

ጥምጢረ : ዘመን

Məšṭira Zaman

“The Mystery of Time”

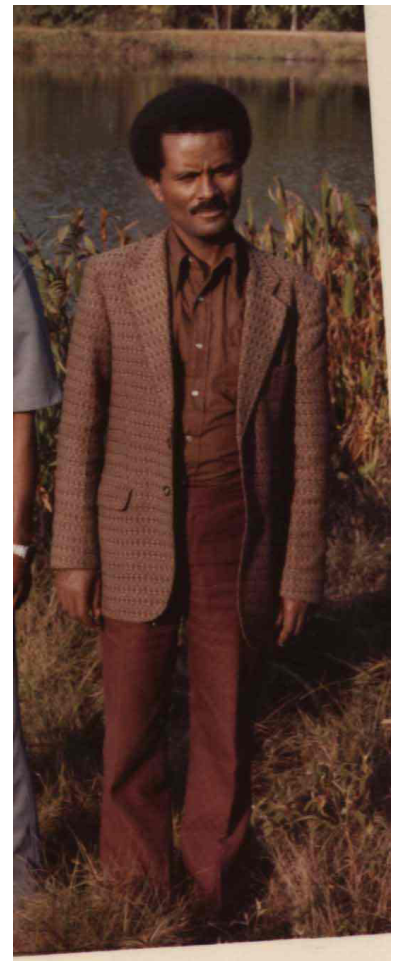
ጥምጢረ : ዘመን is an early seventeenth century Ethiopian manuscript in the Magdala collection of the British Museum, Or. 790. It is written on vellum of 193 folios with a page size of about 14 ³/₈ in. by 12¹/₂ in. and bound in a decorated leather binding. The original owner of the manuscript was ወልደ : ጊዮርጊስ, (ff.2v, 193r). This may have been the Ethiopian builder Walda Giyorgis who built castles for the Emperor Yohannes I and his son Iyasu I (mentioned in R. Pankhurst, *A Social History of Ethiopia*, 1990, p.106). He presented the manuscript as a gift to the church of the Holy Trinity at Dabra Berhan (f.1v). The text of the manuscript is a liturgical poem addressed to the Holy Trinity.

The following pages present two selections from the manuscript. The first selection is the first stanza of the poem with the illustration of the Trinity surrounded by the symbols for the Gospel writers and underneath stand the 24 elders (f.3r). The second selection is nine stanzas related to the story of Joseph (ff. 16v - 19v).

The English translation of these two selections were made by an Ethiopian Orthodox priest, The Rev. Seife S. Yohannis. The translation was made in 1980 at the time when Rev. Yohannis was a student in religious journalism at the Africa Literature Centre, Mindolo Ecumenical Centre, Kitwe, Zambia.

Rev. Yohannis spent his early years in a village of the Baso District in the Gojam Province. His father who was a peasant farmer died when he was young and when his mother died he was left an orphan under the care of the church. He progressed through the traditional educational system. From the village church school he was sent to the school of music (Dorgam Iyesus) and from there to the House of Poetry (Bete Kene) and then to advanced Bible studies at a monastery, Dema Georges. From his traditional education he entered a more Western style boarding school in Addis Ababa, Mikanis Yesu, where he was introduced to the study of English, Maths, History and Geography. Later he studied in the Anglican Holy Trinity College in the United Kingdom.

Before coming to the Africa Literature Centre, Rev. Yohannis worked translating Orthodox canon from Ge'ez into Amharic. He then served as a broadcaster in Amharic for Radio Voice of the Gospel, an ecumenical radio station located in Addis Ababa and beamed to a large part of Africa. After the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie by the military regime of Mengistu the ecumenical program was ended and the radio station was confiscated for the State. After the six month course in journalism at the Africa Literature Centre Rev. Yohannis was called to teach New Testament at the orthodox Theological School in Addis Ababa.





f. 3a. Beginning of the መልክእ¹ of the ምሥጢረ፡ ዘመን.

