HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN (Hist. 1012) FOR STUDENTS OF HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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Department of History & Heritage Management

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Introduction to the Module

This teaching material is prepared for a common course given to Students of Higher Learning Institutions. The purpose is to help students understand the history of Ethiopia and the Horn from ancient times to 1995 as a base for shaping and bettering the future. The module generally focuses on major topics in the history of Ethiopia and the Horn including social, cultural, economic, and political developments and their interrelationships thereof. The contents of the module consider the chronology and thematic relations of events in time and space. To make this course inclusive and representative, the module also includes regional histories across the period.

The module is divided into seven units each of which has its own specific objectives. The first unit defines history, describes why history is important, how history is studied and introduces the region of Ethiopia and the Horn. The second unit describes peoples and cultures in the region. The major topics treated in the unit are human evolution, Neolithic Revolution and settlement patterns, as well as religion and religious processes. Based on these historical backgrounds, the third unit discusses states, external contacts, economic formations and cultural achievements in terms of architecture, writing, calendar, and others to the end of the thirteenth century. Unit Four treats political developments, evangelization and religious movements, trade and external relations of the region from the late thirteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. It explains how the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim sultanates evolved in the region and how their interactions shaped the history of the region in the pre-sixteenth century. Unit Five discusses a history of the region from the early sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries. It deals with interaction between states, foreign interventions, religious controversies, population movements, and how these contributed to the integration of peoples across ethnic and religious diversities to the end of the eighteenth century. Besides, the unit describes peoples and states in different parts of Ethiopia and the Horn. The unit ends up its discussion depicting major conditions and achievements of the Gondarine period, and the *Zemene -Mesafint* (Era of Princes) in which the Yejju lords played a dominant role.

The social, cultural, economic, and political experiences of Ethiopia and the Horn in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries that played significant role in shaping the

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modern history of the region are given space in unit six. Historical processes including state formation and power rivalry, trade, external relations, foreign threats and major battles, centralization and modernization attempts, Italian occupation, and socio-economic conditions from 1800 to 1941 holds central position in the modern history of the region. It also underlines how personalities helped change the setting, how societies interacted, and its implication for history of Ethiopia and the Horn. The last unit discusses the historical developments in the region from the period of liberation from the Italian occupation (1941) to the period of the ratification of the FDRE Constitution (1995). Important issues discussed in this regard include consolidation of Imperial Power and socio-economic conditions, oppositions made by various social groups, national questions, reforms, and political developments.

Despite serious attempts made, the module is far from being comprehensive in terms of coverage of themes and issues across time and spaces in the region. Certainly, however, the topics and approaches considered in the module merit the attention of learners and instructors of higher institutions.

Objectives

The general objective of this module is to introduce students to the diverse histories of Ethiopia and the Horn and the extent to which interaction between peoples throughout the region and with the outside world have shaped the history of the region.

The specific objectives of the module are to enable students to:

- distinguish the nature and uses of history;
- identify pertinent sources for the history of the peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- describe changes and continuities that unfolded in Ethiopia and the Horn;
- elucidate the causes, courses and consequences of events that happened in the region;
- explain the nature of the region's external contacts and their effects;
- appreciate peoples' achievements, heritages and cultural diversities of the region.

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Competences

This module enables students to:

- comprehend the nature of history;
- analyze relevant sources for History of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- describe Ethiopia and the Horn in relation to Human Evolution and Neolithic Revolution;
- trace the origin, developments and achievements of states;
- analyze the role of the legend of Queen of Sheba in shaping historical developments in Ethiopia from 1270 to 1974;
- assess dynamics of the relations between the Christian kingdom and Muslim Sultanates;
- appreciate the interplay between local and global developments in shaping the history of the region;
- explicate the role of population movements in shaping the history of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- assess the evolution of states and societies in Eastern, Central, Southern and Western parts of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- identify the major socio-economic, religious and political achievements of the Gondarine period;
- discuss the salient features and effects of the *Zemene-Mesafint*;
- expound the political process for formation of Modern Ethiopia and the Horn;
- discern the efforts and challenges of modernization in the region;
- point out the legacies of major battles, victories and the role of patriots in the resistance struggle against colonialism;
- discuss the major socio-economic and political developments from 1941-74;
- reveals the political momentum, reforms and oppositions during the *Derg* period;
- clarify the political developments undertaken from 1991 to 1995.

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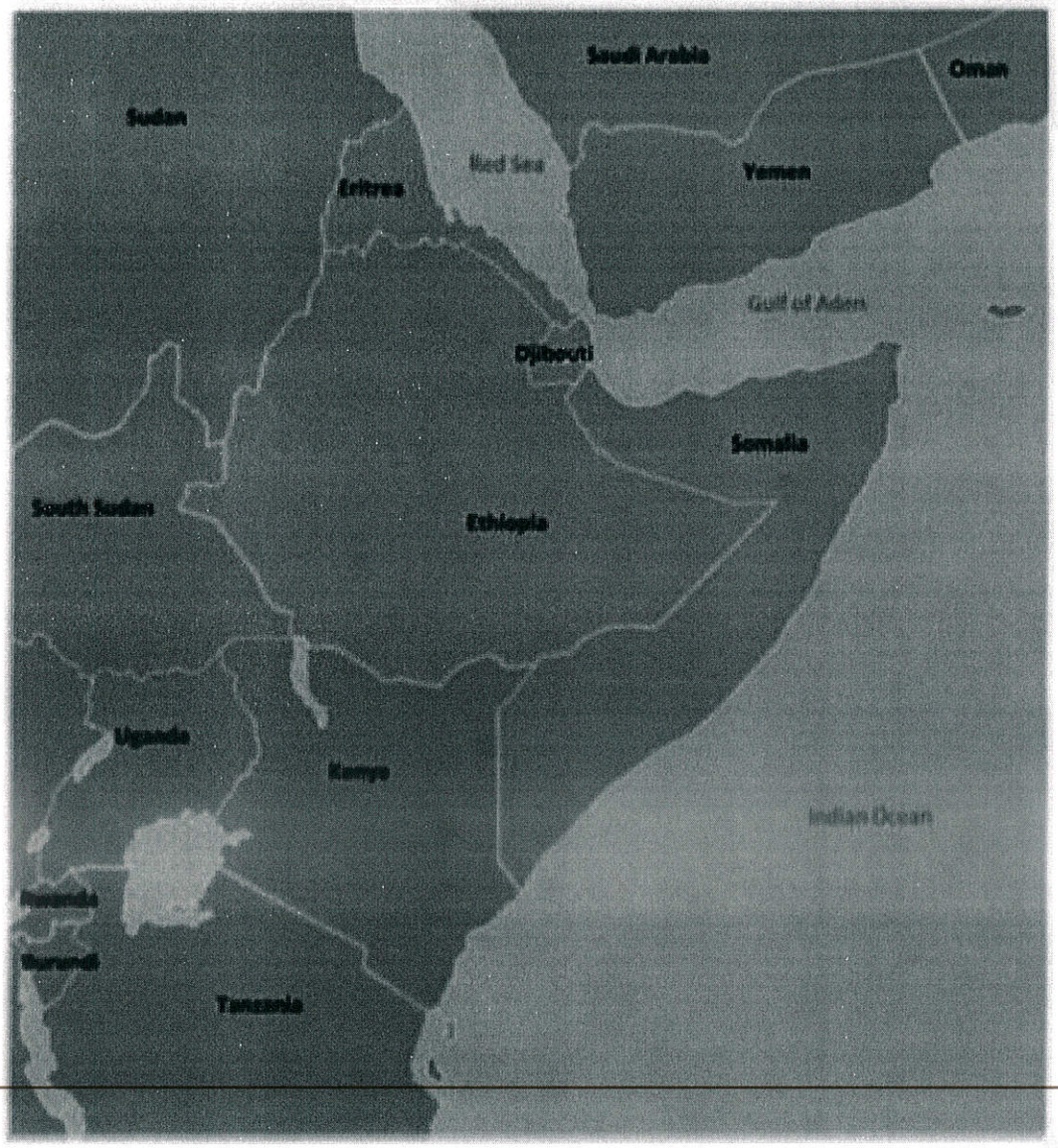
Map 1. Political Map of Ethiopia and the Horn



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UNIT ONE

INTRODUCTION (3 hours)

Introduction

This unit introduces you with the nature of history and historiography, the diverse histories of Ethiopia and the Horn and the extent to which interactions between societies throughout the region have shaped human history. History is a systematic study and organized knowledge of the past. The purpose of historical study is not simply to produce a mere list of chronological events about the deeds of the dead but to find patterns and establish meaning through the rigorous study and interpretation of surviving records. Historiography, on the other hand, refers to the history of history; it explores changes in historical interpretations through time. Accordingly, the unit considers popular and academic conceptions of history, the why and how of studying history and trends in historical writing in Ethiopia and the Horn focusing on Ethiopia. Finally, the unit discusses the role of geography in the region's human history. In this regard, it shows that despite the region's diverse environments, peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn were never isolated but they interacted throughout history. As a result, the social, economic, cultural and political history of Ethiopia and the Horn is highly intertwined.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- differentiate between past and history.
- distinguish between popular and professional conceptions of history.
- identify categories of historical sources.
- explain what methods historians use to study the past.
- discern basic patterns of continuity and change.
- explain the uses of history.
- avoid judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
- explain how the writing of history has evolved over time.
- discuss the role of geography in human history.

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Unit Starters

- What do we mean by history?
- What is the relevance of knowing about the past?
- Have you ever read a historical work? Do you remember the title and author of the work?
- Can you name some writers of the history of Ethiopia and the Horn?

1.1. The Nature and Uses of History

A. Nature of History

The term history derived from the Greek word *Istoria*, meaning "inquiry" or "an account of one's inquiries." The first use of the term is attributed to one of the ancient Greek historians, Herodotus (c. 484–425 B.C.E.), who is often held to be the "father of history." In ordinary usage, history means all the things that have happened in the human past. The past signifies events, which have taken place and the facts of the past, which are kept in writing. More specifically, the distinction is between what actually happened in the past or that part which exists independently of the historian and still awaits to be recorded and the accounts of the past provided by historians, that is, 'history'. Historians apply their expertise to surviving records and write history in the form of accounts of the past. Academically, history can be defined as an organized and systematic study of the past. The study involves the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

Evidently, what actually happened in the past is almost infinite. Historians select which topics and problems they wish to study, as do natural scientists. In this regard, the major concern of history is the study of human society and its interaction with the natural environment, which is also the subject of study by many other disciplines. What differentiates history from other disciplines is that while the latter study the interaction between humans and their environment in the present state, history studies the interaction between the two in the past within the framework of the continuous process of change taking place in time. Because of the longevity of that time, historians organize and divide the human past into discrete periods after identifying significant developments in politics, society, economy, culture, environment etc. through the rigorous study of documents and artifacts left

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by people of other times and other places. Then they give a label to each period to convey the key characteristics and developments of that era. Accordingly, history is conventionally divided into ancient, medieval and modern history. This is what we call periodization in history; one of the key characteristics of the discipline.

When historians talk about continuities or persisting patterns, they are not implying that a particular pattern applied to everyone in the world or even in a particular country or region. Nor are they claiming that absolutely nothing changed in the pattern they are describing. All aspects of human life that is, social, cultural, economic, and political in the past have been changing from time to time; and none of them were practiced in exactly the same way in the lifetime of our ancestors. Nevertheless, some things stay more or less the same for long periods, since few things ever change completely. For example, we continue to speak the languages of our ancestors; follow their beliefs and religious practices; wear the costumes they were wearing; continue to practice their agricultural or pastoral ways of life; maintain the fundamental components or structures of their social organization. In the same vein, the basic fabric of society in Ethiopia and the Horn remains similar and continues to have special characteristics.

B. Uses of History

Peoples live in the present and plan for and worry about the future. History, however, is the study of the past. Why bother with the past while living in the present and anticipating what is yet to come? This section discusses the uses of history in the context of the relationship between the past and the present.

History Helps Better Understand the Present

History is the only significant storehouse of information available for the examination and analysis of how people behaved and acted in the past. People need to produce some sort of account of their past because it is difficult to understand problems that face humanity and society today without tracing their origins in the past. Put differently, knowledge of relevant historical background is essential for a balanced and in-depth understanding of many current world situations.

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History Provides a Sense of Identity

Knowledge of history is indispensable to understand who we are and where we fit in the world. As memory is to the individual, history is to the society. An individual without memory finds great difficulty in relating to others and making intelligent decisions. A society without history would be in similar condition. It is only through sense of history that communities define their identity, orient themselves, and understand their relationships with the past and with other societies.

History Provides the Basic Background for Other Disciplines

Historical knowledge is extremely valuable in the pursuit of other disciplines such as literature, art, philosophy, religion, sociology, political science, anthropology, economics, etc.

History Teaches Critical Skills

Studying history helps students to develop key research skills. These include how to find and evaluate sources; how to make coherent arguments based on various kinds of evidence and present clearly in writing. These analytical and communication skills are highly usable in other academic pursuits. Gaining skills in sorting through diverse interpretations is also essential to make informed decisions in our day-to-day life.

History Helps Develop Tolerance and Open-Mindedness

Most of us have a tendency to regard our own cultural practices, styles, and values as right and proper. Studying different societies in the past is like going to a foreign country, which contributes to free ourselves from some of our inherent cultural provincialism. By studying the past, students of history acquire broad perspectives that give them the range and flexibility required in many life situations.

History Supplies Endless Source of Fascination

Exploring the ways people in distant ages constructed their lives offers a sense of beauty and excitement, and ultimately another perspective on human life and society.

To conclude, history should be studied because it is essential to the individual and the society. Only through studying history can we grasp how and why things change; and only

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through history are we able understand what elements of a society persist despite change. Aesthetic and humanistic goals also inspire people to study the past, far removed from present-day utility. Nevertheless, just as history can be useful, it can also be abused. Such abuses come mainly from deliberate manipulation of the past to fit current political agenda. In such cases, history is written backwards. That is, the past is described and interpreted to justify the present. While personal biases are not always avoidable, a historian is different from a propagandist in that the former takes care to document his judgment and assertions so that they can be subjected to independent and external verification. That said, how do historians study and interpret the past and the changes that took place in periods during which they have not lived?

1.2. Sources and Methods of Historical Study

Historians are not creative writers like novelists. Therefore, the work of historians must be supported by evidence arising from sources. Sources are instruments that bring to life what appear to have been dead. It is said that "where there are no sources, there is no history". Sources are, therefore, key to the study and writing of history.

Historical sources are broadly classified into two types: Primary and Secondary. Primary sources are surviving traces of the past available to us in the present. They are original or first hand in their proximity to the event both in time and in space. Examples of primary sources are manuscripts (handwritten materials), diaries, letters, minutes, court records and administrative files, travel documents, photographs, maps, video and audiovisual materials, and artifacts such as coins, fossils, weapons, utensils, and buildings. Secondary sources, on the other hand, are second-hand published accounts about past events. They are written long after the event has occurred, providing an interpretation of what happened, why it happened, and how it happened, often based on primary sources. Examples of secondary sources are articles, books, textbooks, biographies, and published stories or movies about historical events. Secondary materials give us what appear to be finished accounts of certain historical periods and phenomena. Nevertheless, no history work can be taken as final, as new sources keep coming to light. New sources make possible new historical interpretations or entirely new historical reconstructions.

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Oral data constitute the other category of historical sources. Oral sources are especially valuableto study and document the history of non-literate societies. They can also be used to fill missing gaps and corroborate written words. In many societies, people transmit information from one generation to another, for example, through folk songs and folk sayings. This type of oral data is called oral tradition. People can also provide oral testimonies or personal recollections of lived experience. Such source material is known as oral history.

For the history of Ethiopia and the Horn, historians use a combination of the sources described above. However, whatever the source of information-primary or secondary, written or oral- the data should be subjected to critical evaluation before it is used as evidence. Primary sources have to be verified for their originality and authenticity because sometimes primary sources like letters may be forged. Secondary sources have to be examined for the reliability of their reconstructions. Oral data may lose its originality and authenticity due to distortion through time. Therefore, it should be crosschecked with other sources such as written documents to determine its veracity or authenticity. In short, historians (unlike novelists) must find evidence about the past, ask questions of that evidence, and come up with explanations that make sense of what the evidence says about the people, events, places and time periods they study about.

1.3. Historiography of Ethiopia and the Horn

Historiography can be defined as the history of historical writing, studying how knowledge of the past, either recent or distant, is obtained and transmitted. People have had some sense of the past perhaps since the beginning of humanity. Yet historiography as an intentional attempt to understand and represent descriptions of past events in writing has rather a briefer career throughout the world. The organized study and narration of the past was introduced by ancient Greek historians notably Herodotus (c. 484–425 B.C.E.) and Thucydides (c.455-400 B.C.E.) The other major tradition of thinking and writing about the past is the Chinese. The most important early figure in Chinese historical thought and writing was the Han dynasty figure Sima Qian (145–86 B.C.E.). Despite such early historiographical traditions, history emerged as an academic discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century first in Europe and subsequently in other parts of the world including the US. The German historian,

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Leopold Von Ranke (1795–1886), and his colleagues established history as an independent discipline in Berlin with its own set of methods and concepts by which historians collect evidence of past events, evaluate that evidence, and present a meaningful discussion of the subject. Ranke's greatest contribution to the scientific study of the past is such that he is considered as the "father of modern historiography."

Historiography of Ethiopia and the Horn has changed enormously during the past hundred years in ways that merit fuller treatment than can be afforded here. This section is devoted to exploring significant transformations in historical writing. In order to appreciate twentieth-century historiography of the region, it is first necessary to examine earlier forms of historiography (historical writing). The earliest known reference that we have on history of Ethiopia and the Horn is the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, written in the first century A.D by an anonymous author. Another document describing Aksum's trade and the then Aksumite king's campaigns on both sides of the sea is the *Christian Topography* composed by Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Greek sailor, in the sixth century A.D.

Inscriptions aside, the earliest written Ethiopian material dates from the seventh century A.D. The document was found in *Abba* Gerima monastery in Yeha. This was followed by a manuscript discovered in Haiq Istifanos monastery of present day Wollo in the thirteenth century A.D. The value of manuscripts is essentially religious. Yet, for historians, they have the benefit of providing insights into the country's past. For example, the manuscript cited above contains the list of medieval kings and their history in brief. The largest groups of sources available for medieval Ethiopian history are hagiographies originating from Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Invariably written in Ge'ez, an important function of hagiographies is enhancing the prestige of saints. Yet other related anecdotes are also introduced, and often discussed in detail such as the development of the church and the state including territorial conquests by reigning monarchs. A parallel hagiographical tradition existed among Muslim communities of the country. One such account offers tremendous insight into the life of a Muslim saint, *Shaykh* Ja'far Bukko of Gattira, in present day Wollo, in the late nineteenth century. Besides the saint's life, the development of indigenous Islam and contacts between the region's Muslim community and the outside world are some of the issues discussed in this document.

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Ethiopia had also an indigenous tradition of history writing called chronicles. Chronicles in the ancient Ethiopian Ge'ez tongue first appeared in the fourteenth century and continue (sometimes in Amharic) into the early twentieth century. Kings or their successors entrusted the writing of chronicles to court scribes or clergymen of recognized clerical training and calligraphic skills. The earliest and the last of such surviving documents are the *Glorious Victories of Amde-Tsion* and the *Chronicle of Abeto Iyasu and Empress Zewditu* respectively. Chronicles incorporate both legends and facts-past and contemporary about the monarch's genealogy, upbringing, military exploits, piety and statesmanship. Chronicles are known for their factual detail and strong chronological framework, even if it would require considerable labor to convert their relative chronology to an absolute one. They are also averse to quantification. Furthermore, chronicles explain historical events mainly in religious terms; they offer little by way of social and economic developments even in the environs of the palace. However, in conjunction with other varieties of written documents, such as hagiographies and travel accounts by foreign observers, chronicles can provide us with a glimpse into the character and lives of kings, their preoccupations and relations with subordinate officials and, though inadequately, the evolution of the Ethiopian state and society.

Written accounts of Arabic-speaking visitors to the coast also provide useful information on various aspects of the region's history. For example, al-Masudi and Ibn Battuta described the culture, language and import-export trade in the main central region of the east African coast in the tenth and in the fourteenth centuries respectively. For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we have two documents composed by Yemeni writers who were eyewitnesses to the events they described. The first document titled *Futuh al Habesha* was composed by Shihab ad-Din, who recorded the conflict between the Christian kingdom and the Muslim principalities in the sixteenth century. Besides the operation of the war including the conquest of northern and central Ethiopia by Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, the document describes major towns and their inhabitants in the southeastern part of Ethiopia, although the discussion abruptly ends in 1535. The other first-hand account was left to us by Al-Haymi, who led a Yemeni delegation in 1647 to the court of Fasiledes (r. 1632-67).

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Other materials that appeared in the sixteenth century include Abba Bahrey's Geez script on the Oromo written in 1593. Notwithstanding its limitations, the document provides us with first-hand information about the Oromo population movement including the *Gadaa* System.

The contribution of European missionaries and travelers to the development of Ethiopian historiography is also significant. From the early sixteenth until the late nineteenth centuries, missionaries (Catholics and Protestants) came to the country with the intention of staying, and who, nevertheless, maintained intimate links with Europe. Thus, the missionaries' sources provide us with valuable information covering a considerable period. Some of the major topics covered by these sources include religious and political developments within Ethiopia, and the country's foreign relations. An example of such account is *The Prester John of the Indies*, composed by a Portuguese priest, Francisco Alvarez who accompanied the Portuguese mission to the court of Lebne-Dengel in 1520. In addition to the missionary sources, travel documents had important contribution to the development of Ethiopian historiography. One example of travel documents is James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*. Like other sources, however, both the missionaries and travelers' materials can only be used with considerable reservations and with care for they are socially and politically biased.

Foreign writers also developed interest in Ethiopian studies. One of these figures was a German, Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704). Ludolf was the founder of Ethiopian studies in Europe in the seventeenth century. He wrote *Historia Aethiopica* (translated into English as *A New History of Ethiopia*). Ludolf never visited Ethiopia; he wrote the country's history largely based on information he collected from an Ethiopian priest named Abba Gorgorios (Abba Gregory) who was in Europe at that time. In the nineteenth century, August Dillman published two studies on ancient Ethiopian history. Compared to Ludolf, Dillman demonstrated all markers of objectivity in his historical research endeavors.

Historical writing made some departures from the chronicle tradition in the early twentieth century. This period saw the emergence of traditional Ethiopian writers who made conscious efforts to distance themselves from chroniclers whom they criticized for adulatory tone when writing about monarchs. The earliest group of these writers include *Aleqa* Taye Gebre-

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Mariam, *Aleqa* Asme Giorgis and *Debtera* Fisseha-Giorgis Abyezgi. Later, *Negadrases* Afework Gebre-Iyesus and Gebre-Hiwot Baykedagn joined them. Unlike chroniclers, these writers dealt with a range of topics from social justice, administrative reform and economic analysis to history. Taye and Fisseha-Giorgis wrote books on the history of Ethiopia while Asme produced a similar work on the Oromo people. Notwithstanding his other works, Afework wrote the first Amharic novel, *Tobiya*, in Ethiopian history while Gebre-Hiwot has *Atse Menilekna Ityopia* (*Emperor Menilek and Ethiopia*) and *Mengistna Yehizb Astedader* (*Government and Public Administration*) to his name. The most prolific writer of the early twentieth century Ethiopia was, however, *Blatten* Geta Hiruy Wolde-Selassie. Hiruy published four major works namely *Ethiopiana Metema* (*Ethiopia and Metema*), *Wazema* (*Eve*), *Yehiwot Tarik* (*A Biographical Dictionary*) and *Yeityopia Tarik* (*A History of Ethiopia*). In contrast to their predecessors, Gebre-Hiwot and Hiruy exhibited relative objectivity and methodological sophistication in their works. Unfortunately, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia interrupted the early experiment in modern history writing and publications.

After liberation, Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria formed a bridge between writers in pre-1935 and Ethiopia professional historians who came after him. Tekle-Tsadik has published about eight historical works. Tekle-Tsadik made better evaluation of his sources than his predecessors. Another work of importance in this period is Yilma Deressa's *Ye Ityopiya Tarik Be'asra Sidistegnaw Kifle Zemen*(*A History of Ethiopia in the Sixteenth Centu*ry). The book addresses the Oromo population movement and the wars between the Christian kingdom and the Muslim sultanates as its main subjects. *Blatten Geta* Mahteme-Selassie Wolde-Meskel also contributed his share. Among others, he wrote *Zikre Neger*. *Zikre Neger* is a comprehensive account of Ethiopia's prewar land tenure systems and taxation. Another work dealing specifically with aspects of land tenure is left to us by Gebre-Wold Engidawork. Another writer of the same category was *Dejazmach* Kebede Tesema. Kebede wrote his memoir of the imperial period, published as *Yetarik Mastawesha* in 1962 E.C.

The 1960s was a crucial decade in the development of Ethiopian historiography for it was in this period that history emerged as an academic discipline. The pursuit of historical studies as a full-time occupation began with the opening of the Department of History in 1963 at the

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then Haile Selassie I University (HSIU). The production of BA theses began towards the end of the decade. The Department launched its MA and PhD programs in 1979 and 1990 respectively. Since then researches by faculty (both Ethiopians and expatriates) and students have been produced on various topics. Although mainly a research organization, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) is the other institutional home of professional historiography of Ethiopia. The IES was founded in 1963. Since then the Institute housed a number of historians of whom the late Richard Pankhurst, the first Director and founding member of the Institute is worthy of note here. Pankhurst's prolific publication record remains unmatched. He has authored or co-authored twenty-two books and produced several hundred articles on Ethiopia. Since its foundation, the IES has been publishing the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* for the dissemination of historical research. The Institute's library contains literary works of diverse disciplines and has its fair share in the evolution of professional historiography of Ethiopia.

The professionalization of history in other parts of the Horn is a post-colonial phenomenon. With the establishment of independent nations, a deeper interest in exploring their own past quickly emerged among African populations, perhaps stimulated by reactions to decades of education in an alien imperial historiography. With this came an urgent need to recast the historical record and to recover evidence of many lost pre-colonial civilizations. The decolonization of African historiography required new methodological approach (tools of investigation) to the study of the past that involved a critical use of oral data and tapping the percepts of ancillary disciplines like archeology, anthropology and linguistics. At the same time, European intellectuals' own discomfort with the Euro-centrism of previous scholarship provided for the intensive academic study of African history, an innovation that had spread to North America by the 1960s. Foundational research was done at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London and the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Francophone scholars have been as influential as Anglophones. Yet African historiography has not been the sole creation of interested Europeans. African universities have, despite the instabilities of politics and civil war in many areas, trained their own scholars and sent many others overseas for training who eventually published numerous works on different aspects of the region's history.

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1.4. The Geographical Context

The term "Ethiopia and the Horn" refers to that part of Northeast Africa, which now contains the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The region consists chiefly of mountains uplifted through the formation of the Great Rift Valley. The Rift Valley is a fissure in the Earth's crust running down from Syria to Mozambique and marking the separation of the African and Arabian tectonic plates. The major physiographic features of the region are a massive highland complex of mountains and plateaus divided by the Great Rift Valley and surrounded by lowlands, semi-desert, deserts and tropical forests along the periphery. The diversity of the terrain led to regional variations in climate, natural vegetation, soil composition, and settlement patterns. As with the physical features, people across the region are remarkably diverse: they speak a vast number of different languages, profess to many distinct religions, live in various types of dwellings, and engage in a wide range of economic activities. At the same time, however, peoples of the region were never isolated; they interacted throughout history from various locations. Thus, as much as there are many factors that make people of a certain area unique from the other, there are also many areas in which peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn share common past.

The history of Ethiopia and the Horn has been shaped by contacts with others through commerce, migrations, wars, slavery, colonialism, and the waxing and waning of state systems. Yet, the evolution of human history owed much to geographical factors notably location, landforms, resource endowment, climate and drainage systems which continue to impact, as incentives and deterrents, the movement of people and goods in the region. In this section, we will study the impact that the region's geography has on the way people live and organize themselves into societies.

Spatial location in relationship to other spaces and locations in the world is one geographical factor that has significant bearing on the ways in which history unfolds. Ethiopia and the Horn lies between the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean on the one hand, and the present-day eastern frontiers of Sudan and Kenya on the other. Since early times, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden linked Northeast Africa to the Eastern Mediterranean, the Near and Middle East, India, and the Far East. Likewise, the Indian Ocean has linked East Africa to the Near and Middle East, India and the Far East.

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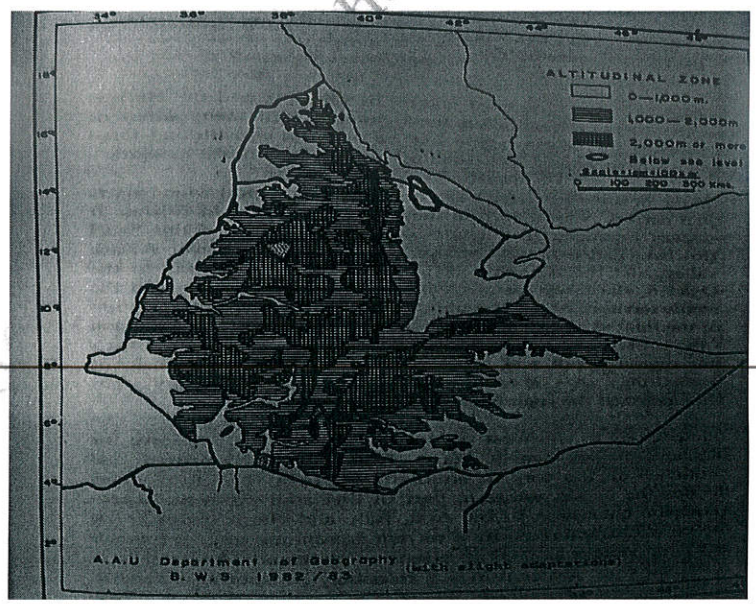
Another element of geographical factor that had profound impact on human history is drainage system. Ethiopia and the Horn has five principal drainage systems. These are the Nile River, Gibe/Omo–Gojeb, Genale/Jubba-Shebele, the Awash River, and the Ethiopian Rift Valley Lake systems. Flowing from Uganda in the south to the Sudan in the north, the White Nile meets the Blue Nile (Abay in Ethiopia that starts from the environs of Tana Lake) in Khartoum and eventually, drains into the Mediterranean Sea through Egypt. The Awash River System is entirely confined to Ethiopia and links the cool rich highlands of Central Ethiopia with the hot, dry lowlands of the Danakil Depression. The Ethiopian Rift Valley Lakes System is a self-contained drainage basin, and includes a string of lakes stretching from Lake Ziway in the north to Lake Turkana (formerly known as Rudolf) on the Ethio-Kenyan border. The Gibe /Omo–Gojeb River System links southern Ethiopia to the semi-desert lowlands of northern Kenya. The Shebele and Genale rivers originate in the Eastern highlands and flow southeast toward Somalia and the Indian Ocean. Only the Genale (known as the Jubba in Somalia) makes it to the Indian Ocean; the Shebele disappears in sand just inside the coastline.

Map 2: Physical Map of Ethiopia



Source: Bahru Zewde (Compiled), *A Short History of Ethiopia and the Horn* (Addis Ababa, 1998), p. 9.

The above watersheds are very important in the life and history of the peoples inhabiting the region. Besides providing people with the source of their livelihood, the drainage systems

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facilitated the movement of peoples and goods across diverse environments, resulting in the exchange of ideas, technology, knowledge, cultural expressions, and beliefs. Thus, studying the drainage systems of Ethiopia and the Horn is crucial for proper understanding of the relationships of the peoples living within the river basins mentioned previously.

Ethiopia and the Horn can be divided into three major distinct environmental zones. The vast Eastern lowland covers the narrow coastal strip of northeastern Eritrea, widens gradually and descends southwards to include much of lowland Eritrea, the Sahel, the Danakil Depression, the lower Awash valley, and the arid terrain in northeast of the Republic of Djibouti. It then extends to the Ogaden, the lower parts of Hararghe, Bale, Borana, Sidamo and the whole territory of the Republic of Somalia. There is no much seasonal variation in climatic condition in this zone. Hot and dry conditions prevail year-round along with periodic monsoon winds and irregular (little) rainfall except in limited areas along the rivers Awash, Wabe-Shebele and Genale/Jubba that traverse the region and a few offshore islands in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean that are inhabited by people closely related to those of immediate mainland districts. Much of the lowland territories are covered by shrub and bush as its major vegetation.

Immediately to the west of and opposite to the eastern lowland region forms the highland massif that starts from northern Eritrea and continues all the way to southern Ethiopia. The eastern extension of the highland massif consists the Arsi, Bale and Hararghe plateau. The major divide between the western and eastern parts of this zone is the Rift Valley. The major physiographic features of the zone are complex of mountains, deep valleys, and extensive plateaus.

Further to the west, along the western foothills or on the periphery of the plateau and on borderlands of the Sudan stretching from north to south are hot lowlands that were characterized in earlier times by thick forests chiefly on the banks of the Nile and its tributaries.

Despite the varied physical environments discussed above, the countries of the Horn of Africa are, for the most part, linguistically and ethnically linked together as far back as recorded history goes. Population movements had caused a continuous process of interaction,

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creating a very complex picture of settlement patterns. The high degree of interaction and the long common history of much of the population had weakened ethnic dividing lines in large parts of the region. Linguistic and cultural affinities are therefore as important as ethnic origin in the grouping of the population.

Learning Activities

- Discuss the similarities and differences between the past and history?
- Why is history worth attention as a subject of study?
- What do we mean by change and continuity in history?
- What techniques do historians use to write about the past?
- What are the different sources of history? How do you evaluate them?
- What is the difference between historiography and history?
- Who was Leopold von Ranke?
- Discuss how the writing of Ethiopian history has changed over the last hundred years by using the writings of individual historians.
- Briefly describe the similarities and differences between chronicles and hagiographies and their contributions to write Ethiopian history.
- Describe the role of travel and missionary accounts to the study of Ethiopian history.
- Explain how geographical factors shaped human history in Ethiopia and the Horn.

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UNIT TWO

PEOPLES AND CULTURES IN ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN (4 hours)

Introduction

Ethiopia and the Horn Region is referred to as the cradle of humankind. It is also a region where early civilizations including food production, making tools and religious practices were initiated.. These developments contributed to the social evolutions, economic formations, and socio-cultural and political settings. This unit traces human evolution and the Neolithic Revolution and then describes languages and peoples settlement along with cultural settings of the region. The purpose is to show that the region is home to diverse peoples, cultures (languages, religion, customs…) and economic activities.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- evaluate pieces of evidence related to Ethiopia and the Horn as the cradle of mankind;
- explain Ethiopia and the Horn in relation to Neolithic Revolution;
- identify the peoples and languages of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- elucidate settlement patterns and economic formations of the peoples of the region;
- discuss religion and religious processes in the region.

Unit Starters

- How do you think human beings came into being?
- What do you know about the domestication of plants and animals?
- Explain how trade facilitates peoples' relations.
- Define language and language families.
- What is religion?
- Can you name some religious practices in Ethiopia and the Horn?

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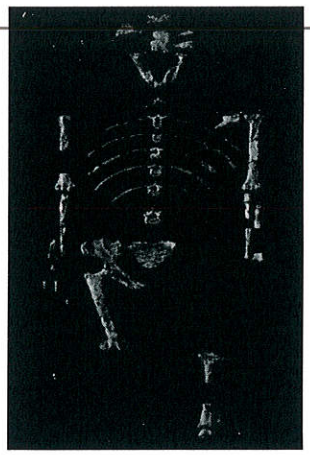
2.1. Human Evolution

Human evolution accounts only a fraction of history of the globe that had been formed through gradual natural process since about (circa/c.) 4. 5 billion years before present (B. P.) The earliest life came into being between 3 and 1 billion years B. P. Blue green algae, small plants, fishes, birds and other small beings emerged at c. 800 million years B. P. Primates branched of placental mammal stream as of 200-170 million years B. P. and then some primates developed into *Pongidae* (such as gorilla, chimpanzee, orangutan, gibbon etc) while others evolved into *Hominidae* (human ancestors).

Archeological evidences suggest that East African Rift Valley is the cradle of humanity. Evidences related to both biological and cultural evolution have been discovered in the Lower Omo and Middle Awash River valleys both by Ethiopian and foreign scholars. A fossil named *Chororapithecus* dated 10 million B. P. was unearthed in Anchar (in West Hararghe) in 2007. *Ardipithicus ramidus kadabba* (dated 5.8-5.2 million years BP) was discovered in Middle Awash. *Ardipithicus ramidus* (dated 4. 2 million B.P.) was discovered at Aramis in Afar in 1994. Other *Australopithecines* were uncovered at Belohdelie (dated back 3.6 million years B. P.) in Middle Awash. A three years old child's fossil named as *Australopithecus afarensis*, Selam, dated to 3.3 million years B.P was also discovered at Dikika, Mille, Afar in 2000. Another *Australopithecus afarnesis* (Lucy/Dinkinesh, dated c. 3.18 million years B. P.) with 40% complete body parts, weight 30kg, height 1.07 meters with a pelvis looks like bipedal female was discovered at Hadar in Afar in 1974 A. D.

Picture 1: Fossil of Lucy



Source: Bahru Zewde, *A Short History of Ethiopia and the Horn (*AAU, 1998), p. 12.

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Fossil named *Australopithecus anamensis* was discovered around Lake Turkana. An eco-fact named as *Australopithecus garhi* (means surprise in Afar language) dated to 2.5 million years B.P was discovered at Bouri, Middle Awash, between 1996 and 1999.

The development of the human brain was the main feature of the next stage of human evolution, which produced the genus Homo, believed to have emerged 2-2.5 million years B.P. Different evidences of the *genus* homo have been recovered in different parts of Ethiopia and the Horn. A partial skull of a fossil named as Homo *habilis,* which is derived from Latin terms "Homo" (human being) and "Habilis" (skillful use of hands), dated 1.9 million years B. P. has been found in the Lower Omo. A fossil named Homo *erectus* (walking upright, dated 1. 6 million years B. P.) was discovered at Melka Kunture, Konso Gardula and Gadeb with 900-1100 cc brain size. Homo *erectus* seems to have originated in Africa and then spread out to the rest of the world. Skeleton of Archaic Homo*sapiens* (knowledgeable human being, dated 400, 000 years B.P.) named Bodo with brain size of 1300-1400cc was discovered in Middle Awash. Fossils of Homo *sapiens sapiens* (100, 000 years B.P.) were discovered at Porc Epic near Dire Dawa, and Kibish around Lower Omo (in 1967). In 2004, Kibish fossils were re-dated to 195, 000 B. P, the oldest date in the world for modern Homo *sapiens*. Homo *sapiens idaltu*, found in Middle Awash in 1997, lived about 160, 000 years B.P.

Cultural evolution is related to technological changes that brought socio-economic transformation on human life. It can be conventionally grouped in to Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Stone tools had been the first technologies to be developed by human beings. By taking their features, ways and period of production, stone tools can be grouped in to Mode I (Olduwan, which was named based on the first report made at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania), Mode II (Acheulean, named after the first report at St. Acheul, France) and Mode III (Sangoon). The Mode I stone tools are mainly characterized by crude and mono-facial styles, and were produced by the direct percussion. Mode II stone tools were produced by indirect percussion, by using hand-ax or hammer, and mainly characterized by bifacial, pointed and convex features. Mode III stone tools are characterized by flexible and fine form of production by the use of obsidian.

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Examples of the above types of stone tools have been found in Ethiopia and the Horn. Fossilized animal bones (3. 4 million years B. P.) were found with stone-tool-inflicted marks on them (the oldest evidence of stone tool in the world) at Dikika in 2010. Artifact findings suggest that Olduwan tools made and used by Homo *habilis* were discovered near Gona (dated 2.52 million years B.P. in 1992) and at Shungura in Afar. Homo *erectus* produced Acheulean tools dated back to 1.7.million years B.P, invented fire and started burial practice. Acheulian tools (over a million years old) were found at Kella, Middle Awash in 1963. Homo *sapiens* produced Sangoon tools that trace back up to 300,000 years B. P. Gademotta site in central Ethiopian Rift Valley has been dated back to 200, 000 B. P. Other sites such as Gorgora, Ki'one and Yabello in Ethiopia and Midhidhishi and Gudgud in Somalia have offered noteworthy information about Stone Age communities.

The period of usage of stone tools is divided into sub-periods. The first, the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age, from 3.4 million to 11, 000 years B. P.) was the period when human being sheltered in caves, developed language, and used stone , bone, wood, furs, and skin materials to prepare food and clothing. There was sex-age labor division with able-bodied males as hunters of fauna, and children and females as gatherers of flora. Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age /11, 000-10,000 B. P.) was transition between Paleolithic and Neolithic (New Stone Age /10, 000-6, 000 B.P).

2.2. Neolithic Revolution

During the Neolithic period human beings transformed from mobile to sedentary way of life. This was a radical shift involving changes from hunting and gathering to the domestication of plants and animals. Climatic change and increased hunter-gatherers' population resulted in the declining number of animals and availability of plants. As food gatherers were already aware of growing cycle of most grass types, they began to grow those, which were most common and yielded seeds that are more edible. The big animals, which depended on dense bushes for sustenance, were reduced by hunting while smaller animals that were easy to domesticate were easily domesticated. and animals that people were able to domesticate easily were smaller ones.

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The process of domestication took place independently in the various parts of the world. In Ethiopia and the Horn chiefly in the more elevated and wetter-parts, people cultivated plants including *Teff (Eragrotis teff)*, *dagussa* (*Eleusine coracana*), *nug* (*Guzotia abyssinica*), *enset* (*Ensete ventricosum)* etc. The domestication of *enset* plant (*Ensete edule)* reduced shifting cultivation (continuous clearing of new plots), slowing down soil exhaustion.

