

Ethiopian History: Original Bible, Moses & 10 Commandments

December 2, 2023

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: Ethiopia is a unique country in the Global South. It was able to retain a **monarchy, which had roots in King Solomon and Queen Sheba all the way till September 12, 1974.**

It was not a monarchy, which was refusing to change. The **November 1955 constitution**, promulgated by the last Emperor, gave, to the Ethiopian Parliament, all the powers, that today's such institutions have in democracies of the rest of the world, including the authority to **disapprove imperial decrees.**

Ethiopia is a country, which claims to have a **Bible**, written in its own language and which probably is different from the **73-book scriptural canon**¹, finalized by the **Council of Rome**, which was convened under the leadership of **Pope Damasus in 382.**



***Aksum, Ethiopia: the annual festival of St Mary
The Aksum Church claims to be the home of the Ark of the Covenant, which
contains the 10 commandments handed down to Moses by God***

www.DiGiNews360.com is no authority on Bible. But we understand the Bible², used by the Anglican Church is essentially an English translation of the Bible of 382 in Latin.

Ethiopian tradition claims to have sites and symbols associated with the Ark of Covenant and the ten commandments of Moses.

The claims of the Church of Mary in Aksum have not been documented for their historical veracity and have not been tested scientifically as the Shroud of Turin (*claimed to be the actual burial shroud used to wrap the body of Jesus of Nazareth after his crucifixion*) was by the Italians through carbon dating. www.DiGiNews360.com can only report that both have been venerated for centuries, though the pilgrims at Aksum may be only Ethiopians or Africans.

www.DiGiNews360.com wants to say that the world of 21st century, **including the Ethiopians themselves**, has failed to value and retain the monarchy and its Church as **living and true heritages of the world**, while we talk about UNESCO World Heritage sites.

¹The Catholic Bible: The Council of Rome, which was convened under the leadership of Pope Damasus, promulgated the **73-book scriptural canon** in **382 AD**. The biblical canon was reaffirmed by the regional councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), and then definitively reaffirmed by the ecumenical Council of Florence in 1442. Finally, the ecumenical Council of Trent solemnly defined this same canon in 1546.

²The Bible of the Anglican Church: The **Church of England**, also known as the **Anglican Church**, was established by **King Henry VIII** in **1534**. The first complete English Bible was produced by John Wycliffe in the 14th century. The first English Bible to be authorized for use by the Church of England was **the Great Bible**, which was published in **1539 during the reign of King Henry VIII**. The Bishop's Bible was published in 1568, and the **King James Bible** was published in **1611**.

---- A BACKGROUNDER on the REGIONS of Ethiopia ----

Historically Ethiopia consisted mainly of the **Amhara** and **Tigrayans**. They now make up 24% and 6% respectively of modern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's federal system has been a source of **tension between the central government and regional elites**. Today's Ethiopia has a population of more than 108 million and **more than 90 ethnic groups**. **The biggest groups are the Amhara and Oromo**. **Together they comprise more than 65% of the population**.

Before 1991, the groups, that took up arms against Ethiopia's central government and its elites, alleged rampant ethnic oppression and discrimination. So, when any group or groups had the fortune of leading a government and designing its structure, they chose ethno-linguistic classifications to benefit its/ their group/ groups. Sadly, in a nation of **more than 90 ethnic groups**, the system created animosity and competition for power and influence among different groups.



The map above shows the regions, as these existed before the recent re-organization by **Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government**. The following Table shows the state of the Regions as of today.

REGIONS of ETHIOPIA:

#	Name	Population	Area in Km ²	Capital	Remarks
1	Tigray Region	5,838,000	50,079	Mek'ele	
2	Afar Region	2,076,000	72,051	Semera	
3	Somali Region	6,657,000	279,252	Jijiga	
4	Oromia Region	40,884,000	284,538	Addis Ababa	
5	Sidama Region	5,301,868	12,000	Hawassa	
6	South Ethiopia Regional State			Wolaita Sodo	formed from the southern part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) on 19
7	South West Ethiopia	4,197,164	39,400	Bonga	split from the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) on 23 November 2021 after a
8	Gambela Region	525,000	29,783	Gambela	
9	Benishangul-Gumuz Region	1,251,000	50,699	Asosa	
10	Amhara Region	23,216,000	154,709	Bahir Dar	
11	Central Ethiopia Regional State			Hosaena	Created from the Northern part of SNNPR, after a Referendum on August 19, 2023 . With a majority of Muslims.
12	Harari Region	283,000	334	Harar	
13	Addis Ababa (city)	3,945,000	527	Addis Ababa	
14	Dire Dawa (city)	551,000	1,559	Dire Dawa	

---- A BACKGROUNDER on the 1995 CONSTITUTION of ETHIOPIA ---

1995 Constitution: Federal Parliamentary Republic,

The Prime Minister is the head of government.

Executive power is exercised by the government. The prime minister is chosen by the 547-seat **House of Peoples'** Representatives. The Representatives are elected by direct election.

The 108-seat **House of Federation** has members chosen by the **Regional Councils** to serve five-year terms.

The President is elected by the Representatives for a six-year term.

---- A BACKGROUNDER on the HISTORY of ETHIOPIA ----

HISTORY from 1855: Ethiopia has never been colonized, (*Latin names: "Abyssinia" and "Ze-Etiyopia"*), except for 5 years from 1936-41 by Mussolini of Italy.

1855–68: Emperor Tewodros II:

Tewodros II re-unified Northern Ethiopia. **Emperor Tewodros II** conquered Magdala on 22 September 1855. He constructed a number of buildings on the top of the mountain, including a church and a palace and made it as his kingdom's seat of power.

Today, Magdala is known as Amba Mariam. It is located in **central Ethiopia in the Debub Wollo Zone of the Amhara Region**. It is one of three towns in **Tenta** woreda (*district*).

In 1862 Tewodros II offered Britain's Queen Victoria an alliance to destroy Islam. The British ignored the scheme, and, when no response came, Tewodros imprisoned the British envoy and other Europeans. This diplomatic incident led to an Anglo-Indian military expedition in 1868. Sir Robert Napier, the commander, paid money and weapons to **Kassa Marcha**, a **Dejazmatch** (*meaning Earl*) of **Tigray**, in order to secure passage inland, and on April 10, on the plains below **Āmba Maryam**, British troops defeated a small imperial force. In order to avoid capture, Tewodros committed suicide two days later.

1868- 1871: Tekle Giyorgis II, Emperor of Ethiopia:

Background: **Wagshum Gobeze** was the ruler of Amhara, Wag, and Lasta. In 1864, he raised the banner of rebellion against Tewodros II in **Lasta**, six years after his father *Wagshum Gebre Medhin* had been executed by Emperor Tewodros II for accusations of supporting the rebel *Agew Niguse*.

Lasta (*original name: Begwena*) is a province in northern Ethiopia, in which **Lalibela** is situated. Lalibela was the capital of Ethiopia during the Zagwe dynasty and home to **11 medieval rock-hewn churches**.

Agew Niguse was a Leader of the Agaw peoples, who practice a **Hebraic religion** (*a form of Judaism*). The Agaws, who have converted to Christianity, are called **Falash Mura**. Agaws are native to the **Northern highlands of Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea**.

