Entangled Religions

Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Religious Contact and Transfer

6 (2018) Article 7: 309-344

Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jewish) Monastic Sites North of Lake Tana

Preliminary Results of an Exploratory Field Trip to Ethiopia in December 2015

BAR KRIBUS

Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

VERENA KREBS

History Department, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany

Entangled Religions 6 (2018)
http://dx.doi.org./10.13154/er.v6.2018.309–344

RUHR UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM RUB CERES DYNAMICS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS KÄTE HAMBURGER KOLLEG

SPONSORED BY THE Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jewish) Monastic Sites North of Lake Tana

Preliminary Results of an Exploratory Field Trip to Ethiopia in December 2015

BAR KRIBUS, VERENA KREBS
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel; Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany

ABSTRACT This paper presents results of the first field trip aimed at locating and studying the remains of Beta Israel[1] (Ethiopian Jewish) monasteries, as part of an ongoing research project aimed at shedding light on Beta Israel monasticism. Prior to this field trip, no Beta Israel monastery had ever been mapped, and no study focused on these monasteries has ever been conducted. On the trip, two former Beta Israel villages north of Lake Tana were examined: Amba Gʷalit and Aṭeyä. At Amba Gʷalit, the remains of a Beta Israel holy site, which may have been a monastery containing a synagogue and surrounded by an enclosure wall, were documented. In a nearby Beta Israel cemetery, the tomb of a well-known Beta Israel monk was found. At Aṭeyä, remains of well-preserved Beta Israel dwellings were examined. Both sites demonstrated that Beta Israel material culture in Ethiopia is sufficiently preserved to enable further research aimed at locating and examining Beta Israel monasteries.

KEY WORDS Ethiopian Jews; Beta Israel; Falasha; monasticism; monasteries; Lake Tana; Gonder

Introduction: Beta Israel Monasticism

The Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jewish) monastic movement is the only Jewish or Judaic monastic movement known to have existed in medieval or

1 In this article, the transliteration system of the Encyclopaedia Aethiopica for Amharic and Geʿez terms is followed; for personal names, the individual's preferred transliteration is given. However, for the sake of simplicity the common spelling "Beta Israel" will be used rather than the correct spelling "Betä Ǝsraʾel".

modern times. Beta Israel monks, similarly to their Ethiopian Orthodox[2] counterparts, devoted their lives to the worship of God and practiced celibacy and asceticism, withdrawing, to an extent, from lay society and residing in monasteries (Kribus, forthcoming a). Unlike their Ethiopian Orthodox counterparts, Beta Israel monks served, by virtue of their monastic initiation, as the highest-ranking Beta Israel clergymen. They were charged with training and consecrating the lay clergy, and—if they resided in the vicinity of lay communities—with leading the liturgy attended by these communities (Flad 1869, 35; Shelemay 1989, 78–88, 104–109). Following the loss of Beta Israel autonomy and the demise of the Beta Israel political leadership as a result of conflict with the Christian Solomonic kingdom from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century (Kaplan 1992, 79–96; Quirin 1992, 52–62, 72–86), the monks assumed the role of leaders of the Beta Israel in political matters as well (Kaplan 1992, 69–73).

Documented examples of the impact of Beta Israel monastic leadership on the lay community are numerous. Beta Israel monks enacted religious revivals (Leslau 1947, 80–81), fervently opposed the efforts of Christian missionaries to convert the Beta Israel to Christianity, and imposed sanctions on converts (Ben-Dor 1994, 74–82). They represented the community in attempts to establish contact with Jewish communities outside of Ethiopia (Waldman 1989, 109–116, 125–128, 184–185). In 1862, Abba Mähäri, a high-ranking Beta Israel monk, led an unsuccessful exodus aimed at reaching Jerusalem (Ben-Dor 1987).

Beta Israel oral tradition attributes the foundation of this monastic movement to the fifteenth-century monk Abba Sabra. One version of this oral tradition views Abba Sabra as a member of the Beta Israel community,

2 The term “Ethiopian Orthodox” will be used to refer to the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church, the national church of Ethiopia.

who decided to withdraw from the world due to the calamities which befell his community. A second version sees him as a Christian who, impressed by the religious devotion of the Beta Israel, decided to join their community (Ben-Dor 1985, 41–45). Ethiopian Orthodox hagiographies of Christian monks mention interactions with groups which have been identified with the Beta Israel or their predecessors, and, in one case, speak of a monk explicitly joining such a group (Conti Rossini 1919–20, 567–577; Kaplan 1983). Coupled with the similarity between Ethiopian Orthodox and Beta Israel monastic practices (Shelemay 1989) and the above-mentioned oral tradition on Abba Sabra, scholars have attributed a Christian origin to Beta Israel monasticism (Kaplan 1992, 69–73; Quirin 1992, 66–68; Shelemay 1989, 81–83). The Beta Israel community, on the other hand, sees this monastic movement as an internal Beta Israel development.[3]

Beta Israel monasticism drastically declined during the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Reasons for this decline include famine (1888–1892, see Kaplan 1990a; 1992, 143–154), armed conflict, and political unrest (see, for example, Erlich 2007). These calamities drastically reduced the population in the northern Ethiopian Highlands, including the areas inhabited by the Beta Israel. In addition, Christian missionaries active among the Beta Israel from the mid-nineteenth century criticized this monastic movement and its representatives (Kaplan 1987; 1992, 116–142). And, finally, efforts made by representatives of World Jewry to encourage the Beta Israel to adhere to Orthodox (Rabbinical)

3 The Beta Israel tradition attributing a Christian origin to Abba Sabra was narrated by Yona Boggalä and Tä'ammərat Amanu'el (Ben-Dor 1985, 42; Leslau 1974, 624–626). During the course of interviews with the religious leadership of the Beta Israel community, conducted in the years 2014 to 2017 as part of research on Beta Israel monasticism, the results of which are still being processed, it has become clear to the present authors that the tradition attributing a Christian origin to Abba Sabra is virtually unknown within present-day Beta Israel society.

religious laws at the expense of their traditional religious practices (see, for example, Trevisan-Semi 2007) led to a partial abandonment of traditions with no Rabbinical Jewish parallel. Only one practicing Beta Israel monk immigrated to Israel (Odenheimer 2005; Tourny 2002), and only one of his students is currently pursuing a monastic life.

While Beta Israel monasticism thus no longer exists as a widespread phenomenon, numerous sources shed light on its history and characteristics. These include late nineteenth and twentieth century accounts of encounters with Beta Israel monks, written by scholars (see, for example, d'Abbadie 1851; Leslau 1951, xxi–xxvii), missionaries (see, for example, Payne 1972, 21, 85; Stern 1968, 195–197, 207–208, 244, 248–253, 259–260, 279–280, 282–283, 295), and representatives of World Jewry (see, for example, Faitlovitch 1959, 69, 79–81; Halévy 1994, 43–45, 50) active among the Beta Israel. There are also texts written or edited by the Beta Israel community religious rather than historiographic in nature.[4] The Beta Israel oral tradition as well as the personal experiences of the elders of the community and its religious leaders, many of which have met with Beta Israel monks in the past, is of paramount importance to the study of this monastic movement.