The discovery of polished axes, ceramics, grinding stones, beads, stone figures and animal remains in sites like Emba-Fakeda around Adigrat in Tigray as well as Aqordat and Barentu in Eritrea evinces the existence of Neolithic material culture. The Gobodara rock shelter near Aksum has provided us agricultural stone tools. Remains associated with domesticated cattle, chickpeas and vegetables have been excavated from Lalibela Cave on the southeastern shore of Lake Tana. Stone tools used for cutting grass and grass like plants as well as rock paintings of domesticated animals have been found at Laga Oda rock shelter near Charchar. Evidence for domesticated cattle also comes from around Lake Basaqa near Matahara. Playa Napata and Kado in the Sudan, Cyrenaica in Libya and Futajalon in West Africa were among known places of domestication of animals like Nidamawa and Zebu (*Bos indicus*) cattle that in due course expanded to Ethiopia and the Horn.

2.3. The Peopling of the Region

2.3.1. Languages and Linguistic Processes

Ethiopia and the Horn in general is marked by ethnic and linguistic diversity. There are about 90 languages with 200 dialects in Ethiopia and the Horn. Beneath this apparent diversity, there is some degree of unity. Linguists classify languages of Ethiopia and the Horn into two major language super families. These are Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan.

A. Afro-Asiatic: this super family is sub-divided into the following families:

- **Cushitic**: linguists divided this language family into four branches:
  - Northern: is represented by Beja, spoken in northwestern Eritrea bordering the Sudan.
  - Central: Agaw includes Awign, Kunfel, Qimant; Hamtanga and Bilen.

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- Eastern: this includes diversified linguistic groups like Afar, Ale, Arbore, Baiso, Burji, Darashe, Dasanech, Gedeo, Hadiya, Halaba, Kambata, Konso, Libido, Mosiye, Oromo, Saho, Sidama, Somali, Tambaro, Tsemai, etc.
- Southern: represented by Dhalo in Kenya and Nbugua in Tanzania.

➢ **Semitic**: is divided into two:

- North: Ge'ez, Rashaida (spoken around Eritrea-Sudanese border); Tigre (spoken in Eritrean Lowland); Tigrigna (spoken in highland Eritrea and Tigray).
- South: is further divided into two
  - ✓ Transverse: Amharic, Argoba, Harari, Silte, Wolane and Zay.
  - ✓ Outer: Gafat (extinct), Gurage and Mesmes (endangered).

➢ **Omotic**: Anfillo, Ari, Banna, Basketo, Bench, Boro-Shinasha, Chara, Dawuro, Dime, Dizi, Gamo, Gofa, Hamer, Karo, Keficho, Konta, Korete, Male, Melo, Oyda, Sezo, Shekkacho, Sheko, Wolayta, Yem, Zayse etc.

B. Nilo-Saharan: Anywa, Berta, Gumuz, Kacipo-Balesi, Komo, Kunama, Kwama, Kwegu, Majang, Mi'en, Murle, Mursi, Nara, Nu'er, Nyangatom, Opo, Shabo, Suri and Uduk.

Language classification did not remain static. Factors like population movements, warfare, trade, religious and territorial expansion, urbanization etc. have resulted in intense linguistic processes that forced languages to be affected. In this process, some languages died out or have been in danger of extinction while others thrived over time .

2.3.2. Settlement Patterns

A settlement pattern, the distribution of peoples across the landscape, is the results of long historical processes in northeast Africa. In some areas, settlement was dense and in other areas sparse. Some people inhabited extensive highlands and others the lowlands. Based on historical linguistic and history of inter-peoples relations, studies indicate that environmental, socio-economic, and political processes significantly shaped and reshaped the spatial distribution of peoples in the region.

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Since early times, the Cushitic and Semitic peoples had inhabited the area between the Red Sea in the east and Blue Nile in the west from where they dispersed to different directions. In due course, the Cushites have evolved to be the largest linguistic group in Ethiopia and the Horn and have also spread over wide areas from Sudan to Tanzania. Similarly, the Semitic peoples spread over large area and eventually settled the northern, north central, northeastern, south central and eastern parts of Ethiopia and the Horn. The Semites are the second majority people next to the Cushites.

Except the Shinasha, who live in Benishangul-Gumuz and the South Mao in Wallagga, the majority of Omotic peoples have inhabited southwestern Ethiopia along the Omo River basin. Yet, in the earlier times, they had extended much further to the north.

In the west, the Nilotes are largely settled along the Ethiopia-Sudanese border although some of the Chari-Nile family inhabited as far as southern Omo. The latter are identified as the Karamojo cluster living around Turkana Lake along Ethio-Kenyan border.

2.3.3. Economic Formations

The domestication of plants and animals gave humanity two interdependent modes of life: agriculture and pastoralism. While there may be pure pastoralists, it is very rare to think of a farmer without a head of cattle or two. Likewise, in Ethiopia and the Horn, these two forms of livelihood have coexisted and quite often intermingled . Topographic features and climatic conditions largely influenced economic activities in Ethiopia and the Horn.

A predominantly pastoral economy has characterized the eastern lowland region since early periods. Pastoral economy namely the production of camel, goat, and cattle has been the most common economic practice among the Afar, Saho and Somali as well as Karayu and Borana Oromo. While the Afar and Karrayu have depended on the Awash River, the Somali have owed a great deal to Wabi Shebelle and Genale (Jubba) Rivers.

The plateaus have sustained plough agriculture for thousands of years supporting sizable populations. Majority of the populations were engaged in mixed farming. It is here that

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sedentary agriculture had been started and advanced at least since 10, 000 years B. P. by the Cushites, Semites and Omotic groups. The major economic activity of the Omotic has been mixed farming and trade in northern Omo while southern Omo have predominantly practiced pastoralism and fishing. Many of the Omotic groups have also been famous in metallurgy, weaving and other crafts.

In the sparsely populated western lowland region, the dominant economic formations were pastoralism, shifting agriculture, fishing, apiculture and hunting. For instance, sorghum, millet, cotton and other crops have been largely cultivated in the lowlands along Ethio-Sudanese border since antiquity. The Nilotes along the Blue Nile and Baro-Akobo Rivers have been shifting cultivators where sorghum has been a staple food. Among majority Nilotic communities, cattle have high economic and social values. Berta and other Nilotes had trade and other social contacts with northern Sudan.

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2.4. Religion and Religious Processes

2.4.1. Indigenous Religion This includes a variety of religious beliefs and practices, which are native to the region and have been followed by the local people since ancient times. A distinctive mark of indigenous religion is belief in Supreme Being, but special powers are attributed to natural phenomena, which are considered sacred. Spiritual functionaries officiate over rituals, propitiate divinities, and are held in a lot of respect as intermediaries between the society and spirits. Some major indigenous religious groups that still claim adherents among the region's population are discussed here under.

Waqeffanna of the Oromo is based on the existence of one Supreme Being called *Waqa*. *Waqa's* power is manifested through the spirits called *Ayyana*. The major spirits include *Abdar/Dache* (soil fertility spirit), *Atete* (women or human and animal fertility spirit), *Awayi/Tiyyana* (sanctity spirit), *Balas* (victory spirit), *Chato/Dora* (wild animals defender), *Gijare/ Nabi* (father and mother's sprit), *Jaricha* (peace spirit), *Qasa* (anti-disease spirit) etc. There is also a belief that the dead exist in the form of a ghost called *Ekera* in the surrounding of his/her abode after death, or his/her cemetery (*Hujuba)*. In the autumn and spring seasons every year at the edge of ever-flowing river and top of mountain respectively, there is thanks giving festival called *Irrecha* besides New Year (*Birbo*) rite. Revered experts

known as *Qallu* (male) and *Qallitti* (female) have maintained link between the *Ayyana* and the believers. Qallu's ritual house called *galma* is located on hilltop or in the groves of large trees. On Wednesday and Friday nights, there is *Dalaga*/ecstasy at which *Qallu* or *Qallitti* is possessed by *Ayyana* so that s/he can interpret mysteries. The *Jila/Makkala* (delegated messengers) used to make pilgrimage to get consecration of senior *Qallu* (*Abba Muda* or anointment father) until about 1900. *Abba Muda* had turban *surrirufa* of tri-colors: black at top, red at center and white at bottom representing those in pre-active life, active (*Luba*) and those in post-active life respectively.

Among the Hadiya the Supreme Being is known as *Waa*, who is believed to exist before everything (*hundam issancho*) or create world (*qoccancho*) and whose eyes are represented by *elincho* (sun) and *agana* (moon). Spirits like *Jara* (male's protector), *Idota* (female's guard), *Hausula*, *Qedane* and *Warriqa* attracted prayers and sacrifices at Shonkolla and Kallalamo mountains chosen by Anjancho and Jaramanjcho. One of Hadiya's clans, Worqimene, is believed to have the power to send rain in drought. *Fandanano* (sing. *Fandancho*) practice is believed to be introduced by either spiritual leaders, Itto and Albaja from Bimado clan, or Boyamo, father of five Hadiya clans, and was largely followed by inhabitants of Boshana, Misha etc.

The Kambata have *Negita* or *Aricho Magano*/Sky God and religious officials known as *Magnancho*. The Gedeo called the Supreme Being, *Mageno* and had thanks giving ceremony called *Deraro*.The Konso religion is centered on worship of *Waaq/Wakh*. The Gojjam Agaw used to call the Supreme Being *Diban* (Sky God). Among sections of the Gurage, there have been *Waq/Goita* (Supreme Being), *Bozha* (thunder deity) and *Damwamwit* (health goddess). Yem worshipped *Ha'o* (Sky God). So'ala clan was considered as the top in religious duties as it was in charge of *Shashokam* (the most vital deity). Religious functions were performed through couriers in each village called Magos. The Konta's spirit-cult was called *Docho*.

The Wolayta called God *Tosa* and spirit *Ayyana* including *Tawa-Awa /Moytiliya* (father's spirit), *Sawuna* (justice spirit), *Wombo* (rain spirit), *Micho* (goat spirit), *Nago* (sheep spirit), *Kuchuruwa* (emergency spirit), *Gomashera* (war spirit), *Talahiya* (Beta *Talaye* or *talheya*, Omo spirit) etc. *Dufuwa* (grave) was believed to be abode of *Moytiliya*. Annual worship of

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spirits was performed at a sacred place called *Mitta* usually at the end of May and beginning of June to offer sacrifice of the first fruits called *Teramo* or *Pageta* (*Dubusha*). People gathered around tree called *Dongowa,* which varied from clan to clan: sycamore (*Ficus sur exasperate)* for the Bubula, *podocarpo* for Zatuwa etc. The Qesiga called their meeting place *Kasha* (*Dabre*). To protect people from eating crop before harvesting Zomboro clan used *Diqaysa* practice by planting in their fields sour olive and *nubica* trees. The Wolayta also had the practice of *Chaganna* (prohibited days to work) to protect produce from disaster. They also chose and kept dark brown heifer called *Beka* (*Beqabe*) or *Baqa Potilliya* (Literally, ritual cattle) as birthday fate. If they made error in respecting this custom, they would anoint their bodies with a leaf called *Aydameta* (ground red pepper) as repentance. Religious practitioners known as *Sharechuw*a had *Becha* or *Kera Eza Keta* (ritual house).

The Keficho called Supreme Being as *Yero*; spirit as *Eqo* and a person who hosts *Eqo* is known as *Alamo* or *eke-nayo*. Father of all spirits is *dochi* or *dehe-tateno* and its host is called *dochi-nayo* or *Ibedechino/Ibede-gudeno* (including *Arito* and *Wudia Riti*), with residence at Adio. Harvest spirit is called *Kollo* and sacrifice to it is *dejo*. Earth and area spirits are known as *Showe-kollo* and *Dude-baro* respectively. There are also local spirits like *damochechi* of Channa, *yaferochi* of Sharada and *wogidochi* of Adio as well as *gepetato* or king of hill identified by Yetecho clan as landowner. Members of the Dugo clan led spiritual services.

The Boro-Shinasha people believe in super natural power called *Iqa*, which created everything and presides over the universe. The indigenous religion elements prescribe praying for the prevention of drought, flooding, erosion, disease and starvation within the community and their surrounding environment. Among various prayer rituals, the first is *Gure Shuka* for preservation of their locality through slaughtering animals by calling the name of God being at the tip of the mountains. The second is *Shode De'na,* praying and slaughtering when unexpected disease happens. The third is *Marrowa Shuka*; slaughtering for children to grow without disease and to prevent children from evil spirits attack; for rehabilitation of wealth; to promote harmonious way of life and productivities in the family. The rituals are led by recognized elders, whose pray and bless are trusted to reach God among the three clans: Enoro, Endiwo and Dowa.

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The Nuer believe in *Kuoth Nhial* (God in Heaven), but believe in the coming of God through rain, lightning and thunder, and rainbow is necklace of God. Sun and moon as well as other entities are also manifestation or sign of God. There are also spirits associated with clan-spears names such as *WiW* (spirit of war) associated with thunder. The Nuer believe that when a person dies, flesh is committed to earth while breath or life goes back to *Kuoth* and soul that signifies human personality remains alive as a shadow or a reflection, and departs together with ox sacrificed to place of ghosts.

An interesting feature of indigenous religion is the way its practices and beliefs are fused with Christianity and Islam. This phenomenon of mixing of religions is known as syncretism.

2.4.2. Judaism

Judaism is considered as the expression of the covenant that Yahweh/Jehovah (God) established with the ancient Hebrew community. Sources indicate that Judaism has been followed in Ethiopia and the Horn by peoples before Christianity reached the region. . The Bete-Israel practiced *Haymanot* (religious practices, which are generally recognized as Israelite religion that differs from Rabbinic Judaism). Many of the Bete-Israel accounts trace their religion from the very ancient migration of some portion of the Tribe of Dan to Ethiopia, led it is said by sons of Moses, perhaps even at the time of the Exodus (1400-1200 B.C.). Alternative timelines include perhaps the later crises in Judea, e.g., split of the northern Kingdom of Israel from the southern Kingdom of Judah after the death of King Solomon or Babylonian Exile. Other Bete-Israel take as their basis the account of return to Ethiopia of Menilek I, who is believed to be the son of King Solomon (r. 974-932 B.C.) of ancient Israel and Makeda, ancient Queen of Saba (Sheba), and considered to be the first Solomonic Emperor of Ethiopia. Another group of Jews is said to have been arrived in Ethiopia led by Azonos and Phinhas in 6th century A.D. There are also other stories that attribute the presence of the Bete-Isreal in Ethiopia to an intermarrige between Jewsh immigrants with native Agaws. On the other hand, scholars such as Tadese Tamirat and Kay Shelmay argue that the Bete-Israel are remenants of old testament followers of orthodox Christianity rather than Jews who migrated from abroad.Whatever the case, the Jews appear to have been isolated from mainstream Judiac practice for at least a millennium. The Jews developed and lived for centuries in northern and northwestern Ethiopia.

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2.4.3. Christianity

Christianity became state religion in 334 A.D. during the reign of King Ezana (r. 320-360), who dropped pre-Christian gods like Ares (Hariman/Maharram/war god), Arwe (serpent-python god), Bahir (sea god) and Midir (earth god), and embraced Christianity. Instrumental in conversion of the king were Syrian brothers, Aedesius and Frumentius (Fremnatos). When Fremnatos (Kasate Birhane or Abba Salama) visited Alexandria, Patriarch Atnatewos (328-373) appointed him as the first Bishop of Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). Consecration of bishops from Coptic Church in Egypt continued until 1959, when *Abune* Baslios became the first Ethiopian Patriarch.

Christianity was further expanded to the mass of the society the later part the fifth century, during the reign of Ella Amida II (478-86) by the Nine Saints shown in the table below:

Table I: The Nine Saints

Name	Origin	Church/Monastery	Location of the Church
Abuna Aregawwi (Abba Za Mika'el)	Constantinopole	Debre Damo	Eastern Tigray
Abuna Isaq (Abba Gerima)	Constantinopole	Debre Gerima	Medera (East of Adwa)
Abba Pentelwon	Constantinopole	Debre Pentelwon	Asbo (North East of Aksum)
Abba Afse	Ladocia	Debre Afse	Yeha (Northeast of Aksum)
Abba Alef	Qa'esare'a	Debre Haleluya	Biheza (Northeast of Aksum)
Abba Gubba	Cilicia	Debre Gubba	West of Medera
Abba Liqanos	Constantinople	Debre Qonasel	North of Aksum
Abba Sehama	Antioch	Tsedania	Southeast of Adwa
Abba Yima'ata	Qosa'iti	Debre Yima'ata	Ger'alta

Source: Sergew Hable Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa: Haile-Selassie I University Press, 1972), pp.115-119.

The saints also translated the Bible and other religious books into Geez.

The expansion of Christianity continued in Zagwe period (1150-1270) and chiefly gained fresh momentum during the early Medieval Period (1270-1527), when many churches and monasteries were constructed. These include Rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Debra-Bizan of Hamasen in Eritrea; Debra-Hayiq in Wollo, Debre-Dima and Debre-Werq in Gojjam; Debra-Libanos in Shewa, Birbir Mariam in Gamo and Debre-Asabot on the way to Harar. These churches and monasteries are not merely religious centers, but served through the ages as repositories of ancient manuscripts and precious objects of art.

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From mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, the Jesuit missionaries tried to convert Monophysite EOC to Dyophysite Catholic. Yet, this led to bloody conflicts that in turn led to expulsion of the Jesuits. However, the Jesuits intervention triggered religious controversies within the EOC that is discussed in subsequent units.

As of 1804, missionaries' religious expansion also resulted in the conclusion of treties between European diplomats and Ethiopian authorities. The Catholic Giuseppe Sapeto (Lazarist mission founder), Giustino De Jacobis (Capuchin order founder), Cardinal Massaja, Antoine and Arnauld d'Abbadie were active. Anglican Church Missionary Society (ACMS), Church Missionary Society of London (CMSL) and Wesleyan Methodist Society led Protestant missionaries under such leaders as Samuel Gobat, C.W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf. Systematic approach of trained Protestants enabled them to win confidence of local people. They translated spiritual books into vernaculars. They adopted old names for Supreme Being like *Waqayyo*, *Tosa* etc and used them in new versions as equivalent to God. Village schools were established as centers of preaching the faith. These schools were open to all children of chiefs and farmers. They also provided medical facilities. All these attracted a large number of followers. Eventually, continuous and systematic indoctrinations seem to have resulted in grafting of new teaching on indigenous religion.

2.4.4. Islam

When Prophet Mohammed had preached Islam in Mecca since 610 AD, he faced opposition from the Quraysh rulers. Under this circumstance, the Prophet sent some of his early followers to Aksum including his daughter Rukiya and her husband Uthman as well as the Prophet's future wives Umm Habiba and Umm Salma to Aksum .The first group of refugees was led by Jafar Abu Talib. In his advice to his followers, the Prophet said of Ethiopia, "…a king under whom none are persecuted. It is a land of righteousness, where God will give relief from what you are suffering." The then Aksumite king, Armah Ella Seham (Ashama b. Abjar or Ahmed al-Nejash in Arabic sources), gave them asylum from 615-28. Leaders of the Quraysh asked Armah to repatriate the refugees, but the king did not comply. Armah is said to have replied, "If you were to offer me a mountain of gold I would not give up these people who have taken refugees with me."

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Subsequently, Islam spread to the Horn of Africa largely through peaceful ways including trade. Islam was well established in Dahlak (Alalay) Islands on the Red Sea by the beginning of the eighth century. In the early tenth century, the Muslim community on the islands developed a sultanate. In due course, Muslims settled other places on the Red Sea coast. It was from these coastal areas that Islam gradually spread among the predominantly pastoral communities of the interior, largely through the agency of preachers and merchants.

Notwithstanding the debates, the Dahlak route played a minor role in the introduction of Islam into the interior as Christianity was strongly entrenched as a state religion in Aksum and later states of northern Ethiopia and open proselytization of Islam was prohibited. Thus, the port of Zeila on western coast of the Gulf of Aden served as an important gateway for the introduction of Islam mainly into the present day Shewa, Wollo and Hararghe. Islam firmly established itself in the coastal areas by the eighth and ninth centuries. From there, it radiated to central, southern, and eastern Ethiopia through the role of Muslim clerics who followed in the footsteps of traders. In this regard, it should be noted that Sheikh Hussein of Bale, a Muslim saint (Waliy) of medieval period, played very important role in the expansion of Islam into Bale, Arsi and other southeastern parts of Ethiopia and the Horn. Another Islamic center in this region is Sof Umar cave.

Islam was introduced into Somali territories in the eigth century A. D. through Benadir coasts of Moqadishu, Brava and Merca. Abu Bakr Ibn Fukura al Din Sahil set up Moqadishu Minirate c.1269.

The mosques, Islamic learning and pilgrimage centers have been the depositories of cultures, traditions and literature of local Muslims.

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Learning Activities

- Why do you think Lucy had attracted more attention from the world than other human remains discovered in Ethiopia and the Horn?
- Discuss the salient features of the three species of Homo family.
- List major developments in the three Stone Ages.
- Explain the link between hunting and taming animals, and gathering and plant domestication.
- Explain the relations between the domestication of plants and animals and early civilizations in Ethiopia and the Horn?
- What are the major categories of language families in Ethiopia and the Horn? Describe also their geographical distribution in the region.
- Explain how the study of language can be useful in understanding cultures and societies.
- Identify the commonalities among indigenous religions of Ethiopia.
- Discuss the role of trade and religion in the relations among peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn.
- Explain how physical environment-land forms, vegetation, climate- affect the way people live and the ways that humans organize themselves in social, political, and economic institutions. Illustrate your discussion with examples from the experience of peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn.

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UNIT THREE

POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN TO THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY (6 hours)

Introduction

From ancient times to the end of the thirteenth century, societies in Ethiopia and the Horn underwent political, economic, social and cultural changes. One remarkable change in the period was the evolution of states with diverse socio-cultural and economic settings. While agriculture and trade contributed to the evolution of states, religions shaped the socio-cultural setup of the states in different parts of Ethiopia and the Horn. The results of the period were socio-cultural achievements such as architecture, writing, calendar, numerals etc. Furthermore, the unit explains the external relations of the period that had significant role in shaping the history of region.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- show the evolution of states in Ethiopia and the Horn;
- identify the factors for the rise and developments of the prominent ancient states;
- examine the relations among these states and the effects thereof;
- explicate the external relations of the period;
- elucidate socio-economic and cultural achievements of the period.

Unit Starters

- What does a state mean?
- Can you name some of the earliest states in Ethiopia and the Horn?
- Tell how Ethiopian people in different geographical locations maintained relationships.
- Explain how religion facilitates peoples' relations.

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3.1. Emergence of States

One important factor for the emergence of states was the beginning of sedentary agriculture. Peoples had to descend from mountainsides to build houses near cultivated plots fencing both farming fields and residences, and harvested crops had to be stored and protected from humidity and rodents. Families preferred to live together forming larger communitiesfor better security and to help each other in hard works. Using stick or hoe for planting was gradually replaced by ox-drawn plough and farmers acquired surplus produce to exchange with better tools and clothes with the artisans who were able to specialize in the production of these items. Gradually, intermediaries (traders) also began to buy the products of both to take to predetermined places or markets for exchange. Therefore, states were formed mainly through the expansion of agriculture that gave rise to class differentiation. Furthermore, the growth of trade facilitated the development of states.

State refers to an autonomous political unit having population, defined territory, sovereignty and government with the power to decree and enforce laws. State was the outcome of regular cultural process. In this regard, it should be emphasized that, states arose independently in different places and at different times. Favorable environmental conditions helped to hasten the rate of transformation in some regions. Religious leaders such as shamans played prominent role in maintaining the social and religious affairs of their people during the intial formation of the states. As production became market oriented, religious elites were gradually replaced by chiefs, who began collecting regular and compulsory tributes which amounted to protection payments with which they maintained themselves, their supporters chiefly the army, the bureaucracy and other followers.

Ethiopia and the Horn is one of the regions in Africa where early state formation took place. From small beginnings, such states gradually developed into powerful kingdoms and even empires with a well-demarcated social structure. Geographical proximity to and control of the international water bodies like Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean along with their ports as well as rich interior favored some of them to become stronger than their neighbors and eventually dominated them.

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3.2. Ancient States

3.2.1. North and Northeast

A. Punt

Punt was the earliest recorded state in Ethiopia and the Horn. The evidence on Punt comes from Egyptian hieroglyphic writings, accompanied by vivid paintings that describes series of naval expeditions, which the Egyptian Pharaohs sent to Punt. Pharaoh Sahure (r. 2743-2731 B.C.) sent expedition to collect myrrh, ebony and electrum (gold and silver alloy). During Pharaoh Asosi, treasurer of God Bawardede took dancing dwarf "dink" to Egypt from Punt.

The best described and illustrated expedition was the one undertaken by the order of the famous Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut (1490-1468 B.C.), whose expedition is documented at her tomb in Dier El Bahri. She sent five ships under the leadership of Black Nubian Captain Nehasi via Wadi-Tumilat. The expedition was warmly welcomed by the Puntites King Perehu, his wife Ati, sons, daughters and followers. The expedition was able to return collecting frank incense, cinnamon, sweet smelling woods (sandal), spices, ivory, rhinoceros horn, leopard and leopard skins, ostrich feathers and egg, live monkeys, giraffes, people etc. Hatshepsut presented some parts of the items to her god, Amun. It was because of the ritual importance of their exports that Puntites were also known as Khebis of the Ta Netjeru (divine or ghosts land). Iron, bronze, asses, foxes, cattle, animals fur, dying and medicinal plants were also exported from Punt to Egypt. In return, axes, daggers, swords, knives, sickles, clothes, bracelets, necklaces, beads and other trinkets were imported from Egypt to Punt.

Scholars have not reached agreement as to the exact location of Punt. The varieties of incense and myrrh mentioned in the writings have suggested northern or northeastern Somalia to some scholars while others are inclined more towards Northern Ethiopia because of the reference to gold, ebony and monkeys. The latter reinforce their guess arguing that at that early period, Egyptian sailboats might not have been strong enough to pass through the Strait of Bab-el Mandeb into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Considering the two suggestions, still some others argue that it probably stretched from Swakim or Massawa to Babel Mandeb (Gate of Tears) and Cape Guardafui.

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B. Da'amat and Other Cultural Centers in Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea

The state known as Da'amat had a center a little to the south of Aksum. Inscription of the king of Da'amat tentatively dated to the fifth century BC shows that he used politico-religious title known as *Mukarib*. Various gods and goddesses like *Almouqah* (principal god), *Astarr* (Venus god), *Na'uran* (light god), *Shamsi* (sun god), and *Sin* (moon god) were worshipped in the domain of the Da'amat state and other northern Ethiopian pre-Aksumite cultural centers.There were similar practices in South Arabia at the time.

There were a number of cultural centers in northern Ethiopia. The major ones are:

- **Yeha:** is located 30 kms to the northeast of Aksum and was the oldest of these centers. It probably emerged around 1, 000 BC as a small emporium where South Arabian merchants and their agents bought and stored ivory, rhinoceros horn and other commodities coming from the interior. It seems that the period of its prosperity (zenith) was from about 750 to 500 B.C. Remains of walls of some of its buildings and stone masonry as well as still standing temple and inscriptions indicate Yeha's glory.
- **Hawulti Melazo**: is situated to southeast of Aksum, where stone tablets that are inscribed in rectangular temple surrounded by a wall decorated with paintings representing herds of cattle have been excavated.
- **Addi-Seglemeni**: is located at 10kms southwest of Aksum, from where a stone slab is found and the oldest Ethiopian monumental inscription is discovered.

There were also other cultural centers like Addi Gelemo, Addi Grameten, Addi Kewih, Atsbi Dera, Feqiya, Hinzat, Sefra, Senafe, Tekonda etc.

C. The Aksumite State

The nucleus of the Aksumite state was formed around 200-100 B.C. Initially, its power was limited to a relatively small area comprising the town of Aksum and its environs. Gradually, however, it expanded to include large territories in all directions. In its heyday, Aksumite territories extended from the Red Sea coast in the East to the Western edge of Ethiopian plateau overlooking the vast Nile Valley in the west and from the northern most corner of Eritrea and possibly as far south as northern parts of Shewa.

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According to *Periplus of Erithrean Sea*, Adulis on the western coast of the Red Sea was the major port of Aksum. The long distance trade routes from Adulis and other posts on the Red Sea coast passed inland through such centers as Kaskasse, Coloe, Matara and even further west across Takaze River. The document also mentioned ports of Aden (Eudaemon) Gulf like Avalites (Zayla) and Malao (Berbera), and Indian Ocean Benadir Coasts like Serapion (Moqadishu), Nicon (Brava) and Merca. The major items of export of the Aksumite state consisted mainly of the natural products such as ivory, myrrh, emerald, frankincense and some spices (like ginger, cassia and cinnamon), gold, rhinoceros horns, hippopotamus hides, tortoise shells and some curiosity animals like apes. In turn, a number of manufactured products like garments and textiles from Egypt, India, the Roman Empire, and Persia; glassware and jewelry from Egypt and other places; metallic sheets, tools or utensils of various kinds, oil and wine from the regions of Roman Empire and Syria were imported. Zoscales (c. 76-89), the then king of Aksum, used to speak the Greek language, the Lingua Franca of Greco-Roman world. Aksum also had relations with Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Laodicea (Asia Minor).

The Adulis inscription written in Greek about an unknown king, which eventually was published in Cosmas Indicopleustes' book, the *Christian Topography*, describes commercial activities of the Red Sea areas. It also mentions the internal long distance trade between Aksum and a distant region called Sasu, most probably in Beni Shangul and the adjoining lands beyond the Blue Nile. A big caravan made up of close to five hundred merchants some of them special agents of the kings of Aksum would take to Sasu cattle, lumps of salt (probably salt blocks) and iron to exchange for gold. Yet, as they did not speak each other's language, and did not even trust to be near to each other to bargain through signs and gestures, the whole exchange was done without one side seeing the other. This was a good example of silent trade.

Aksumite kings had extensive contacts with the outside world notably with the South Arabian region, leading to exchange of ideas, material and spiritual culture. Sometimes such contacts involved conflicts between the two regions. One of such known recorded conflict between areas on both sides of the sea took place around 200 A.D. Accordingly, peoples in

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Southern Arabian Peninsula, in present day Yemen, had difficulties in defending themselves against the army of the Aksumite king, Gadarat.

From the third to the seventh centuries, Aksumite kings like Aphilas, Endybis, Wazeba, Ezana, Ousanas II, etc. minted and issued different kinds of coins in gold, silver and bronze for both overseas and local transactions.

Aksum was one of the four great powers of the world (i. e. Roman Empire, Persia, China and Aksum) at the time. It was a major naval and trading power from the first to the seventh centuries. Aksumite ships were the main means of transporting goods. Aksum was the only one with sufficient sources of timber for ship building and in those days, the technology for it existed in Adulis. Aksum had a large fleet of ships, which was used not only for trade but also for its wars across the Red Sea.

Kaleb (r. 500-35) expanded overseas territories of Aksum beyond Himyar and Saba, but the local prince Dhu-Nuwas was converted to Judaism, marched to Zafar and Nagran, and killed many Christians. Byzantine Vasaliev Justinian (r. 527-65) with sanctification of Patriarch Timit III (518-538) provided Kaleb with a number of ships to transport armies led by Julianos and Nonossus against Dhu Nuwas. Dhu Nuwas was defeated and Kaleb appointed Abraha as governor of Arabia that continued until 570 A. D. Kaleb was succeeded by his son Gabra Masqal (535-48) who built a church at Zur Amba in Gayint. It was during Gabra Maskal that Yared developed Ethiopian Orthodox Church liturgical songs and hymns.

The Aksumite state begun to decline since the late seventh century because of internal and external challenges. Environmental degradation, decline in agricultural productivity and possibly plague infestation started to weaken it. With the destruction of the port of Adulis by the Arabs around 702, the international lifeline of the state was cut. The whole network of Aksumite international trade came under the control of the rising and expanding Arab Muslims, isolating the Aksum state from its old commercial and diplomatic partners. Consequently, the Aksumite state declined economically. This naturally led to the decline of its political and military power not only on the Red Sea coast but also in its interior provinces, where Aksumite hegemony was challenged by local rebellions. The recurring

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rebellions of the Beja, the Agaw and Queen Bani al Hamwiyah (Yodit) finally sealed the collapse of the Aksumite state.

However, as a civilization, Aksum had a profound impact upon the peoples of the Horn of Africa and beyond, and on its successors i.e. the Zagwe, 'Solomonic Dynasty', the Gondarine period etc. Some of its achievements include Sub-Saharan Africa's only surviving indigenous script and calendar as well as EOC hymns and chants, paintings etc; diversified ceramic and lithic tools, ivory curving, and urbanization and sophisticated building traditions (palaces, stele, rock-hewn churches…). It also developed complex administrative and governance system, and agricultural system including irrigation etc.

D. Zagwe Dynasty

After its decline, the center of Aksumite state shifted southwards to Kubar rural highland in the territory of the Agaw, one of the ancient inhabitants of the land between the Eritrean Plateau and Jema River, and to the west up to the Blue Nile valleys. This apparently gave Agaw elites the opportunity to take part in Aksumite state structure serving as soldiers and functionaries for at least four centuries. After integrating so well with Aksumite ruling class, they successfully tookover the state administration. Accordingly, the Agaw prince Merra Teklehaimanot married Masobe Worq, the daughter of the last Aksumite king Dil Na'od. Later he overthrew his father-in-law and took control of power. Merra-Teklehaimanot's successors include Yimirahana Kirstos, Harbe, Lalibela (1160-1211), Ne'akuto La'ab, Yetbarek etc. Notwithstanding the debates, the Zagwe Dynasty is believed to have ruled from c. 1150 to 1270.

The Zagwe Dynasty made its center in Bugna District within Wag and Lasta, more exactly at Adafa near Roha (Lalibela). The territory of the Zagwe kingdom extended from most of the highland provinces of the ancient Aksumite kingdom in the north down to northern Shewa in the south, the Lake Tana region and the northern part of what is today Gojjam in the west.

The Agaw maintained the ancient Aksumite traditions almost intact. Zagwe rulers renewed cultural and trade contact with eastern Mediterranean region. The most important export

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items included slaves, ivory and rare spices while cotton, linen, silver and copper vessels, various types of drags and newly minted coins were imported.

Furthermore, the Zagwe period was a golden age in Ethiopia's paintings and the translation of some religious works from Arabic into Ge'ez. That said, Zagwe rulers are best known for the construction of cave, semi-hewn and monolithic churches:

1. Cave: with some decoration inside, almost similar with natural cave, eg. Bete-Mesqel.
2. Semi-hewn: this and the monolithic churches that have become UNESCO world heritage are unique in costructions. Semi-hewan are with detailed interior decoration and partial decoration outside. They are not totally separated from the surrounding rock. Their roofs or walls are still attached to the rock, eg. Bete Denagil, Bete Debresina/Mikael, Bete Golgota, Bete Merqoriwos, Bete Gabri'el-Rufa'el and Bete Abba Libanos.
3. Monolithic: with detailed decoration in the interior and exterior parts. They are completely separated (carved out) from surrounding rock, eg. Bete Amanuel, Bete Giyorgis, Bete Mariyam and Bete Medhanialem.

Among the eleven churches of Lalibela, Bete Medhanelem is the largest of all and Bete Giyorgis is said to be the most finely built in the shape of the Cross.

Lalibela wanted to establish the second Jerusalem, and mitigate or even avoid difficulties, which Ethiopian Christians encountered in their journey to the Holy Lands. This was done by constructing churches based on the model of Holy Lands in Israel.

The Zagwe Dynasty came to end due to internal problems of royal succession and oppositions from groups claiming descent from the ancient rulers of Aksum. The latter considered Zagwe kings "illegitimate rulers" based on the legend of the Queen of Sheba. The legend was in turn based on a book known as *Kebra-Negest* (Glory of Kings) that was translated from Coptic to Arabic and then into Ge'ez. Based on the legend, the power claimants contend that "Solomonic" Dynasty ruled the Aksumite state until its power was "usurped" by the Zagwes.Yekuno-Amlak (r. 1270-1285), who claimed decent from the last Aksumite king Dilna'od, organized his forces with the assistance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and engaged the last king of Zagwe, Yetbarek in battle. Yetbarek was killed in

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Gaynt and Yekuno-Amlak took the state power proclaiming the "restoration" of "Solomonic" Dynasty.

3.2.2. East, Central, Southern, and Western States

3.2.2.1. Bizamo, Damot, Enarya and Gafat

A. Bizamo: was a kingdom located on the southern bend of Abay River just opposite to the present districts of Gojjam and around the current Wambara area. It was founded in the eighth century and had early connections with Damot.

B. Damot: was a strong kingdom that expanded its territories into most of the lands the south of Abay and north of Lake Turkana as well as west of Awash and east of Didessa. Motalami was a prominent king of Damot in the thirteenth century.

C. Enarya: was a kingdom in the Gibe region in southwestern Ethiopia. The royal clan was Hinnare Bushasho (Hinnario Busaso). Enarya's kingship was a divine one: the king (Hinnare-*Tato*) was secluded and considered as sacred. He communicated with visitors through an intermediary, *AfeBusho.*The real power rested with *Mikretcho* (council) including *Awa-rasha* (king's spokesperson) and *Atche-rasha* (royal treasurer). The kings had residences in Yadare and Gowi. In the nineth century, Aksumite king Digna-Jan is said to have led a campaign into Enarya, accompanied by Orthodox Christian priests carrying arks of covenant (*tabots).*

D. Gafat: historically, the territory of Gafat lies south of Abay (Blue Nile) River adjoining Damot on the south western periphery of the Christian Kingdom. It was inhabited by Semitic speaking population related to Harari and the Gurage. It is not clear from available records whether the Gafat formed a "state" or not, but Gafat mountains provided a rich source of gold. Despite efforts by Christian evangelists, the Gafat largely remained practitioners of their own indigenous religion. As of early medieval period, Gafat was paying tribute to the Christian Kingdom mainly in cattle, which came from six districts, among which Gambo and Shat are Gafat clan names. The state was governed by rulers bearing the title of *Awalamo*.

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3.2.2.2. Muslim Sultanates

After the spread of Islam since the beginning of the eighth century, viable Muslim communities and states had been established at many locations especially along the main trade routes from Zeila and its many branches penetrating the interior. These states include:

A. **Shewa:** Makhzumi Khalid ibn al-Walid, who claimed decent from Meca, set up the Makhzumite Sultanate in 896 A. D (283 A.H.) on northeastern foothill of Shewa.

B. **Fatagar:** was founded around Minjar, Shenkora and Ada'a in the eleventh century. It was a hilly lowland area with thoroughly cultivated fields of wheat and barley, fruits, and extensive grazing grounds full of numerous herds of cattle, sheep and goats.

C. **Dawaro:** located south of Fatagar between upper waters of Awash and Wabi-Shebelle extending to Charchar in Northeast and Gindhir in Southeast. We have valuable information on Dawaro by an Egyptian courtier Ibn Fad Allah el-umari. It was much smaller than Ifat, but resembled it in many aspects. Dawaro had a currency called *hakuna* for transaction .

D. **Bali:** was an extensive kingdom occupying high plateau, separating basins of Shebelle and Rift valley Lakes. It was separated from Dawaro by the Wabi-Shebelle River and extended southwards to the Gannale Dirre River. Bali was one of the largest of Ethiopia's Muslim provinces. Its economic activity resembles those of other nearby Muslim lands. Trade was mainly based on barter exchanging cattle, sheep, cloth etc. It had strong army composed of cavalry and infantry.

E. **Ifat:** was a state located adjacent to Shewan Sultanate. Its territory ran from northeast-southwesterly in the Afar plain eastward to the Awash. It was established by Umar Walasma, who claimed descent t from Hashamite clan and said to have come from Arabia between 1271 and 1285. He intervened between quarrelsome Makzumite princes Dil-Marrah and Dil-Gamis, weakened and annexed the sultanate of Shewa. The sultanate was fertile and well watered. Its inhabitants earned their living from cultivation of wheat, sorghum, millet and *teff*, and animal husbandry. Sugar cane, bananas, variety of fruits, beans, squashes, cucumbers, and cabbage completed the diet. *Chat* was described for the first time as being consumed as a stimulant.

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F. **Others**: autonomous states mutually independent states like Arababani (between Hadiya and Dawwaro), Biqulzar, Dera (between Dawaro and Bali), Fadise, Gidaya, Hargaya, Harla, Kwilgora, Qadise, Sharkah (West of Dawaro and North of Bali in Arsi) and Sim were established and flourished.

3.3. External Contacts

Ethiopia and the Horn had contacts with Egypt since at least 3,000 B. C. These relations may be the region's earliest contacts with the Mediterranean world or the Greco-Roman World. It had very close relations with all commercially active South Arabian Kingdoms starting sometimes before 1,000 B.C. The introduction of Christianity to Aksum established a new pattern of relation between the region and Egypt. Until the introduction of Islam into Egypt and the general reduction of the Christians into minority, relations between the two were fairly smooth and friendly. Following the introduction of Christianity, Aksum established close relationship with the East Roman or Byzantine Empire with which it shared common commercial interest in the Red Sea area against their rival Persians. Yet, in the seven century, this relation became complicated and began to deteriorate. The rapid expansion of the Muslim Arabs through the Near and Middle East, North Africa and the Nile valley led to the decline of Aksumite land routes and shipping lines. Successive Egyptian Muslim rulers began to use the consecration and sending of a bishop as an instrument to further their own foreign policy objectives and to squeeze concessions from Ethiopian Christian rulers, who reacted by threatening to divert the Nile. The coming to power of the Mamluk was followed by the reciprocal persecution of religious minorities. Moreover, the Mamluk presented a barrier to the contacts between Christian Ethiopia and European states.

