



Polygenetic Errors in the Ethiopic Witnesses of The Epistle to the Galatians

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Article info

Received Date: 6 April 2023

Accepted Date: 2 Mei 2023

Published Date: 1 January 2024

Keywords:*

polygenetic errors, critical edition, innovations, transposition, banalization, metathesis

Abstract*

As part of the preparation of a critical edition of the Epistle to the Galatians in its Ge'ez version one needs to examine various manuscripts. Exploring 16 Ge'ez manuscripts the author has collated all types of variants and come up with the hypothesis of three different groups of Ethiopian manuscripts as far as the Epistle to the Galatians is concerned. Just as some variants like Galatians 6:14 help to identify groups of manuscripts, the majority of variants are not caused by scribal dependence on earlier manuscripts. In other words, the innovations and errors are polygenetic, namely the fruit of independent scribal activities. This article presents such variants, classified according to transposition, banalization, incongruity of grammatical number, omission of letters, polar errors, and metathesis.

1. Introduction

When one examines the Ethiopic version of the letter to the Galatians, one finds a major divergence of variants on Galatians 6:14. Accordingly, one may identify three groups:

Group A: "to me, the world is dead, and I am dead to the world".

Group B: "on his account, the world is crucified unto me, and I, too, am crucified to the world".

Group C: "On his account the world is crucified to me and I am crucified to the world, because of Jesus Christ; to me the world is dead, and I am dead to the world"

The version of Group B seems to be a literal translation from the Greek or from a version very close to the Greek. The Greek manuscripts say in fact $\epsilon\mu\acute{o}\iota\ \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega\tau\alpha\iota,\ \kappa\alpha\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \tau\omega\ \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omega;$ "by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Of the many variants extant in the manuscripts, the one just mentioned above is of major importance and may help in reconstructing the history of the text of the letter to the Galatians. On the other hand, other variants which we may reflect polygenetic errors are relatively trivial. This research, part of a doctoral dissertation on the Ethiopic version of the Epistle to the Galatians, consists, among others, of preparing a critical edition and an annotated translation of the above-mentioned text.

Now, while all errors, including polygenetic errors, are shown in the critical apparatus of the edited text, this article aims at showing the latter through Figures and inviting the scholar to comments. It is known that polygenetic errors, which can be committed easily, are frequent; they can appear independently in several witnesses. These include transposition, banalization, and incongruity of grammatical number, omission of letters, polar errors, and metathesis.

The following figures show these features as attested in the manuscripts of the Epistle to the Galatians.

The manuscripts which are examined for this research are the following ones.

- 1) ChelekotSilasie004 = CH4; 2) UNESCO 02_027 = U02_027; 3) DagaStephen = DS
- 4) MaqalaMikael165= M165; 5) ChalakotSilasie14, = CH14; 6) MaqalaMikael167 = M167;
- 7) AddisAlem29 = AD29; 8) AddisAlem38 = AD38; 9) AddisAlem 48=AD48; 10) AddisAlem64= AD64; 11) EMIP02772_UNESCO 1_27= U1_27; 12) UNESCO10_28 = U10_28; 13) Kiddus Giyorgis = GI, UNESCO 1_5= U1_5; 14) UNESCO1_27 = U1_27; 15) Patriarchs' Library= PL; 16) ChelekotSilasie115= CH115

2. Research Method

This research uses a philological qualitative method to produce a critical edition of the Ethiopic text of the letter to the Galatians. In the process one major step is to identify relevant manuscripts ranging from the 15th to the 20th century. Based on the collected data, that is followed by the transcription of the chosen manuscripts. The next important step is the collation in order to identify all the variants which will be the basis for the classification and detection of manuscript groups and families.

Based on the identification of relevant variants, the research applies the principles of philology or textual Criticism, in order to trace the textual history of the Epistle to the Galatians according to the Ethiopic version.

