



Aethiopia 24 (2021)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

VINCENT WEST, Reading

Review

WOLFGANG R. O. HAHN, in collaboration with ROBERT KECK,
Münzgeschichte der Aksumitenkönige in der Spätantike

Aethiopia 24 (2021), 279–281

ISSN: 1430-1938

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob-Ludolf-Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

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WOLFGANG R. O. HAHN, in collaboration with ROBERT KECK, *Münzgeschichte der Aksumitenkönige in der Spätantike*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien, 21 (Wien: Österreichische Forschungsgesellschaft für Numismatik, 2020). 312 pp., illus., 20 colour pl. Price: €58.00. ISBN: 978-3-950-42680-9.

This major new work is the first to provide a history and catalogue of the Aksumite coinage since *Aksumite Coinage* by Munro-Hay and Juel-Jensen (henceforth *AC*)¹ and Anzani's articles,² all of which it supersedes.

Introductory sections review such matters as previous studies (with a bibliography), metrology, minting technique, inscriptions, and design types. The bulk of the work consists of a catalogue of the known coin types for each king and corpora of the known coins; this review will concentrate on these.

The catalogue of coin types provides for each king a numismatic and historical commentary. Each of the types is described and illustrated by an original size line drawing. Cross-references are given for each type to the numbers used in the catalogues of Anzani, Vaccaro, Munro-Hay, and to the Ashmolean *Sylloge*.³ The type numbering system previously used by Hahn since his 1983 analysis of seventy-two types is replaced by a new one of ninety-five types.⁴ Though a few new types have turned up since 1983, this increase rather reflects that a number of sub-types have been appropriately given type status; the proliferation of 153 types in *AC*, where many are merely die varieties, has been wisely avoided. The only really new type (71) is a small copper of Armaḥ. The chronology follows

¹ S. C. Munro-Hay and B. Juel-Jensen, *Aksumite Coinage: A revised and enlarged edition of The Coinage of Aksum* (London: Spink, 1995).

² Respectively A. Anzani, 'Numismatica Aksumita', *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienze Affini*, Serie terza, 3 (39) (1926), 5–110; A. Anzani, 'Numismatica e Storia d'Ethiopia: Note bibliografiche e nuove osservazioni di numismatica axumita', *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienze Affini*, Serie terza, 5–6 (41–42) (1928–1929), 5–69; A. Anzani, 'Le Monete dei Re di Aksum: Studi Supplementari', *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienze Affini*, Serie quarta, 1 (43) (1941), 49–73, 81–99, 113–129.

³ Respectively A. Anzani, 'Numismatica Aksumita', cit.; A. Anzani, 'Numismatica e Storia d'Ethiopia: Note bibliografiche e nuove osservazioni di numismatica axumita', cit.; A. Anzani, 'Le Monete dei Re di Aksum: Studi Supplementari', cit.; F. Vaccaro, *Le Monete di Aksum* (Casteldario–Mantova: Edizione a cura di "Italia Numismatica,, 1967); S. C. Munro-Hay, *The Coinage of Aksum* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1984); S. C. Munro-Hay and B. Juel-Jensen, *Aksumite Coinage: A revised and enlarged edition of The Coinage of Aksum*, cit.; W. Hahn and V. West, *Sylloge of Aksumite Coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, 2016).

⁴ W. Hahn, 'Die Münzprägung des axumitischen Reiches', *Litterae Numismaticae Vindobonenses*, 2 (1983), 113–180.

that of Hahn in the Ashmolean *Sylloge* with the following equations of king-names: ʾĪllä ‘Amida = Armaḥ, ʾĪllä Gäbāz = Wazena = AGD. These changes have rendered a new numbering system essential, though it would have been useful to include concordances of the new system against the others. The terms *chrysos*, *argyros*, and *lepton* have oddly been used for gold, silver, and copper unit coins respectively.

Four Appendixes cover metrological and metallurgical statistics, die numbers, (possible) modern forgeries, and finds. The estimated number of dies is based on the simple formula of Lyon,⁵ but the more sophisticated formulas of Esty,⁶ which give an estimate range, would be preferable. The lists of finds usefully cover not only find-spots of Aksumite coins by type but also those of other ancient coins—mainly South Arabian and Roman—in the Aksumite area.

