

Unit

8



POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN ETHIOPIA MID- 16th TO MID- 19th C.

Unit Introduction

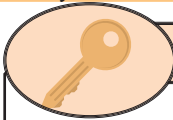
This chapter presents the socio-economic and political changes in Ethiopia between the mid-16th to the mid-19th centuries. After the decline of the Christian Kingdom, many groups of people from southern, western, eastern and central Ethiopia developed their independent local states. During this period, political power was decentralised across the country. The unit also discusses the history of different peoples who had their local states in the southern half of the Ethiopian region. In the first section, you will learn about some of the independent polities that flourished in western, southern and eastern Ethiopia. The lessons of this unit describe the different ways in which economic, political and social process was organised in polities. The differences and similarities that existed among them were underlined. It also

treats societies that are not so highly organised in the region. The next section of the unit describes changes and continuities in the Christian kingdom from the mid-16th to the mid-19th centuries. It starts with the recovery of the Christian highland kingdom from the defeat it faced in the hands of the Sultanate of Adal. Nevertheless, its efforts at revival were disturbed later on by elements of regional power struggle. This period of regionalism was called the *Zemene Mesafent* (period of regional warlords). It deals mainly with the efforts of the Christian Kingdom to consolidate its power and how it entered into chaos in the mid-19th century. This unit forms an important context to understand the dynamics of the creation of the modern Ethiopian, which will be discussed in grade 10.

Unit learning outcomes

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

- describe peoples and states of Ethiopia from mid-16th mid 19th century.
- explain the major socio-economic and political structure of Ethiopia during the period.
- explain major features and achievements of the Gondarine period.
- identify the main characteristic features of the *Zemene Mesafint* and the *Yejju Dynasty*.



Key Terms

- Tato
- Kawo
- Sera
- Gondar
- Zemene
- Mesafint
- Yejju Daynasty

8.1 Peoples and States of the Eastern, Central, Southern and Western Regions

This section reviews some polities that flourished in the southern part of Ethiopia in the period and their major political, economic, and social features. From the middle of the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, many people of Ethiopia were politically autonomous, and independent polities flourished. They led an independent position from the domination of either the Christian Kingdom or any other power of their kind. However, these polities and their people maintained a sort of relationship through trade, marriage, and conflicts over resources. Due to this process, these polities either expanded their territory or lost it.

8.1.1 Southern States

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the source of political power in the peoples and states in southern, western, and eastern Ethiopia.
- explain the socio-economic and political structure of Omotic, Cushitic, Semitic, and Nilotic peoples.
- show the competitive and cooperative forms of political dynamics between peoples Omotic and Cushitic states socio-political structure.
- value the historical, cultural, and political values shared by different peoples of Ethiopia.

Brainstorming

- What does the term *Tato* mean?

• Omotic States and Peoples under *Tato* system

Kafa

The Kingdom of Kafa was found south of Enareya, located south of the Gojeb and north of the Omo River. According to the people's traditions, it was known at least since the end of the fourteenth century. This part of Ethiopia receives heavy rainfall, has dense forests and fertile soil. It was inhabited by peoples related to the Bench. Kafa was ruled by a king whose title was called *Tato*. The insignia of the kingship is interesting and important. They consist of twelve objects, many of them made of gold. Especially, the king's crown was in the form of a helmet made of gold and silver, with a triple phallus of gold in front.



Figure 8.1 Crown of the Kingdom of Kafa, (adopted from Laphiso G. Delebo, 1985:18)

The Kingship was hereditary. An advisory council of nobles called *Mikkerecho* assisted the king. Though one of the king's sons succeeded, it was not necessarily the eldest like other societies of the country. The choice of the king's successor lay in the hands of *Mikkerecho*. The regional administration and the maintenance of law and order in the kingdom were also their duties. Under the king were kinglets or chiefs of the

districts who were allowed to wear golden armlets as insignia (signs) of office. Sub-districts (*woraafo*) were in charge of a junior chief called *woraafe rasho*, who was responsible to the king. These all indicate that the kingdom of Kafa was highly organised. Bonga was the center of the kingdom. Anderecha was the second seat to the southeast of Bonga. It was an independent kingdom from the Christian High land state. Kafa was influenced by the Christian kingdom. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 16th century, Kafa seems to have been an independent state. However, Kafa survived the Oromo pressure and disconnected its relation with the Christian Kingdom. Kafa governed itself as an independent state until the late 19th century.

Kafa was one of the resourceful kingdoms that greatly contributed to Ethiopian trade. The economy of Kafa was based on agriculture and trade. Coffee said to have been originated in Kafa was the main crop, and enset is the major food crop of the Kafa kingdom. The main trade items were ivory, mask, honey, coffee, enslaved people, and gold.

Kafa had considerable trade relations with the neighbouring Oromo and Shewan states in the nineteenth century. In addition, it had a tradition of digging deep trenches called *Kuripo* as a defensive barrier. This strong internal political organisation and defense system enabled the kingdom to maintain its independence for an extended period.

The Kafa rulers adopted the title *tato* from the neighbouring kingdom of Ennarya whose ruling elite moved to the south of Gojeb River due to the Oromo pressure. Christianity was also introduced to Kafa from Enaria state. Nevertheless, it remained limited to the royal families, while the local people largely continued to practice their indigenous religion.

Yem

Evidence shows that the Yem had established a state before the late 16th century. Then, according to their traditions, power was transferred from a local dynasty called Gama to another dynasty that traced its origin from Gonder before the 15th century. This dynasty called *Mowa* ruled the Yem until the late 19th century from its capital at Angari.

Like Kafa and Ennarya, the Yem state was hierarchically organised, and its key institutions were broadly similar. At the top of the political hierarchy was the king called *tato* or *amno*. He was a political and religious leader. Like *Mikkerecho* of Kafa, below the king were his twelve councillors called *astessors*, led by *waso*. The council nominates the king's successor made decisions on wars, foreign relations, and administration.

Like Kafa, the Yem were also influenced by Orthodox Christianity. According to a few sources, it paid tribute to the Christian in horses. However, their relationship with the

Christian kingdom seems to have been discontinued after the arrival of the Oromo to the Gibe region. The Yem managed to repulse the Oromo in the Gibe region. However, after the formation of the kingdom of Jimma Abba Jiffar, the pressure on the Yem was intensified. Raids and counter raids between the two states would continue until the last quarter of the 19th century.

Activity 8.1



Discuss the following questions in groups.

1. Compare and contrast the socio-economic and political organisations of the kingdoms of Kafa and Yem.
2. What kind of relationship did the two states have with the highland Christian kingdom, Ennarya and the Oromo monarchies?

• Omotic States and Peoples under *Kawo/Kati* system

Brainstorming

- What do you know about *Kawo/Kati* system?

The Omotic States of Wolaita, Gamo, Gofa, Dawuro and Konta, who live on both sides of the Omo River, practice nearly similar political structures. The Wolaita live between the Bilate river in the east and Omo River in the west. Omo River separates them from the Dawuro people. To the south of Wolaita, the Gamo people live in a mountainous terrain known as the Gamo highlands. The first mention of the Wolaita and Gamo in written records dates back to the fifteenth century.

