WÄWÄHABO QOB’A WÄ’ASKEMA...:
REFLECTIONS ON AN EPISODE
FROM THE HISTORY
OF THE ETHIOPIAN MONASTIC MOVEMENT

Among the traditions transmitted in Ethiopian hagiographic works, those referring to the encounters between Täklä Haymanot¹ and Iyäsus Mo’a² — two late 13th-/early 14th-cent. monastic leaders and great Ethiopian saints —

¹ There is no need to quote all existing scholarly literature on Täklä Haymanot’s activities, hagiography and cult, or all works on the history of his monastic foundation, Däbrä Libanos of Säwa. These topics have been discussed in a number of publications, ranging from brief entries in reference-books to chapters in monographs [for the list of abbreviations used in this article see p. 239]: s., e. g., BHO 247–248, nos. 1128–1134; CERULLI 1943:228–232; TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:160–169; DEB 157–158; KRZ 92–93, no. 151; KRIS — KRIS HEINRICH 1975:30–41; among the recent publications, s., e. g., BÖLL in: LTK IX, 1244–1245; T EDESCHI in: EnSanti II, 1132–1138; DERAT 2003, passim. On the hagiographic legend of Täklä Haymanot, s. DERAT 1998, NOSNITZYN 2003 (concerning the hagiographic reports on the Saint’s translatio), NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming (on the Synaxarion commemorative note about the Saint). Let us only recall that, according to the more or less commonly accepted chronology, Täklä Haymanot is thought to have lived in ca. 1214/15–1313; the Saint’s major annual feasts are celebrated on 24 Nähase (obitus) and 12 Gəñbot (translatio).

² As is commonly known, abba Iyäsus Mo’a was one of the most prominent representatives of Däbrä Ḥayq Ästifanos, which, like Däbrä Libanos of Säwa, is today one of the most venerated monasteries of Ethiopia. However, Iyäsus Mo’a appears to have been somewhat less popular than a number of other holy monks. The rather local character of his cult becomes evident when compared to the country-wide veneration of Täklä Haymanot, Gäbrä Mänfäs Qaddus, Samu’el of Waldobba, Zä-Mika’el Arägawi, as well as of several other Oriental saints. Iyäsus Mo’a’s commemoration is recorded in the Synaxarion, but only in a short notice (26 Ḥodar), not in a hagiobiographic account. His popularity could have been increased by hagiographies of other saints, where he is mentioned as a prominent monastic leader; yet, the considerable difference between the respective cults of Täklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Mo’a is demonstrated, e. g., by the number of manuscripts containing their hagiographies. Whereas Täklä Haymanot’s hagiographic tradition, represented by a substantial number of works, is attested by many dozens of manuscripts, the same cannot be said about the tradition of Iyäsus Mo’a (s. e. g., DEB 92; TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970:88–91; KRZ 78–79, no. 86; MARRASSINI 1986; T EDESCHI in: EnSanti II, 267–271; BAUM in: BKK XX, 804–806).
are considered central for the reconstruction of medieval Ethiopian church history. This is reflected in the well-known evaluation given by Tadesse Tamrat of one such episode: «His [sc. Täklä Haymanot’s] encounter with Ýäsus-Mo’a on this second occasion is shrouded with uncertainties in the traditions, and has become one of the most controversial points in Ethiopian ecclesiastical history. The controversy basically evolves around the mutual claims of seniority later advanced by Däbrä Hayq and Däbrä Libanos».3 This «controversy» has been the subject of a number of studies; yet, the progress made in the understanding of Ethiopian history and the growing number of accessible sources offers an opportunity to assess the problem one more time, at the cross-roads of historical and philological studies. Today, a deeper analysis of the relevant hagiographies is possible, with the aim not only of coming closer to the reconstruction of the late 13th-cent. events, but also of tracing the development of the traditions within their original context, their sources and interrelations — thus correctly assessing their value. The present essay is an attempt at such analysis.4

Before embarking on the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the accounts I would like to summarize the most important points and acting characters of the story, according to its «classical» version as transmitted by the early-16th-cent. Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the recension of Däbrä Libanos.5

Obeying the Lord’s command,6 Täklä Haymanot, who had converted large numbers of pagans in the south of the Ethiopian kingdom and worked miracles, sought to take on the monastic habit and learn the «monastic rules».

3 **ATTERSE TAMRAT** 1972:164.
4 The essay is drawn from my Ph.D. thesis, «The Vita of Täklä Haymanot as a monument of Ethiopian medieval literature», completed under the supervision of the late Sevir B. Chernetsov and defended at the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University on 20 December 2002.
5 From here on, the text of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension is quoted after the **editio princeps**, BUDGE 1906; however, one should note that this text represents not the original but a slightly reworked variant of that recension (a problem I have addressed on several occasions: e.g., Nosnitsin 2006, forthcoming, cp. also n. 34, below). The translation provided in BUDGE 1906 is often erroneous; when referring to it, I will attempt, therefore, to rectify it (and simplify the transcription of proper names).
6 The summary follows BUDGE 1906, chs. 68–88 (particularly relevant are chs. 68–75, 77–81, 85–88). In the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita, Täklä Haymanot’s monastic career does not appear as detailed and lengthy as one would expect considering the time (more than 30 years) Täklä Haymanot spent in different monasteries (s. the synopsis in BUDGE 1906, ch. 113; 10 years in the community of Bäšälotä
In order to fulfil his predestination — the foundation of the monastery of Däbrä Asbo/Libanos — Täklä Haymanot was deemed to become a monk. Since there are no monasteries in Šawa, he travelled to the north of Ethiopia, seeking to assume the monastic habit there. The first place where he made a halt is that of abba Bäšälotä Mika’el «of Gaššè», the head of a (unidentified) monastery in Amhara. Täklä Haymanot spent ten years there; Mika’el [Amhara], 10 years at Däbrä Hayq Ḵ星座fanos, 12 years at Däbrä Dammo, 1 year wandering in Tagre and Jerusalem, 29 years in Däbrä Asbo; in manuscripts, there are some differences concerning the last period).

While the historical context of the episode is more or less clear (cp. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:112–117, 177–178), the chronology and historical identity of abba Bäšälotä Mika’el is difficult to ascertain. According to the Synaxarion recension of Täklä Haymanot’s Vita — which is probably one of the most ancient hagiographic sources on the Saint (s. Nosnitsin 2006, forthcoming) — Bäšälotä Mika’el was the only spiritual teacher of Täklä Haymanot and it was he, one could presume, who imposed the «monkish yoke» upon Täklä Haymanot (s. GUIDI 1912:381). However, the Waldsäba recension of Täklä Haymanot’s Vita does not mention Bäšälotä Mika’el at all, while in the Hayq and Däbrä Libanos recensions Bäšälotä Mika’el is styled as Bäšälotä Mika’el zä-hagäärä Gasse (e. g., in MS Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, éth. 342 = Griaule 38 [s. below], fol. 89vb; however, he is «Bäšälotä Mika’el of Amhara» on fol. 85va, 87ra) and Bäšälotä Mika’el zä-Gaššä (BUDGE 1906, ch. 68) respectively. It is difficult to identify him as «Bäšälotä Mika’el of Däbrä Gol» whose hagiography was edited by C. CONTI ROSSINI (1905), and who was the spiritual father of Aron of Däbrä Daret (cp. Turaiev 1908:125; EÆ I, 350f.). Däbrä G*al of Amhara — a historical monastery identical, according to the Vita of Bäšälotä Mika’el, to Däbrä Ṣmonna, where Bäšälotä Mika’el assumed the monastic habit from Anorewos and lived (Conti Rossini 1905:14; there he lays the monastic habit upon Aron)— can hardly be identified with the well-known monastery of Däbrä Bahray (in Gassäča, domain of abba Giyorgis of Gassäča/Sägla), the contemporary site of Bäšälotä Mika’el’s cult, where his relics were transferred from G[*]lo Mäkäda (northeastern Tagray; s. CONTI ROSSINI 1905:50–53; SAUTER 1963:275). The identification of Gaššè (the region where the important church of Mäkanä Sälgase was situated) with Gassäča is also problematic, though it is favoured by the local tradition (this identification, recorded in the Acts of Bäšälotä Mika’el preserved in Däbrä Bahray of Gassäča [s. DERAT 2003:116–117], may in fact originate from the Acts of Täklä Haymanot; however, the monastic library of Däbrä Bahray needs further investigation). In any case, Däbrä G*al is traditionally said to have been destroyed during the 16th-cent. Muslim war and never rebuilt; its precise location remains unknown. In his hagiography, Bäšälotä Mika’el appears as the contemporary of Metropolitan abunä Ya’aqob and King Ḵ星座on I (1314–1334), as a strenuous opponent of the latter and reformer of the Church and monastic life (s. EÆ I, 493f.). Thus, there seems to exist more reasons to distinguish between «the early» Bäšälotä Mika’el of Gaššè (mentioned in the hagiographic legend of Täklä Haymanot) and «the later» Bäšälotä Mika’el of Däbrä G*al (as proposed by TURAIEV 1902:53; s. also Getatchew Haile’s commentary to MS EMML 1834, fol. 93b). The Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a seems to conflate «earlier» and «later» personages, while stating that Iyäsus Mo’a was the spiritual father of Bä-
thereafter he proceeded to abba Iyäsus Mo’a, the abbot of the famous community of Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṣṭifanos. Iyäsus Mo’a accepted Täklä Haymanot and vested the new disciple with the «monkish garb», becoming his «spiritual father».⁸ After ten years at Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṣṭifanos, an angel appeared to Täklä Haymanot with a message from God: he should visit other monastic communities and learn the monastic rules; besides, he should go to the monastery of Däbrä Dammo (the place where Iyäsus Mo’a had taken his monastic habit) and receive from its head, abba Yoḥanni,⁹ the monastic cap (qob’i) and scapular (askema), and obtain therewith «the complete monk’s habit». When taking his farewell from Täklä Haymanot, Iyäsus Mo’a asked Täklä Haymanot to bring the monastic cap and scapular also for him, since he had left Däbrä Dammo without receiving these parts of the monastic garb from abba Yoḥanni. Iyäsus Mo’a was aware of the circumstance that, in case his request was fulfilled, his «spiritual son» would formally become his «spiritual father».¹⁰ Täklä Haymanot reached then

⁸ BUDGE 1906, ch. 75; Iyäsus Mo’a receives from an angel the command to vest Täklä Haymanot with monastic habit (ibid., 69 [text] Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : ). When Täklä Haymanot is introduced to him, Iyäsus Mo’a mentions that he has been directed by the angel, yet Täklä Haymanot should stay and wait a little bit. Soon, the Abbot vested him with the monastic garb «which is the likeness of angel» (ibid., [text] Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : Ṣw adept : ).

⁹ TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:158–159, 163, 165–166; DEB 189; TEDESCHI in: EnSan-tii II, 1362–1363. Historiographical notes attached to the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi (GUIDI 1895:34, 42; s. below) appear to be the primary source on Yoḥanni, where he is the seventh after Zä-Mika’el, the founder of Däbrä Dammo (this being «chronologically impossible», s. TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:158, n. 4), but only the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a presents an extended hagiographic account of abba Yoḥanni’s life. Apart from this, he seems to be less known and should not be confused with abba Yoḥanni of Däbrä Sina of Sänḥit (Kärän, Eritrea), or abba Yoḥanni from Däbrä Ṣasa (Ṭagray). Considering the name «Yoḥanni» and its similarity to Coptic names (Marrassini 1990:37), one should notice that «Yoḥanni» can also be explained from the point of view of Ethiopian onomastics, as a contracted form of the Ethiopic name Yäwḥanni («[the Lord] has been merciful to me», this variant having been recorded on wall paintings in the ancient Gännätä Maryam church, s. BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA 1998–1999:189, n. 56).

¹⁰ BUDGE 1905, ch. 77, with «oil» and «(monastic) garb» standing for qob’i and askema respectively. The passage reads: «[And Iyäsus Mo’a said to Täklä Haymanot:] Why are you leaving me? I have not seen you like a son, for I have seen you like a honourable father. Nevertheless your words about going to my mountain have pleased me, and when you arrive there [you] will receive the (monastic) cap and scapular; and afterwards you yourself will give (them) to me, and you will become me a father».
Däbrä Dammo and told abba Yoḥanni that he received his monastic garb from Iyäsus Mo’a. Stating that Täklä Haymanot is «the (spiritual) son of his son», Yoḥanni bestowed upon him the qob ‘and askema. After visits to other monastic communities of northern Ethiopia and three miraculous travels to Jerusalem, Täklä Haymanot, following God’s command, returned to Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣeṣṭifanos and handed the monastic cap and scapular over to Iyäsus Mo’a, in accordance with the latter’s will.

At the end of the account, there is a fragment containing Täklä Haymanot’s monastic pedigree beginning with Anthony the Great, in which the «spiritual kinship» between the three holy monks — Iyäsus Mo’a, Yoḥanni and Täklä Haymanot — is explained once again; however, referring to Täklä Haymanot, the hagiographer or deliberately leaves out or forgets to mention, from whom the Saint received the parts of the monastic habit of the first grade («monastic clothes» — from Iyäsus Mo’a). However significant this contradiction might be, we can not say that this pedigree «reverses» the preceding account.

It seems that this version of the story first became widely known because of the popularity of the Däbrä Libanos recension of Täklä Haymanot’s Vita.

11 Budde 1905, ch. 78. Before vesting Täklä Haymanot with the monastic cap and garb, abba Yoḥanni questions him; after that, he performs the consecration rite: «And he [abba Yoḥanni] said: What is your name, and who vested you with the monastic garb (אַלְוָל: אָבֹת נַחֲמָן)? And he said: My name is Täklä Haymanot, and abba Iyäsus Mo’a who dwells on an island of the lake, endowed me with the garb of the monk. And abba Yoḥanni said: Verily you are son of my son, for I begot him by the Holy Ghost. And abba Yoḥanni prayed over the cap and scapular according to the law ([אַלְוָל: אָבֹת נַחֲמָן] קְרַאָה: מַעְלָה: הֲלָהוֹת אֱלֹהִים): κήρυξεν εἰς τόν Ρήμαν ὁ ἀβαβᾶς τοῦ Ἰάσου τοῦ Ἰουδαίου καὶ τῷ Ρήμαντε τοῦ Ἱερουσαλήμ, and he gave them to our father holy man Täklä Haymanot».

12 Budde 1905, ch. 87, 188–189 [tr.]: «And on the morrow he rose up and departed, and he came to the place on the sea-shore, and he walked upon the water, even as a man walketh on the dry land; and he came unto Iyasus Mo’a. And when the Abbot saw him, he rejoiced exceedingly, and said unto him, “Where didst thou receive the [monastic cap and the scapular] (חָלָה: מַעְלָה: הֲלָהוֹת אֱלֹהִים): κήρυξεν εἰς τόν Ρήμαν ὁ ἀβαβᾶς τοῦ Ἰάσου τοῦ Ἰουδαίου καὶ τῷ Ρήμαντε τοῦ Ἱερουσαλήμ, and he gave them to our father holy man Täklä Haymanot”. And [he] said unto him, “From this time onward I will cease from the toil of the road; I will be thy son, and thou shalt be [my] father; give me the [monastic cap and the scapular] which are in thy holy hands”. And [Abba Täklä Haymanot] gave [him] the cowl [the monastic cap] and the cloak, for the angel said unto him, “Hearken unto what he sayeth unto thee”».

