

FALL
NEWSLETTER
2013

ILLUMINATIONS



HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

Celebrating 40 Years of the EMLL Project



Illuminations

CONTENTS

- 2 Director's Letter
- 3 Four Decades of EMML
- 7 Where We're Working
- 9 Manuscripts from HMML
Travel to Jerusalem
- 11 HMML News
- 14 Getatchew Haile Receives
Edward Ullendorff Medal

ON THE COVER: *A member of a masonry crew works to repair and rebuild the church at Mandaba Monastery on Lake Tana in 2013 during the most recent trip to Ethiopia by HMML Executive Director Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, and HMML Director of Digital Collections Wayne Torborg. The longevity and resilience of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are reflected in the 40-year-old EMML project, which has persevered through trying circumstances.*



ABOVE LEFT: *Women fill water containers at the village well at Yeba in Ethiopia's Tigray region. The town is home to an Ethiopian Orthodox church and the oldest standing structure in Ethiopia.*

ABOVE: *Hippos swimming in Lake Zway, 60 miles south of Addis Ababa. According to legend, the Ark of the Covenant was housed at the monastery of Debre Zion on one of the lake's islands.*

Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library's mission is to identify, digitally photograph, catalog, and archive endangered manuscripts belonging to threatened communities around the world. Having formed partnerships with over 540 libraries and archives, HMML has photographically preserved over 140,000 medieval, renaissance, and early-modern manuscripts from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and India. These resources, available through HMML's online catalog, OLIVER, and image database, *Vivarium*, have become essential tools for global manuscript research. HMML is the home of *The Saint John's Bible*.

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Illuminations is a publication of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and is published for scholars and friends of HMML twice per year.

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Set in the Junicod typeface.

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Dear Friends,

When I became executive director of HMML in 2003, one of my first meetings was with Dr. Getatchew Haile, Curator of the Ethiopia Study Center. Getatchew had long been one of my heroes, and I was eager to learn how we might resume the work begun by the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) in the 1970s.

Ethiopia has always been special for HMML because it was our first fieldwork outside of Europe. The vision—and courage—shown by Dr. Julian Plante and his advisors in the early 1970s are still impressive today. Back then HMML was a very small shop, operating out of basement quarters in Alcuin Library, focused on Latin manuscripts from Austria. To imagine a mission that stretched as far as the Horn of Africa and embraced a very different religious culture was by no means a natural extension of our founders' vision of a library focused on the Benedictine monasteries of central Europe, then on the front lines of the Cold War. You will read here about the success of EMML under very difficult circumstances.

Within months of that conversation with Getatchew I made my first visit to Addis Ababa. My main task was to find the microfilms from the latter stages of the EMML project. The civil war that engulfed Ethiopia in the late 1980s and early 1990s had made it impossible to copy the films or to send them to Minnesota. Only one set existed, and happily we found them at the National Archives and Library. We have also discovered, however, that many of the manuscripts filmed in the project have now disappeared. Fortunately, we have the microfilms.

The EMML has made us even more aware of the threats to manuscripts across the globe, threats which have only increased since those bold steps in the 1970s. These threats are why our new capital campaign is so important. We thank all of you for your support, and ask that you keep us in your thoughts, prayers, and in your giving as we move through this campaign.

Sincerely,

Columba Stewart, OSB

Columba Stewart, OSB
Executive Director



Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, surveys the remains of an ancient temple structure at Yeba in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The temple, built in the Sabaeen style and dated to around 700 BC, is the oldest standing structure in Ethiopia.

Four Decades of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library: A Story of Partnership, Resilience, and Success

By Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB

In December 1970, Professor Walter Harrelson, dean of the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University, asked to see His Holiness Abuna Tewofilos, acting patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Prof. Harrelson was looking for Ethiopian manuscripts; Abuna Tewofilos was worried about what was happening to those same manuscripts in a country without secure libraries but with a flourishing black market in cultural treasures. The Patriarch shared his vision of a comprehensive microfilming project that would create copies of all manuscripts in Ethiopia. He asked Harrelson, a distinguished scholar at a leading university, to use his knowledge and networks to help realize this great ambition.



projected to begin as early as autumn 1971, four committee meetings were required to establish the working procedures for the project before the camera started shooting in September 1973. In the meantime, His Holiness Abuna Tewofilos had made a memorable visit to the United States in May-June 1973 that included visits to both Vanderbilt and Saint John's.