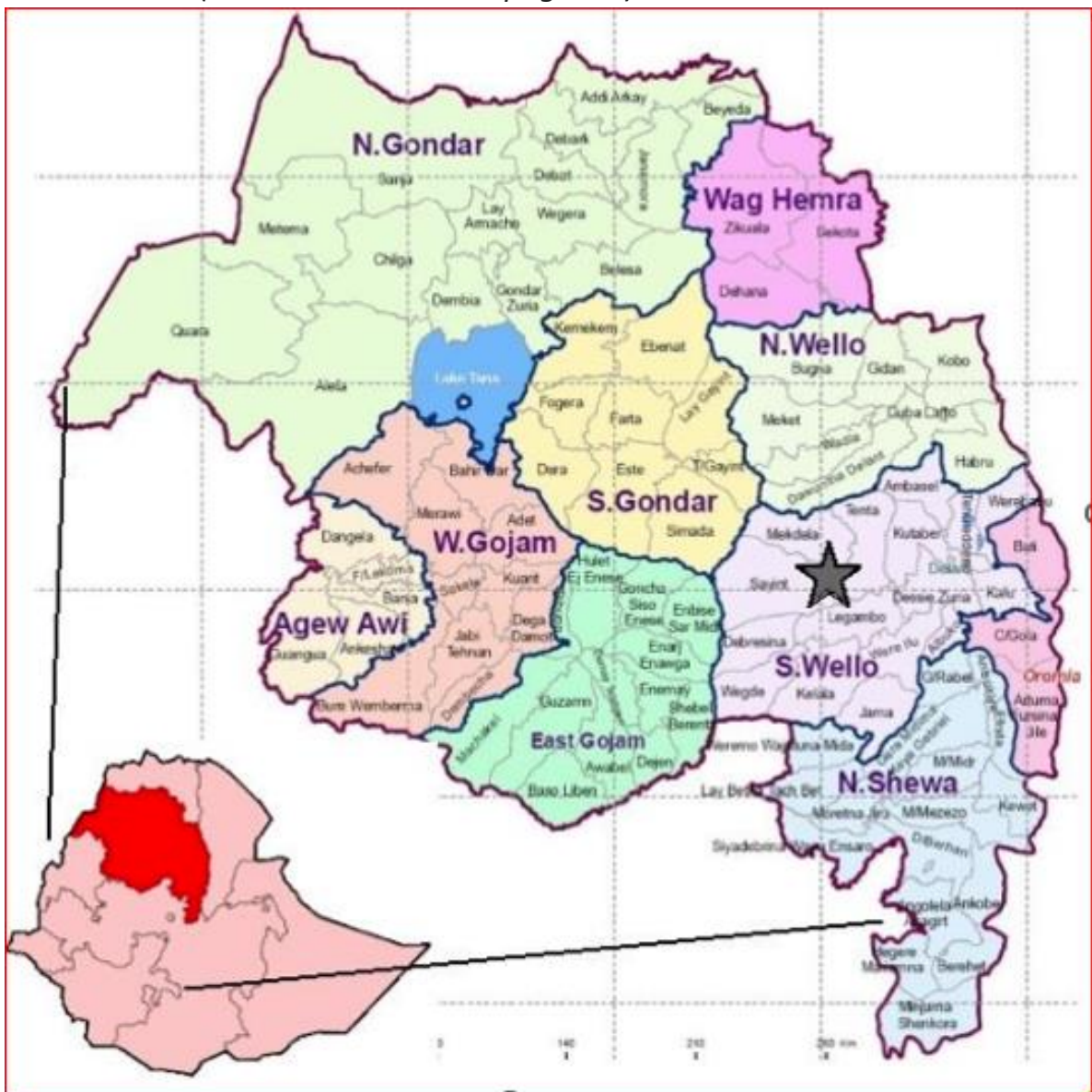
The Agaws currently exist in a number of scattered enclaves, which include the **Bilen** in and around Keren, Eritrea; the **Qemant people** who live around Gondar in the North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region, west of the Tekezé River and north of Lake Tana; the **Awis** living south of Lake Tana, around Dangila in the **Agew Awi Zone** of the Amhara Region; and the **Xamirs** living in and around Soqota in the former province of Wollo, now part of the Amhara Region, along with Lasta, Tembien, and Abergele.

Towards the end of 1867, Wagshum began to march on Tewodros' fortress at **Magdala**, but stopped about 50 Km away, and turned to fight *Tiso Gobeze* of Welkait, who had revolted against Tewodros and had control of **Begemder** in NorthWest Ethiopia.

Begemder was a province (capital: Gondar or Gonder) in NorthWest Ethiopia. The word "*Begemder*" refers to "land that rears sheep" or "the dry area."

Tiso was killed in the battle at **Qwila**.

In August 1868, **Wagshum Gobeze** was proclaimed as **Emperor Tekle Giyorgis II** of Ethiopia at **Soqota** in the highlands and crowned at **Debre Zebit**, where his father had been executed. (Please see Note 1 on page 32.)



Debre Zebit is a village in Northern Ethiopia. Located in the Amhara Region, about 240 Km nearly directly to the **North of Addis Ababa**, this village has an elevation of 2928 meters above sea level.

Soqota: a woreda (*meaning "District"*) in the East of **Wag Hemra** zone of **Amhara** Region. *Sekota Zuria means "Greater Sekota Area"*. Population: 0.13 Mn, Area: 1,722 Km². The **predominantly hilly terrain** of the 'Sekota Zuria' isolates the inhabitants of Sekota. The steep **slopes are highly degraded, limiting crops yields**. High points include Mount Biala (3,810 meters). The Tigray region is in its East.

Because Abuna Salama, head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had died in October 1867, he was crowned by the Ethiopian **Echege** (*Echege is the second rank, just below the Patriarch in the Church hierarchy*), the principal head and **Abuna** (*Abuna: The honorific title used for a **bishop** of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church as well as of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church*) of all monasteries and churches of the land.

1872-1889: **Emperor Yohannes IV:**

BACKGROUND: After the British finished their campaign against **Emperor Tewodros II (1855-68)**, they awarded **Kassa Marcha** for his cooperation by giving him a number of weapons. Kassa had organized a strong army and he refused to submit to the authority of **Emperor Tekle Giyorgis II (1868-71)**. When **Emperor Tekle Giyorgis**, attacked Tigray, at **Adwa**, Kassa Mercha was able to crush the imperial army because his troops, although outnumbered, were better equipped. **Tekle Giyorgis II** was wounded during the battle. leading to the demoralization of his troops. He and his generals were captured and he died in captivity.

On January 21, 1872, Kassa was crowned as Emperor **Yohannes IV** of Ethiopia.

The **Battle of Adwa** has been noted by some as one of the **first 'truly modern' battles in Ethiopian history**, given that the tactics used by **Kassa of Tigray** revolved around the use of gunpowder weaponry.

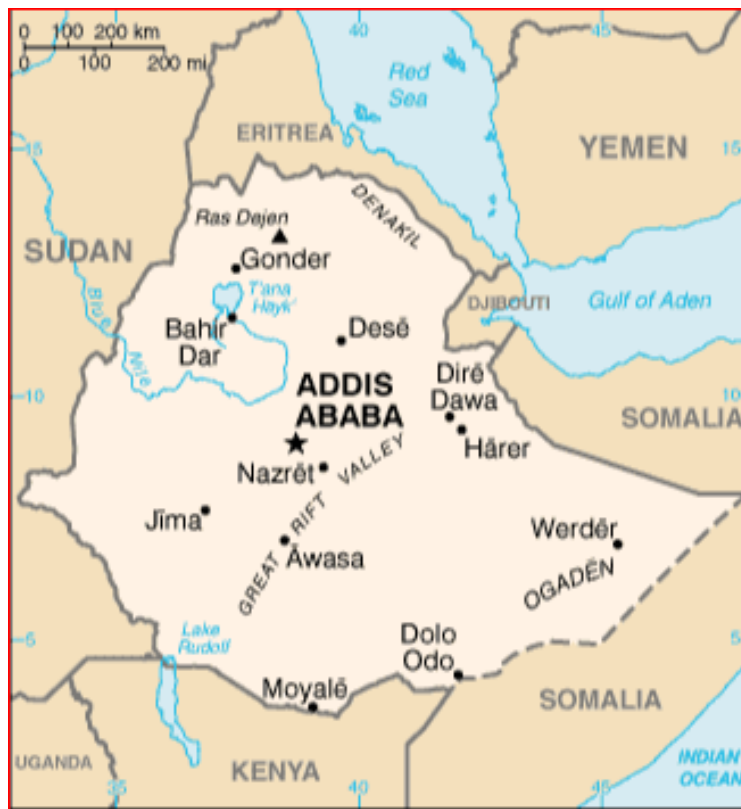
In 1875–76, **Yohannes IV** ejected two Egyptian armies from the highlands of Eritrea. Since **Yohannes** was preoccupied in the battles with Egyptians, in the summer of 1876, *Sahle Mariam of Shewa*, took over **Wallo**, located to the NorthWest of Shewa. Early in 1877, he took over Begemdir (also known as Gondar or Gonder), a province located to the north of Shewa.

