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DENIS NOSNITSIN

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## Mäṣḥafä fəlsätu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study\*

DENIS NOSNITSIN

### Relics and Translations

The veneration of relics is an important component of the cult of saints. It is officially recognized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and has a very long history in the Ethiopian Christian tradition.<sup>1</sup> The discovery and subsequent veneration of a saint's relics were closely connected with the tradition of the Ethiopian monastic movement. The remains of a saint were usually kept in the monastery he was believed to have founded and lived in. The spiritual centre of the monastery could have been represented by the grave (or graves) containing the relics. It was essential for a monastic community to dispose of such relics. Through them it had a better chance of attracting new believers and pilgrims who came seeking the saint's help and protection, and was thus able to compete more successfully with other monasteries. All of these increased the cloister's prestige, influence and wealth. In hard times the presence of relics helped to consolidate and inspire the community.<sup>2</sup>

\* An earlier version of this paper was read at the XIV<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, November 6, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> See EOTC 43–44 [Amharic], 41–42 [English]. The role this kind of worship played needs to be studied more thoroughly. There is no credible evidence of the veneration of relics of the Ethiopian saints from the times before the Zag<sup>w</sup>e dynasty came to power. All the cases when such veneration is mentioned date from the time after the re-establishment of the Solomonic dynasty (ca. 1270). Generally accepting the veneration of relics, the present Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition is somewhat cautious regarding its necessity. As an example of the restraint needed in this respect, one usually refers to the Synaxarium reading for the 8<sup>th</sup> of *Mäskäräm* commemorating Moses (*Amharic Church Dictionary* V, 390). There it is emphasized that God hid the body of the Patriarch, so that the Israelites could not find or start worshipping it (cp. Budge 1928:32). At the same time, the veneration of relics (both remains of the body and the objects “substituting” for them, like pieces of clothes, crosses etc.) has clearly been a common practice at least in some regions of Ethiopia (cp. Kaplan 1986:5).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. KAPLAN 1986:6–8. One should emphasize that the presence of the remains of a saint was not obligatory for a monastic community to exist. Many cloisters did not possess any relicts, neither did a monastic community cease to exist if the relics were lost. The *tabot* of the monastery church appears to have been much more important. The best instance could be the famous cloister of Däbrä Libanos. As the monastic

The role played by the veneration of relics was important enough to find its reflection in Ethiopian hagiography. The *Gädlät* (Lives or Acts) of Ethiopian saints contain numerous accounts of the magic power emanating from the saint's grave or remains, pieces of shroud, ashes from his tomb etc. In addition, the Acts often contain narratives of the translation of the saints' relics, of the competition over the relics between several monasteries and similar themes.<sup>3</sup> Such text fragments did not develop into a separate type of text in Ethiopian literature. They never even form parts of the *Gädl*, which would be independent or complete in its composition.<sup>4</sup> These accounts were evidently not differentiated from the rest of the text of the corresponding *Gädl*; the miracles connected with the relics or the burial of a saint were read together with other miracles. This was obviously caused by the fact that, wide-spread as the veneration of saints in Ethiopia might have been, there are hardly any known feasts devoted to the discovery or the translation of their relics, so that there evidently existed no necessity to create any special texts.<sup>5</sup> Numerous texts for the feasts of the translation or discovery of relics, which became known in Ethiopia thanks to the Synaxarium, seem

community was endangered by the Oromo onslaught in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., it moved to the region of the lake Ṭana and established itself in the vicinity of Gondär. In the subsequent years the connection with the original site of the monastery (in the Zega Wädäm gorge, Šäwa) was forgotten and the members of the "house of Tāklä Haymanot" did not have the Saint's remains at their direct disposal for more than 150 years. The place of Tāklä Haymanot's grave was forgotten. The remains of the Saint were "re-discovered" only in the 1870s in the time of Yoḥannäs IV. The tradition of Däbrä Libanos claims at the same time that the original *tabot* of the Saint was never lost and is still preserved in the church of the community (see Campbell 1994:4, 7).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. KAPLAN 1986:2–6.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. MARRASSINI 1981:CVII "La traslazione non è elemento frequente nell'agiografia etiopica". The biography of a saint as narrated in his *Gädl* was obviously considered complete, even if there was no detailed story of what happened to his remains. Thus, according to the Acts of the famous *abba* Gäbrä Mānfäs Qəddus, the relics of the Saint were kept far from his adherents: following God's order, the body of the Saint was transported to Jerusalem and buried there (s. BUDGE 1928:772, BEZOLD 1916:75). Not having been included in his *Gädl*, the motif of the return of the Saint's relics was developed in folk legends. According to some of them, the Saint ascended to Heaven, but left his rib, which is still lying in his tomb near the church on the mountain of Zəq'ala, his sanctuary (KRISS & KRISS-HEINRICH 1975:13).

<sup>5</sup> So far only rare exceptions have been found, e.g., a narration about the translation of the remains of Tāklä Ḥawaryat (GETATCHEW HAILE 1994), or an account from the *Gädlä Yoḥannäs Məsraqawi* which was meant to be read on 18 *Mäggabit* (MARRASSINI 1981:318–37).

to have lost their importance in the Ethiopian context and did not become as popular as in Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

### The tradition of Däbrä Libanos

The tradition of Däbrä Libanos is unique in this respect: here we find at least two feasts devoted to the translation of the relics of two holy fathers of the monastery: the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət*, the day of the translation of the holy relics of *abunä* Täklä Haymanot, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Mäggabit*, the day of the translation of the holy relics of one of his followers, the famous *abba* Filəppos. There are special texts meant to be read on these days. The translation of the relics of Filəppos (the third abbot of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos, who died in exile) must have taken place during the tenure of Märḥa Krəstos (ca. 1488).<sup>7</sup> The event was considered so important that the 23<sup>rd</sup> *Mäggabit* was made a feast and a text was compiled to be read on it – in all probability in the early 16<sup>th</sup> cent., during the tenure of the abbot Peṭros (1496–1523).<sup>8</sup> The commemoration of this day must, however, have lasted for a fairly short time, and even then only within Däbrä Libanos. It is not mentioned in any of the known copies of the Ethiopian Synaxarium; the *Zena Däbrä Libanos*, which is the monastic chronicle of the history of Däbrä Libanos up to Aḥmad Grañ's invasion, presents no account of the translation of Filəppos's relics. Therefore it is not surprising that the *Book of the Translation of the Relics of Filəppos of Däbrä Libanos* remained little known. But the second feast, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət*, which is devoted to Täklä Haymanot, the founder of Däbrä Libanos and one of the most famous Ethiopian saints, retained its importance till today.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the text commonly called *Mäṣḥafä fəlsätu lä-Täklä Haymanot*, or *The Book [of the History] of the Translation [of the Body] of Täklä Haymanot* (further referred as BHT), which was composed to be read on the 12<sup>th</sup> of

<sup>6</sup> The Ethiopian Synaxarion contains all in all nearly twenty commemorations of the finding or translation of the relics of early Christian martyrs (see, e.g., BUDGE 1928:52–54, 177, 209–10, 274, 354–55, 388–89, 515–16, 548, 591, 596, 641, 656, 658–60, 754–55, 958–60, 1061, 1171, 1263–65, cp. MEINARDUS 1968:138–41). The question remains open as to whether the texts meant to be read on these feasts influenced the Ethiopian hagiographic tradition (since the Ethiopian hagiographers could find in them examples of how to narrate what happened to the martyr's remains after his death).

<sup>7</sup> See KUR 1972:91–92.

<sup>8</sup> See GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:76–77.

<sup>9</sup> Currently there are three major feasts of Täklä Haymanot that draw great numbers of pilgrims to Däbrä Libanos: 24<sup>th</sup> *Təḥsas* (the day of the Saint's birth), 24<sup>th</sup> *Nəḥase* (the day of his decease) and the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət* (the day of the relics' translation). Besides, there is a monthly commemoration day on the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month.

*Gənbət*, became well known, first of all as an integral part of the Acts of the Saint, *Gädlä Täklä Haymanot* (hereafter referred to as GTH).<sup>10</sup>

### The Book of the History of the Translation and other traditions

The text of the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos as it was edited by Budge (1906), includes, after the story of the life of the Saint, two separate large chapters, to which the translator gave the titles *The Book of the History of the Translation of the Body of our Father, the Holy Man Takla Hāymānōt* and *The Book of the Miracles of our Father the Holy Man Takla Hāymānōt*.<sup>11</sup> The first one is of central importance for my research.<sup>12</sup> Not only does it form a separate part of the Acts, along with the story of the life

<sup>10</sup> As is widely recognized, there are at least three versions of the GTH. The so-called Wäldəbba version is the shortest and probably the earliest (first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> cent., see CONTI ROSSINI 1896:100). As to the date of the composition of the so-called Ḥayq version, there is a suggestion made on the basis of the ms. Éth. 697, according to which the text could have been written about 1425–26 (DERAT 1998a:77; see also his comments on the mss. EMMML 1834, 2134). The best-known and perhaps the latest version of Däbrä Libanos is believed to have appeared around 1515 (CERULLI 1968:93, CONTI ROSSINI 1899:29). This large and complex work of hagiography was compiled over two centuries after the death of Täklä Haymanot (ca. 1313) on the initiative of Peṭros, the then abbot of Däbrä Libanos monastery (see CERULLI 1944:149–50; during that time, on the eve of the Aḥmad Grañ invasion, the monastery was more respected and influential than ever). Besides, a short biography of the Saint can be found in the Synaxarium, for 24 *Näḥase* (BUDGE 1928:1241–47).

<sup>11</sup> BUDGE 1906:v.245–65, v. 267–345.

