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– All correspondence should be addressed to:

Redazione Rassegna di Studi Etiopici  
Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo  
Università di Napoli L’Orientale  
Piazza S. Domenico Maggiore 12 – 80134 Napoli, Italy  
e-mail: [redazione@unior.it](mailto:redazione@unior.it)  
Segretario di redazione – Editorial Secretary: MASSIMO VILLA

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Direttore Responsabile – Director: GIANFRANCESCO LUSINI

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## *Ai lettori*

Questo settimo volume della “3a Serie” della *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (cinquantaquattresimo dalla fondazione della rivista) ospita gli atti della conferenza *Ethiopian art and architecture: recent studies with focus on Jewish, Christian and Muslim material culture* (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 9–11 novembre 2021), organizzata da Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, Víctor M. Fernández, Mario Lozano Alonso e Dorothea McEwan. L’uscita di una nuova raccolta di saggi, dedicati ad alcune fasi cruciali della storia artistica dell’Eritrea e dell’Etiopia, non potrà non essere salutata con interesse dalla comunità scientifica, considerato che negli ultimi decenni si è consolidata la consapevolezza dell’importanza di questi studi, si sono allargati gli obiettivi della ricerca e moltiplicate le occasioni di confronto sui risultati delle indagini in corso. La redazione della *Rassegna*, dunque, si congratula con i curatori del volume e li ringrazia per aver proposto la loro opera alla rivista fondata da Carlo Conti Rossini. Proprio qui, nel lontano 1942, l’etiopista italiano licenziava la breve e densa nota “Appunti e commenti: Miniature armene nel ms. et. n. 50 della Biblioteca Vaticana”, che sotto molti aspetti costituisce una pietra miliare degli studi, piena di preziosi spunti di riflessione e materiali di confronto, messi a valore da altri e più estesi lavori nella seconda metà del secolo scorso.

Se i dieci contributi qui raccolti si riferiscono solo alla citata conferenza del 2021, tuttavia non si è voluto rinunciare al Bollettino delle ricerche in atto nei vari centri accademici internazionali, da molti anni uno strumento di servizio per la comunità dei lettori di questa rivista. E qui piace osservare come l’esaurirsi degli effetti della pandemia stia restituendo l’opportunità sia per la ripartenza di programmi scientifici, sia per creazione di nuove occasioni di incontro e condivisione dei risultati di attività in corso, delle quali il nostro Bollettino si sforza di dare conto puntualmente. Né si può tacere del fatto che i timidi segnali di pace inviati attraverso l’accordo del 2 novembre 2022, con i successivi passaggi attuativi, sono una premessa indispensabile per la graduale ripresa di tante iniziative accademiche, a lungo forzatamente interrotte, se solo ragionevolezza e rispetto reciproco torneranno a guidare le decisioni dei governi nazionali e locali.

In chiusura del volume, nei ricordi dedicati ad Angelo Del Boca e Marcello Piperno, da poco scomparsi, il lettore troverà un invito a meditare sul valore dell'eredità scientifica di due intellettuali che molto ci mancheranno. Entrambi, infatti, con la determinazione propria dei 'militanti' hanno fornito alle generazioni successive indicazioni fondamentali circa la direzione e il metodo della ricerca in due ambiti separati da una distanza cronologica di migliaia di anni, ma resi molto vicini dalla necessità di puntare sempre alla verità, abbattendo i muri della mistificazione e del pregiudizio.

La redazione dedica questo volume alla memoria di Issa Adem Hamid, studioso eritreo, candidato al titolo di Dottore di ricerca presso il Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo (DAAM), spentosi prematuramente poche settimane prima di poter discutere la propria tesi. Coloro che hanno letto le sue pubblicazioni sulla letteratura orale in lingua Nara, e ancor più quanti hanno avuto l'occasione di conoscerlo di persona, rimpiangeranno molto le sue doti intellettuali e umane.

Il Direttore

## *To the readers*

This volume of the *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (the seventh of the “3a Serie” and the fifty-fourth since the establishment of the journal) hosts the proceedings of the conference *Ethiopian art and architecture: recent studies with focus on Jewish, Christian and Muslim material culture* (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 9–11 November 2021), organized by Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, Víctor M. Fernández, Mario Lozano Alonso and Dorothea McEwan. This new collection of essays, dedicated to crucial phases in the art history of Eritrea and Ethiopia, will be certainly welcomed with interest by the scientific community. In the last decades these studies grew in relevance, the research targets widened and the opportunities for discussion about the ongoing investigations multiplied. Therefore, the board of the *Rassegna* congratulates the Editors of the volume and thanks them and the authors for publishing their work in this journal established by Carlo Conti Rossini. It was here that the Italian scholar published a short contribution entitled “Appunti e commenti: Miniature armene nel ms. et. n. 50 della Biblioteca Vaticana” – a landmark in the field of Ethiopian art history, with particular regard to its analytical and comparative perspectives, which foreshadow research themes explored in the second half of the twentieth century.

In addition to the ten papers from the 2021 conference, this issue includes a Bulletin of current research activities in the field carried out by different research clusters, a feature of this journal that has continued to receive strong interest from the research community in recent years. Indeed, we are delighted to observe that the end of the effects of the pandemic has been marked by the relaunch of scientific programmes and the creation of new venues for sharing the outcomes of current activities, which our Bulletin strives to document in a timely manner. We cannot ignore the fact that the tentative peace agreement signed in Pretoria (2 November 2022), along with its implementation, is an essential step towards the gradual recovery of many academic initiatives in Ethiopia, which for a long time have been forcibly stopped, provided that rationality and mutual respect will enlighten again the decisions of local and national governments.

