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Review

STEFAN BOMBECK, *Die Geschichte der heiligen Maria in einer alten
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Apparat, Übersetzung, Anmerkungen, Kommentar*

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kunde’; detailed (within reason), complete, well thought out, balanced and up to date – it recognizes, and gives due weight to the two most striking modern developments, comparative codicology and quantitative codicology, without neglecting more traditional approaches ... It is no accident that this book appears in Italy, the country which now leads the field. The codicologists of the world can congratulate themselves; and, if they do not read Italian, they ought to learn”. An invitation that is all the more valid to scholars in Ethiopian studies.

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STEFAN BOMBECK, *Die Geschichte der heiligen Maria in einer alten äthiopischen Handschrift: Einleitung, kritischer Apparat, Übersetzung, Anmerkungen, Kommentar*.^{*} Dortmund: Verlag Praxiswissen, 2010. 294 pp., Paperback. Price: € 29.–. ISBN: 978–3–86975–029–3.

In this book, Bombeck delivers a most welcome German translation of a collection of the *Signs or Miracles of Mary* (*Tä’ammärä Maryam*) from a late 14th/early 15th cent. Ethiopian manuscript of Betä Ləhem church near Däbrä Tabor.¹ Along with the translation, the book features an introduction, a critical apparatus, annotations and comments. As most likely the second oldest manuscript containing the Ethiopian *Miracles of Mary*,² it is of great interest and while a critical edition of the text is yet to come, the current translation makes it accessible to a wider audience.

The book, *Die Geschichte der heiligen Maria* (hereafter GHM), is the sequel to a two-part publication by Stefan Bombeck, the first having been self-published in 2005.³ Unfortunately and quite surprisingly, the author does not mention his earlier publication in the current work, which has a number of negative implications (s. below). Familiarity with the first volume is crucial to understanding the GHM.⁴

Vol. 1 features the introduction (also on pp. 9–14 of GHM) and the original Gəʾəz text in facsimile, enhanced with line and page numbers. The translation fills vol. 2, it is now apparent, in a revised and corrected version on pp. 37–261. In his review Luisier concludes (p. 137) that “un troisième

^{*} Accessible online at the author’s own homepage: <http://www.bombeck.de/stefan.html>.

¹ C. BOSC-TIESSÉ, “Betä Ləhem”, in: *EAE* 1, p. 560.

² E. BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA – A. BAUSI, “Tä’ammärä Maryam”, in: *EAE* 1, p. 789.

³ Reviewed by P. LUISIER in *Orientalia* n.s. 75, 1, 2006, pp. 137–138.

⁴ A fact that the author seems to be aware of, since on page 14 he offers the reader the possibility of ordering a copy of the original text (s. also on the author’s website).

volume de commentaire devrait suivre”. The recent publication seems to be the result of Bombeck’s attempting such a commentary.

The GHM, it must be said, lacks an appealing layout, and the contents are presented in an unstructured way. Therefore the book needs to be carefully read, to discover what is hidden inside, while certain elements are simply missing. Without the original text at hand certain parts of the book under review are not really comprehensible. Among them are unfortunately the critical apparatus (pp. 15–35) and parts of the annotations (pp. 263–278).⁵ Leaving out the original text has the effect of making a large number of pages, and therefore also the elaborated work of the author, less valuable. Since the entire volume of the book can already be read online it may be useful to make the original text accessible online as well.

In transcribing Ethiopic words Bombeck does not mark differences between *h/h/h*, *ʾ/ʿ* and *s/s/ṣ* (s. the names of the Ethiopian months in the “Kommentar”, p. 285). In general he shows irritating inconsistencies in his transcription, e.g.: “Batra ‘Aron” in the introduction (p. 13) versus “Bäträ Aron” in the translation (p. 48); “Gabra Krəstos” in the introduction (p. 13) versus “Gäbrä Kristos” in the translation (p. 156); “Fərekāhən” in the introduction (p. 13) versus “Firekahin” in the translation (p. 247).

Apart from the descriptions made by Balicka-Witakowska 1984, Chojnacki 1983 and 1988, Heldman – Munro-Hay – Grierson 1993 and Jäger 1957⁶ the manuscript has not been catalogued, an ample description would, therefore, be welcomed.⁷ Since Bombeck worked from photographs he did the best possible in calculating the size of the manuscript and its text area. Counting the leaves leads to another peculiarity of the GHM: instead of numbering the folios, Bombeck paginated them in the full sense of the word – he gave each

⁵ Statements like “3b20,1 – -t” (critical apparatus, p. 15), “332a23,3 ወረሰ፣ : (Fehler aus 20,1)” (critical apparatus, p. 15), or “28a17,2 unmöglich; für ev ‘an’” (annotations, p. 263), cannot be understood if not compared to the original text. The following note seems strange: “340a4,4 gemeint ‘(und) in (dieses)’; lies ወወ-ሱተ : ሱተ : oder nur unscharf [or only blurred]?” (annotations, p. 271).

⁶ E. BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA, “Observations sur l’iconographie de l’Annonciation dans la peinture éthiopienne”, in: *PICES* 7, pp. 149–64; S. CHOJNACKI, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting from the 13th to the 19th Century* = *ÄthFor* 10, 1983; IDEM, “The Annunciation in Ethiopian Art: Its Iconography from the 13th to the 19th Century”, in: P. SCHOLZ – R. STEMPPEL (Hg.), *Nubia et Oriens Christianus. Festschrift für C. Detlef G. Müller zum 60. Geburtstag* = *Bibliotheca Nubica* 1, Köln: Verlag Jürgen Dinter, 1988, pp. 281–351; M. HELDMAN – S. MUNRO-HAY – R. GRIERSON (eds.), *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993; O. JÄGER, *Äthiopische Miniaturen*, Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1957.

