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Dissertation Abstracts

SOPHIA DEGE-MÜLLER, *Die Angelologie der Aksimaros-Literatur. Aufnahme und Anwendung eines literarischen Motivs*, PhD Dissertation in Ethiopian Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Hamburg, defended on 5 October 2023.

In this dissertation I explore the Gə‘əz texts *Aksimaros* (‘Hexaemeron’ of Pseudo-Epiphanius of Salamis, CAe 1046) and *Ṭəntä haymanot* (‘Beginning of Faith’, CAe 1976), both originally translated from Arabic. When undertaking preparatory work for a new edition of the *Aksimaros* (the text showed an extremely conservative transmission tradition, and so I soon abandoned the plan, since there was already an edition by Trumpp 1882), I discovered that the word ‘Aksimaros’ is used in Ethiopic literature as a label covering, apart from the actual *Aksimaros*, a large body of other writings that treat the creation of the world, such as the *Šənä fəṭrät* (‘Beauty of Creation’, CAe 2314) and the *Amməstu a ‘əmadä məšṭir* (‘Five Pillars of Mystery’, CAe 1097). I noticed that the label ‘Aksimaros’ is specially frequent for texts describing the fight between the good and the bad angels and the latter’s subsequential fall into hell. Based on this observation, I identified this narrative as the *Leitmotiv* of the *Aksimaros* literature, and its adoption and adaptation in Gə‘əz literature became the main topics addressed in my dissertation.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter describes the use of the label ‘Aksimaros’ as well as its circulation in the sources, consisting of written texts in several languages (mostly in Gə‘əz, but also Amharic and Təgrəñña), as well as of oral traditions and internet finds. A further topic of this chapter is the genre of ‘hexaemeral’ literature (texts describing the six days of creation), to which both the *Aksimaros* and the *Ṭəntä haymanot* belong. As the text of the *Ṭəntä haymanot*, after the creation narrative, continues with the life of Adam and Eve after their expulsion from paradise, there are overlaps with the *Gädlä Addam* (‘The Life of Adam’, CAe 1415). Consequently, the first chapter also discusses Adam books, as well as their *Sitz im Leben* in Ethiopia.

Through a literary study, I show that the *Aksimaros* literature was of special importance during the Christological debates of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. Theologically opposed groups made use of the texts, and reference to the *Leitmotiv* can be found in their writings. This is especially the case for the proponents of the *Qəbat* teaching (‘Uncionists’), centred in the Goğgām province of Ethiopia. Another section of the first chapter discusses the artistic reception of the *Aksimaros* literature. Direct references to the texts in icons, wall paintings and manuscript illuminations allowed me to date the translation of the *Aksimaros* and

