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Vignette:

Gold coin of King Aphilas, early third century CE, as drawn by A. Luegmeyer after the coin in Rennau collection. Weight 2.48 grams, diameter 17 mm.

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The journal focuses on philology, linguistics, archaeology, history, cultural anthropology, religion, philosophy, literature, and manuscript studies with a regional emphasis on Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, and related areas. The editors welcome contributions on relevant academic topics as well as on recent research in the respective field. Each issue of **AETHIOPICA** contains reviews of books which form a substantial section of the journal.

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Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA is the twenty-fifth since the journal's founding in 1998. It is also the thirteenth issue I have worked on as editor-in-chief, one more than that of founder Siegbert Uhlig. The present time, however, does not lend itself to celebrations of any sort. The global political crisis and the situation in the Horn of Africa are having a deep impact on the scholarly community, which appears divided and radicalized on opposite or increasingly diverging positions as never before. The growing influence of diaspora communities is at times marked by waves of resurgent nationalism. The challenge posed by main-stream policy in countries of established scholarly traditions gives less and less space to small fields—as is the case of Ethiopian and Eritrean studies. The consequent lack of resources triggers the fragmentation of the scholarly scene. New balances based on mutual legitimation and acknowledgement of a common scholarly method are not obvious. The consequence of this complex situation, which reflects global changes, is that scholarly and academic freedom can be put at risk. Of all priorities envisaged in the mission of AETHIOPICA, preservation of academic freedom along with scholarly quality has been, is, and will remain the top priority of the journal.

I regret that in the past, and still now, the lack of available qualified authors has prevented AETHIOPICA from duly commemorating distinct colleagues and researchers recently passed away who were more than deserving of an obituary. I would like to remember at least some of them here, by name, as a very modest tribute to their work and memory: Johannes Launhardt (1929–2019), Mesfin Wolde Mariam (1930–2020), Steffen Wenig (1934–2022), Girma Fisseha (1941–2020).

To end on a positive note, three colleagues active in Ethiopian and Eritrean studies have received important awards this year, and we would like to mention them here: Samantha Kelly (Professor of Medieval History at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, also on our International Editorial Board), has won the Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2020, and the African Studies Review Prize for the Best Africa-focused Anthology or Edited Collection 2021, for her *A Companion to Medieval Ethiopia and Eritrea* (Leiden–Boston, MA: Brill, 2020); Verena Krebs (Junior-Professorin für Mittelalterliche Kulturräume at Ruhr-Universität Bochum) has received the Dan David Prize for her *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship, Craft, and Diplomacy with Latin Europe* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); and Massimo Zaccaria (Professore Associato in Storia e Istituzioni dell'Africa at Università degli Studi di Pavia) has received the Giorgio Maria Sangiorgi award of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 'per la Storia ed Etnologia dell'Africa'. To all of them—the warmest congratulations from AETHIOPICA!

INGVILD SÆLID GILHUS, ALEXANDROS TSAKOS, and MARTA CAMILLA WRIGHT, eds, *The Archangel Michael in Africa: History, Cult, and Persona* (London–New York, NY–Oxford–New Delhi–Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2019). xv, 246 pp., maps. Price: £100.00. ISBN: 978-1-350-08471-1.

The Archangel Michael plays the most important role in the hierarchical orders of angels, being their leader in the nine-fold order known from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's book *On the Celestial Hierarchy* (*De Coelesti Hierarchia*) which has influenced the wider Christian, and especially the Ethiopian tradition. Dedicating a study to his veneration in Africa therefore is a welcome addition to the field of angelology. The book *The Archangel Michael in Africa* takes a fresh look at the 'history, cult, and person' of this angel in the regions or language traditions of Coptic Egypt, Christian Nubia, Christian Ethiopia, and South Africa. The editors have invited colleagues from the different disciplines, dedicating two to three contributions to each of these traditions.

