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Review

DAVID APPLEYARD, *Colloquial Amharic: A Complete Language Course*

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DAVID APPLEYARD, *Colloquial Amharic: A Complete Language Course*. Routledge: London and New York, 1995. vi + 374 pp. DM 45,80. Two 60 min. cassettes available. ISBN 0-415-10005-4 (book and cassettes course).

Colloquial Amharic by DAVID APPLEYARD is one of the many language textbooks published by Routledge under the title "Colloquial Languages Series". The book is classified into fourteen lessons (pp. 16-295) preceded by a short introduction (pp. 1-15). The last section of the book contains "key to exercises" (pp. 296-323) followed by an English-Amharic Glossary (pp. 324-371), a two pages grammatical index (pp. 372-373) and a very short Amharic index (pp. 374). The accompanying two cassettes, each about 60 minutes are recorded by the author himself, who actively participated in several of the Amharic conversations, assisted by four native speakers (two women and two men), supervised by YALEW KEBEDE, who also teaches Amharic at SOAS, like APPLEYARD.

Colloquial Amharic will enable learners to communicate in Amharic on everyday situations, to write and to read simple Amharic texts. The "interactive" system of learning a foreign language with its own script, transliteration and translation is established according to the modern standard. For the transliteration of the seven Amharic vowels Appleyard used 'ä, u, i, a, e, i, o' and for the explosive and ejective sounds of 'ቀ ኃጠ ኃጠ ኃጠ ኃጠ' he adopted the IPA system (k', t', č', p', s'). An ambiguity comes with the changes in the transliteration system. In fact, Appleyard prefers to transliterate the second person plural form with aččuh instead of aččihu -አችሁ, because of the pronunciation (p. 20). The question here is how the student of Amharic can learn the correct form of the pronunciation, especially regarding the gemination of Amharic consonants, which is an important aspect in the Amharic verbs and nouns. A solution for this problem is to put two super-script dots on top of the Amharic scripts, like LESLAU (1967) did. APPLEYARD now shows the pronunciation of the double consonant only through the transliteration, e.g. 'ምንም' is transliterated as 'minimm', 'አለ' as 'allä', which is in our opinion the best solution, because the Amharic is left as it is.

Colloquial Amharic focuses on modern spoken Amharic, based on the language of everyday situation. All the fourteen lessons are presented in order to achieve certain objectives such as new vocabularies, grammatical elements and skills of the Amharic language. It begins with simple dialogues and continues with more pretentious sentences and exercises. *Colloquial Amharic* is contemporary because the texts are showing the recent social and political development in Ethiopia. There is e.g. a map of Ethiopia and Eritrea (p. 159), which shows the new division of

Ethiopia into the fourteen zones, with a list of the present names. The conversations given in the lessons and the explanatory notes on them will help learners to have an insight into the Ethiopian's daily life style, like family affairs, shopping, and cultural observances. For example, lesson 11 (p. 210) presents a dialogue on one of the national holidays (the Feast of Meskel), it gives a vivid impression of the typical Ethiopian (Christian) way of celebrating a religious feast. Beside this, APPLEYARD offers in the notes on the dialogues useful hints of the Ethiopian life, e.g. the signification of the greeting 'ኖር' 'nor', important for a good behaviour, is explained in detail (p. 50).

Unfortunately, there are several unusual or unfamiliar expressions which may not be directly translated as the English speaker does, due to grammatical, contextual and cultural differences between Amharic and English. Some examples from the dialogues of lesson five (p.83) may show this. The title itself, 'የሩቅ ፡ ጥሪ' – 'A long distance call' is normally expressed in Amharic as 'የሰልክ ፡ ጥሪ'. This is similar to the 'ማንነህ ፡ የምትናገር?' 'Who is speaking' at the beginning of the telephone call, which should be better expressed as 'ማን ፡ ልበል?'. The same could be said about the expression 'I'm in a hurry' 'እኛኩላላሁ' instead of 'መቸኩል ፡ አለቢኝ' (pp. 83). Also the description about greetings, 'Sälamta', in the first lesson (p. 21) contains minor mistakes. There are several ways of expressing greetings in Amharic in different contexts. But the most commonly known contexts or times are, morning, day time and evening and while meeting in the evening the common greeting is expressed by 'እንደምን ፡ አመሻችሁ?' and not 'እንደምን ፡ ዋላችሁ?' (pp. 21). Furthermore, some words are very colloquial, 'ጓደኛዎች' 'gwadaññamoč' (p. 229) should be better 'ጓደኞች' 'gwadaññoč'.

The classification of Amharic verbs given by APPLEYARD (pp. 55–60, 90–91) is according to the anglophone system, which distinguishes between trilateral and biliteral verbs and again within the bilateral between Type A and Type B. This is surely the easiest way for beginners to learn the complex Amharic verbal system. But some further tables with a survey of the verbal classes would have been useful for the learner. Also, the division of the Amharic grammar into little pieces in each exercise makes it difficult to get an overview, all the more as there are no exact references to further explanations of one topic, i.e. the use of the plurals of nouns (lesson 2) is indicated for another lesson, but the index refers only to lesson 2. Besides, APPLEYARD's presentation of the Amharic grammar is very compressed and needs, like all colloquial language courses, further consultation of other grammars such as the one recently written by LESLAU (1995). The exercises for the learners could be of greater use if they give an example sentence in the beginning.

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There are some minor mistakes in the exercises, for instance the answer of n. 2 of exercise 3 (p. 24) is the 1. person plural and not singular.

Colloquial Amharic is a good introduction for learners in spoken Amharic. The book does not go into the more standard and complicated structure of written Amharic. Although the books by LESLAU and RICHTER are widely used for teaching, *Colloquial Amharic* is more contemporary. For beginners and for self-study “key to exercises” is very useful for controlling one’s own improvements. The cassettes are effective, but some of the dialogues are too fast to easily follow the conversations. However, according to the aim of the book, the author is to be congratulated for preparing an Amharic language course accompanied by recorded cassettes. We wish it a lot of readers.

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STUART MUNRO-HAY and RICHARD PANKHURST (compilers), *Ethiopia = World Bibliographical Series 179*. Oxford, Santa Barbara and Denver: Clio Press, 1995. xxxiii, 225 pp., 1 map. DM 97,-. ISBN 1-85109-111-4.

Volume 179 der World Bibliographical Series ist Äthiopien gewidmet. Clio Press hat für die Bibliographie zwei renommierte Äthiopisten gewonnen: STUART MUNRO-HAY und RICHARD PANKHURST.

Die Bibliographie ist mit 610 Einträgen, einem ausführlichen Index (Autoren, Titel und Themen) und einer aktuellen Karte Äthiopiens versehen. Eine zehneitige ‘Introduction’ und eine chronologische Zeittafel mit einer Liste der Herrscher sind der eigentlichen Bibliographie vorangestellt. Die Bibliographie beginnt mit einer sehr kurzen Übersicht (5 Seiten) der Dissertationen und Thesen über Äthiopien. Die 610 Einträge selber sind in 30 Sektionen eingeteilt, die alle wichtigen Bereiche der Äthiopistik abdecken sollen. Durch die Einteilung in Sektionen wird die Suche nach bestimmter Literatur erleichtert.

Gemäß dem Leitsatz der Serie ist die Bibliographie für das englischsprachige Publikum konzipiert. Das Hauptgewicht liegt auf der englischen Literatur, anders-