



Aethiopia 14 (2011)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

RICHARD PANKHURST – RITA PANKHURST, Addis Ababa University

Personalia

In memoriam Stanislaw Chojnacki (1915–2010)

Aethiopia 14 (2011), 215–221

ISSN: 1430–1938

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

Personalia

In memoriam Stanislaw Chojnacki (1915–2010)

RICHARD PANKHURST – RITA PANKHURST, Addis Ababa University

Professor Stanislaw Chojnacki, librarian, museologist, art historian, educator and horticulturalist, was born in Riga, Latvia on 1 October 1915, and died in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, on 3 July 2010 aged 95. His funeral took place at St. Casimir's Church, Sudbury and Professors Mulugeta Wodajo and Aklilu Habte convened a memorial service in Washington DC on 2 November 2010, attended by many former colleagues and other friends from Ethiopia.

Chojnacki's earliest years were Europe-oriented, but the greater part of his professional life was involved with Ethiopia. His first university studies were in law in Warsaw whence he travelled to Paris, enrolling at the Sorbonne. His educational career was interrupted in 1939 by the German invasion of Poland. As he later recalled, he devoted five days to his motherland's defence, before he was captured and spent the next five years as a prisoner-of-war in Germany. At the termination of hostilities in 1945 he went to Rome to assist with a Polish Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) publishing project, after which he emigrated to Canada, where he joined the University of Montreal, and took an MA in Slavonic studies.

That was the time when Dr Lucien Matte, director of Addis Abäba's Täfäri Mäkonnen School, was chosen by the Emperor to establish the country's first college of higher education. Modern education in this post-liberation period had been established only a decade earlier, so that not many students were adequately qualified. Initially no more than 71 in number, they were for the most part boarders. This meant that Chojnacki and his colleagues had closer relations with them than only a few years later, when student numbers began to rise.

Dr Matte, a French Canadian Jesuit, recruited mainly Roman Catholics, many of them refugees from Eastern Europe. For the post of Librarian he approached Chojnacki, who had studied librarianship in Montreal, and came from a scholarly family interested in the outside world – his father was a keen book collector and he himself read and travelled widely. He was surprised when Matte phoned to offer him the post of Librarian of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). Knowing little about Africa, Chojnacki asked Matte in what part of Canada Addis Abäba was situated.

That little point solved Chojnacki willingly accepted the offered employment. Thereafter he took a keen interest in Ethiopia, and, unlike many librarians, read most of the books he ordered.

Chojnacki, as the first librarian of UCAA, was largely free to build up its library as he wished. Education at the college was based mainly on general survey courses on world cultures, but, realising that the students needed to know more about their own country, he succeeded in purchasing a core of works on Ethiopia. This was relatively easy before the establishment of African Studies Programs in North America and elsewhere, for works on Africa could be obtained for the picking, and Chojnacki soon built up good relations with a second-hand bookseller in Britain.

Chojnacki likewise began the collection of Ethiopian ethnographic objects, many of which he collected himself. Once while walking in a remote part of northern Ethiopia he suddenly came upon a local inhabitant with an outlandish-looking dagger tied to his waist. He and the owner had no language in common, and thus relied on signs. The man had no interest in money, but took a liking to the professor's shirt. A deal was thereupon struck, as a result of which the librarian returned to his hotel bare-chested, but in possession of the cherished weapon, which was duly displayed, along with other ethnographic acquisitions, above the shelves in the library. He always claimed that this location caused the students to look on such articles with enhanced interest and respect. He also founded a student Ethnological Society, the *Bulletin* of which ran from 1953 to 1961, and was reprinted in 2002. One of the founders of the Horticultural Society of Ethiopia he organised the UCAA's gardens. The indigenous trees he planted, now fully grown, are bringing shade and fresh air to the Arat Kilo campus. The *Bulletin of the Horticultural Society of Ethiopia* published numerous articles by him: on growing African violets, greenhouse gardening, shrubs and trees grown in Ethiopia, lilies, azaleas, and dry weather gardening. He also collected zoological specimens, especially butterflies, which were later transferred to Addis Abāba's Natural History Museum and persuaded students, by whom he was known as "Hoy", to go with him out of the capital to enjoy and sketch country scenes.

