



## Guardians of the Tradition (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)

*By James De Lorenzi*

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**Guardians of the Tradition (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)** By James De Lorenzi

This book explores the development of historiography in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the home of Africa's oldest written historical tradition. Taking issue with those who describe history as a uniquely western intellectual pursuit and the historical discipline as a specifically modern form of knowledge, the present work offers a comprehensive survey of Ethiopia and Eritrea's rich and dynamic tradition of vernacular historical writing, which began with the monumental epigraphy of Aksum, flourished in the medieval Solomonid era, reached its creative meridian in the early twentieth century, and endured through the revolutionary era into the present day. Its primary focus is a cohort of early twentieth-century Ethiopian and Eritrean historians who explored innovative questions, genres, methods, and sources in order to grapple with a host of problems related to the modern world.

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**Guardians of the Tradition (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)** By James De Lorenzi **Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

The century-long study of Ethio-Eritrean tradition has never been crowned with such an objective, scientific definition as in *Guardians of the Tradition* . . . (It) shows remarkable insight into a complicated and sensitive problem at the very basis of Ethio-Eritrean studies, for which contribution scholars will be grateful.

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN HISTORY (Bairu Tafla, University of Hamburg) "De Lorenzi provides an insightful historiographical taxonomy of centuries of Ethiopian and Eritrean scholarship, revealing the complex, often contested processes by which African intellectuals selectively meshed vernacular approaches to history with foreign concepts and methodologies. Interesting, smart, well organized, and effective." Tim Carmichael, College of Charleston A crucial reference work for Ethiopian intellectual history . . . *Guardians of the Tradition* is argued clearly and convincingly, with evidence inferred from a wide array of primary sources. (A)n engaging and informative read. CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES (Fikru Gebrikidan, St. Thomas University) The creativity and richness of Ethiopian historical writing forcefully challenge the argument that historiography is a product of Western modernity and a Western export - a point rather obvious for Africanists, but not so obvious in the field of history at large, which De Lorenzi attacks for its 'parochialism' and 'latent Eurocentrism.' AFRICA (Sara Marzagora, School of Oriental and African Studies) "Insightful, painstakingly researched, and innovative in its selection and sensitive to changing regional and international contexts . . . (De Lorenzi) has opened up new vistas to readers of the concerns, conventions, and analytical categories of public intellectuals who combined traditional and modern concepts in the construction of Ethiopian historiography." Ruth Iyob, University of Missouri, St. Louis De Lorenzi is a remarkable scholar . . . His latest and most interesting book deals with Ethiopian and Eritrean intellectuals, examined in terms of tradition and cultural change. This topic . . . is rarely treated in such a sweeping geographical-historical framework . . . An ongoing debate, a stimulating topic. AETHIOPICA (Irma Taddia, Universita di Bologna)

### **About the Author**

James De Lorenzi is associate professor of history at John Jay College, City University of New York.

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