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Professor Richard Keir Pethick Pankhurst (usually known among his colleagues simply as Richard) will celebrate his 75th birthday towards the end of this year, i.e. on 3 December. About two-thirds of this respectable age have been devoted to Ethiopian studies, a fact which prompted the Editorial Committee to congratulate the venerated teacher and prolific scholar by dedicating the fifth volume of *Aethiopica* to his *Festschrift*.

Among the contributors to the volume is his wife, the former long-time Librarian of Haile Sellassie I University, Rita Pankhurst, herself a scholar, who has been requested by the said Committee to compile a select bibliography of his publications. Only such a short list as Rita has kindly compiled for us could be accommodated in this volume. If Richard's newspaper articles and reviews were to be included, a separate bibliographic monograph would be required.

This brief note seeks to introduce the author and his works, and, in particular, Rita's bibliography. Admittedly it is not altogether an easy assignment to introduce such a personality as Richard's to the community of scholars, of which he has been an outstanding member for almost 50 years. He has been an admirable instructor to some, a colleague to many, and a friend to almost all. But this is my duty and should be carried out even if it may in part reflect a personal view.

I have known Richard for over 40 years, and our contact has remained intact despite the long geographical distance that separates us. "One in a million", he once described our unexpected meeting in a New York street in the summer of 1966, only a day after our arrival in the city from different directions and without knowing about each others' trip. That was not our first meeting though; by then I had already studied four years under him and worked more than a year under his directorship at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. It was the University College of Addis Abäba (later integrated into the Haile Sellassie I University, now known as Addis Ababa University) that brought about our first acquaintance in the autumn of 1961 – he in his early 30s as a lecturer in economics and I in my early 20s as an undergraduate student. He had already won fame as an eloquent lecturer having joined the Faculty of Liberal Arts upon his arrival in 1956 from

England where he earned his B.Sc. (Econ.) and Ph.D. degrees at the London School of Economics. The hundred or so freshmen were pleased to have him as their lecturer in the Introduction to Economics which was then a compulsory course. As soon as the schedule was out, a kind of stir spread among the freshmen.

A new course by an imposing instructor thrilled almost everyone! The news proved to be true in every respect. I had never seen such an attentive audience! Unlike some of his colleagues, Richard had (and this was his custom throughout) only a few notes before him; but the fluency of his presentations and the lucidity of his explanations gripped everyone and left none in perplexity. Perhaps the one or the other might in the prevailing torpidity have fallen asleep had Richard not cracked a couple of quaint jokes now and then, thereby releasing a crescendo of laughter from the audience. Recalling these jokes whenever a few of us happened to meet years later always reanimated our college memory.

Richard continued to teach for years even after he became director of the research institute, about which I will make some remarks later. In fact, he has not stopped teaching today; he has only changed his pupils and his platform. In recent years, Richard has undertaken an innovative project of educating the public in history. In an ingenious way, he brings researched history to the public, particularly to the young intellectuals at home and abroad who are highly qualified in various fields, but have had little or no exposure to the history of their own country. As a talented teacher, he knows how to approach them. Often they prefer to read newspapers in the English language rather than grapple with erudite academic treatises. So he has chosen the weekly *Addis Tribune* to convey to them the facts of the past in a series of simple and perceptive presentations.

He deals with almost every aspect of Ethiopian history of all periods arranged in particular patterns not dissimilar to history lesson plans. Often a theme is featured seriatim running for weeks. Citing a part of a list of topics covered from the catalogue of the said newspaper's homepage (www.addistribune.com) may well illustrate this point. Among the periods he chose to feature extensively has been the Italo-Ethiopian war and its aftermath, 1935–45, a period which interests most Ethiopian intellectuals for various reasons. He treated it in a series of articles under the following headings:

“The Italo-Ethiopian Scenario, 1935; Mussolini and Ethiopia; League of Nations Sanctions; Anglo-French Diplomacy, and the Initial Italo-Ethiopian Campaign of 1935–6; May Chaw and Badoglio's Occupation of Addis Ababa; The Occupation Years; The Beginnings of

the Patriotic Resistance; Fighting around Addis Ababa, during the Rains of 1936; Resistance and Repression; Fierce Fighting; The Graziani Massacre and Consequences; Graziani's Reign of Terror, and Patriot Resistance; The Duce and the Patriots, in 1937; Mussolini's Concern at Increasing Patriot Power; The Dismissal of Graziani; The Spirit of the Patriots in 1938, and the Advent of the Duke of Aosta; The Patriot Resistance, 1939–1941; Approaching the European War; Mussolini's Entry into the European War; 1941: The Italian Departure, and the Arrival of the British; Post World War II Relations with the British; Ethio-American Post-War Relations; Emperor Haile Sellassie's Post-War Foreign Policy.”

