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 influence\(^1\), 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 \textit{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, \textit{La Chronologie des Temps Chrétiens de l'Égypte et de l'Éthiopie}, Paris, 1925) and others (esp. V. GRUMEL, \textit{La Chronologie (Traité d'Études Byzantines}, 1, publié par P. Lemerle), Paris, 1958), have been clearly summed up recently by A. Cody, (\textit{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 Mätêwos) is first within this series, followed by that of Mark (Zamana Mârqos). Then comes the year of Luke (Zamana Luqâs) 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 (Ὁρϒ: warî) 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 Fūg-emēn, from the Greek Επαγομέναι ἡμέραι, 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 calendar\(^2\) 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 correspondence between the calendars of different Churches, e.g. to compare their Sanctorals, should refer to the Julian correspondence shown in the second column."
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 •Μ≤: μΗΡτ: ṭāmata meḥerat, that is to say "Year of Mercy." It is what the abbreviation (•.μ.) indicates when it is written after dates.
The difference of 7 (from Maskaram to Tăḩšăś incl., that is through 31 December) or 8 (from Ṭerr, or 1 January, to Păğ"emēn) 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 •Μ≤ •Αµ: ʾāmata ţālam, i.e. Era of the World, or •Μ≤ : ឌŢΡτ: ʾāmata Fēprat, i.e. Era of the Creation, or •Μ≤ : αℜµ : ʾāmata Addām, i.e. the Era of Adam, or •Μ≤ : 蔌ţ: ʾāmata 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.


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 tradition 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 (�性 γη: za-nageh) of certain solemnities of the Sanctoral, and of Mass (fθϦε: za-qeddāsē). To these two, we shall add a mention of the Wāzēmāā.

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5 But maybe not without any relation with it.

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

a - The Wázêmâ (ቧን) 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 Wázêmâ 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 Wázêmâ, therefore, cannot too simply be equated with Vespers.

In principle, and according to the book of the Mërëf, 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. Frequently, however, only the Gospel is read and commented at the very end of the service, generally without any ceremony.

b - The morning service (በጭን: nageh) takes place before the Eucharistic liturgy on the feast days of the Sanctoral. It is commonly known as the ይለ ል.longitude: Mâhèlêt, 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-verse (or Psalm gradual) and a Gospel which are chosen to match the principal commemoration of that particular day. The Psalm-verse (Ps) is called መሸክ: Mesbâk (from Sabaka, "to preach"), which may refer to its being proclaimed, or perhaps to the elevated place from which it is fitting to proclaim it in order to herald the Gospel reading. It is also adequately called በድም: Ωϧλ: Qedma Wangël, according to its position "before the Gospel." The text of the Mesbâk 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 እﻟሲ: Alleluia. before the assembly sings the verse for the last time.

The execution of the Mesbâk, therefore, goes like this:

1 - Deacon: verse.
2 - Assembly: verse.
3 - Deacon: verse.
4 - Assembly: verse.
5 - Deacon: Alleluia.
6 - Assembly: verse.

8 Cf. B. VELAT, Mërëf. 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 Mesbâk, see BVM p. 56. In the context of the present work, the Mesbâk is always understood as the Psalm-verse 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 Mesbâk is nothing other than the Alleluia verse of other liturgies.
The Psalm-versicle is sung five times 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.

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 cross 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 (£ΘΡ : 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 (£ΜΣΦ : £ΘΡ : Masha'fa Qeddāsē) contains the whole service of the Mass with 14 anaphoras 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.

It is to be noted that Mass may always be celebrated, whether or not the Divine Office has taken place. The ΥΛτ: 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 mariqētā or choir director, singers, etc.). The Wāzēmā is considered less obligatory, though proper on the great occasions. If a Wāzēmā is celebrated, both ΥΛτ: 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.

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13 In reality, many communities simply sing the Mesbāk six times as the deacons do not proclaim the Hailēlayā 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 ρδέθ : ΘΕΡ : Šer `ata geddāsē, which means: "the service of the Mass," not the service of the first half only. 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. 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 censing. 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 ©ωΛ(σ., Ḑweleos. 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.

The second reading is chosen from among the seven Catholic epistles and is simply called Ḍρ― : Hawārīyā, the "Apostle." The second reading may also be drawn from the Apocalypse of John, Λμ ισ : Qalamsis, a short form of αΒ=λυσ : Abuqalamsis, often called τψ : Ρ ισ Rā'eya Yohannes, "Vision of John." This text is read by the assistant deacon turned towards the North.

The third reading is from the ΓβΡ : Ḍρ―τ : Gebra Ḍawārīyāt, 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, the priest chants the Theotokia, the clergy and faithful
alternate the Hymn of the incense,\(^{25}\) and the priest begins the Christological *Trisaghion*, understood as the introduction to the most revered Prayer of the Covenant (*Kidân*).\(^{26}\) This prayer is concluded by the collective Our Father and Hail Mary\(^{27}\) 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 *Mesbâk* 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 (ΩνΓλ: *Wangel*) is read in a simple manner by the priest standing under an un-


\(^{26}\) The text is part of the *Maṣṭafa Kidân et 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 *Kidân* and the *Trisaghion* 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 *Trisaghion* while burying him (see for instance the book of meditation called *Asra sostu hemâmâta mestër*, ed. Tesfâ Gabra-Sellâsĕ, Addis Ababa 1986, E.C., pp. 79-80). I am indebted to Abbâ Habtamichael-Kidane to have attracted my attention to this fact.

