Verena Böll, Georg Haneke, Günther Schlee, Ogato Ambaye and Robert Dobslaw: Emperor Haile Selassie I: his burial and the Rastafarians in Shashemene, Ethiopia. Two-part documentary. Halle (Saale): Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Department 'Integration and Conflict' 2018/19. 94 minutes

In 1974 the Derg, a Soviet-backed military junta, deposed Emperor Haile Selassie and placed him under house arrest. Ethiopia's King of Kings died a year later while still under arrest.[1] In 1992, after the end of the socialist regime, his remains were discovered buried under a concrete slab in his former palace and were transferred to the church of Ba'ata Mariam Geta in the palace compound. After long negotiations with the new government, in 2000 Haile Selassie's mortal remains were finally buried in a church ceremony in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Abeba. A proposal to hold a state funeral was rejected by the government.

The anthropologists Günther Schlee and Georg Haneke filmed Haile Selassie's church funeral on 5 November 2000. Between 2016 and 2019, a team of three researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Verena Böll, Ambaye Ogato and Robert Dobslaw, used the material to create a documentary film in two parts. The first part of the documentary is a compilation of footage from the funeral with explanations of the historical background and the ongoing funeral ceremony. The procession was accompanied by, among others, members of the Ethiopian royal family from Europe and America, former imperial guards, veterans of the Ethiopian-Italian war, church leaders, the ambassadors of African countries and prominent Rastafarian figures such as Rita Marley.

The ceremonies began at Ba'ata Mariam Geta Church, where, as already noted, Haile Selassie's remains had been kept since being discovered in 1992. From there, the procession with the coffin moved to Addis Abeba's largest square, Meskel Square, where some speeches were held by, among others, Prince Beede-Mariam as a representative of the royal family. The parade then continued on to St George's Church for further obsequies, since this was where Haile Selassie had been crowned in November 1930. The highlight of the celebration was the church liturgy at the procession's final destination, Holy Trinity Cathedral, which had been built by Haile Selassie himself. During his lifetime he had decided to be buried in Holy Trinity Cathedral, next to his wife Menen, who had died in 1962.[2] Numerous church choirs and church musicians (*debtera*) participated at this final destination of Haile Selassie's coffin, singing and waving Ethiopian flags, though flags without the Lion of Judah.[3] The culmination of the ceremony was two talks by Archbishop Abune Gerima and Patriarch Abune Paulos. They praised Haile Selassie as a 'guardian of religion' and for achieving independence from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They also recalled his political role, for example, as a supporter of African independence movements, and his dramatic appeal to the League of Nations in June 1936 over the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Finally, they also recalled the other victims of political violence in revolutionary Ethiopia.

As Schlee and Haneke followed the procession as part of the crowd, the film gives us the view of the ordinary participants, not that of the privileged, and often includes shots from the side-lines or the crowd. This and the long camera shots reveal the often improvised and uncertain character of the event. The original speeches and songs that appear in the footage have been translated from Amharic and Geez into English and German by the project members.

The first part of the documentary film ends with the following voice over, thus creating a connection to the second part of the film:

> His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I,
> the 225th ruler after Menelik I,
> son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,
> the victorious Lion of Judah,
> the Chosen One of God,
> King of Kings of Ethiopia
> is officially buried!
> For the Rastafari, who worship him as God and Messiah and call themselves Ras Tafari after his birth name and 1st prince title, he has not been [buried and is therefore not dead].

After the first part of the documentary was completed in 2018, it was shown to Rastafarians in their settlement at Shashemene,[4] who, because of their belief in Haile Selassie as the Messiah, doubt he has died and have their own views about the bones that were found and their burial. Interviews based on their comments in 2012, 2013 and 2017, led by Ambaye Ogato, form the basis of the second part of the documentary.

