all step out of the sanctuary and the people bow towards the Book as they sing. The celebrants, and sometimes other clergy as well, often kiss the Book at this point and the priest invites everybody to recite another Our Father and Hail, Mary. The Gospel (ወንጌል: *Wangēl*) is read in a simple manner by the priest standing under an umbrella. He turns towards the East, outside the sanctuary²⁹, and holds the cross of the

²⁶ The text is part of the *Maṣḥafa Kidān* or *Testamentum Domini* (edited and translated by R. Beylot, *Le Testamentum Domini Ethiopien*, Louvain 1984), which Our Lord is believed to have dictated to the apostles and disciples during the time between his Resurrection and his Ascension. The book, which can be dated from the 5th c. and situated in the area of Antioch, includes a liturgical section, which depends on the "Apostolic Tradition" (the area of Antioch, around 300). The Anaphora of the Lord is part of the *Testamentum Domini*. For the text, see M. DAOUD, *Lit.* ch. III, n° 174-175 and Appendix pp. 314 to 321; BVM pp. 161 to 174. The Ethiopian tradition associates both the *Kidān* and the *Trishagion* because both have been given by Christ, although in different circumstances. Jesus is believed to have asked Joseph and Nicodemus, who had taken him down from the cross, to recite the *Trisagion* while burying him (see for instance the book of meditation called *Asra sostu ḥemāmāta mesṣir*, ed. Tesfā Gabra-Šellāsē, Addis Ababa 1986, E.C., pp. 79-80). I am indebted to Abbā Habtamichael-Kidane to have attracted my attention to this fact.

The Prayer of the *Kidān* is composed of three sections, which include three prayers each. Outside Mass, the whole of the *Kidān* is always said. At Mass, only one of the sections is said: the first section, for Midnight (*za-manfaqa lēlit*), is used at a night Mass (Easter, Baptism and Christmas). The second section, for the morning (*za-nageh*), is said at a morning Mass (all Saturdays and Sundays of the year, as well as the week-days outside a time of fast). The third section, for the evening (*za-šark*), is used when Mass is celebrated in the afternoon (on fast days).

²⁷ The *Our Father* is always concluded by the doxology: *For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.* The following is a version of the much used Ethiopian *Hail, Mary* (በሰላም: ኅብርኤል: *Ba-salāma Gabre'ēl*):

O my Lady Mary, hail to thee by the salutation of the angel Gabriel. Thou art a virgin in mind and thou art a virgin in body. Mother of God Sabaoth, hail to thee! Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Rejoice, O full of grace, God is with thee! Pray and supplicate for mercy to thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, that he may forgive us our sins. Amen.

²⁸ Three grains were burnt at the censuring, the fourth one is offered to the Gospel, and the fifth one will be for the Eucharist.

²⁹ Though some people claim that the Gospel should always be read while put on the *tābot*, which in turn rests on the altar: from the sanctuary.

deacon.³⁰ The priest concludes the reading with a verse, which varies with the Gospel writer, and the assembly sings the corresponding hymn of praise.

The holy Book is wrapped in a cloth by a minister and offered to the veneration of the faithful who kiss it and touch their foreheads to it as a sign of both loving veneration and adherence. The homily is given at this stage.³¹ The service then proceeds with the deacon ringing a bell and dismissing the catechumens.

C - The Lectionaries

The liturgical book which indicates the seasons of the Temporal and the feasts of the Sanctoral, as well as the biblical lessons which fit the different days or Sundays of the liturgical year, is the መጽሐፈ ግጥም: *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē*.

The word *Geṣṣāwē* means "explanation", "exposition", hence "ordo" Another reading says ግብጥም: *Gebṣāwē*, instead. This would ascribe to this book an Egyptian origin.³²

The መጽሐፈ ግጥም: *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē* is both a perpetual liturgical calendar or *ordo* and a lectionary. In turn, the latter may be either a full or plenary lectionary (including therefore the text of the biblical lessons written in full), or else only an index of the readings. We shall make use here of the word 'lectionary' with the general meaning of *Geṣṣāwē*, whether plenary or not, and shall be more precise when necessary.

³⁰ Quite likely, this cross (in fact a long staff topped with a large cross which can be detached and is used by the priest for important blessings) has its origin in the "caduceus" or staff, which is the attribute of the god Mercury, the messenger of the supreme god in the Greco-Roman mythology. The caduceus entered the Christian iconography of angels and has become characteristic of the Ethiopian deacon in his ministry of leading the people in their prayer and attitudes. The pastoral staff of the Bishops of the Eastern Churches derives from the same caduceus.

³¹ In fact, even though the habit of preaching at the end of Mass before the final blessing (like in many Russian Orthodox churches) is widespread, a movement is growing, at least in important towns, to preach immediately after the Gospel has been proclaimed.

³² As Jeffery Chantbook (= P. JEFFERY, *The Liturgical Year in the Ethiopian Deggwā* [=Chantbook], *Εὐλόγημα* - Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, SJ a cura di E. Carr, S. Parenti, A.-A. Thiermeyer, E. Velkovska, *Studia Anselmiana* 110 = *Analecta liturgica* 17, Rome 1993, pp. 199-234.) contends (p. 209). The ms. EMMML 1832 he brings as support (n. 32) is indeed dated 1280/1 A.D., the time when the Amhara King Yekuno-Amlāk had just taken the power from the Zāgwē Dynasty (1270) and a period known for the systematic Egyptianization of the Ethiopian Church. To ascribe an Egyptian (Coptic) origin to such a book, therefore, has nothing surprising. Several *Geṣṣāwē* of the end of the last century are presented as translations from the Arabic: GETATCHEW HAILE and W.F. MACOMBER, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library* [=EMML], (Addis-Ababa, and for the Hill Manuscript Library, Collegeville, 10 vols published, Collegeville, 1975-), EMMML, IV, 1209 and 1332, or EMMML, X, N° 4439 (1892/93 AD). Mention is made in the introduction of the latter, f. 2 a, of "the book of the order of our fathers the Egyptians" The Missal always includes an initial note referring to "our fathers the Egyptians" (M. DAOUD, *Lit.* p. 7: ch. II, n° 1).

1 - Sources

Two printed lectionaries are presently in use in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. We shall describe them below and refer to them under the abbreviations of, respectively, "MG" and "NMG." They allow most of the communities to possess their own *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē*. The first modern printed *Geṣṣāwē* was the small book called መጽሐፈ ስዕልቤ: *Mashafa Aseleti*.

Formerly, not every community had its own lectionary, since manuscripts were rare and very expensive. At present, the printed lectionaries do not seem truly to depend on former lectionaries except, quite likely, as far as the liturgical seasons are concerned. It is what we can deduce from the introduction to MG (p. 3), which explains the circumstances in which these modern lectionaries appeared. Before, the introduction says, people used to read as they wished and it cannot be said for sure that their choice was agreeing with the occasion. Besides, even in places blessed with Church scholars, choosing the appropriate lessons was a difficult exercise. In addition to this, the scholars were not of one thinking and there was felt the need to harmonize the prayer, the readings and the teaching that were to be addressed to the same people. Therefore, a number of Church scholars undertook to prepare lectionaries. The first one was *Alaqā Walda-Rufā'el*, a scholar of Dabra-Bizan (see below). Another one was *Mal'aka Dahay Tagañā* of Dabra-Marqos (Goḡḡām), who wrote a lectionary for the whole year. It was only a hand-written work, however, and could not be of any use to the whole Church but only to a few churches and monasteries. To answer this scope, this lectionary was prepared in 1925 E.C. (1932-33 A.D.) as an index, the introduction explains.

In any case, the history of the lectionary requires the study of the manuscript tradition, which, unfortunately, we are not in position to perform. On the other hand, the seemingly late development of the liturgical seasons and their particular character might very well make them more dependent on the tradition of the Divine Office in its cathedral form, of Yārēd, after the name of the inspired cantor to whom is ascribed the origin of the plainchant.³³ This is however a matter for caution, for the Ethiopian Church is the carrier of a tradition, which is very firm in its spirit, even if diverse circumstances render its evaluation uneasy. The history of the lectionary requires the study of the manuscript tradition, which, unfortunately, we are not in the position to perform.

Probing into the available catalogues, however, has allowed to make an inventory of the following manuscripts, classified in chronological order:³⁴

³³ On St. Yārēd, see the *status questionis* given by Habtemichael-Kidane, *Il Degg'ā*, p. 365-369.

³⁴ The Catalogues of Manuscripts where we found material relevant to our topic are the following:

British Library:

Dillmann = A. DILLMANN, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur*. Pars tertia: codices Æthiopicos continens, London, 1847

Wright = W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1847*, London, 1877.

1. Manuscript Documents

1. XIV-XVth c. Shoa, Debbi, Ankobarr, Waramo Mikā'el (= EMML, VII, 2883)
2. XVth c. Wallo, Ambāssal, Hayq Estifānos (= EMML, V, 1954)
3. late XVth c. Brit. Libr. Or. 543-(= Wright N.129)
4. XV-XVIth c. Addis Abbaba, Institute of Ethiopian Studies (= EMML, V, 1571)
5. XV or XVIth c. Brit. Libr. Add. 18.993- (= Wright n° 130)
6. XVth and XVIth c. Vat. Eth. 15
7. Before 1540 Vat. Eth. 16
8. XVIth c. Vat. Eth. 26
9. XVIIth c. Vat. Eth. 79
10. XVIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Madhānē 'ālam (= EMML, VI, 2437)
11. early XVIIIth c. Brit. Libr. Or. 544-(= Wright n° 131)
12. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Galilā Māryām (= EMML, VIII, 3040)
13. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Galilā Māryām (= EMML, VIII, 3042)
14. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Māhel Wanz Māryām (= EMML, VII, 2581)
15. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Ankobarr Māryām (= EMML, X, 4024)
16. Ca. 1790 Addis Abbaba, Bolē, Urā'el (= EMML, I, 174)
17. XVIII/XIXth c. Manchester, John Rylands Libr., Eth. 21
18. XIXth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Ginā Agar Egzi'abḥēr (Ab) (= EMML, VIII, 3297)
19. Between 1809 and 1852 Vat. Eth. 271 (= Van Lantschoot p.474)
20. 6/8/1890 Addis Abbaba, Enṭoṭto, Rāgu'el (= EMML, I, 67)
21. 1892-3 Shoa, Moḡā and Wadarrā, Sallā Dengāy Māreqos (= EMML, X, 4439)
22. 1896-7 Addis Abbaba, Bolē, Ḥannā (= EMML, IV, 1332)
23. 1897-8 Addis Abbaba, Bolē, Urā'el (= EMML, I, 173)
24. 1898-9 Addis Abbaba, Gabre'el (= EMML, II, 359)
25. The three following manuscripts are actually the same work.
 - a. End XIXth-early XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Arādā, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 996)
 - b. 1913 Addis Abbaba, Arādā, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 995) Addis Ababa
 - c. 1883-1913 Addis Abbaba, Arādā, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 947)
26. 6/8/1918 Addis Abbaba, Šellāsē (= EMML, IV, 1209)

Ethiopia (with the microfilms available at Collegeville, USA):

EMML + number = GETACHEW HAILE and W.F. MACOMBER, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Mss Microfilmed ... and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library*, Collegeville, t. I to X published (we indicate the tome in Roman figures for the sake of convenience).

Manchester:

S. STRELCYN, *Catalogue of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, Manchester, 1974.

The Vatican:

Vat. Eth. (no indication of catalogue) = S. GRÉBAUT and E. TISSERANT, *Codices Aethiopici Vaticani et Borgiani, Barberinianus Orientalis 2, Rossianus 865, Pars prior*, Vatican City, 1935.

Van Lantschoot = A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire sommaire des mss vaticans éthiopiens 251-299 in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda* (= Studi e Testi, 219), Vatican City, 1962, p. 453-512 (+ 2 pl.).

O. RAINERI, review of S. UHLIG, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 56(1990), p. 499-502 (a brief description of the Comboni collection of the Vatican Library, not yet catalogued; its mss are identified with the letter E).

27. The three following manuscripts are actually the same work.
- a. 1923 Addis Abbaba, Šellāsē, N. 11 (= EMML, IV, 1165)
 - b. Addis Abbaba, Šellāsē, N. 12 (= EMML, IV, 1166)
 - c. Addis Abbaba, Šellāsē, N. 13 (= EMML, IV, 1167)
28. 1931-2 Shoa, Tagulat and Bulgā, Miṭāq Amānu'el (= EMML, VI, 2173)
29. 1940 Addis Abbaba, Māryām (= EMML, II, 390)
30. 1940 and 1936-7 Addis Abbaba, at *Alaqā* Yamāna Berhān's (= EMML, III, 832)
31. Ca. 1945 Addis Abbaba, Arādā, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 953)
32. XXth c. Shoa, Sabbatā, Gēḡgā Māryām (= EMML, VII, 2941)
33. XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Enṭoṭto, Manbara Šellāsē (= EMML, III, 864)
34. XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Yakā, at *Marigētā's* Malāku's (= EMML, I, 278)

0.? Undated Brit. Libr. Add. 16.249 (= Dillmann 26)

In addition, five manuscripts of the Comboni collection at the Vatican Library (E 1,3,4,8 and 11) mentioned by O. Raineri.

