

Addis Ababa University
College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism, and Communication
Department of Linguistics and Philology

Codicology of Gondärian Manuscripts (ca. 1650 - 1800)

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philology,
Addis Ababa University, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philology**

By: Teshager Habtie Seboka

Principal advisor, Professor Denis Nosnitsin

Co advisor, Dr. Indirs Mohammed

November 2019
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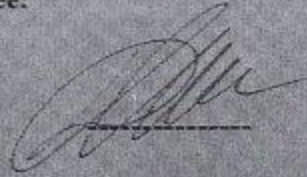
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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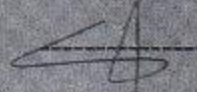
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Transliterations

Transliteration of Ethiopic writing system of *Fidäl* and numerals are listed in the following tables, respectively. Adapted from Ayele Bekire 1997 and modified by the researcher.

1. *Fidäl*

	Ge'ez ä	Ka'eb u	Salis ĩ	Kab'e a	Hamis é	Sadis í	Sab'e o
<i>l</i>	ለ	ሉ	ሊ	ላ	ሌ	ል	ሎ
<i>h</i>	ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ
<i>m</i>	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ማ	ሜ	ም	ሞ
<i>ś</i>	ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ
<i>r</i>	ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ራ	ር	ሮ
<i>s</i>	ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ስ	ሶ
<i>š</i>	ሸ*	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ
<i>k</i>	ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ
<i>b</i>	በ	ቡ	ቢ	ባ	ቤ	ብ	ቦ
<i>v</i>	ቨ	ቩ	ቪ	ቫ	ቬ	ቭ	ቮ
<i>t</i>	ተ	ቱ	ቲ	ታ	ቲ	ት	ቶ
<i>č</i>	ቸ	ቹ	ቺ	ቻ	ቼ	ች	ቾ
<i>h</i>	ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	ኆ
<i>n</i>	ነ	ኑ	ኒ	ና	ኑ	ን	ኖ
<i>ñ</i>	ኘ	ኙ	ኚ	ኛ	ኜ	ኝ	ኞ
ፊ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ
<i>k</i>	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ
<i>k</i>	ኸ	ኸ	ኸ	ኸ	ኸ	ኸ	ኸ
<i>w</i>	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ
ፎ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ

z	ሀ	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ህ	ሆ
ž	ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ
y	የ	ዮ	ዿ	ያ	ዬ	ይ	ዮ
d	ደ	ዱ	ዲ	ዳ	ዴ	ድ	ዶ
đ	፯	፰	፱	፳	፻	፼	፽
g	ገ	ጉ	ጊ	ጋ	ጌ	ግ	ጎ
t	ጠ	ጡ	ጢ	ጣ	ጤ	ጥ	ጦ
č	ጨ	ጨፍ	ጨሊ	ጭ	ጨፍፍ	ጭፍ	ጭፍፍ
p	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ
š	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ
ś	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ
f	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ
	ፐ	ፑ	ፒ	ፓ	ፔ	ፕ	ፖ
ጎጎ ጎጎጎ	ቁ ባጎጎ	ኀ ኀጎጎ	ኁ ኁጎጎ				

*The bold ones are Amharic *Fidäl* added to Ethiopic

2. Numerals

፩	፪	፫	፬	፭	፮	፯	፰	፱	፲
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
፳	፴	፵	፶	፷	፸	፹	፺	፻	፻፻
20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	1000

Abbreviations

ATMI - Atatami Michaelae

BDGE - Bahər Dar Georges

CAT- Catalogues

COMSt - Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies

Ch. - Chapter

cm - centimetre(s)

DBS - Däbrä Bərəhan Šəllase

ed. - editor, edited

e.g. - *exempli gratia*, for example

EMML - Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa

Ethio - SPaRe-Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation, Research

et al. *et alii*, and others

etc. *-et cetera*, and so on

fig. (figs.) - figure (s)

f. (ff.) - *folium* (*folia*)

MED - Mädhane ʿAläm

MNDA - Məndaba

MOGI- Mäg^wina

MS (MSS) - manuscript(s)

n. (nn.) - Note (s)

NALE - National Archives and Library of Ethiopia

NCS - National Colour Standards

no. (nos.) - number(s)

ORG - Organization

p. (pp.) - page(s)

QUS - Qusəq^wm

r- recto

v- verso

Atatami Michaele	
Bahər Dar Fälagə Ginet Quddus Georges Cathedral	
*Däbrä Bərəhan Šəllase rəsä adəbarät z Gondär	DBS
Däbrä Mäg ^w ina Monastery	MOGI
*Manbärə Minəgist Mədhané °Aläm	MED
Məndaba Monastery	MNDA
Two private collections in the city (no official names)	INDI
Secular Organization collections, Ethio-SPaRs ¹	ORG
Däbrä dḥay Qusəq ^w m ²	QUS
Wright	CAT

Acknowledgments

First and for most, my gratitude goes to my principal advisor, Professor Denis Nosnitsin and to Dr. Indirs Mohammed. I should thank them for their time and trouble advising me doing this research. I should thank Dr. Amsalu Tefera, Sisay Sahile, Dr. Abrha Tegegn, Sefenew Zeray and Dr. Gashaw.

Moreover, Hirut Bekele [Mimi], my beloved wife and my little children; Hilina, Bereket and Kiya, Yeshareg Adem contributed a lot. They all deserve thanks. The curators, Bahire Tibebe, Saba, and gashe Zewdu deserve respect for what they have done for me. I should thank my

¹ During the digitalization project, the team collected those books formerly parts of the Maqdala collections.

^{2*} These are the only collections, which received books from more than one king and in two sub periods.

sponsor, University of Gondar. Inspector Worqe and her husband, Mr. Ayalew, Mulat Alemayehu, Andenet Asfaw and Dinbero, they all deserve many thanks helping me in many respects.

Others who wished me the best such as, aleqe Endie (አለቅ አጌዴ?) and Alalaqem (አላለቅግግ?). They would be different to hear from me that I accomplished at last. My mother Kassaye Adem, Tesfahun Nigussie, and Yenus Worku who helped me to restart the long journey of academics in Spetember1994EC after three years drop out.

Abstract

Ethiopia is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of its manuscript culture since antiquity. Almost all of this culture is recorded on typically known manuscript made from birana (a Ge'ez term for parchment). The manuscripts supposedly produced from ca. 1650-1800 A.D. are the continuations of the manuscript culture that began about two millenniums B.C. However, these manuscripts have not been studied from their codicological aspects. Though these manuscripts have shown impressive origin and historical changes, no serious codicological investigations have been conducted. Nor do they were analyzed in terms of their historical interpretations. This study has the objectives to explicate how codicology is a philological matter and is an integral part of a manuscript culture and to illustrate how the material aspects have impacts on the investigation of the entire codices. In addition, it aimed to explain the predominant codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts relating them through

philological perspective and to trace back the typical characteristics of the local manuscript culture and their historical evolutions. Mixed research design has been used for cross-referencing of 80 purposefully selected manuscripts. Using 'textual' analysis, the manuscripts referred to the Gondärian manuscripts produced at the heydays of the Gondärian period are scrutinized in light of their historical contexts. These 80 manuscripts of varied subject matters have been compared using a descriptive statistics tool. A guideline form, which has 110 items, was developed for the comparative codicology between three periods within the Gondärian period. The use of descriptive statistics is further extended to include the study of material culture that is codicology. Comparisons of these 80 MSS in line with 110 items concretize our knowledge about the indissolubility of codicology, paleography, and text block analysis. The comparative statistics applied in the study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts gave new insight in the philological analysis that has traditionally been more of a subjective analysis. The qualitative aspect of this study adopted Clifford Geertz's powerful concept of "thick description" for its descriptive codicology. The findings of this study are successful justifications of how descriptive codicology explained from the philological perspective that accentuate how historical context and locational variations matter in the construction of meanings and the resultant interpretations. Data beyond the content of the "text" have been used for historical justifications and manuscript based identity constructions. The 'textual' analysis on the codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts revealed that there were no holes on parchments, a single work of a manuscript only contains a single subject matter, and the flyleaves were added independently from the text block. Moreover, in the Gondärian manuscripts, the size of the wooden board was larger than the parchments' size and bookmakers tooled ornamental Latin crosses on the covers of the manuscripts. Relatively speaking, these codicological features are found peculiar in the Gondärian manuscripts. Cognizant of these points, this study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts can give new insights to investigate the complexity of codicology and its inseparability from philology by emphasizing the close relationship between bookmaker, text block, context, and users of the manuscripts.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopia has a book culture since late antiquity. This book culture predominantly using parchment (*bərana*³) has evolved through millenniums. Attesting this, Ayele (1997) and Bausi (2012) indicate that Ethiopia has a rich writing tradition that reveals a complex knowledge system that began at least since 2000 BC or the middle of the first millennium BC. This book culture written predominantly in Ge'ez has been used as a repository for divergent knowledge systems such as theology, history, astronomy, medicine, culture, and so forth (Uhlig & Bausi 2014, 738).

Ancient monasteries, churches, royal libraries took the upper hand preserving and replicating earlier religious and secular books. Monasteries and churches located in different places of Ethiopia have served as higher institutions documenting and using these knowledge systems on varied occasions for different purposes. Royals and wealthy individuals from the publicly financed and gave material support to these higher institutions. Undoubtedly, Ethiopia's book culture became rich and continued to these days. It is because of the generous hands of the successive royalties⁴ and the wealthy person's logistical support in the long history of the country. As such, the rich book culture is evidence of the depth of the knowledge bases applicable both in productions and receptions of ancient manuscripts.

Ayele (1997, 25) illustrates that almost all of these ancient manuscripts used *bərana*¹ (a Ge'ez term for parchment) a type of vellum instead of papyrus as used in ancient Egypt. On the contrary, Bausi (2016, 112) spelled *bərana* as *berännā* to link the root with a Latin term membrane and/or with a Greek term membrane.

³*bərana* is a parchment made of either domestic or wild animals' skins.

⁴ 'For example, the affection Emperor Yohannis (*ṣadiqu Yohannis*), the successor of Fasilädäs, had for books can be demonstrated by one of the buildings among the castles in Gondär.' Meresha Alehegn 2011,145 note 4.

Ayele (1997) further notes the difficult tasks in preparing the *bərana* and inks and writing the manuscripts. Writing the manuscripts includes value-added replication of original manuscripts. This implies, the long process of book culture accentuates the complexity of the knowledge system. Ayele (1997, 62) indicates that this complex process is performed by resourceful priests⁵, but at times with the help of few others. This illustrates that an ancient manuscript is “a truly self-sustaining or self-reliant production.” He further observes that all the constituents of the knowledge system from generating ideas to the manufacturing of the *bərana* to the chemistry of the inks to the actual writing and binding processes are all done domestically.

The ancient *bərana* manuscripts are dependable sources to investigate the maxims in the knowledge systems, order of things, and identity constructions based on the interpretations of the used material. This can be done in scrutiny on structural changes in identifiable historical periods and variations in locations. Though to trace back the original form of the ancient manuscripts seems difficult, it is possible to view critically the historical developments and quality changes over time from these replicated manuscripts. Besides, studying codicological features is a base to conduct philological studies from the outset of manuscripts plausibly produced in the historically identified Gondārian period.

The Ethiopian manuscript tradition has a long history and persists until the present time. The tradition's essential properties had been often embodied in the currently existing manuscript culture. According to Bausi (2015, 48), Ethiopia's long history of book culture is linked to the heritage of the codex that can be the only⁶ the book format is known (i.e., a handwritten book made by sewing together folded sheets, bound between boards, as distinct from scrolls). By far the majority of Ethiopian codices were produced in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia at multiple manuscripts producing ‘centers’. These centers, often monasteries and old churches, are also centers for manuscripts' preservations and uses. This particular circumstance means a substantial bulk of manuscripts situated in rural /urban and isolated local centers with a very limited concentration in higher central institutions in the country (Bausi 2015, 48).

⁵ Churchmen Pankhurst 1984,207

⁶Bausi 2012, 56

Though the Ethiopic manuscripts are being produced at a very low rate especially as compared to earlier times, they are still preserved in multiple local centers. According to Bausi (2015, 48), there are at least sixteen (16) major centers for manuscripts production and preservation of codices. Each book is assumed to contain a variety of information about itself and signatures marking its local origin, which is particularly identified and is a historically known workstation. The data source about each manuscript as an object of use may be revealed in the book's three constituent parts, namely, in-text block (written text, script, and illuminations), in the bindings (material and structural features), and the decorations. This seems evident in the most intricate instances of illuminated manuscripts. However, no treatise narrating the practices directly from the places or time of book production is readily available.

Many of the previous scholars tended to pay attention mostly to the body text. The textual block data contents received more research coverage than the material aspects. Even decorations on the bookbinding have been studied more than the material aspects of codices. Nonetheless, the interior and exterior materials and structures of the books that together make up the binding as objects have the least scholarly attention. Witkowski (2015, 485) regrets about the incompleteness of philological investigations that have overlooked codicological information within. Nosnitsin (2014, 75), notes in the 19th and the most of the 20th centuries, some scholars were interested primarily in texts and in philological elaborations, which was putting aside codicological aspects.

The emergence of codicology as a research subject matter is very young. Gumbert (2004) indicates that it was as recently as 1950 AD that the term codicology was coined. This implies codicology, which is about 70 years old as a scholarship is progressing. The case in Ethiopia in the study of codicology is paradoxical as compared to Ethiopia's book culture since antiquity. It is only at the publication of Särəgäw Habälä-Səlassie's (1981) *Bookmaking in Ethiopia* that the first separate booklet dedicated to Ethiopian bookmaking appeared. Hence, undoubtedly, the Ethiopian codicological study is still in its infancy.

Moreover, many of the codicological studies that have been done from the middle of 19thc up to present are based on the “real”⁷ collections of Ethiopian manuscripts located abroad. Those manuscripts collections outside of Ethiopia are not so cooperative in reconstructing the historical appearance of the Ethiopian codices. The reason is simply they would have been lost their original features due to subsequent rebinding. This is meant that items preserved in the manuscript collections outside Ethiopia may allow for very few general evaluations of their material characteristics. Identifying features that can be correlated with the specific regional origin and periodic analysis especially in line with specific historical periods appears to be difficult.

Most of the authors who were engaged in conducting researches on Ethiopian manuscripts have done their work only on "overviews." The question of variations due to the "local traditions" did not come into discussion yet. Possibly, these authors did not overlook consciously the issue of local variations in the production of manuscripts since it is hardly convincing these authors denied the existence of local variations. Instead, these authors' lack of serious intent and knowledge would be accountable not to study Ethiopia's manuscripts show local variations. More importantly, scholarly interest in the study of codicology of Ethiopic manuscripts started to grow only in the late 20th century.

There are some varied assumptions circulated among scholars. Some of them are suggestive of an examination of quality aspects. Often the ‘Gondärian’ higher values manuscripts have been represented with its distinct ‘fine’⁸ category of books. Many of the Emperors in the historically identified Gondärian period were first class sponsors to the production of manuscripts of varied topics. Plausibly, the sponsors influenced the final products of the crafts; the production of new materials, and the development of the structural techniques more considerably in the Gondärian context. Some of the Gondärian royalties, nobles, and wealthy individuals who patronage the high value books with illuminated manuscripts presented manuscripts to religious institutions as a political/ ideological statement. Each of the imperial successors in Gondär had likely put his

⁷Bausi 2012, 57

⁸ ‘Fine’ here used to illustrate the quality of book material and structural features and not merely aesthetical sounding terms.

hand sponsoring the production of the codices. This also implies that each emperor had a specific purpose and expected reward in sponsoring the production of the codices. For this reason, the historical changes of codicology are observable on the Gondärian manuscripts; thereby, the manuscripts reflect the successive emperors assumed reward and their attitude towards either religious or secular manuscripts.

The historic periods might be greatly diversified than the present-day practices. Certain MSS production technologies are not serial at the beginning, but later they were found unified through time. Consequently, the MSS technologies assumed a conventional standard that evolved based on the center of productions. As such, there was a reciprocal relationship between the physical appearance of the material aspects and the matter they contain (i.e. the script/ illuminations). Moreover, it is assumed that there are mutual interdependences between the chosen structure and the used materials by the binder and the textual content of the codices.

For the aforementioned general backgrounds and for what is recommended by scholars such as Nosnitsin, the need to study codicology of Gondärian manuscripts is found important. Attesting this, Nosnitsin (2012, 16) indicates, "there is little doubt that only a portion of the estimated number of manuscripts in Ethiopia is of real interest for the study. The research in Ethiopia should be aimed at defining the historical picture of the manuscript culture and its centers (multiple scriptoria), and characterizing them through their local manuscript." Thus, the study of the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts is found relevant.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Codices are indispensable repositories of cultural values and norms and are reflections of people's mentality in a particular historical period. Hindman and Bergeron-Foote (2010, 25) emphatically indicate the excellence of Ethiopian codices particularly the Christian ones. They further note the remarkable qualities of these Christian codices particularly the binding structures have been used as models at least since the fourth century. As such, codices' important place as a medium of written cultural messages and they are being the historical manifestations should be associated with contextual matters.

However, to my informed conviction, there are no studies conducted on the philological aspect of codicology and its indissolubility from the textual analysis. Nor are studying take into consideration the integrated nature of a historic physical codex, which deserves to be studied in both codicological and philological ways. Nor are studies about locational variations of codicology and evolution in time.

The basic shortcomings of many of the philological investigations are their exclusive interest in the body text of manuscripts overlooking codicology as an integral part of the manuscript culture. These days the common misunderstanding to associate philology exclusively to linguistic terms is challenged. Lundhaug & Lied (2017) and Lundhaug's (2017) innovative perspective in philology referred to as New Philology explains the need to consider the wholeness of manuscripts instead of focusing on a single aspect of manuscript culture.

By this, philology grants, how our knowledge of codicology advances or hinders our understanding and interpretation of manuscripts. Hence, it is possible to emphasize how codicology is an integral part of philological inquiry rather than it is peripheral to a sharpened focus on linguistics alone. The purpose in the reconstruction of these codices as they are an integral part of the manuscripts' textual analysis necessarily requires an appropriate systematic approach for the historical period through a comparative analysis. Thus, the codices should be scholarly scrutinized from both diachronic and synchronic views appropriate in philological tradition. The synchronic view helps to look at the structural, functional, and contextual matters. The diachronic view shows codicological changes and developments over time.

In the search for reliable criteria to establish the original reading of texts, philology has refined its methods. From disciplines like “codicological stemmatics,” or “material philology” as sub-disciplines, philology takes advantage of them and their recent developments. Thanks to these new research directions, the relationships between the manuscripts and the texts they transmit are established. In addition to this, the material structure of specific copies may have exerted influences up on the entire codex within a single textual tradition. So far, Ethiopian manuscripts have seldom been studied by the full application of these recent disciplinary subdivisions (Uhlig & Bausi 2014, 738).

While the aforementioned studies offer some useful concepts linking philology with medical science, religious texts, art history, music, film, and historiography. Moreover, codicology is taken as a key philological matter and is used as a knowledge base to trace back visible structural features on the manuscripts. The codices' material aspect corresponds to the text layout structure and the religious expressions therein. None of them directly touches upon codicology as an aspect of new philology. Codicology, as it is one key aspect of philology, needs to be studied in consideration of the carriers of the book culture (i.e. the monasteries, the scribes, and the binders in this case), the cultural value systems, and the material aspect of the codices themselves.

However, some studies have only limited to a general description of the single aspects of the manuscripts by different disciplines separately rather than a book as object. Scholars such as Asäffa Libän (1958), Särägäw Habäl-Səlassie (1981), Fäqadä-Səllase Täfärra (2010), and Winslow (2015) have done some ethnographic descriptive studies. Nonetheless, all of them focus on the technical aspect of traditional bookmaking techniques and writing materials. As such, they only describe the preset time craft procedures, which is exactly dissimilar to the historic book aspect of the codices.

In the long book culture of Ethiopia, codices mainly made up of *bərana* have been used as very important source materials to reconstruct the past. Sadly, sources on historic ones and their methods of manufacture and kinds of materials used are scarce. Literatures usually report general information like, places of production, formats of the books, and some basic qualities. Only rarely do they concern the actual fabrication techniques employed by those bookmakers, who are now 'dead'. Nevertheless, they are not passive copiers/binders of ancient manuscripts.

Contrary to the Ethiopian crafts, they seem to claim that Ethiopian codices is simple that the codices appear without any variations in historical periods and locations resulted from unchanged process of manufacturing. Bausi (2012, 56) observes that codices historical features could only be understood by considering their long historical developments and local cultural history rather than emphasizing on the ethnographical observation. For this reason, one can say that Ethiopian manuscripts with their historical features and regional changes have not been represented by these studies. Undoubtedly, these studies overlooked contextual matters that could be deduced from the codices themselves.

Nevertheless, consideration of contextual matters enables us to trace back the underlying interpretations and to investigate how cultural semiotics works both in production and in the reception of the codices. The textural development of the manuscripts that are often linked to the historical event that power (both ideological and financial) was in the hands of the royalties in at least regional level. Interpretations of codicological features vary at a particular point in time.

The existence of regional variations of codices in whatever form and these codices' historical changes are open to a thorough investigation. So far, we know only scatter information from the secondary kinds of the literature of non-codicological nature about their real existence. This follows that I can assume that the Gondärian, as one local tradition might exist⁹ through studying books in local historic collections in the broad area of Gondär. I may assume, as a "working hypothesis" that Gondärian MSS may have regional features so were closely related and link them a single origin; at some related centers in and around Gondär (Berzock 2002). However, no thorough investigations have been carried out on Ethiopian codicology including Gondarian as regional sub type.

Nor are studies to determine its historical features and their evolution in response to needs of the local book culture. Disciplines often overlap, but the case with codicology seems to have strong attachment with historiography and historical changes. Hence, codicology as a key component of the Ethiopian manuscript culture needs to be studied in its codicological evolution in the 'Gondärian' period.

The object of this study is the Ethiopian codices of regional collections. Nevertheless, the particular concern is to understand and to present the possible historical interpretations about constituents of the book culture. As these constituents were inherently embodied in the local corpus, within the 'Gondärian', there would probably be local or regional codicological features as sub-types to Ethiopian. Thus, an informed reflection of the present status of Ethiopia's

⁹Local – centers were proposed mainly based on literature, educated guess, and physical observation of collections at their primary historical contexts. Scant information has been published on art-historical aspects but little has been done on their material, technical, and local related features.

manuscript culture would be done to emphasize the urgency of rescuing the manuscript culture in peril.

For this end, this study is carried out to look for the changed subject matter of codicological studies. This is simply to shift from a focus on production processes of current practices and from a rudimentary description of Ethiopia's collection. Yet, towards investigating, the inseparability of manuscripts' body text, codicology, and text-based historical analysis is timely. Thus, the historical examinations along with locational variations manifested in the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts produced from 1650 to 1800 are addressed.

1.3 Research Questions

This study has tried to answer the following research questions:

- How does conception related to the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts is an integral part of the book culture, which often is also subject matter of philological investigations?
- How material aspects have impacts on the investigation of the entire codices of Gondärian manuscripts presumably produced from 1650 to 1800?
- What are the predominant codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts, which are associated with the local manuscript culture?
- What are the typical characteristics and their historical evolutions in the years from 1650 to 1800?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study on the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts is linked to the historically identified Gondärian period and has the following general and specific objectives.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to understand Ethiopian codicology and its nature in the field of material philology and to provide some of the possible interpretations closely associated to the Gondärian manuscripts.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

This study has the following specific objectives:

- To explicate how codicology is a philological matter and how it is an integral part of a book culture reflected on Gondärian manuscripts.
- To illustrate how the material aspects have impacts on the investigation of the entire codices of Gondärian manuscripts plausibly produced from 1650 to 1800.
- To explain predominant codicological features associated with the local manuscript culture.
- To trace back the historical evolutions of the typical characteristics of Gondärian manuscripts produced in the years from 1650 to 1800 and relate them through a philological perspective.

1.5 Scope of the Study

To meet the purpose of this ‘textual’ /codicological analysis of Gondärian manuscripts, 80 codices were purposefully selected. The list of codices is shown in Appendix II. These purposefully selected codices are analyzed only from their codicological features. This implies paleography and content analysis on the body texts were not considered in this study. Scrolls were not considered rather the processes in the production of codices, the issues of the identity construction, and the interpretative rendering to the Gondärian manuscripts was dealt with. All the codices were used as primary sources, and they were all hand-made. They are available in distant monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana and ancient monasteries in and around the city of Gondär. These codices have been analyzed from the art-historical point of view.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts may have the following significances:

- It suggests the need to transcend the limitations of discussing a singled out aspect rather than discussing the multiple dimensions in textual scholarship.

- It emphasizes not only on the setbacks that occur in the manuscript studies but also to correct interpretations on which long used to determine the methods of the authentication. This study would trigger scholarly discussions about Ethiopia's manuscript culture.
- It may be used to widen our knowledge to counter the methodological limitations of focus only on body texts. This may introduce other researchers to consider codicology as an integral part of their philological textual scholarship that can show as well as regional peculiarities.
- It may be used for practical involvements as can be done by cataloguers, curators, historians, librarians, and others. There is no doubt that knowledge of codicology is helpful in that people engaged in restoring codices would pay their utmost attention not to damage the original codicological features of codices.
- It offers 'new' insights for a scholarly approach of codicology, as it is an independent field of study and one aspect of philological inquiry to illustrate historical changes and locational variations.
- It is a means to emphasize researchers' role in their scholarly approached social responsibility commenting on the great dangers the long history of Ethiopia's book culture has faced.
- It can be used as a springboard for further researches on the area.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Codicological research by nature has largely depended on fieldwork and physical contact to possibly the original manuscripts. Still, the history of each manuscript can be viewed and traced to other manuscripts of the same collection, or to manuscripts of other collections, which also can be recorded and be studied at one span of research. Inaccessibility to some of the original handwritten and hand-pressed codices is found to be one of the limitations of the study. Enough number of codices have been thoroughly examined albeit the trouble to access the manuscripts archived in remote monasteries (some took 9 hours to walk a day). Some manuscripts were found severely damaged; hence, I was forced to drop them out.

I and my supervisor (Prof. Denis), first planned to collect 100 sample manuscripts [the book as physical state and some numbers of virtual books] that presumably found in at least 18 collections from the largely unknown total number of books available in the present time. Later on, I only can examine eighty (80MSS). The restriction to this number was endorsed due to situations of which I had no control. That was so happened because of the five collections in the royal churches believed to be the centers refused me to access the manuscripts. However, churches such as Tāda Egaziabhir ab and Gəmjabet Mariam, Dāfāça Kidane Məhirāt had no manuscript collection that can be attributed to the ‘local.’ Ba’ta, Azezo Tekel Hayamot, and Deq^wa Kidan Məhirāt in Dabat remained inaccessible for me that the church authorities categorically rejected my request. From the secondary context, monastic communities of Mahbār Səläse in the west responded to me in the same way. However, the selected 80 MSS is supposedly enough for the main objective of this study, which is illustrative to codicology of Gondärian manuscripts rather than is exhaustive to show all the manuscripts supposedly produced in the entire Gondärian period.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This monograph is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the study on the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts. It includes the background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, the significance of the study, and limitations of the study. The second chapter offers a review of related works of literature and the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology that includes the research design, rationale of selecting the codices, and data collection procedure and interpretation. Chapter 4 offers a description of the codices and their present condition. Chapter Five, which is the main body of this monograph offers the corpus data and analyzes it in detail. Chapter 6 presents the historically tuned interpretations of the codices. Finally, chapter seven concludes and recommends what should be next in rescuing the codices.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents review of related literature and conceptual framework employed to study codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts. In the first section, review of codicological studies Ethiopia is done. In its sub-sections, studies on Ethiopian manuscript culture from a codicological point of view, regional variations of Ethiopian codicology focused on Gondärian manuscripts, codicological arts peculiar to Gondärian manuscripts are presented. In the second section, a theoretical overview of codicology constituting philological concepts is addressed. In the sub-sections, conceptions of codicology integral to philology, and totality of the codex in studying manuscript philology are presented. Finally, the conceptual framework applied in studying the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts is discussed.

2.1 Review of Codicological Studies in Ethiopia

In this section, codicological concerns on Ethiopian manuscript studies are reviewed. Moreover, critical reviews on regional variations of manuscripts productions are presented.

2.1.1 Studies on Ethiopian Manuscript Culture: From a Codicological Perspective

There are few studies in Ethiopian manuscripts that are directly linked to codicology. As scholars who engaged in studying Ethiopian manuscript culture such as Bausi (2010, 2015), Nosnitsin (2012), and Witakowska (2015) and Uhlig (1990) indicate that Ethiopian codicology has been less studied. Scholarship of Ethiopia's manuscript culture frequently raised the need to study Ethiopian codicology from historical contexts both at national and regional levels. In fact, they implicitly state the need for academic discussions among the scholars of Ethiopian MSS studies in general and Ethiopian codicology in particular. Hence, studying historical evolutions of manuscripts and studying the noticeable variations of regional manuscript tradition is found helpful.

Wion (2010), in her writing of the post-face to Fäqadä-Səllase's seminal book next to Sergäw Häble-Selassie (1981) indicates how Ethiopian codicology is little studied. Codicology, which primarily is concerned in studying the material aspect, and palaeography, which primarily is

concerned in studying the handwritten script, have less attention in the academics and this is 'especially regrettable'. Moreover, Woin implies the study of Ethiopian codicology should integrate investigation of contextual matters as well. These contextual matters include the how and the whereabouts of manuscript productions, when they were produced, how they were continued and transmitted, and for what purposes. These all issues assume the need to analyze peculiar characteristics of each manuscript. She underscores each manuscript's codicological feature has to be reconfigured (i.e. interpreted) along with the continuum of historical evolutions. Hence, "all data concerning codices are precious to understand the history of a text" (p. 303).

More importantly, her interest investigating codicology in line with philology is found essential. Codicology's relatedness to manuscripts' history and philology is emphasized. She points that "codicology is an auxiliary science of history and philology". In the following chapters, I reviewed some of the few researches conducted. They might have the potential to offer a deeper understanding to trace back the possible contextualized interpretations and historical evolutions associated with the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts.

The above scholars promote codicology to be an "independent" research tradition by its own, and initiate codicological investigations. However, only handful codicological studies on Ethiopian manuscripts have been conducted in the last decades in the history of codicology as a discipline. In fact, they all initiate a new line of inquiry on the existence of regional variations of bookmaking culture. Yet, no serious codicological research to the long history of Gondärian manuscripts that justifies the existence of regional variations of the codex. This would help to reconsider the existing local tradition [*theory?*] and to stand against the misconception that there are no local traditions in Ethiopian codicology.

Attesting this, Bausi (2015, 48) explains the existence of multiple local centres for the Ethiopic book production. He notes that there are at least sixteen (16) manuscript production centres in Ethiopia¹⁰. Each centre assumed to have a variety of specific material and structural features, and there is a development over the centuries in the use of materials and techniques. For this reason,

¹⁰See also Appendix- V, Historic documents and Map -2

it is reasonable to study codicology in the sub corpus related to high criteria of production. This can be possible by studying the fine book categories mainly found in Gondärian manuscripts of their material and structural components.

Codicologically viewed manuscripts can tell us something about their makers and sponsors. Even they may tell us about their historical periods of productions and of changes, and about their developments. Delamarter (nd, 45-46) writes about the complexity of Ethiopian manuscripts if investigated from a codicological perspective. Manuscripts are found informative of several aspects. Beyond their being witnesses of ancient material culture of bookmaking, they are witnesses of revealing their historical origins, developments, transmissions from their 'originating culture to the target culture'. Furthermore, Delamarter notes that the material aspects of manuscripts can be 'read' in line with an exploration of the manuscript culture.

Consequently, codicological readings of the materiality of the manuscript helps us to understand how the manuscript is "a nexus connected to a host of social locations like educational, liturgical, devotional, and even economic settings. We can peer into the activities of craftsmen, scribes, readers, artists, buyers, sellers, and owners, just to name a few." In fact, Delamarter warns against codicological investigations taking single manuscript and tracing back the choices of a single scribe. Rather, he encourages systematic categorization and analysis of codicological features divided in historical periods.

This is evident in the few types of research conducted about the Ethiopian codices and the binders' crafts. Almost in all of them, the codicology of Ethiopian manuscripts is viewed as simple, homogenous, unchanged, and with no local tradition that could catch the attention of scholars engaged in codicology. Bausi (2015) and Nosnitsin (2014) indicate how the generations of the former researchers claim after comparing¹¹ the 'Ethiopian' with other tradition inappropriately. Their discontent explains the fact that these researchers reconstructed the

¹¹"Ethiopian Codicology", in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*, ed. by A. Bausi et al. (Hamburg, COMSt - Nordstedte, BOD, 2015), pp. 168-191

Ethiopian codicology from indirect sources and scanty information acquired from digital libraries and fragments of ethnographic data of the codices. As such, the codices considered by them are no longer preserving their originality and the great majority of these books are preserved in central institutions outside Ethiopia.

Obviously, cataloguing is a concern to codicologist. Yet this can only be successful if cataloguing is done with a codicologist who has the professional competence of a philologist. Hence, as Witakowski (2015, 487) states a codicologist needs the support from a philologist who know about the language and literature of the codices. The most resourceful Ethiopian philologist, Getatachew Haile's contribution has been important for Delamarter's codicological study and cataloguing of Ethiopian manuscripts found in European libraries particularly in the British ones. Witakowski reminds how Delamarter's codicological investigation and cataloguing before he worked with Getatachew Haile was not successful in codicological evaluations.

This implies, codicological studies on Ethiopian manuscripts necessarily need the inputs from philologists who have linguistic competence and extant literatures about the codices under investigation. This witnesses the inseparability of codicology and philology. Nonetheless, the concern of philology in such particular case is not dealing with the contents of the manuscripts. Rather it deals with the symbolic interpretations of the annotated notes and symbols written on the marginalia, the colophons, the inks used, and such things.

Bausi (2007) indicates many of the codicological studies on Ethiopic manuscripts were conducted based on the information obtained from the printed catalogues of which the vast majority are found outside Ethiopia. Even the majority of these catalogues do not show details of codicological features of Ethiopian manuscripts. Rather, they are primarily aimed for the documentation to study the art history, palaeography, ethnography, and textual content analysis of the Ethiopian manuscripts and book culture. The catalogues have significant limitations for they only provide simple descriptions of common structural elements for Ethiopian manuscript culture in general. Consequently, only partial views of either one or two codicological aspects of the codex are shown to categorize Ethiopian manuscript culture. In other words, the catalogues of the Ethiopian manuscripts does not show the regional variations and the manuscripts historical and cultural origins. Uhlig (1984, 45) and Gumbert (2004, 520) remark comprehensive

codicological investigation may not be done based on catalogued manuscripts rather be based on ‘live manuscripts’. In fact, Gumbert mentions the usefulness of properly done catalogues especially where there is no access to ‘live manuscripts’.

The aforementioned studies emphasize how investigations on contents of text blocks are better treated in philology. In this sense, philology is seen as an independent entity; hence, the material aspects have not yet fully done. In fact, few of these studies can be regarded as codicological, but they are based on Ethiopian codices available out of Ethiopia and in digital libraries. As for digitalized Ethiopian manuscripts, it seems manuscripts are compared on their actual appearance rather than on their evolutionary developments. This seems unrealistic to investigate regional variations and changes in the manuscript culture.

In this regard, many scholars engaged in codicological studies agree the problems of digitalized codices. Codicological evidences are often the attributes of the technical and structural aspects of codices. In digitalized codices, these aspects may not be evidences to support their specific production period and origin of locations. Hence, studies on digitalized Ethiopian codices would not show evidences of book culture in Ethiopia and the successive historical developments. In the following sub-section, an overview of Ethiopian manuscript studies focusing on regional variations of Ethiopian codicology is presented.

2.1.2 Regional Variations of Ethiopian Codicology: Gondärian in Focus

As there are distinct codicological features marking the differences between ‘oriental’ and ‘occidental’, between regional variations such as Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, etc., there may be distinct codicological features differentiating Ethiopian codices. Codicological studies illustrate manuscripts’ material features. Yet, reconstruction of the processes of historic manuscript productions, and link them to specific local origins have not been realized. Bosc-Tiesse (2009) explains how the material features of manuscripts are indications of the patrons who commissioned the productions. They also reflect the prestige of the patron who presented them to monasteries and churches. Similarly, Bausi (2012) implicitly state how codicology needs to consider manuscripts long historical developments and local cultural backgrounds. Nonetheless,

there are no scholarly investigations on the material features of Gondärian manuscripts. Nor the manuscripts historical changes in the Gondärian periods have been studied.

One of the important problems of studying Ethiopian codicology in reference to the possible regional variations is the lack of databases. Consequently, the few researches on Ethiopian codicology tend to treat the generalized view of Ethiopian manuscripts. Given the long history of manuscript culture in Ethiopia and the noticeable regional variations, it is challenging to differentiate what are Gondärian from what are non-Gondärian manuscripts. Besides, one cannot study all Ethiopian manuscripts. Moreover, to study Gondärian manuscripts from a single codicological aspect would be unconvincing. Nonetheless, as Ancel (2016, 270) explains the relevance of paratextual features; it is possible to deduce regional properties, ownership, and provenance.

Symbolic representations of codicological features and the writing traditions differ from place to place. The materials used in the processes of producing manuscripts, the wealth of the sponsors supplying quality materials, and technical aspects in historical periods also differ. This seems plausible to focus on the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts to extend our knowledge by producing new insights and relevant data on the complexity of Ethiopian codicology.

From a general view, Ayele (1997, 23) observes the variations on the shapes of scripts¹² as "monumental inscriptions tend to have square shapes, whereas writings on *bərana* or parchment are symmetrical or curvilinear." As there are variations of shapes of scripts accounted for the differences of the writing surfaces, the quality of scripts significantly differs from a scribe to a scribe and from a region to a region. For instance, Uhlig (1990, 15) indicates the possible existence of influential 'regional styles or scriptoria' in dealing with Ethiopian manuscript culture. He notes the limits of codicological and palaeographical researches not addressing regional variations in studying Ethiopian manuscripts. Attesting the importance of looking into

¹² See also Uhlig, S, (1990) 'Introduction to Ethiopian Palaeography' Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian studies. A.A.U. EEs. Uhlig, S, & Bausi, Alessandro (2014), 'Paleography', in, Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, IV, O–X, in cooperation with Siegbert Uhlig – Alessandro Bausi et al., (eds.) Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, pp. 101–104

regional variations, he writes, “important scriptoria must have had an influence upon styles in the areas where they were located”.

Pankhurst (1984) indicates the Gondärian period covers all the years in the late medieval period of Ethiopian history. This period is recognized as the prominent of all historical phenomena recorded in political, religious, and socio-cultural developments. In fact, this study does not consider all the codices produced in the whole Gondärian cultural period (ca. 1630-1850). Rather, this study is delimited to Ethiopian royal manuscripts produced in the political Gondärian period (ca. 1630-1769). One can say that this period was the most flourishing, productive, and influential in terms of cultural developments¹³, and in terms of artistic innovations. Above all, as historians such as Pankhurst (1984) and Šøferaw Bekele (1990) indicate, Gondär had been the prominent capital of political power and of cultural development. Similarly, Witakowska & Bausi (2015) state Gondär was at its height. Hence, it became the centre of traditional church schools and skill developments in the fields of calligraphy, bookmaking, and paintings.

They further indicate that the city of Gondär represented as a permanent capital would have been an important contributing factor for the city to be considered as a hub of ‘cultural renaissances.’ With regard to literary productions, a large number of Gondärian manuscripts were found original¹⁴ compositions of individual authors. Attesting this, Kropp (1980) and Getatachew Haile 2000 write about works in the form of "Short Chronicle" independent from the official annals. Crummy (2009) also indicates how Gondär remained an important political, religious, cultural, and intellectual capital until 1850s onwards and referred this period as Gondär’s political eclipse. As such, this study identifies the Gondärian manuscripts in line with specific period, place, and tradition that are linked to the cultural renaissances of the Gondärian period.

¹³In the 19th cent, Gondär was eclipsed by Addis Abäba as the political centre of the state, emerged based on the principality of Šäwa and its local ^{dynasty}. However, the culture of "new Ethiopia", including its northern part, Tégray, with the ancient tradition of its own, was to the great extent defined by the Gondärian culture (Nosnitsin 2007, 67).

¹⁴book called the ‘basic Geez Grammar’ was written by Azaž Sinoda in 1736

In this city, the prominent emperors such as Fasilädäs¹⁵ 1632 -1667, Yohannes I 1668-1682, Iyasu I 1688 -1706, Dawit III 1711 -1716, Bäkkäfa 1721 -1730, Iyasu II, Queen Mäntəwab 1730 -1755, Iyoas 1755 -1769, and Täkälä Giorgis¹⁶ 1777 – 1784 had built new royal churches which had been destroyed by Ahmed Grag and the Jesuits. These Gondärian emperors led a massive building campaign of churches and monasteries. They were able to build more than 44 churches in Gondär city and its vicinity (Andreu Martínez and Sisay Sahile 2016,48-49).

Gondär established as a unique urban centre apart from Axum was a success from the cultural point of view. As a result, the city attracted a number of intellectuals such as Aläqa Gebru for Lideta, Sinoda¹⁷ for palace, and artists from different places of the country. These individuals were affiliated either to the royal court or to the ‘44 churches’ in the city (Getachew Haile 2010; Nosnitsin 2007). In that Gondärian period, traditional church education had probably taken its final shape and the division of the subjects into five “houses”¹⁸ of readings (Nosnitsin 2007).

From Ancel’s (2016) interesting article written based on the investigation of travelling manuscripts taken from Mäqdäla library, one can understand the high quality of Gondärian manuscripts. Ancel critical observation about origins of manuscripts is informative about analysis of codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts. Ancel points the challenges to justify regional codicological features of Ethiopian manuscripts only looking at the present location sites of manuscripts. As such, the present collection sites such as he mentioned of the churches and monasteries in north-eastern part of Təgray in Ethiopia may not tell particular codicological features of manuscripts original status. He notes collected manuscripts may not

¹⁵(Strelcyn 1954 34 Catalogue does mss Ethiopians (collection Griaule) 200 201) ““ፋሲል ተክለ እያሱ አደላደሰ’ ይባላል ከነተረቱ።”

¹⁶The year 1784 the end of the his reign traditionally also referred as Fisame Mingist, ‘end of the government’(Shiferaw Bekele. “The State in the Zemena Masafent (1786-1853), An Essay in Interpretation.” In Tadesse Beyene, R. Pankhurst and Shiferaw Bekele.eds. Kassa and Kassa; Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889). Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990. PP. 25-68.

¹⁷Shumet Sishagne a catalog of land tenure related microfilm from churches and monasteries of Gondar province recorded in 1984 and between January and July 1988; AEA 2014,42.

¹⁸Fidel, Nibab, Dawit, Zema, Qene, mäshafə

show of their original production at particular period altogether at once. In addition to this, they may also tell us their original producers and users as the same persons, and of their preservation in their places of origins.

In other words, among dislocated manuscripts it is difficult to identify what are the historically distinct codicological features of the manuscripts. Moreover, manuscripts function particularly in reference to the margins and the colophons is changed fitting the interests of the individuals, churches, and monasteries. He exemplifies a commercialized manuscript used for recording contractual agreement between a buyer and a seller including the names of witnesses. For this reason, Ancel (2016, 269) underscores the need for “the compilation of a detailed description of each manuscript is a desideratum strongly felt in the field of Ethiopian manuscript studies. This is an essential step towards a meaningful and systematic description of regional codicological and palaeographical features.”

Ancel further explains about the manuscripts taken from Mäqdäla library was originally produced in Gondär. In fact, it is common to get manuscripts used for keeping records of many types such as land grants, histories, and commercial activities. This is particularly true to many of the manuscripts taken from the Mäqdäla library. Attesting this, Ancel writes about some exemplary manuscripts taken from Mäqdäla library to Agula in Təgray region. In one of the manuscripts (AGKM-017), Ancel (2016, 294) indicates, “apart from its main text, i.e. a collection of hymns, it also contains numerous marginal notes written on its protective folia.” Different handwritten notes of historical events happened in Gondär lead by Gondärian kings such as Iyo’as (1755–1769), Sälomon II (1777–1779)’, and King G^walu (1801–1818) were written in different folia.

In this manuscript taken from Gondär, Ancel (2016, 294) explains that the manuscript based on the ‘annotations’ in the margins shows historical events occurred in the royal courts of Gondär ‘during the Era of Princes (zämänä mäsafent, 1769–1855)’. These marginal annotations show “Gondarian kings such as Iyo’as (1755–69), Täklä Giyorgis (1779–84, 1788–89, 1794–96, 1798–99, 1800), Həzəqyas (1789–94), Dəməṭros (1799–1800, 1800–01) and Šahlu (1832–40, 1841–45, 1845–50, 1851–55)”. The analysis of such codicological features of the marginal notes and the flyleaves is found helpful to trace back the provenance of manuscripts. Attesting this,

Ancel (2016, 294) points that “referring to the royal court of Gondär and having being in Mäqdäla fortress, these manuscripts most probably come from a church located in Gondär.”

Some of the impacts of dislocating manuscripts are mentioned in Ancel’s article. For instance, he mentioned what happened on one of the Gondärian manuscript obtained from Mäqdäla library. The clergies intentionally erased the marginal notes as seen in the manuscripts. When manuscripts travel from place to place, they obviously lose the significances and the meanings of their original marginal notes. Consequently, the lost meanings of the marginal notes would not show the ‘secondary function’ of manuscripts in keeping historical records. In fact, some marginal notes in the Mäqdäla manuscripts were left untouched only as long as these notes retained their ‘original functions’ of uses for liturgical purposes.

More importantly, Ancel (2016, 295) explains about the high quality of Gondärian manuscripts taken from Mäqdäla library then passed to churches and monasteries in Təgray. He writes how codicological features would lose their significance and meaning as “the local clergy accommodated such manuscripts not because of their marginalia, but because of their main texts and the function these had for the liturgy.”

Ancel (2016, 296-297) emphasizes the need for critical evaluation of dislocated manuscripts since this has “a clear impact on the study of regional codicological features of Ethiopian manuscripts. Without a close study of the provenance of manuscripts, the result of such a study would be completely misleading.” In doing this, investigation of the provenance of manuscripts in line with the political history of Ethiopia is vitally important. For instance, Ancel (2016) mentions about the marginal notes in an eighteenth century written Synaxarion manuscript found in a church in Təgray region particularly in the Romanat church. The notes in the manuscript are helpful to “the study of Ethiopian political history.” The manuscript is “full of historical notes concerning the court of kings in Gondär like King Šahlu.” Romanat is located a long way from Gondär and far from the supposed area of political control of the Gondärian kings”.

Ancel (2016, 296-297) emphasizes, looking at the codicological features in the travelled manuscript, raises a question whether “the clergy of Romanat used to record events from Gondär or if this manuscript actually came from elsewhere”. He further highlights how “the question is

of prime importance and its answer will tell us if Romanat, and thus north-eastern Təgray, was under the direct political influence of Gondärian kings between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.” With this understanding, this study has critically reviewed the codices in order to check for the origins and the provenances of the manuscripts.

Uhlig (1990) on his side explains how the use of ‘model manuscripts’ for they are being indicators of historical evolutions of manuscripts. He implies proper analysis of palaeographical features is important for codicological aspects of dating and locating manuscripts. In turn, analysing scripts is meant analysing provenance in a sense of analysing the particularized place of origin. Uhlig indicates the inseparability of palaeography and codicology as “the distinctive form of a single letter may sometimes indicate the period in which a certain codex was produced” (p. 19). Uhlig’s insight on palaeographic investigations is helpful for codicological analysis of colophons and marginalia notes in Ethiopian manuscripts. Nonetheless, Uhlig seems unaware of Ethiopic writing system along with the phonetics of written symbols as exemplified in his discussing the unique forms of written letters considered ‘vowel markers’.

Similar misunderstanding of Ethiopic writing system is indicated in Naveh (2005, 49-51). Naveh citing Dillmann (1907) and Ullendorf (1951) differentiates the symbols in the Ethiopic writing system into ‘consonant’ forms and syllabic forms of which the former are assumed as ‘unvocalized’ and the later as ‘vocalized’. In other word, the symbols in the first column of the Ethiopic writing system are taken as ‘consonants’ while the writing symbols next to each of the ‘consonants’ are taken as derivatives of the ‘consonants’ to make them syllabic.

Naveh (2005, 51) further writes in Ethiopic writing system, the making of ‘syllabic’ form is done by making “a slight modification of the basic character.” Naveh continues, the ‘slight modification’ on the ‘basic character’, which is understood as a ‘consonant’, is to show “whether a certain consonant was to be vocalized by u, i, a, e, o, or was to remain unvocalized; the original letter forms stand for the consonant.” In fact, all what are indicated in Navah about the Ethiopic writing system and syllabic forms are totally mistaken understanding of the system.

Ayele’s (1997) and a number of other scholars critical observation on Ethiopic writing system accentuates the system has no distinctive forms of writing vowel markers. Ayele justifies how

Ethiopic writing system is not alphabetical in the sense that all the symbols in the system are syllabic, for all¹⁹ of them stand as a combination of consonant and vowel sounds. Ethiopic writing system is not alphabetical rather it is syllabic in a sense that there are no vowel markers distinct as in English writing system. In other words, Ethiopic writing system has no distinct writing symbols to stand as representations of consonants and vowels. Nor modifications of vowel markers to make syllabic forms exist. Hence, a single symbol in Ethiopic writing system is a syllable by its own.

Each of these basic characters has seven forms of syllographs. In fact, nearly all of them have an eighth form. The Ethiopic writing system and the added eight basic characters in the Amharic writing system along with the seven forms for each basic character comprises a syllabry (the Amharic term for this is *Fidäl*). Sylvia Pankhurst cited in Ayele (1997, 91-91) the Ethiopic “syllabry comprises 26 basic characters, each of which has seven forms, the vowels being combined with the consonants and indicated by signs attached to them; the vowels are not separate as in the Roman alphabet which predominates in Europe”. Hence, the complete syllabry and the eighth column syllographs, and numerals are tabulated at page ii.

Here the primary concern of this study is not to pinpoint such distortions about Ethiopic writing system. Rather, the important point is to show the inseparability of palaeography from codicology in dealing with the contents of colophons and marginalia notes for dating and localizing Ethiopian manuscripts.

Uhlig (1990, 11) implicitly calls attention to the strong relationship between palaeography and codicology. He explains how these concepts should not be treated independently. In fact, his definition of palaeography explains how it is strongly related to codicology. He writes that palaeography “is the study of the evolution of handwritten scripts”; and palaeography “includes codicology, the science of manuscript analysis.” Implicitly, he associates codicology to what he referred as ‘external palaeography’ that includes investigations of “the forms of the letters, the margins, and in some periods, the problems of binding, the size of the volumes, etc.”

¹⁹ On this idea, Getactchew Haile, (‘ከግዕዝ ሥነ ጽሑፍ ጋር በዙ አፍታ ቆይታ’ 2012 EC አዲስ አበባ ገጽ 27), has not agree completely, ‘as all of the seven forms for each basic character comprises a syllabry.’

More importantly, he distinguishes his primary concern of palaeography from the structural linguistics concern of language elements. Uhlig (1990, 11) particularly indicates how his palaeography “will not be concerned with changes in syntax or orthography of the Ge’ez manuscripts.” Similarly, this study of codicological features in Gondärian manuscripts deal with material aspects of the codices of their margins, bindings, decorative tooling, number of volumes in a codex, number of folia in quires of the main texts and the colophons, etc. Moreover, extended analysis to what Uhlig has observed on the difference of ‘Gwelh script’ and ‘Räqəq script’ is not done. In fact, Uhlig (1990) states only briefly about the regional variations of Ethiopian manuscript culture. Perhaps, Uhlig’s primary concern is not to show regional variations of manuscript culture in Ethiopia rather is to show variations of scripts of palaeographic comparisons in historical periods.

If truth were told, he hallmarks “the *G^welh* script is unique to the history of Ethiopian scripts. It is shaped very clearly with vertical strokes and with very harmonious proportions. Many manuscripts of the Gondärian era were written in this script, which was deemed suitable for official use and for presentation of manuscripts. Similarly, Bausi and Nosnitsin (2015: 290) explain the *G^welh* script is ‘the most elegant’ and all the letter symbols on texts are ‘evenly shaped and clear’. This is assumed as a typical codicological feature is like that of palaeography associated with the Gondärian period. They state that *G^welh* script “represents a regional script” (p. 290). Using the words of Uhlig (1990, 87), they write *G^welh* script is referred as “the script of kings.”

Uhlig (1990) emphasizes the tasks of palaeographers that they should investigate the prominent features of manuscripts in connection to their hypothetical ‘stylistic periods.’ What he refers, as ‘stylistic periods’ can be associated with the synchronic aspects of codices and the diachronic aspects such as origins and evolutions of codices. Moreover, he explains the uses of identifying ‘model manuscripts’ to compare manuscripts in their ‘stylistic periods’. These ‘model manuscripts’ “are the manuscripts which best characterize the salient palaeographic features of a certain period; the general definition of the script of a particular period is based upon its model manuscripts” (p. 18). In fact, he explains precise dating is difficult to achieve rather he assumes dating in fifty years of interval between ‘stylistic periods.’ Uhlig also explains there may be

difference of styles and changes within a single 'stylistic period'. He states, "change of ductus or style within one period may occur" (p. 19). By implication, the material aspects of Gondärian manuscripts can be analysed in reference to model manuscripts that offer salient stylistic features corresponding to historical periods.

In another codicological aspect of number of columns on a text, Uhlig (1990, 44) states the salient difference of columns on a single text in between thirteen century to the mid fifteen century Ethiopian manuscripts. In the indicated period, he writes, "most codices are written with two text columns, but small codices may be written with only one text column." Furthermore, Uhlig (1990, 59) states, "the manuscripts have two columns of text. Three text columns are rarely found." However, in the other period, for one of the styles that are unique to the history of Ethiopian scripts, the Gwelh style of script, the reality seems different. Uhlig (1990, 93) states 'one third of the manuscripts (Gondärian) written in this style have three text columns.' This means that 'the page proportion of these manuscripts is more or less square'.

Likewise, Bausi (2015) implies about a similar issue of changes in the number of columns from two columns to three columns on texts. Both these scholars associate one-text column codices with the sizes of the codices. This association is a mistaken one. In fact, the size of the codex is not the reason to write codices with only one text column. Rather, it seems the textual content and functions of the codex are what matters on the number of columns on texts. Because there may be, a dozen of manuscripts, which have two text columns whose sizes, are found smaller than one text column such as *Dawit*. Again, the point is not to show the differences of number of columns on a text; rather, it is to show how such codicological features are context sensitive of cultural interpretations.

The other codicological aspect that is briefly mentioned in studies is the concern of manuscripts bindings. As van Regemorter (1962, 87) indicates what the French explorer Antoine d'Abbadie wrote about Ethiopian manuscripts and his own observation. They indicate that bindings of Ethiopian manuscripts were done with catguts." As such, van Regemorter (1962, 87) is quick to associate such material use for binding with "the Coptic origin of the Ethiopian bookbinder'scraft."

Similarly, Sergew Hable-Selassie (1981, 24) supposedly with a mistaken meaning he gave to a gut, states the use of “oxen gut string” for binding. This implies the naturally soft cows or oxen intestine is used as a string. However, the studies by Fākade-Selassie (2010) and Alehegne (2011) state that are supported by ethnographic data describe the material used for binding is sinew. Particularly, Fākade-Selassie (2010) explains the complexity of obtaining binding string from cows or oxen. He indicates that the binding strings obtained from the muscles of these animals extracted with great care. Hence, the binding strings are not catguts; rather, they are sinews or tendons.

There is another misconception about the static feature of Ethiopian manuscripts bindings by Greenfield. Greenfield (1991, 183) indicates the long history of Ethiopian manuscripts binding. Looking at a single manuscript, at least in the short article he wrote, he points out how Ethiopian binding “is very simple, practical, and amazingly unchanged for at least seven hundred years and perhaps even sixteen hundred.” His indication about the long history of Ethiopian binding is agreeable; Greenfield’s mention of its being ‘amazingly unchanged’ for many centuries is not well supported with evidence. Nor Greenfield mentions the specific structural features along with regional variations as “‘amazingly unchanged’”. With this regard, many scholars engaged in studying Ethiopian codicology indicate the opposite. An overview of codicological arts peculiar to Gondārian manuscripts is presented in the following sub-section.

2.1.3 Codicological Arts Peculiar to Gondārian Manuscripts

Codicological arts include all the artistic works such as cover decorations, tooling, pictorial illustrations, and paintings of plaits and tendrils on page borders or in between columns of texts. In fact, as Alehegne (2011, 159) indicates paintings found in manuscripts may not necessarily for beauty; rather, paintings serve as “illustrating the story narrated in the text.” Obviously, a complete codicological investigation needs to consider how manuscripts are illuminated and how insertions of paintings are important in analyzing manuscripts’ material features. In line with this, Mann (2004, 193) observes the established traditional practices of applying artistic works in Ethiopian manuscripts and iconographic representations.

In consideration of a particular case of iconographic representation of Virgin Mary, Mother of God- Christ- and St. George, Mann explains about the artistic illuminations used are of “trefoil frame in an interlaced design.” Mann compares the trefoil designs used in the manuscript in the iconographic representation. Based on analyzing the artistic decorations, Mann speculates that the manuscript and the icon were of the 15th century products. Mann notes the common practices of decorating manuscripts using such interlaced trefoil of framing, but it was unusual to decorate paintings using interlaced trefoil.

Pankhurst (1984, 205) points most of Ethiopian codices particularly the Gondärian codices’ decorations and their designs are little studied; thereby, illuminated manuscripts are left virtually ‘uncharted sea’. Moreover, Pankhurst (1984, 105) explains the possible historical background in line with the establishment of Gondar as an Ethiopian capital that contributed for “a renaissance of Ethiopian art.” According to Pankhurst, this period marked the Ethiopian art back to its own root for “the country's tooling of manuscript as distinctive, and unique as their illuminations.” Attesting this, Getachew Haile (2006) indicates the religious reforms after expulsions of Jesuits might be accounted for the extensive moves in literary and intellectual progresses.²⁰

Berry (1976) explains about the renaissance of art in the city of Gondär. Similarly, Chojnacki (1983) points out that new painting style evolves after the destructions of Ahmed Gragn 1527 - 1543. Getatachew Haile (2010) and Uhlig (1990) state, these new developments in the history of Gondär be the capital city of Ethiopia, were accompanied with renewal in literary developments, in illuminating manuscripts, and in paintings. These developments in art were accompanied with codicological aspect of decorating Gondärian manuscripts.

Maniaci (2015) implies how codicology includes comparative analysis of manuscripts physical features of writings and decorations. Nonetheless, it is difficult to get studies of Ethiopian codicology that are directly linked to the art works on Ethiopian manuscripts. In line with this, remarks how Ethiopian codicology is little studied except in very few accounts like Pankhurst

²⁰ ጎንደር “እመአህጉር፣ ባህረጥበብ፣ ነቅዕሃይማኖት፡፡” ኔታቸው-ሀይሌ (ባህረሐሳብ) 2006 ዓ.ም. 2ኛኛኛ፡፡ Gondär, "Mother of cities, the sea of wisdom, and origin of religion." P.237.

1980; 1981 and 1984. Even these few studies focus on elementary practices of manuscript culture in Ethiopia. However, Pankhurst tells us the period and place using decorative and material elements of the bookbinding. Explaining Ethiopian codicology in depth with a direct observation of the practical methods and with retrospective moves of tracing back the ancient methods is not done. Yet there are many collections of Ethiopian manuscripts in Ethiopia and abroad to be studied and to be localized from a codicological perspective.

Actually, ethnographic based researching from the actual practices of bookmaking in accord with codicological principles may not be possible at the present. More importantly, such ethnographic investigation is not the main concern of this study. Rather, this study is concerned with codicological analysis on already produced Gondärian manuscripts where data of artisans' practices are not available today. Moreover, ethnographic approach does not directly show manuscripts' historical changes, origins, and regional variations.

Some contradictory points are stated in Uhlig's (1990) comparative analysis of 'model manuscripts' verified in historical periods of Ethiopian manuscript culture. For instance, Uhlig (1990, 89) writes how there were typical stylistic features in one period of ornamenting manuscripts superbly. Immediately after, he writes ornamentation had lesser importance. Explaining the attitudinal changes in decorating manuscripts, he writes how the majority of the manuscripts have no ornaments. Uhlig (1990, 93) explains the possible reason about this attitudinal change of ornamentation as it "would detract from the beauty of the script." With regard to some of the symbolic signs on the margins and between columns of texts, he states that "the marginal signs serve no function; they are merely decorative" (p. 64).

Nonetheless, the marginal signs such as the one that resembles the swastika on page 65, the "christogram" on page 38, and the symbols indicated on page 44 do have symbolic interpretations, so they are not merely decorative. Fäkäde-Sälässie (2002, 65-66) interesting book explains the inseparability of codicological and palaeographic features from philological interpretations and changes in meaning in the course of time. For example, the one indicated by Uhlig (1990, 38) as "christogram" is further interpreted as the top part as a "crown" used as a symbol of Lordship, the middle as a "chair" or a "stool" of a rabbinical motifs, and the bottom part of the same symbol as "throne" a symbol of a judgment.

Similarly, what Uhlig state as ‘merely decorative’ on page 44, is clarified as it has important symbolic meaning by Fäkade-Səlassie (2002, 66). Of this marginalia sign, Fäkade-Səlassie states that it symbolizes a camel for it is a culturally symbolized representation of a camel as the most revengeful animal. The point is not to pin point differences; rather, it is to justify the inseparability of codicology, palaeography, and philology. Moreover, it is to explain how codicological features indicated in many of Ethiopian manuscripts have evolved; thereby, the codicological features are often attributed to changes of interpretations.

Szirmai’s (1999) study following the ‘archaeological’ method of medieval bookbinding attempts to relate bindings with artistic works. Szirmai examines a few bindings, but does not offer detailed descriptions in this regard and show the possible existence of regional variations. The value of Szirmai study is more apparent not from his being a codicologist but from his being a professional conservator capable of offering detailed descriptions of codicological features of bindings and artworks in doing these bindings. He compares and "recapitulations" a number of Oriental and Occidental manuscript traditions in accord with the established codicological parameters.

The Ethiopian manuscript culture is presented in Szirmai’s comparative analysis with that of the Coptic codices for the first time. The considerable earlier ages and conservatism of the Ethiopian manuscript making traditions can be justified from the compared codicological features. Accordingly, Szirmai (1999, 46-47) explains Ethiopian chain-stitch sewing is sometimes referred as an ancient codicological feature of Ethiopian book production. Hence, Szirmai’s study does not show complete picture of codicological features and the possible existence of regional variations of bookmaking in Ethiopia.

Some other Ethiopian codicological studies briefly indicate the art-historical and palaeographic features as well as offer clues for the existence regional-traditions. For instance, Heldman (1989) compares Gunəda-Gunədi (one of manuscript collection centre in Təgray region) with the Gondärian. Witakowska et al. (2015, 168 - 191) implicitly discuss Ethiopian manuscripts in line with art works but in a limited way. In this study by Witakowska et al. (2015), one can see some conflicting ideas about the artistic works in Ethiopian manuscripts. Decorations of Ethiopian manuscripts are explained to some extent, but how the inks, the pigments, and other features

related to art are less discussed showing regional variations. At times, Witakowska et al. (2015, 157) state, “there is no evidence that any particular symbolism was connected to the colours used for decorating codices and their consistent application was ruled only by tradition.”

In studies by Pankhurst (1984), Berzock (2002), and Nosnitsin (2014) the existence of Gondärian local tradition along with the mentioning of some particular technologies used for achieving the superb quality of Gondärian manuscripts are presented. Reviewing the works of Rgemorter (1962; Pankhurst 1980, 1981, & 1984) I can possibly give clues for mapping some of these codicological features linked to the Gondärian period. Abäbaw Ayalew (2002) primarily focuses on studying art history. He explicates how artwork reached its high time probably during the period of Queen Mäntəwab's regency (1730-69). He particularly states how this period is called the golden age of visual arts. In a related account by Chojnacki (1983), in the artistic works, the portrayal of patrons was not a common appearance until the reign of Iyasu II and his mother Queen Mäntəwab. In addition, her reign marked a watershed in the production of Gondärian manuscripts. Thus, these studies have partially illustrated origins, historical developments, and peculiar artistic qualities of Gondärian manuscripts' culture.

Pankhurst (1984, 249) indicates there were manuscripts used as exemplars had probably been Anomalies from the Arab world. Most of these manuscripts were written in Arabic. The Gondärian kings diplomatic efforts and their ability to pay for return, in kind or in cash are accounted for the Anomalies manuscripts. Consequently, the city of Gondär not only became the political centre but also it became a spiritual and artistic centre of the entire country. Hence, Gondär became the centre for architectural innovations manifested in the built palaces, manuscript productions, and painting workshops. In fact, the historical realities of Ethiopian manuscript production before Gondär indicate that there were of limited growth.

Nosnitsin (2007) reason out, in earlier times before Gondär, the courts were not in permanent places; rather, they were moving with the military camps. The establishment of Gondär as a permanent capital of Ethiopia has probably allowed it to host production of highly valued manuscripts and of great numbers. Uhlig (1990) and Assefa Liban (1958) indicate that Gondär became the centre of mass production of handwritten Ethiopian codices. As can be traced from

the manuscripts produced in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, the 17th century productions marked the climax of manuscript productions.

As a sub-set of intellectual and material cultural phenomena, the book production remained notable to Gondärian cultural element that underwent significant changes as historically referred to as upper-quality crafts. Pankhurst (1984), Chojnacki (1983), Wion (2004), and Ancel & Nosnitsin (2014) associate the high quality Gondärian manuscripts with the new methods of production employed by bookmakers in the city of Gondär. Similarly, Sergew Hable-Selassie (1981) explains that some of the manuscripts, particularly those which have been commissioned by the emperors and high dignitaries are lined with colour cloth and covered with leather and finally tooled. Pankhurst (1984, 209) also states how the tooled decoration became much more sophisticated in the Gondärian period.

As such, the existence of a distinct local tradition quite independently from others that are called the ‘Gondärian’ tradition is probable. Moreover, the renovation of the tradition might be related to new phenomena particular to the establishment of the city of Gondär. Book production also became consistent in spite of changes of royalty in patronages at court but in constant supervisions of book production²¹. Back then, the royalty staged religious debates required codices for justifications. In such debates, even conflicting parties respected what the ‘books say’ as a final.

Bausi (2012) and Bosc-Tiesse (2009) illustrate the relationships between Ethiopian book culture and issues of patronage, spirituality, and artistic creativity. According to Bosc-Tiesse (2009), the British collections are rich of illuminated Ethiopian manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries. These manuscripts had been in Gondär before they were transported to Mäqdäla then to London (Wright 1877; Pankhurst Richard 1980, 1981, and 1984; Pankhurst Rita 1973, 1989, 1990; Ancel & Nosnitsin 2014). Ancel (2016) also states the vast majority of these manuscripts were looted at the British expedition in 1868.

²¹ ‘During the regency of queen Mäntewäb a chief of the copyists working for the queen and her son’ Witakowska, 2015, 169.

Manuscripts, which I describe, as the “Gondärian” in this context, are those, which were produced in the aforementioned period (ca. 1650's- 1800) and in the ‘broad area of Gondär’. The precise area of production has not clear and it has long remained at the hypothesis. Yet the available scant information suggests the location of Gondärian manuscript production areas broadly and the ‘heartland’ of Gondärian tradition. Berzock (2002), Abəbaw Ayalew (2002), and van Regemorter (1962) cited Antoine d'Abbadie supposed the city of Gondär must have been the place of production of quality books. This was the place where the kings and higher officials used to commission²² and present the manuscripts for royal churches such as Manbärə Minəgist Mädhané ʿAläm, Däbrä Bərəhan Šəllase, Däbrä Tshay Qusəqam, etc. For more lists of royal churches, one can see in Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner¹ & Sisay Sahile (2016). They also list out some rural monastic centres such as Məndaba Monastery and Däbrä Mog^wina Monastery located around Gondär whose historic connections to the court were significant in the periods.

Quality manuscripts of an object-level were produced in the city of Gondär where the binders' skills reportedly very outstanding as one of the principal centres of religion and culture next to Aksum (Pankhurst 1984; Barzock 2002; Abəbaw Ayalew 2002). Some studies such as Wright (1877) and van Regemorter (1962) examining the material and structural features attribute the Gondärian manuscripts as they are of a high quality manuscripts. Particularly, Pankhurst (1980, 1981, and 1984) claims, the Gondärian manuscripts are more than the average in terms of their quality. Pankhurst (1984, 207) cited Ruppell how the bookmakers in Gondär were of high class experts in doing all aspects of a book: parchment, copying, binding, and decorations.

Moreover, Nosnitsin (2013), Ancel & Nosnitsin (2014), and Ancel (2016) observe the manuscripts they found in Tigray region are uncommon to Təgray in terms of their high quality. Hence, they analyzed the high quality manuscripts are internally dislocated manuscripts from their origins of production in Gondär. It is for the above high quality manuscripts that Getatchew

²²Please refer to Appendix V

Haile cited in Bausi (2015) indicates, the codex as a complete product made at a single place locally²³.

As shown in the aforementioned reviews, one might understand that many of the previous studies are partial views of codicological investigations of Gondärian manuscripts. Nor the previous studies explain the existence of regional features specifically in relation with historic features²⁴ or historic bookmaking techniques. No local corpus so far was created as a cohesive group of books, which commonly suggests a single origin. As such, these previous studies neither described all Gondärian book features nor defined them of their local origin clearly. In the following section, theoretical overviews of codicology constituting philological concepts are presented.

