

SPRING
NEWSLETTER
2016

ILLUMINATIONS



HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY



Illuminations

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ON THE COVER:

Abba Garima Gospel 1, a section of the Eusebian Canon Tables presenting parallel stories in the various Gospels. MS AG 00001, possibly 6th century. Manuscript on vellum, 14.4 x 25.6 cm.

LEFT:

Ethiopian women on their way to prayer on the Abba Garima monastery grounds.

Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

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 from around the world. HMML places a special priority on manuscripts from regions endangered by war, political instability, or other threats.

HMML is currently preserving manuscript collections at sites in Lebanon, Iraq, Jerusalem, Egypt, Mali, and Malta. These resources—available through HMML's online catalog, OLIVER, image database, *Vivarium*, and recently-launched *vHMML*, which will introduce a new generation of scholars to manuscripts—have become essential tools for global manuscript research.

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

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Set in Junicode typeface.

Dear Friends,

The turn of the calendar to a new year has shown us a world still in turmoil, with refugee numbers reaching a level not seen since the 1940s. My visits to Lebanon and Iraq since January have brought this home in a poignant manner as I saw Syrian refugees struggling to survive in Beirut and their Iraqi counterparts seeking safety in the Kurdish areas of the north while their ancestral homelands remain under ISIS control. I was able to visit refugee communities in Erbil and then to follow the trail of manuscripts removed from the frontlines and hidden away in remote villages. Some libraries are known to have been destroyed, others have been moved, the fate of some remains unknown. It will be years before we know the full story.



Father Columba Stewart, OSB and HMML partner Rev. Nageeb Michael, OP, of the Dominican Friars of Mosul stand in front of graffiti at a refugee center in Erbil that features the 14th letter of the Arabic alphabet and the equivalent to the Roman letter N. Pronounced “noon,” it is the first letter of the Arabic word for Christians and has become a symbol for their struggle in the modern Middle East.

Even as we do our best to keep working in places like Iraq, we’re looking at new opportunities and cultures. HMML is in serious conversation about work with Persian manuscripts in several countries, expanding our scope to embrace another great culture with deep ties to those we have been working with for many years. Students of Late Antiquity and the medieval period are recognizing the importance of Persian culture, both in its historic pre-Islamic form and its Islamic expressions, for Byzantine history and Christian peoples of the Caucasus region. And the manuscripts are beautiful, both in content and presentation.

More imminent is this summer’s public launch of the vHMML Reading Room. For the first time, scholars in any and every location with internet access will be able to consult complete copies of digitized manuscripts along with much-improved cataloging information (“metadata”). Over the next few years, cataloging for all of HMML’s collections will be moved into the vHMML Reading Room environment, along with images for those manuscripts captured in digital form or for which we have scanned microfilm copies. This is the culmination of several years of work by HMML staff, supported by major grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Arcadia. We’ll let you know when vHMML Reading Room is live, and hope you’ll enjoy browsing our collections!

Sincerely,

Columba Stewart, OSB

Columba Stewart OSB
Executive Director

The Mystique of the Abba Garima Gospels

By Elizabeth Reisinger

The question seems like a simple one, but the answer is often complex: “when was it written?”

Since the dawn of manuscript research, it’s been a question that scholars ask. And sometimes, there isn’t a definitive answer.

Such is the case of the famous Abba Garima Gospels, sacred Ethiopic manuscripts sometimes heralded among the world’s oldest illuminated manuscripts. And, even after decades of research and analysis, their definitive age is still somewhat of a mystery. But their significance is not. “The Garima Gospels are one of the earliest, if

not the earliest, exemplars of Ethiopic writing and Ethiopian Christianity,” said Getatchew Haile, curator emeritus of the Ethiopian Collection at HMML. “Even the presence of this book supports the view that Christianity was introduced and declared the state religion as early as the 4th century in Ethiopia.”

In 2013, a team from HMML traveled to Abba Garima to digitize the Gospels. With written permission from the Patriarchate, the local government authorities, the monastery’s guardians and the hands-on assistance of the abbot, HMML staff and Ethiopian colleagues spent several days preparing and digitizing two Gospel books. Ethiopia is familiar territory for



Abba Garima Gospel 2, beginning of the Gospel of Mark with illumination of the Evangelist. MS AG 00002, possibly 6th century. Manuscript on vellum, 22.9 x 31.4 cm.