Numerous studies dealing with the Beta Israel have been conducted (Kaplan and Ben-Dor 1988; Salamon and Kaplan 1998), but relatively few deal with Beta Israel life prior to the twentieth century, and even fewer

4 Modern scholarship has recognized the role of Beta Israel monks in the composition and editing of Beta Israel religious texts (Kaplan 1990b; 1992, 73–77). The Beta Israel oral tradition attributes the composition of several Beta Israel prayers to these monks (Halévy 1994, 45; Kaplan 1992, 72–73). Therefore, such texts can potentially shed light on Beta Israel monasticism.
Only one known account of Beta Israel history written by a member of the Beta Israel community could possibly predate the twentieth century (Leslau 1947). A number of historiographical accounts dealing, in part, with Beta Israel monasticism have been written down by members of this community in recent years (Asres Yayeh 1995; Gobäze Baroḳ 2007; Ḥädanä Täqoyä 2011).

with Beta Israel monasticism. The latter include the monumental works of Kaplan (1992), Shelemay (1978; 1989), and Quirin (1979; 1992). These focus primarily on the Ethiopian context of Beta Israel monasticism, and on the religious and leadership roles of the monks. A number of studies, such as those conducted by Ben-Dor (1985; 1987), Leslau (1951), and Tä'ammərat Amanu'el (published by Leslau, 1974), shed light on the acts of individual monks and on the location and layout of specific monasteries. The material culture[5] associated with Beta Israel monasticism, the location and layout of Beta Israel monasteries, and the physical, concrete aspects of the lives of the monks (with the exception of their role in liturgy performance) have, however, not been comprehensively studied before. In fact, only one archaeological study of Beta Israel material culture has ever been published (Klein 2007), and this study does not deal with monasticism. In December 2015, a team working under the auspices of the European Research Council project "Jews and Christians in the East: Strategies of Interaction between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean" (JewsEast), based out of Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany, conducted a first mission towards this purpose.[6] This article will present some of its results. It will hopefully be the first of a number of field seasons conducted as part of research focusing on the material culture and physical lives of Beta Israel monks.

---

5 This term is used to refer to objects made or utilized by people with the understanding that assemblages of such objects are indicative of and comprise part of the culture of the people who made use of them. In the context of this article, it is used to refer to structures and items used in domestic and religious settings.

6 The field season was headed by Dr. Verena Krebs of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and based on preliminary research conducted by Bar Kribus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Permission to conduct fieldwork in Ethiopia was granted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Semira Mohammed of Addis Ababa University served as interpreter and conducted many of the interviews. Ismail Ibrahim served as driver. Chen Zeigen prepared some of the maps used to plan the fieldwork. Abebe Asfaw Tadege translated a number of interview recordings.

Locating the Beta Israel Monasteries North of Lake Tana

The material culture of the Beta Israel in general and of their monastic movement in particular is a virtually untapped source with the potential of shedding significant light on Beta Israel monastic practices.[7] As the location of Beta Israel monasteries as well as that of the majority of the villages inhabited by the Beta Israel have not been documented in a manner that enables precise identification, the attempt to study Beta Israel material culture in Ethiopia must begin with pinpointing the locations of the above-mentioned sites.[8]

The Beta Israel traditionally resided in the Northern Ethiopian Highlands in an area extending from the lowlands west of Lake Tana through the regions north of this lake and the Səmen Mountains to the vicinity of the town of Aksum in Təgray (fig. 1). Beta Israel monasteries existed in virtually all regions inhabited by the Beta Israel, with the possible exception of Təgray province[9] and provinces in which the Beta Israel settled in modern times, such as Lasta and Goǧǧam.

---

7 For recently published examples of the use of material culture to shed light on various societies and groups, see Insoll 2015; Wynne-Jones 2016.

8 Only one systematic effort to map the location of villages inhabited by the Beta Israel is currently known—the World ORT census which was carried out in 1976. Unfortunately, the map compiled as part of this survey is schematic and devoid of topographic features. No Beta Israel monastery location had ever been pinpointed with precision on a map prior to the 2015 field season.

9 In an informal conversation with a Beta Israel priest from Təgray, which took place in Jerusalem on the 31st of October 2013, the priest was asked whether he knew of Beta Israel monasteries in Təgray. His response was that there were no such monasteries in that region. Rather, individuals from Təgray who wished to be trained as priests would travel to monasteries in the Səmen Mountains and receive their training there. Two documented examples of this phenomenon have been identified by the present writers: Qes Käśate Mənase (interviewed 31 March 2016) served as a priest in Wälqayt, a region neighboring

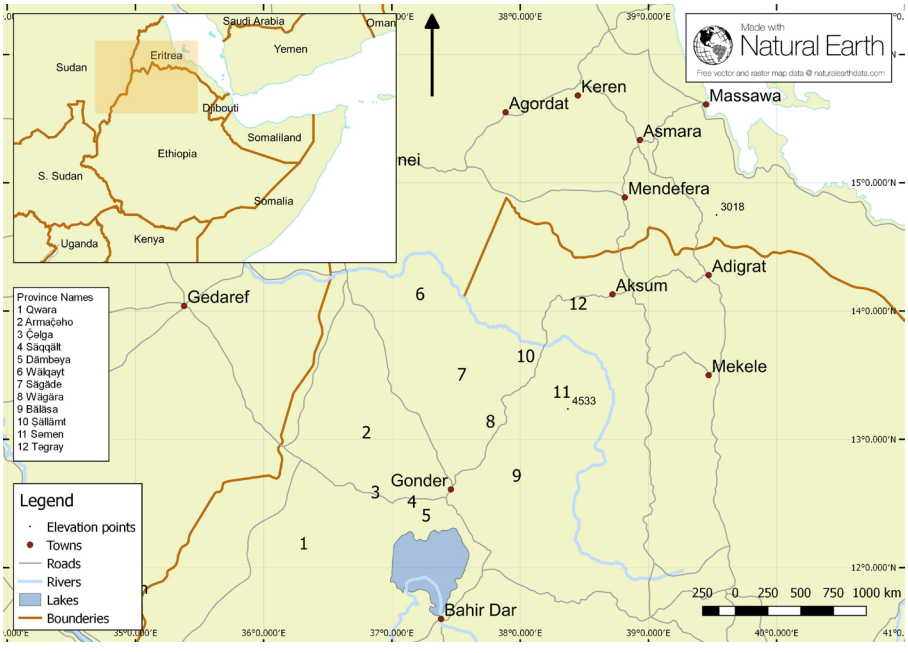

FIGURE 1 Areas inhabited by the Beta Israel in pre-modern times. Made with Natural Earth (Free vector and raster map data @ naturalearthdata.com)

Beta Israel monasteries were typically composed of a number of huts serving as dwellings for the monks, similar in form to the typical rural dwellings (*goǧo*) of the region in which they were situated; a prayer-house (*mäsgid*)[10] which, in some cases, served both the monks and the lay community residing near the monastery; and an enclosure wall or fence, delimiting the monastery and enabling the monks to maintain ritual purity within it. These monasteries were typically situated in the immediate vicinity of villages inhabited by the Beta Israel or, less commonly, within a

Təgray. He received his training in the monastery of Səmen Mänaṭa, located in the Səmen Mountains (fig. 2). *Mämhər* Yəsḥaq Iyasu from Təgray studied in the same monastery (Ben-Dor 1985, 33).

