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In memoriam Edward Ullendorff (1920–2011)

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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

indeed it may fairly be said that within Great Britain his name epitomized the subject. Born in Berlin on 25 January 1920, he attended there the famous Gymnasium Graues Kloster from 1930 to 1938, where he taught himself Hebrew and Arabic, and where, because of his obvious ability, he was given permission at the age of fifteen to attend university classes in Arabic. In 1938 he was able to travel to Palestine to study for a degree at the recently founded Hebrew University in Jerusalem; he attended courses in Semitic languages and Semitic philology under a distinguished group of scholars including the Egyptologist H.J. Polotsky, whom for long after he continued to regard as a mentor. His knowledge of Ethiopian Semitic languages led to him playing an important role in the British Military Administration in Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1942 to 1946, and his experiences at that time were to have a decisive influence on his future career. He was joined in Eritrea by his fiancée, Dina Noack, whom he had met in Jerusalem, and they were married in Asmara in 1943; it is impossible to think of Edward Ullendorff without at the same time thinking of Dina, to whom throughout his life he owed so much.

After the War Edward Ullendorff served in the dying days of the British Mandatary Government in Jerusalem from 1947 to 1948 and then took up a post at the Institute of Colonial Studies in Oxford while at the same time studying for a DPhil. He served as Lecturer, and subsequently Reader, in Semitic Languages at the University of St Andrews (1950–1959), Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures at the University of Manchester (1959–1964), and was then appointed to a Chair in Ethiopian Studies that was especially created for him at the School of Oriental and African Studies. In 1979 he transferred to the Chair in Semitic Languages at SOAS; he retired in 1982, but continued to be very active as a scholar for many years thereafter into the present century.

An account of Edward Ullendorff's life and scholarly work by David Appleyard, which was intended to mark the celebration of his ninetieth birthday, was included in *Aethiopica* 13,¹ and that account contained much that would naturally appear in an obituary.² It is not intended here to repeat what has already been said by David Appleyard, but rather to complement his account by focusing on one aspect of Edward Ullendorff's multi-faceted work in the field of Ethiopian studies, that is his contributions in the field of biblical and related studies, and by attempting to describe the man that I knew.

The title of Edward Ullendorff's memorable series of Schweich Lectures, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (1968), points already to the fact that one of the major foci of his research was the Bible and the Pseudepigrapha in the Ethiopian

¹ APPLEYARD 2010: 201–04.

² Obituaries of Edward Ullendorff were published in *The Times* (10 March 2011, p. 52) and *The Guardian* (20 May 2011, p. 29); both obituaries included a photograph.

context. He was also concerned with the Hebrew language and with the Old Testament in general, and this concern is reflected, for example, in the essays included in the first section ('Hebrew and Old Testament') of the first volume of his collected essays, *Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?* (1977). But he was to devote more time to the Bible in the Ethiopian context, and in his Schweich Lectures he took up three topics on each of which he wrote on more than one occasion: Ethiopic Bible translations, particularly the translation of the Bible into Gə'əz, the impact of the Old Testament on Ethiopian life, and the legend of the Queen of Sheba. For the second lecture he took up in a revised and expanded form – and in dialogue with Maxime Rodinson³ – points that he had made in his article "Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity" (1956), and for the third he substantially reproduced a previously published paper entitled "The Queen of Sheba" (1963). In the first lecture, following a masterly survey of previous work on the subject, he developed a very distinctive theory concerning the origins and history of the Ethiopic Bible. He rejected the widely held view that the original translation of the Bible into Gə'əz based on the Greek was subjected later to revision on the basis of the Syriac (mediated by the Arabic) and subsequently of the Hebrew and argued that there was nothing to prevent the assumption that all three – Greek, Syriac and Hebrew – were used, directly or indirectly, for the original translation by a team of translators. He believed that direct Syriac or Hebrew influences could readily be accounted for in the period from the 4th to perhaps the 7th century, but not in the 14th or 15th century, but he did accept that there was influence from Arabic sources at that time. He also accepted that in purely statistical terms Greek was the source *par excellence* used for the original translation.

Edward Ullendorff reverted to these arguments in two later papers, "Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek: the Versions underlying Ethiopic Translations of Bible and Intertestamental Literature" (1980) and "Hebrew Elements in the Ethiopic Old Testament" (1987). He had earlier argued in similar terms that the Ethiopic version of Enoch was in large part made directly from Aramaic ("An Aramaic *Vorlage* of the Ethiopic Text of Enoch?" [1960]).⁴ It is perhaps the case that his views concerning the use of Syriac and Hebrew in addition to Greek for the original translation of the Bible into Gə'əz and concerning the history of the translation, have not found

³ RODINSON 1972: 166–170.

