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Review

OSVALDO RAINERI, *Vita del santo monaco etiopico Mälke'a Krestos (sec. XVI–XVII). Edizione del testo etiopico e traduzione italiana*

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the '19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies', held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt's own will, to a pool of younger scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
ÄthFor Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
AethFor Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
AION *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
EAE S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
EI² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
JES *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
NEASt *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
OrChr *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
PICES 9 A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).
RSE *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

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of the miracles of Mary edited in Part Two) is the ambitious effort of the author(s) to consistently emphasise the truthfulness of the recounted episodes and miracles by referring to (saintly) ear- or eyewitnesses.¹³

It would be interesting to examine whether both saints enjoy liturgical veneration and are honoured with a commemorative notice in a local *Sənkəssar* of Däbrä Zämäddo since the memorial days are given for both saints (4 Təqəmt and 30 Həmlə). However, both *Lives*, together with the miracle stories provide extremely valuable material for the study of Ethiopic hagiography in general and of indigenous hagiography in particular. Also the edited collection of local miracles performed by St Mary (ed. pp. 62–112, tr. pp. 197–266) with inspirational stories of faith, and narratives about the people's daily life and its challenges, offers rich material for further research.

The publication under review reminds the scholarly community once again of the absolute necessity of a systematic and an overarching comparative study of Ethiopic hagiography, its thematic relationships and intertextualities, and of its common and specific motifs and elements, etc. The Editor has already contributed significantly to this endeavour in various ways for which he deserves the highest appreciation.

Susanne Hummel, Universität Hamburg

OSVALDO RAINERI, *Vita del santo monaco etiopico Mälke'a Krastos* (sec. XVI–XVII). *Edizione del testo etiopico e traduzione italiana*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 51/3 (228) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). 130 pp. (= 257–388). Price: € 48.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-53428-2.

This edition and translation of the *Gädlä Mälke'a Krastos* is now available in the *Patrologia Orientalis* series, thanks once more to the work of Msgr Osvaldo Raineri, who has edited several unpublished hagiographic works over the past years.

¹³ For example from the *Gädlä Bärtälomewos*, 'However, this, that has been written, is what was revealed to the spiritual saints. As for the rest, those who had seen it openly have testified' (p. 148); from the *Gädlä Yoḥannəs*, 'this miracle was heard by people of that village and other villages' (p. 182). See also the passionately written concluding passage of the colophon of the local miracles of St Mary (ed. pp. 111–112, tr. p. 266) with a promise and a warning, 'And you, people of Zämäddo, do not treat it like fiction [...]. It will help you and rescue you from all tribulations of this world and the one to come. But if you ignore (the miracle worker), she will utterly destroy you from the life of body and soul'.

The introduction provides a general overview of the text and its transmission ('Manoscritto'). The *Gädlä Mälkäʿa Krəstos* is so far known from one manuscript preserved in the monastery of Gəšaq (Wällo). The manuscript was photographed by Fr. Emilio Ceccarini and the pictures, used by Msgr Raineri for his edition, are preserved in the House of Comboni Mission in Addis Abäba (to the knowledge of the editor there is no copy preserved in the Vatican Library as claimed by Amsalu Tefera Alemu¹). A short description of the manuscript (based on the pictures) is given along with a hypothetical date ('sec. XIX (?)') apparently justified on the basis of palaeographic evidence. The manuscript contains: (1) the *Gädlä Mälkäʿa Krəstos* (ff. 1r–38v); (2) the Miracles of Mälkäʿa Krəstos (ff. 38v–62v); (3) the *Mälkäʿ* of Mälkäʿa Krəstos (ff. 62v–65v).

A brief summary of the content of the *Gädl* ('Vita di Mälkeʿa Krestos') as well as of the miracles is provided (pp. 252–254). Mälkäʿa Krəstos was born to Ṭaʿämä and Awganya in the land of Särägo. He spent his childhood learning the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. At that time the Catholic missionaries came to Ethiopia and the saint played an active role in opposing them and in supporting the *Təwəhədo* doctrine. A heretic king initiated a violent persecution, and Mälkäʿa Krəstos moved to Təgray and to other regions; he became presbyter and abbot of the monastery in Waldəbba, founded the monastery of Adagät and other monasteries in different places, gathering many disciples. Among the precepts and norms that the saint taught his disciples is the observance and sanctification of the Sabbath, as prescribed in the holy books and in the *Sinodos*. The Virgin and Jesus Christ appeared to Mälkäʿa Krəstos while he was in Däbrä Maryam Təkuz; both gave him the *kidan* and the promise that all the members of the community would receive his special protection during their lifetime, and eternal salvation after their death. Mälkäʿa Krəstos felt that the day of his death was approaching and gathered all his disciples together to give them final instructions and the blessing of the Lord and of the saints. On that occasion Mary and Jesus Christ appeared to him again and renewed the *kidan*. An earthquake occurred when the saint died and many people came to pay their last respects. The saint is commemorated on the 10 Sane, if the fasting of the Apostles does not take place on that day, otherwise on the 5 Ḥamle. Other faithful celebrate his memory on the 21 Ḥamle, in conjunction with the celebration of the birthday of Ewostətewos, and yet others on the 5 Mäskäräm, together with the commemoration of Aron, since that was the day on which he worked a miracle in the monastery of Gəšaq. The disciples sent a letter to the king to

¹ 'Mälkäʿa Krəstos', *E Ae*, III (2007), 707a–708a (Amsalu Tefera Alemu).

inform him of Mälkə'a Krəstos's death; the king was deeply moved and had food ordered and everything that was needed to celebrate his funeral.

