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International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies

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by Alessandro Bausi in cooperation with Bairu Tafla, Ludwig Gerhardt, Susanne Hummel and Alexander Meckelburg

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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!

Reviews

It is fitting to conclude with a summary statement from the book itself: 'our understanding of the New Testament texts is enhanced when they are put into dialogue with their closest literary neighbours, including a significant group of texts preserved only in Ge'ez' (p. 7). Time and time again the authors display the legitimate and respectable theological perspectives preserved within Ethiopic texts. Scholars in this field and related ones would do well to consider the contents and broader implications of this fine book.

Calum Samuelson, Africa Nazarene University

ABRAHAM JOHANNES DREWES, Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite, III: Traductions et commentaires, B: Les inscriptions sémitiques, Introduction par Roger Schneider, Texte révisé et adapté par Manfred Kropp, édité par Manfred Kropp et Harry Stroomer, Aethiopistische Forschungen, 85, De Goeje Fund, 34 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019). xv, 722 pp. Price: €148.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-11316-8.

Abraham J. Drewes's interest in Ethiopian epigraphy dates back to his doctoral dissertation, published in 1962, which finally led to the more systematic collection of the *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite* under the aegis of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, divided into three parts and four volumes. The first volume, collecting all the texts in transliteration with epigraphic notes, appeared in 1991 together with the second volume of plates and figures, and both were published by Drewes in collaboration with Étienne Bernand and Roger Schneider, with archaeological notes by Francis Anfray. The third part with the translation of the texts and relative philological commentary was intended for two volumes, of which only the study by Bernand on the Greek texts appeared in 2000 (III/A).

The fourth volume (III/B) was to have dealt with the translation and commentary of the most conspicuous Semitic texts, Ethiopian Sabaic and Gəʿəz, written in the South Arabian or Ethiopian scripts, coming from Ethiopia, or written by Ethiopians in other territories, up to the Aksumite period—according to the numbering of the first volume, these are the texts with sigla RIÉ 1–268 and RIÉ 288–443. As was natural to expect, Schneider should also have collaborated but, as he was then in Ethiopia permanently, his contribution was in fact limited to sporadic exchanges of letters. From 2002, the year of Schneider's death, Drewes

A. J. Drewes, *Inscriptions de l'Éthiopie antique* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962).

resolved to continue by himself. Schneider's contribution is condensed into a large Introduction, included in this volume (pp. 5–15), which is particularly useful for a better understanding of the criteria with which the material was delimited, the reasons for some exclusions in 1991, and a short descriptive list of inscriptions published after the release of the first volume.

When Drewes himself died in 2007, he left a draft not yet ready for print but in quite an advanced state, as suggested by both the Préface (pp. 1–4), and the 'Note additionnelle' written after 2000 (pp. 17–18). The release of this volume therefore continues the meritorious project of adapting for printing the important works Drewes left unfinished in his archive, inaugurated by the publication of the volume of South Arabian $zab\bar{u}r$ texts on sticks from the Leiden collection, a project shared by Drewes with Jacques Ryckmans, and published in 2016 with the scientific review by Peter Stein.²

With the publication of this fourth and last volume of the *Recueil*, a great gap has therefore been filled in the tools for the study of ancient Ethiopian epigraphy; this important result is due, in addition to the will of Harry Stroomer, to the revision of Manfred Kropp who intervened with much regard on Drewes's draft and which justify some redundancies that in all probability would have been slimmed down by its author before releasing the volume for printing.

The volume consists of eight parts, of which the first five contain a translation and a commentary on the inscriptions that naturally follow the sequence in which they were presented in Volume I—with the exception of the Greek inscriptions RIÉ 269–286A (already studied in Volume III/A) and of the RIÉ 287: (1) inscriptions of the pre-Axumite period (RIÉ 1–179); (2) inscriptions of the Aksumite period (RIÉ 180–268); (3) inscriptions on small objects (RIÉ 288–309); (4) inscriptions on pottery (RIÉ 310–384); (5) monograms (RIÉ 385–443).

