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Article

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A New Witness to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*: EMMML 7919*

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Introduction

The work of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (= EMMML) project from 1973 to 1994 filmed nearly ten thousand manuscripts, which have offered up many interesting discoveries.¹ The EMMML partnership agreed that a copy of the microfilms would be deposited at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (= HMML) as well as in several locations in Addis Abäba. However, no positive copies were produced for approximately fifteen-hundred microfilmed manuscripts. Moreover, no copies were shipped to HMML and the exact location of the microfilms was unknown. In 2003, Columba Stewart and others from HMML located these microfilms at the National Archives and Library Agency in Addis Abäba. A digitization team sent by HMML scanned approximately half of these microfilms in 2005.² Collegeville, MN, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, 7919 (= EMMML 7919) is one of these manuscripts and we are indebted to the EMMML project and the team at HMML who have made this manuscript available for study. This manuscript will be of interest to Ethiopic scholars as well as scholars of Late Antiquity as it contains a newly discovered witness to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*. This article analyses this new witness and considers its place alongside the four previously known Ethiopic manuscripts. The article also presents a catalogue entry for EMMML 7919, fashioned after the excellent cataloguing work of the EMMML collection by William F. Macomber and Getatchew Haile.

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¹ For a history of the EMMML project, see Stewart 2017.

² Stewart 2017, 467–468.

EMML 7919 as a Witness to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*

The *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* is a written source of immense value for the history of Egypt.³ It covers the time span from Creation until the Islamic conquests and was composed by a Coptic bishop named John in the seventh century. The text of the *Chronicle* is divided into 122 chapters. The body of the work is prefaced with an Introduction and a Table of Contents containing short descriptions of all chapters and it is followed by a conclusion and a colophon. All in all, seven manuscripts containing the text of the *Chronicle* are known so far. Five of them are in Ethiopic: London, British Library, Or. 818 (= BL Or. 818), fols 48–103, first half of the eighteenth century;⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 123 (= BnF Éth. 123), fols 62–138, seventeenth century;⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 31 (= BnF d'Abbadie 31), fols 104–165, 1766 (fol. 103v);⁶ Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Fondo Carlo Conti Rossini 27 (= ANL Conti Rossini 27), pp. 1–120, twentieth century;⁷ EMML 7919, fols 49–98, early eighteenth century. Two manuscripts are in Amharic: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 240/Mondon-Vidailhet 53, fols 2–83, twentieth century; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 241/Mondon-Vidailhet 54, fols 1–61, twentieth century.⁸ The recent discovery of a new text witness from the EMML collection stresses the importance of a new edition of the *Chronicle*.⁹

Currently only two manuscripts (BL Or. 818 and BnF Éth. 123) have been completely edited and translated into French by Hermann Zotenberg.¹⁰ Furthermore, an English translation prepared by Robert Henry Charles was based on this edition.¹¹ Maxime Rodinson conducted a further study on Chapters 90 and 91. His student, Michel Boisset, collated the text of these two chapters from BnF d'Abbadie 31 at Rodinson's request.¹² Having analysed this collation, Rodinson states that the manuscript from d'Abbadie's collection represents another branch of text transmission, although it derives from the same

³ 'John of Nikiu', *EAE*, III (2007), 298a–299a (S. Weninger); Fiaccadori 2009.

⁴ Wright 1877, 297–314.

⁵ Zotenberg 1877a, 222–249.

⁶ D'Abbadie 1859, 37–40; Chaîne 1912, 19–20; Conti Rossini 1914, 207–208.

⁷ Strelcyn 1976, 100–102. This manuscript is paginated.

⁸ Chaîne 1912, 34–35.

⁹ Daria Elagina would like to express her deep gratitude to Dr Marcin Krawczuk for placing his materials on the *Chronicle* at her disposal.

¹⁰ Zotenberg 1877b; 1878; 1879; 1883.

¹¹ Charles 1916.

¹² Rodinson 1974, 132.

translation from Arabic.¹³ In the same article he also lists some interesting new readings from d'Abbadie's manuscript for Chapters 90 and 91, discusses Charles's translation, and identifies several proper names in the work.¹⁴ He collates the colophon of BnF d'Abbadie 31 and describes the differences in comparison with the colophons of the manuscripts edited by Zotenberg.¹⁵ The colophon of BnF d'Abbadie 31 is slightly different from the other manuscripts and contains the name of a second translator into Ethiopic, which is lacking in the colophons of the other manuscripts.

