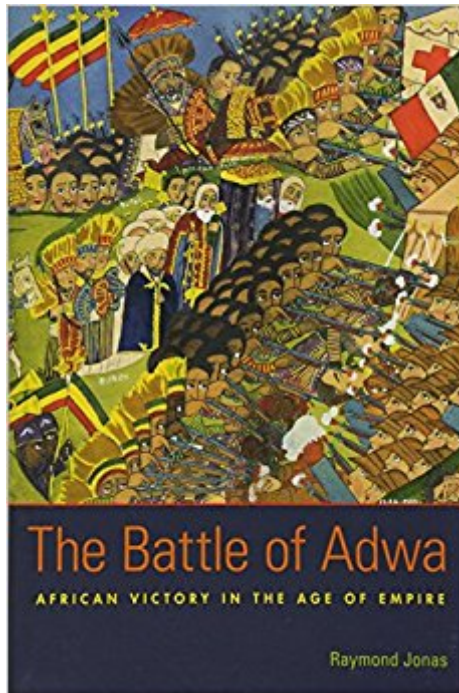




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The Battle Of Adwa: African Victory In The Age Of Empire



Synopsis

In 1896 a massive Ethiopian army routed an invading Italian force and brought Italy's conquest of Africa to an end. In defending its independence, Ethiopia cast doubt on the assumption that all Africans would fall under the rule of Europeans, and opened a breach that would lead to the continent's painful struggle for freedom from colonial rule.

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Customer Reviews

"Jonas has brought Adwa into the fold of transnational history, marrying the local and the global in lively, engaging prose in this excellent exercise in narrative history." -- Teshale Tibebu, Temple University, A Choice (A Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2012)"[Jonas has given] us a masterly account of one of the most dramatic moments in the modern history of Africa."- Bahru Zewde, University of Addis Ababa, Africa Review of Books Jonas offers the first comprehensive study of one of the most important events in modern African history. He brilliantly brings to life the story of Ethiopian leaders, Italian military officials, and quirky European advisors and observers. Written in a wonderfully evocative and lively style, this book firmly establishes the Battle of Adwa's place in world history and will appeal to a broad readership. (Jonathan Miran, author of Red Sea Citizens)On March 1, 1896, near the town of Adwa, in Ethiopia, an African army convincingly struck down the colonizing Italian army in a battle that decisively shaped not only the contours of Ethiopia but also its future and that of the continent. As University of Washington historian Jonas so deftly observes in this nimble and artfully crafted work, the events at Adwa cast doubt upon Europeans' unshakeable certainty that Africans would eventually fall under their rule. Jonas draws vibrant

portraits of the personalities at the center of these events, from the shrewd Ethiopian monarch Menelik and his bold, aggressive wife, Taytu Betul, to the unfortunate Italian general Oreste Baratieri, the leader of the defeated Italian forces. As Jonas points out, the African victory at Adwa commenced the crumbling of European dominance of Africa; Ethiopia thus became a source of pride and lineage often indistinguishable from Africa itself, and writers such as W. E. B. DuBois based their own model African states on Ethiopia. Weaving a colorful account from the stories of a dazzling array of characters, Jonas skillfully recreates this now mostly forgotten event that determined the color of Africa. (Publishers Weekly (starred review) 2011-09-26) Jonas's lucidly woven account masterfully repositions the role of contingency in the unfolding of history and uses the little-known battle to stand for the audacious imperial quest for glory unleashed by Western powers in the "scramble for Africa."...His remarkable cast of characters and insightful prose will be of interest to scholars of African history and issues related to counterinsurgency. (Brian Odom Library Journal 2011-10-15) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Winner of the Toyin Falola Africa Book Award for 2012 from the Association of Third World Studies
--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I bought this book after spending some time in Ethiopia as a member of a UN Peacekeeping Mission, during which time I was fortunate to visit the site of the battle some 107 years after. Ethiopia is a timeless land full of rich culture and beauty and the diversity of the country and its people are something to behold. In this work, the author has examined the lead up to the actual battle, its conduct and the aftermath, when the vast Ethiopian forces under Menelik marched some 1900 Italian prisoners back to Addis Ababa via various routes in order to parade them through the capital and also to use the prisoners as a bargaining chip for future relations with the great European powers. The author has produced a very good work of this significant battle, as the world moved into the twentieth century and headed into the First World War eighteen years later. The first major defeat of a colonial power by an African nation certainly made the world take heed. Some semblance of this defeat of a colonial power was also to be played out some forty six years later with the fall of Singapore and the defeat of a major colonial power by an Asian country was to set in motion the changes in the world in the post WW2 era. The book is well written and easy to read rich in personal accounts of various participants in the Battle of Adwa from Generals to ordinary soldiers; it does not dwell on lengthy historical oratory about the various political and social events of the world at the time but focuses on the grassroots events that lead to the Italian army arriving at Adwa

