An Unknown German Manuscript on Ethiopia in the Goethe *Nachlass* in Weimar

Niebuhr on His Research Expedition and His Criticism of James Bruce

Ib Friis

This article attempts to place a virtually unknown German manuscript on Ethiopia in the setting of travels in the Red Sea area during the last decades of the eighteenth century.[1] The manuscript (Fig. 1), now in the Goethe *Nachlass* in the Goethe Schiller Archive in Weimar, was written by Carsten Niebuhr, a Danish-German explorer who collected data on Ethiopia yet never visited the country (Niebuhr 1791: 539; 1837: 153; Smidt 2007: 1177).

Carsten Niebuhr is representative of the close German-Danish relations in the eighteenth century. Although only a minority in the territory ruled by the king of Denmark had German as their first language at that time,[2] nearly all educated people could speak and write German and German was the first language in the southern parts of the realm of the Danish king (now part of modern Germany). Niebuhr was born in 1733 in the *Land Hadeln*, a former administrative district on the North Sea coast just south of the then border between the kingdom of Hanover and the realm of the Danish king (Baack 2014: 48). He studied mathematics, astronomy, surveying and engineering at the German university of Göttingen and entered the services of the Danish king in 1760 with the purpose of becoming one of the five people to take part in the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia (1761–1767). During the expedition, Niebuhr drew the first detailed maps of the Red Sea, which were more accurate than any other previously published (Fig. 2). He also mapped Yemen and made careful records of the history and ethnology of the countries visited by the expedition (Baack 2013: 70–74; 2014: 297–322).

The studies undertaken on the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia shifted fundamentally as the expedition progressed. The focus changed from biblical philology in the spirit of the critical Bible studies of the Enlightenment to observations in the natural sciences, cartography, cultural geography, epigraphy and archaeology. Carsten Niebuhr and the naturalist Peter Forsskål were particularly instrumental in this change. After the deaths of Peter Forsskål and the philologist Frederik Christian von Haven in Yemen, Carsten Niebuhr and the three remaining members of the expedition – the artist Georg Wilhelm Baurenfeind, the medical doctor Christian Carl Cramer and the servant Lars Berggren – left the port of Mocha on a ship belonging to the British East India Company bound for Bombay. Baurenfeind and Berggren died during the passage, and Cramer died shortly after arrival in Bombay. Niebuhr, the only survivor, returned to Denmark via Persia and the Ottoman Empire (Baack 2013: 74–75; 2014: 284–353).

In Copenhagen, Niebuhr published his main works detailing the journey. The first volume appeared in 1772 and contained a systematic, scholarly description of Arabia based on Niebuhr's own observations and secondhand information, which he had collected in the country itself and during voyages in the surrounding countries (Niebuhr 1772). Two years later, in 1774, the first volume of his travel account appeared, containing his personal, but fully objective account of the journey to Arabia and surrounding countries (Niebuhr 1774). During 1775 and 1776, Niebuhr published three works by the expedition's deceased naturalist, Peter Forsskål, on the plants and animals of Egypt and Arabia (Forsskål 1775a; 1775b; 1776).

With these works published, Niebuhr was made *Landesschreiber* (an administrative position) on the North Sea coast of the westernmost part of the German-speaking part of the realm of the Danish king, close to his birthplace. In this remote place, Niebuhr published a number of articles, mainly in the journals *Deutsches Museum* (German Museum) and *Neues Deutsches Museum* (New German Museum) (Baack 2014: 348).

Niebuhr's critical review of James Bruce's *Travels to discover the source of the Nile* from 1791 is particularly relevant to our subject (Fig. 3) (Friis 2013). Bruce's *Travels* had been published in English in 1790 (Bruce 1790) and was immediately translated into German and published (Bruce 1790–1791). The title of Niebuhr's review is *Bemerkungen über die zwei ersten Bände der Reisen des Herrn Bruce zur Entdeckung der Quellen des Nils* ('Comments on the two first volumes of the travels of Mr. Bruce to discover the sources of the Nile') (Niebuhr 1791). I have noted from a remark on an erroneous translation in the review that it must have been based on the German translation of *Travels* (Niebuhr 1791: 542–543), although we know that Niebuhr was able to read and communicate in English. The veracity of James Bruce was much debated in the decades at the end of the eighteenth century; critical editions of the *Travels* were published and new points in which Bruce is incorrect or too inventive can still be discovered (Friis 2013). Niebuhr's comments in the review are precise and based on facts he himself had ascertained. He pointed out that the geographical coordinates indicated by Bruce for many places along the Red Sea coast were surprisingly similar to those he (Niebuhr) himself had published with his map of the Red Sea (Niebuhr 1791: 542–543). This similarity was particularly striking considering the uncertainty of astronomical observations made at sea, but Niebuhr did not go so far as to directly accuse Bruce of plagiarism. Niebuhr also commented critically on the long conversations with people in Egypt, Arabia and Ethiopia rendered word for word in Bruce's *Travels* and pointed out at least one blatant chronological error in these conversations as given in the *Travels*. However, Niebuhr concluded the review in an amicable tone, stating that while he was unable to test the veracity of Bruce's descriptions of the inner parts of Ethiopia he generally found them believable (Niebuhr 1791: 550).

