

exception rather than the rule in Burmese history. Kings could appoint their preceptors or other monks famous for their erudition, saintliness or popularity as royal advisers, as heads of the metropolitan monasteries or, when required, to preside over councils and re-ordination ceremonies. Appointments were at the discretion of the king, which explains why these patriarchs bore different titles or appellations and why there were periods in classical Burma without them. The existence (or absence) of a head of the *sangha* only began to matter when the British started to regard the *sangha* as the representative of a church-like institution and recognized its head as a patriarch. Yet claiming that church and state were separate, the British declined to assume the full responsibilities of a Burmese ruler and declined to appoint a new head on the death of his predecessor. Schober is not always clear about who the peoples of the “Buddhism” were, i.e. who interacted with the state at the conjunctions she explores.

This leads to another question that surfaces repeatedly and is not dealt with satisfactorily. It concerns the inherent qualities required of an outstanding monk or successful ruler. Schober regularly uses the term “charisma”, e.g. for U Nu (pp. 79, 85), U Ottama (pp. 103, 105), Aung San Suu Kyi (p. 110), U Vinaya (p. 113), Saya San and U Wisara (p. 134). Curiously, “charisma” or “charismatic power” is a distinct Weberian category, denoting one of his types of legitimate political power. However, what is more intriguing here than Weber’s covert re-entry is the fact that Schober does not utilize the Burmese equivalent for charisma, the concept of *dago* or *pon-dago*. She thus voluntarily forsakes a useful analytical tool: who acknowledges that a certain person does or does not have *dago*; what can a person credited with the possession of *dago* actually achieve? Not taking up these and related questions leaves the investigation of the conjunctures of Buddhism and politics in Myanmar a somewhat unfinished project.

Tilman Frasch

Manchester Metropolitan University

AFRICA

ISABEL BOAVIDA, HERVÉ PENNEC and MANUEL JOÃO RAMOS:

Pedro Páez’s History of Ethiopia, 1622. (Translated by Christopher J. Tribe.) (Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society Third Series No. 23 and No. 24.) 2 vols, xxiii, 501 pp. (vol. I), x, 429 pp. (vol. II). London: Ashgate (published for The Hakluyt Society), 2011. £100. ISBN 978 1 908145 02 4.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X12001905

This two-volume publication provides the first English translation of *História da Etiópia* by the Spanish Jesuit missionary Pedro Páez (Pêro Pais in Portuguese, 1564–1622), that is considered the most important source for the history of early seventeenth-century Ethiopia and Jesuit missionary history in the country. The work was composed from 1613/1615 until 1622, during the so-called “second Jesuit mission” culminating with the conversion of the Ethiopian king Susenyos (r. 1607–32) to Catholicism. The work is based upon the first critical edition of the original Portuguese text published in 2008 by the same editors (*História da*

Etiópia, Pedro Páez, Obras clássicas da literatura portuguesa, Século XVII Sete estrelo 22, Lisbon).

The *História* was first published by Camillo Beccari in his *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a saeculo XVI ad XIX*, vols II–III (Rome, 1905–06) from MS Goa 42 in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, eventually also by Lope Teixeira, Alberto Feio, and Elaine Sanceau (*Pêro Pais, História da Etiópia*, 3 vols, Porto, 1945–46) from MS 778 in the Biblioteca Pública de Braga (a seventeenth-century copy with emendations and minor changes). Yet, even unpublished the *História* was highly influential, since it served as a source for Manuel de Almeida's *Historia de Ethiopia a alta ou Abassia* (published by Beccari, 1907–08), utilized in turn by Baltasar Teles for his *Historia Geral de Ethiopia a Alta* (Coimbra, 1660). Moreover, Páez's manuscript was read by among others Athanasius Kircher in Rome, who first credited Páez in 1665 with the discovery of the source of the Blue Nile, a Páez discovery along with the mention of coffee and Maḥram Bilqīs temple in Yemen.

Besides providing a critical text giving account of variants, corrections, etc., this book seeks to direct the reader, with a substantial "Introduction" (I, 1–55), towards a precise appreciation of Páez's work as a product of the disputes of the time, and not simply as a collection of data. The occasion for Páez to write the *História* were the controversies between Dominicans and Jesuits on missionary activity in Ethiopia and the nature of Ethiopian Christianity, Páez's polemical targets being Luis de Urreta's *História eclesiástica... de lo grandes y remotos Reynos de la Ethiopia* (Valencia, 1610–11), and *Historia de la Sagrada Orden de Predicadores en los remotos Reynos de la Etiopia* (Valencia, 1611). Páez's confutation appears to be the outcome of a co-ordinated Jesuit counter-attack. Paradoxically, it was precisely the nature of Páez's work as a rebuttal of Urreta's that prevented its publication for some years, confining it to the role of source-material reserve. Language and style or even nationalist factors – the Spaniard Páez wrote in a Portuguese full of Hispanisms, and attempts at separating the crown of Portugal from Spain resumed from 1640 – did not help either.

