



Center for African and Asian studies

Visual Representations of Christian Talisman Arts: A Comparative Study of Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt

By: Mihiretu Wassie Yihunie

Advisor: Joachim Persoon (Ph.D.)

Addis ABABA, Ethiopia

November, 2020

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
CENTER FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES

Visual Representations of Christian Talisman Arts: A Comparative Study of Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt

This thesis submitted to Center for African and Asian studies (CAAS), college of social science at Addis Ababa University, in partial fulfillments for the degree of Master of Intellectual African History and cultural studies

By: Mihiretu Wassie Yihunie

Advisor: Joachim Persoon (Ph.D.)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

November, 2020

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Dr. Joachim Persoon, Center for African and Asian Studies department. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

Name

Signature

Date

Addis Ababa University

November, 2020

Endorsement

This thesis has been submitted to Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies of Center of African and Asian Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Advisor

Signature

Date

Addis Ababa University

November, 2020

Addis Ababa University
Center for African and Asian Studies
Intellectual African History and cultural studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mihiretu Wassie, entitled: Visual Representations of Christian Talisman Arts: A Comparative Study of Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in African and Asian Studies with specialization in Intellectual African History and cultural studies compiles with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

By Mihiretu Wassie Yihunie

Approval of the board of examiners

Internal examiner _____
Name Signature Date

External examiner _____
Name Signature Date

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator

Key translations-Institute of Ethiopian Studies

I. The seven sounds of the Ethiopic alphabet are represented as follows:

1st ለ = Lä

2nd ሊ = Lu

3rd ሊ = Li

4th ላ = La

5th ሌ = Lè

6th ል = Le

7th ሎ = Lo

II. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

ሸ = šä

ቸ = čä

ኸ = ḥä

ዠ = zhä

ጸ = jä Xv

III. Glotalized sounds

ቀ = qä

ጠ = ṭä

ጬ = çä

ፀ = šä

ጰ = pä

IV. General Examples

ጠልሰም=ṭälsäm

ደብተራ=Däbtärä

መርጊታ=Märegeta

ክታብ= Ketab

Acknowledgment

First of all, I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Joachim Persoon for his limitless support, constructive feedback, and academic experience from the beginning to the end of this thesis. He guided me without hesitation all through the year even before title submission to the department. Secondly, I want to thank my friends and experts who helped me to get important information frequently. Samuel Tefera (Ass. Prof.) Korschi Dosoo (Ph.D.), Samson Kebede, Zemenu Hadis, Henok Melkamzer Yihun, Kidus Gezahegn, and Ewnetu Belachew assisted me unlimitedly their knowledge and experience. They had a great contribution to my thesis and I have great respect for all of you.

Thirdly I want to thank my family, the Center for African and Asian Studies department and teachers', my classmates, colleagues, and Arba Minch College of Teacher's Education sponsored me to learn this MA degree. Lastly, I also thank all of you who contributed a lot in the name of the Almighty God.

List of tables

Table 4.1: Astrological names, characteristics and represented direction

List of figures

Figure 4.1: Demonic characters in Ethiopian talismans

Figure 4.2: Human figures in Ethiopian scroll

Figure 4.3: “Aba Samuel of Waldeba” Animal representations in Ethiopian talisman

Figure 4.4A and B: Lewatan and Behemot image

Figure 4.5: Nāwā beguw pictures from the book of ‘Mälkea Räguel’

Figure 4.6: Eyes in Ethiopian talisman

Figure 4.7: Depiction of eyes on prayer against evil eye scroll

Figure 4.8A and B: Unknown symbols in Ethiopian talismans

Figure 4.9A: Häräg talisman painting on canvas

Figure 4.10B: Harag on parchment

Figure 4.11: Geometrical talismans in diagrams

Figure 4.12: Märäbtä Solomon talisman in parchment codex

Figure 4.13: Talisman from Awädä Nägäst that includes 16 moons in each star.

Figure 4.14: Protective scroll

Figure 4.15: Experimental talisman paintings

Figure 4.16: Tälisäm painting

Figure 4.17: Talisman painting that shows ‘Säbedeät’ half-animal and half-human figure

Figure 4.18: This talisman drawing titled Mänbär/ሙንበር shows human, cow, eagle, and angle representation that shows the throne of God/trinity.

Figure 4.19: Eyes in talisman painting

Figure 4.20: Aynäwork talisman

Figure 4.21A and B: Symbolic representation of talismans

Figure 4.22: 367 Ethiopian days and its talismans

Figure 4.23: Magical table drawn in parchment codex

Figure 2.24: The Figure of an angle

Figure 4.25: Image of an angle taken

Figure 4.26: Animal representation in talismans

Figure 4.27: Birds in Coptic talisman image

Figure 4.28: Bird in Coptic talisman image

Figure 4.29: Talisman characters in Coptic talisman

Figure 4.30: Razzouk’s esoteric Tattoo design

Figure 4.31: Razzouk’s esoteric tattoo

Abstract

Talisman art esoteric practices were evolved from indigenous knowledge, religious values, and cultural perspectives. Talisman art in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt were transferred informally from generation to generation for long periods. Due to having a long historical relationship, Ethiopian and Coptic Christian talisman arts share a common source of talisman art culture. Both countries' talisman arts used virtually similar talisman culture, secret symbols, way of visual representations, and material culture though it is not clearly defined. On the other hand, western scholars claim and wrote that the Ethiopian talisman arts directly adopted from Coptic talisman arts. This thesis investigates the indigenous practices of talisman art history, visual representation, material culture, and artistic compositions both in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt comparatively. 19 Ethiopian Däbtäräs/practitioners and 5 Coptic experts selected based on purposive sampling method from northern and central Ethiopia. The Coptic talismans are not active among the society. Due to this the Coptic talisman informants were researchers and experts in Egypt and outside Egypt. This study helps to address the talisman art experts, Däbtäräs, and talisman artists to identify the common understanding and basic difference between Ethiopian and Coptic Christian talisman arts. Finally, it forwards recommendation and possible suggestions to stakeholders.

Key terms

Däbtärä, Egypt, Ethiopia, Esoteric Art, Symbols, Talisman Art, Visual Representation

Acronyms

1. AAU Addis Ababa University
2. EOTC Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahdo Church
3. IES Institute of Ethiopian Studies
4. ENAA Ethiopian National Archives Agency
5. PGM Papyri Graecae Magicae (Greek Magical Papyri)
6. CMP Coptic Magical Papyri

Glossary

1. *Abäy*- Nile River (literally ‘great river’ it was formerly known as *Géyon*).
2. *Abunä Zäreä Buruk*- Medieval Ethiopian saint associated with renaming the Nile.
3. *Agänent*- demons
4. *Asmät*- literally names (plural), implying secret names, i.e. names of power with esoteric significance.
5. *Awädä Nägäst*- EOTC spiritual book translated from Arabic.
6. *Bränä* – processed animal skin used as parchment, the traditional material for scrolls and manuscripts
7. *Beër*- traditional ink-pen often made of bamboo
8. *Chäräkä tälsäm*- amulet necklace is worn by women made of silver
9. *Däbtära* – Minor clergy who traditionally engage in making talisman and esoteric practices such as herbal medicine, they also have a liturgical function.
10. *Dikälä Hohiyät*- informal letters and special letters used by *däbtaras*
11. *Eoselä*- root similar to potato used for the preparation of red pigment.
12. *Eṣä däbdäbè*- list of plants and instructions for healing preparations.
13. *Fethä Nägäst* - Important collection of laws
14. *Gäbir*- an instruction to make a talisman drawing and ritual activities
15. *Geèz*- the official liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
16. *Häimänotä abäw*- Codex of traditional spirituality (*our elders religion*)
17. *Häräg* – literally creeping plant used to describe parchment illumination or decorative patterns
18. *Hibusem*- powerful secret name of God
19. *Kebrä Nägäst*- *Rule of the Kings (Glory/Honour of the Kings)*, including the traditional account of the origins of the Solomonic Dynasty.
20. *Ketäb* – is an amulet worn by males and women around their neck or arm to protect themselves from harmful practices, usually consisting of a magic scroll in a leather case.
21. *Lefäfa ṣedk*- long scroll equal to the height of a person that includes additional prayers and extra images
22. *Maesär*- is a symbol used to designate secret things in the talisman tradition.
23. *Mälayekt*- angels i.e. intermediaries or messengers of God

24. *Mälk*- faces of human or animal, type of literature describing appearance in spiritual terms.
25. *Mälkeä Giyorgis*- Face of St. George
26. *Mäkeä Rāguèl*- Face of Archangel *Rāguèl*
27. *Mälkeä Sätnèl*- Face of the Devil
28. *Märiḡètä* – Highly educated *Däbtärä*, who leads Matins and Vesper services (*Mehalèt*) in connection with great festivals.
29. *Näd color*- red color prepared locally
30. *Näwä abäegu*- name of sheep talisman
31. *Pägumèn*- 13th short last month of the Ethiopian calendar (which has only 5 or 6 days) since all other months are of equal length i.e. 30 days.
32. *Sätinäèl*- a type of demon, who presides over the demonic hierarchy
33. *Säbädeät*- a human figure with a fox, dog, or lion head, similar with Egyptian pharaonic art.
34. *Seél*- icon/painting
35. *Tänquäy* – is someone well versed in esoteric knowledge and skilled in making talisman/amulets
36. *Tälsäm*- talisman, i.e. associated with esoteric traditions
37. *ṣäbäl*- holy water, usually coming from sacred wells and often used for healing purposes.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Endorsement.....	ii
Key translations-Institute of Ethiopian Studies.....	iv
Acknowledgment	v
List of tables	vi
List of figures.....	vii
<i>Abstract</i>	ix
Acronyms	x
Glossary	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the study	2
1.2. Problem statement	3
1.3. Objective of the study.....	4
1.3.1. General objective	4
1.3.2. Specific objective.....	4
1.4. Research questions.....	5
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6. Scope and limitations	5
1.7. Organization of the study	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
RELATED LITRATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1. Meaning of talisman arts	7
2.3. Historical Background of Talisman Arts.....	9
2.4. Symbolism in talisman arts	10
2.5. Ethiopian Talisman arts.....	11
2.5.1 The Mysterious Element of Talisman art	15

2.5.2. Material culture in Ethiopian talismans	15
2.6. Coptic Talisman Art.....	16
2.7. Astrological symbols	17
CHAPTER THREE	19
RESEARCH METHODS	19
Introduction.....	19
3.1. Research design	19
3.2. Research method.....	19
3.3. Research sample and sampling method.....	19
3.4. Data source	20
3.4.1. Primary data collection methods.....	20
3.4.2. Secondary data collection method	21
3.5. Data analysis.....	22
CHAPTER FOUR	24
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	24
Introduction.....	24
4.1. Types of Talisman Arts in Ethiopia	24
4.1.1. Visual Representations in Ethiopian Talisman arts.....	24
4.1.1.1. Demonic Characters in Ethiopian Talisman	25
4.1.1.2. Representation of Human Figures in Ethiopian Talisman.....	27
4.1.1.3. Animal Representations in Ethiopian Talisman.....	28
4.1.1.4. Eyes in Ethiopian Talisman	31
4.1.1.5. Secret Symbols in Ethiopian Talisman.....	33
4.1.1.6. Secret names in talismans	34
4.1.1.7. Color representations in Ethiopian talisman art	35
4.1.1.8. Numerical Representation.....	35
4.1.1.9. Non-figurative compositions	35
4.1.2. Astrological symbols in Ethiopian talisman art	39
4.1.3. Contemporary Talisman Arts in Ethiopia.....	43
4.1.4. The View of the EOTC concerning Talisman Art	54

4.2. Coptic Talisman Arts	55
4.2.1. Concept of Coptic talisman arts	55
4.2.2. Material Culture in Coptic Talisman Arts	56
4.2.3. Types of Coptic talisman arts	57
4.2.3.2.1. Representation of Figures in Coptic Talisman Arts	58
4.2.3.2.2. Animal Representation in Coptic Talisman Arts	60
4.2.3.2.3. Signs, symbols and names in Coptic talisman arts	62
4.2.4. Nonfigurative elements in Coptic talisman	64
4.2.5. Vestiges of Coptic Talisman Art in Egyptian Folk Art and modern art	64
4.2.6. Razzouk Tattoo family	65
4.3. Similarity and Differences between Coptic and Ethiopian Talisman Arts	66
CHAPTER FIVE	68
CONCLUSION	68
5.1. Conclusion	68
Bibliography	71
Books	71
Articles	73
Unpublished sources	775
Online sources	76
Annexes	78
Annex I	78
Annex II	80
Annex III	81
Annex IV	82
Annex V	83
Annex VI	84
Annex VII	85
Annex VIII	86
Annex IX	86

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a comparative study of the visual representations of Christian talisman arts in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt. The comparison concerns the representation of figures, signs, symbols, and colors in the talisman arts traditions of the two countries mutual influences. Coptic magical arts were particularly influential during the Coptic period (395-642 CE) i.e. before the Islamic invasion. Early Christian Egyptian magical arts include Coptic and Greek texts, which were written in different scripts including Demotic and Hieratic. During the Greco-Roman period (332BCE-395CE) talisman art traditions were adapted to local Egyptian traditions and subsequently transformed during the Coptic period. The Greco-Egyptian culture was highly connected with texts as well as magical arts due to being enriched by the interaction between the different cultures.

Ethiopia and Egypt had close relations and have prominent Christian and Islamic communities as well as a Jewish presence. The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwähdo Church (EOTC) was part of the Coptic Church for many centuries. From the 4th to the 20th centuries the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox Church shared the same central administration. During the reign of the Ethiopian king David, the Ethiopian archbishop was appointed from Alexandria (Malaty, 1993:158). The EOTC became autocephalous and nominated the first Ethiopian patriarch at the end of the 1950s. Copts and Ethiopians continued to share many traditions, in the realms of theology, talisman Traditions, and iconographies. Coptic iconography continued to influence the EOTC for many years. This paper focused on the influences after the thirteenth century. Due to the expanded trade relationships and religious common practices with many countries, influences on iconography and talisman arts were seen boldly after 13th century. Many EOTC religious books were translated after this period and it is a turning point. Certain concepts and use of talisman symbols and representations are stylistically identical in both Ethiopian and Coptic magical art cultures. Talismanic art in Ethiopia continued to play a significant role in spiritual practices into modern time's especially concerning healing, protection, and amulets.

The Ethiopian talisman arts are not seen independently from the history or iconography as well as manuscript writing culture. The *Däbtäräs* are experts in different types of indigenous knowledge. Most magic scrolls are made by *Däbtärä*, who also practice herbal medicine and other therapeutic traditions, and gain an income from such activity (Chernetsov, 2006:189).

Talismans are used in Christian and Islamic traditions, to ward off evil spirits or for protective purposes and to assist the ailing. Emperor *Zärä Yakob* condemned using talisman objects during the fifteenth century; however, the practice survives and flourishes in central and northern Ethiopia to this day.

1.1. Background of the study

Christianity became the state religion of Ethiopia in the mid-4th century under the Aksumite kingdom, during the reign of *King Ezana* (Abebaw, 2002:3). After the introduction of Christianity, Ethiopian Christian arts, and ritual activities flourished. The metropolitan archbishop of the EOTC was appointed by and sent from Egypt for long periods. Finally, the EOTC was permitted to become autocephalous in 1959 and *Abunä Baselios* became the first Ethiopian patriarch (De Ménonville, 2018:9).

Christianity in Ethiopia was the major source of inspiration for political, cultural, and economic activities (Ibid: 7). Talisman art styles adapted elements from orthodox iconography to some extent. Ethiopian healing scrolls are written in geez language and date back to the seventh century. Most of the magic scrolls are written in Geez manuscripts including *Asmat*¹ አስማት (Wdmiller-Luna, 2015:2). Scholars such as Luna mentioned color symbolism in magic scrolls, especially the use of black and red to write the baptism names and the names of God.

The *Däbtäräs*' talismans include mystical names from religious books with protective words to guard one's person against the evil spirit (Ibid: 2). The word 'talisman' has different related interpretations in Greek, Arabic, Geèz, and other ancient languages, commonly meaning effective objects. It relates to a complex of ancient wisdom, different shapes, and compositions about varying religious and cultural backgrounds (Mercier 1997:10-17).

¹ *Asmat* is used interchangeably for magic and many names. *Asmat* in geez language is a plural form of the name.

Däbtäräs are recognized as the most educated and talented priests (Encyclopedia Ethiopica, 2005:853), fulfilling roles as healing practitioners, poets, painters, and producers of amulets. *Däbtäräs* are alternatively categorized positively or negatively, giving service in the churches, and as *ṣänquay/ጠገቺይ*, giving therapeutic services without authorization of Church doctrine and tradition for the sake of their own business (Ménonville, 2018:15). The Ethiopian talisman makers or *Däbtäräs* constitute a well-known category of clergy possessing special skills, as wise men, performers, and even sometimes trickers (Ibid: 1).

1.2. Problem statement

Before the acceptance of Christianity in the early 4th century, different magical practices flourished in Ethiopia. Ethiopian magicians learned from their Egyptian counterparts and concurred with them in upper Nubia, two millennia before Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia (Budge, 1930:177). If the two countries' intimate relationship much predated the coming of Christianity, there must have been a mutual exchange of esoteric practices and talisman arts? This paper focuses on talismanic practices in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt after the introduction of Christianity since the thirteenth century.

According to Jacque Mercier and Wallis Budge, the will of God will not be limited to words; it also includes symbols, secret languages, and talismans to favor in human life. The ancient Greek, Syrian and Egyptian priests, and kings preserved the earliest and sacred objects, symbols, and mysteries (*Asmat*) names for therapeutic and ritual purposes' (Shaw, 2017:239). The symbol of 'an eight-pointed star' is very common in Ethiopian scrolls and could symbolize the leader of all demons or the great power to catch evil spirits (Papahagi and Burtea, 2012:106). An eight pointed star talismans are familiar in Arabic and Jews talisman images. But the Ethiopian *däbtäräs* modified it into Ethiopian culture. Such kind of adaptations, using secret languages and symbolic representations in talisman arts and scrolls are common in Ethiopian *Tälsäm*. But the western scholar doesn't acknowledge these adaptations and they always associated with occidental and oriental mentality.

Some Christian clerics used the Arabic talismans and the Ethiopian *Däbtäräs* translated it into geez language and adopted like '*the book of Buni*' (Mercier, 1979:48-52). Ethiopian magical scrolls are influenced by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim arts (Wesley, 2017:3). Ethiopian Talismanic art symbols were adapted elements from Coptic and Greek magic traditions (Chernetsov, 2006:96). Mercier, Wesley and Chernetsov mention that talismanic arts originate from one center and influence different cultures. But they doesn't explain how and when Ethiopian talismans influenced by Coptic, Muslim and Jews talisman culture.

