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AETHIOPICA

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The beginnings of academic interest in Ethiopian studies in Europe go back to the 18th century. If one reckons, that the first dictionary of Gəʿəz, the classical Ethiopian language, written by a European author was published in 1548, it would seem that the Ethiopian studies belong to one of the oldest fields of African studies in Europe. Still, from the very beginning of its presence at European universities, Ethiopian studies were closely connected with the Semitic philology; separated from African studies it was not identified with it for a long period of time. The reason behind this state of play was that the languages of the Ethiopian rulers as well as the languages of Ethiopian literature belong to the Semitic language family. What more, the country's Christianity is closely related to the sphere of Middle Eastern forms of Christian religion, the Semitic sphere from the point of view of languages, in which religious writings were produced. The Ethiopian studies in Europe, as well as that of the whole Middle East Christianity were carried out within the frames of Semitic philology.

In the second half of the 20th century, the Ethiopian studies slowly leaned towards the African studies, undergoing spontaneous development at the time. The Semitic tradition of the Ethiopian studies in Europe, however, remained as one of the factors distinguishing Ethiopian studies from Africanistic. This distinction is reflected for instance in the name: "Institute of African and Ethiopian Studies" at the Hamburg University, which is one of the most important academic research centres of the area defined by its name. This Institute has for many years been famous for superior academic publishing in the field of Ethiopian studies. Let me at least mention the *Aethiopistische Forschungen*, a series started in 1977 containing at present 54 monographs on Ethiopian linguistics, history, literature and culture.

The intensive scientific and publishing activity of this centre of Ethiopian studies has extended in the recent years to a large scale project already in progress, *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, containing entries on numerous scientific fields in reference to

Ethiopia¹, and last but not least, the publishing of scientific periodical *Aethiopica* (*Aeth*), being reviewed in this paper, of which three volumes have come out.

The editor-in-chief and the publisher of *Aethiopica* is Siegbert Uhlig, a scholar in Ethiopian studies, who for many years has been heading the Hamburg Institute of African and Ethiopian Studies, and who is also the chief editor of the above mentioned *Aethiopistische Forschungen* series and *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*. The Editing Board of *Aethiopica* has the following members: Bairu Tafla, specializing, though not only, in the history of Ethiopia and Eritrea², and one of the present day top scholars engaged in Ethiopian studies; Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg, a Hausa linguist, who has been co-editing a well known African studies periodical *Afrika und Übersee*; Veronika Six, engaged mainly in ancient Ethiopia and its writing in the classic Gəʿəz language. The presented *Aethiopica* editing board is made up of world known scholars and reputed specialists.

As stated in the editorial by Siegbert Uhlig, the priority for this new periodical are philology and history, though articles on history of art, studies on religions and literature, linguistics, paleography, archaeology and ethnology will also be published. Reports on current research, bibliographical information, reviews, reports from scientific conferences, obituary notes and other sections depending on the initiative of readers, will be considered for publishing. Designed as a sort of a supplement to the *Aethiopistische Forschungen*, this new periodical is intended as a panel for discussion and exchange of information as well as printing material of shorter contributions. The decision as to which received papers are to be published will be made by the Board of Editors which, if needed, seeks advice of the international academic community. The preferred language of publication is English and papers in German, French and Italian will be printed accompanied by a summary in English (*Aeth* I, Editorial).

These ambitious assumptions were carried out in the first three volumes in an impressive manner in view of the thematic range of articles published as well as care if not reverence of editing and printing manner.

I will start discussing the contents of these three volumes with news on the Ethiopian studies academic community and bibliographies. The first contain obituaries of recently deceased scholars: Robert Hetzron (1938-1997) an outstanding linguist of Hungarian descent, whose works in the field of general linguistics, the Cushitic and Semitic languages, comparative and historic studies on Hamito-Semitic languages and Hungarian, constitute a permanent contribution to the linguistic thought of the second half of the 20th century; Shlomo Raz (1936-1999), specialized in Ethiopian

¹ There are eight main topics: geography, anthropology and ethnography, linguistics, history, archaeology and numismatics, culture and social history, religions. The volumes will be organised in alphabetical order. Work on vol. I containing A-D entries is nearly finished.