The Rastafari movement emerged in Jamaica during the 1930s, while Ethiopia was under Italian occupation and Haile Selassie was in exile in England.[5] Haile Selassie is viewed by Rastafarians as the Messiah who will lead the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora to freedom. Haile Selassie himself seemed divided in his relationship with the Rastafarians. On the one hand, he emphasized to them that he was a mortal person,[6] while on the other hand he did not want to presume to judge others' faiths.[7] After his return from England in 1948, he granted land for the 'black people of the world' in Shashemene, where many Rastafarians are still settled.

Individuals and representatives of the Rastafarian community in Shashemene were interviewed with the following questions that are blended in with interview clips:

- Who are the Rastafarians who live in Shashemene, and why do they live there?
- Who is Haile Selassie for them?
- Do the Rastafarians believe in Haile Selassie's death, and what do they think about the burial and the people who organized it?

At the beginning of this second part of the documentary a number of Rastafarians are briefly introduced. Already here it becomes clear how diverse this community is. Some people had already come to Ethiopia in the 1970s, while others only live in Shashemene on an occasional basis. Besides Rastafarians from the Caribbean, Rastafarians from other African countries, from Europe and even from Asia are also resident there. Some belong to religious orders like the Nyabinghi Order or grew up in Rastafarian families, while others found their way to Ethiopia as individuals. Sister Ijanyah Christian of the Nyabinghi Tabernacle Center and Ras Kwantinseb from Trinidad soon proved to be one of the most eloquent interview partners in this group.

After this introduction, Ato Zewde Gebre Negus from the Association of the Patriots explains the history of the town of Shashemene.[8] As the home of the graves of the fighters who died in the second Ethiopian-Italian war (1935–1941), it has become a symbol of Ethiopian unity and patriotism. After the Rastafarian settlement, it developed further into a sign of pan-Africanism. To this day the land that Haile Selassie made available to the Rastafarians legitimizes their claim to be in Africa (Bonacci 2010b:551).

Then the focus of the film shifts to the Rastafarian's faith in Haile Selassie. Community responses and views on these points are very diverse. While some people see Haile Selassie as a God or a black Christ, as opposed to a white Jesus, others see him as a believer in Christ himself. Views also diverge on the issue of whether he is actually dead. While some believe he appeared in the UK in 1981 and that the bones that were found and buried in reality came from a man taller in size, others see him as a source of inspiration and a role model and study his speeches as a third testament.

The next topic dealt with in the film is the divided relationship between the royal family and the Rastafarians. Unlike the latter, the royal family regards their former head as mor-

tal and has fought for years to find his remains and finally put them to rest. However, the members of the royal family who have their say here, such as Haile Selassie's great-nephew Asfa-Wossen Asserate, credit the Rastafarians for continuing the faith in pan-Africanism for which Haile Selassie fought so hard.[9] The royal family and the Haile Selassie Memorial Association, who played important roles in organizing the funeral, are convinced that the correct bones were buried at the funeral. They justify their disagreement with the Rastafarians with reference to the usual controversies that exist between historiography and religion.

This film is an exciting continuation of another film, "The Emperor's birthday" by John Dollar (1992), which focuses on events around the celebrations of Haile Selassie's hundredth birthday, shot shortly after the fall of the Derg regime, but before the Emperor's bones had been excavated and transferred to Ba'ata Mariam Geta Church. It depicts members of the imperial family on their first visit to Ethiopia since going into exile and shows them mourning Haile Selassie and other family members who had been murdered during the socialist regime. The royal family, like the film crew, planned to attend Haile Selassie's burial, which was scheduled for July 1992. However, the government postponed the celebration at short notice. In 1992 no one could have imagined that it would only take place eight years later, in 2000.