HMML. HMML first began preservation work in Ethiopia in 1971 and is now the world's richest resource for the study of Ethiopian manuscripts, with complete copies of more than 11,000 Gəʿəz manuscripts in microfilm and digital formats.

The Gospels are named for the monastery that has housed them for centuries. Abba Garima Monastery is an Ethiopian Orthodox monastery located approximately 3 miles east of Adwa, in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia. The monastery clings to the adjacent mountainside, approximately 7,000 feet above sea level, with patches of grass, shrubs and the occasional cactus dotting the rocky landscape.

The Abba Garima Gospels are illuminated manuscripts written on parchment in the ancient Ethiopian Semitic language of Gəʿəz. The manuscripts are two distinct books: Garima 1 consists of 348 pages, beginning with 11 illuminated pages, followed by the Gospel texts. Garima 2 has 322 pages, including 17 illuminated pages, of which four are portraits of the Evangelists.

Legend shrouds both the location and creation of the Abba Garima Gospels. The monastery was supposedly built by King Gabra Masqal in the 6th century as a home for Saint Abba Garima, a Byzantine royal who arrived from Syria in what is now Ethiopia. Abba Garima, it is claimed, finished one of the manuscripts in a single day because God stopped the sun from setting while he worked.

“Ethiopia is unique in the Christian tradition, as it still possesses a vibrant scribal culture,” said Ted Erho, research fellow in Ethiopian



The makeshift HMML studio that digitized the Abba Garima Gospels required several partnerships and permissions. Power inconsistencies and outages were also a factor.

manuscript studies at HMML. “These books are one of the earliest surviving exemplars of this tradition that reaches down to our own time.”

Initially, scholars thought the books dated between 10th–13th century, as suggested by HMML’s William Macomber in the 1970s. Macomber based his assertion on a detailed examination of the codices from a complete set of microfilms presented to HMML by Donald Davies. In the last decade, various scholars, including both art historians and textual experts, have hypothesized that the books could be much older, dating somewhere between 330 and 650 AD. Such an assertion would make them possibly the most complete — and among the



Handmade rock gongs on the monastery grounds sound surprisingly like metal bells.



Monks of the Abba Garima community consider caring for the Abba Garima Gospels a sacred charge and facilitate any visits to view the manuscripts.



The Abba Garima Monastery resides high on a cliff near Adwa, in Northern Ethiopia, a highland area with a rugged topography. The large building on the left is the monastery church.

earliest surviving — illuminated Christian texts in the world. But other researchers demur.

The divide illustrates the complexity of manuscript research, even with modern-day technology, and why continued work on even very well-known historic manuscripts continues to this day.

“Early Ethiopian manuscripts are exceptionally rare, as there simply aren’t many other examples of manuscripts in Ethiopia from that time period.” said Erho. “The Abba Garima Gospels are still a significant object of study, and HMML has the best images for study and the only complete set readily accessible for scholarly use.” The Garima gospels are like many other historic manuscripts — full



The church on the monastery grounds sits near the road and serves as the central meeting place for prayer and services. The monastery residence is further up the hill; no women are allowed in the residence. Here, parishioners gather in the shade after worship.

of marginal notes that accompany the official texts and illuminations. These additions to the books reveal the activities, traditions and the lifestyle of the monastery and people. And, they can often paint a more complete picture of when, how and where a manuscript was created.

“Regardless of their age, the fact that these books were preserved and treasured shows us that these books were foundational to the monastery and its surrounding people,” said Erho. “Their value went beyond the religious sphere. They were used to record important events and land grants, serving effectively as the public and legal land record of the day.”

HMML’s digitization work at Abba Garima will allow scholars to extend the avenues of their research. The images will be available online in the new [HMML Reading Room](#), launching this summer.

“Digitizing these manuscripts was crucially important,” said Haile. “The world can always have a copy, even if the books are lost or destroyed. It has been rescued.”



