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Review

ጎጂ ለገሰ ገሰገሰ, ነቅጥ መጻሕፍት ፤ ከ600 በላይ በግዕዝ የተጻፉ
የኢትዮጵያ መጻሕፍት ዝርዝር ከግብረ-ሪያ ጋር

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Reviews

– Page 135, type 90: the legend is *ng-s* not *n-gs* on 90b. Other obverse symbols are recorded, for example from my own collection alone: triangle between N and G (90b), bar before chest (90b), bar left of crown (90a), and diamond of four pellets behind neck (90b). Examples of an unmentioned type 90c are illustrated on plate 17.

– Page 142, note 384: the reference should be to my 2013 article.⁷

Hahn pays tribute to his late wife Adelheid, who took a close interest in Ethiopian matters and inspired him to complete this work.

This handsome book is heartily recommended to all with an interest in the Aksumite coinage. It is to be hoped that an English translation will be produced which would considerably increase the potential readership and ensure the use of this work as the standard reference.

Vincent West, Reading

'AMSĀLU TAFARRĀ [AMSALU TEFERA], ነቅዕ መጻሕፍት ፤ ከ600 በላይ በግዕዝ የተጻፉ የኢትዮጵያ መጻሕፍት ዝርዝር ከግብራሪያ ጋር (*Naq'a maṣāḥəft. Ka-600 balāy ba-gə'z ya-taṣāfu ya-'Ityōpyā maṣāḥəft zərzər kamābrāriyā gār*, 'The source of books: List of over 600 Gə'əz books with explanation') (Addis Ababa: Jajaw publishers, 2011 EC = 2018/2019 EC). 366 pp. Price: \$20.00. ISBN: 978-9-994-475-67-4.

Amslau Tefera's *Naq'a maṣāḥəft*, written in Amharic, is a voluminous book which offers a comprehensive overview of Gə'əz literature, particularly providing detailed valuable information about the hagiographical genre. As is clear from the title of the book (*naq'a*, Gə'əz for 'source'), the main aim is to introduce more than six hundred Gə'əz texts with basic information on their contents, the current scholarship, and other aspects that provide new insights into the field of Gə'əz literature. In fact, the work is not limited to discussing only these selected texts, but also explores key themes in Gə'əz literature—such as addressing manuscript culture, history of writing, and textual criticism—revealing new ideas and approaches. This scholarly book is the product of rigorous research, based on exhaustive use of both primary and secondary sources. Most of all, with the work being written in Amharic, it will find a wide readership among Ethiopians.

⁷ V. West, 'A Parcel of Coins of King Hataz of Aksum', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, 216 (2013), 4–6

The book is structured into five main chapters accompanied by a Foreword and an Introduction. The Foreword has been written by a leading scholar of Ethiopian studies, Getatchew Haile, who has reviewed the book and firmly asserted that it is as valuable as the pioneering work done on the history of Gə'əz literature by eminent Ethiopist scholars (Enrico Cerulli, Ignazio Guidi, Carlo Conti Rossini, among others; p. x). The Introduction very briefly introduces the primarily renowned local authors of various Gə'əz texts in medieval Ethiopia (pp. 1–4), followed by a review of pioneering works on a similar topic, and confirms that the book has filled the void of such works and further enriched this topic.

The first chapter of the book discusses various basic introductory themes of Gə'əz literature and manuscript culture, including the history of Ethiopian Christian literature. On this matter, the chapter begins providing detailed information about the inscriptions of 'Aksum and Adulis (pp. 9–13), followed by the Holy Scriptures' writings (pp. 13–24). More broadly, the chapter focuses on manuscript culture and its development in medieval Ethiopia, types of Gə'əz genres and the major collections of Ethiopian manuscripts outside of Ethiopia, including how they were taken overseas and the efforts to microfilm and digitize manuscripts over a few decades and how to make them available online for wider scholarship (pp. 30–54). One can understand that all these topics have been studied by several scholars and are available but scattered amongst various works. Amsalu's achievement is vital here as he has summarized and presented the subject for readers to obtain a clear and basic understanding of these topics coherently. It is an eye-opener for anyone wishing to equip herself or himself with basic facts on the manuscript culture of Ethiopia. It also examines very nicely the history of the tradition of Ethiopian scriptoria over the medieval period, mentioning major monasteries and churches that served as centres of manuscript production, within as well as without Ethiopia (pp. 27–30).