Ṭəntä haymanot to the fifteenth century. As none of the manuscripts pre-date the seventeenth century, the adaptation of the *Leitmotiv* in art is crucial for dating the arrival of the *Aksimaros* literature to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The second chapter is dedicated to angelology and demonology. *Aksimaros* literature is characterized by only a distinct group of angels featuring in it. These are nine classes of angels, corresponding to the angelic hierarchy described by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the fifth century. The hierarchy is at first divided into ten groups of angels distributed over three heavens, with each group having its own leader (for two groups, the name of the group is the same as their leader). In general, the texts are extremely uniform in these lists of angels, and only the name of the angel who later becomes the devil varies. From the first heaven, down to the third: 1. Dominions (አጋእዝት, *aga'əzt*), leader: Sāmāyal/Sāṭna'el/‘the beautiful angel’/other name; 2. Cherubim (ክሩቤል, *kirubel*), leader: Cherubim/Kirubel; 3. Seraphim (ሱራፌል, *surafel*), leader: Seraphim/Surafel; 4. Powers (ኀይለት, *ḥaylat*), leader: Michael; 5. Masters (አርባብ, *arbab*), leader: Gabriel; 6. Thrones (መናብርት, *mānabərt*), leader: Raphael; 7. Principalities (ሥልጣናት, *śəṭṭanat*), leader: Suryal/Uriel (in a later chapter the interchangeable use of these two names is elaborated upon); 8. Princes (መኳንንት, *māk'wānnənt*), leader: Sādakyal; 9. Archangels (ሊቃናት, *liqanat*), leader: Sāratyal; Angels (መለእክት, *māla'əkt*), leader: Ananyal. The highest of these ranks—Sāmāyal and his Dominions—rebel against God and are expelled from heaven, after which nine ranks remain. This nine-fold division of the angelic hierarchy is found in all texts belonging to the *Aksimaros* literature. Other angels that feature prominently in the overall Ethiopian-Eritrean tradition, such as Fanu'el, are absent from the *Aksimaros* tradition. Regarding the devil and demonology, the *Aksimaros* literature inherits a unique tradition, and especially contains a peculiar narrative of the fall. Contrary to texts such as the *Book of Enoch*, the angelic mutiny against God is placed within the creation account, sometimes on the fourth day of Creation (in the *Book of Enoch* it happens at a much later time). Another distinct feature of the *Aksimaros* literature is the place to which the devil falls—several texts specify that he fell to the city of Mekka, some adding that Muhammad is his son. This feature represents an obvious anti-Islamic polemic, an angle worth exploring in future work on the *Aksimaros* literature.

The third chapter discusses the text and manuscript corpus and is divided into ‘primary texts’ (*Ausgangstexte*) and ‘recipient texts’ (*Rezipiententexte*). Primary texts are those that contain the original information: *Aksimaros*, *Ṭəntä haymanot*, *Gädlä Addam*, but also *Qäleməñtos* (‘[Book of] Clement’, CAe 1957) and *Tä'ammärä İyäsus* (‘Miracles of Jesus’, CAe 2382). The latter two share similar features, such as the creation and fall narratives, but their connection to the general *Aksimaros* tradition becomes especially apparent in the recipient texts. The corpus of recipient texts, defined by their incorporation, adaptation and adoption of the

Leitmotif, includes fifteen texts. Apart from this unifying element of the *Leitmotif*, they vary greatly. Some are widely attested in manuscripts, such as the *Šānā fəṭrāt*, the *Amməstu a ʾəmadā məšṭir* and the *Dərsanā Gabraʾel* ('Homily of Gabriel', CAe 1284), whereas others are known only from one or a few manuscripts, such as the *Māzmurā Krəstos* ('Psalms of Christ', CAe 2002) and the 'Vienna Protology' (CAe 2485). For most texts of this corpus, I carry out a comprehensive textual and manuscript analysis. This is frequently the first time that these texts have been investigated in such a detailed way. Hundreds of manuscripts were inspected, containing texts in Gəʿəz and Amharic as well as Təgrəñña. Investigating such a large body of witnesses showed how the *Leitmotiv* has been received and adapted in the texts and, moreover, led to numerous new insights about these texts. For example, I identified a colophon, contained in two manuscripts of the *Ṭəntā haymanot*, which demonstrates that it was translated from Arabic, and I could establish that the earliest textual attestation of the term *Aksimarios* and its *Leitmotif* is found in the *Māzmurā Krəstos*. Furthermore, I identify the Arabic *Vorlage* of the *Māqdāmā Wāngel* ('Introduction to the Four Gospels', CAe 4872), and I demonstrate that the 'Vienna Protology' is not an independent text, but instead belongs to the *Dərsanā Gabraʾel* tradition, which again borrows heavily from *Ṭəntā haymanot* and *Täʾammərā Iyəsus*.

Chapter four is devoted to the individual texts. I first translated, in parallel, passages about the creation of the angels from the *Aksimarios* and the *Ṭəntā haymanot*. The parallel presentation shows where the works follow each other, and in which parts the *Ṭəntā haymanot* expanded the text. In the next sections follow attestations of the *Leitmotif*, which I divided into different narrative units, such as the angels' question about their origin or Gabriel's role in the fight against the devil. This chapter showcases the complexity and entanglement of the *Leitmotif* in the recipient texts. Verbatim repetitions of whole phrases are sometimes encountered, whereas in other texts the *Leitmotif* is only alluded to. Knowledge of the full *Leitmotif* was crucial for the identification of such allusions, which otherwise tend to go unnoticed.

