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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!

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.

Sophia Dege-Müller, Universität Hamburg

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.

Generally speaking, those chapters treating particular theological issues (i.e. Son of Man, non-human animals, 'House of the Gospel') tend to reach relatively straightforward conclusions. Conversely, those chapters dealing with more technical manuscript juxtaposition appropriately offer more measured insight and highlight desiderata to be addressed by future studies. The four chapters falling into this latter category (authored by Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Jan Dochhorn, Darrell Hannah, and Eric J. Beck) provide nuanced discussions of the highest quality. Particularly impressive is the way that these authors preserve the tension between clear conclusions and more speculative ones.

In fact, the entire book is characterized by deft treatment of the interwoven complexity of the Ethiopic textual tradition. The texts discussed are often conglomerates of distinct works and feature considerable 'blending' (p. 96) of ideas that 'weave together' (p. 35) similar but separate source material. Readers familiar with ancient textual transmission will not be surprised by these discussions, but may be enlightened by the additional factors at play when considering Ethiopic manuscripts. In short, Ethiopic manuscripts were not merely *influenced by* the standard Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic sources but also reveal unique interplays *between* those traditions due to their unique contexts and 'participatory' roles (p. 142). Hannah's informed description (pp. 100–101) of the two major periods of influx for Ethiopic manuscripts (c.350–650 and after c.1270) establishes constructive parameters for these intricate conversations and might have been a useful way to frame the book's contents in the Introduction.

One recurring observation concerns the inaccuracy of Ethiopic translation efforts and the frequent 'careless' behaviour of Ethiopian scribes (p. 100). While the general consensus about this among the authors demonstrates an important reality of working with Gə'əz literature, it may appear condescending to readers who are less familiar with the discipline. Fortunately, multiple chapters take care to demonstrate the likelihood that the motivations of Ethiopian translators and theologians were likely somewhat different from those of other Christian traditions. In particular, Meron T. Gebreanayye persuasively demonstrates the supremacy of theological alignment as opposed to textual or even 'canonical' consistency.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this volume is the way it functions as a bridge between understudied Ethiopic literature and better-recognized biblical/Christian literature. The tandem methodological approaches of juxtaposing manuscripts and bringing their theological claims into 'conversation' (p. 28) help to explicate both textual preservation as well as the occasional 'critical inversion' (p. 36). Scholars specializing in the study of Hebrew, Greek, Coptic, or Syriac texts are offered detailed comparisons and points of connection to the less-accessible Gə'əz textual tradition(s). Indeed, except for a single footnote (p. 132), citations of Gə'əz are provided entirely in transcribed form while the more familiar biblical languages mentioned above are reproduced in their standard scripts. Although this may prove a minor inconvenience to those who are able to read Gə'əz, it serves to make the

volume more accessible to knowledgeable readers from a wider range. As it happens, however, it seems that inclusion of the terms እጎ (əgo = Greek ἔγώ, ‘I’) and እኅ (ana, ‘I’) in the Gə‘əz script would have been beneficial on page 102 since the discussion refers specifically to their superficial resemblance to explain how a particular ‘translational’ error may have transpired. It is also noteworthy that this study assumes reasonable familiarity with the fields of biblical studies and theology, such as when the *Urzeit/Endzeit* schema is referenced without qualification or explanation (p. 41).

Overall, this book is quite accessible if readers bear in mind the commonalities stated in the Introduction: every chapter deals with literature that has been generally deemed ‘pseudepigraphal’ or ‘apocryphal’ and that survives in complete form only in the Gə‘əz language. Furthermore, the authors are to be commended for numerous references intended for non-specialists. The chapter from Logan Williams is particularly helpful in this regard as he provides important context for recent developments (citing the significant 2005 Camaldoli Enoch Seminar), but also makes a deliberate effort to situate his argument within the broader tradition of biblical studies (citing the landmark 1962 study from Samuel Sandmel). Ample mention of other key scholars in the field (Alessandro Bausi, Roger W. Cowley, George W. E. Nickelsburg) also helps establish the range and oscillation of views that have impacted the field of Ethiopic studies in recent decades.

This book contains very few flaws, but some are worth mentioning. It is somewhat regretful that the images in Francis Watson’s chapter were not of high enough quality to compliment his superb descriptions of them. Still, this shortcoming is understandable given that the scope of the book as a whole was not primarily iconographic in nature.¹ Another questionable occurrence is that the term ነገር, *nagar*, initially appears without any definition (p. 12). Watson does offer some insight on the term in the last chapter (p. 156), but neglects the possible meaning of ‘thing’, which might have strengthened his overall argument.² Despite these issues, some very minor grammatical hiccups (‘Judah’ on p. 137; ‘defers’ on p. 142), and negligible interpretive quibbles,³ the volume is edited and presented with excellence.

¹ Cf. the recent volume, containing dozens of high-quality images of Ethiopic manuscripts: Thomas C. Oden with Curt Niccum, eds, *The Songs of Africa: The Ethiopian Canticles* (New Haven, CT: ICCS Press, 2017). Cf. also Judith S. McKenzie and Francis Watson, *The Garima Gospels: Early Illuminated Gospel Books from Ethiopia, With Preface and Photographs by Michael Gervers and contributions by Matthew R. Crawford, Linda R. Macaulay, Sarah S. Norodom, Andres T. Reyes, and Miranda E. Williams*, Manar al-Athar Monograph, 3 (Oxford: Manar al-Athar, 2016).

² Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge‘ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge‘ez–English/English–Ge‘ez, with an index of Semitic roots*, repr. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 392.

³ See page 19, where Philip Esler seems to neglect mention of the debated term ἀπάντησις in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 with his suggestion that the Lord will lead believers to heaven.

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 1962,¹ 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 Gə‘əz, 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

¹ A. J. Drewes, *Inscriptions de l'Éthiopie antique* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962).