Challenges

Just as EMLL's microfilming was finally getting underway, Ethiopia was beset by waves of popular protest and uprisings within the military over corruption and patronage. In June 1974, after months of unrest, the Emperor Haile Selassie, official patron of the project, was deposed (he would die a year later under mysterious circumstances). Ethiopia was declared a Marxist-Leninist state, and pressure began to mount against all church-related activities. Despite growing shortages of fuel and other essential supplies, the camera kept going as manuscripts were brought to Addis

Ababa for microfilming. The NEH stuck with the project, and with their support and other generous gifts HMML hired William F. Macomber and Getatchew Haile to undertake the immense work of cataloging the manuscripts preserved on the hundreds, then thousands, of reels of film arriving regularly in Collegeville. Haile, a leading scholar in Ethiopia, had escaped his native land after a life-threatening attack by the regime, and was soon able to bring his family with him to Minnesota. Together Macomber and Haile would rewrite the history of Ethiopic literature through ten published catalogs (volume 11 is almost complete). The decision of the Patriarch to allow copies of particular microfilms to be made for scholars who could not travel to either Ethiopia or Minnesota was a generous and transformative act that opened the riches of EMLL to a much wider audience in that pre-digital age.

Meanwhile, the situation in Ethiopia was growing worse. In 1979, Patriarch Tewofilos was arrested and then executed. The first director of EMLL in Addis Ababa, Sergew Hable Selassie, left for an academic post in Germany. The government completed its takeover of the project, and communication between the team in Ethiopia and their American partners grew more sporadic. Diplomatic strain between the governments of Ethiopia and the United States did not help. The NEH continued to support the cataloging work in Collegeville, and the Ford Foundation stepped in with grants directly to the Ethiopian government during the 1980s to keep the manuscripts coming to Addis Ababa for microfilming. Gradually, however, Ethiopia was being consumed by the civil war that ultimately led to the fall of the communist regime and then to Eritrean independence. In the aftermath of all of this chaos, the last EMLL photographs were taken in 1994.

Scope

In the late 1970s, it was estimated that there were 150,000 manuscripts in Ethiopia, of which 15 percent might be suitable for EMLL filming. The sheer quantity and the many copies of the same texts (a large number were simply copies of the favorite prayer book of Ethiopia, the Psalter, or Dawit) made selection imperative. The theory was correct but its application was a challenge: how to tell a monk that the manuscript he had spent days bringing to Addis Ababa was not worth filming?



ABOVE: Front-page newspaper coverage of the beginning of the EMLL microfilming project. Pictured with His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie are HMML's Julian Plante and Dean Walter Harrelson. FACING PAGE: His Holiness Abuna Tewofilos, acting patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (right), and Dr. Sergew Hable Selassie sorting Ethiopian manuscripts for microfilming in 1974.

When those first photographs were taken in September 1973, the studio was located in the capital, with the notion that the equipment could be moved to more remote locations later. However, the microfilm camera was not designed as a portable unit and hopes of obtaining a custom-made mobile microfilming setup were never realized. Right to the end of the project, therefore, manuscripts were brought by car to the EMLL studio in Addis Ababa, often accompanied by their guardians. Doing all of the photography in Addis limited both the scope and the selectivity of the project. Furthermore, the realities imposed by the deteriorating political situation in Ethiopia restricted the reach of the field teams to the central regions of the country.



ABOVE: At Yeba, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, a monastery wall is adorned with an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and numerous pouches used to carry Bibles and other manuscripts from place to place. BELOW: Fishermen in reed boats ply their trade on Lake Zway, south of Addis Ababa.

Those who have used the EMMML collection know that the quality of the microfilms varies greatly. The turnover of personnel and the many challenges of working in the uncertain environment of post-imperial Ethiopia were not favorable to consistent workflow. In the later stages of the project, difficulty in obtaining and maintaining the chemicals used for developing and stabilizing the films added yet another challenge to what had become an almost impossible task.

Despite unimaginable obstacles, the results of EMMML's work are impressive: between 1973 and 1994, some 9,600 manuscripts were filmed, including the oldest known copies of all of the books of the Ethiopic Bible. No serious scholarly publication about pre-modern Ethiopian history or religious culture fails to cite the manuscripts of EMMML. The cataloging begun by Macomber and continued by Haile has gradually unlocked the treasures contained in those thousands of reels of film, which continue to generate groundbreaking scholarship.