To punish *Sahle Mariam* for these intrusions, in March 1877, **Yohannes** left Adwa and advanced south, while *Sahle Mariam* retreated back to Shewa. On 10 March 1878, **Yohannes** reached Shewa. *Sahle Mariam* submitted to **Yohannes** and promised to pay annual tribute, to cease trade routes to European ruled territories and to be faithful to the emperor. In exchange, *Sahle Mariam* got to keep his land and was anointed by the Emperor as King of Shewa. *Sahle Mariam*, later changed his name to **Menelik**.

During Yohannes' rule of nearly two decades, Menelik remained faithful. Menelik would respond when Yohannes asked him to suppress a revolt and he respected territorial boundaries carved out for him by Yohannes.

Yohannes thus became the first Ethiopian emperor in 300 years to wield authority from Tigray south to **Guragē**⁷.

After annexing the Southern and Eastern regions, he found that the people of the southern regions were mostly Muslim and pagan and their lands were fertile. **Ormos form 35.8% of the population of modern Ethiopia.**



Yohannes then sought to oust the Egyptians from coastal Eritrea, where they remained after the **Mahdists** had largely taken over the Sudan.

In February 1885, Italy disembarked troops at Massawa (*a port city in the Northern Red Sea region of Eritrea, located at the northern end of the Gulf of Zula beside the Dahlak Archipelago*). Yohannes was unable to stop the Italians.

In order to weaken the emperor, Rome tried to buy King of **Shewa**, *Sahle Mariam's* cooperation with thousands of rifles. (*Please see the BACKGROUNDER on the KING of SHEWA on pages 36-41.*)

The Shewan king remained faithful to Yohannes but took the opportunity in January 1887 to incorporate **Harer** into his kingdom. Meanwhile, Yohannes repulsed Italian forays inland, and in 1889 he marched into the Sudan to avenge Mahdist attacks on **Gonder**. On **March 9, 1889**, a great battle ensued at **Gallabat** (*in Sudan*), with Mahidis under **Zeki Tumal**. The Mahidis were beaten. But at Metemma (*a village in Ethiopia, on the border with Sudan. Located in the Semien Gondar Zone*), a stray bullet hit **Yohannes** and the Ethiopians decided to retire. **Yohannes** died during the night, and his body fell into the hands of the enemy. (*Metemma Yohannes, is a town in NorthWestern Ethiopia.*).

1889-1913: Emperor Menilek II:

Sahle Mariam, the erstwhile King of Shewa, declared himself Emperor of Ethiopia on **March 25, 1889**, taking the name **Menilek II**.

WUCHALE TREATY: On May 2, 1889, **Menilek** signed a treaty of amity and commerce **granting Italy rule over Eritrea and northern Tigray**, in exchange for a sum of money and the provision of 30,000 muskets and 28 cannons.

WUCHALE, called as Uccialli by Italians, is a town in Northern Ethiopia, located at 40 Km North of Dessie (also called Dese) in the Debub Wollo Zone of the Amhara Region, at an elevation of 1711 m. It is the largest settlement in Ambassel woreda (District).

Learning that Rome had used mistranslation to *claim a protectorate over all of Ethiopia*, Menilek first sought a diplomatic solution. In September 1890, **Menilek II** repudiated the Italian claim, and in 1893 he officially denounced the entire treaty.

During 1891–93 he sent expeditions south and east to obtain gold, ivory, musk, coffee, hides, and slaves to trade for modern weapons and munitions. These were two years of good harvests, that filled Ethiopia's granaries.

Menilek II acquired modern rifles and Hotchkiss artillery guns together with ammunition and shells for his army. These were superior to the Italian rifles and artillery. He trained his army well in use of the modern arms.

DEFEAT of ITALY: On 7th December 1895, **Menilek** moved his army into Tigray. The **battle of Amba Alagi** ended with an Italian force of 2,150 men losing 1,000 men and 20 officers killed.

ITALIANS LOSE the FORT of MEKELE: **Ras Makonnen** followed up that victory by defeating **General Arimondi** and forcing the Italians to retreat to the **fort at Mekele**. On the morning of 7 January 1896, the Emperor joined **Ras Makonnen** in laying the siege of the fort. On 19 January 1896, the fort's commander, **Major Galliano**, whose men were dying of dehydration, raised the white flag of surrender. **Menelik's** magnanimity to the defenders of **Fort Mekele**, by not harming the soldiers and allowing them to go free, may have been an act of psychological warfare.

BATTLE of ADWA: Italy's Prime Minister **Francesco Crispi** sent another 15,000 men under the Italian commander, **General Oreste Baratieri**. On 28 February 1896 the Italians decided to seek battle with **Menelik**. On 1 March 1896, the two armies met at Adwa. **The Ethiopians came out victorious.**

Adwa is a town and separate woreda (*District*) in **Tigray Region**. **The Battle of Adwa is one where Africa was able to thwart European colonialism.**

After **Italy was defeated at the Battle of Adwa**, on March 1, 1896, by the **Treaty of Addis Ababa** (Oct. 26, 1896), the country south of the **Mareb** and **Muna** rivers was restored to Ethiopia, and Italy acknowledged the absolute independence of Ethiopia, but the Italians were allowed to retain Eritrea.

Three months after the battle of Adwa, **the first hospital** was established in **Addis Ababa**, with the **help of Russia**.

Menilek continued to expand Ethiopia's territory further south and west. In 1897, after defeating the **last king of Kaffa, Abba Jifar II**, **Menilek** took over the **Kingdom of Kaffa** (*from 1390 to 1897*), with its capital at Bonga. **Kaffa** was one of the most powerful and influential states in the region, known for its trade, culture, and military prowess.

Kaffa became a province on the southwestern side of Ethiopia until 1995, when it was divided into several zones and special woredas. It covered an area of about 39,000 Km² and had a population of about 1.5 Mn in 1994.

Kaffa was the original home of coffee, which grows wild in the mountain rain forests.

MODERNIZATION: **Emperor Menilek II** initiated modern education, creation of ministries and the construction of telephone and telegraph systems and of a railway, through a French company, from Djibouti, on the Gulf of Aden, to **Addis Ababa**, the Emperor's new **capital in the highlands of Shewa**. The Railway line spurred the exploitation of the country's produce by foreign merchants in cooperation with the ruling elites.

He abolished slave trading.

Menelik II founded the first modern bank in Ethiopia, the **Bank of Abyssinia**, introduced the first **modern postal system**, introduced electricity to **Addis Ababa**, as well as the motor car and modern plumbing.