² The independence of Eritrea was formally declared on the 24th of May, 1993. It was admitted to the UN on 28th May of same year. Being formerly part of Ethiopia, the research on this country was traditionally connected with the Ethiopian Studies. Presently they are being distinguished from Ethiopianistic.

languages, in particular Tigre and Amharic as well as in Arabic dialects and in phonetics in general. The obituaries on Robert Hetzron and Shlomo Raz were written by semitisant and éthiopisant linguist, Gideon Goldenberg (*Aeth* II, 198-200 and III, 190-191). The other deceased is a French éthiopisant Jacques Bureau, anthropologist, sociologist and political scientist, who spent many years in Ethiopia doing field research, a lecturer at the Haylä Səllassē I University prior to the 1974 revolution and the Addis Ababa University afterwards. The *In memoriam*, devoted to him accompanied with a selected bibliography, was written by his French colleague, Alain Rouaud (*Aeth* II, 201-205). The obituary of Charles Fraser Beckingham (1914-1998) written by Arthur K. Irvine (*Aeth* III, 191-194) details the rich life and scientific work of the deceased. Professor Ch. F. Beckingham began his work in Great Britain with the Civil Service then moved to the Foreign Office and started his professional scholarly career in 1951. His main interests were travel literature, history and geography of Muslim Middle East and Ethiopian Eastern Christian worlds.

Besides the memories about those who passed away from our éthiopisant circle, *Aeth* provides information about those just entering it, i.e. the abstracts of Ph.D. dissertations: on the Hellenistic concepts of moral ideals rooted in the Ethiopian hagiographic literature³, on the process of forming a centralised model of Ethiopian state from the end of 17th century to the beginning of 20th century⁴ (*Aeth* I, 279-280); dissertation of edition and translation of Arabic and Ethiopian text of the Testament of Izaac and Jacob⁵ and other dissertation being the translation from Arabic to Gə'əz "The Book of the Spiritual Remedy"⁶ (*Aeth* III, 281-283).

Another initiative of *Aeth* is the information on contemporary scholars and their research works devoted to Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as the list of prospective academics compiled and edited by Bairu Tafla (*Aeth* III, 166-187)⁷

The informational section contains also reports on scientific conferences, which took place between May 1997 and January 2000 (*Aeth* I, 281-287; II, 297-303; III, 284-287). Among them, one can find here: a report from *Orbis Aethiopicus*⁸, a sym-

³ S. WOLDE YOHANNES, *Il fondo umanistico dei modelli e degli ideali dei gadl. Ricerca linguistico-filosofica su alcuni testi del XV etiopico*, Pontificiale Universitatis Gregorianae, Romae, 1996.

⁴ TSEGAYE TEGENU, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism. The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696 – 1913*, Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm 1997.

⁵ M. HEIDE, *Edition und Übersetzung der arabischen und äthiopischen Texte der Testamente Isaaks und Jakobs*, Universität Marburg 1999.

⁶ M. KLEINER, *Maḥḥafa faws manfasāwi. Die Gə'əz-Übersetzung des arabischen kitāb aṭ-ṭibb ar-ruḥānī- ("Buch von der geistlichen Medizin") des koptischen Bischofs von At-rīb und Malṭṭ (13. Jh.)*

⁷ The *Register of International Scholars in Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies* contains the names of scholars, their place of work, the topics of current research, starting and completion dates. This register is a continuation of a similar source published since the 60's of the 20th century by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa, of which the last issue appeared – as far as I know – in 1980.