10 The term *mäsgid* is derived from the Geʿez root SGD, which means “to bow” or “to worship by prostration”.

distance that would still enable frequent contact with the laity.[11] Eyewitness accounts of visits to Beta Israel monasteries often name the village in the vicinity of which the monastery was located (see, for example, Faitlovtich 1959, 69; Leslau 1951, xxv–xxvi). Therefore, the first, crucial step in locating the remains of the monasteries is locating these villages.

An examination of written accounts of visits to Beta Israel monasteries and of information regarding such monasteries narrated by members of the Beta Israel community, conducted prior to the 2015 field season, revealed information regarding the location of fifteen distinct places in which Beta Israel monks resided.[12] Of these, eleven are explicitly described as either monasteries or dwelling places of several monks. Whether the remaining sites were monasteries in the full sense of the term or rather dwelling places of individual monks remains to be determined. An examination of historical and modern maps led to the identification of localities bearing names identical or nearly identical to those of the villages in which seven of the monastic sites were situated, and located in the same regions as these villages (fig. 2).[13] Hence, it is likely that the monastic sites were located in these localities or in their immediate vicinity.

---

11 For a discussion regarding the characteristics of Beta Israel monasteries, see Kribus forthcoming a. All documented information regarding Beta Israel monasteries appears in written sources which date to the second half of the nineteenth century or later and in oral accounts narrated during the second half of the twentieth century or later (see above). This information thus sheds light on Beta Israel monasticism as it existed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It may be that, prior to this time, some of the characteristics of these monasteries were different. However, addressing this issue requires further research.

12 A discussion regarding all 15 sites and the sources dealing with them is beyond the scope of this paper, and will be held in future publications. (For examples of such sources, see Faitlovitch 1959, 69, 79–81; Halévy 1994, 44–45; Leslau 1951, xxii–xxvi).

13 Information regarding the precise location of three additional monastic sites, Teyber, Doro Wəḫa and Səmen Mänaṭa, obtained and examined following the 2015 season, has enabled

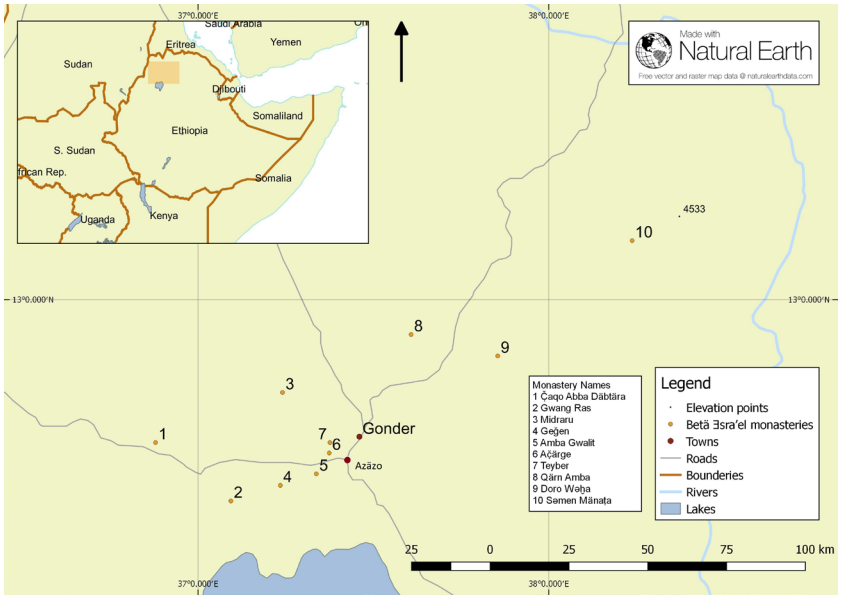

FIGURE 2 Estimated location of Beta Israel monasteries. Made with Natural Earth (Free vector and raster map data @ naturalearthdata.com)

Seven of the sites explicitly identified as monasteries are located in areas easily accessible from the Azäzo-Č̣əlga road, not far from the central town of Gonder: Ačärge, Zär'a Wärq, Amba Gʷalit, Goraba, Gʷang Ras, and Mədraru in the Säqqält region, and Č̣aqo Abba Däbtära in the neighboring Č̣əlga region. Place-names identical to those of all but two of these sites, Zär'a Wärq and Goraba, have been identified on the maps examined. Due to the relatively large concentration of sites in a well-defined area

us to pinpoint their estimated location on the map. Thus, ten (rather than seven) sites appear on the map.

easily accessible from a main town and the relative wealth of information regarding these sites, it was decided that the regions of Säqqält and Č̣əlga would be an ideal focal point for fieldwork aimed at locating and studying Beta Israel monasteries.

The 2015 season was, first and foremost, a preparatory season aimed at laying the groundwork for future fieldwork. Hence, the amount of time which could be devoted to fieldwork was relatively limited. The outbreak of hostilities between different groups residing in the Č̣əlga region, which coincided with this season, severely limited the possibility of travel to the monastic sites: the Azäzo-Č̣əlga road was completely closed off at Azäzo, and numerous individuals informed us that travel throughout Säqqält was not safe. Looking into Beta Israel monasteries in other regions was not

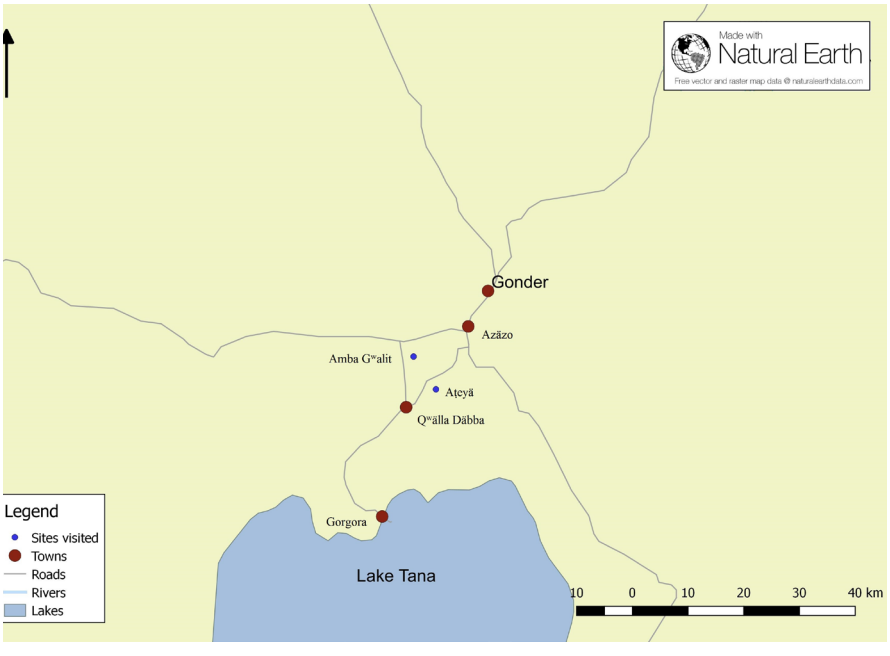

FIGURE 3 Location of Amba Gʷalit and Aṭeyä. Made with Natural Earth (Free vector and raster map data @ naturalearthdata.com)

feasible at the time for a variety of logistical and security-related reasons.