<sup>12</sup> TURAIEV translated a part of the BHT from the ms. Ad.16,257/Br. Mus. 45 into Russian (TURAIEV 1902:13–16; for the description of the ms., see DILLMANN 1847:50). An important note was written by E.Cerulli, who made some conjectures on the purpose and the time of creation of the BHT (CERULLI 1944:142): “Probabilmente lo scopo di questa composizione era soltanto quello di dare una lettura commune di occasione sulla festa che si teneva il 12 genbot in commemorazione della «trasmigrazione»; tanto più perchè quella festa era una delle tre ricorrenze annuali nelle quali si radunavano a capitolo in Dabra Libanos gli abbati dei monasteri scioani collegati. Ciò mi sembra, del resto, provato non solo dall analogia con usanze ben note dei conventi etiopici in simili occasioni, ma anche dal fatto che la «trasmigrazione della ossa» non parla appunto che del primo trasferimento (quello proprio che si commemorava il 12 genbot) e non già del secondo, che invece era quello più recente e più direttamente collegato con l’opera personale dell’abate Giovanni Kamā”. M.-L.Derat used the BHT for historical reconstruction, demonstrating the development of the monastic congregation of Däbrä Libanos in the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> cent. (DERAT 1998:193–98). These, and some other scholars, studied the BHT mostly as a document providing important information on the history of Däbrä Libanos and the cult of the Saint. So far little attention has been paid to the analysis of the text itself.

of the Saint and his Miracles, it is also further divided into subchapters, as is the history of the life of the Saint. The editor's title does not fully correspond to the definition given by the hagiographer himself, which is *Māṣḥafä zenabu lä-Täklä Haymanot*<sup>13</sup>, i.e., 'The Book of the History [Story] of Täklä Haymanot', meant especially to be read on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot*, the day of the translation of the Saint's relics.<sup>14</sup>

In the GHT ms. tradition, the BHT is usually attached to the narrative of the Saint's life as a separate text. I have not, however, been able to find any ms. where this text would be presented without the biography or the Miracles of the Saint, as his monastic genealogy sometimes is.<sup>15</sup> Most of the mss. containing the GTH, whether in the Däbrä Libanos version or in the Ḥayq version, also contain the BHT.<sup>16</sup> This undoubtedly illustrates the importance of the feast and of the corresponding text for the cult of the Saint.<sup>17</sup>

The accounts of the translation of the relics of Täklä Haymanot can be found in several other sources. The narrative in the Wäldəbba version of the GTH<sup>18</sup> could be the earliest one, and the text in the Ethiopic Synaxarium is

<sup>13</sup> ስምዑል ፡ ወለብው ፡ አፍቁራንዩ ፡ መጽሐፈ ፡ ዜናው ፡ ለተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ ፍቁር ፡ እግዚአን ፡ ዘይትነብብ ፡ በዕለተ ፡ ፍልሰተ ፡ ሥጋው ፡ አመ ፡ ፲ወጀለግንቦት ... "Hearken ye, and understand, O my beloved, the Book of the History of Takla Hāymanōt, the beloved of our Lord, which shall be read on the day of translation of his body, on the twelfth of the month Genbōt" (BUDGE 1906:t.99, v.246).

<sup>14</sup> The EMMML catalogue usually defines the BHT as "(Anonymous) Homily on the translation of the body of Abuna Takla Haymanot", see the ms. EMMML 2919–1[2–3]; the description to the ms. EMMML 2581 reads: "Anonymous homily for the translation of the relics of Abuna Takla Haymanot"; cp. the definition in WRIGHT 1877:195–96 nos. 300, 303: "discourse on the translation of the saint". The word "homily" usually corresponds to the Gəʿəz term *dərsan*, but not *zena*, which refers normally to a literary work of historical/narrative character.

<sup>15</sup> In the ms. EMMML 2197, however, the BHT is only accompanied by a few miracles of Täklä Haymanot.

<sup>16</sup> Almost all the mss. mentioned in previous footnotes can serve as examples thereof. The BHT attached to the GTH in the Ḥayq version can be found, among others, in the mss. EMMML 2134 and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Éth. 697.

<sup>17</sup> In some mss. the BHT is missing. They are, for example, the Lake Ṭana ms. Kebrān 19 (see HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973:126–28, late 17<sup>th</sup> cent.; here the genealogy of Täklä Haymanot is immediately followed by the text describing the life of Zä-Yoḥannəs, the founder of the monastery on Kəbran, Lake Ṭana); the British Museum ms. Orient. 728 (WRIGHT 1877:254, no. 304, mid-18<sup>th</sup> cent., see below); EMMML 3410, vol. VIII, 247. The BHT is not mentioned in the descriptions of the mss. Orient. 724 or Orient. 725 (WRIGHT 1877:195–96, nos. 301, 302).

<sup>18</sup> This tradition is somewhat inconsistent and may reflect two stages of development. On the one hand, the story of the Saint's life relates that Täklä Haymanot was buried in the church immediately after his death: ወለሥጋው ፡ ክቡር ፡ ገነዘዎ ፡ ሠናዩ ፡ ወወደይዎ ፡

probably one of the latest traditions.<sup>19</sup> The other known sources are one of the “Short Chronicles” and the *Acts of Anorewos*, an Ethiopian saint and Täklä Haymanot’s pupil.

Most sources containing an account of the translation of Täklä Haymanot’s body concentrate on the first translation. They do not specify the exact year of this event. As the dating was essential for such narratives to confer credibility on them, the hagiographers refer to other historic events, supposed to have taken place around the time of translation, or to the author’s contemporaries – well-known officials in charge. Traditionally, the date of the Saint’s death was used as the reference point, and some texts mention that the relics of Täklä Haymanot were translated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot*, 56/57 years after the Saint’s death (an interval which was set by godly providence). The note in the Synaxarium hardly mentions any real details of the event, but keeps the number of years.<sup>20</sup> The Wäldəbba version of the GTH refers to Həzqəyas [Hezekiah], the then abbot of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos.<sup>21</sup> The *Zena Däbrä Libanos*, being a later source, contains both the dating systems, mentioning the “56 years” and Həzqəyas.<sup>22</sup> The “Short Chronicle” has the most developed chronology, placing the event in the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Säyfä Arʿəd’s reign (1344–71), i.e. approx. 1370. This date is,

**ውስተ ሳፁን ሐዲስ ወቀበርዎ ውስተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን በዐቢይ ክብር በሰብሐት ወማህሌት** “His honoured body was covered by a beautiful shroud and put into the new coffin and buried in the church with great honours, with praises and hymns” (CONTI ROSSINI 1896:121, 141). On the other hand, the biography of the Saint is followed by a narrative of the discovery and translation of the Saint’s relics. According to this tradition, abbot Filəppos was followed by Həzqəyas: the latter had a vision of Täklä Haymanot announcing that the time to translate his bones had come. The saint also demanded that Həzqəyas should fulfil this task himself “in order to obtain my blessing” (**ከመ ጎርከብ በረከት**). The bones of Täklä Haymanot were festively translated from the cell (**ጸማዕት**), where the Saint had spent the last years of his life in seclusion and constant contending, to the church (of the monastery?). No sooner are the bones translated than the cell of Täklä Haymanot collapses (**ሶብ አብእዎ ለበድኑ አቡነ ውስተ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ቅድስት ንህለት ይእቲ ጸማዕት**). The narrative is continued by accounts of a few miracles that accompanied this event (CONTI ROSSINI 1896:122–23, 142).

<sup>19</sup> In the readings on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot* (BUDGE 1928:885, and COLIN 1997:256–57). The Synaxarium had been introduced into Ethiopian tradition in the late 14<sup>th</sup>–early 15<sup>th</sup> cent. The mss. in which the note appears are not the oldest ones (the signature “P” appears in mss. Éth. 126 and Éth. 128 of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> cent. respectively, cp. COLIN 1997:5).

<sup>20</sup> 56 years in BUDGE 1928:885, 57 years in COLIN 1997:256. In these and some other sources, numbers 56 (%6) and 57 (%7) interchange, possibly as a result of the unclear writing of numbers in mss.; the Ethiopian figures 6 (6) and 7 (7) look very much alike.

<sup>21</sup> CONTI ROSSINI 1896:123, cp. CERULLI 1944:137–38.

<sup>22</sup> See TURAIEV 1906:8–9.



however, obviously based on the same number of “56/57 years”, as perhaps also the further calculation of the “Short Chronicle”, which states that Täklä Haymanot died in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Wädäm Rāʿad’s rule (1299–1314).<sup>23</sup>

Some relevant text fragments are also included in the Saint’s biography in the Däbrä Libanos version of the GTH. For instance, in the scene at the conclusion of the testament (*kidan*), God is reported as predicting the translation of the Saint’s bones from his “cell” in 57 years.<sup>24</sup> The narrative of the miracles is sometimes followed by a short extract devoted to the history of the monastery, which places the first translation in the time of Säyfä Arʿäd’s reign, as the “Short Chronicle” does, but includes a different chronology.<sup>25</sup> At the very end of the text, at least in some mss., we find still another piece which is obviously taken from the Wäldəbba version of the GTH.<sup>26</sup> As one can see, it is predominantly the first and the earliest transla-

<sup>23</sup> See BASSET 1882:10 (error in the Ethiopian text?), 11, 99.

<sup>24</sup> After BUDGE 1906:t. 92,v. 226: “And our father the holy man Takla Haymanot said unto him, ‘Lord, where dost thou command that my body shall be buried?’ And our Redeemer said unto him, ‘Thy body shall be buried here for fifty-seven years; and after fifty-seven years have passed, the cell [ጸግዕድ “cell, hermit’s hut, cave”, many other mss. have here ጸላእት “rock, cavern”] of thine shall be destroyed, and thy sons shall build a great monastery in the open space of the desert in thy name, and they shall remove thy body into it ...”

<sup>25</sup> After the ms. Ef. 18 (see TURAIEV 1906a:84–85, no. 43/Orlov 35), a 18<sup>th</sup>-cent. copy of the GTH from the collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies, St.-Petersburg: “(137rc–va) Our Father Täklä Haymanot rested in fame in the eighth year of the reign of [Yagbəʿa Şəyon], the son of Yəkʷənno Amlak [of] Israel. For Yagbəʿa Şəyon ruled for nine years, and the bones of our Father Täklä Haymanot were translated on the twenty-and-fifth year of the rule of Säyfä [Arʿäd], the son of *nəgus* ʿAmdä Şəyon ...” (cp. the same tradition in EMMML 2197–6, vol. VI, 308). Thus, this account differs from what is related in the Synaxarium and in the “Short Chronicle”: here Täklä Haymanot is said to have died in the eighth year of Yagbəʿa Şəyon (1285–94), i.e. in 1293, and the time span till the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Säyfä Arʿäd results in an interval of 76 years.