English translation of the text:

ሰላም²፡ እብል፡ ለተዋሳይ፡ ቅድስት፡ ሥላሴ ቅዱሞየ፡ ቅድመ፡ ሥላሴ
እንበለ፡ ናፍቆ፡ አአምን፡ ህላዊ፡ ሥላሴ ።
ግዳዊሆሙ³፡ ሥላሴ ፤ ወአካሉሙ፡ ሥላሴ ።
ወ ቅሴሆሙ⁴፡ ከማሁ፡ ሥላሴ ።

Peace², I say to the unity of the Holy Trinity,
Standing in front of the Trinity,
Without doubting, I believe the existence of the Trinity,
And their face³ triune and their person triune,
And their liturgy⁴ as it is triune.

rt. margin ወሰዓለሁ፡ ሕዝቅኤል⁵

painted by Ezekiel⁵

Notes:

¹ The መልክ (malk') is a type of Ge'ez poetry consisting of five lines (usually addressed to a saint praising the various parts of the body). As liturgical poetry there is a traditional way of chanting that is used. An audio tape was produced of Rev. Johannis chanting the nine stanzas related to the Joseph story in this traditional manner. Below is an attempt to describe the first three verses of this chant in staff notation.



Notes:

¹ The መልክ (malk') is a type of Ge'ez poetry consisting of five lines (usually addressed to a saint praising the various parts of the body).

² ሰላም (salām) is a greeting, such as שלום (šālōm) in Hebrew and سلام (salām) in Arabic.

³ A contemporary of John Chrysostom stated that the plural of face could not be used for a person of the Trinity because then there would be nine faces (3x3=9).

⁴ The ቅዱስ (q' ddāse) is the recital of the ቅዱስ (q' ddus) "holy" in the liturgy.

⁵ The marginal identification of the artist is very unusual for Ethiopian manuscripts. The few examples are manuscripts that are incomplete. Pankhurst suggests that the artist's name on incomplete manuscripts may be for the purpose of indicating who is responsible for its completion (Pankhurst, "Ethiopian manuscript illumination," *Azania*, pp. 105ff., Vol. 19, 1984). It is clear that it was intended that every page of the text of the poem be illustrated. The text is complete, but the illustrations are not complete. The illustrations are fully painted through the first 19 folios. After that the illustrations are still only line drawings, sometimes partially painted, sometimes the names of colors (in Amharic) indicated for the painter, sometimes only the text with the space for the illustration blank. This manuscript provides an opportunity to study the artists' technique in developing the illustrations.

ምክለ፡ብዙሓ፡ፍርሃት፡
 ሉክ፡ቅዱስ፡ዘልብስክሙ፡
 እሳት፡ሚጥዎ፡ለጸላኢሃ፡እ
 ምኒ፡ግእዙ፡እኪት፡ወእመ፡

ተዎ፡ዓቃቤ፡ደኩኖ፡እመ፡እ
 ኃዊሁ፡ሢጥዎ፡ሥሉክ፡ቅ
 ዱስ፡በኪዳን፡ወእሰፍዎ፡እም
 ሕማም፡ናሐይወክ፡ለሰብእና



እቦየ፡ንሥእዎ፡በሞት፡
 ሕላዮሴ፡ልብክሙ፡ዘፈ

ሃ፡በልዎ፡እክሙ፡ግብርክሙ፡
 ውእቱ፡አሕይዎ፡ኦዘዘረእ

አመ፡ተራከቦ፡ያዕቆብ፡^{16v} ምስለ፡ብዙሓ፡ፍርሃት
 ሥሉስ፡ቅዱስ፡ዘልብስክሙ፡እሳት
 ሚጥዎ፡ለጸላኢሃ፡እምኒ፡ግእዙ፡እኪት
 ወእመ፡አቦየ፡ንሥእዎ፡በሞት

Portion of preceding stanza, f16a - b.

When [Esau] met Jacob who was full of fear,
 Holy Trinity, clothed in fire,
 turn aside the enemy of wicked strife
 and thus prevent the acceptance of death.

Portion related to Joseph, ff.16b- 19b.

ኦለዮሴ፡ልብክሙ፡ዘፈተዎ፡
 ዓቃቤ፡ደኩኖ፡አመ፡አኃዊሁ፡ሢጥዎ
 ሥሉስ፡ቅዱስ፡በኪ ገ፡ወእሰፍዎ፡
 እምሕማም፡ናሐይወክ፡ለሰብእናሃ፡በልዎ፡።
 እስመ፡ግብርክሙ፡ውእቱ፡አሕይዎ

Portion related to Joseph, ff.16b- 19b.

