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Robyn Howes' Repatriation of Eleven Ethiopian Mss from Johannesburg, South Africa to Ethiopia's National Archives and Library Agency

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Introduction (Yikunnoamlak Mezgebu)

We are here today to witness the repatriation of a collection of eleven manuscripts to Ethiopia. They have been absent from the country for more than sixty years. Ms. Robyn Howes of Johannesburg, South Africa, has owned the collection for six years. She has brought the manuscripts back to Addis Ababa to turn them over to the National Archives and Library Agency. It is appropriate today that we should tell the stories of where these manuscripts came from, how they came into the hands of a German family in Ethiopia in the 1950's, how they were moved to South Africa, how they were eventually bought by Ms. Howes, and why she desires to give them back to Ethiopia today.

Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce to you Ms. Robyn Howes.

The Provenance of the Collection with Robyn Howes, 2016 to 2022 (Robyn Howes)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and future scholars. I am the one who is honored to present to you today (along with my colleagues Prof Delamater, Mr. Kaleab Demeke and dignitaries at NALA (Mr. Yikunnoamlak Mezgebu).

I was born in Durban, South Africa in 1971 and raised in Pretoria as part of a large Anglican Family. We were raised as part of a christian church community which had no additional significance other than being immersed in community service and a respect for the efforts of others. My parents had always instilled in us kids that you are here in service to

others in everything that you do. So, I went on with my life as a young adult and progressed in a career in medical In Vitro Diagnostics which continues to fill my life today. The only thing that I kept with me during my younger years and throughout my life was a simple bible which was the hallmark of my tiny contribution to our community church being built in Pretoria (South Africa, Corpus Christi Anglican Church). My brother Vernon Foster is now an Anglican Priest so has been a great resource in understanding the role of bibles and prayer books used during the church service, and his reluctance to change utilizing digital platforms.

So, I was very surprised at my response when I was presented with an opportunity in 2016 to “have a look” at this bible which my friend Doron Locketz¹ had in his bookshop. Doron always knew the special interests of his customers and would always let you have “first peek” at whatever treasures he had stashed behind his counter. I had already collected rare books on the KoiSan people for safekeeping and future donation. It so happened that Markus Reichardt and myself were special collectors. Wandering around his tiny bookshop was like visiting a living museum. During these years (2015 - 2019) I had begun to get a sense that all these precious books and collections would soon disappear and be eternally lost in time. I got a sense that as the older generation would pass away, their children would dump boxes on the doorstep of the bookshop. The number of bookshops have been diminishing rapidly over this very short period of 5 years along with antique collections at an alarming rate.



Fig 1: Bookshop owner Doron Locketz (left) who sold the books to Robyn Howes (right)

When I saw the first Manuscript, I had a real sense of panic. It was such a visceral response that I could not lose sight of this manuscript and had to get it for safekeeping. I knew Doron would make sure this manuscript would go to a responsible home. So, after I bought the first one, I was then surprised to hear that there were more available from the same owner. My sense of panic increased and wondered how I was going to try to get all of them into safe keeping, much like an endangered species. I then suggested that I meet with the owner, Markus, to try to get as much information on the origins of these manuscripts. If

¹ See “Meet Doron Locketz, the beloved book man from Bookdealers” an article published in The Citizen by Hein Kaiser on August 9, 2022; accessed at <https://www.citizen.co.za/lifestyle/3168788/doron-locketz-beloved-book-man-bookdealers/> on September 3, 2022. The article also provides a link to a video documentary of Doron and his bookshop (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo5VCn_As3s&t=176s)

they had traveled in time together? How had he acquired them? Did they have their origins in Ethiopia, or had they been part of other collections around the world?

So, to my huge relief, the transaction was simple, and I could quickly see that this was not an economically profitable endeavor, but rather a search for the best home for the collection, and to keep them all together was critical.

When you have an Ethiopic manuscript in front of you it is like looking after a "living" work of art. The privilege here was looking at all the tiny details from the perspective of an entire collection. Each one compared to the other. The differences in style, the difference in ages and size. Some present a more grand approach, whilst others are more humble in style. Some came with Mahdur double or single cases and some with simple leather and wooden binding. The craftsmanship is exquisite. Each one is incredibly individual and personal. Each page tells the story not only of the purpose of the text, but also that of the priest as they progress through the church service and prayers. Each one is carefully curated over time. The thoughts of each Sunday service with hymns and incense weaves a memory of the past and brings it into the present. This is the true value of the manuscript, it engages all the senses at once. One is compelled to ask the questions, what is this all about, and what do these religious texts represent culturally and spiritually?

And so began the idea to take a further step in order to take them back to their origins. After some google research, the name of Prof Delamater kept on coming up. He had been part of a team of specialists who were key in both the safekeeping of other important manuscripts as well as being involved in the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project. So, in November 2017 I reached out to Steve to determine how best to preserve them.

This project has taken years in the making (including the limitations during COVID). To my mind there were only two objectives. One to get them digitized for future reference, as is now the recommendation for other manuscripts. The other is to repatriate them back to Ethiopia, where they can continue to be a part of a rich cultural heritage that future generations can celebrate.

We were fortunate to contact Markus Reichardt, the son of the couple who acquired the manuscripts in Ethiopia. With his generous help we are able to reconstruct the rest of the story about the origins of this collection.

The Provenance of the Collection with the Reichardt Family, 1958-2016. The Story of the Reichardts and their Ventures in South America and Africa (Robyn Howes)

Irmela Buchholz (1931-2008) was the future wife of Manfred Reichardt (1924-2016). The roots of her family in the 18th and 19th centuries were in the area of Leuneburg, near Hamburg, Germany. It was her father who set in motion the travels and explorations that would take members of the family to Ethiopia. In the late 19th century, he studied the field of tropical agriculture with a view to business and trading in agricultural products. Once he had his degree he set off for Chile in South America where he lived and worked in the early 1900s. But, in the middle of the first World War when Chile declared its support of the European allies against the Kaiser, he along with other Germans living in the country, were ejected and shipped back to Germany.