13 Cp. Derat 2003:106–107; s. Budde 1906, ch. 88, with the somewhat vague title «How the garb of the monk and the rule of ascetic life descended from Anthony to Takla Ḥāymānōt» (ibid., 189–190 [tr.]): «...and Abba Mäsqal Mo’a begot Abba Yoḥanni, and Abba Yoḥanni begot Abba Iyäsus Mo’a and Täklä Haymanot, [Iyäsus Mo’a] by the cassock and girdle ([אַלְוָל: אָבֹת נַחֲמָן] קְרַאָה: מַעְלָה: הֲלָהוֹת אֱלֹהִים), and [Täklä Haymanot] by the [monastic cap and the scapular]; and Abba [Täklä Haymanot gave Iyäsus Mo’a the monastic cap and the scapular], even as we have said before.»
Yet, this story — in particular its conclusion, which makes Täklä Haymanot the «spiritual father» of Iyäsus Mo’ā, the latter having had no monastic cap or scapular before — was emotionally refuted in another hagiography, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’ā. This work is considered to reflect the point of view of the monastic community of Däbrä Ḥayq Īṣṭifanos; it summarizes Täklä Haymanot’s biography, seeking to prove that the case was only that Täklä Haymanot gave Iyäsus Mo’ā the scapular. The same story is repeated, with some variants, in other hagiographic texts (the Waldɔbbanga and Ḥayq recensions of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi), and mentioned in many other sources. As the most important of these texts were edited, the episode in question attracted considerable scholarly attention, mainly to the aim of reconstructing the sequence of developments and ascertaining which of the two holy monks, Täklä Haymanot or Iyäsus Mo’ā, held superiority concerning the parts of the monastic habit. Different interpretations of the story resulted in varying understandings of the roles Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa and Däbrä Ḥayq Īṣṭifanos played in Ethiopian medieval church history. The question became even more delicate from the beginning of the 20th cent., when Täklä Haymanot, Iyäsus Mo’ā and Zä-Mika’el Arägawi were raised to symbols of Ethiopian Christianity by the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwàhada Church.

Summarizing the main points of the studies, one should note that, where-as the encounters of Täklä Haymanot, Iyäsus Mo’ā and Zä-Mika’el Arägawi — the prominent 13th–14th-cent. monastic leaders — are generally thought to have been historical events, there is a commonly accepted view that hagiographical accounts must be approached critically and evaluated as both historical events and fictional products. The prevailing tendency today is to refrain from the positivistic enquiry into the episode as described in the hagiographies (including the monastic investiture performed by the «spiritual son» Täklä Haymanot upon his «spiritual father» Iyäsus Mo’ā), and attempts to find out who precisely conferred particular parts of the monastic habit upon

14 S. K APLAN 1986; cp. E. Cerulli’s remark in the preface to the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’ā (KUR 1965:v–vi [tr.]): «Un cliché commun dans l’hagiographie éthiopienne sont les rencontres du saint dont on écrit la Vie, avec d’autres saints personnages de l’Église qui sont de la même époque ou plutôt qu’on peut vraisemblablement attribuer à la même époque» (cp., however, on the possible historical background of such episodes, CERULLI 1958:271). The establishment of the identities of the characters interacting with the protagonist of a Vita is thus a common subject of hagiographical. While pursuing this task, scholars define possible chronological and historical frames of the narrated events and establish the historical value of hagiographic accounts. In many cases, reports about encounters of holy monks can be counter-checked against other hagiographic traditions. The results, however, are different depending on the type of individual hagiographic work in question. Cp. the typology of such accounts in MAR RASSINI 1981:XCIII–C («incontri con personaggi del passato», «incontri con personaggi ‘contemporanei’»).
whom, when and where.\textsuperscript{15} One would rather prefer to consider this story as a reflection of a particular historical process, namely the rivalry between Däbrä Libanos of Säwa and Däbrä Ḣayq Ėṣṭifanos that started presumably some time after the death of both saints and left traces in their hagiographies, the episode in question being one of the main pieces of evidence. As a result, the accounts with that story have been carefully investigated in order to find the idea of (spiritual) superiority expressed therein that was thought to have been functional to earning and consolidating religious and political influence.\textsuperscript{16} For the later period, the alleged rivalry is fitting with the political and religious context of the Gondärine kingdom, with the inner struggle of the «houses» of Täklä Haymanot and Ewọṣatewos.\textsuperscript{17} The idea of the superiority of

\textsuperscript{15} TADDESSE TAMRAT (1972:165 and n. 5) thinks that the story of Täklä Haymanot handing over the monastic cap and scapular to Iyäsus Mo’a is the result of an inconsistent usage of terminology and should not be given historical credibility. Monastic canons render it impossible that a disciple could perform the monastic investiture upon his spiritual father. In Taddesse’s opinion, the system of the grades of monastic habit was introduced in Ethiopia at a later point: «It appears, however, that these rules of gradual investiture were of a relatively recent date»; in the 13th–14th cent. the novice was supposed to assume the «monastic yoke» only once. Taddesse, pointing to the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi as the central source, considers the episode in question to be partly a result of some sort of «confusion» and partly a kind of «literary invention» of the hagiographer, which was subsequently introduced into other hagiographic works: «This Däbrä Damo tradition seems to be the original source of all the controversy, and was apparently invented by an over-zealous scribe of the monastery to stress the historical fact that both Iyäsus-Mo’a and Täklä-Haymanot derived their monastic origin from the house of Abunj Arägawi» (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1972:166). It is remarkable that in his important study on the abbots of Däbrä Ḣayq Ėṣṭifanos, Taddesse does not discuss the episode, only characterizing the relevant passage of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a as a «highly polemical» one (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970:89, n. 13).

\textsuperscript{16} As early as 1898, Vasilij Bolotov, the Russian historian of the Early Church, suggested that versions of the story concerning the spiritual relationship between Iyäsus Mo’a and Täklä Haymanot and their taking parts of the monastic habit reflect the historical changes in the position of the offices of ʿaqqabe sä’at and ʿēchāge respectively (BOLOTOV 1898:195, n. 12). Cp. DERAT 2003:105: «La substitution progressive de Täklä Haymanot à Iyäsus Mo’a, dès le début du XVIe siècle, est le signe que les communautés de ces deux saints étaient concurrentes… Il s’agit d’un affrontement entre les deux communautés monastiques, par texte interposé, à la fin du XV\textsuperscript{e} et au début du XVI\textsuperscript{e} siècle». Perhaps, the same view stands behind the statement in Six 1975:27–31, esp. 29 and n. 50, where it is said that the head of Däbrä Ḣayq Ėṣṭifanos was invested with the title and office of ʿēchāge already under the King ʿAmadá Ŝayon I (1314–1344), which was transferred to the head of Däbrä Libanos during the reign of Zär’a Yaʿqob after 1445.

\textsuperscript{17} M.-L. Derat came to the conclusion that different variants of the story in question reflect the early stage of the «rivalry» between Däbrä Libanos and Däbrä Ḣayq Ėṣṭifanos, the later being reflected in the Bọ ʿslà Nàgásti, the narrative about the reestab-
«the spiritual father» over his «son» can therefore be interpreted in terms of the actual — religious and administrative — submission of one monastic community to another. If applied to the case of Däbrä Ḥayq Ǝştifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, this concept provides, a priori, a well-structured picture for a long period of the Ethiopian church history. It is clear, however, that the acceptance of one all-embracing model does not remove either the task of a comparative evaluation of all the pieces of evidence or the need to reveal and explain, as far as possible, all the contradictions and discrepancies between them.

A closer look at Ethiopian hagiography reveals that monastic initiation is often featured in the biographical accounts of Ethiopian saints. However, in most cases hagiographers record the mere fact of the assumption of the monastic habit. While describing how the protagonist enters monastic life, they mention sometimes the monkish «tunic» or robe (qämis), more frequently girdle (qonat), «monastic cap» (qob) and scapular (askema), or simply un-

lishment of the Solomonic dynasty (in which the role that originally belonged to abba Iyäsus Mo’a is taken over by Täklä Haymanot: «one third of the kingdom», thought to have been previously promised to Däbrä Ḥayq, is promised to Däbrä Libanos), and is thus to be dated to the late 17th or early 18th cent. (Derat 2003:97–98). A passage of the «monastic chronicle» of Däbrä Libanos (Zena Däbrä Libanos) is considered to be important in this connection, since it may present the core of the story to be later developed in the Bo'šlā Nägāšt (the account of Täklä Haymanot’s intervention in the political struggle and his intercession on behalf of Yäkunno Am-lak), and contain allusions to the «testaments» in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a (ibid. 102–103). Regarding the episode under enquiry, M.-L. Derat encounters a difficulty since she accepts the dating suggested by E. Cerulli: «En effet, les actes du Iyäsus Mo’a datant de la fin du XVe siècle apparaissent comme une réponse des auteurs des Ḥayq à ceux de Täklä Haymanot rédigés au début du XVIe siècle. Soit la réponse des auteurs de Ḥayq est postérieure à la rédaction de la Vie de Iyäsus Mo’a, et représente un remaniement de ce texte après le début du XVe siècle. Soit, du côté de Däbrä Asbo/Libanos, la vie de Täklä Haymanot a connu des version intermédiaires entre le début du XVe siècle et le début du XVIe siècle, dans lesquelles le rattachement de Däbrä Asbo/Libanos à Däbrä Ḥayq fut d’abord affirmé, puis nuancé par l’épisode du qob et de l’askéma» (Derat 2003:109; s. below).

18 This interpretation of the episode with Täklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Mo’a, with the subsequent conclusions concerning the relations between Däbrä Ḥayq Ǝştifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, would fit into the picture of the development of Ethiopian monastic movement as presented by E. Cerulli 1958:270–273.

19 E. g., Turaev pointed out that the suggestion of Bolotov concerning the «rivalry» between the offices of aččāge and aqqabe sä’at (s. above, n. 16) can not be fully supported by the evidence from the hagiographic tradition of Täklä Haymanot: the early Waldābba version of Täklä Haymanot’s Vita has the «controversial episode», whereas it is missing in the more recent Synaxarion note on Täklä Haymanot, 24 Nāḥase (Turaiev 1902:96).
specified monastic garb or clothes (loḥsä/albasä/mälbäsä mönkʷ ᵃsɔnna or arʿutā [lit. «yoke»] mönkʷ ᵃsɔnna). Yet, the exact listing of all the insignia received by a saint in the course of his monastic career or the precise recording of respective bestowing rituals were not considered obligatory; in a few cases, the mention of the monastic initiation is missing altogether. Hagiographers apparently wanted to attract more attention to the religious and ethical value of the monastic vow and ensure moral responsibilities and obligations. Consequently, most of the relevant episodes appear in the form of brief, loosely formalized hagiographic «common places», which only occasionally include more details.

20 According to traditional sources, these are parts of the monastic habit and, at the same time, insignia designating the grades of the monastic profession, up to the askema, for the «perfect monk». The qämis is the traditional long shirt (or «tunic»), usually made of undyed material (cp. GUIDI 1901:248; cp. also KBT 359). The qawnat is a rough leather (or fibre) belt but frequently nothing else but a simple rope (GUIDI 1901:283; cp. KBT 387). The qob (Amharic: qob) is a round, flat-topped cap without brims, made of white or black material (GUIDI 1901:274; KBT 437; cp. an Amharic idiom yäqob säd «monastic name»). The askema consists of two leather strips hanging over the shoulders and crossed on the back and breast, with 12 small crosses hanging from it (GUIDI 1901:446; cp. KBT 729, s. «Askema»; «Clothing: Ecclesiastic» in: EÆ I, 373, 761–763). The term derives from Greek σχήμα «habit, species» (s. LESLAU 1887:43; cp. DILLMANN 1865:752), this clarifying the meaning of such term as askema zämälaʾkt — ḍεγγελικὸν σχήμα — «appearance [likeness] of angel». The askema-scapular symbolises the third, highest grade of the monastic profession, at which the monk reaches the highest degree of purity and obtains the «angelic nature» (cp. KAPLAN 1984:81–83; cp. HAMMERSCHMIDT 1962:221). All parts of the Ethiopian monkish apparel have parallels in other (Oriental) Christian traditions (cp. the similar composition of the monastic habit in the Byzantine typika, THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES Hero 2000, vol. 1, xxii).

21 For the typology of this motive as presented in Ethiopian hagiography, s. Appendix, with examples from some 22 hagiographies.

22 The terminology used there is, indeed, not quite consequent, yet the accounts are clear and transparent. There is seemingly no difference in the use of the term loḥs and its plural albas, which mean all the parts of the monastic habit together, with the exception of the scapular. The term askema (monkish, holy, angelic — zämänākʷ-šsat, qaddāst, zämālaʾkt) may appear as a potential source of uncertainty, referring to both the monastic life in general (as equivalent for arʿutā mönkʷ ᵃsɔnna) and the scapular as the highest («angelic») grade of the monastic profession in particular. In fact, the askema symbolizes the monastic profession and monastic life; «to take on the askema» may simply mean «to enter monastic life», but also «to assume the scapular [the angelic habit]». Yet in the sources the term askema is only ambiguous in a few cases (s. Appendix: Gäbrä Mänfäs Qaddus, Yəḥṣaq/Gārima, Libanos/Māṭṭa, Nine Saints in the Vita of Zä-Mikaʾel Arägawi). For a similar problem in Byzantine monastic documents s. THOMAS — CONSTANTINIDES Hero 2000, vol. 1, 155, n. 1; cp. also the Coptic monastic rite, EVETTS 1906:64.
The attempts at regarding the hagiographic accounts of monastic consecration as reflections of a real practice lead to conclusions concerning the organization of the Ethiopian monastic institutions. The hierarchical order of monastic communities based on the three grades of the monastic profession does not appear to have been commonly accepted across Ethiopian monastic communities, because of the decentralised character of Ethiopian monasticism and the absence of a strong Church organization. 23 However, it can be assumed that the idea of the monastic investiture and the corresponding rituals could have been known in Ethiopia even before the re-establishment of the Solomonic line (ca. 1270). 24 From the 14th cent. onwards the gradual monastic investiture (this being nothing but the formal expression of the basic principle of the progressing spiritual contendings, shared by all monastic traditions) possibly gained wider circulation. The assumption of the girdle, tunic and «monastic cap» at one time and the scapular at another time would thus correspond to the custom of distinguishing between the «little habit» and the «great habit». However, a few hagiographies (among them those re- 

23 TADDESE TAMRAT 1972:165. 
24 The tradition of the book of monastic consecration rites known as Šor‘atā Mënḵ°asənna («Rule[s] of the Monasticism») or Mäšḥäfä Mënḵ°asənna («Book of the Monasticism»), preserved in many manuscripts, may well go back to the 14th cent. (cp. MSS EMML 2093, 2168, 2272, 2459; HAMMERSCHMIDT — SIX 1983:197–198, no. 103; SIX 1989:73, no. 42; cp. a probably 15th cent. MS of the Šor‘atā Mënḵ°asənna from Däbrä Dammo, STRELČYN 1976:323–323, no. 131; cp. also for the same work MS Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, éth. 80, ZOTENBERG 1877:85, no. 79). The book could have also been composed at an earlier time (Ricci 1969a: 816–817). GRÉBAUT (1940) edited and translated the monastic rite after the 14th- / early 15th-cent. MS 6th. 80 (ZOTENBERG 1877:85, no. 79; s. UHLIG 1988:287); though this Šor‘atā Mënḵ°asənna is not complete, there are chapters devoted to the ritual of cutting the hairs of the novice (GRÉBAUT 1940:227) and the prayer over the monastic garb (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-rb it is stated that anyone who wants to become monk (ibid. 229–230), and to putting on the garb and girdle (ibid. 231) or the girdle alone (ibid. 234); any ritual for the askema is unfortunately missing. The Šor‘atā mënḵ°asənna in MS EMML 1950 (17th/18th cent., Däbrä Hayq ġystifanos) is much more developed and contains not only the rites but also the regulations concerning monastic life: e. g., on fol. 1ra-
lated to the tradition of Däbrä Libanos) clearly speak of the separate assumption of the scapular, whereas the majority of the sources do not, proving to be indifferent to the question. On the whole, the sources produce no substantial evidence on the introduction of the strict «twofold» monastic consecration as a result of «reforms», though it is known that active attempts to reorganize some spheres of monastic life did take place. At the same time, hagiographies reflect a range of different attitudes to the «monastic career» in general.

