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**The survival of Ethiopia as an independent state through the period of the “scramble for Africa” and colonial rule is a glorious chapter in African history. **How** and **why** did Ethiopia alone manage to preserve its independence?**

**This booklet attempts to answer this complex question through synthesis of the country’s rich and diverse culture and history .**

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**“As a free Africa has emerged during the past decade, a fresh attack has been launched against exploitation, wherever it still exists. And in that interaction so common to history, this in turn, has stimulated and encouraged the remaining dependent peoples to renewed efforts to throw off the yoke which has oppressed them and its claim as their birthright the twin ideals of liberty and equality”**

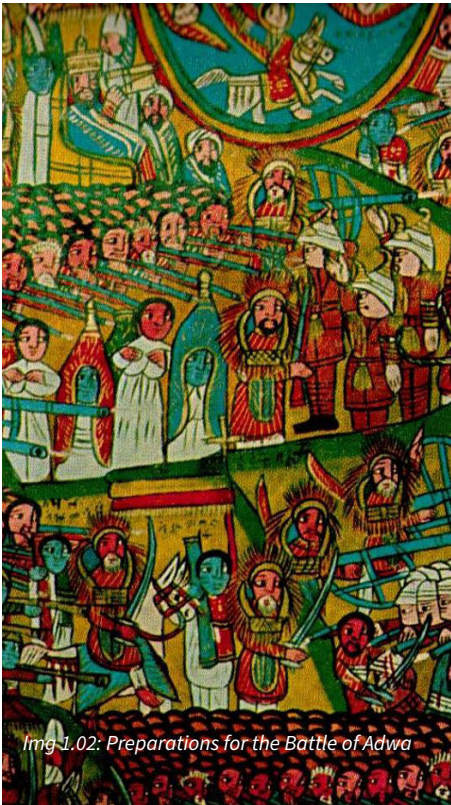
**Haile Selassie addressing the League of Nations in 1936**

Img 1.01: Bet Maryam church, Lalibela.  
Traditional Ethiopian church art



# Independent and Free

“ I FELT I WOULD BE VISITING MY OWN GENESIS ,  
UNEARTHING THE ROOTS OF WHAT MADE ME AN AFRICAN ”  
( NELSON MANDELA )



*Img-1.02: Preparations for the Battle of Adwa*

As mentioned in the formulation of the research question for this booklet, Ethiopia has always differentiated itself by being an independent and free state. According to scholar K.V. Ram, it is possible to highlight the reasons for Ethiopia’s survival through the centuries:

1. its geographical characteristics (and the locations of its dynamic settlements)
2. the inherent strength and solidity of its national consciousness, both in its culture and religion
3. the quality of its leadership
4. the determination of Ethiopian people to preserve their independence and its rich ethnical diversity (Ram, 1977).

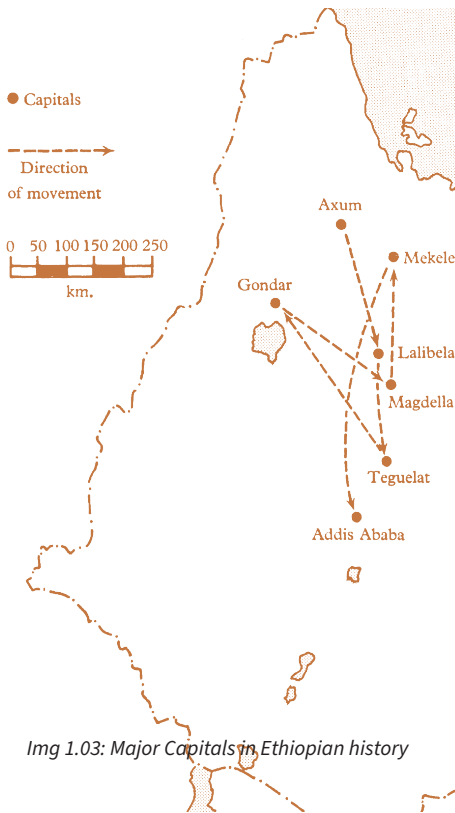
These points will be introduced in more detail in the following pages, and you will be able to find concrete examples of them throughout the whole booklet. This is not an attempt to cover all of the historical and cultural events that have preserved its independence, but it is an attempt to understand chronologically the key ones.

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# 1. Wandering Capitals and Settlements

“CAPITALS IN HISTORIC ETHIOPIA WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A KIND OF QUASI-CITY: URBAN IN CHARACTERISTICS AND YET NOT PERMANENT”. (HORVATH)

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Img 1.03: Major Capitals in Ethiopian history

According to Horvath, Ethiopian capitals in history would appear as masses of white tents and rural huts, which were positioned without a specific order. However, he argues that they were extremely structured and similar to each other, despite the constant moving throughout the centuries.

In fact, as you can observe in the map to the left, the capital kept shifting both for military and cultural reasons. Within the same capital, the situation would look different throughout the year. In fact, during the rainy months the king would leave the capital (throughout the night so that no one could attack him) to travel towards more pleasant destinations. During these months the one people staying in the capital settlement would be the emperor's retainers, soldiers, and slaves. "But with the cessations of the rains capital once again became the focus of the Ethiopia power field and the population of the settlement would swell towards its zenith" (Horvath, 1969).



*Img 1.04: Magdella*





*Img 1.06: Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon in Jerusalem, from a 19th century Ethiopian manuscript.*



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“THERE IS A BOOK CALLED KEBRA NAGAST WHICH CONTAINS THE LAW OF THE WHOLE OF ETHIOPIA, AND THE NAMES OF THE SHUMS (GOVERNORS), CHURCHES AND PROVINCES ARE IN THIS BOOK. I PRAY YOU WILL FIND OUT WHO HAS GOT THIS BOOK AND SEND IT TO ME, FOR IN MY COUNTRY MY PEOPLE WILL NOT OBEY MY ORDERS WITHOUT IT” (PRINCE KASA OF ETHIOPIA TO QUEEN VICTORIA)

This quote gives an idea to the cultural importance of the Kebra Nagast for Ethiopians. Not only is it considered to be an historical account of the country's centuries, but also the living proof that all emperors, up to Haile Selassie, directly descend from King Solomon. This strong national consciousness, which we have discussed in the previous pages, has created a very strong faith in the leaders that have governed the country through the centuries.

Although he is not the only great leader who has governed the country, Haile Selassie is a perfect example for exemplary leadership. He presided “over a country and government that was an expression of his personal authority”, according to Biography.com. His reforms were

very much focused on improving education and national public services, and he instituted a new constitution and centralized his own power.

Even during his exile in Bath (England), he continued exerting his influence by becoming the face of resistance against the Italian Occupation. Moreover, his great abilities in foreign affairs allowed him to build relationships with the most influential leaders of his time.

Haile Selassie is not the exception that confirms the rule: on the other hand, many leaders that are mentioned in this booklet have been greatly charismatic and influential. Even today, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has made history by winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Img 1.07: A short article by Eric Roach concerning the Kingdom Government of The Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah

# He sits on Solomon's throne

By ERIC ROACH

**OUR ROYAL** visitor, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie who comes on Monday, will be 74 years old this year.

He was born on July 22, 1892 and ascended the throne of Ethiopia on November 2, 1930 to rule over a kingdom of 24 million people. The Emperor is the 225th successor in the dynasty that began with the scion King Solomon of Judah and The Queen of Sheba 3,000 years ago.

One of the oldest countries in the world and the senior independent nation in the continent of Africa, Ethiopia shares borders with Kenya, the Sudan, Somalia, and the Red Sea. Her people are of an ancient race which, "because of early migrations, is today still undefined."

## Ancient race

The Emperor governs his mountainous and, by Western standards, still largely primitive kingdom through a Parliament comprising a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies.

The Senate is appointed by the Emperor himself and members of the Chamber are (since 1955) "elected by popular election pursuant to a special electoral law enacted



**HAILE SELASSIE**

as required by the Constitution." Formerly members of the Chamber were chosen by the leaders of the provinces from which they came.

The Government of Ethiopia is administered through 17 Ministries, one of which is called "The Ministry of the Pen."

"The Emperor determines the organisation, powers and duties of all ministries, executive departments and the administration of the Government, and he appoints, promotes, transfers, suspends and dismisses the officials."

Sensors are appointed for six years, and appointment to the Senate is limited to princes, dignitaries, former high government officials, or other persons esteemed for their character, judgment and public service. The term of office of one-third of the Senate terminates every two years. Senators are eligible for re-appointment.

Members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected from electoral districts, each of which contains, as nearly as possible, 200,000 inhabitants. Each electoral district is represented by two Deputies. In addition, each town with a population exceeding 30,000 inhabitants elects one Deputy and an additional Deputy for each 50,000 in excess of 30,000.

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## 4. People’s Determination and Diversity

“IT HAS BEEN THE SILENCE OF THE VOICE OF JUSTICE  
WHEN IT MATTERED MOST THAT HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE  
FOR EVIL TO TRIUMPH” (HAILE SELASSIE)

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Img 1.08: UNPO Protest for Human Rights, 2017

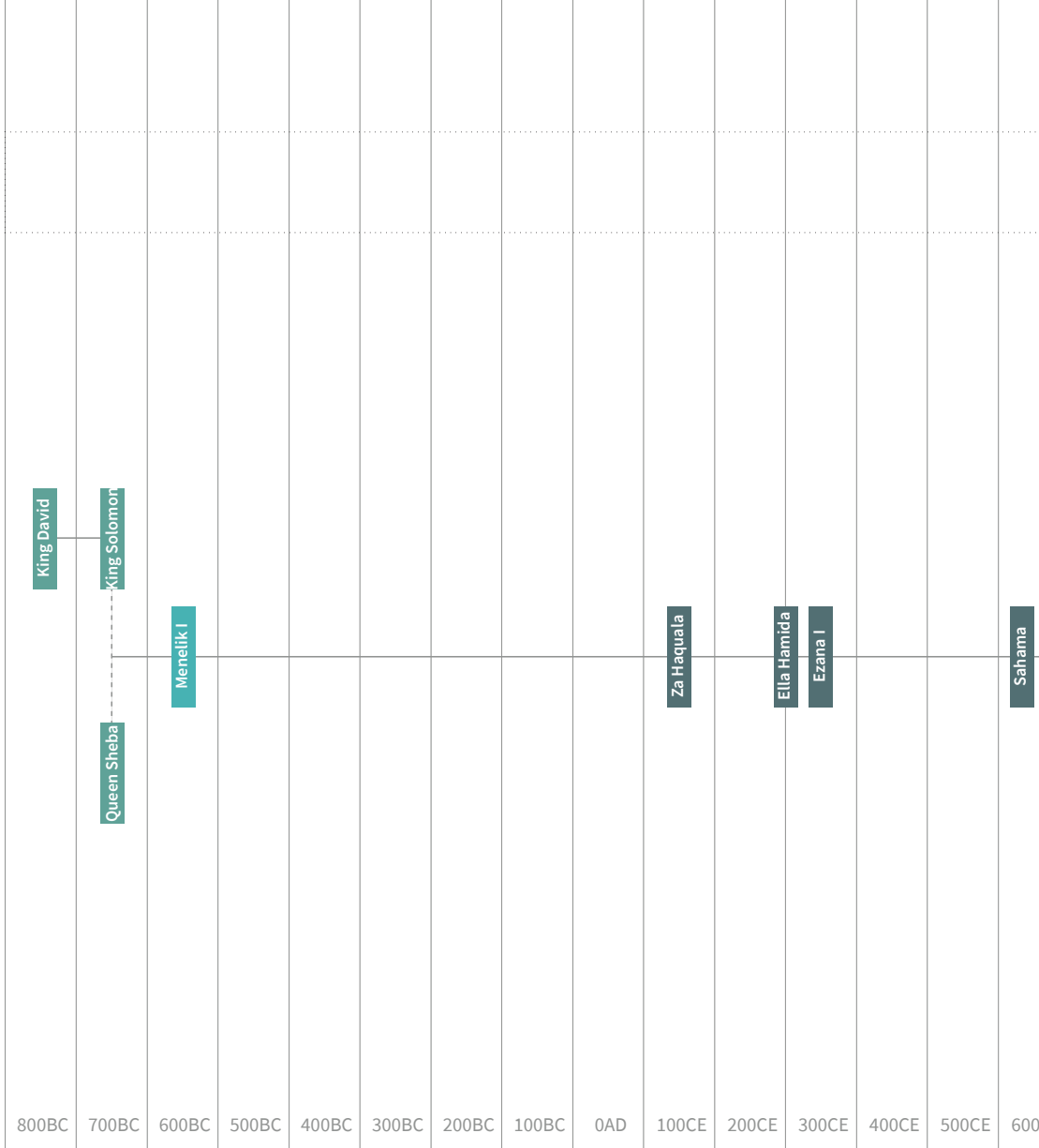
Throughout history, the Ethiopian population has always been determined to preserve the country’s cultural heritage. Even nowadays, the different ethnic groups of the country remain strong and keep fighting for their right to exist.

In 1994, the House of Federation recognized the different nations and nationalities under the FDRE Constitution. This day was declared as the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ (NNPs) Day in Ethiopia as a way to celebrate the differences, strengthen the ties, and guarantee the rights of the different groups. This decision was also helpful in promoting the different cultural expressions for tourism.

The thirteenth Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day was celebrated on December 8, 2018 in Addis Ababa and brought 30,000 people together. According to Unesco (2017), the festival’s objective is to support “a country in which its people could live peacefully and in harmony, thereby enabling the nation to realize its vision of creating one economic and political community”.



Img 1.09: Omò Valley Tribe Members



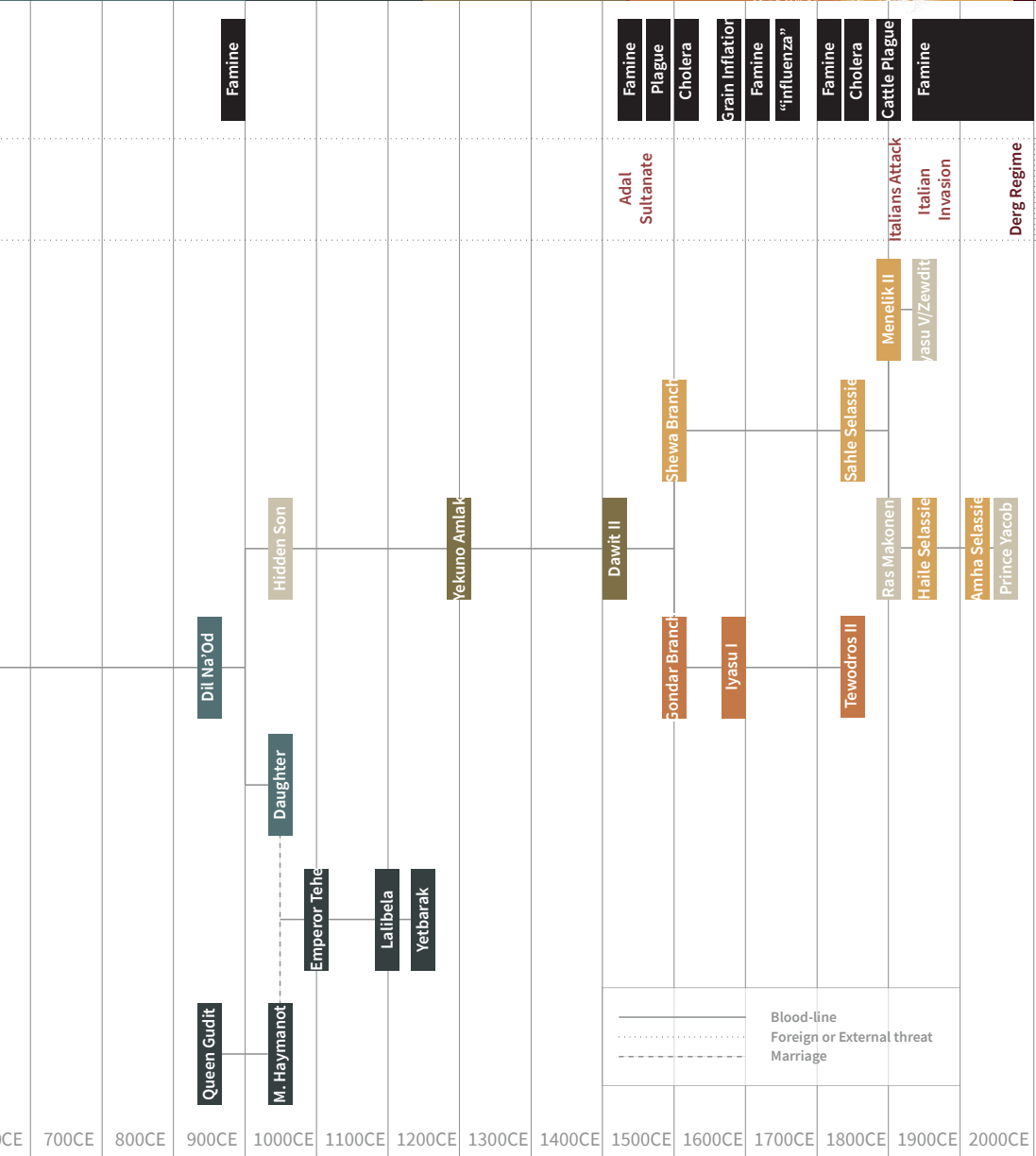


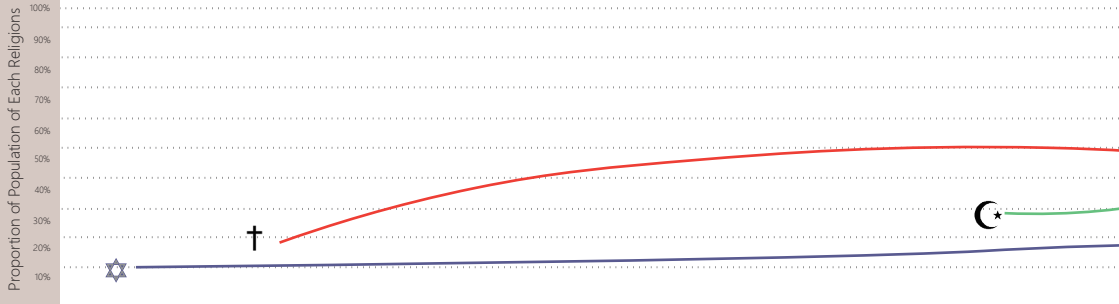
## Zegwe Dynasty

## Solomonic Dynasty

## Gondar Branch of SD

## Shewa Branch of SD





empire ruler Biblical Legend Empire of Aksum

**King Solomon** — contemporaries — **King Solomon**

**Menelek I**

**Za Haquala** — Ethiopian Orthodox appear and was dominant in northern and southern area — **Za Haquala**

**Ella Hamida** — Captured as slave of Ella Hamida — **Ella Hamida**

**Frumentius** — established a tradition — **Frumentius**

**Ezana I** — Become the teacher of king Ezana — **Ezana I**

**Keleab** — Christianity was declared a state religion — **Keleab**

**Armah** — person in whose hands religious rights were respected and whose land was ruled with justice. — **Armah**

**Gedion** — armed conflict between the Empire forces and the Beta Israel forces — a new expansion of Aksum — **Gedion**

**Christian**

**Jews**

ancient migration of some portion of the Tribe of Dan to Ethiopia

establish the Kingdom of the Beta Israel

Judaism was experiencing a resurgence in Arabia

Another group of Jews arrived in Ethiopia

spread of Christianity among the Agaw tribes of central Ethiopia agasint Jewish

Christian Churches throughout northern Ethiopia

Christianity was declared a state religion

Christian

spread of Christianity among the Agaw tribes of central Ethiopia agasint Jewish

Islam first arrived in Ethiopia in 614 with the First Migration to Abyssinia, also know as first Hegra.

Bilal ibn Ribah was the first Muezzin

was required by Prophet Muhammad to stay peaceful with the native Christian

armed conflict between the Empire forces and the Beta Israel forces

a new expansion of Aksum

31-34 BCE

100 CE

320 AD

325 AD

328 AD

341 AD

520 AD

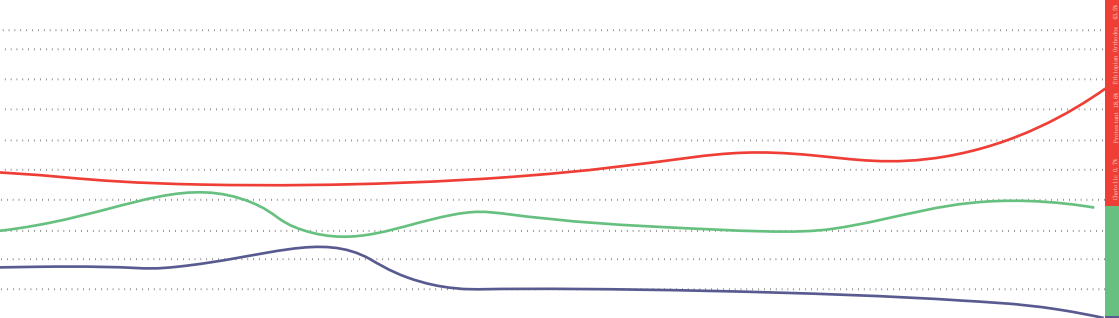
600 AD

615 AD

800 CE

900 CE

Golden age of K



Zegwe Dynasty      Solomonic Dynasty      Gondār Branch of SD      Shewa Branch of SD      The Dergue Era

**Lalibela**

Western churches → rebuilt earthly and heavenly Jerusalem → Eastern churches

1100CE

**Yekuno Amhik**

the Ethiopian Church was crippled as well as the power of the emperor

1270AD

**Amida Sijon**

Leader Yifat destroyed churches and forced christian to convert to islam

1314-1344AD

**Dawit II**

Christian power expand to the Awash Valley

1441AD

**Iyasu I**

Muslims around the world will celebrate the end of Ramadan

1500CE

**Susenyos I**

Beta Israel autonomy in Ethiopia ended in the '620s, and many Jewish practices has changed or lost

1620AD

**Halle Selassie**

PRDF took power from the Socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam

1800CE

**1911CE**

accepted as Jews by the Israeli government

**1974**

Operation Moses in 1984

Operation Solomon in 1991

1995

known to the west countries

discussed union between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches

Christianity spread among petty kingdoms in Ethiopia's west, like Emarea, Kafa or Garo

Publicly converted to Ytholism

commissarated their lands, sold many people into slavery and forcibly baptizted others

went for prayer during itiana attack

destroyed a lot of churches

Numerous Muslims in Ethiopia perform the pilgrimage to Mecca every year.

the emigration was officially abanned

the Ethiopian Church was crippled as well as the power of the emperor

Leader Yifat destroyed churches and forced christian to convert to islam

Christian power expand to the Awash Valley

Muslims around the world will celebrate the end of Ramadan

Beta Israel autonomy in Ethiopia ended in the '620s, and many Jewish practices has changed or lost

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accepted as Jews by the Israeli government

Operation Moses in 1984

Operation Solomon in 1991

the emigration was officially abanned

Numerous Muslims in Ethiopia perform the pilgrimage to Mecca every year.

Christianity



● Ethiopian Orthodox appear and was dominant in northern and souther area



Frumentius

established a tradition

Captured as slave of Elia Hamida



Become the teacher of king Ezana

● Frumentius was appointed as the first bishop by the Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria

● starting established church and converted citizens to christian



● Christianity was declared a state religion

● Christian Churches throughout northern Ethiopia

● spread of Christianity among the Agaw tribes of central Ethiopia agasint jewish



Gudit

Lalibela

Yekuno Amlak

Amda Siyon

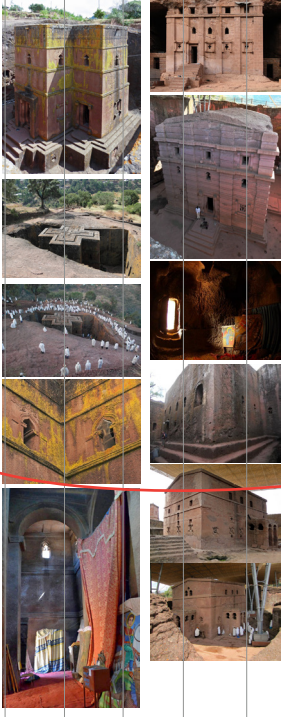
Dawit II

Iyasu I

Susenyos I

Haile Selassie

Haile Tessema  
Haile Mariam



western eastern

● eleven churches ● rebuilt earthly and heavenly Jerusalem

● the Ethiopian Church was crippled as well as the power of the emperor, Yekuno Amlak

● savage attack and won

● Christian power expand to the Awash Valley  
● discussed union between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches.

● Christianity spread among petty kingdoms in Ethiopia's west, like Emarea, Kaiffa or Garo.

00CE 1000CE 1100CE 1200CE ..... 1270AD 1314 -1344AD 1441AD 1500CE 1600CE 1620AD 1800CE 1911CE 1974 ..... 1991 1995

Freedom of religion is provided by the constitution of 1995

ruler

King Solomon

Menelek I

Za Hecuala

Ella Hamida

Ezana I

kelab

Armah

Gedion



Islam first arrived in Ethiopia in 614 with the First Migration to Abyssinia, also known as first Hegira.

person in whose hands religious rights were respected and whose land was ruled

Bilal ibn Ribah was the first Muezzin

was required by Prophet Muhammad to stay peaceful with the native Christian

Islam





Zegwe Dynasty

Solomonic Dynasty

Adal Sultanat

Gondar Branch of SD

Shewa Branch of SD

The Dergue Era

Gudit

Lalibela

Yekuno Amlak

Amda Siyon

Dawit II

Iyasu I

Susenyos I

Haile Selassie

Haile Abteok  
Haile Meskem

went for paper during itilana attack

● Leader Yifat destroyed churches and forced

● Muslim City of Yifat was conquered by Ethiopia, prevented new bishop

● Muslims around the world will celebrate the end of

● EPRDF took power from the Socialist regime of Mengistu Haile

● Numerous Muslims in Ethiopia perform the pilgrimage to Mecca every year.

Freedom of religion is provided by the constitution of 1995

ruler

King Solomon

Menelek I

Za-Haquaia

Ella Hamida

Ezana I

Keleab

Armah

Gedion



Jews

● ancient migration of some portion of the Tribe of Dan to Ethiopia

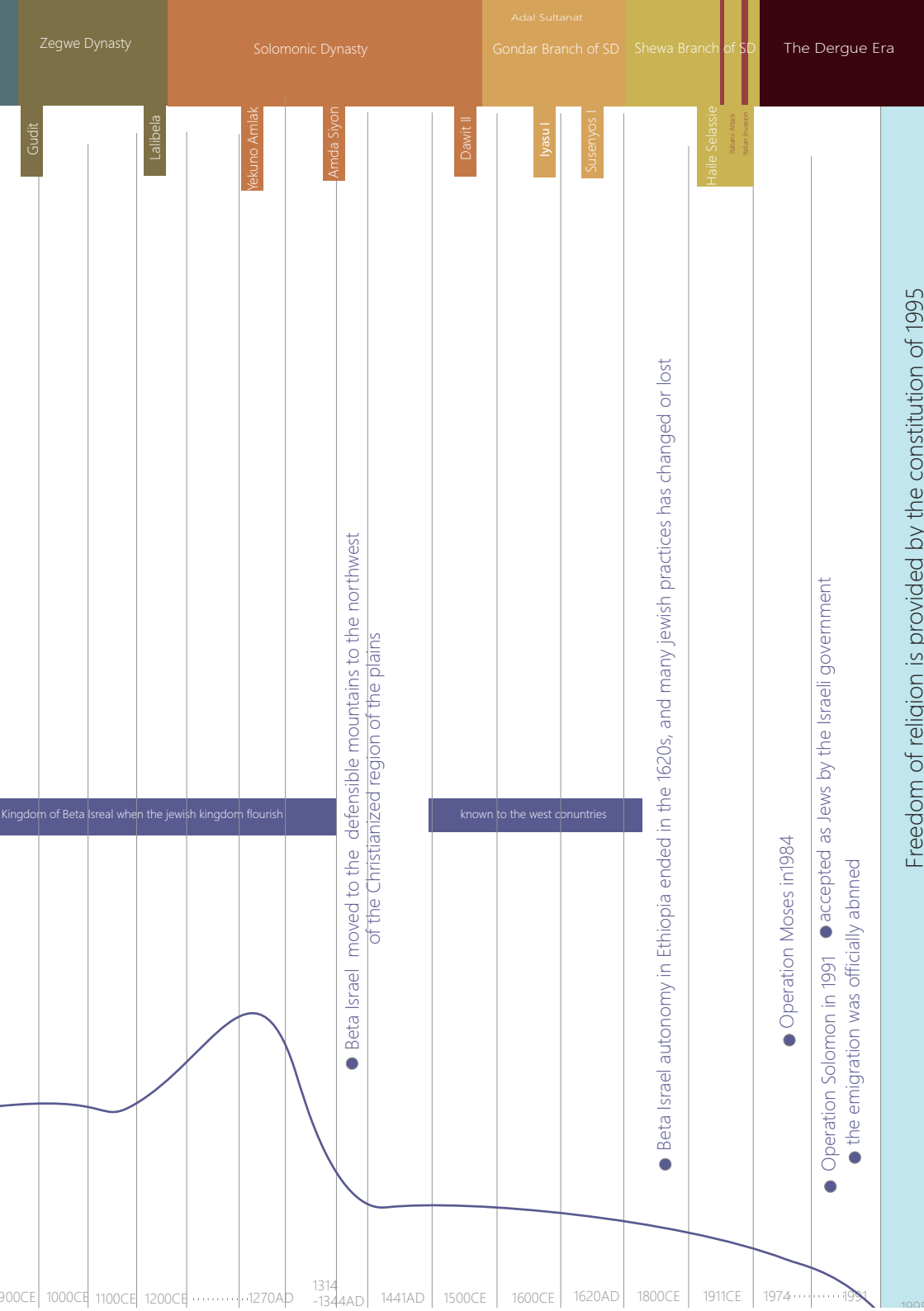
● establish of the Kingdom of the Beta Isreal

- Judaism was experiencing a resurgence in Arabia
- Another group of Jews arrived in Ethiopia

Golden age of

31-34BCE 100CE 320AD 325AD 328AD 344AD 520AD 600AD 615AD 800CE





Kingdom of Beta Israel when the Jewish kingdom flourishes

known to the west countries

000CE 1000CE 1100CE 1200CE ..... 1270AD 1314 -1344AD 1441AD 1500CE 1600CE 1620AD 1800CE 1911CE 1974 ..... 1995

Zegwe Dynasty

Solomonic Dynasty

Adal Sultanat

Gondar Branch of SD

Shewa Branch of SD

The Dergue Era

Gudit

Lalibela

Yekuno Amlak

Amda Siyon

Dawit II

Iyasu I

Susenyos I

Halle Selassie

Imamu Abate  
Bakir Meskion

● Beta Israel moved to the defensible mountains to the northwest of the Christianized region of the plains

● Beta Israel autonomy in Ethiopia ended in the 1620s, and many Jewish practices have changed or lost

● Operation Moses in 1984

- Operation Solomon in 1991
- the emigration was officially banned

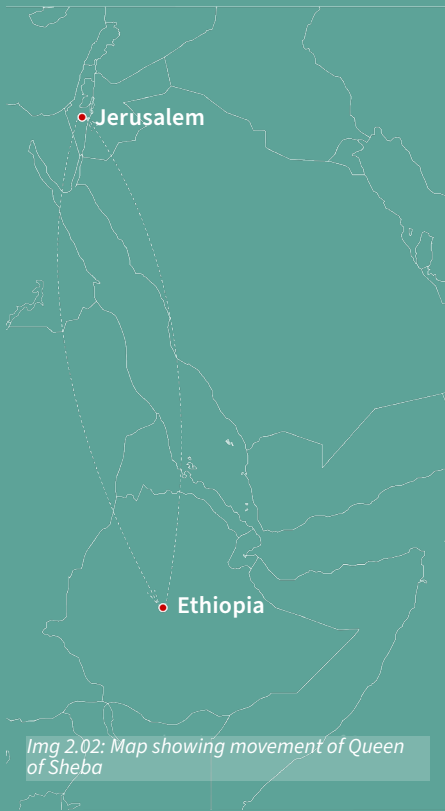
Freedom of religion is provided by the constitution of 1995

*Img 2.01: King Solomon and Queen Sheba*



# Legend

“OF ALL THE STORIES OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, THOSE OF ETHIOPIA ARE THOSE THAT RETAIN THE MOST RESONANCE TODAY WITH THE PEOPLE WHO TELL THEM” (BBC)



Img 2.02: Map showing movement of Queen of Sheba

As we previously mentioned, the story of the Queen of Sheba is extensively told in the Ethiopian holy book, the Kebra Nagast, where we read descriptions of the queen’s trip to Jerusalem and her encounter with King Solomon. There are multiple versions that describe the love affair between the royals, two of which are reported in the following page of this booklet.

