

La versione etiopica del Pastore di Erma (ሄርማ ፣ ነቢይ ፣). Riedizione critica del testo (*Visioni e Precetti*)*

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A major apocryphal work of the New Testament, the *Shepherd* of Hermas was originally composed in Greek in the second century AD in Rome. The rapid popularity that the writing knew throughout the Mediterranean world brought to its translation into a number of Christian languages, among which Gə'əz. Regarded as Scripture by a number of Fathers of the Church, the *Shepherd* of Hermas was appreciated for its ethics and read for catechistic purposes. The decline of the work from the fifth century onwards, testified by the progressive scarcity of sources, was a consequence of its ultimate rejection amongst the canonical books. The work, structured in five *Visions*, twelve *Precepts* or *Mandates* and ten *Similitudes*, is traditionally ascribed to the apocalyptic genre and makes wide use of allegories. Hermas is a former slave, set free by a woman named Rhode to whom he was sold in Rome. Simple and pious man, he yields to a sinful thought while seeing Rhode washing herself in the Tiber. Some time later, during one of Hermas' rambles outside Rome, she appears to him as a heavenly figure and accuses him for the sins he and his family committed. Hermas is then granted with visions by an aged woman representing the Church and a shepherd, whence the title of the work, representing the Angel of Repentance. The pre-eminence of the Church is openly declared, and the need for the repentance (μετάνοια) of the previous sins repeatedly claimed. A momentous passage of the work is the magnificent vision of the tower built on the water with stones dragged from the deep, allegory of the Church built with the faithful.

The *Shepherd* of Hermas is a document of considerable significance for the history of the early Christianity, and the Ethiopic version (Gə'əz *Herma nābiy*), translated from a Greek *Vorlage* in the Aksumite age (fourth to seventh centuries), is a crucial source for our knowledge of the text. Contrary to the Greek, the Gə'əz version transmits the entire text, including the conclusion. The Ethiopic text is generally referred to by scholars according to the 1860 *editio princeps* by Antoine d'Abbadie, made on the basis of the then *codex unicus* Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Éthiopien Abb. 147.

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The same French-Irish explorer and missionary had it copied in 1847 from a sixteenth-century manuscript preserved in Gundä Gunde (‘Agäme, Təgray) and now allegedly lost. Although d’Abbadie’s text, accompanied by a Latin translation, is still the reference edition of the Ethiopic *Shepherd*, the growing broadening of the documentary evidence has made it substantially outdated, and has dramatically increased the need of a new edition. The main purpose of my doctoral research was to fill such long-awaited gap. As the *Herma näbiy* was translated in Late Antiquity, my study is also part of a research trend in the Ethiopian studies that in the latest decades has paid particular attention to the Aksumite literature, i.e. the older literary heritage of the Ethiopian civilization. A chapter by chapter summary of the dissertation follows.

The thesis opens with an overview of the historical and cultural context of the work, and outlines the rise and fall of its popularity in the Mediterranean world, in particular in Egypt (ch. 1). The interlinguistic tradition covers a Greek dossier (represented, amongst the numerous witnesses, by the sumptuous Codex Sinaiticus, the medieval Codex Athous Grigoriou 96 and a number of papyrus fragments), two Latin versions (both preserved in full, the widely attested Vulgata, made soon after the composition of the work, and the later Palatina), two fragmentary Coptic versions, excerpts of a Pahlavi version and two Georgian fragments under the authorship of Ephrem. A further section (ch. 3) is devoted to the investigation of the relationship between the Ethiopic version and the remaining tradition, in particular the Greek. The section aims at bringing into light, if not a stemmatically well-defined sub-grouping of the sources, at least a closer proximity to one textual type or the other. This introductory part is followed by a detailed inquiry into the Ethiopic manuscript tradition (ch. 4). A description of all available witnesses is provided, both text-critically valuable and not. A remarkable feature of the previously mentioned MS Paris, BnF Éth. Abb. 174 is the concluding identification of the author of the writing with Paul of Tarsus, based on a misinterpretation of *Acts* 14, 12 (‘Seize my name, o heretic, also in the *Acts* of the Apostles, where it is written: ‘and they called Silas Dəya and Pāwlos Hermen, that is to say master of doctrine’’). A second witness, a fifteenth-century manuscript also coming from Gundä Gunde and first noticed by Antonio Mordini during World War II, was brought to Italy and preserved in Mordini’s private collection near Lucca. A photographic copy was executed at the request of Enrico Cerulli for the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Fot. 133), upon which two partial collations were made by Robert Beylot and Osvaldo Raineri. The original codex, purchased in 1995 by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, is now preserved in the Biblioteca Palatina of Parma as MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 3842. A significant and unexpected

