

Denis Nosnitsin
Hamburg University

Historical Records from Ethiopia: A Trilingual Document from Aṣbi Däbrä Gännät Səllase, Təgray.

Abstract

The article deals with a few documents from the “Golden Gospels” of Aṣbi Səllase, the main church of the town of Aṣbi, Təgray. The church was founded by *dağğazmač* Subagadis, one of the main political figures of the turbulent “Era of Judges”, for his youngest son G^wang^wəl, in 1825-26. The “Golden Gospel” book of Aṣbi Səllase preserves the foundational charter of the church written, unusually, in Amharic, with a few Arabic and Coptic passages, as well as a number of documents concerning the tributes and benefits of the church, and more than 200 other *additiones*.

Text

The large rectangular church of Aṣbi Səllase¹ stands on the eastern edge of the town of Aṣbi². Not as spectacular as other antiquities of

¹ Known also as Aṣbi Səllase Sərw [Sur, Šur] Anbäsa, Sur Anbäsa, Īnda Səllase, or Däbrä Gännät Səllase.

² The central town of Kəlättä Awla^olo district, Təgray. The early history of Aṣbi is not well known. The earliest mention of the toponym may be in a charter of King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-40) who renewed *g^walts* of some monasteries (*CRLAxumae*, no. 44, mentioning the “governor of Aṣbi” in Hagäray [?]); another mention of the place is found in a charter issued by the 18th-century king Täklä Giyorgis and *dağğazmač* Wäldä Səllase (*CRLAxumae*, no. 67, “governor of Aṣbi”). The brief history of the settlement has been summarised by Pankhurst (1982:231f.), with reference to its economic importance as a strategic place and the first stop on the salt trade routes leading from the Dankali depression (specifically, from Arho, men-

the area³, Aṣbi Səllase has nevertheless played a pivotal role in the life of the region and the town since the latter became a permanent settlement⁴. As was frequently the case in Ethiopia, Aṣbi settlement itself must have emerged simultaneously with or soon after the establishment of Aṣbi Səllase by the famous *däğğazmač* Subagadis Wäldu⁵, which might have happened some time in 1825-26⁶, during

tioned in the document below) into the Highlands, as well as the site of a large market (where the price of *amole*-salt bars was still low, cf. Pankhurst 1968:354, 357, 462f.; Abir 1968:47). In 1974, being the capital of the then *wäräda* Aṣbi Dära, *awrağğa* Kəlättä Awla'əlo, the settlement became the main base of the Oxford expedition to Ethiopia which investigated historical sites of the region (Juel-Jensen / Rowell 1974:9-13).

³ In particular, its rock-churches and archaeological sites, see Juel-Jensen / Rowell 1974; Plant 1985 (esp. map on pp. 38f.).

⁴ Rarely quoted in the scholarly literature, the church of Aṣbi Səllase is known mainly due to one single land charter published in the compendium *Liber Axumae* (CRL*Axumae*, no. 82; tr. in Huntingford 1965:72f. [no. 82], 101).

⁵ *Däğğazmač* Subagadis (b. 1770, d. 15 February 1831; known also as Səbagadis, Säb'agadis, Subagadis, Subagadiš etc.), a son of the ruler of 'Agame (*šum 'agame*) Wäldu, and one of the most prominent personalities of the "Era of Judges" (*zämänä mäsaḥānt*), dreamed of the "renaissance" of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity and intended to defeat the "pagan" Yäğğu rulers controlling Gondär (on Subagadis Wäldu, see, e.g., *DicAfrBio* 131; a biographic sketch in Appleyard et al. 1985:38; Abir 1968:34ff.). In 1822 he managed to consolidate his power over Təgray, although for a short period only, and was seeking alliance with other Christian rulers of Ethiopia against the Yäğğu. In accordance with the old tradition, the establishing of new churches became one of the main points of Subagadis's political programme, and he assigned his new churches a role in his scheme of obtaining technical and military support from the foreign powers. With a reference to the Christian cause, a pledge for technical help in constructing churches appears in each of Subagadis's known letters from 1827: Appleyard 1985, no. vii (= *ActaAeth* I, no. 21) to Henry Salt; Appleyard 1985, no. viii (= *ActaAeth* I, no. 23) to King George IV, with a document written on behalf of Subagadis by W. Coffin. According to these documents, Subagadis built three or four new churches and renovated four old ones by that time. One of the churches must have been Aṣbi Səllase (see below); another one was

the last years of the tenure of the Metropolitan *abunä Qerällos*⁷. Remarkably, Aṣbi Səllase is today the only church of the town. It is situated within the spacious churchyard, just next to a small valley and a picturesque groove (practically the only green spots in the town)⁸.

‘Adwa Mädhane ‘Alām (in 1823-25, see Pankhurst 1982:222). The latter was described as the finest and most impressive round church of Ethiopia, cf. *DAE* III, 51, “...das am vollkommensten und reichsten durchgebildete Beispiel einer abessinischen Rundkirche....”. Also Budge 1928:159 refers to Mädhane ‘Alām and Ēnda Səllase at ‘Adwa (the latter built by Yoḥānnəs IV) as “...the most famous round churches in Abyssinia”. However, Subagadis ran into conflict with the numerous and influential clergy of Mädhane ‘Alām, when they, being unhappy with their master’s intimate relations with the missionaries, refused in January 1831 to let Christian Kugler be buried at Mädhane ‘Alām. The conflict might have made a specific, though indirect contribution to Subagadis’s defeat at May Ḥslamay on 14 February 1831 (cf. Tsegay Berhe G. Libanos in: *EÆ* III, 884b-885b; see also Abir 1968:35f.; Crummey 1972:37f.; Parkyns 1853:116, who gives a curious description of psychological condition of Subagadis on the eve of the battle).

⁶ As follows from the documents discussed below, the church was founded by *däggazmač* Subagadis during the reign of King Gigar (1821-26), the rule of *ras* Yəmam of the Yäggü dynasty over Gondär, Bägemdär and Amhara, who succeeded his father *ras* G^wəgsa Märsa in 1825 and died in 1828 (see Abir 1968:33-34; Crummey / Red. in: *EÆ* II, 906b-07a).

⁷ *Abunä Qerällos* was brought from Egypt by *ras* Wäldä Səllase; he arrived in Ethiopia in February 1816, shortly before Wäldä Səllase’s death (Conti Rossini 1916:826, 889f.). In Ethiopia, Qerällos had a turbulent and difficult career that ended in grave conflict with Subagadis. The latter’s dissatisfaction and anger with the Metropolitan are expressed in his letter to the Coptic Patriarch Būṭrūs VII (*Acta Aeth* I, 26-27, no. 22; the letter was never delivered), which also contains a request to send another metropolitan. However, Qerällos remained in office until his death towards 1828 (he was buried in ‘Adwa Mädhane ‘Alām, see Conti Rossini 1916:830, 893; see also Tedeschi in: *CE* IV, 1032f.).

⁸ The groove is hiding a couple of *ṣäbäl*-springs and another small church dedicated to St. Zär’a Buruk. It seems that the church is at least of the same

Aṣbi Səllase witnessed the history of the area, while its annals preserve numerous records concerning the religious, social and economic activities of the local population. The library of the church is known to comprise a substantial number of manuscripts. One of the most remarkable books of Aṣbi Səllase is its “Golden Gospels”, a co-dex that was donated to the church upon its foundation by *däḡḡazmač* Subagadis⁹. In keeping with the old tradition, the “Golden Gospels” of

age as Aṣbi Səllase, or even older. When I passed through Aṣbi in February 2008, the church was temporarily closed and the *tabot* was removed from it; one of the walls of the church had a large crack, and, reportedly, the water was gathering within the church building.

