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**himml**  
Magazine  
WINTER 2021



## On the Cover

This manuscript (EMML 1480), microfilmed at **Dabra Māryām Monastery** in **Eritrea**, was made in the mid-fifteenth century during the reign of Emperor **Zar'a Yā'eqob**. More than half of its pages contain writings yet to be attested anywhere else, including several by Zar'a Yā'eqob. His **Tomāra Tesbe't** ("Epistle of Humanity," pictured) is one of the many unique texts of EMML 1480 that **Getatchew Haile** translated and published. Note: the names in bold each have a detailed entry in HMML Authority File.

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## HMML Magazine

is published twice a year in support of HMML's mission: to preserve and share the world's handwritten past to inspire a deeper understanding of our present and future.

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Ted Erho—Contributing Writer

Dr. Daniel K. Gullo—Contributing Writer

Joe Rogers—Contributing Writer, Editorial Review

Katrina P. Schlude—Editorial Review

Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB—Contributing Writer, Editorial Review

Wayne Torborg—Imaging, Production Manager

Dr. Catherine Walsh—Contributing Writer

Dr. des. Vevian Zaki—Contributing Writer

## The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML)

is a global organization that advances manuscript research and scholarly inquiry by digitally preserving, providing access to, and interpreting manuscript collections around the world. HMML places a special priority on manuscripts in regions endangered by war, political instability, or other threats. HMML is currently preserving manuscript collections at sites in Croatia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Malta, Nepal, Pakistan, Syria, and Ukraine. With approximately 300,000 manuscripts digitized in partnership with more than 800 libraries worldwide, HMML offers the world's largest collection of resources for the study of manuscript cultures. View the manuscripts in Reading Room ([vhmml.org](http://vhmml.org)).

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Father Columba Stewart, OSB

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# Dear Friends,

This past year brought several milestones in HMML's history.

In early October, we celebrated the successful launch of HMML Authority File, an online database that identifies the people, families, works, organizations, and places related to the manuscripts and artwork that HMML preserves. As the cover story in this issue will explain, this database is the major deliverable of our National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant for the cataloging of manuscripts underrepresented in traditional Western scholarship.

HMML has always focused on overlooked collections, whether hidden in monasteries or in remote or unexpected locations. The cataloging done by our scholars shows the links among these various manuscript cultures, reminding us that manuscripts were the original worldwide web of knowledge, traveling in a scholar's satchel, being translated into other languages, fostering intellectual exchange across vast distances. Our work is showing that the traditional concept of a "republic of letters" is not solely a European achievement but a global one—at HMML we have the proof.

We've also begun a new five-year grant from Arcadia, our major preservation funder for the last decade. Arcadia's support—combined with the essential support of long-standing individual donors—has been transformative for HMML, enabling us to respond nimbly to urgent needs in conflict zones around the world.

In June, we mourned the passing of our longtime colleague and mentor, Professor Getatchew Haile. His influence in the field of Ethiopian Studies remains unique, built upon his patient cataloging of some 6,000 Ethiopian manuscripts microfilmed by HMML in the 1970s and 1980s. It was my great privilege to celebrate his funeral liturgy in the Abbey Church with a strong representation of the Ethiopian community and their religious leaders. All of us regarded Getatchew as a father and wisdom figure; he remains close in our memories.

We have rich fare for you in this issue: enjoy! And blessings for the holiday season and the new year ahead.

Sincerely,

*Columba Stewart, OSB*

Father Columba Stewart, OSB  
Executive Director



**ABOVE:** Getatchew Haile and Fr. Columba at Getatchew's home in New York, New York, October 2015.

# Creating Relationships

Sharing the Past to Build Toward Future Scholarship

By Catherine Walsh

This October saw the public launch of HMML Authority File, a new open-access database created as part of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to facilitate the sharing of data from understudied manuscript traditions.

For more than 55 years, HMML has worked to preserve handwritten traditions that range across historical, geographic, and cultural boundaries. Since 2016, this has involved a concerted effort to carefully establish name authorities—standardized language that uniquely and consistently identifies people, organizations, families, works, and places to distinguish their identities in library systems and scholarship.

