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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.

AETHIOPICA is published mainly in English. Articles in French, German, and Italian are also accepted for publication. An English summary for all articles in any language is provided.

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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!

families, which are sub-archetypes, by lower-case Greek letters: alpha ( $\alpha$ ), beta ( $\beta$ ), gamma ( $\gamma$ ), and so on. Finally, a stemma has been reconstructed; both the nodes for hypothetical archetypal and sub-archetypal *Vorlage* and the sigla of the actual manuscripts (including those eliminated during collation) were shown in the family tree. The variants/errors were also divided into two based on archetypal (or top-level) and sub-archetypal variants/errors. Using the term ‘variant’ is assumed more neutral than ‘error’ for the textual innovations. During the emendation, variants were treated through the criterion of ‘ambiguous reconstruction’ but when there are equal families, which makes any decision difficult, the variants were handled implementing the criterion of *ope ingenii* (by means of intelligence, judgment, or internal criteria). An edited Gə‘əz text of *Gädlä Yəm‘atta* has been produced and translated into English, faithfully, with annotations. Textual analysis of the manuscripts was carried out after the translation. This edition helps gain a fuller understanding of the hagiographic tradition of the Nine Saints; eastern Təgray (specially Gär‘alta) has been referred to as the southern extremity of the evangelical mission; however, the hagiographic tradition of Yəm‘atta and his confession father Gubba reveal Christian expansion to have extended ever further to the south: Wägğärat and Rayya. The manuscripts do not feature colophons; the sixteenth-century Portuguese traveller Francisco Alvares mentioned both the monastery of Guḥ and Saint Yəm‘atta; however, the hagiographic tradition appears to be far younger as the place names date only from later periods. Nonetheless, the text is more focused on the Aksumite period beginning with King Sä‘aldoba (r.469–477), the supposed father of King Əllä ‘Amida.

CARSTEN HOFFMANN, *Das geographische Traktat in der Weltgeschichte des Wäldä ‘Amid – Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, PhD Dissertation in Semitic Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages at Philipps-Universität Marburg, defended on 21 October 2021.

In my dissertation I deal with the geographical treatise in the *Universal History* of Giyorgis Wäldä Amid, known in Ethiopic literature as *Tarikä Wäldä Amid* and by the name of its author Ğirğis al-Makīn Ibn al-‘Amīd or as *al-Mağmū‘ al-mubāarak* (‘The blessed collection’) in its Arabic version. In my partial edition I collected all available manuscripts that contain the geographical treatise, provided a translation to German and a commentary on its geographical content as well as linguistic peculiarities.

Ğirğis al-Makīn Ibn al-‘Amīd the Elder was born in 1206 CE in Cairo in a respected Christian family. Like some of his ancestors, Ğirğis was member of the Dīwān of the army and thus held an important function in the military admin-

istration during the period of the last of the Ayyubid sultans. His position both honoured him and caused him troubles. He fell out of favour during the subsequent Mamluk period and was arrested several times due to, according to some later sources, allegations of high treason, claiming he served a fifteen-year imprisonment during the reign of Sultan Baybars. It is most likely that al-Makīn wrote his *Universal History* either during or after this period of imprisonment.

Whether or not al-Makīn can lay claim to a high degree of originality for himself or actually copied large sections either from his contemporary co-religionist Abū Šākīr ibn al-Rāhib or his coeval Ibn al-Wāsil is a matter of dispute. Later research opted for the latter view of his opus being littered with widespread plagiarism. However, the latest sections of his work that concern his lifetime are considered to reflect his own outlook.

The section on geography in various aspects is included in the first part of the compendium dealing with the pre-Islamic history, and more specifically with the myth of the construction of the Tower of Babel. This legend sparked an explanation of the alleged seventy-two peoples that were split into three phylae following the three biblical sons of Noah in Semites, Hamites, and Japhetites.

After picturing the genealogical lines of the Old Testament in Genesis 10, the four peripheral zones the author postulated to be at the outer fringes of the world to the east, south, west, and north with specific qualities of heat, cold, wetness, or dryness are introduced. These qualities make each of them inhabitable, with only the middle zone alone providing comfortable living conditions.

Describing the middle zone to be the only one hospitable the author subsequently turns to the description of the Earth's form and the path of the Sun before referring to the maximum of daylight varying according to its geographical position in each of seven climates. These climates, as do many other aspects of this geographical treatise, correlate to antique concepts. They are described again in more detail in a subsequent section. Another section depicts the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans as the two major seas—the latter named the 'Green Sea'. This section concludes the geographical treatise that forms the object of my edition and analysis.

All the seven sections that form the geographical treatise represent specific aspects and distinctive genres of the historical geography that prevailed for many centuries dating back to pre-Christian times.

The geographical treatise naturally contains a large number of toponyms and ethnonyms—some of them had become outdated by the time of the original manuscript and even more so at the times of its translation to Ethiopic. Due to the widespread orthographic ambivalence for a number of uncommon toponyms and ethnonyms, which can emerge exclusively due to the misunderstanding of diacritical dots in Arabic script, I was able to find evidence of two independent translations resulting in two distinct recensions of the *Tarikä Wäldä Amid*. I



have given the name  $\alpha$ -recension for the earlier and  $\beta$ -recension for the more frequent later translation. Following indications in the incipit or desinit of some manuscripts, it is possible to claim the reign of *Aṣe Zār'a Ya'qob* (r.1434–1468 CE) as the more secure date of translation of the  $\alpha$ -recension and the time span from 1525–1540 CE during the reign of *Aṣe Ləbnä Dəngəl* as the most likely date for the translation of the  $\beta$ -recension.

In its linguistic part the dissertation addresses the aforementioned great diversity and ambivalence in the orthography of proper names that go beyond the ever observed misconceptions and garbles but also include divergent multiple standards in the orthography of place name according to their shape and their familiarity to contemporary scribes.

Furthermore a number of genuine Arabic features have been detected in this short piece of the translation that the text *Tarikä Wäldä Amid* represents. Among others, one can list Arabized names, adjectives of provenance ending in *-i*, some specific geographical terminology, idiomatic phraseology, and other technical terms, the construction of *l-omu* instead of *b-omu* (which designates expression of possession or belonging in accordance with the arabic *la-hum*), topicalization by the means of the conjunction *wä- ... wä- ...* according to Arabic *wa-'ammā ... fa- ...*, the emergence of asyndetic attributive sentences, ordinal numbers frequently used in postposition, and an early instance of the letter ڤ.

SISAY SAHILE BEYENE, *A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Treatise: Tārik Zamədra Gondar (The History of the Land of Gondar)*, PhD Dissertation in Ethiopian Studies, Faculty of Humanities at Universität Hamburg, defended on 12 November 2021.

The *Tārik zamədra Gondar* ('The history of the land of Gondar') is a historical compendium written in Amharic, in the city of Gondar (Ethiopia), between the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, after the destructions and looting the town had suffered in the decades preceding. It narrates the history of Gondar, its kings, nobles, and clergy from its founding in the 1630s up to the reign of Mənilək II (r.1889–1913). Most of the episodes copied in this collection are known through other historiographic corpora.

The dissertation focuses on the complex intertextuality to obtain an understanding of the specificities of writing the long royal chronicles, the short chronicles, and the regional *tārika nagaśts*. Also evaluated is the role of oral traditions in the circulation of the narrative elements and patterns. This comparative study leads to precise hypotheses on the milieus of production of the *Tārik zamədra Gondar* that appear to have been compiled by a religious scholar, most probably