



The Ethiopic Manuscripts and Textual Criticism: The Case of Enzira Sebhat

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relevance of textual criticism in the reconstruction of Ethiopic manuscripts. Textual criticism also called the stemmatic method or Lachmann's method is convenient to build the *stemma codicum* that help to show the genealogical line of the surviving Mss based on their shared errors. In fact, most of the Mss at hand are copies of copies which became far several phases to the original one. Thus, the method would help to reconstruct the lost (the original) ms as close as possible to its original form. For this task, the ancient hymnological text called the *Enzira Sebhat* (E.S) is employed. E.S is a beautiful and imaginative poetic presentation and was composed based on the whole series of Ge'ez alphabets including labiovelars graphemes, and is a unique type of Ethiopian patristic work from the 14th cent. For the Editorial task, six different versions of the E.S which are collected from different sources are used. Among the whole witnesses of the E.S, several kinds of errors (shared innovations), archetype and sub-archetype errors are found that help to identify the family of the Mss. The evaluation of the shared errors helps to understand their genetic relationship, and therefore a stemma was established which is branched into two sub archetypes, a bipartite one. Finally, the study remarked that the Lachmann's reconstruction method would save editors to be free from a subjective emendation of the extant manuscripts.

Key words: manuscript, errors, emendation, textual criticism, stemma, archetype.

INTRODUCTION

The medieval period was the famous time in which the art of writing was highly developed and expanded so as it enriched Ethiopia in written heritages. In the period different kinds of manuscripts were written in Ge'ez, so that Ge'ez became a unique language for Ethiopian studies amongst the Ethiopian languages (Mersha, 2002). The writings include hagiographies, homiletic texts, chronicles, liturgical and hymnological texts, philosophical and ethical writings, theological and ecclesiastical books, medicinal and magical texts (FERENCE 1985:256). These manuscripts reached us in due course predominantly from the hands of the clergies, or priests and monks of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) and those who were interested in literary matters, the kings and queens, for examples (Harden, 1926:19-20).

As writing got great attention in the medieval period, several writers and translators flourished. For example, one of the known scribes with his nickname was "*Metergum*, the translator", Abune Selama (ca. 1348 - 1388), had translated and authored different kinds of religious texts. His work was included in the church Canonical books, the Synods and *Didisqelya*, of which were said to be translated by him or by his order to Ge'ez from Coptic and Arabic manuscripts (Bartinski, & Yo'ana, 2006 E.C: 121).

In additions to translations, many local writers also emerged throughout medieval times. Examples of Ethiopian writers of the times: Retu'a Haymanot (emerging around 1375), Abba Giyorgis zeGascha, Emperor Zera Ya'eqob (1434 - 1468), Emperor Libne Dingel (born, ca. 1496/97), Arke Sillus (Osvaldo, EAE, 1, 341), Echege Enbaqom (who was raised in 1561) and Abba Bahrey (Getatchew, 1993: 47 – 56; 2005: 736 – 741). Some Ethiopian Scholars considered Abba Giyorgis zeGascha (died ca. 1426 A.D) as a prolific writer for his prodigy amongst many Ethiopian scribes (Getatchew, 1981: p.236). Several kinds of manuscripts like *Metshafe Mister*, the *Horologium* or *Se'atat*, *Arganone Wuddase* or

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Metshafe Arganon although James Bruce claimed that Metsafe Arganon (Arganon Dengl) was ascribed by a certain Armenian called George in 1440. (James, 1790: 497), Wuddase Mesqel, Te'ammeho Qeddusan, Hohite Berhan, Me'aza Qeddase, and others manuscripts were ascribed to Abba Giyorgis zeGascha (EOTC, 2000 E.C: 215). The contribution of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha, and many others scholars with the support of Emperors who were interested in literary matters, had a great role in making the period to be called the Golden Age of Ethiopic Literature (Harden, 1926; Solomon, 2001, (Merahi, 1999:12).

With empirical evidences, different kinds of writing styles and forms of compositions were exposed in the Ethiopic writing tradition. Many of the manuscripts were written in the narrative or paragraph form which include, chronicles, homilistics, hagiographies, Senkesar, Haymanote Abew, and etc. There are also texts, but they are few in numbers, which are written in the form of short sentences based on the model of Psalms of David, such as Mezmur ze Kerstos, which was one of the fascinating works of Abba Bahrey (Getatchew, 1997 and Sergiw and etal, 2009 E.C) . In addition to this, there are miscellaneous texts which were composed in poetic forms including, Arke, Melk and Negs.

