



Aethiopia 15 (2012)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review

WALTER RAUNIG – PRINZ AFA-WOSSEN ASSERATE (Hrsg.), *Orbis Aethiopicus, XIII*

Aethiopia 15 (2012), 273–277

ISSN: 2194–4024

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

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Reviews

and in the Third Chapter (pp. 143–168), is the strong connection the author aims to establish between the pre-Islamic data and the information preserved in the Islamic documentation, effectively widening the scope of this research. Historical and social dynamics in this area between the 3rd and 5th centuries A.D. are clarified thanks to a general analysis of epigraphic data, pointing out tribal geography, especially concerning Tan‘im-Tan‘ima, Ġaymān, Ḥawlān Ḥaḍilum and Šaddād (cf. also Karte 4, p. 180). This completes what we already know from the same period in the area just south of Ḥawlān proper.⁶

The book is enriched by four very well charted maps which are very useful in placing all the sites where the inscriptions have been found in contrast to the morphological situation of the area – a datum that should always be kept in mind when interpreting the diffusion or limitation of cultural and social elements. Unfortunately, the pictures of the inscriptions are sometimes of poor quality and, if we also consider the poor preservation of the majority of texts, checking the proposed transliteration is often problematic. The reader would have also appreciated a more detailed index at the end of the book, where all the data of the inscriptions could have been better organized: e.g. onomastics, toponyms, and possibly a list of all the inscriptions mentioned in the commentary, which could have given a general epigraphic repertoire to connect with the investigated area.

Besides these minor shortcomings, this work will be useful to all specialists in South Arabian epigraphy and history thanks to the solid methodology of which the author gives proof throughout his study.

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WALTER RAUNIG – PRINZ ASFA-WOSSEN ASSERATE (Hrsg.), *Orbis Aethiopicus ውርብ ኢትዮጵያ Beiträge zur Geschichte, Religion und Kunst Äthiopiens*, Band XIII: *Juden, Christen und Muslime in Äthiopien – ein Beispiel für abrahamische Ökumene. Beiträge der Jahrestagung 2008 in Pinneberg*, Dettelbach: Verlag J.H. Röhl, 2010. 191 pp., 116 colour pls. Price: € 79.–. ISBN: 978-3-89754-354-6.

The present volume of the “Orbis Aethiopicus” Society Proceedings for the 2008 annual meeting opens with the obituary by Angela Raabe (pp. 7–9) for Peter Roenpage (1924–2008). Roenpage was one of the founders of “Orbis

⁶ Cf. C. ROBIN 1987, “L’inscription Ir 40 de Bayt Ḍab‘ān et la tribu Ḍmry”, in: C. ROBIN – M. BĀFAQĪH (éds.), *Ṣayhadica. Recherches sur les inscriptions de l’Arabie préislamique offertes par ses collègues au Professeur A.F.L. Beeston* = *L’Arabie préislamique*, Paris: Geuthner, pp. 113–164.

Aethiopicus” (in 1994), since 1959 worked as a teacher in Ethiopia at the School of Fine Arts at Addis Ababa, a benefactor for a long time. He was especially known as the inventor of the popular motto of Ethiopia as the “13 months of sunshine” country. The volume bears the subtitle “Jews, Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia”, which, as it will appear, is only to a certain point justified by the contents, as only few of the contributions actually focus on the topics.

Rudolf Agstner’s “The Foreigner’s Cemeteries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia” (pp. 11–44) is a careful presentation with first-hand data on the neglected “European cemetery”,¹ also known as “Ṕetros wäṔawlos”, from the name of the Catholic cemetery “San Pietro e Paolo”. Founded in 1912, it was significantly expanded in the period of the Italian occupation and of World War II (1936–1941), when an Italian Military Cemetery and a Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery Military were added. It also includes an International Cemetery, a New and an Old Armenian Cemetery, and a Greek Orthodox St. George Cemetery. Information on other cemeteries is also provided, such as on the Cemetery of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, on the British Embassy Cemetery and on the Jewish Cemetery. The author’s care for details is to be highly commended, while it is regrettable that so many errors occur in the transcription of Italian words. The author later developed the theme in a monograph.²

Bairu Tafla’s “Between Religion and Politics. Reflecting on the Age-long Religious Policy of Imperial Ethiopia” (pp. 45–56) is a stimulating memento that once more discusses the taken-for-granted conclusions on the assumed paradigm of religious intolerance (or even of religious tolerance!) in Ethiopia. It is a reasonable invitation to distinguish ideology and economic and social reality in interreligious relationships throughout Ethiopian history, and as represented in the sources which document it, both in the last two centuries as well as in the more remote past.

