

## Editorial

The first issue of *ITYOPIS* (ኢ ጥ ዮ ፒ ጵ ስ ) was received very positively in Ethiopia, but also in the wider region, with reactions from South Sudan, Djibouti and Somaliland, and from the wider international scholarly community. We were greatly encouraged by these comments to continue, in spite of constant challenges. This issue contains research articles, short scholarly notes and reports which were submitted in 2012 and then went through a long process of peer-reviewing and editing. In addition, short informative contributions such as book reviews and conference reports were actively solicited.

The Journal is committed to a rigorous academic approach, documenting research undertakings going on in the region. The Journal's concept is to work for an increasing exchange of knowledge in the region, and help in the creation and further rise of academic interconnections.

Northeastern Africa is on the one hand marked by a great cultural, linguistic, religious and political plurality, and even by strong boundaries and differences, and on the other hand by a long history of cultural, economic and political interaction, exchange and contact. Researchers who submitted texts to the Journal themselves represent this diversity – there were submissions not only from Ethiopia, but also from South Sudan, Egypt, Kenya, Eritrea and Djibouti. In addition, there are contributions by researchers from other countries which have long-established research traditions in the region. Different, however, from previous times, foreign researchers are no longer working exclusively for foreign institutions, but increasingly become part of the rising academic landscape of northeastern Africa. They are working for example in Ethiopian or Somali universities and/or present their research in institutions in the region. This is very different from before when research on Ethiopia was mainly done by researchers from abroad who also presented their results abroad. This Journal wants to actively support that new trend.

This Journal will contribute to the strengthening of the academic landscape in northeastern Africa, marked now by over 30 universities in Ethiopia (in contrast to only two universities which existed two decades ago), one new university in Djibouti, and well over a dozen new universities in Somalia. As stated in the first editorial (2011), this Journal aims at making research in and on northeastern Africa better known in the region itself, but also internationally. This is done in collaboration with the international community of researchers and the increasingly active regional academic institutions. One key idea of the Journal, as stated in the first editorial, will be repeated here:

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Research results – by foreign and by local researchers – should be made more accessible in the region which they originally belong to.

The disciplines covered by this journal are archaeology, ancient and modern history, cultural studies, social anthropology, social studies/sociology, development studies, ethnohistory, heritage, historical linguistics, linguistics, literature, philology, political science and political anthropology. This issue is an example for the wide range of perspectives. No article will be specifically mentioned here – except the short note by Richard Pankhurst, as it treats a topic which is directly relevant for every journal and scholarly publication working with and on Ethiopian languages: It treats the question of transliteration. How to write Ethiopian words and names in a non-Ethiopian script? Richard Pankhurst tells us about the specific historical moment when the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) over half a century ago decided on one system, while other systems already existed. *ITYOPIS* itself had to make a decision (see the transliteration table), and follows a system especially used by historians, for example in the famous collection of sources *Acta Aethiopica*.

The Gə'əz script has gone through a long history of attempts to transliterate it into the Latin script (often called “English” by Ethiopians). A number of transliteration systems have resulted from that, some of them dear to philologists (but rather inaccessible to other scholars), others rather preferred by historians, followed by many vulgarized, often inconsistent forms.

One of the most important attempts proved to be the decision made at the *Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES)* in Addis Ababa. Since then this system has been adopted – with small variations – for academic theses produced at Addis Ababa University dealing with Ethiopian cultures, languages and history, and by the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* edited at Hamburg University, and especially by numerous scholars working on Ethiopian philology. At the same time there are other more or less consistent transliteration systems, the most prominent being, it seems, that chosen by the historian Sven Rubenson for his *Acta Aethiopica*, mentioned above, which is as consistent as the one chosen by the IES, but uses different letters (as a consequence, the two leading systems produce differences in writing names and terms, such as *Menilek* vs. *Mənilək* or *Mereb* vs. *Märüb*, the latter being the IES system). Pankhurst's historical note gives us an interesting insight into the IES decision.

### *Acknowledgements*

We are grateful to the large number of authors who have submitted articles and research reports of all kinds to this journal. Only a small number, i.e. those which fell exactly in the main scope of interest of the journal and had successfully gone through the lengthy process of reviewing and editing, are assembled here. Other submitted articles will follow in upcoming issues. We have to thank the very dedicated anonymous reviewers for their constant help

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and their readiness to work on the articles. The language editors contributed greatly to this journal, without demanding compensation and spending many hours – especially Jonah Wedekind and Orin Gensler have to be thanked for their great efforts. On the institutional side, the journal could not exist without the strong support by the higher management, in collaboration with NORAD; the home-base of the journal, the *College of Social Sciences and Languages* (CSSL), who graciously provided the necessary bureaucratic support without which an undertaking as complex as this one cannot exist, and who covered the printing costs; and the *Institute of Paleoenvironment and Heritage Conservation* (IPHC) and its staff members who gave important moral support. By now the journal also has an internet presence, which was excellently prepared by Habtom Kabsay of the ICT of Mekelle University and finalized by Steffen Kirchner from the *Society for the Promotion of Museums in Ethiopia* (GFMÄ), Berlin, for which we owe deep gratitude. The initiative *African Journals Online* (AJOL) accepted ITYOPIS after reviewing for inclusion in its internationally recognized platform and makes the electronic publication of all articles possible.

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