Between 1896 and 1906, the Solomonic state, under Menelik's leadership, expanded to its present size, taking in the highlands, the key river systems, and a buffer of low-lying zones around the state's central core. Revenues from the periphery were used to modernize the new capital of **Addis Ababa**, to open schools and hospitals, and for other developmental purposes.

LEGACY of **Menilek II as Emperor of Ethiopia (1889-1913) and as King of Shewa (August 1865-1889)**: Today's Ethiopia has the people and area, left by Menelik II in 1913.

The **Adwa Victory Day** is celebrated in March annually, and it would also inspire Pan-African movements around the globe.

Despite being generally considered the **founder of modern Ethiopia**, for Oromos, Menelik II is devil incarnate and is beyond redemption, due to Menilek's cruel campaign for subduing Ormos.

A desire to share in the glamor Menelik enjoyed after his victory over Italy may explain an improbable Serb legend, which claims that Menelik was a

distant cousin of Prince Nikola of Montenegro. The Serb legend claims that it is due to this large admixture of Slav blood that the Abyssinians owe their fine stature and their high standard of civilization, as compared with the neighboring African tribes.

PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Menelik reportedly **spoke French, English and Italian fluently**. He read many books and was educated in finance, getting involved in various investments, including in American railroads and American securities and French and Belgian mining investments.

The Emperor's Family: Menelik II had no child through his wives. But he recognized three children: #1. **Woizero (Lady) Shoaregga Menelik**, born 1867, her mother was *Woizero Abechi*, #2. **Woizero (Lady, later Empress) Zawditu Menelik**, born 1876, her mother was **Woizero Abechi**, a noblewoman of Wollo, #3. **Abeto (Prince) Asfa Wossen Menelik**, born 1873. He died unwed and childless when he was about fifteen years of age.

Menelik was rumoured to be the father of **Ras Birru Wolde Gabriel** and **Dejazmach Kebede Tessema**. The latter, in turn, was later rumoured to be the natural grandfather of **Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam**, the communist leader of the Derg, who eventually deposed the monarchy and assumed power in Ethiopia from 1977 to 1991.

Woizero (Lady) Shoaregga Menelik married twice. Her first marriage was to **Dejazmatch (a military title meaning commander of the central body) Wodajo Gobena**, the son of **Ras Gobena Dachi**. (*Ras Gobena Dachi* was a military commander, who helped win Oroma territories.) **Shoaregga** and **Wodajo** had a son named **Abeto (Prince) Wossen Seged Wodajo**, but he was eliminated from the succession due to **dwarfism**. The marriage ended in divorce.

Woizero Shoaregga Menelik, 25, was later married to 42-years old **Ras Mikael of Wollo**. **Woizero Shoaregga Menelik's** second marriage produced two children: a daughter named **Woizero Zenebework Mikael** and a son named **Lij Iyasu** (February 4, 1895). *The title Lij means a child born in a Royal or noble family.*

Beginning in 1906, Emperor Menilek suffered a series of paralytic strokes, and power passed to his wife, **Empress Taitu Betul**, to **Ras Tesemma Nadaw**, who

became **Balemulu Enderase** (*Regent Plenipotentiary*) for **Lij Iyasu**, the grandson who was to succeed the Emperor. The stricken emperor finally died on the night of 12–13 December 1913. He was buried quickly without announcement or ceremony at the Se'el Bet Kidane Meheret Church, on the grounds of the Imperial Palace. In 1916 Menelik II was reburied in the specially built church at Ba'eta Le Mariam Monastery in Addis Ababa.



Menelik's mausoleum (Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menelik_II)

Ras Tesemma Nadaw was a military commander, whose house was a refuge for the needy and the helpless, and he was known for his generosity and kindness. Ras Tesemma was resentful of the “unjust Amhara rule” over Tigray and feared Showan Hegemony.

1913–16: Emperor Iyasu: Emperor Menelik II’s eldest daughter **Woizero** (*Lady Shoaregga*) was a Shewan Amhara. Her husband was a descendent from the Muslim rulers of Wollo and was of mostly Oromo descent. So, **Iyasu** was related with a large part of Ethiopia’s population.

Iyasu took over power in 1911 when regent **Ras Tasamma Nadew** passed away. **However his powers were circumscribed by the Council of Regency** – from which the empress was excluded. The Council had been formed in March 1910, under **Ras Tasamma Nadew**.

Upon the Emperor’s death at the night of **12-13 December 1913**, **Iyasu** took power in his own right. Thus began the short reign of **Iyasu**, which ended on **September 27, 1916**. Iyasu did not prove to be a strong leader and the country fell into a period of uncertainty. The next true leader, **Haile Selassie**, was not crowned until 1930.

Iyasu ordered that **Mikael of Wollo**, his father, be anointed as the King or **Negus of Wollo and Tigray**. (*Please see the BACKGROUND on King Mikael on pages 34-35.*)

It was suspected that **Iyasu** was a 'closet' convert to Islam, which was the religion of his paternal ancestors. Having a Muslim on the throne would have grave implications for Ethiopia in future generations. Therefore, the nobles, in the cabinet of **Iyasu**, **did not crown him**.

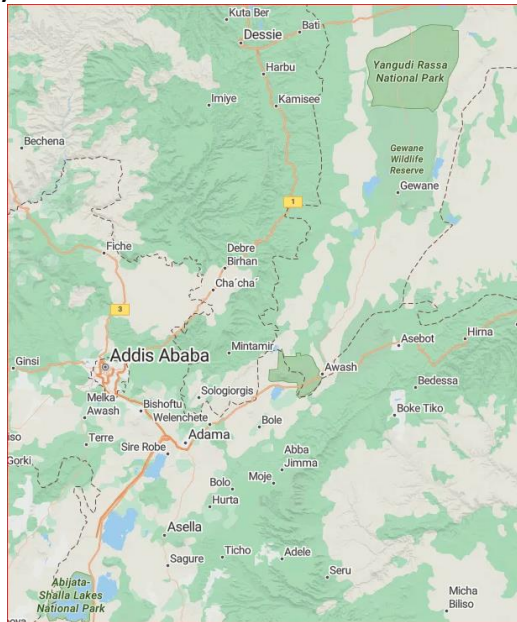
Seeking a society free of religious and ethnic divisions, **Iyasu** removed many of Menilek's governors and integrated Muslims into the administration, outraging Ethiopia's Christian ruling class. During World War I, **Iyasu** dallied with Islam and with the Central Powers **in the hope of regaining Eritrea and freeing himself still further from the dominance of the Shewan aristocrats**. After the Allied powers formally protested, the Shewan aristocrats met, accused **Iyasu** of apostasy and subversion, and **deposed him on September 27, 1916**.

When **Negus Mikael** heard that **Iyasu**, his son, had been removed as the Emperor, he set out from Wollo, on 7 October 1916, at the head of an army of 80,000 men to reinstate his son. **Iyasu** was supposed to join him with his army. On 27 October, 1916, **Negus Mikael** confronted the forces supporting **Empress Zewditu** in the **Battle of Segale**. **Iyasu** arrived at the battlefield too late to help. He was only able to see that his father, **Negus Mikael**, was defeated and captured by **Fitawrari** (military title for *Commander of the Vanguard*) **Habte Giyorgis**. **Mikael** was imprisoned in an island in **Lake Chabo** in **Gurageland**. After two and a half years, **Mikael** successfully petitioned to **Empress Zewditu** to be moved from the island. He was put under house arrest at **Holeta Genet** at a **former country home of the late Emperor Menelik II**. On September 8, 1922, **Mikael** died at **Holeta Genet**.