2.2 Theoretical Overview of Codicology Constituting Philological Concepts

In this section, conceptions of codicology constituting philological concepts are reviewed. Moreover, a review of the totality of the codex in studying manuscript philology is presented.

2.2.1 Conceptions of Codicology Integral to Philology

Obviously, practices that can be related to codicology are much earlier than the coinage of the term. In fact, it was shadowed by the closely related disciplines such as palaeography and philology. As such, Gumbert (2000, 312) indicates there are limited publications in codicology as a discipline which focuses on the analysis of material features of manuscripts.

Reviewing some of the salient theoretical and methodological approaches in codicology is found helpful in the codicological studies and investigations of regional peculiarities of manuscript culture. This seems an important beginning for future efforts to fill the large methodological gaps in the field of codicology. In an interesting article by Del Barco (2017, 3), the major points of

²³Getatchew Haile 'The Southern Shores of the Mediterranean and Beyond: The Case Ethiopian Manuscript Heritage' Hill Museum & Monastic Library Saint John's University Collegeville, Minnesota, nd. p.6; for manuscript production centres see the map in Bausi 2015, 48.

²⁴Bausi 2012, 55 provides two reasons for the underestimations of ancient features by scholars.

indeterminacies defining the term codicology and explicating the practical tenets of codicology are well-presented. Focusing on Hebrew manuscripts, Del Barco offers convincing theoretical and methodological approaches. Comparing the prominent authorities' philosophical standpoint, Del Barco indicates that there is a noticeable paradigm shift from an exclusive focus on the 'archaeological' perspective to an inclusive perspective as in a "comparative and structural codicology, including quantitative and historical approaches."

In this article by Del Barco (2017, 4), Masai's pioneering concept of codicology and the subsequent theoretical and methodological developments are presented. Accordingly, Del Barco reflects the benefits of Masai's innovative conceptualizations of codicology. He promotes the divergence between codicology and palaeography. These two disciplines are quite different in their objectives and in their methodological approaches towards the codex. For Del Barco, such conceptualization denies the comprehensiveness of palaeography of studying scripts, writing materials, and all the evidences for dating manuscripts.

Moreover, Masai's contribution is seen in light of a methodological approach he proposed. Masai aligns codicology with 'archaeological disciplines.' As a result, Del Barco (2017, 4) observes that Masai's conceptualization of codicology is contrary to associating it to a historical field. Hence, Masai's codicology denies the benefits of historical approach; "therefore, the capacity for engaging in interpretation of data and its contextualisation within the history of the book in particular and cultural history in general."

According to Del Barco (2017, 4), conceptualization of codicology only in line with an archaeological discipline, makes codicological method attending to each of the phases in the production of manuscripts "similar to the stratiographic description of archaeological excavations." As such, Masai denies the relation between manuscripts study and texts' historicity and their philological aspects. Prior to Masai's 'archaeological' approach, manuscript study was inseparable from studies of 'literary history and philology'. Nonetheless, the exclusive nature of codicology study only from an 'archaeological' approach is implicitly challenged by subsequent scholars such as Beit-Arié (2019) and Gumbert (2004).

Beit-Arié (2019, 29-30) indicates classifying manuscripts according to provenance and production time would enrich our philological knowledge. He supported it with evidence drawn from the most reliable data obtained from original manuscripts. Beit-Arié's own view reveals that the term 'material codicology' should be used to describe the comprehensive study of all aspects of the codex form. Consequently, in codicological studies the need to understand the materials' cultural and social history is important. Moreover, codicology should consider the complexity of the codex that deserves to be studied by its own. In spite of this, there are no serious codicological investigations and practical engagements aligning codicology with manuscript philology and history in studying Ethiopian manuscript culture.

In this regard, Del Barco (2017, 6) indicates the two major factions in the same codicology though it stand as a single discipline. In other words, codicology is divided into two by the scholars who support Masai's claim of 'archaeology of the book' exclusively. Also, there are other scholars who extend this 'archaeology of the book' to include the study of history, function, and reception of the codex as "a cultural and textual object." Hence, conceptions of codicology have two versions. First, codicology is seen in '*stricto sensu*', by those scholars who are strictly following Masai's 'archaeological' approaches. Hence, it disregards all the issues other than the material aspects and objective descriptions of the codex. Second, codicology is seen in '*lato sensu*', by those scholars who support the inclusion to study historical, cultural, and textual aspects of a manuscript in addition to the study of the material aspect.

Even in later division, there are relatively slight differences of conceptualizing codicology. Some scholars more focus on the historical and cultural dimensions of the codex explaining its production, function, transmission, and meaning of the codex as a material object. "Whereas others – mostly philologists concerned with codicology – tend to broaden the field to include textual and literary criticism and the transmission of texts" (Del Barco 2017, 6). Explaining such kind of differences, Del Barco (2017) further exemplifies the positions of some of the prominent authorities in codicology such as Marilena Maniaci and Maria Luisa Agati.

Citing Maniaci (2002), Del Barco (2017, 6-7) states that Maniaci attends only from the 'archaeological' perspective, which exclusively analyzes the material aspect of the codex. Hence, Maniaci disregards the textual criticisms' objectives in dealing with the historical and cultural

aspects of the codex. He also disregards the evaluation of the codex as per the ownership of the codex (i.e. whether it is a private or an institution), of the generalized view of a manuscript's production or of its function, of its conservation, and of its restoration. In my opinion, this seems fallacious to the ultimate objective of conducting a research of its social significance and of its resolving problems or at least alleviating problems. Similarly, Del Barco (2017, 7) indirectly accuses Maniaci for his restricted analysis of the material aspects of the manuscript. He puts aside the philological concerns of studying historicity of texts and textual criticisms. In addition to these, he overlooks the restoration agenda, the integral part of the history of the manuscript from its inception to its transformations, and the “the socio-economic and cultural aspects of a manuscript's production, use and transmission.”

In contrary to Maniaci's understanding of codicology, which exclusively attends the 'archaeological' approach, Del Barco discusses the other prominent scholar's (i.e. Maria Luisa Agati's) conception of codicology. Citing Agati (2009), Del Barco (2017, 7-8) states that Agati promotes a more comprehensive view of codicology. Her version of codicology integrates the study of the material aspects of the codex with “the study of palaeographical features, decoration, and the history of libraries.” The existence of conflicting concepts in a single discipline connotes the practicality of a codicological study as a matter of degree of orientations. More importantly, the practitioners who often promote a more comprehensive view of codicology vary as per the researchers' inclination towards history or towards philology. In other words, researchers' inclination towards history is indicative of how cultural and social issues are more pronounced. On the other hand, researchers' inclination towards philology is indicative of how 'textual criticism and the history of the transmission of texts' are more focused.

Groningen (1967, 9) explains the objective of palaeography as a discipline dealing with analyzing methods of writing aiming at “to read texts written in earlier centuries and to ascertain as exactly as possible the contents of those texts.” Groningen (1967, 9) links palaeography with codicology which is mainly concerned in studying formal properties of manuscripts, material aspects, and historical dimensions of the manuscripts themselves. This implies, histories that background the productions of manuscripts are unattended. Similarly, Metzger (1981, 3) discusses the three main objectives of Greek palaeography. Metzger states the

objectives of Greek palaeography include practical methods in 'reading' the material aspects of manuscripts and then dating them.

The second objective according to Metzger is to trace back Greek handwritten scripts as well as punctuation marks and abbreviations. Finally, Metzger (1981, 3) indicates the main objective of studying Greek palaeography is "analyzing the layout of the written page and the make-up of ancient book forms (codicology)." In my view, these conceptions of palaeography in association with codicology have some conflicting ideas. To use codicological data for verification of the contents of manuscripts may not be convincing. Moreover, limiting the wider conceptions of codicology by relating it only with page layouts and formal properties of ancient manuscripts is also not convincing.

Boyle (2001, xii) widens the scope of palaeography to include issues of commonly understood codicological features. Boyle invites palaeography to be a multi-disciplinary field at least to closely related disciplines. He stresses the necessity of supports from the closely related disciplines such as from codicology. For him, palaeography should not be a separate and independent discipline from codicology, which is mainly concerned with studying "the physical aspects of the manuscript book." Hence, a palaeographer needs to be an open-minded to collaborate with a codicologist, since codicology is believed to be an integral part of palaeography.

Boyle (2001, xiii) hopes there would not be any indeterminacy "in accepting a multidisciplinary approach and in recognising the nexus between 'history' and the 'written word'." He states it is a success to palaeography to integrate other related disciplines from the restricted realms. By this, he attributes a comprehensive palaeography that integrates the study of 'history of handwriting' in relation to the corresponding "socio-cultural contexts, and systems of production of written testimonies that historians have periodically needed to create and exploit."

It is with this tendency of studying palaeography from a multi-disciplinary perspective that "the very widest interpretations of palaeography" can be realized and be practical. More importantly, Boyle (2001, 41) points what is termed as variations not with respect to the contents of the manuscripts in a literal sense; rather, with the formal and material properties of manuscripts.

Hence, the material aspects of manuscripts are evidences of “codicological variations - marginal notes, colophons, holes, peciaemarks, inversions, insertions, erasures, fillers, glosses, expunctions, ornamentation, odd forms of abbreviation - are therefore as much a part of ‘common variations’ as are the truly textual variations.”

As such, Del Barco (2017) explains the benefits of the methodological paradigm shift from an exclusive focus on descriptions of the material aspect of the codex to a comparative and structural codicological analysis. He claims such methodological advancement is helpful for a historical and textual study of the codex taken in its totality. Obviously, totality of the codex connotes that codicological units are summed up. In this comparative-structural analysis, identification of particular codicological units and comparison of these units would give clear picture about how the totality of the codex is important. This in turn offers an understanding of the history of the manuscript, the changes from the original status that may be accounted to the scribal hands and artworks. Furthermore, Del Barco (2017, 24) explains the benefits of comparative-structural analysis in line with the historical and cultural contexts that produced the manuscripts under consideration. Hence, codicological study following comparative-structural analysis would enrich the syntactical description. That means comparative analysis of codicological units in association with contextual matters of history and prevailing manuscript culture.

Grujjs (1972), Gumbert (2004), and Del Barco (2017) state the term codicology was first used by Alphonse Dain in 1949. Nonetheless, Del Barco’s (2017, 5) article discusses how Dian’s ‘codicology’ does not include the study of the material aspect of the codex. Rather Dian attends the study of the manuscripts’ history, of their collections, and of their location of origins. On the other hand, Masai’s ‘codicology’ accentuates the material aspect of the codex particularly independent from palaeography and to be studied in line with ‘archaeological’ disciplinary approaches. In line with this, Grujjs (1972, 96) cited Masai who claims that paleography and codicology are concerned of the tasks in editing. Masai refuses these disciplines to be considered as “subdivisions of philology but as independent disciplines with their own goals and methods.” In fact, Masai did not see these disciplines - palaeography and codicology – as they are the same.

Gumbert (2004) explains about often codicologists are identified as palaeographers. Gumbert justifies how these two ‘fields’ “not seen as a separate discipline” “did not mean two fields of study, but two faces of the same field” (p. 505). Gumbert (2004) cited Masia (1950) “a codex is a twofold thing” (p.506). “books have a material face, a ‘body’, and an immaterial aspect: value, meaning, content – in the case of books: texts. A text is an immaterial object, a thing of the mind; but it cannot reach us except clad in a body” (p. 506). The difference between palaeography understood as codicology and philology is a degree of focus and of approach on the material aspect and on the textual aspect respectively. Gumbert accuses philologists for they only focus on the ‘immaterial aspect’ of the codex and inconsiderate to the body of the text.

Uhlig (1990) draws attention to the strong relationship between palaeography and codicology. He explains how these philological concepts should not be treated independently one each other. He defines palaeography, as it “is the study of the evolution of handwritten scripts. It includes; codicology, the science of manuscript analysis” (p. 11). Implicitly, he associates codicology to what he referred as ‘external palaeography’, which includes investigations of “the forms of the letters, the margins, and, in some periods, the problems of binding, the size of the volumes, etc.” (p. 11).

Extending Uhlig’s impressive observation about the strong relationship between palaeography and codicology, this study of codicological features in Gondärian manuscripts investigates other more codicological features. In fact, Uhlig’s main concern is to show the historical evolutions of Ethiopic scripts categorized in periods. He emphasizes studies in palaeography should consider the totality of the manuscript that “include the size of the codex, the number of text columns, and the size of the letters” (p. 17). As such, complexity of Ethiopian manuscript culture and the salient regional variations of the existing codicological features such as binding, tooling, decorating, and other aspects are investigated in this study.

2.2.2 Totality of the Codex in Studying Manuscript Philology

Maniaci (2015, 70) remarks that there is a wide knowledge gap in Ethiopian codicology. For a proper codicological study, comparative approach is undoubtedly acceptable. Nonetheless, comparative analysis of codices is impacted due to the noticeable variations of manuscripts

origin and evolution. Apparently, Maniaci (2015, 70) underscores comparative approach employed in codicological analysis should not be restricted to the comparison of technical aspects and practices. Rather, comparative approach needs to explain the reasons for the possible origins and evolutions of salient codicological features drawn from the codices under investigation. Moreover, it should consider cultural and functional aspects possibly contributing for the transferring of codices.

Maniaci (2015, 71) points the trends and objectives of codicology as a discipline by its own. As such, he states the objectives of codicology in accordance with an ‘archaeological’ reading strategy for historical purposes. He remarks such archaeological approach of ‘reading’ in the material aspects of manuscripts should go “beyond the contents transmitted by letters and images.” However, he calls attention to the current trends in codicological studies, even those conducted by the most experienced scholars; lack to extend codicology in view of it as ‘an auxiliary tool for dating and localizing manuscripts.’ In other words, he indicates many codicological studies have not imagined beyond its being an auxiliary tool to integrate the technological advances, knowledge bases, artistic importance, and socio-economic backgrounds accountable for manuscripts production and transmission.

An interesting article of a gendered analysis by Burke (2007) shows how the material aspect of a book and the content of it are mutually interdependent. In fact, Burke’s study is on paper works. Nonetheless, such interrelated conception of the material aspect with the content is possibly true in the analysis of parchment works. Burke (2007, 1667) hallmarks “the content of a text must not be severed from its physical presentation.” “Codicology, or the physical examination of manuscripts, can contribute much to the study of seventeenth century writing. Far from being a fringe interest, codicology and the study of paleography (or handwriting), provenance, various processes of transcription, and other topics related to manuscript production, transmission, and reception are integral to understanding a writer’s words when they appear in handwritten form.” However, there is no explicit mention of philology in dealing with the mutual interdependence of codicology and palaeography of which the former addresses the material aspect and the latter addresses the ‘content’ of manuscripts.

Allison (2010, 302) states his discontent on current research trends of paper works. Allison rejects the undermining considerations of palaeography and codicology as ancillary disciplines. If they are categorized into ancillary disciplines, Allison (2010, 302) reacts “the study and description of paper have been ancillaries to ancillaries.” As shown in Del Barco (2017, 22) an interpretation of palaeographic data is helpful to justify the historical transmissions of manuscripts and the cultural domains of the probable owners.

May (1986, 13) explains the close relationship between the material aspects of religious manuscripts and the artistic works on them. In reference with a Hebrew manuscript, May indicate that critical evaluations are required identifying the codicological evidences about “its construction, its contents, and especially its decoration.” As a result, critical observers would see the complexity of the manuscript as a physical object. May (1986) further notes how complete a codicological analysis would be, if the evidences drawn from the physical object were analyzed with the contents of the documents. Consequently, the analysis would show the complete history of manuscripts and their present conditions.

May exemplifies a particular Hebrew Bible that attracted researchers’ interest because of the illuminations and the binding. May implies the importance of other important codicological aspect of the contents of the colophons. These contents are important historical records; hence, they should be interpreted to trace back the history of the manuscript. As such, May (1986, 13) explains how a comprehensive codicological analysis should consider “the material evidence, taken together with the documents.”

Accordingly, the codex taken in its totality would show “a more complete history of the manuscript and how it arrived at its present appearance.” Nonetheless, the important places of palaeographical data that can be drawn from the contents of colophons and marginalia notes for a complete codicological study are disproportionately covered in the articles of COMSt (2015). Moreover, the textual criticisms (but not in the strict sense of philology proper) are discussed in detail. In fact, COMSt (2015) remains an impressive presentation of manuscripts’ material aspects, but it is less considerate to interpretation of paratextual matters.

Gumbert (2004, 506) indicates in line with, at times interchangeably used terms - palaeography and codicology - citing Masai (1950) who referred palaeographers as codicologists “have always studied the text with its body.” By implication, Gumbert accuses philologists for they focus only on the ‘immaterial’ aspect of a manuscript. He refers as an ‘immaterial object’ to a textual analysis of variant interpretations, values, and content wise differences among manuscripts. Here, I think that there is only a degree of emphasis on the material and the immaterial. Certainly, codicological studies as claimed by many palaeographers are to study a manuscript in its totality aiming to date and to localize the manuscript. This implies manuscripts’ historical evolutions and locational variations of origins are the main concerns of codicologist or palaeographer in this sense. Codicologist concern of studying body with texts associates them with philologists who are not focusing on the material aspects of manuscripts; rather, on textual aspect the of manuscripts’ evolution and locational variations.

Gumbert (2004, 508) further indicates that the concern of material codicology is not only a description of the technical notions of the book but also it is a justification on the ‘way of looking’ at the material aspect of a manuscript. According to Gumbert, this ‘way of looking’ is taken as a means to understand the ‘body language’ of a manuscript. In short, the material aspect of the codex is seen as a ‘body language’. More importantly, Gumbert remarks’ understanding this ‘body language’ is essential before one goes to the textual analysis.

Gumbert (2004, 509) a manuscripts if it is studied from a codicological perspective can show that “the manuscript is not homogeneous but composite, or at least articulated in blocks” (Nosnitsin 2014). He further explains about the commonly understood as simple books that can potentially show evidences of their being they had ‘a very complex genesis.’ In this sense, a codicologist explicating these complexities not only find his task as the most satisfying experience but also understand investigation of the material object as “a signal step in understanding the text in that book.”

Gumbert (2004, 509) explains the strong relationship between codicology and philology. He emphatically attributed the important contribution of codicology in the whole realms of philological studies of medieval manuscripts. He writes, “Codicology is a serious and useful discipline, which can offer precious services to medieval philologists and historians; it is in the

codicological analysis of single manuscript, in understanding their ‘stratigraphy’, that these services are most directly apparent.” In the sub topic below, we see conceptual framework applied in this mainly codicological study aligned with a philological study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework of Studying the Codicology of Gondärian Manuscripts

This section presents the accentuated conceptual framework applied in this mainly codicological study aligned with a philological study. This conceptual framework has been used as a point of departure rather than it has been taken as a framework often used in deductive analysis aimed at verifications of existed codicological features. Though codicology often immersed into a philological study as an academic field of study originated in the antiquity, it is difficult to find a full-fledged codicology theory by its own terms.

As such, based on Gumbert’s (2004, 505) brief implication that reads, “evidently codicology is the branch of scholarship that is concerned with manuscript books,” this conceptual framework is applied. Gumbert highlights that any scholarship of philology and historiography should necessarily begin from codicology. As a result, similar to any other qualitative studies, it has applied diverse conceptual framework from the apparently inseparable disciplines of codicology and philology.

Codicology similar to that of palaeography requires scrutiny and visual training of the eyes for details. Their emphasis slightly differs that codicology primarily focuses on the materiality while palaeography focuses on the scripts. Consequently, these two disciplines do have much common ground to link them with manuscript philology. Such notion focuses on not on linguistic elements origin, evolution, and meaning rather assumes how manuscript culture originates and evolves in the course of time. It also integrates with an art-historical perspective of interpreting paintings, choice of colours, and of marginal signs. However, eclectic approaches, which are mainly based on codicological parameters supported with palaeography and manuscript philology, are not seen in many of the studies on Ethiopian manuscripts; thereby, this study on Gondärian manuscripts has followed an eclectic approach.

There are noticeable differences between the cataloguing in the trends of purely quantitative approach that present descriptions of the material aspect of the manuscript and the cataloguing in the trends of neo-historicist approach. Cataloguing in quantitative approach excludes considerations of palaeographic and cultural domains of the codices. However, as Del Barco (2017, 16-17) cited Sirat (2002) explains that she attends a neo-historicist approach for the cataloguing of manuscripts. Sirat is in favour of a neo-historicist approach for it considers manuscripts unique textual and historical features. Hence, “a neo-historicist catalogue accords equal attention to the material, textual and historical features of codices, highlighting the individuality of each manuscript under consideration, both with respect to its form (the material, textual and visual aspects) and its function (intellectually, culturally and historically).”

Moreover, Del Barco (2017, 16) cited Sirat (2002) that the codex “must be studied in all the complexity of its forms and functions as well as in its cultural context. Therefore, the study of individual codices is essential, unlike in a quantitative approach, which seeks to identify general tendencies in large samples of manuscripts.” He further notes Sirat’s position, as “the history of the mediaeval manuscript book should be reconstructed from the sum of material, textual, and historical peculiarities in each manuscript rather than from tendencies that are identified by conducting statistical analyses of selected material features within a sample of manuscripts.”

As Del Barco (2017, 10) cited Ornato (1997), “codicology to be an independent and autonomous discipline within the historical sciences, at the same level as other specialisations and not subservient to any of them.” Moreover, Del Barco (2017, 9) cited Bozzolo & Ornato (1980) and Ornato & Bozzolo (1982) indicates how codicology “is understood by historians as a discipline that deals simultaneously with all aspects of the mediaeval book, from the nature of the materials used and the phases of material production to the modes of conservation, reading and dissemination. For Bozzolo and Ornato it is something very similar to the history of the book, which begins with a material – archaeological – analysis, but also assumes the prerogative to explore and respond to questions that were formerly seen as being the exclusive concern of historians and philologists.” Furthermore, Del Barco (2017, 17) remarks the benefits of comparative-structural approach for it can extend our understanding limited by the

‘archaeological approach’; hence, it is an important methodological tool for “resolving the textual and historical difficulties that each manuscript presents.”

This study of codicology has drawn heavily on Gumbert’s (2004) conception of codicology but has extended Gumbert’s concept by integrating codicology with philology. For Gumbert codicology is the study of “body language” of a book. He observes that there is a close relationship between an understanding of bookmaking and an understanding of text and these understandings are inseparable. For Gumbert (2004, 509) a codicological perspective applied in studying of even a single manuscript may be dealt with the consideration of codicology as it is “not homogenous but composite.” He further emphasizes the complexity of codicology “even apparently quite simple books, even books containing one text written by one scribe, may prove to have had a very complex genesis.”

Gumbert’s (2004, 509) citing Derolez emphasizes the indispensability of codicology as “codicology is ‘a serious and useful discipline, which can offer precious services to medieval philologists and historians.’ The crown is reached in those cases where the genesis of the book coincides with the genesis of the text, and where understanding the makeup of the book means understanding the growth of the text: autographs and author’s copies.”

He comments on philologists focus on text overlooking the primary container of the text that is the book. Gumbert (2004, 506) cited Masai’s conception of codicology which is more associated to a book study rather than a script study. The critical evaluation on the difference between the script and the book is that the book illustrates more about historical dates and locational variations but the script does not.

In this study, though the primary focus is on the material aspect, its interdependence with the value system, contextual matter of meaning constructions and interpretations are vital. Moreover, how pattern of bookmaking and quality of materials varies according to the content of the text block is equally attended. In line with this, the conceptual frame of New Philology highlights the combined aspects of the ‘material’ and the ‘immaterial’. By this, Gumbert (2004, 506) accusation of philologists that they focus only on the immaterial aspect of codices is critically read. In other words, philologists’ focus of attention is on the values, meanings, and content

analysis of the codex. More importantly, his emphasis on codicology has been attended for what he claims the need to study “text with its body.” There may be a degree of emphasis on the text or on the body (i.e. the book) but for sure, there is a concern for the indissolubility of the text from the book.

Smith’s (2014) perspective towards a codex has been partially considered as a conceptual framework studying codicology of Gondärian manuscripts. It is partial because unlike to Smith’s theoretical framing following an application of complex statistical tools for comparing scribal hands on a single manuscript, this study has employed rudimentary descriptive statistics for comparing some 80 MSS focusing mainly on the codicological aspects. In fact, Gondärian manuscripts have not been studied in the young scholarship of codicology as a discipline by its own stand. Yet, this discipline is plausibly being the origin of many fields of studies in the humanities.

Ethiopia’s book culture can be seen as one of the earliest surviving multidisciplinary manuscripts. Yet, no major analysis of the material aspects of Ethiopian manuscripts has been conducted. Nor has any variant reading on Gondärian manuscripts so far. In fact, appreciable researches have been conducted and hopefully would continue by scholars. Among these scholars, Bausi (2014, 142) remarks in favour of studying Ethiopian philology in consideration of it as the highest textual analysis that of necessity needs to look in totality of the manuscript culture.

According to Bausi, textual scholarship should not be limited to examine linguistic aspect of etymological analysis. Instead, he notes that this textual scholarship in philology should be a comprehensive one of codicology, palaeography, history, linguistics, sociology, theology, and literature. All these aspects under the umbrella term, philology, would not directly use data source beyond the codices themselves. Rather these data would be extractable imaginatively from the textual analysis.

Furthermore, Uhlig & Bausi (2014, 738) indicate about Ethiopian philology would benefit from sub-disciplinary approaches such as “codicological stemmatics”, or “material philology.” This implies codicology interconnects the codices (i.e. the books) with the text block and enables to

trace back the historical evolution of the material aspects and the representational influence overall manuscript culture. These scholars reflect their discontent on how codicology has hardly been applied in the studies of Ethiopian manuscript culture. Uhlig & Bausi (2014, 101) also illustrate the close relationship of palaeography to the study of Ethiopian philology.

Palaeography is one of the key components of Ethiopian philology that deals with the origin, development, changes, interdependence with other aspects of studying manuscript culture. These are writing materials (better termed codicology, or even manuscript archaeology) and of the socio-historical practice of bookmaking. This trend of integral dimensioning has acceptance recently; thereby, Uhlig & Bausi (2014, 741) indicates, “Ethiopian codicology is still in its early stages.” Nosnitsin (2012, 2014, & 2015) has examined Ethiopian codicology fairly in depth. This study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts has been based his conceptual frame of Ethiopian codicology. Nevertheless, an attempt has been done to integrate descriptive statistics to show regional variations and historical developments of codicology in Ethiopia.

The various codicological elements, especially pricking and ruling, were explored during the 1940's and 1950's by scholars, but Beit-Arié (2019,51) confirms they are not by means of theoretical speculation rather examining the writing styles used. They realize that these elements had both confined to local scriptoria and temporal characteristics. Scholars of Latin and Greek manuscripts subsequently, began to examine external characteristics of larger assemblages of the manuscripts, and they did determine that groups of the same provenance and time-shared these characteristics. The same result found by Scheper (2011) and Anderson Priscilla (1999).

In addition to this appropriation of descriptive statistics befitting to the mixed research design, I have also adopted the concepts of Bausi explaining the mutual interdependence of philology and codicology. This study has also drawn on the concepts of Nosnitsin (2012 & 2014) the importance of studying Ethiopian codicology focusing on the local collections that possibly show regional variations. Nonetheless, their exclusive interest in qualitative approach has been widening further by me towards inclusive of quantitative approach. I have assumed this as a “new” insight for the textual analysis of this kind. Investigation of codicology is inseparable from an investigation of other dimensions of manuscript culture. As such, carriers of this culture

such as the scribes, monasteries, royal churches, secular institutions, and even individuals who collected the ancient manuscripts have been considered as integral parts of studying codicology.

Besides, text based examination about the social groups and the royalty's dispositions then back has been found helpful for the codicological analysis. In other words, the analysis of cultural semiotics has given this study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts to integrate the interests of the commissioners and or the bookmakers, the contextual production, the contents of the text blocks and collection sites. Attesting integrity of cultural study assumed as equivalent to philological study in this regard, Astrid (2011, 102) cited Posner and Schmauks (2004) to illustrate the close relation between the material, the social, and the mental aspects of a cultural study. Quite analogously, philology unavoidably calls for both diachronic and synchronic dimensions. Beit-Arié 2019, 51 states the need to establish a synchronic and diachronic typology by recalling Albert Derolez. Who was the first Latin codicologist-palaeographer, in 1984 who pointed out published his study of the Humanistic parchment manuscripts produced in Italy.

Bahru (2000) critically examined the status of historiography in Ethiopia and suggested what should be an appropriate theoretical frame in historiography. He noted that historiography as a discipline has evolved significantly. In fact, he reflected his discontent in researches of historiography that attend exclusively on the chronological ordering of historical events. Instead, he proposed researches of historiography should necessarily integrate analytical views of historical matters rather than mere keeping of records and dissemination of dry facts of historical events.

This inclusion of analytical views, he further explains, would be advantageous in 'deepening historical research' by including 'new' insights from the local history examined from the bottom up approach. That means "the history of ideas," the use of verified folkloric sources as opposed to exclusive interest on documented archives, and the perspectives of other disciplines that could offer historiography an interdisciplinary feature. As such, Bahru Zewdie (2000, 1) emphasized the need for a methodological shift from a focus on a narrative and on an illustration of elites' political views to a comprehensive and an interdisciplinary nature of research in historiography.

He accentuates the theoretical tenet of historiography should consider “the totality of the past human experience or at the very least broaden historical investigation to include social and economic history.” Kristeva (1986, 39) explains about the mutual interdependence between history and texts as “the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history.” This agrees with Bahru’s implication in highlighting historiography should be integrative and interdisciplinary. Though some salient concepts are drawn from this proposed theoretical perspective, this study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts has not frame entirely on the analysis of codicology explaining the chronological order of producing the codices and using folkloric sources related to the codices.

Rather, since this study is a ‘textual’ analysis on the already archived documents (historic books), perspectives in historiography that accentuate analytical views and interdisciplinary nature of historiography have been applied on the investigation of philological aspect of codicology. Thus, investigation of the bookmakers’ general intention of why they preferred to apply particular codicological elements, the context, and the implied sponsor and possibly users are all analyzed from the purposefully selected codices alone.

Turner (2014, 139) strongly criticizes the philological study tradition that exclusively depends on the synchronic dimension. Turner stands against the long established practice of focusing on the diachronic aspect only to explain language changes over time. He also notes how complete adherence to synchronic perspectives only would make a philological study historical and decontextualized. He underscores how philology has been heavily influenced by structural linguistics; thereby, philological study became “Searching for unvarying ‘laws’ governing linguistic change stood far from the contextualizing, interpretative method of philology.

When linguistics shifted from a historical study to a predominantly synchronic approach, it moved even further from the philological tradition.” Similarly, Posner (1990, 349) emphatically remarks the mutual interdependence between these aspects “as diachronic linguistics requires theoretical support from synchronic linguistics, synchronic study would itself be crippled without the insights provided by a historical perspective.”

Lundhaug (2017, 22) is quoted below:

When applied to the study of the Nag Hammadi texts, New Philology has several notable consequences. Most importantly, the emphasis is changed from hypothetical original texts and *their* contexts, to the texts in the form in which they have actually come down to us. Since a preserved text's primary context is constituted by its manuscript, it is pertinent to gain as solid an understanding as possible of the context of the production and use of the manuscript, which can then subsequently inform our analyses of how the texts may have been received in that context. Information concerning the production and use of the codices may be reached by means of codicological and palaeographical analysis, studies of documents reused as cartonnage in the codices' covers, and through an investigation of paratextual features such as titles, colophons, punctuation, etc., as well as the selection and sequence of the texts themselves in each individual codex. By doing so, this may be able to shed light on the socio-historical, cultural, and religious context of the people who produced and owned the manuscripts, who presumably also read the texts contained in them.

This codicological study of Gondärian manuscripts involves an examination of manuscripts, as they are medium for transmitting and reflecting up on the material culture. Along with that, it also deals with the cultural associations, interpretations, and identity constructions as they belong to Gondärian manuscript culture. By this, users' disposition can be discerned from the manuscripts. Supporting this trend of philological investigations that combine the qualitative with the quantitative, Smith (2014, 37) illustrates the need for efforts to overcome some of the limitations of earlier work. He adds, "descriptive and qualitative observations will be accompanied by quantitative data wherever possible; descriptions of materials, binding, and quire structure are fairly standard among studies that examine the physical artefact".

Smith's work seems an unprecedented one especially as compared to previous scholarly traditions of investigating codicology, paleography, and scribal hands. Smith conducted his study using descriptive statistics to describe the codex (i.e. the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus) as it is a cultural expression. Smith (2014, 37-38) indicates that this kind of description integrates the identification of "the physical composition of the book, its binding, and division into volumes"

Moreover he indicates the importance of identifying “the organization of the textual content by use of titles; the page and quire numbering systems used throughout; and the organization of the codex into quires.” However, Smith’s conceptual framework exclusively focusing on studying codicology and palaeography, and variations of scribal hands is found helpful. This study of codicology of Gondārian manuscripts would not appropriate his perspective dissociating codicology from philology overlooking their complementariness. In the following chapter, I discuss the methodology, which I have applied to investigate codicology of Gondārian (Royal) manuscripts.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this methodology chapter, research design, rationale for selecting Gondärian manuscripts, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis and interpretation are presented.

3.1 Research Design

This study on codicology of Gondärian manuscripts ca 1650 – 1800 applied a mixed research design (i.e. qualitative and quantitative). The qualitative design following material cultural features was helpful for descriptive codicology. It was an exclusively ‘textual’ analysis attending the methodological appropriateness of Clifford Geertz’s (1973) powerful concept of “thick description.” To highlight contextual issues and historical changes, the combined philological dimensions were applied. These were the diachronic (i.e. the historical changes over time) and the synchronic (i.e. the interpretative rendering of cultural sign systems at a particular point in time). For Bausi 2008, 19 “Philology refers to a rigorous methodology that gives prominence to the direct analysis of written textual evidences-integrated with oral and archaeological evidences.”

This mixed research design has agreed to Julien’s (2008, 121) remark that “text is open to subjective interpretation, reflects multiple meanings, and is context dependent (e.g., part of a larger discourse).” The interpretative rendering drawn from the developed bottom-up flexible guideline was possible because of this research design applied to investigate codicology of Gondärian manuscripts. In fact, in the application of this semiotic research design, mere description of codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts was not done. Instead, the codicological features identified through the surgical attention accentuated by close reading, were elaborated more in relation to the “material philology” in the indicated historical period. By this, I think, it is possible to understand codicology better.

The quantitative research design following a case study approach aimed to compare the historical changes between divided periods. The comparative advantage of case study was drawn from the computed descriptive statistics and was applied for the comparative approaches. As Schreiber (2008, 209) emphasizes, the importance of descriptive statistics is for both the researcher and for

the reader. Graphical representations using histograms, bar charts, pie charts etc can make summarized data. As opposed to inferential statistics, which often relies on sampling to draw conclusions, descriptive statistics has the advantage to condense big numerical data, to compare categories, and to give depth for meaning construction. Common in mixed research design of this kind, summarized data can be absorbed at ease. With this advantage, descriptive statistics was applied for the comparative²⁵ purpose of codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts. More importantly, the result of the descriptive statistics was a base for subsequent in-depth analysis and interpretations.

3.2 Rationale for Selecting the Manuscripts

The reason for selecting of the manuscripts produced in the indicated period (i.e. from 1650 to 1800) which is lesser than the years in the historically accepted Gondärian cultural period (1636-1855) was taken from the critical review of literatures of the codices into consideration. The Gondärian political period 1632 – 1784 was the typical manuscript production period. Yet the clear boundary often appears challenging to draw at least on the outset. Thus, the period 1650 – 1800 was proposed. Dates were determined by two methods. The first method is text written in the colophon, which is also refereed as absolute date. The second one is attributed date, mentions of historical persons in the main text body that are corresponded to literatures indicating the names and the historical events in line to the period. In other words, the names of emperors, royalties, and metropolitan bishops are linked to historical records.

Nonetheless, the period before 1650 and after 1800 is excluded from the manuscripts production dates. This is done purposefully examining the codices and Pankhurst's (1984) dating that the majority of Gondärian manuscripts were produced in this period. Moreover, Witakowski's (2015, 484) statement indicating that many of the production and collection centers of Ethiopian manuscripts were in north-western part of Ethiopia was considered to focus on Gondärian manuscripts. In fact, not all the manuscripts in the centers were collections containing

²⁵ 'Peter Gumbert in his preface to Agati's manual (Agati 2009, 14), stating that 'comparative codicology and quantitative codicology' are 'the two most striking modern developments' in the field (see for example Gumbert 2011, for a keen application of the comparative approach in codicology)' Buasi 2015,10.

exclusively Gondärian manuscripts. For this reason, identification of Gondärian manuscripts was critically done supported by existing literatures about the manuscripts that were conventionally accepted as ‘Gondärian manuscripts.’

Gondär is believed to be the principal centre for archives of ancient books. The city of Gondär was the metropolitan centre of the political seats and religious centre. This assumed the city as one of the important centre of manuscript production. The number of total collections containing Gondärian manuscripts was not clearly known in precise number (*appendix -VI*). We, however, know that the city of Gondär and its periphery are one of the higher concentrations at their primary context. Based on historical evidences, Gondärian royalty were actively engaged in manuscript production.²⁶ This production included both coping and productions of originals then the manuscripts were presented to royal churches and to monasteries located across the broad area of Gondär mainly for religious services. At times, these churches and monasteries had been used as archival repositories.

The royalties of Gondär directly offered the manuscripts to the monasteries of Lake Tana and Däbrä Mäg^wina in the indicated period. As such, they are taken as Gondärian manuscripts. Some manuscripts from the churches in Tägəray- Čäläqot were included in the study with the assumption shared by Pankhurst (Rita) (1973) that the included manuscripts into this study identified as Gondärian were originally taken from Gondär to Mäqədäla then handed down to the churches of Tägəray.

Moreover, Gondärian MSS from the open source of British Library catalogued by Wright (1877) of MSS taken to England from Mäqədäla were included. However, only five from each were considered since they are available in digital and published catalogues; thereby, they are inaccessible physically. Three-dimensional cultural materials primarily represent codicology. Hence, only five codices were considered to illustrate particular codicological features. Moreover, the Gondärian manuscripts from overseas accessed digitally were assumed to have many alternations. Context was also the parameter to the purposeful selection.

²⁶see also appendix -V

The Gondärian manuscripts included in this study were from ecclesiastic institutions such as from däbëroch (churches) established by the Gondärian royalties themselves back then and from the gädamat (monasteries) founded many centuries before the Gondärian period but supported by the royalties. Other manuscripts available elsewhere in Ethiopia but produced in the Gondärian period were excluded from this study. This was done with the assumption that they would not show locational variations. More importantly, the manuscripts purposeful selection was not for generalization in the literal sense, rather it was for illustration.

Most of collections were selected based on the historic attributes to the Gondärian manuscript culture in the political period (1632 – 1784). In fact, the ‘local’ collection extended beyond the political period to include manuscripts up to 1800, since many of the manuscripts were donated directly by the royalty to those royal churches²⁷ and to those monasteries, the royalty favoured most. Thus, purposeful selection of the manuscripts was done in consideration of geographical proximity to the city of Gondär and of manuscript collections’ historical significance in close relation to the ‘core’ book culture (collection context²⁸). The table below shows the collection sites of Gondärian manuscripts.

Table 3.1 Collection sites from which the sample books were selected

No.	Name	Signatures	Geographical location
1	Atatami Michaelae	ATMI	in city of Gondär
2	Bahär Dar Fälagə Ginet Quddus Georges Cathedral	BDGE	in Bahir Dar

²⁷Among royal churches built by Gondärian period in the city and around only two were built by nobles; Ras Gabre Abiy Egze and Dejach Wondiwosson Abune Tekal Hyamnaot. Strelcyn 1954,200.

²⁸ In its attempt to document the Ethiopian manuscript culture in its original context, the Ethio-SPaRe project follows, in one way or another, in the methodological footsteps of such major endeavours as the Deutsche Aksum Expedition (1906)¹, the Lake Ṭana expedition of Ernst Hammerschmidt (1968)², Oxford British Expedition (1974)³, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library microfilming enterprise (1970–90s)⁴ and several more regionally centered initiatives or case studies, such as the series of research initiatives of the French scholars focusing on the antique and medieval sites (in particular rock-hewn churches)⁵, the manuscript recording project of the Universities of Illinois ¹ The expedition led by Enno Littmann (EAE II, 145a–46a) is particularly famous for the very important first-hand descriptions of the ancient archaeological monuments but also medieval churches (see the volumes of DAE; activities of the expedition dedicated to Ethiopian manuscripts are less known, but see Wion 2011).

3	*Däbrä Bərəhan Šəllase rəsä adəbarät z Gondär	DBS	in city of Gondär
4	Däbrä Mäg ^w ina Monastery	MOGI	60 Kms N/W of Gondär
5	*Manbärə Minəgist Mədhané cAläm	MED	in city of Gondär
6	Məndaba Monastery	MNDA	70 kms south of Gondär
7	Two private collections in the city (no official names)	INDI	in city of Gondär)
8	Secular Organization collections, Ethio-SPaRs ²⁹	ORG	in Hamburg
9	Däbrä dhay Qusəq ^w m ³⁰	QUS	in city of Gondär
10	Wright catalogues ³¹	CAT	in UK

The above eleven collection sites appeared to have been unified by Gondärian manuscript culture. The culture area had particular historic mechanisms that interconnected collections in a broad area of Gondär during the cultural period. The collections were exposed to this book culture based on their historic significances to the state- religion marriage. Thus, I expect that the books as an object might exist.

Locations and materials containing any valuable information about the topic have been identified first: local libraries, EMMML library, NALE, travellers' eyewitness accounts³² and others were visited to build documentation. Archival materials, local inventory files in culture and tourism

²⁹ During the digitalization project, the team collected those books formerly parts of the Maqdala collections.

^{30*} These are the only collections, which received books from more than one king and in two sub periods.

³¹ It was Wright's opinion that the acquisition of the Maqdala collection made the British Museum the best library for Ethiopian manuscripts in Europe. In his report, quoted in Holland and Hozier, he writes, 'Looking to the number and intrinsic value of these manuscripts, this seems to be the largest and finest collection of Aethiopic literature in Europe' Pankhurst [Rita] 1973, 41.

³² Scheper 2014, part -6

office of Gondär city³³ administration, (see appendix – IV lists of collections situated in the city of Gondär and number of books they currently possessed] published catalogues³⁴ of ‘Gondärian’ books in the various non-religious institutions in Ethiopia and abroad (the Mäqädäla collection) were consulted.

In the selection of the manuscripts type of owners, religious institutions (royal churches and monasteries)³⁵, and individuals were considered. Books were identified from the collections of each of these institutions, usually associated mostly with the particular Gondärian royalty and the public as users. These collections were presumably linked to specific religious movement that had a unique history. This in turn affected the physical appearance of books and often typology of books the institutions had preserved. Where the periods’ original (close re-productions) were available at primary custodians that were represented by the relevant manuscript collection and by the ecclesiastic institution hosting them (Nosnitsin 2012, 2013a). Thus, the method and rationale applied to select purposefully the Gondärian manuscripts of the sample size of 80MSS followed critical evaluation.

Among the emperors and empresses associated to the supporting of manuscript production, for more than one time are, the famous royalty and nobles such as Fasiledes, Tekle Haymanot II, Tekle Ghiyorgis, Mintiwab, Yohannis I, Bekaffa, Iyasu I, Iyasu II, Dawit III, Tewoflos, Yostos, Ras Gebrie, Wolde Le’ul were identified. Hence, the eleven high-ranking royals and the two nobles were ordered from the higher to the lower rate of these powerful persons association to the royal churches deduced from the manuscripts indicating the names of these persons.

³³The office was able to make an inventory of church treasures including MSS from December 2013 up to May 2014 more than 350 codices.

³⁴Wright, W (1877) Cataloguing of Mäqädäla Collection; Please note that Wright 1877 is only the main catalogue

³⁵First, we assumed both city and rural might possess the same with city royal churches but now it did not work. Only the city royal churches housed original Gondärian books in both quality and number.

The entire number of royal churches in the city was conventionally known as ‘forty four’ in number³⁶ but more than that number, sixty one lists indicated together with the kings or royal families they were historically attributed to King – church association³⁷. However, based on their current book numbers and favoured by more than one king in the entire period were taken into considerations. Location of collections was identified as 18 collections. From this number, I found some 11 collections, which contained original Gondärian books, of course varying in number. Five digitalized manuscripts from one or more churches from Tigray were identified by Ethio-SPaRe³⁸ project and recently found in its database - labels as ‘ORG’³⁹ from ORG – 071 – ORG – 75. These five books (in their non-physical form of course) from the British library, Wright catalogue⁴⁰ 1877 (no photos), were taken in addition to the 70 MSS previously selected from the ‘local’ Gondärian collections. The later was indicated by their collection name they came from, - ‘CAT’⁴¹ from CAT -076 – CAT - 80 books on published catalogue selected mostly to use them for comparison purposes⁴². Others books like those taken by James Bruce⁴³ and by

³⁶Andreu Martínez d’Alòs-Moner¹ and Sisay Sahile 2016. The Myth of the Forty Four Churches of Gondar Journal of Social Sciences University of Gondar. ERJSSH 3(1), June 2016 p. 49.

³⁷For detail list of royal churches see; Andreu Martínez d’Alòs-Moner¹ and Sisay Sahile 2016, THE MYTH OF THE FORTY FOUR CHURCHES OF GONDÄR Journal of Social Sciences University of Gondär ERJSSH 3(1), June 2016, pp.48 – 49.

³⁸I really thank Hamburguniversitywhich permit me to get those digital books from its own database through email. Researcher, University, Hiob Ludolf Center for Ethiopian Studies. From December 2009 to May 2015, the author was the principal investigator of the project “Ethio-SPaRe, Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia, Salvation, Preservation, Research”, funded by the European Research Council within the EU 7th Framework Programme IDEAS;s.http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE.

³⁹ see appendix - II

⁴⁰It was Wright's opinion that the acquisition of the Maqdala collection made the British Museum the best library for Ethiopian manuscripts in Europe. In his report, quoted in Holland and Hozier, he writes, 'Looking to the number and intrinsic value of these manuscripts, this seems to be the largest and finest collection of Aethiopic literature in Europe' Pankhurst [Rita] 1973, 41.

⁴¹see also appendix - II

⁴²For a number of other manuscripts, a link to Mäqədäla may be assumed on the basis of the palaeographical, codicological and historical evidence' Ste`phane & Nosnitsin 2014,92.

Italian troop's in the 1930's were not accessible. Among 600 Mäqədäla MSS scattered in Tigray, nineteen identified as Gondärian by Ethio- SPaRe project in six churches (Ancel & Nosnitsin 2014, 91).

It was significant to see the six production and collection sites; namely, the church of Atatami Miechael, Däbrä Bərəhan Šəllase re'ase adbarat z Gondär, Manbärə Minəgist Mādhané Aläm, two private collections in the city (no official names), and Däbrä Tshay Qusqam, (on the outskirts of the city at its north west direction). The most remarkable example was Däbrä ḍhay Qusəq^wm, a royal church founded in 1740 A.D. by the Empress Mentewwab and by her son, Emperor Iyasu II and other royal churches in the city of Gondär established by the Emperors such as Dawit III, Iyasu I, Fasilädäs, and Iyasu II, and Empress Məntəwab, respectively is still open and functional.

Däbrä Mäg^wina⁴⁴ monastery is located about 60kms north –west of the city in Tache Armachiho woreda of Central Gondär zone was often associated with emperors such as Iyasu I and Yohannes I. Məndaba⁴⁵ ,the monastery is located on a peninsula of the northern shore of Lake Tana, ca. 70 kms from Gondär, close to Gorgora (the Dämbiya wäräda), was often linked to Yohannes I and Bäkkafa. However, it was believed to be established in 1331 AD by Abune

⁴³In the eighteenth century, the Scottish James Bruce, who came to Ethiopia to discover the source of the Nile, had also carried off to Europe camel loads of manuscripts. The d'Abbadie brothers, Antoine and Arnauld Michel, were very successful in purchasing or having copyists copied manuscripts during the years before the rise of Emperor Tewodros in the 1850s.²⁴ Carlo Conti Rossini²⁵ and Enrico Cerulli were also ardent collectors of Ethiopian manuscripts when they were in Ethiopia during the Colonial era.(Gatachew Haile The Southern Shores of the Mediterranean and Beyond The Case Ethiopian Manuscript Heritage Hill Museum & Monastic Library Saint John's University Collegeville, Minnesota, pp 8 – 9, no year? The Southern Shores of the Mediterranean and Beyond The Case Ethiopian Manuscript Heritage Getatchew Haile Hill Museum & Monastic Library Saint John's University Collegeville, Minnesota

⁴⁴Wion 2014 'Mäg^wina' EAE, 644.

⁴⁵The peninsula of Mandaba is reached. There are about twenty-five monks living in this monastery at present. Their church is called Medhane Alem Church. It is a round church with a thatched roof. The present building was reconstructed a short time ago. It is said that the monastery was founded by Amda Seyon's son, Aba Asai, a prince who abdicated and became a monk The monastery and the church are surrounded by a stonewall. In the bay, the shore is covered with pretty pebbles; same carnelian, though rather small, can be found here. It is jokingly called the "diamond coast" (Jager 1965, 66). It was an important centre of learning during the Gondärian period (Persoon, 2014).

Yassay son of ase Amdä Séyon. It is the second largest monastery (Gädam) in the Lake Tana region after Daga Éstifanos (Persoon 2014, 23).

Whereas Bahər Dar Fālagə Ginet Quddus Georges Cathedral, a little far away from Gondär, 160kms at the Lake Tana region, at the heart of Bahir Dar. Thus, all the aforementioned centres were considered as prominent places for Gondärian manuscript production and church education centres since the early periods of Christianity. Two secular organization collections are found in and Digital Oriental Manuscript Library, Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg University, Germany and in British museum, England respectively.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedure involved a close reading/study of the manuscripts. This was done by developing an axiological data collection guideline. This guideline was entirely developed by the researcher and has passed through the scholarly comments of my supervisors, Professor Denis Nsnitsin and Dr. Indris Mohammed, and of my two colleagues⁴⁶. The guideline format was modified after almost every “field” work searching for and recording of the Gondärian manuscripts.

This guideline helped for the development of the axiological categories or the analytical units used for cross-referencing. No extant literatures were directly adopted in producing the guideline. Instead, the bottom-up data collection and preliminary analysis on the purposefully selected Gondärian manuscripts (ca 1650 – 1800) was done to identify some of the powerful points usable for constructing the thematic categories. Informed approximation from the names of royalties crosschecked with extant literatures and the reading of exact dates indicated in the manuscripts was used to justify productions in the period. In line to this, Ethiopian names, locations, and language terms that have no English equivalents have been transliterated following EAE style.

⁴⁶Ebrahim Damtew, Associate professor in history in University of Gondar department of history; Ababaw Ayalew, Assistant professor in art history in Addis Ababa university art school.

Data collection on codicological features manifested in Gondärian manuscripts did not attend particular manuscript feature seriously unique to Gondärian as opposed to the whole Ethiopian, rather the blend of the two. To obtain rich data focus was made on codicological features in Gondärian manuscripts in line with Uhlig's (1990) statement that Gondärian was regarded as the symbol of classical book productions. The textual/structural analysis based on the collected data applying Geertz's powerful concept of "thick description" has used the conceptual framework illustrated in the chapter two preceding this chapter-three.

The primary object of this study is the manuscript – the codex (i.e., a handwritten book made by sewing together folded *bi folia*, bound between two wooden boards, as discrete from accordion). The actual state of a codex includes its structural properties intact: raw material, production, and design. The book in this context meant, two parts together, text block, and binding and decoration. Scrolls, protective's, *Kətab*, *Mäktub*, archival, files in the folder or others etc are not the proper object of the study.

Subjects of survey ranges from larger monastic collections to individual collection /or possession for a single devotional book. The size ranges from pocket book to large size book of half a meter square (largely determined by cutting and folding parchment). The contents (subject matters) range from religious services books (larger in my samples) to secular book of history in nature. Techniques applied – as a smallest building unit – to the physical book format remained the subjects of study and detail analysis. But lacing hole size, thickness of the folium, the thickness of the boards, the dimensions of single column etc were considered too detail to reveal practical aspects of the crafts and hence unnoticed.

Rarely provenance can be revealed though information contained in the manuscripts' colophon. Their specific place of origin⁴⁷ or centre of production were assumed in most codices of the

⁴⁷Manuscripts may provide some clear information about their provenance. & Nosnitsin 2014,91; for more better information on this question please see Stéphane Ancel (2016), 'Travelling Books: Changes of Ownership and Location in Ethiopian Manuscript Culture' De Gruyter. He states the provenances of *Mäqdäla* manuscripts in such way; 'Referring to the royal court of Gondär and having being in *Mäqdäla* fortress, these manuscripts most probably come from a church located in Gondär.' p.295

sample except two bindings (MOGI – 037, copied in Səwakin-Eritera and DBS – 017 mentioned that it came from Aäräma Gibəreal monastery). Hence, the period of production would be that I try to find out or estimated through the information contained in the text block or elsewhere in the bindings. The text blocks were examined focused on information provided by primary owners in the form of ownership marks or other notes in the manuscripts (Ancel 2016). Marginal notes indicating the ownership history of the book; dates provided during inventory experts, dates given by cataloguers etc are still important. After examining all written evidences indicating the origin of the text blocks were recorded, the case of detail analysis of certainly dated and attributed MSS were identified for creating special model⁴⁸ books.

Based on the data on the textual records of books, eight Gondärian kings mentioned might roughly define the time⁴⁹ boundary from 1650's only up to 1784 which also known as 'Political period' of the Gondärian power. During the 'field' survey, one of the challenging⁵⁰ tasks the researcher faced was dating⁵¹ the binding boldly. Based on either written or text block contents, non textual dating system⁵² and other tools for dating⁵³ was poor and unstudied, for instance, art history and palaeography⁵⁴ (Nosnitsin 2012, 12).

⁴⁸ Uhlig 1990,18

⁴⁹ 'The oldest among them Dr. Wright finds to be of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the great bulk of the collection belongs to the seventeenth and eighteenth, and some were written during the present century, even in the reign of the late King Theodore' Pankhurst [Rita] 1973, .41

⁵⁰ '...for dating Coptic manuscripts, Coptologists have for the most part relied on the uncertain criteria of palaeographical typology (based largely on Greek palaeography) and codicological typology. Similarly, it is often the case that nothing is known about the geographical origin of the surviving Coptic manuscripts, with the lack of colophons being compounded by the fact that many entered modern collections via the Egyptian antiquities trade, without any reliable information as to provenance.' Stephen Emmel 2015, 142.

⁵¹ William Wright says in his catalogue, "To determine the age of undated Ethiopic MSS is by no means easy." This is quite true. That is evident; in number of datable MSS I got only 31 MSS out of 80. And 780, 80-means 1,8 ratio Pankhurst (1984) noted that most of the bindings (from Gondär) cannot at present be dated with accuracy, but some historical inferences can be drawn in cases where the age of the MSS itself is known (or can be estimated) (Pankhurst 1984, 213).

⁵² Type of calendar , Era of the World (amate alem) 'year of the world', 'Year after the creation' (amate emfeterat) beginning in 5493 BCE; Era of Diocletian ('year of martyrs'), (amate sematate) beginning 5,776 years after creation, in 284/285 CE; Era of Grace (amate mehitrt) 'year of mercy', beginning 5,852 years after the creation, in 359/360 CE; Era of the Incarnation (of Christ) (amate segawi), beginning 5,500 years after creation, in 7/8

In the data collection procedure, the preservation condition is found one of the natural criteria for the quality of the binding works. As such, manuscripts preservation condition was considered by looking the damage and repairs patterns on books structures and state of conditions (digital or material or group or singleton). The sample manuscripts I analyzed must preferably have original bindings (very many codices have lost their original bindings, partly or completely). At least, the constituent elements I analyze must be original. The preference should be given to fine codices, and to undisturbed codices (better not “composite⁵⁵ codices”).

In addition, the basic one was relying on the trained eye⁵⁶ can gather a significant amount of data without the aid of laboratory measuring instruments. “Codicological eye” it was just a metaphor for the visual examination of codicological features, the first and natural step in a codicological study. Like philologist reads the text, codicologist looks at codicological features visible at the manuscript of which he is aware of, and “reads” them. Hence the primary source of information about their techniques of constructions would usually be derived from /on the codices themselves the visible material and structural features (Kwiatkowski and Bausi 2015,168 – 191) and the collection proper (Nosnitsin 2013).

For the textual evidences, books were examined from the collections of the eleven institutions mentioned above. Each of these institutions has a different acquisition history that affects the types of books they collect, and none of these modern collections can be said to represent statistically the whole population of books produced in the Gondärian periods. Gondärian books

⁵³The external sources of manuscripts dates, Museum labels (curator) a written date on the pages by federal inventory team, little help as most dates given by guess.

⁵⁴‘...which established the main stages in the history of Ethiopian handwriting, on the basis of a large corpus of material?’ (Nosnitsin 2012,12)

⁵⁵Very few composite layers of books were found in the sample. The large majority found to be single works in textual terms as can be seen in chapter four.

⁵⁶‘...the important thing is codicology in the sense of a 'way of looking' - an eye, so to speak, that is trained to understand the 'body language' of the book. The codicological eye is not a new invention; many nineteenth-century scholars must have had it, or they could not have produced so much work of lasting quality. "Without it, one will not be able to decipher half of what the manuscript has to tell, But those, of course, are borderline cases; one would not advocate this attitude as general practice’ (Gumbert 2004,506).

as specific groups were effective in drawing out the books true essential features; but because the groups were small, it was difficult to generalize from this data.

There may be 700 – 750 codices available and asserted to be accessible to me in eleven collections and other three⁵⁷ sibling collections from no specimen was found, located in the town of Gondär and within 70 km radius and beyond. The project will be primarily based on “at least 80 sample books.” The sample 80 manuscripts must be written between 1650’s and 1800 (the traditional boundaries of the Gondärian political period and the core of cultural Renaissance) present in the so-called historical sources. Please refer to appendix -II to find the lists of sample books (80MSS).

Data collection was also looking at palaeography⁵⁸ and the study of illustrations (Uhlig 1984, 1990). As such, it was already in work for dating manuscripts by the authors of the first catalogues of Ethiopian manuscripts (Ancel & Nosnitsin, 2014) when the text itself provided no hint (a colophon, additional notes, etc.) as to the time of writing. Particularly, the scripts⁵⁹

⁵⁷Collections survey but no any specimen was found based on preset criteria were; Gəmja bet Mariam, Täda egazabhir ab, Lideta lemariam in and around the city of Gondar.

⁵⁸The handwriting itself is of codicological use. Manuscripts can be written in a ‘formal’, that is calligraphic, or an ‘informal’, personal hand. However, most calligraphic script types are linked to rather wide regions and periods, and although many varieties within the different styles are known, progressive developments of types render it difficult to be very precise; moreover, a coherent framework to classify scripts still awaits development. Apart from that, to distinguish between the calligraphic hands requires paleographic training (Scheper 2014,132).

⁵⁹‘For a number of other manuscripts, a link to Māqdāla may be assumed on the basis of the palaeographical, codicological and historical evidence, even though it cannot be ascertained’ Ste`phane & Nosnitsin, 2014, 92.

features used as a marking for the Gondärian⁶⁰ manuscript classification to mid 17th to second half of the 18th c political⁶¹ periods (Uhlig 1990, 87 – 102).

I did not need to try to demonstrate something about the script, as it does not appear convincing. I was following the loose criteria of the script Gwelh⁶² as the “Gondärian” (but please note that no one exactly defined its palaeographical properties). In other words, if I see in a MS something clearly different from what is called Gwelh, I did not take it, Uhlig’s 1990 ‘Introduction to Ethiopian palaeography’, had been useful in this regard.

The visible painting styles⁶³ and/or techniques were also used as data collection procedures. The paintings,⁶⁴ illumination⁶⁵ such as subjects, colour, and schematic sketches⁶⁶ ornamentations:

⁶⁰‘The study of Ethiopic palaeography by Uhlig (1988, 1990) established a broad frame for the history of Ethiopic script, with its periods and general features; but it is still not possible to understand how they relate to regional styles and idiosyncrasies of individual scribes. No strictly palaeographic regional or scriptoria styles could be clearly identified so far’ Bausi 2015c, 289; though it adds only general information which cannot be used to locate manuscripts written in this style at individual level. It is true that gwelsh script is also related to a rather specific geographic region, so it may be very precise that its appliance is not helpful for locating manuscripts origin as they were related at a corpus level.

⁶¹‘The characteristic features of the Gwelsh script is more easily recognized as general features of style than in distinctive traits of the letters: Because, the classification of manuscripts belonging to the Gwelsh style is not difficult’ (Uhlig 1990, 93).

⁶²‘G^welsh script spans mid-seventeenth to the second half of the eighteenth century. This script is considered the most elegant. The characters are evenly shaped and clear. It is the script typical for the period of the Gondärian Kingdom (1632–1769); it probably originated in Gondar, the capital city (in this sense, it represents a regional script) and is frequently associated with the large luxury manuscript production of that time. Some distinctive letter forms, the modern form of pe appears, to substitute various older forms’ (Bausi 2015c, 290).

⁶³‘Scholars of art and art history had given little attention to the study of the paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The paintings of these two centuries are regarded as stereotyped. In this thesis, I have given emphasis to show the diversity in the selection of themes, expression, and composition of different themes. The methodology I used is iconographic description and analysis. The absence of secondary written sources on the cultural and social history of the region is the main reason that restricted me from making iconological analysis and interpretation of the paintings’ (Abebaw Ayalew 2006, vii – viii). ‘In addition, decorative aspects of illuminated religious manuscripts may help to pinpoint the place of origin’ Scheper 2014, 196 note 65.

⁶⁴That looks valid that paintings produced at city of Gondar (Abebaw Ayalew 2006, 39; Bezorck 2002) as local production.

⁶⁵‘as much as possible I have tried to date some the paintings based on their techniques used; I have used written information as well as stylistic analysis and the classification of Stanislaw Chojnacki in dating all the paintings’.[Abebaw Ayalew 2006, vii – viii].

(Uhlig 1984, 46), and tooling, specially the type and position of the central motifs (cross) (Pankhurst 1984, 220) were considered in the data collection procedure. The raw material and ornamentations used such as the cover leather and textiles inlay⁶⁷ were usually approximately the same age as MSS themselves (Pankhurst 1984, 213). Regarding determining the composition of raw materials used like the colours or identifying the fibres in a parchments or threads, this study would not involve these tasks. Possibly, the royalty in the city of Gondär presented the Anomalies high quality cover leather and textile inlays⁶⁸.

A guideline was prepared and was used to collect data. It was organized to collect largely ‘objective’ information on the ‘field’. All data categories acquired from the observation of Gondärian manuscripts in their home location: based on that observation I prepared the chart and it had not been made or copied from somewhere outside. Using the paper survey form I was able to collect codicological data from the books and their collection proper in both the physical and digital environments of Gondärian books.

I recognize that to find survey formats used to collect codicological data from the three-dimensional a book preserved in their primary context was necessary. I did not go to the collections using the form prepared by someone in somewhere in big library in western context and Hebrew⁶⁹ collections. They might lack contextual data typical to our collections. I therefore avoided them.

In order to avoid confusion or contamination with ‘features’ from other Ethiopian codices or foreign traditions, I inductively approached from the already available manuscripts. First, I

⁶⁶ (Gumbert 2004, 517)

⁶⁷ Pankhurst, Richard (1980), ‘Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Manuscripts in Britain’, *Azania*, 15, 43–55; Pankhurst, Richard (1981), ‘Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Eighteenth Century Manuscripts in Britain’, *Azania*, 16, 131–150; Regemorter 1962,87

⁶⁸ Machado Pedro, 2011 “Awash in a Sea of Cloth, Gujarat Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300-1800”, in *The Spinning World, A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*, ed. By Giorgio Riello and Prasanna Parthasarathi (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 161-80 (p. 167).

⁶⁹ ‘The result is, that we know, and can find out, more about the Hebrew book than about any other group of manuscripts; you can ask SFARDA when and where a certain technique is found, and for a given manuscript it will tell you the time and place which are the most likely home’ (Gumbert 2004,513; Bausi, 2015,506 -531).

observed the Gondärian books and prepared the guideline based mainly from their observable features. I have also striven to be as descriptive as possible, because Gondärian manuscript features significantly understudied. I tried to make the guideline a comprehensive one as much as possible. In the guideline, general information, codicological information, preservation information, bibliographic information, and special notes about the manuscripts were indicated. It had 110 items in total.

This arrangement enables the researcher to acquaint with features better and hence guess the dates of the book. All they were found in five categorical sections arranged from external to internal book parts direction (refer the book parts in appendix Ib) consequently, "the number of paper form used depends on the number of book properties needed."⁷⁰ Another thing the researcher might need to see was just more Ethiopian manuscripts in general, those that might not be specifically Gondärian. The purpose was exactly to understand the place of the features I might have observed on the main corpus.

1. General information about the collection/ books

1.1 Collection:

1.1.1 I.D (code no).....

1.1.2 The church/monastery full name.....

1.1.3 Number of codices accessible.....

1.2 Types of book,

1.2.1. Codex

1.2.2 Scroll

⁷⁰ Dwight B. King, User Surveys, Libraries Ask, "Hey, How Am I Doing?", 97 Law Libr. J. 103 (2005). Available at, https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship/119[King 2005] p.108

1.2.3. Chain book/accordion

1.2.3.1 Typology (Subject matter?): Bible, liturgy, hagiography, theology, history, magic, music, homilies, rules and regulations (*underline the selected typology*)

1.2.3.2 Language type: Geez Amharic Both Other

1.2.3 Code Number:

- Ministry number: Federal.....Regional.....
- Internal museum number

1.2.4 Title (signature + number).....

1.2.5 Summary of the above with special features.....

.....

2. Codicological information: Structural Features

2.1 Raw material:

2.1.1.1 Container: (Mahdar-ጠቅላይ ጽሑፍ) Yes No Missing

2.1.1.2 Material type: Leather Metal Other.....

2.1.2 Fastenings. Material.....any traces of holes.....

2.1.3 Covers board made of: Leather Textile Metal Other.....

2.1.4 End bands: leather parchment textile other.....

2.1.5 Textile in lays: Cotton Silk other.....

2.1.6 Adhesive material.....

2.1.7 Parchment: Goat sheep Other.....

2.1.8 Inks: Black Red Other

2.1.9 Pigments: Animal Plants Minerals ... Other.....

2.1.10 Board type: Wood Leather Cardboard ther.....

2.1.1 Threads: Animal Vegetal Synthetic other.....

Summary of the above with special features

.....
.....

2.2 Design: Construction:

2.2.1 Cover Board decoration::

2.2.1.1 Tooling applied? Yes No Invisible

2.2.1.2 Where the tooling applied? Side Spine Turn – in cover edges

2.2.1.3 Back & front similar? Yes No

2.2.1.4 Number of frames:

2.2.1.5 Number of motifs:

2.2.1.5.1 Inside frames cross? Yes No

2.2.1.6. Cross type: Latin cross Equal armed cross Diamond shaped cross eclipse other

.....

2.2.2. Textile inlays (or of any other material): Yes No Missing

2.3.2.1. Types of design: strips flower colored blank local cotton

2.3.2.2. Kind of fabric: plain diagonal other

2.2.2.3. The devotion images posted on the inner sides: Yes No Missing

2.2.2.4. Curving on the wood boards? Yes No Unidentified

2.2.2.5. Treatment of the wooden boards: Yes No Unknown

If Yes, Waxed Polished

2.2.3 Provide characteristics descriptions too [Special Features]

.....

.....

2.3 Coverings

2.3.1 Measurements/ Extent:

2.3.1.1 Size in cm: Length Width..... Height (thickness).....

2.3.1.2 The size of the text block and the boards: Flush square under size other.....

2.3.2 Type of binding:

2. 3.2.1 Two wooden boards covered with: leather textile metal re-used leather

2.3.2.2 Leather Composition: Single composite two composite three

2.3.2.3 Leather cover: Full Quarter Missing

2.3.2.4 Colour: reddish brown red pink dark

2.3.2.5 Over back exist: Yes No unknown

2.3.3 The width of the turn-in:

2.3.3.1 Front board, Top.. Bottom..... Side.....From bonded.....

2.3.3.2 Back board, Top.. Bottom..... Side.....From bonded.....

2.3.4 The types of the turn-in:

2.2.4.1 Mitred: Joined Stitched butt mitre open mitre Other..... (See examples)

2.2.4.2 Over lapped: 'A' type 'B' type 'C' type [refer to models]

2.2.4.3 Shape of the turn-in: 'A' Trimmed 'B' Irregular 'C' irregular

2.4 Board attachment technique: Sewn board:

2.4.1 Shape of spine: Flat Convex Concave

2.4.2 Spine leather cover types: fold cut other..........

2.4.3 Row of running stitches on the back of spines and number.....

2.4.4 End band:

2.4.4.1 Head band: Yes No Missing

2.4.4.2 Tail band Yes No Missing

2.4.5 Types of end band: First type second type other

2.4.5.1 Last quires were ever used as pastedowns: Yes No Other.....

2.4.6 Spine-lining: Yes No Invisible Missed

2.4.6.1 Material: Leather parchment Textile Other.....

2.4.6.2 Turn to: Boards text block

2.4.6.3 Function: Protection Strength Aesthetic other.....

2.5 Types of Sewings:

2.5.1 Text body sewing: Link - stitched swings limp - stitches other.....

2.5.2. Number of sewing stations ? 2 3 4 6

2.5.3. Location of rackets/knotted ($\omega\Delta$).....

2.5.4 Stubs: Yes No Where..... Quire guards?.....

2.5.5 Tie down holes seen: Yes No Where.....

2.5.6 Wooden board shapes: Square Round Beveled other.....

2.5.7 Summary of the above with special features.....

2.6. Text blocks Organization Features:

2.6.1. Arrangements of bi folios:

2.6.1.1. Page flow: Continuous Discontinuous Other

2.6.2. Structure of the Quire: IV (8) V (10) Mixed Other.....

2.6.3 Number of quires in a codex.....

2.6.4. Quire signature: Yes No / blank

2.6.5. Quire signature type: Numerical Symbol Letter other.....

2.6.6. The position of the quire signatures: Top left Bottom left Middle Other.....

2.6.7 Number of total unruled flyleaves (geber-7 n c)

2.6.7.1 Full size under size extended same as text leaves

2.6.7.2 Where? Beginning End Both other place

2.6.7.3 Attachment techniques used: independently integrated other.....

2.6.8 Gregory's Rule: Yes No Unknown

2.6.10 Summary of the above with special features.....

2.7 Arrangements of Texts:

2.7.1 Number of volumes /Composite.....(one is my best choice: the first is the oldest)

By name: 1.....from quarry no.....to.....Total no.....