The remaining option was attempting to reach relevant sites from the one main road in the vicinity of Säqqält which remained open—the Azäzo-Gorgora road (fig. 3). Information obtained in Gonder indicated that the village of Amba Gʷalit, the possible location of a Beta Israel monastery, was accessible from this road and relatively safe. The location of an additional monastic site, Ačärge, was unknown at the time, but in one of the maps examined,[14] a village by the name of "Adi Cirgie" appeared in the vicinity of this road. It was surmised, due to the similarity of the two names, that the village of "Adi Cirgie" and the village of Ačärge may be one and the same.[15] Therefore, we decided to attempt to reach both sites.

The aim of visiting the sites was to try and obtain information regarding the exact location of the Beta Israel monasteries within them, identify the monastery remains and additional elements of Beta Israel material culture in general, and determine the feasibility of more detailed research at the sites in the future. Collection of potential archaeological finds or detailed mapping were not possible, as these would have required additional permits. Structures and structure remains observed during fieldwork were later identified on satellite images, enabling the documentation of their exact location and general layout (see below).

Plans for future fieldwork include a preliminary survey aimed at identifying additional Beta Israel monastic sites, followed by a detailed survey of key sites. The information gathered, complemented by information obtained from the Beta Israel community and from people living in the vicinity of the monastic sites, will enable a better understanding of the

14 Great Britain. War Office. General Staff. Geographical Section. *East Africa 1:500,000.* Map. London: War Office, 1947.

15 It was only following the 2015 field season that the village of Ačärge was located by us on the ORT 1976 census map (see above) north of the Azäzo-Č̣əlga road, hence disproving this identification.

layout and characteristics of Beta Israel monasteries and the way of life of Beta Israel monks. It is hoped that a comparison between finds examined in monastic sites and those typical of non-monastic contexts will enable a better understanding of the characteristics of Beta Israel monastic material culture. In addition, a comparison of finds from Beta Israel monastic sites with finds uncovered in datable archaeological contexts could potentially enable the dating of different monastic sites and further an understanding of their development over time. Therefore, the examination of non-monastic Beta Israel material culture as preserved in Ethiopia was deemed a secondary objective of the field trip and will serve, in addition to monastic material culture from non-Beta Israel contexts, as a framework within which the examination of Beta Israel monastic material culture can be examined.

This fieldwork was of paramount importance in determining the viability of future research on Beta Israel material culture: the typical rural dwellings of the north-western Ethiopian Highlands are largely built of perishable, organic materials. All significant Beta Israel communities had immigrated to Israel during the second half of the twentieth century; it was thus unclear to what extent identifiable remains of their material culture had remained *in situ* and to what extent the non-Beta Israel inhabitants of the region would welcome such research and volunteer information on the Beta Israel. Additionally, due to the similarity between the dwellings of Beta Israel monks and dwellings of the laity, it was unclear whether it would be possible to differentiate between such dwellings in the sites examined. This is further complicated by the fact that Beta Israel monasteries were typically located within or near villages, adjacent to dwellings of laymen. During the 2015 field season, it was conclusively proven that these potential difficulties could be overcome, as will be demonstrated below.

Each of the two sites visited will be treated separately. An overview of the reasons leading to our selection of the site will be followed by a general

description of its geographical setting and sub-sections describing the different features examined within it.

Textual Sources Hinting at a Possible Beta Israel Monastery at Amba Gʷalit

The study of textual sources, such as travel accounts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has proven invaluable in the attempt to pinpoint the location of Beta Israel monasteries and examine their characteristics. In 1897, Ethiopian missionaries, employed by the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, journeyed to a number of villages inhabited by the Beta Israel in Säqqält and wrote an account of their journey (Wandem Huning Negoosie 1898). Regarding their visit to Amba Gʷalit, they wrote:

> After a day's march we reached Amba Qualit, the large village of the High Priest; inhabited only by Falasha [Beta Israel] priests. There are no females, as all priests are unmarried. Having passed the night at a Christian village, two hours' distance, the next day, their Sabbath, we made our appearance, after they had finished with their synagogue ceremonies.

This description would indicate that a Beta Israel monastery had existed in Amba Gʷalit at the time: prior to initiation as priests, Beta Israel novices would commonly receive their training from the monks at a monastery.[16]

16 During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, due do the decline of the Beta Israel monastic movement, Beta Israel priests gradually assumed the roles of the monks as trainers and consecrators of the clergy.

Following the successful completion of their training, they could either choose to marry and become priests, or to remain celibate and become monks. Marriage was thus one of the conditions of initiation into the priesthood (Kribus, forthcoming b). Beta Israel monks were often referred to as priests, and monastic leaders as high priests (Faitlovitch 1959, 69, 79–81, 90; Flad 1869, 32; Stern 1968, 249). Therefore, it would seem that the above-mentioned description, which refers to a high priest as well as a place inhabited only by priests, and to these priests being unmarried, would indeed actually refer to a monastery.

The Jewish emissary Jacques Faitlovitch (1959, 67–75, 83–85, 87–89) resided in the village of Amba Gʷalit for three months in 1908 and wrote extensively about his stay there. He does not mention a monastic community, but rather twenty-three Beta Israel families, and writes: "The community has a large *mäsgid*, famous for its religious scholars, the *däbtära*."[17] In contrast, he describes a Beta Israel monastery in the nearby village of Goraba (Faitlovitch 1959, 69).[18] Elsewhere, Faitlovitch (1959, 32, 72) mentions *däbtära* Baroḵ as the priest and head of the *mäsgid* in Amba Gʷalit. This priest is one of the most prestigious Beta Israel religious leaders of recent generations, Abba Baroḵ Adhənän (Gobäze Baroḵ 2007, 15).

The Baroḵ family is well-known within the Beta Israel community. Several religious leaders came from its ranks. Abba Baroḵ Adhənän, who may be considered the founding father of this dynasty of religious leaders, was a native of Amba Gʷalit. His descendants recount that he lived as a

17 Faitlovitch 1959, 67. The Geʿez term *däbtära* refers to a tabernacle or tent and is derived from the Greek *διφθέρα* (leather used as a tent). The term is also used to refer to unconsecrated religious scholars and cantors, often also renowned for their skill as healers and scribes. The position of *däbtära* exists both in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and among the Beta Israel (Kaplan 2005; Shelemay 1992).

18 We had hoped to be able to visit Goraba during the field trip, but were informed that the security situation did not enable this.

hermit in the wilderness for forty years, until he was instructed in a dream to renounce the monastic life, return to his home village, marry, have children, and serve as a priest. After the third occurrence of this vision, he reluctantly acted as he was instructed. A number of his grandsons and great-grandsons currently serve as priests in Israel (Gobäze Baroḵ 2007, 5–6).

Faitlovitch's description therefore indicates that during the time of his visit, a monastery did not exist in Amba Gʷalit, but the village's place of worship was prestigious and its clergy renowned and affiliated with Beta Israel monks.[19] Assuming the missionaries' description, predating Faitlovich by eleven years, is indicative of a monastery, it remains to be determined when exactly and why this monastery ceased to be active.

The Evidence from Amba Gʷalit

We arrived in Amba Gʷalit on December 12, 2015. Upon arriving, we were greeted by a number of the village's inhabitants,[20] who informed us that

19 In his book, Qes Gobäze Baroḵ (2007, 5) mentions a monk by the name of Abba Aräyane who served as the teacher and mentor of Abba Baroḵ Adhənän. Faitlovitch (1959, 69), in his account of his visit to the monastery at Goraba, remarks that a monk by the name of Abba Aryen was the head of the community. The similarity of the name and proximity of Goraba to Amba Gʷalit may indicate that the head of the monastery and Abba Baroḵ's mentor were one and the same. This suggestion is given further weight by the account of Qes Ḥädanä Täqoyä (2011, 124), who states that a monk by the name of Abba Aräyane, who was from the region of Armač̣əho, was one of the monks who met with Faitlovitch at Goraba.

