
PHILIPP PILHOFER (ed.), *Das Martyrium des Konon von Bidana in Isaurien*. Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 188). Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter 2020. xx + 196 pp. – ISBN: 978-3-11-064105-9 (€ 99,95)

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The volume under review is the second half of the editor’s doctoral dissertation, complementing the first volume which was also published by De Gruyter.¹ In the latter text, PILHOFER examines the religious landscape of Christians in the region of Rough Cilicia along the Kalykadnos (present-day Göksu) River in southern Asia Minor in the first five centuries AD, whereas the present book offers an edition and German-language translation of the *Martyrdom of Konon of Bidana*, together with an extensive introduction to the text and its variants.

In Part I of the book, PILHOFER provides a detailed history of the re-emergence of this hagiographic text from obscurity in the nineteenth century, situating the story of Konon’s life, miracles, and martyric witness in the context of what the editor has coined the “Kalykadnos region” within the mountainous terrain and shifting political borders of Cilicia and Isauria in Late Antiquity.² Via onomastic analysis and geographical data, he presents a new thesis for the composition of the text, locating the first compilation of Konon’s life and wonders in the late fourth century as part of a push to record the active veneration of the saint in his native region and to spur on the spread of his cult, which reached as far as Syria and the Byzantine capital itself.³ The book then proceeds to a detailed codicological survey of the surviving manuscripts of the text, which vary not only in terms of language (Greek, Old Church Slavonic, Latin,⁴ Armenian, and Coptic) but

1. Cf. PHILIPP PILHOFER, *Das frühe Christentum im kilikisch-isaurischen Bergland: die Christen der Kalykadnos-Region in den ersten fünf Jahrhunderten*. Berlin 2018.

2. PILHOFER 2020, p. 3.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 70. The editor also notes that two churches were dedicated respectively under Emperor Zeno (r. 474–475, 476–491), a native of Isauria, to the chief saints of that region, namely, Konon and Thekla (*ibid.*, p. 61).

4. The latter, however, are post-medieval translations and manuscripts from the sixteenth century (*ibid.*, p. 76); while PILHOFER includes these in his manuscript survey for

also in terms of length and content. Close analysis of the Slavonic variants in the two surviving manuscripts proves key in the *recensio codicum* near the end of this section, where PILHOFER is able to propose a stemma showing that the Slavonic versions are not in the first instance translations of the primary Greek manuscript, *Vaticanus graecus* 1669, but rather that both the earliest surviving Greek and the Slavonic manuscripts must have derived from an earlier, lost *Urtext* (p. 97).

Following brief explanatory comments on his critical apparatus, PILHOFER then proceeds to the heart of the present volume: the edited Greek text with a facing German-language translation. The editor is to be highly commended for this achievement: not only for the textual edition encompassing the Greek and Slavonic manuscripts,⁵ but also for an idiomatic and eminently readable translation of this Late Antique text into a modern language, which hitherto has been completely lacking.⁶ The division into paragraphs is the work of the editor, but for ease of comparison with the primary sources, the right-hand margin on the Greek edition includes references to the *folia* in the respective Greek and Slavonic manuscripts consulted.

There is little to detract from the present volume. In terms of structure, one does find a large amount of cross-referencing to PILHOFER's first volume, to the extent that one begins to wonder whether publishing the edition and translation separately from the theological/historical study on the Kalykadnos region in *Christentum im kilikisch-isaurischen Bergland* was the best choice. To the editor's credit, this issue is noted at the very outset of the text under review, and his explanation is worth quoting in full:

“Verschiedene Gründe ließen es ratsam erscheinen, die beiden Hauptteile meiner Dissertationsschrift gesondert zu publizieren. Es handelt sich um zwei unterschiedliche Gattungen, die vermutlich nicht ein und denselben Leserkreis ansprechen: Wer sich für die vorliegende Monographie [that is, *Christentum im kilikisch-isaurischen Bergland*] interessiert,

completion's sake, he rightly notes that the Latin translations were made from the primary Greek source, and thus “die Handschrift I [*Vaticanus latinus* 6188] ist für die Edition des griechischen Textes von keiner Bedeutung” (ibid., p. 89).