* * *

Haile Sellassie I University (HSIU) later Addis Ababa University (AAU) was founded in 1961 to replace the UCAA. This was followed in the same year by the founding of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES). In the course of these developments Chojnacki was transferred to the newly established Institute. He became its first Librarian and Museum Curator, as well as Co-Editor, with Richard Pankhurst, of the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies (JES)* and the first volume of a *Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography* (1975).

The IES was situated in the Emperor's former Palace, and, benefiting from the monarch's life-long interest, the Institute was set up at minimum cost. As heir to the UCAA, it inherited the latter's library on Ethiopia and virtually all its ethnographic collection. Books and artefacts were transported by the Imperial Bodyguard from the old site at Arat Kilo to the new at Səddəst Kilo without any cost to the University.

The transition from College to University was effected wherever possible by staff transfers, rather than by new appointments. Personnel were thus transferred to the IES from both the UCAA and from another Government institution: the National Library of Ethiopia. Chojnacki, Librarian of the UCAA, thus became Librarian of the IES. Richard Pankhurst, history professor in the UCAA, was appointed Director of IES, while continuing his teaching commitments. Stephen Wright, an English librarian in the National Library, was made the IES librarian for works in Amharic. Rita Pankhurst, too, was transferred from the National Library, to become the first University Librarian, and thereby the first librarian of the newly erected Kennedy Library, built with US funds and called after the assassinated President Kennedy. This juggling of staff was achieved without any significant increase in the Government payroll.

Chojnacki, an Ethiopicist in his own right, kept abreast of research in the area and, in 1966, with Richard Pankhurst, convened the First International Conference of Ethiopian Studies to take place on Ethiopian soil. He was later involved in the International Conferences in the History of Ethiopian Art. Throughout this time he enjoyed close ties with other scholars, and this enabled him to enlist their help in his acquisitions programme. Every year he undertook purchasing forays to Asmāra, Harär and Dərre Dawa. He built up an extensive manuscript microfilm collection by obtaining copies of films taken by Ernst Hammerschmidt, UNESCO and the US-based Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, as well as European and other diplomatic papers on Ethiopia filmed by Sven Rubenson. To familiarise readers with recent publications on Ethiopia he produced *Ethiopian Publications*, an annual listing of books and articles printed on Ethiopia, and several other bibliographical works, including a *Register of Current Research on Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa*, edited in collaboration with Richard Pankhurst. In the course of producing these publications he trained several library assistants in bibliography, among them Həylä Mäsqäl Gäbrä Wäld and Mārğa Diro. Chojnacki joined other librarians in pressing for a law of deposit for printed materials but was no more successful than they were in getting one enacted. The IES Library nonetheless grew steadily under his stewardship. His achievement may be seen in the fact that the IES library, which he had built up from scratch, at the time of his retirement in 1975 numbered over 10,600 works in Ethiopian and some 14,350 in foreign languages, while the Museum housed almost 5,500 ethnological objects.

The Institute's museum, of which the Emperor was very proud, and which he often inspected, was regularly seen by visiting heads-of-state. In 1965, finding that the expansion of tourism and growing foreign interest in Ethiopian art was leading to a serious drain of antiquities from the country, Chojnacki founded a Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of Old Ethiopian Paintings. It evolved in 1968 into the Society of Friends of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (SOFIES) which exists to this day. Both organisations purchased works of art for the museum, which, regrettably, had, and still has, no acquisitions budget. Despite all difficulties Chojnacki developed the world's finest collection of Ethiopian icons.

He won the support of a dedicated band of followers, most notably Dägafe Gäbrä-Şadäq, who succeeded him as IES Librarian, Gërma Fəssəha who, on leaving Ethiopia, continued with museum work at the Völkerkunde Museum in Munich, and Ṭəlaye Gäbrä-Mädhən, who was always ready to help him in his research.

