

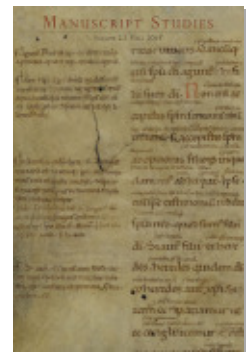


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Reconstructing Biography and Cross-Cultural Encounter
Through Manuscript Evidence

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The Two Yoḥannāses of Santo Stefano degli Abissini, Rome

*Reconstructing Biography and Cross-Cultural
Encounter Through Manuscript Evidence*

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THE PILGRIM HOSTEL-CUM-MONASTERY OF Santo Stefano degli Abissini (or dei Mori) in Rome is well known to scholars of medieval and early-modern Ethiopia. Part of the Ethiopian diaspora around the Mediterranean whose other centers, of much older foundation, were located in Jerusalem, Cairo, and Cyprus, the monks of Santo Stefano played a particularly important role as cultural intermediaries between Europe and Ethiopia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Despite the community's murky origins—Ethiopians are first attested at Santo Stefano in 1497, but as “violators” whose rights to it were clearly not secure—it was sufficiently established by the second decade of the sixteenth century to

We thank the two anonymous reviewers for *Manuscript Studies* for their useful comments and suggestions on this article. Translations, except where otherwise noted, are ours; for transliteration from Gəʿəz and Arabic, we follow the system of the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*.

have helped produce the first printed book in Gəʿəz, the *Psalterium Aethiopicum* (Rome, 1513).¹ The monks' numbers fluctuated over the following decades, and had dwindled to a single monk by 1628, when the pope ordered the community's closing and appropriated its books for the Vatican Library. Ethiopian pilgrims were again admitted to Santo Stefano a few years later, and though their numbers were not large in the later seventeenth century, the critical role played by one of its denizens, Gorgoryos, in the scholarship of Hiob Ludolf attests to Santo Stefano's continuing role as a center of Ethiopian-European intellectual exchange.²

The peak of Santo Stefano's intellectual influence was nonetheless the mid-sixteenth century, for it was in this period that Täsfa Şəyon, who had arrived in Rome by 1536 and died there in 1552, tirelessly disseminated knowledge of Ethiopian language and culture.³ Friend of Pope Paul III and correspondent of several reform-minded prelates, he tutored a series of European scholars, including Pietro Paolo Gualtieri, Bernardino Sandri, Paolo Giovio, and Guillaume Postel. He edited the Gəʿəz New Testament (*Testamentum Novum*, Rome, 1548–49) and published, also in 1549, Latin translations of the Ethiopian rituals of baptism and the Mass. He also collaborated with Mariano Vittori, another scholar to whom he taught Gəʿəz, on the first printed grammar of that language, published in 1552. His frequent mention in the writings of his European colleagues and memorializa-

1 The book was co-edited by a German ecclesiastic in Rome, Johannes Potken, and a monk of Santo Stefano named Tomas wäldä Samu'el who had tutored him in Gəʿəz since 1511. See Renato Lefevre, *L'Etiopia nella stampa del primo Cinquecento* (= Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Italiano per l'Africa, Quaderni d'Africa series 1, no. 3) (Como: Pietro Cairoli, 1966), 17–24; Sophia Dege and Siegbert Uhlig, "Potken, Johannes," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (hereafter *EAE*), vol. 4: O–X, ed. Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 191–92.

2 For recent overviews of the history of Santo Stefano, see Gianfranco Fiaccadori, "Santo Stefano dei Mori," *EAE*, 4:528–32, and Delio Vania Proverbio, "Santo Stefano degli Abissini: Una breve rivisitazione," *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi antichi* 66 (2011): 50–68.

3 Evidence on the dates of his arrival in Rome and of his death is conflicting, but see Sebastian Euringer, "Das Epitaphium des Tasfa Sejon (Petrus Aethiops) und seine Chronologie," *Oriens Christianus*, series 3, 1 (1927): 60–66.

tion in European works of art attest to his role as the prime representative of Ethiopian learning and culture in sixteenth-century Europe.⁴

Much less is known, however, about the other monks of Santo Stefano in the sixteenth century. The manuscripts copied or annotated at Santo Stefano offer considerable information on members of the community, but have not yet been thoroughly inventoried or subject to sustained prosopographical analysis. European sources, for their part, occasionally offer information on monks other than Täsfa Şəyon, but refer to Ethiopians by European aliases (much as Täsfa Şəyon was known to Europeans as “Peter the Indian”), which poses a challenge to their full identification.

The case of Giovanni Battista “the Indian” illustrates these evidentiary difficulties. He is the only Ethiopian colleague of Täsfa Şəyon to have received much scholarly attention, thanks to his mention in a number of European sources. None of these sources, however, give his Ethiopian name. In the 1930s, the Ethiopianists Sylvain Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant identified him as Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare, a monk frequently mentioned in the Gəʿəz manuscripts belonging to Santo Stefano.⁵ This identification has been accepted in subsequent scholarship as one of the few firm prosopographical facts available on the community’s members.⁶

As we shall argue here, however, the individual known to Europeans as Giovanni Battista was not Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare—a contemporary and equally prominent denizen of Santo Stefano—but rather the monk known

4 Alessandro Bausi and Gianfranco Fiaccadori, “Täsfa Şəyon,” in *EAE*, vol. 5: Y–Z, ed. Alessandro Bausi in cooperation with Siegbert Uhlig (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 525–28; Renato Lefevre, “Documenti e notizie su Tasfa Seyon e la sua attività romana nel sec. XVI,” *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 24 (1969–70): 74–133.

5 Sylvain Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant, *Codices Aethiopici Vaticani et Borgiani, Barberianus Orientalis 2, Rossianus 865*, 2 vols. (Vatican City: In Bybliotheca Vaticana, 1935–36), 2:15 and note (hereafter *Codices Aethiopici*).

6 Lefevre, “Documenti e notizie,” 96n; Gianfranco Fiaccadori, “L’Etiopia, Venezia e l’Europa,” in *Nigra sum sed formosa. Sacro e bellezza dell’Etiopia cristiana (Ca’ Foscari esposizione 13 marzo–10 maggio 2009)*, ed. Giuseppe Barbieri, Mario di Salvo, and Gianfranco Fiaccadori (Vicenza: Terra Ferma, 2009), 34; Fiaccadori, “Santo Stefano,” 530; Rafał Zarzeczny, “Su due manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Casanatense a Roma,” in *Aethiopia fortitudo ejus. Studi in onore di Monsignor Osvaldo Raineri in occasione del suo 80° compleanno*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, vol. 298, ed. Rafał Zarzeczny (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2015), 508.

to his fellow Ethiopians in Rome as Yohannəs of Cyprus. Our argument rests on paleographical analysis as well as an array of documentary evidence, and illustrates the richer historical data that can result from the synthesis of different disciplinary tools. For in the process of disentangling the two monks' identities, we shall have occasion to identify their different origins, reconstruct much of their careers, and observe the different skills, inclinations, and even personal qualities they brought to their experience in Europe. Ultimately, the portraits of the two Yohannases that emerge from this study open a larger window onto cross-cultural encounter in the sixteenth century, exemplifying the variety of ways in which Ethiopian Orthodox identity could be negotiated in a Catholic European setting.

Giovanni Battista

The most detailed source of information on Giovanni Battista “the Indian” is the dossier of testimony collected in autumn 1564 to review Giovanni Battista’s candidacy for the post of Ethiopian bishop of Nicosia (Cyprus). In addition to brief comments from European and Ethiopian witnesses regarding the candidate’s “life and morals,” the dossier includes an interview with Giovanni Battista himself in which he offered an account of his life.⁷ As he reported, he was born on Cyprus to an Ethiopian father and an Egyptian mother of Ethiopian descent, his parents having migrated from Egypt to Cyprus before his birth.⁸ His birthdate is not known precisely. A European witness who knew Giovanni Battista only in Italy, Giovanni da Torano,

7 Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereafter ASV), AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fols. 1r–27r, of which the interview with Giovanni Battista, conducted by cardinal Michele Ghislieri, occupies fols. 19r–24r. The dossier has been examined by Renato Lefevre, “Roma e la comunità etiopica di Cipro nei secoli XV e XVI,” *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 1 (1941): 71–86, and Enrico Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina: Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme*, 2 vols., Collezione scientifica e documentaria a cura del Ministero dell’Africa Italiana 13–14 (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1943–1947), 2:1–11.

8 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 19r. Giovanni Battista identified his father as an “abissino di Meroe.” It is unclear whether the Nubian city of Meroë or another location in Ethiopia proper was intended.

estimated his age at “around 50”; Giovanni Battista himself said that he was “50 and more” or, on another occasion, “around 50 or 55.” These notices place his birth between 1509 and 1514. Giovanni Battista then stated that around age fifteen he left Cyprus and came to Europe (doubtless via Venice, which then controlled Cyprus and was the usual port of entry from the eastern Mediterranean), “and I was in Rome, in Portugal and at Santiago [de Compostella] in Galicia, and then returned toward the eastern Indies, where I met the ambassador [Sägga Zä-’Ab] of our king, and I came with him to Lisbon. And with Francesco Alvares and don Martino, ambassador of the king of Portugal, I came to Italy and was in Bologna, while the ambassador of our king stayed in Lisbon, because the king of Portugal would not let him come to Italy on account of the wars. And I translated the letters of our king, brought by Francesco Alvares and by don Martino to His Holiness in Bologna.”¹⁰ The embassy to which Giovanni Battista here referred was that sent by King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508–1540) to the king of Portugal and to the pope, which reached Pope Clement VII in Bologna in January 1533.

Even given the uncertainty surrounding Giovanni Battista’s birth date, it seems unlikely that this account of his travels is wholly reliable. The embassy in question left Ethiopia in April 1526, sailed on to India, and began its return voyage in January 1527, reaching Portugal in late July. The ambassadors then remained in Portugal for more than five years before reaching the pope in Bologna.¹¹ To have joined this embassy in “the eastern Indies” (by which he might have meant either Ethiopia or India), Giovanni Battista would have to have reached Ethiopia by April 1526, or else have serendipitously encountered the ambassadors in India no later than the first

9 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fols. 3v, 9r, 17r, 19r.

