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Review

MARIA S. BULAKH, LEONID E. KOGAN, and OLGA I. ROMANOVA, eds,
Jazyki mira. Semitskie jazyki. Efiosemitskie jazyki

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pean countries and in the African colonies. One example is the dissatisfaction generated among African soldiers as a result of the discrimination they experienced while serving as troops. In this context, the hope of liberation from foreign domination grew, which Braukämper considers to be one of the earliest moments in the decolonization process—even before WWII, which has traditionally been seen as the starting point of decolonization.

The book is a very important contribution in bringing about a change in the way we look at WWI in Africa, focusing on local African events and their connections with European agencies. For the scholars of WWI, as well as for the scholars of the different regions of Africa, this work offers a new direction and an inspiration for new, necessary research on subjects like the relationship between WWI and decolonization, transcolonial activities and anticolonial resistance movements, prosopographical studies, and so on.

The publication is enhanced by ten precise and useful maps realised by Thomas Rave based on drafts of the author.

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MARIA S. BULAKH, LEONID E. KOGAN, and OLGA I. ROMANOVA, eds, *Jazyki mira. Semitskie jazyki. Efiiosemitskie jazyki* ('Languages of the World. Semitic Languages. Ethiosemitic Languages'), Jazyki mira (Moskwa: Academia, 2013). 624 pp. Price: no price indicated. ISBN: 978-5-87444-366-5.

The present volume of the encyclopaedic series Languages of the World regularly published by the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences is devoted to the Ethiopian Semitic group, which in comparison with the great majority of the other Semitic languages is less well researched, due to its remote location in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, with the single exception of Gəʿəz (Classical Ethiopic), all Ethiopian Semitic languages have been orally transmitted or have only recently acquired a written form. The authors of the volume count nineteen Ethiopian Semitic languages, or twenty, if the Dahālik dialect of Təgre is treated as a separate language. Two of them are extinct (Gəʿəz and Gafat),¹ while the others are still spoken, namely Təgre, Təgrāñña, Amharic, Argobba, Harari and twelve

¹ Southern Argobba and Masmā/Māsmās, which are dialects of Argobba and ʿEndegən respectively, are shown to number among the dead Ethiopian Semitic languages (p. 15).

Gurage languages (Soddo, Wolane, Muḥər, Gogot/Dobbi, Äžža/Äžina, Čaha, Məsqaṅ, Ənnämör/Inör, Geto, Əndägañ, Səlṭi, Zay/Z^way) (pp. 14–22; p. 41, table). It should be emphasized that at least five Ethiopian Semitic languages (Argobba, Harari, Gogot, Məsqaṅ, and Zay) are under threat of extinction, since the native speakers of each of them do not exceed 50,000 in number (in the case of Gogot they are only 4,000) and also speak other languages (mostly Amharic and Oromo).

The descriptive essays are dedicated to nine Ethiopian Semitic languages, namely Gəʿəz (by M. S. Bulakh and L. E. Kogan, pp. 141–199), including its early epigraphic variety (by M. S. Bulakh, pp. 199–215), Təgre (by M. S. Bulakh, pp. 216–260), Təgrəñña (by M. S. Bulakh and L. E. Kogan, pp. 260–311), Amharic (by E. G. Titov and M. S. Bulakh, pp. 311–374), Argobba (by D. A. Nosnitsin, pp. 375–405), Harari (E. J. Vizirova, pp. 406–509), Zay (by R. Meyer, pp. 509–546), Gafat (by D. A. Nosnitsin, pp. 546–576), and Čaha (by T. I. Reznikova, pp. 577–613). This selection seems to be well balanced and representative. However, a certain disproportion catches the attention, namely between, on the one hand, the relatively short length of the essays on Gəʿəz, with its rich literary tradition (75 pages), or on Amharic, the principal modern written language of Ethiopia with 21,634,000 speakers (64 pages),² and, on the other, the length of the essay on Harari, with only 25,810 speakers (p. 407) and a modest written heritage (104 pages). Of course, Harari could disappear in the near future, but, in comparison with the other Ethiopian Semitic languages, which are in the same position, it is quite well studied (cf. the bibliographical references on pp. 508–509).

The volume opens with a very short Preface (pp. 9–11) and a general survey of the languages described (pp. 13–141), in which attention is mainly devoted to their classification. It is worth noting that, from the linguistic point of view, the authors recognize the existence of the Southern Ethiopian Semitic subgroup, but not of the Northern one, which is considered as a regional (not genetic) unity. In their opinion, the disintegration of the proto-Ethiopian Semitic continuum began with the separation of Təgre (pp. 42–43). However, they do not explain the special position of Gəʿəz within the Ethiopian Semitic group. Any scholar who has any experience in the commented reading of Classical Arabic and Classical Ethiopic texts, as does the author of the present review, can see that these two are the Semitic languages closest to each other, grammatically and lexically (leaving aside numerous borrowings from Arabic into Gəʿəz). It is obvious that within the

² 21,634,000 speakers equal to 29% of the population of Ethiopia (p. 16).

framework of the concept of proto-Ethiopian Semitic this affinity between the two languages cannot be interpreted.