Through HMML Authority File, these valuable identifications can be recorded and widely shared. Because HMML preserves materials from traditions that are often underrepresented in Western scholarship and librarianship, the database contains a growing body of knowledge that bridges linguistic and scholarly divides. Thousands of names will, for the first time, be represented in established international authority files like the Library of Congress and the Virtual International Authority File, helping libraries and researchers identify and link manuscripts and collections.

## Why Authorities?

Part of the joy of studying and preserving manuscripts is that each object is unique—a legacy of the hands, hearts, and minds of the cultures and people that produced it. Manuscripts tell us stories of the individuals who wrote and used them and who were part of a lineage of passing the texts forward to the next generation. Their authors engaged in discourse with others, and texts traveled from one place, language, or religious tradition to another. Over time, some texts may have been copied in part or without titles, author names translated or shortened, and texts originally found together separated.

Learning about and rebuilding knowledge lost over time involves creating a common language with which to talk about people, texts, and places, and the relationships between them. This is a key job of professional librarianship: creating an infrastructure to establish a common language (like name authorities) for identifying the people and texts the manuscripts contain.

## Building an Infrastructure

Each new record in HMML Authority File represents a cooperative, ground-up approach to scholarship. When a HMML cataloger encounters a new text or author in a manuscript, they work with a team of curators and catalogers to responsibly document the entity, either through information in the original manuscript or through additional research, often using non-Western sources. The metadata librarian (yours truly) then standardizes the data following international guidelines to facilitate sharing. This creates reliable, transparent data that can be used and evaluated by others around the world.

The screenshot shows the HMML Authority File interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for 'ADVANCED' and 'ABOUT'. The main content area displays the following information:

- Record Title:** Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, duc de, 1585-1642. Instruction du chrestien
- Explanation:** Explanation of the canons of the apostolic faith
- HMML ID:** 45169080291
- PURL:** <https://n3t3.org/iaf/work/45169080291>
- LC Uniform Title:** Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, duc de, 1585-1642. Instruction du chrestien
- Library of Congress VIAF:** <https://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2020104324>
- Variants:**
  - Instruction du chrestien ou Catachisme du diocese de Luçon
  - Instruction du chrestien ou Catachisme de Luçon
  - Instruction du chrestien à messieurs les diocessains de Luçon
- Work Information:**
  - Title:** Instruction du chrestien
  - Author:** Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, duc de, 1585-1642
  - Date created:** 1621
  - Places of creation:** Poitiers
  - Centuries:** 17th century CE
  - Original languages:** French
  - Genres:** Catechisms
- Versions:**
  - Expression:** Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, duc de, 1585-1642. Instruction du chrestien.
  - Language:** Ottoman Turkish, Turkish (Ottoman)

On the right side, there are sections for 'Related records' (2 related records, 1 related person, 1 related place), 'Related concepts' (Library of Congress, VIAF), and 'Other formats' (JSON-LD, RDF/XML, RDF/Turtle, N-Triples). A 'Share' section with social media icons is also present.

**ABOVE:** An authority for a catechetical text demonstrates how HMML Authority File tracks cross-cultural exchange and translation, documenting variant titles, versions of the text, and linking to translators and authors. Originally written in 1621 by Cardinal Richelieu in France, *Instruction du chrestien* was translated into Arabic 15 years later and circulated in the East, where it was translated into Syriac and Ottoman Turkish.



**ABOVE:** A portrait of Barbarossa accompanies an Ottoman Turkish poem in praise of the admiral. HMML Authority File describes the author of the poem (Nigâri), the subject (Barbarossa), and the museum that owns this object (the Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum in Mdina, Malta). (PFL 00023)

A web of interlinked authors and texts grows with each new manuscript that is cataloged. HMML Authority File data is used to identify every instance of a name in our library systems, and catalogers create links to group and unite related records in completely different collections so they can be studied together. This is particularly important for traditions that have been siloed by language barriers—linking, for instance, a Syriac hagiography that has also appeared in Arabic, Ge'ez, and Latin.

