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## SEWASEW HAILESELASSIE ASSEFA

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### EDUCATION

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#### **Ph.D., Anthropology**

Washington University in St. Louis

May 2025

Dissertation: “Embodying Social Collapse: Diet, Health and Burial in the East African Urban Center of Mtwapa, Kenya (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> C CE)”

#### **M.A., Anthropology**

Washington University in St. Louis,

May 2021

Thesis: “Biocultural perspective on interpreting diet and health in north-central highlands of Ethiopia during the Zagwe (11<sup>th</sup> C – 1270) and Solomonic Dynasties (1270-1974)”

#### **M.A., Anthropology**

University of Colorado Denver,

May 2018

Thesis: “Borderlands between Egypt and Nubia: A Bioarcheological Analysis of the Effect of Conflict on Health”

#### **B.A., Anthropology**

Texas Tech University,

May 2015

Minor: History

Concentration: Forensic

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### RESEARCH INTEREST

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Archaeology, Human Osteology, Paleopathology, Immunology, Stable Isotopes, Sociopolitical Systems, Biocultural Anthropology, 3D modeling

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### PUBLICATIONS

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**Assefa, Sewasew;** Kusimba, Sibel B; Szymanski Ryan; Kusimba, Chapurukha M. “Isotopic evidence of dietary diversity among urban inhabitants of the East African Coast.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. (In prep)

**Assefa, Sewasew;** Kusimba, Sibel B; Szymanski Ryan; Otieno, Esther; Gandhi, George; Kusimba, Chapurukha M. “Disease, Famine, and Conflict: Reassessing the Collapse of Late Iron Age Swahili Urban Settlements through a paleopathological Analysis of Gedi, Kenya.” Journal of European Medicine. (In prep)

Zhao, Shijie; Wu, Xiaotong; Zhao, Hui; Sun, Yufeng; **Assefa, Sewasew Haileselassie;** Zhang, Xingxiang. “Multi-evidence for origins of the sacrificial victims from the Yinxu Royal Cemetery.” Archaeological Research in Asia. (In review)

**Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew.** “Biocultural perspective on interpreting diet and health in north-central highlands of Ethiopia during the Zagwe (11th C – 1270) and Solomonic (1270-1974) Dynasties,” MA Thesis. Washington University in St. Louis, 2021.

**Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew.** Borderlands Between Egypt and Nubia: A Bioarchaeological Analysis of the Effect of Conflict on Health. MA Thesis. University of Colorado at Denver, 2018.

## **RESEARCH GRANTS**

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Grants total: \$67,924

Wenner–Gren Foundation: Dissertation Fieldwork grant – (\$24,815) - 2023

National Science Foundation: Doctoral Dissertation Improvement grant – Award Number: 2328448 (\$31,109) - 2023

Washington University in St. Louis (Anthropology) Research Travel Grant (\$1,000) - 2023

Rich Smith Research Grant (\$3,000) - 2022

Divided City Summer Research Fellowship Grant (\$5,000) - 2022

Washington University in St. Louis (Anthropology) Research Travel Grant (\$1,000) - 2022

Washington University in St. Louis (AFAS) Mugo Research Travel Grant (\$1,200) - 2022

George R. Throop Endowment Award (\$800) – 2021

## **LABORATORY AND FIELD EXPERIENCE**

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|                                   |  |
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| <b>Ethnographer</b>               | Kenya Coastal Cultural Mosaics: Oromo and Wa’atha lifeways   |
| <b>Bioarcheologist</b>            | Gede Archeological Project, Kenya:<br>Director: Chapurukha Kusimba   |
| <b>Research Assistant</b>         | St. Louis Black Cemeteries Project   |
| <b>Stable Isotopes Researcher</b> | Laboratory for the Analysis of Early Food-Webs (LAEF): Director:<br>Xinyi Liu  |
| <b>Trench Supervisor</b>          | Shire Archeological project, Ethiopia: Directors: Willeke Wendrich   |
| <b>Research Assistant</b>         | Paleoanthropology Lab University of Colorado, Denver, CO<br>Supervisor: Dr. Charles Musiba                                       |
| <b>Student Coordinator</b>        | Field School at Badia Pozzevri (University of Pisa), Italy:<br>Directors: Gino Fornaciari and Valentina Giuffra June 23- July 25 |

