



Aethiopia 19 (2016)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review

GETATCHEW HAILE, *Voices from Däbrä Zämäddo: Acts of Abba Bärtälomewos and Abba Yoḥannas. 45 Miracles of Mary*

Aethiopia 19 (2016), 279–283

ISSN: 2194–4024

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the '19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies', held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt's own will, to a pool of younger scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

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.
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).
EI² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
JES *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
NEASt *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
OrChr *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
PICES 9 A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).
RSE *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

Reviews

The text is edited with accuracy: misprints are scarce (e.g., p. 8.3: ረከብዎ ሙ ፣ instead of ረከብዎሙ ፣; p. 27.13: ያአማሩ ፣ instead of ያአዎሩ ፣; p. 33.18 and 33.21: ከፍለ ፣ and ከፍል ፣ instead of ከፍለ ፣ and ከፍል ፣ respectively; p. 39.21: አነደ ፣ instead of አነዳ ፣; p. 49.21: ከሳዱ ፣ instead of ከሳዱ ፣; p. 54.6: እስ ዩ ፣ instead of ርእስዩ ፣). The emendation of አማዕዋቲሁ ፣ ‘intestines’ into አማ ዑቲሁ ፣ (p. 54.11) seems unnecessary: the word is attested in the dictionaries. The translation is likewise accurate and misprints are of very minor significance, e.g.: p. 13, n. 56: ‘Həllawəyat’ instead of ‘Həlluna’; p. 15.4: ‘Mdäh ən’ instead of ‘Mädhən’; p. 27.14: ‘lived’ instead of ‘lives’. Biblical quotations and allusions are detected throughout. Among the non-biblical sources references are made to Pāntālewōn of the cell (tr. p. 31, n. 102), the Martyrs of Nagran (tr. p. 68.14–15), Ḥmrayəs (tr. p. 68.22), and Peter Archbishop of Alexandria (tr. p. 69, n. 236).

In conclusion, scholars can be sincerely grateful to Getatchew Haile for presenting a new historical source that opens new possibilities for our understanding of an indisputably intriguing chapter of medieval Ethiopia.

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GETATCHEW HAILE, *Voices from Däbrä Zämädō: Acts of Abba Bärtälomewos and Abba Yoḥannəs. 45 Miracles of Mary*, Aethiopistische Forschungen, 79 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013). xii, 273 pp., index. Price: € 64.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-10068-7.

With his first publication in the series *Aethiopistische Forschungen* Getatchew Haile offers an edition and an annotated translation of the unpublished hagiographical texts (*Lives* and hymns) of St Bärtälomewos and St Yoḥannəs, two abbots of the famous monastery of Däbrä Zämädō,¹ Lasta, Ethiopia, who lived during the first half of the fourteenth century (St Bärtälomewos) and the second half of the fifteenth century (St Yoḥannəs); i.e. Part One of the book. In Part Two, the author provides the edition and translation of forty-five local miracles worked by St Mary, mainly for the different members of the community of Däbrä Zämädō (during the tenures of various abbots) but also at neighbouring places (e.g. in the region of Šəmṛätä

¹ The monastery with its rock-hewn church is also known as Ġämädō (p. 1), and Žämmädu Maryam or Gämmadu Maryam (‘Žämmädu Maryam’, *E Ae*, V (2014), 133a–135b (E. Balicka-Witakowska)). According to the *Gädlä Bärtälomewos* (ed. p. 21, tr. pp. 147, 148), the monastic community of Zämädō was founded by Bärtälomewos (who placed the *tabot* of St Mary in the cave), and the church was constructed ‘in form of a cross’ during the tenure of Yoḥannəs. For the construction date of the church see also *ibid.* 134b.

Ab).² Since all works contain several historical episodes, e.g. concerning the foundation and construction of the monastery and its church, the material presented is fascinating not only for the study of the literary genre as such but also extremely valuable for the reconstruction of monastic history.