The people of Wolaita, Gamo and Gofa were led by a hereditary king *Kawo* whereas the Dawro and Konta people used to call *Kati*. The state of Wolaita might have also been part of the kingdom of Damot since its connection with Damot was strong. The ruling dynasty of Wolaita was known as *Wolaita Malla*. This dynasty had a strong tradition that recognized Motalami as its first king. Wolaita was mentioned as one of the areas paying tribute to the Christian king Yeshaq (r. 1413 - 1430). It might have also continued as part

of the Christian empire up to the wars of Ahmad Ibrahim. The kings (*kawos*) Wolaita belonged to the Wolaita Malla and Tigre-Mala dynasties. The beginning of the Wolaita Malla was associated with the kingdom of Damot since the 13th century. Its king Motolami was traditionally said to have been the founder of the Wolaita-Mala ruling family until the Tigre-Mala replaced it in the late fifteenth century. The Tigre-Mala lasted in the late 19th century.

According to tradition, the Dawuro state was established in the 16th century by an immigrant clan called *Kawuka*. By about 1700, the *Kawuka* dynasty had created a big state of Dawuro. Among the rulers of the *Kawuka* dynasty of Dawuro, Kati Erashu (r. 1719-1775) and Kati Halala (r. 1775-1835) were famous. The Dawuro administrative hierarchy in ascending order includes *Huduga*, *Abaliya*, *Danna*, *Guuda*, *Erasha*, *Woraba*, *Bushasha* and *Kate*. The *khati* of Konta controlled and supervised his subordinate officials with the titles of Gana, Torancha, Woraba, Erasha, Guda, and Dana.

The *Kawo* of Gamo was distinct. The Gamo organised between 40 to 55 politically autonomous units called *dere*. Each *dere* administered itself independently and had a hereditary ruler, *kawo*. The *dere* assembly called *duletha* was the major administrative body of the Gamo people. The assembly was made up of elected officials called *halaka*. These representatives were the real administrators of the *deres*. They decided on all the major decisions affecting the lives of the *dere*. The states of Wolaita, Gamo and Gofa had tributary relations with the Christian kingdom until it was cut off following the movement of the Oromo in the 16th century. However, they successfully resisted Oromo pressure. The administration was hierarchical among the Oyda people, with ranks of officials bearing honorific titles of *Khati*, *Chamicha*, *Bitane* and *Erasha*.

The *Chamicha* preserved peace and security, and even he would take the king's task in the event of malpractice. The eldest son succeeds the *khati* upon his death or abdication. The Zayse king belonged to the Zulessa clan. Subordinate to *khati*, there were seven public administrators of equal power with the title of *maga*. Like the *khati*, the position of *maga* was hereditary.

The realm of Gamo was divided into seven different kingdoms, each of which was ruled by a king (*kawo*). The king delivered the most important verdicts, and his decisions were binding. The king was the supreme head of the entire administrative apparatus with the power to appoint and dismiss officials under him. These include *Woraba*, *Erasha*, *Guda*, *Gana*, and *Mochena* (*Mura*). Likewise, the *kawo*, the subordinate officials, had the power to appoint and dismiss junior officials under them.

The highest authority over the socio-political structures of the Basketo, Maleh, Kara, Zayise, Oyda, and Kore was a hereditary king called *khati*. There was a similarity between the subordinate titles also. However, the duty of *khati*, procedure of his successions, and subordinate officials' title vary from place to place. In Basketo, below the *khati*, the administrative hierarchy comprised a series of subordinate officials with the titles such as Dana, Guda, Bitena, Gudena and Chemach. In Maleh, in order of seniority, Goda, Kagotoka, and Katoydka were officials answerable to the king. Being closest to *khati*, the goda were the most powerful among the three. In addition to exercising administrative duties, the Maleh's *Khati* believed to possess spiritual powers. The traditional Kara social structure, below *khati* was Arti and Ghana, who also performed administrative and ritual responsibilities.

The Omotic language family speaking people of Kore possessed a traditional administration comprising a hierarchy of officials discharging duties appointed under the elective system. At the zenith of the administrative hierarchy was the king called *Khate*. Below the king officials were: Awajite, Daynena, Ushete, Tora Maga, Fizena and Mura, in descending order of their importance.

Economically, the Omotic states and polities are agriculturalists. The enset was their main crop. They cultivated crops like maize, taro and sorghum. They also raised livestock. They had a complex relationship with one another. They fought wars over territory and tribute. For instance, Wolaita began to expand its influence among the Omotic and Cushitic peoples during their Tigre-Mala dynasty.

On the other hand, they traded with each other and also had extensive marriage relationships. Land ownership is ordered according to three basic principles of social organisation, i.e., kinship, polity and social status. There were also communal lands allocated for grazing and social gatherings to which all members of the society except artisans had equal access.

The Omotic states defended their boundaries by using fortifications are called *Kella*. For example, the Wolaita's most famous fortification was *Amado Kella*. It was constructed during *Kawo Amado* (r.1799-1834) thus named after his name. Similarly, in Dawuro, *Kati Halala* is remembered for building stone fortifications which he oversaw to defend his territories from outsiders. Therefore, it was named after him, the *Kati Halala Kella*.

Activity 8.2



1. Why did Kawo Amado and Kati Halala build a stone wall of fortification.
2. Mention other societies in Ethiopia that followed similar methods to defend their territories.
3. Use the internet or refer to other sources and write about the socio-economic and political developments of Omotic states.

• Cushitic States and Peoples under *Sera-Woma* system

Brainstorming

- What do you know about *Sera-Woma* system?

Since the mid-16th century, several states emerged by the people who belong to the “Highland East Cushitic” languages. These include: Hadiya, Kambata, Sidama, Tambaro, Kabena, Halaba, Gedeo, Konso and Burji. Due to the relative freedom from the domination of the three forces: the Christina Kingdom, the sultanate of Adal and the Oromo Population movement, they all developed largely similar traditional political structures.

For example, a web of relations has traditionally been ruled by the *sera* among these peoples. *Sera* tradition is a set of local cultural norms regulating the communal social structure. It may be seen as an unwritten law. It is not a codified body of rules but several sets of norms. Hence, during the execution of *sera*, reference cannot be made to specific articles. The entire implementation of *sera* is consultative and compromise-oriented that influenced by circumstances as the elders see fit. In their traditional administrative system, *woma* (king) is the height of authority.

The administrative system of the Hadiya was called *Sera*. Hadiya constituted one of the important Muslim states during the 13th-16th centuries. In the 16th century, the wars of *Imam Ahmed* and the Oromo population movement transformed the territorial,

social and political landscape of Hadiya. During the wars of *Imam Ahmed*, the rulers of Hadiya joined the Imam and remained active participants in the empire until the *Imam's* downfall. During the 17th century, Hadiya was confronted with the Christian kingdom. The political and social transformation of the 16th and 17th centuries seems to have led to the traditional administrative system called *Sera*. In Hadiya, the traditional administrative system leadership position were all elected officers.

Among Hadiya equivalent to a king is named *adila (garada)*. It is reported a term derived from the Arabic word *adil*. The kings led the council of elders of their people.

Power transfer took place in ritual ceremonies, and it was hereditary. Each clan (*Giicho*) administered itself independently without recognizing any higher authority. The clan leaders continued to use the title of *garad*. The *garad* was not an absolute ruler or a king. The people appointed him for his leadership qualities. He could also be an elected war leader who had the title of *gatanna* or *abegaz*. The position was not hereditary.