Instead of the Transversal Southern Ethiopian Semitic languages, two different sections were singled out, namely Harari–Eastern Gurage and Amharic–Argobba, while the unity of the Outer Southern Ethiopian Semitic linguistic group and its subsequent division into *n*-Gurage and *tt*-Gurage is confirmed (pp. 43–56).

In the short overview of the development of Western academic research in the field of Ethiopian Semitic languages (pp. 22–27), the leading role played by Italian Ethiopianists seems to be underestimated. Such prominent figures as Lanfranco Ricci (1916–2007) and Paolo Marrassini (1942–2013) are not even mentioned. As for Ethiopian studies in Russia, only one small paragraph is devoted to them (p. 27), in which the authors found no place for three key Russian scholars: (1) Basile (Vassily) V. Bolotov (1853–1900), the pioneer of interpreting medieval Gəʿəz texts in the Russian scholarly tradition; (2) Sévère (Sevir) B. Chernetsov (1943–2005), who revived the teaching of Gəʿəz at Saint Petersburg State University in the early 1990s after a gap of seventy years, and was a top-ranked connoisseur of the *lössanä tarik* (‘language of historiography’); (3) Venceslas (Viacheslav) M. Platonov (1941–2012), a courageous fighter against the Soviet regime, who spent many years in concentration camps and exile and who, nevertheless, became one of the greatest experts in the world on the Old Amharic language and the Ethiopian manuscript tradition.

In the excursus on the toponyms used for designating the Horn of Africa in ancient and medieval sources there are some inaccuracies. According to the common interpretation of Monumentum Adulitanum II (RIÉth. 277) the name Αἰθιοπία in it (l. 36) does not correspond to a concrete region of the Aksumite kingdom (cf. p. 14), but to a territory of the ‘people with burned faces’ (i.e. the Blacks) in a rather vague way.³ The proper noun *ḥbs²t* in Sabaic inscriptions (which corresponds to *ḥbšt* in Gəʿəz epigraphy) obviously relates to an ethnic group, not to a territory (cf. p. 14). Furthermore, the terms *ḥabäša* and *ḥabäš* in medieval Ethiopian sources should not be merged into one, since the former goes back to *al-ḥabaša* in Arabic, while the latter proves to be borrowed from Ottoman Turkish administrative nomenclature, in which the province known as *Eyālet-i Ḥabeš* extended from the coastal areas of Ḥiḡāz through North-eastern Africa bordering the

³ É. Bernand, ed., 2000. *Recueil des Inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, III: *Traductions et commentaires*, A: *Les inscriptions grecques* (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2000), 41–42.

Red Sea basin and comprising the ports of Massawa, Hərgigo, Sawākin, and their hinterlands.

Among the descriptions of individual Ethiopian Semitic languages, two essays prove to be of particular value: that on Amharic, one of the co-authors of which was Prof. Dr Eugène (Evgeny) G. Titov (1929–2011), the greatest specialist in Amharic grammar in Russia, who in the 1970s was involved as an interpreter at the highest state level; and the one on Zay by Ronny Meyer, the unique expert in this language.⁴ E. G. Titov's interest in Old Amharic is reflected in his concise, but detailed description of the language (pp. 315–318).

Each overview is arranged in a standard pattern, which includes the following data on the language described: general (1.1), geographical (1.2), sociolinguistic (1.3), type of writing (1.4), short periodization of the language history (1.5), infrastructural phenomena caused by external contacts (1.6), phonological (2.1), morphonological (2.2), semantic grammatical (2.3), paradigm samples (2.4), morphosyntactic (2.5), sources, extension and role of lexical borrowings (2.6), and dialect system (2.7). Only the essay on Epigraphic Gəʿəz is built on another, shorter scheme because of its small size (16 pp.).

