

Marcin Krawczuk

'Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project, II', Veronika Six [et al.], Cambridge 2012 ; 'Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project, VII', Kesis Melaku Terefe [et al.], Cambridge 2012 : [recenzja]

The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 44, 189-191

2014

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Veronika Six, Steve Delamarter, Getatchew Haile, Kesis Melaku Terefe, & Jeremy Brown, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project, II: Codices 106–200 and Magic Scrolls 135–284*, Cambridge 2012, 477 pp., ISBN 978-0-227-17384-8.
Kesis Melaku Terefe, Steve Delamarter, & Jeremy Brown, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Imaging Project, VII: Codices 601–654: The Meseret Sebbat Le-Ab Collection of Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa*, Cambridge 2012, 250 pp., ISBN 978-0-227-17385-5.

The two books under review appear in the project series *Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts, and Studies* (as volumes 3 and 13 respectively) the purpose of which is ‘to digitize and catalogue collections of Ethiopic manuscripts in North America and around the world’ (p. xiii). The importance of this task for Ethiopian studies (or strictly speaking Ethiopic/Gə‘əz philology) cannot be stressed enough¹ and it is most welcome that alongside *EMIP* there are other similar projects carried out.² Any description of previously uncatalogued collection is of course an important contribution although with all the most important³ collections already described,⁴ the possibility of utterly new and exciting manuscripts coming to light is not very

¹ For basic problems of cataloguing Ethiopic manuscripts, see: A. BAUSI, ‘La catalogazione come base della ricerca. Il caso dell’Etiopia’, [in:] B. CENNI, C. M. F. LALLI & L. MAGIONAMI (eds.), *Zenit e Nadir, II: I manoscritti dell’area di Mediterraneo. La catalogazione come base della ricerca*, Montepulciano 2007, pp. 87–108.

² One can mention Ethio-SPaRe (<<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIO-SPARE/>>) hosted at Hamburg University and Endangered Archives managed by the British Library (<<http://eap.bl.uk/>>); though not focused exclusively on Ethiopic manuscripts.

³ That is, outside Ethiopia and Eritrea and with a striking exception of the Ethiopic part of the Schøyen Collection in Oslo.

⁴ The bibliography of the catalogues is to be found in: R. BEYLOT & M. RODINSON, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits éthiopiens*, Paris 1995.

high. At the same time, the methodology of describing Ethiopic manuscripts has advanced greatly since the pioneering era of August Dillmann or William Wright, particularly in the area of physical description. This is plainly visible in both books herein reviewed.

For the former, the editors managed to acquire services of the two currently most experienced cataloguers of Ethiopic manuscripts: Veronika Six (responsible for the large part of the Ethiopic documents described within the *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* series) and Getatchew Haile, illustrious scholar and co-author of the catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscript Microfilm Library in Collegeville. Whereas Veronika Six is solely responsible for the description of the magic scrolls, Getatchew Haile was assisted in describing the codices by Steve Delamarter, Melaku Terefe, Jeremy R. Brown, and Erik C. Young. The manuscripts chiefly come from various American private collections; one particularly impressive was assembled by Gerald Weiner and subsequently donated to the UCLA.

The description of manuscripts follows a well established pattern: shelf number, title, physical description, enumeration of the contents, enumeration of miniatures and various notes (on topics such as *addenda* and *marginalia*, land transactions, rubrication, names of scribes and owners, decorative elements, irregular allignment of text, pagination, etc.). A rather innovative feature is that each entry is accompanied by a graphic map of quires. The incipits and other fragments of the texts are written in Ethiopic script throughout. There are no illustrations.

None of the manuscripts described in this volume can be dubbed a revelation from a textual point of view. In fact a large number of them are actually ordinary Psalters. There are no items older than the seventeenth century. There are however manuscripts interesting for reasons other than textual and these have been enumerated by Steve Delamarter in the introduction (pp. xxv–xxx). To this list I might add a rather lengthy (101 folios) *EMIP* 179 – Alwan Codex 28, containing an Amharic commentary on Wəddāse Māryām, since the genre of Amharic commentaries of Biblical and liturgical texts virtually unknown until the mid-twentieth century is still seriously understudied.

The catalogue is furnished with a set of useful indices: general subject and modern names, works in the codices, names and places in the scrolls, miniatures, and finally – and this again is an important innovation – scribal practices. It should be stressed here that the amount of information on the physical features of manuscripts including issues such as binding techniques, covers, and arrangement of quires is very impressive, and even attempts are made to provide some statistical generalizations (pp. xxxv–xxxvii) concerning the quire structure. Since our knowledge of Ethiopian bookmaking still leaves a lot to be desired⁵ this is a very recommendable approach.

⁵ A useful summary of the current knowledge with extensive bibliography is to be found

The second volume under review is identical in terms of technicalities of manuscript description but unlike the first one describes only one collection namely that of Mekane Jesus Seminary in Addis Ababa. This collection was assembled by an Ethiopian scholar, teacher and author of theological works Meseret Sebhat Le-Ab, whose life and output are presented in the introduction. The collection contains fifty-four manuscripts, all but four dating from the nineteenth and twentieth century, and is fairly representative of the Ethiopic literary production. Apart from Biblical and liturgical texts one finds there theological treatises (such as the famous *Qerellos*), synaxaria and some hagiographies as well as a certain number of manuscripts with traditional Ethiopian musical notation. The gem of the collection is however the fifteenth/sixteenth-century codex containing, among others, the Book of Jubilees. It was not used by James C. VanderKam in what is at the moment the standard edition of this apocryphon⁶ and its textual variants are described in Ted M. Erho's introduction.

Judging by the two volumes under review, ethiopisants worldwide have every reason to eagerly anticipate the publication of subsequent volumes.

[*Marcin Krawczuk*]

Jean-Pierre Coriat, *Les constitutions des Sévères: Règne de Septime Sévère. I, Constitutions datées de la première période du règne (juin 193 – automne 197 ap. J-C) et constitutions non datées de Septime Sévère citée comme seul auteur de la décision [= Sources et Documents publiés par l'École française de Rome 1]*, Rome 2014, xxvi + 422 pp., ISBN 978-2-7283-0969-6.

The book under review inaugurates the edition and publication of palimpsesta of imperial constitutions from the times of Principate carried out by the École française de Rome under the name 'Programme Edoardo Volterra'.

in A. BAUSI, 'La tradizione scrittoria etiopica', *Segno e Testo* 6 (2008), pp. 507–557. Recently published: FÄQQÄDÄ SƏLASSE Täfarra, *Təntawi yäbəranna mäṣabəft azzägəgəgät*, Addis Ababa 2002 EC [= AD 2010], is an absolutely fascinating monograph on the subject, even more interesting since written by an author who underwent the traditional Ethiopian education in bookmaking and himself is skilled in both preparing the parchment and copying the texts. As of today it is only available in Amharic.

⁶ James C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, Leuven 1989.