The experience of composing poetic texts went back to the 5th c., with the works of St. Yared. He performed poetic texts in several parts his works, *Deggwa*, *Zimmare* and *Mewasit*. Thus, we can be sure that in the Ethiopic writing tradition, it is not difficult to find texts which are composed in poetic forms. One of the wonderful works of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha, Se'atat, most of its parts are composed in poetic form. A unique patristic work, *Enzira Sebhat* ('E.S) which is the focus of this study, is one of the remarkable hymnological works of the medieval period of Ethiopia. The book was composed according to the order of Ethiopic alphabets including the labialized graphemes. E.S, with its wholly poetic presentation, its beautiful construction, biblical instructiveness, theological richness, and literary expressiveness make the book an exceptional one. In its prologue, the text says:

**በሰሙ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ አብ፡ ለሥንኪ፡ ዘአፍቀር፡
ወበሰሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወልድ፡ ዘረሰየኪ፡
ማኅደር፡ ወበሰሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ መንፈስ፡
ቅዱስ፡ ዘወጥሐ፡ ዲቤኪ፡ ብርሃን፡ ስብሐቲሁ፡
ወምዕዛር፡ እዌጥን፡ ዘንተ፡ ማሕላተ፡ ዘይሰመይ ፡
እንዚራ፡ ስብሐት፡ ወቀርን፡ ዘምሮ፡ እንዘ፡ እዘብጥ
፡ለዕበይኪ፡ ለመሰንቆ፡ አልባብ፡ አውታሮ፡ ጾታ ፡**

**ፊደላት፡በአኅብሮ፡ወሱባዔ፡ዮቲሆሙ፡በአስተናብሮ፡
ከሙ፡እንግር፡ ጥንቁቅ፡ ለስብሐተ፡ ስምኪ፡ ክብሮ።**
In the name of God the Father Who loved your beauty. And in the name of God the Son, Who made you His tabernacle, And in the name of God the Holy Spirit, Who crowned upon you the light of His glory and its splendor, May I begin this song, which shall be called the Enzira Sebhat and the Qerne Zemmero, While I beat the string of the psaltery of hearts for your greatness, By bringing together the series of alphabets, And arranging them into their sevenths, To speak out cautiously the praise for the honor of yourname (The Prologue of 'E.S).

Considering the time of composition of the E.S, it was suggested to be written in the beginning of the medieval period (Getatchew, 2012). The manuscripts which have been written in the medieval period were lost during the fifteen years of wars and destruction of Imam Ahmed Bin Ebrahim Al-Gazi called the *Gragh* (the left-handed) in the 16th c. To restore the lost mss, a great deal of copying activity was done since the beginning of the 17th c., and thus numerous copies were reproduced from a certain ancestor ms. However, the copying activity on the one hand benefited to have the collection of the Mss., on the other hand, the occurrence of variant readings and errors on the copied texts became the case to the emending activity and so that it caused to the creation of a new science or art, which is called textual criticism.

Textual criticism is a Philological inquiry (Bausi 2006, 2008), which is also the highest level of text editing (West, 1973). Most of the literature we have today was written in different eras and has been transmitted from one generation to the next, and hence errors are inevitably occurred during the coping process. From this hypothesis, the notion of textual criticism is emerged out. Thus, the collections of surviving witnesses are the key issues to the realization of textual criticism. In this context, (Kelemen, 2009:14) says that this (textual criticism) is "...one of the field's basic techniques for gathering data". As also stated by Lusini (2017:75), philological inquiry refers to "the analysis aimed at detecting and emending the orthographic and grammatical mistakes every codex unavoidably transmits, traces back to the first times of the systematic study of the ancient Ethiopian literature". Therefore, errors are the base for textual criticism. Errors are also called shared innovation (Marrassini, 2008:7). On errors Timpanaro (2005:119) remarks that "shared innovations" as "the fact that innovations are shared by certain manuscripts of the same family,

demonstrates that these are connected by a particularly close relationship, that they belong to a sub group.' Therefore, the error, is very crucial in making the genealogical line of the mss based on the relationship between the existing mss. This is because, common errors are very useful for reconstructing a family tree (Dearing 1974; Saleman 2000) which is called a *stemma codicum* - the definition of their relationship.