Many authors and texts now in HMML Authority File had no representation in modern authority databases. For example, HMML created the first authorities for the works of the Muslim timekeeper Mustafa bin Ali, whose astronomical writings were foundational within the Ottoman Empire, and Ruqayyah bint Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, a female poet from what is now modern-day Nigeria. Even authors who have been translated and studied extensively within a scholarly community, such as Zar'a Yā'eqob, emperor of Ethiopia, wrote works that had not been established as authorities within a library context.

There are nearly 12,000 authorities in HMML Authority File today, with tens of thousands more expected, both from the migration of HMML's legacy data and from the constant work of HMML's prolific cataloging team.

### Sharing Data

The database is built for manuscript researchers, catalogers, and libraries to find, group, and download open data for use in their own work. The search interface is user friendly, so that someone can quickly find, for example, all the persons within HMML's collections who were active in eighteenth-century Turkey. At the same time, the innovative, sophisticated design allows for more detailed search queries, such as finding texts by non-Latin script or by author, title, or incipit (the first line of a text, particularly useful when the title has been left out or lost). In the future, HMML Authority File data will be able to be harvested automatically via an API for use in large-scale work.

HMML Authority File is a groundbreaking project that creates basic library infrastructure for collection caretakers who might not have the resources to devote to this task. The system is free to use, open access, and intended to be a permanent, growing resource. It professionalizes cataloging, bringing the scholarly expertise of HMML further into the realm of technological innovation and data management.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Catherine Walsh is director of cataloging at HMML.

# The Monastery of Santa Ursula

By Daniel K. Gullo

When Cláudia Garradas, the site director of the Malta Study Center, learned about the opportunity to digitally preserve the archives of the Monastery of Santa Ursula in Valletta, Malta, she immediately understood the significance of the project. She wrote, "In all my life, I would never imagine that I would have the opportunity to work in a place like Santa Ursula. One could see the genuine happiness of their lives and the incredible peace that comes from being in a place grounded in four centuries of religious life." Ms. Garradas remarked how place and time are special at Santa Ursula. "It's a living community," she wrote, "whose records allow us to reach into the past and be fully connected to the present."

Since the late twelfth century, the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem accepted cloistered religious women as members, along with knights, chaplains, and servants of arms. As part of his efforts to promote the reforms of the Council of Trent in Malta, Grand Master Hugues Loubenx de Verdalle wanted to found a Hospitaller monastery for the sisters of the Order of Saint John. This new foundation would

give each part of the Order full representation on the island, which they had ruled since 1530.

In 1582, Grand Master Verdalle received permission from the General Council of the Order for the new convent. Two women, Franciscan sisters (Poor Clares) from Sicily, Clara Febo and Elisabetta Humano, agreed to become Hospitaller sisters in Malta and lead the new monastery. The sisters first resided in the old Magistral Palace in Birgu, on the Grand Harbor. After little more than a decade, the Order moved the sisters to the newly built Monastery of Santa Ursula in Valletta. The monastery saw rapid growth over the course of the seventeenth century, owing much to local support and its status within the Order. Several large donations of property were given to the community, as well as special privileges that allowed them to collect revenue from local tribunals, including a five percent share of all profits from the sale of corsairs' spoils in Malta.

Given the monastery's complex relationship with the Order's administration, the Malta Study Center approached Dr. Valeria Vanesio, a specialist in the



**ABOVE:** (Left to right) Cláudia Garradas, Dr. Valeria Vanesio, and Dr. Christine Muscat review manuscripts at the Monastery of Santa Ursula, Valletta, Malta.



**ABOVE:** Volumes in the archives of the Monastery of Santa Ursula, Valletta, Malta.

history of the archives of the Order of Saint John, to help catalog the material. When she visited the monastery, Dr. Vanesio was struck by the diverse nature of the collection and the sisters' strong relationship not only with their own Order of Saint John and the Church but also with the local people in Valletta. "I expected to find a few account books and records from the minutes of the monastery's meetings," she wrote to me, "but I did not expect to find minute details on the daily administration and life of the monastery, from the food that they ordered to the prayers that were said on behalf of their benefactors."

