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In memoriam Ioan Myrddin Lewis (1930–2014)

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Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

Editorial

The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the '19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies', held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt's own will, to a pool of younger scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

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.
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).
EI² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
JES *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
NEASt *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
OrChr *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
PICES 9 A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).
RSE *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

Personalia

Siegbert Uhlig awarded with the British Academy 'Edward Ullendorff Medal'

The 'Edward Ullendorff Medal' of the British Academy 'for scholarly distinction and achievements in the field of Semitic Languages and Ethiopian Studies', established thanks to the generous support of Edward Ullendorff's widow, Dina, was awarded to Siegbert Uhlig in 2015, in consideration of his significant contribution to the field, and to Ethiopian palaeography in particular (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/prizes-and-medals-ceremony-2015>).

In memoriam Ioan Myrddin Lewis (1930–2014)

THOMAS ZITELMANN, Berlin

Ioan M. Lewis, Professor emeritus for Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics (LSE), died on March 14, 2014. Throughout his academic life Lewis became regarded as the doyen of 'Somali Studies'. At the same time he is remembered as an uncompromising representative of classical structural-functionalist and comparative British social anthropology. For more than half of a century the life and work of Lewis was also connected with the political trials and tribulations of the Ethiopian-Somali neighbourhood. In fact, when 'Somali Studies' were in the year 1980 formally established as a special academic subfield, strongly supported by the former Somali president and dictator Siyad Barre (1969–1991), it was clear that this was a political-cultural act done in mimicry and competition with 'Ethiopian Studies'.¹ Lewis, the comparative anthropologist, could have called such mimicry 'the "demonstration effect" of the neighboring'.²

Born in 1930 to parents of a Welsh-Scottish background, Lewis grew up in London and Glasgow. In 1951 he obtained a Bsc. in chemistry from Glasgow University. However, Lewis decided to turn to social anthropology, with the help of a grant from Nuffield Foundation which was to support science students to join the humanities. Lewis was accepted at the Institute of Social

¹ Labahn 1980, 93.

² Lewis 1976, 346.

Anthropology at Oxford University, were E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902–1973) and Franz Steiner (1909–1952) became his teachers. At that time Steiner himself was to prepare, on behalf of the International African Institute (IAI), a multi-language bibliography on the Somali, Afar (Danakil) and Saho people. Steiner convinced Lewis to write a BLitt thesis on the basis of the material. Following Steiner's early death, Lewis took the task to publish bibliography and thesis as part of the IAI Survey on Africa.³ Lewis now longed for extended fieldwork among the Somali. He eventually captured a grant from the 'British Colonial Social Science Research Council'. Extended fieldwork, the obligatory *rite de passage* for British social anthropologists, was done in 1955–1957. To obtain Somali language skills Lewis began to learn with the linguist W.B. Andrzejewski (1922–1994). Both men developed a life-long friendship and cooperation. After returning from Somaliland Lewis finished his DPhil thesis within five months. The book on 'A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa' appeared in 1961 and established Lewis' anthropological credentials. It was also republished twice (1982, 1999), each time with new introductions, pre- or afterwords, which adapted general arguments about the importance of clan and lineages in Somali society to changing contexts.

While Lewis remained bonded to the Somali field of research throughout his life, his various academic positions lead him to teach rather comparative social anthropology than to focus only on regional studies. From 1957 to 1960 Lewis obtained a university position in African Studies at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This was followed by positions at Glasgow University (1960–1963), University College at London (1963–1969), and finally a full professorship at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1969, which he held until his retirement in 1994. In 1969 Lewis was considered to be the youngest professor in Great Britain. Additionally he held positions as the editor of 'Man' (*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*; 1959–1972), and as the Honorary Director of the London-based International African Institute (1982–1988).⁴

During the 1960s and 1970s Lewis remained on good relations with the subsequent post-colonial governments of Somalia. However, during the late 1980s Lewis fell in disgrace with the regime under the Somali President and Dictator Siyad Barre (1969–1990), and he and his team was not allowed to conduct an already planned refugee survey on behalf of the UNHCR.⁵ Following the

³ Idem 1955; 1969; 1994 (bibl.ref. A.1.).

⁴ Gesheker 2001, passim; Hoehne and Luling 2010, passim.