To this end, employing the textual criticism is based on the Neo-Lachmannian method is needed to reconstruct the text as close as possible to the original form. Considering this argument, this paper is mainly worked to show how errors are emended and displayed the position of the manuscript family in the stemma codicum.

'Enzira Sebhāt' - Etymology

The 'Enzira Sebhāt is composed from two *Ge'ez* terms, 'Enzira' and 'Sebhāt'. Etymologically, the word 'Enzira' is from the *Ge'ez* verb 'Anzere', which means 'nefa', 'meta', 'Asechohe', meaning, 'trump', 'beat', and 'hit', respectively (Kidane Wold, 1948 E.C). And 'Sebhāt' comes from the word 'Sebbeha' which means 'he praised' or in Amharic 'amesegene'. Thus, E.S stands for a praise presents incorporated with the instrument 'harp', so it is called 'Enzira Sebhāt' or 'The Harp Praise'.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, the Neo-Lachmannian reconstruction method was employed to carry out the critical edition on the available texts of the E.S. According to reconstructivist philology, the reconstruction of texts in its 'Original' form means *a form as close as possible to the 'original one'* (West, 1973).

Data Sources and Collation

The sources of the research were the ancient Ethiopian Monasteries and Churches such as, *Abba Giyorgis zeGascha*, the Church of Fenterge Tsiyon Maryam, which is found in Eastern Gojjam, Enarj Enawga woreda and a private collection. In addition, the three printed books of the E.S were considered for the edition. These were prepared by Amanuel (2006 E.C), Tesfa Mika'el (2007 E.C), and Amde Werq (2007 E.C).

Therefore, six mss were served as representative and the base for family texts. A systematical Specification of Letters (*Sigla*) are selected for the identification of each ms, using the following capital letters (G, F, Z, A, C, and T) to represent each of the

six manuscripts. The selection was simply done according to a mnemonic scheme as 'G' as in Abba Giyorgis zeGascha; 'F' as in Fenterge Tsiyon; 'Z' Private collection of Abba Gebre Medih; 'A' is the book presented by Amanu'el (2006 A.M); 'T' a book presented by Tesfa Mika'el (2007 A.M); and 'C' a book presented by 'Amde Werq (2007 A.M).

The collation: a systematic comparison between all the witnesses was carried out with the aim of treating all the disagreements (variants) among the collected manuscripts. The main objective of making the collation, in the process of making the edition is to record the variance and then to catch up the result of emendation, i.e, the process of elimination of the errors in the editorial process, which could facilitate the construction of the stemma codicum (Lusini, 2017:76). For the collation, the editor chose the manuscript obtained from the monastery of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha (Ms G) as his main reference. This is because, manuscript (ms. G), its location, the monastery Gascha is one of the known monasteries in Ethiopia which preserved its manuscripts safely and is also easily accessible. Moreover, this manuscript was considered to be appropriate as a reference for the collation based on its plausible external and internal conditions which are its binding and folios (leaves) that look like they were safely preserved. Besides, the text is also found as complete in its content, legible and clear for reading and of an early date.

Description of the Manuscripts

Ms. 'F': it was found at the Church of Fenterge Tsiyon, near to the Church of Dima Giyorgis, Eastern Gojjam. The ms. is made up of parchment and covered with wood and is sewn with cotton made thread and velum made strips. It measures 19x28 cm. It has twelve quires and 110 folios. It is written in the two columns with black and red ink, and written in *Ge'ez* only. The first three folios are written in 16 lines, and ff, 17 – ff. 110 are written in 17 lines. Though the ms was undated, based on the paleographical features of the readings, it is possible to assume that the ms was 17th century treasure. The manuscript is seen in a good condition.

Ms. 'G': it was obtained from the monastery of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha, South Wollo Zone, Kelela District. It measures 21x30 cm. and is made of parchment (velum), written in black and red inks, and inscribed in *Ge'ez* only. It is bound in wooden material which is covered with Suti (kind of cloth). Written in two columns of 18 lines each, the codex has 13 quires and 98 folios, out of which the first two

folios were left blank. The calligraphy is very good and neat. Based on the paleographical description of Uligh (2015), the manuscript can be dated to the 18th century. The general condition of the ms is very good.

