Albeit it accounts for the whole genre of *gedl*, this hagiography is a treasure of information. If you look at it with a feminist eye (as Belcher promotes it), you will notice that the classic distribution of gender roles is challenged. Walatta Petros was the uncontested leader of several mixed-gender monastic communities; she debated with kings, missionaries, and high clerics; and, she led a self-determined life after leaving her husband. When her death was near, male community members conferred with her on who should succeed her rule. Her decision to name her loyal companion Eheta Kristos – another woman – was not contested.

Even without a feminist focus, the text offers fascinating insight into its time of composition. It presents the Ethiopian side of history and reveals how unpopular the Jesuits were and how the Orthodox resistance suffered and was contested by the king, missionaries, and court members alike.

We learn that it was challenging for the community members of Wallata Petros's monasteries to keep the vow of celibacy, as she assembled large groups of men and women at the same time. And we read that former slaves could live together with former slave owners in the same community and with the same social status.

In advertising the book, Belcher unfortunately reduced the noteworthiness of the text to the mention of same-sex desire included in a short episode of Petros's hagiography. This is a fact worthy of note, especially for a seventeenth-century text from Orthodox Ethiopia; however, it is simply one short episode. It also is not clear who the intended audience would be. The introduction appeals to the interested laymen, while the translation of the text and especially its annotation are of high standard. It would be desirable for its author, Michael Kleiner, to publish the whole Ethiopic text in a critical edition, since he has delivered such a meticulous work already.

Despite the criticism, the book under review is a welcome piece as it opens Ethiopian history to the broader public and presents the, rather unexpected, influential role women exerted in the religious and political society of seventeenth-century Ethiopia.

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SOMALI MIGRATION

Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity.
By Cawo M. Abdi.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Pp. ix + 289. $94.50, hardback (ISBN 978-0-8166-9738-0); $27.00, paperback (ISBN 978-0-8166-9739-7).
doi:10.1017/S0021853717000160

Key Words: Somalia, northeastern Africa, diaspora, Islam, migration, refugees.

This pioneering study compares the refugee and migration experiences of Somalis residing in three very different parts of the world: the United Arab Emirates (UAE); South Africa (especially, but not only, Gauteng Province); and the US (especially Minnesota and Ohio). Combining approaches that often remain apart – the anthropologist's focus on

identity and belonging and the sociologist's emphasis on settlement, resource mobilization, and integration – Cawo Abdi uses the method of multi-sited ethnography to give the Somali men and women she interviewed a voice. By focusing on the gaps between expectations and reality or between what migrants managed to achieve and what remained out of reach, the author succeeds in giving this book a unity that constitutes one of its major strengths and makes it eminently readable.

In the UAE, Somali migrants of a range of economic levels emphasized their sense of religious and cultural belonging, but with the exception of the top transnational businessmen, chafed at their insecure legal status, which also constituted a barrier to unhindered movement across borders. In South Africa, migrants expressed satisfaction at the speedy access to legal refugee papers and the crucial support from Indian fellow Muslims that facilitated initial settlement. However, barriers to permanent settlement and family reunification, as well as the extreme risk of physical violence in the economic niches open to them, made them dream of the more flexible citizenship represented by a European or US passport, not unlike their fellow Somalis in the UAE. In the US, Somalis made extensive use of governmental support systems, including health care and subsidized housing. Still, they expressed concern about the negative racialization and increasing Islamophobia confronting them. They also spoke about the strains of raising big families, disciplining teenage youth, and coping with a new gender order in which women are economically more independent from men than back home, in part because welfare checks and housing are registered in the names of mothers rather than fathers. The sense of obligation (shared by Somalis transnationally) of having to send remittances to relatives in Somalia and beyond also made successful integration more difficult. Even in the much-coveted American location, then, the earthly paradise of which Somali migrants dream remains elusive.

There are drawbacks to the tight focus of the book. First, while the author gives the numbers of the individuals she interviewed in a range of social settings (18–20), she does not clarify which sociological variables beyond gender and economic class guided her selection of respondents. While qualitative research does not require formal sampling, the absence of transparency in this matter makes it more difficult to evaluate the answers she elicits from those she interviewed. Second, the author pays no attention to the specific circumstances that motivated her respondents to leave Somalia, although this subject lies well within the conventions of immigration and transnationalism studies. The key events of the civil war in the period 1988–92 are summarized in Chapter One, but the respondents' specific and differential experiences of violence and circumstances of escape – in what stage of the civil war, from what kind of violence occurring in what area, and at what personal and family cost and loss – are not explored. Did those experiences not potentially affect the outcomes of their resettlement and shape the personal reflections that lie at the core of this study? Moreover, given that clan-based communal violence, directed at and perpetrated by civilians in the name of clan, constituted a significant dimension of Somali civil war violence, especially at the time of state collapse, this blind spot leads to another important absence in the study, namely the issue of how Somalis in the locations under study related, or failed to relate, to each other. The author may find any mention of clan unnecessary and improper (24–5), but given the fact that clan has been a crucial and long-standing technology of power in Somalia (from colonial times onwards and, with increasing lethalness, in 1978, 1988, and after the collapse of the state in 1991), ignoring when and how the

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politics and discourse of clan identity shape (or do not shape) the actions and mindsets of Somalis in the diaspora constitutes, to the mind of this reviewer, a missed opportunity and a serious shortcoming.

Finally, readers of this journal may want to note that this book is not framed as a study that documents the histories of the diaspora communities or traces change-over-time within them in any detail. Such themes may be fruitfully explored in the future. For example, one wonders whether, now that many Somalis have been in the US for twenty years or more, there have been changes in men's negative evaluations of a new gender order that empowers their wives' economic agency at their expense but has also expanded opportunity for their daughters.

All in all, this ambitious, pioneering, and informative study, which draws on ethnographic fieldwork in three different countries, is an important accomplishment that solidifies Cawo Abdi's position as a major scholar in the field of Somali and Somali diaspora studies.

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THE SHIFTA CONFLICT

Conflict in the Horn of Africa: The Kenya-Somalia Border Problem 1941–2014.
By Vincent Bakpetu Thompson.
Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2015. Pp. xv + 405. £59.95/$100.00, hardback (ISBN 978-0-7618-6527-8); £29.95/$46.99, paperback (ISBN 978-0-7618-6525-4).

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya: A Social History of the Shifta Conflict, c. 1963–1968.
By Hannah Whittaker.
Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014. Pp. ix + 176. €69.00/$89.00, paperback (ISBN 978-90-04-28267-4).
doi:10.1017/S0021853717000172

Key Words: Kenya, Somalia, East Africa, social, smuggling, violence.

The two books under review take up the post-independence struggle known as the 'Shifta Conflict' in which a substantial segment of the population of northern Kenya fought to be incorporated into the nascent Somali Republic rather than the Republic of Kenya. These carefully documented books could not be more different from each other: one is a diplomatic history, while the other privileges the perspective of local people. If names and dates had been fictionalized, the reader would not be able to tell that they deal with the same conflict.

Vincent Bakpetu Thompson's admirably rich account of the 'Shifta' crisis in northern Kenya from the 1960s focuses particularly upon the Ogaden war in the late 1970s as well as, to a far lesser degree, later developments. 'Shifta' refers to the movement of some members of the northern Kenyan population who, at independence and after, wanted to join Somalia and were supported in their guerrilla war by Somalia. Thompson's account is