2..... from quarry no.....to.....Total no.....

3..... from quarry no.....to.....Total no.....

2.7.2 Introduction exists: Yes No Missing

2.7.2.1 Where? Incipit Desinit

2.7.2.2 Pen trails seenwhere?.....

2.7.3 Script Types , gwleh reqiq both Other.....

2.7.4 Illuminated Yes No Image type & no?.....

2.7.4.1 Pages. Left empty Added later other.....

2.7.5 Musical notation: Yes No in black red, in both here.....

2.7. 5.1 Marginal notes indicating readings: Yes No

2.7.6 Text Layout:

2.7.5.1 Number of Columns: One Two Three Four

2.7.5.2 The number of written lines per page Which Quire..... & Folio.....

2.7.5.3 Dimensions of written area in cm^2 , (Length..... X Width..... = cm^2)

- Which Quire.....& which folio.....?

2.7.6 The shape of the written area:

Rectangular (with the width being less than the height of the codex,

Square (the proportion width/height c.1.0);

Tall (the proportion width/height less than 0.5)

2.7.7 Pricking:

2.7.7.1 Pricking observed; Primary pricks (vertical pricks) Text pricks (horizontal pricks) Both

2.7.7.2 Shape of the holes: Circled triangle rectangular Irregular ther.....

2.7.8 Ruling type:

2.7.8.1 Hard-point ruling Ink ruling other type.....

2.7.8.2 Ruling side: Flash Hair Both

2.7.9 Summary of the above with special features.....

.....

3. Preservation Status information category

3.1 The Manuscript Current Condition,

Used, Yes No

Worn, Yes No

Damaged, Yes No

3.2 Damage caused by:

3.2.1 Past restoration works: Yes No Unknown

3.2.2 Bad storage: Yes No Unknown

3.2.3 Bad weather and humidity: Yes No Unknown

3.2.4 Rodents and Insects: Yes No Unknown

3.2.5 Accident: Yes No Unknown

3.2.6 Misuse: Yes No Unknown

3.3 The most affected parts of the binding:

Spine area End band Cover boards Sewing structures Other

3.4 Present Status: Bad, Fair Normal Fine, Excellent

Special cases

4. Bibliographic Information

4.1 The History of the book:

4.1.1 Name of owner: Current owner.....

4.1.2 Commissioner or donator: A King Noble Individual Group

4.1.3 Donator information:

4.1.3.1 Any other indication of possession;

A simple handwritten name

Stamps or seals, dedications

Statements of bequest

4.1.4 Age based on: Colophon (Composer date

4.1.4.1 Age—absolute (1650's...1800) years.....

4.1.4.2 Age relative (17th - 18th C) political Period.....

4.1.4.3 Age based on: names and events mentioned in the text:

4.1.4.4 Mentions of historical persons: -Kings Metropolitan Abune

4.1.5 Mentions in the relevant catalogues

4.1.5.1 Other secondary sources: Palaeography Marginalia

4.1.5.2 Mention of historic events

4.1.5.3 Ranges of Date of production

: 2nd quarter of 17thc 3rd ' ' ' ' th ' ' ' ' ' 18thc

2nd ' of 18thc 3rd ' ' ' ' 4th ' ' ' '

4.2 Place of original production: - Inside the host city inside Gondär/ local outside Gondär/ broad area

4.2.1 Workshop: Court Church Individual monastery her.....

4.2.2 Collection Context: Primary context Secondary context Tertiary context

4.2.3 Number of people involved in production::

One Two Three More Jnknown

5. Special notes about the manuscript book as a complete object

.....
.....
.....
.....

A database was built with 66 headings to describe each selected volume and record the technical components regarded as essential for this research. To allow for consistent and quick recording the headings dealing with distinct parts of the binding were subdivided into a list of check-boxes and open-ended⁷¹ questions and those with structured responses and for the quantitative and qualitative data. Structured type of questions included yes/no or true/false items, multiple choice, check off or ranking lists, semantic differential (excellent to poor) scales.

Because of the pioneering nature of the work and other external reasons related to the nature of the discipline and regions where the collections has been hosted, the objectivity of the selection has not far from biases. Still attempts were made to mitigate them. Nevertheless, I may claim important reliable evidence could be collected from luxurious looking, fine⁷² books (up market), based on the instrument and methods of data collections techniques and strategies that I supposed to work.

In the data collection, I recorded all material aspects into the guideline. Get all recording materials⁷³ ready. Receive a book; examine it for information indicating most marking features of Gondärian manuscripts. Sisay Sahalie,⁷⁴ a field assistant identified the texts. He also examined the manuscripts for written evidence of their provenance⁷⁵. Then I began to record every element on to the paper survey form prepared and printed out in paper prior to the date of the field. Since the paper form data items were arranged from books external to internal book parts from the work often preceded faster and precise. Sisay Sahalie, field assistant, had been telling me the measurements readings while I was recording on the paper form. He sometimes could see some particular features and again told me and I described it in the special notes section and open

⁷¹"Allow for some open-ended responses, but not too many, because the results are difficult to compile" King 2005,107.

⁷²The fine books commonly associated with royal courts, they contained pieces of clothes which gave the bindings additional beauty appearances [Pankhurst 1980,44]

⁷³Model references were used in the field survey; cross types, colour spectrums[chap.4.fig.4.23], turn in kinds, script minor features

⁷⁴'While Getatchew has tended to the matters of content and dating, I and my students have given our attention to matters of codicology and scribal practice...' Delamarter 2009,131; Ancel 2016.

⁷⁵(Scheper 2011, 52)

space in the form. All measurements in meters unit were provided in centimeters. To receive the next book I was wanted to give the former one to the bookkeeper back. In the process, I had got a number of books with no marks and asked to replace by any other. When I received a shipment of manuscripts, I and Sisay also sorted them and assigned each manuscript a number⁷⁶. One day or two or three days elapsed to complete the work on ‘all’⁷⁷ books in that particular collection.

Identification of raw materials were mainly done through observations. A manuscript was examined and all required specific characteristics were subsequently recorded in the chart. Simple optical techniques were used to examine the books material structures. Rake light and the use of a magnifying glass proved especially helpful for discerning the threads, textile weaving patterns, two-pieces technique etc.

At times, sketch drawing was used to show its minor details when photography of the codex was not allowed. For instance, board shapes, turn in folding angles, and spine cover leather at spine were drawing in field and with no scales. It was simply a sort of sketch to be re-drawn later properly with the aid of computer programs at home. As a part of the analysis, photographing⁷⁸ was also applied. It was important to show the current appearance and used to capture details of codicological feature. Taking pictures as Delamarter (2009) states was essential tool to produce a physical description and an architectural map of the codex. I made eight images of each book. The condition of manuscripts in storages and the buildings (inside and outside) was also captured.

After finishing recording of all data in to the chart, eight photos from different sides of the binding after putting signatures and paper colour scales were taken. Please note that all pictures that are used to illustrate the text in this thesis were photographed on the spot by I myself except those few from Ethio-SPaRe data base which has been duly acknowledged. When referred in the

⁷⁶The title (no+subject) given to the composite books is based on the first volume at the arrangement of the volume. The name given by the owners indicating the earliest volume the rest added later.

⁷⁷Bookkeeper often tended to hide the most rare books from us

⁷⁸For more detailed and techniques and procedures please refer to ‘Pictures taking’ (Witakowska 2015, 576-580).

text body only the first two would be used to distinguish the individual MS. These were taken from the book using the digital camera⁷⁹ with some extra images as required⁸⁰. Photographing⁸¹ had been made with 100% close-up and on florescent light or in day light outside the storage buildings to reduce darkness and the heat the codex was subjected to. If one aspect of the book feature had been used in the text to illustrate something the number indicated with signature formula. Naming⁸² of the manuscripts with codes made up of the name of the current owning institution, and serial number (ranges from 001 – 080) separated by slash and the subject matter of the book. The name of the institution should not be more than four characters (capital letter) and not less than three (Appendices II). Always I avoided incorrect exposure by taking meter reading before placing scale in the picture area; fine focus was achieved.

Please note that some pictures in the text were magnified twice by computer program called PAINTS. During the field works, I had encountered with three types of institutions that they have different responses on the question of photography. No photo allowed at all (Manbärə Minəgist Mādhané ‘Alām), only two photos for each codex allowed (Dābrā Mäg^wina) the rest have no restriction they set and allowed us to take 8-10 photos without restrictions. Photos from digital codices download from Ethio-SPaRs⁸³ database were properly acknowledged. Not all institutions had opposed shooting of their storage buildings. All photos took by the author himself.

⁷⁹Please use very modern camera to get the quality pictures

⁸⁰Pickwood, Nicholas (2004) The condition survey of the manuscripts in the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, *The Paper Conservator*, volume 28 2004 P.61 <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcon19> Pictures taking in three situations please see also(Witakowska2015, 576-580)

⁸¹I tried to get trained fundamental photographic techniques at NALE experts before field works

⁸² ‘The name of the library or institution housing the manuscript, and its call mark in that collection. Manuscripts kept in large collections are referred only by their place-name without the name of the library, their abbreviations as employed in the manuscript references’ (Beit-Ari’e 2019, 20).

⁸³Professor Nosnitsin helped me a lot in this regards.

3.4 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the two methods used for data analysis are discussed. Codicology is concerned Gumbert (2004, 506) with the handwritten book as a material object and a craftsman's product. We have "descriptive codicology" and "comparative codicology," and various grades, which involve various "scales." Nevertheless, I now study only the "structure of the codex." Thus, the methods used in the descriptive codicology are presented below.

3.4.1 Descriptive Codicology

The data gathered through the developed guideline form were organized to create three different stuff. The first one, individual data elements were transferred into a custom-designed relational database. Systematic manoeuvring of the database correlated the different structural binding features; I then identify both generalized trends and marked as 'X' (characteristic of all or almost all of the members of a sample) and specific only to some marked as 'Y' (characteristic of only one member of a sample) as regional/'Gondärian' features in chapter four. The second product of the survey was a detail analysis of individual binding material and technical elements described in prose⁸⁴ in chapter five. In addition, create a corpus of coherent group based on codicological features for the first time.

When a manuscript is locally re-sewn and provided with no new binding features, the information about techniques and use of material is still relevant. Of course, for the primary objective of this research, the information found in the colophon was useful. Through the re-sewn is evidently produced in a different period, and possibly in a same region. However, information provided by such bindings was recorded and included in the general results on the use of the different techniques and materials. In such cases, conclusions have been drawn with regard to the connection between origin and books features.

⁸⁴Anderson Priscilla 1999 'Fifteenth-Century Bookbinding Structure in Italy and the Netherlands, A Survey of Manuscripts and Printed Books' The American Institute for Conservation Volume 17, pp.3 -4

The third product was associating elements to their specific single origin (in the close vicinity of the city of Gondar) within the region of Gondar. For example, the variable of "type of cross" was compared with the variable of "period of the text." The resulting correlation revealed that almost all of the books with Latin cross were produced in local, and almost all of those 'others' and elapsed circles correlated with the outside local in chapter six. The whole body of data was compiled and related through this manner.

The descriptive data were collected on the manuscript's aspects at a time. This was done by employing the developed guideline form and by supplementing with illustrative terms, photos, and sketch drawings. In the process of collecting and analysing data, almost all book elements were collected except excluded few: Too detail and subjective data. Since the aim was to obtain complete and accurate information in the physical books under study, the researcher should generate and analyze relevant data successfully using descriptive analysis methods.

3.4.2 Comparison: Descriptive Analysis

The way data were collected and analyzed determines the success of any scientific inquiry. Since investigation of codicological aspects of the book culture is complex, the methodological approaches cannot be linear. At times, they overlap and double back. After finishing all these processes, I entered the collected data into the database for the descriptive analysis /statistics processing. The data entry works were done soon after the return from the "field." Data entry at home (see the three - quantitative, qualitative and the two at a time examples of data entry at appendix – IV).

Again, my friends from the IT department of the University of Gondär were assisting me where I needed clarifications on the advantages of selecting one way or another. There is a wide variety of spreadsheet, database, and statistical software available for data entry and analysis. Spreadsheets such as Lotus 123, Excel, and Quatro Pro; database packages such as Dbase, Foxpro, and Paradox enabled computer analysis and reporting. Finally, I succeed to choose two computer software programs for my purposes; Open Code was appropriate only for qualitative data analysis and Excel for both qualitative and quantitative data. These two Software programs were time saving and efficient for further analysis of the data.

The 80 manuscripts in the project's corpus, which means that a substantial amount of data related to their physical features, were entered into a database and to be queried for patterns later. Subsequently, the database was cross-searched and mined for information⁸⁵. A spreadsheet containing 66 sub-groups with 280 cells of elements were analyzed to get the predominant feature across all categories. Every data collected soon entered in to a computerized database after every field trip, our ability in identifying Gondärian features from others has been grown. So, chart attributes were thoroughly modified.

Two computer software programmes and manual methods were used to analyze data: Open Code⁸⁶ for qualitative data and Excel for quantitative data. Using stiff computational methods, of course internal within the sample and with others that passed in my hands (Sergew at least 10,000 MSS passed in his hands). I managed to use appropriate terms⁸⁷, photos, and measurement values. Moreover, in order to make an identification of the innovations, trace their temporal and regional origins, and establish when the new format became the received pattern, the images and sketch drawings manuscript description that accompanies each entry were sufficient to do the job.

The data analysis did aim for searching the typical codicological feature of Gondärian manuscripts in the period 1650 -1800. Rather, it was to elaborate the evolvement in the course of the indicated time and to show tangible evidences about the advanced level of manuscript culture of material aspects in the period and the location identified as Gondärian. Thus, data collection and analysis have been done systematically to obtain the most possible codicological data from the purposefully selected manuscripts' material aspects. Consequently, in this study, the units of

⁸⁵ Relational database may be regarded as superior in its derivability and hyperlinked capacity. Gippert 2015, 25.

⁸⁶ Computer software called 'open code' had a great help to do this job. Computer software called 'open code' had a great help to do this job. Open Code 4.0 is a tool for coding qualitative data generated from text information such as interviews, observations or field notes

⁸⁷ Scheper, Catharina Helena (Karin) 2014, *The Islamic Bookbinding Tradition. A Book Archaeological* at appendix I, pp. 229 -238 ; Mersha Alehegne, "Towards a Glossary of Ethiopian Manuscript Culture and Practice", *Aethiopia, International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 14 (2011), 145-62 (p. 146). see Faqāda Šellāsē Tafarrā 2010, 305-320; Roberts Matt T. and Etherington Don 1982 *Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books, a Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology* Washington, library of congress, 1982

analysis were manuscripts' material aspects. As such, all recorded information on to the survey forms and field notebooks now transferred to the database where all elements were systematically manipulated and the distinguishing characteristics of the elements of the sample would be described and analyzed towards answering the research questions.

Before going to the actual analysis, I checked the data for completeness, missing values, coverage, representative of target number of books, adequacy of the size were done. After completing the checkups of three primary object of further analysis, the elements, the manuscripts, the compared aspects such as periods, places, and commissioners were identified. With regard to the period, Gondärian cultural period, 1650 -1800 was divided into three sub periods. The first period was 1650-1721, the second period was 1721-1769, and the final third period was 1769-1800.

Types of historic owners were institutions such as royal churches and monasteries, and individuals. Commissioners included the royalty, nobles, and wealthy individuals. In the owners' category, seven religious institutions (i.e. five royal churches and two monasteries), two secular institutions, and two individuals were identified. In terms of typology, two general categories, local production, and translations were formed. These categories had sub-categories in them. Twenty-eight MSS translations from foreign languages such as the Bible, Apocryphal, the Gospel were formed. Under local production category, history, music, homiletic, hagiographic, liturgical etc. 52 MSS were categorized. In all these categories, the assumed place of production was within Gondär region and the comparable aspects were Gondärian manuscripts. And the total corpus of 80 mss is therefore representative of a regional codicology which is very essential before that of a social codicology.

In order to reach that aims each book was catalogued in terms of nearly one hundred and ten questions in computerized format and the results were turned into graphs for percentage interpretation. In addition, every book was recorded on a detailed survey form, supported by photographs, drawings, and diagrams to provide as full a set of details as possible. Utilizing a microcomputer with a powerful spreadsheet programme, the thoroughly done examination of the selected eighty manuscripts explored all aspects of Gondärian binding as an object.

With regard to method of data interpretation, this study has adopted the trend in cultural semiotics following Geertz's (1973) powerful concept of "thick description." In fact, unlike ethnographic description, the inherent nature of interpretations has been addressed. Subjectivity, reflections, and contextual sensitivity have been used as thematic categories for the data interpretations. Moreover, description of the codicological features was substantiated by how material philology has socio-cultural significance if it is further developed. More importantly, the summarized presentation through the computed descriptive statistics can make the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts more digestible by subsequent users. Hence, the properly done interpretation of descriptive statistics not only would deepen readers' knowledge but also would initiate them for a concrete realization of cultural renaissances. In the following chapter, presentation of data about the descriptive codicology is done.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY RESULTS

In this chapter, I have presented data on codicological criteria of Gondärian manuscripts as regional sub type, some quantitative data about the origins of the manuscripts and their historic context. Besides, simple statistical data on the material and structural make up of a codex and causes of damage and repairs of the sample would be presented.

4.1 The Diversity within Sample Manuscripts

The sample of 80 manuscripts was examined during the field seasons of 2015 -2017 in ten collections located in the broad area of Gondär. The appropriateness of the selection criteria and the degree of representation of the collections and the sample books had been detailed in the methodology part of the thesis (chapter three). This chapter - four gives shreds of evidence from both text block and material aspects of sample books which 'recite' the Gondärian origin of the crafts together. The recording works on the paper survey form have been pressed forward from external to internal book parts. Now the presentation of data would be done from the reverse direction, from internal (textual) to external (material) aspects of the book.

In this chapter, among others, material and structural features of the Gondärian manuscripts provide us only little help to identify the Gondärian books from the collections surveyed in the broad area of Gondär. Besides, while I was recognizing that the attempt would bear few desired results. I at the end had been convinced that it needed to be supplemented by text block information. In order to generally perceive the 'Gondärian' criteria from the 'Ethiopian' at ease both approaches seem important as it enable us making up the sample of 80 books.

In fact, the size and diversity of the samples did not by any means offer an accurate reflection of the whole (780MSS) accessed and could hardly be used to project results valid for all Gondärian Manuscripts. Nevertheless, none of these collections represented the whole population books produced in 150 years (1650 -1800). Hence, the results of the thesis needed not to be generalized to all books, but only for books surveyed. Still, this study, assist in the form of references points to the identification of books with similar origin. Nevertheless, the 'Gondärian' signifies here not simply place and time but it involves its own meaning determined by historic functions it

supposed to meet. The sample coded individually from QUS – 001 up to CAT⁸⁸ - 080. For a more highly structured description of the contents, especially with regard to the manuscripts of Mäqədäla collection, I must refer to Wright catalogue: Wright (1877) Catalogue of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the Year 1847 London: British Museum.

4.1.1 Codicological Properties shared by all members the sample

The quantitative data of eighty Gondärian books from the city and around were investigated. Findings indicate common use of some features, which are also quite common to almost all the Ethiopian codex. Such as, all-along sewing, tied-down end bands, link stitched sewing of even number sewing stations and end band with stripes of braided leather. Parchments, wooden boards, Gregorian rules in arranging text blocks must be mentioned. The board attachment is always and is only based upon the sewing.

The features common to the entire samples were, no specimen having symbolic quire sign, but all are numeric; no last leaf was used as a pest down; no pen trails; no waste parchments was used for flyleaves; no paper leaves was used as text block and cardboard as cover board. Also, no specimen has got central panel without cross and bands tooled only by simple fillet lines as indicated in Szirmai 1999, 48. Both sides of the cover leather of all books have been of tooled with similar in motifs, no anyone with different motifs. Moreover, no devotional images posted at central inner boards, No 1.5 number of sewing station; No oblong book format; No magical typology and no Amharic language was used for writing the main contents except later added texts on flyleaves. No ink ruling was executed but all were hard ruling techniques. No four or more number of text column, no any page opening or catch words devise used, and finally ornamentation of (text) by *Harag* has been found rare.

⁸⁸Catalogue manuscripts[five] were taken from Wright, W (1877) Cataloguing of Mäqədäla Collection were more than 75% incomplete and hence unless very relevant to use they were intentionally excluded from comparative analysis.

4.1.2 Features Becoming the Centre of Differences and creating groups of manuscripts

Number of frames, types of crosses, colour of the cover leather boards, book size, spine shape, types of end bands, the use of spine lining parchment, kinds of the spine folds for sewing, size of turn in, textile design selection, turn -in types at binding sides, board edge shapes, number of pairs of sewing station in a volume (not necessary in a book), structure of quires in a book, number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book), flyleaves sub-patterns, shape of book format ratio, dimension of written area, are features of the centre of differences among in the sample. In our study of the material aspects of individual manuscript in the sample, I was able to identify eighteen varieties altogether. Text block, 5; Binding, 5; covering, 4; Decorating, 4 these material and structural components would be subjected to further scrutiny in chapter five.

4.1.3 Features Shared by Less than Three Books

Laminated container, end band braided leather colours, three layers of spine lining (MED – 024), quire structure VI (12) ATMI – 026; exceptionally very large turn-ins. 13-16cm (DBS - 011), leather board QUS - 002 (Nosnitsin 2014, 82 the ‘second type’), One unique textile inlays⁸⁹ two different textiles joined to for one inlays on only the lower board MED - 024. The two boards covered with different textile inlays MNAD-050⁹⁰. Instead of textile inlays leather applied on the place QUS – 005, opening pages marks (Elebat) in every chapter DBS – 009, Häräg on the 1st page MED – 025, location of claps; front cover MNDA – 049, Guards in side every quire (DBS - 017), cotton spine lining –MED – 013, Pen-trials on the last recto fly leaves MNDA – 042 , bottom right quire signature position BDGE-066; DBS-062, page number given page by page QUS- 004, decorated quire sign MED -024, quire sign executed from last to front direction MED – 020, discontinuous page signs (QUS – 008, MOGI 031, cross tooled on the quarter covers MNDA-044, spine lining extension was not turned to the last fly leave quire but pasted on the inner side of the boards (MED – 014).

⁸⁹The fine books commonly associated with royal courts, they contained pieces of clothes which gave the bindings additional beauty appearances [Pankhurst 1980,44]

⁹⁰See also Pankhurst, Richard (1980), ‘Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts in Britain’, *Azania*, 15, 47–48

The survey results above enabled me to determine the possible ranges of book structural varieties. Certainly, many more anomalies had characterized some of the codices. A greater extent of diversity of elements have been found in a single book level. The database analysis has also demonstrated that level of richness of variety⁹¹ of elements manifested in the sample were remarkably large. Some elements are very rarely seen in most Ethiopian codices but abundant in sample.

To determine the natures of essential features and books' internal connections towards creating unified corpus I need to make further scrutiny over those books. A holistic-approach appears to have been essential to get the maximum out of all aspects of construction techniques employed in that particular crafts. The consistent variations of elements contained in the books might be associated with specific subgroups of books. It had also some implications for their single origin.

One can perhaps better explain as the Gondärian manuscripts have been admired already for their script and miniatures. Gondärian manuscripts might also accord with higher values of material aspects. More specifically, it is one of the objectives of the study to determine the criteria of Gondärian manuscripts, instead of choosing "Gondärian like" or 'Ethiopian like' manuscripts before doing any analysis. I therefore should answer questions like; what were theses predominant features? Were these features can create a particular corpus different from others in the sample? What the preliminary results of codicological data analysis say about the existence of regional tradition known as the 'Gondärian'? To attempt these questions, some sort of procedures⁹² was applied. Please follow the next sup topic.

⁹¹Nosnitsin, Denis "Lesser-Known Features of the Ethiopian Codex", in E. Ficquet, Ahmed Hassen, T. Osmond, "Movements in Ethiopia, Ethiopia in Movement. Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies", Paris: CFEE - AAU - Tsehai Publisher, vol. 1, pp. 63-78, to may be printed in 2016. p. 88 Textual dynamism is also possible in structural features of the books. 'many bindings are composite structures and contain elements introduced (sometimes in more than one stage) after the codex was manufactured'

⁹² Scheper 2011, 2014; Pankhurst 1984; and Anderson Priscilla 'Fifteenth-Century Bookbinding Structure in Italy and the Netherlands: A Survey of Manuscripts and Printed Books' The American Institute for Conservation Volume 17, 1999)

4.2 Codicological Criteria of Gondärian manuscripts

To establish whether there appeared to be a regional bookbinding tradition, the physical aspects of the manuscripts were examined and related to the origin of the text blocks. The comparison could be made at the hand of examples from the same collection that appeared to have been produced in the broader region of Gondär during the Gondärian 1650 -1800, called as the ‘Gondärian’ book tradition. In this case certainly dated as model books were identified for special analysis. These manuscripts, therefore, play an essential role in establishing the comparisons⁹³ required for Codicology⁹⁴ to progress. However, it does not look forward to detail data comparisons using rich and detail records of huge numbers.

In total, the data analysis provided background information to the thesis amounting to more than 528 cells of information about the structures of the books studied. These can be matched or compared cell by cell to provide comparative data between different books and groups of books. Systematic manipulation of the database correlated the different structural features, identifying those that are generally characteristic of only one member of a sample or creating at least one homogenous corpus. To this end, I might not be wrong to consider the codices as-objects of use, where the procedural aspects of the bookmaking techniques had no longer existed

4.2.1 Identifying the first 32MSS from text block evidences

.In order to localize manuscripts belonging to the Gondärian, I need to carry out three steps. First, I have to find written evidence that might specify the date of production of books in the sample. After I completed categorizing for dates of manuscripts, I would be describing the material aspects of dated 32 manuscripts as whole. Third step was to compare the dated

⁹³Method of development of categories of analysis A sort of approach might be learned from Scheper 2011, 2014; Pankhurst 1984. Because, his corpus was the Mäqədäla collection and they were originated from the churches of Gondär. (Pankhurst 1984, 219) and Ancel & Nosnitsin (2014), ‘On the History of the Library of Maqdala: New Findings’ *Aethiopica* 17 *International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies* UniversitÄt Hamburg.pp.91 - 93

⁹⁴ Deroche, Francois 2006, *Islamic Codicology; an Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script*. London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, p.16 -17; Scheper 2011, 2014.; Uhlig 1990 ‘Introduction to Ethiopian Paleography’ *Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian studies*. A.A.U. EEs

manuscripts physical characteristics to those their date of production have not yet known. However, because the absence of written dates in the text block of most of the sample, I cannot date all of them precisely. Only about one-third of the manuscripts (32 MSS) presented in this thesis were securely dated. These 32 manuscripts may provide a chronological framework in which to place the remaining literarily undated 48 MSS to their appropriate date of production.

Within the samples of eighty manuscripts, (see the lists of books selected at appendix II) the two different groups of manuscripts recognized. The first group of 32MSS had evidence of dates of their production could be identified⁹⁵ and the second group of manuscripts had no written evidence either in their colophon or in the text blocks were found: I name them as ‘certainly dated’ MSS and rest 48MSS as ‘attributed’ manuscripts respectively. Even in the former group, I have identified two kinds of dates: Composer dates⁹⁶ (Fig 4.1) that put the precise date of the work finished in the colophon. The second one is historical icon dates (Fig 4.2) that mentioning of well-known names in the text for instance, kings, metropolitan, or holly man often written with red colour in the main text body.



Fig. 4.1 QUS – 007 Composer date mentioned in the text

⁹⁵ see also Pankhurst, Richard (1980), ‘Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts in Britain’, *Azania*, 15, 47–48

⁹⁶ He usually included the name (baptism name) of the sponsor in the colophon if originally written.

In the above figure, 4.1 dates of origin possibly the manuscript was presented on the indicated date 7275 since the creation date. Moreover, the name of the emperor Iyasu I [1683 -1706], the son of emperor Yohannes [1667 – 1682], is mentioned.

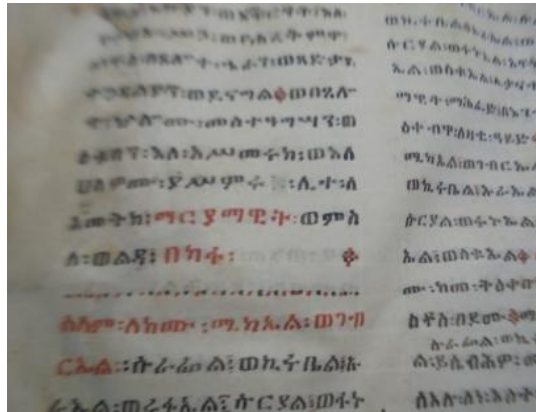


Fig 4.2 MNDA-O54 Historical Icon dates - Mentions Emperor Bäckkafa 1721 -1730

The above figure 4.2 the text in the manuscript also mentions emperor Bäckkafa's mother, Mariamawit. To involve members of his family in the donation, the owner was willing the mention of the names of the owner's relatives here. This permitted the reader to identify the owner and his social status in the local community accurately. In Ethiopian manuscripts, it was a frequent practice (Ancel 2016, 280).

Historical icon dates which mentions some of Gondärian kings and few nobles; Fasiledas [1632 - 1667], Yohannes I [1667 – 1682], Iyasu I [1683 -1706]–(Dawit, 1716 -1721) Bäckkafa [1721 – 1730], Iyasu II [1730 -1755], Iyoas [1755 –1769 and Takle Giyorigs 1777 – 1784; only one book (DBS – 017 found). Similarly, clergies may donate manuscripts to royal churches. As shown in the figure below, 4.3 the manuscript was given from a bishop who might originate from 'Tilätilya' Ge'ez term for Italy.⁹⁷

⁹⁷'Teliteleya', it is Geez for "Italy"; the text is a known Miracle of Mary linked to that country (in many collections it is just the first one)

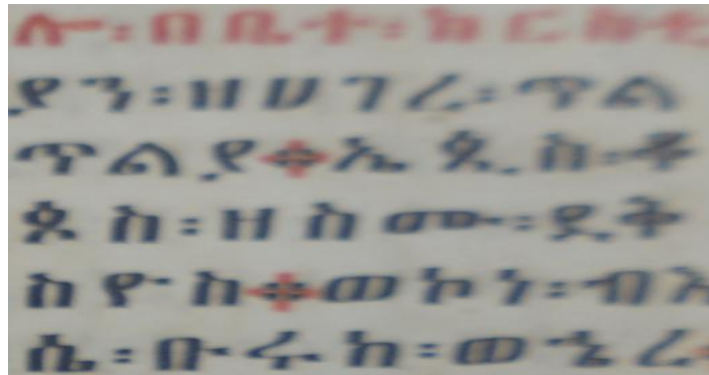


Fig 4.3 MNDA-051 Gift from a Bishop in Tilatilaya (Italy)

From the first certainly dated category of 32 manuscripts, 4 manuscripts were believed to be produced in the period 1810 and after, which falls also within the ‘cultural’ period of the Gondärian. However, 28 manuscripts offer dates based on the data on the textual records of books, eight Gondärian royalties were mentioned and that might roughly define the time⁹⁸ boundary from the 1650s only up to 1784. The indicated period has been also known as the ‘Political’ period of the Gondärian history.

Both ‘cultural’ (1784 -1810 and after) and ‘political’ (1650 -1784) periods acquired from 32 certainly dated books cover all along historically marked as Gondärian period (1636 -1855) in the broader Ethiopian history. This time on I call this period as the ‘Gondärian.’ Based on frequency of books –to- periods correlation, the Gondärian might be further classified in to three sub periods; the ‘first period’ 1650-1721- 17MSS, the ‘second period’⁹⁹ – 1721-1769 -11MSS, the ‘third period’ – 1769-1800 -4MSS.

In the last sub- topic, (Table 4.4) I have already created two different groups of manuscripts based on production dates of manuscripts from their text blocks. I clustered them further into two categories: Both first and second periods to be assigned as ‘Political’ period [28MSS] and the the

⁹⁸“The oldest among them Dr. Wright finds to be of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the great bulk of the collection belongs to the seventeenth and eighteenth, and some were written during the present century, even in the reign of the late King Theodore’ Pankhurst [Rita] 1973, 41.

⁹⁹ Three manuscripts were left unrecorded in the field survey form.

third period alone as 'Cultural' period [4MSS] of the Gondärian. These two sets, marked 'PG' for Political Gondärian and 'CG' for Cultural Gondärian, formed the basis of our comparative study.

Table 4.1 Manuscripts origin in two categories of the Gondärian

Category	Books' signature
'P' political period Dated - 28 Manuscripts	DBS – 014 , MED – 018, MED – 019, MOGI – 031, MOGI – 033, MOGI – 035, , MOGI – 038, MOGI – 040, MOGI – 037,MNDA – 041 , MNDA – 051, MNDA – 053,, BDGE – 063, ORG - 073 , QUS - 005,,MNDA – 054,MNDA – 052, MNDA – 048,MNDA – 047,MNDA – 046, MNDA – 042, MED – 023, DBS – 012,QUS - 002 ¹⁰⁰ ,QUS – 001, MNDA – 050 ¹⁰¹ , CAT- 078
C' cultural period 4 MSS	DBS - 017, ATMI - 028, INDI – 060, ORG -075)

For the sake of comparison, Table 4.1 above indicates the origins of the manuscripts in the two categories of periods. The data in this table show that Gondärian manuscripts can be assigned fewer than two periods: the political period and the cultural period. However Scheper 2014, did not agree on this line of localizing methods and considered it as "Ideal."¹⁰² She continued to

¹⁰⁰The binding was not covered with wooden boards thus excluded from the comparative study totally.

¹⁰¹King Iyoas 1755 -1769 was mentioned in the marginalia / historical notes may be written later as it exhibits different hand.

¹⁰²"The political and cultural periods have provided useful anchors for classifying the bindings on a stylistic level, These labels, based on historical periods or dynasties, are therefore not suitable as a basis for a structural typology. But, though these categories work as an art-historical criterion, for structural features they are not useful"(Scheper 2014,213 -214).

suggest that rather than trying to fit a manuscript and its binding into one ‘period or local’ category, the diverse aspects need to be described individually and specifically.

I may argue that the Ethiopian context was separately seen from Islamic as the books and their production appeared to be connected to the court tradition¹⁰³ and political¹⁰⁴ time frame based classification would be possible and supposed to work. Its rise, growth, and decline in a greater extent had been related with ‘political’¹⁰⁵ than ‘merely’ cultural. I say so because most of books should have been sponsored by political elites (appendix – Va) and most royal churches were built by kings. This implies that books available in those churches and their interrelations¹⁰⁶ (books historic owners) should be viewed as tool used to pursue people towards loyalty-motivated objectives. It has already become apparent that the criteria used to select the collections and the criteria used to select the books in the collections were probably appropriate.

4.2.2 Codicological Properties shared by 32 members of the Sample

All physical elements of the dated 32 manuscripts of two categories would be examined, recorded, and described, although no chemical analysis was carried out. Because what physical elements could turn out to be characteristic of these manuscripts’ origin was not yet known. Thus, I would be able to recognize those manuscripts with their particular features shared in common respective of their own category.

The parchments quality and kind of colour was examined to ascertain whether the fibres’ were the fine-grained smooth cloudy creamy grain that varies in intensity across the surface and the binders’ holes were noted. Again, the quality and colour of cover leather, rare textile inlays, and

¹⁰³Gatachew Haile. (2010) ‘Ethiopian Manuscripts’ in *Lucy's Legacy: The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia*. Houston Museum of Natural Science; Sergew Hable Selassie, 1981, *Bookmaking in Ethiopia*, Leiden Karsten Drukkers,

¹⁰⁴ ‘The investigation of the provenance of manuscripts touches upon issues concerning the political history of Ethiopia’ (Stéphane 2016, 297).

¹⁰⁵ ‘Political’ power here denoted (sələtan) of kings and stability of the state and its ideologies.

¹⁰⁶ ‘During the same period, an American scholar, Marilyn Heldman, initiated new studies on the relationships between patronage, spirituality, and artistic creation’ (Claire 2009, 12).

their application techniques, decorative patterns all were examined and recorded. Spine tooling techniques and (fillet) turn in tools, complexity of the blind tooling levels on framing and ornamenting elements in the central panel including the cross types etc were also described. Regarding the format of the book size, dimension of the written area, had been documented well. The nature of covering schemes of full board covers¹⁰⁷ and techniques of coverings, turn-ins corners (both joined and stitched) precisions and covering the spine area, width of turn-ins (trimmed edges), nature of quire organizations, quire signature locations, flyleaves construction methods at both sides, number of works in a volume at a time were described.

The material used for spine lining the text block spine and its way of the application was recorded, whether the spine lining had been made for text block integrity. Then the covering material and the material used for the boards with shaping techniques involved, the way the covering material was applied and the method used to finish the head and tail ends of the spine and the spine shape. The design and material used for the textile inlays were recorded, as well as the bindings' format, the sewing structures and board attachments methods and most importantly, any trace of former sewing or repairing of the current binding. Finally, any peculiarity or remarkable components were documented. I actually not indented to consider as anomalies but as variety in the tradition (see data collection form).

4.2.3 Features shared by two categories of 32 manuscripts

The data about materials and structural features were processed in a spreadsheet. I found physical characteristics that led to a preliminary subdivision into two separate sets of manuscripts, one with a presumed 'Cultural' Gondärian origin, the second one showing evidence of 'Political' Gondärian origin. The results were soon compared with the particulars obtained by the examination of manuscripts' content to get short-term division into two sets (for the two periods). Therefore, the three manuscripts from Cultural Gondärian and twenty-six manuscripts from Political Gondärian appear to have retained their original bindings. Unfortunately, some manuscripts were excluded from the comparative study (MED – 019) and (CAT - 078*, CAT -

¹⁰⁷Quarter cover might be applied from only conservation point of view (Sergew Hable Selassie 1981, 25)

079)* respectively; one manuscript from CG and two manuscripts from PG, due to they no longer had their original bindings.

Three manuscripts produced in Cultural Gondärian have showed no specific features consistently. These are, white and yellow colour parchment, standard cover leather, and absence of textile¹⁰⁸ inlays, multiple and single works at the one time, organized with regular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book), odd and inserted fly leaves at both side, quarter cover boards and full, overlapped and joined turn- in corners, elongated format, decorated by one fold motifs and simple frames number. The total of eleven material and structural features identified which possibly reflect generally un unified group of books. They at least could not have three features shared in common. Hence, they might have multiple place of origin within the region. However, they remained ‘Gondärian’ by time.

Characteristic of all the 26 remaining manuscripts created in political Gondärian are; white parchments, quality looking full wooden board cover leather, application of textile inlays, single work at the one time, regular quire structure¹⁰⁹, organized with a regular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book), and original flyleaves at both sides were observed. Moreover, a mitred/joined turns -in corners, rectangular or square book format, decorated by four and more motifs, and four and more frame number. The total of eleven material and structural features identified which possibly reflect generally the major features of books that could suggest their single origin. Yes, the patterns represent "high criteria of fabrication," and were obviously intended for high society, but they still might show certain patterns consistently, that in a different region might be different (Tigray, for instance).

4.2.4 Comparison to the 48MSS

The next research task is concerning the remaining forty-eight (48) manuscripts that did not contain convincing evidence in the text block about their date of manufacture, in either the colophon or elsewhere in the text block.

¹⁰⁸s. Commonly the bindings with quarter covers would not have textile inlays

¹⁰⁹, very irregular in Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski Technological aspects of the monastic manuscript collection on May Wäyini, Ethiopia, 2015 pp.110 - 113

In the choice of these 48 manuscripts, as it had already been indicated in chapter three, I can stress various aspects: falling within the period with Gwelh script, very probable geographical origin from the Gondar area, accessibility, and state of preservation (the last two not insignificant). In addition, obviously I could not use in the study all books that came into my hands, which would be impossible. I think it is not incorrect to argue that clear codicological patterns could be first discovered only in the selected group, but I had in my hands many more, 780 MSS. The necessity of having dated manuscripts for establishing a codicological analysis is of course a desideratum and has been many times discussed in the scientific literature.

The notion of "Gondärian book culture/manuscripts" in the literature predominantly leads us to the high quality manuscript production, and I wanted to study these books. The description and evaluation of the entire book culture of Gondar (which must be much more complex and larger in terms of quantity) remains a task for the future, and is just impossible at this stage and for a PhD project.

I then analyzed them because of their physical aspects alone; with no trouble the observable characteristic components of the sets 'PG' and 'CG' served as orientation. Thirty-five of them showed all the characteristics of the previously identified political Gondärian bindings and were categorized as 'PG₂'. The other nine shared many characteristics with the established Cultural Gondärian category and they were marked 'CG₂'.

Accordingly, two big categories remained (Table 4.2). The first, with 61 manuscripts from the categories 'PG₂', contained manuscripts that I believed to be internally related than the other group and might indicate its single origin in the region of Gondar, which is marked by the 'Related Majority'. No specific workshop or scriptoria, but there might be multiple as scribes coming from outside the city of Gondar. As well, written testimonies by travellers (such as Antoine d'Abbadie in the preface of his Catalogue, 1859) show that the production of MSS was quite abundant and not limited to very few workshops. The second, with 12 manuscripts from categories 'CG₂', consisted of manuscripts to which I attributed it as the 'Anomalies' it originated from other than single area in the broad area of Gondärian kingdom it might be from many places within the region or beyond.

The distinctive features of the codices in the anomalies group are inconsistent. A great variety of structural forms for a single feature appears not only from one manuscript to the other, but also within a single manuscript. We must conclude that features and traits of codices of the Anomalies group should be regarded as tendencies rather than distinct category. Contrary to this, and as shown in the following table, one related majority corpus has been created based on codicological features. Yet, both categories belong to the Gondärian, which is evidently characterized by unity in diversity representing regional codicology.

Table 4.2 presenting the Gondärian manuscripts indicating their origin for both categories

Two categories	Four categories	Books signature
The 'Related Majority' group	'PG'	26 Manuscripts: DBS – 014 , MED – 018, MED – 019, MOGI – 031, MOGI – 033, MOGI – 035, MOGI – 038, MOGI – 040, MNDA – 041 , MNDA – 051, MNDA – 053, MNDA – 059, BDGE – 063, ORG - 073 , QUS - 005,MNDA – 054,MNDA – 052, MNDA – 048,MNDA – 047,MNDA – 046, MNDA – 042, MED – 023,DBS – 013,DBS – 012,QUS - 002 ^{110*} ,QUS – 001, MNDA – 050 ¹¹¹
	'PG ₂ '	35 Manuscripts: MNDA - 057, MNDA - 055 MNDA – 056, MNDA – 043, MNDA -050, MOGI – 034, BDGE – 068, BDGE – 064, BDGE – 065, BDGE - 066, BDGE - 067, DBS - 062, QUS - 006 ,QUS - 007,QUS - 008,DBS - 009,DBS - 010,DBS - 011,DBS - 015,DBS - 016,DBS - 017,MED - 020,MED - 021,MED - 022,MED -024,MED – 025, QUS – 004, DBS - 062, ORG – 074*,

¹¹⁰The binding was not covered with wooden boards thus excluded from the comparative study totally.

¹¹¹King Iyoas was mentioned in the marginalia / historical notes later written by a different hand

		ORG - 075 CAT - 078*, CAT - 079*.
The 'Anomalies' group	'CG'	3 Manuscripts: DBS – 017*, ATMI - 028, INDI – 060, ORG - 075
	'CG ₂ '	9 Manuscripts: ATMI – 026, DBS - 009, MED - 025, MED - 024, ORG - 071, MNDA – 044, MED – 019, ATMI - 029, CAT - 076* , CAT - 077* , CAT - 080*, QUS - 003
		MS. numbers marked * were excluded from the sample because of their rebinding and incomplete records.

The table 4.2 above indicated that within this sample 61 Manuscripts, more than 76%, and the large majority related consistently. The minority 12 manuscripts 15.2% were believed to be anomalies. This would imply that the needs of the reading community in that specific locality were largely fulfilled by local bookmakers resided probably in the region of Gondar.

Please note that the “anomalies” books are different in some features, are assumed to be produced somewhere that I cannot indicate their precise point of places geographically at least in this study. They might be in broad area of Gondar [DBS -017] or outside of it [MOGI -037] Sewakin. Yet the raw material, scripts and few structural features resemble the ‘related majority’ corpus indicates that they might be produced in the same Gondärian period in which the book tradition has been active in the regions as far as north western parts of the country. Within the region, they might be consistently sharing some features with other group that I do not know them yet.

In addition, they might be modified later in the Gondärian style in one of the centers of Gondar region. Besides, they were crafted by individual binder and might be commissioned by ordinary

individuals or sponsored by royalty,¹¹² and nobles but rebound later by untrained binder. Royal churches in the city and monastic centers outside the city received books from Gondärian upper class society as results of close relation to the court. However, the majority of the corpus surveyed in this dissertation was most probably made originally for religious collections.

Please note that at the first impressions of the collections one can perceive more than half of every collection's holdings were staffed with exceptional books that have specific features of its own. This proves that identifying regional variation look possible. Accordingly, internal criteria used to comparison purposes within the sample seem to be appropriate. Then the conclusion is simple: The features, which predominant the entire sample, are eleven in number mentioned in table 4.3 below.

4.2.4.1 The Predominant Features that Create the 'Gondärian'

Table 4.3 Predominant material and structural features of many of both groups of the sample from the Gondärian 1650 - 1800

'Related majority'	'Anomalies'
White parchments	White and Pale yellow parchments
Quality looking cover leather	standard cover leather
Application of rare textile ¹¹³ inlays	absence of textile ¹¹⁴ inlays
Complex decorative frames	Simple Frames number
Decorated by diverse type of cross motifs	decorated by less than two cross motifs
Square/rectangular book format	elongated format

¹¹² Many manuscripts of the Gondärian era were written in this G^wleh script, which was deemed suitable for official use and presentation of manuscripts. Uhlig 1990, 87.

¹¹³ Textile is often varying in quality (Witakowska and Bausi 2015, 173).

¹¹⁴ Commonly the bindings with quarter covers would not have textiles inlays as the materials were held by the turned edges of the full cover leathers (Pankhurst 1980, 44).

Full wooden board covers leather	Full and quarter cover boards ¹¹⁵
Mitred /joined turn in corners	Overlapped and joined turn-in corners
Even and original flyleaves at both sides	odd and inserted fly leaves at both side
Organized with the regular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book)	organized with an regular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book)
Single work in one time	Multiple and single works in one time

Table 4.3 display many of the books by their origin. Theses eleven material and structural features were used to categorize books into two major groups; ‘related majority’ and the ‘Anomalies’ based on the ‘majority’ rule, but not necessary a ‘hundred percent’ basis. The specific origin of the book was usually apparent if a particular book that has three or more features associated with one category. Therefore, the information contained in this table should not be interpreted as a static rule. These are some of the criteria of Gondärian manuscripts.

Nevertheless, it was clear that very few of the specific features identified in the survey are exclusive to one specific category or the other. It is common for Gondärian manuscript culture manuscripts from one center to have features that may be more characteristic of another center of manuscripts, and vice versa. This must therefore be regarded as identity marks to specific group of manuscripts rather than to a separate individual basis.

At first sight, Gondärian manuscripts look unlike their counterparts from the broad area of Gondär or their closest neighbour. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the Gondärian manuscripts in collections are generally made following the Ethiopian tradition. For instance, the sewing of the gatherings with link stitch sewing without binding supports, the application of the

¹¹⁵ I had observed formerly full and later quarter based on traces of evidence and would be taken as full; On the contrary formerly quarter and later [recent] full would be taken as full no quarter since they witness techniques within the periods of the tradition;[MNDA – 041 and ATMI – 030[fig.4.38] respectively] "The distinction between ‘first’ and ‘later’ binding structures does not affect or compromise the quantification of the overall results. Every included volume is a product of the Islamic binding tradition"(Scheper 2014, 137, part - 4).

wooden boards' attachments, and the organization of text block quires, the materials and fabrication of threads and adhesives follow standard practice. The manuscripts are made following the Ethiopian tradition and yet they are different.

The above eleven material and structural features on which the 'Gondärian' is built, may elaborate changes are made to transform the pre existing bookmaking crafts into perhaps to meet conservation and beauty needs. More particularly the covering schemes became key aspects witnessing the reality more than others did and worth of further consideration. However, the changes have been inclusively done across almost in four-book aspects. As the old and the 'new' co-existent at book level, this informs us something that there are changes and a continuation of the medieval tradition within the book culture. One thing that must have been noticed here was that the change was not very new.

4.2.5 Both Varieties Represent the 'Gondärian'

Yes, the "Gondärian"¹¹⁶ in the very narrow sense of the concept is far from reach, but I could expect it. However, if I can distinguish some "trend(s)" in the book production, it is already quite something to claim the existence of regional tradition; the trends might be indicative of phenomena, which were more pronounced in the past.

In fact, the textual tradition of book production of Gondärian reflected in material bookmaking designs which was supposed to represent in the actual world by those books. The result shows that the 'book' as its totality has completely integrated object. This implied that the content and the material aspects of the book match. As the historic origin of books, most of them dated to the political period 1650 -1784.

As far as local craftsmen's' practices concerned the data found could have been used as evidence of centers of books production characterized aesthetic qualities given more attention followed by

¹¹⁶ 'Schools of calligraphy evolved around a few centres of traditional learning, with manuscripts produced according to peculiar local styles, for illuminations as well (e.g., at Gundä Gunde, Hayq, Gondär etc.)'Bausi 2014b, 751.

structural and then functional requirements. Such is observable mostly in its external book aspects (covering, end banding, spine treatments, tooling, and finishing). In those works, I assume that might be influenced by Gondärian arts flourishing in the historic city of Gondär. The damage and repairs patterns have also indicated that the visible parts of the book given great attention than internal; threads, adhesive, and board attachment techniques fall down more badly than exterior structures.

The results of the survey reveal that the differences in the text blocks of Gondärian manuscripts are echoed in books material and structural features too. There is a strict correlation between the material appearance of the text carrier and the matter that contain (influence each other). The higher structural constituent in book exterior parts could have also endorsed variations within textual evidences of Gondärian manuscripts. The changes in craft practices were evident in the number and status of books survived today just after three hundred years would suggest the results of higher values of books. More knowledge about this particular tradition of book production would be gained if I have a chance to elaborate on the Gondärian manuscript book as an object of its entirety (Wion's postface in Fakade-Selassie 2010, 303).

It is difficult to be too certain that the 'single origin' should fit the 'Gondärian'¹¹⁷ of which most art historical studies referred. Moreover, it has not been representing exactly the 'center' Gondär had been pointed out by Bausi 2015, 48 one of the sixteen manuscripts producing center in Ethiopia. The corpus in the study stands for the Gondärian but it is representing the Gondärian in its 'small size' and so could have been regarded as subset the Gondärian. Because of this finding, I might justify the assumption with slight correction; place and 'original' preservation area overlap. The categories proposed by former scholars and the criteria used to select books and collections would likely to be justified.

Nevertheless, one might ask; 'how those book elements came together in a single book and most books of specific corpus different from others? Was the need to make more durable and beauty books in mind? Why the bookmakers choose such particular materials and structures in such a

¹¹⁷'Gondärian' in both time and place terms wider in art historian and historical bases than mine.

consistent manner from other more alternatives believed to be found in the tradition? These and other more questions are awaiting our proper answers.

In addition, to substantiate the difference between the related majority corpora from other books category, I needed to look at further codicological characteristics and technical bookmaking components found in the individual manuscripts in 61MSS at the next chapter five. I hope in analyzing these features (close reading) found in individual manuscripts in this corpus, I could have got specific elements typical to the particular local origin than the anomalies, which are flux. Even based on the small sample preserved in a broad area of Gondär I have evidences which suggest that a typical 'local' bookmaking tradition might be existing. The next sup topic will define and contextualize the Gondärian from qualitative results.

4.3 Some Quantitative Results on the 'Gondärian' manuscript tradition

The sub-topic presented the result of quantitative data derived from the descriptive book features in individual manuscript level. One can recognize two major numbers of books in percentages (that should be converted in % and not given in absolute numbers, in order that their meaning could be better understand). These are codicological features shared by all or most of the sample and those features only shared by some of the books in the sample.

Traditionally, all codicologist¹¹⁸ have made the material books themselves the principal focus of study most particularly when they are 'historic' (when craftsman practices data are not available today). This is also the case in the codicology of Gondärian manuscripts. Sometimes the local markers were formed in distinctive ways; the material and structural features of the books is the most significant feature of the Gondärian books. The material aspects have impacts on the investigation of the entire codices of Gondärian manuscripts presumably produced from 1650 to 1800. Because the distinctive codicological elements of a single book might sometimes indicate the specific period, to which a particular codex could be attributed.

¹¹⁸‘To find out about the craft of bookmaking, one must study first a single manuscript, and then a great number of single manuscripts; this will lead to knowledge about 'the' body of 'the' book: to material codicology. Knowledge about 'the' book will in its turn help in understanding single books’ (Gumbert 2004, 508).

4.3.1 Defining the Gondärian Tradition from their Historic Context

This section presents data found mainly from text blocks of the sample books as a specific demographic collection of books after analysis of their bibliographical data. The classifications of the sample in distinct group (category) are based on internal textual information contained in every manuscript recorded on the spot. Therefore, it may be considered as the first technical undertaking of the descriptive codicology. However, one should understand that the real book production has lots of irregularities and contamination, and clear-cut conclusions frequently improbable.

4.3.1.1 Typological Distribution of the Manuscripts

Table 4.4 Book distribution in the typology of samples

No.	Category ¹¹⁹	Manuscript number	Percentage	Sampled vs. Total collection ¹²⁰
1	The Bible (Tä'ammärä Maryam and Iyäsus)	16	20	
2	Liturgy	15	19	
3	Hagiography ¹²¹	4	5	
4	Theology	14	17.5	
5	History	20	25	
6	Music	4	5	

¹¹⁹ National Archives and Library of Ethiopia -NALE Union Catalogue and Acquisitions Department (National Bibliography Team) June, 2006; see also Delamarter, Steve & Demeke, Berhane 2007,1310 -1311.

¹²⁰ The total number of books currently owned by each religious institutions surveyed would not to be mentioned for security reasons (Nosnitsin 2013, xii)

¹²¹All four manuscripts belong to Church ownership.

7	Homilies	4	5	
8	Rules and regulations	2	2.5	
9	Magic/medicine	1	1.25	
10	Other	0	0	
Total		80	100%	

As shown in Table 4.4 above, the book distribution of the sample, out of the nine typologies the proportion of the great majority of the manuscripts 71% was made up of four categories; Theology, Liturgy, Bible, and History, in ascending order. The highest number in these categories is History.¹²² This was probably due to the need to reclaim the faith of the one's father. The number made up of not only the standard set of books needed to perform the liturgy and other services but also others more. Almost all typologies are represented by such small sample. This indicates that the bookmaking tradition was very rich in unity and diversity. The diversity of book typology may be associated with multiple codicological features.

Sometimes, the contents tend to inform us of the books' location and function: devotional, ecclesiastical, references, borrowings, leanings. This data in table 4.1 provides clear evidence of the subjects being used by owners in the broader area of Gondar. It appears to have been used in the region until the end of Gondärian cultural period, 1855. It also suggests that subjects are accorded a higher significance. By any means, these typologies were less probably sponsored by ordinary individual persons for personal uses; they must have been by higher classes or possibly

¹²²Sənnəksar; the text contained the history of saints and kings of and their deeds and read daily.

by political authorities at the institutional basis to be donated for religious institutions. We have also two sub categories¹²³ based on manner of production:

- Translations from foreign languages. Bible, apocryphal. Gospel - 28MSS
- Local production: history, homiletic, hagiographic, liturgical, etc – 52MSS

Much more frequently, however, the content of a manuscript translated from foreign languages could be copied from other exemplar whose origin is mostly obscure. Whereas the scribe's original composition might rather be indicating the center of production not far from the present collections location. The number of local original¹²⁴ production was exactly two-third of the translations.¹²⁵ That might indicate most of the demands of the book were satisfied by local craftsmen settled or at constant move within the broad area of Gondar or beyond.

Furthermore, the basic nature of the texts suggests that they were used in an educational¹²⁶ and theological context. In addition, works of a more devotional nature linked to individual users were completely absent. From the contents of the books, one may estimate they were used to multiple functions of historic importance.

From the untrained eye, the texts indicate the books were made for non-ordinary function. They might be used for higher theological interpretation and public services. The Bible and Theology categories should have been read- in salient by the learned faithful monks in monasteries. The history category was read for references and ideological history with little use for individual

¹²³Further categories might be possible: Reading in load and silent; Personal use and group (schooling) but the data collected did allow us to proof their workability at this stage.

¹²⁴Geez Grammar was originally written by Azažə Sinoda in the reign of Bakkafa in 1718 E.C. Mersie Hazan also written by the same author. Kropp, Manfred (1980) "A Hypothesis Concerning an Author or Compiler of the "Short Chronicle" of the Ethiopian kings". *Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian studies/Tel-Aviv/14-17 April 1980*

¹²⁵ please compare with a monastic manuscript collection at May Wäyini, Təgəray, Ethiopia Jacek Tomaszewski and Michael Gervers 2015,110 -113

¹²⁶"Dawit" denotes "school book"

sake. Other categories of texts include books commonly used for preaching large publics loudly and for religious education.

All most all history and theology were from the monastic origin. They seemed to have been centers of a higher level of learning and centers of history and theological interpretations. If kings sponsor those books, it meant that their power and its legitimacy¹²⁷ questions could inherently be depended on monastic than churches. Hence, majority books are supposed to be associated with the primary context, a royal¹²⁸ churches, and rural monasteries.

4.3.1.2 Book-owning institutions

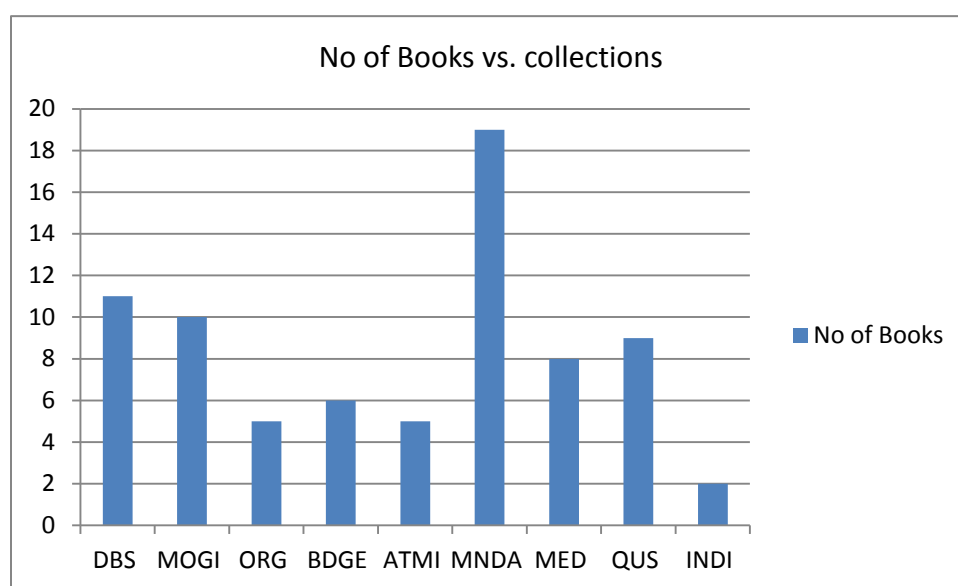


Fig 4.4 Number of books surveyed in nine collections

¹²⁷Berry LaVerle, "The Solomonic Monarchy at Gonder, 1630-1755: An Institutional Analysis of Kingship in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1976), 194

¹²⁸ from City (Gondar) Culture and Tourism office Inventory files of total 330 codices -from 17 royal churches out of this total the higher number possessed by DBS – 43MSS. Frequency of codex type (genre) ordered from high to low: 1st – Gənəzät 2nd – Tämərəä Mariam and Missal, 3rd – Gibre Himamat and Tamare Iysus, 4th – Tselot Etan and Sinkissar. The extent of binding – 99% - full cover. (Also see appendix – III)

There are ten collections of 80 books. Out of these books, a maximum of 19 books¹²⁹ were surveyed from MNDA, which was also followed by DBS and MOGI counting 11 and 10 respectively while the least of two books were surveyed from the individual collection in the city. The sample has fallen in the broad area of Gondär where the books were probably made and used and this particular area appeared to have been overlapped to the core area for their production (Bausi 2015, 48). If truth were told, the manuscripts point to a religious and cultural area stretching roughly from region of Lake Tana in the south to the high lands of Səmen in the north, including important centres of learning, the city of Gondar.

The sample has also corresponded to four subcategories about their present-day physical location of books. Among four types of ecclesiastic institutions of which only two were relevant here to be included in the survey: Royal churches (as '*däbər*' (church, cathedral) in the city and two monasteries (*gädam*) outside. However, the book owning institutions' historical role as a center of religious movement representation was not found in the data. For instances, (Mäg^wina¹³⁰ (*Täwahido*) NARG¹³¹ (*Qəbat*). Mänədaba (MNDA) was formerly the supporter of *Täwahido*. Nevertheless, late it tends to be (*Qəbat*) after 1716¹³².

¹²⁹ in his experiences in Tigray churches, Nosnitsin (2013, Xvii) noted that 'Most of the manuscript collections are of relatively small size. The number of historical Manuscripts they comprise is usually not high, and in most cases does not exceed fifteen or at most twenty codices. At least one-third of each collection is usually composed of very recent (post-1940s) Manuscripts. Monastic collections usually stand apart for their quality, diversity, and size'.

¹³⁰Abaddie visited the place and the strong center of unionist (Tewahido) Anais Wion, Aethopica? 644

¹³¹Narga Selassie – Qibat; Daga Estipanos – orthodox: the later possessed 111 books in its custody; Daniel Kibret 2011, pp.47-51. Narga Selassie rejected my question for the survey and soon replaced by Mnadaba located at the southern shore of Lake Tana, near the town of Gorgora

¹³² 'abbot abba Niqolawos (also known as (also known as abba Liqanos), contemporary of ase Iyasu I and one of the and one of the Täwahédo leaders, who was beheaded together with 40 church scholars by ase Dawit III for opposing the Qébat teaching.' (Persoon 2014,723).

Table – 4.5 Book distributions by four categories of book-owning institutions of the samples

No.	Category	Ms no	Percent	Remark
1	Monastic	29	36.25%	
2	Church (city)	39	48.75%	
3	Individual	2	2.5%	
4	Non-religion institutions	10	12%	All are digital codices
Total		80	100%	

Table -4.5 above depicted that the monastic and churches collections were well represented by books. Yet, close to half of the books associated with individual royal churches (as 'däbər') (church, cathedral). As long as royal churches had been located in the city and its environs, the places of production of their collections needed not far away from the city of Gondär. The lowest number was found in the individual collection. All these categories were fairly represented with books of varying numbers in the sample. Among others, attributes such as private, public, imperial, monastic, scholarly, and priestly are commonly used to describe a collection¹³³.

The Gondärian manuscripts, I assume, were often distributed to their original owners soon after their production date or a little after. The donation made by kings to the religious institutions, as indicated in some textual evidence written inside the text block mentioning the name of the

¹³³ 'but it is not evident at all on which aspect or combination of them a particular attribute is based. For instance, is a collection private regarding its owner or to its user? And is a collection scholarly regarding its contents or its use? Besides, at a closer look, some attributes prove less self-explaining as probably assumed. do they reflect concepts existing in local culture? A manuscript is produced at a certain time, and over a certain period. The use of the manuscript, too, is a process that happens at a certain time, and over a certain time. In some cases, such as Books of Hours and liturgical Manuscripts, particular times are prescribed for particular practices of use.' Max Jakob Fölster, Janina Karolewski, et al., 'Questionnaire for the Study of Manuscript Collections (Towards a Typology of Manuscript Collections)' Link to this document: http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/papers_e.html Published: March 2015, p.1 - 6)

kings' or their reign, the kings must have lived at the time of donation¹³⁴. These donation notes afford the name of the donor, who most likely was also the commissioner of the work. Almost every reigning king/ queen had constructed royal churches/s in the city or outside the city. These church buildings with their collections may be regarded as visible evidence of church - king mutual relationships. This demonstrates that the historic tie between church and state.

4.3.1.3 Commissioners from Scanty Written Evidences

The name of kings, nobles, and individuals [mentioned without traditional title] had been taken as persons who commissioned the thirty-four books for probably for presentation for the church or monastic centers. Specific information on original sponsors was rarely available, but educated guesses were made for slightly more than half of the sample. In addition to the notes written in the margins, the use of a book was also known by dirty and damaged page edges. The amount of decoration¹³⁵ in each text was also recorded to indicate whether it was a deluxe or utilitarian book type (Bausi 2012, 56). Kings should have been the major patronages, as both original and translated works of such deluxe kinds would less likely to be commissioned or owned by ordinary individuals.

Table 4.6 Book distribution in commissioners of dated books [34] in samples

No.	Category	Ms no	Percent	Remark
1	A King (royal family)	30	88%	
2	Noble	2	6%	
3	Individuals	2	6%	

¹³⁴ 'A reference to the current king at the time, and to other officials – details that have enabled us to date the donation.' Stéphane Ancel (2016), 'Travelling Books: Changes of Ownership and Location in Ethiopian Manuscript Culture' De Gruyter. P.276

¹³⁵ "Book donation" came to mean the act of donating a physical book, rather than providing the funds for its production. The, the motivations for sponsorship were for, paradise, love of their king, 'ሰለ ጌታችውም ፍቅር.....', see the appendix – VB, pilgrimage, feast day of Saints, etc

4	institutions	0	0%	
Total		34	100%	

As may be understood from Table 4.6 kings' role in commissioning books would be considered far more prominent than nobles. Hence, this may generally points out that in the tradition, the high-class members were actors in this regards¹³⁶ (Appendix – VB). One might correctly suppose that book commissioners and the producers of the Gondärian manuscript might live in the same locality but do often not in the same social class. The books selected as a sample might little represent a lower class of greater mass in the city.

In Gondärian especially in its urban context, book commissioner¹³⁷ assumed to have the big impacts on the products' appearance than the bookmaker himself. The design of the construction was appeared to be decided by him and by his supervisor in the court¹³⁸. The name and portray of the sponsors inserted in the text indicated not only the socio-economic class of the commissioner but also the honorary and genuineness of the copy.

¹³⁶Pankhurst 1984, 247

¹³⁷Women also involved in sponsoring books for donations to churches. See appendix V written in Amharic as inventory file in churches in the city of Gondär in Strelcyn, S 1954 'Catalogue Des Manuscrits Ethiopiens [collection Griaule] Imprimerie Nationale: Paris

¹³⁸ of the volumes seen at Calaqot, only one could be clearly identified as having been in the Maqddla collection: it was a Soma Degwa 'Hymns for Lent ', which had belonged to one of the Gondärian kings, Emperor Bakaffa (1721-30). A second beautifully illustrated manuscript, a Ta'amera Sellase 'Miracles of the Trinity', depicting scenes from the life of Iyasu I, 'the Great', of Gondär (1681-1706) may have reached Qalqot by the same route ; It, too, had belonged to Emperor Iyasu I. Most of the other volumes seen at (d)laqot were either given by other named donors, especially Ras Waldi Sellase, or were clearly of recent origin". Pankhurst, Rita (1973), 'The Library of Emperor Tewodros II at Mäqdäla (Magdala)', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1973), p. 22.



A

B

Fig.4.5 showing the commissioner's portrays [A] QUS -004 and [B] MNDA - 057

Patronage and commissionership fund the production of a manuscript. In need for securing his or her memorial, for sake of his heavenly life,¹³⁹ the kings or queen had been dedicating and presenting the manuscript to royal churches and monasteries.¹⁴⁰ “The portrayal of the donor would not be announced for the public until the 18th C, particularly the rule of Iyasu II (1730-1755) and his mother queen Məntəwab” (Chojnacki 1978, 72). Their wealth and generosity would have a clear tendency of the fact that it had direct consequences on its outward physical characteristics.

¹³⁹Please see the appendix -V

¹⁴⁰Hanna Wimmer et al., ‘A heuristic tool for the comparative study of Manuscripts from different manuscript cultures’ Link to this document: http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/papers_e.html Published: March 2015, p. 3) CSMC Occasional Paper No.

No data found to point that churches donated books to another church¹⁴¹ but borrowing for coping¹⁴² was common: And no data for an intergroup donation is found. I may be here safe to assume that the manuscript production place should have been in the court. The royal court in the city escapes¹⁴³ the fact that is convenient for them for supervision and follow-ups based on their specification of what the final book appearances should look like. However, the main works of the book manufacturing jobs were coordinated by and given to a court-linked person as an appointment by kings as *ṣhafī tǝzaz*. This is also historically considered as a claim to rulership and legitimacy. It is manifested by building “royal” churches¹⁴⁴ and massive production of manuscripts. This may be of the reasons that create the ‘Gondārian’ tradition.

