

Le confessioni dei Padri (I'tirāfāt al-ābā'). Tomo 1. Un testo tradizionale di spiritualità della Chiesa copta. Introduzione, testo critico arabo, traduzione italiana e note a cura di Bartolomeo Pirone. Indici a cura di Davide Righi. «Patrimonio Culturale Arabo Cristiano» 25. Bologna: Edizzioni del Gruppo di Ricerca Arabo-Cristiana, 2025. 554 pp. ISBN: 979-1280091192.

The first volume of the edition and translation of the *I'tirāf/I'tirāfāt al-Ābā'* is yet another precious gift offered to us by Professor Pirone. His vast knowledge of the Arabic language and of Arabic-Coptic literature makes this new addition of the collection *Patrimonio Culturale Arabo Cristiano* (PCAC) –of which he is the current director– a true literary gem for all those interested in Christian Arabic literature in general, and in Arabic-Coptic texts in particular.

The book is divided into two main sections: the Introduction (pp. 9–28) and the critical edition accompanied by the annotated Italian translation of the Arabic text (pp. 32–535). The volume opens with a note on the transliteration system used for Arabic terms (p. 5), a list of abbreviations (p. 6), and the bibliography (p. 7); it closes with two indices compiled by Prof. Righi, one of biblical references (pp. 537–539) and another analytical index of personal and place names, as well as of key terms (pp. 541–547).

The first section, as mentioned above, consists of the Introduction, which is divided into ten subsections wherein the author discusses, among other matters, the compositional structure of the text (p. 9) and its internal chronology (pp. 10–11), the dating of the work to the twelfth century (p. 12), and several theological considerations posed by the text (pp. 12–13).

Particular attention is devoted to the description of the manuscripts employed in this critical edition (pp. 13-16): five in total, with *ms.* Par. Ar. 183 (13th century) serving as the base text, and the remaining four as collation witnesses providing the critical apparatus: D (Cairo, Coptic Museum Theol. 196, A.D. 1544), M (Dayr al-Muḥarraq Theol. 59, undated), T (Dayr Tāsā, ms. 23, A.D. 1726–27), and V (Vat. Ar. 101, A.D. 1688–89). The author also addresses the textual problems present in the manuscripts (pp. 16–17), the interrelations among them (pp. 17-18), and offers a pertinent discussion on the question of vocalization of the text (pp. 18–26), concluding with a general evaluation of the work (pp. 26–28).

The second section –by far the more substantial– contains the critical edition of the Arabic text, accompanied by its annotated Italian translation. As has been the hallmark of the PCAC collection since the days of its first director, the late Father Samir, the edition is exemplary, distinguished by a lucid textual architecture that allows readers to navigate the structure of the Arabic text with remarkable ease. The editor's critical collation is splendidly executed, marked by immaculate scholarly rigor and a meticulous recording of the variants found among the manuscript witnesses. It is, without doubt, a critical edition of the highest academic standard and craftsmanship.

Equally deserving of praise is the Italian translation produced by the author himself. A seasoned translator of medieval Arabic texts –as evidenced, to cite but one

example, by his splendid annotated translation of the *Annales* of Patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria– Prof. Pirone here offers a masterful rendering of a text of great thematic complexity, rich in theological intricacies, which he has resolved with skill and discernment. The annotations accompanying the Italian translation are both useful and indispensable, guiding the reader through the identification of figures and biblical quotations, as well as clarifying obscure passages and terminological nuances of theological import.

As the poet once said, "the less, the more–and the better". Thus, little remains to be added regarding this excellent volume, the work of Professor Pirone, a distinguished Arabist and profound connoisseur of Eastern Christian Arabic literature, particularly that of the Arabic-Coptic tradition. With the invaluable collaboration of Professor Davide Righi, he has enriched the field of Christian Arabic studies with this magnificent first volume dedicated to an important work of Arabic-Coptic theology.

Readers will undoubtedly delight in an outstanding translation, while scholars will greatly benefit from this superb critical edition so generously bestowed upon us by Professor Bartolomeo Pirone. Our gratitude and warmest congratulations are due for such exemplary work; congratulations that we also extend to the *Gruppo di Ricerca Arabo-Cristiana*. We now await with great anticipation the arrival of the second volume.

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