In the years between the two World Wars, Buchholz was looking for his next opportunity. He was given the chance to become a coffee trader and later plantation manager in Guatemala. This is where Irmela and her older sister and younger brother were born. But, once again, world events would intervene. The alignment of Guatemala against Germany in the Second World War led to their expulsion from Guatemala in 1942-43, and the loss of most of their holdings and assets there. By now Buchholz was in his early 60s, but still looking to make his way in the world of international business and trading. Somewhere around 1953, he moved to Ethiopia in another attempt to trade in tropical agri-products and then moved on to establish a coffee plantation in the Oromo region southwest of Addis Ababa, with some help from the Ethiopian government.



Fig 2: Map showing the location of Wushwush, some 470 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa



Fig 3 Four images of the plantation at Wush Wush in 1957

The coffee plantation he established was called Wush Wush and has, in the years following the Derg, become famous for its tea since the forest canopy disappeared during the drought years. Buchholz, his wife, and his three children would live and work in Ethiopia until the early 1970s, at which time the plantation was eventually nationalized by the DERG.



Fig 4: Wush Wush Tea from the region where Mr Buchholz established the Wush Wush Plantation in the 1950s

Irmela, the dutiful second daughter of Mr. Buchholz, played a role in plantation administration and logistics management. Every six or eight weeks she would travel the dirt roads for a day and a half across the 470 kilometers to Addis Ababa in order to pick up supplies.



Fix 5: The road between Bonga and Jimma in 1957

Manfred Reichardt was the future husband of Irmela Buchholz. His family was from Lower Saxony in Germany, near the city of Eisenach, where Martin Luther translated the Bible into German. Manfred's father was a banker who was eventually hounded to death by the Russians as a class enemy after the Second World War. Manfred became a displaced

person and eventually went to live with his sister's family to go to University in the city of Bonn. His area of study was in finance and trade. Eventually, he ended up in the import/export business. He had some linguistic abilities and gained some conversational fluency in several languages, though his son says "he was surprisingly bad at all of them." But his language skills were one of the things that helped launch a career working with an Armenian-owned company called Seferian. They made and distributed heavy equipment for building roads and other civil engineering projects. He took up his post in Addis Ababa as regional sales manager for the company which had about 30 or 40 employees at the time.

One day, so the story goes, a young German woman from the rural areas of southwest Ethiopia walked into his office. She was there to pick up some supplies for the plantation. According to Manfred's memoirs, before that first meeting was over, he knew he had to see her again. Within six months they were properly dating, and within 18 months they were married in 1958.



Fig 6: Manfred and Irmela at their wedding (left) Dec. 13, 1958, and shortly after (right)

They set up a home in Addis Ababa, where they lived and worked.



Fig 7: the street in Addis Ababa where Manfred and Irmela lived between 1958 and late 1960. In the center of the picture is the statue of Abune Petros who was murdered by the Italian Fascist in 1937 A.D. (1929 E.C.), and beyond that the Saint George Church²

² With thanks to my friend and colleague, Ato Demeke Berhane, for identification of the location of the image.

For the next two and a half years, until late-1960, they drove their black Volkswagen around the country to many places, especially between Wushwush and Addis. But they also frequented other areas. Some of their favorites were Lake Koka not far to the south from Addis, and also the Danakil Desert near Djibouti. Both of them had been in the country for 7 or 8 years at that time, and could carry on a conversation in Amharic or Italian.

They were always on the lookout for interesting things and loved to barter and trade. After a trip to Lalibela, they became fascinated with the manuscripts they saw there and the paintings on the walls of the churches. They marveled at the intricacies of both the art and the book culture they saw. On another occasion they went to a monastery and watched skins being prepared, and scribes doing their work. They were spellbound.



Fig 8: The Reichardt's Volkswagen in Ethiopia (left); Manfred barters a set of binoculars for a set of spear points (right)

It is in this context of their trips and their trading and their growing interests that we have some idea about the location where they got the manuscripts. Neither Manfred nor Irmela left an exact record of where they came from. But they did leave some stories that enable us to understand the nature of the acquisitions and the social locations from which the manuscripts came. Most of these types of transactions were barter, not outright cash payments. In the figure above, for instance, we see Manfred bartering for a set of spear points with a pair of binoculars.

Their son, Markus, remembers them telling about the circumstances that led to the deal to trade for the manuscripts. They had made acquaintances with a set of priests. These men did not have responsibility for a particular church, but were involved in some local travel and teaching. One day, they were complaining about the weight and bulkiness of the manuscripts that they had to carry around with them in their duties. When they were back in Addis, the Reichardts went to the EOTC bookstore and bought dozens of the religious books containing the texts that the priests needed. The priests were delighted and happily traded one manuscript for a half dozen paper books. In their view they were trading a single Dawit for an entire Bible. When asked about parting with the artwork in the books, the priests replied that it was OK, since they had all of the same scenes on the walls of the churches. The Reichardts told their son that they could easily have obtained fifty more manuscripts had they so desired. They stopped at eleven.

Even with this sparse information, we can deduce some things about the likely location of purchase and the social location from which the manuscripts came. The manuscripts probably came from the area south of Addis, or further out toward the southwest. They came from private individuals, not from churches. And they were obtained through straight-forward barter agreements not through direct cash sales. The transactions took place somewhere between 1958 and 1960.

