

Conference Reports

The last presentation was given by Emanuele Bruni, PhD candidate from Sapienza University of Rome. The main topic of the presentation was on the importance of medical anthropology in Global Health, with a focus on the researches that were conducted by Bruni in the last three years on Ethiopian Nosological System and the one, still in progress, that involves him together with MU in a Ethiopian National research project on an epidemic liver disease with an unknown aetiology that has been affecting a number of villages in North-Western Tigray (Ethiopia). Bruni concluded his contribution stressing on an approach of research and intervention that goes beyond the reductive focus on biological perspective in favor of a holistic approach, promoting more participative tools of research for the population.

A deep and stimulating discussion on all the contribution followed the presentations. The conference was concluded by the chairman Pino Schirripa who, on the behalf of „Sapienza” – University of Rome, recognized the strategic importance of International Development Cooperation, intended as the best international relation frame where the moral ethical and political efforts taken by the international community for the reduction of inequities – especially in health – and the solution of any kind of conflict take place. This new conception of development, therefore, must not be only based on a simple economic growing but must also be based on a human sustainable development, oriented to the participation and the collaboration between donors and beneficiaries.

Emmanuele BRUNI¹

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National Workshop on the Launching of *ITYOPIS*, *Northeast African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (NEAJ)*, 17 December 2010, Mekelle University

The opening speech was done by Mekelle University (MU) vice-president Abdelkader Kadir, followed by representatives of the College of Social Sciences and Languages (CSSL) and the Journal team, who were explaining how the project was started and what the main ideas of the Journal were – both concerning content and organisational structure. Ideas on the development of the logo were presented, and the history of discussions around the choice of the name by the team was told.

The main part of the workshop was devoted to both the national and international guests and their scholarly analysis. National guests, who presented papers, were the specialist of historical Ethiopian studies, Semeneh Ayelew (Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa), the linguist Dr Biniyam Sisay (Dean, Addis Ababa University), and the archaeologist Tekle Hagos (Addis Ababa University), in addition to members of the Journal team. The

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international guests represented the different fields of studies to be covered by the journal, such as social anthropology (Pino Schirripa), history / cultural studies (Giulia Bonacci), human geography (Sabine Planel), philology (Denis Nosnitsin) - and they also represented several potentially strong international academic partner institutions, such as the renown Roma University „La Sapienza“, Hamburg University (especially known for its tradition of Ethiopian studies, and with whom a Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed), and the French Centre of Ethiopian Studies (CFEE), Addis Abeba. The speakers thus covered all major fields of interest of ITYOPIS.

The presentations (see the documentation below) were important both for the good acceptance of the journal project by the audience and as food for thought for the journal committee. The speakers made constructive suggestions on the concept of the Journal and future contents. It was especially applauded that the journal focuses on cultural studies not only within the borders of Ethiopia but also outside the political boundaries, as historical connections, both political and cultural, go far beyond present boundaries on the one hand. On the other hand the focus on cultural aspects allows also to look at local cultural developments in much smaller units than the state (sometimes cross-boundaries) regardless dominating state-oriented needs. The Journal will thus be able to document the wide and strong interconnections of the wider region, and in the same time the manifold local differences, constituting a rich cultural heritage. The comment of Denis Nosnitsin pointed to that direction: A major contribution of this journal can be to document cultural features rather overlooked by researchers, among whom too many have a rather „bird’s eye perspective“, ignoring local cultural practices. Biniam Sisay made a very instructive speech on linguistic knowledge so far, describing the great possibilities and need for further research in diverse local communities, and for publications.

The comments by the audience were most vivid and overall very positive. The greatest concern was about the language of the Journal (English). While several commenters said that it would be advisable to have also articles in local languages, it was responded by members of the editorial team, by the CSSL and by invited presenters, including an impressive speech by Solomon Enquai, that the aim of this journal is to make researches – including local ones – internationally accessible. This has the consequence that only English can be chosen as the language of publication. Members of the editorial team suggested that as the concept includes the possibility of extra issues, one may think of extra issues in local languages. However, it might be also possible to create journals in Amharic or Tigrinya which address mostly an Ethiopian audience – as a category fundamentally different from the chosen concept, which makes only English possible, if one like the English language or not. However, the editorial team strongly commented that academic journals in local languages should exist and also exist in other countries - and ITYOPIS would be happy to cooperate. In addition, texts in original languages (such as literary texts and oral traditions) should also be published in ITYOPIS itself and commented in a

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scholarly way (with translation), which is another means to make the local languages accessible to an international scholarly public. Also translations into English can be envisaged if funds are available (on this topic see also the contribution of Tekle Hagos, in this issue).