Finding the Missing Films

Reports from Ethiopia spoke of 9,600 microfilmed manuscripts, but only 8,000 had made it to Collegeville before shipments ceased in the late 1980s. Where were the others? Even in Ethiopia, after all of the turmoil of the 1990s, there was uncertainty about the location of the "lost" films. In 2003 I made my first trip to Ethiopia, 22 years after the last visit from a



LEFT: In 2005, HMML partnered with ArcaSearch, its microfilm scanning provider, to bring a scanner to Addis Ababa to digitize films that were never delivered to HMML. Here, Cal Sixta of ArcaSearch demonstrates the sophisticated device to a microfilm technician at the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia. BELOW: Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, with the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Matthias.



representative of HMML. Stephen Wolfe, now a member of the HMML Board of Overseers, accompanied me for that first reconnaissance mission. Our first task was to find those microfilms.

After asking around, we found stacks of film cans in a locker at the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia bearing project numbers beyond "EMML 8000." Here were the original negatives, the sole copy of 1,600 precious microfilmed manuscripts. Lacking the equipment to duplicate the films, the staff had been allowing researchers to use the microfilms, leaving many of them scratched and torn from being run through worn-out microfilm readers. After a lot of negotiation, planning, and complicated logistics, we managed two years later to scan the legible films, a saga you can read more about in the Spring 2007 issue of *Illuminations*. Since then HMML has participated in several other projects across Ethiopia as a way to continue the pioneering work of EMMML. You'll be hearing more about that work in future issues.

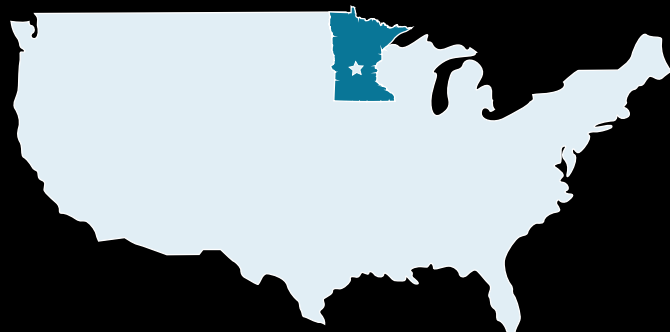
RIGHT: Dr. Amsalu Tefera, an Ethiopian scholar from Addis Ababa University, studied at HMML this past summer. He also presented at the "EMML @ 40" conference hosted by HMML in July to celebrate the anniversary. See more in the HMML News section on page 13.



Where We're Working

HMML by the Numbers
2013

1 Benedictine Monastery



HMML (originally named the Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library, later the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, and finally the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library) was founded in 1965 by Saint John's Abbey on the campus of Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Today, HMML has a staff of 11 in Collegeville, field directors in Beirut and Jerusalem, and teams of local residents trained to digitize manuscripts at preservation sites worldwide.

9 Countries with Active Manuscript Preservation Sites

HMML is currently preserving manuscript collections at sites in:

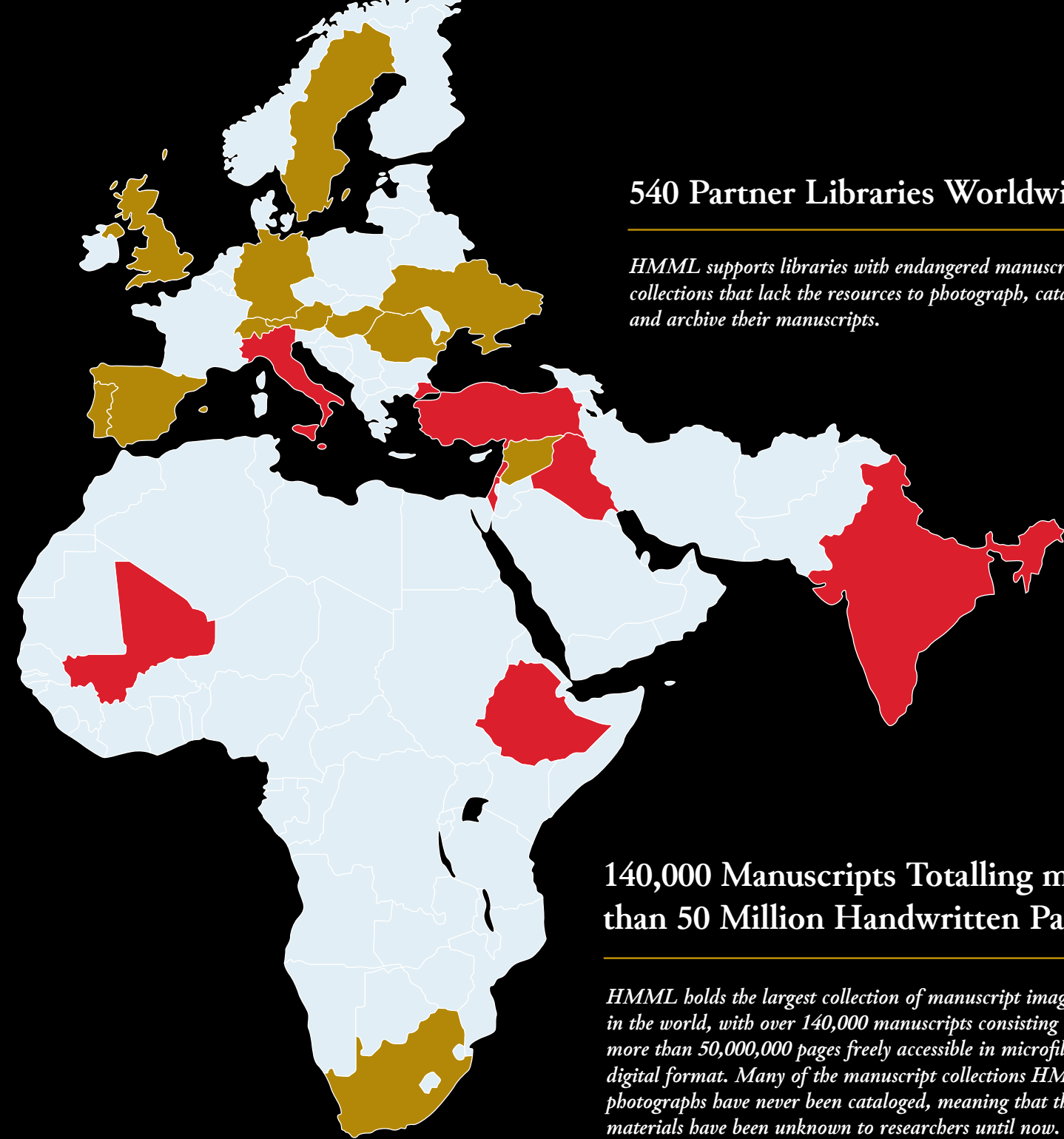


- Ethiopia
- India
- Iraq
- The Old City of Jerusalem
- Lebanon
- Mali
- Malta
- Rome
- Turkey

In its 48 years, HMML has completed manuscript preservation projects in:



- Austria
- England
- Germany
- Hungary
- Portugal
- Romania
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Ukraine



540 Partner Libraries Worldwide

HMML supports libraries with endangered manuscript collections that lack the resources to photograph, catalog, and archive their manuscripts.

140,000 Manuscripts Totalling more than 50 Million Handwritten Pages

HMML holds the largest collection of manuscript images in the world, with over 140,000 manuscripts consisting of more than 50,000,000 pages freely accessible in microfilm or digital format. Many of the manuscript collections HMML photographs have never been cataloged, meaning that the materials have been unknown to researchers until now.

Scholars around the world use the manuscript cataloging developed by HMML staff. HMML's online catalog, OLIVER, named for HMML's founder, Fr. Oliver Kapsner, OSB, contains well over 100,000 manuscript entries covering a quarter of a million texts. Recently-digitized collections are being cataloged by an international team, with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Arcadia Fund. Vivarium, HMML's free manuscript image database, provides thousands of sample manuscript images and a growing number of complete manuscripts. HMML is currently developing vHMML, an online environment for manuscript studies that will include training in paleography and codicology as well as rich resources for manuscript study.