Basically this study paper tries to address how Ethiopian talisman arts are using stylistically similar symbols with Coptic talismans as well as how Ethiopian *däbtäräs* adapted into Ethiopian culture since the medieval period talisman arts. Ethiopian talisman art is ongoing and has flourishing to such a degree in the current period that it influences the contemporary art scene. In contrast, Coptic esoteric art has virtually died out due to ecclesiastical disapproval, with only a limited number of examples preserved. The negative attitude to Coptic talismanic art by the Coptic Church makes it more difficult to research. As an academically trained artist, I focus on visual representation and anthropological aspects in the comparison of Ethiopian and Coptic experience.

1.3. Objective of the study

1.3.1. General objective

The general objective of this research is to study Ethiopian and Coptic Christian talisman art visual representations comparatively.

1.3.2. Specific objective

This thesis attempts to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Identify how and when the Ethiopian talisman arts were influenced by Coptic talisman arts or shared common roots
2. Explore the basic characteristics, similarity and difference between Ethiopian and Coptic talisman art visual representations

1.4. Research questions

The following are the basic research questions of this study (detailed questions on both Ethiopian and Coptic talismans are listed in the annex).

1. How did talisman arts begin and develop in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt? What were the major mutual influences?
2. What are the major characteristics, visual representations, similarities and differences between the Ethiopian and Coptic Christian talismanic traditions?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of Coptic and Ethiopian talisman arts has been widely recognized, and they have been the object of fine art exhibitions and academic research. However, until now, very little attention has been given to the relationship between them, and their common characteristics or differences. As far as I know, this research paper is the first attempt at exploring the relationship between the two traditions of esoteric art culture. Ethiopian and Coptic talismans with regard to visual culture, symbolic representations, and use of language have stylistic similarities. This sheds light on an important aspect of the cultural and spiritual relations between the two traditions, promoting a common understanding of these two civilizations.

Scholars like Wallis Budge and Jacques Mercier doesn't acknowledge the adaptation of talisman arts into Ethiopian culture. On the other hand, Ethiopian talisman experts arguing in favor of their unique characteristics despite influence from Coptic and Arabic talismans, and some evidence of a common esoteric culture. Both Ethiopian and Coptic talisman arts use some stylistically identical elements and similar symbols, an issue investigated by this research project.

1.6. Scope and limitations

The talisman traditions of Ethiopian *Tälsäm* art have been passed on orally from generation to generation for centuries, without much documentation, making access to data challenges, besides the additional problems caused by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The possibility of finishing the data collection within the expected period became very difficult to fulfill, consequently, an extended period of data gathering was required.

1.7. Organization of the study

This study organizes into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope, and limitations. Chapter two discusses related literature reviews in Ethiopia and Egypt. Chapter three is a research method that includes a data collection method, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter four is about findings and discussions in Ethiopia and Coptic talisman arts, characteristics, similarities, and differences. Chapter five is conclusion and recommendations finally bibliography, and annex of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITRATURE REVIEW

2.1. Meaning of talisman arts

Dictionary meaning of the word talisman is “*an object that is thought to have magic powers and to bring good luck*” (Oxford English Dictionary 2020 edition). The English word Talisman has different variations in different languages; in Arabic, it is ‘*Tilsam*’, in Greek ‘*Telesema* ’or ‘*ἀλεξιοφάρμακον*’, magical symbols in Coptic ‘*Eroukh*’, and in Amharic it is called ‘*Tälsäm* ’ or “ጠልሳም” commonly referring to a ‘*powerful object*’ (Encyclopedia Ethiopica, 2010:850), (Shaw, 2017:237). Talisman art is associated with amulets used for therapeutic purposes or healing processes in many cultures of the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Africa.

The words amulet, charm, and talisman are mentioned interchangeably by different authors, being closely related and referring to magical powers and spiritual process. Wallis Budge states that the word amulet was derived from the Latin “*amuletum*” which refers to an object that helps to protect a person from a bad spirit, used as treatment and medicine (Budge, 1930:12). An amulet is an object usually worn around the neck or hand for protective purposes, normally including abbreviations or shortened words and secret formulas. It is figuratively something of magical power worn or displayed by the sick person (Varner, 2008:3), such definitions are similar to Ethiopian talismans and magic scrolls. In ancient Greece and Rome, amulets were used to protect against the evil eye, and spirits called ‘*baskanion*’, ‘*fascinum*’ and ‘*probaskanion*’ (Budge, 1930:13). It is an object used for many purposes across different cultural and historical situations for medical and spiritual healing processes (Cerny, 2013:1).

Talisman art can be expressed through different media including forms of visual art such as painting, sculpture, drawing and even performing art. Artworks combine with ritual or liturgical performances to gain their power. Most talisman arts include texts, secret names (magical words), conceptual signs, and illustrations (Shaw, 2017: 19).

Amulets often include images of protective angels or figures of people or demons, somewhat related to the tradition of Christian believers hanging crosses in their homes (Varner, 2018:35). In addition to handing amulets, the Ethiopian highland women have worn other amulets around their neck.

The relation between human beings with charms and amulets has evolved over thousands of years, in the course of the development of human civilization, being prepared from different materials including stone, wood, and animal bones, and continuing through pre-Christian, Jewish, and Christian periods. Charms were not only used to protect people but also livestock, crops, and personal property from damage (Varner, 2018:12). Talismanic arts are found in different religions, including Islam, which is considered to have protective power for those who sense, read, or observe it. Talismanic objects are covered by decorations, ornaments, and the 99 names of God/Allah (Al-Saleh, 2010:20).

Ancient Greek, Egyptian, Arabic, and Ethiopian medical books listed materials such as fruits, flowers, vegetables, roots, and leaves, used to prepare the medicine. Animals such as snakes, lizards, and crocodile body parts such as skin, teeth, nails, and tail are also used to prepare medicines (but not body parts of pigs or human beings). Precious minerals, powdered salt, colored soil, and other substances are also used for amulets. Amulet and talisman have different functions, involving instructions and orders. Amulets are prepared for protective purposes and worn around the neck, whereas talismans are prepared for a specific function of healing and can be placed on the ground or hung on the wall (Budge, 1930:14-17).

Budge divided amulets into two categories that are general and specific. Specific amulets are prepared to protect against particular diseases or situations, especially for children and pregnant women. General amulets may be placed on the gate of the home or the wall for good fortune and collective defensive purposes (Ibid: 22).

2.2. The Concept of talisman Art

The essence of the mysterious wisdom preserved in talisman art expresses itself through different types of symbols, numerical, alphabetical orders, and symbolic representation through the artworks (Hiwot, 2018:1). Talisman is a comprehensive structure between humans and the ultimate nature of the universe concerning the accumulation of knowledge and mastering it (Creme, 2017: 109).

The concept of talisman art expanded into North Africa, Europe, and North America, from the ancient tradition of Greek and Roman philosophy of mystery tradition and spiritual wisdom (Faivre, 2010:2). This ancient wisdom is very important for the human being to live and use their natural resources peacefully with the help of this esoteric or universal power (Versluis, 2009:86). Most talisman knowledge was kept in the form of symbols, invisible languages, and secret images for long periods (Versluis, 2009: 8-11).

2.3. Historical Background of Talisman Arts

The origin of talisman and amulets dated back to the earliest existence of the human species - homo sapience. Archeological excavations and found materials indicate that, ancient human beings used magical materials and practices starting from ancient periods (Budge, 1930:1). According to Wallis Budge's legendary sources, the origin of amulets and talismans are from ancient Sumerians, ancient Egyptians, and Babylonians to protect them from evil spirits. The ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians were known for keeping the secrets of the divine through their calligraphy and by their artworks (Burns, 2016:214).

According to the religious background concerning talismans, the angels and the devil made war against each other, and the devils defeated by angles. After this battle, the use of amulets and talismans became common as protection against evil spirits and the evil eye (Budge, 1930:11). Esoteric practices have different meanings according to their context and cultural values, including divination, Gnosticism, Kabbalah, occult, and magic (Burns, 2016:213).

Many ancient talisman artworks were ignored or suppressed during the Middle Ages and rediscovered during the Renaissance and Modern periods through advanced academic techniques. The ancient Greeks traditions of use of dice and Tarot related specific games to forms of divination since the 17th century expressed through symbolic art and literature (Burns, 2016:223-225). After the creation of talismans, the relation between human life and plants and other various components became stronger. Relative basic principles of talisman arts with time, place, sympathy, and antipathy became connected with human life in this field (Fahd, 1987:14).

During the past twenty year's visual culture, art theories, anthropological findings, and sociological analysis have advanced in the West from different perspectives. The recent findings have emphasized talisman art traditions in a new way through research and publications. From the beginning of the thirteen century, the alchemical combination of images, symbols, and texts became accepted in Europe, and western scholars motivated by the Egyptian ancient symbols to analyze the esoteric tradition (Forshaw, 2017:1-3).

2.4. Symbolism in talisman arts

Symbolism is '*the art of thinking in images*' that connects persons with subjects. Symbols may be represented in different forms like allegorically or directly through creative imagination. Even though ancient peoples were highly conversant with communication through symbols, the ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians greatly elaborated these techniques and contributed a lot to the development of religious and hieroglyphics symbol systems, and appreciation of the spiritual nature of symbolism in the world. According to Erich From, there are three types of symbolism: accidental, conventional, and universal symbols (Cirlot, 1962: xxx).

Animals are taken as symbols because of their close connection with human life and activities. Animal symbolism was expanded through animal worshiping and totemism. Types of representation are different due to their position and relation to human life. Animal symbolism in primitive societies is common throughout the world. In Egypt Hieroglyphics the representation of human life is related to animal activities. Birds, reptiles, mammals, and others figure prominently in this symbolism (Cirlot, 1962:10).

After the introduction of Christianity, animals were represented in biblical contexts such as religious sacrifices, involving sheep, lions, doves, and birds. According to EOTC before Christianity Ethiopians were Old Testament believers and followers of Judaism.

The Ethiopian rulers and kings were Judeo-Christian believers related to the King Solomon dynasty (Pawlikow, 1991:179-180). According to EOTC clergies, the pre-Christian Old Testament believers were sacrificing animals and rituals at *Tana Kirkos* monastery and other ancient churches.

In Aksum and *Lalibälä* monuments Christian symbols like stylistic crosses and other motives are found. The allegorical use of symbolism was very common in Ethiopia in religious elements, architectural designs, crafts, and household objects.

2.5. Ethiopian Talisman arts

The Ethiopians and Egyptians had a relationship before the coming of Christianity into Ethiopia. After the Arab conquest and occupation of vast territories, the Muslims practiced certain talismanic arts, especially from the 10th century onwards. Despite traditional claims that the pre-Christian state religion was Judaism, archeological evidence indicates before the early 4th century², worshiped the moon, sun, and stars. It seems that at the same time as Christianity was adopted, a body of talismanic practices was introduced and Ethiopians learned from the traditions of ancient Egyptians (Budge, 1968:177).

The expansion of Christianity promoted the growth of parallel talisman arts, using Christian symbols like the cross, biblical narratives and doctrines.

“..., talismans are said to have been revealed supernaturally to Old Testament figures, and representational paintings to have begun with John’s and Luck’s image of the crucifixion and of Mary. In so far as the clerics knew that talismans had been revealed later than the birth of Christ and that the image of cherub had framed the ark of the covenant in the temple in Jerusalem, the temporal sequence of these stories suggests that for them, the Old Testament is the terrain of the hidden, the New Testament of the self-evident and that this typology is the cornerstone of their classification of images, and of knowledge as well” (Mercier, 1979:78).

The exact date of the introduction of the date of talisman art in Ethiopia is controversial due to lack of surviving evidence. But the former Ethiopian kings and rulers used a talisman to retain their authority and expand their territory. The oldest survival scrolls being from the 15th-16th centuries (Mercier, 1997:122-123).

² *Even though Christianity is officially accepted by king Ezana, the Ethiopian Orthodox church was sacrificed animals. The church believed Christianity was in Ethiopia before the 9 saints came on to Ethiopia.*

Talisman art wisdom in Ethiopia was transferred from one generation to the next informally over centuries. The early experts wisely insisted on the need for secrecy in transferring this knowledge. The developments of talisman arts are more boldly seen after the 15th century, as the interaction between Christians in Ethiopia, Syria, and Egypt increased.

In Ethiopian, Hebrew, Syrian and Arab traditions, King Solomon is commonly associated with esoteric skills and a legacy of great wisdom. Both King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were closely connected with Ethiopian talisman art as well as political systems³(Ibid: 192). The concepts of talisman arts are different in many countries of the world due to cultural diversity and religious philosophy. The material culture, art styles, purposes, and instructions are diverse due to varying cultural perceptions. Talisman art experts in Ethiopia function as medical practitioners promoting therapeutic practices that replace modern medicine within Ethiopian society. Due to a lack of modern education and confidence in doctors, the *Däbtäras* were highly accepted as experts for treating many diseases in traditional ways (Mercier, 1979:14-15). Talismans were used in a comparable way to vaccines for different physical and psychological illnesses in the form of scrolls accompanied by rituals.

Talismans and magic scrolls vary according to content and purpose, talismans being more multi-purpose, whereas magic scrolls were commonly used for healing, love, and acquiring property. Magic scroll elements and symbols are taken from talismans and used for specific purposes. Talismans in Ethiopia can be used for astronomical purposes, calendric computation, preservation of secret knowledge, and environmental protection. While Talismanic representations are stylistically similar in different countries, interpretations vary according to cultural adaptation (Mercier, 1979:16). A single stylistically similar talisman symbol may have different meanings in different countries according to local interpretation and culture.

³ *The Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia is considered to have lasted until the communist revolution i.e. Därg regime came to power.*

The British Museum and National Library have a vast collection of over 900 Ethiopian manuscripts pillaged from Ethiopia after the battle of *Mäkdäla* 1868⁴ when *Emperor Tewodros* was defeated. They included indigenous books like *Fetha Nägäst* and *Kiberä Nägäst* as well as magical books and talismans (Budge, 1968:198).

Some claim that the origin of the Ethiopian talisman is related to the Book of Enoch and *Zëna Adam* an apocryphal work ⁵(Schodde, 1982: 13). However, the emphasis of the book of Henoch is on the Calendar, astronomy, and future events rather than talismanic knowledge. Ethiopian talisman is not indigenous but rather influenced by Muslims, Jews, and Christian Europe (Wesley, 2017:1). However, this seems to be unfounded. Ethiopian magic scrolls were commissioned to protect against or exorcise evil spirits from sick people through a conjunction of written texts and images. Christian and Jew communities in different regions used magic scrolls and amulets as part of their daily life activity in Ethiopia (Cherntsov, 2007:188).

The Ethiopian talisman arts usually take the form of parchment scrolls. Protective talismans are dated from the 14th century, and the oldest surviving scroll is from the 18th century (Wesley, 2017:7). Jacques Mercier wrote that the oldest surviving Ethiopian magic scroll was from the 14-16th centuries. I consider these dates to be based on misconceptions, and would rather postulate a date going back to the 7th or 8th centuries based on iconographic evidence. *Zärä Yakob* was the first to officially condemn the use of magical scrolls (Windmuller-Luna, 2018:1). However, it continued in Northern and Central Ethiopia to this day.

There are two types of Ethiopian magical scrolls; small scrolls prepared for personal use *Kitäb* and long scrolls, which were unrolled and hung on the wall as therapy for the whole family (Mantel-Niecko, 2006:40-41). The length of the scroll is prepared equal to the client's height, called *ma'eroqumät* in *Tigray* and *Lefafä Tsdek*⁶ in *Amahara* regions (Luna, 2015:5).⁷This prayer was used as an entry to the kingdom of God (Mercier, 1997:79). *Kitäb* worn as an amulet (by children and women) is common in northern Ethiopia, especially in *Amhara* and *Tigray* regions. A special kind of amulet worn by

⁴ See *Tddesse Beyene etal (1990).Kassa and Kassa, papers on the lives, times and images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1885-1889), book published by Institute of Ethiopian Studies, p-211.*

⁵ *The Book of Henok includes secret codes, symbolism, and allegorical meaning, Däbtära is said to consider it to be a magical book.*

⁶ *Lifafä šädk is a special long scroll with additional special texts that are prepared for individual purposes. It is long equal to the height of the client. Due to the availability of free space, the Däbtära add extra prayers and talisman images. When the owner of this scroll dies, it will be burial with her/him.*

⁷ *This citation is taken from Wendemuler-Luna lecture a presentation in 2015 retrieved from youtube*

women called '*Täläsm*' is made of silver or other metals, constituting a protective device and necklace (Encyclopedia Ethiopica, 2010:851). The Ethiopian *Däbtäras* considered that the secret wisdom of talisman was given to King Solomon by God. Symbols associated with Solomon like the eight-pointed star were used to expel evil spirits, thus Solomon was considered the key to talisman arts in Ethiopia (Mercier, 1979:49).

In terms of its visual form, talismans are classified into four groups: representational, symbolic, illustrations, and figures (Chernetsov, 2017:191). The representation of animals, human beings, meaningful signs and symbols, the illustration of texts and magical words, and figures are purposely depicted. Red, green and yellow is commonly used in Ethiopian scrolls, especially unmixed primal colors symbolizing the characteristics of the object or the depicted figure. Two colors of ink are used for texts, red associated with God, his words and saints, black associated with other things. Colors can distinguish between the demonic and the divine, secret signs and representations are sometimes deliberately miss-represented to confuse the demons, abstractions, and personal styles continuing the secrecy of talisman wisdom, though not used for random abstraction (Mercier, 1979:53).

The talisman images are considered to have the power to protect from the evil eye or *Buda*. The cross is an obvious element in talisman art used in stylized compositions to have effective magical power, as part of a necklace tattoo or in other different places (Encyclopedia Ethiopica, 2010:851). The cross is the greatest symbol of power used by Christian believers in their homes as protection against evil spirits. Demons facing off against other demons have the power to chase away spirits (Ménonville, 2018:127) (Mercier 1997:19). That is why images of demons are depicted in Ethiopian talisman arts in different compositions.

Ethiopian Christian magical culture sought to display the secret spiritual world in a tangible visual form through talisman pictures (Potter, 2017:1). These images and narratives are derived from the Bible, miracle books, and mythological sources.

4.1.2. The Mysterious Element of Talisman art

Ethiopian talisman experts/*Däbtäras* are highly educated, and avoid transmitting their wisdom to foreigners or perceived external enemies, rather it is transferred from generation to generation informally often to selected individual family members. If it was easily accessible it would disappear from Ethiopia.

The mixed origin *Dekalahoheyat/ደ,ቃላ ሆህያት*⁸ letters were created purposely to preserve the secrecy of talismans (Mercier, 1979:19). Such words and symbols have their power despite being difficult to pronounce or write by outsiders. The *Däbtäras* believe in the imperative to retain the secrecy of esoteric knowledge as an aspect of defending national interests.

