



Aethiopia 18 (2015)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review

Literatura na świecie 7–8

Aethiopia 18 (2015), 269–272

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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Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1917ff.).
- CSCO* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES 8* TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
- PICES 10* C. LEPAGE and É. DELAGE, eds, *Études éthiopiennes: Actes de la X^e Conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988* (Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, 1994).
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches* (Paris: (Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres) Diffusion de Boccard, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

Reviews

Fasil's book is well worth reading, not only for its portrayal of a leading figure of modern Ethiopian literature, but also as a demonstration of how hard it is to write an 'objective' biography.

Magdalena Krzyżanowska, Universität Hamburg

Literatura na świecie 7–8, (2014) (516–517), index no. 364088, Title of issue: *Etiopia* ('Ethiopia'). 423 pp. Price: PLN 16.00. PL-ISSN: 0324-8305.*

The Polish-language monthly *Literatura na świecie* ('Literature in the World') is considered to be one of the most prestigious literary publications in Poland, presenting the most significant contemporary literary texts from around the world, as well as selections of poetry, critical texts, essays, interviews, and so on. It began publishing in 1971 with the aim of presenting fragments of world literature in high-quality translations, published for the first time in the Polish language. Each issue of the journal chooses a special focus, concentrating, for example, on the literary output of a particular author, in a given language, from a specific country or region, or on a chosen topic. The reviewed issue (no. 7-8/2014) is the first ever devoted to literature from Ethiopia and was edited by Anna Górecka, Jerzy Jarniewicz, Andrzej Kopacki, Michał Lipszyc, Piotr Sommer, Andrzej Sosnowski, Marcin Szuster, Anna Wasilewska, and Nina Gackowska.

The issue begins with a fragment of Səbḥat Gäbrä Əgzi'abəḥer's Amharic text *Letum aynägaləñ* ('I will not see the end of the night'). The excellent translation from Amharic into Polish was undertaken by Magdalena Krzyżanowska (pp. 5–61). The book was first published in French in 2004, translated from the Amharic by Francis Falceto with the participation of the author. A short introduction to Səbḥat's text written by Falceto has also been included in this issue of the journal (pp. 62–69). What makes Səbḥat's text interesting is that it was long considered too scandalous to be published in Ethiopia, and the first publication in Amharic only occurred in 2004 (with many fragments omitted), the same year as the publication of the French version (on the basis of the full manuscript), even though *Letum aynägaləñ* had been written some forty years earlier, in the early 1960s. The fragment included in the journal portrays a part of Ethiopian life rarely encountered in Ethiopian literature, openly painting a picture of the nightlife in Addis Abäba, including rather explicit descriptions of various sexual encounters,

* Webpage of the journal: www.literaturanawiecie.art.pl.

which obviously account for the problems the text had with the Ethiopian censorship. This first introduction for Polish readers to Səbḥat's writing is supplemented by a translation of a selection of his stories taken from the collection *Amməst, səddəst, sabbatt* ('Five, Six, Seven'), which allows a glimpse at another side of the author's literary output, more didactic in character and obviously influenced by Ethiopian orature (pp. 70–105).

The next writer to be presented in the issue, Nega Mezlekia, is an Ethiopian author writing in English who has lived in Canada since the 1980s. The fragments of his autobiography *Notes from the Hyena's Belly*, first published in 2000, have been translated by Michał Lipszyc into Polish (pp. 106–186). Despite its non-fictional character, the text reads like a novel, with its intriguing portrayal of a young boy growing up in Giḡiga interspersed by short allegorical stories, clearly taken from the rich resources of Ethiopian oral tradition. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the text is the ease with which the author manages to paint a detailed picture of the town and its various inhabitants, as well as creating intriguing in-depth portraits of both the major and minor characters in the text. The interview conducted with Nega Mezlekia by Therese Eiben is an interesting supplement (pp. 187–195), due—among other things—to Nega's explication of the differences in the perception of how reality and superstition depend on the culture one grows up with.

The last contemporary Ethiopian writer to be included in this issue of *Literatura na świecie* is Dinaw Mengestu. Yet again this is an author who writes in English and does not live in Ethiopia, having immigrated to the USA at a young age. The fragment published here is a chapter taken from his latest book published last year as *All Our Names* in the translation into Polish prepared by Michał Lipszyc (pp. 196–220). Despite being very well-written and constituting an interesting portrayal of how two young Africans almost accidentally become revolutionaries in Kampala, the fragment has little to do with Ethiopia directly, thus it was perhaps not the best example of an Ethiopian text to have been chosen for the issue. Dinaw Mengestu is, however, one of the few Ethiopian writers (if not the only one) to have been published in Polish in book form.

It must be remembered that *Literatura na świecie* is aimed at a broader audience, not necessarily well-acquainted with a given country's history or literature. Therefore, it goes without saying that the issue would not have been complete without the highly informative article on contemporary Ethiopian literature written by Ewa Wołk (pp. 312–336). This short overview of the rise of modern Ethiopian literature brings the various texts included in the first part of the issue together and places them within a wider context.

The next part includes translations of three exceptional sacral texts originally written in Gəʿəz (pp. 221–244). The translations done by Marcin Krawczuk

include a sermon by Zär'a Ya'əqob from *Mäṣḥafā milad* ('The Book of Birth') based on the manuscript edited and published by Kurt Wendt, a *mälkə'* about the Virgin Mary and a selection of prayers written by the so-called Betä ʿƏsra'el or Falaša and transcribed in the nineteenth century. The texts are accompanied by an informative critical article by Marcin Krawczuk in which he gives an overview of Ethiopian writing in Gə'əz from its very beginnings until modern times. The translation of Emanuela Trevisan Semi's text about the experiences of Ethiopian Jews (the Betä ʿƏsra'el) in Europe during their attempts to learn about Western Judaism (pp. 351–379) can in some ways be considered a complementary text to Krawczuk's contribution in that it provides information about the differences between Western Judaism and that of twentieth-century representatives of the Betä ʿƏsra'el.

