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Review

TEDROS ABRAHA, ed., tr., *Gädlä Abunä Yonas Zä-Bur. Eritrean Saint of the 15th Century. Ge'ez text edited and translated*

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Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1917ff.).
- CSCO* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES 8* TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
- PICES 10* C. LEPAGE and É. DELAGE, eds, *Études éthiopiennes: Actes de la X^e Conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988* (Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, 1994).
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches* (Paris: (Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres) Diffusion de Boccard, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

TEDROS ABRAHA, ed., tr., *Gädlä Abunä Yonas Zä-Bur. Eritrean Saint of the 15th Century. Ge^cez text edited and translated*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 53/2 (236) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015). 182 pp. (297–478). Price: € 97.–. ISBN: 978-2-503-56548-4.

Since the Pontificio Istituto Orientale in Rome, with Prof. Philippe Luisier, S.J., assumed in the last fifteen years the editorship of the renowned series *Patrologia orientalis*, there has been a substantial increasing in publications of Ethiopian hagiographical texts, with contributions by three scholars, Gérard Colin (aside from the *Sənkəssar*-related publications, with *Gädlä Mädhəninä Īgziʾ*, *Gädlä Bəsoy*, *Gädlä Samuʾel* of Waldəbba), Tedros Abraha (*Gädlä Dəmyanos*, and *Gädlä Təwäldä Mädhən* together with *Gädlä Fiqtor*), and Osvaldo Raineri (*Gädlä Mälkəʿa Krəstos* and *Gädlä Petros*). All in all, these publications make a very important contribution for the study of Ethiopic texts and *Aethiopica* has tried to keep track of as many of them as possible in the last years. Yet it is apparent that they are all marked by the prioritization of producing a *text edition*, whatever it is, usually a *base text edition*, more than a *real text-critical edition*. In keeping with this, the analysis of the manuscript tradition is usually short and does not apply a clear text-critical method. This is not certainly the ideal approach and still reflects a state of the art—not limited to this series—which Ethiopian studies show some difficulty in emancipating from. With some features of its own, this edition is no exception to this trend.

The introduction deals with the biography of Yonas, mainly basing on his *Gädl. Yonas* (c.1400/1403-1495/1498, depending on the problematic dating of the first year of King Dawit II's reign) was an important fifteenth-century monastic leader from the Ewostəatean movement to whom the foundation of six monasteries is attributed, in Səraye, Eritrea, and in Tənben, Təgray (pp. 7–8 (303–304)). The introduction resumes efficaciously the general historical context, as it emerges from the narrative of the *Gädl* and of the *Mälkəʿ*, highlighting among the main characters of the *Gädl*, King Zärʿa Yaʿqob (1434–1478), Bəlen Asgädä (or Sägädä), the *nəburä əd* Nob and the abbot Gäbrä Krəstos, both involved in the Sabbath controversy, as well as the 'pluralistic, itinerant, multiethnic, multi-religious human setting' in the background. The editor also rightly identifies as a specific feature of the *Gädlä Yonas* a "New' area of conflict' (p. 11 (307)), to be identified with the interactions with the Muslims from the Red Sea, the question of the interdiction of 'Muslim meat' being a crucial case in point. One would tend to agree with the editor that in this context, the absence of any reference to Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ġāzī's (Aḥmad Grañ) campaigns is an *argumentum ex silentio* for the composition of the *Gädl* in the early sixteenth century at the latest. The editor also provides,

although a proper purely *hagiographic analysis* is missing,¹ some attempt at distinguishing what is topical, with reference to specific features of the Ewosṭatean hagiography, and what can be more reliably connected to the historical background.

