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JON ABBINK, African Studies Centre, Leiden–Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam
Review

ULRICH BRAUKÄMPER, *Fandaanano: The Traditional Socio-Religious System of the Hadiyya in Southern Ethiopia*

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by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1917ff.).
- CSCO* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES 8* TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
- PICES 10* C. LEPAGE and É. DELAGE, eds, *Études éthiopiennes: Actes de la X^e Conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988* (Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, 1994).
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches* (Paris: (Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres) Diffusion de Boccard, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

ULRICH BRAUKÄMPER, *Fandaanano: The Traditional Socio-Religious System of the Hadiyya in Southern Ethiopia*, Aethiopistische Forschungen, 80 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014). xii, 364 pp., 55 ills, 2 maps, 4 tables. Price: € 76.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-10194-3.

Ulrich Braukämper has produced an excellent book on the Hadiyya of Southern Ethiopia, based on many years of field research. His careful presentation of the traditional belief system of this people is empirically rich and interpretively convincing, and it is a unique contribution to the historical ethnology of Ethiopia. In often amazing detail and with balanced judgement he presents the non-literate *Fandaanano* system and shows its integrated character and practical workings. All crucial aspects—social, political, religious and life cycle-related—are described. In an all too brief concluding section he reflects on the ‘legacy’ and possible implications or relevance of this traditional body of beliefs and practices for the Hadiyya today.

The Hadiyya live mainly in a heavily populated area of south-central Ethiopia and speak a language of the Cushitic family. The book reconstructs a system that no longer has any ‘followers’ but is remembered as formative and now seen as a cultural heritage or legacy of the Hadiyya. The *Fandaanano*, as a comprehensive way of life and its ‘syncretistic’ corpus with elements from Christian, Muslim and indigenous beliefs, contained an ethic of cooperation and community solidarity. Although it is largely forgotten, formal aspects of it were retained in subsequent religious practice. However, more and more contemporary Hadiyya are becoming adherents of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, which, as is well-known, are dogmatically inimical to indigenous religion.

In five chapters and two appendices, the book offers a detailed survey of the *Fandaanano*. The two appendices contain a corpus of Hadiyya folktales—although information on dates, contexts and narrators of the stories is lacking—and rich description on material cultural items corresponding to the Hadiyya social status groups. The format of the book makes it recognizable as a product of the Frobenius Institute school of ethnology. It is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs and has diagrams, two maps and a good bibliography.

The *Fandaanano* developed from the seventeenth century onwards in the wake of a declining Islamic religious pattern and were influenced by expanding Oromo beliefs and practices, and later by those of Orthodox-Christianity (nineteenth century). It was a unique *bricolage* of ideas that organized the socio-cultural life of the Hadiyya and *worked* for them in their specific local context over a long period of time. It involved inventive religious adaptation, geared to survival challenges and group formation.

However, it ended in the late twentieth century, with the last adherents converting to Christianity in 1999–2000.

The Preface sets out the author's general 'eclectic' approach to culture, aiming to find a 'consensus between analytic and hermeneutic strategies' of research. Chapter One describes the historical and socio-economic context. Important is the observation that the label 'Hadiyya' did not always refer to one and the same identifiable people, but was historically dynamic and used for various groups. As Braukämper describes, the Hadiyya figured prominently in Ethiopian medieval history (evident from the documents). Economically the Hadiyya now evolved towards a type of mixed agrarian way of life, with intensive cultivation and a material culture very similar to that of neighbouring peoples.

Chapter Two offers information on the origins and genesis of the *Fandaanano*, but is quite short and largely describes contemporary Hadiyya reminiscences of their history. In fact, its exact origins cannot be described accurately, because there is little data other than some oral traditions stressing multiple links with Arsi and Ittu Oromo and the influence of Muslim immigrants. However, Braukämper criticizes mistaken statements of authors such as d'Abbadie, Conti Rossini and Cerulli that the Hadiyya and Kambaata were Muslims in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. He also notes that the Hadiyya formerly saw their traditional religion as a higher socio-moral code, a belief system *on a par* with world religions such as Christianity or Islam, and above 'pagans'.

Chapter Three is an in-depth survey of their social structure and socio-political organization: kinship, clans, customary law, chiefs, slaves, etc. In itself the analysis is meticulous and very informative. Unfortunately it is difficult to see what all this information has to do with the subject (and title) of the book, which seems to offer a historical reconstruction of the no longer extant *Fandaanano*. This chapter is more about contemporary Hadiyya social life, and not about the past. Current socio-political organization surely has little relation to the *Fandaanano* as it was before the 1960s (the main exception being the part played by traditional leaders like the *anjaamma*-priests/judges). One important cultural element discussed here is the 'meritorious complex', also found in other parts of Southern Ethiopia, and long a focal point of German ethnologists in their descriptions of Ethiopian societies. It is a recognized process of status acquisition, achieved by prowess in hunting and raids/warfare (killing), and celebrated in feasts of merit.