20 The dynamics of our interaction with the inhabitants of Amba Gʷalit during this preliminary visit did not allow for a proper documentation of the names of individual informants or a clear documentation of which of the informants had narrated each portion of information. According to the locals, we were the first research team they encountered and the first group of *färäñǧ* (Western Foreigners) in a generation's time. Thus, we were

they well remembered the Beta Israel community which formerly resided in the village and kindly offered to show us where they had resided and different features associated with them. We visited the Beta Israel cemetery and prayer-house, both of which are described below.

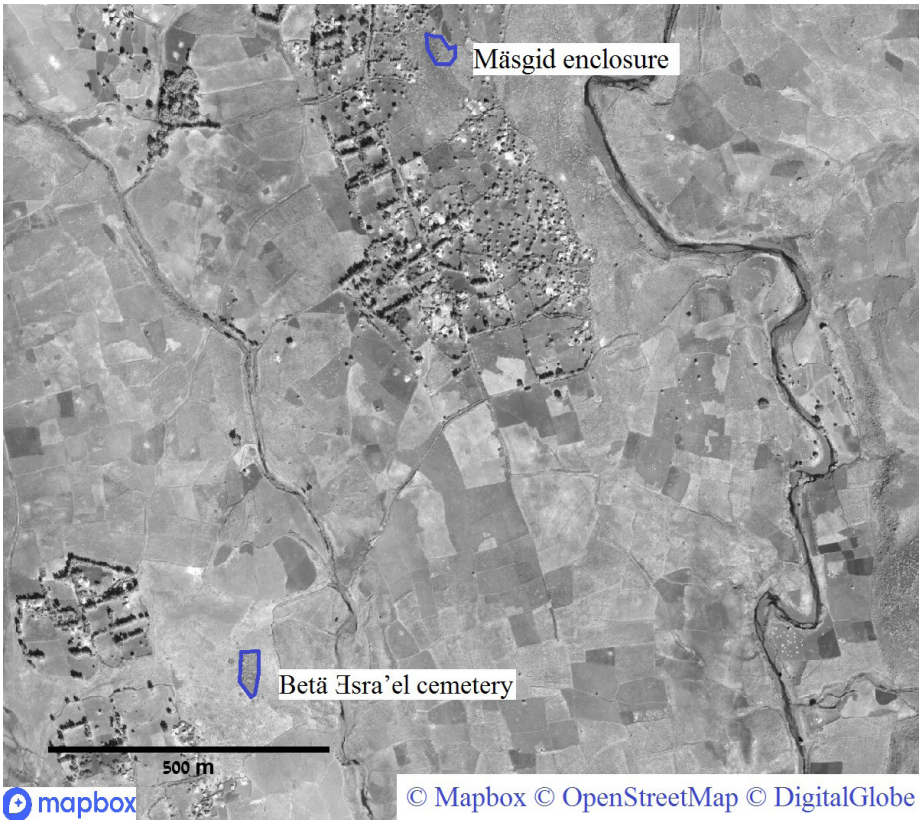

FIGURE 4 Amba Gʷalit, satellite image (© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap © DigitalGlobe)

greeted by numerous people, who accompanied us and volunteered information, with some joining and others departing over the course of our visit. We hope to conduct more thorough ethnographic field work and in-depth interviews with relevant individuals in the near future.

Amba Gʷalit: The Beta Israel Cemetery

The village of Amba Gʷalit is composed of a number of clusters of domestic dwellings, located on hilltops, with numerous homesteads and cultivated fields surrounding them (fig. 4). The Beta Israel cemetery is situated in a valley east of the road leading from Qʷälla Däbba to Amba Gʷalit. It is surrounded by a stone enclosure wall, delimiting a roughly quadrangular area with a maximum extent of 79 meters north to south and 29 meters east to west (fig. 5).[21] No gate leading into the enclosed area was visible. According to ʾAvišai Baroḵ (personal communication), a member of the Beta Israel community and of the Baroḵ family mentioned above, due to the impurity of cemeteries and the emphasis of Beta Israel religious practice on the maintenance of purity, members of this community do not commonly visit burial sites. The walls erected by members of the Beta Israel community around the community's cemeteries in Ethiopia in recent years serve solely to protect and preserve the burials. Thus, no gateway allowing regular access is needed. Our informants recounted that the enclosure wall as well as the tombstones (see below) were erected by members of the Beta Israel community residing in Israel in recent years. The vast majority of burials were marked by heaps of stone, as was the tradition of the Beta Israel prior to the twentieth century. A

FIGURE 5 Beta Israel cemetery, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

21 In accordance with the permit obtained, no detailed mapping was carried out during this field trip. The measurements presented here are derived from an examination of satellite images on Google Earth.

number of twentieth-century tombstones were identified, featuring the names of the deceased in Amharic, the language of the Beta Israel inhabitants of the region,[22] as well as their year of birth and year of death. Significantly, the tombstone of the renowned Beta Israel religious leader and former monk, Abba Baroḳ Adhənän (see above), was among those identified (fig. 6).

FIGURE 6 Tombstone of Abba Baroḳ Adhənän (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

Amba Gʷalit: The Beta Israel Prayer-House

Identifying the *mäsgid* was of paramount importance in the attempt to locate the remains of the Beta Israel monastery. A *mäsgid*, while not always situated within the enclosure wall delimiting such a monastery, is nevertheless one of its crucial components. In addition, the missionary account which indicated that a monastery had existed in the village (see above) mentioned that the priests, or potentially monks, had just finished service in the synagogue when the missionaries presented themselves to them.

After establishing that our informants at Amba Gʷalit had not heard of a Beta Israel monastery ever having existed in the village (though they were familiar with the Beta Israel monastery at the nearby village of Goraba and mentioned the names of a number of Beta Israel monks), we asked them

22 In a gradual process which culminated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Amharic, the colloquial language of the Ethiopian Orthodox population of Amhara region, gradually replaced the dialects of Agäw languages spoken by different ethnic and religious groups in this region, including the Beta Israel (Appleyard 2003).

about the village's *mäsgid*. Our informants recounted that this *mäsgid* was a central Beta Israel holy site, and had been a place of pilgrimage for the Beta Israel who had resided in the entire region. They specified that only Beta Israel men were allowed inside and that the locality in which the *mäsgid* was situated was known as Gağena.[23] Assuming this information is correct, the sanctity of the site beyond that of a typical *mäsgid,* as well as the prohibition of women from entering it (contrary to common practice regarding Beta Israel houses of prayer, see Flad 1869, 44; Leslau 1951, xxii–xxiii), increases the likelihood that this is indeed the site of a former monastery. Several Beta Israel monasteries founded or inhabited by prestigious monks are known to have been considered holy places by the Beta Israel community and to have served as pilgrimage sites (Ben Dor 1985). Both men and women would conduct pilgrimage to such sites, but there is at least one documented case where separation between them within the holy site is indicated (Faitlovitch 1959, 79).

