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Review

ROCHUS ZUURMOND, *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice*. Part III: *The Gospel of Matthew*

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ROCHUS ZUURMOND, *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice*. Part III: *The Gospel of Matthew* = *Aethiopistische Forschungen* Bd. 55. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001. viii, 488 pp. Eur 66,-. ISBN 3-447-04306-7.

This volume represents the long-awaited continuation of Rochus Zuurmond's edition of the Ethiopic version of the synoptic gospels, of which Part I (General Introduction) and Part II (Edition of the Gospel of Mark) was published as volume 27 of *Aethiopistische Forschungen* in 1989. A review of Parts I and II by the present writer appeared in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992), 124–26. Although self-contained, the present volume presupposes knowledge of the earlier volume, and even that users will have the earlier volume to hand; but while the edition of the Ethiopic Matthew represents in essence a continuation of the earlier work, and of the views expressed within it, some significant differences are also to be observed.

Continuity exists at the most fundamental level in the fact that Zuurmond has seen no reason to change his classification of manuscripts of the synoptic gospels into five families or groups — excluding, that is, the mass of manuscripts copied in the last couple of hundred years that contain the M-text ('modern' or 'mixed' text), whose character is reflected in the editions printed in Ethiopia. The oldest of the five groups (Zuurmond's A-text) represents the closest it is possible to get to the original translation from the Greek, and manuscripts of this group can be further divided into two sub-groups, Aa- and Ab-text. The former consists of Abba Garima I and III and the Lalibala gospel manuscript, all of which can be dated to the thirteenth century or earlier; the latter contains the same type of text, but revised under the influence of the B-text, and consists of Abba Garima II, BN Éth. 32, and BFBS 193. In an article on the A- and B-texts of Matthew that appeared in *Aethiopica* 4 (2001) 32–41, Zuurmond described the A-text as a first draft, a very 'free' or slightly simplifying translation.

Zuurmond's B-text represents a thorough revision of the A-text — or possibly even a new translation made with the old in mind — that is much closer to the Greek. This type of text was in existence at least by the end of the thirteenth century, but may be much older. It is contained in Vat. Et. 25, Dabra Maryam 1, and BFBS 170 (the former Ba group), and, in a contaminated form, in EMMML 6942 and 7031 (the former Bb group); in the present work the first three manuscripts only are classified as belonging to the B-text, and the last two are treated independently. This type of text does not exist in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, which have a further form of the A-text (Ac) in these manuscripts. Vat. Et. 25 was used as the basis of the *editio*

princeps published in Rome in 1548, and because of the influence of this edition on all subsequent European editions of the gospels in Ethiopic, the B-text of Matthew is the kind of text with which scholars are most familiar, while the A-text of Matthew is quite different from existing printed editions. (For Mark and Luke the situation is different because in these gospels Vat Et. 25 reflects the A-text.)

The C-text is contained in a large number of manuscripts dating from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, and its representatives can be divided into a number of sub-groups (Ca, Cb, Cc); its oldest representative is EMMML 1832, which is dated to AD 1280/81. The essential characteristic of the C-text is that it conflates readings from the A- and B-texts and, in later stages, from other sources as well. The D-text exists in only about a dozen seventeenth and eighteenth century manuscripts (e.g. EMMML 3300) and probably came into existence in the seventeenth century as a revision, apparently based on (an) Arabic gospel text(s), of the C-text; it can be described as a ‘deconflating’ text. The E-text exists in only a few manuscripts dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth century (e.g. BL Or. 509) and represents a revision of the Ethiopic to bring the Ethiopic more closely into line with the Arabic ‘Alexandrian Vulgate’; this revision can also be dated to the seventeenth century.

If the above signifies continuity, there are, nonetheless, some significant differences. Most obviously the Ethiopic text is computer-set, not hand-written — and one can only sympathize with the difficulties described by the author in handling the software in the case of a volume as complex as this. Much more significantly, instead of the single text (the Aa-text) of Mark, the author presents editions of the A- and B-texts and of the D- and E-texts of Matthew on facing pages. An apparatus based on all the manuscripts collated by the author is provided for the A-text, but only an apparatus based on the manuscripts belonging to the respective families is provided for the B-, D-, and E-texts. Underneath the B-text Zuurmond has also provided a comparison of a number of A- and B-readings with the Greek, primarily readings mentioned in the fourth edition (1993/94) of *The Greek New Testament* edited by Kurt Aland and others (United Bible Societies); it is, as he rightly points out, only the A- and B-texts that are relevant for the purpose of text-critical comparison with the Greek. Zuurmond decided against providing in addition a complete edition of the C-text of Matthew because the text, despite having common characteristics, is not a unity, but he does provide some specimen passages of this text with an apparatus. Other differences from the edition of Mark include the use of four manuscripts that were not collated (or not extant) for Mark.