With regards to the Ethiopian monastic tradition as reflected by hagiography, one can not say that the current monastic practice basically disagrees with the information originating from the sources. At the same time there are same obvious discrepancies which are not easy to explain. For instance, it has been repeatedly reported that, especially in the countryside, the mode of clothing of clergy and monks hardly differs from that of laymen; a distinctive feature of the monk or priest, besides the cap (qob), may be the turban (maṭtaṃamiya), and for monks, of course, the cloak or «mantle» made of crude dry sheepskin (Gǝǝz: hamelat or meloto, Amharic: däbälo), the last two items excluded from the monastic ritual and rarely appearing in hagiographies. However, at least in contemporary Ethiopian monastic practice,

25 Repetition of the ritual would raise concern about its «desacralisation». In Byzantine monastic tradition, e. g., there was a controversy about the «duplication» of the assumption of the monastic habit, which some monastic leaders considered unacceptable like the repetition of Baptism; consequently, they rejected the distinction in the monastic dress: s. Thomas — CONSTANTINIDES HERO 2000, vol. 1, 78; 155, n. 1, 2; vol. 2, 1203.

26 They were not always only positive. In fact, in many hagiographic accounts hermits appear as «spiritual athletes» (like abba Gâbrä Mänfäs Qoddu) who supersede cenobitical monks in asceticism, miraculous power and sanctity. Hermits did not always seek complete separation from the cenobitical communities but frequently kept up relations with them; the hermitic way has been fully recognized as an honourable way of ascetic life, more difficult than the that in the community. E. g., in Waldǝbbba, a monk could become a hermit and be separated from the community only if the abbot decided that he was experienced enough and ready to continue the ascetic life alone. In order to become a hermit, a monk would not need to assume the scapular (on the contrary, hermits were supposed to reject a formal recognition of their spiritual merits). Having settled in a deserted place, a hermit would stay in complete isolation and seldom appear in the community. Some hermits never leave their abodes; however, they are sometimes helped by younger monks (GIRMÄ ELYAS 1977:110–113). In Ethiopia, hermitic life has always exercised an immense attraction, its followers being revered by both laymen and ecclesiastics (yet, they were sometimes at odds with representatives of the official Church hierarchy).


28 On hamelat/meloto, which is considered to be the traditional clothing of both the monks and wandering students seeking for the education in church and monastic schools, s. DILLMANN 1865:71, KWK 449. Cp. EÆ I, 761–763: those monks who re-
the assumption of the scapular (the highest grade of the monastic profession) though formally quite important, is implemented only in rare cases\textsuperscript{29} — in spite of the fact that the service books provide a full set of relevant rituals, well known to, and much revered by, Ethiopian monks. It is possible that the early assumption of the scapular as described in many hagiographic works should be understood as a sign of the extraordinariness and sanctity of the vitas’ protagonists (and be ascribed, thus, to the «imaginary world» of the hagiography): a saint need neither many years of ascetic exercises to reach the «angelic nature», nor should he wait many years for the scapular to be conferred upon him;\textsuperscript{30} even the period of probation and noviciate appears very short or even non-existent. As in the past, the institution of the «spiritual fatherhood» is also vivid today: the senior monk who initiates a novice into monastic life remains his «spiritual father» and actively participates in the «spiritual upbringing» of his «son» (while the latter maintains warm attitude to the former for many years), yet his advising concerns matters of spiritual life and is not binding, especially when his pupil matures and moves to another place.

received the sacerdotal consecration can carry hand-crosses, as priests do. In the sources one can find references to the lack of acknowledged standards in monastic clothing, cp. the most valuable notes by Almeida, in: Historia Aethiopieae, ed. by C. Beccari, Roma 1907, book II, ch. xviii, 195–200. There are also mentions of the yellow robes or cloaks worn by some monks (s. Beckingham — Huntingford 1961:126, 424), a custom preserved, e. g., in Waldbäba monasteries, and currently followed also by monks of Däbrä Libanos (Säwa) and some other communities. In the 20\textsuperscript{th} cent., there were some attempts at standardizing (and «modernizing») of the clothing of the ecclesiastics and monks.


\textsuperscript{30} Quite the opposite to the living monastic tradition. According to the rules of Däbrä Abräntant, one of the monasteries of Waldäba, a candidate for the scapular should be elected among old monks of the community. He must be renowned for his piety, virtue, knowledge and other merits. He had to spend a long time living as a monk and being an example of perfect asceticism (in particular, abstaining from meat and sleeping in a bed). Due to his age and way of life, he was expected to stay most of the time within his community; he could offer spiritual teaching, but he had to abstain from participation in any other active work, especially in administrative matters (Bärihun Käbbäda 1971:108–115). As local tradition reports, during the entire history of Waldäba Abräntant only four monks have assumed the scapular (though honourable monks were numerous). The first was 14\textsuperscript{th}-cent. Samu’el of Waldäba, who is considered to be the founder of Abräntant (the scapular was reportedly conferred upon him by Mädhaninä Ṣgzi’ in Däbrä Bänk’al; the Vita of Samu’el, however, relates that he assumed from Mädhaninä Ṣgzi’ the clothes [albas], the girdle [qonat] and the monastic cap [qofä’], s. Turaiev 1902a:2), while the others were three prominent superiors of the community. Abba Gäbrä Ṣgzi’abäsher Täsämma was the last one to receive the scapular at Däbrä Dammo, in the late 1960s (Bärihun Käbbäda 1971:109).
Historically, the issues of strict distinction between the grades of monastic profession, the standartization of everyday monastic vestments and their distinction from the clothes of laymen, were certainly not a crucial point in Ethiopian monastic discourse; it is, however, quite natural that, regarding the question of garments, local Ethiopian tradition put emphasis on some other specific points.\(^{31}\) As to the hierarchy within the monasteries, this certainly existed in any Ethiopian cenobitical community, though its formalization (also by means of the parts of the monastic habit) may have happened only in a few cases — when it was required, e. g., by the growth of the monastery and by the need of organizing the religious and economical activities of a great number of monks. Ethiopia was famous for its numerous monasteries, but most of them, including the well-established and influential ones, had comparatively small communities.\(^{32}\) Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa, being among the few excep-

\(^{31}\) While the Bible and extensive monastic literature (Mäṣahḥäftä Mänäkosat) provided the religious, ascetic and ritual foundation for Ethiopian monasticism, the local tradition had a specific appearance. It is from this point of view that one should consider the notable remark by J. Simon concerning the so-called Ethiopic Regulae Pachomii (DILLMANN 1866:57–69 [Hammerschmidt 1988]): «On ne peut citer aucun monastère éthiopien qui ait été organisé selon la “Règle de S. Pachôme”» (Simon 1941 [Hammerschmidt 1988]:301). While two of the three parts of these «Regulations», where a lot is said on the role of the monastic garb, were translated during the Axumite period (Lusini 1997:54–55, n. 16–20), and the «Regulations» certainly exercised influence on the life in Ethiopian monasteries, attested collections of genuine Ethiopian monastic regulations are deeply rooted in the local reality and focus on quite different points (ibid. 55). Cp., e. g., the regulations (from the 15th/16th-cent. manuscript, compiled at an unknown monastery) containing a paragraph about the vestments expressing concerns different from the Regulae Pachomii (ibid. 57–60; «Ancora, il §2 contempla soltanto la pelle di capra come elemento specifico del vestito monastico, probabilmente per sottolineare come quello più degli altri sia l’autentico segno di riconoscimento del monaco», ibid., 58–59); cp. also concerns expressed in the «rules» of abba Nabyud (Beylot 1974:1, 16–17). Concerns of leaders of local communities should have focused on the simplicity of clothes, or avoidance of outspoken inequality among monks in this respect (e. g., as a repercussion of their different social background), or the amassing property by individuals, etc. Certainly, a substantial degree of disagreement between what is written/prescribed in the books and what is implemented in the real life is characteristic of the Ethiopian monastic tradition, as of any other (e. g., the Coptic monastic rite includes rituals for both the «little» and «great habits», but cp. Everts 1906:65: «Aujourd’hui les moines égyptiens ne portent que des tuniques noires et turban de même couleur sur une calotte, comme les prêtres séculiers»).

\(^{32}\) It seems that the population of most monastic communities did not exceed a few dozens of brothers (like those noted by Alvares, s. Beckingham — Huntingford 1961:175, 185). Ethiopian sources hold witness to a few larger monastic communities; cp., a valuable description of the Ewostatean monastic organization in Zär’a Ya’aqob’s Mäṣḥäftä Bärhan, which reports that in three nunneries affiliated to Däbrä.
tions, is reported to have had a population of no less than one hundred monks or many more over a long period of time. For the early 16th cent. — shortly before the monastery was destroyed by Aḥmad Grañ — there are some pieces of evidence that the community was hierarchically organised according to the monastic grades, and the bestowing rites for the parts of the monastic habit were established and duly performed.\textsuperscript{33}

II

There is no doubt that the value of the story’s versions as presented in the hagiographic texts mentioned above is different for each of them. It is usually assumed that the hagiographers, more or less consciously, used their works for expressing their ideology and asserting the claims of their respective communities. However, one should not forget that this was just one — and possibly not even predominant — of the many functions at work in hagiographic texts. When compiling a new Vita, the hagiographer hardly distinguished those passages in the text which would serve as his monastic community’s «credo» or «proclamation»; however, he maintained the same «literary devices» throughout the work. In addition to the passages he penned himself, the hagiographer used elements he borrowed, directly or indirectly, from both oral and written sources, which he could re-interpret and/or revise. Bizän there were 1146 nuns (Conti Rossini — Ricci 1965:150). This information, however, refers to the peak of the Ewostatean movement; the number of monks decreased in the early 16th cent. (cp. Beckingham — Huntingford 1961:88–90); currently there is no trace of a large monastic settlement there. There are some other reports on monastic settlements with hundreds and even thousands of monks (cp. Girma Elyas 1977:101; Beckingham — Huntingford 1961:201). Even if these reports are trustworthy, big communities could not persist for long, since they would quickly exhaust the ecological resources of the region and would be vulnerable to epidemics and military conflicts (for the population in Byzantine monasteries, and approximate statistics comparable to the Ethiopian situation [notwithstanding the important cultural, social and economical differences!], s. Thomas — Constantinides Hero 2000, vol. 1, xvi–xvii).

\textsuperscript{33} Almeida, in: Historia Aethiopicae, ed. by C. Beccari, Roma 1907, book II, ch. xviii, 196–200. Almeida mentions those who assumed «the great habit» — the scapular; he also reports of an exceptionally lengthy probation period (7 years). A monk could assume the scapular only after he had assumed other parts of the habit (some assumed only the tunic first, and the monastic cap later), only if he reached the age of 30 years and fulfilled another period of probation. It seems that the community of Däbrä Libanos retains, to the great extent, the old organisation: it consists of probationers (arda’st, sg. rādσ’) who are waiting for being accepted into the monastery, junior monks (nσ’usan, sg. nσ’us), senior monks (a’σrug), and «perfect monks» (lit. «saints», qoddusan, sg. qoddus; s. ACDic IV, 142–156; for the term, s. also Ricci 1966:77 and 93, n. 174; Ricci 1969–70:145).
Thus, understanding the message of a hagiographic account would mean, to a great extent, disentangling the process of its emergence, the task being distinct from, though parallel to, establishing the work’s textual history within the framework of a critical edition. Let us therefore discuss each of the most important traditions that relate the story in question, in chronological order.

34 Even though I have already expressed my view concerning the hagiographic tradition of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot on several occasions, I would like to summarize here the most crucial points. It is generally accepted that the hagiographic tradition of the Vita consists of four recensions. 1) The Synaxarion note on 24 Nähase, the day of Täklä Haymanot’s death, is represented by at least two text-types: the old one (GUIDI 1912:377–383, the text from the MS «P»), and the more recent one (ibid. 1912:474–476, «Appendice»; cp. BUDGE 1928:1241–46). 2) The Waldabbä recension, only preserved in two copies (one of them, MS éth. 136, from Bibliothèque nationale de France, dates possibly into the 15th cent.) has the reign of Yəsḥaq (1414–1429) as its terminus post quem. It can not fully be excluded that this work does not date from an even earlier period, since King Yəsḥaq is not mentioned in the main body of the text, but in the «Miracles», which could be attached to the Vita somewhat later. 3) The best-known recension of the Vita is the Däbrä Libanos version (BUDGE 1906), compiled around 1515 by the initiative of ṣeḥage Ṣērones. This recension is represented by two text-types: the original one and its slightly reworked and much more recent variant (the first half of the 18th cent.?; cp. NOSNITZYN 2000). 4) There is a number of definitively interrelated texts — their archetype remains to be reconstructed — which precede the recension of Däbrä Libanos and were incorporated into it. The so-called Ḥayq recension (the critical edition of which I am currently preparing) owes its name to MS EMML 1834, a 16th-cent. Ġädlä Ṭaddusan from Däbrä Ḥayq Ḫṣṭifanos, the hagiographic collection with the Acts of Täklä Haymanot differing from both the Waldabbä and Däbrä Libanos recensions (see Getatchew Haile’s description of EMML 1834, 2134). MS EMML 8742, from Ṭanä Qərqos (not catalogued, accessible only in the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa), contains a text of the same type as EMML 1834, though with substantial differences. EMML 1834 seems to represent an abridged version (typical for a work included into a collection of texts), with a few new passages (in some cases the influence of the Däbrä Libanos recension can not be excluded) of the same text as in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éth. 342 = Griaule 38 (late 15th cent., s. GRÉBAUT 1941:18–20), to which 16th-cent. or older MS Ṭănäsee 162 = Däğa Ḫṣṭifanos 51 (SIX 1999:202–206) is identical. A suggestion concerning the dating of this text, designated as «the 1st Däbrä Libanos recension», ca. 1425–1426, was made on the basis of Éth. 697, another text related to Éth. 342 (s. DERAT 1998:77; for the internal evidence pointing to a slightly more recent time, i. e. to the early reign of Zăr’a Ya’aqob, s. NOSNITSIN 2003:149, n. 40). The brief version of the Synaxarion recension of the Vita appears to be one of the oldest hagiographic documents about Täklä Haymanot and most probably antedates both the Ḥayq and the Däbrä Libanos recensions; this text was the basic source for the compiler of the Ḥayq recension (s. NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming). After the Däbrä Libanos recension was composed, but before 1532, the Homilies on the annu-
In Waldëbba recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, the account of the Saint’s visit to (Däbrä) Ḥayq is included in the sequence of events which took place when the saint was wandering in northern Ethiopia. According to this recension, Täklä Haymanot decided to adopt the «monkish yoke» (አርስትርስ : የምንካርተር) after he was consecrated priest and distinguished himself while converting the people into Christianity. Thus, Täklä Haymanot went to Angot and reached Lake Ḥayq (አበረት : ከአርር), where he received the monastic habit (indiscriminately denoted here as «monastic clothes»: እስከላካት : እስከላካት : የምንካርተር) from Iyäsus Mo’a. After nine years, having received blessing from Iyäsus Mo’a, he moved (ኢትዮጵያ) to Tägray and received the monastic cap and scapular at Däbrä Dammo (the name of the superior is not mentioned). The account states that in Tägray Täklä Haymanot introduced many people into monastic life (አርስትርስ : የምንካርተር) and built/ founded many monasteries. On his way back to Sewa (አושaaS), Täklä Haymanot visited Ḥayq where the notorious conversation with Iyäsus Mo’a took place. The superior asked his pupil what he had on his head; having learnt that this is the «perfect order» of the monastic habit (ግርሳ-ምር : የምርንካርተር : የምንካርተር), he asked Täklä Haymanot to give him both the monastic cap and the scapular, and the latter fulfilled his teacher’s request.35

The perception of the Waldëbba recension as the early stage in the development of the hagiographic legend of Täklä Haymanot (which may have been «only» 120–140 years apart from the events it described) is important for understanding the episode. The hagiographer did not try to adapt the account to any literary model,36 being perhaps not skilled or knowledgeable al holidays of the Saint and three respective collections of the Miracles were attached to the Vita. «The Book of the Translation of the Body of Täklä Haymanot», which is usually found in the MSS with the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita, represents a still separate tradition (s. NOSNITSIN 2003).

enough to put the narrative into a more elaborate literary shape, or simply having no intention to do so. Thus, in the Waldëbba recension the account has neither literary decorative elements nor, seemingly, ideological implications, and may have a direct link to the oral legend, as attested by the frank and somewhat naïve expression of astonishment and admiration in the words Iyäsus Mo’a directed to his own pupil: «Oh my son! What is it on your head, and what is on your neck?, and the following: «Give me the (thing) that is similar to what I see on your neck, for it is nice!».

