

Preface

My personal starting point for the study of Ethiopic manuscripts was the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. More specifically, it was the strand of Emmanuel Tov's work that culminated in his *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Brill, 2004). To the interests raised in Tov's work, I overlaid the sociological models and sensitivities evidenced in the work of Shemaryahu Talmon. This convinced me of the need for more robust (i.e., sociologically informed) models of scribal practice. This in turn led to a period of study of the works of medieval codicologists, particularly those involved in the so-called New Codicology. An absolute masterpiece in this regard is Michelle P. Brown's *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*. (The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture; London: British Library, 2003). From these works I have developed an intense interest in scribal practice and bible-making communities. This is, perhaps, the distinctive interest that I bring to this project to catalogue and study Ethiopic manuscripts.

Several times a week, *Kesis* Melaku Terefe and I work together by means of video conferencing (Skype). In recent months we have been completing the manuscripts content portion of the catalogue entries for volumes two, three and four in this series of catalogues of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project. Professor Getatchew played the central and detailed role in the cataloguing of volume one, both in reference to the codices and the magic scrolls. In volume two, Dr. Veronika Six is the primary scholar with reference to the magic scrolls and Professor Getatchew has reviewed with me all of the codices in volumes two and three, making initial determinations about content and final decisions about dating. But in the case of these more recent volumes it has been left to *Kesis* Melaku and me to work through the manuscripts and complete, in detail, the catalogue entries—all under the watchful supervision of Professor Getatchew. And at every point along the way, I and my students have been the ones to tend to the description of the scribal practices in evidence in the manuscripts. Initially Roger Rundell was central to this work; more recently it is Jeremy Brown and Erik Young.

The current volume, with its attention to details of scribal practice, is an expression of this central interest of my scholarship and of my approach to the Ethiopic manuscript tradition. My ongoing cataloguing with *Kesis*

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Melaku has informed so many details of my understanding along the way that he is justly listed as an author along with me.

Once again I wish to acknowledge the generosity of the owners who have made their manuscripts available to us for digitizing and research. For this volume these include (in chronological order): Paul Herron (of Oregon), Eliza Bennett (of Colorado), Blake and Claire Marwick (of Oregon), Mr. Whisnant of Louisiana), Shepherd and Sharon Earl (of Oregon), Trinity Western University (British Columbia, Canada), Lee Kirk (acting on behalf of the Tsunami bookshop in Oregon), Hazel Kahan (of New York), Luigi Focanti (of Utah), University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History (of Oregon), Mount Angel Seminary Library (of Oregon), Gerald Weiner (of Illinois), Theodore Bernhardt (of New Jersey), and Abilene Christian University (of Texas). The reader can consult the introduction to the catalogue volume for more information about the history of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project.

I want to express again what I have already expressed at some length elsewhere: the extent of my gratitude and learning from other scholars who have introduced me to this or that matter of Ethiopian Studies, These include Professor Getatchew Haile, Professor Richard Pankhurst, Ato Demeke Berhane, Dr. Veronika Six, Ato Fentahun Tiruneh and (more recently) Professor Lucas Van Rompay.

Steve Delamarter
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