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**Georg Klute. 2013. Tuareg-Aufstand in der Wüste.
Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag**

Author:

Petr Skalník – Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové, The Czech Republic

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University of Hradec Králové
Philosophical Faculty

Klute, Georg. 2013. *Tuareg-Aufstand in der Wüste. Ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie der Gewalt und des Krieges*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 696 pages.

This monumental work has been slightly revised 'habilitation' thesis which has waited for publication for quite few years. The Köppe publishing house has undertaken the task of making it accessible to the academic world and the wider public. I must say from the outset that it was the right decision because the quality of the text is outstanding.

At the same time the reviewer has to admit that the task of assessment of such a gigantic work is not at all easy. The author based his work on extensive and repeated fieldwork in three major countries with a Tuareg population, namely Mali, Niger and Algeria (unfortunately the map on page 238 is not clearly reproduced). He also studied practically all accessible literature in several languages, collected and used government documents. His sympathy lies with the Tuareg but as a scholar he keeps the necessary distance and is true to his academic calling. Of course, the problem is coupled by the subject of the book which is war and violent conflict. As is known the Tuareg have migrated over an enormous territory, mostly arid, making the central part of the Sahara Desert their territory. This territory was divided into at least four if not more colonial and post-colonial states. Thus the Tuareg experienced the tragic division of their ethnic territory into several modern nation-states. Luckily, however, the area of their distribution has had very porous borders and that enabled the Tuareg to continue in their migrations and keep their contacts across international borders. The special estate or caste character of Tuareg society has determined the relations to the modern state elites. It had a more respectful relationship toward Algiers and Tripoli but was condescending towards Bamako and Niamey or Ouagadougou. This major difference in attitude has also contributed to the places and directions of the Tuareg rebellions.

The book is divided into four major parts. Beside the theoretical and methodological Introduction, the author begins with the poetry of the revolt which he collected in cooperation with local Tuareg specialists. This 180 pages long treatise is as very suitable introduction as it is an original approach to the Tuareg uprising. But let us first look at the Introduction. Its central part – political anthropology of Tuareg rebellions – asserts among

others that the chiefs were successful mediators between the central governments in Mali and Niger and that the rebellions have accelerated the democratisation process in those two countries. The rebellions can be classified as a small-scale conflict (*Kleinkriege*), in fact a kind of maquis war in small groups, mostly using the natural mountain terrain as cover. The Tuareg maquis used small infantry weapons, and little artillery. However, terrain vehicles in which the fighters very skilfully moved around the desert in were very important. Methodologically, Klute advises that participant observation in the armed conflicts is hardly possible, and ethically problematic. Thus reconstruction work is the base for data collection. The anthropologist serves as a catalyser which induces the interviewed partner to tell his story. The violent conflicts are thus described and interpreted in the thick manner known from the work of Clifford Geertz.

When we now return to the poetry of rebellion we realize that the anthropologist is the most suitable for placing this artistic production into a social and political context and thus offer the most likely interpretation. The poetry of the revolt addresses itself to the whole Tuareg nation, in fact it is a nation-building poetry. This nation in the making will overcome the traditional hierarchy. This brings us to the Tuareg living in exile in Arab countries which the Tuareg fighters derived its existence from as this was their recruitment and training ground. Exile however confirmed that the Tuareg from Mali and the Tuareg from Niger did not melt; their identity was further derived from their origin in each modern state. The central part is called War in the Desert. The small war was to a certain extent culturally and geographically circumscribed. What is noteworthy is the hybrid character of the conflict because fighters and non-fighters, front and hinterland and even peace and war are difficult to distinguish. Finally, the fourth part deals with domination (Herrschaft) in Aday by which the author means the formation of new forms of politics in the periphery of the Malian post-colonial state. Here comes Klute's and von Trotha's term of parasovereign domination. It combines the existing chieftaincy structure with armed organization. It is not by chance that the book is dedicated to Trutz von Trotha to whom the author is academically indebted.

To conclude the reviewer classifies the monograph by Georg Klute to be among the best that has come from German African studies in recent years. Rather than waiting for a translation, I recommend the potential readers from other language circles to learn German because this volume is worth

it. It brings the rather intractable subject of war into the centre of interest not only for anthropologists but also for political scientists, sociologists and historians. It deals with the African regional war but should be studied by all who are interested in the emancipation movements in other parts of the world.

Petr Skalník