However, the tradition to visit Jerusalem and other holy places in the Middle East had begun at the end of the first millennium AD. In order to reach the places, Ethiopian Christian pilgrims used the land route to Egypt. From Cairo, again they used the land route to the Holy land. Consequently, there were considerable numbers of Ethiopian Christian communities found in different regions, in Egyptian monasteries, in the holy places of Palestine and Armenia, and in Italian city-states in subsequent centuries. The communities living in different parts of the world served as an important link or bridge between Ethiopian Christian Kingdom and Europe.When pilgrims met their fellow Christians of Europe in the holy

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places, they transmitted information about the EOC and its exceptional liturgical practices. They also explained about the territorial extent of the Christian Kingdom.

From the information, the Europeans began to consider Ethiopian Christian Kingdom as a very powerful and wealthy state existing in the Horn of Africa. Consequently, they wanted to use this imaginary strong Christian power in their struggle against the Muslim powers in the Holy land. Around the middle of the 12th century, a myth about a very rich and powerful Christian ruler known as Prester *John* began to circulate in Europe. The legend was developed when the balance of the crusade war fought over Jerusalem between the Christians of Europe and the Muslims of the Middle East was in favor of the latter. In 1165, a letter addressed to European kings, thought to be sent by the Prester John appeared in Europe mentioning about the enormous power of the Prester John. The geographical location of the country of Prester John was not known to Europe for over a century. However, the Europeans began to regard Ethiopian Christian Kingdom as the land of Prester John since the only Christian kingdom between the Red Sea and the Indian sub-continent was the Ethiopian Christian Kingdom. Then, they began to search for the location of the Kingdom and to make an alliance with it.

3.4. Economic Formations

A. Agriculture and Land Tenure System

The main stay of ancient states' economy in highland areas was plough agriculture. The mastery of the technology of irrigation also contributed to the growth of agricultural production. Small valley head wetlands were drained for dry season cultivation. The people used diverse soil fertility enhancement strategies like manuring, compost and spreading residues' ashes as well as fallowing, crop rotation, intercropping and contour plowing. In times of peak harvest seasons , farmers also orgnized teamwork.

Land has always been one of the most precious possessions of human society throughout history. The rules according to which members of the society hold, share and use land constitute what is known as the land tenure system. The most ancient system of land holding which survived in many parts of Ethiopia and the Horn is the communal land tenure system. Communal right to land is a group right. Here group refers to the family, the clan and the

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other lineage groups to which the individual belonged. Each of these groups had communal right to the land they lived in and freely exploited the resources of the land.

Peasants in the north had *rist* rights in their respective areas. *Rist* is a kind of communal birthright to land by members of the families and clans whose ancestors had settled and lived in the area over long periods. It is inherited from generation to generation in accordance to customary law. Most of the subjects of the state had *rist* rights. The *rist* owners were known as *bale-rist*. Yet, they paid tributes to the state and all land belonged to the state theoretically. Tribute was collected through a complex hierarchy of state functionaries or officials who were given *gult* right over the areas and populations they administered on behalf of the central government. *Gult* is a right to levy tribute on *rist* owners' produce. The tribute collected by *bale-gults*, partly allotted for their own up keep and the rest were sent to the imperial center. *Gult* right that became hereditary was called *Riste-Gult* as prominent well-placed officials used to transfer their position to their offspring.

B. Handicraft

Indigenous handcraft technology had existed since the ancient period. The social, economic and political conditions of ancient states had allowed the emergence of artisans in various fields with diverse forms and applications including metal work, pottery, tannery, carpentry, masonry, weaving, jewelry, basketry and others. Metal workers produced spears' points, swords , javelins, bows, arrows, traps, slings, slashers, shields, knives, axes, sickles, hoes, ploughshares, spades, machetes, hatchets, iron tripods, ornaments etc. Carpenters engaged in carving wood implements like doors, windows, stools, chairs, tables, beds, headrests, mortars, bowls, beams, yoke, stilt, coffins etc while potters produced ceramic utensils like saucepan, ovens, jar, pot, kettle, cooking tripod, plates, granary etc. Tanners produced leather tools used for bed, bed cover, saddles, harness, ropes, footwear, prayer mats, sacks, honey and butter container, drinking cup and clothes until replaced by weavers' cotton dresses.

However, except the carpenters and masons in some cases, the artisans were mostly despised and marginalized. The ruling classes mostly spent their accumulated wealth on imported luxurious items rather than the domestic technology. The general public attitude towards artisans was not at all encouraging. Consequently, the locally produced agricultural

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implements and house furniture did not show any significant improvement and sophistication.

C. Trade

Trade was another important economic activity of ancient states that obtained considerable income from both internal and international trade. The major socio-economic and political centers of earliest states seem to have also been major trade centers with wide ranging contacts in various directions within the region itself and with merchants coming to the area across the international water bodies. A network of roads connected the centers with the coast and various dependencies in the interior. Local and international merchants frequented these roads. The region was crisscrossed by various trade routes connecting various market places in all directions. The regular flow of trade was so vital to the states in that one of their major concerns was to protect the trade routes and make them safe from robbers.

3.5. Socio-cultural Achievements

A. Architecture

As the states expanded, architecture also began to flourish and one of the unique architectural technologies was the engraving of stele around the third century AD. There were totally fifty eight steles in and around Aksum that can be grouped into well made and decorated, half completed and megaliths (not hewn). As local tradition says, the steles were engraved specifically at Gobodara from which they were transported and planted in Aksum. The longest one of these stele measures 33meters heights (the first in the world). It is highly decorated in all of its four sides. It represents a-14 storied building with many windows and a false door at the bottom. It also bears pre-Christian symbols, which are a disc and a crescent (half moon) at the top. Some scholars suggest that this giant stele was broken while the people were trying to erect it. The second longest obelisk measures 24 meters height that was successfully erected and represents a ten-storied building with many windows and a false door at the bottom. The third longest stele measures 21 meters and represents a nine-storied building with many windows and a false door at the bottom. It is smooth at the back of its side with no decoration.

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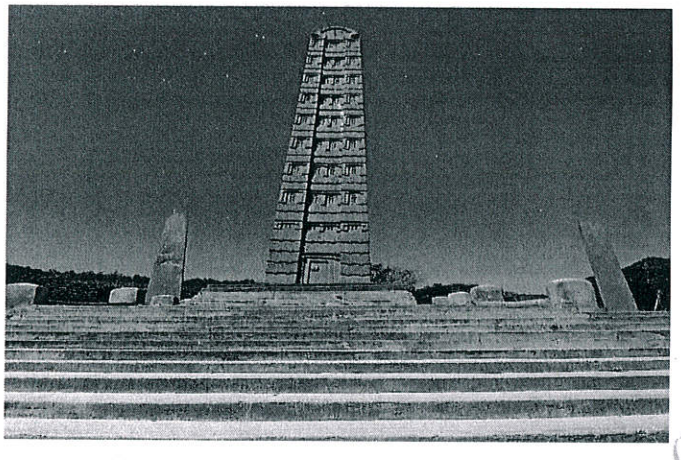
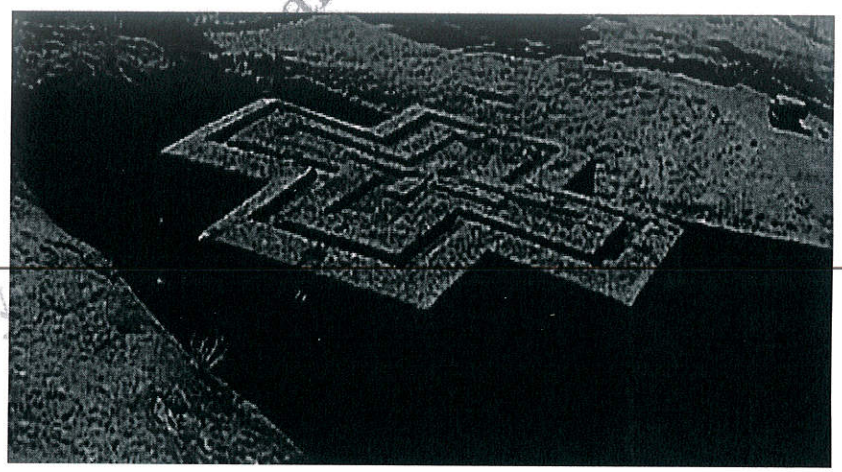
Picture 2: The Second Longest Aksumite Stele



Source:http://whc.unesco.org, accessed on 8-1-2020.

The Zagwe churches are regarded as some of the finest architecture of artistic achievements of the Christian world and that is why they were registered by UNESCO as part of world cultural heritage in 1978, two years before that of the Aksumite stele. Further refinement can be observed in the construction and decoration of the rockhewn churches in the Zagwe period. Zagwe architecture used a softer material like sandstone, which was cut and shaped all round, except the floor, into a variety of delicately decorated churches.

Picture 3: One of the Zagwe Churches (Bete Giyorgis)



Source: wanderlust.co.uk, accessed on 21-1-2020.

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B. Writing System

The Sabean language had an alphabet with boustrophedon writing type that is paleographical writing from left to right and right to left alternatively. The earliest Sabean inscriptions in Eritrea and Ethiopia date to the ninth century BC. One peculiar feature of Sabean inscriptions is absence of vowels as most of the words are written in consonants. For instance, Da'amat was inscribed as D'mt, while its successive kings are written as RDM, RBH and LMN using title, mlkn.

After the seventh and sixth centuries BC, however, variants of script arose, evolving in the direction of the Geʿez script (an alpha syllabary). This evolution can be seen most clearly in evidence from inscriptions mainly graffiti on rocks and caves. By the first century AD, "Geʿez alphabet" arose, an *abjad* (26 consonant letters only) written left-to-right with letters identical to the first-order forms of modern vocalized alphabet.

Though the first completely vocalized texts known are inscriptions by Ezana (who left trilingual inscriptions in Greek, Sabean and Ge'ez) c. 330 AD, vocalized letters predate him by some years, as vocalized letter exists in Wazeba's coin some 30 or so years before. The process was developed under the influence of Christian scripture by adding vocalic diacritics for vowels, u, i, a, e, ə, o, to the consonantal letters in a recognizable but slightly irregular way, so that the system is laid out as a syllabary.

Ethiopia's ancient indigenous writing system has immense contribution to the development of literature, art and the writing of history.

C. Calendar

People needed to know and remember the times when the rains would begin and end as well as the rise and fall of the water level. The responsibility of understanding these vital climatic cycles fell on expertise. In due course, calendars were invented. In most cases, the length of the month was based on the movement of the moon or the apparent movement of the sun. Otherwise, the number of days in the week or in the year varied from region to region.

Calendars were developed and adopted among various peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn. Oromo calendar has been based on astronomical observations of moon in conjunction with

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seven or eight particular stars or group of stars called *Urjii Dhahaa* (guiding stars) and *Bakkalcha* (morning star). There are 29.5 dates in a month and 354 days in 12 months of a year. Pillars (dated 300 B.C.), which were discovered in northwestern Kenya from 1978-86 by Archaeologists Lynch, Robbins and Doyl have suggested to represent site used to develop Oromo calendar. In connection with this, c. 900 A. D. Oromo person Waqlim is said to have taken art of shaping phallic bowls to Zimbabwe.

The Sidama calendar rotates following movements of stars with 13 months a year, 12 of which are divided equally into 28 days while the thirteenth month has 29 days. The Sidama week has only 4 days (*Dikko*, *Dela*, *Qawado* and *Qawalanka*) and hence each month has 7 weeks. Nominated *Mote* (King) is presented to *Fiche Chambalala*, New Year ritual, for *Qetela* or popular demonstration.

Ethiopic solar calendar has 12 months of 30 days plus 5 or 6 (is added every 4 years) Epagomenal days, which comprise a thirteenth month. A gap of 7–8 years between Ethiopic and Gregorian calendars results from alternative calculation in determining date of Annunciation. Thus, the first day of the year, 1 *Meskerem/Enkutatash* is usually September 11 (Gregorian). However, it falls on September 12 in years before the Gregorian leap year. The Ethiopic solar calendar has evolved to become the official calendar of the country.

The Muslim (Islamic) calendar is a lunar calendar consisting of 12 months in a year of 354 or 355 days. It employs the *Hijra* year of 622 AD, in which Mohammed and his followers made flight from Mecca to Medina and established the first Muslim community (*ummah*). Dates in this era are usually denoted AH (After *Hijra*, "in the year of the *Hijra*"). Years prior to the *Hijra* are reckoned as BH ("Before the *Hijra*").

Other peoples like the Agaw, Halaba, Hadiya, Wolayta, Gedeo, the Nilotes, etc have their own dating system.

D. Numerals

Numerals appeared in Ethiopia and the Horn at the beginning of fourth century AD. Geʿez uses numeral system comparable to the Hebrew, Arabic and Greek numerals, but it lacks individual characters for multiples of 100. Numbers are over- and underlined in proper

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typesetting, combined to make a single bar, but some less sophisticated fonts cannot render this and show separate bars above and below each character.

Learning Activities

- Do further research in your library on the histories of ancient states of Ethiopia and the Horn and present your findings to the class. Make sure to address the what, where, when, why, how and by whom questions in your assignment.
- Explain the role of agriculture and trade in the formation and consolidation of ancient states of Ethiopia and the Horn. Use examples to illustrate your discussion.
- Discuss how Christianity and Islam expanded in Ethiopia and assess their importance in the political and cultural life of ancient states of the region.
- Discuss the debates surrounding the location of Punt.
- What differences did you observe between Aksumite stele and Egyptian pyramids?
- Discuss the origin and growth of the Aksumite state.
- Discuss outstanding political and cultural achievements of the Aksumite state.
- What did the states of Punt and Aksum have in common?
- Discuss internal and external factors for the decline and fall of Aksumite kingdom.
- What were the major reasons that led king Lalibela to construct rock-hewn churches?
- What was the significance of the legend of Queen of Sheba in Ethiopian politics?
- What factors brought the Zagwe dynasty to an end?
- Discuss the role of trade and trade routes in the interactions between peoples and states in Ethiopia and the Horn and assess the outcomes of these relationships.
- Sketch the major trade routes that linked northern and southern Ethiopia with the outside world.
- Explain how Ethiopian societies were both influenced by contact with the outside world while concurrently influencing external societies with whom they had contact.

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UNIT FOUR

POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY FROM THE LATE THIRTEENTH TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURIES (6 hours)

Introduction

The period from the late thirteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth centuries experienced dynamic political, economic, and socio-cultural developments that lay the foundation for the formation of modern Ethiopia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The "restoration" of the "Solomonic" Dynasty, succession problems, territorial expansion, evangelization, flourishing and development of trade as well as expansion of extensive socio–cultural interactions among different peoples who lived in different agro–ecological zones were some of the events that shaped the course of history in the region. This unit treats those events and shows the relationships that exist between them.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- explain the concept of the "restoration" of "Solomonic" Dynasty;
- Explain the succession problems and the role of Amba Gishen in Christian Kingdom;
- scrutinize dynamics of territorial expansion of the Christian Kingdom;
- elaborate the relationship between trade and expansion of Islam in the region;
- identify the characteristics of inter-state relation during the period under discussion;
- identify the factors for interaction of the people of the region in the period;
- discuss the rivalry between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim Sultanates in the region;
- point out the nature of Ethiopia's relations with the outside world during the period.

Unit Starters

- What do you remember about the legend of the Queen of Sheba and its role in Ethiopian politics?
- What does territorial expansion mean?
- What do we mean by evangelization?
- What do you think are the roles of trade in a society?

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4.1. The "Restoration" of the "Solomonic'' Dynasty

The rulers of the "Solomonic" Dynasty claimed that they were descendants of the last king of Aksum and hence, they were legitimate to take over state power from the "illegitimate" rulers of the Zagwe dynasty. As the claim has no historical evidence, the name "Restoration" is put in quotation mark.

Similarly, the name "Solomonic" is placed in quotation marks because the claim of descent from King Solomon of Israel is legendary. The claim has been elaborated in the *Kibre Negest* ("Glory of Kings") that associated Ethiopia with the Judeo-Christian tradition. The *Kibre Negest* claims that Ethiopian ruling class descended from the line of Menilek I, son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon of Israel. As a result, Ethiopian monarchs from Yikuno-Amlak to Emperor Haile-Silassie I claimed descent from Menilek I.

4.2. Power Struggle, Consolidation, Territorial Expansion and Religious Processes

4.2.1. Succession Problem and the Establishment of a 'Royal Prison' of Amba Gishen

Following the end of the reign of Yikuno-Amlak in 1285, a political instability caused by constant power struggles among his sons and grandsons for succession occurred. A letter written by Yegba-Tsion (r.1285-94) to the Sultan of Egypt and the Patriarch of Alexandria in 1290 reflected the existence of those struggles. The power struggle intensified during the reigns of Yegba-Tsion's five sons who reigned from 1294 to 1299.

The succession problem seems to have been partly resolved in 1300 during the reign of Widim-Ra'ad (r. 1299-1314) following the establishment of a 'royal prison' at Amba-Gishen located in present day southern Wollo where all male members of the royal family were confined until one among them was installed in power. Loyal soldiers to the reigning monarch guarded the royal prison. When the monarch died, court dignitaries would send an army to the royal prison to escort the designated successor and put him on the throne. This practice continued until Amba-Gishen was destroyed by Imam Ahmad Ibrahim Al-Ghazi's force in 1540.

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4.2.2. Consolidation and Territorial Expansion of the Christian Kingdom

From 1270 until the establishment of Gondar in 1636, the medieval monarchs had no permanent capital. Initially, the center of the "restored" dynasty was in medieval Amhara (today's South Wollo) around Lake Haiq. However, it gradually shifted southward to the districts of Menz, Tegulet, Bulga, and finally to the regions dominated by the great height of the Yerer, Entoto, Menagesha, Wachacha, Furi and Zequalla mountains.

After coming to power, Yikuno-Amlak embarked on consolidating his authority throughout the empire. In this regard, he quickly subdued Ifat, the Muslim center adjacent to Shewa. Yet, until the coming of Amde-Tsion (r.1314-44), the center and the territorial limit of the Christian Kingdom was mainly in present day Tigray, Lasta, medieval Amhara and Shewa. Amde-Tsion was the first "Solomonic" King, who embarked on a policy of a wider and rapid territorial expansion. His main motives of expansion were economic and political i.e. to control the trade routes and seize territories. The Christian Kingdom controlled extensive territories during the reign of Emperor Amde-Tsion. The period also witnessed the expansion of trade leading to the flow of commodities to the coast following the major routes.

In the process of consolidating his power, Amde-Tsion subdued rebellions in an attempt to end centrifugal tendencies, which threatened the unity of the Christian Kingdom. In the process, he expanded his territory into Agaw (Awi) of Gojjam around 1323/4; Bizamo and Damot in 1316/7; Bete-Israel (located between Dambiya and Tekeze River) around 1332; and the Red Sea Coast. To consolidate the control of the Christian state over the provinces of the north extending to the coastal areas of Massawa, Amde-Tsion gave Enderta (in today's northeastern Tigray) to his wife Bilen-Saba. Amde-Tsion's army faced stiff resistance from among Ifat and Shewa, which might have cooperated with the rebellious army at Enderta, led by Yibeka-Igzi in 1320s. However, Bahr-Sagad, the son of Amde-Tsion, became the governor of Tigray. In 1325, Amde-Tsion campaigned to today's Eritrean region. After controlling the whole region, he appointed a governor with a title of *Ma'ekale-Bahir*, which later on changed to *Bahire-Negash*.

In the southeast, Muslim sultanates paid tributes to the Christian Kingdom. In the south, Gurage speaking areas and a few of the Omotic kingdoms like Wolayta and Gamo were

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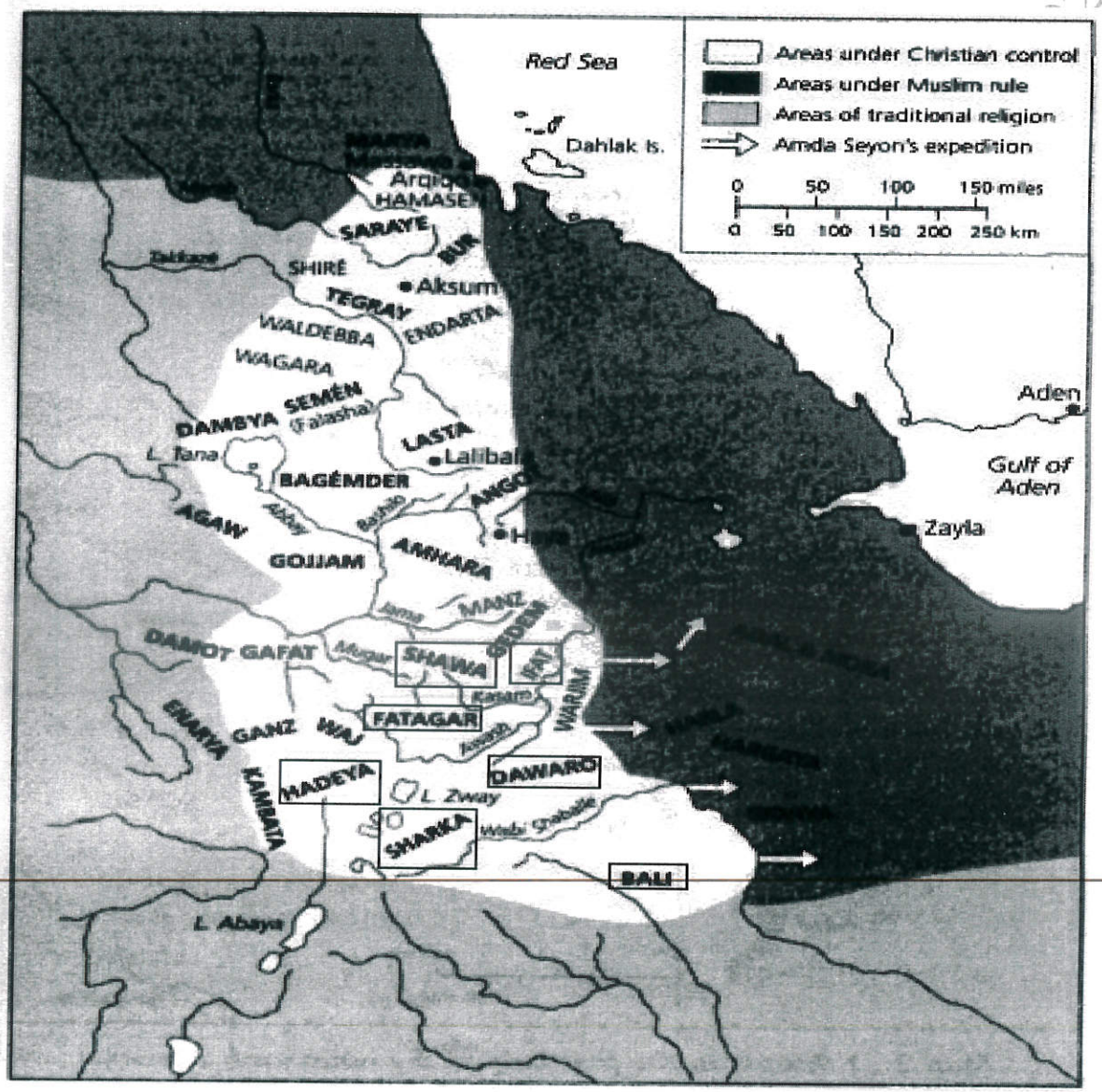
brought under the influence of the Christian state. Amde-Tsion was in full control of all the trade routes and sources of trade of the Ethiopian region in the early 1330s. The consolidation and territorial expansion of the Christian Kingdom continued during the successors of Amde-Tsion.

Map 3: The Christian Kingdom during the Reign of Emperor Amde-Tsion



Source: Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, p. 133.

4.2.3. Evangelization, Religious Movements, and Religious Reforms of Zara-Yaqob

I. Evangelization

Christianity had a long history of expansion. Churches and their believers had been in existence long before expansion of the Christian Kingdom in various parts of the Horn of Africa. For instance, in Shewa there were early Christians who maintained contacts with their distant relatives in Northern part of Ethiopia. Those early Christians played an important role in the spread of Christianity in several areas. In the thirteenth century, Eyesus-Mo'a opened new opportunities of learning for Christians who lived in the central part of Ethiopia and later evangelized the newly incorporated areas where the influence of Christianity had either been non–existent or minimal. The territorial expansion carried out by Amde–Tsion during the medieval period set an addition momentum for the spread of Christianity.

Abune Tekle-Haymanot (thirteenth century) played a key role in reviving Christianity in Shewa, which was followed by the evangelization of areas in southern Ethiopia including medieval Damot. He baptized and converted Motalami to Christianity. The clergy, under the direction of the bishop in Ethiopia, Yaqob, spread Christianity to different areas of Shewa such as Kil'at, Tsilalish, Merhabite, Wereb, Moret and Wegda, and Fatagar, Damot, Waj and Enarya.

II. Religious Movements

A. The Ewostatewos Movement

Monasticism became a dominant practice in Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the mid-thirteenth century. The period witnessed development of monasticism and religious movements of which the major one was the Ewostatewos movement, named after the founder. Ewostatewos established his own monastic community in Sara'e (in present day Eritrea). There, he was joined by many students and taught until about 1337. Among his teachings was the strict observance of Sabbath. When he was opposed by an organized religious rival group of the clergy in Sera'e, he fled the country to Egypt. He faced the same opposition in Cairo by Ethiopian pilgrims.

After Ewostatewos left Ethiopia, the movement was weakned although his followers led by Abba Absad tried their best to maintain its momentum. The movement revived when some of

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his followers such as Bekimos, Merkoryewos and Gebre–Iyasus returned home from Armenia. The followers of Ewostatewos soon became active and dispersed to different monasteries in northern Ethiopia. The movement spread to areas like Enfraz, northern Tigray, and Hamessen. The King and the *Abun* opposed the movement. Hence, the anti-Ewostatewos group led by the Abbot of the Hayq Monastery called Aqabe-Se'at Sereqe-Birhan was supported by the Abun and the monarch. The monarch imprisoned some of the Ewostatians owing to the fact that he feared that dispute in the church could divide his kingdom. The clergy expelled Ewostatians from their church services; some of the Ewostatians were forced to withdraw and settle in peripheral areas while some of them sustained their movement in monasteries like Debre- Bizen, Debre-San, etc.

B. Deqiqe Estifanos/ the Estifanosites

The Estifanosites were a movement within Ethiopian monasticism, called so after their founder and spiritual leader *Abba* Estifanos. The movement rose to prominence in the fifteenth century and continued until the sixteenth century, when it was formally reconciled with the main body of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The head of the movement, *Abba* Estifanos, was born in Agame at the end of the fourteenth century. He established a rigid monastic organization, which emphasized poverty, absolute self-subsistence, equality and autonomy from secular authorities. His adversaries in the monastic circles attempted to discredit him, but the movement gained followers in various monastic communities. When summoned to the royal court, Estifanos was initially able to convince the emperor (probably *Atse* Takla Maryam, r. 1430-33) that he posed no threat to royal power or the unity of the Church. Later, however, he collided with Zara-Yaqob. Estifanos appears to have disapproved of the Emperor's religion initiatives, rejected royal supremacy and authority in spiritual matters and refused to participate in court judiciary procedures. Zara-Yacob took very harsh measures against the Estifanosites allegedly for their opposition of the veneration of St. Mary.

Naod appears to have been more favorably inclined towards the Estifanosites and to have been instrumental in their reintegration into the EOC during the period of Metropolitan *Abune* Yeshaq. For their part, Estifanosites appear to have softened their position, the

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excommunication was lifted by the Metropolitan. Despite the importance of the Estifanosites movement for the history of Ethiopia, as yet we have neither a comprehensive critical history of its background and development, nor a clear idea of its real geographical scale, historical significance and influence.

III. The Religious Reforms of Emperor Zara-Yaqob

Emperor Zara-Yaqob (r.1434-68) took several measures to stabilize and consolidate the Orthodox Church. First, he settled the conflict among the Ethiopian clergy in order to create an amicable church-state relationship. In this regard, he made peace with the House of Ewostatewos by reviving Sabbath in the Ethiopian church and the Ewostatian agreed to receive Holy orders from the Ethiopian prelates. Further, he urged the clergy to preach Christianity in remote areas. Besides, he ordered the people to observe fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays and get Father Confessors.

Lack of sufficient religious books was another problem. Thus, the king encouraged the establishment of a library in every church. This was followed by revival of religious literature. He himself wrote some books like *Metsafe-Birhan*, *Metsafe-Me'lad*, *Metsafe-Sillasie*, *Metsafe-te'aqebo Mister*, etc. In addition, during his reign, some parts of *Te'amre-Maryam* were translated from Arabic to Geez.

4.3. Political and Socio-Economic Dynamics in Muslim Sultanates

A number of strong sultanates had emerged since the fourteenth century. Trade was one of the major factors that resulted in the rise and development of those sates. Trade served not only as a major source of livelihood but also acted as a major agent that resulted in the formation of Muslm Sultanes and remained a major source of conflict between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim sultanates. One of the strong Muslim sultanates that emerged along trade routes and became a center of resistance against the Christian Kingdom until the second half of the sixteenth century was the Sultanate of Adal.

4.3.1. The Rise of Adal

After its establishment, Ifat conducted a series of campaigns against its neighbouring sultanates thereby extending its hegemony over these areas. It also resisted the expansion of

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the Christian Kingdom. However, one branch of the Walasma family, which realized that Ifat was becoming an easy target to the Christian Kingdom due to its location, moved further to the southeastern lowlands and established new and vigorous Muslim Sultanate of Adal in the highland districts around Harar in 1367. The first center of this extended Walasma Dynasty was at a place called Dakar, a place located to the southeast of Harar. The Walasma family consolidated its power in the new center, and began another phase of military campaigns against the frontiers of the Christian Kingdom. The center of Adal in 1520 changed to the city of Harar and after the defeat of Imam Ahmed; a growing threat from a new force-the Oromo forced the sultanate to change its capital to Awsa in 1576/7, to the present Afar region.

4.3.2. Trade and the Expansion of Islam

Islam spread into the central and southwestern parts of the Ethiopian region through Muslim merchants and preachers. Trade served as channel for the expansion of Islam in the Muslim Sultanates while at the same time it formed the base of the economy of those states. The most known Muslim Sultanates during this period were Ifat (1285-1415) and Adal (1415-1577).

The main trade outlet shifted to Zeila and the old city-states of Mogadishu, Brava, and Merca were used as ports for their hinterland. In the meantime, for the trade in the northeast, Massawa served as an outlet.

With the revival of trade, different towns and trade centers emerged along the route from Zeila to the interior. Travelers' accounts and chronicles referred to these towns and ruins of mosques and residences mark the existence of market centers, which followed and served the trade coasts. The ruins that mark the landscape around Jigjiga and the highlands of Harar and Charchar attest to the market towns that served the Zeila route. These include Weez-Gebeya in western Shewa/famous market on the Fatagar-Dawaro-Harar route, Suq-Wayzaro in old Damot, Suq-Amaja and the very famous market center Gandabalo on the Ifat-Awsa route. Gandabalo was largely inhabited by Muslim and Christian merchants serving the kings and sultans as agents.

Other big market towns include the ones that linked medieval Amhara with Awsa, called Wasel near what is today Ware-Illu, Qorqora/Qoreta (north of Waldiya) and Mandalay in

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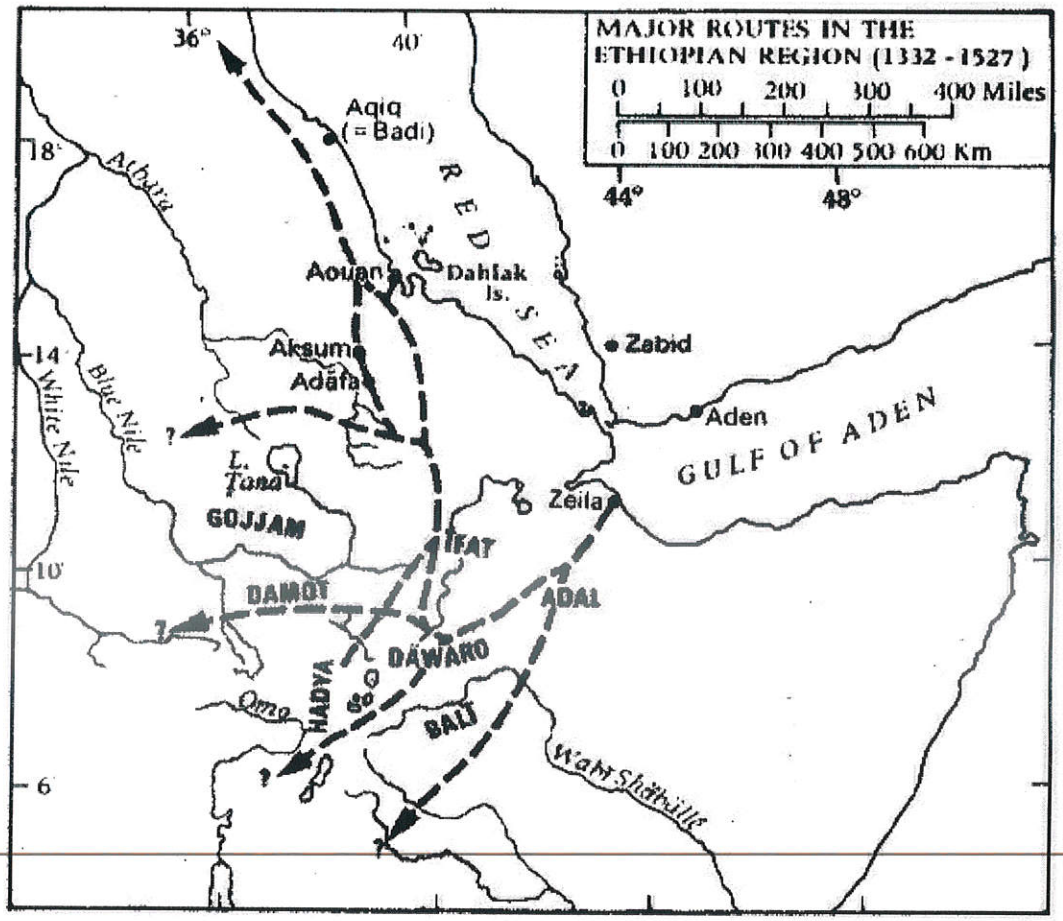
southern Tigray. The towns of Dabarwa, the seat of the *Bahre-Negash* ("Lord of the Sea"), and Asmara were the two important entrepots of caravans in the hinterland of Massawa.

Muslim states had significant control over trade routes that passed through Zeila due to their geographical proximity, although contested by "Solomonic" Kingdom especially after its revival and consolidation.

Map 4: Trade Routes and Muslim Sultanates in Medieval Ethiopia



Source: Bahru Zewde (Compiled), *A Short History of Ethiopia and the Horn*, p. 39.

4.4. Rivalry between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates

Zeila was the main outlet to the sea during the medieval period. The ambition to control this trade route and commodities that passed through Zeila led to rivalry between the "Solomonic" rulers and the Sultanate of Ifat. The first recorded conflict between the Christian Kingdom and Ifat took place in 1328 when the Muslim Sultanates organized their

armies to take military action against the Christian Kingdom. The Sultan of Ifat, Haqaddin I stopped merchants belonging to the Christian King, Amde-Tsion, confiscating the goods, capturing, and imprisoning the king's agent, Ti'iyintay returning from Cairo. These actions forced Amde-Tsion to wage a campaign against Haqaddin I; defeated and took him prisoner and eventually replaced him by his brother Sabradin. Both Ifat and Fatagar came under Sabradin.

Ifat was defeated and Sabradin was captured during his retreat. As a result, Ifat, Fatagar and Dawaro were incorporated. Amde-Tsion required from them annual tributes and freedom of movement for all caravans through Zeila. Following the decline of Ifat, other Muslim Sultanates like Sharkha, Bali, Dara, and Arbabani were also seriously weakened.

It was owing to these developments that -some members of the Walasma moved their seat of power further east to Adal, from where they continued their struggle. To check their attacks on the highlands, the successors of Emperor Amde-Tsion conducted repeated campaigns into the lowlands. In 1376, Haqadin II came to power and refused to pay tribute and rebelled against Neway-Maryam (r. 1371-80), the son of Amde-Tsion. However, he died fighting in 1386. Similarly, the successor of Haqadin II, Sa'd ad-Din II (c. 1386-1402) gained initial success until king Dawit I (r. 1380-1412) in 1402/3 extended his expansion and defeated him. Sa'd ad-Din II became refuge in Zeila until King Yishaq (r.1413-30) killed him in 1415. Since then the area was called "the land of Sad ad-Din." Following the death of Sa'd ad-Din and loss of Zeila to Christian Kings, the Muslim sultanates declined in power. Sa'd ad-Din's sons who took refuge in Yemen came back to succeed their father. Yet, Adal continued to challenge the Christian state and were successful in killing Tewodros (1412-13) and Yeshaq. This led to intense struggle for predominance.

During the mid-fifteenth century, Emperor Zara Yaqob gained some access to the Red Sea. In 1445, Zara Yaqob defeated Sultan Ahmed Badlay at the battle of Yeguba. As a result, the son and successor of Ahmed Badlay, Mohammed Ahmed (r.1445-71) sent a message of submission to Ba'ede Mariam (r. 1468-78) to remain vassal of the Christian Kings. On the death of Mohammed, however, Adal was still strong and continued its struggle. Hence, the

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reigning monarch, Ba'ede-Mariam campaigned against Adal. Despite initial successes, the army of Ba'ede-Mariam lost the battle in 1474.

The successors of Ba'ede-Mariam proved weak in their dealings with the rulers of Muslim Sultanates. At the same time, leaders of the Muslim Sultanate sought to resolve the problem peacefully. As a result, Mohammad ibn Azhar ad-Din (1488-1518) attempted to smoothen relations with the Christian Kingdom. However, among the various Sultans of the Muslim sultanates, Emir Mahfuz carried out some effective military campaigns into the highlands. In 1517 Emir Mahfuz died fighting against Emperor Lebne-Dengel's (r. 1508-40) force and his son-in-law, Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, popularly known as Ahmed *Gragn* or the "left-handed" took over the leadership.

Apart from the hostile relations, there were wider socio-economic and cultural interactions between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim principalities. As in earlier periods, trade continued to be the major channel of social integration. Also, it had long been the source of friendship, interaction, interdependence, and conflict among the states of the region. The long distance trade and local markets served as core areas of social ties. Relatively, the difference in ecology of the Muslim sultanates and the Christian Kingdom created economic interdependence, which in due course strengthened socio-economic bondage. Merchants of the two regions often moved from the highlands to the coast and vice versa. It was through such caravan merchants that the social links were strengthened and religions spread. These interactions and interdependence in economic, social, cultural and political spheres lay the foundation for modern Ethiopia.

Beside the above dusscused socio-cultural and economic interactionas, the period witnessed the flourishing of Geez literature as is evident from the works of *Abba* Giorgis Ze-Gasicha and others and philosophies epitomzed by Zara-Ya'iqob (not to be confused with the king). On the Muslim side, literature had developed including the works of Arab writers such as Ibn Fadil al Umari, Ibn Khaldun and others.

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4.5. External Relations

4.5.1. Relations with Egypt

From the late thirteenth century onwards, the Christian Kingdom continued to maintain relations with Egypt, which was mainly religious in character. In 1272, Yekuno-Amlak sent an emissary to Egypt's Sultan, Baybars, requesting an *Abun* from the Coptic Church. Furthermore, both Egypt and Ethiopia continued to act as protectors of religious minorities in their respective domain. Egypt also wanted to ensure secure flow of the Nile (the Abay River) that originated from Ethiopia.

In the early fourteenth century, Mohammed ibn Qala'un persecuted the Copts and destroyed their churches in Cairo. In response, Amde-Tsion demanded the restoration of the churches and warned that failure to do so would result in the diversion of the Nile waters. Patriarch Marqos (1348- 63) sent a message to Sayfa-Arad (r.1344-71), revealing his imprisonment by the then Egyptian Sultan. Sayfa-Arad is said to have mobilized a huge army against Egypt after which the Sultan released the patriarch and sent a delegation to the King. Besides, Patriarch Matewos (1328-1408) delegated by the Sultan, established harmonious relations between King Dawit and Egypt. The Sultan is said to have sent a piece of the "True Cross" and in return, Dawitis said to have given a number of religious paintings to the Sultan.

In 1437/8, Zara-Yaqob wrote a friendly letter to Sultan Barsbay requesting the protection of Christians in Egypt. Three years later, however, Patriarch Yohannes XI wrote Zara-Yaqob a letter stating the demolition of the famous church of Mitmaq (Debre-Mitmaq). Then Zara-Yaqob sent an envoy to Sultan Jaqmaq (1438-53) with a strongly worded letter. In reply to this message, Jaqmaq sent an envoy to Ethiopia, with complimentary gifts to the King but rejected the reconstruction of the church.

4.5.2. Relations with Christian Europe

As with the Muslim Arab world, the Christian Kingdom maintained relations with Christian Europe. During the medieval period, contacts between the two regions were strongly influenced by the legend of "Prester John".This was followed by sustained relations in subsequent decades. For example, it is stated that Ethiopian delegation was in attendance of

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Gian Galeazzo Visconti's coronation in Milan in 1395. In 1418, three Ethiopians attended the Council of Constance. In another report, message from an Ethiopian monarch, Amde-Tsion was presented to King Phillip of France in 1332.

The earliest known message to Ethiopia from a European monarch is the letter of King Henry IV of England dated 1400 A.D. and addressed to "Prester John",the purported king of the Christian Kingdom. The identification of the King with "Prester John" was firmly established in the fourteenth century. They even thought that it was possible to liberate Jerusalem with the help of this King. Hence, during the reign of King Dawit, the leaders of Rome, Constantinople, Syria, Armenia and Egypt sent letters to the king in which they asked for support. King Dawit received some Italian craftsmen consisting mainly of Florentines. In 1402, King Dawit sent his first delegation to Europe led by a Florentine man called Antonio Bartoli.