We are aware of only one project which includes an analysis of the four previously known manuscripts of the *Chronicle*. This research was undertaken by Shamil Mingazov with the assistance of Maria Bulakh.¹⁶ They used BL Or. 818, BnF Éth. 123, BnF d'Abbadie 31, and ANL Conti Rossini 27 to analyse a specific passage in Chapter 120 and described differences in readings between the latter two and the manuscripts edited by Zotenberg.¹⁷ All of these facts lead to the conclusion that a new edition of the *Chronicle*, a historiographical document of great importance, would deliver new historical and philological insights.

The lifetime of John, composer of the *Chronicle*, corresponds with a time of considerable change in the history of Egypt, meaning the decline of Roman rule and the conquest of Egypt by Arabs. Roman dominion in Egypt lasted for over six hundred years. In the seventh century, the pressure of the Persians on the borders of the province increased. This came to a head during the reign of Heraclius (r 610–641), who came to power after a revolt against Phocas (r 602–610). In 616, Persians successfully invaded Egypt and held it for ten years until a revolt against the Persian king faltered amongst the Arab soldiers. As a result, the Persian army was weakened and Heraclius had a chance to restore his power. He did so in 627 and retained power until the conquest of Egypt by °Amr ibn al-°Ās in 640–642.¹⁸ It is around this time that John of Nikiu was born.

The political circumstances during the lifetime of John were as follows: John was coeval with the governor °Abd al-°Azīz, a son of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam. In 684, after a struggle for power with Ibn Zubayr, Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam entered Egypt and settled there. Soon he appointed his son, °Abd al-°Azīz, as

¹³ Ibid., 133.

¹⁴ Ibid., 132–137.

¹⁵ Ibid., 132.

¹⁶ Mingazov 2012.

¹⁷ Ibid., 28–30.

¹⁸ See Butler 1902 for a detailed review of the history of conquest, which remains a valuable analysis.

governor and returned to Syria. °Abd al-°Azīz remained in this position for twenty years until he died in 705. His governorship is regarded as one of relative peace. He had groomed his son for the succession, but he predeceased his father by a few months. Instead, the Caliph selected his son, °Abd Allāh, to serve as the new governor after the death of °Abd al-°Azīz.¹⁹

As for biographical information about the ascribed author of the *Chronicle*, John served as the bishop of Nikiu, a city in the south-west Delta. This city was already known in the third century BCE. It is referred to by several names, Nikiu (Νικίους or Νικίου) in Greek, Pšati (Πϣατ) in Coptic, and Niqyūs (نقيوس) or Ibšādī (ابشادی) in Arabic.²⁰ The precise site of Nikiu is uncertain.²¹ The only source on the life and personality of John of Nikiu is found in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*.²²

The original language of the *Chronicle* is still a subject of debate. Three main options are discussed: Greek, Coptic, and the interchangeable usage of these two languages. At first, Zotenberg was convinced that the *Chronicle* was originally written in Greek, although he then wondered why the text had remained unknown to Byzantine authors.²³ However, some years later he changed his mind and proposed that some chapters of the text, specifically those reporting on the history of Egypt, were written in the Coptic language.²⁴

Coptic was a standard literary language of the Egyptian Christians just before and after the conquest of Egypt. The lifetime of John corresponds to the time when the Coptic language developed and even flourished in its literary form.²⁵ Moreover, there is evidence that the city of Nikiu was an important

¹⁹ For a short overview on this period see, for example, Kennedy 1998, 70–72.

²⁰ ‘Nikiou’, *CE*, VI (1991), 1793b–1794a (R. Stewart); for other orthographic variants see Timm 1985, 1132.

²¹ See Amélineau 1893, 283; Butcher 1897, 390; Butler 1902, 17, n. 1; Quatremère 1811, 420–446.

²² Evetts 1947, 20–22 and 32–34.

²³ Zotenberg 1877b, 451. There is a proposal that the text of the *Chronicle* was used by an unknown Byzantine author of the eighth century for an account on Bulgars. This account was retold by Theophanes the Confessor in his *Chronicle* and by Nikephoros I of Constantinople in *Historia syntomos, breviarium* (Mingazov 2012, 13; Sirotenko 1972). This assumption should be treated carefully. First of all, it is not always clear whether the identification of certain ethnic groups in the *Chronicle* with Bulgars is correct. Second, it is possible that John utilized an as yet unknown source that was also consulted by Theophanes and Nikephoros for their histories.