The parts of the book fall into two categories: those dedicated to classical philological research and archaeology (Part 2 focusing on Coptic Egypt, with contributions by Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, Karel Innemée, Pietro D'Agostino, and Hugo Lundhaug, and Part 3 on Christian Nubia, with contributions by Alexandros Tsakos, Dobrochna Zielińska, and Magdalena Łaptaś)¹ and those dedicated to more modern-day veneration and contemporary archaeology of the angel, his role in healing, and consumer culture (Part 4 focusing on Christian Ethiopia, with contributions by Marta Camilla Wright and Dan Levene, and Part 5 on South Africa, with contributions by Lize Kriel, Deléne Human, and Raita Steyn). At the end, we find an Appendix by David Tibet, where he presents a song and a film he created about the angel. The audio-visual material can be accessed through a QR-code (p. 194).

The Introduction (Part 1, with contributions by Tsakos, Gilhus, and Wright) obviously tries to connect these two major foci of the book. It is not always easy, as one might expect, comparing centuries of old Orthodox Christianity in Egypt, Nubia, or Ethiopia with modern Protestant groups, such as Pentecostals in South Africa, and ancient church murals contrasted with present-day consumer culture do pose some challenges. However, this is intentional, as stated in the Introduction, for the editors 'have invited innovative forms' and 'disciplines other than those that gather data through analysis of the textual record, the archaeological artifacts, or the anthropological contexts' (p. 8).

Despite this conscious intention, it may be seen as a weakness of the book. A synopsis of the interdisciplinary overlaps of the traditions, where applicable, would

¹ The latter translated from Polish by Miłka Stępień.

have been a welcome addition to the book and may have remedied this. That they exist, at least regarding Nubia and Ethiopia, is indicated in Tsakos's introduction: 'We see here powerful Christian kingdoms of Nubians meeting with the authority of Ethiopian Christianity. This is undisputed evidence of exchanges within the African world [...]. The combination of the textual and archaeological records is a *sine qua non* for the success of an intellectual enquiry about phenomena of the past' (p. 5). Further down, Wright states that '[w]e see similar practices of veneration in different parts of Africa today—particularly in the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church' (p. 23). Unfortunately, despite the Introduction emphasizing these similarities, they are not explored further in the text, omitted even in the chapters dedicated to Ethiopia.

Taking Chapter 4 as an example, 'The Archangel Michael as Psychopomp in Christian Iconography in Egypt' by Innemée, it opens the door to many references to the Ethiopian tradition. The idea of Michael as *psychopompos* (guide of the soul in the hereafter) is extremely popular in Ethiopian tradition, both in textual and artistic representations. Relating to this, and also mentioned by Innemée (p. 46), is Michael's role as saviour of the Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace. This motif is taken up again in Chapter 8, 'The Position of the Archangel Michael within the Celestial Hierarchy: Some Aspects of the Manifestation of His Cult in Nubian Painting' by Łaptaś. Describing Michael's role in safeguarding the Three Hebrews, or Three Youths, in the Fiery Furnace,² she notes that the biblical story (Dan. 3:49) does not provide a name of the angel in action, but that 'this function was gradually attributed to Michael as part of a later tradition' (p.103). This was noted as early as 1959 in Müller's formative study *Die Engellehre der Koptischen Kirche*.³ The same motif is found in the Ethiopian tradition, for example in the *Sənkəssar* for 12 Taḥśaś, as well as in several recensions of the *Dərsanā Mika'el* ('Homiliary of Michael'),⁴ and has been heavily exploited in the artistic tradition.

The depiction is found in numerous Ethiopian manuscripts, and the description of the Nubian painting from the narthex of Faras cathedral provided by Łaptaś may well describe an Ethiopian rendering of the motif. 'The Archangel Michael stands in one row with the young men, but he is taller than them. He protects the youth with his cross scepter (*crux hastata*), and his wings spread out to the sides to addi-

² Both versions are found throughout the book, the Three Hebrews, or the Three Youths.

³ C. D. G. Müller, *Die Engellehre der Koptischen Kirche: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der christlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), 11, 21 (n. 134), 108, 147, 157.