10 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fols. 19v–20r.

11 Charles Fraser Beckingham and George Wynn Brereton Huntingford, eds., *The Prester John of the Indies: A True Relation of the Lands of Prester John, Being the Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520 written by Father Francisco Alvares*, 2 vols., Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, 114–15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 2:472–88; Salvatore Tedeschi, “Paolo Giovio e la conoscenza dell’Etiopia nel Rinascimento,” in *Atti del Convegno Paolo Giovio: Il Rinascimento e la memoria (Como, 3–5 giugno 1983)*, Raccolta storica 17 (Como: Presso la Società a Villa Gallia, 1985), 96–97.

days of 1527. If he was indeed aged fifty in 1564, this is impossible: he would have been only twelve or thirteen years old in 1526–27 and still living on Cyprus. If he was instead five years older, he would have first come to Europe circa 1524, but even this chronology leaves well under three years to account not only for his travels to Rome, Portugal, and Galicia, but also for the usually long and arduous journey to Ethiopia or India. More likely is that Giovanni Battista did indeed travel in Italy, Galicia, and Portugal, and simply encountered the embassy in Portugal sometime between 1527 and 1532. His proclaimed role in the embassy's meeting with the pope is also open to question.¹²

Giovanni Battista's next notice of himself is that he returned to Cyprus "around 1535." He stayed on the island for three years, receiving his priestly ordination by the Coptic bishop of Cyprus and performing the Mass there in Ḡəʿəz in 1538. Returning then to Italy, he stayed in Venice, where "I had authorization from the legate Veralle to celebrate the Mass in Latin, and I gave my first Mass in Capodistria with the permission of the bishop of that territory, Pier Paolo Vergerio, and I stayed there two years." Summoned to Rome, as he claimed, by Cardinal Contarini at the request of Pope Paul III, he answered the summons when his two years in Venice were finished, thus presumably in 1540.¹³ Giovanni Battista's startling desire to celebrate the Mass in Latin, and thus presumably following the Catholic rite, may represent a first glimmer of his interest in conversion, which he would undertake some years later.

Of his activities in the 1540s, Giovanni Battista related only that he was received into the house of "the Theatine cardinal" (Gian Pietro Carafa, the future Pope Paul IV), "where I stayed until his death."¹⁴ Other sources offer

12 Lefevre, "Roma e la comunità," 78n, asserts that the presence of an Ethiopian (not Šägga Zä'Ab, who did indeed stay behind in Lisbon) is mentioned by "the papal diarist mentioned by Baronio and by Damiano de Goetz." Tedeschi, in his analysis of the several reports of this meeting, finds no such mention: "It doesn't appear that there were present at the consistory any Ethiopian monks": Tedeschi, "Paolo Giovio," 106–7. Giovanni Battista's claim to have translated the Ethiopian king's letters for the pope is open to doubt: they had already been translated into Portuguese and had no need of a Ḡəʿəz interpreter.

13 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fols. 19v–20r.

14 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 20r. Pope Paul IV died on 18 August 1559.

more specific notice of him in Rome in 1547. In July of that year, Täsfa Şəyon and Pietro Paolo Gualtieri were working on a translation of the Ethiopian ritual of the Mass, which they sent to Cardinal Marcello Cervini by way of his secretary, Guglielmo Sirleto. On 5 September, Sirleto wrote to Cervini that the same text had also been translated by “don Giambattista, who is chaplain of the Theatine cardinal, and I believe that it has been translated faithfully, and almost word for word. . . . [Carafa], much praising your proposal to have the canon translated by fra Pietro [i.e., Täsfa Şəyon], has ordered Gioanbattista that he too translate it as a service to God and also as a service to you.”¹⁵ On 18 September, Cervini answered, “To your letter of the 5th I can only reply that having received, together with your letter, the other translation of the Ethiopian Mass done by don Giovanni Battista, I looked at it willingly, and can only praise the labor that he devoted to it, as I wrote to him also, thanking him; you can do the same in person when it is convenient.”¹⁶ This Giovanni Battista is certainly our man: a witness for his episcopal nomination in 1564 testified to meeting him in the house of Gian Pietro Carafa some eighteen years earlier (thus circa 1546), and observed that the Ethiopian was Carafa’s chaplain, precisely as Sirleto reported.¹⁷ Giovanni Battista’s translation of the Mass ritual was clearly independent of the translation that Gualtieri and Täsfa Şəyon were simultaneously doing, but it may have been consulted for the translation of the Mass ritual published by Täsfa Şəyon in 1549.

Giovanni Battista resumes his autobiography by noting that “in the time of Pope Julius III [1550–1555], recognizing that I had been ordained by the aforementioned heretical Coptic bishop [of Cyprus], who did not use the rite that the Roman Church uses . . . I spoke with the Theatine cardinal who was then in Naples. He conferred with Pope Julius, who sent the case to the Inquisition, and thus I was re-ordained in all the orders, first receiving confirmation from the bishop of Veglia of good memory.”¹⁸

15 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV), MS Vat. lat. 6177, fol. 336 (old foliation, top right), 350 (new printed foliation); partially cited in Lefevre, “Documenti e notizie,” 85.

16 BAV, MS Vat. lat. 6178, fol. 127, partially cited in Lefevre, “Documenti e notizie,” 86.

17 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 4r.

18 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 20v.

Giovanni Battista's conversion from Ethiopian Orthodoxy to Catholicism was thus accomplished no later than March 1555, on the advice of the cardinal to whom he had been chaplain for several years. After that cardinal's election as Pope Paul IV in May 1555, Giovanni Battista regularly appears in papal records as a chaplain of His Holiness and recipient of clothing from the pope's tailor.¹⁹ In February 1560, as a familiar of the new pope, Pius IV, he proposed Cardinal Giovanni Morone as protector of the Ethiopian community of Santo Stefano, of which Giovanni Battista himself, according to the papal brief announcing Morone's appointment, was "prior and chaplain."²⁰ In early 1561, Pius IV tasked him with translating letters sent to the pope from the patriarch of Alexandria, praising Giovanni Battista's fluency in Arabic as well as Latin; in September of that year, Giovanni Battista accompanied the pope to Perugia, where he participated, with squire and horse, in the Company of the Holy Sacrament.²¹ In late 1564, as noted above, he was nominated to be (Catholic) bishop of the Ethiopian community of Cyprus. The nomination was confirmed in February 1565, and Giovanni Battista probably left soon afterward for his homeland, where he fell gravely ill and soon died.²²

Giovanni Battista's identification as Yohānnas of Qāntorare

But was Giovanni Battista Yohānnas of Qāntorare? The identification was first made by Sylvain Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant in their detailed catalog of the Vaticani etiopici collection of Gəʿəz manuscripts in the Vatican Library,

19 Lefevre, "Roma e la comunità," 72.

20 Lefevre, "Roma e la comunità," 71. "Prior and chaplain" is an unusual combination of titles; Gəʿəz manuscripts from Santo Stefano generally identify only a prior or administrative head (*rayas*), and no Santo Stefano manuscript so far discovered corroborates Giovanni Battista's tenure in this role. If the designation is accurate, it would mean that in 1560 the prior of Santo Stefano was, for the first time (to our knowledge), a Catholic convert.

21 Lefevre, "Roma e la comunità," 73.

22 Lefevre, "Roma e la comunità," 79–81.

published in 1935–36.²³ The Vaticani etiopici collection is indeed a promising place to look. Sixty-six of its manuscripts, by Grébaut and Tisserant's count, passed directly from Santo Stefano to the Vatican in 1628, and at least two others produced at Santo Stefano reached the Vatican even earlier.²⁴ Many contain ownership notes, scribal colophons, and witness lists in which the Ethiopian names of the monks present in the community were recorded.

Exactly what data in these manuscripts prompted Grébaut and Tisserant's identification of Giovanni Battista as Yoḥannēs of Qāntōrare, however, remains unclear. Grébaut, an accomplished paleographer, succeeded in identifying the hand of Yoḥannēs of Qāntōrare, who copied a number of manuscripts at Santo Stefano. This monk identified himself explicitly as the scribe of MS Vaticano etiopico (Vat. et.) 35, which therefore offers an indisputable example of his handwriting (figure 3). Doubtless using this hand as a benchmark, Grébaut and Tisserant eventually identified three other manuscripts, all of which lack a scribal colophon, as having been copied by the same man: MSS Vaticano Rossiano 865, Vat. et. 1, and Vat. et. 2 (figures 4 and 5).²⁵ None of these manuscripts, however, mention Giovanni Battista or link that name to Yoḥannēs of Qāntōrare. That link is made by the cataloguers on two occasions. First, in their description of MS Vat. et. 66, they note that the manuscript makes reference to Yoḥannēs of Qāntōrare, “the one, as it seems, who was bishop in Cyprus”—in other words, Giovanni Battista. The manuscript itself, however, does not make this connection, nor do the cataloguers explain their reasoning. The second occasion on which

23 *Codices Aethiopici*.

24 *Codices Aethiopici*, 2:15, 19–20.