The Prayer of the *Kidân* is composed of three sections, which include three prayers each. Outside Mass, the whole of the *Kidân* is always said. At Mass, only one of the sections is said: the first section, for Midnight (za-manfaqa lêlît), is used at a night Mass (Easter, Baptism and Christmas). The second section, for the morning (za-nâqeḥ), 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-šârk), 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 (B – M : Γβραλ: *Ba-salâma Gabre’el*):

*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 Sabauth, 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 censing, the fourth one is offered to the Gospel, and the fifth one will be for the Eucharist.
brella. He turns towards the East, outside the sanctuary, and holds the cross of the deacon. 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. 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 ΜΣ' Φ : γ新陈代谢 : Mašhafa Gešåwē.

The word Gešåwē means "explanation", "exposition", hence "ordo". Another reading says γ新陈代谢 : Gebsåwē, instead. This would ascribe to this book an Egyptian origin.

The ΜΣ' Φ : γ新陈代谢 : Mašhafa Gešåwē 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

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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.

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 Deggewä [=Chantbook], - 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. EMML 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 Gešåwē of the end of the last century are presented as translations from the Arabic: GETATCHEW HAILÉ 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-), EMML, IV, 1209 and 1332, or EMML, 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. DAOU, Lit. p. 7: ch. II, n° 1).
meaning of Geššāwē, whether plenary or not, and shall be more precise when necessary.

I - 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 Mašha’fa Geššāwē. The first modern printed Geššāwē was the small book called ΜΣ: Φ : αη: η : Mašha’fa Aselefiti.

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 Alaqă Walda-Rufa’el, a scholar of Dabra-Bizan (see below). Another one was Mal’aka Da-hay Taga’na of Dabra-Marqos (Goğgâm), 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 Yárèd, after the name of the inspired cantor to whom is ascribed the origin of the plainchant. 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:

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33 On St. Yárèd, see the status questionis given by Habtemichael-Kidane, Il Degg’à, p. 365-369.
34 The Catalogues of Manuscripts where we found material relevant to our topic are the following:

British Library:
1. Manuscript Documents

1. XIV-XVth c. Shoa, Debbi, Ankobarr, Waramo Mikāʾèl (= EMML, VII, 2883)
3. late XVth c. Brit. Libr. Or. 543 (= Wright N.129)
4. XV-XVIth c. Addis Ababa, 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. 26
8. XVIIth c. Vat. Eth. 79
9. XVIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Māl Wanz Mārām (= EMML, VII, 2581)
10. XVIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Māl Wanz Mārām (= EMML, VI, 2437)
11. early XVIIIth c. Brit. Libr. Or. 544 (= Wright n° 131)
12. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Galīlā Mārām (= EMML, VIII, 3040)
13. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Galīlā Mārām (= EMML, VIII, 3042)
14. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Māhāl Wanz Mārām (= EMML, VII, 2581)
15. XVIIIth c. Shoa, Ankobarr, Ankobarr Mārām (= EMML, X, 4024)
17. XVIII/XIXth c. Manchester, John Rylands Libr., Eth. 21
18. XIXth c. Shoa, Asāgert, Ginā Agur Egziʾabher (Ab) (= EMML, VIII, 3297)
20. 6/8/1890 Addis Ababa, Entọto, Rāguʾèl (= EMML, I, 67)
21. 1892-3 Shoa, Moğā and Wadarrā, Sallā Dengāy Māreqos (= EMML, X, 4439)
22. 1896-7 Addis Ababa, Bolē, Hannā (= EMML, IV, 1332)
23. 1897-8 Addis Ababa, Bolē, Urāʾèl (= EMML, I, 173)
24. 1898-9 Addis Ababa, Gabrèʾèl (= EMML, II, 359)
25. The three following manuscripts are actually the same work.

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


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

EMML + number = GETATCHEW HAIL 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:


The Vatican:


O. RAINTERI, 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).
a. End XIXth-early XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Arădă, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 996)

b. 1913 Addis Abbaba, Arădă, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 995) Addis Abbaba

c. 1883-1913 Addis Abbaba, Arădă, Giyorgis (= EMML, III, 947)

26. 6/8/1918 Addis Abbaba, Šellāsē (= EMML, IV, 1209)

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, Miťaq Amānu’ēl (= EMML, VI, 2173)

29. 1940 Addis Abbaba, Māryām (= EMML, II, 390)

30. 1940 and 1936-7 Addis Abbaba, at Alaqā Yāmānā Berhil’s (= EMML, III, 832)


32. XXth c. Shoa, Sabbathā, Geğiṯā Māryām (= EMML, VII, 2941)

33. XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Enčto, Manbara Šellāsē (= EMML, III, 864)

34. XXth c. Addis Abbaba, Yakā, at Marigēṯā’s Malǎku’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 (XVIIth 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, Naḥāsē 15 and Ṭeṛr 21; EMML, X, 4335, has only ff. 161b-163b for a Geššawē 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 Gešsäwë such as Sundays.

a - Alaqä Walda-Rufä‘él, Maṣḥafa Aseaḥti (ΣΦ : ασλς全资--) (= 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 Aseaḥti seems to come from the root slt (slt) / aslaτ: "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.


Pages 221 to 228 show an index ( αδη" ) 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

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\(^{35}\) 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 Alaqä Asnäqa, an authority of Gondar Ledatit 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.
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.

