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Review

SOPHIA THUBAUVILLE, *Die Wandernde ist eine Kuh: Lebenswege von
Frauen in Maale, Südäthiopien*

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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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Overall the book is very well readable and an excellent example of how Ethnography and History can be combined. I hope that it will be translated into English in the future to make it accessible to non-German speaking readership as well, especially Ethiopians and most importantly to the Sälte themselves. Besides those readers interested in history and identity of the Sälte people, the book is generally relevant to scholars interested in the complex processes involved in identity formation – a phenomenon that can be observed in many parts of contemporary Ethiopia.

Susanne Epple, Addis Ababa University

SOPHIA THUBAUVILLE, *Die Wandernde ist eine Kuh: Lebenswege von Frauen in Maale, Südäthiopien* = Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 22, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2010. 233 pp. with b/w photographs. Price: € 36,80. ISBN: 978–3–89645–822–3.

The Maale, as Sophie Thubauville's remarks in her contribution, next to other south Ethiopian ethnic groups, have already been studied by a number of anthropologists. Thubauville, however, chooses a different focus for her research – the life circles and life histories of women in Maale – following the trend that emphasizes gender related subjects in Ethiopian studies.¹

The Introduction gives an overview on former anthropological research and a short historical outline of women and gender studies in Anthropology.

Chapter 2 starts with a personal account on how the author was introduced to the field and got accustomed to Maale culture during her long stays in the field.

It also mentions the methodological approach, which is in line with other researches of the Mainzer anthropological school² and relies on all the basic

¹ Compare other recent examples in the Ethiopian context: e.g. the historical study of MARGAUX HERMAN on Säblä Wängel; E.C. GABBERT with G. BALLO, “How we let go war” on women's role in peacemaking among the Arbore, in: S. EGE – H. ASPEN – BIRHANU TEFERRA – SHIFERAW BEKELE (eds.), *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, II, Trondheim 2009, pp. 323–335 [online version: <http://portal.svt.ntnu.no/sites/ices16/Proceedings/Forms/Allitems.aspx>; last access: 20 March 2014]; see also: Footnote 2.

² Compare S. LATOSKY, *Predicaments of Mursi (Mun) Women in Ethiopia's Changing World* = Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 33, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2013; T. BRÜDERLIN, *The Incorporation of Children into the Society: Pre- and Postnatal Rituals among the Hamar of Southern Ethiopia* = Arbeitspapiere des Instituts für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien 135, Mainz: Johannes Gutenberg Universität, 2012; E.C. GABBERT – S. THUBAUVILLE (eds.), *To Live with Others: Essays on Cultural*

anthropological skills. A special feature introduced in Chapter 2 and continued till the end of the publication is the quotation of excerpts from field dairies, which gives the whole book a very personal, sometimes amusing, and sometimes touching tone.

Chapter 3 provides an anthropological account of the society's structures, beginning with a description of the area, a description of the economy, the social and political organization, and concluding with a depiction of the traditional worldview and the influence Protestantism had upon Maale society, all considered under the aspect of social changes and the role of women.

Chapter 4 portrays the main informants (relying on the researcher's point of view and on the informants' self-perception) and the research locations.

Chapter 5 finally concentrates on the life circle of women. The author conducts her research based on women in Maale and gathers data from single women's life histories, sayings and proverbs, and participant observation. Sequential life stages are defined, described and contextualized by various rituals: pregnancy, preparing for birth, giving birth and seclusion, becoming a woman by giving birth to one's first child, children-related concerns, girls' education, girls' tasks, markets, jewellery, wedding preparations, wedding ceremonies, bridal price and bridal seclusion, the life as a wife, wives' tasks, domestic violence, various problems of married life, divorce, widowed life, sickness, death, mourning, and funeral.

Chapter 6 focuses on another ritualistic speciality in Maale:³ women's commandments and taboos (especially connected to menstruation and around giving birth) and women's rituals. The author also gives a short historic account about the special position of the "kadi" (political and ritualistic leader) to women. Then she lists all rituals for women: a ritual for the bride, a ritual for the "complete" woman, a ritual for the wife to renew connections to her family of origin, and a ritual to call back luck after a disaster.

The publication is concluded by a very short summary, which mainly stresses the changes happening in Maale culture in the last decades and their influence on women's lives.

Neighborhood in Southern Ethiopia = Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 27, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2010; S. EPPLE, *The Bashada of Southern Ethiopia: A Study of Age, Gender and Social Discourse* = Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 25, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2010; P. ELMANN, *Women's Worlds in Dassanetch, Southern Ethiopia* = Arbeitspapiere des Instituts für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien 53, Mainz: Johannes Gutenberg Universität, 2005.

³ For sure commandments and taboos are, however, not only a specialty of Maale, see e.g.: C. KNIGHT, "Menstruation" in: A. BARNARD – J. SPENCER (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, London – New York: Routledge, 2008 [1996], pp. 363–364.

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Next to the reference list, a glossary of Maale terms, a complete list of interviews, a list of oral stories narrated in the book, furthermore lists of maps, figures, and photographs follow; however, no index is included. The book closes with field notes on a funeral ceremony.

This kind of closure is somewhat representative for the whole publication, even though it seems unconnected and of disputable value to the rest of the book, as it shows the very personal tone with an emphasis on very detailed and personal depictions, and systematizes, objectivizes, academic sounding analysis. A feature which is on one hand likable, informative and revealing can on the other hand leave the impression of naivety and being over concerned with personal experiences, therefore lessening the impression of being valuable information. For a Ph.D. thesis this may be convenient, but for a publication it may have been rewarding to revise and restructure the data once again, e.g. leave the long list of interviews in the appendix etc. aside and include a well-structured index instead. Furthermore a more analytic, academic sounding outline and writing style should have been developed. The reference list should have been revised as well, as there are many mistakes found, especially if compared to the references given in the text. This step would surely have up-graded the rich and thoroughly researched findings.

In any case, the publication is a very important contribution to anthropological gender studies in Ethiopia and moreover to anthropological studies on the Maale in general, as it fills a gap in research, which was long overdue.

Angela M. Müller, Universität Hamburg

SUSANNE EPPLE, *The Bashada of Southern Ethiopia: A Study of Age, Gender and Social Discourse* = Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 25, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2010. 291 pp. with b/w photographs. Price: € 39.80. ISBN: 978-3-89645-825-4.

The present publication obviously follows the tradition of the renowned anthropology department situated at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz with its focus on the many ethnic groups of Southern Ethiopia. The research focuses on the Bashada,¹ and, the main attention of the publication is given to the age set formation of this group. Different to former anthropological researches, the author demonstrates the implications the naming

¹ The Bashada are an ethnic group of Southern Ethiopia, who are speaking a southern Omotic language and are neighbours to the Hamar, the Banna and the Kara.