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Review

MONICA S. DEVENS, *A concordance to Psalms in the Ethiopic Version*

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Reviews

Texts, Malibu, Undena Publications, 1983, pp. 17–19; il plurale di *zār* è, secondo le regole, *zārāt*: vedi ENNO LITTMANN & MARIA HÖFNER, *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache. Tigré-Deutsch-Englisch*, Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1962, p. 495).

Una delle invocazioni più ricorrenti negli amuleti etiopici è certamente l'inno (*salām*) in onore dell'arcangelo Fānuʿēl. Esso è riportato su entrambi i rotoli studiati dal Burtea, seppure in due redazioni tra loro sensibilmente diverse, l'una e l'altra sottoposte dallo studioso ad accurata analisi metrica e linguistica (pp. 64–69 e 82–84). Ancora una volta occorre notare come la mancanza del confronto con altri testimoni manoscritti generi incertezza e pregiudichi il raggiungimento di conclusioni stabili. In questo caso, ad esempio, non è possibile determinare quale delle due redazioni dell'inno sia più antica, se altre versioni dello stesso testo siano state utilizzate come preghiere magiche (una terza redazione dell'inno a Fānuʿēl, non inventariata nel *Répertoire* di MARIUS CHAÎNE [1913], è edita in STEFAN STRELCYN, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens de l'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Fonds Conti Rossini et Fonds Caetani 209, 375, 376, 377, 378*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1976 [Indici e sussidi bibliografici della biblioteca, 9], pp. 173, nr. 61, 21), e infine se la forma di certe espressioni sia corretta, o se i manoscritti utilizzati abbiano recepito alterazioni testuali intervenute in fasi anteriori della tradizione.

Queste sono solo alcune delle considerazioni stimulate dalla lettura di un libro di grande utilità, contributo sostanzioso alla maggior conoscenza di una delle manifestazioni più complesse della tradizione letteraria etiopica, di cui il Burtea si dimostra studioso competente e accorto.

Gianfrancesco Lusini

MONICA S. DEVENS, *A concordance to Psalms in the Ethiopic Version* = *Aethiopistische Forschungen* 59, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001. Pp. XV–546. Price: Eur 104,-. ISBN 3–447–04452–7.

The volume under review is the first result of the long-lasting effort of the Author to produce a concordance to the Ethiopic Bible, cf. her *Designing a Biblical Concordance*, in H.G. MARCUS (ed.), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies. Ethiopia 94. Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 2 vols. (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1994), vol. I (*Humanities and Human Resources*), 1237–1248, where the main points of the very short and assertive Introduction to the volume (pp. IX–XV) are already clearly stated. The book is the absolutely first concordance of an

Ethiopic text, and is a new, powerful and well-designed working tool at disposal of the scholars dealing with Ethiopic texts: there is no remark which may diminish its value and importance, or deny its exceptional usefulness. Technical arrangements of the concordance are carefully and clearly explained. Finally, as the author is perfectly aware of (cf. p. IX), due to the high frequency of its quotations, *Psalms* were certainly well chosen as the first concorded biblical book.

As to the remarks, a crucial question is that of the choice of which text of the *Psalms* should be concorded. After deliberately giving up the idea of first providing a critical edition of the biblical text (which should have tried to retrieve the text as it was first translated, although in this case also a detailed representation of its textual history should have been taken into account), and then building up a concordance (cf. p. IX; *Designing a Biblical Concordance*, p. 1240f.), on the basis that “no critical edition of the entire Ethiopic Biblical text is likely to appear” in reasonable time, and that “any concordance produced now, however less than ideal, will have sufficient ‘shelf life’ to be useful”, the author has consistently chosen the *Psalms*’s text as it is found in F. (Francesco, not “Francisco” as on p. IX) DA BASSANO’s edition – *Vetus Testamentum cum antiquis codicibus necnon cum versionibus syriaca, graeca et arabica comparatum*, 4 vols. (Asmarae: Typis Missionis Catholicae, 1923–1925/26), vol. III (*Tobiae, Iudith, Esther, Iob, Psalmorum, Proverbiorum, Ecclesiastes, Canticum Canticorum, Sapientiae, Ecclesiastici. Cura missionis editum*, 1925), 115–225. Otherwise, it may be observed that to the difference of a critical edition of the entire Ethiopic biblical text (cfr. *ibid.*), it is not true that that of *Psalms* only would take one’s lifetime (cf. e.g. a good list of 29 mss. – still a manageable number – of the 14–15th c., in M.A. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Translation of the Psalms*, in A. AEJMELAEUS and U. QUAST (Hsgeb.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen. Symposium in Göttingen 1997*, Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 24, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, 107–122, esp. 107f.). Further reason for using the edition by da Bassano is that “it is widely enough distributed to make it a good base for a concordance” (*ibid.*).