2. Full Documents

The following are relatively new works:

a. МΣ Φ: γν: fψτ↔Bβ: μτ: Мτ: Ωf ←βτ: Ψβ: μσΛ: МΣ= τ; Mașafa Geșăwe za-yetnab ab eska `amat wa-za-sanābet za-yaḥaber mesela mazmurāt: "Lectionary of what is to be read from year to year" and of the Sundays, together with the Mazmur (= 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 Wald Raful of Dabra-Bizan with his Mașafa Asele (see above), Mal'aka Ḍhaḥay Tagañā of Dabra-Märqos (Goğgêm) wrote a lectionary for the whole year. It was only a handwritten 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 Heruy Fantā and Liqē Qadalā [sic] Alaqā Afa-Waqr revised it with the intention to have it being printed. But when all was completed with Malāka [sic] Berḥān 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 Bāšā Śāhā-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 (ω↓:) in three parts:

1. The lectionary of the Days (γν: fΩτp: Geșăwe 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.

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 Deggā (or to Ziq).
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 Ṭeṣemṭ, 13 in Ḥeddār, 13 in Tāḥšās, 11 in Ṭerr, 5 in Yakkātī, 5 in Maggābit, 6 in Miyāzyā, 8 in Genbot, 6 in Sanē, 11 in Ḥamlē, 14 in Naḥāṣē and 1 in Pāg emēn. This service is performed only if a tābot of the corresponding commemoration is present in the church.

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: B≤ωκ: Λ ↓Ωγ: Λ ↓Ωρ (β•Λτ←αΣ; Bataweskt la-miwardu ba-lāt-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.

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 Qiryqos," 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.

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": μηλ: Mehelā, or rather: μηλα: 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 (Meluʿ: for John the Forerunner, the Friday ending Lent and Pentecost) or an "incomplete" form (Netugt: 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 qaʿa qaʾīm). We shall not deal more with this topic here but the interested reader may consult BVM p. 35-37, corrected and completed by Habtenmichael-Kidane, L'Ufficio, chapter IX.

The name of Mehelelā 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 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 the office of Palm-Sunday (Hosā`enna) under a distinct number, as if it were a question of 10 distinct Sundays.

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

This book was edited by Tesfā Gabra-Śellāsē, Addis-Ababa, 1976 E.C. (1984 A.D.). It is a lectionary totally written in Ge`ez, 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 Yakkātīt 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" have been grouped together. The book ends with two pages of ecclesiastical computation, the Bāhēra hasāb (HP: ♠ β ·), followed by a table of the movable feasts from 1976 to 2041 (September 1983 to September 2048 A.D.).

See n. 42.
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 priests (za-qasəvest, NMG/P) dated 1977 E.C. (1985 A.D.) and the other one is for the use of the deacons (za-diyəgonət, NMG/D) dated 1978 E.C. (1986 A.D.).

**NMG/P** includes:
1. The lectionary for the Days, from p. 1 to 486.
2. The index for the Fasts and the feast [of the Ascension], from p. 487 to 490.
3. The index for the Sundays, from p. 490 to 496.

**NMG/D** includes:
1. The lectionary for the Days, from p. 1 to 241.
2. The index for the Fasts and the feast [of the Ascension], p. 242 and 243.
3. The index for the Sundays, from p. 244 to 246.

A few remarks:
1. The *Mesbək* 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 *Mesbək* 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 *Mesbək* + Gospel for the morning,
   2) a Mass,

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⁴⁴ In contrast with MG, which does not hesitate to offer full chapters.
3) another couple Mesbâk + Gospel for the evening.\(^{45}\)

These morning and evening lessons are meant to enrich the double daily\(^{46}\) celebration of the Prayer of the Covenant or Šalota Kidân.\(^{47}\) 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 Mesbâk, 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. ΨΒάς: Κρσ:—ν: ΠΛάτ: Ya-Bëta krestiyâin Šalot: "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.


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 celebra-
tion 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* 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. **ΣΦ**: δ: *Mašṭafa Deggā* (= MD) is the main chantbook. It covers the whole year. It is concerned with both the Temporal and the Sanctoral.\(^51\)

2. ¬Μ: δ: *Soma Deggā* : "the Deggā of the Fast" (= SD). This Lenten chantbook probably used to be part of the Deggā 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. **ΣΦ**: µ: *Mašṭafa Me’rāf*.\(^52\) 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. **ΣΦ**: M: *Mašṭafa Mawāšē’t* (= M) is an antiphonary 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.

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\(^{49}\) 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 Deggā, *Da’ata Si’ol* in the Zemmārē, or the whole purpose and use of *Mawāšē et*, etc.

\(^{51}\) Cf. the introductions provided for by HABT MICHAEL-KIDANE, *Il Deggā*, and JEFFERY, *Chantbook*.

\(^{52}\) BVM; B. VELAT, *Études sur le Mé 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.

5. ΜΣ Φ : ζ : 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. ΜΣ Φ : f θ: Maṣḥafa Ziq (= Ziq), or "lesser chantbook" in contrast with the Maṣḥafa Deggā which is often likened to a huge ocean. It is therefore relatively recent and was elaborated by the schools of sacred chant, or Aqāqām.

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 Pāgēmēn, the Ethiopians say fΩτρ: 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 ΜΣ Φ : ςνκρ : (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

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. Grébaut and G. Colin in PO (SynPO), as well as Budge's translation (SynB).
57 The word "Synaxary" means "collection."
58 BVM p. 71.
"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 from Coptic sources in order to exalt martyrs (from the persecution of Diocletian, mostly) and monks as well, with a few other exceptions. The work was begun around 1200 by Butrus al-Ǧamil 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 Ṣtīfānās. 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, Kešat 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 Maṣḥaf Gaṣṣāwē, 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 life-

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


62 Well informed people are saying (1996 G.C.) that a printed edition in Ge’ez and Amharic is under preparation at “Kokaba ṣebḥāl” 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.
time, or a famous miracle they performed, etc. Finally, some commemorations refer 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 day\textsuperscript{65}, 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

\textsuperscript{65} In practice, only the sanctuaries of the major monasteries would have Mass daily.
same commemoration, the texts of Matins are supposed to be the best choice to express the mystery of the day in the appropriate way.