The edition of the texts takes up the bulk of the volume (pp. 34–421). For the rest, there is a very brief introduction; a text-critical appendix which

is primarily devoted to listing orthographic variants that occur in the most important manuscripts used; a series of supplements, including a listing, with comments, of all the real and supposed variants from the Greek recorded in the fourth edition of *The Greek New Testament* issued by the United Bible Societies; and a very short list of additions to Parts I and II.

There can be no question but that this edition represents a very significant achievement by Zuurmond, for which both Ethiopic scholars and New Testament textual critics have every reason to be grateful. Quite apart from the enormous value of having at last a critical edition of the Ethiopic version(s) of Matthew and of having the careful — and so far as one can see — soundly based classification of the manuscripts that underpins the edition, there are a number of features of the work that are extremely hopeful. I note, for example, Zuurmond's stress on the 'hypothetical' character of the five families and on the extent of cross-contamination between the families in virtually all manuscripts; his emphasis on the fact that we do not know how the Ethiopic text fared in the period between the original translation and the date of our oldest manuscripts with the consequence that it cannot be assumed that the existing A- and B-texts represent the original form of these types of text; or his comments on selected readings in comparison with the Greek and his caveat (spelt out in detail in Part II) on the value of such comparisons. But notwithstanding its enormous value, the edition does raise a number of questions and comments in the mind of the reviewer, of which three may be mentioned here.

First, as already indicated, the edition of Matthew presupposes not only knowledge of Parts I and II, but even that users will have a copy of Parts I and II to hand, and use of the present volume would have been considerably facilitated if a good deal more basic information that is provided in the earlier volume had been summarized here than is the case. At the very least it would have been helpful if the list of abbreviations had been reproduced and the names (and catalogue numbers) of the manuscripts used had again been listed. Here Zuurmond merely uses his own sigla (1, 2, 3, etc.), and one has to look to the earlier work to know that these represent Abba Garima I, III, II, etc. (It might be added that in Part I, pp. 171–204, there are samples of all five texts of three passages in Matthew in synoptic columns, with some very helpful notes on the significance of the differences; but the user of the present work could easily be unaware of this.)

Second, in matters of orthography Zuurmond states that the principle of the edition is to represent as much as possible the manuscript evidence, but that the edition also aims at uniformity of orthography and punctuation. His general rule is that spelling in the edited text has been standardized according to Dillmann's *Lexicon*, but the application of this rule in the light of his two, frequently conflicting, principles necessitates a considerable number of

qualifications and compromises. The text-critical appendix does give the actual spelling of the most important manuscripts, partly by means of lists of common variants, and partly, for the remaining relevant variants, verse by verse. But there remains some uncertainty, and there can be, as Zuurmond notes, some minor discrepancies between the text and apparatus of the A-text on the one hand and the text and apparatus of the B-, D-, and E- texts on the other. Since consistency of orthography in an Ethiopic context is at best a debatable concept, one cannot help wondering whether it would not have been better to have given the actual orthography of the manuscripts used as the base texts for each of the A-, B-, D-, and E- texts, and the actual orthography of the oldest manuscript listed in an entry in the apparatus.

Finally, it may be noted Zuurmond offers a number of helpful suggestions as to the origins of the B-text which take further his comments in Part I. Thus he considers it possible either that the B-text, as a revision of the A-text, was produced in Ethiopia 'on the basis of a Coptic/Arabic or even a Greek or Syriac manuscript brought to Ethiopia, e.g. in the luggage of the Abuna', or that it originated outside Ethiopia, in Jerusalem or the Sinai desert. If it could be established that the revision was made directly on the basis of a Greek text, then it would seem to the reviewer most likely that it was produced outside Ethiopia.

But these are essentially minor points, and again one can only thank Zuurmond for what he has given us.

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
BN	Bibliothèque nationale
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
EMML	Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library
Vat.	Vaticana

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