



Aethiopia 20 (2017)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review

ULRICH BRAUKÄMPER, *Afrika 1914–1918. Antikolonialer Widerstand jenseits der Weltkriegsfronten*

Aethiopia 20 (2017), 327–329

ISSN: 1430-1938

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,
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should have a leading role in Ethiopian education. Yirga challenges the way in which historians, such as Bahru Zewde, have depicted the educated elite of twentieth-century Ethiopia, by presenting them for what they are—agents of colonialism, demonstrating culpable indifference to the importance of traditions they consistently disregarded in favour of Western education. Finally, Yirga leaves the reader to ponder the possibility of developing a curriculum that integrates both traditional and modern education. The author stresses the need for compromise and for a reconciliation of traditional and modern education, as well as the importance of indigenizing education so that local people are able to create knowledge about themselves, from what they observe and see around them. The goal then, according to Yirga, is to develop an epistemology with Ethiopia rather than the West, as the centre of education.

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ULRICH BRAUKÄMPER, *Afrika 1914–1918. Antikolonialer Widerstand jenseits der Weltkriegsfronten*, Studien zur Kulturkunde, 130 (Berlin: Reimer, 2015). 212 pp., 10 tables. Price: €39.00. ISBN: 978-3-496-01548-2.

The hundredth anniversary of the First World War (henceforth WWI) has generated great scholarly interest in the conflict. Many new research projects on the Great War have been conducted, documentaries have been made, and exhibitions aimed at a broader audience have been organized. In comparison to the previous more scientific productions, many of the new research projects about WWI also broaden the geographical perspective. In the last years, in accordance with leading trends in transnational and global history, the research on this war, which has traditionally been seen as a crucial moment in *European* history (the *Urkatastrophe*), has paid growing attention to the analysis of warlike events in *non-European* regions. Thus, the African continent too has been integral to these investigations, not only because of its colonial ties with European countries, but also for its political and economical connections with other continents. However, despite the importance of including Africa in the studies on WWI, the topics of the new research have largely been limited to European agencies, and mainly related to the colonial territories. For this reason, the book reviewed here is particularly original: it investigates WWI in Africa, but from the specific perspective of a local phenomenon, namely anticolonial resistance during the World War. In particular, it underlines the crisis of colonial rule as seen by the African population, and their

experience of the colonial powers in conflict (p. 18). If colonization had juxtaposed Europeans and Africans, the war diluted this powerful image for the colonized Africans because the Europeans fought against each other.

Following his many publications in different fields—from cultural ecology to religious ethnology—particularly concerning North-eastern Africa, the distinguished anthropologist, Ulrich Braukämper, delivers an excellent overview of the political and military events that occurred on the African continent during the war. He has an impressive capacity to relocate his investigation from one geographical context to another, and thus to cover the different regions of Africa. Specific attention is dedicated in the book to the German colonies, which—especially German East Africa—were the scene of heavy fighting. Consequently, the primary sources used by the author are mainly German sources. Supposedly, these have been far understudied. This reliance on German sources may lead to discrepancy in regard to the other European powers and this might be seen as a weakness of the book. However, the sources are accurately and critically presented taking into account the fact that they were conceived and written by European actors. Concerning WWI, no interviews were conducted with Africans, and attestations of African actors are very rare. The rest of the book is based on secondary literature, which the author handles with great accuracy.

The book is not the outcome of an original research project, but assembles the results of different investigations and merges them into an exhaustive and excellent discussion. Moreover, it proposes a convincing and innovative hypothesis that the years between 1914 and 1918 represent the first significant stage of the decolonization of the continent (p. 172). Anticolonial resistance had different causes, but a common outlet in its opposition to foreign domination. In Chapter 7, which deals specifically with the ‘Szenarien des antikolonialen Widerstandes’ (‘scenarios of anticolonial resistance’, p. 101), a detailed narration of political and military history of the most significant events of anticolonial resistance is presented. The reader learns that, in some cases, the anticolonial revolts had their origin in the dissatisfaction with the exploitation and abuses of the colonial regimes; in other cases, the connection between anticolonialism and WWI was less direct. In the atmosphere of confusion caused by the conflict, African countries had their share of spies and agents, and the claims and conflicts internal to the local societies found fertile terrain for their spread and growth. In addition to their social and political nature, the author also highlights the spiritual character of some anticolonial movements. Charismatic personalities took advantage of their influence on local societies and came to the forefront of the crisis that the colonial powers faced in their mutual antagonisms. WWI radicalized both the sense of belonging and of exclusion, both in the Euro-

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pean countries and in the African colonies. One example is the dissatisfaction generated among African soldiers as a result of the discrimination they experienced while serving as troops. In this context, the hope of liberation from foreign domination grew, which Braukämper considers to be one of the earliest moments in the decolonization process—even before WWII, which has traditionally been seen as the starting point of decolonization.

The book is a very important contribution in bringing about a change in the way we look at WWI in Africa, focusing on local African events and their connections with European agencies. For the scholars of WWI, as well as for the scholars of the different regions of Africa, this work offers a new direction and an inspiration for new, necessary research on subjects like the relationship between WWI and decolonization, transcolonial activities and anticolonial resistance movements, prosopographical studies, and so on.

The publication is enhanced by ten precise and useful maps realised by Thomas Rave based on drafts of the author.

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MARIA S. BULAKH, LEONID E. KOGAN, and OLGA I. ROMANOVA, eds, *Jazyki mira. Semitskie jazyki. Efiosemitskie jazyki* ('Languages of the World. Semitic Languages. Ethiosemitic Languages'), *Jazyki mira* (Moskwa: Academia, 2013). 624 pp. Price: no price indicated. ISBN: 978-5-87444-366-5.

The present volume of the encyclopaedic series *Languages of the World* regularly published by the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences is devoted to the Ethiopian Semitic group, which in comparison with the great majority of the other Semitic languages is less well researched, due to its remote location in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, with the single exception of Gəʿəz (Classical Ethiopic), all Ethiopian Semitic languages have been orally transmitted or have only recently acquired a written form. The authors of the volume count nineteen Ethiopian Semitic languages, or twenty, if the Dahālik dialect of Təgre is treated as a separate language. Two of them are extinct (Gəʿəz and Gafat),¹ while the others are still spoken, namely Təgre, Təgrāñña, Amharic, Argobba, Harari and twelve

¹ Southern Argobba and Masmās/Māsmās, which are dialects of Argobba and Āndegān respectively, are shown to number among the dead Ethiopian Semitic languages (p. 15).