⁹ The codex bearing the signature C3-IV-343 (of the Ministry of Culture and Education) was examined in 2002 and partly photographed in 2005 by Michael Gervers and Ewa Balicka-Witakowska (unfortunately, the manuscript has been inaccessible ever since, and I did not have a chance to verify the foliation). Bound in the common way (the boards covered with leather), the codex has dimensions 47 x 49 x 51cm and contains some 248 parchment folios. The main text of the book, the Gospels, is written in two columns, 19-21 lines each. The handwriting, though typical for the late 18th/early 19th century, is fine and executed by a trained hand, and thus very different from the marginal notes. Red elements in punctuation marks are also carefully done. Fol. 2r-v is occupied by drawings (incomplete miniatures). Each Gospel is preceded by the “preface of the Gospel” (*Mäqdāmā Wängel*) followed by the stichometry (cf. Zuurmond 1989, part I, 14-16), and is concluded with the “postscript” (cf. Zuurmond 1989, part I, 29).

The content of the codex can be described as follows: fol. 1r–1va colophon mentioning *däḡḡazmač* Subagadis and his baptismal name Zä-Mänfäs Qəddus, washed out but still discernible, and Mk 1:1-14 only; fol. 2r-v unfinished miniatures: Nativity and Flight to Egypt, Baptism of Christ and Transfiguration resp.; fol. 3r colophon again with one name washed out and the baptismal name of Subagadis, the names of his father Wäldä Ləʿul and his mother Wälättä Şəyon added (in fact, the name washed out was that of Subagadis; someone did that in order to include, in smaller script, the names of both the commissioner of the manuscript and his parents); fols. 3r-117r the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark follow (in the beginning of the preface to the latter, the name of Subagadis washed out and then the three names added), completed by the “postscripts”; fols. 117r-195v the Gospel of Luke (beginning without the colophon), with the “preface” and the “postscript”; fols. 195v-246v the Gospel of John (beginning without the colo-

Aṣbi Səllase incorporated a large number of additional Amharic notes which are unrelated to the manuscript's main content. While the Gospel texts represent an example of the common recent eclectic text and are of lesser scholarly interest, the additional notes – *marginalia* or *additiones*¹⁰ – build an extensive documentary corpus for the study of the political, social and economic history of the region over a long period of time. The “Golden Gospels” of Aṣbi Səllase contains over 200 such notes, which cover the period from the foundation of the church to the 1950s¹¹.

The minor part of the earlier records, including also the earliest ones from the time of *däggazmač* Subagadis, is written in red. Starting with the time of Mənilək II, the records are written in black ink, while many dozens of notes (mostly on purchase and sale of the property like houses and plots of land) that come from the years after the war and occupation of 1935-41 are executed in pen¹².

phon), with the “preface” and the “postscript”. The trilingual document discussed below occupies fol. 197v, i.e. follows the “preface” of the Gospel of John [the stichometry of John ends fol. 197r], and precedes the Gospel of John beginning fol. 198r.

¹⁰ Bausi 1994:16-19; cf. Lusini 1998:5f.

¹¹ The most recent documents written on the added folios are dated 1958-60 Ethiopian callendar. The *additiones* of the “Golden Gospels” of Aṣbi Səllase cover most of the topics usual for such kind of documents, except for those related to the monastic life.

¹² For the bibliography on Ethiopian “Golden Gospel” books see Bausi 1997:14. The “Golden Gospels” of Aṣbi Səllase may be referred to as an example of the Gospel book that was extensively used for non-religious purpose, i.e. writing down the *additiones*. The notes (many of them stamped with seals) occupy virtually the entire space left below the columns of the biblical text on the most folios (though the ones containing the Gospel of Mark were left free); by including additional parchment leaves, the capacity of the book to accommodate records was further increased, and it was transformed into an “archive” of the local affairs. All the *additiones* are in Amharic (even though the language is sometimes incorrect or clumsy and shows heavy influence of Təgrəñña). Here are some examples of the most interesting pre-1935 records: (fol. 80r [before the Gospel of Mark]) – a record concerning the death date of *däggazmač* Subagadis (ዓለም : ከተፈጠረ : ዘመን : ከተቆጠረ : ጌሽ : ከ፲፻፳፫ ከሆነ : በዮካቲት : በ፱ቀን : ሞተ : ደጃዝማች : ሰባጋዲስ ...); a long record

concerning a dispute over a plot of land (በዘመነ : ንጉሥነ : ምንጊዝ : ወበዘመነ : ማቴዎስ : ወንገላዊ : ደጃዝማች : አብርሃ : ወር[አ] : ምላሽ : ሲገዙ : የአራኪኖ : ምድር : የትየ : ታድራና : የትየ : ስምዖን : ልጆች : ተማከረው...); a record concerning the change of the status of an agricultural area into the *desʿa*-land (በአፄ : ምንጊዝ : መንግሥት : ወበደጃች : አብርሃ : መስፍንነት : ደርዓት : የሚባል : መሬት ...; for a short summary on *desʿ*, see Favali in: *EÆ* II, 143b-44a); a record concerning property transactions from the time of *däggazmač* Tädla Abba Gubon, the long-lasting governor of Käləttä Awlaʿälo (በራስ : ስዩም : ግዛት : በመምህር : ርት : መምርነት [sic!]...). Between the stichometry and the text of Lukas, two (added) folios are fully occupied by records. On fol. 120r, there are two documents; the major concern of one of them is the return of a parcel of land, which had been used illegally by other people, to its owner (በዘመነ : ሉቃስ : ፲፱፻፲፭ : ዓመተ : ምሕረት : ሐምሌ : በ፳፭ቀን : በንግሥት : ዘውዲቱ : ወበአልጋ : ወራሽ : ራስ : ተፈሪ : መንግሥትነት : በደጃዝማች : ተድላ : መስፍንነት : በመምሕር : ወልደ : ጊዮርጊስ : መምሕርነት ...). On fol. 120v, there are three documents, among them a long record stamped with a seal, concerning the partition of a *rast*-plot in which *däggazmač* Tädla Abba Gubon took part (በዘመነ : ሉቃስ : ፲፱፻፲፭ : የስር : አንበሣ : ትውልድ : የርስተም : ሐብተማርያም : ክፈለማርያም : ወንድማች : ናቸው...; as it can be assumed from some of the documents, the acquisition of land plots was instrumental for Tädla's tightening grip on the region). The following added leaf (between fols. 120v and 120r) contains a text only on the *recto*-side; it is a long record concerning the settlement of a dispute between two churches, Aṣbi Dära Giyorgis and Barka Gäbrä Mānfäs Qəddus (በመዋዕሊሁ : ለንጉሥነ : ኃይለ : ሥላሴ : ንጉሠ : ነገሥት : ወበመስፍንነት : ራስ : ጉግሣ : ወበመምሕርነት : መልአከ : ገነት : ተሰፋ : ሚካኤል : ፲፱፻፳፫ : ዓመተ : ምሕረት). On fol. 197r (preceding the document under discussion), there is a register of *rim*-holders of the church, initiated during the tenure of the first head, *māmhar* Gäbrä Maryam (and opening with his name), which includes priests and *däbtāras* of the church, but also *däggazmač* Subagadis (Säbʿa Gadis) himself and his sons *däggazmač* Wäldä Mikaʿel, *däggazmač* Hagos, *abeto* Gʷangʷəl and a number of other *abetos*; the register shows the traces of many corrections and updatings (የሥላሴ : ስር : አንበሳ : የካህናት : ወተሠሩ : መኳንንት : በዓለ : ርሞች ::). On the *recto* side of the ultimate *folio*, there are records concerning the books and the paraphernalia of the church (e.g. በዘመነ : ሉቃስ : በሀለቃ : ስኑ : የተቈጠረ : የሥላሴ : እቃ : ፲፭ ምንጻፍ : ነው : ፲፯፻፲፱ : ነው...). This *folio* is followed by three additional double leaves, full of records.

I.

