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In memoriam Fr. Kevin O'Mahoney (1930–2015)

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the '19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies', held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt's own will, to a pool of younger scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
ÄthFor Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
AethFor Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
AION *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
EAE S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
EI² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
JES *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
NEASt *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
OrChr *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
PICES 9 A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).
RSE *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

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In memoriam Fr. Kevin O'Mahoney (1930–2015)

Fr. JOSÉ L. BANDRES

Kevin was born on May 3, 1930 in Manchester, England. His parents were Irish and he was the youngest in a family of three children. His elder brother, Denis, was a priest in the Diocese of Salford and his sister, Catherine, was a teacher. Kevin joined the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) at the age of 16 after secondary school studies at St Bede's College in Manchester.

He studied Philosophy in Scotland and from 1948 to 1949 he did his Novitiate in 's-Heerenberg, Netherlands. He continued his theological studies there from 1949 to 1952 before returning to Monteviot near Galashiels, Scotland, for his final year of Theology. He took his Missionary Oath on July 25, 1952 in 's-Heerenberg and was ordained on June 11, 1953 in Monteviot. As he was only 23 years old, he needed a dispensation to be ordained. He was immediately sent to Rome to study Philosophy at the Gregorian University and graduated with a Licentiate in 1955. He taught in the Society's seminary in Blacklion, Co. Cavan, Ireland, from 1955 to 1966. He was a good teacher and was well appreciated by the students. He was easy to be with socially and enjoyed a good argument.

The Society appointed him to Ethiopia in 1966. This was in response to a request from *abunä* Hailemariam Kashay of the Eparchy of °Addigrat to the Superior General, Fr. Leo Volker, to help in the formation of the local clergy for the tiny Catholic population of °Addigrat. He spent a year in Rome studying in the Ethiopian College. Kevin, Fr. José Bandres, Fr. Nicolas Gildas and Bro. Max Gemür were the first White Fathers to arrive in the Eparchy of °Addigrat. He took up his teaching post in °Addigrat on September 1, 1967. Apart from 6 years as Provincial in Ireland, from 1994 to 2000, this was his life's work. He lived through the reign of Emperor Ḥaylä Šəllase I, the brutal *Därg* regime and the revolution of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Kevin also had to double up as an NGO worker in helping the Diocese cope with the enormous number of refugees who came there looking for help during the periods of violence and famine. There were many letters to Irish Aid organisations and to the Irish Government and there was a big response when he was featured on some TV and radio programmes appealing for help during the drought of 1984. While 1984 was serious, Kevin believed that the effects of the 1989 famine were worse, as the government was using food as a weapon. Eventually food did get through and things got easier when the EPRDF swept to power. Although the new government was Marxist in outlook, it did work with the Church to improve the lot of the people.

In addition to his teaching duties, Kevin became a writer and historian. His most notable work was a massive history of the Vicariate of Abyssinia, 'The Ebullient Phoenix', and 'Meaza', a historical novel of the Ethiopian Revolution. He is listed as the author of 23 books and articles. He placed great importance in maintaining friendly contacts with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and with the Muslim community, itself a minority group.

He endured all the difficult moments of war and isolation in a spirit of loyalty and fidelity to his mission. It says much that he survived and even blossomed there despite the very painful task of dealing with starving people and especially children. His health began to fail in the last few years and

he just made it back to Ethiopia before the pursuing pack of superiors could ground him. He died, where he wished, in his beloved Ethiopia. On January 3, 2015, he fell ill and was brought to Mäqälä for treatment but died just before midnight. His body was brought back to °Addigrat. His funeral Mass in the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour, °Addigrat, was presided over by *abunä* Tesfaselassie Medhin, Eparch of °Addigrat. He was buried in the Catholic Eparchial cemetery on January 5, 2015.

A month after he died, on February 6, 2015, a memorial Mass was held in the Chapel of the White Fathers in Dublin. Members of Kevin's family from Manchester came together with a sizeable contingent from Araglin in Co. Cork. The Ethiopian Ambassador to Ireland and a representative of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and representatives of some NGOs working in Ethiopia were also present. Needless to say, there were many neighbours and friends who came to honour a loyal and lively confrere 'who remained faithful to his religious calling and was indeed a person of faith' (*abunä* Tesfaselassie Medhin).

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In memoriam Fratel Ezio Tonini (1939–2016)*

IRMA TADDIA, Università di Bologna

It is difficult to accept the news arriving from Asmāra: Fratel Ezio Tonini passed away on January 15, 2016. It is particularly difficult for me, because of my frequent research visits in Eritrea since 1984 and my persistent visit to the Fratel Ezio library in Asmāra, at the Pavoni Social Centre. The library is a solid

* I am deeply grateful to Gian Carlo Stella for his highly valued help in finding items and memories concerning Fratel Ezio and the Pavoni Centre.