

Haile Selassie Film Project: Emperor Haile Selassie I. His Burial and the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia.

A two-part documentary by Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Department 'Integration and Conflict'

Part I: The Burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Germany, 2018

Part II: Emperor Haile Selassie I and his 'Burial' – Perspectives of the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. Germany, 2019



Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Halle (Saale), Germany Department 'Integration and Conflict' Director: Günther Schlee

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### **Summary**

The main topic of the two-part documentary is the burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1892–1975) of Ethiopia. The burial took place in Addis Ababa on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2000. A few Rastafarians attended parts of the ceremony. They worship Emperor Haile Selassie I as God and Messiah. The first part of the documentary accompanies and comments on the burial. The second part points out the perspectives of Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia about the burial through interviews (interview period: 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019).



### Background

The anthropologists Günther Schlee and Georg Haneke (†2017) attended and filmed the burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 5th of November 2000. They accompanied the funeral procession and the church ceremony in the St. Trinity Cathedral. Their detailed recordings are important documents of Ethiopia's contemporary history. In addition to the celebrations, they also reflect the atmosphere in Addis Ababa in the year 2000. The original footage has been kept in the archives of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPI) in Halle (Saale), Germany ever since. A project at the institute (Haile Selassie Film Project) enabled Verena Böll, assisted by Ambaye Ogato and Robert Dobslaw to work with the original film material. Researches about the circumstances and the organization of the delayed funeral of Haile Selassie (25 years after his death) and the church ceremony were conducted, the original speeches and songs (Amharic, Ge'ez) translated (English, German), and interviews and recordings carried out. Because of the richness of the original footage and the additional material on the Rastafarians it was decided to make a second part.



After the liberation from the Italian occupation (1935–1941), Haile Selassie granted land to the "Black People of the World" in Shashamane, Ethiopia. This land grant was a thank-you present for their military and ideological support during the occupation. He also granted land in Shashamane to the families of the Ethiopian patriots, who fought against the Italians.

From all over the world, Rastafarians, venerating Haile Selassie as God, Messiah and Saviour, are still 'repatriating' to Ethiopia due to this land grant. They perceive Ethiopia as Zion, the promised land mentioned in the Bible. They have been living in Shashamane for half a centenary now.

The main task for the second part was exploring how these Rastafarians consider the announced death of Haile Selassie in 1975 and the burial in the year 2000. With the methodological approach of *longue durée* interviews (period of six years) made in Shashamane with several Rastafarians from different organizations (houses) the perspectives of the Rastafarians could be gathered. Some of the interviewees had agreed to watch and comment on the first part of this documentary, the film about the burial of Haile Selassie, and a rough version of part II. Their arguments and reflections were integrated into the second part.

#### Part I

The first part of the documentary accompanies and comments on the burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. He had died in 1975 but was buried 25 years later. The ceremonies took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2000 and lasted the whole day. They were mainly conducted at three places: Meskel Square, St. George Church and Holy Trinity Cathedral.

The atmosphere and tension of the obsequies, carried out many years after the death, is clearly noticeable. The main liturgical ritual, the dance of the church musicians (Dabtara) around the sarcophagus of Haile Selassie on the foreground of the St. Trinity Church (min 28:40–34:60), was not commented by the project team in order to keep the dignity of the ceremony. The documentary compiles a 45 minutes film from the extensive material, which accompanied the funeral procession with sensitivity.

#### Research Work

Research about the circumstances of the dead of Haile Selassie I and the funeral's delay were carried out in Ethiopia and Germany. Several interviews were made and recorded. The research results were integrated into the film via a commentary and subtitles. The original speeches and songs (Amharic, Ge'ez) of the burial ceremony were translated into English and German. The songs used in the film were composed by Dawit Guyo. Subtitles, maps, a picture, and historic material like the invitation card of the funeral were integrated, too. The preliminary version was shown to the family members of Haile Selassie, the Emperor Haile Selassie I Memorial Association and some Rastafarians. Their comments and further research results will be published in various other media (articles, podcasts).



#### Part II

The second part is an intense dialogue with 15 Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. The film presents them in their surroundings and guides the viewer through the themes of 'death' and 'burial' with the help of eight questions and the respective answers of the Rastafarians:

- 1. Who are the Rastafarians living in Shashamane, Ethiopia?
- 2. Why do Rastafarians live in Shashamane, Ethiopia?
- 3. Who is Emperor Haile Selassie I for the Rastafarians in Shashamane?
- 4. Is Emperor Haile Selassie really dead?
- 5. Where is Emperor Haile Selassie living today?
- 6. Where else is Emperor Haile Selassie I present today?
- 7. What is the connection between the organizers of the burial in 2000 and the Rastafarians?
- 8. What do the Rastafarians say about the burial?