Dr. Vanesio described how "one day, Cláudia and I were investigating the documentary typologies of a miscellaneous register. Leafing through the pages, a name came to our eyes: Mario Attard, *il fornaro di Valletta* [the baker of Valletta], who provided bread and supplies to the monastery once per month. At his death, his wife, *la vedova del fornaro* [the widow of the baker], took his place in supporting the monastery. Through the pages, it is still possible to be captured by the smell of the bakery in Valletta while the bell rings and calls the sisters to prayer." The sisters' very efficient and thorough record-keeping system is a reminder of their care for the preservation of local history.

The rich documentary legacy of the sisters of Santa Ursula has remained largely intact despite the expulsion of the Order of Saint John from Malta in 1798. Unlike the knights of the Order, the sisters were allowed to remain on the island as an active monastery. The sisters and their archives are thus the unbroken, living link between the early modern Order of Saint John and the present day. Digitization of the archives of the Monastery of Santa Ursula began in March 2021 and, presuming further funding, the work may be completed within the next three years.



**ABOVE:** "Prioress of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem," engraved by Jean Picart and published in Anne de Naberat's *Sommaire de privileges octroyez à l'Ordre de Saint Jean*. (HMML 00208)

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Daniel K. Gullo is Joseph S. Micallef Director of the Malta Study Center at HMML.

# News in Brief

## Highlights from HMML's cultural preservation initiatives and activities

### HMML Receives Major Grant From Arcadia

Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, has awarded HMML a five-year, \$5 million grant to preserve at-risk manuscripts. This is Arcadia's third grant to HMML and the single largest gift to HMML in our 57-year history.

The grant focuses on the digitization and cataloging of vulnerable manuscript collections located outside of Europe. Furthermore, it supports long-term access to digital images by establishing a fund for the perpetual archiving of each terabyte of data created through the grant.

Complementing essential support from generous individuals and foundations, Arcadia's gift enables HMML to quickly respond to digitization needs throughout the world.



### Virtual Program Offerings Expand

Audiences worldwide can experience HMML programming through expanded online offerings. Thanks to continued development on HMML's new website—[hmml.org](http://hmml.org)—there is now a virtual environment for HMML exhibitions. And, every two weeks, curators and catalogers share editorials at [hmml.org/stories](http://hmml.org/stories), using manuscripts and artwork to examine how specific themes run across HMML's digital collections.

January 2022 rings in a host of virtual events, starting with the second season of *To Listen: A Global Journey*, a series featuring preservation leaders around the world, interviewed by Fr. Columba Stewart, HMML's executive director. In February, join us every Saturday morning as HMML curators demonstrate how manuscripts and printed books can help us understand culture, part of a collaboration with four county historical societies in Minnesota. For details, visit [hmml.org/programs](http://hmml.org/programs).



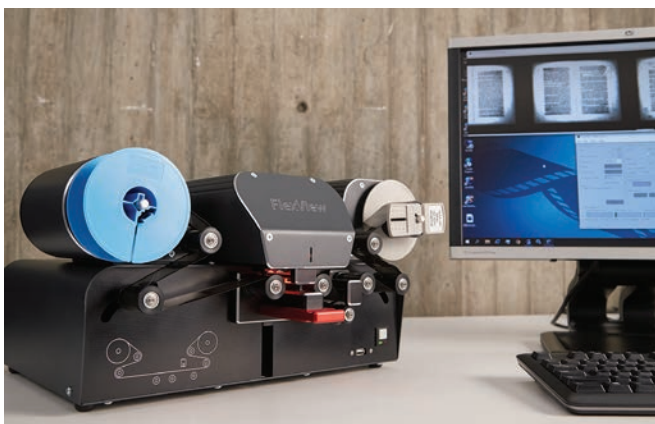


## New Scanner is a Quantum Leap for Digitizing Microfilm at HMML

Microfilm was used by HMML to preserve images of manuscripts from 1964 until the early 2000s. Reading images on microfilm requires the use of a specialized device and must be done on-site at HMML. In contrast, digital files can be uploaded to HMML's online Reading Room, available to anyone with internet access. It has long been a goal at HMML to convert the many thousands of microfilmed manuscript images into digital format to make them fully accessible to all, but the process of converting microfilm to digital has been a slow one. Until now.