The Synaxarion commemoration of Täklä Haymanot on 24 Nähase (in its «short version») differs from the Waldëbba recension of the Vita of the Saint. While reporting that Täklä Haymanot had only one spiritual teacher — Bäsälötä Mika’el of Amĥara (s. above, n. 7), it does not mention whether Täklä Haymanot received from him any separate part of the monastic habit. This story was incorporated into the hagiographic legend of Täklä Haymanot as a stable element and appears in other recensions of the Vita, its variations being developed from the common narrative core: Täklä Haymanot stayed in the monastic community of Bäsälötä Mika’el for a long time (the Synaxarion: ṭḥḥ.: ṣn̄): and was introduced into the monastic life; yet neither version says that he received there either monkish robe, or monastic cap and scapular.

The Ḥayq («1st Dabrä Libanos») recension as transmitted in MS Éth. 342 = Griaule 38 and a few other manuscripts presents the story of Täklä Hay-

37 One may get an impression of a somewhat «anecdotal» character of the account, which in this sense appears to be unique and differs from both hagiographic accounts and reality: it is hardly possible that monastic cap and scapular could be adopted in such a simplified way and without appropriate rituals (still another feature of an oral account?). Curiously, the account implicates that Täklä Haymanot was «deprived», in fact, of his monastic cap and scapular, which he had to give to his spiritual teacher. Most probably, in this case we should assume that, to a certain extent, this passage of the Waldëbba recension remains a mystery — we still have no proper understanding of the message conveyed in the episode. So far I have found no similar stories in other hagiographic sources that could facilitate the analysis.

38 At the same time, the Synaxarion reports that, in Wägda, Täklä Haymanot «gave the monastic garb» (ḥl̲nl̲mn.: ḫnl̲n.: ḫnl̲n̲) to his first 17 disciples (GUIDI 1912:382).

39 On the one hand, the reliability of this account is difficult to assess against what is said in the Waldëbba recension of the Vita (it looks a little unusual that a novice could spend a considerable number of years in the monastic community while receiving no part of the monastic habit; in fact, we can only speculate why in one case it is Iyäsus Mo’a, in another Bäsälötä Mika’el); on the other hand, this «lacuna» inspired other hagiographers to «fill» it with different personalities — spiritual teachers — who overshadowed Bäsälötä Mika’el (s. NOSNITSIN 2006, forthcoming).

40 Apart from MS Eth. 342 = Griaule 38, I was able to check MS Tănasee 162 = Dăgă Estifanos 51; furthermore, MS Éth. 697 (s. French translation in DUCHESNE-FOURNET 1908, vol. 1, 338–440), though recent (18th/19th cent.?) and copied with omissions and mistakes, contains the same variant of the story.
manot’s stay at Däbrä Ḥayq Ģståfanos as a lengthy and detailed account containing much more information than the Waldabba recension (the latter was obviously unknown to the author). Apparently following the Synaxarion note, the text reports that Täklä Haymanot entered the community of Bäsälotä Mika’el (neither its name nor its location are designated), asking Bäsälotä Mika’el to educate him in the «monastic custom(s)>> (ってくる：するもの). Yet neither here nor further on does the text mention any separate part of the habit as symbols of the grades of monastic profession, though it does touch upon some topics related to regulations of monastic life.41 After a long stay with Bäsälotä Mika’el, Täklä Haymanot proceeds to Däbrä Ḥayq Ģståfanos and remains there for 10 years, before returning to his native Sāwa (Šāwa). In general, the text in MS Eth. 342 = Griaule 38 does not add anything special to the episode in question.42 The account is enriched with hagiographic «common places» on the endurance of the Saint in fasting and praying, his miraculous walking on the water, etc.

41 The account about Täklä Haymanot’s life in the monastery of Bäsälotä Mika’el is lengthy (MS Eth. 342, fol. 89vb–97ra), very dynamic and full of developments. In the scene of the first conversation between Bäsälotä Mika’el and Täklä Haymanot, the hagiographer raises an important topic concerning the monastic discipline, namely, the move from one monastic community to another. Bäsälotä Mika’el states that a monk should ask his superior (mämḥor) for permission if he wants to leave his community and move to another one; otherwise the head of any other community may not accept him, under the threat of «excommunication» (']: ]; MS Eth. 342, fol. 89vb–90rb). This statement certainly reflects the constant intention of the monastic elite to prevent the uncontrolled wandering of monks (cp. Kaplan 1984:49); however, the request of Bäsälotä Mika’el as presented in the Ḥayq recension — to hear the words of Täklä Haymanot’s mämḥor confirm what Täklä Haymanot said — appears to be a literary device «repairing» the inconsistency of the legend concerning Täklä Haymanot’s initial receiving of the monastic garb. Bäsälotä Mika’el accepted Täklä Haymanot as «a monk from the country of Sewa» (the monk with whom Täklä Haymanot travelled was also convinced that he was a monk), though the latter has virtually not entered the monastic profession yet. However, Täklä Haymanot tells that it was his mämḥor who sent him to Bäsälotä Mika’el to learn the monastic life, while the Holy Spirit confirms his words. Though the language of the passage is somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that Täklä Haymanot virtually had no spiritual teacher; so the Holy Spirit orders Bäsälotä Mika’el to «make him a monk» (…持续推进：するもの：するもの）, whereas the question of the assumption of the monastic habit remains without clear answer.

42 It only reports that Iyäsus Mo’a received Täklä Haymanot well and offered him a «dwelling» (持续推进：するもの、MS Eth. 342, fol. 98ra); the account about Täklä Haymanot’s stay at Däbrä Ḥayq Ģståfanos is very brief (fol. 97rb–100va), its major portion being of a didactic treatise inspired by Mt. 25 (fol. 98ra–vb). Occasionally, the text refers to the monastic habit (持续推进：するもの） that Täklä Haymanot took upon his nephew Marqos, «his brother, the son of his father’s brother in the flesh» (fol. 100va:持续推进：するもの：持续推进：持续推进） in Wägda (s. Nosnitsin 2006, forth-
The text preserved in the 15th-cent. MS EMML 8742 from Ṭana Qirqos represents a source of particular value, unfolding a version of the story as possibly related and perceived in the 15th cent. by the monks of Ṭana communities. According to MS EMML 8742, too, Täklä Haymanot spent a number of years at the place of Bäšälotä Mika’el, without the formal assumption of the monastic habit.⁴³ Thereafter, the angel told him to go to Däbrä Ḥayq Əştıfanos, where Iyäsus Mo’a was supposed to vest him with «the monastic yoke» ( حقيقيي : بَحِيَّة). Täklä Haymanot went to Ḥayq, did not find a boat, and stood praying until Archangel Michael appeared, walking on the surface of the water (fol. 35rb), and urging Täklä Haymanot to follow.⁴⁴ Here, at Däbrä Ḥayq Əştıfanos, Iyäsus Mo’a vested Täklä Haymanot with the monastic garb, obviously completing the ritual of the monastic consecration.⁴⁵ After some time, Täklä Haymanot decided to visit other monasteries,⁴⁶ and,

⁴³ Täklä Haymanot is called by God «to adopt the monastic habit of the fathers» (کَشَرَحُنَّ أَبَا : چَنَرْتُنَّ : وَحَلَّلْنَّ : نُشِرَتْنَّ : لُمِّنِكُنَّ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ, fol. 31va), the name of the place he is supposed to go to is not indicated. When he comes to a monastery, he is accommodated by a monk. The following day, the abä märnet of the place, abba Bäšälotä Mika’el, is informed about the new-comer and asks him to come (fol. 31rv: ٌنَحْنَ : ٌمُهْرِسَ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ : لُمِّنِكُنَّ). When Täklä Haymanot enters, Bäšälotä Mika’el stands up, greets him and kisses his head (fol. 32ra ... ٌلَعْبَتِ یَ حْرَسُ آ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ : لُمِّنِكُنَّ : نُشِرَتْنَّ). Bäšälotä Mika’el questions Täklä Haymanot, since «this is the custom of the wise» (fol. 32rb... ٌنَحْنَ : ٌمُهْرِسَ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ : لُمِّنِكُنَّ...). Bäšälotä Mika’el allows Täklä Haymanot to stay with him, yet nothing is said about the assumption of a monastic habit. Täklä Haymanot serves in the community doing every kind of work (32vb: ٌلَعْبَتِ یَ حْرَسُ آ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ : لُمِّنِكُنَّ : نُشِرَتْنَّ...), here the narration being interrupted by biblical quotations (Mt. 20:28; Phil. 2:3–9). Then the contendings of Täklä Haymanot are described (fol. 33rb-va), including him healing a man possessed by a demon (ٌلَعْبَتِ یَ حْرَسُ آ : دَفْرَسْتُنَّ; fol. 33va–34rb). Finally, Täklä Haymanot is displeased by fame (fol. 34va).

⁴⁴ Täklä Haymanot and Archangel Michael reach the church of the monastery; there follows a complex account on how Iyäsus Mo’a learnt about Täklä Haymanot’s arrival, how the key-keeper (ٌعَرْبِ) informed him about the coming of a guest (cjąس) and let Täklä Haymanot enter (fol. 35va–36ra, s. below).


having crossed Lake Ḥyq by walking on the water once again, he went further and reached Däbrä Dämme. Here, at «the place of Arägawi», he took on the monastic cap and scapular, the name of the superior — Täklä Haymanot’s spiritual father — not being mentioned. After the description of Täklä Haymanot’s contendings at Däbrä Dämme and an extensive praise of him, there follows a note on Täklä Haymanot’s travelling around Däbrä Dammo and back to Sewa (Ṣāwa), via Däbrä Ḥyq, and — the most important matter — the note concerning the parts of the monastic habit received by Iyäsus Mo’a from his spiritual son Täklä Haymanot, with a striking statement: «...And many of our elders told that our father Iyäsus Mo’a took the (monastic) cap and scapular from his (spiritual) son Täklä Haymanot».

The passage on fol. 39va recalls the Waldsbbba recension of the Vita; and it is remarkable that the hagiographer refers to an oral tradition — not to the «old writings» — as to his source.

The most remarkable thing is that the same version of the story is found in a copy of the work produced at Däbrä Ḥyq ʿAstifanos — late 15th/early 16th-cent. MS EMML 1834 — the text that gave name for the entire recension. This text repeats the entire passage narrating the «monastic career» of Täklä Hamnyanot as it appears in MS EMML 8742 (including what the «elders told» of Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic cap and scapular). There are some differences which probably reveal the virtual considerations of the hagiographer: e. g., in EMML 1834 the phrase Ḥyq’s life as it appears in MS EMML 8742 (including what the «elders told» of Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic cap and scapular).
Like EMML 8742, EMML 1834 refers to two spiritual fathers of the saint (አንህን-
сут, : ከማን, ከማን): an unknown monk of ደብብራ ዝምም and ከያህስ ከማ∂ of ደብብራ ክሱንq.54

The question of how the hagiographic tradition explains the strange story of ማክላ ከህነውንት giving the monastic cap and scapular to his spiritual fa-

ther makes it necessary to examine the traditions of ደብብራ ዝምም. The Vita

of ድአ-

闩-

ሃ-

el እሬሹሊ እሶም is supposed to be the most important source.55 The passa-
ge which is usually referred to in connection with the analyzed episode is not

included in the description of the life of ድአ-

闩-

el. It is found in a brief

history of the community of ደብብራ ዝምም — attached to the biography of

the Saint. In turn, this history is not a homogeneous text: it encompasses

several different (predominantly historiographic) pieces, mostly following

the sequence of the abbots of ደብብራ ዝምም — from መትያስ to ድ-

 AAC-

us. The narration concerning the tenure of ኢባባ ዝሄሱን — the seventh after ድአ-

闩-

el — is composed of two notes. The first reports the construction of a

church; the second refers to two prominent monastic leaders visiting ደብብራ ክሱንq — ከያሁስ ከማ∂ and ማክላ ከህነውን.56 The account obviously follows

the chronology of events: ከያህስ ከማ∂ came first, received the «scapular of

54 S. EMML 8742, fol. 40ra; EMML 1834, fol. 100va.

55 S. DEB 209–210 («Zä-Mika’èl ’Arägawi»); RAINERI in: EnSanti II, 1382; the Vita of Zä-

闩-

el እሬሹሊ is supposed to have been written in the second half of the 15th cent. (GUIDI 1932:60; RICCI 1969:825).