The sixth part consists of nine studies focused on some transversal issues arising from the analysis of the most important Aksumite royal inscriptions. The subject of the first study is the royal title, particularly its formal aspects, including epithets and territorial associations, with the related historical-political problems, suggested in particular by RIÉ 185 and RIÉ 186; it is followed by the analysis of some names of the military troops mentioned in the texts of 'Ezana, Kaleb, and W'ZB. Some of the historical-chronological issues of the reign of 'Ezana according to RIÉ 185 and RIÉ 185bis are discussed in the third study, while the following evokes the hypothesis of the 'two 'Ezana', which Drewes

A. J. Drewes and J. Ryckmans, Les inscriptions sudarabes sur bois dans la collection de l'Oosters Instituut conservée dans la bibliothèque universitaire de Leiden, Texte révisé et adapté par Peter Stein, édité par Peter Stein et Harry Stroomer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016).

seems inclined to support, essentially relying on the well-known paleographic arguments, to which it now seems useful to recall the more cautious position advocated by Paolo Marrassini, who proposed a formal separation within this documentation to accept the coexistence of different epigraphic genres and styles—not to mention the numismatic data (regrettably quite disregarded in the present work);³ finally, Drewes reiterates that the interval between the two hypothetical homonymous sovereigns still remains à préciser but that the text of Ousanas I man of Gəšän, brother of 'Ezana son of 'Illä 'Amida must definitely be placed within this time frame. This topic also converges in the fifth study. where the problem concerning the author of the mutilated inscription RIÉ 186 has been taken up again; the military campaigns on the eastern and northern territories recalled in the same text are also dealt with in the sixth study, focusing on the locations of the ethnic entities involved (Agwazat ['gdtm] and Matin). Military issues also occupy the latest studies, the seventh dealing with the identification problems of some toponyms or ethnonyms (esp. Hngabo and Atagaw) of the RIÉ 187; the eighth briefly retracing the campaigns against the Noba described in the RIÉ 189 and RIÉ 190, while the last is dedicated to the Kaleb campaigns (RIÉ 191, plus RIÉ 195) which again involve the Agwazat, HST, and Southern Arabia.

In the useful final onomastic and lexical indexes, it was opportunely decided to keep the pre-Aksumite documentation separate from the Aksumite one, a division that follows the one already established for the texts since 1991—with some arbitrary choices, as admitted by the editors themselves, and it could not be otherwise due to the uncertainties on the first Aksumite phase. There is no doubt that this separation better highlights the marked lexical differences that exist between the two historical moments at a linguistic level. The quotation of the passages referring to the individual lexemes is also much valuable, less so is perhaps the irregular repetition in these indexes of some of the etymological hypotheses, especially the most controversial from the pre-Aksumite period, which have already been extensively treated in the philological commentaries.

Overall, in fact, for each text the etymological investigations on the lexicon and onomastics are very meticulous. In the commentary of the most long-debated epigraphic documents—quite a few here—large excerpts of references are often cited, which in some cases would spare the reader from recovering

P. Marrassini, Storia e leggenda dell'Etiopia tardoantica: Le iscrizioni reali aksumite con un'appendice di Rodolfo Fattovich su La civiltà aksumita: aspetti archeologici e una nota editoriale di Alessandro Bausi, ed. A. Bausi, Testi del Vicino Oriente antico, 9, Letteratura etiopica, 1 (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 2014), 75–76.

previous literature, an added value that should be emphasized and which justifies the weight of the volume.

Many wide-ranging analyses arise even from the most fragmentary inscriptions, such as the excursus on the South Arabian royal title mkrb (already treated by Drewes)⁴ which is discussed specifically in connection to its first attestation in the fragmentary RIÉ 3—but this title apparently is not used by the Minaean sovereigns, contrary to that which is stated on page 31. Broader connections are those that continue to be solicited by the analysis of the Dakhanamo abecedary in the South Arabian script (RIÉ 165). The reading of this document, important for understanding the development and diffusion of South Semitic script and letter order, is slightly modified in terms of the transliteration proposed in the first volume (in turn revised regarding the article by Drewes and Schneider);⁵ in fact, some readings already proposed by Michael C. A. Macdonald are accepted here, 6 in particular the inversion of the t and b in the first line (as in the South Arabian order) and the reading of the d after g in the second. An improved reading is also for the two series in the graffito from Dakhanamo in Ethiopian script (RIÉ 239 I–II), which testify to a later stage of this internal evolution and is in fact closer to the traditional order of the Ethiopian script.