Fr. Daniel Seifemichael Feleke represented the Patriarchate of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in working with the monastic and local cultural officials to arrange the digitization of the Abba Garima Gospels.

Where We're Working

Iraq & Syria



The four Evangelists depicted in a manuscript of the Gospels belonging to the Syriac Catholic Archdiocese of Baghdad, Iraq. MS ASCBN 00052, fol. 2v-3r, dated 1542. Manuscript on paper, 26x17x7 cm.

Iraq and Syria are located in Mesopotamia and the Levant, an area of rich and diverse history since ancient times. And both regions have been devastated by political instability in the past decade, making HMML's manuscript preservation work in the area a project of vital importance.

"Despite the many conflicts that have ravaged those regions over the centuries, these areas have remained a vital crossroads of languages, faith traditions and civilizations — all of which have left their mark," says Nicholas Al-Jeloo, Ph.D., currently a lecturer in classical Syriac at the School

of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. Al-Jeloo was a recipient of the Swenson Family Fellowship in Eastern Christian Manuscript Studies at HMML in fall 2014.

"This is why we find so many manuscripts belonging to endangered ethnic and religious groups in these areas," said Al-Jeloo. "The preservation of manuscripts in Iraq and Syria is thus vital in safeguarding literature in threatened languages, and the tangible heritage and culture of indigenous ethnicities."

HMML began working in Syria in 2004 and in Iraq in 2009. In Syria, HMML partnered with several church-affiliated libraries in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus to digitize almost 3,200 manuscripts. Work continued until 2012, when the deteriorating security conditions made it impossible to continue.

Since 2009, HMML's partners have digitized over 5,000 manuscripts in Iraq. HMML established contact in Iraq in 2009 with the Rev. Nageeb Michael, OP, of the Dominican Friars of Mosul and his team at the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux (CNMO). Despite the loss of Mosul and surrounding villages to ISIS in 2014, work continues in Iraq with a two-camera studio in Erbil.

“The most devastating result of political upheaval in the Middle East has been the destruction of thousands of individual manuscripts — largely through burning them, tearing them apart, or damaging them with water or gunfire,” says Al-Jeloo. “In other cases, manuscript libraries have been looted, and their contents subsequently find their way onto the black market. Other manuscripts are lost when their owners hide them before escaping.”

In 2011–2012, HMML worked with Iraqi partners to digitize one of the most valuable Syriac libraries in existence: the historic 4th-century Mar Behnam monastery. In March 2015, ISIS bombed Mar Behnam monastery and the fate of these manuscripts is not yet known.

HMML's support for manuscript preservation in Iraq created excellent digital versions of these pieces of history. Thanks to the digital collection, researchers around the world will now have online access to these rich collections.



TOP: *St. George slaying the dragon, from a Gospel Lectionary belonging to the Dominican Friars of Mosul, Iraq. MS DFM 00013, fol. 62r, dated 1723 CE. Manuscript on paper, 42x26.5x4.5 cm.*

BOTTOM: *A HMML-trained Iraqi technician prepares a manuscript for digitization at the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux (CNMO) in Erbil.*

Father Columba Stewart awarded 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship

Father Columba Stewart, OSB, executive director of HMML and professor of theology at Saint John's School of Theology, has been awarded a 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Chosen from nearly 3,000 applicants, Fr. Columba is one of 175 fellowship awardees appointed on the basis of scholarly productivity, achievement and exceptional promise.

The fellowship will support Fr. Columba's completion of a forthcoming book, *Between Earth and Heaven: Interpreting the First Thousand Years of Christian Monasticism*. His research will take place during a sabbatical in academic year 2016-17 when he will be in residence as a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Fr. Columba will remain engaged in HMML's work around the world.

For more information, check out our website at www.hmml.org.