Journeys Through Space, Time, and Traditions in Text:

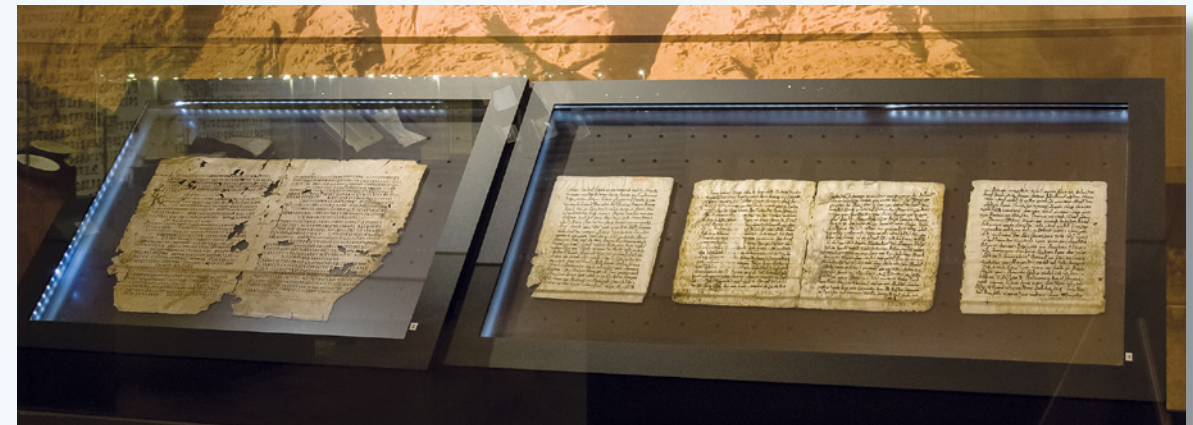
Manuscripts from HMML Travel to Jerusalem

By Heather Reichstadt, MPhil, BFA

Book of Books is an exhibition created by The Museum of the Bible (represented as *Verbum Domini* to the international public). It is being presented by the partner institution in Israel, The Bible Lands Museum of Jerusalem, now through the spring of 2014. The uniquely designed displays will serve to delineate the relationship between Jewish and Christian faiths by tracing the transmission of the biblical text over the last two millennia, spanning from the Judean wilderness to the nations of the world. The floor of the exhibition space itself is one large map, strategically designed to channel patrons from the beginning of the story (Ancient Israel) into North Africa, Europe, and so on.

Each “chapter” of this story represents another phase of transformation and transmission of the biblical text. Region by region, new cultures are introduced, which were both influenced by and have contributed to the shaping of the book we commonly refer to as the Bible, represented through texts of the region and objects of ritual. Much like the journeys of Paul, rabbi and apostle, these journeys through space and time will present the trajectory and transmission of text, language, and belief.

The loans granted by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) will be critical in representing two key areas in this journey—Egypt and Ethiopia. Both



of these regions demonstrate notable variants of scriptural interpretation and expression. The three HMML manuscripts which will be featured focus on a specific portion of the Bible, the book of Psalms, which is significant to Jews and Christians alike. The Egyptian manuscript, a large bifolium piece from a Coptic Psalter (a volume or collection of Psalms), is quite early and dates to the 9th century CE. The remaining two, also Psalters, are both of Ethiopian provenance and were produced in the modern era, between the 17th-19th centuries.

text to the nations of the world through modern vernaculars. However, displays such as these, featuring the book of Psalms (represented in the exhibition with early copies of the Septuagint from the 3rd-4th centuries CE, up to these medieval and modern Psalters of Egypt and Sub-Saharan Africa) are crucial for illustrating the preservation and continuity of those beliefs and values which have been shared between Jews and Christians for the last two millennia.

Heather Reichstadt, MPhil, BFA, is Curator for Verbum Domini's traveling exhibition, "Book of Books," Jerusalem 2013-14, and Curator of Antiquities for The Museum of the Bible, Oklahoma City.

Later areas of the exhibition will focus on significant topics such as canonization, the revolution of the printing press in Europe, and the spreading of the biblical

FACING PAGE: Medieval gallery featuring immersive environments created with enlarged manuscripts and a floor map of the holy land. Images courtesy of Moshe Caine Photography.

ABOVE: Two early Christian manuscripts, a bifolium from an early Coptic Psalter (9th century CE) loaned by HMML and the Codex Climaci Rescriptus (5th-9th centuries CE) from the Green Collection, both believed to have come from monasteries in Egypt and the Sinai.