2. Fragmentary Documents

One may find elsewhere a number of mentions of readings meant for specific occasions of the year. For instance, Vat. Eth. 36 (XVIth c.) includes readings for Pentecost, in a liturgical framework left unspecified; Vat. Eth. 66 (dated 1551) has the four Gospels of the Resurrection; Vat. Eth. 29 (XVth c.) announces readings for Easter, and so does Vat. Eth. 86 (XVI-XVIIth c.); Vat. Eth. 12 (XVth c.) gives a set of readings *Ba-Māryām*; Lake Ṭānā Kebrān 45 and Dabra Māryām 14 have readings for, respectively, Naḥasē 15 and Ṭerr 21; EMML, X, 4335, has only ff. 161b-163b for a *Geṣṣāwē* of Maskaram and Ṭeqemt, etc.

3. Remarks

This exploration reveals a few points:

1. The ancient manuscripts are rare, but the documentation becomes richer around the XVIIIth c. and onwards.
2. The origin of some lectionaries is Egyptian, according to various indications (colophon, structure...).
3. There are several sorts of lectionaries: plenary or indexes, commons, lectionaries for Lent, fragments of *Pentecostaria*, lectionaries for the Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, lectionaries including reading for the evening and the morning of the Days, etc...

4. Former Practices

To compensate for the lack of lectionaries, a solution has often been for the leaders of the communities concerned to meet and decide themselves what should be

read. This may have occurred on the spot, without anything recorded in writing, on the occasion of the celebrations.³⁵ In a more serious way, local lectionaries may also have been composed in a more or less elaborate manner, as said above (point 1: Sources).

Besides, it is possible that one of the reasons for the development of the monthly cycle of the Sanctoral (which is a truly popular calendar, useful for any sort of appointment) may have been a handy solution to possess a little lectionary, easy to memorise or even to keep in hand-written form.³⁶

2 - Printed Lectionaries

1. Partial Documents

These documents do not contain the whole of the lectionary, but either a global selection, that is to say of a certain number of occasions chosen for their importance in the course of the year, or a section of the Geṣṣāwē such as Sundays.

a - *Alaqā* Walda-Rufā'ēl, **Maṣṣafa Aseleṭi** (መጽሐፈ: አስልጢ:) (= MA). This booklet of 92 pages (format: 10 x 15 cm) was prepared in the Eritrean monastery of Dabra-Bizan and printed at the Swedish mission, Asmara, 1914 E.C. (= 1921 A.D.). The word of **Aseleṭi** seems to come from the root *slṭ* (*slṭ*) / *aslaṭa*: "to accomplish, to make useful," hence the meaning of "handy manual." This small plenary lectionary proposes readings for thirty-four occasions. It was the first book of this type to be printed, thanks to the position of the monastery, in order to give service to a wider circle for the reasons explained above.

b **Maṣarat Sebḥat-la-'Ab**, ትውፊታዊ: ገሳብ: ዘመንና: ታሪክ: በኢትዮጵያ: ቤተ: ክርስቲያን: አጭም; *Tewefitāwi ḥassāba zaman-ennā tāriku ba-'Ityopyā bēta krestiyān aqwām*: "The traditional computation and its history in the set-up of the Church of Ethiopia" (= MS). Addis-Abbaba, 1981 E.C. (1988 A.D.).

Pages 221 to 228 show an index (ማውጫ:) for the Sundays of all the year.³⁷ In fact, this index is not original and we do not need to take it into account since it appears to reproduce MG which is described below. It is true that we can number about fifty differences between these two indexes, but these include misprints, inversions, additions of readings for different occurrences. We note, however, a few interesting improvements as, on two occasions, Gospels which are repeated without apparent reason are replaced by other lessons.

³⁵ It is quite likely, judging from the present day style of the arguments which rise regularly right in the middle of a service, for instance about the choice of an anaphora, or of a hymn.

³⁶ As Ugo Zanetti, S.J., suggests. See below section III (the Sanctoral), G.

³⁷ The author states p. 228 that he follows the unprinted *ordo* prepared by a certain *Alaqā* Asnāqa, an authority of Gondar *Ledatā* church choir school, who discovered in a "monument" the ancient book from which he drew his knowledge. No more information is given, for instance as to the patronymic name of this man, or as to the time when he lived.

2. Full Documents

The following are relatively new works:

a - መጽሐፈ፡ ግጽዋ፡ ዘይትነበብ፡ እምዓመት፡ እስከ፡ ዓመት፡ ወዘሰናብት፡ ዘየጎበር፡ ምስለ፡ መዝሙራት፡ *Maṣḥafa Geṣṣāwē za-yetnabab em- 'amat eska 'amat wa-za-sanābet za-yahaber mesela mazmurūt*: "Lectionary of what is to be read from year to year³⁸ and of the Sundays³⁹, together with the Mazmur⁴⁰ (= MG), edited by the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. The introduction of the book tells the complicated story of its production. It ascribes its origin to an initiative meant to meet the need described above (1 - Sources): after the partial attempt of *Alaqā Walda Rufā'ēl* of Dabra-Bizan with his *Maṣḥafa Aseleṫi* (see above), *Mal'aka Ḍahay* Tagaña of Dabra-Mārḳos (Goḡḡām) wrote a lectionary for the whole year. It was only a hand-written work, however, and could not be of any use to the whole Church, as we already saw. This lectionary was therefore prepared in 1925 E.C. (1932-33 A.D.) with chapters and verses only. *Alaqā Ḥeruy Fantā* and *Liqē Qadalā* [sic] *Alaqā Afa-Warq* revised it with the intention to have it being printed. But when all was completed with *Malāka* [sic] *Berhān Admāsu* as secretary, the book remained unprinted because of the war. But then, while the rest of the book disappeared, the first half happened to be rediscovered by *Bāṣā Šāhla-Māryām*. Metropolitan Bāselyos authorized in 1945 E.C. (1952-1953 A.D.) that the recovered section, prepared again by the Department of History and Literature on the same basis as before, be printed. The book was reprinted in 1958 E.C. (1966 A.D.), and on Miyāzyā 26, 1973 E.C. (4 May 1981 A.D.) for the last time, since it is supposed to be replaced by NMG (see below).

This work of 152 pages is an index (ግዑጫ፡) in three parts:

1. **The lectionary of the Days** (ግጽዋ፡ ዘዘወትር፡ *Geṣṣāwē za-zawater*), that is to say the Sanctoral (pp. 9-124). The title describes the same reality by saying: "From year to year." This section gives, month by month, a list of the commemorations for each day. The references of the different lessons follow. They are placed beside one or two headings, which are shown in the left margin. Thus, the rubric *Za-Nageh* ("for the Morning," i.e. Matins) includes a Psalm-versicle (*Mesbāk*) in association with a Gospel on 112 occasions, and the rubric *Za-Qeddāsē* ("for Mass") is always present.

The 112 days on which a morning service is prescribed are shared among the different months as follows: on 12 occasions in Maskaram, 8 in Ṭeqemt, 13 in Ḥedār, 13 in Tāḥṣās, 11 in Ṭerr, 5 in Yakkātīt, 5 in Maggābit, 6 in Miyāzyā, 8 in Genbot, 6 in

³⁸ I.e. the Sanctoral. See section III below.

³⁹ I.e. the Temporal. See section IV below.

⁴⁰ I.e. the Sunday hymn described below in section IV, C, 2. This mention refers to the chantbook of the *Degg"ā*. (or to *Ziq*).

Sanē, 11 in Ḥamlē, 14 in Naḥasē and 1 in Pāg^wemēn. This service is performed only if a *tābot* of the corresponding commemoration is present in the church.⁴¹

Each book of the Bible is indicated in an abridged way, followed by the chapter, the verse and the *incipit*, and then by the verse which comes after the *desinit* (*terminus ante quem*). This last verse will therefore be understood exclusively. Unless it is well known, the text of the Psalm-versicle or *Mesbāk* is written in full, without any mention of chapter or verse. When the text of the *Mesbāk* is well known, only the first words would be found. The anaphora to be used, should Mass be celebrated, is also indicated.

2. [The lectionary placed] as a supplement for the mobile festivals and the fasts: በተውሳክ: ለሚወጡ: ለሚወርዱ: በዓለትና: አጽዋማት; *Batawesāk la-miwaṭu la-miwardu ba'ālāt-ennā aṣwāmāt* (pp. 125-127). This second section is concerned with the days of the Easter Cycle which do not fall on a Sunday: the Mondays which start the fasts of Nineveh, Heraclius, and the 40-day fast; the Friday of Nicodemus, which ends the 40-day fast; mid-Pentecost; the mobile festival of the Ascension; the Supplications.⁴²

3. The lectionary of the Sundays, together with the *mazmur* (pp. 128-149). This section enunciates the liturgical seasons (which provide the Sundays with their framework) on the day on which each starts. It also gives their *terminus ad quem*. It does so sometimes by mentioning the saint of that day in the manner of a date: "Up to [the feast of] saint Qiryāqos," or "of Abbā Yoḥanni," for example.

In this section, we also find the index of the Sunday readings as in the section for the Days: to start with, the serial number of the Sunday is found, followed on the same line by the first words of the *Mazmur*, the hymn of reference, which is drawn from the chantbook.

The Sundays are numbered from 1 to 80. The expected number of 52 Sundays is well exceeded because of the many provisions which have been arranged for all the possible occurrences for a particular year. In addition, MG registers every portion of

⁴¹ The *tābot*, lit. "ark" (of the Covenant), corresponds to the altar slabs used in the Coptic, Syriac and, formerly, Roman rite churches. In Ethiopia, the *tābot* is consecrated by the Bishop (or, at his request, by the *Qomos*) who dedicates it in the name of a particular saint. Introduced in a church, the *tābot* gives it its name which, then, plays a role analogous to that of the titular of the church in the West.

⁴² The "Supplications": ምህላ: *Mehellā*, or rather: ምህላላ: *Mehelelā*. This type of office, which can stand the analogy with the Latin "Rogations," is performed 10 times a year, always on a Wednesday or a Friday in connection with established times, independently of particular needs or circumstances, either in a "complete" form (*Melu'at*: for John the Forerunner, the Friday ending Lent and Pentecost) or an "incomplete" form (*Netugāt* for the Fast of Advent, *Masqal*, the Season of the Flowers, before the Great Fast, after the 2nd and 5th Sundays of the Great Fast, and the Rainy Season). Variations are found according to the schools of plainchant (see below, The Sundays - the *aq^wūq^wām*). We shall not deal more with this topic here but the interested reader may consult BVM p. 35-37, corrected and completed by Habtemichael-Kidāne, *L'Ufficio*, chapter IX.

The name of *Mehellā* can also be given to the series of invocations sung at different times (evening prayer, times of distress, etc. even during Mass) under the direction of clergy, with deacons holding icon(s) and "processional" cross(es), outside the church building.

the office of Palm-Sunday (Hosā'ennā) under a distinct number, as if it were a question of 10 distinct Sundays.

The group Psalm-versicle + Gospel is not found at the office of Matins before Mass on a Sunday.

b - መጽሐፈ: ገጽጽ: *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē ka- 'āmat eska 'āmat ba-Qeddāsē-nnā ba-Māḥelēt gizē ba-zawater-ennā ba- 'elata sanbat ya-mminabbab. Bāḥera hasāb*: "Lectionary of what is to be read from year to year, at Mass and at Matins, on the Days and on the Sundays. Comput" (= MGa). This is what the end paper reads. The title on the cover reads: *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē mesela mareḥa ḥ^welq^wa zaman eska hulat ših arbā and [Amharic, sic!] 'āmata meherat*: "Lectionary with the guide of the reckoning of time until the year of mercy 2041 [= table of movable feasts until 2048 A.D.]."

This book was edited by Tesfā Gabra-Šellāsē, Addis-Ababa, 1976 E.C. (1984 A.D.). It is a plenary lectionary totally written in Ge'ez and corresponding exactly to MG. It is interesting to consult, however, for two reasons: (1) It allows to correct MG or to supplement a reading forgotten by it, for example, and (2) the texts of the Sundays include specific elements of the office, in particular the *Mazmur*, in modern, easy to read print and *in extenso*. In actual practice, however, this lectionary is hardly in use, as the readings are generally performed in Amharic.

