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OLGA KAPELIUK, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Review

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by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

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it appears that most of them are faculty members of the same institution. But this is almost an irrelevant factor. Any hint to the fields of specialization or academic status as well as experience of the contributors in particular would have given the reader confidence in the credibility of their contributions. Most of the authors, the six board members and of course the two executive editors are presumably faculty members of the same university. But there is also an International Editorial Board comprising 13 scholars from around ten countries: Canada, Djibouti, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Great Britain and the United States. There is no explanation on what basis the named scholars have been chosen nor is it stated why academics of northern and eastern Europe – all of whom were at one time or another involved in ‘northeastern Africa’ – are not included in the board. Above all Italy should have been represented, as it has consistently pursued the study of ‘northeastern Africa’ in the last 150 years and quite a few of its scholars in various fields are still actively engaged in the research. These problems can easily be rectified in the future. The most important thing is the continuous publication of the journal which is a welcome addition to Ethiopian Studies.

Bairu Tafla, Universität Hamburg

Rassegna di Studi Etiopici. Nuova Serie, Vol. III. 2011. Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”. iv + 278 pp. Price: € 70.00. ISSN: 0390-0096.

This is a renewed publication of the renowned journal *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (*RSE*), founded by Carlo Conti Rossini in Rome in 1941, whose publication was interrupted in 2003, to be brought to life again in 2011 as Volume III of New Series. Until the appearance of *Aethiopica* in 1998, it was the only scientific journal devoted exclusively to Ethiopian and Eritrean subjects, regularly published outside of Ethiopia. Its reputation was immense and I still remember how proud I was at the beginning of my academic career in the early 1970s when I was asked by the editor to contribute a paper to the journal. I would like to express here my most sincere wishes for the success of this enterprise. This time a group of scholars from several Italian Universities joined forces to revive the *Rassegna* and the “Orientale” in Naples became now, most suitably, the seat of the publication. Unfortunately the editors recently lost one of their most active members and a great Ethiopianist, the much regretted Paolo Marrassini, who was meant to be head of this publication. The volume under review still contains one of his articles, probably one of his recent articles, if not the last one, written on a subject which was very close to his heart, namely the origin of the Semitic peoples.

In this article entitled “‘Early Semites’ in Ethiopia?” (pp. 75–91) PAOLO MARRASSINI refers to the theory mainly upheld by Grover Hudson according to which “the original seat of Semitic languages should be sought in the Ethiopian Semitic area, and particularly in the Gurage one” (p. 75). With his usual erudition the author demonstrates, based on proper names from the oldest Semitic sources, that the direction of Semitic migration was from north to south and not *vice versa*. Thus, for instance, in Mesopotamia, the proper names of the Akkadians (who originally were not indigenous to the region) were 77 % and Sumerian 5 %, whereas in the south 80.5 % of the names were Sumerian and 12 % Akkadian meaning the Akkadians must have come from the north. Also the other most ancient Semitic peoples, the speakers of Eblaite, the Amorites and the Arameans resided in the regions between Syria–Palestine and north Mesopotamia. The Arabs were nomads with no limited localization, however names of Arab kings and queens are frequently cited in historical Assyrian texts before the earliest mention of an Arab name in a Sabeian inscription (7th century B.C.). When referring to an Afroasiatic stage and a possible separation of the Semites and their migration out of Africa, Marrassini quotes some interesting lexical material in Gəʿəz on agriculture, domestication and breeding, and building activities and its cognates in other ancient Semitic languages. He shows for instance that in the first domain 30 terms were of common Semitic stock whereas only 7 had a Cushitic etymology, which suggests that their source ought to be sought in Middle Eastern techniques and not outside the continent.

