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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!

panded to provide more historical background to the language than existed in the original edition, thus the changes somewhat alter the content compared to the original German version.

Designed to help language learners acquire competency with the script at the outset, *Classical Ethiopic* provides a comprehensive treatment of Gə'əz grammar, with detailed chapters on the language's writing system, phonology, morphology, morphosyntax, and syntax. Numerous example sentences from several Ethiopic biblical books illustrate the grammatical concepts discussed. Each example is presented in Ethiopic script, transliteration, and English translation. An updated Bibliography takes into account the developments that have occurred in the study of Gə'əz in the two decades since Tropper's original publication. The grammar is followed by an Appendix presenting a reader of sample texts in Gə'əz with a transliteration after each text and not parallel. A Gə'əz–English Glossary concludes this grammar. It has been ordered according to the Latin alphabet with the words in Ethiopic script after the transliterated ones.

Both appropriate for the classroom and independent study, for students and scholars, *Classical Ethiopic* is the best grammar of Gə'əz and is sure to become the standard reference in English for the study of the language.

Maija Priess, Hamburg

DERIB ADO, ALMAZ WASSE GELAGAY, and JANNE BONDI JOHANNESSEN, eds, *Grammatical and Sociolinguistic Aspects of Ethiopian Languages*, Impact, Studies in Language, Culture and Society, 48 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2021). viii, 415 pp. Price: €99.00, \$149.00. ISBN: 978-9-027-20833-0 (HB), 978-9-027-26024-6 (e-book).

The book *Grammatical and Sociolinguistic Aspects of Ethiopian Languages* is a collection of papers presented at two conferences—the 46th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics, Long Beach, California (1–3 June 2018) and the 20th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Mäqälä, Ethiopia (1–5 October 2018).¹ The research has been carried out in the framework of the project Linguistic Capacity Building—Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia (LCB), run jointly by the Universitetet i Oslo, Addis Ababa University, Hawassa University, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, and Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (MultiLing) from 2014 to 2020 and funded by the Norwegian Agency for Develop-

¹ The electronic version of this book is Open Access (<https://benjamins.com/catalog/impact.48>).

ment Cooperation (NORAD). The major aim of the project is to increase the capacity of Ethiopian universities for research and development of disadvantaged languages of Ethiopia, that is, languages which are little studied and lack the resources necessary for fully-fledged incorporation into modern life. Importantly, this involves Ethiopian sign language, which came into existence in the 1960s (through the foundation of several schools for deaf people in Ethiopia by Nordic and American missionaries), and which until recently was largely ignored by linguists.

The introduction paper, authored by Derib Ado, Almaz Wasse Gelagay, and Janne Bondi Johannessen, gives a condensed survey of the language situation in modern Ethiopia, presenting basic facts on the genetic classification of Ethiopian languages, their geographical distribution, and sociolinguistics. Furthermore, the structure of the book is explained and the information on the contributors, the reviewers, and the funding is given.

The papers have been arranged into five sections: ‘Lexicon’, ‘Sociolinguistics and culture’, ‘Grammar (syntax and morphology)’, ‘Phonetics’, and ‘Sign language’.

The ‘Lexicon’ section includes two papers. ‘Term-formation methods in the Gamo language’ by Almaz Wasse Gelagay deals with the Gamo language (Omotic), spoken by more than a million people, and employed as a medium of instruction in primary education since 1995. The paper focuses on the methods used to fill in gaps in the original Gamo vocabulary to make it fit for the purpose of primary education. The research was based on various textbooks, a Gamo–Amharic dictionary, and consultations with Gamo linguists been engaged in the creation of Gamo textbooks, and thus, inevitably, in the coinage of new Gamo terms.

‘The ensete in Gurage: Nomenclature, use and meaning extension’ by Fekede Menuta is an exciting paper which outlines the extremely complicated terminology related to *ensete ventricosum*. This plant is central to the Gurage culture as the main cultivated crop of the area, which provides the local peasants with food and forage for cattle, as well as material for twisting ropes; to a certain degree its parts also serve for preparing traditional medicines. The paper presents the traditional classification of the *ensete* plant varieties and stages of its growth. Furthermore, it lists the terms used to denote its various products and by-products. An important part of the investigation deals with semantic extensions and figurative employment of the relevant terms.