56 After the description of the death of the Saint in the time of king ጋብሮ ረሱስ the there is no concluding formula, only the blessing: ደሮ-

ሱ: ከፉርሱር: ከፉርሱር: ከፉርሱር: ከፉርሱር (s. GUIDI 1895:31). It is followed by the accounts about:

the tenure of መትያስ, who is credited with having commissioned the writing of the Vita of Zä-

闩-

el and — along with ወያቅ — to have been the main informant about the life of Zä-

闩-

el (ibid. 31–32); the commemoration of the Saint, established by መትያስ, with the miracle the multiplication of foods (ወ-

ሱራሱ: የር-

ሱሱ: የሱራሱ: የሱራሱ, .. etc., ibid. 32); stories of the Saint’s (posthumous) miracles related by the

witnesses — his spiritual sons (ወ-

ሱሱ: ከፉርሱር: ከፉርሱር: .. etc.). These stories reached king ጋብሮ ረሱስ, who bestowed upon the community the rich land possessions enumerated in the text (መ-

ሱሱ: ከፉሱ: ከፉሱ: ከፉሱ, .. etc., ibid. 32–33); the tenure of መትያስ and the internal order of the community (መ-

ሱሱ: ከፉሱ: ከፉሱ: .. etc., ibid. 33–34). After Matyas’s death, the account proceeds with brief mentions of Yosef and መ-

ሱስ-

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ሱስ, the subsequent two abbots, and with an extensive story of the
tenure of ኢባባ ዝሄሱን (ibid. 34: ዯ-

ሱሱ: ዯ-

ሱሱ: ዯ-

ሱሱ: .. etc., ibid. 35–36). I have checked quite a number of manuscripts containing the Vita of Zä-

闩-

el እሬሹሊ, and in all of them the portion of the text described above reveals no substantial differences (apart from the usual va-

riant readings).
the monks» from abba Yoḥanni and went to Ḥayq. Shortly after, Ṭäklä Haymanot arrived from the place of Iyāsus Mo’a (sic!) and asked for the monastic cap and scapular. However, as he told of his intention to go to Jerusalem, Yoḥanni persuaded him to give up this idea. Ṭäklä Haymanot received the monastic cap and scapular and, after several years at Dābrā Dammo (in Guidi’s edition: 12 years), returned to Iyāsus Mo’a. The account ends with the laudation of both Ṭäklä Haymanot and Iyāsus Mo’a. The hagiographer seems to be generally unbiased, and, at a first glance, has no other aim than preserving the memory of the two prominent monks in the annals of his monastery.57

57 Here is the English translation of the Ethiopic passage (Guidi 1895:34–35; the editor did not translate the passage into Italian, and limited the renarration to only a brief remark [ibid. 42]: «Abbä Yohanî riveste dell’abito monacale Abbâ Iyasus Mo’a»...): «And thereafter abba Iyāsus Mo’a came and said to abba Yoḥanni: ‘Oh abba, vest me with the scapular of monks [the monastic habit? ḥālrəl / ḥālə ᵘ : ḥwənlə ᵗ]’. And then he vested him, and he stayed for a long time obeying his teacher. And he learned the writing and became the one who loved solitude and prayer (ḑəhə : ḥwənlə ᵗ : ḥwənlə ᵗ : ḥwənlə ᵗ). And he was alone among the rocks, and he wrote the (book of) Gospels there, which exists until now. And he went and returned to a country whose name was Ḥayq, and he became the father of many monks there. And after a short time abba Ṭäklä Haymanot came, having taken on the soldier’s clothes (?; ḥārə / ḥærə) from abba Iyāsus Mo’a, and wished to go to Jerusalem. And he reached the holy Dābrā Dammo where abba Yoḥanni resided. As he saw him, he liked him and kissed him; and he told him about (the cause of) his coming, and he said to him: ‘I came so that you would vest me with the monastic cap and scapular; I wish to go to the Sepulchre of our Lord’. And abba Yoḥanni said to him: ‘I do not think (that you should) go (ḥālrəl / ḥālə ᵗ : ḥwənlə ᵗ); but you will be (dhəhə / ḥwənlə ᵗ) father of many (monks) here. But let us tell (this) together (ʔʔwəl / ḥwən) to God, in order that he will show us the good way’. And he gave him the scapular and monastic cap, and they stayed together, devoting themselves to praying. Our father Ṭäklä Haymanot worked signs and miracles, and he was with abba Yoḥanni for 12 years. He returned to Iyāsus Mo’a having taken the scapular and monastic cap, for he had gone out of a desire of righteousness, loving the solitude and seclusion. They — Iyāsus Mo’a and abba Ṭäklä Haymanot — are wide in (their) branches, and they generated bright stars, as numerous as the sea sand, and they filled the land of the south (ʔʔwəl / ḥwən). The words ḥālrə / ḥærə were not translated by Guidi, but were interpreted in Taddesse Tamrat 1972:165 (followed by Kaplan 1986:54) as: «dressed like a soldier». Indeed, ḥarrə in Go’az means «army, troops»; yet the hagiographer did not mean «soldier» in the proper (military) sense, but was probably referring to the Saint as «a soldier of Christ» (ḥawawi zä-Kræstos). However, as an alternative explanation one may suggest that the word ḥarrə might be connected with Arabic word ḥār or Amharic harr ‘silk’ (s. Leslau 1987:243), hence ḥbsă ḥarrə may originally have the meaning «silk garb», i.e., «white cloth» referring to the monastic garb; about the Arabic loanwords in the Vita s. Guidi 1895:54). The Vita simply mentions that Ṭäklä Haymanot came to Yoḥanni from Iyāsus Mo’a, having received the monastic garb, but not yet the monastic cap and scapular.
Surprisingly, the comparison of additional manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi demonstrates that one of the most important passages is uncertain to such a degree that one should ask, who — Täklä Haymanot or Iyäsus Mo’a — «left without receiving the cap and scapular»?\textsuperscript{58} Understand-

\textsuperscript{58} Cp. Guidi’s edition: [\ldots \text{\ldots}].

— Cp. a copy of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi from the monastic library of Däbrä Ḥayq, MS EMML 1953 (18\textsuperscript{th} cent.; cp. SERGEW HABLE-SELASSIE 1992): (fol. 38va-39ra) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldot
ing that the text of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi should be established in a new critical edition, I assume nevertheless that the short eulogy concluding the account originally contained the name of abba Täklä Haymanot only; therefore, the phrase «...for, not having received the cap and scapular, he left seeking righteousness, desiring silence and solitude...» originally referred to Täklä Haymanot, whereas the name of Iyäsus Mo’a was added at a later point.59

In other words, the (hypothetical) archetype could have read: ኢያስוס መ’=: ኢያስוס መ’=: ኢያስوس መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያስውስ መ’=: ኢያคำตอบ 59 The inclusion of the name of Iyäsus Mo’a into this passage could have led to its gradual re-interpretation with harmonisation of the grammatical forms up to the thorough usage of the plural ones (as in the text presented by I. Guidi):

In the introduction to the edition I. Guidi states that the text of the Vita has been established on the basis of three manuscripts: 1) British Museum Add. 16,228 (DILLMANN 1847:50, no. 46, not dated) = L1; 2) Orient. 709 (WRIGHT 1877:188, no. 285, «first half of the XVIII cent». ) = L2; 3) Museo Borgiano L. V, 12 (missing for many years, s. GREBAUT — TISSERANT 1935:828) = R1. Additionally, the fourth one — 4) Museo Borgiano, L. V, 13 (ibid. 826–828, no. 22) = R2, dated to 1559 r. — presents special variants not shared by the first three copies. R2 reads: ...

59 If the original sentence had two subjects connected by a particle, all the forms would preferably have taken the plural (cp. DILLMANN 1907:501–502); there would have been no reason for divergent readings.

60 «He returned to Iyäsus Mo’a having taken the scapular and monastic cap (ክልልውስ: ከአብባ እልወርጭ), for he had gone because of desire of righteousness, loving the solitude and seclusion. He, abba Täklä Haymanot, became wide in (his) branches, and he generated bright stars as numerous as the sea sand, and they filled the land of the south». In the Waldobba recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, the metaphor «wide in (his) branches» refers to Täklä Haymanot, while mädrä azeb (lit. ‘the land of the south’, cp. ngaštä azeb from Mt. 12:42) may refer to the historical southern part of Ethiopia, i. e. Šäwa, the region thought to have been the place of Täklä Haymanot’s major activities.
However, there is another account found in the manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el only a page before this one, relating, in clear terms (and in keeping with the hypothetical reading), that Iyäsus Mo’a received the scapular from abba Yoḥanni, and disrupting the entire construal of Täklä Haymanot giving the monastic cap and scapular to his spiritual father. The manuscript tradition of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el currently counts more than 15 testimonia, but it is difficult to answer such questions as: 1) whether the historiographic notes were composed together with the Vita or added some time thereafter; 2) at what time the contradictory reading emerged. In any case, it is clear that, in the 16th cent., anyone reading the Vita could have had two interpretations of the episode in question.

From what has been said, it is not difficult to presume that in the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot the corresponding account — about Täklä Haymanot acquiring the grades of the monastic profession — emerged as a synthesis of several earlier hagiographic traditions. The origin of the different elements, however, can not be always established, since by the beginning of the 16th cent. they must have been included in «common version(s)» of the legend of Täklä Haymanot — the famous Saint, — circulating along with the written traditions of his Vita. Yet, it is certain that the author of the Däbrä Libanos recension shaped his narrative following, more or less, the structure of the account according to the Ḥayq recension and used extensively its text(s), while extracting less voluminous but important details from another — Waldabbba — recension of the Vita.

The narrative structure of the account about the Saint’s wanderings is symmetrical: Täklä Haymanot departs from and returns to Däbrä Ḥayq Īṣṭī-
fanos; before returning to Däbrä Ḥayq he goes to Däbrä Dammo, departs from there and returns there. Täklä Haymanot leaves Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṭifanos seeking to receive the monastic cap and scapular, having been requested by Iyåsus Mo’a to also bring the cap and scapular to him. In Däbrä Dammo he receives the cap and scapular from abba Yoḥanni then he proceeds to other monasteries receiving blessings from other monks, and after three pilgrimages to Jerusalem he returns to Däbrä Dammo again. The sequence of the episodes is concluded with Täklä Haymanot’s second coming to Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṭifanos and his handing over of the monastic cap and scapular to Iyåsus Mo’a. In the Däbrä Libanos recension, when asking Täklä Haymanot to give him the monastic cap and scapular, Iyåsus Mo’a expresses the essence of his request by means of the sentence found, in the same function, in the Waldæbbba recension (the sentence was incorporated in the corresponding passage of the Däbrä Libanos recension!):

The episode in its entirety appears neither in the short version of the Täklä Haymanot’s commemorative reading in the Synaxarion nor in the Ḥayq recension-related texts of the Saint’s Vita. A remarkable chronological element, not attested in the earlier versions of the story, is the inclusion of abba Yoḥanni, during whose tenure Täklä Haymanot, then, came to Däbrä Dammo — certainly a result of the influence of the hagiographical tradition of Zä-Mika’il.

64 [Ṣäwa] — Däbrä Ḥayq — Däbrä Dammo — pilgrimages — Däbrä Ḥayq — [Ṣäwa].


66 BUDGE 1906, ch. 78 (s. n. 11, above).

67 BUDGE 1906, ch. 86.

68 BUDGE 1906, ch. 87 (s. also n. 12, above).
Arägawi. It is noticeable that the author of the Däbrä Libanos recension chose (from the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi?) one particular version of the story, yet it is not certain that the episode of that recension was supposed to demonstrate in any way Täklä Haymanot’s superiority over Iyäsus Mo’a. This interpretation can not be excluded, but the primary goal of the hagiographer was most probably the «historical reconstruction» of the episode on the basis of (all) the pieces, scattered in different traditions, included into a coherent and complete account of the Saint’s wandering; this account tells the story which, in fact, is not quite different from the one in MS EMML 1834. One should not assume that the primary aim of the author was to refer to the contemporary situation of his monastery and its relations with Däbrä Ḥayq Ǝştifanos, or to express any kind of ideological program or claims. In addition, in order to understand the limitations of any direct interpretation in this case, one should consider other episodes from the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, as well as accounts from other hagiographies; despite the turbulent religious history of Ethiopia, and the very intensive production of hagiographic works, the topos of the assumption of the parts of the monastic habit (as well as that of spiritual fathership) does not seem to have been overexploited.

The hagiographic tradition known as the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a — the document which has attracted much attention in recent years — raises even more complicated questions. Some time ago the so-called «Homily [in honour]

69 There are some narrative elements shared by both texts. 1) As in the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi, the Däbrä Libanos recension reports that Täklä Haymanot spent 12 years at Däbrä Dammo. 2) the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi might have also been the source for the account of Täklä Haymanot’s pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Even though the former reports that abba Yoḥanni persuaded Täklä Haymanot to leave the idea of the pilgrimage to the Holy City, the Däbrä Libanos recension transformed the topic into a «positive account» and reports of the Saint’s three visits to the holy city (beside the fact that the pilgrimage to Jerusalem is one of the most common motifs of Ethiopian hagiography). 3) The Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi might account for the unusual situation: how it happened that Iyäsus Mo’a, though having stayed at Däbrä Dammo, did not receive the scapular (according to the Däbrä Libanos recension, he did not receive either the monastic cap or scapular) and, afterwards, had to ask his disciple Täklä Haymanot to bring him these parts of the monastic habit.

70 In fact, among the sources discussed in this article, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a was the latest to have been studied and published (s. E. Cerulli, in KÜR 1965, also for the sources of the work, the rivalry between the monasteries and its possible historical context; for the substitution of Iyäsus Mo’a through Täklä Haymanot in the legend about the re-establishment of the Solomonic dynasty, and the aforementioned polemical passage in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a). This was compensated by the fact, that the hagiography of Iyäsus Mo’a has attracted considerable attention in recent years: s. MARRASSINI 1986; TEDESCHI 1994; Id. in: EnSanti II, 267–271; KROPP 1998, 2003; HIRSCH 2003.
of Iyäsus Mo’a» came to light, in which the biography and contending of this Saint are depicted in a different way from the Vita 71. The dating of the composition of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a to the period between the second half of the 15th cent. and the beginning of the 16th cent. 72 seems to have been abandoned. Currently, the Homily, not the Vita, has been largely seen as the earlier stage in the development of the hagiographic tradition of Iyäsus Mo’a, both works having different literary features and functions. 73 The Vita ap-

71 The value of this text has been fully recognized only in the recent years: s. Tedeschi 1994, with a fine analysis of the Vita but with the Homily largely discarded; the same in Serweg Hable-Selassie 1992; cp. also Tedeschi in: EnSanti II, 267–271; Baum, in: BBK XX, 804–806. In the latter publication the Homily is mentioned, yet the biography of the Saint is presented without differentiation of the sources or references to the origin of the details; cp., e.g., one «common place»: «Als Junge wanderte er nach Tigre und trat in das Kloster Debre Damo ein, wo er unter Abba Yohannis zum Kalligraphen und Theologen ausgebildet wurde». At the same time, the author states: «Das Gadl des Heiligen (EMML 1940) wurde nach 1601 aus älteren Quellen wie z.B. einer Homilie auf den Heiligen (dersan) und Motiven aus den Erzählreisen über die Anfänge der Salomoniden zusammengestellt».

72 E. Cerulli points to the second half of the 15th cent. (Cerulli 1961:95). In the preface to the translation of the text, he considers the Vita «la rédaction composite» and states: des Actes de Iyasus Mo’ a ici édités ont été rédigés dans leur forme actuelle dans la deuxième moitié du XV e siècle (Kur 1965:XIV–XV). Yet some arguments supposed to foster this hypothesis (ibid. IV–V, XV) appear today less convincing: e.g., «style ‘fléuri’ des introductions» is not a feature of 15th-cent. literary works alone; in the case of Dərsanā Ura Ḩel one should remember that the recension which is referred to was composed in the 19th cent. (in the library of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḩistifanos there are both the brief and the lengthy recension of this text, s. MS EMML 1942) etc. Cerulli stresses: «la question … des rapports entre Iyasus Mo’a et Takla Häymänot qui ne s’expliqueraient qu’en se référant à la période où l’hégémonie sur le clergé régulier éthiopien était à peine passée ou sur le point de passer de St Étienne de Ḥayq à celui de Dabra Libānos…» (Kur 1965:XV).

73 Against the cautious point of view expressed by Marrassini 1986:177, criticizing the proposal of Getatchew Haile in his comments to MS EMML 1960. The problem of the relationship between the Vita and the Homily was mostly dealt with by M. Kropp, who came to the conclusion that the terminus post quem for the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a should be «Ende des 15./Anfang des 16. Jhds» (Kropp 1998:306); in his more recent publication, Kropp concludes, regarding in particular MS EMML 1960, that «der Textzeuge des dersan älter ist (Anfang 15. Jhdt.?), und der Text selbst aus noch früherer Zeit stammen kann» (Kropp 2003:194); the question of the time of the composition of the Vita remains without a clear answer (yet it is supposed to have been an instrument acting as a response to the spreading legend of Täklä Haymanot; ibid., 195). Recently, M.-L. Derat has summarized existing views, yet she cautiously accepted the old chronology and considers the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a to have been created prior to that of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension («la fin du XV e siècle»: Derat 2003:88–90, 107, 109, 118 and elsewhere).
pears to have been composed on the basis of the Homily by means of the revision and insertion of new pieces, including the well-known «testaments» between Iyäsus Mo’a and king Yskunno Amlak. Consequently, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a can be characterized, at first glance, as a hagiographic compilation — belonging to the same type of hagiographic composition as the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension.