The most important documents included in the Gospel book are a few 19th-century records dealing with issues and provisions meant to secure the well-being and status of Aṣbi Səllase and its clergy as well as the descendants of *däğğazmač* Subagadis, the founder of the church (see below). The land charter, written and granted to Aṣbi Səllase upon its foundation (some time in 1825-26 or shortly thereafter), is the most remarkable record preserved in the manuscript (fol. 197v; see fig.). Despite the comparatively recent date, it is interesting from several points of view. First, its main language is Amharic, and the document is thus one of the early samples within its genre¹³, the fact reminiscent

¹³ Amharic documents from the 18th–early 19th century are not rare; however, it seems that in the time of Subagadis the primary document of an individual church, i.e. the charter documenting the act of *gʷəlt*-granting to the church upon its foundation, had to be written in Gəʿəz, and not Amharic. Gəʿəz would be preferably used also for the so-called *särit*, i.e. the document establishing the number of individuals (clergy, *däbtära* and others) associated with the church (despite the reference in Crummey 2000:176f., for an example of a proper *särit*, see Wion 2003:94-97, *passim*, and annex 43), and for other land charters (“feudal deeds”) granted to the church at different occasions (e.g., there are virtually no Amharic pieces among the 103 documents of the *Liber Axumae*, CRL*Axumae* 18-66 t.). The foundation of a big church was a significant event, with serious consequences for the area and its population in all spheres of life, which required that the main document of the church be written in Gəʿəz, the sacred language of the liturgy. However, later internal records of a “lower level” – transfer of *rim*-plots, registers of ecclesiastic possessions etc. could be written also in Amharic. A classic example of such a distribution may be the Gospel book from the church of Ḥāmārä Noḥ, Gondär, with the foundation charter in Gəʿəz from 1709-11 [Guidi 1906:654, no. 4] and numerous 18th-century Amharic “additional notes”; cf. also the documents from Däbrä Şāḥay Qʷəsəqʷam, the foundation document (“institutional grant”, remarkably, without mentioning the term *gʷəlt*) in Gəʿəz and Amharic records dealing with distribution of land parcels to individuals (Crummey 2000:172, doc. 2; 176, doc. 3 [in index, p. 362, indicated as “foundation document”], 178, doc. 4).

of the role played by this language also in non-Amharic speaking areas of the Ethiopian Highlands, at least in Aṣbi and southern Təgray¹⁴. Second, the land charter of Aṣbi Səllase is not one single monolingual text. Its main part, in Amharic (see below, I.iv), is accompanied by some interrelated additions in three languages: Amharic, Coptic (Bohairic) and Arabic (I.i–I.iii, I.v–I.vi). Though not unknown, the cases of Arabic and Coptic notes and additions in Ethiopian manuscripts are rare¹⁵ and may be suggestive of the personal involvement of the metropolitan, the highest religious authority of the country, or refer to some specific circumstances or events related to the history of a manuscript and the church to which the manuscript used to belong. In the case of Aṣbi Səllase, its foundation was a step taken by *däggazmač* Subagadis for consolidating his power, to which the presence of Met-

¹⁴ Today, the exact circumstances of the writing of the charter cannot be reconstructed; it is not easy to say why the scribe did not follow the usual practice. Possibly, it can be partly explained by the general powerful influence of the culture of Gondärine kingdom, of which the main language was Amharic. Mastering Təgrəñña and Irob languages, Subagadis might have spoken Amharic at least well enough or even fluently, and certainly appreciated this language as a means of internal and even external communication (cf. the letters of Subagadis referred to above; at the same time, all other known charters and documents related to Subagadis are in Gəʿəz, see *CRLAxumae*, nos. 73 [*gʷalt* charter given to Subagadis], 76, 83, 84, 85 [register of the clergy], 86, 87). It is striking to find in the Gospel book of Aṣbi Səllase virtually not a single line in Təgrəñña, the language of the area, also of the post-1941 period (which for this time can possibly be attributed to the results of “Amharisation” policy).

¹⁵ As examples of Arabic notes and records in Ethiopian manuscripts, one should recall the document of 1375 in the so-called Gospel book of Krəstos Täsfañä (Pāwlos Šadwā 1952:23f.; Schneider 1970:79–82, “Acte I”), with a few Coptic additions; and the Arabic land charter from the Gospel book of Lalibāla Mādḥane ʿAlām, issued by King Dawit II (Schneider 1970:82–85), with the Coptic document (corresponding to the Arabic charter?) which were left without translation; cf. also a few Arabic documents included into the Gospel book of Qoma Fasilädäs (Wion 2004), and a hint to an Arabic addition in the Gospel book of Ḥawzen Täklä Haymanot (Crummey 2000:169).

ropolitan *abunä* Qerällos (in fact, the church was built “for him”, see below) was supposed to give additional splendour, solemnity and authority. The traces of the Metropolitan’s involvement are the passages of the text which the local clergymen were barely able to read. The Amharic document was thus the only functional portion of the text, the Arabic and Coptic additions being purely “decorative”.

The entire trilingual document is presented below, with a discussion concerning some philological and historical issues related to specific passages. Apart from the main Amharic charter, there are four Coptic and four Arabic additions on the same fol. 197v. Among them, three Arabic passages are translations of the corresponding Coptic passages (grouped accordingly). One Coptic passage (I.v) which extends on the right margin of the page has no corresponding translation but is attached to the main Amharic text as its continuation. The largest Arabic piece (I.vi) at the bottom is, in fact, a summary of the main Amharic charter. The entire structure of the document roughly corresponds to the usual structure of Gəʿəz land charters¹⁶:

- 1) Invocation: I.i – I.ii;
- 2) Grantor and grantee, list of the estates: I.iii – I.iv;
- 3) List of the contemporary rulers: I.iv;
- 4) Type of the grant: I.iv;
- 5) Legal regulation concerning the *gʷəlt*: I.iv;
- 6) Immunity clause: I.iv;
- 7) Sanction: I.iv – I.v.

The Amharic charter shows some uncertainties of the language usage. At the very beginning of the document, the scribe used 1st person sing. pronoun *anä*, not Amharic *əne*; at the same time, for whatever reason, he did not make use of the opening and concluding Gəʿəz formulas, which are not unusual in many 18th- or 19th-century Amharic texts¹⁷. Curiously, the functions of these formulas seem to have been assigned instead to the Arabic/Coptic additions.

¹⁶ Cf. Huntingford 1965:4-8; cf. Kropp 2005a:121-37.

¹⁷ Including the legal documents; cf., e.g., the asylum-charter of Dāräsge Maryam, issued between 1833 and 1840 (Kropp 2005:198).

Even though the charter was supposed to be the church's main document of juridical character, it alone could not be useful for the purpose of administering the church lands and extracting its tributes without some additional documents, giving more specific information as to the revenues and the benefits of the church. The manuscript contains such records, some of them being represented below (I.vii-I.ix and II.i-II.ii). It is difficult to establish the precise chronology of these documents, yet they were certainly meant to be considered and consulted along with the main charter; at the same time, taken alone, these documents might have had no legal authority in the traditional practice¹⁸. Today they are indispensable for the understanding of the charter, and *vice versa*; taken together, they help to understand the organisation of the economic life of the church and the local area. The

¹⁸ Thus, the article does not only offer a philological study applying to the documents the usual methods of the philological approach, but it also strives to consider the functions of the texts as parts of the documentary corpus of the Gospel book of Aṣbi Səllase. Here appears the relevance of the reference to Ethiopian "Golden Gospel" books as medieval "archives", the study of which should be different from the usual practice of picking up, publishing and translating separate documents. While some of the older studies dealing with the documents provide more in respect to the coherency, embracing an "archive" as fully as possible (Guidi 1906; *CRLAxumae* [cf. Bausi 1997:13-23]), later the dominant method was to discuss separate documents (among the recent studies, see Kropp 2005, 2005a). However, as justly argued by Kropp (2001:116f.), "The principle of interpretation is not to concentrate on isolated documents but to treat the whole bulk of documents inscribed in the MS as an interrelated archive; each piece of evidence sheds light on the other and *vice versa*". Even though more advanced philological methods have been applied in some recent studies (e.g., Kropp 1998; Bausi 1996:24-44 [description of and excerpts from the Gospel of Däbrä Maryam Qoḥayn]), the notes and records of the "Golden Gospel" books and similar "archives" appear difficult for treating them as corpus due to their amount and complexity, and present technical and methodological problems still waiting for solutions. Such manuscripts as the Gospel book of Aṣbi Səllase and their *marginalia* as a "mirror" of the life of the society ("porteurs d'information et de documents sur le société", Uhlig 1999:97) at times require the students to go far beyond a purely philological essay.

trilingual document is reproduced and translated below, with some commentaries facilitating its understanding.