RIGHT: Exhibition Curator, Heather Reichstadt, installs New Testament papyri with Cambridge University Library representative James Bloxam.



Click on the News heading at www.hmml.org to see a video of the exhibition space and interviews of the curators.



Political Commentator Cokie Roberts Visits HMML

Cokie Roberts, political commentator for ABC News, delivered the seventh annual Eugene J. McCarthy Lecture titled “Conscience and Courage in Public Life” at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, September 18, 2013 on the Saint John’s University campus. The lecture was sponsored by the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement, which serves the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University student and faculty community.

While on campus, Roberts spent some time at HMML and learned more about its manuscript preservation work in the Middle East. She was impressed with the scope of HMML’s work and said she has visited all the countries in which HMML is currently.

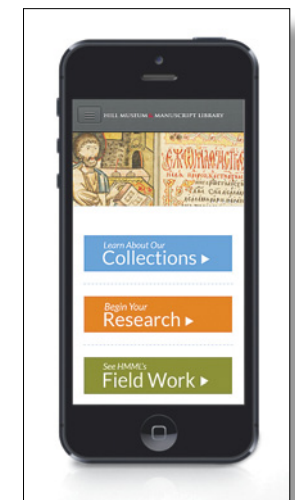


ABOVE: Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, greeting Cokie Roberts and HMML friend Corty Fengler.

“As a journalist, I have witnessed first-hand the destruction that wars and natural disasters can wreak on a community’s identity and cultural heritage,” she said. Roberts commended HMML for its efforts to help endangered communities save their handwritten manuscript heritage.

In December 2011, Roberts had presented HMML with the National Medal of Honor awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services—the highest award a library can receive in the United States.

HMML Website Gets Fresh Face, Provides Improved User Experience



The HMML website at www.hmml.org was republished this fall with an entirely new look. Visitors will find fresh content, visually rich pages, and streamlined navigation. The website also offers mobile-optimized viewing for hand-held devices and easy access to HMML’s online databases and resources without sacrificing functionality.

Enhanced social media sharing options have been added to news stories, while direct links from the website’s footer lead to all six social media sites HMML uses regularly to communicate with students, scholars, and researchers from around the world.

“We think users will now find our website more intuitive to navigate and much more visually appealing,” said Executive Director Father Columba Stewart, OSB. “We are excited about our renewed online presence, and the future updates yet to be revealed.”

New features will continue to be added to the website, especially as we move closer to the launch of vHMML (virtual HMML), the initiative to provide an entirely online environment for manuscript studies set to open in 2014. “The new user experience provided by our website is the herald to more online opportunities HMML plans to provide . . . [it is] a platform to

announce new content, programs, preservation projects, and milestones on the continual development of vHMML,” said Fr. Columba, who invites feedback on the site’s changes.



IMAGES: HMML’s redesigned home page shown on a computer and a smart phone. The mobile site allows users to click through to the full site from the footer link. The new look is carried throughout the website, including pages for HMML’s three curator-led study centers, like the Ethiopia Study Center’s main page shown above.

Fall 2013 Event Featured Presentation by Dr. Jack Tannous

Members of HMML's Millennium Club* and Legacy Society gathered at Mill City Museum in Minneapolis in September 2013 for a lecture given by Princeton University professor and renowned Syriac scholar, Dr. Jack Tannous (pictured). He presented "Why Manuscripts Matter: And How HMML is Revolutionizing Scholarship." Tannous has been a leading advocate for the scholarly possibilities opened by digital technology and a tireless promoter of HMML's work.



An enthusiastic and engaging speaker, Tannous drew the 85 attendees into the wonders now accessible through HMML's work of the past decade. Tannous is a gifted linguist with a particular interest in Syriac, the Eastern Aramaic dialect that for centuries was the literary lingua franca of many Christians in the Middle East. In his dissertation, Tannous bridged Byzantine, Islamic, and Eastern Christian history to examine the "moment in the early Islamic period when Syria was 'trilingual': when Greek, Syriac, and Arabic existed side-by-side as equals in a 'shared world' between Christians and Muslims." This is precisely the world of HMML's recent projects in the Middle East.

The full lecture will be posted on YouTube—follow the link from the footer of our website at www.hmml.org.