<sup>26</sup> So far I have been able to find it only in Ef. 18 and in EMMML 2197. Here is the piece in full (cp. CONTI ROSSINI 1896:123), after Ef. (138vb–139ra): “In the office of abba Həzqəyas, the fourth. And after this holy, humble and mankind-loving man had been appointed – and his Acts had been written down – then [our Father] Täklä Haymanot came to him in a vision and he said: ‘The time came, which I spoke of before, when I spoke about my children and the removal of my bones to fulfil God’s will. For so He said: ye do it and carry my bones’. And after he said so, [the Saint] disappeared from him. And after that our father Həzqəyas gathered all his children, from afar and from near, for the feast of the translation of this holy *abba* Täklä Haymanot. And mighty crowds gathered and carried his bones with praise and hymns. And the leg of one man in the crowd was trodden upon and it broke. And when (the bones of the saint) touched him, he recovered at once. Those who saw it, praised our Lord. And after



tion of Tāklä Haymanot's remains that receives most of the hagiographers' consideration.<sup>27</sup> One gets the impression that it was this event that was perceived as the beginning of the sacral history of the monastic community, not the actual foundation of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos, which remains mostly unmentioned.

The narratives of the first translation of the relics of Tāklä Haymanot often differ in detail or even contradict each other. This allows one to suggest that there also existed other traditions apart from the above-mentioned and best-known ones. The compilers interpreted historical events and existing traditions in conformity with their purposes – or were guided by some other oral or written sources, which are unknown to us. For example, the author of the *Acts of Anorewos* (ca. 1478)<sup>28</sup> tries to use the story of the translation to prove the superiority of his saint over others and ascribes to him the leading role in the discovery of Tāklä Haymanot's relics; he does not mention Həzqəyas, the discovery is said to have taken place under Filəppos.<sup>29</sup>

All in all, we can count at least ten traditions of this sort, narrating the first translation of the body of the Saint. One should mention that the earliest account, whatever text it might be, must have been written down more than 50 years after the translation took place. At that time, the real circumstances of the translation could be remembered only vaguely. However, the hagiographic canons did not require from the author an historic description of the event: half of the whole account in the Wäldəbba version of the GTH was devoted to the miracles which accompanied the translation. Consequently, few basic narrative elements passed, together or separately, from one text to another, acquiring each time new details and interpretations. It goes without saying that the additional details can hardly be considered

they carried his bones and placed them in the shrine of the holy church, there fell this mighty rock to fulfil the prophecy he made in his lifetime”.

<sup>27</sup> Some of the sources also contain information on later translations. The *Zena Däbrä Libanos* mentions the translation of the Saint's bones to a wooden church during the tenure of Tewodros, in the reign of Dawit II (1382–1411/12; see TURAIEV 1906:8, CERULLI 1944:139). According to the Wäldəbba version of the GTH, the remains were later translated again under abbot Yoḥannəs Kāma, during the reign of Yəṣḥaq (1414–29), who ordered a new stone church to be built for the Saint's relics (CONTI ROSSINI 1896:123, the narrative also mentions the miracles that accompanied this translation; s. above, note 12). Among the numerous Miracles of the Saint, a group of 22 wonders is prefaced by a homily on the transfer of the relics into a “shrine of gold”, which took place in 1495, during the reign of the emperor Naʿod (1494–1508) and the tenure of abbot ʾəḳḳäge Peṭros – and again on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot* (e.g., EMMML 2134ff. 151b–54a; Ef. 18ff. 123rc–24ra).

<sup>28</sup> CONTI ROSSINI 1905:62.

<sup>29</sup> CONTI ROSSINI 1905:99.

historical as well; the additional accounts were far more a result of the hagiographers' literary work. It is as such that they present a special interest.

### The Versions Compared

Careful study of even a few copies of the GTH in the Däbrä Libanos version and of catalogue descriptions of some other mss. allows us to conclude that there exist at least two distinct versions of the BHT: one identical with the Budge edition (BHT<sup>2</sup>) and one distinctly different from it (BHT<sup>1</sup>).<sup>30</sup> The comparison between the two clearly shows that the latter presents an independent original tradition, used for the composition of the former (edited by Budge):

<sup>30</sup>The existence of different versions of the BHT correlates with the fact that the narratives of the Saint's life in the version of Däbrä Libanos also fall into two somewhat distinct types. The deviations between them had already been observed (see GRÉBAUT & TISSERANT 1935:404, no. 110; cp. CONTI ROSSINI 1914:192). Though catalogues usually define the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos as such, without providing any additional comments, closer analysis of the descriptions and the mss. themselves allows us to conclude that there exist (at least) two types of the GTH within the Däbrä Libanos version. The texts of the first type are presented, e.g., in the following mss.: GRÉBAUT & TISSERANT 1935:403, no. 110; Ef. 18, see TURAIEV 1906a:84–85, no. 43; ZOTENBERG 1877:206, no. 138; etc. The second text-type is represented by the Budge edition (after ms. Orient 300, see WRIGHT 1877:195), and also by some other mss., see ZOTENBERG 1877:204, no. 137; GRÉBAUT 1941:20–25, Éth. 343/Griaule 39; DILLMANN 1847:49–50, no. 45; ULLENDORFF 1951:18, Aeth.3 etc. The first type of the text was the *Vorlage* of the Arabic translation of the GTH, which was produced during the reign of the Emperor Gälawdewos (1540–59) and sent to the Coptic patriarch Gabriel VII (see GRAF 1934:25, no. 66; 186, no. 483, also ZOTENBERG 1877:205). The year 1515, usually mentioned as the date of the creation of the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos (CONTI ROSSINI 1899:29, CERULLI 1968:73), seems to have been related to the composition of the GTH of the first type. The texts of the second type must have been composed long after, probably in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> cent. (for further discussion see NOSNITZYN 2000). It was possibly during the period of transformation of the first-type text into the second type that the BHT<sup>1</sup> was edited and acquired the form we know from Budge's edition (BHT<sup>2</sup>). However, in the ms. tradition the distribution of the BHT<sup>1</sup> and the BHT<sup>2</sup> does not coincide exactly with that of the first and second type of the GTH, even though one could suggest that the BHT<sup>2</sup> is usually attached to the later version of the GTH, that is, to the GTH of the second type. The BHT<sup>2</sup> seems to be much more known, than the BHT<sup>1</sup>; the Ethiopian editions of the GTH (e.g., ገድለ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት “The Acts of Täklä Haymanot”, Addis Abäba 1973 A.M. [1980/81 A.D.]) present a text very close to the one edited by Budge, and that attached to the BHT (pp. 189–200) is the same text as the BHT<sup>2</sup>.

Table 1<sup>31</sup>

BHT <sup>1</sup> (Ef. 18ff. 90ra–94vb; EMMML 2582, ff. 84rb–88va; EMMML 2134, ff. 107a–114b)	BHT <sup>2</sup> (BUDGE 1906)
1. Rhymed preface: “(90ra) In the name of the triple holy one God, one Son and one Holy Ghost, one Deity and one Lord ...”; a praise of God.	1. <sup>(32)</sup> Rhymed preface: “In the name of the triple holy one God, one Son and one Holy Ghost, one Deity and one Lord ...”; a praise of God.
a. History of the last days Moses, to whom God reveals how He takes care of all the creatures. History of Moses	
2. Introduction (“Hearken, o hearken ye, o my beloved ...”). Discourse on the date of the 12 <sup>th</sup> of <i>Gənbət</i> .	2. Introduction (“Hearken, o hearken ye, o my beloved ...”). On the date of the 12 <sup>th</sup> of <i>Gənbət</i> .
3. The “Garden” of Tāklä Haymanot: “(90vc) ... and he watered all the land of Šäwa, and freed it from its curse [of sin] ...”	3. The “Garden” of Tāklä Haymanot: “... and he watered all the land of Šäwa, and freed it from its curse [of sin] ...”
4. The “palace” of the Saint and its 44 thousand “pillars of gold” and 45 thousand “pillars of fire” (91rb–rc). The insufficiency of the weak human mind to understand the construction of the “palace”.	4. The “palace” of the Saint and its 44 thousand “pillars of gold” and 45 thousand “pillars of fire”. The insufficiency of the weak human mind to understand the construction of the “palace”.
5. The testament of Tāklä Haymanot; conversation of the Saint with God.	5. The testament of Tāklä Haymanot; conversation of the Saint with God.
6. Tāklä Haymanot begs that the archangel Michael be not be separated from his soul and that all the Saint’s true believers be remembered and awarded.	6. Tāklä Haymanot begs that the archangel Michael be not be separated from his soul and that all the Saint’s true believers be remembered and awarded.
7. Tāklä Haymanot asks where his bones should be buried after his death. God says that they should be buried in his cell.	7. Tāklä Haymanot asks where his bones should be buried after his death. God says that they should be buried in his cell.
8. God tells the Saint that his body shall be translated in 57 years by his sons coming “from afar off and near”.	8. God tells the Saint that his body shall be translated in 57 years by his sons coming “from afar off and near”.
9. On the benefits of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Tāklä Haymanot. Instruction for the monks not to “go round in the world” and not to forget the testament of the Saint.	9. On the benefits of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Tāklä Haymanot. Instruction for the monks not to “go round in the world” and not to forget the testament of the Saint.

<sup>31</sup> Numbers 1–11 are used for the passages shared by both the BHT<sup>1</sup> and BHT<sup>2</sup>, letters a–k for those appearing in only one version (BHT<sup>1</sup> or BHT<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>32</sup> *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter I (BUDGE 1906:t. 99, v.246).

Mäṣḥafä fəlsātu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study

	b. Instruction compiled from the sayings of apostle Paul (“as Paul the Apostle saith, ‘Without faith [men] cannot please God ...’”).
10. On the veneration of Täklä Haymanot and faith in his covenant.	10. On the veneration of Täklä Haymanot and faith in his covenant.
c. On the observance of the testament of Täklä Haymanot (93vb); the conveyance of the prophecy on the translation of his body in 57 years.	
	d. <sup>(33)</sup> Appearance of Täklä Haymanot to abbot Həzqəyas, instruction to gather all his “children” and translate the relics on the 12 <sup>th</sup> of <i>Gənbət</i> , as 57 years have passed. Täklä Haymanot promises to appear during the translation and manifest his coming by lighting the extinguished lamp.
	e. <sup>(34)</sup> Həzqəyas gathers the “children” of Täklä Haymanot; 12 <i>māmbəran</i> arrive. Names of all the <i>māmbəran</i> are mentioned.
	f. The coincidence of the day of translation (12 <sup>th</sup> <i>Gənbət</i> ) with the feasts of the archangel Michael and the day of <i>rəkəb</i> .
	g. <sup>(35)</sup> The <i>māmbəran</i> discover the Saint’s bones in his cell; they carry them to the church. The miracle of the lamp, lit when Täklä Haymanot comes.
	h. <sup>(36)</sup> On how the book was revealed and interpreted “through the prayers of the company of the Saints”. Conclusion
j. The account on the plague in the monastery. Täklä Haymanot promises those who will have to die a martyr’s reward. God predicts prosperity to the cloister.	