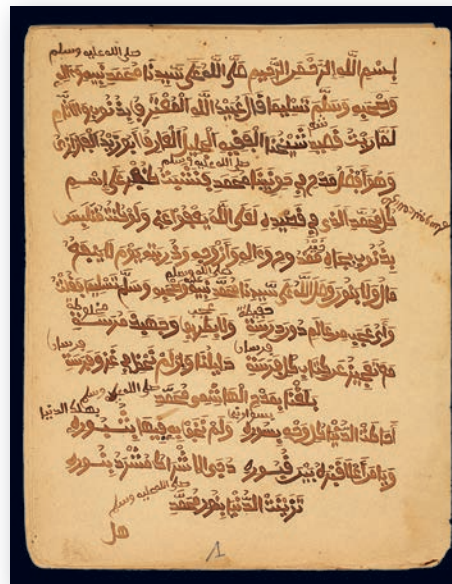


Saint John's University President Michael Hemesath congratulates Father Columba Stewart on his Guggenheim Fellowship at a reception in the HMML Reading Room on Friday, April 15.

Update on the Timbuktu Manuscripts

HMML continues its partnership with SAVAMA-DCI, a Malian NGO, to digitize the manuscripts that were rescued from Timbuktu in 2012. The project began with a two-camera studio in Bamako in January 2014, with additional cameras added incrementally as funding allowed. In January 2016, a new partnership with the Juma Al-Majid Center for Culture and Heritage in Dubai added six additional cameras, for a total of twelve active digitization stations in Bamako. Given the storage conditions in Bamako and the uncertain political and security situation in Mali, acceleration of the project is imperative.

The collections from Timbuktu will become HMML's largest project in its five decades of manuscript preservation work, potentially exceeding 250,000 manuscript books and documents. The manuscript collections owned by the families of Timbuktu are a primary resource for understanding the evolution of humankind's diverse cultures, and represent a distinct record of the history, language, art, literature, and religious beliefs of many communities.



A manuscript on paper from the rescued manuscripts from Timbuktu. This Qasida, or ode, is in Arabic and praises the prophet Muhammad. From the Mamma Haidara collection, SAV BMH 14474, f. 1r.

New Staff Members

Anton Pritula, Ph.D., joins HMML as the new lead cataloger for Eastern Christian manuscripts. Previous to HMML, Pritula earned his doctorate in Iranian Philology at St. Petersburg University in Russia; after graduating, Pritula was the curator of the Oriental Department at the Hermitage Museum. A renowned scholar of Christian communities in the medieval Islamic Near East, Pritula has authored two books: *Christianity and the Persian Manuscript Tradition in the 13th through 17th Centuries* (2004) and *The Warda: An East Syriac Hymnological Collection* (2015). He was also a curator and a catalog editor of two large exhibition projects at the Hermitage: *In Palaces and Tents: The Islamic World from China to Europe* (2008), and *A Gift to Contemplators: Ibn Battuta's Travels* (2015). In the fall of 2014, he was the recipient of the Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, Fellowship for Eastern Christian Manuscript Studies at HMML, and was a resident scholar at the Collegetown Institute for Ecumenical & Cultural Research at Saint John's University.



Eileen Smith joined HMML as the metadata librarian in July 2015 after serving 11 years at Yale University, as a catalog librarian for the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Previously, she held similar positions at The Huntington Library in San Marino, California and the John Carter Brown Library of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. A native Minnesotan, Smith earned her bachelor's degree in theology from the College of St. Catherine and her master's degree in library/information science from the University of Arizona. Her other graduate studies focused on historical theology at the Toronto School of Theology and the Centre for Medieval Studies. Among her professional accomplishments, Smith served on the committee that produced the national standards for rare book cataloging in 2007. She is an active member of the Rare Book & Manuscript Section of the American Library Association, and serves as a lab instructor for summer courses in descriptive bibliography at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.



vHMML Reading Room

For more than 50 years, HMML has advanced manuscript research by preserving manuscripts around the world and then providing access to those collections for scholarly study. HMML's digital copies of manuscripts from Christian and Islamic communities in Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and India comprise the world's largest, most diverse, and until now, little-studied collection of sources from these ancient traditions.