As to the origin and structure of the passages concerning the relationship between Täklä Haymanot and Iyäsus Mo’a, the Vita of the latter has the topic developed in three separate and complicated accounts:

1) Two parts of different origin can be distinguished in the first account. The first is clearly based on a fragment taken almost verbatim from the Homily with the only difference being that in the Homily Iyäsus Mo’a receives from abba Yoḥanni both the scapular and the girdle, whereas in the Vita — the monastic garb (clothes) and girdle. The theme of the parts of the monastic habit is only further developed in the Vita; the second part of the account, in which, following his «monastic carrier», Iyäsus Mo’a receives the scapular and monastic cap, is based on a rather faithful borrowing from the Acts of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi.

75 In the Homily, the account of Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic habit from abba Yoḥanni appears after the following episodes, which, in fact, do not differ much from what is recounted in the Vita: Iyäsus Mo’a leaves the worldly life, together with pious Yoḥanni and other companions (fol. 31va–33va; KUR 1965, 8–9:25); he comes to abbot Yoḥanni and is introduced into the community (fol. 33va–rb; KUR 1965, 9:25–10:10); as Iyäsus Mo’a was dispatched to a travelling, he met robbers who were going to kill him (fol. 33rb–34rb, KUR 1965, 10:10–10:25); Iyäsus Mo’a punishes a rich man who has refused to let the Saint sleep in his house (fol. 34rb–35vb; KUR 1965, 10:25–13:2); Iyäsus Mo’a stays (at Däbrä Dammo) for seven years humbly completing his pious works (fol. 35vb–36ra; KUR 1965, 13:2–14:5). After he carries out one extremely difficult task received from Yoḥanni, the latter brings him into the church, reads a prayer and, according to the Homily, the blessing from his teacher»; the Vita has a slight, yet important change: instead of «the scapular», it has «monastic clothes/habit».

76 After the accounts of miracles that happen to Iyäsus Mo’a while in Däbrä Dammo (fol. 37ra–38rb; cp. KUR 1965, 15:4–17:24), there follows — in the Vita only — the story of the foundation of Däbrä Ḥayq, the legend of the dragon (KUR 1965,
2) In the second account, which is missing in the Homily, there appears abba Täklä Haymanot. The account begins with a short traditional history of the Ethiopian monastic movement, exposed, apparently, from the point of view of the community of Däbrä Dammo, with the list of regions where Iyäsus Mo’a’s spiritual children preached and founded monasteries. After a mention of the «testament» between Iyäsus Mo’a and king Yékunno Amlak, in accordance with which the title of ‘aggabe sä’îcat was given to the abbot of Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṭifanos, the hagiographer describes the pious life that Iyäsus Mo’a lead in his monastery and then proceeds with a lengthy account concerning abba Täklä Haymanot which appears to be comprised of three parts:

I. Täklä Haymanot arrives at Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṭifanos, he assumes the monastic yoke and takes on the tunic, girdle and monastic cap from Iyäsus Mo’a. He stays at Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣṭifanos for 10 years — 7 years before and 3 years after the assumption of the monastic habit, the numbers, most probably, brought in accordance with the Däbrä Libanos recension of the Acts of Täklä Haymanot; the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a is enlarged by details describing how Iyäsus Mo’a went to Ḥayq following a directive from Archangel Gabriel (KUR 1965, 21:20–22:7).

II. This lengthy part relating how Täklä Haymanot received the scapular is composed of several episodes. The Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a narrates Täklä Haymanot’s departure to Däbrä Dammo and his stay with abba Yoḥanni (following, in general, the outline of Täklä Haymanot’s legend). The Vita reports that Täklä Haymanot wanted to go to his country, yet, when Iyäsus Mo’a said good-bye to him, Täklä Haymanot headed in the opposite direction, to the north — to abba Yoḥanni (ibid. 20), a notice on Gäbrä Yōn, Iyäsus Mo’a’s brother who has entered «another monastery» and dies on the 25th of Yäkkatit (ibid. 20:21–21:6). The next account (about the construction of a church «in the entrance of [Yoḥanni’s] cave», ibid. 21:6–21:13) is the same — with the exception of some slight changes — as in the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi (GUIDI 1895:34, ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... ἅρμα: ἁρμα: ...)

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79 S. n. 7, above. KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18, from: ... ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ... to the most relevant sentence: ωληγρηγησας: ἡληγησας ...
While telling Täklä Haymanot to receive the scapular at Däbrä Dammo, Iyäsus Mo’a himself confirms that he went from Däbrä Dammo without the scapular: "I went from Däbrä Dammo without the scapular: [sic]". The sentence is related to the corresponding passage from the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi and closely follows it, though with one correction.

Further on, Iyäsus Mo’a explains why he went without receiving the scapular: he was involved in a political struggle on the side of Yäkunno Amlak and could not return. On the following pages, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a narrates how Täklä Haymanot came to Däbrä Dammo and met Yoänni (extensively drawing upon the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi, with the difference that it refers to the scapular only) and indicates that Täklä Haymanot received the scapular from Yoänni and spent 7 years at Däbrä Dammo.

III. This part relates how Täklä Haymanot, being on the way from Däbrä Dammo to his native region, met Iyäsus Mo’a for the second time. He brought the scapular and delivered it to his spiritual father, not only fulfilling the latter’s order, but also obeying the request of abba Yoänni. The hagiographer agrees that Iyäsus Mo’a accepted the scapular from Täklä Haymanot (but the scapular only: "Iyäsus Mo’a accepted the scapular from Täklä Haymanot..."), considering it credible from the point of view of both the history and monastic canon, and, 81 They crossed the lake walking on its water: "They crossed the lake walking on its water:..."

82 KUR 1965, 37:2–3, cp. the translation: «Je suis jadis de chez toi sans prendre chez toi le scapulaire, ayant aimé le silence at la solitude» (ibid. 30 [tr.]). Also above, nn. 60, 61; GUIDI 1895:35 (in particular manuscript A): ("Je suis jadis de chez toi..."")..."

83 In a difficult phrase, clearly influenced by Amharic speech, Iyäsus Mo’a asks Täklä Haymanot to transmit his request to Yoänni and bring him the scapular from Däbrä Dammo: "Now, having said to him: send (it) for me, tell him (all this)!" (the French translation in ibid. 30 [tr.] is not quite exact).

84 Cp. GUIDI 1895:34: ("..."")... till ibid. 35: ... - the passage we have already referred to. Cp. KUR 1965, 37:20–38:8. As in other cases, it is impossible to ascertain which text of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el was used; yet the relation between the traditions is transparent, apart from the similar structure of the episode in the both works, cp., in particular, in the Vita of Zä-Mika’el: ("..."")...", cp., ibid., 38:2–3. In many manuscripts of the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi it is said that Täklä Haymanot spent 7 years at Däbrä Dammo (see n. 58, also n. 6, above); the number 12 does not seem to be the prevailing reading.

85 Cp. KUR 1965, 38:8–23, from "..."..."..."..."..."..."..."..."
probably, seeing a comparable situation in the Bible, as indicated by the quotation of Jn. 3:27. By means of the quotation, the hagiographer transposes the story of Iyäsus Mo’a receiving the scapular with the biblical account of the Baptism of Jesus Christ: the interpretation of the story remains, thus, «open», since each of the Saints — both the spiritual father and son, senior and junior — can be considered as the one with «greater grace». Even though Iyäsus Mo’a humbly accepts the formal initiation from Täklä Haymanot, the one who is junior, the latter fulfils the request of a senior monk and his spiritual teacher; in any case, the consecration of the scapular for Iyäsus Mo’a had been completed by abba Yoḥanni and the rest is a purely technical operation. The hagiographer refuses to believe only one thing, which, according to his understanding, is untrue and contradicts both the canons and common sense about monastic life: that up to that time Iyäsus Mo’a had had neither monastic cap nor scapular (asserting, thus, that he had the former). Unfortunately, we are not able to reconstruct the entire process of the Vita’s composition, so we will never learn why its author — being well acquainted with the Vita of Zä-Mika’el Arägawi and perhaps even directly using it for his own work — oversaw or neglected the passage (as the hagiographer from Däbrä Libanos did) which would have removed the doubts: the passage reporting that Iyäsus Mo’a duly accepted both the monastic cap and scapular from his spiritual father abba Yoḥanni.

87 This topic is attested, though rarely, in Ethiopian hagiographies: cp. the Vita of Täklä Ḥawaryat, in which Täklä Ḥawaryat and a certain Zär’a Ṣayon, probably his disciple, «imitate» the baptismal ritual in a lake, recalling, thus, the Baptism of Jesus: first Zär’a Ṣayon, the junior, «baptizes» the saint, and then Täklä Ḥawaryat, the senior, baptizes Zär’a Ṣayon (Conti Rossini 1910:127). Cp. also the Vita of Yohannas Moṣrqaqwi (‘enzë yebel: waldeya kunanni ‘aba, Marrassini 1981:196–197, esp. n. 2). Besides, one has to remember that in Ethiopia John the Baptist was a popular saint, and the stories about him — or the account on Jesus Christ’s Baptism in which God’s Son is baptized by a man — used to attract the attention of traditional Ethiopian scholars. Among the Ethiopic writings ascribed to John Chrysostom, there is a Homily on John the Baptist and the Baptism of Christ. A passage of this work, popular and preserved in quite a number of manuscripts, helps to understand the traditional view of this biblical episode: as Christ was baptised by John, the «insane» Jews (λαλήτης), who were observing this, immediately concluded that the latter was «greater». In order to refute this erroneous view, God sent the sign — the dove (Esteves Pereira 1911:6; Portugese translation ibid., 10–11).
88 This would mean that he was introducing others into monastic life before he himself «was born in the monastic habit». Therefore, the author of the Vita considers this version of events not only as a lie, but also as an offence (which, because of its obvious absurdity, can not be proposed by a reasonable person; hence the reference to «stupid» or «insane», λαλήτης, cp. n. 87) and an attempt to dishonour «his» Saint, s. Kur 1965, 38:19–39:3.
3) The third account, like the second, is missing in the Homily. It relates once again how Iyäsus Mo’a and Täklä Haymanot assumed the monastic habit. This time, the author of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a retells the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, following the Ḥayq or, most probably, Däbrä Libanos recension — as it may be proved, among others signs, by the mention of Täklä Haymanot’s encounter with a monk from Amhara before the Saint’s arrival at the monastery of Bäsälotä Mikä’el. Though the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a briefly summarises the story, the sequence of the episodes and the entire structure of the narrative remain the same. The account ends with Iyäsus Mo’a imposing the monastic yoke upon Täklä Haymanot and vesting him with the «monastic garb» (খিসিম মোহারাম). In the conclusion, the hagiographer poses the same question once again: how Iyäsus Mo’a could fulfil this without having reached the proper grade of the monastic profession (i.e., everything except the scapular)? The arguments used here do not go beyond those presented in the previous account: the hagiographer postulates that Iyäsus Mo’a «was born in the monastic life» long before Täklä Haymanot’s coming; the receiving of the scapular from the hands of Täklä Haymanot, his spiritual pupil, is accepted in the sense indicated above: as the ritual fulfilled according to the spiritual father’s request, which does not essentially change the relationship of the «spiritual» fathership. We can conclude that the author of the

90 As it has already been noted by E. Cerulli (s. KUR 1965:X [tr.]; ibid., 39:4–9); in fact, neither the Ḥayq nor the Däbrä Libanos version of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot says that the monk whom Täklä Haymanot met on his way to Amhara was «a novice» (খিসিম মোহারাম) of Bäsälotä Mikä’el; in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a this is an anticipation typical of a renarration, indicating that the hagiographer had known the text or story in advance.
91 Cp., in particular, in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a (KUR 1965, 39:9–15), such phrases as: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: খিসিম মোহারাম: (ibid. 39:11–13), which seems to be a corruption of a passage from the Vita of Täklä Haymanot in the Däbrä Libanos recension (Budge 1906:69 [ch. 67]); (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (�িসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (�িসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (�িসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (�িসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: (খিসিম মোহারাম: 
93 The Vita strongly prohibits monks to receive the girdle, monastic tunic, cap and scapular from other spiritual teachers; this prohibition appears in the dispositio of one of the «testaments» between Yakunno Amlak and abba Iyäsus Mo’a. How-
Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a collected and scrutinised all the hagiographic documents relating to how Iyäsus Mo’a and Täklä Haymanot assumed the monastic habit (though, in fact, he failed to find the necessary evidence!); in order to denounce the versions of the story that he considered untrue, he created a new tradition which — curiously enough — was supposed to be a proof in itself.

The introduction of such a polemic against another monastic leader, which apparently was not caused by any theological controversy or other serious contradiction concerning matters of faith, was pretty unusual for Ethiopian hagiography. It must have had quite a peculiar historical background; in this respect, the question of the dating of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a — and the time when the story in question took its final shape — becomes the primary issue. One more — previously little known — testimony appears to be of considerable importance: a possibly 18th-cent. manuscript from the monastery of Däbrä Daga āstifanos (already quoted above), recently described (Tänäsee 164 = Dägä Esṭifänos 53) and containing, among other texts, the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a, but in a version different from both the Homily and the Vita known from Kur’s edition. A closer investigation demonstrates that this is most probably the «intermediary recension», the document which should be placed between the Homily and the Vita. This text contains an account of Iyäsus Mo’a and Täklä Haymanot assumed the monastic habit — was written later, since it is missing in the original document, MS EMML 1832, fol. 269r (s. KROPP 1998:309–310).

94 SIX 1999:207–211.

95 SIX 1999:209 pointed out to the differences between the Vita and the text preserved in Tänäsee 164; yet the latter is obviously not the shortened text of the Vita, but rather the extended Homily (for the collation below, MS EMML 1960 and MARRASSINI 1986 are used):

1) The Homily’s short introduction (κτλ’ : ὠς ὁ ἱερός : ἑξέβαλε : ἔτη, οὖν... till: ἐνακολουθοῦν : ἦτ’... fol. 29ra) is extended in Tänäsee 164 by an extensive addition which begins with the rhymed passage: ἐνακολουθοῦν : ἡ Μηνιά βαρέαν : ἦτ’ : ἤρχεται τε : ἤρχεται τε : ἤρχεται τε : ἤρχεται τε : ἤρχεται τε : ἤρχεται τε -(fol. 1ra–3ra, then we find: ὁμοίωσεν Ἰην...); the Vita drops the introduction of the Homily, accommodates the introduction from Tänäsee 164 (KUR 1965, 3:18–5:10) and extends the introduction by one more piece (ibid., 1:3–3:17);

2) The next piece of the Vita (ibid., 5:11–20, ἐνακολουθοῦν : ἦτ’...) coincides with Tänäsee 164 (fol. 3rb);

3) The texte in Tänäsee 164 from fol. 4ra: ἔγραφεν : ἤρεῖαν : ὁμιλοῦσαν... till ἕλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ : ἔνακολοθοῦν : ἤρεῖαν...(fol. 6rb) coincides with the Vita KUR 1965, 5:22–7:9, yet the latter has some small additions; thereafter it adds the passage 7:9–8:2. For ibid. 8:2–8:12, Tänäsee 164 has only: ὕποτασσεν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν : ἔγραψαν: (KUR 1965, 8:2–3);

4) The Homily relates Iyäsus Mo’a’s escape from worldly life: ἔγραψαν : ὅλατ’... fol. 31rb) up until the story of his «wandering» (ἡ ἔργη, fol. 33rb); the piece from Tänäsee 164 fol. 6ra–8ra is the basis for the Vita, s. KUR.