²⁴ Zotenberg 1883, 6–7.

²⁵ Wilfong 1998, 185.

centre of Coptic literary production at that time.²⁶ Nöldeke, in his review of Zotenberg, adduced arguments for a pure Coptic original.²⁷

In the introduction to his translation, Charles subscribed to the final opinion of Zotenberg, that is the interchangeable usage of Coptic and Greek, and admitted that it is impossible to delimit the boundaries of these presumed sections.²⁸ Crum, in his review of Charles's work, criticized this theory. He asserted that no other such bilingual text is known so far and that the historical circumstances do not support this idea.²⁹

There are some scholars who continue to argue for a strictly Greek original. For example, Tito Orlandi states that the original was written in Greek and later translated into Coptic. However, he does not offer any evidence for this claim.³⁰ A strong argument for Greek as the original language is made by Serge Frantsouzoff in his article 'Hronika Ioanna Nikiuskogo: nekotorye osobennostiazyka i soderžaniya' ('The Chronicle of John of Nikiu: some peculiarities of its languages and contents'). He points to a translation mistake, which would suggest the usage of the Greek language. In Chapter 97, the two main circus parties of Byzantium (*demes*) are mentioned: Venetoi ('the Blues') and Prasinoi ('the Greens'). For the first, a transliteration of the corresponding Greek word was used, **ⲗⲁⲠⲏⲧⲏⲥ** : *alwanutēs* or **ⲗⲁⲠⲏⲧⲏⲥ** : *alwanutis*. But for the second, an Ethiopic word **መስተገብራን** : *mästägäbran* ('labourers', 'workers') is applied. This word choice was explained by Zotenberg as a translator's misunderstanding of the Greek word οἱ Πράσινοι, confusing it with one of the derived forms from the verb πράσσειν ('do', 'work', 'make').³¹ Frantsouzoff states that in this case the original language must be Greek. However, Phil Booth in his article on the Blue and Green factions in the *Chronicle* writes that this case does not point directly to Greek as the original language of the text because the Greek verb πράσσειν was also in use in the Coptic language with the same meaning.³²

Unfortunately, there are no traces of either a Coptic or a Greek manuscript containing the text of the *Chronicle*. A Sahidic fragment discovered by Heinrich Schäfer in the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin ul-

²⁶ Orlandi 1998, 145.

²⁷ Nöldeke 1883, 1367.

²⁸ Charles 1916, iv.

²⁹ Crum 1917, 207.

³⁰ Orlandi 1970, 109.

³¹ Frantsouzoff 2010, 79; Zotenberg 1883, 410, n. 2.

³² Booth 2011, 563.

imately turned out to be another text related to the *Chronicle*, the *Cambyses Romance*.³³

Whatever the original language of the composition was, the *Chronicle* was later translated into Arabic. This translation seems to be part of a natural process as Arabic became the only official language by decree in 705.³⁴ Although at first Coptic did not lose its role as a literary language, the extensive usage of Arabic influenced Coptic literary production as well. Original compositions in the Arabic language by Christian authors as well as translations of early works are known from the tenth century onwards.³⁵ The precise date of the translation is not known. However, Frantsouzoff analyses the usage of transliterated Persian lexica, attributed to the Arabic version, and comes to the conclusion that the translation of the text into Arabic happened around the twelfth or thirteenth century.³⁶

No material traces of the Arabic version have yet been found. However, Amélineau makes a very cautious statement, claiming that he knew of an Arabic version of the *Chronicle*.³⁷ Unfortunately, all further investigations by his colleagues were fruitless.³⁸ It is not clear whether Amélineau really possessed any information on an Arabic copy or if he confused this text with another. Interestingly, Amélineau did not mention this Arabic manuscript in his 1915 article in *Revue Historique* concerning the conquest of Egypt.³⁹

The translation of the *Chronicle* into Ethiopic took place at the time of the arrival of the Jesuits into Ethiopia which provoked a new period of literary production. The history of the mission and relations between the Jesuits and Ethiopians is complicated. The Jesuits attempted to collaborate with the local nobility and to develop effective tools for religious debate. For that reason they started their own literary production, translating and composing into Ethiopic various texts dealing with Christological and theological questions. This literature from the Jesuits' side encouraged Ethiopians to undertake the same literary activity in order to defend their religious dogmas. The translation of Coptic Orthodox texts from Arabic into Ethiopic intensified in response to the propaganda of Catholicism.⁴⁰ Written by a Coptic bishop, this *Chronicle* is heavily influenced by the religious dogmas of its author. John of Nikiu defends his

³³ Charles 1916, iv.

