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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!

ANNEGRET MARX, *When Images Travel to Ethiopia ... Impact of the Evangelium Arabicum printed 1590 in Rome on a 17th Century Ethiopian Gospel: Documentation and Synoptic Presentation of their Images. Wenn Bilder nach Äthiopien reisen ... Einfluss des 1590 in Rom gedruckten Evangelium Arabicum auf ein äthiopisches Evangeliar (17. Jh.): Dokumentation und synoptische Gegenüberstellung ihrer Bilder* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2019). 237 pp. Price: €49.80. ISBN: 978-3-844-06533-6.

The aim of this oblong bilingual (English and German) book by Annegret Marx, in the words of its author, is to ‘comprehensively contrast’ the miniatures from a seventeenth-century Ethiopic Gospel book kept in Märtulä Maryam with the ‘woodblock prints (by Antonio Tempesta) from the *Evangelium Arabicum*’ and to provide ‘a sound basis for further academic studies’ (p. 11).<sup>1</sup> The volume is made up of three main sections (though the rationale for the numbering of these sections is not entirely clear): the first provides a short introduction to the Märtulä Maryam manuscript and the Arabic Gospels (pp. 15–32); the second—the largest of the volume—juxtaposes a single scene from the Arabic Gospels with its Ethiopian visual adaptations in the Märtulä Maryam codex (pp. 33–208); and the third contains cropped images of the captions from the images shown in the previous section that are placed above what the author describes as an ‘English translation’ of them.

Chapter 1 opens with a cursory overview of history and material culture of the Ethiopian Church from its inception to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Ethiopia (pp. 15–17).<sup>2</sup> This is followed by a brief but inclusive review of the literature on the topic where the author rightly notes that Hugo Buchthal initiated research on the reception of the Arabic Gospels in Ethiopia and provides a useful list of Ethiopic manuscripts that showcase a connection with its woodcuts. One must note that the author does not attempt to critically engage with these studies or to provide a contextual reading of the production of the Ethiopic Gospel. This section could have been expanded by considering, for example, the suggestion that the Arabic Gospels were introduced into Ethiopia by Franciscan

<sup>1</sup> While it has become conventional in Ethiopian studies to refer to this volume, which was printed in Rome for the *Typographia Medicea* between 1590 and 1591, with the title *Evangelium Arabicum*, as Marx herself notes on page 20, its actual Latin title, used for both the Arabic version (1590/1591) and the bilingual Arabic–Latin version (1591), is *Evangelium Sanctum Domini nostri Iesu Christi conscriptum a quatuor Evangelistis Sanctis idest, Matthaeo, Marco, Luca, et Iohanne*.

<sup>2</sup> While I do not wish to dwell on inaccuracies and typos, I must note that the concept of a ‘Byzantine-Palestine period’, brought up on page 15 in connection to the Ĕnda Abba Gärīma Gospels, does not exist in the relevant literature.

missionaries.<sup>3</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the author does not include a discussion of the history of Ethiopia *after* the expulsion of the Jesuits, that is to say of the period when the Märtulä Maryam codex was produced. This is indicative of a questionable disinterest in the circumstances that led to its making.

Section II.2, entitled ‘Search for the Complete Pictures/Suche nach vollständigem Bildmaterial’, is broken into subsections that deal with the distribution of images in the Arabic Gospels (Subsection II.2.1); its production history (Subsection II.2.1.1);<sup>4</sup> and the life and work of Tempesta (Subsection II.2.1.2). Subsection II.2.2 revolves around the author’s initial difficulties in identifying the subject matter of the images and her subsequent discovery that the complete manuscript was available through the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library’s vHMML (project no. EMDA 00046). It is positive that the author has sought to include a description of the codex, and links to her source material, but this should have been accompanied by a discussion of its dating—supported by palaeographic or stylistic comparisons with other manuscripts—or of the individuals who are mentioned in the codex and have been the subject of scholarly discussion.<sup>5</sup>

Chapter 3 singles out three variations among the numerous changes introduced by those Ethiopian artists responsible for the decoration of the Märtulä Maryam manuscript in their rendition of the Italian prints. Marx considers how Ethiopian illustrators approached representations of the Christ in profile (p. 27) and the substitution of ‘Renaissance buildings’ with structures that evoke the ‘architecture of Lalibela churches’ (p. 28). Personally, I find it difficult to see any meaningful connection between the architecture of Lalibäla and the buildings visible in the background of the miniatures of the Märtulä Maryam codex, so I would have liked to see the author support such remarks with some comparative evidence. Section III.1 provides a list of ‘rules’ followed by Ethiopian painters and is followed by a second short statement of objectives (Section IV).

<sup>3</sup> C. Bosc-Tiessé, ‘The Use of Occidental Engravings in Ethiopian Painting in the 17th and 18th Centuries’, in M. J. Ramos with I. Boavida, eds, *The Indigenous and the Foreign in Christian Ethiopian Art: On Portuguese–Ethiopian Contacts in the 16th–17th Centuries, Papers from the Fifth International Conference on the History of Ethiopian Art (Arrábida, 26–30 November 1999)* (Aldershot–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 83–102, here 85.

<sup>4</sup> This is the most informative section of the book. The date given in the frontispiece of the Arabic version is 1590, but the book was finished in 1591.