I.i.

Coptic: **ΠΙΩΟΥ ΦΑ ΦΨ ΠΕ** “Glory to God (alone)!”¹⁹

Arabic: المجد لله في العلا “Glory be to God in the highest!”²⁰

I.ii.

Coptic: **ⲃⲈⲛ ⲫⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲫⲓⲱⲩ ⲛⲈⲙ**

ΠΩΗΡΙ ΝΕΥΠΠΠΝΔ ΕΘΟΥ[ΑΒ Ο]ΤΝΟΥΨ ΝΟΥΩ[Υ]²¹

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God.”

Arabic: بسم الاب و الان و الروح القدس الاله الواحد

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God.”

I.iii.

Coptic: **ΠΙΣΗΚΙ ΚΤΡΙΑΛΟC**

“Cyril the meek”

Arabic: كيرلس الحقيق

“Cyril the meek”

¹⁹ = *Soli Deo Gloria*; for the expressions with Coptic possessive pronouns, see Mallon 1956, §§87-88.

²⁰ The beginning of Luke 2:14 “Glory be to God in the highest [and upon earth peace, good-will among men]”. Cf. the same quotation written as a monogram on the letters by Metropolitan *abunā* Sālama, dated 10 June 1844 (*ActaAeth* I, 106f., no. 83), 2 August 1849 (*ActaAeth* I, 162f., no. 125); and also Luke 2:14 inscribed in full on Sālama’s seal on the same letters as well as on some others (*ActaAeth* I, 202f., no. 149; 216f., no. 161; 240f., no. 181, cf. p. XX; cf. also the Amharic letter of Sālama stamped with his seal, *ibid.* 82, nos. 65). Neither epistolary documents issued by nor the seal of *abunā* Qerällos have been discovered so far.

²¹ The second part of the second line of the formula is difficult to read.

Liv.

Amharic: (fol. 20va) አነ : ቁርሎስ : ጳጳስ : ዘኢትዮጵያ ፡ ዓፅቢ ፡ መጸሁ ፡ በሥላሴ ፡ በደጃዝማች ፡ ሱባጋዲስ ፡ የተሰራ ፡ ችኝ ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን ፡ ከለልሁ ፡ መምህርነትም ፡ ቆሞስነትም ፡ ሾምነ ፡ አሉ ፡ ለመምህር ፡ ገብረ ፡ ማርያም ፡ ከዓፅቢ ፡ ለይተን ፡ ጉለትነ ፡ (fol. 20vb) ፩አገር ፡ ደብረ ፡ ሰላም ፡ ጸባ ፡ ዓይና ፡ አሰት ፡ አድያብ ፡ ማይ ፡ መሳኑ ፡ ቀፈና ፡ ጠረቀም ፡ ሣምራ ፡ አፍቀራ ፡ ከወምበርታ ፡ በሊጋ ፡ ከበራ ፡ ጋራ ፡ ነብራት ፡ ድባብ ፡ ከጽራዕ ፡ ግራ ፡ ሆፃ ፡ ቆረር ፡ ፈለግ ፡ ማያት ፡ ከአርሆ ፡ በር ፡ አሞሌ ፡ ከሰናፌ ፡ አሞሌ ፡ ከዓፅቢ ፡ አሞሌ ፡ ከወምበርታ ፡ አሞሌ ፡ ከንደርታ ፡ በዘመነ ፡ ማርቆ (fol. 20vc)ስ ፡ በመንግሥቱ²² ፡ ለንጉሥነ ፡ ጊጋር ፡ ወበራዕስ ፡ ኢማም ፡ ወበደጃችማች ፡ ሱባጋዲስ ፡ ወበጳጳስነ ፡ አቡነ ፡ ቁርሎስ ፡ ይህ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ጉልት ፡ ሰጠሁ ፡ ለደብረ ፡ ሥላሴ ፡ ሱር ፡ አንበሳ ፡ በዚህ ፡ ደብር ፡ የተጉለተ ፡ ጉልት ፡ በመምህር ፡ እጅ ፡ ለአቤቶ ፡ ገንገላ ፡ ይሁን ፡ እርሱም ፡ ቢሞት ፡ ለወንድሞቹ ፡ የጌታው ፡ ልጆች ፡ ወንድ ፡ ያለቀ ፡ እንደሆን ፡ የደጃዝማች ፡ ሱባጋዲስ ፡ ልጅ ፡ ያገባ ፡ ይሁን ፡ መምህሩም ፡ ደከሙ ፡ ብሎ ፡ ሌላ ፡ እንዳይሾም ፡ ውጉዝ ፡ ይሁን ፡ ውጉዝ ፡ ይሁን ፡ ንጉሥም ፡ እንዳይገባ ፡ ው[ጉ]ዝ ፡ ይሁን ፡ በአፈ ፡ ሥላሴ ፡ ይቤ ፡ ቁርሎስ

(fol. 20va) “He said²³: ‘I, Cyril, the Metropolitan of Ethiopia, arrived at Aṣbi. In the Trinity – the church which was built (for) me by *däggazmač* Subagadis – I delimited the precinct, (and) we appointed *māmhar* and *qomos*’²⁴. Having separated from Aṣbi, we gave a *gʷəlt* to *māmhar* Gäbrä Maryam (fol. 20vb)²⁵. Five countries (of) Däbrä

²² The words added above the line and on the right margin: አድአሊጋ ፡ ከእንደርታ ፡ ዐቀብ ፡ ጠሊ ፡ ሰሰላ.

²³ In the Amharic text this word concludes the sentence (... ቆሞስነትም ፡ ሾምነ ፡ አሉ).

²⁴ *Qomos* (from Ar. *qummuṣ*) is an old senior church title; the ecclesiastics bearing these titles were usually Copts accompanying the bishops (see Nosnitsin in: *EÆ* II, 342a-344b) and the patriarch, coming to Ethiopia from Egypt (cf. the description in Kidanä Wäld Kəffle 1948:786b; cf. also Guidi 1901:249).

²⁵ Written in red by another hand, the words ፀዓዳ ፡ መቃብር ፡ መሬቱ “His land is Ṣāʿada Mäqabər” are added above the line. One would like to think that Ṣāʿada Mäqabər is the *gʷəlt* given to the *māmhar*; this is, however,

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Sälam²⁶, Šäba °Ayna²⁷, Osät, Adyab, May Mäsanu, Qäfäna, Täräqäm, Šamra, Afqära; from Wämbärta²⁸: Bälīga with its ‘door’, Nābrat²⁹, Dəbbab; from Šəra³⁰: Gra Hoša, Q°ärir, Fäläg Mayat; from Arho³¹ door *amole*, from Sānafe *amole*, from Ašbi *amole*, from Wänbärta *amole*, from (Ǝ)ndärta (*amole*). In the year of Mark (fol. 20vc), during the reign³² of King Gigar, (in the time of) *ras* Imam, and *däğğazmač* Subagadis, and our metropolitan, *abunä* Cyril, I gave all this *g°ält* to Däbrä Səllase Sur Anbäsa. May the *g°ält*, which was granted to this church, remain in the hand of the *māmhar* for *abeto* G°ang°əl. If he dies, (let it be) for his brothers, the sons of the lord. If the male (line of the family) dies out, (let it be for) the one whom a (daughter) of *däğğazmač* Subagadis will marry. Let no other (*māmhar*) be appointed under the pretext that the (present) *māmhar* became weak; let him be excommunicated, let him be excommunicated, let him be excommuni-

doubtful, since these words are the rest of another text which had been washed out.