Niebuhr died in 1815. His son, the well-known German historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr, wrote a long obituary of his father in *Kieler Blätter* (Fig. 4) (Niebuhr 1816). In this, he related further criticism of Bruce that he had heard from his father (Niebuhr 1816: 65), including the accusation that Bruce had invented parts of his voyages on the Red Sea, including a voyage from the Arabian coast to both a number of islands and the mainland on the Ethiopian side of the Red Sea near Assab. Published in German, these comments have largely been ignored in modern English literature about Bruce, and Bruce's Red Sea voyages are uncritically shown on maps as they are represented in the *Travels*. Evidence published by Alexander Murray, editor of critical second and third editions of the *Travels* (Bruce 1805, 1813), and by myself in a recent paper entitled *Carsten Niebuhr and James Bruce: Lifted Latitudes and Virtual Voyages on the Red Sea …*? (Friis 2013) suggest that both Niebuhr's written and unwritten criticism of Bruce is correct.

Carsten Niebuhr's critical article from 1791 was the only publication relating to Ethiopia that appeared during his lifetime, but since his return from the expedition to Arabia he had remained deeply interested in that country. Without visiting Ethiopia himself, he had gathered information from people who had been to the country, and this is where a manuscript written by Carsten Niebuhr and owned by Goethe becomes particularly interesting. Barthold Georg Niebuhr sent the manuscript to Goethe following his request for an example of Carsten Niebuhr's writing to add to his collection of autographs by famous men (see also Mommsen 1988: 25–27; Schreckenbach 1961: 64, nr. 1181; Mandelkow and Morawe 1965: 171, nr. 951 (cited from Baack 2014: 341)).

Goethe stated in a letter to B.G. Niebuhr that he had read C. Niebuhr's works and would like to receive an autographed manuscript because he had respected the name of Niebuhr since his youth (Baack 2014: 284 and 341). The Niebuhr-manuscript in the Goethe *Nachlass* has now been shown to relate very closely to a posthumously published note on Abyssinia by Niebuhr.[3]

The third part of Carsten Niebuhr's *Reisebeschreibung*, called *Reise durch Syrien und Palästina, nach Cypern, und durch Kleinasien und die Türkey, nach Deutschland und Dänemark* ('Journey through Syria and the Palestine, to Cyprus and through Asia Minor and Turkey to Germany and Denmark'), was published in Hamburg in 1837, twenty-two years after Niebuhr's death (Niebuhr 1837: 153–168). It was edited and published by Johan Nicolaus Gloyer, Niebuhr's assistant and later successor as Landesschreiber, and Justus Olshausen, professor at the University of Kiel. An essay about Ethiopia appears as an appendix to that volume (Fig. 5). This German text is as little-known as Niebuhr's review of the *Travels*, but has recently been summarized by Wolbert Smidt in an article about Niebuhr in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (Smidt 2007: 1177). A comparison shows that the Goethe manuscript and the printed text from 1837 are clearly two versions of the same essay, with the printed text being twice as long (6943 words) as that of the Goethe manuscript (3328 words). The final manuscript for the printed version has unfortunately not been found. Niebuhr consistently used the term Abyssinia, and that name will also be used in the discussion here. Niebuhr's essay was mainly based on interviews with merchants and Egyptian Copts.

The Goethe manuscript (Fig. 1) begins with a discussion about the position of Abyssinia and its importance, from antiquity, as a trading post between India, Arabia and Egypt, a meeting point for caravan routes and voyages by sea. It points out that the kings of Abyssinia long ago ruled over southern Arabia and large stretches of Africa. Abyssinia accepted Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century AD (see also Munro-Hay 2003: 717–723), but with the growing power of Islam it was soon surrounded by Muslims to the north and east and by pagans to the south and west, which meant that cultural exchange with the Mediterranean civilisations was hindered. Hence, Abyssinian kings used Muslim subjects or traders from Greece and Armenia as foreign envoys. When the Abyssinian kings heard about the growing power of the Portuguese they saw the possibility to create alliances with fellow Christians and to acquire firearms. This resulted in a Portuguese army supporting Christian Abyssinia against Muslim invaders. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, a swarm of Catholic missionaries were sent to Abyssinia. Well-received in the beginning, it soon became apparent that the Catholic Church

