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ALESSANDRO BAUSI, Universität Hamburg

Review

UGO ZANETTI, *Saint Jean, higoumène de Scété (vii^e siècle). Vie arabe et
épitomé éthiopien*

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by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

UGO ZANETTI, *Saint Jean, higoumène de Scété (vii^e siècle). Vie arabe et épitomé éthiopien*, *Subsidia hagiographica*, 94 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 2015). 286 pp. (numbered 1–108, one unnumbered page, 144 pp. numbered 2*–73* with same number on facing even and odd pages, and 109–141). Price: €75.00. ISBN: 978-2-87365-031-5.

This volume is dedicated to the edition and commented translation of the *Life* of St John, the *hegoúmenos* ('priest administrator') of Scetis, in Lower Egypt, in the seventh century. In this book, its author, a leading authority in Egyptian (Coptic and Copto-Arabic) hagiography, summarizes two of his more important contributions on this subject: 'La vie de Saint Jean, higoumène de Scété au VII^e siècle. Appendice: l'état de la langue arabe', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 114 (1996), 273–405, in which he published the Arabic version with a substantial introduction and commentary; and a second contribution in which he raises the question of the shorter Ethiopic (Gəʿəz) recension of the text, namely 'The Ethiopian Short Life of John of Scetis (Seventh Century)', in D. Nosnitsin, ed., *Veneration of Saints in Christian Ethiopia. Proceedings of the International Workshop Saints in Christian Ethiopia: Literary Sources and Veneration. Hamburg, April 28–29, 2012*, Supplement to *Aethiopia*, 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 221–232.

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 (= EMMML), 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 Šəyon Māryām at Lake Z^wāy. 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;¹ these will be presented in a forthcoming publication on the *Gadla samā^ctāt* manuscripts. Here, in a concise form and detailed according to its

¹ The starting point remains the comprehensive note by G. Fiaccadori, ‘Aethiopia Minima’, *Quaderni Utinensi*, 7 (13–14) (1989, pub. 1993), 145–164, esp. 150 and 161–163 (‘IV. EMMML 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. Grierson (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 Phileae nel Gadla samā^ctāt*, Supplemento agli Annali, 92 (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 2002), 6 (no. 29).

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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: Mārḳos of Dabra Tarmaḳ (fol. 2r: 29 Sane; fol. 1v: miniature of Mārḳos);
- 2) fols 8ra–38rb: Sanudiyos (fifty-two miracles; fol. 8r: 7 Ḥamle; fol. 7v: miniature of Sinodā);
- 3) fols 39ra–56ra: Bəsoy (fol. 39r: 7 Ḥamle; fol. 38v: miniature of Bəsoy);
- 4) fols 57ra–73rb: ʾEwoḫarāksəyā (fol. 56v: miniature of ʾEwoḫarāksəyā);
- 5) fols 74ra–82rb: Yāsāy (fol. 74r: 9 Maskaram; fol. 73v: miniature of Yāsāy);
- 6) fols 83ra–89va: Paṅtalewon za-šomāʿt (fol. 83r: 6 Teqemṯ; fol. 82v: miniature of Paṅtalewon);
- 7) fols 90ra–95va: Gabra Krəstos (fol. 90r: 14 Ṭəqəmt; fol. 89vb–c: miniature of Gabra Krəstos);
- 8) fols 96ra–107va: ʾElāryon (fol. 96r: 23 Ṭəqəmt; fol. 95vb–c: miniature of ʾElāryon);
- 9) fols 108ra–109ra: Yoḫanni (fol. 108r: 5 Ḥəḏār; fol. 107vb–c: miniature of Yoḫanni);
- 10) fols 110ra–113va: Danəʾel and ʾAnorewos (fol. 110r: 16 Ḥəḏār; fol. 109v: Danəʾel and ʾAnorewos);
- 11) fols 114ra–117vc: ʾƏnbāmərənā (fol. 114 r: 8 Ṭəḫšās; fol. 113vb–c: miniature of ʾƏnbāmərənā);
- 12) fols 119ra–122vb: Bakimos (fol. 119r: 11 Ṭəḫšās; fol. 118v: miniature of Bakimos);
- 13) fols 122vb–123rc: miracle of ʾAbbā Sinodā;
- 14) fols 124ra–125va: Yoḫannəs (fol. 123v: miniature of Yoḫannəs);
- 15) fols 126ra–128ra: Maṭāʿ (fol. 126r: Ṭərr; fol. 125vb–c: miniature of Maṭāʿ);
- 16) fols 129ra–131r: ʾArkaledis (fol. 129r: Ṭərr; fol. 128v: miniature of ʾArkaledis);
- 17) fols 132ra–139vc: ʾAbrəḫām the Second (homily by Efrem) (fol. 131v: 5 Naḫasē; fol. 131v: miniature by ʾAbrəḫām the Second);
- 18) fols 141ra–159ra: Damātewos and Maksimos (fol. 140v: 17 Ṭərr; fol. 140v: miniature of Damātewos and Maksimos; fol. 159ra: colophon, partly illegible).²

