

Travelling Among Fellow Christians (1768-1833): James Bruce, Henry Salt and Eduard Rüppell in Abyssinia

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Abstract

In Yemen the *Arabian Journey* visited a Muslim country which was little known in Europe. Also the Christian highlands of Abyssinia, separated from Yemen by the Red Sea, were poorly known outside and were visited by few scientific travellers between 1750 and 1850. Most important were James Bruce (in 1768-1772), Henry Salt (in 1805 and 1809-1810) and Eduard Rüppell (in 1832-1833). All three interacted with all strata of Abyssinian society: rulers, nobility, clergy, traders and local peasants. They all followed similar routes in northern Abyssinia, collected general information and objects of natural history and studied Aksumite monuments. Bruce and Rüppell were also important collectors of old Abyssinian manuscripts. All three wrote travelogues for the general reader and commented on work of their predecessors. Yet their approach and attitudes to the country and its people were notably different: Bruce was an eccentric and wealthy Scottish laird with attitudes characteristic of his class. Salt, an English artist and secretary to a British peer of the realm, had more liberal attitudes. Rüppell, a German naturalist sent by the *Senckenberg Naturforschende Gesellschaft*, a learned association in Frankfurt, approached the Abyssinians with scholarly attitudes of his time. Bruce, Salt and Rüppell expressed views about the past and present of the Christian Abyssinian civilisation; Salt also nourished a political vision for future interaction between Abyssinia and Britain.

This is a comparison of three expeditions to Abyssinia during the period 1768-1833 – the travels of James Bruce, Henry Salt and Eduard Rüppell. Being a botanist, the author's interest in the three travellers began with their activity as botanical collectors. However, the author's field work in many parts of Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as his contribution to a book on the plant drawings of Bruce and Luigi Balugani enhanced his awareness of Abyssinian history and material and

spiritual culture.² In this review it is attempted to outline the observations by Bruce, Salt and Rüppell, including their views on the fellow Christians they travelled among.³ The geographical area covered in this

1. The author wants to thank Lawrence J. Baack for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this manuscript. However, the responsibility for the text and conclusions rests entirely with the author.

2. The author has taken part in two flora projects relating to the Horn of Africa: the *Flora of Ethiopia and Eritrea* and the *Flora of Somalia* (Hedberg 2009; Friis 2009a, 2009b; Thulin 1993-2006). His other works on the region include a monograph of the forests of the Horn of Africa (Friis 1992), a vegetation atlas of Ethiopia (Friis, Sebsebe Demissew & van Breugel 2010) and an account of Bruce and Balugani's plant drawings (Hulton, Hepper & Friis 1991).

3. In the main text the most common spelling of personal and place-names are used; where such names are dealt with in

paper is now part of modern Ethiopia and Eritrea, but here the name Abyssinia has been used for the predominantly Christian highlands,⁴ as it was used by the three travellers.

The Christian background of eighteenth and nineteenth century Abyssinia

A pagan Aksumite civilisation flourished in Abyssinia in the first centuries AD, when unvocalized and vocalised adaptations of the Epigraphic South Arabian script were created to fit the local Semitic language, Geez or classical Ethiopic. The Aksumite kings built palace-like buildings, erected monolithic, up to 30 meter tall stelae, some with architectural ornamentation, and minted coins of bronze or gold with Greek and Geez inscriptions.⁵ Around 350 AD the introduction of Christianity as the official religion of Abyssinia was marked on coins minted by King Ezana.⁶ Jerusalem soon became a place of particular importance for Christian Abyssinia. An ancient Abyssinian monastery in Jerusalem, Dayr-as-Sultan, exists even today on the roof of the Chapel of St. Helen at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁷ In the fifteenth century Abyssinian clergy came to Rome, and the Pope granted

Encyclopaedia Aethiopica they are also given in standardised transcription in the footnotes, allowing easy reference to the *Encyclopaedia*. The published volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* are listed in the References under Uhlig (2003, 2005, 2007) and Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

4. Abyssinia was the name used for parts of the present countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea up to the middle of the 20th century, referring to the predominantly Christian and Semitic speaking highlands. "Abyssinia" in Uhlig (2003).

5. Phillipson (1998); "Aksum" and "Aksumite culture" in Uhlig (2003); "Epigraphic South Arabian" in Uhlig (2005); "Inscriptions" in Uhlig (2007); "Gᵌᵌz" in Uhlig (2005); "Stelae" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010); "Coinage" in Uhlig (2003).

6. King Ezana (c. 325-c. 370; ruled c. 330-c. 370) is mentioned in 356/357 by the Roman Emperor Constantine II in connection with the introduction of Christianity in Abyssinia. Ezana's early coins are marked with pagan symbols, his later coins with a Christian cross. Pankhurst (1998); Phillipson (1998); "Ezana" in Uhlig (2005).

7. "Dayr as-Sultān" in Uhlig (2005); "Jerusalem" in Uhlig (2007).

them the use of a church, *Santo Stephano dei Mori*, in the Vatican gardens, and later a hostel adjacent to the church.⁸ Before the Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa in 1498 the Abyssinians had attempted to contact authorities in Venice, Florence, France, Spain and Portugal.⁹ In response to such contacts a Portuguese delegation travelled widely in Abyssinia in 1520-1526 and wrote a detailed report of the travels, partly published in 1540.¹⁰ A reason for these contacts was the attacks on the Christian highlands in Abyssinia by Muslim armies under Ahmad iben Ibrahim.¹¹ A Portuguese army landed on the Red Sea coast in 1541 in order to support Christian Abyssinia, and eventually the Muslim invasion was halted.¹² With the army came Jesuit missionaries, proselytizing, studying Abyssinia's history and geography, and influencing the Abyssinian building style.¹³

8. The first community of Christian Abyssinians in Rome seems to have been established in 1481. The church of *San Stephano* had become "*dei Mori*", "*degli Abissini*" or "*degli Indiani*" by 1495. In 1531 an Abyssinian monk named Tomas helped Johannes Potken, a German provost from Cologne, to publish the first printed Psalter in Geez. "Potken, Johannes" and "Santo Stephano dei Mori" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

9. "Links with European Christendom" in Pankhurst (1998).

10. Beckingham & Huntingford (1961); "Alvares, Francisco" in Uhlig (2003).

11. The invading Muslim armies came first from Adal, a region in the lowlands between Harar and the Ogaden, later from the Muslim city state of Harar. Ahmad b. Ibrahim (c. 1506 - 1543), also known as Amad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī or Ahmad Gagn ["the left-handed"], was born in Adal and became leader of Harar. Refusing to pay taxes to the Abyssinian Emperor, he started a holy war against the Christian highlands; he fell in the war in 1543. "Imam Ahmad iben Ibrahim and his Expedition" in Pankhurst (1998); "Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī" and "Aksum Séyon" in Uhlig (2003).

12. "The Arrival of Christovão da Gama" in Pankhurst (1998); "Gama, Christovão da" in Uhlig (2005).

13. The Jesuit Manoel de Almeida (c. 1579-1646) spent ten years in Abyssinia and wrote *História de Etiópia a alta, ou Abassia*, partly translated by Beckingham & Huntingford (1954); see Pankhurst (1965), pp. 36-47; "Almeida, Manoel de" in Uhlig (2003). Jerónimo Lobo (1595-1678), another Jesuit, spent the years 1623-1633 in Abyssinia and wrote two manuscripts about the geography and history of the country; see Lobo (1735); Pankhurst (1965), pp. 47-50; Da Costa, Lockhart &

In 1557 the Jesuits began a series of attempts to convert the Abyssinian rulers from the traditional Abyssinian Orthodox faith to Catholicism, but only about hundred years later the Jesuits were successful in converting Emperor Susenyos to Catholicism, after which widespread rebellion and civil wars broke out.¹⁴ Emperor Susenyos' son, Fasiledes, expelled the Jesuits in 1632, and broke all formal contacts with Europe, but in Europe, particularly in Rome, contacts between Abyssinians, visiting or living temporarily in Rome, and Europeans continued, for example between the Abyssinian monk Abba Gregoreyos and the German scholar Hiob Ludolf.¹⁵ Only very few Euro-

pean visitors came to Abyssinia between the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1632 and the arrival of Bruce in 1769, for example the French apothecary Charles-Jacques Poncet, who was invited to the imperial court at Gondar in 1699 in order to treat Emperor Iyasu I.¹⁶ Eighteen years before the arrival of James Bruce in Abyssinia, the Bohemian Franciscan Father Remidius Prutky, who had received medical training, was invited to Abyssinia by Emperor Iyasu II in 1752-1753.¹⁷

James Bruce and Luigi Balugani

James Bruce¹⁸ (1730-1794) was a Scottish aristocrat and the most important foreign traveller in Abyssinia since the expulsion of the Jesuits. He was the son of David Bruce, who inherited the name of Bruce and the estate of Kinnaid in Stirlingshire, Scotland, from

Beckingham (1983); "Lobo, Jerónimo" in Uhlig (2007). A comprehensive history of Abyssinia by a third Jesuit, Pedro Páez (1564-1622), was edited and translated by Boavida et al. (2011). A certain Portuguese influence is seen in the Gondarine architectural style of Abyssinia, in which e.g. the palaces of Fasiledes [Fasilädäs] and Iyasu I in the Imperial Compound of Gondar were built; see "Architecture" in Uhlig (2003).

14. The Spanish Jesuit Andrés de Oviedo (1518-1577) began unsuccessful attempts to convert the Abyssinian Emperor to Catholicism; see "Oviedo, Andrés de" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010). Emperor Susenyos (c. 1571 - 1632), who ruled 1607-1632, ordered in 1625 the conversion of all Abyssinian provincial governors to Catholicism. But in 1632, due to unrest, he had to abdicate in favour of his son Fasiledes [Fasilädäs], who was an Orthodox Christian; see "Susenyos, Danqaz and Catholicism" in Pankhurst (1998); "Susenyos" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

15. Fasiledes (1603-1667), ruled 1632-1667; see "Fasilädäs" in Uhlig (2005). Hiob Ludolf's Abyssinian informant, Abba Gregoreyos (died 1658), came from a monastery, Mekane Selase, near the town of Desie. He converted to Catholicism under Susenyos and left Abyssinia in 1632 to settle in the Abyssinian community in the Vatican. In 1649 he met Ludolf in Rome and became his teacher of Geez and main informant about Abyssinian languages, history, culture and Orthodox Christianity. In 1652 Gregoreyos went to Germany, invited to Gotha by Duke Ernest von Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg to work with Ludolf. Gregoreyos wanted to return to Abyssinia in 1658, but died on the way; see Pankhurst (1965), pp. 56-66; "Gorgoryos" in Uhlig (2005). Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704) is the founder of Ethiopian studies as an academic discipline. He introduced the idea of previously formulated questions to representatives of foreign cultures; see Ludolf (1681); "Ludolf, Hiob" in Uhlig (2007).

16. Poncet (1655-1706) was invited to the Imperial court at Gondar to treat the Emperor Iyasu I for a skin disease. He arrived at Gondar in July 1698 and was forced to see the Emperor in secret to avoid rumours about renewed Catholic influence in Abyssinia; see Pankhurst (1965), pp. 67-71; "Poncet, Charles-Jaques" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010). Emperor Iyasu I (c. 1658-1706) ruled 1682-1706; see "Iyasu I" in Uhlig (2007). There is no evidence that the French count, Pierre Josef le Roux d'Esneval, who persuaded the Danish King Christian VI to send an expedition lead by him and F.L. Norden up the Nile towards Abyssinia in 1737-1738, had any contact with Iyasu II, then still a very young Abyssinian Emperor, nor with the regent, Mantuab, widow of the former Emperor Bakaffa. There is no mentioning of attempted contacts between Denmark and Abyssinia before the *Arabian Journey* in the article "Denmark, relations with", nor is any attempt at French-Abyssinian contacts in the 18th century mentioned after Poncet's visit in the article "France, relations with"; both articles in Uhlig (2005).

17. The manuscript of Prutky's travels was rediscovered in the 1960's and published and translated by Arrowsmith-Brown & Pankhurst (1991). Prutky came to Massawa in February 1752, arrived at Gondar in March, and visited the source of the Blue Nile. In April 1753 he left Abyssinia via Massawa.

18. No new scholarly biography of Bruce exists. Alexander Murray, editor of the second and third editions of Bruce's *Travels* (Bruce 1805, 1813), wrote a biography. Biographies for the general reader have been published by Reid (1968) and Bredin (2000). Short biographical notes by Paul Hulton appear in Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991).

his mother. The family had Hanoverian sympathies, and James was sent to school at Harrow in England, where he read the classics and acquired an interest in art and architecture. In 1754 he married Adriana Allen, the daughter of a wealthy wine merchant. In October 1754, when the newlywed couple was on their way to Provence, Adriana tragically died in Paris. Bruce was outraged by Catholic priests who tried to convert her on her deathbed and refused her burial in consecrated ground. From these traumatic experiences Bruce developed a deep and lifelong antipathy for Catholic clergy, a mind-set that later influenced his attitude to Jesuits and their scholarly work on Abyssinia.

In 1757 Bruce embarked on a long tour of the European Continent, which took him to Portugal, Spain and the Low Countries. At the death of his father he inherited the title Laird of Kinnaird and quickly returned to Scotland to take possession of the Kinnaird estate, where rich deposits of coal had been found. In 1760 he made contract about extraction of coal with the Carron Company, located only a few miles from Kinnaird and then the largest iron factory in Europe. This contract meant a considerable income for Bruce, and allowed him to travel again without concern for the costs. He was offered the post of British consul-general in Algiers, where, apart from his main duties, he would be able to study and draw ruins of Roman architecture. But the post was not immediately vacant, so while waiting for the vacancy Bruce travelled in France and Italy, studying Oriental languages (including Arabic and Geez), classical art and drawing. In Florence he found artists capable of redrawing and embellishing his original architectural drawings from Paestum, but he did not manage to publish them. Finally, in February 1763, he was requested to take up his post in Algiers.