A difference with MG is to be noted: the arrangement of the work is somewhat less practical; it is structured as follows:

1. From p. 5 to 304, the Days, or Sanctoral, are grouped, from Maskaram 1 to Yakkātit 30.
2. From p. 305 to 390, the Sundays are found, together with the exposition of the liturgical seasons, and, in addition, Holy Saturday.
3. From p. 390 to 398, the readings for the first days of the fasts and for the end of Lent.
4. From p. 399 to 718 the Days of the second half of the year have been grouped.
5. From p. 718 to 768 the Sundays from Easter up to the end of the year are found.
6. From p. 769 to 774, mid-Pentecost, Ascension, the beginning of the Fast of the Apostles and a Mass for the "Supplications"⁴³ have been grouped together. The book ends with two pages of ecclesiastical computation, the *Bāḥera ḥasāb* (ገሥፈ: ገሥፈ:), followed by a table of the movable feasts from 1976 to 2041 (September 1983 to September 2048 A.D.).

c - መጽሐፈ: ገጽጽ: *Mashafa Geṣṣāwē*, "The new Lectionary" (= NMG)

This book has been produced by the Patriarchate at Addis-Ababa as a replacement for MG. Thus, we characterise it with the adjective "new." It is made up of two volumes, whether they are bound together or not. The first one is for the use of the

⁴³ See n. 42.

priests (*za-qasāwest*, NMG/P) dated 1977 E.C. (1985 A.D.) and the other one is for the use of the deacons (*za-diyāqonāt*, NMG/D) dated 1978 E.C. (1986 A.D.).

NMG/P includes:

- I- The lectionary for the Days, from p. 1 to 486.
- II- The index for the Fasts and the feast [of the Ascension], from p. 487 to 490.
- III- The index for the Sundays, from p. 490 to 496.

NMG/D includes:

- I- The lectionary for the Days, from p. 1 to 241.
- II- The index for the Fasts and the feast [of the Ascension], p. 242 and 243.
- III- The index for the Sundays, from p. 244 to 246.

A few remarks:

1. The *Mesbāk* or Psalm-versicle is placed with the Gospels in NMG/P, even though it is always sung by the deacons.
2. Both volumes include the same sections set in a symmetrical way, even though they happen to vary. For example, NMG/D will provide readings for every day of the Week of Easter, but NMG/P does not.
3. The lectionary for the Days is organised as a plenary lectionary: it includes the texts of the readings themselves. These lessons are very short⁴⁴, and preceded by their references. The final verse is understood inclusively. The Number of the Psalm of the *Mesbāk* is also shown, but not the verse numbers. The Days are written out in full on two columns, in Ge'ez on the left and in Amharic on the right.
4. There is no longer any Sanctoral: the daily commemorations are not written and, on the other hand, the readings have no relation with the commemorations of the Synaxary, except in the case of an outstanding festival which could not be bypassed. The explanation given for this fact is that the new lectionary aims at proposing the full four Gospels and St Paul's letters each year to the meditation of the faithful. However, the principle on which the actual choice of the pericopes lies is not known to us. We are told from the start that we should expect repetitions from the books of the Acts of the Apostles and the "Seven epistles" (i.e., the Catholic Epistles).
5. NMG offers readings for every Day, in the order Morning + Mass + Evening:
 - 1) a couple *Mesbāk* + Gospel for the morning,
 - 2) a Mass,
 - 3) another couple *Mesbāk* + Gospel for the evening.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In contrast with MG, which does not hesitate to offer full chapters.

⁴⁵ We observe that the civil day has overruled the liturgical day. The *Geṣṣāwē* EMMML, IV, 1165, for instance, also included a daily series of 3 services, but in the traditional order: Evening, Morning, Mass.

These morning and evening lessons are meant to enrich the double daily⁴⁶ celebration of the Prayer of the Covenant or *Şalota Kidān*.⁴⁷ The anaphora to be used is indicated for each Mass.

6. NMG includes a lectionary for the Days of the twelve months of the year, including those days, which always fall in Lent. In a parallel way, it provides us with a full index for all days of the fast: a true Lenten lectionary.
7. The Lenten index provides the text of the *Mesbāk*, always with the reference of the Psalm. The anaphoras are indicated once only after the last day of Lent, p. 489, just before the texts regarding the Ascension.
8. Every Sunday or series of Sundays belonging to a single liturgical season is preceded by the name of this season. The Sundays are introduced by a title made up of both their number within the series of all the Sundays, and the *Mazmur*.⁴⁸

3- Other Published Documents

a - The Lectionaries

In order to be complete, let us make a passing mention of two other types of lectionaries:

1. የቤተ ክርስቲያን ጸሎት: *Ya-Bēta krestiyān Şalot*: "The Prayer of the Church" (= BKS), was composed and published in London during the imperial exile in 1931 E.C. (1939 A.D.). This book includes a lectionary, which contains a number of peculiarities and seems contaminated by other traditions. It is not possible to discuss it here. This position could be reconsidered on the basis of the study of manuscripts.
2. ገብረ ጳጳሳት: *Gebra Hemāmāt*: "The [Book of] the Service of the Passion," i.e. the lectionary for Holy Week (= GH). This book was printed for the first time in Addis Ababa in 1942 E.C. (1950 A.D.). It roughly follows the Egyptian practice.
3. The readings of the **Ritual** are not grouped together in a particular lectionary. We refer rather to the virtual collection of lessons belonging to the celebration of the different Sacraments (Christian Initiation, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick) or such occasions as the blessing of the land where a church will be built, the blessing of the waters on the feast of the Epiphany, etc. The *ordo*

⁴⁶ Especially the evening prayer, very widely attended in towns.

⁴⁷ See n. 26.

⁴⁸ We should also take note of the relatively little success which NMG has had up to now. Communities are attached to the index of MG, which has become very familiar and, in particular, to the relationship between saints and readings which is found in it. Besides, these feelings are supported by the cost *ratio* between MG and NMG. MG continues to be published by Tesfā Gabra-Şellāsē, both under the form of MG and under that of MGA.

of the ceremony calls for the first part of the celebration to follow the model of the first part of the Mass; it will therefore include a liturgy of the Word similar to that of the Mass and known by the same name of *Šer 'āta Qeddāsē*.⁴⁹ We shall not deal here with the Ritual.

b - The Chantbooks

The chantbooks of the Church propose a hymnography organised according to the liturgical seasons of the year or the feasts and commemorations. Thus, the organisation of the various hymns and antiphons presupposes a structure of the year and a calendar (or calendars), which would deserve fuller scholarly study. All the documents agree roughly on the different liturgical seasons, which mark the year, even though there are terms still to be better defined as to their use or meaning.⁵⁰ We shall rapidly review these chantbooks.

1. መጽሐፈ: ድገ: *Maṣḥafa Degg'wā* (= MD) is the main chantbook. It covers the whole year. It is concerned with both the Temporal and the Sanctoral.⁵¹
2. ጸመ: ድገ: *Ṣoma Degg'wā* "the *Degg'wā* of the Fast" (= SD). This Lenten chantbook probably used to be part of the *Degg'wā* itself. It contains the hymnography proper to the Sundays and weekdays of the great Lenten season and beyond, since it includes Holy Week services and the night of the Resurrection as well.
3. መጽሐፈ: ምዕራፍ: *Maṣḥafa Me'erāf*.⁵² This book, the name of which means "chapter," cannot be employed alone, but always with the chantbooks, to which it gives the necessary structure. It includes rubrics related to the liturgical year.
4. መጽሐፈ: መዋሥኔት: *Maṣḥafa Mawāše't* (= M) is an antiphony used around 50 times a year, and especially for the funerals.⁵³ The occasions of its use, as well as the way they are styled, are of interest.

⁴⁹ See above section II, B, 1. The practice is often reduced to keeping the framework of the readings (dialogues which give a rhythm which punctuates the ceremony in a way similar to that of the short litanies of the Byzantine rite, introductory prayers and concluding hymns) without actually reading them.

⁵⁰ Such as *Kebra qeddusān* in the *Degg'wā*, *Ḍa'ata Si'ol* in the *Zemmārē*, or the whole purpose and use of *Mawāše'et*, etc.

⁵¹ Cf. the introductions provided for by HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg'wā*, and JEFFERY, *Chantbook*.

⁵² BVM; B. VELAT, *Études sur le Me'erāf, Commun de l'Office divin éthiopien*, [=Études], PO 33 (= Nr. 155-158), and 34, fasc. 1-2 (= Nr. 159-160), Paris 1966; B. VELAT, *Exécution liturgique de l'Office divin éthiopien*, [=Exécution], Paris. Pro manuscripto.

⁵³ cf. BVM p. 60-61; S. GRÉBAUT, "Un Recueil ancien de *Mawāš'et*" [=Mawāš'et], *Æthiops* 4/1 (1931), pp.1-6. Paris. B. VELAT, *Le Mawāše'et et les livres de chant liturgique éthiopien*, [=Mawāše'et], "Mémorial du Cinquantenaire de l'École des Langues Orientales Anciennes de l'Institut Catholique de Paris," Paris, 1964 (n° 21, pp. 159-170).

5. መጽሐፈ: ዝግግሬ: *Maṣḥafa Zemmārē* (= **MZ**) is an antiphonary the texts of which are dedicated to the Eucharist; it is used at Mass, from the time of the distribution of the communion, according to the calendar.⁵⁴
6. መጽሐፈ: ዚቅ: *Maṣḥafa Ziq* (= **Ziq**), or "lesser chantbook" in contrast with the *Maṣḥafa Degg'ā* which is often likened to a huge ocean. It is therefore relatively recent and was elaborated by the schools of sacred chant, or *Aq'āq'ām*.

III. THE SANCTORAL

A - Terminology

In order to speak about the Days⁵⁵ in their succession throughout the year, from 1 Maskaram to 5 or 6 Ṣāg'emēn, the Ethiopians say ዘወትር: *zawater*. This term means the succession of time which runs constantly, without ceasing. It includes all the days of the yearly calendar, except the Sundays and whatever belongs to the mobile year (the Easter Cycle).

The fact that the Days are grouped into months makes it easy to treat these groups as so many chapters. The word of "Menology," used in other Churches, describes this reality perfectly and can be utilised appropriately, although the word itself does not seem to exist in Ethiopia, except for an occasional use of the word "Months" with the same global meaning.

B - The Books

1. The Ethiopians regard the መጽሐፈ: ሰንክሳር: (*Maṣḥafa Senkesār*), i.e. the Synaxary or martyrology⁵⁶, as authoritative concerning the calendar of the saints. This large work includes⁵⁷ entries presenting the life of the saints or other fixed commemorations on their day, and in a rather concise manner.⁵⁸

The earliest Ethiopian Synaxary⁵⁹ was the translation of a Coptic Synaxary made from Arabic into Ge'ez around the turn of the 15th century by a certain Simeon, an "Egyptian" who lived in the monastery of St. Anthony (Egypt), and by others as well. It included practically no Ethiopian saints. The Arabic original had been compiled

⁵⁴ B. VELAT, "Hymnes eucharistiques éthiopiennes" [=Zemmārē], *Rythmes du Monde* 7(1953), pp. 26-36.

⁵⁵ The Ethiopian Sanctoral functions in a way similar to that of the Copts, who speak about "days"

⁵⁶ See the editions by I. Guidi, S. Grébaud and G. Colin in PO (SynPO), as well as Budge's translation (SynB).

⁵⁷ The word "Synaxary" means "collection."

⁵⁸ BVM p. 71.

⁵⁹ On the history of the Synaxary, see the study by G. COLIN, "Le Synaxaire Éthiopien. État actuel de la question", [=État], *AB* 106(1988), pp. 273-317.

from Coptic sources in order to exalt martyrs (from the persecution of Diocletian,⁶⁰ mostly) and monks as well, with a few other exceptions. The work was begun around 1200 by Buṭrus al-Ġamīl and practically completed in 1246 by Michael, Bishop of Atribis.

A second Ethiopian version, the "revision," followed. It included entries for the Ethiopian saints, entries which became more numerous after the conflicts caused by the Jesuits. This "Vulgate" seems to have been prepared by one author, or a single group of authors. It was completed between 1559 and 1581 at the latest, possibly at the monastery of Ḥāyk Estīfānos. Hymns to the various saints, composed by a certain 'Arka Sellus during the Gondarine period, were added later and conclude most of the lives. These hymns are called Arkē, by the name of their author.⁶¹

In Ethiopia, the Synaxary is found in manuscripts only.⁶² The first six months and the last six months of the year, respectively bound together, generally form the two volumes of the one work. Manuscripts indicate that the day's notice of the Synaxary should be read during services which take place in the morning or which end in the morning: *Mawaddes*, *Keṣtat za-'aryām*, ordinary *Sebḥata Nageh* for the week days and Lenten *Sebḥata Nageh*.⁶³ This regular practice explains the large quantity of copies of the book.