<sup>33</sup> *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter II: “How Takla Hāymānōt appeared unto abbā Hezekiah ...” (BUDGE 1906: t.103, v.256).

<sup>34</sup> *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter III: “How abbā Hezekiah gathered together holy men ...” (BUDGE 1906: t.104, v.258).

<sup>35</sup> *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter IV: “How abbā Hezekiah and twelve holy men went and dug up the bones of Takla Hāymānōt’s ...” (BUDGE 1906: t.105, v.260).

<sup>36</sup> *Book of the History of the Translation*, chapter V: “How the history of Takla Hāymānōt was written down and then was lost and forgotten ...” (BUDGE 1906: t.105, v.262).

<p>k. The comparison between Täklä Haymanot's place and Zion. "Twelve shepherds who ruled the word of faith by the sermon of the new gospel". The vision of Nägädä Krəstos on Däbrä Asbo; Zion is in Däbrä Asbo. Conclusion.</p>	
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Certainly, one cannot exclude the possibility that there also exist other versions of the BHT which have not yet been properly investigated.

### The First Version

The BHT<sup>1</sup> hardly mentions any specific details on the translation of the remnants of the Saint. This text, styled by the hagiographer as the *Book of the History of Täklä Haymanot*<sup>37</sup>, was only meant to be read during the celebration of the translation, which, however, was not and did not have to be the work's main and only theme.<sup>38</sup> The BHT<sup>1</sup> is principally devoid of the

<sup>37</sup> መጽሐፈ : ዜናዑ : ለክብር : ወብፁዕ : ተክለ : ገይማኖት : ፍቁረ : እግዚእነ : ዘይትነበብ : በዕለተ : ፍልሰቱ : ለሥጋዑ : አመ : ፲ወጀለግንቦት ... "The Book of the History of the honoured and blessed Täklä Haymanot, the beloved of our Lord, which shall be read on the day of the translation of his body on the twelfth of Gənbət", cp. the similar definition used in the BHT<sup>2</sup> (see above).

<sup>38</sup> The author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> speaks mainly about the covenant (*kidan*) between Täklä Haymanot and God and his wish to interpret it properly, but he has no intention to describe the translation of the relics (Ef. 18 f. 93vb–vc, cp. EMMML 2582 f. 87rb–rc, EMMML 2134 ff. 112vb–113rb): "We tell ye, o brethren. For our Lord said when the end time came (of the Saint's life): 'After fifty-and-seven years your bones shall be removed from here, and there will be a great gathering for the great number of your children'. And they lived and kept this prophecy. And such was the testament his Lord concluded (with the Saint), saying 'He who remembered thee and who is buried in thy place, he shall never ever be judged' ... (90vc) In keeping this prophecy and this testament his children lived until this day. And they did not realize other, hidden things written down in this book. For we did not write down everything, but concealed much from his testament and from the wonders of our blessed Holy Father Täklä Haymanot. But so [he explained to us] one night, saying: '[Write down] the concealed too, and do not disclose it to (anyone) except the few who [have the knowledge]'. But they, our fathers, lived, keeping this testament and the prophecy without writing it down in the book, (90ra) but rather passing it as a prophecy from generation to generation." Cp. the beginning of the text devoted to the translation of the body of Filəppos of Däbrä Libanos, where the author stresses his intention to write about the event the feast is devoted to: ንጽሕፍ : እንክ : የም : በዛቲ : ዕለት : ዘከመ : ኮነ : ፍልሰቱ : ለአቡነ : ፊልጶስ : ሰማዕት : መስተጋድል : ትሩፈ : መግባሩ. "Behold, we write today, how the translation of the Martyr Abunä Filəppos, contender, (and) of excessive good deeds, happened" (GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:79, 99).

literary features which would have been expected from a translation report. It is a compilation of praises to the Saint and loosely connected narratives (see table 1).

The BHT<sup>1</sup> was meant for an audience which consisted exclusively of the members of a monastic community.<sup>39</sup> The opening rhymed praise of God is followed by a passage missing in the BHT<sup>2</sup>, which narrates a parable of the biblical Moses (see table 1, a). This fragment deserves special attention and I will return to it later in this article. Further on, the hagiographer considers the importance of the day of the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot*: the 12<sup>th</sup> of each month is devoted to the archangel Mikaʿel, and it is the month of *Gəmbot* when the days of the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ are celebrated (table 1, no. 2). This coincidence is not occasional, but divinely ordained. Then, in few sentences the biography of Täklä Haymanot is metaphorically described. The saint is compared to a fountain watering a garden (i.e. the land of Šäwa), making it flourish and bringing forth fruit (the souls of the faithful people); he is also compared to John the Baptist and Anthony the Great. The hagiographer then describes Täklä Haymanot’s heavenly “place” and his “palace” containing 44,000 “pillars of gold” and 45,000 “pillars of fire” (the symbol for the monks – the Saint’s “spiritual children”) and proves that one cannot doubt the existence of this “place” and this “palace” (table 1, no. 4). After this the hagiographer turns to the interpretation of the Saint’s testament on the day of his death. In the discourse about the archangel Mikaʿel (table 1, no. 6), “the prince of Hell” ʿAbdəlmakos is mentioned, who will not endanger the soul of the Saint on its way to the Heaven.<sup>40</sup> Fi-

<sup>39</sup> Cp. CERULLI 1944:142.

<sup>40</sup> አብድልግብስ : መከንኑ : ገሃንዖ. This personage occurred in the *Māṣḥafä Məṣṥir* (*Book of the Mystery*), written by Giyorgis of Sägla about 1424 A.D.: አብድልግብስ : መልአስ : ገሃንዖ (“Abdəlmakos the Angel of Hell”) is the name of the “Prince of Hell” (see YAQOB BEYENE 1993:197); the *Book of the Mystery* refers thereby to an episode from the *Acts of Läteṣən* (Latson), an Egyptian saint, where ʿAbdəlmakos (or Abdəlmalekos, cp. EMMML 1939, vol. V, 429) appears as “the angel of the punishment” (መልአስ : ኩናኔ) in the monastic context, namely, in the story about a peccant abbot of a monastery (MARRASSINI 1987:137, 157). The relationship between the traditions of the *Māṣḥafä Məṣṥir* and the BHT<sup>1</sup> is further corroborated by yet another testimony: the *Māṣḥafä Məṣṥir* and the GTH in the Ḥayq version share a similar episode relating the resurrection of the dead and describing Hell (in these texts, *abba* Giyorgis and Täklä Haymanot, respectively, are the main characters and the workers of the miracle, cp. YAQOB BEYENE 1993:194–96; the same episode, slightly changed, can be found also in the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos, see BUDGE 1906:v.77–82, ch. “How Takla Hāymānot raised the dead ...”); the mention of “the angel of the Hell” suits well into this context.

nally, the translation of Tāklä Haymanot’s relics is predicted to take place in 57 years (table 1, no. 8).

The next account instructs the listeners in the rules of monastic life and the monastic ethical norms (table 1, no. 9). The author once again returns to Moses, to whom he compares Tāklä Haymanot since the Saint’s tomb is similar to the Promised Land (consequently, his community is similar to the Israelites). The comparison of a wandering monk with a fish that is caught and taken out of the water<sup>41</sup> could be inspired by a quotation from the *Zena Abäw*, a piece of ascetic literature.<sup>42</sup> The piece about the vineyard<sup>43</sup> is similar to another passage from the same work<sup>44</sup>, which is well known in the Ethiopic tradition.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ef. 18 f. 93ra, (cp. BUDGE 1906:t.102, v.253; EMMML 2582 f. 86ra, EMMML 2134 ff. 111vb–112ra): ወይቤ : እንጦንስኒ : እምከመ : ወፅኦ : መነኮስ : እመካኑ : ይመውት : ፍጡነ : ወአኮ : ዘይመውት : በሥጋ : ዓዲ : ይመውት : ፍጡነ : በነፍሱ : ከመ : ዓሣ : ዘወፅኦ : እምባሕር : እስመ : አሥገሮ : ኖትያዊ : ይመውት : ፍጡነ : ወኢይክል : ሐይወ : ወከማሁ : ለመነኮሳት : ኢይትክሐሎሙ : ሐይወ : ዘእንበለ : አጽንዖ : መካኖሙ :: “For Antony said: whensoever a monk goes from his place, he dies quickly, and he does not die in respect of his body only, but also in respect of his soul, like a fish when it is caught by the fisherman, for it dies speedily and is unable to live. Even so the monk is unable to live without abiding continually in his cell.”

<sup>42</sup> Cp. ARRAS 1967:1: ወይቤ : ቅዱስ : እንጦንስ : በከመ : ዓሣ : ዘነበረ : ውስተ : ዮብስ : ከማሁ : መነኮሳትኒ : ሰባ : ይወፅኦ : እመካኖሙ : ወያነውኑ : ንብረተ : ውስተ : ዓለም : የሐጽጽ : ትዕግሥቶሙ : እምጽሙና : ወነድአት :: ይደሉ : ታእምሩ : ከመ : ዓሣ : አልቦ : ማኅደረ : ዘየሐይዖ : ዘእንበለ : ማይ :: ከማሁ : መነኮሳትኒ : አልቦሙ : ድኒኒ : ወኢዕረፍተ : ዘእንበለ : አጽንዖ : መካኖሙ : እስመ : ሰባ : ያጸርቡ : እመካኖሙ : ይገድፉ : ሀልዮ : ነፍሶሙ :: “For Saint Antony said: the monks are like fish on dry land: when they go from their place and prolong their stay in this world, their patience to hardship and there serenity decrease. You should know, that you have no other salvation and repose but to abide in your place, as a fish, which cannot live outside water. The monks are similar. If they abandon their place, they forget to take care about the soul”. Cp. a corresponding paragraph from *Vitae Patrum* suggested by E.A.W. Budge, ROSWEYDE 1615:563 [De Quiete II–1]: “Dixit abbas Antonius: Sicut pisces, si tardauerint in ficco moriuntur: ita & monachi tardantes extra cellam, aut cum viris secularibus immorantes, à quietis proposito reuoluuntur. Oportet ergo sicut piscem in mari, ita & nos ad cellam recurrere; ne fortè foris tardantes, obliuifcamur interioris custodiæ”.