In my opinion, even after giving up the idea of basing the concordance upon a critical edition, the choice of the text should still answer to at least three *desiderata*: 1) it should be easily accessible; 2) it should represent the oldest retrievable Ethiopic manuscript tradition; 3) it should be related with the previous scholarly tradition. In the light of these points, the choice of da Bassano’s edition can be variously judged. It is somehow accessible, although not so easily accessible (any Ethiopian edition is much more accessible: for a list cf. V. SIX, *Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tānāsee Teil 3. Nebst einem Nachtrag zum Katalog der äthiopischen Handschriften*

deutscher Bibliotheken und Museen, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland Band XX 3, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 1999, 31); it happens to represent *enough* the oldest Ethiopic tradition, in the specific case of the *Psalms*; certainly, it is not related with the previous scholarly tradition.

As to the second point, the *Psalms* suffer certainly much less than other biblical books from the general eclectic character of da Bassano's edition, due to the exceptionally fixed form of their text, probably already established by the first half of the 6th c. – cf. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Translation of the Psalms*, p. 111f.; on the epigraphical evidences cf. ID., *Translating the Bible. The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1995, Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1999), 46–54, and the observations by P. MARRASSINI, *Ancora sul problema degli influssi siriaci in età aksumita*, in L. Cagni (a c. di), *Biblica et Semitica. Studi in memoria di Francesco Vattioni* (Series Minor 59, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, 1999), 325–337, esp. 332f. –, which may also explain what is noted by E. ULLENDORFF, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1967, Oxford: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1968, repr. 1983, Paperback edition 1988), 77, that “the large number of quotations [in the *Kebra Nagast*], especially from the *Psalms*, which agree verbatim ... with the da Bassano text, would appear to suggest some widely accepted text-model from a fairly early period”.

As to the relation with the scholarly tradition, I will try to explain better: the most important and reliable tool for textual references in the study of Ethiopic literature remains A. DILLMANN's *Lexicon linguae aethiopicae* (Lipsiae: T.O. Weigel, 1865), paralleled only by KEFLA GIYORGIS, KIDĀNA WALD KEFLĒ and DASSTĀ TAKLA WALD, *Maṣḥafa sawāsew wages wamazgaba qālāt ḥaddis. Nebābu bage'ez fečew bāmāreññā* (Ba'Artistik mättamiyā bēt, 1948 'a.me. [= 1955/56 A.D.]). Dillmann (cf. *Lexicon*, p. VI: “Inter Veteris autem Testamenti libros Psalmi cum Canticis a J. Ludolfo a. MDCCI Francofurti ... ita editi sunt, ut eos excerpere sufficeret”) has quoted the *Psalms* according to the edition by H. Ludolf (Francofurti ad Moenum: Typis et sumptibus Autoris impressit Martin Jacquet, 1701), and besides this particular privilege, that by Ludolf is still the best edition of the Ethiopic *Psalms*, better than that by da Bassano. It was based upon both J. Potken's 1513 and 1518 editions, and revised by the help of three mss., among which are the Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. or. qu. 172, 14th/15th c., and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Poc. 3 (cf. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Translation of the Psalms*, p. 113; however, it is possible that the Bodleian ms. was revised on the basis of the Arabic, cf. *ibid.* p. 116). Of

course, this edition is no way easily accessible, but the text established by Ludolf has been reprinted several times in Europe (cf. KNIBB, *ibid.* p. 113).