The post as consul-general was more difficult than anticipated, and Bruce resigned from it in April 1765. While in Algiers he hired an artist and draftsman from Bologna, Luigi Balugani, to assist with the drawing of Roman ruins in North Africa. In August 1765 the two men set off on a long journey through Tunis, Libya, Crete, Rhodes, Lebanon and Syria to Egypt. In Al-

giers, Bruce had been able to study medicine with a British surgeon, Richard Ball, and in Aleppo, Bruce was again taught surgery and medicine by the Scottish surgeon and naturalist Patrick Russell. It was probably in Egypt that Bruce formed the idea of going to Abyssinia. In December 1768 the party sailed up the Nile to the first cataract at Aswan (Syene) and joined a caravan crossing the desert from Quena to the small town of Qusayr on the Red Sea coast, which they reached in February, 1769. They left Qusayr in April, 1769, and sailed via ports of the Red Sea to Luhayyah in Yemen, from where they sailed to Massawa on the Red Sea coast of Abyssinia in September, 1769.¹⁹

While waiting for negotiations with the Naib of Massawa about permission to proceed inland, Bruce and Balugani made observations on the bay of Massawa and the Dahlac Islands.²⁰ In November, 1769, they were permitted to travel through the coastal plains with a caravan of men and mules and to ascend to the Christian highlands. The route of Bruce and his party through Abyssinia is plotted on a modern topographical map in Fig. 1. Having passed the first town in the highlands, Dixan,²¹ they continued through the province of Tigray²² and finally reached the historical town of Aksum in January, 1770.²³

19. Hulton, Hepper and Friis (1991), "Bruce, James" in Uhlig (2003). Massawa, at 15° 36½' N, 39° 28' E, is the largest deep sea port on the African side of the Red Sea. It replaced the Aksumite port of Adulis at some time between the 8th and the 10th century and has since been one of the main ports serving the Abyssinian highlands. "Massawa" in Uhlig (2007). See the article by Friis in this volume "Carsten Niebuhr and James Bruce: Lifted Latitudes and Virtual Voyages on the Red Sea ...?" about the truth in Bruce's claim of having made a voyage south of Qusayr and Luhayya.

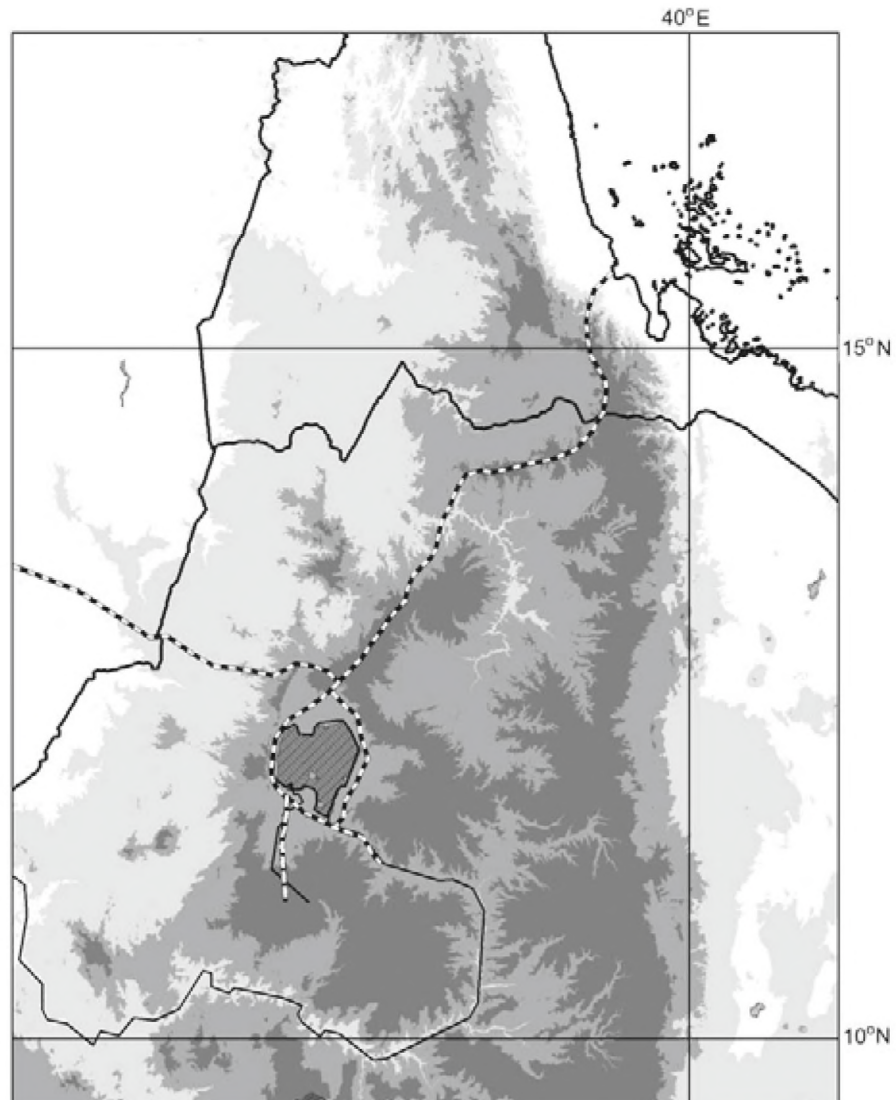
20. The Naib was the local official representative of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, governing the Abyssinian Red Sea coast. "Nā'ib" in Uhlig (2007).

21. Small town at 14° 59' N, 39° 14' E. "Dəgsa" in Uhlig (2005).

22. Tigray is a historical region and now a regional state for the Tigrinya-speaking population in northern Ethiopia. "Təgray" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

23. Town at 14° 07' N, 38° 44' E. It was the capital of the Aksumite Empire to c. 9th century and remained the town

Fig. 1. Travel route of James Bruce in Abyssinia (entire route from the Red Sea around Lake Tana to the source of the Blue Nile and to the Sudan). Luigi Balugani died at Gondar, after the journey to the source of the Blue Nile. The altitudinal shading is: No shading: < 500 m. Pale grey: 500-1000 m. Medium grey: 1000-2000 m. Dark grey: > 2000 m. Modern borders are marked with the thickest lines; rivers with thinner lines.



In the *Travels*, Bruce briefly described the old stelae at Aksum (“... one larger than the rest still standing, but two larger than this fallen”) and other ruins.²⁴ He suggested that these ancient monuments were created by “Cushitic” people, for “the Abyssinians never built any city, nor do the ruins of any exist at this day in the whole country.” Bruce (probably, rather than the more accurate draftsman Balugani) also drew the ar-

chitecturally decorated, still standing stela, which Bruce thought was “the work of Ptolemy Evergetes.”²⁵ The ornaments on the large stelae were, according to Bruce, “... something like metopes, triglyphs, and guttae, disposed rudely, and without order ...” He also believed that large stone slabs were pedestals for Egyptian statues: “... solid pedestals, upon the top of

where the Emperor was crowned. “Aksum” in Uhlig (2003).

24. Fig. 2, showing the only architecturally decorated stela at Aksum which was standing at the time of Bruce’s visit.

25. “Euergetes” is the name of two Ptolemaic kings of Egypt in the third and second century BC: Ptolemy III Euergetes (246 BC-221 BC) and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163 BC and 145-116 BC).

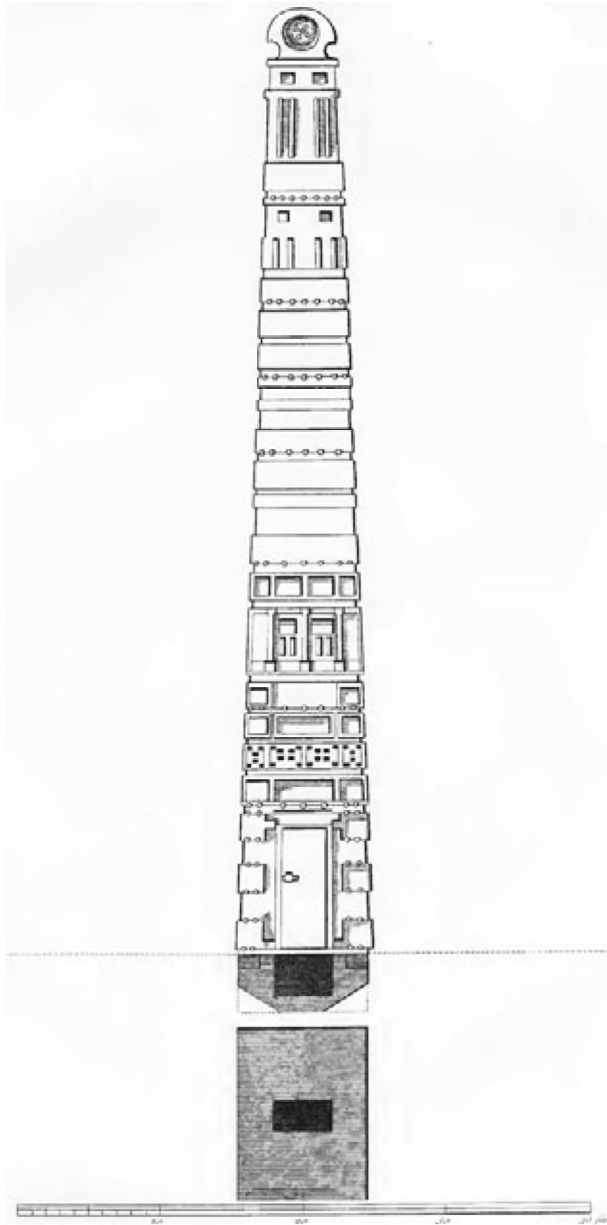


Fig. 2. James Bruce (or Luigi Balugani): Detail of *Obelisk at Axum*. Plate 13 in Vol. 4, Book V, Chapter 5, at p. 321, in Bruce: *Travels ...*, (1790). The scale shows that Bruce estimated the stela to be approximately 60 feet (c. 18.30 m) high and rendered the architectural decoration incorrectly. The only architecturally decorated stela standing at the time of Bruce's and Balugani's visit was the one now referred to as Stela 3. It measures ca. 20.5 m and has eight bands of tall "windows" throughout the length and one row of square "windows" just above the false door. Scanned and reproduced from a copy of 2nd edition of *Travels* in the author's possession.

which we see the marks where stood the colossal statues of Sirius, the Latrator Anubis, or Dog Star. One hundred and thirty-three of these pedestals, with the marks of statues I just mentioned, are still in their places; but only two figures of the dog remained ... much mutilated, but of a taste easily distinguished to be Egyptian. ... There are likewise pedestals, where on the figures of the Sphinx have been placed ..." These vast and carefully shaped stone-slabs are still a prominent feature in several parts of Aksum. However, Bruce interpreted a still preserved and rather similar "pedestal" in front of the main church differently, it was, and is, surrounded by four columns: "Within the outer gate of the church [compound], below the steps ..." and shaped as a throne upon which "the king sits, and is crowned, and always has been since the day of Paganism." At this monument Bruce observed an inscription "though much defaced, may safely be restored' as a text in Greek with a reference to Ptolemy Evergetes."²⁶

Bruce wrote about the main church of Aksum, Enda Mariam Zion (not mentioned by name, but identifiable from the description): "Two magnificent flights of steps, several hundred feet long,²⁷ all of granite, exceedingly well fashioned, and still in their place, are the only remains of a magnificent temple. In the angle of this platform where that temple stood, is the present small church of Axum, in the place of a former one destroyed by Mahomet Gagne,²⁸ in the reign of king David III;²⁹ and which was probably the

26. Bruce (1790, 1805, 1813), Book V, Chapter 5. No later source mentions statues of dogs and sphinxes (Phillipson 1997; Chiari 2009). No Greek inscription mentioning Ptolemy Evergetes has been reported from Aksum, but inscriptions in Greek from the Antiquity exist, many referring to King Ezana (ruled c. 330-c. 370 A.D.).

27. There are two flights of steps leading to the podium on which the present church stands, but much smaller than described by Bruce. Phillipson (1997); Chiari (2009)

28. This is Amad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī ["Gragñ"], mentioned above.

29. The Emperor normally referred to as "Dawit III" ruled at Gondar 1716-1721; see "Dawit III" in Uhlig (2005). The ancient church in Axum was destroyed by Amad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī ["Gragñ"] around 1535 (Phillipson 2009, p. 38), during the

remains of a temple built by Ptolemy Evergetes, if not the work of times more remote.” The church standing in this place at the time of Bruce’s visit, as today, was, according to Bruce, “... a mean, small building, very ill kept and full of pigeons’ dung. In it are supposed to be preserved the ark of the covenant, and copy of the law, which Menilek, son of Solomon, is said, in their fabulous legend, to have stolen from his father Solomon in his return to Ethiopia ... Some ancient copy of the Old Testament, I do believe, was deposited here [in the church in Aksum] ... But whatever this might be, it was destroyed, with the church itself, by Mahomet Gragne, though pretended falsely to subsist there still. This I had from the king himself.”³⁰

According to *Travels* it was near Aksum that Bruce saw Abyssinian soldiers cutting and eating pieces of meat from a living cow. Even today this observation is not believed, or at least thought to represent a unique incident.³¹ From Aksum the party descended into the valley of the River Tacazze.³² Having crossed the Tacazze late January, 1770, they continued over the La-

rule of Lebna Dengel (1508-1540), who also adopted the throne name “Dawit”; see “Ləbnä Dəngəl” in Uhlig (2007). The early mediaeval church was seen and described before its destruction by the first Portuguese mission to Abyssinia; see “Alvares, Francisco” in Uhlig (2003).

30. In this place, Book V, Chapter 5, and elsewhere Bruce expressed the opinion that the religious object, which in the tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is said to be the true Ark of Covenant, was in fact an old Hebrew copy of the Law of Moses, which was lost during the wars with Amad b. Ibrāhīm al-Gāzī [“Gragñ”]. See also Bruce (1790, 1805, 1813), Book II, Chapter 6: “... Azarias, the son of Zadoc the Priest, ... brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the law ... the book itself was burnt with the church of Axum in the Moorish war of Adel ...” A scholarly discussion of the tradition about the Ark of Covenant being at Aksum has been given by Munro-Hay (2005).

31. Bruce (1790, 1805, 1813), Book V, Chapter 5, pointed out about the cow that “... it occurred to us all that it had been stolen.” Contemporary Ethiopians suggest to the author that thieves or hostile soldiers might treat a stolen cow as described by Bruce; a righteous owner would certainly not.

32. The deep gorge of the Tacazze River forms a loop around the Semien Mountains. “Tākkāze” in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

malmon Pass [present day Limalima Pass]³³ in the Semien Mountains³⁴ and reached the Imperial capital Gondar by the end of February, 1770. At that time the young Tekle Haymanot II³⁵ was Emperor. Other influential people at Gondar were Ayto Aylo,³⁶ Mantuab,³⁷ widow of Emperor Bakaffa, her daughter Aster (Esther),³⁸ and the Ras of Tigray, Michael Schul,³⁹ then the real ruler of Abyssinia.

Bruce provided no portrait of Mantuab, his most important benefactor. There are, however, contemporary Abyssinian images representing her. She supported the building of the church of Narga Selassie on Dek Island in Lake Tana, where she is depicted in several places.⁴⁰ In *Travels*, Bruce described his first

33. Even today the road from the Tacazze Valley to Gondar winds its way up to and down from this pass, reaching altitudes of 3100-3200 m.