<sup>43</sup> Ef. 18 f. 93ra–rb (cp. BUDGE 1906:t.102, v.253; EMMML f. 86rc–va, EMMML 2134 f. 112ra–rb) እስኩኩ : ሐሊ : ኦብእሲ : እመከመ : አፍለስኮ : ለዓፀደ : ወይንክ : ለለዓመት : ይክልኑ : ፈርዮ :: ወባሕቱ : ይዮብስ : እምሐሩረ : ፀሐይ : እስመ : አልቦ : ስርው : ይዮብስ : በእንተ : ዘፈለሰ : ለለዓመት :: “O man, think, if you remove your vineyard to another place every year will it be able to bear beautiful fruits? Without roots it will dry out because of the heat of the sun. It will dry out because it was moved every year.”

<sup>44</sup> Arras 1967:26: ይቤ : አረጋዊ : ከመ : ዕዕ : ይክል : ይፍረይ : ሰባ : ያፈልስዖ : በበዓመት : እመካን : ውስተ : መካን : ከማሁ : መነኮስ : ለእመ : ኮነ : ዘይፈልስ : ወዘየሐሪ : መካኖተ : ኢይፌጽም : ግብሮ :: “The old man said: as the tree can not bring forth fruits, being



The last fragment of the BHT<sup>1</sup>, in which the author states that Zion is in Däbrä Asbo (table 1, k), is of great interest. A statement of this kind is not something unusual in the Ethiopian local monastic traditions, but the author chooses to prove his claim. He provides a narrative, in which a certain Nägädä Krəstos relates a vision before his death: he saw the Church in the semblance of a “woman clothed in light” (ብእሲት : ለቢሳ : እሳት)<sup>46</sup>, who pointed at Däbrä Asbo as the “second Jerusalem of our father Täklä Haymanot”.<sup>47</sup> The hagiographer reports this event as having taken place at the same time as the translation. Among the monastic leaders of that period, Nägädä Krəstos can be immediately recalled, an abbot of the monastic community on the island of Kəbran (lake Ṭana), the fourth after Zä-Yohännəs and a contemporary of kings Säyfä Ar<sup>c</sup>əd (1344–71) and Dawit (1382–1411/12).<sup>48</sup> In the concluding formula we read: ተፈጸመ : ገድሎ :

removed early from one place to another, the monk cannot carry out his contending if he wanders choosing the places.”

<sup>45</sup> Cp. the *Gädlä Yohännəs Məsraqawwi*, in which the same quotation is used twice; the second time it occurs (perhaps accidentally) in the part of the *Gädl* describing how the translation of the remains of the saint took place (MARRASSINI 1981:158–59, 324–25).

<sup>46</sup> Allusion to Rev. 12:1 [ብእሲት : እንተ : ትሉብስ : ፀሐዩ].

<sup>47</sup> After EMMML 2134 ff. 114 ra–vb (Ef. 18 f. 94rb–va, EMMML 2582 f. 88ra–rc), “And I think that Zion is here, in accordance with the witness (of) the blessed Nägädä Krəstos, to whom seven lamps descended from Heaven on the day of his death. And there was witness that he said: ‘I am Nägädä Krəstos; and my beholder is the Holy Ghost. I wandered in all the countries and ... [አንድድኩ sic!] all the places, and did not see any sacred church, except Däbrä Asbo, the second Jerusalem of our Father Täklä Haymanot’. And I say unto thee: I, the sinful, regretted for many years that I did not see the church – the dwelling-(place) of the Deity. I stood in the church after midnight contemplating thus. And therewith the light shone like the light of the sun, and she appeared before me in the semblance of a woman clothed with flames and said unto me: ‘Dost thou know me?’ And I said unto her: ‘Who art thou, my Lady?’ And she said: ‘I am the Holy Church. Think not that it is only wood, and stone, and grass. For the Church means “I am the bride of the Father”’. And I said unto her: ‘Dost thou reside here?’ And she said: ‘So I do, this is the place of my rest forever’. Saying so, she disappeared from him. And I told ye about this, thou sinful brother, so do not leave this place’ And so saying he rested in peace ...”.

<sup>48</sup> See mss. Kebrän 6, 8, 19 (HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973:103, 106, 127, 214), see also SCHNEIDER 1972:v.38. Making Nägädä Krəstos confirm the sanctity of Däbrä Libanos, the hagiographer treats him as a spiritual leader of high authority, whose witness cannot be false. Another possible interpretation would be that Nägädä Krəstos is a representative of a rival community, whom the author makes confirm the superiority of Däbrä Libanos. In this case, the passage might have been a reference to complicated conditions which once existed between Däbrä Asbo/Libanos and some representatives of the monastic movement of the lake Ṭana. Otherwise, later hagiographic sources of

ለአቡነ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ... ('Herewith the *life* [my italics – D.N.] of our father Tāklä Haymanot is concluded ...')<sup>49</sup>, i.e. the author defines the text as a *gädl*, and not as a *zena* (cp. note 14), either erroneously repeating the same term for the BHT<sup>1</sup> as for the narration of the Saint's life or neglecting to define its genre.

There is no information, either in the introduction or in the conclusion to the BHT<sup>1</sup>, that would indicate the time of the composition. As to the typology of the translation reports, there are no similarities either between the BHT<sup>1</sup>, and, e.g., the *History of the Translation of the Relics of Filappos*, which must have appeared at approximately the same time as the Däbrä Libanos version of the GTH. The BHT<sup>1</sup> contains some sentences probably recalling passages from the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos, written around 1515. However, there is no single case where we can say with any high degree of probability that it is specifically the BHT<sup>1</sup> that uses the GTH as the source, and not *vice versa*. For example, the description of the heavenly "palace" of Tāklä Haymanot (Ef. 18, ff. 65rb–66rc) in the BHT<sup>1</sup>, similarly to the GTH in the Däbrä Libanos version, mentions that the "palace" had already been erected in the Saint's lifetime, before the conclusion of the testament, and mentions the impressive 44,000 pillars supporting the "palace". On the other hand, the BHT<sup>1</sup> provides details which were not mentioned in the GTH, specifying the pillars as "pillars of fire" (አዕማዲሁ ፡ ዘእሳት) and "pillars of gold" (አዕማዲሁ ፡ ዘወርቅ). Besides, the interpretation of the "pillars" as symbols for the souls of Tāklä Haymanot's "spiritual children" and adherents, which is central for GHT, is completely missing in the BHT<sup>1</sup>. Another example would be the BHT<sup>1</sup>'s long narrative of the plague which devastated the monastery (see table 1, j). Defending the trust in the power of the Saint's guardianship, the author indicates that those who died of plague were rewarded as for martyrdom and that pestilence was followed by times of plenty. This account contains reminiscences on the epidemics as described in the GTH;<sup>50</sup> both the texts draw parallels be-

Kəbran seek to connect the local monastic tradition to that of Däbrä Libanos. E.g., it is reported, that Zä-Yohannəs (KINEFE-RIGB ZELLEKE 1975:101–2), predecessor of Nägädä Krəstos, was not only the disciple of Fəlippos of Däbrä Libanos, but also one of the 12 *māmbəran* (as follows from a text, attached to the GTH in the version of Däbrä Libanos, in the ms. Ṭānāsee 19, f. 137va, HAMMERSCHMIDT 1973:126–27; cp. also SCHNEIDER 1972:v–vi).

<sup>49</sup> Ef. 18 f. 94vb, EMML 2582 f. 88rc.; cp. BHT<sup>2</sup> ዛቲ ፡ መጽሐፈ ፡ ገድሉ ፡ ለአቡነ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ ቀዳሚሆሙ ፡ ለመነሳሳት ፡ ዘሃገረ ፡ ሸዋ ... "This is the Book of the Contending of our father the holy man Takla Hāymānot, the first man of the country of Shawâ" (BUDGE 1906:t.105).

<sup>50</sup> Ef. 18 ff. 82–83, BUDGE 1906:v.228, ch. "How Takla Hāymānot fell sick and died ...").

tween the death of the monks and their ascension to the “wedding feast” (*käbkab*). Here the author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> does not go into details again and does not include the central eschatological concept of “the 1000 years feast on Mount Zion”<sup>51</sup> which is present in the GTH in the Ḥayq version and much elaborated in the Däbrä Libanos version. Consequently, if the BHT<sup>1</sup> mentions the “uncountable” dead and that all of them received the same “reward” as Täklä Haymanot, the author of the GTH’s tendency to specification might have been secondary: in the Saint’s biography, eleven monks are reported to have died. It seems that both the traditions would be better characterized, not as interdependent, but as independent and originating from the common set of the legends about the Saint.

One can in any case suggest the time of the creation of the BHT<sup>1</sup>, since its author used the name Däbrä Asbo, and not Däbrä Libanos.<sup>52</sup> The possible literary connections between the *Book of the Mystery*, the BHT<sup>1</sup> and the GTH (see note 41) point to a relatively early period as well. Summarizing, one can draw a tentative conclusion that the BHT<sup>1</sup> could have been composed some time after 1424, but prior to 1445. The ideology and mood expressed in the BHT<sup>1</sup> are another reason to suppose that its time was distant from that of the Däbrä Libanos version of the GTH (that is, around 1515). The late 15<sup>th</sup>–early 16<sup>th</sup> cent. was the period when the monastery flourished; yet the content of the BHT<sup>1</sup> definitely indicates a period when the monastery was either persecuted or was on the edge of complete demolition and, having survived the crisis, started gaining strength again. It is quite probable that the appearance of the BHT<sup>1</sup> manifested the revival of the community and the establishment of the festive Mass on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət*, or perhaps the re-establishment of the feast after a long period, or a considerable increase in the feast’s importance.

### The Second Version

At some time the further development of the cult of St. Täklä Haymanot required that the BHT<sup>1</sup> should be revised in conformity with its needs. An unknown hagiographer revised and completed the BHT<sup>1</sup> and thus created a new text (see table 1), which combined different sections: the introduction, together with homiletic and didactic parts from the BHT<sup>1</sup>, followed by the narrative part, depicting the occasion to be commemorated, and then by the discourses on the date of the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət* and the miraculous origin of the text. The text of the BHT<sup>2</sup> was divided into chapters, so that a specific

<sup>51</sup> See BEYLOT 1971–72.

<sup>52</sup> The monastery was renamed in 1445 (PERRUCHON 1893:91, cp. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:236, 263).

portion of the text (the sermon, the narrative about the event etc.) could easily be found.