*Millennium Club members contribute \$1,000 or more to HMML annually. Legacy Society members have made a provision for HMML in their estate plans. Contact Erin Lonergan at elonergan@hmml.org to learn more.

EMML 40th Anniversary Celebration Hosted by HMML

In late July, HMML hosted "EMML @ 40: The Life and Legacy of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library," a conference to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) and to honor our long-time cataloger, Getatchew Haile.

A small but select group of scholars presented papers to an audience of HMML friends and newcomers from the area and the Twin Cities. HMML Executive Director Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, spoke on the early history of the EMML, and HMML catalogers Adam McCollum and Ted Erho reported on their discoveries within the collection. Haile's comments reflected upon the impact of EMML's 40 years of manuscript preservation work—both in microfilm and digital format. Scholars from Ethiopia, France, Germany, Canada, and the US were in attendance. Many of them, and several others who were not able to attend the conference, are contributing essays to a volume honoring Getatchew for his work with the EMML.

Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, HMML | *EMML: A Brief History and a Look Ahead*

Getatchew Haile, HMML | *A Fragment of the Aksumite Period of a Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*

Claire Bosc-Tiessé and Marie-Laure Derat, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris | *Towards an Archaeology of Manuscript Libraries around Lalibela (Begna-Lasta, 12th-21st cent.): Inventories of Books, History of Texts and Differential Preservation of Manuscripts*

Adam C. McCollum, HMML | *A Mass of Texts: The Witness of the EMML Project to Hagiographic Material in Ge'ez*

Amsalu Tefera, Addis Ababa University | *Gädlä Sarabamon: The Case of the Ethiopic Version*

Sophia Dege, Ethio-SPARE, Universität Hamburg | *The Aksimarios among EMML Manuscripts*

Curt Niccum, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas | *What has Athens to do with Addis Alem? Greek Biblical Scholarship's Renewed Interest in Ethiopic*

Ted Erho, HMML and Ludwig - Maximilians - Universität München | *Demographic Trends in the Manuscript Tradition of Ethiopic Enoch*

Council of the British Academy Bestows Edward Ullendorff Medal Upon Getatchew Haile

The Council of the British Academy has bestowed the Edward Ullendorff Medal on Getatchew Haile, PhD, cataloger emeritus of Oriental manuscripts and Regents Professor of Medieval Studies at HMML.

He was presented the award on November 14 at Carlton House Terrace in London. The ceremony included the Academy's other annual prizewinners.

Haile studied theology at the Coptic Theological College, Cairo (BA, 1957); social sciences at the American University, also in Cairo (BA, 1957); and Semitic philology at the Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Tübingen, Germany (PhD, 1962).

After teaching for more than ten years at the Haile Selassie I (now Addis Ababa) University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Haile and his family moved to Minnesota in 1976. He has published several catalogs of Ethiopic manuscripts on microfilm, books, and many articles on Ethiopian studies both in English and Amharic, his native language. His latest book is an Amharic autobiography, *Andafta Lawgachibu*, published in 2008.

Haile is a corresponding fellow of the British Academy, winner of the MacArthur Foundation Award, member of the Academy of Social Sciences of Addis Ababa University, and a member of the editorial boards of several international scholarly journals. His participation in international conferences has led him to visit several countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

"I am most grateful to be recognized for whatever I have accomplished in my research and writings. However, I must share this award with all who have taken this journey with me: the staff at HMML and Saint John's University, the many colleagues with whom I have collaborated, the students and scholars I have taught, and of course, my family," Haile said.

First awarded in 1912, the Edward Ullendorff Medal is awarded for scholarly distinction and achievements in the field of Semitic languages or Ethiopian studies.



ABOVE: Getatchew Haile looking over a selection of Ethiopian manuscripts and prayer scrolls from HMML's collection.

Ullendorff (1920-2011) was a fellow of the British Academy from 1965 until 2011 and a professor emeritus of the Semitic languages and of Ethiopian studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

"Getatchew Haile is a rare example of a scholar who has encyclopedic knowledge of his field combined with humility and kindness," said HMML Executive Director Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB. "His cataloging and critical studies have defined the field of Ge'ez literature and inspired hundreds of scholars around the world. At HMML he has been an example and guide for decades. All of us are delighted at this well-deserved recognition by his scholarly peers."

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