While in the Biblical version it is told that Sheba is fascinated with the King’s immense intelligence and falls in love with him, in the Kebra Negast the story is far more complicated. In fact, the Ethiopian tradition narrates that while the Queen was staying at the King’s house, he had asked her not to touch or take anything for him. When the Queen broke the promise, he also broke the promise of staying away from her.

In any case, the legend narrates that the queen returned to Ethiopia pregnant with Solomon’s child. His name would be Menelik, which literally means ‘Son of the Wise’.

# The Holy Bible

*“The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon’s fame and came to test him with hard questions. She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large retinue, camels laden with spices, gold in great quantity, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she told him everything she had in her mind, and Solomon answered all her questions; not one of them was too abstruse for the king to answer. When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, the food on his table, the courtiers sitting round him, and his attendants standing behind in their livery, his cupbearers, and the whole-offerings which he used to offer in the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit left in her. Then she said, ‘The report which I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom was true, but I did not believe it until I came and saw for myself. Indeed I was not told half of it; your wisdom and your prosperity go far beyond the report which I had of them. Happy are your wives, happy these courtiers of yours who wait on every day and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God who has delighted in you has set you on the throne of Israel; because he loves Israel for ever, he has made you their king to maintain law and justice.’ Never again came such a quantity of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon (...) she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants..” (Holy Bible, Trinitarian Bible Society translation).*



Img 2.03: Solomon's Idolatry, Lucas van Leyden (1514)



## Kebra Nagast

*“And Solomon answered and said unto her, “I swear unto thee that I will not take thee by force, but thou must swear unto me that thou wilt not take by force anything that is in my house.” And the Queen laughed and said unto him, “Being a wise man why dost thou speak as a fool? Shall I steal anything, or shall I carry out of the house of the King that which the King hath not given to me? Do not imagine that I have come hither through love of riches. Moreover, my own kingdom is as wealthy as thine, and there is nothing which I wish for that I lack. Assuredly I have only come in quest of thy wisdom.” (...) And the Queen slept a little. And when she woke up her mouth was dry with thirst, for the food which Solomon had given her in his wisdom had made her thirsty, and she was very thirsty indeed, and her mouth was dry; and she moved her lips and sucked with her mouth and found no moisture. And she determined to drink the water which she had seen, and she looked at King Solomon and watched him carefully, and she thought that he was sleeping a sound sleep. But he was not asleep, and he was waiting until she should rise up to steal the water to [quench] her thirst. (...) And the Queen said, “I have sinned against myself, and thou art free from [thy] oath. But let me drink water for my thirst.” Then Solomon said unto her, “Am I perchance free from the oath which thou hast made me swear?” And the Queen said, “Be free from thy oath, only let me drink water.” And he permitted her to drink water, and after she had drunk water he worked his will with her and they slept together.” (Budge translation, 2007)*

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# Religion- Origin of Beta Isreal

ETHIPIOIAN JEWISH- LOST TRIBE OF DAN

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The 'Beta Israel' – as the Jews of Ethiopia refer to themselves – have lived in Ethiopia for many centuries, but their origins are uncertain. Some hold to the tradition that they are descended from the lost tribe of Dan. Other Beta Israel take them as the contemporaries of Solomon when Menelik arrived in Ethiopia at around in 39–31 BCE. The majority of them think they were descended from the tribe of Dan.

Modern academics are also divided in their explanations: some think that Jewish tribes from the Arabian Desert migrated to Ethiopia, others have proposed that Jewish influence travelled down the Nile from Egypt (Link Ethiopia,2019).

The Beta Israel lived in northern and north-western Ethiopia, in more than 500 small villages spread over a wide territory, alongside populations that were Muslim and predominantly Christian. Most of them were concentrated mainly in what are today North Gondar Zone, Shire Inda Selassie, Wolqayit, Tselemti, Dembia, Segelt, Quara, and Belesa. They practiced Haymanot

religious practices, which are generally recognized as an Israelite religion that differs from Rabbinic Judaism(Weil, Shalva, 2012).

Beta Israel appear to have been isolated from mainstream Jewish communities for at least a millennium. They suffered religious persecution and significant portion of the community were forced into Christianity during the 19th and 20th centuries; those converted became known as the Falash Mura. The larger Beta Abraham Christian community with pseudo-Israelite practices is also considered to have historical links to Beta Israel(Prof Yossi Mekelberg, 2015).

The Jewish community in Ethiopia were kept hidden and unknown to the western world until late 19th and 20th centuries.

*Img 2.04: Jews of Ethiopia*



Img 3.01: Menelik I





# Pre-Aksum: Menelik I

“HE ESTABLISHED IN ETHIOPIA A KINGDOM MODELLED ON THAT OF ISRAEL, AND INTRODUCED INTO HIS COUNTRY THE LAWS OF GOD” (BUDGE)



Img 3.02: Yeha is Capital of the Empire

The Kēbra Nagast “tells us nothing about Menelik after his coronation, except that he carried on one or two campaigns against the enemies of his country, and the book is silent in respect of Queen Mākēdâ’s history after her voluntary abdication. The author seems to expect his readers to assume that Ethiopia was ruled over by descendants of Solomon and Queen Mākēdâ from the tenth century before Christ to about the tenth century A. D., i.e. for about two thousand years, and that the religion, laws, social customs, etc., of the Ethiopians were substantially those of the Hebrews in Palestine under the kings of Israel”, according the expert William Budge.

Menelik chose as the capital the settlement of Yeha which is believed to have been built around 800 BC. Yeha, the country’s pre-Aksumite foundation of Ethiopian civilisation, is situated between Aksum and Adwa in the province of Tigray. The towering ruins of Yeha’s Temple are in such good condition today that they have become one of the tourist attractions of historical significance.

Img 4.01: Empire of Aksum, Obelisk



# Empire of Aksum

AKSUMITE ADAPTATION OF ROMAN COINAGE IMPLIES  
AN EQUALITY OF THE AKSUMITE KING WITH THE ROMAN  
EMPEROR OF THE TIME (PHILLIPS)



Img 4.02: Aksum becomes the new Capital

Aksum was both the name of a city and a kingdom which is located in the northern part of Ethiopia and Eritrea (and extended further in certain periods). According to scholars, Aksum was certainly a major military and trading power from the 1st to at least the 7th centuries C.E.

As a civilization, Aksum had a profound impact on the kingdoms of Egypt, southern Arabia, Europe and Asia: it can be considered as important as the most flourishing time of the Roman Empire.

This civilization introduced the indigenous written script Ge'ez as the main communication language of the Empire.

The society was hierarchical with a king at the top, then nobles, and the general population below. This can be discerned by the buildings that have been found, and the wealth of the goods found in them.

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# Religion-The kingdom of Aksum

CHRISTIANITY WAS DECLARED AS STATE RELIGION  
FOUND OF KINGDOM BETA ISREAL  
ORIGIN AND EXPASNSION OF MUSLIM

---

The Aksumite empire was originally a Semitic Jewish kingdom based at Axum from around the second century BC (Micheal Ruark,2015 ), which is a great empire lasting over millennium and declared Christianity as the state religion in 4th century. It is one of the oldest Christian countries in the world and has witnessed the origin and the development of the Muslim group. A Jewish community existed in Ethiopia earlier than the foundation of Aksum Kingdom and at around 325 AD, the Ethiopian Jews established the kingdom of Beta Isreal because they were unwilling to be converted to Christianity, which stayed independently within Ethiopia until 1620AD.



*Img 4.03: The following morning, deacons with processional crosses from three of the churches stand at the edge of a baptismal pool that signifies the River Jordan where Jesus Was baptised*

*Img 4.04: A priest reads a holy book at the entrance to Abuna Yemata church in Tigray*



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# Christianity

The Kingdom of Aksum in present-day Ethiopia was one of the first Christian countries in the world, having officially adopted Christianity as the state religion in the 4th century. Ethiopia was the only region of Africa to survive the expansion of Islam as a Christian state (Edinburgh: University Press, 1991).

The religion took a strong foothold when it was declared a state religion in 330 AD under the rule of King Ezana. Orthodox Christianity has a long history in Ethiopia dating back to the 1st century AD, and is dominant in northern and central Ethiopia. Both Orthodox and Protestant Christianity have large representations in southern and western Ethiopia. However, it was during the seventh century when the empire slowly began to decline as Aksum was faced with the rise of Islam which was spreading west from the Arabian Peninsula. The Islamic Empire took control of the Red Sea trading routes, forcing Aksum into economic isolation. Even if not threatened directly, Aksum was now cut off from its Christian allies around the Mediterranean (Africa Geographic, 2018).

However, while many northeastern African states were converting to Islam, the Christian kingdom of Aksum maintained its faith. Ethiopia was the only region of Africa to survive the expansion of Islam as a Christian state (Gascoigne, Bamber. HistoryWorld, 2001).



*Img 4.05: The abbot and a senior monk with one of the ancient manuscripts kept in the monastery*



# The Origin of Christianity

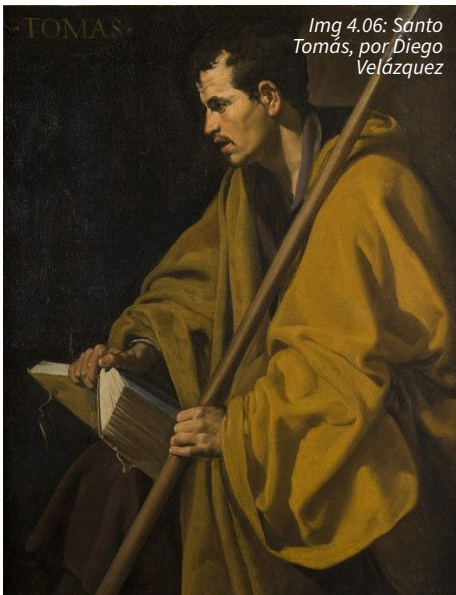
There are various accounts of the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia, but most of them have no satisfactory historical basis. One tradition, found in the Royal Chronicles and other native works, claims that the Apostle Thomas was responsible for the introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia. Origen refers to the Apostle Matthew as a missionary to the Ethiopians, an association which Rufinus also gives (Dale H. Moore, 1936).

The adoption of Christianity in Ethiopia dates to the fourth-century reign of the Aksumite emperor Ezana. Aksum's geographic location, at the southernmost edge of the Hellenized Near East,

was critical to its conversion and development. The kingdom was located along major international trade routes through the Red Sea between India and the Roman empire.

Frumentius, the first bishop in Ethiopia, had a huge contribution to the development of Christianity in Ethiopia. He is consecrated in Alexandria (the beginning of a lasting link between Ethiopia and the Coptic church of Egypt). Tradition says that Frumentius is a young Christian, captured and brought to Aksum, who persuades the king to allow Greeks to build churches in his kingdom.

The King Ella Hamida freed them shortly before



Img 4.06: Santo Tomás, por Diego Velázquez



Img 4.07: St Frumentius, the Apostle of Ethiopia



*Img 4.08: A gold coin of the Aksumite king Ousas*

his death, and they were invited to educate his young heir. They also began to teach Christianity in the region. Later, Frumentius traveled to Alexandria, Egypt, where Frumentius was appointed bishop by Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria and established the Church in Ethiopia, converting many local people, as well as the king. His appointment began a tradition that the Patriarch of Alexandria appoint the bishops of Ethiopia. By 331 AD, Frumentius returned to Ethiopia, he was welcomed with open arms by the rulers who were at the time not Christian. Ten years later, through the support of the kings, the majority of the kingdom was converted and Christianity was declared the official state religion (Stuart Munro-Hay, 2002).

Ezana's decision to adopt Christianity was most likely influenced by his desire to solidify his trading relationship with the Roman Empire. Christianity afforded the possibility of unifying the many diverse ethnic and linguistic peoples of the Aksumite kingdom, a goal of Ezana's leadership. Aksum was one of the earliest states to develop a coin system in order to service its sophisticated and prosperous economy. Emperor Ezana was the first world leader to put the cross on coins, which are the earliest examples of Christian material culture from Ethiopia (Emma George Ross, 2002).

The kingdom's ancient capital, also called Axum, is now a town in Tigray Region (northern Ethiopia). The Kingdom used the name "Ethiopia" as early as the 4th century. Tradition claims Axum as the alleged resting place of the Ark of the Covenant and the purported home of the Queen of Sheba (Raffaele, Paul, 2007).

In 340 AD, King Ezana commissioned the construction of the imposing basilica of St. Mary of TSION in Aksum. It was said to contain the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments which was brought back by the Menelik, the son of King of Solomon and Queen Sheba. This sacred tabot (a consecrated wooden altar slab, made of wood or stone) was placed in the sanctuary, confirming to Ethiopians that they are the chosen people of God. Today, St. Mary of TSION represents the spiritual heart of Ethiopian Christian Orthodoxy (Emma George Ross, 2002).

Since its founding during the episcopacy of Frumentius (known in Ethiopia as Abune Selama Kesatie Birhan or "Our Father of Peace the Revealer of Light") the Church of Mary of Zion has been destroyed and rebuilt at least twice. Its first putative destruction occurred at the hands of Queen Gudit during the 10th century. Its second, confirmed, destruction occurred in the 16th century at the hands of Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi, after which it was rebuilt by the Emperor Gelawdewos, then further rebuilt and enlarged by Fasilides during the 17th century. St. Mary of Zion was the traditional place where Ethiopian Emperors came to be crowned. And indeed, if an



*Img 4.09: Original Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum, Ethiopia*

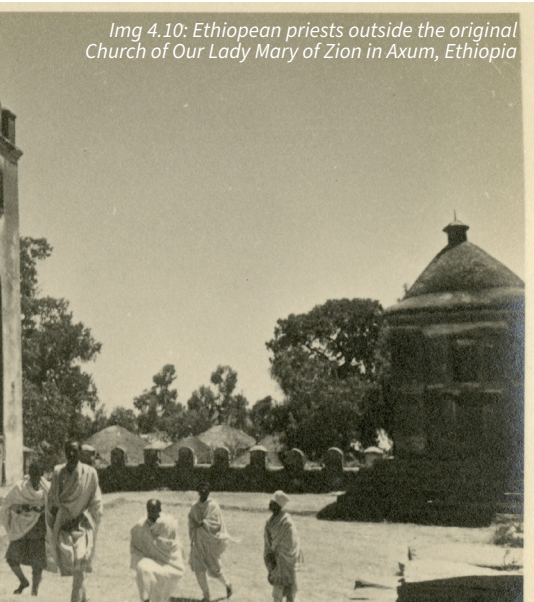


Emperor was not crowned at Axum, or did not at least have his coronation ratified by a special service at St. Mary of Zion, he could not be referred to by the title of “Atse” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016).

In the 1950s the Emperor Haile Selassie built a new modern Cathedral that was open to both men and women next to the old Cathedral of Our Lady Mary of Zion. The old church remains accessible only to men, as Mary, symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant allegedly resting in its chapel, is the only woman allowed within its compound.

The church is a significant center of pilgrimage for the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, especially during the main Festival of Tsion Mariam on 30 November (21 Hidar on the Ethiopian calendar).

*Img 4.10: Ethiopian priests outside the original Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum, Ethiopia*



*Img 4.11: Cathedral of Our Lady Mary of Zion, built during the reign of Emperor Fasilides*



*Img 4.12: The Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion*





*Img 4.13 :Medhane Alem Adi Kasha rock-hewn church in Aksum*

Remains of distinctive Aksumite church architecture have been located in Aksum, Matara, and Adulis. These are oriented basilicas with stepped podia, which are accessed by a monumental set of stairs. These churches include an apse with lateral square chambers, introduced into the design of basilicas along the south coast of Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine by the fifth century. The construction of churches is believed to have served the religious needs of the new officials settling in expanded territories. The growth of the Aksumite state ended after the Persian conquest of South Arabia, which displaced the trade routes of the Red Sea (Emma George Ross, 2002).

By the beginning of the 6th century, there were Christian Churches throughout northern Ethiopia.

King Kaleb of the Aksumite Kingdom, led crusades against Christian persecutors in southern Arabia, where Judaism was experiencing a resurgence that led to persecution of Christians. King Kaleb's reign is also significant for the spread of Christianity among the Agaw tribes of central Ethiopia.

In the late 16th century Christianity spread among petty kingdoms in Ethiopia's west, like Ennarea, Kaffa or Garo.

There is little evidence about the activities of the daily life of the early Aksumite Church, but the essential doctrinal and liturgical traditions were established in the first four centuries of its creation. The strength of these traditions was the main force behind the Church's survival despite its distance from its patriarch in Alexandria.

# The Nine Saints

During the late 5th century, a group of missionaries contributed tremendously to the initial growth of Christianity all over what is now Ethiopia. They came from various parts of the East Roman Empire, having fled the persecutions of the Orthodox who remained faithful to the teaching of St. Cyril after Chalcedon's acceptance of the semi-Nestorian tome of Pope Leo the Great. They were later named the Nine Saints. Their names were Abba Aftse, Abba Alef, Abba Aragawi, Abba Garima (Isaac, or Yeshaq), Abba Guba, Abba Liqanos, Abba Pantelewon, Abba Sehma, and Abba Yemata. They built monasteries and churches all over the



Img 4.14: Nine Saints in the Abuna Yemata Guh church



Img 4.15: Icon of the Nine Saints, at Abba Pantelewon Monastery near Axum, Ethiopia.



*Img 4.16. Monks who live at Debre Damo are strong and fit. They must pull themselves up to the entrance to the monastery complex using a twined leather rope*

kingdom. Thanks to the work of the Nine Roman Saints the Apostolic Faith was firmly planted in Ethiopia and began to use the Ge'ez language in its divine services instead of Greek. The Nine Saints were themselves responsible for having the translation of the Holy Bible, begun in the time of St. Frumentius. They also had a number of the writings of the Fathers, including those of Ss. Athanasius of Alexandria, Cyril of Alexandria, and Pachomius the Great, translated into Ge'ez (the value, 2018).

Several of the Nine Saints who left the vicinity of Axum established monasteries and churches on old centers of pagan worship. In the place where a serpent had long been worshiped Abba Zemika'el overthrown the pagan cult and founded

the famous Monastery of Debre Damo. Abba Aftse traveled to the once great city of Yeha, where he converted its ancient Sabaeen temple into a (churchorthodoxwiki, 2012).

Debre Damo monastery is dedicated to its founder, Abuna Za-Mikael (also known as Aragawi), one of the Nine Saints. It dates to the sixth century and is considered one of the most important centres of Christianity in Ethiopia. Only men are allowed to enter this almost inaccessible monastery, located at the top of a sheer-sided amba – a steep-sided, flat-topped mountain – that is one kilometre in length. To access the monastery men must pull themselves up with a rope of twined leather – though the monks are there to help haul if need be. The church of Abuna

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Aregawi, built in the Aksumite style in the tenth or eleventh century, is probably Ethiopia's oldest intact church.

In the past, the monastery served both as a refuge from invaders due to its remote location, and housed excess male members of the royal family, thus removing possible threats to their reign. Today, an estimated 150 monks live there, who are entirely self-sufficient – growing crops and raising (all male) livestock – and therefore have no need to leave the mountain.

Abba Garima monastery was founded by Abba Garima, one of the Nine Saints – a group of missionaries who were important in the initial growth of Christianity during the late fifth century – and is home to the illuminated manuscripts of the New Testament Gospels. Not only are these the oldest manuscripts in Ethiopia, but also the oldest illustrated Gospels in the world – recent carbon dating of two pages put the dates between 330 and 650 AD. The story goes that Abba Garmia wrote the five-hundred-page Gospels in one day. However, by sunset he was not quite finished, so he prayed for intercession – a prayer that pleads with God for your needs and the needs of others. God answered him by providing three extra hours of daylight in order for him to complete his writing.

Abuna Yemata Guh church in Tigray is an incredible example of a triumph of faith and endurance. The monolithic church, founded by Abuna Yemata – of the Nine Saints – is hewn into the side of a rock face at a height of 2,580 metres. After founding a monastic community in Aksum in

the sixth century, Abuna Yemata chose to establish a hermitage at the summit because of its needle-like pinnacle, pointing like a finger towards the heavens (Africa Geographic, 2018).

The entrance is reached by a steep and hazardous ascent with hand and footholds in the rock. Visitors have to cross a natural stone bridge with a sheer drop of approximately 250m on either side, and thereafter a final narrow wooden footbridge (The Guardian, 2017). A strenuous ascent is followed by a climb up a vertical rock wall depending entirely on hand grips and footholds (without additional support) crowned with a walk over a 50 cm wide ledge facing a cliff of 300 metres (980 ft) sheer drop. The standing pillars are made up of Enticho and Adigrat Sandstones, which are the last erosional remnants of a sandstone formation that once covered the Precambrian basement (Noll Daniel, 2014).





*Img 4.17: Pointing like a finger towards heaven, Abuna Yemata Guh is removed from the noise of life. The entrance to the church is located about a third of the way up the pinnacle*



*Img 4.18: A priest is seen looking out of Abuna Yemata church's only window. The church, hewn into the side of the rock face, is reached by a steep and hazardous ascent with hand- and footholds in the rock.*



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# Islam

As mentioned before, the empire slowly began to decline as Aksum was faced with the rise of Islam which was spreading west from the Arabian Peninsula. It was around 615 AD that the first group of Muslims arrived in Ethiopia with the First Migration to Abyssinia, under the rule of the Aksum king Negus – or Al-Najashi King Armah. This was recorded historically as the first Hijra.

Ethiopia is considered “the heaven of the first migration or Hijra”. In seventh century, some of the Prophet Muhammad’s followers, given the persecution they were subjected to in the city of Mecca, undertook their migration or journey to Ethiopia, where, there was a King (King Nugus) who “did not wrong anyone”. Ethiopia was known as a land where religious rights were respected and was ruled with justice. The migration to Ethiopia that has laid down the foundations on which Islam was built. Ethiopia is therefore a land that means freedom of expression and protection.

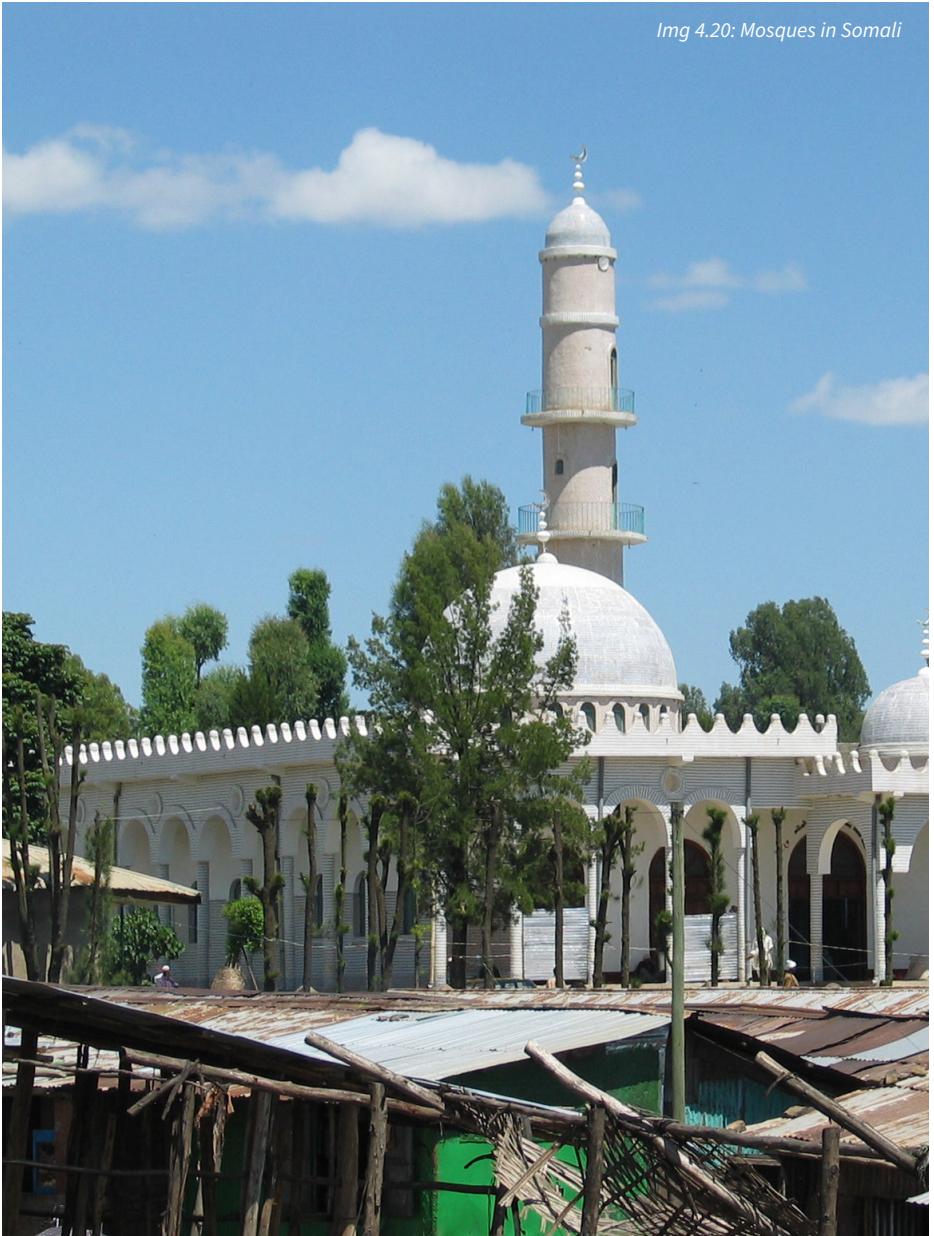
Bilal ibn Ribah was the first Muezzin, who was chosen to call the faithful to prayer, and one of the foremost companions of Muhammad, was from Abyssinia (Eritrea, Ethiopia etc.). Also, the largest single ethnic group of non-Arab Companions of Muhammad was that of the Ethiopians.

Muslims who came to the Axumite empire were required by the prophet to respect and

protect Axum as well as live in peace with the native Christians. Islam developed rapidly in the eastern part mostly in Somali and Harar, and it was challenged by the mostly Christian northern people of Abyssinia, including Amhara, Tigray and north western Oromo. The north and northeastern Oromo, who have a mainstream traditional belief, have actually helped the growth of Islam as well (Cecilia ,2015).



*Img 4.20: Mosques in Somali*





Img 4.21: An old man drinks coffee in Harar

*Img 4.22: One of Harar's iconic mosques*



# Beta Israel

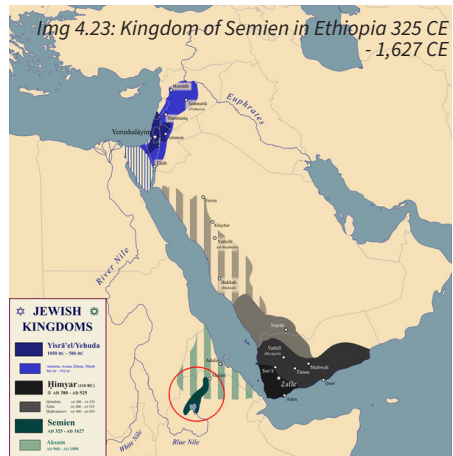
The name “Beta Israel” (literally, “house of Israel” in Ge’ez) originated in the 4th century CE, when the community refused to convert to Christianity during the rule of Abreha and Atsbeha (identified with Se’azana and Ezana), the monarchs of the Kingdom of Aksum who embraced Christianity. Beta Israel appear to have forged an independent state, either in northern western Ethiopia or the eastern region of Northern Sudan.