With the limitations I have mentioned, the editor makes an important contribution to our knowledge of this important text, editing it for the first time in its entirety from four manuscripts, as well as providing informations on several further previously unknown manuscripts. Tedros has distinguished two different recensions of this text: the earliest and shorter one, identified by archetype errors (p. 12 (308)),² is the only one edited in this volume from four manuscripts (pp. 22–151 (318–447), editorially subdivided into 166 numbered paragraphs provided by the editor with a title). Among them, MS London, British Library, Or. 698 (MS B in the edition) was already known to C. Conti Rossini, when he edited some excerpts of *Gädlä Yonas* in 1903 from a manuscript now in Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Conti Rossini 92, copied from an exemplar in the church of ʿĪnda Ṣadqan at Baräknaha, in Akkälä Guzay, Eritrea. Conti Rossini's copy is not mentioned by Tedros, who uses, however, an exemplar from the same church (MS C).³ The base manuscript (MS A), also the oldest (fifteenth/early sixteenth century), comes from the monastery of Däbrä Dəḥuhan, in Säraye, Eritrea, while the fourth manuscript is from ʿAddi Wəssək (MS D), in the district of ʿArräza, also in Säraye, Eritrea.⁴ It is a pity that the edition limits itself to the older recension, nor is it

¹ For the motif of the 'burning fingers', detailed on p. 6 (302), n. 4, see for example A. Brita, *I racconti tradizionali sulla «seconda cristianizzazione» dell'Etiopia. Il ciclo agiografico dei Nove Santi*, Studi Africanistici Serie Etiopica, 7 (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Paesi Arabi, 2010), 45–46, 136, 203, this latter reference occurring just before the episode of Guba's moving to Däbrä Dəḥuhan.

² Although one cannot exclude that the small misquotation of Phil. 3:13 simply belongs to the original and not to the archetype. Moreover, to say (*ibid.*) that 'None of the collated manuscripts has emended the text of A' presupposes that MSS BCD directly depend upon it: but when, where was this demonstrated by the editor? and if this were the case, why should they be used, provided they do not attest to a different recension?

³ It would have been obviously important to know if this manuscript served as an anti-graph to the manuscript that Conti Rossini had had copied for his collection and is now preserved in the Lincei library. Yet Tedros makes some important corrections to Conti Rossini's contributions as well as those who used his partial edition, including the present reviewer in his *EAE* article (see below): for example, Yonas was the nephew of his maternal uncle Dəmyanos (not of Danəʿel) of Däbrä Sina.

⁴ Note that these manuscripts are grouped as 'Older witnesses' (p. 13 (309)) as opposed to those listed under 'B. Second recension', p. 14 (310): but there is no point 'A' in this classification, and the opposition of 'Old witnesses' to 'Second recension' is inconsistent.

clear to the reviewer which is the ground for this ('The wide semantic gap between the two sets of witnesses and the difference in the arrangement and contents of the material do not allow one to edit them together', p. 12 (308)).

Manuscripts of a later recension, characterized by an expansion on the epithet 'Gənbā Lə'ul' as referred to Däbrä Şəge (one of the three monasteries in Säraye founded by Yonas), and by a *Mälkä*^c of Yonas also edited in the volume (pp. 150–172 (446–469), subdivided into 59 numbered strophes), come from Däbrä Dəḥuḥan (MS D²) and Däbrä Şəge (MS Ş); yet the *Mälkä*^c is also attested by MS D, as well as by a rare printed edition published in Asmära in 1962. Among the further manuscripts mentioned (p. 15 (311)), that testify to a much detailed field-research carried out by the editor in the field—besides manuscripts in Gundä Gunde, one in Däbrä Şəge, two privately owned manuscripts, and one more—'two undated manuscripts in the monastery of Däbrä Şahl' are also mentioned. This monastery is mentioned in MSS B and C in a *Letter of benediction and of absolution* sent to Yonas abbot of Däbrä Şahl by a patriarch of Alexandria John and is shortly commented in the introduction (pp. 7–8), but no information on its present state is given.⁵

According to the editor (p. 8 (304)), the text at § 26 would be evidence that Tānsə'a Krəstos is the author of the *Gädl*: but the text, at best, indicates that he committed its composition (*walällihu 'aşḥafä mäşḥafa gadlu*) and provided informations, there being no reason to identify him with the real *author*.