Around 1963 or 64 Manfred received an invitation to work for the International Monetary Fund in the Africa Department. He continued in that role until 1982. In that job, he was assigned to posts all over Africa. They lived in Somalia for three years between 1969 and 1972. And later in the 1970s, they lived for a season in Kenya and Tanzania. Eventually he was assigned to the Sotho nation (pronounced su-tu) also known as the Basuto or Basotho peoples. Officially "the Kingdom of Lesotho," the nation is a landlocked mountain country surrounded by South Africa, one of two such countries. It was their goal to separate from Apartheid South Africa and form their own currency. Manfred was assigned the task to facilitate that goal by developing financial regulations and laws surrounding the banking sector. This task consumed the years from 1975-1982.

During this time, Manfred and Irmela's son, Markus, and daughter, Almut, were in a serious car accident in the country and were taken back to Germany around 1982 and did not return until some time later. Manfred and Irmela took another post with the South African Homeland Bank (the DBSA) and stayed there through retirement. They lived in South Africa until her death in 2008 and his death in 2016.

It was when Markus was closing out his parents' estate and relocating from South Africa to Europe in 2016 that they had to make choices about what they could take and what they would have to leave behind. They felt like they had got the use they desired from the books and were ready to sell. The only other item that Markus held back from sale was a large cowhide wall hanging, showing the exploits of Saint George, killing the dragon and saving Birutawit, and telling the story in a text below.



Fig 9: (left) A cowhide wall hanging of the Story of Saint George and the Dragon, the only other manuscript acquired in the same timeframe as the eleven; (right) Markus Reichardt, the son of Manfred and Irmela Reichardt

The Digitization of the Manuscripts (Kaleab Demeke)

One of the ways we preserve the manuscripts of Ethiopia is to digitize them. We do this for several reasons. First, the images are a backup to the manuscript if it were ever destroyed or lost. And if the manuscript were ever lost and then resurfaced, the images can

be used to establish ownership. Second, in a digital form, the manuscript can be consulted easily by anyone with an internet connection. Both of these issues fulfill the primary duty of holding institutions to preserve cultural heritage and to make it accessible for research.

This collection was digitized in Johannesburg between September 15 and 20, 2022. The digitizing process results in the images both in a RAW format and also in fine JPG form. The digital collection consists of 3,176 images which we have deposited with NALA for anyone to consult.

Our practice is to shoot the manuscript from beginning to end. Each shot is made of the two-folio spread. Finally, we shoot the six external sides of the book. If there is a mahdar (case), we take several images of it. If there is fabric attached to the front or back cover, we shoot closeup images with a macro lens so that we can see the weave and structure of the fabric.

These mss have been digitized as EMIP numbers 3724 through 3734. In addition to depositing the digitized images the National Archives and Library Agency in Addis Ababa, the images and metadata will be available in the Beta Mesaheft web repository for access and research.

The Contents of the Collection (Steve Delamarter)

Opening Comments:

Eleven manuscripts are in this collection. Six of them Psalters. You can already hear people say, "just a bunch of Psalters! Nothing important is here." But many of you understand just how ignorant this view is.

Everything is in the Psalters! Not just the ancient words of king and prophet. That is the old perspective, that books are merely containers for texts. But those who have been introduced to the New Philology, understand that books are so much more than just texts. A host of hands have touched these books. And their hands have left marks. We all see the marks left by those who prepared the parchment, and the wood for covers, and the string for binding, the scribes who wrote, and the painters who painted, the leather workers who dyed and tooled the leather. But most of us would have to be trained to see the marks left by readers: 1) threads sewn into the foreedges of folios to help with navigation; 2) patterns of dirt from their hands; 3) marginal notes at the tops of pages to indicate the days when this section of the book should be read; 4) wax drops on the folios from their candles; 5) dry stitching of torn folios, etc. And if we think that scribes were only concerned with copying the main text of a work, we will greatly underestimate the vastness of their skill and knowledge: they had to know 1) the proper layout of the strophes of the first three works in one column, and the layout of two columns in the final two works; 2) the correct decisions about the size of letters in relation to the size and aspect ratio of the book; 3) what to do when the line of text was longer than the space available for the rest of the line and whether to wrap the line up or down; 4) leaving space for harags; 5) grouping the psalms into sections of ten psalms each, not at the psalms numbered by tens (10, 20, 30, 40, etc.), but those numbered with ones (1, 11, 21, 31, etc.); 6) the use of rubrication to signal the start of a new section or Psalm, or to use red ink to honor the names of Mary and God;

And who knew that scribes did things differently in different epochs of time? – 1) That before the 16th century the Praises of Mary started with Sunday instead of Monday; 2) that before the 17th century the name of God is not rubricated in Psalters, even though the name of Mary always receives red ink; 3) that Psalters before the 17th century never have the long form of Psalm 151 and that after the 19th century nearly all of them have the long form; 4) that the midpoint of the Psalters in Psalm 77 should be marked in some way; 5) that before the 17th century nearly all Psalters needed someone to go through and record the number of strophes in each Psalm, and to give the total of the number of strophes in the first 50 Psalms and second 50 Psalms and in the third 50 Psalms; 6) that over time there were at least five different systems to use in Psalm 118 to explain the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters; 7) that the texts of Psalm 28 and 148 and 150 and the tenth biblical canticle can be written with their first words employing alternating red and black ink; 8) that in the 15th century there was a version of the Song of Songs, probably composed by Giyorgis of Gassacha, with more than 120 additional strophes, and that it disappeared until the 17th century but returned, but with only half of the additional strophes in a form called the Hebraic edition, and that this edition was copied more and more in the late 19th and early 20th century, especially in the government scriptorium. I can go on and on with this list.

There are a host of things that go on in Psalters that you simply cannot know by looking at one Psalter. Indeed, you need to collect data from hundreds of Psalters to see the patterns that developed and played out over time. Every Psalter is precious to this task. Now, we are studying the history and sociology of Ethiopian culture and we need statistical models to explain it all. By doing all of this complicated work we develop the skills of analysis and synthesis that will help us face the complex challenges facing us in the modern world. How will we solve these problem of the future, if we will not learn from our past?