2. The calendar itself is found in the first section of the *Maṣḥafa Geṣṣāwē*, as we have seen above.

C - The Commemorations

Every day, from one to around ten commemorations share the entries of both the Synaxary and the calendar. As it happens they are significantly more numerous during the first six months of the year. They refer first of all to "mysteries" or events of the life of the Lord Jesus that are particularly significant for our salvation.⁶⁴ They also refer to the righteous generally commemorated at least on the day they died (their entry to heaven) and, for the more important saints, on other occasions such as their nativity, the transfer of their relics to some place, a particular event of their lifetime, or a famous miracle they performed, etc. Finally, some commemorations refer

⁶⁰ See Graf's severe analysis in Colin, *ibid.*, 278.

⁶¹ See W. LESLAU, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, [=LESLAU], Wiesbaden, 1987, p. 70 ("araka") and GETATCHEW HAILE, *Ethiopic Literature. An essay in*: R. GRIERSON (ed.), *African Zion: the Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, an exhibition catalogue by Intercultura, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1993, p. 51.

⁶² Well informed people are saying (1996 G.C.) that a printed edition in Ge'ez and Amharic is under preparation at "Kokaba ṣebaḥ" Press, Asmara.

⁶³ BVM p. 71. In parishes, the Synaxary can be read at the end of the Sunday Mass.

⁶⁴ Easter and the mobile feast days organized around Easter are part of the Temporal but will appear on any list of festivals.

to events, either ecclesiastical (e.g. ecumenical councils) or otherwise (e.g. earthquakes), that have been important in the life of the community.

The many commemorations of the Sanctoral have relatively little impact on the faithful. On the contrary, the Ethiopian attachment to the saints is concerned with a rather small number of personalities. On the other hand, as Mass may be celebrated every day⁶⁵, especially in Lent, biblical readings are provided for every day in the lectionaries. Except in NMG, their choice has been made in such a way that they correspond to the lives of the saints.

Commemorations and Lectionary

The Coptic usage is to select a single saint only out of the several ones presented by the Synaxary, and integrally to attribute to him one of the "commons" for the purpose of the lectionary. The Ethiopian practice, on the other hand, is to distribute all the readings of a given day and even all the variable portions of the offices, as far as possible, among all the commemorated Just Ones (that is, insofar as their number does not exceed the number of variable elements). The system of "commons" is not altogether foreign to Ethiopia. But the distribution of the readings over a large number of commemorations of very different kinds of saints makes the systematic verification of the fact long and difficult. Sometimes, a lesson corresponds so well to a given feature of the life of a particular saint that the use of a "common" becomes most unlikely.

When the principle enunciated above is implemented, all in all, the different commemorations occurring on a "Day" may either be distributed or inspire the selection of the following readings, by order of importance:

1. The *Mesbāk* and Gospel of Matins (should the *tābot* of the occasion commemorated be present);
2. The *Mesbāk* and Gospel of Mass;
3. The Epistle of Paul;
4. The Apostle (*or*, the Catholic Epistle);
5. The Acts of the Apostles, and even, in addition:
6. The Anaphora, selected among the anaphoras of the Missal.

If the *Māhelēt* is not performed on a feastday for which the lectionary of the Days offers a *Mesbāk* and Gospel *za-nageh*, but if Mass is celebrated, the *Mesbāk* and Gospel *za-nageh*, of Matins, should be used at Mass rather than those originally meant for Mass. The reasons for this are: (1) They have been prepared specifically for the major commemoration among the several ones of the day. (2) If it so happens that the sets of Psalm-versicles and Gospels of both Matins and Mass refer to the same commemoration, the texts of Matins are supposed to be the best choice to express the mystery of the day in the appropriate way.

⁶⁵ In practice, only the sanctuaries of the major monasteries would have Mass daily.

D - The Main Festivals

The mobile festivals of the mysteries of the Lord are, of course, included in the Easter Cycle. The fixed feasts of Christ, of Our Lady and the daily commemorations of the saints, parts of the Sanctoral, are to be added according to categories similar to those of the Coptic liturgy.⁶⁶ We use here the systematic presentation made by Bernard Velat.⁶⁷

1. The Major and Minor Feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ

a) The Nine Major Feasts

- 1- The Incarnation ት-ሰብእት: *Tesbe'et*, 29 Maggābit.
- 2- Holy Week, mobile.
- 3- The Resurrection ት-ግዛኤ: *Tensā'ē*, mobile.
- 4- The apparition of the risen Lord to the Apostle Thomas ቶማስ: *Tomās**⁶⁸, mobile.
- 5- The Ascension ዕርገት: *Ergat*, mobile.
- 6- Pentecost ጸራ-ቅሊጦስ: *Parāqliṭos*, mobile⁶⁹
- 7- The Transfiguration, i.e. Mount-Tabor ደብረ: ታቦር *Dabra Tābor*, 13 Naḥasē.
- 8- The Nativity ልደት: *Ledat*, 29 Tāḥsās.
- 9- The Baptism ጥምቀት: *Ṭemqat**⁷⁰, 11 Ṭerr, and the miracle at Cana of Galilee ቃና: ዘገሊላ: *Qānā za-Galilā*, *12 Ṭerr.⁷¹

⁶⁶ See M. DE FENOYL, *Le Sanctoral Copte*, Recherches publiées sous la Direction de l'Institut de Lettres Orientales de Beyrouth, tome XV, Beyrouth 1960, pp. 7-9, and U. ZANETTI, *Les Lectionnaires Coptes Annuels, Basse-Égypte*. [=LCA] (PIOL, 33), Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985, p. 41-50.

⁶⁷ BVM p. 22-29. An asterisk "*" shows the places where we bring corrections to his text.

⁶⁸ Easter Tuesday is named after Thomas but the feast is the Sunday following Easter.

⁶⁹ Holy Week and Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Thomas are mobile. BVM p. 24 says that the Synaxary has arbitrarily ascribed them the dates of, respectively, 29 Maggābit, 8 Genbot, 18 Genbot and 6 Miyāzyā. Here, however, the Ethiopian Synaxary only follows the Coptic Synaxary. In fact, these dates are part of a complete fixed cycle of the "mobile" feasts, which gravitate around the commemoration of the Annunciation (29 Maggābit / 25 March). On the ground of a symbolical chronology, on this date of the Spring equinox which also corresponds to the Jewish Pasch, both the Annunciation and the Conception of the Saviour have been placed into a parallel with the Passion. This was a Western perspective. The East, instead, developed a vision according to which the parallel was made both with the Creation of the world and with the assumption of this world into Christ's Resurrection.

⁷⁰ BVM p. 24 rightly signals that the term አስተርእዮ: (*Astare'eyo*) means "manifestation," "epiphany," and may replace that of *Ṭemqat*. He is wrong, however, to state that the same term also refers to the feast of the Falling-asleep of our Lady and to the time between the feasts of the Baptism and that of the Falling-asleep. The popular expression *Astare'eyo Māryām* means in fact: the feast of Mary (her Falling-asleep) which occurs during the time of the Epiphany of the Lord.

⁷¹ 13 Ṭerr according to the books, but 12 according to the large practice. The joyful celebration of Cana was upgraded as a means to commemorate the return from exile of Emperor Ḥāyḷa Šellāsē on 12 Ṭerr 1933 E.C. (= 20 January 1941 A.D.) The feast is particularly important in places where there is a *iābot* dedicated to the Archangel Michael. In such a case, the *iābot* would be carried back from the water

A second way to list these nine feasts consists in uniting into one solemnity both the Resurrection of the Lord and Holy Week, and in separating the Baptism from the miracle at Cana.⁷² All these feasts, including Cana, should be celebrated in all churches, whatever their *tābotāt*.⁷³ The fixed feasts have precedence over the Sunday.

b) The Six Minor Feasts

- 1- The (Exaltation of the) Cross መስቀል: *Masqal*, 17 Maskaram.
- 2- The Circumcision of the Lord ግዝረት: *Gezrat*, 6 Ṭerr.
- 3- The Multiplication of the loaves ባረከ: እግዚእነ: *Bāraka Egzi'e-na*⁷⁴, 28 Ṭerr.
- 4- Presentation of the Lord ስምዖን: *Sem'on*, 8 Yakkātit.
- 5- The Finding of the true Cross መስቀል: *Masqal*, 10 Maggābit.
- 6- The Entry of the Lord into Egypt በአተ: ግብጽ: *Ba'ata Gebṣ*, 24 Genbot.

All these feasts are fixed and belong to the Sanctoral. The first one, which includes characteristics belonging to the celebration of the New Year, is assimilated to the major feasts of the Lord and is therefore celebrated everywhere in similar conditions.

2. The Four Categories of Feasts of Our Lady Mary

a) Five Feasts related to Her Life

- 1- The Entry of the three year old Virgin Mary in the Temple በአታ: *Ba'atā*, 3 Tāḥśās.
- 2- The Falling-asleep ዕረፍታ: *Eraftā*, 21 Ṭerr.
- 3- The Nativity ልደታ: *Ledatā*, 1 Genbot.
- 4- St. Anne's Conception of Mary ፀንሰታ: *Dansatā*, 7 Naḥasē.
- 5- The Assumption ፍልሰታ: *Felsatā*, 16 Naḥasē.

b) Two Feasts honouring a Name of Mary

- 1- Mountain of Sion ደብረ: ጽዮን: *Dabra Ṣeyon*, 21 Ḥedār.
- 2- Covenant of Mercy ኪዳን: ምሕረት: *Kidāna meḥerat*, 16 Yakkātit.

c) Three Feasts commemorating a Miracle of Mary

- 1- Saïdnaya ዴደንያ: *Ṣēdēnyā*⁷⁵, 10 Maskaram.

place to its church, not at the end of the celebration of the Baptism, but after Mass of 12 Ṭerr has been celebrated upon it.

⁷² BVM p. 23, n. 1, and p. 454, p. 238 of the Ethiopian text (PO 34, nos. 159-160), shows in the *Sebhata Nageh* of the great feasts a rubric in which the feast of Thomas is suppressed while the feast of Simeon, i.e. the Presentation of the Lord (*Sem'on*), which is generally classified among the Minor feasts of the Lord, is added.

⁷³ We note a hesitation regarding the Transfiguration which, as a matter of fact, is not celebrated regularly in all churches. Some people find it appropriate, should it be celebrated, to do so in churches that possess a *tābot* by the name of *Madḥānē 'alam*, as the full name of the feast is said to be: መድኃኔ: ግለም: በደብረ: ታቦር: *Madḥānē 'alam* (the Saviour of the world on Mount Tabor).

⁷⁴ Lit. "Our Lord blessed." Cf. Mt. 14:19-21.

- 2- Apparition to Ildefonse of Toledo በዐለ: ደቅስዮስ: *Ba 'ala Daqseyos*⁷⁶, 22 Tāhśāś.
- 3- Apparition at Dabra Meṭmāq ደብረ: ምጥማቅ: *Dabra Meṭmāq*⁷⁷, 21 Genbot.

d) Four Feasts dedicated to Marian Sanctuaries

- 1- Dabra Q^wesq^wām ደብረ: ቀብዳም: *Dabra Q^wesq^wām*⁷⁸ 6 Hēdār.
- 2- "The Source which her Son caused to spring"⁷⁹ ዘአንቅዳ: ወልዳ: ማዶ: *Za-'anq ā Waldā māy*, 8 Sanē.
- 3- The Building up of the church bearing her name at Philippi አንጸተ: ቤተ: ክርስቲያን: በሰማ: *Henzata bēta krestiyān ba-semā*, 20 Sanē.
- 4- The Consecration of her church at Philippi⁸⁰ ቅዳሴ: ቤታ: *Qeddāsē bētā*, 21 Sanē.

Emperor Zar'a Yā'eqob (1434-1468)⁸¹ instituted the celebration of a total of 33 annual feasts in honour of Our Lady, "to be kept like Sundays."⁸² However, the Ethiopian tradition holds that Mary told St. John that, should someone be unable to entirely satisfy this precept, she asks that everyone should faithfully keep her five main commemorations. She promises those who venerate her in this way, as well as by writing her praises, commenting, learning and teaching them, to stand by when they die and to assist them in every trouble. Here are these Five Feasts:⁸³

1. The Falling-asleep ዕረፍታ: *'Eraftā*, 21 ጥጥ.
2. The Covenant of Mercy ኪዳን: ምስረት: *Kidāna meherat*, 16 Yakkātit.
3. The Nativity ልደታ: *Ledatā*, 1 Genbot.
4. The Consecration of her church at Philippi ቅዳሴ: ቤታ: *Qeddāsē bētā*, 21 Sanē.
5. The Assumption ፍልሰታ: *Felsatā*, 16 Naḥasē.