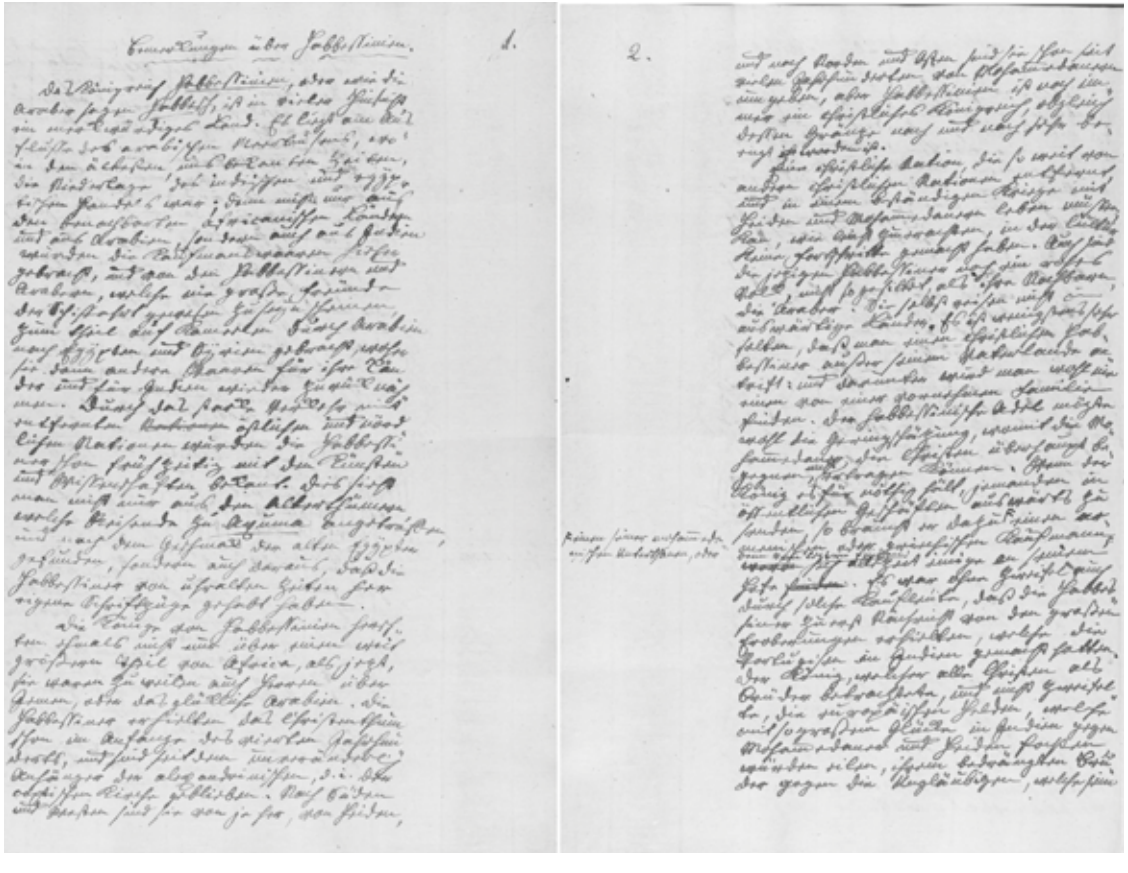


Fig. 1: The first two pages of the Niebuhr manuscript, *Bemerkungen über Habessinien*

