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Review

AMSALU TEFERA, *The Ethiopian Homily on the Ark of the Covenant: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Dərsanä Şəyon*

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decision to include relevant French titles in this edition is a great help in understanding the text; they make the reading easier, especially of the miracles. However, more details in the Introduction about the available manuscripts concerning Samu'el, those used in the edition and those not, would surely have enriched this precious work, along with more commentary on the edition itself, at least on the most significant textual readings and corrections. It would also have been useful to have some more indications as to the editorial criteria adopted and about the apparatus.

Vitagrazia Pisani, Universität Hamburg

AMSALU TEFERA, *The Ethiopian Homily on the Ark of the Covenant: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Dərsanä Şəyon*, Text and Studies in Eastern Christianity, 5 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2015). xvi, 286 pp. Price: €114.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-28233-9.

The volume under review stems from the author's PhD Dissertation, submitted in 2011 at Addis Ababa University with the title *Dərsanä Şəyon: Philological Inquiries, Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* and prepared under the supervision of Prof. Paolo Marrassini and Prof. Baye Yiman. The dissertation is the first product of the recently launched philology programme at Addis Ababa University, and this initiative, strongly promoted by the late Paolo Marrassini, is a new landmark in the progress of Ethiopian studies.

The work offers a wide-ranging investigation into *Dərsanä Şəyon* (= hereafter *DŞ*) or the 'Homily on [the glory] of Zion'. The same author has already made other contributions on this text,¹ as well as on the related texts which constitute the corpus of literary pieces focusing on Zion. With this term, as the author meticulously illustrates, multiple meanings are intended: not only the Ark of the Covenant, widely glorified in the text, but also Mount Zion, as well as the Temple in the earthly Jerusalem, the new heavenly Jerusalem, the church of Aksum Şəyon as the repository of the Ark, and, by extension, the entire Christian kingdom of Ethiopia. A metaphorical connection, attested elsewhere, is further established with the Holy Virgin, pivoting on the parallelism of Mary and the Temple as 'wombs' where God dwelt and making *DŞ* one

¹ Amsalu Tefera, 'Dərsanä Şəyon: Philological Inquiries into the Text', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Nuova Serie, 3 (2011), 141–166; 'Mariology in the EOTC Tradition: Special Emphasis on Dərsanä Şəyon', *Journal of Ethiopian Church Studies*, 2 (2012), 71–96; 'Colophonic Reflections on Dərsanä Şəyon and Kəbrä Nəgəst', *Aethiopica*, 17 (2014), 78–89; 'Dərsanä Şəyon', *E Ae*, V (2014), 304a–305a (Amsalu Tefera).

of the most pre-eminent sources of Mariology. *DṢ*, presumably composed in the fifteenth century, recounts a number of Old Testament episodes, including the destruction of the first Temple, and concludes with the transportation of the Ark from Jerusalem to Aksum, thus retelling traditions also transmitted in the *Kəbrä nägäšt*.

The book is structured into two parts. The first part, ‘Background and Analysis’ (pp. 9–120), comprises both a historical and a philological-linguistic introduction to the edition. The second part, ‘Text Edition and Translation’ (pp. 121–244), offers the critical edition, based on ten witnesses, and an English translation of the entire literary corpus on Zion, including *DṢ*, *Zena Ṣayon* (‘News on Zion’), *Tä’ammärä Ṣayon* (‘Miracles of Zion’), and *Mälkä’ä Ṣayon* (‘Effigy of Zion’). An appendix of images and a rich index of the subjects treated conclude the work.

In his historical analysis (pp. 9–80), Amsalu Tefera covers a large number of themes connected with the cult of the Ark in Ethiopian religious practice, from the long-debated question of the Jewish heritage (see the section devoted to the question of the *tabot*) to the ceremony of the royal coronation at Aksum. The methodological criteria adopted in the edition are clearly stated in the philological introduction (pp. 81–120). In compliance with a trend of ‘normalization’ of the practice of Ethiopic text editing, Amsalu Tefera’s edition is conducted according to the Neo-Lachmannian (reconstructive) method. The *stemma codicum* is firmly elaborated through a set of archetype and sub-archetype errors, extensively discussed on pp. 103–109. The value of some of them, marked in the edition with *crucis desperationis*, remains open to debate. For instance, archetype error no. 2 is based on the *varia lectio* around the name **ዘዑራ ፣/ዘዑራ ፣/ዘዑሶ ፣/ዛዑራ ፣/ዘዑራ ፣** (§ 16), rendered as ‘of Uri’ in the translation. However, the spectrum of variants leaves open the distinct possibility of a *diffratio in praesentia*, meaning that one of the attested readings is in fact the original one. As for error no. 11, the proposed solution **ዘአንሱቲ.ዖሆን ፣** (§ 127), shared by most manuscripts and variously corrupted by others, contradicts the archetypal value attributed to the error itself. On the ground of the sub-archetypal errors, Family ξ (MSS Q and T)² is solely identified by the common variant **አጉከላ ፣** instead of **አጉከለ ፣** (§ 88), a polygenetic innovation which is ultimately too weak for the manuscript sub-grouping.

² Q = Collegetown, MN, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (= EMLL), 8713; T = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Tānāsee 72.