25 In their description of BAV, MS Vat. et. 1 (*Codices Aethiopici*, 1:10), the cataloguers offer no scribal identification, but the following description of MS Vat. et. 2 states that it was copied “e cod. Vat. et. 1 ab eodem librario transscripta” (at 1:11). MS Vat. Ross. 865 is then described as “descriptus eadem manu ac codd. Vatt. 1, 35, i.e. Iohanne, filio Qaṭōrārē” (1:862). Finally, in the “addenda et emendanda” to volume 1, added later (xv), the cataloguers add to the description of Vat. et. 1 that “librarius est Iohannes ille, de Qaṭōrārē, praeses hospitii s. Stephani, qui et cod. 35 exaravit,” reflecting the deductions they had made since penning the initial description of that first manuscript. For further analysis of the paleographical evidence, see the appendix.

the cataloguers link the two names is in their introduction, which opens the second volume of the catalog. Here they state that MS Vat. et. 2 was copied by Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare, and add in the attached footnote, “Giovanni Battista the Indian, on whom see [Sebastian] Merkle, loc. cit [p. 354], is Yoḥannəs son of Qāntorare, who copied Vat. et. 2.”²⁶

This last comment suggests that Sebastian Merkle’s article played a role in the cataloguers’ identification of Giovanni Battista and Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare. On the page cited by Grébaut and Tisserant, Merkle stated that Giovanni Battista had translated the Gəʿəz canons of the Council of Nicaea into Latin.²⁷ Grébaut and Tisserant knew that a partial Latin translation of these canons was to be found in MS Vat. et. 2.²⁸ They may therefore have concluded that Giovanni Battista was not only the translator responsible for the partial Latin translation found in this manuscript, but the scribe of the manuscript as well—a scribe whom, upon paleographical evidence, they had already identified as Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare. If this was the cataloguers’ inference, it rests on circumstantial evidence: nothing requires that the monk who translated part of a text into Latin also copied the accompanying Gəʿəz text. But in fact, even this circumstantial connection is baseless, for Merkle’s statement is incorrect. In his overview of the Sirleto-Cervini correspondence described above, Merkle claimed that in a letter of 31 August 1547, Sirleto had wondered why the Gəʿəz version of the canons of the Council of Nicaea was so much longer than the Latin version, and had at the same time announced Giovanni Battista’s translation of the Gəʿəz version into Latin. Sirleto’s letter does indeed express curiosity about the “extra” canons found in the Gəʿəz copy, but makes no mention whatever of Giovanni Battista.²⁹

26 *Codices Aethiopici*, 2:15 and note 4, repeated without further explanation in the “addenda et emendanda” to volume 2 at 2:38.

27 Sebastian Merkle, “Ein patristischer Gewährsmann des Tridentinums,” in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des christlichen Altertums und der Byzantinischen Literatur: Festgabe Albert Ehrhard zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Albert Michael Koeniger (Bonn: Schroeder, 1922), 354.

28 Only the table of contents and one canon were translated into Latin here.

29 BAV, MS Vat. lat. 6177, at fols. 332–33 (older foliation, top right), 346–47 (printed foliation, bottom right).

Without consulting the original manuscript correspondence between Sirleto and Cervini, Grébaut and Tisserant could not have been aware of Merkle's error, and circumstantial similarities could well have recommended the identification of Giovanni Battista and Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare: the relative prominence attached to the two names, the propinquity of their dates, perhaps even the fact, if Grébaut and Tisserant knew it, that Giovanni Battista (like Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare, as we shall see) was at one time identified as prior of Santo Stefano.³⁰ It is nonetheless safe to say that no persuasive evidence linking the European name Giovanni Battista to the Ethiopian name Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare can be reconstructed from the clues that Grébaut and Tisserant have left in their erudite catalog, nor have our investigations uncovered any new evidence in that direction.

Giovanni Battista as Yoḥannəs of Cyprus

Giovanni Battista's Ethiopian name may therefore be considered an open question, and two other codices from Santo Stefano offer a persuasive candidate. The first is MS Vat. et. 66. A relatively short manuscript of liturgical material, it also seems to have served as a sort of commonplace book for the community. In addition to a copy of the community's Rule, composed in 1551, it contains a number of short historical notices on life at Santo Stefano, and was written by multiple hands across several decades, principally from the 1530s to the 1550s.³¹ Regarding Giovanni Battista, of interest is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:1–16) on fols. 50v–51r bearing the following colophon: “I, Yoḥannəs, [spiritual] son of [wäldä] our father Täklä Haymanot, of [zä] Cyprus, wrote this Gospel of Matthew; I translated it from the Latin” (figure 1).³² As a monk who came from Cyprus and was proficient enough in Latin to translate from it, this Yoḥannəs matches known characteristics of Giovanni Battista.

30 See n. 20.

31 Described in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:245–47.

32 Transcribed in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:247.

A second codex belonging to Santo Stefano—a copy of the printed Gəʿəz psalter of 1513—goes far in confirming the identity of Giovanni Battista and Yoḥannēs of Cyprus. Bearing the Vatican library shelfmark Stamp. Barb. A VIII 18, it is not part of the Vaticani etiopici collection and thus escaped the notice of Grébaut and Tisserant. But it certainly belonged to the community of Santo Stefano. A notice in Latin on the front flyleaf records its donation by “Marco [Marqos], prior of the hospice of Santo Stefano of the Abyssinians, near Saint Peter’s, on 5 September 1580.” The pastedown facing this front flyleaf offers the name of the psalter’s onetime owner: “This psalter belongs to Yoḥannēs of [zä] Cyprus, [spiritual] son of [wäldä] our father Täklä Haymanot.” The name is identical to that in the Matthew reading in MS Vat. et. 66; the hand, too, appears to be the same. A Greek inscription on the rear flyleaf of the codex (fol. 110r) is the clue that connects Yoḥannēs of Cyprus with Giovanni Battista. It reads:

ἔτος ἑφτά χιλιάδες πετακοσιές πενῖταενάς· ἡμῶν | ἐγὼ ὦ γιωργακῆς τοῦ
τοῦρμα ἡς στη ρομη εσο τοῦ μῆσερη ἰα|πατιστα τοῦ ἥτιανοῦ (l. Ἰνδιανού)·
καὶ γραφο τοῦ ἡς θημηση δια να ξέ|βεύρει· καὶ να θηματε το καίρο· καὶ
εγο ο γιωργακῆς· ἡμὲν ἡς | στο παχάλατι κὶ τοῦ κάρμηρει· καὶ το σπιτη
μᾶς· νη ἡς στα ὄκα|λῖα καὶ ἡ μηταίρα μοῦ το νομα τίς κατερινά τοῦ
οσκηλομακοῦ | καὶ εραφτι ἡς στὶς ὀκτο τοῦ ὀκτοβειριοῦ:

[In our year 7550 I, Ghiorgakis of Turma, in Rome, in the circle of Gian Battista the Indian, write to be remembered by him: that he recall that I, Ghiorgakis, am in reduced circumstances and poverty; and my house is located near the steps, and my mother is named Caterina Sokilomakou; and this was written on the eighth day of October.]³³

There is good reason to assume that Ghiorgakis wrote this message, which was directed to Giovanni Battista, in Giovanni Battista’s own book—a book belonging, as its front pastedown attests, to Yoḥannēs, son of Täklä

33 We thank Agostino Soldati for this transcription and translation of the Greek text.

Haymanot, of Cyprus. The given date of 7550 is curious, corresponding to no plausible date in the European, Byzantine, or Ethiopian dating systems. It may represent a scribal error, or an attempt to give the appearance of a suitably exotic Byzantine date. Plausibly the year 1550 AD was intended, and would accord with the known dates of Giovanni Battista in Rome.

This printed psalter is the only known source, Ethiopian or European, that connects the name Giovanni Battista to an Ethiopian name, Yoḥannəs of Cyprus. That connection receives some additional support from the hybrid name by which Giovanni Battista apparently came to be known in his homeland. According to a European Cypriot who testified in 1564, Giovanni Battista was known on Cyprus as “Giovanni Battista Cipriotto.”³⁴ The epithet “Cipriotto” (Cypriot) makes little sense in the context of Cyprus, where it could hardly have distinguished one denizen of the island from many others. It makes more sense as a translation of the epithet he used among Ethiopians in Rome, *zä-Qəḫros* or “of Cyprus,” here combined with his usual European alias. All told, the available data concerning Yoḥannəs of Cyprus accord with what we know of Giovanni Battista: his Cypriot origins, his fluency in Latin, his sporadic presence in Rome in the mid-sixteenth century, and his status as one of the Santo Stefano monks best known to non-Ethiopians in Rome. His handwriting, finally, as attested in MS Vat. et. 66, indicates that he was a trained scribe.³⁵

Two more documents make reference to a Yoḥannəs *qäsis* (priest), whom we can confidently identify as Yoḥannəs of Cyprus. The first reference appears in the first volume of the *Gəʿəz Testamentum Novum* (1548). At the conclusion of the text of the Acts of the Apostles, the editor Täsfa Şəyon stated that the work had been accomplished “with the help of many translators, with the skilled priest Yoḥannəs (*Yoḥannəs qäsis ma’mər*) and with all the sons of baptism.”³⁶ A man also identifying himself as Yoḥannəs *qäsis* was in Venice in December 1548, where he wrote to Täsfa Şəyon that a Gəʿəz

34 ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 5v.

35 Paleographic comments on Yoḥannəs of Cyprus’s hand are found in the appendix.

36 *Testamentum Novum cum Epistola Pavli ad Hebreos tantum* . . . [editio princeps of the Gəʿəz New Testament], ed. Fr. Petrus Ethiops [Täsfa Şəyon], 2 vols. (Rome: Valerium Doricum et Ludouicum Fratres Brixianos, 1548–49), 1: fol. 157r.

copy of the Pauline Epistles had been sent by the archbishop of Cyprus.³⁷ This text was crucial to Täsfa Şəyon's edition of the New Testament. Lacking any exemplar from which to print the Pauline Epistles, Täsfa Şəyon had omitted them from the first volume of his edition, printed in 1548; only with the arrival of this copy from Cyprus could the Pauline Epistles be included in the second volume of 1549.³⁸ The hand of this letter is somewhat looser than that which copied the Matthew reading in MS Vat. et. 66, as would not be surprising in a personal missive, but it can nonetheless be identified as that of Yoḥannəs of Cyprus (figure 2). The characteristics of this Yoḥannəs *qäsis* also match our man. In 1548 he was a priest, but not prior; he was a skilled translator between Gəʿəz and Latin, as Täsfa Şəyon observed; he was connected to Cyprus, and could report on the dispatch of manuscripts from that island. Indeed, it is very likely that he was responsible for requesting the manuscript from his Cypriot compatriots, and had gone to Venice, which then ruled Cyprus, precisely to oversee its arrival. These two notices demonstrate that Giovanni Battista/Yoḥannəs of Cyprus was closely involved with Täsfa Şəyon's editorial projects, and well acquainted with Täsfa Şəyon's European collaborators, Pietro Paolo Gualtieri and Bernardino Sandri, to whom he sent greetings in his letter of 1548.

Yoḥannəs of Qäntorare

As for Yoḥannəs of Qäntorare (spelled with such variations as Qäntärare, Qäntärari, Qätorar, and Qätorare), this name appears in no European sources yet identified, nor should we expect it to: it was quite unusual for Europeans to refer to Ethiopians except by European-style aliases. Only the Gəʿəz manuscripts of Santo Stefano can provide information on his origins

37 Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS D V 13, fol. 253r; translated by Lefevre, "Documenti e notizie," 96.