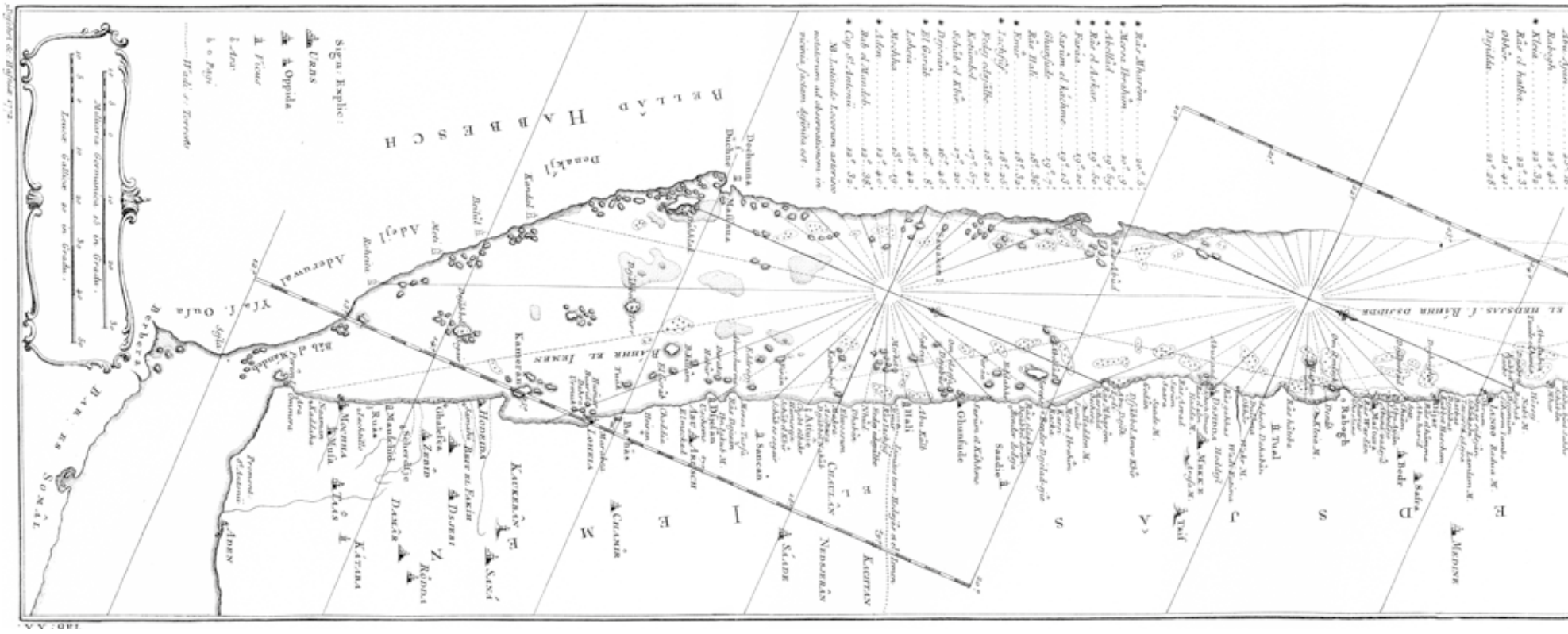
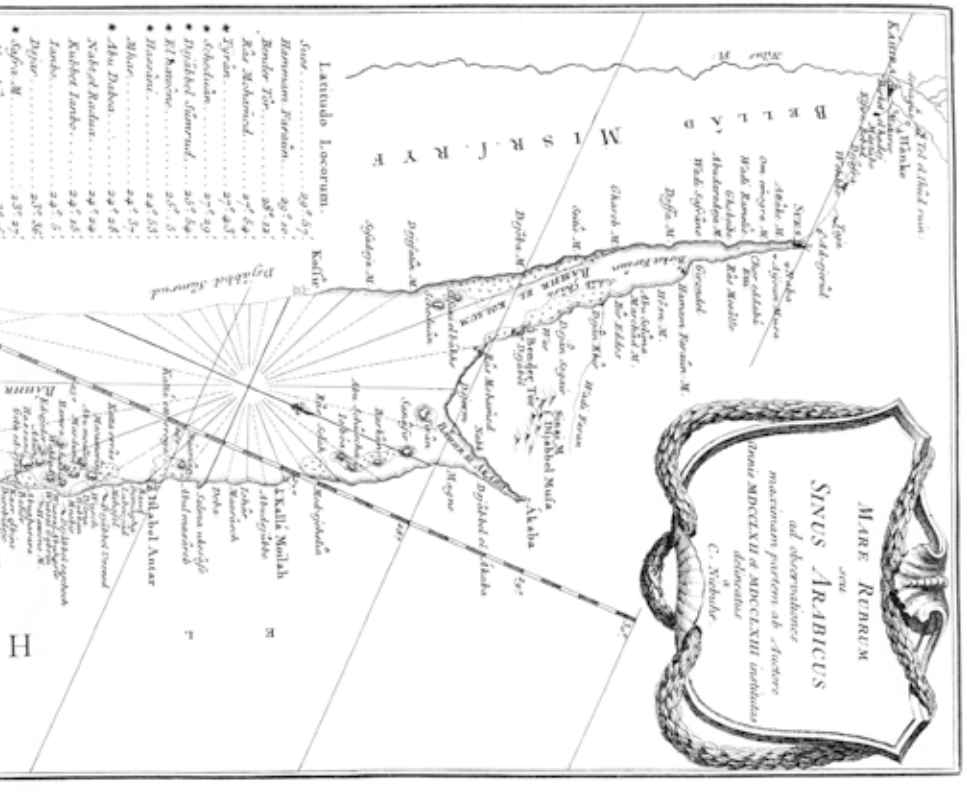


Fig. 2: Carsten Niebuhr's map of the Red Sea, Mare Rubrum, sue Sinus Arabicus, ad observations maximam partem ab Auctore Annis 1762–1763 instituts delineates a C. Niebuhr

wanted to rule the Abyssinian church absolutely. The Jesuit order was established at that time and Ignatius Loyola himself intended to go to Abyssinia.[4] The Pope would not allow his visit but Jesuits missionaries established themselves in Abyssinia and converted many, causing resentment amongst the local clergy. This resulted in the ejection of all Jesuits, after which all Europeans had to ask permission from the king to enter Abyssinia and were forbidden to proselytize.

Following his discussion of Abyssinia's history, Niebuhr goes on to explain, with some regret, that the king of Denmark had not instructed the Royal Expedition to visit Abyssinia. He had, therefore, to refer to the works of James Bruce, whose work on Abyssinia he praised for having been acquired first-hand with knowledge of the local language. In spite of having previously criticised Bruce, Niebuhr pointed out that Bruce's observations from Abyssinia were made by the traveller



himself. Niebuhr would therefore record the information he himself had gathered second-hand, and this might in some cases support the information provided by Bruce. If the two sets of information did not agree, the eyewitness, Bruce, should probably be believed more than Niebuhr's second-hand information.

Niebuhr then relates a story about two Roman Catholic fathers – an older Syrian Maronite and a younger European – who had been permitted to enter Abyssinia and reached the court at Gonder, but were ejected after some months.[5] Niebuhr had met the older Maronite in Cairo in 1762.

Niebuhr also records that a Doctor Höcker of the Herrnhut faith, a special German branch of Protestant Christianity, had attempted to reach Abyssinia a few years before Niebuhr's arrival in Cairo, but had been shipwrecked on the Arabian coast and returned to Europe; he had apparently again tried to go to Abyssinia, but his later whereabouts were unknown. Niebuhr also relates details about Dr Höcker's unnamed fellow traveller, and refers to Bruce as the source of information about a German watchmaker of the Herrnhut faith who lived in Cairo.