34. The highest and most dissected mountain massif in Abyssinia, an eroded basaltic dome. The highest peaks are Ras Dashen (4500 m) and Mt. Bwahit (4330 m), but many others reach above 4000 m. “Səmen” in Ulig and Bausi (2010).

35. Emperor Tekle Haimanot II (?-1777), ruled 1769-1777, was enthroned by Ras Michael Schul (see following note) as the third Emperor in 1769, the two previous ones, Iyoas and Yohannes II, both murdered on the order of Ras Michael Schul. Tekle Haimanot II continued as the nominal ruler of Abyssinia after the overthrow of Ras Michael Schul at Sarbakusa, a battle witnessed by Bruce. “Täklä Haymanot I” in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

36. Person not identified from other sources; presumably Ayto Aylo had the formal title “Abeto[hun]”, later “Ato”, and the name “Ḥaylu.” “Ato” in Uhlig (2003); “Ḥaylu” in Uhlig (2005).

37. Mantuab [“Məntəwwab”; “Oh, what beauty!”] was the generally accepted nickname of Berhan Mogäsa (early 1700s-mid-1770s). She was influential at the court at Gondar during the mid-1700s. According to popular legend, also reported by Bruce, she came from Qwara [Q^wara], west of Lake Tana, brought to Gondar by Emperor Bekaffa in the 1720’s and was his consort in his later years. “Bäkaffa” and “Bérhan Mogäsa” in Uhlig (2003).

38. The second of three daughters of Mantuab. “Aster” in Uhlig (2003).

39. Ras Michael Schul (c. 1691-1777). “Mika³el ‘Səḥul” in Uhlig (2007).

40. Di Salvo (1999) has reproduced a painting in the Gondar style showing Mantuab prostrate at the feet of Virgin Mary.

Bewossen⁴⁶, and Fasil⁴⁷ of Damot, to place a counter-Emperor, Susenyos II, on the throne in Gondar. On their return, Ras Michael Schul and Tekle Haymanot II disposed of him and executed his supporters.

Finally, late in October, 1770, after a long rainy season, Bruce and Balugani managed to leave Gondar again and on the 4th of November, 1770, they reach what local people told him was the source of the Nile on a swampy mountain side south west of Lake Tana.⁴⁸ Following a route along the western shore of Lake Tana Bruce and Balugani returned to Gondar on Christmas Eve 1770. Sick of the general bloodshed in Gondar, Bruce was invited to stay at Mantuab's pal-

ace at Qusquam during most of his remaining stay in Abyssinia. Sadly, Balugani died of dysentery on or shortly after the 15th of February.⁴⁹ In May 1771 Ras Michael and the Emperor's army faced the rebels Goshu, Wand Bewossen and Fasil on three occasions at Sebraxos (Sarbakusa) not far south-east of Gondar. Bruce claimed that he took active part in all three battles and provided engraved maps of the battlefields.⁵⁰ The victory went to the rebels, and they deposed Ras Michael from all official functions and took control of the country: While the Emperor was allowed to rule on as a figurehead, Ras Michael was sent to Tigray in chains.

Returned from the battles at Sebraxos, Bruce continued staying at Qusquam, away from the cruel politics at Gondar. In the autumn of 1771 he decided to return home. He was granted permission to leave Abyssinia and set off by the end of December, 1771, following a route towards the Sudan via Ras el Fiil (and Galabat and Metemma).⁵¹ In March, 1772, he left Abyssinian territory, travelling along the Rahab River in eastern Sudan and then along the Blue Nile, first to Sennar, where he stayed from April to September, 1772, and then onwards to the point where the Blue Nile met the White Nile, at the modern towns of Khar-

Michael, but opposed him in 1771. "Goššu" in Uhlig (2005).

46. Wand Bewossen [Däggazmač Wänd Bāwāsan] (died 1777), prominent nobleman and warlord, married to a granddaughter of Mantuab. In the beginning Wand Bewossen was loyal to Ras Michael, but his loyalty changed. "Wänd Bāwāsan" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

47. Fasil of Damot [Däggazmač Fasil Wārāñña], Oromo chief. The Oromo people moved northwards into the central and northern highlands of Abyssinia from what is today southern Ethiopia; see "Oromo history" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

48. Numerous rivers and smaller streams flow into Lake Tana, but for centuries Abyssinians have maintained that the source of the largest of these rivers, Gilgil Abay or Tinnish Abay ["Little Abay"], is the true source of the Abay [Blue Nile].

João Gabriel, a Portuguese captain based in Tigray, made an expedition to that area in 1600 and was probably the first European to see the spring. In 1618 a Spanish Jesuit, Pedro Páez, visited the source and wrote a description of it, which Bruce must have known, as it was quoted in a work in Latin by Kircher (1678), Vol. I, p. 73. In 1629 the Jesuit Jérôme Lobo also visited the source of the Blue Nile. Lobo was in contact with the Royal Society of London; Lobo's observations of the Nile were translated into English by Sir Peter Wyche, a member of the Royal Society, and published (Lobo 1669).

When Bruce claimed to be the first European to visit the source of the Nile, the 1669-publication of Lobo's account was reissued with the following remark in the anonymous preface: "A later Traveller [Bruce], however, in various instances, asserted the ignorance of the Portuguese Missionaries, taxing them with wilful misrepresentation, and including them all under the polite appellation of *Lying Jesuits!*" (Lobo 1798). Also Prutky visited the source of the Blue Nile before Bruce, in 1752 (Arrowsmith-Brown & Pankhurst 1991); see also "Nile" in Uhlig (2007).

49. Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991) have seen that that weather observations in Bruce's papers are in Balugani's hand until the 14th of February 1771, but after that date in the hand of Bruce; see Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), pp. 41-53.

50. The battles at Sarbakusa [also Sarbak'əsa, Bruce's Serbraxos], a town half between Gondar and modern Addis Zemen, at 12° 29' N, 37° 35' E], are mapped on Bruce's Plates 16, 17 and 18. The two first battles were indecisive, but the third forced Ras Michael and the Emperor to retreat to Gondar. It is now generally believed that Bruce was present at these battles; see "Sarbakusa" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

51. Ras el Fiil was a district in the western lowlands of Abyssinia. "Ras al-Fil" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010). Galabat (in the Sudan) and Metemma (in Abyssinia; 12° 58' N, 36° 12' E) are two adjacent towns, which since early 18th century have existed at the border between the Sudanese province of Qadarif and Abyssinia. The towns developed as important trading links between Abyssinia and the Nile Valley. "Qallābāt" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010) and "Mātamma" in Uhlig (2007).

toum and Omdurman. This point he reached late September, 1772, and noted about his observations in *Travels* that the Abiad River [the White Nile] “was larger than the Nile [the Blue Nile]”, but stated that the “the Nile preserves the name of Bahar el Azergue, or the Blue River, which it got at Sennar.”⁵² In this way he maintained that what he had seen south west of Lake Tana in Abyssinia was the source of the Nile.

After a gruelling trip through Sudan, the Nubian Desert and Egypt Bruce arrived at Marseille in March 1773, but remained in Italy for almost a year before returning to Britain. Finally arriving in London in June, 1774, after a stay in Paris, Bruce’s descriptions of Abyssinia were met with disbelief. There were several reasons for this: firstly Bruce’s boastful personality caused offence, secondly because some of his observations made in Africa were hard to believe because of their apparent strangeness, and thirdly because certain of his statements were factually wrong, for example his claim of having discovered places already described by the Jesuits.⁵³ Particularly Bruce’s description of the Abyssinian tradition of eating raw beef, with beef from a living cow as the extreme incident, was generally mistrusted.⁵⁴ Bitterly disappointed by the general mistrust and ridicule, Bruce retired to Scotland and married again in May 1776, this time to Mary Dundas, the daughter of another rich and influential Scottish laird from Stirlingshire.

Publication and results of Bruce’s travels

Bruce only began working on his *Travels* after the death of his second wife in 1785. He dictated the enormous work from memory, only occasionally consult-

ing his journals and notes. His secretary, the Reverend Benjamin Latrobe, described how Bruce would dictate almost without a break from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.⁵⁵ Finally, five volumes in quarto were published in 1790, nearly 20 years after the time in Abyssinia. The books contained engravings based on drawings from the journey,⁵⁶ many showing animals and plants and portraits of prominent Abyssinians.⁵⁷ Two new editions appeared after Bruce’s death in 1794, edited by an Edinburgh scholar, Alexander Murray, and provided with commentaries and additional material from Bruce’s and Balugani’s original notes.⁵⁸

The results of Bruce’s travels in Abyssinia are diverse. His descriptions of the situation in the country during his visit are valuable historical sources to the events in Abyssinia in the eighteenth century. This information is often influenced by Bruce’s views of society: he speaks about Abyssinian nobility or royalty as he would of European nobility or royalty. In Abyssinia Bruce acquired old manuscripts or commissioned them to be copied. The most important were the *Kebrä Nagast*⁵⁹ and the *First Book of Enoch*.⁶⁰ The former is a legendary description of the descent of the Abyssinian royal family from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The second is an ancient Jewish religious text, a so-called pseudo-epigraph, ascribed to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. The text of the *First Book of Enoch* is only completely preserved in Geez. Neither of these two texts was known in Europe, although already in the sixteenth century

52. Bruce (1790, 1805, 1813), Book VIII, Chapter 10.

53. An example of the reaction to Bruce’s treatment of the Jesuits is seen in the new preface to Lobo (1798).

54. A satirical cartoon by Isaac Cruikshank, showing entitled “An Abyssinian breakfast”, was published in 1791 and is reproduced by Bredin (2000), pp. 194-195. It shows Bruce carving meat from a live cow desperately trying to escape. Tender, raw beef and mead (tej), as described by Bruce, is still consumed in Ethiopia as a delicacy; see “täggg” in Uhlig & Bausi (2020).

55. Hulton in Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), p. 38.

56. In the first edition of *Travels* (Bruce 1790) the plates are scattered through the volumes. In the two later editions (Bruce 1805, 1813) the text is in octavo and the plates are gathered in a separate volume in quarto. For discussion of authorship of the drawings, see Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), pp. 55-60.

57. Reid (1968) has reproduced the original drawings of people at the court of Gondar on his Plate 6a and 6b.

58. Bruce (1805, 1813); Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), pp. 121-122.

59. The title has been translated as “The Glory of Kings.” Wallis Budge (1922); “Kəbrä nägäšt” in Uhlig (2007).

60. Charles (1893); “Enoch, Book of” in Uhlig (2005); “Pseudoepigrapha and Apocrypha” in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

the Portuguese traveller Alvarez had reported on their existence. Other important manuscripts obtained by Bruce were Abyssinian royal chronicles.⁶¹ He spent much effort on compiling a history of Abyssinia from the thirteenth century to the time of his visit; this vast compilation appeared in *Travels* just before the description of his arrival in Abyssinia. A collection of 35 manuscripts collected by Bruce are now the Bodleian Library at Oxford⁶² and an unknown number, given to Louis XV of France, are in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* in Paris.⁶³ Bruce seems to have had considerable abilities as a practical linguist,⁶⁴ although not necessarily as a scholarly one. In *Travels* he reproduced a range of samples of Abyssinian languages. The archaeological observations in Bruce's work are unreliable, and so is his illustration of the still standing stela at Aksum.⁶⁵ Other drawings brought back from Abyssinia represent good draftmanship, but the range of subjects is not representative of what Bruce and Balugani must have seen. There are no drawings of landscapes or drawings of the characteristic Abyssinian ecclesiastic or secular architecture. The portraits of people represent only a few prominent Abyssinians; no ordinary Abyssinians were drawn. A few examples of arms are illustrated, but there is no example of everyday utensils. No example of the characteristic traditional Abyssinian painting is reproduced.

The best represented subject among the drawings reproduced in Bruce's *Travels*, and among other pre-

served drawings from the journey, is Abyssinian natural history. Balugani made close to 200 pencil or pen and ink drawings or watercolours, representing c. 180 Abyssinian plant species, often with notes in Italian about the plants, where they had been observed and records of local names and uses. Bruce did not make a herbarium, but he and Balugani collected seeds and bulbs of more than 50 species of plants, some of which germinated in botanical gardens in Italy and France. Information about 30 species of plants was given in Bruce's *Travels*, with engravings based on Balugani's drawings. In the *Travels* only one of these was named according to the Linnæan system, but the others were given scientific names by botanists of the day. There are only about 50 drawings of animals, of which 24 have been reproduced as engravings. These include mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and a fly. The original drawings of plants and animals were kept by Bruce's descendants, but most are now in the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, USA.⁶⁶ A genus of trees in the family Simaroubaceae (the quassia family) is named *Brucea* J.F. Mill. It was illustrated in Bruce's *Travels*, where it was mentioned that the plant was used against dysentery. A legume tree from the humid parts of Abyssinia was illustrated by Balugani and later named *Erythrina brucei* Schweinf. (1868). The observations on natural history made by Balugani are generally correct and show a keen and careful observer. Bruce's own observations on natural history are often more vivid, but also often confused. Murray explained this:⁶⁷

At the close of life, after twenty years repose, and much domestic affliction, the Author of these Travels seems to have viewed his former life as in a dream. Each interesting event found a glowing place in his descriptions, though indolence often prevented him from fixing, by his journals, the true time and place. If, however, this be not received as the full cause of the errors in ques-

61. "14th-17th century" of "Historiography" in Uhlig (2007).

62. A catalogue of Abyssinian manuscripts in the Bodleian Library by Dillmann (1848) contains descriptions of 35 manuscripts, almost all of which were brought from Abyssinia by Bruce.

63. Hulton in Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), p. 35.

64. See comments on Bruce's abilities in Abyssinian languages in Salt (1814), pp. 334-335, based on the evidence from a learned local informant who had conversed with Bruce.

65. See Fig. 2. The stela seen by Bruce (1790), Vol. 3, Plate 13, is now called "Stela 3" and its current condition is illustrated by Phillipson (1997), pp. 27-32. The errors or inaccuracies in Bruce's representation are significant. See also the criticism of Bruce's descriptions of the archaeological remains and inscriptions at Aksum by Salt in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, pp. 177-202.

66. Further about Bruce's collections of seeds and bulbs of plants, as well as the various collections of drawings from the journey, in Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), pp. 61-68.

67. Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), particularly pp. 61-68, but Bruce's lack of precise observations is noted elsewhere, for example p. 26. See also Murray's "Preface to the Third Edition" in Vol. 1 of Bruce (1813).

tion, it may be mentioned that, in the particular state of the public mind at the time when Mr. Bruce returned from Abyssinia, few men could expect either notice or patronage, who did not describe their adventures as miraculous, and boldly pretended that they had left nothing undone. ...

