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Review

WALTER RAUNIG – STEFFEN WENIG (Hrsg.), *Akten der Ersten Internationalen Littmann-Konferenz 2. bis 5. Mai 2002 in München*

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Reviews

WALTER RAUNIG – STEFFEN WENIG (Hrsg.), *Akten der Ersten Internationalen Littmann-Konferenz 2. bis 5. Mai 2002 in München* = *Meroitica* 22. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005. Pp. XXII–456. Price: € 108,-. ISBN: 978-3-447-05175-0.

The First International Conference named after Enno Littmann (1875–1958) – a true Orientalist, especially Semitist, linguist, epigraphist, *éthiopianist*: among the greatest ones of the 20th cent. – was held in Munich from 2 to 5 May 2002. Its proceedings appeared in 2005, and include 31 contributions (and two abstracts) out of the ca. 80 presented in Munich. They are grouped according to thematic sections: archaeology of the Horn of Africa (pp. 3–87, “I. The Archaeology of the Horn of Africa”); history, with the exclusion of contemporary issues, subdivided in turn into two sections, one methodological-monographic (pp. 91–133, “II. The History of the Horn of Africa”), the other religious-literary (pp. 135–243, “III. The Ethiopian Church”); various issues and current research (anthropology, linguistics, history, art, archaeology, pp. 361–456, “V. Recent Research and New Discoveries”). The fourth section (“IV. Enno Littmann und die Deutsche Aksum-Expedition”, pp. 245–359) is dedicated to both the personality of Enno Littmann and the reconstruction of various aspects of the historical context, background and scholarly results of the “Deutsche Aksum-Expedition” (*DAE*).

A few of the authors, stimulated by the reference to Littmann, used the occasion to sketch a tentative general evaluation of contents and methodology of the research themes and disciplines most closely linked to the *DAE*, almost a century after it took place in 1905/6: among them, Rodolfo Fattovich, “The Archaeology of the Horn of Africa”, pp. 3–29; Wolfgang Hahn, “Zur Geschichte der Materialerfassung in der aksumitischen Münzkunde” (pp. 60–66); Gianfrancesco Lusini, “Philology and the Reconstruction of the Ethiopian Past”, pp. 91–106; Stuart Munro-Hay, “Saintly Shadows” (pp. 137–68), the latter being, out of the four main thematic papers planned by the organizers, the only one completed on schedule and with adequate debate and comments by other scholars (cf. p. xi). These papers, each from its own viewpoint and with its own subject, offer contributions of general interest.

The common perspective of the conference can be summarized as the history of ancient and medieval Ethiopia from the proto-historical roots of the Aksumite kingdom to the kingdom itself and its continuation into medieval, pre-modern and modern up to present times, in its material expres-

sions and, above all, its written tradition – which was exclusively Semitic for far more than two millennia and is still the most inflexibly “exotic” and characteristic feature of the Ethio–Eritrean civilization within the African context. The chosen perspective is all the more important because it was, and probably still is, the only one accounting for the special disciplinary framework of “Ethiopian Studies” once we agree, as Walter Raunig himself in his “Vorwort” seems to do (p. xi), that the International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies tend more and more to acquire dimensions and attitudes making them ‘something different’, however stimulating, interesting, pleasant, yet ‘radically different’ from occasions of scholarly debate.

