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**La liturgie de S. Marc dans le Sinai arabe 237.** Édition et traduction annotée, hg. v. Ugo ZANETTI. – Münster: Aschendorff Verlag 2021. 240 S. (Jerusalem Theologisches Forum, 38), brosch. € 38,00 ISBN: 978-3-402-11059-1

Since 1990, Geoffrey J. Cuming's study and critical edition of the liturgy of St. Mark based primarily on the Greek Middle Eastern manuscript *Vatican gr. 2281* (AD 1209) has been the standard monograph on the medieval eucharistic liturgy of the patriarchate of Alexandria (Cuming, *The Liturgy of St Mark*, Rome 1990). Although this ancient eucharistic liturgy was written in Greek and used as such for centuries, it was eventually translated to Arabic at an unknown date for the use of Arabophone Chalcedonian Orthodox Christians of Egypt and Sinai, part of a broader process of Arabizing the Christian heritage of the Middle East. To this date, no edition has appeared of the Arabic translation of the Liturgy of St. Mark that emerged from this process. This lacuna has been finally filled with the long-awaited publication of the Arabic translation of the liturgy of Mark from the thirteenth-century codex *Sinai Arabic 237* by Fr. Ugo Zanetti from the Monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium). This manuscript has been a treasure trove of interesting liturgical texts found elsewhere only in Greek or not at all, such as the presanctified liturgy of St. Mark (Mikhail, "The Presanctified Liturgy," *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 2015, 163–214), and the Byzantinized Roman Mass known as the liturgy of St. Peter, the edition of which is forthcoming (Bukovec and Mikhail). So far, the liturgy of Mark in *Sinai Arabic 237* is the only known full and stand-alone Arabic witness (i. e., not as a parallel text to a Greek original) of this ancient liturgy used for nearly a millennium by Christians of the patriarchate of Alexandria and to a lesser extent in Sinai.

This important and long-awaited contribution consists mainly of the Arabic text of the liturgy of Mark, followed by a Greek retroversion and a French translation. The author's exceptional skill in Arabic philology is apparent throughout in his presentation of the text and his ability to strike a general balance between fidelity to the manuscript's orthography and presenting an intelligible Arabic text for the benefit of the modern reader. The apparatus in all three sections is full of helpful notes pointing out at times the exact orthography in the manuscript (which the author on occasion corrects in the main text for purposes of intelligibility), at other times helpful remarks on the author's translation choices and decisions employed in reconstructing the Greek text from which the Arabic of Mark was translated. In doing so, help is often sought in other witnesses of this liturgy, whether the medieval Greek manuscripts also utilized by Cuming, or at times the present-day Coptic liturgy of Mark (known as the liturgy of St. Cyril) as published in the official Coptic Orthodox Euchologion of 'Abdel Masih Şalib in 1902.

In addition to these main sections, the author provides a thorough philological analysis of the Arabic text, pointing out its idiosyncratic linguistic features in terms of spelling, orthography, and grammar, as well as translation methodology. Much of this analysis will be of interest to scholars of Christian Arabic because of its insights into the Arabic dialect of that time and place, as well as the strategies employed by the translator in rendering liturgical Greek into a Middle Arabic idiom. But perhaps of particular interest here to the scholars of eastern liturgy is the author's insight that the translator of this text was a person other than the scribe of the manuscript, and the evidence he advances towards this hypothesis. The work is crowned with an extensive and thorough state of research on the liturgy of Mark and the Alexandrian liturgical tradition generally, given in German by *Heinzgerd Brakmann*, one of the world's foremost experts on Alexandrian liturgy and one always known for his comprehensive knowledge of this broad subject in numerous publications throughout his long career. Altogether, the resulting work is a wonderful contribution to studies on the liturgy of the patriarchate of Alexandria in the medieval period and should become an indispensable resource for scholars engaging with this lesser-known tradition alongside the edition of Mark by Cuming.

As stated in the book's acknowledgements, the author has been invited to publish this text already since 1992, though several reasons have intervened to delay the publication of this important work. Although the study is very useful as it stands, one wishes that additional time would have been invested to add a few more elements to this work. For example, a discussion of the text from the perspective of liturgical history would have added considerable value, especially in light of recent developments in studying the Byzantinization of the liturgical practices of the Middle Eastern patriarchates (see mainly Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*, Oxford 2018). While Brakmann's introduction is exceptional in giving the broader picture of Alexandrian liturgy and the place of this text in this bigger picture, a more fine-grained analysis of the text at hand would have been helpful for scholars of liturgy unfamiliar with the details of Alexandrian tradition and its Byzantinization in the medieval period. Readers unfamiliar with eastern liturgies in general would have appreciated a division of the text into meaningful sections corresponding to the main parts of the liturgical celebration (e. g., preparation, entrance, liturgy of the word, anaphora, communion...etc.).

Editions of such texts often require the author to make difficult choices in terms of presentation and approach, and this case is no exception. Z.'s meticulous skill as a philologist indeed ensures an exceptional level of transparency in presenting the text and its retroversion, where the reader can see the original text of the manuscript with minimal chance of being misguided as to what is explicitly attested and what is hypothesized by the author. Yet, this very attention to detail comes at a price, namely, that the Greek retroversion of any given prayer is almost always incomplete. That is because Z. shies away from suggesting any Greek words or phrases themselves not already attested anywhere in the Greek manuscript tradition of Mark, even when such phrases can very easily be surmised from the Arabic text at hand. Sometimes such surmising makes its way into the apparatus, other times it is completely absent, but the result is a Greek retroversion that is peppered with stretches of French text in the middle of any given prayer. The result, though understandable, is quite cumbersome to read. Such meticulousness can also result sometimes in awkward literal renderings of the Arabic into Greek, such as the consistent choice of *nun kai eis aei* to render the Arabic *al-ān wa-ilā al-abad*, where simply *nun kai aei* would have been sufficient and more familiar (see index of such common phrases on 68).

Another editorial decision that can never be perfect or satisfactory is the level of “correction” that should be employed in publishing Middle Arabic texts. Here, the author keeps such interventions to a minimum, respecting the text’s original grammatical structure, but rendering individual words in a spelling acceptable to the modern reader. Although the author admits that even such a compromise approach suffers from exceptions (43), the result is still somewhat unsatisfactory with frequent cases of non-standard spellings, especially in terms of the application of the glottal stop (*hamza*) or in the unique case of the adjective “divine,” appearing in the manuscript as *alāhī* and erroneously corrected as *al-ālāhī*, when modern orthography would require *al-ilahī*. Overall, the reader will find that despite Z.’s sound method in principle the presented text remains challenging to read and can use a number of additional orthographic corrections. Such linguistic issues aside, the fact remains that Z. has made a valuable and much-awaited contribution to the study of Alexandrian liturgy that will occupy a unique place in this field for years to come.

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