As the grandfather of the wife of the Crown Prince, Negus Mikael was given full mourning by the royal court. (Reference: <http://www.ethiopian treasures.co.uk/pages/iyasu.htm>)

Iyasu fled the battlefield and went into hiding. **Iyasu** spent considerable time in hiding at the home of **Ras Seyoum Mengesha** (*an army commander and the son of Ras Mangasha Yohannes. Ras Mangasha Yohannes was the son of Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia and Woizero Kafay, daughter of Ras Wale Betul Abba Tattan, Viceroy of Tigray*). When, in 1921, **Iyasu** was captured by Dejazmatch (*a military title for a commander of the central army*, later Gugsu was made a Ras)

Gugsa Araya and his forces. **Dejazmatch Gugsa**, knelt on the ground and kissed Iyasu's feet before arresting him. That was the kind of respect people had for the ex-Emperor in those days.



Ethiopia: Fiche, a town in NorthWest of Addis Ababa

Iyasu was then imprisoned in the town of **Fiche**, in the custody of **Ras Kassa Haile Darge**, a Shewan Amhara nobleman who ruled **Selale province** near the monastery of Debre Libanos in the early 20th century. The town of **Fiche** was a **part of the province of Selale**. Iyasu's death was announced on 25 November 1935.

Dejazmatch Gugsa was a member of the Ethiopian Imperial family from Tigray and an army commander. He was the son of Leul Ras Gugsa Araya Selassie and the great-grandson of Emperor Yohannes IV. After his father's death, he replaced him as Shum of Eastern Tigray Province with the title of Dejazmatch. During the Second Italo-Ethiopian War, Dejazmatch Gugsa became a fascist collaborator and defected to the Italians when they invaded Ethiopia in 1936.

Empress Zauditu (September 27, 1916- April 1, 1930):

Iyasu was replaced by Menilek's daughter, **Zauditu** on **September 27, 1916** (*aged 40 at that time*). Since it was considered unseemly for a woman to serve in her own right, Ras **Tafari Makonnen**, the son of **Ras Makonnen Wolde Mikael Wolde Melekot** (*a Royal from Shewa and the Governor of Harar*) and a cousin of Emperor **Menilek II**, served as **Zauditu's** Regent Plenipotentiary and **heir apparent**.

The nobles did not want **Zewditu's** husband and his family to exercise power and eventually occupy the throne. Therefore, **Zewditu's** cousin Ras **Tafari Makonnen** was named both as **Zauditu's Regent Plenipotentiary** and **heir apparent**.

Empress Zewditu had **ceremonial duties** to perform and wielded **powers of arbitration and moral influence**, but ruling power was vested in the hands of regent **Ras Tafari Makonnen**, who succeeded her as **Emperor Haile Selassie** in 1930.



Empress Zauditu was the first woman to hold that position in Ethiopia since the **Queen of Sheba**.

She was married four times. She was only ten years old when Menelik got her married to **Ras Araya Selassie Yohannes**, the fifteen-year-old son of Emperor Yohannes IV, in 1886. In May 1888, Ras Araya Selassie died and Zewditu became a widow at age twelve. She was married two more times for brief periods to **Gwangul Zegeye** and **Wube Atnaf Seged** before marrying **Gugsa Welle** in 1900 CE. (*Gugsa Welle was the nephew of Empress Taytu Betul, Menelik's third wife.*)

Zewditu had some children, but none of them survived to adulthood.

The prince developed the rudiments of a **modern bureaucracy** by recruiting the newly educated for government service. He also engineered **Ethiopia's entry into the League of Nations** in 1923, reasoning that collective security would protect his backward country from aggression. To brighten Ethiopia's external image, he hired **foreign advisers for key departments** and set about **abolishing slavery**—a process possibly helped by the stirrings in Ethiopia of a market economy.

By **1928**, when **Zauditu named Tafari** as a **King**, the economy was booming, thanks mainly to the **export of coffee**. In the countryside, local officers helped build roads

and improve communications, facilitating the penetration of traders and entrepreneurs. Ethiopians remained in charge of the economy, since **Tafari** forced foreigners to take **local partners** and maintained **tight control over concessions**.

Gugsa Wale expected to become Emperor, but he was not favored by the nobles.

To rid her of the **Crown Prince and heir apparent, Negus Tafari Makonnen, in 1930, Gugsa Wale assembled an army of 35,000**. By January 1930, **Mulugeta Yeggazu**, the newly appointed **Defense Minister**, found that most of the commanders had deserted him and he had only 2,000 men as he gathered them in **Dessie**.

BATTLE of ANCHEM: On 31 March, 1930, Gugsa Wale and his army met the Army of the Center (*Mahel Sefari*) at **Debre Zebit** on the plains of **Anchem**. The use of **aerial warfare, psychological warfare, and superior armaments** by the **Mahel Sefari** meant that the Battle of Anchem was almost over before it was fought. Shortly after mid-day, Gugsa Wale was surrounded and isolated. Mounted on a white charger, **Gugsa Wale was shot several times and killed**. **Fitawrari** (*Military title of Commander of the Vanguard*) **Shumye**, the second-in-command of the Army of **Begemder**, fought on until he was captured later in the afternoon. What little was left of the army then completely disintegrated.

Within three days of the death of **Ras Gugsa Wale, Empress Zewditu** was dead of natural causes.

Emperor Haile Selassie (April 1, 1930- May 2, 1936 and May 5, 1941- September 12, 1974):

On April 1, 1930, **Zauditu** died, and Tafari declared himself Emperor. **Negus Tafari Makonnen** was crowned Emperor (*Negusä Nägäst*) **Haile Selassie I** (*"Power of the Trinity"*; his baptismal name) on **November 2, 1930**.

July 1931: The Emperor promulgated a new constitution. It provided for an **indirectly elected bicameral parliament**, among other modern institutions.

By 1932 **revenues were pouring into Addis Ababa** from taxes applied to **25,000 tons of coffee exported** each year. During 1931–34 Haile Selassie instituted projects for roads, schools, hospitals, communications, administration, and public services. The combined effect of these projects was to increase the country's exposure to the world economy.



Haile Selassie, the Atse (Emperor) or Negusä Nägäst, (King of Kings) of Ethiopia

Reign: April 1, 1930- May 2, 1936 and May 5, 1941- September 12, 1974

(Governors of Gojjam, seaward provinces and Shewa, received the honorific title of Negus (King).)