38 Bausi and Fiaccadori, "Täsfa Şəyon," 525; Lefevre, "Documenti e notizie," 96.

and career, and a half-dozen of them do.³⁹ MS Vat. et. 35 we have already had occasion to mention. Its colophon reads, “This book was completed in the days of Luke the Evangelist in the Year of Mercy 187, in the month of *Ṗagʷəmen*. It was copied by Yoḥannəs, son of [*wäldä*] Qäñtorare, for the salvation of his soul.”⁴⁰ The intercalary month of *Ṗagʷəmen* in the Year of Mercy 187 corresponds to 24–29 August 1535 AD.⁴¹ A second and somewhat fuller identification occurs in MS Vat. et. 15, a composite manuscript whose first production unit (fols. 1–153) dates to the fifteenth century.⁴² Near the end of this production unit, on folio 150v, is the following acquisition note: “I, Yoḥannəs, [spiritual] son of Abimos, of Qäñtorare, bought this book from Täsfa Şəyon, son of Däbrä Libanos, in the presence of eight pilgrims. May whoever steals or takes it be excommunicated by the mouth of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.” This is immediately followed by the statement “I, Täsfa Şəyon, said it.”⁴³ Since Täsfa Şəyon clearly brought this manuscript with him to Rome and sold it thereafter to Yoḥannəs of Qäñtorare, the acquisition note can be dated between circa 1536, date of Täsfa Şəyon’s first notice in Rome, and his death in 1552.

MS Vat. et. 66, in its turn, identifies “Yoḥannəs of Qäñtorari” as *rayəs* or prior of Santo Stefano in three notices.⁴⁴ A bequest recorded on folio 51va

39 Mentions of Yoḥannəs of Qäñtorare in BAV, MSS Vat. et. 35, Vat. et. 66, and Vat. et. 15 are listed in Zarzeczny, “Su due manoscritti,” 509–11, though here conflating Yoḥannəs of Qäñtorare and Yoḥannəs of Cyprus.

40 Translations from Gəʿəz manuscripts are based on our consultation of the manuscripts themselves, but wherever a colophon or other notation has been transcribed by Grébaut-Tisserant, we refer the reader to their catalog. Here, BAV, MS Vat. et. 35, fol. 105v, transcribed in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:163.

41 For the conversion of Ethiopian dates to European, see Conti Rossini, *Tabelle comparative del calendario etiopico col calendario romano* (Rome: Istituto per l’Oriente 1948), and Marius Chaîne, *La chronologie des temps chrétiens de l’Égypte et de l’Éthiopie* (Paris: Geuthner, 1925). The converted date 1536 given in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:164 (again in vol. 2, Table XI) is incorrect.

42 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:45.

43 Transcribed in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:61. Despite the presence of first-person statements in two voices, the entire acquisition note was written by one scribe, who was not Yoḥannəs of Qäñtorare.

44 Like the Ethiopian community in Cairo and that in Jerusalem (the model for both Cairo’s and Rome’s), Santo Stefano employed the Arabic term *rayəs* to denote the administrative

lists “*rayəs* Yoḥannəs, son of Qāntārari” among its four witnesses; this notice is dated to the Year of Mercy 184, which corresponds to the *anno Domini* year running from September 1531 to August 1532. Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare was thus already prior of the community at this time.⁴⁵ Immediately following this bequest (fol. 51vb) is a second notice decreeing that the monks commemorate the feast day of Saint Stephen, which again identifies the *rayəs* as “Yoḥannəs, son of Qāntorari” and is dated to the month of *Mäskäräm* in the Year of Mercy 185 (= September 1532).⁴⁶ Finally, on folio 1r was recorded another bequest naming “*rayəs* Yoḥannəs, son of Qāntorare” as its recipient. If the date of the immediately preceding bequest also applies to this note, it was done in the Year of Mercy 187, or 1534–35 AD.

Several other notices refer to a *rayəs* Yoḥannəs without identifying him further. A record of donation on the front flyleaf (fol. I) of MS Vat. et. 25 affirms that the record was written “in the city of Rome by the tombs of Peter and Paul before 14 pilgrims under *rayəs* Yoḥannəs . . . in the month of *Ḥamle* . . . in the Year of Mercy 192, in the days of John the Evangelist.”⁴⁷ This date corresponds to July 1540. MS Vat. et. 5, a sixteenth-century paper manuscript containing the Catholic Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews, was donated by one Färe Mika’el to the community of Santo Stefano in the presence of seven monks, including *rayəs* Yoḥannəs.⁴⁸ Very likely this donation was made before 1548, when Täsfa Şəyon published the first volume of the *Testamentum Novum*, for this manuscript served as his exemplar for the text of these epistles.⁴⁹ Finally, the Rule of Santo Stefano states that it was composed in a meeting of all the monks “together with our *rayəs*, *abba* Yoḥannəs, and our spirit and our teacher [*mānfəsənä wä-mämbərənä*], *abba* Täsfa Şəyon,” and, in the conclusion, that it was done on the third of

head of the community. See, e.g., BAV, MS Vat. et. 25, fol. 260v, transcribed in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:130.

45 He must have been elected prior after 18 February 1529, however, for on that date (= 24 *Yäkkatit* in the Year of Mercy 181) the monk Təwkəltä Maryam was prior: BAV, MS Vat. et. 66, fol. 66r.

46 More additional notes from this manuscript have been published in Chaïne, *Chronologie*.

47 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:129.

48 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:21.

49 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:20.

Mäskäräm (1 September) in the year 1551 “by the reckoning of the Franks.”⁵⁰ The explicit, paired mention of the names of Yoḥannəs and Täsfa Šəyon in this official document attests to the two men’s complementary and leading roles at Santo Stefano. Yoḥannəs was *rayəs*, a title that appears to have been in continuous use at Santo Stefano and that denotes the administrative head of the community.⁵¹ Täsfa Šəyon was the community’s *māmbər* or spiritual teacher. Though this title was sometimes used at other Ethiopian monasteries to refer to the community’s abbot, we have found it attached to no other individual at Santo Stefano, where *māmbər* appears to have been an honorific reserved for its most distinguished and erudite member.⁵²

Taken together, these data inform us that Yoḥannəs, “son of” or simply “of” Qāntorare, also considered himself a spiritual “son of Abimos.” He was prior of Santo Stefano by 1531–32, so noted again circa 1534–35, and probably in this capacity bought Täsfa Šəyon’s manuscript in or after 1536. The references to *rayəs* Yoḥannəs in July 1540, before 1548, and in September 1551, though lacking the epithet “of Qāntorare,” are almost certainly to this same man.

Finally, there are the manuscripts or parts of manuscripts that Yoḥannəs copied but did not “sign,” and which can be attributed to him on the basis of the hand. The full extent of his scribal activity will only be known when

50 The three Gə‘əz manuscript copies of the Rule on which the editions and translations of Marius Chaïne and Mauro da Leonessa are based all agree on the presence of *rayəs* Yoḥannəs and Täsfa Šəyon and on the date of composition, though the date 3 *Mäskäräm* was translated in the Vatican’s official Latin version of the text as 3 September. See Chaïne, “Un monastère éthiopien à Rome au XVe et XVIe siècle: San Stefano dei Mori,” *Mélanges de la faculté orientale de l’Université Saint-Joseph de Bayrouth* 5 (1911): 20–26; Mauro da Leonessa, *Santo Stefano Maggiore degli Abissini e le relazioni romano-etioptiche* (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1929), 204–16.

51 In addition to Təwkalṭä Maryam, who preceded Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare as *rayəs* (see n. 45), one ʿInqʿa Maryam was identified as *rayəs* in an undated historical notice: MS Vat. et. 66, fol. 65va. European texts identify a Tommaso as prior before 1518 (Leonessa, *S. Stefano Maggiore*, 188) and a Marco as prior in 1580 (Latin donation notice in BAV, Stamp. Barb. A. VIII. 18, front flyleaf), but we do not have the corresponding term employed by the Ethiopians in these cases. See also Chaïne, “Un monastère,” 12.

52 Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen, “Jerusalem,” in *EAE*, vol. 3: *He-N*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 273–77 at 276, for the use of this title at the monastery of Däbrä Gännät in Jerusalem.

the Santo Stefano manuscripts have been thoroughly identified and studied, but even the data so far collected indicate that he must have spent many months at such work. In addition to MS Vat. et. 35, the only manuscript in which he identified himself as scribe, he copied MS Vat. Ross 865; both were evidently intended for personal or internal monastic use, and employ a rough, irregular, and somewhat old-fashioned script.⁵³ A number of other texts scattered in different manuscripts appear also to be in Yoḥannəs's hand, including the copy of the monastic Rule in MS Vat. et. 66.⁵⁴

Finally, as noted above, Grébaut and Tisserant have attributed MSS Vat. et. 1 and Vat. et 2 to Yoḥannəs as well. These two are of particular interest in being related to the major editorial and translation projects overseen by Täsfa Şəyon. In MS Vat. et. 1, for instance, Yoḥannəs copied the text of the Four Gospels and the Ethiopian missal from the print edition that Täsfa Şəyon had just published, and added a series of important "reference works," including the *Senodos*, that is, a translated collection of early church canons.⁵⁵ His hand here is more controlled than in the "private" manuscripts described above; the manuscript itself is of relatively large size (325 × 233 mm) and free of the marginal notations so common in other Santo Stefano codices. Both the contents and the physical attributes of the manuscript suggest it was intended as a sort of master copy for the community, such as one might expect a prior to undertake—and one that took Täsfa Şəyon's new edition as its textual authority and antigraph. The majority of the contents (all but the computus, calendar, and a brief invocation of the Virgin) was completed by April 1549.⁵⁶ Yoḥannəs then copied MS Vat. et. 2

53 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:163 (re: MS Vat. et. 35): "Scriptura, plane rudis, formas quasdam antiquiores retinet." See the appendix for further description.

54 The fact that Yoḥannəs of Qänṭorare himself copied out the Rule is strong evidence that the "rayəs Yoḥannəs" mentioned therein was indeed him. See the appendix for further comments on additional texts that may be attributed to him.

