PRESENTING THE COLLECTION

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ETHIOPIAN’S "MAGIC SCROLLS" FROM THE MAE COLLECTION

The African funds of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) RAS contain Ethiopian scrolls, some of which are so-called "magic scrolls", i.e. hand-written amulets which were used as means of protective magic and are well known among researchers.

The first scholar greatly impressed by the role of magic in Ethiopia was Hoot Loddei himself, the father of Ethiopian studies in Europe. Later his compatriot, Erno Littmann, called Ethiopia "a real well" of superstitions and magic, while a Russian scholar Boris Turaev described the local religious situation as follows: "In Christian, though ethnically backward Abyssinia, almost no borderlines exist between faith and superstition, religion and magic. Priests and chergyman trade in writing and selling magic prayers, which are venerated together with canonical ones; the latter may in their turn be used for magic ends, as well as the Scripture itself, by the way of its mechanical reading, or by wearing on neck, or even by the very fact of its possession" [2].

Philologists were fascinated with these written amulets which constituted a peculiar kind of literature designed not at all for reading, but for protection of its owner, and called these Ethiopian written amulets "magic scrolls" both for their specific form of scroll and its protective function. Russian scholar Ivan Kravchikov wrote about these specific literary pieces: "They may contain various texts, sometimes even the canonical ones, to which, however, magic power is ascribed. More often they are filled with charms and spells, and sometimes it is just a collection of mysterious names, whose meaning and origin is almost impossible to determine. It is of no importance for a scroll holder, because the efficiency and protective function are supplied, not much to the reading of a scrolls, as to wearing of it, or just to its presence in a dwelling place" [3].

So their function was quite obvious and clear-cut: they were written protective amulets — a phenomenon common and typical for many religions, both Christian and Muslim as well. As for the content of this specific magic literature Russian scholars called it oryntunus falass [4], or "interdicted literature", because the very practice of "writing amulets with names" had been officially prohibited by the Church and the Councils at Ephesus and Chalcedon.

Ethiopian hand-written amulets are written in the Ge'ez language; it stopped being a spoken language as early as in the 13th c., and since then it has only been used as a literary and church language. This is what makes Ethiopian written magic different from verbal magic, as local languages and dialects are used for verbal incantations and spells.

Thus, Ethiopian magical literature follows old literary traditions, and not the traditions of verbal magic. On the other hand, literary works of Ethiopian magic written in the language obscure for the people, are meant not for reading, but perform the function of preventive amulets whose meaning lies with owning, wearing or keeping them at home. The appearance of Ethiopian amulets also proves to this fact: the middle and the end are well-preserved even in the oldest scrolls. Only the beginning and the edges of scrolls are faded and battered, which means that they were not unfolded or read.

The usual form of an Ethiopian written scroll is scroll of parchment or more or less thin paper. Sometimes, however, these amulets may have a form of tiny books with wooden cover. In Amharic these scrolls are called simply megdeh, i.e. "book". The size of a scroll may vary from 4 to 25 cm in width, and from 40 to 200 cm in length. Long scrolls are usually sewn together of two or three parts with little strips of the same material. Text is usually written on the smooth side of the scroll. Sometimes the other, rougher, side is also covered with writing, but these records are usually made by another hand and another galam, and have nothing to do with the text of the right side. According to their size, and partly to their use magic scrolls can be divided into two categories: (i) small scrolls, no wider than 6 cm and no longer than 50 cm which are rolled up and tied with a piece of cloth or tucked into a leather cylindrical container to wear them on neck [5], they are worn also on a strap tied to shoulder or forearm; (ii) larger scrolls, up to 25 cm in width and up to 200 cm in length, which Prof. Oscar Lijfregen called Wadamullene, i.e. wall amulets [6], because they are designed not for wearing on neck, but for hanging up at a wall of a dwelling unfolded [7]. This functional division is not strict at all. For example, the scrolls, which Prof. Dimitri O'Derogue brought from Ethiopia and donated to Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) Nos. 134-151 were made precisely in the manner of Wadamullene, but nevertheless they are rolled up and tied by a piece of cloth for wearing on body. However, the genuine Wadamullene do exist besides Uppsala collection. One of them is by Ato Lijfregen, and quite recently Ato Girma Fisseha demonstrated me a beautiful and extraordinary large (up to 60 cm in width) amulet of the department of Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich.