In Niebuhr's account, more success met the Greeks who attempted to go to Abyssinia for non-religious ends; mostly because the closeness of the Greek and the Abyssinian Orthodox churches meant that they were not suspected of proselytizing.[6] A Greek servant of the Venetian consul in Cairo had started the migration by returning from Abyssinia a wealthy man. This induced a considerable number of Greeks to go to Abyssinia, and the rumour spread that a Greek had become *vesir* to the Abyssinian king and accumulated an immeasurable fortune, but had died soon after. Niebuhr also relates a story of two Greek cooks who had wanted to trade in Abyssinia but had instead gone to Yemen, where he had met them at the town of Beit-el-Fakih. From these two Greeks, he heard more about the Greeks in Abyssinia: some were traders and others found good work as craftsmen or artisans, had become soldiers or servants of rich Abyssinians, but most lived in poverty and wanted to return home. It was said that the Abyssinian king had allowed Greek clergy to travel to Abyssinia, but Niebuhr doubted this because it might have allowed Roman Catholic missionaries to enter disguised as Greeks. These descriptions of the Greeks in Abyssinia end the Goethe manuscript.

In the printed version of the essay on Abyssinia, Niebuhr begins with a short account of European visits to Abyssinia, including those made by missionaries, and describes the presence of Greek and Armenian merchants in the country (Niebuhr 1837: 153–155). The text continues, almost word-for-word as the Goethe manuscript: the stories of the two Maronites who succeeded in entering the country, the failed Protestant Herrnhut mission, the establishment of a Greek merchant group in Ethiopia that was initially successful but then began to fail,

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Bemerkungen über die zwei erſten Bände der Reiſen des Herrn Bruce zur Entdeckung der Quellen des Nils.

Herr Bruce ſagt in der Einleitung zu dieſer ſeiner Reiſebeſchreibung S. 64. der vollſtändigen deutſchen Ueberſetzung: „Nachdem Herr Wood und Dawkins ihr Werk über die Ruinen von Palmira herausgegeben hatten, ſchickte der vorige König von Dänemark einige gelehrte Männer in verſchiedenen Wiſſenſchaften ab, um in den Morgenländern Entdeckungen zu machen, mit dem Auftrage, daß ſie zwar Baalbek und Palmira beſuchen mögten und ſolten, doch ward ihnen unterſagt, ſich mit dem, was die engliſchen Reiſenden bereits gethan, zu befaſſen, oder einen Plan zu einem jenem ähnlichen Werke zu entwerfen. Beide Verfaſſer nahmen dieſen Beweis von Achtung dankbar auf, und weil ich den däniſchen Gelehrten auf dem Fuße nachzufolgen im Begriff war, ſo wünſchte Herr Wood, ich mögte dieſes erwiedern, und mich ſo viel möglich enthalten, über die von Herrn Niebuhr, gewählten Gegen-

Fig. 3: First page of Carsten Niebuhr's critical review of James Bruce's two first volumes of the German translation of James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* from 1790–1791

and the interest of the Abyssinian kings in Greek traders and artisans were all included (*ibid*. 154–159).

In a subsequent section, Niebuhr provided detailed geographical information on Abyssinia, with many place-names and information about the Muslims in the coastal and lowland parts. Tigré and 'Afar are described as virtually independent of the rule of the highland, as are the Sawakin, Massawa, Zayla, Berbera and the Somalis (*ibid*. 159–165). Some place-names in this part of the text can be easily identified, others cannot; some information can be confirmed, other information seems unreliable. An example of the latter is the description of Oussa as a fertile landscape in which much coffee is cultivated, as well as the plant (probably the legume *Flemmingia grahamiana)* producing a yellow dye called 'Uars' [Wars].[7] In fact Oussa must refer to Awsa or *Aoussa,* in the 'Afar region, an area far too dry for the cultivation of coffee and *Flemmingia grahamiana,* unless it is meant to include the highlands around Harar.

Directly relating to Ethiopian history is a short paragraph that can be translated as (Niebuhr 1837: 161): 'The Negus ruling in the year 1763 was called Jusof, called Joas by Bruce [Iyoas in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*], a son of Jaso [Iyasu II] (compare with Chernetsov and Nosnitsin 2007: 251–252), who again was a son of Makaffe [Bäkaffa] (compare with Crummey 2003: 449–450)'. Negus Jaso was described to Niebuhr as a great ruler with victories over the Oromo (called the 'Gellas' by Niebuhr), but this does not agree with other sources.[8] He loved splendour and had many buildings erected, and it was during his rule that many Greeks came to Abyssinia as traders, artists and artisans. Iyoas died in the year 1755; Niebuhr had been told that the Negus died from a poisoned pipe of tobacco given to him by his own mother, not named by Niebuhr, but obviously the regent queen Berhan Mogäsa (called Mentwab by Bruce) (compare with Berry 2003: 534–535). The motive being that she would have more power during the minority of her grandson than her son currently allowed her.[9]

Niebuhr's text continues with brief descriptions of many places in the highlands, like Gonder, Addowa (Adua) and Umfras (Imfras), but other place names seem difficult to identify, and there are some errors:

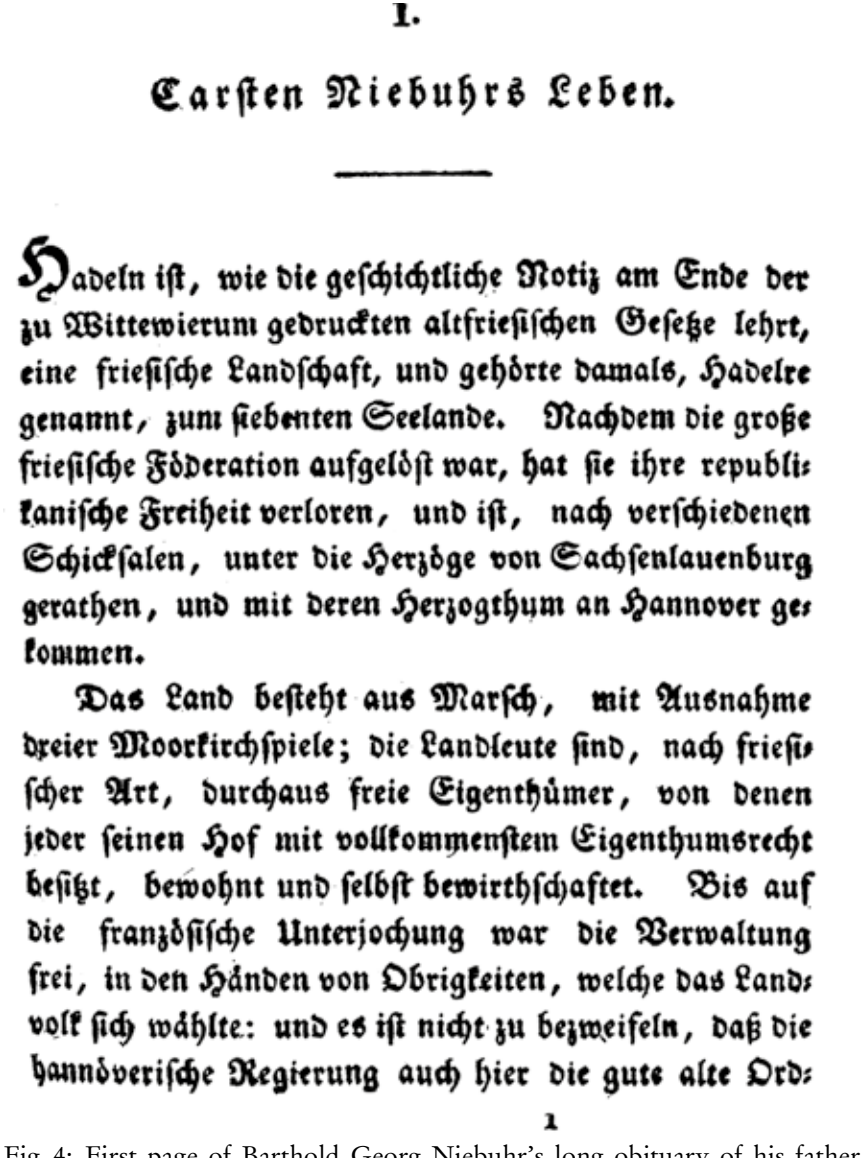
Imfrass is said to be located between Gonder and Massawa (Niebuhr 1837: 164), while it is in fact south of Gonder.

Some animals mentioned by Niebuhr on the evidence of his informants are correctly described, while others seem imaginary, such as the 'Ambassa' (perhaps a misinterpretation of the Amharic word *anbessa* for lion); the animal is described as reddish and as big as a camel, with a long neck. Niebuhr suggests it might be a giraffe (*ibid.* 163).

Godsjâm (Gojjam) is correctly mentioned as the border region to the Oromo. Two grand bridges are mentioned as crossing a river called Dildi, said to flow into the Nile. These bridges had been built by Bakaffa (*ibid.* 164). Presumably, this refers to the two bridges across the Abbay between the former Gojjam and Gonder regions. The Amharic name of the best known of the bridges (Yäṭis Wəha Dəldəy) means in fact 'the fuming water bridge'.[10] In a short paragraph, Niebuhr discusses the question of the Nile and the Niger and quotes informants who claim that not only the Nile, but also the Niger has its origin in Abyssinia (*ibid.* 165–166).

The printed text concludes with the text positioned at the beginning of the Goethe manuscript, a discussion of Abyssinia's position and importance in the ancient trade with India and Egypt (*ibid.* 166–167). Niebuhr adds that the Abyssinians' contact with written languages in antiquity and their development of a script of their own is a proof that these people have more natural abilities than other populations in Africa. This statement is followed by an extended comment on the rich potential of Abyssinia if the Jesuits, the Abyssinian clergy and the rulers had found a common path in the seventeenth century. If they had been able to work together, the Abyssinians and the Europeans might have formed the most powerful state in Africa, Niebuhr claims. This fancy piece of counterfactual history writing, hardly politically correct today, is not found in the Goethe manuscript, and it is not in the vein of most of Niebuhr's other writing on the nations he met during the Expedition (*ibid.* 167–168). Nevertheless, it is interesting that he ascribes such potential to Abyssinian/European state building.

The Goethe manuscript is of interest in demonstrating the development of the text printed in 1837. We can see this development in the



I.

Carſten Niebuhrs Leben.