O Joseph whom your heart loved,
 Becoming his guardian when his brothers sold him,
 Holy Trinity, in covenant and promise
 Say to myself, "We will revive you from your tribulations,"
 Since your work is restoration.

ምክሉ፡ ብዙላ፡ ፍርሃት፡
 ልክቅዱስ፡ ዘልብክሙ፡
 እሳት፡ ማሳዎ፡ ለጸሐዮ፡ እ
 ምኑ፡ ግእዙ፡ እኪት፡ ማሳዎ፡

ተዎ፡ ማተቤ፡ ደክና፡ አሙ፡ እ
 ኃዊሀ፡ ማሳዎ፡ ማሳዎ፡
 ማሳዎ፡ እኪት፡ ማሳዎ፡
 ማሳዎ፡ ማሳዎ፡ ማሳዎ፡



አብዮ፡ ግሥእም፡ በግደት፡
 አብዮ፡ ግሥእም፡ በግደት፡

ሃ፡ በልም፡ እኪት፡ ግሥእም፡
 ሃ፡ በልም፡ እኪት፡ ግሥእም፡

ኦዘዘራክ^{17r}፡ ውስተ፡ ሕሊና፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ንጽሐ፡
 አመ፡ አመከረቶ፡ በጸሕቅ፡ ብእሲተ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡
 የዋሐነ፡ ልብ፡ ሥላሴ፡ ዘታፈቅሩ፡ የዋሃ፡
 ሀብዎ፡ ወጸግውዎ፡ ለልቡናየ፡ ፍሥሐ፡
 ወእምነ፡ ዓይንየ፡ መሬታዊ፡ አሰስሉ፡ ላህ፡

O you who sewed purity in Joseph's mind
 When his master's wife repeatedly tempted him eagerly,
 Our meek-hearted Trinity who loves meekness,
 Give generously happiness to my heart,
 And from my earthly eye take away the tear.

ኦዘአጥበብክም^{17v}፡ ጊዜ፡ መከራሁ፡ ወተሞቅሐቱ፡
 ከመ፡ ደፈክር፡ ሕልሞ፡ ለመቁሐን፡ ፪ቱ፡
 ሥላሴ፡ ለዮሴፍ፡ እስመ፡ ታፈቅርዎ፡ ሎቱ፡
 አጥብብዎ፡ ለልቡናየ፡ ወግላ፡ ዚአሁ፡ አኣተቱ፡
 ከመ፡ ያእምር፡ ሰውራተ፡ አለ፡ ኮና፡ ቦቱ፡

O you who made him wise at the time of his
 temptation and imprisonment
 That he interprets the dreams of two prisoners,
 Trinity, because of your loving Joseph
 Make my heart wise and remove the veil
 That it might know things.

መ፡ታፈቅርዎ፡ሱ፡ቲ፡አፍብብዎ
 ለልዑናዩ፡ ወግባ፡ ዚአሁ፡ እእ
 ት፡ቲ፡ክመ፡ያእምር፡ከውራ
 ቲ፡እለ፡ኮና፡የቲ፡**እዘወሀብ**

እግዚአ፡ ወእምታእ፡ቲሁ፡ን
 ጥሠ፡**✠**እምተጠብብቲለዩ
 ሱ፡ፍ፡ ወእምፈጽሞቲ፡ማሳሠ
 ሠ፡**✠**አልብስዎ፡ለእለናዩ፡ልብ



ክምዎ፡ በቅድመ፡ፈርዖ
 ን፡ሞገስ፡**✠**ከከክ፡ይረስዩ፡

ስእእምር፡ሐዲስ፡**✠**ዘኢትፈቅ
 ዲ፡**ሥላሴ**፡አልባስ፡

እዘወሀብክምዎ፡ በቅድመ፡ ፈርዖን፡ ሞገስ **✠**
 እስከ፡ ይሬስዩ፡ እግዚአ፡ ወእምታሕቲሁ፡ ንጉሠ **✠**
 እምተጠብብቲ፡ ለዮሴፍ፡ ወእምፈጽሞቲ፡ ማሳሠሠ **✠**
 አልብስዎ፡ ለሕሊናዩ፡ ልብስ፡ እእምር፡ ሐዲስ **✠**
 ዘኢትፈቅዱ፡ **ሥላሴ**፡ አልባስ፡ ^{18r}

O you who gave him favor before Pharaoh,
 Until he will make him master and king under him,
 From his being wise and fulfilling a need,
 Clothe my heart with clothes of new knowledge,
 O Trinity who need not to be clothed.