The hagiographer considered the description of the translation of the relics central to the new text. When structuring this account he used one of the most-common hagiographic patterns as the basis of the composition – one of the so-called “basic hagiologic situations”<sup>53</sup>, widely used in hagiographies (including the Wäldäbba version of the GTH and the Synaxarium on 12 *Gənbət*): the translation is preceded by an account of the vision Həzqəyas, the main organizer of the translation, had the day before (table 1, d). He sees Täklä Haymanot, who announces that the time has come to transfer his body. Thus, the Saint himself predicts and defines the ritual of the translation.

The narration devotes more attention to the timing information, so that the date of the vision of Həzqəyas, 21 *Yäkkatit*, appears. There follows a discourse on the importance and symbolical meaning of the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gənbət* (table 1, e), the topic already touched (table 1, no. 2; this passage of the BHT<sup>1</sup> appears in the BHT<sup>2</sup> somewhat shortened). To “reconstruct” the description of the translation itself, the author compiled and processed the material he could find in other sources; the narrative of the opening of the tomb and the extraction of the bones of the Saint can be compared with the account of the *Acts of Anorewos* (*Gädlä Anorewos*), which most possibly influenced or inspired the author of the BHT<sup>1</sup>.

Table 2

<p><i>Acts of Anorewos</i> (<i>Gädlä Anorewos</i>) (CONTI ROSSINI 1905: t.99, v. 87–88)</p>	<p>BHT<sup>2</sup>, BUDGE 1906: t.105, v. 260–61 (cp. Éth. 697 ff. 79rb–80va)</p>
<p>1. ወተማከሩ ፡ ያፍልሱ ፡ አዕዕምቲሁ ፡ ለቅዱስ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ ወእምድጎረ ፡ ፈጸሙ ፡ ተማከሮ ፡ ከረዩ ፡ መቃብሮ ፡ ወረከቡ ፡ አዕዕምቲሁ ፡ ለቅዱስ ፡ አቡሆሙ ... And they took counsel together to translate the bones of saint Täklä Haymanot, and after the counsel was over, they dug out his grave, and found the bones of their Holy Father ...</p>	<p>ወእምድጎረ ፡ እምድጎረ ፡ ተጋብኡ ፡ ፲ወጀመምህራን ፡ አመ ፡ 0ወ2ለግንቦት ፡ ተንሥኡ ፡ ምስለ ፡ ሕዝቅያስ ፡ አቡሆሙ ፡ ወሐሩ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ጸማእት ፡ ወከረዩ ፡ ህህሮ ፡ ለቅዱስ ፡ ወረከቡ ፡ አዕዕምቲሁ ፡ ዘጠግዓ ፡ ምስለ ፡ መግነዙ ... And it came to pass that after the twelve <i>mambəran</i> were gathered together on the twelfth day of the month Gənbət, they and their father Həzqəyas rose up, and went into the cell of the holy man Takla Haymanot, and they dug up his grave, and they found his bones in the coffin, with all its funeral wrappings still upon it [sic; “... and they found his bones which adhered tightly to his wrappings ...”] ...</p>

<sup>53</sup> Cp. HEINZELMANN 1979:104: “hagiologische Grundsituation”.

<p>2. ወአቡነ : አኖሬዎስ : ቀደመ : በዊአ : ውስቴታ :          ወቀዊሞ : ወነበበ : ወይቤሎሙ : ለአኃዊሁ :          መኑ : ይቀድም : እምኔየ : አልቦ : እምቅድሚየ :          ወአልቦ : እምድኅሬየ :: ... And our father          Anorewos was the first to go in and stood          and exclaimed, and said, “Who is in front of          me? There is no one in front of me and no          one behind me!”</p>	<p>ወቦአ : ወአቡነ : አኖሬዎስ : ዘብሐረ : ወረብ ::          ወይቤ : መኑ : እምቅድሚየ : ወመኑ :          እምድኅሬየ : በፀዊረ : አዕዕምቲሁ : ለአቡየ : Then          our father Anorewos from the land          of Wārāb went in, and said, “Who will be          in front of me, and who will be behind me          in bearing the bones of my father?”</p>
<p>3. ወዘንተ : ብሂሎ : ቆመ : ውስተ : ትርጋዕ ::          ወአቡነ : ፊልጶስ : ውስተ : ትርጋስ : ወገነዙ :          አዕዕምተ : አቡሆሙ :: ወነሥአ : አቡነ :          አኖሬዎስ : 3ተ : መሳቅለ : እለ : ሀለዉ : ውስተ :          መቃብር : 1መጠዎ : ለአቡነ : ፊልጶስ : ወ፪ተ :          ረሰየ : ሎተ :: ... And, saying so, he stood at          the foot (of his bed), and our father          Filāppos stood at the head (of his bed), and          they wrapped the bones of their Father in          the shroud. And our father Anorewos took          three crosses which were in the grave and          gave one to our father Filāppos , and took          two unto himself.</p>	<p>ወነሥአ : መስቀለ : ወመጠዎ : ለሕዝቅያስ :          መንገለ : ትርጋሲሁ :: And he took the cross          which was at his pillow and gave it unto          Həzqəyas. ወአምጽኡ : ሰንዱናተ : ንጹሕ :          ወጠብለሉ : አዕዕምቲሁ :: And next they          brought some clean linen napkins and          wrapped his body therein.</p>

The polemics of the *Acts of Anorewos*, aimed against the spiritual domination of Dābrä Libanos over other monasteries, is, of course, missing in the BHT<sup>2</sup>. Instead, Anorewos worships the remains of Täklä Haymanot and kisses his wrappings. To make the narrative more convincing, the author introduces such important details as the names of the witnesses of the event. In contrast to the passages from the *Acts of Anorewos*, in which the participants of the translation are called “saints” (*qəddusan*, here meaning “monks”), but neither their number nor their positions are mentioned, the author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> (see table 1, e) calls the participant *māmbəran*, clearly referring to the tradition of the 12 *māmbəran* of Dābrä Libanos<sup>54</sup>, and lists all the 12 names. Perhaps the author reached this conclusion, interpreting the source in the following way: as Anorewos was one of the 12 *māmbəran*, other saints participating in the translation of the relics could have been nobody else but his comrades, i.e., the other *māmbəran*, appointed to ad-

<sup>54</sup>The tradition about the 12 *māmbəran* (“teachers”, sometimes called also *nəburanä əd*), pupils of Täklä Haymanot who were sent to different regions of Ethiopia to convert their populations to Christianity, is considered important for the reconstruction of the Church history of Ethiopia of the early Solomonic period. This tradition, as preserved in the *Acts of Filāppos* of Dābrä Libanos (see TURAIEV 1908:198), seems to be the one most commonly referred to (cp. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972; KAPLAN 1984:92–100; DERAT 1998:197–98 etc.).

minister other regions of Ethiopia. As an analysis of the passage in the BHT<sup>2</sup> demonstrates, the hagiographer may have based his list of *māmbəran* on the *Acts of Filappos* of Däbrä Libanos, probably intending to use the most ancient and the most “respectable” document and giving less credit to other sources, including the account in the GTH itself.<sup>55</sup>

The description of the whole process of the translation amazes through the realism of the narrative; it is quite probable that the text follows the literary pattern based on the real ritual which used to be performed in a similar way. One can identify the distinct phases of the opening, elevation and re-burial of the remains. As the bones are unwrapped, a sweet odour comes from them – a miracle proving the sanctity of the relics. The funeral wrappings are immediately torn into small pieces and distributed among the participants. The *māmbəran* place the bones of the Saint in a “small chest” (ገሰቲት : ሣዑን) and carry it to the church (the destination is, however, as vague as in the other traditions: the text only mentions that it was a church, but which church and where it was is not quite clear). The monks are followed by a crowd of people; one of them hurts his knee, but it heals as soon as he touches a piece of the Saint’s shroud (a detail can be found already in the Waldəbba version of the GTH), which is another proof of the power of

<sup>55</sup> Another register of the 12 *māmbəran* can be found in many copies of the GTH as a part of the narration about the monastic genealogy of Täklä Haymanot’s spiritual descendants within the Saint’s biography (Ef. 18 ff. 90rc–91vc: ልደተ : አባቶች : መነኮሳት or “The [Book of the] Genealogy of our Fathers the Monks”; cp. EMMML 2582 ff. 88va–89vc, GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:17, 28–30). In the BHT<sup>2</sup> the *māmbəran* Tadevos, Gäbrä Krəstos, Yosef, Adḥani, Iyosyas and Qäwəstos are said to have come from the same regions as in the *Acts of Filappos*. Anorewos (“the Elder”, TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:176) is said to have come from Şəgağa, not from Wäreb, as the *Gädlä Filappos* reports. It probably reflects the influence of some traditions tending to identify Şəgağa with Wäreb; the hagiographer could have found the reason for it in the *Acts of Anorewos* (cp. CONTI ROSSINI 1905:100; see also TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:177, note 8; GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:28). Anorewos from Märḥabete must have been a mistake for Marqorewos from Märḥabete. Instead of Anorewos from Morät, as in the *Acts of Filappos*, Zena Marqos from Morät is mentioned, a recent tradition included in the GTH in the Dabrä Libanos version (see BUDGE 1906:198). As in the *Acts of Filappos* (TURAIEV 1908:198), a *māmbəran* bearing the name Matyan (ማትያን) from the region of Fäṭägar can be found. The name Matyan is not attested in Gəʿəz. It is certainly a mistake for Matyas (ማትያስ), which could have been taken over from the *Acts of Filappos* into the BHT<sup>2</sup> (cp. GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:32, note 63). Both in the BHT<sup>2</sup> and the *Acts of Filappos*, Yoḥannəs of Kälʿat is mentioned, a less-known *māmbəran* who disappeared in some other traditions (cp. GETATCHEW HAILE 1982–83:29). The author of BHT<sup>2</sup> compiled the fragment carefully and did not include in the list more than one region for each *māmbəran*.

the Saint and his remains. The *māmbəran* bring the chest with the bones into the church and close the doors, leaving the people outside, and carry the chest three times around the *tabot*. The lamps, which have been extinguished by the presence of so many people, light up on their own, which is the manifestation of the miraculous appearance of Täklä Haymanot, accompanied by *abba* Filəppos (table 1, g)<sup>56</sup>. After that, the bones are buried.