Bruce's travel account was written both for the general reader, with descriptions of everyday life and conversations with important figures in Abyssinia, but also for learned readers, with long essays on specialised subjects, such as the observations on natural history and extracts of historical chronicles. Murray comments on the popular aspects of the *Travels*:⁶⁸

Another source of defect [of the *Travels*] is owing to a natural desire of rendering his work agreeable and popular. ... To the same cause must be ascribed, the freedom with which he has translated the conversation which passed between himself and the natives [of Abyssinia]. ... It is only a person who is acquainted with the Abyssinian language and phraseology, who can trace their authenticity.

Also a later editor of the *Travels*, Beckingham, has commented on this conflict between writing for the general reader and for the specialist. Beckingham's conclusion about the *Travels* seems a fair one:⁶⁹

... in spite of the magnitude of the achievement they record, the *Travels* are not often read to-day except by specialists, and it is not for them that Bruce wrote. They really comprise three books which might well have been published separately, the story of his own travels, a history of Ethiopia [Abyssinia] from earliest times to 1769, and a number of essays on very varied topics, such as polygamy, the origin of civilisation, the untruthfulness of Portuguese writers on Ethiopia [Abyssinia], and the effect of the Nile on the level of the land in Egypt. The history is inserted in the travel narrative on his arrival at Massawa while the essays are scattered throughout as more or less appropriate digression. The result is confusing, for it is easy to forget the identity of someone in a story that is so often

interrupted. His topographical descriptions are not always easily understood, and, strangely enough considering his scientific interests, his map was inadequate; Murray, indeed, wrote in a letter to Salt that it "was laid down with shameful inaccuracy." The work [*Travels*] is very uneven in interest and value. His speculations on ethnography and ancient history were of little importance in his own day and are of less now. His own adventures, on the other hand, are told with a verve and sense of farce unsurpassed in the literature of travel. ...

Beckingham does not mention the excellent observations made on natural history, which must largely have been produced by Balugani. These observations were not properly represented in *Travels*. Nor were the valuable collection of old Abyssinian manuscripts given enough weight, although Murray tried to correct that in his editions of the *Travels*.⁷⁰ These important aspects of Bruce's and Balugani's travels are mentioned by Hulton in an overall impression of their work:⁷¹

... of his achievements, perhaps the two greatest, beyond his feats as an explorer, were the collection of Ethiopian manuscripts which he acquired or had copied and brought to the west; and the great quantity of drawings which he and Balugani created and which he succeeded in bringing out intact under the severest possible conditions.

Henry Salt, Nathaniel Pearce and William Coffin

Henry Salt (1780-1827) was English, the son of a medical doctor in Lichfield in Staffordshire. Salt had a considerable talent for painting and was trained in drawing, watercolour and oil painting. Set for a career as a portrait painter in London, he was at first not success-

68. Bruce (1805, 1813), vol. 1, "Account of the Life and Writings of James Bruce, Esq."

69. Beckingham (1964), pp. 18-19.

70. Murray cited extracts of the chronicles throughout his two editions of the *Travels*, including a longer summary in Bruce (1805, 1813), vol. 7, Appendix, Account of the Ethiopic MSS from which Mr. Bruce composed the History of Abyssinia, comprised in Book V of the *Travels*.

71. Hulton in Hulton, Hepper & Friis (1991), p. 39.

ful.⁷² However, at an art exhibition in London in 1799 he met George Annesley (1770-1844; the son of an Irish Peer and the 9th Viscount Valentia).⁷³ Annesley was acquainted with Salt's family, and, in spite of social differences, the two men developed a friendship. When Annesley soon after planned to make a journey to India, this friendship changed Salt's life and career. In 1802 Salt left England as secretary and draughtsman for Annesley. Although without a public position, Annesley had a keen interest in the Indian trade and was confident that he could improve it. During the visit to India, he convinced the British Governor-General of India⁷⁴ Richard Colley (1760-1842; Marquis of Wellesley, previous Earl of Mornington), that it would be beneficial to open commercial contact with Abyssinia, and he obtained the governor's support for an expedition to the western shores of the Red Sea. On board the *Antelope*, a ship provided by Wellesley, Annesley and Salt landed at Mocha in Yemen in April, 1804, accompanied by Annesley's servant William Coffin.⁷⁵

In early May the *Antelope* reached the African shore of the Red Sea, while the crew mapped the many islands that did not appear on earlier European maps, including a reliable nautical map of the many Dahlac Islands.⁷⁶ Salt visited Dahlac el-Kibeer, the largest and only inhabited island in the archipelago. After this, the *Antelope* went to Massawa, where Annesley, Salt and Coffin were well received by the Naib.⁷⁷ How-

ever, the time of the year was too far advanced for further exploration, and the *Antelope* returned to India. Early in December, Annesley left India with another ship, the *Panther*. The ship reached Mocha late in December 1804. Nathaniel Pearce⁷⁸ (1779-1820), a sailor who had deserted the *Antelope*, was taken back into Annesley's service on the *Panther* and was to become an important partner for Salt's discoveries in Abyssinia and an independent and observant traveller in that country. In January 1805 the *Panther* reached Massawa and completed the survey of the Dahlac Islands, after which the ship returned to Mocha. Before leaving Massawa, Annesley had sent a message to the court of the Ras of Tigray, Ras Wolde Selassie,⁷⁹ asking for further contact. At Mocha a reply from the Ras reached the party, inviting Annesley or a representative to come to Tigray. In July Salt could start towards Tigray, being the first European visitor to Abyssinia after Bruce. He set out from Arkeko, a small coastal town opposite the island of Massawa. Apart from Salt, the party consisted of three Europeans, including Pearce, and about twenty-five Arabs and Abyssinians. The party followed the same route as Bruce had taken, ascending to the highlands at Dixan.⁸⁰ This and Salt's second journey in Abyssinia have been plotted on a modern topographical map in Fig. 3.

Already when at the coast, Salt had realised that centralised government in Abyssinia had disintegrated since Bruce's visit. In practice, the country had dissolved into three states, each ruled by an independent Ras. Nearest the coast was Tigray, with the town Aksum; further inland was Amhara,⁸¹ and yet further in-

72. Halls (1834); Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 1-9; "Salt, Henry" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

73. "Annesley, George" in Uhlig (2003).

74. The Governor-General of India had at that time only direct control over Fort William, the government fortification in Calcutta, but supervised the private British East India Company and its officials in India.

75. Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 11-66; "Coffin, William" in Uhlig (2003). The dates and years of Coffin's birth and death are not known. He served Annesley on the voyage to India and later Salt on the second journey to Abyssinia. At the request of the Ras of Tigray he remained in Abyssinia. In 1827 he was sent on a mission from Abyssinia to Egypt and returned to Abyssinia with a large supply of muskets and carabins.

76. An archipelago of c. 125 flat islands in the Red Sea off the port of Massawa. "Dahlak islands" in Uhlig (2005).

77. The local official representative of the Ottoman Turkish

Empire, governing the Red Sea coast along Abyssinia; see "Nā'ib" in Uhlig (2007). See also the note under Bruce about his problems with the Naib in Massawa.

78. Pearce (1831); Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 22-66; "Pearce, Nathaniel" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

79. Ras Wolde Selassie (1733-1815) ruled Tigray from the 1790s and into the early years of the 19th century. His capital was at Antalo in the south-eastern part of Tigray. "Wäldä Śöllase" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

80. For Dixan, see note above under Bruce's journey.

81. Amhara was originally the name of the highland region bounded to the north and west of the Blue Nile (Abay River).

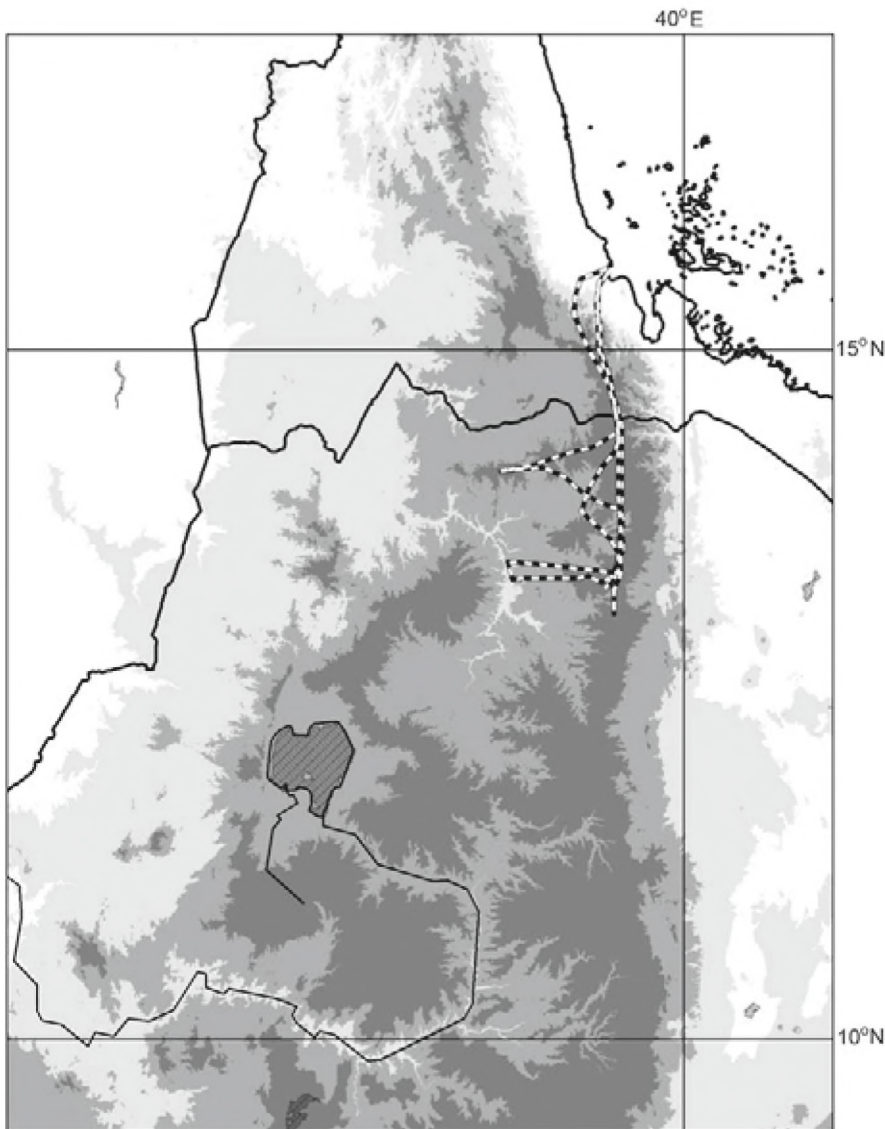


Fig. 3. Travel routes of Henry Salt in Abyssinia. Salt's two journeys took him to the eastern parts of Tigray, as far as the Tacazze Valley, with short journeys in western Tigray, where he visited the ancient town of Axum. The travels of his two assistants, Nathaniel Pierce and William Coffin, are not shown; they went to Lalibela, into the Semien Mountains and to Gondar. Altitudinal shading, modern country borders and rivers as in Fig. 1.

land and further south was Shoa.⁸² Through messengers, Salt communicated with Ras Wolde Selassie of Tigray, and by the end of August Salt reached his

court at Antalo,⁸³ just south of the present-day Mekelle.⁸⁴ Salt asked permission to visit Aksum, and in September he was able to spend four days there. He first visited the "Catacomb of Calam Negus" outside

Later, the Amhara region came to include all ethnic groups speaking Amharic, except those in the Kingdom of Shoa (see next note). Gondar was the most important town. "Amhara" in Uhlig (2003).

82. A political unit south of Amhara; the extent has changed much over time, but with its core area to the south of the Abay River; see "Säwa" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

83. At 13° 19' N, 39° 27½ E. "Antalo" in Uhlig (2003).

84. At 13° 29' N, 39° 28' E. In the second half of the 19th century Emperor Yohannes IV made Mekelle his capital. It soon overshadowed Chelicut and Antalo, the important centres at the time of Salt's visit. "Mäqälä" in Uhlig (2007).

the town.⁸⁵ Their route into Aksum continued along the north-eastern stela field and past the Aksumite water reservoir, both of which Salt briefly described.⁸⁶ The same day, and the following, Salt visited the main church of Aksum, the Enda Mariam Zion, which he described and illustrated, but, like Bruce, without mentioning its name. He studied and drew four columns and a throne base in front of the church and reported, like Bruce, that this was the place where the “old Abyssinian emperors were crowned.” Nearby he noticed “other remains scattered about in different directions” – presumably the throne bases, the stone slabs which Bruce had taken for statue-bases. Salt also noted in front of the church “a broken stone with two spears ...”⁸⁷ and a stone with an old Geez inscription.⁸⁸ Salt was also shown a smaller stela with an indecipherable and much weathered inscription on one side and, on the other, an inscription in Greek characters, which he carefully copied.⁸⁹ He also prepared detailed descriptions and drawings of the erect and the fallen stelae. From the top of the hill above the ancient water reservoir he drew a plan of Aksum and noted on the other side of the hill an stela without ornaments and a row of “five pedestals or alters” similar to the ones in front of the church.⁹⁰ Because of war Salt was

not allowed to travel to Gondar, and therefore he could not make contact with the Emperor of Abyssinia, a nominal ruler without political power. Instead Salt tried his diplomacy on the Ras of Tigray, and at the end of the visit Salt seemed to have convinced Ras Wolde Selassie that trade and friendly relations between England and Christian Abyssinia would be beneficial for both.

By the beginning of October the *Panther* had to leave, and Salt’s party was forced to travel to the coast. Pearce was left behind with the Ras, in order to learn the language and make observations on the traditions of the country, as well as to create a feeling of good will towards the British.⁹¹ On the way back, Salt revisited Aksum for two days to check earlier observations and make new drawings of antiquities. From Massawa a dramatic sea voyage through the Red Sea followed, before the *Panther* could finally anchor at Suez in January 1806. After a stay in Egypt which does not relate to the subject dealt with here, Annesley’s party reached London in October 1806, more than four years after they had set out. Salt’s drawings and journals from the journey were incorporated in volume two and three of Annesley’s *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt*, a work published in three volumes in 1809.⁹² It was a general travel account, with many plates based on Salt’s drawings. The plates from Abyssinia showed people, landscapes and religious and domestic architecture, as well as many monuments in Aksum. Separately, Salt produced a set of large coloured aquatints from the journey, which were sold as *Twenty-four Views taken in St. Helena, the Cape, India, Ceylon, Abyssinia, and Egypt*. Back in England, Annesley pushed the idea that England should establish trade links with Abyssinia to counter the risk of increasing French influence in the Red Sea after Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. Annesley’s pressure worked, and in January 1809 Salt was sent back to Abyssinia with a Royal letter and presents to the Emperor of Abyssinia. The financial sup-

85. Described in detail by Salt in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, pp. 81-83. Now known as the “Mausoleum of King Kaleb and Gebre-Maskal”.