As to the above mentioned overview articles, one must say that the updated panorama on history and extension of Aksumite coin collections offered by W. Hahn unfortunately corroborates the *vulgata* (pp. 61f.) still tributing too much to Arturo Anzani, a good collector and numismatist but an absolutely poor *éthiopisant*, and too little on Carlo Conti Rossini (for details, cf. my “Numismatica aksumita, linguistica e filologia”, in *Istituto Italiano di Numismatica. Annali*, 50, 2003 [2005], pp. 157–75, esp. pp. 160ff., n. 10). The proposal by G. Lusini of an essentially 19th-century, Wolfian, all-encompassing philology (a “historical science aimed at the criticism of the sources”, p. 91) – in my opinion, to be more respected in the spirit than in the letter – might even play a ‘progressive’ role within the context of Ethiopian Studies, still so devoid of any philology whatsoever (very little is found, e.g., in the best contributions by specialists of ‘feudal acts’: cf. Donald Crummey’s “Literacy in an oral society: the case of Ethiopian land records”, in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 18/1, 2006, pp. 9–22, all in all, with sound criticism of James C. McCann’s “Literacy, orality and property: Church Documents in Ethiopia”, in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32/1, 2001, 81–88). Yet, it can rather lend itself to vindicating shortcuts to easier and more appealing ‘ideological’ solutions (cf. Lusini, p. 92: “today, the need to take into account all the chances given by the constellation of disciplines composing the philology *lato sensu* – namely the criticism of the sources starting from their material consistency up to the analysis of their ideological construction – has become stronger than ever”) that carefully shuns the phase of the properly ecdotic (text-critical) work (philology *stricto sensu*, cf. my “Current Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Philology”, in Siegbert Uhlig [ed.], *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Hamburg July 20–25, 2003*, Aethiopistische Forschungen 65, Wiesbaden, 2006, pp. 542–51). Obviously, philology in its strict sense does keep the whole of its importance out of a number of reasons. First of all, a vast majority of texts has never been edited, and even for most of those which did, we hardly have reliable editions. Second, text-

critical work necessarily implies, and requires, a deep historical research on all available sources, the intrinsically historical character of text-critical philology being well known since quite a long time (cf., e.g., the still interesting pamphlet *Filologia e storia*, Firenze, 1920, by Giorgio Pasquali, one of the most prominent classical philologists of the 20th century). Third, the often exhausting experience of editing a whole text – a tremendous responsibility, if properly done – has a strong formative potential, much wanted, in my opinion, in this very phase of Ethiopian Studies, as it mandatorily involves capacity, effort and need to understand and provide in-depth explanations and evaluations: a most effective remedy against any superficial approach as well as arbitrary and desultory use of traditional sources, taken out of context and forced into the direction of pre-conceived hypotheses. The contribution by S. Munro-Hay marks a somehow paradoxical turning point in the research on the traditions of Christianization by the ‘Nine Saints’ and related figures (Libānos, Šādeqān, etc.), in that, following isolated and long unheard scholarly statements by other authors (first of all Paolo Marrassini, “Ancora sul problema degli influssi siriaci in età aksumita”, in Luigi Cagni [ed.], *Biblica et Semitica. Studi in memoria di Francesco Vattioni*, Series Minor 59, Napoli, 1999, pp. 325–37), it eventually popularizes the situation of extreme weakness inherent to all available sources versus the much sought after historical reconstruction of the personalities of those ‘Saints’ (Munro-Hay, p. 164: “It seems that, as with the literature, so with the art – nothing can be traced that confirms the reputed age of Ethiopia’s Nine Saints”).

Among the archaeological contributions, the article by Ueli Brunner (“Water Management and Settlements in Ancient Eritrea”, pp. 30–43) provides a reasonable outlook on future research, based upon the hypothetical parallelism of the settlement patterns observed in South Arabia and in the Eritrean highlands, both conditioned by the limited availability of water resources. The author seems, however, unaware that the relevance of place names correspondences between the two shores of the Red Sea is an ancient methodological clue dating from Carlo Conti Rossini’s times at least (cf. p. 32). The contributions by Stanislaw Chojnacki (“New Discoveries in Ethiopian Archaeology. Dabr Takla Hāymānot and Enšo Gabre’el in Lāstā”, pp. 44–59), Paul B. Henze (“Unexplored Aksumite Sites in Tigray”, pp. 67–78) and Jacke Phillipps (“‘Go West, Young Man, Go West’”, pp. 79–86) give precious indications on medieval (S. Chojnacki) and Aksumite (P.B. Henze) archaeological sites, and inform about the starting of systematic archaeological surveys in Shire (J. Phillipps). These articles are rather preliminary, both for their character of immediate field-trip report and for the scarcity of any scholarly apparatus (but on Shire the contributions by Giovanni Ellero, also repr. in *Antropologia e storia d’Etiopia. Note sullo Scirè, l’Endertà, i*

Tacurri e i Uolcait, a c. di Gianfrancesco Lusini, Prefazione di Gianfranco Fiaccadori, Folia 3, Udine, 1995, had to be referred to).