Sometimes the texts written on the "magic scrolls" also pose a philosophical, religious and aesthetic question. For example, on scroll No. 4053-7 from the MAE collection the following words are put in the mouth of Jesus Christ: "And Jesus said to Mary: 'Take it, I give you my present. The one who shall keep the memory of Me and believe in the words of this scroll and put it round his neck, and place it in his home, and will be baptized in the water of [his] prayer, and drink [this water] with faith, shall not be pro-achieved by the Devil'" [8].

Meanwhile, if there is no stricter borderline between small and large scrolls in their usage, than it certainly exists in their design. The scrolls of the first type intended for wearing on body in a rolled form, usually contain only a text without any decorations and often even without any figures at all. Already as a whole they are made in ink in rather awkward and careless style. Larger Wadamul- lenene are by contrast made with art and assiduity, the text itself is decorated with initial letters and design elements, and magic drawings are always present there. These drawings are painted in colour, sometimes so artfully, that they remind miniatures of the Theological Academy in Leningrad, who later played an important role in the modern history of Ethiopian Church [9] this design represents the throne of the Devil and all angels. In order to make an evil spirit, which, probably, possessed the owner of the scroll, to leave him when he looks at the design and occupy it as his proper seat. To prevent the reverse resettlement the "throne" is confined in red lines of spells. This explanation is both interesting and logical, but it is difficult to say how much conventional it was. Written charms are supported by demons' faces in them, the drawings of eyes, separate "letters in spectacles" and other minor details. It seems that the Ethiopians cared more for the significance of an element, not for any logic, but first and foremost for the precise and literal copying of the original scroll. From their point of view it is precisely this exactness, which guarantees the effectiveness of an amulet.

Though there is no strict order of arrangement of drawings within a scroll, a certain sequence can be noticed. Usually they are arranged in the following way: in the beginning of a scroll angels or crosses are designed. These crosses deserve some special mentioning. Usually they are of two types. The first is a typical Ethiopian octagonal cross, but the second is most interesting. It is "Cross within the Crown" (kral): see the image on the right. In 1997 Prof. Ewa Balicka-Witkowska published a wonderful monograph "La Croixion sans Crucifié dans l'Art éthiopien", where she submitted a long and complicated history, both artistic and theological, of this particular de-
sign in Ethiopian and international Christian art [10], which had found its way into Ethiopian written magic as well. In the latter case, the manner in which the motif is used, and the end — a grating design of “Devil’s throne” or Ethiopian octagonal crosses. Thus, the very arrangement of magic device tends to understate the true power to threaten and elicit them. Magic “marks” or “letters” have no specific position and occur in a scroll and can lead to any drawing or text. The presence of illustrations depend mostly upon the content of magic texts, and also upon the text of the scroll.

That is how magic scrolls look like. But what are they, however? They are certainly amulets, effective by their mere presence and intended, unlike oral charms and spells, to be effective. The term of magic scrolls is literature, a specific magic literature, sharing common Ethiopian literary tradition (Ge’ez language and culture) and a literature, not intended for reading, — a rather widespread phenomenon among adherents of those religions, which had their own Holy Writ: Jew, Christian, Musulim. So, it was precisely the sacred language (Hebrew, Arabic, and in the Ethiopian case — Ge’ez), which made written charms and scrolls amulets. Scholars went so far as to reduce these written amulets pieces of what they called “magic literature.”

One can raise a question, however, how could these numerous and diverse writings intended for magic use, constitute a particular and coherent kind of literature, namely the magic literature. On what criteria can one combine together these diverse writings “from Bible apocalypse to the laic book of spells” from a specific place do they occupy as against equally magical oral charms and spells? A student of Ethiopian magic literature cannot escape from attempting this.