The main part of the journal devoted to articles has three sections: History, Linguistics and Philology, all three traditional disciplines which guarantee the continuity of the spirit of the *RSE*, though in the historical part we can sense the increased interest in contemporary issues. In an extremely well documented study entitled “Centralization and political changes: the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the ecclesiastical and political challenges in contemporary times” (pp. 1–29) STÉPHANE ANCEL describes the process of reorganization of the administration of the Ethiopian Church from the attempts of Ḥaylä Šəllase vis-à-vis the Coptic Church to achieve an autocephalous status and up to the secession of the church of Eritrea from the mother Church in 1994. Despite some individual cases of rebellion and opposition, the heads of Ethiopian Orthodox Church cooperated with the lay authorities, be it the monarchy, the Italians, the Marxist regime or the present federal government. The article “History and conflict in Africa: the experience of Ethiopia–Eritrea and Rwanda” (pp. 27–39) by the eminent historian BAHRU ZEWEDE reflects the trend which began with the deposition of Ḥaylä Šəllase, in particular among local historians (and linguists), to distance themselves from the Middle Eastern world and to refer to Ethiopia as

another African country rather than as a unique phenomenon in the continent. Bahru Zewde stresses that there is no common measure between the genocide in Rwanda and the war of 1998–2000 between Ethiopia and Eritrea, apparently a “normal” inter-state conflict between two independent states about a boundary issue. However his historical analysis leads him to point out certain similarities, the most interesting being the question of identity. According to him the Hutu and the Tutsi were one ethnic stock but the Belgians, by favouring the latter, created an artificial difference between them which was one of the reasons of the reciprocal hostility and the trigger of the massacre. Similarly, the Christian speakers of Təgrəñña in the Eritrean highland represented a continuum with Ethiopia within what was called the “Abyssinian” civilization and which was disrupted by the creation of the colony of Eritrea by the Italians and the artificial creation of an Eritrean identity.

The section on Linguistics opens with a paper by BAYE YIMAM on “Modality in Amharic” (pp. 41–62) or, one would rather think, on modality in the idiolect of BAYE YIMAM himself, because no other speaker of Amharic would ever pronounce, write or even passively understand such examples as: *ləḡ-očč-u nāgā mənəlbət ənčāt mä-flät lə-yi-čəl-u yi-čəl-u yə-bon-all(u>0)* “It may be possible that the children could/would perhaps be readily able to do log-chopping tomorrow” (p. 54), or: *ləḡ-očč-u nāgā (mənəlbət) ənčāt al-yə-fält-u yi-bon(-u) yi-bon(-u)-all(u>0)* (p. 50) “It may be that the children may not perhaps chop log tomorrow.” Follows GETATCHEW HAILE’s “One more text in ‘older Amharic’” (pp. 63–74). It is a short 17th century catechesis of the Ethiopian Church from the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) collection. The accuracy of the kind of Amharic as revealed from this text is questioned by the author who writes: “its similarity to Gəʿəz syntax is noteworthy and deserves a plausible explanation: is it either because the text is a word for word translation from a Gəʿəz version or because the text is, indeed, written in Amharic of the time it was composed?” (pp. 63–64). It seems that from the point of view of content and style the text can be divided into two parts: the first part (par. 1–7) that contains the exposition of the principles of faith and the second part (par. 8–39), which opens with the expression ከሁለት ፡ ከሁለት and comprehends questions to the believer about what he should have learned from the first part. In the second part the sentences are short and simple and the word order is similar to the modern Amharic word order (with the exception of par. 16) with characteristic features of a dialogue, such as the gerund at the end of a sentence.¹ On the other hand, in the first part which is theoretical

¹ Cf. O. KAPELIUK, “Les auxiliaires et leur omission: guèze–amharique–tigrigna”, in: J. LENTIN – A. LONNET (eds.), *Mélanges David Cohen*, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003, pp. 347–355 [ID., *Selected Papers in Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic Linguistics*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 2009, pp. 443–451].

and more complicated, and has longer sentences, the word order is somewhat chaotic. Perhaps in the second part the author produced the questions and the answers spontaneously by himself, whereas in the first part he clearly tried to transpose the Gəʿəz text into Amharic and got confused due to lack of experience in rendering complex Gəʿəz sentences in written Amharic.

