

**Addendum to Catalogue of Ethiopian manuscripts preserved in the Wellcome Library
London.**

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Introduction

The library of the Wellcome Trust has a wide range of oriental manuscripts not only relating to the history of medicine but most areas of human endeavour, including a number of Ethiopian manuscripts. The late Stefan Strelcyn, who was Reader in Semitic Studies at Manchester University, compiled the catalogue of Ethiopian manuscripts in the Wellcome Library in 1972 which was published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol 35, pt.1 (1972)*. Other Ethiopian manuscripts that were acquired by the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine¹ since 1972 are described below. Their shelf numbers run from xviii to xxv following on from Strelcyn's shelf numbers. These manuscripts (except no xxv) are undated. Strelcyn indicated that scrolls are never dated (Strelcyn 1972). However, it is assumed that most of these scrolls and the other manuscripts belong to the 19th century. The scrolls nos xviii, xix, xx, were acquired by the Wellcome library through purchase; there is no information about the others (nos xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxiv and xxv); either they were presented or purchased. Additionally, none of them have any title, but the contents of Ethiopic magical scrolls nos, xviii, xix, xx relate to prayers.

The text of magical prayers presented in this paper are written by in two columns in black and the introductory trinitarian formula is written in red ink. Usually the name of the sick person who is inserted at the bottom of the scroll. An example of this is found scroll no. xix.

The scroll is composed of three pieces of vellum sewn together and designed to be equal in length to the height of the sick person, ("full-size" in Tigrinya *ma'ero qumat*) to protect the sick person against demons from head to foot or to prohibit the return of evil spirits (Mercier, 1979) The width of the scroll depends on the price agreed with a sick person.

Of the present collection no xxv is not a magical prayer nor a liturgical text but is an Imperial letter which was written by order of the Emperor Menilik II in 1890 [Ethiopian calendar], 1897 [Western calendar] for five British citizens resident in Ethiopia preparing to leave for Britain.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr David Appleyard for providing me with background knowledge of Ethiopian magical scrolls during my work and my thanks also extend to Dr Nigel Allan for allowing me to do this work.

XVIII

Undated, [nineteenth-century], vellum; 165 x10 cm; scroll composed of three pieces of vellum sewn together; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); written in a good hand writing and clear.

¹ Formerly the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. The Wellcome Institute was disbanded in 1999.

1.Text beginning with an invocation to the Holy Trinity to the Father of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

በስመኣብ ወወልድ፡ወመንፈስ ቅዱስ ኣምላኽ

2 Prayer for protection from various diseases e.g, *meč*⁴ **ሞች**, *wrädšeñ* **ወወረድሺኝ** unidentified disease, malaria *nedad*,⁵ **ንደድ** epilepsy *barya*⁶, **ባርያ** curses involving the drowner of devils . *mäst'emä aganent*⁷ **መስጠመ ኣጋንንት ወሰይጣናት**, and demons of the noon day *aganēnä qet' r***ወጋ**

3.Prayer for protection against demons and other magical prayers.

4.Prayer for protection against *Šotälay*⁸ **ሾተላይ** (name of the devil who makes women sterile)

5 Prayer against evil eye⁹ *aynät* **ኃይነት** spontaneous abortion and attacks suckling infants).

6.Prayer for medicine which cures men.

7.Invocation to Saint Susenyos.

Three coloured magical drawings in red, yellow and green pigments

The top illustration comprises an angel holding a sword against a demon.

The middle part of the scroll comprises a geometrical illustration of the four Evangelists The

last illustration comprises a talismanic magical drawing *sadur; asadur; danat;adura* and

roduso. **ሳደር፡ ኣሳደር፡ ኣደራ፡ ሮዳስ፡**

The five headings and the Trinitarian formulae are written in red ink with the remainder of the text in black ink.

XIX

Undated, [nineteenth-century], vellum; 165 x10 cm; scroll composed of three pieces of vellum sewn together; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text incomplete written in black ink.

1.Prayer for protection against diseases, e.g. heart disease *hemamä lebb* **ወሕጣመ ልብ ወኃይን** and another magical prayer.

2.Prayer of Saint Susenyos .against plague and diseases of children. .

3.Prayer for protection against plague, *däwē*, **ደዌ** and against many demons.

4.Prayer of Saint Susenyos . for protection against diseases, e.g.. epilepsy *barya* **ባርያ** *älēgēwon*, **ወሌጌዎን** etc

5.Prayer for protection against devils *aganent*. **ኣጋንንት**

Three magical drawings decorated with a frieze *haräg*

⁴ *Meč* a kind of violent disease with fever which kills in a short time. For details see Strelcyn p.49, 1972

⁵ *Nedad* is the Tigrinya word for fever. When people suffered from *nedad* they died on the third day; *nedad* is presumably a kind of malignant malaria. (*Falciparum*), Pankhurst, 1990. Strelcyn uses the word *nedad* for malaria .

⁶ *Hemamä barya* is the Tigrinya term for epilepsy. *Barya* literally means black-skinned people. People believe that *Barya* serve the demon or spirit which provoke epilepsy.. (Strelcyn p.44, 1972)

⁷ *Mäst'emä aganent* name of Satan

⁸ *Šotälay* is the name of a devil. There is a belief that *Šotälay* makes women sterile or miscarry through causing excessive flow of blood in a woman's womb as a result of cutting up the foetus with his sword . Further see Strelcyn p.52 , 1972.