Friends, we lose our cultural heritage one Dawit at a time. Sometimes we lose it because outsiders carry away our Psalters. But, other times we give away our own heritage or we neglect and disrespect it. At the airport, we have to confiscate Dawits from the bags of tourists. But then we stack them in a closet in the National Museum. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could digitize and catalogue these manuscripts and make them available for others.

The Dawit is the key to understanding Ethiopia's book culture. We lose this understanding one Dawit at a time, but here is the good news: we can recover that heritage. Sometimes it comes about through the kindness of strangers. And then we can take the next steps to respect and preserve and study the intricacies of our own cultural heritage.

Overview:

Number	Content	Date
Howes Codex 1	Psalter, with four charts, drawings, and illuminations	19 th /e20 th
Howes Codex 2	Canticle of the Flower, Lamentations of the Virgin, Prayer of the Covenant, Morning Prayer	e 2 th
Howes Codex 3	Psalter, mentioning Emperor Menilek	1889-1913
Howes Codex 4	Missal, mentioning Patriarch Yohannes the 3 rd (1742-1761), Abuna Mark the 7 th (1745-1769), and King Iyasu II (1730-1755)	1745-1755
Howes Codex 5	Homily by Abba Jacob about right faith	19-20 th
Howes Codex 6	Psalter A Psalter, with an extensive set of Computus Charts	e 20 th

Howes Codex 7	The Homiliary for the Monthly Feast in Honor of the Archangel Mik'ael	e 20th
Howes Codex 8	Psalter, in double-slip mahdar	20th
Howes Codex 9	Missal (1889-1913), mentioning Patriarch Petros (1881-1916)) and Abuna Matewos (1889-1926), king Mika'el of Wollo (1874-1922), with Chart of the Fraction of he Host, in double-slip mahdar	1889-1913
Howes Codex 10	A large Psalter (119-e 20th), bound in green leather, from the highest social location with very fine Harags and Mahdar	119-e 20th
Howes Codex 11	A small Psalter, with crude materials and crude Mahdar	e20th

**EMIP 03724 – Robyn Howes Codex 01
Psalter fragment (119th/e20th)**

Physical Description: 117 x 95 x 40. Simple wooden covers (front broken). 103 folios. 17 lines per page. Arranged in one and two columns. Standard five-sheet quires. Ge'ez. Intricate Harags with geometric patters and faces. Every 10th psalm. The harag on f. 64r is accompanied by the drawing of a seated scribe copying a Psalter (identified by its first word, ብሔ "explanation"), and lower on the page, a feline animal. 119th/e20th (paleography).

Main Works:

Fragment of a Psalter.

Notes:

1. Rubrications of God and Mary throughout, though the rubrication of God begins at the second letter (as though the first alf were entered by the primary hand and a space left over for the rubricator).
2. Many line wraps; wrapped up except for top line.
3. F. 30r: Circular chart, written over 12 lines of text, with spokes radiating out from the center; some elements labeled; two animals drawn at the bottom.



4. Repairs of parchment (e.g., ff. 36, 38), holes (e.g., ff. 61, 99).

5. F. 59v. Marking the midpoint of the psalms with three ornate crosses as well as a line of text መንፈቁ ... ወመንፈቁ ታሕተ "its half is above and its half is below."
6. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
7. Quires are missing between ff. 93v and 94r. The manuscript is missing text from Psalm 137 to The Praises of Mary for Saturday.
8. F. 100v: Illumination of the Holy Mother and her beloved Son, with two guardian angels.
9. F. 101r: Drawing of two stars interwoven. Also several pen trial texts "a good pen".
10. F. 102v: Illumination of Christ (?) with Processional Cross (?) with several people below and at least one angel above (The Harrowing of Hell?).
11. F. 103r: unidentified text, written in a later hand in pencil.
12. Spine strings broken.

EMIP 03725 – Robyn Howes Codex 02

Canticle of the Flower, Lamentations of the Virgin, Prayer of the Covenant, Morning Prayer (e20th)

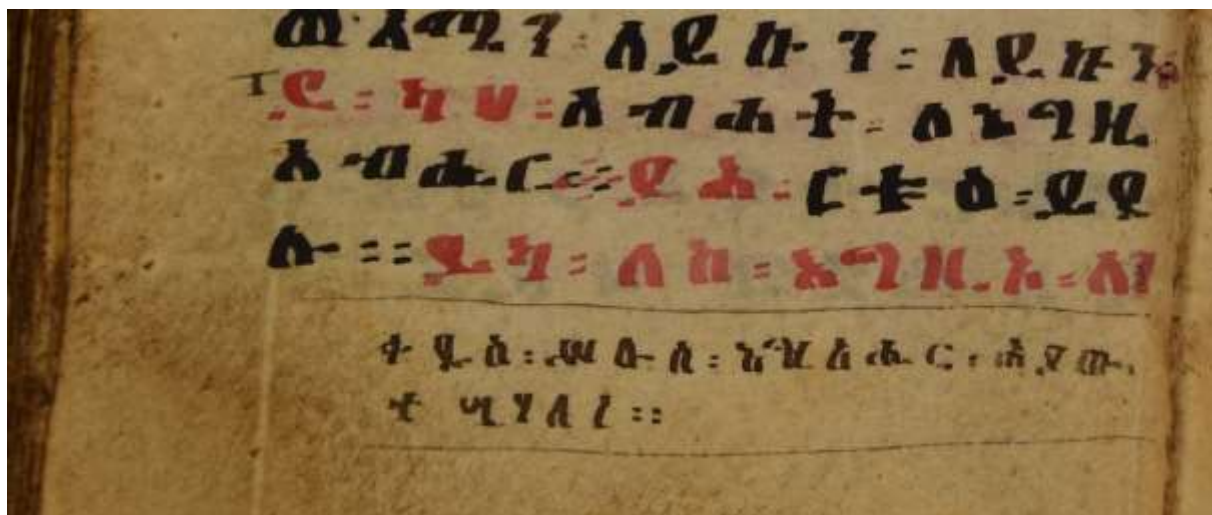
Physical Description: 130 x 90 x 38. Simple Boards. 64 folios. 16 lines per page. Ge'ez. Harags in the style of the Menilek and following scriptoria. Quire numbers throughout. Standard five-sheet quires. Outfitted with spine strap to protect the spine. e20th (paleography).