More specifically, this paper has focused on the results of one portion of this research, namely the identification of variants and their evaluation. Accordingly, one would see whether the cause of a variant is scribal error or intention innovation. Besides, there is also a difference between polygenetic or monogenetic errors. In the latter case, we are dealing with innovations which are done purposely because the transcribers consulted other sources or thought it better to amend a given text. In the case of polygenetic errors, the variants are not intentional and are not telling us the family relationship between manuscripts. It is important to see the philological principles that help the research to distinguish between the two types of errors. Thus, the rational and the relevance of examining the polygenetic errors, which is the topic of this paper.

Figure 1

1. Transposition

A copying error in which there is a reversal or alteration of the position or order of words or phrases in the Epistles of Galatians.

The following list is full of transpositions of phrases and sentences. For better understanding of how some families commit transposition, the original reading is also presented in the Figure.

Chapter and Section	Reconstructed Text	Transposition	Family/Ms/Mess
Chapter 1 3	‘Asara Zi’āna Tələwu	Tələwu Zi’āna	‘Asara DS
3	M’al’āh’ə Maḥara Kəmu	Maḥarakəmu M’al’āh’ə	AD 48
5	’Afaqədə Lasabə’ə	Lasabə’ə ’Afaqədə	CH 4
8	Kā’əba Tamayaṭəku	Tamayaṭəku Kā’əba	CH 115,
Chapter two 1	Kā’əba ’Iyarusālēmə	’Iyarusālēmə Kā’əba	AD 29
Chapter Three 3	’Abərəhāmə ’Aməna	’Aməna ’Abərəhāmə	PL, U1_27
10	Zagəḥa Maşəḥafə	Maşəḥafə Zagəḥa	CH 115, U10_28
Chapter 4 2	Wuludə ’Anətəmu	’Anətəmu Wuludə	CH 115, U10_28
5	’Aḥawin	’Asətabaqu’akəmu	AD48
14	’Asətabaqu’akəmu Yə’əzē ’Aḥawin	Aḥawin ’Aḥawin Yə’əzē	AD 38, M167, CH 4
Chapter 5 1	Kā’əba ’Asama’ə	’Asama’ə Kā’əba	CH 115, U10_28
4	Kamākəmu konaku	Konaku Kamākəmu	U10_28, AD 48, AD 29, M165
7	Tətəbāləu Watətənāsaku	Tətənāsaku Watətəbāləu	U1_27
11	Bamanəfasə Nəḥəyawu	Nəḥəyawu Bamanəfasə	CH 115, U10_28
Chapter 6 1	Zasəḥəta ’Amənəkəmu	Amənəkəmu Zasəḥəta	U1_27, M167, AD 38, GI,
2	Wakulo Yāmakərə	Wayāmakərə kulo	CH 115, U10_28

Figure 2

2. Banalization*

In the course of copying a ms./mss., giving the equivalent translation or preference of using the alternate form of the expression (for a word, verb, noun, adjective etc.) is a frequent phenomenon by scribes. Banalization occurs while one makes a text plainer. Still some copyists may apply it

* Banalization, in this section, is used to describe synonymous readings or slight change of meaning

unconsciously. Their minds put the alternate lexeme randomly. They then simply substitute it. Banal errors are easy to be repeated independently. They are categorized under polygenetic errors. Let us examine the attested banal errors in EG families and mss.

Chapter and Section	Reconstructed Text	Banalization	Family/ms/mss
Chapter 1 1	Wa'ikona	Wa'i'əmanəgala	U10_28, CH 115
1	Za'ənəbala	Dā'əmu	U10_28, CH 115
1	'əgəzi'əna	'əmə'iyasusə	U10_28, CH 115
1	Rə'əso	Nafəso	PL,U02_027, U10_28, CH 4
2	'Anakərakəmu	'ənagərakəmu	PL, AD 64
2	Za'ikona	Za'ihalo	CH 115
2	Za'ikona	Wa'aləbo	DS
2	Yə'al'əwu	Yəwalətu	U10_28, CH 115
2	Təməhərəto	Təməḥərəto	DS, M167
2	Za'ənəbala	Wabāḥətu	U10_28, CH 115
2	'ələwa	Bā'əda	DS
3	Zi'ana	Zi'ahu	AD 48
3	'Aśara	Fakāda	U10_28, CH 115
3	Maharakəmu	Nəgərakəmu	CH 14, M165, U 1_5, AD 38,
3	Maharakəmu	Maḥarakəmu	DS,AD 64, U1_27, AD 48
4	'Abē qadāmi	Waṭanəku Kədəma	U10_28, CH 115
5	Na'amənə	'Aḥəsəśə	U10_28, CH 115
5	'Adəlu 'Ikonəku Gabəro	'Aśəmərəta Sabə'ə	U10_28, CH 115
5	Gabəro	Gəbəro	AD 64