“I prestiti italiani in amarico e tigrino” by YAQOB BEYENE (pp. 97–140) explores the numerous Italian loans in both Amharic and Təgrəñña. The author quotes two complete lists of the loans in both languages and we may see that there is a great difference in the numbers. In Amharic he counts 179 cases and in Təgrəñña 645. The numerical difference is not surprising due to the difference of the time span in the direct contacts between the speakers of these two languages and Italian as the language of the colonial power. However even the lower number of loans in Amharic is relatively considerable considering the short period of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. But Yaqob Beyene explains: “The influence of Italian on Amharic is not due to the short colonial presence in Ethiopia but rather to the presence of Italian merchants and businessmen, and even more to the presence of Eritreans who, for occupational reasons, lived among the speakers of Amharic” (p. 102). These two modern Ethio-Semitic languages have the capacity to absorb loanwords with foreign forms and an unusual number of syllables and uncommon sounds, despite their background of Semitic noun morphology. The background is characterized by its (mainly) triliteral roots and fixed nominal patterns and can be traced back to Gəʿəz which absorbed a non-negligible number of loanwords from Greek and Cushitic.² This borrowing of nouns with various foreign forms has dislocated the noun morphology of Neo-Ethio-Semitic, a process also witnessed in the Neo-Aramaic dialects, whereas the verb morphology remained relatively well preserved in both peripheral branches of Neo-Semitic.

The section on Philology opens with two studies summarizing the results of two text editions: AMSALU TEFERA’s “*Dərsanä Şəyon*: philological inquiries into the text” (pp. 141–166), a Ph.D. dissertation completed in 2011 at the University of Addis Abāba under the supervision of the late Paolo Marrassini and Baye Yimam, and a Ph.D. dissertation in the course of preparation entitled “Some light on an Arabic treatise by *Şayḥ* Sayyid Muḥammad Şādīq (1897–1977) by ENDRIS MUḤAMMED (pp. 167–184). Despite the chronological and thematic distance between the two texts, both receive similarly serious and impressive treatment. AMSALU TEFERA examines 10 versions from various periods, from the 16th century to the late 20th century of the Gəʿəz text of the *Dərsan*, which is devoted to the glorification of the Ark of the Covenant and

² Cf. D.L. APPELYARD, “Linguistic evidence of non-Semitic influence in the history of Ethiopian Semitic”, *Abbay* 9, 1978, pp. 49–56.

St. Mary and which used to be read at the public ceremonies at Aksum on the presumed day of the arrival of the Ark of Covenant into that location. Using a sophisticated method of philological analysis the A. succeeds at mapping the different versions of the text and determining their source and ramifications. ENDRIS MUḤAMMED's study refers to a politico-historical treatise written in Arabic in 1955 and entitled: "The Piercing Arrows on the Legends of the Idolatrous and Fallacious Ḥabaša" which criticizes the Christian ruler's attitudes in Ethiopia towards the Muslims throughout the Ethiopian history and in particular during the reign of Ḥaylä Śəllase. The text has remained in its manuscript version for obvious reasons and was distributed only on a personal basis. The A. is not acquainted with the original but used a copy which was made by hand and is now in possession of a Muslim merchant in Addis Abāba. The criticism is embedded in very strong terms but there is no expression of a separatist tendency, all aspiration being that of a non-discriminating treatment by the Christian authorities and recognition of the Muslims as citizens with equal rights. The Philological section ends with an erudite study on "Two circular diagrams on a royal Ethiopic manuscript" by MARYLIN HELDMAN (pp. 185–218) and an equally erudite analysis, and translation of the reproduced text of "The Ethiopic version of the story of Ahiqar" by GIANFRANCESCO LUSINI (pp. 219–248).