ኦህተ ሠፍክሙ፡ ደቂተ፡ ይ
 ወደ፡ ክልኤተ ቅትእማርሃ፡
 ሶበ፡ ረሰዩ፡ ምንንተ ቅሥሉስ፡
 ቅዱስ፡ ዘተ ትዓለፉ፡ ከብ

ዱ፡ አመ፡ ርእሱ፡ አትሐት፡
 እምቤተ፡ ይሁዳ፡ ተወ
 ክፈ፡ ምድራዊ፡ ልደተ፡
 አአመ፡ ነገዳ፡ ሕፃናት፡ ያዕ



ሐተ፡ እምኤክሙ፡ አሐ

ዱ፡ ዘተልዕለ፡ ሕዓብ፡ ዘሢ

ኦዛቀሠፍክሙ፡ ቂቀ፡ ይሁ፡ ክልኤተ
 ትእማርሃ፡ ሶበ፡ ረሰዩ፡ ምንንተ
 ሥሉስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ዘትዓለፉ፡ ከብሐተ
 እምኤክሙ፡ አሐዱ፡ አመ፡ ርእሱ፡ አትሐት፡
 እምቤተ፡ ይሁ፡ ተወክፈ፡ ምድራዊ፡ ልደተ

O you who punished the two children of Judah
 When they rejected Tamar
 Holy Trinity who are clothed with glory,
 From the one of you when he was humbled
 Receive earthly birth from the house of Judah.

ኦአመ፡ ነገዳ፡ ሕፃናት፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ዘተልዕለ
 ጎበ፡ ዘሢ፡ ጥዎ፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ከመ፡ ይሣየሙ፡ እክለ
 እምልበ፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ሥላሴ፡ ዘአጥፋእክሙ፡ በቀለ፡
 አጽንዑኒ፡ በፍቅርክሙ፡ ወረስዩኒትኩለ
 ከመ፡ በስምክሙ፡ እሙት፡ ወእጹር፡ መስቀለ

O when the children of mighty Jacob travelled
 To where they sold Joseph that they might buy cereal,
 O Trinity who caused the heart of Joseph to forget revenge,
 Strengthen me in your love and make me stand straight
 That I die and carry the cross in your name.

ጥም፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ክመ፡ ይሳየው፡
 ኦክ ሰቅኦም ልቦ፡ ዮሴፍ፡
 ላሊ፡ ዘአጥፋ ኦክመ፡ በቀሊ፡
 ኦድን ውኒ፡ ዘፍቅር ክመ፡ ወ

ከተ ለኛ አሰመንግ ሥቅክመ፡
 ዘይነብር፡ ወይሂ ሉቀስን ዘ፡
 ሥልጣኛ፡ ይገብር፡ ወያርኢ፡
 ዕቦየ፡ ኃይሉ ቅድሳው ሊቲ፡



ረከዮኒ፡ ቅኩል ቅኩመ፡ በስም
 ክመ፡ ለመ፡ ቅ፡ ወእጼር፡ መ

ሥላሴ፡ በውሂ በጸጋ፡ ዘላዕሉ፡
 እንዘ፡ ይሁብ፡ ለአጋዊሁ፡ አም

ኦለመንግሥቶክመ፡ ዘይነብር፡ ወያረሉ❖

እንዘ፡ ሥልጣኖ፡ ይገብር፡ ወያርኢ፡ ዕቦየ፡ ኃይሉ❖

አድልዉ፡ ሊተ፡ ሥላሴ፡ በውሂ በ፡ ጸጋ፡ ዘላዕሉ፡

እንዘ፡ ይሁብ፡ ለአጋዊሁ፡ አም^{19r}፡ ንዋዩ፡ ወብዕሉ❖

ከመ፡ ለብንያም፡ ዮሴፍ፡ አድለወ፡ በኩሉ❖

O your kingdom which lives and exists forever

While its authority accomplishes everything and reveals its power,

O Trinity be fair to me and be gracious from the highest

When (Joseph) gave to his brothers from his wealth and property

(And) gave Benjamin more than all.