In October 2015, HMML launched **v**HMML, on vhmml.org, our online environment for manuscript studies. Development of the second phase of this project, the **v**HMML Reading Room, continues. The **v**HMML Reading Room will eventually be the world's largest online collection of manuscripts. By cataloging and presenting these materials through a single online platform, **v**HMML Reading Room will greatly facilitate research in many areas of study. Whether searching for a specific manuscript or text, or browsing a collection or the libraries of a particular region, the user will find **v**HMML Reading Room to be a more intuitive and productive resource than HMML's existing online systems. The project has been generously supported by The Henry Luce Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Arcadia Fund. Go to our website at www.hmml.org for more information on the **v**HMML Reading Room in the coming months.

Ethiopian Manuscript Culture Featured in HMML Exhibition

Ethiopia, Europe and Collegetown: Cultural Encounters Across Four Centuries was on exhibition in HMML's Reading Room in Collegetown from January through May 2016. HMML's microfilm and digital collections are the world's most comprehensive resource for the study of Ethiopian manuscripts, and the exhibition showcased selected pieces from HMML's other collections, including early Ethiopic manuscripts, processional crosses and artwork from the African nation. Tim Ternes, director of HMML programming, and Matthew Heintzelman, curator of the Austria-Germany Collection and rare book cataloger, curated the exhibition.



Items on display in the Ethiopia exhibition included Ethiopian psalters, prayer scrolls, processional crosses, an 18th century map of Africa, and several printed books about Gə'əz, or classical Ethiopic, from the 17th century.

Alcuin Library at Saint John's University Undergoing Renovation

The campus library at Saint John's University—Alcuin Library—is undergoing its first major renovation since it opened in 1966. It closed its doors in May and will remain closed until January 2017. During that time, Saint John's University students will continue to have full access to the College of Saint Benedict's Clemens Library.

HMML's Reading Room, offices and reference collection adjacent to the lower level of Alcuin Library will remain open during the renovation. Because HMML's main entrance through Alcuin Library will not be accessible, visitors and scholars will enter HMML through its outside stairs on the northwest side of Alcuin library.

Alcuin Library renovation plans include new secure storage for HMML's rare book and print collections, as well as a new room for study and use of those collections. A new gallery for viewing pages from *The Saint John's Bible* and other items from HMML's collections will open in the fall of 2018.



The Alcuin Library renovation also includes a new addition, the Learning Commons, which will be completed in January 2018. The building, combined with the current library space, will have classrooms, collaborative areas, a media production studio, instructional technology labs, and spaces designed to provide support in writing, language learning, advising, and subject tutoring.

HMML in the News

The London-based international periodical, *The Economist*, featured HMML's global manuscript preservation work in its annual holiday double issue, dated December 19, 2015. The article described Abdel Kader Haidara's rescue of thousands of manuscripts from extremists in Timbuktu, and HMML's partnership to digitally preserve and make accessible the collections. A nine-minute video accompanies the article online.

KSTP, the Minneapolis-St. Paul ABC News affiliate television station, also featured HMML in a news story, broadcast in March. The piece primarily focused on HMML's work in the Middle East and Africa, but also included information about HMML's history and connection to Saint John's Abbey. Both news items can be seen at www.hmml.org.



While The Economist article focused on the Timbuktu manuscripts, the writer also featured HMML's 50-year history and connection to Benedictine traditions, including Fr. Columba's leadership in expanding HMML's mission to the Middle East and Africa.

HMML in the Community

HMML Executive Director Father Columba Stewart, OSB, gave the Zamorano Club Lecture at The Huntington Library in San Marino, California, on March 9, 2016, titled "Preserving Endangered Manuscripts in the Middle East and Africa." The University of Louisville hosted Fr. Columba as its 2016 Gottschalk Lecturer in April. His lecture titled, "Outracing Ignorance: Preserving Manuscripts Threatened by War and Cultural Trafficking." Both presentations introduced the various manuscript cultures represented in HMML's projects, surveyed recent threats to them, and described HMML's efforts to digitally preserve the world's handwritten heritage.

HMML hosted an event for its Millennium Club and Legacy Society members at the Science Museum of Minnesota in March in conjunction with the museum's Omnifest film *Jerusalem*. Fr. Columba presented an

update on HMML's current digitization projects in the Old City of Jerusalem. HMML recently completed digitizing two Islamic manuscript collections in Jerusalem: the Al-Budeiry Family library includes 1,150 manuscript books from the 11-19th centuries, written in Arabic, while the Dar Isaaf Nasahshibi Family library is a smaller collection of some 750 manuscripts.