The Kambata kingdom maintained the tradition of monarchy from king *Anno* to king *Dilbato*. All of them were from Oyata clan. Mount Hambaricho, an important symbolic significance for the Kambata, became a major ritual site and home to Kambata leaders. Christian churches on Mount Hambaricho was not destroyed and religious objects were concealed in caves during the wars of *Ahmed ibn Ibrahim*. The earliest clans were believed to be seven in number and settled on Mount Hambaricho.

Christianity was introduced to Kambata sometime in the 14th or 15th centuries. Before introducing local administration, Kambata was governed by a prominent Christian governor called Hamelmal of the Christian kingdom.

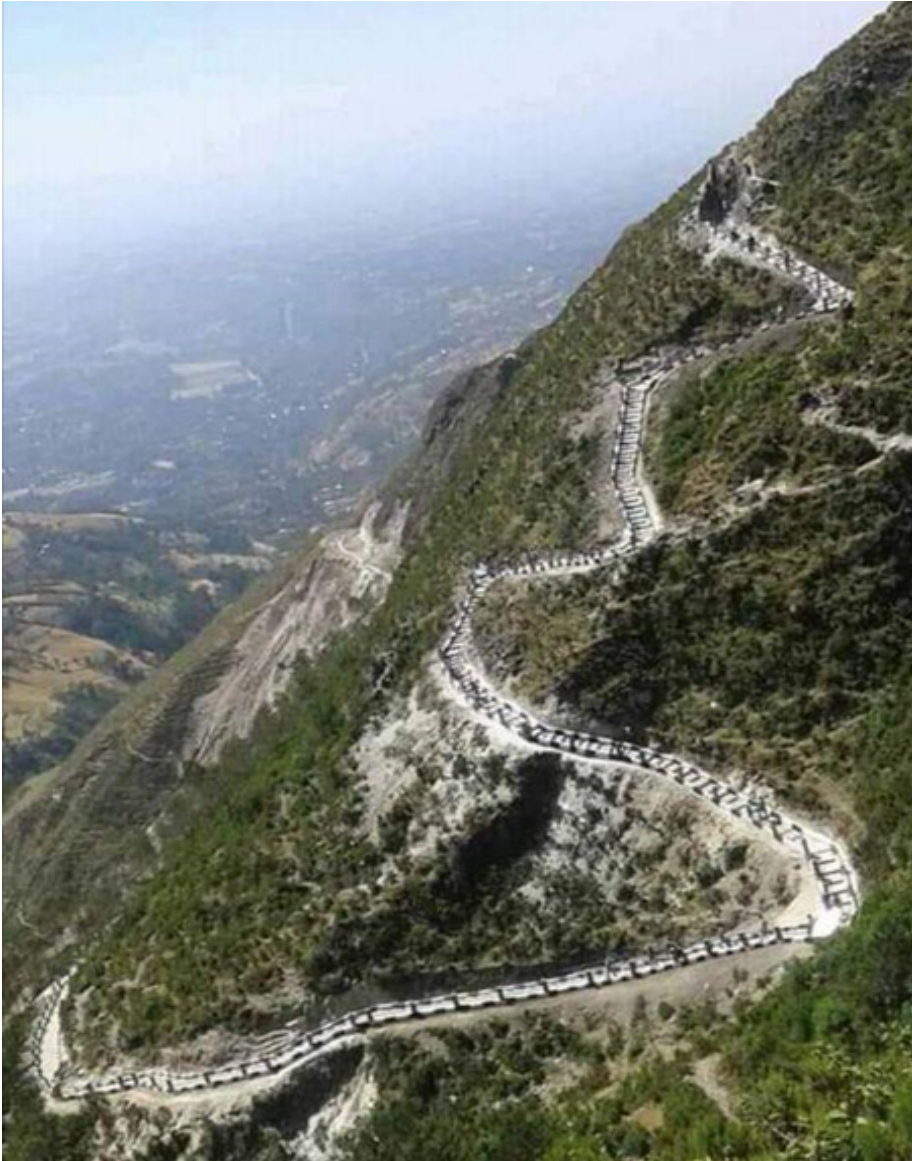


Figure 8.2 Mount Hambaricho, early socio- political center of Kambata

The *woma* of Halaba came from the *Sidae* clan. Likewise, the offices of kings of Tambaro were from *Molla* clans. The office of the king appears not hereditary. For example, in Sidama, power transfer took place in luwa ceremonies once every eight years. The Sidama people comprise several sub-tribes ruled independently by their king, the *woma*, actually a supreme judge.

The *woma* of the different sub-tribes within the Sidama make up the *woma-songo*, the assembly of sub-tribal kings or judges. In a way, it is the highest traditional authority.

The Qabena were ruled by a group of elected leaders, the *woma*. An administrative council comprises 12 judges governing based on traditional and Islamic law. The *woma* of Halaba chaired the council of clans called Ogate and presided over ritual ceremonies.

Further south, Gedeo and Konso political process varies from their contemporary Cushitic states. *Gadaa* system was introduced in Gedeo after the period of Akumanoye. It was an era when women succeeded one another in dynastic rule. It was reported to have been dictatorial. The Gedeo *Gadaa* system comprised nine members council called *yiea*.

The *Gadaa* system announced power distribution and introduced egalitarian, democratic values. The *Gadaa* system transferred power once every eight years. Among Konso's nine clan leaders, *poqala tuma* possessed administrative and judicial authority.

One prominent unifying feature of these groups was their economies. They were farmers belonging to the "*enset*-culture complex" and cattle herders. *Enset* was a crucial staple for almost all of them except the Konso due to their environment. They, therefore, focused on producing cereals crops. They have grains, the most important of which is sorghum and millet.

The region receives low and erratic rainfall, making these crops ideal for such an environment. Konso has also developed an intensive agriculture system through time. They have terraced their hillsides with stones. This technological achievement has given sustainability to Konso agriculture.

Enset edulis is mainly cultivated by different ethnic groups west of the Rift Valley, except the Sidama, the Gedeo and the Amarro areas east of the Rift Valley. The *enset* plant provides a large amount of carbohydrates, which means that a whole family gets its daily requirement from a few plants. The *Enset* cultivation made the high density of population possible.

The *Enset* can be stored for months, allowing planned storage. This diet, though, has to be supplemented by-products from animal husbandry. In this way, the *Enset* cultivation and the cattle breeding complemented each other.

Enset food products have been used as a staple and/or co-staple food by the people who inhabit the country’s southern, southwestern, and western parts. These regions are among the most densely populated areas in Ethiopia. The markets became places for communication across ethnic borders.

