



Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century

Donald Crummey

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Donald Crummey's monumental work is the first extended history of Ethiopia to focus on the system of taxation and tribute, called gult, that underpinned the region's social and political structure for some six centuries. By making imaginative use of previously overlooked records, particularly property documents that were written in the margins and flyleaves of Ethiopian manuscripts, Crummey provides new insight into how ordinary farming and herding folk were incorporated into and affected by the institutions that ruled them. He examines how social relations affected the conditions for economic production and how, in turn, people of power drew on the wealth created by society's basic producers. The persistence over six centuries of a continuing pattern of social inequality, Crummey concludes, can only be explained by the social character of gult as a foundation of enduring relations between the tribute payer and the tribute receiver.

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