Main works:

1. Ff. 4r-38v: Greeting to the Blessed Virgin, called on f. 37v ማኅሊተ ጽጌ, Canticle of the Flower. *Chaine Repertoire*, 171. A secondary hand has written in the 157 verse numbers in the margins. With notes for daily readings in the upper margin, written by a secondary hand.
2. Ff. 39r-51v. Lamentations of the Virgin, ሰቆቃወ ድንግል.
3. Ff. 52r-61v: Morning Covenant ኪዳን ዘነገህ.

Notes:

1. Ff. 1rv and 64v: Spine strap made from a discarded page from another manuscript, containing an unidentified Marian text, written in a well-trained hand of the 19th century. The text from that discarded page has been copied anew (as scribal practice?) on ff. 2v-3r.
2. F. 39r includes a prayer for an owner, whose name has been erased and two additional names have been written in (in two separate hands): ክፍለ ዮሐንስ, and ተክለ ማርያም ስሎሞን. The name of the scribe is also written እጽመ ጊዮርጊስ.
3. F. 51v includes a prayer for an owner whose name has been erased and the name ክፍለ ዮሐንስ written in. The name of the scribe is also written እጽመ ጊዮርጊስ.
4. F. 52v, Inserted text (in lower margin) with insertion symbol three lines above the addition; F. 56r: inserted text (in upper margin) with insertion symbol.



**EMIP 03726 – Robyn Howes Codex 03
Psalter (1889-1913), mentioning Emperor Menilek**

Physical Description: 158 x 115 x 70. Simple Boards. 144 folios. 25 lines per page. Arranged in one and two columns. Ge'ez. Harags of the type precursor to the Menilek scriptorium, employing the basic shape of the pattern, but with faces and other geometric shapes; the harag at the beginning of the Praises of Mary is full page and runs down all margins. Quire numbers. Strings of various colors are sewn into the fore edges of several folios to serve as navigation aids to content. 1889-1913 (f. 111r has a prayer that mentions "our Emperor Menilek").

Main works:

1. Ff. Psalter. Arranged for readings according to the days of the week (in upper margins).

Varia:

1. F. 2r: "Prayer of Fire. . .", written in a secondary hand.
2. F. 143v, col. 2, lower: an unidentified note written in red ink of a later hand.
3. F. 144r: An asmat prayer, written in pencil.

Notes:

1. F. 1r: various notes in pencil
2. F. 1v: Illumination: Equestrian Saint with spear
3. The word for God receives no rubrication in the manuscript; Maryam on the other hand is rubricated in the last two works.
4. F. 57r: The midpoint of the Psalms is marked with a full harag after the middle line.
5. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
6. Columeric layout of text in Psalm 148, Psalm 150, and tenth biblical canticle.
7. F. 111r: An extensive prayer for blessing "for my father **ወልደ አብ** for Emperor Menilek (**ንጉሠ ነገሥት ምኒልክ**), for the memory of your servant **ወልደ መስቀል**, and for her servant **ወልደ አምላክ**። ተክለ ማርያም፤ **ወልደ ኢየሱስ**። ወክደ ሚካኤል። ንብረ ኪዳን, along with the memory of my mothers **ወለተ ወልድ**። **ወለተ አቤብ**። **ወለተ ጋብርኤል**። **ወለተ ዮሐንስ**። **አጎተ**። **ሚካኤል**። **ወለተ መድኅን**። **አሰካለ ሥላሴ**። and for its scribe **ወልደ ጻድቅ**።

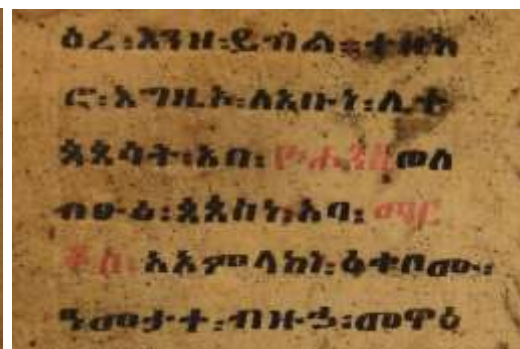
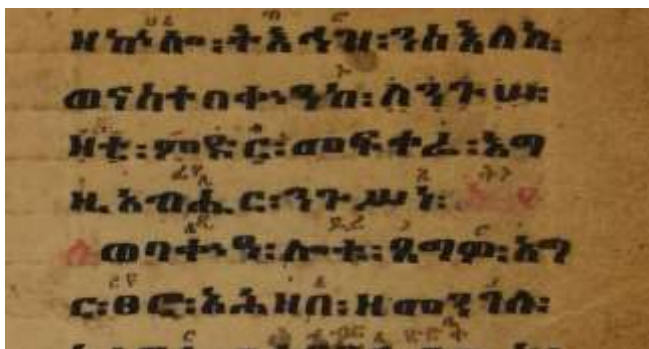


8. Psalm 151 contains the full, long text, though certain words of it have been added by a secondary hand.
9. The fourth biblical canticle is titled, Prayer of Hana, mother of Samuel, prophetess.
10. The Song of Songs may contain the added strophes of the Hebraist edition.
11. F. 128r contains a scribal note of completion of the Song of Songs and mentions **ወልደ ጳጳቅ**, who is mentioned again in a prayer on 143v.
12. The Praises of Mary are arranged for the days of the week, beginning on Monday.