⁵ Lewis 2003a, 319–320 – A small survey was actually conducted in 1988 and enabled the author of these lines to slip for research into Somalia.

downfall of Siyad Barre in 1990, and the outbreak of civil war, Lewis' expertise on the Somali social structure and the clan system, came back on demand, and sidelined various attempts of 'humanitarian intervention' by international actors. He contributed to the idea to reconstruct Somalia through 'building blocks', i.e. using local forms of governance by elders, councils and contractual relations to rebuild a state from below.⁶ Lewis became also engaged to promote the protection of Somali refugees in the global orbit.

At the core of Lewis career was his initial work on the Somali clan system, based on fieldwork (1955–1957) among nomadic Somali camel herders in the British Protectorate of Somaliland.⁷ As a comparative anthropologist Lewis used his deep knowledge about Somali society, culture and history⁸ as a starting point to venture into many fields:

- Somali and other oral poetry in the Horn of Africa;⁹
- clan, nation, state building and failure in Somalia and beyond;¹⁰
- types of Islam among the Somali and in sub-Saharan Africa;¹¹
- possession cults and ecstatic religions;¹²
- last but not least taking position in general anthropology.¹³

The anthropologist Ioan M. Lewis stayed firmly with the findings and discussions of his peer generation of British social anthropologists (among others Max Gluckman, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner). Lewis wrote influential contributions to discussions about models of segmentary lineage societies as systems of kinship, marriage and political order; history and anthropology, and theories of symbolism.¹⁴ Verbalized disinterest was in particular applied to French and US-American anthropology. To the discussion about anthropologists imperial/colonial/post-colonial entanglements Lewis contributed a continuous self-reflexive defense of research practice.¹⁵

When Lewis arrived in Somaliland in 1955, the Haud, the border region towards Ethiopia, had been just returned to Ethiopia. Following the end of Italian colonialism in Ethiopia in 1941, the Somali-settled areas of the Haud within Ethiopia came under British control. They were returned to Ethiopia

⁶ Idem 2003b, IX–XXII; Helander, Mukhtar, and Lewis 1995; Lewis and Mayall 1995; Lewis 1997 (bibl.ref. A.2.).

⁷ Lewis 1957; 1961 (bibl.ref. A.1.).

⁸ Idem 1980; 2008 (bibl.ref. A.1.).

⁹ Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964; Hayward and Lewis 1996 (bibl.ref. A.1.).

¹⁰ Lewis 2008; 2004; 1997; 1994; Lewis and Mayall 1995; 1983 (bibl.ref. A.2.).

¹¹ Lewis 1998; 1984; 1966 (bibl.ref. A.3.).

¹² Idem 2009, 2003; 1986; 1971; Lewis, al-Safi, and Hurreiz 1991 (bibl.ref. C.).

¹³ Lewis 1976; 1988 and 2003; 1998; 1999 (bibl.ref. B.).

¹⁴ Idem 1965; 1968; 1977 (bibl. ref. B.)

¹⁵ Idem 1968; 1973; 1977; 1998, 1999, 2003 (bibl.ref. A. 4., B.).

in 1954, much to the dismay of the Somali pastoralists, who had their grazing grounds on both sides of the border. Lewis developed an emotional attachment for the Somali cause, which found an outlet in a sympathetic description of Somali patriotism, based on local interests in pasture lands, with access regulated by the stateless structure of clans and corporate lineages. Fully arguing in the functionalist legacy, Lewis regarded the flexible and contractually structured system of lineage alliances in Somali society, as deriving from basic security needs in a stateless environment.¹⁶ However, when he analyzed two decades later the notorious Marehan-Ogaden-Dulbahante ('M.O.D.') alliance, which formed the power base for the dictatorship of President Siyad Barre, it became as well represented as a function of internal and external security.¹⁷ For some Somali intellectuals and critics, this analytical approach meant not looking behind the screen of cultural form but concealing power relations and changing features of the clan and segmentary structure behind the 'duplicitous phrase' of 'pastoral democracy'.¹⁸ The controversy about the basics of Somali clanship, primordial or contextual defined, holds on.¹⁹