The last passage (h) of the BHT<sup>2</sup> contains a concluding discourse, which can be considered the colophon of the work. In the very beginning it is briefly mentioned that Täklä Haymanot received “the yoke of ascetic life” (አርዑተ ፡ መነኩስና) from Iyäsus Mo<sup>3</sup>a. Then, along with the traditional praise of Täklä Haymanot and of other abbots of Däbrä Libanos, some information appears that helps us understand how the hagiographer perceived and understood the text he created. He did not consider himself the author in the full sense of the word, and presented the history of the creation of the text as including the following stages: the BHT<sup>2</sup> was “revealed” (ተከሥተት), “set forth” (ወፅአት), (later) “interpreted” (ተተርጎመት) and “declared” (ተነግረት).<sup>57</sup> The hagiographer understood his task as the implementation of the third stage – he wrote down what the Holy Spirit revealed and “interpreted” to him. Among the sources of the “interpretation”, he mentions hagiographic traditions related to the disciples of Täklä Haymanot and the GTH.<sup>58</sup> He also explains that the history of the translation itself initially remained unwritten and was forgotten, for the “fathers” did not write it down. Then it was again revealed, interpreted and written down. The author of the BHT<sup>2</sup> sees himself in the same situation as *abba* Yoḥannəs Käma, who tried hard to have accounts of the Saint composed (GTH in the Waldəbba or the Ḥayq versions?) many years after the Saint’s death, and was successful because the history of Täklä Haymanot was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup> The hagiographer declares that the only authentic

<sup>56</sup> In the discussion about the importance of the date of 12<sup>th</sup> of *Gəmbot* the hagiographer draws a parallel between the appearance of Jesus Christ after His resurrection and the miraculous appearance of Täklä Haymanot, to sustain the veracity of the latter.

<sup>57</sup> BUDGE 1906:t.105, v.263 (the same in Éth. 627 ff. 81vb–82rb): “Hallelujah! This book of the translation of the honourable and blessed Takla Hāymānot ... was revealed, and sent forth, and was sealed in thanksgiving to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, and it was translated (ተተርጎመት) in the faith of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and it was also declared in the Faith of the Father, and in the praise of the Son, and with the tongue of the Holy Spirit”.

<sup>58</sup> ወናዑ ፡ ተተርጎመ ፡ መጽሐፈ ፡ ገድሎሙ ፡ ወመጽሐፈ ፡ ዜናሆሙ ፡ ለደቂቁ ... ወይእዜኒ ፡ ተተርጎመት ፡ መጽሐፈ ፡ ገድሎ ፡ ወመጽሐፈ ፡ ፍልሰቱ ፡ ለክቡር ... (BUDGE 1906:t.106).

<sup>59</sup> ወይእዜኒ ፡ ተተርጎመ ፡ መጽሐፈ ፡ ገድሎ ፡ ወመጽሐፈ ፡ ፍልሰቱ ፡ ለክቡር ፡ በብዙግ ፡ ዓመት ፡ እምድግረ ፡ ኃለፈ ፡ መዋዕል ፡ ወተረሰዐ ፡ ዘመን ፡ ከሠተ ፡ ለነ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ዘንተ ፡ በእንተ ፡



version of the history (the one revealed and declared by the Holy Spirit) belongs to the circle of people to which he also belongs; all the other written traditions, including the BHT<sup>1</sup>, are obviously considered to be “false interpretations”.<sup>60</sup> In general, without providing any dating and without referring directly to the name of the commissioner, the passage does not appear as a usual colophon; it can not be excluded that the hagiographer styled this part of the text, following an older pattern.<sup>61</sup>

As to the date of the composition, even though the BHT<sup>2</sup> refers to Yoḥannəs Kāma, it must have been composed after 1478, which is the supposed time of the composition of the *Acts of Anorewos*. It seems reasonable to suggest an even later period for its composition, some time in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or in the early 18<sup>th</sup> cent.<sup>62</sup> Being thus a relatively recent compilation of the

ጸሎቶች ፡ ለማኅበረ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ወበእንተ ፡ ስለሌሎች ፡ ለማኅበረ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ወትንብልናሆሙ ፡ ለገዳማውያን ፡ ወበእንተ ፡ አንብቡ ፡ ለዮሐንስ ፡ ከማ ፡ ጸሎት ፡ ነበረ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ያበከ ፡ ወያስተሐምም ፡ በእንተ ፡ ጸሐፊ ፡ ዜናሁ ፡ ለቅዱስ። “Now the Book of his Contendings and the Book of the Translation of the Body of the honourable man were composed [are interpreted. – D.N.] several years ago, but owing to the lapse of time they became forgotten; and God revealed them unto us through [for the sake of – D.N.] the prayers of the Company of the Saints, and through the supplication of the Company of the Saints, and through the intercession of the desert monks, and through the tears of our father Yôhannes Kamâ, for this man continued to weep and to exert himself with the greatest care and diligence about the writing of the history of the holy man” (BUDGE 1906:t.106, v.263). Yoḥannəs Kāma is mentioned as a prominent abbot, well known for his efforts in “the writing of the history of the holy man”, but nothing is said about his direct participation in composing the BHT. This interpretation is not contradictory if we translate በእንተ as “for the sake of” (cp. CERULLI 1944:142; cp. the colophon of the *Book of the Translation of the Relics of Filappos*, where the name of the commissioner of the composition of the text is mentioned, GETATCHEW HAILE 1990:96, 113).

<sup>60</sup> BUDGE 1906:t.106, v.264 (the same in Éth. 627 f. 82rb): ወናሁ ፡ ከሁተ ፡ ለነ ፡ ወተርጎሙ ፡ ለነ ፡ መንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ወእመስ ፡ ትቤ ፡ ኢተርጎሙ ፡ መንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ለዝንቱ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ ንግሥት ፡ ወጸሐፎ ፡ ኦብእሲ ፡ አብድ ፡ ወእንብብ ፡ ኪያሁ ፡ እምጥንቱ ፡ እስከ ፡ ተፍጻሚቱ ፡ “... and behold, it was the Holy Spirit Who revealed and dictated it unto us ... And if thou wouldst say, “The Holy Spirit never dictated this book [to thee], take and write [a copy of it] thyself, O foolish man, and read it from the beginning thereof even unto the end”.

<sup>61</sup> A systematic textological study of colophons in Ethiopian mss. has not been conducted so far. Here one can, however, refer to the colophon of a copy of the *Acts of Filappos* E. Cerulli was able to obtain in 1929. This colophon is different from the ones known through Turaiev’s edition, and its creator applies similar categories to the author of the BHT<sup>2</sup> (see CERULLI 1943:234–35).

<sup>62</sup> As in the case of many hagiographic works, the textual tradition of the BHT<sup>2</sup> shows some diversity. E.g., in the GTH<sup>2</sup> in ms. Éth. 627 the date of the vision of Həzqəyas is not 21 *Yäkkatit*, but 19 *Yäkkatit* (Éth. 627 f. 78ra); the list of the *mämbəran* contains 4

elements of other traditions, the BHT<sup>2</sup> indicates an interesting development in the written hagiographic tradition about Täklä Haymanot, but is obviously of secondary value as a historical source.

### The Death of Moses

Most of the modifications one finds in the BHT<sup>1</sup> as a part of the BHT<sup>2</sup> are of decorative, purely literary character.<sup>63</sup> At one place a long fragment was inserted by the hagiographer (table 1, b), who elaborated the biblical sayings “(And) as Paul said: without faith men cannot please God” (Heb. 11:6), and “the righteous shall live by faith” (Rom.1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38) into a lengthy sermon on the benefits of faith, with the use of numerous quotes and paraphrases from the Bible (Ps. 118:8, Mt. 3:7, Heb. 3:12, Rom. 14:23). But a few passages of BHT<sup>1</sup> were revised more profoundly. E.g., at least in the text of the BHT<sup>2</sup> as presented in Budge 1906, a few fragments of the earlier version, which became the main source of the new compilation, were omitted. Even although not all the criteria for the selection of the material can be defined, it is clear that the hagiographer was guided by his monastic community’s interests and by considerations of a religious and/or political nature. One of the fragments, which does not appear in the BHT<sup>2</sup>, is the narrative about Nägädä Krəstos’s vision in the BHT<sup>1</sup> (see above); it was not taken over from the BHT<sup>1</sup>, perhaps due to the circumstance that in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> cent. the community of Däbrä Libanos was located near Gondär, in close proximity to the monasteries of lake Ṭana. Another fragment is the account of the last days of Moses, which the author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> possibly adopted from the work known as the *Death of Moses* (*Motä*

names instead of 12 (Anoryos of Wārāb, Matyas of Fätägar, Yosef of Ənnar<sup>3</sup>ət, Anoryos of Morät, Éth. 697 f. 80ra), Täklä Haymanot is said to have accepted the monastic yoke from Bäṣälötä Mika’el, and not from Iyäsus Mo’a (Éth. 697 f. 86rb, cp. BUDGE 1906:t.105–6, v.263); the comparison of the Saint to Moses is followed by a long didactic discourse on the latter and the disobedience of the Israelites (Éth. 697 f. 74vb–75vb, the passage inserted between መሀብኩክሙ : ዘንተ : ሀገረ : መምህሩ : እስሙ : አነ : እግዚአብሔር : ርሑቀ : መዓት : ወብዙኃ : ምሕረት : ወጻድቅ and ወይእዚኒ : ለነሂ : ወሀብነ [Ef. 18 f. 82vb–vc; cp. BHT<sup>2</sup> BUDGE 1906:t.102, v.252]), missing in both the BHT<sup>1</sup> and the BHT<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> For example, what in Ef. 18 (f. 90vb) sounds like: “This day is the day of the translation of the body of the man, whom God sanctified from his mother’s womb. This day is the day of the translation of the blessed one, whom God blessed from his mother’s womb ...” is represented in BUDGE (1906:t.99, v.246) as follows: “This day [is the day of] the translation of the body of the holy man, whom God sanctified from his mother’s womb, like Jeremiah and John. This day [is the day of] the translation of the blessed man, whom God blessed, even as the Prophet saith, ‘Before I fashioned thee in the womb of thy mother I knew thee [Jer 1:5]’”.

