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Review

SUSANNE EPPLE, ed., *Creating and Crossing Boundaries in Ethiopia: Dynamics of Social Categorization and Differentiation*

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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*.

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recounts, seemingly verbatim, the speeches of others. This remarkable talent is shared and cultivated by all good spokesmen and women in oral based societies. *The Lightning Ceremony* is the live speech of a Suri leader (*komoru*) appealing to his people to heed the rules of social life and preserve group cohesion. All these speeches are the product of rhetorical genius, the one being subdued and indirect, the other making use of tension, and all employing prosody, rhythm, modes and tones of feeling, to address prime concerns and persuade their audience to act morally correctly. I cannot help reiterating the benefit an audio recording of such speeches would bring, not only to gain the full effect of the orature, but also to enhance any attempts at analysis. It goes without saying that the same applies to the traditional Suri songs where the melody and phrasing can only really be reproduced in an audio recording. The poetic density found in songs makes it very difficult to translate, and any analysis will require references to cultural traditions, histories, environment etc.

Part 4, *A Suri View on Suri Life and Society – Daniel Bambu’s Narratives*, is a great treasure. As we learn in the last entry entitled *Daniel’s Story*, Daniel had a very difficult upbringing, suffering periods of extreme hunger, losing his siblings, his mother, and finally his blind grandmother. When his mother’s brother rejected him he fled to Jeba where he stayed until another uncle saw him and asked him to herd his cattle, but the man’s wife was always angry with him so he fled to the gold fields. Finally he returned to his village with nothing. Daniel’s narratives deal with assorted Suri histories and various Suri customs—all of which are fascinating. The footnotes are very helpful, and amongst other things we learn that Daniel is a Christian, which explains some of his comments that are not typically Suri.

Suri Orature succeeds well in its aim to provide an introduction to the society, language and oral culture of the Suri people, and I look forward to future editions of Suri oral texts.

Jean Lydall, South Omo Research Center, Ğinka

SUSANNE EPPLE, ed., *Creating and Crossing Boundaries in Ethiopia: Dynamics of Social Categorization and Differentiation*, Afrikanische Studien/African Studies, 53 (Berlin et al.: LIT Verlag, 2014). 257 pp. Price: € 29.90. ISBN: 978-3-643-90534-5.

Since the pioneering fieldwork of Ivo Strecker and Jean Lydall in the early 1970s the region of South Omo has been a major focus of cultural anthropological research in Ethiopia. The editor of this book, Susanne Epple, and some of her co-authors have been heavily influenced by this academic tradi-

tion. The articles deal with one of the most urgent and challenging topics of present Ethiopia: the increasing relevance of ethnic boundaries in the federal state of Ethiopia since the access to power of the EPRDM government and its promulgation of the doctrine of unity in diversity in the 1990s. This policy gained particular importance in the *Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State* (SNNPRS) where fifty-six of Ethiopia's seventy-four ethnic groups are concentrated. Eight of the eleven articles in the anthology deal with this area.

Of the eleven authors, eight are Europeans and three Ethiopians; however, the ongoing hegemonic position of foreign anthropological research seems to be decreasing quite noticeably. The articles, apart from the Introduction, are divided into three major parts that deal with relevant aspects of stability and change in inter- and intra-group boundary formations, as well as with the cognitive concept, borders; specifically the alteration and crossing of borders in southern Ethiopia. Social borders as an overriding theoretical issue have become a topic of central interest since the famous study of Fredric Barth in 1969. In Ethiopia, the establishment of territorial units based on ethno-linguistic criteria (e.g., 'zones') was a promising attempt at satisfying the desire of the majority of the inhabitants for cultural autonomy which had long been suppressed by a strictly centralistic government policy. However, the strategies for overcoming the manifold particularistic interests have obviously proved to be much more difficult than had been expected by the political agents. That is why the processes of defining, creating, altering and crossing boundaries will most probably remain one of Ethiopia's key problems for several decades.

For reviewers of anthologies of this kind it is common practice to sketch the themes of the individual articles. More general remarks and criticisms will be considered at the end of this descriptive part.