The lengthy *Bulletin* at the end of the volume (pp. 249–271) which "intends to facilitate communication and information among scholars and institutions" is a most welcome addition to the Volume. We are offered many interesting details about the curricula, M.A. and Ph.D. Dissertations, Seminars, Workshops, Round Tables and Public Lectures in the Universities that dispense programs in Ethiopian Studies, first and foremost the Addis Ababa University. It is surprising how many students in Addis Ababa University are engaged in preparing their Ph.D. dissertations in Linguistics. It would be useful to organize the material in a unified manner and indicate more clearly the location of the institution under consideration in order to facilitate the use of the Bulletin.

The volume itself suffers from a few editorial mishaps. Not all participants adhere to the request for "edited English" in the "Guideline for contributors". The editors should not rely blindly on the contributors and should check the material in the body of the Volume and in the Bulletin before sending it to the printer. The system of writing references is not unified. In some articles the references are in the footnotes and in some other part of the text. This is not a common practice in editing journals. Also, references within the text in parentheses that refer to a book only by the name of the writer and the date of its publication without indicating the pages are useless. How is the reader supposed to find the right *locus* in a book of 500 pages? But these are only minor problems which can be corrected in the following issues and they do not real-

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ly diminish the excellent quality of the scientific material. The Ethiopianist community is awaiting impatiently the following issues and hoping for a long and fruitful continuation.

Olga Kapeliuk, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

FRANCIS BREYER, *Das Königreich Aksum. Geschichte und Archäologie Abessiniens in der Spätantike* = Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Sonderbände der Antiken Welt, Darmstadt – Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2012. 160 pp., 159 b/w and colour figs. Price: € 29.99. ISBN 978–3–8053–4460–9.

In keeping with the title of the series it has appeared in “Illustrated volumes to archaeology. Special volumes on the Ancient World”, the book under review might be recommended not only for the small price, compared to the great quality of the print, but also for the numerous and beautiful, useful and mostly quite recent colour images, drawings and maps, which document quite in detail, through the avowedly popularizing and felicitously appealing style of the author, the ancient civilization of the Aksumite kingdom from an archaeological perspective. History and archaeology are often mixed in presentation with history of research (especially the German one), and all in all the example and the achievements of the 1906 “Deutsche Aksum-Expedition” (henceforth: *DAE*), also intermingled with earlier reports (in particular by Francisco Alvarez), are constantly quoted or referred to.

The book is divided into the following parts: a general presentation of the site of Aksum (“Zur Einstimmung”, pp. 8–19); a history of the research on Aksum, with special focus on the discovery and interpretation of its royal inscriptions (“Geschichte und Erforschung des Reiches”, pp. 20–48), with further subdivisions; a review of the monumental archaeological findings (“Die Monumente Aksums”, pp. 49–127); an overview of other archaeological sites with Aksumite remains (“Die wichtigsten antiken Fundstätten Abessiniens”, pp. 129–148); a conclusion (“Ausblick: Zurück zu den Anfängen”, pp. 149–151); a chronological table (p. 152); notes with bibliographical references (pp. 153–158); notes on transcription, bibliographical abbreviations and sources of the illustrations (pp. 159–160). Note that the ch. “Geschichte und Erforschung des Reiches” is subdivided into several parts, the titles of which are slightly misleading: for example, on coins (“Goldstücke und Silberlinge: das aksumitische Münzwesen”, pp. 35–39) and Christianization (“Wann wurde Abessinien christlich”, pp. 39–46), both of which actually dealing with general questions of Aksumite history and periodization, strongly involving (esp. pp. 44ff.) archaeological questions as well. It is to be remarked, however, that the problem of the “Ethiopian origins”, that is, of the origin of the Semitic civilization of Ethiopia, is reviewed in its proper terms on pages 149–151 and includes, as it has to be done, questions of epigraphy, in particular the relationships between the two groups of actual South Arabian inscriptions of Ethiopia.