The film introduces the belief system of the Rastafarians in Shashamane and reflects their way of life, too. A representative of the Association of the Patriots, the board of the Emperor Haile Selassie I Memorial Association and two family members of the Emperor also expressed their views on the events (interview period: 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019).

#### Research Work

In 2012 and 2013 Ambaye Ogato conducted the first interviews with some of the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. In 2018 and 2019, Verena Böll and Ambaye Ogato carried out further interviews. The interviews took place in the compounds, homes or other localities of the Rastafarians. Interviews with relatives of the Emperor and the organizers of the burial complemented the topic. In October 2018, the first part of the documentary, the film about the burial of Haile Selassie was presented to Rastafarians in Shashamane.



Their reactions and comments on the 'burial' were recorded and incorporated in the second part of this documentary. In May 2019 a preliminary version of the second part was shown to the interviewees. The results of the discussions and reflections about reality, death, burial and Pan-Africanism were integrated in the final version of part II.

### Research Ethics

The first part reflects the ceremonies on the burial of the last emperor of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie I. It focuses on the procedures and atmosphere of that single day (5<sup>th</sup> November 2000). The burial ceremony stands for itself and therefore the commentary (voice-over and subtitles) gives only the most necessary information for understanding the background. It is a documentary about the funeral and neither about the life, the reign nor the personality of Haile Selassie.



With the second part the research team aimed to produce a film with the Rastafarians and not merely about them. After the first interviews, the team edited a first rough version and showed it on the next fieldwork trip to the interviewees. The Rastafarians had thus the opportunity to comment on the documentary, accompany the editing process, discuss their opinions and give further explanations. This process, recorded with accuracy by the film team, ensured fair treatment of the Rastafarians. They indeed appreciated this procedure of participation. The principle of transfer – that the results of the research be given back to the ones who were researched – was ensured by this repetitively encounter between Rastafarians and the film team.

#### Research Results

A two-part documentary – documenting the burial ceremony in a 45-minute film and a second 49-minute film documenting the perspectives of the Rastafarians about the burial ceremony – was produced.

This booklet for the DVD folder gives an overview about the research and information about the technical data of the documentary. A postcard-book, available on the MPI website, shows the main interviewees and gives further explanations about the life of the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. Articles will be published under the title of the documentary to be connected easily with the film. The first part of the documentary was already shown on the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES, October 2018) in Mekelle, Ethiopia and the Centenary of Amharic courses at the University of Hamburg, Germany (May 2019). The documentary can be downloaded on the website of the MPI and is available as DVD through the library of the institute and other libraries worldwide.

https://www.eth.mpg.de/4960163/haile\_selassie

Verena Böll vboell@yahoo.com Halle (Saale), Germany July 31, 2019

#### Technical Data

### Camera

Günther Schlee
(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2000)
Georg Haneke
(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2000)
Ambaye Ogato
(Addis Ababa, Debre Zeyt and
Shashamane, Ethiopia 2014, 2018,
2019; Frankfurt, Germany 2017)
Biruck Mengesha
(Shashamane, Ethiopia 2012, 2013)
Verena Böll
(Addis Ababa and Shashamane,
Ethiopia 2018, 2019)

### **Footage**

The original recordings of Günther Schlee and Georg Haneke were converted into MP4-videos

Günther Schlee 1 MP4-video, 60 min, Meskel Square, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2000

The original recordings of Biruck Mengesha and Ambaye Ogato (MTS-video) were converted into MP4-videos.

Biruck Mengesha, Ambaye Ogato, 92 MTS-videos, ca. 150 min, Shashamane, Harar, Dire Dawa, Hawassa, Ethiopia, 2012, 2013, 2014 Verena Böll, 16 MP4-videos, 12 min, Addis Ababa and Shashamane, Ethiopia 2019

#### Camera Assistant

Biruck Mengesha (Shashamane, Ethiopia 2012, 2013) Alemtsega Zimita (Shashamane, Ethiopia 2018, 2019)

### Locations and dates of the film

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2000, 2018, 2019) Shashamane, Ethiopia (2012, 2013, 2018, 2019) Frankfurt, Germany (2017)

Georg Haneke 1 MP4-video, 60 min, Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2000 1 video clip, 3 min, Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2000

Ambaye Ogato 8 MTS-videos, 65 min, Frankfurt, Germany, 2017 61 MTS-videos, 236 min (August), 398 min (October), Addis Ababa and Shashamane, Ethiopia, 2018 38 MTS-videos, 332 min, Addis Ababa and Shashamane, Ethiopia, 2019

### Storage/Organizing of the material

The recordings of Günther Schlee, Georg Haneke, Biruck Mengesha, Ambaye Ogato and Verena Böll are stored on MPI servers and the GWDG Cloud (Haile Selassie Film Project). The contents of the films were transcribed by minutes and are stored as files on the server. Speeches, held in Amharic, Oromo or Japanese were translated (English, German) and transcribed by minutes. Songs (Ge'ez, Amharic) were translated into English and German as well.