The introduction to the edition (pp. 1–10) and to the translation (pp. 115–135) includes a brief description of the manuscripts used, an informative introduction to the monastery and the protagonists of the hagiographies, and, finally, an insightful discussion supplied with rare textual material on the veneration of St Mary in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwāhədo Church. The work is completed with an index of proper names (pp. 267–273).

Both hagiographies, the *Gädlä Bärtälomewos* and the *Gädlä Yoḥannəs*, each with a collection of miracles (*Tä'ammər*), are preserved together in three manuscripts along with other texts. These multiple-text manuscripts, all originating in Däbrä Zämäddo, were once microfilmed by the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library as MSS EMMML nos 6975, 6843, 7064 (MSS A, B, C in the edition).³ The edited hymns (*sälam* and *mälkä'*) devoted to St Bärtälomewos are transmitted in MSS A and C; MS EMMML no. 6993 (MS D), containing a collection of *mälkä'* hymns devoted to various saints (*Mälkä'a Guba'e*), is the only known codex containing the edited *Mälkä'a Yoḥannəs*.⁴ The forty-five miracles of St Mary, edited in Part Two, are transmitted in a codex microfilmed as MS EMMML no. 6835 (MS E) which contains a huge collection of the 'Miracles of Mary' (*Tä'ammərä Maryam*). In line with the author's editing method employed in his many previous works, the oldest MS A (dated to the sixteenth century on palaeographical grounds) served as the basis for the edition of the hagiographies.

The *Gädlä Bärtälomewos*, followed by two miracles performed after the saint's death (ed. pp. 13–26, tr. pp. 137–154), provides only a few biographical data on its protagonist. The text, significantly a first-person narrative, basically offers a stereotyped portrait of a holy monk, glorifying the saint's righteousness, grace, wisdom and virtues, and drawing parallels to the most revered saints. The text is full of allusions to and quotations from biblical

² Notably, three miracles (nos 36, 37, 39) are not related to the monastery but narrate episodes about three great kings: Lalibäla and his godson who eats nothing but earth, the prophecy of Nä'akk'wəto lä-Ab's kingship, and Zär'a Ya'qob who was admonished not to lean against a pillar in the church.

³ The Editor provides a preliminary list of all microfilmed manuscripts from Zämäddo (p. 119; on p. 167, note 11 he additionally mentions a manuscript with a Synaxarion, MS EMMML no. 6968, which was brought from Sökla), thus testifying to the richness of the library's collection of manuscripts.

⁴ MS D contains another version of the *Mälkä'a Bärtälomewos* which was not considered as a text witness for the present edition (p. 1).

writings. Moreover, the overriding purpose of the text seems to have been the edification of the reader and listener of the *Life*, since the author eagerly and constantly explains the underlying meanings of the given quotations (such as “I, too, am dead to the world’ [Gal 6:14] means ‘I do not desire worldly needs”, p. 137) and interprets the subtle signs of holiness (such as for the milk that suddenly appeared where the saint stood, the author explains that ‘as for the interpretation of the milk, (it meant) ‘there will rise after him someone whose deeds will be tasty like milk”, p. 144). Five more posthumous miracles of different narrative style are appended to the *Life*, probably added at a later stage (ed. pp. 13–26, tr. pp. 154–159).

One of the very few biographical coordinates that we find in the hagiography is that the saint originally comes from Ṭaṭra of Mārāwa⁵ and that Bärtälomewos was a contemporary of St Täklä Haymanot, who clothed him with the *askema*⁶, and of St Yafqərännä Əgzi⁷, whom the protagonist met on the Ṭana-island of Məṣraḥa, as well as of Metropolitan Ya‘qob (in office in the mid-fourteenth century), from whom he received the *tabot* of St Mary.⁷ As is often the case with local saints, sources outside of their own monastic tradition providing information on their lives and deeds are scarce or even nonexistent. Therefore, it becomes difficult to evaluate the historicity of the given information,⁸ even more when—as it seems here—a *Life* was composed many years after the lifetime of the protagonist.⁹

⁵ A place located in the district of Wäfla (northern Wällo) which is inhabited by the Agäw, see ‘Wäfla’, *E Ae*, IV (2010), 1068b–1069a (Wudu Tafete Kassu).