Hadeln iſt, wie die geſchichtliche Notiz am Ende der zu Wittewierum gedruckten altfrieſiſchen Geſetze lehrt, eine frieſiſche Landſchaft, und gehörte damals, Hadelre genannt, zum ſiebenten Seelande. Nachdem die große frieſiſche Föderation aufgelöſt war, hat ſie ihre republikaniſche Freiheit verloren, und iſt, nach verſchiedenen Schickſalen, unter die Herzöge von Sachſenlauenburg gerathen, und mit deren Herzogthum an Hannover gekommen.

Das Land beſteht aus Marſch, mit Ausnahme dreier Moorkirchſpiele; die Landleute ſind, nach frieſiſcher Art, durchaus freie Eigenthümer, von denen jeder ſeinen Hof mit vollkommenſtem Eigenthumsrecht beſitzt, bewohnt und ſelbſt bewirthſchaftet. Bis auf die franzöſiſche Unterjochung war die Verwaltung frei, in den Händen von Obrigkeiten, welche das Landvolk ſich wählte: und es iſt nicht zu bezweifeln, daß die hannöveriſche Regierung auch hier die gute alte Ord-

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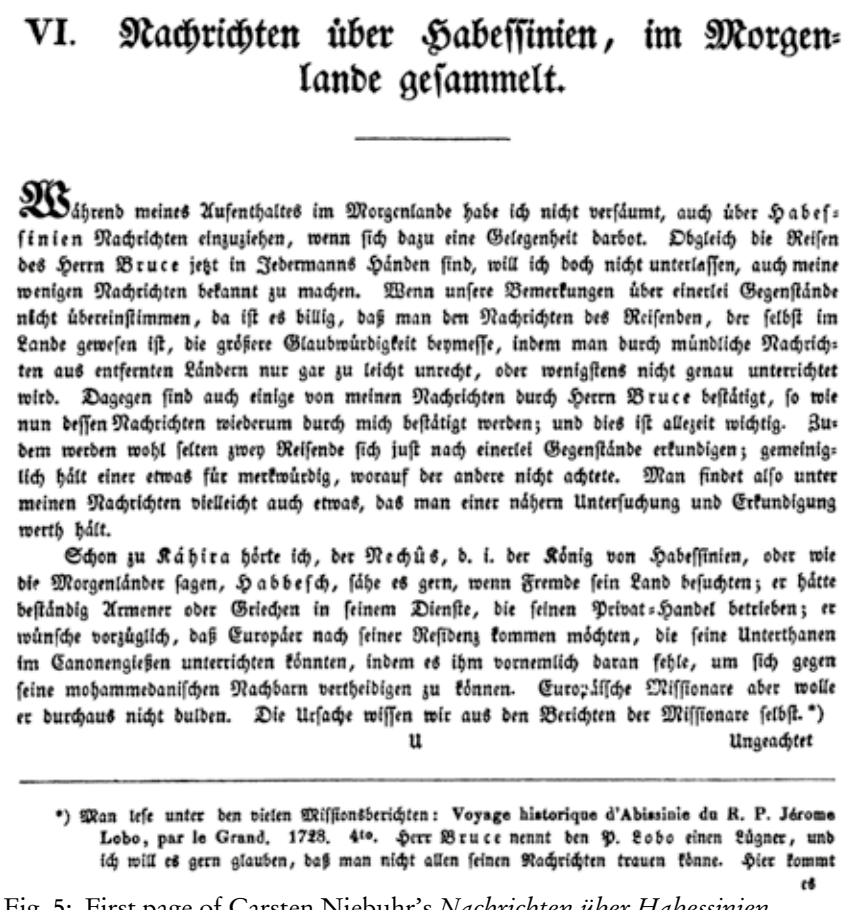
Fig. 4: First page of Barthold Georg Niebuhr's long obituary of his father from 1816



VI. Nachrichten über Habeſſinien, im Morgenlande geſammelt.

Während meines Aufenthaltes im Morgenlande habe ich nicht verſäumt, auch über Habeſſinien Nachrichten einzuziehen, wenn ſich dazu eine Gelegenheit darbot. Obgleich die Reiſen des Herrn Bruce jetzt in Jedermanns Händen ſind, will ich doch nicht unterlaſſen, auch meine wenigen Nachrichten bekannt zu machen. Wenn unſere Bemerkungen über einerlei Gegenſtände nicht übereinſtimmen, da iſt es billig, daß man den Nachrichten des Reiſenden, der ſelbſt im Lande geweſen iſt, die größere Glaubwürdigkeit beymeſſe, indem man durch mündliche Nachrichten aus entfernten Ländern nur gar zu leicht unrecht, oder wenigſtens nicht genau unterrichtet wird. Dagegen ſind auch einige von meinen Nachrichten durch Herrn Bruce beſtätigt, ſo wie nun deſſen Nachrichten wiederum durch mich beſtätigt werden; und dies iſt allezeit wichtig. Zudem werden wohl ſelten zwey Reiſende ſich juſt nach einerlei Gegenſtände erkundigen; gemeiniglich hält einer etwas für merkwürdig, worauf der andere nicht achtete. Man findet alſo unter meinen Nachrichten vielleicht auch etwas, das man einer nähern Unterſuchung und Erkundigung werth hält.