4.1.4. Material culture in Ethiopian talismans

Ethiopian talisman art can be made using different materials or formats; parchment, scrolls, silver, bronze, wood, and other precious materials. Famous examples of Ethiopian Architecture such as the *Lalibälä monolithic Churches*, *Aksum obelisk*, and *Fassilädäs* structures are full of talisman/motives sometimes found in talismans. Early Western scholars like Wallis Budge's writing on Ethiopian talismans depended on only a few examples in two or three western museums (Budge, 1930:177-200). However, they have now become an increasingly important part of Ethiopian art collections in Museums around the world mainly dating from the 17th-20th centuries. Ethiopian talisman is depicted in various materials and types according to its function. Goat and sheepskin *Branna* i.e. parchment scrolls were used widely for magic scrolls, sheep symbolizing purity, and goat's evil (Mercier, 1979:16), (Wesley, 2017:7).

After the introduction of paper this material became a substitute material for magic scrolls, paper was popularized by Arab traders active in Ethiopia since the 13th century, who were already familiar with it for a long time. *Branna* scrolls are more durable, and using *Beër* (traditional pen) is considered more accurate and effective.

⁸ *Dékala Hohiyat* is informal letters that used only in talismans like ዳ:ቋ: ሯ' Even there are also special letters only used by *Däbtäras*. These letters are difficult to pronounce.

2.6. Coptic Talisman Art

Amulets in ancient Egypt dated from the pre-dynastic period in the form of symbols, signs, and figures in animal bones and ivory. Christianity accepted officially by St. Mark during the 1st century (Dosoo, 2018:3). During the early Christian period, the magical practice was common and accepted in Christianity tradition influencing daily life activities of church officials, priests, and monks (Varner, 2018:21). Egyptian talismans consisted of both magical symbols/*kharaktēres* and magical words (Dosoo, 2019:1).

In many Coptic magical texts saints, angels and God are mostly depicted on papyrus in combination with texts and undefined characters. The Coptic magical formulas dated back to 3rd and 4th Century magical papyri texts.

Magical wands were very common among ancient practitioners, being highly decorated and colorful, including symbols of baboons, lizards, snakes, and other magical symbols and signs (Ibid: 26).

In ancient Christian magic, names were not considered to be simply names but possessed the power to make contact with God or influence demons. Each name was kept secret from all except practitioners and talisman makers. Coptic magical works are full of mysterious names and codes, the Greek vowels being used for special power purposes concerning the zodiac, planets, and constellations (Satzinger, 2006:8).⁹

The Egyptian ancient magical symbols are combined with pre-Christian practices, expertise, and rituals; there is some analogy between monks and *Däbtära*'s in Christian Ethiopia (Frankfurter, 1998:327). Among the influential narratives in pre-Christians cosmology, is the Isis-Horus story, with its magical practices, and themes which prefigure aspects of the Christian passion and resurrection.

The ancient Egyptians used the *ankh* symbol '☩' as a sign of life and power, however, it is ambiguous and can represent 'pagan or Christian', 'male or female', 'human or divine' (Budge, 1930:128). Budge considers the symbol '☩' to be controversial without well-defined meaning; it may be used to symbolize human body parts or organs. Early Coptic Christians believed this sign to be associated with death and resurrection (Tedros, and Malaty, 1993:10). The eye of Horus was an important symbol associated with life and death, common in Roman and Greek culture (Edward, 2019:5). The Jews were

⁹ In Satzinger's citation, the page number is not page number, it is slide number.

skilled in ancient magic and influenced the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, Moses was recognized as the greatest magician in the region and widely imitated, and some ancient Christian magical practices and symbols were adapted from Jewish culture (Dosoo, 2019:4). The main actors of ancient Egyptian amulet and talismans production were monks and the current surviving talismans were prepared by monks (Frankfurter, 2017:498). Coptic talismans were prepared for two purposes; the former were amulets for one-time use by individuals for specific purposes, the latter concerns 'master spells' for multipurpose utilization (Vliet, 2019:332), similar talisman art practices are common in Ethiopia. The analogy between Ethiopian and Coptic magical practices involves common symbols and practices.

Magical scrolls were not limited to Copts but were common among Greeks and Jews living in Egypt. Before the coming of Christianity, texts from the psalms were used as amulets for protective purposes (Dosoo, 2019:5). In the course of Islamic influence on Coptic magical practices increased, from the 8th - 9th century's Coptic magical texts used Arabic letters and symbols. Similarly Ethiopian talismanic art was influenced by Jewish, Arabic, and Syrian sources.

2.9. Astrological symbols

The dictionary meaning of astrology is "*the study of position of stars and movements of the planets in the belief that they influence human affairs*" (Oxford Dictionary 2020 edition). It is the influence of zodiac symbols on human life and activity based on the date of birth. It is generally considered that the origins of astrology were associated with the ancient Babylonians or Chaldeans, and go back to 3000 BC (Gonzalez-Wippler, 1991:53). Astrology expanded and was widely accepted during the Middle Ages, developing into the tradition of horoscopes i.e. predictions based on star signs. There are 12 symbols in astrological systems, ruled by the 12 planets of the Babylonian period. Each ruled by assigned planets: Aries by Mars, Leo by the sun, Pisces by Neptune, and so on (Ibid: 57). Furthermore, each month has representative names and symbols. Numbers and colors are symbolic in ancient amulets and talismans, contributing to their special power. For example white for virginity, blue for marriage, and yellow for good luck. Colors can be associated with zodiacal symbols, Mars is symbolized by a red, Venus by green, and gold represents the sun.

Colors also have positive and negative connotations; violet, blue, red, yellow, and green are considered good, whereas black, orange, and brown are associated with misfortune (Budge, 1968:487).

Numbers constitute a type of language and means of communication used to transfer messages (Ibid: 77-78), having different values in different cultures. The Babylonians assigned numbers from one to sixty to their gods. Three, nine, and twelve are associated with magical activities in Ancient Greece and Rome. The number 7 is sacred in ancient Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian and Indian cultures (Ibid: 431-433). Numbers have negative and positive values in ancient cultures, in Egypt, number one symbolize gods such as Ammon and Ra, the number 3 reflected in the sides of the pyramid had magical power symbolizing the “Almighty” (Ibid: 81). In Babylonian culture numbers like three, four, five, seven, and fifteen are considered blessed. Number systems are at the basis of the Jewish mystical books such as the Zohar and Kabbalah, and the significance of the numbers 3 and 7 have influenced Ethiopian as well as Coptic culture.

Generally astrology is the concept of esoteric wisdom based on the position of zodiac symbols associated with human life. However the concept of astrology is similar, its interpretation, symbols and representation are different due to diversified cultural adaptations in Ethiopia, Egypt, Arab and Jew culture.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology, techniques of sampling, interview guidelines, ethical considerations, limitations of the research, data analysis process, and general structure of the thesis. It is the overall structure of the thesis organization and format.

1.1. Research design

The research design is ethnographical approach focused on comparing the general, symbolical, and mystical strategies used by Coptic and Ethiopian Christian talisman arts and their characteristics, answering questions about visual representations, secret symbols, and languages. The study involved active participants such as talisman makers, researchers, artists, and EOTC clergy. The two traditions share common stylistically similar symbols yet also have their indigenous language of talisman art. So this study investigates the common culture, influences, basic similarities, and differences from different perspectives.

1.2. Research method

This study is based on purely qualitative research methods, including observation in museums and talisman art studios, document analysis in parchments and codex from IES and ENAA libraries and in-depth informant interviews with *Däbtäras* and experts in Ethiopia and Egypt. The in-depth informant interview facilitates a profound exploration of experts' ideas; Enabling gaining insights concerning indigenous knowledge systems.

1.3. Research sample and sampling method

This research was conducted by gathering information from primary and secondary sources in interviewing and field observation in Ethiopia and Coptic talisman visual arts. Samplings were used from selective places and experts, involving the different regions of Ethiopia, emphasizing the North and Addis Ababa which are centers of Orthodox Christian culture and scroll making. The researcher selected 24 informants both in Ethiopian and Egypt. Ethiopian interviewees were categorized into three groups: *Däbtäras* minor clergy functioning as indigenous scroll makers, secondly contemporary talisman artists, and thirdly EOTC clergies. *Däbtäras*' were selected from

different areas, data gathering focused in *Gojjam*, *Gondär*, and *Tegray*. Of the 24 informants; five were Coptic experts abroad. The Ethiopian experts and informants were from different educational backgrounds and regions, including 2 artists, 13 scroll makers or *Däbtäras*, 4 from the EOTC church.

3.4. Methods of data collection

The data collection was conducted from primary and secondary sources. Both the Ethiopian and Coptic talisman art experts' responses and documents were analyzed deeply.

3.4.1. Primary data collection methods

The primary data collection methods included field observation and interviews. Furthermore, observations were held in talismanic art collections in museums, manuscripts, indigenous talisman makers (*Däbtäras*), contemporary modern talisman artists' studios in different parts of Ethiopia. The observation also included different regions and communities in Ethiopia (especially north and central Ethiopia), and Coptic experts about their talismanic art styles and symbols. The Coptic talisman experts' interviews were held online in Skype and email exchanges. Most images are captured during my field observation especially from IES library, Merigeta Genente Alemu, Samson Kebede's talisman art exhibition and Henok Melkamzer's studio at *Entoto* and *Korschi Dosoo* articles. These images were selected due to its visual representations, colors and styles.

3.4.1.1. Interview

Interviews took place close to or in the interviewee's place of residence or work, according to previously agreed time, place, and procedures. In-depth informant interviewees were talisman experts in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt. In-depth interviews were personal, flexible, and facilitated to understand emotions, feelings, and approaches and thus gaining insight into esoteric wisdom and its context. Two informants were contemporary talisman painters from Addis Ababa and graduated the university art school and using fine art techniques. Five informants were *Däbtäras* with the title of '*Märegëta*', *i.e.* highly educated minor clergy who lead church ceremonies. Three informants were experts of indigenous medicine in addition to talisman work since they both concern therapeutic practices that are interconnected. Other informants were

talisman EOTC church priests knowledgeable about talisman arts, and able to explain the attitude of the Church to magic scrolls. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, contacts with five leading Coptic experts took place by email and social media.

3.4.1.2. Field observation

In the course of field observation, the researcher used appropriate materials to capture momentary insights, including photo cameras, sound recorder, sketch book, and notebooks, etc. Images of Scrolls were gathered during visits to practitioners and art exhibitions, while associated rituals were recorded in audio and video facilitating analysis in locations such as *Gojjam*, *Gondär*, *Awı*, and Addis Ababa. Efforts were made to communicate with those coming to the *Däbtäras* for therapy. The first field observation was held at talisman art exhibitions, art studios, and galleries in Addis Ababa. Attendance at *Samson Käbäde's* art exhibitions (February 2020) facilitated communication with the artists and audiences; *Hènok Mälkämerzär Yihun's* studio at *Enfofo* was also an important place of encounter. The third observation was also held from my advisor's talisman painting collections in his home. The observation was also conducted at the important collections of the IES (Institute of Ethiopian Studies) Ethnographic Museum at *Sedest Kilo*, and the Ethiopian National Archives Agency (ENAA).

3.4.2. Secondary data collection method

The secondary data included journals, books, websites, and archives both in Ethiopia and abroad (Egypt and other places). Ethiopian esoteric traditions were passed on orally; consequently, oral narratives were an important source of data. The internet is also an important source for data collection, especially concerning Egyptian esoteric art. Broadcast outputs, email exchanges, and websites were also important secondary data sources.

The Coptic Church resources are more available than Ethiopian ones in European universities and Egyptology research centers and more accessible on websites. Secondary data was collected from these platforms. Mythological elements constitute an important aspect of both Coptic and Ethiopian talismanic traditions, being passed on informally.

3.4.2.1. Document analysis

Document analyses were held in Ethiopian manuscripts and archives from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library, Ethiopian National Archives Agency, books, magazines, and personal collections. Documentary movies about talisman arts, photograph exhibitions, online websites, university databases, and diaries were also sources of secondary data.

Ethiopian talisman arts are documented as parchment strips (scrolls) and codex, 20 *Branna* magic scrolls, and talismans were observed at IES museums and the ENAA library. The scrolls were long sometimes 1m in length, normally including talisman pictures, decoration/*Häräg*, and careful texts, analyzed both concerning Ethiopian and Egyptian sources.

3.5. Data analysis

The data analysis involves a thematic analysis of Ethiopia and Coptic talisman art. After the data gathering process completed from informants' interview and document analysis, the data was combined thematically. The first step consists of organizing all primary and secondary data – including accumulation, filtering and coding according to its type. The discussion of data being orientated towards establishing findings and achieve research objectives.

During field observation, audio records, videos, photographs, sketches, and notes were documented on Ethiopian talismans. All these documents were transcribed into word documents. Ethiopian informants were interviewed in Amharic and the Coptic informants in English, and then translated where necessary. During field observations, photographs and videos were recorded and subsequently edited for clarity, and categorized into Ethiopian and Coptic groups and then sub-themes. Finally, detailed analysis filtered the data focusing on main concepts, facilitating comparative analysis subject to the proper objectives.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues constituted important considerations during the data collection process, with the use of letters from the university and briefing of the informants, clearing the way for positive interaction between the researcher and participants. However, social stigma and hesitation concerning the topic of magic and esoteric practices were a hindrance to the free sharing of information. Even some *Däbtäras* were not able to talk freely regarding *Tälsäm* due to its secretive aspect, particularly in *Gojjam*. Knowledge about esoteric activities can cause being ostracized, thus much discretion was required. And this constituted one aspect of ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter examines and makes comparison between Ethiopian and Coptic talisman art culture. The discussion included mainly data from my field observation in talisman collections and practitioners' work place, in-depth interviews with talisman experts, document analysis from manuscripts and collections in museums, and mythologies. Initially the discussion explores the basic characteristics of Ethiopian and Coptic independently. Finally the comparison would be taken place based on the findings of the two countries' talisman art culture, their common characteristics, and basic differences.

4.1. Types of Talisman Arts in Ethiopia

Talismans are primarily classified according to their functions, such as healing, causing romantic attraction, protection, divination, astronomy, and other secret purposes. Magical arts in terms of visual form grouped into four i.e. representational images, secret signs, an illustration of texts, and geometrical images (Chernetsov, 2006:191). This paper focuses on these visual representations of talisman artworks rather than their purpose or ritual activities.

4.1.1. Visual Representations in Ethiopian Talisman arts

Visual representation is a means of expression once idea in symbols, images, text, or color to communicate and recognize easily or secretly (Esaak, 2018:1). It helps to make things clear and easily understandable. Talisman art expresses esoteric wisdom through abstract images, symbols, texts, and secret codes are common in Ethiopian, Coptic, Arab, and Hebrew traditions. In Ethiopia talismans images often have allegoric interpretations and significance (Mercier, 1997:44). Talisman in Ethiopia is broad and difficult to grasp the concept with its characteristics. Ethiopian talismans have five basic elements: letters (Geèz letters), numbers, portrait (*መለክ*), pattern (*Häräg*), and color. There are also links with the 13 months of the Ethiopian calendar.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Mäläsä Tīlaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.*

1. **Letters**- such as ሁ-ግእዝ፡ ሁ-ካእብ፡ ሂ-ሳልሰ፡ ሃ-ራብ፡ ሄ-አምሰ፡ ህ-ሳድሰ፡ ሆ-ሳብ constitutes talismans with crucial symbolic value.
2. **Häräg**- or illumination defines patterns beginning from a point, developing into a line and constituting forms often with specific names and special meaning combined with colors it can have the power to predict the future.
3. **Color**- there are 7 basic colors in the talisman. These colors prepare from plants and soil from the surrounding materials.
4. **Number**- is a basic formula in talisman art to symbolize nature. Ethiopian talisman number is reasonable that begins from 1 (not from 0).
5. **Portrait**- is a facial expression that can be human, animal, Devine, or angle faces.

Each month of the Ethiopian calendar has its face, talisman, sign, and number. Many types of Ethiopian talismans can be classified according to their purpose and instructions/ገቢር. It includes artistic compositions, colors, secret names of God or *Hebusem/ህቡአ-ሰም*, numbers, and tables (Chernrtsov, 2006:192). Drawings and rituals follow basic instructions, missing or added irrelevant elements would make the talismans less effective, manuals including instructions and pictures exist parallel to scrolls.¹¹ The text *Eṣä Däbdabé/እጽ-ደብዳቤ* which lists plants for medicine and their procedure does not include images regularly. A talisman practitioner uses a ritual process, involving mental preparation, and recitation of prayers, connecting the image with magical names to expel evil spirits.

4.1.1.1. Demonic Characters in Ethiopian Talisman

Talismans in its visual forms can be positive or negative dedications. Demonic representations are classified into two according to their activities. *Mälaektä ṣelemät/መላእክተ-ጸልመት* is an Angel [demon] sent to kill evil people or spirits, always sent by God not by the devil to punishment. *Mälaektä ṣelemät* constitutes horrible characters – the scourge of God. Demons are always depicted negatively especially those not carrying out the orders of God.¹²

¹¹ Mäläsä Ṭilaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.

¹² Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020,

Mälkea-Satnaèl/መልክላ ሳጥናኤል is a miracle book similar to other miracle books used by *Däbtäras*.¹³ It contains a hierarchy of demons starting from *Säṭnaèl* at the top, his son *ṭebleyaqos* and finally *Säyṭans*.¹⁴ This hierarchy is important proportionally that *Saṭnaèl* always being bigger than other *Säyṭans*/demons. Evil characters are depicted in profile as in iconography paintings in EOTC.

“The Devil is represented as a huge black man, with large fiery eyes and terrible teeth, an enormously long body and long thin legs, and paws with claws. He has a pair of horns and long tail, while lesser fiends performing his will have animals' heads and tails; and like their master, and overpoweringly filthy smell, by which their comings and goings could be detected.” (Budge, 1968:473).