The editors deconstruct the "myth" of Páez as an architect (I, 38–9), a controversial point (cp. II, 376; for a different view, Andreu Martínez d'Alos-Moner, "Páez, Pedro", in Siegbert Uhlig in co-operation with Alessandro Bausi (eds), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, Volume 4: O–X, Wiesbaden, 2010, 89a–90b), to be probably solved only through archaeological excavations, as recently carried out by Victor M. Fernández (see Fernández et al., "Archaeology of the Jesuit Missions in the Lake Ṭana Region: Review of the Work in Progress", *Aethiopia* 15, 2012, 72–91).

A glossary (II, 357–90), an extensive bibliography (II, 391–408: some names and titles are misspelt or inconsistently arranged), and a detailed index (II, 409–29) complete the work. The glossary is intended to explain titles, characters, historical places, institutions, literary works, etc., and definitions and explanations are constantly referred to primary sources. The accomplishment of this task – shared by the editors with present-day scholars of the French school – deserves respect, although consistency in transcriptions is not always observed (cf. correctly "Se'ela Krestos", in the glossary, II, 365, alternating with "Se'elā Krestos", I, 8 ff.). Odd forms such as "Meššewā" appear, with an unusual "š" diacritic (cf. II, 7 and *passim*), and unexpected geminations abound (cf. II, 15, "Enṭṭoto"). Even main entries show shortcomings: under *Kebra Nagašt* (II, 380) Carl Bezold's 1905 book is dated to 1909, then to 1901 in the bibliography (II, 392), yet even worse is the erroneous dating to the fifteenth century of the fourteenth-century *neburā 'ed* of Aksum Yesḥaq, who is credited with the redaction of the work.

“Oadeçalâ/Walda Sa’älâ” (II, 384) is dated to “late 15th century–1661”, actually a bit too long a period.

Some doubts arise concerning the editors’ linguistic competence in Ge‘ez and Amharic, a preliminary requirement for any serious investigation of the history of Ethiopia, as it would be expected of a scholar in Italian history to master Italian, and Latin as well. In the introduction we read (I, 48): “he [Páez] translated *ambaçâ bêit*, *zefân bêit* and *farâz bêit* correctly, but his transcription of the latter two items is syntactically incorrect, since the determinative should be indicated by an affix represented by the first order character of the Ethiopic syllabary (*fidal*) or the letter ‘a’ in Latin transcription: *zefana bêt* and *farâza bêt*”. Yet Páez’s translation is correct (“house of the lion”, “house of the bed”, and “house of the horse” respectively), as is his transcription. The expressions are in Amharic, where no *-a*-status construct is needed, whereas the purportedly correct forms “*zefana bêt*” and “*farâza bêt*” would have a completely different meaning (“bed of the house”, “horse of the house”). Also problematic are the remarks on theological vocabulary (II, 386–7): Ge‘ez *bâhrey*, “pearl”, also “essence, nature”, is curiously translated with “breath”; moreover *šegâ* “flesh, body” (and so *bâhreya šegâ*, not *bâhreya šegâ*, means “nature of the body, bodily nature” rather than “human nature”), *šaggâ* “grace”, *tawâhedo* “union”, are mis-spelt, thus engendering in the reader a sense of embarrassed distrust.

The editors have put at the disposal of scholars Páez’s work in a universally accessible language, and some critical remarks are not intended to diminish the quality of their contribution. This translation is destined to remain for decades the standard reference edition of Páez’s *História*.

Alessandro Bausi
University of Hamburg

MARLA C. BERNS, RICHARD FARDON and SIDNEY LITTLEFIELD KASFIR (eds):
Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley.
607 pp. Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2011. ISBN 978 0
9778344 6 4.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X12001917

This magnificent volume was produced to accompany a major exhibition of the arts of Nigeria’s Benue River Valley which opened at the Fowler Museum of the University of California, Los Angeles in February 2011 and then travelled to the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institute and the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, before arriving in November 2012 at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. Both exhibition and book serve to extend the long sequence of scholarly projects mounted by the Fowler Museum on the rich artistic heritage of Nigeria, beginning with *Black Gods and Kings: Yoruba Art at UCLA* in 1971 and last seen in *Ways of the River: Arts and Environment of the Niger Delta* in 2002. The genesis of *Central Nigeria Unmasked* itself extends back thirty years or more: it is to be found in the work of Arnold Rubin (1937–1988), a pioneering art historian of the Jukun peoples who first conducted fieldwork in the region in 1964–66 and who in the early 1980s approached the Fowler Museum with a proposal for an exhibition of sculpture from the Benue Valley. Following Rubin’s