⁷⁵ Miracle of Mary's icon at Saidnaya (Syria). See D. BARAZ, "The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya Goes West, A re-examination of the motif in the light of new manuscript evidence", *Museon* 108 (1995) fasc. 1-2, pp. 181-191.

⁷⁶ Mary was asking St. Ildefonse (= Dexius), Bishop of Toledo (Spain) (681-690), to establish a monthly commemoration of the Annunciation.

⁷⁷ An apparition of Mary in Egypt.

⁷⁸ Place of Upper Egypt where the Holy Family ended up and where Christ gathered his apostles, dedicating a sanctuary.

⁷⁹ During the flight into Egypt.

⁸⁰ That is, the church bearing her name.

⁸¹ See GETATCHEW HAILE, *The Mariology of Emperor Zār'a Ya 'əqob of Ethiopia*, OCA 242, Rome 1992.

⁸² See the *Miracles of Mary*, Introduction for the Sundays. E.A.W. BUDGE, *One Hundred and Ten Miracles of Our Lady Mary*, London 1933, p. xlvii sq.

⁸³ See, for instance, the pocket edition of the *Weddāsē Māryām* (314 p.) and *Qeddāsē Māryām* (336 p.) with their *andemtā* commentary by Tesfā Gabra-Šellāsē, Addis-Ababa 1985 E.C. (1993 G.C.), p. 314 of the first part: "Regarding the Observance of the Feastday of Our Lady and Mother of God Mary."

Among all the feasts of the Mother of God, only that of the Assumption is celebrated in all churches, whatever their *tābotāt*, and has precedence over a Sunday. All other feasts depend for their solemn commemoration on the presence of a *tābot* consecrated after their various names.

3. Feasts of the Saints

- a) Angels
- b) Old Testament Saints⁸⁴
- c) New Testament Saints: Apostles, Disciples, holy Women
- d) Martyrs of the ancient Church, especially of Egypt
- e) Fathers of the Church
- f) Ethiopian saints, especially kings and monks

Any commemoration is solemnly celebrated only at churches which possess the corresponding *tābot*.

E - The Ethiopian Saints

The Ethiopian saints are characterised by the following:

1. The *Gadl*

The Ethiopian Church canonises her righteous in a progressive way. First of all, a life will be written by some sort of a witness, possibly by a scribe who knew the saintly character, or belonging to his or her community. This life is called ገደል: *gadl*, "fight", and corresponds to the Greek *Athlêsis*, which is used for the Martyrs. The *Gadl* shows the heroic aspects in the life of the person. Generally, a prologue exhorts the listeners or the readers to take every advantage of the example they are about to receive. The *Gadl* often ends by asking the prayer of the one whose edifying life has been read.

A particular feature related to biblical covenants may occur in a *Gadl*, generally towards the moment when it narrates the death of the person: the ክፍን: *Kidān*, "Covenant." Only the most remarkable among the saints have been favoured with this apparition of the Lord, who promised them that, whoever would in the future pray him through their intercession or do good to the poor on the day of their commemoration or write the story of his life, etc., would certainly be saved.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ The Ethiopians divide the just ones into the two broad categories of those "*ba-'aṣada mo'*" (በጸጸ: ጥጥ:), "in the fold of death," i. e. those who died before the time of Christ, and those "*ba-'aṣada naṣf'*" (በጸጸ: ነፍስ:), "in the fold of life [lit.: 'soul']", i. e. those who died from the time of Christ onwards.

⁸⁵ See S. KUR, "Le pacte du Christ avec le saint dans l'hagiographie éthiopienne", in: *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, éd. S. Rubenson, Adis Ababa - Uppsala - East Lansing 1984, 125-129.

Eventually, his or her name may be recorded on the day of the death, when he or she entered eternal rest, in a Synaxary kept locally.⁸⁶

2. The *Malk'e*

Should the saintly person be acknowledged as saint, his spiritual **መልክዕ**: *Malk'e*, "portrait"⁸⁷, is drawn, whereby each of the parts of his body will be the object of a greeting (*Salām*) and of a five line poetic strophe. To detail in such a way the members of the body of a saint, praising its virtues or the gifts of which they were the seat, is tantamount to a hymn rendered to the saint. Some portraits may have as many as 52 strophes. This type of hymnography can be very imaginative and full of finesse. It is inspired by the *Gadl* of the saint and is a means conveying his spiritual attitudes or elements of his theological thinking.⁸⁸

Malk'āt may have been composed already during the 15th century but the genre developed during the 17th century and onwards.

3. The *Ta'ammer*

A man of God is supposed to listen to the prayers addressed to God in his name, and to intercede for his people as powerfully as the great love he had for them when on earth allows him to do when in heaven. The story of the wonders experienced in answer to prayer made through his intercession, confirms his holiness by showing how close he is to God.

The collection of ተአምራት: *Ta'ammerāt* "Miracles," often appended to the *Gadl*, is also necessary, because their reading is part of the service of Matins on the feast day of the saint in a church which contains a *tābot* bearing his name.

The most famous collection of Miracles are the ተአምራት:ማርያም: *Ta'ammera Māryām*, the Miracles of Mary, and the ተአምራት: ኢየሱስ: *Ta'ammera Iyyasus*, the Miracles of Jesus.

⁸⁶ As in Egypt (see COLIN, "État", p. 281, n. 31, mentioning O. MEINARDUS, "A Comparative Study on the Sources of the Synaxarium of the Coptic Church", ("Study"), *BSAC*, 17(1963-1964), pp. 111-156), the Ethiopian Synaxary continues to be enriched.

⁸⁷ Latin *effigies* is often employed to describe the *Malk'e*. Cf. HMW (=Liqa Şelṭünāt HABTA-MĀRIĀM WARQ-NAH, *The Ancient Ethiopian Learning*, Addis-Ababa 1962 E.C./1970 A.D.), p. 53; BVM p. 67; M. CHAINE, "Répertoire des *salam* et *malke'e* contenus dans les manuscrits éthiopiens des Bibliothèques d'Europe", *ROC* s. 2, 8 (18) (1913) 183-203 337-347. Getatchew Haile translates "image," e.g. when the word is encountered in EMML t. X.

⁸⁸ We can notice that there does not seem to be any guideline concerning the painting of an icon of the saint.

4. The *Tābot*

Some say that only those whose *Gadl* contains a *Kidān* may have a *tābot* dedicated in their name. But it has been written: "In our [= of us, Ethiopians] Church, a *Şellāt*⁸⁹ is carved for the one who is called a saint, a church is built for him, and there is no [saint] to whom such praise is not offered."⁹⁰

The liturgical service of the commemoration of a saint on his feast day may take place only in a church, which contains a *tābot* dedicated in his name.⁹¹

F - The Main Commemorations of Saints

It is not useful for our purpose to enter into a detailed discussion of this subject here. We shall mention only those saints who are particularly popular, or whose commemoration marks a change in the liturgical year. This is because the rubrics generally do not indicate such a change by means of a date, but in mentioning the saint whose commemoration is made on that day. Thus, it will not be said that the Season of the Flowers ends on *Ḥedār* 5, but on *Abbā Yoḥanni's* feast day.⁹²

1. *Maskaram*

1: John, the Forerunner.*⁹³ 2: John the Baptist's Beheading. 3: *Abbā Anbasā*. 8: Zachary. 11: *Fasiladas*. 18: Eustathius. 30: the Sons of Zebedeus.

2. *Ṭeqemt*

4: Kings *Abraha* and *Aşbeha*. 5: *Abuna Gabra Manfas Qeddus*. 6: *Abbā Pan-talēwon*. 12: Matthew, the Apostle. 14: *Abbā Aragāwi*. 17: Stephen, the first martyr. 20: *Elisha*, the prophet. 22: Luke, the Evangelist. 28: *Abbā Yem'atā*.

3. *Ḥedār*

4: *Abbā Abayedo*. 5: *Abbā Yoḥanni* (end of the liturgical Season of the Flowers). 8: The four living Creatures. 12: The Archangel Michael. 13: The Myriads of Angels. 24: The 24 heavenly Priests. 26: The Martyrs of *Nagrān*. 29: Peter of Alexandria.

⁸⁹ Literally, the slab engraved with the Ten Commandments and contained inside the Ark of the Covenant (*tābot*). In actual practice, the two words cover the same object: the altar slab. See above n. 41 and 71.

⁹⁰ HMW p. 53.

⁹¹ See below the occurrences of the Sanctoral with a Sunday.

⁹² Here, we follow BVM pp. 27-29.

⁹³ BVM p. 28, n. 2. This commemoration is made in the chantbooks and comes from the fact that *Maskaram* 1 is New Year's Day.

4. Tāḥsās

1: Elijah, the prophet. 2: Ananias, Azaria and Misael. 3: Andrew, the Apostle, and Abbā 'Oḏ. 18: Abbā Salāmā.⁹⁴ 19: The Archangel Gabriel.

5. Ṭerr

1: Stephen, the first martyr. 3: The Holy Innocents and Abbā Libānos.⁹⁵ 4: John the Evangelist. 15: the child Cyriacus. 16: Juliet, Cyriacus' mother.

6. Yakkātīt

2: Pāwli.

7. Maggābit

5: Abuna Gabra Manfas Qeddus. 8: Mathias, the Apostle. 10: The Finding of the True Cross. 11: Abbā Alēf. 13: The 40 soldiers martyred at Sebastia. 23: Daniel, the Prophet.

8. Miyāzyā

6: Adam and Eve. 17: James, the Apostle. 23: George of Lydda. 30: Mark, the Evangelist.

9. Genbot

9: Helen, the Queen. 11: Yārēd, the Hymnographer. 20: Kālēb, the King. 29: Abbā Afṣē and Abbā Gubā.

10. Sanē

12: The Archangel Michael. 17: Abbā Garimā (opening of the first period of *Astameḥero*^{*96}). 20: Elisha, the Prophet. 25: Opening of *Keramṭ*, the Rainy Season.

11. Ḥamlē

5: Peter and Paul. 18: James, the Apostle. 19: Cyriacus. 26: Abbā Salāmā. 30: Andrew, the Apostle.

12. Naḥasē

1: Pistis, Elpis, Agapē. 2: Sophia, the Queen. 6: Mary Magdalen. 10: The Assembly of the First-Born. 12: The Archangel Michael and Mār Mātrā. 24: Abuna Takla Hāymānot. 26: Sara. 28: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

13. Pāg^wemēn

3: Archangel Raphael and Melchisedek.

⁹⁴ I.e. St. Frumentius.

⁹⁵ Or Maṭā'e.

⁹⁶ *Astameḥero*, not *Astamehero*.

G - The Monthly Cycle of the Sanctoral

The Ethiopian monthly cycle is an expansion of the three Coptic monthly commemorations. It groups the yearly commemorations which are dear to the feelings of the people. This bears a certain analogy to the Byzantine weekly cycle, but it is more consistent insofar as it offers a sort of a handy calendar allowing for wider practical use, even outside of any specifically religious purpose.

From the point of view of the lectionary, nothing is officially affected, except that the lectionary often takes into account the important monthly commemorations. However, it is normal practice, for instance whenever Our Lady is commemorated in a church which bears her name, to replace the appointed *Mesbāk* and Gospel by Ps. 45 followed by the *Magnificat*, sometimes even on Sundays.

Here is the list of these commemorations. The more popular ones are printed in bold letters. It must be said, however, that in practice things can be different: various elements - the name of the *tābot* of the local church, the influence of local confraternities who gather in honour of a mystery or of a saint (ማኅበር: *māhebar*), or the devotion of the celebrants, for instance - can influence and give place to local practices.

- 1 - ልደታ: *Ledatā*: the **Nativity of Our Lady Mary** (1 Genbot).
- 2 - ታደዎስ: *Tādēwos* [Thaddeus] (2 Hamlē); አባ: ጌባ: *Abbā Gubā*, one of the Nine Saints (Genbot 29).
- 3 - በአታ: *Ba'atā*: the Entry of Mary into the Temple (Tāhšās).
- 4 - ዮሐንስ: ወልደ: ነጉድንድ: *Yohannes Walda Nag'adg'ād* [John, "the Son of Thunder"] (ፒerr).
- 5 - አቡነ: ገብረ: መንፈስ: ቅዱስ: *Abuna Gabra Manfas Qeddus* (ፒeqemt and Maggābit)⁹⁷; ጳጥሮስ: ወዳውሱስ: *Pētros wa-ፑāwelos* (Hamlē).
- 6 - ኢየሱስ *Iyyasus*: the Name of Jesus, received at Circumcision (ፒerr); ደብረ: ቊስቋም: *Dabra Q'esq'ām*, in Upper Egypt, where the Holy Family is said to have spent 6 months and 10 days (፬edār).
- 7 - ሥላሴ: *Sellāsē*, the Holy Trinity (Hamlē and ፒerr).
- 8 - አባ: ኪሮስ: *Abbā Kiros* (Hamlē).
- 9 - ቶማስ *Tomās* (ፒeqemt); ሠለስቱ: ምእት: *Śalastu me'et*: the 318 [lit.: 300] Fathers of the Council of Nicea (፬edār).
- 10 - መስቀል: *Masqal* [the Invention of the Holy Cross] (Maggābit).
- 11 - ሐና: *Hannā*, the mother of Mary (፬edār); ገላውደዎስ: *Galāwdēwos* [Claudius] (Sanē).