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

² No. 14, a very short piece, is edited in this volume. For no. 1 see B. Lourié, ‘S. Alypius Stylite, S. Marc de Tharmaḳa et l’origine des *malkə*’ éthiopiennes’, *Scrinium*, 1 (2005 = D. Nosnitsin in collaboration with S. Frantsouzzoff, L. Kogan, and B. Lourié, eds, *Varia Aethiopica. In Memory of Sevir B. Chernetsov (1943–2005)* (Saint Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 2005)), 148–160. On no. 4 see A. Bausi, ‘Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Vat. et.* 264’, in P. Buzi and D. V. Proverbio, eds, *Coptic Treasures from the Vatican Library. A Selection of Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic Manuscripts. Papers collected on the occasion of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies (Rome, September 17th–22nd, 2012)*, Studi e Testi, 472 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2012), 117–128, p. 121. On no. 6 see A. Brita, *I racconti tradizionali della cristianizzazione dell’Etiopia: il “Gadla Liqānos” e il “Gadla Paṅtalēwon”*, Tesi di Dottorato, Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (2007), 271–351. On no. 9 see D. Nosnitsin, ‘Ancient Chants for ʾabba Yoḫanni: Text Variance and Lost Identity’, in V. Brugnatelli and M. Lafkioui, eds, *Proceedings of the Dies Academicus 2017*, Africana Ambrosiana, 2 (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2017, in print).

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.³ In his own words, the editor has 'cherché à respecter aussi souvent que possible la graphie des manuscrits, tout en désirant conformer 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 **ዩክሊ** : (*yəbelli*) and **ክሊኖሁ** : (correctly, **ክሊኖሁ** : *ḥəllināhu*, as found in the edition, p. 71*), for which, among the variants of the manuscripts in the apparatus, the graphic variants *yəbelli* and *ḥəllināhu* 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 *ḥly* (not *ḥly* as given by Dillmann in his *Lexicon*).⁴ Actually, Dillmann himself was initially uncertain as to how this root should be standardized: there are four occurrences of *ḥəllinā* in the initial part of the *Lexicon*, whereas *ḥəllinā* 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 ʾAbbā Garimā manuscripts, is very clearly in favour of *ḥly*.⁵ On a different note, respecting

³ For an overview of the question, see A. Bausi, 'On editing and normalizing Ethiopic texts', in A. Bausi with assistance from E. Sokolinski, eds, *150 Years after Dillmann's Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of Gə'əz Studies*, Supplement to *Aethiopia*, 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 43–102.

⁴ A. Dillmann, *Lexicon linguae aethiopicae* (Lipsiae: T. O. Weigel, 1865), 577.

⁵ See R. Zuurmond, *Novum Testamentum Aethiopicum: The Synoptic Gospels. I: General Introduction. II: Edition of the Gospel of Mark*, *Äthiopistische Forschungen*, 27 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989), II, 305. See also D. Nosnitsin and I. Rabin, 'A Fragment of an Ancient Hymnody Manuscript from Mə'əsar Gʷəḥila (Təgray, Ethiopia)', *Aethiopia*, 17 (2014), 65–77, p. 69 (fol. va, l. 9, *za'itəḥalla[ya]*); and Fr. Maximous el-Antony, J. Blid, and A. M. Butts, 'An Early Ethiopic Manuscript Fragment (Twelfth–Thirteenth Century) from the Monastery of St Antony (Egypt)', *Aethiopia*, 19 (2016, pub. 2017), 27–51, p. 34, occurring twice. In the texts of the Aksumite Collection

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the forms found in the manuscripts sometimes has its own inconveniences: the form **ወናህህዎ** : (§ 14, reading of the Berlin manuscript, accepted in the edition and defended with good reasons as a Copticism on p. 106, as against **ወናህህሁ** : found in the EMMML manuscript) cannot be accepted, because **ወናህህዎ** : is simply a non-grammatical form; the expected form would be **ወና<ዘ>ህዎ** : (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.

Alessandro Bausi, Universität Hamburg

GÉRARD COLIN, ed., tr., *Vie et Miracles de Samuel de Waldebba*, Patrologia Orientalis, 53/1 (235) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). 296 pp. Price: €150.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-55207-1.

In this publication, Gérard Colin presents his edition of the Ethiopic text of the *Gädl* and *Tä’ammär* (miracles) of Samu’el of Waldəbba, 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 Samu’el’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. Samu’el is one of the most famous monks and saints of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who lived in the fourteenth/fifteenth century. Usually known as Samu’el of Waldəbba, in this *Gädl* (§ 183) and especially in the miracles (§§ 227, 239, and 314), Samu’el is referred to several times as ‘Samu’el of the desert of Wali (Gädämä 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 *ḥəllinā* is completely absent and only *ḥəllinā* (over forty occurrences) appears, alternating with *ḥəllənā* (thirteen occurrences).