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Review

TEDROS ABRAHA, *Māṣḥafä Sawiros zä-Esmunayn: la versione ge'ez del*

Kitāb al-īdāḥ di Severo di Ašmūnayn (X/XI sec.), Omelie IV–VIII, Omelie X–XII

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Reviews

TEDROS ABRAHA, *Māṣḥafä Sawiros zä-Esmunayn: la versione ge'ez del Kitāb al-īdāḥ di Severo di Ašmūnayn (X/XI sec.), Omelie IV–VIII*, introduzione, edizione del testo etiopico con traduzione italiana annotata, ed., tr., *Patrologia Orientalis*, 57/2 (250) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020). 226 pp. (117–342 [217–442]). Price €99.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-59292-3.

TEDROS ABRAHA, *Māṣḥafä Sawiros zä-Esmunayn: la versione ge'ez del Kitāb al-īdāḥ di Severo di Ašmūnayn (X/XI sec.), Omelie IX–XII*, introduzione, edizione del testo etiopico con traduzione italiana annotata, ed., tr., *Patrologia Orientalis*, 59/2 (257) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024). 199 pp. (231–429 [443–641]). Price €82.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-61436-6.

The first volume of the edition with annotated translation of the twelve homilies of the *Maṣḥafa Sāwiros* by Tedros Abraha (henceforth: vol. I) has already been the object of two separate reviews by the present author,¹ and there is nothing new to remark concerning the general aspects of the edition. Therefore, I will limit myself here to the minimum of updates for the second (henceforth: vol. II) and third, and last, volume (henceforth: vol. III), simply providing some basic information on these two volumes.

The second part of the edition of the *Maṣḥafa Sāwiros* contains five homilies (IV–VIII): IV: On the paschal lamb and the transformation of the bread and wine (into the body and blood of Jesus Christ); V: On the war that demons wage against the faithful and how they (the faithful) defeat them; VI: On the glory of Sunday; VII: On the reasons for fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; VIII: On fasting. The third part contains the last four homilies (IX–XII): IX: On the death that God eradicated on the cross and refutation of the belief that God would have commissioned an angel to bring death to mankind; X: On the steadfastness of the Jacobite Orthodox faith, and deviant religions; XI: Comments on the canticles of Moses and

¹ See A. Bausi, 'Review of Tedros Abraha, *Māṣḥafä 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, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 56/2 (247) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017)', *Aethiopica*, 24 (2021), 285–294; an expanded version also in Osservatorio sulle Edizioni Critiche, Università degli Studi di Milano, Dipartimento di studi letterari, filologici e linguistici, 2021, <https://sites.unimi.it/oec/schede.php>.

his sister Miriam. Comments on Psalms 135 and 150, the Fourth Vision of Daniel, and the Canticle of the Three Young Saints; XII: On the consolation of the faithful and their patience in difficulties.

The basis of the edition of the Gəʿəz text remains the same as for the first volume, with only manuscript 'H' (MS London, British Library, Or. 738) being used for a small portion of the second volume, namely, until Homily VI, § 6 (vol. II, p. 180.8 [280.8]), after which the text in the codex ends due to material loss. All the other eight Gəʿəz manuscripts (with sigla ABCDGSTV) are used for all homilies IV–XII.

As already noted in my previous reviews, one of the greatest merits of this edition is the systematic use of the Arabic *Vorlage* of the work, based on a large manuscript base. Since the publication of the second part, moreover, this basis (MSS EMPQ) has been substantially increased. In the second volume, three additional manuscripts have been used (see vol. II, p. 119 [219]): 'R': MS Paris, arabe 172 (AD 1292), containing only the eighth homily; 'N': MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate, 269 (Theol. 94, eighteenth century); 'L': MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ar. Borgia 98 (no date provided), containing the first eight homilies. As expected, of these only 'N' could be used in the third volume for homilies IX–XII (see vol. III, p. 237 [449]).