³⁴ 'Literature, Copto-Arabic', *CE*, V (1991), 1460a–1467b (A. S. Atiya).

³⁵ Wilfong 1998.

³⁶ Frantsouzoff 2010, 80.

³⁷ Amélineau 1890, xxxiv, n. 2.

³⁸ Charles 1916, v.

³⁹ Amélineau 1915, 292–310.

⁴⁰ 'Jesuits', *E Ae*, III (2007), 277a–281b (L. Cohen and A. Martínez); Ricci 1969, 840–841.

faith with passion and depicts representatives of the Roman Church in an unattractive manner. Thus, it seems that the Ethiopians viewed the *Chronicle* as an ideal text for this ideological debate.

In addition, at the end of the nineteenth century the *Chronicle* was translated into Amharic from the edition of Zotenberg. There are no traces of any other traditions of the *Chronicle*, modern or ancient.

Returning to EMLL 7919, the manuscript demonstrates a strong relation to that of ANL Conti Rossini 27. The latter is incomplete; it lacks the Introduction, the Table of Contents, and Chapters 103–122. Before the manuscript from the EMLL collection came to light, it was already clear that the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei manuscript derives from an unknown witness as, by the time of the production of this copy, all other known manuscripts of the work had already arrived in Europe.

A comparison of ANL Conti Rossini 27 with the newly discovered EMLL 7919 reveals that they share many monogenetic errors. For example, they share the longer omissions of ‘ጎበ ፡ ሐይቀ ፡ ባሕር ፡ ወአርሰጦግኮስ ፡’ ‘to the shore of the sea and Aristomachus’s (Chapter 95)⁴¹ and ‘ወይቤሉ ፡ እስዎ ፡ ገንቱ ፡ ኮከብ ፡ ዘአስተርአየ ፡’ ‘and they said that this star which had appeared’ (Chapter 95).⁴² These omissions do not seem to be due to the scribal error of *homeoteleuton*. Moreover, these witnesses also have in common several further small omissions in Chapters 89 and 90. As the manuscript from Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is much younger than EMLL 7919, only two variants of their relation to one another are possible: either EMLL 7919 was a *Vorlage* for the younger manuscript or they derive from a common sub-archetype. Neither of these relationships can be established with certainty without additional study. EMLL 7919 introduces some minor omissions, which are often obvious and could have been restored using context. No cases of disjunctive error, which would clearly point to the existence of a common sub-archetype, were discovered. Thus, it seems likely that EMLL 7919 was either a direct or indirect *Vorlage* for the manuscript found in the collection of Conti Rossini. Interestingly, it is only in EMLL 7919 that the main text of the *Chronicle* precedes the Introduction and the Table of Contents. The manuscript from Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei lacks these portions of text and begins with the main text. This could also point to EMLL 7919 as a *Vorlage*, although other explanations are possible. Concerning the place of EMLL 7919 in the *stemma codicum*, the most

⁴¹ EMLL 7919, fol. 81rc; ANL Conti Rossini 27, p. 109.

⁴² EMLL 7919, fol. 81vb; ANL Conti Rossini 27, p. 110.

probable hypothesis is that this manuscript represents a separate branch of text transmission and is, therefore, highly valuable for the reconstruction of the text.

The discovery of this new manuscript containing the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* offers the opportunity to consider works that often appear alongside the *Chronicle*. A collation of the contents of the five Ethiopic manuscripts reveals two works were copied in three of these manuscripts.⁴³ The first work is the ክብረ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ (*Kabrä nägäst*, ‘Glory of kings’). This work appears in BL Or. 818, BnF Éth. 123, and ANL Conti Rossini 27. The second such work is the ዜና ፡ ስክንድስ ፡ ጠቢብ ፡ ለእንድርያኖስ ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ወትምህርታቲሁ ፡ ወጥበቡ ፡ ወተስፋሎታቲሁ ፡ (*Zena Säkändäs täbib lä’andaryanos nägus wätəmhərtatihu wätəbäbu wätäsə’əlotatihu*, ‘The story of Secundus, King Hadrian’s sage and his teachings and his wisdom and his questions’). This work is found in BL Or. 818, BnF Éth. 123, and EMMML 7919.⁴⁴ Although the sample size remains small, it does demonstrate that several works were copied alongside the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*.