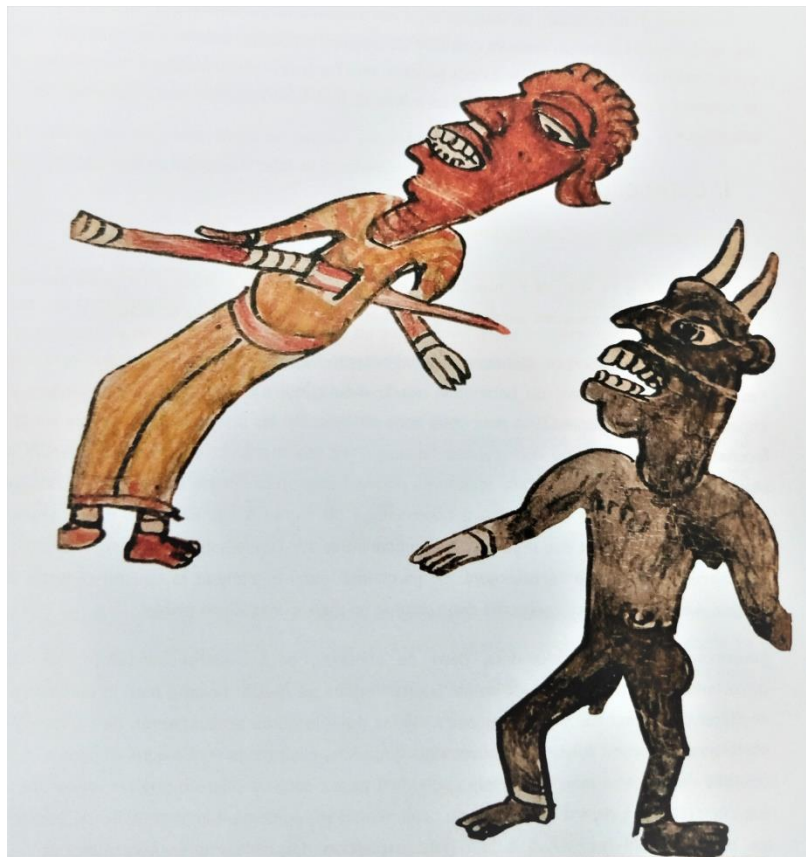


Figure 4.1: Demonic characters in Ethiopian talismans

Photo credit: Caroline Bedos's book titled *Diplome De Restaurateur Du Patrimoine* page 103, at Paris museum

¹³ Gasten Dekenson (2019). *Magic, Angelology and Demonology, Scrolls, Enoch, Intercultural Exchange, Ethiopian Orthodoxy*, Radio interview with *The Modern Hermeticist* held Nov 14, 2019, retrieved from YouTube.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

This representation of the devil is familiar in Ethiopian talismans, reflecting the ugliness of the devil as in Ethiopian iconography. Such representations of devil characters are always uniquely negative inspiring horror and dark or dull in color. This association of devilish characters in black color may be the impacts from the oriental and occidental mentality of the western ideology.

4.1.1.2. Representation of Human Figures in Ethiopian Talisman

Concerning figure representations, humans, angels, saints, and demon figures are represented stylistically. In protective scrolls, the seven archangels Michael, Gabriel, and others draw with swords are illustrated at the beginning and end of scrolls (Wesley, 2017:9). Further images are added depending on the type of scroll. Solomon, Alexander, Eyob and other Ethiopian saints will be depicted in addition to protective angles.

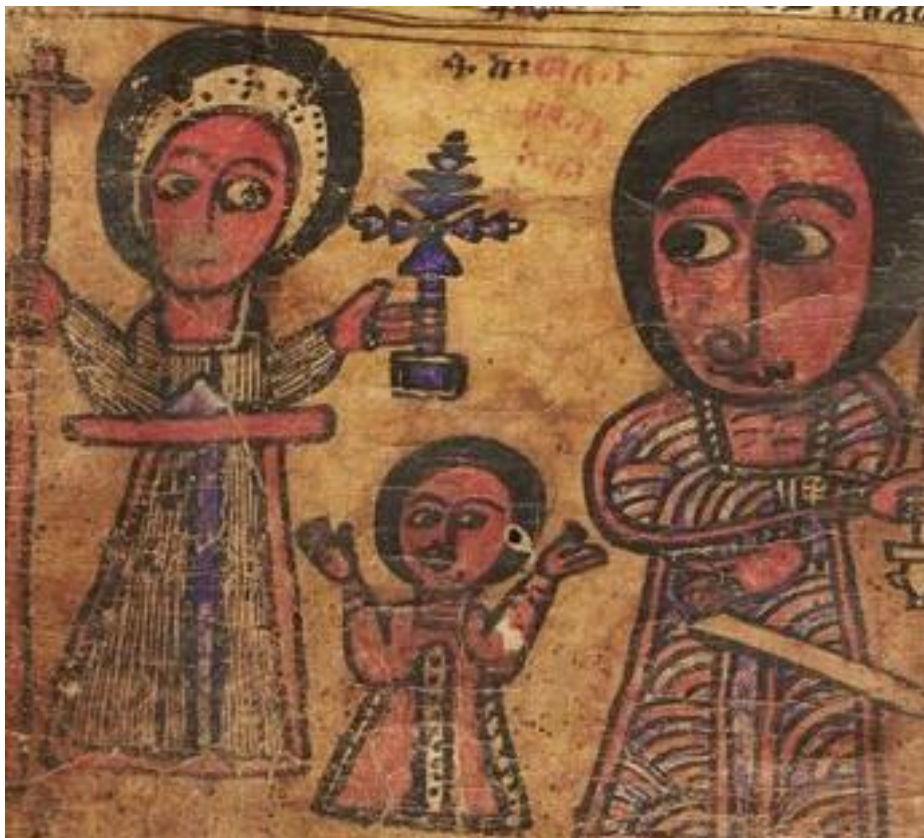


Figure 4.2 human figures in Ethiopian scroll
Image credit; Selam Semrete Selassie

Face [portrait] is a very important aspect of Ethiopian talismans. Portraits and figures in Ethiopian talismans are King Solomon, Alexander, and Ethiopian saints. Portraits' in talismans reach approximately up to 500 (male and female faces) including faces of humans, angles, demons stylistically.¹⁵

Ethiopian talisman figures have a power as hypnotisms¹⁶ in combination with color and motives. Hypnotisms in talisman figures have a power on when concentration, imagination and emotions are combined together. After the scroll is done by Däbtära, the owner of the scroll orders to concentrate on figures for two or three days when he sleep or weak up.

4.1.1.3. Animal Representations in Ethiopian Talisman

Animal representations in Ethiopian talismans related to Christian symbolism. Animals such as lions, Chita, serpents, doves, sheep, and eagles are used symbolically as Christian talismans. Other human figures and saints may also be depicted according to their importance including favored people. Property talismans often depict Eyob as a symbol of a wealthy person.

¹⁵ Mäläsä Ṭilaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.

¹⁶ Abebaw Ayalew, interview with Fana Television about talisman arts, April, 2020



Figure 4.3. “Aba Samuel of Waldeba” Animal representations in Ethiopian talisman
 Photo credit; Jacques Mercier

Ethiopian talismans represent serpents for different types of talismans. In the *gädel/vita* of *Abunä Zäraburuk*, and *Mälkea Raguèl* depicts the serpent as a protective talisman looking after the world named *Bähèmoth* and *Lèwatan*.¹⁷ In the book of *Mälkea Raguèl*, the two serpents i.e. male and female relate to circular and rectangular shapes indicating the end of the world when the two serpents’ tongues meet each other or one serpent swallows the other. The serpent representation is associated with Saint *Abunä Zära Buruk of Gish Abay* (source of the Blue Nile).

¹⁷ *Dämälash Bäqälu*, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020



Figure 4.4A

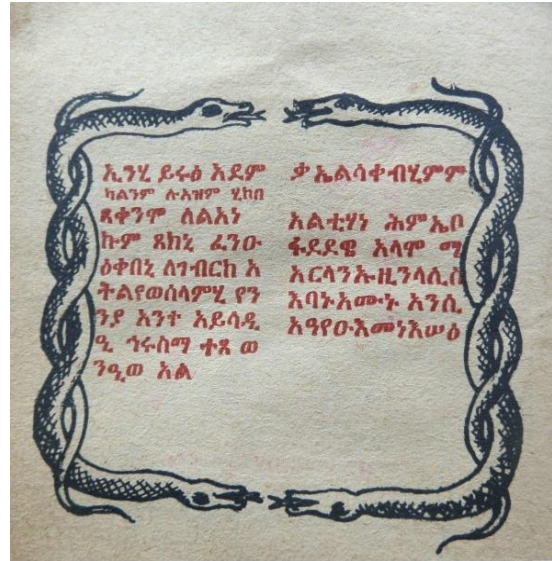


Figure 4.4B

Figure 4.4A: Lewatan and Behemot image taken from the book of Jacque Mercier, *Art heal image as medicine in Ethiopia*, published in 1997.

Figure 4.4B: Bèhemoth and Lèwatan images from the book of Mälkea Raguèl from Märigèta Yohannis Zäwongèl at Gusha Giworgis church (Awi Zone)

Another Christian talisman is the lamb of God, symbolizing Christ known as the *Näwa Bägeu* associated with goodwill, it is often depicted holding a cross representing the passion of Christ.

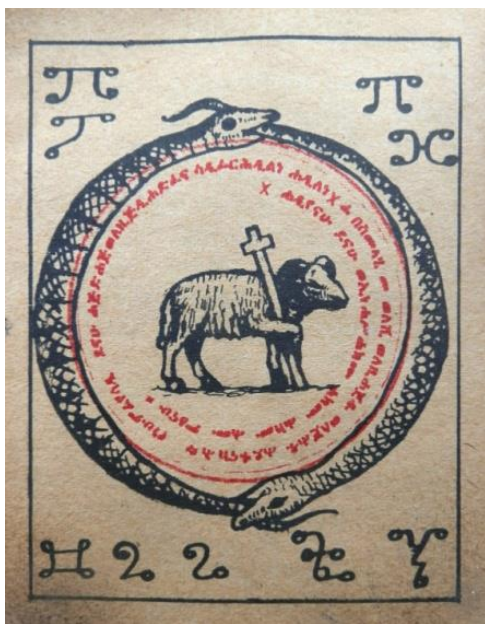


Figure 4.5: Näwä beguw pictures from the book of 'Mälkea Räguel'
From Meigeta Yohannis Zäwongel at Gusha Giworgis church (Awi Zone)

Birds in manuscripts represent the supernatural and like flowers are associated with the Holy Spirit and Heaven. *Urzela* is a demon represented as a dragon that kills women and children in the womb; she was in turn killed by *Susenyos*. The lion is a messianic symbol (i.e. Lion of the Tribe of Juda) symbolizing royal honor and glory; it also served as a mount for *St. Aba Samuel of Waldeba*.¹⁸

4.1.1.4. Eyes in Ethiopian Talisman

“The eye represents beauty; it is also powerful, even death-dealing” (Mrecier, 1997:94). I observed different eye styles and shapes in scrolls and talisman paintings, including eyes of God, Angels, demons, and animals. The picture in figure 4.5 is my sketch derived from the observations of different talisman images. Eyes in talismans help to hypnotize during the healing process. Eyes in Ethiopian talisman creates fear and terror when concentration and deep looking during the ritual process.

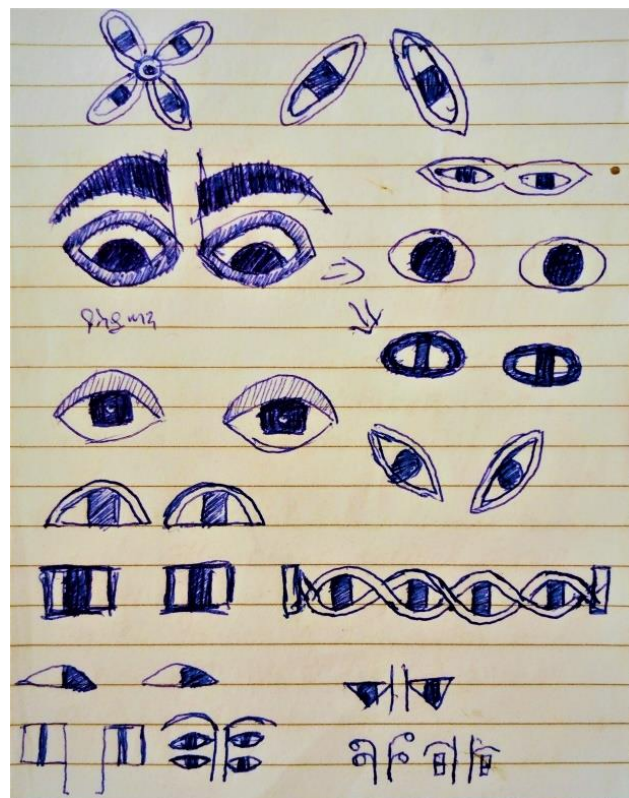


Figure 4.6: Eyes in talismans sketched by the researcher from field observations and parchments. These eyes are represented human, angel, demon, animal and eye of God.

¹⁸ Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020

An Ethiopian proverb says ‘ሰይጣንን ሰይጣን ያውጣዋል’ (demons drive out demons). Based on this tradition, the demonic eye seems to cause other demons to flee (Mercie, 1997:95). Each eye in a talisman is represented stylistically.¹⁹ Eyes are among the most powerful symbols in Ethiopian talisman tradition. The talisman eyes represent the powerful eyes of God/አይነቲሁ ለአግዚአብሔር which chase away evil spirits.²⁰The image of አይነ-ሮግብ talisman is dominated by eyes.



Figure 4.7. Depiction of eyes on prayer against evil eye scroll
Photo credit; tree frog Creative website retrieved from Google

¹⁹ Zämänu Häddis, talisman art expert and practitioner, informant interview at Arba Micnch University, July 21, 2020.

²⁰ Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020

4.1.1.5. Secret Symbols in Ethiopian Talisman

Talismanic wisdom is written in different languages including Geez, Copt, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, etc. When Muslim practitioner does a talisman art he strained to associate with his religion to get acceptance from the community. The Ethiopian *Däbtärä* assimilated many elements from Ethiopian Orthodox Church iconographic styles such as big eyes, angelic and demonic character or portraits, and the color is almost identical. Also, the assimilation of Christian motifs is found in Ethiopian magical arts. This includes magical literature in geez language (Chernetsov, 2006:199). Unknown symbols/*characters* are found in Ethiopian talismans, according to *Mäläsä Tilaye* commonly referred to as ማእሰር/*maeser*. These secret signs are also found in Coptic, Arab, and Jewish Kabala talismans. Still these symbols are very important in Ethiopian talismans without defined meaning as well as function and it needs further research and investigation.

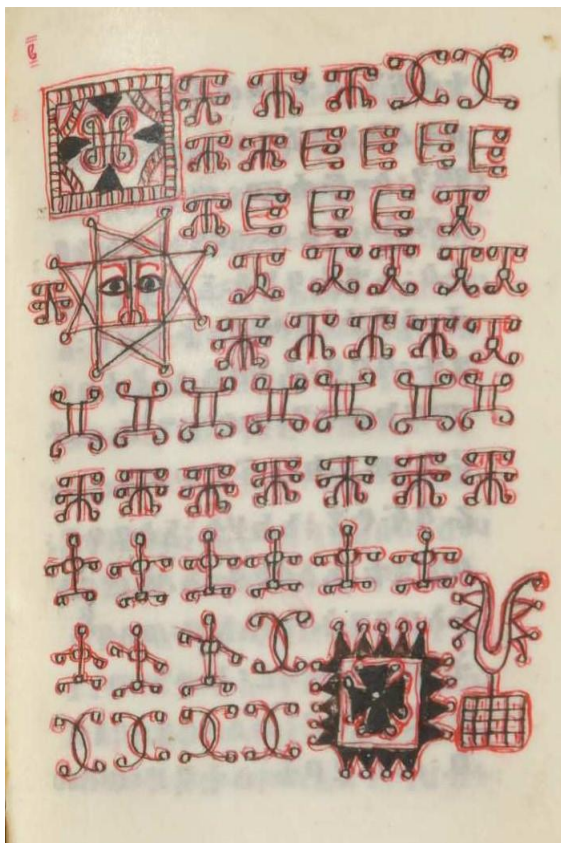


Figure 4.8A

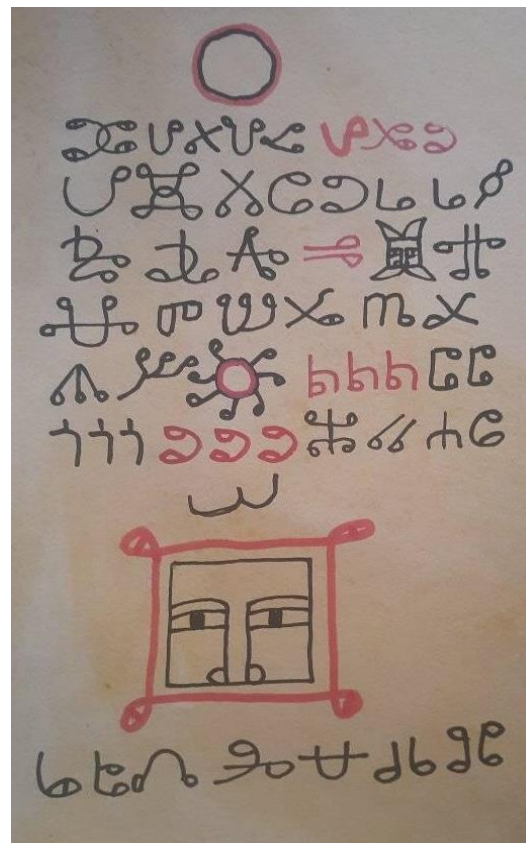


Figure 4.8B

Image 4.8A, unknown symbols in Ethiopian talismans from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies museum

Image credit; IES Museum

Figure 4.8B, Hénok Mälkämerz Yihun's talisman symbols in his studio

Image credit Henok Melkamzer Yihun

Ethiopian talisman arts are not limited to scrolls and manuscripts, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibälä have talismans such as the eight-pointed cross named ‘ሃውዲ-መስቀል’, there are also symbols similar to ‘swastikas’ symbolizing energy.²¹ Crosses are frequently represented in talismans. These symbols sometimes used as a graphic decoration or pattern in talismans. These codes can be drawn in free spaces of scrolls and talismans repeatedly based on its instruction.²²

4.1.1.6. Secret names in talismans

The word *Asmat/አስማት* in Geez means ‘a collection of names’ or the plural form of name. They are considered to have power in the universe and associated informally with magical activities and divination. Secret names of God are the unknown names shown in talisman drawings (Mercier, 1997:51). God has an unlimited number of names, more than the number of stars in the sky or the grains of sand on earth. These names are important for healing purposes and are used in combination with images. They are believed to cause demons to automatically leave people, written on scrolls and paintings they include: ጌርሻማኤል፣ ተከቱኤል፣ አፍሊሹም፣ ኘኘኘኘኘ፣ ዠዠዠዠዠ፣ etc. There are local Demonic names like ጋኔን, ውሉጋ, ቆናጭር, ጥላ ዎጊ, etc. Some paralleling Coptic, Arabic and Syriac terms like ሰይጣን as *shaytan*, ባርያ as *Legion*, ጋኔን as a demon, ቡዳ as evil eye/shadow eye.²³

Powerful names include the hidden names of God/Allah, angels, demons, and minerals. Islam has 99 beautiful names of Allah, in Judaism, there are 77 sacred names of Yahweh but in Ethiopia, the number of magical names of God is not clearly defined. Names and secret symbols constitute codes, which cannot be translated but are used as passwords to protect the secret of talismans.²⁴

²¹ Mäläsä Tilaye, talisman art expert at Finote Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.

²² Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 202

²³ Gasten Dekenson (2019). *Magic, Angelology and Daemonology, Scrolls, Enoch, Intercultural Exchange, Ethiopian Orthodoxy*, Radio interview with *The Modern Hermeticist* held Nov 14, 2019, retrieved from YouTube.