King Kaleb, of the Aksumite Kingdom, led crusades against Christian persecutors in southern Arabia, where Judaism was experiencing a resurgence that led to persecution of Christians. King Kaleb’s reign is also significant for the spread of Christianity among the Agaw tribes of central Ethiopia.

During the mid-9th century, the empire of Aksum began a new expansion, which led to an armed conflict between the Empire forces and the Beta Israel forces. The Beta Israel kingdom under King Gideon the fourth managed to defeat the Axum forces. During the battle, King Gideon was killed. As a result, Gideon’s daughter Judith inherited the kingdom from her father, and took command.

“Judith’s Field”: an area full of ruins of destroyed buildings which according to tradition were ruined by the forces of Queen Judith

Queen Judith signed a pact with the Agaw tribes which were pagans. Around 960, The large tribal confederation led by Queen Judith, which included both forces of the Agaw tribes and the Beta Israel forces, invaded the capital city of Axum, conquering and destroying it (including many churches and monasteries which were burned and destroyed) and imposed the Jewish rule over Axum. In addition, the Axumite throne was snatched and the forces of Queen Judith sacked and burned the Debre Damo monastery which at the time was a treasury and a prison for the male relatives of the emperor of Ethiopia, killing all of the potential heirs of the emperor.







*Img 4.24: Beta Israel women in Jewish Clothes*

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*Img 5.01: Sketch of Lalibela*



# Zagwe Dynasty

IT IS A LINE OF 12TH- AND 13TH-CENTURY ETHIOPIAN KINGS WHO COMBINED A NOMADIC MILITARY LIFE WITH A DESIRE TO BUILD CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS” (MCKENNA)



Img 5.02: Lalibela becomes the Capital

The name of the dynasty derives from the expression Ze-Agaw, which literally means “opponent”. The explanation of this name can be understood in light of the defeat of the Aksum Empire. In fact, during the reign of the last King of Aksum Dil Na’Od, the evil Gudit decided to kill the king and exterminate everything that the Aksum Empire had built, including much of the artistic and architectural heritage. Queen Gudit was against the introduction of Christianity, and did everything in her power to destroy as many churches as possible. In Amharic, Gudit is also known as “Esato”, which means “fire” or “destruction”.

The descendant of Queen Gudit, emperor Mara Haymanot, was responsible for the re-connection with the previous royal family of Aksum: he decided to marry the daughter of Dil Na’Od, and officially started the Zegwe Dynasty. This decision was fundamental to tie him back to the Solomonic dynasty and legitimize his rule. There are various disputes on the duration and the number of kings

throughout this dynasty: some historians claim there were 10-11 Emperors, others that there were only 5. According to Carlo Conti Rossini, an Italian historian, the shorter hypothesis is the most probable.

A very important Emperor of this dynasty is Gebre Mesqel Lalibela, who reigned from 1181 to 1221. His name literally means “Servant of the Cross”.

The dynasty ended when Yekuno Amlak proclaimed his right to the throne as the legitimate heir, as he descended from the hypothetical son of Dil Na’Od who had escaped from the massacres of Queen Gudit.

It is also important to mention that during Zegwe Dynasty, the Beta Israel Kingdom kept flourish according to the Ethiop



Img 5.03: Zagwe Dynasty Warrior



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# Religion-Zegwe Dynasty

## GOLD AGE OF ORTHODOX CHURCH IN LALIBELA

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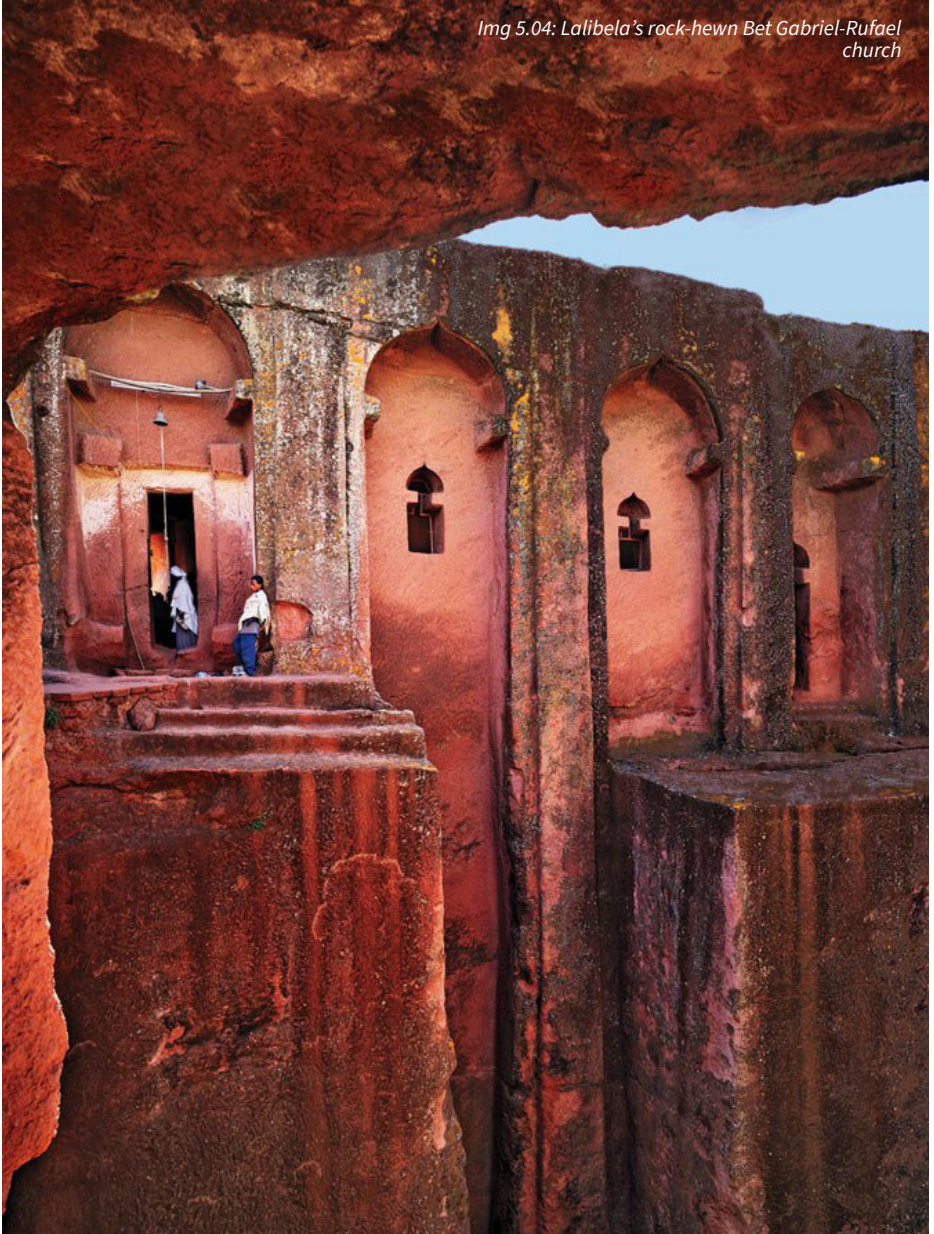
During the reign of the last King of Aksum Dil Na'Od, the evil Gudit decided to kill the king and exterminate everything that the Aksum Empire had built, including much of the artistic and architectural heritage. Queen Gudit was against the introduction of Christianity, and did everything in her power to destroy many churches.

After the abandonment of Aksum, the previous political and economic capital, the city of Roha, now called Lalibela, was established as the ceremonial center of the Zagwe dynasty. Churches most likely based on Aksumite precedents were hewn out of living rock in the mountains of Lasta. The Church of the Redeemer (Bet Medhane Alem), the largest and perhaps most famous church at Lalibela, may be an architectural copy of the Cathedral of Our Lady Mary of Zion at Aksum. The interiors of these magnificent structures were covered with paintings and murals (Emma George Ross, 2002). The most famous king or emperor of the Zagwe dynasty is undoubtedly Emperor Gebre Mesqel Lalibela (Servant of the Cross) or Saint

Lalibela (Approx Reign 1181-1221AD), who was born in Roha the capital city of the Zagwe kings, which was later renamed Lalibela in honour of him and the rock hewn churches he built there. As a young man, Lalibela claimed to have had mystical visions and spent some time living as a hermit. He is also said to have received a divine instruction to build 10 churches from the Archangel Michael, a vision he received when he almost died after being poisoned by his half brother Gophre and half sister Orierna. (Note: Lalibela is said to have spent 3 days in a tomb before rising from his death like coma, which sounds similar to the resurrection of Jesus). King Lalibela is said to have received a separate instruction to build the 11th church in a divine message / vision from St George.

Each church is unique, but they follow the design of Axumite churches, and are not replicas of any buildings in Jerusalem. They are all monolithic in design, meaning that they are each carved from a single piece of rock and not constructed from bricks or stone blocks. (Similar to the temples and

*Img 5.04: Lalibela's rock-hewn Bet Gabriel-Rufael church*



*Img 5.05: Bete Giyorgis (Church of St. George) in Lalibela*



*Img 5.06: window detail in Bete Giyorgis (Church of St. George) in Lalibela*







treasury found at Petra in Jordan). This would require the craftsmen to dig 4 wide trenches down into the bedrock around the four sides of the proposed church, and then with hammers and chisels they would literally carve out the whole church including doorways, windows, stairs, pillars, arches, altars, etc.

The 11 churches are clumped into three distinct groupings. The first group of six churches are located north of the river. They are Bet Golgotha, Bet Mika'el (also known as Bet-Sina), Bet Maryam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel, and Bet Medhane Alem.

There is another group of four churches east of the River: Bet Emanuel, Bet Mercurious, Bet Abba Libanos, and Bet Gabriel-Rafael. There is some speculation that some of these churches may

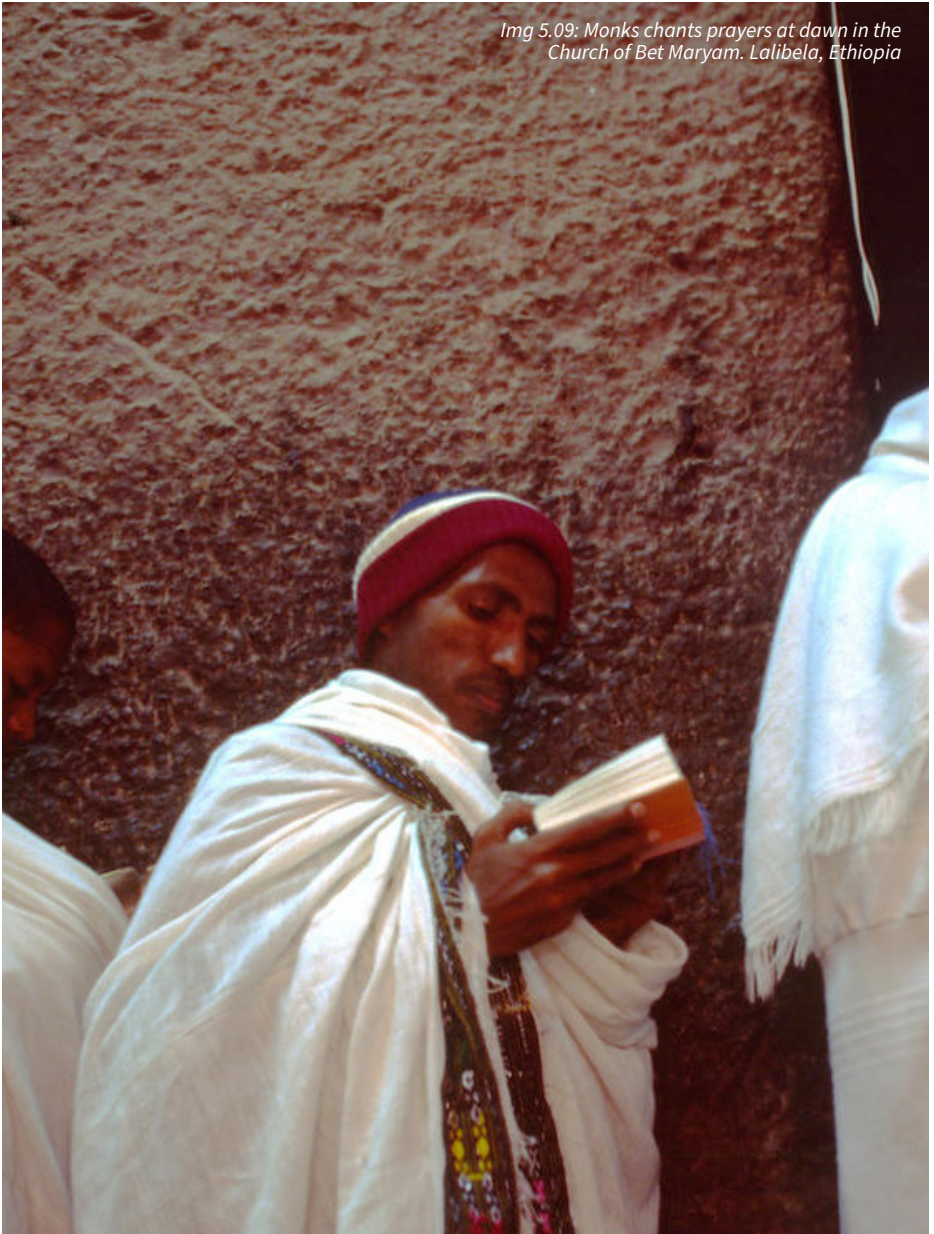
predate King Lalibela by as much as 500 years. Others argue that this group represented the Heavenly Jerusalem.(Ashtronort,2018)

The Western: Bet Giorgis (House of St. George), is the iconic image of the Lalibela complex. It is like the lead singer in a rock band, outshining the other 10 churches. Bet Giorgis is shaped in the form of a Greek cross, which some visitors have identified as a Templar cross. Standing 40 feet high, it is the tallest of the 11 churches. It is also the best preserved and most spectacular. Due to it being in such good condition, some historians have suggested it was most probably the last church to be built, but maybe its condition is due to it being located away from the other 10 churches, thus avoiding vandalism.

*Img 5.08: An Ethiopian nun reads from her bible at dawn outside the church of Beit Maryam, Lalibela, Ethiopia*



*Img 5.09: Monks chants prayers at dawn in the Church of Bet Maryam. Lalibela, Ethiopia*



*Img 6.01: Emperor Dawit II*



# Solomonic Dynasty

“THE NAME DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL CONTINUITY IN ETHIOPIA AND THE DEEP SENSE OF HISTORY THAT HAS ALWAYS PERMEATED IT” (HENZE)



Img 6.02: Tegulet becomes the Capital

The Solomonic dynasty begins in 1270 with the *nəgusä nəgäst* (“king of kings”) Yekuno Amlak, who kills the last king of the Zegwe Dynasty and proclaims his descentance from the last King of Aksum Dil Na’Od. This makes him the direct and rightful heir of King Solomon himself, according to the *Kebra Nagast*.

There are many oral legends and medieval hagiographies that recall anecdotes about Yekuno Amlak’s life. One of them narrates that every morning for three months, a rooster would scream in front of Amlak’s house saying that whoever could cut his head off would substitute him as king. Yekuno Amlak cut off the rooster’s head and ate it as proof that no one could take away his power. Yekuno was a great diplomat and became close friends with the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire Micheal VIII.

During the Solomonic time of Ethiopian history, the Christian highland and the Muslim coast were in constant fighting, often for the right to control trade routes. (Pankhurst 1998, 72).

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# Religion - Solomonic Dynasty

## ONE OF DRAMATIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

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This period was one of dramatic social and cultural change and development. Extensive international trade returned to Ethiopia since Europeans were seeking alternatives to trading along Islamic-controlled routes. This resurgence lasted until the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Evoking the legend of King Solomon, rulers of this period established royal churches lavishly decorated with wall paintings, gold ornamentation, and precious fabrics. These included the famous rock-hewn churches of Tigray and Lasta. Through affiliations with monastic leaders, these secular rulers used artistic patronage, including the recruitment of European artisans, to establish their authority and enhance their prestige. This interface with Europe exposed Ethiopian artists to new mediums, technologies, and aesthetic sensibilities. These influences are reflected in wall paintings through a shift from rigid frontality and the widespread use of geometric patterning to a three-quarter pose, a greater fluidity of line, and the use of modeling to describe

three-dimensional volumetric figures. This new style contained elements of both Byzantine and Italian prototypes (Emma George Ross, 2002).

The Dabra Hayq Estifanos monasteries in Amhara were established as centers of learning. These complexes often contained illuminated manuscripts, of which very few survive. The labor-intensive work of the scriptorium was often considered a crucial dimension in a monk's spiritual training. There were many monasteries in the region of Lake Tana, including that of Fre Seyon, one of two known artists of this period. Seyon is credited with the development of the devotional Marian Icon images and style. Mary became an important figure in the Ethiopian church when Emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob (r. 1434–68) mandated the reading of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary and that she be honored at most of the thirty feast days in the liturgical year. Zar'a Ya'eqob was particularly successful at utilizing the power of Mary's visual imagery to publicly emphasize teachings about her centrality to Christian salvation.



*Img 6.03: Diptych with Mary and Her Son Flanked by Archangels, Apostles and a Saint*

This painting which depicts that the Christ Child touches his mother's chin with a gesture of affection that was probably inspired by 15th-century Italian paintings then greatly admired at the Ethiopian royal court. Victorious saints on horseback had great appeal for the upper classes of Ethiopia, where noblemen were trained in horsemanship and combat. The artist is most likely a follower of Fre Seyon, the celebrated 15th-century painter who left only one signed work (Wikimedia Commons, 2018).

During the solomonic dynasty, under the rule of the king Yekuno Amlak, and was ruled and justified by Christianity until the late twentieth century. The Muslim city of Yifat was conquered by Ethiopia in 1270, under Yekuno Amlak, which

caused officials in Cairo to use their influence to prevent a new bishop from being sent to Ethiopia. This action crippled the Ethiopian Church as well as the power of the emperor. By the time that Amda Siyon (r. 1314-1344) took the throne in 1314, Sabradin of Yifat led a united Muslim front made up of people angered by Christian rule, destroying churches in Ethiopia and forcing Christians to convert to Islam. Siyon responded with a savage attack that resulted in the defeat of Yifat. Furthermore, Siyon's victory caused the frontier of Christian power in Africa to expand past the Awash valley.

The Yafit defeat allowed Alexandria to send Abuna Yakob, to Ethiopia in 1337 to be its metropolitan. Yakob reinvigorated the Ethiopian

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Church, which had been without a leader for almost 70 years, by ordaining new clergy and consecrating long-standing churches that had been built during the power void. Furthermore, Yakob deployed a corps of monks into the newly obtained lands. These monks were often killed or injured by the conquered people, but, through hard work, faith, and promises that local elites could keep their positions through conversion, the new territories were converted to Christianity.

As mentioned before, that the rise of the Christian Solomonic Dynasty put the ends to the gold period of Beta Israel. For the next three centuries, the Solomonic dynasty emperors conducted several long ongoing series of armed confrontations with the Jewish kingdom.

In 1441 some Ethiopian monks travel from Jerusalem to attend the council in Florence which discussed possible union between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches.

The arrival of the Ethiopian monks caused a sensation. Rome has hoped to bring the Ethiopians into the Catholic fold for nearly two centuries. In 1554 Jesuits arrive in Ethiopia - to be joined in 1603 by Pedro Páez, a Spanish missionary of such energy and zeal that he has been called the second apostle of Ethiopia (Frumentius being the first).

Páez learns Amharic, the Ethiopian language, and prepares in it a catechism. He also wrote a treatise on the theological errors of the Ethiopian church, armed with which he persuaded the king, Susenyos, to abandon his monophysite heresy and to declare that Christ has two natures. But Páez

dies in 1622. Ten years later, under strong local pressure, the king reverts to Ethiopia's traditional version of Christianity.

The departure of the Jesuits is followed by two centuries in which Ethiopia survives once more in precarious isolation - until the second half of the 19th century, when the colonial interest in Africa again involves the kingdom in the affairs of the wider world. (Gascoigne, Bamber. HistoryWorld, 2001).





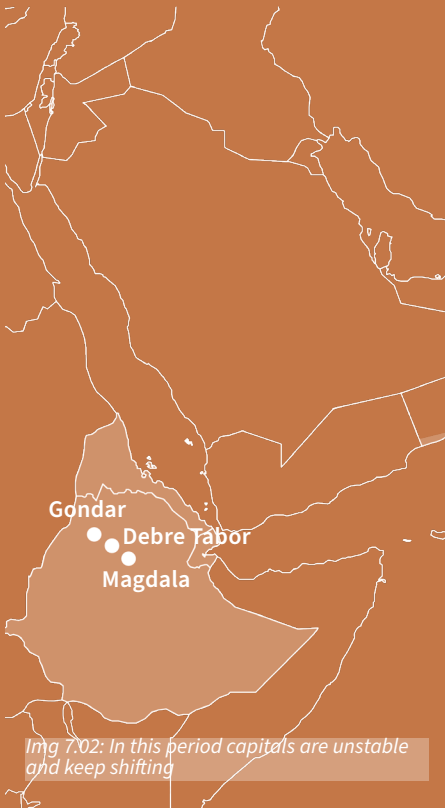
*Img 6.04: An Orthodox monk inside Abuna Yemata Guh church, Tigray, Ethiopia, Africa*

Img 7.01: Tewodros II



# Gondar Branch

“GONDAR WAS THE CAPITAL FROM 1632 TO 1855,  
AND IT HAS THE REMAINS OF CASTLES AND PALACES  
CONSTRUCTED BY GREAT EMPERORS” (BRITANNICA)



The Gondar branch of the Solomonic dynasty is the eldest of two branches. It starts with Susenyos in 1606.

Right after Tewodros' reign, Wagshum Gobeze claimed his legitimacy to the throne through his mother, Aychesh Tedla, a descendant of Iyasu I, and reigned as emperor of Ethiopia with the title Tekle Giorgis II. He focused on investing in the renovation of churches and monuments in Gondar, which was the capital of the Empire. Additionally, he was an heir to the Zagwe throne, thus his reign was seen to be a unification of both dynasties and both blood lineages.

Tekle Giorgis II fought a famous battle with the Tigrean Claimant Kassai Mercha (also known as Yohannes IV). Yohannes IV was an ally of the British, who provided for him all kinds of weaponry and armament in return for his assistance in the defeat of Tewodros II.

This is the reason why Tekle Giorgis II's army was defeated, and he was brutally killed.

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# Religion - Gondar Branch

## GONDAR “THE AFRICAN CAMELOT”

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Gondar was an old imperial capital in northern Ethiopia. Emperor Fasilides ruled from 1632 to 1667. The building was the first constructed in the Fasil Ghebbi compound. The complex hosted several castles erected by a succession of emperors, as well as one building on the far north side erected by a queen, Mentewab. The Greek Orthodox church has been practiced a lot Ethiopia.

The Fasil Ghebbi complex was beautiful with its shapes, outlines, and details of the palaces. The three most impressive buildings in the complex were Fasilides Castle, Library of Yohannes I, and the Palace of Mentewab. These were also three of the best preserved. Various portions of the complex fell victim to time and natural weathering, others to an earthquake of 1704, and also to damages sustained during World War II.

The churches built in Gondar have a square sanctuary with two aisles running along the periphery. The interiors are entirely covered in both murals and paintings that were commissioned by the wealthy elite in order to assist in their

ascension to heaven. This was a period of intense artistic production, including, in particular, considerable quantities of icons devoted to the Virgin Mary Emma (George Ross, 2002).

Tradition states that Gondar, the ancient capital of the Ethiopian Empire, had 44 Orthodox Tewahedo churches.

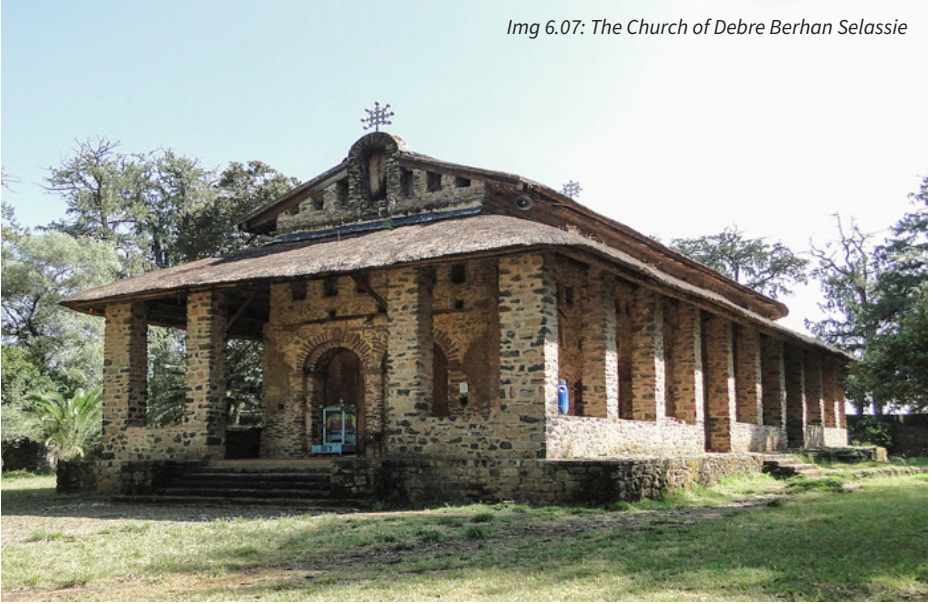
Debre Berhan Selassie Church and Monastery is one of the most beautiful churches in Gondar. It is part of a larger UNESCO World Heritage Site known as Fasil Ghebbi, Gondar Region, inscribed in 1979 for its Outstanding Universal Value.

The church of Debre Berhan Selassie is a modest stone building surrounded by an exterior stone wall. It is particularly well known for its interior filled with extraordinary examples of Ethiopian Christian Church art painted in what is known as the second Gondarine style.

The biblical scenes are vividly remarkable and the interior paintings cover the walls and ceilings in richly applied red, blue and golden hues. Subjects include the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the



*Img 6.07: The Church of Debre Berhan Selassie*



*Img 6.08: Ceiling Painting*





Img 6.09:he Church of Debre Berhan Selassie

Son and God the Holy Spirit, seated above Christ on the Cross.

Pictured beside is perhaps the most endearing sight – the ceiling of the church is completely covered by the faces of cherubic angels peering down at visitors. (sacredsites1,2018)

Baths and the park surrounding them are a peaceful place on a daily basis, providing respite from the hustle and bustle. The faithful enliven their area during important ceremonies. But in the Debre Birhan Selassie temple they are almost constantly. They pray and rest in the shade of the trees and in the church’s cloisters (visiting the world,2013).

In the 16th century, Muslims from the Adal Sultanate embarked on a Conquest of Abyssinia

(Futuh al-Habash) under the command of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (referred to as Gagn Mohammed or “Mohammed the left-handed” in Amharic).

The gravest danger is in the 16th century. It derives from the strong Muslim sultanate established at Harar. In 1530 its ruler, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim (known to the Ethiopian Christians as Grañ) moves west with an army of Somalis in a holy war against Ethiopia. By the time of his death, ten years later, the holy places and Christian shrines had been sacked and burnt as far north as Aksum.

*Img 6.10: aisles in The Church of Debre Berhan  
Selassie*





*Img 6.11: prayers rest in the Church of Debre Berhan Selassie*



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# The Decline of Beta Israel

During the reign of Susenyos I, who publicly converted to Catholicism in 1622, the Ethiopian empire waged war against the Jewish kingdom, and managed to conquer the entire kingdom and annex it to the Ethiopian empire by 1627. The vanquished Jews were sold as slaves, forced to baptize, and denied the right to own land. (jewishvirtuallibrary,2018).

After the Beta Israel autonomy in Ethiopia ended in the 1620s, Emperor Susenyos I confiscated their lands, sold many people into slavery and forcibly baptized others. In addition, Jewish writings and religious books were burned and the practice of any form of Jewish religion was forbidden in Ethiopia. As a result of this period of oppression, much traditional Jewish culture and practice was lost or changed. (Kaplan, 1967)

Nonetheless, the Beta Israel community appears to have continued to flourish during this period. The capital of Ethiopia, Gondar, in Dembiya, was surrounded by Beta Israel lands. The Beta Israel served as craftsmen, masons, and carpenters for the Emperors from the 16th century onwards. Such roles had been shunned by Ethiopians as lowly and less honorable than farming. According to contemporary accounts by European visitors, Portuguese merchants and diplomats, French, British, and other travellers, the Beta Israel

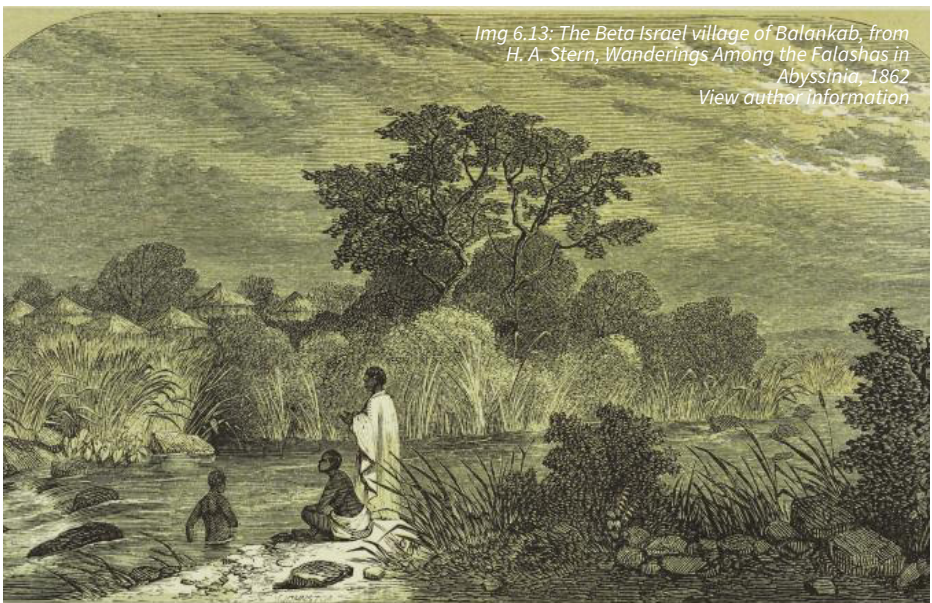
numbered about one million persons in the 17th century.