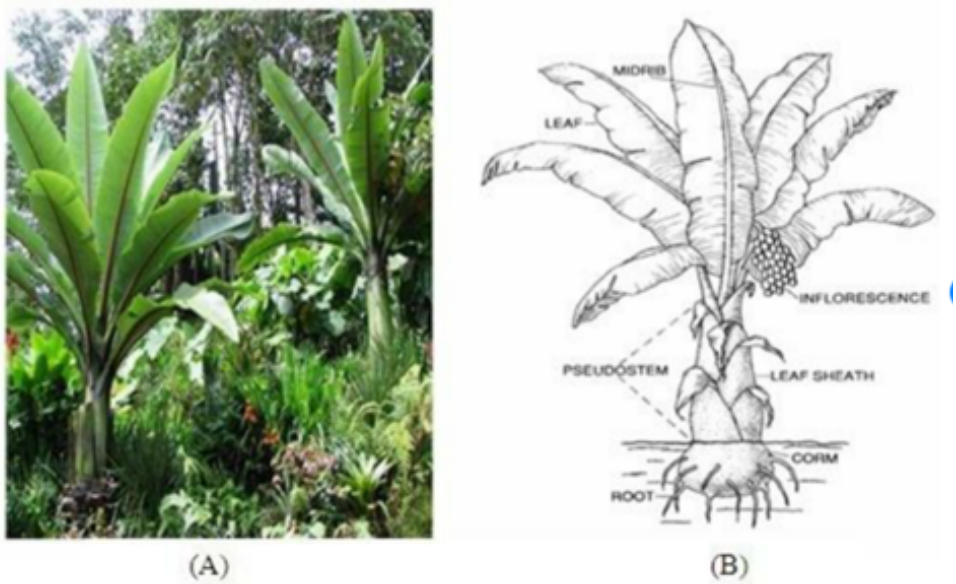
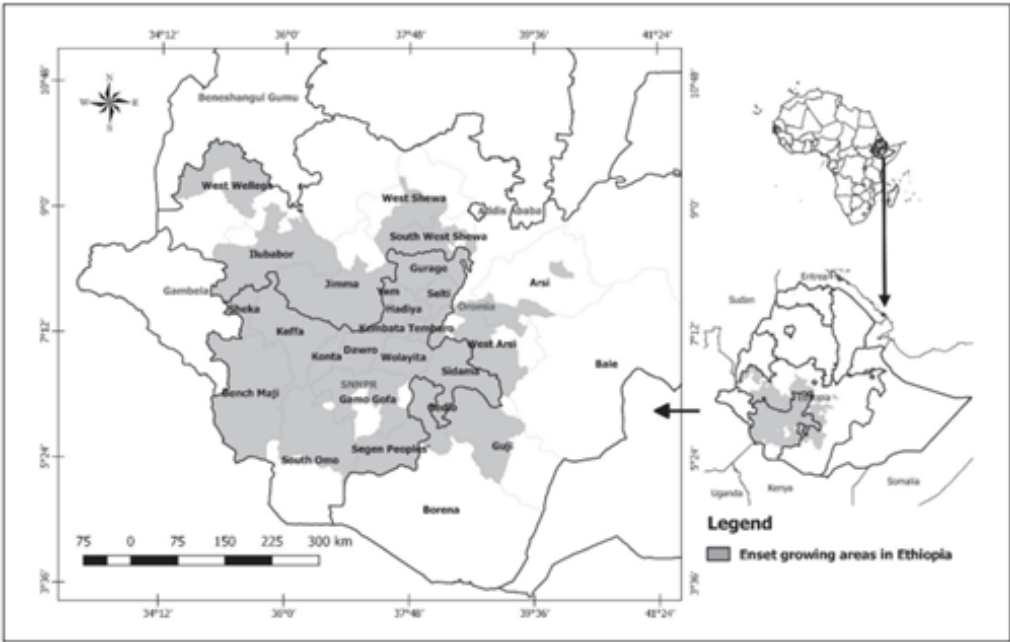


Figure 8.3 Enset plant in the garden (A) and its parts (B), (Source: ResearchGate)



Map 8.1 *Enset*-growing areas of southern and southwestern Ethiopia, (source: ResearchGate.net)

Although the Gurage are not a Cushitic language speaking population, their culture has been strongly influenced by the Cushitic speaking population. They are also part of what has been called the “*enset*-culture complex”, which is discussed above. The Gurage chiefdoms were concentrated in the area west of Lake Dambal and the highlands of Dawaro. The Gurage were mentioned in written sources for the first time in the 14th century.

Gurage chiefdoms: Oral tradition suggests that they were descendants of Christian settlers from Gura, Eritrea. They were led by a man called *Azmach Sebehat*. The Gurage had been influenced culturally by the medieval Islamic and Christian Semitic culture. The Gurage practice agriculture. Enset is their main staple crop.

Its local chiefs used the titles of *Azmach*, *Abegaz* and *Nigus*. The basic unit of socio-political organisation was the clan assemblies. Local power is vested in lineages; these descent groups display corporate rights, obligations, and influence. In contrast, the religious or ritual system is highly centralised; ritual officials sanction the authority of the political elders. Elected officials exercised political, social and legal power. This distributed land administered justice and organised social events like funerals. This was called the *Yajoka Sera* among the *Sebat Bet*, while among the *Kistane*, it was known as *Ye Gordana Sera*.

Activity 8.3



1. What are the cultural and political significance of Mount Hambaricho for the Kambata people?
2. Identify the main peoples and states in the southern and central Ethiopian region.

8.1.2 Western States

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the source of political power in the peoples and states in western Ethiopia.
- explain the socio-economic and political structure of Nilotic peoples.
- value the historical, cultural and political values shared by different peoples of Ethiopia.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about the five Gibe Oromo states?

A. Oromo Monarchies: Gibe States

The Oromo had an egalitarian and republican socio-political organisation system known as the *Gadaa*, which is based on age groups. As discussed earlier, the socio-political organisation of the Oromo was based on the *Gadaa* system. However, following their expansion in the Gibe and Wallaga regions, the system went under changes in the early nineteenth century. In such a way, the Oromo gradually abandoned the *Gadaa* system and began to form monarchical states in these regions.

The Oromo population movement and expansion brought about fundamental changes in this part of the Ethiopian region. It put pressure on Damot, Gafat and Bizamo, causing the local inhabitants to assimilate with the Oromo or flee north of Abay River.

Different views are held regarding the cause for the transformation of the *Gadaa* system. One of the main factors was the changing of Oromos from a pastoral to agrarian mode of life and the class differentiation that this brought about. The continuous wars that the Oromo waged during their movement and expansion were another factor. The war tended to strengthen the powers of the *abba dula* (the war-leader in the *Gadaa* system) at the expense of the *abba boku* (head of the Oromo society).

They controlled land, markets and trade routes, and used much of the war booties to built up their private armies. Finally, they were able to gain control over their respective clans and regions and began to assume the title of *moti*, meaning king.

This evolution towards monarchical power was manifested in two regions. The first was in the area of the Gibe River, hence they were named Gibe monarchies. This process occurred first in the Gibe region in the early nineteenth century, where five small Oromo states Limmu-Ennarya, Jimma, Gumma, Gomma and Gera emerged. The same process was repeated in Wallaga later in that century, where Leqa Naqamte and Leqa Qellem were formed.

Limmu Ennarya was the earliest Gibe state. Its center was *Saqqa*. This state was established on the territories of the older state of Ennarya. Its strategic location in the region enabled it to control the long-distance trade routes that linked the region with the north. As a result, it became the strongest state in the region during the first half of the nineteenth century. The strongest ruler of Limmu Ennarya was *Abba Bagibo*, or *Ibsa* (r.