The first criterion on which one can single out the works of Ethiopian magic literature out of other literary pieces is their protective function as amulets intended not for reading the text itself. The second one is that they are most personal. Each Ethiopian magic scroll is made for a certain name or names. This is obvious from the fact that in the very text of a scroll the name of its owner (or should I call him/her a protégé?) is mentioned invariably and repeatedly. If such a scroll changes hands, the name of the previous owner is always scraped out, and a new name is entered in its stead. This is a trait, which is common also for oral charms and spells, but quite foreign for pieces of literature. Therefore, since there is a certain difference between these two categories, there is also a formal one, which is extraneous to other literary genres. Besides in these texts there can be found sometimes instructions on the use of a particular scroll: to wear it on a neck, to wrap round body, to keep at home, etc. Such inscriptions are typical not only for Ethiopian magic literature, but also for Russian, Greek, Coptic, and others as well.

All these features common for all literary works of Ethiopian magic, makes it possible to view them as a certain genre of magic literature, being originated from verbal incantations and spells, and to a large extent having inherited their structure, the works of Ethiopian magic are immediately possible between literary monuments and magical faithfulness. The structure and conservations of a written incantations allow to view them as a magical plot, unlike the incantation motifs in verbal magic. However, the attempts to reconstruct the original text of a written spell are useless, and this is what makes the works of magical literature different from other literary monuments. It does not matter how versatile as plague variations of this or that magical plot, it is impossible to distinguish the original edition or the authentic text, as, to a certain extent all variations are “authentically” and, here we can only speak about the reconstruction of text and the description of the contents is, in fact, limited to the listing the text set. What concerns a study of a separate magical plot, especially an adopted one, in this respect written magic is a fruitful field.

One can raise a question, however, how could a magical scroll become possible to define its origin and trace its further circulation. Such data can shed a new light on the picture of the spiritual and cultural process, which determines the multiplicity of the peoples inhabiting modern Ethiopia, their ethnic diversity and differences in the level of their spiritual and cultural achievement. Comti Rosossi referred to this country as to a “museum of peoples.” [11]. Although, we do not have exact figures, we can refer to the approximate linguistic and cultural isolation in which, although there are at least 70 different languages and over 200 dialects in the country [12].

Following Powne [13], we could also call Ethiopia a museum of cultures, as due to the presence of ethnically diverse groups represented in Ethiopia, each such group has its own specific culture, different from that of its neighbor. If we consider the fact that there are at least 70 different languages and over 200 dialects in Ethiopia, the folklore, language and religious beliefs to the details in the ornaments in clothing and pets’ names.

In this context, long political instability, which is why we can only find hand-written amulets made for sale, not by request. In such cases the text of an amulet there are gaps left to insert, provided the owner of the amulet desires. The question of dating of Ethiopian hand-written amulets is extremely complicated for a number of reasons. As they are distributed in a dated manner, not much can be correlated from the linguistic analysis of the texts. A greater or lesser purity of the language indicates to the level of education of the penman, rather than the age of the text. The authenticity of Ethiopian amulets, unlike, for example, Arabian amulets, contain no indications of the time when they were written or the name of the copyist. Textological analysis of the scrolls is not a criterion. When preparing quite old hand-written amulets from the MAA collection with the scrolls brought by D. A. Oldebroeke in 1968, one can notice that the content of these literary monuments have undergone many changes. Thus, the only criterion one can follow for dating of this or that scroll, is the palaeographical one. However, the inadequate development of Ethiopian palaeography, is in the respect of copyists for the magical contents of a scroll, which resulted in their aspiration to convey the original as accurately as possible, including the mistakes, slips of pen and even the handwriting, it extremely difficult to date the scrolls. A modern researcher possesses no effective directions as to how to date these scrolls. It is only possible to determine the period by the name, other than the date of the creation of a manuscript. It is difficult to define the copyist, as a different surface of the writing material affects the handwriting, not to mention the cases when the copyist is forced to use another, larger qalam for writing on the reverse side.

Definition of the genre of Ethiopian magic scrolls is extremely complicated a problem. It is still not certain how only reveals its content, and its function is often defined by indirect features, while it is the function which determines a certain amulet. This amulet, as a working on the people, concerns the contents of such scrolls, in scientific literature it is usually characterized with a vague term Introduced by Deborah Lipstadt “amulets” [18]. The Ethiopians themselves give it an even broader definition: tenkert — “a teaching”. S. Wright describes the concept saying that the word tenkert preserves its original meaning, the meaning of learning based on the holy doctrines of the Christian church; it arouses fear and esteem, and is considered to be beyond the understanding of the common people. It is a marvelous thing, a kind of a secret teaching,” if we use the Ge’ez title of the work which was included by the publisher [Deborah Lipstadt — S. O.] into her "magical spell" book. All these statements are derived from Addis Ababa in a cheap edition, and it is bought up by competent worshippers as a cheap access to esoteric knowledge— "tenkert" (Ge’ez language is obviously strange for most of them) [19].