Chapter 2 focuses on the two essential aspects of Gə'əz biblical studies in Ethiopia: the development of its translation and commentary. Having explained that biblical translation took a long time, the chapter clearly asserts, based on the assertion of various scholars, that there are two crucial historical periods that characterize revised biblical translation in Ethiopia (the first from the thirteenth to fifteenth century and the second from the fifteenth to seventeenth century). The book briefly surveys scholarly works on the various Gə'əz biblical books that have been studied and published by various biblical scholars from the sixteenth century to the present. After which, it examines the two established traditions of biblical commentary—Gə'əz–Gə'əz commentary (*tərgwāme*) and Gə'əz–Amharic commentary (*'andəmtā*)—in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawāhədo Church over a century, listing approximately sixteen Gə'əz texts that serve as sources for the commentaries (pp. 80–86).

The third chapter, the main section of the book, deals with the hagiographical tradition of the Ethiopian Gə'əz texts. In this section, the author gives a broad and substantive introduction to the hagiographical tradition (pp. 87–99). Based mainly on previous works, it also introduces new ideas and concepts on the tradition of hagiographical composition, which will undoubtedly be of great use to scholars of Ethiopian hagiographical texts. Here, the book discusses what hagiography is all about, its main components, the purpose of hagiographical text composition for local saints, and the authors of the hagiographical tradition, whilst also reviewing the current scholarship. After discussing these basic theoretical concepts, it provides a detailed list of hagiographical texts, drawing heavily on the work of Kinefe-Rigb Zelleke (1975) and adding a list of new hagiographical texts (pp. 99–212). The book lists 472 hagiographical texts; some translated, that is, first written in Arabic and then translated into Gə'əz (quite a few of them were also translated from Greek into Gə'əz during the Aksumite time); and others written locally, which are hagiographical texts about local saints commemorated in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawāḥədo Church. Each of the hagiographical texts listed is accompanied by a short and very informative description. The description focuses on certain aspects, mainly the content of the *gädl* and whether or not the *gädl* has been studied. It also gives details on the whereabouts of some of the hagiographical texts' preserved manuscripts. The chapter is therefore a valuable resource for any research of Ethiopian hagiography.

Given the vastness of the field of the hagiographical genre, the book provides considerable information on those hagiographies which have either been studied by church scholars or within academia. However, it is quite astonishing that the author did not take into account earlier scholarly works on some listed hagiographical texts. For instance, the *Gadla 'Iyāsu 'Adyām Sagad* is listed as not being studied (p. 169), yet it has been edited and translated into Italian by Conti Rossini.¹ Similarly, the *Gadla Śarḏa Pētros* is noted as not studied (p. 125) while in fact it was the focus of Susanne Hummel's PhD at the Universität Hamburg which was in progress over some years before the publication of the reviewed book. Indeed, she had also introduced the *Gädl* in a few of her previous contributions.² Likewise, the *Gadla Yəm'atā* is noted as not yet published (p.186), failing to mention Hagos Abrha's critical edition for his doctoral study

¹ C. Conti Rossini, 'Iyāsu I re d'Etiopia e martire', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 20/1 (1942), 65–128.

² S. Hummel, 'Searching for the Appropriate Editorial Technique: The Case of *Gädlä Śarḏa Pētros*', *Aethiopica*, 18 (2015), 128–144.

in 2014.³ Though stating the *Gadla Zenā Mārḳos* to have been studied (p. 182), there is no mention of the new critical edition of this text by the late Abebe Dessie (d.2016) for his doctoral study at Addis Ababa University, to date unpublished.⁴ The author would have served us all far better if he had undertaken a more careful and exhaustive consultation of these works.