The contributions of Part I focus on the alterations and crossing of boundaries from various angles. Yeraswork Admassie's article deals with 'gated communities', a phenomenon of urban anthropology which—apart from South Africa—is relatively new in most parts of the southern hemisphere. In Addis Abäba, where the study was conducted, most of such communities did not exist prior to the 1990s. The author shows that gated communities basically meet the expectations of a wealthy minority regarding standards of security and luxury, but to a limited extent they also pursue the tradition of neighbourhood-based voluntary associations (*äddär*). Gebre Yntiso's article presents data of fieldwork carried out in 2010/11 among the Nāñatom, a small ethnic group in the border region between Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. As he aptly puts it, ethnic boundaries are neither given attributes nor arbitrary constructs, rather they represent consented and contested cognitive lines of group inclusion and exclusion. The

relations of the N̄aṅatom with their neighbours, the Murle, K^wegu, Toposa, Turkana, Ḍáasanač and Surma, are regulated by strategic reasons concerning control over resources and maintaining a balance of power. Bosha Bombe's contribution on the Ganta in the Gamo highlands analyses a social problem which is still widespread in rural areas of southern Ethiopia, namely the discrimination of slave descendants despite all the statutes regarding their full emancipation, from the time of Emperor Ḥaylā Šəllase I until the present. As a pan-Ethiopian phenomenon a similar problem affects craft workers who are still regarded in many respects as 'outcasts'. Furthermore the introduction of (western) Christianity has basically not been able to eliminate deep-rooted social boundaries of this type.

In Part II various aspects of status change and interdependencies across intra-ethnic divides in the area of the SNNPRS are debated. In a comparative approach focussing on agro-pastoralist societies, Susanne Epple highlights topics such as the social meanings of dress and body-ornament, labour participation and the relevance of *rites de passage* for young females. Sophia Thubauville documents narratives of elderly women among the Maale who describe the changes which were relevant to their lives in their society during the last decades: changes in the distribution of work load as well as in the significance of traditional customs and value concepts. The author concludes that in the cultural mosaic of South Omo, where many ethnic groups with differing cultural traits live in close proximity, group identity is largely derived negatively by dissociating from one's neighbours. There is an obvious tendency on the part of women of an advanced age to claim that their customs and patterns of behaviour were generally superior to those of the present young generation. The article of Yvan Houtteman based on fieldwork in 1995 and 1997 examines social relationships within Ḍáasanač society and how inherent disturbances are believed to cause disease and misfortune within the group. The author reveals an astonishing amount of detail on highly complicated concepts involving such practices as blessing and cursing, divination, magic, witchcraft and on medical techniques, which are peculiar to the Ḍáasanač. The general patterns in these fields are widespread in Ethiopia, however. Nicole Poissonier emphasises the theme of death as a fundamental crisis and also as a time of creativity among the Konso. This group is known for its spectacular funeral rites and for the rich symbolism memorising the deeds of heroes by erecting wooden and lithic effigies on their graves. Konsoland marks the apogee of ancestor worship in southern Ethiopia, and there is a deep-rooted belief that people will triumph over death through their children. The paper of Tina Brüderlin offers a special contribution of ethnographers, and particularly those of the Mayence School, to the preservation of cultural heritage in the South Omo

region. This includes, beside the analysis of political organisation, social structure, religion and historical traditions, a comprehensive documentation of material culture. For this purpose, systematic collections of objects from all spheres of life have been exhibited and stored in local museums, such as in Konso and Ġinka, and workshops have been organised which evidence the importance and complexity of artefacts in the overall context of human realm.

Part III debates aspects of the differential perception of social boundaries. Thomas Osmond's article on competing trends in Oromo studies deals with a predominantly theoretical and epistemological topic. There seems to be a growing nativist trend of strengthening the promotion of the 'authentic Oromo religion' confronted with the presently dominant confessions of Christianity and Islam. The author suggests to overcome sterile and obsolete concepts of hitherto dominant etic approaches and explicitly concludes that the predominant apprehensions of 'Oromoness' as 'one people' tend to hinder the development of new trends in Oromo studies. Wolfgang Bender's article on the Rastafarian movement suggests that it is a peripheral phenomenon in Ethiopia, but which has attracted a high amount of attention globally in religious anthropology. The author's field research in 2002 was obviously not extensive and new empirical data would be appreciated. Susanne Epple and Fabienne Braukmann contribute to the cultural, historical and linguistic investigation of the Bayso and Haro peoples on Gidiččo Island in Lake Abbayya. Although their sojourns there were fairly short, they have contributed appreciable data in a field which can explicitly be labelled urgent anthropological research. It is particularly emphasised that the most prominent boundary marker between the two groups is defined by a food taboo: the Bayso strictly avoid the meat of hippopotami whereas this is a common food among the Haro.