⁹⁷ The *Gadla Iyāsu* tells how the saint of Ġār Sellāsē "founded a church by the name of the Paraclete our God and established there the feast of the Paraclete our God on the fifth of each month" (my translation). See O. RAINERI, *Atti di Habia Māryām († 1497) e di Iyāsu († 1508), Santi Etiopici*, OCA 235, Rome 1990, p. 245.

IV THE TEMPORAL

A - The Liturgical Seasons of the Temporal

1. The Four, or the Three Seasons of the Year

Many texts, especially translations, mention four seasons, which divide up the twelve months of the year into four equal sections of three months, or 90 days, each.⁹⁸ These seasons, traditional in the Northern Hemisphere, are:

- 1- The Windy Season: መጸው: *Maṣaw*, from 26 Maskaram to 25 Tāḥṣās.
- 2- The Dry Season: ሐጋይ: *Ḥagāy*, from 26 Tāḥṣās to 25 Maggābit.
- 3- The Sowing Season (or that of the light rains: በልግ: *balg*): ጸደይ: *Ṣaday*, from 26 Maggābit to 25 Sanē.
- 4- The Rainy Season: ክረምት: *Keramt*, from 26 Sanē to 25 Maskaram.

It can be seen from their dates that these seasons do not exactly fit the year. This is particularly obvious with the Rainy Season, which covers both the end of the year and the first 25 days of the next year, and with the fact that New Year's Day is not at the beginning of any season. The four-season system is used by Church scholars⁹⁹ to group together all the liturgical seasons within them. Among these seasons, however, only the Rainy Season has a real importance in giving overtones to the time it covers.

Generally only two seasons are taken into consideration: the Dry Season በጋ (Bagā) and the Rainy Season ክረምት: (*Keramt*).

Another system of division of the year has been developed, and is found in the chantbook of the *Maṣḥafa Degg'ā*. Threefold, it immediately reminds one of the threefold division of the Egyptian year¹⁰⁰, based on the vital rhythm of the Nile river. This system appropriately has New Year's Day as its point of departure. Here are these divisions:

- 1- ዮሐንስ: *Yohannes*, from 1 Maskaram to 30 Hedār, covers the beginning of the year.
- 2- ለስተምሕሮ: *Astameḥero*¹⁰¹, "supplication to obtain mercy", from 1 Tāḥṣās to 30 Maggābit, is also known as ርሐቅ: መዓት: *reḥuqa ma'ūt*: "slow to anger."

⁹⁸ Pāg'emēn is excluded from the count.

⁹⁹ For example HMW p. 90-93, who classifies all the liturgical seasons within them by starting with the Rainy Season.

¹⁰⁰ On the Coptic liturgical year, see SAMIR KHALIL SAMIR, "L'année liturgique copte", *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, 39(1989), pp. 26-34.

¹⁰¹ JEFFERY, *Chantbook*, adds a "Section III: Season of the Fast," section omitted from the printed edition of the *Degg'ā*. The fact that Lent is held as a season of *Astameḥero* anyway (see below on the Fasts, "Rubrics concerned with fasts,") makes it hardly relevant to add a specific section to locate it.

The theme of God's mercy and forgiveness, together with man's effort to reach out to them, therefore prevails.¹⁰²

- 3- ፋሲካ: *Fāsikā*, from Easter to the end of the year. It is divided between the time of the Resurrection and the Season of the Rains (*Keramt*), when the office celebrates a transformed nature and glorifies the Creator.¹⁰³

2. The Computation of the Feast of Easter

The celebration of Jesus Christ's Resurrection in the Feast of Easter is central for the Christian Church. As it is a mobile feast and as a large cycle gravitates around it, the correct determination of its date is crucial for the organisation of the liturgical year. The book of the ባሕረ: ጎሳብ: *Bāhera Ḥasāb*, that is to say "the comput [that is wide as a sea]", i.e. Egypt in this case, treats this matter. Explanations are also given by a book such as መርሐ: አዝማን: *Marḥa Azmān*, "The Guide of the Times."

Basically, these works indicate the way to find out the date of the Fast of Nineveh in any given year, and thereby the date of Easter and all other mobile feasts. "The procedures of the *Ḥasāb* are undoubtedly of Alexandrian origin, having thus preserved for us much of the "computus" of early Christianity (4th century).¹⁰⁴"

These mobile dates are shown at the end of these books and others (e.g. GH) in handy tables.

It is believed that Abu Šāker's treatise on "Chronography" (አቡ: ሻክር:) "had significant influence on the Ethiopic computus..." Otto Neugebauer showed that this "is completely unfounded and should be laid to rest for good."¹⁰⁵

3. The Liturgical Seasons

The liturgical seasons total 30 different periods: 20 fixed periods as well as 10 mobile periods belonging to the cycle of the Resurrection, which is the focus and centre of the entire year (they are shown hereafter by the letters "a" to "j" instead of figures).

An asterisk "*" will indicate a correction or an addition to the study of Bernard Velat.¹⁰⁶

However, a difficulty remains in the presentation of the division of time between the 2nd and the 3rd parts of the year. For *Astamehero* ends on the fixed date of 30 Maggābit while Easter is mobile.

¹⁰² HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg'ā*, p. 361.

¹⁰³ HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg'ā*, p. 361.

¹⁰⁴ O. NEUGEBAUER, *Abu Shaker's "Chronography": A Treatise of the 13th Century on Chronological, Calendrical, and Astronomical Matters, written by a Christian Arab, preserved in Ethiopic A Summary*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 498, Vienna 1988, p. 9. For details on this matter, see CHAINE, *Chronologie* and GRUMEL, *Chronologie*.

¹⁰⁵ NEUGEBAUER, *Abu Shaker*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ BVM p. 30-35

The beginning of the year

1. Maskaram 1 to 8: "John the Forerunner (*Yohannes*)."
2. Maskaram 8 only: "Zachary (*Zakkāryās*)."
3. Maskaram 9 to 15: "the Fruits (*Frē*)."
4. Maskaram 16 only: "the Building up of the temple [* that is, the Basilica of the Anastasis (Holy Sepulchre) at Jerusalem] (*Ḥeṣata bēta maqdas*)."
5. Maskaram 17 to 25: "the Cross (*Masqal*)."
6. Maskaram 26 to Ḥedār 5: "the Flowers (*Ṣegē*)."
7. Ḥedār 6 to Tāḥsās 7 up to the Saturday between Tāḥsās 7 and Tāḥsās 13: * "the Supplication (*Astameḥero*)."

The Cycle of the Nativity and of the Epiphany

8. From the Sunday of the Preaching (= Sunday between Tāḥsās 8 and Tāḥsās 14) to the following Saturday: "the Preaching (*Sebkat*)."
- In addition, the following names can be appended: "the Descent (*Redat*)," and "the Coming (*Meṣ'at*)."
9. The following week, "the Light (*Berhān*)," from Sunday to Saturday.
10. From the Sunday following to Tāḥsās 27: "the Shepherd (*Nolāwi*)."¹⁰⁷
11. Tāḥsās 28: "the Bridegroom (*Mar āwi*)."
12. Tāḥsās 29 to Ṭerr 10: "the Nativity (*Ledat*)."
13. * From the Monday following the first Sunday after Christmas (and only if there are two Sundays between Christmas and Epiphany in a particular year) to Ṭerr 10: "Nazareth; the Upbringing (*Nāzrēt; ḥeḏnat*)."¹⁰⁸
14. From Ṭerr 11 to the eve of the Sunday of the Encounter (*Qabbalā*) which marks the beginning of the Easter Cycle: * "the Epiphany (*Astare'eyo*)."
- MG characterises this period in the following way: "He walked (*Ansosawa*); he was born (*Tawalda*); he was baptised (*Taṭamqa*); he changed water into wine (*Aweyano la-māy*)."
- a) Announcement of the approaching Great Lent (Easter Cycle): "the Fast of Nineveh (*Ṣoma Nanawē*)."
15. * The last week of the season of the Epiphany as well as of the cycle of the Nativity and of the Epiphany: "the Bridegroom (*Mar āwi*)."

¹⁰⁷ The Sundays and weeks 8, 9 and 10 may be regarded as lesser divisions within the one season of the Preaching, similar to the Western Advent.

¹⁰⁸ Inside the time of the Nativity.

The Easter Cycle

- b) "Sunday of the Encounter [with the Fast] (*Qabbalā*)."
- c) "Week of Heraclius (*Herqāl*)," or "of Moses (*Musē-ni*)," or "of the Encounter with the Fast (*Qabbalā Ṣom*)."
- d) "Forty-day Fast (*Ṣoma ārbā*)."
- e) "Holy Week (*Ḥemāmāt*)."
- f) * "Eastertide (*Zamana Tenšā'ē*)" up to Ascension eve.
- g) * "Resurrection week (*Samuna Tenšā'ē*)," a part of Eastertide.
- h) * "Ascensiontide (*Zamana Ergat*)."
- i) * "Week of the Holy-Spirit (*Samuna Marfas Qeddus*)," a part of Ascensiontide.
- j) * Flexible ending to both Ascensiontide and the Easter Cycle, in order to reach Sanē 17.

16. Sanē 17 to 25: * Supplication (*Astameḥero*).

Sanē 25 to Maskaram 25: the Rainy Season (*Keramt*)

- 17. Up to the end of the year and inside *Keramt*, the following lesser periods are included: Sanē 25 to Ḥamlē 18: "Seed (*Zar'*), Cloud (*Dammanā*)."
- 18. Ḥamlē 19 to Naḥasē 9: "Lightning (*Mabraq*), Thunder (*Nag^wadg^wād*), Sea (*Bāḥer*), Rivers (*Aflāg*), Dew (*Ṭal*)."
- 19. Naḥasē 10 to 27: "the Little Crow ('Eg^wela q^wā'āt), the Islands (*Dasayāt*), the Eye of all [creatures] (*ʿAyna k^welu*)."
- 20. Naḥasē 28 to the end of the year: "Daybreak (*Goh*), Morning (*Nageh*), Dawn (*Ṣebāḥ*), Light (*Berhān*), Day (*Ma ālt*), Nativity (*Ledat*)."

B - The Fasts

The times of fasting — 𐌸𐌹𐌺: (*Ṣom*) by opposition to 𐌱𐌴𐌹: (Fessek) — give a particular emphasis to some of the liturgical seasons of the year. They may even inaccurately attribute to a period the character of a fully fledged liturgical season. This is the case with the fast of the Assumption or with 𐌵𐌹𐌸: *Gahād*, the vigil of the feast of Epiphany on Ṭerr 10. These times of fasting are followed by festivals of various importance, the celebration of which they prepare: Easter, the Lord's Nativity, the Assumption of the Mother of God, the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul and *Dabra Q^wesq^wām*. The feastday which ends a fast is called its "pasch:" 𐌱𐌴𐌹: *fāsikā*.¹⁰⁹

Before we mention the various regulations concerning the fasts, one must keep in mind that fasting is a spiritual exercise. For, as the *Law of the Kings* teaches, "fasting does not consist merely of [taking] bread and water only; the fast which is acceptable

¹⁰⁹ See for example FN G/A pp. 150 sq. §§ 568, 569, 571. This applies to Easter as well: cf. FN G/A §§ 575, 576.

before God is living in purity of heart. If the body is hungry and thirsty, but the soul eats whatever it likes and the heart is entirely given to delights, what benefit derives from your fast?¹¹⁰

1. The Rules of Fasting

The day of fast is based on the civil day which runs from midnight¹¹¹ to midnight. Often, it will be understood as starting in the night preceding the said day after the normal time for supper is over, at around 10 p.m.¹¹², and as running until the following night, that of the fasting day itself.

No drink or food should be absorbed until communion time (strictly speaking 3 p.m.¹¹³) is reached, whether the Eucharist is actually received (for the Eucharist breaks the fast) or not. However, it is admitted that this strict rule be kept in monasteries only, and that one may eat from 12 o'clock on, and even drink something earlier if necessary, on condition that one does not assist at Mass within the church on that day.

Past that time, food may be eaten but abstinence from any food of animal origin is prescribed. Fish, which used to be widely tolerated¹¹⁴, was excluded by H. H. Patriarch Paulos I at the opening of Great Lent of 1985 E.C. (1993 G.C.)