In the historical monographic section, Richard Pankhurst ("A 'Missing' Letter from Emperor Tēwodros II to the Queen Victoria's Special Envoy Hormuzd Rassam", pp. 107–11) briefly reports on one of the three still unedited letters from the correspondence between Tēwodros II and the envoy of Queen Victoria. Hanna Rubinkowska ("The Struggle for Power in Ethiopia in the Beginning of the 20th Cent. and the Role of European Powers", pp. 112–23) deals with the international political panorama of the early 20th cent. Wolbert Smidt ("An 8th Century Chinese Fragment on the Nubian and Abyssinian Kingdoms – Some Remarks", pp. 124–33) tries to exploit and explain a short Chinese travel account, allegedly describing (according to the author's hypothesis, already in "A Chinese in the Nubian and Abyssinian Kingdoms (8th Century). The visit of Du Huan to Molin-guo and Laobosa", in *Chroniques yéménites*, 9, 2001, pp. 17–28) the African coastal regions of the Red Sea. The use of the difficult source may necessarily require a 'multidisciplinary' approach. The desire to draw from it as much as possible may result in overemphasized and far-fetched hypotheses, especially if the author has to rely mostly on secondary sources, and has neither knowledge of the language of the primary source (Chinese) nor deep understanding of the historical context. Of course, the results shall be evaluated separately (by Sinologists in the first place) for their actual contributions. However, the omission of relevant bibliographic materials on the topic seems an index of the extemporary character of the research: cf., e.g., Viktor Andreevič Vel'gus, "Маршрут плаваний из Восточной Африки в Персидский залив в VIII в.", in *Africana. Культура и языки народов Африки*, 7 (1969), pp. 102–26 (also transl. in English, "Chinese Voyaging to Africa and to the Persian Gulf: Hypotheses and Sources", in *St. Petersburg Journal of African studies*, 1, 1993, pp. 104–12), and esp. "Страны Мо-линь и Бо-са-ло (Лао-бо-са) в средневековых китайских известиях об Африке", *ibid.*, 6 (1966), pp. 104–21, where the question is dealt with in detail.

A number of contributions in the subsequent section (Petros Berga, "What Happened to the Original Church Unity in Ethiopia?", pp. 169–80; Walter Buder, "Union – Unterwerfung – Erweckung. Anmerkungen zu den ersten Missionsversuchen in Äthiopien", pp. 181–85; Ian Campbell, "Remarks on 'Aspects of the Ethiopian Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries'", pp. 186–89, who comments upon Munro-Hay's paper; Friedrich Heyer, "Der Asboberg des Heiligen Pantalewon und der Qanazel des Heiligen Liqanos in den 1970er Jahren", pp. 199–202) – all have more popular than scholarly character. In particular, I. Campbell seems unaware that on the numerous raised questions (e.g., "The 'Abba Garima' Gospels",

“The Syrian Connection: Early Ethiopian Church Architecture”, the seemingly new need of becoming “familiar with the legends and literature of the Other Orthodox churches”, etc.) not only do we have a rich literature and, in some cases, a centuries-old scientific debate, but that there are disciplines still considering these questions their special field. The philological contribution by Martin Heide (“The Tradition and Transmission of the Ethiopic Testaments of the Three Patriarchs”, pp. 190–98) summarizes and resumes some points of his appreciable critical edition (*Die Testamente Isaaks und Jakobs. Edition und Übersetzung der arabischen und äthiopischen Versionen*, Aethiopistische Forschungen Band 56, Wiesbaden, 2000). Joachim Persoon (“Ethiopian Monasticism Between Tradition and Modernity”, pp. 203–16) provides a synchronic insight into the Ethiopian monastic practice: although the presentation, as intended by the author, is devoid of practically any historical and/or comparative remark, it is of some interest for the contemporary church life. Zewde Gabre-Sellassie (“Some Aspects of the Religious Policies of Emperors Zär’a Yaeqob (1434–1468) and Yohannes IV (1872–1889) and the Development of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church”, pp. 217–43) compares the religious policies of emperors Zar’a Yā’qob (basing exclusively on second-hand materials) and Yoḥannəs IV (with some more in-depth and first-hand elements) in several respects and contexts.