⁸ See: V. SIX, "5. – 29.1997 in Gniew (Polen): Dritte Tagung des *Orbis Aethiopicus*: Äthiopien und seine Nachbarn", *Aeth* I, 283 – 284.

posium in Gniew, organised by the Polish Academy of Science and the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum, the 13th International Ethiopian Conference in Kyoto⁹, a working meeting in Bologna, devoted to one of the ways of soil usage (so-called *rim*) in ancient Ethiopia¹⁰, the 5th International Conference on the history of Ethiopian art in Lisbon¹¹, or the International Conference on African languages and literatures into the 21st century¹². The space is limited to mention every international meeting and exhibition discussed in *Aeth* I-III. It should be enough to say there has been 17 of them in the period under review. The informational section of *Aeth* also contains an extensive report on an Amsterdam exhibition devoted to Ethiopia seen as the heritage of the Empire and a short note about an exhibition in Ude (Holland) "Kopten und Ethiopiërs. Tweeduizend jaar mystiek en christendom langs de Nijl"¹³

Passing over review of the extensive and thematically many-sided section containing reviews of monographic publications (*Aeth* I, 206-285, *Aeth* II, 225-276, *Aeth* III, 195-277) I should like to draw attention to a new in Ethiopian studies – to my knowledge – idea of providing a list of articles devoted to Ethiopia which were printed in various scientific periodicals not necessarily closely related to the Ethiopian studies (*Aeth* I, 221-225 and *Aeth* II, 285-291, *Aeth* III, 277-280)¹⁴

The informational and bibliographical thematic range of *Aeth* also includes a linguistic bibliography written by Reiner Voigt: *Bibliographie zur äthiosemitischen und kuschitischen Sprachwissenschaft* (*Aeth* I, 207-217; II, 190-197; III, 160-166). It covers the period between 1995 and 1998 being a very valuable study in view of scarcity of Ethiopian bibliographies in the recent years on one hand and the growing number of linguistic research works on particular languages used in Ethiopia as well as associated with it more general considerations (for example socio-linguistic) on the other.

Closing the report on the bibliographical section of *Aeth* I-III, I will discuss an article, which in my opinion rates among the most important items in the three so far published volumes. An article by Bairu Tafala: *Production of Historical Works in*

⁹ See: S. UHLIG, "12.-17.12.1997 in Kyoto (Japan): The XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies", *Aeth* I, 286-287.

¹⁰ See: BAIRU TAFLA, "15.-16.1.1999 in Bologna (Italy): International Workshop: 'Rim'Land in Historical Ethiopia", *Aeth* II, pgs. 302-303.

¹¹ See: S. CHOJNACKI, "October 27-30, 1999 at Arrábida/Lisbon (Portugal): 5th International Conference on the History of Ethiopian Art", *Aeth* III, 285-286.

¹² See: BAIRU TAFLA, "January 11-17, 2000, at Asmāra (Eritrea): Against All Odds: African Languages and Literatures into 21st Century — An International Conference and Festival", *Aeth* III, 286-287.

¹³ See: J.G. ABINK, "Report on an Exhibition (Amsterdam: November 1998-August 1999) *Ethiopia – the heritage of an Empire*. Notes on an exhibition", *Aeth* II, 291-296 and *Aeth* III, 287

¹⁴ The list, according to the editor's note placed at its beginning does not pretend to be complete. I would suggest to Polskie Towarzystwo Afrykanistyczne (Polish Association for African Studies), that the "Afryka" periodical they publish should deliver bibliographical details of articles devoted to Ethiopian studies printed there as there is no such information in *Aeth*. Polish titles should be sent together with English translation in order to more comprehensive information.

