



Aethiopia 17 (2014)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review

PETER GARRETSON, *A Victorian Gentleman & Ethiopian Nationalist: The
Life & Times of Hakim Warqenah, Dr. Charles Martin*

Aethiopia 17 (2014), 276–278

ISSN: 2194–4024

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

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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, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003; II: D–Ha, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005; III: He–N, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007; (in cooperation with A. BAUSI), IV: O–X, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010; A. BAUSI (ed. in cooperation with S. UHLIG), V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014.
- EFAH* Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung, Epigraphische Forschungen auf der Arabischen Halbinsel, herausgegeben im Auftrag des Instituts von NORBERT NEBES.
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- IJAHS* *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston, MA – New York 1968ff.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.
- NEASt* *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig – Roma – Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- OrChrP* *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, Roma 1935ff.
- PICES 15* S. UHLIG – M. BULAKH – D. NOSNITSIN – T. RAVE (eds.) 2005, *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20–25, 2003* = *AethFor* 65, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PICES 16* H. ASPEN – BIRHANU TEFERRA – SHIFERAW BEKELE – S. EGE (eds.) 2010, *Research in Ethiopian Studies: Selected papers of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Trondheim July 2007* = *AethFor* 72, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND – A. J. DREWES – R. SCHNEIDER 1991, *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.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma 1941–1981, Roma – Napoli 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.
- ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig – Wiesbaden – Stuttgart 1847ff.

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Library (pp. 329–333), a French-translated text relative to the life of Wäld Säʾala (pp. 335–346), and a series of Qoma Fasilädäs oral translations collected in September and October, 1999 and completely translated into French (pp. 347–432).

In conclusion, due to its sources and to the historical analysis it provides, Wion's book is an important contribution to the understanding of the events that shook Ethiopia during the first half of the 17th century.

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PETER GARRETSON, *A Victorian Gentleman & Ethiopian Nationalist: The Life & Times of Hakim Warqenah, Dr. Charles Martin*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey, 2012. xv + 320 pages, 2 maps, 8 photos and a chart, cloth. Price: GB-£ 55.–. ISBN: 978–1–84701–044–5.

This book tells a fascinating life story of a versatile man who was a physician by training as well as practice, a businessman, a diplomat, a progressive and an educator, to mention only a few of the roles he played in various countries during his almost 87 years of life.

Hakim Wärqənäh Əsäte was allegedly born in Gondär (presumably the city) on 22 October 1865. At the age of two and a half he was found on a battlefield in Mäqdäla by a British officer, which is where his parents moved by imperial order and where the British forces fought Emperor Tewodros II. Wärqənäh is said to have had a complex personality, which taunted him for at least two-thirds of his life. As his biographer so eloquently described, Wärqənäh “was effectively caught in the middle of an international conflict at a very tender age; and would remain caught between different cultures for the rest of his life” (cf p. 1).

As a child Wärqənäh was taken to India by an officer, where he was brought up and educated by different families of British origin and thus became an Englishman through and through. His Ethiopian origin always remained present and eventually influenced his permanent settlement. He studied medicine and practised it in India. He also did his postgraduate studies at Edinburgh and Glasgow universities and was subsequently appointed civil surgeon in Burma, where he worked in various parts of the country before returning to Ethiopia after the Battle of ʿAdwa to treat the wounded. He eventually went back to Burma only to return to Ethiopia some years later where he married a woman of high birth.

After traveling between Burma and Ethiopia (briefly visiting India and England in-between) until 1919, Wärqənäh decided to settle for good in his native country where he saw that there was still a great deal to be done. In addition to practising his medical profession in Addis Abäba, he promoted his progressive ideas for the country in close co-operation with the crown prince, *Ras Täfäri Mäk^wännän* (later Emperor Ḥaylä Šəllase I), by founding an association for the liberation of slaves, opening modern schools (one of which he administered himself), establishing a printing press and an Amharic newspaper, conducting the construction of a road, and writing at least one textbook. As an Ethiopian envoy, he went abroad a few times to seek a financial loan or to recruit qualified teachers and physicians. He is also said to have occasionally spoken “about the very unsatisfactory state of administration of different provinces in the country, and advised the Emperor to undertake a general administrative reform” (cf p. 149). In 1930–35, he became governor of a province whose traditional administration he reformed and made a model for the administration of the other provinces. At the beginning the initiative was not welcomed by the conservative colleagues.

In 1935, he was appointed Ethiopian ambassador to London; with the help of his British friends and acquaintances Wärqənäh tried to campaign against the Fascist invasion on behalf of his country. He also accompanied the Emperor to Geneva and assisted him in various ways during his stay in England. Eventually he had to leave for the Far East where he could earn his living. In 1942 he returned to Ethiopia where he remained in retirement until his death in 1952.

The book is composed of 12 chapters, each of which features the significant events related to Wärqənäh’s life, his progressive ideas and his reform attempts. Chapter 1 (pp. 7–22) deals with his family background, his youth and education in the years 1865–96, chapters 6–9 (pp. 101–256) vividly describe the various high administrative and political positions he held and his contributions towards the modernization of Ethiopia. Access to the main theme is also facilitated by an introduction, a conclusion, a bibliography and an index.

The author, a well-known scholar of Ethiopian history, has meticulously used published and archival materials as well as oral sources in the course of reconstructing the life and activities of this remarkable person. Perhaps the most important source he exploited is the diary of *Hakim* Wärqənäh Əšäte, apparently a detailed and valuable work which has existed for a long time, but has not yet been published. The author also used a great deal of material from the reminiscences of the family members of *Hakim* Wärqənäh and other persons who knew the physician personally. Once again the historian has presented us with an excellent work. The narrative is fluent, the inter-

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pretation objective and the sources are well selected. Only the arrangement of the bibliography at the end of the book appears somewhat surprising, as works published in series are treated inconsistently. Subtitles of books and journals are also sometimes included and at other times ignored. But that can be a cause for criticism only if one is in quest of a utopian perfection.

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SASCHA A. KIENZLE, *Ursachen für den eritreisch-äthiopischen Grenzkonflikt: Eine historisch-politische Analyse*, Tönning – Lübeck – Marburg: Der Andere Verlag, 2010. Paperback, 146 pages, 5 maps. Price: € 25.90. ISBN: 978-3-86247-081-5.

In 1998–2000 the cruelest and most pointless war raged between Eritrea and Ethiopia and caused immense human and material loss on both sides; as a result the basis of their economies was weakened for many years to come. The book opens with these facts and gives a brief description of the numerous international publications launched to explain the various aspects of the disastrous event.

Precisely that seems to have also been the intention of the author of this monograph who apparently is just entering the field of African studies. Kienzle writes: “The aim of this work is to examine the various factors which effected the warlike outbreak of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border conflict” (p. 15). But no passage explains clearly the *raison d’être* of the book under review, particularly in which manner the work differs from other books on the causes of the conflict. Apparently the author has read practically all of them and compiled them at the end of his monograph under the title “Literatur- und Quellenverzeichnis” (pp. 137–146). He also acknowledges their views and factual findings in 530 footnotes. Unfortunately his effort hardly included a critical evaluation of his sources. His casual remarks in that direction merely reflect his unfairness in judgement or even laxity in his research. For instance, he complains that he was denied access to the Research and Documentation Centre (RDC) in Asmara despite a letter of recommendation from the German embassy (cf. p. 19). But nowhere is there mention of his attempt to accede any of the documentation centres in Addis Abäba. As far as I know RDC recognizes visiting researchers bearing recommendation letters from academic institutions. As to the written support of a diplomatic body, it should logically be presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs first, with the hope of redirection of the application to RDC.