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Review

ALESSANDRO BAUSI, *La Versione Etiopica degli Acta Phileae nel
Gadla Samâ'tât*

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Reviews

Altre osservazioni: p. 293, n. 14: tre documenti da attribuire alla comunità etiopica di Scteti nel ms. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Éthiopien 46, sono pubblicati in ENRICO CERULLI, *Etiopi in Palestina. Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme* (Collezione scientifica e documentaria a cura del Ministero dell’Africa italiana 12 e 14, Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1943–47), II, 386–90. – p. 298, r. 24: corr. ተመሰሎቶሙ ፣ in ተመስ. – p. 306, r. 7: corr. ወያርሕቀ ፣ in ወያርሕቅ ፣. – p. 314, r. 5: corr. ሰብእ ፣ in ሰብእ ፣. – p. 322, r. 16: corr. አምሌኮ ፣ in አምልኮ ፣. – p. 324, r. 7: corr. እእኅዩ ፣ in እእኅዮ ፣. – p. 326, r. 11: corr. እእምር ፣ in እእምር ፣ (così anche C, f. 47th). – p. 338, r. 25: corr. ዘይኑበር ፣ in ዘይኑበር ፣. – p. 346, r. 17: corr. ለመለኮስ ፣ in ለመነኮስ ፣. – p. 348, r. 31: corr. አማስንኩ ፣ in አማሰንኩ ፣. – p. 354, r. 5: corr. ምዩ ፣ in ማዩ ፣.

Alessandro Bausi, Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”

ALESSANDRO BAUSI, *La Versione Etiopica degli Acta Phileae nel Gadla Samâ’tât*. Istituto Universitario Orientale: Supplemento n. 92 agli Annali – vol. 60–61 (2000–2001). Napoli 2002, pp. IX + 64.

The author introduces this interesting contribution by stating that it is part and parcel of a wider project, labelled by the writer himself as the “hunt for Aksumite texts”. The “hunt” is supposed to be a concerted initiative which sets out to perform a systematic research of “new Ethiopic texts, translated directly from Greek” (Premessa), that is, without the mediation of other languages such as Arabic. The rationale behind the drive of the “hunt”, which has an undeniably fascinating appeal to philologists and historians is clearly stated in the Foreword. “The hunt” is meant to be an endeavour to engage in texts which are supposed to belong to the golden age of the Aksumite kingdom, a period in which Ge’ez was still a spoken language. Bausi declares that the objective is to retrieve Aksumite material or literature translated directly from Greek, “hidden” or “embedded” in a wider literary *corpus* belonging to subsequent historical periods (Premessa). He maintains that if the *Acta Phileae* was translated from Greek, “as it looks likely”, this would strengthen the case for the pursuit of the “hunt”. The complexity of this superhuman initiative is leaked by two different statements which appear in the second and third paragraphs of the Foreword. In the second paragraph the aim of the “hunt” is presented as “systematic pursuit of new Ethiopic texts, beside the few known ones”. The third paragraph reads: “this hunt has not been conceived as an activity aimed at the material recovery of new manuscripts. It is rather intended to be a more attentive analysis of texts and collections of texts which have assumed a standard form in epochs in which it is impossible to detect a direct interaction with Greek”.

This apparent discrepancy does not diminish the value and seriousness of Bausi's enterprise. The author makes good use of his well known skills and experience in dealing with editions of unpublished Ge'ez texts. He explains the method he follows in the organisation of the material used and the criteria employed in the analysis of the text. The introductory part of the work supplies a great deal of detailed background information related both to the Gädlä Säma'ətat and to the *Acta Phileae*. A long inventory of manuscripts containing the Gädlä Säma'ətat (within which the *Acta Phileae* are to be found), with a threefold classification of them is provided. There is a succinct but equally important description covering the chronology and contents of each codex including those which do not yet appear in catalogues. The Ethiopic version of the *Acta Phileae* is preceded by a presentation of what the author calls "Dossier of the *Acta Phileae*", that is, two Greek papyri of the IV cent. and a Latin witness of the V cent. They are to be a constant point of reference as far as the nature of the Ethiopic version of the *Acta Phileae* is concerned. The critical edition of the Ge'ez text is based on eleven of the twelve known manuscripts. The author concludes that the Ethiopic version is close to the text of the Greek papyrus of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, P. Chester Beatty XV which dates from the period 310–350. Bausi concludes that the importance of the Ethiopic version for the reconstruction of the *Acta Phileae* is considerable (p. 28).

