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WOLBERT SMIDT

Conference report

November 13–14, 2000 in Harar (Ethiopia)
“Friends of Harar”, Conference On Harari Culture

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Conferences

Zur folgenden Konferenz im Jahr 2003 haben die Universität Hamburg und die Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik nach Hamburg eingeladen.

Veronika Six

November 13–14, 2000 in Harar (Ethiopia) “Friends of Harar”, Conference On Harari Culture

This conference, which took place in Harar immediately after the 14th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa, was organized jointly by the Addis Ababa *Centre français des études éthiopiennes* under the direction of Bertrand Hirsch, and Ahmed Zekaria from the Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. Around 40 scholars from Ethiopia, France, Italy, Germany, Poland and the USA, as well as local students met in the fully renovated, Indian style Rimbaud House to discuss papers on the history of Harar and other Muslim regions, and projects for the preservation of Harari culture.

Peri Klemm opened the conference with her paper on handicrafts in Harar. Lectures given by Giorgio Banti, Ewald Wagner, and Germa Zenebe, concentrated on literature and Harari manuscripts. History was another major subject represented in the papers of Ali Yusuf, and Imran Abdallah of Harar. Ahmed Zekaria presented his research on the shrines of Harar, which are far more numerous than previously documented. Hussein Ahmed gave an overview of the history of rural Wällo Muslims in comparison with the more urban traditions of Harar; followed by a paper of Wolbert Smidt with new historical evidences on the coronation of *nəguś* Mika'el of Wällo in 1914.

The projects presented included a possible World Bank funded plan to promote the revival of old local handicraft traditions and the creation of new traditions on the basis of ancient ones such as the implementation of calligraphic schools. This economically rather than culturally motivated project aims at attracting more tourists, an idea, which is also another project, the production of a map. The Italian geographer Roberto Bianchini presented the first cultural map of the city of Harar, sketched recently in collaboration with the local cultural office. It includes a great number of shrines and, even more importantly, all the traditional quarters of the city. At the end of the conference the *ENCYCLOPAEDIA AETHIOPICA* project at Hamburg University was presented.

The presence of both the city's mayor and the region's governor gave the conference public prominence. The discussions were especially marked by a

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deeply felt need to define Harar's cultural identity. On this occasion a fine exhibition with early photographs on Harar history and art works of Harari painters was opened at Rimbaud house, followed by a guided visit to the cultural museum.

Wolbert Smidt

26.–30. März 2001 in Bamberg: XXVIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag

Der 28. Deutsche Orientalistentag hatte als übergreifendes Thema: Orientalistik zwischen Philologie und Sozialwissenschaft, was vorwiegend in fächerübergreifenden panels und Plenumsdiskussionen — dort mit Bezug auf die Situation der orientalistischen Fächer an den deutschen Universitäten — abgehandelt worden ist.

Nur zwei Beiträge befaßten sich mit Themen der Äthiopistik. Sie wurden erörtert in der Sektion: Semitistik: Lutz Edzard, Zur Konvergenz von Fachsprache im Lichte neuerer arabischer, hebräischer und amharischer diplomatischer Dokumente (dieser Titel war etwas irreführend, da beispielsweise der Vertrag von Wäçäle aus dem Jahr 1889 das "neuere" Dokument war) sowie in einem fächerübergreifendem panel: Andreas Wetter-Reinhard Hiß, Die Arbeiten am Thesaurus Linguae Aethiopiae — ein Unicode basiertes äthiopisches Textcorpus in XML: Werkzeuge und Workflow.

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Announcement

for the First International Littmann Conference which will take place from May 2nd until May 5th 2002 in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München (Germany). The special topic will be "Archaeology and History of the Horn of Africa".

The mailing address is: Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Maximilianstr. 42, D-80538 München ("Littmann Conference").