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Review

LOVISE AALEN, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Ethiopia: Actors, Power and
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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.

Aethiopica 17 (2014)

LOVISE AALEN, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Ethiopia: Actors, Power and Mobilisation under Ethnic Federalism* = African Social Studies Series 25, Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill, 2011. 214 pp. Price: € 73.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-20729-5.

The analysis of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations has become one of the major concerns of Ethiopian policy since the introduction of the federal system in the early 1990s. A thorough knowledge of the processes of interactions is indispensable for a constructive policy at the national level and particularly in the “Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State” (SNNPRS) where almost 50 of the about 70 ethnic entities (or “nationalities”) of Ethiopia are concentrated. The political scientist Lovise Aalen has chosen the Sidaama and the Wälāyṭta, who two of the numerically and politically most important groups of this state. Both groups are culturally related neighbours but have been arch-enemies from time immemorial. The population amounting to 3.2 million and 1.6 million people respectively inhabits fertile highland areas with a population density that often exceeds more than 500 per km². Despite their admirable degree of agricultural intensification, population pressure therefore has become an existential problem for both groups, thus increasing tensions along their common boundary.

The first chapter deals with theoretical considerations regarding the current controversies over the limits of institutions in multiethnic societies and strategies of federalism in general. It is followed by a critical account of self-determination on the national and regional levels of Ethiopia from the Revolution of 1974 onwards. The primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist approaches to the discussion on ethnicity are critically evaluated. Aalen argues in favour of the constructivist position, based on the assumption that ethnic identity is not static, but permanently subjected to dynamic processes of change. This has been a convincing view in my opinion.

The historical and cultural presentation of the two ethnic groups, the Sidaama and Wälāyṭta, is restricted to a sketch of relevant data, indispensable for the understanding of the contemporary political processes. Despite far-reaching similarities in their ecological and socio-economic conditions, a striking difference can be stated in their traditional political system, which originated from the time before the conquest by the Ethiopian Empire under Mənilək II in the 1890s and has been relevant up to the present. The Sidaama are organized in a basic egalitarian system of territorially concentrated clans without a centralized political leadership. The marginalized group of craftsmen, potters, tanners and smiths, called Hadichcho, are concentrated in a territory of their own as a part of the common clan structure.

The Wälaytta are characterized by a kingship, a sophisticated hierarchy of clans, a considerable percentage of descendants of former slaves and craftsmen in the position of outcasts scattered all over the area. These peculiar conditions of the two groups resulted in significantly divergent types of reaction to the centralistic rule of the monarchy or the *Därg* regime in the past as well as to the challenges of the federal state guided by the *Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front* (EPRDF) in the present time. The necessity of condensing historical and ethnographic accounts to a fairly limited scope inevitably entails that facts concerning, for example, the functioning of the *gadaa* age-class order or the *gäbbar* system vis-à-vis the military settlers (*näftäñña*) from northern Ethiopia, are sometimes not as precise as desirable (pp. 60, 75). With regard to the transcription of Ethiopian words, personal and ethnic names as well as cultural terms, the standardisation of the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (2003–10) can also be recommended for studies in political science.

Lovise Aalen did not carry out a long-term field research with participant observation at the grassroots level among the Sidaama and Wälaytta. Following the strategy of political scientists, the author conducted interviews with local administrators, traditional leaders, elected chairmen of the peasant associations (*qäbäle*), who frequently compete for power and influence in local communities and districts. The interviewees represent the major representatives of political decision making, demonstrating why the selection was indispensable for the particular aim of the study, although one cannot forget that it necessarily implies a male bias. As it is the case in most Ethiopian societies, females traditionally do not play an important part in public affairs, such as councils or administrative matters. The number of samples taken by Aalen appears sufficient for a statistically relevant basis, and for the sake of documentation a considerable number of interviews (partly anonymized for good reasons) is presented in the text.

Beside the remarkable basis of empirical data, the author provided a thorough evaluation of the relevant literature on post-Revolution Ethiopian policy as well as on the Sidaama and Wälaytta. However, in most cases only the names of the authors and the year of publication of the books and articles are specified. The numbers of the pages in the respective works are not indicated, so that a quick and precise specification of the quoted materials is not available. It is regrettable that this meagre type of quotation is becoming more and more common in the social and political sciences.