The two essays on Gəʿəz are of special interest, since it is the only Ethiopian Semitic language with a very long (almost two-thousand-year-old) written tradition. The problem of the origin of its endonym proved to be confusing, since the authors treat the question of the interrelation of the terms *ag^εazi* and 'gəʿz' (as per the transliterated form adopted by the authors) as unsolved (p. 142). However, a thorough analysis of epigraphic documentation demonstrates that among the population of the Aksumite kingdom there were at least three ethnic groups. Two of them, *ksm-n* and *hbs²t(-n)*, are attested in Sabaic inscriptions; as to the third one, it occurs in the form *ag^wezat* in the vocalized Ethiopic text ascribed to King ʿEzana (RIÉth. 187, ll. 9–10) and in the form Γάζη ἔθνος in the Monumentum Adulitanum II (RIÉth. 277, l. 3).⁵ The disappearance of the ʿayn in both of them can be explained by the influence of

⁴ It is clear that R. Meyer, whose works are written in German and English (p. 546), does not know Russian. Therefore the translator should have been mentioned.

⁵ The meaning 'freeman' attributed to *ag^εazi* in Classical Ethiopic seems to be a derivative from that ethnonym, since in principle every member of the *ag^wezat* tribe (or tribal confederation) should be free.

Greek. What is really very strange is the lack of dialects in Gəʿəz (cf. p. 198)⁶ in spite of the ethnic heterogeneity of the subjects of the Aksumite kings.

The earliest texts discovered in the territory of Ethiopia are in the Ethio-Sabaic (not merely Sabaic) language (cf. p. 145), but compiled using South Arabian script.⁷ In both essays the parts dedicated to the writing are incomplete and inaccurate (pp. 145, 200–201). It is not possible to connect the creation of the Ethiopian syllabary (more precisely alphasyllabary) with ‘the introduction of the Christian religion in Ethiopia’ (p. 200), since the first vocalized inscriptions contain the names of pagan deities (RIÉth. 187, l. 4; RIÉth. 188, ll. 5, 25–26).

The authors did not succeed in interpreting the enigmatic appearance of the emphatic *p* (*ḫ*) in Gəʿəz (pp. 58–59, 147–148). As for the assimilation of the nasal consonants *m* and *n* in Epigraphic Gəʿəz (p. 205), it can be explained as an imitation of the late Sabaic epigraphic style, in which the same phenomenon is well attested, like the use of the negative particle *dʰ* (p. 214). The overwhelming majority of its occurrences is attested in two inscriptions from the first half of the sixth century CE written in South Arabian script (RIÉth. 191 and 192). The bibliographic reference for the statement of Alessandro Bausi, who collected evidence of such assimilation in early Solomonic manuscripts, should have been provided.⁸ However, it cannot be ruled out that the early Gəʿəz epigraphic style exerted influence on the local manuscript tradition, when it emerged.

As for loanwords in Gəʿəz, the place and role of borrowings from Sabaic is underestimated, even if they are integrated into the core of the cultural vocabulary, for instance *bagär* (from *hgr*) ‘town’ (later ‘region, province, district, country’), *mahfäd* (from *mḥfd*) ‘tower’ (later ‘fortress, citadel’), *g^walt* (from *gwl-m* ‘with full ownership rights’) ‘service land tenure’, and *säb* (from *S^lb^o* ‘Sabaeans’) ‘persons, men, people’.⁹ Nevertheless they are completely ignored in the essay on Classical Gəʿəz (pp. 195–198), while in the essay on Epigraphic Gəʿəz only some lexemes discovered in the inscriptions of ʿEzana are considered (p. 213). The Arabic origin of three words attested in the epigraphy,

⁶ The small variations in the language of early epigraphic documents in Gəʿəz cannot be interpreted as proof of the existence of dialectal differences.

⁷ A concise description is given in A. J. Drewes, ‘The Lexicon of Ethiopian Sabaean’, *Raydān*, 3 (1980), 35–54.

⁸ A. Bausi, ‘Ancient Features of Ancient Ethiopic’, *Aethiopica*, 8 (2005), 149–169.

⁹ S. A. Frantsouzoff, ‘Sabaic loanwords in Gəʿəz and borrowings from Gəʿəz into Middle Sabaic’, in A. Bausi with assistance from E. Sokolinski, eds, *150 Years after Dillmann’s Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of Gəʿəz Studies*, Supplement to *Aethiopica*, 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 141–147, and in particular 141–143.

namely *arkubatä* ‘she-camels’ (RIÉth. 189, l. 24), *gämälä* ‘camel’ (RIÉth. 187, l. 7), and *šomāt* ‘cell, cave of anchorite’ (RIÉth. 252, l. 2) (p. 214), should be discarded, since Classical Arabic did not exist at that time, and Old Arabic was one of numerous North Arabian languages that had no real written tradition. The first of them seems to be borrowed from Sabaic,¹⁰ the second apparently belongs to the common Semitic lexicon, and the third came from Gəʿəz into Arabic and not vice versa.¹¹