The further description may contain manuscripts, which have magical texts in the strict sense of the word, but which can be used as amulets.

Description

1. Collection No. 2103

Collection No. 2103 was received in the museum in 1960. It contains eight manuscripts which can be viewed as amulets.

No. 2103-19: a booklet, 5 × 7.5 cm (fig. 1). It consists of several parts made of thick parchement. Only the first five

parts have preserved content which consists of 42 folios. The binding is made of leather, the back of the book is not preserved. The end of the manuscript is missing. The text is written in black and red ink. The red ink is carmine. The script is small and the name of the owner is missing. According to the palaeographical
No. 2103-25 is a scroll made of thin parchment, 7×43 cm, sown together from two parts with a parchment strap. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in red and black ink. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th—beginning of the 20th c.

The manuscript contains 51 lines of text, which is the message of Apostle John, Zepeda’s son—a common school sample to teach writing.

The text of the message is followed by four lines of additions. The first addition—‘Oh, Amda Maryam!’ obviously refers either to a person called Amda Maryam, or a famous Ethiopian monastery which bears this name. The latter is more probable. The second addition says ‘written for dadfach Beilo as a sample for studying’.

No. 2103-26 is a scroll made of thin parchment, 5.5×65 cm. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black and red cinnamon ink. The same script as in manuscripts Nos. 2103-27, 2103-29.

Apart from the text, the manuscript contains a headband and a tail-piece made roughly with a qalaw. The text has gaps for the owner’s name, which was not inserted. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the second half of the 19th c.

The manuscript contains 134 lines of text. According to its contents the text can be divided into five magical plots.

Fig. 1

No. 2103-27 is a scroll made of thin parchment, 4.5×112 cm, sown together from two parts with a parchment strap. On one side the scroll is covered with red and black ink. The red ink is cinnamon.

Apart from the text, the manuscript contains two images drawn with a qalaw in red and black ink. The first drawing is an image of a winged angel, holding a sword in his right hand, and the shroud in his left hand (fig. 3). The second drawing contains three images, one after another: a twisted ornament; an angel’s head framed with wings (it must be a depiction of the Holy Spirit); a square divided diagonally into four triangles. A human face is drawn in the top and bottom triangles, and the side ones contain geometrical patterns. The latter could be the ‘Devil’s throne’ (fig. 4).

The script is rough but distinct. The name of the owner is missing, but there is a gap left for it in the text, which proves to the fact that this scroll was made not by request, but for sale. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the second half of the 19th c.

The manuscript contains 127 lines of text. According to its contents, the text can be divided into three magical plots.

Fig. 2
No. 2103–29 is a scroll made of thin parchment, 4×40 cm. On one side the manuscript is covered with a text written in black and red cinnabar ink. The same script as in manuscript No. 2103–27.

Apart from the text the manuscript contains two drawings — in the beginning and in the middle of the scroll. The first drawing consists of three images placed one after another: three half-length human figures; a twisted ornament; an angel’s head framed with wings (Fig. 5). The second drawing consists of two images: four squares, each of them containing a human face (this could be a depiction of the Devil’s throne); an angel’s face framed with wings (Fig. 6). The script is rough but distinct. The name of the owner is missing. According to palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the second half of the 19th c.

The manuscript contains 87 lines of text. According to its contents the text can be divided into two variations of the same magical plot “Absolution of charms”.

Lines 1—56 — the first variation

Lines 57—87 — the second variation

2. **Collection No. 3052**

No. 3052–887a — a scroll made of thick parchment, 9×35.5 cm. A parchment strip is placed in the upper part of the scroll. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black ink. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th — beginning of the 20th c.

The manuscript contains the text of the message of Apostle John, Zepeda’s son.