Alphonso de Paiva V of Aragon received a delegation from Yishaq in the city of Valentia, in 1427. Yishaq's delegation to Europe was to ask for more artisans and military experts. The embassy of the Duke of Berry consisting craftsmen, Neapolitan Pietro, a Spaniard and a Frenchman reached Ethiopia during the reign of Yishaq.

In 1450 a Sicilian Pietro Rombulo, who had been in Ethiopia since the last years of Dawit's reign and who had previously carried out a successful trade mission to India on behalf of the King, was now sent to Europe as Zara-Yaqob's ambassador. An Ethiopian priest, Fikre-Mariam and two other individuals accompanied him. The mission was to Alphonso of Aragon (also ruled as king of Naples and Sicily). King Zara-Yaqob sent delegates to Alphonso to get political, military, and technical assistance. Alphonso wrote a letter to Zara-Yaqob and informed him that he has sent him artisans and masons he requested.

The most authentic pieces of evidence on Ethio-Europe links are the maps of Egyptus Novelo (c. 1454) and Fra Mauro's Mappomondo (1460) which clearly depicted many places and peoples. Venetian Gregorio or Hieronion Bicini visited Ethiopia in 1482. Pedros da Covilhao/Peter de Covilham arrived at the court of Eskindir (1478-1494) in 1493.

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The beginning and continued rivalry between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim Sultanates in the fifteenth century strengthened the relation between the Christian Kingdom and Christian Europe. Queen Elleni (the daughter of Hadiya *Garad* and married to King Zara Yaeqob) played an important role in the strengthening of these relations. She had foreseen the threat that came from the Ottoman Turkish who showed a clear interest to support the Muslim Sultanates. She also had foreseen the possibility of consolidating relations with and getting support from Portugal that was against the Turks. In 1508, Portugal sent an envoy to act as an ambassador to Christian Ethiopia. Around 1512, Queen Elleni, the mother and regent of Lebne-Dengel sent an Armenian called Mathew to Portugal. The Portuguese court doubted his authenticity and was received coldly. The Portuguese Embassy led by Rodrigo di Lima, Duwarto Galliba and Francisco Alvarez reached Ethiopia in 1520 and remained for six years. The objective was to establish a naval port against the expanding Turkish power in Red Sea Area. The mission was not successful.

Learning Activities

- What led rulers of the "Solomonic" dynasty to construct a 'Royal Prison' at Amba-Gishen?
- Discus the role and contribution of territorial expansion in shaping today's Ethiopia.
- List some features of the movemnts of Ewostatewos and Dekike Estifanos.
- Discuss Emperor Zara-Yaqob's religious reforms?
- Discuss the role played by trade in the spread of Islam in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Ethiopia.
- Describe the circumstances that gave rise to the sultanate of Ifat.
- What was the major source of rivalry between the Christian kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates in medieval and post medieval periods? What role did religion play in the conflict between the two?
- Discuss the nature and contents of Ethiopia's external relations during this period?

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UNIT FIVE

POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIAL PROCESSES FROM THE EARLY SIXTEENTH TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES (10 hrs)

Introduction

This unit discusses socio-economic and political developments from the early sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries. These contributed to the making of modern Ethiopia through the intermingling of peoples, economic interdependence and political activities . Major developments of the period include expansion of trade, conflicts between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim Sultanates and foreign interventions; the population movements of the Afar, the Somali, the Argoba and the Oromo; religious expansions, interaction of peoples and the resultant integration across ethnic and religious diversities. Besides, it discusses societies and states in different parts of Ethiopia and the Horn that passed through different historical processes. Finally, this unit discusses the Gondarine Period (1636-1769), *Zemene Mesafint* (1769-1855) including the Yejju rule (1786-1853).

Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- identify the nature of peoples' interaction and major reasons of conflicts between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates and consequences;
- analyze the circumstances that led Portuguese and Turkish ' involvement in the region;
- explicate the major population movements and their contributions to the intermingling of peoples in Ethiopia and the Horn;
- identify the political, social and economic developments among peoples and states of Ethiopia and the Horn;
- explain the nature, political developments and major cultural achievement of the Gondarine Period
- discuss political, social and economic conditions during the *Zemene-Mesafint* and Yejju Dynasty.

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Unit Starters

- Do you think trade and trade routes can be sources of conflict between states? How? Give examples
- Share orally with your classmates the causes of conflict in a given society
- What do we mean by population movement and why and how does it occur?
- Imagine that your community changes its habitat from one area to another part of Ethiopia and the Horn. What do you think are the likely effects of the movement on the host community and vice versa?
- What do you know about the *Gadaa* system?

5.1. Conflict between the Christian Kingdom and the Sultanate of Adal and After

As discussed in unit four, the revival of long-distance trade caused competition and struggle for control over the trade routes between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim principalities. This was followed by a series of wars, which were depicted as wars for religious supremacy in historical accounts of Christian and Muslim clerics. While mal-administration and exploitation of periphery made military mobilization possible, religion provided ideological justification for the wars. However, the interest to control trade routes lay at the heart of the conflict between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates that continued for over two centuries, culminating in the wars between the Christian Kingdom and the Sultanate of Adal that lasted from 1529 to 1543.

As a prelude to this conflict, among the Muslim Sultanates, internal strife, corruption and anarchy was intensified and a new leadership was urgently called for. Such leadership came from Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi. The origins of Imam Ahmed, alias "the left-handed," are obscure. He was born at Hubet in between Dire Dawa and Jigjiga and raised by his devout Muslim kin in one of the oases on the route to Zeila. He was a devout Muslim. He soldiered for *Garad* Abun of Adal, who during his few years in power called for Islamic Puritanism.

According to local tradition, the Imam withdrew to the countryside, upon the death of his source of inspiration, *Garad* Abun, and started calling for devotion to the teachings of Islam.

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Here came fundamental change in the cause of the confrontations. After Imam Ahmad's rise to power under circumstances discussed above, the battles were not just fought for control of the long-distance trade route going through Zeila but mainly because there was environmental pressure among the Afar and Somali pastoralists pushing to approach Harar and the Christian Kingdom. For centuries, lowland inhabiting Muslim pastoralists had wanted to expand to high plateaus for better and enough pasturelands and attempted to do so but only to be held back by the Christian army. With increased population and overgrazing in Somali and Afar of eastern Ethiopia, between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, raiding and counter-raiding at water holes or animal rustling intensified.

It was one of the Imam's remarkable achievements in leadership that he mobilized the pastoral communities of the Afar, the Somali, the Harla, Harari and others to a common cause. He convinced them not to fight amongst themselves but to unite and expand to the Christian Kingdom and resolve their pressing material needs while at the same time guarding Islamic doctrines and practices from the infiltration of any alien religious doctrine. He was able to gain acceptance as Imam and consolidated his army to fight the Christian Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Lebne-Dengel was enthroned when he was only eleven. Assisted by the elderly Elleni and due to internal conflicts in Adal, the Christian state initially retained its interest and even advanced into Muslim territory scoring significant victories in the early sixteenth century. As a result, most of the Muslim Sultanates including Adal were made tributaries to the Christian Kingdom.

However, shortly, Adal fell to Imam Ahmed's army. By the time Imam Ahmed was strong enough for military confrontation in 1520, he refused to pay tribute and this was followed by a campaign against the Christian Kingdom in 1527.The Imam's army fought fiercely and controlled the territories including Bali, Dawaro, Fatagar, Sidama, Hadiya and Kambata and putting the Christian Kingdom at risk.

In 1528, realizing the rising threat, Lebne-Dengel mobilized a vast force from his domain and encamped about fifty kilometers east of what is now Addis Ababa. In addition to logistical problems, the leadership of the army of Christian Kingdom failed to adopt a common strategy to defeat Adal's force. On the other hands, Imam Ahmed's highly

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motivated but small-sized army faced no such logistical challenges. The Imam's army had also an excellent leadership characterized by better mobility and flexible tactics with a unified command.

As a result, the larger and well-equipped Christian army was defeated in one of the most decisive engagement at the battle of Shimbra Kure in 1529, near present day Mojo. After the victory, the Imam's army made a large-scale control of the territories of the Christian Kingdom including Shewa, Amhara, Lasta, and moved as far north as Mereb Melash. By 1535, Imam Ahmed's empire stretched from Zeila to Massawa on the coast including the Ethiopian interior. As he penetrated deep into the Christian Kingdom, Imam Ahmed established a civil administrative bureaucracy constituted from his own men and newly recruited personnel from the Christian territories.

One of the most illuminating figures during the war was the wife of the Imam, Bati Del Wanbara. She was the daughter of a Muslim military commander of Adal known as Mahfuz. Tradition claimed that Del Wanbara had encouraged her husband to avenge the death of her father. She accompanied her husband throughout his expeditions and she is said to have marched even in a state of pregnancy during which she was unable to use mules. Indeed, she delivered her two sons during the campaigns of 1531 and 1533 in Ifat and present day Tigray respectively.

On the part of the Christian Kingdom, the military set back forced the reigning king, Lebne-Dengel, to retreat finally dying in 1540 as a fugitive . His son and successor, Gelawdewos (r. 1540-1559), continued to face the wars this time with more intensity as Imam Ahmed had received Turkish musketeers. In the meantime, based on earlier request made by Lebne-Dengel in 1535, about four hundred Portuguese soldiers, armed with matchlocks arrived in the Christian court in 1541.The force was led by Christopher da Gama, the youngest son of Vasco da Gama. However, in August 1542 the Christian army was defeated in Ofla, in today's southern Tigray. In the battle, about two hundred Portuguese were killed and their leader Christopher da Gama was beheaded.

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An important anecdote that should be mentioned here is the role of Lebne-Dengel's wife Seblewongel. She is said to have participated in the war against Imam Ahmed in 1542 when the army of the Christian Kingdom lost almost half of the Portuguese soldiers. After the success, Imam Ahmed was confident about his army's ability to repulse any future attack by the force of the Christian Kingdom that he sent his allies back home and let his army camp. On the part of the Christians, preparations were made for final confrontation under the leadership of Emperor Gelawdewos (r.1540-59). The Queen mother, Seble-Wongel, advised the reigning emperor how to prepare and march for the battle of Woyna-Dega. Due to limited resources, the monarch employed hit and run strategy, which severely affected Imam's army. Imam Ahmed's army could not use its previous advantage of easy mobility because they did not know where the attacks came from. On February 25, 1543 while Imam Ahmed was encamped near Lake Tana, he was attacked and killed after a fierce fighting at the battle of Woyna-Dega.

Soon after the battle, Gelawdewos was confident that the nobility and his army were loyal to him. As a result, the king restored possession of almost all the northern and central plateau. Muslim communities in the highlands submitted to Gelawdewos and he was tolerant toward them to promote national conciliation and to develop revival of smooth relations with the Muslim world. Besides, Gelawdewos was able to restore many of the pre-1520s territories and tributary regions. The king attempted to reconsolidate the state through campaigns to different areas and camping *Chewa* (regiment) in border areas. By the early 1550s, Gelawdewos had established a strong Christian Kingdom. However, the control over the Muslim dominated areas was not an easy task. In the period, the growing challenge to the Christian state came from the retreating soldiers of the Sultanate of Adal, the Ottoman Turks, Jesuit interlude, and Oromo advance into the center. Adal under the leadership of Nur Ibn al-Waazir Mujahid was ready to wage war against the Christian state for revenge. In 1559, the forces of Emir Nur confronted Gelawdewos and killed the king himself.

Emperor Minas (r.1559-1563) who succeeded Gelawdewos defeated the Turks' force and reclaimed territories in the coast including Dabarwa. However, in the early 1560s, Yishaq revolted and allied with the Turks against him. Similarly, Sartsa-Dengle (r.1563-1598) had to defend his terittory from the Turks while fighting with the Agaw, Gumuz, Bete-Israel,

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Sidama, Enarya and the Oromo. The emperor then marched to the north, defeated Turkish forces, and restored the territories.

The Muslim-Christian conflict had resulted in a number of consequences. One of the most obvious was the huge human and material cost. It is also evident that both the Muslim Sultanate and Christian Kingdom were weakened thereby paving the way for an easy infiltration and success of the Oromo population movement. On the positive side, it should be restated that the war had arguably resulted in cultural interaction among the peoples of Ethiopia. Linguistic and religious interactions accompanied by intermarriages among peoples of the various cultural groups were one of these manifestations in the long history of Ethiopia and the Horn.

Competition for supremacy over the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean between Portugal and the Ottoman Turks gave the prolonged conflict between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim principalities a global dimension. Middle Eastern powers including the dominant Ottoman Empire who were the intermediaries of the international trade were adversely affected by the discovery of a new sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498. They tried to counter the Portuguese encroachment into the East, while Portugal for its part began to look toward the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia as an ally, reviving the old "semi-spiritual quest" for Prester John. From the first decade of the sixteenth century, messengers were sent. However, actual military alliance did not take place because Ethiopia was not a sea power to give a meaningful maritime support to Portugal against the Ottoman Turks. On its part, the Christian Kingdom asked Portugal's military assistance against its Muslim rival.

Having noticed the movement of diplomatic missions between the Christian Kingdom and Portugal, the Turks gave moral and military support to Imam Ahmed. In 1540, the Imam turned to his Muslim ally, Turkey, for assistance and regional Ottoman authorities provided two hundred Muslim musketeers and ten cannons.

5.2. Foreign Intervention and Religious Controversies

As with the state, the church was weakened by the wars against the sultanate of Adal. The destruction of property and deaths of its clergy hampered the operation of the Church and by extension its service as an ideological arm of the state. At the same time, the monarchy could

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not count on the traditional political and military apparatus to withstand the continued expansion of the Oromo deep into the Christian Kingdom and then to consolidate the Christian Kingdom. Thus, revival was sought in the church.

The rulers of the Christian Kingdom may have regarded an alliance with Roman Catholicism as a tactic to secure sufficient modern weaponry and training to restore its lost territories. In 1557, several Jesuit missionaries along with their bishop, Andreas de Oviedo, came to Ethiopia to expand Catholicism. The Jesuits promoted Catholic doctrine of two different and therefore separate, natures of Christ-divine and human, which was contrary to Monophysite theology of Ethiopian Orthodox Church. EOC taught that Christ, through union or *Tewahedo* had a perfect human nature inseparable from the divine. The leading members of the mission who played key role in efforts to evangelize the country include Joao Bermudez, Andreas de Oviedo, Pedro Paez and Alfonso Mendez.

The Jesuits began their evangelical effort with Emperor Gelawdewos (r.1540-59), hoping that the rest of the society would follow suit. Gelawdewos listened and engaged in doctrinal debates with the missionaries, but he was not prepared to give in. Instead, he defended the teachings of Orthodox Christianity in a document entitled the *Confession of Faith*. Minas and Sertse-Dengel, who succeeded Gelawdewos one after the other, were too busy fighting against the Oromo and the Turkish forces to engage the Jesuits in their courts. The Jesuits got relative success with Emperor Za-Dengel (r. 1603-4), who was said to have been sympathetic to Catholicism. Yet Za-Dengel's reign was too short for the Jesuits to effect the desired result. Za-Dengel was overthrown by Yaqob (r. 1598-1603; 1604-7), who met a similar fate in the hands of Susenyos (r. 1607-32).

Susenyos who was challenged by provincial leaders who refused to pay tribute, integrated the Oromo with the forces of the central government to consolidate his power and stabilize the country. Probably as a means to this, Susenyos sought for an alliance, which he got through the diplomatic advisory of Pedro Paez. In 1612, Susenyos converted to Catholicism and announced it to be state religion later in 1622. In the meantime, in 1617-8 several anti-Catholic voices mounted following the changes in liturgy and religious practices.

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Even worse, with the monarch's consent, another Spanish Jesuit, Afonso Mendez ordered reconsecration of Orthodox priests and deacons and rebaptism of the mass. Besides, he called for the suspension of Old Testament customs such as male circumcision and the observance of the *Sabbath*. Additional pronouncements include prohibition of preaching in Ge'ez, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, reverence for Ethiopian saints and the Ark of Covenant (*Tabot*). Meanwhile, he ordered eating pork, Latin Mass and Gregorian calendar to be adopted. The reforms led to revolts led by the ecclesiastics and the nobility. Even loyal followers of the emperor including his own son Fasiledas (r. 1632-67) were opposed to the changes initiated by the Jesuits.

After 1625, controversies, rebellions, repressions mounted and the state came to the verge of falling apart. In a battle in June 1632, large number of peasants lost their lives in one day. Finally, the emperor abdicated the throne in favor of Fasiledas, who reversed the Catholic transformation. Fasiledas restored the position of Orthodox Church as the state religion, expelled the Jesuits and punished local converts including Susenyos' brother and the most fervent supporter of Catholicism, Se'ela Kristos. Fearing another religious conflict, Emperor Fasiledas introduced a "closed-door" policy, which isolated the country from all Europeans for about a century and a half. Conversely, he initiated and adopted a policy of close diplomatic relations with the Islamic world and formed an alliance with the neighboring Muslim states to ensure that no European crossed into the Christian Kingdom. As a result, in 1647, he concluded an agreement with the Ottoman Pasha at Suakin and Massawa to the effect that the latter should block any European from entering in to his territory. By doing so, Fasiledas was able to restore peace and order. Ethiopia's diplomatic break from Europe remained effective until the beginning of the nineteenth century with the exception of secret visits by a French Doctor Charles Jacques Poncet and the Scottish traveler James Bruce in 1700 and 1769, respectively.

Yet, the Jesuit intervention triggered doctrinal divisions and controversy within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that was divided into disputant sects and reached its peak during the *Zemene Mesafint*. *Tewahedo* teaches *Hulet Lidet* (two births) of Christ: first in eternity as a Divine Being the eternal birth and second, born again from St. Mary into the world as a perfect man and perfect divinity united in one nature, thus *Tewahedo* (United). It was

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dominant in Tigray and Lasta. *Qibat* (Unction) was also developed from *Hulet Lidet* doctrine and accepted the eternal birth as the first birth of Christ, but claimed that at the moment of his incarnation, when he was born into the world, Holy Ghost anointed him. This sect was dominant in Gojjam. *Sost Lidet*/Three Births (*Ya Tsega Lij*/Son through Grace) taught that Christ was first born in eternity as divine being, was born again in the womb of St. Mary and anointed by Holy Ghost. This sect was dominant in Gonder and Shawa.

5.3. Population Movements

The movements of people from one place to another have played important roles in shaping the history of Ethiopia and the Horn. population movements occurred in the Horn due to various reasons, in varied scales and followed different directions. People moved from place to place due to pull and push factors, which can be summed up as natural and social. Specifically, people move out from their habitats in search of resources and better living environment in general. In Ethiopia and the Horn, the causes of the movements could be attributed to the region's long socio-political conditions involving military conflicts, drought and demographic factors.

Population movements of the medieval period had extensive effects including the integration of peoples across ethnic and religious lines. Major outcomes of population movements during the period under consideration include religious, ethnic and linguistic interactions and intermingling of peoples. Specifically, this has resulted in intermarriage of peoples, change of abode, original culture and evolution of new identities.

5.3.1. Population Movements of the Argoba, Afar, and Somali

The military conflict between the Christian Kingdom and the Sultanate of Adal in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries was partly responsible for the population movement of the Argoba, Afar and Somali. In addition, pressure on the environment was a major factor for the population movement. Their territories lay in the region where trade routes passed and hence were affected by the consequences of the military conflict. These peoples moved back and forth in response to the ongoing military conflict.

The Argoba: the Argoba were major agents of Islamic expansion, trade and Muslim state formation in the Horn. For instance, the sultanate of Shewa and Ifat were established by the

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Makhzumite and Walasma Dynasties respectively. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the sultanate of Shewa moved further to the east as the result of the pressure from the Christian Kingdom. The sultanate of Ifat, in which the Argoba were dominant, became the center of Muslim resistance. On the eve of the wars of Imam Ahmed al Ghazi, the Argoba joined the Afar and the Somali against the Christian Kingdom. The area inhabited by the Argoba was also a target of the expanding Christian Kingdom and was the major center of conflict. This was because the major caravan trade routes passed through Argoba territory. As a result, the Christian-Muslim rivalry and the conflicts thereof led to the destruction of sultanates and dispersion of the people. The enduring effect of the conflict can be observed from the fragmented settlement patterns of the people.

The Afar: before the sixteenth century, due to drought, the Afar moved towards the east until they reached the middle Awash. Trade routes linking the ports in the Horn passed through the Afar's territory. As a result, the region was the centre of competition between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim sultanates to control the trade routes. Besides being actors in the conflict, the conflict inevitably pressurized the Afar to move into different directions to avoid the risk of the conflicts. Their pastoral economy helped the Afar to survive the destructive effects of the wars of the sixteenth century..

The Somali: their territory lay in the region traversed by major trade routes during medieval period. Prior to the sixteenth century wars between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates, there was environmental pressure on Somali inhabited areas. The population movement of the Somali was a strong force behind the military strength of the Imam. However, the population movement of the Somali did not last for long as they returned to their home base following the defeat of Imam Ahmed in 1543.

5.3.2. *Gadaa* System and Oromo Population Movement (1522-1618)

A. The *Gadaa* System

The Oromo population movement of the sixteenth century cannot be better understood without considering the *Gadaa* system. The *Gadaa* system was an institution through which the Oromo socially organized themselves, administered their affairs, defended their territories, maintained law and order, and managed their economies. This section reflects on

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the operation of the *Gadaa* system in relation to the Oromo population movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Studies do not clearly indicate when and how the *Gadaa* system emerged. However, it is clear that for long the society organized their politics, economy, social, cultural, and religious affairs through the *Gadaa* institution. The account by Abba Bahrey indicates that during the early sixteenth century, the system fully functioned because of which the Oromo were well organized. Thus, it is reasonable to think that the Oromo had practiced the *Gadaa* system long before the sixteenth century movement.

Recent studies based on the *Gadaa* calendar and *Gadaa* centers suggest that the system evolved from the earlier Cushitic age-set social organization. Time computation and recording history was based on the eight-year segment of time. In the system, eight years represented one *Gadaa* period, 5-*gadaa* periods or 40 years represented one generation and nine generations represented an era. Accordingly, the earliest eras of *Gadaa* but still obscure were those of *Bidiri Dhoqqe*. Prior to the beginning of *Gadaa* Borana-Barentu around 1450 AD, the Oromo passed through known eras of *Taya*, *Tasaa*, *Munyo*, *Suftu*, *Maddile, Abroji*, *Dhittacha* and *Warra-Daye (warden)*, each of which survived for an era. Gadaa was interrupted and revitalized during various eras because of various internal and external factors. For instance, the Borana-Barentu *Gadaa* was instituted after interruption for nearly two generations. It was revived in 1450 at Madda Walabu that became the central *Chaffe* (assembly) and seat of the senior *Qallu* until 1900.

The *Gadaa* system constituted elements of democracy such as periodic succession and power sharing to prevent a one-man rule. Other principles of the system included representation of all lineages, clans and confederacies. It also served as a mechanism of socialization, education, maintenance of peace and order, and social cohesion. In addition, *Gadaa* constituted rules of *arara* (conflict resolution), *guma* (compensation), and *rakoo* (marriage).

The *Gadaa* system organized the Oromo society into age-grades and generation sets delineating members' social, political, and economic responsibilities. In the system, ten age-grades and five classes operated in parallel. The system provided a socio-political framework that institutionalized relationship between seniors and juniors and egalitarian relations among

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members of a grade. The system helped the members of age-sets to develop a consistent and stable sense of self and others. Sons joined the first grade as members of *Gadaa* class (generation class or set) forty years after their fathers and were initiated into the next higher grade every eight years. The following table shows a common version of age-grades and roles associated to them.

Table II: Age-grades and their roles

Gadaa-grade	Age	Roles
Dabale	birth-8 years	socialization
Game	9-16	
Folle	17-24	military training, agriculture etc
Qondala	25-32	military service
Raba-Dori	33-40	candidates for political power
Luba	41-48	leaders of *Gadaa* government
Yuba	49 to 80	senior advisors, educators and ritual leaders

Source: Gada Melba, *Oromiya (*Khartoum, 1988), p. 11.

The *gadaa/luba* assumed power for eight years. The head of the government was known as *Abba-Gadaa* literally "father of the period" who was assisted by several elected representatives from among the generation set. These included *Abba Bokku* (father of scepter), *Abba Chaffe* (head of the assembly), *Abba-Dula* (war leader), *Abba Sera* (father of law), *Abba Alanga* (judge), *Abba Sa'a* (father of treasury) and other councilors.

In the *Gadaa* system, the senior *Qallu (Abba Muda)* played indispensable roles in power transfer and legitimizing the ruling *gadaa* class. Women maintained their rights by the *Sinqe* institution, which helped them to form sisterhood and solidarity. Women from childhood to old age i.e. *guduru* (pre-pubescent), *qarre* (adolescent, ready for marriage), *kalale* (wives of *Luba* and *Yuba*) and *cifire* (wives of *Gadamojji*/above 80 years) were believed to have sacred power. They involved in occasions like power transfer, conflict resolution, thanks-giving and others. The *kalale* were also privileged to support and advise the ruling class.

The *Gadaa* system functioned by the cyclical power transfer from one *Gadaa* class to the next every eight years. With some minor differences in nomenclature in different parts of Oromo territories, the five *Gadaa* classes (generation sets) are listed below:

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Table III: The Five *Gadaa* Classes

Fathers	Sons
Melba	*Harmufa*
Mudena	*Robale*
Kilole	*Birmajii*
Bifole	*Mul'ata*
Michille	*Dulo*

Source: C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford trans. and eds., *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954).

B. The Oromo Population Movement (1522-1618)

A combination of natural and manmade factors caused the Oromo population movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Natural factors include demographic pressure and subsequent need for land to accommodate the growing human and livestock population. Furthermore, the conflict between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim Sultanates from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries might have pressurized mainly pastoral Oromo groups to leave the lands they inhabited for other areas.

In the early decade of the sixteenth century, when the population movement began, the Oromo were already organized under Borana and Barentu confederacies. The Oromo forces took northern direction and passed through a corridor between Mount Walabu and Lake Abbaya. When they reached half way between Lakes Abbaya and Hawassa, they took westward and penetrated across the Bilatte River to the southwest. Then they headed northwards to the lakes region of the Rift Valley.

From 1522 to 1618, the Oromo fought twelve *Butta* wars. Accordingly, the first *Gadaa* i.e *Melba* (1522-1530) fought and defeated Christian regiment Batra Amora led by Fasil and occupied Bali while *Mudena* (1530-8) reached the edge of Awash River. The *Kilole* (1538-46) controlled Dawaro after defeating Christian regiment Adal Mabraq while *Bifole* (1546-54) advanced to Waj and Erer. The *Michille* (1554-62) scored victory over Hamalmal's force at Dago, and Jan Amora forces as well as Adal led by Emir Nur Mujahiddin at Mount Hazalo. The *Harmufa* (1562-70) fought Minas (r.1559-63) at Qacina and Wayyata, occupied Angot, Ganzyi, Sayint etc.

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In 1574, Sartsa Dingil's (r.1563-97) cavalry led by *Azzaj* Halibo defeated *Robale gadaa* (1570-78) at Woyna Daga, but Robale recovered by defeating Zara'a Yohannis' force. The *Birmaji* (1578-86) controlled Ar'ine in Waj, crossed Jama to Wolaqa and overwhelmed the Daragoti regiment. The *Mul'ata* (1586-94) seized Damot, Bizamo, Gafat, Dambiya and Tigray.

In the early seventeenth century, the Dulo (1594-1602), *Melba* (1603-10), and *Mudena* (1610-18) expanded to West and Northern parts of the Horn of Africa while others like the Warday moved to Kenya and Bur Haqaba and Majertin in Somalia. In addition to the wars between the Christian Kingdom and Muslim Sultanates, the organization of the Oromo under the *Gadaa* system played crucial role in the success of the Oromo population movement.

In the course of their movement into various regions, different Oromo branches established *Gadaa* centers. Accordingly, *Oda* Nabee of Tulama, *Oda* Roba of Sikko-Mando (Arsi), *Oda* Bultum of Itu-Humabenna, *Oda* Bisil of Mecha and *Oda* Bulluq of Jawwi Mecha became major *Gadaa* centers. Other places, which became Gadaa centers, were Gayo of Sabbo-Gona, Me'e Bokko of Guji, *Oda* Dogi of Ilu, *Oda* Hulle of Jimma, *Oda* Garado of Waloo, etc. *Gadaa* leaders such as Dawe Gobbo of Borana, Anna Sorra of Guji, Makko-Bili of Mecha, Babbo Koyye of Jimma and others established *Gadaa* centers and laid down cardinal laws in their respective areas

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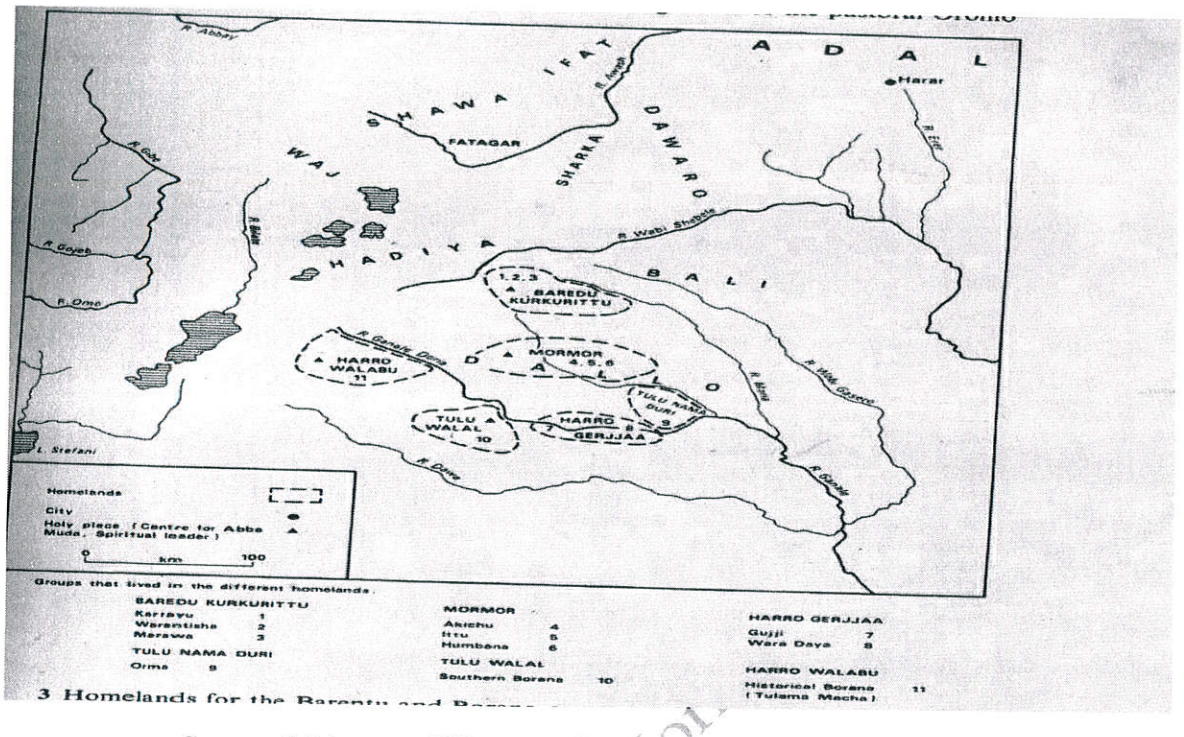
Map 5: *Gadaa* Centers



Source: Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia,* p.15.

However, various Oromo groups kept their relations through the office of *Abba Muda* (the father of anointment) seated at Madda Walabu and formed alliances during times of difficulty. Besides, they obeyed similar *ada* (culture) and *sera* (law) through sending their delegates to Madda-Walabu, the central *chaffe* until the pan-Oromo assembly was forbidden in 1900 due to the political influence of the Ethiopian state.

In due course, *Gadaa* devised effective resource allocation formula including land. Land holding system to regulate resource and their interaction among different clans is known as the *qabiyye* system. The system established rights of precedence (seniority) in possession of land. Accordingly, place names were given the names of pioneers as markers of *qabiyye* rights.

5.4. Interaction and Integration across Ethnic and Religious Diversities

The political, social, and economic processes of the medieval period were the major factors for the people's interactions across regions. Such interactions occurred during peace and conflict times. The cases in point were the trade contacts and conflicts to control trade routes,

religious expansion, and territorial expansion and population movements. One of the major consequences of the interactions in the medieval period particularly in the population movement of the sixteenth century was the integration of peoples across ethnic and religious diversities in Ethiopia and the Horn. Population movement of the period relatively covered extensive geographical areas in the region. It involved diverse ethnic groups, cultures, and religions from south to north and from east to west. It is apparent that territorial and religious expansion by the Christian kingdom diffused Christian tradition from north to the south. Similarly, the wars of Imam Ahmed and the population movements of the Argoba, the Afar and the Somali caused the expansion of Islam into the central parts of Ethiopia.

One consequence of the Oromo population movement was that it put an end to the wars between the Christian and Muslim states as well as the southward expansion of the Christian state. At larger scale, the Oromo contact with diverse peoples in the sixteenth century brought far-reaching integrations among peoples across ethnic and religious background. The Oromo integrated non-Oromo through two adoption mechanisms: *Guddifacha* and *Moggasa*. *Guddifacha* refers to the adoption of a child by a foster parent. In this system, the child enjoyed equal rights and privileges with a biological child. Likewise, M*oggasa* was a system of adopting non-Oromos commonly known as *Oromsu*. *Moggasa* was the practice of incorporation of individuals or groups to a clan through oath of allegiance with all the rights and obligations that such membership entailed. *Moggasa* was undertaken by the Abba Gadaa on behalf of the clan. The adopted groups gained both protection and material benefits. The process significantly contributed to the social cohesions, national integration, and the revival of long-distance trade.

The interactions also resulted in an exchange of socio-cultural values and institutions. A number of peoples in the neighborhood of the Oromo adopted *Gadaa* system and Oromo language. Likewise, the Oromo adopted and adapted cultures and traditions of the people with whom they came into contact. The case in point is the adoption of monarchical systems and the integration of the Oromo to the Christian and Muslim cultures. It is important to mention the rise of nobles in the northern Oromo in politics particularly during the Gondar period, *Zemene-Mesafint* and the making of modern Ethiopia.

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5.5. Peoples and States in Eastern, Central, Southern and Western Regions

It is not possible in the space of a brief teaching module such as this to provide an exhaustive detail of societies and states in eastern, central, southern, and western parts of the country in the period covered by this unit. Thus, this section explores the history of some of the states (as illustrations) in the period under consideration. Although there was no one criterion used to select the states, due regard has been given to balance the number of states selected from each region mentioned above. The selection of states for discussion also considered availability of sources and treatment in earlier sections.

5.5.1. Peoples and States in the East

Somali

The Somali people inhabited vast territory in the Horn. For long, the Somali practiced pastoral economy and moved between places for centuries possibly in search of sufficient pasture. Ibn Said (1214-86), an Arab geographer, noted that Merca town located in the southern Somali coast near Shabele River was a capital that brought large number of Somalis together during the thirteenth century. The songs celebrating King Yeshaq's (r. 1413-30) military success depicts that the Somali lived close to the Christian Kingdom. Somali contingents also played important role in the victories of the Sultanate of Adal against the Christian kingdom.

Historically, a council known as *shir* governed the society. The decision making process was highly democratic in which all-adult male were allowed equal access and participation. These councils at sub-clan, clan and inter-clan level provided a governing structure that acted as an enforcement of law and justice. The council governed wide-ranging affairs including resource allocation, marriage, trade and crime. As a component of *shir*, the *guurti* (a council of elders) was the highest political council mandated with resolving conflict and crisis.

Afar

The Afar predominantly lived in northeastern Ethiopia and in northern Djibouti, although some have also inhabited southern part of Eritrea. The Afar had an indigenous governance system known as *Makabanto*, which has some elements of democracy. The Afar people were

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first mentioned by Ibn Said. During the thirteenth century, they occupied the lowland territory near Bab el-Mandeb.

The land inhabited by the Afars was home for many historical cities such as Maduna and Abasa. Following the collapse of the power of Sultanate of Adal in the sixteenth century, the Afar established their sultanates like Awsa, Girrifo, Tadjourah, Rahaito and Gobad. Awsa Sultanate succeeded the earlier Imamate of Awsa in the middle Awash. The latter polity had come into existence in 1577, when Mohammed Jasa moved his capital from Harar to Awsa. At some point after 1672, Awsa declined and temporarily ended in conjunction with Imam Umar Din bin Adam's recorded ascension to the throne. The Sultanate was subsequently re-established by Kedafo around 1734, and was thereafter ruled by his Mudaito Dynasty. Primary symbol of the Sultan was silver baton. Awsa's economy mainly depended on Bati-Ginda'e trade route. Later it became center of Islamic learning led by preachers like Tola Hanfire.

Argoba

Early reference to the people of Argoba is insufficient. There are two versions on the origin of the people of Argoba. The first version holds that they descended from the followers of the Prophet Mohammed who came to the Horn of Africa and settled at Ifat. The second version claims that the origin of the Argoba is not related with Muslim-Arab immigrants. More plausibly, the Argoba are one of the ancient peoples in the region that accepted Islam very early from religious leaders who came from Arabia.

The Emirate of Harar

Harar is one of the earliest Muslim centers in the region of Ethiopia and the Horn. In the sixteenth century, Harar became the capital of Walasma of Adal replacing Dakar until 1577 when it was shifted to Awsa due to the pressure from the Oromo. Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim used Harar as a center from where he launched his campaigns into the Christian kingdom in 1527. Later during the reign of Emir Nur Mujahid, Harar became a walled city where the sultanate of the Harari developed.

In the mid seventeenth century, Emir Ali ibn Da'ud (r. 1647-62) in cooperation with the Oromo established a dynasty which was to rule for nearly two centuries and a half. It was

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strengthened by Amirs like Abdul Shakur (1783-94). The Amir's council, *Majilis* engaged in supervising Mosque land, *Waqf* and offering other assistance to the Amir. The emirate grew in importance to be a steady center of Islamic culture and power. Its economic power grew as it controlled trade routes from the Gulf of Aden ports of Zeila and Berbera. Its authority was established over the surrounding Oromo and Somali through trade, inter-marriage, and expansion of Islamic teachings. Egyptians were attracted by such a prominence that they sent an expeditionary force in 1875 and controlled the emirate for nearly a decade. Although it was later restored, and ruled by Amir Abdulahi, as the last emir of the Sultanate for two years, Emperor Menilek's expansion to the region shortly followed in 1887.

5.5.2. Peoples and States in Central and South Central Parts

The Kingdom of Shewa

The Kingdom of Shewa was formed by a Menz ruler Negasi Kristos (r.1696-1703) and eventually controlled districts like Asandabo, Debdabo, Mafud and Yifat. The second king was *Merid Azmatch* Sebestie/Sebastyanos (r.1703-18). Abuye/ Abiyye (1718-45) made Haramba, his capital and tried to subjugate the surrounding Oromo before he was killed by the Karrayu Oromo. In addition to his unsuccessful attempts to control the Afar and Abitchu Oromo, Amaha Iyesus/ Amayyes (r.1745-75) declared authority over Bulga, Efrata, Menz and Tegulet with his capital at Doqaqit which later shifted to Ankober. Asfa-Wosen (r.1775-1808) conquered Antsokia, Asbo, Gedem, Gishe, Merhabete, Morat and Shewa Meda. The dynasty became very strong under *Negus* Sahle-Sellasie (r.1813-47), the grandfather of Emperor Menilek II. During his reign, many travelers visited Shewa and he even signed "treaty of friendship and commerce" with the British in 1841.

Shewa's economy was mainly based on agriculture supplemented by trade and craft. Near the capital, Ankobar, there was an important trade center in Aleyu Amba administered by the Shewan court.

Gurage

The Gurage are divided into the Western and Northern Gurage. The first are also known as Sebat Bet Gurage and include: Chaha, Muher, Ezha, Gumer (Inamor, Enner, Endegegna and

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Gyeto). The latter are variously known as Kistane, Aymallal or Soddo Gurage. Additional groups included Dobbi, Gadabano and Masqan. The staple crop in Gurage land is *enset*.

The Gurage had traditional system of governance developed over the centuries. It is known as the Yajoka Qicha among the Sebat Bet and the Gordanna Sera among the Kistane. There was, however, no centralized leadership. Power was vested in clan or lineage groups. The descent groups displayed corporate rights, obligations, and influence.

Kambata

By about 1550-70, four communities of separate origin coalesced to form the contemporary state of Kambata which means, "this is the place" (where we live-as the Kambata believe in). The first one, Kambata in the narrow sense, had its original homeland around Mount Hambericho in the heartland of Kambata territory. The other three namely the Dubamo, Donga and Tembaro trace their homeland from Sidama highlands.

If the above processes led to the formation of the nucleus of the state, the ethno-genesis of Kambata also benefitted from Omotic and Semitic peoples who moved into the region at different times. Emperor Yeshak (r.1413-30) annexed Kambata proper and controlled the area between Omo and Bilate Rivers, which he incorporated into the Christian Ethiopian Empire. In 1532, the region was captured by Imam Ahmed's army, which furthered the interaction of peoples. At the end of the sixteenth century, the groups were recognized as and conscious of the name Kambata related to one of the seven dominant clans (Kambata Lamala) in the region. The people were *ensete* farmers sharing similar culture and speaking the same language called Kambatissa, which belongs to the Highland East Cushitic family together with Qabena, Halaba, Hadiya, Sidama, Gedeo and Burji groups.

The Kambata had a traditional administrative institution called the Hambericho Council. The council had seven members each representing the seven clans in the region. With a king at the top, the council ruled Kambata until the late nineteenth century.