²⁴ Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020

4.1.1.7. Color representations in Ethiopian talisman art

Red and black were popular colors in early talismans. But the current talisman arts in scrolls and canvas paintings include blue, green, violet, ocher, yellow, orange, and brown colors.²⁵ Colors are prepared from the surrounding environment; plants, fruit, pulses, and colored soils. Talisman colors are mainly ‘bright’ mixed with holy water/ *ፀብል* to make the healing process real.²⁶

the names of God, angels, baptism name, and secret codes are often written in red, in contrast to the normal black pigment, red bold characters are called ‘*Nägash Sem/ነጋሽ ስም*’ (Mercier, 1979:16). Such traditions are common to Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahdo* Church manuscripts.

4.1.1.8. Numerical Representation

Numbers in Ethiopian talisman are symbolic and an element of the artwork, especially numerals 1-10 which have their talisman,²⁷ three, five, seven, and ten beings of most significance.²⁸ In astrology each 33 Geez letters have symbolic numbers. For example ሀ-1፣ ለ-2፣ ሐ-3፣ መ-4፣ ሰ-7፣ ቀ-8፣ ቡ-9፣ ተ-10፣ ነ-30፣ አ-40፣ ተ-50፣ ወ-60፣ ዘ-80፣ የ-90፣ ደ-100፣ ገ-200፣ ቀ-300፣ ጸ-400፣ ጸ-500፣ ፈ-700፣ ፐ-800. In Christianity including the EOTC three represents the trinity, five and seven perfection or spirituality, similar ideas are found in Coptic, Hebrew, and Islamic traditions. Talisman instructions require repetition of symbols, shapes, forms, and decorations, words may be repeated 7, 12, or 33 times. Samson exhibited 33 paintings in his exhibition purposely. Number 33 is mysterious in talismans in the world. The number of years of the life of Jesus Christ on earth was 33, or a third of the 99 names of Allah. Number 33 in the world is considered a magical number including latitude and longitude 33.²⁹

4.1.1.9. Non-figurative compositions

None figurative elements and decorations are familiar in Ethiopian iconography, manuscripts, and talisman arts, including decorative frames called *Häräg/ሃርግ* i.e. illumination, with their principles, instructions, and types. *Henok* describes *Häräg* as not merely decoration, but as symbolic constituting talisman in itself. Each talisman symbol

²⁵ *Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020*

²⁶ *Mäläsä Ṭilaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020*

²⁹ *Samson Kübädä, talisman art painter, informant interview at Addis Ababa, July 17, 2020*

has its own appropriate *Häräg* in his artwork, which functions as decoration. *Hènok Mälkamzär* and *Samson Kåbådä*'s works are highly decorative and full of *Häräg* combined with symbols. The *Häräg* is apparent in Figure 4.8; it is not merely decoration but also symbolic constituting talisman in itself.



*Figure 4.9A: Häreġ talisman painting on canvas
Hènok Mälkamzär Yihun - art work
Photo captured by the researcher*



Figure 4.10B: Häräg on parchment

Image credit; Anna Gawronska

4.1.1.9.1. Geometrical Shapes in Talismans

Many scrolls in Ethiopia are attributed to King Solomon, including the seal of Solomon, Net of Solomon, and the ring of Solomon. Such talismans were used to bind demons/ማእረ-አጋንንት to exorcise evil spirits from the sick, much mythology relates to Solomon and his wisdom (Mercier, 1979:19) (Wesley, 2017:10).

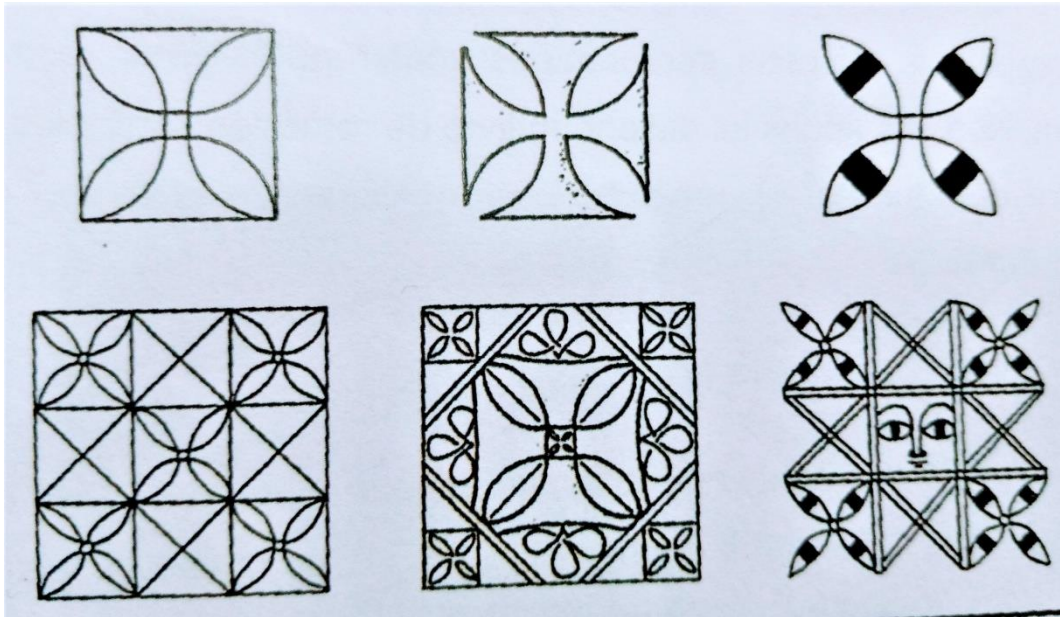


Figure 4.11: geometrical talismans in diagrams

Image credit: Jacque Mercier (1979). *Ethiopian magic scroll*, page 23

King Solomon burned the demon ‘*Subriyan*’ after he took his ring. The Solomonic talismans are usually geometric rectangular shapes that symbolize binding the demons from the four directions.³⁰ Märbäbtä Solomon talismans are rectangular shapes with eight-pointed tips, with human portraits, eyes, or patterns at the center. The basic compositions of Solomon’s talismans are occasionally seen in Arabic talismans. Solomon’s talismans can be reshuffled through more than 360 types’ of the ‘Märbäbtä Solomon’ category³¹ (Mercier, 1979:56). Märbäbtä Solomon talismans in Arab and Coptic context differ in style and name i.e. five, six, seven, and eight-pointed star talismans are found with different compositions.

³⁰ Dämälash Bäqälu, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, July 18, 2020

³¹ Zämenu Hädis made his MA thesis in märbäbtä Solomon talisman. He discovered 360 types of images under Märbäbtä Solomon category.



Figure 4.12: *märbäbtä* Solomon talisman in parchment codex

Image credit; image credit Institute of Ethiopian studies museum, code IES.ms. 1082

4.1.2. Astrological symbols in Ethiopian talisman art

Astrology connects human lives with the stars and predictions for the future. There are astrological symbols for each month, in Ethiopia 13 including *Pägume* the 13th month. The astrological concept including 12 names of the stars (Shärtan, Gäwz, Säwer, Asäd...) ³² derived from Arabic talismans but adapted to Ethiopian culture. Copts emphasize a person and his/her father to count horoscope, while Ethiopian astrology is based on a person and his/her mother. There is an Ethiopian proverb that says “እናትነት እውነት ነው አባትነት እምነት ነው”. The Coptic astrology counting system is based on their Fathers name. But the Ethiopian astrology magnifies the matriarchal line than the patriarchal line of the counting system. ³³

³² These names are Arabic names of animals and objects still functioning in talisman arts

³³ Mäläsä Ṭilaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010.

Even though the concept and names are similar, its principles are different. The Ethiopian experts are using the *Geez* alphabets to calculate the type of horoscope. In the Ethiopian alphabet from *ሀ-ፒ* there are 33 letters. Each letter has a symbolic number. All calculation is based on these *Geez* alphabets.

Even though it seems similar to other countries' astrology system, the Ethiopian style is unique in many criteria's. There are many categories of Ethiopian astrology like *häsbe kifel*, *hasäbe sänasel* and *häsabä edel*, and so on.³⁴The table below shows the characteristics of 12 stars with assigned directions. Based on these characteristics the experts predict an individual's horoscope.

	Names of Astrology	Assigned month	Assigned Direction	Characteristics
1	<i>Mèzan</i>	September	North	Wind
	<i>Gäwez</i>	May		
	<i>Dälawi</i>	January		
2	<i>Akrab</i>	October	South	Water
	<i>Shärtan</i>	June		
	<i>Hut</i>	February		
3	<i>Qäwes</i>	December	East	Fire
	<i>Asäd</i>	July		
	<i>Hämäl</i>	March		
4	<i>Jädi</i>	November	West	Earth
	<i>Sanbula</i>	August		
	<i>Säwer</i>	April		

Table 4.1, astrological names, characteristics and represented direction

The Ethiopian astrological system is adapted to its culture, every 12 stars have their almanac classified by 16 moons, and orientated to the four directions. Aspects of the system are depicted differently, for purposes like acquiring property, trade, etc. Each classification is symbolized in Ethiopian lakes, rivers, and places. ባህረ-ጣና፣ ባህረ-አዋሽ፣ ባህረ-ኤጥን፣ ባህረ-ዝዋይ and other 16 large rivers and lakes are symbolized in Ethiopian astrology as shown in figure 4.13. This kind of adaptations makes Ethiopian talisman arts unique and highly interconnected with the local culture.

³⁴ *Zämänu Häddis, talisman art expert and practitioner, informant interview at Arba Mich University, July 21, 2020.*

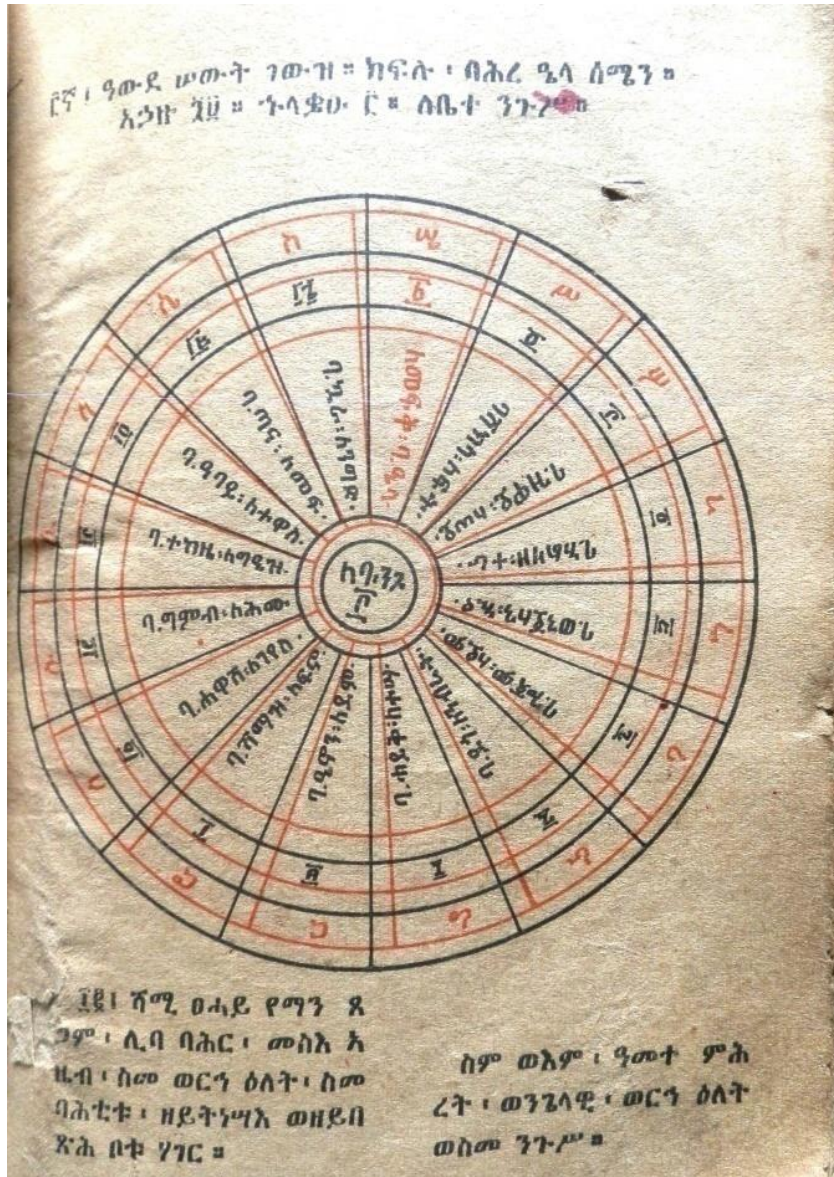


Figure 4.13: talisman from Awädä Nägäst that includes 16 moons in each star. Moons represented by ethiopian rivers and places.

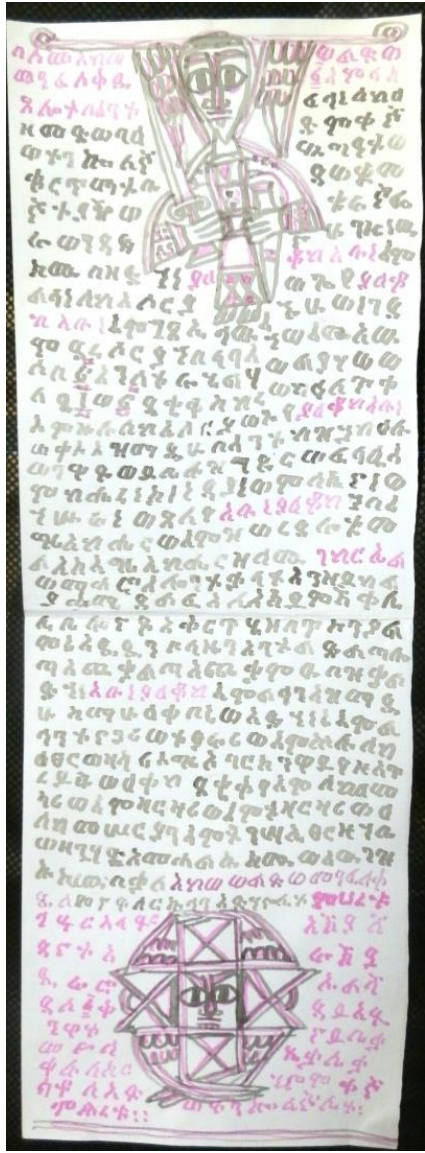


Figure 4.14: protective scroll done by Märegëta Gëtenät Alämu for me at Addis qdam (Awi zone)

This protective scroll was made by Gènete Alämu for me at Addis Qdam (Awi zone). He first asked me and my mother’s names and then calculated my horoscope. He told me that my star is *Säwer*. Based on my star, he prepared this scroll and told me my future, appropriate profession and age of death. Finally, he gave me this protective scroll and I paid 230 Ethiopian birrs for his services.

4.1.3. Contemporary Talisman Arts in Ethiopia

Unlike the early talisman arts, the contemporary talisman art evolving in to modern fine art techniques. Talisman arts developed from codex and scrolls to canvas paintings, becoming part of the contemporary fine arts scene. Unique compositions, highly colorful paintings and conceptual talisman ideas are practicing professional painters and self-trained talisman painters. *Hènock Mälkamzär* and *Samson Käbädä*'s Talsäm art works on canvas were presented at art exhibitions in 2018 and 2020 respectively. *Hènok* and *Samson's* artworks, materials, and concepts are mixed with 'modern art' techniques, sometimes appearing to be 'experimental arts' as seen in figure 15, or a highly 'modern art style'. Talisman symbols are derived from indigenous talismans but the style and techniques of paintings are quite different.



Figure4.15: Experimental talisman paintings

Photo credit: Henok Melkamzer Yihun

Samson used new style ‘glazing techniques’ with colorful, unique composition, material selection and concepts are changed into ‘fine art styles’ based on the early talisman motives. Samson’s paintings are also layered (having a tinted background and hot foreground), whereas the earliest talismans were flat and linear.



Figure 4.16: *tälisäm* painting on canvas

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Photo credit: Samson Käbädä, taken from his official page

The *Säbdeät*/ሰብዳኦት figures are depicted in talisman paintings. ‘Säbdeat’ is half fox and half-human, similar to pharaonic deity images.

In *Hènok*’s painting Figure 4.16, the four evangelists are represented by four faces: human, angel, an eagle, and cow,³⁵ reflecting EOTC trinity iconography style in talisman form (Mercier, 1997:57). The four living creatures always surround the image of the trinity as in Ethiopian iconography; they are also represented in triangular form. Both *Samson* and *Hènok*’s paintings have the concept of hypnotisms. Hypnotism has a power to give fear and terror our mind due to having complex detail and abstraction. Hot and

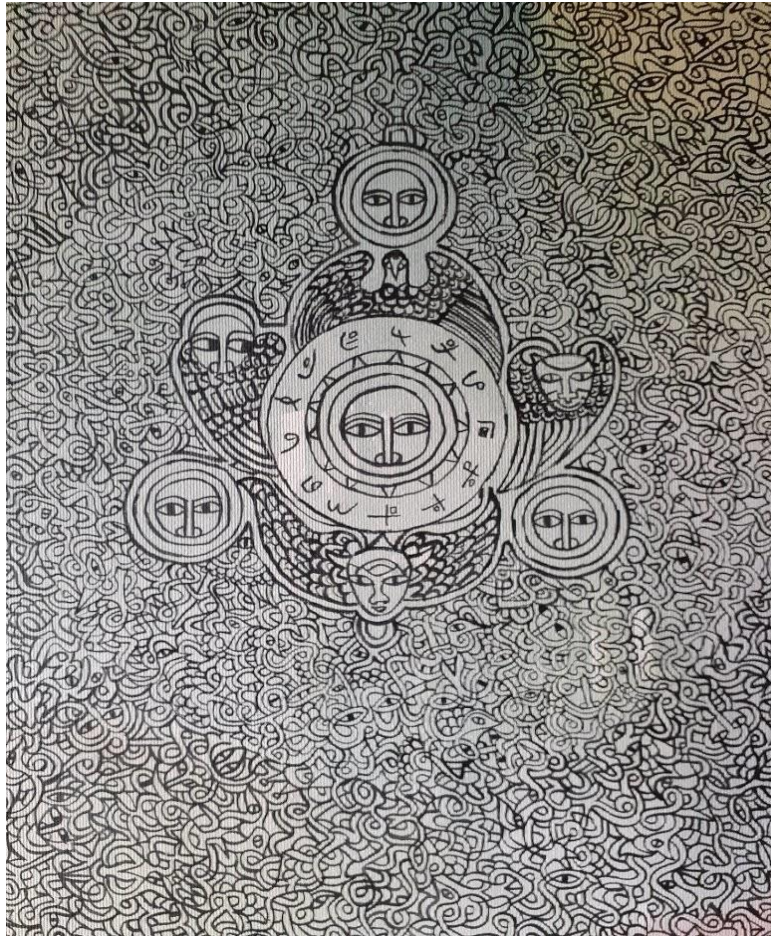
³⁵ Zämänu Häddis, talisman art expert and practitioner, informant interview at Arba Minch University, July 21, 2020.

high contrast colors, reputation of shapes and symbols makes these talisman images hypnotizes.³⁶



*Figure 4.17: talisman painting that shows ' Säbedeät' half-animal and half-human figure from Samson Kábädä exhibition, Acrylic on canvas
Photo credit: Samson Kábädä*

³⁶ Abebaw Ayalew, interview with Fana Television about Ethiopian talisman arts, April 2020.