The isolation of the Beta Israel community in Ethiopia, and their continuing use of some Hebrew, was also reported by the Scottish explorer James Bruce who published his travelogue *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* in Edinburgh in 1790.

The Beta Israel lost their relative economic advantage in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, during the Zemene Mesafint, a period of recurring civil strife. Although the capital was nominally in Gondar during this time period, the decentralization of government and dominance by regional capitals resulted in a decline and exploitation of Beta Israel by local rulers. No longer was there a strong central government interested in and capable of protecting them. During this period, the Jewish religion was effectively lost for some forty years, before being restored in the 1840s by Abba Widdaye, the preeminent monk of Qwara. (Kaplan, 1967)



*Img 6.12: The castle of Emperor Fasildes, who ruled Ethiopia from 1632 to 1667, was built by many Ethiopian Jews*



*Img 6.13: The Beta Israel village of Balankab, from H. A. Stern, Wanderings Among the Falashas in Abyssinia, 1862  
View author information*

*Img 8.01: Menelik II*



# Shewa Branch

“ ‘SHEWA’ MEANS ‘RESCUE’ OR ‘SAVE’; THIS REGION WAS CONSIDERED A “SAFE HAVEN” IN THE AKSUMITE PERIOD AGAINST THE ATTACKS OF QUEEN GUDIT” (MARCUS)



*Img 8.02: Addis Ababa becomes the Capital*

The Shewa branch of the Solomonic dynasty is chronologically the second one to ascend to power. It begins with the coronation of Menelik II, previously Menelik King of Shewa, in 1889. Just like the Gondar branch, it traced an uninterrupted male line descent from King Yekonu Amlak.

The direct male line ended with Menelik II, who was succeeded first by the son of his daughter Lij Iyasu from 1913 to 1916, then by his daughter Zewditu until 1930, and finally by the son of a first cousin in the female line, Haile Selassie I. Haile Selassie's reign lasted until 1974, when the dynasty was removed from power. His reign, as you will read in the following chapters, was interrupted by the Italian Occupation. His grandson Prince Zera Yacob is his legal heir and therefore the current head of the imperial dynasty. Therefore, we could assert that it is still present nowadays, even though it is not in power.

The Shewan branch has several sub-branches, most notably the Selalle line established by Menelik II's uncle Ras Darge.

---

# Addis Ababa, the Capital

Addis Ababa, namely “new flower”, is the name that the emperor of Ethiopia Menelik II chose for this city in 1889.

In fact, he decided to found a new capital, wider and more modern than the previous one, Entoto. Entoto was a traditional African city, that is closer to a large rural village than a city: it almost had no masonry houses and was a collection of groups of huts with no real streets or squares.

According to Britannica, for the new capital a fairly flat terrain was chosen, but always on the plateau: Ethiopia, moreover, extends over a very high plateau and Addis Ababa (2,400m above sea level) is the African capital at the highest altitude. Both to make the place more pleasant and healthy, and to have plenty of firewood available, a eucalyptus forest was planted. It was also thought that they were a defense against the mosquitoes that transmit malaria. For the most part, eucalyptus trees still exist, though the city now has around 2,500,000 inhabitants and has expanded far beyond the edge of the forest.

Since 1970, Addis Ababa had a sudden development: hundreds of thousands of people poured into the capital, abandoning the regions most affected by a series of severe famines and the wars that involved the country. Many of the new inhabitants reside in informal settlements.



*Img 8.03: Menelik's II Palace in 1934*



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# The Battle of Adwa

According to Bufardeci, the European colonization acts in Africa during the 19th century, take just a few lines in modern western textbooks.

A battle that, however, remains famous is that of Adwa. Italy began with the colonization of Eritrea, which was acquired with a series of treaties and agreements with the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and the local elites between 1882 and 1890.

Just the year before, Italian diplomats had signed the Ucciali Treaty with the Negus Menelik II, King of the Kings of Ethiopia. On May 2, 1899, in fact, Ambassador Pietro Antonelli signed an international agreement with the Ethiopian sovereign, which had the aim to open up trade opportunities and the peaceful coexistence of the relationship between the two nations.

In truth, it was this treaty that led to the future war of Abyssinia. The bone of contention was the mistake in the double translation of article 17:

Italian version: "His Majesty the King of the Kings of Ethiopia allows the King of Italy to use the Government of His Majesty for all business dealings he had with other powers or governments"

Amharic version: "His Majesty the King of the Kings of Ethiopia can treat all the business he wishes with other powers or governments with the help of the Government of His Majesty the King

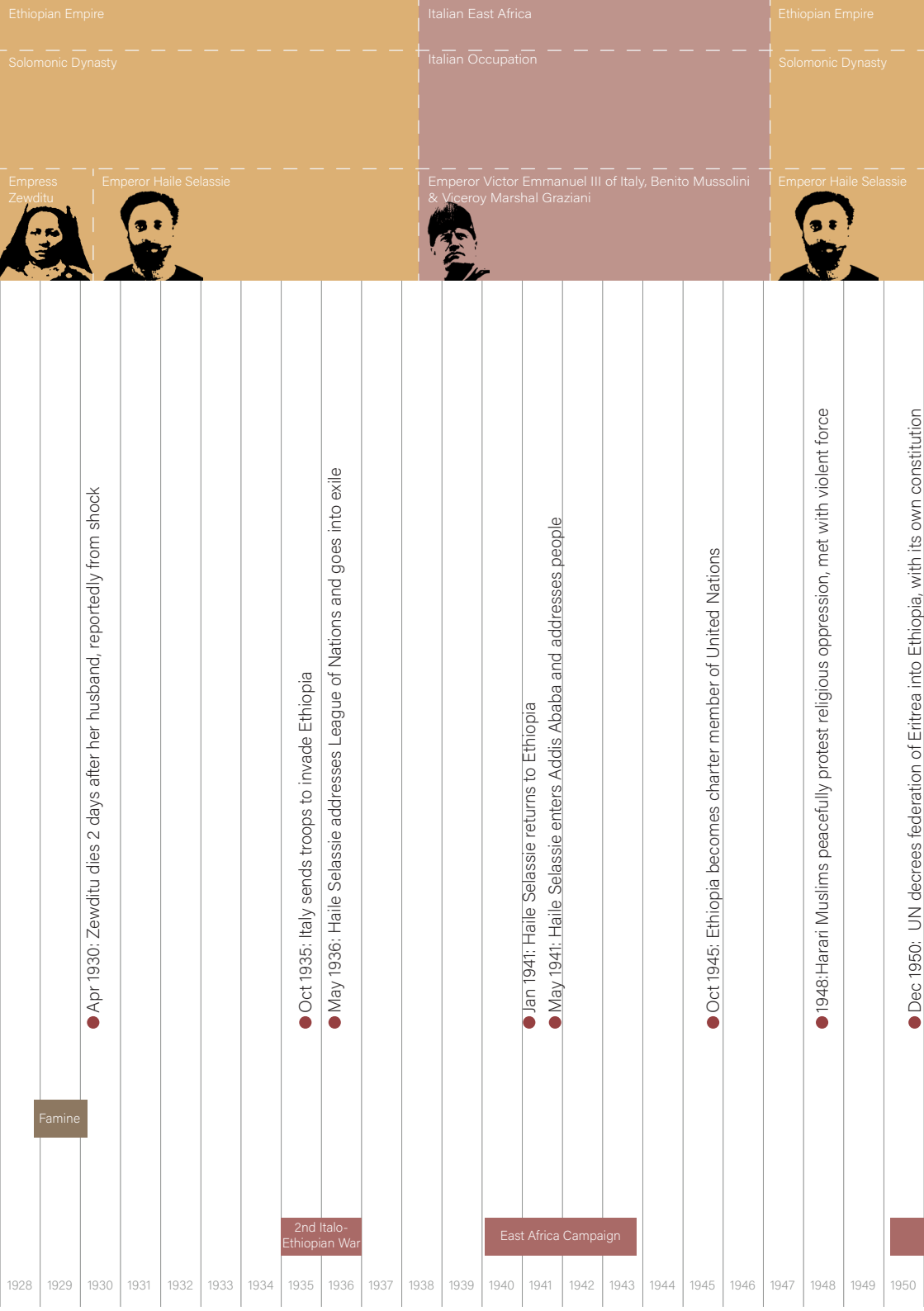
of Italy".

The Battle started after this diplomatic "mistake" in the translation of documents. Italian officers had no maps that faithfully reproduced the theater of operations, as those drawn up by the royal cartographic institute reported distances and places incorrectly, creating chaos and continuous misunderstanding. Thus, the Italians found themselves with their forces scattered. The Ethiopians, on the other hand, were perfectly aware of their native land and threw themselves on the single Italian brigades. In this way, within a few hours, on that bloody day of March 1, 1896, the proud Italian army was annihilated. At sunset there were 6,000 dead in combat, with 1,500 wounded and 3,000 prisoners, including two generals (Arimondi and Dabormida) and Lieutenant Colonel Galliano, who survived the siege of Macallè to fall to Adua. Even the Ethiopians had suffered huge losses, with about 15,000 dead and wounded, but the day was theirs. They had rejected and undone the European troops, guaranteeing themselves a strong position of strength in future negotiations with Italy. Menelik knew, in fact, that his semi-feudal army had reached the limits of its offensive capacity and its very high number of officers made it inefficient to use for prolonged periods, even more so away from its own territory.



Img 8.04, Painting depicting the Battle of Adwa





Ethiopian Empire

Solomonic Dynasty

Empress Zewditu

Emperor Haile Selassie

Italian East Africa

Italian Occupation

Emperor Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, Benito Mussolini & Viceroy Marshal Graziani

Ethiopian Empire

Solomonic Dynasty

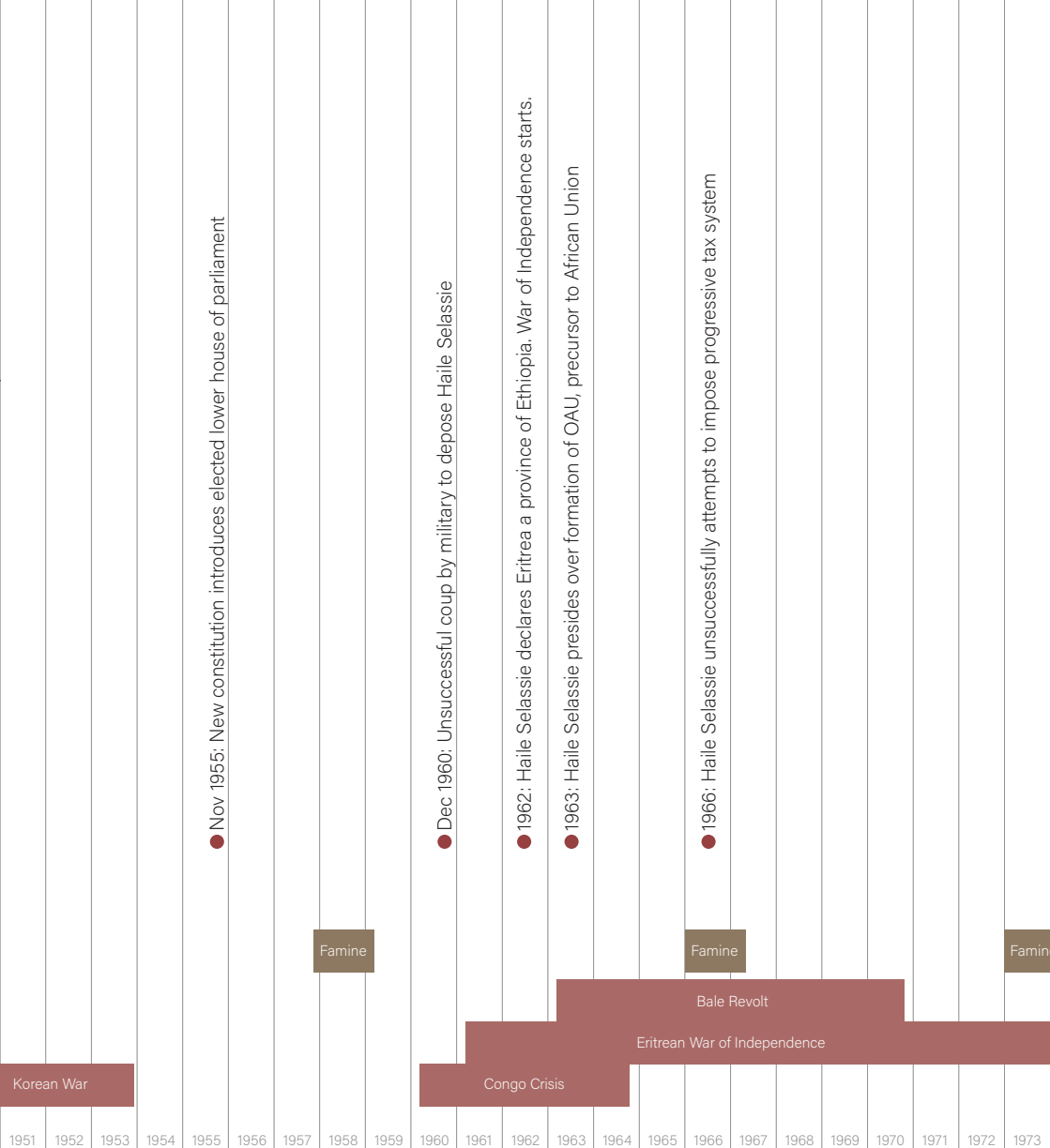
Emperor Haile Selassie

Famine

2nd Italo-Ethiopian War

East Africa Campaign

UN



● Nov 1955: New constitution introduces elected lower house of parliament

● Dec 1960: Unsuccessful coup by military to depose Haile Selassie

● 1962: Haile Selassie declares Eritrea a province of Ethiopia. War of Independence starts.

● 1963: Haile Selassie presides over formation of OAU, precursor to African Union

● 1966: Haile Selassie unsuccessfully attempts to impose progressive tax system

Korean War

Famine

Congo Crisis

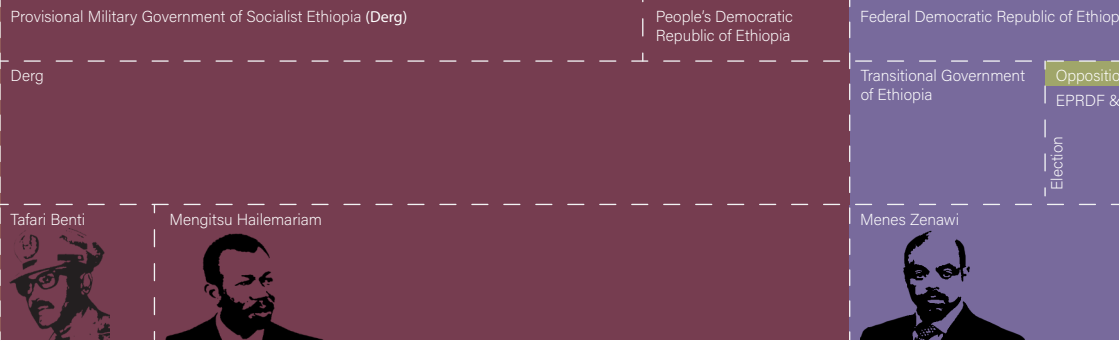
Famine

Bale Revolt

Eritrean War of Independence

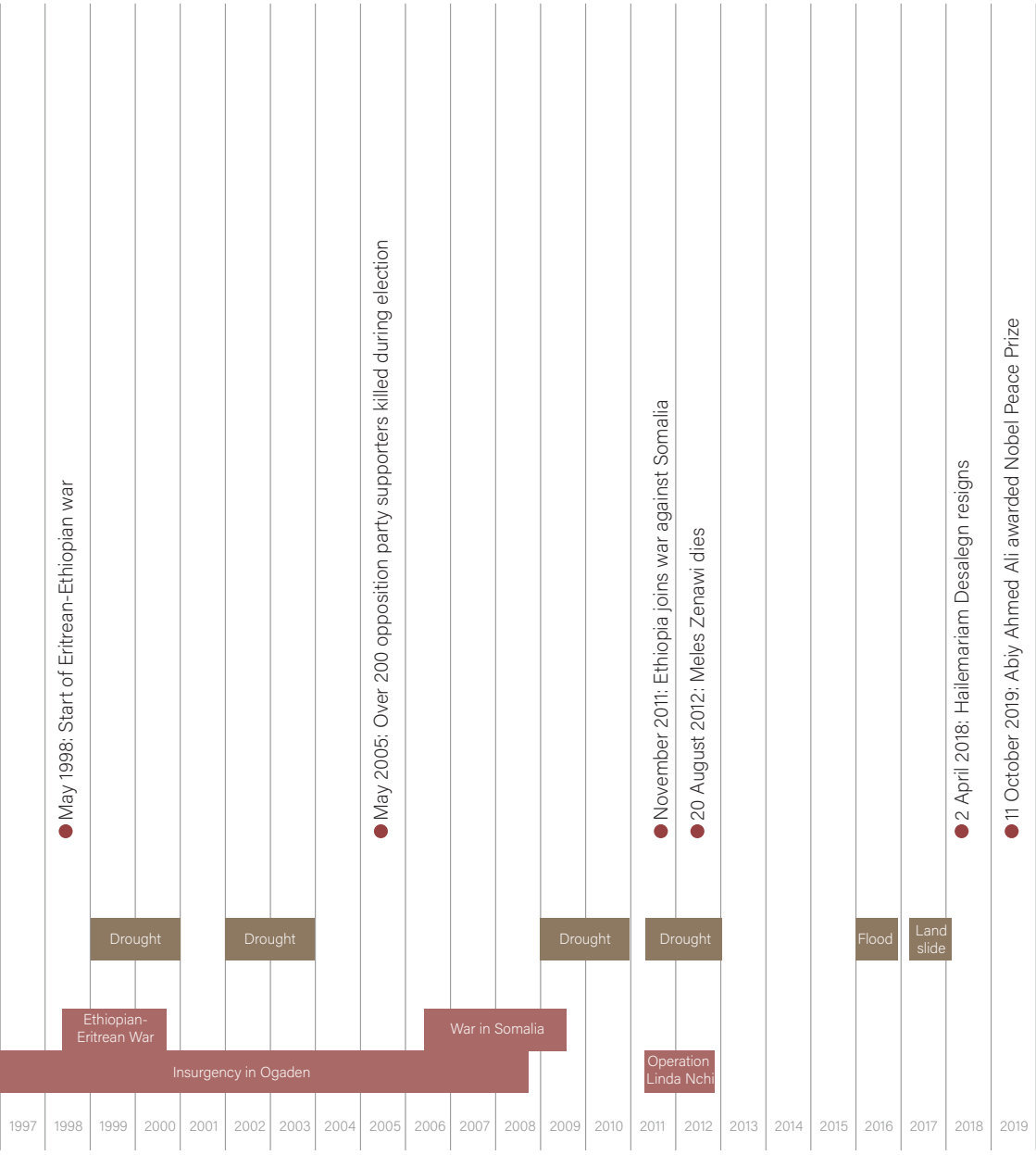
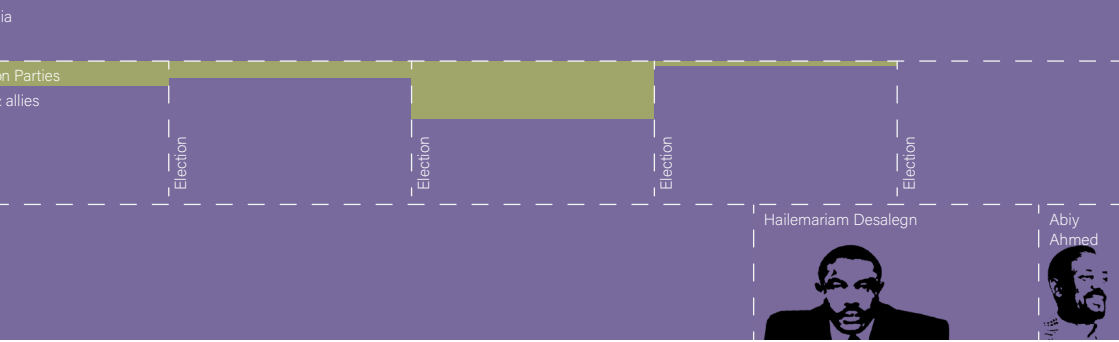
Famine

1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973



- Feb 1974: popular revolution
- 12 Sep 1974: Emperor Haile Selassie overthrown
- 27 August 1975: Haile Selassie murdered
- 3 Feb 1977: Assassination of Tafari Benti and supporters
- 12 November 1977: Execution of Atnafu Abate
- Jul 1985: Live Aid concerts held around the world to raise money for ongoing famine
- 22 Feb 1987: PDRE constitution adopted
- May 1991: EPRDF takes control of Addis Ababa. Mengitsu flees for Zimbabwe
- 5 July 1991: Transitional Government of Ethiopia formed
- 1993: Eritrea declares independence
- May 1995: First election. New constitution takes effect

Red Terror (1974-1977)  
 Ogaden War (1977-1978)  
 Famine (1983-1985)  
 Eritrean War of Independence (1974-1991)  
 Ethiopian Civil War (1974-1991)



Img 9.01: Haile Selassie



# Haile Selassie

“WE MUST AVOID THE PITFALLS OF TRIBALISM. IF WE ARE DIVIDED ON TRIBAL LINES, WE OPEN OUR DOORS TO FOREIGN INTERVENTION (HAILE SELASSIE)



Img 9.02: Addis Ababa is the Capital

On July 23, 1892, Haile Selassie was born in a place called Ejersa Gora. He was initially called Lij Tafari Makonne (the governor of Harar) and was the only son of Makonnen who lived to adulthood. Selassie traced his origin to the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, Menelik I. Emperor Menelik II, who was the cousin of the Tafari, did not have a male child who could take over. However, following the death of Menelik II in 1913, Lij Yasu, nephew of the emperor, was appointed emperor. Because of Yasu's ties with Islam, he failed to win the favor of the mostly Christian population; consequently, he was deposed in 1916 and succeeded by Tafari. Tafari was the symbol of hope and a better future for the new generations of Ethiopians. He represented Ethiopia in the League of Nations in 1923 and became the first ruler of Ethiopia to fly abroad. In 1928 he proclaimed himself king and, after the death of Zauditu, Tafari became the emperor and officially used the name Haile Selassie which means “Power of the Trinity”.

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# Pre-Occupation Haile Selassie - Politics

“GOD AND HISTORY WILL REMEMBER YOUR JUDGEMENT”  
(HAILE SELASSIE, 1936)

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**Born:** 23 July 1892  
**Affiliation:** Solomonic Dynasty  
**Positions:** Emperor of Ethiopia (1930 - 74),  
(in exile 1936 - 41)

Haile Selassie's political legacy is replete with contradictions: he both attempted to break the centuries-old feudal system, but believed wholeheartedly in an absolute monarchy; he was an internationalist but strongly defended Ethiopia's right to rule Eritrea; he fought across the world for the rights of African people, but tacitly allowed slavery in his own country (Thomson, 2015).

Many of the most notable moments of Haile Selassie's reign came with his return to power after exile in 1941, however his early reign and impact before his coronation as Emperor should not be overlooked.

As regent and heir apparent Haile Selassie was instrumental in Ethiopia's entry into the League of Nations (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). He first applied to join the League in 1919,

but the application was refused due to concerns about slave-holding in the country. Ethiopia was admitted to the League on its second application in 1923, however slavery remained legal until the Italian Occupation (Thomson, 2015). In 1924 Haile Selassie travelled to Europe, becoming the first Ethiopian ruler to conduct a foreign visit.

Shortly after his coronation as Emperor, Haile Selassie signed a new constitution for Ethiopia which severely limited the parliament's power. In effect Haile Selassie gave himself almost complete control, however his policies tended towards the progressive, with the opening of schools and implementation of social and economic reforms.

Haile Selassie led the resistance against the invading Italian Army from 1935, but was forced into exile in 1936. He gave an unprecedented speech to the League of Nations (he was the first leader to directly address the assembly), where he criticised the League's inaction and hypocrisy in regards to the Italian "aggressors" (Haile Selassie, 1936).



*Img 9.03: Haile Selassie*

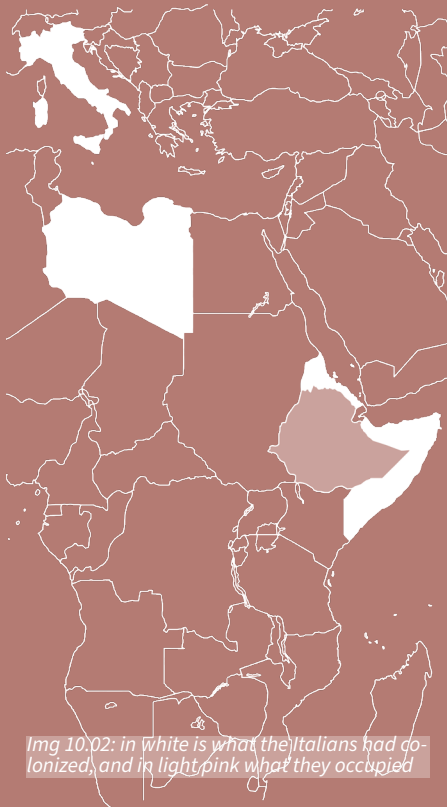


*Img 10.01: Benito Mussolini*



# Italian Occupation

“ WE HAVE BEEN PATIENT WITH ETHIOPIA FOR FORTY YEARS. IT IS ENOUGH NOW ” ( MUSSOLINI )



*Img 10.02: in white is what the Italians had colonized, and in light pink what they occupied*

We here report Mussolini's radio speech of 1935. "Blackshirts of revolution, men and women of all Italy, Italians all over the world, beyond the mountains, beyond the seas, listen. A solemn hour is about to strike in the history of the country. Twenty million Italians are at this moment gathered in the squares of all Italy. It is the greatest demonstration that human history records. Twenty million, one heart alone, one will alone, one decision. This manifestation signifies that the tie between Italy and fascism is perfect, absolute, unalterable. Only brains softened by puerile illusions, by sheer ignorance, can think differently, because they do not know what exactly is the Fascist Italy of 1935.

For many months the wheel of destiny and of the impulse of our calm determination moves toward the goal. In these last hours the rhythm has increased and nothing can stop it now. It is not only an army marching towards its goal, but it is forty-four million Italians marching in unity behind this army. Because the blackest of injustices is being attempted against them, that of taking from them

their place in the sun. When in 1915 Italy threw in her fate with that of the Allies, how many cries of admiration, how many promises were heard? But after the common victory, which cost Italy six hundred thousand dead, four hundred thousand lost, one million wounded, when peace was being discussed around the table only the crumbs of a rich colonial booty were left for us to pick up. For thirteen years we have been patient while the circle tightened around us at the hands of those who wish to suffocate us.

We have been patient with Ethiopia for forty years. It is enough now.

The League of Nations, instead of recognizing the rights of Italy, dares talk of sanctions, but until there is proof of the contrary, I refuse to believe that the authentic people of France will join in supporting sanctions against Italy. Six hundred thousand dead whose devotion was so heroic that the enemy commander justly admired them—those fallen would now turn in their graves.

To economic sanctions, we shall answer with our discipline, our spirit of sacrifice, our obedience. To military sanctions, we shall answer with military measures. To acts of war, we shall answer with acts of war. A people worthy of their past and their name cannot and never will take a different stand. (...) The Italy of the blackshirt fascist revolution, rise to your feet; let the cry of your determination rise to the skies and reach our soldiers in East Africa. (...) It is the cry of Italy which goes beyond the mountains and the seas out into the great world. It is the cry of justice and of victory”.



Img 10.03: Corriere della Sera 6th of May 1936

**Primo giorno dell'assedio economico**

Milano -- Mercoledì 6 Maggio 1936 -- Anno XIV

EDIZIONE DEL MATTINO

# CORRIERE DELLA SERA

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# Proclama del Duce La guerra è finita L'Italia è italiana Il trattato in Addis Abeba

...ini al popolo e al mondo: Il tricolore sventola 400 mila pers  
 sull'ex "ghebbi" all'adunata di Ro

Hansa S. 101

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# Italian East Africa - Politics

“BEFORE ANY OTHER NATION TALKS OF PENALTIES  
AGAINST ITALY, LET IT THINK WELL UPON THE  
CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH FOLLY.” (MUSSOLINI, 1935)

---

Italian troops occupied Ethiopia from May 1936, and from June that year they proclaimed Ethiopia to be a part of Italian East Africa, a group of countries which also included Eritrea and Italian Somaliland (now Somalia). From the outset, Italian occupation of Ethiopia was not considered as an ‘invasion’ or ‘colonisation’, with contemporary commentator Corrado Zoli (1937), disparaging of other African nations, noting “A country that for thirty centuries had been governed in one way or another as an independent state could not be considered as of the usual type of colonial territory inhabited by primitive tribes in a semi-savage state.”

The international response to the Italian occupation and the use of poison gas against the Ethiopians, was subdued. The League of Nations, who did not wish to upset the Italian government, did not intervene, and this situation led to Haile Selassie’s unprecedented address to the General Assembly in 1936.

Italy’s occupation of Ethiopia was led by dictator Benito Mussolini, with Italian king Victor Emmanuel

III being declared Emperor of Ethiopia during the Italian occupation. The territory was ruled on the ground by Viceroys and Governors General who represented the king.

It has been suggested that the Italian desire to occupy Ethiopia was twofold: firstly, the Italians wanted to redress their defeat at the hands of Ethiopia in the battle of Adwa in 1896; and secondly to improve the political acceptance of the fascist regime back in Italy (Ben-Ghiat, 2017).