The *mäsgid* is located on a hilltop to the north-east of the cemetery and is surrounded by an enclosure wall delimiting an area with a maximum

23 A locality by the name of Geğen, traditionally one of Abba Sabra's stops on his way from the court of the Solomonic monarch Zär'a Ya'əqob (1434–1468) to Mt. Huhʷara, where he established the first Beta Israel monastery (Ben Dor 1985, 43–44), is described by Tä'ammərat Amanu'el as "the most renowned *masgid* [*mäsgid*]" (Leslau 1974, 636). However, the identification of the site of the Amba Gʷalit *mäsgid* with Geğen is doubtful, as Geğen is described as being near Gʷang Ras, the source of the Gʷang river, and a locality bearing that name in the general vicinity of this river appears in a number of topographical maps of the region (see fig. 2). In a list of Beta Israel villages narrated in 1848 to D'Abbadie (1851–1852, 260–262) by Abba Yəsḥaq, the head monk of the monastery of Huhʷara, and by his disciple Ṣagga Amlak, a locality by the name of Gağena is mentioned. Neither Geğen nor Amba Gʷalit are mentioned in that list. Therefore, while it could very well be that this mention refers to the former, the possibility that it refers to the latter should be taken into account.

extent of 51 meters from north to south and 37 meters from east to west.[24]

FIGURE 7 Foundations of the Beta Israel prayer-house, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

The stone foundations of the circular prayer-house structure—a shape typical for both post-sixteenth century Ethiopian Christian churches as well as Beta Israel *mäsgids*—are six meters in diameter (fig. 7). Rubble and overgrowth made it impossible to discern during our visit whether walls dividing the interior of the *mäsgid* existed. No additional architectural features were visible within the enclosure.

Amba Gʷalit: Blacksmith Tools Affiliated with the Beta Israel

FIGURE 8 Hammers used for blacksmithing, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

In recent generations, the livelihood of members of the Beta Israel community residing in the Gonder area was commonly based on the practice of blacksmithing, weaving, and the manufacture of ceramic vessels (Quirin 1992, 134–137). One of our informants offered to show us objects which had originally belonged to former Beta Israel

24 It should be noted that several plots on the hilltop on which the *mäsgid* is situated, and, indeed, throughout the village are delimited by enclosure walls. Therefore despite the fact that such a wall was one of the typical characteristics of Beta Israel monasteries, it cannot serve, in this case, as proof of the existence of such a monastery at Amba Gʷalit.

FIGURE 9 Chisels used for blacksmithing, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 10 Tong used for blacksmithing, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 11 Bellows used for blacksmithing, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

inhabitants of the village. These, kept in his home, were blacksmith tools. While it cannot be conclusively proven that these specific items originally belonged to members of the Beta Israel community, it stands to reason that items utilized in the practice of crafts commonly associated with this community would reflect, to some extent, the characteristics of the actual items used by its members.

The tools which we were shown included two metal hammers with wooden handles (*medosha*, fig. 8); two metal chisels with wooden handles (*selet mawuča* / *mored*, fig. 9); a metal tong (*guṭet*, fig. 10); two bellows comprising a bag made of animal skin, with a nozzle composed of a wooden intermediary tube attached to a metal tube (*wonaf*, fig. 11); and an anvil, composed of a wide metal rod bent to form a convex surface (*neṭaf*, fig. 12).[25] The preservation of such items, as well as the knowledge displayed by our informants regarding their usage, demonstrate that even at present, more than three decades after the beginning of the Beta Israel mass migration to Israel in 1984, information

25 The Amharic names of the blacksmith tools were related by our informants and transcribed by Abebe Asfaw Tadege, using common spelling by Amharic native speakers, based on a recording of the relevant interview.

FIGURE 12 Anvil used for blacksmithing, Amba Gʷalit (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

on a variety of aspects of Beta Israel life in Ethiopia is retained by this community's former neighbors.

It should be stressed that the above-mentioned tools can be considered indicative of the material culture of the Beta Israel in general, rather than of their monastic movement in particular. As stated above, examining general aspects of Beta Israel material culture as preserved in Ethiopia is an important first step in shedding light on Beta Israel monastic material culture and the difference between it and the material culture of the laity.

Aṭeyä: Evidence of Preserved Beta Israel Material Culture

On December 14, 2015 we attempted to reach the text-documented Beta Israel monastery of Ačärge, which we believed, at the time, to be situated at the locality marked on one of the maps of the region as "Adi Cirgie" (see above). According to the relevant map, this locality is situated in the vicinity of the Azäzo-Gorgora road, and was thus the only targeted site in the vicinity of Gonder other than Amba Gʷalit which we could safely reach. Upon arriving in the vicinity of the relevant area, we asked for directions. The people whom we asked were unfamiliar with a village by the name of "Adi Cirgie" or Ačärge, but, once asked about places inhabited by the Beta Israel, recounted that there was such a village nearby and offered to take us there. Thus, we arrived at the village of Aṭeyä, which was formerly home to a Beta Israel community. As in the case of Amba Gʷalit, the current

inhabitants of the village vividly remembered their Beta Israel neighbors and offered to show us Beta Israel-related sites.

FIGURE 13 Aṭeyä, satellite image (© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap © DigitalGlobe)

The modern village of Aṭeyä is situated at the northern foot of a hill, south of an intensely cultivated plane which is traversed by the Azäzo-Gorgora road (fig. 13). According to our informants, the Beta Israel dwellings had been situated on a terrace south of the present village. And indeed, both the Beta Israel cemetery and the prayer-house remains are situated in the vicinity of that terrace.

Aṭeyä: The Beta Israel Cemetery

The Beta Israel cemetery at Aṭeyä (fig. 14) is, similar to that of Amba Gʷalit, surrounded by an enclosure wall delimiting a roughly quadrangular area measuring 42 meters northwest to southeast and 48 meters northeast to southwest. It is situated south of the present village, on the lowest part of the eastern slope of the above-mentioned hill. As in Amba Gʷalit, it is surrounded by an enclosure wall with no entrance gate. According to our informants, it was built by members of the Beta Israel

FIGURE 14 Beta Israel cemetery, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

community in Israel. The burial sites within the compound were marked with heaps of stones. A number of modern tombstones, similar to those we had seen at the Amba Gʷalit cemetery, had also been erected.

Aṭeyä: Beta Israel Dwellings

FIGURE 15 Foundations of a Beta Israel dwelling, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

Following our visit to the cemetery, we were led by our informants to a wide, natural platform to its north-west. There, a series of stone foundations of circular structures (see fig. 15) were identified by them as remains of Beta Israel dwellings. Further fieldwork is necessary in order to document these remains. At least in the case of Aṭeyä, the existence of such undisturbed foundations contradicts the possible assumption that such dwellings would have been appropriated by the present inhabitants, or their building materials re-used. In actuality, the remains *in situ* enable one to clearly identify the dwellings' locations and dimensions.

Aṭeyä: The Beta Israel Prayer-House

The remains of the structure identified by our informants as the Beta Israel *mäsgid* is located at the top of the hill towering over the village (fig. 16). The complete outline of the structure's wall is impossible to trace on the

surface. However, a rounded corner, from which two walls extend (one to the south and one to the southwest) is visible. Clearly, this structure, unlike other known examples of a Beta Israel *mäsgid*, did not have a circular floor-plan.