5	Sabə'ə	bə'əsi	U10_28, CH 115
5	Wa'amanəzazəkəwomu Fadəfāda	Watagādāləkəwo mu Tərufa	U10_28, CH 115
6			U10_28, CH 115
6	Ḥəzəbəya	Wanagadəya	U10_28, CH 115
6	Baḥəga 'Ab'awuya	Latəmərəta 'Abawuya	U10_28, CH 115
6	Wa'ama Śaməra	Wasoba Faqada	U10_28, CH 115
7	Kama Yətə'āwaqə	Kama Yāgəhə	U10_28, CH 115
7	'Italawuku	'Ikaśatəku	U10_28, CH 115
8	Wa'i'āragu	Wa'iḥorəku	U10_28, CH 115
8	Waḥorəku	Tafanoku	U10_28, CH 115
9	Wa'iya'amərə Bā'əda	Wa'irə'iku Kālə'ə	U10_28, CH 115
9	Başāḥəku Dawala	Ḥorəku Mədəra	U10_28, CH 115
9	'Abəyāta Kərəsətiyānātə	Māḥəbara Mə'əmanānə	U10_28, CH 115
9	Wadā'əmu	Wabāḥətu	U10_28, CH 115
9	Yəsabəkə	Yəmēhərə	U10_28, AD 48
Chapter 2	Şədəqa	Ṭəyāqē	U10_28, CH 115
2			
2	Kama YəŞənā'ə	Kama Yə'əmanu	DS
3	Dā'əmu	Z'ən'ətu	U10_28, CH 115
3	Dā'əmu	Zayətəmālə	PL
4	Wawu'ətu	Wazəku	U10_28, CH 115
4	Za'arədə'o	Zaradə'o	AD 64
5	'Ama	Soba	CH 115

5	Taqāwaməkəwo	Tazālafəkəwo	U10_28, CH 115
5	Gə'əzəwo	Yaḥaməyəwo	U10_28, CH 115
5	Gə'əzəwo	Gə'əzəkəwo	CH 14, U02_027
5	'Adawə	Sabə'ə	U10_28, CH 115
8	Wa'əmasa	Wa'əlasa	DS, CH 4
8	Wa'əmasa	Wanəḥənani	U10_28, CH 115
9	'Amasakē	Wabāḥətu	U10_28, CH 115
9	'Anəsakē	Wayə'əzəsa	U10_28, CH 115
10	Rə'əso	Nafəso	U10_28, CH 115
Chapter 3	Manu 'Aḥəmaməkəmu	Manu qanə'a	U10_28, CH 115
1		La'əl'əkəmu	
1	Başədəqə	Bakərəsətəsa	U10_28, CH 115
1	Dā'əmu	Nagara	U10_28, CH 115

Figure 3

3. Incongruity of Grammatical Number

Grammatical number: In some of the Mss of Epistles of Galatians, we can see a plural instead of the singular of the original text, or vice versa, or else the form of the plural is different. The following Figure lists many of these cases:

Section	Reconstructed text	Change of singular/plural	Family/mss/ms
2	Zaşawu'ākəmu	Şawu'aukəmu	DS
4	Maharənākəmu	Maharakamu	CH 115
5	Na'amənə	'A'amənə	AD 48
5	Sabə'ə	Bə'əsi	U10_28, CH 115
9	'Abəyāta	Bēta	AD29,AD38,U10_28

Chapter 2	Bāḥəṭitəya	Babāḥəṭitəna	DS, U02_027
1			
2	Wa'iyāgabarəkəwo	Wa'iyāgabarəwo	DS, U02_027
5	Farəhomu	Fariho	U10_28, CH 115

Figure 4

4. Omission of letters

There are also other mechanical errors that are attested in copying the Mss of EG. Some of these change the meaning, some do not. Let us examine the following.