As far as some of the technical aspects of the book are concerned, one will notice that there is no table of transliteration. Why not put the Ge'ez characters instead of the transliteration in pp. 17, 18 (footnote 70)? The introduction and the translation are peppered with an impressive amount of footnotes which are a witness to the author's familiarity with the area he deals with. Although it goes without doubt that they are quite enriching to those who have an interest in the field, the sheer volume of footnotes and their small typographical size defy the rules of aesthetics and may not render the reading particularly amusing. One may wonder whether it would not have been more convenient to expand the introduction and slim down the footnotes. Biblical cross-references which are a basic feature of Ethiopic literature have generally been identified and put in the footnotes. However it seems that there have been some few lapses, like for example in n. 58 where the allusion comes clearly from the Johannine corpus. It is unclear to what Eph 4:2.32; Col 3:12–13 refer in footnote n. 58. Omissions exist, such as the lack of identification of quotations and allusions. The concern for guests or foreigners in n. 58 evokes Heb 13:2. "Luce infallibile" which, by the way should have been rendered with "luce inimaginabile", is an allusion to 1 Tm 6:16.

The Ethiopic version of the *Acta Phileae* does not present insurmountable grammatical or semantic difficulties. There are texts which are far more tor-

turous and complicated than it. The Italian translation is good. The presence of the same story in the Synaxarium of Ṭəqəmt XVII is certainly of some help to have a clear picture of the story from the start. Most of the subtleties and nuances of the Ge'ez have been grasped and correctly translated. Yet, as in any translation, here too there are occasional inaccuracies. "... rivestitevi all'interno della circoncisione" or "... detto questo, con la benedizione di Nostro Signore, fu coronato del martirio" should have been translated respectively with "rivestitevi della circoncisione interiore" (n. 55) and "detto questo, fu coronato con la benedizione di Nostro Signore". Actually the word "martirio" does not appear in the Ge'ez text (62). In the first sentence of n. 14 the question mark is missing. **ዘኢይትወዕቅ ፡ ወኢይትአመር ህልው ዘለዓለም** in n. 29 has been rendered with "inconoscibile e ineffabile eterno". The **ወ** of **ወኢይትአመር** has the function, which in Ge'ez is known as **ፍጹም** (Kidānā Wāld Kəfle, 374). It is intended to join two words with an identical meaning or hendiadys, and the purpose is to obtain a superlative or **አጋናኝ**, (cf. Kidānā Wāld Kəfle, 374). The expression should therefore read: "assolutamente ineffabile, che vive in eterno". In n. 45, if the translation wants to reproduce **ያመክርዎ** (of the body text), which is the imperative of **አመክረ** = to test, then it should be "che lo esaminino!". Bausi has however translated with "... che lo lascino riflettere". In this case the verb should have been **ያምክርዎ** (as in MSS *ACEFG*). These are but very minor observations and there is no doubt that the merits of the work far outweigh its few shortcomings.