⁹*Hemamä aynät* is simply "the eye" (Arabic *!ayn*). Verbal forms "to eye" or "to eye-strike" is the Tigrinya term for evil eye (Reminick p.77, 1976)

The top illustration comprises three rows of human faces.
The middle illustration comprises an angel with a sword in his hand.
The last illustration comprises a talismanic drawing for protection evil eye.

XX

Undated, [nineteenth-century], vellum; 199 x11.5 cm; scroll composed of three pieces of vellum sewn together: language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text incomplete written in black ink in a good hand writing and clear.

1. Text beginning with an invocation of the Holy Trinity to the Father of the Son, and of the

Holy Spirit በስመአብ ወወልድ፡ወመንፈስ ቅዱስ አምላኽ

2. Prayer for protection against the curse of drowning devils *māstemä aganen* በስመ...
ጸሎት፡ በእንተ፡ መስጥመ፡አጋንንት፡

3. Prayer against *barya*, epilepsy . and other diseases, e.g. colic *qerset*, joint pain *qertmat*. :
typhoid *fera*. ቁርጸት፡ ቁርጥማት፡ወግፃት፡ ወፌራ፡

2. Prayer for protection against the evil eye, *hemamä 'aynät* ሕማም ዓይነት

3. Prayer for protection against disease of *šotäläy*. Beginning ጸሎት፡ በእንተ፡ ሕማመ፡
ወሾተላይ፡ ጋኔን፡ሀ ናትአ (See no xviii above).

4. Prayer for undoing spells *mäftehē seray*.. Beinng በስመ፡...ጸሎት፡ በእንተ መፍትሔ፡
ሥራይ

5. Prayers for the protection of a woman who is named in the manuscript as *Amätä S'eyon*,
አድ ና እም ሕማመ፡ ለአመትከ፡ አመተጽዮን ፡አም ሕማመ፡

ሽቶላይ፡ለአመተከ፡አመተጽዮን to protect her from the evil eye. *aynät barya* ሕማም
ባርያ፡ , *hemamä buda*¹⁰ ሕማም ቡዳ, *Šotäla* ሾተላይ፡

6. Prayer for protection against epilepsy, *barya*.

Three magical pictures. Decorated with frieze *haräg*.

The illustration at the top comprises a talismanic magical drawing

The middle illustration also surrounded by four eyes,

The final illustration has a cross surrounded by four eyes.

All the above illustrations are designed for protection against the evil eye.

The female owner is named *Amätä S'eyon*

All headings and the Trinitarian formulae are written in red ink with the rest of the text in black ink.

Part of the text missing from the first piece of vellum

XXI

Undated, [nineteenth-century], double columns; vellum; 35x 30 cm conjugate folio;
language : *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text written in black and red ink but incomplete and unclear.

From the content the following may be deduced:

1. The text is extracted from the Acts of the Apostles, *Gebra-hawaryat*

2. It includes an account of St Paul's and St Barnabas' visit to Antioch.

¹⁰ *Hemamä buda* is the Amhara term for evil eye. According to Strelcyn, *buda* possesses the victim by drinking her blood and eating her flesh (Strelcyn p.45, 1972). To be *buda* is to have the evil eye. The term "evil eye" is also known as 'ayn or and sometimes kifü ayn'. (Reminick p. 87, 1976)

Five illustrations comprise the Holy Trinity, Angels. St George, St Paul with St Barnabas, the fifth unidentified.

XXII

Undated, [nineteenth-century], vellum; 18x 11cm; 16 folios; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text written in black and red ink.

Theological text relating to the Incarnation of Christ; quotations from Archbishop Athanasius of Alexandria and various Church Fathers: a liturgical text.

XXIII

Undated [nineteenth-century], vellum; 14x 9.cm; 37 folios; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text written in black and red ink; incomplete with the first and last folios missing.

Service book comprising 'Covenant of Dawn, '*Kidan Zänāgh*, blessing. It includes the name Abunä Sälam who was a Bishop during the 19th century in the reign of Emperor of Tewodros.

XXIV

Undated, [nineteenth century], vellum; 20.1x 17.cm; 74 folios ; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic); text written in black and red ink; some parts of the folios stained by water; bound in wooden boards with leather spine.

Extract from the Gospel of St John containing:

- 1.'For Monday' *Zä-sänuy* ስሉኑይ is written on the upper margin of fol. 3r.
- 2.Monday reading from St John's Gospel.
- 3.Invocation to Jesus.

The illustrations on fol. 74r have no connection with the content of the text. It is assumed that a *däbtära* (cleric diviner) drew them for his own amusement.

XXV

Dated 1890 [Ethiopian Calender] 1897 [Western calander], paper; 26.5.x 20.5 cm; 1 folio ; language: *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic) and Amharic; text written in black ink in a good hand writing and clear.

1.Text beginning with the motto of the Ethiopian monarchs, which is often attached to the emperor's name *Mao Anbesa Ze Imnegede Yehuda Dagmawi Menilik Sehumi-Igzeabhier Negusa Negesta ze Itiopia*. "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah Menilik the second Elect of God, Emperor of Ethiopia".

2.This is a letter written for use as a pass paper for five British citizens who were leaving for their home country (England) with their servants and goods. Briefly the contents of the letter ask that they should not be hindered and that they should be given hospitality and any help needed for their journey and be escorted without hindrance.

This letter was written at Addis Ababa, 3rd of 1890 [Ethiopia Calendar].

The paper has stamped on it the official seal of the Emperor Menilik II

The seal of his Majesty the Emperor Menilik II comprises a crowned lion and flag in the centre with the motto of the Ethiopian monarchs round the seal.

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