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Dissertation abstract

MICHAEL KLEINER, *Maṣḥafa faws manfasāwi. Die Ge'ez-Übersetzung des arabischen Kitāb aṭ-ṭibb ar-rūḥānī ("Buch von der geistlichen Medizin") des koptischen Bischofs Michael von Aṭrīb und Maḥǧ (13. Jh.)*

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Dissertation abstracts

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.

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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.

The general opinion of a late 17th c. translation at the initiative of Sabla Wangēl has its origin in CONTI ROSSINI (1899). It can, however, be shown that CONTI ROSSINI seriously misread his evidence, i.e. the great 19th c. mss. catalogues. Nowhere do these catalogues suggest that any of the three late 17th c. MFM mss. they describe could be considered the archetype, as CONTI ROSSINI implies. In linking the translation to Sabla Wangēl, CONTI ROSSINI moreover misinterpreted a mention of her name in one of these mss. Nonetheless, all later historians of Ge'ez literature in essence followed CONTI ROSSINI in their assessment of the MFM's translation. Apparently nobody ever checked the evidence. This raises broader questions about the methodology of the historians of literature.

In the early stages of research, it was discovered that alongside the MFM of Bishop Michael (henceforth: M-MFM), a second independent Ge'ez text carries the same title of *Maṣḥafa faʿws manfasāwi*. This second text is transmitted anonymously (therefore: A-MFM) and to this day is not mentioned in a single literary history. This is despite the fact that a large number of A-MFM mss. were already described in the major 19th c. catalogues. WRIGHT (1877) even explicitly distinguished between the two *Faʿws Manfasāwi*'s. These findings further nourish reservations towards the literary histories.

In the case of the M-MFM the supposed Arabic *Vorlage* could be ascertained. Also in the case of the A-MFM several indicators point to an Arabic original from medieval Egypt.

While it provides a sketch of the A-MFM, the thesis focuses on the M-MFM. Its text is partially published (approximately two thirds) and commented upon. An extensive commentary proved indispensable when it was found that the M-MFM's text frequently was severely defect (non-sensical or/and ungrammatical). These defects mainly stem from the translator's insufficient understanding of his Arabic source text. The commentary (= Volume II) elucidates these misunderstandings and the ensuing inadequate renderings.

Within the framework of a thesis, the sheer size of the commentary necessitated the limitation to a partial edition. The complete text of the M-MFM is now being prepared for publication.

Michael Kleiner