History of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in Africa;[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-1) the emergence of Ethiopian civilization dates back thousands of years. Abyssinia or rather "Ze Etiyopia" was ruled by the Semitic Abyssinians (Habesha) composed mainly of the [Amhara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amhara_people), Tigrayans and the Cushitic [Agaw](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agaw_people). In the Eastern [escarpment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escarpment) of the Ethiopian highlands and more so the lowlands were the home of the [Harari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harari_people)/Harla that founded Sultanates such as Ifat and Adal and the [Afars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afar_people" \o "Afar people). In the central and south were found the ancient [Sidama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidama_people), Semitic [Gurage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurage_people) and Omotic [Wolaita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolaita_people" \o "Wolaita people), among others.

One of the first kingdoms to rise to power in the territory was the kingdom of D'mt in the 10th century BC, which established its capital at Yeha. In the first century AD, the Aksumite Kingdom rose to power in the modern Tigray Region with its capital at Aksum and grew into a major power on the Red Sea, subjugating South Arabia and Meroe and its surrounding areas. In the early fourth century, during the reign of Ezana, Christianity was declared the state religion and not long after, The Aksumite empire fell into decline with the rise of Islam in the Arabian peninsula, which slowly shifted trade away from the Christian Aksum.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] It eventually became isolated, its economy slumped and Aksum's commercial domination of the region ended.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-2) The Aksumites gave way to the Zagwe dynasty, who established a new capital at Lalibela before giving way to the Solomonic dynasty in the 13th century. During the early Solomonic period, Ethiopia underwent military reforms and imperial expansion, allowing it to dominate the Horn of Africa.

**Etymology**

[A statue of a horse

AI-generated content may be incorrect.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Leaping_Ibex,_Ethiopia_(2130266960).jpg)Leaping Ibex, found in northern Ethiopia, probably created around the first century BC in D'mt.

The [Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) name [Αἰθιοπία](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aethiopia" \o "Aethiopia) (from Αἰθίοψ, *Aithiops*, "an Ethiopian") is a compound word, later explained as derived from the Greek words αἴθω and ὤψ (*aithō* "I burn" + *ōps* "face"). According to the [Liddell-Scott Jones Greek-English Lexicon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Greek%E2%80%93English_Lexicon), the designation properly translates as *burnt-face* in noun form and *red-brown* in adjectival form.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-3) The historian [Herodotus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus) used the appellation to denote those parts of Africa south of the [Sahara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahara) that were then known within the [Ecumene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumene) (habitable world).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-Herodotus1-4) The earliest mention of the term is found in the works of [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer), where it is used to refer to two people groups, one in Africa and one in the east from eastern Turkey to India.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-5) In [ancient times](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history), the name Ethiopia was primarily used about the modern-day nation of [Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) which is based in the [Upper Nile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Upper_Nile_(region)) valley and is located south of Egypt, also called [Kush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Kush), and then secondarily about [Sub-Saharan Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa) in general.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-Richard_Lobban_2004._p.1-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-David_M._Goldenberg_p._18-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-ReferenceA-8)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-newadvent.org-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-ReferenceB-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-concordances.org-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-jbq.jewishbible.org-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-jewishencyclopedia.com-13)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-ReferenceC-14)

Reference to the [Kingdom of Aksum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aksum) (designated as Ethiopia) only dates as far back as the first half of the 4th century AD. Following the Hellenic and biblical traditions, the *[Monumentum Adulitanum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monumentum_Adulitanum" \o "Monumentum Adulitanum)*, a 3rd-century inscription belonging to the Aksumite Empire, indicates that Aksum's ruler governed an area that was flanked to the west by the territory of Ethiopia and Sasu. The Aksumite King [Ezana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezana_of_Axum) eventually conquered Nubia. In the following century, a [Ge'ez](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ge%CA%BDez) version of the Ezana inscription, Aἰθίοπες is equated with the unvocalized *Ḥbšt* and *Ḥbśt* (Ḥabashat), and denotes for the first time the highland inhabitants of Aksum. This new [demonym](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demonym) was subsequently rendered as *ḥbs* ('Aḥbāsh) in [Sabaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabaean_language" \o "Sabaean language) and as *Ḥabasha* in [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-Hatke-15)

In the 15th-century Ge'ez [*Book of Axum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Axum), the name is ascribed to a legendary individual called *[Ityopp'is](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopis" \o "Ethiopis)*. He was an extra-biblical son of [Cush, son of Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cush_(Bible)), said to have founded the city of [Axum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axum).[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-Agrvt-16)

In English, and generally outside of Ethiopia, the country was historically known as Abyssinia. This toponym was derived from the Latinized form of the ancient *Habash*.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ethiopia#cite_note-17)