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 τσβΙτ: Tesbe’et, 29 Maggābit.
2- Holy Week, mobile.
3- The Resurrection τνŠ α: Tenšāʾē, mobile.
4- The apparition of the risen Lord to the Apostle Thomas ★: Tomāš, mobile.
5- The Ascension )ρΓτ: Ergat, mobile.
6- Pentecost θΛ⊥⊄σ: Parāqītīs, mobile69.
7- The Transfiguration, i.e. Mount-Tabor 3βP: Dabra Tābār, 13 Naḥasē.
8- The Nativity λςτ: Ledat, 29 Tāḥsās.
9- The Baptism Τµš τ: Temq̄at*70, 11 Ėrr, and the miracle at Cana of Galilee ← : fΓΑלם: Qānā za-Galīlā, *12 Ėrr.71


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 Miyažā. 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 ασ≤ρΙℵ: (Astare’ēyō) means "manifestation," "epiphany," and may replace that of Temqat. 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’ēyō Mūšūn means in fact: the feast of Mary (her Falling-asleep) which occurs during the time of the Epiphany of the Lord.

71 13 Ėrr 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 Ḥāyla Šellāṣē on 12
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.\textsuperscript{72} All these feasts, including Cana, should be celebrated in all churches, whatever their t\textsuperscript{č}bot\textsuperscript{tāt}.\textsuperscript{73} The fixed feasts have precedence over the Sunday.

**b) The Six Minor Feasts**

1- The (Exaltation of the) Cross M\textsuperscript{o} \text{λ}: Masqal, 17 Maskaram.
2- The Circumcision of the Lord γζΠ\textsuperscript{r}: Gezrat, 6 Terr.
3- The Multiplication of the loaves П→ : Ḳf\textsuperscript{t}: Bāraka Egzi’e-na\textsuperscript{74}, 28 Terr.
4- Presentation of the Lord σμ\textsuperscript{v}: Sem’on, 8 Yakkātīt.
5- The Finding of the true Cross M\textsuperscript{o} \text{λ}: Masqal, 10 Mammābit.
6- The Entry of the Lord into Egypt BαΣ: Ba’ata Gebṣ, 24 Genbot.

All these feasts are fixed and belong to the Sanctorial. 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 Bατ: Ba’atā, 3 Tāḥṣās.
2- The Falling-asleep Ṭρ: Eraftā, 21 Terr.
3- The Nativity Λ\textsuperscript{v}: Ledatā, 1 Genbot.
4- St. Anne’s Conception of Mary Ḳγ\/ : Ṭansatā, 7 Naḥasē.
5- The Assumption Ḳ\textsuperscript{t}: Felsatā, 16 Naḥasē.

**b) Two Feasts honouring a Name of Mary**

1- Mountain of Sion ฿Π\textsuperscript{r}: Dabra Ṣeyon, 21 Hedār.
2- Covenant of Mercy →\textsuperscript{}`: Kidāna meherat, 16 Yakkātīt.

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\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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 t\textsuperscript{č}bot by the name of Madḥjānē’alam, as the full name of the feast is said to be: Μ\textsuperscript{o}\textsuperscript{t}: BஇΠ\textsuperscript{r}/p: Madḥjānē’alam (the Saviour of the world on Mount Tabor).

\textsuperscript{74} Lit. “Our Lord blessed.” Cf. Mt. 14:19-21.
c) Three Feasts commemorating a Miracle of Mary
1. Apparition to Ildefonse of Toledo: $\text{Z\theta\sigma\Sigma \text{σ}}: \text{Ba'ala Daqseyos}$, 10 Maskaram.
2. Apparition at Dabra Metmâq: $\mu\Theta: \text{Dabra Metmâq}$, 21 Genbot.

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d) Four Feasts dedicated to Marian Sanctuaries
1. Dabra Qwesqâm: $\text{Dabra Qwesqâm}$, 6 Hedâr.
2. "The Source which her Son caused to spring" $\text{Zu'anq à Waldâ mây}$, 8 Sanê.
3. The Building up of the church bearing her name at Philippi: $\text{Henșata bêta krestiyân ba-semâ}$, 20 Sanê.
4. The Consecration of her church at Philippi: $\text{Qeddäsē bêtā}$, 21 Sanê.

Emperor Zar’a Yä’eqob (1434-1468) instituted the celebration of a total of 33 annual feasts in honour of Our Lady, "to be kept like Sundays." 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:

1. The Falling-asleep $\text{Eraft}$, 21 Terr.
2. The Covenant of Mercy $\rightarrow \text{Kidâna meherat}$, 16 Yakkâtit.

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76 Mary was asking St. Ildefonse (= Dēnsiu), 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.
3. The Nativity λΣ: ḿedatā, 1 Genbot.
4. The Consecration of her church at Philippi θℜ: Qeddāsē bētā, 21 Sanē.
5. The Assumption φλ: Felsatā, 16 Nahāsē.

