

destroying witchcraft and fetishes, new purveyors of global magical objects (*medicaments*), Christian saints that emulated the symbolism of nature spirits, and white people who came to be seen as ritual specialists. At the same time, practices such as European fencing of graveyards for fear of African cannibalism and exhumation of African bodies for science, as well as Gabonese retaliations through the maiming of French people and processing white flesh as ‘magical capital’ (96), similarly contributed to new colonial imaginaries of extraordinary force (103, 96–117) and extraordinary agency (184). The objects, body parts, rumours, dramas, complaints, trials, and laws which mediated French-Gabonese colonial relations comprise the material for *Colonial Transactions*. Bernault’s *longue durée* approach advances us beyond Luise White’s rebellious anticolonial discourse of vampirism, as well as beyond the commoditization, bricolage, and ‘European revolution of African values’ frameworks of the Comaroffs.¹ Bernault’s book perspicaciously shows that French and Gabonese ideologies about power and agency originated from their respective pre-colonial-encounter histories and knowledge systems, but became convergent and mutually reconstituted in the course of racialized colonial subjugation, resistance, and adaptation. Following on Bernault’s work, other scholars should pay closer attention to the gendering nature and gendered repercussions of these transformative colonial imaginaries of power and agency in Gabon. The book will appeal to scholars of colonialism in Africa and beyond, and to anyone interested in African spirituality and modernity. It will work well in graduate seminars, as well as upper-level undergraduate classes.

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EDUCATION AND NATION BUILDING IN ETHIOPIA

Éduquer la nation en Éthiopie: École, État et identités dans le Wolaita (1941–1991).

By Pierre Guidi.

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Pierre Guidi’s *Eduquer la nation en Ethiopie* studies schools as the meeting points between the state and the people in the Wolaita region of southwest Ethiopia between 1942 and 1991. This is a study of nation building from the grassroots and from the geographical and cultural margins of the Ethiopian empire. Through its focus on education in a country

¹ L. White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2000); J. L. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume II: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago, 1997).

that remained politically independent, the study presents a political, social, and intellectual history of globalization without European colonization.

The book is divided politically and chronologically into two parts: the first on Haile Selassie's return to power after the Italian occupation (1941–74) and the second on the Därg revolutionary military junta's rule (1974–91). The Wolaita region was itself colonized; it was forcefully integrated into the Ethiopian Empire in 1894, and its people shared neither the religion nor the language of the central government. They were harshly subjugated and exploited by their new overlords, who were recruited from among highland Amharic-speaking Orthodox Christian followers of the emperors. This experience made the majority of the Wolaita associate Amharic and written language with foreign administration, oppressive justice, and taxation. After the Second World War, the Ethiopian government's reforms included an education policy more open to conquered people. In the 1950s, Wolaita also converted en masse to Protestantism. The American Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) opened schools in rural areas and spread literacy and Amharic. Better-educated rural Wolaita became more numerous in the rare government high schools. Over time, students from southern Ethiopia graduated and joined the public administration, working in schools and health centres. Thus for the generation of the 1950s, formal education was a path to integration and emancipation. Emperor Haile Selassie's favoured themes of unity, progress, and hope echoed with the experience of the first graduates of Wolaita. They believed in the future and mostly supported their king.

In the 1960s formal education became more widely accepted, but as the number of rural pupils rose, professional openings closed down, while the political system tightened around the emperor. The embittered second generation of students and graduates turned to the opposition and, in the 1970s, to the revolution. Guidi argues that the revolution (1974–9) was not only urban and centred on the capital. His focus is on the relations between the revolutionary university students in Addis Ababa and the high school students in Wolaita. A Maoist inspired movement (*zämächa*) carried tens of thousands of revolutionary students to rural areas across the country to teach basic literacy to rural folks and carry out agrarian reforms.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) was the main rival to the revolutionary military junta in power (Därg). They initially recruited among students and invested themselves in the *zämächa* movement, making Wolaita one of their strongholds. However, when the EPRP tried to organize armed resistance against the brutal dictatorship of the Därg the rural population did not follow, and revolutionary students were easily hunted down by the authorities.

The ambivalence of the Wolaita about the new regime is well-illustrated in the second part of the book. On one hand, the population suffered terribly. They were heavily taxed, and their children were taken to die in a conscription army. But farmers were given land and the Wolaita became full citizens of the new, revolutionary Ethiopia. It was only in the mid-1980s, with a regime weakened by war, famine, and a failed villagization movement, that the Därg lost its support in rural areas. The Därg's education policy was initially important in rallying the rural population to the regime. But it was also part of the authoritarian state apparatus. Teachers were compelled to assist in pressganging unwilling students into an army decimated by the war in Eritrea.

A study of this quality could only be achieved by several years of fieldwork, an excellent mastery of Amharic, numerous interviews, and a relentless hunt for archives not only in Addis Ababa but also in isolated provincial administrative centres and remote rural schools. Its far-reaching conclusion, minute details of nation-building techniques, and strong anchoring in the social sciences will appeal widely to historians and social scientists.

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