One of the most successful efforts in this work is the translation and the systematic identification of biblical echoes and quotations, which is an essential component of the hagiographic literary texture, although—as the editor is well aware of (p. 15 (311))—these might in turn go back to the immediate models of the *Gädl*. In the commentary the editor has scrupulously tried to clear place and personal names, difficult or rare terms, also

⁵ This would be of some importance, since according to the reviewer and G. Lusini's data—see especially the latter's 'Scrittura documentarie etiopiche (Dabra Deḥuḥān e Dabra Şegē, Sarā'ē, Eritrea)', *RSE*, 42 (1998 (1999)), 5–55, esp. pp. 18–19—already in the 1990s this monastery seemed to be no more extant. For a possible identification of the patriarch John as well as further details, including the mention of the *Letter* also in MS MIE (Missioni Italiana in Eritrea) no. 22, see 'Yonas of Bur', *EAE*, V (2014), 92b–94a (A. Bausi). Lusini's article is a fundamental documentary contribution to Yonas' chronology, inexplicably neglected by Tedros and not even mentioned in the bibliography on pp. 17–19 (313–315): doc. no. 1 contains a chronology of Yonas' ecclesiastical career, according to which he was born in the twenty-first year of King Dawit II's reign (1400/01 or 1403), succeeded Dəmyanos as abbot of Däbrä Sina in the seventh year of reign of King Zār'ā Ya'qob (1441), founded Däbrä Şəge in the twenty-first of the latter (1455), and Däbrä Dəḥuḥan in the eleventh of Əskəndər (1489), and died in the fourth year of reign of King Na'od (1498, 17 *Mäggabit*), having lived ninety-five years.

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exploring the hypothesis already advanced by Conti Rossini of possible Tigrinisms in the text.⁶

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DENIS NOSNITSIN, ed., *Ecclesiastic Landscape of North Ethiopia: Proceedings of the International Workshop Ecclesiastic Landscape of North Ethiopia: History, Change and Cultural Heritage. Hamburg, July 15–16, 2011*, Supplement to *Aethiopica: International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies*, 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014). xviii, 188 pp., 130 ills, 4 maps, 6 tables. Price: € 36.–. ISBN: 978-3-447-10102-8.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a workshop held in Hamburg on July 15–16, 2011. Edited by Denis Nosenitsin, it has been published as a supplement to *Aethiopica. International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies*. After the ‘Preface’ (pp. vii–x) and a ‘Presentation’ by Gianfranco Fiaccadori (pp. xi–xvii), one finds three sections. The first part is introductory, the second focuses on monastic networks and the last concentrates on case studies. Following the index, colourful plates give a picture of the various sites described in the articles.

In the preface, Denis Nosenitsin describes the workshop as part of a project called Ethio-SPaRe, which stands for ‘Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia – Salvation, Preservation and Research’. The project aims at studying Ethiopian manuscripts in the light of their ‘historical, geographical and social context’ and the concept ‘ecclesiastic network’ is used and explained in this connection. Following this Gianfranco Fiaccadori gives a summary of the various articles and an explanation of Ethio-SpaRe’s significance.

The main subject of the book is introduced by two articles. The first, by Denis Nosenitsin, ‘Ecclesiastic Landscape of North Ethiopia: Methodologies and Types of Approach’ (pp. 3–13), deals with practical issues for the study of historical Christian sites in northern Ethiopia. Valuable information in this field is given in a brief summary of previous research on the same geographi-

⁶ In keeping with the *Aethiopica* policy, I will limit myself to the minimum with regard to typos and minor errors: note however that on p. 19 (315) (also p. 43 (339), n. 48) the right name is (Ruffillo) ‘Perini’, not ‘Perilli’; and that some names are frequently misspelt, for example (p. 5 (301)) ‘Nāwayä’, instead of ‘Nəwayä’, ‘Dämyanos’ instead of ‘Dəmyanos’; there is also an extensive vocalization of sixth orders (‘Baräkənaḥa’, *passim*, instead of ‘Baräknaḥa’, etc.), including laryngeals in final position (‘Ǽgzi’ə’, etc.) that is not justified.