⁴ The different recensions of the *Dərsanā Mika'el* remain unstudied until today, it suffices to say that one would be dealing with several hundreds of manuscripts.

tionally offer shelter to them' (p. 104).⁵ Among the oldest artistic representations of this scene, albeit without giving a name to the angel, is that found in Iyäsus Mo'a's famous Gospel manuscript dated 1280/1281. On fol. 17r, the angel stands behind the three men in the fire, his wings stretched above them for protection.⁶

In Chapter 9, 'Relationships with the Archangel Michael: Materiality and Healing among Ethiopian Orthodox Christians in Contemporary Addis Ababa', Wright focuses on the healing properties associated with Michael, which in Addis Abäba often centre around springs with holy water. Michael's role as a powerful agent is associated with his role in the fall of the devil and his evil angels, which qualifies Michael to heal believers from all kinds of illnesses to this day. As a basis for this, Wright mentions textual sources such as the '*Miracles of Jesus* and *Aksimaros* by Pseudo-Epiphanius of Cyprus' (p. 119), which, however, is a misunderstanding of the original texts. She relates the information to a study by Witold Witakowski, which summarizes the *Aksimaros*, the *Hexaameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius of Salamis. The *Aksimaros* itself, on the other hand, simply states that Michael took the position of the highest angel after the latter's fall.⁷ However, there is no mention in the *Aksimaros* of Michael's involvement in the Devil's fall. Moreover, in the wider *Aksimaros*-literature, a genre focusing on the fight of the good against the evil angels, bears no mention of Michael playing a significant role. The *Aksimaros*-literature actually gives this role to Gabriel, and references to this abound in the genre sources.⁸ The *Miracles of Jesus*, which is part of this tradition, also features Gabriel in his fight against Satan.⁹ Thus, Wright's description following from the information she gathered in interviews on these sites is intriguing, and shows how fluid traditions can be, and how they can easily be adapted and altered. She does mention Michael saving the Three Youth from the Fiery Furnace, but only in passing, and without relating it to the other traditions (p. 121). Throughout her chapter,

⁵ Cf. S. Chojnacki, 'Les trois hébreux dans la fournaise: une enquête iconographique dans la peinture éthiopienne', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 35 (1991, pub. 1993), 13–40, figs. 1–10.

⁶ Ms Wällo, Däbrä Ḥayq Ḥstifanos, Gospel. A black and white copy of the manuscript is accessible through vHMML, as Collegeville, MN, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (= EMML) 1832, also fig. 3 in Chojnacki, op. cit. In *Mäzḡäbä Sə'älät* (<http://ethiopia.deeds.utoronto.ca/doCmd.jsp>), colour images of the same manuscript are accessible (use keyword search for easier access).

⁷ W. Witakowski, 'The Fall of Angels in Ethiopian Tradition', *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 62/1 (2009), 240–249, here 245.

⁸ I am writing my doctoral thesis on the angelology of the *Aksimaros*-literature.

⁹ S. Grébaut, ed., *Les miracles de Jésus, texte éthiopien publié et traduit*, I: *Miracles I à X*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 12/4 (Paris: Firmin-Didot et C^{ie}, imprimeurs-éditeurs, 1917, pub. 1919), 565.

Wright presents vivid descriptions of healing in the name of Michael that underline the power associated with this angel in Ethiopia today.

In Chapter 10, Levene discusses ‘The Archangel Michael: An Everyday Popular Saint in Ethiopia’ on the basis of two textual witnesses of a miracle story found in the *Dərsanä Mika’el*. He does not intend to offer comparisons ‘of philological significance’, but instead underlines the value of this text as a ‘living tradition’ (p. 133). He describes that the physical book containing these texts is ‘considered potent as an object in its own right’ (p. 129), a practice known also for the Book of Psalms, the *Gädlä Kiros*, and several other books. Levene further examines a ‘market amulet’ and a ‘market booklet’ which he studied more extensively (using the same images) in Amsalu Tefera and Loren Stuckenbruck’s recent volume *Representations of Angelic Beings in Early Jewish and in Christian Traditions*.¹⁰

While both Wright and Levene could easily have treated topics relating to the two previous chapters on Egypt and Nubia, they chose instead to focus on other aspects of Michael’s veneration. It feels like something of a missed opportunity that the connections to the other traditions were not treated in more detail, possibly in a third chapter on Ethiopia.

