

Il culto di San Qirqos nell’Etiopia storica: analisi storico-filologica, con edizione critica della “Passio” (Gädlä Qirqos). Dissertation in African Studies (Curriculum Literatures, Philology and Studies on African Antiquity and Middle Ages), Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”. Supervised by Prof. A. Bausi; defended on 26 March 2013.

The principal research of the dissertation concerns the philological reconstruction with critical edition, translation and commentary of the Ethiopic version of the *Passio* of Saint Qirqos (*Gädlä Qirqos*), text so far critically unpublished. Together with this main part, also a historical and literary introduction is provided, aimed at investigating and reconstructing the veneration of the saint in Ethiopia and in all Christian traditions. Qirqos (ቂርቆስ) is the Ethiopian name (also known as Qurqos or Çarqos/Çärqos, etc.) for Cyricus or Quiricus, a martyr who, according to the legend contained in his *Passio* (attested in various languages), was killed in Cilicia at the age of three years with his mother Julitta (ጊላቲታ ሃላሁታ), during the persecutions against the Christians at the beginning of the fourth century. His name, which should not be confused with the name of another saint Cyriacus (Greek Κυριακός; Latin *Cyriacus* or *Quiriacus*; ጊላቲታ ገራኮስ or ገራካኮስ), comes originally from the Greek Κήρυκος or Κήρικος, whence the Latin *Cyricus* (or *Quiricus*). At the end of the fifth century the *Passio* of Cyricus was dismissed and banned by the *Decretum Gelasianum* in the Roman Church, being regarded as apocryphal, but his veneration expanded soon throughout the Christian world. This is attested through many churches built in his honor and from the abundant material drawn up in the Christian hagiographic literatures.

In Ethiopia Saint Qirqos is very popular and is commemorated, together with the mother on 15th of the month of *Trr* (the dates of 19th, 20th and 21st of *Hamle* are also mentioned in the Ethiopian Synaxarion). His worship is already attested at the time of the Zag^we dynasty (12th–13th cent.). Many historical places bear his name, some of them also showing traces of pre-Christian and South Arabian settlements (e.g., Wəqro Çarqos in East Təgray). Beside, numerous churches are dedicated to him, from Addis Abäba to the Lake Ṭana, to Təgray, to Asmära, in the present day Eritrea, where the saint’s veneration is also ancient, probably diffusing from the 12th century onward. The ጊላቲታ hagiographic literature written on Qirqos is extensive, testified by many manuscripts containing his translated *Passio* alone or along with other original compositions in his honour, like the hymns (*Mälkä’ä Qirqos*, *Sälam lä-Qirqos*) and the large collection of his posthumous miracles (*Tä’amrä Qirqos*).

The thesis, including 5 chapters, contains a preliminary historical *excursus* on the Christian persecutions aimed at contextualizing the martyrdom of Saint Qirqos, followed by a second preliminary part dealing with the worship of the saint in the universal Church tradition. Here are presented all the information so far collected concerning the literary hagiographic tradition of him in general, which is attested in the form of *martyrologia*, calendars, *menologia*, *synaxaria*, and, more extensively, in the various versions of his *Passio* (Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, etc.)

A second part, regarding his veneration in Ethiopia, gives a description of important churches dedicated in his name, more detailed for those personally visited during the field researches carried out within the Ethio-SPaRE Project in north Ethiopia; it follows a presentation of the literary Ethiopian tradition transmitted in the hagiographic collections of the *Sənkəssar* and *Gädlä Säma’at*.

In a third part, the 21 manuscripts used in the critical edition of the *Passio* are presented, listed and described with some of the most relevant palaeographic and codicological features. The *codices*, some of them resulting from the Ethio-SPaRE field research, and some collected from European and North American libraries, are of different age + covering the time between the 14th and the 20th century + and originate from different regions of Ethiopia. Furthermore, this part contains an analysis of the textual traditions on Saint Qirqos: from his *Gädl*, which is compared with the other versions of the *Passio* (especially the Greek, Latin, Coptic and Arabic) to his numerous miracles (not less than 95) listed and summarized (with references to the manuscripts containing them). A number of pictures show excerpts and some miniatures and decorations from the manuscripts.

The fourth and fifth parts are dedicated to the main object of the investigation: the edited text of the *Gädlä Qirqos*, with its critical apparatus, some philological notes and the Italian translation with a commentary. The text, with a rather complicated tradition, has been philologically reconstructed on the basis of the 22 witnesses (in 21 manuscripts) through the so-called neo-Lachmannian method, of which the *recensio* and the *collatio* have been particularly long and demanding, mainly because of the numerous witnesses and the physical conditions of some manuscripts.