⁶ Again, the author explains, ‘askema means decoration of the Holy Spirit’ (p. 144).

⁷ St Bärtälomewos is mentioned neither in the *Gädlä Yafqərännä Əgzi*⁷ edited by I. Wajnberg nor in the edited versions of the *Gädlä Täklä Haymanot*; cf. I. Wajnberg, ed., tr., *Das Leben des Hl. Jäfgerana ‘Əgzi*⁷ (Weimar: Druck der Hof-Buchdruckerei, 1917; 2nd edn, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 106 (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1936)); C. Conti Rossini 1896. *Il ‘Gadla Takla Häymānot’, secondo la redazione Waldebbana*, Roma: Accademia dei Lincei, 1986; ገድለ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ የትልቁ ፡ ኢትዮጵያዊ ፡ ጸድቅ ፡ የአቡነ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ ዜና ፡ ሕይወትና ፡ ሥነ ፡ ገድል ፡ (Gädlä Täklä Haymanot. Yä-təlləqu ityoṗyawi ṣadq yä-Abunä Täklä Haymanot zena ḥəywätə-nna ṣənä gädl, ‘Life of Täklä Haymanot. The life-story and the beauty of the combat of the great Ethiopian righteous Abunä Täklä Haymanot’) (Addis Ababa: Bā-Tenśa’ə Zä-Guba’ə Matämiya Bet Tatämä, 1946 EC (1953 CE)).

⁸ The Editor’s conclusion—that Bärtälomewos was one of the monks who chastised King ‘Amdä Şəyon (r. 1314–1344) for ‘marrying the wife of his brother’ (pp. 116, 122)—may be arguable. The *Life* itself does not explicitly contain this information but merely refers to a ‘great oppression’ and the involvement of ‘twelve abbots’ during the reign of ‘Amdä Şəyon as an event that happened during the lifetime of Bärtälomewos (ed. p. 20, tr. p. 146).

⁹ The saint’s age was taken from ‘a note found in the house of archives that the ancient fathers had kept’ (ed. p. 17, tr. p. 142).

The case of the *Gädlä Yoḥannəs* (ed. pp. 37–55, tr. pp. 166–189) is different; it seems to have been written shortly after the death of its protagonist. According to the embedded colophon (ed. p. 55, tr. p. 189), his successor Habtä Šəllase commissioned the *Life* ‘that he heard with his ears and saw with his eyes because he has lived with him’.¹⁰ The text offers more details on the saint’s life. We learn about his parents (both members of the military nobility), the miraculous birth of the firstborn saint and his education (biblical writings, arts of war, farming)—all typical hagiographical motifs. St Yoḥannəs received the ‘monastic garb’ from *Abba Səməʿon* (from?) Təgray (አባ ፡ ስምዖን ፡ ትግራይ ፡, p. 38)¹¹, and the *askema* from *Abba Eṣṭifanos* of Däbrä Šəmbla. The latter left his monastery during famine, and Yoḥannəs was chosen as abbot. Yoḥannəs was later ordained priest by Metropolitan Gäbrəʾel (in office together with Metropolitan Mikaʾel during the reign of King Zärʾa Yaʿqob, r. 1434–1468). Finally, his spiritual father, Tāṭəmḳä Mädhən (he is sometimes given the epithet ‘of Mayä Wäyn’) sent his protégé to serve as an abbot at the tomb of Bärtälomewos.¹²

The *Life* includes thirteen miracles that the saint worked during his lifetime (ed. pp. 47–52, tr. pp. 178–185). All miracles were reported by his spiritual son, Gäbrä Maryam, ‘that he himself had seen and that he had heard from him’ (ed. p. 52, tr. p. 185). Eventually St Yoḥannəs died on 30 Ḥamle in the same year as King Naʾod (r. 1494–1508).