headway has been made with the discovery of a third nearly complete witness, MS EMMML 8508 (uncatalogued, dated to the second half of the fourteenth century). Microfilmed by the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library project in the monastery of Ṭana Qirqos (Bägemdər) in April 1986, the manuscript remained unknown to scholars until Ted Erho's recent report in 2012. Despite the unconventional orthography (that may occasionally hide archaic phenomena) and the numerous corruptions, the newly-discovered copy also displays a not negligible number of readings closer to the Greek text. The witness, at present only viewable at the National Archive and Library Agency (NALA) in Addis Ababa, has been largely collated by the present writer. Additional very recent exemplars have been identified, unfortunately of no text-critical value since they are direct or indirect copies of the above-mentioned witnesses. A repertory of archetype errors and conjunctive errors is discussed in ch. 4.6 in order to define the *stemma codicum*. The philological evidence confirms the preliminary sorting based on the geographical mapping of the witnesses: the two Gundä Gunde manuscripts, Paris, BnF Abb. 174 and Parm. 3842, belong to one single family, opposed to the Ṭana Qirqos branch.

Ch. 5 deals with the occurrences of Hermas in inventory lists preserved as *additiones* in the following libraries: Däbrä Maryam Qoḥayn (Eritrea), Ṭana Qirqos, Kəbran Gäbrə'el (Bägemdər), Lalibäla Beta Golgota (Wällo), Qəfrəya 'Ura Mäsqäl (Təgray). Quotations and allusions in the Ethiopic literature are accounted for in ch. 6: they have been so far singled out in the *Ṣoma dægga*, and in four hagiographical works composed in the fourteenth or fifteenth century in the Ewoṣṭatean monastery of Däbrä Maryam Qoḥayn, i.e. the *Gädlä 'Absadi*, the *Gädlä 'Ewoṣṭatewos*, the *Gädlä Täwäldä Mädhən*, and the *Gädlä Fiḳtor*. Finally, a homiletic document contained in MS Saint Petersburg, Institute of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ef 28 and explicitly inspired to *Sim. 5* (on the acceptable fast) is for the first time edited and translated. A comprehensive evaluation of the presence of Hermas in Ethiopia also places in a new perspective the assumption that Gundä Gunde, major centre of the dissident Stephanite movement, played a decisive role in preserving the work during the fifteenth-century theological renewal. In fact, the emerging picture seems to indicate that the connection with the Stephanite creed has been in some respect overestimated, and calls for additional factors to account for the rarity of the *Shepherd* in Ethiopia. Ch. 7 offers a survey of nonstandard grammatical phenomena presumably belonging to the archaic layer of the language (Aksumite Gə'əz). Each feature is supplemented with additional specimens met with in other Ethiopic works.

The core of the dissertation is the critical edition of the Ethiopic text with a parallel Italian translation (ch. 9). Both are supplied with a multi-layered set

of critical apparatuses recording formal and substantial variants, punctuation variants, and further textual remarks. The edition is limited to *Visions and Precepts* (chapters 1–49), due to the circumstances under which the collation of EML 8508 has been made, as well as to the impossibility to have access to the original manuscript in Tana Qirqos. According to a text-critical approach nowadays largely adopted in the field of Ethiopian studies, the edition follows the reconstructive, i.e. Neo-Lachmannian, method. The strongly bipartite structure of the *stemma codicum* has not infrequently forced to resort to the internal criteria in order to choose the presumably original readings.

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