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Review

HERBERT S. LEWIS, *Jimma Abba Jifar. An Oromo Monarchy:
Ethiopia 1830–1932*

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Reviews

wanted to learn, the students placed Oromo only in fourth position (10.9 %), after English, French and Arabic (Table 10).

Another interesting outcome of the survey, showing the decreasing number of the various Ethiopian tongues spoken as native languages from 35 in the generation of the grandparents (Tab 15), via 32 in the generation of the parents (Table 12) to 25 Ethiopian languages named by the students as their native languages (Table 4), may serve as an indicator of the fate awaiting some endangered small languages. Small languages such as Ari, Dassenech, Dorze, Gidole, Gimira etc. spoken in the generation of grandparents are missing from the list referring to their grandchildren. In a parallel manner, the number of native speakers of small languages (spoken by less than 500.000) was reduced from 6 % in the grandparents' generation to 5.4 % in the parents' category and to 3.3 % among the students (Table 16). The survey also included questions about the level of education and the occupation of the parents of the students and the answers are quite encouraging, as far as social mobility is concerned, given that 26.9 % of the parents had not attended school at all (Table 13) and that 35.4 % were peasants and 8.7 % workers (Table 14).

There still are many important details which can be retrieved from this rich and scientifically most reliable publication and we should be grateful to Renate Richter and to her team for providing us with all this information. It is absolutely imperative, now that the situation in Ethiopia is back to normal, that the survey be completed by information about those central and northern regions of the country which could not be visited in 1997 and 1998 because of the hostilities with Eritrea. If similar material could also be collected for Eritrea we could say that we are much wiser as to the linguistic situation in the area.

Olga Kapeliuk, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

HERBERT S. LEWIS, *Jimma Abba Jifar. An Oromo Monarchy: Ethiopia 1830–1932*. Asmara: The Red Sea Press, 2001. pp. 180. Price: \$ 21.95. ISBN: 1569020892.*

For the Ethiopian and Ethiopia-focussed scientific public it was overdue that Lewis' *Galla Monarchy* was re-published as a paperback. It was all the more urgent because the book was forbidden to be distributed in Ethiopia when it was published first and because it is still not widespread there till recently. By direct and indirect censorship the contemporary Ethiopian

* Originally: HERBERT S. LEWIS, *A Galla Monarchy*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.

government tried to suppress knowledge of the historical fact that the Oromo had developed their own states.

Lewis' book continues to be a great contribution to the political anthropology of African political systems and to the history of the Oromo of the Gibe region. In the first chapter Lewis lays his theoretical ground. As his starting point here serves Weber's statement, that there is always a struggle of reciprocal expropriation of estates between the ruler and those who achieved a privileged status. In order to work out this struggle or play of interests Lewis takes a double (or even holistic) perspective. One of his perspectives is that of the ruler who urges to stabilize his dynasty, the other is that of the subordinate officials and local clan leaders who are trying to gain their own material and political advantages. As Lewis shows in the later chapters, the Jimma kings succeeded in balancing the inter-dependence of the central authority and the substructure so that they were able to gain material wealth in order to distribute it again to their followers and by this to achieve and/or stabilize their support. Lewis gives an understandable account of how the dynasty gradually developed its centralizing policy by a bureaucratic administration constituted by officials directly dependent to the king.

For those who have in their bookshelf the first edition, it should be noted that it would be necessary to buy the paperback version. Only two things have been added enclosing the original text of the book: the new title and the "afterword". The revised title took into account the pejorative connotation the term "Galla" has – and, as the author points out, already had especially for the Muslim Oromo in the time of the first publication – and substituted it with the dignified "Oromo". The original text remained untouched by accendant alterations. Only in the "afterword" the author's decisions concerning the ethnonym is explained. One may think of those few undisciplined readers who "corrected" books they have lent in the IES library by crossing out the term "Galla" and replacing it by "Oromo" have to read until the "afterword" to learn that the author is fully aware of the incorrectness of "Galla".

The value of the "afterword" lies in a concise account of the main developments the Oromo and Oromo studies have gone through out the years after the publication of the book in 1965. The author gives some short bibliographical notes and comments which can be helpful also for the non-specialist public. The author in the "afterword" states self-confidently that "nothing" since the publication of the first edition "has been added to Oromo studies that has invalidated the findings of this book". He even claims that the basic pattern of agriculture and community he described in the region did not change significantly. Far from carrying this too far he points out that modern education is more and more spread among the population and that urbanization intensified. In my opinion especially the

last point should lead to a more cautious judgement. Urbanization and urban migration led to more complex social structures determined by new economic relations and inter-dependencies as well as to an altered organization of the “economy of prestige”.

Finally it should be recommended to all those interested in the history of the Oromo as well as those who study the political anthropology of Africa, to take the appearance of the new edition as an occasion to re-read Lewis’ book or, respectively, to discover it for the first time.

Dirk Bustorf, Universität Hamburg

ASTRID OTTO, *Das kulturspezifische Wissen und seine Anwendung im Medizinsystem der däbtära in Gondär, Äthiopien* = Interethnische Beziehungen und Kulturwandel. Ethnologische Beiträge zu soziokultureller Dynamik 53. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003. 144 S. Preis: € 14,90. ISBN: 3-8258-6834-6.

Die vorliegende Arbeit – eine überarbeitete und erweiterte Fassung einer an der Universität Hamburg vorgelegten Magisterarbeit – befaßt sich mit der Frage nach den Inhalten kulturspezifischen Wissens der *däbtära* und berücksichtigt die Ergebnisse eines dreimonatigen Feldforschungsaufenthalts in Gondär, Äthiopien.

In der Einleitung (S. 9–12) wird der Inhalt und die Fragestellung der Untersuchung dargestellt. Kulturspezifisches Wissen charakterisiert traditionelle Medizinsysteme wie diejenigen, die von spezialisierten Heilern in Äthiopien im Spannungsfeld von christlich institutionalisierten Glaubensvorstellungen und Volksreligion praktiziert werden. Vor diesem Hintergrund versucht die Untersuchung von Astrid Otto die religiösen Vorstellungen dieser Heiler auszuloten und ihren Einfluß auf die Deutung und Bewältigung von Krankheit zu bestimmen.

Der folgende Teil (S. 13–22) bietet den theoretischen Rahmen der Arbeit und befaßt sich mit dem Begriff kulturspezifischen Wissens, indem die wichtigsten ethnologischen Ansätze der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jh. diskutiert werden. Ein Abschnitt dieses Teils ist dem kulturspezifischen Wissen im Medizinsystem gewidmet. Der Ansatz, Krankheit und Heilung seien kulturspezifisch organisiert, führt zur Untersuchung magisch-religiöser Glaubensvorstellungen als Voraussetzung zum Verständnis traditioneller Medizinsysteme.

Der nächste Abschnitt “Volksglaube und Praxis im traditionellen Medizinsystem der Amhara” (S. 23–79) versucht, die Faktoren, die das traditionelle Wissen maßgeblich beeinflussen können, zu schildern und zu analysieren. Hier werden in erster Linie die in Opposition stehenden, jedoch sich gegen-