The authors of the anthology should be complimented for having provided a condensed analysis of different facets of boundaries, i.e. their creation, their symbolic relevance, their preservation and their transgression. It has to be stated that, during the past decades, particularly the South Omo region with its extraordinary mosaic of ethnic unities has become a centre of attention for ethnographic documentation as well as for the advancement of anthropological theories. Unlike many other areas in Africa where fieldwork, mainly due to political instability and military conflicts, is dramatically decreasing, Ethiopia and especially the SNNPRS continue to offer favourable conditions for research. This is particularly appreciated by scholars of the sciences of Man.

A map of southern Ethiopia indicating the areas and ethnic groups of the case studies would have been helpful for readers who are not specialists in the geographical regions dealt with in the book. With regard to quotations there appears to be a growing tendency among cultural anthropologists to mention only the name of an author and the year of publication of his or

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her work. For the sake of accuracy an indication of the numbers of the pages would more often be desirable.

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SHAUNA LATOSKY, *Predicaments of Mursi (Mun) Women in Ethiopia's Changing World*, Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung, 33 (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2013). 260 S., 3 Karten, 2 Farbtafeln, 48 s/w Fotos, 1 Grafik, Glossar. Preis: € 39,80. ISBN: 978-3-89645-833-9.

Diese Publikation ist eine weitere zur Veröffentlichung überarbeitete Doktorarbeit und ein weiteres Beispiel der sehr produktiven letzten Jahre der deutschen ethnologischen Forschergruppe, die sich um das South Omo Research Center in Südäthiopien gebildet hat. Jede dieser Arbeiten präsentiert Forschungen zu einer anderen, bislang weitgehend unerforschten und vor allem von den welt- und äthiopienweiten Veränderungen relativ unberührten Ethnie und ist das Ergebnis einer in die Tiefe gehenden, oft viele Jahre andauernden, ethnologischen Forschung und stellt die jeweilige Ethnie sehr genau und einfühlsam dar. Außerdem bezieht jede dieser Arbeiten die Auswirkungen des langsam in der Region ankommenden Wandels ein und zeigt die Schwierigkeiten, mit denen die Menschen dort dadurch konfrontiert sind. Interessanterweise sind es relativ viele Frauen, die sich auf die eine oder andere Weise mit dem Genderaspekt in der jeweils von ihnen erforschten Ethnie beschäftigen. Dies hat zur Folge, dass in den letzten Jahren eine ganze Reihe an genderrelevanten ethnologischen Publikationen zu Südäthiopien erschienen ist.

Auch das vorliegende Buch macht hier keine Ausnahme. LaTosky beschränkt sich weitgehend auf eine Analyse der Welt der Frauen (im Gegensatz zu Susanne Epple). Besonders interessant ist jedoch der von ihr deutlich erarbeitete, theoretische Hintergrund aus der Rhetorikforschung, der, wie sie anmerkt, wohl allen Studentinnen und Studenten Professor Ivo Strecker geläufig sein sollte, jedoch in den anderen Publikationen, die ich bisher las, nicht in gleicher Weise erläutert wird.

Der Aufbau des Buches entspricht dem klassischen Schema ethnologischer Forschungen: eine Einleitung, ein Methodenkapitel, ein Literaturkapitel, ein Hauptteil (der sich in vier Kapitel aufteilt) und ein kurzer Abschluss.

In der Einleitung stellt LaTosky den theoretischen Hintergrund für ihre Forschungstätigkeit dar und gibt einen Einblick in die für die Ethnologie relevante Rhetorikforschung. Außerdem stellt sie kurz und knapp die von ihr beforschte Ethnie, die Mursi, vor, einschließlich ihrer Nachbarn, ihrer Wirtschaftsweise, ihrer sozialen und politischen Organisation, ihrer Verwandt-