

The idea that WWI has been a global conflict is commonly accepted by the scholarly community and it constitutes a real *leitmotif* of the most recent literature on this topic. As a consequence of this development, a number of scholars has started investigating the impact of WWI on Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and even Latin America.

This conference aims to suggest an analysis of the conflict that focuses on three crucial points. The first one is related to space. It seems to us that the framework of the nation state is too circumscribed and does not allow to capture the complexity of the relations that came into being at local, national and international level. In this regard we find particularly inadequate the conventional approach which tends to investigate WWI in Africa and the Middle East as two separate settings. Our choice to focus on a territory which stretches from Libya to Somalia is an attempt to overcome this hiatus. Embracing an area rather than a war theatre allows to connect colonies, states and territories that have maintained substantially different attitudes with regard to the war such as being belligerent, neutral and non-belligerent.

The second focus of the conference is related to time and, more precisely, to chronologies. As a result of a long and vibrant debate, it is now taken for granted that military chronologies, are just one - and probably not even the most effective - of the possible periodisations of WWI. For the geographic area taken into account by the conference this issue is even more relevant. In fact, on one side some scholars suggest that the Libyan war of 1911-1912 could be taken as the real beginning for WWI. At the same time other scholars emphasise the fact that some of the consequences of the War stretched over a longer period of time and mention among their examples the Egyptian revolution of 1919 and the subsequent independence of 1922, the nationalist movement in the Sudan in the 20s, the political change in the Hejaz, and the British decision to hand over the Jubaland to Italy in 1924. Though some of these suggestions can be criticised, it remains sure that the transition from peace to war and from war to peace in the region lasted well beyond the conventional framework 1914-1918 and that the ensuing political turmoil that engulfed the region significantly redrew the political map of the area.

The third and final focus of the conference is on agency. The conference want to shed light on how different local powers negotiated their involvement in the conflict, providing, in this process, ample evidence of their autonomy of judgement and of their independence in taking action. Tensions ignited by WWI interacted with complex pre-existing balance of power, which, in many cases, influenced the positioning and choices of the local actors.

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# THE FIRST WORLD WAR FROM TRIPOLI TO MOGADISHU (1911-1924)



30 Sept. – 1 Oct. 2016

**Ras Makonnen Hall**  
*Institute of Ethiopian Studies*  
*Addis Ababa University*  
*Sidist Kilo Campus - Social Sciences*

Cover picture: A joint Italian and British patrol on the Egyptian Libya border, 1916. *Archivio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Roma.*



## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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## FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

### 9:30 Opening ceremony:

Ahmed Hassan Omer, Director Institute of Ethiopian Studies

Samuel Negash, Chair Department of History (AAU)

David Ambrosetti, Director Centre français des études éthiopiennes

**10:00 keynote address** by Shiferaw Bekele, Addis Ababa University

coffee break

### 11:30–12:45 Panel 1 **WWI General Considerations**

Chair: Ahmed Hassan Omer, Institute of Ethiopian Studies

Tesema Ta'a, Addis Ababa University

**"Africa and World War I (1914-1918)"**

Haggai Erlich, Tel Aviv University

**"WWI in the Middle East and Africa. Nationalist Movements in a Formative Age"**

lunch break

### 14:30-16:30 Panel 2 **Origins and Understandings**

Chair: Samuel Negash, Addis Ababa University

Mostafa Minaw, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

**The Eastern Sahara and the Ottoman 'Scramble for Africa**

Andrea Ungari, Guglielmo Marconi University, Rome

**The Italo-Turkish War: from a Colonial War to an European War**

Stefan Hock, Georgetown University

**Waking Us from this Endless Slumber: The Ottoman Empire's African Origins of the First World War**

coffee break

### 17:00-19:00 Panel 3 **New Sources and Perspectives**

Chair: Bellete Bizuneh, Addis Ababa University

Eileen Ryan, Temple University, Philadelphia

**The First World War and Resistance in the Libyan Oral History Project**

Rémi Dewière, ConfigMed/IMAF, Paris, in collaboration with

Vincent Hiribarren, King's College, London

**'Our Joy Is not for German Prince because We Are on the Path of Imam Malik'. A Borno Letter in the Anglo-German War for Kamerun (1914-1916)**

Uoldelul Chelati Dirar, University of Macerata

**Writing WW1 with African Gazes. The Great War in the Writing of Eritrean Expatriates**

social dinner

## SATURDAY 1 OCTOBER

### 9:30-12:00 Panel 4 **Diplomacy and Nation-Building**

Chair: Haggai Erlich, Tel Aviv University

Patrick Gilkes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa and Martin Plaut, The Commonwealth Institute, London

**"Great War Intrigues in the Horn of Africa"**

Gabriele Montalbano, EPHE/University of Florence

**The Italian Community of Tunisia from Libyan Colonial Ambitions to First World War. A Colonial-Migrant Approach to an Italian Community under French Colonial Rule**

Juliette Honvault, Aix-Marseille Université/IREMAM

**World War I and the Perspective of a Hashemite Order in Yemen. Study of the Chronicle of Ismā'il b. Muḥ ammad al-Washālī**

Simon Imbert-Vier, IMAF, Aix-en-Provence

**Living the War far away from the Front: Creating New Territories in Djibouti**

lunch break

### 14:00-16:00 Panel 5 **Economic, Social and Cultural Aspects**

Chair: David Ambrosetti, Centre français des études éthiopiennes

Laurent Jolly, LAM, Pau

**The Great War Seen from Djibouti: Controlling, Recruiting, and Enlisting**

Massimo Zaccaria, University of Pavia

**Feeding the War. Canned Meat Production in the Horn of Africa and the Italian Front**

Salomon Addis Getahun, Central Michigan University-Mt. Pleasant

**Italy's Ethiopian Mercenaries, the Forgotten Trnbuli**

coffee break

### 16:30-18:30 Panel 6 **The Aftermath**

Chair: Tekalign W/Mariam, Addis Ababa University

Jakob Zollmann, Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung, Berlin

**Ethiopia, Neutrality, and the First World War.**

**Considerations of Foreign Policy and International Law by the European Power**

Anne-Claire Bonneville, INALCO/CERMOM, Paris

**Aftershocks of the First World War in the Nile Valley**

Samson A. Bezabeh, Makerer University, Kampala

**Indian Ocean Diasporas During the Inter War Period: The Case of Arabs in Djibouti, 1919–1939**

**18:30** Closing remarks