In 1970 the Emperor awarded Chojnacki the "Star of Ethiopia" and the AAU Senate decided in 2010 that the Museum should be called after him.

Chojnacki was a prolific author, writing on such diverse topics as forestry problems, foreign travellers to Ethiopia and the history of the Ethiopian flag, on which he published three articles. Initially interested in modern Ethiopian art, Chojnacki encouraged contemporary Ethiopian artists. He began by writing in *Ethiopia Observer* about some post-Liberation foreign trained ones, such as Əskəndər (Skunder), Gäbrä Krəstos and Wärqu Goşşu, but also drew attention to talented lesser known younger artists, such as Danə'el Tayyā from whom he commissioned a portrait.

It is, however, a historian of traditional Ethiopian Christian art, who opened up Ethiopian art history as a field of Ethiopian Studies, that he made his most outstanding contribution. Some of his earliest articles appeared in the *JES*, and included his "Short Introduction to Ethiopian Painting" (1964) and "Notes on art in Ethiopia in the 16th century: an enquiry into the unknown" (1971). These were followed by detailed studies of specific aspects of Ethiopian iconography, many in his pioneering *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting* (1983). There followed two further important works: *Ethiopian Icons* (2000), a monumental beautifully reproduced catalogue of the IES icon collection which he had done so much to build, and *Ethiopian Crosses* (2006), an important aspect of Ethiopian faith and creativity.

Throughout his life Stanislaw Chojnacki travelled and read widely and developed many interests, though political affairs were not one of these. He did not listen to the radio news nor read newspapers, declaring that if a matter were important enough people would soon tell him about it. Richard Pankhurst, who worked closely with him, and often saw him daily, had a constructive and trouble-free relationship, can testify to his dedication to

the Institute and to Ethiopian Studies in general. Chojnacki encouraged and advised Rita Pankhurst on her gardening pursuits and she enjoyed discussing contemporary Ethiopian art with him. His picturesque and idiosyncratic English will be remembered by many of his British friends. He would refer to the waste paper basket as the wasting paper box – a not inept description.

Chojnacki returned to Canada in 1976 and was given a leading position in the Sudbury University Library until his retirement in 1986, when he became Emeritus Professor of that University. He continued to live in Sudbury for the last thirty-four years of his life, with frequent travels to friends in distant parts. He also usually attended, and presented papers to the German-based scholarly society, *Orbis Aethiopicus*, which published a Festschrift in his honour in 1992 and designated him a Most Distinguished Fellow of the society.

Though a citizen of the world and a resident of Canada, when this became possible he was happy to go back to Poland to visit his family and take an interest in the education of its younger members. He also gave scholarships to students to attend the John Paul II University in Lublin. Throughout his life he maintained his affectionate links with the Ethiopian people and his love for the land of his birth.

Select Bibliography of Stanislaw Chojnacki*

- 1963 “Note on pre-Gondarine Imperial Capitals”, *Bollettino [dell’] Istituto di Studi Etiopici* (Asmara) 3, [1964], pp. 5–8.
- 1969 with I. MARSHALL, “Colonel Milward’s Abyssinian Journal 2 December 1867 to 13 June 1868”, *JES* 7/1, pp. 81–118.
- 1970 “A Second Note on the Ethiopian National Flag, with Comments on its Historical and Sociological Sources”, in: R. PANKHURST – S. CHOJNACKI (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa [3–7 April] 1966*, I, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University – Institute of Ethiopian Studies, pp. 137–153.
- 1971 “Gebre Christos: Impressions of his Recent Exhibition”, *EthObs* 14/1, pp. 10–24.
- “Notes on Art in Ethiopia in the 16th Century: An Inquiry into the Unknown”, *JES* 9/2, pp. 21–98.
- 1980 “Notes on the Ethiopian Traditional Art: The Last Phase”, in: J. TUBIANA (ed.), *Modern Ethiopia from the Accession of Menilek II to the Present (Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies [Session A], Nice/19–22 December 1977)*, Rotterdam: Balkema, pp. 52–72.
- 1985 *The ‘Qwer’ata Re’esu’, its Iconography and Significance: An Essay in the Cultural History of Ethiopia* = *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* (AION) Suppl. 42, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale.

