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Review

PAOLO NICELLI, ed., *L'Africa, l'Oriente mediterraneo e l'Europa. Tradizioni e culture a confronto*

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More could have been achieved on the formal and editorial level as the volumes present quite a few mistakes in terms of pagination, frequent typos (including in prominent places such as the Table of Content or the title of the Introduction), layouting and formatting imprecisions (e.g. Yves Marie Stranger's paper, 'Horse Markets in Northern Shewa', I, 375–380, has the wrong header giving Kemal Abdulwehab's name). In the Introduction, the editors mention the fact that they chose not to impose homogeneous transliteration criteria. However, this would probably have been desirable and would have given a more consistent look and feel to the publication. In its present form the reader will have to adjust to the large variety of transliteration systems, where even recurrent names (for instance Wällo/Wello and Shäwa/Shewa/Šäwa) are transliterated differently according to more or less scientific approaches, sometimes within the same paper or even on the same page (e.g. Amba Gishen and Amba Geshen, p. 3).

Nevertheless, these proceedings are of great documentary value, as the International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies are important events in the history and development of Ethiopian studies. It is also a valuable orientative read and a useful tool for university students and young researchers thanks to the breadth and diversity of topics and approaches.

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PAOLO NICELLI, ed., *L'Africa, l'Oriente mediterraneo e l'Europa. Tradizioni e culture a confronto*, Africana Ambrosiana, 1 (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2015). xi, 205 pp., plates i–viib. Price: €17.00. ISBN: 978-88-6897-013-0.

The first volume of the series Africana Ambrosiana presents the activities of the newly founded Classe di Studi Africani of the Ambrosian Academy, in the premises of the Venerable Ambrosian Library in Milan. The 'Class', composed of three sections (Berberology, Coptology, and Ethiopian studies), was formally established in April 2014. The volume presents the contributions to a conference which was held in the Ambrosian Library on the first Dies Academicus of the new class, on 22–23 October 2014. The publication is dedicated to the memory of the late Prof. Gianfranco Fiaccadori whose untimely death on 24 January 2015 was a great loss to the scholarly community. A prominent scholar in the field of Byzantine, Near East and Ethiopian studies, G. Fiaccadori promoted the establishment of a new class where Ethiopian studies were to play a significant role. The underlying idea of the new founda-

tion is well expressed in the title of the volume under review; and, as the grand chancellor of the Academy, Cardinal Angelo Scola, stated,

the Academy, thanks to its richness and variety of its Classes and Sections, seemed to be showing, in an increasingly evident way, some guidelines for this new humanism, in order to answer fundamental questions put to us by young people and posed by the news coming from the world today ('Prefazione', p. x).

The extension of the Academy with the Classe di Studi Africani is an encouraging event at a time when the humanities are facing cuts in many universities, when African studies of whatever kind are under pressure, and when Ethiopian studies still have to prove their viability in hard competition with other Orientalist disciplines.

The volume opens with the 'Prefazione' (in Italian and English) by P.-F. Fumagalli, the director of the Class, followed by ten scholarly contributions arranged in four sections: 'Africa berbera', pp. 15–43; 'Africa occidentale', pp. 47–86; 'Il Corno d'Africa', pp. 89–126; 'La tradizione copta', pp. 129–168. One contribution (P. Nicelli) is placed at the beginning outside of the sections, probably because it relates to more than one African tradition. The contributions are followed by nine abstracts in English (pp. 169–174), and by the very useful 'Informazioni accademiche' (in Italian and English, pp. 177–194) describing the structure and statute of the Ambrosian Academy. The carefully edited volume is concluded with registers and plates.

Despite the small size of the book, most of the contributions are fully-fledged studies offering a lot of essential information on the regions as well as new data and ideas.

In P. Nicelli's article, MS Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, X 104 sup., if considered without the more recent paper production unit MS Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, X 104 sub. bis, is a rare example of an old Ethiopic psalter of very small size, only 135 mm x 120 mm, which did not originally include the texts *Wəddase Maryam* and *Anqäṣä bərhan*.

The contributions of 'Africa berbera'—by L. Galand, H. Stroomer, V. Brugnatelli—provide a good overview of the cultural and linguistic situation in the vast Berber-speaking part of Africa which, until very recently, was considered a domain of predominantly oral culture. The 'discovery' of the written Berber literature and manuscript culture takes place at a time when various African traditions written in the local vernacular languages, in most cases in the Arabic script (*ʿağamī*), previously ignored or poorly known, are coming to light and are increasingly attracting the attention of researchers.

In the section 'Africa occidentale', the article by P. Valsecchi presents the stories of two West-Africans in seventeenth-century Europe, Aniaba of Assini

and Wilhelm Amo. The accounts contextualize a similar story well-known to Ethiopianists, that of the seventeenth-century fugitive ‘prince’ Šägga Krəstos who presented himself in Europe as the son of the Ethiopian king Ya‘qob (1603–1607).¹ The contribution by A. Soldati presents a summary of the history of Usman dan Fodio and the Sokoto caliphate, which introduced a century of great African religious leaders and religious wars. On the other side of the African continent the period resulted in the religious radicalism of the movement of Muḥammad Aḥmad (1844–1885), the Sudanese Mahdī, and the Ethiopian Christian kings Tewodros II (1859–1868) and Yoḥannəs IV (1872–1889).