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 Saints
   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 Γδλ: gadl, "fight", and corresponds to the Greek Αθλῆσις, 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 → לְרִי: 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

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84 The Ethiopians divide the just ones into the two broad categories of those "ba-ʾaṣāda mot" (BoT[[3]: ʾ], "in the fold of death," i. e. those who died before the time of Christ, and those "ba-ʾaṣāda nafs" (BoT[[3]: ʾ), "in the fold of life [lit.: 'soul']," i. e. those who died from the time of Christ onwards.
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

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’ē*

Should the saintly person be acknowledged as saint, his spiritual *ΜΛΚ*: *Malk’ē*, "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 finess. 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 ≤ọọr ṭ: *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 tābor bearing his name.


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 مشاركة 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’s contenues 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.
The most famous collection of Miracles are the ≤αµP: ρ—µ: Ta’ammera Māryām, the Miracles of Mary, and the ≤αµP: α⊥Ψ—σ: Ta’ammera Iyyasus, the Miracles of Jesus.

4. The Tābot

Some say that only those whose Gadl contains a Kindān may have a tābot dedicated in their name. But it has been written: "In our [= of us, Ethiopians] Church, a Ṣellāt\(^{89}\) 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. Ṣeqemt


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\(^{89}\) 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.
3. Ḥedār
4: Abbā Abayedo. 5: Abbā Yoḥanni (end of the liturgical Season of the Flowers).

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

5. Ṭerr
1: Stephen, the first martyr. 3: The Holy Innocents and Abbā Libānos. 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: Yārōd, the Hymnographer. 20: Kālēb, the King. 29: Abbā Afsē and Abbā Gubā.

10. Sanē

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

12. Naḥasē

°° I.e. St. Frumentius.
°°° Or Maṭa’e.
°°°° Astameherō, not Astameherō.

13. Ṭāg ṣemēn

3: Archangel Raphael and Melchisedek.

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 (TBp: māhebar), or the devotion of the celebrants, for instance - can influence and give place to local practices.

1 - λ.Ω: Ledatā: the Nativity of Our Lady Mary (1 Genbot).
2 - /φ=σ: Tādēwos [Thaddeous] (2 Ḥamlē); α : Γ= : Abbā Gubā, one of the Nine Saints (Genbot 29).
3 - Bs: Ba'atā: the Entry of Mary into the Temple (Tāhsās).
4 - ρ νσ: Ωλ.Ω: ↔Γ(δω.δ): Yohannes Walda Naq"adg"ād [John, "the Son of Thunder"] (Ṭerr).
5 - αΒ=↔: ΓθΡ: MvΦθ: θ(σ: Abuna Gabra Manfas Qeddus (Ṭeqemt and Maggābit)⁹⁷; ΩΓ :ΩαΑ(σ: Pēros wa-Πiwelos (Ḩamlē).
6 - αΠΨ =σ: Iyyasus: the Name of Jesus, received at Circumcision (Ṭerr); ΩΩ: Ω: Dabra Q"esq"ām, in Upper Egypt, where the Holy Family is said to have spent 6 months and 10 days (Ḥedār).
7 - ) : Śellāsē, the Holy Trinity (Ḩamlē and Ṭerr).

⁹⁷ The Gadla Iyāsu tells how the saint of Ĝār 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 Habta Māryām († 1497) e di Iyāsu († 1508), Santi Etiopici, OCA 235, Rome 1990, p. 245.
8. α : → ⊥ σ : Abbā Kiros (Ḥamlē).


11. ← : Hanna, the mother of Mary (Ḥedār); Γ−ωϕ∞σ: Galawdeños [Claudius] (Sanē).

12. ↓α : Mikā‘el (Ḥedār and Sanē).

13. †σα: B = κ: Zar‘a-Buruk, the servant of Abuna Gabra Manfas Qeddus (Ṭerr).

14. αΒ=↔ αΡ∅?: Abuna Aragāwi, one of the Nine Saints; ΓβΡ: κρσ∞σ: Gabra Krestos the hermit (Ṭeqemt).

15. …ρœ σ: Qirqos [Cyriacus] (Ṭerr. See also 19 Ḥamlē).


17. ισ⊃⊥⇑σ: Esṭifanos (Ṭeqemt); α : Γ : Abbā Garimā, one of the Nine Saints (Sanē).

18. ασ≤≤∞σ: Ewosgātēgos [Eustathius] (Maskaram).


20. HvI≤: B≤: κρσ—ν: Bσ : Ḥençaata bēta krestiyān ba-semā [the Building up of the church bearing Mary’s name at Philippi] (Sanē).

21. Ḣγιτ↔: p—μ: Egze‘et-na Märıyām Our Lady Mary (especially her Dormition or Falling-asleep in Ṭerr).

22. Σθσκσ: Daqsyos [Ildefonse (= Dexius) of Toledo (681-690)]. Our Lady asked him to establish a monthly commemoration of the Annunciation (Ṭāḥšās).

23. ΠκΓσ (George of Lydda] (Miyāzyā).

24. αΒ=<>: κσ; ψ ↑τ: Abuna Takla Ḥaymnōt (Naḥasē. Also Tāḥšās, Ṭerr, as well as 12 Genbot).


27. MΩ↔: *Μυ: Madḫānē ʾdāam [Christ on the Cross] (Maggābit and Ṭeqemt).

28. θσ|=|λ: Amānu’el (Ṭāḥšās); αβρνμυ: ψσ θ : → β : Abrehām, Yeshaq and Ya’eqob (Naḥasē).