The *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* provides a valuable glimpse into a time period for which we have limited sources. Its value as a historiographical document as well as its much later usage in Ethiopia are areas for further research. Moreover, when such an interesting work was so rarely copied, every witness holds the promise to shed new light. The recent discovery of the contents of EMMML 7919 provides the opportunity to re-examine and explore the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* with hopes of gaining new insights.

EMMML 7919: National Museum, central quarter [Mäkakkälāñña], Addis Abäba

Parchment, 290 × 260 mm, four Coptic chain stitches attached with bridle attachments to wooden boards covered in tooled leather, protection quire + 16 full quires, ii + 112 folia, three columns, 31 lines, Gəʿəz, early eighteenth century.

Quire descriptions: quires 1–2, 4–11, 13, and 15 balanced; quires 3, 12, and 14 adjusted balanced. The exact construction of the protection quire and quire 16 is unknown as the beginning and the end of the codex were not micro-filmed.

⁴³ The contents of BL Or. 818 and BnF Éth. 123 are identical (albeit in different orders). Excluding the matching contents of these two manuscripts, no work is found in just two manuscripts.

⁴⁴ For additional information about this work, see Heide 2014.

Major Works

1) Fols 1r–48v: Minor Prophets with commentary. For another manuscript example see Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. or. quart. 986. For an Ethiopic edition and English translation of the commentary on the Prophet Micah see García 1999. For an Ethiopic edition of the commentary on the Prophet Hosea see Fuhs 1971.

- a) Fols 1r–11v: Hosea;
- b) Fols 11v–19r: Amos;
- c) Fols 19r–23v: Micah;
- d) Fols 23v–25v: Joel;
- e) Fols 26r–26v: Obadiah;
- f) Fols 26v–27v: Jonah;
- g) Fols 27v–30r: Nahum;
- h) Fols 30r–33v: Habakkuk;
- i) Fols 33v–35v: Zephaniah;
- j) Fols 35v–36v: Haggai;
- k) Fols 36v–46r: Zechariah;
- l) Fols 46r–48v: Malachi.

2) Fols 49r–95r: *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*. For other manuscript examples see BL Or. 818, BnF Éth. 123, BnF d’Abbadie 31, ANL Conti Rossini 27. For an Ethiopic edition and French translation see Zotenberg 1883. For an English translation see Charles 1916.

Incipit:

በስመ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ መሓሪ ፡ ወመ<ስ>ተሣህል ። ይቤ ፡ አብ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ ጳጳስ ፡ ዘኒቅዮስ ፡ ዘእስተጋብኦ ፡ ለዛቲ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ አመፍቅሬ ፡ ድካም ፡ እስከ ፡ ታጠርዖ ፡ ለፍቅረ ፡ ኂሩት ፡ እስመ ፡ ፍቅረ ፡⁴⁵ ድካም ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ሕማም ፡ ወይእቲ ፡ ታልሕቅ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ሠናዖተ ፡ እለ ፡ ይጽሕቁ ፡ ኅቤሃ ፡ ኩሎሙ ፡ ቀናአያነ ፡ (sic) ወበእንተ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ሠናዖተ ፡ (sic) እንተ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ጥ

⁴⁵ The final consonant, ረ, has been added by a secondary hand to correct the spelling error.

**በብ ፡ ዘለዓለም ፡ እንተ ፡ አጋዜ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ወእግዚአ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ እስመ ፡ አስተዳጋ
ርዋ ፡ ለእለ ፡ ይመጽኡ ፡ እምድገሬሆሙ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይግበሩ ፡ ዘኃረዩ ።**

(In the name of God the merciful and <compassionate>. The holy father John bishop of Nikiu, who compiled this book, said, ‘Oh lover of hardship until you acquired the love of virtue. For the love of hardship is suffering and it causes to grow all the good things which all of the zealous ones covet. And because of all the good things which are the wisdom that is eternal which is the Almighty and Lord of All. For he preserved it for those who come after them so that they might do what they choose.’)