Ms. Z: it was collected from a private collections. The ms. was photocopied in A-4 Size form and so I am uncertain of the size of the actual ms. Based on the paleography it was written in the 18th c. in two. Columns. It has 102 folios and has 16 lines.

Ms. A: is a printed ms. by Amanu'el (2006 E.C), in Addis Ababa. The source ms. the edition was based is not mentioned. It is presented in one column and has 144 folios. The number of lines is irregular, thus minimum 12, and maximum 24 lines are found.

Ms. C: Ms. C is presented in a book form which comprise two major texts, the Hohete Berhan and the E.S. It was published by Miskaye Hizunan Medhanealem Temro mastemar Senbet Temehert Bet and prepared by Memhr Amde Work Estifanos of Te'aka Negest Ba'ata Lemaryam Gedam, in 2007 E.C., in Addis Ababa. It is presented in one column, but in one side it is Ge'ez and its opposite is Amharic (i.e. the *recto* (i.e. the front side page) is Ge'ez and the *verso* (i.e. the back side page) is Amharic). The Ms. contains three major sections and all of them begin with pp. no. 1. The Introduction pp. 1 – 43, is followed by the Hohete Berhan pp. 1 – 88, and finally also followed by the Enzira Sebhat pp. 1 – 294. The number of lines is irregular that contains a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 30 lines. Although it is not mentioned the source of the ms in the book, it was possible to check lately the ms was obtained from the Paris library.

Ms. 'T': it was printed by Mahebere Qiddusan and translated to Amharic by Memhr Tesfa Mikael Taddese in 2007 E.C in Addis Ababa. It is presented in two columns, and in the one column it is Ge'ez and the second column it is Amharic. The book contains 235 pages. The number of lines are irregular and it is found that a minimum of 17 and maximum of 23 lines. The source of the ms. is not mentioned.

The Stemma Codicum (Textual Criticism)

In this study, an attempt has been made to reconstruct the original text of the E.S, based on the Neo-Lachmannian method. As an ancient ms, the E.S is not a viable witness to the original work of its author. Because almost all of the original texts have long disappeared and the manuscripts at hand are copies, and copies of copies which became far several phases

to the original one (Michael, 1987: 287; Michael, 2011: 27-28; Lusini, 2017:78). When any manuscript was copied, certain errors indisputably occur, so it needs to be corrected (Maas, 1927:54; West, 1973: 12). Besides, the copyists also affect the ancestor reading as they made deliberate additions and omissions as well as changes. This kind of experience is not only found in the Ethiopian scribal tradition, but it is also obvious in ancient Indian writings (Jagannatha, 2007: 63). In respect to Ethiopic texts in general, Lusini also states 'the Ethiopian copyists applied a rather conservative attitude toward their models, most often renouncing to change or to correct the received text' (Lusini, 2017:78). Thus, this proposition invites the critical edition which a hypothetical reconstruction of the lost texts using the evidences (mss.) that are survived.

The editorial task begins with the search of shared errors (shared innovations) in the entire reading of the extant evidences. The shared errors are useful to identify the path of the genealogical lines of the witnesses and establish the base for the stemmatic method. This method was proposed by the reconstructivist Karl Lachmann. The method is called by the derivation of his name, Lachmannian and its revised version, Neo-Lachmannian Methods (Pasquali, 1952) which is acknowledged as the modern science of Textual Criticism and many scholars favor for text edition (Trovato, 2014).

Although The Neo-Lachmannian Method was considered as the modern approach and it is in use by many current scholars, a lot of antagonisms have been raised upon it. The famous scholar who opposed to the Lachmann's Method was the contemporary Philologist, Joseph Bedier (1864 - 1938). He claimed every edited text to be a temporary product that could be revisited if any new version of the text were to be discovered. He also advocated the use of a single text, with minor emendations, which is a historically tangible exemplar among surviving witnesses (Altschul, 2006). However, Lusini strongly oppose Bedier's suggestions as it is methodologically unmotivated (Lusini, 2017:83). There are also other philologists (Dearing, 1974; Saleman, 2000) who strongly disagree with the application of the Lachmannian Method which advocate the common error of distinguishing the relationship between manuscripts. They tend to be considered all factors (i.e. clusters of minor variants) as useful for reconstructing a family tree.