86. The view in Fig. 4 shows the northern stela field, through which Salt entered Aksum, with the reservoir Mai Shum on his left. In the foreground the fallen architecturally decorated stela (now referred to as stela 2) and the architecturally decorated, still standing stela (now referred to as stela 3).

87. Now known as the “Stela of the lances”, which Phillipson (1998) has identified as a fragment of a fallen stela, Stela 4. Salt (1814) published a drawing of this fragment.

88. This is probably the inscribed stone now known as the “stone of Bazen” at the stairs leading to Enda Mariam Zion.

89. The so-called “Ezana inscription” is now in the Ezana Park. The slab has inscription in Greek, Epigraphic South Arabian and unvocalized Geez describing the victories of King Ezana. It is illustrated in both Annesley (1809) and Salt (1814).

90. These are also throne bases and the same as the “pedestals” which Bruce thought had supported Egyptian statues. They are illustrated in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, at p.

180, and described in Salt (1814).

91. Manley & Rée (2001), p. 32.

92. Annesley (1809).



Fig. 4. Henry Salt: *The Obelisk at Axum*. Hand coloured aquatint by D. Havell from drawing by Henry Salt, published as Plate no. XX [20] in Henry Salt: *Twenty-Four Views in St. Helena, The Cape, India, Ceylon, The Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt*. London: William Miller. 1809. The architecturally decorated and standing stela is the one shown in Fig. 2. The architecturally decorated, fallen and broken stela in the foreground is part of the second largest stela at Aksum, Stela 2; the fragments were removed to Rome in 1935, reconstructed and erected at Porta Capena, but returned to Aksum in 2005-2008. Many of the smaller stelae in the print are still standing. The view through the Northern Stelae Field and the valley behind is now blocked by fences and vegetation. To the right the Aksumite water reservoir, Mai Shum. Reproduced with permission from a copy at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK, Shelf mark 2034 a.2.

port for this mission came from the African Association, by then for the first time involved in the eastern part of Africa.⁹³ Although the ship, the *Marian*, was

ready to sail from Portsmouth in January, it could only leave in March due to bad weather. Via the Cape the *Marian* preceded to Mozambique, where it arrived

93. *Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa*, usually referred to as the *African Association*; see “The age of the African Association, I, 1788-1802” and “The age of the African Association, II, 1802-15” in Hallett (1965). Rubenson (1976)

has confirmed the conclusion that the contact between the British government via Salt and Wolde Selassie was taken on British initiative to counter French interests in the regions around the Red Sea.

in August and continued to Mocha, arriving early in October.

Pearce, who had remained with the Ras of Tigray since Salt's first journey,⁹⁴ was supposed to come down to the Red Sea coast to meet the party, but November went by without his arrival, and Salt discovered that the first messenger to the Ras had died on the way. Salt therefore sent Coffin, and in February 1810 a big party, including Salt, Pearce and Coffin, could start for Tigray from Massawa via Dixan. In March the party reached Chelicut,⁹⁵ where Ras Wolde Selassie received them. Also on the second journey Salt was unable to reach Gondar. The presents of ammunition and arms intended for the Emperor were instead delivered to the Ras of Tigray.

Salt, Pearce and Coffin were allowed to travel to the Tacazze Valley in a direction south west of Chelicut. The towering Semien Mountains were visible on the other side of the deep valley, but it was impossible for Salt to visit them. In April, the Ras, his retinue and Salt's party moved to Antalo. By early May, Salt was ready to depart, leaving Pearce and Coffin behind, with the solemn promise from the Ras that he would protect them during their stay in Abyssinia and allow them to go, should they want to return to England. On the way back, Salt was able to pay a visit to Aksum to check his observations from four years earlier, and additionally visit old temple ruins at Yeha.⁹⁶ Reaching Massawa before the end of May, the *Marian* was not in sight, and the party had to cross to Mocha on a dhow. Eventually, the ship arrived and sailed the party to Bombay. Leaving Bombay in October, the *Marian* reached England in January 1811. In 1814 Salt published *A Voyage to Abyssinia*,⁹⁷ again a publication for the general reader with a description of the journey, maps, engraved plates based on his drawings from the sec-

ond journey and a number of appendices with observations on language and natural history.

Although Salt remained friendly towards Abyssinia for the rest of his short life, he was never able to return or to have much further contact with the Christian Abyssinian highlands. Shortly after the publication of *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, in 1815, he was appointed British consul-general in Egypt and became a collector of Egyptian antiquities for the British Museum in London. In 1816, together with the traveller John Lewis Burckhardt,⁹⁸ he employed a Venetian, Giovanni Battista Belzoni, to remove a colossal bust of Ramses II from Thebes.⁹⁹ This bust was presented by Salt and Burckhardt to the British Museum in 1817, and is now one of the largest Egyptian exhibits in that Museum. Salt himself excavated antiquities at Thebes in 1817, and he paid Belzoni to excavate the great temples at Abu Simbel that were at that time covered by sand. Salt remained in Egypt after selling his collections of antiquities, but died in 1827, at the age of only 47.¹⁰⁰

Results of Salt's visits

Because of the mistrust that had met Bruce's observations in England, a major task for Salt was to test as many of Bruce's observations as possible. Some could be objectively tested by visiting places where Bruce had been, for example the monuments of Aksum. Other testing consisted of interviews with Abyssinian nobility and scholars that had met Bruce. One of Salt's informants, Dofter Ester from Chelicut, is quoted and portrayed in Salt's *Voyage*.¹⁰¹ Salt concluded

94. Pearce (1831); Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 47-50; "Pearce, Nathaniel" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

95. At 13° 21' N, 37° 37' E. Chelicut is now an insignificant village in southern Tigray, south of Mekele, but was important during the time of Ras Welde Selassie. "Çäläqot" in Uhlig (2003).

96. The monuments at Yeha are described in Chiari (2009).

97. Salt (1814).

98. For a biography and description of the methods of Burckhardt, see Hallett (1965), pp. 366-378.

99. Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 82-100

100. Halls (1834); Manley & Rée (2001), pp. 267-269; "Salt, Henry" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

101. Dofter Esther, portrayed in Salt (1814), opposite p. 333, had personally met Bruce on several occasions, and stated that Bruce was accepted at the court in Gondar, Bruce had cured children of nobles, Mantuab had taken Bruce under her protection, and Woyzero ["Ozoro"] Esther had been much attached to him. Bruce did not speak Tigrinya and did not

that most of Bruce's observations on contemporary Abyssinia could be verified, with the exception of some exaggerations and claims. Sir Walter Scott reported from a conversation with Salt:¹⁰²

He [Salt] corroborated my old acquaintance Bruce in all his material facts, he thinks that he [Bruce] considerably exaggerated his personal consequence and exploits, and interpolated much of what regards his voyage in the Red Sea.

Being a highly competent draughtsman, Salt's portraits of Abyssinians appear to be more correct and less Europeanised than the portraits reproduced in Bruce's works. As with Bruce, Salt's description of contemporary Abyssinia is a valuable historical and geographical source. Salt's view on the social structure in Abyssinia was markedly influenced by his respect for British nobility and views on the stratified British society, although less rigid than Bruce's views had been. Salt's and Bruce's interests in and contribution to Abyssinian history and archaeology are notably different. Bruce took great interest in the written history, was a keen collector of manuscripts and compiled personally a historical account from sources he had brought from Abyssinia. Salt collected few historical or religious manuscripts, although a manu-

have a good knowledge of Geez. At first he did not speak Amharic well, but improved it greatly during his stay. He spoke Arabic with Muslims. Both Bruce and Balugani had been at the source of the Gigil Abay together. Balugani died some time after the return to Gondar. Bruce was excellent on horseback, and had been present at the battles of Serbraxos, but had not directly taken part in the fighting. Bruce and Ras Michael had been on friendly terms, but Bruce exaggerated the generosity of the Ras. Bruce sometimes resided at Qusquam, the palace of Mantuab; in Gondar he lived in a house near the church of Kedus Raphael and close to the Imperial compound. Bruce had often asked to be made governor of Ras el Feel, the border province with modern Sudan, but he had not received this distinction. Dofter Esther confirmed the eating of raw beef in Abyssinia, but assured that he had never seen meat been cut from a living cow and showed great abhorrence at the thought.

102. From a letter from Sir Walter Scott to Lady Abercorn, cited by Beckingham (1964), p. 17.

script of musical interest, said to contain hymns of the Abyssinian saint, St. Yared, credited with the invention of the liturgical music of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, was said to be "now in the author's possession."¹⁰³ Salt also ventured into speculations about the ancient history of Abyssinia, taking the monuments at Aksum as his starting point.¹⁰⁴ With regard to archaeological observations, Salt carefully re-examined the monuments at Aksum described by Bruce, and added many new and better observations. Undoubtedly, Salt's studies at Aksum can be seen as a forerunner of his later and much better known archaeological work in Egypt.

Salt brought drawings back from Abyssinia, but, as opposed to Bruce and Balugani's drawings of objects of natural history, they were mainly landscapes with figures, portraits or drawings of objects. All the drawings are in the somewhat romantic style of the time; the landscapes are dramatic and inhabited by human figures dressed in often spectacular Abyssinian clothes and engaged in the busy activities of daily life at all social levels. Salt's observations on archaeology, architecture of ancient buildings and old inscriptions are illustrated both in Annesley's work and in his own *Voyage*. The main church in Aksum, Mariam Zion, was first illustrated in Annesley's book, where Salt also published the first plan of Aksum, together with drawings of a selection of Aksumite stone monuments.¹⁰⁵ An illustration in his *Voyage* shows the first published ground plan of an early mediaeval rock-carved church in Tigray, Abreha-wa-Atsbeha,¹⁰⁶ called

103. Illustrated in Salt (1814), opposite p. 302. About St. Yared, see "Hymns" in Uhlig (2007).

104. A dissertation by Salt on the Aksumite kingdom and the early history of Abyssinia was published in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, pp. 242-258.

105. The plan of Aksum is published in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, at p. 82, the drawing of the church at p.87. At p. 180 is a plate with the stela with the house (now called Stela 7), a plate from the base of a stela, three throne bases, and the base of an Axumite column.

106. Salt (1814), opposite p. 302. It is a large rock carved church from the 12th century with five aisles and three bays. "Séra^c Abrəha wā-Aṣbəḥa" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

Abha os Gabbha or Abhahasuba by Salt. This rock-carved church is still well preserved today, and it is clear that Salt's ground plan is too schematic and not correct. Salt also reproduced drawings of Aksumite gargoyles from the old church of Enda Maryam Zion, as well as of the unique stela-fragment with lances.¹⁰⁷ At Chelicut Salt commissioned a local painter to make a traditional Abyssinian painting, which he brought back from his second journey and reproduced in his *Voyage*. It shows a stylised battle scene in traditional Abyssinian eighteenth century Gondarene style and is the first published example of that kind of Abyssinian representative art.¹⁰⁸ Unlike Bruce's *Travels*, both Annesley's and Salt's *Voyage* contain illustrations of Abyssinian domestic architecture: the residence of the Ras at Antalo, Pearce's traditional round Abyssinian stone-house in Chelicut and others. Salt reproduced drawings of Aksumite inscriptions from Axum: the "Stone of Bazen" near the stairs to Enda Mariam Zion and the Greek inscription of King Ezana.¹⁰⁹ On his second journey Salt also saw and illustrated ancient inscriptions at the temple of Yeha in Epigraphic South Arabian scripts.¹¹⁰ He also made drawings of objects of everyday life (umbrellas, pots, traditional clubs, etc.), musical instruments,¹¹¹ as well as a traditional Abyssinian gold ornament.¹¹² Salt's linguistic abilities with regard to everyday conversation in Abyssinia seem to have been less developed than Bruce's, but he provided multilingual glossaries with up to nearly 200 words from each of approximately fifteen languages of the region.¹¹³ Salt made no plant drawings or observations on indigenous names or uses of plants, but he collected a herbarium, the first made in Abyssinia. Close to 500 plant specimens collected by

him are still preserved at the Natural History Museum, London.¹¹⁴ He published a list of 146 new names for previously unnamed plant species, which was provided by Robert Brown, botanist at the Natural History Museum.¹¹⁵

Salt was probably not as deeply interested in natural history as in archaeology, but he had instructions from England to make collections of plants and animals and did so.¹¹⁶ A plant genus, *Saltia* R. Br. ex Moquin, is named after him; the genus has only one species, *Saltia papposa* (Forsskål) Moquin, known from the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. A small number of species of vascular plants have also been named after Salt.¹¹⁷ Salt published two illustrations of animals in *Voyages*.¹¹⁸ One shows an Abyssinian bird, in the text called *Erodia amphilensis*, but the bird in the illustration is easily recognized as a Crab Plover (*Dromas ardeola*), described already in 1805. The Crab Plover occurs along the shores of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Another shows a locust called "Abyssinian locust"; it can be identified as either the Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria*) or the Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*). In *Voyages* Salt also published short descriptions of mammals and birds. These descriptions were mostly given to him by Lord Stanley (see below). His collections of marine animals from the Red Sea were donated to the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, together with skins and skeletal parts of terrestrial mammals; all are now in the Natural History Museum in London.¹¹⁹ Most of the species in these collections were already known to science, except for the skin of a small antelope from the Red Sea

107. Salt (1814), plate opposite p. 408.

108. Salt (1814), opposite p. 394. "Painting" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

109. Two versions were published: in Annesley (1809), vol. 3, at p. 181, and in Salt (1814), p. 408 and opposite p. 411.

110. Salt (1814), figures in the text on pp. 431-433. This inscription is still preserved at Yeha.

111. Salt (1814), opposite p. 408.

112. Salt (1814), opposite p. 302.

113. Salt (1814), Appendix 1.

114. Friis (2009a, 2009b). Vegter (1986) gives no number of plant specimens collected by Salt. The number given here is estimated.

115. Salt (1814), Appendix IV, *List of new or rare plants collected in Abyssinia during 1805 and 1810*.

116. Largen (1988).

117. *Amberboa saltii* (Philipson) Soják (1962) [= *Centaurea saltii* Philipson (1939)]; *Convolvulus saltii* Steud. (1840); *Sida saltii* Steud. (1841); *Trachyandra saltii* (Baker) Oberm. (1962) [*Anthericum saltii* Baker (1876)].