30 - $\rho \sigma$ : Mârqos (Miyāzyā).
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. These seasons, traditional in the Northern Hemisphere, are:

1- The Windy Season: ΜΠω : Maṣaw, from 26 Maskaram to 25 Tāḥṣās.
2- The Dry Season: Ωψ : Ḥagāy, from 26 Tāḥṣās to 25 Maggābit.
3- The Sowing Season (or that of the light rains: Βλψ : balg): Πψ : Šadaw, from 26 Maggābit to 25 Sanē.
4- The Rainy Season: κΡµτ : Keram, 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 scholars 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 Ωψ: (Bagā) and the Rainy Season κΡµτ: (Keram).

Another system of division of the year has been developed, and is found in the chantbook of the Masḥafa Deggā. Threefold, it immediately reminds one of the threefold division of the Egyptian year, 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- Ρ υσ : Yohannes, from 1 Maskaram to 30 Heder, covers the beginning of the year.
2- Ασ≤µΗ– : Astamehero, "supplication to obtain mercy", from 1 Tāḥṣās to 30 Maggābit, is also known as Ρ : M•τ: reḥuqa ma’aṭ: "slow to anger." The

98 Pag"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.


101 Jeffery, Chantbook, adds a "Section III: Season of the Fast," section omitted from the printed edition of the Deggā. The fact that Lent is held as a season of Astamehero anyway (see below on the Fasts, "Rubrics concerned with fasts," makes it hardly relevant to add a specific section to locate it.
theme of God's mercy and forgiveness, together with man's effort to reach out to them, therefore prevails.\textsuperscript{102}

3- ↓ ↓: Fāsikā, from Easter to the end of the year. It is divided between the time of the Resurrection and the Season of the Rains (Keramti), when the office celebrates a transformed nature and glorifies the Creator.\textsuperscript{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 HP: ♦ β : Bāhēra Ḫasāb, 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 Mp: αζν : Marha 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 Ḫasāb are undoubtedly of Alexandrian origin, having thus preserved for us much of the "computus" of early Christianity (4th century).\textsuperscript{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 Șäker's treatise on "Chronography" (αβ= ￩ KP) "had significant influence on the Ethiopic computus..." Otto Neugebauer showed that this "is completely unfounded and should be laid to rest for good.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 Maggābi while Easter is mobile.

\textsuperscript{102} HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, Il Degg"ā, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{103} HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, Il Degg"ā, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{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, philosohisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 498, Vienna 1988, p. 9. For details on this matter, see CHAINE, Chronologie and GRUMEL, Chronologie.

\textsuperscript{105} NEUGEBAUER, Abu Shaker, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{106} BVM p. 30-35
The beginning of the year
1. Maskaram 1 to 8: "John the Forerunner (Yoḥannes)."
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] (Ḥenṣata bēta maqṣas)."
5. Maskaram 17 to 25: "the Cross (Masqal)."
6. Maskaram 26 to Ḥedār 5: "the Flowers (Ṣegē)."
7. Ḥedār 6 to Tāḥṣāš 7 up to the Saturday between Tāḥṣāš 7 and Tāḥṣāš 13: * "the Supplication (Astameḥero)."

The Cycle of the Nativity and of the Epiphany
8. From the Sunday of the Preaching (= Sunday between Tāḥṣāš 8 and Tāḥṣāš 14) to the following Saturday: "the Preaching (Sebkat)." In addition, the following names can be appended: "the Descent (Redat)," and "the Coming (Mes'at)."
9. The following week, "the Light (Berḥān)," from Sunday to Saturday.
10. From the Sunday following to Tāḥṣāš 27: "the Shepherd (Nolāwī)."107
11. Tāḥṣāš 28: "the Bridegroom (Marʾāwī)."
12. Tāḥṣāš 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 (Nāẓrēt; ḥednat)."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 (Astareʾeyo)." MG characterises this period in the following way: "He walked (Ansosawa); he was born (Tawalda); he was baptised (Ṭaṭamqa); he changed water into wine (Aweyano la-māy)."
   a) Announcement of the approaching Great Lent (Easter Cycle): "the Fast of Nineveh (Soma 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 (Marʾāwī)."

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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 Șom)."

d) "Forty-day Fast (Șoma ʿārbā)."

e) "Holy Week (Hêmāmāt)."

f) "Eastertide (Zamana Tenšāʾē)" up to Ascension eve.

g) "Resurrection week (Samuna Tenšāʾē)," a part of Eastertide.

h) "Ascensiontide (Zamana Ergat)."

i) "Week of the Holy-Spirit (Samuna Manfas Qeddus)," a part of Ascensiontide.

j) Flexible ending to both Ascensiontide and the Easter Cycle, in order to reach Sanē 17.


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 Naḥāse 9: "Lightning (Mabraq), Thunder (Nagʿadgʿād), Sea (Bāḥer), Rivers (Aflāg), Dew (Ṭal)."

19. Naḥasē 10 to 27: "the Little Crow (ʿEgwela qʷāʾāt), the Islands (Dasayāt), the Eye of all [creatures] (ʿAyna kʷelu)."

20. Naḥasē 28 to the end of the year: "Daybreak (Goh), Morning (Nageh), Dawn (Šebāḥ), Light (Berhān), Day (Maʿalt), Nativity (Ledat)."

B - The Fasts

The times of fasting — șom (Șom) by opposition to φσκ (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 Γδ: Gahd, 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 Qʾesqʾām. The feastday which ends a fast is called its "pasch:" ↓↓↓: fāṣkā.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?

1. The Rules of Fasting

The day of fast is based on the civil day which runs from midnight 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., 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.) 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 tolerated, 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.