Although one must agree with the author that “the most ‘common’ editions of books of the Ethiopic Bible can hardly be deemed commonly available and numbering systems can vary widely from edition to edition” – that’s why the author has given throughout the book a double numbering of the *Psalms*, according to da Bassano and to B. METZGER and R. MURPHY (eds.), *The new Oxford annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1991), cf. p. XIII – a short comparison, limited to the sign *h* of Dillmann’s *Lexicon* (= Dillm.), cc. 1–22, will give an idea of how many quotations registered according to Ludolf’s edition differ from that by da Bassano (= da B.), due to the variation of the numbering system: 28, out of 49 quotations from the *Psalms* in cc. 1–22, have a different reference. – C. 8, s.v. *meherkā* Dillm. Ps. 59,6 = da B. 59,8 (cf. Devens p. 82). *ibid.* s.v. *hērodyānos* Dillm. Ps. 103,19 = da B. 103,17 (Devens p. 9). C. 10, s.v. *hakak* Dillm. Ps. 123,4 = da B. 123,5 (Devens p. 24). *ibid.*, s.v. *tahakaya* Dillm. Ps. 35,4 = da B. 35,5 (Devens p. 24). C. 12, s.v. *hoka* Dillm. Ps. 59,2 = da B. 59,4 (Devens p. 25). *ibid.* Dillm. 41,15 = da B. 41,12 (Devens p. 26). *ibid.*, s.v. *tahawka* Dillm. Ps. 61,6 = da B. 61,7 (Devens p. 26). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 108,9 = da B. 108,10 (Devens p. 26). *ibid.* Dillmann Ps. 6,2 = da B. 6,3 (Devens p. 26). C. 13, s.v. *hukat* Dillm. Ps. 54,25 = da B. 54,23 (Devens p. 26). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 65,8 = da B. 65,9 (Devens p. 26). *ibid.* s.v. *heya* Dillm. Ps. 138,7 and 138,9 = da B. 138,8 and 138,10 (Devens p. 34). *ibid.* Dillm. 131,18 = da B. 131,17 (Devens p. 33). *ibid.* s.v. *heyanta* Dillm. Ps. 89,17 = da B. 89,15 (Devens p. 38). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 34,14 = da B. 34,12 (Devens p. 38). C. 14, s.v. *hayyal* Dillm. Ps. 17,36 = da B. 17,34 (Devens p. 34). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 28,8 = da B. 28,9 (Devens p. 34). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 41,1 = da B. 41,2 (Devens p. 34). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 103,19 = da B. 103,18 (Devens p. 34). C. 14 s.v. *mahāymen* Dillm. Ps. 100,8 = da B. 100,6 (Devens p. 37). C. 15, s.v. *tahayyaya* Dillm. Ps. 26,15 = da B. 26,9 (Devens p. 41). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 54,1 = da B. 54,2 (Devens p. 41). *ibid.* Dillmann Ps. 137,9 = da B. 137,8 (Devens p. 41). C. 16, s.v. *hayd* Dillm. Ps. 61,10 = da B. 61,11 (Devens p. 41). C. 19, s.v. *tahag^wla* Dillm. Ps. 48,10 = da B. 48,11 (Devens p. 44). *ibid.* Dillm. Ps. 67,2 = da B. 67,3 (Devens p. 44). C. 20, s.v. *hagar* Dillm. Ps. 143,17 = da B. 143,14 (Devens p. 45). – On the basis of the preceding considerations, I seriously wonder, well aware of its inconveniencies, if Ludolf’s edition could have been a better text to be concorded than the da Bassano one.

Other minor remarks follow. The work is entirely in Ethiopic writing and the entries are disposed according to the syllabary, but laryngeals and sybilants which exchange are listed altogether (*h*, *h*, *h̄*, under *h*; *s* and *ś* under *s* etc.), in fulfilment of a sound recommendation by G. GOLDENBERG, *Comparative dictionary of the Ethiopic language*, “Journal of the American

Oriental Society” 112 (1992) 78–87 = *Studies in Semitic Linguistics. Selected Writings by G.G.* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998) [333]–[342], esp. 79, and to the contrary of the general arrangement of W. LESLAU’s *Comparative dictionary of Ge’ez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), which is the main guide of the author. It appears that the enclitic particles *-hi*, *-hu* (cf. e.g. Dillm. c. 1, Ps. 72,13 and 93,9), *-ma*, *-sa*, *-nu*, *-ni*, *-kē* have no entry of their own: a particular which is probably insignificant to those involved with the identification of quotations, but a bit disappointing to the linguists. The list of proper names begins *ex abrupto* on p. 528 (as we are told on p. XIV), in a sort of tacit appendix, but they would have been better included in the body of the concordance. Following the wishes of the author that similar tools will be published soon, a concordance by G. LUSINI of the *Ascension of Isaiah* (critical edition by P. BETTILOLO *et al.*, *Ascensio Isaiae*, 2 vols., Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum 7–8, Turnhout: Brepols, 1995) is now forthcoming.

Alessandro Bausi

TEDROS ABRAHA, *La lettera ai Romani, Testo e commentari della versione Etiopica* = *Aethiopistische Forschungen* 57. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001. 734 pages. Price: Eur 149,-. ISBN : 3-447-04380-6.

A reliable edition of the earliest retrievable text of the Ge’ez Version of the complete New Testament has been a wish for a long time. Tedros Abraha’s text-critical edition of Paul’s *La lettera ai Romani* is an important achievement, filling a considerable part of the still existing gap. The edition is based on thirteen described manuscripts from a group of almost one hundred. Their variant readings are placed in an extensive text-critical *apparatus*.

Apart from the edition of the text of the Epistle to the Romans this large Volume (734 pages) includes a text-critical edition of the traditional Ethiopic commentary (‘Andemta’) on Romans. It is based on thirteen manuscripts, all but one from EMMML, the microfilm collection of the Hill Monastic Microfilm Library at Collegeville, Minnesota. The commentary contains the text of Romans but necessarily in a form slightly different from the edition. The edition of the ‘Andemta’ comes with a full translation of both text and commentary. Little research has so far been done in this field and scholars will greatly welcome the edition of this text, its translation, and helpful explanatory notes.

There is one serious drawback: all introductions to the edition and the translation of the Andemta are in Italian. Although some Ethiopic scholars