In the ten pages devoted to the seven words of RIÉ 180, the so-called 'boomerang' of 'Addi Gälämo, the identification of King GDR with the GDRT known from the South Arabian sources (cf. Middle Sabaic CIH 308, Gr 210, and Ja 631) is reaffirmed with conviction, and the linguistic arguments in this direction certainly exist as well as the historical plausibility, although not unanimously accepted (cf. Arthur K. Irvine and Lanfranco Ricci), while the multitude of the possible values of the term *mzlt* allows one to wonder once more about the enigmatic nature of the bronze object upon which the inscription is engraved, and certainly Drewes's hypothesis—that it was a sign of royalty—remains the most convincing. The same in-depth analysis is of course devoted to one of the most challenging and obscure documents of the collection, the Safra inscriptions (RIÉ 183), for which Drewes's attempted interpretation will certainly remain an important point of reference.

The utmost gratitude goes to all who collaborated in various capacities for this long-awaited book to finally see the light, particularly to its curator who has

⁴ A. J. Drewes, 'The meaning of Sabaean MKRB, facts and fiction', *Semitica*, 51 (2001, pub. 2003), 93–125.

⁵ A. J. Drewes and R. Schneider, 'L'alphabet sudarabique de Dakhanamo', *Raydān*, 3 (1980, pub. 1981), 31–33.

M. C. A. Macdonald, 'ABCs and Letter Order in Ancient North Arabian', Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, 16 (1986), 101–168, on pp. 154–156, n. 145.

done an excellent job. However, it must be borne in mind that this volume was conceived over a quarter of a century ago and its reference list stops around the year 2000—updated regularly only until 1995, as declared by Drewes himself. Despite the inevitable absences, at both a documentary and a bibliographical level, this volume will be an exhaustive introduction for the non-specialist, as well as an indispensable reference for all those dealing with the many linguistic and historical issues of ancient and late-ancient Ethiopia.

Alessio Agostini, Sapienza Università di Roma

MICHAEL LAUSBERG, *Geschichte und Kultur Äthiopiens*, Schriften zur Kulturgeschichte, 57 (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2021). 305 pp. Price: €98.80. ISBN: 978-3-339-11896-7.

Der Politikwissenschaftler und Publizist Michael Lausberg legt mit seinem Band eine Einführung in die jüngste Geschichte Äthiopiens vor, die als Überblicksarbeit in "Land und Leute" geeignet ist.

Das Buch ist in 32 Kapitel gegliedert. Die Abfolge dokumentiert, dass der Autor vor allem die politische und weniger die Kulturgeschichte im Blick hat. Gelegentlich offenbart der Titel eine Schwäche in der Struktur, die Reihenfolge wirkt unorganisiert: nach der "Wiege der Menschheit" folgen "die Afar", die man unter der Beschreibung der Ethnien (Kapitel 28) erwarten würde; nach dem "Königreich Limmu-Ennarea" (= ∃nnarya) folgt unvermittelt "Altäthiopische Sprache", danach der "Islam".

Lausberg hat eine Fülle von Informationen zusammengetragen – eine Fleißarbeit, wenn auch keine "Forschungsarbeit", wie verschiedentlich behauptet wird. Das wird auch deutlich, wenn man nach den Quellen fragt. Es finden sich viele teilweise etwas zufällig wirkende Literaturnachweise, darunter nicht wenige Einführungs- und Überblickstitel, es fehlt dagegen relevante Forschungsliteratur z. B. von Carlo Conti Rossini, Ernst Hammerschmidt, Wolf Leslau, es fehlt das Grundlagenwerk *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, u. s. w. Salopp formuliert: Das Buch bietet Breite und ermangelt der Gründlichkeit einer wissenschaftlichen Studie.

Auch auf seinem eigenen Arbeitsgebiet, der Politik, bleibt das Buch etwas flach und dürr: "Äthiopien 1987 bis in die Gegenwart" wirkt mehr wie ein straffer "Durchmarsch" denn wie eine Einweisung und Hinweisung auf die gegenwärtige Lage, damit der Leser die gegenwärtige Krise im Lande als eine fürchterlich folgenrichtige Entwicklung einzustufen in der Lage ist.

Von Vorteil wäre gewesen, wenn der Autor mit einem Fachwissenschaftler der Kulturgeschichte des Landes zusammengearbeitet hätte. So aber ist ihm z. B.