4.3.1.4 Defining Aspects the Gondārian Manuscripts Culture

In this section, comparison of sub categories; typology, time, and collections against number of books are presented.

¹⁴¹ In some cases the evidence of the deliberate transfer of a manuscript from one library to another was provided by Stéphane (2016,285) as ‘This manuscript was donated by a monastery, Gunda Gunde, which gave it to another one, Maḳodā Dābrā Gännāt Kidanā Məhrāt, which is explained in the donation note on fol. 144rc.’

¹⁴² borrowing of books for coping was a tradition between churches. The abbot of Mog^wina reclaimed one book from one of the monasteries in Gojjam though ended by failure.

¹⁴³Not only religious people were involved in book production also non- orthodox believers such as the Bete Israelites or commonly known as the fālashas, metal workers, the Qimants, woodworkers. Informal discussion with two of the leather makers in the outskirts of the city of Gondar confirmed this tradition true.

¹⁴⁴(Berry 1976.191-192); ‘ṣadiqu Yohannes’ church in Gondar named after emperor Yohannes I [1668 -1682]

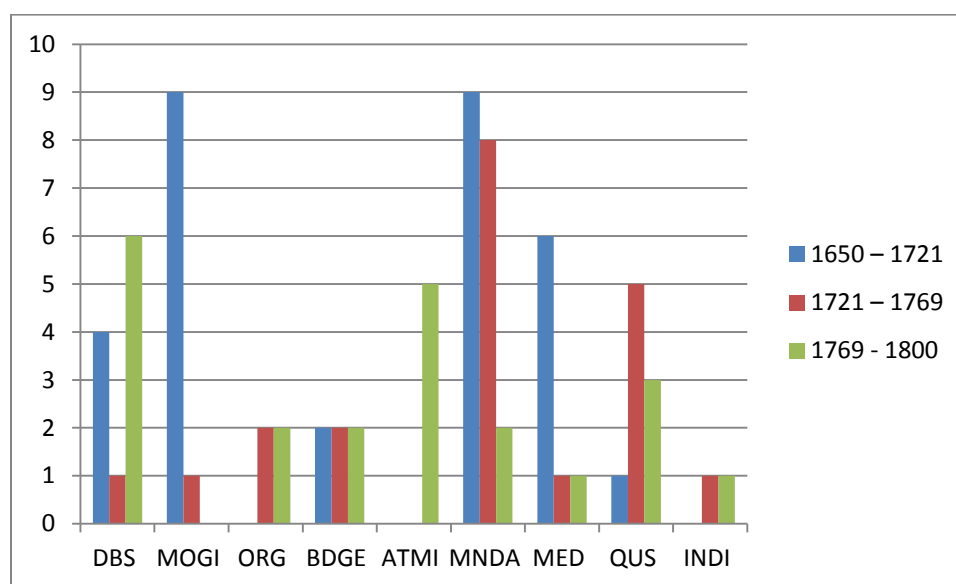


Fig 4.6 Number of books possessed by each collection under three sub-periods/ the order of collections was random

The second period witnesses a good representation by almost all collections except ATMI whereas the first period stands to have larger number of books. No period without books indicated that the sample was appropriate. The collection which are receiving books in all three periods are; MNDA, DBS, QUS, BDGE, MED; those in two periods; MOGI, ORG, INDI; Only one period; ATMI. Mänədaba was receiving in three periods with more numbers. Collections receiving books all along three periods meant the features of the books would most probably show considerable variations within the single collection. However, the same king might donate books to more than one church or monastic collection at a time. It also indicates that more than one donor donated books in a single period. This makes history of book ownership very complicated matter. Since commissioners or donors of the manuscript are not explicitly identified as owners. It is reasonable to think that the name of persons mentioned in such a colophon or in the main text was perhaps the owner of the manuscript and, thus, the one who donated it to that particular institution (Ancel 2016, 281).

Furthermore, the commissioners have probably presented a complete book (as an object) produced under their supervision (specification) nearby centers in the city of Gondar. They certainly presented the book/s to the religious intuitions they favoured most. In order to reach

this need, the royal family most likely established at least one scriptorium in their court. Queen Məntəwab's court based book production center and full supervision of the works at Qesəq^wam.¹⁴⁵ might be regarded as a witness to this claim. Nevertheless, it is largely proposed that nobles and rich individuals did it with city-based individual scribes or royal church associated *däbtäras*¹⁴⁶ who could have been engaged for personal business¹⁴⁷ in the city of Gondär and its environs.

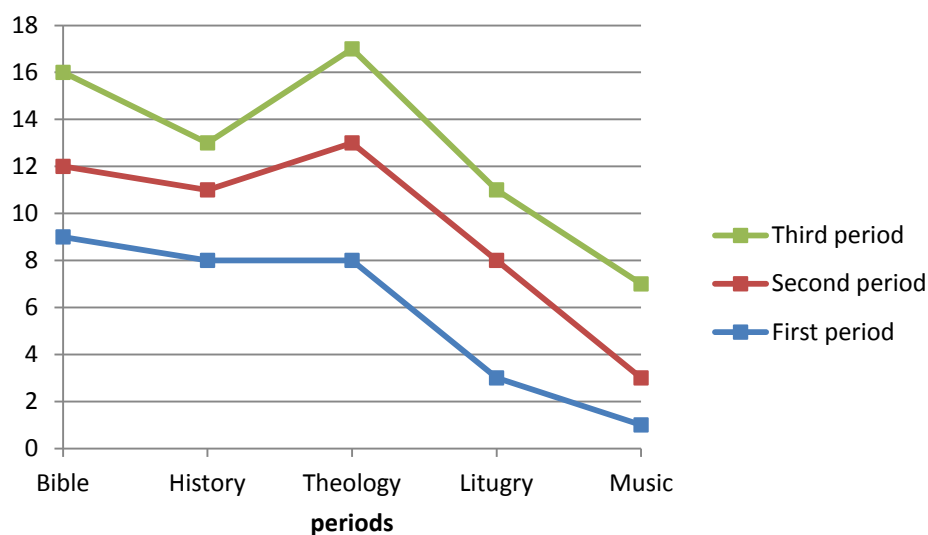


Fig. 4.7 Number of books in five-selected typology over three sub-periods

The figure illustrated that there was a clear tendency to have exactly the same trends of book typology production and use across all three periods. This also suggested that the perfect correlation between typology and the historical events in the Gondärian; the local need for Theological typology had not shown any decreasing demands. It became the watershed in book typology preference trends; the first period (1650-1721) higher and third period (1769-1800)

¹⁴⁵ According to the sources (chronicle), e.g., many dozens of manuscripts were donated to Däbrä şhay Qesəq^wam upon its foundation, and many more for other churches.

¹⁴⁶ Crummy, Donald. (2000). *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia from the tenth to the Twentieth Century*. University of Illinois Press:

¹⁴⁷ "Antoine d'Abbadie, an erudite individual well placed in the Ethiopian society of the first half of the nineteenth century had manuscripts copied for him when he could not get possession of the original. In Gondär, the capital city of the kingdom at that time" (Witakowska & Bausi 2015, 171).

lower. Yet the general decreasing trends towards Liturgy from the Bible might indicate something that Gondärian characterized by more in doctrinal than devotional matters.

4.3.1.5 The Single ‘political period’ of Origin of Manuscripts

The Gondärian had been defined not only by a number of books distributed in each parameter but also by context of their distributions. Books distribution may map the book features exchange niche in the local at least roughly. In this section two kinds of data would be presented to define the "local" origin; within the so-called ‘Gondärian’ in a broader sense of book tradition. The "Local" in this context was attributed to the Gondärian political periods [1650 -1769] and a place in and around the city proper.

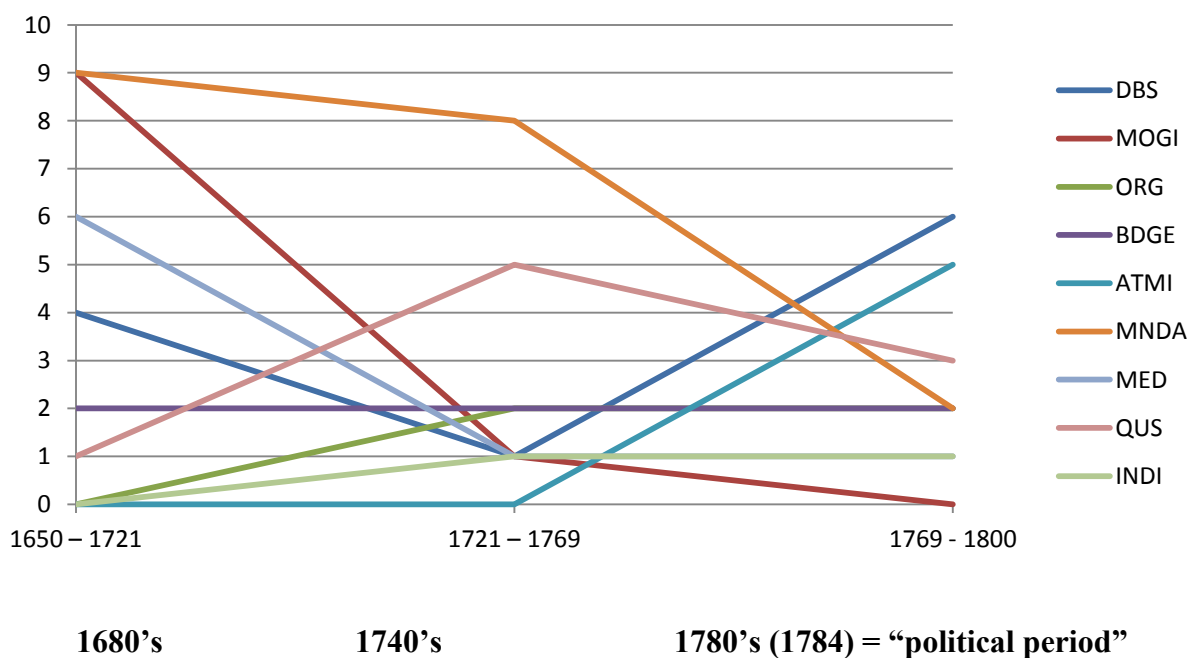


Fig 4.8 Nature of reception of books in nine collections of the three periods

What was significant in this graph was; times before the 1660s and after 1784 were not well represented, the limits coincide with political periods. All tend to vary but only BDGE, which was possibly due to far away from the core culture area. The second period was a point of shift in their volume of book accusations and coincided with the king – church links, e.g. MED was not

favoured by any king after the death of Fasiledes 1632 -1667. Were kings responsible for the continuity of the tradition? The fig.4.8 above depicted several different kinds of trends:

- 1 An increasing trend, DBS and ATMI decreasing and then increasing
- 2 Decreasing trend, QUS, MNDA, MOGI
- 3 NO change, BDGE

INDI and ORG increase in the first period while it has remained the same between the second and third periods

MED decreasing from first to second and remained unchanged for the third period.

Based on this graph, the second period (1721 – 1769)¹⁴⁸ appears to have been a turning point in terms of a number of books provenances between 1650 -1800.

The increase in book production towards the first period and afterward meant an increasing volume of work for the bookmakers. In addition to the ‘workshops’ of monasteries, private craftsmen were believed to join in to benefit from the growing local market. As they spent more time working on book making, they were becoming perfect. Bookmakers had been able to learn from the past mistakes and continued to advance his technical skills further.¹⁴⁹

In the data presented under previous sub-topics, one may learn that the number of books kept changing. Unfortunately, the two periods; first and second, coincided with the Gondärian political period. In due course, the number of books was concentrated towards single-core where the political gravity remained influential followed by religious and intellectual developments. The probable places of production might follow those trends. Hence, they would largely remain suggestive than conclusive.

The above illustrations generally showed the perfect political period 1656 – 1784 correlated to eight powerful Gondärian kings whose main seat was in the city of Gondar. Hence, they might be considered as the most important factors for the changes in the number of books, which also

¹⁴⁸Textile imported at a majority in the Bäckkafa to Iyasu II (Pankhurst 1981,131 -132)

¹⁴⁹ (Szirmai 1999, 173).

appeared to have been characterized by organic unity in diversity. It needs to be considered in terms of particular manuscript geography called the Gondärian. In the next sub topic, only a few mentions are dedicated to the textual contents of the sample, rather I focused on material and structural features of the samples. Unfortunately, not much has been written about their structure and construction.

4.3.2 Material and Structural Constituents to each manuscript of the Samples

A spreadsheet containing 66 sub-groups with 280 cells of elements were analyzed to get the predominant feature shared across all the samples and these features would be presented from external to internal book parts order. The images of manuscripts and quantitative description that accompanied each major entry were sufficient to make the identification of the marking features and innovations related to one groups of books from the other group in the samples.

4.3.2.1 Sources of Raw Materials

4.3.2.1.1 Parchment

All books in the sample used traditional parchment as a basic writing material (Wright 1877). No paper or other materials were used ever¹⁵⁰. The animal origin of the parchment could not be made certain but from the white colour of parchments of greater number of manuscripts goats skins¹⁵¹ seem to dominate over all samples. However, a dozen of manuscripts also show pale yellow parchment colour. These manuscripts may be made rather from sheepskin. I have only one exception with horses¹⁵² skin (MOGI – 031)¹⁵³.

¹⁵⁰. Some Ethiopian manuscripts of the Vatican Library and Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris", before the nineteenth century, have been written on paper. As the colophon of some of them (Val. 38) indicates clearly that they have been written outside Ethiopia (Sergew Hableselase 1981,9)

¹⁵¹ 'goat and gazelle skins are fine white and take ink very well. Sheepskin usually is yellowish and is not used for religious books unless goatskin is scarce" (Sergew Hableselase 1981,9); Regemorter Berthe Van (1962) "Ethiopian bookbinding", *The Library: transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 5th series, XVII, pp. 85 - 88 (this lady translated the earliest description of Ethiopian manuscript making practice made by Antoine d'Abbadie).

¹⁵²There could be information the preparation of vellum from the horse skin since the past times until the dawn of this century. Sergew Hable Selassie 1981,9 and Assefa Liban 1958,10

4.3.2.1.2 Boards

With one exception (QUS - 002) with leather boards, all books in the sample bound between two wooden boards. Leather boards are usually manufactured from the thicker section of the leather of oxen, buffalo, or hippos (Mersha Alehegne 2011, 151). Nosnitsin 2014, 82 an oblong piece of thin leather embraces a small text block (up to 50 folios). No other kind of board materials used such as cardboards, or laminated paper, papyrus etc. Sergew Habele-Selassie 1981, 24 noted that in the case of large manuscripts, to combine smaller pieces of wood into boards of suitable size, this technique might be used "connected with a gut string, sometimes but not often with a bar of iron." To the latter case, only one manuscript QUS -005 is obtained.

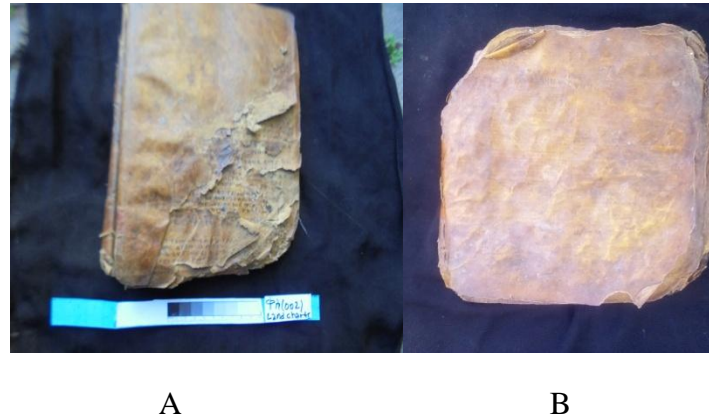


Fig. 4.9 'A' QUS- 002 Leather board: Land charter¹⁵³ 'B' malk'a from the non sample (Täda Eg əziabəhir ab royal church collection in the outskirts of the city of Gondar)

4.3.2.1.3 Wooden Board Cover

Books with wooden boards are covered with leather at least their spine. From the samples of full covers cases, 61 (76.25%) manuscripts were presumably made with tanned leather with dark

¹⁵³ The storekeeper told me this information and soon I did pay special attention to find out the physical evidence attesting the information. Sadly in the field and later on at home on the picture, that I could not find any textual and structural differences with that of goat. This might be further research area in the future.

¹⁵⁴ Also mentioned by Habtamu Mengistie Tegegne article 'Record making, Recordkeeping, and Landholding – Chanceries and Archives in Ethiopia (1700–1974)' *History in Africa*, Volume 42 (2015), pp. 433–461 Archival Reports

brown and reddish-brown colour varieties.¹⁵⁵ The standard leather covering may belong to the remaining instances. The animal origin of the cover leather of the former category appeared to be goatskins. Nevertheless, viewing the skin size and thickness I strongly suspected that was true (See in chapter five 5.3).

4.3.2.1.4 Rare Textile Inlays

Out of the entire sample, 41 manuscripts (51.25%) have textile inlays. Some their textile inlays missing partially were nine manuscripts. Yet, out of 20 (25%) manuscripts without textile inlays records, only 11 bindings have no traces of former existence of textile inlays. Those manuscripts, which have been left bare, must have been quarter covered. Hence, a great majority of 60 MSS could have got textile inlays at the time of their production. Regarding the material used as inlays, no leather/ parchments were used in any manuscript except one QUS – 005. No paper was used. Silk and cotton were predominate material fabric of the textiles.

4.3.2.1.5 Threads

About the sewing threads used in these bindings, I know almost nothing except the use of thick plain threads, which is evident to the naked eye and simple magnifying glass; only further detailed observations and analysis will give us some more information. Only 25 manuscripts (31.25%) have a thick thread of probably original thread¹⁵⁶ of animal origin. The large majority of our sample had resewn with synthetics, 52 manuscripts (65%). The resewn had replaced the original by new suggested that almost all were formerly sewn by threads of animal origin and three of them remain unidentified under a simple magnifying class. The threads remained the most affected material of all.

¹⁵⁵Fakade Selassie 2010,223

¹⁵⁶ ‘In the descriptions in his catalog, Antoine d’Abbadie says more than once, ‘cousu au fil de boyau’, which means that the book has been sewn with catgut and not with ordinary cord. Nearly all the Ethiopian manuscripts I have seen were likewise sewn with catgut’ (Regemorter 1962, 87; Seregew Hable Selassie 1981, 24). Fakade Selassie 2010, the threads were not made from animal gut or catgut, but rather from animal strong muscles tissue cords of the flesh called *ǧəmmat* (ጅማግግ); Meresha Alehegn 2011, 152 ‘sinew’; a cord or sinew used to stitch the leaves of the manuscripts together.’

4.3.2.1.6 Availability of Metal Plaques

The present metal plaques on the boards could be identifiable in a much smaller number of books, in five manuscripts (QUS – 008, MOGI - 033,036 and 038, MNDA - 060). However, the one is exceptionally furnished larger parts with metals and minerals for decoration purposes (MNDA - 049). No book was found that is fully covered by metal covers¹⁵⁷. Nevertheless, traces of fastening have left holes on three books. Number of fittings indicates the total number of furniture originally attached to the binding as they can be seen on it or can be deduced from holes, colour marks on the cover, etc. The books were clasped from the upper to the lower board. Nevertheless, all that remains of the fastenings are the stubs of the tanned leather straps. Fastenings were metals that fasten the cover leather with the boards further strengthening the weak adhesive. The representative specimens were photographed and presented below.



Fig. 4.10 Fastenings MOGI - 036

4.3.2.1.7 Adhesive

Although the adhesive said to be weak and have often made from the unclear material origin (Fekade-Selassie 2010, 223), the great majority of the books in the sample seem to have been

¹⁵⁷. However, the instances were seen in Pankhurst 1984,249.

made from the adhesive of vegetal substances; cereal crops mainly *teff* and wheat. Nevertheless, gum nut and other have not been found¹⁵⁸.

4.3.2.2 External Decorations

4.3.2.2.1 Number of Decorative Frames

Decoration¹⁵⁹ using the blind tooling technique had been applied on both internal and external cover leather surfaces of nearly all of the books in the sample. As one kind of decorative devices tooling on the cover leather stamped with several frames:¹⁶⁰ more than six frames in 11 (13.75%) manuscripts from 80 and 9(11.25%) manuscripts from recorded; five frames in nine (11.25%) cases, four frames in 20 (25%) from 80 and 18 (22.5%) from recorded. Three frames in 4 (5%) instances, MED – 023, MED - 019, MNDA – 051, MED – 018. Two frames in seven (8.75%) manuscripts were documented. Out of the total, six manuscripts had no any tooling made namely, QUS – 002, MED - 025, ORG - 071, ORG - 072, MED - 020, QUS – 006. Nevertheless, 40 (65%) manuscripts have above three frames, while quarter covered, rebound and unrecorded cases excluded. Thus, a considerable number of manuscripts in the sample might be decorated with more frames that are complex.

¹⁵⁸muča (ሙታ): a hard, animal gelatin, obtained by boiling skins, hoofs, and other animal substances in water, that which when boiled down provide a strong adhesive (Merasha Alehegne 2011, 156). I suppose this kind of technique must have been unknown in Gondär broad area.

¹⁵⁹dəggwsə (ደገሰ) the decoration made on the covered or laminated gäbäta (ገበታ) mulu dəggwsə (ደገሰ) when the whole cover of the gäbäta (ገበታ). is decorated Merasha Alehegne 2011, 150.

¹⁶⁰. It should be pointed out, however, that it is an asset to have as many patterns as possible. This is the key to success in the job. The more patterns there are, the greater is the chance of success. For this reason, many patterns are designed and used. It is not, however, easy for us to list them "all. Here only the most common and widely used are mentioned. Sergew Hable Selassie 1981, 25

4.3.2.2.2 Cross Motifs in Central Panel

In our sample of full covered specimens, 63(78.75%) manuscripts were sides tooled but at different levels and with varieties of cross motifs. Four types of cross¹⁶¹ motifs were applied on the central panel of a most significant number of books in the sample but 13 (16.25%) manuscripts without cross or with only two cross motifs. These were either quarter of no evidence of its existence was recorded. At least four varieties of cross types¹⁶² found in the sample. These are, Latin cross, equal arms (Fig. 4.11) cross, and diamond shape cross, and eclipse circle crosses.



Fig. 4.11 Types of cross: ‘equal arms cross’, MNDA – 051

A cross motif was applied on the two sides of the cover boards almost similarly. I found no other motif other than the cross. No cross was tooled without background cross inside the central panel except in cross of the diamond type. Pankhurst (1984, 209) indicated that such ‘cross motifs are generally imaginative as few examples would be available in either metal or wood made cross.’ However, one can find them in plenty in church collections of the study area, and most probably made during the period under discussion.

¹⁶¹Pankhurst, 1884, though not a professional codicologist, also considered the Latin cross (and a trend from Latin to the more frequent appearance of non-Latin) as the central argument. It seems, however, that the design of the cross appears slightly before the foundation of Gondär. And the spine left without tooled contrary to this survey findings

¹⁶² Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski (2015, 127) identified four main groups of motifs. Pankhurst 1984 identified three forms of central panel decoration based on the cross motif.



Fig. 4.12 shows one of the examples of diamond shape type of crosses made of metal

4.3.2.2.3 Tooled Cover Edges

In total, 51(63.75%) manuscripts from recorded have got their cover edges tooled. Blank, 19 (23.75%) from 80 and 14 (17.5%) from the survey. The remainder 10 manuscripts are quarter covered.

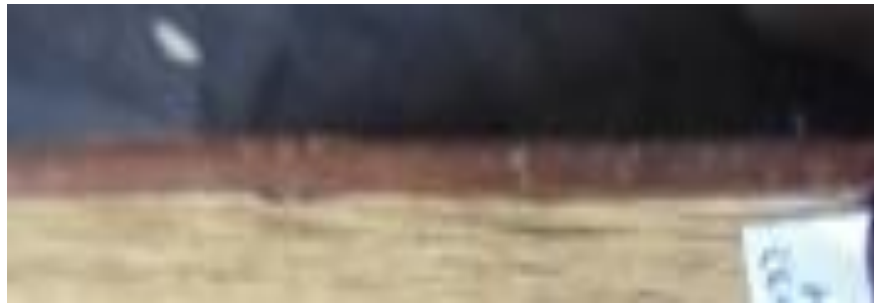


Fig. 4.13 Cover edge tooled; MNDA - 043

4.3.2.2.4 Spine Tooled

There were 63 spine tooled¹⁶³ manuscripts and checked as 'Yes'. The other two manuscripts say 'No' MNDA - 046 and DBS - 015: 'Unidentified' 1 manuscript DBS - 10; the rest 14 manuscripts recorded as 'unknown'.

¹⁶³The spine is generally left with little or no tooling' (Pankhurst 1984, 209)

4.3.2.2.5 Internal Decorations: Textile Inlays and Tooled Turn- in

As the three turn-ins of the leather, covers are stuck down on to the interior of the wooden boards the rectangular shape areas left empty. This area is often filled with textile inlays. From the total manuscripts surveyed 41(51.25%) manuscripts have been bound with imported rare textile inlays with not more than four designs and colours.

Also interesting is the suggestion that attractive textile could have been used to ornament books were imported and that occupied a large mass of imported merchandise during the Gondärian political periods in the region. Their geographical origin was hard to make in accuracy, yet most cotton fabrics were imported from India and silks were from Europe (Pankhurst 1980, 1981; Machado 2011). No paper or composite of two different materials or textiles with any other material were used for decorating the rectangular open space of the inner boards. All most all books with tooled covers had also been tooled at their turn- in. Out of the samples, 60 manuscripts (75%) got their turn- in tooled with triple fillet lines. The more illustrating example is MNDA – 054, BDGE- 063 and MNDA - 057.

4.3.2.3 Bindings

4.3.2.3.1 Size of the Book

Binding¹⁶⁴ works revealed variations on the book sizes. From the survey, 20(25%) manuscripts were ‘large’¹⁶⁵ size [41x36x11cms -52x47x14cms], 48(60%) manuscripts ‘medium’ [29x24x11cms – 40x35x11cms] and ‘small’ size [17x11x4cms – 28x23x4cms] was only one book (INDI-069). ‘No record’ was 11 (13.75%) manuscripts. The great majority of the sample 68MSS fall in both ‘large’¹⁶⁶ and ‘medium’ book size categories. The general tendency was to have large and medium formats that characterized the sample.

¹⁶⁴See also terminology in the appendix –I ‘Binding’ (The entire structure used to cover and hold the °text block together, which includes covers, cover spine, end bands, sewing, spine-lining, and fastening.)

¹⁶⁵ Witakowska 2015, 63 three sizes seem to be set.

¹⁶⁶.For Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015,114 the thickness from 7 – 25cms is medium.

4.3.2.3.2 Shapes of the Book

Shapes of book format show 58(72.5%) manuscripts 'square', the rest 10 (12.5%) manuscripts having length greater than the width and no 'tall' manuscripts, 'No records' 12 (5%) manuscripts. The preference to 'square' book format accounts the large majority in the sample.

4.3.2.3.3 Extent of Cover Boards

The extents of covers leather in full cover boards¹⁶⁷ or in part were examined. A book covered entirely with leather has a full binding. Within the sample, on the category of extent covering 60 (75%) manuscripts full covered, and there was no half cover, ten bindings have quarter¹⁶⁸ cover. The remaining ten of their covers missed with varying extent. Even in a considerable number of manuscripts, their covers were totally absent at the time of the survey but their covers might be full and removed later as the traces of full could be recognized by simply seeing remnants of adhesive stuck and tooling press impressions leaving traces on the entire external and internal surfaces of the wooden boards.

Hence, the full extent became the tendency to have been most majorities sampled. Alternatively, there were bindings whose exact nature of covering has not yet identified certainly in the sample; for instances, a couple of manuscripts have a quarter covers in the time of the survey and might be full covers originally or the visa Versa.

4.3.2.3.4 Kinds of Turn-in

There are commonly two kinds of turn- in; mitred and overlapped types. There have been also two further categories of mitred turn- in; butt or joined (fig.4.14'A') and stitches or leather lacing¹⁶⁹ (fig.4.14'B'). Of these, 43 (53.75%) manuscripts made with butt or joined. The other 12

¹⁶⁷ 'Most of the simple Ethiopian codices have remained uncovered. Sometimes the spine and about one-third of the boards are covered and only the more luxurious codices are in full leather. The covering leather is mostly of goat or sheep hair of a red-brown variety, also characteristic of many of the Coptic codices.' (Szirmai 1999,49)

¹⁶⁸ Terminology appendix - I

¹⁶⁹Szirmai 1999, 48.

(15%) manuscripts were made with stitches or leather lacing. Moreover, seven manuscripts (8.75%) went to 'overlapped' category. Rather than butted interfaced edges of the turn-in, they had the overlapped one above another. Damages on turn-in caused total or partial loss on 18 (22.5%) manuscripts. The turn-in had often held the authentic colour of the original cover leather. The mitred turn-in category, conquer the majority books.

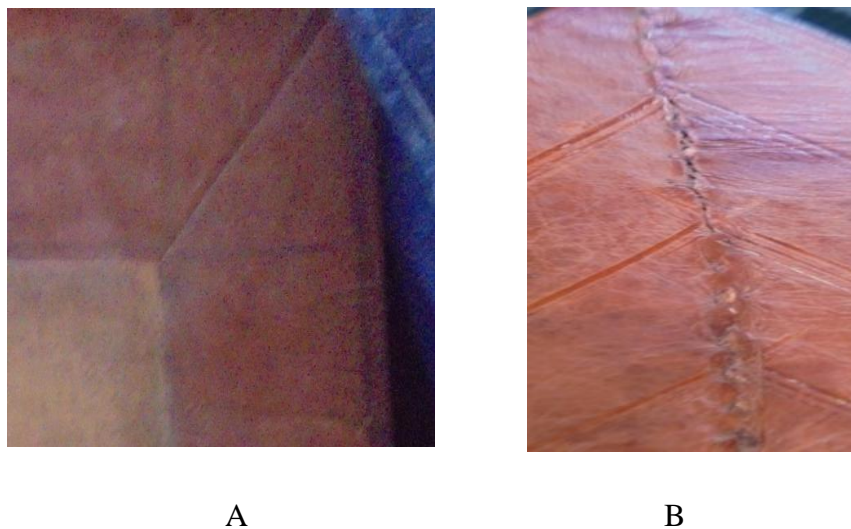


Fig. 4.14 'A' 'Joined turn-in as subtype of butt mitred; BDGE – 065, 'B' stitched mitred; DBS – 062

4.3.2.3.5 Back over Added Later

In total, 15 Manuscripts; ORG - 075, ORG - 073, DBS – 016, MNDA – 041, BDGE – 067, 068 , 063, MOGI – 033 , 034, 037, QUS – 001, QUS - 006, QUS - 008 and DBS – 009 have back over leather on their spine. Some have quite new and some have different colours, material fabrications, and application techniques from the original leather covers.

4.3.2.3.6 Board Attachment Techniques

As of all Ethiopian manuscripts, our sample's wooden boards were also attached to their text block by direct sewing. This proves that the Ethiopic manuscript tradition is said to be characterized by consistency in board attachment techniques. The large majority of the books in the sample had original wooden boards, very few of them was composite and re-used.

4.3.2.3.7 End Bands

Out of the sample, 27 (33.75%) manuscripts, end bands partially or fully missed head and tail bands as the traces of missing end bands have been currently seen on former places of end bands. However, 40 (50%) manuscripts retained their seemingly original end bands. 13 (16.25%) manuscripts 'No Record'. Most books' end bands have two colours: Red and white. Brown, DBS – 061, MNDA – 055 –and red (DBS – 062) No any book without end band¹⁷⁰ in the sample including quarter covered ones.

4.3.2.3.8 Spine Lining

It was quite difficult to see the spine lining of full-length parchment underneath. Yet, I was able to find out 22(27.5%) manuscripts' undamaged spine lining out of the sample. It was a very large number. The only exceptions are the textile cloth used as a spine lining (MED - 018, ATMI – 028 and MNDA - 043). 54 (67.5%) manuscripts I had recorded with no information for the early presence or invisible without causing damages. In these cases, I had no any book in which the leather lining is combined with textiles. Besides, one book with three layers of leather lining was (MED-017). The spine lining material of nearly the entire sample was parchment, not leather, only in one instance, BDGE – 067.



Fig. 4.15 QUS – 008, full-length parchment spine lining

¹⁷⁰The binding without end bands were recorded in 20% the corpus of Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2014, 119. Braided thong or folded strips of leather, four folded strips of leather end band Fig. 4.42, p. 119.

4.3.2.3.9 Number of Sewing Stations

Even number of sewing stations was observed in really the entire sample. 66 (82.5%) manuscripts have four and 10 (12.5%) manuscripts have six sewing stations. No 1.5 or two sewing stations are found in the sample. Four manuscripts call no record at all. Most books have the predominant four sewing stations of just equal distances and positions from a fixed point. Link –stitched was an overwhelming kind of text block sewing.

4.3.2.4 Text Block Organization

4.3.2.4.1 Quire arrangement

In total, 52 (65%) MSS were recorded with 4 bi folios and 20 (25 %) MSS in five bi-folios; in both cases regular no of quires in the volume occur. However, some 8 (10%) MSS had mixed quire arrangements; four, five and six VI (12) ATMI – 026. Mixed in the single work, but it is not within each quire. Nearly all of the bindings in the sample had a tendency to show a regular quire structure.

4.3.2.4.2 Flyleaves at Both Sides

60 (75%) manuscripts consisted of flyleaves with the same quality to the text block quires: number of flyleaves constructed on two sides of the text block; two both 23(28.75%) manuscripts, 4 both 32(40%) manuscripts, 6 both four (5%) manuscripts, more than six, 4 (5%) manuscripts. An irregular number of flyleaves has been associated with 10 (8%) and a flyleaf only on one side was documented with MED – 021. Most samples had even number of original flyleaves at both sides. Irregularity in number might be indicating later interventions.

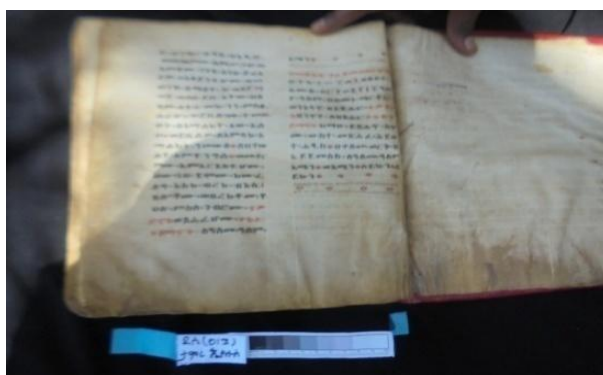


Fig. 4.16 DBS – 013 showing original flyleaves at the end of the last quire.

4.3.2.5 Text Organization

4.3.2.5.1 Single Work at a Time

As to the survey, result reveals there were 67 (83.75%) the manuscripts that seemed to contain single work at a time. Whereas, the other eight manuscripts were made up of a multiple works in their contents. Among these, six (7.5%) of eight manuscripts had 2 works and two (2.5%) manuscripts three. The remainder five books ended with unidentifiable complexity. I may infer that the larger majority of the sample has remarkably a single work text.

4.3.2.5.2 Text Layout: Number of Text Columns

With regarding the number of text columns, 31(38.75%) manuscripts had two, 29 (36.25%) manuscripts three¹⁷¹, seven (8.75%) manuscripts one text column. In fact, three (3.75%) manuscripts followed mixed text layout style (INDI – 060, two and three, MOGI- 033, one and three, MOGI – 031, one and two). Consequently, the majority of the sample has been written with two and three text columns. Slightly less than half of this majority has three text columns, which means that the page proportion of these manuscripts is more or less square. No reliable information is recorded for the ten leftovers.

¹⁷¹'One-third of the manuscripts written in Gwelh style script have three text columns' Uhlig 1990, 93.

4.3.2.5.3 Shape of Written Area

The shape of the written area is that 46(57.5%) manuscripts square, 28(35%) manuscripts rectangle shape. The rest six (7.5%) manuscripts go to somehow tall in shape. This shows that square and rectangular shapes of written area have probably remained the predominant features of the sample.

4.3.2.6 Miscellaneous

4.3.2.6.1 Illumination

Later added illuminations are seen in 3(3.75%) manuscripts and left empty 8(10%) manuscripts total 11(13.75%) manuscripts. If painters are drowning the illuminations on the half-page of the leave, they are added later. Almost all of the full-page miniatures spaces were left unruled.

4.3.2.6.2 Ornamentation

Only few four (5%) manuscripts had ornamented text pages: ATMI – 026,027, QUS – 007, INDI - 060. The remaining majority had been left without ornamentations. As Uhlig 1990 correctly puts it was thought that ornamentation would detract from the beauty of the script.

4.3.2.6.3 Page Markers

The page markers called *elebat*¹⁷² are used in five manuscripts. It is made in every chapter; QUS – 009, 007, ATMI – 027, DBS – 017. These page-markers are made of textiles and threads but no leather was used as page marker. Although each of these materials was fixed to the upper-edge of a folium, different methods by which this was achieved were not recorded in the survey.

¹⁷²“a marker thread which is to indicate the page where the reader stopped reading. It is usually made from cloth or thread which is sewn on the upper edge of *gäbäta*” Meresha 2011, 148.

4.3.2.6.4 Presence of Container

From the whole sample of 80 MSS, only 14MSS¹⁷³ were recorded with container *mahidär*. All containers were roughly processed leather except two containers which were laminated by imported leather over the roughly processed leather case and had been tooled with cross motifs; MOGI -031 and 033. No other material used as a container rather than leather.



A

B

Fig. 4.17 MOGI – 031 Showing container laminated by quality looking cover leather; ‘A’ MOGI - 031 stamped with four crosses from the corpus; ‘B’ Tana Monastery (Kəbəran Gəbərəal collection) identified during field study. Can you see the crosses tooled on the cover of ‘A’?

4.3.2.6.5 Picture Cover Cotton

Picture cover cotton¹⁷⁴ is found in DBS – 061, QUS – 004, BDGE -063 in four pages covered with pictures and as was covered with a sheet of cotton (tin) MOGI – 034.

¹⁷³ ‘Few manuscripts are equipped with all this apparatus’ (Regemorter 1962, 88).

¹⁷⁴ Such pictures are usually covered with pieces of cloth, sewed to the leaves. (Wright 1877, IX –X)

4.3.2.6.6 Pan Ethiopian



Fig. 4.18 Pan Ethiopian, MNDA – 049

Fig. 4.18, above, represents the Ethiopian book culture in single book. However, the diversity of features might suggest the existence of many more other subgroups of books. The following subsection presents, the manuscripts present status.

4.4 Damages Caused by Misuse, Bad Storage and Unwise Repairs

Recording the books, present condition at their ‘actual state’ essentially means assessing levels of damage related in time of use, storage conditions, and repairs schemes. Here now, I needed at least to understand the general conditions of the collection, and types of human interference that should have been causing the damages. Since most of the damages to the samples as collection were linked to, the sewing structures and material/physical damages caused more likely by misuse, bad storage conditions and unwise repair works. The survey therefore combines two elements, an historic record, and a condition record. I urge also that before embarking on any conservation work one should have to establish clear conservation needs and priorities first.

Presumably, codices spend 99% of their lifetime on the shelf (Mayer 2015, 571). This does not show the reality in the Gondärian books as the evidence of frequent use can be seen from the physical parts of the sewing structures of mostly service books (Fig 4.22’B’). The patterns of damages and repairs helped us to estimate the natural wears of coverings from usage. The most frequent damages to the Gondärian manuscripts were illustrative enough to attest the high values of the Gondärian codices in the face of time. Colour fade ups, leaf break, adhesive tape losses,

tooling impressions details (fig.5.49) etc are not presumably the major problems of the sample, though the visual attractiveness of some of these elements is highlighted, they are one of the secondary importance for conservation purposes. They bear little with manufacturing defects.

4.4.1 Misusing of the Manuscripts

From the book storage, the user takes the book to the place where he would be reading. There was an object, which is used to support books at the time of reading. Nevertheless, one might not certain all readers use it. Rather, one's legs and dusty floor were common surfaces on which the readers often put the books to read and it could damage manuscripts. The use of *atronos* protects the manuscripts from the damages of misusing them. Meresha Alehegn (2011, 148) defines *atronos* as it is a type of a chair like lectern. Moreover, as can be seen from the fig. 4.19B, the way of horizontal opening of manuscripts affects the life of the manuscripts. Frequent use, Fig. 4.19B, can also damage manuscripts. Handling (care at use) and storage (protection from weather), and lack of periodical inspections could be classified under the external damages of the manuscripts.

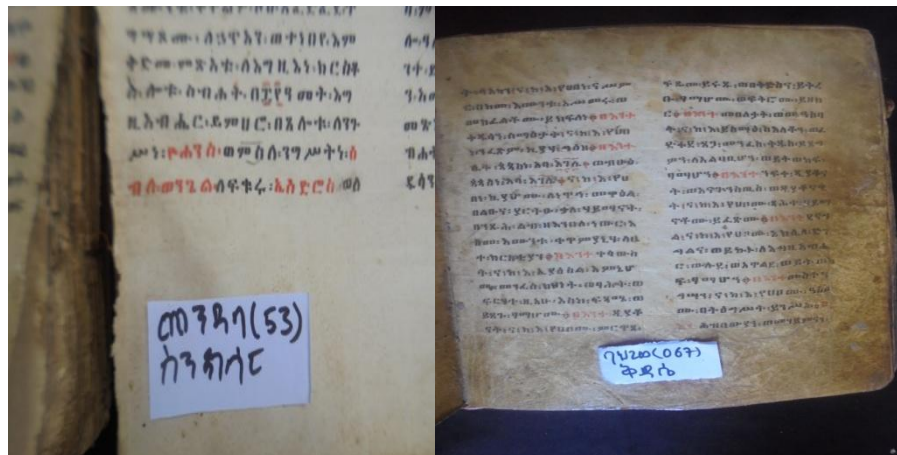


A



B

Fig.4.19 Showing different kind of opening the book block that affects its sewing structures: Positive A and negative B.



A

B

Fig. 4.20 MNDA – 053 ‘A’ Text block breaks across bi folia centrefolds; BDGE – 067 ‘B’ evidence of frequent use

4.4.1.1 Manuscripts with Frequent Damage: The Spine Area

The damage distributed across all three aspects of the book; but there were often variations among the three; binding, text block, and decorations from the most affected to the lesser order.

- Sewing threads
- End bands (most frequently tail bands)
- Spine covers and turn- in at binding side removed
- Cover adhesive

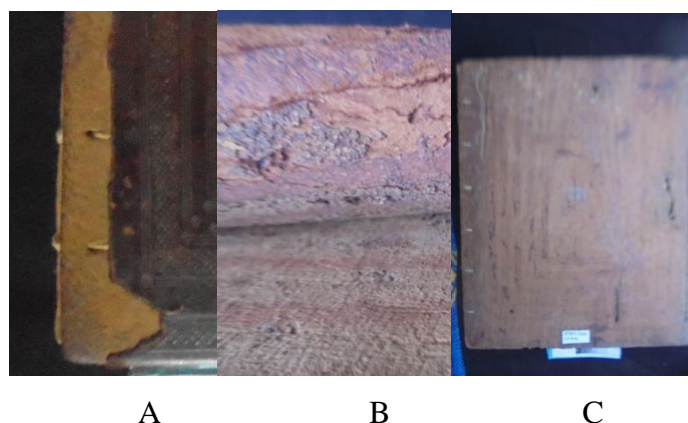


Fig. 4.21 BDGE – 066 Spine cover removed to get access to lancing holes[A] MNDA – 042, detached cover from the boards, poor adhesive,[B] MNDA – 050 complete cover off [C]

The most frequent type of damage in the sample was the sewing structures, missing end bands; mostly the spine areas responded by new material¹⁷⁵ replacements. New synthetic ones replaced the original threads.

4.4.2 Damages from Bad Storage

There may be several different conditions at which collections were exposed to risks of damage. Some of the causes for the problem of damage might be connected to storage mechanisms (only representative cases presented with photos below). Formal library in churches was absent but separate building in the church compound called eqa bet; otherwise, some books could be kept inside the main church building - qədəsət. In Ethiopia, MSS are stored in "əqa bet"¹⁷⁶ indicates books are kept with other items. Uniform preservation approach does not always recognize the individual requirements of artefacts.

¹⁷⁵ repairs were made by new materials; only boards and covers same to Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski Graver 2015,104

¹⁷⁶ əqa bet (አቃ ቤት) stone – house; a separate hut usually situated to the east of the church where manuscripts are kept along with other ecclesiastical items

Our books were not put at the shelf in upright position spine outwardly but lying horizontally¹⁷⁷. When volumes with decorated bindings are stacked on top of one another in the absence of proper boxing, a horizontal arrangement may be more suitable. Though large volumes needed to be stored flat, with a maximum of three volumes one on top of the other (where applicable), the reality is most of the collections surveyed showed even more than three was looking common. It follows; the significant number of these books either repaired at their spine area or remained open with only re-sewn.

This was probably due to the load above results pressure on sewing structures and the wooden boards. Moreover, it leads finally to extended text blocks to the forage to cause beak at spine area. Witnessed by all quarter-covered books their wooden board broke vertically. At times, if a thread was torn completely, the sewing structure breaks apart. Hence, there were no other backups other than threads. The sewing techniques did not compatible with the mechanics around the spine while the book was at both rest and function. This problem seemed to be persisted longer time as bindings of original repairs suggested.



Fig. 4.22 Depicting Bahir Dar Giyorgis' storages conditions; two books over one below

4.4.2.1 Exposure to Bad Weather and Humidity

In addition to damages caused by poor placing of books, moulds on the parchment sheets (rust storages), cover board detachment, and the adhesive quality in question can be associated with

¹⁷⁷ This is the case of Byzantine and Islamic bindings too (Parodi 2015, 563).

manuscripts exposure to unfavourable room temperature. The weather condition such as exposure to rain, leakage, and humidity¹⁷⁸ can result in the following damage shown in the picture below.

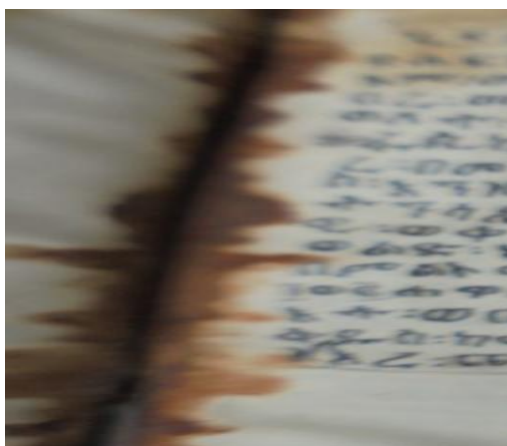


Fig. 4.23 MNDA – 059 showing quire folds damaged by humidity

The above damage can result copper corrosion of ink and inflexible parchment vulnerable to break or crumble when bending. However, such type of damage was represented by very few books in the sample, because, these damages can be related to poor parchment making methods.

4.4.2.2 Damages Caused by Rodents and Insects

The other important book-damaging problem was the attacks of rodents and insects. Books placed either in the shelves and boxes were found to be affected by these agents. Periodic inspection must have been an essential way to cope up the problem.

¹⁷⁸ In storage areas, low temperatures (around 10°C) can be maintained (Parodi 2015, 577).

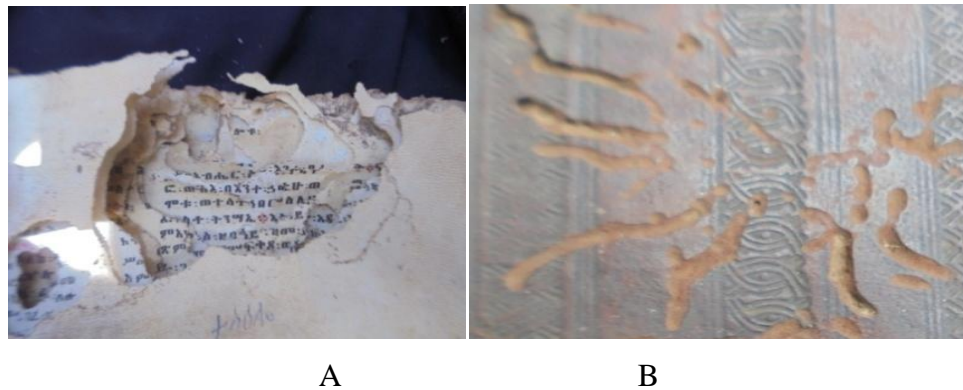


Fig. 4.24 MNDA – 059[A] showing Insects attack at text block; MNDA – 048 [B] showing insect attack on cover leather.

4.4.2.3 Manuscripts Damaged by Accidents



Fig. 4.25 MOGI – 038 showing fire¹⁷⁹ a scar on the cover leather incidents emerged outside the storage building

From the above evaluations of the damages on the manuscripts, it is undoubtedly important to understand that care should be taken against, accidents including fire, caused by careless individuals. Most storekeepers are making their living in the storage and they often used fire for cooking in or near the storage buildings. Often, fire would be considered as most dangerous of

¹⁷⁹The abbot of the Däbrä Mog^wina monastery, abba Täsəfa, told me that the accident of fire happened in 1928 e.c while two monks were cleaning the area around the storage made of entirely woods and mud. He is now only 39 years old, narrated the event as if he were there and the fire caught the storage house to burn about five books and many more artifacts before it had been totally under control by the efforts many monks living in the monastery.

all that because we have no trace of books features remained to us. Of course, this fire caused damage may append documentary value to the books by reflecting some important historical events (Kurmo 2014).

4.4.3 Damages from Repairs

These physical objects continue to exist through time, and are disseminated and consumed in ways which are also socially, economically, and intellectually determined, and of which they bear traces in the form of their present condition. To assess the overall risk to these books, the ways in which damage occurs, and its significance to the books, which sustains it, are hugely variable. In which case a general statement on the preservation was recorded. However, the unwise repair works should have been causing a great deal of damages on close to half of the books in collections surveyed.

The misusing practise and bad storage mechanisms together with the natural ageing of the materials used might facilitate the damage on books surveyed. In order to elongate, their lifetime in function people often tried to intervene to maintain the damages. In doing so, the repairers used various materials and techniques. These materials and techniques selected by usually by unprofessional peoples as could be seen from the repair works. They 'kill' the authenticity of the book structures by two damaging actions; the first one, to repair one element they break another. Secondly, they frequently used material and techniques of application quite different from that of the original. Let us see each case with examples.

Usually removal of spine cover ended with breakage at the spine joints in order to get access to sewing holes had required the temporary removal of the leather covering of at least one of the boards, fig. 4.13 'A' and 'B'. Besides, it usually involved the breaking of the end bands. Board breaks associated with changes of lacing holes, gutter in four bindings; MOGI - 032, MNDA – 059 in local category and MOGI – 037 and MNDA – 044 from Anomalies group.



Fig. 4.26 MNDA – 044 showing position of lacing holes and size differences occurred after frequent re-sewing from the Anomalies category.

After all these, the book repairs did not worry to follow the original methods of construction or materials used. Nevertheless, secondary sewing would seemingly be made with awkwardly and using synthetic threads materials. However, later interventions did not follow such understanding and the large majority of repaired bindings exposed the threads over the spine leather at the back cover. In attaching the board, holes for a braided leather attachment was made the curved channel in which the thread¹⁸⁰ passed through was given little attention. Moreover, replacing end bands inappropriately and recovering the spine with new leather can be categorized into damages because of human intervention due mainly to the complexity of spine structures. Sometimes, when the repairs work was made very earlier, identifying signs of repair and dating of these books is often very difficult (Szirmai 1999, 137).

¹⁸⁰The threads was not necessarily ‘thin’ but the loads that exerted pressure on them did.



A

B

Fig. 4.27 'A' MNDA – 057. 'B' GBI -002; Intentional cutting or removal of the spine covers to get access to holes for resewing



Fig. 4.28 Spine covering leather damages and later repair works from none sampled (in one of the Tana Monastic Collections)

Later repair works were not carried out that aim to consolidate the object's condition without disturbing its authenticity but they were carried out to restore the object's functionality (Parodi 2015, 562). In other cases, it is rather clear the repair patches never harmonized with the original¹⁸¹. From my experience, it is difficult to say, in many cases, why repairs were necessary as the book was a little worn out. Still pretty much ok also without any intervention, and could

¹⁸¹(Scheper 2014, 210)

survive many years, and repairs in many cases were not very successful (the wish to have it “renovated” was probably the reason behind).



Fig. 4.29 QUS – 005 crude repairs leaving the turn-in irregular

In many respects, the speed of research on the local collection of such books should be conducted now faster than the times elapsed before now. To mention few factors, little attention to old books situated in local collections, increasing market demand abroad, theft, natural damages and unwise repairs because changes taking place on the physical survival of the Gondärian manuscripts can hardly be, slow down by human efforts. For instance, the books sampled from CAT, ORG and BDGE collections have evidently showed that they lost most of their original features and hence I avoided them from the comparative codicological¹⁸² study (since few of the codicological features left and described by cataloguers and conservators).

The book reception without break suggested a local tradition characterized by internal consistency. Did the textual tradition continue at material aspects? Would it be possible to reveal material characteristics that designated a local production of these Manuscripts? Were they produced locally similar to their present location or were they Anomalies from the broad area of Gondär or beyond? Besides, by what material and structural book features do the locally

¹⁸² ‘The transfer of manuscripts from place to place has a clear impact on the study of regional codicological features of Ethiopian manuscripts. Without a close study of the provenance of manuscripts, the result of such a study would be completely misleading’ (Ance 2016, 296).

produced Manuscripts differ from the Anomalies? These quite important questions were attempted in the next sub topic investigating material and structural features peculiar to the samples.

I assume that differences in books physical/external appearance may be caused by a kind of material and technical elements applied behind each structure (chap. 5 has a details). However, I knew little about the reasons behind bookmakers' choices of specific material and technical elements from many alternatives. If I had implied that, it could have provided valuable hints about the kind of material culture and people involved in production and use manuscripts. Formerly, it was almost impossible to demonstrate such a hypothesis because not enough data seems to have been found (or recognized and described, anyway) on the Gondärian manuscripts. In doing so, the next chapter tends to determine whether both groups were creating the local corpus that might be linked to the local production and use.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF CODICOLOGICAL FEATURES IN GONDÄRIAN MANUSCRIPTS

In the preceding chapter, the two category of corpus, the Related Majority made up of 61MSS and the Anomaly made up of 12MSS could be created based on 11 material and structural features that presumably had provided distinctive variant of the same Gondärian manuscripts tradition. These pointes require a detail study on the single corpus. Therefore, this chapter five primarily focus on its detail codicological analysis on the ‘related majority’ group of 61MSS. The anomaly group has mainly used for comparison purposes.

In this chapter, attempt to make analysis of the codicological features related to three major manuscripts’ components, namely, the text block, the bindings, the covering techniques, were made. In the process of producing manuscripts, those the three above and other like the decorations and conservation aspects believed to bring about differences in the developments of Gondärian craftsmanship characterized by diversity of material and technical elements within the area in question were discussed. The result of data analysis would be presented following the conventional procedures of book production.

5.1 Codicological Features at Text Block

These codicological features were intentionally preferred and applied by the bookmakers towards producing high value books. The materials used (often attributed to the type of animal skin used) and technical aspects in making parchments would particularly be useful to study about book cultures. The techniques of organizing text blocks and texts involved several processes. These processes have strong relatedness with some time factors and places of producing books. Da Rold (2011, 20) underscores studying the technical aspects in making parchments and the skilful practices of bookmakers would be helpful providing ‘important codicological evidence’. As such, this would give new insights to understand how book culture evolved and how texts are made. In the following sections, techniques in text block and text organization are analyzed.

5.1.1 Techniques of Organizing the Text Block

The techniques in text block organization are manifested in four codicological features. These features include preparation of standard parchments, designing the structures of quires, numeration techniques of quires, and preparation of flyleaves to be added in both the front and the backsides of the manuscripts. Undoubtedly, these codicological features do have importance such as making the codices more durable by protecting the loss of parchment leaves, by working on fixed spines that could not be dislocated when opening the books, and by making flexible parchment leaves. In the following sub-sections techniques followed in text block organization such as preparation of parchments, quire structures, numeration, and addition of flyleaves are analyzed in the same order.

5.1.1.1 Parchment Manufacturing

Parchment manufacturing includes all the processes of preparing the animal skins to the patching of holes to the avoiding of remnants of fat and hair. These processes do have impact in the production of high value manuscripts. Moreover, they are found suggestive about the wealth of the royalty who often sponsored the books production. These processes are discussed in relation to the relatively peculiar codicological features reflected in Gondärian manuscripts.

5.1.1.1.1 Standards in Making Parchments

Any text blocks making start from the parchment preparations. Seregew Hable Selassie (1981, 10) points that there have been some conventionally established evaluative parameters to justify qualities of parchments as ‘good’ or ‘poor’. He indicates that ‘poor quality’ looking parchments are those parchments that have cut marks, dark colour, and remnants of fat and hair. Meeting standards is important in the process of preparing parchments, and this has direct impact on the production of books. Da Rold (2011, 18) explains how codicological studies are trying to address the standard differences in making parchments since they have impact on the production of books.

The bookmakers' resourcefulness in the high criteria of fabrication on the manuscripts can be deduced from the manuscripts themselves. These bookmakers were undoubtedly outstanding in designing the manuscripts that they were thoughtful about durability and aesthetic essentials. Regemorter (1962) and Pankhurst (1984) explain bookmakers' quality of later periods in the cultural Gondärian period about 1848. They indicate that bookmakers were careful in the selection of particular materials and techniques. They produced high valued local raw materials or used quality imported ones. This implies how bookmakers seriously compared alternatives to apply the best materials and techniques. These bookmakers were concerned to produce attractive and durable manuscripts to please their sponsors.

Almost all the bindings of the related majority corpus created are made of high standard white parchments and there are no fat remnants on the parchments. From the total number of manuscripts under the related majority corpus (61 MSS) only four of them witness 'poor' standard in preparing the parchments. Even these four manuscripts show damaged parts on single leaves of parchments. Possibly, these manuscripts suggest the curiosity of bookmakers in selecting and preparing parchments. In contrast, the remaining manuscripts other than the related majority corpus (23 MSS) show lesser technicality of preparing the parchments. As such, one can observe many leaves of the parchments are composed of parchments with dark colour on them and fat and hair remnants. By observing, measuring, and recording the features and characteristics of the parchment, I was able to analyze the possible differences between the related majority corpus and the rest of the manuscripts mainly in concern to the technical aspects of preparing the parchments.

Commonly in Ethiopian book making tradition, sheep and goats skins are preferred more than other animals' skins. This implies that many of the Gondärian manuscripts were made from skins of these animals. It is assumed that white and fine parchments were made from goats' skins. In fact, it is difficult to say exactly which animal skins were used only looking the parchments of the manuscripts. From the literature sources and from the codicological critical observations, almost all the leaves of parchments in Gondärian manuscripts were made from goats' skins and these parchments witness the highest technicality of the persons preparing the parchments.

Hence, very fine, white, and smooth parchment seems to be used in the Gondärian period (17th-18th century).

The process used to obtain the desired results is often observed in the visual examination of the manuscripts' material aspects. In fact, the preparation of quality parchments began from the careful slaughtering of the goats and the sheep. This agrees with what Assefa Liben (1958, 258) stated about the technical aspects of preparing quality parchments. He indicated, "Quality of the parchment depends on the kind of animal skin used and its careful preparation." Similarly, the codicological evaluation about the standard in preparing the parchments has checked both the hair and flesh sides of the skins used for preparing the parchments. As a result, very few parchments are observed with hair follicles, axilla areas, scar tissues, discoloured parts, ink corrosions, and patched holes on them. In general, the corpus had little marks of such kinds. In fact, only two tears (one in QUS 001 and the other in QUS 003) are observed as 'poor' quality of parchments due to faults in preparing the parchments.



Fig. 5.1 Faults in preparing parchments A- QUS 001 and B-QUS 003

It is possible to deduce that the script writing on the parchments was done after the repairing of the torn parchments that had been torn at the time of preparing them. With the help the clues of the written words and flow of sentences, one can easily identify how the parchments were stitched before the writing on them. A codicological scrutiny offers an understanding of how the scribe skipped the damaged parts of the parchments. In fact, such kinds of faults in preparing parchments have been found rare in Gondärian manuscripts.

5.1.1.1.2 Patching up Parchments

As the quality of preparing the parchments requires the skill of the parchmenters, the patching up of cut marks and holes on parchments need expertise hands. These processes have impact on the text block organization. Some defects on parchments are observed in few of the parchment leaves. The skill of repairing cut marks and holes was in consideration of not to damage the text block and not to make unpleasant appearance in patching up defected parts. As can be seen from Fig. 5.2 the patching work requires the skill of the bookmaker.



Fig. 5.2 MNDA – 059 shows patching a parchment of less opacity with beauty

As shown above, in repairing the parchment, the bookmaker cared about the aesthetic appearance of quires. As can be seen from Fig. 5.2 above, the skilful bookmaker duly considered the aesthetic beauty of the parchments. At times, scribes and not parchment producers made the repairing. This often happened when the scribes found the already produced parchments unreceptive to ink or less attractive. Holes on parchments may not require amending them by patching up. As can be seen from the following figure (Fig. 5.3) some holes were left unattended.

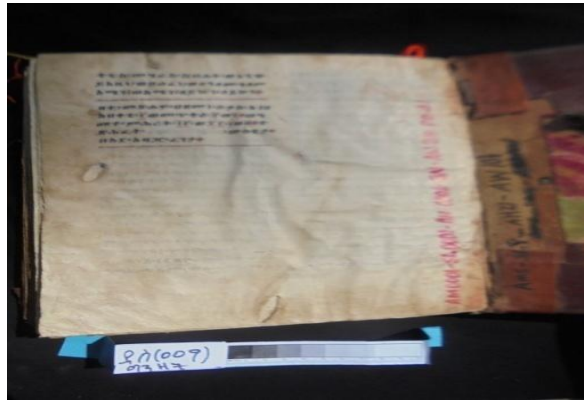
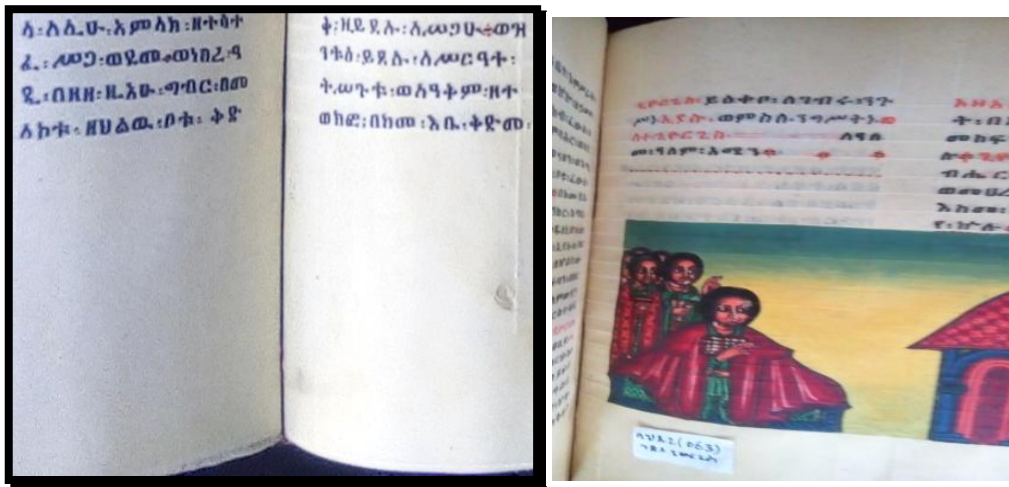


Fig. 5.3 DBS - 009 Parchment makers left holes unpatched (note that the holes are in the end leaf, not in the regular text leaf).

Possibly, the holes on parchments were left without patching them up because bookmakers would have assumed the size of the holes and which specific parchments have defect. Interestingly, relatively small holes in the flyleaves were not repaired. However, holes in the regular text leaves necessarily demanded repairing the parchments. Thus, patching up has strong relation with the text block organization and these patching were done carefully in Gondärian manuscripts.

5.1.1.1.3 Whitening and Dehairing of Parchments

White parchment leaves in Gondärian manuscripts have been the witnesses of the skills of the bookmakers. Producing these white parchment leaves was not an easy one. Bookmakers were thoughtful which animal skins would be the best to prepare parchments. Preparation of parchments is often done carefully beginning from the slaughtering stage. For example, if the place of slaughtering the animal is dirty then the skin would have undesirable dark spots. Bookmakers also care about avoiding blood taints that could darken the parchments.



A

B

Fig. 5.4 BDGE – 063 shows the more white page ‘A’ (flesh side) than page ‘B’ (hair side)

The above picture Fig. 5.4 (BDGE – 063) shows the high contrast between the page openings labelled as ‘A’ and as ‘B’. In a relative sense, the parchment leaves of ‘A’ are more white than the leaves indicated in ‘B’. Possibly, the slight difference of whiteness came from the natural differences of the flesh side and the hair side. These sides can easily be identified by looking the textures and sensing by fingertips. In fact, many of the parchment leaves in Gondärian manuscripts are found white ones. This quality of the parchment leaves has several benefits. The whiter a parchment leave is, the better it receives the ink. This also has advantage to make readings even in less brighten places.

The professional capability of the bookmakers in preparing white parchments without leaving dark marks is manifested in how they were able to make white parchments from both the hair side and the flesh side. This implies how these bookmakers were careful in removing the hair and in scraping the hair to make the hair side as smooth as the flesh side. Assäfa (1958) and Meresha (2011) recalled how bookmakers used a special tool called *mädmas* to rub both sides of the skins to remove fat and hair remnants. This tool also helped to produce smooth and thin parchments. Similarly, Da Rold (2011) inspected quality of parchments in a codicological eye and said this can offer evidences about the type of the animal. Moreover, the colour of

parchments can give clues about the animal. In fact, these codicological features of size and colour are not always true. Rather, the age of the animal, the techniques in making the parchments, and the overall appearance of the final product matters in evaluating the quality. Da Rold (2011, 18) summarized the quality of parchments defining it as “‘Quality’ refers to the thickness, the ‘drape’, the colour and the overall appearance of the parchment, therefore good-quality parchment is usually even in weight (or thickness) and has a good ‘drape’, to do with its flexibility”.

The parchments used for the Gondärian codices of the corpus are found uniformly thin. This indicates lavishness, standard materials, and expert workmanship. The parchments are found impressive that their surfaces were rubbed to make them receive inks and to enhance contrasts by making the scripts more visible even in less brighten places.

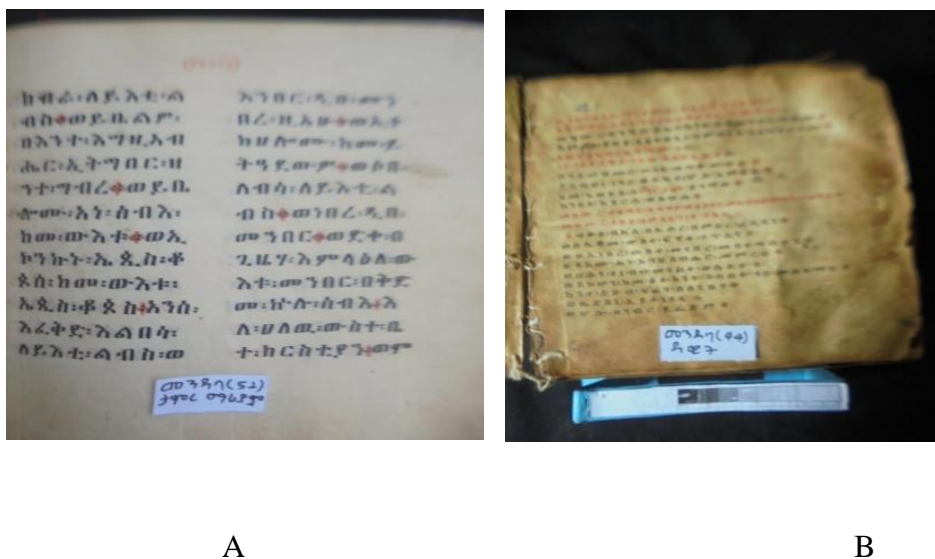


Fig. 5.5 MNDA- 051 shows two sets, white ‘A’ ‘local’ and MNDA - 044 pale yellow ‘B’ ‘Anomalies’

Almost all of the corpuses have white parchment leaves. Most of the corpuses have ‘A’ quality in the local and only few of them have pale yellow appearance. Perhaps the pale yellow appearance of the parchment indicated above as ‘B’ (MNDA-044), poorly done scraping of fat or hair. It might also be colour changed due to exposure to sun light and the long age of the parchments. In either case, the many of the Gondärian manuscripts do have parchment leaves

that are smooth, thin, and white, have no dark colour markings and holes, and have no remnants of fat or hair.

5.1.1.2 Structuring Quires

In every bookbinding craft, a unique skill of the bookmakers is manifested. In all the codices considered in this study, the skill of the bookmakers in selecting materials, in making parchments, and in designing structures of quires are observed. It is assumed that the original scribes would have taken part in designing the structures of the quires. Nonetheless, looking at the quires and to the other components of the Gondärian manuscripts, one can observe there was a sense of uniformity and representation. As such, sponsors interest in search of an identity construction of Gondärian manuscript culture can be traced back. By this, bookmakers particularly competent binders would have considered issues of durability, attractive appearance, and persistent arrangement of parchment bi-folia in the designing the structures of the quires. For this reason, whether the arrangement of the quires was intended for a temporary or for a permanent use, the structuring of the quires has impact on the appearance of the finished codices.

