

ISTITUTO PER L'ORIENTE "C.A. NALLINO"
UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE

RASSEGNA DI STUDI ETIOPICI

Vol. 9

3ª Serie

(LVI)



UniorPress

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3^a Serie

(LVI)

ROMA–NAPOLI
2025

RASSEGNA DI STUDI ETIOPICI – RIVISTA FONDATA DA CARLO CONTI ROSSINI

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The present issue is the 9th volume of the “3^a Serie” (the volume 4th of the “Nuova Serie” was published in 2012) and it represents the 56th volume since the establishment of the journal.

– The Università di Napoli L’Orientale participates in the publication of the «Rassegna di Studi Etiopici» by entrusting its care to its Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo.

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Iscrizione presso il Tribunale civile di Roma, Sezione Stampa, al numero 184/2017 del 14/12/2017

ISSN 0390-0096

UniorPress, Via Nuova Marina 59 – 80133 Napoli

Ai lettori

In apertura, questo nono volume della “3a Serie” della *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (cinquantaseiesimo dalla fondazione della rivista) offre al lettore una serie di contributi raccolti sotto il titolo generale ‘Cataloguing practices’, che rimanda a un evento scientifico celebrato a Napoli, presso il Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo, il 21 e 22 novembre 2024. In tale occasione, quindici comunicazioni furono presentate da specialisti di grande rilievo internazionale, prevalentemente formati o operanti all’interno dell’Asien-Afrika Institut dell’Università di Amburgo. Alla proposta di pubblicare i testi di quelle presentazioni hanno risposto solo quattro studiosi, che han fornito a questa uscita della nostra rivista contributi di sicuro valore scientifico. Nel suo articolo, Alessandro Bausi, coordinatore del progetto ‘Beta maṣāḥəft’ (2016-2040), illustrando i principi che han portato all’ideazione e alla creazione della maggiore piattaforma digitale operante a livello internazionale nel campo della descrizione e catalogazione dei manoscritti etiopici, fornisce una mole di considerazioni e strumenti di grande impatto e utilità, e opportunamente rivendica il contributo di ‘Beta maṣāḥəft’ in tutti i settori della ricerca sui manoscritti e il patrimonio testuale dell’Etiopia e dell’Eritrea. Gioia Bottari concentrando la propria attenzione sulla natura stratificata di molti codici etiopici e sulla necessità che questa loro condizione trovi adeguato riscontro in una catalogazione modernamente intesa, illustra come l’analisi codicologica, in particolare l’identificazione di unità di produzione distinte, aiuti a ricostruire le storie complesse di molti manoscritti. Daria Elagina, applicandosi al ricco e intricato *corpus* di scritture tradizionali volte a calcolare cicli temporali e posizioni astrali, fornisce un innovativo contributo su una tipologia testuale poco indagata, il *Ḥassāba ṣənə ‘t wa-ṣənṣənt*, di cui giunge a cogliere il nesso profondo con pratiche antiche, non estranee alla necessità di stabilire un rapporto fra ritmi lunari e qualità della legna. Pietro Liuzzo, partendo dallo studio di disegni fiamminghi della seconda metà del Cinquecento, che raffigurano animali e li identificano anche con parole etiopiche, trae argomenti per provare che queste scritture sono state utilizzate da Hiob Ludolf nella sua *Historia Aethiopica*, e per ricostruire un affascinante contesto di circolazione, in cui per oltre un secolo furono attivi intellettuali, artisti ed editori vissuti a Francoforte.

Nella seconda parte di questo volume, Jama Musse Jama offre un nuovo e significativo contributo di linguistica cuscitica, partendo dai notevoli risultati da lui stesso acquisiti nell'ambito del progetto di costruzione di un *corpus* della lingua Saho e di sviluppo delle risorse informatiche necessarie per la sua analisi, con particolare riferimento alla morfologia nominale. Allo studio di alcuni resti epigrafici della presenza militare italiana, negli anni in cui le ambizioni coloniali del gruppo dirigente fascista portarono all'occupazione, tanto breve quanto violenta, del Paese africano, si dedicano Jean-François Breton e Hiluf Berhe, ricostruendo alcuni momenti significativi della campagna di aggressione del biennio 1935-36. Infine, Ermias Andualem, offre un utile contributo lessicografico, incentrato sulla terminologia che viene utilizzata nell'ambiente della Chiesa Etiopica Ortodossa *Tāwahədo* per l'apprendimento e l'esecuzione della danza liturgica tradizionale (*aqq^waq^wam*).