ኒ፡ንዋዩ፡ወብሐሉ፡ክመ፡ለ
 ብንደግ፡ዮሴፍ፡አድለወ፡በ
 ኩሉ፡**አዘዓቀብክሙ**፡ደዕዮ
 ብሃ፡ወደቂቶ፡ክመ፡ምድረ፡

ሐሌ፡ለቃዲስ፡ደድለተልቆ
 ሐንቅወኒ፡በሃይማኖት፡እን
 ዘ፡እጸልእ፡ኖፍቶ፡ለእኩ
 ቴትክሙ፡እኩን፡ሐዲስ፡መ



ግብጽ፡ወረዱ፡ምስለ፡ዮሴፍ፡
 ለተላጽቶ፡**ዘኃይልክሙ**፡**ሐ**

ሐንቆ፡**ለክብርክሙ**፡በዓራት፡አብ
 ራክ፡ደዕቆብ፡**ሐገዱ**፡ክመ፡

ኦዘንቀብክሙ፡ ደዕቆብሃ፡ ወደቂቶ ❖

አመ፡ ምድረ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወረዱ፡ ምስለ፡ ዮሴፍ፡ ለተላጽቶ ❖

ዘኃይልክሙ፡ **ሥላሴ**፡ ለቃዲስ፡ ደድለቀልቆ፡

ሐንቅወኒ፡ በሃይማኖት፡ እንዘ፡ እጸልእ፡ ኖፍቶ ❖

ለአኩቴትክሙ፡ እኩን፡ ሐዲስ፡ መሰንቆ ❖

O you who kept Jacob and his children

When they descended to the land of Egypt to
 unite with Joseph,
 Your power, O Trinity, trembled in the Sinai desert.

Pluck the strings of faith (without) hate or doubting

That I might praise you with a new harp.

ደቂቅ፡ ባረከ፡ ለለ፡ አሐዱ፡ አሐዱ፡
 ሐዱ፡ ወአርአይክሙ፡ ሥላሴ፡
 ትዕምርተ፡ በውስተ፡ እዱ፡
 ለኤፍሬም፡ ንዑስ፡ እድሜ፡

ነገዱ፡ ተዓገሥክሙ፡ አሜን፡
 ነዋኝ፡ ትእግሥተ፡ እንዘ፡
 ያጸንዑ፡ ግብጽ፡



ከሙ፡ ደከብሩ፡ ውሉዱ፡
 ለምናሴ፡ ልሂቅ፡ ይቴሐት፡

በሐዘብክሙ፡ ቅንየተ፡
 ካልዕ፡ ፈርዖን፡ በጊዜ፡ ነገሠ፡

ኦክብርክሙ፡ በዓራት፡ አብራከ፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ሰገዱ፡
 አመ፡^{19v} ደቂቅ፡ ባረከ፡ ለለ፡ አሐዱ፡ አሐዱ፡
 ወአርአይክሙ፡ ሥላሴ፡ ትዕምርተ፡ በውስተ፡ እዱ፡
 ለኤፍሬም፡ ንዑስ፡ እድሜ፡ ከሙ፡ ደከብሩ፡ ውሉዱ፡
 ወለምናሴ፡ ልሂቅ፡ ይቴሐት፡ ነገዱ፡

To your glory the knees of Jacob knelt
 When he blessed children one by one,
 And you, Trinity, showed the cross with your hands
 To the children of the younger Ephraim,
 And the elder Mannaseh will be a subordinate tribe.

End of the Joseph portion:

ተዓገሥክሙ፡ አሜን፡ ነዋኝ፡ ትእግሥተ፡
 እንዘ፡ ያጸንዑ፡ ግብጽ፡ በሐዘብክሙ፡ ቅንየተ፡
 ካልዕ፡ ፈርዖን፡ በጊዜ፡ ነገሠ፡^{20r} መንግሥተ፡