The film "The Emperor's birthday" also features several hundred Rastafarians from all over the world visiting Shashemene to celebrate Haile Selassie's hundredth birthday during a whole week of drumming and chanting. Generally, the film provides interesting insights into life in Ethiopia shortly after the fall of the Derg regime and includes important historic footage of, for example, Haile Selassie's 1966 visit to Jamaica and an interview with him in his palace garden. In 1992, the Rastafarians in Shashemene numbered not more than fifty settlers from the Caribbean, the US and UK. Sixteen years later, when the film reviewed here was shot, we are given a completely different picture of the expanded Rastafarian community that had settled in Ethiopia: the land Haile Selassie formerly dedicated to the 'black people of the world' is now also home to white Rastafarians from Europe and Asia.[10]

The two films are based on the same idea, already mentioned above, that the Rastafarians, who see Haile Selassie not as a mortal emperor but as an immortal messiah, do not accept the presence or burial of his mortal remains, because the bones that were found appear to be too long. Neither film goes beyond this, and moreover the questions the film discussed here asks, such as whether Haile Selassie was dead for the Rastafarians, already anticipate certain answers. It is therefore debatable why the two films both give the Rastafarians such a strong voice on Haile Selassie's remains and their burial.

I would have preferred a combination of the original footage of the funeral with a discussion based on the historical facts. The twenty-five-year delay in holding the funeral of the King of Kings would certainly have provided enough interesting material, such as the royal family's struggle to locate Haile Selassie's remains and organize a funeral, the relationship between the state and religion in Ethiopia, or the view of the current government on the deposed ruler.

However, this two-part documentary is unquestionably an important document regarding Ethiopia's contemporary history. Thanks are due to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, for editing the film footage and making it freely available in German and English on its website to all researchers and interested parties.

[1] 'King of Kings' is the literal translation of Haile Selassie's title in Amharic ('neguse negest') which is usually transliterated into English as 'Negus' and translated as 'Emperor'. For a more detailed description of the fall of Haile Selassie

and the circumstances of his death, see Asfa-Wossen (2015).

2 A more detailed account of the processions can be found in Asfa-Wossen (2015:312–313).

3 From 1914 until today the Ethiopian flag has featured the three colours green, yellow and red. Until the fall of Haile Selassie – and thus the end of the Solomonic dynasty, which claimed to be the descendant of the Tribe of Judah – the flag also depicted the Lion of Judah. After 1974, the lion was replaced with other emblems.

4 For more information on Shashemene, a small town in southern Ethiopia, see Bonacci (2010a).

5 For more information on the Rastafarians, see Bonacci (2010b).

6 See McLeod (2014:70).

7 During a visit to Jamaica in 1966, Haile Selassie is reported to have said, 'Who am I to disturb their belief?' (Chang and Chen 1998:243).

8 This association was created to honour the Ethiopian soldiers who fought and defeated the Italian invaders during World War II.

9 Interesting insights into the relationship between the royal family and the Rastafarians can be found in the additional interviews Erin McLeod conducted with Haile Selassie's descendants (2015:70–74) and the corresponding section in Asfa-Wossen's biography of Haile Selassie (Asfa-Wossen 2015:59–60).

10 Compare Bonacci (2015:249–254).

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Luc Pecquet (coordinator in partnership with the Ethnographic Film Committee): Jean Rouch, ethnologue et cinéaste. Journal des Africanistes 87(1/2). 2018. 520 pp., figures, tables

This special issue of the Journal des Africanistes, published as a tribute to Jean Rouch, includes a collection of articles organized around five themes presenting different facets of this ethnologist's masterly career: "Premiers films", "Migrations, déplacements", "Possessions, performances", "Transmettre: Harvard", "Raconter, façonner" and finally a selection of contributions grouped under the title of "Mélanges". Through the diversity of the themes and the richness of the career path of this 'researcher at the Musée de l'Homme' (Godard 1959:19–22; all translations from the French N.W.), who simultaneously claimed to be an ethnographer, a filmmaker, a poet, a storyteller and a scientist, the reader immediately grasps the complexity and importance of his character. As Luc Pecquet, in charge of this issue, asserts, at more than 520 pages this double volume of the Journal des Africanistes is a response to the lack of any official acknowledgement from the research laboratory with which the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique entrusted Jean Rouch, as early as 1962.[1]