*Figure 4.18: This talisman drawing titled Mänbär/መንበር shows human, cow, eagle, and angle representation that shows the throne of God/trinity.
Photo credit; Hènok Mälkämzär Yihun,*

In Figure 4.17, a talisman art example is shown with more than 400 eyes, representing healing, with patterns associated with 29 medicinal plants. *Hènok Mälkämzär Yihun's* paintings are highly abstract with complex detail, interconnecting lines, and numerous eyes.

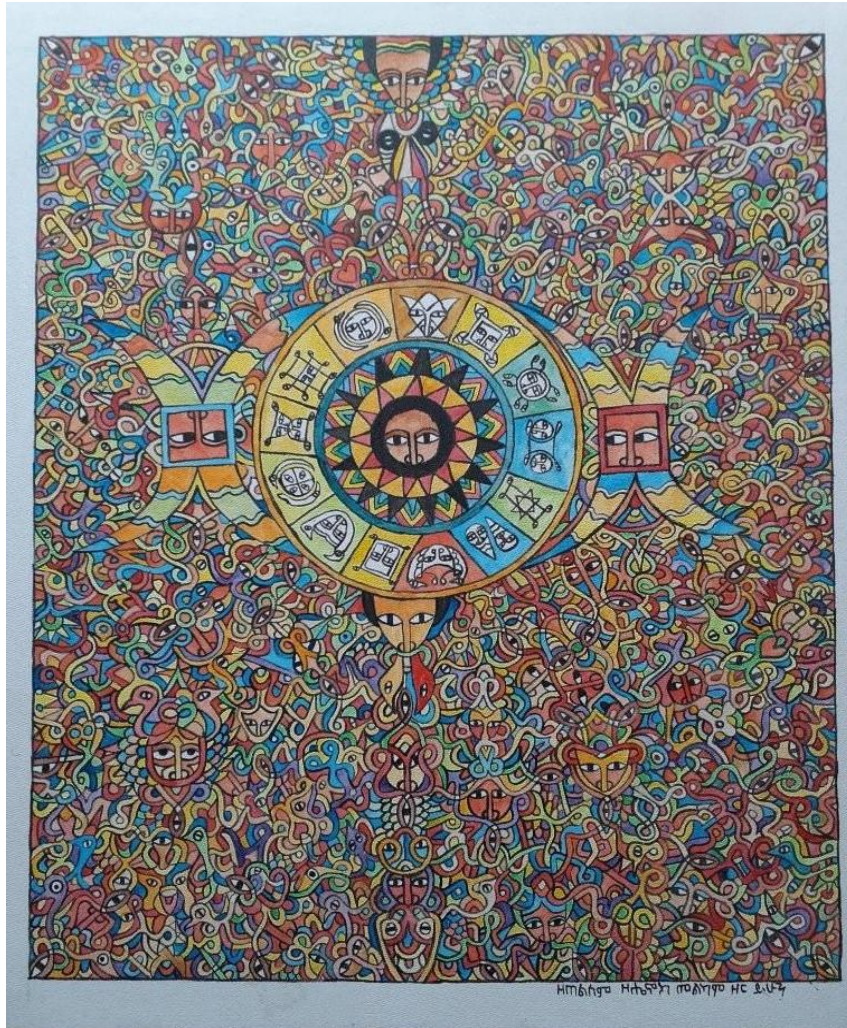


Figure 4.19: eyes in talisman painting
 Talisman painting on canvas
 Photo credit; Henok Melkanzer Yihun

“This picture entitled ‘protection against the evil spirit’ constitutes an aspect of the art [wisdom] given to King Solomon to make medicine. I believe and I am sure that it is perfect medicine given to all human beings through King Solomon. I didn’t add or minus anything given to King Solomon; I just put as it is. Each line and form is tied to create letters; each letter also changes into a word which has the power”³⁷

³⁷ Jacque Mercier (2010). Documentary movie; Ethiopian magic art, retrieved from YouTube

In addition to scrolls and canvas paintings, the Ethiopian talismans will depict in different part of the body as tattoo. These symbols around the face used to protect from different disease. For example the *aynäwork/አይት-ወርቅ* talisman depicted around the eye to those who are under this sickness. Some disease including aynework have its symbols.³⁸ even the color that used for this purpose is prepared from special plants/የአስተናግር ቅጠል to make it permanent the tattoo.



*Figure 4.20. Aynäwork talisman
Mage credit; retrieved from Google*

4.1.4. The influences of others in Ethiopian Talisman Art

The concept of talisman in Ethiopian, Coptic, Syriac, and Jewish traditions are conceptually similar despite a diversity of art styles, ritual activities, and context of material culture varying. Magic scrolls are very common in Ethiopia, widespread in "practical Kabbalah" and used to protect men, women, and children from late antiquity to this day.³⁹ According to Shalom Saba, this influence is not only limited to scrolls but also found in amulets and necklaces.

³⁸ Mäläsä Ṭilaye, talisman art practitioner at Fionte Sälam, informant interview, may 25, 2010

³⁹ Shalom Sabaht, expert of folklore including esoteric traditions at Hebrew University Jerusalem, informant interview, September 17, 2020

The cases for amulets various shapes and designs, made of leather or textile small bags, and metals are very common among the Jews in the lands of Islam (in Muslim society). These include the cylindrical silver cases used in necklaces.⁴⁰

Standard Jewish symbols like David's star are common in many countries, signs of the zodiac, and the Menorah.⁴¹ The Ethiopian Jews/Bètä-Israël has adopted many elements of Christian practices, sharing many cultural and religious elements with Ethiopian Orthodox society according to Bar Kirbus.

The Ethiopian Bête-Israel/ *Fälasha* and Christians share common elements in Gondär. And hence it would not be surprising if elements of Ethiopian Orthodox talisman art have Beta Israel parallels. Beta's Israel used to have Däbtäras who served in a capacity similar to Christian Däbtäras, and would also make amulets.⁴²

Similarly, the Ethiopian Orthodox Däbtäras incorporate Jewish elements in their Christian talismans, although figurative art seems to have been much rarer among Beta Israel than among Christians. Beta Israel prayer houses were simpler structures than Ethiopian Orthodox churches not extensively decorated with paintings, and the Bête Israel were quite distinct from Jews in Israel and elsewhere. The lifestyle, non-religious art, talismans, and fashions of the two communities i.e. Bête Israel and Ethiopian Orthodox were very similar. Many of the traditional practices of the Beta Israel are no longer being practiced in Israel, or are only being practiced by a small number of people, mostly those who immigrated as adults.⁴³

Another adaptation in Ethiopian talisman art is the Coptic Church, Coptic talismans and elements are found in Ethiopia. Due to historical and religious connections, the Coptic Church influenced the Ethiopian Orthodox Church iconography and talisman arts. The thirteen-century Egyptian author *Al-Buni's* Arabic book titled "*Shams al-Maarif*" contained many nonfigurative elements. Magical tables, diagrams, and texts were included in it. Scholars like Jacque Mercier wrote that *Al-Buni's* magical tables were used as a source of inspiration to Ethiopian talisman experts and artists (Mercier, 1997:54).

⁴⁰ *Shalom Sabaht, expert of folklore including esoteric traditions at Hebrew University Jerusalem, informant interview, September 17, 2020*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Bar Kiribus, Bètä-Israel community expert at Jerusalem, informant interview, September 4, 2020*

⁴³ *Ibid.*



Figure 4.21A



Figure 4.21B

Figure 4.21A: this diagram shows the symbolic representation of talismans. This picture taken from *Awädä Nägäst* book from *Märegëta Zämänä Hädis at Wärdä Märÿam - Burè Damot*.

Figure 4.21B: *Hènok Mälkämzär Yihun* talisman that shows the 13 month astrological symbols and talismans

These two diagrams are stylistically similar to that which is widely used in Ethiopian astrological computing systems. According to *Hènok Mälkämzär Yihun*, the first diagram i.e. figure 4.21A is the Coptic talisman directly translated from Arabic into *Ge'ez*. This was part of a deliberate ploy by the Coptic Church to expand their cultural influence and to get rid of the Ethiopian talisman concept purposely. Animals and objects depicted in this talisman are not associated with Ethiopian culture. Figure 4.21B is *Hènok's* talisman and Ethiopian concept that transferred for long periods.

In Ethiopia, there are 13 months in a year. This makes us different from the rest of the world. In this talisman (Figure 4.21B) there are three main concepts. These are face/*Mälk*, talisman, and number. The outer round is called *Mälk* the second is talisman and the third is number.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Hènok Mälkämzär Yihun. Talisman art painter at Addis Ababa, informant interview, September 15, 2020*



Figure 4.22: 367 Ethiopian days and its talismans

Photo captured from Hènok Mälkamzär's studio by the researcher

This picture shows 367 talisman days of a year. Each day in Ethiopia has a talisman symbol, *Härägs*, and interpretations. This Ethiopian talisman is different from Coptic or other countries' talisman arts. According to Hènok's argument figure 4.21A talisman expresses the Coptic Church's hegemonic power.

Most of the eyes are circular eyes and different from the Coptic style. In Ethiopia compositions including 2, 4, or 8 eyes are common in scrolls. Single elements in Ethiopian talismans are sometimes doubled, eight-pointed star talismans become sixteen pointed stars, two eyes double into four eyes, etc. The Arabic *Awedä Nägästs* was written on a single page but when translated in Ethiopia it becomes doubled or more than

that. Ethiopians derive only concepts and adapted it to their culture rather than a direct translation.⁴⁵

These kinds of adaptations into Ethiopian talisman arts are familiar. We cannot deny the influence of Coptic culture in Ethiopia due to the strong relationship between the Copts and the EOTC. During many centuries of the Coptic Church rule, their hegemonic power exerted influenced which led to the adaptation of culture, art, and mythologies, with the Ethiopians making efforts to adopt Coptic models. When Däbtära's accept one talisman from abroad, they changed it into three or more styles based on Ethiopian culture.⁴⁶

The magical Square is found in Ethiopian talismans, which can be calculated or read from different directions with similar results. This kind of calculation is found in Arabic, Coptic, and Jews Kabala. But Wallis Budge and Jacques Mercier believe that the Ethiopian 'stator-square' is copied from Arabic and Coptic talismans especially from the book of Al-Buni '*shams-al Maarif*' (Mercier 1979:10). The Magic square in Ethiopia is called የጠልሰግዎ ገበታ/*YäTälsäm Gäbäta*,⁴⁷ which can be read diagonally or horizontally. According to *Hènok Mälkamzär*, *YäTälsäm Gäbäta* hides secret codes and formula in table form. *Zämänu Hädis* also believes that the magic/sator square talismans from the Book of the Seal of Alexander (*Eskender* in Ethiopian context) are unique in its calculations methods and interpretations. The book of Alexander is of course translated from a text of Arabic origin; there is an overlap of schools of magic in different Middle Eastern traditions, which relate to a common Christian culture.

⁴⁵ *Zämänu Hädis*, talisman art expert and practitioner, informant interview at Arba Minch University, July 21, 2020.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Dämälash Bäqälu*, talisman art expert at Gondär, informant interview, Gondar July 18, 2020

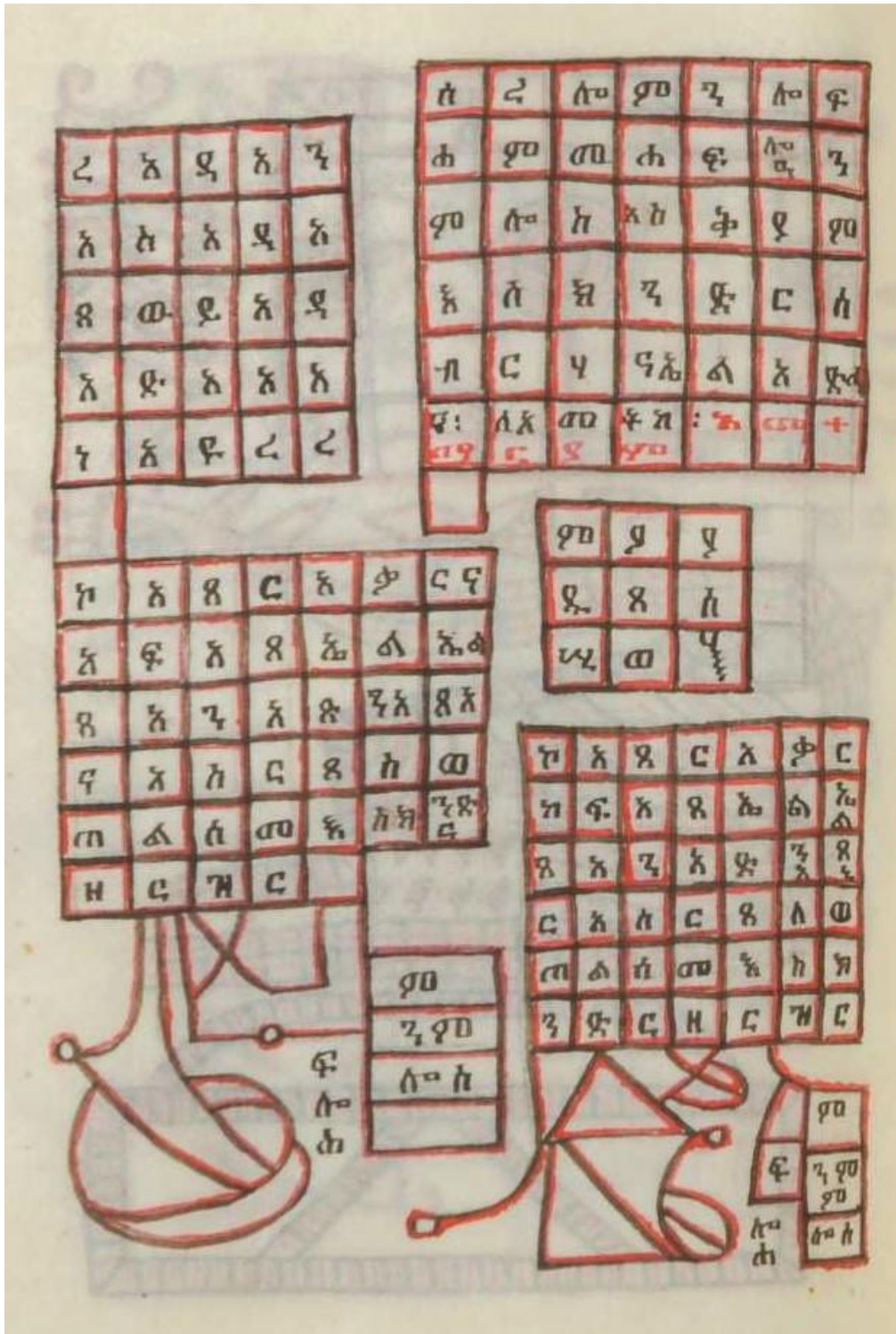


Figure 4.23: magical table drawn in parchment codex

Photo taken from Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum code-IES.ms 1082.

4.1.5. The View of the EOTC concerning Talisman Art

EOTC doctrine forbids magical practices including *Tälsäm* as demonic and devilish activity. The Church has her healing processes using the cross, holy water, and prayers. Even though practitioners of *Tälsäm* use the name of God, the cross and spiritual words, talismanic elements are associated with demonic depictions, which do not conform to the Church's doctrine and spiritual services. Ethiopian Christians practice two kinds of healing processes: biblical and magical, the one based on biblical words whereas the second uses magical incantations or formulas.⁴⁸ The EOTC recommends biblical healing processes using holy water, prayers, and rituals. *Tälsäm* wisdom is not a sin by itself; the main issue is how it is functioning. Early talismans were used for beneficial purposes; gradually talisman makers perverted their practices for commercial aims, yet talismans still have a role to play in the EOTC. Talismans should not be used for divination or negative purposes.⁴⁹ I observed talismans called syncretism being officially used in Orthodox Churches in *Gojjam* to protect agricultural production from ice and disaster. After the ritual process held in the Church, the talisman were hung in tall trees secretly during the night. Despite the EOTC condemning magical practices, some churches and individuals continue using talismans and amulets inside the Church.

⁴⁸ Gasten Dekenson (2019). *Magic, Angelology and Daemonology, Scrolls, Enoch, Intercultural Exchange, Ethiopian Orthodoxy*, Radio interview with *The Modern Hermeticist* held Nov 14, 2019, retrieved from YouTube.

⁴⁹ Mäbaşion Seleshi, a deacon at EOTC in Addis Ababa, informant interview, September 07, 2020.

4.2. Coptic Talisman Arts

Before the introduction of Christianity to Egypt, the people believed in a pantheon of numerous indigenous deities like Osiris, Amun, Ra, etc. In the course of Roman rule in Egypt, the traditional gods disappeared with tarnished reasons in the mid-fourth century (Dosoo, 2018:3). Jesus fled to Egypt as a child while escaping from King Herod with St. Mary, St. Joseph, and the midwife Salome (Tewodor, Malaty, 1993:5). Copts claim that Jesus grew up speaking Coptic and that it is consequently a sacred language. Coptic Church history relates that Christianity first came to Egypt during the late 1st century, consolidated by the activities of St. Mark. The Greek orientated city of Alexandria famous for its classical philosophers and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament became a center of Christian theology. Christianity became popular and expanded widely, replacing the worship of the traditional gods. The Coptic language was used for passing on magical spells as well as becoming the Church's official liturgical language during the third century (Meyer and Smith, 1994:8). The first surviving text, a love spell dates from the 5th century. Coptic magical texts were written on different materials including papyrus, parchment, and ceramics.