The section on ‘Sociolinguistics and culture’ hosts four papers, all dedicated to the languages of Gurage area. Based on field research, they deal with various aspects of Gurage culture and intrinsic sociolinguistic factors influencing the language use in Gurage. One paper—‘Language contact and its effects on language use of the Gurage varieties of Muher’ by Awlache Shumneka Nurga—

deals specifically with one language, Muḥər, and investigates multilingualism in Muḥər communities and the employment of Muḥər as opposed to other languages of the area by Muḥər native speakers in various social spheres. The author, a native speaker of Muḥər and an accomplished linguist, shares with the reader not only the results of his field research, but also his personal experience and knowledge gathered from everyday communication. He demonstrates convincingly how the Muḥər language ‘is in state of shift and endangerment’ (p. 70) and, importantly, proposes concrete measures to be taken to preserve the Muḥər language (p. 88).

The research by Etaferahu Hailu Tessema, ‘Sociolinguistic functions of the secret language of Gurage females’, describes the use of a secret language employed by a religious group called the Fedwät, female followers of the traditional Däm^wam^wit cult. The worship of Däm^wam^wit is particularly associated with females, Däm^wam^wit being considered the female’s protector and the divinity of fertility and well-being. The collection of the data on Fedwät (which is derived from the speakers’ first language, Čaha, by means of various modifications) was a challenging task, because the Däm^wam^wit cult has largely been replaced by Christianity and Islam, and even those few possessing the knowledge of secret language of Fedwät are usually reluctant to admit this. Nevertheless, the researcher was able to employ twelve women who could speak Fedwät as her main consultants and eight other females who were former Fedwät speakers. The paper contains several samples of Fedwät expressions, short phrases and dialogues, and two short songs. The author identifies the main functions of Fedwät and typical situations in which the secret language is used. The contribution provides unique information on the rare type of sociolect, the Däm^wam^wit cult in general, and the gender roles and various strategies employed by the females in the Gurage society to protect themselves from male oppression.

Fekede Menuta and Yigeremu Kifle’s paper, ‘Gender and women representation in Gurage culture of Ethiopia’, presents the results of investigation among Gumär speakers (a Central West Gurage variety) and shows the traditional distribution of gender roles in Gurage society in various situations, for instance markets, courts, domestic life—as well as the reflection of this distribution in oral texts performed at certain cultural events, such as mourning poems at commemorative gatherings and the promise of gifts for newly-wed at wedding ceremonies. Incidentally, the oral material collected by the authors sheds light on some lines of an Old Amharic poem published by Denis Nossnitsin and the present author: the quoted lines of *mäsag’ä*, a part of wedding ceremony during which the relatives promise the bride and groom gifts for their newly established household (p. 157, example (14)) display non-trivial similarities to the lines of

the religious poem in which the riches and enticements of the secular world are listed.² Thus, we find a solid confirmation of the claim that early Amharic poetry drew heavily from the oral tradition (in the assumption that Amharic parallels existed—or even exist until now—for the wedding rituals of the Gurage area).

Emebet Bekele Birkie in her paper ‘Ethnolinguistic perception and identity in Gurage’ explores the connection between language and ethnic identity in the Gurage area. This article clearly shows that a concept of common Gurage identity exists and speakers of various languages of the Gurage zone tend to identify themselves as Gurage. However, according to results of Emebet’s investigation, not all inhabitants of the Gurage zone share the common identity. Among the groups interviewed by the author (that is, Čaha, Inor, Wäläne, Mäsmäs, and Dobbī), the Wäläne speakers are obviously unwilling to be regarded as Gurage. This clearly correlates with the fact that the language of Wäläne is only remotely related to the languages of the other participants of the investigation, among the East Gurage language group (and, importantly, the speakers of other East Gurage languages—Səlṭi and Zay—do not share common Gurage identity).

The section on ‘Grammar (syntax and morphology)’ contains papers dealing with various grammatical phenomena of specific Ethiopian Semitic, Cushitic, and Nilo-Saharan languages. Baye Yimam in his paper ‘Manner of movement in Amharic’ considers how various types of movement, manner of movement, and speed of movement are expressed by verbal lexemes of Amharic, paying special attention to the interaction of the lexical meaning with the aspectual grammemes of the language.

‘Verbal derivations in Inor’ by Tsehay Abza offers an overview of the system of verbal stems in Inor (in earlier linguistic works referred to as Ānnāmōr), a Peripheral West Gurage language spoken by more than 167,000 people. The description is based on fieldwork with three native speakers of Inor and contains data on the morphology and semantics (in particular, semantic restrictions on the verbal derivation). Phrasal examples are occasionally provided to illustrate some semantic nuances. This paper thus enlarges our knowledge of the verbal system of Inor and also contributes to our understanding of the Semitic system of verbal derivation in general.