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| <b>Student</b> | Field School in Paleoanthropology, Tanzania: Director: Charles Musiba May 30 - June 20   |
| <b>Student</b> | Texas Tech University Study Abroad: Anthropology in Cyprus in Human Skeletal Biology and Forensic Techniques: Director: Robert R. Paine. June 2 – July 3 |

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Who eats What and Why? Stable Isotopic Reconstruction of Diet at Mtwapa.” **Society of Africanist Archaeologists**, 23 July, Algarve, Portugal (**Accepted**).
- 2024 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Embodying culture change: Examination of health in 14-17<sup>th</sup> c CE populations of Mtwapa, Kenya.” **Society of Ethnobiology conference**, 25 April, St. Louis, MO (**Paper presentation**).
- 2024 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “An Isotopic study of Diet in Mtwapa, Kenya (15-18<sup>th</sup> c CE)” **Society of American Archaeologists**, 17-22 April, New Orleans, LA (**Poster presentation**).
- 2021 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Amda Seyon and the Use of Religion as the linchpin of social and political structure of 14<sup>th</sup> C Solomonic Ethiopia.” **97<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America**, 10-13 March, Charlottesville, VA (**Presented - Online**).
- 2017 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Borderlands between Egypt and Nubia: Effects of Conflict on Health”. Poster Presentation: **University of Colorado-Boulder Anthropology Conference (Presented September 30)** at University of Colorado, Boulder in Boulder, Colorado.
- 2017 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Borderlands between Egypt and Nubia: Effects of Conflict on Health”. Poster Presentation: **Research and Creative Activities Symposium (Presented April 28)** at University of Colorado, Denver in Denver, Colorado.
- 2017 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Experimental Study of Sheep (*Ovis aries*) Bone Weathering Under UV-B Light”. Poster Presentation: **American Association of Physical Anthropologists (Presented April 22)** at New Orleans, Louisiana.

### PANEL PRESENTATIONS

- 2021 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Politics of the Urban Body: Bioarchaeological Studies of Ancient States” Society of Ethnobiology conference 2023. April 24-27 (**Co-Chair**)
- 2021 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “The Hansberry Society: Recovering African Antiquity” Africa-America institute (AAI) 7<sup>th</sup> Annual State of Education on Africa Conference. November 5. (**Panelist**)

## PUBLIC LECTURES

2019-2022 Haileselassie Assefa, Sewasew “Introduction to Archaeology,” Archaeology and Artifacts program, Partners in Education Rockwood School District: Wild Horse elementary. October 8. Chesterfield, Mo.

## **TEACHING (INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD)**

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Spring 2024 The East African Coast (1 c BCE-1800CE)  
Spring 2023 Introduction to Human Evolution

## **TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP**

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Summer 2020 The Pandemic: Science and Society – Dr. Krista Milich  
Fall 2020 Archaeology of Ancient Egypt – Dr. Helina Woldekiros  
Spring 2021 Humans and Animals – Prof. Fiona Marshall  
Fall 2021 Human Osteology – Dr. Sarah Baitzel  
Spring 2022 Introduction to Global Health – Dr. Theresa Gildner  
Fall 2022 AIDS Epidemic: Inequalities, Ethnography & Ethics – Prof. Parikh

## **DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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Africa United Graduate Association – Founding Member, President (2024-2025)  
National Humanities Advocacy Day – Advocate (March 12, 2024)  
Archaeology Committee of 3 – Student representative (Spring 2024)  
Friday Archaeology – Student coordinator (2020-2021)  
Anti-Racism initiative: Decolonizing the Syllabus

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS**

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AAPA/AABA- American Association of Biological Anthropologists  
SAFA – Society of Africanist Archaeologists  
Black in Biological Anthropology (Member)  
William Leo Hansberry Society (Founding Member)  
National Humanities Alliance  
Society of American Archaeologists  
Society of Ethnobiology

## **SKILLS**

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**Technical skills:** Teaching, , Identity examination from skeletal remains, Stable isotopic analysis, technical report writing for field excavation and research results, archaeological survey and mapping, ethnography, RStudio

## **LANGUAGES**

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**English:** Fluent speaker, advanced reading, and writing  
**Amharic:** Native speaker, advanced reading, and writing  
**Swahili:** Beginner