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 :Sa’tašti, the Hours. They are celebrated during the night, and follow the text composed at the

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108 Fritsch

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

111 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.

112 FN PAULOS p. 96.

113 On account of the problem of interpretation of the canon which reads in Ge’ez ḥa’b: : za’enbala ṣašā, which may mean either "including fish" or "except for fish." See FN PAULOS p. 94, n. 14; LESLAU p. 27.

114 FN PAULOS p. 96.
time of Emperor `Amda Šeyon (1314-1344) by Abbā Giyorgis of GāseŠšā, 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. 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.
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 Geʿez, Ḗzel and Arărāy. In the periods of Astamehero, that is, of "fast" understood in the wider sense according to the classification above, the musical mode "Geʿez" is preferred to the mode Ḗzel, which is employed on festive occasions. Arărāy is employed to sing specific pieces of hymnography but does not associate particularly with any season.

Some editions of the Geʿez text of the Missal show two lines of musical signs just above the lines of the text. Each one of these signs is a µλκτ: Meleket. The lower

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116 M. DAoud, Lit. p. 53.
117 BVM has attempted to sort out this matter pp. 73 sq.
118 BVM p. 99 sq.
line is black in colour and is meant for the singing of Mass in mode Ge’ez. The upper line of meleketo\footnote{Amharic plural of meleket.} 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 Madhjănē ‘alām, or the Transfiguration. It can be also the feast of the Covenant of Mercy (Kidāna meḥerat) or the main feast of the local parish, according to the name of its tābot. In such a circumstance, known as ya-‘ānat ba‘al (lit.: “yearly feast”), the office should include the Wāzēmā.\footnote{The Wāzēmā characterizes solemnities, which include the singing of hymns called Nagē 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; ḫebra Ṣellāśē (tu’ālāwi ạlọt) wa-dersa 7 malā ẹkọ mesla Nagē za-Māhelet,” Addis-Ababa 1985 A.M. [= 1993 A.D.], Tesfā Gabra-Sellāśē Press, 70 pages (editor’s emphasis). In this booklet, a Sebbuḥ or a Nagē 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; Eustathius; Sion; Samuel; George; Takla Ḥāymanot; Christmas; Baptism; Mary’s Astare’eyo [sic = Falling-asleep]; Mary’s Nativity; Assumption.} This entails that the singing will be in mode ‘Ezel.\footnote{However, the Book of the Mē’erāf, 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); Masqāl (17 Maskaram); Michael (12 Ḥedār); the Preaching (1st Sunday of “Advent”); Christmas (29 Tāḫsās); the Monday of Musē-ni (the Great Lent’s 1st day of fast); Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Niqodīnos (the last week of the Great Lent); Palm-Sunday (two mentions unclear to me); Ascension; Pentecost; Michael (12 Sanē); Transfiguration (13 Naqasē). The rest of the services is in ‘Ezel, hence the need for this rubric.} In Lent, the drum is permitted exceptionally.

5. The Six Fasts

The fasts are listed in chronological order:

1. "The fast of [Mount] Q”esq”ām, ¬–M: [ṢβP:] Ṣoma [Dabra] Q”esq”ām,” 40 days, from Maskaram 26 to the feast of Q’esq’am on 6 Ḥedār. 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, ¬–M: ←B.↓→t: Ṣoma nabiyāt,” or: "of the Nativity ¬–M: Ḵ. Ṣoma Ledat," 43 days, from Ḥedār 16 to Tāḥṣās 28 (or from Ḥedār 15 to Tāḥṣās 27 in the years of John), including the day of "the Bridegroom, Mª?: Mar’awi,” (i.e., the eve of Christmas). The three first days commemorate the miracle of the Muqṭṭam near Cairo. This fast is compulsory for monks and priests; on the last day of the Bridegroom only, all the
faithful join in the fast. Again, on Ţerr 10, the eve of the Epiphany called "Manifest, Γ: Gahād," all the faithful will fast.

3. "The Fast of Nineveh ←M: ↔×: Šoma 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, δΒ¬ψ: ¬μ: 'Abiy Šom" (or: "Ζ=Ρ ψ: Κudādē") is compulsory for all. It lasts 55 days, including Saturdays and Sundays when abstinence only is required.

a - "The Fast of Heraclius, ←M:Hp λ: Šoma Ḥerqāl" 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 M= ↓·↓: Musē-ni ("And Moses") (see Ex. 24:16); they often use this name for the eighth week before Easter.


5. "The Fast of the Apostles ←M: χp—τ: Šoma Havāryār" lasts from the Monday after Pentecost to the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on Hamlē 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 ←M:δΥviso: Šoma deγγnēt" 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 ←M:φλ•: Šoma felσnē" is compulsory for all from Naḥsē 1 to the feast on Naḥsē 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.

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C - The Sundays

1. The Day

The Sunday is called Ἐλγ: Œlud: the "first" day of the week. Sanbat (pl. Sanәbet), that is to say "Sabbath," is also a term much utilised, especially in the expression νΒ≤ : κρσv: Sanbata krestiýan, the Sabbath of the Christians. The latter is said in contrast to the "first Sanbat" ( Ṣҝ/member : νBτ : qadәmit Sanbat, that is, the "Sabbath of the Jews" ( νΒ≤ : αψ{=δ: Sanbata Ayhud), which 15th century King Zar’a Yәqәb 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 Alexandria\(^{123}\) 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 first\(^ {125}\) but not the last. Oh, this day is the last\(^ {126}\) 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.\(^ {127}\)

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

\(^{125}\) M. DAOUDE, Lit, n. 3: "The first of the seven days of creation."