With the controversial application of the Lachmann's Method in general, some modern scholars used the

revised version, the Neo-Lachmannian Method (Trovato, 2014) as just like any other scientific work, it is opened to the possibility of being re-edited, if a new ms is extracted later based on the principles of the Neo-Lachmannian method. Therefore, the Neo-Lachmannian method is suggested as appropriate for editing the E.S as it can pursue its genealogical line based on the mss shared innovations. Thus, the conjunctive errors were attested using the six evidences of the E.S which are divided into two categories: archetype and sub-archetypes.

The witnesses which are known as sub-sub families or inferior families are possibly existed texts. To this end, the archetype is marked by Greek capital letter – OMEGA [Ω], and the sub-archetype is indicated by the small Greek letters α and β.

Archetype Errors

Normally, the archetype or sub-archetype is the lost reading (Timpanaro 2005:163.). In the philological investigation the archetype is considered a reasonably hypothetical witnesses when its existence can be proved by considering the expected errors of the witnesses. Archetypal errors need great effort to find out as at least one or more significant shared errors, conjunctive errors, from the witnesses need to be identified which will then help to show the direction one has to pursue to reach as close as possible a reconstruction to that of the original text.

In the case of the E.S, the Archetypes are grouped into two named, [α] and [β]. The [α] contains the family (FGZ) and [β] comprises [γ] & [T]. The sub archetype [γ] holds (AC). In this section, the archetypes of the E.S are discussed as follows:

1. The Family α (FGZ)

We find a shared error in the readings of Mss (FGZ) as “ተሰመዶኪ : ደብተራ : ዘተክለ : ጸዳለ።” in this verse, the word ‘ዘተክለ’ is meaningless and we cannot secure full understanding of the verse. Thus, it can be reconstructed as (ACT) saying ተሰመዶኪ : ደብተራ : ዘተክለለት : ጸዳለ። (You are named the Temple which was surrounded with splendor). To this end, we can consider that the Mss. (FGZ) are the same family.

2. The Family α (FGZ)

In the family α (FGZ) the reading says “ሰብዐ : ሰዕለትዮ : እሴብሐኪ : እንዘ : ጎሩተኪ : እሰብክ፤”. In this verse the word ‘ሰዕለትዮ’ (my beseech) is inappropriate to

the context of the reading, so that the meaning is distorted. To this end, this verse is reconstructed as it is preserved in the [β] family that says, ሰብዐ : ሰዕለትዮ : እሴብሐኪ : እንዘ : ጎሩተኪ : እሰብክ፤ (I praise you seven times a day while I preach your mercy).

3. The Family α (FGZ)

The reading in (FGZ) keeps “አድገንኒ : ዘልፈ : እምልሳነ : ብእሲ : ጽልው፤ (Save me always from the tongue of the attentive man)”. In this verse the word ‘ጽልው’ (the attentive man)’ is not a proper word, for it is not sensible to the reading. The error might have occurred due to the assimilation of the character /ሐ/ in the word ‘ጽልሐው’. Therefore, the text is proposed for reconstruction as አድገንኒ : ዘልፈ : እምልሳነ : ብእሲ : ጽልሐው፤ (save me always from the tongue of the deceitful men). Besides; the word ጽልሐው, (deceitful) is also collocated with the word ልሳን (tongue) based on the context of the verse. Thus, we can consider that the Mss. (FGZ) are the same family.

4. The Family β (ACT)

Based on the reading, “ወክፍልኒ : ጎዲረ : በብሔር : ዘአልቦቱ : አሠረ : ጸማ።” witnesses [ACT], shared the error አሠረ : ጸማ። which cannot give sense to the reading. But the family α [FGZ] says ወክፍልኒ : ጎዲረ : በብሔር : ዘአልቦቱ : ሐሣር : ወጸማ። (And grant me to live in the province where there is no suffering and exhaustion) which should be accepted based on its meaning, and thus the original text is similarly reconstructed.