Apparently, his aim is not only to inform the youth about their forefathers and the historical process of their country, but also to make them conscious of the poor state of their heritage, particularly the material culture on which their historiography and, to some extent, their economy depend. He urges them to participate in any way possible in the retrieval and preservation of their material and spiritual culture. He thus brings out a number of articles with seemingly sensational titles which deal with existing or looming dangers:

“Artistic Developments of the Past, and the Crisis of the Manuscript Today; A Serious Question of Ethiopian Studies: Five Thousand Ethiopian Manuscripts Abroad, and the International Community; The Dilemma of the Two Looted Crowns; The Unfinished History of the Aksum Obelisk Return Struggle; Preserving Ethiopian History; A Stolen Ethiopian Icon: The Story of the Kwer'ata Re'esu Hits the Headlines; Africa's Stolen Cultural Property; The Preservation of Ethiopian Culture; Ethiopia's Culture in Grave Crisis: The Old City of Danqaz: an Urgent Question for the Authorities; Ethiopia's Crumbling Historical Heritage; How to Destroy Your History: The Temple of Yeha, and its Killer Trees; How to Conceal Your History: The Hidden Inscriptions of Aksum; How to Lose Your History: The Micro-filming of Ethiopian Manuscripts: A Nostalgic View; How to Lose Your History: Lives of Ethiopian Saints; How to Lose Your History: The Mysterious Case of the Ethiopian Archives; How to Write, or Lose, One's History: In Praise of Historical Memoirs, and Autobiographies; How to Remember Your History: Ethiopia's Missing Statues; Ethiopian National Archives: “Folly” and “Disaster” Justified.”

It is no surprise that Richard was a founder member of the non-governmental Aksum Obelisk Return Committee and of AFROMET, the Association for the Return of Maqdala Ethiopian Treasures.

The distinguished teacher is a prolific writer, a meticulous researcher and above all an innovator. Every student of Ethiopian history is aware of the size and instructive nature of Richard's works. The novice may be referred to Rita's list of his works in this issue or to the standard bibliographies on Ethiopia. His unique contribution to Ethiopian studies should nonetheless be mentioned here, albeit briefly.

The year 1961 may in a way be regarded as a turning-point in Ethiopian historiography, for it was in that year that Richard's first innovative work – *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia from Early Times to 1800* – appeared in print. It was innovative in that Ethiopian studies (traditionally comprising theology, philology and history) adhered in its third component strictly to political history, more or less restricted in its scope to a narrow trail based primarily on a chronology of dynastic successions. Richard's mother, Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960), had attempted to bring in the cultural dimension of history in the mid-1950s, but her huge book was soon out of print and no one seems to have pursued thereafter the study of Ethiopian culture as a branch of history. Richard on the other hand continued his own innovation of the economic dimension and established it firmly as a three-year course at the then Haile Sellassie I University.

In addition to numerous related articles that appeared in the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, *Ethiopia Observer* and other scholarly journals, he developed his Economic History into a monumental work. The second volume (covering the period 1800–1935), which Professor Ullendorff rightly considers a serviceable handbook, was published seven years later. These two volumes are landmarks in the economic history of Ethiopia. They have since been supplemented by several of his specialised monographs: on state and land (1966), on the army (1967), on money and banking (1967), on tax records (1968), two volumes on Ethiopian towns (1982 and 1984 respectively), and on famine and epidemics (1985). The monograph on social history (1990) is also very closely related to them.

Richard's publications are by no means limited to economic history. He has published on subjects pertaining to education, art, culture, medicine, music, literature, games, architecture and biography. He has also edited, annotated, abridged and/or prefaced many a work of historical value. Examples of each category are provided in Rita's select bibliography.

Before concluding this note, mention should be made of another significant contribution of Richard's to Ethiopian studies. It was notably the joint initiative of Professors Richard Pankhurst and Stanislaw Chojnacki that the Institute of Ethiopian Studies came into existence in the early 1960s. From the very beginning, the Institute housed an ethnological museum, a reference library and a research department. Richard became the Institute's first

director while Chojnacki became curator of the museum as well as head librarian. Both joined hands to build up the Institute to an unparalleled institution of Ethiopian studies. They also launched the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* as the organ of the Institute and became its joint editors until they left the country in the late 1970s.

Richard was away only temporarily. After 20 years' continuous residence in Ethiopia, he left for London in 1976 where he served for ten years as the Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society. All the same, his interest remained linked to Ethiopia. This interest never waned and the linkage was in no way loosened. He researched and published on related themes as enthusiastically as ever. He initiated the first of a now regular series of international conferences on the history of Ethiopian art and was also visiting the country at least once a year. Finally, he returned to Addis Abäba for good in 1987 and continues today to live there surrounded by his son, Ethiopian daughter-in-law and grandchildren and a botanical garden, Rita's brainchild and handywork.

It is gratifying to recall that Richard is still active in research and contributes enthusiastically to the forthcoming *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. As Chair of the Society of Friends of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (SOFIES), he is committed to building a new library for the Institute, and to saving Ethiopian artistic treasures for the museum. We may be pleased to reckon on his further contributions. We hope that all readers of the journal will join us in wishing him many more healthy years!