This manuscript served as a sample for copying, was a kind of an Ethiopian copy-book.

No. 3052–887b is a scroll made of thick parchment, 9×30.5 cm. A parchment strip is placed in the upper part of the scroll. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black ink. The script is distinct and accurate. The same hand as in manuscript No. 3052–887a. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th — beginning of the 20th c.

The manuscript contains the Ethiopian alphabet and figures. At the end of the manuscript there are letters which denote labialized sounds, which are not found in the Ge’ez language, but are found in Amharic. The manuscript served as a school-book. It must be the second part of a scroll. Its first part is described above (No. 3052–887a).

3. **Collection No. 4055**

Collection No. 4055 was received by the MAE in 1930 from the State Hermitage. The collection consists of objects from the collection of academician B. A. Turiev and the collection of the former Theological Institute. It contains 19 units, eight of which are Ethiopian hand-written amulets.

No. 4055–3 is a scroll made of thick parchment, 9.5×200 cm, sewn together from three parts with parchment straps. On the right side the manuscript is covered with a text written in black and red ink, the reverse side is covered with a text written in black ink only.

Apart from the text, in the beginning, middle and the end of the manuscript there are three drawings. The first drawing depicts a full-length two-winged angel with a sword in his right hand, and a sheath in his left side (Fig. 7). The second one is a half-length image of three angels in helmets (Fig. 8). The third drawing must depict the “Devil’s throne” (Fig. 9). All drawings are made by a qalam, with black and red ink and yellow paint.

On the right side of the scroll the text is placed in a frame, the script is slipshod, but distinct. On the reverse side of the scroll the script is even more slipshod. However, it must be the result of writing on a rough surface. The main text on the reverse side is written by the same hand as the text on the right side, but separate inserts in the text are written by another hand, with lighter ink and a different qalam. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th — beginning of the 20th c. In the text on the right side of the scroll the name of its owner is mentioned — Valata Emanuel.

The text on the right side consists of 219 lines. According to its contents, it can be divided into seven magical plots.

Lines 1—44 — “Absolution of charms”

Lines 45—91 — “Absolution of charms”

Lines 92—131 — “Makokot” — a prayer of a deity

Lines 132—163 — a prayer against bleeding

Lines 164—173 — “Makokot” — a prayer of a deity

Lines 174—199 — “Sabhat” — glorification of Jesus Christ

Lines 200—219 — “Absolution of charms”
The reverse side of the scroll is covered with 18 texts, divided from each other with longitudinal lines.

3 lines — unintelligible
5 lines — yazem to the Trinity
6 lines — yazem to martyr St. Simon
9 lines — yazem to the Trinity
18 lines — salom to the Father
30 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
8 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
8 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
17 lines — yazem to Michael
10 lines — yazem to Talia Abi
7 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
9 lines — yazem to Naheb Tabor
10 lines — yazem to Gabriel
20 lines — washed off
13 lines — yazem to George of Ladd
7 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
6 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre
7 lines — spiritual poems of an unknown genre

No. 4055.4 — a scroll made of thick parchment, 10 x 217 cm, sewn together from three parts with parchment straps. A parchment strip is tied to the upper part of the scroll. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black and red ink. The text is placed in a frame drawn in black ink and painted with yellow paint.

Apart from the text, the manuscript contains two drawings made in black ink and red and yellow paint. The first drawing, placed in the beginning of the scroll, is a red cross on the yellow background placed between the sun and the moon (fig. 10). The second drawing, in the middle of the scroll, is an image of a guardian angel drawn in red and yellow on the yellow background (fig. 11).

The text is distinct and accurate. In the text two names of the owners are mentioned — Valda Maryam and Valda Johannes. According to the palaeographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the beginning of the 20th c.

This manuscript is described in the catalogue by B. A. Turaev [22] among the manuscripts from his own collection.

The manuscript contains 292 lines of text. According to its contents the text can be divided into three plots.

Lines 1–44 — a prayer of quite a canonical character
Lines 45–190 — "Absolution of charms"
Lines 191–292 — "Absolution of charms"

No. 4055.5 — a scroll made of thin parchment, 5 x 63 cm. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black and red ink. According to the palaeographical features, this manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th—beginning of the 20th c.