⁴ In my edition of the Ethiopic Enoch, I argued that those who translated Enoch into Ethiopic had available an Aramaic as well as a Greek text, but I would be less certain now that the evidence I discussed is to be explained in the way I suggested: see KNIBB – ULLENDORFF 1978.

wide acceptance, but there is no question but that all three of his Schweich Lectures reflect great erudition and learning, and that the volume remains indispensable for all those concerned with any aspect of the Ethiopic Bible and the impact of the translation within Ethiopia.

Edward Ullendorff's concern with the Ethiopic Bible was also reflected in his supervision of two doctoral dissertations that consisted of editions of Ethiopic texts, Hugh Pilkington's unpublished edition of the Book of Proverbs in Ethiopic (1978) and my edition of the Ethiopic Enoch. I had first met Edward Ullendorff in 1965, a year after his arrival at SOAS, at a time when I was already interested in the Book of Enoch; he very kindly agreed to help me by reading some Gə'əz with me, and I met him for this purpose on a number of occasions over the autumn and winter of 1965/66. I learnt a very great deal from him on those occasions. Two years later he showed even greater kindness in suggesting that I should take over from him the preparation of a new edition of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch and should prepare it in the first instance as a University of London doctoral dissertation.

The discovery of Aramaic fragments of the Book of Enoch amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls had aroused a renewed interest in the book, and from as far back as 1959 Edward Ullendorff and Matthew Black (Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of St Andrews) had had it in mind to prepare a new edition and translation of Enoch, and an exegetical commentary, and they were only prevented from making progress by the delay in publishing the Aramaic fragments. I believe that it was originally envisaged that for the edition, the Ethiopic, Greek and Aramaic texts would be presented in parallel columns. It was in this situation that Edward Ullendorff suggested that I should take over his part in the enterprise, the preparation of the edition and translation, and eventually it was agreed that the exegetical commentary should be published separately. During the period that he spent at the University of Manchester Edward Ullendorff had begun the preparation of a catalogue of the Ethiopic manuscripts in the possession of the John Rylands Library,⁵ and I imagine it was at this time – although we never discussed it – that he had determined that the edition should be based on a photographic reproduction of the relevant portions of Rylands Ethiopic MS 23. He was in any case a strong advocate at that time of the publication of Ethiopic texts by means of photographic reproduction.

Subject to the above, he gave me enormous freedom in the preparation of the edition and translation, but provided advice, help and encouragement whenever I needed it. It was thanks to him that I was given access to photographs of the Aramaic fragments of Enoch before they were published. I

⁵ See STRELCYN 1974: vi, viii–ix.

know that he found it hard to understand why the work took me longer than he had expected, but he continued to provide support and encouragement. When the work was completed as a dissertation, it was again thanks to him that it was published by Oxford University Press (1978). He remained thereafter a mentor and friend, and I was frequently in contact with him, both in person and by telephone. I learned so much simply from listening to him, and on more than one occasion he gave me some very shrewd advice.

Edward Ullendorff published over a sixty-year period a very substantial body of books, articles, notes and reviews, as a glance at the two bibliographies of his work (1989; 2000) will reveal and as is apparent from the tribute by David Appleyard. He was able to achieve this partly because of his ability to concentrate absolutely on the matter in hand, partly because of the support he constantly received from Dina, and partly because he continued throughout his life the habit he developed as a student of rising early and completing several hours work long before most people were about. But in addition to his research and publications, he played a significant role in the affairs of SOAS and of the British Academy, of other learned societies and of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society. It was also he who ensured that a memorial service was held for Ḥaylä Šəllase at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Although he states in his autobiography (1988) that he never had cause to regret choosing an academic career in preference to continuing in the British Colonial service, as was open to him in 1948, I think there was an element in him that would have enjoyed a life of action.

He lived for nearly thirty years after his retirement in 1982. From his home in Oxford he kept in contact with scholars in the Ethiopic and wider Semitic field both in Great Britain and throughout the world, and he received many visitors. He and Dina were most generous in their hospitality, and my wife and I, like many others, frequently enjoyed lunch with them in their home or in a restaurant in the Cotswolds. He was a very interesting and amusing conversationalist, and he had a fund of stories that he would tell, which it was not unknown for him to repeat. It was characteristic of him throughout his life that he did much kindness by stealth.

Edward Ullendorff saw himself as the heir of a tradition of Germanic philological scholarship, which he attempted to preserve and pass on. He was an example to all those who counted themselves as his pupils, an example of learning and scholarly judgment that few are likely to equal.

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In memoriam Paul B. Henze (1924–2011)

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Paul Henze devoted much of his professional life to the study of Ethiopia. Born on 29 August 1924 in Redwood Falls, Minnesota, he earned his B.A. degree in 1948 from St. Olaf College and his M.A. from Harvard University in 1950, specializing in history and languages. He served for two years in the U.S. Army in Europe during World War II and then joined Radio Free Europe in Munich. Henze made his first trip to the Horn of Africa in 1962, visiting Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan. In 1968, he returned to Sudan, Somalia