The fourth chapter (pp. 213–262) describes 128 texts belonging to different Gəʿəz genres, including homilies, theological, liturgical, historiographical, ethical, and linguistic texts, as well as texts dealing with various other topics. This chapter provides comprehensive information on each type of such Gəʿəz genres under the following categories: content, whether they have been edited or not, and the philological-scientific approach the author adopted. Some of the texts listed are not very well known, which invites further research in the future. The approach applied in reviewing the historiography of the scholarly works regarding the editions and translations of texts is, however, very interesting. Here, for instance, the author reviewed the philological studies of historical texts chronologically and identified the names of editors and the languages of translations. In this section of the book, the different types of historical texts are listed, which is crucial in providing sufficient and clear knowledge for the reader of historiographical genres (pp. 238–249). However, I wondered why the book fails to list *Zenāhu laGällā*, a well-known historiographical text of the sixteenth century, though many smaller and lesser-known historiographical texts are listed. Other texts are listed as not studied, though the *Nagara Grāññ* (p. 243) was edited and translated into Italian by Guidi.⁵ Some basic proofreading mistakes appear, such as wrong dates of publication. For example (p. 244), the publication of the *Chronicle of ʿAmda Šayon* is attributed to 1890 in a footnote, but in the text is correctly given as 1889. On the same page, the year of translation of this chronicle into English by George Wynn Brereton Huntingford is given in the text as 1995, yet in the footnote, correctly, as 1965. The book also states that the *Chronicle of ʿIyāsu* was studied by Conti Rossini and Guidi, but he confuses the chronicle with the hagiography of this king. The chronicle was studied only by Guidi, but Conti Rossini edited and translated the hagiography of the king into Italian in 1942. Similarly, it is stated that the *Chronicle of Šarḍa Dəngəl* was also studied by Guidi, but no reference is provided in either footnote or bibliography (p. 245).

³ Hagos Abrha, *Critical Edition (With Translation) and Textual Analysis of Gädlä Yəm ʿata*, PhD Thesis, Addis Ababa University (2014).

⁴ Abebe Dessie, *The Gəʿəz Acts of Abba Zena Marḳos: Critical edition and translation*, PhD Thesis, Addis Ababa University (2016).

⁵ I. Guidi, ‘Leggende storiche di Abissinia’, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 1/1 (1907), 5–30.

The final chapter surveys ten selected texts on which the author has carried out research in the last few years. It includes books dealing with the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, some of the works of Saint Ephrem, works of Saint Yāred and those books which were written for his honour, works written about Gabra Manfas Qəddus and those on Saint Ura'el and *Mawaddəs qəne*. Detailed descriptions are provided for each. In addition, the author also provides philological textual criticism on the *Rā'əya Māryām*, a text which has been hotly debated politically as it retains a pejorative ethnonym. However, it is to the author's credit that he addresses this issue (pp. 294–300) very nicely from the perspective of textual criticism in order to avoid the debate over pejorative ethnyms emanating from the absence of any critical edition prior to its use as a historical source. However, some of the theological sermons (p. 294, Section 5.5.3) covered in this chapter are, in my opinion, irrelevant to the main purpose of this scholarly and scientific book and were therefore superfluous to it.

Before I conclude, I also suggest that some typographical errors are corrected in a future reprint of the book. For example, p. 45 (line 10) የሚገኙ ፡ is repeated; p. 53, ዩኒቨርሲቲ for ዩኒቨርሲቲ; p. 106, እነፈ ፡ for ክነፈ; p. 163, የተሠ for የተሠ; p. 285, ያደረሰው for የደረሰው; p. 285, በጾ for በጾም; p. 290, በደቡብ for በደቡብ; p. 318, እንዳተመለከተው for እንደተመለከተው.

Notwithstanding some of the above-mentioned shortcomings, the book is an indispensable work for teaching and researching Gə'əz literature. It fills a huge lacuna in Amharic scholarship, and it will be a major reference work for scholars in Ethiopian studies in relation to Ethiopic philology, theology, heritage studies, and history. Furthermore, the book will be of great interest to the wider Ethiopian public.

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TEDROS ABRAHA, *Mäṣḥafä Sawiros zä-Esmunayn: la versione ge'ez del Kitāb al-īdāḥ di Severo di Ašmūnayn (X/XI sec.), Omelie I–III, Introduzione, edizione del testo etiopico con traduzione italiana annotata*, ed., tr., *Patrologia Orientalis*, 56/2 (247) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017). 216 pp. (133–348). Price: €95.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-58087-6.

This book contains the first edition of the first part (three out of twelve homilies) of the Gə'əz version of the Arabic *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* ('Book of the elucidation'), also known as *Kitāb al-durr al-īamīn fī īdāḥ al-dīn* ('Book of the precious pearls in