Nella nuova rubrica 'Fieldwork and ongoing research' sono ospitati due *reports* di altrettante attività: Gioia Bottari rende conto della 'riscoperta' di manoscritti etiopici posseduti dalla Biblioteca Nazionale Univeritaria di Torino e dalla Biblioteca dei Cappuccini di Genova, felicemente individuati nell'ambito del progetto CaNaMEI (Catalogo Nazionale dei Manoscritti Etiopici in Italia); Luisa Senicola descrive le prime fasi di sviluppo del progetto *The Konso Agricultural Landscape: Documenting Traditional Terracing Systems in South-West Ethiopia*, mirante alla descrizione, allo studio storico-archeologico-antropologico e alla conservazione dei sistemi tradizionali di terrazzamento praticati nel Sud-Ovest etiopico.

Con profonda tristezza, la comunità scientifica internazionale ha appreso della scomparsa di Yaqob Beyene (1936-2025), personalità accademica di grande profilo, repentinamente sottratta alla stima e all'affetto di tutti. Poche settimane prima, egli aveva varcato per l'ultima volta la soglia del nostro Dipartimento, in visita ai nuovi scaffali che custodiscono i preziosi volumi della biblioteca personale di Lanfranco Ricci. Il ricordo scritto da Andrea Manzo riaccende in tutti noi la memoria della sua presenza, ad un tempo discreta ed elegante, sorridente e benevola, sempre pronta a condividere con i giovani ogni più piccola piega del suo vasto sapere.

Il Direttore

To the readers

This ninth volume of the “3rd Series” of the *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (the fifty-sixth since the journal was founded) opens with a series of contributions collected under the general title of “Cataloguing practices,” which refers to a scientific event held in Naples, at the Department of Asia, Africa, and the Mediterranean, on November 21 and 22, 2024. On that occasion, fifteen papers were presented by specialists of great international renown, mainly trained or working at the Asien-Afrika Institut of the University of Hamburg. Only four scholars responded to the proposal to publish the texts of those presentations, providing this issue of our journal with contributions of undoubted scientific value. In his article, Alessandro Bausi, coordinator of the ‘Beta maṣāḥəft’ project (2016-2040), illustrates the principles that led to the conception and creation of the largest international digital platform in the field of the description and cataloguing of Ethiopian manuscripts. He provides a wealth of considerations and tools of great impact and usefulness, and rightly underscores the significance of ‘Beta maṣāḥəft’ for all areas of research on the manuscripts and textual heritage of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Gioia Bottari draws attention to the layered nature of many Ethiopian codices and the need for this feature to be included in modern cataloguing practice. She illustrates how codicological analysis, in particular the identification of distinct production units, helps to reconstruct the complex histories of many manuscripts. Daria Elagina, applying herself to the rich and intricate corpus of traditional writings aimed at calculating time cycles and astral positions, provides an innovative contribution to a little-studied textual typology, the *Ḥassāba ṣənə́t wa-ṣənṣənt*, managing to grasp its profound connection with ancient practices, not unrelated to the need to establish a relationship between lunar rhythms and the quality of wood. Pietro Liuzzo, starting from the study of Flemish drawings from the second half of the sixteenth century, which depict animals and also identify them with Ethiopian words, lays out arguments to prove that these writings were used by Hiob Ludolf in his *Historia Aethiopica*, and to reconstruct a fascinating context of circulation, in which intellectuals, artists, and publishers living in Frankfurt were active for over a century.

In the second part of this volume, Jama Musse Jama offers a new and significant contribution to Cushitic linguistics, building on the remarkable results he himself achieved in the project to construct a corpus of the Saho language and develop the IT resources necessary for its analysis, with particular reference to nominal morphology. Jean-François Breton and Hiluf Berhe focus on the study of some epigraphic remains of the Italian military presence during the years when the colonial ambitions of the fascist leadership led to the brief but violent occupation of the African country, reconstructing some significant moments of the campaign of aggression in 1935-36. Finally, Ermias Andualem offers a useful lexicographical contribution, focusing on the terminology used in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahədo* Church for learning and performing traditional liturgical dance (*aaq^waaq^wam*).

The new section ‘Fieldwork and Ongoing Research’ features two accounts on different activities: Gioia Bottari reports on the ‘rediscovery’ of Ethiopian manuscripts owned by the National University Library of Turin and the Capuchin Library of Genoa, successfully identified as part of the CaNaMEI (Catalogo Nazionale dei Manoscritti Etiopici in Italia) project; Luisa Senicola describes the early stages of development of the project *The Konso Agricultural Landscape: Documenting Traditional Terracing Systems in South-West Ethiopia*, which aims to describe, study (from a historical, archaeological, and anthropological perspective), and preserve the traditional terracing systems practiced in southwestern Ethiopia.