5. The Family β (ACT)

The family of β (ACT) shared the common error in the verse “ራግናተ : አሕማር : አንቲ : ወሐብለ : ሚላት : ዘእንበስብሶ” Unlike this text, we read in the family [α] as ራግናተ : አሕማር : አንቲ : ወሐብለ : ሚላት : ዘቢሲሶ. When we compare the reading of the two families, the copiers in the family [β] committed a common error because of the word ‘ዘእንበስብሶ’. This might have been occurred in the copying process when the copyists rejected what seemed to them an unusual word or expression (i.e ዘቢሲሶ) and replaced it by another word that sounds similar

(**ዘአንበሰብሰ**). This kind of mechanical error is called trivialization. However; the word **ዘአንበሰብሰ**, (*move quickly*) affected the context of the word. Thus, this reading is reconstructed according to the way it is preserved in the family [α] **ራግናተ : አሕማር : አንቲ : ወአሕባለ : ሜላት : ዘቢሲሶ** (*You are the cordage of ships, and rope of silk of fine linen*).

6. The Family β (ACT)

The reading in family β (ACT) presents, “**ዘወጽአ : ኀቢኪ : ሰቡሐ : እስራኤል : ከመ : ወሬዛ : ሆላ : እንዘ : ይቀንጽ።**” in this verse the meaning lacks inaccuracy because of the word ‘**ዘወጽአ**, *who vanquished*’ which does not associate with the word ‘**ኀቢኪ : to you**’. Thus we can justify that the family β (ACT) shared common errors. Therefore, to reconstruct the text we can propose as **ዘመጽአ : ኀቢኪ : ሰቡሐ : እስራኤል : ከመ : ወሬዛ : ሆላ : እንዘ : ይቀንጽ።** (*The blessed Israel came to you like the young ibex while he is jumping over*) as it is preserved in family α (FGZ). Indeed, the word ‘**ዘመጽአ : who came to you**’ associates with the word ‘**ኀቢኪ : to you**’ that makes the variants more sensible and thus the reconstruction secures accuracy.

Sub-Archetype [β] = [γ] and [T] and [γ] = [AC]

The sub-archetype is the combination of [γ] and [T]. To illustrate the existence of this sub-archetype, we can present the following two examples from the text of the ’፲.S.

- Here, we see that family [β] is made up of two sub-sub families. These are [γ] which consists of the families (AC) and (T). To ascertain this, we can present the following evidence. The reading in γ (AC) is “**ወዕድዋነ : ነፍስየ : አመ : አጽንዑ : ምክረ : ወቄጸሩ።** *and the enemies of my Soul when they solidified a plan and conspired*” the verse lacks completeness which entails ‘*for what?*’ Thus (AC) shares common features (i.e. errors). And the witness (T) says, “**ወዕድዋነ : ነፍስየ : ለገቢረ : ማኅሌት : አመ : አጽንዑ : ምክረ : ወቄጸሩ።**” here also because of the word ‘**ማኅሌት :**’ on its own makes the verse decontextualized. Therefore, it should be reconstructed according to the family [α], **ወዕድዋነ :**

ነፍስየ : ለገቢረ : ማዕሌት : ሳዕሌየ : አመ : አጽንዑ : ምክረ : ወቄጸሩ። (*And the enemies of my Soul at the time they solidified a plan and conspired to carry out a revolt against me.*).

- In contrast to the reconstructed reading as (FGZ) which says “**ሶበ : ይበወእ : መቅደሰ : ዘይትሬሰየ : በከመ : ሕጉ።** *When he entered to the temple for he should be prepared based on the law*”, the reading in AC says **ሶበ : ይበወእ : መቅደሰ : ዘይትሬሰየኪ : በከመ : ሕጉ።** and T keeps... **ዘይሬሰየኪ :** ... in both texts we can recognize because of the words **ዘይትሬሰየኪ** in (AC) and **ዘይሬሰየኪ :** in (T) affect the meaning of the text. Therefore, we can consider that the Mss. (AC) are the same family.

