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Review

GIRMA GETAHUN, ed., tr., *The Goḡgam Chronicle, by Aläqa Täklä Iyäsus
Waqġera*

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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[°]ez', inconsistently used together with 'Gə[°]əz' (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,

it fits more into the category of the general historical works of Ethiopia such as the Amharic historical narratives written in the early twentieth century by *Aläqa Tayyā Gäbrä Maryam*, *Yä'ityopya bəzb tarik* ('History of the people of Ethiopia'), or by *Aläqa Ašmä Giyorgis Gäbrä Mäsih*, *Yägalla tarik yäšäwa mängəst* ('History of the Galla and the kingdom of Šäwa'). In addition, the title of the book *The Goğgam Chronicle*, given by the editor and translator, fits neither the content nor the intention of the author. Rather, the book deals with the entire period of Zämänä mäsafənt and with the general history of nineteenth-century imperial governments; it does not deal specifically with Goğgam province. The manuscripts' witnesses of the text listed in the Introduction (pp. 5–8), except for one which may also be resolved by the rule of critical edition, reveal a wider interest in Ethiopian history. Indeed, on the first page of the book, the translator recognizes that the manuscripts appear with various titles such as *A Chronicle or History of Kings*, *Yäzämän tarik* ('Annals'), *A History of Goğgam*, but he chooses to give his own title, *The Goğgam Chronicle*, claiming that this is 'the current modern title' (p. 1). Usually, the editor of a text is not expected to give it a title beyond the scope of the content of the text, so it would have been better if he had used one of the titles shared by the majority of the manuscripts.

The work by Täklä Iyäsus Waqğəra covers the major historical episodes of the nineteenth-century political history of the country and of the centralization policy of the imperial governments of Ethiopia. It is written in a style similar to the old tradition of historiography (i.e. to recount the history of Ethiopia from ancient to modern times) and consists of 600 pages (p. 1), of which over two-thirds are excluded from this edition. What is unique about this work, however, is its historical approach which is antithetical to established historiographical tradition. Unlike a court historiographer making a hero of the king, this author attempts to recount the historical episodes of the period objectively, which makes this work a more valuable historical source.

The contents of the book can be structured into three main parts. The first part is the Introduction (pp. 2–26) and the author's Preface (pp. 27–32). The introductory notes concern the philological-historical elements that describe the witnesses of the manuscripts used in the edition: the date of composition, and author of the chronicle, the purpose of the chronicle's composition and the rules of annotation and translation. This section provides detailed information on the textual history of the manuscripts and on the method that the editor used in choosing the best manuscripts to carry out the edition of the text which, in turn, seems to affect both the edition and the translation. He also drew the *stemma codicum* of the text (p. 8)

based only on the provenience and date of the manuscripts without any further collation work.

The Preface (pp. 27–32), the most interesting section of the book, concerns Tāklä Iyäsus Waqğəra's view of historical interpretation where he expresses a scholar's criticism of the subjectivity of his contemporary royal historiographers who were writing in service of the kings and for personal advantage. Tāklä Iyäsus Waqğəra's approach seems to parallel that of one of the early twentieth-century educated intelligentsia of Ethiopia, Gäbrä Həywät Baykädañ.

The second and main section of the book is the English translation of the text (pp. 33–263). For reasons the editor explains in the Introduction, the Amharic edited text is not included, but is available online. The work of translation is carefully done but several questions must be raised as to the philological method the editor used to establish the edited Amharic text. For the reason he gives (p. 3), the editor omits the first nineteen and the last ten (47–56) chapters of the book, publishing only the selected chapters 20–46. This surely contradicts the rule of text edition. Furthermore, the editor promises to maintain the coherence of the text, but this is impossible. In addition, the Amharic original of some English translated chapters is not found in the online-edited Amharic text. Perhaps the main flaws of the edition originate in the fact that the editor employs only two manuscripts out of five, excluding the remaining three manuscripts without any coherent rule. Theoretically, the best reading of a text can only be established through collating all the existing witnesses and establishing a family relationship of the manuscripts and then selecting a reading supported by the majority of the families. In this case, the editor did not carry out a full critical edition of the text, collating all five manuscripts and establishing a family. Had he done so, it would have been easier to select the right reading possibly attested in the lost original text. Thus, the editor fails to treat some of the readings in his own edition correctly.

The third section of the book includes the Notes, Glossary, Bibliography and Indexes. It would have been more convenient for the reader if the annotated notes had been presented in the footnotes rather than in the endnotes. Furthermore, there are some irregularities in the numbering of the endnotes that confuse the reader. However, the translation must be appreciated for providing very detailed and meticulous annotation of many local place names which also make the book especially valuable and increase our knowledge of the political geography of the country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Despite the above-mentioned shortcomings, the book is an essential source of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ethiopian history and may be

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used as an important reference for historical research on various themes in the period under discussion.

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KEON-SANG AN, *An Ethiopian Reading of the Bible. Biblical Interpretation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church*, Foreword by William A. Dyrness, Preface by Joel B. Green (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2016). 258 pp. Price: £16.50. ISBN: 978-0-227-17591-0. American Society of Missiology Monograph Series, 25 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015). 240 pp. Price: \$27.95. ISBN: 978-1-4982-2069-9.

Keon-Sang An is Assistant Professor of Bible and Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary and pastor of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. He previously served as a missionary in Eritrea and Ethiopia, working with Serving In Mission and the Global Mission Society. He taught theology and missiology at Kale Heywet Ministry Training Centre in Asmara, and later at the Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa.

The aim of this book is given as follows: 'The thesis of this monograph is that tradition and context significantly influence biblical interpretation and that the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) provides a compelling historical example of contextual reading of the Bible' (p. 1). The book is divided into five chapters: (1) 'Contextual Theology'; (2) 'Contextual Reading of the Bible'; (3) 'The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church: Tradition and Contextualization'; (4) 'Interpretive Tradition of the EOTC: The *Andemta* Commentary'; (5) 'Biblical Interpretation in the Preaching of the EOTC'. This is followed by a Conclusion and a Bibliography of eight pages (some of the names of the authors are not quoted correctly or are missing).

In the introductory part, An states that the interpretation of the biblical texts is always both contextual and theological, influenced by the historical background of the churches and their members. He himself is an example of this fact: a Korean theology teacher delivering Western theology to Ethiopian students. It was, of course, difficult for his students to apply unknown concepts in their religious life. Therefore, An encouraged them to construct their own theology based on Ethiopian orthodox commentary called *andemta*.

Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 9–84) are an extensive study of the history and development of international theology and of different interpretative traditions concerning the Bible. An claims that it is impossible to read any text