The fourth section includes an article by Rainer Voigt (“Enno Littmann: Leben und Werk”, pp. 247–64) that is a valuable, concise and informative overview on Littmann’s life and career, grounding on the relevant bibliography, and also considering the original hand-written 1944 autobiography (already printed in 1986, as “Leben und Arbeit von Enno Littmann. Handschriftliches Manuskript aus dem Nachlaß Enno Littmann (245/90)”, cf. p. 260) and archival materials preserved at Tübingen University (cf. p. 248). Werner Daum (“Gelehrter und Diplomat. Friedrich Rosen und die Begründung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Äthiopien: Der Mann, ohne den es die Axum-Expedition nicht gegeben hätte”, pp. 265–81) provides an outline of the 1904/5 German diplomatic mission to Abyssinia led by Friedrich Rosen, and puts it against the background of the latter’s family history. An outstanding dynasty of intellectuals, diplomats and Orientalists, his family included Friedrich Ballhorn-Rosen (1774–1855), Friedrich August (1805–37, the first Orientalist), Georg (1820–91), Friedrich (1856–35), his brother Felix (1863–1925, a botanist) and his son Georg (1895–1961). Alfons Ritler (“Fotografien als historisch-geographische Quellen für Eritrea am Beispiel von Aufnahmen der Deutschen Aksum-Expedition”, pp. 300–21) gives a preliminary evaluation of the historical significance of the photographs collected by the *DAE*. The bibliography should be complemented with many recent and important contributions on large Italian collections: e.g., Alessandro Triulzi (a.c.), *Fotografia e storia dell’Africa: Atti*

del *Convegno Internazionale Napoli–Roma 9–11 settembre 1992. Istituto Universitario Orientale: Dip. di studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Istituto Italo-Africano* (Napoli, 1995); Maria Mancini (a c.), *Obiettivo sul mondo. Viaggi ed esplorazioni nelle immagini dell'Archivio Fotografico della Società Geografica Italiana (1866–1956)* (Roma, 1996 [1997]); Silvana Palma, *Archivio Storico della Società Africana d'Italia. Vol. II. Raccolte fotografiche e cartografiche* (Fonti e studi italiani per la storia dell'Africa 7, Napoli, 1996); quite recently, *Ead.*, *L'Africa nella collezione fotografica dell'IsIAO. Il fondo Eritrea–Etiopia* (Napoli, 2005); cf. also, e.g., Wolbert Smidt, “The coronation of Nāgus [sic!] Mikael in Desse in May 1914: a Photograph from the Nachlass Jensen and its historical background”, in *Annales d'Éthiopie*, 17 (2001), pp. 361–73; and the reaction by Berhanou Abebe, “Montages et truquages photographiques dans *L'Éthiopie moderne (1915–1955)*”, *ibid.*, 19 (2003), pp. 19–41. Susanne Ziegler (“Historical Sound Recordings from Ethiopia on Wax Cylinders”, pp. 322–43) opens new perspectives of great ethnomusicological and linguistic interest, with an essay on the earliest sound recordings from Ethiopia preserved in the unique Berlin “Phonogramm-Archiv”, today part of the Ethnology Museum: the oldest items are 46 wax cylinders (each recording lasting about 2½ minutes) collected in 1905 by Felix Rosen during the “Deutsche Gesandtschaft”, and 37 collected in 1906 by Erich Kaschke, the DAE staff physician. Rainer Voigt (“Ein amharisches Lied zu Ehren des Deutschen Kaisers aus der Sammlung Kaschke”, pp. 344–49) provides a preliminary examination of an Amharic song from the Kaschke collection (no. 5); he later developed his contribution with addition of detailed linguistic remarks (“*Ĝärmän dägg näw* ‘Deutsches/Deutschland ist gut!': Ein amharisches Lied zu Ehren des deutschen Kaisers aus der Sammlung Kaschke”), in *Aethiopia*, 7, 2004, pp. 146–59. Some features of the historical events in the regions where the DAE took place are sketched by Kerstin Volker-Saad (“Die politische Situation Eritreas und Tigrays zur Zeit der Aksum-Expedition (1905–1906)”, pp. 350–59). Manfred Kropp's article (“Individualität und Bindung: Die Geschichte des Äthiopischen (Gə'əz) im Spiegel von Wolf Leslaus *Comparative Dictionary*, pp. 282–99”) is the text of a *Probevortrag* read in Hamburg in 1990, published instead of the paper presented at the conference (“Archaeology and History of the Horn of Africa”), which the author decided not to publish to avoid ‘confrontation’ with Enno Littmann as a historian (“dies auch eine Auseinandersetzung mit Littmann als Historiker werden würde”, p. 282). The text published is not only an attempt at sketching a *Sprachgeschichte* of Gə'əz, but rather an insight into this language's intimate nature through its lexicon, which is analysed via a sort of overview/review of Wolf Leslau's *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden, 1987). One may wonder if the attempt is really successful: in fact, apart from general remarks