Due prominence is given by the author to the manifold modalities by which *DṢ* was transmitted. In fact, some manuscripts include *DṢ* within pieces of Marian literature, for instance *Dərsanä Maryam* ('Homily [in honour] of Mary'), whereas in others it was copied together with the *Kəbrä nägäšt*, sometimes even merging the two texts into one single conflated account of the Ark of the Covenant. Such is the case with three twentieth-century witnesses (MSS A, B, and P)³ belonging to the same Family β, a stemmatic configuration which allows the reasonable assumption that editorial intervention took place at the time of their common ancestor. Finally, in one single witness D,⁴ *DṢ* is transmitted together with another historical work, *Tarikä nägäšt*. The copying of MS NALA 620, executed in 1986 upon a fourteenth-century manuscript microfilmed in Ṭana Qirqos (MS EMLL 8508) and containing the Ethiopic version of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, can also be definitely attributed to the scribe of MS D, *Qes Gälaw Biyadgälläññ zäGondär*.

Among the numerous traditions incorporated in the literary dossier, at least one is worth mentioning here. The text of *Tä'ammərä Şəyon*, 'Miracles of Zion', as preserved in F (= MS EMLL 8823, nineteenth century), contains a version of the well-known account of the Christianization of Ethiopia by Frumentius (text on pp. 186–187, tr. on pp. 194–195). A closer look at the textual arrangement of the passage demonstrates that it is clearly dependent upon the *Sənkəssar* entry for 26 Ḥamle, not infrequently even verbatim. Contrary to the other Ethiopic sources of the story, some readings are uniquely exhibited in the *Sənkəssar* entry, such as the parenthetical addition **ወቦ ፡ እለ ፡ ይሰምዶዎ ፡ ሲድራኮስ ።** 'and there were some who named him Sidrakos', referring to Aedesius and intended to conflate two competing versions of the story around the name of Frumentius' brother. Again, the offices attributed to Frumentius and Aedesius, respectively appointed **ዐቃቤ ፡ ሕግ ፡ ወጸኣፌ ፡ አክሱም ፡** and **መጋቤ ፡ ቤተ ፡ ቀጢን ፡**, only find exact correspondence with the text of the Ethiopic *Synaxarium*.⁵ The identification of this literary debt would have allowed us to accept the text of F with more confidence, for instance in the case of **ሜሮፖስ ፡** (Meropius, p. 186, n. 74), unnecessarily corrected into **ሜሮጵስ ፡**, or in the case of **ሰአልዎ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይፈንዎሙ ፡** 'they

³ A = Aksum, Aksum Şəyon Cathedral (p. 82); B = Addis Ababa, Ḥnṭṭṭo St Mary Church (pp. 82–83); P = Lake Ṭana, Ṭana Qirqos Communal Monastery, printed text (p. 87).

⁴ D = Addis Ababa, National Archives and Library Agency (= NALA), 630, copied in 1984/1985.

⁵ For an overview on the Ethiopic sources in a text-critical perspective, see M. Villa, 'Frumentius in the Ethiopic Sources: Mythopoeia and Text-critical Considerations', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Terza Serie, 1 (forthcoming).

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asked him to dismiss them' (p. 186, last line but one), marked with a *crux desperationis* which is quite unnecessary since the *textus receptus* perfectly parallels the corresponding passage in the *Sənkəssar*.

The presentation of the work under review is clear, the translations are accurate, and misprints are rare and largely insignificant, for instance 'Banū l-Yahudiya' instead of 'Banū l-Yahūdiya' (p. 53.8), the spelling 'Ge^eez', inconsistently used together with 'Gə^eəz' (pp. 82–90), 'brought' instead of 'bought' (p. 90, n. 26), 'erros' instead of 'errors' (p. 111.7), and a few others.

To conclude, Amsalu Tefera's work on the Zion corpus, remarkable for its methodological accuracy and the richness of its bibliographical tools, makes available a new source on one of the most multifaceted concepts of the Ethiopian Christianity. Also, it makes a significant contribution to our understanding of a genre of the Ethiopic literary heritage, the homiletic literature, which despite its vitality remains to date largely understudied, and opens the way to new perspectives of investigation into a number of questions, among which, to mention one, the intricate textual relationship between *DŞ* and the *Kəbrä nəgəšt*.

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GIRMA GETAHUN, ed., tr., *The Goğgam Chronicle, by Aläqa Täklä Iyäsus Waqġera*, Fontes Historiae Africanae, New Series, Sources of African History, 12 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). 408 pp. Price: \$115.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-726309-9.

The translation and publication of the 'Goğgam chronicle' is a significant step in the study of eighteenth and nineteenth century Ethiopian historiography. Although many of the historical details dealt with are widely known and written about in several historical works concerning this period (chronicles as well as historical narratives of Ethiopian history in general), this text provides a fresh corpus of historical information on the social and cultural aspects of state and society during the period of *Zämänä mäsafənt*. The author, Täklä Iyäsus Waqġera, served in the court of King Täklä Haymanot and Emperor Mənilək II, and was thus able to make use of his personal experience to reveal a fund of historical data from the nineteenth century that could not easily have been obtained from other historical sources. It is this personal experience that makes the publication of Girma Getahun's edition so valuable.

However, it is misleading, to label the text by Täklä Iyäsus Waqġera a chronicle as this genre has its own established features. Rather, I would say,