The extensive corpuses of 1466 gold and 2176 silver coins in collections (both public and private) and trade will be invaluable to the researcher. They include die identities, which, in the case of the Ebana gold type 43 with 382 examples cited, represent a labour of love. While the copper coins of some types such as the anonymous issues (types 36 and 45) are certainly too numerous for corpuses to be feasible, the scarce and rare copper types could have been included, for example Aphilas type 13 with twenty-one examples and Israel type 79 with seven examples recorded. In the corpuses GG (Vienna) and RA (Vienna) thinly disguise the Hahn and Keck collections respectively. The substantial Coffman (USA) collection of over 1000 Aksumite coins is a revelation. It will be desirable to find a way of issuing addenda and corrigenda to the corpuses, perhaps on an appropriate website.

The twenty excellent colour plates illustrate almost all types at 1.5 magnification, including a good selection of varieties for each type, with gold and silver specimens cross-referenced to their corpus entries.

In such a wide-ranging and detailed work, minor slips are probably unavoidable. These are commendably few in number, but the following have been noted:

– Page 16, note 36: types 23, 35, 49, 53, 59, and 71 should be added to the list of types known from a single specimen; types 86 AE and 92a AE to the list of those of which only two specimens are known.

– Page 77, type 27: the double obverse specimen is unmentioned but appears in the corpus as 27.4.

⁵ S. Lyon, ‘Analysis of the Material’, in H. R. Mossop, ed., *The Lincoln Mint: c 890–1279* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Corbitt & Hunter, 1970), 15–17.

⁶ W. W. Esty, ‘How to estimate the original number of dies and the coverage of a sample’, *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 166 (2006), 359–364.

– Page 135, type 90: the legend is *ng-s* not *n-gs* on 90b. Other obverse symbols are recorded, for example from my own collection alone: triangle between N and G (90b), bar before chest (90b), bar left of crown (90a), and diamond of four pellets behind neck (90b). Examples of an unmentioned type 90c are illustrated on plate 17.

– Page 142, note 384: the reference should be to my 2013 article.⁷

Hahn pays tribute to his late wife Adelheid, who took a close interest in Ethiopian matters and inspired him to complete this work.

This handsome book is heartily recommended to all with an interest in the Aksumite coinage. It is to be hoped that an English translation will be produced which would considerably increase the potential readership and ensure the use of this work as the standard reference.

Vincent West, Reading

'AMSĀLU TAFARRĀ [AMSALU TEFERA], ነቅዕ መጻሕፍት ፤ ከ600 በላይ በግዕዝ የተጻፉ የኢትዮጵያ መጻሕፍት ዝርዝር ከግብራሪያ ጋር (*Naq'a maṣāḥəft. Ka-600 balāy ba-gə'z ya-taṣāfu ya-'Ityopyā maṣāḥəft zərzər kamābrāriyā gār*, 'The source of books: List of over 600 Gə'əz books with explanation') (Addis Ababa: Jajaw publishers, 2011 EC = 2018/2019 EC). 366 pp. Price: \$20.00. ISBN: 978-9-994-475-67-4.

Amslau Tefera's *Naq'a maṣāḥəft*, written in Amharic, is a voluminous book which offers a comprehensive overview of Gə'əz literature, particularly providing detailed valuable information about the hagiographical genre. As is clear from the title of the book (*naq'a*, Gə'əz for 'source'), the main aim is to introduce more than six hundred Gə'əz texts with basic information on their contents, the current scholarship, and other aspects that provide new insights into the field of Gə'əz literature. In fact, the work is not limited to discussing only these selected texts, but also explores key themes in Gə'əz literature—such as addressing manuscript culture, history of writing, and textual criticism—revealing new ideas and approaches. This scholarly book is the product of rigorous research, based on exhaustive use of both primary and secondary sources. Most of all, with the work being written in Amharic, it will find a wide readership among Ethiopians.

⁷ V. West, 'A Parcel of Coins of King Hataz of Aksum', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, 216 (2013), 4–6