Ethiopia and Eritrea. Some Notes on the State of Recent Publications 1991-1997 (*Aeth I*, 176-207). It contains the reflection on of the latest tendencies of African studies' development, including the Ethiopian studies, both in Europe and the USA, which were defined by Rajmund Ohly and who distinguished three stages of its development¹⁵ First, the missionary, "...which consisted of adapting the African languages to the Christian and religious functions and the modern forms of elementary education in particular African societies " which "...contributed to the emergence of African Studies centres in Europe..." The second, based on the aspiration to examine as many African languages and cultures as possible with the passive participation of the Africans; and the third, present phase being the academic education of native African linguists "...able to carry out individual African studies research in Europe, USA and at the African universities...". This final stage was reflected in the discussed article by Bairu Tafla, whose motto: "Ethiopians are more anxious than ever to know their history (Mulugeta Lule, 1992)" constitutes the *pendant* to Rajmund Ohly's concept. A good example of relevancy of both these diagnosis is a monography by Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974*. First published in 1991 and reprinted in 1994, 1995, 1996 in English, was translated into Amharic and published by Addis Ababa University Press in 1997/78. This is the first such case in the history of Ethiopian studies publications. Up till then, the translation of Ethiopian historiographic writings, rarely done, were from Amharic into European languages and not the other way around! This a significant and important difference.

Bairu Tafla's aim, and I quote him directly, is: "...on the one hand to provide a bird's eye view of historical and related works produced primarily by Ethiopians and Eritreans in their native languages and on the other hand to assess the trend, progress and growth of historical writing in the two countries. The first is essential not only as a source of information for scholars and students abroad who, in the absence of smart publishers and bookshop catalogues, may not be aware of newly published book in Gə'əz, Təgrəñña or Amharic which are anyhow issued in a very limited number of copies, but also as a reminder to international bibliographers who have constantly ignored such works unless published in European language. The second aspect must be of interest to Ethiopian and Eritrean intellectuals, who from time to time, may give thought to what has been done and what is yet to be accomplished."(I, 177-178)

Bairu Tafla's article supplies information on publications in the above mentioned languages as well as in English together with notes on authors and characterisation of current historiographic trends (*Aeth I*, 205-206). Let me add – there are not many so linguistically competent Ethiopianists as polyglot Bairu Tafla. The author arranged the collected bibliography in the following manner: Historical works, Comprehensive history (pgs 182-183), Epochal studies (pgs 183-190), Eritrea (pgs 190-192), Biographies (pgs 192-196), Autobiographies/Memories (pgs 196-198), Church history (pgs 198-200) Ethno-history (pgs 200-202), Documentary works (pgs 202-205).

¹⁵ See: R. OHLY, "The role of African Studies today" (in Polish), *Afryka* 3(1995), 58-66.

Everyone who is occupied with modern history of this part of Africa will be thankful to Bairu Tafla for the rare bibliographical information he managed to collect. Let us hope that the author will continue his work the more so as he himself writes (I, 178) the article does not exhaust all of the dispersed and often incidentally found publications. Hoping this will be the case I would add to Bairu Tafla's list a few bibliographic positions known to me, including the political and social profile periodicals, which have recently been published in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the USA in the last decade. They are the sign of contemporary Ethiopian and Eritrean socio-political thought taking shape in both these countries and in the exile. As it would be very difficult to find the bibliographical information I will provide a few items also from the period prior to 1991-1997 discussed in the article.

For example, in the section 'Epochal studies': Fintahun Tiruneh: *The Ethiopian Students: Their Struggle to Articulate the Ethiopian Revolution*, Chicago, Nyala Type, 1990, 114 pgs. The work gives a picture of the trends of the social and political thought among various groups of Ethiopian students before the 1974 revolution and its initial stage. It is an important position in the section on contemporary history of Ethiopia listed by Bairu Tafla including the topic of political movements of young Ethiopian intellectuals.

A book by Teshome Wagaw, *Four our Souls: Ethiopian Jews in Israel*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1993, 271 pgs, belongs to works on the most recent period of Ethiopian history. This work describes the history of the Bētä Isra'ēl (Fālaša) people on the 80's of the 20th century, their exodus from Ethiopia to Israel and their fate thereafter.