and the subsequent battle and its aftermath. The personal stories many of the survivors from both sides makes interesting reading, especially the various fates of many of the Italian prisoners who were billeted out to families in Addis Ababa and how they then set about working in a new lifestyle until their repatriation back to Italy. The author includes many photos of the people and the terrain of the battle site in this book. In summary a well written and sourced account of one of history's significant battles, rich in personal accounts and well documented. It would be a very well rounded account of the battle of Adwa with a balanced account of events from both sides. Well done, Raymond Jonas...!

This is a well written book , explaining a significant but little known battle. One of the first major battles where indigineos people defeated a European Army. The battle was as important to Ethiopia as Dien Bien Phu is to Vietnam. The author is extremely fair to both sides , and doesn't stereotype regarding Italians or Ethiopians. His sympathies lie with Ethiopia. One can wonder if the Sudanese had adopted the Ethiopian tactics of harassment and waiting when Kitchner took the British with Churchill down the Nile would the outcome have been different. Of course the British had the Nile Gunboats always close by securing their supplies and communications. Interesting much of the Battle was African against African. The Italians had been quite successful in recruiting loyal troops from their Red Sea Colonies and unlike the British didn't seem to hold much of a racial animosity [at least according to Jones, and I would have a tendency to accept his opinion]. There are few accounts of the anti-European resistance to Colonialism in English. Adowa or Adwa is considered the greatest battle lost by a European power, but if one looks the Vietnamese put up a spirited and sometimes successful fight against the French. The Berber's and Moroccans inflicted a major defeat on the Spanish. The Ethiopian strategy was what won the battle . It placed the Italians in an untenable position where they would have to retreat to protect their colony or advance against a much superior army. Retreat was politically impossible [Clauswitz scholars take note]. The actual battle plan was a good one but need to be executed at night causing a major mistake by an aggressive general Albertone, resulting in a terrible domino effect on the whole Italian Army. Unlike many European armies of the day when they took native prisoners the Ethiopians were quite civilized with the Italian prisoners, though the many African Askaris fighting with the Italians taken prisoner were brutally treated. Anyone who likes obscure history should read this book, though this battle should be better known outside of Italy and Ethiopia.

I got The Battle of Adwa Book as a christmas gift. This book is one of the best I ever read. I am not

a historian but I am an African origin. It is a documentary book written from both the Italian & the Ethiopian perspectives. It seems, the writer invested a lot of time and effort & researched a lot, when he wrote the book. I kept this book as a treasure to read it again, and if possible again and again & also recommend it for others to read. It is well done, I recommend it greatly!!!!!!!. I read the book "Gona with Wind" some time ago; I am equally satisfied with the book "The Battle Of Adwa".

I bought this book because one of the captains that aided Menelik II in the Battle of Adwa was my Great-Great Uncle and I wanted to learn more about my family history. Raymond Jonas did a great job in sharing this moment in Ethiopian history.

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