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Review

UGO ZANETTI, Saint Jean, bigoumène de Scété (viè siècle). Vie arabe et épitomé éthiopien

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The shorter Ethiopic text is a major witness to the history of St John (born c.585 or more likely 587–595, died c.675 or 677–685, ninety years old). Especially known for the importance of his monastic disciples and also occurring in Copto-Arabic sources, he was little known through direct sources. The Arabic and now also the Ethiopic texts provide additional information on a character of some importance in the history of Egyptian monasticism. The early interest in this text started with the discovery of the Arabic version in 1981 by Zanetti, while compiling the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts found in the monastery of St Macarius. In this volume Zanetti re-edits the Arabic *Life*—it is ‘revised and augmented’ (p. 9) mainly by the addition of a second manuscript—and enhanced with the more recent and shorter Ethiopic version of the *Life*, which is well introduced, edited, translated, and thoroughly commented.

The Ethiopic version (pp. 67*–73*) is considerably shorter than the Arabic text, and, nonetheless, as is often the case, presents passages and episodes which are absent or at some variance with the Arabic, not all of which might be explained with the excerpt from the *Synaxarion*, probably going back to non-identifiable sources. The edition of the Arabic text—in turn based upon a lost Coptic original—is preceded by basic data concerning the biography of St John and its sources, as well as the *Life* (Introduction and
Chapters I–III, pp. 11–57), careful description of the manuscripts (Chapter IV, pp. 58–71) and of the linguistic phenomena (Chapter V, pp. 72–89), as well as of the principles underlying the edition (Chapter VI, pp. 90–92): as can be seen from the number of pages allotted to each chapter, most of the actual problems posed by the edition are of a linguistic character and concern Egyptian Middle Arabic.

The whole of Chapter VII (pp. 92–108) is dedicated to the ‘Ethiopic Epitome’. The author carefully describes the two manuscripts used—which are also the only ones known so far. Both are remarkable for their content, since most of the texts in these manuscripts (they share only a few of them) are very rare. The first one, MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Ms. or. fol. 117 (no. 66 in August Dillmann’s 1878 catalogue, pp. 56–57) is very well known, had an important role in studies on Ethiopic literature from its very beginning and was copied several times in Europe (as detailed by the author, pp. 94–98). The second one, MS Collegeville, MN, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (= EMML), 7602, on the contrary, is much less known, although it has been exhibited, reproduced, and partially described in several publications. It is a fourteenth/fifteenth-century finely illuminated codex from the collection of the church of Dabra Ṣǝyon Maryām at Lake Zǝwây. It has not yet been precisely catalogued, but has been used in a number of editions in which attention is called both to its art history and its texts. It may contain a few texts for which it remains the codex unicus (but for no. 17 see Ted Erho’s contribution in this issue).

Since the editor only had the portion on St John of Scetis at his disposal, it might therefore be useful to present some of the bibliographical details here; these will be presented in a forthcoming publication on the Gadla cambiāt manuscripts. Here, in a concise form and detailed according to its

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1 The starting point remains the comprehensive note by G. Fiaccadori, ‘Aethiopica Mini- ma’, Quaderni Utinensi, 7 (13–14) (1989, pub. 1993), 145–164, esp. 150 and 161–163 (iv. EMML 7602: il «Libro dei Santi” di Tullu Guddo’). Concerning the previous literature on this manuscript, see also E. Hammerschmidt and O. A. Jäger, Illuminierte äthiopische Handschriften, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 15 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1968), 49, and plates 19 and 20 (fols 140v and 7v; the dating to the sixteenth century is obviously wrong); and M. E. Heldman with S. C. Munro-Hay, African Zion. The Sacred Art of Ethiopia, ed. R. Griersen (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1993), 179–180 (no. 70). An index of liturgical readings in this manuscript was provided by A. Bausi, La versione etiopica degli Acta Philese nel Gadla samā’tāt, Supplemento agli Annali, 92 (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 2002), 6 (no. 29).
eighteen units and date of reading, are the exact contents (note that due to an imperfect and defective pagination there may be minor inconsistencies when compared with other partial descriptions):