The section ‘Il Corno d’Africa’ is introduced by the ‘Prolusione’ of G. Fiaccadori who made an outline of the history of the Aksumite polity and of the most important aspects of its culture.² An important contribution by T. Erho concerns the issues of the status and circulation of the Ethiopic version of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and presents an analysis of a few old traditional book inventories. Many dozens of such inventories are known and definitely require further systematic study.³ The contribution of A. Gori discusses the situation of the ‘Islamic languages’ in the Muslim parts of the Horn of Africa. One wonders if the elements of the model(s) presented by A. Gori (pp. 119–121) are partly applicable to the description of the linguistic situation in the Christian areas of the Horn. Parallel to the dichotomy of the Arabic and ‘*aḡamī*’ traditions, non-spoken Ethiopic (Gə‘əz) was the main written language of the Christians, while Amharic, also a written language, was meant for daily com-

¹ Šägga Krəstos (d.1638) was received in Europe with honours and had audiences with Pope Urban XIII (in 1633) and with King Louis XIII (in 1635). During the last years of his life he lived under the protection of Cardinal Richelieu (see L. Störk, ‘Notizen zu Zaga Krestos’, *Scrinium*, 1 (2005 = D. Nosnitsin in collaboration with S. Frantsousoff, L. Kogan, and B. Lourié, eds, *Varia Aethiopica. In Memory of Sevir B. Chernetsov (1943–2005)* (Saint Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 2005)), 317–322).

² The contribution is a transcript of G. Fiaccadori’s speech.

³ At least twenty-five inventories have been recorded by the project Ethio-SPaRe (the signature UM-027, mentioned by T. Erho in relation to the Four Gospels manuscript which sourced the inventory edited on pp. 110–111, was assigned to the book by the project Ethio-SPaRe, in the course of digitization in May 2010; see <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/ethiostudies/research/ethiospare.html>). T. Erho demonstrates that inventories can be valuable sources. At the same time, however, they are difficult sources. They do not contain the exact titles of the works, but rather ‘labels’ assigned to the manuscripts by the local users. The labels are related to the actual content of the manuscripts but they are schematic and in many cases not explicit enough (luckily, the opposite seems to be the case of the *Shepherd of Hermas*). Finally, the inventories were meant mainly to make known the physical availability of the books (or, more precisely, volumes).

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munication and religious instruction (and it can be equated to the 'learned dialect', in terms of L. Brenner and M. Last, p. 120). Apart from that, a number of local languages, purely oral, were used in the region for day-to-day communication only.

The volume concludes with two solid and informative contributions on the Coptic tradition. A. Camplani discusses the language situation in Egypt during Late Antiquity and the origin and status of the Coptic language; P. Buzi summarizes the evidence on the tradition of venerating St Onuphrius (known in Ethiopia as Abunafer).

Hopefully, the series will continue to publish the proceedings of conferences organized after the year 2015 (Dies Academicus of 2015, 2016, and 2017).

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ALESSANDRO BAUSI, ALESSANDRO GORI, and GIANFRANCESCO LUSINI, eds, *Linguistic, Oriental and Ethiopian Studies in Memory of Paolo Marrassini* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014). xlvi, 741 pp., 67 illus., 20 tables. Price: €128.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-10317-6.

Die für 2012 zum siebzigsten Geburtstag des Florentiner Äthiopisten und Semitisten Paolo Marrassini geplante Festschrift ist 2013 zu einer Gedenkschrift geworden. Der üppige Band enthält vierzig Beiträge, von denen neunzehn in englischer, achtzehn in italienischer und drei in französischer Sprache verfasst sind, sowie eine Bibliographie der Schriften des Geehrten. Angesichts der vielen italienischen Beiträge wäre ein italienischer Titel oder Nebentitel angebracht gewesen.

Neben den äthiopistischen Artikeln befasst sich die Hälfte der wissenschaftlichen Beiträge mit anderen semitischen Sprachen und Literaturen. Von Bedeutung für das Äthiopische sind die Beiträge zum Südarabischen (A. Agostini, 'Peccato e trasgressione nei testi di espiazione sudarabici'), Neusüdarabischen (M.-C. Simeone-Senelle, 'Expression de l'appartenance et de la possession dans le syntagme nominal en sudarabique moderne', mit neuem Material) und Arabischen. Zu letzterem gehören die Beiträge von L. Bettini ('Una citazione evangelica nel *Kitāb al-hawāmil wa-al-šawāmil*') zu einer Redewendung von Miskawaih (*ruwiya lanā wa-nuqila min luġatihī ilā luġatinā*), A. Gori ('Fame (and debts) beyond the sea: two mentions of imām Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm in an Indian Arabic source') über die Erwähnung von Aḥmad *Grañ* in einer indisch-arabischen Quelle und P. La Spisa ('À propos de l'*Apocalypse*