A digital facsimile of Walters Ms. W.836, Ethiopian Gospels

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This Gospel Book was written in Tǝgray, Northern Ethiopia, in the early fourteenth century, and was once owned by the church of St. George in Dābrā Mā’ar. It was written by the scribe Māṭre Krǝstos (መጥሬ፡ክርስቶስ፡) in the official liturgical language of Ethiopia, Ga’az. Most notable is its prefatory image cycle, which makes references to holy places in Jerusalem, such as Golgotha and the Holy Sepulcher, as they appeared in the sixth century. The manuscript therefore appears to be based on a sixth-century exemplar containing images connected to the Byzantine cult of holy places. Several related manuscripts have been identified that seem to be based on the same prototype, most notably Paris, Bibliotheque nationale eth. 32, a fragment in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, Inventory No. 3475 a-b, and another fragment in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, NM B 2034. The Paris manuscript contains a mid-fourteenth-century colophon which helps date the group. Although water has damaged some of its elaborately decorated pages, this Gospel Book is still an important record of the resurgence of monasticism that flourished in fourteenth-century Ethiopia.

Date
Early 14th century CE

Origin
Tǝgray, Northern Ethiopia

Scribe
As-written name: Māṭre Krǝstos
Name, in vernacular: እርባዕቱ፡ወንጌል፡

Form
Book

Genre
Scriptural

Language
The primary language in this manuscript is Geez.

Support material
Parchment
Heavy, yellow parchment
Extent
Foliation: 248
Modern pencil foliation upper right corners; stubs of two contemporary flyleaves, unfoliated, present at beginning of codex; fol. 128 blank

Collation
Formula: 1(8), 2(10-10), 3-30(8), 31(10,-1,8,9)
Catchwords: None
Signatures: None
Comments: Quires begin on folios 1(1), 10(2), 18(3), 26(4), 34(5), 42(6), 50(7), 58(8), 66(9), 74(10), 82(11), 90(12), 98(13), 106(14), 114(15), 122(16), 130(17), 138(18), 146(19), 154(20), 162(21), 170(22), 178(23), 186(24), 194(25), 202(26), 210(27), 218(28), 226(29), 234(30), and 242(31)

Dimensions
16.5 cm wide by 26.6 cm high

Written surface
12.0 cm wide by 21.0 cm high

Layout
Columns: 2
Ruled lines: 26
Hard-point ruling; layout does not apply to Eusebius letter and canon tables (folios 1r-6r)

Contents
fol. 1r - 248v:
Title: Gospel Book
Text note: Complete
Hand note: A modern hand has attempted to correct the text in some places (especially obvious on fol. 246r).
Decoration note: Three full-page miniatures comprise prefatory cycle; Small Evangelist portraits before each Gospel do not fill page but are centered within it; three full-page colored harags framing Eusebius' Letter to Carpiusus; eight framed Canon Tables; strong palette of red, blue, green, and yellow used for illuminations; rubrics, punctuation, margin ornaments in red and black; text in black ink

fol. 1r - 2r:
Title: Eusebius' Letter to Carpiusus
Incipit: እናት፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም:

Decoration note: Ornate columned framework around text which includes interlace, Greek key designs, and birds; opening text in alternating lines of red and black; Chi rho in red ending text

fols. 2v - 6r:
Title: Eight Eusebian Canon Tables
Incipit: ጥርዓት፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም:

Text note: Complete; several groups of numbers in final table present but obscured due to water damage; tables ending with diagram showing how Four Gospels agree in words (fol. 6r)

Decoration note: Eusebian numbers divided into columns ranging from four to eight per table; large framing arches enclosing smaller arches, ranging from one to four, filled with elaborate interlace and cross patterns; birds perching on foliage growing from top; arches supported by two columns except in last table, which has eight columns; Eusebian numbers in black with canon titles and ruling lines in red

fols. 6v - 7v:
Title: Prefatory cycle
Incipit: No text

Decoration note: Prefatory cycle with three full-page miniatures related to Christ's death and resurrection

fols. 8r - 247r:
Title: Gospels
Incipit: እርእስተ፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም፡ ወልም:

Contents: Fols. 8r-9r: list of sixty-eight traditional chapters of Matthew (last numbers illegible); fols. 9v-78r: Gospel of Matthew; fols. 78r-79r: list of forty-eight traditional chapters of Mark; fols. 80r-120v: Gospel of Mark; fols. 120v-122v: list of eighty-three traditional chapters of Luke; fols. 124r-192v: Gospel of Luke; fol. 192v-193r: list of nineteen traditional chapters of John; fols. 194r-247r: Gospel of John; in
the opening text of Matthew, the word ְמַח : "husband of (Mary)," has been erased (according to Church teaching, Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but he did not marry her); number of words of John and the total number of section titles (218) are given at the end (fol. 217r); a note on the same folio states that "every word in the Gospel[s] is true [because] the Son himself had uttered it."

Decoration note: Small Evangelist portraits at beginning of each Gospel (fols. 9v, 79v, 123v, 193v), each enclosed in frames made of three bands of color with an overall height of 18-20 lines; opening lines of Gospels in alternating red and black lines; explicits accented by red and black dot and dash designs

fols. 122v - 123r:
Title: Added prayer: excerpt from Ordinary of the Mass
Incipit: ነውእቱ፡ ከዜ፡ ቃር᎒፡ ነውእቱ፡ ከዜ፡ ብጣን፡ ስሩይ፡ Text note: Prayer added in an early eighteenth-century hand to originally blank space; concludes with a note of the copyist (name erased) asking users of this prayer to pray for him
Decoration note: None

Decoration

fol. 1r:
Title: Eusebius' Letter to Carpianus
Form: Full-page miniature

fol. 1v:
Title: Eusebius' Letter to Carpianus
Form: Full-page miniature

fol. 2r:
Title: Eusebius' Letter to Carpianus
Form: Full-page miniature

fol. 2v:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canon I
Comment: The inscription for the agreement of the Four Gospels begins "ሥርዓት፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ዛለስቱ፡ ለማትዎስ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ለሉቃስ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡," and ends with "ተፈጠመ፡ ዘመር፡ ዘዳም፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ማለስቱ።.

fol. 3r:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canon II
Comment: The inscription for the agreement of Matthew, Mark, and Luke begins "ሥርዓት፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ዛለስቱ፡ ለማቴዎስ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ለሉቃስ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡," and ends with "ተፈጠመ፡ ዘመር፡ ዘልስ፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ማለስቱ።.

fol. 3v:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canons III and IV
Comment: The inscription for the third Śǝr'at for the agreement of Matthew, Luke, and John reads "፡ ዛለስቱ፡ ለማቴዎስ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ለሉቃስ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡," and ends with "ተፈጠመ፡ ዘመር፡ ዘልስ፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ማለስቱ።." The inscription for the fourth Śǝr'at for the agreement of Matthew, Mark, and John reads "፡ ዛለስቱ፡ ለማቴዎስ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ለሉቃስ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡," and ends with "ተፈጠመ፡ ዘመር፡ ዘብዕ፡ ተኀብሩ፡ ማለስቱ።.

fol. 4r:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canon V
Comment: The inscription for the fifth Śǝr'at for the agreement of Matthew and Luke reads ".neo፡ ዛለስቱ፡ ለማቴዎስ፡ ለሉቃስ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡," and ends with "ተፈጠመ፡ ዘመር׃ ዘምስ׃ ተኀብሩ፡ ይልኤቱ።.

fol. 4v:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canon VI and VII
Comment: The inscription for the sixth Śǝr’at for the agreement of Matthew and Mark reads "፡፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡," and ends with "፡፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡." The inscription for the seventh Śǝr’at for the agreement of Matthew and John reads "፡፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡," and ends with "፡፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡." The inscription for the eighth Śǝr’at for the agreement of Luke and Mark reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡," and ends with "፡፲查封፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡." The inscription for the ninth Śǝr’at for the agreement of Luke and John reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡," and ends with "፡፲查封፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ፡." The inscription for the first part of the tenth Śǝr’at for Matthew alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ፡ ይሚፋ፡ የርጉ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃ የርጉ׃." The inscription for the second part of the tenth Śǝr’at for Mark alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃ የርጉ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃ የርጉ׃." The inscription for the third part of the tenth Śǝr’at for Luke alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00". The inscription for the fourth part of the tenth Śǝr’at for John alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00".