<sup>5</sup> See for example the discussion in C. Bosc-Tiessé, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un *scriptorium* en Éthiopie? L’organisation du travail des copistes dans le Royaume Chrétien d’Éthiopie’, *Scripta*, 7 (2014), 9–27, here 16–17, n. 8. The link to a digitized copy of the Arabic Gospels provided by Marx is broken or no longer active, but a digitized copy of the volume can be currently viewed at <https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/510574> (last accessed on 4 February 2022).

As noted above, the core of the book consists in a series of openings where images from the Arabic Gospels to the left are juxtaposed with those miniatures in the Märtulä Maryam codex that were directly or indirectly inspired by them to the right. The image from the Arabic Gospels is accompanied by a descriptive title of the scene, followed by a list of relevant biblical passages, and an ostensive description of its content. The listing of biblical passages is useful, though often somewhat imprecise.<sup>6</sup> This is not a major issue, but it is a recurring one. More striking is the author's decision to not provide a scholarly commentary or analysis of Ethiopian miniatures reproduced on the opposite page, nor a discussion of their formal and semantic connections with Tempesta's woodcuts.

In the *Typographia Medicea* book some of Tempesta's wooden printing blocks are used multiple times to illustrate parallel biblical passages: thus, for example, since the Baptism of Jesus is described in all four Gospels, the same woodcut was re-employed four times. The same approach was adopted by the Ethiopian illuminators who adapted Tempesta's design. In two cases the blocks were used to illustrate two different episodes: one showing Jesus among a group of Apostles is used to illustrate Jesus sending out the Twelve Apostles (e.g. Matt. 10; Mark 3:13–19) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–18); while one showing Jesus in the act of multiplying food is used for the Feeding of the Five Thousand (e.g. Matt. 10:13–21; Mark 6:30–44) and the Feeding of the Four Thousand (Matt. 15:29–39; Mark 8:1–13). Instead of distinguishing between these different episodes, Marx has made the questionable decision of duplicating the title and description of the Arabic Gospels (so pp. 70, 72 and pp. 84, 86 are identical). The approach to image captioning also deserves a passing mention: instead of using the folium or page numbers of the Märtulä Maryam manuscript, which is unfoliated, Marx refers to the images with the file number of the JPGs uploaded to vHMML followed by L and R to distinguish between the verso and recto of the photographed openings.

As noted above, the third section is devoted to the captions of the miniatures. One wonders whether it might not have been more convenient for the reader to include this information in the description of the various scenes. Having said that, it is positive that the author has strived to include such data since this has not always been systematically done. Two further points must be raised about this section: first, not all the captions are accurately translated;<sup>7</sup> second, although Stefan Bombeck appears to be the author of these translations, based on what

<sup>6</sup> On page 70, for instance, the verses of the episode where Jesus Appoints the Twelve (Mark 3) should be 13–19, rather than 14.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. ስከመ ፡ ቦአ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ውስተ ፡ ቤተ ፡ መቅደስ ፡ ተፅዕኖ ፡ ዲበ ፡ ዕዋል ፡ በዕለተ ፡ ሆሳስያ ፡ is translated 'Our Lord enters Jerusalem riding a foal on Palm Sunday'.

Marx states on page 11, he is not indicated as the author of this chapter, so his precise role remains unclear. There are some typographical issues with this section of the volume on which there is no need to dwell, and the transliterations are at times inconsistent.

In sum, this book has the merit of systematically bringing together related images from the Arabic Gospels and the Gospel book of Märtulä Maryam. In spite of a good level of enthusiasm and effort by the author, I am not convinced that this volume can be considered a scholarly publication, since it does not advance the field of Ethiopian art history, but it can be seen as a useful tool for analysing and viewing the Ethiopian adaptations of Tempesta's woodcuts side by side. For example, while writing the review for this book, I could not help noticing that Ethiopian artists must have drawn from the Arabic-only version of the Arabic *Evangelium* since they included scenes that were not inserted in the unfinished Latin-Arabic version. When pursued, such comparative research should ideally shed light on the approaches and working methods of Ethiopian illuminators, but also on the wishes and preferences of their patrons.

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JOSEF TROPPER and REBECCA HASSELBACH-ANDEE, *Classical Ethiopic: A Grammar of Ge'ez, Including Sample Texts and a Glossary*, tr. Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee, Languages of the Ancient Near East, 10 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021). 440 pp. Price: \$69.95, €109.00. ISBN: 978-1-575-06841-1.

When I started teaching in 2002 Gə'əz, Josef Tropper's *Altäthiopisch* has been my standard modern grammar despite only being in Latin script.<sup>1</sup> This new English translation with the addition of the Ethiopic script throughout has been revised and expanded by Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee (associate professor of Comparative Semitics at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago) and as a result has become far more useful. The translation closely follows the original text in both outline and content with the exception of a few changes made reflecting the translator's opinion. Where necessary, the content has been updated to reflect current views on Ethiopian and Semitic grammars. In some cases, the system used was adjusted to reflect linguistic concepts and terminology more commonly found in anglophone literature. The Introduction has been ex-

<sup>1</sup> Josef Tropper, *Altäthiopisch: Grammatik des Ge'ez mit Übungstexten und Glossar*, Elementa Linguarum Orientis, 2 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002).