6) In the story about Iyāsos Mo’a’s monastic consecration Tānāsēe 164 (fol. 11ra) omits the name of the saint’s mamhār, as does the Homily (fol. 36rb); cp. the Vita, KUR 1965, 14:6. In the sentence describing how Yohannī vested Iyāsos Mo’a with parts of the monastic habit, already Tānāsēe 164 reads albasā mmk “essēnna (fol. 12rb), instead of askema, as in the Homily (s. above; cp. Marrassini 1986:179);

7) The story about the accident that happened while the saint was splitting wood with an axe coincides with Tānāsēe 164 (fol. 13ra–14rb) and the Vita (KUR 1965, 15:24–17:7), as does the story about salvation of the jar (respectively, fol. 14rb–15ra; KUR 1965, 17:8–20);


9) The description of Iyāsos Mo’a’s pious life on Hayq in his Vita (KUR 1965, 35:17–36:8, from ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς ... ) is extended as compared with Tānāsēe 164, fol. 17ra (the extension begins, in the Vita, from: ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς : ὁ ἑρατικὸς ... ; the texts converge at the quotation from Ps. 83:11; s. KUR 1965, 36:7–9);

10) The story about Tāklā Haymanot KUR 1965, 36:10–36:18 appears in Tānāsēe 164 (fol. 17ra);

11) Tānāsēe 164 does not contain other stories about Tāklā Haymanot, and continues with the episode of Iyāsos Mo’a’s chair (fol. 18ra: ὁ ὄσχλη : ὁ ὄσχλη : ὁ ὄσχλη : ὁ ὄσχλη ... ; KUR 1965, 40:5–13);

12) There is a passage of the Vita (KUR 1965, 40:14–41:4) containing some pieces of the Homily which do not appear in the corresponding portion of Tānāsēe 164 (fol. 18ab);

The rest of the text in Tānāsēe 164 corresponds to the Homily and to the Vita (cp. also Marrassini 1986:180–182), yet the collation demonstrates that it is closer to the Homily and was the basis for the further elaboration in the Vita (mostly revision of style and «decorative» additions); the text in Tānāsēe 164 ends at KUR 1965, 54:11. The colophon is, thus, different from that in the Homily (it does not mention Sono-nyas; s. Marrassini 1986:182).
Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic habit identical to the account 1) of the Vita; therefore, the change of «the scapular of Christ» into «the monastic garb» was made first in the account in Ṭānāsee 164, possibly for purely stylistic, not ideological, considerations (both terms meaning «monastic habit»); the latter variant was taken over into the Vita of Iyāsus Mo’a.⁹⁶ There is only one narrative on Tāklā Haymanot’s assumption of the monastic habit that corresponds to the (rather neutral) account 2)-II. of the Vita of Iyāsus Mo’a.⁹⁷ As the first possibility, we should assume that this text is a genuine document that originated in the community of Dābrā Ḥayq and reflects its position concerning the spiritual relationships between Tāklā Haymanot and Iyāsus Mo’a. The relevant traditions — different recensions of the Vita of Tāklā Haymanot, the Vita of Zā-Mika’el Arāgawi — were certainly well-known at the time of the creation of this «short» Vita of Iyāsus Mo’a; however, those who composed the text simply did not consider the episode as «contradictory» and were not keen on «rectifying» the history. On the basis of the material that we presently have, the time of the composition of the «lengthy» Vita of Iyāsus Mo’a should be therefore dated to a later period — during the 19th cent. — since it is hardly possibly that Iyāsus Mo’a’s biography would have been revised twice within such a short period of time. Consequently, the polemical passages found in the «lengthy» Vita should reflect the contemporary (19th cent.?) views of the community.

My hypothesis concerning the recent character of the «contradiction» is corroborated by its ideological and literary context. The preliminary search for traces, which the controversy must have left in the written tradition of both monasteries, brought rather disappointing results. Documents from Dābrā Ḥayq which deal with the «monastic carrier» of Iyāsus Mo’a appear to be of recent origin; none of them pays much attention to the question of how

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⁹⁶ Thus, the Homily: ወሶስትል: ኲባታት : ያለት : ከንብር : ከርጋብ : ወሚትሯ : ወወት : ለወጆች : ወቅት : ለእኔርማሯ : ከርጋብ : ወሚትሯ... (fol. 36vb–37ra); cp. Ṭānāsee 164: ከጉለት : ከጉለት : ወጆች : ወወት : ለወጆች : ወቅት : ለእኔርማሯ : ከርጋብ : ወሚትሯ... (fol. 36vb–37ra); cp. the Vita: KUR 1965, 15:2–4 (s. above, n. 75, also n. 95); after all, it is unprobable that the author of the Vita would have omitted the mention of the scapular.

exactly Iyäsus Mo’a assumed the monastic habit, and none contains polemical passages comparable to those found in the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a.\textsuperscript{98} However, some of them describe the monastic carrier of Iyäsus Mo’a in a peculiar way; of particular interest is the lengthy «History of the Churches and Monasteries of Ethiopia»\textsuperscript{99} in MS EMML 1942, linked to the cycle of Homilies in honour of Archangel Uriel, obviously of Mənilak II’s period (and of Šawān origin). According to the colophon of this work (which deserves, in fact, a closer look), it was composed by a certain ‘aqqabe sā’ut Yoḥannās, the contemporary of King Ḩabnā Dāngal (1508-40). The History is certainly a pseudoepigraphic work of a much later period, and was probably not composed at Dābrā Ḥayq; the ideological background of its author is not quite clear, and the work should not prematurely be described «pro-Šawān».\textsuperscript{100} In any case, it speaks more about Täklä Haymanot than about Iyäsus Mo’a; the account concerning Täklä Haymanot follows his Vita in the Dābrā Libanos recension, and the author of the History shows no interest in taking up the occasion to raise the discussion and revise the story about Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic habit, unless the absence of the author’s clear position should be considered an attempt to hide details of Iyäsus Mo’a’s life.\textsuperscript{101} Otherwise,

\textsuperscript{98} While working on his well-known essay (TADDESSE TAMRAT 1970), Taddesse Tamrat managed to gain access to and consult the unique sources preserved in Dābrā Ḥayq; however, he apparently did not find any material which would have lead him to discuss the problem in his article and/or start its closer investigation.

\textsuperscript{99} MS EMML 1942, fol. 67b–85a.

\textsuperscript{100} Cp. also Getatchew Haile’s comments, EMML V, 440.

\textsuperscript{101} Here is the relevant passage according to MS EMML 1942. It is related that Täklä Haymanot was born in the seventh year of the reign of Nā’akk*a’sto Lā-Ab at the age of 22 years he left his parents, quitting the worldly life. Thereafter, the Saint had preached and built churches in Kätata, Damot, Ţnnarya etc. Thereafter, «(72vb) saint Uriel ordered him to learn the monastic law from Bābrä Mikael of the country of Amhara, in order to become the father of all holy monks of the land of Ethiopia [हृदय, हृदय सृस्ती etc.]. He went and stayed (there) 10 years, learning the monastic law and making signs while healing the sick. And thereafter Saint Uriel ordered him to go to Lake Ḥayq and stay with Iyäsus Mo’a. And he stayed with him 10 years. And after this, he departed from abba Iyäsus Mo’a and ascended (73ra) Dābrä Dammo, to abba Yoḥannē; and he stayed with him 12 years». Täklä Haymanot travelled to Jerusalem three times, till the Patriarch Michael ordered him to stay in Ethiopia to promote monasticism. «(73rb) And after this (73va) he returned from the Patriarch abba Michael and ascended Dābrä Dammo, to abba Yoḥannē. And he told him what the Patriarch said, all his words. And thereafter abba Yohanni responded to him and said: ‘I heard [it] from the mouth of all holy monks, the beloved of Our Lady Mary, and they told me that you would be the father of holy monks of the monasteries of all [the country of] Šāwa (हृदय सृस्ती : हृदय : हृदय), which Archangel Uriel consecrated with the blood of Christ… Go there and stay there… (73vb)’ And after this he left Dābrä Dammo and went to Dābrä Libanos, after he [reached the age of] 70 years after he had been
at first glance there are no Däbrä Hayq documents concerning the biography of Iyäsus Mo’a, except for his Vita, which would deal with the episode in a very different way, speaking from an articulated and consequently ideological position. 102

An additional last group of documents worth noting is represented by monastic spiritual genealogies and other texts of this kind. These sources have not yet been a subject of comprehensive research; yet many of them mention both Täklä Haymanot’s and Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic habit, thus recording the relationship between the two saints. The spiritual pedigree of Täklä Haymanot, which follows the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita, was compiled simultaneously with or, most probably, somewhat later than the latter, and spread throughout Ethiopia in numerous copies. 103

Taking into account the fact that the genealogies show numerous variations

... And in the second year after his entering Däbrä Libanos, the Orthodox King Yäkunno Amlak reigned through the prayer of this father [who] anointed him by his [own] hand with the pure anointment of the kingdom. And it was fulfilled what was called «the miracle of his name» in the Homily of Urael...» The King went to Roha, visited Lalibäla and built another one church — Gänñätä Maryam, which Tätraî Haymanot consecrated. «(74rb) And after this Yäkunno Amlak went to the island of Lake Hayq and built a church for Iyäsus Mo’a and called it Däbrä Nägädad...» (74rb)

And he appointed abba Iyäsus Mo’a Archpriest (א, פ : ימו ת) and ‘aggabe sä’at for the entire country of Ethiopia, and he said to Tätraî Haymanot: «Bring all your [spiritual] sons that you generated through the Holy Spirit, so that they will construct and build church[es] in the name of our Lady Mary, the Mother of God (74va), on all the mountains that Saint Uriel blessed with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Tätraî Haymanot chose from his [spiritual] sons 33 who took the monastic cap and scapular from his hands...»

102 Cp. also the Miracles of Iyäsus Mo’a (EMML 1940, 19th cent., from Däbrä Hayq 3ståñanos; the Miracles seem to post-date the bulk of Iyäsus Mo’a’s hagiography, and sometimes draw upon his Vita) which begin with the account of how Iyäsus Mo’a left his family at the age of 40 and went to Däbrä Dammo where he spent 7 years with abba Yoänni. The author of the Miracles does not provide details on Iyäsus Mo’a’s assumption of the monastic habit — tunic, monastic cap and scapular (fol. 69–70, s. also MARRASSINI 1986:183; unless the reference to Iyäsus Mo’a as a «perfect monk», אָפְיָה : קַ-פְּע י on fol. 78vb [cp. MARRASSINI 1986:188] is a hint to his complete monastic profession).

103 The earliest edition of such a text, from MS Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, Êth. 160 is in BASSET 1896:15–16. Some time in the late 17th or 18th cent. this genealogy was combined with a short description of Tätraî Haymanot’s life deriving from the Däbrä Libanos recension of his Vita and became known as the «Genealogy of our fathers, the monks». The account renarrates the life of Tätraî Haymanot, taking its start from his spiritual genealogy (this spiritual genealogy is missing in BUDGE 1906, which has only its «short» variant in ch. 88; in manuscripts with the original Däbrä Libanos recension of the Vita this genealogy usually stands before the Homily
which reveal that their creators could easily «reinterpret» different points of the Ethiopian monastic history, we can not escape the impression that the episode in question failed to attract particular attention, and did not generate resentment or polemic in monastic circles (at least until a certain moment). The episode is sometimes found in the spiritual genealogies of those monks whose communities were distant from both Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa and «the house of Täklä Haymanot» in Azäzo near Gondär, with the variant of the story rejected by the hagiographer of Däbrä Hayq Ǝsṭifanos apparently dominating, but sometimes diffused and/or incorporated into other traditions. Some of the genealogies omit central details of the story or mutilate it, or depart from its main framework, probably making reference to different traditions. On the whole, though the topic of spiritual fathership appears important, the genealogies do not focus on the monastic habit and do not create on its basis any claim for superiority.

on the day of his translatio, following the Vita and the family genealogy of the Saint). It tells that Yoḥanni «begat» Iyäsus Mo’a with qāmis and qənat, and Iyäsus Mo’a, in turn, «begat» Täklä Haymanot with qāmis and qənat; Täklä Haymanot received qob and askema at Däbrä Dammo, from Yoḥanni; as he came back, he gave qob and askema to his spiritual father, following the request of the latter (Getatchew Haile 1982–1983:9–10, 23–24 and n. 12).

104 Cp. the spiritual genealogy of Mädhåninä Ǝgzi, the founder of Däbrä Bankwal in Šare, Tägray (Conti Rossini 1943:337): «Yoḥanni generò Iyasus-Mo’a e Täklä-Häymänot: generò Iyasus-Mo’a col camice e col cingolo e Täklä-Häymänot col cappuccio e con la scapolare. Täklä-Häymänot generò Mädhåninä-‘Egzi’ di Bankual»... Cp. the genealogy from the monastery of Gundä Gunde: «Mädhåninä Ǝgzi’ generated Mäsqäl Mäwa’i, and Mäsqäl Mäwa’i generated Yoḥanni, and Yoḥanni generated Iyäsus Mo’a, and Iyäsus Mo’a generated our father Täklä Haymanot with the tunic and girdle and the garb [986], whereas he took the scapular and [monastic] cap from abba Yoḥanni of Dammo, who is the father of his father in spirit ... And our farther Täklä Haymanot generated abba Mädhåninä Ǝgzi’ of Bonkäl...» (Mordini 1952:56, 58).

105 In MS EMML 1440, a brief monastic genealogy from Anthony the Great until a certain Läbbawi Krestos states that Iyäsus Mo’a was the spiritual son of Yoḥanni, but neither mentions Täklä Haymanot nor contains any further details about Iyäsus Mo’a (fol. 58ra–vb). Cp. also the genealogy of the disciples of Iyäsus Mo’a from EMML 1960, fol. 28vb, in which nothing is said about Iyäsus Mo’a’s spiritual father, whereas a certain Täklä Haymanot is mentioned only after some generations, as the spiritual son of Gäbrä Ǝndrayas. Besides, cp. the genealogy of Däbrä Libanos monks (from Anthony the Great to the early 17th-cent. abbot Abraham) from the manuscript of the Catholic mission in Kärän (Conti Rossini 1904:238–240): here Iyäsus Mo’a comes to Däbrä Dammo and receives from Yoḥanni the monastic cap and scapular; then Täklä Haymanot comes ( قوله : الحَمْرَاءِ, s. above) and also receives the monastic cap and scapular; then Täklä Haymanot comes to Iyäsus Mo’a, and, following the request of the latter, hands the monastic cap and scapular over to his...
III

We have been tracing the episode which constitutes the «controversial point» of Ethiopian Church history through a number of sources. Indeed, this episode is also recorded, among others, in old traditions — a fact which speaks for its historicity. However, having studied it from different points of view, we are less certain than before as to what degree the episode reflected in the relevant texts is «controversial». Between the earliest attestation of the story and the time it could have taken place there remains a gap of more than 100 years. As the story took the form of a written account, it started to change its shape, but, apparently, very little of actual «ideological revision» can be found in any of its alterations. By the time of the creation of the Waldabbα recension of the Vita of Tāklā Haymanot, it was already a remembrance of the honourable past of Ethiopian monasticism shaped as a hagiographic account — shared by all sides involved — Dābrā Libanos, Dābrā Ḥayq Ṣṣṭīfanos, Dābrā Dammo; this is supported by the story of monastic career of Tāklā Haymanot as presented in EMML 1834 of the Dābrā Ḥayq and EMML 8742 of the Ṣana Qirqos. The tradition of Dābrā Dammo contributed an important element to the hagiographic representation of the episode some time in the late 15th/early 16th cent.; the fact that the author of the Dābrā Libanos recension took from the Vita of Zā-Mika’el Arāgawi one particular interpretation of the story, is possibly an example of the biased approach of hagiographers. As to the rest, the pieces of evidence, which are extracted from sources prior to the creation of the lengthy recension of the Vita of Iyāsus Mo’a, can hardly be interpreted as reflecting the rivalry between Dābrā Libanos of Ṣāwa and Dābrā Ḥayq Ṣṣṭīfanos, especially if they are looked at in a broader literary (hagiographical) and hi-
historical context,107 including considerations as to the role and position of the monastic investiture in traditional monastic culture.