For many years, HMML used a microfilm scanner that digitized images one frame at a time. A few months ago, thanks to a generous gift from Robert Weyerhaeuser, HMML purchased a new scanner—the FlexView 300—which can digitize an entire reel of microfilm in minutes. Work that would have taken two people several weeks to complete can now be done by one person in one day, and the digital images produced by the new scanner are of a significantly higher quality.

This has enormous implications for the accessibility of microfilmed collections, such as the incomparable Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML). Wayne Torborg, director of digital collections and imaging at HMML, explained the value of the new scanner this way: "The FlexView 300 scanner has made the impossible possible for HMML. It has transformed the quality of our work, our productivity, and the real impact we can have on the world."



## Notable

More than 16,500 new records were uploaded to HMML Reading Room since December 2020, including:

### EASTERN CHRISTIAN COLLECTION

- 376 from various repositories in Ethiopia (EMML, EMDA, UNESCO, GG)
- 309 from the Lebanese Maronite Missionary Order, Jūniyah, Lebanon
- 263 from Séminaire Sainte-Anne, Jerusalem
- 227 from Qalb al-Aqdas Chaldean Church, Tel Kepe, Iraq

### ISLAMIC COLLECTION

- 5,398 from Aboubacar Ben Said Library, Timbuktu, Mali
- 1,157 from the Austrian National Library, Vienna
- 181 from al-Zāwiyah al-Uzbakīyah, Jerusalem
- 64 from Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### MALTA COLLECTION

- 98 from Malta Maritime Museum, Birgu
- 95 from Cathedral Museum, Mdina
- 55 from the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace, Zabbar
- 33 from the Cathedral Archives, Mdina

### WESTERN EUROPEAN COLLECTION

- 1,046 from Saint Paul's Abbey, Lavanttal, Austria
- 924 from Saint Peter's Archabbey, Salzburg, Austria
- 786 from Admont Abbey, Admont, Austria
- 392 from Heiligenkreuz Abbey, Heiligenkreuz, Austria

### ART & PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION

- 517 prints and drawings from the HMML Art Collection
- 100 icons from the HMML Art Collection

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Joe Rogers is director of external relations at HMML.

# Advancing Scholarship

## A Tribute to Getatchew Haile (1931–2021)

By Ted Erho

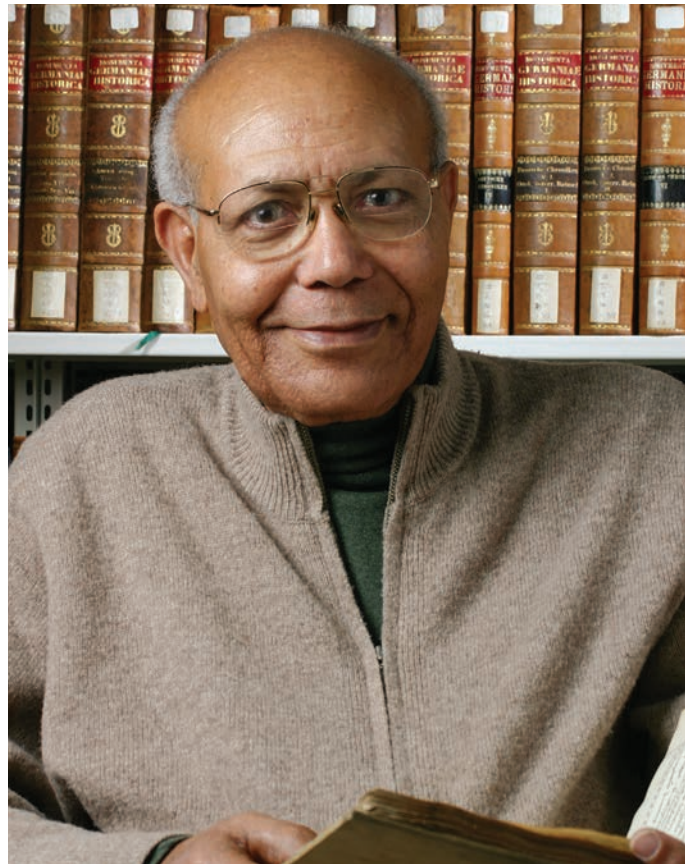
In Wayne Gretzky's final NHL game in Minnesota, he added four assists to the 24 he had previously recorded in the state. Famously supportive of his teammates scoring, Gretzky would retire from hockey with 1,963 assists, 42 more than the total career points of any other player.

