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Review

PREDRAG BUKOVEC, ed., *Christlicher Orient im Porträt – Wissenschafts-
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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*.

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The studies offer a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issues, but much remains to be explained. Besides political and strategic questions, one may also think of theological, religious, artistic or other factors.

In this connection, one might explore further aspects of life in these ancient monasteries. The role of community life versus eremitic, issues of diet, types of prayer, missionary activity, time-table and other similar questions would enhance studies on history, geography and social context, already enriched by Ethio-SPaRe's valuable and significant contribution.

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PREDRAG BUKOVEC, ed., *Christlicher Orient im Porträt – Wissenschaftsgeschichte des Christlichen Orients. Kongreßakten der 1. Tagung der RVO (4. Dezember 2010, Tübingen)*, I–II, Religionen im Vorderen Orient, 2, 3 (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2014). 1131 (680 (1–680) + 451 (681–1131)) pp. Price: € 259.60 (129.80 + 129.80). ISBN: 978-3-8300-7813-5; 978-3-8300-7812-8.

This massive two-volume work of 1,131 pages contains the proceedings of the first conference of the series 'Religionen im Vorderen Orient', held in Tübingen in 2010 and devoted to the history of Christian oriental studies seen through the biographies of several outstanding personalities in the field during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To my knowledge, no such attempt has yet been made, and this work is more than welcome. It should be said that 'Christian Orient' is understood here in its broader sense, so as to encompass—besides the traditionally established 'six languages' (namely, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, and Georgian) corresponding for example to the six linguistic subseries of the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* or to single chapters in M. Albert et al., *Christianismes orientaux. Introduction a l'étude des langues et des littératures*, Initiations au christianisme ancien (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993)—the Byzantine and particularly the Slavonic area. These latter fields—the 'Byzantine and Slav(on)ic area'—are more commonly considered to be a branch in their own right and previous attempts in the golden age of Christian oriental studies between the end of the nineteenth and especially in the earliest decades of the twentieth century did not yet include Georgian.¹ As a matter of fact, however, one can confidently

¹ See for example the interesting passage from C. Brockelmann, ed., *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients*, Die Litteraturen des Ostens in Einzeldarstellungen (2nd edn, Leipzig: C.F. Amelangs Verlag, 1909), including only Syriac together with Christian Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopic, to A. Baumstark, *Die christ-*

say that the definition of ‘Christian Orient’ as a disciplinary field strongly depends on national academic traditions and that aspects of language or culture have been differently stressed in different contexts. For example in Germany—one of the few if not the only country where chairs and research units for ‘Christian oriental studies’ still exist, apart from confessional institutions—there is a strong tendency to stress the social and historical aspects to the detriment of linguistic and philological approaches, which are given more attention in linguistic or areal studies.

The work is organized with two introductory essays by Predrag Bukovec (pp. 7–11) and Florian Lippke (pp. 13–51), the latter looking in particular at the connections between Old Testament and Christian oriental studies. There follow fifty-four essays by one each or in some cases two authors, dedicated to fifty-three scholars, plus a short Appendix (additions to the first volume).

With seven scholars, Ethiopian studies are fairly well represented in this work. Two monumental contributions by Jürgen Tubach and Michael Güterbock are dedicated to one author—which is the only case in the work—namely August Dillmann (1823–1894), the re-founder of modern Ethiopian studies. These two articles make up almost one tenth of the entire volume (pp. 109–150 and 151–220 respectively). Other scholars of Ethiopian Studies presented by different authors are: Rafał Zarzeczny on Ignazio Guidi (1844–1935, pp. 281–337), Hatem Elliesie and Markus Falk on Franz Praetorius (1847–1927, pp. 339–353), Rainer Voigt on Enno Littmann (1875–1958, pp. 603–627), Maija Priess on Wolf Leslau (1906–2006, pp. 883–897), Ralph Lee on Edward Ullendorff (1920–2011, pp. 1055–1064), and Veronika Six on Ernst Eduard Maria Hammerschmidt (1928–1993, pp. 1065–1077). Of the other scholars presented, not a few have also contributed or remain reference authors in Ethiopian studies, although this was not their main field, for example Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930, pp. 221–230), Carl Brockelmann (1869–1956, pp. 467–496), Anton Baumstark (1872–1948, pp. 497–550), and Georg Graf (1875–1955, pp. 591–602).