The fifth chapter discusses individual terminology from the cosmology of the *Aksimarios* literature. Inherent to the texts in the *Aksimarios* literature is a three-fold division of the heavens—often called *Iyor*, *Rama* and *Ṭrər* (from top down). Additionally, there are cosmological terms that are unique to these texts. For example, many call the lowest region of hell *Bārbaros*, *Tartaros* or *Ṭnṭoṭos*. Also discussed in this chapter are the unusual term *Dudalem*, referring to a dry and desert-like region on earth, found only in very few texts, and the term *Falek* for the firmament, which connects the *Aksimarios* literature with the *Qäleməntos*. The location of Satan's fall is discussed, as well as the time of creation and the fall.

The dissertation concludes with a sixth chapter, which highlights the most important results and outcomes and briefly addresses some outstanding questions,

the most prominent being the interrelation between the *Aksimaros* and the *Ṭāntā haymanot*. An appendix is provided in which I list all 171 titles of texts that are mentioned in the dissertation, where applicable with CAe ID.

In this dissertation, I show that the *Aksimaros* literature is an extraordinary literary genre, which has incorporated traditions from multiple languages, regions, eras, and religions to form a new and independent tradition. The characteristics of the *Leitmotiv* and its adaptation and adoption in the recipient texts are, however, unique to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

JAMES R. HAMRICK, *A Critical Text Edition, Translation, and Analysis of a Gə'əz Tərg'ame to the Book of Daniel*, PhD Dissertation in Philology of the Christian Orient, Faculty of Cultural Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, defended on 4 July 2023.

This dissertation offers a critical text edition, English translation, and comprehensive analysis of a *tərg'ame* (Gə'əz textual commentary) to the Old Testament Book of Daniel. There are multiple extant *tərg'ame* to Daniel in the Gə'əz manuscript tradition. I designate the most extensive of these as TDan1, which is attested in three different forms: TDan1a (MS Təgray Province, Gundä Gunde Monastery, C3-IV-45 = G2; MS Təgray Province, Gundä Gunde Monastery, C3-IV-115 = G1; MS Goğgām Province, Dima Giyorgis Monastery, UNESCO 10.47/EMDA 392 = U1; MS Šäwa Province, Äddis Alām Maryam Church, EMMML 6269/EMIP 1074 = E1; MS London, British Library, EAP 336/2/3), TDan1b (MS Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Aethiop. 16; MS Wällo Province, Betä Maryam Church, EMMML 7069), and TDan1c (MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Éthiopiens d'Abbadie 157). TDan1a and TDan1b are likely independent translations of the same Arabic work, and TDan1c is an intra-Gə'əz abbreviation of TDan1a. Earlier European scholars, including Oscar Löfgren and Roger Cowley, have engaged TDan1b and TDan1c in limited ways, with Löfgren including the lemmata from TDan1b in his edition of Gə'əz Daniel. To this point, western scholarship has given no meaningful attention to TDan1a. The primary focus of my work is an edition, translation, and analysis of TDan1a.

TDan1a includes the complete text of Daniel, including the *Prayer of Azariah* and the *Song of the Three* (in abbreviated form in some of the manuscripts) and *Bel and the Dragon*, but without *Susanna*. Lemma sections of varying lengths are followed by Gə'əz commentary. The version of Daniel in TDan1a is a fresh translation that is ultimately based on the Syriac Peshitta rather than the Greek/Theodotion-based version of Daniel otherwise attested in Gə'əz manuscripts. This provides us with something relatively rare in the Gə'əz 'biblical' tradition, where the dominant practice is to make revisions of the Greek-based text through consultation of other versions rather than to create a new, independent translation.