Texts such as the *Acta Phileae*, are precious specimens which offer the possibility to monitor and register linguistic characteristics peculiar to older Ge'ez literature. A few of them will be listed below. The use of the accusative modifier with **ቦ**, **አልቦ**, **አኮ**, is a common feature of older Ge'ez and the *Acta Philae* is no exception. The text therefore reads: **አኮ በከ** for **አኮ በከ** (n. 36); **አልብከ ጥሪተ** for **አልብከ ጥሪት** (n. 40); **አልቦ ንጹሐ** for **አልቦ ንጹሕ** (n. 54). There are instances in which the accusative modifier fails to be employed where it ought to be, as in n. 41 which reads **ሀገርኒ ትክል ሴስዮ** instead of **ሀገርኒ ትክል**. There are multiple constructs: **ፈጣሪ ወገባሪ ኩሉ** (n. 29). In Ge'ez of subsequent eras, the usual way to put it is **ፈጣሪ ወገባሪ**. There are similar phenomena elsewhere in other literary productions as well. For example **መጽንፍ ወመንጽሐ ኩሉ** in the Missal; or **ኅዙነ ወትኩዘ ልብ** in Monday's Wəddase Maryam. N. 51 reads **እስመ መዋርሱቶ** whereas the usual form is **እስመ መዋርሱቲሁ**. Older Ge'ez literature displays many morphological and syntactic difficulties, which are evident in the *Acta Phileae*, too. There are anomalies such as **መጻሕፍት ቅዱሳን** (n. 32). **ቅዱሳን** should never be predicated of inanimate things. The correct form is **ቅዱሳት**. Constructions like **እመአኮ ከመዝ ውእቱዝ**, need to be reformulated at least as **እመአኮነ ከመዝ ውእቱ** (n. 32) if some sense is to be made out of it. The same can be said about **እስመ ፈቀድኩ አድጎንከ**

ዘንተ በዘ ኢገበርኩ (n. 33). The በ in በዘ is an unnecessary addition which in fact ruins the sentence. There are errors of various natures to be pinpointed. ዘይክሕድ in n. 32 is one example. It should be emended with ዘይክሕድ or ዘይትክሕድ.

In conclusion, Bausi's work is a soul searching investigation performed with rigour. It sets out to make an extensive and multi-directional "excavation" into an old text. Even though identifying the genes and chromosomes of literary productions may not lead to rock solid conclusions, obviously the author has tried hard to sort out issues related to the original text and to the history of its transmission. He has also made great efforts to both point out and explain words lacking in the most authoritative lexicons. It is indeed an impressive piece of research that shall excite and stimulate philologists and hagiographers.

Tedros Abraha, Asmara

ALESSANDRO BAUSI, *La "Vita" e i "Miracoli" di Libānos*, CSCO 595, Aeth 105, CSCO 596, Aeth 106, Lovanii, in aedibus Peeters, 2003. XXX-226 pp. Price: € 90,-. ISBN: 90-429-1160-3.

L'edizione delle "recensioni inedite o non tradotte" del *Gadla Libānos* (compresi 68 *Miracoli*, un *malke*^o e un *salām*) costituisce l'obiettivo dichiarato di questa pubblicazione, che contiene l'*editio princeps* di una 'nuova' versione dell'opera (*GL2*), trādita da 5 testimoni (ABCDE). Questo testo, la cui valorizzazione costituisce il merito principale del libro, si affianca al racconto agiografico – analogo nella sostanza, ma molto diverso nella forma testuale – pubblicato da Carlo Conti Rossini fin dal 1903 (*Ricordi di un soggiorno in Eritrea*, Asmara, Tipogr. della Missione Svedese, 1903, pp. 25-41): edizione fondamentale perché a lungo la sola esistente dell'opera, ma gravemente difettosa in quanto lo studioso omise in maniera del tutto arbitraria ampie porzioni del testo – giudicato non meritevole neppure di una traduzione – e ogni informazione intorno al ms. riprodotto (proveniente dal convento di Dabra Libānos nello Šemazānā). Anche questa recensione (*GL3*) è stata trascritta dal Bausi secondo l'unica fonte disponibile, ovvero l'edizione a stampa vecchia di un secolo (R), mentre il volume non riporta il testo edito e tradotto da Getatchew Haile nel 1990 (*The Homily of Abba Elāyas, Bishop of Axum, on Mätta*^c, "Analecta Bollandiana", 108, 1990, pp. 29-47), a tutti gli effetti una terza recensione del *Gadla Libānos* (*GL1*), costituita da un racconto molto più breve degli altri due, tramandato in almeno tre codici che si caratterizzano per la loro ragguardevole antichità (FGH). Con questo libro, dunque, la conoscenza scientifica delle tradizioni letterarie relative a Libānos segna un vistoso progresso tanto nella sostanza, per la pubblicazione di un