

E. Balicka-Witakowska. *La Crucifixion sans Crucifié dans l'art éthiopien. Recherches sur la service de l'iconographie chrétienne de l'Antiquité tardive.* — *Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica*, No. 4, herausgegeben von P. O. Scholz. Warsaw: 1997, 1888, 108 pp.

This monograph by E. Balicka-Witakowska, which concerns the complex iconographic issue of crucifixion scenes in Ethiopian art where the crucified Christ is not depicted, is her doctoral dissertation, written under the direction of Professor Karl Otto Nordstrom. The work was defended at the University of Uppsala (Sweden) on May 20, 1993. The study has appeared as an independent book in the series *Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica* with the help of the Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

The author has analysed an extremely broad array of both written and non-written sources from the Christian East and Latin West, including not only appropriate passages in the synoptic gospels but apocrypha as well, commentaries by the Church fathers, liturgical texts, and spiritual poetry. In determining the place in Eastern art of Ethiopian manuscripts with miniatures which depict the crucifixion scene in a particular iconographic way, the researcher structures her work with an eye to the following three basic questions: (i) what were the sources which led to the emergence of such an original composition; (ii) what is the ideological import of such a scene; and (iii) how could such an iconographic variant arise?

The book is divided into five chapters and presents in an appendix a catalogue of Ethiopian manuscripts with miniatures the author deems noteworthy. Chapter 1 contains a description of manuscripts which belong to the category of illuminated Gospels. They are all decorated in accordance with the same principle. First come canonical depictions and the "Source of Life"; portraits of the Evangelists precede the texts of the corresponding gospels. The placement of the Crucifixion scene is not linked directly to the text, but remains in keeping with the chronology of events.

Typologically, Balicka-Witakowska places the miniatures into three stylistic groups. The division is based on the forms of the Golgothan cross, its ornamentation, differences in the personification of the Sun and Moon, and in the depiction of the lamb against the background of the half-sphere. In her opinion, the dates in the colophons relate to the texts, not the miniatures; one must date the latter by their stylistic features. The author admits that attempts to link manuscripts with specific scriptoria and centres have not yet borne fruit.

The second chapter deals with the ideological sources of the depiction of crucifixion scenes without the crucified Christ. Having analyzed the contents of numerous apocrypha in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic, which speak of Christ's death on the cross and his immunity from suffering, the author concludes that one should seek a theological explanation not in heretical treatises, but in works by Christian apologists, primarily Tertullian and Origen. Also, the absence of Christ in crucifixion scenes is not linked to the teachings of the medieval Ethiopian sects of the Michaelites and Stephanites. Ethiopian miniaturists copied early Byzantine sources before the Council in Trullo in 692, which banned the symbolic depiction of Christ. The decrees of the Council were not accepted by the monophysite Church in Ethiopia as well as by the Latin West.

Specific sections of chapter three in the book under review here present an iconographic analysis of crucifixion scenes and their various components — the lamb, the caged bird, the Sun and Moon, the good and evil thieves, the soldier with a spear and the soldier with a sponge, and people standing at the foot of the cross. She does not neglect the form of the cross or the ornamentation of engraved stones which covers its surface. The latter feature is viewed in the context of the stones and their attendant symbolism. The explanations draw not only on familiar medieval treatises, but also on more specialised materials which were especially popular in Ethiopia and provided the basis for local versions. Among them is the "Book of Heavenly and Earthly Secrets", where sapphire symbolises the legs of Christ and topaz his wounds.

In the analysis of each of the components enumerated above, Balicka-Witakowska provides varied and worthwhile observations which in a number of cases lead the author to original conclusions. To enumerate only a few, the lamb — a symbol of Christ, the human nature of the Saviour and the Eucharist — is in Ethiopian miniatures linked exclusively with the idea of sacrifice, such as the lamb which replaced Isaac in the "Sacrifice of Abraham". The horns of the lamb reveal themselves to be full of hidden meaning — a symbol of the cross. The same is true of the hide destined for removal, which symbolises the very act of crucifixion. Other associations are found in the rod which the lamb bears: it is, like the rod of Moses, a symbol of the cross. The bush or tree near which the lamb stands is a prefiguration of the cross; the cross itself is the tree of life.

In Ethiopian miniatures, the connection between the lamb and the cross is always direct — it stands on the upper horizontal beam of the cross and is conceived as crucified and imbued with radiance, for as we find in the Book of Revelation (21, 23), heavenly Jerusalem is sanctified by the