55 Alessandro Bausi, "Senodos," in *EAE*, 4:623–25.

56 The colophon at the end of the *Senodos* text (fol. 198r) states that the *Senodos* was completed in the month of *Gənbət* in the Year of Adam 6585: see *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:10. This date, which perplexed the cataloguers, is explained by Mauro da Leonessa, "Un trattato sul calendario redatto al tempo di re 'Amda Syon I," *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 3 (1943): 316, as employing a less common Ethiopian dating system known as the "Era of Däbrä Bizan." We thank Alessandro Bausi for this reference.

directly from this master copy, and probably immediately afterward.⁵⁷ Here he included only the Nicaean and pseudo-Nicaean canons of the *Senodos*, prefaced by a table of contents in Latin that was doubtless written by one of the monks' European collaborators. This second manuscript exhibits the same, more-controlled hand as in MS Vat. et. 1. It was very likely intended to be the presentation copy for Cardinal Cervini and Sirleto, who were quite interested in this text, not only because of the Latin it contains, but because there is some evidence it was in Sirleto's possession in 1562.⁵⁸ These two manuscripts, therefore, indicate that Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare, like Yoḥannēs of Cyprus, was involved in his own way in the Ethiopian-European collaborations that distinguished Santo Stefano in the mid-sixteenth century.

Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare and Yoḥannēs of Cyprus/ Giovanni Battista Compared

If we collate the data collected above, the distinction between Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare and Yoḥannēs of Cyprus/Giovanni Battista becomes clear. First, the Ḡǣz evidence indicates that Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare and Yoḥannēs of Cyprus could not have been the same person. For one, their handwriting is different; they used different scripts; and Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare, even in his more carefully executed manuscripts, remained the less accomplished scribe.⁵⁹ A second index is the differences in their self-identification or identification by fellow monks. Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare is never associated with Cyprus, nor is Yoḥannēs of Cyprus ever linked to Qāntorare. Yoḥannēs of Qāntorare never identifies himself as a spiritual son of Tāklä Haymanot, nor does Yoḥannēs of Cyprus ever identify himself as a spiritual son of Abimos.

57 The paper used for this manuscript bears a watermark datable to circa 1547–50: *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:12.

58 See *Codices Aethiopici*, 2:15.

59 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:10, describes the more carefully executed MS Vat. et. 1 as still “scriptura inelegans,” and with the same “signa antiquitatis” (for instance, in the shapes of the numerals ፪, ፫) evident in the scribe's other manuscripts.

These distinctions hold true even when the two men are named in the same manuscript, as in MS Vat. et. 66.

Moreover, chronological data indicate that the monk known to Europeans as Giovanni Battista—even if he was not Yoḥannās of Cyprus—could not have been Yoḥannās of Qāntorare. As we have seen, the latter was in Rome, and already prior, in 1531–32. Giovanni Battista was probably still a teenager, or at most in his early twenties, at this time, a very young man to be put in charge of Santo Stefano. (This is one datum suggesting that Yoḥannās of Qāntorare was somewhat older than Giovanni Battista; another is the fact that Giovanni Battista was still living in 1565, whereas Yoḥannās of Qāntorare disappears from the documentary record, at least as we now know it, after 1551.) Yet more telling is the fact that in 1531–32 Giovanni Battista was not in Rome at all: by his own account, and whether or not one accepts his alleged voyage to the Indies, he was in Portugal.⁶⁰ Finally, Giovanni Battista's subsequent travels, including three years on Cyprus (1535–38) and two years in Venice (1538–40), make it impossible that he could have served continuously as prior of Santo Stefano over these years.

A final proof of the distinction between these two men, and an important addition to our biographical information on Yoḥannās of Qāntorare, concerns his identification with the toponym Qāntorare and with the spiritual father named Abimos. The unfamiliarity of both names has doubtless contributed to the confusion between the two Yoḥannāses, and we here set forth the available information on them.

Qāntorare (also spelled in the manuscripts Qāntorar, Qāntorari) appears in the *Acts* of Saint Tāklā Haymanot, at least in the standard version dating to the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁶¹ According to the *Acts*, Tāklā

60 If he did meet the embassy in “the eastern Indies,” he would have remained with it in Portugal from late 1527 to 1533; if not, he would simply have been traveling in Portugal and Galicia at this time.

61 On the *Acts* of Tāklā Haymanot, see Denis Nosnitsin, “Tāklā Haymanot,” in *EAE*, 4:831–33. There is no scholarly edition of the text. The story appears principally in chapters lxxxii, lxxxiv, and esp. lxxxvii and xc in Ernest A. Wallis Budge, ed., *The Life and Miracles of Tāklā Hāymānôt in the Version of Dabra Libânôs, and the Miracles of Tāklā Hāymānôt in the Version of Dabra Libânôs, and the Book of the Riches of the Kings*, 2 vols. (London: privately

Haymanot (d. ca. 1313), on a return journey from Jerusalem in the company of his disciple Ar'ayännä Şäggahu, traveled to the land of Zälan. There he ascended a mountain (*däbr*) called Qänṭorar, which he liked since it was a “desert land” (*mədrä bəḍaw*). Thereafter he went to Ḥayq (i.e., Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥstifanos on Lake Ḥayq) and Amhara, and then proceeded to the “mount” called Dada or Dəda, said to be in the region of Sayənt. Having received an order from God to return to his native Şäwa, Täklä Haymanot left but told Ar'ayännä Şäggahu to remain there.

The clear southern trajectory of this journey aids in locating Qänṭorare. Having returned to Ethiopia from Jerusalem (therefore from the north), the two monks first reach Qänṭorare, then Lake Ḥayq in the Amhara region, then Sayənt, a subregion of Amhara located west-southwest of Lake Ḥayq and bordering the Abbay River.⁶² We should thus expect Qänṭorare to be north of Lake Ḥayq. According to James Quirin, the land of “Zälan” in which Qänṭorare was located “may have been near Angot,” that is, directly north of Lake Ḥayq: Ethiopian Christian traditions associate it with Muslim groups near the Ifat sultanate and the Awaş River and identify it as a land taken from the Christian Ethiopian king, suggesting it occupied a borderland between Christian Ethiopia and the Muslim sultanate of Ifat.⁶³

The monastic genealogy of Täklä Haymanot, a text closely related to and often circulating with his *Acts*, explains in its turn the link between Qänṭorare and the figure of Abimos. A particular, extended version of this genealogy presents the monastic history of Ethiopia from the point of view of the community of Däbrä Libanos of Şäwa, the sanctuary of St. Täklä

printed for Lady Meux, 1906); in the modern Ethiopian church editions of the *Acts*, it is found in chapters 48–50: see, e.g., *Gädlä Täklä Haymanot*, 3rd ed. (Addis Ababa: Tənsä'e yämāşaḥəft masattämiya dərəgğət, 1973 AM = 1980/81 AD).

62 Denis Nosnitsin, “Sayənt,” in *EAE*, 4:567–68.

63 James Quirin, “Zälan,” in *EAE*, 5:120–21; to this, valuable information on Angot and its later capital “Angeteraz” and a place called “Corcora” (Qorqora? phonetically not very far from Qänṭorar) can be found in Carl Wilhelm Isenberg and Johann Ludwig Krapf, *Journals of the Rev. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf, Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, detailing their proceedings in the kingdom of Shoa and journeys in other parts of Abyssinia, in the years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842* (London: Seeley, Burnside and Seeley, 1843), 16–19, 44, 452–53.

Haymanot.⁶⁴ The saint's disciple Ar'ayännä Šäggahu appears in this text too, now described as the head of the monastery at Dada and as accompanied by his three "spiritual sons," Abimos, ʾIndrāyas, and Sälama. Abimos, moreover, is said to have gone to "Angot which is Qāntorari."⁶⁵ In addition to confirming the location of Qāntorare in Angot, this text explains Yohānnas's self-identification as "son of Abimos." A disciple of Ar'ayännä Šäggahu, Abimos was probably the founder of the monastic community at Qāntorare, or perhaps one of its early abbots.

Ar'ayännä Šäggahu and Qāntorare appear not only in the traditions linked to Täklä Haymanot, but also in those of the Ewostatean movement—specifically, in a monastic genealogy of Däbrä Šārabi, a monastery in the Šərə region of eastern Təgray founded by Ewostatewos himself in the first decade of the fourteenth century.⁶⁶ The earliest of three known (slightly variable) copies of this text dates to the seventeenth century. Ar'ayännä Šäggahu appears here, not, of course, as a disciple of Täklä Haymanot, but as a fifth-generation disciple of Ewostatewos, and is described as "father of Qāntorar."⁶⁷ This designation suggests he founded the community himself,

64 Getatchew Haile, "The Monastic Genealogy of the Line of Täklä Haymanot of Shawa," *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 29 (1982–83): 7–38.

65 Haile, "Monastic Genealogy," 10 (text), 24–25 (translation). Angot is the name of a district in the later Wällo province: see Merid Wolde Aregay, "Angot," in *EAE*, vol. 1: *A–C*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 268. Hiob Ludolf, in his summary of Ethiopian provinces, mentions Dada (the same as here and in the Acts of Täklä Haymanot?) as a subprovince of Amhara: see Hiob Ludolf, *Historia aethiopica, sive brevis & succincta descriptio Regni Habessinorum, quod vulgò malè Presbyteri Johannis vocatur . . .* (Frankfurt: Joh. David Zunner, 1681), Book I, Ch. 3, §8 ff.

66 Gianfrancesco Lusini, "Däbrä Šārabi," in *EAE*, vol. 2: *D–Ha*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 40.