Italian ruling forces aimed to keep the country segregated along racial lines, with minimal contact between Ethiopian people and the Italian occupiers. Indeed, a new plan for Addis Ababa was drawn up which separated the two communities. In reality, this separation did not exist as strongly as the Italian government had intended. As few of the wives of Italian troops accompanied their husbands to Ethiopia, sexual relations between Italian men and Ethiopian women were common (though outlawed from 1937) (Ben-Ghiat, 2017).

*Img 10.04: British troops pull down a fascist monument in Italian East Africa, 1941*





Battle of Adwa, 1896



Battle of Gogetti, 1937



x10

x10

 = 1000 deaths



# Italo-Ethiopian War

Italy's colonial policy gained momentum in the 1920s, finding its consistent justification in fascist ideology. Immediately after the advent of Mussolini, the Italian presence in Libya was consolidated: the occupation of northern Tripolitania (1923-1925) and southern Tripolitania was enlarged, while a harsh repression had started in Cyrenaica, successfully led by General Graziani.

Between 1923 and 1928 the conquest of Somalia was also completed, until then limited to the central part of the country.

The decision to undertake a military campaign in Ethiopia began to mature from 1930. The pretext for the start of military operations, whose plans had been prepared for some time, was justified in December 1934 by an accident at the town of Wal-Wal, along the Somali border. The Emperor of Ethiopia at the time, Haile Selassie, worried by Italian intents, turned to the League of Nations, of which his country had been a member since 1923 (you can read an excerpt the speech in the opening page of this booklet).

At that time, England and France did not want to alienate Mussolini's support in the new political scenario, and did not prevent Italian action from being obstructed. However, England was willing to host Haile Selassie during his exile. Only later on, when the international public opinion began

to mobilize against Italy's violent aggression, the League of Nations approved a series of economic sanctions against Italy (October 1935).

A necessary premise: it is true that the Italians used chemical gases, and used them much more often than certain post-war publications wanted to admit. (Romeo, 2018). The Italian argument has passed from a total denial to an adherence to the theses of Ethiopian propaganda on the indiscriminate use of gas.

The English journalist and writer Ewelyn Waugh recalls that the night of October 2nd 1935, the journalists of Addis Ababa were in such extreme fear of an Italian bombing, that "they played poker all night wearing gas masks". Moreover, there is evidence on the Ethiopian side of a grotesque episode: the bombing and destruction of the hospital of Adua, in which many women and children were killed.

The Abyssinians also used illegal weapons such as the "dum dum" bullets that are designed to explode inside human bodies; both the latter and chemical gases were, in theory, weapons prohibited by international conventions.

In conclusion, there was a proper massacre during the Italo-Ethiopian war, and you can visualize the outcome of deaths in the graph to the left.

*Img 10.05: Picture from the archive of the Corriere della Sera*



*Img 10.06: Picture from the archive of the Corriere della Sera, showing an Italian general's tent.*

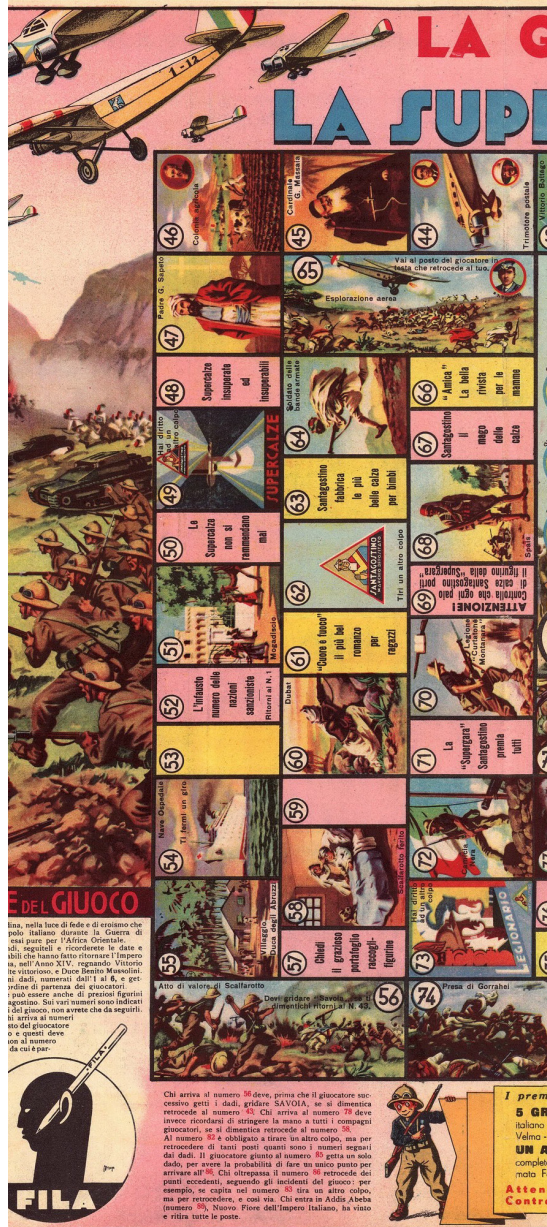


The Ethiopian war was accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign. All means of mass communication were mobilized and placed at the service of the colonial enterprise of the regime.

For the duration of the conflict, the radio news program was broadcast in six daily editions (for a total of 7256 hours of broadcasting, or 21% of the programs). In cinemas (defined by Mussolini as the strongest weapon) the newsreels, whose projection was mandatory before the start of any show, benefitted Mussolini greatly. The Istituto Luce produced about 140 newsreels between October 1935 and May 1936: more than 110 contained at least one film on an African topic, while in many cases the entire news project was dedicated to the victorious war.

As for the media and press, we must especially remember the illustrated tables of the Domenica del Corriere and the children's magazine Il Corriere dei piccoli, which you can observe in the next pages of the booklet. Relating to that, many of the common children's board games that were in use at the time were produced in a special edition for the Italo-Ethiopian war. To the right, you can observe an edited version of the famous "gioco dell'oca", which was carefully designed to brainwash kids, convincing them that war and violence were the only possible solutions.

Generally speaking, propaganda made more use of the image than of words. This is significant because at the time the illiteracy rate was still very high: around 17%, on a national scale, and even higher in the South. (Feltri, n.d.).



# GUERRA D' ETIOPIA ER-GARA SANTAGOSTINO

Img 10.07: Special Edition of the Gioco dell'Oca for kids, made in occasion of the occupation of Addis Ababa

The board is divided into several sections:

- Top Left:** A small map of Ethiopia with Addis Ababa highlighted, and a compass rose. The title 'GUERRA D' ETIOPIA ER-GARA SANTAGOSTINO' is prominently displayed at the top.
- Top Right:** A large illustration of a city street scene with soldiers and civilians, likely Addis Ababa during occupation.
- Middle Left:** A section titled 'IL DUCE' featuring portraits of Italian military figures: P. Badoglio, R. Balbo, E. D'Adda, E. R. Graziani, and others, with the text 'Entrata in Addis-Abeba Nuovo Fiore dell'Impero Italiano'.
- Center:** A large central illustration showing Italian soldiers on horseback and on foot, with a large '86' in the bottom left corner.
- Bottom Left:** Text describing the 'Supergara Santagostino' series, mentioning 'TAVOLETTE' and 'FIGURINE'.
- Bottom Right:** Text advertising a 'SCATOLA DI FIGURINE' and a 'ROMANZO' by R. Barone.
- Game Pieces:** Various numbered tiles (1-41) and cards are scattered across the board, each with different illustrations and text. Some cards are marked 'ATTENZIONE!' (Attention!) and 'SANTAGOSTINO'.

... della Supergara Santagostino per la serie completa di figurine dall'1 al 40:  
**LEI TAVOLETTE** del rimonatissimo ed eccitato "SUCHARD" (Miko - Miko Coramè Bitta - Arancio).  
**STUCCIO IN PELLE GRANA FOVA**, di un ricchissimo ed utile corredo della grande mita abibano "FILA".  
**CONTROLLATE NEI VOSTRI ACQUISTI CHE OGNI PAIO DI CALZE, I INTASCIAGATI GILIATO, SANTAGOSTINO PORTI LA PREZIOSA FIGURINA DELLA SUPERGARA, Controllato**

... Trovare le figurine della "Supergara" SANTAGOSTINO.  
**UNA SCATOLA DI FIGURINE** "LAZZARONI" lo Marco di N...  
**L'AFFASCINANTE ROMANZO "CUORE E FUOCO"** di R...  
 ...  
**SANTAGOSTINO MILANO - NIGUARDA**

**SANTAGOSTINO MARCHIO DEPOSITATO**

# LA DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE

Img 10.08: La domenica del Corriere, January 1937

Anno XXXIX — N. 3  
Anno XXXIX — N. 3  
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Centesimi 30 la copia



Nell'Impero pacificato. A Gambela, un'importante città...

# LA DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE

Img 10.09: La domenica del Corriere, December 1936

ITALIA ESTERO  
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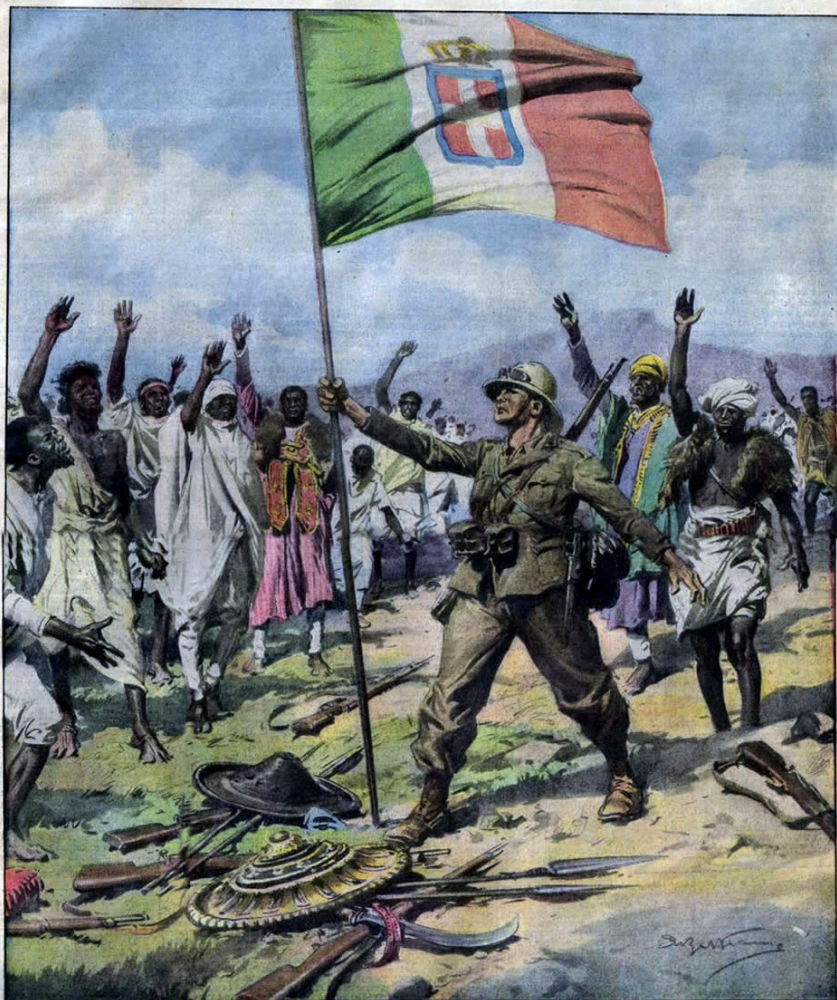
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*Tutti i territori dell'Impero sono occupati.  
Le popolazioni sottomesse salutano il Tricolore.*

---

# Post-Occupation Haile Selassie - Politics

“ DEMOCRACY IS NECESSARY IN SOME CASES [...] BUT IN  
OTHER CASES IT IS HARMFUL, A MISTAKE.”  
( HAILE SELASSIE, 1973 )

---

**Born:** 23 July 1892  
**Affiliation:** Solomonic Dynasty  
**Positions:** Emperor of Ethiopia (1930 - 74),  
(in exile 1936 - 41)

Haile Selassie returned to Ethiopia in January 1941, and addressed the people in May 1941, 5 years after going into exile. On the creation of the United Nations in October 1945 (after the end of World War II), Ethiopia became a charter member.

Haile Selassie's second period of rule was as controversial as his first. The question of Eritrean independence remained unanswered during his reign. In 1950 the UN decreed that Eritrea should be federated within Ethiopia, but with its own constitution and relatively high political and economic independence. Just seven years later, however, Haile Selassie declared that Eritrea was a “province” of Ethiopia, which was met with strong resistance from the Eritreans. This provocation began the Eritrean War of Independence, which was not fully resolved until the peace agreement

of 2018 (Maasho, 2018).

Haile Selassie introduced a new constitution in 1955 which allowed for an elected lower house of parliament, but the Emperor retained many powers. Many of his more progressive policies were thwarted by the strength of traditional leaders and nobles - he unsuccessfully attempted to implement a progressive tax system in 1966 but had to settle for a flat tax system due to the nobility revoting in Gojjam (Schwab, 1970). Haile Selassie survived an attempted coup to overthrow him in 1960.

In 1963 Haile Selassie presided over the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor to the African Union. The OAU established its headquarters in Addis Ababa and Haile Selassie was elected as the first chairman.

A widespread famine in the north-eastern province of Wollo, as well as some parts of Tigray, led to revolution in 1974. Haile Selassie was overthrown by rebel forces, notably Derg, and was murdered a year later in 1975.



*Img 10.10: Haile Selassie*



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*Img 11.01: Mengistu Haile Mariam*

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# Derg Regime

“THE DERG BORROWED ITS IDEOLOGY FROM COMPETING MARXIST PARTIES, ALL OF WHICH AROSE FROM THE STUDENT MOVEMENT”. (BRITANNICA)



At the time of the Derg revolution, the Ethiopian empire of Haile Selassie was in one of the most delegitimizing moments of its history. In 1960 an attempted military coup had already failed; in the north, meanwhile, the national Eritrean question and the pro-independence mobilizations were strongly felt. In addition to this, the government was completely impotent with regards to the two famines of Welo and Tigré, which had started in the beginning of the decade.

The Derg took the leadership of the government on September 15th.

The Derg was born, in short, as an institution that lacked any type of communication with the outside: a sort of closed system of military oligarchy. Nevertheless, the decisions were taken in a collegial form, and the proposed motions were voted on.

In theory, the movement started with the idea that positions such as the President and spokesman had the same importance of any other hierarchical role within the system.

Img 11.02: Expansion of Derg Regime

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# Derg & PDRE - Politics

“DEATH TO COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES!  
DEATH TO THE EPRP!” (MENGITSU, 1976)

---

**Formation:** 1974  
**Collapse:** 1991  
**Ideology:** Marxism-Leninism,  
Military Junta (Derg)  
**Leaders:** Aman Andom (1974)  
Tafari Benti (1974 - 77)  
Mengitsu Haile Mariam (1977 -91)

The Derg (sometimes “Dergue”) was formed by 109 low-ranking military personnel in 1974. No new members were ever admitted, so the membership dwindled as members died, were expelled, or were executed.

At its outset the Derg was led by chairman Aman Andom, and under his leadership overthrew the Imperial regime of Haile Selassie. Andom was killed in a shoot-out organised by Mengitsu Haile Mariam. Following Andom’s effective execution, Tafari Benti gained the chairmanship of Derg. In 1977 he was assassinated in an attack masterminded by his deputy, Mengitsu Haile Mariam (Resource Information Centre, 1999).

The period 1974 - 77 is known as the Ethiopian Red Terror and was characterised by widespread violence organised by the Derg targeting rival Marxist-Leninist groups. Unprecedented power was given to local militia groups in Kebeles, who searched for and often killed supposed counter-revolutionaries. This period resulted in as many as 500,000 deaths (Mcgee, 2013).

Following a referendum in 1987 Ethiopia became a one-party state, known as the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE). The surviving members of Derg became the leaders of the new civilian government, and Mengitsu gave himself almost dictatorial power.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the USSR became unable to financially and politically support Ethiopia. Without this funding the Derg’s grip on power loosened (Watkins, n.d.). In 1991 rebel forces, including the EPRDF, captured major cities and overthrew the Derg Regime.

*Img 11.03: Emblem of the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia*



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# Mengitsu Haile Mariam

“ [ HAILE SELASSIE ] WAS 80 YEARS OLD AND A VERY WEAK MAN . WE TRIED OUR BEST TO SAVE HIM BUT WE COULD NOT KEEP HIM . ” ( MENGITSU , 1999 )

---

**Born:** 21 May 1937  
**Affiliation:** Derg  
**Positions:** Chairman, Derg (1974, 1977 - 87)  
Head of State (1974, 1977 - 87)  
President of Ethiopia (1987 - 91)

Born into a military family, unsubstantiated rumours claim Mengitsu’s mother was the illegitimate daughter of Kebede Tessema, a high-ranking nobleman in Haile Selassie’s court, who himself claimed lineage back to Menelik I (Spector, 2005). Following his father into the army, he attracted the attention of Aman Andom, who would later be leader of Derg.

Mengitsu was originally a low-ranking member of Derg, but became deputy chairman by 1975. He is widely believed to have either ordered or personally undertaken the murder of Haile Selassie in 1975 (Washington Post, 1994), and was responsible for both the effective execution of his former mentor Aman Andom and the subsequent Derg chairman Tafari Benti (Resource Information

Centre, 1999).

After Benti’s execution Mengitsu took over as chairman of Derg and proceeded to murder his deputy Atnafu Abate and 40 other officers. As leader he embraced Marxism-Leninism and enacted policies which resulted in high levels of state control. One such policy was extensive state control of industry and the nationalisation of all land, other than owner-occupied dwellings, under the slogan “Land to the Tiller”.

Following the formation of the PDRE in 1987, Mengitsu gave himself sweeping executive and legislative powers, essentially taking the role of a dictator. However, with crushing military defeats his power was weakening by 1989. With the fall of the PDRE Mengitsu, his immediate family and 50 other Derg members fled the country.

Mengitsu took refuge in Zimbabwe, where he still resides. He has been convicted of genocide in absentia for his role in the Ethiopian Red Terror (Tadesse, 2007).

*Img 11.04: Mengitsu  
Haile Mariam*



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# Religion - Dergue Era- Jewish Emigration

## OPERATION MOSES AND OPERATION SOLOMOM - LOST TRIBE OF ETHIOPIAN JEWS RETURNING ISRAEL

---

Beta Israel became known to the West during the 19th and 20th centuries, and were accepted as Jews by the Israeli government in 1975. Following this, a rabbinic debate ensued over whether or not the Beta Israel were Jews. After halakhic (Jewish law) and constitutional discussions, Israeli officials decided, in 1977, that the Israeli Law of Return was to be applied to the Beta Israel (Gabby Blair, 2015). It was Prime Minister Menachem Begin, after he came to power in 1977, who first opened the country to Ethiopian Jews.

They mainly practice Haymanot religious practices, due to isolation from mainstream Jewish communities until the late 20th century, when most of the community emigrated to Israel. (Prof Yossi Mekelberg, 2015)

The emigration to Israel of the Beta Israel community was officially banned by the Derg, although it is now known that General Mengistu collaborated with Israel to receive money and arms in exchange for allowing them safe passage during Operation Moses.

Operations Moses and Solomon, conducted in 1984 and 1991 respectively, airlifted the vast majority of the Ethiopian Jewish population to Israel. By the end of 2008, there were 119,300 people of Ethiopian descent in Israel, including nearly 81,000 people born in Ethiopia and about 38,500 native-born Israelis (about 32% of the community) with at least one parent born in Ethiopia or Eritrea.

The Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel is mostly composed of Beta Israel (practicing both Haymanot and Rabbinic Judaism) and to a smaller extent of Falash Mura who converted from Christianity to Rabbinic Judaism upon their arrival to Israel. (Prof Yossi Mekelberg, 2015).

In the first half of the 20th Century and especially before 1991 – the date when EPRDF took power from the Socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam – Islam had been subject to oppression and marginalization from the state. But since this period, there is a new climate of religious freedom and tolerance.





*Img 11.05: Heading to Tel Aviv from Ethiopia in 1991*



*Img 11.06: Operation Moses, 1985*

Img 12.01: Zainul Abedin, Famine Sketch



# Famines and Live Aid

“PEOPLE ARE DYING NOW. GIVE US THE MONEY NOW.”

(GELDOF)



*Img 12.02: Live Aid*

Famines have always been present in the history of Ethiopia. However, one of the famines that have marked forever the course of modern history was that of 1984. There was an extreme drought, and nearly 8 million people were affected, with over a million deaths.

In 1984, a BBC crew was the first to document the famine, with journalist Michael Buerk, who described it as “a biblical famine in the 20th century” and “the closest thing to hell on Earth”. Up to that point, western countries were not paying a great level attention to the disastrous event.

The Live Aid, an effort to raise funds directed by Bob Geldof, induced millions of people in the West to donate and push their governments to participate in humanitarian aid.

The inability or ill will of the Ethiopian government to face the famine of 1984-85 resulted in universal condemnation by the international community. Even many supporters of the Ethiopian regime opposed their policy of withholding food shipments in rebel-controlled areas.

Politics

Plague

Oromo expand  
Amir Nur dies

Epidemic in Tigray and Harari

Plague of locusts in Harar

Mentita Plague of kantara (cholera) locusts in Tigray

Epidemic of kabab

Iyasu I feeds peasants

Famine

Ahmad al-Nagasi dies

Pankhurst describes it as devastating

Famine in Tigray and Harari

Famine in Harar

People starve

Famine in Shewa

Thousands of Animals die

Famine in Amhara

Crop failures

First recorded drought

Cost of grain inflated

Climate

Heavy rains



Dejazmach Hailu Eshte  
adopts "needy  
people" as guards

Haile Selassie  
refuses to send  
aid to Tigray

soldiers  
die due to  
famine

typhus

smallpox

locusts &  
caterpillars

cattle infestation  
plague

locusts  
epidemic  
er epidemic

cholera

locusts  
in Gondar

rinderpest

2.5 million  
people displaced

hemame  
famine

100,000  
deaths

1.2 million  
deaths

famine  
in Gondar

famine  
in Shewa

90% of  
cattle dies

famine  
in Amhara

famine  
in  
Begemder

famine  
in Tigray

famine  
in Tigray

famine

drought

heavy  
rains

lack of rainfall

Img 13.01: Meles Zenawi



# FDRE

“THE YOUNG GENERATION OF TODAY SHOULD REPEAT THE VICTORY OF ADWA BY DEFEATING CURRENT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS” (ABIY)



*Img 13.02: FDRE is born*

in 1995, Ethiopia adopted a new constitution that established the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

“The federal government is responsible for national defense, foreign relations and general policy of common interest and benefits. The federal state comprises nine autonomous states vested with power for self-determination. The FDRE is structured along the lines of bicameral parliament, with the council of Peoples’ Representatives being the highest authority of the federal government while the federal council represents the common interests of the nations, nationalities and peoples of the states. Members of both councils are elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term” (Engerati, 2014).“The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia’s Office of the Prime Minister is currently restructuring under the premiership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed” according to the FDRE’s website.

---

# FDRE - Politics

“LET’S DEFINE THE COUNTRY IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE BUT ALSO, IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE, YOU CAN LEAVE.” (MELES ZENAWI, N.D.)

---

**Formation:** 1991 (Transitional Government)  
1995 (Constitution adopted)  
**Ideology:** Ethnic Federalism, Democracy  
**Leaders:** Meles Zenawi (1991 - 2012)  
Hailemariam Desalegn (2012 - 18)  
Abiy Ahmed (2018 - present)

With the collapse of the PDRE a transitional government was formed under the leadership of Meles Zenawi, the leader of the EPRDF. A constitution based on the principle of Ethnic Federalism was drawn up and adopted in 1995, when the first democratic elections were held.

The Ethiopian parliament consists of two houses, the upper House of the Federation and the lower House of People’s Representatives. The government is lead by a prime minister (the leader of the ruling party in the lower house). The presidency is a largely ceremonial role, elected by the House of People’s Representatives.

The House of the Federation has 110 seats, with a minimum of one seat for each Nation, Nationality

and People, with an additional 1 seat for each 1 million of that Nation’s population. The members are appointed by the states, and it is for each state to decide how the members are selected.

The House of People’s Representatives has 547 seats, each representing a single constituency. 22 of these seats are reserved for minority nationalities. Each constituency directly elects a representative through first-past-the-post voting. Members are elected for 5-year terms. Currently the EPRDF holds 500 seats, with their allies holding the remaining 47. Thirty-nine per cent of the members are female.

Doubts have been cast about the fairness of elections, with opposition parties quick to contest the results of the latest election in 2015 (Maasho, 2015). The US State Department has voiced concerns about restrictions on opposition parties (Maasho, 2015). The 2015 election was monitored by the African Union, who raised concerns about vote casting and counting, but also noted the elections were calm and peaceful (AUEOM, 2015).





Img 13.03 Swearing in of Prime Minister Abiy's cabinet

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# EPRDF

“THE EPRDF HAS ALWAYS HAD DIVISIONS BUT IT’S BEEN VERY INSULAR AND EVERYTHING HAS BEEN CONTAINED”  
(AHMED SALIM, 2018)

---

**Formation:** 1988  
**Ideology:** Marxism-Leninism (1988 - 91)  
Revolutionary Democracy,  
Ethnic Federalism (1991 - present)  
**Leaders:** Meles Zenawi (1991 - 2012)  
Hailemariam Desalegn (2012 - 18)  
Abiy Ahmed (2018 - present)

The Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front was formed in 1989 as a coalition of the Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (EPDM) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), both of which were rebel groups opposing the Derg regime and later the civil government of the PDRE.

Later the EPDM (now known as the Amharan Democratic Party, or ADP) and the TPLF were joined by the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDm).

Originally the EPRDF held broadly Marxist-Leninist views, however these have shifted

to a Revolutionary Democratic ideology (Fick & Negeri, 2018). The coalition supports (and indeed introduced) the current system of Ethnic Federalism. As a coalition the EPRDF contains a broad range of viewpoints.

Since the transition to democracy in the early 1990s, the EPRDF has dominated Ethiopian politics, holding (with their allies) the majority of seats throughout this period. Their goals include rapid export-based economic growth, the privatisation of state industry, alignment with the US on foreign and defense policies, reduction of state bureaucracy, and reformation of the tax system (Maru, 2018).

Under the leadership of Meles (who was also chairman of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front) the EPRDF was widely seen to favour the Tigray people. Under the subsequent leaderships of Hailemariam and Abiy this has begun to change, however until recently the Tigray nationality was believed to be over-represented in positions of power (Temare, 2019).

*Img 13.04: Emblem of Ethiopia*



# Ethnic Federalism

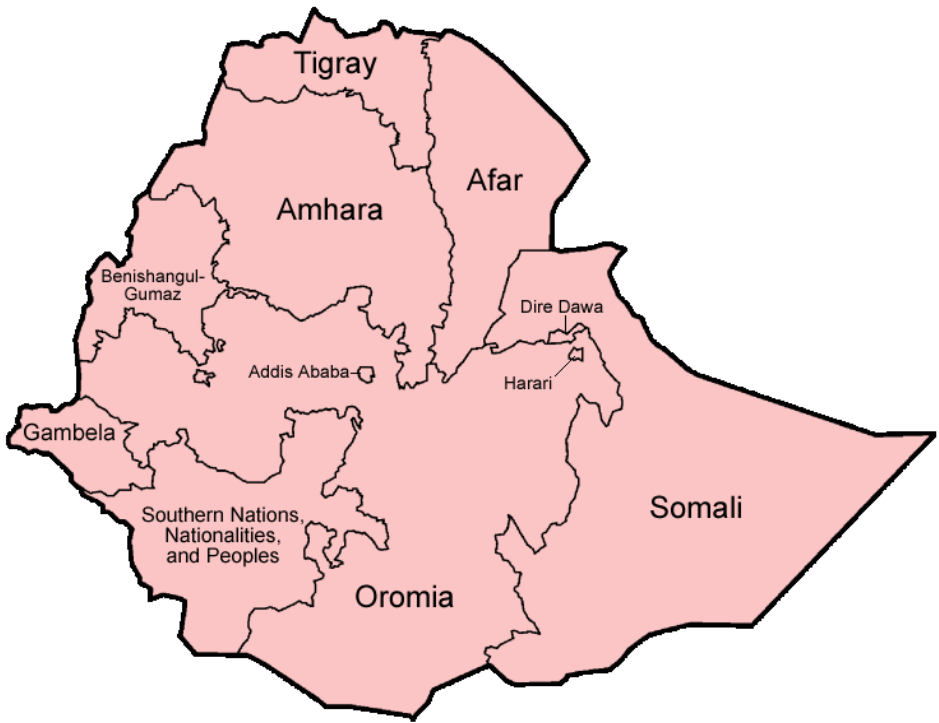
“EVERY NATION, NATIONALITY AND PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA  
HAS AN UNCONDITIONAL RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION”  
(ARTICLE 39, ETHIOPIAN CONSTITUTION)

Since 1995 the concept of Ethnic Federalism has been enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution. The system gives semi-autonomy to states and chartered cities, allowing them wide-ranging powers apart from the central government.

The current system of states and chartered cities replaced the former provinces of Ethiopia in 1992. States are based on ethnic and linguistic groups, and the areas and populations of the states vary widely (Harari is a notable example).