Structuring the quires involves selecting the materials of the cover (leather, vellum, and fabric), the boards, the decorations on the cover, the sewing and its supports, and the use of end leaves. All these matters of codicological features are related to the contextual factors of the principal actors in the production of the codices. Obviously, in Ethiopian book culture, the bookmaker by profession did his work not for commercial purpose. Rather, he performed to please God, and of course to please the patrons. Often members of the royal families and wealthy individuals sponsored production of books in the indicated Gondärian period. These people would have inspected closely the production of books. They often gave the finished products of the local corpuses to religious institutions, and at times, they gave to archival centres around the palaces in the Gondärian political period of 1650 -1784.

Almost all of the Gondärian manuscripts (i.e. 72 MSS out of the total 80 MSS) have consistent number of bi-folios. In the manuscripts, four was the most common number of bi-folios in a quire. As such, the majority of the corpus (52 MSS) is found that they had four bi-folios in each quire. In fact, there are some codices (20 MSS) with five bi-folios in a quire. Only eight of the

MSS from the total selected manuscripts have shown a mixed pattern of structuring the bi-folios. These eight manuscripts have not been categorized in the created related majority corpus. Rather they are categorized into the 'Anomalies' group because of their codicological characteristics associate them more to this group than to the related majority corpus. In one exceptional case from these MSS of mixed structure of quires, one of the manuscripts has even six bi-folios in a quire. In general, in the Gondärian manuscripts, the making of the codex has established pattern of structuring quires and quires have consistent number of bi-folios. For example, 2II (8), 8V (40), 2II (8) = total 56 bi-folios, 106 folium or leaf or 212 pages from the 'small' number of quires ATMI -029; and from the 'big' number of quires MOGI -038; 2II (8), 29IV (116), 2II(8) = total 132 bi-folios, 264 folium or leaf or 528 pages. The numbers of bi-folios at the first and last order are flyleaves.

Gervers & Tomaszewski's (2015) study to rescue the endangered manuscript culture of Ethiopia focused on one of the monastic site of northern Ethiopia that is particularly located in the province of Tigray. Though their primary concern was in addressing the preservation of Ethiopia's book culture into the digital world, they alongside investigated the structural pattern of bi-folios in quires in that particular area of Ethiopia. The irregular pattern of bifolia in quires caught their attention. They observed that the number of bifolia in the quires is strikingly irregular ranging from three to six bifolia in quires.

Though their study cannot be used to compare "Gondarine" manuscript culture with "Tigrean" manuscript culture, for their study was done on one monastic library (holding almost one hundred codices) and does not pretend to be representative of all manuscripts in Tigray. This reveals, if studied a little further, that there were significant regional variations in the structuring of quires in Ethiopian manuscript cultures. As such, the strikingly consistent number of bifolia (mostly four and at times five) in each quire throughout the entire volumes can be important codicological evidence worth mentioning.

In other words, almost in all of the selected Gondärian manuscripts, one can find consistency in the number of bifolia in the volumes. This has impact on the quality and durability of another codicological feature, binding, which is discussed in one of the sub-sections in this chapter. Undoubtedly, such new insight would give the academics an opportunity to investigate further on

the regional variations of Ethiopia's manuscript culture. In the following sub-section, paging, the other closely related codicological feature to structuring quires was analyzed.

5.1.1.3 Arranging the Quires in a Volume

Arrangement of quires is an essential technique in the organization of text blocks. It involves some important codicological features of text block organization such as techniques of paging, number of quires in a single volume, and preparation and addition of flyleaves. These codicological features reflected in the selected Gondärian manuscripts is analyzed in the same order.

5.1.1.3.1 Techniques of Paging

Techniques of paging in Gondärian manuscripts deserved in-depth analysis for they have distinct codicological characteristics. Unlike to the conventional way of paging in the 'modern' period wherein every single writing surface of a sheet of paper gets a page number, the pattern of paging in Gondärian manuscripts follows paging according to the accepted order of quires. In fact, paging is not understood in a literal sense of pagination. Rather, paging refers to the ascending order of Ge'ez numerals indicating the sequence of quires in a volume.

The Ge'ez numbers that were understood as page numbers were often written at the top left-hand corner of the last outer folium of each quire of the first leaf on recto. From the related majority corpus of 57 MSS, 29 MSS have paging of quires at the top left location. Moreover, six MSS have paging at the top right corner, four MSS at bottom left, and 6 MSS at the bottom middle. The remaining codices did not indicate paging using numerals. Perhaps, the scribes and the binders might have used some other clues of beginnings and endings.

All of the Gondärian manuscripts that have been arranged by the paging of the quires, page numbers were all written in Ge'ez numerals. However, Wright (1877) catalogued the Gondärian codices, which had been taken to the British at the Mäqədäla expedition, and he wrote a preface account of paging which is quite implausible. Wright indicated that the codices used Greek numerals to arrange the quires. This seems Wright's misunderstanding about the codices and this reflects his unawareness about Ethiopian history and Ethiopian scribes that they have never been

used to write in Greek numerals instead of Ge'ez numerals. In fact, all the codices used Ge'ez numerals for page numbering the quires. In addition, paging was done for quires rather than for individual parchments or writing surfaces.

The quire signatures used in the bindings had equal size, similar colour and hand to that of the main text underneath. The binders / scribes preferred top left location; I supposed they might avoid later trimming off. The decoration of the quire signatures were common that form the cross itself. The location of signature and the typology of the books showed no correlations.

The other codex which has a strange paging technique is MED – 020. In this particular codex, the conventional ascending order of paging is not observed. Rather, a descending order of paging of quires is observed. Perhaps, such technique of paging the quires in this particular codex was adopted for definite reasons. In a speculation, two persons were involved in the book making processes. One of the persons prepared the parchments and gave page numbers to the quires. Another person might have done the writing, but he mistakenly began from the last page number of the quires.

Lusini (2004) and above all Claire Bosc Tiessé (2014) analysing the making of the libraries of Qwesqwam and Narga. These articles deal with the question of the numbering of the quires, showing that more than one scribe (up to 6) could collaborate on the copying of one single text. According to Bosc Tiessé, the association between the numbering of the quires and the name of the scribe would be most probably dedicated to the payment of the scribes and not necessarily only for the binder to know how to bind the quires. In general, paging of quires in Gondärian manuscripts would have helped the binders more than the users since it was uncommon to refer to book sections using quire numbers. This would also help for later conservational purposes such as making copies of the codices.

5.1.1.3.2 Numbering of the Quires in a Codex

Number of quires in a book varies according to the size of the volume (s) inside the codex. Binding thick codices such as Sənkəssar (Synaxarion) was done by binding the four volumes independently as a single codex. In other words, the same Sənkəssar has four volumes that each

volume became a single codex. In line to this, the number of quires depended on the size of the volume. Many of the codices considered in this study have one volume for each type of book. As such, 67 MSS contained only one work in a book. In other words, these manuscripts contained 67 volumes. Similarly, six MSS contained two works, and two MSS contained three works in independent codices. The remaining five codices were accessed digitally. Hence, it is difficult to identify the number of volumes in each codex and the number of quires in the volumes.

Understanding this codicological feature has an importance since some of the prominent authorities engaged in studying Ethiopia's book culture such as Bausi (2016) and Nosnitsin (2016) claimed otherwise. These scholars concluded that many of the Ethiopic codices were composed of composite and multiple text layers in a single codex. They said that one book contained more than one text or work. This implies that different volumes of different content were merged into a single codex and some other parchments were put over the other parchments even in the main text block. Perhaps, these scholars did not investigate what was the case in Gondärian manuscripts.

In fact, all the codices under the related majority corpus (61 MSS) were found single work each comprising a codex by its own. Only four manuscripts from the 'Anomaly' group have one work in each of the codices. Consequently, the merging of more than one text works into one codex, and attaching layers of parchments into the main text block of a single codex would have reduced the value of the book. In some rare cases, attached layers of parchments were observed not in the main text block rather in the flyleaves. The organization of single works in a codex in Gondärian book culture suggested that there was some kind of specialization in producing a codex of a single content.

In consideration of the number of quires in a volume, three classifications have been identified. The volumes that have 10-16 quires were classified as 'small'. The total number of codices from the related majority corpus in this classification was 15 MSS. Some other codices, 23 MSS, have the 'medium' (i.e. 17-23 quires in a volume) number of quires in each of the volumes. Finally, in the category as 'big' (i.e. 24-29 quires in a volume) there were 15 MSS. In fact, four of the manuscripts in the related majority corpus contained mixed ranges of small, medium, and big.

From the codices under the related majority corpus, ten quires in a volume were found as lower limit and twenty-nine quires in a volume as upper limit. Hence, almost all the related majority corpus of Gondärian manuscripts falls into small, medium, or big.

Strikingly, the manuscripts under the category as big have uniform single quire structure as each volume has either four or five number of bi-folios consistently in the quires of the volumes. This kind of uniformity in number of bi-folios in a quire and similarity of quire structures was not observed in the Anomalies category of the Gondärian manuscripts. This codicological evidence suggested that there were single hands in organizing text blocks that included the uniformity of number of bi-folios in quires and relatively persistent number of quires in volumes.

Moreover, this kind of uniformity indicated that the production of the codices was at a single point in time from the beginning to the completion of organizing the text blocks. This codicological feature of agreed with Beit-Arié's (2019, 497) critical observation of examining phases of production looking at the pattern at which the quires were organized. Beit-Arié emphatically indicated that even in a single codicological feature one could observe there were more production units.

Beit-Arié explained "a change to the composition of the quires at the ends of textual units (such as a smaller quire or a larger quire at the end of some parts of the Bible or a change in the layout of the copying in a manuscript written in a single hand may be evidence of a distinct phase in the production of the unitary codex". Thus, it was observed that there was a regular pattern of organizing the number of bi-folia in quires and consistency of organizing quires in volumes in the Gondärian manuscripts. In the following, the other important codicological feature of flyleaves preparation and addition is analyzed in relation to the above-discussed techniques of organizing text blocks.

5.1.1.4 Fly Leaves Preparation and Addition

Preparation of fly leaves and addition of them to the text block is an important codicological feature. In making parchments for flyleaves, similar care was often done as the care taken for making the parchments used for the main text. Similar to the parchments used for the main text,

the flyleaves were ruled. In terms of selecting and producing quality parchments for the main text block, the same was done for the flyleaves. The techniques applied in the preparation and addition of flyleaves in the related majority corpus attended in the consideration of flyleaves as independent quires added both at the beginning and at the end of the text blocks.

In fact, the flyleaves in all the Gondärian manuscripts were not intentionally left blank parchment sheets. This can be deduced from the number of parchment sheets added at the beginning and at the end. By this, the number of flyleaves was always even since the added flyleaves were bifolia. It was observed that the flyleaves were original ones, and they showed the same quality of parchment leaves similar to the parchments used for the main text blocks. Fly leaves were added similarly that the flesh sides were facing to the main body. In making the flyleaves, no book making tradition was observed in making flyleaves from less quality and wasted parchments.

Contrary to this, Gervers & Tomaszewski (2015)¹⁸³ indicated that the typical low quality of parchments used for flyleaves. They underscored the ‘poor’ quality of parchments used for flyleaves since these parchments have several black spots on the writing surfaces and other defects of colour and very thin ink transparent to the back of the writing surfaces. Perhaps, the codicological evidence they presented was an indicative of the regional variations of book production sites in Ethiopia. This is because the codices they investigated were originally produced not in the city of Gondär and its vicinity.

The addition of flyleaves in Gondärian manuscripts was done skilfully that equal number of parchments were added in both sides of the codices. Similar to what Sergew Hable-Selassie (1981) and Winslow (2015) indicated about the number of fly leaves, in the related majority corpus of Gondärian manuscripts showed equal and even number of parchments were used in both sides. This technical aspect of adding flyleaves attested that the added flyleaves were

¹⁸³“Lower quality parchment was generally used in the preparation of flyleaves. Numerous stains, discolorations, defects and semi-transparency tend to be the main features of this material” Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015 Technological aspects of the monastic manuscript collection at May Wäyni, Ethiopia. P.115

originally done. This means the flyleaves were not inserted later. As Winslow (2015) indicated, the flyleaves were original as the main text blocks and they were not inserted later.¹⁸⁴ Actually, Winslow (2015) was right about the added flyleaves, but flyleaves were not added as protective only. Rather, fly leaves have other purposes other than their use as protective of the main text block. Similarly, in the related majority corpus, the added fly leaves were originally made, for they were found covered with spine linings from the beginnings. Moreover, they had holes on their spine folds, which were possibly done at the time of working on the sewing structures such as the end bands and the tie downs. Looking the physical appearances of the added flyleaves, it was easy to understand that they were made before spine linings.

Furthermore, the flyleaves in the related majority corpus were all consist of full parchment sheets. This codicological feature of full parchment sheets of flyleaves was found slightly different from Delamarter & Melaku's (2009) observation looking at Ethiopian codices available in western countries that have inserted half parchment sheets.¹⁸⁵ In the corpus, no half-parchment sheets were added neither in the flyleaves nor in the main text blocks. At times, the added flyleaves were assumed that they were newly manufactured ones, or they would have originated from other different codices.



Fig. 5.6 MNDA – 059 a layer of parchment later added as a flyleaf

¹⁸⁴73% of Ethiopian manuscripts have separate protective end leaves (Winslow 2015, 115).

¹⁸⁵Inserting half sheets in few Ethiopian codices was not uncommon (Delamarter & Melaku 2009, 9).

As shown in the above figure (Fig. 5.6), there were rare cases at which full parchment flyleaves were added later forming layers to the main text block. Similarly, Nosnitsin (2016) indicated that there is a possibility that the organization of different parts of a codex (text block) at different points of time as ‘production units’.¹⁸⁶ In line with this, Winslow’s (2015, 114) assumption indicated that fly leaves were added at the binding phase rather than originally at the production phase. He implied that the parchment leaves for flyleaves were different from the parchment leaves used for the main text blocks. However, most of the flyleaves in the corpus were ruled similarly as the parchment leaves of the main text blocks. This indicated that the parchment leaves used for the main text block and the parchment leaves used for flyleaves were done at the same time.

With regard to the functions of flyleaves, it can be assumed that they may have other purposes than their being used as protective inside covers of the main text blocks. Plausibly, these kinds of production of flyleaves in the related majority corpus would have had conservation roles. This implied any added scripts would be done on the flyleaves rather than in the margins of the main text blocks. In addition, some model paintings of saints and patrons were found pasted over the flyleaves. For instance, in the sample pictures from the related majority corpus such as pasted in MNDA - 050, BDGE - 064, and MNDA – 054, it was assumed that flyleaves did have other purposes. Attesting this, Bausi (2014b) explained some other possible functions of having flyleaves originally added to the main text blocks such as drawings can be done on them and historical notes can be written on them.¹⁸⁷ Undoubtedly, the main text blocks would not be affected and cut, had the paintings, and the notes were not written on the main text blocks. Hence, the independent flyleaves in the Gondärian manuscripts assumed other purposes other than protecting the main text blocks.

¹⁸⁶Nosnitsin (2016, 88) suggested that in order to have a better understanding of each manuscript’s history one should take the development of one codex in several stages.

¹⁸⁷Four Gospels manuscripts, so-called ‘Golden Gospels’ could be used to preserve notes regarding the institution (usually a monastery or a church), inserted in empty spaces or on blank. This is particularly remarkable in the Ethiopic manuscript culture (Bausi 2014b).

Moreover, the flyleaves in the Gondärian manuscripts had no quire number but they were ruled similar to the main text blocks. The flyleaves were of the same quality as the leaves of the main text block but the spine linings were not. In such a case, the later seemed done by the binders than by the scribes. In some codices, spine-lining parchments' edges were not folded properly; hence, problems of attrition were common. At times, same threads to the main text blocks and the boards connected the flyleaves, but the tie downs were included in the flyleaves. This likely created problems of opening the codices at ease. Nevertheless, the end leaves in the corpus were made part of the text block, and they were not done separately.

These codicological evidences could be seen in the exposed parts of the original spine linings. By this, the mechanics of the book became smoother than before. After sewing, the quires in all text block spines appeared less likely, as a rule, to be covered with spine lining parchments. The spine lining material covers the spine from head to tail but they were not adhered with any adhesive. Moreover, flyleaves were constructed independently as 'quire' and were sewn with the text block composed of some two to eight in the related majority corpus and according to Nosnitsin (2016), flyleaves were composed of two to six bi-folia.¹⁸⁸ They were never taken from the regular quire of some leaves as end leaves or were left unwritten by the scribes where the actual writing of the main text stopped which often would have formed irregular number of fly leaves to be added.



Fig.5.7 MOGI - 038 shows the use of a ruled flyleaf

¹⁸⁸...placed before and after the text block, are usually composed of some two to six folia. These quires are not intended for receiving the writing, but otherwise they are included into the codex as regular text quires' Nosnitsin 2016, 84

As shown in the above figure (Fig. 5.7), the flyleaf was ruled similarly to the main text block. In this particular flyleaf, the ‘name’ of the codex that often resembled the ‘title’ was written on it. Obviously, the marker used to write the ‘name’ of the codex indicated the writing was done recently since the use of markers in the Gondärian period was unthinkable. Hence, the above figure and some other cases about the uses of flyleaves in Gondärian manuscripts attested that fly leaves were made to the main text block from the beginning phases of book production.

The comparison of used flyleaves between the related majority corpus and the ‘Anomalies’ revealed significant difference between the two. As shown in the following table (Table 5.1), there were significant variations of patterns of bifolia with respect to the added flyleaves.

Table 5.1 Comparison between the related majority corpus and the Anomalies on the number of bi-folios used as flyleaves.

Patterns of bi-folios with number of fly leaves	Number of books’ origin	
	The corpus	Anomalies
two double leaves/four single leaves of both sides	48	2
one double leaf/two single leaves of both sides	8	1
three double leaves/six single leaves of both sides	5	0
Total	61	3

As shown in the above table, only three codices in the ‘Anomalies’ group had even number of flyleaves. This indicated that the added flyleaves in the remaining eleven manuscripts of the ‘Anomalies’ group were not of separate parchment sheets, which often would be found in bifolia rather than in single sheets. Possibly, the added flyleaves were the end parchments of the main text blocks. As such, this pattern of adding flyleaves assumed irregularity of arranging bifolia.

Gervers & Tomaszewski (2015) shared the idea that such kind of irregularity in arranging parchments of a book might come from inattentiveness to the books text block organization.¹⁸⁹

Moreover, these eleven manuscripts might have irregular number of flyleaves in both sides and odd numbers of flyleaves, which implied single leaves of parchments were used instead of bifolia. However, most of the manuscripts in the local group have regular number of flyleaves in both sides and even numbers of flyleaves, which implied the used fly leaves appeared in bifolia rather than in single sheets. Hence, such technique of attaching flyleaves in bifolia to the main text blocks and yet as separate quires gave mobility advantages in using the codices. In other words, inserting single parchment leaves would not be fixed such that at the opening of the books such flyleaves would slip out of the bindings.

To what extent some of the unusual constructions were the result of later damage was very difficult to say. Nonetheless, It was perfectly clear that the very straightforward bifolia were undisturbed and were original. End leaves even with numerous bifolia were all regarded as independent quires from the text-block.¹⁹⁰ A number of guard leaves, (blank leaves) were usually added to the text block to protect the texts¹⁹¹. On more deluxe¹⁹² manuscripts, the number of these may be higher, as it was a common practice to write in the blank spaces at the beginning and ends of manuscripts. In this way, prayers, property transactions, death notices, and information relevant to the community that owned the manuscript were preserved (Winslow 2015, 205).

Parchments end leaves that appeared to be have been added by scribes but not by binders were ruled and had the same features as the text block. Certainly, there was no evidence that the separate leaves were added after the main text blocks had been sewn because the sewing threads

¹⁸⁹On occasion, however, the irregularity nature of their folio composition is indicating that no particular attention was paid to the consistent arrangement of the book.(Gervers, Michael & Jacek, Tomaszewski 2015, 114).

¹⁹⁰Mostly flyleaves were wrapped by spine lining parchments; if a fly leaf is out of the spine lining it must have been added later.

¹⁹¹To protect written pages from the direct contact with wooden boards' Nosnitsin 2016, 80.

¹⁹²Fly leaves often give a clue about the binder's attitude or status of the book in question' (Scheper 2011, 59).

were found always continuous. Codicological evidences offered that many protective flyleaves as regular text quires were observed in the related majority corpus. Nosnitsin (2016) indicated that many Ethiopian codices before 17thc had used the outer leaves of the protective originally as “pastedowns.” There were also quires of flyleaves used for other purposes: They had been used for writing marginalia on them such as writing brief memorial notes and relevant documents to be transmitted to the subsequent generations and local community.

In fact, flyleaves were all parts of the codices, yet they were independent quires by their own sake as ‘small’ quires. Ruled flyleaves indicated that the scribe made them or the scribe and the binder was the same person. Plausibly, painters were different from either the scribe or the binder. For example, the incomplete painting on the flyleaf (BDG–066) was possibly done by paint and not by a scribe who ruled the flyleaf similar to the main text block. In other words, the paint was unlikely to rule the parchment leaf on the other side of the bi-folia. Perhaps, the incomplete painting might be due to a shortage of inks or possibly the death of the paint before finishing his work. In the following, the other important codicological feature that dealt with the main texts’ organization is discussed.

5.1.2 Text Organization

Codicological features reflected in the selected Gondärian manuscripts that were strongly related to text organizations such as page layouts, added paintings inside texts, and sizes and shapes of written texts are analysed in the next sub-sections.

5.1.2.1 Number of Columns on a Single Page

Number of columns on single parchment leaves was regarded as a codicological feature of text organization. Number of columns on a single page has significant implication on the type of the manuscript. For instance, it was found always true in Gondärian manuscripts particularly for Book of Psalter (i.e. Psalms) which often included Song of Solomon, the number of column was only one on any single pages. This codicological feature of number of columns on a single page may have some trends of connection to specific contents. For example, Senkesar, Gospels, Wudassie Amalk etc are their contents organized in three columns.

From the Gondärian manuscripts considered in this study, 31 MSS were found having two columns on all the parchment leaves consistently. Some other 29 MSS were found having three columns on every page, and other seven MSS were found having only one column on each of the parchment leaves. In fact, in three MSS inconsistent number of columns was observed on the parchment leaves comprising the codices. As such, two and three columns on single pages were characterized as the typical features of the related majority corpus. Consistency in the number of columns as either two columns or three columns on single pages was possibly the typical feature of Gondärian manuscripts. Moreover, there were manuscripts that have three columns on single pages. These manuscripts have square shapes of equal measure of width and length. Whereas, one and mixed number of columns on single pages were the codicological feature of the manuscripts belonged to the 'Anomalies' group. All the codices that have only one column on single pages fitted the requirements of appearing rectangular. The contents of the manuscript and how it would be used were more probably the two important considerations for the ultimate design of the pages.

Moreover, all the manuscripts with highly ornamented text pages belonged to the 'Anomalies' group. The manuscripts such as ATMI-026, ATMI-027, QUS-007, and INDI-060) have ornamented text pages, and they belonged to the 'Anomalies' group. Unlike to the related majority corpus, many manuscripts in the 'Anomalies' group, have ornamented frames of the columns. This might suggest about bookmakers choice and about users interest in organizing texts. In fact, ornamentation was associated with the scribal practice and patrons preference rather than with textual organization. On the other hand, no manuscript in the related majority corpus was observed having ornamented text pages and having mixed number of columns on single pages.

5.1.2.2 Paintings inside Texts

In some cases, the main texts of the Gondärian manuscripts were organized with added paintings on blank spaces often at the ends of book chapters. Such added paintings inside texts suggested the involvement of other hands in organizing texts. Paintings inside texts were observed in 3 MSS which had half pages of paintings. Moreover, eight MSS have full-page paintings inside the respective texts. In addition, not to contaminate the text with colour droplets, all the full pages

spaces were left unruled¹⁹³. The painting of book edges was not common but excellent examples had survived. As can be seen from the figure below (MNDA-054), there were some kind of insertions of paintings inside texts.

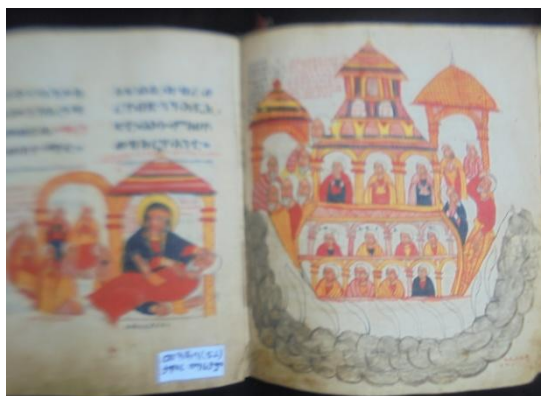


Fig. 5.8 shows half page and full-page paintings inside the text.

From the above figure, one can see how the paintings were done on a half-page blank and a full-page blank space on the other side of the same bifolia. This kind of added paintings inside texts would not touch the actual texts. Rather, they were painted in blank spaces of the main text block. Possibly, the paintings main purpose might be to give pictorial representations. Perhaps, the added paintings inside texts were to protect any additions of written texts to the main body. However, such addition of paintings inside main texts was not found in all of the manuscripts. In the following, the proportion of written area with the margins and the book size was discussed.

5.1.2.3 Page Layout of the Written Area

Sizes and shapes of the written text and their proportionality with the margins and the book size were important codicological features. These features can be associated with the page layout in the Gondärian manuscripts. Comparison between the actual written areas with the outer dimensions of the writing surfaces can give important codicological evidences related to page

¹⁹³ 'Paintings of the 17thc were painted in unruled frame' (Witakowska & Bausi 2015, 168)

layouts. Presumably, in texts with square written area there would be equal ratio of height to width (i.e. 1:1). Delamater (nd) recalled this feature of written area was common in books produced in the second-half 17th-century books, whereas, rectangular shaped books came in the 18th century.

In the Gondärian manuscripts considered, the ratio of the book dimension over the actual written area dimension was found 2:1. Moreover, the regular shapes ratio varied as 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3. In a square shaped written area, the square shape was strictly maintained by the actual text area. By this, there was proportionality between the book size and the open space. Many of the codices in the local corpus were found having large book sizes. With proportionality to these large books' thicknesses, 52 MSS were found in the range 17 – 38 cm width as medium, and the rest of the manuscripts were greater than 38 cm such that they were taken as large.¹⁹⁴

In the Gondärian manuscripts, the dimensions of the written area per page were in the ranges between 55.5 cm² and 1180 cm². As such, there were 22 MSS viewed as 'small' having 55.5 cm² – 377 cm², 28 MSS were found 'medium' having 377 cm² – 754 cm², and 11 MSS were in the category of 'large' since they have 755 cm² – 1180 cm². This might imply significant number of the codices were either medium or large.

In consideration of the page layouts, the numbers of lines per page were in a range from 9-40. With this, codices that have 9-20 numbers of lines per page were considered as small, that have 21-30 as medium, and that have 31-40 as large. Perhaps, the smaller the number of lines per page, the bigger the font sizes of the written texts. In contrast, the larger the number of lines per page, the smaller the font sizes of the written texts. Similarly, the page layouts of the four margins were not found equal. Rather, in almost all the manuscripts, the bottom margin was significantly wider than each size of the three margins. Possibly, this kind of page layout was adopted purposefully in consideration of protecting the main written area from hand-touches in turning pages.

¹⁹⁴Ethiopian manuscripts sizes are in the ranges, Midium 17- 38 cm; small less than 17 cm, and large greater than 38 cm. Witakowska, Balicka 'Ethiopic codicology' in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies* (2015, 163).

5.2 The Second Production Elements of bookmaking

Codicological features of bookmaking mainly include techniques of binding such as sewing and board attaching, spine linings, and end-bandings techniques. These techniques involved all the processes of selecting materials and technical modifications to achieve the desired higher values of Gondärian manuscripts in terms of durability and attractive appearance.

5.2.1 Binding: Sewing and Board Attaching

The study of binding in the vast field of codicology is recent phenomena. As Gumbert (2004), it was only some fifty years for serious attention given to bookbinding. Obviously, binding work begins after accomplishing the organization of text blocks. Hence, binding referred to the sewing of the organized quires, and then to the attaching of the sewn quires to board coverings. The techniques of sewing and attaching to boards are codicological features have required skilful persons. As such, bindings have a remarkable functionality such as they hold quires together; allow opening and closing of codices without losing parchment leaves and bi-folios.

Observing the possibly applied techniques in organizing the texts of Gondärian manuscripts, there have been two phases of binding. The first referred to the sewing together of the organized quires into the text block. This was found less complicated work. The second was related to the complexity of attaching the sewn quires that made the text block to boards. These two phases of binding are discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Sewing the Text Block

In the earlier period, the lacing of the boards to the text-block was markedly different. The emphasis was in achieving the utmost flexibility of text blocks when they were opened and closed. Skilful binders often considered the selection of best binding materials in terms of durability. They also considered the spacing of stitching and the identification of sewing stations of the organized quires. Spinning was the main concern, and it included three major practices. These practices namely, board shaping, spine lining, and end banding were parts of the sewing. By this, due considerations have been taken granting durability and attractive appearance of the codices. In many of the Gondärian manuscripts, the sewing structures assumed binders careful

designing and doing the bindings. Techniques consistently appeared in the corpus revealed the place where the binders should have given attention towards meeting certain functions.

In sewing quires, binders would have predicted the level of opening text blocks, the points of stitching, and the arrangement and number of quires in a volume to be sewn. In contrary to what Seregw Hable-Selassie (1981, 23) indicated about the maximum number of quires in a volume that was not more than 15, in the case of the Gondärian manuscripts' sewing structure, I have observed up to 29 quires were sewn into a single volume. Similarly, many of the Gondärian manuscripts reflected the skills of the binders in sewing the text blocks that can be opened up to 180 degrees flat. This was possible even in sewing text blocks of very thick codices. These characteristics of the mechanics of the book to see and its durability depended on the quality of the bindings. Each of the quires was sewn through the nested spine-folds to attach them to each other by sewing link –stitches.

Two phases in the process of sewing were observed in the Gondärian manuscripts. These phases were related to tie downs made at both sides of a spine area. Plausibly, sewing was predominantly made of chain stitch and/or link stitch. The corpus had sewing structures on two or three pairs of sewing stations.¹⁹⁵ Most books have four sewing stations¹⁹⁶ four sewing stations divide the length of the spine fold in five equal parts. In sewing text blocks with link-stitches techniques vertical to the quire folds, two techniques of phases of procedures were identified in the corpus that the threads passed to. The first technique, link-stitches, lower board attachment, flyleaves, text block, upper boards, and coverings and end band with braided leather came finally. Both sewing works began by wooden boards, but the difference seen at elements involved and steps of sewing the tie down and end band application procedures did vary.

The second technique of the first phases started from lower board, then spine line parchment (one side), fly leaves, text blocks (quire folds), The next phase continued; using the same threads, tie down, quire folds, inserted folded leather, spine lining edges and braided leather end

¹⁹⁵Seven pairs of sewing stations were also known (Szarmai 1999, 46).

¹⁹⁶90% with thick thread with two station two small MSS one pair only one MS three stations unlikely. Furthermore, Ethiopic book bindings display most often a unique way of sewing the text blocks, using a four-needle sewing in two pairs of sewing holes (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, 11).

band. Final third phase, same threads spine lining other side edge and board attachment repeated same elements at other side of the binding to end at upper board attachment, then finally coverings. The first method applied after covering while the second method was done before covering. The analysis of the data based on the corpus demonstrated that the second type mainly marked the local corpus¹⁹⁷, which was also rare.

The second type was sewing that did pass over on the text block spine folds only. (Without sufficient support, the sewing could be more vulnerable to tearing through the quires. The connection between the covers and text block is also more dependent on merely on the covering material at the spine and possibly by material joining the boards to the text block on the inner joints - threads and outer joints; needless to mention the physical appearances and integrity of the entire book format.

The first was the accepted way and more than half of the recorded in the corpus showed, whereas the second could be regarded as short cuts and not accepted (Fakade-Sellasié 2010, 224). The later did not conservational and not aesthetic as well. The basic stability centre for the first one was its spine lining and the second was on its spine threads exposed, the mechanics became more difficult in the later than the former. Because the later text block was fixed at two points: braided and spine that restricted free movement between the boards and the leaves caused breaks on them. Spine lining with stitches running on the backside of spine structures were appeared to be later worked or not typical; the existence of interventions might be recognised simply from the material origin of threads and sewing quality used witnessed little originality. In cross section, the spine shape of the local corpus books was distinctly flat, and any book of this date with another shape must have been altered or repaired later.

Bookbinders' choice significantly determined the strength of a relatively simple but quick sewing structure. In addition to that, however, the quality of the whole structure depended on the number of tie downs in relation to the number of quires. Actually, inside the Gondärian tradition

¹⁹⁷Rare in Ethiopian tradition (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, 118).

the ratio¹⁹⁸ was always 1:1. The boards and the threads services age were partly determined by the extent of coverage from external exposure.

5.2.1.2 Board Attachments

Board attachment was found more complex than sewing both of which belonged to the techniques of binding. Parchments size which had been organized in quires then the organized quires sewn into volumes have direct relation to the selection of appropriate boards. In addition, the skill of board shaping in consideration of several other codicological features deserved critical understandings. These two issues of board attachment techniques are presented in the following sub-sections.

5.2.1.2.1 Parchments Smaller than Boards

All the parchment leaves in the whole codex were of equal size. By this, all the codices considered in this study have shown equal sizes of parchment leaves respective to the codices they were part of text blocks. Hence, text blocks comprised of respectively equal parchment leaves were determinant in designing and working on boards. The preparation of boards was considerate about the size of the parchments. This in turn tells how boards were prepared before the sewing process began. This has determined the placement of sewing stations by making tunnels used for passing the ties to attach the boards.

It was observed that in many of the manuscripts, lacing up the upper boards was done before working on the sewing. The holes to pass the laces were done slightly deeper into the written areas only in small number of books in the corpus.

¹⁹⁸Scheper 2014, 168, noted also in Islamic manuscript tradition that as long as the ratio was 1:1 the construction was durable



A

B

Fig. 5.9 'A' MNDA – 041 shows text block smaller than boards, the square 'B' QUS – 003-text block smaller or flush to boards

In many of the Gondärian manuscripts, the text blocks were smaller than the respective boards of the codices. However, Paterson (2008, 55) states that the text blocks without a square has been one of the common characteristics of Ethiopian codices. Nosnitsin (2016, 80) also indicates that the sizes of the text blocks and the boards are either relatively equal or small size difference between them.

The other codicological characteristics assumed the boards used for the covers did not belong to the original text block. The covers of Ethiopian manuscripts were usually flush with the text block's edges. If the boards protrude beyond the edges, it may imply the text block and the boards were made in different places. Assumption may be taken the boards were used for a larger manuscript before they were recycled. In fact, boards may have been reused fitting them to text block edges. However, many of codices in the corpus showed the codicological characteristics indicated in fig.5.9 'A'. Moreover, all the manuscripts those are similar with 'B' type was the 'Anomalies' group. Thus, the very intention of bookmakers as indicated in 'A' type was to protect the text block from damage due to frequent touches. It would be able to extend the service ages of the text block at the three sides. The text block was not cut flush to the boards, but it was slightly smaller in comparison to the boards.

5.2.1.2.2 Board Shaping

Similar to the codicological importance of differences between the sizes of text blocks and the boards, investigating the techniques in board shaping were found significant. It may be difficult to explain exactly how boards were attached with text blocks. Szirmai (1999) indicated that binding work involved cutting of appropriate wood and making laces to pass through them the threads.¹⁹⁹ Sergew Hable-Selassie (1981) shared this idea and underscored the need to study about the choice of woods and the ways of cutting the woods. In contrary to the commonly observed problem of Ethiopian book culture making thick boards thickness was also a problem in Ethiopian MSS making tradition, but a considerable number of manuscripts in the corpus had thin boards. Formerly boards were made from papyrus or leather (Witakowska and Bausi et al., (eds.) 2015, 154). In fact, wooden²⁰⁰ boards have recent ages to be used as book covers; perhaps their manufacturing skill seems to advance in Gondärian period onwards.

Wood with the grain running from top to bottom²⁰¹ but a vertical split was common problem. As such, of nine bindings, eight were found with quarter covers. All were in the Anomalies category. This indicated that covering in full had also assumed a structural functions in addition to aesthetic one. Thin boards as were used in MNDA – 047 were assumed as solutions by protecting text blocks from thick and rough wooden boards. Thus, shaping wooden boards has impact on the life of the leather bindings especially leather covers at spine. Similarly, shaping of boards for the spine as shown in the figure below, has impact on the durability of the bindings.

¹⁹⁹“The binding operation begins with preparing the wooden boards, which receive holes to accommodate the thread” *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, (Szirmai, J. A. 1999, 45 – 50).

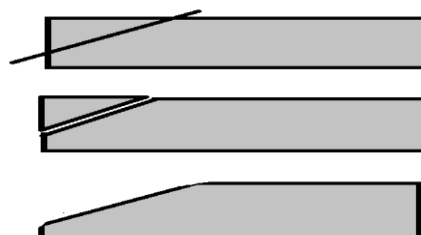
²⁰⁰ ‘...the idea of using wooden covers for books had been adopted by the Arabs from the Ethiopians.’ Sergew Hable Selassie 1981, 22.

²⁰¹Delamarter and Melaku Terefe, *Ethiopian Scribal Practice* (2009, 53).



Fig. 5.10 QUS – 008, bevelled boards shapes at spine edge

Bevelled board shapes were observed in many of the bindings in the corpus. As shown above, the board shaping mattered significantly. The flat cut shape at only the edge before reaching to the last laced hole in which the thread of the board attachment to the text block passed. The primary board attachment was always and was only based upon the sewing²⁰², more often the proper attachment was made by a real lacing of the sewing thread to the boards edges adjacent to the text block spine. Replacing the holes by new ones was seen on MNDA – 053.



Wooden board edge shaping steps: View from width

Fig. 5.11 cross section of board edge shaping steps; upper side, and facing to a spine. The above drawing shows possible cutting patterns in shaping boards for the spine area. By this, the particular trend of cutting the boards may have been adopted in many of the manuscripts studied. In addition, there were varieties of board shaping at the spine areas as stipulated in the following drawing.

²⁰²There are also covering structures which connects the two wooden boards as folding part of the spine cover leather and is glued onto the inside of the boards partly filling the gaps in a joint area, a fold type of the turn-ins.

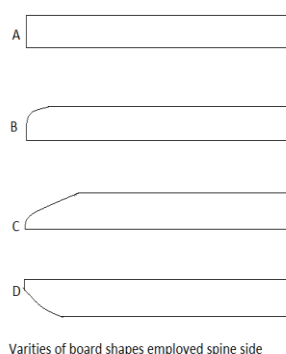


Fig. 5.12 Board shaping varieties from outer to inner facing only to spine edges; 'A' square, 'B' 25% bevel, 'C' 75% bevel and flat bevel, 'D' 75% bevel but round bevel

As shown above, in the first kind 'A' all the sides were of 90° making a rectangular board shape for the spine. In the second kind 'B', the fore edge was free, and the spine side was curved. This was done by removing the upper side of the board for the spine by cutting in 45° . In the third kind 'C' both sides were curved similarly. Finally, in the fourth kind 'D', the lower sides were curved to the spine side. The curve helped the cover for further strength and reduced friction. Leather coverings would possibly have damaged points that were caused mainly by tensions from the two shapes of board edge corners of square boards common to adjacent to the spine folds. One can guess how binders made more stable spines. Experienced binders critically observe which parts of the bindings were vulnerable to damages.

From the figure above, one can notice that the boards frequently have a slight border shape. The way in which they were cut or shaped or unshaped edges introduced differences among the bindings. The possible reason for the shape was partly due to a structural feature and conservation in purpose. The shape of the wooden board outer surface edges adjacent to the spine edge was only curved. The rest either gently touched to be round or left as square. The edges subjected to shaping had been four variants and differ in spine and fore edge sides.

Table 5.2 the occurrences of types of board shapes only in the bindings visible and that contained the evidence

Board shape		The Corpus	Anomalies
Square	6 MSS	DBS-014, 016; MNDA- 058; BDGE- 063; QUS- 004	DBS - 017
Round 25% bevel	21 MSS	BDGE- 066, 068; DBS - 011; MNDA- 041, 042, 043, 047, 048, 049, 053 051, 057, 058; DBS - 010; QUS - 001, 005, 006, 007, 075	DBS - 009; QUS - 003
Bevel 75% bevel and flat bevel	11 MSS	DBS-014; MNDA-045, 052, 060, 047; DGE-064, 065, 067; QUS -008	MNDA - 044; ATMI - 027
75% bevel but round bevel	1 MS	MNDA - 059	0
Total	39	34	5

The above table shows, the square board edges were small in both categories, the corpus and the ‘Anomalies’. The shaping of the boards’ edges adjacent to the spine could have been the common practice against some literatures, which indicated no shaping was applied to all Ethiopian bindings. Round/ 25% bevel constituted greater number than others. Nonetheless, the number in both groups was not comparable indicated differences in tradition of shaping the boards. The unique codicological feature of board shaping in these particular codices needed further investigation.

Books generally have flat spines, or they have slightly rounded ones. The way at which the wooden boards were shaped, probably caused the damages at the bindings, especially in the sewing structures at joints and the spine. The thread in relation to all the loads of the wooden boards and the text blocks could not resist; hence, it was found damaged. Formerly boards were considered not as a mechanical part but only used as protections. As a result, as witnessed in the manuscripts, all the quarter-covered books were found with their wooden boards broken vertically. Similarly, the shape of the boards’ edges in the second type of end band can affect the spine area. As shown below (Fig. 5.13), shaping the boards for the spine area was often done carefully.

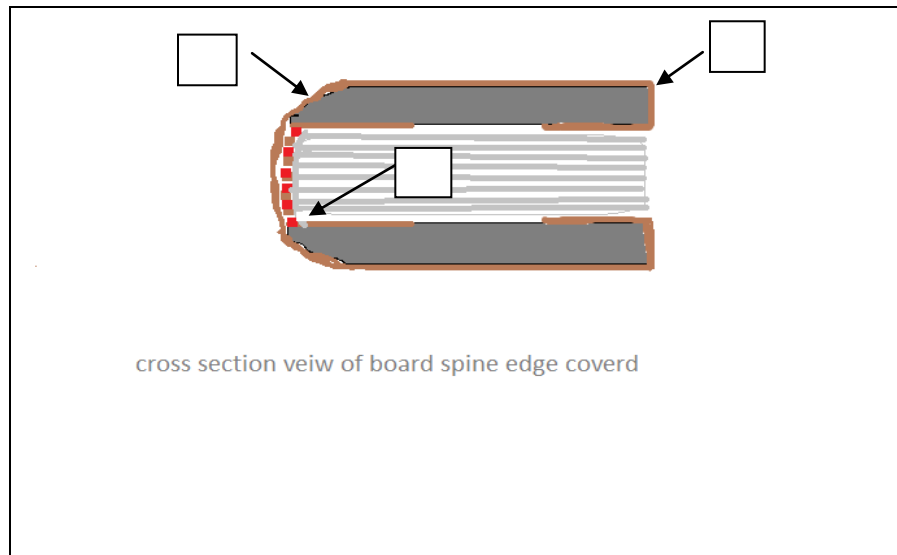


Fig. 5.13 showing three board placements displayed as A, B, and C; notice the shape of the board edges as they occupy different position in the bindings of the second of end band type

The above figure represented the structures in shaping the boards' edges. This had a strong relation to the strength of the codices. In this kind of end band structures, the board used for the spine edges has significantly different curving patterns. This suggested the skilful practice of the binders in shaping the wooden boards thinking about the vulnerable areas of the bindings and about the issue of making the bindings attractive.

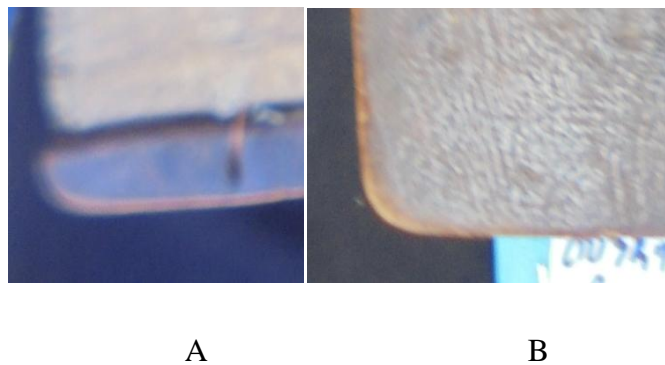


Fig. 5.14 MNDA – 059 shows bevelled and round curves that create less friction zone

These typical Gondärian bindings, their heavy wooden boards were round (Fig. 5.14, B) or square (Fig. 5.13, C) at the outer edges and bevelled at the spine edge, which were then covered by spine leather (Fig. 5.13 A, B). Since some leather covers at fore edges and spine edge boards had worn out from as evidences of extensive uses. It seemed a good choice for shaping of the boards of the books to sustain heavy use.

In the following sub-section, the issue of spine lining is discussed in relation to the important codicological features under spine lining such as the material selection and the issue of meeting the standards.

5.2.2 Spine Lining: Material and Standard

Spine lining was addressed in terms of the selected materials for the purpose and the requirements to meet the standards. These codicological features of spine lining are discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.2.2.1 Material

Materials selected for making spine linings were found important codicological feature. In one third of the corpus, which were 20 MSS that were produced in the second Gondärian period (i.e. 1721-1784), 18 MSS have parchments used for spine lining, and 2 MSS (MNDA – 046, MED – 018) have textiles. The prevalence of using parchments instead of textiles to protect the sewing structure and strengthen the text blocks at spine folds was considered as advancement in making spine linings. Nosnitsin's (2016) remark on the rare use of parchments for making spine linings²⁰³ suggested the existence of regional variations in book making culture in Ethiopia. Nosnitsin critical investigation of materials used for spine linings focused on codices found in Tigray province. In the case of the Gondärian manuscripts, it can be suggested that the binders preferred using full extent parchments. In fact, leather was used for making and supporting end bands but not for making spine linings.

²⁰³Less common ways of protecting the spine area in some codices were recorded. A rectangular piece of thin leather or parchment has been brought upon the spine, embracing the text block under the boards, and held by the threads of the sewing' (Nosnitsin 2016, 84).

In both cases, the techniques for the full extent of covering the quire spine folds were applied. In fact, the semi processed parchments used and the colour varied considerably. Possibly, in all of the twenty MSS in the corpus except in the two MSS bindings (DBS-011, DBS-014), the tie downs were sewn before the spine linings were applied. This might be the bindings in these manuscripts were not originally done rather they were done later in time. No manuscript in the Anomalies group had used parchments for making spine linings; rather they all used textiles as in MED-019 and ATMI-028. Though the use of parchments for making spine linings was an important codicological aspect, it was less common to observe this aspect in wider contextual association to Gondärian book culture.²⁰⁴ However, the use of parchments for spine linings was especially common in the second type of end band of manuscripts produced in the second Gondärian period.

The materials used for spine linings were turned to text block. These spine lining were no long covering the whole pages. The threads connecting it to the boards were exposed at their gutter. The gutter threads were seen between the spine linings and the boards' edges indicating their main purpose. By this, the spine linings were turned to the text blocks, and were not to the boards mainly to stabilize the text blocks and to reinforce the board attachments. Looking at the broken board edges lacing holes, broken spine lining holes, and removed binding side turn-in, one can observe the materials used and the codicological evidences of rebindings, at least for one time.

²⁰⁴The construction of a manuscript was defined by spine-lining (Scheper 2014, 140), but less likely in Ethiopian context as the element found rarely.



Fig. 5.15 MNDA – 052-spine lining turned on to the text block and never to the boards.

All the spine linings had no hole- marks across the distance of the text block spine up to the shoulder of the two boards indicating traces of pervious tie downs attaching end band sewing structure. I had only holes created by the extension of link- stitches threads that connect also the two boards (fig. 5.14). This indicates that the spine lining were applied after the tie down sewn. Yet, the lining extends beyond the first and the last quires of the text block engulfing the flyleaves on both sides, except in one case on one side only, perhaps later inserted ones (MNDA – 041). If not lined, the tie down sewn directly to gatherings to emerge outside of the spine covers creating two running stitches. Moreover, no spine linings is found with traces of holes on it as evidences of former tie downs sewing. Hence, the turned in end band seemed to have been sewn with linings with hallow between them as no evidence that attested the lining leather or not to be folded with which the end band braided sewn. Because I could not know from the linings' edges turned in as most were flush to the quire folds or damaged.

5.2.2.2 Standards

Similar to the significances of selecting appropriate materials for spine linings, binders attempt to meet standards was found important. It was quite difficult to see the spine linings underneath the undamaged spines. Only some 22 MSS with their spine linings underneath have undamaged

spines. Out of the corpus, only some 20²⁰⁵ MSS with their spine lining visible 19 MSS had no at all. Some 11 invisible and others 7 missed and four MSS no record (NR). The material used for spine linings in the 20 MSS was parchment. There were only two exceptions which used textiles. The spine-linings extended beyond the edges of the spines. This formed the covering surface of the text blocks turned on the last quire without gluing them on. The function of spine linings was therefore to stabilize the text blocks. There was little evidence that these spine linings were used to strengthen the board attachment. All spine linings applied on the bindings were full covered, hair side outwardly with gray colour.²⁰⁶ Spine linings correlated with textile in lays, and most of them were of four flyleaves.

The binders could use various mechanisms to control the virtually unrestricted flat opening; one of these was the linings on the spine of the text-block with rectangular piece of full parchment. Primarily, they applied it to stabilize the text block and to support the end band. The presence of spine lining seems to resulting flex spine, not rigid, no any adhesive used. Only in single instances, which I find the sort of adhesive between upper surface of the spine lining and the lower side of the spine cover used in DBS – 014 (Fig. 5.19).

Resulting regular spine shape enhanced the beauty viewed from a spine side. The spine cover leathers without spine linings gave rise to an almost skeletal appearance in some instances. Spine lining applied with end bands braided that the hollow²⁰⁷ space between spine cover and the end band was evident. All bindings with spine lining must have been second type of end banding as no tie down passed though spine linings, except two instances, (ATMI – 030 and DBS – 014). In the second period, the spine linings that were widely used correlated with medium size of text

²⁰⁵The number in the corpus was very big and significant. ‘While examples of such a treatment are singular, at least in one collection of North Ethiopia I observed some five codices treated in this way, apparently by the same craftsman’. (Nosnitsin 2016, 84). Nosnitsin also noted that he could only record a very few occurrences in the areas where he studied, ‘but the technique may be not as recent and rare as it looks like at the first glance; cp. a large 15th-cent. Manuscript from Yoḥannəs Kāma (Central Tigray). Also in a sample in Delamarter and Melaku Terefe 2009: 134-135, plate 85 ‘The authors speak of 5% of the manuscripts having such a device (“spine strap”)’.

²⁰⁶‘in rare cases it is composed of two pieces of leather of different colour’ in Nosnitsin 2016, 79.

²⁰⁷It created an ‘air layer’, hollow, between text block spine covered with spine lining and spine leather covers. This open space might be taken as shock absorber mechanism that would be smoothening the opening and closing of the binding at ease and hence rescuing the structural system of the books from complete break ups.

blocks, and external board edge curvatures to meet durability and protective requirements of quality crafts.



Fig. 5.16 DBS – 062 a strip of leather folded toward inside turned over the edges of the lines on which braided leather cord was sewn too.

As shown above in Fig. 5.16, a strip of rolled leather was evidently folded towards the turned edges. This might suggest the protective measures taken in the Gondärian book culture. Hence, the strip of leather rolled toward the inside edges would frame the bindings and would stop undesirable stretching.

Table 5.3 Comparison of materials used for spine lining in the local and Anomalies groups

Type of element	Patterns	Number of books' origin	
		Local	Anomalies
Spine lining material			
	parchments	18	0
	textile	2	2
	Other	0	0
	Total	20	2

Parchment was common, for the corpus but textile spine linings used in both categories. No spine lining of either material applied in the rest of the Anomalies manuscripts. In addition to parchment, two folded leathers²⁰⁸ were inserted on upper and lower faces of the spine lining

²⁰⁸It is leather, Winslow Sean Michael 2015 Ethiopian Manuscript Culture: 2015, 118 Not leather it was parchment

edges. Their insertion at head and tail position most probably served to fix the end bands; which has been noticed exclusively in the local corpus. The absences of spine lining coincided with ‘no’ textile inlays and only four sewing stations. Later end band construction was related to replace covering materials applied in both full and quarter covers.



A

B

Fig. 5.17 ‘A’ MNDA – 043 Textile spine lining between parchment spine lining and folded turn in leathers ‘B’ MED – 018

Cotton cloth lined on the spine lied under spine cover leather and above the spine lining parchment. The textile spine linings were turned into the text blocks following the parchment spine linings. Nonetheless, the uses of parchments were the dominant in the corpus. Sewing thread was not often sturdy enough to resist the mechanical strain at the joints. The thread was often broken at the board junction (Szirmai 1999, 50).

The spine linings stabilized the text blocks more strongly than before and covered the sewing structures. At the centres, the folds of the quires would be safe. As a result, the spine lining holes were found wider and were capable of reducing the possible friction between the boards and the quires. Moreover, individual movements of the quires would be limited rather dividing the weight of the text blocks that were formerly loaded over the link-stitched threads alone.

Nevertheless, Winslow's (2015) statement was found unconvincing for he said this has nothing to do with the coverings directly.²⁰⁹

5.2.3 End Banding

Techniques of end bandings assumed some procedures in doing them. These techniques attended the ways of sewing the tie downs and the phases of end binding before or after coverings. These codicological issues are discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.2.3.1 Sewing Tie Downs

In the application of end banding, there were tie downs sewn. In more than half of the Gondärian manuscripts, the tie downs attached the text blocks, the boards, and the end bands. In other words, when sewing the tie downs, the threads used in the text blocks and the board attachments were also used in attaching end bands in slightly more than half of the bindings. As can be seen from the figure below (Fig. 5.18), tie downs were a part of the binding structure; hence, the holes represented that there were traces of tie downs.

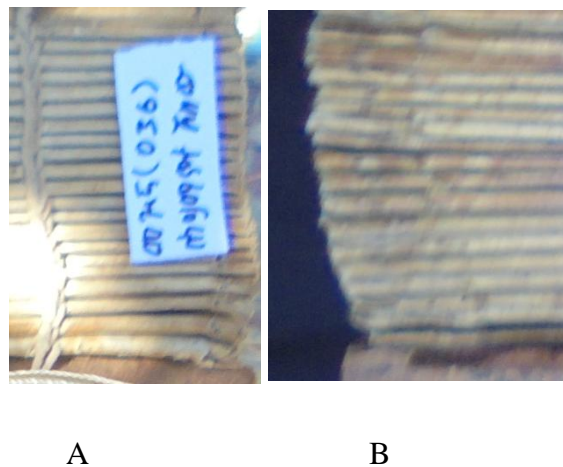


Fig. 5.18 'A' MOGI – 036 shows tie downs at every quire folds, pierced holes not slit holes
'B' MNDA – 043 double holes.

²⁰⁹Winslow 2015, 213, made four unclear reasons, which seemed incorrect.

Preparing quires for sewing by piercing holes into spine folds at predetermined sewing stations were common on the corpus manuscripts. Since the manuscripts included re-sewn or repaired volumes, there could be the possibility of a diverging end band sewing threads. This might be an indication of replaced end bands. No evidence was found to proof the assumption. Yet the damages such as cracks and large size of holes of the quire folds showed frequent attachment and failures of end bands, less probable to be stubs. Holes, I had hard time to identify whether they were tackles or former end banding traces. For few binding spine lining had not been removed at repairs. Nevertheless, the repairer used new threads connecting them into the spine covers against their original methods of application (fig.5.19). No repair used the old original threads. Nonetheless, repairer never used the spine lining again with new materials available in the time of re-sewing. He might have been recognised a little more difficult task that needed extra time and skill. The great majority of the corpus was sewn following a one-to-one method of sewing; hence, every quire fold received one hole²¹⁰ including the flyleaves (Fig. 5.18. 'A').

Number of tie-downs indicated the relative number of tie-downs in respect to the number of the quires of the text-block. Whenever the actual number of tie-downs was visible, this should be recorded. It would normally record one of the following options: If the tie-down threads passed through the spine lining parts around head and tail of the spine, the spine lining must have been present before it was sewn and the spine linings in my corpus were certainly before sewing of tie down and attachments of end bands. Because threads passed through only of spine linings' edges adjust to the boards hence after the end bands. If any against this rule, the practise must have been done later. As such, tackets were used for provisional or temporary sewing stitches, to keep the individual bi-folios to bring together as long as the text blocks were not completed.

²¹⁰The durability of the whole structure therefore depended on the number of tie downs in relation to the number of quires; as long as the ratio was one – to – one the construction was sound'(Scheper 2014, 168).

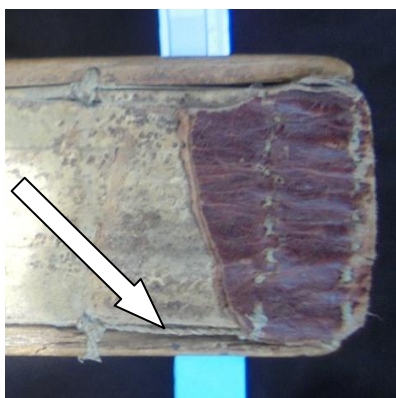


Fig. 5.19 DBS – 014 showing the using single thread for both sewing text block and tie down (pointed by the arrow)

Tie downs were used for strengthening text blocks primarily not for the boards and the cover attachments using end bands. Link stitch sewing pattern was drawn in miniature of St. Mary in DBS– 061. Spine lining ends not folded. Folded turn in at spine edges helped to prevent extended opening of the books. Spine lining had lay above spine folds and done before turn in. However, given the large format of many of the manuscripts, and the complexity of sewing would have been very difficult to achieve based on observation and visual information to the sewing thread of the manuscript without some deformations created by damages or mistakes at the time of executing the work. Quire – to – quire connecter threads also used to connect the wooden board, which was many times heavier and harder than parchment sheets in the single quires (Four or five).

This was the most common technique in most books in the Ethiopia that two pairs of running stitches seen from spine side with syntactic threads and rarely consolidate them spine with adhesive. This tradition could not be the original that well preserved bindings (MNDA– 049) showed that it was not the case. The corpus had very short tie downs, end banding never used the holes of the chain stitches.

Another important feature was that the primary structural sewing passed throughout the leather inserted. Actually, in many of the Gondärian manuscripts, the stitches on the spine linings were found covered by parchments. This technique of covering stitches was widely used. However,

Winslow (2015) indicated it was rare²¹¹. The spine lining was faced to the flesh side in contact with the spine folds of the text block. This has importance to identify some evidences of parchment remnants inside the boards. It seemed that the tradition was simply discarded as it appeared to be in contradiction to demand of greater speed of production, and binders superseded it preferring less complex works far greater reliance upon spine cover leather. This was also area of frequent damage and repairs. Slightly, more than half of headbands and tail bands were missed in the sample and in the other collections visited.

5.2.3.2 Types of End Banding

End bands have both structural and aesthetic purposes. There are two types of end bandings that were differentiated according to their manufacturing procedures and their aesthetic value. Though Gervers & Tomaszewski (2015) indicated there are four types of end bands,²¹² there are two types of end bandings in the Gondärian manuscripts, which are presented in the following sub-sections.

5.2.3.2.1 End Band after Covering: First Type

The end bands in the manuscripts attested how they served for both structural and aesthetic functions. Often end banding after covering assumed the first type. In the majority of the manuscripts (70% of them), have well-preserved leather bindings. Actually, the end bands in these manuscripts were sewn after the covering was complete. However, in a critical codicological investigation, the end bands of these manuscripts were originally sewn before the completion of the coverings. Possibly, these manuscripts in the corpus were rebounded, for they appeared with end bands sewn for three or four quires after covering. In other words, each quire has no end band of its own originally sewn to it. As a result, the end bands in this first type were applied bringing chunk of quires together.

²¹¹“A rare practice is covering the stitches on the spine with a wrap around piece of parchment. It may be best suited to protecting books which are intended to otherwise remain without boards and it is unclear why it would be used for a book that has them, as it would likely increase the wear on the threads connecting the text-block to the boards” (Winslow 2015, 213).

²¹²There are four types of end band attachments made of a two-throged slit braid (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski (2015, 118-119).

Moreover, looking at the extended sides of the spine-linings of these text blocks, the end bands might suggest they were cut properly, and the board attachments were consisted of the leather spine coverings only. There was significant number of bindings with simple spine structures, which were covered only by leather. Such bindings often have relatively lighter boards than for the bindings with larger text blocks and heavier boards. Most of the biggest MSS were repaired by back over later and linings added in the second Gondärian period. This indicated that the binders understood the root causes of the problems of bindings.

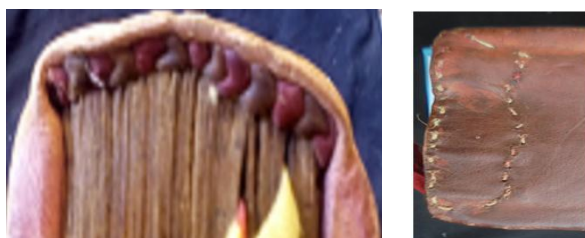


Fig. 5.20 QUS-007 1st type of end band (End band sewing after covering side and back/spine view respectively).

The braided leather on the end bands that were sewn with the covers of the text blocks were to stabilize them, and to provide beauty to the books. Attesting this, Nosnitsin (2016) indicated these kinds of end bands were to strengthen and to stabilize the book. These end bands in Ethiopian manuscripts were found particularly vulnerable to damages. As a result, many codices have only reminiscence of the end bands. At times, one can observe some rows of holes in the back covers or in the spine folds of the quires sometimes with remains of threads. In Ethiopia, quires were not bend to get round spine shape but used gently curved board shapes.

Though these points mentioned by Nosnitsin (2016) regarding end bands were common in the first type, they were not continued in the second type. Perhaps, the binders of the manuscripts in the local corpus were more advanced than their predecessors in doing the end bands. As such, the end bands attached the boards and the text blocks. Hence, the end bands met their purposes of longevity and of beauty²¹³ at the same time.

²¹³ 'in rare cases it is composed of two pieces of leather of different colours (fig. 6)'.Nosnitsin 2016,79

5.2.3.2.2 End Banding before Covering: Second Type

Often braided leather was used for making end bands at the top/ head and at the bottom/tail of the spines. Though it was difficult to explain exactly, it appeared to me that the folded additional strips of leathers, pointed by arrow in fig. 5.21 below, were inserted at two edges of the parchment spine linings then the braided end bands were sewn through them. As shown in the figure below (Fig. 5.21), they were usually made of double-tongued slit braids stitched with threads to each of the quire but not to the spine leather cover. As such, the leather covers were glued firmly to the fore and backsides of the boards but not to the spine sides. By this, the spine lining edges would have hollow spaces above them. This implied how the spine lining parchments have avoided direct contacts of text block spine to the covering leathers. Hence, the longevity of the bindings along with attractive appearances was secured in this second type of end banding.

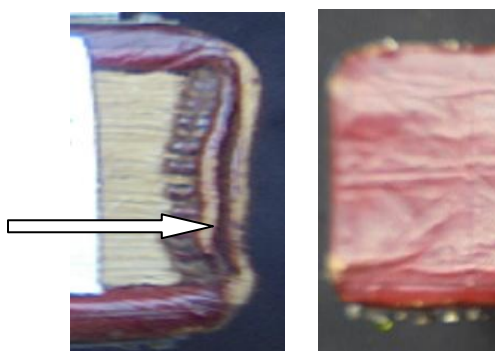


Fig. 5.21 MNDA – 049 2st type end band (End band sewing before covering, side and back/spine view respectively)

The above figure can be used as evidence on the several advantages of applying the second type of end banding before covering. As such, each quire has sewing threads and that passed through braided end band then sewn two leather folds, finally to the edges of the parchment spine lining, but not sewn to the leather covers. By this, as shown in the above figure, the folded stripe of leather had left a gap to give a free space that could reduce tension. I think this statement might be taken more suggestive than conclusive. Detail study on this particular construction technique of the end band may determine the real intention of the Gondärian binders in the future.

Moreover, the sewing threads were hidden, so they were less exposed to external direct contacts. Because, the seams connecting the end bands to the leather spine on the back of the books are invisible. As a result, this type of end banding technique before covering gave strength to the bindings of the manuscripts. This type of end banding would also make the binding more attractive.

The first type of end banding would most probably was added later at the time repairs was made. As all the threads used to sew these bindings were synthetic and cotton origin and the braided leather were not original. In contrary to the first end band type, in the second type of end banding, there were no similar threads used for sewing both the text blocks, the tie downs and the cover spine. The turn-ins size matched the distance of the up to the nearest sewing station from the end bands might inform something to the type of spine covers employed: 'fold' or 'cut'. The spine cover leathers would be turned over the edge of the boards without cutting them. This gave the end bands more strength at the joint areas by reducing tensions from the boards open at use. By this, some of the problems of damage at joint places could be solved since the end bands facilitated by the bevelled and round board shapes at spine angles had been adjusted to the joint areas.

Table 5.4 the occurrences of types of end bands in both book categories (the numbers shown were only for the bindings that have visible end bands)

Types of end band	Number of books	The corpus	The Anomalies
1 st type	11 MSS	MNDA-050, 051, 052, 053, 005, 004; MOGI-037	ATMI-026; QUS-003; ATMI-027; DBS-009
2 nd type	14 MSS	ATMI-030, DBS-010, 061, 062, 014, 016; MNDA-049, 054, 055, 057, 058, 043, 046, 047	No book

Other	3 MSS	Fold and sewn QUS -075, 006, 001	No book
Total	28	23	5

The above table showed there were two types of end banding: after and before covering was completed. Second type of end banding was seen in many of the manuscripts in the integrated majority corpus. However, none of the codices in the ‘Anomaly’ group has shown this application. The significant difference between the corpus and the Anomalies in the application of the second type of end banding may be associated with the changes in the book production cultures. Moreover, this might suggest the long years of service that could be gained through the applications of the second type of end bandings for many of the manuscripts were found as evidences of long uses. Similar to the above claim, Fäqadä-Sällase Täfärra (2010, 224) indicated it was a short cut and seemed little required in the established tradition.

In general, the aforementioned codicological features closely related to binding were found complex, for they included several aspects of bindings such as sewing text blocks, board attachments, and material selection for spine linings, and aspects of end bandings whether they were applied before or after coverings. In the following, another important codicological feature, covering technique was analyzed.

5.3 Covering Techniques

Covering referred to the processes after sewing the text blocks, attaching the wooden boards, making the spine linings, and sewing the end bands. The covering techniques applied in the Gondärian manuscripts assumed two types: internal and external covering techniques. These codicological aspects of coverings were analyzed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.1 Covering Techniques of Internal Surfaces of Boards

Techniques of internal coverings included all the processes of attaching textile inlays, reconstruction of cut marks, working on turn-ins, considering standards of turn-ins size. These important codicological features closely related to the covering techniques of the internal surfaces of the boards are presented in the following sub-sections.

5.3.1.1 Attaching Textile Inlays

Inlays were decorative textile additions framed by turn-ins facing the text blocks. The space at the centre of internal surfaces of the boards was covered with textile inlays. According to Wright (1877) and Regemorter (1962), binders' preference and capacity mattered in the attaching of the inlays, which were often made from brocade, striped silk, or cotton cloth. The attached inlays in many of the manuscripts were of textiles. In some manuscripts, the spine linings and the page markers were made of locally produced woven cotton as in QUS – 004.

The manuscripts in the local corpus, the rectangular open areas of the internal surfaces of the boards were covered with rare textile inlays and strips perpendicular to the lower width of the turn-ins. In fact, cotton cloth was the predominant material used for the inlays. In some few manuscripts, expensive Anomalies cotton cloth and silk were used in making the inlays. Plain, diagonal, and regular fabric of printed type of designs was the features for most textile inlays in the corpus. Very few of the manuscripts in the local corpus have inlays of handmade cotton cloths without designs applied on them. For example, the manuscript, MNDA – 058 has plain white cotton cloth used for attaching the inlays. With regard to colour choices, red and pink were mostly used. Perhaps, these colours were chosen to match the colours of the leather coverings.

On the other hand, the manuscripts in the Anomalies group had no attached textile inlays of any kind. To explain the prevalence of attaching textile inlays and the origin of the materials used in the local corpus was difficult. Nonetheless, critical examination of the manuscripts themselves offered informed guessing about the origins of the textiles that they were brought from overseas. Using the codicological clues of the motifs applied in the textiles and the designs on them, the

textiles used for the inlays were Anomalies from India²¹⁴, sub continents of the Bengal and Bihar, Middle East (*buta*), Europe, or might be of the high valued domestic products.

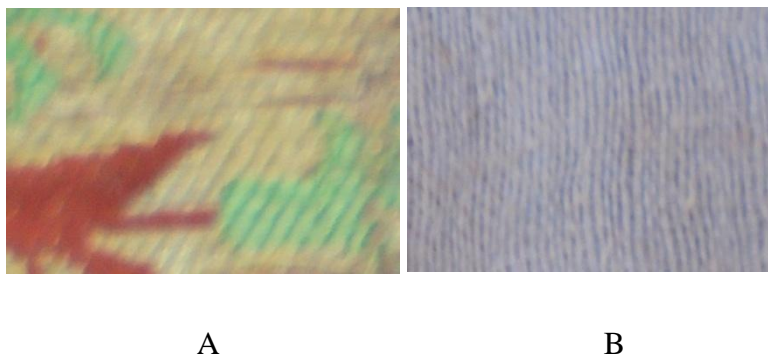


Fig. 5.21 ‘A’ MNDA – 050; ‘B’ MNDA – 057 patterns of cotton fabrics diagonal and plain, (please notice that the selvages²¹⁵ application while adhered to the inner wooden boards).