The fast implies that married people also observe sexual abstinence.¹¹⁵

At least monks (including Bishops) should avoid travelling and distractions.

Of course, people on medication, babies, etc. may be exempted from fasting by their spiritual father. Pastoral peoples are generally allowed by their Bishops to continue drinking milk as it is their staple food.

2. Services Occurring during the Fasts

The Divine Office which characterises a period of fast is that of the ሰዓታት: *Sa ātāt*, the Hours. They are celebrated during the night, and follow the text composed at the

¹¹⁰ *The Fetha Nagašt - The Law of the Kings translated from the Ge'ez*, [= FN PAULOS], by Abbā PAULOS TZADUA, Addis-Ababa, 1968, p. 96.

¹¹¹ FN PAULOS p. 94 n. 13 quotes the gloss which comments that the normal day of fast is "reckoned from the morning."

¹¹² Even though this is outside our immediate context and supposes an early morning Mass, this practice may be related to the 9 hour fast required in the Coptic Church before taking communion. See Archbishop Basilios, entry *Holy Saturday, C.E.*, IV, p. 1249.

¹¹³ FN PAULOS p. 96.

¹¹⁴ On account of the problem of interpretation of the canon which reads in Ge'ez ዘለንበለ: ጥጥ: *za'ebala āsā*, which may mean either "including fish" or "except for fish." See FN PAULOS p. 94, n. 14; LESLAU p. 27.

¹¹⁵ FN PAULOS p. 96.

time of Emperor 'Amda Şeyon (1314-1344) by Abbā Giyorgis of Gāseçčā, which has replaced the Egyptian Book of Hours.

Barring major difficulties, Mass is celebrated on every fast day, after 12 o'clock on weekdays, and in the morning on Saturdays and Sundays, when abstinence only is kept. Thus, those who contend that the Fast of Heraclius is not really binding will keep the abstinence from animal products only and indulge in having breakfast in the morning. Hence they will not celebrate Mass, as it would be impossible to celebrate early on weekdays commonly held to be fasting days.

3. Rubrics Concerned with Fasts

In the Missal, there are rubrics for times of fasting, as in Chapter III, 192 b.¹¹⁶ Such rubrics refer not only to the periods rapidly described above but also to all the seasons considered of *Astamehero* (Supplication). These seasons of *Astamehero* include:

1. The Great Lent, from the beginning to the Sunday of *Niqodimos*.
2. The Fast of the Apostles.
3. The Rainy Season (*Keramt*), until 30 Hamlē.
4. The 3 Sundays preceding Christmas.

The books contain texts for the important festivals. They include a night service called the *Māhelēt*, which may be preceded by the *Wāzēmā*. When the festival is actually celebrated in a given church (see the following paragraph), the liturgical rubrics of the Missal specifying "if there is a fast" are cancelled whether there is actual fasting or not.

4. Incidences to the Chanting

Although we cannot develop the topic of the **liturgical music**, some remarks should be made insofar as music is an integral part of the celebrations.

Ethiopian church music has three modes, called *Ge'ez*, *'Ezel* and *Arārāy*.¹¹⁷ In the periods of *Astamehero*, that is, of "fast" understood in the wider sense according to the classification above, the **musical mode** "*Ge'ez*" is preferred to the mode *'Ezel*, which is employed on festive occasions. *Arārāy* is employed to sing specific pieces of hymnography but does not associate particularly with any season.

Some editions of the Ge'ez text of the Missal show two lines of musical signs just above the lines of the text. Each one of these signs is a ጭልከት: *Meleket*.¹¹⁸ The lower line is black in colour and is meant for the singing of Mass in mode *Ge'ez*. The

¹¹⁶ M. DAOUD, *Lit.* p. 53.

¹¹⁷ BVM has attempted to sort out this matter pp. 73 sq.

¹¹⁸ BVM p. 99 sq.

upper line of *meleketoč*¹¹⁹ is written in red and is used when Mass is sung in mode *Ezel*.

A solemnity may occur during a "fast". Such a solemnity may be a feast of the Lord, e.g. the Annunciation, or *Madhānē ālam*, or the Transfiguration. It can be also the feast of the Covenant of Mercy (*Kidāna meherat*) or the main feast of the local parish, according to the name of its *tābot*. In such a circumstance, known as *ya-ūmat ba'al* (lit.: "yearly feast"), the office should include the *Wāzēmā*.¹²⁰ This entails that the singing will be in mode *Ezel*.¹²¹ In Lent, the drum is permitted exceptionally.

5. The Six Fasts

The fasts are listed in chronological order:

1. "The fast of [Mount] Q^wesq^wām, ጸመ: [ደብረ:] ቀሳብዳም: *Ṣoma [Dabra] Q^wesq^wām*," 40 days, from Maskaram 26 to the feast of Q^wesq^wām on 6 Hedār. It is compulsory for monks and priests only. It commemorates the hardships endured by the holy family, by Mary particularly, at the time of the flight into Egypt.
2. "The fast of the prophets, ጸመ: ነቢያት: *Ṣoma nabiyyāt*," or: "of the Nativity ጸመ: ልደት: *Ṣoma Ledat*," 43 days, from Hedār 16 to Tāhšās 28 (or from Hedār 15 to Tāhšās 27 in the years of John), including the day of "the Bridegroom, መርግዮ: *Mar āwi*," (i.e., the eve of Christmas). The three first days commemorate the miracle of the Muqaṭṭam near Cairo. This fast is compulsory for monks and priests; on the last day of the Bridegroom only, all the faithful join

¹¹⁹ Amharic plural of *meleket*.

¹²⁰ The *Wāzēmā* characterizes solemnities, which include the singing of hymns called *Nagś* or *Sebbuḥ*, lit. "glorious." Hence a particular day can be mentioned by the expression: "This day is *Sebbuḥ*." These short hymns can be found in booklets, like, for example, that which bears its table of contents on its cover: "Sayfa Malakot; ḥebra Šellāsē (lu'ālāwi ṣalot) wa-dersāna 7 malā'ekt mesla Nagś za-Māḥelēt," Addis-Ababa 1985 A.M. [= 1993 A.D.], Tesfā Gabra-Šellāsē Press, 70 pages (editor's emphasis). In this booklet, a *Sebbuḥ* or a *Nagś* is provided for the following: John; the Cross; the Season of the Flowers; the Four Living Creatures, Raphael and the Priests of heaven (a common); Michael and Gabriel (a common); the Righteous (a common); Palm-Sunday; Peter and Paul; Transfiguration; Eusthatus; Sion; Samuel; George; Takla Hāymānot; Christmas; Baptism; Mary's Astare'eyo [*sic* = Falling-asleep]; Mary's Nativity; Assumption.

¹²¹ However, the Book of the *Me'erūf*, p. 1, indicates as exception that the *Wāzēmā* of the following feasts or occasions (independently of our topic) is to be chanted in mode *Ge'ez*: John the Forerunner (1 Maskaram); *Masqal* (17 Maskaram); Michael (12 Hedār); the Preaching (1st Sunday of "Advent"); Christmas (29 Tāhšās); the Monday of *Musē-ni* (the Great Lent's 1st day of fast); Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of *Niqodimos* (the last week of the Great Lent); Palm-Sunday (two mentions unclear to me); Ascension; Pentecost; Michael (12 Sanē); Transfiguration (13 Najasē). The rest of the services is in *Ezel*, hence the need for this rubric.

in the fast. Again, on Terr 10, the eve of the Epiphany called "Manifest, ገሃድ: *Gahād*," all the faithful will fast.

3. "The Fast of Nineveh ጸመ: ነዮ: *Ṣoma Nanawē*" is observed by everybody on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the second week preceding Lent (= the tenth week before Easter).
4. "The Great Fast, ፀቢይ: ጸም: 'Abiy Ṣom" (or: "ኹዳደ: *Kʰudādē*") is compulsory for all. It lasts 55 days, including Saturdays and Sundays when abstinence only is required.
 - a - "The Fast of **Heraclius**, ጸመ:አርቃል: *Ṣoma Herqāl*" in perpetual expiation for the massacre of Jews allowed by the Emperor Heraclius. Ethiopians, however, prefer to stress the spiritual aspects implied in the hymn መብኒ: *Musē-ni* ("And Moses")¹²² (see Ex. 24:16); they often use this name for the eighth week before Easter.
 - b - "The Fast of **Christ**, ጸመ:ክርስቶስ: *Ṣoma Krestos*," or: "Fast of the **Forty [days]** (አርብዓ: ጸም: *Arbe ā Ṣom*)."
 - c - "The **Pasch**, ፍሥሕ: *Fesh*," or: "the Passion ሐማማት: *Hemāmāt*," or: "Holy Week, ሰመገ: ቅድስት: *Samun Qeddest*," starting on the Friday evening before the Palms.
5. "The Fast of the **Apostles** ጸመ:ሐዋርያት: *Ṣoma Hawāryāt*" lasts from the Monday after Pentecost to the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on ሸጠጤ 5. This fast is compulsory for monks and priests only. It commemorates the fast which the apostles are said to have observed after their "baptism" in the Holy Spirit before they began their ministry. They were themselves imitating the Lord Jesus who had retired into the wilderness after his baptism in the Jordan river before he commenced his own ministry. It also refers to Matthew 9:15.
6. "The Fast of **Salvation** ጸመ:ድኅነት: *Ṣoma deḥenat*" begins on the Wednesday after Pentecost. It is kept by all on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except from Easter to Pentecost and on Christmas or Epiphany, should they occur on such a day.
7. "The Fast of the **Assumption** ጸመ:ፍልሰታ: *Ṣoma felsatā*" is compulsory for all from Naḥasē 1 to the feast on Naḥasē 16. It is meant to implore God to admit us to the contemplation of the Mother of God in her exaltation and, one day, to share in her glorious life.

¹²² *Musē-ni* is the *Abun* of Terce on the Monday of Heraclius. B. VELAT, *Carême*, T. p. 28, V. p. 305 [= *Ṣoma deggua, Antiphonaire de Carême (quatre premières semaines)*, PO 32, fasc. 1-2 (= Nr. 152-153), 1966, and 32, fasc. 3-4 (= Nr. 153-154), 1969].

C - The Sundays

1. The Day

The Sunday is called አሁድ: *Ehud*: the "first" day of the week. *Sanbat* (pl. *Sanābet*), that is to say "Sabbath," is also a term much utilised, especially in the expression ሰንበተ: ክርስቲያን: *Sanbata krestiyān*, the Sabbath of the Christians. The latter is said in contrast to the "first *Sanbat*" (ቀዳሚት: ሰንበት: *qadāmit Sanbat*, that is, the "Sabbath of the Jews" (ሰንበተ: አሁድ: *Sanbata Ayhud*), which 15th century King Zar'a Yā'eqob endeavoured to maintain as a holy day by his writings and his imperial power. The first *Sanbat* lost a large part of its pre-eminence when Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. To translate a text, which reads "*Sanbat*," we prefer to write "*Sanbat*" instead of "Sunday" because of the connotations underlying the various wordings.

The Eucharistic anaphora attributed to St. Athanasius of Alexandria¹²³ contains a large section which beautifully extols the qualities of Sunday. For example:

[55]¹²⁴ "Come, let us celebrate the chief of the holy days which is the holy *Sanbat* of the Christians. Let us say: "This is the day which the Lord hath made..."

[56] "Truly let us rejoice in God who hath granted us freedom from slavery, light from darkness [...]"

[61] "Oh, this day is the first¹²⁵ but not the last. Oh, this day is the last¹²⁶ which exists for ever.

[67] "Oh, this day is that in which the old ceased and the new was confirmed; the prisoners were released and the slaves were set free.

[68] "Oh, this day is that on which the ruined was rebuilt and Satan was destroyed.

[69] "Again, when this day rules there will be a new work and a new thing; and at that time there will not be the light of the sun or the moon or the stars or candle or any light, winter or summer."

[176] "O holy, come unto us every week that we may rejoice in thee, world without end."

It is possible to see in this exaltation of the *Sanbat*, which sometimes culminates in its personification, one of the Judeo-Christian characteristics which are among the features characterising Ethiopian Christianity.¹²⁷

¹²³ Probably a genuine Ethiopian composition. See E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras*, Stuttgart 1987 (2nd ed.), pp. 40-41, and GETACHEW HAILE, *Ethiopic Literature*, p. 52.

¹²⁴ The numbers in [] refer to M. DAOUD, *Lit.* The whole relevant section runs from §55 to 104 and 172 to 176 (especially § 55-69; 172-176). We wrote *Sanbat*.

¹²⁵ M. DAOUD, *Lit.*, n. 3: "The first of the seven days of creation."

¹²⁶ M. DAOUD, *Lit.*, n. 4: "The tradition is that Christ's second advent will be on Sunday."

