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4. – 7. 9. 1998 in Frankfurt/Main (Germany): 5th Biennial European Association of Social Anthropologists' Conference

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This conference was held at the Frobenius-Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, in Frankfurt. At the conference, more than 500 scholars from various countries of the world – among them, however, only 5 Africans – participated, being divided into 36 different workshops and 3 panels. The theme of the conference was “The Politics of Anthropology: Practice and Thought”. At the conference 8 papers pertaining to Ethiopia as well as several interesting papers on the contemporary political and social situation of African countries, including such topics as pastoralism, ethnic conflict, rural development, language policy, ritual ceremonies, political and cultural changes, were presented.

Ivo Strecker organized a workshop on “Rhetoric Culture” and presented a paper entitled: “Towards a Rhetorical Theory of Culture”, while his wife Jean Lydall presented one on “The Rhetoric of Kinship”, both of them drawing case-studies from their many years of extensive field-research among the Hamar of Southern Ethiopia. Professor Strecker also presented another paper at the workshop on visual anthropology under the title: “The Provocation of Ethnographic Film”. Thomas Zitelmann from Berlin contributed a paper with the title: “Creating a ‘we-race’: Makonnen Desta and Anthropological Foundations of Imperial Policy in Post Italian Ethiopia”. Eamonn Brehony from CON-CERN (Ethiopia) read a paper on “Building a Community Practice: An Approach Towards Development in Borena”. Jon Abbink’s paper bore the title “Culture and Political factors in Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Maji, Southern Ethiopia: Peasants, Pastoralists and the State”. His analysis is based on the current political developments that have been seen at the level of the local administration since the change of government in Ethiopia in 1991. Harald Aspen presented his critical observations and described the professional challenge that he faced with some Ethiopian and foreign scholars on the current ethnic politics in Ethiopia at the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies which was held in Kyoto in December 1997, with the title: “When Culture becomes Politics: report from a positioned conference participant”. The last paper: “Doing Fieldwork in a Native’s Community: Ethiopian Peasants and their Reflections on Local Politics and Administration in Amharic Oral Poetry”, was presented by the writer of this report.

Abstracts of the papers were published earlier in book form (358 pages) by the local organizing committee and were distributed to the participants.

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