As can be seen from the above figure (Fig. 5.21), the standards of the fabrics and the designs determined the beauty of the textile inlays. Locally made cotton cloths seemed with lesser preference rate than high valued imported cloths for making the inlays of ‘special’ books. The edge of a woven fabric where the weft (side-to-side) threads run around the warp (top-to-bottom) threads creating finished borders in only MNDA – 057, and faded paints of textile in MNDA – 053. The fabrics were cut diagonally to the grain side. Possibly, the binders applied this lining technique that resulted the joints would lie over the stronger parts. The fabrics at the joint area were less vulnerable to tearing because of the direction of the threads.

In one exceptional manuscript, QUS – 005 (possibly produced in the years between 1755 and 1769), the open spaces of the lower boards were covered with leather pieces. In another manuscript, MNDA – 050 (possibly produced in the years between 1682 and 1706), one can

²¹⁴Massawa’s principal imports were later also described by Bruce, who emphasised that they included many articles from India. These comprised “blue cotton, Surat cloths, and cochineal ditto, called Kermis”, as well as “fine cloths from different markets in India” Pankhurst 1999, 13. ‘Ethiopia Across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean’ Ethiopian Review; May 14, 1999.

²¹⁵The edge of a woven fabric where the weft (side –to-side) threads run around the warp (top-to-bottom) threads creating finished borders.

observe the use of composite textile inlays. Extant textile inlays were rare, for they could be easily damaged. Hence, the binders of the manuscripts in the local corpus were skilful, for they were not randomly applying the inlays rather in a way of reason suggesting an intentional technical motivation.

Two of the bindings in the local manuscripts have discoloured inlays. The inner board surfaces of these bindings lost their original colours and became of white and gray in colours. BDGE – 064, Sənkəssar textile inlays changed into a new colour by the painting inks, perhaps a local product making a deep red, in colour. Similarly, in BDGE–066, the colour of the textile inlays appeared to be an attempt to match to the colour of leather cover, which was a reddish brown. Possibly, some other external matters spread over the inlays.

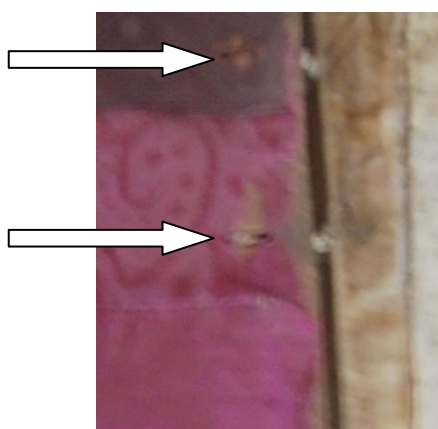


Fig. 5.22 BDGE – 066 showing evidence of later works, the threads cut the textile inlays as originally did not.

From the figure above, one can observe also how the extent of the textile inlays covering the boards' inner surfaces below the turn-ins. As the arrows in Fig. 5.22 pointed that, the threads cut the textile inlays, which could have been later intervention. This suggested the attached inlays were done prior to the making of the turn-ins and after the boards' attachments. Hence, the binders of the local corpus had accounted both beauty and durability aspects in line with their due considerations of selecting better fabrics and designs. In the following sub-section, reconstructing the cut marks, which was closely related to attaching the textile inlays, is presented.

5.3.1.2 Reconstructing Cut Marks in Covering

An attempt has been made to reconstruct the covering techniques applied on the internal surfaces of the Gondärian manuscripts. The leather covers used in the turn-ins were clean, unscratched, and evidently testify that they were applied originally in their first use. Possibly, the cut marks were done using angled knives; hence, the turn-ins was uniformly sized in the three sides and was of consistent medium width. In other words, the cut marks were characterised by their being a single knife cuts.

Plausibly, the cuts were done before actually attaching the turn-ins. The evidences of cut marks were examined only on the leather coverings and not on the boards, because of the boards were covered by the textile inlays. As a result, no marks on them, no attrition of cut marks on edges, and no scissors were used. As shown below in Fig. 5.23, the cuts were done before the turn-ins was attached to the boards to be a subtlety that was typical to the local corpus). This method is so distinctive of the bindings that it may claim to be an important characteristic of local city workshops.

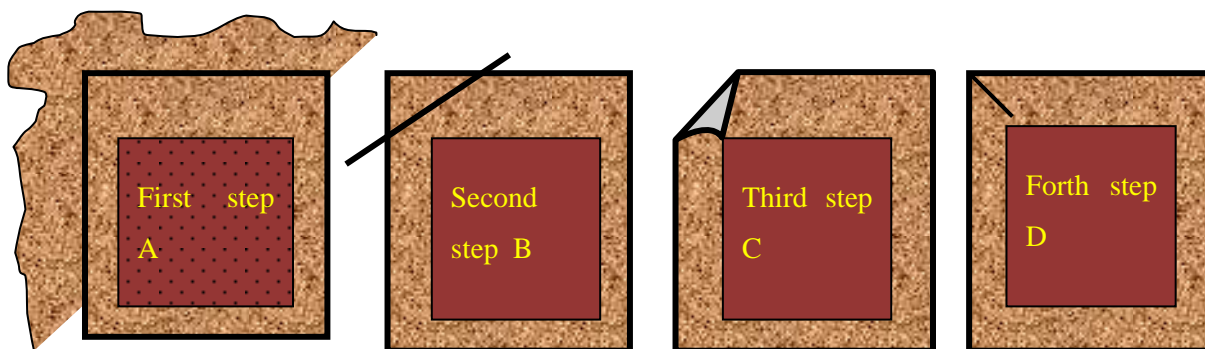


Figure 5.23 constructing of the turn: Showing only single fore edge corner of the lower board: Four steps A, B, C, and D. Place note that the red colour at central space was textile inlays.

‘A’ mark by ruler on the skin; ‘B’ preparation to make the mitred corner, make straight lines; ‘C’ cut the leather along the line to form joined corner; ‘D’ turn the leather inwards to butt the both edges.

The skin coverings were attached on to the surfaces of the boards themselves; thereby, it ensured that the grain of the skin was preserved. In examples of good work, the shape of the spine and

the covering of the boards have a very natural look. Coverings encouraged closing fitting and joints to prevention of the material used. They were done intentionally for purposes no by chance. The changes in binding practices were evident in the number and status of the bindings. As can be seen today, the higher criteria of fabrication in binding works of the Gondärian manuscripts survived centuries of service that they appeared undamaged even after three hundred years.

The straight cut marks at the corners were found evidences of skilful designing and of efficient cuttings. This implied the cut marks of the leather turn-ins were done before they were applied onto the internal surfaces of the boards. Actually, in none of the manuscripts' bindings, the joining of the upper or bottom sides of turn-ins with the front sides of the turn-ins assumed a mixed pattern of cut marks. In other words, there were no bindings of combined cut marks such as the diagonal, the tongued, and the overlapped at each of the corners of the turn-ins. Rather, particular designs of cut marks were applied for the respective manuscripts in the corpus. Thus, productions of mitred turn-ins were found typical codicological feature of Gondärian manuscripts. In fact, there were many evidences of high criteria of fabrication craftsmanship basically to meet the desired aesthetic and structural functions such as by keeping uniformly consistent sizes, clarity on curves, perfectly fitting joints, equality of angles, harmonious levelling to the textile inlays, decorative tooling with triple fillet, and proportional turn-ins to the inner boards' total areas. In the following sub-section, the closely related codicological feature of making turn-ins is analysed.

5.3.1.3 Making Turn - In

All of the bindings in the corpus used full leather covers. Nonetheless, there were variations in the making of the turn-ins of the leather coverings; thereby, there were variations among the manuscripts in the cuttings of the excess leather at the corners of the boards. In contrast to what Wright (1877) claimed that Ethiopian manuscripts have partially covered and overlapping internal coverings.²¹⁶ All the manuscripts in the local corpus showed perfections in making turn-

²¹⁶ Overlapping of the outer leather was a kind of method used to cover the inner side of the boards partially (Wright 1877).

ins, for there were no overlapped turn-ins in these manuscripts. In other words, the manuscripts in the local corpus have mitred corners, with a simple diagonal slit where the two pieces of folded leather butt against each other. In fact, only two manuscripts, both of which were in the ‘Anomalies’ group, have overlapped turn-in.

The portions of the turn-ins were applied onto the textile inlays (Fig 5.23), and they were folded back and adhered behind the covered surfaces. The turn-ins were usually brought over the edges of the boards and adhered to the inside surfaces of the covering boards. The edges of the turn-ins were adhered under or on top of the later at the binding side. The bookbinders applied two kinds of turn-ins: overlapped and mitred. The bindings of 43 MSS were of mitred turn-ins. From these manuscripts in the corpus, only 12 of the bindings were with stitched corners of the turn-in. Only two manuscripts, MED-019, and DBS-009, from the Anomalies group were of overlapped turn-in. Hence, overlapped turn-ins were only observed in few of the manuscripts of the Anomalies group but totally absent in the corpus.

Within the mitred turn-in corner there had been two types of making the turn-ins in the corpus. The commonest types were the use of butt and of stitched corners. Nonetheless, a combination of these two different cornering techniques applied at the same time in a single codex was not found. In fact, manuscripts with stitched²¹⁷ corners were rare. Often, the stitched turn-ins have parallel blind tool lines at the right and left sides as used in DBS-060 and MED-023. In these manuscripts, the edges of the turn-ins leather were folded inwards to prevent attritions and to probably add beauty. The seemingly darkened line in Fig. 5.24 below showed this aspect of how turn-ins was folded inwards.

²¹⁷Stitched corners were done for big books but joining by adhesive only for medium size books as stabilizing role for boards on attachments and covers on boards, Fakade Selassie 2010, 240.



Fig. 5.24 MNDA – 043, folded turn-in edges.

The measuring precisions and the related components of making turn-ins were found to be informative to their distinct crafts employed. With this regard, the making of turn-ins was a complex one and was an essential part for the books structure and beauty. Adjusting the angles of the turn-ins in 45° resulted the making of turn-ins of equal sizes at all sides. The 45° turn-in joints implied 90° angles of the board cuts, and the equal sizes of the turn-ins all sides implied perfectly the same thickness of the boards. The edges of the turn-ins suggested that they were not done using scissors, for they had no signs of zigzag cuts.

The turn-ins cuts indicated the time of execution of the cover's turn-ins trimming in respect to the actual process of covering the book. Such a trimming appeared to be made before the binders were adhering the leather covers on the boards. I have not find any traces of cut marks of knife or any other tool left from the trimming on the inner sides of the boards. The leather covers were trimmed to get rid of excess leathers. The leather covers and the turn-ins were usually decorated with blind lines or with simple ornamental stamps. These primarily decorative set of lines gave the adhering substances to stick the leather covers with the boards for better strength. In one exception, the turn-in edges were folded as in Fig. 5.24 for the sake of protecting the covering leather from tears, but the textile inlays were missed.

From the total 57 MSS in the local corpus, 55 of them have trimmed turn-ins. As such, the local traditional practice was an evident of the skilful working on the corners of the turn-ins and the trimmings were made with a single knife cuts. Moreover, the mitred corners were characterised by the application of single vertical knife cuts with the leather covers tended to butt at the corners.



Fig. 5.25 DBS -061 Trimmed turn in edges, straight single cut marks

The sizes of the trimmed turn-in edges indicated the relative width of the turn-ins. The widths of the turn-ins were found proportional to the sizes of the internal surfaces. This implied the sizes of the internal surfaces determined the sizes of the turn-ins; strikingly, all the three sides of the turn-ins were found equal. This turn-ins were found of medium size except in one particular case of the internal coverings of EAP -286. As such, the relative width of the turn-ins did not agree with what was indicated by Szirmai (1999) as Ethiopian manuscripts have ‘wide’ turn-ins.²¹⁸

There was a tendency that the size of the binding side had smaller than others three were. Moreover, this side became most affected by damages. No book is made with a turn-in that has less than 4cm wide. This size of turn- in, is not of course as ‘large’ as the ‘Ethiopian’ which has generally been regarded by Pankhurst 1984 and Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2014).

Perfect measures of the turn-ins were the important codicological evidences in the local corpus. The size differs in periods but the perfection was uniform across the categories. Hence, the making of the books with perfect turn- in measurement could be regarded as one of the typical the characteristics of the local tradition.

The reference point of division between widths of the turn in was acquired from subtraction the small 5cm from the large 12cm and the result would be 7cm. The exceptional were labelled as

²¹⁸There is wide turn-ins, mitred at the corners, pasted down, or joined by leather lacing (Szirmai 1999, 48).

any size above 12 cm and below 5 cm. Only one manuscript was identified as exceptional DBS-011, having 13-16 cm. Mostly, the turn-ins at the binding sides were missed.

Proportionality might be considered important features of turn in construction crafts: The 45° angle of mitred /stitched turn in joints (tongues) resulted from square area of the book, and its board's edge. This and another more structural features had to give higher values to the books seen at least for the first time. Total book area minus area covered by the turn-in or turn-in total area ratio results =1:3 all most all books in the local corpus revealed the ratio consistently that might indicate a precise craft works.

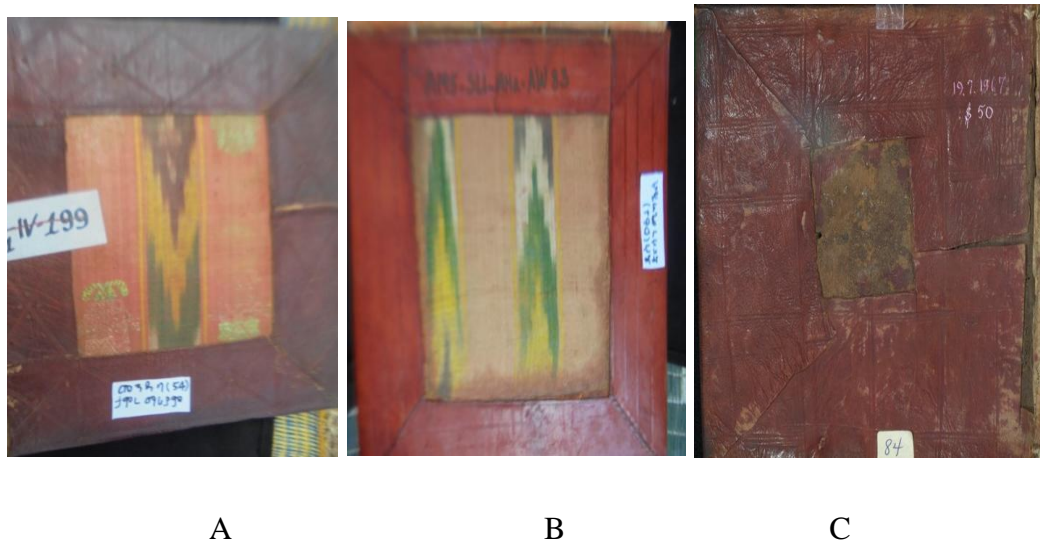


Fig. 5.26 MNDA – 054 showing turn in production: perfect 45° corners and balanced turn in size ratio ('A' 'joined and 'B' stitched), and example of untrimmed and unproportional size to the area, 'C' EAP -286.

5.3.1.4 Standards of Turn-In Size

In the survey, I recorded the width of the four turn-ins under the following order: top, bottom, fore edge side and bound side, after separated by hyphen I began to record the lower boards turn in width just the similar to the order before it. An example of the data analysis result demonstrated that all four turn- in sides of the binding were equal width. 10 10 10 10 – 10 10 10

10; 7 7 7 7 – 7 7 7 7; 4 4 4 4- 4 4 4 4 - the fourth values were usually missed because of the frequent removals by the later repairs who needed access to the sewing holes for resewing the binding. Hence, based on the number of occurrences, there had three patterns of the turn-in size;

10, 11 and 12 / 7, 8 and 9 / 4, 5 and 6

The binder probably used his hand fingers as measurement tools. From two up to seven fingers which looks fit to 4cm to 12 cm respectively depended on the how big was the binders fingers. To judge as (“large” or ‘narrow’ or ‘medium’, 7cm was used as a standard size. There were three standards of size. These were 3 – 6, as ‘Small’ and 16 MSS have shown such measure of turn-ins. From 7-9 as ‘medium’, and there were 25 MSS. Finally, 10 cm and more as ‘large’²¹⁹, and there were 14 MSS. NR 6 MSS; Total 61 MSS

The corner turn-ins of 55 bindings indicated how standards of turn-ins sizes were important. The above data suggested that the profiles on the inner faces of the boards were related to the kinds of furnishing materials used and to the particular periods in time, and probably to particular regional preferences.. The turn-ins cut before the covering suggested how the sizes at the upper and bottom were of equal measures. In fact, to make equal sizes of turn-ins were impossible if the turn-ins were done after the coverings.

5.3.2 Covering Techniques of External Surfaces

The covering techniques of external surfaces included selections of standard leather covers and preferences of colours. Often leather was used for external coverings as built-in protections for the text blocks. The quality and extent of leather used for external coverings, and the binders’ colour choices are discussed in the following sub-sections.

²¹⁹‘Large’ in literature would not probably fit this range.

5.3.2.1 Quality and Extent of Coverings

The coverings of the boards were not only to protect text blocks but also to strengthen the wooden boards²²⁰. From the evidences of covered bindings with board beaks, one can see how the coverings encouraged the close fitting of the joints and the prevention of the materials used.



Fig. 5.27 MNDA – 053. Hair side follies of hair holes facing upward

Based on the local corpus, the methods of covering the manuscripts were more numerous than we really can imagine today. Hence, covering was regarded as one of the most critical components that brought about changes in physical structures and appearances of the bindings. The binding elements to be covered (internal to external parts of the book), and what the binders used for covering materials were also diversified with references to built in coverings.

High valued imported cover leather were used, with only little local manufacture called ... bar t änoben²²¹. Goat or sheepskin of a red-brown colour of covering leather that most of the bindings in the corpus were supposedly made from. This was also characteristic of many of the Coptic codices²²². However, regarding the animal origin of the cover leather, I strongly argue that the leather was made from not goatskin rather from calf or cow²²³. This might be seen from the total

²²⁰Fakade Selassie 2010, 237

²²¹“...it looks less attractive at first, deteriorates less with age” (Winslow 2015, 214).

²²²Might be imported from Egypt would be true Fäqadä Sellase Täfärra, *Tentawi yäbranna mäsaheft azzägäjajät*, “The Ancient Way of Preparing Parchment Books”, Addis Abäba 2002 E.C. = 2010 A.D.

²²³ Informal discussion with two of leather makers in the outskirts of the city of Gondar told me that they and their ancestors used to specially produce leather from the skin of calf or cow as it was demanded by bookbinders of the city. They have also told me that now a day’s one can find such type of leather on the Saturday market in the city.

width (two sides, spine, and two turn-in) of the leather cover of one of the 'large' size bindings, which measured 130cm or 1.30m. I doubt that because, how big was the goat before it was slaughtered which provide leather size of 1.30m width.

The techniques of covering in the corpus predominantly used single pieces of leather, but they also used two pieces. At times, this type of external covering used cotton, *mahidār* as a separate protection. The basic technical elements that distinguished the local tradition from others might be in the process of covering the spine areas, the turn-in, and the preferences of leather covers, and the subsequent applications. Below were the results of the analysis of cover leathers for full extents only. In this regard, the corpus stood out as a very skilful example of leather works.

Covering became the third cover made to the text block next to flyleaves and wooden boards. The covering of the binding by adhesive and mechanical means had not sufficient the book to be durable/stable and attractive. Both intentions would have been supplemented by decorative schemes. After sewn and boards attached to the text block, the binder needed to cover the binding with leather in the mean time he had to decide first on three matters such as material selection and preferences, techniques to be applied, and issues related to standardization. As such, due considerations may have been taken whether full or quarter of the books to be covered, and evaluation of preferences since they had impacts on the durability and beauty of the whole book.

Covering might be regarded as the final work in the book production processes. However, covering of the sewing threads and joints (both the interior and the exterior) were regarded as essential works for the structural and mechanical aspects of the binding. The decorative section might not be taken as a must, but traditional books were ornamented with different motifs and of varying complexities. Thus, selecting standard leather coverings had their own contributions for durability and beauty of the bindings.

The works of covering often began from selecting high valued materials used to cover the book since the binding has been completed by covering the volume. Two materials were the basic covering materials commonly available for this purpose, leather, and textile. The extent of covering determines the use of textile since quarter-covered books had no textile in lays. The

quality of materials and the skills of application involved have impact on the beauty and longevity of the books. Often evaluations of quality materials were controversial. However, quality of leather covering materials were usually measured from some characteristics such as, having small grain, having no fat or hair remnants on either of the leather surfaces, and no faults of making holes on the cover leathers. The most significant number of the corpus covering leather selected was of goat of a red-brown variety.

All of the books in the corpus were full leather covered but nearly all of the books of the Anomalies group remain quarter covered. “Quarter²²⁴ cover” was thought to be a sign of scarcity of leather or the commissioner had limited financial capacity (Nosnitsin 2016, 79). Hence, the bookmakers of the corpus seem to prefer standard leather covers for their books, as sponsors appeared to supply the materials to provide the books special appearance. Although two books found to be particular²²⁵ in their technique and composition of leather cover that joined at spine. They were not applied overlapping styles but by joining two pieces together using sewing (fig.5.28 A and B).



A

B

²²⁴ ‘The term half leather should be avoided because it brings to mind the Western half leather binding which has a very different layout, with a leather spine and leather corners. That design is almost never found on partial leather bindings in the Islamic bookbinding tradition’ (Scheper 2014, 48).

²²⁵Scheper 2014, 141

Fig. 5.28 Double pieces ‘A’ MNDA - 043; along the spine ‘B’ DBS – 017; across the spine vertical joining of two pieces at quarter covered (Anomalies group) two pieces of leather in which a saddle-stitched seam runs down the whole length of the back.

The surfaces of the wooden boards were intentionally made rough as the adhesive materials stick the covers more than smooth or slippery wooden board surfaces. The application the gluing substances of plants origin added presumably on the leather cover (flesh side) and then turn it to cover on boards without adhesives of the covering leather. The binders tended to use the different techniques while they were applying the adhesive to attach the textile inlays. They perhaps rather apply the adhesives on boards, not on textile. The wrinkles (Uneven) of cover on the boards were not happening except single instance (MNDA -046).

Covering from spine to fore edge direction²²⁶ and continued to cover from outer to inner surfaces of the boards. The book was laid squarely on the glued leather, the bookbinder first used his ruler to measure the size, and cut before gluing, only appropriate size was receiving adhesive²²⁷ that was probably to save resources. Cutting the leather before covering of the turn-in was the common practices. The technique employed here was not the same but different. As the end bands attached during sewing the text block and board attachment, the headband (*totan*) had remained to be inserted in the upper and lower edge of the spine. The leather covering had been stickled on the board smoothly. This might be evident from remnants and absences (only traces) visible on the inner sides of the wooden boards (Nosnitsin 2016, 79) of less than quarter of the corpus.

5.3.2.2 Colours Preference of Leather Coverings

In addition to the quality of the leather and the extent of using the leather, the colours of the coverings did matter in defining the physical appearance of the Gondärian manuscripts. There

²²⁶“The leather is stretched as far as possible and made flat with the palms. It should be ensured that all the wrinkles have been smoothed out. Then it is rubbed with a piece of cloth until the paste has fixed properly” Sergew Hable Selassie 1981, 25.

²²⁷Contrary to this practice, adhesive were added over all leather surfaces including that it would be removed (Winslow 2015, 215).

were codicological evidences distinguishing the bindings of manuscripts in both of the categories. This was attested, in part, by the clean joint (or not) of the turn-ins on the inside of the covers, and the finishing works of covering of the binding sides. Examination of some identified characteristics of the cover leather applied on boards such as, texture, colour, yielded results presented here. I have learned that colour differences with a book occurred. To determine the original colours of the material, I saw the outer cover and the turn- in colour, and dark brown and reddish brown respectively (MOGI – 036). Because of weathering, it might change for outer cover colour: then the colour of the leather as seen in these protected areas is recorded also obviously considered to be closer to the original one.

Moreover, all colouring practice took place before selecting the leather by the binders and applied on to the wooden boards, any colouring of the leather of after covered was less likely to be practiced. All covers of the corpus coloured by original dyeing before applied on to boards. As evident from the same colour of all along leathers, the internal and external were not painted after covered. Covers leather choices, not necessary signify level of attractiveness. Yet it tends to mean in terms of book production and taste of the possessor. Tanning was the most important stage in the leather production. The quality of the tanning process determined the durability of the leather, which in turn determined the durability of the completed cover book. Colour selection for covering had codicological impact since clear differences of the covers colour were observed when the books were seen in exposed to light and in less brightened areas. As can be seen from the figure below, one can observe how the colouring of the cover made a significant difference.

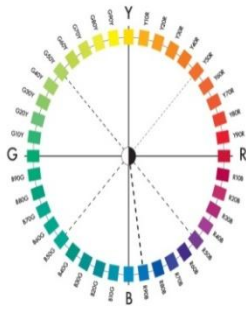


Fig. 5.29 MNDA - 051 showing spectrum of colour variations within the dominant Reddish brown R-B cover colour,

Based on NCS 1950 standard of colours, there was no cover colour in the corpus that was 100 % pure red and pure blue. Nonetheless, there was *hue* degree of resemblance²²⁸ that was seen in a relative visual similarity to the “strongest,” the most saturated colour. In line with this NCS standard of colours, the colour combinations in many of the Gondärian manuscripts were found of three varieties such as red with 70% blue, red with 50% blue, and red with 30% blue.

The quality of the produced full leather covers was evident in the Gondärian manuscripts. From the manuscripts that had full leather covers 44 MSS have identifiable colour coverings. The remaining manuscripts' original colour cannot be clearly identified. In many of the manuscripts, the colours of the coverings remained intact revealing their strong intensity despite these manuscripts has been used across centuries. These were the typical features of colourings, which were resistant to fading. Though reddish brown was the dominant colour of the corpus, significant number of the manuscripts that had full cover was also found of red and dark brown coverings.

On the other hand, the entire manuscripts in the Anomalies group had quarter leather covers of red, dark brown, or black. Only two manuscripts in this group had full leather covers. Moreover,

²²⁸NCS 1950 standard of colours, *hue* (= relative similarity to two of the chromatic elementary colours red, yellow, green and blue, expressed in at most two percentages).

neither of this manuscripts' covering showed the use of reddish brown colour, which was the dominant colour choice in the case of the corpus. One of the prominent figures studying Ethiopian manuscript culture, Seregew (1981) indicated his experience that he had never seen a manuscript with a black colour²²⁹. In fact, the colour of the leather covering of ATMI – 028 (Fig. 5.30) was found nearly black. This implied that there were no strict binding rules on the choice of covering colours. Hence, the Gondärian manuscripts under the local group have full leather covers of single pieces while the manuscripts under the Anomalies group have quarter leather covers.



Fig. 5.30 ATMI-028 showing the use of very close to black colour for covering

In fact, the colour choice for the covering of the above manuscript seemed exceptional. However, the high preference of the other dominant colours such as reddish brown, dark brown and red in the corpus caught a codicological interest explaining the possible suggestions of colours. The following data illustrates the prevailing colour choices in both groups. Reddish brown, 27MSS; dark brown, 8MSS; red, 8MSS and colour which is close to dark applied to only two books that belong to the Anomalies group. This data very clearly show that red brown was a predominant colour choice and naturally varied considerably.

²²⁹It is red or brown in colour, morocco leather. Other colours are not widely used. Personally, I have not come across a manuscript covered with black leather (Seregew 1981, 24 -25).

Though the bindings of manuscripts that have full leather covers have been compared between the corpus and the Anomalies, the predominant colour choice of reddish brown in the corpus could catch interest. It should be noted that there was much uncertainty to explain especially colour variations of leather covers only through visual observations. As Seregew (1981) indicates, the animal skins used for covering may change their colour through time.²³⁰ Moreover, it was difficult to explain why reddish brown was the dominant colour of the coverings, yet such kind of colour choice deserved further investigations.

5.3.2.3 Spine Works

The term spine as a codicological feature might be a bit confusing, for it has multiple contextual meanings. The term spine has at least three meanings. First, it referred to the general location of the binding side of a manuscript. Second, it indicated the nearest area to the text block. Finally, it implied the outer-over back of the spine cover. These codicological aspects associated to the spine works are analysed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.2.3.1 Covering at Spine Area: Most Unstable Point

Another important codicological feature was to examine the finishing at the head and tail of the leather spines. During the processes of application of the leather covers, the binders would want to turn in the leather to cover the boards' edges. Just before gluing the leather turn-in over the inner sides of the wooden boards, the binders had two options. First, they either needed to cut the material at the joint at the height of the end bands; second, they would not cut the leather and the turn-in continued from the boards' edges over the spine. For our purpose, I called them as the 'cut' and the 'fold' types respectively. The first technique was quick and it created weak point in the joint for that it opened the window for further tearing (Fig. 5.31 A & B). In the application of the later technique, (Fig. 5.31 C), the joint and therefore board, attachment was tended to be stronger than the former.

²³⁰The skins may start to show colour differences when aging (Seregew Hable Selassie 1981, 24).

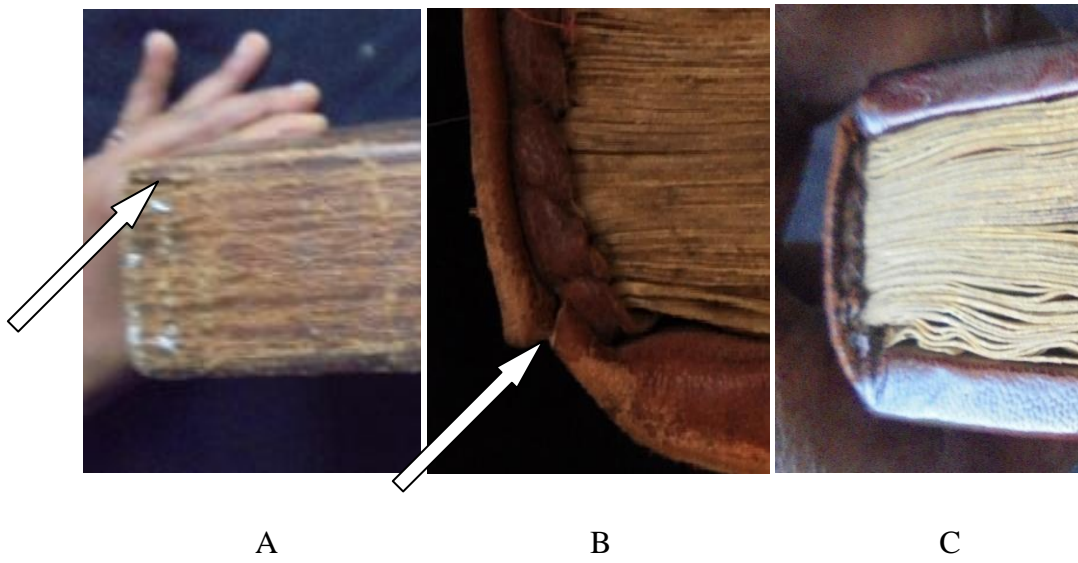


Fig. 5.31 ATMI -028 'A' the path of tears; ORG -074 'B' the cut type; cut marks, arrows, viewed from exterior, QUS -004 'C' the fold type.

During the process of covering of the spine in the case of cut type, the leather was cut near the spine as it folds over the board edges; the cut type of spine covers with spine lining the most serious problem was spine cover leather cracks.

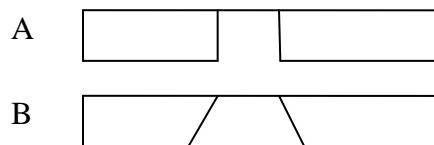


Fig.5.32 drawing showing two kinds of turn in covering at spine: cutting straight line, type A, and cutting diagonal line type B

Most of the local corpus had two kinds of spine production: Spine leather cut at joints or turned in spine leather. In the first cases, the binders wanted to cut the leather at spine joints to turn it toward inside and glue over the internal surface of the boards. In this case, the leather left behind between the two cuts would be turned to the space occupied by the text block spines. This possibly reduces the attrition rates of the leather at spine to which the end band braided leather sewn through it. In the process of cutting the spine leather covering at spine area, I had been identifying two further varieties of cutting techniques might be employed by the binders.

The first one was cutting at straight line down to the last sewing station, fig.5.32 A or fig. 5.31 A. In the second kind, the binders preferred to cut the leather diagonal lines, (fig.5.32 B or fig. 5.31 B). Yes, the binders would have their own reasons to do them differently. Nevertheless, it might be important to propose that the type B introduce more easier opening leaving the conjecture point free than the type A. However, both of two types seemed to have weak spine joints that they did little to cover the gaps between the two boards and making the boards disconnected along the inner faces of them contrary to the fold type of spine covering techniques (fig. 5.34 or fig.5.35).

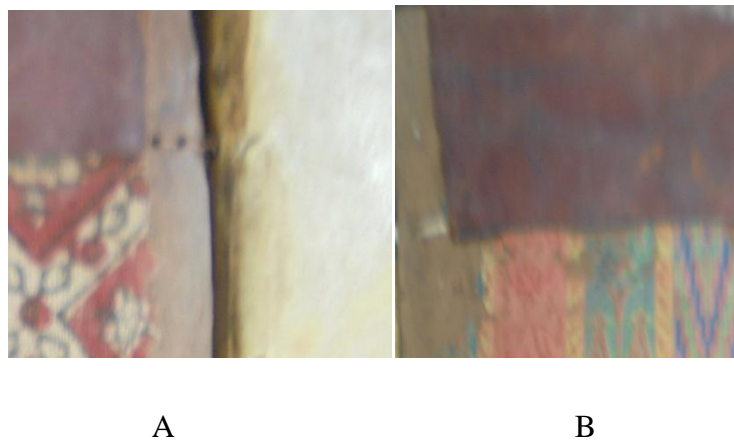


Fig. 5. 33 MNDA -052 cut type A and MNDA -054 cut type B, viewed from interior

In addition, the binders' choice in finishing the leather covering at spine area involved turning in the leather at head and tail, without the need to cut such strengthening material in the joint that was remarkable. Technically, it would be possible by stopping covering the interior parts of the spine just before or up to the last sewing station. In this method, one essential result, among others, could have been preventing the breakup of the sewing structures. This was probably true as it shared the loads of the boards over the threads. Few manuscripts had evidences of change of gutter. Besides, the technique appeared to allow horizontal opening of the book boards without twisting back to the spine side. The structure generally looked to be friendly with spine lining and even with the two-pieces technique.

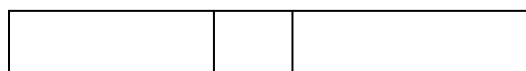


Fig. 5.34 drawing showing turn- in cover at spine edges²³¹ folds Type

The spine cover without cut had been rare in Ethiopian tradition. The fold type constituted slightly more than half the bindings investigated for such kind of information. The 17 manuscripts found be special in containing evidence of local origin. Some was also having turned in spine cover leather visible for confirmation, specially associated with second type of end banding. The fold type of spine covering that the spine tended to show flat shape. Because the weight of the text block spine was assumed halted from going out ward form convex spine appearance. That was likely to happen in the spine structure whose weakest points were concretely constructed by double leather inside and outside and the threads of the end band or the tie down passed through them.



Fig. 5.35 BDGE – 065-spine cover that includes turn in indicated by the arrow, fold Type turn in leather continued to cover the spine

However, it is also true that certain books with specific functions were accorded much stronger and better structures than others. The cover helped to enhance the longevity of boards in addition to decorative surfaces. Wooden boards frequent break should be that necessitated covering most parts of the books more specifically the sewing structures by quality leather. It is hardly

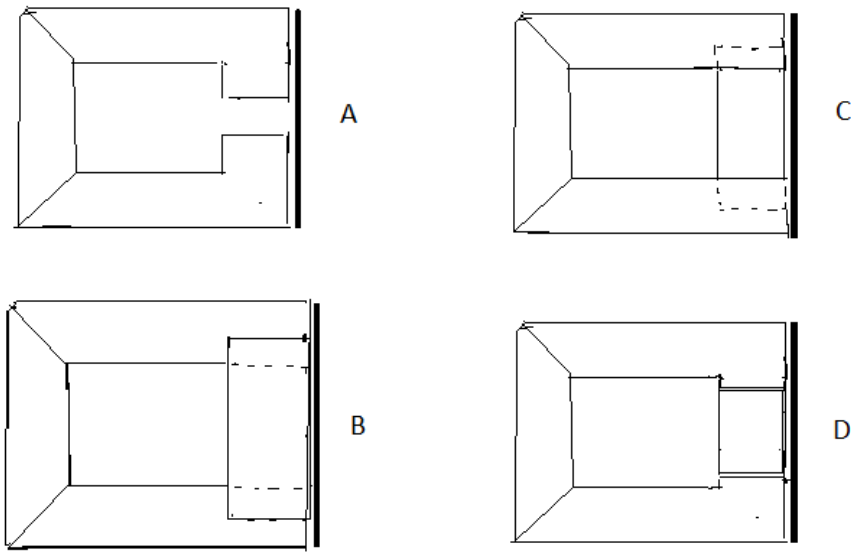
²³¹Szirmai 1999, p. 165, fig. 8. 21 'b' and 'a' respectively

surprising that high values of books of the Gondärian manuscripts, with well-written and illuminated texts, tend to be bound in good bindings, regardless of their typology.

5.3.2.3.2 Covering the Fourth side of the turn-in: The Binding Side

In the presented data, there were four varieties of covering techniques employed at binding sides²³²: Gaps, butt, overlapped below and overlapped above. The leather patches on the inner sides of the boards covering the sets of holes located adjust to the text block edges. As can be shown on the images below, fig. 5.36, A,B,C,& D, the binders applied the strip of leather that have equal width, colour, and leather quality and application clarity with that of the rest three sides of the turn- in. In addition, he probably could think that it would be nice to enhance a bit the sewing holes by covering with leather. If it were the later reasons, the binders did not need to worry about their choices of leather and technical qualities rather they choose any leather or other material randomly as long as its primary function was to cover the threads on the boards. This implied that the principal reasons of covering the binding sides were more likely related to beauty, which was followed by conservation.

²³²The open rectangular spot in the middle is usually covered with textile, and the area between the turn-ins, along the boards' inner edge, is frequently covered with a separate leather patch (Nosnitsin 2014, 78).



Types of turn in at binding sides

Varities of board shapes employed spine side

Fig. 5.36 'A' applied overlapped to covering both binding side covering attempts and board covering exactly at the same time. 'B' applied after covering; 'C' applied before covering; 'D' applied during covering two vertical turn-in lied above the binding sides, and this bound side composed of two leathers joined at the middle length.

It is simply possible to understand that with the exceptions of method 'C' in fig. 5.29 the binders inclined to prefer methods were regarded as the kind of methods done after the works of the turn-in had been completed. Its application before the gluing of the turn-in on the inner boards seems close to the reality as they posted over it. It is supposed that the binding sides were pasted down first. This indicates that the remaining can yield very precise information about the sequence of their execution; technique 'B' was applied after the turn-in had been glued and technique 'D' could be done possibly after. With regard to the technique type, 'A' further remark can be made, but it was either initially left uncovered or it was later removed.

Generally, the technique was characterized by diversity. Butt (Fig. 5.36 'D') and overlapping below ('C') techniques were used for application of leather covers on binding sides for which relatively great majority of the local group belonged. From the four sides of the turn-in, the most manmade affected of all turns-in sides was the turn-in at binding side. Often, this place had been long been the most venerable parts of the bindings for damages caused more greatly by manmade than natural. Because, the book repairers would often intentionally remove them off to get accesses to board lacing holes for re-sewing. As a result, I had very few specimens in the corpus to attest the issue firmly. Nevertheless, I wanted to suggest detail study at it could have been one of the potential areas of worth of further consideration.

5.3.2.3.3 Spine Shape

The shape of the spine and the ease of opening depend on a huge number of factors. Some of them could have been related to both the material qualities and the structure of the spine constituents, such as, structure of quire composition, number of the quires, the sewing structure, the spine lining, and types of spine covering techniques (fig.5.31 and fig. 5.34). For example, equal number of quires appeared to provide spine evenness and flat spine shape. However, in view of the intrinsic natural changes over time, it was virtually improbable to demonstrate the role of the above-mentioned factors on a centuries old binding like the corpus.

The local corpus binding structure had the worth of having preserved its basic functioning for hundreds of years, thanks to the excellent spine treatments; the protective mechanisms applied using quality material and production techniques that survived across time. This implies that the majority of corpus developed flat spines with only two exceptions, concave and convex. The factors which were likely to contribute to the flatly of the spine could be the natural balance created between the size of text block, the number of sewing stations, and the effect of spine linings.

This was supposed to help avoid excessive loads on the spine covers suspended by hallow²³³ spaces created between the spine lining and the spine covers and due to the curved spine edge of the board; bevelled boards had resulted round shape at the edge and flat spine shape but not square or free shape. Technically speaking the structure may be there to facilitate the extended flexibility at spine. These are not surprising enough in a book culture whose extended opening has been a remarkable characteristic such as ours. However, it appears that spine shape have been determined by sewing and spine lining application. Spine cover leather was nothing to do with spine shape. These all might suggest what spine function the Gondärian binders had in mind that needed further research.

5.3.2.4 Size of the Book

Data have been collected from physical measurements of the books size on three places: Length, width, and height. This measurement was taken from size of the exterior parts of format from above the cover boards but not the text block separately. Commonly, the two have size differences. The reason why the makers, of course scribes, chose some specific ranges of sizes was probably related to the size of text block found in the exemplar format used. Still other factors might be responsible in bringing about subsequent changes in size and shape. Please note that large size can be a symbol of richness and glory²³⁴ as the size was apparently predetermined during skin selection.

Because the scribes have already established size /shape long before the binders' physical contacts of the books, the internal textual factors for instances, kind of scripts, text lay out, typology changes might be attributed more to changes on size than external factors (needs). Hence, it was done intentionally by bookmakers towards accommodating the internal textual factors with the physical medium that presented text to the readers in convenient manner. The

²³³ The hallow structures work like a coiled spring to absorb shock, maintain balance, and allow range of motion throughout the spinal column.

²³⁴ Winslow 2015

results of data analysis of the physical measurements of the books sizes indicate a relatively big range of 17X11X4cm – 52X47X14 cm.

Based on internal criteria and using scant information from literatures²³⁵, this range could have been categorized in to three sub sets:

17X11X4cm – 28X23X4cm = ‘small’²³⁶ -----2MS

29X24X11cm – 40X35X11cm ‘medium’ - ----42MSS

41X36X11cm – 52X47X14 – ‘large’ -----17MSS

Every sub set have been well represented by a number of books within the total corpus. only two had no records, and among the Anomalies group, four manuscripts belonged to small size and seven of which become medium size. However, no any book of the Anomalies group sized as large. The large number of the corpus could be belonging to the medium and large category. As it seems uncommon from other²³⁷ collections, it was perhaps remarkably a big number that found in the small corpus of 61 MSS in such size.

Regarding the shape of the books, it was said to be assumed that the ‘squareness’ became consistent across most parameters. Yet, in order to determine the shape objectively other than visual data, and in order to compare differences in format, the ratio of height and width can be expressed in a single number, obtained by dividing height by width. The result shows the most significant number of books fall within 1:1 - 1:3 ratios and thus this might have been considered as small range of book shape of the corpus. This could be used in levelling them into three sub categories. The first category consists of books’ shapes lies between 1.1 - 1:3 ratio have been assigned as ‘oblong’ which really means length is greater than width. The second one was

²³⁵On this provisional basis, one can say that the dimensions of the Manuscript. range from 10–12 cm to more than 40 cm in height (48 cm in an exceptional Manuscript. from Däbrä Bizän, Eritera, and also Manuscript 1837 of the Schøyen private collection, London – Oslo, 49 cm.); the most common height is ca. 30 cm.’ Uhlig, S, & Bausi, Alessandro 2014, 741.

²³⁶Szirmai 1999, 46; 80mm – 12mm

²³⁷ COMSt 2015, 163 tentatively assumption of the existence of three main manuscript sizes: (1) the most common mid-size, with height 170–380 mm; (2) small size, with a height less than 170 mm; and (3) large size, with height around or more than 380 mm

square format. Absolute majority of the corpus had been perfect square though usually, the shape of the codices is a vertical format. With some volumes however, the vertical shape was more pronounced.

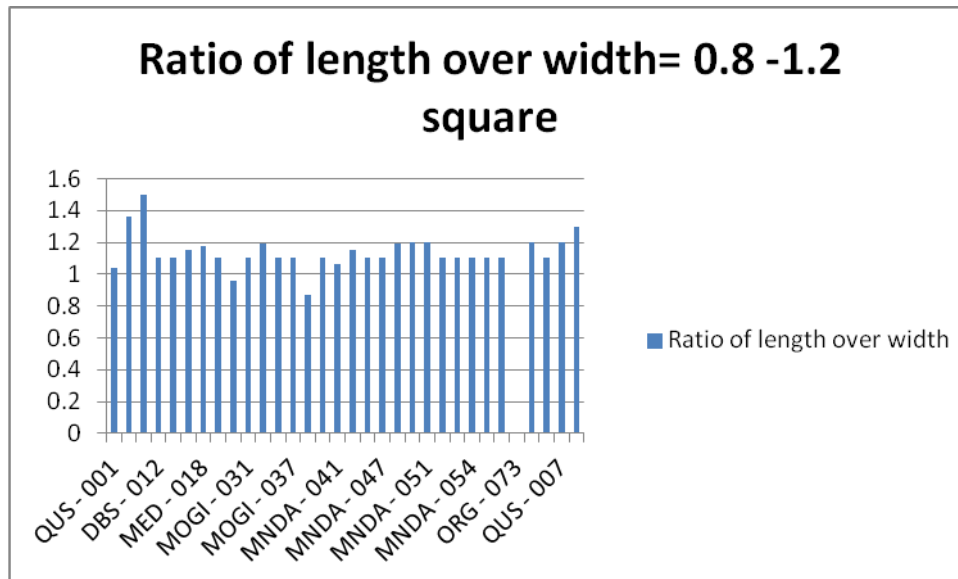


Fig.5. 38 showing ratio of length over width of some selected bindings in the corpus, exclusively on manuscripts created in 1nd period.

As revealed in fig.5.38 above, most books ratio fall between 1:1-1:2 ratios that is a perfect square. This implicates book formats as one of binding characteristics, may differ over historical periods and cultures. Similarly, Delamarter (nd) has noticed that changes in the height to width ratio of text blocks in general terms from the seventeenth to late nineteenth century. It has been observed that the size of the codices may be connected to the certain text. The format of the books can have also additional function-eye pleasing. If that is the case, artistic act on the part of the scribes or binders perhaps came in the front line.

5.4 Decorating Internal and External Parts of the Bindings

The acts of adorning the bindings with tooling would be considered as the final tasks of the binders work. Despite the fact that tooling was not structural, it could not be ignored as blind tooling was already well known and widely used on Gondärian manuscripts, as it increases the

value of the books. In addition to the size (i.e. the amount of parchment used), the type of binding and the number of the miniatures, Bausi 2014b, 751 notes that the number of ornaments has also tended to define the manuscripts value. The craftsmanship during the Gondärian period general entered in to an epoch of transformation in all aspects of the books including decorating bindings perhaps beyond artistic sake. That might also correspond with Gondärian as visual cultural renewal specific to the local phenomenon. This sub topic therefore presents only those elements used to beautifying books and are realized as results of binders' choices of specific materials and their technical skills. It followed that highlighting of the aesthetic/quality aspect as particularly accented in the Gondärian book production seemed to me reasonable. The following were the results of such efforts.

There were two basic decorative schemes found to be applied in beautifying the local books. The first one was stamping certain motifs on the cover leather. Secondly, adorning the interior and exterior parts of the boards with attractive textile in lays and with metal plaques [not full but partially] respectively. These decorative elements were not merely taken as purely decorative functions but they presumably had technological and conservational ends. This implied that the multiple roles of single action would be the very character of the standard production²³⁸.

5.4.1 Tooling of Certain Motif on the Cover Leather

In this sub topic, 'decoration'²³⁹ simply signifies that the extent of binders' intention that they liked to see (with physical eyes) the books in the sense of beauty and durability. The book without decorative works would be regarded as incomplete in the local manuscript culture. For the local context like Gondärian, this could have been the key features that relate the books to

²³⁸ It also represented the sense of quality. Pan Ethiopian, MNDA – 049. They are ten in number (Sergew Hable Selassie 1981, 25) here only the most common and widely used were mentioned.

²³⁹For detail varieties and kinds of pressing tools, please refer recent works by Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski (2015)Technological aspects of the monastic manuscript collection at May Wäyni, Ethiopia, chap. Four. Pp.119 -131 and Winslow Sean Michael 2015 Ethiopian Manuscript Culture: Practices and Context. A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Department of Medieval Studies University of Toronto, pp. 224 -261.

their local origin. This section of the binding work had relatively given freedom for the binders to integrate the aesthetic elements at a single book level, as visual cultural object.

5.4.1.1 Principles of the tooling technique

Tooling motifs on the leather covers seemed to follow some principles of the technique: First outlining the design with ruler; second, impressing with the so-called triple fillet lines and finally stamping selected bands inside and outside the lines made. Decorative tools²⁴⁰ were frequently added in blind on both quarter and full covered bindings. So far in the literature and even in this survey, I had never come across with cutting the outlines with a pointed knife (inset) halfway the thickness of the leather.

What was more probably common in ornamenting the leather cover with tooling involving wetting the leather during applying heated tools? The engraved stamps of iron were used, as it was common of in all regions since 17thc²⁴¹ in Ethiopia. There can be no doubt that tooling on the unprocessed skin is difficult. Yet, tooling of bindings, in association with the introduction of tanned leather after 17thc, also showed the revival of Gondärian renowned techniques of artistic expressions using the covers themselves as vehicles.

5.4.1.1.1 Tooling Border Bands

The covers were receiving tooling on their sides, spine, and turn-ins and board edges with the application of heated metal devises. On these four places, the designers used to stamp various motifs including border bands (frames), cross (background cross), triple fillet, and small circles. This was evident in sequences of their executions. As can be seen from fig 5.39 A below, the small circles seemed to be done last in time. Because, it is seen just above the main band and the

²⁴⁰ For more elaborate lists and varieties please see, Fäqadä Sellase Täfärra 2010, pp.242-243; Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, pp.122 -125; Winslow 2015 pp.231 -242

²⁴¹ No any binding with tooled full leather dated before end of 16th and beginning of 17thc Fäqadä Sellase Täfärra, *Tentawi yäbranna mäsaheft azzägäjajät*, “The Ancient Way of Preparing Parchment Books”, Addis Abäba, 2010, p.237

triple -fillets used to make the background cross and framing the bands. There was no central motif tooled other than the cross.

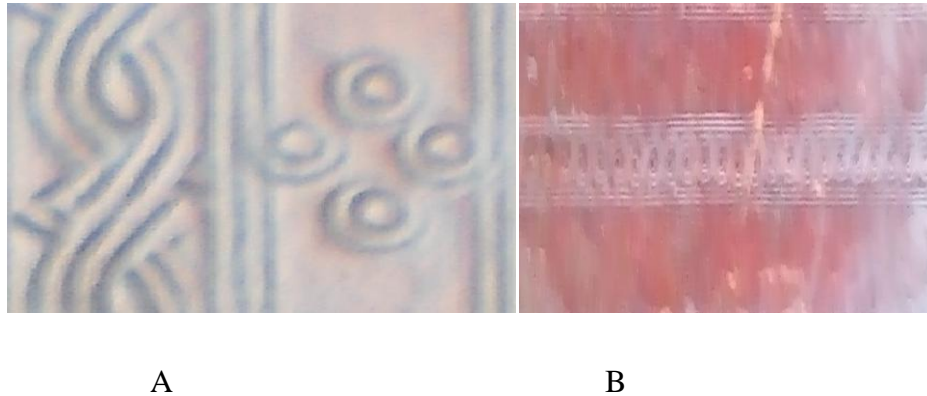


Fig. 5.39 showing sequence of tooling; QUS – 004 ‘A’ triple fillets applied after bands and BDGE -063 ‘B’ triple fillets applied before bands. *(Please note that tooling gave the cover leather additional gray variety of colours and different surface textures to untooled spaces as results of hot metal presses).*

Triple lines always finished the most significant number of the corpus’ border bands. Since no band has done without border, fillet lines suggest that the fillet lines were most probably done after the application of bands. Consequently, I suppose the following tooling procedures preferred by the book decorators in the local: First, they might be outlining the design with ruler on the area where patterns are going to be tooled; second, impressing with triple fillet lines and finally stamping selected bands inside and outside the lines made. The front and backboards took similar works. However, the direction of tooling would not be revealed in the study²⁴². The future research might consider it. The hair side of the leather cover should possibly to be good for tooling impression. This might be reasonable that the flesh sides of the cover leather tended to display lesser quality of impression press because it had often been covered with membranes.

²⁴² ‘Often cotton cloth lined under the tooled leather to enhance tooling figures in tin covers, wetting covers was also another method in enhancing impressions.’ In these occasions, all patterns involved were mentioned starting from the outer pattern and continuing to the inner one from the board edges to centre direction (Fakade Selassie 2010, 242)

In search for optimal techniques, not so easy to get, something like a very good control over the temperature of tools and pressure exercised on the surface; the proper preparation of the leather itself; the use of one specific type of grease; and, of course, the manual skills of the binders or even "toolers". They needed to make the front and backboards to take similar works. In addition, during blind tooling, the thickness of the cover leather matter for tooling quality. For a very good quality of the product, even slight variations in technology were important.

If I assume that the tooling on Gondärian manuscript was particularly well done, was it different? Was it the same in the Gondärian time? Fig.4.39 illustrated that it looked difference in this case but since we had not known yet all the technological details in the historic books and for which a more specialized material research is needed. I do remember I saw imperfectly tooled covers, but not many, and of a later time.

The frames might consist of some ways of impressions; repeated impressions of small multi-use tools and the space between the fillets were left empty or filled with occasional impressions of small circles. Number of frames was determined by length of width than length. More frame number generally implied that an increase in width, (one-by one from length, or one by two). More motifs number at central panel responded by more frame or wide central panel and depended on the size of the book²⁴³ and binders creativity (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, 126). It is said to be a more complex tooling scheme²⁴⁴ (fig.5.40 'A') that is more number of bindings had greater than four frames (Pankhurst 1984, 247).

The number of frames in the corpus may also exceed to more than four. Those books, 11MSS, having 6-7 frames had been considered as 'high density'; Others with 4-5 frames as 'medium density' are represented by 23MSS; the remaining group of books with 2-3 frames were regarded as 'low density' and are represented by 10MSS; NR--17MSS; Total---61MSS. Frames number with two and less than two were the characteristics of books of the Anomalies category.

²⁴³ Fakada Selassie 2010,235

²⁴⁴ Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015,126 found only few bindings in their collection with more than four frames. However, 73% of the bindings had only two and three.



Fig. 5.40 'A' MOGI – 035, 'B' ATMI - 027 showing the density and standards of frames differences in the corpus: Six frames of high density [A] and half of the Anomalies have two frames and low density [B]

5.4.1.1.2 The Central Panel: Crosses

Just after completing the works of ornamenting two sides of the book with boards bands in similar design, the binders had now began to staff the central panel by stamping very divers motifs centring the cross in the middle position. Certainly, it was of a religious subject. Inside rectangular panel at least four independent motifs were made (fig. 5.41 'A') these were the cross, background cross, the joint small circles appeared to be a 'cross' at upper and lower position of the cross, and the triangular shapes at the bottom of the main cross fig. 5.41 'B'. No any other cross has been created without background cross inside the central panel except in few diamond crosses.

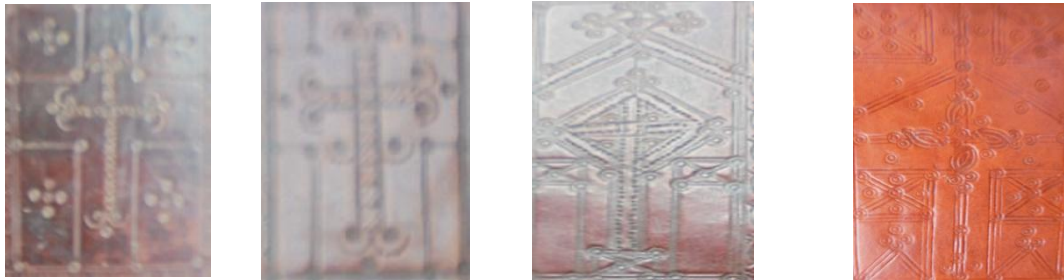


A

B

Fig. 5.41 MOGI – 036 showing the typical background cross and five small circles within; ‘B’ Full diamond cross and both triangle and square at the base of the cross (fig. 5c in Pankhurst 1984,214 and fig.26b in Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015,127).

Type of cross execution techniques: Variations: based on the central panel including a cross



A

B

C

D

Fig. 5.41 types of crosses²⁴⁵: ‘A’, Latin cross MNDA – 051, ‘B’ Equal arms cross MNDA – 057, ‘C’ Diamond cross QUS – 004 ‘D’ eclipse circles or looped-shaped cross DBS – 062²⁴⁶ with outer cross.

This simply illustrates the reality from recorded data of cross type that can be clearly identified with visual means. One must never lose sight of the fact that so many bindings having been lost I can never be sure of how common a feature this may have been. Number of books represented each category of crosses type. Latin cross with 28MSS, equal arms cross with 2MSS, diamond cross with 4MSS, elapsed circles cross with 6MSS, and other 4MSS. Latin cross (fig.5.41,A) was typical Gondärian cross and the corpus. However, the equal arms cross type²⁴⁷ (B) are less

²⁴⁵The typological classification based on Pankhurst 1984 also distinguished three basic forms of cross tooling on bindings: 1) the Latin cross; 2) an equal-armed cross with extended lower stem; and 3) the diamond-shaped cross (“Ethiopian Manuscript Bindings”, p. 209).

²⁴⁶P.216, fig.6 A and B

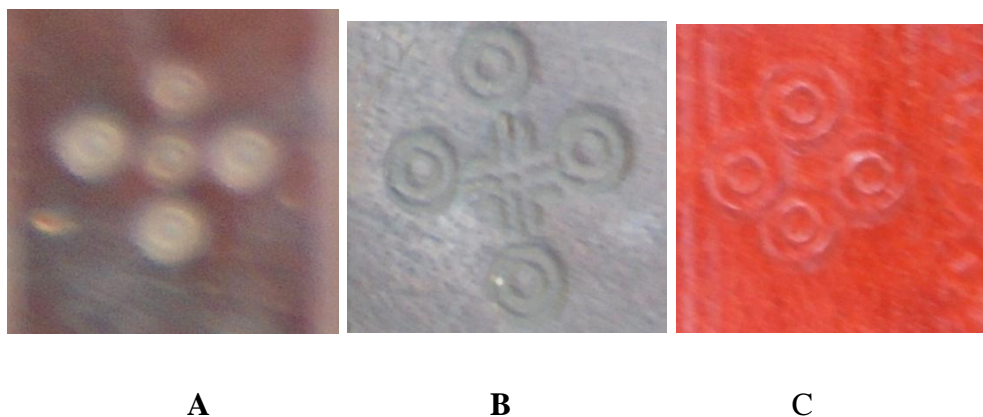
²⁴⁷ Pankhurst 1984, 214 figures 5B The cross has a much higher proportional than the case of the simple Latin cross. Such crosses were generally ‘far less ornate, and imaginative, than those of either metal or wood’ (Pankhurst 1984, 209).

common than other crosses. No small circle has been pressed on the leather of equal arms cross type 'B'. Diamond cross 'C' tended to embody four features together. The most striking features of all are a single gable – triangular area two slopes of the roof meet.

What are common to all tooled specimens were all had background cross and border of bands, which were often made with triple fillets. The more illustrating example of all border tooling is of the background cross that was specially made by triple fillets and mostly was ornamented by small circles. Owing to border ornamentations²⁴⁸, they are in their own right an impressive piece of decoration.

5.4.1.1.3 Small Circles

The application of five or four small circles²⁴⁹ varied in combination, places they were stamped, and arrangements across the surface of the leather covers. The most common type combination to the corpus is indicated in fig. 5.42 'A' variety. This seems to be the case most frequently preferred by local decorators. Slightly more than half of the corpus the edge of the cover tooled with two fillet lines and small circles.



²⁴⁸ Both instances are absent in a book of Winslow, 2015, 237, fig. 6:22 Dābrā Marəqos.

²⁴⁹ 'Circle on the corner of cross was unique feature of Ethiopian bindings' (Pankhurst 1984, 211).

Fig. 5.42 'A' MNDA - 051 'B' MOGI - 036 'C' DBS – 061 showing variety of, small circles motifs combination mainly found in the central panel

Table 5.5 the variety of additional elements in decorating the cross in two categories

Crosses with horn and circles		The Corpus	Anomalies
With small circles only	12MSS	BDGE-065,066,067 ²⁵⁰ ,068,MOGI-035,037;MNDA –048,058,046,047; QUS - 004 ²⁵¹ ;QUS - 008	
With horn and circles	13 MSS	BDGE – 063, MOGI – 031,034,036 ²⁵² , 038, ,MNDA – 049,048,051, 052,054, 057 ²⁵³ ; QUS – 006, 075	
Without circles and horns	12 MSS	DBS – 009, 014, 061, 062,014, 016,MNDA – 043, 050,055;QUS – 001,005,007	DBS–009Diamond cross
Other/ with horn only?	1 MS	MNDA - 059 ²⁵⁴	0
Total	38	37	1

²⁵⁰This is an equal arms cross type, BDGE – 067, 063,

²⁵¹Diamond cross

²⁵²Pankhurst 1984, Fig. 1 C p.206

²⁵³This is an equal arms cross

²⁵⁴Typical round (not flat) bevelled board edge shape.

The data on the table 5.5 above indicated that all of additional decorative elements to the crosses were found in the corpus other than in the Anomalies group of books. There might not single or predominant preferences of decorating the cross in the local. Rather three varieties were available for the binders. The data on the table indicated no clues why this happen. The data were taken from only the bindings of which their crosses were so decorated by additional ornamentations were identified with certainty.

5.4.1.1.4 Triple filleting

Referring to a standardized typology of tooling that was used very frequently for decorating the leather coverings were probably the triple filleting. The tools used to outline the layout on the surfaces of leather covers appears extremely difficult to tell. The binders had probably used a metal tool with sharp point, as they were hidden under the pressed motifs and hard to see them. The most unusual parts receiving triple fillet tooling were; side, spine, turn ins, board edges. All except turn-in had been presumably assigned with double functions, beauty, and durability including laminated container Fig 4.51'B.'

Furthermore no evidences of fillet wheels were also used to create grids of straight lines in various arrangements associated with different centres of binding, the binders skilfully and always used the ruler[instrument made of wood or metal] to achieve such level of precisions in straightness which would be unlikely otherwise. Winslow (2015, 225) also indicates that a variety of crossing or parallel lines will be drawn with the ruling tool.



Fig.5.43 MNDA – 053, triple-fillet stamped with hot metal tools (left); the dark staff seen scar of heat not burn on the leather cover contrasted from un tooled spaces; impressions from the side of upper cover magnified twice and the picture on the (right) shows triple fillet tooling on the spine of bindings (DBS – 011).

A most significant number of the bindings in the corpus were tooled on spine and all of them on the turn -in. Multiple lines with small circles at the middle were also integrated together (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015,130, fig.4.30). Hence, though spine tooling has a mere aesthetic significance, it may demonstrate the practice that was a typical local tradition. The corpus thus seemed to manifest a product of more complex crafts than the Anomalies. The tooling on the edges and on turn- in served both a decorative and technological functions. The impression with a hot metal tool on moist leather enhances its adhesion to the wooden boards. Nevertheless, the tooling of the spine did not have technological functions.

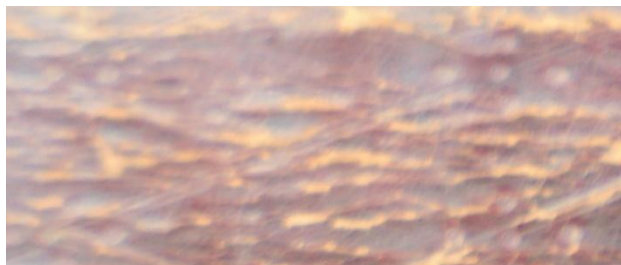
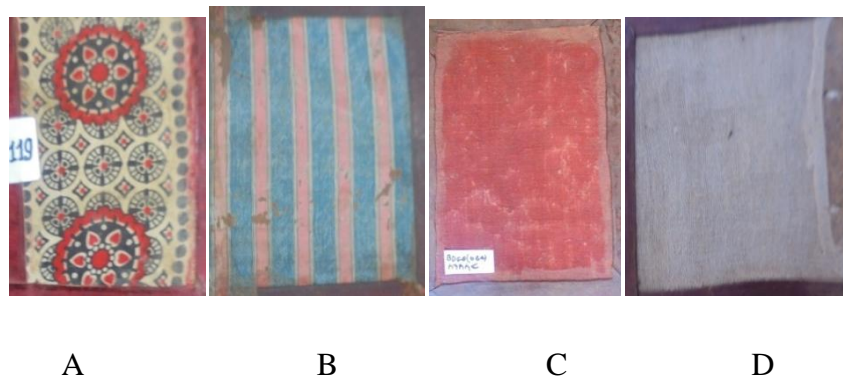


Fig. 5.43 MNDA – 054 showing elaborately tooled spine with triple fillet lines and four joint small circles.

5.4.2 Decorating the Bindings using Materials

5.4.2.1 Adorning the Inner Boards by Attractive Designs of Textiles

The bookmakers began their work of adorning the inner boards by selecting better fabric and design for the central area made rectangle by turn-in. In view of the binders' choices, one could perhaps imagine that beauty and durability might be taken in to consideration. In addition to this to enhance the beauty of the textile, harmonizing the area was one important practice. As such, the choices of design made by the binders seem to follow specific internal criteria. For instances they tended to use no animal motifs, no religious motifs, no Indian architectural motifs. Furthermore, the textiles were displayed correctly vertical (fig.5.44 B). This shows that selection was probably based on design.



Fig²⁵⁵.5.44 'A' ATMI- 030, 'B' MOGI – 033, 'C' BDGE -064. 'D'MNDA – 057 four varieties of textile²⁵⁶²⁵⁷ in lies in terms of design found in the corpus

²⁵⁵For the great variety and state of presentation Pankhurst, Richard (1980), 'Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Manuscripts in Britain', *Azania*, 15 , 43–55 . Pankhurst, Richard (1981), 'Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Eighteenth Century Manuscripts in Britain', *Azania*, 16, 131–150.

²⁵⁶I had got basic information about the textile production processes and its type of products in different waving patterns and fabric used that determine the quality of the textile. I went to the town of Bahir Dar where Bahir Dar textile Share Company is located and I had been explained excellently by one of the weaving section engineer in Sep.2016.

The figure 5.44 indicated that in addition of its functions and types of fabrics and patterns of weaves, textiles could generally be distinguished by also motifs or different *buta* or *buti* designs used in the inlays. The ‘two-faced’ or reversibility created a very feature that made them desirable except the printed designs. The distribution of such choices was largely varied than Pankhurst’s²⁵⁸ results; floral greater number than bands.

No any devotional image was placed on the central area made rectangle by turn-in as adoring purposes. Mostly both surfaces of the boards’ internal central field covered with similar textile²⁵⁹ design except with two books. In the later case, two pieces of clothes, the edges of the upper pieces overlap in the middle of the open field over the lower pieces. While the lower piece was applied on the bias, this suggested an economic²⁶⁰ usage of scraps of cloth but less probable to be an intentional technical motivation.

No curving on the inner surface had been applied for the way of ornamentation. In the corpus, there was no any special treatment of the inner surfaces of the boards, and originally no bare surfaces found, if some, only later coming phenomena as traces of former presence were evident. The drawing of a horse on the open field had been seen in one binding fig.5.45. It is possibly be occur after the missing of the textile inlay. Finally, no any layer lacquerer made.

²⁵⁸Floral 45, band 23, three had only lines, and blanks 42MSS Pankhurst 1981,132.

²⁵⁹ ‘A study of these fabrics is profoundly beneficial for tracking the location and economic matrix to which the book belongs, almost identical to the role that watermark studies plays in the study of Arabic Islamic manuscripts.’ Delamareter 2009, 13

²⁶⁰(Scheper 2014, 165, Part -5)



Fig. 5.45 BDGE – 056, showing horse drawn on the open field of the inner board

To enhance visual beauty of the inner face of the wooden boards further, the binders were presumably applying the bands vertically to suit the trimmed turn-in and blind-tooled triple fillet pressed over them. The dominant choices of the binders was the strips and flower designs of both printed and woven kinds with reddish background colour.