²⁶ Däbrä Sälam is an old and today famous church of Aksumite type, situated in a cave a few kilometers north-west of Ašbi (among the recent publications, see, e.g., Balicka-Witakowska in: *EÆ* II, 37a-39b). “Five countries” must be areas that had paid tributes to that church, and that were re-assigned to Ašbi Səllase.

²⁷ A locality with a church dedicated to Čerqos (Qirqos; St. Cyriacus), situated a few kilometres to the east of Ašbi (Plant 1973:37).

²⁸ Historical region in eastern Təgray, later a sub-district (*məkəttəl wäräda*) within Kələttä Awla°əlo *awrağğa*.

²⁹ Nābrat or °Addi Nābrat, a village in the vicinity of Ašbi.

³⁰ Historical region in eastern Təgray which played a role in the monastic movement of the Ewostəteans (see Lusini 1993), later a *wäräda* of Kələttä Awla°əlo, with the capital Agula° (the place of a famous archaeological site, see Curtis / O’Mahoney in: *EÆ* I, 153).

³¹ On Arho see above, note 2.

³² The words added above the line and on the right margin: “...Ad Aliga, from Ǝndärta °Aqäb Tāli, Säsäla”. These are the names of other tributaries of the church which were added later. In the charter, their place is not quite clear, yet the obligations of these localities appear elsewhere, e.g., in document II.i (see below).

cated. The king may not enter (the *gʷalt*); let him be excommunicated. Through the mouth of the Trinity, Cyril said ...”

I.v.

Coptic: ΠΕΧΕ ΚΤΡΙΑΛΛΟC ΠΙΕΗΚΙ ΟΤΟΝ ΝΙΒΕΝ
ΑΥΨΙΠΨ ΝΕΝ ΓΑΧΙ ΕΨΕΨΩΠΙ ΝΑΝΑΘΕΥΑ

“Cyril, the meek, said: anyone who will change our words be anathema!”

I.vi.

Arabic: هذا الوقف يكون بيد ولدنا الحبيب قنقل
ولد الراس سباقادس و ان مات هو يكون لاخته اولاد السيد جيل بعد جيل
الي يوم الفنا وانكان يقطعوا كلهم و تفضل بنت يكون بيدها
هم لاولاد السيد الكنيسة تبعاتهم و الوقف تباعهم يولوا و يعزلوا فيه الرئيس
و الممهر
وكلمن تجاسر و حالق هذا المكتوب يكون محروم مقطوع من فم الثالث و فمي
انا الحقيير كيرلص

“This *waqf* should be in the hands of our beloved son, Qanqul [Gʷangʷəl], a son of *raʿs* Subāqādis [Subagadis]; and if he dies, it should be for his brothers, sons of the master, from generation to generation till the end (of the world). And if they [i.e., their lines] are cut, a daughter (of Subagadis) should be given preference, (and the *waqf*) should be in her hand. Verily, they are the sons of the master; the church is (at) their disposal and the *waqf* is (at) their disposal. They appoint and dismiss there the head and the *mamhar*³³. Let anyone who would dare and erase this writing be excommunicated and cut with the mouth of the Trinity, and mouth of mine, Cyril the meek.”

³³ A rare example of the Arabic transcription of an Ethiopian ecclesiastic title (I am grateful to Dr. S. Frantsouzoff, St. Petersburg, for valuable hints). It appears that initially the scribe did not realize that *mamhar* is not an Arabic word but considered it as qualifier to *al-raʿīs* and he started to write, accordingly, the definite article. While writing it, he understood that he is wrong and he put the conjunction *wa*, separating the two words.

The deviations of the Arabic text from its Amharic *Vorlage* can be explained by the translator's knowledge of Amharic being not quite sufficient to understand one of the main points of the document, concerning the role of Subagadis's daughter. In any case, as we designated above, the role of the Arabic document was not central, and the translator produced, in fact, a summary of only a part of the main Amharic text without caring much about the accuracy of the details.

There is one specific feature concerning the structure of the Amharic document: it is composed of two different parts. The initial one is issued from the person of *abunä* Qerällos, and ends with the word "he said" (አሉ). As to the second part, i.e. the proper legal document, it is not quite clear who issued it. While one would think that the words "I gave" (ሰጠሁ; sic for the standard ሰጥኹ/ሰጥኩ) refer to Subagadis, who is the founder of the church, he is not mentioned explicitly as grantor, as would be obligatory in the documents of this kind (this probably reflecting the uncertain character of Subagadis' power).

Apart from those mentioned above, there are a number of some other language uncertainties in the Amharic text. 1st pers. plur. of ለይተን ÷ ጉለትነ ("having separated..., we gave a *g"äl*") is inconsistent with 1st pers. sing. "I gave" (ሰጠሁ) and somewhat misleading in view of "we appointed" (ሸጦነ), referring to another person (the Metropolitan). Other imperfections³⁴ are suggestive of the origin of the Amharic charter, released first as an oral proclamation, and written down immediately or shortly thereafter. The punctuation marks used in the text are more decorative than practical.

³⁴ Such as: መጸሁ (*mäsahu*, perhaps under the influence of Təgrəñña) instead of መጽሐሁ (*mäṣṭahu*); የተሰራ : ችኝ (*yätäsärä-ččəññ*) where the separation of the suffixes may be occasional, but the correct form for "which was built for me" would be *yätäsäräččəlləññ*; on fol. 20 vb, ቤራ (*bära*) apparently instead of *bärwa*; on fol. 20vc, ደጃችማች (*däggäčmač*) may be a colloquial variant for the standard *däggäzmač*, which occasionally entered document; finally, the form ወንድሞቼ (*wändamočču*, "his brothers") is a feature of the colloquial language, the correct one for the written (today also for the standard spoken) language would be *wändamamačču* or *wändə-mamaččočču*; see also below note 44.

It is not difficult to recognise that the Amharic charter was most probably the *Vorlage* of a Gəʿəz document thought to be directly linked to the foundation of the church Aṣbi Səllase, namely, the *gʷalt*-charter published by Conti Rossini in the compendium *Liber Axumae*³⁵. Unexpectedly, the “Golden Gospels” of Aṣbi does not contain this Gəʿəz document. It may be possible that it is preserved in another manuscript of Aṣbi Səllase’s extensive library and could be discovered in the future by means of a careful check of the books belonging to the church. However, there may be also another explanation. The Gəʿəz document published by Conti Rossini was taken from MS d’Abbadie 152 that was produced some time (in the 1840s?) after the foundation of Aṣbi Səllase. Not much is known about this manuscript³⁶. One can assume that the texts it encompasses³⁷ were copied at the request of d’Abbadie from one or more manuscripts. There is no information either on the scribe or the commissioner of the manuscript, or on the place or the circumstances of its production, as in the case of some other paper manuscripts from the same collection³⁸. One can not overlook the fact that the Gəʿəz document in d’Abbadie 152, taken without the accompanying records, could be of limited utility only³⁹. In other

³⁵ *CRLAxumae*, no. 82, 58-59t., 69-70tr.

³⁶ See the description of the paper manuscript in d’Abbadie 1859:165 (“31 sur 22; volume de papier vergé acheté au Caire; 86 feuillets écrits sur deux colonnes”), Chaîne 1912:92f., Conti Rossini 1914:205, no. 205.