It is with deep sadness that the international scientific community has learned of the passing of Yaqob Beyene (1936–2025), a highly respected academic figure who was suddenly taken from the esteem and affection of all. A few weeks earlier, he had crossed the threshold of our Department for the last time, visiting the new shelves that house the precious volumes of Lanfranco Ricci’s personal library. Andrea Manzo’s tribute rekindles in all of us the memory of his presence, at once discreet and elegant, smiling and benevolent, always ready to share every little detail of his vast knowledge with younger colleagues.

The Director

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THE CANAMEI PROJECT IN 2025: NEWLY IDENTIFIED ETHIOPIAN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS IN ITALY

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Abstract

This article presents the main research activities carried out within the CaNaMEI project during the year 2025, with particular emphasis on field surveys that led to the identification and study of Ethiopian manuscript collections previously unknown. The contribution outlines the results of investigations conducted at the National University Library of Turin and at the Provincial Library of the Capuchin Friars in Genoa, describing shortly the identified holdings, their chronology, and the historical contexts in which they were formed. These activities offers a contribution to the documentation, scholarly cataloguing, and valorisation of the Ethiopian manuscript heritage preserved in Italian .

Keywords

Ethiopian Manuscripts – CaNaMEI – Manuscript cataloguing – Codicology.

Within the framework of the CaNaMEI project (Catalogo Nazionale dei Manoscritti Etiopici in Italia), embedded since 2022 at the Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo of the University of Naples L'Orientale, several research activities were carried out during the year 2025, most notably a series of field missions aimed at the identification and documentation of Ethiopian manuscript collections preserved in Italy, both by public and private (generally ecclesiastic) institutions. Conceived as a structured programme devoted to the systematic survey, study, cataloguing, and valorisation of the Ethiopian manuscript heritage, the project provides a stable institutional framework and a shared methodological approach aiming to overcome the

fragmentary and occasional character of earlier research in this field. The activities conducted in 2025 (supported by the DAAM program “I manoscritti etiopici in Italia: documentare, catalogare, conservare”) led in particular to the survey and scholarly cataloguing of two previously undocumented manuscript collections preserved at the National University Library of Turin (Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino, BNUTO) and at the Provincial Library of the Capuchin Friars in Genoa (Biblioteca Provinciale dei Cappuccini di Genova).

The BNUTO Collection (National University Library of Turin)

The Ethiopian collection held at the National University Library of Turin consists of six codices, catalogued under the shelfmarks from a.VII.38 to a.VII.43. Information concerning their acquisition is extremely scarce; however, a few brief notes written on loose sheets suggest that these artefacts were brought back from Eritrea or Ethiopia by military personnel. Taken together, the codices constitute a valuable testimony to Ethiopian book production between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, encompassing texts of liturgical, hagiographical, biblical, and scientific content.

a.VII.38 – Psalter. መዝሙረ ፡ ዳዊት ፡ (CAe 2000)

132 fols.

Dimensions: external 180 × 131 × 55 mm; internal 176 × 128 × 41 mm.

Date: early nineteenth century.

a.VII.39 – ‘Calculus of stars’. ሐሳብ ፡ ከዋክብት ፡ (CAe 5048)

79 fols.

Dimensions: external 161 × 117 × 50 mm; internal 163 × 112 × 25 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

a.VII.40 – Gospel of John. ወንጌል ፡ ዘዮሐንስ ፡ (CAe 2715)

166 fols.

Dimensions: external 137 × 97 × 76 mm; internal 133 × 97 × 60 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

a.VII.41 – Anthology of New Testament excerpts (CAe 2072)

48 fols.

Dimensions: external 151 × 110 × 18 mm; internal 145 × 106 × 13 mm.

Date: early nineteenth century.

a.VII.42 – Life of Saint Cyrus. **ገድለ ፡ ኪሮስ ፡** (CAe 1468)

49 fols.

Dimensions: external 161 × 146 × 32 mm; internal 163 × 147 × 20 mm.

Date: late sixteenth century.

a.VII.43 – Collection of liturgical hymns with musical notation (antiphony). The fourteen Anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church (CAe 3189)

136 fols.

Dimensions: external 220 × 185 × 70 mm; internal 214 × 182 × 50 mm.

Date: early twentieth century.

All the six manuscripts belonging to the BNUTO collection have been fully digitised and will be incorporated into the CaNaMEI database.

