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Dissertation Abstract

The Textual Tradition of the Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Towards the Critical Edition of the Ethiopic Version

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theories which lack evidence. Finally, to make the study more transparent and understandable, a relevant textual source is given for each theory or analysis.

The tradition of the schools maintains that the introduction of the existing Gəʿəz grammar ʾaggabāb goes back to fifteenth-century scholars. Thus, it can be identified as a classical grammar of Gəʿəz.

The knowledge which has come down to our time comes through oral transmission. Even today, the methodology which is applied in the schools is based on oral teaching.

DARIA ELAGINA, *The Textual Tradition of the Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Towards the Critical Edition of the Ethiopic Version*, PhD Dissertation in Ethiopian Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Hamburg, defended on 29 July 2019.

The *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* is an important source for the history of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, as well as for the history of Late Antiquity in general. It was composed by a Coptic bishop, John, in the seventh century in Egypt and tells the history of the world starting from Adam and Eve till the author's time. The first part of the *Chronicle* relies on diverse sources and offers an impression of the scope of literary works available to the author of the *Chronicle*. The second part is, however, an account written down by an eyewitness to the Islamic conquest and thus represents a highly valuable historical document.

The original language of the *Chronicle* is still debatable. There are arguments for Coptic as well as for Greek. Presumably around the twelfth century the text was translated into Arabic. In 1601 it was translated into Ethiopic and, at the very end of the nineteenth century, into Amharic. According to the current state of knowledge, only these two versions, Ethiopic and Amharic, have survived. The *Chronicle* consists of 122 chapters prefaced with an Introduction and a Table of Contents with short descriptions of chapters and followed by a Conclusion and a Colophon. However, the latter belongs exclusively to the Ethiopic version and only contains information on the circumstances of the translation into Ethiopic.

The complete text of the *Chronicle* was published and translated for the first time by Hermann Zotenberg in 1883 on the basis of two manuscripts (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 123 and London, British Library, Or. 818). An English translation was published by Robert Henry Charles in 1916, and is based on Zotenberg's edition. Since that time the number of available witnesses to the Ethiopic version of the *Chronicle* has

increased. In 1902 a manuscript from Antoine d'Abbadies's collection containing the *Chronicle* was handed over to the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien d'Abbadie 31). Around 1903 Carlo Conti Rossini brought a paper ledger containing the *Chronicle*'s text from his journey to Eritrea (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Fondo Conti Rossini 27). Another manuscript from the EMML collection (Collegeville, MN, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, 7919) came to light during the course of my PhD studies thanks to Jeremy Brown of The Catholic University of America. The increasing number of unstudied witnesses to the *Chronicle* made a preparation of a new critical edition a scholarly *desideratum*.

My dissertation is devoted to the preparation of a new text-critical edition of the *Chronicle* applying the so-called genealogical-reconstructive method.

The dissertation consists of an Introduction and three chapters. The Introduction is dedicated to a short presentation of the *Chronicle* as a historical source, the history of study of the *Chronicle*, and the importance of this new text-critical edition. Chapter 1 is dedicated to John, the author of the *Chronicle*, with a short note on possible sources at his disposal, the problem of the original language, and the history of the text's transmission, especially the Amharic version, which has been discussed in detail for the first time in this dissertation. Two nineteenth-century manuscripts (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 240/Mondon-Vidailhet 53; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Éthiopien 241/Mondon-Vidailhet 54) containing the Amharic version of the *Chronicle* are assumed to transmit a translation based upon Zotenberg's printed edition.

Chapter 2 presents the results of the *recensio* and contains the description of textual witnesses used in the research (including the indirect tradition of the *Chronicle*), two possible hypotheses for a *stemma codicum* which are based on the entire collation of all available text witnesses, as well as a number of reflexions on the problems of text reconstruction and on some emendations and interpretations.

Chapter 3 consists of a short introduction to the text-critical edition followed by the list of bibliographical references, and the text-critical edition of a portion of the *Chronicle* itself (Introduction, Table of Contents, and the first eighty chapters, corresponding to approximately 40 per cent of the entire text) with a number of critical apparatuses and a parallel translation into English. The English translation is accompanied by commentaries on various aspects, including comparison with other texts, which might have served as a source for the *Chronicle*, explanations of various conjectures,

historical and linguistic commentaries including notes on an extensive comparison of the actual content of chapters with their short descriptions in the Table of Contents. The English translation is enhanced by a transliteration of proper names and ambiguous lexical items, which, hopefully, will provide for a better understanding and analysis of the content of the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu*.

Nafisa Valieva, *The* 'Gadla Lālibalā *collection of textual units': tradition and documentation*, PhD Dissertation in Ethiopian Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Hamburg, defended on 25 September 2019.

The present dissertation is an elaborate study of twenty-three manuscripts containing the basic '*Gadla Lālibalā* collection' which consists of fourteen textual units. The '*Gadla Lālibalā* collection of fourteen textual units' is a working title used in this dissertation for what is often referred to as the *Gadla Lālibalā*, and which is considered to be the main source concerning the life and deeds of King Lālibalā, a saint. King Lālibalā is considered to be a saint along with other kings of the so-called Zāgʷe dynasty, who ruled in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries CE. It is believed that he had the renowned rock-hewn churches constructed in the city of Lālibalā, the city which bears his name. The term '*gadl*' (lit. 'combat') defines a text written in the hagiographic genre, a genre with its own rules and conventions, but which also reveals the author's own ideas. Therefore, hagiographical texts are excellent witnesses to the history of thought, mentality, and practices. As yet, the only scholarly, if only partial, edition of the *Gadla Lālibalā* was carried out by the French philologist Jules Perruchon in 1892.

The main hypothesis of this dissertation is that the *Gadla Lālibalā* is anything but a homogeneous text that simply recounts the life of Lālibalā. Rather, it is a composite of multiple textual units revolving around Lālibalā, that are partially independent of each other and occur in different combinations in different manuscripts. The units are organized on both a logical and a physical basis.

Some of the textual units have already been identified by other scholars as independent of the *Gadla Lālibalā*. Other units—this dissertation counts fourteen of them—have always been thought to be an intellectual unit of production. These fourteen textual units are defined here as the 'basic' collection referred to in my dissertation as the '*Gadla Lālibalā* collection of fourteen textual units', and appear under the siglum HagLal. While some textual units of the HagLal are known to be part of other collections, some