Omission of a letter

Section	Reconstructed text	Omission of a letter	Family/mss/ms
Chapter 1	'Aḥāwina	'Aḥāwi	U10_28, CH 115
1			
1	'Agəzi'abəḥərə	'Agəzi'abə	AD 38
3	Maharənākəmu	Mahanākəmu	M167
5	Wa'ihimaharuniyo	Wa'imaharuniyo	AD 48, GI, U02_027
5	Wafaqada	Wafaqa	M165
Chapter 2	'Anəşokiyā	'Anəşoki	AD 38
5			
6	'əmasakē	Sakē	M165
Chapter 3	'Aḥadu	'Adu	DS
9			
Chapter 4	'Aḥāṭə'ə	'Aḥāṭə	U1_27
9			
10	Daqıqa	Daqa	U02_027
Chapter 5	Wa'itəṭəḥamayu	Wa'itəḥamayu	M165
11			

Figure 5**5. Polar Error**

The copyist writes a word whose meaning is diametrically opposite to what he read in his exemplar. Some of these involve the negative morpheme ኢ; others involve lexical antonyms. In general such errors may be unintentional. The following are some of the polar errors found in EG.

Section	Reconstructed text	Polar error	Family/mss/ms
Chapter 1 5	Samā'əkəmu	'Isamā'əkəmu	CH 14
Chapter 2 3	Wa'iyāgabərəkəwo	Wa'agabarəwo	DS
7	'əməfəṭəratəna	'əməṭabāyə'ina	U10_28,CH115
Chapter 3 7	Wa'iyətəkahadə	Wa'iyətəkāhalə	CH 14

Figure 6**6. Metathesis**

Its existence is evident in Ge'ez. The common example of metathesis is the verb nāsākā/nākāsä “he bites” (cp. Moscati, 1964: 63)[†]. Furthermore, dāqhaqādha “he inaugurates” can also be an example in this regard (cp. Dillmann, 1864: 460, 1098; Leslau, 1987: 139, 420). Some mss. of EG preserve these forms. The following cases are cited from the critical edition of the Epistles of Galatians

Section	Reconstructed text	Metathesis	Family/mss/ms
Chapter 9	Təwuzəfətə	Təzəwufətə	PL, U02_027

Novelties

The identification, evaluation and presentation of polygenetic errors for the Ethiopic version of the letter to the Galatians are part of an original work, given that no critical edition has been prepared so far. This is not the case of all the other 26 books of the New Testament in Ethiopic. Besides, the examination of the polygenetic errors of the Epistle to the Galatians has enabled to distinguish types of variants and to discover the family groups of manuscripts which ranged from the 15th to the 20th century. Accordingly, as mentioned in the introduction, it is the examination and evaluation of the variants that enable the researcher to produce a critical edition, with a critical apparatus. The reader can thus appreciate how and why a given manuscript preserves a closer reading to the original Greek. Similarly, the reader can also understand what kind of

[†] Nevertheless, nākāsä “he bites” is Amharism according to Leslau, 1987, p. 397.

mistakes was made by scribes or transcribers. Mistakes sometimes can lead to other interesting variants worthy of study.

Acknowledgement

The author appreciates the persons who made available the PDF files of Ethiopic manuscripts which were then transcribed and examined during this research. Moreover, the author thanks various persons who help through their advice and insights during important discussion. This includes fellow students and PhD candidates in the Addis Ababa University.

Conclusion

As shown above we observe various types of errors in the examination of the Ethiopic manuscripts of the Epistle to the Galatians. The main phenomena concern transposition, banalization, disagreement of grammatical number, omissions of letters, polar errors, and metathesis. Nevertheless, these variants expressed in errors and innovations cannot to be used to affirm or exclude genetic relationship between manuscripts. One needs to find monogenetic errors or innovations that can be explained only by direct dependency of manuscripts. This is for instance the case in Galatians 6:14 where a variant is caused by direct and necessary dependence on a given manuscript.

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