Apart from the text, the manuscript contains a headband. The manuscript contains 18 lines of text which is the beginning of the magical plot "The damned eye on lake Tiberiad".

No. 4055.6 — a scroll made of thick parchment, 7 x 208 cm, sown together from three parts with parchment straps. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black and red ink.

Apart from the text the manuscript contains three drawings made in black ink and red and yellow paint. The first drawing is a depiction of an Ethiopian eight-pointed cross on a pedestal with two figures of angels on both sides (fig. 12). This drawing is analogous to the one in manuscript No. 2101.22. The second drawing is a two-winged angel with an Ethiopian cross on the head; in his right hand he is holding a sword above his head, and in his left hand — a book (fig. 13). The third drawing is a depiction of a "tied-up demon" with six horns placed inside an ornamental frame by eight-pointed crosses (fig. 14).

The text is poetic, angular. It is clear and distinct. The text contains the name of the owner — Berle — later replaced with a woman's name Esmenech. According to the palaeographical features, this manuscript can be dated to the end of the 19th—beginning of the 19th c.

A piece of paper is glued onto the reverse side of the scroll which contains a short description of the scroll written by an anonymous person [22].

This manuscript was not described in the Catalogue of B. A. Turaev, but there are reasons to assume that it belonged to his collection, as in his article "Coptic Parchment Amulet" he writes:

"One of the scrolls from any small collection of Ethiopian manuscripts is very close to its character to the subject of the present article. It is after the beginning (1:1–5) of John's Gospel there follows the famous prayer to St. Socinias, a number of prayers against demons and illnesses interpreted with fragments from the other three Gospels telling about the cure from the possessed and the bleeding, as well as magical images, which must also be connected with crosses on our amulets" [23].

The manuscript was not described in the Catalogue, but was mentioned in the above mentioned article, this can be explained by the fact that the Catalogue had been compiled before its author's travel to Egypt in 1909, where B. A. Turaev acquired most of the manuscripts which formed his collection, and the article "Coptic Parchment Amulet" was written in 1912.

The manuscript contains 300 lines of text. According to its contents it can be divided into eight magical plots.

Lines 1–18 — John's Gospel
Lines 19–92 — "St. Socinias and Umbula"
Lines 83–98 — "Absolution of charms"
Lines 99–114 — "Absolution of charms"
Lines 115–139 — Matthew's Gospel (8:28–32)
Lines 140–163 — Mark's Gospel (1:23–8)
Lines 175–300 —总结 to Fassial

No. 4055.7 — a leather scroll, 11 x 206 cm, sown together from three parts with leather straps. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in black and red ink. The text is placed in a frame drawn in black ink and colored with yellow paint.

Apart from the text, the beginning, middle and the end of the manuscript there are three similar drawings made in black ink and red and yellow paint. They depict three Ethiopian crosses on pedestals (fig. 15). On the last drawing there are two smaller crosses between the three main ones.

S. Chermetsov, Ethiopian "Magic Scrolls" from the MAE Collection

53
The script is accurate and distinct. The text contains the name of the owner — Takla Maryam, which was later replaced with two other names: Takla Giorgis and Gabra Egzaibhiker. According to the paleographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the first half of the 19th c. It contains 303 lines of text which tells the famous magical plot ("Justification scroll").

No. 4055-8 is a leather scroll 9 x 225 cm sown together from three parts with leather straps. The scroll is covered with a text on both sides.

The right side is covered with a text written in black and red ink. Apart from the text, there are three drawings made in black ink and yellow and red paint. The drawings are placed in the beginning, middle and end of the scroll. The first drawing is a full-length depiction of a two-winged angel, dressed in something resembling an Arabic jalabiya. The angel is holding a sword in his right hand, and shews in his left hand (fig. 16). The second drawing is a face of the "tied-up demon" with six horns placed in a geometrical ornament (fig. 17). The third drawing is a geometrical ornament which must have depicted the "Devil's throne" (fig. 18). The text on the right side of the scroll is placed in a frame.

The text is distinct. The text contains the name of the owner — Valatta Gabriel. On top another name is written — Verkhes. It is hard to say whether this was a nickname of the original owner, or the name of the second owner of the scroll. According to paleographical features, the manuscript can be dated to the first half of the 19th c.