that may apply to any *Sprachgeschichte* and several keen and interesting suggestions (e.g., Gəʿəz as a dead language, but a written expression of a living, developing culture, p. 291), the clear statements are rather few (e.g., strict parallelism between Gəʿəz and Middle Latin, essential difference of the Gəʿəz *Sprachgeschichte* from that of Arabic, p. 289). Many stimulating hints (regional differences in Geʿez, p. 289; a view on Ethiopic loanwords in other Semitic languages different from Theodor Nöldeke's, p. 291) could have been explained in some more detail; there is no mention of the *vexata quaestio* of Aramaic loanwords in Ethiopic either. Of course, *Sprachgeschichte* does not consist only in lexicon, but M. Kropp provided also valuable contributions on other linguistic aspects (cf., e.g., his fundamental "Arabisch-äthiopische Übersetzungstechnik am Beispiel der *Zena Ayhud* (*Yosippon*) und des *Tarikä Wäldä-ʿAmid*", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 136/2, 1986, pp. 314–46).

For the fifth section, with contributions on various subjects not immediately related to *DAE* research fields, I will limit myself to listing the titles of the papers: Ulrich Braukämper, "Controversy over Local Tradition and National Ethiopian Context: Case Study of the Hadiya" (pp. 363–76); Francis Amadeus Karl Breyer, "Morgenländische Wörter im Deutschen: Die ägyptischen Lehnwörter" (pp. 377–401); Martha H. Henze, "Oriental Carpets and Textiles in Ethiopia: Evidence of Trade and Contacts" (pp. 402–10); Hussein Ahmed, "Scholarly Research and Publications on Islam in Ethiopia (1952–2002): An Assessment" (pp. 411–26); Didier Morin, "'Persian' and 'Galla' Presence on the Afar Coast" (pp. 428–36), who after a thorough scrutiny of the sources concludes against an ancient Oromo settlement in the area, while an ancient Persian presence can not be excluded; what is more important is that both *gällá* and *Fúrs(ʔ)* (author's spellings) seem eventually to acquire a political rather than geographic or ethnic meaning; Burkhard Vogt – Vittoria Buffa, "Cultural Interactions with the Horn of Africa – a View from Early Arabia" (pp. 437–56).

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Scrinium: Revue de patrologie, d'hagiographie critique et d'histoire ecclésiastique/Scrinium: Журнал патрологии, критической агиографии и церковной истории. Vol. 1: Varia Aethiopica: In Memory of Sevir B. Chernetsov (1943–2005)/Varia Aethiopica: Памяти Севира Борисовича Чернецова (1943–2005), ed. DENIS NOSNITSIN et al. Saint-Petersbourg: Byzantinorossica, 2005. xlii, 418 pp. Preis: € 78,-. ISBN 5–88483–058–0.

Als erster Band einer neuen, von der Société des études byzantines et slaves, St. Pétersbourg herausgegebenen und von B. Lourie verantworteten Zeit-