One of the first, if not the first, autobiographies¹⁶ by an individual who does not belong to the Ethiopian student elite and is uncommitted politically, but who was forced by the terror of Māngəstu Ḥaylā Maryam's regime to save his life by escaping his motherland through the Western border to Sudan and then on foot through the desert to Cairo and finally to USA, is a very moving and personal book by Tadele Seyoum Teshale *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee (1944-1991): Sojourn in the Fourth World*, New York – Lewiston, The Eldwin Mellen Press, 1991, 97 pgs. These important, from sociological and historical point of view, memories were written - as the author states - thanks to the encouragement and assistance of Virginia Lee Barnes.

To publications by Ethiopians in exile definitively in opposition to the present government of Mälās Zānawī one can add a book *The Pillage of Ethiopia by Eritreans and Their Tigrean Surrogates*, Los Angeles, Adey Publishing Company 1996, 129 pgs, whose author, Assefa Negasch accuses the inhabitants of the northern territory of Ethiopia of looking solely after their own welfare conducting a wasteful exploitation in other regions of Ethiopia.

¹⁶ This item refers to "Autobiographies, memories" see: I, pgs 196-198

The section defined by Bairu Tafla as 'Documentary works' (I, pgs 202-205) would also include a socio-political periodical 'əyta (*Prospect*) edited and published by Getachew Paulos Berhane. The first issue came out in Addis Ababa 1 gənbot 1984 (May 9, 1992) and the last 8th issue, *ṭəqəmt* in 1986 (October-November 1993). It contains news and political commentaries on domestic and international matters, review of cultural events, economic information, a review of cultural events, memoirs about great Ethiopian intellectual individuals of the past, drawings, critical and satirical articles. I think that it is the first periodical of this character and importance ever to appear in Ethiopia. The first issue contained 12 newspaper size pages and the last – 8¹⁷

Səmənna Wärq. Nəşanna hullä-gäb yä-ṭənaṭənna yä-mərəmmər mäsəht (Wax and Gold. The Independent and Comprehensive Periodical of Studies and Research) was a periodic published in Washington between 1979 and 1983 (= 1986-1991) edited by Fintahun Tiruneh. The last issue of this publication *Yä-Ityoṗya Gizēyawī Yä-polätika Hunēta. Səmənna Wärq, läyyu 'atəm (The Political Situation of Present Day Ethiopia. Wax and Gold, special issue, Annual 3, issue 8-9),* Washington, 1983 (=1991) was a special one. The periodical, including the special issue, is devoted to Ethiopia and Eritrea and it includes articles on the following: political programmes for the future, political and sociologic issues, general history and history of culture as well as news on printing from Ethiopia, Eritrea and abroad, Amharic neologisms with English translations, biographies and bibliographies of Ethiopian scholars¹⁸ Let me just mention a few more periodicals: *Journal of Eritrean Studies*, a bi-yearly, published by the Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, edited by Araia Tsegai, of which the first issue came out in 1986 in Grambling, USA; *The Oromo Commentary. Bulletin for Critical Analysis of Current Affairs in the Horn of Africa*, published since 1991 in Minneapolis, USA and in Sonly, Sweden, edited by Mekuria Bulcha; and finally, *Ethiopian Register*, a monthly, coming out since 1994 in Minneapolis, USA, in Amharic and English. This periodical is in opposition to present authorities in Addis Ababa and equally accusatory as the cited above book by Assefa Negash. One of the leading political publishers of *Ethiopian Register* is the previously mentioned Prof. Gētačāw Haylä. The January 2000 issue of the periodical brings information and sharp criticism of the language policy, which – according to the authors – the central government is trying to impose in the Southern regions of Ethiopia. Safely, one can state, that the social and political publicism of Ethiopians, Eritreans and the people of this region, is very lively at present. I think time has come to ana-

¹⁷ Unfortunately, I only have Xeroxed copies of the three issues of this journal.