67 Lusini edits and translates all three copies of the text, in which Ar'ayännä Šäggahu is described as the "father of Qāntorar" (*abubomu lä-Qāntorar*): Gianfrancesco Lusini, "Per una storia delle tradizioni monastiche eritree: Le genealogie spirituali dell'ordine di ʾEwostātēwos di Dabra Šārābi," in *Aegyptus Christiana: Mélanges d'hagiographie égyptienne et orientale dédiés à la mémoire du P. Paul Devos bollandiste*, Cahiers d'orientalisme 25, ed. Ugo Zanetti and Enzo Lucchesi (Geneva: Cramer, 2004), 263 (text), 264 (trans.); 266 (text), 267 (trans.); 268 (text), 269 (trans.). Variants and slight text corruption are quite possible, especially as here when the genealogy deviates from the straight chain of names, so the original reading perhaps was

or perhaps (as in the Täklä Haymanot genealogy) was responsible for sending a disciple to found it. Thus both Ewostatean traditions and the traditions of the monastic network of Täklä Haymanot associate Ar'ayännä Šäggahu with the foundation of Qänṭorare, though in different eras. In the Täklä Haymanot texts, he became a monk during Täklä Haymanot's lifetime and thus in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and sent his disciple to found a community in Qänṭorare; in this Ewostatean genealogy he is again responsible directly or indirectly for the founding of Qänṭorare, but in a decidedly later period (probably the late fourteenth or fifteenth century).⁶⁸

Two other, lesser known hagiographical texts make brief but important mention of Qänṭorare. The place appears as "Däbrä Qäṭorar" in the *Acts* of Mälkä Šedeq, a saintly monk from Šäwa and a contemporary of King Bä'ädä Maryam (r. 1468–78), which suggests that a significant monastic community may have existed in Qänṭorare by the later fifteenth century; no monastic affiliation is here specified.⁶⁹ Second, in the sixteenth-century *Acts*

abubomu lä-zä-Qänṭorar, or *abubomu lä-zä-əllä-Qänṭorar* ("father of those of Qänṭorar"). The expression *abubomu lä-Qänṭorar* might be meant to reflect that the "spiritual sons" of Ar'ayännä Šäggahu were numerous, as indeed is the case in other genealogies.

68 Ewostatean claims to Qänṭorar(e) may have developed later than those of the Täklä Haymanot monastic network; there are certainly Ewostatean monastic genealogies that mention neither Ar'ayännä Šäggahu nor Qänṭorar, or mention Ar'ayännä Šäggahu only, such as that published by Getatchew Haile, "A Fragment on the Monastic Fathers of the Ethiopian Church," in *Orbis Aethiopicus: Studia in honorem Stanislaus Chojnacki natali septuagesimo quinto dicata, septuagesimo septimo oblate*, 2 vols., Bibliotheca Nubica 3, parts 1–2, ed. Piotr O. Scholz in collaboration with Richard Pankhurst and Witold Witakowski (Albstadt: Schuler, 1992), 1:231–37.

69 The text, unedited, is preserved in only one eighteenth-century manuscript, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML), MS no. 4553 (kept in the church of Däbrä Məṯmaq Maryam, in the then district of Moğa-Wädära, Šäwa): see Getatchew Haile, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and for the Hill Monastic Library, Collegeville*, vol. 10: *Project Numbers 4001–5000* (Collegeville, MN: Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library, 1993), 214–16. The importance of the place may be indirectly assumed from the fact that his *Acts* report several important events in Mälkä Šedeq's life as having taking place at "Däbrä Qäṭorar," located in Angot; his entire stay there lasted nine years (see fols. 48va–61va). Remarkably, the name includes the word *däbr* (a common part of the names of the churches and monasteries) only in this specific source; the

of ʿĪzra, famous head of the Stefanite monastery of Gundä Gunde (d. ca. 1520), ʿĪzra debates the monks of “Qānturare” on a point of theology.⁷⁰ Here, too, no monastic affiliation is given for the community.

It is clear from this evidence that a monastic community existed at Qānturare by the early sixteenth century at the latest; that its foundation was credited directly or indirectly to Arʾayännä Šäggahu; and that both the house of Täklä Haymanot and (possibly somewhat later) the Ewostateans claimed the community as their own. Qānturare may have begun as a daughter house of one monastic family and changed its affiliation over time. Alternatively, it may have been an independent monastic foundation, not closely linked to either the Ewostateans or the monastic network of Täklä Haymanot. That neither the *Acts* of ʿĪzra nor those of Mälkä Šedeq link it to a major monastic network might lean toward the latter conclusion. So might Yohānnas of Qānturare’s self-identification as a “son of Abimos,” recalling an earlier abbot (possibly the founder) of his specific monastery, but not affiliating himself or his community expressly with either of the major monastic networks of his time. No location in the contemporary landscape of Ethiopia has yet been found that can be identified with the historical Qānturare. The community, located in a vulnerable border region, may have been deserted or changed location in the face of the devastating military campaigns of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ġāzī (later 1520s–40s) or of the subsequent Oromo migration into the region.⁷¹

variant *Qānturare* is probably a later derivation from *Qä(n)torar*. The name *Qānturar* may also be somehow connected to or inspired by *Qāntorya* in the Ethiopic apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: see Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Contendings of the Apostles (Maṣḥafa gadla ḥawāryāt)*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935; repr. Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1976): 1:279–80 (text), 2:279–80 (trans.).

70 The debate concerned the Trinity. See A. Caquot, “Les actes d’Ezrā de Gundā-Gundē,” *Annales d’Éthiopie* 4 (1961): 89–90 (text), 117 (trans.). Caquot only mentions that “un monastère de Qāntorār, de tradition eusthatienne, est cité dans la généalogie monastique de Ćeʿaraši publiée par Conti Rossini, *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, 1900, p. 154–156,” which is the one republished in Lusini, “Per una storia,” at 265–66 (see n. 67 above).

71 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Éth. 35, contains two references to monks of Qānturare resident in the Ethiopian community of Ḥārat az-Zuwayla (Cairo); both are undated but surmised by Enrico Cerulli to date to the second half of the sixteenth century (first reference, fol. 198v) or to the century generally (second reference, fol. 200v). See Cerulli,

Conclusion

Both Yoḥannəs of Cyprus and Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare were clearly prominent representatives of Santo Stefano in the middle of the sixteenth century, but their biographies were rather different, and illustrate the variety of origins and career trajectories represented among the monks of Santo Stefano. The former was a true product of the Ethiopian diaspora, born on Cyprus to parents who had met in Egypt. Though in his testimony to Cardinal Ghisleri in 1564 he made no mention of his monastic vows—perhaps considering the information irrelevant, or even impolitic, after his conversion to Catholicism—it is likely that he took his vows during his youth on Cyprus, and gained from the Ethiopian monastic community of Nicosia the scribal training he exhibited in later years.⁷² It was doubtless also during his youth on Cyprus that he learned the Arabic for which the pope praised him in later years; he might also have learned Latin and Italian there, Cyprus being in that period under Venetian control, although given his evident linguistic talent he could easily have picked these up during his subsequent years in Europe. Restless by disposition, as his frequent travels attest, and equipped with the languages to enter easily into learned European society, he soon developed relations with a series of increasingly prominent Catholic prelates who knew him as Giovanni Battista. As a “culture broker” between the European and Ethiopian Orthodox communities,

Etiopi in Palestina, 2:397, 407–8. Some manuscripts of the Ethiopic Synaxarion contain a brief notice of the *translatio* of Ar’ayännä Šäggahu under 21 Ḥamle; if he were buried at Qāntorare, such *translatio* might suggest the community’s relocation. See Ignazio Guidi, *Le synaxaire éthiopien. Les mois de Sanê, Hamlê et Nabasê*, vol. 2: *Le mois de Hamlê*, Patrologia Orientalis 7/3 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1911), 378. By the seventeenth century, according to Manoel d’Almeida (d. 1640), Angot was occupied by the Oromo: see Charles Fraser Beckingham and George Wynn Brereton Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646; being extracts from the History of High Ethiopia or Abassia by Manoel de Almeida, together with Babrey’s History of the Galla* (= Works issued by the Hakluyt Society Ser. 2, 107) (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954), 15 and map.

72 Yoḥannəs was certainly intimately connected to the Ethiopian ecclesiastical community of Cyprus: his father was a priest, and two of his brothers assumed control of the Ethiopian church of San Salvatore in Nicosia, which until that time certainly housed monks. See the testimony of “Samuel Ethiops,” in ASV, AA., Arm. I–XVIII, no. 2953, fol. 6r–v.

he seems to have been second only to Täsfa Şəyon. Unlike Täsfa Şəyon, however, he converted to Catholicism, and it was as a Catholic Ethiopian that his fortunes rose highest. Chaplain and familiar of Pope Paul IV, familiar of and translator for Pope Pius IV, he ultimately acquired an episcopal position that promised to return him to his native Cyprus as a man of consequence and power.

Yoḥannəs of Qāntorare was in some ways Giovanni Battista's opposite. A native of Ethiopia who had begun his monastic life in the borderland of Angot, he may have been spurred to leave his homeland by the turbulence that afflicted this region, and indeed much of the Christian kingdom, from the later 1520s. We have as yet no evidence that he had extensive contact with high-ranking European figures or acquired European languages. Nor did he ever master calligraphic handwriting, though he did often copy texts, for reasons of practical necessity, learning, and pious exercise. His scribal work, like his other activities—witnessing acts, acquiring manuscripts, establishing new liturgical rites, and overseeing the composition of the community's first official written Rule—stemmed from his role as administrative head of Santo Stefano, and his two-decade tenure in this position suggests that he must have been an able administrator and man of sound moral reputation.

If Täsfa Şəyon was the brilliant center of the Santo Stefano community, the two Yoḥannəses stood just below him in importance, but representing the different facets of Ethiopian life in Rome that Täsfa Şəyon balanced so well. On the one side stood *rayəs* Yoḥannəs, upholding the Ethiopian Orthodox identity of the community as guardian of its rituals and library and as enforcer of its rules. On the other stood Yoḥannəs of Cyprus, talented and ambitious, like Täsfa Şəyon a bridge between Ethiopian and European culture but one who, in his conversion and subsequent entrance into the Catholic hierarchy, adopted more fully a European identity.

Appendix

THE HANDS OF YOḤANNĒS OF CYPRUS AND YOḤANNĒS OF QĀNTORARE

The following observations are not intended to provide a full paleographical description of the manuscripts or manuscript portions attributable to YoḥannĒs of Cyprus and YoḥannĒs of Qāntorare, but rather to describe the paleographical characteristics that enable the hands of each scribe to be identified across manuscripts and to be distinguished from each other, as well as to offer some further comments intended to help build a “scribal profile” of each.⁷³ The historical conclusions drawn from this data are reflected in the foregoing article text.

YOḤANNĒS OF CYPRUS

Identified examples of YoḥannĒs of Cyprus’s handwriting are relatively few, but leave no doubt that he received good scribal training and was accustomed to scribal work.