The *Gädlä Bärtälomewos* and the *Gädlä Yoḥannəs*—both local productions of the same monastery, which might have been written within the same period—bear close similarities in their use of hagiographical themes employed for portraying their saintly heroes. Neither saint ever acts on his own but is guided either by the will of God or by the instructions of a spiritual father. For example, the commonly employed theme ‘escape from marriage’ is pictured in such a way. The parents of both saints intended to arrange a marriage that was ultimately prevented by divine intervention: either the chosen wife (Bärtälomewos) or the parents (Yoḥannəs) died before the wedding. Another notable example is that both monks were recognized as a saint during their lifetime for changing water to milk (Bärtälomewos) or water to honey (Yoḥannəs). Furthermore, a dominant feature of both texts (as well as of

¹⁰ The five additional posthumous miracles of St Bärtälomewos were most probably commissioned by the same Habtä Šəllase (his name is mentioned in the supplication formula of the first additional miracle, p. 27).

¹¹ For this, both were imprisoned by the then abbot of Zämäddo, *Abba Märqoryos*, because they transgressed the order ‘that giving monasticism is forbidden to other abbots but to the abbot of Zämäddo’ (ed. p. 38, tr. p. 167).

¹² According to the second miracle of St Mary presented in Part Two, Yoḥannəs was the sixth abbot after Bärtälomewos (ed. p. 63, tr. p. 199).

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the miracles of Mary edited in Part Two) is the ambitious effort of the author(s) to consistently emphasise the truthfulness of the recounted episodes and miracles by referring to (saintly) ear- or eyewitnesses.¹³

It would be interesting to examine whether both saints enjoy liturgical veneration and are honoured with a commemorative notice in a local *Sənkəssar* of Däbrä Zämäddo since the memorial days are given for both saints (4 Ṭəqəmt and 30 Ḥamle). However, both *Lives*, together with the miracle stories provide extremely valuable material for the study of Ethiopic hagiography in general and of indigenous hagiography in particular. Also the edited collection of local miracles performed by St Mary (ed. pp. 62–112, tr. pp. 197–266) with inspirational stories of faith, and narratives about the people's daily life and its challenges, offers rich material for further research.

The publication under review reminds the scholarly community once again of the absolute necessity of a systematic and an overarching comparative study of Ethiopic hagiography, its thematic relationships and intertextualities, and of its common and specific motifs and elements, etc. The Editor has already contributed significantly to this endeavour in various ways for which he deserves the highest appreciation.

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OSVALDO RAINERI, *Vita del santo monaco etiopico Mälke'a Krastos* (sec. XVI–XVII). *Edizione del testo etiopico e traduzione italiana*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 51/3 (228) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). 130 pp. (= 257–388). Price: € 48.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-53428-2.

This edition and translation of the *Gädlä Mälke'a Krastos* is now available in the *Patrologia Orientalis* series, thanks once more to the work of Msgr Osvaldo Raineri, who has edited several unpublished hagiographic works over the past years.

¹³ For example from the *Gädlä Bärtälomewos*, 'However, this, that has been written, is what was revealed to the spiritual saints. As for the rest, those who had seen it openly have testified' (p. 148); from the *Gädlä Yoḥannəs*, 'this miracle was heard by people of that village and other villages' (p. 182). See also the passionately written concluding passage of the colophon of the local miracles of St Mary (ed. pp. 111–112, tr. p. 266) with a promise and a warning, 'And you, people of Zämäddo, do not treat it like fiction [...]. It will help you and rescue you from all tribulations of this world and the one to come. But if you ignore (the miracle worker), she will utterly destroy you from the life of body and soul'.