*Muse*). A widely known peculiarity of this text in the Ethiopian tradition is that it is usually ascribed to the religious literature of the Betä ʿĪsraʿel.<sup>64</sup> The author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> placed the fragment immediately after the opening praise of God. After a very short summary of the contents of the *Motä Muse* (God reveals to Moses that the day of his death will soon come. Moses is grieved and troubled, because he will have to leave his mother, wife and children), the hagiographer retells, it paraphrasing or sometimes even quoting phrases from it, possibly the ones he remembered best. The following table compares the fragment of the BHT<sup>1</sup> and the source text:

Table 3

BHT <sup>1</sup> (Ef. 18, f. 90rb–va; EMMML 2582 f. 83rb–rc, EMMML 2134 f. 107va–vb.)	<i>Motä Muse</i> (ULLENDORFF 1961:430–31, 437)
1. ንሣእ ፡ በትረከ ፡ ወረድ ፡ እስከ ፡ ፈለገ ፡ ድር[86rc]ዳኖስ ፡ ወጸውያ ፡ ወይቤሎ ፡ ንሣእ ፡ ወዝብጣ ፡ ለባሕር ፡ ወዝብጣ “Take your rod and go to the river Jordan”. And He called him and said to him: ‘take (your rod) and strike the water!’ And he struck (the water).	ወይእዜኒ፡ ተንሥእ ፡ ወንሣእ ፡ በትረከ ፡ ወዝብጣ ፡ ለባሕር ፡ ኤርትራ ፡ ወተንሥእ ፡ ሙሴ ፡ ወዝብጣ ፡ ለባሕር [And God said to Moses ...] ‘And now rise and take your rod and strike the Red Sea’; and Moses rose and struck the Sea.
2. ወሶቤሃ ፡ ተሰጥቶት ፡ ባሕር ፡ ወአስተርአየ ፡ የብሰ ፡ ወይቤሎ ፡ ንሣእ ፡ ዕብነ ፡ አንኩርኩረ <sup>65</sup> ፡ ወነሥእ ፡ ነቢይ And the water was riven asunder and the dry land appeared. And He said to him: “Take this rolling stone!” And the prophet took (it).	ወተንሥእ ፡ እምባሕር ፡ ወረከበ ፡ ዓቢየ ፡ እብነ ፡ ወአንኩርኩረ ፡ ፡፡ And when he arose from the Sea he found a big rolling stone.
3. ወይቤሎ ፡ ዝብጣ ፡ ለዕብን ፡ ወዝብጣ ፡ ወተሰጥቶት ፡ ዕብን ፡ ወረከበ ፡ በከርሠ ፡ ዕብን ፡ ዕዪ ፡ ወሲሳዩኒ ፡ ዕዕ ፡ ልምሉም ፡ ዘበቆለ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ከርሠ ፡ ዕብን ፡ ወአንከረ ፡ ሙሴ ፡ ወሰብሐ ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር And He said to him: ‘Strike that stone!’ He struck and the stone burst asunder, and he found in it a worm, and	ወይቤሎ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለሙሴ ፡ ዝብጣ ፡ ለውእቱ ፡ እብን ፡ ወአንኩርኩሮ ፡ ለውእቱ ፡ እብን ፡ ወገብረ ፡ ከመ ፡ አዘዞ ፡ ወተሠጥቶ ፡ እብን ፡ ወረከበ ፡ በውስጥቱ ፡ ተፍኢሞ ፡ ሐመልማለ ፡ ሣዕር ፡ ንስተት ፡ ዕዪ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይብል ፡ ይትባረክ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ዘኢረሰዓኒ ፡ እስከ ፡ ዛቲ ፡ ዕለት ፡ እንዘ ፡ ሀሎኩ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ዕመቆ ፡ ባሕር ፡ ፡፡ And

<sup>64</sup> It is believed that the *Vorlage* of the *Motä Muse* was Arabic (see ULLENDORFF 1961:442, LESLAU 1951:106–07, KAPLAN 1999:106–7).

<sup>65</sup> The Ethiopic for “rolling stone” is unclear, both in the *Motä Muse* and in the BHT<sup>1</sup>. See ULLENDORFF 1961:30–31: እብነ ፡ ወአንኩርኩረ and እብን ፡ አንኩርኩር, translated as “rolling stone” and እብን ፡ ወአንኩርኩሮ “[strike that stone] and roll [that stone]”. Cp. FAITLOVITCH 1906:18, 27: እብነ ፡ ወአንኩርኩረ “pierre qui roulait”, እብን ፡ አንኩርኩር “pierre roulante”. These forms could go back to the correct original እብን ፡ ዘአንኩርኩረ, or more probably to እብን ፡ ዘያንኩርኩር “stone that rolled/rolls” – “rolling stone”, that is, “rounded, round stone”.

<p>his food was some green grass sprouted in the interior of the stone. And Moses was astonished and praised God.</p>	<p>God said to Moses: ‘Strike that stone and roll that stone’ and he did as He commanded him. And the stone burst asunder and he found in it a worm eating some green grass and saying: ‘Blessed be God who has not forgotten me to this day I was in the depths of the Sea’ ...</p>
<p>4. ወካእበ ፡ ይቤሎ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለሙሴ ፡ ትራኢኑ ፡ ከመ ፡ ኢይሰአነኒ ፡ ለዝ ፡ ዕዔ ፡ አህቦ ፡ ሲሳዮ ፡ በከርሰ ፡ ዕብን ፡ እፎ ፡ እረስዕ ፡ ግብረ ፡ እደውዮ ፡ ዘለሐ[ኩ] ፡ በአርአያዮ ፡ ወበአምሳልዮ ፡ ወተናዘዘ ፡ ሙሴ ፡ በዝ ፡ ነገረ (87va) ፡ ትካዘ ፡ እሙ ፡ ወደቁቁ ... And God said to Moses: ‘Do you see that I can procure food for this worm in the interior of the stone? Shall I forget the creation of My hands, that I shaped in My image, after My likeness?’ And Moses was consoled by this word, in his sorrow for his mother and children.</p>	<p>ወይቤሎ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለሙሴ ፡ ኢትራኢኑ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ባሕር ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይነብር ፡ ድፉነ ፡ ወውስተ ፡ እብን ፡ አንኩርኩር ፡ ዘኢረሳዕክዎ ፡ ለዝ ፡ ዕዔ ፡ ይመስለኩ ፡ ዘእረስዎሙ ፡ ለደቁቅኩ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይስእሉኒ ክያዮ ... And God said to Moses: ‘Do you see that I did not forget this worm while it lived hidden in the sea and in a rolling stone? And do you think that I shall forget your children when they pray to me?’</p>

On the one hand, the author of the BHT<sup>1</sup> used this fragment as a continuation of the praise of God and as an element of the decorative rhetoric. On the other hand, the narrative became the richest in number of motifs and metaphors, comparing Täklä Haymanot with the biblical patriarch Moses. Further on in the text, Moses’s grave with its unknown location (Deut. 34:6) is juxtaposed to Täklä Haymanot’s burial, which was revealed by God so that the faithful could be saved. Later the testament (*kidan*) of the Saint is compared to the testament of Moses, and in still another place the location of the Saint’s relics is compared to the refuge given to Israelites, i. e. the Promised Land. The author of the BHT<sup>2</sup> did not try to erase all the literary parallels between Moses and Täklä Haymanot found in the BHT<sup>1</sup>.

The fate of this text fragment demonstrates that in the early 16<sup>th</sup> cent. the *Motä Muse* was included in the literary environment in which the hagiographers of the monastic community worked, and that borrowed passages satisfied the tastes and norms of that time<sup>66</sup>. But some time later, starting perhaps with the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., the place of the *Motä*

<sup>66</sup>The fact that a fragment from the *Motä Muse* was included in the *Gädl* of one of the most prominent Ethiopian saints proves and illustrates Ullendorff’s presumption that “one should not be too dogmatic about its [*Motä Muse*’s – D.N.] exclusive connection with the Falashas” (ULLENDORFF 1961:421). Most researchers consider that the Betä ʿEsraʾel literature forms an inseparable part of the Ethiopian written tradition, both in its themes and in the manner of their treatment.

*Muse* in the Christian tradition changed, possibly after it was adopted by the literary and liturgical tradition of the Betä ʿĪsraʿel. Therefore, by the time of the composition of the BHT<sup>2</sup> the *Motä Muse* might have been perceived as alien to the Christian literary tradition, so that its paraphrase in the text devoted to the founder of Däbrä Libanos became unacceptable, even as a decorative rhetorical element. This, however, does not allow an ultimate conclusion on how clearly the place of the *Motä Muse* was determined at that time. Neither does the fragment used in the earlier version of the BHT<sup>1</sup>, small as it is, witness the existence of two distinct versions of the work – a Christian and a Betä ʿĪsraʿel one. But it does prove that the *Motä Muse* could have reached the Betä ʿĪsraʿel via Ethiopian Christian literature.

### Conclusions

So far some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. A possible reconstruction of the textual history of the BHT involves two stages. The BHT<sup>1</sup> is an early text. Its literary form is very vague, possibly because the literary pattern of reports on the translations of relics was not well developed as yet. This text is much closer to a sermon than to a translation account, as the genre of the sermon was better known to the author and it suited well his purpose of creating an instructive text which could be recited at a festive meeting or liturgy of the members of the Däbrä Asbo/Libanos community. The BHT<sup>2</sup>, being a much later work, included an important “historical” account of the translation and burial of the Saint’s relics, borrowed from a hagiography of a disciple of Täklä Haymanot. The further revision of the BHT<sup>1</sup> consisted mainly in omitting passages, undesired for political or religious reasons, and including other, “neutral” ones. Both the texts were composed for the same occasion, but the BHT<sup>1</sup> was intended mostly for internal use in the monastic community, and the BHT<sup>2</sup> was meant for a much wider audience, where the majority consisted of the common faithful who did not know the monastic traditions and wished to hear an account describing how the translation of the remains of the Saint was carried out.

### Abbreviations

CSCO	–	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliū
Sae	–	Scriptores aethiōpici
t.	–	text
v.	–	translation

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Mäṣḥafä fölsätu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study

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Māṣḥafä fəlsātu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot: a Short Study

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Summary

The account of the translation of the relics of *abunä* Täklä Haymanot, usually attached to his Acts, is one of the less-studied elements of the Saint's hagiographic tradition. The article starts with a typology of translation reports in Ethiopian literature and deals in detail with the analysis of the textual tradition of the so-called *Māṣḥafä fəlsātu lä-abunä Täklä Haymanot* ('Book of [the History] of the Translation [of the Body] of our father Täklä Haymanot', BHT) and the problem of its sources. At least two stages can be distinguished in the development of the text (BHT<sup>1</sup>, BHT<sup>2</sup>), a long period of about two centuries separating them. The narrative of the first translation of the body of the Saint, which is said to have taken place in 1370, only becomes central in the later version of the work (BHT<sup>2</sup>). Among the literary relations around the BHT revealed in this study, the connection with the so-called *Death of Moses*, mostly known as a text affiliated to the literary tradition of the Betä ʿƏsraʿel, is the most interesting one.