3) Fols 96r–98v: table of the chapters of the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*.

Incipit:

**በስመ ፡ አብ ፡ ወወልድ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ፩አምላክ ፡ መቅድመ ፡ መጽሐ
ፍ ፡ ሳቲ ፡ በኅልቁ ፡ ክፍላቲጎ ፡ ዘውእቶን ፡ ፻፳ወ፪ ።**

(In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. The introduction to this book with an enumeration of its chapters which are 122.)

4) Fols 99r–109v: *The Story of Secundus, King Hadrian’s Sage and his Teachings and his Wisdom and his Questions*. For other manuscript examples see Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Petermann II Nachtrag 38 (= SzB Peter. II Nachtrag 38); BL Or. 818; London, British Library, Or. 827 (= BL Or. 827); BnF Éth. 123. For an Ethiopic edition see Bachmann 1887. For an Ethiopic edition and English translation see Sumner 1981. For further description of this work, see Heide 2014 and ‘Secundus’, *EAE*, IV (2010), 590b–591a (S. Weninger).

Incipit:

**በስመ ፡ አብ ፡ ወወልድ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ፩አምላክ ፡ ዜኖ ፡ ስክንድስ ፡ ጠ
ቢብ ፡ ለእንድርያኖስ ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ወትምህርታቲሁ ፡ ወጥበቡ ፡ ወተስእሎታቲ
ሁ ፡ በሰላመ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ አሜን ። ጸሎቱ ፡ ወበረከቱ ፡ የሃሉ ፡ ምስለ ፡
ፍቁሩ ፡ [erased text] ፡ ለዓለመ ፡ ዓለም ፡ አሜን ።**

(In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. The story of wise Secundus to King Hadrian and his teachings and his wisdom and his questions with the peace of God, Amen. May his

prayer and his blessing be with his beloved [erased text] forever and ever, Amen.)

5) Fols 110r–111v: *The Story of Sərkis of Armenia and the Story of Saint Tərtag, King of Armenia* (ዜና ፡ ስርኪስ ፡ ዘአርማንያ ። ወዜና ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ትርታግ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ አርማንያ ፣). For additional manuscripts see SzB Peter. II Nachtrag 38; BL Or. 827; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, d’Abbadie 152. For an Ethiopic edition see Bachmann 1888. For an English translation see Goodspeed 1906.

Incipit:

በስመ ፡ አብ ፡ ወወልድ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ሄአምላክ ፡ ንዌጥን ፡ በረድኤ ተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ወንጽሕፍ ፡ ዜና ፡ ስርኪስ ፡ ዘአርማንያ ። ወዜና ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ትርታግ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ አርማንያ ፡ ወዜና ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ሮም ፡ ወምክንያተ ፡ ተፈልጦቶሙ ፡ ለአርማን ፡ እምሮም ፡ እምሃይማ<ኖ>ቶሙ ፡ በሰላመ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ አብ ፡ አሜን ።

(In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Let us begin with the assistance of God and let us write the story of Sərkis of Armenia; and the story of Saint Tərtag, king of Armenia; and the story of the king of Rome and the cause of Armenia’s division from Rome (and) from their <faith>, with the peace of God the Father, Amen.)

Varia

1) Fol. 111v: *History of the Leaders of Israel*. This text is written in a different hand from that which wrote the main works.

Incipit:

እም ፡ እስራኤል ፡ ወእም ፡ አሜሃ ፡ መሳፍንት ፡ እለ ፡ ከካኑ ፡ ቀዳሚ ፡ መስፍን ፡ ሙሴ ፡ ወልደ ፡ እልንበረም ፡⁴⁶ ዘከኑኖሙ ፡ ለእስራኤል ፡ ሿዓመተ ፡ በገዳም ።

(From Israel and from the time of the rulers, those who ruled. The first ruler was Moses son of Amram who ruled Israel for 40 years in the desert.)

⁴⁶ The second character is marked for erasure with a line above and below it.