Cross Contamination between [T α]

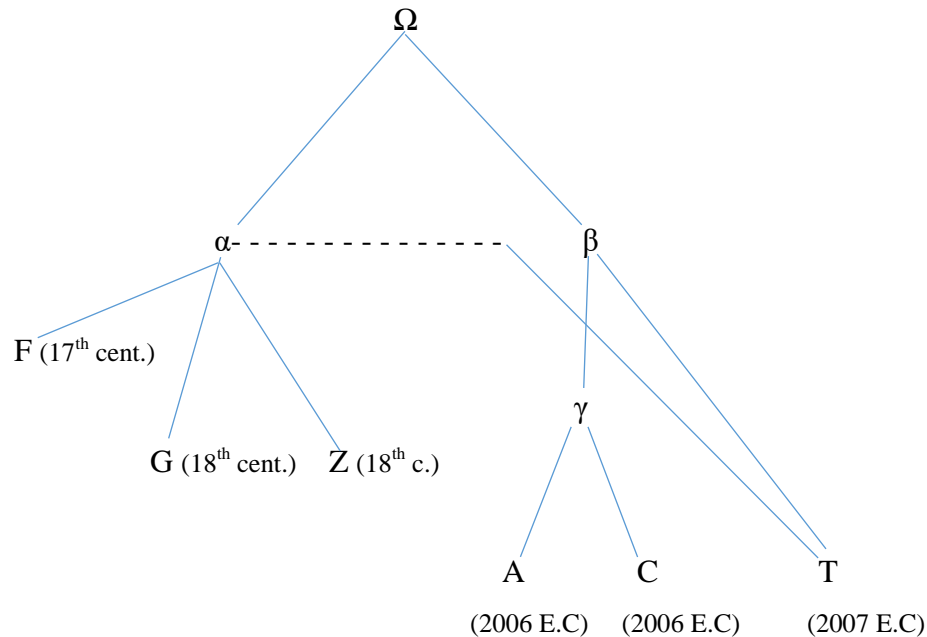
Cross contamination, in this case, refers to the attraction of errors across the family of the extant manuscripts. In the following cases we can consider the cross contamination between Ms. (T) and the family [α] in readings of the E.S. Thus, we can represent their cross attraction in broken lines as [T...A].

- Against to the original text (AC), which says **ዘይጭድስዋ : አናብስተ : ወርቅ : ካዕበተ : ስሱ።** *Whom the Golden Lions which are more than sixty times extol her*, both T and α say ‘**ዘይሜግብዋ : ,feed her**’ instead of ‘**ዘይጭድስዋ : extol her**’.
- The reconstructed text (AC) say ‘**ሕይወትየ : ለመዊት : ሶበ : ተሰልጠ : ወኀልቀ።** *When my life was accomplished and ended to die*’ where as both (T) and [α] preserves the mistaken reading as **ዓለመ : መዊት : ሶበ : ተሰልጠ : ወኀልቀ።**
- The original text says ‘**ወሀገር : ጽንዕት : ዘኢይክህሉ : አንሕሎታ : በመፍጽሕ : ወበማገኘ።** *And the enduring City which anyone are unable to make collapse her with battering ram and axe.*’ whereas [α] and (T)

preserve wrongly ... አንሐሎታ
: መፍጽሐ : ወማኅኒ።

Therefore, based on these readings we can recognize that there are cross contamination between *Ms.* (T) and the family [α]. In general, based on the texts' errors (shared

$$\Omega (\alpha [FGZ] + \beta [\gamma \{A + C\} + T])$$



A Hypothesis of the Stemma Codicum of the E.S

Textual History of the E.S

According to Ethiopian history in general and Church history in particular, it is note worth that since early 14th c., the veneration of St. Mary was reached its highest level in opposition to the fundamentalist movement of the Stephanites. After the movement of Stephanites was reversed, Emperor Zera Yaqob (1434 - 68) decreed against this Stephanites. The King regarded the Virgin Mary more highly as was the influence of the teaching he received from his Master, Abba Giyorgis zeGascha (Amde Worq, 2007:12). Most of the writings of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha include praise and honor of St. Mary, as can be seen in the Arganone Wuddase, the H̄ohte Berhan, the Me'aza Qiddase, and the Se'atat, are the main examples of this attribution. All these Mss. were written in the 14th c. and their content and diction bares some similarity with the E.S indicated period of composition although they are different in stylistic approach.