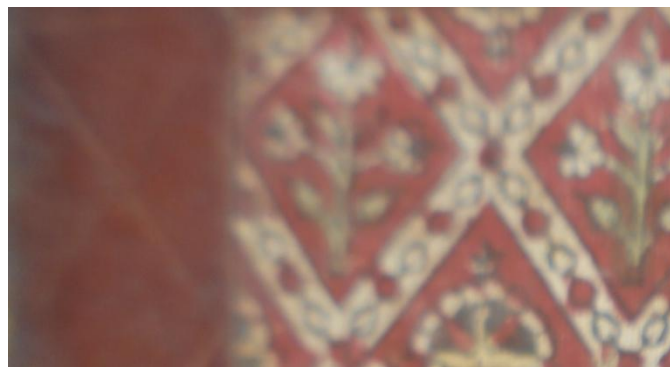


Fig 5.47 MNDA – 052 Modelling textile design in decorating the interior coverings²⁶¹

Fig. 5.47 illustrates that the pattern of textile inlays sometimes matched to frames or bands: strips (both printed and empty) between the double lines (Tomaszewski & Gervers 2015, 130 fig. 4.29). The colour of the textile might indicate a need to match it to the colour of the cover (fig.5.47). The durability of the works in mind the binders tended to display the textile inlays vertically the selvages position up wards to restrict tearing possibility and then to make them

²⁶¹'In this case, the leather ornamentation seems to have been inspired by the geometric pattern of the printed textile.' Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015 , 130, fig. 4.29.

safer. However, horizontal application of the cloth was recorded, the number of occurrences was very small, and there was one instance, DBS 061. This manuscript was lined, after resewing. This proves that the crafts would probably have both aesthetical and durability ends at a time. One of the most telling examples is the metal plate's fig.5.48.

5.4.2.2. Decorating the exterior covers with metal plates/ Plaque

The intention for applying such elements appeared to fix the cover along the three sides of the turn-in as might be deduced from their location. Therefore, the metal plaques appear to have more preservation function than aesthetical. Moreover, the reverse looks truer in the case of the rossta. Mäg^wina and Čäläqot books, (Winslow 2015, 253), metal plaques and tooling were similar out ward appearances²⁶². Both had typical Gondärian Latin cross with background cross.



Fig 5.48 ‘A’ MOGI – 036 [Straight lined boss] ‘B’ MOGI -033 [curved lined boss] ‘C’ MOGI - 033 Inside, showing attachments. [internal fixing above turn-in, rectangular shapes], ‘D’ MNDA

²⁶²Figure 6.36: Metal covers of a Gospels at Čeläqwt Səlasse in the works of Michael Gervers and Winslow (2015,250)

– 049, [the boss with central piece of precious minerals²⁶³] Bosses," protective metal pieces attached to each corner of the binding.

The figure 5.48 above show that there were two kinds of plaques designs. These are curved and straight leaf making lines fig.5.48 B and D respectively. The čäläqot belongs to the former: Varied from four to seven in number. The variation in pattern would be based on (compared) the number of frames. Strap leather with trimmed double step sewn leather similar to the cover; the anchor pin was nailed above the cover. It might be important evidence for in order to be able to use for our claim of higher criteria of fabrication and mark it as further consideration.

5.4.3 Signs of Standard Decorative Works: Beauty and durability

The description of decorative elements on tooled covers had not long been regarded as codicological object of study and tasks especially in early specimens. Moreover, linking them towards their local origin appeared to have been remaining improbable. However, the high values of decorative materials and techniques used may be indicative for the status of the books and their association with specific local manuscript culture. The manuscripts in the local corpus were not merely artistic, but also functional it could possibly be used as a tool to pursue people. The different book appearance found to be possible not by all structural elements that underwent innovations but also by outstanding decorative designs.

Nevertheless, Fakade Selassie 2010,244 states that the stamping tools of Gondar were low quality in comparable with the Aksum. I would not agree with him. The stamping metal tools were possibly higher criteria of fabrications as one could see from the pressing visibility today (Fig. 5.49). In continuing to list the special characteristics of the decorative works of the local crafts, I should have cited the following among others. The level of high contrast, placing every decorative items on a right position, completeness of the work done, clear border demarcation, perfect band size and right angles, consistent ratio of total area of open space over total area

²⁶³ 'Many of such treasure bindings, ..., decorated in various ways such as enamelling and embellished jewels and precious stones'. Szirmai, J. A., 1999 *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 80

covered with stamps, these and more others make the corpus exceptionally had been considered higher fabrication criteria probably involved in crafts technology.

Furthermore, as the pressing standard suggested that, the binders executed it using hot tools and wet leather that is sensitive to press. Uniform pressure exerted during press²⁶⁴; proper function of stamp devices; no scar of burn; no time saving short cuts; number, at least six (Pankhurst 1984, 247), and varieties of punches used and their metal stamping device quality were also some essential features of the local crafts. It should be noted that those elements would tell about the decorating practices that was changing. Indeed, it seemed that when decorative schemes were developed, initially they were executed with high artisanship. Since no objective instrument²⁶⁵ has been devised so far to qualify the workmanship, the occurrence of different stylistic shapes and trends in it await further investigation.

Most of bindings of the Anomalies group only the spine were covered with leather, structural over weight aesthetical. All most all of the corpus decorative practises²⁶⁶ were done both for beauty and for structural function as the same time, except tooling of the spine and painting of the quire folds of the text block. Colourful page markers, decorated page number, and other more manifested that the binders were inherently connected with beauty and its expressions.



Fig. 5.49 MOGI – 036 the quality²⁶⁷ of tooling impressions/ it seems curving than pressing

²⁶⁴Impressions seen on torn off covers on wooden boards, Fig 5.50

²⁶⁵Scheper 2014, 133, part 4; Pankhurst 1984, 243; Nosnitsin, 2012,14.

²⁶⁶How creative they were in design' binders of Gondar city Pankhurst 1984, 207

²⁶⁷Tooling quality comparable between Winslow 2015, fig. 6.18, Bahir Dar, p. 228 and MNDA – 049 and fig. VII, Cover of B,F.B.S. – 179, p. 256, Pankhurst 1984.

One could notice that on high valued volumes, the decoration relief remains well visible and very durable, and lasts well, like 315 years is nothing, and the leather itself is shiny and soft. Without exaggeration, the blind person could trace the tooling elements in patterns by touching the decorated surfaces with his fingers: even today after a couple of centuries later a high criterion of fabrication in artistic bases of attainment (fig.5.49). Hence, the longevity of the bindings at usage implied to the better the decorative works done.

The number and type of materials and techniques employed in the manufacturing of the local corpus suggested the aspects with which the binders and the sponsors agreed to use for meeting their purposes, book as object, which further assumed the most accepted book type standard to local vision (Dalamater 2006). The essential means to create the ideal book appearance that represents the level of conformity between the design and the actual book was based on specification influenced by actual construction ability and supervision.

Hiding unpleasant materials from sight, the sewing threads of the end band and braided leather of all the books were inserted into the turn- in glued in the inner face of the boards, providing the greatest possible preservation for sewing structures along the joint area. During the process of covering a binding with first type of end band, the leather was cut near the spine as it folds over the board edges, which bestride the gap between the text block and the boards. Later on, the binder appeared to recognize the problem and invent the second end band type. The leather was not cut near the spine but it was folded over the board edges connecting the two wooden boards without break internally that seem to illustrate both durability and beauty at the same time that shed an interesting light on book production. The next topic dealt the former issue more closely below.

5.5. Conservation practices and durability issues

The act of preventing books [material and structural elements] from being lost, wasted, damaged, or destroyed on the products of local binding methods would be discussed here in the this last sub topic. The primary goal of the bookmakers was presumably to protect the text block and its contents, secondly the material and structural elements, which support the book, finally, the book as whole. Every action was also likely to denote both conservation and decorative functions at a

time. This actually requires very professional skills and suitable material supply. One may think that the possibility of such standard craftsmanship would only be reliable in urban context, such as the local. Furthermore, the crafts may be ruled by the visual cultural values possibly related to the Gondärian.

The conservation of books did not by any means come to be seen next to decorating works as the end of the book making processes. Whereas conservation of book as an object had been implied in every action that used to produce a complete book. Nevertheless, some material and technical practices in the making of the books needed to have supposedly multiple roles at the same time; such as, durability and beauty. The choices of techniques to meet the requirements of the time, in which the bookmakers' ability of book binding skills would be judged. Such practise appears to evolve over time towards providing lasting solution to the most frequent conservation problems within the framework of the sponsors' tastes and functions preferences, shaped often by the community's broad vision (needs).

5.5.1 Beauty and Durability Functions Bearing Techniques

The text block at the central position guarded from any possible damaging threats originated from outside of the book physical body; from six sides. By this, imagination of the book calls for four perfectly designed edges, the two up, and lower ones guarded by wooded boards that were square. The spine sides avoided from direct external shook by spine lining²⁶⁸ and hallow. The upper and lower sides of the text block contents protected by with 2 – 4 bi folios fly leaves under wooden boards.

Furthermore, the well-being of the text block and its sewing structures could have been secured using indirect mechanisms tools such as *atronos* during the time of reading the works. Other indirect mechanisms were also used like *elebates*. All *elebats* are made of textile threads, but no

²⁶⁸ 'While examples of such a treatment are singular, at least in one collection of North Ethiopia, I observed some five codices treated in this way, apparently by the same craftsman. Though not very solid and durable, the thin strip of parchment does provide a certain protection for the spine and is effective enough for codices which are not overstrained and kept in decent conditions' Nosnitsin 2014, 84.

leather²⁶⁹. Brighter parchment that enable reading in distance; more number of original fly leaves used for cuts in need of pieces of parchments and records and pasting pictures, and other might enhance preservation of parchment or text blocks.

What is remarkable is that the techniques used to prevent the structural elements and the joint profiles of the local corpus. For instance, why the fold type of the turn -in at the spine joint were preferred? Its method of construction without cut²⁷⁰ was supposed to prevent tears and reducing the twist of the wooden boards along the spine axis. Similarly, the use of end bands especially the second type. Where present, the second type of end bands were tied down in every gathering, increasing the chance of the end bands' survival hiding the threads inside the covering leather at quire edges in the spine. Stitching under the spine covers had also suggested the very intentions of the binders to produce fine appearance and durable bindings. Moreover, proportional balances and integrity of the entire book had several advantages. Proportionality balance of different sections of book bodies might indicate to allow self-imposed balance to achieve longevity of usage of the books and repairs.²⁷¹



Fig. 5.50 MOGI – 034 showing unproportional size of text block causing extended concave spine shape

²⁶⁹ ‘In the manuscripts deluxe nature, a small colourful bunch of silk threads are used’ (Witakowska & Bausi 2015, 174).

²⁷⁰ Winslow 2015, 215, fig. 6:10 C

²⁷¹ We had hard times to know how many times the particular element of the book retouched.

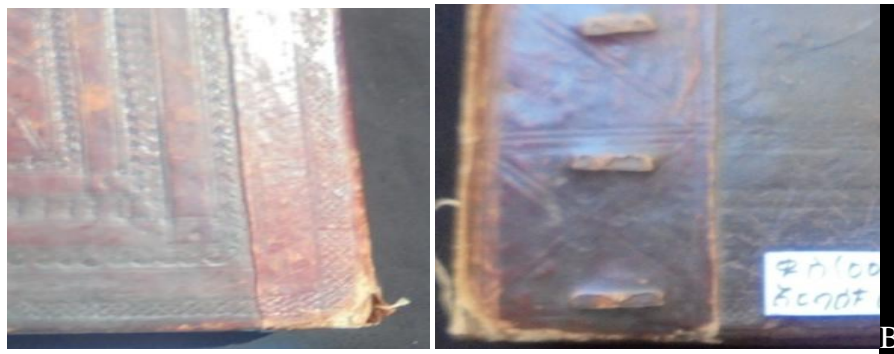
Applying of heated tool press on covering leather with more than four frames was entirely dependent on covering structures but do have contribution for the durability of the manuscripts. The impression with a hot metal tool on moist leather enhances its adhesion to the wooden boards. Besides, no pest down was applied to cover the gap between the wooden boards and the text block that may increase stress at joints resulted split leather and board detachments. Nevertheless, all the above technical elements applied purposely to beautify and protect the book and its parts from being damaged that in turn would elongate its service age up to the natural age of the material involved.

5.5.2 Materials used to both Functions

Covering in single pieces of which the hair side up wards and covering the sets of holes and sewing lacing holes tunnel with leather turn-in at the binding sides were some protective intentions that should be preserved at the present. As such, application of textile inlays on the inner boards had been displayed vertically that gave the salvage up ward direction showed to meet conservation objective. Moreover, lining the spine with full-length parchment were important to signify both beauty and durability roles at the same time.

All over backs were applied on full covers books. I have not encountered with back over made in the pre-use condition they should have been added later as some have new and some have a different colour, material quality from the original²⁷² except for two bindings Fig. 5.51 'A' & 'B'.

²⁷²Nosnitsin 2015, 83



A

B

Fig. 5.51 DBS – 009, 'A' and QUS – 008 'B' over back added during the tradition period (tooled with the main cover leather)

In DBS – 061, QUS – 004, BDGE - 063, and in some manuscripts, the miniatures had been protected by a tipped- in curtain of thin cotton or other textile, (QUS – 001) but seldom are the whole set protected (Balicka-Witakowska 2015, 174).



A

B

C

Fig. 5.52 DBS – 061 'A'; local made sheet cotton covers²⁷³; QUS – 004 'B' textile covers for pictures; the arrow pointed the place of textile attached on the leaf top right corner knotted with cotton threads.

²⁷³Berzock 2002, the whole pictures in the manuscript covered with sheet cotton.

According to Seregew 1981, 27, the beginning of making and practically using of the leather case might be regarded as an imperative landmark in book preservation. In this study, most codices with container were associated with specific typology; Bible and theology, with medium (29X24X11cm – 40X35X11cm) size bindings but large (24 – 29) number of quires in a book. The use of this standard to qualify structures and materials as they occur in the local tradition should be verified.

Similarly, metal fittings²⁷⁴ are also important to preserving the coverings. Fastenings were devices to keep the book constantly closed. A clasp was therefore needed to keep the book closed when not in use, (example is MS London, BL, Or. 728, Witakowska & Bausi 2015, 174). In addition to the stabilizing purposes, they also attest aesthetic function (MNDA- 049).I assumed that were very rare in the corpus (Nosnitsin 2014. 87; Fäqadä-Sällase Täfärra 2010.267). The closing system for boards that assumed a decorative scheme as well needs to be reconstructed in the future.



A

B

²⁷⁴A few codices are decorated with metal (silver) studs or plaques (Pankhurst 1984)

Fig.²⁷⁵ 5.53 MNDA – 054 fastening type; double straps at the top right corner of the binding Tä³ammärä Maryam [The Miracles of Mary] ‘B’, Model Icon pasted on the last page of recto of the fly leaves at beginning side

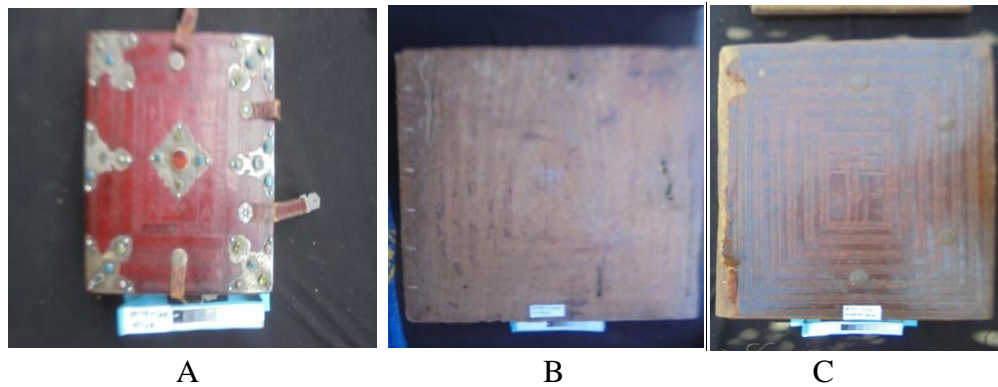


Fig. 5.54 ‘A’ MNDA – 049, ‘B’ MOGI - 031 showing location of pins attached to the upper boards; Traces of fastening holes at ‘B’ appeared to have been fastenings of straps than fixed cover board connectors. ‘C’ metal plaques that fasten the cover leather with the boards, further strengthen the weak adhesive.

The figure above 5.54, illustrated that I had hard time in identifying between the fastenings or the metal plaques and so their respective functions on specially specimen having only traces of their past existence. The pattern of holes or pins on the cover boards looked identical; they were commonly arranged towards the fore edge of the bindings. Nosnitsin, (2016, 87) remarks “they could be used for long leather straps or bands wrapping the volume. Murals and icons of the famous church of Kəbran Gäbrə’el, where several representations of the codices with fastenings

²⁷⁵Nosnitsin, Denis "Lesser Known Features of the Ethiopian Codex", in: E. Ficquet, Ahmed Hassen, T. Osmond, "Movements in Ethiopia, Ethiopia in Movement. Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies", Paris: CFEE - AAU - Tsehai Publisher, vol. 1, pp. 87-89, to be printed 2015 Fig. 21:Book with fastenings and cross in the hand of a saint (exterior side of a triptych), after ANNEQUIN 1975:83. See also Winslow 2015, 255 at fig.6.39, A and B

have been attested (fig. 21), this time from the Gondärian period, provide more indications. On the whole, the feature was apparently more common than one might think.”

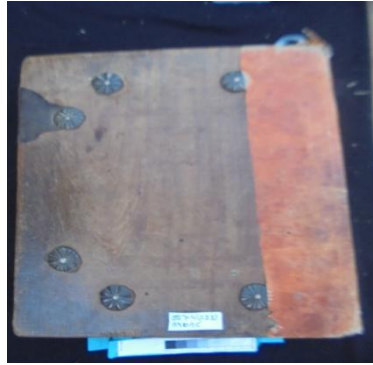


Fig.5.55 MOGI – 033 showing re back spine²⁷⁶ and remnants of cover leather at the top left corner of the backboard; the role of the fastener to cover boards' attachment even against natural aging.

These were appeared to be the most genuine kinds of preventive measures that affect the process of natural decline and risk of further deterioration in a positive way and meant to be a little alternation of the books' basic features. This implies that elongating the function of the book was thought/planned before and during the production processes, not after the completions, or later. However, spine tooling and quire signature decorations, tooling on spine cover leather, and the colours of the braided leather of the end band had signal for beauty and hence they had only decorative functions.

In this regard, the corpus might be taken as one of the durable product attributed to the better production works. The statement can be evaluated based on the frequency of damage and repairs found in the book structures. Since internal structural elements like, sewing, joints and materials used at the spine area have failed at much higher rates than the external structures, it could be said that the bookmakers could not yet understand the problem connected to users who were assumed to be living far away. However, sponsors 'eye' was satisfied with most on appearance

²⁷⁶An eighteenth-century copy of the Haymanotä Äbäw at Çeläqwot Səlasse church, outside Adigrat (fig.6.38) shows that a spine repair has been put over the silver oral bosses, which are then likely to have been contemporaneous with the original covering and not a later element'.(Winslow 2015,251 -252

than internally invisible material and structural parts of the books. Later on, the bookmakers would have got a tendency to begin to tackle those users-related durability problems well. Those experimentations might enable the makers to incorporate double functions for each material and technical applications. The core problem of repairing them awkwardly at present seems to be case that happens in relation to misunderstandings about the complexity of original production.

I could probably be certain the visual culture in the Gondärian might have impacts on them towards the perceptions of the book. That simply made it clear the book was more than a mere carrier of the text and had socio cultural implications embodied in the book as object of symbolic significance inherited to the time. Both the donors and the users should have been giving the synchronic meaning. Hence, preservation should necessarily reconstruct the original codices that can be possible through philological perspective looking for origin and historical changes and for representations and functions at particular point in time in the local would be discussed in detail at the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERPRTATIONS OF CODICOLOGICAL FEATURES IN GONDÄRIAN MANUSCRIPTS

In the preceding chapter, analysis is done with a careful examination of codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts. As such, the codicological features are divided into four major structural and thematic categories. These categories are explained as per their basic meanings and qualities, structural features, textually uncovered procedures, and peculiarities along with the supportive methodological tools and conceptual frameworks. Informed judgments of their high qualities and aspects of originalities or at least of advancements are addressed.

The analysis has revealed that codicology is best explained in line with supportive conceptions from the strongly close disciplines such as palaeography and ‘New’ philology, which combined the analysis of the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions. Moreover, ‘New’ historicist conceptions have substantiated the historical interpretations of both productions and receptions of manuscripts in connection with contextual matters of historical periods and particular locations. The codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts are evidences for multiple interpretations; thereby, the contribution of artworks to codicology together with culturally tuned symbolic meanings and choices of colours should be further explicated.

The interpretations are hoped to address the Ethiopian codicology together with the regional variations. Undoubtedly, the codicological features of the Gondärian manuscript culture is a complex area of knowledge. Hence, there should be interpretations to the codicological features in order to understand the contextual and cultural meanings attributed to the material and the ‘immaterial’ aspects (i.e. the values, meanings, and collective mentalities drawn from the codices) of the Gondärian manuscripts. In this chapter, the how and the whys of interpreting the Ethiopian codicology in general and the codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts by focusing on peculiar thematic categories are presented. In the following sections, interpretations of the codicological features divided into four thematic concerns are presented. These thematic concerns include localization of codicological features, implications of the codicological features in the manuscript culture, interpretations of the identified local tradition, and the codex embedded in the local codices.

6.1 Localization of Codicological Features

In this section, localizations of the codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts (ca. 1650 - 1800) are presented. The interpretations of the localized codicological features are supported with pictorial representations of the changes in the constructed Gondärian periods. Hence, in this section, interpretations of the predominant codicological elements reflected on the Gondärian manuscripts and interpretations of more than one standard at a time in the evolved corpus are addressed.

6.1.1 Predominant Codicological Elements Reflected on Gondärian Manuscripts

In the following sub-sections, the high preferences of Latin type of crosses, the covering technique particularly the uses of single pieces, and the ways in which the textile inlays were done are discussed. Moreover, the techniques of the turn-ins applied on at the spine joints, the preparations of the spine folds for sewing end bands often observed as the applications of the second type of end bands, and finally, the ways how the spine lining of parchments are presented in the same order.

6.1.1.1 Types of Crosses

Among the various types of crosses, the Latin type of cross is favoured as seen in the Gondärian manuscripts of religious concerns. From the Gondärian manuscripts, the undated and the re-sewn volumes have been excluded. Putting these deselected Gondärian manuscripts aside, the remaining manuscripts have been categorized according to the cross types applied in them. Comparative analysis has been done to the dates of occurrences. As a result, Latin type of cross is found the predominant one across the periods. As shown below in fig.6.1, the use of Latin type of cross is observed in the three Gondärian periods. The relative use of such type of cross within a period is greater than the uses of other types of crosses.

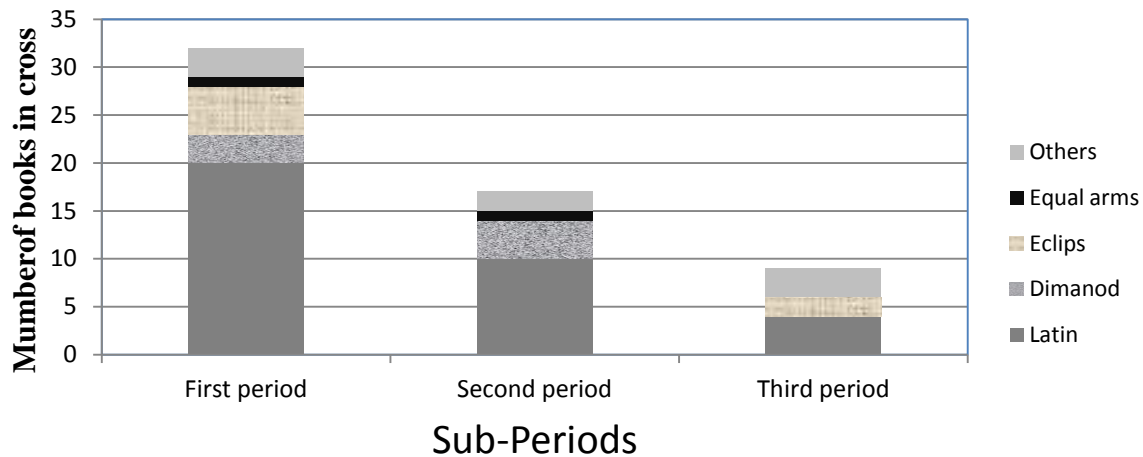


Fig. 6.1 Occurrence of the different cross types²⁷⁷ as used throughout the periods, with exclusion of the re-sewn and the undated manuscripts.

Decoration²⁷⁸ elements help us to date books (bindings) based on cross (Pankhurst 1984, 229 - 247). It is clear the Latin²⁷⁹ type crosses were predominant in the two sub periods. In comparative sense, the first and the second periods were more to show these types of crosses than the third period (Fig. 6.1). This figure also illustrated that the relatively high number of variant cross types in the first period, and the fact that the third period showed a continuous use of the dominant Latin²⁸⁰ cross, as well as the less variety in cross types, though the number of other three types totally absent. Diamond cross, equal arms and other cross types belonged only to the first and second sub periods and eclipsed circles cross type linked to the first and third sub period and that eclipse cross type was totally absent in the second period. No element was almost solely used in the single sub period alone.

²⁷⁷Matched to Pankhurst 1984, Latin , 219 – 221; equal arms, 227 -232; Diamond, 232 – 234; and eclipse, 234-236

²⁷⁸ The Gondärine bindings inspired by the 15th and 16th C bindings Pankhurst 1984, 248 and the post Gondärine bindings used the late 18th C bindings as model.

²⁷⁹Pankhurst 1984, Latin , 221

²⁸⁰The cover is a Latin cross executed with special tools (Pankhurst 1984, 207).

In relation to the above, the tooling of crosses can be said the typical codicological phenomena of 16th and 17th centuries of the Gondärian periods. As literatures stated, no²⁸¹ tooled codices are found before this periods (Fakade-Selassie 2010, 237). Nevertheless, tooling of crosses was developed in the subsequent years consistently. At times, there were the partially covered decorated manuscripts of which they were without the aids of pressing tools in the later period of the 18th century (Ibid, 248). In general, the use of Latin type of cross was mostly in the 17th century, of Equal Arms type of cross from 1632 onwards, but was favoured more during the reign of Iyasu II (1730-1755). This type of cross was not observed after the end of the 18th century as can be seen in MNDA-057. With regard to the use of Diamond type of cross, it appeared more since 1730 unlike to the Latin²⁸² type of cross that was continued to be used throughout the 19th century as can be seen from DBS-014. The number of manuscripts, which applied specific types of crosses, has been compared. As seen in the following fig. 6.2, the number of manuscripts has shown variations in the three Gondärian periods.

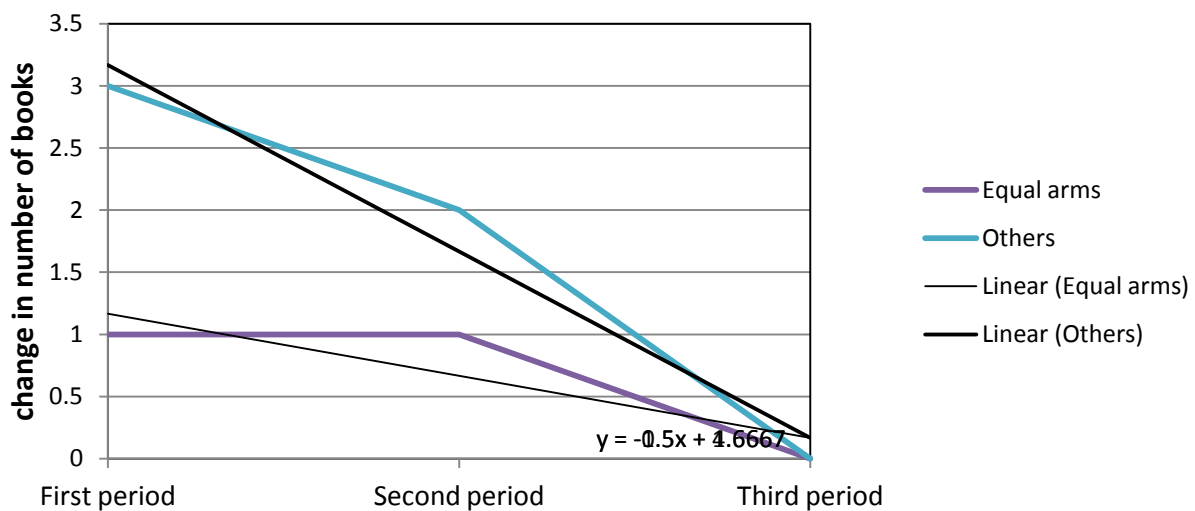


Fig. 6.2 showing cross types of trend of change of book numbers for three sub periods

²⁸¹Datable MSS in Pankhurst 1984, 219 are only 9 (nine) in number, the rest dated by their tooled decoration

²⁸²Pankhurst 1984, 220 - 250

The equal arms trends for the three sub periods implied that the unit decrease in periods resulted 0.5 times decrease in number of books. The 'other' category one unit change in sub periods affected 1.5 times decrease in number of books; when a period changed by one unit number of books decreased in both cases but in varied rates. The number of books often decreased from first to last period. The two cross types suggested that the type of cross the binders preferred influenced by the period of time the making of the central cross. Latin cross with one or more horizontal or vertical lines placed between the cross and the frame was a typical local cross.

The above decorative uses of different types of crosses in the three periods can be associated with the closely related artworks. The decorative uses of are further interpreted along the lines of the illustrative paintings and of the artworks in the Gondärian manuscripts. The insights of Gumbert (2004, 517) differentiating the levels of artworks in manuscripts, are used for interpretations of the artworks cultural implications. In fact, this study on Gondärian manuscripts has extended the interpretations of the artworks by including the contributions of the important historical figures sponsoring manuscript productions. Commonly, illumination is categorized to art history and not to codicological feature. According to Gumbert's (2004, 517) the resting place of simple decorations became codicology. This is only because the less aesthetic value ascribed by art historians and no interest on decorations by palaeographers. Nonetheless, Gumbert expresses his discontent that decorations in manuscripts do not have serious attention by theoreticians and practitioners of codicology. He emphatically indicates how decorations in manuscripts are essential 'codicological units' and are helpful for 'localizing and dating manuscripts'.

Similarly, Cloonan (1995, 137) implies how bookbinding apart from their being protections of the parchments of the codex, they are also viewed as decorations. Obviously, the primary function of bookbinding is structural. Hence, the codicological feature of bookmaking is viewed from its protective function, and not from its decorative function. Cloonan (1995, 137) in reference to bookbinding culture compared in historical periods as before and after the 20th century, states that "the decorative elements have been, at times, perceived as so important that they have over shadowed the structural elements."

In this respect, decorations are analysed as important codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts. Decorations such as those manifested in the tooling, coverings, paintings in between columns and frames, and insertions of full-page paintings on either side of the flyleaves have paratextual implications. At times, they are symbolic in a sense that they are open for multiple interpretations. For instance, the painting in one of the manuscripts can catch codicological interest of analyzing the fillet. The dressing of the sponsor, Queen Mintiwab, who laid below the feet of Virgin Mary and her Son, Jesus Christ symbolizes that she appears polite in front of them. The white cloth she dressed may symbolize that she is of the worldly and an indigenous woman. By this, paintings in Gondärian manuscripts are not only decorations but also they are illustrations.

Placing particular meanings on the artworks of the Gondärian manuscripts, one can share the cultural values in the long history of Gondärian period. In fact, the artworks in the manuscripts are not only for aesthetic values but also they have important liturgical and paratextual values and meanings. As seen in the Gondärian manuscripts, the codices and the artworks in them are not of onetime productions. They clearly show successive developments within the Gondärian period.

The high values of the illustrative paintings in two Gondärian manuscripts is thoroughly examined by Dorothea McEwan. She explains the highly illuminated Gondärian manuscripts together with the political and historical realities in Gondär then back. She also explains how the manuscripts are evidences of sophistications and developments in paintings and how they have been used by the historical figures for secular themes. Attesting this, Dorothea McEwan (2002, np) writes “manuscript books are in the tradition of splendidly illuminated de luxe gospel texts, produced for a purpose far beyond the needs of officiating clergy.” In the following sub-section, the applied covering techniques are compared and interpreted in the three Gondärian periods.

6.1.1.2 Covering Techniques

Covering is one of the essential features of the manuscript tradition to assign the book as fine, simple, and relatively easy to date them if the original binding elements are found.

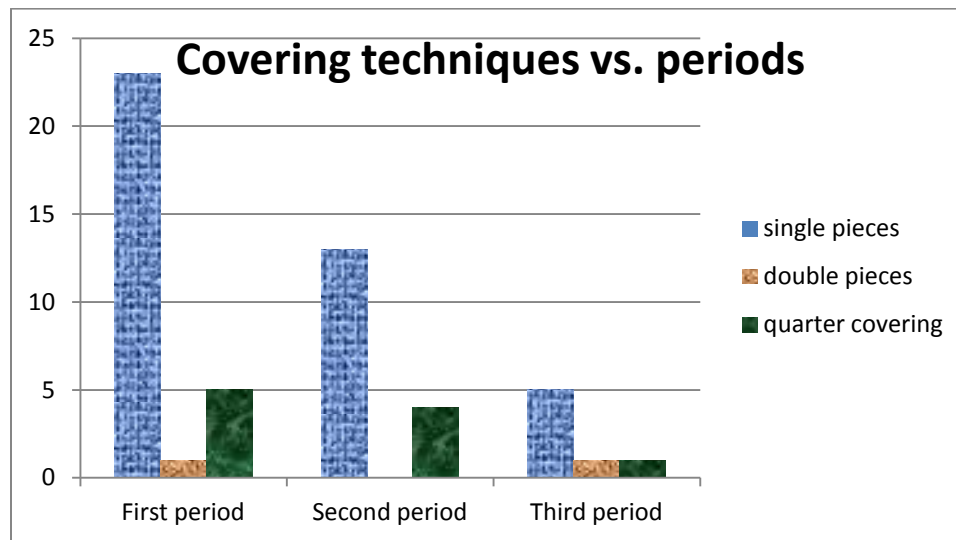


Fig. 6.3 Comparison of basic covering types throughout the periods in the sample, rebound manuscripts excluded.

Fig. 6.3 above clearly depicts that the full cover with single pieces were predominant among other sub elements throughout the three sub periods. However, the political period scored greater in number of books than the cultural period. This figure also illustrates the relatively high number of variant elements in the first period and even high number in political period than cultural. It also demonstrated that the third period showed a continuous use of the dominant single pieces techniques, as well as the two variant techniques, belonged to the third period. The double pieces was absent in second period. Nevertheless, no element was almost solely used in the single sub period. Significantly, the two great varieties, single and quarter pieces, tended to decreasing rates from first maximum to third sub period while the rest two remained same. Over the next centuries, the numbers of items in this category decreases significantly, relative to the number of full leather bindings in the political periods. Moreover, as the figure illustrates, in none of the sub periods does the number of quarter leather bindings exceed the total number of full leather of single pieces bindings, the dominance of a full leather covering is found in almost the first and second periods.

These figures contradict the idea that the partial leather bindings after 1755, Pankhurst 1984,207. Starting approximately from the 16th or early 17th century, the boards of the binding began to be covered with reddish-brown leather (slightly tanned sheep or goatskin; rarely, Anomalies

morocco leather). Full covering as techniques and material were regarded as historic turning point²⁸³ in the differentiation of bindings. The continuous use of the technique, throughout the manuscript period, therefore provides no clues to localize or date a binding until the other two had been getting popularity. It is important that so far, to my knowledge, the triple pieces technique has not been reported to have been used on leather bindings from Ethiopian traditions, so it is conceivable that the method has been used in other traditions such as Islamic²⁸⁴ book bindings, but was likewise overlooked or ignored in ours. In the following sub-section, the patterns of textile inlays are interpreted.

6.1.1.3 Textile Inlays

The application of the textiles inlays in its finest nature only used in the first and second²⁸⁵ sub periods. The third period had no any bindings with fine waved textiles at all, the number of bindings with missed textile in the later time became large in the second sub period as compared to the first, but the dominant number linked to the first sub period.

²⁸³ ‘Until 16th and 17th C Ethiopian codices never tooled, roughly covered by less quality (local-center) leather covers. But most remained uncovered’ (Szirmai 1999; Fakade Selassie Tafara 2010, 247).

²⁸⁴ Scheper 2014, 173 - 197

²⁸⁵ Abäbaw Ayalew 2002, 43 ‘Several formal and stylistic elements of the Second Gondärine Painting are reflected. Floral decorative patterns of garments are carefully rendered’.

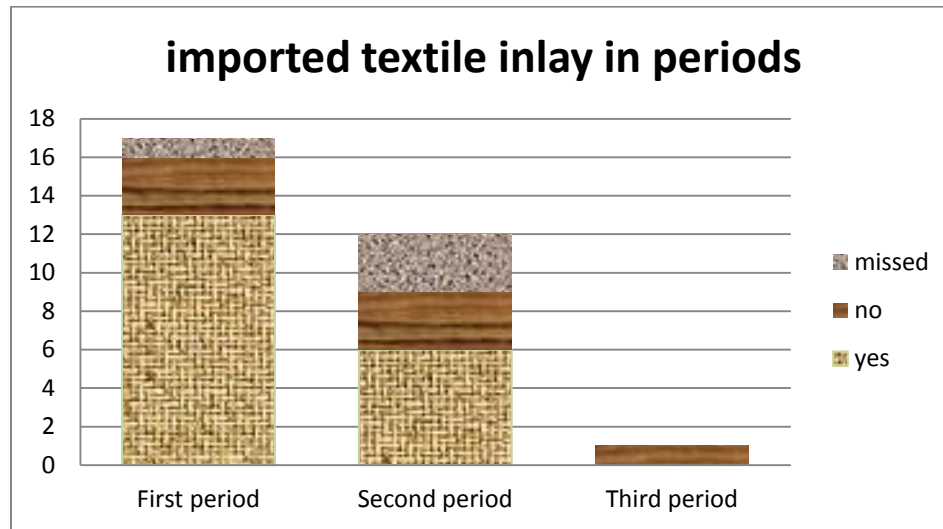


Fig. 6.4 Occurrences of number of books with textile inlays on sub periods based on dated manuscripts.

Textile inlays composite and leather QUS - 005 1755 -1769, MED - 024. First period MNAD-050²⁸⁶first period 1682 – 1706; the textiles inlays the event of first and second periods. Illustration as shown in fig.6.4 about the advancements of doing quality textile inlays agrees with Pankhurst (1981, 131-132) statement in this regard. The majority of quality textile inlays are observed at the period of Bakkafa's reign and continued to his successor Iyasu II, Bakkafa's son. These changes into more advanced textual inlays occurred in the second Gondärian period. Hence, the fine books commonly associated with royal courts, as they contained rare pieces of clothes, gave the bindings additional beautiful appearances. In the following sub-section, the techniques in applying the turn-ins at spine joints are discussed.

6.1.1.4 Techniques in Applying Turn-ins at Spine Joints

The techniques in applying the turn-in at spine joints are found peculiar in the Gondärian manuscripts. As can be seen from the figure below, the second Gondärian period has shown growth in this regard.

²⁸⁶See also Pankhurst, Richard (1980), 'Imported Textiles in Ethiopian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Manuscripts in Britain', *Azania*, 15, 47-48

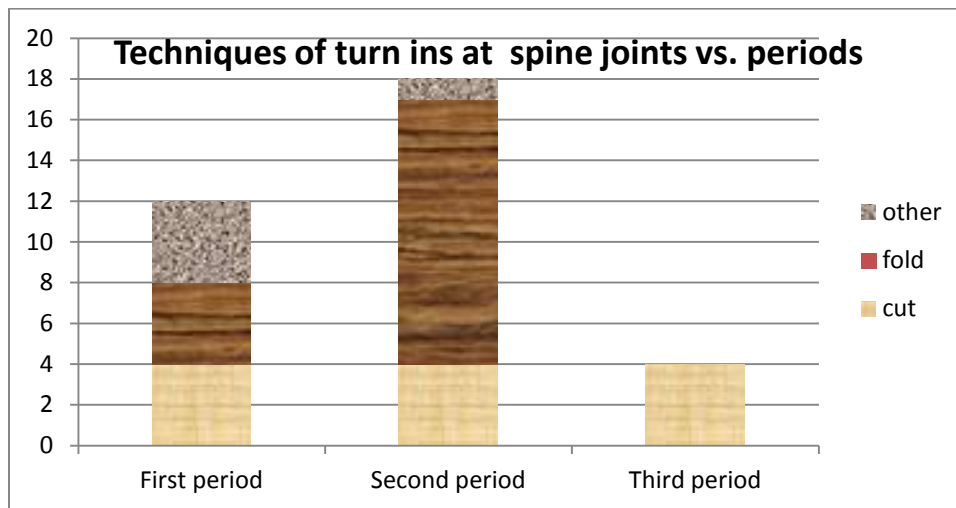


Fig. 6.5 Occurrences of number of books with techniques of applying turn- in at spine joint on sub periods based on dated manuscripts.

Fig. 6.5 illustrated that the dominant element was the fold type of technique of applying turn- in at spine joint in second sub period, the local. The three numbers of variants also linked to the second period. The cut type of technique of applying turn- in at spine joint remained more or less constant across the first and second sub periods. However, the number of fold type tended to increasing from first to second sub period. The only element found linked to the first period was the ‘other’ variant. There might be three methods of board attachments in the local corpus. These were, by sewing, by end bands and covering. One of the finishing works at spine area that could be related to covering was techniques of applying the turn in on the inner surfaces of the boards and the joints to the text block shoulders²⁸⁷. The methods of applying spine covers by folding have been one the changes made in the spine joint profile and opening characteristics of the Gondärian books, as it was evidently associated with the local crafts.

²⁸⁷ ‘The pastedowns covered the opening in the middle between the turn-ins (what was later occupied by textile inlays), and also the sets of holes in the boards and threads anchored in them’. Nosnitsin 2016,84

6.1.1.5 Preparation of the Spine Folds for Sewing End Bands

The technique of sewing end bands may have been made the Gondärian bookbinders stayed close to their own tradition, as is attested by the overall construction, the application of end bands²⁸⁸ and with varieties.

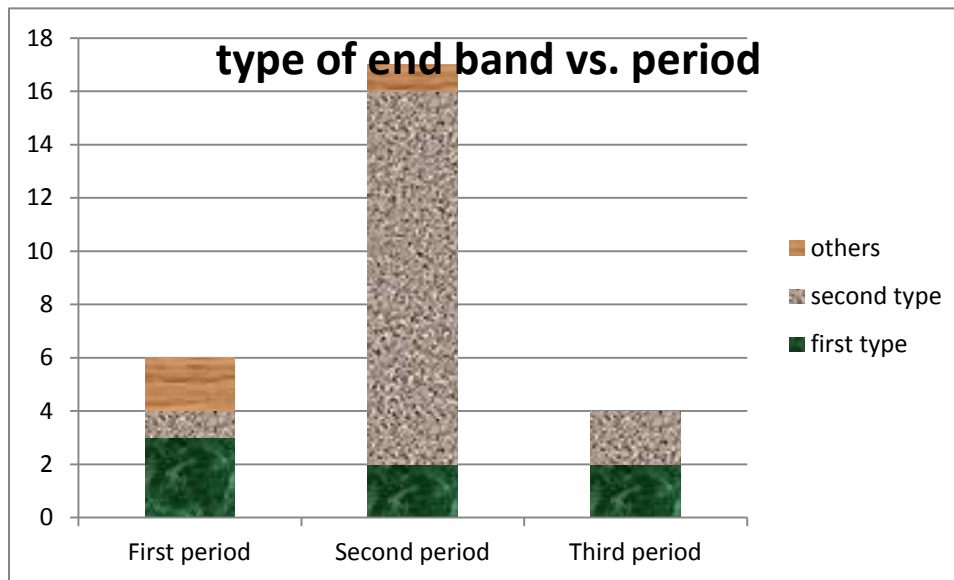


Fig. 6.6 Occurrences of number of books with end band types on sub periods based on dated manuscripts.

The data in the above fig. 6.6 illustrated that the dominant element was the second type of end band in second sub periods. The number of variants also linked to the second period. The first type remained more or less constant across three sub periods. However, the second type tended to decreasing from second to third sub period. The only element found linked to the first period was the ‘other’ variant. The other technique, however, loses ground over the third sub period, and examples from the period were not found. Original end band types was the second type applied before covering which was also believed to be the late Coptic and Islamic techniques

²⁸⁸ In the West, books from this period sewn on thin supports almost exclusively have hollow spines (Scheper 2014, 160).

(Szirmai 1999, 32 – 45). Similarly, Gervers et al. (2015, 18 note 45) state ‘a similar solution was used in the first multi-quire Coptic codices by way of separate leather strips attached to the inner sides of the covers.’ The second type of end bands associated with spine lining; the first type without spine lining. It would be possible just technically, spine lining facilitate the leather turn in at head and tail without cutting turn in at the joint area. To strengthen the end band structure, this kind of techniques of at most important.

6.1.1.6 Spine Lining

Spine lining was assessed in 20 books that means one third of the corpus. Out of this, 18 books had parchments spine lining. Spine lining of textile MED - 018, first period ATMI – 028 third period and MNDA - 043 first periods Spine lining correlated with four sewing station but, six station matched with no-spine lining.. Bindings with spine lining their end bands survived. Quite unique of these spine lining application was three layers of parchment spine lining observed in one codex (MED – 024). Parchment spine lining was absent in the first period and became the phenomena of the second period in association with the second end band type. It is therefore, going to attest one of the rare examples of book elements that also can characterize the local tradition. In the following sub-section, how more than one standard at a time is discussed.

6.1.2 More than one Standard at a time in the Evolved Corpus

All the data below were acquired from binding whose elements were visible at a time of survey only and often time hard to identify them in confidence due to repairs and lost or damage. In addition, the identification of the original from later works was another challenge in the field records. Hence, the number of books needed to be used as representation of the variety found in the corpus not the only ones, may be more if studied closely without destruction.

6.1.2.1 Extents of Cross Ornamentation with Small Circles and the Horn

Cross ornamentation with small circles²⁸⁹ and the horn²⁹⁰ needs to be considered in the

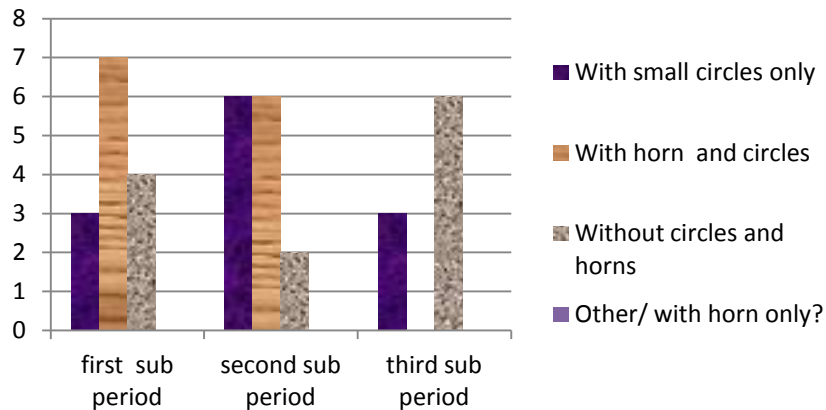


Fig. 6.7 Showing the frequency of occurrences of the cross decoration items used in relation to time periods; only based on identifiable bindings.

The three basic decorating items revealed across three sub periods: the tendency of cross ornamentations by both horn and small circles were only found in the first and second periods, that means the local. Soon, these better decorated cross deceased and totally absent in the third period. Small circle only and both horn and small circles had equally become popular in the second period²⁹¹. The Gondärian modify the appearances of the central panel cross's' four corners with small circles. The data in the above figure agreed with date given by both scholars; the first period and the second period respectively.

²⁸⁹ 'Circle on the corner of cross was unique feature of Ethiopian bindings' (Pankhurst 1984, 211).

²⁹⁰The 'horn' the decorating items the shot out outwardly in divergence fashions that looked like palm leaves at the four ends of the cross specially with the Latin, equal arms cross types (Pankhurst 1984, 219).

²⁹¹Pankhurst, 1984, though not a professional codicologist, also considered the Latin cross (and a trend from Latin to more frequent appearance of non-Latin) as the central argument. It seems, however, that the design of the cross appears slightly before the foundation of Gondär.

According to Pankhurst (1984, 212) it was appeared to be seen after the late 17th century²⁹². Similarly, Wright dates it to the 1st quarter of 18th C. Pankhurst (1984, 234) had stepped further to compare the Gondärian to the other books he saw; ‘The Ethiopian of such crosses is generally far less ornate where as the Gondärian cross appeared with significant modification of the appearance of the crosses in 18th C’. Both the horn and small circles had been the two main cross ornamentation elements used consistently in the local.

6.1.2.2 Shape and Aspect Ratios of the Codex

Findings indicated that both length and width increase or decrease together but at different rates. Not one changes another stop in order to make the manuscripts square. It seems relatively stable after frequent changes. Square text shape correlate to IV quire structure. Square text shapes appeared in first period 11, in second period 7, and in third period 1.

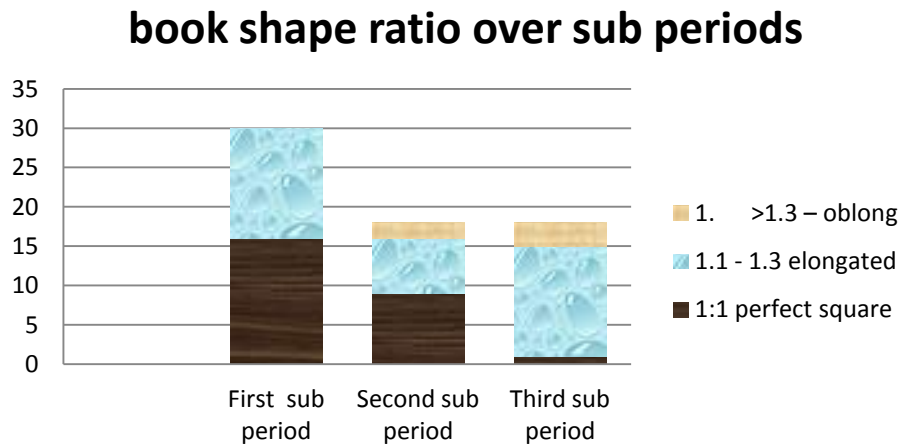


Fig .6.8 showing occurrences of three book shape ratios against sub periods

Two dominant book shapes, perfect square and elongated, appeared to be dominant in the political period. Only one in the cultural period, that was elongated type. In terms of variety, the first sub period only had two shape categories and but represented with maximum number of bindings: In the second sub period all, three shapes with small books. The third sub period had a

²⁹² ‘The design of the cover is simpler than the 17th C’ (Uhlig 1990, 47)

marking decrease of 1:1 perfect square but still high number to elongated type. The third period shows a continuous use of the dominant elongated, as well as the variety in the technique, though the number of perfect manuscripts has decreased. The binding characteristic agreed to Delamarter nd who had noticed that the height to width ratio of text blocks in general terms changes from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century.

Regarding the trends of changes, two trends recognized; first, perfect square format had decreasing trends from first sub period to the third sub period. To the contrary, the oblong one increasing trends from second to the third sub period. The changes happened to two different directions, overlapping and diversification of preferences from perfect square to non-perfect others. The transition from one unified taste to more diversify and from one center to provincial as the results of changes of time units²⁹³.

“This data makes it clear that something happened to Ethiopia’s basic conception of a book, but it does not tell us why or how these changes took place. In order to explain those changes, we will need the input of historians and social scientists to identify the causes and illuminate the mechanisms. Nevertheless, clearly something was at work to re-shape—quite literally—the culture’s view of the external dimensions of the book.” (Dalamatrer nd Between “Then and There” and “Here and Now” ‘An Introduction to the Codicology of the Green Ethiopic Psalters’

The changes to the shape of the book dropped from second period to third might be related to the failure of political period, but not necessary political capital with which the cultural period continued. Therefore the political period [1650’s to 1784] attributed to bringing about changes of shapes more consistently than cultural period; the local signified both political period and places of Gondär broad area, indicated that place assumed only little role to affect changes on elements and number of books. With regard to format, when manuscripts are elongated and square-ish these manuscripts are likely to be produced in the political period. Perfect square linked to monastic in more number of books than the church.

²⁹³But in the late-18th and 19th centuries, this uniformity gives way to a period of fairly rapid change, until the aspect ratio re-equilibrates in the late-19th and 20th century and takes on a new shape’ Deamarter nd

One decreases another increases also the number of columns. Space management would appear to be the top agenda. The G^wleh script could not go with small quire number. Rāqiq might be that was written with large line per page. The economic factor involved in the G^wleh script, the width of the parchments leaves needed to increase to accommodate big size and generous space under three columns. The width of the parchment folio curved out from big goat rarely accessible to self-business scribes. The square shape of the books has probably been attributed to the case.

6.1.2.3 Size of Codices and Width of the Turn-ins

No national standards or scales of measurement set, hence this measure is corpus specific. The size here is measurement values of only the Length. This was mainly because of that almost the entire local corpus belongs to elongated or square shape implied that the length would bring about variation among books than width and thickness or height. The size differed in periods but the attractive outward physical appearances remained stable across sub periods. 41cm – 52cm – ‘Large’ book size – 17MSS - first period; 29cm – 40cm – ‘Medium’ book size – 42MSS - 2nd period and 17cm – 28cm – ‘Small’ book size – 2MS – third period.

Hence, the making of the books with perfect turn in width could have been correlated internally with the size of the book. Three patterns of the turn in width were identified. Tape measurements were taken from all four sides of both boards of the books during the survey and since most of the corpus had even width size; I picked just one value per codex for the purpose of this comparison. Thus, 8 – 12cm – ‘wide’ - first period; 4 – 7cm – ‘Medium’ - 2nd period; Any width less than 3cm – ‘Narrow’ – third period. Anything above 12cm and below 4cm is regarded as third period; No ‘narrow’ range set because of absence of books that represents the range. The book size of medium and large²⁹⁴ predominant the two sub periods as no any small size in these

sub periods or in the local. Moreover, large size of the books might be a symbol of richness and glory.²⁹⁵

From the above data, I had learnt that size of the turn-in appeared to vary with book size, and not fixed. I used 7cm width size of the turn -in particularly as a standard size to judge the rest as (“large” or ‘narrow’ or ‘medium’ . The multiple standards characterized the corpus. this probably be linked to both internal and external factors; Assume that the size of the book influenced by time and that size of the turn in appeared to vary with book size, the turn in size intrinsically correlated with the times . Most books of medium sizes tended to come from church ownerships. The point of division between sizes for both book and the turn in categories was acquired from the most frequently applied measurements within the corpus.

6.1.2.4 Shaping the Outer Edges of the Boards on the Binding Sides

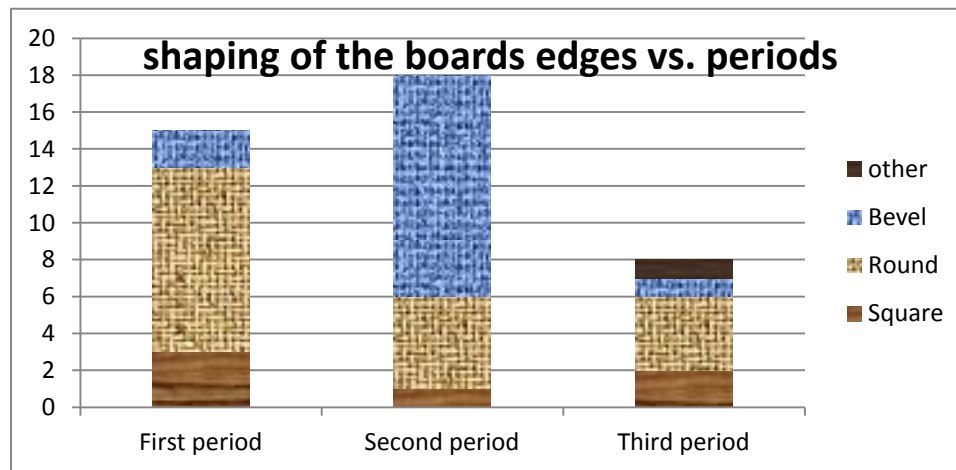


Fig. 6.9 depicting the occurrences of shaping the outer edges of the boards on the binding side against periods

²⁹⁵Winslow 2015

The above figure 6.9 demonstrated that the round and bevel types of the board shaping became dominant in number of books of the political period than the cultural. The round type had still become the leading element in number and distribution across three sub periods. Other type was introduced and confined only to the third period. The bevel type predominated in the second sub periods. The general trends of using single type at a single period were not occurred. In addition, the round type demonstrated the decreasing trends from first to second sub period where as the bevel type followed the reverse direction. The change from round shape forward to the bevelled was apparent in the local tradition. Nevertheless, the square type was almost stable, if slightly diminishing, at the second period. The elements did not correlate to either of the provenances. The bevelled type correlated to second end bands and spine lings etc. This might suggest that the spine area might have been the centre of experimentations to improve the mechanical precisions in time of use and preservation.

6.1.2.5 Location of Quire Signatures on the Quires' First Pages

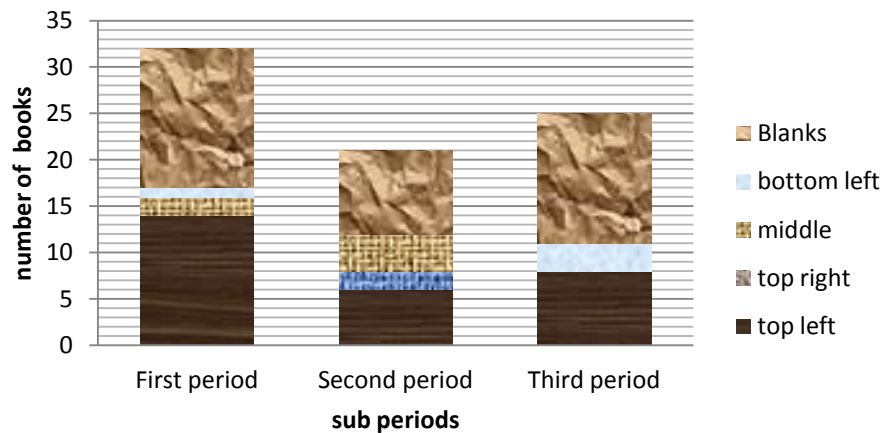


Fig. 6.10 showing number of occurrences of books with different quire signature locations in three periods.

The above figure 6.10 demonstrated that the top left position of the quire signatures²⁹⁶ became dominant in number of books of the political period than the cultural, next to blanks [no quire sign was made] the blank also still becoming leading element in number and distribution across three sub periods. In terms of number of variants, four belonged to political period [both first and second sub periods together] and three to the third sub period (cultural period), that accounted three. Top right type was introduced and confined only in the second period. The middle position type found in the first and second sub periods and absent in third period. Bottom left associated with first and third sub periods but no any in second period as it had more number in the third period.

The general trends of using single element at a single period were not recognized; but the top left and the blanks alternatively preferred in the first and second sub periods: And demonstrated the decreasing trends from first to second sub period. The elements did not correlate to either of the provenances. The top left type correlated to single volume of the text. This might suggest that mixed or more than one volume in the text block were scribed by well more than one scribe as each of them signed the quires at different position.

No extant treaties can directly inform us about the activities in producing the codices. All the analyses and interpretations are possible with critical examinations of the actual manuscripts at hand. Appropriate codicological investigations are helpful to reconstruct the practical realities at the time of producing the manuscripts and the sponsors' needs. For instance, there has been a higher degree of homogeneity among the Gondärian manuscripts attributed to the preferable dominance of one codicological feature. In the first and second Gondärian periods, the tooling of Latin crosses and the applications of single piece covering techniques have been observed. This indicates the emerging signs in the developments of local stylistic preferences. Pankhurst (1984) states about the growing interest in stylistic preferences in the first Gondärian period that became weaker in the subsequent periods. This is interpreted as the emergence of a common regional origin. By implication, in the later Gondärian periods there have been tendencies of departing from the national codicological features to the local regional varieties. Moreover, the internal and

²⁹⁶All quire signature types were numerical'. Wright 1877 preface IX –X, indicated that quires numbered with arithmetical figures (i. e., Greek letters) positioned at the top of the first page, in the left-hand corner.

external parts of the codex have shown structural interconnections. Consequently, the implications towards the internal to external parts of the codex have evolved. As such, the high qualities of the materials used in the Gondärian manuscripts are reflections of the implications by the commissioners and the bookmakers.

In the above sub-sections, I have looked at the varieties and differences in the local corpus from the material selection, technical, and manufacturing point of view. Besides, in relation to date of occurrence and place of origin it had already been indicated in the last sub topics in more detail manner. I identified six predominant elements and five elements with more than one standard for this purposes. From this diachronic²⁹⁷ approach, more trends may be emerging. Certain variations belong to specific periods or centres. As Nosnitsin (2012, 16) points studies of Ethiopian codicology in the future need to examine important manuscript production centres and to explain the historical changes and the localized manuscript culture.

Moreover, the corpus under the Gondärian focusing on high criteria of fabrication and diversity asserts the existence of well-developed local tradition. The wealth and dedication of the sponsors, who lived in the city of Gondär and the outskirts, might be credited to the variety of patterns chosen by the bookmakers. Critical observations of the codices can give clues that confirm there have been origins and successive changes in terms of qualities. Hence, the codices can be good illustrations of material philology in that they relatively show origins, developments, and varied contextual functions. In the following sections, interpretations of the cultural implications of codicological features in the Gondärian manuscripts are presented.

6.2 Implications of Codicological Features in the Manuscript Culture

The Gondärian manuscripts have been made as complete book products mirroring the cultural orientations and ideologies of their respective production periods. In these productions, there are several codicological features peculiar to the Gondärian manuscripts. These features are supposed that they originated and flourished in and around the city of Gondär in the historical

²⁹⁷Scheper 2014,196

high time of the Gondärian periods. Thereby, interpretations of the manuscripts together with their implications should take the manuscripts in their totality. The large number of Gondärian manuscripts produced consistently for about a century and half are open for multiple interpretations. In fact, these manuscripts are understood as objectified representations of symbolic meanings about the patrons' degree of faith in the doctrines of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They are also the symbolic representations how the bookmakers sought knowledge and the keepers of these manuscripts are loyal in transmitting the wisdom of manuscript culture.

More importantly, the codicological viewing attests how the patrons were unhesitant for the huge investments of manuscript productions. Particularly, the high values of Gondärian manuscripts evaluated in terms of the codicological features are analyzed. The salient codicological features such as the types of scripts, of illuminations, and of bindings deserve further interpretations. Consequently, the critical observations of the Gondärian manuscripts have justified the fact that the royalty have aspired high criteria of productions and ownership.

With regard to the type of scripts, there have been more preferences to the G^welh script than to the Raqiq script. This agrees with what the literatures mention about the high preference of the G^welh script. Particularly, the primarily palaeographic study of Uhlig (1990) underscores the evolutions of the handwritten scripts reached the highest level in the Gondärian period. As such, the G^welh script is often understood as 'the script of the kings'. Thus, the evolutions of the handwritten scripts to a higher value indicate the manuscript craftsmanship had underwent quality changes and regional variations. This in turn reflects how the bookmakers, who are supposed to be the carriers of manuscript culture, are the bearers of the locally contextualized processes of manuscript productions.

The palaeographic evolutions of the handwritten scripts manifested in the G^welh script can confirm the inseparability of codicology and palaeography. Moreover, one can understand how the original status of Gondärian manuscripts examined in codicological parameters have changed in the three compared historical periods within the range of Gondärian period. This justifies the issues of material philology by presenting the origins, evolutions, and the assumed factors that contributed for these changes in the Gondärian manuscript culture. In short, the codicological features are considered, as they are non-verbal signs; yet, they do have important culturally

constructed meanings. These signs have been examined in semiotics in order to show their diachronic and synchronic dimensions. Thus, the analysis and interpretation of the material aspects of Gondärian manuscripts has included concepts of palaeography and material philology. This agrees with Gumbert's (1975, 336) conception of codicology citing Ebert who defines codicology as it is "the science of reading manuscripts, of judging them according to their outer and inner form, and of interpreting them historically according to their accidental features."

In line with the above relations between codicology and palaeography, the codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts can further be analysed in their particular implications in the Gondärian period. Some of the important codicological aspects are interpreted, as they are the common grounds of the three closely related disciplines that are codicology, palaeography, and philology. For instance, plausible historical interpretations of the contents of colophons and marginalia notes have been realized for there have been an appropriate association of concepts from these disciplines. The aspects of codicology are explicated along with their cultural and historical implications. These aspects are more meaningful for they have been related with the evolutions of the scripts and the issues of 'New' philology, which is concerned with explications of origins and changes.

In other words, the palaeographic data embedded in these codicological aspects are so important to analyze the origins and the periods of manuscripts' productions. More importantly, the interpretations of the codicological aspects of the Gondärian manuscripts are elaborated in line with the analyses of palaeographic variations and implications therein. Obviously, palaeographic variations can bring variations of meaning constructions, which in turn can be regarded as textual variations.

Interpretation of codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts has included analysis of the changes in the manuscript productions and the implications behind these changes. In the Gondärian period, the bookmakers' preferences of applying one or more codicological elements at particular codices are observed. This illustrates the emergence and development of local specific codicological elements in the bookmaking culture. This in turn helps to localize and to create the local corpus of the Gondärian codices. Interpretations and implications of the

codicological features are also drawn from the palaeographic data of the notes on the marginalia and the colophons. Other palaeographic data such as written insertions of letters and symbols, erasures of names and dates, and ornamentations are also used. The implications of the codicological elements in the Gondärian manuscripts can be further interpreted in terms of the peculiar qualities and diversities, and the implications in particular reference to the city of Gondär. These issues are addressed in the following two sub-sections.

6.2.1 The Gondärian Manuscripts: High Values and Diversity in Focus

Given the long history of manuscript culture in Ethiopia, it is less convincing to focus on single codicological elements. This implies the need to consider other constituents codicological elements of Ethiopian codicology in particular reference to the interpretations of the qualities and diversities of Gondärian manuscripts. With this framing of the interpretations, the Gondärian manuscripts should be explained in line with the predominant culture of the 17th and 18th century and contextual matters then back. As such, interpretations of higher values and diversity issues should necessarily relate with the closely related disciplines such as the art history.

The critical examination of the codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts confirms those manuscripts have multiple historical functions in addition to their liturgical functions. Particularly, the historical functions of manuscripts in keeping records and securing legitimacy and powers are evolved. Particularly, in the later Gondärian period the secular and religious themes are combined. For instance, the colophons in many of the manuscripts are indicators of the religious dedications of the commissioners and are warnings against misuses, theft, and handlings. There were cultural expectations and imperatives to keep and pass manuscripts in their good original conditions. Wealthy commissioners often donate complete manuscripts for religious and at times for secular services at the primary contexts in the royal churches and monasteries. This implies royal churches and monasteries are the repositories of high valued manuscripts evaluated in their material aspects. The dissemination and consumption of the Gondärian manuscripts in the primary contexts justify how they are the bearers of historical and cultural testimonies and are evidences to trace back the changes. Thereby, the interpretations of qualities and diversities of the manuscripts are helpful to map out how these codicological features hold on the medieval cultural orientations and traditions.

In many of the liturgical Gondärian manuscripts, insertions of secular themes into text blocks are less observable. In fact, in secular Gondärian manuscripts themes that reflect the ideologies of the sponsors are observable. The paratextual features particularly the contents beyond the liturgical text blocks reflect the ideologies and value orientations of the sponsors then back. Bosc-Tiessé's (2009, 15) interesting article though primarily focuses on the analysis of Gondärian paintings, is informative how contextualized historical and cultural issues are included in the manuscripts. This implies historical dating and locating the manuscripts is essential for a better understanding of the codicological aspects.

Bosc-Tiessé (2009, 15) underscores the need to go even beyond the paintings to other related studies and writes "for illuminate contextual history imposes a codicological analysis including a history of as well as a history of the literature." Bosc-Tiessé's (2009) further indicates for better interpretations of the images in Gondärian paintings in manuscripts and paintings on church walls, it is necessary to explicate the religious orientations, financial and political powers of the commissioners of the time. According to Bosc-Tiessé's the qualities of manuscripts can be explicated from the patronages preferences. Attesting this, Bosc-Tiessé's (2009, 15) writes how "the choice could be based on politics and/or aesthetics. Either way, one can decipher the background of creating specific images, their meanings, and purposes." This critical observation agrees to the interpretations of the qualities and diversities of the paintings in the Gondärian manuscripts.

In relation to the aforementioned high values and diversity issues that reflected the patronages powers and cultural orientations, one can see the predominant assumptions of the people and the centres then back. Two questions said to be open on the knowledge of where the Ethiopian codices were produced and how the works were organized (Balicka-Witakowska & Bausi 2015, 168). As explained above, the objective of the study was not only to study the materiality of the manuscripts, but also to relate these facts to the origin of the artefacts in order to work towards interpreting them both diachronically and synchronically. The Gondärian collections offer a unique opportunity to do so. Therefore, the collections provide the possibility to examine a substantial number of old manuscripts in their first bindings. Many of the manuscripts have retained their original bindings. Additionally, the acquisition of manuscripts has continued

steadily and still does so today, bringing manuscripts into the each collection from the total breadth of the broad area of Gondär or beyond as in the Anomalies category. The collections come close to representing the essence of what was produced in the Gondärian manuscript culture.

In the later Gondärian periods, the advancements of the technical capabilities of bookmakers are observed. By this, high qualities manuscripts with perfectly trimmed corners and with exactly 45⁰ turn-ins angles were produced. This development of geometrical perfection has evolved in the course of time; Ornamented Latin crosses with background crosses were also seen in the Gondärian manuscripts. The use of salvage textile inlays had a consistent pattern of putting the vertical. Most parts of codices were tooled with a variety of designs. As such, some books shared some patterns of tooling similarly. More importantly, there were striking similarities in many of the Gondärian manuscripts. In the following sub-section, I present the probable implications the codicological features associated with the historic city of Gondär.