4.2.1. Concept of Coptic talisman arts

The Greek term for Egypt is "*Aigyptos*" which was derived from the ancient Egyptian term *Hakapta* meaning "*the house of the spirit of Ptah*". The Arab Islamic conquerors shortened "*Aigyptos*" to '*Kibt*' (plural *Akbat*) which became Copt or Coptic in English and designated the indigenous Christians and their culture (Y. Malaty, 1993:8). The Coptic language is the latest version of Egyptian languages from different periods. The early Egyptian languages were written in Hieratic, Hieroglyphics, and demotic languages. Coptic language used similar alphabets with Greek and became regular during the 3rd CE (Dosoo, 2018:1)

Coptic is an Afro-Asiatic language related to Nubian, Berber/Amazing, Cushitic languages, and more distantly Semitic languages. It was the original spoken language of Egypt, first written in hieroglyphs, later in Hieratic and Demotic scripts (i.e. adapted Greek alphabet). It became a prominent liturgical language, but around the 17th century died out as a spoken language although there have been attempts to revive it. Coptic magical texts include three main contents: Firstly, magical instructions for private purposes such as protection, healing, or performing of rituals. Secondly, verbal phrases for ritual activities such as "*I invoke you*" and "*I adjure you*". Thirdly, it includes

magical symbols, secret names, and drawings (Dosoo, 2019:1). Rituals are used to make the healing process applicable and to complete healing, instruction included elements like:

“Stand over here, hold a pebble, tie seven threads in seven knots, say the names seven times, draw the figure in the bottom of the cup, write the spell with the finger of a mummy, write it with bat's blood, with menstrual blood, on papyrus, on clay, on lead, on tin, on a rib bone, on a parchment shaped like a sword, fold it, burn it, tie it to your arm, your thumb, drive a nail in it, bury it with a mummy, bury it under someone's doorstep, mix this recipe, drink it. Or simply "do the usual." (Meyer and Smith, 1994:3).

Coptic ‘magical’ and ‘medical recipes’ were written on parchment, medical texts were mainly used to heal physical diseases treatment involved use of plant, mineral and animal products, while magical treatment based on written amulets freed from demonic control. Amulets used biblical texts or the names of saints and angels for supernatural protection against evil spirits and could be considered as ‘magical texts’, used in the home on household materials (Vliet, 2011:555-574).

4.2.2. Material Culture in Coptic Talisman Arts

Egyptian talisman arts included elements of material culture from Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, and Coptic Christian periods covering a long history (Mayer and Smith, 1994:18). The Egyptian magical art tradition predated Christianity, though its function and concepts varied: “....in later periods [it was characterized] by the adaptation and assimilation of practices and materials from Mesopotamia, Persia, and the Greco-Roman world” (Meyer and Smith, 1994:18). Old Coptic love spells included a narration of Isis, Horus, and other traditional gods. Later, mythological narratives, elements, and symbols were derived from Christianity. The Coptic magical texts studied by international scholars, constitute a specific genre of esoteric literature and art, associated with Greco-Roman influence.

In addition to papyrus, Coptic magical arts and texts were written on materials such as ceramic, parchment, wood, and metal plates (Richter, 2015:86-88). However, the use of papyrus made from reeds growing on the banks of the Nile predominated. It is said that the current produced papyrus is very different from the original papyrus.⁵⁰

In the third century, papyrus is clearly the dominant material, although parchment becomes an important secondary material from the fourth century onwards, and pottery and limestone ostraca remain as less-used tertiary supports throughout the period. After the 10th century most of the Coptic magical art materials substituted by paper instead of papyrus (Dosoo, 2019:3).

Coptic magical arts developed due to the presence of suitable materials and concepts in the local culture. In addition to symbolic representation, the possibilities of using Coptic magical materials were availability and its expense. Material selection is part of the magical arts (Dosoo, 2019:2). Next to papyrus animal skins were widely used, such parchment prepared from goat, calf, and sheep skins and comparable to Ethiopian *Branna*, was more durable than papyrus. After the introduction of paper from China, it was widely accepted in the Islamic world and used by Coptic scribes, the oldest surviving magical text on paper being from the ninth century (Bloom, 2001:10). Ostraca i.e. fragments of limestone or pottery were used to write short magical texts with pictures in the desert areas of Egypt, often consisting of magical recipes or love spells. Rarely, lead, and animal bones were also used to prepare amulets and texts.

4.2.3. Types of Coptic talisman arts

Coptic magical arts can be classified into two based on its purpose and visual form.

4.2.3.1. Coptic Magic based on its Content

The Coptic amulets prepared for two purposes; the first is an amulet for a certain purpose or an individual for one time and the second is a ‘master spell’ for multipurpose utilization (Vliet, 2019:332). Coptic talisman arts had different functions for individuals or groups, mainly used for healing, protection, curse, love, business, or gaining favor.⁵¹ However healing and protection purposes predominated according to *Korishi Dosoo*. Curses were used for negative purposes, to inflict bad luck, death, harm, on animals, property, or people.⁵² They manipulated the supernatural activities of God for

⁵⁰ *Korishi Dosoo, Coptic magical papyri expert at University of Wurzburg, Germany, informant interview, July 10, 2020*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

protection or to hurt enemies. *Korishi Dosoo* estimates that among surviving texts, business spells are fewer than healing, protection, curse, and love ones. Amulets were more likely to survive than texts on papyrus since as necklaces they were usually made of hard materials like pieces of limestone, such amulets mostly included love spells and curses. The numbers of texts are small, and they show influence from other cultures, especially Greco-Roman culture.

4.2.3.2. Coptic Magic based on its Visual Form

Basically, there are two forms of Coptic magical art: the first depicting supernatural powers, mostly angels, sometimes also demons, in a very recognized and stylized way. The second uses 'grids', abstract patterns filled in with texts, letters, words, or numerals.⁵³Coptic magical arts vary according to their function; artwork and written texts are inseparable. There are simplified human figures, angels, demons and animals, secret signs, unknown symbols or *charakters*, and magical names. Unlike Ethiopian talisman arts, the Coptic talismans do not use color; they are simply drawn or written in black ink, which becomes brown as it ages.

4.2.3.2.1. Representation of Figures in Coptic Talisman Arts

Coptic talismans included figurative elements, such as humans, angels, and animals. The angelic drawings were also copied onto various media, for instance, pots or pot shreds, but the practices in which they were used, have not been studied well. Very rare are depictions that apparently represent Christ himself.

Demons, only depicted in curses and imprecations, are usually depicted with animal features, i.e. with faces that resemble donkey faces; this is an ancient Egyptian tradition, referring to the evil god Set-Thyphon (Richter, 2015:85)

⁵³ *Jacques van der Vliet, expert on Coptic esoteric art at Leiden University the Netherlands, informant interview in September 4, 2020*



Figure 2.24: The Figure of an angle taken from Korischi Dosoo's Article; Coptic Amulets II: Sending an angel to give grace, published on 15th November, 2019 page 2.



Figure 4.25: image of an angle taken from Coptic magical papyri website, Retrieved from their official website

In addition to angels favored biblical characters are also represented in talismans, especially Daniel, the three children (*Hananiya, Azariya, and Mishael*) – who are drawn on favor amulets (Dosoo, 2019:4).

4.2.3.2.2. Animal Representation in Coptic Talisman Arts

Angels, divinity, and (rarely) humans are depicted frontally and the representations are heavily stylized, normally using geometric forms. Demons with animal heads are shown in profile, animals are only rarely represented.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Jacques van der Vliet, expert on Coptic esoteric art at Leiden University the Netherlands, informant interview in September 4, 2020

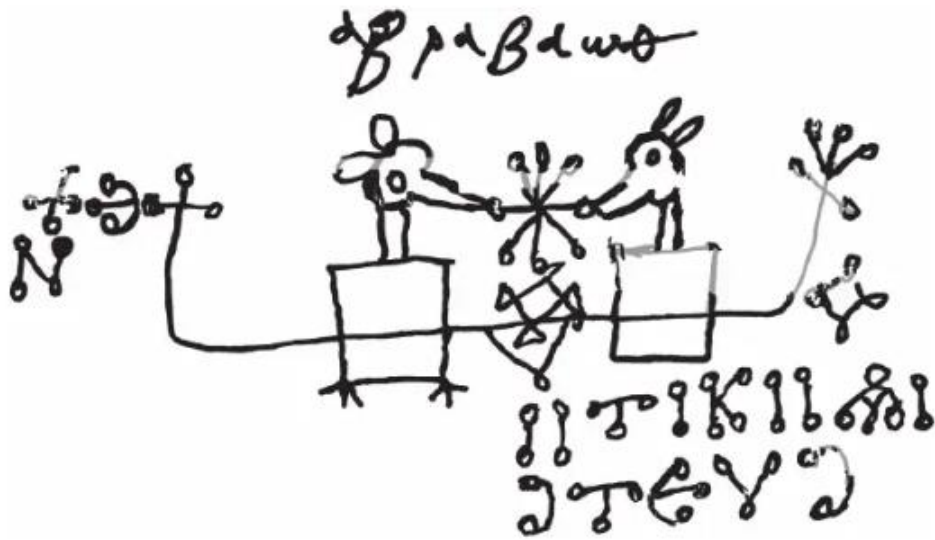


Figure 4.26: animal representation in talismans

Photo credit: Korischi Dosoo

Birds and simplified human figures are seen rarely as seen in figure 4.27. It is very simplified and stylized drawing.

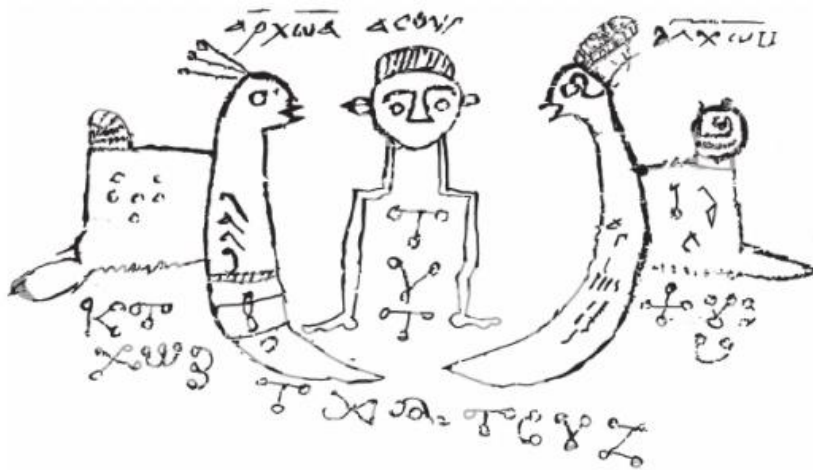


Figure 4.27: birds in Coptic talisman image taken from Korischi dosoo's article- Zodian and praxis: an illustrated Coptic magical papyrus in the published in Macquarie university collection in 2018, p- 11.

Image credit: Korschi Dosoo



Figure 4.28: bird in Coptic talisman image taken from Korschi dosoo's article- *Zodion and praxis: an illustrated Coptic magical papyrus in the published in Macquare university collection in 2018, p- 15.*

Image credit: Korschi Dosoo

4.2.3.2.3. Signs, symbols and names in Coptic talisman arts

Coptic Orthodox monks conducted rituals like Ethiopian *Däbtäras*, using pre-Christian motives and Coptic talisman images (Vliet, 2019:327). The cross as it is or modified stylistic designs are used widely. Divine, angelic and demonic names are familiar and frequently mentioned on amulets and talismans. The ancient figures gradually changed into grids abstract symbols and stylistically simplified forms.⁵⁵

The most numerous categories are probable angelic names, usually ending in *-el* like *Michael*, *Gabriel Anael*, the familiar names of the seven archangels; angels' names from apocryphal literature, but also names that were apparently made up. Such angelic names could also be applied to elements of the divine world or even attributes of God himself.⁵⁶

Names of power are written on talismans and amulets, those of the seven archangels: *Michael*, *Gabriel Anael*, *Salathiel*, *Sarapouel*, *Raphael*, and *Souriel* are

⁵⁵ Jacques van der Vliet, expert on Coptic esoteric art at Leiden University the Netherlands, informant interview in September 4, 2020

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

repeatedly mentioned.⁵⁷ Secret symbols in Coptic talisman are not defined clearly. It is used to communicate between practitioners and supernatural power.

Charakters in Coptic talisman arts are taken as sacred writing helps to communicate with God or the divine world. It cannot be pronounced rather it is a visual symbol. These letters are artificial letters that help to communicate messages secretly. It is merely created to communicate hidden messages (Dieleman, 2006:11).



Figure 4.29: Talisman characters in Coptic talisman

Image credit: Korschi Dosoo's article Zodion and praxis: an illustrated Coptic magical papyrus in the published in Macquarie university collection in 2018, p- 15.

Grids were copied onto papyrus or paper, constituting amulets that were folded and worn on the body or hidden somewhere, they could also be painted onto walls (Dieleman, 2006:10). *Dieleman* observed the secret symbolism of characters, which had special supernatural powers, and transferred secret messages between practitioners. Similar functions appear to occur in Coptic, Ethiopian, and Arabic, and Syriac talismans, though little defined. Current practices are influenced by Islamic culture.

⁵⁷ *Jacques van der Vliet, expert on Coptic esoteric art at Leiden University the Netherlands, informant interview in September 4, 2020*

4.2.4. Nonfigurative elements in Coptic talisman

Nonfigurative compositions or decorations are seen in Coptic talismans and amulets. *Charakters* are repeatedly seen in Coptic talismans are used as decoration.⁵⁸ Besides, to use as a code, the *Charakters* are used in clothes and free spaces as an ornament. Angel wings, cloths, animal, and human body parts are decor by these symbols. But *Häräg* in Ethiopian talisman is well developed than Coptic. Due to the absence of color in Coptic talismans, decorations, patterns, and colorful symbols are not familiar as compared with Ethiopia.

4.2.5. Vestiges of Coptic Talisman Art in Egyptian Folk Art and modern art

The Coptic magical arts continued from ancient Egypt, Greco-Roman periods, and Coptic periods. Up to the fifteenth century, priests were well known for using ancient pagan magic for a different purpose. After the fifteenth century St. Augustine condemned using of magical practices. After this condemnation, the Christian practices changed into holy water, forms of prayers, and incantation of sacred spiritual books (Varner, 2018:28). Coptic esoteric art is not a living tradition; consequently, it has had little direct influence on contemporary Egyptian Art/Fine Art in contrast to Ethiopian Esoteric Art. In Egypt there is not a strong continuation of art traditions like in Ethiopia, Islamic traditions, in particular, tend to denigrate what came before Islam. However, one can find some traces of esoteric art traditions, especially in Egyptian folk art, neo-Coptic art, folklore traditions, etc. They betray some evidence of talisman symbols and signs.

There are certain elements of Coptic Magic art representation, such as simplification, certain proportions with big heads and eyes, certain themes of extreme stylization and essentialism, etc., which we see reflected in folk art such as the figurines traditionally sold at festivals, and in Neo-Coptic art. The tradition of decorating the exterior of traditional buildings in Nubia (North Egypt) with bold geometric designs and other motives shows some relationship with Coptic esoteric traditions. Egyptian Folk Art does have some influence on contemporary Fine Art, but less than in Ethiopia. Well known esoteric signs such as the eye, have figured on Egyptian postage stamps.

⁵⁸ *Korshi Dosoo. Coptic magical papyri expert at University of Wurzburg, Germany, informant interview, July 10, 2020*

4.2.6. Razzouk Tattoo family

The Coptic *Razzouk* family claims a lineage going back 700 years - 500 in Jerusalem, allegedly the oldest tattoo family in the world; *Rassim Razzouk* is the 27th generation and his son is the 28th generation.⁵⁹ Their customers are mainly pilgrims to Jerusalem, the tattoos constituting mementos of their visit to the holy city. Their motifs include representation of Christ's resurrection, the Holy Sepulcher and other signs associated with Jerusalem, conventional Christian signs as well as esoteric signs and codes. Those receiving tattoos say they do so for varied reasons including protection, healing, memorial, and others. Most Copts have simple cross tattoos on their pulse i.e. inside of the wrist (by which they can be distinguished from Muslims). However, elaborate tattoos with esoteric associations are extremely rare in Egypt. Perhaps it was the isolation of the *Razzouk* family which facilitated the survival of this tradition, which could be considered one of the rare examples of Coptic talisman art in the contemporary period.



Figure 4.30: Razzouk's esoteric Tattoo design

Medium- tattoo design on leg

Photo credit: Razzouk official online store, retrieved from Google

⁵⁹ *The oldest tattoo family in the world*", documentary movie, genesis worldwide, uploaded on YouTube October 8, 2019



Figure 4.31: Razzouk's esoteric tattoo

Medium- Tattoo on Hand

Photo credit: Razzouk official online store, retrieved from Google

4.3. Similarity and Differences between Coptic and Ethiopian Talisman Arts

Ethiopia and Egypt share a long history of common contacts as shown by cultural influences, archeological evidence, and the Nile valley civilization.

With regard to talisman arts, the comparison indicates that the Ethiopian branch is more diverse and still flourishing. Coptic influence can be seen not only in Ethiopian talisman but in translated books, mythology, and iconography. The Ethiopian *Däbtäras* received material from Coptic Egypt and but also were innovative in creating new talisman art styles not familiar to Copts or Arabs.⁶⁰

In terms of material, papyrus is the widely used in Coptic talisman art and *branna* in Ethiopia. The surviving Coptic material is earlier than Ethiopian talisman. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Talisman figures are colorful whereas the Coptic uses only black outlines. Early Ethiopian talismans used a black and red color, after the 15th-century colors like

⁶⁰ Zämänu Häddis, talisman art expert and practitioner, informant interview at Arba Minch University, July 21, 2020.

blue and green became widespread. Contemporary talismans are rich in color showing new styles and concepts, whereas Coptic talisman arts are undecorated and drawn in a simplified way.⁶¹ Secret symbols, angelic names, biblical references, and ritual instructions are common to both Ethiopian and Coptic magic arts, despite stylistic differences and cultural adaptations. Later Coptic talisman art was influenced by Islamic and byzantine arts, whereas Ethiopian development is more indigenous. In Ethiopia there is more indication of mutual influence between iconography and talisman images, use of colors; eye and figure proportions are almost identical. Actually, the Copts had different styles and during the Middle Ages, simple and geometric styles were popular with simplified forms reminiscent of Talisman Art. Talismanic practices associated with the environment and intended to ensure good agricultural yields are more evident in the Ethiopian highland areas, but less in Egypt where agriculture has become more mechanized since the building of the Aswan Dam. However, the inability to do fieldwork in Egypt makes it difficult to confirm this. But there are also incomparable elements which are not found in Coptic talisman like color, geometrical talismans, *Häräg* and contemporary canvas paintings and other details.

⁶¹ *Shalom Sabar, an expert on folklore including esoteric tradition at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, informant interview, September 6, 2020*

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

Talisman art and the associated esoteric wisdom constitute a wide and complex field of knowledge that is not easily understood. Esoteric wisdom and arts are widespread in many countries; however, both Coptic and Ethiopian esoteric arts share a common origin and inspiration which emanates from late classical i.e. Greco-Roman culture. We usually associate the Greco-Roman heritage with western Philosophy and empirical sciences. However, it also had a shadow side, which expressed itself in a body of esoteric literature that circulated and developed in the Middle East during the late antique period and thereafter. This source informed the magical traditions of Coptic, Jewish, Syriac, and Arabic talismanic art, and accounts for their similarities. For example, the Aramaic/Syriac incantation bowls of the early middle ages show a striking similarity to Ethiopian *Tälsäm* art, despite the fact that they are separated by time and place. This was not due to direct connection, but because they shared common sources and inspiration.