Msgr Raineri devotes an interesting paragraph ('Dati cronologici') to the chronological data he was able to detect in the text although they are not explicitly mentioned. This reconstruction was made on the basis of the following: (1) A clear reference to the Jesuit mission which took place in the sixteenth–seventeenth century can be found in § 10 of the *Gädl*. The Catholics are called **ደቂቁ ፡ ለልዮን ፡ ርኩስ** 'sons of the defiled Leo' and **ወደቂቁ ፡ ለንስጥሮስ** 'sons of Nestorius', with reference both to Pope Leo I (440–461), who believed in the Christological hypostatic union of two natures—divine and human—in one person, and to Nestorius (c.386–451) who was thought to believe in the existence of two natures—divine and human—in two persons (although the Christological position of Nestorius was not exactly so). In the *Gädl*, the comparison between Leo, Nestorius and the Catholics is due to the fact that the theological position of the Ethiopians denies the presence of two natures of Jesus Christ, and consequently also the presence of two persons. According to Ethiopian Christology, the human and divine natures are completely and perfectly united in Jesus Christ, *Täwahədo* ('union') in the essence, in the hypostasis, in the nature. (2) The heretic king, mentioned in § 26, who started to oppose the Christians throughout the country and who instigated a massive persecution, can be identified as Susənyos (c.1571–1632). During his reign (1607–1632), he proclaimed Catholicism as the official religion of Ethiopia, abolished several doctrines proper to Ethiopian Orthodox belief, among which was the observance of the Sabbath (Saturday). The faithful who continued to observe the traditional practices were persecuted. (3) A third episode transmitted in § 80 relates that two disciples of the saint, Mahdärä Krəstos and Sämu'el, were beheaded for having told the king not to marry two sisters. Mälkə'a Krəstos called together countless monks in Dera. Worried about the involvement of so many religious, the king convened his notables and his officials, among whom was *bašša* Aygäbäz (who died in 1686). The editor connects this episode both with the chronicle and the annals of Fasilädäs. In the first work it is mentioned that in the year 1651 'the monks of Həryaqos struggled because of the issue of the two sisters' and for this reason 'the monks of Mäg^wina were killed'. This episode is reported also in the latter work, the annals of Fasilädäs, where it is dated to 1657. The comparison made by Msgr Raineri is stimulating, although we must admit that, neither in the chronicle nor in the annals of Fasilädäs are the disciples of Mälkə'a Krəstos explicitly mentioned.

These details allowed the editor to sketch the chronological framework in which the *Gädlä Mälkə'a Krəstos* is set as follows: the saint goes to Waldəbba to complete his religious education (c. 10–13 years old) and in that period the

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Catholic mission arrives in Ethiopia. According to the editor, this must have been the Jesuit mission lead by Pero Paez in 1603. Since Mälkäʾa Krəstos was an adolescent at that time, this may mean that he was born soon after 1590. Other events reported in the *Gädl* are connected respectively with King Susənyos and his successor Fasilädäs, although neither of these kings is explicitly mentioned in the text. The editor concludes that the death of the saint might have taken place after 1690, the year of the death of queen Säblä Wängel for whom he celebrated the funerals.

Msgr Raineri's attempt to extract precise chronological data is courageous. However we must admit that, while it is clear from many details in the text—correctly pointed out by its editor—that Mälkäʾa Krəstos lived in the sixteenth–seventeenth century, these might not be sufficient for reconstructing the precise years of the saint's birth and death. The more so, if we consider that, on the one hand, the church education of the saint (used as one of the arguments to establish his year of birth) is often treated in Ethiopic hagiographic texts more as a *tópos* than as a real fact; on the other hand, the fact that queen Säblä Wängel—one of the arguments used to establish the year of his death—was a spiritual daughter of the saint is never mentioned in the sources known so far. The general impression is that the editor relies too much on hagiographical details for reconstructing the history of the saint.

In publishing the *Gädla Mälkäʾa Krəstos*, Raineri once more makes an important contribution to our knowledge of the extremely rich Ethiopian hagiographic tradition, still partially unknown. This text abounds in place names, hagiographic themes, and biblical quotations, excellently identified by the editor.

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ANDREU MARTINEZ D'ALÒS-MONER, *Envoys of a Human God: The Jesuit Mission to Christian Ethiopia, 1557–1632*, Jesuit Studies: Modernity through the Prism of Jesuit History, 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2015). xxxiii, 419 pp. Price: € 146.00 ISBN: 978-90-04-28914-7 (hardback).

In the centuries following the rise and expansion of Islam and the decline and downfall of Aksumite power, Christian Ethiopia's contact with Europe and to some extent with the Middle East waned. The sporadic attempts which were made to revive relations during and after the Crusades were undertaken by individuals or by small groups of Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem and Egypt as well as by European explorers and adventurers, primarily from the Italian states, central Europe and the Iberian peninsula.