6.2.2 The Area in Question: The City of Gondär

Interpretations along the lines of places of production illustrate how the city of Gondär is supposed to be at the centre of the cultural renaissance. This cultural renaissance has its symptoms reflected in appreciable changes to the manuscripts structures related to both the external and internal contents especially those, which were produced in the city of Gondär. As Bausi (2015) and Getatachew Haile, (nd) indicate the urban centres were some of the centres of manuscript production in Ethiopia. It is logical to assume the existence of multiple local features since there was multiple manuscript producing centres. Generally, the existence of regional styles in whatever forms has been a hypothesis that has been confirmed; thereby, meaningful interpretations of the codices features are drawn.

Place of preservation and production in the same ‘centre’ indicates the development of the book culture at local level. Place of production must have been the centre²⁹⁸ of high criteria of

²⁹⁸The probable origin of the Second Gondärine style of painting is believed to be, according to some scholars, the town of Gondär itself. The island monasteries of Lake Ṭana which were frequently visited and supported by the Gondärine monarchs are also likely to have been in the forefront of the development of painting and, therefore,

fabrication. Please note that if more than three quality technical elements occurred in one book it would be clear to indicate us their single origin. In the centre, several scriptoria or scribal hands would less likely to be uniform as such by chance. As described in chapter four, the information on places of origin of books was smaller than data on time of production that hinders the attribution of books technical works to a single scriptoria²⁹⁹. It is clear, however, that some materials and techniques were predominantly used in the local corpus than in the Anomalies category. There were also quality differences among them. Nevertheless, the most marking features for the 'local' were identified if not the specific workshops in the local.

Many of the book productions centres in Ethiopia were moved to Gondär in the 17th century with its being the political capital, where the scribes and calligraphers were attracted to it. These persons were supposedly to produce multiple custom-made manuscripts. In this manner, they tended to influence the existing traditions of bookbinding, decoration, and illumination. Gondärian manuscript binding covers were famous for their good quality leather, a complex decorative scheme, and a greater thickness of binding boards and clasps (Fakad-Selassie Täffära 2010; Pankhurst 1984; Wright 1877). The tendency of coherency of books increase from far toward the centre and it decreases in the reverse direction. The techniques that appear consistently across the sample reveal that wholehearted attention was given to creating sound visible structures.

Moreover, attention was given to the most vital parts of decorative bindings and spine structures. Every codex in the corpus has shown how it maintains its original threads used for sewing. The sewing were done without skipping stations, sewn all-along, providing strong sewing structure. Second end bands, codices' size proportionality gave balance, and the board edge shapes, spine

probable places of origin of new artistic inspiration and expression. We know for sure the existence of a painter of this style in this period who worked both at the royal court in Gondär as well as in the churches and monasteries of East Gojjam' Ababaw Ayalew 2006, 39

²⁹⁹ There are some articles about scriptorium that could be read with profit such as: Gianfrancesco Lusini (2004) and above all Claire Bosc Tiessé (2014) analysing the making of the libraries of Qwesqwam and Narga, and stating that in Qwesqwam there was a hierarchy for the organisation of the making of the mss under the supervision of the liqa sahaft waza-sehel bēt and scribes coming from outside the city. As well, written testimonies by travellers (such as Antoine d'Abbadie in the preface of his Catalogue, 18593) show that the production of mss was quite abundant and not limited to very few workshops.

covers leather folded created additional strength to the sewing structures at the spine. Hence, it is strongly recommended that the practical aspects exclusively discerned from the examined Gondärian manuscripts need to be preserved and further studied. Based on local corpus, the covering schemes were broader than one really can imagine. This is interpreted as one of the most critical binding components that brought about changes in physical and structural appearances. Even the codices longevity in services and in greater extents did not damage the codices. This can only be explained to the quality covering schemes. The covering schemes were very historic turning points to these collections: 17th and 18th centuries³⁰⁰ were significant in terms of book appearance changes both materials³⁰¹ and resultant techniques (end band, turn in, textile inlays, tooling etc).

In addition to these, the irregularities might point us the corpus linked to the past tradition. Many irregularities in the books of MED (the church established by king Fasilädäs (1632 -1667) indicated that the beginning of transformation in to standardizing in to single craft tradition. Unique textile inlays two different textiles joined to for one inlays on only the lower board. MED – 024; Sənkəssar with quarter years (3 months – I found only three (MED – 020, MED – 021; Quire sign –from last to front direction – MED – 020; Irregular number of fly leaves MED – 021. This in turn characterized by anomalies at the beginning of the Gondärian political period and soon re-entered to state of flux at the end of the political period in 1784 while the cultural period continued up to 1850 is when Gondär ceased to be the official political capital and shifted to Däbrä Tabor³⁰² in 1860's. These aspects are related to the high quality, which might also be linked to single visual cultural origin, possibly the 'Gondärian'.

Hence, though there are few pieces of information about the whereabouts of the corpus manuscripts' place of specific production, the analysis has provided data on the question long

300Winslow 2015, 221, made for connecting text block with covers seemed incorrect.

301Leather covers (bahar arab) and textile in lays imported to be used for book binding components mostly after mid 17th and 18th c on wards.Fäqadä Sellase Täfärra2010, 225 -236; Pankhurst, (1980; 1981) to the city of Gondär

302 'We wanted to make Debere Taboure as Gondär' Pankhurst [Rita] 1973.

unsolved or suffered from shortages of information of such kinds³⁰³. This and other more questions might position the research at special places and equally appeared relevant in codicological terms. Thus, these specific manuscripts codicological features provide building blocks for the codicological framework. In the following section, interpretations of the specified local manuscript culture identified as the Gondärian are presented.

6.3 The Identified Local Tradition

The sponsors used to donate rare and quality codices for several purposes. They may sponsor manuscript productions for they needed heavenly rewards. They may also sponsor to be exemplary to others to sponsor book productions. At times, they sponsor to resolve religious disputes and misinterpretations, to emphasize what would happen on the day of judgments, and to build the country's political stability by restoring the "national" faith.

Accordingly, Wion (2004, 103) describes the common codicological feature of the 17th century Gondärian manuscripts by writing the names and pictorial representations of commissioners. She exemplifies the manuscript of *Miracles of Mary* that shows the commissioner's name and the pictorial representation. The commissioner is identified by the name Amläkawit and the pictorial representation of this same commissioner is displayed. Wion describes Amläkawit's as "she is wearing a beautiful head-dress, a blue striped coat, and a blue quadrilled skirt. The owner appears to have been a member of the royal family; although the name in the dedication has been erased and replaced by that of Queen Wäldä Qirqos the remainder of the original dedication reads as follows: 'How our Queen ... is praying in front of Our Lady Mary'. A servant with a dark complexion is following her with a flyswatter." The pictorial representations of the commissioners and the notes and/or annotations of the Gondärian manuscripts analyzed in the preceding chapters can substantiate the need for a complete codicological study supported by palaeography and philology. The concern of palaeography is seen from the scripts and the concern of philology is seen from the interpretations of the pictorial representations of the commissioners.

³⁰³Balicka-Witakowska et al., 2015, asked several unanswered questions of mostly related with correctional ones

Rossi (2015, 34) explains the inseparability of Arabic codicology from Arabic palaeography. More importantly, in the study of Arabic codicology, it is necessary to associate the ‘graphical phenomena’ in relation to the Islamic culture that produced them. According to Rossi, these graphical phenomena have “symbolic and aesthetic value”; thereby, they have “deeply rooted function as a vehicle of textual transmission.” However, Rossi points the challenges of standardizations by taking individual characteristics of manuscripts in such an approach. Rossi (2015, 34) indicates “the study of Arabic codicology (understood as the codicology of manuscripts in Arabic script) has so far been mainly stimulated by philological and literary approaches, which have mostly focused on single cases rather than developing systematic studies and quantitative analyses.” However, as explicated in this study, interpretations of codicological features can only be possible taking particular characteristics of manuscripts. For instance, the codex shape of Psalms is quite different from other codices. The highly illuminated Four Gospels are open for multiple interpretations; thereby, are indicators to consider individual manuscripts physical features, which are also determined by the contents in the text blocks. Particularly, careful interpretations on the uses of colours are essential.

Wion (2004, 109) points it is important to analyze the widespread use of red inks in both the Gondärian manuscripts and in the paintings. She points that red inks are used for writing the names of divinities such as saints, martyrs, angels etc., and owners often referred as commissioners. She focuses on the analysis of pigments used in two manuscript paintings assumed originally produced in the high time of Gondärian period. Particularly, studies of red inks used would give fresh insight on the use of vermilion in Ethiopia. About the use of vermilion or cinnabar, she indicates that it “is quite probable that Ethiopia Anomalies vermilion from this trade route” Wion (2004, 109). Actually, the Ge’ez term for vermilion is *näd qäläm*, which is meant having a bright reddish-orange colour. According to Wion (2004), vermilion is obtained from cinnabar mines.

Nonetheless, Wion indicates the existence of such mines in Ethiopia seems weak. Nor produced in Ethiopia is unsubstantiated. She assumes the probable source of red ink is an Anomalies vermilion. Maniaci et al. (2015, 75-76) states the recipes and uses of red pigment sourced from cinnabar or vermilion since the ancient times. The chemical compound of the pigment sourced

from cinnabar or vermilion “known in antiquity as black *Aethiops mineralis*.” Possibly, the scientific name for vermilion as *Aethiops* suggests Ethiopia was the origin to use this for colouring. Similarly, Wion reminds that in the Gondärian period of the 17th century of Ethiopia had strong trade relations with European and Asian countries. As a result, it is expected for the Gondärian royalty to have precious pigments from abroad. She emphatically states the set of instructions for producing the inks is amazing. Wion (2004, 109) also indicates the sources of these inks as “all the colours necessary for a painter’s palette can be obtained by using organic and mineral elements found in the local environment.”

Regarding the source of blue colour, Wion (2004, 106) cited Manuel Barradas, who was a Portuguese Jesuit back in 1634, recorded that he saw indigo trees in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, Barradas did not explain the use of this indigo tree whether the natives used it to produce blue ink or not. In addition, Wion cited Barradas’s witness as “indigo was an Ethiopian natural resource that the Portuguese could exploit.” She also cited Edwards, who claimed all the species of indigo tree that are usable for making colours grow in Ethiopia at relatively higher elevations of between 1000 to 2700 meters above sea level. The Ge’ez name for indigo is *nīl* as cited in Leslau’s *Comparative Dictionary of Ge’ez*. This “blue is only used in large quantity for the cloth of the Virgin Mary” Wion (2004, 106).

In line with this, Balicka-Witakowska (2015, 157) writes, “there is no evidence that any particular symbolism was connected to the colours used for decorating codices and their consistent application was ruled only by tradition.” However, there are ample evidences from the choices of colours used in the Gondärian manuscripts. Particularly, the uses of *nid qelem* (the Ge’ez term for the colour obtained from vermillion) in both the scripts and the paintings in the manuscripts have multiple interpretations. Often this kind of *nid qelem* having a bright reddish-orange colour symbolizes fire. At times, it is used to show the powers of divinities. It is also used to write the names of patrons provided those books be supposedly categorized as ‘saints’.

One manuscript has basic material and structural components to be a manuscript. Certainly, its constituent elements would often vary in number and quality in connection to specific time and place. The manuscripts in Ethiopia said to signify only single origin. This showed that they remained stable across time and places changes since the archaic and 16 centres. Consequently,

large group of manuscripts produced in those 16 centers should have been represented by single codex the ‘Ethiopian codex’, without sub group. This results the general perception that no any book feature would be found deviating from the archetypes in relation to particular periods and/or areas of production.

In view of the breadth, the local should not precisely fit into the ‘Gondärian’³⁰⁴, of which most art historical studies referred to it. In addition, not representing Gondär as one of the sixteen ‘centres’ of manuscript production in Ethiopia they as had been proposed by Bausi (2015, 48). Corpus specific unit of definition of scope was largely used and were supplemented by non-codicological literatures in a way of contextualizing the units. Hence, the corpus appeared to be interrelated and existed in reality.

Because in addition to quality of script and painting productions, the binding could also be considered as a quality craftsmanship product. These prove that content and cover matched. It unified three aspects in to one at book level; it connected books in to groups by one-quality crafts. The results from the survey testified that an archetype of the local bound manuscript can be defined, but the multiplicity of techniques and materials used was also demonstrated. Therefore, the local corpus differs and could be perceived as independently existing sub group out of many others I supposed they could be found in broad areas of Gondär. In the following sub-sections, the specified local tradition referred as the Gondär is further interpreted in consideration of two thematic categories: the local as a unified whole and the evolved local manuscript culture.

6.3.1 The ‘Local’ as a Unified Whole

Quality, diversity, and changes; the impression of materials and techniques used to manufacture the local corpus do illustrate the richness of the local culture and the diversity of the artefacts made. They are about sponsors of the codices, the preeminent producers of the codices as opposed to the minor participants, and the active users of the codices. Obviously, historical developments determine the trends of changes in the local tradition. Gondärian constituted all

³⁰⁴‘Gondärian’ in both time and place terms wider in art historian and historical bases than mine

these periods, places, and tradition of book possession as dominant local-based development took place and interacted with other productions centres in the region and beyond. Their mutual interconnection defines the “Gondārian” as distinct from other more importantly the local tradition characterized by both diversity in unity.

To support this statement with evidences, let us see the results of the damage and repair structures. In this case, the sewing structure in general and the threads in particular must have had ample information about the extent to which change by improvements implied to their survival and meeting their intended roles, they were caused to exist. A great majority of the rebinding works of books were on their sewing structures due to breaks off original threads. Next, it was the complete binding structural unity and text block of the manuscript failed down. In order to enhance their realization of all three functions at a time, changes and innovation works should center on it and must not be delayed any ways. Hence, most changes were inherently carried out for positive improving results on primary functions of the book, longevity of the bindings, and for aesthetical requirements, which qualified the artisanship as higher criteria of fabrication and specifically signified by the regional tradition that exists. The quality production over all aspects of the book might be possible with the division of labour, as it seems improbable otherwise.

However, these extraordinary practices were not without defects. The major one was the challenges of the threads overlooked by backup methods and covering. Why the threads and adhesives did not have improved and neglected? Thus, they remained weak in their structural strength: Yet they seemed not being a problem during the manuscript period, might be after. Because the great majority of elements passed through modification could have been older than Gondārian political period and even not new for Local corpus. If it was so, what really drive the local craftsmanship to improve the age old problems³⁰⁵ at that particular time and place using

³⁰⁵ Most common problem of damages were between spine and edges ” It seems that the bindings of most Ethiopian manuscripts go through similar stages of deterioration, which can be described as follows: the leather covering between the edges of the boards and the spine cracks and gradually disappears due to the weak attachment of the end band sewing to the covers.” (Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, 101) Because of this, Ethiopian original bindings older than the early 19th century are rare. (Nosnitsin 2012,10)

mainly such number of elements more specifically than others? However, it is required to keep in mind that imitations and revisions of more ancient book structures are infrequent.

The probable driving force for those principal innovative works was love of arts and artistic beauty. From this proposition, the reason why the invisible elements like threads and adhesives consequently received little efforts of changes would be their small contribution for beauty. However, they apparently had critical position in the structural well being of the book as a whole. The modification made on the element or sub element levels felt overtly on functional, structural and appearances changes so did on aesthetic values of the books. This suggests that, the results of the data analysis illustrated that all the three looked to be demanded but the later even more. The visual aspects of the bindings remained prominent features of the corpus attested primarily and only the attention given to them. The need to understand them better, I suggest art historical perspective. Fashion and religious sects had not detected for understanding in this survey.

The craftsmanship applied in the production of the corpus and the Anomalies³⁰⁶ groups demonstrated that the old and the new coexisted implied multiple needs of the diversified users living at same time and place. The diversity of book aspects that underwent innovative works might be related to local needs and tastes of commissioners. The context could not have been existed out of the city, royal churches.³⁰⁷ The city of Gondär and its broad areas around might manifest some characteristics to which the corpus origin attributed.

Diversity among elements witnesses the reality of the artisanship on the ground. Yet, some specific elements related to particular time within the local. Though the binders would have their own reasons, it appears to me that there was an idea of improving the material and structures of the bindings from less durability to higher, and from less attractiveness to more attractiveness

³⁰⁶Even some lower classes could have possessed books (prayer books) Getachew Haile 2010; Pankhurst 1984)

³⁰⁷Construction of churches by kings, providing visible evidence of the tie between church and state and the effort to build a claim to ruler ship and legitimacy. Another was a remembrance factors to build a “royal” churches (p.191-192) Igziabherab at Tedda was built by Yohannes I. These special churches were also the locales of royal tombs (Berry 1776,p. 262).

status. Sadly the ideas of initial progression in the choices of elements are not long lasting. As can be seen from some books elements below, within the local, a sort of consistency together with decline trend to end of political period were noticeable. Single piece technique of covering, the preference to the Latin cross, application of textile inlays, shapes of board edges switching from round to bevelled, top left quire signature position, spine shapes, tooling quality. Hence, there must have been a network of interaction in such large area of places where various kinds of crafts workshops were found. In the mean time, that craftsmanship became a standard to model for others. This indicated that the individual scribal hand (identity) had been dying from which a unified ones began to grow (e.g. formal calligraphy). The binders were not the scribes and it appeared to have been there was a clear division of labour in the local manuscript production tradition.

This time books did not develop a binder's identity, rather a constant contacts between them made possible a new tradition of local origin where standards of book production strictly kept. Means, no short cuts, and all paintings were original – not drawn under outlines of others seen on parchment underneath. Books production, use, circulation patterns determined the sub-category set in this study and hence surveyed as internal criteria. The changes credited with material and techniques implied by both commissioners and artisans involved in the higher degree than users. I may infer that most of the corpus end users were not sponsors, if not producers.

Beit-Arie's (1981, 9) study on the codicology of medieval Hebrew manuscripts implies that there could be wider reflections of codicological features as oriental and occidental, and as Christian and Muslim. In turn, the specific cultural areas and the religious orientations of people are determinant for productions and uses of codices. Moreover, Beit-Arie's (1981, 11-12) codicological analysis connotes the existence of codicological typologies as per the varying techniques in particular areas and historical periods. After the identification of codicological features that are attributed to particular manuscript cultures, locations, and historical periods, it is necessary to further describe and analyze codicological aspects by tracing origins, material and technical changes, and dating these changes. More importantly, reconfigurations of these material aspects in line with contextual matters are necessary. In this sense, Beit-Arie's codicological study with a strict adherence to 'archaeological' approach only, cannot show a

complete codicological analysis and interpretations of Ethiopian manuscripts let alone show codicological features attributed to regional peculiarities and historical developments of Gondärian manuscripts.

Similarly, the description of codicological features in line with ‘archaeological’ approach only would be a partial view of Ethiopian codicology. Ethiopian manuscripts are the codicological reflections of the predominant religious orientations of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. Hence, analysis and interpretation of the material aspects should necessarily include analysis of cultural and historical periods in both production and consumption stages. In fact, it should be noted that almost all studies on the Hebrew manuscripts particularly on the religious manuscripts are based on manuscripts closely linked to Judaism. Obviously, the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church accepted both the manuscripts categorically identified as manuscripts of the Old Testament and as manuscripts of the New Testament. Manuscripts in Judaism by implication religious Hebrew manuscripts cannot explicate codicological features of religious Ethiopian manuscripts. For instance, decorating manuscripts by painting and/or tooling of any type of cross may not be codicologically analysed from Hebrew manuscripts of religious contents. This may be accounted to the fact that in Judaism, there is no symbolic implications and reverence of the Cross. This attests how codicological features should necessarily be interpreted from cultural point of views.

Moreover, studies on the Ethiopian codicology should consider the high respect given to the Four Gospel (*ärbatu wongel* in Ge’ez) by the followers of Ethiopian Orthodox Church. As such, the codex of the Four Gospel is especially highly illuminated. In fact, this may not be unique in the Gondärian manuscripts. Nonetheless, the rich and powerful royalty of Gondär illuminated the codex of the Four Gospel more than any other regions in Ethiopia. About the especially decorated manuscripts (Bausi (2015, 47) indicates how manuscripts of the Four Gospels are remarkable. In such manuscripts, Bausi continues the common feature “to preserve notes regarding the institution (usually a monastery or a church), the place, or the region where the codex was kept. Such notes may be inserted in empty spaces or on blank leaves and/or copied onto separate leaves or quires that were then later bound into the codex.” In this regard, one may not find manuscripts of the Four Gospels as especially illuminated in religious Hebrew manuscripts of the medieval period. After all, it seems difficult to find books of the New

Testament written in Hebrew as long as Hebrew language is often associated to manuscripts of the Old Testament. Nor analysis of codicological features on insertions of pictorial illustrations such as Virgin Mary with her Son, Jesus Christ in the parchment leaves of the religious Hebrew manuscripts is probable.

Similarly, Balicka-Witakowska et al. (2015, 172) indicates the especially illuminated manuscripts of the Four Gospels as “in very few cases, the codex could receive a luxurious furnishing made of metal plaques (usually bearing tooled decorations) attached to the boards. The material could be copper or (gilded) silver or gold-like metal.” Balicka-Witakowska et al. further states in comparison to all other Ethiopian codices with few exceptional, the manuscripts of the Four Gospels display applications of ‘expensive embellishment’. As a result, the manuscripts of the Four Gospels have been reserved with the utmost care. Balicka-Witakowska et al. (2015, 172) indicates “traditionally, the term ‘golden gospel’ (*wangēla warq*) refers to a Four Gospels manuscript which contains the most significant notes regarding the owning institution (usually a monastery or a church) or the region.” Hence, studies on Ethiopian codicology should necessarily give serious attention to the highly illuminated manuscripts understood as ‘golden gospel’ (*wangēla warq*). In addition, studies of Ethiopian codicology should pay attention to the comparative quality differences at regional levels. Hence, the analysis of codicological features of Gondārian manuscripts is not separated from the analysis of the predominant Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church.

Beit-Arie’s (1981, 11-12) codicological analysis following ‘archeological’ approach is also assumed by him as an important issue to study Hebrew palaeography. In other words, the study of Hebrew palaeography should not be restricted to the study of the scripts; rather, it should necessarily consider Hebrew codicology. Furthermore, Beit-Arie’s (1981, 12) notes that codicological studies of Hebrew manuscripts should associate “the exceptional historical conditions of the Jewish people.” As Beit-Arie (1981, 12) indicates to map out the unique original script of the scattered Jewish people is challenging. In such a case, to investigate ‘stylistic periods’ of the Jewish palaeography would be impossible. The Jewish people are socially mixed with other hosting people. Hence, their script is likely to be influenced by the script of the hosting people.

As a result, Beit-Arie (1981, 12) indicates, “the role of script typology is weakened.” The theoretically plausible notion of taking the codex in its totality of producing it should consider further the special case of Jewish people. To examine the totality of the codex is not only for theoretical principles of it “as a product of the culture of its locality and time, but also because of these practical reasons” Beit-Arie (1981, 12). Consequently, Beit-Arie (1981, 12) remarks how “these particular historical conditions offer an interesting opportunity to study the relationship between script and techniques.” Attesting this, Beit-Arie’s (1981, 110) concludes, “one always has to use combined analysis of both script and techniques.”

The study of Ethiopian codicology as well as the noticeable regional variations of manuscripts production and consumption does not agree with that of Beit-Arie’s emphasis to combine palaeography and material and technical analysis of the codex. Almost all Ethiopian codices are written in Ethiopic writing system often understood as Ge’ez. Hence, the possibility of Ge’ez script to be influenced by other scripts is unlikely. Moreover, Ethiopian people had never experienced dislocations from their origins. In fact, the combination of palaeography and codicology is found appropriate, but not in line with that of Beit-Arie’s (1981) notion of integrating palaeography into the study of codicology of Gondärian manuscripts. In other words, one may not find script variations of Ge’ez in Ethiopian manuscripts let alone regional palaeographic variations reflected in codicological features.

The benefits of integrating the concepts of ‘New’ philology and palaeography into the interpretations of codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts are many. In doing this, it is possible to explicate how literary works do not exist independently of their material embodiments. In other words, the physical form of the manuscript is an integral part of meaning constructions and value judgments. Hence, it is necessary to look at the totality of the codex, to explicate the relationships between the text and the material features such as layouts, illuminations, bindings, and rubrics of paratextual features. In fact, interpretations of Ethiopian codicology should also consider the surrounding contexts of both productions and consumptions.

Obviously, manuscripts seen as physical objects come into being through a series of processes. This indicates the possibility of the many hands involved in the productions and each of the

hands left their codicological marks. These physical objects continue to exist through time, and are disseminated and consumed in ways which are also socially, economically, and intellectually determined, and of which they bear traces of changing codicological features. In the following sub-section, I present the roles of sponsors in the productions of codices combined with contextual interpretations.

6.3.1.1 Sponsor of Codices

The interests of the sponsors mainly determine the production of quality manuscripts. Particularly, the high values of codices are seen from both the liturgical and the paratextual features. In fact, the differences of codices are revealed not in the contents of the text blocks, which are often usable for liturgical services, but in the contents of the paratextual features. Nonetheless, Bausi's (2015, 1-2) general introductory notes states some of the commonly shared assumptions in the mainly codicological articles included in COMSt. Bausi indicates that contents of manuscripts are evaluated as per their purposes. If these contents are found 'strictly functional' when evaluated in codicological parameters for 'text editing, cataloguing, conservation, preservation, and restoration', then they would be considered as relevant for codicological studies. Otherwise, contents of manuscripts would not be considered if they potentially lead codicology to include the vast unmanageable area of knowledge drawn from manuscripts.

Moreover, manuscripts' contents reflected in visual arts are excluded from those contents to be considered for codicological studies. This kind of exclusion of pictorial matters is justified, for the analysis of these matters is categorized into "another well-defined discipline, namely art history." As explicated in the preceding chapters, the paintings in the Gondārian manuscripts and the decorations of the bindings have both structural and symbolic functions. For instance, the paintings in BDGE-063, in MNDA-054, and MNDA-057 are illustrations of the commissioners. In a codicological close reading of MNDA-057, the collar like ribbon on the picture of the woman praying is a symbolic representation of her being an Ethiopian Empress possibly Empress Minitwab. The white headdress may represent the typical Ethiopian women style. The white colour on the head and beard of the portrait below Virgin Mary on the picture MNDA-054 is more of illustration than it is structurally functional.

The picture in BDGE-063 though mainly to show the difference of appearances between the hair side and flesh side of a parchment leaf, it shows the symbolic representations of the commissioner. Looking at the palaeographic content above the painting, one can extract meaning that her Christian name Wolte Giorgis (wife of Iyasu I) is indicated as a historical register of the commissioner. These examples of pictures in the Gondärian manuscripts may not be interpreted with a sophisticated deep analytical approach as in art history. Rather, the basic symbolic representations drawn from the visual arts substantiate of the interdependence between art history and codicology. Moreover, the palaeographic data as in BDGE-063 underscores the need to combine palaeography with codicology.

The high values of the Gondärian manuscripts and the paintings in them are better explained in line with the historical developments and contextual particularities of the Gondärian period. Attesting this, Wion (2004) focusing on the high quality pigments used in the paintings, explains the high quality of the artworks of the Gondärian manuscripts and the paintings. She associates the high values of the 17th century Gondärian manuscripts with the wealthy commissioners then back who favoured the productions. Examining the high quality of the materials, Wion (2004, 110) writes, “most of them were part of the international luxury goods trade of this time.” Though her focus is on the paintings in the manuscripts, she briefly implies the differences between the manuscripts sponsored by aristocratic group of people and by local people often live in rural areas. Often in Ethiopian history, churches and monasteries much supported by dignitaries in the palaces are production centres of high quality manuscripts and paintings. In this regard, generally the Gondärian manuscripts are of upper qualities. In fact, there are noticeable variations among these manuscripts in the region of Gondär.

Interestingly, descriptions of quality matters of the Gondärian manuscripts and the paintings in them are not in reference to the literal meanings of urban and rural areas. Rather, the high qualities of the artworks in Gondärian manuscripts are attributed to the wealth of the commissioners. The royals and the nobles were rich in the Gondärian period. These people’s religious dedication also matter as seen in Gondärian manuscripts produced at the reign of Emperess Mintwab, who reigned in the ‘second’ Gondärian period. All codicological aspects related to quality of manuscripts have shown developments within the general frame of

Gondärian period. In addition, manuscripts quality is not interpreted along the lines of literal meanings of rural and urban areas. What defines the high values of Gondärian manuscripts is with respect to the huge investment producing the manuscripts. Obviously, the higher investment is meant the much better quality of a manuscript. However, such correlation cannot be seen in dislocated manuscripts thinking their present location is the place where they were originally produced. For instance, the Gondärian manuscripts found in other regions within Ethiopia and abroad cannot show the quality matters of all the processes of producing the manuscripts.

What determines the quality difference of manuscripts as 'rural' and 'urban' (often urban is used to refer to manuscripts sponsored by the aristocratic group of people) is not the production centres rather the quality of the codicological features. As Wion (2004, 109) recommends the Gondärian manuscripts should be studied with respect to the codicological features that include the technicalities in producing the pigments, qualities of parchments, and the bindings of the manuscripts. Nonetheless, this codicological study of Gondärian manuscripts has delimited its scope to already produced manuscripts; thereby, the ethnographic descriptions of the techniques applied to produce the pigments are not integrated.

The commissioners in the city can have choices to decide to whom he give contract and which type of book they want to see at the end product and present to the church. The interaction of the two in the city affected what the book looked like at least in physical appearance. Quality material accessibility to high-class sponsors and personal tastes of arts should have contributed the high values of books of the Gondärian. The Gondärian can be identified by the first observation at the macro structures. The elements concentrated on specific aspects of the book, perhaps the exterior visible parts: format, cover, decoration, visual textures of materials, internal book structural regularities, etc. Hence, they were made sponsor -centred than user- centred.

The person commissioned a book in accordance with his taste and budget; the bindings reflect the intent of these first owners, either to impress with their assets and to display their wealth or social status, or to provide protection for the Gods word or content.³⁰⁸. However, in Gondärian

³⁰⁸ Scheper 2014:9; See N. Pickwood, 'Onward and downward' (1994), pp. 61-68.

tradition, it seems that the sponsors came before binders in terms of time, as the binders had no books for sale and donators did not go to his home or shop to buy a finished book. This kind of practices created little room for the presence of a mere binder driven features in the book. The Gondärian kings whose name were mentioned in chapter four, 4.1 could have been contributed to the advancements of book production technology in the local and motivated book- based wisdom to their people. In the following sub-section, creators' contributions to the local as a unified whole are discussed.

6.3.1.2 Creators of Codices

The codicological analysis of the Gondärian manuscripts necessarily integrates the historical backgrounds of the establishments of Gondär as Ethiopia's capital. It is discussed elsewhere that Gondär was the place where the skilful persons were gathered. After all, at the face of time, the Gondärian manuscripts are still significant to tell the stories of their quality marks emphasizing the high professional capabilities of their creators back in time. In spite of all these years of services, I found them in collection distinctively different in fine structural components that changed their appearances and endured them to be at good condition than others. This might be related to the quality production that result such durability in function and beauty at the same time; material and technological elements would be used to achieve the quality book by multiple ways: quality book is equal to quality crafts.

In concern to beauty, creators of the manuscripts stood on the forefront as they paid great attention in producing every book elements coherently. White colour of parchment, elaborately tooled. No any pure aesthetical actions taken independently, but done with others two or one as causally related; except spine tooling and text block quire signature painting. The key to this quality secret was the technology and the upper skills to manipulate the materials used. For instance, the local binders preferred second type of end band, mitred turn in, selvages textile application etc than other alternatives available for them in the local tradition. These indicated that he intended to see quality products and he had a relative professional freedom. Please note that no written treaties narrating the methods of the book production at that time and place to tell us why he choose one techniques from other more.

However, one thing that must have been clear to us was that the bookmakers very likely had high skills in design and capacity to execute what he wish to do and asked by the sponsors to do. The statements looks suggestive than conclusive because the ethnographic data failed short to be the same with that of the historic crafts and had not exactly depicted the past except the use of parchments. Moreover, codicological layers of the codices appeared to have been at constant move as of text block and structural levels; most book parts subjected to changes by natural and human factors meaning valuable data lost faster than one often expected. Consequently, all the data in concern to the bindings are gathered from the visible codicological elements, which are visible at the time of the survey. Some of the elements have been time hard to identify them in confidence due to the repairs, losses, or damages. Moreover, the identification of the original from later works was another challenge in the field records. Hence, the number of books needed to be used as representation of the variety found in the corpus would not be the only ones, may be more if studied closely without destruction.

The materials and technical devises largely used in the conservation purposes were regarded as old traditions prototypes, what could be special for the corpus? Three aspects of subtle modification carried out; adaptation to new conditions of users centred triggered by arts and visual culture of local, Sewing techniques was very simple and that it left the board attachment structures without support. The results of the survey elucidated that considerably more number of material and technical solutions were attempted to strengthen the board attachments in the corpus than in Anomalies groups. These were; applying spine lining, spine cover fold techniques, covering threads at gutter, lancing holes channel,[photo] proportional balances of the text block to the size and sewing structures of the bindings. They were also characterized by full covered, balanced format, and elaborately tooled features to mention few.

The corpus had evidences of progressive experimentations and changes to solve the mechanical problems perfectly using both material and technical means. These changes of functionally quality directed by places and patterns of frequent damages; namely between boards and text block, within the text block quires, between boards and cover leathers from most serous to less order. Here I could understand that the typical mechanical caused threat directions would be

from end bands braided leather missing to tie down and then to board attachments and finally quire sheet gatherings.

These were those elements of books that physical / relevant codicological evidences could attest their causes of changes. The contemporary solutions were; protecting sewing threads by covering and supporting the boards and leather cover attachments by metal pelages and strong tooling press. However, they were not fully target full in sufficiently solving the problems of durability and beauty needs of the time as they persisted here and there. These features, along with the absence of other timesaving shortcuts, indicate that the local binders intended to make beauty and or durable bindings. In relation to these materials, many techniques were introduced or reintroduced in to the local craftsmanship.

The production techniques per supposed the damage during creating them; internal pressure balanced by spine linings, spine cover folds, second end bands³⁰⁹, board shaping, proportional text blocks construction to the sewing structures etc. Nevertheless, the threads as material and as structural components left un supported by sufficient mechanism or physical material supports that reduced the loads on threads on joint areas, like, pest down or daubers as Islamic tradition. Some creativity was seen on among bookmakers and applying single element for more than one purpose might signify the local bookmakers as skilled and professional artisans.

Since binding was a last work. No contaminations on pre works, by glues, cut marks, erasing of texts trimming sections etc. Some already fixed by prior-scribes that include spaces, sizes, shape, volume –typologies, and ratio-length/width. As Gervers et al. (2015, 126) indicates creators work needed to be accommodated with such properties. The qualities in general, had some sort of impacts on creators' ways of using their skills. To achieve such higher qualities, creators often are careful in doing their work and they update their skills to suit the requirements of the specific local tradition depend on the function they planned to meet. This indicates that the reason why the scribal practices were honoured by the communities of that time when it occupied a higher

³⁰⁹“These steps in the binding process were not so much influenced by budgetary issues or esthetical considerations” (Scheper 2014,125)

position next to nobles in the pyramid like social stratiography of book users within the Gondärian.

As a result, the Gondärian manuscripts can be also largely considered as of highly valued, higher in number ever and consistency of book sponsorships by higher classes for about for about a century and half without break. This indicates sponsors should have wanted to meet multiple and broader functions beyond personal and local level through books as ‘tools’. Else, either they needed to solve very tough contemporary problems or they need to advance the old tradition of book productions, finally for their purposes. Hence, creators’ contribution is significant as shown in the Gondärian manuscripts. In the following sub-section, the identified local tradition is explained in line with its evolutions in the Gondärian periods.

6.3.2 The Evolved Local Manuscript Culture

The evolved local manuscript culture is more meaningful when it is compared to others. As such, the meaning constructions and value judgments have been intentionally linked into the Gondärian from among other alternatives available at that historic time. The Gondärian represents an idea and it is generally a concept by itself. The existence of multiple standards of features also expected to indicate that in the tradition there might have been a diversified users needs in the city. Moreover, if the two matched the book was most probably made at one single culture consistent by skill and fixed place common in city indicating division of labour and supervision; the assumption production and preservation overlapped. Showed book distribution on provenances coincided with kings’ royal church connection evident by donation to it. In this preliminary data, the local needs were assumed to be answered by local crafts. The sample I surveyed were from those the manuscript owning institutions situated in the city and around were royal churches built by royalties for about 150 years. They used to serve the readerships by providing books for ones interest like; education, debate intellectual centre, liturgy, exemplar for copying, and caused for social and monastic community contacts and stages of events. It also suggested that the producers were not the end users. The hypothesis of city of Gondär was the place of quality manuscripts production centre appeared to be confirmable by direct and present evidences later.

Yet quality was considered as one of the fundamental features of the crafts in making specific book elements of exterior parts except threads and adhesives which could have been hidden in to the binding components of the book. This implied that more attention was given to visible parts than invisible corresponded to Gondärian visual culture renovation. The variation did not show the traits of fashion or particular workshops and specific periods below sub periods in this study may be next ones. Hence, more study on them; I believe help to verify the reality further especially on city collections.

I had recognized three general trends of changes in the production of book crafts and preferences of techniques by the binders of that specific time. These are; elements those were dominant in the first period and soon decrease in the subsequent periods; from probably square to round board edge shaping, from textile inlays perhaps to empty, from single piece covering technique to quarter. The second one is the increasing from first to second periods; from cut to fold types of spine covering techniques, from first to second types of end bands, from round to bevelled shapes of the board edges. The third one is that two or more than two elements equally important in one period with little sign of changes to either sides; cross ornamentation elements of horn and small circles and only small circle, perfect square and elongated shapes ratio of the books.

What those codicological components modified across all book parts could probably tell us was that, the book as totality received the wave of changes, not single aspects only. This Gondärian political period was the blooming, and influential in terms of culture in respect to artistic innovation; Similar to the development of script, the preparation of manuscripts had been developed in Gondärian period by size, binding, illumination, decoration, and method of preservation. This period might be referred to us as ‘the golden age of Ethiopic manuscript making’. Moreover, it signified continuity and change in manuscript production technologies.

The single book did not show difference and changes of technologies across time but group of books could have far better recognized the extent, which it changes. Naturally, not all features that are found in all books have similar kinds of features and number in all times. The local corpus have differed from the Anomalies groups with its book elements that are at least seen from the book’s outward physical make-ups perspective just long before data acquired from production techniques revealed from deep in to the lowest structural unit of the book. Finally,

from the survey data one should recognize that if he/she plans to study the books in a particular collection in Ethiopian context, section based on purely by time or place would not work well. The time and place must have been linked by special historic phenomena that in turn name the books origin and define its limits against others. Single or multiple events might occur at a time; Gondärian stand for the later, religious, capital city, political and cultural which all allowed the emergence of new tradition and new crafts.

All these could not be possible without, high craftsmanship, multiple production centres, division of labour, three aspects of fields transformation period at a point, strong institutional establishments, high class sponsors and stable socio political conditions at a fixed city where many needs expressed by arts to be flourished under a particular production context like Gondärian. Hence, ‘Ethiopian’ the evidences of multiple ways of making books, as convenient to ‘local’ needs. Nevertheless, as the data analysis has shown, there is the local tradition that existed for a century and a half. The Gondärian in broader sense would also be apparent as the following information collected based on observations cast lights and worth of further considerations particularly on the qualitative data gaps. We had better date bindings by one ‘tradition’ than by specific number of years. It should be noted that tradition tended to unify centres of manuscript productions. The codex as product of craftsman and one tradition must have been considered as an object needs to be studied from interdisciplinary approaches. In the following final section of this chapter, interpretations of some peculiar codicological features of the Gondärian manuscripts are presented. Particular emphasis is given how these peculiar features can serve for the identification of archetypical local codices.

6.4 The Codex Embedded in the Archetypical Local Codices

There are some 11 codicological features mentioned in the sections at the beginning of this chapter. These features are reflected in the archetypical local codices consisting the ‘fine’ physical appearances. These 11 codicological features attributed to Gondärian are also mirrors of some more many variations that can be related to specific periods and areas that give way to evolve diversity of characteristic associated to their own local tradition. From the results, it has become clear that there is an archetypical structural make-up for the Gondärian codex. However, all achieved by set of processes made to create an individual book element that define the whole

book appearance if combined influenced by the need and taste of the owner changed in times and dominant cultures. For instance, the codex embedded in the archetypical codices reflects the political periods that caused the binders to choose those codicological elements more frequently, among the others. One can trace back the availability of human resources and material ones from the scope of the tradition to make a complete codex at a time. Material, techniques and as a complete book form, as object, three aspects at a time and as group different and defined by features of its own distinct from others. Not as ‘corpus organizer’³¹⁰ but original complete manuscript at a time; ‘total quality managements’. This implies that the Gondärian manuscripts were produced with the highest quality of manuscripts both in their durability and in aesthetic values.

It has been said that combination of those elements together on to a single book brought about different in its physical appearances. The single element alone was less likely to do that. Hence, one should have considered it as part of a complete work. In addition, the codex in association to the local corpus suggests the existence of local tradition implicitly. Please note that no any one of those elements had been out of the Ethiopian but only some that possibly created sub group marked by quality crafts. The sub group making was likely by binders work than scribes’ that would be relevant to codicological analysis. The approach was from book to features because of the absence of data on local corpus.

In those works aesthetic qualities were given more attention followed by structural and then functional, might be related to the impacts of Gondärian arts as it was contemporary to book making works flourishing in historic city of Gondär. While nearly half of the present survivals in collections surveyed could be labelled as ‘fine’ book category the rest as ‘simple’ in both their material and technical characteristics and their physical appearances which also made them exceptional. Changes and continuities asserted as a result. Ranges of features found in all corpus but at sub group level variation occurred depend upon both internal (book manufacturing crafts) and external sponsors and skills of makers. The difference came due to both the quality of production methods and by different ‘progressive’ needs of the new traditions and users. In

³¹⁰Bausi 2012,55

relation to this, the covering and decoration schemes became the critical points to designate the corpus to local origin. Both durability and beauty enhanced by those materials and techniques used. Even some earliest techniques were also reused in the local, first types of end bands³¹¹, fastenings, etc for additional needs of enhancing the quality in the second sub period (1721 - 1784). Some those hindered the beauty back totally dropped; pest downs³¹², text ornamentations, in 17th c.

Practical aspects to be preserved also include issues of one-piece techniques. Composite materials were less frequent in use; thereby, the use of one single piece should be promoted. The perfection in measure and cut before doing on the cover should be encouraged. In the application of these precise measures of cuts, the joining of two edges keeping their symmetry rather than overlapping them should be adopted. Perpendicularly angular cuts rather than circular and/or curved lining should also be modelled from the manuscripts selected. Other important aspects of preserving Gondārian manuscripts should consider issues to be chosen of the binaries such as regular rather than irregular, even number rather than odd, similar elements on one side rather than the dissimilar and original components added rather than the used or the waste ones.

These preferential orientations of visual textures observed in the Gondārian manuscripts should integrate some other aspects. For instance, a contrasting design of colour rather than the dim or dull should consider the scripts contrasted with the parchment, the textile contrasted with the covers, the tooling bands frames, and the background crosses should be visible. More importantly, the writing of the text block's style should not apply artistic forms of individual letters. Changes within the specific element enable the existence of multiple standards. 'Total quality management' was applied in manufacturing books. This was possible by division of labour³¹³, specialization, supply of materials, supervisors at particular place. Berzock (2002, 8)

³¹¹Late Coptic features. Szirmai 1999: 35; Gervers Michael & Jacek Tomaszewski 2015, 118.

³¹²Nosnitsin 2014,85, fig. 15 and 16

³¹³ 'Malka Šēdēq wrote the Book of Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua, while I myself, Pāwlos, wrote the other [books]. If we added or omitted anything, either wittingly or not, forgive and bless us for ever and ever. Amen. And

notes that ‘bespeaks the creativity of artists, working in proximity and inspired by one another.’ In a sufficient sample of dated books that represent the full extant manuscript history, measure the practice as employed by bookmaker, it cries out for an explanation.

Conceptually, content and its concrete physical instantiations can be, and have often been, distinguished and considered in separation from each other. In the production and use of a manuscript tradition like the local, however, they are inextricably interrelated. Berzock (2002, 10) is right to figure out the sheets of ruled parchments was used by the illuminators indicating that words and images are conceived as a unified completely incorporating elements which coexisted in a single volume.

Using one single binding as evidences of localizing these elements or vice versa were risk, and often use more at a time for guaranteed: This was due to the nature of Ethiopian codex, and frequent repair history. The ‘local’ city and times; the typology tell us not ordinary devotional roles and rather historic and theological matters hard to sponsored by lower class; their provenances also indicated royalty, and might have been clued to state controlled production workshops in the political capital. The preservation and production places overlapped had not completely true in this survey results. For this reasons, Codicology should not merely be strived to reconstruct processes of book making techniques.

Moreover, should not be characterized by “technical practice” and “endless facts” without “theories” and “ideas.” Hence, the Gondärian/ books were selected due to ‘Gondärian’ its historic significances. It seems true, as it is purely historical with no alike at present. Therefore, the sole source of information about its historicity is from and on the physical book only. Close reading [surgical view] is a Philological perspective of interpretation and methods which are appropriate when craftsman practices data are not available today such as the Gondärian. Yet, it informs us something as a continuation of the medieval tradition. The codicological inquires need to be supported by ‘archaeological’ evidences in the future.

bles the makers of parchment, because they laboured much’. Bausi 2016:119. [parchment makers were different person]

The above interpretations confirm that the physical characteristics contain much information and provide clues as to the origin of manuscripts, the potentials of which are not exhaustively studied yet. One thing was made clear and promising that the potentiality to be used as a tool for localizing books using codicological elements would be high. In Ethiopian context, codicology needs to be seen inseparably from philology or history yet further study on more books and precise data recording would probably remain an essential research focus. Many of the articles in COMSt (2015) are interesting and are helpful to formulate a clear full-fledged theoretical framework for codicology. However, some of the articles seem conservative of promoting codicology to be an ‘independent’ discipline. In other words, some of the reflections on material features of manuscripts connote the dissociative moves of codicology from other closely related disciplines such as historical linguistics viewed from a palaeographic point of view, social history, philology viewed from explaining origins and evolutions, anthropology viewed from explaining cultural backgrounds, and so forth.

In fact, no one questions the scholarly benefits of codicology stand as a discipline by its own. The scholarly achievements of codicology are undeniable at least beginning from Masai’s publications. The vast area of knowledge drawn from codicology standing as a discipline by its own would not be realized had it been considered as a ‘unit’ of other generic disciplines such as palaeography and philology. Had it remained as a ‘section’ of these generic disciplines, the complexities of analyzing the material features of codices would have got limited scholarly attention. Thus, the academic values, which are obtained from studying the codicology of the Gondärian manuscripts, are associated in consideration of codicology, as it is a multidisciplinary field or at least as an interdisciplinary one.

I may not be wrong to say there are some conflicting accounts in the articles of COMSt (2015) of defining, delimiting, and framing codicology, as it is a discipline in the social sciences. For instance, it seems a paradox to explicate essential codicological features such as the uses of pigments, dyes, and inks by implicit consideration of codicology as a ‘multi-disciplinary’ and/or ‘interdisciplinary’ discipline explained using technical terms common in the field of chemistry. This implies the constructed association of codicology as it has direct strong relation with

disciplines in the natural sciences. Simultaneously, codicology is pushing away the supports from palaeography and philology.

It seems, many of the challenges in studying Ethiopian codicology come from the methodological and theoretical approaches. Hence, some of the few philological investigations in Ethiopia have excluded the conceptual benefits drawn from codicology and palaeography. Similarly, the very few codicological studies in Ethiopia have been inconsiderate to the conceptions of 'New' philology that integrates the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions. Moreover, historiography has often rejected the varied interpretations in order to be a "scientific" and an "objective" one. This in turn leads to the assumptions of historical "facts" as they are being the chronological arrangements of historical events without any interpretations of these historical events. Cognizant of this, there should be a pressing concern from the academics against the trends of the current trend of codicological analyses that become both far from appropriate content analyses of material descriptions and far from textual analyses of contextualized periodization of codices. In the following chapter, the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

7.1 Conclusions

In this study, Codicology of Gondärian Manuscripts (ca. 1650-1800), attempts have been made to explicate how codicology of Gondärian manuscripts has been an integral part of the manuscript culture, which is a subject matter of philological investigations. In addition, this study has tried to explain how material aspects (interchangeably is meant codicology) of book culture have been indissoluble from the study of palaeography and contents in the text block that can comprise the entire codices. Furthermore, it has attempted to explore the predominant codicological features of Gondärian manuscripts, to clarify the typical characteristics associated to the local manuscript culture, and to relate these codicological features' historical evolutions in the years from 1650 to 1800.

This study has applied mixed research design for descriptive codicological cross-referencing of 80 purposefully selected manuscripts. Using descriptive analysis, these manuscripts plausibly produced at the heydays of the Gondärian period have been scrutinized in light of their historical contexts and locational variations. Descriptive codicology have been conducted using tools for computed descriptive statistics. These tools were the computational spreadsheets such as Lotus 123, Excel, and Quatro Pro and of database packages such as Dbase, Foxpro, and Paradox.

The selected 80 Gondärian manuscripts of varied subject matters have been compared using a self-developed guideline form, which has 110 items, for the three periods within the Gondärian period. The findings of this study have revealed the indissolubility of codicology, paleography, and contents in the text block. Moreover, these codices have been analyzed using "thick description" methodological perspective for the justification of how historical contexts and locational variations matter for codicological study of this kind. The descriptive analysis on the codicological features of the Gondärian codices revealed that there were diachronic changes combined with synchronic aspects of philology interconnecting the codices' symbolic representations in the indicated historical period. This study on the Gondärian codices has

concluded that there have been some codicological features identifiable to Gondärian manuscripts and definitely pointing to the Gondärian origin. Among the predominant codicological features, the Gondärian manuscripts appeared with no holes on parchments, a single work of a manuscript only contains a single subject matter, and add-ons of flyleaves on both the front and the back of the codices independently from the text block. Moreover, these codicological features peculiar characteristics of the manuscripts in concern to the size of the wooden board that exceeds the parchments' size and to the tooling of ornamental Latin crosses on the covers of the manuscripts. These codicological features have been briefly concluded in the following paragraphs.

After a codicological close reading of the eighty books in the focus study, it has been identified that some of the specific features in the study are restricted to local specific. The material and structural features were used to categorize bindings into two major groups. The groups of manuscripts have been the 'local' (political period) and the Anomalies (out of the local – cultural periods) based on a rudimentary analysis following a majority assumption. In fact, it is not uncommon for Gondärian cultural periods binding from one centre to have features that may be more characteristic of another centre of bindings, and the vice versa. However, the specific origin of the binding was usually lucid in a book that has three or more codicological features associated with one category. From the totally selected manuscripts (80 MSS) 61 MSS were produced in and around Gondär in the Gondärian cultural period; thereby, they were categorized under the local corpus.

In fact, "Anomalies" manuscripts are different in a number of codicological features from the local corpus. The "Anomalies" group of manuscripts have the following features: Pale yellow parchments, low-quality cover, absence of textile inlays leather, multiple works in one time, organized with an irregular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book) (mixed), odd and inserted fly leaves at one side, odd and inserted fly leaves at one side, quarter cover boards, overlapped turn-in corners, elongated format, decorated by less than two motifs and simple Frames number. There have been eleven codicological features constituted in the manuscripts. These features were found organized in all or most of the Anomalies corpus and were associated to the 'Gondärian' manuscripts' less quality of Codicological features.

The dominant codicological features noticed in the corpus have been associated with the number of material and structural binding characteristics common to all or most of the local corpus. It was possible to identify larger number and varieties of codicological features that credited to the high criteria of fabrication of the manuscripts: White parchments, high-quality cover leather, application of rare textile inlays, complex decorative frames, decorated by diverse type of cross motifs were significant markers of the manuscripts. Moreover, square/rectangular book format, full wooden board covers leather, mitred /joined turn in corners were the representations of these manuscripts. In addition, even and original flyleaves at both sides organized with the regular number of quires in a volume (not necessary in a book) and single work in one time were examined from the Gondärian manuscripts. These codicological features can show a certain pattern of changes in the three phases of the Gondärian period categorically identified for this study.

Typical to the local manuscript culture are no holes on parchments were exceptionally observed in all of the selected manuscripts. Single piece coverings, a single work contains similar contents at a time. Consistent numbers of parchments in a single quire in a book were observed. Flyleaves were added independently from the text block. This might be because of flyleaves have quite different purpose from the other parchments. When parchments were smaller than the covers, the wooden board, which is used for the outer cover formed square shape. Hence, the attachment for the end bands needed space for the boards to be longer than the parchments for the text block. This implied that the bookmakers cared about the text block. No variation was observed in this regard. Cover leather single pieces, trimmed and turn- in with perfect 45⁰ mitered and equal widths were common.

Moreover, almost all the manuscripts showed some peculiar codicological features such as ornamented Latin cross with back ground cross, selvages positioned textile inlays, tooled most parts, and finally the complexity of tooling more four frames on leather covers. The corpus has also predominantly a flat spine. These all gave the Gondärian manuscripts high value. All these and other more indicated that the related majority corpus was produced in better craftsmanship than Anomalies. High quality looking elements and some others uncommon ones inter-related books of the related majority corpus more closely when others did as they were rarely found in

other collections. A second end band type, bevelled board shapes, spine covers of a continuous folds of turn-in leather rather than cut at joint position were also unique in the Gondärian manuscripts. The variants could have been related to binders choices based on some specific local reasons. These binders have likely been with the motives intended to meet the requirements of the standards. This codicological analysis has attested that the existence of 'local' features in quality and at the same time in diversity was the prominent one.

Multiple codicological features appeared in most of the selected manuscripts. These included the commonality to have double regular quire structure in four or five, the application of rare textile inlays, several designs of flowers and strips, and the colours on the high quality leather covers, and shape of the manuscripts as square or rectangular format do have their own implications. In fact, the shape of the manuscripts also has perhaps relatedness to the contents and number of columns of the text block.

Similarly, the historical changes that can be associated with the diachronic change of philological concept were frequently appearing. Even some more elements have been indicating the evolution of the crafts within the local; the historic times [first and second periods] the years 1650 -1784 and largely supposed to be specific only to the area in question. Cross types, covering techniques, end bans types, spine coverings, shapes of the board edges; bevelled board shapes etc. One group follow decreasing trends; the other increasing trends that shows their historic significance within the local. Decoration becomes more elaborate and refined. The crafting tradition was evolving, not static.

The typical features to the area in question have been the results of bookmakers' intentional actions that might have been motivated by the need to produce more functional, durable, and attractive structures applied on the manuscripts. For this reason, the bookmakers have devoted additional time, preferred materials appropriate to maximize the quality of the manuscripts, and engaged in expressing their maximum knowledge and skills in performing this art. In addition, single piece coverings, the well ornamented Latin cross, second end band, continuous spine cover leather, bevel board shape, cross ornamenting small circles, quire sign position, spine lining, size of the book, textile inlays motifs long vertical block stripes and flower and brocade etc.

Diversity among elements witnesses the reality of the craftsmanship on the ground. Yet, some specific elements related to particular time within the local. Though the binders would have their own reasons, it appears to me that there was an idea of improving the material and structures of the bindings from less durability to higher, and from less attractiveness to more attractiveness status. I had recognized three general trends of changes in the production of book crafts and preferences of techniques by the binders of that specific time.

Nevertheless, the ideas of initial progression in the choices of elements are not long lasting. These are; elements those were dominant in the first period and soon decrease in the subsequent periods; from probably square to round board edge shaping, from textile inlays perhaps to empty, from single piece covering technique to quarter. The second one is the increasing from first to second periods; from cut to fold types of spine covering techniques, from first to second types of end bands, from round to bevelled shapes of the board edges. The third one is that two or more than two elements equally important in one period with little sign of changes to either sides; cross ornamentation elements of horn and small circles and only small circle, perfect square and elongated shapes ratio of the books.

The descriptive analysis has enabled us to deduce the user and the makers' dispositions on the values given to the Gondärian manuscripts. This has been verified in most of the books in the corpus geographical origin of the binding matches that of the text. The material aspects related to text blocks have impact on the investigation of a single codex as a whole, not separately have been realized under the new/material philological approach. This implies that it introduce us to consider codicology as an integral part of their philological textual scholarship.

If truth were told, in some few manuscripts the values and the origins do not match; however, the binding can be taken as an indicator that the text travelled almost immediately after it was produced. In cumulative, this sort of information can donate to our understanding of the history of book production centres and distribution and preservation throughout the broad area of Gondär could be overlapped. More importantly, this codicological evidences has filled the gaps of the previous art historical studies on the question of the geographical origin of the Gondärian manuscripts in the city of Gondär.

The arts historical researches on illuminated manuscripts provided data on the periods of the Gondärian manuscript culture operated. Whereas this codicological study has justified the precise place of manuscripts' production based on corpus using historical and palaeographical information. Here, I know that the book was made as complete and organically unified object. The book as totality here stands for that sponsors can influence it. This shows that it is not a mere technical issue that concerns only with craftsman skills. The corpus was originated from single and independent local tradition called 'Gondärian' that existed.

It offers 'new' insights for a scholarly approach of codicology, as it is an independent field of study and one aspect of philological inquiry to illustrate historical changes and locational variations. In order to complete the processes of codicological investigation especially Ethiopian or regional at historic periods the codicological study need to integrate with philology and history. Therefore, the eclectic or multidisciplinary approach is appropriate to Ethiopian codicology. It suggests the need to transcend the limitations of discussing a singled out aspect of manuscript such as on its materiality or body texts. It may also e used to widen our knowledge to counter the methodological limitations. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are useful.

The local conditions such as the art and visual culture signified the Gondärian artistic quality and advancement in the cultural phenomena. Hence, I should consider the data in the art historical perspective than purely technological. This may be possible to find our ways to local specific features contained in the books. Regarding the Ethiopian codicology, the quality difference between city and rural manuscripts cannot be taken as their literal senses of their present location or origin but it is the matter of sponsors' willing and ability to pay for basic additional costs. However, dislocations did not show the reality better (Ancel, 2016).

Moreover, the 'Ethiopian' manuscript making tradition can also be understood more likely by groups of books at local level than by a single book (no new features largely expected) or some collections isolated from local context. The ranges of changes and level of internal diversity could only be mapped in this way at least in codicological terms. In addition, we could have been revealing Ethiopian manuscript culture distinctly from the oriental. Moreover, rescuing the valuable information contained in the physical state of the bindings might be possible through

this approach. In fact, due to the absence or missing of provenance data, it is difficult to pinpoint the characteristics to precise place of origin or workshops or hands.

The survey results focused on only those manuscripts that have reserved their original binding and whose origin is presumably known. The diversity of materials and techniques used to make books in the Gondärian political period and in the collections around the city of Gondär had been outlined. Hence, certain trends can be recognized during creation of local corpus that these specific manuscripts provided us indeed important for the codicological framework at least tentatively.

The local with its characteristics more influenced by period than place as the political period than cultural period, the city of Gondär remained as a cultural capital. Nonetheless, the city of Gondär assumed an almost zero political capital as many governors that are more provincial fixed their own courts independently. Hence, in the political period (first and second sub periods) two provenances that were the primary and the secondary provenances as opposed to other provenances in the geographical area became the most essential centres of books origin and production with codicological features attributable to the quality of the local corpus. No clear functional goal based data available to determine the particular combination made by the binders as original intentions in mind. Yet some educative guess has been made after comparisons among several bindings having similar arts of organizing practice in the samples. The most likely reason behind bringing every element together that gave distinctive identity to that physical manuscript has been suggested.

Gondär being one of the key centres of manuscript production and collection, it had books that can be explained in line with historical changes and quality issues. The quality evidences obtained from the text, script, and illuminations have asserted both the temporal and the special aspects of philological argumentations of cultural semiotics. Nonetheless, historical sources claimed only quality crafts at that period and not at the place called Gondär. Hence, looking the number and structural variations among the applications on certain book elements, it is important to examine what constituted the local. Ethiopian book culture in particular reference to Gondär region should be examined thoroughly due to the concentration of books and structural elements typical identifiable in place and time. In fact, it is deduced that there must be groups of

bookmakers whose expertise were unified into specific aspect due to the contacts they made at the common place. Perhaps, one might think of how bookmakers had received little attention.

In this case, it is possible to say greater values were given to external structures of visual signs. From the statement above, one can understand that aesthetic values took the upper hand over purely structural. This might illustrate how bookmakers were dominated by commissioners' taste and visual culture of usually related to luxurious high-class backgrounds about the city life in Gondär specially met such requirement at its high time (1650 – 1780's). I said so because not all the efforts of changes could have been realized without high skills and attentions from the bookmakers. Moreover, there was consistent support from the commissioners to the institutions conditioned by stable and growing demand of books. To this end, some important changes were seen. These were improvements in artistic works, uses of rare materials, and careful professional craftsmanship. In fact, at times, production and preservation sites overlapped. In the city, production and preservation sites were the same.

Perfection in measurements and similarly among the manuscripts was observed. I found that one particular element could have been connected to another or functionally dependent. Spine linings connected to sewing of text block and board attachments since the threads of both used to link spine linings. Quire numbers to multiple quires that made up the text block. Textile in lays with full covers never later as they were made under the turn ins. End bands with spine covers either full or quarter, no end band with no spine covers. Cross with full covered binding's only one exception – (MNDA – 044.) Fly leaves with boards, because all of them were independently set and even in number only in one MNDA – 041 and board shapes and coverings. However, the contents size determined the size of a manuscript's text block size, as for example seen in *sānkkāsar*, which is found in three volumes. In addition, the text block size determined sewing number, and it defined the dimension of leaves, if small, big thickness, if large size, small thickness, the pre Gondärian belonged to the former and the Gondärian to the later, respectively.

The later followed by three columns and square book shapes, flat spine shape, full covers, spine lining to support text block, end bands with tie down to stop twisted boards to back side, break at joint area, between wooden boards and text block, concave not convex, and fold spine turn-in edge. The Gondärian in the context of the study is not to denote all bookmakers living in the

broad area of Gondär in specific political period. The court and some high skilled private bookmakers in the city of Gondär and its outskirts were producing these books of higher values in three aspects [scripts, illuminations and bindings/ decorative works]. In the following subsection, I present the recommendations to rescue the declining attention given to the manuscript culture in Ethiopia in general and to Gondärian in particular.

7.2 Recommendations

In spite of the production of these new contributions, studying on the codices in regional collections should be done faster because the most valuable book elements are getting lost due to unprofessional repairs and poor storage conditions.

The need to conduct codicological studies in full and original research faster than now is recommended. To study more codices closely and to attend the detail elements, based on both textual and codicological features as sample (in the same or other new collections) selection should be promoted. The criteria specific to ‘local’, most importantly on covering, bindings at spine and decorative essences that are believed to be tied to visual culture of the Gondärian need to be addressed. Besides, textual analysis with the use of better software specifically on local – element relationships to achieve codicological tasks should be promoted. Most manuscripts in a certain geographic region are products of that same area. Historical travel literatures can be used as further potential sources of information, while references to these specific techniques were not always found in relevant codicological or conservation literature³¹⁴.

In order to advance studies on Ethiopic manuscripts, there should be a mechanism to organize scholars from different field of studies. This would help to systematize the available data that has been published after 1981 during more than 30 years of scholarship, and to increase the database in a systematic and methodologically informed manner. There is still much basic research to be carried out (in some cases by revising and augmenting work done by previous generations of

³¹⁴ Scheper 2014,215, part -6

scholars), both in the form of cataloguing and describing manuscripts—whether in the so good condition in which they are now to be found in the many different collections. Current scribes and their tools has long been a favourite subject of manuscript studies. Nonetheless, attention should be given to historic city based binders and to their production methods, such as what used to be called 'workshops'. Future studies need to focus on scribes, binders, parchment makers, and their place of production.

Conservation of manuscripts with their essential elements needs due consideration. I now recognize that they are not only informative to national level but also they had also ample potential to local centres far better than former studies. They implicitly used to discourage conservation³¹⁵ and resulted widespread inappropriate interventions. Without a doubt, the book's physical structure is so essential for its function, the upholding of its integrity and its continued existence. It may be a blow to be faced with an implicit absence of information about it. The leather cover is a supplementary way of protecting the sewing and stabilizing the sewing structures of the codex. No repair used the old thread, but new implied it was weak, no improvement laminated with fat. In addition, the spine lining is never used again. The spine lining put above the flyleaves indicated that the flyleaves were regarded as parts of text block not as separate ones.

The text block was becoming safer from the threats entering in to it by squaring the boards that prevented direct external contacts to the text block and covering the front and backsides of the text block by flyleaves. The mechanical aspects of the bindings would be important as it allowed usage of the books at ease. The key place for this possible was the spine and its areas. The aesthetical values were invested on both functions employing other actions with both technological and conservational proposes. At the end, all three functions fulfilled at a time by some specific actions. The flexibility nature of the crafts in response to local needs in turn would give value to the very actions relevant to make a binder to be renowned. The sub topic only identifies the binders' actions during the time of book production or within the tradition; any

³¹⁵ Parodi, 2015, pp. 539 -570

conservation measures taken by later time or by later repairer would not be considered here. The repairs made by other people other than the original binders in the tradition also less significant, for fine books not as simple books produced by their end users (Winslow 2015,264). In the fine books, the corpus, the bookmakers, and the users might be assumed that they were not same.

The need to understand the original ‘hands’ before saving from a total loss is found very important. The local book cultural values had direct impacts on the aspects of books subjected to damages and longevity before the end of natural ages of services through influencing the binders’ preferences on material and techniques used. Based on features; quality and exterior/visible aspects; across all book parts of codicological components, not single parts conserved; hence, what was needed was the book as totality not single aspects in isolation, which might be regarded as one of the distinct craftsmanship’s features that distinguished the local from others; binding structures, covers and decoration.

The root causes of all these problems were emerged from the production stage; ‘ruled’ by local book culture: Giving ample attentions to the visible than invisible. The most essential structures for the books during time of use and storages, the sewing structures, the original binders did not attempt to improve the materials used to sewing and adhering, threads and adhesives, but to solve their frequent failure, they preferred to apply other ‘supporting’ material and technical elements. Some of these were rare and old. The probable intentions were durability and beauty, mostly seen at the area in question, which characterized it with rich in diversity.

The impacts of local book culture on the durability nature of specific book structures should be examined. The variety of techniques, materials quality, size, and number of elements were evidences that the book culture had been in constant move to solve the problem better – such variety could not be found in manner similarly to other corpus. In first period, the binders understood direction of threats that caused serious and serial damages on the binding/ coverings. They appeared to decide that the mechanical more serious than the rest. The maintenance would not by any means be very economical as both material and techniques used to construct these structures were to achieve the utmost high in quality; thereby, it seemed costly and sophisticated in workmanships hard to redoing for recent owners.

I have seen threads were used to be hidden for two reasons; for protection and for beauty. The strengthening itself by enhancing its capacity or total changes of material used were not attempted at all. Hiding from sight in order to enforce beauty was the tradition of visual culture in city of Gondär and frequent breaks of sewing structures often corresponded to them.

The sewing threads and adhesive materials though the binders might be considering them as important structural and material elements to the books integrity and usage only later, the improvements works to upgrade them further remained null. The possible reason behind these defects were only because they were not visible. Moreover, the invisible elements had generally been receiving less priority and attentions as they are being far from vision, which measured the quality of the products manufactured in the local. This preposition also suggested that both the makers and sponsors were not necessary the users. Commonly the users preferred functional values to esthetical. As the corpus attested three functions of the elements, the visual cultural traits had been noticeably dominant than the rest two, to shape the taste of the people who sponsored books and longevity of the structural elements before the face of time were credited to the same.

In the conservation recommendations, first avoid direct interventions on the object even any attempts in consolidation of the condition with ‘enhancing’ the aesthetic value. Work on objects conditions; shelf, inside and outside of storage³¹⁶ buildings. Try to stop or slow down further deteriorations using possible/ working measures on the spot. Commonly due to a lack of financial support, specialized personnel, or any other reasons, protecting the object(s) from further damage would most likely be a mere hope. If we succeed to conserve at least those book elements; sewing structures and board attachments, coverings and decorations, the data about the local links would be secured for further studies. In due course, the full contributions to the codicological literatures achieved.

³¹⁶Please refer further points of preventive mechanisms in the storage conditions in (Parodi, 2015,541-579; Fakade Selassie 2010,pp. 262 - 283

This thesis needed to be considered as opening in this regard and hence it remained significant. The elements applied at least to meet two intentions in the minds of the binders. To help the reading and/or the use the primary function should be to strengthen the structural integrity of the object. Ample attention should have been paid to beautify both the interior and exterior parts of the books, to elongate the life of codices, to facilitate for the mechanics, and to conserve the codices preventing them from tearing, breaking, wearing, and damaging. The availability of multiple studies on codicological features of manuscript culture would assume multidisciplinary approaches; thereby, the essential codicological features of the craftsmanship would be philologically reconstructed.

The new philological approaches used might be relevant, use it for justification, or suggest new line if possible. In due course future researches make this line more comprehensive and concluding. Which is supposed to work to Ethiopian context as illustrated by Gondärian MSS is recommended. Our method needs to be refined and test it practically on the 'field'.

Since books that are treated, as artefacts are the product of a historical process, the amount of informational contents of a book, as an object is not steady, but is constantly changing. Most importantly, in the course of aging the informational worth of a book can in reality increase and its symbolic value. In order to choose the most relevant preservation strategy, "biographies" of the objects to be preserved are required. Therefore, the books need to be conserved and documented holistically as objects, but are not separately or/and without considering their original historical context.

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³¹⁷ Please note that in many works the term ‘Pigments’ has perhaps by mistakes been changed to ‘Paintings.’