Nonetheless, it emerges quite clearly that the persona of Michael and the geographical location of the areas under study on the African continent are the unifying factors of this book. The other nice addition to more traditional studies is the look into the contemporary veneration of Michael in the traditions described. This is perhaps best expressed in Lundhaug’s Chapter 6, ‘Textual Fluidity and Monastic Fanfiction: The Case of the *Investiture of the Archangel Michael* in Coptic Egypt’ and the Appendix which provides an audio-visual interpretation of the Coptic text of the *Investiture* by Tibet and Andrew Liles. The latter provided the Archangel Michael with his own voice, through a software programme generating his voice from the written text (p. 193).

As stated in the ‘Introduction: South Africa’ by Kriel, research on Michael in South Africa is less advanced, which is why these sections are better understood as ‘a quest to “find Michael”—both in existing scholarship and through primary research’ (p. 143). The Chapters 11–13, dedicated to consumer culture (for example cookie brands, soap, or gold and diamond exchange shops) and modern day architectural features in honour of Michael from South Africa, may be less relevant for the readership of this journal.

Some of the usual typos and unfortunate inconsistencies in transcriptions—inevitable in such a collaborative book—need not be mentioned here. The book is

¹⁰ Amsalu Tefera and L. T. Stuckenbruck, eds, *Representations of Angelic Beings in Early Jewish and in Christian Traditions*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe, 544 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021).

accompanied by maps, images, endnotes, and an index. Unfortunately, the black and white print renders some of the selected images almost invisible (pp. 85, 91), and figure 10.3 (p. 131) remains unclear, with the details almost unrecognizable.

Overall, which may be obvious already from this review, the Archangel Michael in Africa provides impetus for much more research. The methodology the editors of the book under study have chosen is certainly a welcome ‘innovation’, and the new approach featured in this heterogeneous book on Michael in Africa will cater to a diverse readership.

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MERON T. GEBREANANAYE, LOGAN WILLIAMS, and FRANCIS WATSON, eds, *Beyond Canon: Early Christianity and the Ethiopic Textual Tradition*, Library of New Testament Studies, 643 (London: T&T Clark–Library of Biblical Studies, 2021). vi, 186 pp. Price: £85.00. ISBN: 978-0-567-69585-7.

This new volume represents a valuable contribution to the slowly growing body of work pertaining to Ethiopic literature. The eye-catching title alerts readers to the ongoing debate surrounding the Scriptures of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwāhədo Church (EOTC) and how exactly they should be understood in relation to those of other Christian traditions. A concise Introduction neatly explains the unique nature of the literature in view, namely the fact that they all survive as complete works only in Classical Ethiopic, or Gə‘əz. The five works treated are 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Epistula Apostolorum, and the Apocalypse of Peter. Additionally, the Introduction persuasively suggests what is ultimately at stake in these studies: the conception of the authority and role of the Christian Scriptures. This book hardly attempts to resolve the well-known debate about ‘canonicity’ in the EOTC, but unquestionably adds perspectives that must be considered in the discussion going forward.

The chapters of *Beyond Canon* vary somewhat in their focus and methodology, with some handling narrow, technical manuscript comparisons while others aim to tackle slightly broader concerns. Indeed, the interrelation of the content seems rather superficial and causes some contributions to feel isolated from broader discussions about the topics they address. Although the selection of essays is perhaps less coherent than some would like, it is appreciated that those focusing on the same literature (i.e. the Book of 1 Enoch) are grouped together. The included Afterword from Michael Knibb provides an excellent summary of each contribution to which I will add only marginal supplements, focusing instead on the overarching themes, characteristics, and implications of the book as a whole.