In the final obituaries dedicated to the recently passed away Angelo Del Boca and Marcello Piperno, the reader will find an invitation to ponder the

value of the scientific legacy of two intellectuals who will be sorely missed. Both of them, with a determination of 'militants', offered to the next generations key directions and methods of investigations in two areas divided by a chronological distance of thousands of years, but made very close by the constant quest for the truth, tearing down walls of mystification and prejudice.

The board of the *Rassegna* dedicates this volume to the memory of Issa Adem Hamid, Eritrean scholar, PhD candidate at the Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo (DAAM), who prematurely passed away a few weeks before defending his thesis. Those who read his publications about the oral literature in Nara language, and even more those who had the opportunity to meet him, will miss his intellectual and human qualities.

The Director

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## FOREWORD

Ethiopian art and architecture are areas of research that play an important role in framing Ethiopian history. The period from the 16th to the 18th centuries is marked by the input of several intellectual and artistic traditions among the main religious groupings in the country: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian.

The region of Dämbəya, a plain bordering upon the northern shore of Lake Ṭana, evolved in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries into the thriving centre of the Ethiopian monarchy after the defeat of Imām Aḥmad b. Ibrahīm in the 1527–1543 war. As such it attracted foreigners, among them the newly established missionary order of the Jesuits, which established a mission in the country between 1557 and 1632. Their books and ideas contributed to the flourishing of art and architecture encompassing not only that of the Christian population but also the Betä Israʾel and Muslim inhabitants. The new royal city of Gondär, founded in 1636 after the expulsion of the Jesuits, became the main artistic centre of the Christian kingdom. The focus on this period brings new analyses of the new style – the court or Gondär style – particularly in painting, and the focus on earlier and later art and architecture topics throws light on different cultural expressions, links, and developments in Ethiopia and the Horn of Arica.

The political situation in Ethiopia at present makes field trips nearly impossible, so any findings on the most recent and/or ongoing research is highly appreciated by the academic community. This volume is therefore devoted to publishing the majority of lectures from the international conference hosted by Complutense University of Madrid (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) from 9 to 11 November 2021. The volume was sponsored by the Statehorn Project, based at the Institute of Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (Incipit-CSIC).

The conference was organized by the editors Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, Associate Professor in Art History in the Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University, Víctor M. Fernández, Hon. Professor of Archaeology in the Geography and History Faculty at Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Mario Lozano Alonso [Secretary of the Conference], PhD Candidate at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Dorothea

McEwan, AFEAS. Hon. Fellow of The University of London, The Warburg Institute, the School of Advanced Study, and the University of London.<sup>1</sup> Mario Lozano Alonso, Dorothea McEwan, and Jorge de Torres took up the task of producing the Proceedings published in this edition of *Rassegna di Studi*

<sup>1</sup> The speakers were: Dorothea McEwan (School of Advanced Study, The Warburg Institute, University of London), ‘Of Words and Pictures. The long reach of art and architecture’.

Kristen Windmuller-Luna (Curator of African Arts, Cleveland Museum of Art, USA), ‘Echoes and Evolutions: Ethiopian Artistic Agency and Global Imagery in the Early Modern’.

Gianfrancesco Lusini (Unior, Naples), ‘Italian artists in Ethiopia between the 15th and 17th centuries: how many were they?’.

Ewa Balicka-Witakowska (Institute of Linguistics and Philology, Department of Byzantine Studies, Uppsala University), ‘A Painted Panel of the Crucifixion Preserved in the Church at Agwäza (Təgray): Iconography and Stylistic Features’.

Jacek Tomaszewski (Polish Institute of World Art Studies), ‘A Painted Panel of the Crucifixion Preserved in the Agwäza Church (Təgray): Technical Analysis and Preservation Strategies’.

Dorothea McEwan (School of Advanced Study, The Warburg Institute, University of London), ‘Searching for *Vorlage*. The Ethiopian illuminated manuscript book of The Revelation of John, painted 1700–1730. London: British Library, Or 533’.

Bar Kribus (Ruhr University Bochum), ‘Tracing the Early Development of Betä ʾĪsraʾel (Ethiopian Jewish) Prayer House Architecture’.

Jorge de Torres (Incipit-CSIC, Spain), ‘The meeting ground: Mosques in Somaliland during the Medieval period’.

Héloïse Mércier (Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne), ‘The foundation of a polity and the writing of history in Awsa (Eastern Ethiopia, late 16th–17th c.): A Study of the “Awsa Chronicles”’.

Víctor M. Fernández (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), ‘The pre-Gondarine Jesuit architecture in Ethiopia: Western, Eastern and Local influences’.

Leonardo Cohen (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) and Mauricio Lapchik (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), ‘Magseph Assetat vs. Mazgaba Haymanot: The use of Biblical Literary Descriptions in Father Antonio Fernandes’ Refutation of Ethiopian Christian Doctrine.’

Mario Lozano (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), ‘The Fəlsäta lämaryam iconography: a Jesuit contribution to Ethiopian Art? A reflection on Art and Theology’.

Ilaria Zorzan (University of Padova), ‘The Life and Miracles of Abba Gäräma in Ethiopian Visual Art’.

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Dorothea McEwan  
London

Jorge de Torres  
Madrid

Mario Lozano Alonso  
Madrid

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