118. Salt (1814), plate opposite page lxiii.

119. Largen (1988).

coast, which is now called Salt's Dikdik (*Madoqua saltiana*). Apart from a few specimens that went to London, Salt's bird collection (84 bird skins) was sent to the British ornithologist John Latham, and it is his notes on the collection that were reproduced by Salt through Lord Edward Smith Stanley (13th Earl of Darby), who became the owner of the collection.¹²⁰ 39 bird skins in the Liverpool Museum can still be identified as being part of Salt's collections from Abyssinia. The collection of birds included 35 taxa new to science, including species of parrots, bee-eaters, woodpeckers, kingfishers, weavers and sunbirds.¹²¹ Some of these have been given species epithets referring to Salt. Salt's two travel accounts were, like Bruce's *Travels*, written for the general reader, but the style is less subjective than Bruce's. Salt's descriptions of his observations are written in a straightforward language and can generally be read without insight in specialised terminology. Pearce, who travelled more widely than Salt in Abyssinia, including visits to the rock-carved churches at Lalibela, the Tacazze Valley and the Semien Mountains, also published an account in two volumes of his life and travels in Abyssinia. These two volumes contains many observations of life at court and everyday life in Tigray and an account of the visit which Coffin, Salts other assistant, managed to make to Gondar. Again the language is straightforward and without use of specialised terminology.¹²²

Eduard Rüppell

Eduard Rüppell (1794-1884) was German, born in Frankfurt am Main. His father was a high-ranking civil servant, *Oberpostmeister und Finanzrat*, but also partner in Rüppell und Harnier's Bank in Frankfurt. The young Eduard learnt banking, but was more interest-

ed in travel and natural history and, financially independent, he travelled to Egypt in 1817, where he met Henry Salt and the Swiss-German traveller Ludwig Burckhardt. About one quarter of Rüppell's six weeks in Cairo was spent exploring Giza and the Pyramids with Salt. In 1818 Rüppell was elected member of the *Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft* (founded in Frankfurt 1817; now *Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung*), and studied natural history at universities in northern Italy.¹²³

Rüppell's journey to Egypt was followed by a longer scientific expedition in 1823-1825 to Nubia, Kordofan and Arabia Petraea, during which Rüppell was accompanied by various artists, hunters and taxidermists, particularly the German surgeon Michael Hey from Rüdeshim. After that scientifically fruitful journey Rüppell returned to Cairo and attempted a voyage by ship along the western coast of the Red Sea via the town of el Tor on the Sinai Peninsula. In this area, where Forsskål had also worked, Rüppell collected fish and invertebrates. Via a number of other localities along the shores of the Red Sea, Rüppell's party reached Massawa late in 1826. Here they had an extended stay, but attempts to reach the Abyssinian highlands were not successful, mainly due to the illness of some of the members of the party. In June 1827 Rüppell and his party left Massawa and returned by sea to Europe via Egypt. The return to Germany was dramatic; Rüppell's ship escaped after having been occupied by pirates for nearly two weeks. In the following years Rüppell worked on his collections and published scientific accounts with descriptions of the animals,¹²⁴ as well as a travel account for the general, but educated readers.¹²⁵ Encouraged by the results of the 1823-1827-expedition, and with an interest in Abyssinia raised by having met Salt in Egypt, Rüppell set out on an expedition to the Abyssinian highlands

120. Salt (1814); in Appendix IV, pages I-lxii. Salt published the text he had received about his birds under the heading: *Additional remarks on these birds, communicated to me by the nobleman in whose collection they are now deposited.*

121. A thorough discussion of Salt's bird collection, and what is now preserved of it, by Largen (1988).

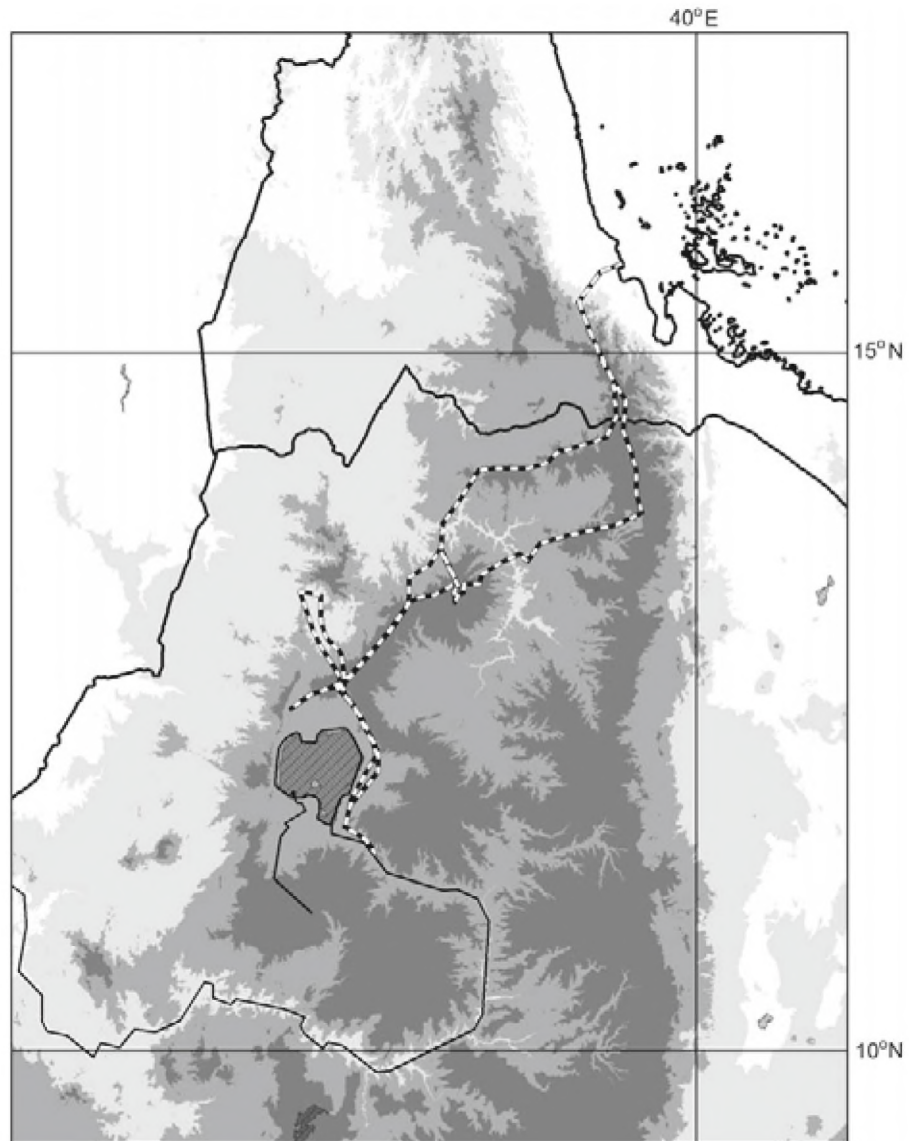
122. Pearce (1831); "Pearce, Nathaniel" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

123. Mertens (1949); "Rüppell, Eduard" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

124. Rüppell (1826-1830), a work which deals entirely with the animals of the expedition, including the fish collection from Massawa.

125. Rüppell (1829).

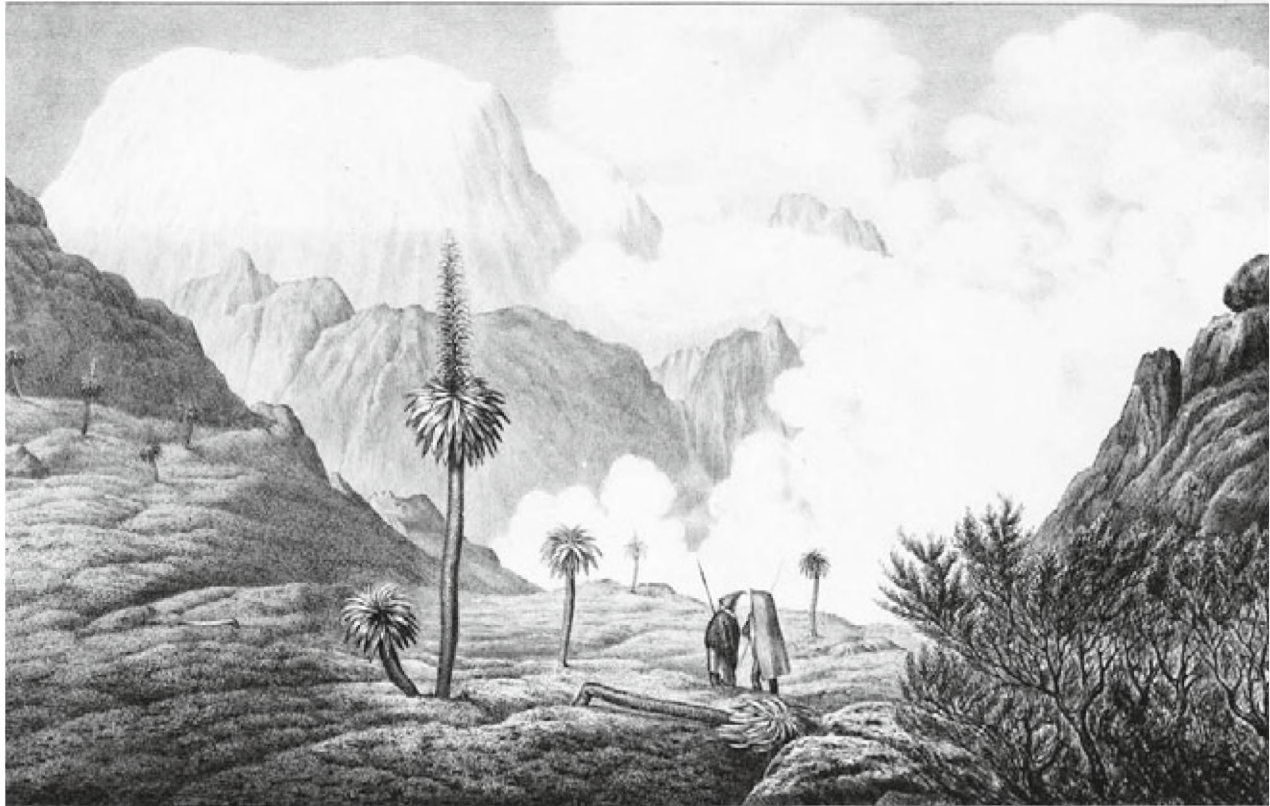
Fig. 5. Travel route of Edouard Rüppell in Abyssinia. On the journey to Gondar and Lake Tana Rüppell followed an eastern route through the Temben, crossing the Tacazze River and ascending the Semien Mountains from the east. Rüppell sent assistants from Gondar towards the northwestern shores of Lake Tana, descended himself into the river valleys and lowland north-west of Gondar, made a journey along the eastern shore of Lake Tana to the Blue Nile and returned towards the Red Sea via a route west of the Semien Mountains and through Axum. Altitudinal shading, modern country borders and rivers as in the map in Fig. 1.



which lasted from 1830 to 1834. This time the preparation of the scientific material was to be taken care of by a young German named Theodor Erckel, later keeper of the collections at the Senckenberg Museum. The expedition went via Leghorn to Egypt. After climbing Mt. Sinai the party continued via Tor on the Sinai Peninsula, and Yambo, Jidda and Gomfuda on the Arabian coast. In September 1831 the party landed at Massawa, where it had its base there for more than half a year, collecting plants and animals from the Red Sea, on excursions to the Dahl-

ac Islands and inland to Arkeko and other places previously visited by Bruce and Salt. Furthermore, Rüppell took interest in Abyssinian archaeology and was successful in reaching the ruins of Adulis, the Red Sea harbour of the old Aksumite Empire.

Back in Massawa the party joined the caravan of the influential Abyssinian trader Genata Mariam from Gondar. The route of Rüppell's party in Abyssinia has been plotted on a modern topographical map in Fig. 5. Leaving Massawa in April 1831, Ganata Mariam's caravan consisted of 49



See & Skizzen von E. Rüppell auf Stein ges. von F.C. Vogel

VEGETATION UNTER DER SCHNEEGRENZE AM SELKI IN DER PROVINZ SIMIEN.

Fig. 6. Edouard Rüppell: *Vegetation untern der Schneegrenze am Selki in der Provinz Simien*. [Vegetation below the snow line at Mt. Selki in the Semien Province]. Lithograph in Plate 6 in *Abbildungen zur Reise in Abyssinien* [Illustrations to the journey in Abyssinia] (Rüppell 1838-1840), drawn by F.C. Vogel after a sketch by Rüppell. The illustration shows the thick grass sward covering rocks above 4000 m, with scattered rosette plants of *Lobelia rhynchopetala* and shrubs of *Erica arborea*. The human figures are dressed for protection against the cold and the mist. Reproduced with permission from copy in Univ.-Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main, shelfmark Gg 70/10.

camels and 40 mules and donkeys and followed a route into Abyssinia that was close to the route Salt had taken towards Antalo. Rüppell made a stop near Halai,¹²⁶ the first town in the highlands. At a tiny village of Gunna Kuma, Rüppell observed old biblical manuscripts in Geez and became deeply interested in that kind of documents. In late May he reached the town of “Ategerat”, now Addigrat.¹²⁷ Due to rumours about civil war

along the main route the caravan turned further to the south into the southern Tigray region of Temben¹²⁸. After two months journey from Massawa, the caravan descended into a deep valley of a tributary to the Tacazze River, where Rüppell for the first time could observe snow-covered peaks in the

126. At 15° 01' N, 39° 20' E. “Halay” in Uhlig (2005).

127. At 14° 16' N, 39° 27' E. The town became important in the

early 19th century. “Addigrat” in Uhlig (2003).

128. “Tämben” in Uhlig & Bausi (2010). The small town of Takeraggio, which Rüppell mentioned as capital of Temben, cannot now be traced; the same is the case with Rüppell’s other localities in Temben.