Example 1: a passage from the Gospel of Matthew, signed *YoḥannĒs wäldä Tāklä Haymanot zä-Qoḥpros* (YoḥannĒs, son of Tāklä Haymanot, of Cyprus), undated, on paper: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), MS Vat. et. 66, fols. 50v–51r (see figure 1).

Characteristics of the hand are as follows:

- The script is regular, rounded.
- The script is slightly right-sloping and consistent in its slant.
- The tops of some letters (σ, ω, ገ, ግ) are strongly, uniformly inclined to the left.
- The proportion of the script is tall, as in most Ethiopian scripts.
- Some individual letter shapes are as follows. Letter ω has an elegant elongated shape; the left loop of σ, σግ, σጒ, etc. touches the lower ruled line; the distinction between ግፍ and ግፆ is subtle, not always well distinguishable. The short downward strokes of ጸ in different orders are conspicuous. The kink of the sixth-order marker of ከ is emphasized.

Example 2: personal letter addressed to Täsfa Şəyon, signed by *YoḥannĒs qäsis* (YoḥannĒs the priest), December 1548, on paper: Siena, Bibl. Comunale degli Intronati, MS D V 13, fol. 253r (see figure 2).

73 On an approach that aims at a more diversified paleographical inquiry, going beyond the main task of dating manuscripts, see Denis Nosnitsin, “Deconstructing a Manuscript Collection: The Case of Ara’ro Tāklä Haymanot (Gulo Mākāda, East Təgray),” in *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies*, Supplement to Aethiopica 4, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Alessandro Gori, and Denis Nosnitsin (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 26 and n. 14, 41 and n. 94, with further references. For a recent overview of the state of the art in Ethiopic paleography, see Alessandro Bausi and Denis Nosnitsin, “Ethiopic Palaeography,” in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Pier Giorgio Borbone, Françoise Chatonnet, et al. (Hamburg: Tredition, 2015), as well as the essential work of Siegbert Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, Äthiopistische Forschungen 22 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988).

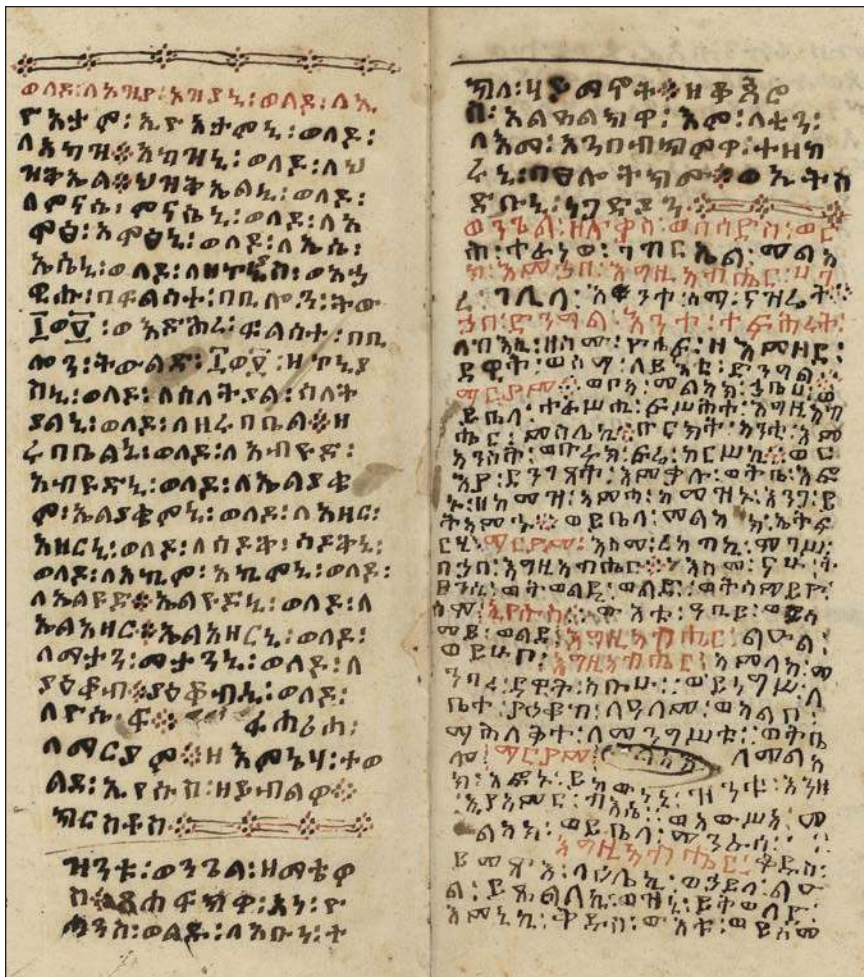


FIGURE 1. BAV, MS Vat. et. 66, fols. 50vb–51ra. © 2017 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. By permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

The hand appears less careful here than in Example 1, which may be explained by the greater informality of a personal letter and/or the greater speed with which he wrote. Elements of many letters are somewhat blurred and less finely executed; the proportions of the letters are somewhat taller than in Example 1, and the downward strokes of \mathfrak{Z} are not as clearly accented. Nonetheless, the overall appearance of the script matches that of Example 1, and some fine traits definitely point to the same hand. These include the kink of \mathfrak{h} , the way the inner loop of \mathfrak{d} is shaped, the absolutely identical shape of \mathfrak{T} , and the signs \mathfrak{O} , \mathfrak{O} , and \mathfrak{O} , which tend to a triangular shape pointing downwards.

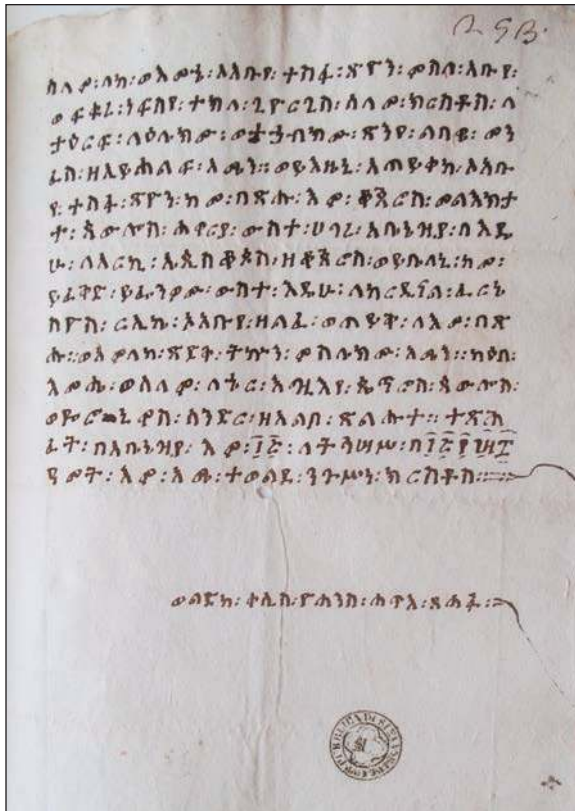


FIGURE 2. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MSD V 13, fol. 253r. © 21.02.2017 Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati. By permission of the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati with all rights reserved.

Example 3: brief note of ownership by *Yohannēs zä-Qoṣros, wäldä abunä Täklä Haymanot* (Yohannēs of Cyprus, son of our father Täklä Haymanot), undated, in a copy of the printed 1513 *Psalterium Aethiopicum*: Vatican City, BAV, Stamp. Barb. A VIII 18, front pastedown.

This ownership note, consisting of only eight words, does not offer extensive data for paleographical comparison. However, several distinctive letter shapes of Yohannēs of Cyprus do reappear here, such as ማ strongly inclined, and the shapes of ል, ከ, and ጽ are identical to those of example 1; compare also ኀ with the dot on the upper bar directed downwards.⁷⁴ For whatever reason, in this note the handwriting of Yohannēs of Cyprus is of somewhat better quality,

74 Cf. Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, 430, image 3.4.

appearing more accurate (despite the blot on the right), and more uniformly slanted than in Example 1.

YOHANNES OF QĀŦORARE

The four principal examples below have been ascribed already to Yohānnas of QāŦorare by Grébaut and Tisserant. The following comments are intended to supplement and refine their very brief paleographical descriptions, as well as to propose some further examples of texts attributable to this scribe.

Example 1: BAV, MS Vat. et. 35, signed on fol. 105v *Yohānnas wäldä Qā[n]torare*, dated August 1535, on parchment, except for final two paper folios (see figure 3).

The handwriting appears strikingly crude and clumsy.⁷⁵ The scribe struggled to control the pen movements and had difficulty following the ruled lines. On the last folios of the manuscript, the handwriting becomes extremely irregular. Several features of the manuscript—its small size, single-column format, and the presence of a text, the “Prayer of Saint Mary on Mount Golgotha,” considered to belong to the “magico-religious” tradition of Ethiopic literature—strongly suggest it was intended for private use rather than for any official or ritual purposes, which may account for its unpretentious appearance.⁷⁶ Grébaut and Tisserant describe the hand as “plainly crude” and note in particular several antiquated features: the angular shape of letters መ, ቀ, ቶ, ዐ, ዓ, ጸ, and ጸ; the absence of bracketing lines on numerals; and the shape of the numeral ፲ (10) “with the ring.”⁷⁷ Other characteristics of the hand are as follows:

- The script tends to rectangular shapes (in particular ሐ, ቦ, ሠ, and ጠ).
- The slant of the letters is irregular, but the tendency is to slightly right-sloping or upright script.
- The inclination of the “tops” of መ, ሠ, ዘ, and ቦ is irregular, though the scribe tried to draw them parallel to the lower ruled line.
- The script, despite its crude appearance, is slender, with high, narrow letters.
- The elements of individual letters frequently look disproportionate, and it is not easy to refer to absolutely stable shapes. The vowel marker of ሎ is very big, set on the linking line close to the top; the halves of መ tend to the triangular shape; the body of ዐ is small, triangular; the heads of ጸ and ዓ are very small, “squeezed,” and set high at the stems. The horizontal bars of ተ or ዘ in various “orders” and the vowel markers (ብ, ቦ, ዙ, ሎ) are set high (for more details, see notes 82–83). The “inner loop” of ል and the vowel markers of the fifth order (ሄ, ለ, etc.) are usually closed.
- the numeral ፯ (6) resembles a short ፯ (7).