³⁷ Apart from the string of documents, which were published in the *Liber Axumae*, the manuscript contains four different texts (see Conti Rossini 1914:205). Concerning the grant charters, d’Abbadie writes: “Donations des rois à l’église de Aksum, et récits abrégés de quelques événements, extraits des feuillets blancs de l’Évangile d’or ፬፻፯፯ : ፲፬፻፺፻, à Aksum; 14 feuillets” (d’Abbadie 1859:165); in d’Abbadie 152, the documents follow upon the *Kabrä Nägästä* and, indeed, might have been copied from a manuscript in the possession of Aksum Ṣəyon. For the moment, however, I have been unable to find any trace of the Gəʿəz charter in the scattered information concerning the library of the cathedral.

³⁸ E.g. some of them were copied for d’Abbadie by Fr. Giusto da Urbino.

³⁹ Unless it was used only as a copy securing the validity and legal authority of the original, preserved at Aṣbi Səllase (cf. Kropp 2005:194f.). This was probably the case with some other documents collected in the *Liber Axu-*

words, it can not be excluded that the Amharic charter was the original, and only later was it translated into Gəʿəz, perhaps by the scribe collecting materials for d'Abbadie.

As to the text in d'Abbadie 152, the translator easily produced well-standardized initial and final parts of the Gəʿəz document⁴⁰. He explicitly mentioned Subagadis as grantor in the beginning (ገላትኩ : አነ : ደጅ : አዝማች : ሰብአጋድስ ...), and dropped the “non-conventional” first part of the Amharic charter coming from *abunä* Qerellos. However, he encountered difficulties rendering the main clause of the Amharic document. As the result, there are some substantial deviations between the Amharic and Gəʿəz versions.

For example, in the string of toponyms ወዘመሀብኩ : ከሰንአፌ : በር...⁴¹ the translator added *bār* to each place, and, possibly, tried to “clarify” it by changing the position of Arho and thus explaining that all the *amole* were extracted (or brought) from there; by this, the number of the customs was reduced to four, whereas originally it was meant to be five. Conti Rossini’s translation of the document – “J’ai donné un *amolē* sur la douane de...” – is closer to the original sense than Huntingford’s rendering: “I have given an *amolē* on the customs

mae, which would be the main documents referring to the fact of the transaction, while the additional records were not copied, but were available only in the local archives (cf. *CRLAxumae*, no. 81, a hint in the grant of Subagadis to Däbrä Bārbāre and Mākanä Akəst referring to “...the remaining charters in the archives of Mākanä Akəst”). Generally speaking, the producing of the copies of the legal documents, especially land charters, was not unusual (see Kropp 2005:138f.).

⁴⁰ The text was given a proper Gəʿəz invocation (በእኩቴተ : አብ : ወወልድ : ወመንፈስ : ቅዱስ ::), a list of the names of Aksum dignitaries (not mentioned in the Amharic document: *nəburä əd* of Aksum Wäldä Mika’el; *qäyäsä gäbāz Zä’amanu’el*; [the words ወኮሉሙ : መዘምራኒሃ : ለጽዮን : ወካህናቲሃ do not make much sense; see Conti Rossini’s interpretation, *CRLAxumae* 70, line 4 (tr.) *mäggabi* Wäldä Dəngəl; “children” [*däqiq*] of *nəburä əd abeto* Mälku and *abeto* Abessalom). The concluding part of the charter (Immunity clause/sanction) also keeps the defiant words prohibiting the King to enter.

⁴¹ Corresponding to: ከሰናፌ : አሞሌ ... ሰጠሁ, words standing far from each other in the Amharic charter.

post...”, but both scholars seem to have been perplexed by this sentence⁴², which is, indeed, difficult to understand without the *Vorlage*. Apart from this, the document in d’Abbadie 152 adds a locality which seems to be completely new, namely, Mä’argat; Ad Aläga may be *scriptio defectiva* for Ad Aliga (cf. also below, II.i.).

Another important passage is the one clarifying who will be responsible for the *g’alt* and on behalf of whom, involving the *mamhar* and *abeto* G’ang’äl, the former “holding” the *g’alt* for the latter. D’Abbadie 152’s passage ዘንተሂ : ጉልት : ዘገለትኩ ... ምስለ : ምታ፡፡⁴³ looks like a careless rendering of the Amharic text. Both modern translators of the document considered G’ang’äl and the abbot of the church the same person. In d’Abbadie 152, more confusion has been added by the word ሢመቱ lit. “his tenure”, which does not suit the sentence; it might be an re-interpretation or misreading of ቢሞት “if he dies” of the Amharic document, mistakenly separated from the following sentence (see above: እርሱም : ቢሞት...). In d’Abbadie 152, the sentence ውእቱሂ : እመ : ይመውት... is also difficult, and must have appeared puzzling for both Conti Rossini and Huntingford. I assume that the Amharic charter renders the conditions of the *g’alt* correct: the person, for whom the *mamhar* was supposed to hold the *g’alt*, was G’ang’äl, the youngest son of Subagadis. When G’ang’äl would die, the *g’alt* was to be handed to his brothers. In the case of all the brothers – sons of Subagadis – dying, the *g’alt* was to be held by the husband(s) of Subagadis’s daughter(s)⁴⁴, possibly to pass, later, to their children, i.e. grandsons of Subagadis (see below). At this point, the Arabic version of the Amharic document also fails to render the essence of the original.

At a later time, the free space of fol. 197v was used for three more *additions*:

⁴² See *CRLAxumae* 70 (tr.), line 6-9 and note 2; cf. Huntingford 1965:72 (and Pankhurst 1982:232).

⁴³ See *CRLAxumae* 70 (tr.), lines 15-21.

⁴⁴ The Amharic sentence should be understood as: የደጃዝማች : ሰባጋዲስ : [ሴት] : ልጅ : ያገባ : ይሁን, reading somewhat uncertain in view of the absence of the accusative marker –n.

I.vii.

Apparently, the note concerns the obligations of the people of the settlement (“community”) of Aşbi to their own church, which was mentioned in the main charter in the most concise way (“from Aşbi *amole*”); it explains precisely from where revenues for the church should be extracted⁴⁵:

የቅመም : እኩል : የድብረት [ች] : እኩል : ለሥብሥ : ነው : ጭቅነትም
: የማህበር : ነው

“Half of the spices, half of the commission are for Səllase; as to the village headmanship, it is for the community.”⁴⁶

I.viii.

The record concerning the transfer of the *rim* of the head of the church, mentioned in the main Amharic charter:

⁴⁵ It would be reasonable to assume that similar notes might exist also for other places mentioned as those paying a tax in *amole* for Aşbi, described in the charter in the most unspecified way: “From Arho door *amole*, from Sənafe *amole*, ... from Wənbārta *amole*, from (፻)ndārta (*amole*)...” (see above).

⁴⁶ The scribe must have forgotten to put the stroke over ጥ, writing the word *dallaločč*, the plural of *dallal* (Kane 1990, vol. 2, 1707), which in this case apparently refers to a half of *amoles* paid as commission fee at the salt market. The Amharic charter only mentions the kind of the revenue, but does not specify any precise quantity of *amole*, since the commission fee was not constant. The tribute was easy to collect, since the fee was to be paid for each deal at Aşbi market. The control was to be executed by the authority, referred to as *čəqənnāt* (“headmanship”, see Kane 1990, II, 2222; the term derived from *čəqa šum*), which was in the hands of the local community, i.e. *mahbār* (see Kane 1990, I, 136-37; II, 1192; here, the term must refer to the grown-up male members of the community). The first part of the note referring to the “spices” must refer to a similar scheme (spices being, in fact, the most common object of trade on markets).