Notes

- 1) Decorative designs: lines of full stops and alternating red and black dots fols 48v, 71v, 95r, 98v, 109v, and 111v.
- 2) Numbered quires: quires 1–13 and quire 15 (numbered as 1).
- 3) Scribal intervention is found on nearly every folium of the manuscript. Techniques include words of text written interlinearly (e.g. fols 1rv, 2rv, and 3rv); text written in the upper margin with the symbols (⊥ and ⊤) marking the location where the text is to be inserted (e.g. fols 3v, 6r, 9v, 11v, 13r, and 22r); markings signal text for erasure (fol. 111v); text has been removed (e.g. fols 1r, 3v, 4r–v, and 5r–v).
- 4) The photographs of this manuscript end with fol. 112r. The quire construction suggests that two additional folia or folium stubs were not photographed at the end of this codex. Also, the protection quire was not microfilmed.
- 5) Fols 83v, 95v, and 112r: blank.
- 6) Fols 88v–89r and fols 100v–101r are microfilmed twice.
- 7) Fol. 48v: the Minor Prophets with commentary end with a note:

ተፈጸመ ፡ ፍካሬ ፡ ትንቢት ፡ ዘ፲ወጀነቢያት ፡ በረከቶሙ ፡ ቅድስት ፡ ትኩን ፡ ምስለ ፡ ገብሮሙ ፡ [erased text] ። ። ለዓለሙ ፡ ዓለም ፡ አሜን ፡ ወአሜን ፡ ለይኩን ፡ ለይኩን ።

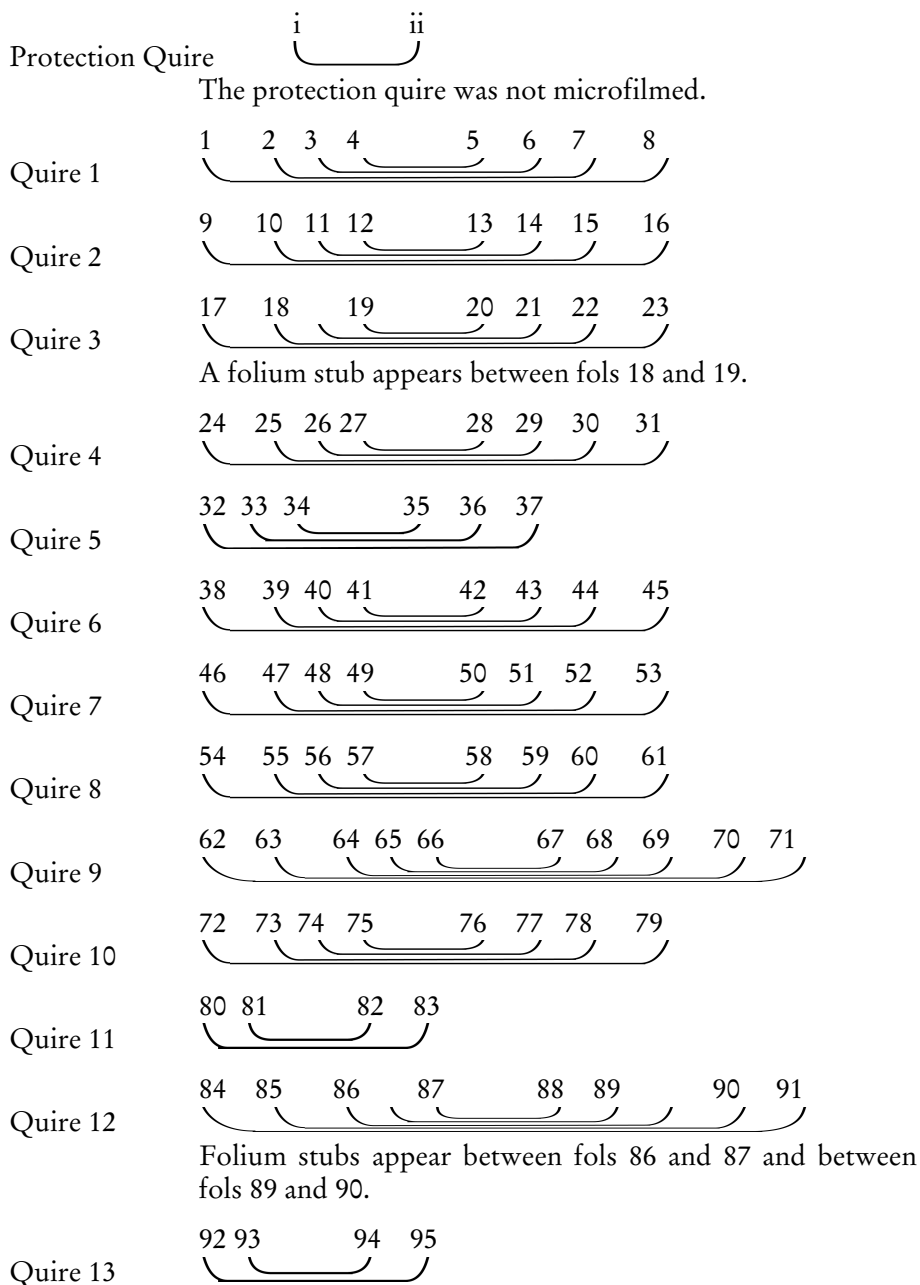
(The commentary of the prophecy of the 12 Prophets was finished. May their holy blessing be with their servant [erased text] forever and ever. Amen and Amen. Let it be, let it be.)