It is true that the problem of correlation between Syriac and other Aramaic loanwords in Gəʿəz is very complicated, but the attempt to derive the Ethiopic *gähannām* ‘hell’ from Judaeo-Aramaic *gēhinnām* (p. 197) should be rejected, since it obviously goes back to the Classical Arabic *djahannam*.¹²

It should be noted that the gemination of the second radical in the prefix conjugation (imperfect) in Gəʿəz, Təgre, and Təgrəñña was interpreted by some scholars (including Wolf Leslau) as a secondary phenomenon, not connected at all with the proto-Semitic or even proto-Afrasiatic forms (pp. 118–119). However, in that context, the opinion of the brilliant connoisseur of Classical Ethiopic, Carlo Conti Rossini, should be mentioned: he did not detect any such gemination in the imperfect of the indicative mood.¹²

It is regrettable that the use of the morphosyntactic construction consisting of a suffix pronoun at the end of words (verbs and nouns) followed by the preposition *la-* with the noun related to that pronoun (p. 167) was not mentioned as being typical for Gəʿəz, while it is very frequent in medieval texts.

And, last but not least, the dynastic treatise *Kəbrä nägäšt* (‘Glory of the kings’) cannot be considered as ‘the most considerable work of the original Ethiopic literature’ (p. 144), since in its colophon it is described as a translation from Arabic and the problem of its provenance is far from being solved.

Nevertheless the volume under review represents a very important and useful contribution to Ethiopian Semitic studies. The four maps—two multicoloured (Map 1 ‘Ethiosemitic languages’, Map 4 ‘Gurage languages’) on

¹⁰ Cf. *rkb* (f pl.) ‘riding camel(s)’, see A. F. L. Beeston, M. A. Ghul, W. W. Müller, and J. Ryckmans, *Sabaic Dictionary (English–French–Arabic). Dictionnaire sabéen (anglais–français–arabe)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, Beyrouth: Librarie du Liban, 1982), 117.

¹¹ Its plural form *šawāmi* attested in the Quran (xxii, 41) is considered to be word of South Arabian origin borrowed through Gəʿəz (A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series, 79 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 200–201.

¹² C. Conti Rossini, *Grammatica elementare della lingua etiopica*, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto per l’Oriente (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1941), 33–34.

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both flyleaves and two black and white (Map 2 ‘Localization of epigraphic documents in the Gəʿəz language on the territory of the Aksumite state’, p. 622; Map 3 ‘Localization of epigraphic documents in the Gəʿəz language beyond the Aksumite state’, p. 623)—considerably facilitate the use of this book.

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LUTZ EDZARD, ed., *Arabic and Semitic Linguistics Contextualized. A Festschrift for Jan Retsö* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015). 576 pp., 11 illus., 6 diagrams, 1 map, 7 tables. Price: €128.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-10422-7 (HB).

This *Festschrift* for Jan Retsö is edited by Lutz Edzard and published by Harrassowitz; it is a good quality book and has a hard cover. The introductory section contains a dedication by the editor, a tribute from the pupils, and a bibliography prepared by Edzard, containing seventy-eight titles.

The twenty-nine papers (mostly in English, but some in German or French) cover various fields of linguistics and philology, mostly in the domain of Semitic studies. The volume duly reflects the diversity of research interests of Jan Retsö, a linguist and philologist whose works deal with topics such as Arabian history, the linguistics of Classical Arabic as well as Middle Arabic and Modern Arabic dialects, and comparative Semitic studies, and whose vast knowledge of languages, religion, history and archeology, both of the Middle East and of Europe, gives the editor every right to qualify him as ‘a humanist in every sense of the word’ (p. 9).

The first section, ‘Slavic linguistics’, contains two papers: ‘Canonical and non-canonical uses of the imperative in Slavic’ (S. S. Alvestad) and ‘New manuscript fragment of a *Prolog*, discovered in the University Library in Uppsala’ (A. Granberg).

The section ‘Arabic linguistics and philology’ includes several text editions: ‘Texts in the Bedouin dialects of the Awlād Saʿīd and the Tayāha of Sinai’ (R. de Jong); ‘Ein Begleitbrief von 904 H zu Erlassen aus dem mam-lūkischen Ägypten’ (‘A letter of 904 H to accompanying decrees from mamluke Egypt’, W. Diem); and ‘Tillo. Two texts reflecting daily life and cultural aspects of the Arabs of Tillo, South-eastern Turkey’ (A. Lahdo). It also includes several papers on various aspects of the grammar of Classical Arabic or of Modern Arabic dialects: “Doppelte” Tempus- und Aspektmarkierung im Neuarabischen. Versuch einer Typisierung’ (‘The “double” marking of tense and aspect in modern Arabic. An attempt at classification’, M. Hanitsch); ‘The