Semien Mountains behind the valley. Having crossed the Tacazze River, the caravan followed the narrow Ataba Valley into the Semien Mountains. As the caravan ascended, Rüppell was able to study the unique fauna and flora of the high mountains of Abyssinia: the Gelada Baboon, the Walia Ibex and the Giant Lobelia (*Lobelia rhynco-petalum*). By early July the caravan had reached the Selki-pass and climbed the upper slopes of Mt. Buahit, one of the highest peaks of the Semien, which Rüppell measured to be more than 4100 m high (the peak is actually 4437 m above sea level), and the almost equally high Mt. Abba Jared. The high mountain peaks of the Semien were covered with snow and the zone just below the snow-line was covered with a type of vegetation not seen before in Africa.¹²⁹ In early July the caravan was divided into two: one heading directly towards Gondar, the other to Enschetkab, the small provincial capital of the Semien.¹³⁰ Rüppell's party stayed at Enschetkab for nearly two months and collected animals and plants from the Alpine zone of the Semien. The party also made short excursions in several directions from the little mountain town, including trips to the Bellegas Valley in the western part of the Semien. When in Enschetkab, Rüppell frequently visited Shellika Getana Jasu, the governor of Semien, whom he treated for various ailments.

The onward journey to Gondar was troubled by a rebellion, and it was only possible to proceed with a substantial escort of soldiers sent from Gondar to protect the caravan, which left Enschedcap in the beginning of October. The route towards Gondar followed the valley of the Belle-gas River towards Debark,¹³¹ at which point they turned in a south-western direction, following

Bruce's route over the Lamalmon Pass [present day Limalima Pass] to Gondar. By mid-October, the party made a grand entry into Gondar. First came twenty Abyssinian musketeers, then Rüppell himself, dressed in a scarlet cloak, a gift from the governor of Semien. Then came a group of merchants from Gondar, including Getana Mariam, and further behind a group of servants who took care of the natural history specimens packed in leather-covered baskets and carried by mules. In Gondar Rüppell was received in audience with the Emperor Aito Saglu Denghel¹³² and became friend of the judge Lik Atkum,¹³³ who was an erudite scholar and interested in contact with Europeans. Atkum had compiled a history of Abyssinia, which he copied for Rüppell, together with other valuable Abyssinian manuscripts present at Gondar. Soon after his arrival in Gondar, Rüppell sent some of his assistants on a collecting trip along the north-western shore of Lake Tana around the small town of Deraske. With more assistants he made a long collecting trip, lasting from December 1832 to January 1833, to the hot lowlands northwest of Gondar, as far as the lower Angereb River. Here the party was able to collect specimens of large mammals for the Natural History Museum of the Senckenberg Society in Frankfurt, including elephant, buffalo and antelopes, and Rüppell observed the extensive grass fires that are characteristic for the *Combretum-Terminalia* woodlands of the western Abyssinian lowlands. The collections from this excursion were so heavy and bulky that all the mules in the caravan were needed to carry them; everyone had to give up riding.¹³⁴

129. Fig. 6, showing the Afroalpine vegetation at Mt. Selki in the Semien Mountains.

130. The capital of Semien in the 19th century. Enschetkab is difficult to trace on modern maps, but is located at 13° 06' N, 38° 09' E. "Īncät Kab" in Uhlig (2005).

131. 13° 09' N, 37° 54' E. Debark is a town and a district on the western extension of the Semien Mountains on the main route from Adwa and Aksum to Gondar. "Däbarq" in Uhlig (2005).

132. Nominal ruler of Abyssinia 1832-1840, 1842-1843, 1846-1850 and 1852-1855. "Šahlä Dəngəl" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

133. Several later European travellers met Lik Atkum (c. 1770-c. 1840), also called Liq Asqu, and spoke about him with praise. His large, comfortable house, great library and garden with useful and ornamental plants are described by Rüppell, who also mentions that Lik Atkum's father and grandfather had met Bruce. "Aşqu" in Uhlig (2003).

134. Rüppell (1838-1840), chapter 6 in volume 2 deals entirely with the excursion to the lowlands north-west of Gondar.

When the party returned to Gondar there had been extensive plundering in the town, but fortunately none of the collections had been damaged or stolen. Ruppell decided to continue collecting along the eastern shore of Lake Tana and along the uppermost part of the Blue Nile. His goals were the village and monastery of Kiratza¹³⁵ on the eastern shore of Lake Tana, and the old Deldei Bridge approximately 1.5 km below the Tissisat Falls on the Blue Nile.¹³⁶ Ruppell's small party left Gondar late February 1833, and reached Kiratza after a few days. He soon realised that he would not be able to purchase what he had come for, a chronicle of Abyssinian history kept at the main church of the monastery at Kiratza. He therefore ordered a copy to be made and continued his journey in order to study and draw the Deldei Bridge.¹³⁷ On the return journey the party again stayed in Kiratza, waiting for about 10 days whilst the copy of the Abyssinian chronicle was finished. Returning along the eastern shore of Lake Tana the party reached Gondar, where Ruppell stayed until a caravan would leave by the middle of May. The return journey followed Bruce's route to Aksum via Debark and the Lamalmon Pass. There the caravan divided: the main group of the party with all the natural history col-

lections and manuscripts continued, heading towards Aksum, while Ruppell made a detour towards the Semien Mountains, where he met Dejazmas Ubi,¹³⁸ the ruler of Semien and Tigray. With promise from Dejazmas Ubi of free passage for men and collections to the Red Sea, Ruppell reached Aksum in the beginning of June and stayed in the town for a week to study the Aksumite monuments.¹³⁹ He was not impressed by Salt's observations and commented:¹⁴⁰ "Some of the monuments have already been described rather inaccurately by Salt, while no report has been given on many other important ruins." [The present author's translation]. Bruce's observations are not mentioned. Ruppell went from Aksum to Massawa via Adwa, Halai and the Taranta Pass. In July 1833 the party sailed from Massawa via Jidda to Egypt, and Ruppell continued to Marseille and Frankfurt. This time he crossed the Mediterranean without attack from pirates, but sadly some of his collections from Egypt were lost on a Russian ship that sank near the French coast.

Results of Ruppell's visits to Abyssinia

Archaeological, ethnological, historical and other results relating to the humanities were described by Ruppell in his travel account,¹⁴¹ which also contains numerous observations of everyday life, as well as descriptions of everyday objects, farming and husbandry practices, etc. An important subject for Ruppell's studies was the type of Aksumite monuments which Bruce called "pedestals" and Salt "thrones", "pedestals" or "alters". Ruppell con-

135. 11° 45¼' N, 37° 26¼' E. Kiratza, also spelt Qorata or Korata, is the name of a settlement, church and monastery on a densely forested peninsula along the eastern shore of Lake Tana. Today the settlement has lost its importance and inhabitants, but the church and monastery remain. "Q'āraṣa" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

136. "Deldei" means "bridge" in Amharic. The bridge visited by Ruppell is the upper of two 17th century bridges crossing the Blue Nile; it is only about 1.5 km below the Tissisat Falls, at 11° 29' N, 37° 35½' E. The lower bridge is located approximately 45 km below the Tissisat Falls at 11° 13' N, 37° 52½' E and is now partly collapsed. The two bridges were built during the reign of Susenyos in the early 17th century and were at the time of Ruppell still the only bridges crossing the Blue Nile.

137. Ruppell (1838-1840), Atlas, Plate 9. The Amharic name of the bridge [Yāfīs Wəha Dəldəy] means "the fuming water bridge" and refers to the Tissisat Falls above the bridge and the rapids in the river under it.

138. Ca. 1799-1867. His title and name are spelt in different ways, e.g. Deggazmach Webe Haile Maryam. "Wəbe Ḥaylā Maryam (Däḡḡazmač)" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

139. Fig. 7, showing stelae at Aksum, in the foreground the fallen, architecturally decorated stela (now referred to as stela 2), behind the still standing stela (stela 3). These stelae, as they appear today, are shown in Fig. 8.

140. Ruppell (1838-1840), vol. 2, chapter 10, which deals with the observations from Aksum.

141. Ruppell (1838-40).



Fig. 7. Edouard Rüppell: *Alterthümliche Ruinen zu Axum*. [Old ruins at Axum]. Lithograph in Plate 10 in *Abbildungen zur Reise in Abyssinien* [Illustrations to the journey in Abyssinia] (Rüppell 1838-1840), drawn by the architect Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer from a sketch by Rüppell. The lithograph shows a closer view than Fig. 4. The number of storeys on the fragments of architecturally decorated, broken stela agrees with those of the second largest stela at Aksum, Stela 2. The human figures wear traditional white clothes with embroidered brims. Reproduced with permission from copy in Univ.-Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main, shelfmark Gg 70/10.

cluded that the monuments were usually formed as flat stone slabs with a centrally placed square elevation, and near the edge of this elevation there were on three sides of the upper surface deeply carved furrows. According to Rüppell, this could be explained if the monuments were interpreted as alters for pagan sacrifices; the furrows would then work as drains for the blood from the sacrificed animals. The monuments are now interpreted as throne bases; the furrows on the three sides of the square elevations have supported other stone slabs that have formed the back and the sides of the throne.¹⁴² Rüppell also described the Aksumite wa-

ter reservoir and the Aksumite podium on which the main church in Axum stands. He saw the stone with reliefs of lances illustrated by Salt and cor-

at Axum and presents a general reconstruction of them. The dimensions of some, but not all inscribed stone slabs are concordant with their having originally formed sides of such thrones, and the inscriptions sometimes refer to the erection of thrones. Bruce's statement that there were 133 of these "pedestals" in Aksum must be a vast exaggeration, allowing a significant loss since his visit. Chiari (2009) quotes three long inscriptions from throne bases and stone slabs associated with thrones. They all refer to a certain Daniel, who ruled Aksum in the 7th century AD or even later, and document that thrones were used centuries after the coming of Christianity. "Dan³el" in Uhlig (2005).

142. Phillipson (1997) accounts for 26 such throne-bases found



Fig. 8. Stela 2 and Stela 3 at Aksum in 2009. Stela 2 is reerected in its original position to the left in the photograph. Stela 3, now slightly unstable, is balanced with a counterweight. Photo Ib Friis.

rectly interprets it as a fragment of a stela.¹⁴³ Of the erect stela with architectural decoration Ruppell says: "... in my opinion, the decoration has no artistic value, as it does not express an idea." [The present author's translation]. Like Bruce, he did not realise that the ornaments represented the design of Aksumite buildings; this observation was only made by scholars in the twentieth century. Among other monuments studied by Ruppell we can identify the mausoleum now referred to as the tomb of Kaleb and Gebre Maskal.¹⁴⁴ The most important new discovery in Axum made by Ruppell

was three inscriptions in Geez on large stone slabs; one was almost complete, the other somewhat damaged and the third very damaged. The texts describe the victories of King La San (Ezana) and the texts refer to pagan gods, so they are written before the introduction of Christianity.¹⁴⁵ Ruppell's Abyssinian manuscripts were donated to Frankfurt

143. Phillipson (1997) has shown that this stela-fragment fits with the Stela referred to as Stela 4, and has published a new reconstruction of that stela.

144. Phillipson (1997, 1998).

145. The text is shown in Ruppell (1838-1840, Atlas, Tab. 5) and a translation is given in Vol. 2, chapter 10. From the shape and dimensions, which Ruppell gives for the slabs, they may represent the sides or back of a throne. Although the inscriptions are similar to the ones on the still-preserved trilingual inscriptions relating to King Ezana (the Greek version was copied and published by Salt), they are not identical. The present author has not been able to trace the whereabouts and conditions of Ruppell's inscriptions today, if indeed they are preserved.

Stadtbibliothek as “The Rüppell Collection.”¹⁴⁶ Partly based on these written records Rüppell wrote a new and critical account of the history of Abyssinia.¹⁴⁷

It is worth noting that Rüppell’s attitude to the religious practises in Abyssinia is pragmatic and sympathetic to the followers of both the two main religions in the country, Christians and Muslims. His main concern is the influence of religion on how well the Abyssinian society functioned and how religion influenced people’s moral attitudes. Having sketched the sectarian conflicts in Abyssinia since the introduction of Christianity, he concluded:¹⁴⁸

I will not discuss the subtleties on which the schisms between the Christians sects in Abyssinia are based, partly because I have not made religious studies as my subject, partly because this is already done by the missionary Samuel Gobat¹⁴⁹ ... [The present author’s translation].

Rüppell expressed his personal opinion about the religions of Abyssinia thus: “The people who confess the Muslim faith [in Abyssinia] are raised high above the Christians with regard to moral attitudes ...” He also concluded that European missionary activity in the Christian and Muslim parts of Abyssinia would do no good. What the Abyssinian people needed was not more religion, but more self-respect: “... from outside, the best way to support regeneration of the Abyssinian nation would be to write and distribute a *His-*

tory of Abyssinia suitable for the moral and intellectual capacity of the inhabitants, in which book the history and rather honourable conditions of the country in the past should be given a prominent state ... in order to raise national feeling and patriotism among the Abyssinians.” [The author’s translation].

Rüppell primary task was to collect objects of natural history, and all his collections in these fields were significant. The plant collections were probably the smallest, but do include a range of important new species from the Alpine zone in the Semien Mountains, including the first specimens of the Abyssinian, and thus African giant lobelia to reach Europe. The herbarium from the journey was studied by G. Fresenius,¹⁵⁰ a specialist at the *Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft* in Frankfurt, and about 100 new plant species were described in the years 1837-45. The collections in the herbarium probably number more than 200 specimens.¹⁵¹ A plant genus, *Rueppelia* A. Rich., with one species, *R. abyssinica* A. Rich., was named after Rüppell, but it is now considered a synonym of the name *Aeschynomene* L. More than 25 species of vascular plants have been named after Rüppell.¹⁵² The collections of animals

146. Goldschmidt (1897). The Rüppell collection of Abyssinian manuscripts consisted of 23 manuscripts when catalogued by Goldschmidt. During the Second World War the manuscripts were transferred from Frankfurt to safe keeping in Thüringen. When that location became part of the zone occupied by the Soviet Union the manuscripts were quickly relocated, but during the transfer six of the manuscripts were lost. In 2010 two of the missing manuscripts collected by Rüppell in Abyssinia were recovered after 65 years (information from *Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg*, Frankfurt am Main).

147. Rüppell (1838-1840), Vol. 2, chapter 13.

148. Rüppell (1838-1840), Vol. 2, chapter 12.

149. Samuel Gobat was a Swiss protestant missionary, who visited Abyssinia at the same time as Rüppell. “Gobat, Samuel” in Uhlig (2005).

150. Fresenius (1837-1845). “Fresenius, Johann Baptist Georg Wolfgang (1808-1866)” in Staffleu & Cowan (1976), pp. 875-876.

151. Mertens (1949); Lobin (1999); Friis (2009a, 2009b). Mertens stated that in 1831 Rüppell collected 150 plant species on Sinai, but the number of species collected in Abyssinia was much larger. Lobin (1999) lists 95 new species collected by Rüppell in Abyssinia, but he gives no information about the total number of botanical specimens collected by Rüppell in Abyssinia. No total number of Rüppell’s plant collections is given by Vegter (1983).