75 The text on fol. 1r is written, though, in a different, better hand that is similar to “rounded scripts” of MS Vat. et. 1. Zarzeczny, “Su due manoscritti,” 509, also notes its similarity to the hand of Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 2206; the ornamental bands in the both are also similar.

76 For the manuscript’s contents and physical characteristics, see *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:160–64.

77 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:163.



FIGURE 3. BAV, MS Vat. et. 35, fol. 105v. © 2017 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. By permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Example 2: BAV, MS Vat. Ross. 865, unsigned and undated, on parchment (see figure 4).

This manuscript evinces all the scribal characteristics present in the previous example.⁷⁸ As in that example, the manuscript’s small size and inclusion of the same “Prayer of Saint Mary on Mount Golgotha” suggest its production for private use.

Example 3: BAV, MS Vat. et. 1, unsigned, dated April 1549, on parchment (see figure 5).

⁷⁸ For the manuscript’s description, see *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:862. The text on fols. 43r–45r (Salutation to the Virgin) is written in a different, “rounded script,” somewhat similar to those mentioned above.



FIGURE 4. BAV, MS Vat. Ross. 865, fols. 28v-29r. © 2017 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. By permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

This manuscript has been noted in previous scholarship primarily for featuring the *Senodos*, which, as a copy of Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, MS Or. 148, has been of lesser philological interest.⁷⁹ Though attributed entirely to Yohannās of Qāntorare by Grébaut and Tisserant, closer examination indicates that he was aided by two others, both better skilled than he.⁸⁰ Yohannās's handwriting here, though inferior to that of his colleagues, is nonetheless of better quality than in the two examples above. It is more right-sloping, but better oriented along the horizontal and vertical axes. It no longer looks "slender," but has the proportionality typical of most Ethiopian scripts. The letter shapes are more regular, and the lines are not hesitant. As

79 See Paolo Marrassini, "I manoscritti etiopici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze," *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 30 (1987): no. 16, esp. pp. 91, 93; Alessandro Bausi, "Johann Michael Wansleben's Manuscripts and Texts: An Update," in Bausi et al., *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies*, 214–15.

80 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:1–11 (manuscript description) and 862 (attribution to Yohannās of Qāntorare). Closer examination indicates that fols. 3r–10r, and 50vb to the end of the manuscript, were executed by "Hand A" (= Yohannās of Qāntorare). A second, fine hand ("Hand B"), resembling that attested in BAV, MS Vat. et. 66 (= Yohannās of Cyprus), executed fols. 13ra–rb, 40vb except the two top lines, and 41rb; the same hand, or a similar rounded hand, also executed the bottom third of fol. 41va, fol. 48ra (titles of Luke), and circa 14 lines on fol. 48va. A third hand ("Hand C") executed fols. 13ra–40vb, 41ra, 41va (top two-thirds), 41vb–48ra (to the end of the text of Mark), 48rb–va (titles of Luke), and the text from the bottom of fol. 48va to fol. 50va. Hand C, though superficially resembling that of Yohannās of Qāntorare ("Hand A"), is distinct. Quite regular, left-sloping, and with thick vertical lines, it can also be distinguished from Hand A by the spiky shape of ω , the rounded shape of σ , and the $\hat{\eta}$ composed of three vertical strokes. One may also compare the shape of ω as indicated in Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, 431, where the figure on the left represents Hand C, and the figure on the right corresponds to the shape of Hand A.

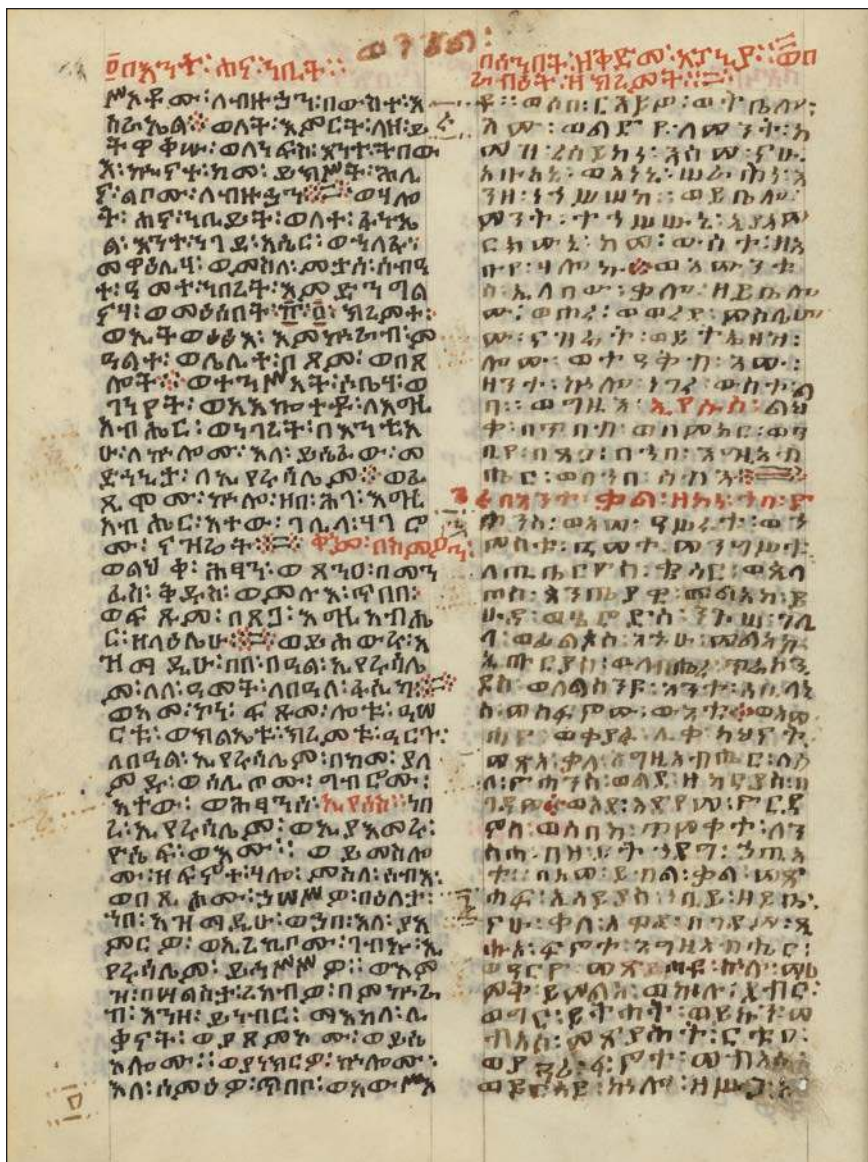


FIGURE 5. BAV, MS. Vat. et. 1, fol. 50v. © 2017 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

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noted in the article text above, the physical appearance and contents of this manuscript suggest it was intended as an official “master copy” of essential religious texts for the community, which may explain Yoḥannās’s more careful execution as compared with his copying of “private” manuscripts. Though this more careful execution gives an initial impression of a different hand, there are no characteristic differences in the formation of the letters that would distinguish the hand here from that attested in the previous two examples.

Example 4: BAV, MS Vat. et. 2, unsigned, undated, on paper.

The characteristics of Hand A of MS Vat. et. 1, as described above, apply also to this manuscript.⁸¹ The neater hand exhibited in both manuscripts reflects their status as a sort of pair: produced in the same span of one to two years, with MS Vat. et. 1 serving as the antigraph for MS Vat. et. 2, they appear to have both been produced for official purposes, in this case as a presentation copy for European readers.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO YOḤANNĒS OF QĀŦORARE

Perusal of digitized copies of select other manuscripts from Santo Stefano suggests other texts that can be attributed to Yoḥannās of QāŦorare on paleographical grounds. This list is in no way exhaustive: a thorough list of texts attributable to Yoḥannās of QāŦorare, Yoḥannās of Cyprus, and indeed other monks at Santo Stefano must await a thorough inventory of the community’s library and systematic analysis of the many hands there represented.

MS Vat. et. 15, production unit II (fols. 154–299v, datable to 1508–40). This production unit was executed by two scribes. The first can be identified as Yoḥannās of QāŦorare. This hand was analyzed by Siegbert Uhlig, without identification, as an example of a crude, “non-aesthetic” script.⁸² It is probably this same hand that Grébaut and Tisserant describe, also without identification, as “not at all elegant.”⁸³ The second scribe employed a fine, rounded, regular script similar to that of Yoḥannās of Cyprus and “Hand B” of MS Vat. et. 1. Both scribes wrote relatively short portions of the text in turns. The stints do not correspond with the quire boundaries, indicating that the scribes worked in tandem. For an example of the hand of Yoḥannās of QāŦorare in this

81 Described and attributed to the scribe of MS Vat. et. 1 in *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:11–12.

82 Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, 375 (“äußerst ungelenke, mitunter nicht leicht leserliche Schrift”) and 376 (a sample of the script from fols. 154–299 and some notes underscoring the difficulty of evaluating and dating such scripts). Several letter forms are mentioned as examples of “traditional forms”: e.g., ᠒ with the sixth-order marker set high, ᠑ also set high, shaped as continuation of the “top” stroke, etc. See other references to or images of this production unit on 300n, 309, 327, and 329. The author notes (309) the significant number of Santo Stefano manuscripts written in “crude hands.” One was certainly copied by Yoḥannās of QāŦorare (MS Vat. et. 35); the others (MSS Vat. et. 10, 16, 17, 18, 42, 49, 52, 57, and 66) merit further evaluation.

83 *Codices Aethiopici*, 1:61.

manuscript, see fols. 282r–289v. He identified himself simply as “Yoḥannās” on fol. 262r, in a portion of text that is also in his hand. His handwriting here resembles his “informal” style, as reflected in MSS Vat. et. 35 and Vat. Ross. 865, rather than the more careful script of MSS Vat. et. 1 and 2.

Vat. et. 40: fol. 1v (bequest) and fol. 78r (short *asmat* prayer), probably written by Yoḥannās of Qānṭorare. The hand here again more closely resembles the “informal” style of MSS Vat. et. 35 and Vat. Ross. 865.

Vat. et. 66: fols. 3r–4r, 51r, 53v (biblical excerpts) and 55va–58ra (Rule of Santo Stefano). These are further examples resembling the “informal” hand of Yoḥannās of Qānṭorare.