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Dissertation abstract

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Dissertation abstracts

MARTIN HEIDE, *Edition und Übersetzung der arabischen und äthiopischen Texte der Testamente Isaaks und Jakobs.*

Dissertation at the Fachbereich Fremdsprachliche Philologien der Philipps-Universität Marburg, on November 25, 1999, for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Besides the well-known “Testament of Abraham” there are two additional testaments among the so-called “Testaments of the Three Patriarchs” (TestIII). They are the “Testament of Isaac” (TestIsaac) and the “Testament of Jacob” (TestJac). Both of them are only extant in Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic. The Coptic version was edited and translated already a hundred years ago by the famous Italian scholar Ignazio Guidi (German, English and French translations following). The Arabic and Ethiopic versions, however, are only known in translations, which are each based on only one manuscript. So the Arabic version of the TestIsaac and TestJac was translated by Stinespring in Charlesworth’s Edition of the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” (New York 1985) into English, and Mathias Delcor translated from the same Arabic manuscript (Ms 132 of the Bibliothèque Nationale) into French (Studia in veteris testamenti pseudepigrapha 2). Delcor translated also the Ethiopic Ms 134 of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Of course, Gaguine delivered in Oxford 1965 his thesis of the Ethiopic Falasha-version of the TestIII, but the Falasha-version is a late recension of the Arabic resp. Ethiopic version, and it has never been published.

The forthcoming volume of the “Aethiopistische Forschungen” will be titled “Edition und Übersetzung der arabischen und äthiopischen Texte der Testamente Isaaks und Jakobs” (“Edition and Translation of the Arabic and Ethiopic Texts of the Testaments of Isaac and Jacob”). For the first time all extant Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts are now edited and translated into German. Critical notes accompany the edition, and references throughout the translation show the dependance of the Testaments on the Old and New Testament and the apocryphal literature.

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The Arabic Version of the TestIII, composed in Middle Arabic, has those typical features of Arabic that, e.g., Joshua Blau described in his reference-work “A Grammar of Christian Arabic.” The present introduction lists every major deviation of the Arabic TestIsaac and TestJac from Classical Arabic, referencing them to Blau’s and Hopkins’ Grammar resp. Since the Ethiopic version is itself a literal translation of the Arabic, a special chapter focusses on the Arabic-Ethiopic translation-technique of the Testaments, displaying the orthography of the personal names and the Ethiopic rendering of Arabic syntactical features. Some years ago, the question of the dependance of I Cor 2,9 on the TestJac was put forward; this question might now be settled, based on the present solution. A Scripture-Index and a Scholar’s-Index is attached to this new volume of the “Aethiopistische Forschungen”.

Martin Heide

MICHAEL KLEINER, *Maṣḥafa faws manfasāwi*. Die Ge[°]ez-Übersetzung des arabischen *Kitāb at-tibb ar-rūḥānī* (“Buch von der geistlichen Medizin”) des koptischen Bischofs Michael von Atrīb und Malīg (13. Jh.). Teil-edition und Kommentar (2 Halbbände). IX, 199 + 185 S.

Dissertation accepted at the Fachbereich Orientalistik der Universität Hamburg, and defended on August 6, 1998.

All major histories of Ge[°]ez literature, from CONTI ROSSINI’s “Note per la storia letteraria abissina” (1899) up to the present day, only provide succinct and largely identical descriptions of a *Maṣḥafa faws manfasāwi* (MFM). In all instances, the MFM is portrayed as a collection of ecclesiastical law or/and handbook of penitential discipline in 34/35 chapters, translated from an Arabic *Vorlage* towards the end of the 17th century at the initiative of *Etēgē* and queen mother Sabla Wangēl. The unidentified *Vorlage* is regularly attributed to the Coptic bishop Michael of Atrīb and Malig (sic).

While scrutiny of MFM mss. proves this picture to be essentially correct with regard to the general character, scope and origin of the MFM, it also shows it to be flawed with respect to the date and occasion for its translation. True, the three oldest extant MFM mss. date from the reign of Iyāsu I (1682–1704 A.D.). But their internal textual evidence clearly indicates a substantially earlier translation, probably already in the 16th century. Even a still earlier date cannot be excluded.