- 8) Fols 70r, 74r, 79r, 80r, 89r, 94r, and 97v: a note written in Greek in the upper margin.
- 9) Fol. 111v: *The Story of Sərkis of Armenia and the Story of Saint Tərtag, king of Armenia* ends with a note:

ተፈጸመ ፡ ዜና ፡ አርማን ፡ ወሮም ፡ ወዜና ፡ ትርታግ ፡ ወሰርኪስ ፡ በስላሙ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ አሜን ።

(The story of Armenia and Rome and the story of Tərtag and Sərkis was finished by the peace of God, Amen.)

Quire Map



A New Witness to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*

- Quire 14 96 97 98
 A folium stub appears between fols 96 and 97.
- Quire 15 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106
 Folium stubs appear between fols 100 and 101 and between fols 103 and 104.
- Quire 16 107 108 109 110 111 112
 The images of this manuscript end with fol. 112r. The construction of the end of this quire is thus uncertain.

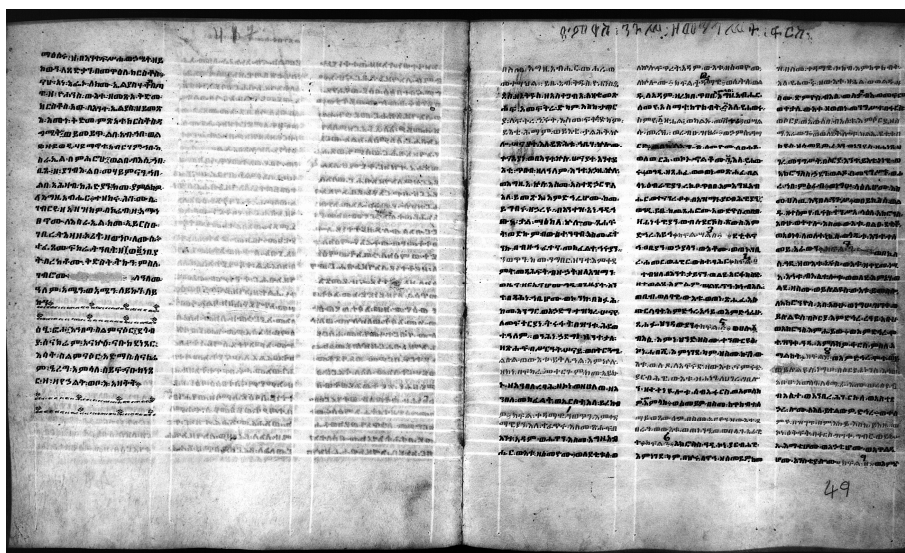


Fig. 1 MS EMLL 7919, fols 48v–49r. Photo courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John’s University, Minnesota.

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Summary

This article introduces a new witness to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* (EMML 7919). It analyses the text of this witness alongside the four previously known Ethiopic manuscripts of this work. The article considers the current state of research on the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*, including an examination of the textual witnesses, the language of the original composition, and the biographical and historical information of the chronicler. The textual analysis of EMML 7919 demonstrates a strong relation with the text attested in ANL Conti Rossini 27, which suggests that EMML 7919 is highly valuable for the reconstruction of the Ethiopic version of the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*. Finally, there is a catalogue entry for EMML 7919, which details the textual and codicological features of the manuscript.