

## Notes and News

### On-line Index of Ethiopian Manuscripts

<http://menestrel.in2p3.fr/spip.php?rubrique694>

This on-line directory is an attempt to identify world-wide all public collections of Ethiopian manuscripts. ‘Ethiopian manuscripts’ here include: codices of Ethiopian Christian and Ethiopian Jewish origin (Ethiopian Jews are also known as Bétā Israel or *falasha*); magic scrolls; and *aethiopica*, which are defined by Robert Beylot and Maxime Rodinson (*Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits éthiopiens* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1995), 11) as ‘modern copies made by or for an Orientalist, historical documents, scientific archive and notes of “éthiopisant”’. This means that here ‘Ethiopian manuscript’ covers very diverse material, the categorization of which varies from one library to another. We have tried not to neglect the Ethiopian Muslim tradition of manuscripts, which typically are classified separately in libraries, still not widely known by the scientific community and scarce in public collections, in Ethiopia as well as abroad. We would refer readers to the pioneering work of Ewald Wagner, *Afrikanische Handschriften, II: Islamische Handschriften aus Äthiopien* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1997; Xx+200 and facsimiles). This catalogue lists nearly 88 Harar manuscripts preserved in German collections.

We have annotated some of the manuscripts in the collections presented here according to their dating, rarity, or documentary interest. This information is illustrative and not exhaustive.

We list the libraries keeping Ethiopian manuscripts according to country. The list is not complete. Our directory is essentially based on Robert Beylot and Maxime Rodinson (1995). We wish to thank Robert Beylot for allowing us to continue his work.

Rather than re-write the above mentioned book, we chose, in addition to the updating imposed by the recent acquisitions of manuscripts, to develop the history of the collections whe-

never possible and to indicate websites that provide on-line catalogues, descriptions of the collections and sometimes images of the manuscripts. This work is not yet complete. However, for countries such as Germany, Ethiopia, France, Italy, United States or United Kingdom, the work is almost completed. This online publication guarantees us the flexibility to provide regular updates. This version is the second, the first having been published in pdf format in April 2006. Given the wide range of collections and their descriptions, we have no plans to publish a print edition of this work.

#### Call for participation of the scientific community

We appeal to the community of researchers as well as curators in charge of the collections described in this index, to help improve this finding aid. Obviously, some of us use some collections more assiduously than others and therefore have knowledge rarely shared in scientific publications. We would like this online catalogue to become a forum for sharing such information. For some countries, we have carried out exploratory work, but the results are still incomplete. This is the case for Egypt, Greece, Israel, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Switzerland. We would favourably welcome any proposal for collaborative work on these countries’ collections. Ultimately, for countries not yet included in the database, we would, again, welcome any initiative. Of course, each contribution will be signed by its author.

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