EMIP 3727 – Robyn Howes Codex 04

Missal (1745-1755), mentioning Patriarch Yohannes the 3rd (1742-1761), Abuna Mark the 7th (1745-1769), and King Iyasu II (1730-1755)

Physical Description: 180 x 180 x 90. Simple Boards. 155 folios. 16-17 lines per page. Ge'ez. Quire numbers. Strings of various colors are sewn into the fore edges of several folios to serve as navigation aids to content. e20th (paleography). F. 48v mentions “our father **ዮሐንስ** and our father **ግርቆስ**, and again on ff. 61r and 67v (where the name of a king has been erased), and f. 74v and 75r. F. 19r mentions our king **ኢያሱ** twice, though the first instance has been erased. The convergence of the three seems to be Yohannes the 3rd (1742-1761), Mark the 7th (1745-1769), and King Iyasu II (1730-1755). Thus the book is dated 1745-1755.



Main works:

1. Ff. 2r-154v: Missal, with musical notation at various places.

Notes:

1. Ff. 70v and 74 and other places, the name of "your beloved" . . . has been erased. On f. 111v and 112v and 149v, the name survives ኢሳይያስ, and in 21v in a partially visible form.

**EMIP 3728 – Robyn Howes Codex 0³⁵
Homily by Abba Jacob about right faith (19-20th)**

Physical Description: 145 x 110 x 30. Boards covered with tooled leather. 39 folios. 15 lines per page. Ge'ez. Harags. Quire numbers. 19-20th (paleography).

Main works:

1. Ff. 1r- 39v: Homily by Abba Jacob about right faith, incipit: **ዘደረሰ ድርሳን አባ ያዕቆብ በሥምራቱ በእንተ ቅድስት ሰንበት ርቱዓ ሃይማኖት ስምዑ አጋውየ ፍቁራን ውለደ ቤተ ክርስቲያን። በእንተ ዕቢያ ወክብራ ለሰንባት።**



Notes:

1. F. 15v and 16: mentions "your servant [ኢሳነ] ሥላሴ" with the first name effaced and the name ማርያም written interlinearly. On 16r we also have "your servant [ኢሳነ] ሥላሴ" with ገበረ እግዚአብሔር written in. The pattern of effacing the first name continues on 16v-18v and elsewhere

³ Once again I am endebed to Ato Demeke Berhane for his assisance in identifying the contents of this manuscript.

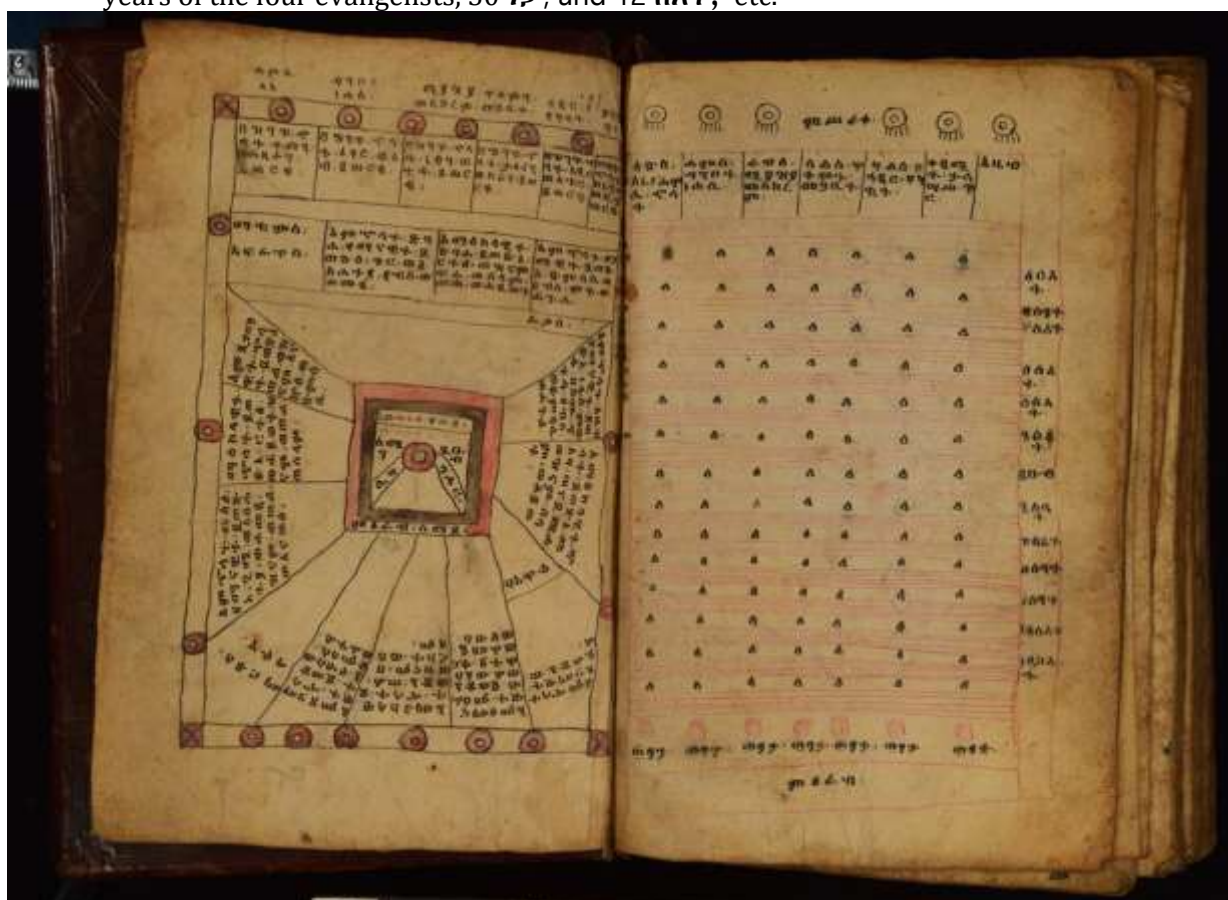
2. Ff. 14rv, contain an asmat prayer to Saint Mika'el for protection and safety, written in a different hand and which mentions "your servant" ወልደ ሥላሴ.
3. A secondary hand has arranged the text for reading, adding names of the days of the week in the upper margin.
4. Swatches of red fabric are visible in the inside front and back covers, between the turn downs.

