

Pennacchietti, the Prince of Sheba

I first met Prof. Pennacchietti in the Aram conference on the Neo-Aramaic dialects which took place in The Oriental Institute of University of Oxford in July 2009. I was just a young MA student, about to present my first paper in a scientific conference. Prof. Pennacchietti, needless to say, was already then a well-established scholar with over 100 publications behind him. At the time, I had hardly read any of his articles, but his elderly figure certainly inspired some awe. Very quickly I discovered his kindness, openness and human warmth. At the time he was only 70 years of age, but his energy, vast knowledge and genuine interest for his various research topics transpired of youth. After the conference he sent me his remarkable article about the Queen of Sheba,¹ in which he shows his mastery not only in linguistics, but also in philology, religion, and Renaissance art, all intertwined into a fascinating narrative, very far from typical dry scholarly writing.

In short, Prof. Pennacchietti made a huge impression on me! I have been grateful to meet him again in subsequent Neo-Aramaic conferences, such as in Warsaw (2016) and in Uppsala (2018). In the last conference at Uppsala I got to meet also his lovely wife Barbro, and I discovered, to my surprise, that he also speaks Swedish! From that conference I have as a souvenir a wonderful photo of the three of us.

Since we first met, Prof. Pennacchietti has increased his publication count by more than 50 new articles. I wish him many more years of engaging and productive research!

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¹ Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti. 2002. *Legends of the Queen of Sheba*. In: *Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen*, edited by St John Simpson, 31-38. London: The British Museum Press.