My informants *Samson Käbädä*, *Hénok Mälkämerzär Yihun*, and *Zämänu Hädis* mention Coptic influences in Ethiopian talismans, paralleling similarities in iconography, Church doctrine, and Spiritual Services. Stylistic and conceptual similarities indicate that Ethiopian talisman arts have a close relationship with those of Coptic Egypt, and the areas of the Oriental Orthodox i.e. Non-Chalcedonian Churches (excluding Armenia where there is little documentation of Talisman art). This indicates the sharing of certain cultural and intellectual traditions, associated in some ambiguous way with a common ecclesiastical background. It mirrors the way in which oriental Orthodox iconography shares conceptual and stylistic similarities. Christian talismans shared common symbols and references to biblical and mythological sources. Considering these common features, we can establish that there is a particularly close relationship between Coptic and Ethiopian esoteric traditions.

Talismans were used for many purposes in Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt, according to their culture and lifestyle. In general, they were used for healing, protection, love, securing agricultural production, and acquiring property. Ethiopian talismans have a much richer repertoire of concepts, art styles, and types than Coptic talismans. This is to be expected due to the fact that Talisman Arts continued to be a living tradition for many centuries in North Ethiopia especially *Amhara* and *Tigray* regions into the modern period, whereas, the Coptic talisman tradition virtually died out (with a few exceptions such as the *Marzzouk* family in Jerusalem). Despite Coptic Church and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches both officially condemning esoteric arts, there was a big difference in the way it was implemented. Whereas in Coptic Egypt the official policies were applied directly (perhaps due to the stronger central administration of the Church), in Ethiopia esoteric practices were institutionalized as the domain of the *Däbtäras* and flourished in the shadow of the official Church. Consequently, Ethiopian talisman art became diversified and more highly developed than Coptic talisman arts.

Despite stylistic similarities between Talisman images in different countries, Ethiopian talismans show many features which originated in Ethiopia, derived from cultural perspectives, and mythological or religious traditions. Colors are very important in Ethiopian talismans enlivening the representation of humans, angels, animals, and objects, while Coptic talismans are monochrome. Ethiopian talismans have detailed figures, patterns, and symbols, while Coptic figures are simplified and use geometrical shapes with stylistic patterns. Animals (cows, sheep, serpents, doves, lion, birds, dragons, and horses) are repeatedly depicted in Ethiopian talismans symbolically, whereas except for (half) donkey portraits they are rare in Coptic talismans.

Charakters/ግላሲር constitutes undefined symbols in both Ethiopian and Coptic talisman arts, found also in Jewish Kabala and Syriac talismans. Interpretations vary but they share the use of supernatural/magical languages or codes, Christian symbols, and references. Coptic influences are apparent in the astrological images of the *Awdä Nägäst* and had more weight than that of other Oriental Church traditions.

We can conclude that talisman arts shared common sources. According to Coptic scholar's talisman arts originated from the Middle East but the Ethiopian *Däbtäras* claim with this idea. However, after the early introduction to Ethiopia parallel to the introduction of Christianity, they flourished in virtual isolation developing rich local forms. In effect, *Däbtäras* constituted a complex indigenous art form absorbing local influences, which preserved its therapeutic activities, philosophical concepts, and vitality into the modern period, in contrast to elsewhere. It is fascinating to see how official and hidden intellectual traditions interacted and established unique indigenous forms in the shadow of each other. Ethiopian talismanic art does not merely reflect hegemonic influences from abroad, but rather the genius of local *Däbtäras* and the fertility of the Ethiopian imagination.

Bibliography

Books

- Budge, W. (1930). *AMULETS and SUPERSTITION*, Bedford square w.c.1.
- Budge, W. (1968). *Amulets and talismans*, Carol Publishing Group, USA
- Cirlot, J.E. (1962). *A dictionary of symbols*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London
- Crème, B. (2017). *The esoteric art of Benjamin Crème*, Share International Fdn.
- Frankfurter, D. (2017). *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity*, Princeton University Press
- Gonzalez-Wippler, M. (1991). *A complete book of an amulet*, Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A
- Taddesse B. *etal* (1990). *Kassa and Kassa*, papers on the lives, times and images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1885-1889), book published by Institute of Ethiopian Studies, p-211.
- Malaty, Y. Tadros, FR. (1993). *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church*, St. Georg's Orthodox Church, Alexandria, Egypt. P-158
- Mantel-Niecko, J. (2006). *ጠለተ፡ጥግና*, *Warsaw University*, pp-40-41
- Mercier, J. (1979). *Ethiopian magic scroll*, George Braziller, New York
- Mercier, J. (1997). *ART THAT HEALS: the image as medicine in Ethiopia*, Museum for African Art, Prestel, New York.
- Meyer, M. and Smith, R. (Ed) (1994). *Ancient Christian MAGIC; Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York
- Richter, T.S. (2015). *Markedness and Unmarkedness in Coptic Magical Writing*, edited by Magali de Haro Sanchez, Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 85–108, plates VII-XIII.
- Taddese B. *etal* (1990). *Kassa and Kassa*, papers on the lives, times and images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1885-1889), Institute of Ethiopian Studies, p-211

Skemer, D.C. (2006). *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages. Magic in History*. University Park, PA

Varner, G.R. (2018). *The History and Use of amulets, charms, and talismans*, Lulu Press

Verlag, H. (2010). *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Volume 4, O-X, printed Germany

Versluis, A. (2009). *Esotericism, Art, and Imagination*: East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, USA

Vliet, J.V. (2011). *Literature, Liturgy, Magic: A Dynamic Continuum. In Christianity in Egypt: Literary Production and Intellectual Trends*, Edited by Paola Buzi and Alberto Camplani, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Rome pp-555-574

Articles

- Bloom, J. (2001). The history and impact of paper in the Islamic world, *Yale University Press*
- Burns, D. (2016). Esotericism Recorded; text, scripture, and parascripture, *Free University of Berlin, Germany*
- Černý, K. (2013). Magical and Natural Amulets in Early Modern Plague Treatises, *Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart*
- Chernetsov, S.B. (2006). Ethiopian magic texts, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), *Russian Academy of Sciences*, p-192
- De-Ménonville, S. (2018). In search of the Debera: An intimate narrative on Good and Evil in Ethiopia today, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, p-8
- Dieleman, J. (2006). A Coptic Magical Text, *Journal of the Saint Mark Foundation and Saint Shenouda the Archimandrite*, Loss Angels, California, Vol. 5
- Dosoo, K. (2018). What is the Coptic Magic? *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany
- _____ Religion in the Coptic Magical Papyri I: “Paganism” and Christianity, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany
- Dosoo, K. (2019). Looking at the Coptic Magical Papyri XII: Coptic Dialects, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany
- _____ Coptic Charms I: Horus, Isis and the Three Agrippas, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany
- _____ Looking at the Coptic Magical Papyri VI: Writing Materials, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany
- _____ Looking at the Coptic Magical Papyri VII: Manuscript Formats, Universitat, Wurzburg, Germany
- _____ Looking at the Coptic magical papyri XI: Magic between

Languages, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany

_____ _Looking at the Coptic Magical Papyri XIII: Types of Magic, *Coptic magical papyri*, Universitat Wurzburg, Germany

Edward, L. (2019). Demonic magical papyri old Coptic, *universitat Wurzburg, Germany*

Faivre, A. (2010) *Western Esotericism: A Concise History*, *Suny Press*

Hiwot A. (2018). 'Min Neber', *the Reporter Ethiopian news*, magazine interview, 24 March 2018

Ogden, D. (1999). *Binding Spells: Curse tablets and Voodoo dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds in witchcraft and magic in Europe; Ancient Greece and Rome*, *University of Pennsylvania Press*, Philadelphia, USA

Papahagi, A. and Burtea, B. (2012). An Ethiopian Magical Manuscript, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1

Shaw, G. (2017). Iamblichus and the Talisman of Gnosis, *Journal of gnostic studies*, Leiden

pawlikow, J. (1991). The Judaic Spirit of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: A Case Study in Religious Acculturation, *Catholic Theological Union*, Chicago, USA

Vliet, V. d. (2019). Christian spills and manuscripts from Egypt, p-327

Wesley, Z. A. (2017). Guardians of Ink and Vellum: Ethiopian Magical Scrolls, *Gettysburg College*

Windmuller-Luna, K. (2015). Ethiopian Healing scroll, *metropolitan Museum*, Princeton University p-2

Winkler, H.A. (1931). Siegel und Charaktere in der Muhammedanischen Zauberei, *Cambridge University Press*, reviewed by Margaret Smith, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp 803-806

Unpublished sources

Abebaw A. (2002). A history of painting in east Gojjam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: a study of the 'second Gondärian' style of painting, MA thesis, p-3

Al-buni, A. (1225). Shams al-Maarif, manually written Arabic magic book

Cascone, Sarah (2017). The World's Oldest Art Studio Was Just.

Esaak, S. (2018). An Introduction to Representational Art, retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-representational-art-182705>

Potter, H. (2017). A handbook of Ethiopian magic incantations and talisman art, Asian and African studies blog, posted by Ursula Sims-Williams

Satzinger, H. (2006). Coptic magical texts, *Austrian national library*, slide, retrieved from Google, Vienna

Online sources

Angels, Daemons, and Magic in Ethiopian Religion [Interview] (11/14/2019) by The Modern Hermeticist <https://youtu.be/ab9bs4KF7YI>

Dr Memehar Rodas Tadese on JTV.

_____ Part 1. (7/13/2019). <https://youtu.be/AmusoNSb47k>

_____ Part 2. (7/19/2019). <https://youtu.be/dikfb7pWp1c>

Ethiopian Magic Scroll (7/13/2011) by kurtismookie

<https://youtu.be/VI5-qIcUsUk>

Genesis worldwide (2019). The oldest tattoo family in the world, uploaded in October 8, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPFozMPZLbY>

Hakim Abebech documentary, ሀኪም አበበች ስለኮረና ያስተላለፉት መረጃና ምክር Ethiopia, Hakim Abebech Shiferaw, EthioInfo Interview, (3/18/2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SpQNo3RPYQ>

Rare Bites: Ethiopian Magic Scrolls (5/7/2018) by Uni Sydney Library

<https://youtu.be/HpBbmsYn62U>

Tälsäm (1/8/2017). By Ethiopia Forever <https://youtu.be/xe9yady2Tow>

The book of Bohak

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/search?author=&excludeText=&facetCollection=Cairo%20Genizah&fileID=&fullText=&keyword=magic&location=&page=1&recallScale=0.0&shelfLocator=&subject=&tagging=1&textJoin=and&title=>

The Coptic Magical Papyri: Vernacular Religion in Late Antique and Early Islamic Egypt' at the University of Wurzburg that pays full attention to the imagery <http://coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de>).

19th Century Ethiopian Magic Scroll (8/7/2011) by Medieval Portland

<https://youtu.be/UXRB8v-bsKQ>

የእግር መዳፍን በመመልከት በሽታን የሚያውቁት ሐኪም አበበች ሸፈራው (8/25/2019).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE5QyFCaRqc>

Annexes

Annex I

List of Ethiopian indigenous talisman expert informants

	Name of informants	Place and date of interview of interview	Profession	Remark
1	Bäkalu Musie	<i>Tilili</i> June 25, 2020	Märegëta	Traditional medicine expert
2	<i>Dämälash Berihun</i>	<i>Gondär</i> July 25, 2020	Märegëta	Talisman art expert
3	<i>Gëtenät Alemu</i>	<i>Addis Kidam (Injibara)</i> June 17, 2020	Märegëta	Talisman art expert
4	<i>Abäbech Shiferaw</i>	<i>Addis Ababa</i>	Traditional medicine expert	Researcher in traditional medicine and advisor
5	<i>Mäläsä Tilaye</i>	<i>Finotä Sälam (Gojjam)</i> May 20, 2020	Dicon	Traditional medicine expert
6	Yohännes Zäwogël	<i>Burè Damot (Gojjam)</i> July 25, 2020	Practitioner	Farmer
7	<i>Zämänu Hädis</i>	<i>Arba Minç (Gamo Gofa)</i> July 27, 2020	Talisman art expert	ArbaMinch university lecturer (ph.d. candidate)

8	<i>Zämänä yohännis</i>	<i>Adigrat</i> <i>(Tigray)</i> May 8, 2020	Märegèta	Traditional medicine and talisman expert
9	Mäbaşion Seleshi	Addis Ababa September 5, 2020	Deacon	Designer
10	Animut Zemenay	Gojjam-Burie Damot July 6, 2020	Märegèta	Talisman practitioner
11	Sergawi Hadis	Wundegi Maryam July 7, 2020	Märegèta	Practitioner

Annex II

List of modern talisman experts

	Name of informants	Place and date of interview	Profession	Remark
1	Samson Kebede	Addis Ababa July, 17, 2020	Artist	Talisman Painter
2	HènckMälkamzär Yihun	<i>Addis Ababa</i> September 5, 2020	Talisman art expert	Talisman Painter

Annex III

EOTC priests

	Name of informants	Place and date of interview	Profession	Remark
1	Dawit fekadu	Injibara Awi zone August 7, 2020	Diacon	
2	Dawit Semachew	Finote-Selam, July, 12, 2020	Diacon and talisman practitioner	Teacher
	Yenhun Andualem	Gojjam Burie Damot July 28,2020	Priest	Farmer
4	Melake-Hail Admasu	Addis Ababa September 25,2020	Priest	

Annex IV

List of Coptic informants

	Name	Place and date of interview	Profession	Remark
1	Jacque van der Vliet	Leiden University, the Netherlands Sept. 4, 2020	expert on Coptic Esoteric art	
2.	Korshi Dosoo	Universitat Wurzburg, Germany July, 10, 2020	Coptic magical papyri expert	
3.	Shabat Shalom	Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel Sept. 6, 2020	expert on folklore including esoteric traditions	
4	Dan Levene	Southampton University, UK Sept. 17, 2020	Esoteric literature expert	
5.	Bar Kiribus	Sept. 4, 2020	Bête Israel community expert	

Annex V

These questions are designed for indigenous talisman practitioners or *Däbtäras*. It helps to address the *Däbtäras* and practitioners' talisman and scroll styles.

1. When and how was talisman art started in Ethiopia?
2. When and how do you start to make talisman arts? How do you get this esoteric wisdom?
3. What kinds of materials are you using to make a Talisman?
4. How many types of talismans are there? Or you make?
5. What are the basic procedure, symbols, and signs that every talisman maker should know?
6. How do you represent human, angel, demons, animals, numbers, and color in your talisman?
7. What are the major principles to prepare a magic scroll/*kitab*?
8. What are the criteria to evaluate whether the talisman is right or wrong?
9. How Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahdo Church handles talisman knowledge? Is it a negative or positive practice according to the church's doctrine?
10. Have you ever seen other countries' talismans? What makes Ethiopian talisman unique?

Annex VI

These research questions are designed for modern Ethiopian talisman artists and professionals. In contemporary art, there are artists who are skilled and specializing the Ethiopian esoteric wisdom into modern art. These questions are designed for those modern professional talisman artists.

1. How and When the Ethiopian talisman arts started?
1. How you got this talisman art wisdom?
2. How many types of talismans are there in Ethiopia?
3. What are the major criteria to make Ethiopian talisman?
4. What kinds of materials are important in your talisman arts? How it can be prepared?
5. What are the major symbols and secret codes in your talismans arts?
6. Why do you use the symbols and signs secretly? Why don't you make it clear for all observers?
7. How color, number, and things are symbolized in your talisman art?
8. What kinds of animals are depicted in your talisman arts?
9. What are the criteria to identify whether the talismans are correct or not?
10. What makes different Ethiopian talisman from other countries talisman arts?

Annex VII

These questions were forwarded to Coptic talisman art experts. The Coptic talisman is not officially available now and difficult to gather from the society as well as practitioners.

But these questions are designed for those who are studying the Coptic magic scroll researchers and priests selected experts.

1. How and when Coptic talisman started?
2. Is Coptic talisman art practices are available in society? If not why?
3. How many types of Coptic talismans are there?
4. What are the main characteristics of Coptic talisman arts?
5. What are the favorite materials in Coptic talismans?
6. What are the major secret names, signs, and symbols in Coptic talisman?
7. How things are represented in Coptic talismans like human, angle, animal, color, and number?
8. How the Ethiopian and Coptic talismans used stylistically similar signs and symbols?
9. Are there any influences in Coptic talisman arts from the outside world?
10. What is the outlook of the Coptic Orthodox Church on talisman arts?

Annex VIII

Ethiopian National Achieves Agency (ENAA) - scrolls and codex

1. Talisman hand book
Title- ድርሳናት ዘመላእክት ወዘእስማት
No- 317
Code-005.53
2. Branna Scroll
Title- መጽሃፈ ጸሎተ-ሱስንዮስ
Code- 0010.31
Length- 75 x 9 cm
3. Branna scroll
Title -----
Code- 0010.09
Length- 323 x 4 cm
4. Branna scroll
Title-----
Code- 0010.23
Length- 60 x 5 cm
5. Branna scroll
Title-----
Code- 0010.08
Length-----
6. Branna scroll
Title- ጸሎተ-ሹተላይ. ቁ. 5
Code-0010.30
Length- 176 x 10 cm
7. Branna scroll
Title- ማእሰረ-አጋንንት
ኮድ-0010.10
ርዝመት- 322 x 3 ሳሜ

Annex IX

IES library-scrolls and codex

1. ልፋፈ-ጽድቅ
ኮድ-IES .ms. 1782
ስፋት- 14 x10 ሳሜ
2. ልፋፈ-ጽድቅ
ኮድ- IES.ms. 756
ስፋት- 7 x 5 ሳሜ
3. መልክአ-መልክ አቃቤ
ኮድ- IES.ms 495
ስፋት- 13 x 9
4. መርቦብተ-ሰሎሞን
ኮድ- IES.ms. 795
ስፋት-13 x 9 ሳሜ
5. መርቦብተ-ሰሎሞን
ኮድ IES.ms.1065
ስፋት- 25 x 30 ሳሜ
6. መርቦብተ-ሰሎሞን
ኮድ- IES.ms. 1082
ርዝመት- 50 x 35 ሳሜ
7. መጽሃፈ-አስማት
ኮድ- IES.ms. 494
ስፋት- 12 x 9 ሳሜ
8. መጽሃፈ-አስማት
ኮድ-IES.ms. 3000
ስፋት- 8.5 x 11.5 ሳሜ
9. መጽሃፈ-አስማት

ኮድ- IES.ms. 3001
ስፋት-7 x 11 ሳሜ
10. መጽሃፈ-አስማት
ኮድ- IES.ms. 3002

ስፋት- 9 x 10.5 ሳሜ

11. አስማት

ኮድ- IES.ms. 210

ስፋት- 13 x 8 ሳሜ

12. አርድት መልአክ ሚካኤል

ኮድ-IES.ms. 69

ስፋት- 13.5 x 10 ሳሜ

13. አስማት

ኮድ- IES.ms.213

ስፋት- 10 x 7 ሳሜ