Schon zu Kähira hörte ich, der Rechûs, d. i. der König von Habeſſinien, oder wie die Morgenländer ſagen, Habbeſch, ſähe es gern, wenn Fremde ſein Land beſuchten; er hätte beſtändig Armener oder Griechen in ſeinem Dienſte, die ſeinen Privat-Handel betrieben; er wünſche vorzüglich, daß Europäer nach ſeiner Reſidenz kommen möchten, die ſeine Unterthanen im Canonengießen unterrichten könnten, indem es ihm vornemlich daran fehle, um ſich gegen ſeine mohammedaniſchen Nachbarn vertheidigen zu können. Europäiſche Miſſionare aber wolle er durchaus nicht dulden. Die Urſache wiſſen wir aus den Berichten der Miſſionare ſelbſt. *)

U Ungeachtet

*) Man leſe unter den vielen Miſſionsberichten: Voyage historique d'Abissinie du R. P. Jérome Lobo, par le Grand. 1728. 4to. Herr Bruce nennt den P. Lobo einen Lügner, und ich will es gern glauben, daß man nicht allen ſeinen Nachrichten trauen könne. Hier kommt es

Fig. 5: First page of Carsten Niebuhr's *Nachrichten über Habessinien*

beginning and the end of the texts, and in the vision of the potential role of the Jesuits, which must have been added after Niebuhr wrote the Goethe manuscript. The long section about Abyssinian geography is completely absent from the Goethe manuscript. We do not know if this section was drafted after the Goethe manuscript but, since it contains much information not found in older European writing about Abyssinia, it must to a large extent build on notes from the Expedition, and it seems likely that one or several drafts of it had been written separately at a relatively early stage, and that the geographical text was later combined with the text in the Goethe manuscript.

That is what we know now. So what next? Niebuhr's works are not well known in the English-speaking world; his *Beschreibung von Arabien* and his *Reisebeschreibung* are still today sometimes cited by English authors from the poor and much abbreviated translation by Heron (Niebuhr 1792), his works on Abyssinia are virtually unknown and most biographies of James Bruce in English do not mention or comment on Niebuhr's critical review of Bruce's *Travels* (Beckingham 1964; Bredin 2000; Reid 1968; Ullendorff 1953). However, Professor Lawrence J. Baack of California recently published (July 2014) the first monograph in English on the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia (Baack 2014). Therefore, L.J. Baack, Wolbert Smidt and I are planning a publication in English, in which we provide a detailed introduction and a more detailed commentary than what can be given in this paper on these little known documents in German about Abyssinia in the eighteenth century.

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Fig. 1: The first two pages of the Niebuhr manuscript, *Bemerkungen über Habessinien*, in the Goethe *Nachlass* in Weimar

Fig. 2: Carsten Niebuhr's map of the Red Sea, Mare Rubrum, sue Sinus Arabicus, ad observations maximam partem ab Auctore Annis 1762–1763 instituts delineates a C. Niebuhr (from NIEBUHR 1772)

Fig. 3: First page of Carsten Niebuhr's critical review of James Bruce's two first volumes of the German translation of James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* from 1790–1791

Fig. 4: First page of Barthold Georg Niebuhr's long obituary of his father from 1816

Fig. 5: First page of Carsten Niebuhr's *Nachrichten über Habessinien*, as published posthumously in Niebuhr, 1837

Endnotes

1 Goethe Schiller Archiv, GSA 33 515, Blatt 1–7.

2 The king of Denmark ruled at the time of the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia over the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, the two dukedoms of Schleswig and Holstein, the county of Oldenburg and other territories which are now part of Germany, independent (Iceland), partly autonomous within the present kingdom of Denmark (Faroe Islands, Greenland) or have other international legal status.

3 Baack (2014: 341) cites the title of the manuscript but does not compare it with Niebuhr's text on Abyssinia published in 1837.

4 Compare with Cohen (2007: 120) and Cohen and Martínez (2007: 277–281).

5 Compare with Crummey and Kaplan (2007: 979–981), who do not mention these failed attempts.

6 See also Natsoulas and Wion (2005: 879–884) Niebuhr's information in the Goethe manuscript and in Niebuhr (1837), about the Greek presence in Abyssinia prior to 1763 supplements the information in this reference and may be among the most valuable information about Abyssinia provided by Niebuhr.

7 Niebuhr (1837: 160; see also Thulin 1989: 193), outlines current knowledge of the taxonomy, ecology and distribution of this plant.

8 Compare with Chernetsov and Nosnitsin (2007: 252) and Ezekiel Gebissa (2010: 62), who unanimously point out that Iyasu II was not known for his victories, but rather blamed for lack of military achievements, and that he was not hostile to the Oromo, but married a high-ranking Oromo woman for political reasons. His son, Iyoas I, was therefore 'half-Oromo'.

9 Compare with Chernetsov and Nosnitsin (2007: 252) regarding the death of Iyasu II: 'As usual in Ethiopia, in instances of an emperor's premature death by means og of ther than in battle, there were rumours that he [Iyasu II] was poisoned […], but they were probably wrong or politically motivated'. During the symposium in Addis Ababa it was also pointed out that smoking tobacco was at that time condemned by the Orthodox Ethiopian Church, and that it was therefore unlikely that an emperor would do so (see also Pankhurst 2010: 967).

10 Compare with Gascon (2010: 964) and Cohen (2010: 771), who state that Susenyos built the bridge immediately below the Tisesat Falls.