The implementation of self-determination in the southern parts of the country is inseparably connected with the ethnic politics of the central state. The EPRDF's rhetoric of "liberating the oppressed nationalities" (p. 98) was still part of the tradition of the *Därg*. Soon afterwards, however, its focus was shifted from "national liberation" to stopping what the present rulers saw

as a process of administrative disintegration and the development of “narrow nationalism”. The SNNPRS shelters the by far highest number of ethnic groups in Ethiopia and is potentially most exposed to such a threat. A foreign observer may sometimes get the impression that every individual in this area wants to possess his own district or “zone”. A prominent example for violent dispute caused by administrative measures of the government was the foundation of *Wogagoda* in North Omo. The four ethnic groups of this area, the Wälāyṭta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro, were merged to one entity led by a common party. Additionally, the construction of a common language, also called *Wogagoda*, was decided for the four groups. These measures were vehemently opposed and resulted in a serious conflict, the consequences of which I could personally observe in Shonee on the northern border of Wälāyṭta in December 1999. It is also obvious that inter-ethnic disputes seem to have recently intensified in some areas, particularly near Lake Abbayya and the Bilate River. For example, along the borders of Sidaama and Wälāyṭta, tensions between the two groups erupted in violent clashes from 2002 onwards. They mostly resulted in deep disagreement over the extension of a state farm, the territorial attribution of some peasant associations and grazing rights of mobile pastoralists.

Also in the field of continuity and change in the intra-ethnic relations and cultural conditions, Lovise Aalen has investigated relevant empirical data. For example, the marginalized groups of craftsmen and former slaves among the Sidaama and Wälāyṭta complained that discrimination against them is now stronger than before the EPRDF government, which they frankly blame for this result (pp. 132, 134). Old hierarchies and traditional elements of social life such as marriage restrictions seem to be as stable as before (p. 129). Despite campaigns by the central state, marriage by abduction and female genital mutilation is far from being abandoned and the representation of women in administrative and political positions has not improved.

In her concluding remarks, Aalen states with regard to southern Ethiopia that conflicts which were previously understood as expressions of economic and social issues are increasingly “ethnicised”. She further reaffirms, on the base of her research data, that ethnic groups are not necessarily cohesive but are products of internal contestations and power struggles between different subgroups, just in line with the constructivist approach to ethnicity. Ethnic political mobilization, as in Ethiopia particularly since the 1990s, must basically be understood as an outcome of both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations. I fully agree with the author that ethnicity is a constructed phenomenon which is not inborn or fixed and which can always be manipulated and mobilized for political goals. I also comply with her conviction (p. 189) that the analysis of her findings from southern Ethiopia will ultimately contribute to our understanding of the extent to which ethnic feder-

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alism can serve as an instrument of conflict management and prevention in ethnically diverse societies. It undoubtedly opens valuable insights into the above-mentioned spheres, but overly optimistic expectations with regard to their implementation by the political actors will most probably be disappointed.

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JÖRG HAUSTEIN, *Writing Religious History: The Historiography of Ethiopian Pentecostalism* = Studien zur Außereuropäischen Christentums-geschichte (Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika) 17/Studies in the History of Christianity in the Non-Western World 17, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011. XVI + 295 pp. Price: € 38.–. ISBN: 978-3-447-06528-3.

The first national Pentecostal church, the Full Gospel Believer's Church (FGBC), Mulu Wängel in Amharic, was founded in Addis Abäba in 1967. Shortly after seven Ethiopians were ordained by Swedish Pentecostal missionaries, the FGBC applied for registration as a religious association in accordance with the 1960 Civil Code and "Legal Notice No. 321". However, this first application was dismissed. Not long after this event, a split over doctrinal disputes resulted in the foundation of the Apostolic Church of Ethiopia, and in 1974, the Gospel Deliverance Church separated from the FGBC. The Gennet (Gännät) Church was founded by Finnish missionaries at the Addis Abäba Märkato area in 1978. In 1980, the Harvest Church of God was founded after splitting from the Gennet Church, and in 1975, the Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission formed the Hiwot Berhan (Həywät Bərhan) Church in Awasa.¹ The number of new foundations soared in the 1990s with newly established churches including the Gubae Egziabiher (Guba'e Egzi'abəher) Church, the Bible Army Church, the Gospel Light Church, the Maranata Church, the Evangelical Praise Church, the Rhema Faith Church and the Winners' Chapel. In 2004, 288 Protestant religious organizations, many with a Pentecostal or Charismatic background, were registered in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia.² Further denominations are often formed as a result of splits, such as the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers

¹ With regard to the names, the spelling used by the churches is applied.

² J. LAUNHARDT, "Protestantism", in: *E Ae* IV, pp. 223b–227a, here 226b. Haustein refers to a list he compiled in 2009, which is available online: J. HAUSTEIN, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ethiopia", <http://www.glopent.net/Members/jhaustein/ethiopia/pentecostal-charismatic-churches-in-ethiopia>; last access: 29 July 2014.