FIGURE 16 Remains of Beta Israel *mäsgid*, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

Aṭeyä: Objects Affiliated with the Beta Israel

As in the case of our visit to Amba Gʷalit, our informants in Aṭeyä volunteered to show us objects that had previously been made or used by the Beta Israel. These included blacksmith tools and pottery vessels. The tools (fig. 17) were similar in form to those we had seen at Amba Gʷalit and included a hammer, a chisel, a tong, two bellows (fig. 18), and an anvil. The ceramic vessels included two larger storage jars (*ənsəra*) and two smaller jars. Though the dynamics of our visit did not enable us to take measurements of the vessels, we can provide a detailed description that may assist future scholars studying the history of ceramics in the region, and specifically ceramic types utilized by the Beta Israel community: [26]

26 For a discussion of ceramic vessels associated with Beta Israel material culture in the Gonder area and a preliminary typology of such vessels, see Klein 2007, 201–277. A comprehensive typology of medieval and modern ceramic types in the Gonder area has not yet been published. Hence, the precise chronology of the types mentioned

FIGURE 17 Demonstration of usage of blacksmithing tools: a metal rod held over an anvil with a tong and struck with a hammer, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 18 Bellows used for blacksmithing, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

All vessels were potted out of ware ranging in color from reddish-brown to dark purple, and were polished inside and out. The two storage jars were similar to each other in form: both have flaring neck with a simple rim, a globular body and four horizontal loop handles on the shoulder. One jar (fig. 19) features three concentric incised lines below the rim, three concentric bands of appliqué at the base of the neck, and two concentric bands of appliqué on the shoulder, extending between the handles. The other (fig. 20) features a concentric band of appliqué with thumb impressions below the neck and a concentric band of appliqué on the shoulder, extending between the handles. Similar vessels are known to have been used in the Gonder area in modern times (see Klein 2007, figs. 6.1: d, 6.3: b; de Torres 2017, fig. 24). Significantly, vessels nearly identical in form and decoration have been produced by Beta Israel potters in a ceramics workshop in Be’er Sheva, Israel, in recent years (fig. 21).

A third jar (fig. 22) is smaller and features a short neck with a thickened rim, a globular

above is yet unknown. For a study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ceramic types in this area, see de Torres 2017.

body, and two vertical loop handles on the shoulder. Decoration includes two incised, wavy parallel lines below the neck and two concentric, incised lines extending between the handles. A fourth jar (fig. 23), smaller than the previous three, features a flaring neck with a simple rim and a pear-shaped body.

Pottery is one of the most common finds in archaeological excavations and is commonly used in archaeological research in order to date the occupation of sites, distinguish between different groups, and shed light

FIGURE 19 Jar attributed to the Beta Israel, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 20 Jar attributed to the Beta Israel, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 21 Jar, Beta Israel ceramics workshop, Be'er Sheva (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 22 Jar attributed to the Beta Israel, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

FIGURE 23 Jar attributed to the Beta Israel, Aṭeyä (B. Kribus/V. Krebs)

on the activities which took place in different spaces within a site. It is hoped that the future examination of ceramic assemblages from Beta Israel monastic sites and their comparison with assemblages originating in non-monastic Beta Israel sites and in contemporary non-Beta Israel sites will shed further light on Beta Israel monasticism.

Was There a Beta Israel Monastery at Aṭeyä?

No indication that a monastic community had ever resided at Aṭeyä was obtained during our visit, and the lack of mention of such a monastic community in all sources pre-dating Beta Israel immigration to Israel examined so far is notable. However, Qes Ḥädanä Täqoyä (2011, 210–212) published a list of Beta Israel monks which includes their places of origin and burial places. As some of the names appearing in the list are of priests, the identity of each individual as a monk should be verified. Four individuals are listed in relation to Aṭeyä: one lived and was buried there, one lived there and passed away in Israel,[27] and two lived elsewhere and were buried there. Therefore, the possibility that a monastic community had resided in the village cannot be discounted and should be further investigated in the future.

27 Famously, only one practicing Beta Israel monk immigrated to Israel (see above), and he is not the individual listed. Therefore, it is not likely that the listed individual was a practicing monk when he immigrated.

Conclusions

While the number of sites visited during the field season was much smaller than initially hoped for and a variety of factors limited the type and duration of the fieldwork carried out in these sites, the results of the field season can significantly contribute to the study of the material culture of Beta Israel monasticism.

First, it was demonstrated that, contrary to what was initially expected, foundations of both Beta Israel prayer-houses and dwellings were well-preserved and undisturbed by the present inhabitants of the sites visited. Therefore, the study of structures built and utilized by the Beta Israel is possible not only in Təgray province, where structures are typically built primarily out of stone, but also in the Gonder area, where organic materials are typically used in the construction of dwellings, albeit over a stone foundation.

Second, it was demonstrated that, at least in some cases, the former neighbors of the Beta Israel can serve as an invaluable source of information regarding the Beta Israel community, which used to dwell in their vicinity. The people we encountered in the sites visited helpfully volunteered such information and pinpointed Beta Israel-related sites.

And third, two sites which merit further research, both of which are rich in Beta Israel material culture remains, have been identified and the main relevant features within them documented.

As demonstrated by this field season, the information preserved in written sources regarding Beta Israel monasticism is detailed enough to enable the identification of the villages in which Beta Israel monasteries existed. However, identifying the monastery compound within the village or its vicinity is another matter entirely. Due to the similarity of monastic dwellings to the dwellings of the laity, and the typical existence of several

areas surrounded by enclosure walls in the villages of the northern Ethiopian Highlands, it is virtually impossible to identify a Beta Israel monastic compound based solely on the architecture of its components, unless a *mäsgid* is identified within or adjacent to it. This highlights the importance of oral accounts—both from the Beta Israel community residing in Israel and from the rural communities living in the vicinity of Beta Israel-related sites in Ethiopia. It was with the help of such informants that all the sites visited during the field season were pinpointed.

Fortunately, only a few decades have passed since the Beta Israel immigrated to Israel, and there are still informants to be found who can contribute firsthand information regarding their lives in Ethiopia. However, if this information is not thoroughly documented in the next few decades, many aspects of Beta Israel monasticism and of Beta Israel material culture, history, and life in Ethiopia in general will forever remain obscure.

Acknowledgements

The 2015 field season could not have been carried out without the aid and support of a number of individuals, including Prof. Steven Kaplan, Prof. Joseph Patrich, Prof. Alexandra Cuffel, Sophia Dege-Müller, Prof. Rodolfo Fattovich, Dr. Luisa Sernicola, Prof. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, Semira Mohammed, Ismail Ibrahim, and Chen Zeigen. We would like to thank Abebe Asfaw Tadege, Andreu Martinez, Ebrahim Damtew, and the staff of the Department of History and Heritage Management at Gondar University for their advice and their willingness to collaborate in future research.

This field season was funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement no. 647467 – JewsEast); as well as by the Jack, Joseph

and Morton Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The research on Beta Israel monasticism, which this field season is a part of, is also supported by the Ben-Zvi Institute, the Ruth Amiran Fund for Archaeological Research in Eretz-Israel, the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Hebrew University, as well as the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University and the Center for the Study of Christianity at the Hebrew University. We wish to thank the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism for granting us permission to conduct this research.