In relation to this, there are brotherhoods (ማኅበር: *Māhebar*, pl. ማኅበራት: *Māhebarāt*) which are dedicated to the *Sanbat*. Their members in turn bring to the church bread and beer and have them blessed and shared on Sundays among the faithful as they go out of the church. The poor who gather at the gates of the church beg "በእንተ: ሰንበት: *Ba-enta Sanbat* (Amharic: ስለ: ሰንበት: *Sela Sanbat*) for the sake of [the] *Sanbat*."

2. The Mazmur

The spirit of the liturgical times is unveiled as the Sundays evolve along the year, both in the elements of the Divine Office attributed to St. Yārēd and in the New Testament readings and the Psalm-versicle (*Mesbāk*) of Mass.

In principle, at least a small portion of the Divine Office should be performed before Mass, especially when celebrated in the morning, in particular on Sundays. In that case, it is the hymn called *Mazmur*, specific to the Sunday office, which will be sung. It may be followed by the *Salām*. In practice, the application of this principle depends on the competence of the personnel available.¹²⁸

The theme of the *Mazmur* always includes the holiness of the *Sanbat*, set in the particular atmosphere of the current liturgical season. The character particular to a given liturgical season, its spiritual trend, is called in Amharic: የዓመት: ቀለም: *Ya-ūmat qalam* (lit.: "colour of the year").

3. *Mazmur* and Readings

For any given Sunday, the Bible readings and hymnography always remain constant. Thus, in a lectionary, the first words of the *Mazmur* of a given Sunday are always stated above the set of readings arranged that Sunday, as if it were a title. Similarly, the first words of a *Mazmur* are employed as a name, which identifies the Sunday spoken about.

4. The Interference of the *Aq^wāq^wām*

The sequence of these fixed units (composed of elements from both the Divine Office and the lectionary of Mass, and meant for the Sunday of a given liturgical period) can be modified inside a given liturgical season. This represents a difficulty: someone passing on a single Sunday from one church to the other may hear different

¹²⁷ Though this should not be exaggerated: it is the Sunday, not the Saturday, which is the object of the praise. Besides, every Church has something Judeo-Christian, including the status it gives to the Saturday, which parallels the Sunday. Neither should this be used in support of theories ascribing Jewish origins to Ethiopia, or Ethiopian Christianity, or the Falashas themselves. On this matter E. ULLENDORFF, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1967, London 1968, gives interesting elements though some seem outdated. A good *status questionis* may be found in HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg^wā*, pp. 372-380.

¹²⁸ On the Church singers, see HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg^wā*, p. 355-356: "I Dābtāra."

readings being proclaimed. This means that the *Mazmurāt*, too, were sung in a different order in various places, since they are always inseparable from the set of readings indicated after them in a given lectionary.

The variation is due to the fact that, as it happens, there exists in Ethiopia a diversity of "schools" (lit. "houses:" ቤት: *bēt*, Amharic pl. ቤቶች: *bētoč*) concerned with the careful execution of the Divine Office by a choir and the correct teaching of the same.¹²⁹ These schools teach ways to execute the plainchant, which differ from one another. The texts of the office remain unchanged. But, besides the actual execution of the office, the different schools of plainchant may also interfere in the *Ordo* and debate on such matters, as to the Sunday on which it is proper to sing a particular set of antiphons and therefore read the readings of Mass attached to these. As a matter of fact, they may decide to re-arrange the sequence in which the same sets of texts meant for given Sundays within a given liturgical season, are produced. There will therefore be several possible sequences for the Sundays of a given period, according to the various ways the different schools of plainchant teach it. In turn, a given church will use the Sunday antiphons and the Mass readings in an order commanded by the particular school to which the singers of that church refer.

In Amharic, "school of plainchant" is: የአቋቋም: ቤት: *ya-'aq'āq'ām bēt*. This type of school represents a particular development of the liturgical tradition of the celebration of the divine praises according to the cathedral mode, in a choir. It started at Gondar, then the capital of the Ethiopian Empire. One of the characteristics of the *Aq'āq'ām* has been the great increase of the successive modes and ways in which very few antiphons are repeated again and again. This in turn has led many to abandon the larger and more ancient chantbook of the *Degg'ā*, qualified as being an ocean impossible to master, in favour of the introduction of a new antiphonary, the *Ziq*, much lighter¹³⁰ and full of a lively dynamism likely to be attractive.¹³¹

The more important schools are the *Lāy Bēt*, or "higher school", and the *Tāč Bēt*, or "lower school," which seems to be the more widespread school nowadays, both in the famous city of Gondar. The *Tāč Bēt* school is also known by the name of the church *Ba'atā* of Gondar. Other schools exist, such as that of *Bēta-Leḥēm* (Gayent), or *Aččiferē*.¹³²

¹²⁹ Similar schools, based in centers known for the development of some specialized branch of Church science thanks to a tradition of Church scholars, develop aspects of the Church tradition other than the plainchant: Scripture, Mass, etc. They exist in various parts of Ethiopia where they continue to attract students who will spend years "at the feet of the master" (cf. Ac. 22: 3).

¹³⁰ *Ziq* refers to *zeqeteññā* and means "lesser". It has something of the concept behind the "breviary."

¹³¹ In particular by the popular ቶፋት: *Ṣefūt*, when the drum is beaten with open hands and the lively rhythm of the ሽብሽቦ: *šebšebo* is introduced to be repeated many times, while the singing goes on with a different tonality in a gentler form, both in the use of the musical instruments as well as the movement of the body. There is a tendency to oppose this spirit with the teaching that *Ṣefūt* refers to the beating of Jesus as his guards were throwing him to one another. See HMW pp. 113-114.

¹³² On this matter, see HMW pp. 108-112; HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *L'Ufficio*; J. DORESSE, *La Vie Quotidienne des Ethiopiens Chrétiens (aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles)*, Paris 1972, p. 152, 160, 165. On *Bēta-Leḥēm*, see HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Degg'ā*, pp. 382-384.

One might wonder whether the terms "*Tāč Bēt*" and "*Lāy Bēt*" ("lower house", "upper house") refer in some way to two groups of *Memher* Esdros' (mid-eighteenth century) disciples. Some of his earliest disciples would come back to him at his invitation, to hear the more in-depth teaching, which he had eventually acquired in his retreat on Lake Tana. Others failed to take this opportunity and continued to repeat his former teaching. These possible contrasting trends among the disciples probably did not represent much more than a parallel in the development of the Church tradition in the area of Gondar around that time.¹³³

5. Solving the Problem

One can find one's orientation in this matter by simply referring to the *Mazmur* heard during the office, whatever its position in the lectionaries. The readings found together with the *incipit* of the *Mazmur* in the lectionary are those to be read.

The liturgical times when the order of Sundays is affected by the *Aq'āq'ām* are: the Flowers (5 or 6 Sundays); the Epiphany (6 or 7 Sundays); the whole season of Easter (14 Sundays up to Sanē 16); the portion of the Rainy Season from Sanē 25 up to the end of the year.

6. The Occurrences

It can happen that the Sanctoral intrudes on the Temporal, that is, when a feast of the calendar falls on a Sunday. In other words, the sequence of Sundays can be interrupted by the occurrence of a festival (not all festivals, nor always, however). The principles already mentioned above (section III, D) have to be repeated in this particular context:

1. All nine Great Feasts of **the Lord**¹³⁴, as well as the two secondary feasts of Cana of Galilee and the Cross (*Masqal*, on 17 Maskaram), have always and everywhere precedence over the Sunday. Their *Wāzēmā*, *Māḥelēt* and Mass are performed, and everything else pertaining to the festival is fulfilled (notably, the readings of the day).

The other feasts of Our Lord follow the common rule, which is as exposed below in N° 3.

2. Among the Feasts of **Mary the Mother of God**, the Assumption (*Felsatā*) has always and everywhere precedence over the Sunday.

¹³³ See R.W. COWLEY, *Mamher Esdros and his interpretations*, Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Tel-Aviv, 14-17 April 1980, p. 41-42 and *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Cambridge 1983, ch. 1, p. 5.

¹³⁴ See their list in Section III, D, 1.

On all other feasts of Our Lady, e.g. the Dormition or *Kidāna Meherat*, which follow the common rule, the relevant section of the book of *The Miracles of Mary* may be read at church. Otherwise, the rules are as follows:

3. Should the commemoration of a **saint** occur on a Sunday, and if in a **given church** there is a *tābot* consecrated in the name of that saint, then the festival is celebrated in that church. The crucial element is the presence of such a *tābot* in the church where the celebration is to take place on the saint's day.

The celebration may include (1) the *Wāzēmā* on the day before, then (2) the *Māhelēt*, at which the *Mesbāk* and Gospel indicated for the Morning (*zanageh*) in the lectionary of the Days (*za-zawater*) should be read, and (3) Mass, which will include the readings and anaphora shown for this purpose in the same lectionary of the Days under the rubric *za-Qeddāsē*.

Rubrics

1. It happens that the Sunday lectionary proposes particular lessons for the Mass of a feast occurring on a Sunday. It will read, for example: ለእመ: ኮነ: ቂርቆስ: በእሁድ: መዝሙር: ጥብዕ: ልቡ: ለሕፃን: *La'ema kona Qirqos ba-'Eḥud, mazmur: Ṭebu' lebbu la-ḥedān.* "If Cyrus is on a Sunday, the *Mazmur* [is]: 'Ṭebu' lebbu la-ḥedān.'" The set of readings follows. Such a command applies to all churches.
2. The lectionary may also content itself with indicating a particular *Mazmur* hymn and refer for the rest to the lectionary of the Days as in the following case: ለእመ: ኮነ: ስምዖን: በእሁድ: መዝሙር: መሀሩ: እለ: ቀደመነ: ምንባብ: የዘወትሩን: በል: *La'ema kona Sem'on ba-'Eḥud, mazmur: Maharu-na ela qadamu-na. Menbāb ya-zawaterun bal:* "If Simon [i.e. the Presentation of Jesus] is on a Sunday, the *Mazmur* [is] 'Maharu-na ela qadamu-na.' Read the reading of the Days." This command applies to all the churches.
3. The Sunday lectionary never mentions any Psalm-versicle and Gospel to be used at Matins on the occurrence of a feast of the calendar. Not a few Church scholars, however, teach that they are to be proclaimed during the Matins of a feast celebrated on a Sunday, should the full solemnity take place on the conditions already mentioned. They are normally taken from the lectionary of the Days.

We have seen above, that Sunday Matins end with the singing of the hymn called *Mazmur*, just before Mass begins. When a commemoration fulfilling the requirements occurs, a hymn of its own office, called *Abun*, replaces the *Mazmur*.

Between the *Māhelēt* and Mass, the *tābot* will also be carried in a triple procession around the church (literally, it is said in Amharic of the *tābot* that "it reigns": ይነግሳል: *yenagsāl*).

Where there is no *tābot* named after the said saint, the normal order of Sundays continues.

However, according to the devotion of the people, the anaphora may be chosen to fit the occasion. Moreover, many people concerned with the feast, e.g. the Falling-asleep of Our Lady, or of the Archangel Gabriel, may go some distance to attend services at a church which possesses such a *tābot* named after Mary or the Archangel. Sometimes this can occasion large gatherings of pilgrims.¹³⁵ This is also why benefactors have in various places built churches bearing the names of popular saints, so as to facilitate honouring them by regular solemn celebrations.¹³⁶ Another alternative is for a church to possess several *tābotāt* in addition to the one after which a church is named.

CONCLUSION

The reader will have appreciated that the Ethiopian tradition is a solid one, the mentality of which is still that vehicled by manuscripts and schools in a decentralized manner. The process of its unification is well advanced now due to the printing of books which, little by little, replace the manuscripts. The contents of each printed book has become a *textus receptus*.

We can consider that this process is already completed for the Missal: the practice of Dabra-'Abbāy has been consecrated through its selection for printing. But even in this case the generalised practice of singing the hymn of the ሙልኸዐ: ቀ-ርባን: *Malk'a Q'erbān* ("Portrait of the Eucharist") before the distribution of the Eucharist to the faithful, for example, is still not included in the Missal.

For the Divine Office, handwritten chantbooks are reproduced anastatically. The uses of various schools of plainchant are sometimes printed, at least partly. This fact consecrates these schools and allows them to maintain their diversity within a common framework. As to the Ordo itself, the books have their limitations.

The scholars and teachers of the Church retain all their authority as regards a relevant way to enact the liturgical celebrations, to the glory of God and the life of the world.

¹³⁵ The fact that priests and people gather together systematically on feast days where the relevant *tābot* is found is not without giving the Ethiopian liturgy a certain stationary character.

¹³⁶ On a week day, when it is not possible to celebrate a solemnity because of the lack of the proper *tābot*, devotees may still give the priests a stipend to have the Mass of the day celebrated.