

*Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*

LA section de sociologie de l'IFAN à Dakar (voir *Africa*, 1953, 4; 1954, 4; 1957, 2) vient de recevoir un psychologue, A. Diop, parmi ses membres, qui n'étaient que trois depuis 1955: A. Hauser, sociologue, L. Massé, démographe, Y. Mersadier, économiste. Il va effectuer une enquête sur le groupement Toucouleur de Dakar, originaire de la vallée du Sénégal. Il examinera essentiellement les faits de stabilisation et les motivations qui déterminent le retour temporaire ou définitif des ressortissants de ce groupe ethnique à leur pays d'origine. Cette étude est en relation avec les projets d'aménagement de la vallée du Sénégal, devant permettre d'y développer la production agricole et d'y fixer une population plus importante.

A. Diop étudiera aussi certains aspects psychosociologiques de la nouvelle enquête que va effectuer Y. Mersadier sur les budgets familiaux à Dakar, en collaboration avec le service de la statistique. Le projet prévoit l'étude de 500 familles au cours d'une année, soit 75 par mois.

[Communicated by A. Hauser]

*Ethiopia Revisited*

THANKS to the generosity of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland I was recently (February–May 1958) able to revisit Ethiopia and to carry out a small programme of research.

When going out to Ethiopia one may obtain a foretaste of the authentic Ethiopian atmosphere at the *Collegio Etiopico* in Rome, the only College within the Vatican City, where one may listen to Ethiopian students reciting Gə'əz (classical Ethiopic) and chanting the haunting tunes of *ḥēma* (the traditional liturgical melodies) accompanied by drum, sistrum, and the rhythmic beat of the prayer stick. One should also meet at Rome Dr. M. M. Moreno, well known for his important work in the field of Galla, Somali, and other Ethiopian languages, Dr. Lanfranco Ricci, in charge of instruction in Ethiopian languages at Rome University, and Professor Jean Simon who is teaching classical Ethiopic at the Pontificio Istituto Biblico and who is largely responsible for the excellent collection of *Aethiopica* at that Institute. And above all one must not fail to see that great universal savant and illustrious *ēthiōpīsant*, Dr. Enrico Cerulli. There are at present also two outstanding Ethiopian scholars at Rome: Abuna Ya'qob Gebreyesus (now *Vescovo Ordinante* to the *Collegio Etiopico*) and Abba Gebreyesus Haylu (Cultural Attaché at the Ethiopian Embassy and a profound student of Ethiopian civilization).

It is a poignant experience to go back to Ethiopia after an interval of twelve years. When the present writer was there last, as a member of the British Military Administration at Asmara, Ethiopia was only just beginning to recover from the wounds inflicted upon her in a war not of her seeking, while Eritrea's future lay, unsettled, in the hands of the United Nations. Since 1952 this former Italian colony has been a federated unit under the Ethiopian Crown. There have been many changes, not least the departure of some 75,000 Italians, but Eritrea seems to be well administered, services are efficient, and Asmara remains an attractive, if somewhat surprising, city in the midst of Africa.

Addis Ababa ('the new flower') is nowadays much more the capital than it used to be, and has nearly half a million inhabitants spread over a vast area. The atmosphere is cosmopolitan, and there are few languages of the world that cannot be heard in the streets of the city. The Americans have established a large Point Four Mission, often engaged in semi-scholarly activities such as aerial mapping, educational tools, &c. The French are in charge of the *section archéologique* which appears to be well organized and offers some attractive displays. Yet both organizations are, perhaps, occasionally inclined to be unaware of the

work of their predecessors, and there is a tendency either to duplicate work or to hail as discoveries things that have been quite well known for a considerable time.

English has made enormous strides since the restoration in 1941 and has replaced French as the country's second language. In Eritrea, Italian is still strongly entrenched, and many Eritreans use, unconsciously and quite unnecessarily, Italian expressions even when speaking their native Tigrinya (next to Amharic, the official language of the Ethiopian Empire, the most important Semitic tongue). In education, British teachers, both in the secondary schools and the University College of Addis Ababa, have made a notable contribution. There are many Ethiopian graduates of British universities in positions of influence. Among these are four Oxford graduates in the senior appointments of Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mayor and Governor of Addis Ababa, Ambassador to Yugoslavia, and Acting Minister of Economic Planning. A recent Ambassador to the Court of St. James is now Minister of Trade and Industry.

His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor Haile Selassie I, remains the pivot of the structure of government, of all social life, and every organized activity in the country. A private audience of His Majesty remains a memorable experience, for his personality and great dignity impress every visitor to his realm. The present writer, on this occasion, had the honour of delivering to the Emperor, in his capacity as Chancellor of Addis Ababa University College, an illuminated scroll from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of St. Andrews University, at present the only British university in which instruction in Ethiopian languages is offered.