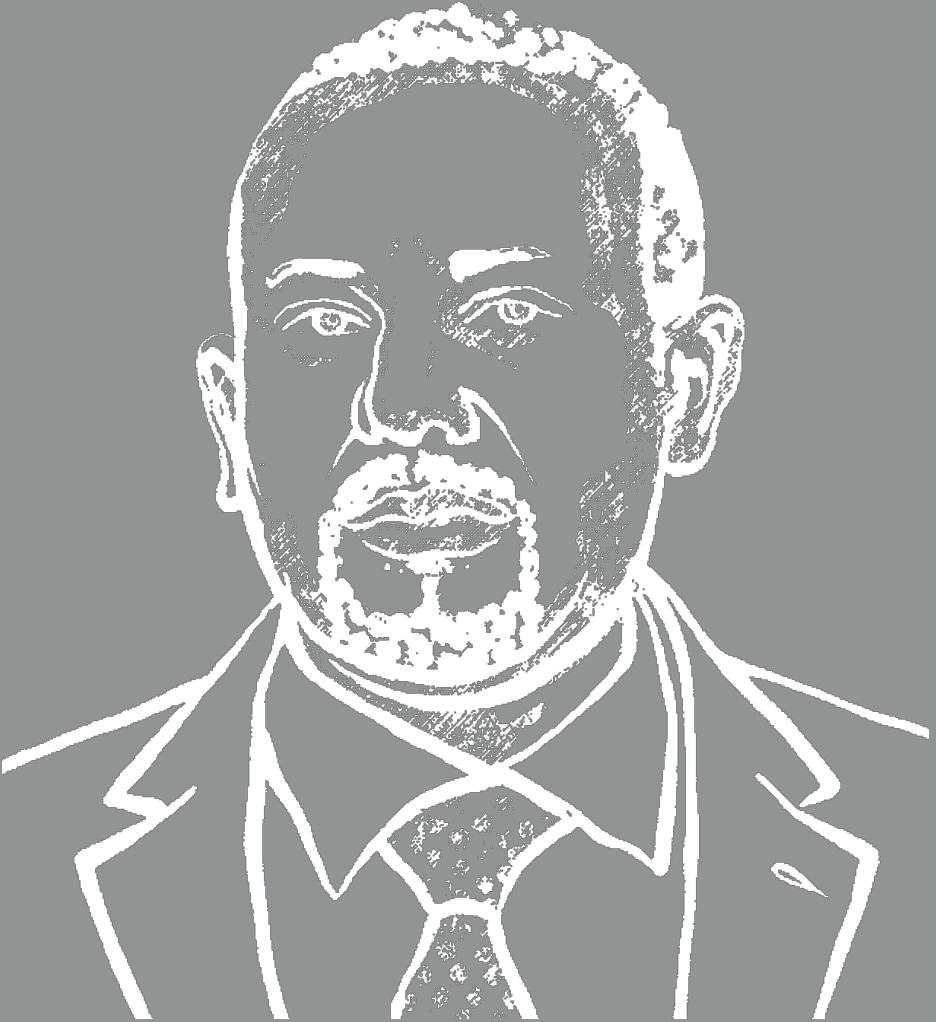
| State                                       | Population | Area (km2) | Capital   | Primary Ethnicity   |
|---|------------|------------|-----------|---|
| Addis Ababa                                 | 3,273,000  | 527        | -         | Amhara (47%); Oromo (20%); Gurage (16%)                     |
| Afar  | 1,723,000  | 72,052     | Semera    | Afar (90%)  |
| Amhara                                      | 20,401,000 | 154,709    | Bahir Dar | Amhara (91%)  |
| Benishangul-Gumuz                           | 1,005,000  | 50,699     | Asosa     | Berta (25%); Gumuz (21%); Amhara (21%); Oromo (14%)         |
| Dire Dawa                                   | 440,000    | 1,558      | -         | Oromo (46%)   |
| Gambela                                     | 409,000    | 29,783     | Gambela   | Anuak (32%); Nuer (19%) + other Nilotic ethnic minorities   |
| Harari                                      | 232,000    | 334        | Harar     | Oromo (54%); Amhara (23%); Harari (9%)                      |
| Oromia                                      | 33,692,000 | 284,538    | Finfinne  | Oromo (88%)   |
| Somali                                      | 5,453,000  | 279,252    | Jijiga    | Somali (97%)  |
| Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples | 18,276,000 | 105,476    | Hawassa   | Sidama (19%); Welayta (11%); + other indigenous ethnicities |
| Tigray                                      | 5,056,000  | 53,638     | Mek'ele   | Tigrayan (97%)  |

Img 13.05: Regions of Ethiopia



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*Img 14.01: Abiy Ahmed*



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# Current Day

“I AM SO HUMBLE AND THRILLED... IT IS A PRIZE GIVEN  
TO AFRICA, GIVEN TO ETHIOPIA” (ABIY)

---



The appointment of Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali as prime minister in 2018 has arguably brought about a new era in Ethiopian politics. In the first year of his term he has released thousands of political prisoners, removed opposition parties from the list of terrorist organisations, and given key roles to political rivals.

Moreover he extended the hand of peace to Eritrea, ending the decades-long war between the two nations. For this he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, and is expected to receive the prize in December 2019. On announcement of the prize in October 2019, Abiy's office stated the award is testament to “to the ideals of unity, co-operation and mutual coexistence that the Prime Minister has been consistently championing.”

However, the honouring of Abiy has not been without controversy - Amnesty International noted the “outstanding human rights challenges” still faced in the country.

*img 14.02: FDRE*

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# Abiy Ahmed Ali

“FROM THIS TIME ON, WAR IS NOT AN OPTION FOR THE PEOPLE OF ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA. WHAT WE NEED NOW IS LOVE.” - (ABIY AHMED ALI, 2018)

---

**Born:** 15 August 1976  
**Affiliation:** EPRDF, ODP  
**Positions:** Prime Minister (2018 - present)  
Chairman, EPRDF (2018 - present)  
Leader, ODP (2018 - present)

Born to a Muslim Oromo father and an Orthodox Christian Amhara mother, Abiy fought against Derg as part of the Oromo Democratic Party after the early death of his brother. Abiy holds a bachelor's degree in computer engineering, a master's degree in transformational leadership, an MBA and a doctorate.

During his leadership he has released thousands of political prisoners and has removed opposition parties from the list of terrorist organisations. He is seen to be more open to reforming political institutions than his predecessors in the the EPRDF. Furthermore he has taken steps to depoliticise the Electoral Commission and judiciary, by appointing Burtukan Mideksa and Meaza Ashenafi (both from opposing parties) as chairwoman and president of

the supreme court respectively.

In opposition to much of his party he is sceptical of Ethiopia's unique system of Ethnic Federalism, as well as aiming to curb the influence of the military. He removed 160 Tigrayan generals from their positions, in an act that was widely seen to be anti-Tigray (Pilling, 2019). His positions often conflict with (mostly Tigrayan) hard-line members of the EPRDF.

Ethnic conflicts have escalated under Abiy's leadership, leading to 1.5 million people fleeing their homes, including 900,000 Gedeo people in the province of West Guji at the hands of the Oromo Liberation Front (Gedamu, 2019).

Soon after his ascension to the prime ministership, Abiy handed the border town of Badme to Eritrea, thus ending the decades-long conflict. Subsequently he has met with Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki, the first such meeting in 20 years. His role in ending the decades-long war with Eritrea earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.



*Img 14.03: Abiy Ahmed Ali*



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# Foreign Relations

“OUR COUNTRY IS [...] A COUNTRY THAT PLAYS A NOTABLE ROLE IN REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL, AND GLOBAL MATTERS” (ABIY AHMED ALI, 2018)

---

In general Ethiopia's relationship with its African neighbours and beyond is friendly, and as the seat of the African Union there is political pressure for Ethiopia to remain largely neutral. Under Abiy's leadership the country has formed a new role as mediator in conflicts between nations both in Africa and the Middle East (Allo, 2019).

Both within Ethiopia and in its relationship with the Horn of Africa Abiy has promoted the idea of “Medemer”, roughly translated as “synergy and togetherness” (Girma, 2019). He promotes peaceful co-existence and collaboration between African nations (Allo, 2019). Following the deposition of Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir in early 2019 Ethiopia has attempted to act as a mediator between the military and opposition civilian groups in the formation of a transitional government. Nonetheless, despite support from opposition parties in Sudan, the Sudanese military rejected Ethiopia's proposal, asking instead for a joint Ethiopia-African Union proposal.

Ethiopian-Egyptian relationships have been

tense since the 2010 decision to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, close to the Sudanese border. This dam, which will be the largest hydro-electric power station in Africa on its completion, is located on the Blue Nile River, a major source for the White Nile that flows through Egypt.

Colonial treaties of 1929 and 1959 apportioned the water in the river Nile, with a large share given to Egypt. However, Ethiopia was not consulted, and as such officially has no right to the water running in the Blue Nile. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian government pushed ahead with \$5bn project. Disagreement over the timespan of the filling of the dam is the major source of tension between Ethiopia and Egypt (Al Jazeera, 2019).

However strained relationships between the two countries are, Ethiopia's increased presence in the Middle East, based on strategic relationships without alignment with any particular power, is a possible reason that conflict has not gone beyond heated discussion (Allo, 2019).

*Img 14.04: Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam under construction*



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# Relationship with Eritrea

“ WHEN PRIME MINISTER ABIY REACHED OUT HIS HAND,  
PRESIDENT AFWERKI GRASPED IT ”  
( BERIT REISS-ANDERSEN, 2019 )

---

Eritrea, a former British protectorate, was federated to Ethiopia in 1951 following the end of colonial rule. Eritrea had autonomy within Ethiopia until Emperor Haile Selassie annexed the country in 1960, starting the Eritrean War of Independence.

This conflict continued through the fall of the Imperial Regime in 1974 and throughout the Derg Regime. The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front were allies of the EPRDF in the conflicts of the late 1980s and early 1990s that resulted in the collapse of Derg in 1991. As a result of this, the Eritrean people were given independence after a referendum in which they overwhelmingly supported the motion.

However, in 1998 Eritrean forces entered the border town of Badme, then in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian response was considered an act of “total war” (BBC, 1998), and thus began the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, which lasted until June 2000, with tens of thousands of deaths on both sides.

A peace agreement (the Algiers Agreement) was

signed in 2000, and two years later the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission ruled that Badme, the original source of conflict, should be awarded to Eritrea. Despite initially accepting the agreement, the Ethiopian government quickly withdrew its support and the countries were engaged in a state of “no war, no peace” (Allo, 2019).

In 2018 newly elected Prime Minister Abiy unexpectedly announced that Ethiopia accepted all conditions of the Algiers Agreement and the boundary commission’s ruling. Thus, 20 years after the conflict began, a state of peace existed between the two independent nations. The borders between the countries were re-opened, and Ethiopian Airlines resumed flights to Eritrea.

The peace declaration between the two countries, signed in July 2018, represented the first visit of an Ethiopian leader to Eritrea in over two decades. For his role in ending the conflict, Abiy Ahmed was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2019.

*Img 14.05: Prime Minister Abiy is received by President Isaias Afewerki in Asmara, 9 July 2018*



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# Domestic Policy - cautious optimism?

“ WHILE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, MUCH MORE WORK  
NEEDS TO BE DONE AHEAD OF THE MAY 2020 ELECTIONS ”  
( HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 2019 )

---

Prime Minister Abiy's first year as leader has seen many changes in domestic politics in Ethiopia. Shortly after taking office he released thousands of political prisoners and unfairly incarcerated journalists, bringing an end to the government's long-time policy of quietly imprisoning the opposition (Girma, 2019).

The infamous prison Maekalawi, until recently a site of torture and repression (Gebreselassie, 2019), was opened to the public in September 2019 in a display of the government's new openness, however persistent problems remain in the justice system. Police brutality is still widespread (Gebreselassie, 2019) and the office of the Attorney General, responsible for prosecution, remains a political appointment (Abebe, 2019).

Abiy has promised to reform anti-terror laws, which have long been used for political means. Despite this, hundreds of people were arrested under these laws in Amhara after a failed “coup” during which high-level regional government officials were assassinated.

Nonetheless, Abiy's government has been more tolerant to political opponents than his predecessors'. Former leader of the opposition party Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) Birtukan Mideksa was recently appointed as chairwoman of the National Electoral Commission, in an apparent attempt to reform the electoral process, which has been criticised by international bodies over allegations of voter and opposition party suppression (Horne, 2015).

Despite being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work resolving the conflict with Eritrea, ethnic conflicts still exist within Ethiopia. International bodies such as Human Rights Watch have congratulated Abiy whilst noting that reforms are needed at home (Bader, 2019). According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement, Ethiopia has more internally displaced people (2.9 million) than any other African nation (IDMC, 2019).

Ultimately Abiy's reforms have been welcomed by the international community, but there is still a long way to go.



Img 14.06: President of the Supreme Court Meaza Ashenafi (left) and Chairwoman of the National Election Commission Birtukan Mideksa (right)



Img 14.07: Displaced Gedeo People

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# Birtukan Mideksa

“ WE ARE AT A TIME THAT NO ONE CAN BACK OFF FROM  
DOING WHAT COULD BE DONE.”  
( BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA , 2018 )

---

**Born:** 1974  
**Affiliation:** UDJ (2008 - 2010)  
CUD (2005 - 2007)  
**Positions:** Chairwoman, NEB (2018 - present)

Birtukan Mideksa graduated with a degree in law from Addis Ababa University before practising law in Ethiopia. She later completed a Masters degree in Public Administration at Harvard University in the US. She was appointed as a federal judge in Ethiopia, a position in which she presided over a high-profile corruption scandal in which the former defense minister Siye Abraha was released on bail, before immediately being re-arrested by government forces on leaving the courtroom (Rice, 2010).

She initially joined the Rainbow for Ethiopia: Movement for Democracy and Social Justice Party before joining Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CDU), which won over 30% of seats in the 2005 election. Birtukan was arrested following the 2005 election during a government round-up

of opposition leaders. She was handed a prison sentence for life, but was pardoned in 2007 after serving 18 months.

She formed the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) following her release from prison on the same principles as CDU. She was re-arrested in 2008 following government claims that her initial pardon had been conditional on “an apology for her crimes” (Human Rights Watch, 2009), and was again sentenced to life imprisonment. She attracted widespread international support due to the perceived political nature of her arrest.

After her release in 2010, she was given the role of chairwoman of the National Electoral Board (NEB, generally considered to be under government control) as part of Prime Minister Abiy’s apparent attempt to improve impartiality in elections. She is considered by Human Rights Watch to be an impartial and competent chair, and her appointment is considered a crucial first step towards much needed electoral reform (Human Rights Watch, 2019).



*Img 14.08: Birtukan Mideksa*



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# Ethnic Tensions

“ OFFICIALS AND OTHERS [...] HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO ALSO RECOGNIZE THIS SERIOUS HUMANITARIAN AND SECURITY CRISIS ” ( WILLIAM DAVISON , 2019 )

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As noted, almost 3 million people are internally displaced in Ethiopia. Notable among these are the almost 900,000 Gedeo people forced to flee their homes as a result of the ongoing Gedeo-Guji conflict in the state of Oromia. These people continue to be housed in refugee camps around the country (Gedamu, 2019).

Furthermore, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), who agreed to give up their arms in 2018, still maintain a presence in the state of Oromia. Politicians in Oromia have been pushing for increased rights for the Oromo people, including issuing residence cards to Oromo people displaced from the Somali region, in an apparent ploy to influence the demographics in the state (Gedamu, 2019).

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has also been brought into the fold, with some Oromo priests, including Reverend Qesis Belay, threatening to form a separate Oromo Orthodox Church, with services held in the Oromo language. The religious conflict and political conflict are intertwined, and

can not be separated (Kripphal, 2019). Tensions in Oromia could be linked to Abiy's Oromo heritage, with his position as Prime Minister emboldening Oromo nationalist groups.

Abiy's heritage is a particular source of tension in the Tigray state, as previous leaders of EPRDF have been primarily of Tigrayan descent. Abiy's re-organisation of the government and military has targeted Tigrayan officials, and his popularity in the state is low (Pilling, 2019).

Further tensions exist in the state of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), where the Sidama people are calling for full statehood. SNNPR is a state consisting of over 40 ethnic groups, which have co-existed peacefully almost since the adoption of the constitution in 1995. Prior to this, Sidama was a separate province, but joined with 4 others to create SNNPR. The major concern is that the secession of Sidama would lead to the full break up of SNNPR, which would likely lead to thousands of people being displaced along ethnic lines (Verjee, 2019).



*Img 14.09: A full rebel OLF unit retreats into Kenya after weeks of fighting with government troops in central Kenya, 2006*

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# Addis Ababa - a constitutional crisis?

“IF YOU CHANGE THIS, YOU CAN CHANGE ADDIS. AND IF YOU CAN CHANGE ADDIS, DEFINITELY YOU CAN CHANGE ETHIOPIA” (ABIY AHMED ALI, 2019)

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Addis Ababa holds a unique position within Ethiopia - it has three (or indeed arguably four) distinct personalities - as a chartered city, responsible for its own governance; as the de facto capital of the state of Oromia, with significant importance for the Oromo people; as the capital of the country; and as the de facto capital of the African Union.

Ethiopia's constitution caters for this split personality. It first caters for the city's chartered status, noting "Addis Ababa shall be the capital city of the Federal State. The residents of Addis Ababa shall have a full measure of self-government. Particulars shall be determined by law", before decreeing that the city's government is answerable directly to the federal government. This becomes less clear, however, in clause 49 where the constitution notes "the special interest of the State of Oromia in Addis Ababa, regarding the provision of social services or the utilisation of natural resources and other similar matters, as well as joint administrative matters arising from

the location of Addis Ababa within the State of Oromia, shall be respected" (Gettachew, 2019).

In March 2019 the winners of the condominium housing lottery were announced, sparking outrage amongst many Oromia residents - they believed that the housing was built on Oromian land, not within the city limits of Addis Ababa. The Oromian state government responded by claiming the right to jurisdiction over Addis Ababa, due to the "special interest" noted in clause 49 of the constitution (Ethiopian Press Agency, 2019).

Legal opinions are divided on the matter, with some scholars arguing that the city should be administered by Oromia, and others claiming the autonomy of the chartered city has precedence. Many political commentators have noted that the national and international importance of the city is too great for it to be administered by one individual state (Gettachew, 2019). In March 2019 the central government set up a committee to rule on the status of Addis Ababa.

*Img 14.10: Addis Ababa*



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# African Union

AN INTEGRATED, PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL AFRICA,  
DRIVEN BY ITS OWN CITIZENS AND REPRESENTING A  
DYNAMIC FORCE IN GLOBAL ARENA.” (VISION OF THE AU)

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The African Union is the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (1963 - 1999), comprised of 55 African member states.

In 1963, representatives of 32 African countries met in Addis Ababa to sign a charter to form an organisation promoting “an-African vision for an Africa that was united, free and in control of its own destiny” (African Union, n.d.). Initially the aims were to free African nations from the destructive forces of colonialisation and apartheid. The re-launch of the organisation as the African Union in 2002 accepted that these twin evils had largely been eradicated, and the focus was now to shift towards “increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa’s growth and economic development” (African Union, n.d.).

The aims of the AU are listed in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Agenda 2063 is a document drawn up by the AU which looks towards improving pan-African collaboration and socio-economic growth by 2063 (African Union, n.d.).

All nations of the African continent are

represented in the African Union, with the latest country admitted being South Sudan in 2011. The AU is led by the Assembly, consisting of the Heads of State of each member country. The Assembly is led by an elected chairperson, currently Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi of Egypt.

The African Union has operated a Peace and Security Council since 2004, and African Union peacekeepers have been involved in various conflicts across the African continent, including in Somalia since 2007. Nonetheless, the African Union has come under criticism for not stepping in during the civil war in Libya, and for not requiring Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to step down (BBC, 2017).

The AU is headquartered in Addis Ababa, and the formation of the OAU was presided over by Haile Selassie. Ethiopia, therefore, can be seen to be highly influential within the AU, and indeed due to the AU’s presence there, Addis Ababa has been described as the “capital of Africa” (New World Encyclopedia, 2018).

*Img 14.11: Emblem of the African Union*



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# Gender Politics

“VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS PREVENTING THEM FROM REALISING THEIR POTENTIAL AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE COUNTRY” (SIMEGN WUBE, 2019)

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In November 2018 Prime Minister Abiy reshuffled his cabinet and appointed women to 50% of the cabinet positions, making Ethiopia the second African nation (after Rwanda) to achieve gender equality in its government. Equally historic was his appointment of Aisha Mohammed to the role of Minister of Defense, the first time a woman had been appointed to that role in Ethiopian history.

Ethiopia's first female president, Sahle-Work Zewde, promised to address gender issues throughout her presidency. However despite her election as president and the gender parity of Abiy's government, gender issues throughout the wider country remain a problem.

One in three women in Ethiopia have experienced emotional, sexual or physical violence, and 65% of women in the country have experienced female genital mutilation (FGM) (USAid, 2019). Despite FGM being outlawed since 2004, it is still prevalent in many communities: 98.5% of women in the Somali region have experienced FGM, and even in the

capital the figure is over 50% (28 Too Many, 2018). Local NGOs, such as Kembatti Mentti-Gezimma (KMG) have tried to address the issues around FGM in local communities, by raising awareness and attempting to change attitudes. In communities such as the Kembatta community, FGM is seen as a right of passage, but KMG proposes an alternative right of passage, the annual “Wimetta” (“I am whole”) ceremony (UNFPA, 2018).

Contraceptive use is around 20% in the country, and only 10% of births are attended by a qualified health professional. Furthermore, whilst primary education levels appear to be balanced between boys and girls, but there are still gaps in rural areas. However, in secondary and tertiary education there are significant enrolment disparities between males and females (UNWomen, 2013).

Local initiatives in rural areas, such as the Barre Women's Handicraft Association, promote the work of women in conjunction with responsible industry (Bale Mountains National Park, 2019).



Ima 14.12: Barre Women's Handicraft Association



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# Sahle-Work Zewde

“ I URGE YOU ALL, TO UPHOLD OUR PEACE, IN THE NAME OF A MOTHER, WHO IS THE FIRST TO SUFFER FROM THE ABSENCE OF PEACE.” (SAHLE-WORK ZEWDE, 2018)

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**Born:** 1950  
**Affiliation:** none  
**Positions:** Ambassador, Djibouti (1993 - 2002)  
Ambassador, France (2002 - 06)  
UN Representative, AU (2011 - 18)  
President (2018 - present)

Sahle-Work Zewde was unanimously elected by the House of People’s Representatives as Ethiopia’s president after her predecessor Melatu Teshome’s shock resignation in 2018. Although largely a ceremonial role, Sahle-Work’s appointment as the first modern-day female head of state in Ethiopia, and as the only serving African head of state, is symbolically important (Atoma, 2018).

After graduating with a Natural Sciences degree from the University of Montpellier in France, Sahle-Work’s diplomatic career began in the 1980s, and she held a number of ambassadorial roles before and after the collapse of Derg, indeed she was the second woman in Ethiopian history to hold an ambassadorial role (MFA, 2018).

Most recently she was the Special Representative of United Nations and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union at the level of Under-Secretary-General, and was thought to be close to retirement. Her candidacy and subsequent appointment as president was unexpected and comes as part of a number of apparently progressive reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy. Due to her long absence from domestic politics, Sahle-Work could be seen as relatively politically neutral (Boko, 2018).

At her swearing-in ceremony Sahle-Work raised the issue of female empowerment, vowing to fight for it throughout her 6-year term as president. Her appointment has largely been welcomed by gender equality groups, though some are wary of a history of empty rhetoric with regards to women’s rights in the country (Gebreselassie, 2018). As a fluent speaker of French (as well as Amharic and English), her appointment as President could herald an increased closeness in Ethio-French relations (Boko, 2018).

*Img 14.13: Sahle-Work Zewde*



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# Religion - Current Day

## DIVERISTY IN RELIGIONS

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According to the national census conducted in 2007, over 32 million people or 43.5% were reported to be Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, over 25 million or 33.9% were reported to be Muslim, 13.7 million, or 18.6%, were Protestants, and just under two million or 2.6% adhered to traditional beliefs. (Ethiopian Census, 2007)

In general, most of the Christians (largely members of the non-Chalcedonian Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) live in the highlands, while Muslims and adherents of traditional African religions tend to inhabit more lowland regions in the east and south of the country. The numerous indigenous African religions in Ethiopia operate mainly in the far southwest and western borderlands.

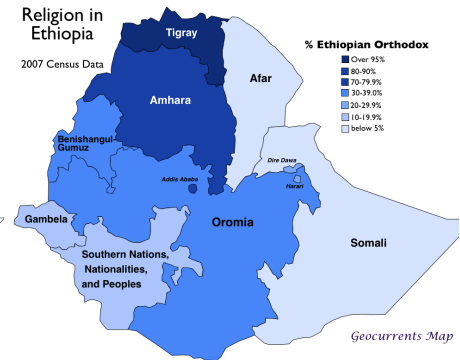
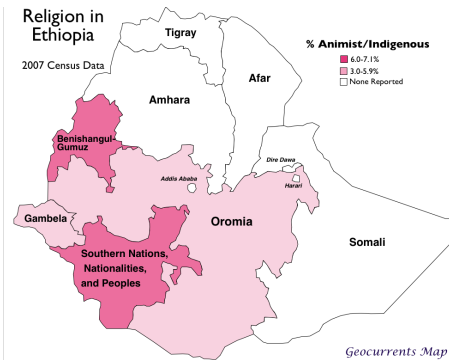
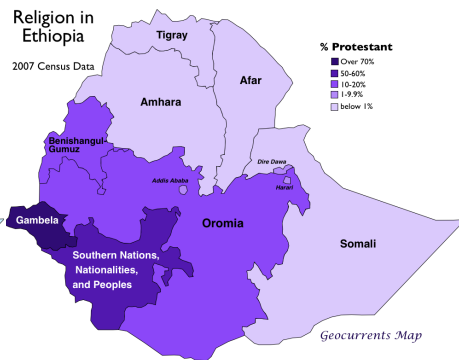
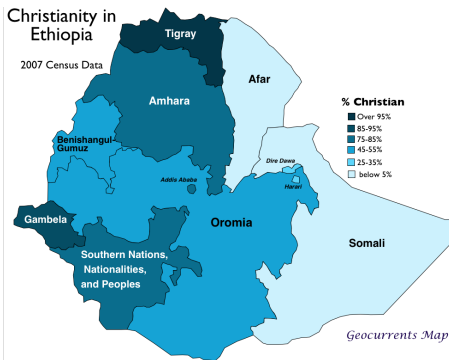
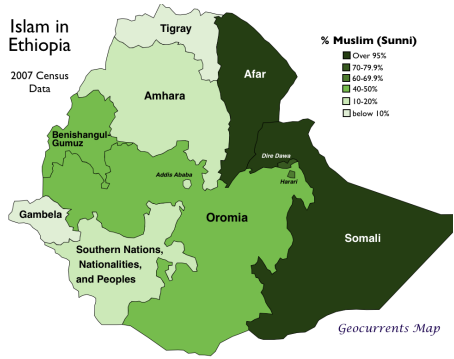
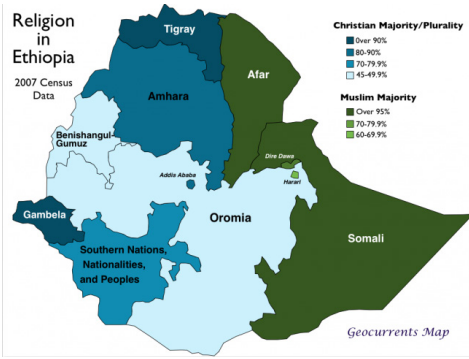
Ethiopia is currently undergoing a religious transformation that could be of major significance for the rapidly growing country of 91 million people.

Ethiopia's Jewish community has been diminishing rapidly over the past several decades,

and is scheduled to essentially disappear this year as the last members of the Beta Israel community depart for Israel. Indigenous faiths are also diminishing, in most cases yielding to Protestant Christianity, which in turn is said to be growing at a brisk annual rate of 6.7 percent.

In contemporary Ethiopia, religious tensions are pronounced in parts of the vast region of Oromia. The Oromos are the largest ethno-linguistic group in Ethiopia (34.5% of the population), outnumbering the politically and culturally dominant Amhara (26.9%) and Tigray (6.0%) peoples. A political movement for enhanced Oromo autonomy has long challenged Ethiopia's national integrity. The indigenous Oromo faith is often described as more monotheistic than animistic, centering on the worship of the single God, Waaqa. Although this religion still has adherents, most Oromos have converted to either Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity or Sunni Islam (Martin W. Lewis, 2013).

Img 14.14: religion maps of Ethiopia



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# Religious Conflicts

“ETHIOPIA CANNOT AFFORD A RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AT A TIME WHEN ITS VERY SURVIVAL IS [ALREADY IN] QUESTION” (TEWODROSE TIRFE)

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98% of Ethiopians claim a religious affiliation, and about 30 churches have been attacked since July 2018, mainly in eastern and southern Ethiopia, with more than half of them burned to the ground, according to the Amhara Professionals Union (APU). Most of the violent attacks recently occurred in Somali Region, and resulted in many deaths. Many attacks have been under-investigated, which leads to negative attitudes of church members towards the government. Recent attacks show that there are different types of conflicts happening in Ethiopia, mainly from the tension between different ethnic groups rather than from religious groups.

The prime minister of Ethiopia, Abiy, Ahmed, has a mixed Christian-Muslim background, and the radical political movement he has started has raised lots of arguments, since Ethiopia has a strong base of nearly 80 ethnic groups. His reforms have helped increase the ambitions of some groups who wish to secede from the federation.

Increasing frictions stemming from identity politics could well be playing a part in the church

attacks, as the EOTC is commonly identified as an Amharic institution. Throughout Ethiopia's history, this has generated suspicions among some non-Amhara Ethiopians that the EOTC is used as a proxy to further the Amhara political agenda. The Amharic people are perceived to be the descendants of beneficiaries of an imperial system that, for example, strongly promoted the Amharic language, suppressed local identities, had Orthodox Christianity as the state religion, and where tenant farmers were largely at the mercy of landlords, which may be the origin for the conflicts (James Jeffrey, 2019).



*Img 14.15: A member of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church sits in front of the destroyed Eboya St. Michael Church, Southern region, Sidama district,*



*Img 14.16: A boy walks past burnt corrugated iron sheets that once covered a church in Asendabo, Ethiopia, west of the capital, Addis Ababa*

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# Religious Conflicts - mosque ban

ETHIOPIA MOSQUE BAN: 'OUR SACRED CITY OF AKSUM  
MUST BE PROTECTED'

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Protestantism is also apparently making headway in some areas of Orthodox Christianity, generating tension between the two communities. Some Protestant leaders claim that members of their churches are being attacked by both Muslims and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians in several different parts of the country, adding that such assaults are often ignored by the Ethiopian government. Other accounts, however, state that religious tensions have declined in most parts of Ethiopia since the start of the new millennium, noting however that they tend to persist in Muslim-dominated rural areas (Martin W. Lewis, 2013).