ገብረ : ማርያም : የመምህር : ሪም : ለተክለ : ዮሐንስ : ሰጡ :
 የከብቴ : ሪም : ተክለ : ዮሐንስ : ገዛው : መድኅን : ቄስ : ሪምሐ : በሥላሴ :
 ያለ : ጉልት : ተዝካር : ሲወጣ : በዕጣን : ዞሮ : ሰርግ : ሲሆን : አለ :
 ማኅበር : አይሁን : ከዚህ : ሕግ : የወጣ : ፪፩ሪዳ : ይክፈል

“Gäbrä Maryam gave⁴⁷ the *rim* of the *mamhär* to Täklä Yohannäs; Täklä Yohannäs bought the *rim* of Käbte, the guarantor being priest Rämḥa; if a commemoration service go (out from) the *gʷalt* which is in (the church of) Səllase⁴⁸, (or) a wedding will be staged in ‘*ətan zoro*’⁴⁹, it should not happen without (the participation of) the community. Anyone who breaks this law should pay two steers.”

I.ix.

The regulation issued by Gʷangʷəl, transferring a part of Aṣbi Səllase’s revenues to other churches, in order to extend the commemoration service for his father:

አነ : ገንገላ : ወሀብኩ : ለሥላሴ : ከገበያ : በር : የወር : የወር :
 ከዚህ : ዕሽሩ : ለ፩አድባራት : ኢየሱስ : ቀረት : ሀውል : ባት : ኤሮ :
 ምጽዋዕ : ከዚህ : ከሁሉ : በላይ : ባመት : አንድቀን : ለደጃዝማች :
 ሱባጋድስ : ተዝካር : ይሁን :

“I, Gʷangʷəl, gave to Səllase from the monthly fees of the market entrance; the 10th part⁵⁰ of this (should be) for the five cathedrals: Iyäsus Qʷərät, Hawäl, Bat, Ero, Məṣəwwa⁵¹; above all this, on one

⁴⁷ Possibly a mistake for “he sold” (which would make more sense than “he gave”), Amh. ሸጡ; the scribe might have forgotten to add the stroke above ስ.

⁴⁸ A difficult sentence. Probably a commemoration service is meant which concerns another person, with no relation to the *gʷalt* of the church.

⁴⁹ The word clearly used here as a term, referring most probably to a kind of the ecclesiastic landed property which is related to incense supplies of the church (rarely appearing elsewhere, cf. Conti Rossini 1942:231, 233 [here probably a toponym]).

⁵⁰ ፡፩፻፳፻ – Təgrəñña for “one tenth” (Kane 2000, II, 1862).

⁵¹ Or Məṣwa; written in the same way as Məṣəwwa, the name of the port on the Red Sea coast, it apparently refers to another place, namely to the small church in the area of Aṣbi: described as “Mikael Metsua. Asbi” by Plant 1973:37f.

day a year there should be a commemoration for *däggazmač* Subagadis.”

II.

The Amharic document provides the register of the places which were obliged to pay tributes to the church, but elsewhere in the manuscript there are some other records, which define the tributes more precisely. Such documents appear on fol. 1v (the list of the places here agree with the main Amharic charter), where the Gospel of Mark is interrupted in Mark 1:14 (see above, note 9). The rest of the *folio* (1vb-vc) is occupied by three records, two of them, being the most relevant, are represented below:

II.i.

(1vb) የሥላሴ : ጉልት : ወርቅ : ያምስት : አገር : ደብረ : ሰላም :
፲፭ወቂት : ፲፭ጨን : ፲፭ፍሪዳ : ፳፭በግ : ማድጋ : ተላዳን : ማር : ነው ::
የጠረቀም : ሂመቶ : ጨው : ሂማድጋ : እኸል : ፫በግ : ነው : የሣምራ :
፫ወቂት : ፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : (1vc) ተላዳን : ማር : ነው : ያድያብ :
፫ወቂት : ፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : ነው : ላዳን : ማር : ያፍቀራ : ፫ወቂት :
፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : ላዳን : ማር⁵² : ነው : የማይ : መሳኑ : ፫ወቂት :
፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : ላዳን : ማር : ነው : የጸባ : ዓይና : ከበርዋ : ጋራ :
፫ወቂት : ፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : (fol. 1vc) ላዳን : ማር : ነው : የአሰት :
፫ወቂት : ፫ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : ፲፭በግ : ላዳን : ማር : ነው : የአድ : አሊጋ :
፩ወቂት : ፩ጨን : ፩ፍሪዳ : ፭በግ : ቊና : ማር : ነው : የሹር : አንበሳ :
፩ወቂት : የጥምቀት : እራት : ነው : የቀፈና : ፩ወቂት : ፩ጨን : ፩ፍሪዳ :
፭በግ : ነው : የበሊጋ : ከበርዋ : ጋራ : ፪ፍሪዳና : ፍትሐት : ነው : የነብራት :
፲፪ወቂት : ፲፪ጨን : ፪ፍሪዳ : ፭በግ : ላዳን : ማር : ነው : የድባብ : ፲ጨን :
መባ : ፫ጨን : እኸል : ሺ : ጨው : ፩ፍሪዳ : ላዳን : ማር : ነው : የማራ : ሆሃ :
፯ወቂት : ፯ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : መስለስ : ማር : ነው : የፈለግ : ማያት :
፲፪ወቂት : ፲፪ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : መስለስ : ማር : ነው : የቆሪር : ፯ወቂት :
፯ጨን : ፫ፍሪዳ : መስለስ : ማር : ነው : የአቀብ : ጠሊና : የሰሰላ : ሼካ :
፪፻ጨው : ፶ጨን : ማድጋ : ከንፍቅ : ማር : ፫ፍሪዳ : ነው : የዓዳ : መቃብር :
: ምድርዋ ::

⁵² Written above the line.

(fol. 1vb) “The gold of Səllase’s *gʷalt*: of the five countries (of) Dəbrä Səlam 15 *wäqet* (gold), 15 *čan*, 15 steers, 75 sheep, a *madga* from a *ladən* mead. Of Təraqām: 700 salt-bars⁵³, 7 *madga* cereals, 3 sheep. Of Samra: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep, *ladən* mead. Of Adyab: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep, *ladən* mead. Of Afqära: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep, *ladən* mead⁵⁴. Of May Mäsanu: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep, *ladən* mead. Of Şäba ʿAyna with its door: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep (fol. 1vc), *ladən* mead. Of Asät: 3 *wäqet*, 3 *čan*, 3 steers, 15 sheep, *ladən* mead. Of Ad Aliga⁵⁵: 1 *wäqet*, 1 *čan*, 1 steer, 5 sheep, *qʷənna* mead. Of Şur Anbäsa: 1 *wäqet*, the supper of the *Təmqaṭ*⁵⁶. Of Qäfäna: 1 *wäqet*, 1 *čan*, 1 steer, 5 sheep. Of Bälīga with its door: 2⁵⁷ steers and the *Fəṭḥat*⁵⁸. On Nəbrat: 12 *wäqet*, 12 *čan*, 2 steers, 5 sheep, *ladən* mead. Of Dəbab: 10 *čan*, *mäba*⁵⁹ (of) 3 *čan* cereals, 1000 salt-bars, 1 steer, *ladən* mead. Of Gra Hoşa: 6 *wäqet*, 6 *čan*, 3 steers, *mäsläs* mead. Of Fäläg Mayat: 12 *wäqet*, 12 *čan*, 3 steers, *mäsläs* mead. Of Qorir: 6 *wäqet*, 6 *čan*, 3 steers, 14 sheep, *mäsläs* mead. Of Aqäb Təli and Säsäla Şeka: 200 salt-bars, 50 *čan*, a *madga* from a *nəfəq* mead, 3 steers. Of Şada Mäqabər – its land.”⁶⁰

⁵³ *Çaw*, lit. “salt”; here possibly meaning the same as *amole* of the main charter.

⁵⁴ These two words are added above the line.

⁵⁵ For Ad Aliga, Aqäb Təli and Säsäla (Şeka) see above, note 32.

⁵⁶ The feast of Epiphany, 11 *Tərr*.

⁵⁷ The number is written above the line.

⁵⁸ The ritual of the absolution of the dead.

⁵⁹ A small offering to the church when visiting it.