1825-1861), which marked the peak of Limmu-Ennarya's ascendancy



Figure 8.4 Abba Bagibo, the Leader of Limu Ennariya (Adopted from Short History of Ethiopia, Baharu Zawude)

The second Gibe state was Jimma. It was stronger than Limmu-Ennarya and other Gibe states since the middle of the nineteenth century. It became popular under Sanna or Abba Jifar I (r. 1830-1855). Jimma named after its founder Abba Jifar I. It emerged in southwestern Ethiopia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The state of Jimma depended on the ideological support of Islam and the commercial prosperity from coffee and slave trade. Jimma's success resulted in its supremacy in the second half of the 19th century.



Figure 8.5 Palaces of Abba Jifar of Jimma

The state of Gumma emerged in the first decade of the nineteenth century. It became an important state in 1820. Its political importance grew up under its strong ruler, Oncho Jilcha. He involved Gomma in successive wars against the neighbouring states. Gomma was the earliest Gibe state to accept Islam. On the other hand, Gera became well known around 1835 during its strongest ruler, Tullu Gunji, a popular warrior king and a good administrator. It was in great conflict with the state of Gumma.

A distinctive feature of the Gibe states was their conversion from indigenous religions to Islam in the first half of the nineteenth century.

B. Oromo Monarchies: Leqa States

Besides the Gibe states, there were two main centres of monarchical power in Wallaga in the early nineteenth century. These were the states of Leqa Naqamte and Leqa Qellem. A leader called Bakare Godana established the state of Leqa Naqamte, which grew even more powerful under his successors Moroda and Kumsa Moroda. After his conversion to Christianity, his successors, Moroda and Kumsa (later Dejazmach Gabra – Egziabher), followed in his footsteps and consolidated Leqa Naqamte.



Figure 8.6 Kumsa Moreda (left) and his Palace at Naqamte (right)

In southwestern Wallaga, Leqa Qellem was founded by one of the Qellem chiefs, Tullu. His son and successor, Jote, consolidated it in the second half of the nineteenth century. Besides agriculture, the economy of Leqa states was based on the Ethio - Sudanese frontier trade. Some foreign merchants from Funj Sultanate of Sudan used to visit these two Leqa states. Jote Tullu's kingdom was in constant interaction, both hostile and peaceful, with the sheikhdoms of Asosa.

Activity 8.4



1. What were the economic sources of Leqa Qellem?

C. Sheikdoms and Peoples of Beni-Shangul Gumuz.

Sheikdoms and Peoples of Beni-Shangul Gumuz inhabited the narrow lowland strip along the Ethio- Sudanese border in the west. These peoples are mainly speakers of the Nilo- Saharan language family. This area was a gold-producing region since Punt and commonly identified as the Silent Commerce, probably due to language barriers between merchants. Gumuz society practiced shifting cultivation as chief subsistence strategies on a small scale in the pre-19th century. The Gumuz used slash-and-burn agriculture not only as a system of farming but also as a natural resource management system. Slash-and-burn agriculture has a long history that appeared during the Neolithic period and gradually expanded into different parts of the world. The Gumuz farmers also identified the fertility of the soil by observing the color of soil and its drainage capacity.

The Gumuz had a positive attitude towards the forests in their surroundings. The Gumuz natural resource management was tied to their belief system; they believed that natural resources are the best gifts of *Yama* (supreme deity). Moreover, they had indigenous knowledge on how to manage their natural resources.

The Gumuz used fire as an essential tool for hunting, providing new vegetation growth for their herds and diminishing the ravages of the tsetse fly. The Gumuz sow sorghum on the first virgin plot prepared through clearing. They sow millet and sorghum again for the second round on the same plot. For the third round, they sow cotton based on a peasant's need. Gumuz do not cultivate a single plot more than three times. Thus, after the third round of cultivation, this plot is left to become fallow for the regeneration of the forest.

The Shinasha were one of the groups of Gonga people who established a powerful kingdom in southwestern Ethiopia before the 16th century.

However, demographic and political pressures since the 16th century pushed them further to the west to the territories they occupied at present. In addition, the 16th century Oromo expansion weakened and divided the Gonga kingdom into different groups. The southern group was represented by the Kafa people, while the Shinasha people represented the northern group. The Gonga people lived along the sides of the Blue Nile, extending up to the Ethiopian escarpment long before the reign of Susenyos (1607-1632).

Shifting cultivation was one of the subsistence strategies of Shinasha, Gumuz and Benishangul. The Shinasha shifting cultivation was based on cooperative labour work coordinated and led by a community leader known as Dawa Nasho. Shinasha followed a similar shifting plot and crop rotation pattern with the Gumuz. After third round cultivation on a single plot, they left fallow. The other subsistence strategy of the Shinasha

people was cattle herding. Their knowledge of traditional medicine enabled them at least to restrict widespread cattle diseases in their locality. Thus, they possess large numbers of cattle.

Shinasha's social and cultural institutions gave special value to the preservation of forests. Cutting trees from such reserved forests was forbidden in Shinasha culture. Hence, Shinasha had cultures that suited the physical environment. They had the traditions of preserving their local environment.

The Benishangul people live in Benishangul Gumuz along the border of Ethiopia and Sudan. The Benishangul people are mixed farmers involved in livestock raising, trade, beekeeping, and coffee cultivation. Their staple food is sorghum.

The people of Benishangul Gumuz had organised their local administrative system. Based on their kinship lines, they were led by their own chiefs and local elderly councils. The people of Benishangul Gumuz were indigenous religious followers in the early period. Islam was introduced as a result of frontier trade and cultural relations with Sudanese. However, the southwestern remained of paramount economic importance to the central highland. The people of Benishangul Gumuz used a unique musical instrument known as *Zumbara*.



Figure 8.7 Zumbara: Musical Instrument

People in Benishangul Gumuz were the main agents of frontier trade and cultural relations between the Ethiopian interior and its neighbours due to continuous interactions between the local Benishangul-Gumuz and the Arabic-speaking merchants. The Muslim states of Asosa, Benishangul and Khomosha were formed Benishangul Gumuz. Because of the immense gold deposits of the region, Sheikhdoms became targets for Egyptians in the 1820s and Sudanese-Mahdist penetration in 1880s. Nevertheless, the Sheikhdoms defended their independence and the territory of Ethiopia as well.

Activity 8.5



1. Describe the type of interactions between the peoples along the Ethio-Sudanese border.

D. Local Chiefs of Gambella peoples

Brainstorming

- What do you know about the local chiefs of Gambella?

The people in Gambella include Anywaa, Nuer, Majang, Komo and Opuo. The history of Gambella peoples was influenced by broad regional developments. The socio-political organisation of the different populations of Gambella was characterized by the absence of a strong centralized state structure. For example, the political organisation of the Anywaa was centered in their villages. Villages were administered by either noble called nyieye or headmen known as *kuaari*. The primary responsibility of both these officials was to maintain peace and redistribute wealth. The Majang traditionally had a very egalitarian society. The traditional leaders of the Majang were called *tapad*, who come from the Melanir clan. Their position, however, was more religious than political. They provided ritual services.

They lived along the banks of rivers by cultivating the floodplains. They grew maize, tobacco, sorghum, among others and engaged in some hunting. Fishing and gathering were also important sources of livelihood. Trade was another factor that connected the peoples of Gambella with their neighbours. For example, before the 1850s, different kinds

of manufactured goods from Northern Sudan passed through Benishangul land and thence to the Oromo territories. It seems that some of these goods were taken into South Sudan.