A little more than an hour west of Bloomington that same day in early 1993, a similar—albeit less heralded—record was in progress. Much like Gretzky, Getatchew Haile understood that if the desired result is accumulating points, an assist counts just as much as a goal.

Getatchew's career demonstrates a deep understanding of this principle—a continual desire not merely to advance his personal work in pursuit of individual achievements but to foster the advancement of scholarship as a whole and expand Ethiopia's role within it.

Long before “open access” had become the academic byword it is today, Getatchew fought ardently for it. When, in the early years of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML), an attempt was made to reduce access to the microfilms, he emerged as the leading voice in Addis Ababa against the proposal. Later, after moving to Minnesota and being placed in charge of the collection, Getatchew did not seize the opportunity to create his own fiefdom. Instead, in work still often taken for granted by his peers, he produced catalog after catalog describing thousands of items, building a strong bridge to the collection that could outlast any moves to restrict access. As significantly, he disseminated through various channels—publications, letters, emails, conversations—much information about uncataloged microfilms, ensuring that the most important items were not hidden away and that the whole collection could be utilized to its fullest.

Such a willingness to share and distribute would have been greatly diminished in impact without the ethos that accompanied it: access independent of qualifications. The contents of the microfilms were not reserved for him, eminent colleagues, or proven scholars; they were open to whomever was interested. Those without university degrees in Ethiopian Studies and whose specializations lay elsewhere



**ABOVE:** Prof. Getatchew Haile, FBA, Regents Professor of Medieval Studies at Saint John's University and Curator Emeritus of the Ethiopia Study Center at HMML.

were not dissuaded from undertaking projects with the material but instead were greeted with gentle encouragement for their efforts. Outsiders received the same consideration and words of guidance as insiders. Even today, one sometimes finds letters written by Getatchew to members of the public, replying to questions about Ethiopia and its manuscripts.

Assists are the result of passing to another player, of removing oneself as the focal point and giving others the chance to achieve something that might benefit the community. Getatchew made thousands of passes. Some of them went unseen, were missed, or fumbled. Others connected, and a great many resulted in goals. While more than one hundred books and articles appeared under his own name, Getatchew Haile contributed to thousands of other publications, often without due credit, through his collegiality and push for openness.

And his career assists total continues to rise.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Ted Erho is cataloger of Ethiopic manuscripts at HMML.

# A Closer Look at a Single Manuscript

By Dr. des. Vevian Zaki

In 1744, the French Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary established a convent in ‘Aynṭūrah, Lebanon, known in Arabic as Dayr Ziyārat al-‘Adhrā’.

Testifying to its activity and vitality, many Arabic manuscripts were produced or commissioned by the convent. These manuscripts were all, at some point, transferred to the library of the Lebanese Maronite Missionary Order in Jūniyah, Lebanon, where they are still housed today.

The manuscript LMMO 00232 is among these. It is a book of vows that records glimpses of the lives of dozens of sisters in this convent, with a few pages dedicated to each sister: her vows, their annual renewal for as long as she lives, and sometimes a short tribute after her death. Here is one example:

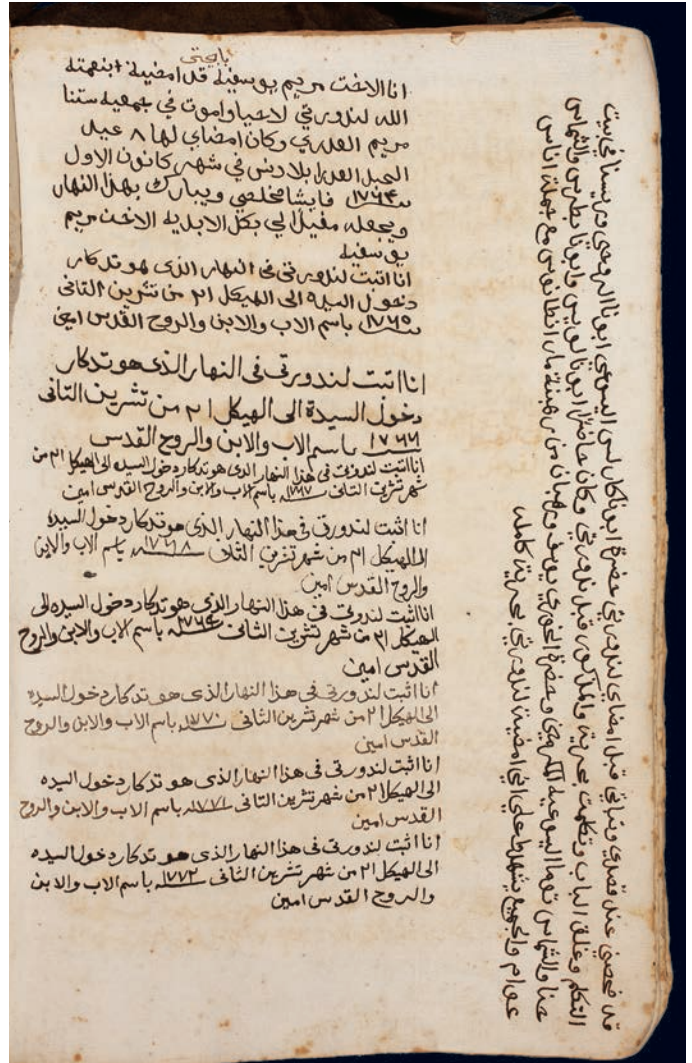
*“I, sister Mary Josephine, have taken my vows, by the grace of God, to live and die in the Society of Our Lady Mary the Virgin. I took my vows on 8th of December 1764, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. May my Savior both will and bless this day and make it beneficial for my eternity.*

*My intentions and constancy were examined before I took my vows by our spiritual father Carlos the Jesuit in the parlor. He shut the door and I spoke freely, and then he accepted my vows. This was in the presence of the honorable Jesuit fathers Louis and Peter, deacons John and Thomas, priest Joseph, and other monks from St. Anthony’s Monastery, as well as many lay people who can testify that I took my vows of my own free will.”*

These were the initial vows of this sister. Following this entry, the pages dedicated to her (folios 64v–66v) repeat the same sentence over and over, documenting the renewal of her vows every year on the same day:

*“I confirm my vows today, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lady to the Temple, on 21st November of the year 1765 [entries encompass years 1765–1806], in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

Sister Mary Josephine passed away on October 14, 1807, nearly a month before the annual renewal of her vows. We know this from the manuscript’s tribute, which reveals more information about



ABOVE: The vows of Sister Mary Josephine (Maryam Yūsufiyah), part of the collection of the Lebanese Maronite Missionary Order in Jūniyah, Lebanon. (LMMO 00232, fol. 64v)

her life. An Armenian Catholic from Aleppo, she was raised by Jesuit missionaries and joined the Visitation monastery along with six other sisters, of whom she was the youngest.

The tribute goes on to describe her virtues, qualities, and ministry in the monastery as a seamstress. Mary Josephine died at the age of 65, after having spent 43 years as a sister or, as the tribute puts it, “in the light.”

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“Getatchew Haile was not just a scholar, not just one among the many, no. He was a man in whom lived the Ethiopian manuscripts, I would prefer to say. He wasn't just a cataloger; he was a catalog himself. The whole Ethiopian tradition, written in Ge'ez, it seemed to live in him, I think.”

—Deacon Mehari Worku, an Ethiopian Studies scholar



**ABOVE:** At a church in Yeha (Tigray, Ethiopia), satchels for carrying manuscripts hang below an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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