* The list includes only titles not compiled in two former bibliographies of Chojnacki’s contributions; see SCHOLZ 1992: xvii–xx (bibliography 1959–1990) and RAUNIG – ASFA WOSSEN ASSERATE 2007: xi–xii (bibliography since 1990).

- 1991–92 “Recherches sur l’art chrétien d’Éthiopie au cours des quatre décennies”, *Annuaire de l’École pratique des hautes études, section des sciences religieuses (AEPHE-SR)* 100, pp. 353–360.
- 1992 “Voyages d’exploration en Éthiopie (Novembre–Décembre 1993)”, *RSE* 36, [1994], pp. 37–48.
- 1993 with P.B. HENZE, “A Rich Heritage – Still Inadequately Explored”, in: P.B. HENZE (ed.), *Aspects of Ethiopian Art from Ancient Axum to the 20th Century*, London: The Jed Press, [1994], pp. 9–16.
- 1994 “Les trois Hébreux dans la fournaise. Une enquête iconographique dans la peinture éthiopienne”, in: C. LEPAGE – É. DELAGE (éds.), *Études Éthiopiennes. Actes de la X^e conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988*, I, Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, pp. 253–270.
- 1996 RAINERI, O., *Santi Guerrieri a cavallo. Tele Etiopiche. Tele di Qēs Adamu Tesfaw. Warrior Saints on Horseback. Ethiopian Paintings. Paintings by Qēs Adamu Tesfaw. Introduzione di/Introduction by STANISLAW CHOJNACKI*, Clusone (BG): Ferrari Editrice.
- 1999 “Les portraits des donateurs comme sources de l’histoire politique, religieuse et culturelle de l’Éthiopie du XII^e au XIX^e siècle”, in: P. NAGEL – P.O. SCHOLZ (Hrsg.), *Nubica et Aethiopia IV/V [vormals Nubica]. Sonderteil: Äthiopien gestern und heute. Akten der 1. Tagung der Orbis Aethiopicus Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung und Förderung der äthiopischen Kultur*, Warszawa: ZAŚ/AN, pp. 621–647.
- DI SALVO, M., *Chiese d’Etiopia. Il monastero di Nārgā Sellāsē. Con testi di STANISLAW CHOJNACKI – OSVALDO RAINERI*, Milano: Skira Editore/Fondazione Carlo Leone Montandon.
- 2000 “Ethiopian Religious Art: Its Significance and Forms of Expression”, in: *Miscellanea Aethiopia Stanislaw Kur*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Warszawskiej = *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* XII/2 (1999), pp. 47–49.
- 2001 *The Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Research on Ethiopian Heritage*, in: P.O. SCHOLZ (Hrsg.), *Von Hiob Ludolf bis Enrico Cerulli. Halle/S. 3.–5. Oktober 1996. Akten der 2. Tagung der Orbis-Aethiopicus-Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung und Förderung der äthiopischen Kultur* = *Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopia. Schriftenreihe zur Kulturgeschichte des Raumes und [sic, pro: um] das Rote Meer in Verbindung mit dem Forschungszentrum für Mittelmeerraumarchäologie der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Warszawa – Wiesbaden [: Selbstverlag], pp. 127–139.
- 2002 “New Aspects of Shoon Painting: The Discovery of an Outstanding Folding Strip”, in: *PICES* 14, pp. 142–151.
- 2007 [CHOJNACKI, STANISLAW], “New Discoveries: The Italianite School Reconsidered”, in: W. RAUNIG – ASFA WOSSEN ASSERATE (eds.), *Ethiopian Art*, pp. 1–20.
- “Collegial Wishes: A few Remarks on Collaboration with Richard at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES)”, *JES* 40, 1–2 = HERAN SEREKE-BRHAN (Guest Editor) – BAYE YIMAM – GEBRE YNTISO (Co-eds.), *Festschrift Dedicated in Honour of Prof. Pankhurst & Mrs. Rita Pankhurst*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University – Institute of Ethiopian Studies, pp. 353–355.
- “Foundation of the Society of Friends of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and its Evolution between 1965 and 1975”, *ibid.*, pp. 359–360.
- 2009 “Tradizione dell’arte religiosa in Etiopia e pittura su tavola”, in: G. BARBIERI – G. FIACCADORI (a.c.), *Nigra sum sed formosa. Sacro e bellezza dell’Etiopia cristiana*.