152. Plant species, almost all based on material from Abyssinia, named in honour of Rüppell, many published by Fresenius (1837-1845), are: *Arctotis rueppellii* O.Hoffm. (1895); *Bidens rueppellii* (Sch.Bip.) Sherff (1930); *Bidens rueppellioides* Sherff (1951); *Brachydeea rueppellii* Sch.Bip. (1867); *Combretum rueppellianum* A.Rich. (1847); *Coreopsis rueppellii* Sch.Bip. ex Walp. (Repert. Bot. Syst. vi.); *Crepis rueppellii* Sch.Bip. (1839); *Crinum rueppellianum* Fresen. (1837); *Dianthoseris rueppellii* Sch.Bip. (1842); *Ethulia rueppellii* Hochst. ex A.Rich. (1848); *Eulophia rueppellii* (Rchb.f.) Summerh. (1940); *Gutenbergia rueppellii* Sch. Bip. (1840); *Gymnanthemum rueppellii* (Sch.Bip. ex Walp.)

from Rüppell's visit to Abyssinia are of the highest importance. He and a number of collaborators described the vertebrates in a series of general publications,¹⁵³ and later books on birds appeared.¹⁵⁴ From all his journeys in North East Africa and Arabia Rüppell himself described 32 new genera and 450 species of animals.¹⁵⁵ He was the first to collect and describe many of the now famous endemic mammals and birds from the high mountains of Abyssinia, especially the Semien. The type material¹⁵⁶ of the most of the unique fauna of Abyssinia, the "flagship species" for nature conservation in modern Ethiopia, including the Semien Wolf (*Canis simensis* Rüppell 1840), the Walia Ibex (*Capra walie* Rüppell 1835), and the Gelada Baboon (*Theropithecus gelada* Rüppell 1835), are in the *Senckenberg Museum* in Frankfurt. A genus of insects belonging to the stiletto flies, *Ruppellia* Wiedemann, as well as species of other animals, are named after Rüppell.

Comparison of the results of Bruce's, Salt's and Rüppell's travels

The length of time which the three travellers spent in Abyssinia was quite different. Bruce remained in Abyssinia for approximately 30 months, and travelled to areas where neither of the other two travellers went. Salt's first visit lasted nine months, his second seven months, and the areas in which he travelled were the

most restricted of the three travellers. Rüppell stayed in Abyssinia for 23 months. He did not cover as large an area as Bruce, but went collecting in the lowlands north-west of Gondar, and, most important, was the first European to study the Afroalpine zone of Abyssinia in the Semien Mountains above 4000 m, areas that were completely new for European visitors. The Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth century had not visited the Alpine zone of Abyssinia, and Bruce had not been above 3200 m at the Lamalmon Pass.

All three travellers went with traditional Abyssinian traders, using camel-, mule- and donkey-caravans, and all three travellers were strongly restricted by civil war and religious and political tensions in the country. For this reason all three travellers were dependent on armed escorts provided by strong rulers: Bruce on the power of Ras Michael Schul, Salt on the power of Ras Wolde Selassie in Tigray, while Rüppell organised his travels in steps, having again and again to secure permissions and escorts for his onwards journey before he could continue. Dramatic events occurred in Abyssinia during the visits of all three travellers, but it is probably correct to say that most dramatic political turmoils occurred during Bruce's travels, events that initiated the steady decline in the central power of Abyssinia that was not halted before late in the nineteenth century. The observations of the explorers were often made in a kind of critical "dialogue" with their predecessors. Bruce knew the Jesuit observations from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but dismissed them as lies. Salt was keen to demonstrate where Bruce had been right and where he had been wrong. Rüppell was often concerned with the verification or rejection of Salt's observations. All three travellers had assistants or helpers. Bruce had a brilliant assistant in Luigi Balugani, and although Bruce was generally the driving force behind the travels, the observations would have been far less successful without the meticulous work of Balugani. Salt was supported by other British observers, Pearce, who stayed behind in Abyssinia after Salt's first trip, and Coffin, who stayed behind with Pearce after Salt's second journey. Salt's observations were often better

H.Rob. (1999); *Haplocarpha ruppellii* K. Lewin (1922); *Iftoga ruppellii* (Fresen.) Danin (1973); *Landtia ruppellii* Benth. & Hook.f. ex Vatke (1875); *Launaea ruppellii* (Sch.Bip.) Amin ex Boulos (1962); *Lissochilus ruppellii* Rchb.f. (1847); *Pennisetum ruppellianum* Hort (1895); *Rhabdotheca ruppellii* Sch.Bip. ex Schweinf. (1867); *Schnittspahnia ruppellii* Sch.Bip. (1842); *Senecio ruppellii* Sch.Bip. (1867); *Sonchus ruppellii* R.E. Fr. (1925); *Sporobolus ruppellianus* Fresen. (1837); *Trichilia ruppelliana* Fresen. (1837); *Trichoseris ruppellii* Sch.Bip. (1839); *Trifolium ruppellianum* Fresen. (1839); *Verbesina ruppellii* A.Rich. (1848); *Vernonia ruppellii* Sch.Bip. ex Walp. (1843).

153. Rüppell (1835-1840).

154. Rüppell (1842, 1845).

155. Mertens (1949).

156. Type material of a species is the material from which the species was first described.

founded than Bruce's, partly due to the fact that he was able to repeat and test his observations on two journeys and less likely to be carried away by his imagination than Bruce. The success of Ruppell was to some extent due to his scientific approach, his partial specialisation on natural history and the collection of manuscripts, but also due to his good field assistants and support from the *Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft*. All three travellers had Abyssinian informants and helpers, and Ruppell's collection of manuscripts would not have been so successful without the determined help of an erudite local informant, the judge Liq Atkum in Gondar.

Topography, Geography and Mapping

The routes of the three travellers have been represented in Fig. 1, 3 and 5 of this paper. It is not surprising that these routes are those of the traditional Abyssinian traders, considering the difficulty of the terrain in the Abyssinian highlands. Today the main roads follow the same general pattern.¹⁵⁷ On his search for the source of the Nile, Bruce went along an established route along the eastern shore of Lake Tana and the River Abay to the Tissisat Falls and the source of the Gilgil Abay, while his return route to Gondar along the western shores of Lake Tana was less well trodden. Salt, on both his journeys into Abyssinia, followed Bruce's initial route from Massawa to the highlands and into Tigray, but turned southwards towards the residences of the Ras of Tigray. Ruppell's ascent of the Semien Mountains from the east does not seem to follow a widely used trade route, but the reason for this rather unusual ascent was civil war along the main routes. Ruppell's route to the lowlands northwest of Gondar, where he explored the fauna and flora of the Angereb River Basin, followed also a major caravan routes towards the Sudan. In their travelogues all three travellers gave an outline of Abyssinian geography with description of the provinces and

based on the best sources available, and all three provided maps based on this evidence. Of these Bruce's were the poorest and Ruppell's the best. Ruppell was the first to give a rough geological characterisation of Abyssinia, and also the first to give a preliminary physiognomic characterisation of the Abyssinian vegetation based on climatic observations.¹⁵⁸

Archaeology; Ruined Buildings

Bruce produced relatively few and often quite fanciful descriptions of ancient monuments. Salt corrected him, particularly with regard to additional detail and better descriptions of the monuments in Aksum. Salt also made observations on the mediaeval rock-carved churches in Tigray not seen by Bruce. Ruppell further improved the information about the monuments in Aksum and illustrated and made a first ground plan of the already then partly ruined Imperial enclosure at Gondar, where Bruce had met Ras Michael and Emperor Tekle Haymanot II. Ruppell was also the first to publish a drawing of the seventeenth century Deldei Bridge across the Blue Nile at the Tisissat Falls.

Ethnology; Agriculture; use of plants and husbandry

In the writings of all three travellers there are many observations on local traditions, conventions and habits. Bruce (or rather Balugani) took many notes on the names and traditional uses of plants, while the observations on agricultural practices and husbandry are surprisingly few in the writing by the other travellers.

157. Map of commonly used trade routes with "Trade" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010). See also "Roads" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

158. This included the first physiognomic characterisation of the altitudinal zonation of the Abyssinian landscape, not least the sometimes snow-covered Semien Mountains. Plates in Ruppell (1838-1840, Atlas) show the first representation of Afroalpine vegetation, drawn on Mt. Selki, with a sward of tufted grasses, giant *Lobelia rhyncopetalum* and shrubs of *Erica arborea*. Ruppell is the first to describe the giant roset plants that are characteristic of the Afroalpine vegetation and of high alpine vegetation elsewhere in the tropics. He also published sketches of the geological structure of the Abyssinian Highlands (Ruppell 1834, 1836).

Collections of historical manuscripts; historical observations

Important collections of Abyssinian manuscripts were established chiefly by Bruce and Ruppell. Bruce's collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, represents about 30 manuscripts. Bruce also gave manuscripts to the King of France, but how many of these that are now in *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris seems not to be recorded. Ruppell's collection of manuscripts in Frankfurt represents about 25 manuscripts. Bruce's and Ruppell's collections of Abyssinian manuscripts are among the earliest in Europe.¹⁵⁹ Bruce wrote a complete account of the Abyssinian history from the early middle ages to his own time; an important, but somewhat unreliable work. Salt provided some corrections to Bruce's historical observations, mainly with regard to near-contemporary events, while Ruppell, in his travel account, gave a shorter, more critical account of the entire history of Abyssinia during the period covered by Bruce.

Collections of religious manuscripts; religious traditions and practices

Introduction of Christianity into Abyssinia in the fourth century AD soon led to the translation of Biblical texts from Greek and possibly other languages into Geez. It is assumed that by the fifth century large parts of the Bible had been translated.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, early biblical texts from Abyssinia were of interest for historical studies of the Bible. Bruce made a special point of collecting religious texts, significantly more so than Salt and Ruppell. The description of religious practice is limited in the writing of all three travellers, but Salt's assistant, Pearce, who lived in Tigray for many years, has provided good descriptions of how

159. It is estimated that there are now several thousand Abyssinian manuscripts in public collections outside Ethiopia (Abyssinia). The four biggest collections are the *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, the *British Library* and the *Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientalabteilung*. "Manuscripts" in Uhlig (2007).

160. Ullendorff (1968); "Bible" in Uhlig (2003).

the major holidays of the Abyssinian Orthodox Church were celebrated, as well as traditional ceremonies for baptism, weddings and funerals.¹⁶¹

Attitudes to people in Abyssinia; views on Christians and Muslims

The travelogues of the three travellers are almost without negative generalisations or patronising statements about the people of Abyssinia. In most cases the travellers have characterised the people they met as clever or incompetent, good or bad, depending on how they behaved. It is also striking that all three travellers wrote about people of various status in life as they presumably would have written about similarly situated people in Europe: the Abyssinian Emperor, people at his court, Abyssinian nobility, officers, traders, clergy, scholars, peasants, etc., are generally described as people with a similar social status in Europe. Robbers and thieves are also frequently referred to by all three travellers, and their behaviour and deeds are naturally feared or condemned, as they would have been in Europe. The changing attitudes to aristocracy during the period from Bruce's to Ruppell's travels are also reflected in the travelogues: Bruce was the most respectful with regard to high ranking and noble Abyssinians, but also Salt and Ruppell showed respect for people in Abyssinia of high social status or erudition. There was little difference in the attitude of the three travellers towards Muslims and Christians. As mentioned, Ruppell pointed out that people of the Muslim faith generally were raised above the Christians with regard to their moral attitudes.

Fauna and flora; collections of animals and plants

Bruce's publications and the drawings of plants made in Abyssinia by Balugani contain notes on many plant species that were described by contemporary scientists. Salt and Ruppell made no drawings of individual plants, only of vegetation or landscapes, but Salt

161. Pearce (1831).

collected hundreds of herbarium specimens and 150 new scientific plant species were described on these. Rüppell also collected several hundred herbarium specimens, from which close to 100 new species were described. The work of Bruce is of relative little importance for the understanding of Abyssinian zoology. Contrary to this, Salt's collections of birds are important, and all of Rüppell's zoological collections are very important.

The successors of Bruce, Salt and Rüppell

Bruce, Salt and Rüppell covered nearly all fields of scientific travel. Later travellers gradually began the disentanglement of disciplines. The French travellers Arnaud and Antoine d'Abbadie¹⁶² at first focussed on surveying Abyssinia, but later Antoine produced linguistic studies, while Arnaud wrote colourful travelogues. The German naturalist G.H.W. Schimper spent large parts of his life in Abyssinia, focussing on collection of plants, animals and geological specimens, but invariably he became involved in Abyssinian society.¹⁶³ The last of the multidisciplinary travellers was the German geographer, botanist, linguist, Egyptologist and archaeologist Georg August Schweinfurth, who visited Abyssinia in 1863-1866 and the Italian colony of Eritrea in 1891-1894.¹⁶⁴ Also the political contexts changed. Europeans in Abyssinia had previously been looked upon as fellow Christians, potentially useful allies in an expanding Muslim world. This continued, but with the gradual opening of the Red Sea for European navigation in the nineteenth century rivalry began between Great Britain and France for dominance in the region. Salt advocated trade on the Red Sea and pointed to benefit of this for both British and Abyssinians:¹⁶⁵

... I may farther observe, that if ... any one point on the

Abyssinian coast [is] taken under protection of the British flag, there is no doubt that a considerable demand would shortly arise for both English and Indian commodities, which, though not in the first instance of any great importance, might still form a valuable appendage to the trade of Mocha,¹⁶⁶ ... The advantage of this intercourse [with Great Britain] to the Abyssinians themselves would prove incalculably beneficial; it would open to them the means of improvement, from which they have so long been debarred, ...

Neither the East India Company nor the British government took up Salt's proposal.¹⁶⁷ When, in 1838-1839, the British East India Company established itself at Aden, it had little connection with Abyssinia. Instead the French government established in 1883-1887 a trading post at the Red Sea, the "Territore d'Obock", which developed into "Côte française des Somalis et dependences", now Djibouti, and became a major point of Abyssinian import and export, as predicted by Salt.

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162. "Abbadie, Antoine d' and Arnaud d'" in Uhlig (2003); Fischer-Kattner 2012.

163. Friis (2009a, 2009b); Rubenson (1976); "Schimper, Wilhelm" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

164. "Schweinfurth, Georg August" in Uhlig & Bausi (2010).

165. Salt (1814), pp. 497-498.

166. Mocha, Mokha or Mocca, was important for coffee export from the 16th to the 19th century, either via Jiddah and Egypt on Arabian ships or via the Indian Ocean on European ships; see Tuchscherer (2003).

167. Hallett (1965), p. 394.

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