The Study of the Ethiopic Manuscripts of Dayr al-Suryān:
A Report on the Visit 3 – 9 February 2019

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Dr Denis Nosnitsin and Dorothea Reule, MA, researchers of the Project 'Beta maṣāḥǝft: manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea', continued their work on cataloguing the Ethiopic collection of the monastery. The data collected during the previous stay (2018) were checked and completed. All 23 Ethiopic manuscripts were included into the research environment of the Beta maṣāḥǝft project, and a full-scale description has been developed for each, which will be continuously expanded to finally result in a catalogue of the collection. The peculiarity of this cataloguing enterprise is that the descriptions are being prepared in XML (Extensible Markup Language). The application of TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) XML according to Beta maṣāḥǝft's customized schema allows accommodating the entire amount of the information mined from the manuscripts according to the most up to date standards of cataloguing, and it will assure the simplicity and clarity of the descriptions, as well as their sustainability by facilitating their use in various resources and formats in the future. The Beta maṣāḥǝft digital research environment has recently been made fully accessible to the public and is now an open resource; the descriptions, in their current state, can be viewed here. In addition to the cataloguing, all manuscripts were provided with special archival boxes brought from Germany.

As during the previous visit, the monks of Dayr al-Suryān, particularly the librarian Father Amūn, showed the maximum of collaboration and flexibility that facilitated the work, and should be thanked their hospitality.
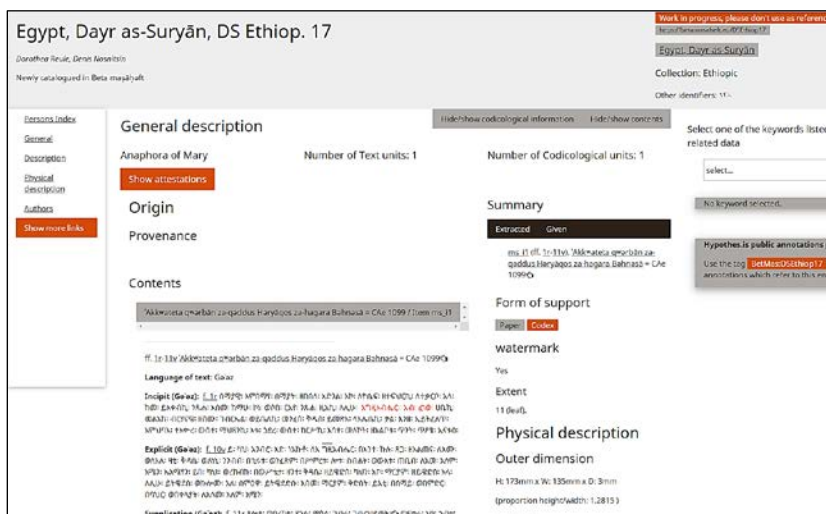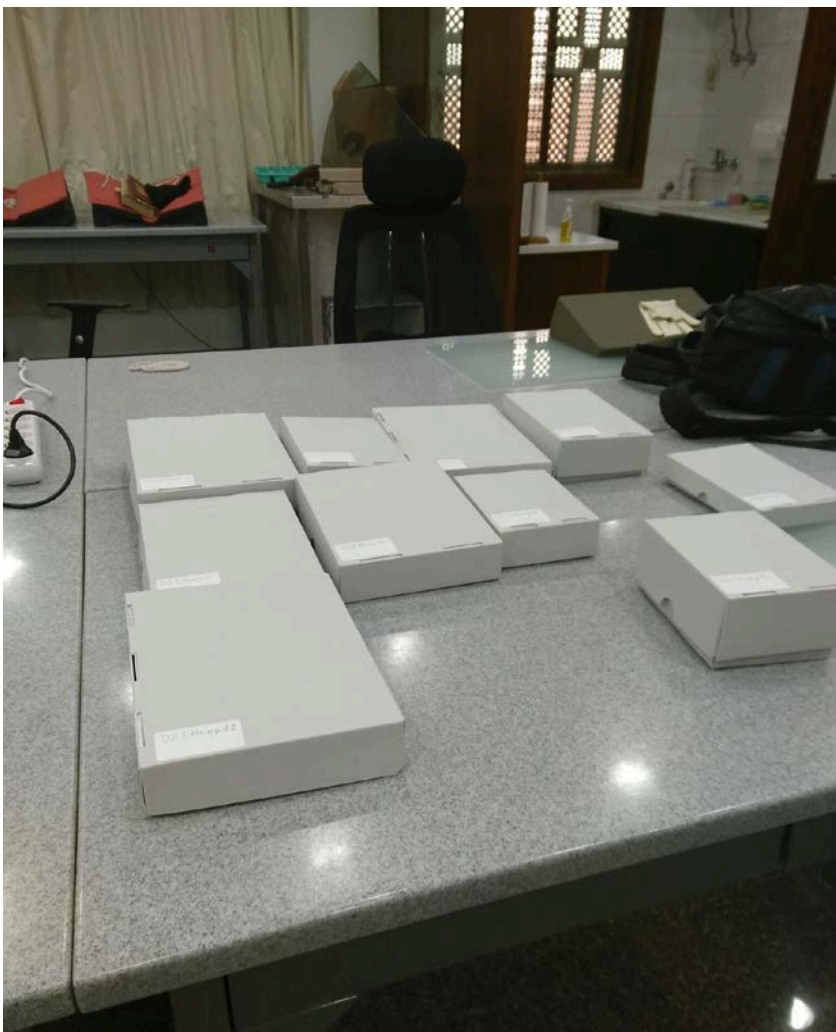

Fig. 1. Excerpt of the online view of manuscript DS Ethiop. 17

Fig. 2. Archival boxes are being prepared and distributed.

Fig. 3. Manuscripts boxed

Fig. 4. The niche for books in the monastic church