Reference List

d'Abbadie, Antoine. 1851–1852. "Réponses des Falashas dit Juif d'Abyssinie aux questions faites par M. Luzzato." *Archives Israélites* 12: 179–185, 234–240, 259–269.

Appleyard, David. 2003. "Agäw: Agäw Languages." In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica,* vol. 1, edited by Siegbert Uhlig, 139–142. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Qes Asres Yayeh. 1995. *Traditions of the Ethiopian Jews.* Thornhill, Ontario: Kibur Asres.

Ben-Dor, Shoshana. 1985. "Ha-Meqomot ha-Qədošim šel Yehudey 'Etiyopiyah." [The Holy Places of Ethiopian Jewry] *Pe'amim* 22: 32–52.

———. 1987. "Ha-Masaʿ lə-ʿEver 'Ereṣ Yisra'el: Ha-Sipur ʿal Abba Mahari." [The Journey towards Eretz Israel: the Story of Abba Mahari] *Pe'amim* 33: 5–31.

Ben-Dor, Shoshana. 1994. “Ha-Qəšarim šel Yehudey ’Etiyopiyah ʿim ha-Melex Teywodros.” [The Ties between the Jews of Ethiopia and the Emperor Tewodros] *Pe’amim* 58: 67–85.

Conti Rossini, Carlo. 1919–1920. “Appunti di storia e letteratura falascià.” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 8: 563–610.

Erlich, Haggai. 2007. “Mahdists.” In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica,* vol. 3, edited by Siegbert Uhlig, 657–659. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Flad, Johann Martin. 1869. *The Falashas (Jews) of Abyssinia*, translated by S.P. Goodhart. London: William Macintosh.

Faitlovitch, Jacques. 1959. *Masaʿ ’el ha-Falašim* [Journey to the Falasha]. Tel Aviv: Devir.

Qes Gobäze Baroḵ. 2007. *Beyt ha-Kəneset ’Abuna ’Aba’ Ṣabra. Be’er Ševaʿ* [The Abuna Abba Sabra Synagogue. Be’er Sheva]. Be’er Sheva: Mulu Gobäze Baroḵ.

Qes Ḥädanä Täqoyä. 2011. *Mə-Gondar lə-Yerušalayim. Moṣa’am, Toldoteyhem ve-Qorot Ḥayeyhem šel Yehudey ’Etiyopiyah* [From Gondar to Jerusalem: The Origin, History and Lives of the Jews of Ethiopia]. Beit Shemesh: Mishkan.

Halévy, Joseph. 1994. “Masaʿ bə-’Eṯiyopiyah lə-Giluy ha-Falašim.” [A Journey to Ethiopia to Discover the Falasha] *Pe’amim* 58: 5–66.

Insoll, Timothy. 2015. *Material Explorations in African Archaeology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaplan, Steven. 1983. “Lə-Toldot Beyta’ Yisra’el (ha-Fa’la’šim) – mitox ‘ha-Ḥayyim’ šel ’Abuna’ Ṭa’qlah Ha’wwa’riya’t.” [A Source for the History of the Bētä Esra’ēl (Fälasha) – From the ‘Life’ of Abunä Täklä Hawaryat] *Pe’amim* 15: 112–124.

———. 1987. “The Beta Israel (Falasha) Encounter with Protestant Missionaries: 1860.1905.” *Jewish Social Studies* 49: 27–42.

———. 1990a. “Kifu Qen: The Great Famine of 1888–1892 and the Beta Israel (Falasha).” *Paideuma* 36: 67–77.

———. 1990b. “Meḥqar ha-Sifrut šel Beyta’ Yisra’el: Hesegim və-Yeʿadim.” [The Literature of the Beta Israel: Retrospect and Prospect] *Pe’amim* 41: 90–111.

———. 1992. *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia. From the Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century.* New York: New York University Press.

———. 2005. “Däbtära.” In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica,* vol. 2, edited by Siegbert Uhlig, 53–54. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Kaplan, Steven, and Shoshana Ben-Dor, eds. 1988. *Ethiopian Jewry. An Annotated Bibliography.* Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Klein, Rebecca A. 2007. “We Do Not Eat Meat with the Christians: Interaction and Integration between the Beta Israel and Amhara Christians of Gonder, Ethiopia.” PhD diss., University of Florida.

Kribus, Bar. Forthcoming a. “The Layout and Architecture of the Monasteries of the Betä Ǝsra’el (Ethiopian Jews) – Preliminary Observations.” *Ityoṗis.*

Kribus, Bar. Forthcoming b. “Betä Ǝsra’el (Ethiopian Jewish) Monasticism and Ethiopian Orthodox Monasticism in Ethiopia: A Comparison.” In *Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Patrich*.

Leslau, Wolf. 1947. “A Falasha Religious Dispute.” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 16: 71–95.

Leslau, Wolf. 1951. *Falasha Anthology.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Leslau, Wolf. 1974. “Taamrat Emmanuel’s Notes on Falasha Monks and Holy Places.” In *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume,* edited by Saul Lieberman, and Arthur Hyman, 623–637. Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research.

Odenheimer, Micha. 2005. “Šuvo šel ’Aba’ Beye’neh.” [Return of Abba Beyene] *Haaretz*, June 10, 2005. http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1018370.

Payne, Eric. 1972. *Ethiopian Jews: The Story of a Mission.* London: Olive Press.

Quirin, James. 1979. “The Process of Caste Formation in Ethiopia: A Study of the Beta Israel (Felasha), 1270–1868.” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 12: 235–258.

Quirin, James. 1992. *The Evolution of the Ethiopian Jews. A History of the Beta Israel (Falasha) to 1920.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Salamon, Hagar, and Steven Kaplan, eds. 1998. *Ethiopian Jewry. An Annotated Bibliography 1988–1997.* Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi.

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1978. “Rethinking Falasha Liturgical History.” In *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies,* edited by Robert L. Hess, 397–410. Chicago: Office of Publication Services, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1989. *Music, Ritual, and Falasha History.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1992. “The Musician and Transmission of Religious Tradition: The Multiple Roles of the Ethiopian Däbtära.” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22: 242–260.

Stern, Henry Aaron. 1968. *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia. Together with a Description of the Country and its Various Inhabitants.* London: Frank Cass.

de Torres, Jorge. 2017. “Sherds of a Kingdom: Historical Pottery of the Lake Tana Region (Northern Ethiopia).” *African Archaeological Review* 34: 225–248.

Tourny, Olivier. 2002. “Abba Bayenne. Le dernier moine juif éthiopien.“ *Cahiers d’ethnomusicologie* 15: 89–96.

Trevisan-Semi, Emanuela. 2007. *Jacques Faitlovitch and the Jews of Ethiopia.* London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell.

Waldman, Menachem. 1989. *Meʿever lə-Naharey Kuš. Yehudey ’Etiyopiyah və-ha-ʿAm ha-Yehudi* [Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia. The Jews of Ethiopia and the Jewish People]. Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense.

Wandem Huning Negoosie. 1898. “A Missionary Journey in Abyssinia.” *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* April: 53–56.

Wynne-Jones, Stephanie. 2016. *A Material Culture. Consumption and Materiality on the Coast of Precolonial East Africa.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oral Sources

Qes Käśate Mənase, Interviewed by Bar Kribus, March 31, 2016.

Layout: Jan Wenke. Typeset: Karolin Sengebusch, Julia Reiker