Similarly, the first translation into Polish (from Amharic) of Ḥaylä Śəllase I's *Appeal to the League of Nations* presented in June 1936 in Geneva broadens the scope of the issue by including a text of huge significance in Ethiopian history (pp. 272–289). Hanna Rubinkowska-Anioł, the translator of the speech and a historian, provides additional information about Emperor Ḥaylä Śəllase and Ethiopia during his reign in her article (pp. 290–311). Additional information about the mythology which surrounds Ḥaylä Śəllase can be found in the translation of David González López's article, which adds to the multi-faceted and varied portrayal of Ethiopia in the journal, since López provides an explanation of the place and significance held by Ethiopia and *Ras Täfäri Mäk'ännən* (the later Ḥaylä Śəllase I) within the Rastafarian movement (pp. 337–350).

This first attempt at introducing Ethiopian literature to the Polish reader is certainly a success. It catches the interest of those used to more racy contemporary texts from around the world while giving a feel for the country for those searching for insight into the 'Otherness' of Ethiopia. At the same time it creates a platform both for the more traditional versions of Ethiopian literature and for informative critical articles about Ethiopian culture and history. However, it should perhaps be emphasized once again that the journal is focused on a wider audience and would probably be considered quite basic for most specialists in Ethiopian history and literature. This does not, however, subtract from the issue's attractiveness as a wonderful introduction to Ethiopian literature for those less knowledgeable about the country and who—thanks to this comprehensive collection of literary and critical texts—will surely be on the lookout for more.

Reference list

(The reference list includes the bibliographical information of the original texts that were translated into Polish in the discussed issue of *Literatura na świecie*).

Dinaw Mengestu, *All Our Names* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); T. Eiben, 'Out of Ethiopia: An Interview with Nega Mezlekia', *Poets & Writers*, January/February 2014 (online available at: http://www.pw.org/content/out_ethiopia; last access: February 11, 2015); F. Falceto, 'Un passant nyctalope', in Sebhat Guèbrè-Egziabher, *Les Nuits d'Addis-Abeba: Roman traduit de l'amharique (Ethiopie) par l'auteur et Francis Falceto* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2004), pp. 2–9; Ḥaylā Šəllase I, ሕይወቴና፣ የኢትዮጵያ፣ እርምጃ (Ḥəywätenna yä'ityopya ərməḡḡa, 'My Life and Ethiopia's Progress'), I, Addis Abäba 1965 EC (1972 CE); C. Hayoz, *Portrait de Marie: Complainte de la Vierge. Deux poésies mariales éthiopiennes inédites. Texte, traduction, commentaire. Thèse etc.*, MA thesis (Fribourg: Université de Fribourg, 1956); D.G. López, 'El Movimiento rastafari y el tercer milenio Ethiopie', *Del Caribe*, Santiago de Cuba, 2008; Nega Mezlekia, *Notes from the Hyena's Belly: An Ethiopian Boyhood* (New York, NY: Picador, 2000); Səbhat Gäbrä Əgzi'abəḥər, ፩ ፥ ፮ ፥ ፯ (Amməst, səddəst, səbat, 'Five, six, seven') (Addis Abäba: Maḥlet Asattami Dərəḡḡət, 2000 EC (2007 CE)); —, ሌቲም ፣ አይነጋልኝ (Letum aynəgalləñ, 'I will not see the end of the night') (Addis Abäba: Zed IE Mattämiya Bet, 2005 EC (2012 CE)); Sebhat Guèbrè-Egziabher (Səbhat Gäbrä Əgzi'abəḥər), *Les Nuits d'Addis-Abeba (Ethiopie) par l'auteur et Francis Falceto* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2004); E.T. Semi, 'Ethiopian Jews in Europe: Taamrat Emmanuel in Italy and Makonnen Levi in England', in T. Parfitt and E.T. Semi, eds, *Jews of Ethiopia: The Birth of an Elite*, Routledge Jewish Studies Series (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), pp. 74–100; K. Wendt, ed., tr., *Das Maṣḥafa milād (Liber Nativitatis) und Maṣḥafa Sellāsē (Liber Trinitatis) des Kaisers Zar'a Yā'qob*, CSCO 221–222, SAe 41–42 (Louvain: Secretariat du CSCO, 1962).

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ABBAS H. GNAMO, *Conquest and Resistance in the Ethiopian Empire, 1880–1974: The Case of the Arsi Oromo*, African Social Studies Series, 32 (Leiden–Boston, MA: Brill, 2014). xiv, 370 pp., 4 ills, 8 maps, 7 tables. Price: € 75.00/US-\$ 97.00. ISBN: 978-9-0042-5813-6; E-ISBN: 978-9-0042-6548-6.

This book tricks potential readers: the spine sports the broadly phrased main title, attractive to many, and only from the cover do we learn that the focus lies on the more narrow case of the Arsi Oromo. Almost shamefaced, the subtitle is printed in tiny type. We all want our books to have a broad appeal, but allow me to ask: what does Abbas H. Gnamo's work deliver for people who are not specifically interested in the Arsi Oromo, but in 'conquest and resistance in the Ethiopian Empire' in general? A lot, as it turns out, as most chapters manage to balance the ethnographic focus and the wider context.