Hadiya

The origin of the state of Hadiya goes back to the thirteenth century. It was mentioned in the Kebre-Negest (*Glory of the Kings*) and it referred to the area west of the Islamic states in the

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federation of Zeila. The people were heterogeneous both linguistically and culturally. Semitic-speaking agricultural people dominated north of the state while the southern part was largely inhabited by Cushitic-speaking pastoral communities. There was a considerable Muslim population. By about 1332, the ruler of the Christian kingdom, Amde-Tsion, subjugated Hadiya after defeating its ruler, Amano who supported by a Muslim "prophet" Bel'am aligned with the then leader of Ifat, Sabraddin to confront the Christian force.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, Hadiya's political importance was considerable with sizable population and vast territory. In 1445, a Hadiya king called Mahiqo rebelled against Emperor Zara-Yaqob (r.1434-68) and was consequently replaced by his uncle Bamo. To stabilize the situation, Zara-Yaqob made a political marriage. Accordingly, Princess Elleni, from Hadiya, who became an important historical figure, married Emperor Zara-Yaqob. Another Hadiya leader, Garad Aze refused to pay tribute to Emperor Sartsa-Dengel (r.1563-98), but was suppressed in 1568/9.

The relations between Hadiya and the Christian Kingdom was interrupted following the wars between the latter and Adal and the Oromo population movement until Hadiya's incorporation into the Imperial state in the late nineteenth century. After these two major historical events especially the latter, Hadiya's population became more diverse. However, descendants of the old Hadiya can be traced from four different linguistic clusters: the Oromo, the Sidama, the Kabena and Alaba, and the Hadiya proper with its sub-groups-the Mareko, Lemu, Soro, Shashogo and Badowacho. As with the Kambata and Sidama, the Hadiya language belongs to the Highland East Cushitic family and their languages are intelligible to members of these ethnic groups.

5.5.3. Peoples and States in the South

Sidama

Historically, the Sidama have been living in the southern parts of Ethiopia occupying lowlands of about 1500 m a.s.l in the Great East Africa Rift Valley that cut through Lakes Hawasa and Abaya up to 3000 m a.s.l in the eastern Sidama highlands of Arbegona, Bansa and Arroressa districts. Agriculture, although practiced traditionally, remained the basis of

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Sidama's economy. *Enset* and coffee are Sidama's important food and cash crops respectively.

The Sidama had an indigenous system of governance led by the *Mote* (king). The *Mote* exercised political and administrative authority in consultation with the council of elders called *Songo*. *Songo* members raised any agenda for discussion within the council and submitted their decisions to the *Mote* for approval. Although there was no written constitution, rules were known by heart through generations and practiced accordingly.

The cultural and ritual leader in Sidama society was the *Woma*. He was selected for his ability as a peacemaker, bodily perfection, oratorical ability, wisdom and caution. The *Woma* could not participate in war or cattle raiding as he was considered a man of peace. The *Woma* handled cultural matters such as offering sacrifices to the spirits. He also performed other rituals such as circumcision and marriage.

Sidama society was divided into generation-sets called *Luwa*. The system had five grades each lasting for eight years. These are *Darara, Fullassa, Hirbora*, *Wawassa* and *Mogissa*. Candidates for *Luwa* received a five-month military training and war songs like *gerarsha* under the leadership of the *gaden* with his deputy called *Ja'lawa*. The *gaden* settled disputes within his *Luwa*, besides handling the defense of Sidama society together with the *Mote*.

Another important institution of Sidama society is *Seera*. *Seera* was the social constitution of the Sidama people governing social life based on the Sidama moral code, *halale* (the ultimate truth) to judge the right and wrong. Although it was not written and defined with strict enforcement mechanisms, people abide by the rules of *halale* to avoid curse or ostracization by the society.

Gedeo

Contradictory traditions exist regarding the origin of the Gedeo people. The dominant tradition relates the ancestors of the Gedeo to Daraso, who was the older brother of Gujo (father of Guji Oromo). Accordingly, the seven major Gedeo clans descended from the seven sons of Daraso. The clans were grouped in two houses, the first being the *shole batte* (senior house) where the first four clans belonged including more than 25 sub-clans and the second

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called *sase batte* (junior house) where the last three belonged having 10 sub-clans. Each clan was exogamous and was assigned for particular duty such as ritual, traditional medicine or leadership.

The Gedeo had a culture called *baalle*, a traditional governance system that worked with age classes and ranking. The *baalle* had seven grades with a 10-year period each creating a 70-year cycle. *Sasserogo* was a federation of three territories; Sobbho, Ributa and Rikuta sharing one *Abba Gadaa* who leaves office every eight years to be replaced by a new holder with the next age set at *baalle* ceremony. It was at this ceremony that all positions ranging from the top, *Abba Gada* down to *Hayitcha* were assumed. Like the neighboring Sidama, with whom they shared a very close language, their economy was based on the cultivation of *enset*.

Konso

The name Konso is invariably used to refer one of the ancient peoples in Ethiopia and the Horn who spoke *affa Konso* (Konso language) and their land. The literal meaning of the term is a "heavily forested hill/ area." A century ago the highlands of Konso, which was covered by dense forest, had been the traditional home of Konso people while the low-lying environment along Sagan and Woyito river valley served as hunting grounds. Konso attracted the attention of local and international researchers interested in human evolution, as it is one of the earliest human settlement sites in the world.

Agriculture was and remains to be the major economic activity of the Konso. Farmers practiced a fairly balanced and integrated system of specialized agricultural technology. The location of mainland Konso within mosquito infested hot and dry lowlands at the edge of the Great East African Rift Valley led farmers to adopt intensive agriculture. Farmers combined crop production with cattle breeding. At the same time, they adopted soil conservation techniques notably the construction of terraces, which proved helpful to convert rugged and hilly areas into permanent cultivation. Farmers were also adept at selecting plant varieties that withstood harsh climatic conditions. Such complex agricultural practices enabled farmers to produce sufficient food on small plot of land for their sustenance. Besides agriculture, Konso's economy depended on bee keeping and craftworks. All of these activities attest the ingenuity of local adaptation strategies.

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Until the late nineteenth century, the Konso people lived in walled villages (*paletas*) which were further divided into wards called *Kanta*. There was no central authority who acted as sovereign power over the three regions. Each village was ruled by a council of elders called *hayyota* who were selected through direct participation of male members of the village. Membership to the council was not hereditary but rotated every eighteen years.

At the core of the socio-political organization of the Konso appear to be the clan or lineage group and generation set, *Tselta*.The Konso were divided into nine exogamous clans namely Toqmaleta, Elayta, Saudata, Pasanta, Kertita, Ishalayta, Mahaleta, Tikisayta and Argamyta. The *Tselta* had fixed cycle of years starting from birth, although they varied across villages-eighteen in Karat, nine in Takati and five in Turo. The major function of the generation set was informing the responsibilities expected of each age group.

5.5.4. Peoples and States in Southwestern Part

Wolayta

The name Wolayta denotes a specific ethnic group in southwestern Ethiopia and their powerful kingdom, which first emerged as a state in the thirteenth century. According to local traditions, before the emergence of Wolayta as a political unit, the area was inhabited by different communities such as the Badia, Badiagadala and Aruja. The state flourished in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of successful wars that the Wolayta fought against their neighbors and the material, human and territorial gains thereof. At the apex of the social and political hierarchy was the *Kawo* (king), assisted by a council of advisors. From the thirteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, two successive dynasties ruled Wolayta: the Wolayta-Malla and the Tigre. Founded in the thirteenth century by Motalami, the Wolayta-Malla seems to have ruled until the end of the fifteenth century. It was then superseded by the Tigre dynasty, so called because it was supposedly founded by Tigreans from northern Ethiopia.

The land of Wolayta is known for its fertility and moderate climate, with green vegetation cover for the most part of the year. All land was nominally owned by the king who granted it to his dependents. In practice, land relationships were ordered according to three basic principles of social organization i.e. kinship, polity and social status. Accordingly, rights over

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land were vested in the lineage group, the crown (royal estate) and the nobility. There were also communal lands allocated for grazing and social gatherings to which all members of the society except artisans had equal access. The king rewarded people with land on grounds of gallant deeds in battle and other important contributions to the state. By grants of land or by threats of dispossession the reigning monarch ensured loyalty to the state. Except those who worked on the royal estate, landholders paid tribute to the king. The dominant food crop was *enset* (*Enset Ventricosum*).

Kafa

According to traditions, this powerful kingdom emerged in the fourteenth century. Around mid seventeenth century, the state had come to prominence. The ruling Minjo dynasty and the medieval kingdom of Ennarya had close contact. The Oromo expansion might have forced the ruling house of Ennarya to flee south of the Gojeb which as a result brought Christianity and the royal title *tato* to Kafa.

As with a number of Cushitic and some Semitic peoples of the south, Kafa's economy was based on the cultivation of *enset* on peasant farms supported by trade. Besides working on their land, peasants rendered free labor service and tilled royal estates with the support of slaves who were acquired through raiding or trading, or as payment for debt. As far as trade is concerned, a prosperous commerce took place with Oromo states of the Gibe region. Major trade items, such as musk, coffee, slaves, Ivory, gold, honey-wax, and civet were exported via markets like Tonkolla, Tiffa, Qeya etc.

From the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, the kingdom expanded to Bonesho, Mashengo, Maji, Nao, She and Chara. At the apex of the administration of the kingdom was the *Tato* with his major political center at Bonga. Another seat of power was Andarcha, seven miles to southeast. The *Tato* was assisted by a council of seven advisors called *Mikrecho*. The *Mikrecho* served to moderate the power of the king but they played important roles in succession as well.

The Kafa had a tradition of digging deep trenches called Kuripo as defensive barrier. The Gojeb also served as natural protection against external invasion and it might have contributed to their relative independence until 1897.

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Yem

The Yem state was located along the eastern banks of the Gibe or to the northeast of the Kafa kingdom. Yem's economy combined agriculture, trade and crafts. Initially, an indigenous dynasty called Dida or Halmam-Gamma ruled Yem from its palace in Dudarkema/Zimarma near Oya, in the vicinity of Bor Ama Mountain. Besides being at the top of the political ladder, the Amno (king) of Yem acted as a chief priest with attributes of divinity. A state council of 12 members named *Astessor* with its chairperson *Waso* assisted the *Amno* in administering the state. *Erasho* were the provincial governors and they were responsible for digging ditches called *bero* and erecting nearly fifty-meter wooden or iron pillars at the center of the kingdom around Brisi Bita so that the war father, the *Nomiaw*, could patrol the surroundings. Special messengers, *Wosi* carried orders from *Amno* down to district chiefs, *Gagna* and vice versa. In the fourteenth century, the last King Oyokam/Amo Dasha was overthrown by people from the north who founded a new dynasty called *Mowa* (*Howa)* with its center at Angari. In the nineteenth century, the neighboring state of Jimma Abba Jifar tried to control the Yem which itself was absorbed into the imperial state of Ethiopia under Emperor Menilek II towards the end of the century.

Gamo

Historically, the Gamo inhabited areas from Lakes Chamo and Abaya to the Gughe Mountain and beyond. Gamo's physical landscape can be divided into two: the *geze* (highland) and the *bazo* (lowland). The highlands were densely populated while people who escaped coercion by the state at the political center largely settled the lowlands which also served as hunting fields. A set of interrelated indigenous laws called the *Woga* defined land-use in the Gamo highlands. The laws had their origin in a belief that everything was connected and bound in a delicate balance. Together they formed a natural resource management system that governed everything from interpersonal relationships to the conservation and preservation of pasture, forest, soil, and water.

The cultivation of *enset* had been central to the subsistence of Gamo highlands while maize and sweet potato were staple food crops in the lowlands. Other crops grown in the highlands included barely, wheat, *teff*, peas, beans and cabbage. Besides farming, most farmers kept

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cattle for food, farming and manure, which they needed for successful agriculture. Craft making, pot making, tanning and metalworking were other modes of the subsistence system. These people had developed their own indigenous knowledge and technologies in manufacturing different types of tools and weapons, traditional musical and funeral instruments, weaving colorful textiles etc.

The first mention of the Gamo in written records dates back to the fifteenth century in the praise songs of king Yishak (r.1413-30). The song mentioned the Gamo as one of the tributary states to the monarch. The Gamo maintained relative autonomy from control by the Christian Kingdom after war with the Muslim sultanates weakened the latter. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Gamo lived in scattered settlements and organized in different communities called *dere*. The *dere* were politically autonomous villages (units) but shared three essential features. These were: 1) each *dere* had *kawo* (hereditary ruler) who also offered sacrifices and symbolized the unity of the people. 2) every *dere* had its own initiates called *halaqa* and; (3) every *dere* had its own assembly place called *dubusha*, where communal matters were discussed and disputes solved.

Access to politico-ritual status among the Gamo people was made possible through initiation or election and *baira*, a system of seniority. The two systems functioned both in opposition to each other as well as complementarily. Through initiation or election the *dulata* (assembly) elected married men to positions that were known by different names from one *dere* to another. In some *dere* it was called *halaqa*, in others it was known by the name *huduga* or *maga*. Election to this office was open to all married men and accorded representatives with provisional political authority. The *dulata* had an institutional authority to give decisions on different social, political and many other important matters. The assembly had also the power to impose sanctions as penalty on individuals or groups who committed serious crimes or violated the community's social regulations and cultural values.

The second system, the *baira*, was ascribed and largely based on genealogical seniority according to primogeniture. The Gamo people were distributed in agnatic clans each having a system of individual genealogical hierarchy. The *baira* (senior) of the clan had a privilege over lineage members. The *baira* made animal sacrifice on behalf of their juniors at all levels

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of the community. The senior sacrificer of the *dere* is the *kawo*. The concept of *kawo* refers to the first rank status, with variable attributes and he was legitimatized by birth and primogeniture. The *kawo* represented the unity of *dere* and played an important role in relations with the outside world.

Dawuro

Dawuro's topography mostly is mountainous and plateau at the central, and lowland and plain at Gojeb and Omo river basins. The land is divided into three climatic zones. These are *geziya* (highland), *dashuwa* (mid-altitude) and *gad'a* (lowland). Such climatic conditions enriched Dawuro with a variety of tree species and natural vegetation/forest. The livelihood of Dawuro people is based on mixed agricultural activities. The language of Dawuro people is Dawurotsuwa, a sub-group of the Omotic family.

Historically, Dawuro land had been inhabited by three major clans namely *Malla*, *Dogolla*, and *Amara* which altogether were regarded as *Gok'as* or *K'omos*. The area was also home for people that came from neighboring Omotic states such as Wolayta, Kucha, Gamo, Gofa, and Kafa and from places like Gondar, Gojjam, Tigray and Shewa. A political alliance through royal marriages was one important factor that facilitated the movement of people from neighboring territories into Dawuro.

By about 1700, the *Kawuka* dynasty had created a big state from a great number of petty chieftainships on the territory between the Gojeb and Omo rivers in the north, east and south and the Kafa high mountains in the west. Among the rulers of the *Kawuka* dynasty of Dawuro, Kati Irashu and Kati Halala were famous. Kati Halala was the grandson of the king of Kafa. During his reign, Dawuro incorporated Konta. He is known for his stone fortifications, which he oversaw to defend his territories from outsiders.

Ari

The Omo River basin had been home to different groups of people since early times. These included the Ari, Dasenech, Tsemayi, Erbore, Hamer, Surma, Meniet, Nyangatom, Bodi, Male, etc. Major economic activities in the region were sedentary agriculture, pastoralism and handcrafts.

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The language of the Ari people is called *Araf*, which is one branch of the Omotic language family. The people were sedentary agriculturalist. The society was organized into ten independent clan based chiefdoms. Hereditary clan chief known as *Babi* headed each of these chiefdoms. The clan chief was entitled with both political and ritual authorities over the people of his respective domain. The clan chief was assisted by officially appointed prominent figures in the administration of the political unit. The assistants included *Godimis* (religious leaders), *Zis* (village heads) and *Tsoikis* (intelligence agents of *Babi*).

5.5.5. Peoples and States in the West

Berta and Gumuz

The Berta people inhabit the present Beni-Shangul Regional State. The earliest record of Berta settlement in this region dates from the sixteenth century. The Berta people speak the Berta language as their mother tongue. It is a tonal language classified as a branch of the Nilo-Saharan linguistic group. In addition to the Berta, the Beni-Shangul is home for the Gumuz. They are mentioned by the Scottish explorer James Bruce. He notes that they hunted with bows and arrows, a custom that survives today. The Gumuz speak the Gumuz language, which belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family. It is subdivided in several dialects. Islamic influence had been strong on the Berta and other Nilotes because of their trade and social contacts with the northern Sudan.

Anywa

Historically, the Anywa predominantly inhabited areas along Pibor, Sobat, Gila, Akobo, Agwei, Oboth, Baro, and Alwero Rivers on the western borderlands of the present-day Gambella region. The people speak Dha-anywaa, a sub-branch of the Nilo- Saharan language family. The Anywa had an indigenous administrative system whereby each village lived under a chief called Kuaari who along with the nobles, Nyiye, managed the distribution of farm and grazing fields, settled disputes etc with the community. Although local traditions mention a certain person by the name Oshoda as the founding father of the Anywa, the administration of the territory was not centralized. Economically, they are engaged in small-scale cultivation, fishing and hunting. While most Anywa practiced Christianity, they also believed in traditional religion.

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Nuer

Historically, the Nuer lived in areas that extended across the savannas and marshes of the Bahr el-Ghazal and the Upper Nile regions of the Sudan. Since the nineteenth century, they had been largely settled in the plains of Gambella along the Sobat and Baro Rivers and parts of the Sudan. The mainstay of Nuer's economy was cattle breeding supplemented by crop production. The Nuer had developed a rather complex spiritual culture around their cattle, which were used as bride wealth as well. The Nuer had an age-set system combining social and political functions. Nuer boys had to pass through a rigorous test and a series of rites connected with it before they were initiated into adulthood.

Majang

The Majang formed the southern end of the Nilo-Saharan settlement that covered the escarpment of the Oromo inhabited highlands to the Baro plains. Linguistic evidence relates the origin of the Majang to the Boma plateau in South Sudan. Gradually, they moved northwards and settled in forested areas of western Ethiopia. By mid twentieth century, their settlement extended to areas near Dembi-Dollo in the north. Economically, the Majang practiced shifting cultivation and animal husbandry. Other economic activities of the Majang include beekeeping, hunting and fishing.

The Kunama

The Kunama people also called the Baza are one of the ancient inhabitants of western Eritrea on the Gash and Tekkeze Rivers and in today's northwestern and western Tigray. The Arab traveller al-Ya'qubi in 872 A.D. mentions the kingdom of Baza, which is a self-designation of the Kunama.

The Kunama had a customary institution called *sanga-anene* mandated with the administration of the society. Other responsibilities of the *sanga-anene* included granting asylum to new comers in the sanctuary of their compounds and performing rituals as part of reconciliation process in case of homicides. The office of the *sanga-anene* was held by male members of the society. The office was transmitted hereditarily from the eldest brother to the next born through matrilineal line.

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The mainstay of Kunama's economy is mixed agriculture. Agriculture is based on the use of hoe, spades, sickles and the ox (camel)-drawn plough. Signs of past practices of terraced agriculture are still visible in some areas of the Kunama. The staple crop among the Kunama is sorghum (*kina*), which also has a ceremonial value. Other crops grown are millet (*borta*or *beca*), pulses and maize (*afokina*). The Kunama also keep livestock mainly goats, sheep, oxen, and camels.

5.6. The Gondarine Period and Zemene-Mesafint

5.6.1. The Gondarine Period

A. Political Developments

The period of Gondar began from the reign of Emperor Sartsa-Dengle when the political center of Ethiopian emperors shifted to Gondar area. Emperor Sartsa-Dengle established royal camp at Enfranz in 1571. Emperor Susenyos also tried to establish his capital near Gondar in such places as Qoga, Gorgora, Danqaz and Azazo. Gondar was founded in 1636 when Fasiledas established his political seat there.

Gondar achieved its glory during the reigns of its first three successive emperors: Fasiledas (r.1632–67), Yohannes I (r.1667-82) and Iyasu I (r.1682- 1706). Among the major reforms during these periods were the restoration of Orthodox Church as state religion, and the establishment of a royal prison at Amba Wahni to solve problems stemming from power rivalry. Emperor Yohannes I and his council established a separate quarter for Muslims at Addis Alem. His successor, Iyasu I, reformed land tenure system, introduced a system of land measurement in Begemder, taxes, and customs, and revised the *Fetha Negest* (the civil code).

The assassination of Iyasu the Great by a faction under the leadership of his own son, Tekle-Haymanot, ushered in political instability in Gondar involving intrigues and poisoning of reigning monarchs. Tekle-Haymanot was crowned in 1706 before the death of his father and was in turn assassinated by Tewoflos in 1708. Tewoflos was again killed in 1711 by Yostos, who was also poisoned in 1717 and replaced by Dawit III, who himself was poisoned and replaced by Bakafa in 1721. Bakafa tried to restore stability with the support of his followers

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and his wife *Etege* Mentewab until he was incapacitated in 1728. The Gondarine Period also witnessed increased involvement of the Oromo in Imperial politics and the army as will be discussed shortly.

From 1728 to 1768, *Etege* Mentewab together with her brother *Ras*-Bitwaded Walda Le'ul (1732-1767) dominated the Gondarine court politics. Walda Le'ul was influential during the reigns of Iyasu II (1730-55) and Iyoas (1755-69). Following his death in 1767, *Etege* Mentewab was challenged by Wubit Amito, her daughter-in-law from Wollo. To counter the growing power of the Wollo Oromo in the royal court, Mentewab sought the alliance of *Ras* Mika'el Sehul of Tigray who was politically astute and militarily powerful. Mika'el Sehul succeeded in stabilizing the situation but refused to return to Tigray although demanded by Iyoas. This was followed by the killing of Iyoas and his replacement by an old man Yohannes II by *Ras* Mika'el. Soon *Ras* Mika'el killed Yohannes II and put his son Takla-Haymanot II (1769-77) on power. This marked the onset of the period of *Zemene-Mesafint* (1769-1855).

B. Achievements of the Gondarine Period

Gondar became the center of state administration, learning, commerce, education, art, and crafts for more than two centuries. The first three kings were successful not only in political affairs but also in cultural developments. Gondar had great influence on the country's cultural developments. This enabled Gondar to repeat the splendors of Aksum and Lalibela. The cultural achievements of the period led some writers to describe Gondarine period in history as Ethiopian Renaissance.

Architecture: when Gondar served as a permanent capital, for about one hundred fifty years, Ethiopian kings built significant secular buildings like castles, bridges, residences, bath, library, towers, fortifications and churches of various size and shapes.

In the city's compound, in addition to the most impressive building known as *Fasil Gemb*, there are different palaces corresponding to Emperor Fasiledas, Yohannes I, Iyasu I, Dawit III, Bakafa and Regent Queen Mentewab. The Gondarine style of architecture may have started before the reign of emperor Fasiledas during the reign of Emperor Sartsa-Dengle at

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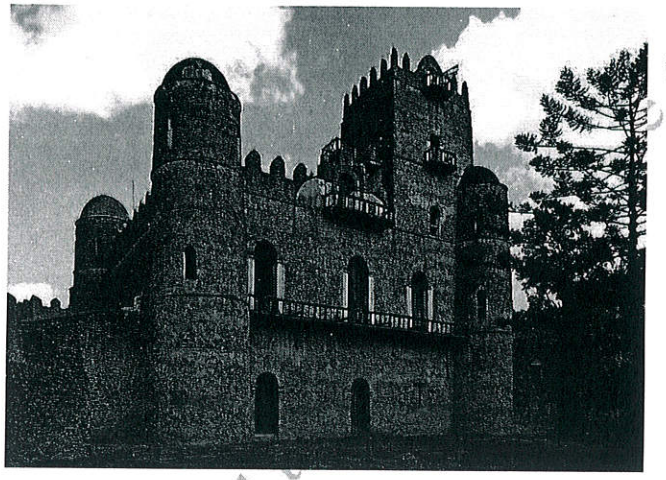
about 1586, as could be seen from his palace at Guzara near Enfranz. The architectural styles of Fasiledas castle usually have two strides and almost square, circular domed corner towers. Not only castles, but the building of bridges are said to be predate the reign of Fasiledas. Emperor Sartsa-Dengel is said to have built a very fine bridge near his palace at Guzara, and Emperor Susenyos likewise erected a bridge over Blue Nile at Alata.

Picture 4: Fasilidas's Castle in Gondar



Source: https://www.britannica.com/place/Gondar#/media/1/238349/11150

Painting: this period is known as for the production of a wealth of religious paintings on manuscripts and on wood, ornaments, weapons and other accessories. The churches built by Queen Mentwab were known for their beautiful paintings, cross and art works.

Literature: The Imperial and provincial scriptoria produced a great number of manuscripts. Besides the Gospels, the Miracles of Mary, the Lives of Ethiopian Saints and the Litanies, many other kinds of illuminated manuscripts were also produced. Gondar is also known for its traditional medicine, music and poetry.

Trade and Urbanization: Gondar was a commercial center that connected long distance trade routes of the southern region with Massawa and Metemma in the Ethio-Sudan border. Gold and salt were used as medium of exchange. Daily markets were commonly held in the city. With spread of urbanization, the city became residences of foreign communities like Indians, Greeks and Armenians. The city had an estimated 60,000-70,000 population. In

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addition to its political and commercial importance, it served as religious center of Christians, Muslims and Bete-Israel. Besides, it served as the center of Ethiopian Orthodox Church until the middle of the nineteenth century. Many of the Orthodox churches which served as education centers, known for their excellence in teaching *aqwaqwam*, liturgical chanting were centered at Gondar.

5.6.2. The Period of *Zemene-Mesafint* (1769-1855)

Zemene-Mesafint refers to the period when actual political power was in the hands of different regional lords. The period lasted from the time Ras Michael Sehul "assassinated" king Iyoas in 1769 to 1855, when Kasa Hailu was crowned as Tewodros II.

Ras Mika'el who was a king-maker in the period attempted to dominate the other regional lords. These measures made him highly unpopular because of which coalitions of lords of Gojjam, Amhara, Lasta and Wollo fought and defeated him at the battle of Sarba-Kussa in 1771. Under the reigns of his successors, there was relative stability but several regional lords evolved. The main political regions that *Zemene-Mesafint* lords ruled were Tigray, Semen, Dembiya, Begemedir, Lasta, Yejju, Wollo, Gojjam and Shewa. When compared to each other the "Yejju dynasty" was the leading power during the Zemen-Mesafint with the center at Debre-tabor. Ali Gwangul (Ali I or Ali Talaq) was considered as the founder of "Yejju dynasty" in 1786.

Yejju rule reached its zenith under Gugsa Marso (r.1803-1825) who made incessant struggle against *Ras* Walde-Silassie of Enderta and *Dejjazmatch* Sabagadis Woldu of Agame. In 1826, Gugsa's successor, Yimam (r.1825-8), defeated Hayle-Mariam Gebre of Simen. Maru of Dambiya was also killed at the battle of Koso-Ber in 1827. The period of *Zemene Mesafint* was brought to an end by Kasa Hailu of Qwara through a series of battles that lasted from 1840s to 1855.

Major features of *Zemene-Mesafint* include:

- absence of effective central government;
- the growing power and influence of the regional warlords;
- the domination of Yejju lords over other lords in northern Ethiopia;

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- rivarly and compeition among regional lords to assume the position of king-maker;
- establishment of fragile coalitions to advance political interests;
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church was unable to play its traditional role of unifying the state due to doctrinal disputes;
- Revival of foreign contacts that ended the "closed-door" policy.

In addition to the above features, there were developments in terms of literature, arts, architecture etc during the period.

Learning Activities

- Why was Imam's force successful at the battle of Shimbra Kure?
- Why did Portugal and Ottoman Turkey involve in the domestic affairs of the Horn in the sixteenth century?
- What were the major effects of the conflicts between the Christian kingdom and Muslim Sultanates?
- What was the 'close door policy' and how did it affect Ethiopia's relations with the outside world?
- Discuss the process and outcome of the Jesuits' evangelical activities in Ethiopia.
- Why do you think Susenyos adopted Catholicism as a state religion?
- Discuss the role of the *Chewa* system in the intermingling of peoples along the borders between the Christian and Muslim inhabited areas.
- Discuss the causes of population movements in the sixteenth century?
- Explain the contributions of the Oromo, Argoba, Afar and Somali population movements to Ethiopia's present socio-cultural conditions?
- What was the purpose of the *buttaa* ceremony and how did it function in the context of the Oromo population movement in the sixteenth century?
- What is the *Gadaa* system and how did it function in Oromo society?
- Which values of the *Gadaa* system contributed to social integration?
- Discuss the similarities and differences between *Gadaa*, *Luwa* and *Baalle* systems of the Oromo, Sidama and Gedeo respectively.
- Discuss the evolution and political administration of the following polities:

  Kambata

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Wolayta

The Emirate of Harar

- Discuss the circumstances that gave rise to the Zemene-Mesafint.
- List the major features of the Zemene-Mesafint and analyze how such conditions affect societies?
- Explain key developments during the period of the *Yejju* dynasty.
- Briefly describe major achievements of the Gondarine period.

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UNIT SIX

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN, 1800-1941 (10 hours)

Introduction

This unit surveys the history of the region from the early nineteenth century to 1941. The unit begins in 1800 as many of the states in the southern half of the country emerged or flourished around this period. The unit tries to explain continuous and complex interactions and external relations that shaped the region's modern history. The region experienced the expansion of trade, state formations, territorial expansion and creation of modern Ethiopia, modernization, and major battles fought to repulse foreign aggression. In the nineteenth century, several autonomous and semi-autonomous states existed at different stages of socio-economic and political developments. The economic activities ranged from hunting and gathering to a well-developed agriculture and trade. The political organizations of some of the states were monarchical system in nature while some others followed political systems of different kinds. Despite the independent existence of peoples and states, they maintained strong economic, social and political relations with one another that created strong interdependence in the region. It is apparent that territorial expansion of the late nineteenth century was made to control lucrative resource bases and trade routes and thereby form a strong Ethiopian state. Simultaneously, Ethiopia and the Horn fought major battles against the imposition of colonial rule and resisted foreign domination as can be seen from the patriotic resistance. This unit also explains the role of various personalities in confrontations against colonial powers.

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Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- point out the different states that existed in Ethiopia and the Horn before the formation of modern Ethiopia;
- analyze the political system, culture and economy of the autonomous and semi-autonomous peoples and states of the period;

- discuss the significances of agriculture and trade in the economy of the region;
- explain the process of territorial expansion of the Shewan Kingdom that led to the formation of modern Ethiopia; and
- appreciate the Ethiopian resistance against foreign powers.

Unit Starters

- Share orally with your classmates the role played by long-distance trade in the relations between peoples of Ethiopia.
- What was the enduring interest of Ethiopian monarchs and regional leaders in establishing contacts with the outside world? What major obstacles did they encounter in the process?
- What role did the nineteenth century territorial expansion play in the interaction and integration of peoples in Ethiopia and the Horn?

6.1. The Nature of Interactions among Peoples and States of Ethiopia and the Horn

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, many autonomous and semi-autonomous peoples and states existed in Ethiopia and the Horn. This section deals with the history of these peoples and states in the period under consideration.

6.1.1. Peoples and States in South-Central, Southwestern, and Western Ethiopia

A. South-Central: Hadiya, Halaba, Kambata and Gurage were autonomous and semi-autonomous political entities during this period. Economically, they depended largely on agriculture. Local merchants were actively involved in local trade and to some extent in the long distance trade. Trade routes that connected the interior with the coast passed through these territories. Among these, the Gurage land was an important market centre and political entity. Important trade centers such as Soddo and Aymallel were located in the Gurage land. The Gurage had their own political organization and their leaders held the titles of *Abegaz* or *Azmatch* who combined political and military authority.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Qabena emerged as a strong political entity. It became a centre of Muslim revivalist movement to the northeast of the Gibe River. Stirred by Muslim refugees from Wollo, and with possible connections even with the Mahdist Sudan,

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the movement swept across a large part of the region and was attended by a fast spread of Islam.

B. The Gibe States: towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, several monarchical states *(motumma)* emerged among the Mecha Oromo at the expense of the *Gadaa* system. Many factors accounted for the transformation of the *Gadaa* system. In the process, the war leaders of the *Gadaa* system (*Abba-Dula*) and powerful individuals usurped the power of the *Gadaa* government. The *abba-dula* accumulated wealth from the control and taxation on long distance trade and utilized the opportunity to establish hereditary leadership. This development especially took place among the Oromo around Gibe, where the following five monarchical states emerged.

i. **Limmu-Enarya:** Limmu-Enarya was the earliest of the Gibe states. It was founded through the incorporation of Enarya. Initially, Abbaa Dulas of Limmu like Tesso fought and defeated the rulers of Enarya like Badancho, Gu'amcho and Banaro at different times. Finally, Bofoo/Abba Gomol (1800-1825) established Limmu-Enarya. Bofo abdicated in favor of his son, Ibsa/Abba Bagiboo (1825-61). The Kingdom reached the height of its power during Ibsa's reign, when he incorporated areas including Hagalo, Badi-Folla etc. Ibsa was succeeded by Abba Bulgu (1861-1883).

ii. **Gumma:** Jilcha Abba Bal'oo of Chira killed Sarbaroda of Dagoye clan; began state formation and succeeded by his son Oncho (1810-1830) who was in turn followed by Jawwe (1840-1854).

iii. **Gomma:** formed by Abba Bokee (1800-1829) who was succeeded by his son Abba Manoo (1829-1840) who occupied Qattuu and converted to Islam by Muslim Ulama/scholars.

iv. **Jimma:** Towards the late eighteenth century, Makahore emerged as an influential female figure among the Sadacha Mecha Oromo of Jimma. The local Abba Dula sought to take political power from her. Among the *Abba Dulas,* Ose Kobi (Abba Faro) was elected as a hereditary ruler against the *Gadaa* rule. He was succeeded by Dangila (Abba Magal) who enlarged the domain. The process of state formation was completed by Sanna/Abba Jifar I (r.1830-55) who formed Jimma Kingdom and left a consolidated state to his successors like Abba Rebu (1855-59), Abba Boqa (1859-1861) and Abba Gomol(r.1861-75). The

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most famous among the Jimma monarchs was Abba Jifar II (c. r.1875-1934). Apart from agriculture and trade, the kingdom's economy depended on iron mining and smelting at Dakkano and Kito, respectively.

v. **Gera:** was the last of the Gibe kingdoms to be formed. The process of state formation in Gera was completed during the reign of Tullu Gunji (r.1835-38), a successful war leader who made himself king. Abba Rago I (r.1838-48) succeeded Tullu Gunji after a short interlude by Abba Basso. Gera enjoyed its prosperity under Abba Magal who had been converted to Islam. As with other Gibe states, Gera attracted Muslim missionaries to preach Islam.

C. The Leqa States

Like in the Gibe region, several monarchical kingdoms evolved among the Mecha Oromo of Wallagga. Among these were the Leqa states, the Sibu and the Jawwi south of the Abbay River. While *Moti* Abishe established strong kingdom of Horro, a number of *Abba Dulas* declared themselves *moti* (king) by controlling profitable trade routes and large territories in the region west of the Gibe region. Among these, the Leqa states were the prominent ones.

I. **Leqa-Naqamte:** was founded by Bakare Godana in 1840, and reached its height under his successors Moroda and Kumsa. The latter were able to establish strong monarchical state rich in trade and agriculture. *Moti* Kumsa (later *Dejazmach* Gebre-Egzi'abiher) was known for promoting handcraft work, gold washing, coffee planting and game reserves/hunting. The Leqa-Naqamte rulers instituted a new administrative structure and judicial hierarchy that replaced the *Gadaa* system known as *sirna abba-qoro* (*qoro* system). In its nature, the administration system was essentially kingship and was quite similar to feudal administration in its reliance on land.

II. **Leqa-Qellam:** was located in southwestern Wallagga. It was founded by Tullu and became powerful under his son, Jote being centered at Gidami and controlling the areas around Sayyo-Dambi Dollo.

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D. Ilu: the Tume clan leader Chali Shono (also known as Abba Bor) set up the well-consolidated state of Ilu-Abba Bor in the early nineteenth century. It was one of the prosperous states in the region.

Each Oromo monarchical state had officials like *Abba Gurmu* (next person to the king), *Abba Mizan* (treasurer and foreign affair minister), *Abba Dango* (immigration chief), Lammi (ambassador/royalmessenger), *Abba Qoro* (district governor), *Abba Ganda* (village chief), *Abba Busi* (tax head), *Abba* Jiga (murder judge) and *Abba-Qawe* (body-guard). Contrary to the *Gadaa* values that did not levy any kind of taxation, under monarchical systems farmers were forced to pay crop tax measured by traditional instruments called *buchano* (about 15 kilograms) and later *guboo* (25 kilograms) on each crop.

E. Nilotic Sheikdoms: in the early nineteenth century, important Islamic centres emerged in the lower course of the Abbay. A number of Shiekdoms were established through parallel imposition of Arabic-speaking Sudanese mercantilists over Berta and Gumuz inhabitants. Among them, the Sheikhdoms of Assosa or Aqoldi, Bela Shangul and Khomosha were established to the south of Abbay River and the Sheikhdom of Guba emerged to the north of the same river in the western edge of Gojjam. The four sheikhdoms were founded by Muslim leaders of Sudanese origin who considered themselves as 'Watawit'. The term Watawit refers to Arabized Berta people who had entered and settled in Benishangul as traders and Islamic religious teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The main economic bases of the sheikdoms were agriculture, gold mining and frontier trade. Among these sheikhdoms, Asosa got preeminence under Sheikh Khojale al Hasan. While Bela/Beni-Shangul became famous under Abd al Rahman Khojale, Khomosha reached its zenith under Khojale Muhammad Wad Mahmud. Similarly, Guba was founded to the north of the Abbay River along the Ethio-Sudanese border.

The influence of Islam from the Sudan and cross border trade was the main reasons for the rise of these states. The rich gold of the region also attracted foreign powers like the Egyptians and Mahdists who attempted to control the sheikdoms at different times.

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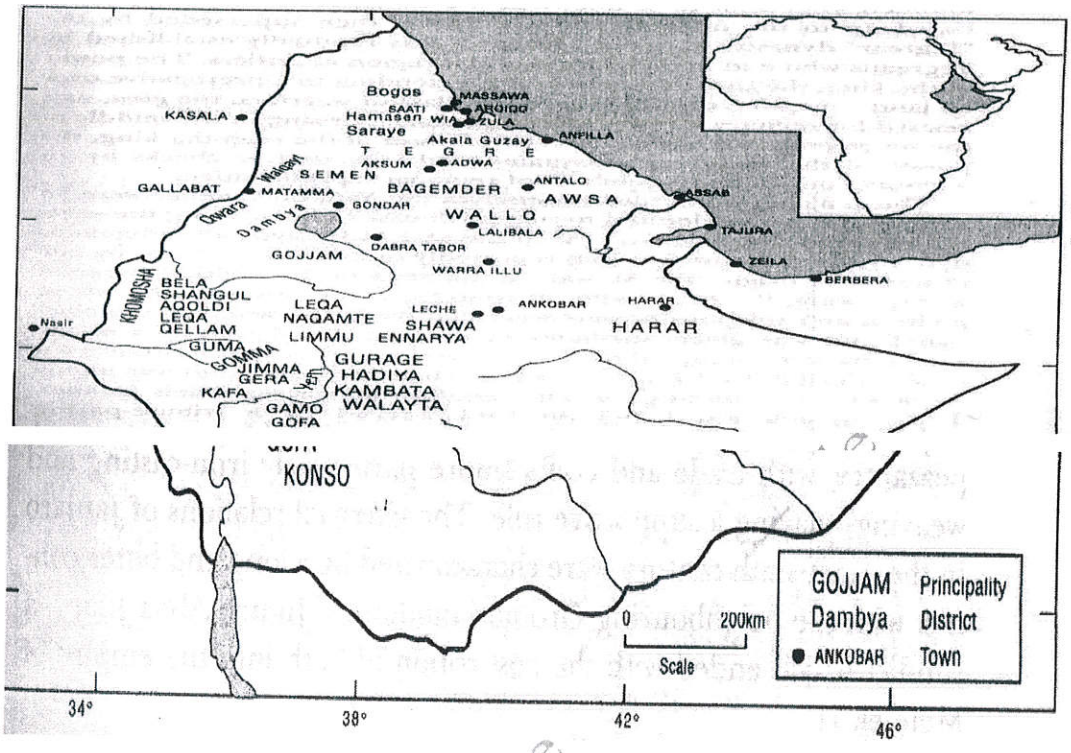
Map 6: Peoples and States of Ethiopia and the Horn, c. 1800



Source: Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855—1991* (Addis Ababa, AAU Press, 2002), p. 17.