The necessary selection of authors obviously lends itself to criticism, and both in Ethiopian studies and in general other names immediately come to our mind that could have been considered. It must be honestly acknowledged that whatever choices are made, criticism is always possible. German scholars are blatantly privileged in this work, and this can explain why, for

lichen Literaturen des Orients, I: *Einleitung*, 1: *Das christlich-aramäische und das koptische Schrifttum*, and II: 2: *Das christlich-arabische und das äthiopische Schrifttum*, 3: *Das christliche Schrifttum der Armenier und Georgier*, Sammlung Göschen, 527, 528 (Leipzig: Göschen, 1911). More recent discoveries have further extended the range of Christian oriental literatures to Iranian and Turkish texts.

example (my personal choice), William Wright (1830–1889), Hermann Zotenberg (1836–1894), Ernst Alfred Wallis Thompson Budge (1857–1934), René Graffin (1858–1941), François Nau (1864–1931), Paul Peeters (1870–1950), Carlo Conti Rossini (1872–1949), Eugène Tisserant (1884–1972), Jean Michel Hanssens (1885–1970), Giorgio Levi della Vida (1886–1967), René Draguet (1896–1980), Paul Devos (1913–1995), Gérard Garitte (1914–1992), Joseph-Marie Sauget (1926–1988), and Michel van Esbroeck (1934–2003) were not included. An omission such as that of Julius Aßfalg (1919–2001), however, is more difficult to explain. Still more difficult to understand and accept is the omission of Enrico Cerulli (1898–1988), who can probably be considered the most important promoter of Christian oriental studies in the twentieth century. His merit lies in his having made Christian Orient a field for the study of East-West relationships and of the wider Mediterranean Middle Ages in general, to have emancipated—or at least tried to emancipate—this field from the narrow-minded approaches of strictly theological and confessional studies, and to have considered Christian Orient as a uniquely interesting environment for the study of human history and civilization.² One can only regret that his lessons have too often been forgotten or even dismissed.

Some concern, however, also arises with some of the selected names. I will limit myself here to Ethiopian studies. There is no doubt that Dillmann, Guidi, Hammerschmidt, and to some extent also Ullendorff, absolutely deserve to be included; the essay on Guidi by Zarzeczny is, by the way, quite remarkable, since it fills a serious gap by providing a substantial profile and the first possibly complete bibliography (pp. 293–337) of the enormous and widely spread production of this genial and prolific eminent scholar. However, much less understandable is the inclusion of Praetorius, Littmann, and Leslau. To say this, obviously does not imply any criticism or limitation of the importance of these scholars or of the quality of the contributions dedicated to them, but on their actual representativeness for Christian oriental studies. All three have a somewhat limited production of texts relevant to

² Just to give one example out of his numerous contributions, let us mention the paper at the conference he convened, on 'L'Oriente cristiano nell'unità delle sue tradizioni', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: L'Oriente cristiano nella storia della civiltà (Roma, 31 marzo–3 aprile 1963) – (Firenze 4 aprile 1963)*, Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura, 62 (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1964), 9–43, later partially reworked in his *La letteratura etiopica: Con un saggio sull'oriente cristiano*, *Le letterature del mondo* (Firenze–Milano: Sansoni–Edizioni Accademia, 1968³), 193–229. His importance has not escaped some recent rethinkings of 'Orientalism', see for example, despite minor mistakes, K. Mallette, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean. Toward a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 132–161 (chapter five, 'The Life and Times of Enrico Cerulli').

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Christian oriental studies, yet—although Littmann also wrote sketches of Ethiopic literature and edited texts, as the others did also in a few cases—their main focus was always linguistic. The comparative approach, which is characteristic of the field of Christian oriental studies, was only marginally present in their cases.

With the limitations I have described—which are to some extent unavoidable in such works—the volume will certainly remain a reference work for the history of Christian oriental studies. An index of proper names, which is unfortunately not provided, would also have been appreciated.

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FASIL YITBAREK, *Soaring on Winged Verse: The Life of Ethiopian Poet-Playwright Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin* (Los Angeles, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2013). xii, 243 pp. Price: US-\$ 24.95. ISBN: 978-1-59907-056-8.

This book by Fasil Yitbarek (Fasil Yötbaräk) is the first book-length biography of the eminent playwright and poet Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin (Şäggaye Gäbrä Mädhən, 1936–2006). Both politically and artistically, Tsegaye was one of the giants of modern Amharic literature. Because of his overtly critical attitude to power abuse by the EPRDF, he and his works have met with a negative reception from the current government. Generally reluctant to talk about himself and his work,¹ towards the end of his life Tsegaye asked Fasil Yitbarek to write his biography. The book, in conformity with Tsegaye's explicit wish, was to be based solely on recorded interviews with him in Amharic. However, his death in 2006 abruptly cut short their 'biographic' meetings. Because Tsegaye was able to bring his life story only up to the year 1974, Fasil had to employ other, external sources to cover the remaining thirty-two years of the playwright's life. The result is that the biography is clearly unbalanced: whereas the years 1936–1974 take up thirty-two chapters in one hundred and fifty-seven pages, the years 1975–2006 occupy only eight chapters in forty-seven pages. But it is only this second, smaller part which is strictly speaking a biography. The first, larger part, based as it is on interviews, is closer to a memoir, except that it has a third-person narrator. On the dust-cover of the book, Wendy Belcher describes it as an 'authorized biography'. However, the fact that Fasil and Tsegaye never brought their interviews to an

¹ See R.K. Molvaer, *Black Lions: The Creative Lives of Modern Ethiopia's Literary Giants and Pioneers* (Lawrenceville, NJ–Asmara: The Red Sea Press, 1997), 269–274, here pp. 269–270.