8.1.3 Eastern States: Harar, Afar, Somali

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the source of political power in the peoples and states in eastern Ethiopia.
- value the historical, cultural and political values shared by different peoples of Ethiopia.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about Harar and Aussa?

Harar

As discussed earlier, in 1332, Ifat was defeated by the Christian kingdom and lost its independence. As a result, some members of the ruling family of Ifat retreated farther to Harar and established the Sultanate of Adal around 1380. As a result, Harar served as a political center of the Sultanate of Adal up to the sixteenth century.

The Sultanate of Adal was reduced to the walled town of Harar as the result of the Oromo expansion. After the death of Imam Ahmed, the Muslims of Adal were reorganised under Emir Nur Mujahid. The Emir launched an offensive war against the Christian kingdom. In 1559 Nur Mujahid defeated and killed Gelawdewos in the Awash valley. However, he could not continue with his victory over the Christian forces because the Oromo forces had already reached the Harar area at the time. So, he returned to Adal to defend it from falling to the Oromo. However, since most of Harar was occupied by the Oromo, he just built a wall around the town of Harar, which is known as the Jegol wall. The walls surrounding this city, considered “the fourth holy city” of Islam, were built between the 13th and 16th centuries and served as a protective barrier.

Following the Oromo movement and expansion, the Walasma rulers abandoned it and moved to Aussa. Then, the emirate of Harar was established under a local Harari dynasty in the middle of the seventeenth century. The founder of this dynasty was Emir Ali Ibn Dawd (r. 1647-1662). Harar functioned as the capital of the Harari emirate from 1520 to 1568 became an independent emirate in the 17th century.

The Emirate of Harar continued to serve as a strong center of Islamic culture and political power. It controlled the rich trade routes from the Gulf of Aden and the coastal areas of the

Indian Ocean. From the late 16th century to the 19th century, Harar was an important trade centre between the coast and the interior highlands and a location for Islamic learning. Harar has existed as a center of Islamic studies since the fourteenth century.

Harar consolidated its power over the neighbouring communities, mainly through Islam and marriage alliances. Starting from 1875, the Egyptians occupied Harar for about a decade. The local Harari, Emir Abdullahi, revived the Harari dynasty in the second half of the 19th century. Harar was finally incorporated into Meneliks Empire in 1887 after the battle Chelanqo.



Figure 8.8 Harar wall (Jegol) and the main gate of Harar City
(source: UNESCO site)

Afar (Aussa, Bidu, Gobaad, Tajura and Rahayito)

Since ancient times the Afar people have resided principally in the Horn of Africa in the region referred to as the “Afar Triangle”. The “Afar Triangle” includes Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. The land inhabited by the Afar in the Horn region is known as the cradle of human beings. It also has abundant natural resources. Geo-political features of the Afar land further magnify its strategic importance. The Afar land is one of the sites of archaeological studies in human history. Afar people are predominantly Muslims.

The ancestors of the Afar settled in farmland in the Ethiopian highlands and primarily raised livestock. Later, they began a gradual transition to a more pastoral lifestyle and moved to the area they currently occupy. The Afar people used the ports of Adulis, Zula, Obok and Tajura for trade. The commercial relations between the Afar and the interior part of Ethiopia date back to the early Christian era. Since time immemorial, the Afar land provided Ethiopia with a bulk of salt supplies. The rock salt (called *amole*) was used for various purposes. It also served as currency for a long period of time.



Figure 8.9 The Afar Amole Production and Caravan Trade

Historically, the territory occupied by the Afar was organised into sultanates and semi-independent regions ruled by sultans. In each sultanate, the group's unique culture and customs flourished. Traditionally each sultanate was made up of several villages. In the early 14th century, however, the kings of the Christian kingdom associated the Afar with the medieval Adal Sultanate. However, the “Afar Triangle” maintained a confederation of sultanates. Among these were the Sultanate of Aussa, Sultanate of Bidu, Sultanate of Tadjoura, Sultanate of Rahaito, and Sultanate of Goobad.

Aussa was ruled by the local Afar chiefs who had the title of *Sultan*. Later, the Walasma rulers of Adal ruled Aussa after they had left Harar in 1577. In 1577, the Adal leader Imam Muhammed Ga’as (r. 1573-1583), moved his capital from Harar to Aussa in Afar. In 1647, the rulers of the Emirate of Harar broke away to form their polity. However, Harari Imams continued to have a presence in the southern Afar. Aussa occupied relatively larger territorial limits than other sultanates in Afar.

The Aussa was weakened after a century. In 1734 sultan Kadafo Hanfarie Aydahis (1733-1790) of the Mudaito clan established the Mudaito sultanate. The Mudaito clan ruled the sultanate of Aussa consequently for 241 years from Sultan Kadafo Hanfarie Aydahis to Sultan Ali Mirah II (1944-1974). The sultanate of Bidu held the second level to Aussa in military power. The Sultanate of Rahaito is the oldest in the region. Although it was the smallest in territorial limits, the Sultanate of Tadjourah exceeded all sultanates in Afar in terms of urban features.

The Afar people had an independent traditional political system. Each Afar sultan was the religious and political leader of his clan. They had overall control of trade activities and imposed tax on caravans. The Afar successively resisted the persistent intrusions by neighbouring highlanders. This shows that there had been long-lasting rivalry between the Afar sultanates and the Christian highland kingdom for economic resources and socio-political hegemony.

Externally, its location on the coast exposed it to attacks from foreigners such as Ottoman Turks, Egypt, and French. Throughout history, the Afar people have strongly resisted domination by others, and this tradition continues into the 21st century. They did not let foreigners in, and thus, no European crossed their territory without claiming the right of hospitality. For example, they ambushed the Egyptian army led by a Swiss Werner Muzinger in 1875 into the sands of Afar.

The Somali

The Somali people have inhabited vast territory in the Horn. The Somali language

belongs to the Eastern Lowland Cushitic language family. The majority of the Somalis were pastoralists, while others settled agricultural communities and traders. There are several Somali clans in Ethiopia. Darod, Isaaq, Gadaabursi, Issa, Massare, Degodia and Jidle, and Karanle Hawiye are some of the clans.

The Somali indigenous governing structure was a council of elders known as Shir, which had the power to decide criminal and civil cases. The decision-making process was highly democratic in that all adult males were allowed equal access and participation. These councils at the sub-clan, clan and inter-clan level provided a governing structure that acted as 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 to resolve conflicts and crisis.

Activity 8.6



1. Describe the type of relationship that existed between Harar and Aussa.
2. To which linguistic family does the Harari people's language belong?

8.2 Gondarine Period

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the major features and achievements of the Gondarine period.
- appreciate the achievements of the Gondarine period.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about Gondar?

The Gondar period refers to the years during which the rulers of the highland Christian Kingdom ruled from a new capital called Gondar. Beginning from the mid-sixteenth century, the Kingdom gradually shifted its political center from the Shewan highlands to the Lake Tana region. The shift was caused by Adal's continued threat and the pressure of the Oromo population movement. After the death of Gelawdewos in 1559, Minas (r.1559-63), brother and successor of Gelawdewos, retreated to the lands north of the Abay River. However, his successors continued to live in mobile capitals. Denqez, Gorgora, Azezo,

Dembiya, and Qoga in Gojjam and Begemidir were sites where this mobile capital rested at different times.

