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
Executive Director
I

groups and requiring the expenditure of sizeable sums calling for collaboration among many individuals and gathering noted: “The undertaking is an immense one, provided crucial early support. The minutes of that first team in Addis Ababa the following April for the first about Harrelson’s proposal, and joined an international Plante was already looking for new opportunities for collections in Austria and elsewhere in Europe, but pal mission was to microfilm Benedictine manuscript had been founded only five years previously. Its princi-

or what was then known as the “Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library” and is now HMML. The Library had been founded only five years previously. Its princi-

mal mission was to microfilm Benedictine manuscript collections in Austria and elsewhere in Europe, but Plante was already looking for new opportunities for the burgeoning microfilming project. He was enthusiastic about Harrelson’s proposal, and joined an international team in Addis Ababa the following April for the first of many meetings to develop and guide the project. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provided crucial early support. The minutes of that first gathering noted: “The undertaking is an immense one, calling for collaboration among many individuals and groups and requiring the expenditure of sizeable sums over a considerable period of time.” This proved to be an understatement. Although filming had initially been

projected to begin as early as autumn 1971, four com-

mittee 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 EMML’s microfilming was finally getting underway, Ethiopia was beset by waves of popular protest and uprisings within the military occupation 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 Getachew 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 EMML 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 EMML in Addis Ababa, Sergew Hable Selassie, left for an academic post in Germany. The government completed its takeover of the project, and commu-

nication 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 EMML 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 EMML 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 manus-

cript he had spent days bringing to Addis Ababa was not worth filming?

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 EMML 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.

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

By Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB

ABOVE: Front-page newspaper coverage of the begin-

ning of the EMML 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 Ethiop-

ian manuscripts for microfilming in 1974.

Continued on page 5
Those who have used the EMML 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 EMML’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 EMML. 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 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 EMML. You’ll be hearing more about that work in future issues.

**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 Sista 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.

**BELOW:** Fishermen in reed boats ply their trade on Lake Zway, south of Addis Ababa.

**ABOVE:** At Yeha, 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.

**RIGHT:** Dr. Amsalu Tifera, 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

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<th>HMML is currently preserving manuscript collections at sites in:</th>
<th>In its 48 years, HMML has completed manuscript preservation projects in:</th>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
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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 Vivarium, an online environment for manuscript studies that will include training in paleography and codicology as well as rich resources for manuscript study.

540 Partner Libraries Worldwide

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

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 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.

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.

“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.

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 HMML (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 HMML,” said Fr. Columba, who invites feedback on the site’s changes.

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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 Laneygan at elaneygan@hmml.org to learn more.

**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 ‘relingual’, 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.

**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 formats. 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.

**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 Laugachihu, 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 2012, the Edward Ullendorff Medal is awarded for scholarly distinction and achievements in the field of Semitic languages or Ethiopian studies.

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
ClaireBoss-Tiecxe and Marie-Laure Derat, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris | Towards an Archaeology of Manuscript Libraries around Lalibela (Beg- era–Lana, 12th–21st cent.): Inventories of Books, History of Texts and Differential Preservation of Manuscripts
Adam C. McCollum, HMML | A Maw of Texts: The Witness of the EMML Project to Hagiographic Material in Gə’ez
Amsalu Tefera, Addis Ababa University | Gidâli Sawa-bamom: The Case of the Ethiopic Version
Sophia Dege, Ethio-SPARE, Universität Hamburg | The Akharomus among EMML Manuscripts
Curt Niccum, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas | What has Amhar to do with Addis Abram? 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

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Council of the British Academy | Edward Ullendorff Medal

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