Others comments were of practical nature. Biniam Sisay supported the idea that the main issue of the Journal should appear annually, instead of promising more issues per year and then possibly promising too much, while other commenters were wishing more issues. The reason is the complex and time-taking nature of reviewing especially in social sciences, where many discussions are involved, and editing being a heavy task. Great support came from all sides towards the idea of a strong reviewing process, including the possibility of internal reviewing first, but always supported by a system of external reviewing. This includes both the permanent members of the international board and ad-hoc-reviewers with a good name in the specific field. It was also strongly underlined that this board must guarantee that articles are not only printed because they are from Mekelle University, but always based on the required standards. The editorial team responded that in addition to the Journal's main body with main scholarly articles there is a possibility of publication of smaller (miscellaneous) articles submitted to a less strict reviewing process, and research reports, which will open the way for promising authors with still less experience - this being a standard chosen already by many international journals. The main corpus of the journal will consist of the high-standard reviewed articles.

There were also comments on the name ITYOPIS, which might underline too much Ethiopia as a centre, thus alienating others in the Horn of Africa. The response was that the name represents rather the idea of „dark-skinned people south of Egypt“, known also in a similar way in oral traditions told also in neighboring states without identification with the Ethiopian state in tradition, was accepted, provided that an editorial will make the cultural and ethnic-geographical nature of the term clear, which does not refer to Ethiopia as a state, but to the more ancient, much more open non-state meaning of the term. Another comment was about representation from scholars from within Mekelle University. The editorial team includes now representatives from the College of Social Sciences and Languages (CSSL), the College of Business and Economics, and the Institute of Paleoenvironment and Heritage Conservation, and a CSSL member who is also a member of the Institute of Geo-Information and Earth-Observation, upon invitation by the first planning group and the CSSL. The editorial team itself is in favor of representing institutions within the university linked to social sciences and humanities, which was the reason for going beyond the CSSL, while this should also stay practical (the team shall be small and efficient).

Participants in the audience included representatives of all colleges and the institute linked with social science research, languages and humanities (such as the Japanese Unit), and also representatives from other MU journals such as *Momona*. In addition, there were members of the civil society and from other

academic institutions such as the Sheba University College. One speaker was the former Speaker of the Tigrayan Parliament, the historian Dr Solomon Enquai, who commented very positively on the foundation of the Journal and also commented strongly on the already taken editorial decisions, supporting them with additional arguments.

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The Second Annual Workshop of the Archaeology and Paleontology Association – Ethiopia: Discussion on the Draft Document on Archaeologists’ Professional Ethics, 15 January 2011, Addis Ababa

The second annual workshop of the *Archaeology and Paleontology Association – Ethiopia* (APAE) was held in Addis Ababa on 15 January 2011 at the National Museum of Ethiopia. Among the issues that were discussed during the workshop was the draft proposal of the code of conducts of the *Archaeology and Paleontology Association*.

The main purpose of presenting the draft professional code of ethics on the general meeting was to get comments and feedback from the participants, thereby involving members in the development of the code of ethics and also further enriching the content of the code of ethics based on the experience and knowledge of the participants. In Ethiopia, the first attempt to provide rules and regulations identifying the duties and responsibilities of professionals in researches in archaeology and paleontology date back to 1966 with the Proclamation no. 229. Over the years other proclamations were issued with more refined rules and regulations, but there were problems with their implementation. This is because archaeological and paleontological researches involve not just the researcher but also the *Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (ARCCH) and regional cultural bureaus as well the community, which lives near the sites where research is conducted.

Since numerous stakeholders are involved in the research, unethical and unlawful activities may occur. During the discussion a number of aspects termed “bad experiences” were identified. Among those mentioned were:

- Researchers conducting research without having proper educational and academic credentials,
- Researchers conducting research on sites without being accompanied by antiquity officers who should have monitored the research work,
- Researchers taking unqualified and unethical assistant personnel to research sites thereby compromising and endangering the findings at the sites.

It was this kind of issues that the code of ethics shall help to solve in the future.

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