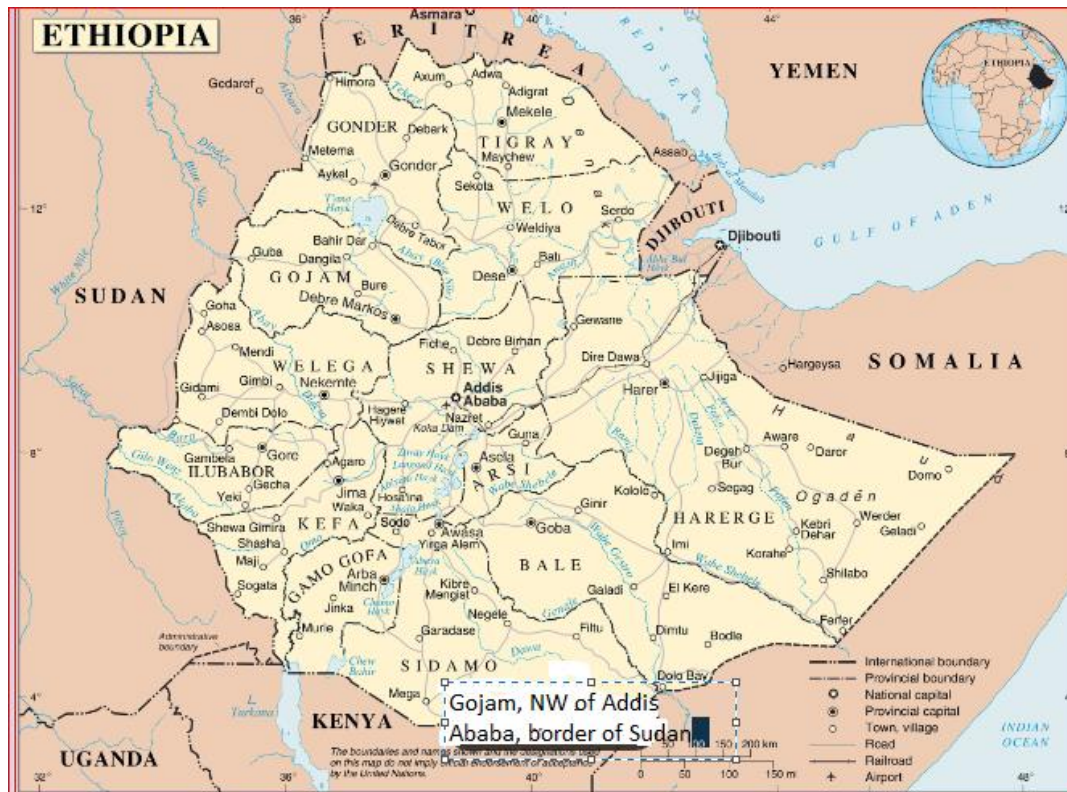
Conflict with Italy: Haile Selassie's success persuaded Italy's ruler **Benito Mussolini** to undertake *a preemptive strike before Ethiopia grew too strong* to oppose Italian ambitions in the Horn of Africa. After an Ethiopian patrol clashed with an Italian garrison at the **Welwel oasis in the Ogaden** in **November–December 1934**, Rome began seriously preparing for war. **Haile Selassie** continued to trust in the collective security promised by the League of Nations. Only on October 2, 1935, upon learning that Italian forces had crossed the frontier, did he order mobilization. During the subsequent seven-month Italo-Ethiopian War, the Italian command used air power and poison gas to separate, flank, and **destroy Haile Selassie's poorly equipped armies**.

Haile Selassie went into **exile on May 2, 1936**.

ITALIAN COLONY: For five years (1936–41), Ethiopia was joined to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland to form **Italian East Africa**. During this period Italy carried out a program of **public works**, concentrating especially on **highways** and on **agricultural and industrial development**. Resistance to the occupation continued, however. The Italians dominated the cities, towns, and major caravan routes, while Ethiopian patriots harried the occupiers and sometimes tested the larger garrison towns.

When Italy joined the European war in June 1940, the **United Kingdom** recognized **Haile Selassie as a full ally**. **Haile Selassie** went to Khartoum, Sudan, to help train a British-led Ethiopian army. This joint force entered **Gojam** on **January 20, 1941**, and encountered an enemy, whose forces were quick to surrender.

Return to Power: The SECOND TERM (May 5, 1941- September 12, 1974): On **May 5, 1941**, the Emperor triumphantly returned to **Addis Ababa**. Without wasting any time, he organized the Ethiopian government.



Gojam: a historical provincial kingdom in NorthWestern Ethiopia, with its capital city at **Debre Marqos**, located in the **South Wello zone** of the **Amhara region**

In February 1945 at a meeting with **U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt**, **Haile Selassie** submitted memoranda stressing the imperative for recovering Eritrea and thereby gaining free access to the sea. In 1948 and again in 1949, two commissions established by the wartime Allied Powers and by the United Nations (UN) reported that Eritrea lacked national consciousness and an economy that could sustain independence. Washington, wishing to secure a communications base in **Asmara** (Asmera) and naval facilities in **Massawa**—and also to counter possible subversion in the region—supported **Eritrea’s federation with Ethiopia**. The union took place in **September 1952**.

In **November 1955** the emperor promulgated a **revised constitution**, which permitted the **Parliament** to **authorize finances and taxes**, to **question ministers**, and to **disapprove imperial decrees**. The constitution also introduced an **elected**

lower house of parliament, a theoretically **independent judiciary** and a catalog of **human rights**. At the same time, the emperor **retained his power of decree and his authority to appoint the government**.

Internal conflicts and the fall of the monarchy: In **December 1960**, while the emperor was abroad, members of the security and military forces attempted a **coup d'état**. The coup rapidly unraveled before the prestige of **Haile Selassie**.

This was used to justify the coup. In **February 1961**, the Emperor named a new government, that gradually lost its credibility, as it became embroiled in **intractable conflicts in Eritrea and with Somalia**.

Somalia's independence in 1960 stimulated Somali nationalists in Ethiopia's **Ogaden** to rebel in **February 1963**. When Somalia joined the fighting, the Ethiopian army and air force smashed its enemy.

Somalia's consequent **military alliance with the Soviet Union** upset the regional balance of power, **driving up Ethiopia's arms expenditures** and necessitating more U.S. assistance.

Meanwhile, an insurrection in Eritrea, which had begun in 1960 mainly among Muslim pastoralists in the western lowlands, came to attract highland Christians disaffected by **the government's dissolution of the federation in 1962** and the **imposition of Amharic in the schools**.

At the same time, **an increasingly radical student movement** in Addis Ababa started identifying **Haile Selassie** as an agent of U.S. imperialism and the landowning oligarchs as the enemy of the people. Under the motto "**Land to the tiller**," the students sought to **limit property size and rights**. Some students espoused **the Leninist notion that nationalities had the right to secede** and, in so doing, gave strength and **ideological justification to the Eritrean rebellion**.

By the **early 1970s** one-third of Ethiopia's 45,000 soldiers were in Eritrea, and others were putting down rebellions in **Balē** (*SE of Addis Ababa*, in the map above), **Sīdamo** (*South*), and **Gojam** (*NE of Addis Ababa and bordering Sudan*).

In **January 1974**, there began a series of **mutinies led by junior officers and senior noncommissioned officers**. The situation was greatly worsened by **drought and famine in the north**. In **June 1974**, representatives of the mutineers constituted

themselves as the **Coordinating Committee (Derg) of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army**. **Maj. Mengistu Haile Mariam**, of Harer's 3rd Division, was elected **Chairman** of the **Derg**.

According to rumours, **Emperor Menelik II** was the father of **Dejazmach Kebede Tessema**. The latter, in turn, was the natural grandfather of **Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam**, the communist **Chairman** of the **Derg**, who eventually deposed the monarchy and assumed **power in Ethiopia from 1977 to 1991**.

The Derg dismantled the monarchy's institutions and arrested **Haile Selassie's cronies, confidantes, and advisers**. It then campaigned against the old emperor, who was **deposed on September 12, 1974**.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: This ended the monarchy, **a historical institution starting with King Solomon and Queen Sheba**, 2000 years back. **It was a World Heritage institution**, if there can be any such institution on the earth, believes www.DiGiNews360.com. The monarchy of Ethiopia had modernized the nation and had not permitted the exploitation of natural resources by the western or Chinese companies, as most of the African and South American rulers have been doing. The **November 1955** constitution, promulgated by the last Emperor, gave all the powers, that today's Parliaments have including the authority to **disapprove imperial decrees**.

The Derg in Ethiopia or the leftist students, who accepted Marxism as their religion, as **uncritically** as the followers of the revealed religions accept their sacred Books, **destroyed something, in which all Ethiopians, including the future generations, should have taken pride**.