According to the internal evidences within the E.S, we can identify the author expressing his feeling about what was happening in his time. Based on the history of war in Ethiopia, during the years 1331 –

1445, there was a continuous battle between the emperors and the Islamic Sultanates for their supremacy (Bartiniski and Yoana, 2014; Tekle Tsadiq Mekuriya, 1961). In addition, there was also the war to defeat the desire of the Arabs to invade Ethiopia (Bahru, 1998). Bearing in mind these periods, it is not hard to imagine the time could have been a cause for popular concern, predominantly for the civic society. Moreover, in the continuous wars of the years (1331 – 1445), as well as during the war and destruction of Ahmed Gagn in the 16th c., the Churches, the monasteries and the scholars were typically targeted groups for the massacre (Bartiniski and Yo ana, 2014). In the E.S, too, we read ample texts that can be considered a reflection of the feelings of the time. For example,

ኦ፡ጎሪት፡ ወለተ፡ ገሩያን፡ ሲለጥ፤ አድገንኒ ፡
እምፀርየ፡ ዘመፍቅዶሙ፡ እንኩጥ፤ ኢይምሥጡኒ፡
ለበግዕኪ፡ ከመ፡ አንበሳ፡ ወከመ፡ ወልጥ፤
ወኢይንግዑኒ፡ ለገብርኪ፡ ከመ፡ አንቁ፡ ወከመ ፡
ውልጥ። ለዓለመ፡ ዓለም፡ አሜን።

O Elect, daughter of elects, the anointed, Save me from my enemy whose favor is a fish, May I, your sheep, not be snatched as a lion and as a hyena do,

And not to hunt me, your servant, as a falcon and as a fox do. Forever and ever, Amen. (§ 181)

In the above stanzas we can see a metaphorical expression in which there were attackers who are represented by a lion and hyena whose nature is to snatch (to kill) the author who represented himself as a sheep. The author also symbolized himself as a servant who prayed not to be hunted by either falcon or fox which are the metaphors used for the killers in the time. Thus, in these verses we can understand the period when the E.S was written to be the 14th c. In addition, there are several references into the texts of the E.S describing the time how the author was concerned by the terrible condition and how he prayed continuously to be saved from the attack and killing of the warriors.

As is discussed above, the E.S was possibly written in the 14th c., because its internal evidences describe the happenings of the time and several famous Ethiopian writers were also raised at the time (Getatchew, 1981b: 236).

To this end, considering the E.S was written in the 14th c., and it was followed by the wars of Ahmed Gragn that lasted till the end of the 15th c. At the time, a lot of Mss. were burnt and destroyed. Thus, it is possible to assume that the Ms. of the E.S also of the time and was lost. After the end of the war a great effort was made in the Gonderian period to reproduce the lost Mss. For instance, amongst the collected witnesses for the edition, Ms. F which was found at the Church of Fenterge Tsiyon, Eastern Gojam, was assumed as the product of the 17th c. that was copied from an earlier version. The other copied manuscript, Ms. G found at the monastery of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha provides in its colophone as there is Ms.E.S at Fenterge Tsiyon. This interrelationship of the Mss. attests both the Mss. to be the same family. The Ms. which was found in a private collection, Ms. Z is also verified as being from the same family. The rest of the Mss ACT which are the printed versions were produced by different scholar and are also assumed to be from the same family though it was not possible to ascertain from which mss they were directly copied. In general, this tradition of the Ms. of the E.S attests the way we received the texts from its original compositions.

CONCLUSION

Ancient Ethiopic Mss were presented either in narrative, short sentences or poetic forms. This unique poetic text, the E.S can be categorized as a lyric type of poem. The whole content of the E.S,

however, is purposefully composed to glorify the Virgin Mary, and hence several issues are incorporated within its great literary beauty and imaginative construction. The E.S, as it is thought to be as one of the compositions of Abba Giyorgis zeGascha, vividly illustrates the progress of literary works in the 14th century. The whole composition of the E.S reflects the author's writing ability as he quoted from various sources to back up the messages embedded in the verses. In addition to the emphasis of the content in the whole presentation of the E.S, we can understand how much the writer purposefully focused his composition forth elucidation of wonder, to beautify the expressions, and to share knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The editor would like to remark that the Neo-Lachmannian Method of reconstruction method could be a guarantee for editors not to judge subjectively in the editorial process. However, the Method by nature is provisional, therefore, any editors should consider if they get more witnesses to involve extra edition, and thus anyone should not be hesitate to re-edit the edited text using more mss to present a better reconstructed text for the readers. Most of the mss are available at the churches and monasteries. Therefore, to create a safe condition for further philological and related investigation, the linkage between universities with Churches and monasteries as well as others religious institution should be enhanced.

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