5. Helpful for readers and scholars versed in Greek, but less so in Slavonic, is a complete listing of Slavonic-language textual variants included in the edition's apparatus with full German translations on p. 163.

6. Ibid., p. 100. The editor does note the existence of a French-language translation, but that this was made on the basis of one of the discussed shorter variants of the text, and not the more recently discovered longer text variant in focus here; cf. ibid., n. 115.

wird sich nicht notwendigerweise mit den Feinheiten der Edition des Konon-Martyriums vertraut machen wollen und umgekehrt... Diese Entstehungsgeschichte erklärt (und entschuldigt hoffentlich) auch die vielen Querverweise auf den anderen Band ...”⁷

While the explanation behind the many cross-references is helpful indeed, the detailed introduction to the hagiographic text edited here leaves the attentive and interested reader wishing the first volume were easily available at hand to consult.

In terms of the translation itself, the careful reader finds little to object to. In two instances, the Greek term ἀσέβεια is translated by the editor as “godlessness/atheism” (*Gottlosigkeit*),⁸ which too heavily moves away from the root meaning of “ungodliness” or “impiety” one usually ascribes to this term;⁹ moreover, the text does include two other instances where “atheist” (ἄθεε, §160, p. 144–145) and “atheism” (ἀθεΐαν, §163, *ibid.*) appear and are appropriately translated as such (*Gottloser*, *Gottlosigkeit*). Additionally, the author notes two uses of the verb σχηματίζω for which the proper translation eludes him¹⁰ (§99, p. 130/131: καὶ οὕτως ἀνὰ ἓνα καὶ δύο σχηματίσαντες ἔσυραν; §147, p. 140/141: ὁρῶσι τὸν ἅγιον Κώνωνα ὑπὸ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν τοῦ ἄρχοντος σχηματιζόμενον). Here, I would suggest that a deictic significance could be inferred from some of the verb’s root meanings of “indicate, mean, represent, show”;¹¹ thus the first passage could be translated as “indicating/pointing out the one and then the other in turn,” and the second passage as “they saw that the holy Konon was pointed out *or* singled out by the ruler’s ministers.” But beyond these few points, the textual apparatus is very helpful for pointing out several *hapax legomena* and other rarely used terms (either regarding meaning or verbal voice/mood) appearing in the text, a full list of which is also appended (p. 161).

While much work has been done in recent decades on the archaeology and political landscape of Rough Cilicia and Isauria,¹² PILHOFER’s volume

7. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 111 (§15 in Greek text on p. 110), and p. 141 (§140 in Greek text on p. 140).

9. Cf. G. W. H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford 1961, p. 242.

10. The author admits this in his notes to the translation: PILHOFER 2020, p. 131, n. 37; p. 141, n. 58).

11. Cf. LAMPE 1961, p. 1359.

12. One can cite here: ELISABETH ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, *The Necropolis of Adrasus (Balabolu) in Rough Cilicia (Isauria)*. Vienna 1980; RICHARD E. BLANTON, *Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Settlement Patterns of the Coast Lands of Western Rough Cilicia*. Oxford 2000; KARL FELD, *Barbarische Bürger. Die Isaurier und das Römische Reich*. Berlin 2005; FRIEDRICH HILD – HANSGERD HELLENKEMPER (eds.), *Kilikien*

provides an easily accessible modern edition and translation of an important textual witness to the creative and active veneration of saints within the religious and cultural matrix of the Kalykadnos region. It is the reviewer's hope that other scholars of Late Antique Christianity and Greek philology will gain access to this primary source via PILHOFER's critical and thorough introduction, edition, and text, and that others will avail themselves of this resource in the preparation of additional translations of the *Martyrdom of Konon* into modern languages for easy consultation by students, scholars, and other persons interested in Late Antique hagiography.

Keywords

Konon of Bidana; hagiography; Isauria; martyrdom

und Isaurien. Vienna 1990 (2 vols.); MICHAEL C. HOFF (ed.), *Rough Cilicia: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. Oxford 2013; YASEMIN ER SCARBOROUGH, *The Funerary Monuments of Rough Cilicia and Isauria*. Oxford 2017; MARCO VITALE, *Eparchie und Koinon in Kleinasien von der ausgehenden Republik bis ins 3. Jahrhundert nach Christus*. Bonn 2012.