

Tras el índice de siglas empleadas (pp. 59-60), se ofrece la edición diplomática del manuscrito (pp. 61-122) con un denso cuerpo de notas cuyo logrado orden y estructura sistemática permiten comparar cada fragmento o término relevante con otros manuscritos similares.

Cierra la obra con una extensa bibliografía que incluye las obras citadas a lo largo del trabajo (pp. 123-138).

La impecable edición de este manuscrito publicada en un volumen de la serie «Syro-Arabica» de la unidad de investigación CNERU y el CEDRAC, es una nueva contribución al estudio de las versiones árabes de la Biblia, que gracias al trabajo y al interés de especialistas como Monferrer-Sala, se va abriendo paso en la investigación.

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MONFERRER-SALA, Juan Pedro, *The Vision of Theophilus. The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. Edited and translated by*. «Texts from Christian Late Antiquity» 39 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015), 130 pp. ISBN 978-1-4632-0550-8; ISSN 1935-6846

In this profoundly erudite work, Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, offers an edition and English annotated translation of one of the most important and popular apocryphal writings of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages, the text, known as the Vision of Theophilus. The text has survived in a number of languages and recensions, such as Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic. However, the original Coptic version is today lost. Still, the Egyptian provenance of the text remains undisputed. As the editor convincingly argues, this text was considered as a reliable source for the history of Jesus and His family during the flight in Egypt. The work is pseudepigraphically attributed to the notorious Patriarch, Theophilus of Alexandria (385-412 CE). The text must be dated to a later time period though.

The text follows the literary model of the ancient novel. Moreover, it demonstrates certain affinities with the canonical gospel narratives and it contains numerous shared motifs and traditions with the rich Christian apocryphal tradition about the nativity and childhood of Jesus. A striking feature of this story is the central role and importance of Mary, the mother of God, in the narrative. The text relates the miraculous apparition of Mary to a pious man, named Theophilus. Mary narrates the story of Jesus's birth following closely the Gospel story of the birth of Jesus but embellished with a plethora of narrative details. The text also incorporates numerous other interesting elements from various apocryphal traditions on Jesus' nativity story. Various anecdotal stories are included in the description of the flight to Egypt, such as descriptions of the infant, Jesus, performing miracles, healing the sick, destroying the idols, et al. Jesus also foresees his own life and crucifixion and meets already in Egypt the robbers that would be crucified along with Him. The description of Egyptian locations underlines the Egyptian provenance of the original writing. The text also demonstrates a strong anti-Jewish sentiment and polemics

This short volume offers the edition and translation of an Arabic manuscript of the Vision of Theophilus preserved in the Mingana collection, Mingana Chr.Arab. 18. An annotated translation, indices and a comprehensive bibliography complete this volume. The edited manuscript is a fragment, dated to the 17th century and more specifically around the year 1670. The manuscript is of Egyptian origin. The text is incomplete both at the beginning and at the end. The oldest manuscript of the text is Vat.ar. 698 (fos. 102v-131r), which is dated to 1371 AD and was edited by M. Guidi together with another Vatican manuscript, Vat.ar. 170. Present volume may be viewed as complementary to the pioneering work of M. Guidi. Several recessions have also survived. The editor gives a short list of later manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries.

As Monferrer Sala maintains the Arabic version is undoubtedly based on a Coptic original and depends on Zachariah of Sakha's 'Homily', transmitted both in Coptic and Arabic, and which might have even served as a common source. There has been some debate in the scholarship with regard to the primacy of the Arabic recensions, the Ethiopic texts and the Syriac versions. However, the scholarly consensus today agrees that the Arabic versions are anterior to the Syriac ones and that the Arabic text was later translated into Syriac and Ethiopic.

As Monferrer Sala demonstrates the history of the text itself is highly intriguing and interesting. Accordingly, the establishment of the "chronological relationship between the various surviving versions" poses a real challenge. Monferrer Sala rightly stresses that an early date of a manuscript is not necessarily evidence for the antiquity of the preserved textual version itself, since manuscripts may simply transmit a copy of an earlier original. Accordingly, the dating of the manuscripts is not a safe criterion for the dating of the various text versions. Monferrer Sala concludes that the three Arabic texts offer independent versions that derive from two different textual traditions. The Syriac textual tradition examined in the present context shares common features with the Arabic tradition represented by Vat. ar. 698. Moreover, it is certain that the Syriac tradition depends on the translation of an original Arabic text. The manuscript evidence and the textual witnesses indicates a date before the 12th century for the composition of the text. Interestingly, the Ethiopic version that dated to the mid or late 14th century does not show any connection with the Arabic version but "contains redactional variant to the Syriac traditions" (p. 34).

Importantly, Monferrer Sala notes that the text in question was written in "neo Arabic" that was used by all Arabic speaking religious communities (Christians, Jews and Muslims) in Middle Ages.

This compact brief volume offers a learned study on the apocryphal text transmission as well as a solid critical discussion of the relevant secondary bibliography. Most importantly, this book stresses the necessity of a carefully study of the manuscript evidence with a critical new approach concerning the dating of the texts preserved in those manuscripts.

The paleographic work and analysis is solid and very careful. Notably, the analysis also offers a very useful critical reading of Guidi's remarks in the *editio princeps* of the text. The critical comparison of all the Arabic and Syriac versions and the Syriac versions with the Arabic ones discloses illuminating aspects of the history of the text in its various linguistic adventures. Accordingly, the early date of the Arabic text is suggested convincingly. Moreover, the earlier date of the Arabic text in relation to the Syriac version(s) is established.

The English translation is furnished with very informative footnotes mainly on linguistic issues. It is regrettable, however, that a reputable publishing house, like the Gorgias Press, has not offered the necessary editorial care for this volume, so that a number of avoidable editorial flaws and typographical errors remain in this otherwise excellent and elegant publication.

As the editor stresses in his foreword, the "study of Christian Arabic apocrypha is still in its infancy" (...) and there is still a huge editing work to be carried out." In this sense this short volume is a most welcome contribution to the study of the largely neglected corpus of Christian Arabic literature through a new meticulous edition and careful translation in a modern language. Furthermore, the volume offers important new insights into the little studied field of the history of textual transmission of Christian pseudepigrapha in oriental languages in Middle Ages.

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