In his paper ‘Reduplication in Oromo’ Shimelis Mazengia describes the employment of reduplication as a morphological means in the nominal and verbal domains in the Harär variety of the Oromo language. He considers reduplication in nouns, demonstrative pronouns (determiners), adjectives, numerals, adverbs,

² M. Bulakh and D. Nosnitsin, ‘An Old Amharic poem from northern Ethiopia: one more text on condemning glory’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 82/2 (2019), 315–350, here p. 323, lines 15, 18.

and verbs. The paper deals with the phonological processes accompanying reduplication, as well as the semantics of the reduplicated forms, illustrated by the sentential examples.

Girma Mengistu Desta's paper 'Serial verb constructions in Sezo' describes the employment of serial verb constructions in Sezo, an Omotic language (Mao group) spoken by *c.*7,000–10,000 people in West Wälläga zone (Oromia National Regional State). The author points out that Sezo is an endangered language, largely used by the older generation. The paper focuses on the syntactic properties of the construction, its interaction with various grammatical categories such as mood and negation, and its semantics. The description, based on fieldwork, is accompanied by numerous sentential examples.

The investigation by John Koang Nyang, 'Number marking in Nuer nouns', focuses on the morphology of number in Nuer, a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in South Sudan and Ethiopia (Gambella National Regional State). The research is based on fieldwork with native speakers of the Jikääny dialect of Nuer (spoken in Ethiopia). Plural marking in Nuer is a complicated system involving various types of segmental and suprasegmental morphological means such as suffixation, phoneme insertion, phonemic alternation, phonation, tone change, and vowel quantity change. The paper also pays some attention to the singulative marking in Nuer.

Lutz Edzard's paper 'Case-marking in Semitic in the light of the evidence in the Ethiopian language area: Linguistic convergence and divergence' considers the case systems of Ethiopian Semitic languages, comparing them, on the one hand, to other Semitic languages, but, on the other hand, indicating their obvious typological similarity with the systems of Ethiopia's non-Semitic languages.

The section on 'Phonetics' features two papers. 'An acoustic analysis of Amharic fricatives' by Derib Ado presents the results of the research of the acoustic properties of fricative phonemes of Amharic (*f, h, s, ʃ, ʂ, z, ʒ*), while 'Durational variations in Oromo vowels' by Feda Negesse and Tujube Amansa explores the differences in the vowel duration (of phonologically long and short vowels) among speakers of several Oromo dialects (Mäçça from the western dialect, Arsi highland from the eastern dialect, Arsi lowland from the central dialect, and Wällo from the northern dialect). The investigation has revealed a correlation between the dialect of the speaker and the vowel duration (with the longest duration in the eastern dialect and the shortest duration in the western dialect). Aside from this, the vowel duration is sensitive to the phonological surrounding and to the quality of the vowel itself (open vowels having higher mean duration than the close vowels).

The 'Sign language' section contains two papers dealing with the grammar and semantics of Ethiopian sign language. Pawlos Kassu Abebe in his study 'The linguistic nature of expression of aspect in Ethiopian sign language' points

out that the general discussion of aspect marking in sign languages has been based thus far on evidence from Europa and America, and one of the aims of his contribution is to supply the typology of sign languages with data from a sign language of Africa. Eventually, his conclusions on Ethiopian sign language coincide with claims made by authors on other sign languages: the marking of aspect is inflectional.

Woinshet Girma's paper 'Polysemy of Ethiopian sign language' contains a useful outline of the history of the Ethiopian sign language and of research on it, including the data on two available dictionaries. The instances of the polysemy discussed in the paper involve rather trivial cases of meaning extension, whose motivation is transparent. The paper also discusses some cases of systematic polysemy (such as 'animal' > 'animal meat') also regularly found in oral languages. It is to be hoped that the results of this and similar research can be used in the creation of sign language dictionaries and other lexicographic materials on sign languages which, as made clear in this paper, are regrettably very few up to the moment.

The papers have been carefully edited, the typographic errors are extremely rare. All the examples are given in Latin-based transcription and provided with morpheme glosses as well as English translations. Several articles are furnished with high-quality photographs, which illustrate the denoted objects for the intricate system of *ensete ventricosum* terminology in several Gurage languages (paper by Fekede Menuta) and the relevant elements of sign language in the papers of the last section (by Pawlos Kassu Abebe and Woinshet Girma). The volume also features a concise Index.

All in all, this volume demonstrates the success of the LCB project and the excellent results of the cooperation between European and Ethiopian linguists. The volume's papers are of outstanding quality, most are based on field research and introduce previously unknown data. Special attention has been paid to the research's theoretical framework, the methodology, various legal, ethical, and cultural issues inevitably arising in connection with the fieldwork the authors carried out. Several papers therein deal with cultural phenomena, providing unique information on agricultural and food production practice, little known rites and ceremonies, and the general structure and patterns of social behaviour in Gurage society. The volume is bound to be of interest not only for linguists and philologists, but for anthropologists as well.

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