Lewis claimed the 'fieldwork mode of production' as his basis for empirically grounded theory.²⁰ However, he also took freely Eurocentric paradigms as basic analytical yardsticks. Lewis believed with the nineteenth-century liberal Stewart Mill that cultural homogeneity might promote democracy.²¹ This romantic position was transferred on the political world of the Somali clan system. In consequence, the Ethio-Somali neighbourhood enshrined not only a conflict about borders or about free movement of pastoralists. It was moreover a clash of principles of statehood, deeply rooted in the pre-colonial African past and renewed under colonialism. According to Lewis, the African past witnessed two types of states: the culturally diverse state, with a conquering elite ruling about diverse populations, using different forms of direct and indirect rule; and the cultural homogeneous state, where rulers and ruled shared the same cultural idiom. The Ethiopian empire stood for the legacy of the former type. The post-colonial order of sub-Saharan Africa made the borders of the culturally diverse state sacrosanct, and gave an additional legitimacy to the practices of the Ethiopian empire and the "Ethiopianization' of Africa'.²² However, the newly formed Somali nation-state reintroduced the principle of the culturally homogenous

¹⁶ Idem 1961, 301–302.

¹⁷ Idem 1980, 222.

¹⁸ Ali Jimale Ahmed 1995, xi.

¹⁹ For details of the controversy see Besteman 1998; Lewis 1998; Kapteijns 2011.

²⁰ Lewis 1999.

²¹ Idem 1976, 351.

²² Idem 1983, 74.

state and challenged the Ethiopian empire on its own territory. In Lewis' initial thought, the culturally homogenous state, had a larger chance to develop democratic forms of consent.²³ The younger Lewis transferred this romantic vision on the Somali and their developing nation-state. The older Lewis preserved the romantic view for his contribution to the efforts by international humanitarian agencies to support in conflict-torn Somalia local state-building from below and the building-block-paradigm.

For more general readers and regional non-specialists Lewis' work on possession, ecstatic cults, popular religion at the Islamic periphery and his comparison with shamanism became particularly attractive and were translated into several languages. Lewis started from the ethnographic observation of a religious niche women hold in the male-centered world of Somali clans and Islamic institutions. This niche was participation in domestic assemblies of spirit possession (the Somali *sar*), which gave women a marginal voice and agency vis-à-vis the male dominated institutions. Looking behind the screen of cultural forms in different contexts of possession cults, Lewis observed a shift from domestic assemblies of women and individual marginals in the Somali setting, to a more public but still marginal possession cult such as the *zar* in the Ethiopian empire, which invoked 'the mystical powers of the periphery' against the Christian center.²⁴ In the case of Central Asian and North American shamanism, Lewis saw the development of a functional equivalent to possession in form of a central public religious cult. Lewis' position to link African cults of possession with shamanism was contested, but became influential.²⁵

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²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Idem* 2003, xvi.

²⁵ Boddy 1994, 409.

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Selected Bibliography of Ioan M. Lewis²⁶

A. Publications with Regard to Somalia and the Horn of Africa (general, politics and social structure, Islam in Somalia, doing anthropology in Somalia, studies with particular relation to Ethiopia)

A.1. General

1955

- *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho* (London: International African Institute, 1955) (reissues: Reprint with supplementary bibliography 1969 (International African Institute: London, 1969); — New edition with supplementary appendices 1994 (London: Haan Associates, 1994)).

²⁶For a comprehensive bibliography of Ioan M. Lewis' publications see Hoehne and Luling 2010; Hoehne et al. 2015.

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1957

- *The Somali Lineage System and the Total Genealogy* (London: Crown Agents, 1957).

1961

- *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) (reissues: 1982, reprinted with a new introduction by I.M. Lewis (New York: Africana Publ. Company, 1982); — *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*. New introduction by Said Samatar and new Afterword by I.M. Lewis (Oxford: James Currey–Hamburg: LIT Verlag–London: International African Institute, 1999).

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1980

- *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (London–New York, NY: Longman, 1980).

1994

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1996

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2008

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A.2. Political and Social Structure

1958

- 'Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, I', *Africa*, 28/3 (1958), 244–261.
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1968

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1995

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1997

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2004

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A.3. Islam in Somalia

1980

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1998

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A.4. Doing Anthropology in Somalia

1977

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1999

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2003

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A.5. Studies with particular relation to Ethiopia

1959

- ‘The Galla in Northern Somaliland’, *RSE*, 15 (1959), 21–38.

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C. Comparative Religion and Islam

1966

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In memoriam Fr. Kevin O'Mahoney (1930–2015)

Fr. JOSÉ L. BANDRES

Kevin was born on May 3, 1930 in Manchester, England. His parents were Irish and he was the youngest in a family of three children. His elder brother, Denis, was a priest in the Diocese of Salford and his sister, Catherine, was a teacher. Kevin joined the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) at the age of 16 after secondary school studies at St Bede's College in Manchester.