THREE MONTHS of INSTABILITY (Sept 12, 1974- December 20, 1974):
The **Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC)**: PMAC was established by the Derg and assumed the functions of government, with Lieut. **Gen. Aman Andom as chairman** and **head of state** and **Mengistu as the first vice-chairman**.

Tensions within the Derg soon fueled a power struggle and led to **Bloody Saturday** (*November 23, 1974*), when as many as **60 leaders, including Andom, were executed**. Andom was replaced by **Brig. Gen. Teferi Banti**, as Head of State of Ethiopia from 1974 to 1977 in his role as Second Chairman of the Derg, the ruling military junta. The new government issued a **Declaration of Socialism** on **December 20, 1974**.

Socialist Ethiopia (December 20, 1974–May 28, 1991):

Though a Socialist Ethiopia was declared, internal contradictions between the Marxist theory and the military regime remained. **The Derg**, headed by Army Officers, arose from the student movement. One of them, the **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party** (EPRP), believed so strongly in civilian rule that it undertook **urban guerrilla war against the military rulers**, and anarchy ensued in the following years.

In **February 1977**, Mengistu (now a **lieutenant colonel**) survived a battle between his supporters and those of rivals on the PMAC. **Mengistu** seized complete power as **Chairman** and **Head of State**. A series of **EPRP** attacks against Derg members and their supporters, known as the **White Terror**, was countered by **Mengistu's Red Terror**, a bloody campaign that crushed armed opponents among the EPRP and other groups, as well as members of the civilian populace. As a result of the campaign, which continued into 1978, **thousands of Ethiopia's best-educated and idealistic young people were killed or exiled**; in all, as many as **100,000 people were killed**, and thousands more were tortured or imprisoned.

Meanwhile, in May and June 1977, Somalia's army **advanced into the Ogaden**. **The U.S.S.R. labeled Somalia the aggressor and diverted arms shipments to Ethiopia**, where Soviet and allied troops trained and armed a **People's Militia**, provided fighting men, and **reequipped the army**. Faced with renewed Ethiopian military vigor, **Somalia withdrew in early 1978**.

Mengistu quickly shifted troops to Eritrea, where by year's end, **the Eritrean nationalists were pushed back** into mountainous terrain around Nak'fa.

LAND REFORM and FAMINE: Mengistu wanted that Ethiopia be led by a disciplined and loyal party that would control all organs of authority. To this end a **Land-Reform Proclamation** of 1975 transferred ownership of all land to the State and

provided allotments of no more than 25 acres (10 hectares) to individual peasants who farmed the land themselves.

Extensive **nationalization of industry, banking, insurance, large-scale trade, and urban land and extra dwellings** completed the reforms and wiped out the economic base of the old ruling class. To implement the reforms, to adjudicate disputes, and to administer local affairs, **Peasants' Associations** were organized in the countryside and **Precinct Organizations** (*Kebele*) in the towns. In **1984** the **Workers' Party of Ethiopia** was formed, with **Mengistu as Secretary-General**. In 1987 a new Parliament was inaugurated. The country was named as the **People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, with **Mengistu as President**.

SMALL LAND HOLDINGS: Distribution of land to the tiller rendered the legal limit of 25 acres irrelevant. Holdings varied according to the country's different regions. On average, a land holding was of the order of 3.7 acres (1.5 hectares). The small holdings, did not incentivize farmers to invest in fertilizers etc. and the surplus for feeding the cities vanished.

In order to feed Ethiopia's cities and the army, the government tried to force the peasants' associations to deliver grain at below-market prices, a measure that alienated the peasants and did nothing to stimulate production.

DROUGHT from 1980-84: Meanwhile, drought intensified yearly from 1980, building to a climax in 1984, when the small rains were scanty and the main rains failed altogether. Famine ensued and ideological suspicions precluded the West from responding to alarms that the Ethiopian government put forward in the spring of 1984 following the small rains.

In 1984, **Workers' Party of Ethiopia** was celebrating the 10th anniversary of Socialist Ethiopia. **Mengistu** did not want to make famine as the issue, that would dominate public discussions. So, the party tried to avoid talking about it.

With one-sixth of Ethiopia's people at risk of starvation, **Western countries made available enough surplus grain to end the crisis by mid-1985**.

TWO FAILED PROGRAMS: The **Workers' Party** had decided to resettle the population by moving people from the **drought-prone and crowded north to the west and south**, where the Party thought that surplus lands were available. The Mengistu regime handled the shift callously and did not have the necessary

resources to provide proper housing, tools, medical treatment, or food for the **600,000 farming families it moved**.

Another program of the **Workers' Party** was to bring together scattered population in the farms to bigger villages, where all the modern services could be provided. While people were forced to settle in bigger villages, the government could not provide any services since the **wars in the North were draining away all the resources of the government**. As late as 1990 most villages lacked the promised amenities.

FAILURE in WARS in ERITERIA and TIGRAY: To face increasing challenges, in 1985–86, **Mengistu** stepped up recruitment and asked the U.S.S.R. for more arms. The Soviets refused to ship more arms.

On **February 1, 1987**, a new Soviet-style civilian constitution was submitted to a **popular referendum**. It was officially endorsed by 81% of voters, and in accordance with this new constitution, the country was renamed the **People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia** (PDRE) on **September 10, 1987**, and **Mengistu** became President.

In 1987, the **Eritrean People's Liberation Front** (EPLF) broke through the **Ethiopian lines before Nak'fa** and waged increasingly successful war with **weapons captured from demoralized government troops**.

In early 1988 the EPLF began to coordinate its attacks with the **Tigray People's Liberation Front** (TPLF), which was fighting for the **autonomy of Tigray** and for the **reconstitution of Ethiopia on the basis of ethnically autonomous regions**.

In **February 1989**, after a series of defeats, the **government evacuated Tigray**. The TPLF then organized the **Amhara Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement**. Together, these two groups formed the **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front** (EPRDF), and their forces easily advanced into **Gonder and Wollo** (*also known as **Bete Amhara***) **provinces**.

In 1990, EPLF occupied **Massawa** port; this broke the Ethiopian stranglehold on supplies entering the country.

Shortly thereafter, when the TPLF **cut the Addis Ababa–Gonder road and put Gojam at risk**, **Mengistu** announced the end of many of the regime’s most unpopular socialist measures.

REGIME is THROWN OUT from VILLAGES: The peasants immediately **abandoned their new villages** for their old homesteads, **dismantled cooperatives**, and **redistributed land** and capital goods. They ejected or ignored party and government functionaries, in several cases **killing recalcitrant administrators**. The regime was thus weakened in the countryside, particularly in southern Ethiopia, where the long-dormant **Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)** had become active.

By **May 1991**, EPRDF forces took over **Tigray, Wollo, Gonder, Gojam**, and about **half of Shewa**. The army did not have sufficient morale, manpower, weapons, munitions, and leadership to stop the rebels’ **advance on Addis Ababa**.

Mengistu fled to Zimbabwe. The experiment of Socialist Ethiopia failed and, on **May 28, 1991, the EPRDF took power**.

TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT (May 28, 1991–95):

EPRDF, a coalition of left-wing ethnic rebel groups, entered the capital Addis Ababa on May 28, 1991, and **dissolved the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE)**. The Transitional Government was led by a Tigrayan, the EPRDF chairman **Meles Zenawi**. However, the ethnic separatist ideas continue to divide the country’s elites and political forces.



Meles Zenawi Asres, President, Government of Ethiopia (May 28, 1991–95)

Meles Zenawi Asres was an Ethiopian soldier and politician who served as **President of Ethiopia from 1991 to 1995** and then **Prime Minister of**

Ethiopia from 1995 until his death in 2012. He was a member of the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** and the **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)**. Meles was a supporter of the referendum, among the Eritrean people. The referendum resulted in the **separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia**. Meles had said that the referendum would democratize Ethiopia through recognition of the country's ethnic heterogeneity.