EMIP 3729 – Robyn Howes Codex 06
A Psalter, with an extensive set of Computus Charts (e 20th)

Physical Description: 210 x 145 x 70. Wooden Boards covered in tooled leather. 200 folios. 21-22 lines per page. Arranged in one and two columns. Ge'ez. Harags in the style of the Menilek, Zewditu and Selassie Scriptoria. Quire numbers. e20th (paleography).

Main works:

1. F. 2r: A round cosmological chart, depicting the middle of the heavens መንፈቀ ሰማይ, showing the two halves of the year and the relation of the months to the movement of the sun's rising.
2. Ff. 2v-3r: Cosmological charts with categories for months of the Ethiopian calendar, the years of the four evangelists, 30 ዓታ, and 12 ሰአት, etc.



3. Ff. 3v-5v: A series of elaborate Calendrical charts, based on months, seasons of the church year, and cardinal points of the compass, etc.

4. Ff. 7r-196. Psalter, with the long version of Psalm 151, and the Hebraic edition of the Song of Songs.

Notes:

1. Fabric swatches are visible between the turn downs on the inside front and back covers.
2. The word for God is not rubricated in the first three works of this Psalter, whereas the word for Mary is in the final two works.
3. The midpoint of the Psalms is marked (f. 76v) with two lines of rubricated text as well as the bust of an angel in the margin
4. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
5. There is colometric layout of letters in Psalms 150 and in the tenth biblical canticle.
6. Psalm 151 contains the full longer text, with all elements in the original hand.
7. The fourth biblical canticle has the title "Prayer of Hana, mother of Samuel, prophet".
8. The Praises of Mary are arranged for the days of the week, beginning on Monday.
9. A loose piece of paper in this book records in Amharic a transaction on Teqemt 9, 1953 E.C., of sale of a Dersane Mika'el with four illuminations and Mahdar for 22 birr. It lists seller, በቀለ ሰረ, buyer, Ato Kidane Fujäga. Names of witnesses appear as well. The transaction clearly refers to EMIP 3730.

EMIP 3730 – Robyn Howes Codex 07

The Homiliary for the Monthly Feast in Honor of the Archangel Mik'ael, with Four full-color illuminations (e 20th)

Physical Description: 260 x 200 x 50. Wooden boards covered in tooled leather. 91 folios. 22 lines per page. Ge'ez. Harags. e20th (paleography).

Main works:

1. Ff. 5r-83v: The Homiliary for the Monthly Feast in Honor of the Archangel Mik'ael, arranged for the months of the year.
2. Ff. 84r-88v: Chaine Repertoire 119, Greeting to Saint Mika'el.

Illuminations in full color

1. F. 2v: The Archangel Mika'el (above), with sword drawn, stands before and blesses a crowd, and one saint within the crowd who points his prayer stick towards an equestrian king (lower). Saint Yared and the King?
2. F. 3r: Upper: The Holy Trinity, surrounded by the four living creatures; lower: a prostrate angel holding sword in scabbard.



3. F. 16v: Mika'el riding a horse in the clouds, above two saints, one of whom holds a garment. Jacob and Israel and the coat of many colors?
4. F. 27v: Mika'el with sword drawn, above the scene of Samson killing Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey.

Notes:

1. Ff. 5r and following: The manuscript has been paginated in Ge'ez numbers.
2. F. 7v: contains a prayer for "your servant ወልደ ኢየሱስ" in two places, and then many times throughout the book.
3. F. 83v: In a later hand, written in blue ink, is the simple note "in 1940, in (the month of) Ter."
4. F. 88v: In addition to a prayer for the owner, ወልደ ኢየሱስ, the scribe ወልደ ሰንባት is mentioned.

EMIP 3731 – Robyn Howes Codex 08 Psalter (20th), in double-slip mahdar

Physical Description: 180 x 125 x 60. Wooden boards covered in red, tooled leather. 145 folios. 23 lines per page. Arranged in one and two columns. Ge'ez. Crude harags. Quire numbers. Double-slip mahdar case. e20th (paleography).

Main works:

1. Ff. 2r-145r: Psalter, containing the short version of Psalm 151, and the common version of the Song of Songs.

Notes:

1. F. 1v: A record, dated 1920 E. C., on the tenth of Megabit, written in a different shade of red ink, mentioning Haile Selassie, King of Ethiopia.
2. The word for God and for Mary are rubricated in this Psalter.