Gabriele Berrer-Wallbrecht’s “Die Mystik des Islam. Der Sufismus als Frieden stiftendes Element im Islam” (pp. 57–78) unexpectedly appears in this volume, no particular reference is made here to Ethiopian Sufism as such, whereas a general and didascalical presentation of Sufism as a general phenomenon is provided.

Stanislaw Chojnacki’s “The history of the Sacred Heart in Ethiopia” (pp. 79–100) gives an interesting and so far unattempted insight into attesta-

¹ With the exception of the *Guida dell’Africa Orientale Italiana*, Roma: Consociazione Turistica Italiana, 1938, p. 486.

² R. AGSTNER, *One week in Ethiopia, forever with God. Guidebook to the Foreigners’ Cemeteries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* = *Kulturwissenschaft* 25, Berlin – Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009, already reviewed by A. MÜLLER in *Aethiopia* 14, 2011 [2012], pp. 301–304.

tion and diffusion of the Sacred Heart motif in Ethiopian Orthodox churches, but also in private devotion and common spaces of social life. Originated in the 17th century Europe and introduced to the country by Catholic missionaries around the turn of the 19th/20th century, the image of the Sacred Heart is traditionally known in popular prints (recently from China), and much less in traditional paintings. It is known under the name of *Mädhane ʿaläm* ‘Saviour of the World’, or [*Yä*] *Läbb Iyäsus* ‘Jesus of the Heart’ (so better than ‘Heart of Jesus’). Two main typologies can be singled out, while even a secondary typology with Jesus in the usual attire, yet with no heart, is also attested. The subject of the Sacred Heart appears to be a typical product of Western influence, with actually no connection to older similar motifs, such as the famous “Ancient of Days”. What Chojnacki could have also mentioned is that the troops of the Italian invaders were solemnly vowed to the Sacred Heart in May 1936, which for sure had consequences on the diffusion of cult and devotional images of the latter.³

Annegret Marx and Friedrich Dworschak’s “Die illuminierte Handschrift Ms. or. 18 aus dem Nachlass von Eduard Rüppell. Dokumentation und Präsentation einer äthiopischen Handschrift mit modernen Medien und kleinen Mitteln” (pp. 101–111) is occasioned by the digitization under the care of the University of Frankfurt of two Ethiopian manuscripts from the Eduard Rüppell collection, Mss. or. Rüpp. IV, 1 and IV, 2. The latter in particular (now apparently preserved under the new shelfmark Ms. or. 18, which is not clear enough in the contribution) is an interesting small-size illuminated manuscript of the period of Fasilädäs (1632–1667)⁴ that has been made the subject of a DVD-film produced on the occasion of the exhibition “Steh auf und geh nach Süden! Arise and go toward the South. 2000 Jahre Christentum in Äthiopien / 2000 years of Christianity in Ethiopia”,⁵ held in Frankfurt from November 2007 to March 2008. The paper provides the text of the film, with the detailed

³ Cf. the essay by M. FRANZINELLI, “Il clero italiano e la grande mobilitazione”, in: R. BOTTONI (a c.), *L'impero fascista*, Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2008, pp. 251–265, esp. p. 254, and in the same volume that by E. NOBILI, “Vescovi lombardi e consenso alla guerra”, pp. 268–284, esp. p. 279; on the theme see also D. MENOZZI, *Sacro cuore. Un culto tra devozione interiore e restaurazione cristiana della società* = *Sacro/Santo* 5, Roma: Viella, 2001.

⁴ Cf. L. GOLDSCHMIDT, *Die abessinischen Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek zu Frankfurt am Main (Rüppel'sche Sammlung) nebst Anhängen und Auszügen*, Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1897, pp. 57–58 (no. 14); also in E. HAMMERSCHMIDT – O.A. JÄGER, *Illuminierte Äthiopische Handschriften* = *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* 15, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1968, pp. 56–64.

⁵ Also the name of the related exhibition catalogue, Frankfurt am Main: Ikonen-Museum der Stadt Frankfurt, 2007.

description of the paintings, origin and history of the Ruppell manuscript collection, and the latter's journeys to Ethiopia.