The University College of Addis Ababa has been in existence for only seven years, but it already possesses a splendid campus. In terms of bricks and mortar many more ancient university institutions might envy the excellent facilities available. The students, with their keenness and thirst for knowledge, form the most satisfactory audience any university teacher could wish to have. The guest lecture (on Ethiopian Studies in Europe) which the present writer delivered at the College and the subsequent discussion remain for him a most pleasant experience. Standards are being gradually raised, and the day may not be far when the University of Addis Ababa will take its place in academic life and make its distinctive contribution.

At the present time, preliminary work has been set in motion for the establishment of an Imperial Academy of the Amharic Language. The proposed institution is to consist of a number of indigenous scholars and a small panel of foreign *éthiopianists* as associate members. The purpose of the Academy is to watch over the development of the Amharic language and—as is done by similar institutions elsewhere in the case of Hebrew and Arabic—to lay down rules for the standardization of neologisms, adaptations of meanings from the classical language, Gə'əz, and generally to render Amharic capable of dealing successfully with the demands of modern civilization. At present, Amharic newspapers are still full of indiscriminate, and often unnecessary, borrowings from European languages (English, French, or Italian—depending on the writer's knowledge) which mar the identity as well as the comprehensibility of the language. A less ambitious institution had been established, during the war, for Tigrinya with the happy result that journalism in that language is less dependent on indecorous hybrid formations (cf. *Africa*, January 1949, pp. 63–64).

Apart from wishing to regain the 'feel' of the country and to speak as much Amharic and Tigrinya as possible, my work was concerned with three main aspects:

1. *An investigation of modern Amharic and Tigrinya literature.*

I had possessed the majority of books published in those languages up to 1946, but it had been extremely difficult to obtain a regular supply of more recent publications. It came as a great surprise to me to see the very considerable number of books printed during the past 10

or 12 years. Obviously, standards are very uneven: there are some excellent translations of European literature, some interesting fresh trends in Amharic poetry, and many books on education, health, administration, &c. Some good novels have been published, and even work whose intrinsic literary value may be slight will frequently still be of interest to the linguist. I collected nearly 300 books and pamphlets in Gə'əz, Amharic, and Tigrinya—yet this represents considerably less than the total output in those languages since 1946.

2. *Recordings of speech and liturgy.*

Here I was fortunate in the assistance and interest of His Grace, the Abuna Theophilos, who enabled me to take a recording of large parts of the Holy Mass (*qəddase*). My main concern is the connexion between these modes of chanting and intonation and those of the Old Testament and later Jewish liturgical practice (cf. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1956, pp. 236–40). I also obtained recordings of parts of the *qəddase* in other regions of the country and was able to persuade several cantors (*däbtära*) to sing into the microphone. I recorded Amharic and Tigrinya passages read by informants from various parts of the country, and took specimens of grammar and paradigms as well as ordinary unrehearsed conversation.

Here the help of the British Information Officer and his staff was quite invaluable.

3. *To check as well as to obtain dialectal material.*

Here again I was principally concerned with Amharic and Tigrinya and—to a lesser extent—with the traditional pronunciation of Gə'əz. I found no cause (as far as the latter aspect is concerned) to modify the conclusions arrived at in my *Semitic Languages of Ethiopia* (pp. 29–32). I was again impressed with the astonishing dearth of dialectal variants over the large area in which Tigrinya is spoken.

In Amharic I thought I could detect a few developments since my last visit in 1946 (to be discussed in greater detail elsewhere). Here I should like to mention briefly three instances:

I noticed that the incidence of diphthongization (especially of *haməs*, the fifth vowel order), as recorded by others as well as myself, had markedly decreased. Thus I found everywhere pronunciations such as *əne* 'I', *zema* 'chant', *bet* 'house'—rather than *ənve*, *zəma*, *b'et*, &c. I could also detect a considerable spread, in the Shoa province of central Ethiopia (perhaps mainly in the larger centres—though I am not quite sure about this), of *s'* at the expense of *t'*. This must not be considered as an expansion of the Gojjam pronunciation but rather as a result of increased literacy and newspaper spelling. Thirdly, I felt I could notice a marked blurring of the distinction between the simple and the compound perfect: thus nobody seemed to detect any difference between *bəzu rässan* 'I forgot a lot' and *bəzu räsšälän* 'I have forgotten a lot'. And waiters would ask, indiscriminately, either *azzäzu* or *azz'wal* 'have you ordered?'

In conclusion I should like to place on record my indebtedness to many Ethiopian friends and helpers; to the Acting President, Librarian, and other members of the staff of the University College of Addis Ababa; to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Addis Ababa and his most helpful senior staff as well as to Her Majesty's Consul General at Asmara; to the Carnegie Trust for enabling me to undertake this journey; and to the Court and Senate of St. Andrews University for granting me leave of absence.

[Communicated by Edward Ullendorff]