⁷ The author forgot, however, to mention J. MERCIER, *Les Vierges d’Éthiopie*, Montpellier: L’Archange Minotaure, 2004, pp. 84f.

page a number, ignoring editorial practice for counting folios by recto and verso. Additionally he does not start counting from the first leaf but from the beginning of the main text, so that fol. 5v is presumably as a result to be the first page.⁸ In the translation Bombeck does not provide “page numbers” for the Urkunde/charter I, as assumedly in his understanding it is outside the scope of the manuscript. Following his explanations, as mentioned above, it should be found on fols. 1v–2r. In the translation, however, the change of folios is not marked. Urkunde/charter II, and a third Urkunde/charter in Amharic, are left untranslated.⁹

Unfortunately Bombeck leaves the description of the illuminations to Balicka-Witakowska, Chojnacki, Heldman – Munro-Hay – Grierson and Jäger. The fact that the illuminations have been the object of so many different works indicates their extraordinary beauty. Bombeck abstains from mentioning their design, details or variety. With the help of the book cover the reader can tell that at least blue, yellow and red are used for the *ḥaräg*. The front cover shows the *ḥaräg* on page 25 of the manuscript; according to the title of the illumination the back cover shows the shadow of the miniature on page 213 (the beginning of chapter 6; cp. p. 284). Since this volume was published completely without any illustrations of the illuminations in the manuscript, it would have been worthwhile to be able to recognize at least these two.

Apart from Bombeck’s short list of abbreviations, general information as to literature and sources is missing. There is neither a list of the manuscripts used, nor a list of the sources and literature. All these data are, however, found within the text and footnotes. It is also not clear to what extent Bombeck used other manuscripts to collate the text. If he prepared a critical edition of the texts, he did not publish it. Following his explanations in the chapter “Inhalt” (pp. 285–91) he apparently compared the following manuscripts with his text: London, British Library Orient 604 (Wright’s cata-

⁸ I estimated this following Bombeck’s explanations on p. 280: “Das Foto mit der Urkunde I zeigt fol1v + fol2r, das mit der Urkunde II fol2v + fol3r. Die Naht ist auf keinem Foto sichtbar. Die Seite 1 kann nicht fol3v sein, und Seite 2f kann das zweite Blatt hinter fol3 sein. Vermutlich ist von 3 Doppelblättern fol3v leer, fol4 weggeschnitten, fol5r leer, fol5v Seite 1, fol6 weggeschnitten.” This passage and that on p. 10 are the only occurrences where he uses recto and verso.

⁹ This seems to me as a further lapse of the author. The first charter and the colophon already mention very interesting facts, namely several metropolitan bishops, Dəl Mogäsa (daughter of *ase* Dawit I) and land grants to the church by her (cp. D. CRUMMEY, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdoms of Ethiopia: from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000, pp. 29, 43, 45; S. KAPLAN, “Notes Towards a History of *Ase* Dawit I (1382–1413)”, *Aethiopia* 5, 2000, pp. 71–88, here p. 85). Additional information from the two other charters is therefore lost to the reader.

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logue no. 215), Orient 692 (Wright no. 256), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, d'Abbadie 91, 128, 158, Ṭanasee 45 and 72. The results of this, however, are not mentioned. Also missing is information regarding which Bible version he used to compare the text.

The annotations constitute one of the strongest parts of Bombeck's book. With the help of Greek and Arabic he reconstructs "einen syntaktisch und lexikalisch schwierigen Text" (p. 263). Although the original text is missing, the reader is able to follow most of the explanations. The translation in itself is good given the limitations of producing a literal translation and given the structures of a syntactically and lexically difficult Gə'əz text.

In conclusion it can be said that Bombeck's book may be of value for the interested layperson or someone with a background in theology. However, since it is basically limited to the translation, it does not meet the standards of good philological praxis, as it leaves out a sizeable amount of the information included in the manuscript.

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STANISŁAW CHOJNACKI, *Christ's Resurrection in Ethiopian Painting* = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 282. Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2009. 105 pages, 74 figures couleur. Prix: € 26.–. ISBN-13: 978-88-7210-364-9.

Le titre du dernier livre de Stanisław Chojnacki, qui nous a quittés en juillet 2010, annonce une étude de la représentation de la Résurrection du Christ dans la peinture éthiopienne et s'inscrit donc logiquement dans la carrière de cet historien de l'art avant tout consacrée à l'étude des thèmes iconographiques éthiopiens. Elle la clôt en abordant la représentation de l'un des thèmes fondamentaux du dogme chrétien.

L'auteur entreprend de tracer une histoire de la représentation de la Résurrection du Christ à partir du XII^e siècle (en commençant par les peintures murales de Yemrehanna Krestos) jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, histoire qu'il développe en trois chapitres (II, III et IV) après un court chapitre liminaire sur la "Résurrection des morts dans la théologie éthiopienne".

L'auteur opère d'après une sélection de peintures murales, d'icônes et de manuscrits qu'il n'explique pas et le chapitre II, qui examine des œuvres du XIV^e au début du XVI^e siècle, amène à se demander quel est le sujet réel du livre. L'auteur annonce, certes, l'orientation du livre dès la première phrase de l'introduction, intitulée "La Descente du Christ aux Enfers dans l'art chrétien". Il commence son livre en énonçant que "La représentation éthiopienne de la Résurrection du Christ (...) s'est développée à partir de l'image byzan-