The author sees continuity of the *Fandaanano* in the life of the Hadiyya of today—despite many differences—in their organization of the life-cycle, discussed in Chapter Three, as well as in contemporary Hadiyya customs, rites and rules regarding birth, childhood, courtship and marriage, family life (with

the *Fandaanano*-prescribed ancestors' cult), death and burial. The author describes how, according to his informants, the Hadiyya remembered the *Fandaanano* rules on these matters. The information given is quite overwhelming.

Chapter Four is perhaps the key chapter to the book: it concerns religious life, and in particular the *Fandaanano* as a system of socio-religious representations, ideas and practices. Again, the historical reconstruction is remarkable. But we can only approximate *ex post facto* how the belief system actually worked and interacted with social life and the economy in the past. Braukämper discusses the theology, even the 'eschatology', and ritual aspects, including prayers, sacrifices, taboos, purification ceremonies, and spirit possession (*jaara*), strongly marked by belief in anthropomorphic beings/spirits. These elements are/were found in most southern Ethiopian traditional religions, but here the author presents a very full picture of how it was among the Hadiyya. He also recognizes elements of fertility ritual in the religion and emphasizes *Fandaanano*'s rich ceremonial life, with a strong community function. Highly interesting, of course, is the historical development of Hadiyya religion from Islamic and other external sources into a novel system (*Fandaanano*). An important section of Chapter Four describes the calendar and time-reckoning system, much of it derived from Orthodox Christianity. It is highly probable that the process of religious change was more related to new survival challenges and to socio-economic practices in Hadiyya community life, and, perhaps, to the nature of conflicts with neighbouring groups.

Many a reader will wonder why this comprehensive system of beliefs and practices saw a relatively sudden demise. No doubt, the growing impact of world religions and externally funded missionizing after 1991 played a big role. But also political factors (the anti-tradition offensive of the *Därg* government), economic factors (modernization, migration, market connections), state education, and the new post-1991 normative discourse of 'development' and 'progress', etc. have played their role. Further analysis of these processes in relation to the decline of *Fandaanano* would have been useful.

As noted, this book presents a historical reconstruction *ex post facto*, and it is difficult to 'test' or evaluate all the interpretations and conclusions on *Fandaanano* today, when hardly any Hadiyya informant has had first-hand experience of it. But Braukämper's methodology and careful approach allow us to believe that the reality described is close to what it once actually was. This study is a most valuable synthesis, presenting an elaborate cultural achievement of the Hadiyya people in the past which is of considerable historical significance, allowing us to gauge the impact of change in the past few decades. Finally, the account also shows us what the Hadiyya people may

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have lost in terms of cultural integrity, aesthetics and identity over the past half century.

Jon Abbink, African Studies Centre, Leiden-Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

JON ABBINK, MICHAEL BRYANT, and DANIEL BAMBU, *Suri Orature: Introduction to the Society, Language and Oral Culture of the Suri People (Southwest Ethiopia)*, Verbal Art and Documentary Literature in African Languages, 33 (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2013). x, 203 pp., 1 map, 6 colour photos. Price: € 29.80. ISBN: 978-3-89645-289-4.

The authors of this book use the term 'orature' in order to elevate Suri oral traditions to the rank of 'literature' to which they justly belong. Ironically, the presentation of Suri oral texts in written form transforms them into literature because of the inescapable loss of para-linguistic features such as tone, gesture and facial expression that normally distinguish orature. Irony also pervades the contributions made by each of the three authors, for their decision to document Suri orature arose as an urgent response to the 'sudden and, in fact, rather stunning process of change' (p. 5) which is affecting the Suri, and threatening their time honoured way of life and corresponding oral traditions.

The book is divided into four parts: *Suri Society*, *Suri Language*, *Orature – Samples from the 'Literature' of an Oral Culture*, and *A Suri View on Suri Life and Society – Daniel Bambu's Accounts*.

In part 1, *Suri Society*, Jon Abbink provides an 'Introduction to the Society and History of the Suri People', setting his description of the ways of life and socio-cultural traditions of the Suri people as they were until c.2010, against the foreground of current 'uni-dimensional and often imposed 'development' schemes and rather uncompromising, top-down prescribed change processes that entertain little or no dialogue with the people' (p. 4). Abbink's account acts as a testimony not only to Suri oral traditions, but also, most poignantly, to the radical changes to, and decline of, Suri culture. 'They (the Suri) are in danger of becoming a proletarianized underclass in the new Ethiopia, certainly with little representation in the federal or other governments, but largely being a class of workers, plantation labourers, watchmen, etc.' (p. 5). Abbink ends his account more optimistically with the hope that 'it adds to an understanding of the Suri as a resilient and strong people that have survived for centuries in an area often called 'marginal', and have a humanity to be respected and a cultural heritage with many elements worth preserving' (p. 22).