¹⁸ For example: BÄRIHE HABTÄ GIYORGIS, *Yä-'Erätra ṭəyaqē: Afätatunna yä-'Ityoṗya hunēta (The Eritrean issues: a solution and the existence of Ethiopia)*, see: the Special Issue, pgs 61-73, the leader *Yä-qalat fač. (The Meaning of Words)*, vol. I, nr 2, 1979 (= 1981), pgs 73-76, containing Amharic neologisms, Amharic on various domains, including scientific and technical; prepared by the board biography and bibliography of a great Ethiopian scholar, writer and political activist - blatengēta Mahəteme Səllasē Wäldä Mäsqał 1897-1971 (1904/05-1978/9), vol. 2, nr 4 1981 (= 1988), pgs 21-35, or the known Ethiopian studies scholar oppositionist to the present government in Ethiopia, a political activist residing in USA, Prof. Gētačāw Haylä, vol. 3, nr. 7, pgs 18-26.

lyse its contents for which the essential measure is the bibliographic arrangement started by Bairu Tafla in the discussed article.

I started this review by discussing *Aeth*'s bibliographic and informational items. Now let me turn to reviewing of articles included in three issues of this journal.

The thematic scope of articles in *Aeth* I-III contains, in accordance with the initial editorial declaration by Siegbert Uhlig, a wide range of epochs and issues. We come across linguistic and philological issues¹⁹, research in the field of history and literature analysis of religious, hagiographic, mystical writings²⁰ as well as studies relating to the contemporary socio-political power process and modernization problems²¹ and the reception of knowledge on Ethiopia in Europe in the 18th century, articles from the field of history of art and archaeology²², critical analysis on the history of Ethiopia from 12th to 19th century²³. Berhanu Beyene, M. Kudlek and O. Kummer published an article entitled *Encoding the Ethiopian Script for LATEX* (*Aeth* III, pgs 132-153). *Signum temporis!* The beginning of 20th century witnessed introduction of printing to Ethiopia and the beginning of following century computers were introduced. But the *scriptus*, who write books manually, endure immutably in the Ethiopian culture.

I should like to end my review by discussing an article by Joseph Tubiana which opens the first volume: *Aethiops-Aethiopica-Aethiopsis. 1922-1938 Sylvain Grébaud à*

¹⁹ O. KAPELIUK, "The Ethio-Semitic Possessive Pronouns as Predicalizers in Historical Perspective", *Aeth* I, pgs. 90-103; W. LESLAU, "Arabic Loanwords in S l i", *Aeth* II, pgs 103-124; P. MARRASINI, "Some philological problems in the *Miracles* of Gabra Manfas Qeddus", *Aeth* III, pgs 45-79; R. VOIGT, "Über die 'unregelmässige' Form yəbe im Altäthiopischen", *Aeth* III, pgs 120-132; V. SIX, "Die Neuerwerbungen äthiopischer Handschriften der Völkerkundlichen Sammlung der Stadt Mannheim im Reiss-Museum", *Aeth* III, pgs 153-160.

²⁰ A. BAUSI, "L'Epistola 70 di Cipriano di Cartagine in versione etiopica", *Aeth* I, pgs 101 – 131; S. Uhlig, *Darsan des Ya'qob von Sərug*, *Aeth* II, pgs 7-53; V. SIX, "Water – The Nile – And the Tā'amrā Maryam. Miracles of the Virgin Mary in the Ethiopian Version", *Aeth* II, s. 53-69; W. WITAKOWSKI, "The Magi in Ethiopic Tradition", *Aeth* II, pgs 69-90; GETIE GELAYE, "Contemporary Amharic Oral Poetry from Gojjam: Classification and a sample Analysis", *Aeth* II, pgs 124-144; V. SIX, "Das Äthiopien in Adolph Knigges Roman: Realität oder Hilfsmittel", *Aeth* II, pgs 144-159; P. BRANDT, "Geflecht aus 81 Büchern — zur variantenreichen Gestalt des äthiopischen Bibelkanons", *Aeth* III, pgs 79-116; R. BEYLOT, "Bref aperçu des Actes Bartalomēwos moine stéphanite du XV^e siècle", *Aeth* III, pgs 116-120; R. BEYLOT, "Origines de la localisation en Ethiopie du Royaume Prêtre Jean", *Aeth* III, pgs 188-190.