⁶⁰ The measurement units mentioned in the document give an idea of the measurement system in the area in the 19th century. Some of the units are widely known: *wäqet*, *čan*, *qʷənna* (see, e.g., Pankhurst 1970:59-61; Pankhurst 1969:116 and 137, 128ff., resp., and *passim*). Some others are less known: *madga*, *ladən*, *mäsläs*, *nəfəq* (Pankhurst 1969:115 and 133, 131, 114 [*mäsläs*] and 131, 113 [*nəfqi*], resp. and *passim*).

The list of the *rim*-holders (fol. 197r; see note 9) should be seen in connection with both this document and the main charter; most probably, the *rim*-holders were supposed to receive a portion of the income collected from the *gʷalt* of Aṣbi Səllase according to this document.

II.ii.

One more type of tribute, the “supper” of Aṣbi Səllase (cf. “the supper of *Ṭəmqaṭ*” mentioned in II.i), is defined in the short record as follows:

(1vc) የሥላሴ : እራት : ያምስት : አገር : ደብረ : ሰላም : ፍሪዳ : የሰምራ : ጀማድጋ : ጥሀን : የአድያብ : ህክምባሻ : የአፍቀራ : ህክምባሻ : የማይ : መሳኑ : ህክምባሻ : የሰረ : አንበሳ : ጀማድጋ : ተጀበግ : የበሊጋ : ፍሪዳና : ጀማድጋ : የነብራት : ህክምባሻ : የድባብ : ህክምባሻ : የግራ : ጥፃ : ህክምባሻ : የቁሪር : አምባሻ : የፈለግ : ማያት : ህክምባሻ : በመምህር : እጅ : ነው : የሚገባ ::

“The supper of Səllase: of Däbrä Sälam with the five countries 1 steer; of Sämrä 2 *madga* of *təhən*⁶¹; of Adyab 40 *ambaša*⁶²; of Afqära 40 *ambaša*; of May Masänu 40 *ambaša*; of Sər Anbäsa 2 *madga* with 2 sheep; of Bälīga steers [60], 2 *madga*; of Näbrat 80 *ambaša*; of Dəbab 80 *ambaša*; Gra Hoṣa 80 *ambaša*; of Qʷärir 80 *ambaša*; of Fäläg Mayat 50 *ambaša* – this (should) come in the hand of the *mamhər*.”

The main Amharic charter seems to define the part of the heritage of the family of Subagadis assigned to *abeto* Gʷangʷəl, the youngest among Subagadis’s sons. The oldest one, Ḥagos, lost his life on 14 February 1831 in the crucial battle of May Ḥislamay (Däbrä Abbay), in which his father was defeated by the coalition of the Yäḡḡu lords⁶³. Another son, Wäldä Mikaʼel, submitted to Wəbe after stiff

⁶¹ “Amharised” *təḥni*, “roasted barley flour” (Kane 2000, II, 2413).

⁶² A kind of bread made of wheat or *tef* (Kane 1990, II, 1129; Kane 2000, I, 177).

⁶³ See above; for somewhat different versions of the story of Subagadis’s death, see Gobat 1853:386; Parkyns 1853:117; Conti Rossini 1916:852f.,

resistance and was appointed to govern Ḥamasen and some parts of Təgray, but was soon assassinated in Ḥamasen⁶⁴. Kaḥsay, the third son of Subagadis, also initially resisted but soon submitted to Wəbe like his brother, retired to ʿAgame and even married a daughter of Wəbe, but later rebelled and was able to rally a large army. He lost, however, the decisive battle at Fāräs May and fled into the mountains of Ḥaramat. After a long siege, he agreed to submit under some conditions to Wəbe, who broke his oath and put Kaḥsay in prison, where he spent many years⁶⁵. As to Gʷangʷəl, he joined Wäldä Mikaʿel and briefly fought Wəbe, later submitted to him and, when Kaḥsay was removed from the field, he divided ʿAgame with his another brother Ḥammam Dahar. When the latter was captured on Wəbe's order and imprisoned in Səmen, Gʷangʷəl rebelled, but finally had to flee and seek refuge in the Danakil desert⁶⁶. Since the priests managed to reconcile Gʷangʷəl and Wəbe, the conflict did not escalate. Gʷangʷəl submitted, did not rebel anymore and ruled ʿAgame for some 20 years⁶⁷, apparently sharing power with his brother *šum ʿagame* Ara-

909 [here he is not mentioned by name]; Littmann 1902:3 (tr.: Moreno 1942:149), Bairu Tafla 1987:438f.

⁶⁴ Parkyns 1853:117f.

⁶⁵ Parkyns 1853:117-23. Kaḥsay (Kasa) Subagadis surfaced on the political scene again as he was appointed by Tewodros over Təgray, instead of *bal-gäda* Arʿaya Səllase Dəmsu; Kaḥsay later proved to be one of a few of Tewodros's most capable governors (Mondon-Vidailhet 1904:7t., 9tr.; Rubenson 1966:78).

⁶⁶ Parkyns 1853:124f. This happened in second half of 1841 (see Abir 1968:110f.). Shortly before his defeat, Gʷangʷəl, desperately looking for support in front of the formidable foe, tried to find his chance in the strata-gems of Belgian Édouard Blondel van Cuelebrouck (Rubenson 1976:99f.).

⁶⁷ Parkyns 1853:110-26. Not always precise, yet greatly attending to fine details, Parkyns reports that Gʷangʷəl was Subagadis's favourite son, and that some jealousy existed in the relations between him and his brothers. This circumstance might have contributed to the final decision of *däğ-ğazmač* Wəbe to leave him on the political scene.

gawi (d. after 1868)⁶⁸. The biographical data on the daughters of Subagadis are meagre; it seems that the transfer of the *gʷəlt* into the hands of one of them and, respectively, their husbands was never attempted⁶⁹. It is unclear to what extent and for how long the obligations and stipulations regarding the revenues, benefits and land possessions of Aṣbi Səllase, recorded in the Gospel book, were fulfilled. It is still unclear whether the church became the burial place of Gʷangʷəl. In any case, the economic and political significance of ʿAṣbi and its church, contrary to ʿAddigrat, the capital of ʿAgame, was prominent mostly for the period of Subagadis, and diminished after his death.

⁶⁸ The information on Arägawi is scarce (see Conti Rossini 1910:880 t., 897 tr., this genealogy recalls Arāway [= Arägawi] and Wäldänkiʿel [Wäldä Mikaʿel] and mentions “5 other” sons of Subagadis). It seems that Arägawi died not in 1860 (as stated in Kevin O’Mahoney 1982:64f. no. 5; also Rubenson in: *EÆ* I, 310), but some years later, as his letters to Napoleon III by 1868 prove (*ActaAeth* II, no. 246). Arägawi’s son *ras* Səbḥat Arägawi was the ruler of ʿAgame (*šum ʿagame*) in the second half of the 19th century. (cf. his tributes record from the time of Tewodros II, see, e.g., Pankhurst 1978:11, no. 78), and his realm with the political centre at ʿAddigrat was inherited by his son *šum ʿagame* Dästa Səbḥat in the late 19th century. (cf. Tsegay Berhe in: *EÆ* II, 106).

⁶⁹ At least two daughters of Subagadis are known: Dənqənāš (Dənqe) was married to *däggəzmač* Wəbe ca. 1828 (Conti Rossini 1916:848, 906); the youngest daughter, Sahlu, was married for a short time to Təwäldä Mädhən of Şazzega, an ally of Subagadis, soon after Subagadis defeated and killed his main local adversary *däggəzmač* Gäbrä Mikaʿel (*gäggəyat* Gäränkiʿel) of Tämbeñ; from Təwäldä Mädhən she gave birth to her son Alula (see Kolmodin 1912, chs. 150, 151, 152, 174, 176, 182; for the account of Subagadis’s victory over Gäbrä Mikaʿel, see also Conti Rossini 1916:833f., 895f.).

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