107 The idea of the controversy between Däbrä Libanos and Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣfäṭifanos, and the mutual attempts at limiting the respective influence by means of reversing the spiritual filiation (Derat 2003:108) should be attenuated. It is not the place here to discuss in details the history of either Däbrä Libanos or Däbrä Ḥayq; but it is difficult indeed to find direct references to any serious controversy of an economic, political or religious nature (e. g., transfer of land possessions and titles; different positions in theological controversies etc.) between Däbrä Ḥayq and Däbrä Libanos. The rise of Däbrä Libanos happened long after Däbrä Ḥayq became an established royal sanctuary. In the 15th cent., in particular during the reign of Zär’a Ya’qob, both monasteries passed through periods of royal favour and disfavour, which had immediate impact, first of all, on the situation of their abbots, ‘aqqabe sä’āt and ṣṢāṭī respectively, who spent much time at the court (with the consequence of weakening direct links to their communities). From the beginning of the 16th cent. at least, the ṣṢāṭī was nominated the head of all Ethiopian monks; however, the ‘aqqabe sä’āt undoubtedly enjoyed high prestige and influence as well (in fact, differences could occasionally appear between them). In the 15th/early 16th cent., the economic situation of Däbrä Ḥayq was improving thanks to donations (s. Taddesse Tamrat 1970). The spheres of direct influence of both monasteries hardly overlapped due simply to the considerable distance separating them. Däbrä Libanos’s religious and administrative presence was substantial in particular in the southern regions of the Kingdom, where it administered missionary activities and ecclesiastic matters. Possibly, these constraints contrasted with the meditative asceticism of Däbrä Ḥayq (the ideal reflected in the Homily of Iyäsus Mo’a, Acts of Bäggā5 and elsewhere). In fact, the reconstruction of the «monastic network» of Däbrä Ḥayq Ṣfäṭifanos — the ecclesiastic organization thought to be a rival of Däbrä Libanos — is mostly based on the in-
The «lengthy» recension of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo'a, containing numerous «testaments» between the Saint and King Yskunno Amlak, is a unique piece of evidence. Certainly, it may have been a response to the late 17th/early 18th-cent. «Riches of the Kings» of the «house of Täklä Haymanot» and the claims of Däbrä Libanos of Säwa. But, in view of its complex textual history and its possible historical context, the work appears to be of a more recent origin than has been suggested before: it was created after the «intermediary recension» of the Vita (or «the short Vita») attested in MS Tänäsee 164 = Dágä Esṭifänos 53 which was the continuation of the textual tradition of the Homily. The fact that the «lengthy» recension of the Vita of the Saint is hitherto known only from two 19th-cent. manuscripts betrays the rather late and local character of the «controversy». Thus, the latter’s possible causes should be looked for in the recent history of Däbrä Ḥayq, in particular, in the age of Yoḥannes IV and Maniłsk II, when the gradual movement towards a centralized state began to take shape. By then, the ancient sanctuary of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥścifonoṣ attracted the attention of the Ethiopian lords. At some point during this period, intending to use the opportunity and resume its high position in the national Church hierarchy, the community of Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥścifonoṣ may have compiled and presented a new complete version of the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a, the most prominent monk of the community, producing new evidence about the valuable services he rendered to the Solomonic rulers, ascertaining his fame, and denouncing old rumours which could have cast doubts upon his fame.

formation from the Vita of Iyäsus Mo’a; yet the claims made in this Vita usually find no confirmation in local monastic traditions; it is unknown how such a «monastic network» could have been organized (DERAT 2003:110–119).

108 This is not an easy task, for the history of the monastery during the late 17th/19th cent. — the time it kept out from big events — remains less well known. In the 16th cent., Däbrä Ḥayq did not suffer a complete devastation like Däbrä Libanos. In the second half of the 16th cent., Däbrä Libanos revived and occupied the leading role in the kingdom, but already in the early 17th cent. a major part of its community moved to the region of lake Ṭana, to settle later in Azäzo, whereas the original Däbrä Libanos remained in decline until the beginning of the 19th cent. Both the ‘aqqabe sä‘at and the ṣččäge resided in Gondär, and were separated from their communities and involved in theological controversies and political intrigues. In the 18th cent., the titles were sometimes bestowed upon the representatives of other monasteries (under Bäkaffa, re. 1721–1730, the title of ‘aqqabe sä‘at was given to the head of Däbrä Moṭmaq). Since at least the 18th cent., while «the house of Täklä Haymanot» retained importance, Däbrä Ḥayq was constantly endangered by Oromo Marawwa and Wälo, and later by Wälo’s Islamic rulers. The Christian population remained only in the vicinities of the monastery. Only from the time of Yoḥannäs IV (1872–1889) did the monastery gain support again, and favour by the kings and nobles (as appears from land charters registered in MS EMML 1940).
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Appendix

1) The famous Gäßä Mänfääs Qeddus was 12 years old when abba Zämäädä Borhan «gave him the holy scapular, like Anthony, and girded his loins with «hair sackcloth» (እል.provider : የእያታት) as «one girdes with the girdle» (ማ.provider : የእያታት : የእያታት, Marrassini 2003:12–13[text]; cp. also xl-xl11), whereas in the lengthy Synaxarium note on Gäbrä Mänfääs Qeddus any indication of the assumption of the monastic habit is missing (30 Mäggabit, Colin 1994:440–467, Budge 1928:755–772).

2) Ewosatewos was clad with the monastic habit by abba Danel (አlluminate : ኢየሮታት...), on which occasion he also obtained his monastic name (Turaiev 1902:303; Turaiev 1905:22–23).

3) Having reached the monastic community of abba Pántalewon, Ÿshaq/Gärīma immediately asks for the scapular: እሬ : ኢየሮታት : ከስሶ : ከውሮስ. After Pántalewon’s question as to whether he is ready for the scapular — i.e. the monastic life (ት..provider : ኢየሮታት : ከስሶ : ከውሮስ) — and Gärīma’s convincing response, Pántalewon confers the scapular upon him: ...ይ..provider : ከስሶ : ከውሮስ : ኢየሮታት : ከስሶ : ኢየሮታት... What follows seems to be an excerpt from the ritual of the monastic consecration (Contri Rossini 1897:152).

4) Zä-Mika’el Arágawi assumed the monastic habit at the age of 19, from the hands of Pachomius the Great, after a short interrogation to prove the seriousness of his intention (ት..provider : ኢየሮታት : ከውሮስ...). After some time Pachomius clad him with the monastic clothes (አlluminate : ኢየሮታት : ኢየሮታት) and proclaimed the formula: «May God bless your scapular as He blessed abba Anthony and abba Macarius, my fathers» and conferred upon him the new name — Zä-Mika’el Arágawi (Guidi 1895:6–7). The same procedure is carried out when Liqanos, Ÿm’ata, ş̈ḧma, Guba, Afse and Pántalewon (cp. DEB 209–210) come to him, with slight deviations in wording (e.g., ኢየሮታት : ከስሶ : ከውሮስ...; እር..provider : ኢየሮታት...; እር..provider : ኢየሮታት...; ከስሶ : ከውሮስ...; s. Guidi 1895:7–8).

5) The Vita of Libanos/Mätta’ reports that he accepted the scapular from Pachomius before leaving for Ethiopia (Bausi 2003, §26; cp. also ibid. [tr.], 9, n. 35;
the Vita most probably repeats what the ancient Homily [in honour of] Mä’täc tells, s. GETACHEW HAILE 1990:36–37: «There, he took the monastic habit [ḥnḥn.ʾ] from the man of God».

6) According to the Vita of Samuʾel of Däbrä Halleluya, when Nāʾakwāto Lā-Ab (Samuʾel’s worldly name) came to the community of abba Ṣntonas, he asked for monastic cap and scapular (ḥnḥn.ʾ : ḫn ṭn.ʾ : ḫn ṭn.ʾ : ḫn ṭn.ʾ), but was first interrogated by Ṣntonas (ʾh:mm:mm : ḥ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm). As the Vita states, the ritual of conferrance of the monastic habit was performed according to the Mäšafä Mënkkʾoswnna: the monastic cap and scapular were placed in front of the tabot, and the prayer was recited over them; the novice was blessed by all the «saints» (qddusan), a prayer was performed over him, and he received the monastic cap and scapular and his new monastic name — Samuʾel (COLIN 1990:8).

7) Yonas took on the monastic habit from abba Dāmyanos of Däbrä Sina, in Šarawe; Dāmyanos clad the novice with the monastic clothes (ḥ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm) and gave him a new name (Yonas’s worldly name was ḤṬgẓi); as the Vita mentions, those who accepted the monastic cap, scapular and «sheep-skin» (ḥ:mm:mm, s. n. 27) from abba Yonas will be saved (CONTI ROSSINI 1903:13–14).

8) Zä-Yoḥanness of Kōbran assumed the monastic cap and scapular in Däbrä Libanos of Šiwa, from abba Hazqāyas, who also clad him with the «clothes of the angels» after seven years of probation (SCHNEIDER 1972:9).

9) The Vita of Filāppos of Däbrä Bizan recounts in detail how Filāppos was called to take a monastic vow and to take on the monastic clothes and «the holy scapular» (ḥ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm) by the Holy Spirit, who told him to go to Bākimos of Däbrä Šarabi. The Holy Spirit also informed Bākimos about the one coming to him. Having performed the ritual according to the Mäšafä Mënkkʾoswnna, Bākimos lay upon Filāppos the monastic habit, speaking of «the garb of our Lady Mary», «the girdle of John [the Baptist]» and «the garment of angels» (ʾddn. : ḫ:mm:mm, s. CONTI ROSSINI 1900:77–78). Thereafter, the Vita relates, somewhat vaguely, how Filāppos went into the desert and received the monastic cap and scapular «from the hands of Jesus Christ, while the Saviour spoke to and conversed with him in the likeness of Ṣntonas» (ibid. 79).

The Synaxarion of Däbrä Wärq, an Ewosṭatean monastery in Goqqam, repeats the story, yet in this document Filāppos received the cap and scapular in Betā Ṣnṭāwew (near Aksum?), and Christ spoke to him in the likeness of Ṣnṭāwew (SCHNEIDER 1978).

10) Abunā Zäʾrʾa Buruk received the «angelic habit» (here meaning: the scapular) from God; he received the «spiritual [monastic] cap» the girdle from God as well, but through the hands of abunā Ṣtkla Haymanot and Gābrā Mänfäs Qddus respectively; in addition, he assumed «the cloth of the chest» (ʾ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm) from Ewosṭateos (JAEGGER 1912:168–169; RICCI 1979:108);

11) Anorewos received the monastic garb and girdle (ʾ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm : ḫ:mm:mm) from Ewosṭateos (JAEGGER 1912:168–169; RICCI 1979:108);

CONTI ROSSINI 1905:
69); further on, it is related that Anorewos wore «the rope belt» (zähabl qənat; ibid., 77).

12) Bäälätä Mika‘el received monastic garb (иханъа : ڞئرھئڞئر) from abba Anorewos, at Däbrä G*äl (CONTI ROSSINI 1905:14).

13) The Vita of Ḥādan Mo‘a reports that this holy monk received «the monkish clothes» (иханъа : ڞئرھئڞئر) from the head of the community of Däbrä Bäggāc (MS EMML 2353, fol. 6ra–va).

14) The Vita of Bäggāc, a monk from Däbrä Ḥayq Ǝstīfanos, does not relate how he assumed the monastic habit; after the report about Bäggāc’s entering the community, the author concentrates on the strictest abstinence of Bäggāc (he did not drink water for many years; MS EMML 1960, fol. 61va).

15) According to his Vita, Yoḥannās Məsraqawi left his family at the age of 22 and spent many years in «the house of Isidor» (in Egypt) serving as rād7 and māggabi, but received the full monastic habit including the scapular (иърپقوق : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر) in Ethiopia, from abunā Täklä Haymanot (MARRASSINI 1984:180–183). Another piece of the tradition, separate from the Vita, mentions his assumption of the habit (иханъа : ڞئرھئڞئر) again, this time without details; here the hagiographer claims that, Yoḥannās has a privileged position as compared to the other 12 pupils of Täklä Haymanot, since he was the first to received the monastic habit from the latter (ibid., 342–345; cp. also ibid., LXVII–LXX, C–CI).

There are some examples from the traditions related to Däbrä Libanos of Șāwa:

16) According to the Waldabba recension of the Vita of Täklä Haymanot, the Saint accepted in his community Abel «a son of Zeb Dāhar» and, after an interrogation (иъرپقوق : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : [sic! ڞئر؟ — D. N.] ڞئرھئڞئر ... ) and a period of noviciate, consecrated him monk (иъرپقوق : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر : ڞئرھئڞئر). When he assumed the scapular his ascetic conduct became so rigid that Täklä Haymanot had to restrain him, but soon he allowed Abel to live «in the desert». It is reported that as soon as he took on the «scapular of the angels» (ïnhανη : ڞئرھئڞئر) he stopped eating bread (CONTI ROSSINI 1895:118).

17) Märha Krəstos was vested with the «monastic garb» (Алъа : ڞئرھئڞئر) by abunā Yoḥannās Kāma, being of a young age, and after a certain time he received the monastic cap and scapular (KUR 1972:24–25).

18) Täklä Hawaryat received the «monastic garb» (Алъа : ڞئرھئڞئر) from Yoḥannās Kāma, in Däbrä Libanos (CONTI ROSSINI 1910:71).


20) Ḥečeğhe Yoḥannās assumed the monastic habit from Ǝnbaqom («se quindi gli vestì l’abito monastico e fece discendere su di lui la benedizione del Signore», Ricci 1969–1970:176), later on the Vita reports that Ǝnbaqom was also his father in respect of the scapular («gli era padre nei riguardi dello scapolare [askiēmā]», ibid., 191).
21) Habtą Maryam, another representative of the community of Däbrä Libanos, assumed the monastic habit (谴 therapeutic) not in Däbrä Libanos (Rainer 1990:37).

22) Samu‘el, the founder of Däbrä Wägäg, assumed the monastic habit (谴 therapeutic) from Täklä Haymanot, who also taught him «the monastic rules» (谴 therapeutic; Kur 1968:7).

SUMMARY

The study deals with an episode from the history of the Ethiopian Church that relates to Iyäsus Mo‘a and his pupil Täklä Haymanot, both famous saints and 13th–14th-cent. abbots of Dabra Hayq Estifanos and Däbrä Libanos of Šäwa respectively. Known mostly from the hagiographic documents and considered crucial for Ethiopian history, the episode centres on Iyäsus Mo‘a’s and Täklä Haymanot’s assumption of the monastic habit, namely on the sequence in which they bestowed on each other the articles of the monastic attire. The episode has been analysed and interpreted by scholars in different ways, and has been thought to be important for the reconstruction of the history of the relationship between Dabra Hayq and Däbra Libanos — the most important centres of the Ethiopian monasticism. The present article continues this discussion and attempts to reach a better understanding of the sources and, consequently, the events they describe. The paper examines the episode in light of what we know about real Ethiopian monastic practices. Thereafter, it attempts to reconstruct the development of the event’s representation in the hagiographic sources and its traditional perception, by clarifying the textual history of the most crucial hagiographic documents containing the episode (including, e. g., the discussion on the «short Vita of Iyäsus Mo‘a» from MS. Tānāsee 164 = Dāgā Estifanos 53), and by inquiring the references to this episode found in other sources.