HMML is also currently digitizing the Al-Khalidi and the Sheikh Abdel-Aziz Al-Bukhari family libraries in the Old City of Jerusalem. Preserving and protecting their manuscript heritage is a centuries-old tradition among the families who own these manuscripts. The Al-Budeiry and Al-Khalidi libraries are located near the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount). The libraries are also just a few minutes from Saint Mark's Syriac Orthodox Monastery, HMML's first project within the walls of the Old City.

HMML Scholars

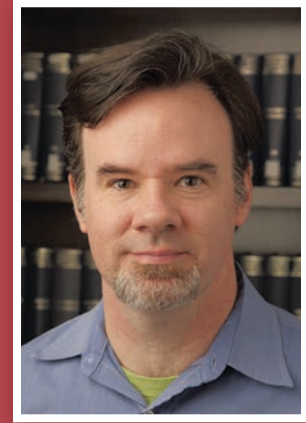
TODD GODWIN

*Language Teacher, and Writing and Research Teacher at
Classical Language Resource Center, Santa Ana, CA and Institute
for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, UK*

Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, Fellowship in Eastern Christian Manuscript Studies

Project title: Interreligious Dialogue and Courtly Diplomacy in
Eastern Christianity 750-850: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Spring 2016



ROBERT PHENIX

Independent Scholar and Writer, Berlin, Germany

Swenson Family Fellowship in Eastern Christian Manuscript Studies

Project title: Researching Uncatalogued Manuscripts of the Ethiopic Version
of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (= *Ethiopic IGT*) and the Ethiopic apocryphal
Miracles of Jesus (= *MJ*)

January 20-February 29



ERIC DURSTELER

Professor, Department of History, Brigham Young University

Nicky B. Carpenter Fellowship in Manuscript Studies

Project title: Can Women Speak Languages? Gender and Multilingualism
in the Early Modern Mediterranean

April 24-May 6



Heckman Scholars

January 1 – June 30, 2016

LARISSA CLOTILDES —

Graduate Student, History, University of Northern British Columbia, Canada
Project Title: Gender Performances of Christian Lay Magic in Early Fourteenth-Century Catalonia
February 7-13

ROBERT WELLS —

Ph.D. Candidate, History, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Project Title: The White Cross and Cardinal: The Knights of Malta between Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds, 1555-1765
March 22-April 21

NICHOLAS MCDERMOTT —

Ph.D. Student, History, Cardiff University, UK
Project Title: The Use of Slaves by the Knights of St. John from the Conquest of Rhodes to the Siege of Malta
March 29-April 19

ELISE HADDAD —

Ph.D. Student, GAHOM (Groupe d'Anthropologie historique dans l'Occident médiéval), EHESS (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) Paris, France
Project Title: Modalities of representation at the turning point of the Twelfth Century: the tympanum of Saint-Pierre church in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne
April 24-May 6

Visiting Scholars

CHARLOTTE ROEDERER — Retired
Independent Scholar, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
January 19-28

ELLEN JOYCE — Associate Professor and Chair of the History Department, Beloit University, Beloit, Wisconsin
Jan 20-March 31

SAMUEL TESFAYE — Ph.D. Candidate,
Philology, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
March 3-4

ROBERT KITCHEN — Minister, Knox-Metropolitan United Church in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; former Dietrich Reinhart OSB Fellow (Fall 2013)
March 7-13

STEVE DELAMARTER — Professor, George Fox University, Director, Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project (EMIP), Portland, Oregon
Scholar and HMML Partner
March 17-25

REV. FR. IGNATIUS PAYYAPPILLY — Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, Kerala, research on the Syrian Christians in India and Lecture (April 28)
April 27-May 3

KRISTINE WENDT-BALOG — Associate Professor, Folsom Lake College, Folsom, California
May 16-20



Rev. Fr. Ignatius Payyappilly, one of HMML's global partners and a visiting scholar from Kerala, India, gives a lecture on palm-leaf manuscripts to a group in the Wallin Classroom at HMML in Collegeville.

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