fol. 5r:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canons VIII, IX, and first half of X
Comment: The inscription for the third part of the tenth Śǝr’at for Luke alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00". The inscription for the fourth part of the tenth Śǝr’at for John alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00".

fol. 5v:
Title: Canon table
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Eusebian Canon X, second half
Comment: The inscription for the third part of the tenth Śǝr’at for Luke alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00". The inscription for the fourth part of the tenth Śǝr’at for John alone reads "፲፡ የስታት፡ ከልእ岬፡ ይሚፋ׃," and ends with "፡፲查封商务部AGMENT составляет 1912-05-08 11:23-04:00".
fol. 6r:
Title: Diagram showing how the Four Gospels agree in words
Form: Full-page miniature
Comment: The inscription reads "ኑባሬ፡ የሥርዓት፡ የዘከመ፡ የክብሩ፡ የአርባዕቱ፡ የወንጌላት፡ የቃላተ፡.

fol. 6v:
Title: Crucifixion, with Christ Represented as Lamb on top of the Cross
Form: Full-page miniature

fol. 7r:
Title: Christ's Resurrection, flanked by two women
Form: Full-page miniature
Comment: The moon and the sun (one of them not giving its light) and the three crosses are depicted at the top.

fol. 7v:
Title: Ascension and Enthronement of Christ
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Faces list of sixty-eight traditional chapters of Matthew (አርእስተ፡ የምንባብ፡ የእምወንጌለ፡ የማቴዎስ።)

fol. 9v:
Title: Portrait of the Evangelist Matthew
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Gospel of Matthew (ወንጌል፡ ወማቴዎስ፡)
Incipit: መጽሐፈ፡ልደቱ፡ለእግዚእነ፡ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡ወልደ፡ዳዊት፡ወልደ፡አብርሃም፡. . .
Comment: Under the portrait there is a note regarding the donation of the manuscript "to [the church of] Mary [of] Ṣǝku'" (ማርያም፡ጽኩዕ) by "Abba ArkǝŚǝllus" (አርከ፡ሥሉስ፡), in an early eighteenth-century hand.

fol. 79v:
Title: Portrait of the Evangelist Mark
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Gospel of Mark (መወንጌል፡ የማርቆስ፡); incipit: እግዚአብሔር፡ በከመ፡ መሄስ፡ በወልደ፡ ማርቆስ፡...
Comment: The inscription on the image names Mark and reads "ቅዱስ፡ ማርቆስ፡.

fol. 123v:
Title: Portrait of the Evangelist Luke
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Gospel of Luke (መወንጌል፡ የሉቃስ፡); incipit: እግዚአብሔር፡ በእንተ፡ ዋር:
Comment: The inscription on the image names Luke and reads "ሉቃስ፡.

fol. 193v:
Title: Portrait of the Evangelist John
Form: Full-page miniature
Text: Gospel of John (መወንጌል፡ የዮሐንስ፡); incipit:
Comment: The inscription on the image reads "ዮሐንስ፡..."

Binding
The binding is not original.
Bound in Tagray, Ethiopia; plain wooden boards, broken and stitched, front and back; chain stitching at four points

Provenance
Copied by Mäṭre Krǝstos (መጥሬ፡ ከርስቶስ፡) (see colophon, fol. 217v) in Northern Ethiopia, early fourteenth century, based on stylistic analysis and comparanda

Note of donation of the manuscript "to [the church of] Mary [of] Ṣǝku" (ማርያም፡ መንበ፡ ከርስቶስ፡) by "Abba Arkä Śəllus" (አርከ፡ ሙሉስ፡), in an early eighteenth-century hand under the portrait of Matthew (fol. 9v)

Owned by church of St. George at Dabra Ma'ar before 1973
Robert and Nancy Nooter collection (Nooter 20.15), Washington, D.C., until 1996
Acquisition
Alton W. Jones Foundation Acquisition Fund purchase from the Robert and Nancy Nooter Collection, 1996

Bibliography


Contributors
Principal cataloger: Getatchew Haile.
Cataloger: Herbert, Lynley
Conservators: Owen, Linda; Quandt, Abigail
Contributors: Bockrath, Diane; Emery, Doug; Isaac, Ephraim; Noel, William; Pizzinato, Riccardo; Tabritha, Ariel; Toth, Michael B.
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