Gondar was founded by Fasiladas around 1636. Gondar was strategically located on the long-distance trade route linking southwestern regions with Massawa on the Red Sea and Mettema on the Ethio-Sudanese border. Its establishment as a permanent capital city ended the tradition of ruling from temporary camps. Gondar continued to serve as a political center for the next two centuries.



Figure 8.10 The Fasiledas Castel

Gondar became known for its architectural achievements and building technology. Several kings who ruled from Gondar built magnificent castles as palaces. In addition, churches, bridges and swimming pools were constructed. Notably, during the reigns of its three successive kings: Fasiladas (r. 1632- 1667), Yohanes I (r. 1667- 1682) and Iyasu I (1682-1706), Gondar attained great prosperity and technological developments. The city grew, and traditional schools of learning were built and expanded around their palaces and Churches. These three Gondarine rulers were also politically stronger than their successors.

Gondar developed certain urban features very soon. It had about 70,000 inhabitants. Its population was composed of different religious, cultural, indigenous and foreign communities. Gondar became an important commercial center with a daily market attracting merchants, crafts and rural people to exchange their respective products. This led to intense urban-rural interactions. Traders were mostly Ethiopian Muslims, known as the Jeberti. However, there were also other occupational groups like the Bete Israel. They were engaged in craft activities such as masonry, pottery, basketry and ironworks. There

were separate living quarters for the Muslim communities, for the Bete Israel and also for some foreign communities from India, Greek, Armenia and Persia. Cash payment for labour services was also introduced.

The ruling class enjoyed luxurious life and lived in their beautiful palaces and castles. They took advantage of Gondar's commercial and urban prosperity. However, it was only during the reigns of the first three kings that Gondar led a life of glory. Later on, Gondar declined as an important political center and economic prosperity. Political disorder and social unrest became common in the city. Court intrigues became common, accompanied by poisoning and assassinations of kings and princes. The Gondarine monarchy could not keep its former political power. This was partly because of its military weakness. Finally, they were unable to impose control over regional lords and provinces. Following the assassination of Iyasu I in 1706, the imperial court itself had to be guarded by powerful warlords with regional bases. The period led to the strengthening of warlords of different regions with little or no control from the weakening centre.

The last stage of the Gondarine period was dominated by the growing power and importance of a Quara born woman called *Itege* Mentewab. She was the wife of Emperor Bakafa (r. 1721-30). Soon after the death of Bakafa, she began to rule over the kingdom as a regent for her young son and the successor of Bakafa, Iyasu II (r.1730-55). Until he died in 1767, she was Supported by her strong brother, Welde Leul, on whom she bestowed the prestigious title of *Ras* Bitweded. The warlords were contending for the title of *Ras* Bitweded and position during the whole period of the *Zemene Mesafint*. Mentewab lost power in 1769 to the Tigrean warlord *Ras* Michael Sehul. Michal Sehul came to Gondar, killed the reigning king, Iyoas (1755-1769), and took over the title of *Ras* Bitweded.

Gondar also suffered from internal splits within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In addition, the clergy were engaged in conflicts over religious principles or doctrines that also had a regional character. The combination of political and religious disputes finally led to the period of the *Zemene Mesafint* or the Era of warlords.

Acitvitiy 8.7



1. Who was Mentewab? By asking local elders or exploring internet, discuss the political role of Mentewab. Also discuss the role women have in political affairs among your society.

8.3 The *Zemene Mesafint* (The Era of Warlords)

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- identify the main features of the *Zemene Mesafint*.
- locate using a map a competing region for political upper hand during *Zemene Mesafint*.
- value the historical, cultural and political standards shared by different peoples of Ethiopia.

Brainstorming

- What does *Zemene Mesafint* mean for you?

From 1767 to 1769, there was a power struggle in Gondar between groups of Wollo and Quara political factions. Wollo was represented by Wabi, the wife of Iyassu II and mother of the young monarch, Iyoas (r. 1755-1769). Quara, on the other hand, was represented by her mother-in-law, *Itege Mentewab*, who then controlled state power in the name of her grandson, *Iyoas*. This rivalry took place following the death of *Ras Bitweded Welde Leul* in 1767. *Mentewab* had given a power base to the Wollo Oromo by arranging a political marriage between her son Iyassu II and Wabi, from the Wollo Oromo family. In addition, she intended to secure their military support to consolidate her power in the Gondarine state. After that, however, the Wollo Oromo gradually began to enjoy a leading political role and influence.

The conflict between Quara and the Wollo Oromo factions created political disorder around the capital. This endangered *Mentewab's* power. She was thus forced to look for any strong personality who could help her control the situation.

The most powerful candidate in 1768 was *Ras Michael Sehul* of Tigray. He had a big army and more modern firearms due to his access to foreign trade through the Red Sea. Michael Sehul was invited to Gondar by *Mentewab* and soon restored peace and order in the city. He was awarded the highest title of *Ras Bitweded*. When king Iyoas ordered him to go back to Tigray, Michael felt strong and refused to obey the king's order. He assassinated King Iyoas in 1769. This event marked the beginning of a new era in which powerful regional warlords undermined the monarchy's power.

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

Ras Michael, a kingmaker during the period, took strong measures against the nobility. A coalition of lords of Gojjam, Amhara, Lasta and Wollo defeated him at the battle of Sarba-Kussa in 1771 and forced him to go back to his power base in Tigray. He ruled over Tigray for the next nine years until his death in 1780. After the defeat of Michael Sehul, chaos and disorder continued until the coming to power of Ali Gwangul (Ali I) from the Yejju Oromo family. Ali founded a new ruling dynasty known as the *Yejju dynasty* or the *Warra Sheh* in 1786.

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, Debye, Begemedir, Lasta, Yejju, Wollo, Gojjam and Shewa. This era is commonly known in Ethiopian history as the *Zemene Mesafint (1769 – 1855)*.

The different regionally based northern Ethiopian warlords of the *Zemene Mesafint* fought against each other for various objectives:

- They wanted to expand their territories at the expense of their neighbours because large territory means enormous human and material resources.
- They wanted to have the title of Ras Bitwedde to become guardians of the weak Gondarine kings and their court.
- They wanted to collect as much tribute as possible in the name of these weak kings.

Religious conflicts worsened the regional power conflicts of the *Zemene Mesafint*. There was an intense doctrinal controversy within the Orthodox Church during the period. This weakened the position of both the Ethiopian state and the Church. The Orthodox Church could not enforce unity among the Christian masses because it was deeply divided into different factions within itself. The divisions took a regional character. The internal religious division gave an ideological dimension to the power conflict and further intensified the power struggle of the *Zemene Mesafint*.

The endless wars of the *Zemene Mesafint* affected the social and economic life of the peasantry. The peasants suffered from frequent wars. The peasants were forced to feed the enormous armies of the local and regional lords. The many shiftas (bandits) also forced the peasant to supply them food. Therefore, the various dependents discouraged the peasantry from working hard and producing surplus production. Moreover, the farmlands of the peasantry often became battlefields, and their villages were burnt down. Therefore,

agriculture which formed the backbone of the peasant economy, was depressed in the period of the *Zemene Mesafint*.