6.1.2. Trade and Trade Routes

Although the trade routes which linked southwestern Ethiopia to the coast had medieval antecedents, it was in the nineteenth century that they attained particular prominence. This was partly because of the revival of external trade in the Red Sea region. As a result, trade became one means of maintaining strong relations across peoples of different areas and backgrounds. During this period, two main trade lines linked various territories of Ethiopia and the Horn. One route originated from Bonga, the capital of Kafa Kingdom, linked peoples and states of the southwestern Ethiopia with the northern part of the Ethiopian region. The main market centers along this line were Bonga, Hirmata (in Jimma), Saqa (in Limmu), Billo (in Leqa-Naqamte), Asandabo (in Guduru), Basso-Yajube (in Gojjam), Yifag and Darita (in Begemider) and Gondar. From Gondar, one line bifurcated to westward through Chilga to Matamma-Qallabat (Gallabat) taking commodities to be sold to the Sudanese merchants called *Jallaba*. The other route passed through Adwa, Asmara and entered Massawa. Still

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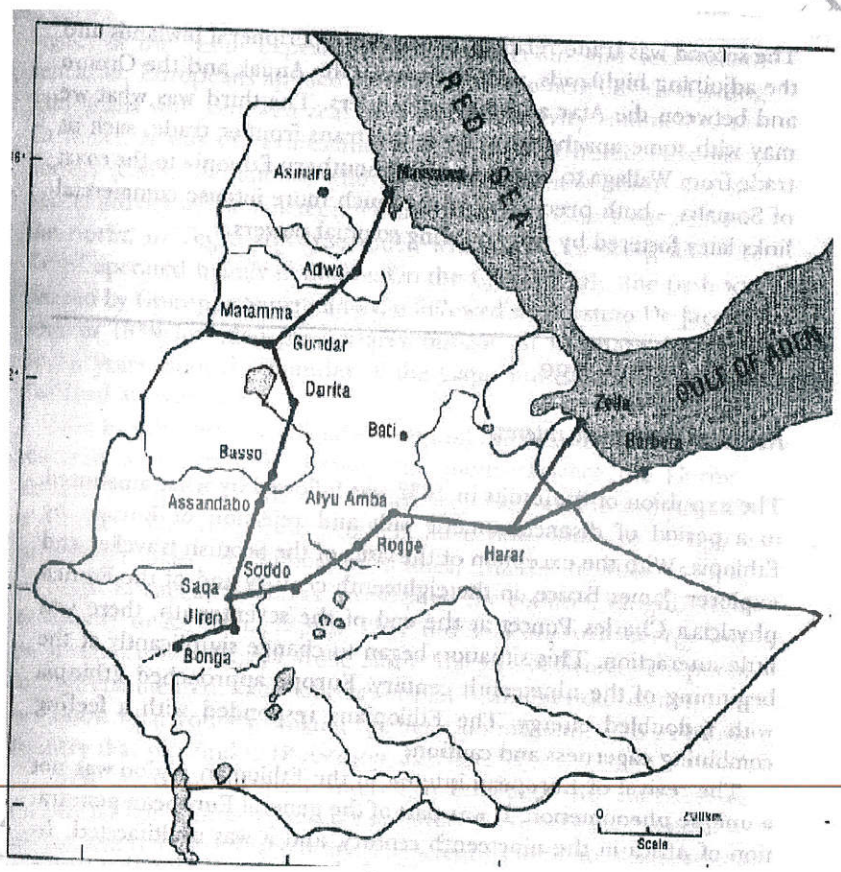
another split at Basso to move via Ancharro and Dawwe in Wollo and Awusa in Afar to Tajura, Obbok and Rahe'ita in Djibouti.

The second major trade route also began from Bonga and passed through Hirmata to Agabja-Andode-Toli to Soddo in southwest Shewa; Rogge near Yerer. Then, the line passed through Aliyu Amba or Abdul Rasul in northern Shewa and ran eastward to Harar. From Harar, the route branched into Zeila and Berbera, the most important commercial centers in Somalia. Then Ethiopian products were mostly sold in the Middle East.

Map 7: Trade Routes of Ethiopia and the Horn in the Nineteenth century



Source: Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855—1991* (Addis Ababa, AAU Press, 2002), p. 23.

In the trade between the interior and the coast, varieties of items were exchanged. The main sources of exported items were the southwestern regions. Among these weregold, ivory, rhinoceros horn, skins, civet, musk, honey, wax, coffee, various spices and slaves. Slaves were either raided or bought from different parts of Ethiopia and exported to Arabia, Persia and India. Likewise, imported products included mirrors and ironware. The major medium

of exchange were salt bars (*amole*), iron bars, wines, cowries' shells, beads, pieces of cotton cloth (*abujadi*), Maria Theresa Thalers (MTT), etc. For internal trade, *amole* was the major important commodity and source of wealth. It was mined in the Afar plains bordering eastern Tigray where it was also suitably shaped for transportation. Then, it was transported from the region to the highlands through Adwa, Gondar, and to south and southwestern parts of the region. The other route took salt from eastern Tigray to south Wollo and Shewa. The town of Mekelle prospered as the salt was cut in and distributed to the highlands from the area under the supervision of the governor of Enderta with the title of *Balgada*, who collected the tributes as tax judge, and grew in importance and rivalying the *Bahre-Negash* (the governor of the maritime province to the north). MTT was a coin introduced from Austria to the Horn of African region at the end of the eighteenth century. On the Red Sea Coast, MTT was used with other kinds of European and Middle Eastern coins.

Diverse peoples of different ethnic and religious background were involved in the trade. At each market center, local peoples were active traders. However, Muslim merchants were the most dominant that traveled from interior to the coast. Among these were northern Muslim merchants (*Jabarti)* and Muslim Oromo merchants of southwestern region known as *Afqala*. Similarly, the Argoba from the Kingdom of Shewa were active merchants in the trade between Harar and the northern Somali coast.

6.2. The Making of Modern Ethiopian State

As discussed in the previous units, the diverse peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn were brought into contact through the agency of trade, population movements, evangelization, and wars. These agencies played an important part in the making of the modern Ethiopian state. On the other hand, a number of autonomous and semi-autonomous peoples and polities were in existence in many regions up to the end of the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century, several states that emerged in the region were involved in territorial competition not only to extend control over resources but also for state building. To put it differently, state building remained an agenda of several powerful individuals and groups that arose in the nineteenth century. The difference was the level of their strength and ambition, and their relations with foreign powers. States in the northern and central parts of Ethiopia had relative

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strength that were built up over time and gained a new momentum during the nineteenth century owing to their foreign contacts and their strategic location.

The making of the modern Ethiopian state went through two distinct phases. The first one involved unifying different regions and peoples in north and north central parts of Ethiopia. The second phase involved territorial expansion into the southern parts of the country. Hereunder, the processes of unification and territorial expansion are discussed in some detail.

A. The Process of Territorial Unification

The territorial unification ushered in a revival of the imperial power, which had declined during the *Zemene-Mesafint*. This occurred after a series of battles and human and material losses. A leading figure in the overall process was Kasa Hailu of Quara who later became Emperor Tewodros II of Ethiopia. Kasa's mission to create a unified state goes back to the time when he was a *shifta*. It is better to trace the origin of Kassa's ideas to the tradition of a once unified Ethiopian state. The myth behind his throne name "Tewodros" makes this clear

As indicated above, the man who ended the *Zemene Mesafint* was Kasa Hailu. He started his career by assisting his half–brother, *Dejjazmach* Kinfu in defeating the Egyptians at Wad Kaltabu (in present-day eastern Sudan) in 1837. As he acquired military and political strength and experiences, he started mobilizing his own army in the area and fought battles in his own right. In 1848, Kasa fought against the Egyptians at a place called Dabarki (again in present Sudan). Although they showed extraordinary courage, Kasa's forces lost the battle owing to the Egyptians' superior military organization, discipline, and better arms. Notwithstanding his defeat, Kasa drew a lesson pertaining to the importance of a modern army. On the other hand, Kasa's fame was spreading in the area and became a major concern to the Warra-Sheh (Yejju) ruling house. As a result, they decided to pacify Kasa through marriage arrangement. Hence, Kasa married Mentwab, the daughter of *Ras* Ali II and he was appointed the governor of Quara. However, Kasa felt that he was not well treated by *Ras* Ali and his mother, *Etege* Menen, and hence, he resumed his *shiftnet* resulting in a series of battles. Accordingly, Kasa defeated *Dejjach* Goshu Zewde of Gojjam at Gur Amba on November 27, 1852; Birru Aligaz, Aben, Yazew and Belew, the four *dejjazmachs* sent by *Ras* Ali, at Taqusa (Gorgora Bichign) on April 12, 1853; *Ras* Ali at Ayshal on 29 June 1853 and *Dejjazmach* Wube of

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Simen and Tigray at Deresge on 8 February, 1855. After defeatingthe major regional lords one after another, he was anointed by *Abune* Salama, the Coptic bishop at Deresge Mariam on 9 February 1855, with the throne name of Tewodros II (1855-1868), King of Kings of Ethiopia.

Tewodros pursued his victory at Deresge by marching to the south. He subsequently marched first to Wollo and then to Shewa. He wanted to create a strong central government by appointing individuals (both hereditary and non-hereditary) who would be totally accountable to him. However, he faced resistance soon after he came to power. After the inclusion of Shewa, rebellions broke out in several regions such as in Gojjam, Simen, Wag and Lasta, Shewa, Wollo, and Tigray. Externally, he was involved in a serious diplomatic crisis following the imprisonment of a handful of Britons and other Europeans. As a result, the British government sent an expeditionary force to free those prisoners and punish the emperor. In a battle that took place at Maqdela, Emperor Tewodros committed suicide on April 13, 1868.

Following the death of Emperor Tewodros, three contenders to the throne emerged; namely, *Wagshum* Gobeze of Lasta, Kasa Mircha of Tigray and Menilek of Shewa. Gobeze took state power immediately after Tewodros as Emperor Tekle-Giorgis II (1868–71). Although attempts were made to create a smooth relation between the Emperor and Kasa Mircha, the quest for state power put them in enmity and it was brought to an end following a battle at Assam (near Adwa) in July 1871, in which the latter became victorious. Kasa, who became Emperor Yohannes IV in January 1872, embarked on a state building project with an approach that differed from that of Tewodros. Yohannes IV (1872-1889) attempted to introduce a decentralized system of administration, permitting regional rulers to exercise a great deal of autonomy. A good example of this was his recognition of Menilek as *Negus* of Shewa in 1878 by the Liche agreement. Similarly, Yohannes designated *Ras* Adal Tesema of Gojjam as *Negus* Tekle-Haymanot of Gojjam and Kafa in 1881. He succeeded in achieving the unity of the predominantly-Christian provinces including Wag and Lasta, Simen, Begemidr, Amhara Saynt, Gojjam, Wollo, Shewa, and the Mereb Milash for quite some time.

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Emperor Yohannes IV sought to end the religious controversy within the EOC as well as effect religious unity in the country as a whole. In this regard, he presided over the Council of Boru Meda (1878) where Tewahdo was declared the only doctrine of the EOC. This was followed by a campaign to convert Muslims and adherents of other religions into Orthodox Christianity. Accordingly, the leading Wollo leaders such as Mohammed Ali and Amede Liben heeded the Emperor's call, rather reluctantly, converting to Christianity and changing their names to *Ras* Michael and *Dajjach* Hayle-Mariam, respectively. Others accepted the Emperor's demand outwardly but remained Muslims, becoming "Christians by day and Muslims by night". Others resisted and fled Wollo to Arsi, Gurage, Jimma and the Sudan while others revolted under the leadership of Sheikh Tola (Talha) Jafar that led to harsh measures of Emperor Yohannes IV.

Externally, Emperor Yohannes faced challenges from Egyptians, Italians, and the Mahdists at different times. He lost his life fighting the latter at Metemma in 1889. Although the Emperor had designated Mengesha Yohannes as his successor, rivalry for power split the monarch's camp and thus, Mengesha was unable to make a viable bid for the imperial throne. As a result, the throne was assumed by *Negus* Menilek of Shewa who became Emperor Menilek II (1889-1913). *Ras* Mengesha refused to submit to Emperor Menilek. The tension was resolved after Menilek led a campaign to force Mengesha's submission in 1889. *Ras* Mengesha was appointed as governor of Tigray after a temporary arrangement in which *Ras* Mekonnen Wolde Mikael ruled the area for about a year.

B. Territorial Expansion

As indicated above, Emperor Tewodros II, Emperor Yohannes IV and others made state building their mission and struggled to achieve that goal. Yet, the most successful was Menilek of Shewa. This was because Menilek had, among other factors, access to modern firearms. The control of resource rich areas that enabled the emperor to build military muscle as well as the determination of his generals counted for his successes. The process of territorial expansion by Menilek can be discussed in three phases i.e. when he was king of Shewa (1865-89), from 1889-96 and the aftermath of Adwa (1896-1900).

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Before the 1870s, Menilek had already incorporated the Tulema and eastern Mecha Oromo territories after controlling local leaders notably Ashe Rufo of Salale, Dula Ara'e of Gullale, Tufa Muna of Gimbichu, Ture Galate of Soddo and others. Meanwhile, other Oromo elites such as *Ras* Gobena Dache, *Fitawrari* Habte-Giorgis Dinagde, *Dejjach* Balcha Safo (*Abba* Nefso) and others worked towards the formation of the modern Ethiopian state.

In 1875-76, the northern Gurage, the Kistane, peacefully submitted to Menilek because of their religious affinity and geographical proximity to the Kingdom of Shewa, and for fear of their local rivals notably the surrounding Oromo. On the other hand, the western Gurage, led by Hasan Enjamo of Qabena, which had elements of Hadiya-Gurage coalition, strongly resisted Menilek's force until *Ras* Gobena broke their resistance in 1888.

Menilek's territorial expansion to western and southwestern regions was concluded through both forceful and peaceful submissions. In the regions south of the Abbay River, particularly in Horro Guduru, *Ras* Adal Tesema of Gojjam had already established his control over the region since the mid1870s. Although he faced stiff resistance from *Moti* (King) Abishe Garba of Horro, Adal's force ambushed Abishe and his entourage at a place called Kokor. Thus, *Ras* Adal (*Nigus* Tekle-Haymanot since 1881) controlled the region until 1882, when he was defeated at Embabo by Menilek's commander, *Ras* Gobana.

After the Battle of Embabo, Leqa-Naqamte, Leqa-Qellem, and Jimma Abba Jifar submitted to Menilek peacefully, who promised them to recognize and maintain their autonomy. Meanwhile, Garbi Jilo (of Leqa-Billo), Tucho Dano (Leqa-Horda), Ligdi Bakare (Leqa-Naqamte), Genda Busan (Sibu-Sire), Mardasa Konche (Nonno Migira), and Turi Jagan (Nonno Rogge) formed a coalition and defeated Menilek's army led by the Nadew brothers, Dasta, Dilinesaw and Tesemma at the Battle of Gurra Doba. Similarly, west of the Dhidhessa River, an alliance of Wachu Dabalo of Sibu, Jorgo Dagago of Noole Kabba and others fought Menilek's local allies like Moroda and Amante Bakare at Sambo Darro. Later, however, they were defeated.

In the Gibe region, Firissa of Guma fought Menilek's army from 1889 to 1901. The imperial army faced similar resistance from Abba Bosso of Gomma, although defeated by *Ras*

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Demisew Nesibu in early 1900. Also, *Ras* Tesemma Nadew's force incorporated Ilu Abba Bor into the imperial state after fighting with Fatansa at Qarsa Gogila.

Of all the campaigns *Nigus* Menilek conducted before he became emperor, perhaps, the most sustained bloody wars were those against the Arsi Oromo. It took six different campaigns from 1882-6 to control this vast region. Menilek encountered fierce resistance from the Arsi Oromo led by notables like Sufa Kuso, Damu Usu, Lenjiso Diga, Gosa Dilamo and Roba Butta. Initially, the Arsi Oromo defeated Menilek's force at Dodota and Qalata. Yet, with intelligence service of local supporters, *Ras* Darge Sahile-Selassie's force defeated the Arsi Oromo at the battle of Azule on 6 September 1886. The battle of Azule was followed by what is known as the Anole incident of 1887, which inflicted heavy damage on the Arsi. [There is disagreement among historians on the veracity of the incident and on whether there is a need to highlight it, as the campaigns of territorial expansion were often attended by atrocities as was the case for instance in Kafa and Walayta].

In the east, Menilek's commander, *Dejjach* Wolde-Gabra'el, fought against the Itu in 1886 and incorporated Chercher. A year later, *Dejjach* Mekonnen's army marched into Harar. The resisting forces of Emir Abdullahi (r.1885-1887) of the Harari and Bakar Ware of the Eastern Oromo were defeated in the final engagement at Chalanqo on 6 January 1887. This was followed by the appointment of *Dejjach* (later *Ras*) Makonnen Wolde Mikael as governor of the province by Emperor Menilek II.

The Great Famine or *Kifu Qen* (Evil Day) of 1888-92 also contributed to Menilek's territorial expansion to parts of southern Ethiopia. Accordingly, Menilek's army occupied Dawuro-Konta and Kambata in 1889 and 1890, respectively. From the early 1890s to 1894, Menilek's army controlled Bale, Sidama, Gamo Gofa and Wolayta. In the campaign to Wolayta, Emperor Menilek and many notables such as *Ras* Mikael of Wollo, *Fitawurari* Gebeyehu Gurmu, *Liqe Mekwas* Abate Buayalew, *Dejjach* Balcha Safo, *Ras* Wolde-Giorgis, and Abba Jifar II of Jimma participated. Wolayta's resistance led by *Kawo* (King) Tona against Menilek's force was defeated in 1894 in which large number of people lost their lives. This was followed by the incorporation of Gedeo, Borana and Konso into the imperial state.

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Menilek's force incorporated Kafa, Borana Beni-Shangul, and Gambella after the battle of Adwa. The process of the incorporation of Kafa paralleled the Wolayta experience in terms of human cost. In 1897, the king of Kafa, *Tato* Gaki Sherocho, fought and lost to Menilek's army led by *Ras* Wolde Giorgis. Beni-Shangul was incorporated after the Battle of Fadogno in 1897/98. This was followed by the occupation of Maji in 1898/99. Tesema Nadew also controlled Baro (Sobat) and Nasir in Gambella around this time.

The process of territorial expansion was consummated with the signing of boundary agreements with the neighboring colonial powers that continued until 1908. Most of these treaties were signed after the victory of Adwa.

After Menilek, the process of centralization and establishing a unitary state continued by abolishing regional autonomies in the early decades of the twentieth century. In the process, Wollo (after the battle of Segele in 1916 when *Nigus* Mika'el was defeated), Begemedir (after the battle of Anchim at which *Ras* Gugsa Wole was defeated in 1930), Gojjam in 1932 and Jimma in 1933 were reduced to mere provinces by Teferi-Mekonnen (Haile-Sillassie I).

6.3. Modernization Attempts

The period from 1800 to 1941 also witnessed efforts to adopt western ideas and technology by Ethiopian monarchs. Although several Ethiopian regional rulers were interested in European technologies, Emperor Tewodros had relatively better information/contact about western technologies than his predecessors. He was well aware of the importance of European technologies to transform his people and country. For this purpose, he attempted to approach Europeans for the introduction of western science and technologies.

It is apparent that, Kasa's defeat by the well-trained and equipped Egyptian troops at the Battle of Dabarki in 1848 had made him think putting the country "on an equal footing with European powers." As a monarch, Tewodros took a number of military, administrative and socio-economic reform measures. As regards the army, Tewodros introduced military titles, like *Yasr Aleqa*, *Yamsa Aleqa*, and *Yeshi Aleqa*. Besides, he tried to organize and replace the regional armies of the *Zemene-Mesafint* with salaried national army. Furthermore, he tried to

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manufacture firearms at his workshop, Gafat (near Debre Tabor) with the help of European missionaries and artisans. At Gafat, about 35 cannons were produced of which the biggest one was known as "Sebastopol." He also tried to build a small navy in Lake Tana. The administrative reforms of Tewodros were focused on the centralization of power and securing financial base. He introduced a policy of "general pacification", warning that everyone should return to his lawful vocation, the merchant to his store, and the farmer to his plough. He tried to separate church and the monarchy. He tried to reduce the amount of land held by the church as well as the number of priests and deacons serving every church. brought him into conflict with the EOC, which precipitated his downfall.

In the case of socio-economic reforms, he began the construction of Ethiopia's first embryonic road network to link Debre Tabor with Gondar, Gojjam, and Maqdela. He also attempted to put an end to the slave trade. Other reform attempts include land reform and banning of polygamy. The use of Amharic writing became more developed, and a traditional library was established at Maqdala, all of which contributed to the development of literary Amharic.. He wrote letters after letters to different foreign powers including to Queen Victoria using Amharic language. With regard to religion, he tried to solve the doctrinal controversy that continued from the 17th century within the EOC. However, his reforms were not fully materialized owing to internal oppositions and external challenges.

Emperor Yohannes' reign also witnessed several important reforms and innovations. Among these, he was the first Ethiopian monarch to appoint foreign consul who served as his representative in London. He hired a French mechanic, a Hungarian gunsmith, and an Italian construction worker to assist his modernization efforts of the country. Furthermore, he sent some individuals abroad for modern education. He was also the first to introduce modern style vaccine against smallpox replacing traditional inoculation. His reign also witnessed extensive treatment of syphilis in several towns.

Modernization attempts of the reign of Emperor Menilek had diverse elements. The post-Adwa period was marked by the establishment of a postal service and telecommunications/ the telephone-telegraph system, the construction of railway line from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, the opening of a bank (the Bank of Abyssinia) and the introduction of silver coin. In

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terms of administration, the emperor introduced European style ministerial system/ministers in 1907. Accordingly, he appointed *Afe-Nigus* Nesibu Meskelo (Minister of Justice), *Azazh* Metaferia Melke-Tsadiq (Minister of Imperial Court), *Bejirond* MulugetaYigezu (Minister of Finance), *Fitawurari* Habte-Giorgis Dinagde (Minister of War), *Negadras* Hailegiorgis Weldemikael (Minister of Commerce and Foreign Relations), and *Tsehafe-Tizaz* Gebreselase Welde Aregay (Minister of Pen). His reign also witnessed the opening of a hotel in 1907 (*Itege* Hotel), a modern school (Menilek II School in 1908) and the foundation of Russian Red Cross hospital in 1906 and Russian-run hospital (Menilek II Hospital) in 1910.

After Emperor Menilek II faced permanent ailment that incapacitated him, he designated and eventually proclaimed *Lij* Iyasu and *Ras* Tesemma Nadew as heir to the throne and regent, respectively. During his short stay in power, *Lij* Iyasu (1913-16) also took several reform measures. The reforms are the banning of the *Quragna* system, a system that involved chaining the applicant and defendant as well as creditor and debtor until justice was settled. He tried to amend *Leba Shay*, a customary mode of detection of criminals or theft. He introduced municipal police called *Tirnbulle*. He introduced a policy of auditing of government accounts, and he tried to integrate Ethiopian Muslims into the administration structure. His rule also witnessed the introduction of a flourmill that functioned mechanically and private industrial enterprises like sawmill, a grinding-mill, a tannery, a soap-factory, etc.

During the Dual Rule of Empress Zewditu and *Ras* Teferi (r. 1916-1930), there were several modernization attempts in broader scope. The two rulers namely *Ras* Teferi and Empress Zewditu had different views towards western culture. Because of his close link with foreigners, *Ras* Teferi had keen interest in modernization by which he wanted to boost the country's image on the international stage. This was marked by the entry of Ethiopia into the League of Nations and his grand tour to Europe in 1923 and 1924, respectively. Some remarkable reforms based on European model took place following his coronation as Emperor Haile-Selassie I in 1930. Some of the reforms were the centralization of the government, promulgation of Ethiopia's first constitution in 1931 (despite its drawbacks), establishment of Imperial Body Guard in 1930, with the help of Belgian military mission and the opening of Ethiopia's first Military Academy at Holeta with the help of a Swedish military mission in 1934.

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6.4. Socio-Economic Developments

The period from 1800 to 1941 was also marked by changes in socio-economic conditions including trade, slavery and slave trade, agriculture, urbanization and manufacturing. Factors for these changes included the socio-economic dynamics in the region and the world.

6.4.1. Agriculture and Land Tenure

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were times when agricultural economy grew and the demand for land for cultivation and grazing increased. The system favored the powerful groups to control land that resulted in the change of property right on the preexisting land tenure system. The role of agriculture in the local economy and the politics of the period could be understood from the territorial competition and expansions to control surplus producing areas. This altered people's relation to land, making some privileged and others unprivileged.

The quest for land and surplus production was one factor for territorial expansion by Menilek in the late nineteenth century. Land was required, among others, to settle and feed the warriors and their families. Hence, the incorporation of the southern half of the country into the imperial state resulted in the redefinition of access to resources in these regions. The state institutionalized different forms of surplus expropriation and mechanisms to ensure political control in the regions that had peacefully submitted and those that resisted. The former relatively enjoyed self-administration but were subjected to pay *qurt-gibir* (fixed tax). The latter were placed under the *naftegna-gabbar/gabbar-naftegna* system whereby local peoples were made to pay tribute to the former. Gradually, the *naftegna-gabbar* system led to the evolution of a new tenure regime in the forcefully incorporated areas. Literally, *naftegna* means a person with a gun. In this context, *naftegna* refers to soldiers of different social backgrounds who were stationed in the southern territories under the imperial banner. In the latter case, the major force of change was the settlement and exploitative nature of the system that altered both settlement pattern and agricultural system. One effect of the institution of the *naftegna-gabbar* system was the creation of classes like landlords, *ballabat*, *gabbar* and tenants. The landholders were largely government agents while the local population was reduced in time into *gabbar* and later tenants.

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One major factor that brought change to agricultural practices including land tenure system was the beginning of the *qalad* system (land measurement) in the 1890s. Land measurement affected access to agricultural resources in diverse ways including changes to customary rules of access to land. *Qalad* introduced new practices in which certain social classes gained access to land while at the same time it resulted in the dispossession of the local peasantry in parts of the south. Later, land was categorized into *lam* (cultivated), *lam-taf* (partly-cultivated) and *taf* (uncultivated) to facilitate taxation.

6.4.2. Slavery and Slave Trade

Earlier in this unit, we have learned that both local and long-distance trade had flourished in the nineteenth century. The major commodities traded were ivory, slaves, civet, and gold.

Slavery and slave trade had long history in Ethiopia and the Horn. Most slaves in Ethiopia were kept as domestic slaves and some were sold to Egypt and the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire through the Sudan, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden ports. During the nineteenth century, in some parts of Ethiopia, slaves were required for agricultural works, in the army and as sources of revenue through selling into slavery. Thus, several regional and local rulers enslaved people for these purposes. Slaves were traded as commodities in local and international markets. For instance, in 1837 slave raiders captured Bilile from Guma and sold her to a German prince, Herman Pickler Muskau at Cairo who changed her name to Mahbuba and made her his mistress. Similarly, Hika (later Onesimos Nasib) was kidnapped in 1869 in Hurumu when he was four years old. He was sold at Massawa, later freed by a Swedish mission, after which he translated the Bible into Afan Oromo at Menkulu (in Eritrea). Aster Gano was also sold into slavery from Limmu. However, in 1886, she was emancipated and assisted Onesimos in the translation of the Bible.

During the nineteenth century, slave trade expanded in Ethiopia and the Horn due to increased demand for slaves in foreign markets largely in the Middle East. This was followed by the emergence of market centers from Bonga to Metemma and Massawa. Selling slaves was source of revenue for many local chiefs. Slaves were acquired through raiding,

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kidnapping, war captivity, debt bondage, and purchase from open markets. Major sources of slaves were southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia.

Emperors Tewodros II, Yohannes IV and Menilek II tried to stop the slave trade although not slavery itself. In 1923, *Ras* Teferi banned slave trade which eventually came out in a decree in 1924 to emancipate slaves. This was followed by the establishment of the *Office for the Abolition of Slavery* in 1932. Freed slaves were kept under the overall supervision of *Hakim* Warqineh Eshete. The Italians proclaimed the abolition of slavery immediately after their occupation of the country. After liberation, the Emperor issued a new decree in 1942 abolishing any forms of slave trade and the institution of slavery itself. The impact of slavery was obviously social and economic deterioration of the source areas, families and suffering of the slaves themselves.

6.4.3. Manufacturing

In many cultures in Ethiopia and the Horn, there were age-old indigenous ways of producing/making tools. Such manufacturing activities involved simple procedures and techniques and produced limited quantity of items. For instance, different items like furniture, dresses and food including local drinks, were produced and processed by using traditional techniques involving manual labor.

One result of the contact with the industrialized world from the mid nineteenth century was the introduction of manufacturing technologies. Although evidences do not trace the exact period of the beginning of modern industry in Ethiopia, there is a consensus that the strong interest of rulers in the region for the introduction of western technologies and the subsequent contacts with the industrial world since the mid nineteenth century contributed to the introduction of manufacturing industries.

The beginning of diplomatic relations and opening of legations in the post-Adwa period was followed by the coming of many expatriates, who either came with the skill or became agents of the introduction of modern manufacturing. Foreign citizens from Armenia, Greece, Italy and India also brought entrepreneurial capacity to develop manufacturing industries locally. Among modern manufacturing industries, Holeta Grain Mill and Massawa Salt Processing

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were set up in 1896 and 1904, respectively. Up to 1927, about 25 factories were established in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Asmara and Massawa. These included cement factories, wood and clay workshops, tanneries, soap and edible oil plants, ammunition factories, breweries, tobacco processing plants and grain mills. Private entrepreneurs established most of them. Among these, Artistic Printing Press and Ambo Mineral Water plant were established before the Italian occupation. After 1928, including in the short lived Italian occupation, more than ten manufacturing industries were set up.

6.4.4. Urbanization

The period from the early nineteenth century to 1941 marked the evolution of towns stemming from political, socio-economic, demographic and ecological factors. During the period, the expansion of both local and long distance trade since the early nineteenth century had transformed old markets and socio-political centers into towns in Ethiopia and the Horn. In this case, several towns located on the long-distance trade in western Ethiopia grew into towns. In addition, the beginning of railway connecting Djibouti and Addis Ababa as of 1917 was followed by the evolution of several fast growing towns. Towns including Dire-Dawa, Adama, Mojo, Bishoftu and others were results of the extension of the railway and the expansion of trade. On the other hand, politico-religious centers in several parts of the region evolved into towns. This was true mainly in the northern parts of Ethiopia. Many centers that once served as "royal camps" evolved into towns and parallel to this many towns declined with the demographic change when "royal camps" shifted to other centers. One of the towns that grew through such process was Addis Ababa. Empress Taytu Betul chose the place for its hot springs, Fel-Wuha (formerly called *Hora* Finfinne). Similarly, as of the late nineteenth century, in southern Ethiopia, a number of towns emerged when Menilek's generals established garrisons in suitable locations in order to maintain control of the occupied provinces. The presence of the governors and soldiers made such areas permanent areas of politico-economic and religious activities. Such centers of administration known as *katamas* (garrison towns) became centers of trade and eventually grew into towns. Towns including Gobba, Ticho, Gore, Arjo, etc were garrisons that grew into towns. During the Italian rule (1936-41), several of the above towns grew in size and other new towns evolved because of socio-economic and political developments of the period.

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6.5. External Relations

6.5.1. Agreements and Treaties

One consequence of the *Zemene-Mesafint* was the end of the 'close door policy' that was introduced by Emperor Fasiladas (1632-1667). Thus, beginning from the early 1800s, regional rulers made independent foreign contacts and signed treaties. During the nineteenth century, the agents of these external relations were mainly travelers. Travelers came to Ethiopia and the Horn with the motives of adventure and scientific research. They were also sometimes involved in fostering friendship and trade relation on behalf of their governments. Some of them, however, came with covert mission of colonialism. Meanwhile, various rulers of Ethiopia and the Horn had also dispatched their own delegations to various countries of the world.

One of the earliest private travelers was Henry Salt who reached the court of *Ras* Wolde-Selassie of Tigray on 28 August 1805. He came for scientific reasons, but he claimed that his mission was to establish friendship between Great Britain and Ethiopia. He returned to Ethiopia in 1809 and concluded agreement with the *Ras*.

Several British travelers including Christian Kugler also arrived in the 1830s. Travelers from Germany like Eduard Ruppell (a scholar) arrived in 1846; Captain W.C. Harris, leading an official British mission visited Shewa. John Bell and Walter Plowden in the 1840s, the Italian Geographic Society in 1869 and the like arrived for trade relation and scientific purposes.

The result of these contacts was the agreement between *Negus* Sahle-Selassie of Shewa and British Captain W. Harris in 1841 as well as with the French Rochet d'Hericourt, in 1843. In addition, Walter Plowden also signed treaty with *Ras* Ali in 1849.

Furthermore, other regional lords had contacts with religious centers in the Middle East, particularly with Jerusalem. During the period, Egyptians threatened the Ethiopian religious community settlement at Deir Al-Sultan in Jerusalem. As a result, in the early 1850s, strong lords like *Ras* Ali and *Dejjazmach* Wube sent letters to Queen Victoria of England to request support against the Egyptians. External relations during the reign of Tewodros II seemed more elaborate and oriented towards obtaining western technology and military support to

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defend against foreign aggression. As with his predecessors, Emperor Yohannes IV tried to create strong relations with Europeans. The major concerns of Emperor Yohannes IV were the restoration of the lost territories, the delimitation of boundaries and the defense of the sovereignty of the state against the threat and interference by foreign powers. When he confronted external challenge like Egypt, he tried to solve through negotiation than war. War was his last choice as he fought with Egypt in 1875/76 and Mahdists Sudan in 1889.

One of the major diplomatic relations Yohannes concluded was Hewett /Adwa Treaty. It was a treaty signed between the Emperor and the British Rear Admiral William Hewett on behalf of Egypt on 3 June 1884 at Adwa. The purpose was to safely evacuate Egyptian troops through Ethiopia who were trapped by the Mahdists troops along the Ethio-Sudanese border. In return, Bogos was to be restored to Ethiopia and the latter was to freely use Massawa for the transit of goods and firearms.

Based on the agreement, Emperor Yohannes facilitated the safe evacuation of Egyptian troops through his territory. Britain restored Bogos to Ethiopia. However, Britain secretly transferred Massawa from Egypt to Italy in February 1885. One consequence of the treaty was Mahdists' determination to avenge Yohannes that led to the battle of Metemma on 9 March 1889, which claimed his life.

In terms of diplomatic relations and repulsing external threats, Emperor Menilek II was more successful through maintaining the balance among powerful forces of the period. While he was king of Shewa, he established commercial relation with Italy that later helped him to acquire military equipment.

Menelik's relations with Italy reached its climax with the signing of the Wuchale Treaty. It was drafted by Count Pietro Antonelli and signed on 2 May 1889, at Wuchale, Wollo between Emperor Menilek II of Ethiopia and Antonelli on behalf of Prime Minister Crispi of Italy. The treaty has twenty articles and was written both in Amharic and Italian languages. s When Ras Mokonnon vistited Italy after the signing of the treaty, the Italians made him sign an additional convension, which introduced the phrase "effective occupation" of Italy to legitimize the territories that the Italians had come to occupy after the treaty. As a result,

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based on the Italian version of Article XVII, Italy announced that all foreign powers had to deal with Ethiopia only through Italy. European powers gave recognition to this Italian claim except Russia. In January 1890, the Italian government formally declared Eritrea as its colony.

Italian action to colonize Ethiopia through a combination of tricky treaties, persuasion and subversive methods failed. This was because Menilek publicly abrogated the Wuchale Treaty in February 1893 and Tigrian lords including *Ras* Mangasha Yohannes, *Ras* Sebhat Aragawi and *Dajjach* Hagos Tafari, who the Italians were hoping to use, began to fight against the Italians collaborating with Emperor Menilek. Italian determination to occupy Ethiopia and Ethiopian resistance against colonialism led to the battle. Finally this led to the Battle of Adwa, where the Ethiopians won a decisive victory. After the victory of Adwa, different foreign countries opened their legations at Addis Ababa to establish relations on official basis.

Furthermore, Emperor Menilek made boundary agreements with the then neighboring colonial powers like French-Somaliland (the present day Djibouti) on 20 March 1897, with British-Somaliland (now Somaliland) on June 1897, with Anglo-Egyptian Sudan on 15 May 1902, with the Italian colony of Eritrea on 10 July 1900 and also with British East Africa (Kenya) in 1907 and Italian-Somaliland in 1908. These boundary agreements shaped modern Ethiopian boundary.

International politics of the twentieth century also shaped Ethiopia's foreign relations. For instance, during the First World War (1914-18) *Lij* Iyasu showed a tendency to side with the Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Ottoman Empire) believing that the defeat of the Allied powers (France and Britain) would allow Ethiopia to push Italy out of Eritrea and Somalia. He also befriended the Somali nationalist leader, Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan, against Italy and Britain. Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan (1864-1920) led the Somali against the European occupation. He tried to attract mass support through his Pan-Somali movement. In the history of the Somali, he is recognized as a forerunner of modern Somali nationalism.

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One of the successes of Ethiopia's foreign relation in the early twentieth century was her admission to the League of Nations in 1923. A year later, Teferi made his grand European tour, which shaped his ideas of modernization. Ethiopia's entry into the League of Nations, however, did not save her from Italian invasion in 1935/36.

6. 5. 2. Major Battles Fought Against Foreign Aggressors and Patriotism

Ethiopian people fought several battles against foreign threats during the period under discussion. The following section discusses patriotism, determination and cooperation as well as the successes and limits of Ethiopian peoples in the course of defending their country.

The Battle of Dabarki (1848): Dabarki was fought between Kasa Hailu of Qwara and Egyptian forces in 1848. Although the forces led by Kasa Hailu lost the battle, the military imbalance particularly, the modern artillery and discipline of Egyptian troops gave him a lesson to modernize his military force, acquire modern technologies. This later initiated him to widen his vision and mission when he became emperor.

The Battle of Maqdela (1868): Tewodros II had early relation with Britain through two British citizens, Walter Plowden and John Bell. His main aim was to obtain help against foreign threats. In 1862, he sent a letter to Queen Victoria requesting assistance through Consul Cameron. Cameron came back to Ethiopia via Egypt without bringing any response. Suspecting him of plotting with Egypt, Tewodros imprisoned Captain Cameron and other Europeans. On learning of the imprisonment of the Europeans, Queen Victoria sent a letter through Hormuzd Rassam, which did not satisfy Tewodros.

After some communications, the British parliament decided to take military action. Subsequently, 32,000 troops led by Sir Robert Napier were sent through Massawa. This force reached Maqdela guided by *Dejazmach* Bezibiz Kassa of Tigray (later Emperor Yohannes). Although Wagshum Gobeze did not make any attempt to fight the British, he did not join them. On April 10, 1868, up to 8,000 Tewodros' soldiers including his general Gebriye were defeated by the British at the battle of Aroge. On April 13, 1868, Tewodros committed suicide at Maqdela. This was followed by the burning of his fortress and looting of manuscripts, religious and secular artifacts including his crown by the British troops.

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The Battles of Gundet and Gura

In the nineteenth century, Egyptians showed a keen interest to occupy Northeast Africa with the ambition of controlling the source of the Nile. Following their occupation of the Sudan in 1821, they moved to occupy Ethiopia on several occasions. For instance, in 1875, Khedive Ismail Pasha sent his troops to invade Ethiopia in three directions. Mohammed Rauf Pasha led the Zeila front and the result was the occupation of the Harar Emirate between 1875 and 1885. Werner Munzinger, the architect of the whole of Ismail's scheme for invasion of Ethiopia, led about 500 Egyptian troops equipped with cannons and rocket tubes through Tajura. But, Munzinger and his troops were all killed by the Afars at the Battle of Odduma. Finally, Colonel Arendrup and Arakel Bey led another 2,000 well-armed troops through Massawa. Emperor Yohannes IV and *Ras* Alula mobilized about 20,000 forces and encountered the Egyptians at the Battle of Gundet (16 November 1875) where the Egyptian troopswere severely defeated. Notwithstanding their setback, Egyptians again reorganized their forces and sent their army to invade Ethiopia. However, the Ethiopian forces again defeated them at the Battle of Gura (7–9 March, 1876).

It is important to understand that some Europeans and Americans were in the service of Egyptians. For instance, the architect of the whole of Ismail's plan, Werner Munzinger, was a Swiss born adventurer and former French Consul in Northeast Africa. Colonel Arendrup himself was a Danish Citizen, and General Charles Stone was fellow American.

The Battle of Dogali

During the late nineteenth century, Europeans had interest to control the Red Sea area. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Red Sea region acquired great strategic and commercial importance. One of the colonial powers with interest in the Horn of Africa was Italy. The relations Italy had with the Horn began when an Italian private shipping company (Rubatino) bought the port of Assab from the local chiefs in 1869. In 1882, the port of Assab was transferred to the Italian government. In 1885, Britain secretly transferred Massawa from Egypt to Italy. By using these bases as springboard, Italy began to penetrate into northern Ethiopia. Subsequently, the Italian forces occupied Sa'ati, Aylet and Wia in the then Mereb Milash region. However, they were defeated decisively at the Battle of Dogali by *Ras* Alula

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Engida, Emperor Yohannes's famous general and right hand man. Following this battle, Italy signed a Treaty of Neutrality with Menilek in October 1887 in a bid to isolate Emperor Yohannes.

The Battle of Metemma

As indicated above, the Hewett Treaty caused clashes between the Mahdist and Ethiopian forces that lasted from 1885 to 1889. The first clash was at Kufit between *Ras* Alula and Uthman Digna in September 1885. Initially, the Ethiopian force was victorious. In January 1887, Yohannes ordered *Nigus* Tekle-Haymanot of Gojjam to repulse the Mahdists. A year later, the Mahdists led by Abu Anja, defeated *Nigus* Tekle-Haimanot's troops at Sar- Wuha in Dembia. However, when Emperor Yohannes IV was in northern Ethiopia to check the Italian advance to Mereb Milash, he heard of the Mahdists advance up to Gondar. The Mahdists caused a lot of destruction on churches and monasteries, including the killing of the clergy and the laity. At this important juncture, *Nigus* Menilek and *Nigus* Tekle-Haimanot conspired against the emperor, instead of directly facing the Mahdists. As a result, Emperor Yohannes faced what can be called a triangular tension, namely the Italians in the north, the Mahdists in the west and northwest, and his two vassals in the center.

Later, in another direction, the Mahdists were defeated at Gute Dilli (in Najjo-Wallagga) by Menilek's commander *Ras* Gobana Dache on October 14, 1888. Emperor Yohannes made a national call:

> **የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ሆይ ኢትዮጵያ የተባለችዉ ሀገር: 1ኛ እናትህ ናት፤ 2ኛ ክብርህ ናት፤ 3ኛ ሚስትህ ናት፤4ኛ ልጅህ ናት፤5ኛ መቃብርህ ናት:: እንግዲህ የእናትን ፍቅር፣ የዘዉድን ክብር፣የሚስትን የዋህነት፣ የልጅን ደስታ፣ የመቃብርን ከከባቲነት አስበህ ተነስ!**
>
> Literally, Oh! the people of Ethiopia,
>
> The country called Ethiopia is firstly your mother, secondly your crown, thirdly your wife, fourthly your child, fifthly your grave. Accordingly, rise up understanding the love of a mother, honor of a crown, the goodness of a wife, the delight of having a child, and the shelter of a grave.