²¹ D. CRUMMEY, "Ethiopia, Europe and Modernity: A Preliminary Sketch", *Aeth* III, pgs 7-24; H. SCHOLLER, "Le développement constitutionnel de l'Ethiopie durant la période révolutionnaire (1974-1991)", *Aeth* III, pgs 24-45.

²² M. E. HELDMAN, "Creating Religious Art: The Status of Artisans in Highland Christian Ethiopia", *Aeth* I, pgs 131-148; S. MUNRO – HAY, "Aksumite Pottery from Medebai", *Aeth* II, pgs 183-190.

²³ E. Van DONZEL, "Ethiopia's Lalibāla and the fall of Jerusalem 1187", *Aeth* I, pgs 27-50; R. PANKHURST, "Ethiopian Dynastic Marriage and the Bētā Isra'el", *Aeth* I, pgs 50-64; H. EHRlich, "Ethiopia and Egypt – Ras Tafari in Cairo, 1924", *Aeth* I, pgs 64-85; O. RAINERI, "La battaglia di Adua secondo Cerulli Etiopico 318", *Aeth* I, pgs 85-101; G. GRÄBER, "Die befreiten Geiseln Kaiser Tewodros' II, Aus dem Photoalbum der Royal Engineers 1867/68", *Aeth* II, pgs. 159-183.

la tâche (Aeth I, 7-26) Sylvain Grébaud – a European lover of Ethiopian literary output and the Christian culture of the Ethiopian Empire. I was brought up on, at the beginning of my Ethiopian studies at the Warsaw University, very tiny books bound in white and orange covers – the texts of Ethiopian literature with French translations. These shaped my knowledge of Ethiopia. The unforgettable reading. S. Grébaud was the forerunner of Ethiopian research periodicals. The next academic Ethiopistic periodical, the annual *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, which first came out in Rome in 1941 were started by Carlo Conti Rossini, the Italian Ethiopianist of great renown. *Rassegna* is coming out till today thanks to the efforts of Lanfranco Ricci, a continuator of the 20th century Italian school of Ethiopian studies. Later, in 1953, the English *Ethiopia Observer* popularised scientific monthly started coming out. It was edited by Sylvia and Richard Pankhurst. Its print stopped together with the fall of the Ethiopian monarchy in 1974. In 1955, Section d'Archéologie du Gouvernement Impérial d'Éthiopie began issuing *Annales d'Éthiopie*, a periodical with an archaeological and philological profile created with the collaboration of French Ethiopian studies scholars. In 1963, in Addis Ababa, a semi-annual *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, printed by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Haile Sellassie I University started coming out. This, in short, is the history of the academic periodicals devoted to Ethiopian studies prior to the period reviewed. The scientific position of *Aethiopica* was not created *Deus ex machina*. It grew from the tradition of Ethiopian studies research conducted long since in Europe, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

I hold in my hand the Hamburg printed *Aethiopica* finding in it the history of Ethiopian studies research. I am not aware of a periodic with such a scope of embodying the world in this region. An imposing journal.

For some time now, there has been a discussion among the international Ethiopian studies scholars, whether the erudite universal, regionally conceived Ethiopian studies rooted in traditional philology is a scientific relic. Is it not time to divide the studies accordingly to the specialized domains of social studies such as linguistics, history or history of art? There is precedence in realisation of the second approach as specialist international conferences devoted solely to the history of Christian art in the Ethiopian Empire are already taking place. At the same time, international Ethiopian studies conferences – the last one held in Addis Ababa in 2000 – have been taking place uninterruptedly since 1956, easily gathering Ethiopian studies specialists from all over the world. I am not alien to the idea that time has come for a specialist division of research on the Ethiopian and Eritean civilizations. However, *Aethiopica*, the matter of this review, proves that the position of traditionally conceived Ethiopian studies is soundly based in the academic world and is not threatened by specializations, which quite naturally must and will develop.