Personalia

- *Ca' Foscari Esposizioni 13 marzo–10 maggio 2009*, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia – Friuladria Crédit Agricole – Regione del Veneto, Vicenza: Terra Ferma, pp. 115–129.
- [CHOJNACKI, STANISŁAW], *Christ's Resurrection in Ethiopian Painting* = *Orientalia Christiana analecta* 282, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale.
- 2010 *Twenty-five Years of Service at the University College of Addis Ababa and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University (formerly Haile Sellase I University), between 1950 and 1975*, Toronto [s.n.].
- “The History of the Sacred Heart in Ethiopia”, in: W. RAUNIG – ASFA WOSSEN ASSERATE (Hrsg.), *Orbis Aethiopicus. ውርሰ ኢትዮጵያ Beiträge zur Geschichte, Religion und Kunst Äthiopiens*, Band XIII: *Juden, Christen und Muslime in Äthiopien – ein Beispiel für abrahamische Ökumene*, Dettelbach: Verlag J.H. Röll, pp. 79–100.

Other Relevant Literature

- 1990 R. PANKHURST – TADESSE BEYENE (eds.), *Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies: Proceedings of the Symposium, Addis Ababa, November 24–26, 1988*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University – Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- 1992 P.O. SCHOLZ, in collaboration with R. PANKHURST – W. WITAKOWSKI (eds.), *Orbis Aethiopicus. Studia in honorem Stanislaus Chojnacki natali septuagesimo quinto dicata, septuagesimo septimo oblata*, Albstadt: Karl Schuler Publishing.
- 2002 A. PANKHURST (ed.), *Addis Ababa University College Ethnological Society Bulletin, Reprint, 1953–1961*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology and Social Administration.
- 2007 W. RAUNIG – ASFA WOSSEN ASSERATE (eds.), *Ethiopian Art – A Unique Cultural Heritage and Modern Challenge. 10. Wissenschaftliche Tagung der Gesellschaft Orbis Aethiopicus – in Leipzig vom 24.–26. Juni 2005 in Verbindung mit der 7th International Conference of Ethiopian Art zu Ehren des Nestors der äthiopischen Kunstgeschichte Stanisław Chojnacki. Orbis Aethiopicus ውርሰ ኢትዮጵያ የኢትዮጵያ ባህል ፡ ለመጠበቅ ፡ ለማዳበር ፡ የቆመ ፡ ድርጅት* Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung und Förderung der äthiopischen Kultur Society for the Preservation and Promotion of Ethiopian Culture, Beiträge zu Geschichte, Religion und Kunst Äthiopiens Band X, Lublin: Marie Curie-Skłodowska University Press.

Obituaries

Sudbury Star, 6 July 2010

TESHOME HABTE-GEORGIS 2010, “Stanisław Chojnacki”, *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5/1, pp. 139–144.

In memoriam Edward Ullendorff (1920–2011)

MICHAEL A. KNIBB – King's College London

Edward Ullendorff, who died in Oxford on 6 March 2011 at the age of ninety-one, was the most distinguished and influential scholar in the field of Ethiopian studies in Great Britain in the second half of the twentieth century, and