The right side of the scroll contains 217 lines of text. According to its contents, the text can be divided into five magical plots:

Lines 1—34 — "Excommunication of Satan"
Lines 35—69 — Matthew's Gospel (8.18—33)
Lines 70—127 — Mark's Gospel (1.22—8)
Lines 128—195 — "St. Socinosis and Ursula"
Lines 196—217 — "Prayer against bleeding, announced to Mary by Gabriel"

The reverse side is covered with a text written in black ink only. There are no drawings. The script is more sloped than on the right side, but still distinct. It seems that it was written by the same hand as the text on the right side. The reverse side contains 100 lines of text. According to its contents, the text can be divided into five plots:

Lines 1—19 — prayer against bleeding
Lines 20—33 — "Excommunication of Satan"
Lines 34—52 — "Excommunication of Satan"
Lines 53—74 — "Protection of the cross"
Lines 75—100 — "Protection of the cross"

We must point to the fact that the right side was written for a woman "God's slave Valatta Gabriel", while the reverse side, despite its contents (prayer against bleeding) mentions a male "God's slave", although the name was not inserted.

No. 4055-9 is a scroll made of thin parchment, 7.5 x 14.5 cm, sown together from two parts with a parchment strap. In the middle the scroll is torn and mended with a white thread. A parchment strap, 14.5 cm long was tied to the upper part of the scroll to tie up the scroll and keep it rolled. On one side the scroll is covered with a text written in red and black ink. Red ink is cinnamon; the black ink is of two types — dark and light. The initial 14 lines in the first part of the scroll occupy the whole width of the scroll, the rest are written in two columns. The text in the second part of the scroll occupies its whole width. Different ink show that the scroll was not made at once; at first the initial 14 lines and the left column of the first part of the scroll were written (in light ink), and then — the right column of the first part, and the whole of the second part (in dark ink).

Apart from the text, there is an ornamental headband, a tail-piece and three primitive drawings made in black ink with a guache. The first drawing (in light ink) is placed before the text and depicts a full-length two-winged angel with a sword in a sheath on his waist. The second drawing (also in light ink) is placed in the middle of the text. It is a depiction of a flying winged angel brandishing a sword. The third drawing, the "tied-up demon" with six horns, is placed in the end of the first part and is made in dark ink. On both sides of the face of the "tied-up demon" there are wands.

The whole text and the drawings belong to the same hand. The script is distinct. The text contains the name of the owner — Valatta Gabriel. According to the paleographical features, the manuscript can be ascribed to the middle of the 19th c.

The manuscript contains 14 lines which occupy the whole width of the scroll in the first part and 76 and 100 lines in the left and right columns accordingly. The text can be divided into six magical plots.

The first 14 lines and 65 lines of the left column — "Absolution of charms"
The last 11 lines of the left column — the beginning of the "Sacramental alphabet" (letters "alet", "bore", "gmoel", "dahar", "te", "waw")
The first 35 lines of the right column — "Amen" — incantations with the "true and secret names of God in the hand of Archangel Michael — the scarer of the enemy"
The last 70 lines of the right column — salawat to Fanaal
The last 68 lines of the second part — a spell which is an eclectic combination of three magical plots — "Amarut", "Excommunication of Satan" and "Tell me your name"
The last 17 lines of the second part — the beginning of the "Psalter alphabet"

No. 4055-10 is a scroll made of thick parchment, 13 x 190 cm, sown together from three parts with straps. The right side of the scroll is covered with a text written in two columns with red and black ink. On the reverse side the text is written in one column. On the reverse side the text is placed in a frame coloured with yellow paint. The reverse side is not decorated.

Apart from the text, the right side contains three drawings made in black ink, red, yellow and blue paint. The drawings are placed in the beginning, middle and end of the scroll. The first drawing depicts two Ethiopian crosses on pedestals placed inside a geometrical ornament (fig. 19). The second drawing shows two angels divided from each other with a frame (plate 2). Behind the angels’ back there are schematic wings. Above their heads there are primitive images of tabals (typical Ethiopian dwellings) or churches. It is interesting that angels have legs instead of arms. The third drawing shows two faces of the "tied-up demons", Fig. 15.