#### Interviews

Ambaye Ogato (Ethiopia: Addis Ababa 2018, 2019, Debre Zeyt 2018, Shashamane 2012, 2013, 2018, 2019; Germany: Frankfurt 2017)

Verena Böll (Ethiopia: Addis Ababa 2018, 2019, Debre Zevt 2018, Shashamane 2018,

2019; Germany: Frankfurt 2017)

#### Music

Dawit Guyo (Hawassa, Ethiopia 2017, 2019) Composition of eight songs Recording: Dave Records, Hawassa, Ethiopia

Audio format of the songs: AIFF

#### Editor

Robert Dobslaw Georg Haneke

# **Editing-Technology**

Apple

### **Transcription**

Verena Böll Ambaye Ogato Getinet Assefa

### Languages

English, German, Amharic, Ge'ez

#### **Sub-Titles**

English, German

Gathering in Shashamane by © Ras Kawintseb, Jaden, Shashamane 2018

Selassie I by © Ras Iron Gad, Shashamane 2019

Give Thanks and Praises by © Bob Marley, Fwè Jah Jah, Shashamane 2018

### **Editing Program**

Final Cut Pro Motion

### **Duration**

Part I: 45 min Part II: 49 min

### **Assistance**

Getinet Assefa Gadena

# Cartography

Jutta Turner

### Interviewees Rastafarians

Ras Kawintseb (2018/2019)

Alex Renia (2018/2019)

Sister Sandrine Somme (2018/2019)

Jaden (2018)

Sister Berenice Morizeau (2013/2019)

Jonathan Dyer (2019)

Ras Gyone (2018/2019)

Wubschet Hailu (2018)

Jahuponus (2018)

Genet (2018)

Sister Joan Douglas (2018/2019)

Sister Linda (2019)

Che Peter Lee (2018/2019)

Ras Fwè Jah Jah (2018/2019)

Ras Kabinda (2013/2019)

Sister Ijahnya Christian (2013/2019)

Ras Iron Gad (2019) Elder Zion Gad (2019)

### Script

Verena Böll Ambaye Ogato

### Photos (booklet)

Verena Böll, Ambaye Ogato (2018, 2019)

### Design (booklet)

Robert Dobslaw

#### Voice-over

Brian Campbell (Part I)

### **Recording Studio**

IMMS, Halle (Saale), Germany Thomas Knebel (Part I)

### **Association of the Patriots**

Ato Zewde Gebre Negus (2018/2019)

### **HS I Memorial Association**

Liqe Kahenat Abbaye (2018) Ato Abebe Bekele (2018) Ato Neguse Ambo (2018/2019)

### **HS Family**

Le'ul Beede-Mariam Mekonen (2018) Dr. Asfa-Wossen Asserate (2017)

#### Advice

Departmental Colloquium
'Integration and Conflict'
Werkstatt Ethnologie
Beate Engelbrecht, Jean Lydall,
Harald Müller-Dempf, Günther Schlee

### Distribution

Library of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany This two-part documentary was enabled by a project of Prof. Dr. Günther Schlee at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany, Department 'Integration and Conflict' (2016–2019).

### **Project Team Members**

Dr. Verena Böll, Dr. Ambaye Ogato, Robert Dobslaw

# **Project Management**

Dr. Verena Böll

### Citation (in Catalogue, articles, books etc.) English Version

Emperor Haile Selassie I. His Burial and the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. A two-part Documentary.

Part I: The Burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I.

By Verena Böll, Georg Haneke, Günther Schlee.

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany, 2018. 45 min.

https://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/en/media/haile-selassie-film-project

Part II: Emperor Haile Selassie I and his 'Burial' – Perspectives of the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia.

By Verena Böll, Ambaye Ogato, Robert Dobslaw.

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany, 2019. 49 min.

https://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/en/media/haile-selassie-film-project

### **German Version**

Kaiser Haile Selassie I. Seine Beisetzung und die Rastafari in Shashamane, Äthiopien. Zweiteilige Dokumentation.

Teil I: Die Beisetzung von Kaiser Haile Selassie I.

Verena Böll, Georg Haneke, Günther Schlee.

Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung, Halle (Saale), Deutschland, 2018, 45 Minuten.

https://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/de/media/haile-selassie-film-project