Hence, on March 9, 1889, the Emperor marched to Metemma where he died fighting the Mahdists. Evidently, it has to be noted here that internal divisions and acrimonies among

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rulers would result in a huge cost to the country and its peoples. Among others, Maqdela and Metemma are very good testimonies.

The Battle of Adwa and Its Aftermath

The disagreement on the Wuchale Treaty finally led to the big battle between Ethiopia and Italian forces. This was because Italians were determined to colonize Ethiopia whereas Ethiopians were ready not to give in. To meet their intention, the Italians crossed the Mereb River, arrived at Adigrat, and proceeded to Emba-Alage. Following Emperor Menilek's proclamation for general mobilization, about 100,000 troops from every part of the country gathered at Wara-Illu (in today's South Wollo).People marched to the front irrespective of gender, regional, and ethnic differences to fight against the Italian aggression. The force led by *Fitawrari* Gebeyehu Gurmu defeated the Italians at Emba-Alage and forced them to retreat to Mekelle. In January 1896, under the leadership of *Ras* Mekonnen, the Ethiopian forces defeated Italians at Mekelle. At Mekelle, the Italians were brought under seige denying them of access to a water well which they used. The strategy was commonly called the "siege of Mekelle" and was considered to be designed by Empress Taytu. After some negotiations, the besieged Italian troops were set free and joined their compatriots at Adwa.

A month later, Ethiopian forces led by Emperor Menilek, Empress Taiytu and war generals like *Ras* Mikael, *Ras* Makonnen, *Ras* Alula, *Ras* Mangasha and *Negus* Tekle-Haymanot and others encountered the Italians at Adwa. The result of this battle was a decisive victory for Ethiopians but a huge blow to the Italians, which doomed their colonial ambition over Ethiopia. At this battle, about 8,000 Italian fighters were killed, 1,500 wounded and 3,000 were captured. On the Ethiopian side, about 4,000-6,000 troops are said to have been killed.

Consequently, Italy recognized the independence of Ethiopia by the treaty of Addis Ababa that was signed on October 26, 1896. A number of powers of the time (including Italy, France, Britain, Russia, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Turkey, and others) also recognized the independence of Ethiopia and opened their legations in Addis Ababa.

Despite different interpretations on the results of the battle of Adwa, the heroic national campaign, cooperation, and common successes of peoples of Ethiopia had a positive

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implication for success and national integration. The victory assured independence and national pride. It has thus become a source of pride for Ethiopians, Africans and the black race in general.

Furthermore, the victory of Ethiopians at Adwa has had an enduring legacy in the relations between freedom fighters and colonizing powers. The victory of black people over white colonizers initiated entire Africans fighting against colonialism. The well-known Pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey, inspired his followers in his "Back to Africa" movement with the success of Ethiopians. He used phrases like "Ethiopia thou land of our fathers" and Ethiopianism became a symbol of anti-colonial movements.

6. 5. 3. Italian Occupation (1936-41) and the Patriotic Resistance

A. Background

Following their defeat at Adwa in 1896, the Italians suspended their expansionist colonial policy in Northeast Africa for a short time. However, they were just waiting for the right time to fulfill their ambitions in any possible way. Italy eventually got its ideological strength in 1922, when Fascists led by Benito Mussolini held power. The Fascists were determined to restore the power and glory of ancient Roman Empire by avenging Italy's shameful scar at Adwa.

Initially, Mussolini did not disclose his ambition against the sovereignty of Ethiopia rather he was playing diplomatic 'cards' till the coming of the 'right time.' To achieve their goal of occupation of Ethiopia, Italians followed two policies as was the case before the Battle of Adwa; 'subversion' and 'rapprochement'. The policy of subversion aimed at affecting the unity of the empire via sowing dissatisfaction in Tigray, Begemedir, Gojjam and Wollo. This responsibility was entrusted to Corrado Zoli, the governor of Eritrea (1928-1930). The Italian legation in Addis Ababa, headed by Guiliano Cora led the policy of 'rapprochement', a pseudo reconciliation tactic which was trying to persuade the Ethiopian government to establish cordial relations between the two countries. For instance, the signing of the 1928 Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Peace and Friendship was the manifestation of the success of the rapprochement policy. Here, beside their legation in Addis Ababa, the Italians had also

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consulates in provincial towns such as Dessie, Adwa, Debre Markos and Gondar. These consulates played a significant role in propagating dissatisfaction and gathering vital military and political intelligence. In addition to such preparations, the Fascists were also able to get indirect diplomatic support from Britain and France for their colonial project in Ethiopia.

Here, although it is difficult to pinpoint one particular year when the decision was made by Mussolini to launch the intended invasion, 1932 appears to have been a crucial year. Mussolini who made all necessary preparations to launch an invasion against Ethiopia was only searching for a pretext, and then fortunately he found it in the Walwal incident. The Walwal Incident (5 December 1934) was the result of the post-Awa boundary agreement limitations: lack of demarcation on the ground and lack of effective administrative control in the frontier regions. However, the Italians refused to give back Walwal and even attacked the Ethiopian soldiers who were stationed nearby. Thus, this situation gave birth to the Walwal Incident.

Surprisingly, although the number of Ethiopians dead during this border clash was three times as high as the Italians, it was Italy, which demanded totally unreasonable apology and reparation from Ethiopia. Then, Ethiopia that refused to accept Italy's demand took the matter to the League of Nations and a period of diplomatic wrangling followed to resolve the dispute. However, in the meantime Mussolini, who already got the desired excuse, was finalizing his preparations to launch a total invasion.

B. The 1935 Invasion and After

After they completed their preparations, the Italians waged their aggression via two major fronts: the northern and the southern Front. The war was started in the northern Front when the Italians crossed the Mereb River on October 3, 1935 and launched a three pronged invasion and controlled Adigrat, Adwa and Mekelle. In January 1936, the Ethiopian counter offensive force marched north through three fronts. *Ras* Emiru Haile-Selassie led the western front, *Ras* Kasa Hailu (also commander of the entire northern front), Ras Seyum Mengesha led the central front, and *Ras* Mulugeta Yigezu (War Minister) led the eastern front.

On January 20, 1936, the Ethiopian army launched a major offensive against the Italians intending to isolate Mekelle, but failed to realize its objective due to lack of coordination

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among the above-mentioned commanders. On January 24, the Ethiopian force lost to the Italians at the first Battle in Temben. This was followed by an attack on the Ethiopian force, which was stationed in what seemed to be an impregnable natural fortress of Amba-Aradom, to the south of Mekelle. The Italians scored yet another decisive victory in which the commander of the Ethiopian army, *Ras* Mulugeta Yigezu, lost his life. Besides modern weapons, the Italian force had superiority in the air. Moreover, the forces of *Ras* Kasa and *Ras* Seyum were outnumbered by the Italian troops. This resulted in another defeat at the Second Battle of Temben (27-29 February 1936). *Ras* Kasa and *Ras* Seyum narrowly escaped and joined the Emperor at Korem.

On the western front, the Ethiopian army under *Ras* Emeru put strong resistance against the advancing force of the Italians. Thanks to *Ras* Emeru's better leadership quality, the number of death of Ethiopian soldiers was less than what it had been in the northern front.

A series of battles between the Ethiopian and Italian forces in the northern Front culminated in Maychew on 31 March 1936. Although the Ethiopian army (especially members of the *Kebur Zebegna*) under the command of the Emperor put strong resistance against the Italians, they were not able to conclude the battle with victory. Many Ethiopian soldiers lost their lives from ground and air bombardment during the battle. Then the Italian forces controlled Dessie and Addis Ababa on 4 April 1936 and 5 May 1936, respectively.

The Ethiopian army in the Southern Front was better equipped and well led. *Ras* Desta Damtew (in the south) and *Dejazmach* Nesibu Zamanuel (in the southeast) were leaders of the Ethiopian troops in this Front.

The Ethiopian army lost to the Italians at two major battles in the Southern Front: Qorahe (November 1935) and Genale Dorya (12-14 January 1936). In the ensuing battles, the *Askaris* (recruited from Eritrea) deserted the Italians and joined the Ethiopian force which boosted the moral of *Ras* Desta's troops. *Ras* Desta continued to challenge the Italians until he was captured and executed in early 1937. The number of soldiers the Italians lost during the fighting in the Southern Front was larger than the North, which slowed their advance to the center; Badoglio entered Addis Ababa before Graziani even crossed Harar.

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On 2 May 1936, the Emperor fled the country and three days later the Italians entered Addis Ababa. Between Haile Selassie's departure and the Italian entry, Addis Ababa was beset by burning of buildings, looting and random shooting. The major targets of the violence were the rich, foreigners and the imperial palace. Many foreigners saved their lives by taking refuge in foreign legations.

Here, the entry of the Italian forces into the capital in the middle of such chaos was a relief for both the foreigners and the natives since the Italians were able to bring peace and order to the city. At this juncture, some scholars suggested that the Italians deliberately delayed their entry so that the people of the city would consider them as 'angels' of peace, and easily accept their rule. Anyway, after their control of the capital, Marshal Badoglio immediately reported the situation to Mussolini. Benito Mussolini announced to the people of Italy and the world about their control of Ethiopia using the phrase "Ethiopia is Italian!"

The Italians immediately merged Ethiopia with their colonies of Italian Somaliland and Eritrea. Then, they named the combination of their colonies Italian East Africa (IEA) or *Africa Orientale Italiana* (AOI). The newly formed Italian East Africa had six administrative regional divisions that replaced former international boundaries. These were: Eritrea (including Tigray) with its capital at Asmara; Amhara (including Begemidr, Gojjam, Wollo and Northern Shewa) with its capital at Gondar; Oromo and Sidama (including Southern and Southwestern provinces) with its capital at Jimma; Eastern Ethiopia with its capital at Harar; Somalia (including Ogaden) with its capital at Mogadishu; Addis Ababa (later changed to Shewa), the capital of the entire Italian East Africa.

During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, the following Italians served as governors of Italian East Africa successively: Marshal Badoglio (till the end of May 1936), Marshal Graziani (till February 1937), and finally Amadeo Umberto d'Aosta (the Duke of Aosta).

Generally, a top-heavy bureaucracy and corruption characterized the Italian administration of IEA. For instance, the last governor of IEA, the Duke of Aosta himself characterized 50% of his officials as inept and 25% as thieves. Marshal Badoglio himself reportedly pocketed about 1,700,000 Maria Theresa Thalers confiscated from the Bank of Ethiopia, in the immediate aftermath of the conquest. In the economic respect, the Italians weakened and

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destroyed non-Italian foreign firms and replaced them with governmental enterprises that controlled the industry, trade and agriculture.

The Italians were relatively successful in the sectors of trade and industry as compared to the agricultural sector. For instance, they planned to settle Italian farmers in selected Ethiopian areas such as Wegera, Chercher and Jimma. However, their agricultural plan failed (they only accomplished 10%) due to their failure to secure the control of the rural areas due to the patriotic movement.

As indicated above, the Italian administrative control was largely confined to urban areas due to the strong patriotic resistance. Thus; their legacy was also largely reflected in the towns than the rural areas, which were actually out of Italian effective rule. Generally, the legacy of the Italian rule can be summarized in the following brief points:

- Architecture- the Italians left an indelible mark in towns such as Addis Ababa, Jimma, Adwa, Gondar, Desse, Harar, Asmara, Mogadishu and others.
- Introduction of urban facilities like clean water and electricity;
- Social legacies (expansion of prostitution, adoption of European habits-including eating and dressing styles, and adoption of Italian words);
- The consolidation of cash economy;
- Road construction and development of motor transport;
- The sense of division, deliberately fostering ethnic and religious tensions etc.

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C. The Patriotic Resistance Movement

The five-year Italian occupation (1936-41) was not a smooth experience. Rather, the Ethiopian peoples opposed them in a number of ways. Among others, the patriots gave them hard times largely in rural areas. They continuously harassed them. Ethiopian patriots continued their resistance in almost all regions and by all ethnic groups of the empire with varying degree of intensification. The first phase of resistance was the continuation of the war itself. Among the highlights of this phase was the resistance waged by three commanders of the Southern Front, *Ras* Desta Damtew, *Dejjach* Beyene Merid and *Dejjach* Gebre Maryam Gari. An extension of this phase was a five pronged assault on the capital in the summer of 1936. The campaign involved two sons of *Ras* Kasa Hailu (Asfawesen and

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Aberra), the veteran of Adwa *Dejjach* Balcha Safo, *Balambaras* (later *Ras*) Abebe Aregay, and *Dejjach* Fikre-Mariam Yinnnadu.

However, it failed because of lack of effective means of transportation and radio communication. *Abune* Petros, the Bishop of Wollo, who was the spirit behind the patriots was executed and became a martyr of the resistance. The killing of the bishop was unheard of in Ethiopia and shocked the nation, arousing the indignation of the people, especially the clergy.

The second phase covers from 1937 to the end of the Italian occupation in 1941. On 19 February 1937, two young Ethiopian patriots, Abreha Deboch and Moges Asgedom, hurled a bomb at Graziani in the Genete-Le'ul palace compound at Sidist Kilo, wounding him seriously and killing some others. This was followed by a reign of terror waged by the Black Shirts; who chopped off heads, burnt down houses with their inhabitants, and disemboweled thousands in Addis Ababa. According to Ethiopian official accounts, about 30,000 Ethiopians of different ages, classes and sex were killed in three days' campaign. Special targets of the Fascist terror were educated Ethiopians (including many members of the Black Lion Organization). The EOC also became a target. For instance, on 21 May 1937, in the monastery of Debre Libanos alone, 297 monks were executed. The elimination of the intelligentsia was to create 'the missing generation' in Ethiopia's intellectual and political history.

This Fascist terror marked the transition from the conventional patriotic resistance to guerrilla warfare that could eventually weaken the enemy forces. Different guerrilla units kept the Italian troops under constant harassment.

As the Fascist regime became intolerable to Ethiopians, there also arose women who led their own army in the guerrilla wars, like *Woizero* Lekyelesh Beyan, whose career as a guerrilla fighter ended in January 1941, when she was captured after an Italian air bombardment.

Woizero Kebedech Seyoum (a daughter of *Ras* Seyum Mengesha and the wife of *Dejazmach* Abera Kasa), started her patriotic activity before the fall of Addis Ababa to the

Italians. Thus, when her husband was fighting in the northern front, she maintained peace and order in the province of Salale representing her husband.

Although it lacked coordination, patriotic resistance to Italian rule took place in the country in numerous forms and tenacity. There was no unified command structure. In most provinces of the country, similar acts of resistance were observed. Eritreans too were joining the resistance in big numbers. A comprehensive list and explanation on each patriot in a module such as this would not be possible.

However, hereunder an attempt has been made to list a few patriots that we think can represent different parts of Ethiopia. *Dejjazmach* Umar Samatar, Colonel Abdisa Aga, *Dejjazmach* Belay Zeleke, *Dejjazmach* Gebrehiwot Meshesha, *Dejjazmach* Abbbai Kahsay, *Woizero* Shewareged Gedle, Zeray Dires, Colonel Jagama Kello, *Woizero* Sinidu Gebru, *Ras* Amoraw Wubneh, *Lij* Haile Mariam Mamo, *Ras* Abebe Aregay, *Dejjazmach* Habte Mariam, Colonel Belay Haile-ab, Major Matias Gemeda, Captain Yosef Nesibu, *Blatta* Takele Wolde-Hawaryat, *Dejjach* Geresu Duki, Bekele Woya, etc.

The struggle continued but it suffered from serious internal weakness. The resistance was handicapped by the Ethiopian collaborators called the *Banda* who exercised their corrosive activities in different areas. Another weakness of the resistance movement was that it was divided and that there was no one national organization to coordinate the activities of the many patriotic groups dispersed in many parts of the country. Relations between guerrilla groups were characterized by parochialism and jealousy. Some guerrilla groups spent more time fighting one another than attacking the declared enemy.

Despite these weaknesses, the patriots carried on a persistent resistance against Italian fascism, until suddenly they got external support from Britain in 1941. Ethiopian struggle for independence was associated with World War II, when Italy declared war on France and Britain on 10 June 1940. Mussolini decided to enter the war on the side of Germany in the hope of securing outside support; the internationalization of the conflict was a good opportunity. For Haile-Sellassie too, the situation was important. His requests for assistance

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were finally answered by the British government that decided to drive out Italians from East Africa.

On July 12, 1940, London recognized the Emperor as a full ally. The British launched a three-pronged attack on the Italians. In the north, General William Platt led the forces that attacked the Italians in Eritrea. In January 1941, Colonel Sandford and Major Wingate accompanied the Emperor from the Sudan into Gojjam at the head of British and Ethiopian troops called the Gedeon force. General Cunningham led the attack from Kenya. The advances were rapid largely due to the demoralization that the patriots had caused on the Italian forces. Emperor Haile-Selassie entered Addis Ababa on 5 May 1941, exactly five years after Italian entry to the capital.

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Learning Activities

- Discuss the socio-economic and political circumstances that gave rise to the Gibe monarchies in Ethiopia.
- Elaborate the role of local and long-distance trade in the interactions between peoples and states of Ethiopia and the Horn.
- Explain the concept of religious revivalism.
- List and discuss Emperor Tewodros' administrative policies, military reforms, and their outcomes.
- Briefly describe *Lij* Iyasu's efforts to reform the country's justice system and the police force.
- Discuss the operation of the *leba shay* system.
- Explicate the internal and external circumstances that led Menilek II's territorial expansion to south
- Assess the divergent paths Emperors Tewodros II, Yohannes IV and Menilek II pursued in the administration of the empire.
- Account for the circumstances that led to the foundation of Addis Ababa as the country's capital.
- Discuss the deeds of the patriots focusing on their achievements and weaknesses.

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UNIT SEVEN

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, 1941–1995 (5 hours)

Introduction

This unit examines major social, economic and political developments in Ethiopia from 1941 to 1995. It does so by reviewing key institutions and processes that underlay the relationships between the Ethiopian political center and the provinces and the country's relations with the outside world. Specific issues the unit considers include: consolidation of imperial power, opposition movements, the 1974 Revolution, and the replacement of the monarchy by a Marxist leaning military government called *Derg*. The *Derg* undertook a series of revolutionary measures that brought about profound social, economic and political changes in the country. In the long term, however, the measures did not prove valuable to increase and sustain agricultural productivity and thus improve the condition of peasants. Meanwhile, the *Derg* had been overwhelmed from its first year in power by strife within the government, regional and ethnic rebellions and separatist movements besides the war with Somalia. Finally, the raging civil war in the north against the backdrop of decelerating economy combined with changes in global politics led to the demise of the *Derg* in 1991. This was followed by the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1991 and then the promulgation of a new constitution in 1995 that established a federal form of government led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Through the examination of the various topics and historical developments, the unit aims to encourage students to study further the history of Ethiopia and the Horn in general and that of their country in particular in the period under discussion.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- identify major socio-economic and political developments in the country from 1941 to 1974.
- assess the role and influence of the British and the Americans in Ethiopia's domestic and foreign affairs in the post-liberation period.
- analyze the causes, course and consequences of the 1974 Revolution.

- account for the revolutionary measures of the *Derg*.
- discuss the fundamental and immediate factors for the fall of the *Derg* regime.
- describe the essential nature of the EPRDF's government with reference to the measures it took shortly after assuming power.

Unit Starters

- What considerations informed the decision of the British government to help Ethiopia in June 1940?
- Do you remember who Colonels Sanford and Wingate, and General Alan Cunningham were?
- How did patriots in different parts of the country react to the flight and return of the Emperor in 1936 and 1941 respectively?
- Which day should be observed as an Ethiopian Victory Day- April 6 or May 5? Why?

7.1. Post-1941 Imperial Period

7.1.1. Restoration and Consolidation of Imperial Power and External Relations

A. Ethiopia and Britain

In the post-1941 period, Britain recognized Ethiopia's status as a sovereign state with mutual diplomatic accreditation, but it continued to exercise the upper hand because of the role it played in the liberation of Ethiopia from Fascist rule. Another reason for the preponderant influence of Britain in Ethiopia's domestic and international affairs was the continuation of WWII (1939-45) which required adequate provision for the Allied defense to win the war. Accordingly, despite protests, the British considered Ethiopia Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA). The 1942 and 1944 agreements that Emperor Haile-Selassie I was forced to sign with the British show the ascendancy of the latter.

The 1942 agreement gave Britain a final authority over Ethiopia's foreign affairs, territorial integrity, administration, finances, the military, and the police. The British minster in Ethiopia enjoyed precedence over other foreign diplomats in Ethiopia and Britain was to approve employment of other nationals by Ethiopian government. Even more, British citizens held key posts in Ethiopian administration as advisors and judges while at the same time they maintained total control over the country's police force, which was set up in February 1942. Additionally, British aircraft had exclusive aviation rights and the emperor had to obtain approval from the

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Commander in Chief of the British Forces in East Africa, Sir Philip Mitchell, to implement sovereign matters such as declaration of war or state of emergency. Britain also decided details on disposal of Italian prisoners of war and civilians and the administration of Italian properties in the country. In terms of finance, the British assumed control over currency and foreign exchange as well as import-exports.

The Emperor resented such restrictions to his powers and made some diplomatic engagements. With this and the help of the USA and friends of Ethiopia such as Sylvia Pankhurst, Britain relaxed the restrictions imposed upon the Ethiopian government. The second Anglo-Ethiopian agreement, signed in 1944, shows some of the concessions the emperor won from Britain. According to this agreement, the priority accorded to the British minster over all other foreign diplomats in Ethiopia was lifted. The Ethiopian government could now employ non-British foreign personnel and it regained control over a section of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, a vital line of external communication. Control over this route assured Ethiopia free access to foreign goods and services including arms and ammunitions. The British also agreed to evacuate their army from the region once they equip Ethiopia's military force- a task mandated to the British Military Mission to Ethiopia (BMME). The BMME assisted the government of Ethiopia in organizing, training, and administration of its army until 1951. Haile-Selassie I Harar Military Academy was modeled after a British Military Academy called Sandhurst.

Britain did not, however, yield to Ethiopia's territorial demands during the negotiation for the 1944 Agreement. The Ethiopian government requested union of Eritrea with Ethiopia claiming that it was historically, culturally, and economically inseparable from Ethiopia. Both Eritrea and Ogaden were part of the Ethiopian empire before they fell into Italian hands in 1890 and 1936 respectively. But Ethiopia's claims to the two territories were met with little sympathy from the British. Britain insisted that Ogaden should be merged with the former Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland to form what they called "Greater Somalia". Similarly, the western and northern lowlands of Eritrea were intended by the British to be part of Sudan. Further, they wanted to integrate the Tigrigna speaking highlands of Eritrea with Tigray to form a separate state. Therefore, in September 1945 at the London conference of Allied powers Ethiopia's claims to Eritrea and Ogaden were rejected.

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The territorial issues were resolved only after a decade. In 1948, the British left parts of Ogaden, and in 1954, they withdrew from the region. In Eritrea, people were divided; those who wanted a union with Ethiopia rallied behind the Unionists. The Liberal Progressive Party and later the Muslim League rallied people who sought for separation and independence. In 1948, the question of Eritrea was referred to the UNSC by Britain, France, USA and USSR. The UN appointed a commission of five men from Burma, Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan and South Africa to find out the actual wishes of Eritreans. After a period of investigation, Guatemala and Pakistan recommended granting independence to Eritrea. While Norway recommended union with Ethiopia, South Africa and Burma recommended Federation. On December 2, 1950, UN Resolution 390V granted the Federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, which came into effect in 1952. However, this arrangement did not satisfy both unionists and the independence bloc; each side seeking to unmake the federation to fit their respective interests. On November 14, 1962, the Eritrean Parliament, under pressure from the Ethiopian government, resolved to dissolve the Federation and placed Eritrea under the imperial umbrella.

B. Ethiopia and the USA

The first official contacts between Ethiopia and the United States of America traced back to 1903 when Ethiopia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with the USA delegate led under Robert P. Skinner. The relations between the two countries had been in the doldrums because of the Tripartite domination of the Ethiopian diplomatic scene until the early 1940s. Following the Second World War, two super-powers, the Soviet Union and the United States emerged. In Ethiopia and the Horn, British pre-dominance in 1940s was replaced by the dominance of the United States in the 1950s. In his efforts to ensure his sovereign political authority from British domination, to modernize his country and consolidate his power, Haile-Selassie I turned towards the United States as a powerful ally than Britain. American interest in the region began to grow especially after they acquired a communication base in Asmara known as Radio Marina from the Italians. The radio station was later on renamed Qagnew after the Ethiopian force that fought on the side of the Americans in the Korean War (1950-3).

In 1943, the Ethiopian vice Finance Minister, Yilma Deressa, visited the US to request expertise

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to assist the country's development. In response, USA extended the Lend-Lease Agreement with Ethiopia and sent a technical mission led by Perry Fellows in May 1944. Emperor Haile-Selassie I and the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, met in Egypt and discussed recognition of an American Sinclair Company to prospect for oil in Ogaden at the beginning of 1945. By granting a concession to the company, Ethiopia sought to reassert its rights in the region as much as it was eager to exploit a lucrative natural resource. The renewed contact between the two countries was concretized with the signing of two agreements in the 1950s. First, the Point Four Agreement that enabled subsequent American assistance in education and public health was signed in 1952. Second, the Ethio-US Treaty that granted a continued American use of the Qagnew base in return for military assistance was signed in 1953. These two agreements in general but the latter in particular defined the Ethio-American relationship in the following decades.

Following the 1953 treaty, the US launched a military aid program named the American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to equip Ethiopia's armed forces. The MAAG was to train 60,000 Ethiopian soldiers in three separate divisions. In the year between 1953 and 1968, over 2,500 Ethiopians received various forms of military training in the US. It was in the army that American military assistance and training was most noticeable. By 1970, sixty percent of US military aid to Africa went to Ethiopia. In the period between 1946 and 1972, US military aid was over 180 million US Dollar. Anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, naval craft, infantry weapons and some times even uniforms like field jackets were of American origin.

Civil aviation, road transport, and education were other spheres that the Americans took active part. From 8 September to 15 December 1945, the founding conference of the UN was held at San Francisco. There, the Ethiopian delegation approached American delegates for assistance to form a civilian airline. Hence, an agreement was concluded with Transcontinental and Western World Airline (TWA) that established Ethiopian Air Lines (EAL) in 1946 with five C-47 warplanes that served during WWII and of which three were converted to passenger version DC-3. In 1962, EAL entered the jet age. Meanwhile the shortage of trained Ethiopian personnel slowed the progress towards the Ethiopianization of the EAL. For almost three decades since the signing of the agreement with the TWA in 1946, key management and executive posts of the Ethiopian airline were seized by expatriates notably by the Americans. EAL got its first

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Ethiopian national pilot, Alemayehu Abebe, in 1957 and Colonel Simeret Medhne became the first Ethiopian General Manager of EAL in 1971.

The Imperial Board of Telecommunication was established with the help of International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) organization between 1950 and 1952. In January 1951, with financial loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Imperial High Way Authority (IHA) was set up based on the model of the US Bureau of Roads. It continued to be run by Americans until 1962. Together with ELA's domestic network the improvement of road transport along with communication services played important role in facilitating national integration and the speedy transport of such lucrative commodities as coffee.

In the field of education, American presence was particularly evident in the university and high schools. A variety of American scholarship programs under USAID and African American Institute African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) offered opportunities for many Ethiopians to go to the United States for their second and third Degrees. Meanwhile, many American volunteers came to Ethiopia to teach in Ethiopian schools under the Peace Corps Program.

Other foreign countries with significant presence in Imperial Ethiopia include Sweden and Norway whose advisors were entrusted to the Air force and navy successively. Germany and Israel trained and equipped the Police Force while the Swedes supported the Imperial Bodyguard and the Harar Military Academy was entrusted to British trained Indians.

In 1956, the Qoqa Dam was built with war reparations money that the Italians agreed to pay. This was followed by the return of the Statue of Judah in 1970, which Italians had taken during the occupation period. Russians established good relations with Ethiopia through their exhibition, library around city hall, post office, mathematics, and literature.

7.1.2. Socio-Economic Developments

Given the low development of industrialization in the country even well into the twentieth century, agriculture remained the leading economic sector in providing employment for about ninety percent of the population, generating about seventy percent of the national GDP and

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supplying almost hundred percent of the country's income from export trade. Therefore, the landholding that was a primary means of production was vital.

Generally, peasants in the northern and central highland parts of Ethiopia held land in the form of *rist*. In the 1970s, more than sixty-six percent of the peasant farmers cultivated less than 0.5 hectares. In southern Ethiopia, government grants were made by the Government for large number of its supporters and tenancy was widespread. The disparity of landownership between north and south Ethiopia by the middle of the twentieth century can be seen from the proportion of tenants to landed peasants. It was only minority religious and occupational castes who suffered from tenancy in the north while the tenant population as percentage of total rural population in newly incorporated regions varied from 37 percent in former Sidama Governorate General to a staggering 73 percent in Ilu Abba Bor, and 75 percent in Hararghe, whereas tenancy in northern provinces averaged 11 percent. Tenants surrendered up to 60 percent of their produce to landlords who mostly lived in towns or the capital.

In addition to formal tributes, there were sundry payments that smallholder and landless farmers had to make, such as "voluntary" contributions to self-help funds for projects from which they rarely benefitted. Sharecrop tenancy arrangements in the country were so onerous that increasing production only increased the exploitation of peasants. Similarly, the extreme taxation to which smallholding peasants were subjected to was too high discouraging peasants from maximizing production beyond subsistence levels. From 1953 to 1974, the annual growth rate of agricultural production was only 2.4 percent, which was lower than the 2.5 percent population growth rate. Consequently, Ethiopia ranked among the countries with very low per capita income.

The deteriorating condition of the country's economy posed a threat to the social and political stability of the country and thus, the regime's power. This coupled with external pressure from donors, induced the government to establish a Land Reform Committee in 1961. This later became the Land Reform and Development Authority that grew to become the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. Yet no meaningful reform was implemented because it would affect the vested economic and political interests of landlords who at that time had taken hold of government.

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In the 1960s and 1970s, commercial agriculture was expanding especially in southern Shewa, the Setit-Humera region on the Sudan border, and in the Awash Valley. The mechanization of farming in these areas led to eviction of tenants. Profitability of agriculture led some landlords to work the land by themselves. Sometimes they rented the land under their ownership to whoever offered them better price in cash (as opposed to the sharecropping tenancy practice); a price paid in advance and for longer periods. The effect of all these was the eviction of tenants.

Furthermore, the government attempted to enhance the productivity of small farmers through launching comprehensive agricultural package programs. The most notable in this regard were the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) and Wolayta Agricultural Development Unit (WADU). CADU was launched in 1967 through the initiative of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) while the World Bank supported WADU. The major objective of the package programs was demonstrating the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural packages to pave the way for subsequent nationwide emulation of the intensive package approach. Nonetheless, the plan was conceived and implemented without undertaking the crucial task of land reform, thereby leaving the targeted population (small peasant producers) at a disadvantageous position vis-a-vis big landlords when it comes to the distribution of benefits. Although few participant small farmers gained real benefit, farmers with large land-holdings took the lion's share of the benefits accrued from these projects. The unintended outcome of CADU was aggravating tenant eviction. WADU initiated by the World Bank was more successful in promoting re-settlement.

Since the 1950s, the government formulated strategic plans for economic development and this came in a series of five-year plans. The First Five Year Plan (1957-1961) targeted the development of infrastructure. The Second (1962-1967) turned towards mining, manufacturing and electricity. The Plan also mentioned major constraints to the development of the agricultural sector, although in very general terms. The Third (1968-1972) gave priority to large-scale agricultural development and 'bringing higher living standard'. The package projects noted above were part of the third plan. Following these plans, the Ethiopian economy witnessed some progress particularly after 1950. Overall, domestic output increased nearly three and a half times

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and even better progress was registered in manufacturing. The number of industrial enterprises grew to over four hundred and the industrial working force to nearly sixty thousand. The electricity supply and infrastructure expanded considerably. Road and air communication enabled linkage of parts of the country. The emergence of new towns and the development of city life hastened urbanization. Moreover, public revenue and expenditure both grew nine and tenfold, respectively. Banking facilities expanded and the State Bank of Ethiopia was formed in 1942. In 1963, it was divided into the Commercial Bank and the National Bank of Ethiopia. Also a private bank, Addis Ababa Bank was established in 1963. The capital Addis Ababa became a continental capital when the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were established in 1958 and 1963, respectively. Overall, there was relatively high level modernization that was reflected in many facets of life: music, sports, cuisine and dress styles.

Yet, much of Ethiopia remained traditional with a low living standard and Ethiopia was one of the least developed country in global terms. While the manufacturing sector contributed less than five percent of the national income, industrialization was spatially limited in the capital and its vicinity in addition only to Asmara and Dire Dawa. The manufacturing sector only produced light consumer goods. Moreover, industrial investment was also primarily of foreign origin. For example, the Ethiopian share in capital was hardly more than twenty percent for Wonji-Shewa and Metahara sugar factories which were largely Dutch-owned. Above all, the absence of meaningful land reform constrained the forces of production in the countryside where the majority of the population lived.

Consolidation of Autocracy

The post-liberation period witnessed the climax of the emperor's power. As in the period before, at the center of post-1941 national policies was the state's enduring interest to curb the political and economic bases of the power of regional lords in favor of the monarch. After he was restored to the throne in May 1941, Emperor Haile-Selassie embarked on consolidating his power. This was made possible through the bureaucratization of government, the building of a national army and a centralized fiscal system. In order to fill-in the expanding bureaucracy, education was promoted at both school and college levels. While primary schools had already been established

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prior to 1935, secondary schools were opened in the post 1941 period. The Haile-Selassie I Secondary School, founded in 1943, and the General Wingate School, established in 1946, became the two most popular and prestigious secondary schools. A significant number of the educated elites in the 1950s attended either of these two schools. In 1950, the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) was inaugurated. This was followed by the Engineering and Building College in Addis Ababa, the College of Agriculture in Alamaya (Hararghe), and the Public Health College in Gondar. These various colleges were brought together to form the Haile-Selassie I University in 1961 which again was re-named Addis Ababa University after the outbreak of the Revolution in 1974.

The post-1941 political order was dominated by Haile-Selassie that both the state and the country came to be identified with the emperor. Significant urban landmarks such as schools, hospitals, theatre halls, stadiums, main avenues and squares in the country bore the name of the Emperor. It was common for students to chant songs praising the emperor who would then gift them with sweets or fruits on holidays such as Ethiopian Christmas on January 7. The emperor's birthday and coronation day were national holidays where large sum of money was spent.

Yet another major pre-occupation of the imperial regime was the strengthening of the military and security apparatus. The ministries of Defense and Interior, in charge of maintaining public security, consistently received the highest budgetary allocations. For example, out of the country's total budget of ETB 38 million in 1944/5 fiscal year, nearly 11 million was allocated for the Ministry of Interior of which security absorbed almost 5 million and about 8 million went for war. Figures show over 80 million allocation for Ministry of Defense and nearly 60 million for Ministry of Interior, out of about 400 million ETB in 1967.Ironically although the emperor anticipated that the military that was composed mainly of the army, the police force and the Imperial Bodyguard would suppress opposition to the regime, they themselves rebelled more than once- a failed coup in 1960 and the more successful one in 1974.

The traditional aristocracy, although made to enjoy urban and rural property, had lost most of its political privileges. Based on the traditional *shum shir*, the emperor appointed and demoted his ministers, most of whom had humble origins. In 1943, the emperor appointed eleven ministers to draft laws and appoint junior officials but their subservience to the monarch was stated in

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explicit terms. For example, it was only in 1966 that even the prime minster was allowed to select his cabinet members to be approved by the emperor. *Ras Bitweded* Mekonnen Endalkachew served as prime minister from 1942. Next to Mekonnen Habte-Wold (1949-58), whose brother, Aklilu, became the last prime minister of the imperial regime (1961-74), Yilma Deressa left the strongest mark on the Ministry of Finance. But the most powerful of the ministers in the post-1941 political order was *Tsehafe-Tizaz* Wolde-Giorgis Wolde-Yohannis who headed the strategic Ministry of Pen in the period 1941-55. Besides, Wolde-Giorgis held the portfolios of Justice and Interior on various occasions that he was the defacto prime minister in the above stated period. Wolde-Giorgis' access to the emperor and the latter's trust in him made him so powerful. In general, members of the royal family, leading nobility and the *Abun* still were members of the crown council, which was an advisory body to the emperor. In 1959, the Emperor's private cabinet was set up as a high-level advisory body to the emperor and developed into agency doing intelligence.

In 1955, Haile-Selassie promulgated a new constitution, revising the first constitution issued in 1931. American advisers like John Spencer as well as *Tsehafe-Tizaz* Wolde-Giorgis Wolde-Yohannis and *Tsehafe-Tizaz* Aklilu Habte-Wold were in the drafting committee of the 1955 revised constitution. More than its predecessor, the 1955 revised constitution provided the basis for the consolidation of absolutism in Ethiopia. About 36 articles of the 1955 constitution dealt with the question of imperial succession and the emperor's privileges. The constitution clearly states the Emperor's personality as sacred, his dignity inviolable and his power indisputable. Some Human rights provisions like those of speech and press were accompanied by nullifying phrases like within law limits. However this constitution introduced universal adult suffrage and elected chamber of deputies for four years term and that of the senate six years with certain property qualification.

In the final analysis, however, neither the constitution nor the Parliament that it created put a limit to the autocratic power of the emperor. He was the head of the three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. The idea of a constitutional monarchy was never materialized. Human rights and civic liberties were restricted and violated. Regional identities, needs and feelings were ignored in the interest of centralization.

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As the years progressed, the emperor started to dedicate his attention to foreign affairs. He played a significant role in the Non-Aligned Movement and the drive for African unity and this increased his international stature that finally resulted in the birth of the Organization of African Unity at the summit of heads of African states held in Addis Ababa in 1963. But his preoccupation with international affairs detached the emperor from the domestic affairs that he failed to see the signs of trouble at home.

7.1.3. Oppositions and the Downfall of the Monarchical Regime

A. Plots and Conspiracies

Various sectors of the society opposed the imperial rule before the 1974 Revolution broke out. Before the 1960s, opposition to the regime took in the form of plots and conspiracies. After the 1960 Coup d'état, however, oppositions gained wider mass support and came out more openly. Some leaders of the resistance movement against Fascist rule were opposed to the restoration of the emperor to the throne for fleeing the country when it needed him most whereas others wished for a republican government. Such misgivings combined with the privileges and rewards accorded to exiles and people who served the colonial administration exacerbated the resentment against the monarchy leading to rebellions. One notable patriot who resented the fact that he was not given a stature recognizing his contribution to the Resistance was *Dejazmach* Belay Zeleke. The emperor made Belay governor of a southern province of Gojjam because he wanted to remove him from his base in Bichena in eastern Gojjam. Belay rejected the offer and was even more dissatisfied at dignified positions of *Ras* Haylu Belaw (Governor General of Gojjam) and *Bitweded* Mengesha Jembere (Deputy Governor General of Gojjam). In February 1943, forces from Debra-Marqos and Addis Ababa invaded Belay's district. After fighting for three months, Belay surrendered, was detained in Fiche from where he tried to escape and return to Gojjam a few months later, but was captured with his brother Ejigu. Taken back to the capital, Belay was finally hanged in public.

Bitweded Negash Bezabih was a vice minister and Senate President in the emperor's administration after liberation. He plotted to assassinate the emperor and proclaim a republic in 1951. In the process, some military officers like Beqele Anasimos were attracted to the plot, but *Dejach* Geresu Duki, another patriot, whom the plotters had unsuccessfully approached to recruit

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to their cause, exposed them. Finally, the plotters were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment after being arrested during one of their clandestine meetings.

The most fierce and sustained opposition to the emperor came from *Blatta* Takele Wolde-Hawaryat, who hatched a plot in constitutionalist terms using Yohannes Iyasu as front and with the support of some contingents of the army. But the plot was uncovered and he was detained. In 1945, *Blatta* Takele Wolde-Hawaryat was released and appointed as deputy *Afe-nigus*. Yet, he was involved in another plot in 1946 and was detained up to 1954. Upon his release, he once again became Vice Interior Minister and *Afe-nigus*. He tried to assassinate the emperor on November 17, 1969, but his final plot failed and he barricaded himself in his house and engaged in a shoot-out with the police in which he was killed.

The most serious challenge to the emperor's authority came in 1960 in the form of a coup attempt. The abortive *coup d'etat* of 1960 was led by the Neway brothers, Brigadier General Mengistu and Germame. Garmame attended Haile-Sellasie I Secondary School, and then the University of Wisconsin where he received his B.A and M.A. Degrees from Columbia. Garmame was also president of Ethiopian Students Association during his stay in the USA. Upon his return to Ethiopia, Garmame became the president of a clandestine alumni association of his former school. As governor of Wolayta, Germame's activities were alarming to the regime. He monitored police activities, introduced a settlement program in which he distributed government holdings to landless peasants and ordered written tenancy agreements. He was then summoned back to Addis Ababa for explanation. However, unable to criticize Germame's intentions Haile-Selassie sent him to Jijiga where he continued as radical reformer. He oversaw the digging of new wells while improving the old, set up clinics, schools etc. But his actions were not liked by the regime which convinced Germame of the need for change. Together with his brother General Mengistu Neway, the head of the Imperial Bodyguard, and others the two brothers started detaining ministers and other members of the nobility when the emperor was on state visit in Brazil. They also took over the radio station and spoke about the backwardness of the country than newly independent African states. The crown prince Asfawosen was declared to be a salaried constitutional monarch. The prince delivered a speech on Radio Addis explaining the rationale of the coup in which he promised the establishment of new factories, schools etc. On December 14, 1960, a new government was declared that was to be headed by *Ras* Emiru

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Haile-Selassie. Major General Mulugeta Buli was chosen as chief of staff of the armed forces while Brigadier-General Tsige Dibu was to lead the Imperial Bodyguard and the Police Force, and Colonel Workneh Gebeyehu was security-chief.