3. This psalter does not mark the midpoint (f. 58r).
4. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
5. The first word of every other line (for the first 8 lines) in Psalm 150 are written in red ink. Columetric layout of text with red ink happens in the tenth biblical canticule.
6. The title of the fourth biblical canticule is "Prayer of Hana, mother of Samuel, prophet."
7. The text block of this book has been trimmed uniformly with a machine.
8. The headband and tailband are made of interwoven strips of brown and red leather.
9. Tooled into the leather of the inside back cover is the following text:



EMIP 3732 – Robyn Howes Codex 09

Missal (1889-1913), mentioning Patriarch Petros (1881-1916) and Abuna Matewos (1889-1926), the king Mika'el of Wollo (1874-1922)

Physical Description: 242 x 195 x 75. Wooden boards, covered by tooled, red leather. 176 folios. 18 lines per page. Ge'ez. Quire numbers. Double-slip mahdar case. e20th (paleography); f. 20v mentions, in two places, "our king Mika'el"; f. 32r mentions "our father ግቴዎስ" and "our Papas ጳጥሮስ"; on f. 32v it is "Abba Petro[s] and our esteemed father ግቴዎስ. On f. 34v, the two are simply "so and so" (ፊገሌ), though on f. 35r we have Abba ጳጥሮስ again. Once again on f. 36v, both are mentioned by name and this continues throughout the book. On f. 44v both are mentioned by name twice. On f. 53r, both are mentioned by name along with "our king" ግኒኤ[ል]. Given the dates of Petros (1881-1916) and Matewos (1889-1926), the king Mika'el would have to be King Mika'el of Wollo (1874-1922). However, on f. 125r we have a prayer for "the king of our land, yourr servant ምኒልክ (1889-1913). Thus the overlapping date range of all of these is 1889-1913, though the form of mention of Menilek suggests early in that date range.

Main works:

1. Ff. 3r-169v: Missal, with musical notation throughout in many places.
2. Ff. 171r-176r: unidentified text, with readings from the four Gospels, mentioning several persons at the end: **ወልደ ጊዮርጊስ, ገብረ አምላክ, and ገብረ ሐዋርያ.**

Notes:

1. Fabric is visible between the paste downs on the inside cover of the book.
2. F. 2r. Three chronological notes (computus): 1) 1938 E.C., the month of Sane, 10th day, 13th night; 2) 1928 E.C. **ኢትዮጵያን [or ኢትድት ዐን] ጥሳት አጠፋት።**; 3) 1933 E.C., **ግርማዊ ኃይለ ሥላሴ ተመልሰው መጡ።**
3. F. 170r: a chart of the Fraction of the Host.



4. F. 176v contains another copy of the same three set of dates and notes as are on f. 2r, with a few differences in detail and spelling. In particular, it has a better text of the note about 1928 E.C. Ethiopia **ጠፋች ጅ ዓመት ጥሳት ገዘት.**

EMIP 03733 – Robyn Howes Codex 10

A large Psalter (I 19-e 20th), from the highest social location with very fine Mahdar

Physical Description: 250 x 185 x 60. Wooden boards covered in green, tooled leather. 185 folios. 21 lines per page. One and two columns. Ge'ez. Full-color harags of the finest quality from the Menilek/Zewditu/Selassie scriptorium, every tenth Psalm and at the beginnings of the other works. Quire numbers. e20th (paleography).



Main works:

1. Ff. 8r-181r: Psalter, containing the long version of Psalm 151 (with all elements in the original hand), and the Hebraic edition of the Song of Songs.

Notes:

1. The words for God and Mary are both rubricated in this Psalter throughout.
2. F. 71v: The midpoint of the Psalter is marked with the following text, employing alternating black and red letters: መደንዊፈትቀ. When the black letters (odd numbered) are read as one word, and the red letters (even numbered) are read as a second word, it reads መንፈቀ ዳዊት, "the middle of David", which is the usual text to mark the midpoint.

3. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
4. Columetric layout of rubricated letters appears in Psalm 150 and the tenth biblical canticles.
5. The title of the fourth biblical canticle is "Prayer of Hana, mother of Samuel, Prophet."
6. The Praises of Mary are laid out for the days of the week, with Monday first.
7. F. 181r: a final note or colophon making up 11 lines of text has been completely effaced.
8. The double slip-mahdar for this Psalter has elements of the finest workmanship and materials. However, the outer slip case (which is only moderate in quality) appears not to be a matched set with the inner slip case, which is of the very highest quality. Further, it does not appear that this Mahdar were actually made for this Psalter, since the Psalter is quite somewhat smaller than the case.
9. The headband and tailband are made of strips of leather that are alternating red and green in color.



EMIP 03734 – Robyn Howes Codex 11
A small Psalter (e20th), with crude materials and crude mahdar

Physical Description: 133 x 113 x 60. Wooden boards, covered in tooled leather. 144 folios. 25-26 lines per page. Ge'ez. One crude Harag at the beginning, another small one at Psalm 81, 91, . Quire numbers. e20th (paleography).



Main works:

1. Ff. 2r-143v. Psalter, containing the long version of Psalm 151 (with all elements in the original hand), and the common edition of the Song of Songs.

Notes:

1. F. 1v: unidentified text in another hand, with effaced text.
2. The words for both God and Mary are rubricated, though the word for God is occasionally left unrubricated.
3. F. 62v: The midpoint of the Psalms is marked with a single word text encased in a box: **መገረቁ**, "its half".
4. Psalm 118 (119) has the recent simple system of headings designating the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters.
5. Columetric layout of rubricated letters appears in Psalm 150 and the tenth biblical canticles.
6. The title of the fourth biblical canticle is "Prayer of Hana, mother of Samuel, Prophet."
7. The Praises of Mary are laid out for the days of the week, with Monday first.
8. F. 143v, second column, through f. 144r: a final theological text, unidentified.
9. The back inside cover has the remnants of fabric that used to fill the space between the turn downs.

The Presentation of the Collection (Robyn)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for being patient with us in sharing our story, and now it is my pleasure to present 11 manuscripts to the National Archives and Library Agency, as an expression of goodwill and respect to the people of Ethiopia and for the preservation of knowledge for future generations. I am content to witness their return back to their country of origin with the hope that both clerics and scholars will get as much enjoyment from their physical presence, wonder and uniqueness as I have had over the last few years. I wish you all the best. Thank you.