While the preface of the second volume does not provide any special remarks and simply gives sigla and bibliography, the third volume has a longer preface with some short, but notable, general remarks (vol. III, pp. 235–237 [447–449]). The editor intends to stress here the importance of the work in the traditional exegesis of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawāḥədo Church and its unitary and strictly genuine and authorial character (here too, as sometimes happens, with not perfectly calibrated Italian expressions, e.g. on vol. III, p. 235 [447]: 'L'ermeneutica biblica utilizzata nelle omelie è quella affibbiata alla scuola alessandrina, ossia, una lettura sincronica della Bibbia' etc., where one would have certainly preferred 'ascritta' or 'attribuita' to the quite colloquial and slightly derogatory 'affibbiata'; not impeccable, and at times inconsistent, is also the punctuation). According to the sequence of his own remarks, the editor also stresses the value of the apparatus to the edition and the annotated translation in the third volume: a one-page glossary of key theological terms (vol. III, p. 421 [633], 'Alcuni termini chiave'); a general index (vol. III, pp. 415–418 [627–630]), which is certainly useful, but by far too imprecise for an exhaustive census of key terms, as I have experienced while carrying out a survey of the passages on the Nicaeo(-Constantinopolitan) Creed, noting that a number of references were omitted (the index, vol. III, p. 415, s.v. 'Credo Niceno', only has IV Homily, § 31, and V Homily, § 21, this latter a wrong reference, whereas see at least vol. I, pp. 39–47 = I Homily, §§ 10–20, and vol. III, p. 523 = Homily, § 36, on the Creed); an extremely rich index of biblical

citations and allusions, which gives an idea of the care the editor has given to this aspect (vol. III, pp. 409–414 [621–626]); and an index of numerals (vol. III, p. 419 [631]).

The editor also once more reminds—quite rightly, in this reviewer’s opinion—that the goal of his edition has been the reconstruction of the primary Gə‘əz text (vol. III, p. 236 [448]: ‘Anche se è stato dichiarato in precedenza, credo che valga la pena ricordare che l’obiettivo a cui ha mirato la mia edizione, è la ricostruzione del testo gə‘əz più vicino alla versione primigenia, confrontandolo con la tradizione manoscritta araba, con un’attenzione particolare ai testimoni arabi più antichi’). Yet, he concludes by stating that this is done according to the universal principles of textual criticism (‘È un’operazione svolta in base ai principi universali della critica testuale’). The problem here is that such ‘universal principles’ are not the same for all editors and therefore not even universal, and that, as is well known, there are debates on what these principles actually are. Important are also the editor’s remarks on the existence of (at least) two Amharic versions of the *Maṣḥafa Sāwiros*, one in an unpublished manuscript and another one in print in a recent Gə‘əz–Amharic edition of the *Maṣḥafa Sāwiros*.²

Let us conclude by repeating that this work, all in all, is truly a remarkable enterprise and achievement: one of the most notable of the last decades of editorial activity on Gə‘əz texts. In over 650 pages of edition and annotated commentary, the editor has succeeded in making available a quite long critically edited Gə‘əz text, carried out with the intention of attaining the primary authorial Ethiopic version of the *Kitāb al-īdāh* of Severus of Ašmūnāyn and has systematically considered the evidence of the Arabic *Vorlage*. All scholars in Gə‘əz textual criticism will be grateful to Tedros Abraha for this excellent effort.

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HIRUIE ERMIAŠ, *The Book of Mystery: Māshafä Məšṭir of Abba Giyorgis of Gaśəčča 1364–1424; Ethiopia’s Most Iconic Theological, Exegetical, Historical, and Philosophical Treatise*, annotated translation (Hamburg: Negarit Publisher, 2024). xii, 407 pp. Price: \$25.00. ISBN: 978-9-99-905269-6.

The publication of an English translation from Gə‘əz of the *Book of Mystery* of Abba Giyorgis is extremely welcome. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahədo expression of Christianity has been theologizing in its own language since at least the fifth century CE, and although it was under the ecclesial authority of the Coptic

² ሃፍረም ኦሪገን, ማጽሐፈ ሳዊሮስ ዘእስሙናይን (*Maṣḥafa sāwiros za’asmunāyn*) (n.p.: Yəmrā māttamiyā bet, 2014 EC = 2021 CE). The editor announces a forthcoming review of this edition.