However, the army and the air force refused to side with the rebels and with the support of the Americans and the blessing of the patriarch, the loyalists led by General Merid Mengesha, *Ras* Asrate Kassa etc attacked the plotters. The rebels asked for a cease-fire, which the loyalists rejected. Finally, they had to run for their lives but only after killing the ministers and other dignitaries they had detained at Geneta L'uel palace. In the meantime, the emperor entered the capital. Finally, Garmame died fighting in the outskirts of the capital and Mengistu was captured and hanged after trial. The regime made some concessions after the failed coup attempt, but failed to address the root causes that triggered the coup itself. Thus, opposition to the imperial regime was only to grow stronger leading to the outbreak of the 1974 Revolution.

B. Peasant Rebellions

The post-liberation period also witnessed growing opposition among peasants in different parts of the country against Haile-Selassie's regime thereby giving the opposition a broader dimension. Peasant revolts, although on a small scale, were especially numerous in the southern territories, where the imperial government had traditionally rewarded its supporters with land grants thereby reducing the local peasantry into tenancy. It is not possible in the space of a brief essay such as this to discuss the numerous peasant rebellions in the entire country. But an effort will be made to canvas major eruptions in the country with the intent of showing some of the deficiencies of the system.

The Woyane Rebellion

The first peasant resistance against imperial rule took place in Tigray, known in history as the Woyane rebellion. The term *Woyane* means 'revolt' in Tigrigna language. A combination of long-running problems stemming from the inequities of the system and short-term factors caused the eruption. Peasants felt victimized by corruption and greed of the Territorial Army unit stationed in the region and general administrative inefficiency that led to the *shiftnet* of peasants who possessed armament left by Italians. The peoples of Wejjerat and Raya-Azebo had wanted to

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maintain their local autonomy that the government violated. Another cause for the rebellion was the 1942 land decree which forced peasants to pay tax arrears whose collection was problematic.This rebellion had the support of members of the nobility who perceived their position to be endangered by the expansion of central authority. The nobility took advantage of the popular discontent against government officials and their militias and put strong resistance against government forces thanks to the able leadership of *Blatta* Haile-Mariam Reda. Finally, the government's retribution against the Raya-Azebo on allegation of cattle raids on Afar territory sparked the general rebellion. As such, the Woyane rebellion was as a continuation of the government's punitive campaign against the region's peasants in the late 1920s. The dress rehearsal for the major confrontation took place on January 11, 1942 where the imperial force was defeated and humiliated by Raya-Azebo peasants. On May 22, 1943, the rebels scored an astounding victory fighting an even larger and well-equipped government army in Addi Awuna, 15 kms away from Hewane in southern Tigray. Soon small towns around Mekelle like Qwiha and Enda-Iyyasus, and Meqelle itself on October 14, 1943 fell in rebel hands. They then expanded to Kilte-Awlalo, Wuqiro etc in eastern Tigray. Such initial advances of the rebel forces, however, did not last long. In October 1943, the imperial army under the command of Abebe Aregay with the support of the British Royal Air Force crushed the rebellion. The government exiled or imprisoned the leaders of the revolt. The emperor took reprisals against peasants suspected of supporting the Woyane. Meanwhile, the imperial regime reversed the 1942 land decree, although the Wejjerat and Raya-Azebo lost their autonomous status, and Raya-Azebo was made part of Wollo.

The Yejju Rebellion

Overt dissidence of Yejju peasants in Wollo during Haile-Selassie's rule occurred three times. In 1948, peasants rose against the system after their appeal against land alienation was ignored by the government. With *Qegnazmach* Melaku Taye and Unda Mohammed in the forefront, peasants stormed and freed inmates held in Woldya prison. The *nech lebash* were called to quell the unrest and eventually the leaders were publicly flogged. Throughout the 1950s, localized skirmishes between government forces and peasants expanded to Qobo, Hormat, Tumuga, Karra-Qore etc led by prominent figures like Ali Dullatti (*Abba* Jabbi). In 1970, peasants revolted against the introduction of mechanized agriculture that encroached on pastoral land and killed

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Qegnazmach Abate Haylu who was a member of the local nobility and direct beneficiary of the new development. Finally, the rising was suppressed by the local militia.

The Gojjam Peasant Rebellion

In 1968, another violent peasant uprising set off in Gojjam caused by the government's attempt to implement new tax on agricultural produce, which the parliament adopted in November 1967. This rebellion was not, however, without its antecedents. The nobles of Gojjam refused to accept any limitation upon the prevailing land tenure system and successfully battled the regime over this issue. Although the expansion of central authority by appointed officials and the development of infrastructural works required a parallel increase in tax payments, it was fiercely resisted by the local gentry. Against this background, the then governor of Gojjam, *Dejach* Kebede Tesema, initiated land assessment and classification to determine taxation. He then raised tax rate from what it had been in the pre-1935 period. In 1950, a revolt broke out in Mota, Qolla-Daga Damot and Mecha districts led by people like *Dejach* Abere Yimam. As a result tax rate was reduced by 1/3, Kebede was removed and replaced by Haylu Belew, a hereditary ruler of Gojjam. Later, Haylu's Shewan successor named *Dejjazmach* Tsehayu Enqu-Selassie forced contributions to build the emperor's statue in Debra Marqos. Besides, peasants were ordered to pay tax arrears and register their arms with fees. Meanwhile, peasants were victimized by the ravages committed by the *nech lebash* in the pretext of eradicating banditry. With all the above unfolding, an attempt was made to introduce the new agricultural tax and this finally sparked the 1968 uprising led by veterans of the resistance period, who had taken titles for themselves such as *leul* and *fitawrari*. The government was forced to transfer *Dejazmach* Tsehayu to Kafa, declare amnesty, abandon the new tax, and cancel all tax arrears of taxation going back to 1950. Despite these concessions, the rebellion spread throughout Gojjam except Agaw-Midir and Metekel, which alarmed the government. Finally the rebellion was subdued by the combined forces of the army, police and *nech lebash* by the end of 1968.

The Gumuz Rebellion

The Gumuz staged major armed rebellion against the regime of Emperor Haile-Selassie in 1952/3. The movement is named after one of its famous leaders, *Abba* Tone. *Abba* Tone served the imperial regime with a position of *Abba* Qoro (head /chief of a sub- district) responsible for collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order as well as mobilization of the people for public

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works in time of peace and for war in cases of conflict.

As with the other peasant rebellions, the *Abba* Tone armed uprising had its roots in administrative injustice, land and taxation policies of the imperial regime. *Abba* Tone sided with the local people who were discontented with the system of government and administration of Emperor Haile-Selassie in general and heavy taxation and mal-administration in particular. Although *Abba* Tone reported the complaints of the peasants to higher government authorities in Najjo and Gimbi, they were not in a position to solve the problem. Meanwhile, the Gumuz were determined not to pay taxes unless the government took appropriate measures to address their concerns.

Finally, an open clash broke out between the policemen and the Gumuz when tax collectors with the backing of the police force attempted to force the people pay land taxes. The situation soon grew into an open rebellion against the government leading to a general breakdown of law and order in the region, particularly in places like Gaba Robi and Tullu Lubu where the first clash had occurred. During the initial engagement between the government's expeditionary forces and those of *Abba* Tone, the latter obtained an upper hand over the former. Nevertheless, the government forces were soon reinforced with more weapons and manpower. *Abba* Tone and his followers were outgunned and outnumbered and thus, the government was able to put down the uprising. *Abba* Tone was captured and later released on pardon.

The Gedeo Peasant Rebellion

As in many parts of rural Ethiopia, the major source of peasant discontent in Gedeo was land alienation. The dispossession of land from the indigenous peasantry was unabated particularly following the introduction of land measurement in the 1920s. In the 1960s, the Gedeo witnessed an unprecedented level of land expropriation by members of the northern nobility who were vying for coffee farms. The major contender in this regard was the emperor's daughter Princess Tenagneworq. This coupled with the denigration of their culture exacerbated Gedeo's resentment against the system. Petitions and appeals to higher authorities to curb the continued land alienation proved futile. Then peasants refused to pay *erbo* (1/4 of agricultural produce payable to landlords), armed themselves with traditional weapons like spears, swords and arrows and clashed with the imperial army at Michille in 1960. That is why it was known as the Michille

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rebellion. Over a hundred peasants lost their lives in the fight while much of their property was destroyed. Finally, *Afe Nigus* Eshete Geda, fined the elders locally called the *hayicha* accused of supporting the rebellion.

The Bale Peasant Rebellion

The Bale peasant uprising, which lasted from 1963 to 1970, presented the most serious challenge to the Ethiopian government. The causes of the uprising were multifaceted. The indigenous peasants largely became tenants on their own land after the introduction of the *qalad* that initiated land measurement in 1951. Peasants also suffered from high taxation, religious and ethnic antagonism that reached to unprecedented level after the appointment of Warqu Enqu-Selassie as governor of the territory in 1963. The predominantly Muslim population resented the imposition of alien rule from the northern and central highlands parts of the empire and thus, political and cultural domination by Christian settlers. Further, the government of Somalia extended material and moral support to the rebels as part of its strategy of re-establishing a "Greater Somalia".

The revolt broke out in El Kerre led by people like Kahin Abdi. Initially, rebel groups conducted hit-and-run raids against military garrisons and police stations separately. Soon, however, they tried to coordinate their military activities under an umbrella organization named the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), engaging in conventional wars against government forces. Haile Selassie tried to win loyalty of the people by developing alliances with notable Oromo leaders. Although this strategy enabled the emperor to recruit some members of local ruling houses in the service of the imperial system, it failed to contain the popular revolt. Instead, it quickly spread to Wabe, Dallo and Ganale under the able leadership of Waqo Gutu and others. In Gola-Abbadi forest, rebels went to the extent of attacking government forces. Further, the rebels killed *Girazmach* Beqele Haragu of Adaba and *Fitawrari* Wolde-Mika'el Bu'i of Dodola in 1965 and 1966 respectively. In December 1966, the government put Bale under the martial rule of Wolde-Selassie Baraka, the head of the army's Fourth Division. In 1967, the army, police, Territorial Army (*beherawi tor*), settler militia (*nech lebash*) and volunteers (*wedo zemach*) launched massive operations against the province. Meanwhile, the rebels lost support from the government of Somalia after Mohammed Siad Barre took over power in 1969 and found it impossible to sustain their campaigns in southeastern Ethiopia. The rebellion ended in 1970s

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after some of its popular leaders including the self-styled General Waqo Gutu surrendered to government forces.

C. Movements of Nations and Nationalities

Oppositions to the imperial rule did not come only from individuals, peasants, students and the army. The question of nations and nationalities for equality, freedom and autonomy was also assuming a significant development towards the end of the imperial regime. Among the movement of nations and nationalities of this period, the Mecha-Tulama movement of the Oromo deserves a special treatment here.

In January 1963, the Mecha-Tulama Welfare Association (MTWA) was formed with the objective of improving the welfare of the Oromo through the expansion of educational, communication and health facilities in Oromo land. Founding members of the association included Colonels Alemu Qitessa and Colonel Qedida Guremessa, Lieutenant Mamo Mezemir, Beqele Nedhi, and Haile-Mariam Gemeda. In the next two years, the association attracted large number of Oromo elites, including such high-ranking military officers as Brigadier General Taddesse Birru.

Although the Mecha-Tulama Association had its root in the will and commitment of a few Oromo elites to mobilize support for the development of Oromo inhabited territories, it soon transformed into a pan-Oromo movement coordinating countrywide peaceful resistance against the regime. This is evidenced by the successful rallies the association organized in Gindeberet, Dandi, Arsi (Dera and Iteyya), etc. The association raised contentious issues such as land and expressed its dissatisfaction with the condition of the Oromo in the society during mass rallies as well as in private meetings. The regime was alarmed by the activities of the association and determined to curb the movement before it crystallized into an organized liberation front.

Meanwhile, leaders of the association plotted to assassinate the emperor and change the regime on the anniversary of his coronation in November 1966, but the plot was foiled by security forces. This coupled with a bombing incident in one of the cinemas at the capital in which the association was implicated led the government to move swiftly and violently to ban the

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association's activities. Mecha-Tulama was dissolved in 1967 following the imprisonment and killing of its prominent leaders such as Mamo Mezemir and Haile-Mariam Gemeda by the regime's forces. Brigadier General Taddese Birru was captured while retreating to the bush and eventually sentenced to death. Later the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was exiled to Gelemso where he stayed until the outbreak of the 1974 revolution. In 1975 the *Derg* executed Tadesse on allegation of instigating armed struggle.

The brutal suppression of the Mecha-Tulama Association, however, did not end the struggle of the Oromo for justice, equality and liberty. In 1971, an underground movement called the Ethiopian National Liberation Front (ENLF) was formed by Oromo elites, perhaps by former members of the association. The Front maintained contact with student circles and other opposition figures in and outside Addis Ababa. The aim was to coordinate local resistance towards a common goal of liberation, although thwarted by the regime's security forces.

The regime's unwillingness to accommodate the legitimate and peaceful demands of various Oromo groups for equality within Ethiopia transformed Oromo nationalism into militancy for self-determination. In 1973, some members of the ENLF and other Oromo nationalists formed the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) with the aim of establishing an independent State of Oromia. The following year, OLF launched an offensive against the imperial regime in Hararghe. After the revolution, OLF increased its military activities because the *Derg* would not allow the Oromo to elect their rulers and use their language in schools and newspapers. Accordingly, the armed struggle which set off in the eastern part of Ethiopia extended to other Oromo inhabited areas such as Arsi and Wallagga.

But the biggest military challenge to the imperial regime came from Eritrea. As we have discussed above, Eritrea was integrated into the Ethiopian empire. The measure consolidated internal and external opposition to the union and led to the formation of liberation movements based in Eritrea and abroad. Although some opposition movements had taken shape as far back as the late 1940s, they did not seem to have much of an impact. In 1958, a number of Eritrean exiles founded the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) in Cairo. In 1961, the ELM evolved into the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) or Jabaha in Arabic. Hamid Idris Awate who fired the first bullet of the Eritrean armed struggle (he was the one who 'started the armed struggle'). By

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1966 the ELF challenged imperial forces throughout Eritrea. In June 1970, two splinter group liberation movements emerged from the ELF. These were the Popular Liberation Forces (PLF) and the Salfi Natsenet Eritrea (Front for Eritrean Independence). The PLF was formed in the Red Sea area led by Osman Salah Sabbe while Salfi Natsenet Eritrea (Front for Eritrean Independence) emerged under the leadership of Isayas Afeworqi. In early 1972, a new coalition of forces composed of Eritrean Liberation Front-Popular Liberation Front (ELF-PLF) led to the founding of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) or Sha'abiya in Arabic. After a long and bloody civil war, the EPLF was able to establish its hegemony over the independence movement. Finally, the EPLF succeeded in achieving *de facto* independence in 1991 and which eventually was confirmed through referendum in 1993.

D. The Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM)

The regime was not only challenged in the provinces. In fact, the Ethiopian student movement was building up in the center as a strong opposition against the regime. Although the movement started within the university, students had turned into a radical opposition and were already marching on the streets from 1965 onwards and was spreading to the high schools by 1968. The parliament's rejection of tenancy reform bill in 1964 triggered student protest in the following year demanding "Land to the Tiller."

Factors that contributed to sharpening the students' ideology include the 1960 coup, students' increased awareness of the country's socio-economic and political conditions vis a vis other African countries which they learned from scholarship students from different parts of Africa, and the Ethiopian University Service (EUS). Launched in 1964, the EUS required the students to teach and offer other services to the community usually in the provinces. In 1964, the emergence of a radical group of students with Marxist-Leninist leanings known as "the Crocodiles" marked the increased militancy of the students.

Side by side with the radicalization of the movement, students formed the University College Union (UCU) to coordinate their activities in 1962 and then the National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS) in 1963. The Main Campus Student Union (MCSU) and the University Student Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA) with its paper *Tagel* (Struggle) were established in 1965 and 1968 respectively. Outside the country, students were organized under

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the Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA) with its paper called Challenge and the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE) with its paper *Tateq* (Gird yourself) in the USA and Europe. ESUNA and ESUE gave ideological support to MCSU and USUAA.

Throughout the 1960s, a rallying cry of student demonstrations was "land to the tiller", but other local and global issues were also raised. For example, students protested against the minority white regime in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1968, while at other times they expressed their solidarity with the people of Vietnam. In the national arena, students protested against Shola Destitute Concentration Relief Camp and the holding of expatriate sponsored fashion show at the university campus and educational reform in 1966 and 1969 respectively. With the students' demands for the respect of the rights of nations and nationalities, the government was alarmed and started taking measures against leaders of the movement ranging from press campaigns to detentions and killings. Furthermore, the regime deported large number of students to the torrid Gibe river valley in 1972. Meanwhile, students' opposition was aggravated to armed hijacking of transport aircrafts.

By early 1970s, the student movement coupled with other under-running issues such as rising inflation, growing discontent of urban residents, corruption and widespread and yet covered-up famine especially in Wollo all prepared a fertile ground for a revolution.

7.2. The *Derg* Regime (1974-1991)

The mass uprising that finally put an end to the old regime came in February 1974. From January 8 to 15, 1974, soldiers and non-commissioned officers stationed at a frontier post in Negele-Borana mutinied protesting their bad living conditions. In the process, they detained the commander of the ground forces who was sent to pacify the situation. The soldiers made the commander eat their food and drink their water so that he could witness the kind of life they were living. Also, soldiers of the Second Division in Asmara, the Fourth Division in Addis Ababa and the Air Force in Debre-Zeyt (Bishoftu) mutinied demanding salary increment and political and economic reforms. The various units then set up a coordinating committee which became a precursor of the later *Derg*, in order to coordinate their actions.

Teachers throughout the country protested against the implementation of an education reform program known as Sector Review, which they deemed was disadvantageous for the poor and

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biased against them. Although the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) had coordinated demonstrations against the program already in December 1973, it called for a general strike demanding a number of other social reforms on 18 February1974. On the same day, taxi drivers went on strike demanding increase in transport fees (fifty percent) due to rise of petrol prices that followed the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war of 1973. Students, workers and the unemployed youth joined the protests, vehicles particularly buses, and luxury private automobiles were attacked.

The government responded by suspending the Sector Review, reducing petrol prices and raising the salaries of soldiers. In spite of this, the uprisings continued and on February 28, the cabinet of Prime Minister Aklilu Habte-Wold resigned. He was replaced by Endalkachew Mekonnin who was an Oxford-educated member of the aristocracy. Although Endalkachew seemed to gain the support of a group of officers within the army, promised to introduce reforms, including constitutional reform and included highly educated and progressive ministers into his cabinet, the protests continued. On March 8, the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) staged a successful general strike.

It was only a matter of time before the strikes and demonstrations spread to the provinces. A major popular demonstration was held on April 20 by about 100,000 Muslim residents of the capital and their Christian sympathizers who came out demanding religious equality.

In the meantime, the soldiers, through their various committees, were also taking their own measures. The coordinating committee of soldiers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) set up in February were joined by officers, such as Colonel Alem Zewd Tessema of the Airborne Brigade, who then became its leader. In April, the Committee, perhaps with involvement of Endalkachew, arrested Aklilu and hundreds of other high-ranking officials of the regime. The Minister of Defense, Lt. General Abiy Abebe, who had noticed the growing power of the Committee as well as series of demonstrations and strikes, set up what was called the National Security Commission to restore order and respect for the authority of the government.

The leading opposition against the Endalkachew cabinet were the students. Not only did they stage their own demonstrations against the cabinet but they also encouraged other sectors of

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society to join the revolutionary tide. Nevertheless, the students were less organized to achieve their goals and eventually, the soldiers hijacked the struggle.

The *Derg* was officially formed on June 28, 1974 when it held its first meeting at the headquarters of the Fourth Division. "*Derg*" a Ge'ez word for "Committee" was the shorter name given to the Coordinating Committee of representatives from various military units: the Armed Forces, the Police and the Territorial Army. However, officers above the rank of major were suspected of supporting the old regime and therefore were not included. Hence, Major Mengistu Haile-Mariam of the Third Division of Hararghe, and the vice-chairman, Major Atnafu Abate of the Fourth Division, came to be key figures.

For some time the *Derg* exercised power parallel with the Endalkachew's cabinet and the emperor tied up in a dual state, trying to keep a balance between the two. However, on August 1, Endalkachew was imprisoned and replaced by *Lej* Mikael Emiru as prime minister. Meanwhile, the *Derg* continued arresting other members of the regime whom it considered obstacles to the revolution. The *Derg* also tried to define its ideology and declared the motto, "*Ethiopia Tikdem*" ("Ethiopia First"), "*Yaleminim Dem*" ("Without any bloodshed").

The *Derg* continued systematically working to isolate the emperor and removing the supports of his imperial power. A strong propaganda campaign was launched against the regime and the widespread corruption of government functionaries. Two enterprises, Anbessa Bus Company and the St. George Brewery in which the emperor and the imperial family had more than fifty percent stake were nationalized. Moreover, a British documentary film disclosing the hidden horrors of the Wollo famine precisely served the awaited interest of the *Derg*. Finally, on September 12, Emperor Haile-Selassie I was deposed and detained at the Fourth Division headquarters.

The *Derg* then proclaimed itself the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) and assumed full powers. All strikes and demonstrations were immediately banned. Very soon, civilian revolutionaries, who had started calling for the establishment of a provisional people's government, started gathering around the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU), the University teachers' group known as Forum, and the students. Sections of the military, the Army Engineers Corps, the First Division (the former Bodyguard), and the Army Aviation opposed what was to become a military government.

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However, the *Derg* was not prepared to make compromise on any ground. Instead, it imprisoned the leaders of CELU and a leader of the Forum group. On October 7, a militant group within the Army Engineering Corps was violently crushed in a tank assault which took the lives of five soldiers and there was massive arrest afterwards. The motto of "Ethiopia First, without any bloodshed" thus failed as early as then.

On November 23, an even more violent phase commenced. Lieutenant General Aman Mikael Andom, chairman of the PMAC was shot dead after a disagreement within the *Derg* over the Issue of Eritrea. Aman Mikael Andom who was of Eritrean origin believed in peaceful approach against some radical members of the *Derg* particularly the First Vice-Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam, who advocated for a military solution. The killing continued and the *Derg* announced execution of some 52 prominent members of the old regime who had been detained and half a dozen other leaders of the military units who had opposed the *Derg* as a "political decision."

7.2.2. Attempts at Socio-Economic Reform

The *Derg* took a series of measures that aimed at fundamentally transforming the country. In December 1974, what was called the *Edget Behibiret Zemecha* (Development Through Co-operation Campaign) was inaugurated. In this campaign, all high school and university students and their teachers were to be sent to the countryside to help transform the life of peasants through programs such as literacy campaigns and the implementation of the awaited land reform proclamation. However, the campaign was opposed by most of the civilian left as a system that the *Derg* designed to remove its main opponents from the center. To appease the oppositions, the *Derg* changed its slogan of "Ethiopia First" to "Ethiopian Socialism." It also adopted slogans like Ethiopian Unity or Death, Revolutionary Motherland or Death, and later Every Thing to the War Front, Produce while Fighting or Fight While Producing, etc.

In 1975, banks and insurance companies were nationalized following a series of proclamations. Over seventy private commercial and industrial companies were then nationalized. Finally, in March 1975 the *Derg* made a radical land reform proclamation, which abolished all private land ownership and set the upper limit on family holdings at ten hectares. The proclamation also

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provided the establishment of peasant associations, which were to be implemented with the cooperation of the *zemach*. On 26 July1975 another proclamation nationalized all urban lands and extra houses. In April 1976, PMAC proclaimed National Democratic Revolution Program and set up the Provisional Office for Mass Organization and Affairs (POMOA) with the objective of organizing and raising the political consciousness of the masses.

The campaigns showed *Derg*'s belief in mass mobilization to achieve a cause. There was the "Green Campaign" of 1978 aimed at bringing about rapid economic development, the literacy campaign aimed at eradicating illiteracy, and the "Red Star Campaign" of 1982 that aimed at solving the Eritrean problem. Of these campaigns, only the literacy campaign registered some degree of success. The land reform proclamation did put an end to landlord exploitation but it failed to make the peasant master of his land because now the state took over as ultimate owner, with the peasant associations serving as its agents. The cooperatives only led to monopolistic government enterprises such as *Ersha Sebil Gebeya Dirijit* (Agricultural Marketing Corporation), resettlements and villagization.

On the other hand, nationalization killed private initiative and introduced a highly bureaucratized management of resources. The state, with its significant role and growing proportion now gained tremendous capacity to reward or penalize. The *Derg* used peasant associations to control the countryside and the urban dwellers' associations (*kebele*) to control the towns. The *kebele* became battleground when the struggle between the *Derg* and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) (formed in Berlin in 1972) reached its bloodiest phase in 1976/7. The EPRP targeted *kebele* leaders and assassinated them while they in turn led the government's campaign of terror against the EPRP called the "Red Terror", as opposed to the "White Terror" of the EPRP.

Initially, the leftist opposition to the *Derg* came from two rival Marxist-Leninist political organizations called the EPRP and the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (acronym in Amharic, *Meison*). In the meantime, the *Derg* pushed by the dominant leftist political culture systematically abandoned "Ethiopian socialism" and embraced Marxism-Leninism. With the setting up of the POMOA, Derg proclaimed the National Democratic Revolution Program, which was the Chinese model for socialist revolution and had identified feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucratic capitalism as the three main enemies of the people. In a few months, *Derg*'s leftist

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political organization known as *Abyotawi Seded* (Revolutionary Flame) was launched.

In 1977, an alliance called *Emaledeh* (the Union of Ethiopian Marxist–Leninist Organizations) was established as prelude to the formation of one vanguard party. The *Emaledeh* was composed of Marxist Leninist Revolutionary Organization (MLRO, or in its more common Amharic acronym *Malerid*), *Meison*, *Abyotawi Seded* (Revolutionary Flame), *Wezlig* (Workers League) founded by a one-time president of the Ethiopian Students' Union in North America, Dr. Senay,*Malerid* (the Ethiopian Marxist–Leninist organization) and *Ech'at* (the Ethiopian Oppressed Masses Revolutionary Struggle) founded by Baro Tumsa. That said, the *Emaledeh* was beset by power struggle from the outset as each organization competed for supremacy instead of working together to realize the original objective of the organization.

Meanwhile, the struggle between the EPRP and the *Derg* and its allies had created a civil war scenario since September 1976 when EPRP militants were arrested and executed by the *Derg* and supporters of the *Derg* were assassinated by EPRP squads. EPRP also attempted to assassinate Mengistu himself in mid-September. In what was followed, the *Derg* attacked EPRP with large-scale arrests of its members and sympathizers and carried out massive search and destroy campaigns, particularly in Addis Ababa.

In late 1976, the *Derg* itself was ideologically divided and beset with the internal struggles. Mengistu had eliminated two powerful members of the *Derg* and potential rivals of his power and influence, Major Sisay Habte and Major Kiros Alemayehu. Many other key members of the *Derg* were accused of being EPRP members or sympathizers. On their parts, other members such as Lieutenant Alemayehu Hayle and Captain Moges Wolde-Mikael resented the growing dictatorial power of Mengistu and his alliance with *Meison* and other pro-*Derg* leftist organizations. With the help of the chairperson, Brigadier General Teferi Benti, they then successfully re-organized the structure of the *Derg* in such a way that Mengistu was marginalized. On February 3, 1977 Mengistu hit back with a coup against Teferi. Eventually, Teferi and other anti-Mengistu Derg members were executed. After the coup, Mengistu Haile-Mariam assumed the chairmanship of the Derg and the post of commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He then filled the top positions in the Derg with his loyal supporters. Within just a year,

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the only remaining outstanding Derg member, Lt. Colonel Atnafu Abate, was charged of impeding the revolutionary process and executed.

Then Mengistu and his civilian left allies unleashed what they called the "Red Terror" initially targeting the EPRP and later including other opposition organizations, including EPLF and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and *Meison* after its break up from the *Derg*. EPRP had to take its only option of turning to rural guerrilla warfare as internal split within it hastened its collapse.

In the meantime, the *Derg* faced another challenge. In the summer of 1977, the government of Somalia led by Siad Barre waged a large-scale war against Ethiopia. The Somalia National Army crossed the border into Ethiopia and carried out military operations in Degahbour, Kebridehar, Warder and Godey taking control of Jigjiga and large scale pockets of western regions in the first two weeks of the war. Within a couple of months, the cities of Harar and Dire Dawa were endangered. Yet Somalia's victory did not last long. The government mobilized a force of about 100,000 peasant militia and other forces that were trained at Angetu, Didessa, Hurso, Tateq and Tolay in a short time with the help of USSR advisors and equipment. Finally, with 17,000 Cuban troops and the help from Southern Yemen Democratic Republic, the Somalia National Army was defeated at Kara-Mara near Jigjiga on March 4, 1978. The aggression of the State of Somalia had been checked. The defeat led to the weakening of Siad Barre's government and contributed to its fall. At the same time, the aggression of the State of Somalia made it possible for the *Derg* to rally the population to its side.

In early 1977, the *Derg* had severed relations with the USA as the American cultural and military institutions ended their operation in the country. This was preceded by the termination of the Ethio-USA 1953 mutual defense agreement. After a month, Mengistu concluded agreements with Moscow for economic, cultural and military co-operation. The relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union remained strong until the end of the military regime.

In the north, Eritrean insurgents had encircled Asmara while a pro-monarchy organization, the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), was marching inroads from the Sudan in the Satit-Humera region. Yet, by the end of 1978, the EPRP had been contained in the towns and the Eritrean

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insurgents were pushed back. EDU was crushed near the Ethio-Sudan borderland in places like Metema, Abder Raffi and Satit-Humera.

The Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations fell apart once *Meison* defected the *Derg* and its leaders were consequently either killed or arrested as they tried to retreat to the countryside. The other three member organizations *Ech'at*, *Wezlig*, and *Malerid* were successively expelled from *Emaledeh* and their leaders and members executed or detained. It was only Mengistu's *Seded* that remained as the authentic Marxist-Leninist organization in the country. The strategy of merging political organizations for party formation was then replaced by recruitment of individuals loyal to Mengistu Haile-Mariam. In December 1979, the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) was established with this motive. In September 1984, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia was inaugurated during the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the coming of the Derg to power. It was a given that Mengistu became the new party's secretary-general.

In order for the government to have a more direct societal control, there was the need for re-structuring of mass organizations that took place after the formation of the party. It started with workers who had challenged the Derg right from the start, and on January 6 1977, the CELU was replaced by a government-controlled All Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), which was later re-named Ethiopian Trade Union (ETU). This was followed by the formation of the All Ethiopia Peasants' Association (AEPA), which ensured the government's control over peasants. Later AETU was renamed Ethiopia Peasants' Association (EPA). Established in 1980, the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) and Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (REYA) played similar role, rallying women and the youth behind the state.

It was when the *Shengo* (PMAC National Assembly) proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) in 1987 that such elaborate organizational set-up designed to ensure total control of society reached its peak. With the birth of the PDRE, the Derg officially ceased to exist. A typically Communist constitution already on its way, Colonel Mengistu became President of PDRE, secretary general of WPE and Commander in chief of the national armed forces with Fisseha Desta as Vice President and Fiqre-Sellassie Wegderes head of the Council of Ministers as Prime Minister with five deputies.

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Finally, it turned out that Mengistu could not stay in power more than four years after he was proclaimed president of PDRE. The dictator, who had maneuvered the urban left and had gone ruthless in the process, fell under the attack of rural-based guerrilla movements. Rural-based movements fighting for national self-determination thrived as liquidation of the urban-based multi-national movements like the EPRP and *Meison* intensified in the center. These included the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), active mainly in the Wallagga region, the Islamic Front for Liberation of Oromia, based in Hararghe, the Afar Liberation Front, the Sidama Liberation Front, the Beni-Shangul Liberation Front and the Gambella Liberation Front. Some of these fronts appeared only in the last days of the Derg. The two significant liberation fronts which could be considered to have jointly brought about the downfall of the *Derg* were the EPLF and the TPLF.

In 1984/5, a more devastating famine than the one in 1973/4 indicated the failure of the *Derg*'s economic policies especially in agricultural production and marketing. In the late twentieth century, Ethiopia had experienced two major famines that gave rise to national and international mobilization created a bad image on the country in international scene. These were the 1972-4 and 1984-5 famines, caused by a variety of interrelated factors, which include environmental crises (notably drought), economic, social causes as well as political factors. The state responded to the latter by resettling the affected people in less affected areas of western Ethiopia. The government responded to the famine by ignoring the problem for some time and then only to introduce its controversial policy of massive resettlement of the affected peasants, mostly of Tigray and Wollo provinces, in southwestern Ethiopia. The villagization program that followed the resettlement further alienated the majority of peasants. It was in this context that the guerrilla forces scored remarkable victories against the regime forces towards the end of the decade.

International politics too had turned against Mengistu's interest as his ally, the Soviet Union ceased to be the source of his external support. Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost, (openness) in 1985 aimed at making Soviet communism more efficient and humane was a failure and the Soviet Union collapsed as a major world power. Even worse, the United States who the *Derg* had never been friendly with became the sole arbiter of international affairs. Although Mengistu now tried to improve relations with the Americans, they

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were more directed towards his opponents, the EPLF and the TPLF, who they believed had fully abandoned Marxism Leninism. In March 1990, the *Derg* proclaimed a mixed economy policy, which seemed to come too late.

The government's military failure came after defeating the invading force of Somalia; the *Derg* turned its forces to the north, with the rather too assured slogan that "the victory scored in the east will be repeated in the north." Initially the plan seemed to go well when the EPLF forces pulled back under the massive assault launched by the Derg, which regained control over the rebel's major strongholds in 1976/7. However, the retreated EPLF forces were not driven out of their fortress at Naqfa in northern Eritrea. In March 1988, EPLF scored a major victory at Afabet, north of Asmara, from its stronghold in Naqfa-Raza. When in 1990, EPLF forces captured the port town of Massawa, it became only a matter of time before the capital, Asmara, also fell to them.

The final decisive blow to Mengistu's regime came to be administered by the TPLF that aimed to secure the self-determination of Tigray within the Ethiopian polity. The TPLF, at its inception, was grounded on the cumulative grievances of Tigray people against the successive regimes of Ethiopia. To address the problems, Tigrayan students created the Political Association of Tigrayans (PAT) and the Tigrayan University Students' Association (TUSA) in the early 1970s. PAT developed into a radical nationalist group calling for the independence of Tigray, establishing the Tigray Liberation Front (TLF) in 1974. In TUSA, there emerged a Marxist leaning group favoring national self-determination for Tigray within a revolutionary transformed democratic Ethiopia. Whereas the multinational left movements such as the EPRP and MEISON advanced the view that the problem of Ethiopian nationalities could be resolved through class struggle, the Marxists of TUSA argued that due to the existing inequalities among Ethiopian nationalities, revolutionaries must use the struggle of Ethiopian nationalities for self-determination as the launching pad for the ultimate socialist revolution.

In February 1974, the Marxists within TUSA welcomed the Ethiopian Revolution, but opposed the *Derg* as they were convinced that it would neither lead a genuine socialist revolution nor correctly resolve the Ethiopian nationality question. Three days after the *Derg* took power, on 14 September 1974 the *Mahber Gesgesti Bihere Tigray* (Association of Progressives of the Tigray

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Nation), also known as Tigrayan National Organization (TNO) was established. TNO was to prepare the ground for the future-armed movement of Tigray.

The TPLF started in February 1975 as a small guerrilla band in the northern region of Ethiopia and eventually grew to provide the core of a future Ethiopian government. Before it turned to confront the Derg, the TPLF was engaged in a bloody struggle with the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army, EPRA (the armed wing of the EPRP), EDU, ELF, and TLF. The Derg initially thought that TPLF was a mere creation of the EPLF to be vanished once EPLF was crushed and thus underestimated its potentials. This made it possible for TPLF to strengthen its forces and when the Derg opened offensives against it in the early 1980s, TPLF, which had built strong army was able to successfully fight back. In February 1989 TPLF scored its most decisive victory at Enda-Selassie, Western Tigray, after a series of other military successes. At the victory of Enda-Selassie, tens of thousands of government troops were captured and their commanders were either killed or captured. This resulted in the withdrawal of all government troops from Tigray. TPLF then took control of the whole of Tigray and then started marching into the neighboring provinces.

Meanwhile, the prevalent accumulated dissatisfaction with Mengistu's regime and the exhausting war in the north had been high especially in the higher echelons of the army. In May 1989, commanders of almost all military units, coordinated and led a coup against Mengistu when he left the country on a state visit to the German Democratic Republic, East Germany. However, the coup was so poorly organized that loyal palace troops encircled the leaders before they could even announce their intentions to the public. Mengistu returned triumphantly to take his revenge. The coup leaders were all imprisoned or executed.

TPLF, after liberating Tigray, continued to move forward and made the necessary organizational adjustments forming a bigger front known as the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The member organizations were TPLF, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), a fragment group of the EPRP which had begun to play a significant role in many of the military campaigns, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM). Other Liberation Fronts

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including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Afar Liberation Front, Sidama Liberation Front, Gambella Liberation Front and Beni Shangul Liberation Front also became active.

In 1990 and 1991 in consecutive and stunning campaigns, EPRDF forces drove the *Derg* out of Gondar, Gojjam, and Wollo and parts of Wallagga and Shewa and approached the capital from the north and west. In 1990, Oromo forces dismantled the Derg army of the 131st Brigade in battle that liberated Asosa and Bambasi in the then Wollega province. In the meantime, negotiations for a peaceful end to the conflict were underway between the government, the EPLF, and the TPLF in Atlanta, Nairobi, and Rome. In May 1991, while the last of these negotiations were going on in London, a series of events put an end to the regime.

On May 21, Mengistu fled the country first to Nairobi and then to Harare (Zimbabwe). There remained no resistance left that the *Derg* troops could put. In London, the government delegation could not bargain anymore after the flight of the president. EPLF forces entered Asmara and Assab and announced the de facto independence of Eritrea. The PDRE Vice President, Lt. General Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan appealed for an end to the civil war on May 23, 1991. Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinqa left for the London peace conference mediated by the U.S.A's Foreign Affair African Service head Mr. Herman Cohen on May 27, 1991. In the early hours of May 28, EPRDF, forces triumphantly entered Addis Ababa.

7.3. Transitional Government

On 1 July 1991, a handful of organizations of which many were organized along ethnic lines assembled to review the draft Charter prepared by the EPRDF and the OLF. The gathering was called the Peace and Democracy Transitional Conference of Ethiopia. The USA was at the forefront in providing the necessary diplomatic backing for the Peace and Democracy Conference. The Conference was attended by delegates from the UN, the OAU, the G7, the US, the USSR, Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti and Eritrea. Eritrea was represented by its future president, Isayas Afeworki.

The Conference debated and approved the Transitional Charter on the basis of which the Transitional Government of Ethiopia was created. Representatives of 27 organizations formed a Council of Representatives (COR) which acted as a legislative body ('Parliament'). This

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transitional parliament had 87 seats of which 32 were taken by the EPRDF and the remaining 55 seats were divided among the 23 non-EPRDF organizations. At the same time, a Council of Ministers was formed as an executive branch, with Meles Zenawi as the President of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). Meles Zenawi then appointed a Prime Minister (Tamirat Layne) and a seventeen-member Council of Ministers. Key posts were given to members of the EPRDF and OLF.

In December 1994, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was ratified, taking effect following federal elections in mid-1995. The constitution stipulates that the country would have nine federated states based on ethno-linguistic, identity and settlement patterns. The federal arrangement sought to decentralize power to the regional states by accommodating the country's various ethno-linguistic groups. After the election, Meles Zenawi assumed the premiership while Dr. Negasso Gidada became head of state.

Meanwhile, EPLF set up a Provisional Government of Eritrea in 1991. This was followed by a referendum to decide the fate of Eritrea in which the majority of the population voted for independence from Ethiopia. In May 1993, the Government of Eritrea was formed with Isayas Afwerki becoming the first president of the country after independence.

Learning activities

- Explain the domestic challenges to the power of Emperor Haile-Selassie I immediately after the expulsion of the Italians.
- Describe the reasons behind the opposition of prominent patriot leaders such as *Dejazmach* Belay Zeleke against the emperor.
- What administrative and economic measures did Emperor Haile-Selassie took immediately after his reinstatement to the throne and how did those measures help to consolidate his power?
- Discuss major socio-economic and political developments in post-1941 Ethiopia.
- What do we mean by *rist* and how is it different from *gult*?
- Discuss important manifestations of British and Americans' dominance in Ethiopia's domestic and foreign affairs in the 1940s and 1950s respectively.

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- Assess the reactions of Eritreans regarding the future fate of their country in the 1940s and 1950s.
- What was the immediate context that led to the promulgation of the Revised 1955 Constitution of Ethiopia?
- Discuss the origin and development of the Ethiopian Student Movement.
- Explain the causes, course and consequences of the 1960 coup attempt.
- Discuss the causes for, and the consequences of, the Gojjam peasant uprising.
- Assess the causes, course and consequences of the Bale peasant uprising.
- Discuss the causes, course and consequences of the Woyane peasant rebellion.
- What commonalities did you observe among the peasant rebellions?
- Account for the causes, course and consequences of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution.
- Identify and discuss major socio-economic reforms of the *Derg*.
- Explain the main factors for the downfall of the *Derg* and the seizure of power by EPRDF forces.
- What similarities and differences did you observe between the EPLF and TPLF?
- Explain essential features of the EPRDF-led government with reference to its measures shortly after coming to power.

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