\(^{126}\) M. DAOUDE, Lit., n. 4: "The tradition is that Christ's second advent will be on Sunday."
In relation to this, there are brotherhoods (Ἐβρ: Μαηβαρ, pl. Ἐβτ: Μαηβαράτ) 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 "Βιν≤: Βα-enta Sanbat (Amharic: ውለ: ዓ EVT: 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. Yārèd and in the New Testament readings and the Psalm-verse (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:ΨΜτ: Αμ: Ya-/DDmat 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'āq’am

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

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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”ā, pp. 372-380.

128 On the Church singers, see HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, Il Degg”ā, p. 355-356: “I Däbtära.”
readings being proclaimed. This means that the Mazmurät, too, were sung in a differ-
ent order in various places, since they are always inseparable from the set of read-
ings indicated after them in a given lectionary.

The variation is due to the fact that, as it happens, there exists in Ethiopia a di-
versity of "schools" (lit. "houses:" B \textvarsity}{bēt}, Amharic pl. B \textvarsity}{bētoc}) concerned
with the careful execution of the Divine Office by a choir and the correct teaching of
the same.\footnote{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).} These schools teach ways to execute the plainchant, which differ from
one another. The texts of the office remain unchanged. But, besides the actual execu-
tion 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 pe-
riod, 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: \textvarsity}{ya-'aq\textvarsity}{aqam bēt. This type
of school represents a particular development of the liturgical tradition of the cele-
bration 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\textvarsity}{aqam 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 aban-
don the larger and more ancient chantbook of the Degg\textvarsity}{, qualified as being an
ocean impossible to master, in favour of the introduction of a new antiphonary, the
Ziq, much lighter\footnote{Ziq refers to zeqeteññ and means "lesser". It has something of the concept behind the "breviary."} and full of a lively dynamism likely to be attractive.\footnote{In particular by the popular \textvarsity}{šefūt, when the drum is beaten with open hands and the lively rhythm of the Ṣefūt: šebēbo 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 Šefūt refers to the beating of
Jesus as his guards were throwing him to one another. See HMW pp. 113-114.}

The more important schools are the Lāy Bēt, or "higher school", and the Tāc Bēt,
or "lower school," which seems to be the more widespread school nowadays, both in
the famous city of Gondar. The Tāc Bēt school is also known by the name of the
church Ba atā of Gondar. Other schools exist, such as that of Bēta-Lehēm (Gayent),
or AŠāferē.\footnote{On this matter, see HMW pp. 108-112; HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, \textit{L'Ufficio}; J. DORESSE, \textit{La Vie
Quotidienne des Ethiopiens Chrétiens (aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)}, Paris 1972, p. 152, 160, 165. On
Bēta-Lehēm, see HABTEMICHAEL-KIDANE, Il Degg\textvarsity}{, pp. 382-384.}
One might wonder whether the terms "Tāč Bēt" and "Lōy 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.\footnote{See R.W. Cowley, \textit{Memher Esdros and his interpretations}, Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Tel-Aviv, 14-17 April 1980, p. 41-42 and \textit{The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church}, Cambridge 1983, ch. 1, p. 5.}

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 \textit{incipit} of the Mazmur in the lectionary are those to be read.

The liturgical times when the order of Sundays is affected by the \textit{Aq q̣̣m} 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\footnote{See their list in Section III, D, 1.}, as well as the two secondary feasts of Cana of Galilee and the Cross (\textit{Masqal}, on 17 Maskaram), have always and everywhere precedence over the Sunday. Their \textit{Wāzēmā}, \textit{Māhelet} 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 \textbf{Mary the Mother of God}, the Assumption (\textit{Felsatā}) has always and everywhere precedence over the Sunday.
On all other feasts of Our Lady, e.g. the Dormition or Kidâna Meḥerat, 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 Māḥelēt, at which the Məsbāk and Gospel indicated for the Morning (za-nageh) 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: ΛιΜ: ι↔: …ρ σ : Βλ : ΜζΜ=ρ: ΤЂ): ΛΗ↔: ΛΗ↔: 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 Mazmūr hymn and refer for the rest to the lectionary of the Days as in the following case: ΛιΜ: ι↔: σμ↔: Βλ : ΜζΜ=ρ : Μ{ ↔: ΙΛ: ΖΜ↔↔: Μν β : ΨƒΩτ’ ν : Βλ : 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 Mazmûr, just before Mass begins. When a commemoration fulfilling the requirements occurs, a hymn of its own office, called Abun, replaces the Mazmûr.

Between the Māḥelēt 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": ψ↔ψ λ : yenagšāł).
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 Malkā: \( \rho \nu : \text{Malk} \text{'a Q'erbān ('Portrait of the Eucharist') before the distribution of the Eucharist to the faithful, for example, is still not included in the Missal.} \)

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.

\textsuperscript{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 stational character.

\textsuperscript{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.
The liturgical year. 1. The calendar The calendar of the Ethiopian church came from Egypt and as to methods and dates agrees with the calendar of the Coptic Church. But the two calendars differ with regard to the saints' days and the time of observing them. The year of the Ethiopian calendar contains 365 days to which is added every fourth year an extra day. The chronology of the Ethiopian church follows the Era of Incarnation that is it dates from our Lord's birth; there is a difference of 7 or 8 years between the western and Ethiopian systems. Because the Ethiopian church holds that our Lord was born 5500 years after the creation of the world this gives the 7 or 8 years difference between the Gregorian and Ethiopian Chronologies.