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Review

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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*.

Reviews

address in any substantial way. Will it be possible to disentangle state and nation(s)? Will Ethiopia take as many centuries as France did?

This book is good to discuss. Its transparent use of sources and the careful argument invite scholarly engagement. Still, some formal issues have to be noted, specifically, missing or false punctuation and spelling mistakes. There are occasional repetitions and redundancies. For both, I would blame the publisher, who apparently neglected proper proofreading and editing services.

None of these detracts from the qualities of the book: even for somebody little interested in ‘the case of the Arsi Oromo’, here are well-founded deliberations about Ethiopian history in general, and a good number of chapters could be extracted for classroom use.

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ÉLOI FICQUET and WOLBERT G.C. SMIDT, eds, *The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia: New Insights*, Northeast African History, Orality and Heritage, 3 (Wien: LIT Verlag, 2014). 224 pp. Price: € 29.90. ISBN: 978-3-643-90476-8.

Ləḡ Iyasu (1897–1936) is probably one of the most controversial figures in Ethiopian history. However, his short reign from 1910 to 1916 is extremely poorly documented. Furthermore, the official discourse, initiated by Həylä Şəllase I, disqualified Iyasu’s reign in condemning all his decisions and assisted in (almost) erasing it from the nation’s history and from official historiography. Although this period represents a crucial one for Ethiopia, due to both internal and external contexts, historians had huge difficulties in defining and analysing governmental actions and the decisions of Iyasu. Fortunately, over the last few years, new sources have emerged and some historians have taken on the task of re-interpreting that crucial period.

The book edited by Éloi Ficquet and Wolbert Smidt is the outcome of an international workshop held at Wollo University in Däse in November 2009. It represents a wonderful attempt to shed new light on Iyasu’s policy and life at a high academic level. The most important thing to emphasize in this book is its capacity to show different points of view and different opinions about Iyasu’s policy. Thus it is an extremely stimulating book, far from dogmatic opinions.

The first chapter (‘The Background: Family, Marriages and Alleged Origins’) contains three articles which take a new look at Iyasu’s origins and at various elements which seem to contradict the official discourse on his reign. The first article by Éloi Ficquet, ‘Understanding *Lij* Iyasu through

his Forefathers: The Mammedoch *Imam*-s of Wello' (pp. 5–29), deals with the policies of Iyasu's forefathers in Wällo and thus opens a crucial window to understanding Iyasu's policies. The next article, by Alessandro Gori, 'Some Observations on a Sharifian Genealogy of *Lij* Iyasu (Vatican Arabic Ms. 1796)' (pp. 31–38), clearly analyses a Sharifian genealogy of Iyasu, found in a manuscript of the Vatican Library. The remarkable contribution of Zuzanna Augustyniak, '*Lij* Iyasu's Marriages as a Reflexion of his Domestic Policy' (pp. 39–47), shows that the marriages of Iyasu were not a sign of a betrayal of Christianity, as Šäwan nobles accused him, but a political tool serving his power in the eastern and southern part of the kingdom.

The second chapter of the book, with the rather grand title 'The Heir: Between Ethnic and Religious Pluralism, Reform and Continuity', brings together a number of contributions which examine different types of sources concerning Iyasu's reign. Estelle Sohier's article 'Childhood Portraits of Iyasu: the Creation of the Heir through Images' (pp. 51–74) opens this chapter. It is a reprint of an English summary of her study already published in 2011 (not in 2012 as mentioned in a footnote) in her book *Portraits controversés d'un prince éthiopien, Iyasu 1897–1935* (Paris: L'Archange Minotaure, 2011, pp. 67–83). Valeria Semenova, in her short article (with the long title): 'The Lion, the Lion Club, the Oxen and the Pigs: Interpreting a 1900's Ethiopian Political Popular Painting' (pp. 75–79), proposes an analysis of a painting preserved in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology of the Russian Academy of Science (n° 4055-14). The next article, '*Lij* Iyasu: A Reformist Prince' (pp. 81–89), written by Ahmed Hassen Omer is based on the study of a specific type of source: the accounts of Iyasu's reign by *näggadras* Gäbrä Həywät Baykädañ and by the entrepreneur Ḥašib al-Idlibī. The fourth and last article of this chapter is written by Richard Pankhurst and entitled 'The Reign of *Lij* Iyasu – as Avedis Terzian Saw it' (pp. 91–100). As the title reads, this contribution aims at presenting the oral account of Avedis Terzian, son of the Armenian entrepreneur Sarkis Terzian, concerning events which occurred during the reign of Iyasu.

The third chapter of the book, more prosaically '*Lij* Iyasu's Foreign Relations', offers articles which, again, analyse new sources from Ethiopia and abroad. The first article, 'The foreign politics of *Lij* Iyasu in 1915/16 according to newly discovered government papers' (pp. 103–113), is contributed by Wolbert Smidt. The author has had access to some remarkable sources: documents gathered by the foreign minister of Iyasu, *qäññazmač* Bäyyänä Yəmār. The next article, '*Lij* Iyasu, the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Honorary Consul in Addis Ababa and the Cannon Deal of 1914' (pp. 115–130), written by Rudolf Agstner deals with Austro-Hungarian sources concerning Ethiopia. In a short article 'A Visit of *Lij* Iyasu to the Railway facili-

ties in Dirré Dawa in 1915' (pp. 131–134), Hugues Fontaine offers new information concerning a visit of Iyasu to Dərre Dawa in 1915 (contained in a report found in the Archives nationales d'outre-mer of Aix-en-Provence (France, FR ANOM 93COL89)); there are also some photographs from the private collection of Jacques Auriol, former director of the Franco-Ethiopian railway. The next article by Haggai Erlich, 'From Wello to Harer: *Lij* Iyasu, the Ottomans and the Somali *Sayyid*' (pp. 135–147), is based on a section of his book *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010), where the author presents contents of recently discovered British and Turkish sources.

The fourth and last chapter of the book is entitled 'The Long End of His Reign' and gathers contributions dealing with the Coup d'État of 1916 and Iyasu's exile until his death. The first contribution, 'The Railway, Diré Dawa and Harer During the Coup d'État of 1916' (pp. 151–163), written by Shiferaw Bekele, brings us an enlightening examination of French diplomatic documents found in the Archives nationales d'outre mer of Aix-en-Provence and successfully shows the succession of events of 1916. Furthermore, the author proposes a re-interpretation of this specific period of the reign. The article of Aramis Houmed Soulé, '*Lij* Iyasu among the Afar in Awsa 1916–1918' (pp. 165–178), describes an unknown period of Iyasu's life and clearly exposes Iyasu's 'Afar policy and its consequences in both local and national contexts. Following this article, there is a short note entitled 'Family Memories on the Captivity of *Lij* Iyasu' (pp. 179–180) written by Asfa-Wossen Assefate.

The book ends with a glossary ('Glossary of Terms and Events of the *Lij* Iyasu Period: Controversial and Non-Controversial Facts and Interpretations', pp. 181–205) prepared by Wolbert G.C. Smidt in which terms and events are analysed and interpreted by the author (unfortunately without any references).

This book is essential for all historians interested in Iyasu's life and reign, and in twentieth century Ethiopia. The presence of maps, illustrations and diagrams throughout the text makes this book particularly pleasant to read. Some minor points for correction and addition may be pointed out: some texts, such as Shiferaw Bekele's one, are affected by typographic mistakes; a chronology of Iyasu's reign could have been very helpful; and the texts could have been organised to give a clearer picture of the historiographic debate concerning Iyasu's regency. However, this book marks an important step in our knowledge of Ethiopian contemporary history.

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