Christiane Esche-Ramshorn, "Instruire ne la catholica fede'. Äthiopier in der Kunst des 15. Jahrhunderts in Rom und Florenz, die äthiopische Pilgerkirche an Alt St. Peter und Äthiopiens Verhältnis zum Vatikan" (pp. 113–133) is a tentative overview presentation of Ethio–European relationships in the early Renaissance, with special focus on the role Rome and the Vatican have played. Unfortunately, not in few cases the bibliography used is largely outdated – e.g., *EAE* is never used – which has caused major inconveniences in several crucial questions, such as the confusion between Ethiopians and Indians, the history of Santo Stefano dei Mori in the Vatican etc. Despite this, the author has provided some interesting evidence on early portrayed Ethiopians in Renaissance art, in particular – basing on Francescio Maria Turrigio and Francesco Cancellieri – a lost painting in a "tramezzo" of the Church of Santo Stefano Maggiore, representing the Trinity with St. Stephen, a Dominican father described in a caption in Ethiopic characters (!) as "Frat. Antonio Abessino", probably to be identified with a member of the 1481 Ethiopian delegation.⁶

Walter Kraft's one-page contribution "Der Löwe von Ancharro bei Kombolcha/Wollo" (pp. 134–137 incl. figs.) is devoted to attract attention again to the rock sculpted lion (earlier interpreted as a sphynx) in the nearby of Kombolča and probably dating to Aksumite times.

Dorothea McEwan, "Sebetat, ein äthiopisches Ungeheuer" (pp. 139–160) deals with the motif in a drawing by painter Eduard Zander (1813–1868, in Ethiopia from 1847 to his death), now lost and preserved only in a glass negative from Dessau, Sammlung Anhaltische Gemäldegalerie. According to Zander's own caption, the drawing portrays a monstrous half-lion and half-man creature with a twofold tail ending in two snakes, and armed with bow and arrow, and who was eventually killed by the bull "Meskitt", whose horns were one of silver and the other of gold. The motif was copied in 1855 from a wooden sculpted door in the Lalibäla church at Gondär that was eventually destroyed in the 1880s during the invasion of the Mahdist troops. Zander names it "Sebetat", i.e. *Gəʿəz sobädaʿat*, a 'spirit of the water', or *sabəddəʿat* (and similar forms), "viper" as a mythological animal, i.e. a monstrous animal. The author traces the motif in the paintings inspired by the hagiographic narrative of the equestrian saints Claudius, Theodor, and Victor, or by the *Nägärrä Maryam*, and investigates related sources and questions.

⁶ On this latter and its further reflexes in Renaissance paintings cf. M. BONECHI, "Four Sistine Ethiopians", *Aethiopica* 14, 2011 [2012], pp. 121–135, and the note by G. FIACCADORI, "A Marginal Note to 'Four Sistine Ethiopians?'" *ibid.*, pp. 136–144.

Steffen Wenig, “Eine archäologische Studienreise nach Wuqro in Tigray/Äthiopien im März 2008” (pp. 161–177) provides a synthetic but impressive report of the recent extraordinary archaeological findings in the nearby of Wəqro. The excavations – since november 2007 by Tigray Cultural and Tourism Commission, then, after a preliminary survey in March 2008 by Wenig himself for the Orbis Aethiopicus society, since June 2008 also by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, at work since October 2008 under direction of Dr. Pawel Wolf – have revealed a complex and rich, previously unknown South Arabian settlement dating to about 7th cent. B.C., documenting a temple, inscriptions and several monumental findings. Other so far unexplored sites – such as “Menebeiti” (probably Mänäbäyti) in the nearby of ʿAddigrat – are also dealt with.

Wolbert G.C. Smidt’s “Another unknown Arabic inscription from the eastern Tigrayan trade route” (pp. 179–191), as the author informs, is the English version of an article in German already published in *Aethiopica*.⁷ The article is devoted to the interpretation of a fragmentary Arabic Islamic inscription consisting of one and two half words (*-k ʿlmlk ʿl-*) preserved at Wəqro in the church entitled to Qirqos, Maryam, Mikaʿel and Gabrəʿel. The well-known Islamic settlement in the nearby of Wəqro, at Nāgaš (10 km to the north), can be but very problematically related to this fragment, which seems to be out of context in the area, to the extent that, in my opinion, a foreign origin can not be excluded. (The author, pp. 128f., n. 22, indulges on remarks on the local pronunciation of Tigrinya “Çärqos” as “Çärqos” corresponding to Gəʿəz “Qirqos”, *şallot* for *şalot*, *qəne mahlät* for *qəne mahlet* [of course, in the traditional pronunciation *mahlet!*], which should actually be considered from the point of view of their phonemic or phonetic relevance, since the author seems to disclaim the real nature of the transcriptions used – after *EAE* – which is essentially phonemic, not phonetic.)

As it happens for miscellaneous proceedings volumes, consistency of transcriptions and bibliographical references is not to be expected. In this case, however, many of the articles are very stimulating and, last not least, accompanied by wonderful illustrative material – 116 colour figures appear, distributed in some 51 pages of tables only – which is definitely one of the most appreciated features of this volume.

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⁷ I.e. “Eine weitere arabische Inschrift von der osttigrayischen Handelsroute: Hinweis auf eine muslimische Kultstätte in der ‘dunklen Periode’?”, *Aethiopica* 12, 2009, pp. 126–135.