The continuous wars of the *Zemene Mesafint* also affected the development of trade. Merchants could not travel peacefully along the long-distance trade routes due to endless wars and robbery. Moreover, they were forced to pay heavy taxes at the different warlords' gates (tax stations). The most important trade items during the *Zemene Mesafint* were natural products such as ivory, gold, and civet. Enslaved people formed an important element of trading items. As a result of feudal wars, war captives increased the supply of enslaved people who were in high demand in Arabia.

By and large, the continuous wars of the *Zemene Mesafint* had undermined the sense of nationalism. It was a period of weak national feeling and national power.

Activity 8.8



1. Identify the basic features of the *Zemene Mesafint*.

8.4 The Yejju Dynasty

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- identify the main characteristic features of the *Yejju Dynasty*.
- locate in a map regions that were competing for political upper hand during *Yejju Dynasty*.
- value the historical, cultural and political standards shared by different peoples of Ethiopia.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about *Yejju Dynasty*?

After the defeat of Michael Sehul, chaos and disorder continued until the coming to power of Ali Gwangul (Ali I) from the Yejju Oromo family. Ali founded a new ruling dynasty known as the *Yejju dynasty* or the *Warra Sheh* in 1786. This dynasty dominated the politics of northern Ethiopia in the name of the puppet kings of Gonder until the middle

of the nineteenth century. During this period of Yejju rule, the most important centers of political power were the territories of the present-day Gojjam, Gondar, Tigray and Wollo. 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 the founder of the “*Yejju dynasty*” in 1786.

The *Yejju dynasty* strengthened its power during its strongest ruler Ras Gugsa (1803-1825). The two successive Tigrian rulers, *Ras Walda Sellase* of Indarta (r. 1790 - 1816) and *Dejjazmach Sabagadis* (r. 1822-1831), resisted Gugsa's power in the north. Nevertheless, he tried to neutralize them through marriage relations and diplomacy. Moreover, Gugsa's military and diplomatic skills helped him exercise his power over the lords of Gojjam, Wollo, Lasta, Semen, Wagara and Dambya. Following the death of Gugsa in 1825, the *Yejju dynasty* met strong challenges from Semen and Tigray. Semen was defeated by Gugsa's son and successor, *Ras Yemam* (1825-1828). Ras Marye succeeded Yemam in 1828.

However, *Dajjach Sabagadis* of Tigray decided to end the Yejju political domination. This led to the battle in 1831 of May-Aslamay, near Dabra Abay, in western Tigray. The two rivals, Ras Marye and *Dejjazmach Sabagadis* were killed in this battle, but the final victory went to the Yejju dynasty. The ruler of Semen, *Dejiazmach Wube*, was rewarded Tigray for his contribution siding with the Yejju lords during the battle of May-Aslamay. However, the Yejju political dominance over northern Ethiopia continued for the next two decades under Ras Ali Alula or Ali II (r. 1831-1853).

Yejju rule reached its zenith under Gugsa Marso (r.1803-1825), who made an 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 *zemen mesafint* was brought to an end by Kasa Hailu of Qwara through battles that lasted from the 1840s to 1855.

Acitvitiy 8.9



1. Who was the founder of *Yejju dynasty*?

8.5 The Kingdom of Shewa

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the historical developments in Shewan region before 1696.
- explain the advantages of Shewan isolation from the wars of the *Zemene Mesafint*.

Brainstorming

- Who was Sahle Sellase?

As already indicated in unit three, the central highlands of the present-day Shewa had been the political center of the Christian Kingdom. However, the Christian State shifted its capital to the Lake Tana area as a result of the pressure from Adal and the subsequent Oromo expansion of the sixteenth century. Some strong Gondarine rulers, including Iyassu I (r.1682-1706), tried to control Shewa. To this end, they sent military expeditions to Shewa. However, Shewa gradually detached itself from the newly founded centre of the Christian State. During this period of isolation, Shewa was disunited, and several local chiefs emerged in various parts of the region.

Nevertheless, the Shewan kingdom emerged in the area of Manz around the end of the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century. The founder of this Kingdom was a local chief known as Negasi. During the *Zemene Mesafint*, by safely isolating themselves from the wars in northern Ethiopia, successive rulers began to consolidate the Shewan kingdom with their centre at Ankober. The Kingdom reached its heyday under King Sahle Sellase (r.1813-47). Sahle Sellase had brought several regions under Shewan's control and maintained law and order in the Kingdom. This stability enabled several foreign travellers to come to visit Shewa. This helped Sahle Sellase to establish independent foreign relations with Britain and France.

Activity 8.10



1. Explain the role of Shewa kingdom in Ethiopian politics during Zemene Mesafint.

Unit Summary



After the decline of the Christian Kingdom, many groups of people from southern, western, eastern and central Ethiopia developed their independent local states. From the mid-16th to the mid-19th centuries, political power was decentralised. In the period, independent polities flourished in western, southern and eastern Ethiopia. From the mid-16th to the mid-19th centuries, various economic, political, and social processes were organised.

In the central, western, eastern and southern Ethiopian regions existed many states and communities at different stages of socio-economic and political developments. The political organisation of these states was monarchical, while that of the several peoples and communities was based on their traditional political systems. However, the Christian kingdom and the states and peoples in the rest of the Ethiopian regions maintained strong economic relationships throughout this period.

From the defeat it faced in the hands of the Sultanate of Adal, the Christian highland kingdom began to recover. Nevertheless, its efforts at revival were disturbed later on by elements of regional power struggle. This period of regionalism was called the *Zemene Mesafent* (period of regional warlords). The arrival of the Jesuit missionaries followed the Portuguese military assistance to the Christian kingdom in 1541.

The main objective of the Jesuits was to convert Christian Ethiopia into the Catholic faith. However, this failed in the early seventeenth century, when these missionaries were expelled. This event was followed by the foundation of a permanent capital city at Gondar in 1636, which became a historical event of great importance.

Gondar experienced the construction of permanent structures like palaces and Churches, the growth of trade, the introduction of cash payment for services and many other urban elements. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, Gondar declined. This was partly due to the political anarchy in northern Ethiopia, culminating during the *Zemene Mesafint* and doctrinal controversies within the Orthodox Church.

Unit Review Questionns

**Part I: Choose the correct answer from the given alternatives.**

- The Ethiopian king who declared Catholicism as the official religion of the country was:
 - Fasilades
 - Susenyos
 - Gelawdewos
 - Lebene Dengel
- Which of the following region did not engage in the wars of the Zemene Mesafint?
 - Showa
 - Gondar
 - Tigrai
 - Gojjam
- The official title of the king of Wolaita was:
 - Moti
 - Kawo
 - Tato
 - Negus
- Which of the following was not the Oromo state?
 - Jimma
 - Limu-Enariya
 - Komosha
 - Gera
- The Emirate of Harar was established by:
 - the Afar chief
 - Nur Mujahid
 - Ali ibn Dawd
 - Emir Abdullahi

Par II: Match the items under column A with names under B**A**

- Title of Oromo kings
- The kings of Kambata, Halaba called
- Ruler of Leqa Naqemte
- Ethiopian Muslim merchants
- Catholic missionaries

B

- Kumsa Moroda
- Jesuits
- Woma
- Moti
- Jeberti