1) fols 2ra–6vc: Mārqos of Dabra Tarmaq (fol. 2r: 29 Sane; fol. 1v: miniature of Mārqos);
2) fols 8ra–38rb: Sanudiyos (fifty-two miracles; fol. 8r: 7 Ḥamle; fol. 7v: miniature of Sinodā);
3) fols 39ra–56ra: Basoy (fol. 39r: 7 Hamle; fol. 38v: miniature of Basoy);
4) fols 57ra–73rb:ʾEwoṗarāksayā (fol. 56v: miniature of ʾEwoṗarāksayā);
5) fols 74ra–82rb: Yāsā (fol. 74r: 9 Maskaram; fol. 73v: miniature of Yāsā);
6) fols 83ra–89va: Ṣanṭalewon za-ṣomāʾit (fol. 83r: 6 Ṭeqemt; fol. 82v: miniature of Pantalewon);
7) fols 90ra–95va: Gabra Krǝstos (fol. 90r: 14 Ṭeqamt; fol. 95v: miniature of Gabra Kratos);
8) fols 96ra–107va:ʾElāḥryon (fol. 96r: 23 Ṭeqamt; fol. 95vb–c: miniature of ʾElāḥryon);
9) fols 108ra–109ra: Yoḥanni (fol. 108r: 5 Ḫádar; fol. 107vb–c: miniature of Yoḥanni);
10) fols 110ra–113va: Danʾel and ʾAnorewos (fol. 110r: 16 Ḫádar; fol. 113vb–c: miniature of Danʾel and ʾAnorewos);
11) fols 114ra–117vc:ʾƎnbāmren (fol. 114 r: 8 Tāḥšā; fol. 113vb–c: miniature of ʾƎnbāmren);
12) fols 119ra–122vb: Bakimos (fol. 119r: 11 Tāḥšā; fol. 118v: miniature of Bakimos);
13) fols 122vb–123rc: miracle of ʾAbbā Sinodā;
14) fols 124ra–125va: Yoḥanni (fol. 123v: 5 Ḫádar; fol. 127vb–c: miniature of Yoḥanni);
15) fols 126ra–128ra: Maṭāʿ (fol. 126r: Ṭerr; fol. 125vb–c: miniature of Maṭāʿ);
16) fols 129ra–131r: Ṭarkeladis (fol. 129r: Terr; fol. 128v: miniature of Ṭarkeladis);
17) fols 132ra–139vc: ʾArbaḥām the Second (homily by Efrem) (fol. 131v: 5 Ṣāḥē; fol. 131v: miniature by ʾArbaḥām the Second);
18) fols 141ra–159ra: Damātewos and Maksimos (fol. 140v: 17 Terr; fol. 140v: miniature of Damātewos and Maksimos; fol. 159ra: colophon, partly illegible).

Zanetti provides everything that a reader might wish to find in an edition, including palaeographic and linguistic descriptions of the manuscripts,

and also (for the Berlin manuscript) a useful assessment of its significance as a multiple-text manuscript. The edition and translation of the Arabic and Ethiopic texts are completed by an array of useful indexes (biblical, of ancient works, of ancient and modern authors and characters, of quoted manuscripts, hagiographic, linguistic, geographical, and of the themes; pp. 111–128) and bibliographical abbreviations (pp. 129–137).

A final remark concerns Zanetti’s choices in the matter of orthographic standardization and normalization. In his own words, the editor has ‘cherché à respecter aussi souvent que possible la graphie des manuscrits, tout en désirant conserver l’orthographe à celle des inscriptions anciennes, en particulier pour les gutturales’, and has therefore ‘suivi le dictionnaire de Dillmann’ (p. 102). Among the emendations to the orthography there is the case of ṣḥǝl:i (ṣḥǝl:i) and ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i (correctly, ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i, as found in the edition, p. 71*), for which, among the variants of the manuscripts in the apparatus, the graphic variants ｙǝḥ:ｌ:ｉ and ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i are also given. This is actually one of the cases in which Dillmann followed the right method of standardizing, but did not make the right choice: the ancient graphic form of the root is certainly ḥl:i (not ḥl:i as given by Dillmann in his Lexicon). Actually, Dillmann himself was initially uncertain as to how this root should be standardized: there are four occurrences of ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i in the initial part of the Lexicon, whereas ṣḥǝ:ḏ:i has sixty occurrences in the remaining part of the Lexicon. This may well be a case where there is enough evidence to propose systematically a choice different from Dillmann’s; in particular, there is no epigraphic attestation supporting either spelling (the root seems not to be attested in inscriptions) and the New Testament manuscripts’ evidence, including the Abba Garima manuscripts, is very clearly in favour of ḥl:i. On a different note, respecting

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the forms found in the manuscripts sometimes has its own inconveniences: the form ለናወንም፡ (§ 14, reading of the Berlin manuscript, accepted in the edition and defended with good reasons as a Copticism on p. 106, as against ለናወንም፡ found in the EMML manuscript) cannot be accepted, because ለናወንም፡ is simply a non-grammatical form; the expected form would be ለንወለ፡ (a clear case of lectio media or ‘diffraction’) and the editor should at least have added a comment and at best emended the reading.

Presented in Ugo Zanetti’s usual competent, fresh, participatory, and humble tone, this admirable new volume is actually a valuable and very welcome contribution to Egyptian (Copto-Arabic) and Ethiopian hagiography.

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In this publication, Gérard Colin presents his edition of the Ethiopic text of the Gädl and Taʾammar (miracles) of Samuʾel of Waldǝbbǝ, along with his French translation. The edition, divided into 341 numbered paragraphs, is structured into two main parts: the Gädl (§§ 1–184) and seventy miracles (§§ 185–338), followed by a final prayer (§ 339) and concluding exhortations (§§ 340–341). The work also includes a brief Introduction (pp. 1–5) in which the author, after a concise presentation of Samuʾel’s life, gives consideration to the motives of his spiritual ‘success’. He then mentions the two recensions of the Gädl, identifying the manuscripts that contain them and providing other detailed information. Samuʾel is one of the most famous monks and saints of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who lived in the fourteenth/fifteenth century. Usually known as Samuʾel of Waldǝbbǝ, in this Gädl (§ 183) and especially in the miracles (§§ 227, 239, and 314), Samuʾel is referred to several times as ‘Samuʾel of the desert of Wali (Gādamā Wali)’, the latter

(see A. Bausi and A. Camplani, ‘The History of the Episcopate of Alexandria (HEpA): Editio minor of the fragments preserved in the Aksumite Collection and in the Codex Veronensis LX (58)’, Adamantius, 22 (2016, pub. 2017), 249–302), the form ለልልበ (over forty occurrences) appears, alternating with ለልልበ (thirteen occurrences).