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## Review

MARIE HUBER, *Developing Heritage—Developing Countries: Ethiopian Nation-Building and the Origins of UNESCO World Heritage, 1960–1980*

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tional research on various features of the Sāho culture. It is particularly valuable for scholars who are interested in the Sāho culture in general, and specifically in traditional dwelling systems of the agropastoral societies in the Horn of Africa as well.

Abdulkader Saleh Mohammad, Oslo

MARIE HUBER, *Developing Heritage—Developing Countries: Ethiopian Nation-Building and the Origins of UNESCO World Heritage, 1960–1980*, *Africa in Global History*, 1 (Berlin–Boston, MA: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021). xiii, 204 pp. Price: €68,95. ISBN: 978-3-11-068023-2.

In academic discourse, the concept of ‘development’ has come under increased scrutiny, with an increasing number of scholars calling for new epistemologies of ‘post-development’ in research and practice. Projects conducted under ‘development’ frameworks are therefore now interrogated more critically regarding the power relations underlying agenda conceptualization and execution and are questioned regarding their outcome. In light of this background, Marie Huber researches the recent historical case of heritage development in Ethiopia. This book gives a detailed introduction into the origins of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage concept. In five chapters it describes the role of cultural tourism in economic development planning, which contributed to the formation of cultural and natural heritage conservation in Ethiopia; the Amhara-dominant symbolism of the heritage sites underpinning Ethiopian nationalism, validated by international and Western narratives; the renewed Western-led academic discourse and formation of the institutional and organizational backing at the United Nations (UN) as prerequisites for the Ethiopian World Heritage nominations; the conflicts between universalist standardization in heritage conservation and protection zoning vs local conservation practice and traditional land administration; as well as the particular bureaucratic background of institutional heritage-making, centering Ethiopia as a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) model country for large-scale projects.

In covering these topics, the book speaks to a scholarly audience from development studies, heritage studies, organizational studies, global history, and Ethiopian studies. It holds specialist interest for development officers within the UN institutions subject to the research.

The book makes for a very informative read by laying out the extensive material gathered on the Ethiopian heritage making and convincingly relates it to the larger discourse on UN World Heritage genesis. It makes evident the strong push towards a universal narrative on ‘world heritage’ that is anchored in western touristic practice and economic developmentalism. The author aptly distinguishes

between nation-building and state-building to make clear the nationalist intentions and symbolic nature of the heritage sites selected in Ethiopia.

Huber deliberately limits herself to a detailed description of the negotiation processes within the UN and the discussion of conflicts with local interests from the view of project implementation. However, this leaves the description of the designated heritage sites (Lalibela, Simien mountains, Aksum, Lower Awash Valley, etc.), without much socio-spatial, morphological, and local cultural, economic, and political context.

Huber conducted extensive reviews of archive material from UNESCO, UNDP, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) archives, focusing on how an ‘expert hegemony’ was produced within UN institutions and their engagement in the development agenda. She sought to balance the sources with material from Ethiopian government archives to document what she terms a ‘historiography of Ethiopian nationalism’ (pp. 4–5); however, availability of data and accessibility to the archive collections proved difficult. As to illustrate the Ethiopian context, the data collection was complemented by adding academic and popular literature, as well as personal records of relevant figures of the time and expert interviews.

While the book explicitly recognizes that material from UN sources is far more accessible than from Ethiopian archives, its attempts to pair ‘disparate types of documents and sources as to open up many new lines of inquiry’ (p. 18) remain guarded. The author draws the expansion of sources to balance the account with an Ethiopian perspective with personal accounts mostly written from a Western lens and notes that the material provided from personal archives is at times ‘essentialist, colonialist and racist’ (p. 18). While the author’s critical reflection puts a lot of this into perspective, the study still shies away from taking a more consequential step of expanding data collection to engage fully in participative, interview, observational, material, visual, or mapping methods. These methods have been termed ‘alternative archives’ by Osorio Tarazona, Drengk, and Chatterjee in their work on the global history of technology<sup>1</sup> and allow for a more elaborated inclusion of local Ethiopian perspectives from outside of ‘aspiring national elites’, as well as cultural heritage practices that the book itself has identified as being marginalized or ignored.

The book makes a step forward on its proposition on ‘how to write African history as global history’ (p. 18). However, there is a lot of room left to be more consequential on this matter in the question of a revised understanding of the archive in the African context. Meanwhile it helps us to understand ‘World Heri-

<sup>1</sup> A. Osorio Tarazona, D. Drengk, and A. Chatterjee, ‘Rethinking Global History of Technology from Alternative Archives’, *Technikgeschichte*, 88/2 (2021), 202–206.

tage' as a universalizing concept, that is based largely on touristic considerations within a development agenda. This is an important contribution to the field of heritage studies, which should lead to further interrogation of the normative ethics behind defining 'world heritage' sites.

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DAVIDE CHINIGÒ, *Everyday Practices of State Building in Ethiopia: Power, Scale, Performativity*, Oxford Studies in African Politics and International Relations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022). xii, 256 pp. Price: €75,12. ISBN: 978-0-19-286965-4.

Davide Chinigò's recent book offers a rarely seen consistent focus on local permutations, variations, and vicissitudes of Ethiopia's developmental state. Special attention is paid to—as the back cover correctly sums up—'how policies of resettlement, decentralization, agriculture commercialization, entrepreneurship, and industrialization inscribed dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in both rural and urban areas'. I am citing this sentence because it is a useful metric for readers to decide if the book is for them: if you tick two or more of these boxes (and/or ethnic federalism), engaging with *Everyday Practices of State Building in Ethiopia* will be fruitful and stimulating. The author's fieldwork experience is evident, even as the case studies encompass five distinct locales (in Amara, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), Oromiyaa, Addis Abäba, and Mäqäle), each developed separately in chapters 2–6. Throughout these case studies, most of the 'policy' topics are reliably addressed with nuance and detail, lending an admirable coherence to the volume.

Readers drawn in by the subtitle—the more conceptual triad of power, scale, performativity—might have a harder time with the book. Initially, chapter 1 develops by interrelating these three and other abstract/theoretical considerations. I appreciated parts of this, even if some programmatic statements might have borne out further elucidation in order to be fully convincing. As an example, the author proclaims that 'if we want to escape depictions that conflate experiences of state formation across space and time, and the reification of micro-empirical realities, we need an empirical focus on social change' (p. 2). I am at a loss what 'the reification of realities' would even be and am not convinced that this conflation is actually occurring. Specifically reading just page 2 will indicate to readers how they will benefit from the conceptual parts of chapter 1.

I remained unconvinced by Chinigò's efforts to distance himself from 'culturalist explanations of state power' in Ethiopia (pp. 20–27)—he discusses other scholars (Vaughan/Tronvoll, Abbink, and of course Levine) to document their