The Collection of the Provincial Library of the Capuchins of Genoa

The Ethiopian collection preserved at the Provincial Library of the Capuchins of Genoa comprises twelve manuscripts, including eight codices, three scrolls, and one *sənsul*, all of which can be traced back to the missionary activity of members of the Capuchin Order in Eritrea and Ethiopia. This collection also contains items of considerable importance for codicological, philological, and historical-religious research.

MS. ET. 1 – Lectionary or weekly liturgical office (CAe 5654)

221 fols.

Dimensions: external 260 × 240 × 90 mm; internal 260 × 240 × 80 mm.

Date: late seventeenth-early eighteenth century.

MS. ET. 2 – The fourteen Anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church (CAe 3189), acephalous

132 fols.

Dimensions: external 255 × 183 × 60 mm; internal 247 × 175 × 40 mm.

Date (according to a note on fol. 127va): 1917 A.M. (Gənbət 3, 1917 A.M. = 11 May 1925 A.D.).

MS. ET. 3 – *Mə'əraf* (CAe 3186), one of the five books constituting the 'Divine Office'.

165 fols.

Dimensions: external 165 × 135 × 55 mm; internal 162 × 130 × 35 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

MS. ET. 4 – *Ziq* (CAe 1979), a collection of lyrical verses drawn from religious hymns, one of the five books of the ‘Divine Office’, accompanied by musical prescriptions.

88 fols.

Dimensions: external 132 × 106 × 37 mm; internal 128 × 103 × 25 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

Nota possessionis on fol. IIr: “This book belongs to our father Täklä Mika’el, who gave it to Däbrä Mika’el of Ad Laggō; the name of his father is Gärma Şəyon; the name of his mother is Wälättä Kidan; the name of his wife is Wälättä Dəngəl; the names of his children are Täklä Maryam, Gäbrä Maryam, and Wälättä Kidan”.

MS. ET. 5 – Psalter (CAe 2000)

167 fols.

Dimensions: external 182 × 170 × 65 mm; internal 175 × 166 × 45 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

MS. ET. 6 – Psalter (CAe 2000)

135 fols.

Dimensions: external 165 × 120 × 60 mm; internal 160 × 110 × 40 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

MS. ET. 7 – Homily on the Trinity, ጵርሳነ ፣ ሥላሴ ፣ (CAe 2736); fols. 82r–90r: *sālam* to Saint Michael; fols. 90r–96r: *sālam* to Saint Gabriel; fols. 96r–106r: *sālam* to Saint George

112 fols.

Dimensions: external 143 × 100 × 50 mm; internal 138 × 99 × 35 mm.

Date: late nineteenth century.

MS. ET. 8: fols. 1r–16v: *sālam* to Saint George; fols. 16v–32v: *sālam* to Saint Michael; fols. 32v–39r: *sālam* to Mary; fols. 39r–56r: *sālam* to the Saviour of the World; fols. 57r–63r: *sālam* to the Sabbath.

66 fols.

Dimensions: external 108 × 80 × 30 mm; internal 110 × 75 × 20 mm.

Date: early twentieth century.

MS. ET. 9 – Non-portable *sənsul*

Content: magical text (the legend of Susənyos and Wərzəlyā).

Dimensions: external 193 × 158 × 27 mm; internal 158.5 × 190 mm (two sewn parchment strips).

Date: early twentieth century.

MS. ET. 10 – Non-portable scroll

Content: magical text (the legend of Susənyos and Wərzəlyā).

Dimensions: 149 × 41 cm; thong 82 cm.

Date: twentieth century.

MS. ET. 11 – Portable scroll

Content: prayer for the entrapment of the demons.

Dimensions: 39.5 + 70 + 62 × 10.5 cm.

Date: twentieth century.

MS. ET. 12 – Portable scroll

Content: prayer for the entrapment of demons, recited by King Alexander in front of Gog and Magog.

Dimensions: 62 × 7 cm.

Date: twentieth century.

Publications

During the year under consideration, two publications appeared within the framework of the CaNaMEI project: Lusini, G., G. Bottari, *Genova, I manoscritti etiopici della raccolta Mosso (Castello d'Albertis e Biblioteca Berio)*, Naples, UniorPress, 2025 (CaNaMEI Reports, 6); Bottari, G., M. Villa, *Catalogue of the Ethiopian Documents from the Società Geografica Italiana (Rome)*, Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2025 (Series Catalogorum, XI).



Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria MS a.VII.39, f. 1r. © CaNaMEI.



Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS a.VII.42, f. 1r. © CaNAMEI.



Genova, Biblioteca Provinciale dei Cappuccini, MS. ET. 1, f. 17r. © CaNAMEI.



Genoa, Biblioteca Provinciale dei Cappuccini, MS. ET. 2, f. 1r. © CaNAMEI.