For Ethiopia's Orthodox Christians, the ancient city of Aksum is a sacred place, home to the Biblical Queen of Sheba and Ark of the Covenant.

Some Muslim groups are campaigning to build a mosque in the city - a suggestion rejected by Christian leaders, saying they would rather die.

"Aksum is our Mecca," declares senior cleric Godefa Merha, who believes that just as churches are banned in Islam's holiest site, mosques cannot

exist in Aksum.

"Aksum is a holy place. This city is a monastery," says Mr Godefa, the deputy head of Askum's Our Lady Mary of Zion Church.

"If anyone comes to build a mosque, we will die. It has never been allowed, and we will not allow it to happen in our age"-Godefa Merha. Cleric from Our Lady Mary of Zion.

This long-held position of Orthodox Christians is now at the centre of controversy as some Muslims are rallying under the banner "Justice for Aksum Muslims" to demand the right to build a mosque in the city, and to give their call to prayer.

Many people see the controversy as unfortunate because the Kingdom of Aksum, one of the world's greatest ancient civilisations, was once famed for its religious tolerance.

Muslim resident Abdu Mohammed Ali, who is in his 40s, said his family has for generations rented Christian-owned homes to provide Muslims with places of worship.

"We have 13 temporary mosques. On Friday, if





*Img 14.17: This is the market in an area of Aksum where many Muslims live*

they [some Christians] hear us using loudspeakers, they say we are denigrating St Mary,” he complains.

Aziz Mohammed, a traditional doctor who has lived in Aksum for 20 years, says some Muslims are forced to pray in the open because of the absence of mosques.

“Here, we, Muslim and Christian, live together. The Christians do not prohibit us from praying but for many years, many of us have been praying in the street. We need a mosque,” he says.

Pointing out that five mosques now exist in Wukiro-Maray, Ms Keriya said: “Though we need a mosque in Aksum, we can’t force them. What we need is to live in peace.” (Hana Zeratsyon,2019)

Freedom of religion is provided by the constitution of 1995, and freedom of worship had also been guaranteed by the 1930 and 1955 Constitutions of Ethiopia, although in certain localities this principle is not always respected in practice. There is no state religion, and it is forbidden to form political parties based upon religion; all religious groups are required to register with the government, and renew their registration once every three years. It is a crime in Ethiopia to incite one religion against another. (Johnstone, Patrick; Miller, Duane Alexan,2015).

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# Religious Festivals

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MARY- 30 NOVEMBER

TIMQAT - 19 JANUARY

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The St. Mary festival is one of Ethiopia's largest festivals and is celebrated once a year to remember St. Mary, the most venerated of all Ethiopian saints. It also honours the believed presence of the Ark of the Covenant in the St. Mary of Tzion church in Aksum. The festival is attended in large numbers by people from all over the world every year, making it one of the most joyous annual pilgrimages in Ethiopia.

Timqat is the festival celebrating the Christ's baptism (Epiphany) in the River Jordan. It is the most important of Ethiopia's nine major Christian feasts and is highly regarded in Addis Abeba, Lalibela and Gondar. In this celebration, tabots (replicas of the Ark of the Covenant that are present on every Ethiopian altar) are taken from various churches the day before the main festival – wrapped in rich cloth and carried high on the heads of priests – to a place of blessing near a large pool or river, to represent the role of the River Jordan in Christ's baptism. It is only for this festival that the tabots are ever removed from the churches.

Overnight the tabots remain in a tent, attended to by the clergy with church singers, debtaras, singing and chanting throughout the night. At daybreak, the procession continues to the water for the official baptism ceremony where the priests bless the water, dip their crosses in it and then extinguish a consecrated candle. The people then collect the water to take home, and at many sites they bathe in it. The tabots are then transported back to the churches as the priests walk in solemn procession, accompanied by the joyful crowds and the wild energy of the debtaras singing in celebration (Africa Geographic, 2018).



*Img 14.18: The procession, known as mihila (supplication), starts at 5am on the Feast of St. Mary*

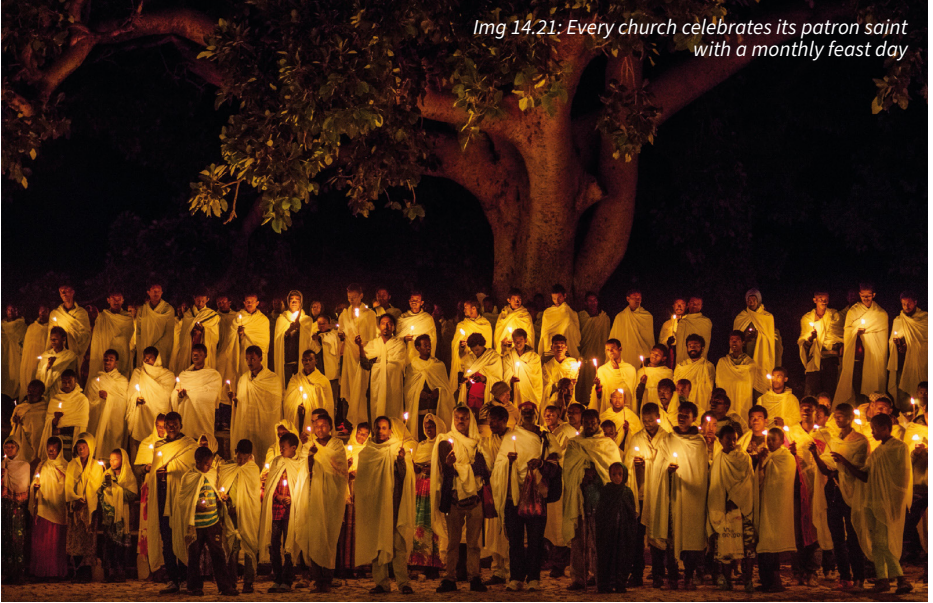
Img 14.19: Lalibela priests carry tabots, remnants of the Ark of the Covenant, during the festival of Timqest



Img 14.20: A priest displays a painting of the Holy Virgin Mary and Child for all to see during the festival of St. Mary



*Img 14.21: Every church celebrates its patron saint with a monthly feast day*



*Img 14.22: Ethiopian Easter*





*Img 14.23 Ethiopian Easter*

All Ethiopian Christians observe the Easter Holiday. Easter is a widely celebrated occasion throughout the country. This year, Easter falls on April 12, 2015, one week later than the Western Churches. This is because Ethiopia follows the Julian calendar to determine Easter dates. In the Amharic language, Easter is referred to as Fasika, originated from the Greek word Pascha. In both Kembata and Hadiya languages it is called “Shashiga”. In liturgical terms, it is referred to as “Tinsae” which means “to rise”. Many devoted Christians also observe Palm Sunday known as “Hossana” and Good Friday “Sikilet”.

Members of the Catholic and Protestant Churches which are dominant in the Southern parts of Ethiopia mark the day by attending church

services. Followers carry candles to symbolize the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Generally, church services are held in sombre moods and are not as colorful as at other occasions. For members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches Fasika marks the end of a 56-day period of Lent. On Saturday night, followers attend a church vigil that goes until 3am. When they return home, they break their fasting from meat and dairy products. Easter is an important festival for all Ethiopian Christians as the Resurrection of Jesus is considered more significant than his birth. Easter is also a time for families and friends to get together. Relatives travel from remote areas to join in festivities and express good wishes to their families (Desta Seyoum, 2015).





*Img 14.24: On the day of celebration, crowds gather round a cross-shaped baptismal pool that represents the River Jordan, where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist*



*Img 15.01: Man and Child painting by Adis Gebru*



# Culture and Traditions

“LEJOCH, YEZARE ABEBAWOCH YENEGE FEREW OCH”  
AMHARIC FOR “CHILDREN, TODAY’S FLOWERS AND  
TOMORROW’S SEEDS!” (ABABA TESFAYE, ALLAFRICA)

Ethiopian culture is diverse and is structured along the ethnolinguistic lines. Each ethnic group has its own culture, customs, and traditions, nonetheless, they all share some common values. For instance, respect of elders is deeply rooted in the culture and is expected of every individual throughout the country. Simple things such as not getting up and offering one’s seat to elders (or even someone slightly older) is highly frowned upon. Parents are seen as nurturers of the younger generation – people might even discipline a neighbor’s child if the parents are not around to do so – and there is great pride in childbearing. Ethiopians are widely known for being hospitable, friendly, and respectful of others. It is customary to use titles such as ‘Ato’ (Mr.), “‘Weyzero’ (Mrs.), and ‘Woyzerit’ (Ms) to show respect.



*Img 15.02: Ethiopian old man*

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## A Tribute to ‘Ababa Tesfaye’

Tesfaye Sahlu – commonly known as ‘Ababa Tesfaye’ – was an Ethiopian comedian and children’s entertainer. He was also a children’s storybook author who performed for the Ethiopian troops during the Korean War. His service earned him an award from the Ethiopian Fine Art and Mass Media Prize Trust by Emperor Haile Selassie. (AllAfrica)

Ababa Tesfaye was the embodiment of the deep-rooted culture of storytelling and oral history in the Ethiopian society. Elders are viewed as a great depository of wisdom, and children traditionally listened to them tell fables and stories filled with allegories as a way of teaching the younger generation. Ababa Tesfaye passed away in 2017, but he remains to be one of the best memories of every child who grew up listening to his animated stories. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, children – especially in the cities and those who had access to television – would sit around and listen to his stories as he taught them good from bad – and to respect their elders.



Img 15.03: Painting of children watching Ababa Tesfaye on TV



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# Northern Ethiopia

## HISTORIC HEARTLAND OF ETHIOPIA

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*Img 15.04: Danakil Depression in Afar*

Northern Ethiopia includes the Tigray, Amhara, and the northern part of Afara regions. It is the historic heartland of Ethiopia, and it historically includes the old 'states' of Gojjam, Begmender, Tigray and Wollo.

Northern Ethiopia highlands were centers of the Empire of Aksum and are major sites of the numerous rock-carved churches in Tigray, obelisks of Axum and the country's main attraction – Lalibela.

Geographically, it can be divided into two major regions: the lowlands in Afar containing Ethiopia's lowest point of the Danakil Depression, and the Amhara and Tigray highlands to the west consisting of Ethiopia's highest peak at Ras Dashen.

The Danakil Depressions in Afar Danakil Depression, which is one of the hottest places on Earth (based on the average temperature throughout the year), sits at 125m below sea level. It is the northern part of the Afar Depression which developed from the movement of the African and

*Img 15.05: Ras Dashen Mountains*





*Img 15.06: Walia ibex in Simien Mountains National Park*



*Img 15.07: Gelada in Simien Mountains National Park*





*Img 15.08: Boy with 'washint' in Simien Mountains National Park*

Asian continent apart from each other as a result of the tectonic plates divergence. This geological event caused the existing rifts, active volcanoes, and the existing sandstone and limestone deposits.

According to Europlanet, “As one of the hottest and most exotic environments on Earth, the Danakil Depression in Ethiopia is helping to redefine the conditions for life on our own planet and beyond.” (2017). The Danakil Depression is also home to the two active volcanoes – Mount Ayalu and Erta Ale.

Ras Dashen is the highest point in Ethiopia and the third highest mountain in Africa. It is one of the famous tourist sites in Northern Ethiopia and is situated within the Simien Mountains National Park. The highlands of these regions are unique in

their natural landscape and indigenous species.

The Simien Mountains National Park is home to the Walia Ibex (*Capra walie*) – an endangered species of ibex and an endemic mammal of Northern Ethiopia. Walia Ibex is on the list of IUCN Red List Threatened species and major threats include human encroachment and change of its habitat. They live at 2600 - 3900 m above sea level in parts of the highlands. (The IUCN Red List, 2019)

The Geladas (also called ‘bleeding heart’ geladas’) are another species only found in the highlands of Ethiopia. These monkeys, often mistaken for baboons, are also instinct species which most likely due to climate change, and are currently protected in the Simien Mountains National Park. ( Craig Welch, 2017)

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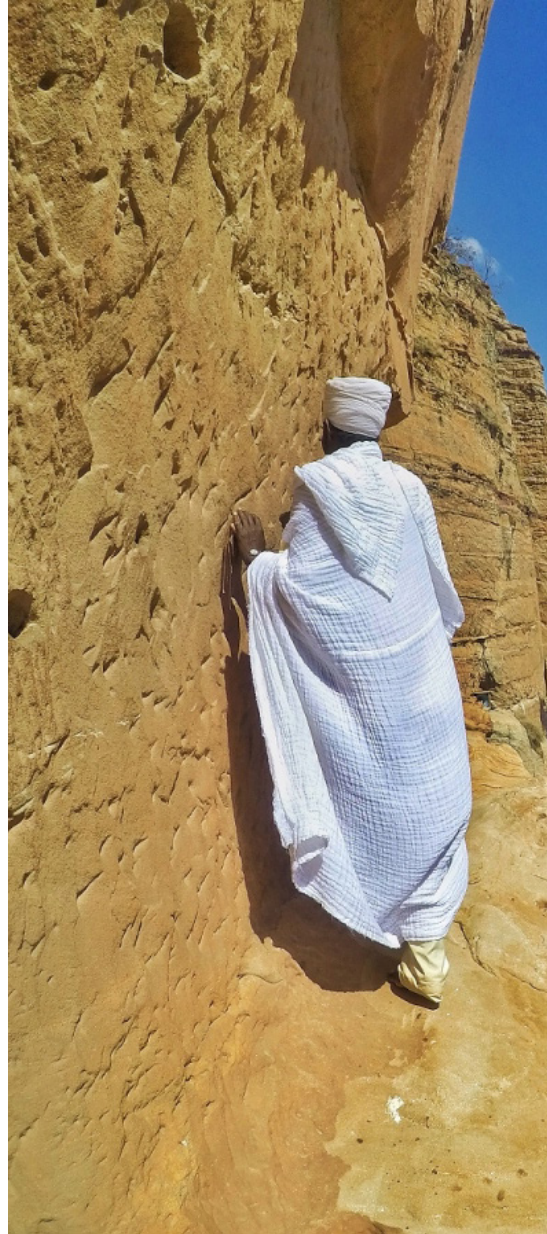
# Tigray

Tigray, also spelled Tegray, Tigrai, or Tigre, is a historical region in northern Ethiopia. Its western part rises in high-plateau country where elevations generally range between 5,000 and 11,000 feet (1,500 and 3,300 metres). The region is drained by the Tekeze and Gash (Mareb) rivers. To the east lies the Denakil Plain, including the Kobar Sink (some 380 feet [116 metres] below sea level).

Tigray contains the core of the ancient Aksumite kingdom and the historic settlements of Aksum, the kingdom's capital; Yeha, a ruined town of great antiquity; and Adwa, the site of a battle in 1896 in which the Italian invading force was defeated.

Although vegetation is sparse, most of Tigray's population is engaged in agriculture (cereals, legumes, coffee, and cotton) and stock raising. Hides and skins are important exports. Salt and potash from desert deposits are also exported. The region, which has long been home to the Tigray people, also supports the Raya, Azebo, Afar, and Agau (Agaw, or Agew) peoples.

The Tigray people (referred to as Tirge) speak Tigrigna – a Semitic language similar to Arabic and Hebrew. It is mostly related to Ge'ez – a 3-4th century CE language – which is currently only used in the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The current alphabet or script 'fidel' widely used in the country is an expanded version of the original Ge'ez.



*Img 15.09: Orthodox priest walking to a rock hewn church in Tigray*



# Amhara

The Amhara people are the second largest ethnolinguistic group of people in Ethiopia. They predominantly live in the Amhara region of north-central part of the country which has highlands with altitudes upto 3000 meters. They are believed to be the descendants of the Aksumite empire, and the registrars of the ancient Ethiopian (also referred to as Abyssinia) history; including the story of Queen Sheba and King Solomon. Although the origin of the name Amhara is unclear, some Ethiopian historians believe that it came during the Ḥimyarite kingdom of the second century BCE to mean “free people” (in Ge’ez).

The Amhara people speak Amharic – also a Semetic language similar to Tigrigna – which is also the official and working language of the Ethiopian government . Amharic is also the second most spoken Semetic language in the world.



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*Img 15.10: Orthodox priests during Timkat, the Ethiopian Orthodox celebration of Epiphany*



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# Northern Highlands Clothing and Lifestyle

The predominant religion in Tigray and Amhara regions has been Orthodox Christianity which is part of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church which heavily influences the daily life and lifestyle of the people. For instance, after women give birth, the family priest will visit the new mother and her baby, bless the baby, and give her or him a Christian name. “The church encourages parents to baptize male infants on the 40th day of their birth, and females on their 80th day (as is the Old Testament tradition).” (RefWorld, 1994)

Due to the climate in these regions – sunny days and cold nights of the highlands – the clothes are mainly made out of cotton cloth strips called shemma. These strips of cotton cloth can be used for thin, two-ply shawls called netela – sometimes called kuta for men – traditionally worn by men and women, or heavy, four-ply blanket-like shawl called gabi which are normally worn during the nights. “When donning their national costume Ethiopian men wear white knee length shirts, white trousers, a sweater, knee high socks and the wrap around “gabi” (allaboutETHIO, 2019).

“The traditional dress of the Christian highland peasantry has traditionally been of white cotton cloth. Since the time of Emperor Tewodros II (mid-1800s), men have worn long, jodhpur-like trousers, a tight-fitting shirt and a shamma (loose wrap).” (Selamta)

Women in the countryside still wear the traditional thin, white cotton dresses with intricate designs – habesha kemis – although women in the cities only wear them during holidays and special events. The main difference between the habesha kemis from Tigray and Amhara region is the placement of the decorative and colorful designs. In the Tigray region, the designs are normally thin and placed on the edge around the neck and continuing down the front center. In the Amhara region, the designs are wide and placed usually around the cuffs, the bottom, down the middle or sometimes with all three. Although they are slightly different, both regions use hair braids on a daily basis and gold jewelry during holidays.

Hand, neck and at times face tattooing and markings also have a long tradition in these regions. Women traditionally use local experienced women to have tattooing done once they reach adulthood as a way to enhance their beauty. These “delicate neck and facial tattoos called nikisat stand out against the traditional white clothing and elaborate hair designs of Ethiopian women.” (James Jeffrey, 2016) Although this practice is still prevalent in the countryside, it has waned off in most of the urbanized part of the country as it is mostly associated with backwardness.

*Img 15.11: Northern Ethiopian Woman*



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## Afar

Afar consists of the northeastern part of Ethiopia known for hot days and the Danakil Depression. This region is mainly covered with deserts and salty lakes including the largest salt mines of Ethiopia (around 60,000sqm). “The salt trade dates back to the 6th century where the Afars work these salt mines, exploiting the mine as their ancestors did... despite the extreme working conditions.” (Veronica Rough) The temperature of this region can range between 34 to 50 degrees Celsius. There are about 750 registered Afar miners who work in the salt mines at the depression and produce about 1.3 million tonnes of salt annually which they transport by donkeys and camels on a daily basis. (Bob Koigi, 2017)

Afar people speak Afar , a Cushitic language, and practice (Sunni) Islam. Afaris usually wear brightly colored light clothing made out of cotton and use wraps to protect their head and face from the desert dust. They are predominantly a nomadic pastoral society raising cattle, goats, sheep, and camels. ”Socially, they are organized into clan families and two main classes: the asaimara (‘reds’) who are the dominant class politically, and the adoimara (‘whites’) who are a working class ... Men traditionally sport the jile, a famous curved knife.”(Atlas of Humanity). Face markings and teeth sharpening for beautification are traditions still practiced in the region.





*Img 15.12: Afar Salt miners with camel caravan*



*Img 15.13: Afar girl with brightly colored shawl*



*Img 15.14: Afar man with sharpened teeth*



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# Western Ethiopia

“RAINFORESTS AND COFFEE PLANTATIONS SHARE THE LANDSCAPE WITH SAVANNAH GRASSLANDS, WILDLIFE-RICH SWAMPS AND HIGH PLATEAUS” (LONELY PLANET)

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*Img 15.15: Freshly picked coffee beans*

Western Ethiopia includes Gambela, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the western parts of Oromia. Historically, this region includes provinces such as Kaffaa, Illubabor, and Wollega, and sites of the Abba Jifar II Kingdom. Western Ethiopia is also famous for its superb coffee and vast coffee plantations. Out of the nine coffee producing regions of Ethiopia, five exist in this part of the country. Jimma , located in the Oromia region is one of the three largest producing cities of the country.

Yirgacheffe has a range of flavours and is rated one of the best Arabica coffee in the world. It is the most exported type of coffee from Ethiopia. Coffee production has a very long standing tradition in Ethiopia. According to Ofcansky and Shinn, about 100 million people in Ethiopia rely on coffee production as a livelihood in some way, and about 60 percent of the countries export is associated with coffee. (2004) “For tourists interested in visiting a place that grows forest coffee, Western Ethiopia is the best answer.” (Discover Ethiopia)



*Img 15.16: Western highlands of Oromia region*

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Although this part of the country is not frequented by tourists as much as Northern Ethiopia, Western Ethiopia is known for its natural beauty. It is home to some of the most beautiful waterfalls, forests, and national parks home to over 80 kinds of endemic bird species and other mammals. The Menagesha Forest located about 35 kilometers west of Addis Ababa – mainly reserved for the endangered species of Menelik bushbuck – and Bale Mountains National Park – rated as the fourth best place for birding in Africa – are few of the visited sites in this region. One can also find more than 800 distinct species of birds including Winged Lovebird, Blue winged Goose, and Watt led Ibis, Rouget’s Rail, and so on in the Bale Mountains National Park. (Balemountains)



*Img 15.17: Yellow-fronted Parrot in Bale Mountains*



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# Oromia

This region is mainly inhabited by the largest ethnic group of the country – Oromos. They speak the Oromo language – a Cushitic Afro-Asiatic language also referred to as Oromifa – and originally practiced the Oromo religion Waqefana. However, since the 19th century, Islam is the predominant religion.

Historically, this region served as sites for different strong kingdoms such as the Aba Jifar II. The written history of Oromos starts after the 16th century since oral traditions and history are strongly integrated into the culture. The kingdoms used a governance system known as the Gada “a system in which all members of society are included in separate age groups for life” (Britanica) The Gada system is an age based eight-years-cycle system used to classify the male groups and their roles in the society. The male leaders are chosen democratically with general assembly, and the system emphasizes moral conduct, unity, and equality. Although this system currently only exists in the Borana and Guji area, it still has a huge influence on the Oromo culture. In the absence of a built structure for assembly, the meetings take place under a sycamore tree which has become a strong symbol of the people. (UNESCO, 2016) The chief of the tribe can be distinguished by his head pieces called kalasha.

Oromos are historically a pastoral society, and their society started to expand west and northward looking for grazeland as the herds of households started to grow. In the 16th century, a series of predatory expansions and raids of neighbouring pastures known as the Great Oromo migration took place which brought them into contact with neighboring kingdoms. (Ofcansky and Berry, 1991) Men were traditionally assessed by their size of their herds and their skills as a warrior. “Virility and male attributes are considered desirable, with bravery and war skills being stressed. Riding, spear throwing, and fighting are also emphasized. Although warfare against enemies is honored, peace within the group is demanded.”

Traditional Oromo clothing widely varies based on the area. Some are made of white cotton cloth, colorful toga-like dresses, or outfits partly made out of leather. As a pastoral society who use animal products on a daily basis, Oromos prefer to use leather goods and also integrate leather into their wardrobe. Beading and the use of shells is common for decoration especially for women’s clothing. Even though most of the traditional clothing are not widely used in the more urbanized areas of the region, more and more young Oromos have started wearing traditional clothing as it is seen as pride in one’s identity and self-expression.





*Img 15.18: Borana chief with his 'kalasha'*

*Img 15.19: Barentu girl In cultural attire*





*Img 15.20: Arsi woman at festival*

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## Benishangul-Gumuz And Gambela

With a capital city of Asosa, Benishangul-Gumuz is a hidden gem which is almost never visited by tourists. The people are evenly divided between Muslims and Christians and seem to live alongside each other quite happily. This region is on the periphery of the country and has little recognition in the political landscape of the country. The people in this region have been marginalized for the majority of the country's history. Recently, there has been an increase of mining companies and non-profit organizations working in this region which has increased the populations and raised its recognition in the country. This region came about with the amalgamation of two towns – Assosa and Meteke. (AK Adegehe, 2009) They speak the Gumuz language which is from a Nilo-Saharan language family and the people have closer ties politically and culturally to their bordering country, Sudan.

Gambela is also another region which is covered with natural beauty but is less frequented by tourists and people from other regions of the country. The Gambela National Park is one of the major national parks found in this region, and it houses rare species of antelopes, crocodiles and other reptiles as well as mammals. Years of migration and interaction with other communities has created a very complex culture in this region,



*Img 15.21: Giraffes at Gambela National Park*



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and there are about 45 different ethnic groups existing in the region alone. (Horizon Ethiopia) The Anuak and Kibish are few of the better known ethnic groups and cultures from this region.

For instance, the Anuak live in this region where very little infrastructure exists and accessibility by outsiders is close to impossible. Although some of the people have been converted to Christianity by evangelists travelling to this area, they traditionally worshiped a god called Gwok. “The Anuak live a tight-knit community life in villages that are self-contained and do not have much communication with the outside world.” (Cultural Survival, 1984)



*Img 15.22: Mruak man with face painting*



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# Eastern Ethiopia

“THE EAST’S PIÈCE DE RÉSISTANCE IS THE WALLED CITY OF HARAR” (LONELY PLANET)

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img 15-23. One of Hara's city gates.

This part of the country is predominantly Muslim and normally has a warm and very dry climate. It includes the city administrations of Harar, Dire Dawa, and the Somali region (and southern part of Afar). Although this area is mostly known for the historical walled city the distinct architectural styles of Harar, Dire Dawa and Somali offer their own attractions with the natural landscape. The Babille Elephant Sanctuary and Awash National Park offer a taste of the natural landscape of this part of the country. According to Lonely Planet, “Most of eastern Ethiopia is a stark landscape of dust-stained acacia scrub and forgettable towns. But scattered around this cloak of the commonplace are gems of genuine adventure.”

The Ethiopian Great Rift Valley is part of the East African Rift Valley and starts at the triple junction of Afar and continues into Kenya. Dire Dawa sits at its most eastern part of the Rift Valley.





*Img 15.24: Babile Elephant Sanctuary in Eastern Ethiopia*

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## Harar and Dire Dawa

Harar is a UNESCO World Heritage city renowned for its 13th century city walls, distinct architectural style, and maze-like streets. Located about 525 km east of Addis Ababa, Harar has 5 major gates and more than 80 mosques “three of which date from the 10th century, 102 shrines and a number of traditional, Indian and combined townhouses with unique interior designs, which constitute a spectacular part of Harar’s cultural heritage.” (UNESCO). Islam has had a great influence on the culture and lifestyle here. Before integration into Ethiopia in 1887, the city served as the capital of the Harai Kingdom from 1520 to 1568.

Dire Dawa developed as independent and vibrant city when it served as a major route for the Harar trade after the 1900s. Dachatu River divides the city into 2 quarters – modern and old. Dire Dawa (“empty plains”) imports most goods due to the dry climate, which has helped the city infrastructure improve immensely. This city surrounded by dusty hills also boasts of a nice mix of Arab, French, Italian and Greek architecture. (James Jeffrey, 2018)

The culture of these two cities are similar due to the climate and geographical locations. Most people prefer to wear loose and colorful cotton fabric wrapped around the help with the heat and, at times dust. during the dry season.



*Img 15.25: Harari girl in traditional attire*



## Somali

Islam is the predominant religion in this region as most of the people converted to Islam in the 14th century during the Arab expansion. Their practice of the Islam religion is mostly loose since they traditionally worship ancestral saints. The r̄er clan is believed to be the basis of the Somalis who are a closely knit group of families claiming to have the same male ancestor. It is a strong patriarchal society with each male member living up to his obligation to his r̄er. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

The majority of people in this region are nomadic herdsmen who travel frequently in the desert in search of resources. Some groups in the more urbanized areas have adopted agriculture as livelihood and acted as middlemen between the Arabs and the nomadic people in the region for centuries. Agriculture in this region also which possess its own challenges due to the very dry climate, and this region has suffered multiple droughts and famines throughout the country's history . Similar to the Hara and Dire Dawa people, the people in this region also wear loose wrapped-around cotton cloth due to the heat and desert dust.

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# Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP)

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*Img 15.26: Suri girl from Omo Valley*

SNNP, consisting of multiple indigenous and ethnic groups, is the southernmost part of the lush and fertile land of the country. The Omo Valley River is a major asset to the society with most of the livelihoods depending on its accessibility. This region is also the second biggest coffee producer of the country. Herdsmen traditionally depend on the flood of the Omo River for their cattle and to cultivate their land. With the Lower Omo Valley redevelopment plan for the construction of the Gibe Dam III to harness power, the people depending on the Oro River are being affected (Elizabeth Fraser, 2019)

The mostly spoken languages in this region are Sidama, Welayta, Hadiya and Gurage. Out of these ethnic groups, the food and culture of the Sodo Gurage has mostly infiltrated into the country's capital city, and the food has become one of the mostly eaten dishes during holidays and in restaurants. The Gurage people live on a fertile land and made the *ensete edulis* (or “false banana plant”) popular in the country. (NALRC)

*Img 15.27: Omo Valley woman and child at the Omo River*



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# Cuisine

“...FOR MOST OF US [IT] MEANS STARTING WITH  
ESCHEWING CUTLERY AND BEING READY TO GET MESSY  
FINGERS.” (CHANNEL 3000)

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*Img 15.28: 'Injera' and 'wot' served on a traditional 'mesob'*

The most widely used food in Ethiopia is hand food, and this is because the foundation of the vast majority of Ethiopian meals is injera – a giant spongy sourdough flatbread about 50 centimeter in diameter and made out of fermented teff flour. Normally, it is served with multiple spicy stews known as ‘wot’ which frequently includes chicken, beef, lamb, vegetables and various types of legumes, such as lentils. This type of eating is highly communal with everyone gathering around a large circular metal tray – traditionally over a woven table-like basket called ‘mesob’ – of injera heavily laden with food “as hands go back and forth scooping up from the various piles of dishes with strips of injera torn from the edges.” (Channel 3000, 2019)

‘Doro wot’ is the main dish served to guests and during holidays. It is made with chicken drumsticks or wings cooked and served in a hot sauce of butter, onion, chilli, cardamom and berbere. This dish is served to guests as a sign of respect, and the preparation is normally laborious. Women

Imğ 15.29: Ethiopian spices





*Img 15.30: Kitfo*



*Img 15.31: Modern twist on 'firfir': 'firfir' with dates*





*Img 15.32: Genfo*

traditionally push girls to learn how to cook this dish encouraging comments such as “ ‘You will never find a husband if you cannot cook doro wot!’ ” (van der Wolf, 2012). Hard boiled eggs are added to the sauce towards the end, and traditionally an odd numbers of eggs are served for good luck. Other common dishes include ‘firfir’, commonly eaten for breakfast; ‘kitfo’, beef tartare eaten with ‘kocho’ – a bread out of false banaba plant; ‘genfo’, barley porridge common in the Western and Southern part of the country, and so on.

Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Jews and Muslims avoid eating pork or shellfish, for religious reasons. Pork is considered unclean in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Many Ethiopians abstain from eating certain meats,

and mostly eat vegetarian and vegan foods during fasting seasons.

Traditional ingredients include berbe’, a combination of powdered chili pepper and other spices; and niter kibbeh , a clarified butter infused with ginger, garlic are important ingredient used in many dishes. Mitmita is also a powdered seasoning mix common with Ethiopian cuisine. Cardamom seed, cloves and salt and normally used to prepare cooking spices at home.

“In their adherence to strict fasting, Ethiopian cooks have developed a rich array of cooking oil sources—besides sesame and safflower—for use as a substitute for animal fats which are forbidden during fasting periods.” (Mesob)

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# Teff

Teff is the main ingredient in the injera bread widely used in the country. “Ground into flour, teff is used to make the traditional bread, injera: a flat, pancake-like, fermented bread that complements their exotic spices.” (Meskel Teff) With its origin in the Horn of Africa, teff is one of the ancient grains in human civilization; and has been cultivated and used by Ethiopian for centuries. Mostly grown in the northern highlands, the Amharas are the largest producers of this grain. Teff is one of the smallest grains in the world and comes in a range of shades. According to the Food and Agriculture organization of United Nations, teff accounts for two-thirds of the protein intake of the Ethiopian diet. Aside from injera, it is also used to make home-made traditional alcoholic drinks such as ‘arak’e’ and ‘t’ella’. The grassy part is also used as reinforcement with much for home construction. (FAO UN)

While teff is mainly used in Africa, it has recently become viewed as a supergrain in some Western countries as its nutritional values are becoming well known. According to Centre for the Promotion of Imports (CBI) of the Netherlands, teff was originally exported out of Ethiopia for the use of the diaspora in the United States and Europe. Eventually, Europe became a good market for Ethiopian export of the grain as a new niche





Img 15.33: Teff plant

for special grains and cereals opened up. “Its nutritional and gluten-free value make teff very suitable as an ingredient for the increasing demand in healthy bakery, cereal and snack products.” (BCI) Germany and the Netherlands are the major importers of teff since the country lifted the ban on exports in 2015. Although Ethiopia managed to establish good export deals and relations with several foreign countries, the recent feud with researchers from the Netherlands seemed to have caused them to re-evaluate their export plans.

The controversy over ownership and patent between the Ethiopian Government and a Dutchman started in 2003 and shocked the Ethiopian community. The appeal that was filed in 2014 was finally denied this year by the Ethiopian embassy in the Netherlands stating that the appeal failed to prove ownership by the Dutch scientist. The former Ethiopian Investment Commission, Fitsum Arega stated on social media: “It is an issue of our inability to own our national assets in the international legal system, ...We need to defend it.” (Abdi Latif Dahir, 2019)

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## Coffee Ceremony

“According to legend, an Ethiopian goat herder discovered the wonders of coffee when his flock grew restless and wouldn’t go to sleep at night. Curious, he discovered that his flock had been eating the cherries of coffee trees.” (CoffeeBeanDirect)

As one of the largest coffee producers in the world, Ethiopia is a country proud of its coffee heritage. Coffee is a common beverage throughout the country with or without meals. It is also a major part of Ethiopian culture and cuisine. After every meal, a coffee ceremony is enacted and coffee is served by the youngest female of the house.

The coffee ceremony is an everyday ritual which can take up to an hour. First, fresh grass is laid on the floor and raw coffee beans are washed with warm water to remove the thin skin on the beans. Then, mostly young girls, roast the coffee beans on a charcoal stove, perhaps in front of everyone so the process and aroma can be enjoyed. Incense is burned in the charcoal as the coffee is roasting. Once the beans are roasted to the desired darkness, they are taken with the roasting pan and walked around so the smell can be enjoyed. Then, the beans are ground (often by the youngest boy) and the coffee is brewed in the traditional clay kettle called ‘jebena’. Meanwhile, small ceramic cups – ‘sini’ – are arranged on a tray for serving. In most homes, there are second and third rounds.



*Img 15.34: Coffee ceremony*



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# Music and Festivities

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Music has always been a big part of the Ethiopian culture, history, and daily life. For instance, traditionally, young boys tending the livestock “play a three-holed flute – ‘washint’ – he has made from a bamboo stem. Additionally, during wartime, singers play war songs to encourage the men and women in the frontline. For example, songs like “Belew, belew...” are performed as motivational songs to encourage the military men going to battlefield. These war songs are known as ‘kererto’, ‘shilela’ or ‘fukera’ are usually slow and can be performed without musical instruments. ‘Kererto’ and ‘shilela’ are more mellow are performed with the use of the string instrument called ‘kirar’. On the other hand, ‘fukera’ songs tend to be more aggressive and expressive, and are used as a way to champion warriors or build self-pride in the younger generation. During these songs, men perform by pacing around while singing the songs and sometimes waving weapons for performance. Although these particular performances are common in the Northern part of

the country – which has the most populous culture – each region has its own version of war songs.

Traditional songs and performances are still common in Ethiopia, even in the highly urbanized city of Addis Ababa. Each ethnic group has its distinct singing and dancing style which is seen as self-expression and used as a way to display the rich variety of cultures. There are different songs dedicated to the different celebrations and life events such as weddings. Wedding ceremonies and rituals are very elaborate and can last for a couple days in certain regions.

The dances are performed while wearing the appropriate attire from the particular region. Songs and dances from the Amhara and Tigray regions are performed in some kind of white cotton outfit while songs from the Western regions such as Oromia are usually in leather outfits or loosely fitting clothing with bead necklaces or headpieces. Songs and dances from the Southern part are normally performed in colorful outfits. (IHE Africa, 2016)



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The main musical instruments are either string instruments, drums, fluet or sistrum. The most commonly used instrument is the the string instrument called 'kifar' widely used by singers. 'Begna' – Ethiopian lyre – and drums are mostly religious instruments used in the Orthodox church (along with the sistrum) or during religious festivals. Orchestra Ethiopia was the first popular music band formed in 1963 with the aim of preserving the folk music from the different ethnic groups. "It was the first ensemble of its type, as these diverse instruments and ethnic groups previously had never played together." (DISCOGS) The band was dissolved after the Derg Revolution.

New Year – or 'Enkutatash' in Amharic – which lands on the 11th or 12th of September is one of the biggest celebrations in the country. People decorate their homes with yellow flowers which are abundant after the rainy season and put fresh grass on the floor. Most homes buy and slaughter chicken or sheep on the eve to prepare traditional dishes for the next day. Aside from religious festivals such as Meskel, one of the major celebrations in the Northern Ethiopian regions of Tigray and Northern Amhara is Ashenda. Ashenda is a festival celebrated in August where girls coming from all over the villages and they will be wearing Ashenda – "tall green grass", estimated at around 80–90 cm minimum height. In this ceremony there will be great traditional songs sung by girls. In the Oromia region, 'Irrecha' – commonly referred to as the Oromo Thanksgiving – is celebrated in October based on their traditional lunar calendar.





*Img 15.36: Women performing to a New Year song*



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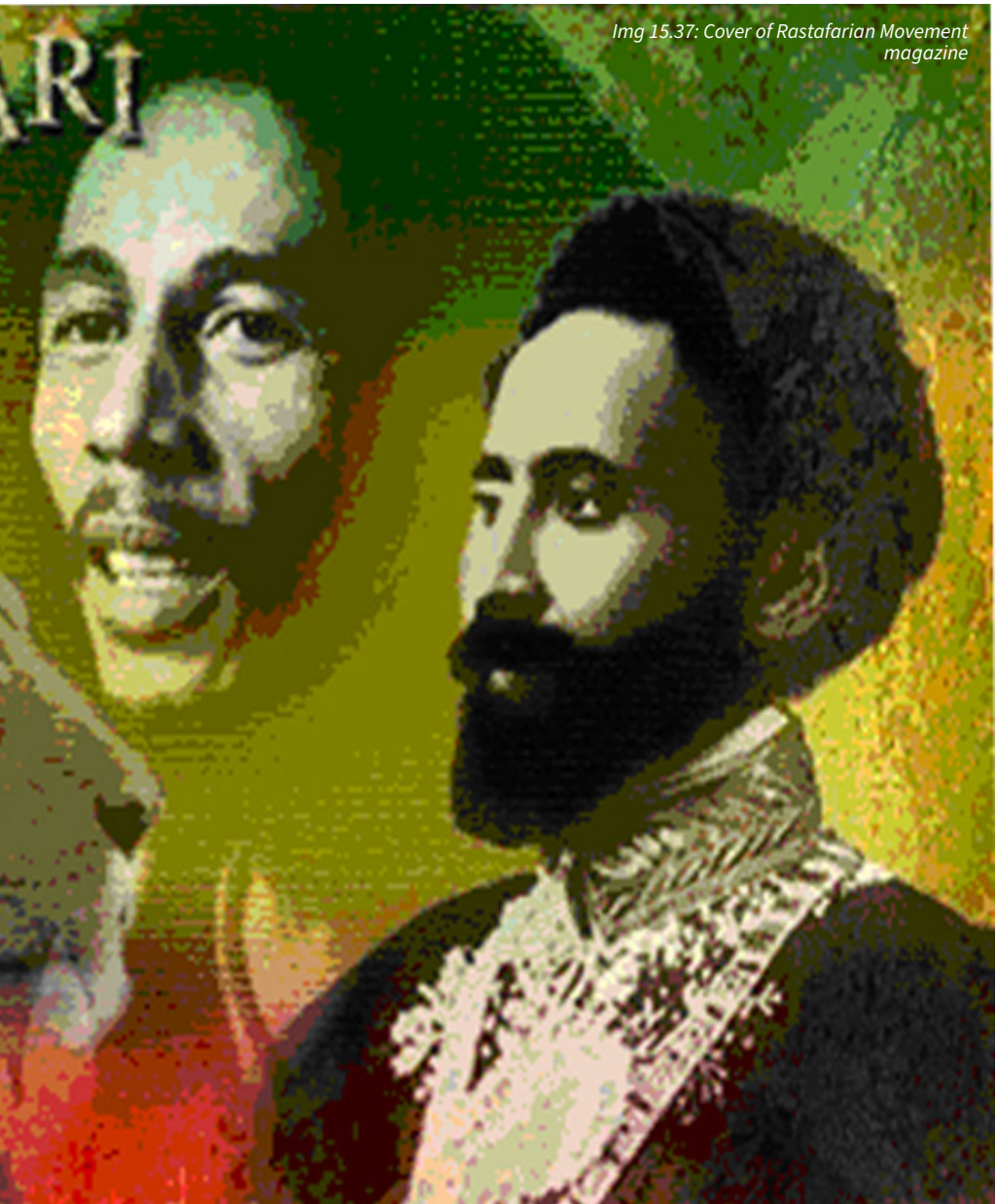
# Rastafarian

Rastafaria – also known as Rastafarianism – is a religion and social movement started in Jamaica in the 1930s. It is a pro-African movement spearheaded by Leonard Howell and Marcus Garvey who preached the superiority of the African nation and the return of Africans in diaspora to the motherland. Garvey also taught about the return of Christ, who he believed would come from the African nation. During a time when the Africa continent was fighting colonialism, the coronation of an Ethiopian king was a great source of pride for Africans in the diaspora.

The name “Rastafarian” originates from the worship of Emperor Haile Selassie, who Rastafarians believed was the 2nd coming of Christ, though the Emperor denied divinity. Before coronation, he went by the name Ras Tafari Mekonen, and afterwards some called him “Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (Moulton, 2018) The name is the combination of the two words: ‘Ras’ (“head” in Amharic) and ‘Tafari’, his birth name. Many Rastafarians disbelieve his death and claim that his assassination was a hoax.

The religious movement slowly became a way of life as well as a music genre called reggae. Bob (Robert) Nesta Marely was a Jamaican singer, songwriter, and follower of Rastafarianism who made reggae popular on a global scale.





*Img 15.37: Cover of Rastafarian Movement magazine*

*Img 15.38: Ethiopian decorative textile design:  
'tilet'*



# Arts and Craft



*Img 15.39: Debre Berhan Selassie Church ceiling art*

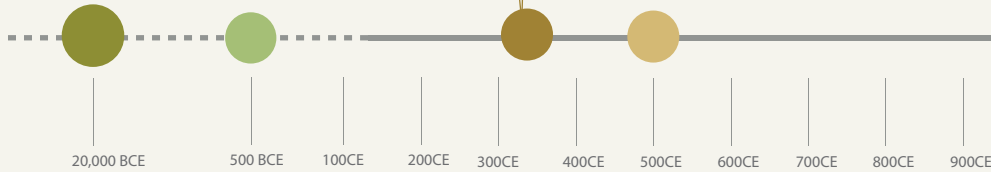
Arts and crafts in Ethiopia are mostly indistinguishable. They both have a long history intertwined with religion and religious practices. For centuries, Ethiopian art was solely done for churches and religious spaces by individuals commissioned by church leaders. Aside from household objects, crafts such as handmade crosses were done for religious purposes by artisans who were either commissioned by church leaders or were themselves part of the church. Other than prehistoric rock art found in central and southern Ethiopia, Christian art has been the prevalent art that existed in the country throughout its history. Since the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has been the predominant religion in Ethiopia since around the 4th century, these art pieces include painting in “churches and their decorations as well as illuminated manuscripts and a range of objects (crosses, chalices, patens, icons, etc)” used for religious festivals and to teach the people. (Gnisci, 2016)

Dome painting of the nine apostles at Abuna Yemata Guh church. The mural clearly indicates the influence of religious iconographies from Syrian



Ge'ez, the classical language of Ethiopia which is still used as a liturgical language by Ethiopian Orthodox church and the Beta Israel Jewish community of Ethiopia, Ezana Empire

| ሰነድ | አ | በ | ገ | ደ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ገ   | አ | በ | ገ | ደ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ | ገ |



"Pre-Axumite" (Iron Age) culture stone grave-markers in Tiya influence by the northern Kingdom of Kush



Cave paintings

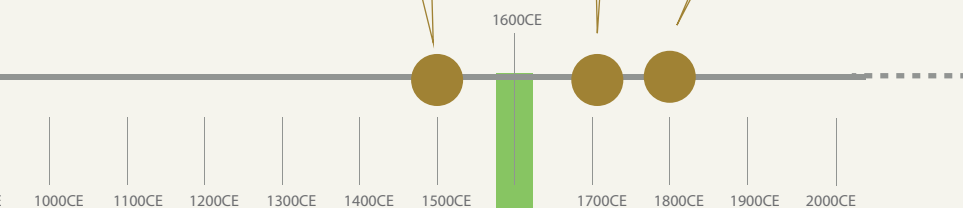
Orthodox style Hand Cross, Iron  
 The cube at the base of the shaft symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant, which is believed to have come to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, and the tomb of Adam, which is believed to have been at the foot of Christ's cross.



Gold and gilded copper crown looted during the Battle of Maqdala when British and Indian troops stormed the fortress of Ethiopian emperor Tewodros II



Processional cross  
 Ethiopian Orthodox style,  
 Copper alloy  
 15th century



1600CE

1000CE 1100CE 1200CE 1300CE 1400CE 1500CE 1700CE 1800CE 1900CE 2000CE

Churches destruction/Muslim invasion



Orthodox church icono,  
 Distemper and gesso on wood

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# Craft

## HANDLOOM TEXTILES AND GENDER ROLES

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The traditional textile and handloom weaving is based on the heritage of the country's cotton production. The textile tradition in Ethiopia is the third largest in Africa. (Cloth Hands) Textile handloom weaving is a gender based craft and

the process is divided between men and women. (Itagaki, 2013) Traditionally, women handle only the cultivation and purchase and preparation of cotton threads. This process is a highly respected activity amongst women, and most women from



*Img 15.40: Carded cotton and 'inzirt'*





*Img 15.41: Women spinning cotton*



*Img 15.42: Man handloom weaving*



Img 15.43: 'Netela' : Traditional Ethiopian cotton shawl

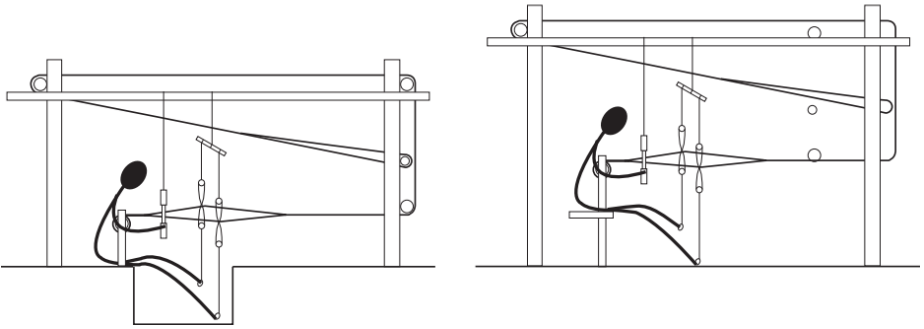
well-to-do families in the rural areas use this as a pastime. Women card the cotton by hand and remove the seeds before spinning it the traditional spindle called 'inzirt'. "Women twist the inzirt, essentially a free standing spindle, in one hand while pulling the cotton in the other to make yarn. The inzirt is topped with a kesem which acts as a bobbin to spool the thread." (Cloth Hands)

When done preparing the cotton thread, they give it to the weavers who are usually men. The men start by stringing the thread vertically then use handlooms either raised from the ground by throwing the bobbin from side to side or suspended over a pit with the weaver moving the shuttle with his feet. Most handlooms are only 70 - 90 cm wide so , which is within arm's reach.

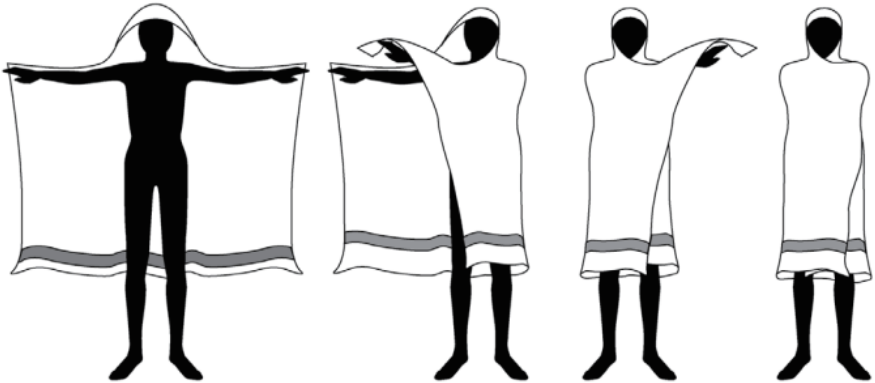
This limits the width of the clothing and the uses, therefore most weavers sew together the strips of textile to make the clothing.

'Netela' is a common product which uses this product. It is normally used by women, and its use is also as complex as the designs used at the of the cloth. Women sometimes use this vethy, white shawl as a way of expressing one's feelings. For example, women wear the 'netela' with the design edge at the bottom for jubilous celebrations and holidays but turn it upside-down and wear the design edge around their face to show sadness or that they are in mourning.

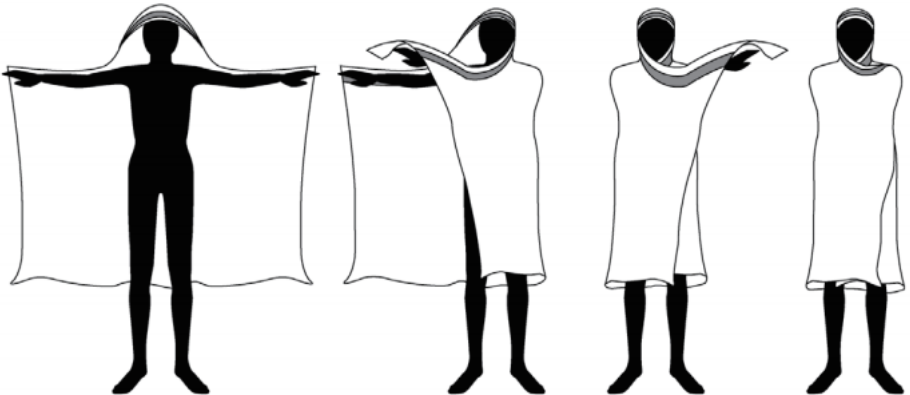
Img 15.44: Loom setup



Img 15.45: How to wear 'netela' during holidays



Img 15.46: How to wear 'netela' during mourning



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Other forms of crafts in Ethiopia include basket weaving – mainly in the Harar region– beadwork, carving of farming and housing tools, jewelry, pottery, and weaponry. Even though the different handicraft products are used on a daily basis in people’s homes, the artisans receive very little recognition. Most of the people still live under the poverty line.

“As things stand now there prevails a strange situation with respect to traditional handicrafts: on the one hand, a great number of arts and crafts people, who may be highly skilled, are living under the poverty line. And the other, there exists a market and a vert real demand, locally and abroad, for genuine handcraft products.” - H.E. Ambassador Mahamoud Dirir, Minister of Culture and Tourism (Dubois, 2008).





img 15.47: Traditional woven baskets

*Img 15.48: View of Addis Ababa skyline*



# Urban Life in Addis Ababa

“ADDIS IS LIKE AN ONION, FULL OF LAYERS WAITING TO BE PEELED BACK. WHEN YOU’RE NOT SEEKING OUT MUSEUMS OR PALACES, YOU’D DO WELL TO TREAT YOUR TASTE BUDS” (LIFESTYLE)



Img 15.49: Modern Habesha dress made in Addis Ababa

As the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa boasts of a rich mixture of ethnic groups and diversity in cultural expressions. Even though travelers often use Addis as a stopover on their way to visit other destinations, the city offers a wide variety of activities and attractions worth exploring. Being one of the fastest growing cities in Africa, Addis is a bustling city that can be a little intimidating to firstcomers. Addis is an inclusive city with individuals from low income and high income households rubbing against each other and enjoying a symbiotic relationship. Individuals with decent income live a highly modernized lifestyle. For people migrating to Addis Ababa in search of work and better opportunities, living in the capital city is a form of betterment of one’s status.

The locals have a great advantage of being within close proximity to many vacation spots. Towns such as Bishoftu (or originally known as Debre Zeit) and its multiple lakes with bungalow style and high-end resorts is frequented by locals. In Addis, the Ethnographic Museum in the

*Img 12.01: Mulatu Astatke playing Ethio Jazz*



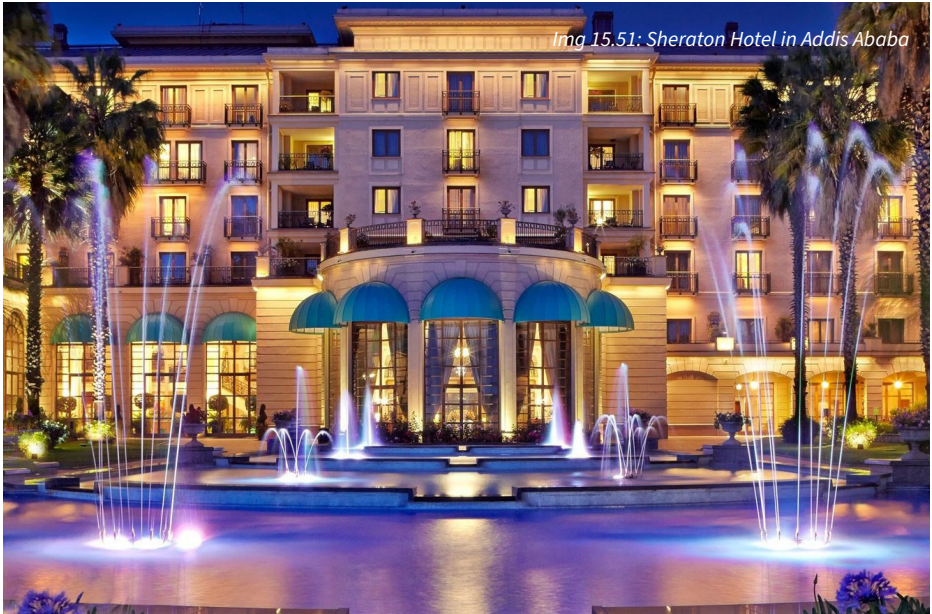
palace of Haile Selassie gives a good overview of the different ethnic groups and their social and cultural history that might be helpful to people traveling to other regions. The National Museum is also a famous place to visit with the display of the remains of the early human of ‘Lucy’.

The city has a modern twist on the culture such as the traditional clothing, music, and . The majority of the younger generation in Addis wear the tradition ‘habesha libs’ with a modern twist which they can easily purchase from the multiple designer stores in the city. In terms of music, Ethio Jazz is one good example of this. It is a music genre introduced by Mulatu Astatke. Educated in modern music at Berklee College in Boston, Mulatu created his fusion jazz music of Ethio Jazz

where he uses traditional ethiopian notes and musical instruments. Mulatu admits: “I learnt the technical aspects of jazz and gained a beautiful understanding of many different types of music. That’s where I got my tools.” (Bandcamp)

Addis Ababa also has its own twist on Western cuisine which can be an attraction to both locals and foreigners. In addition to some Italian words and architecture influences in places such as Talian Sefer and Piassa, Italian presence in Addis has influenced the way of cooking in homes and restaurants. For instance, making lasagna with local spices such as ‘berbere’ and serving them during events and parties is common amongst Addis Ababians; a practice they hold on to while also living in diaspora.





*Img 15.51: Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa*



*Img 15.52: Ethiopian lasagna*

*Img 16.01: Northern Ethiopia mountains*



## Fun Facts

“IN THE MORNING OF THE WORLD, WHEN THE FINGERS OF LOVE SWEEP ASIDE  
THE CURTAINS OF TIME, OUR DUSKY MOTHER, ETHIOPIA, HELD THE STAGE.  
IT WAS SHE WHO WOODED CIVILIZATION AND GAVE BIRTH TO NATIONS. EGYPT  
WAS HER FIRST-BORN.” (GEORGE WELLS PARKER)



*Img 15.02: Display of 'Lucy' on lease at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History*

### “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”

Ethiopia is well known for its early hominid fossil finds in the Afar region including ‘Lucy’, the most complete early human remains discovered in 1974 by paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson. (Hogenboom,2014) Lucy – also known as ‘Dinknesh’ in Amharic – is an *Australopithecus afarensis* who lived about 3.2 million years ago. Her discovery was pivotal to disproving the previous theory of human origin in Europe and Asia.

While digging for the remains, Johanson was listening to the Beatles cassette. When he found the remains, the song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” came on the radio. One of his colleagues suggested to call her “Lucy”. After giving her the name, according to Johanson, “All of a sudden, she became a person.” (Hogenboom, 2014)

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# The Country of 13 Months

When traveling to foreign places, it's safe to assume that things might get lost in translation. Regardless, one can usually keep a note of the date when traveling or rely on modern technology to at least know the time. In Ethiopia, this is different. Currently in Ethiopia, it is the second month of the year 2012. Because Ethiopia has adopted the Coptic calendar instead of the Gregorian (which has 13 months in a year with 12 months of 30 days and one month of 5 days or 6 days in a leap year) the new year normally starts on September 11th or 12th. The calendar is also eight days behind the Gregorian calendar.

Telling time is also wildly different here. Time starts from 1:00 at 07:00 in the morning then goes up to 12:00 (which is 18:00). After 18:00, the time goes back to 1:00 in the evening. So if someone is expected to be at a meeting at 3 in the morning, he or she should expect this to mean 09:00 in the morning.



*Img 16.03: City silhouette of Addis Ababa's  
Orthodox churches*



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# glossary

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>AU</i>                  | African Union. The organisation representing all 55 countries in the continent of Africa.  |
| <i>Derg</i>                | (also Dergue) The common name of the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, the government from 1974 - 1987.                           |
| <i>EPRDF</i>               | Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front. The political coalition that has governed Ethiopia since 1991.                                      |
| <i>FDRE</i>                | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The official state name of Ethiopia since the collapse of the Derg regime in 1991.                            |
| <i>Italian East Africa</i> | A group of African nations ruled by Italy until 1941, including Ethiopia, Italian Somaliland (now Somalia) and Eritrea.                                |
| <i>Negus</i>               | "King," "Ruler" or "Emperor" in the Ethiopian language of Amharic.   |
| <i>Negusa Negast</i>       | "Negusa Negast," also "Nigusa Negast," a title used to address Ethiopian Emperors, means "King of Kings"   |
| <i>OAU</i>                 | Organisation of African Unity. The precursor to the African Union, which lasted from 1963 - 1999.  |
| <i>PDRE</i>                | People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The official state name of Ethiopia after the Derg transitioned to civilian rule in 1987. Lasted until 1991. |
| <i>SNNPR</i>               | Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region   |



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**GLOBAL HOUSING**  
ADDIS ABABA LIVING LAB  
2019

Taught by

**Nelson Mota**

**Harald Mooij**

Design by

**Ludovica Cassina**

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# SOFT DATA

2019

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