A national charter that recognized an ethnic division of political power and the right of nationalities to secede from Ethiopia was accepted by EPRDF. This paved the way for Eritrea's legal independence on May 24, 1993.

In 1992, EPRDF won the first multiparty elections in Ethiopia with 484 of the 547 seats in the **House of People's Representatives**, and **Meles Zenawi** became the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The new government implemented a series of economic reforms, including the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the liberalization of the economy.

The new regime began to lay the foundations for Ethiopia's first federal administrative structure and the component units consisting of ostensibly ethnically homogeneous regions. There was little lessening of control from the centre, however, as the ruling parties of the regional governments were intimately affiliated politically and ideologically with the EPRDF. Many of the country's elite feared that the regime was weakening the country's unity. **The Amhara, identified by the EPRDF as colonizers and unaccustomed to thinking of themselves as but one of the country's many different ethnic groups, were particularly affronted by the apparent fragmentation of the country.** The government fought back by denouncing Amhara leaders as antidemocratic chauvinists and by muzzling the press through the application of a new law, which, ironically, primarily served to end decades of systematic censorship under previous regimes but also established media regulations and penalties. In the provinces the government did not bother to maintain even the guise of freedom: there the suppression of anti-EPRDF forces, especially the OLF, was so blatant as to be noticed by the members of an international team sent to observe hastily called regional elections in June 1992. The OLF left the government over the conduct of these elections and has been in increasingly armed opposition ever since.

Throughout 1992–93 the transitional government worked with donor governments and the World Bank to forge a structural-adjustment program. However, the

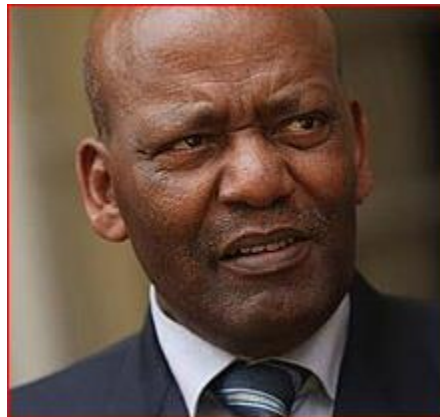
government refused to denationalize land, and foreign investment was slow to return. The economy grew modestly but experienced no structural transformations. With yet another drought in 1994 and the stifling overregulation of business, millions of Ethiopians, largely in the north and east, were facing a famine. By failing to find measures to stimulate agricultural production, Ethiopia remained unable to finance its own development and to create the surplus needed for its own population. Meanwhile, population growth reduced the size of the average Ethiopian farm to under 2.5 acres (1 hectare).

FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of ETHIOPIA: In 1994, a **new constitution**, which created a bicameral parliament and a federal system of government, was approved.

In **May 1995**, EPRDF won the first election, under the new constitution. Meles Zenawi, became the Prime Minister of the **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, and **Negasso Gidada** was elected its President.

Negasso Gidada Solon (1943-2019) was the son of Gidada Solon, one of the first local ministers of a Protestant church in the Dembidolo area in western Ethiopia. He held a doctorate in social history from the Goethe University Frankfurt and was a part-time lecturer of history at Addis Ababa University. Negasso was married to **Regina Abelt**, a German nurse and midwife.

Negasso was a member of the **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)** before becoming independent. In Europe, as a student, he was an active member of the **Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)**.



Negasso Gidada, President of Ethiopia (22 August 1995 – 8 October 2001)

On December 12, 2000, the Ethiopian government signed a peace agreement with EPLF.

Ethiopia's 3rd multiparty election on 15 May 2005 was highly disputed, with many opposition groups claiming fraud. The opposition parties gained more than 200 parliamentary seats. While most of the opposition representatives joined the parliament, some leaders of the **Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD)** party, with **Hailu Shawul** as its Leader, refused to take up their parliamentary seats. They were accused of inciting the post-election violence and were imprisoned. Amnesty International considered them "prisoners of conscience" and they were subsequently released. CUD dissolved in 2007.

Meles died on **20 August 2012** in Brussels, where he was being treated for an unspecified illness. Deputy Prime Minister **Hailemariam Desalegn** was appointed as the new Prime Minister until the 2015 elections.

At the **May 24, 2015** elections, EPRDF won 500 of the 547 seats in the **House of Peoples' Representatives**, while its allies won the remaining seats. The results of the election were announced one month after the election took place. 93.2% of Ethiopia's 36.8 million registered voters participated in the parliamentary elections. However, only 5.1% of the valid votes (less than 1.7 million) went to opposition parties.

Protests broke out across the country on 5 August 2016, and hundreds of protesters were subsequently shot and killed by police. The protesters demanded an end to human rights abuses, the release of political prisoners, a fairer redistribution of the wealth generated by over a decade of economic growth, and a return of Wolqayt District to the Amhara Region. Following these protests, Ethiopia declared a **state of emergency on 6 October 2016**, which was lifted in August 2017.

The **Wolqayt District** is a disputed area between the Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia. It was part of the Amhara region prior to 1991 but was annexed into the Tigray region by TPLF, after the fall of the communist Derg regime. The Amhara region has been agitating for the return of the district to their region for over 25 years.

RESIGNATION of HAILEMARIAM: On 15 February 2018, the government of Ethiopia declared another nationwide state of emergency following the resignation of **Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe**.

The day prior, he announced on state television that his resignation is "vital in the bid to carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy,"

linked to the 2014–2016 unrest in Oromia Region, in which hundreds were killed by government crackdown in Oromia and Amhara Region in between 2015 and 2016.

Hailemariam’s resignation was marked by mass protests **among the youth of Oromia and Amhara people**, who contested the Tigrayan-dominated government demanding political and economic correctness and state corruption abolished.

This was the first time a politician had resigned from office in modern Ethiopian history. **Hailemariam’s** resignation letter was submitted and accepted by the 180-member council of the EPRDF ruling party EPRDF and the **Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM)**. On March 27, 2018, **Abiy Ahmed**, was elected as the Chairman of EPRDF. (***Abiy Ahmed** had been associated with the **Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO)**.*)

Hailemariam’s resignation came amid widespread protests against the government. Other reasons for **Hailemariam’s** resignation, beyond the protests, have been suggested by analysts, including **his belonging to a small minority group of Wolayta** and a lack of support by the ruling party. Hailemariam's resignation was also linked to high-profile political prisoners such as **Bekele Gerba, Eskinder Nega** and **Woubshet Taye**.

RELEASED after the ANNOUNCEMENT of **Hailemariam’s** RESIGNATION: **Bekele Gerba** is the former Deputy President of the **Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC)**. He was arrested in December 2015 on charges of terrorism and incitement to violence, along with other OFC leaders. He was released from prison on **February 13, 2018**, after spending more than two years in jail.



Eskinder Nega is an Ethiopian journalist, blogger, and politician who has been jailed at least ten times by the Ethiopian government on convictions for

treason and terrorism. He was released from prison on **February 14, 2018**, after spending more than six years in jail.

Woubshet Taye is an Ethiopian journalist who was arrested in 2011 and sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges of terrorism. He was released from prison on **February 14, 2018**, after spending more than six years in jail.

Hailemariam continued to lead a caretaker government until his successor, **Abiy Ahmed**, was elected by Parliament on **April 2, 2018**.



Abi Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia (from April 2, 2018)

1st President of Prosperity Party (from December 1, 2019)

3rd Chairman of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (from 27 March 2018- 1 Dec 2019)

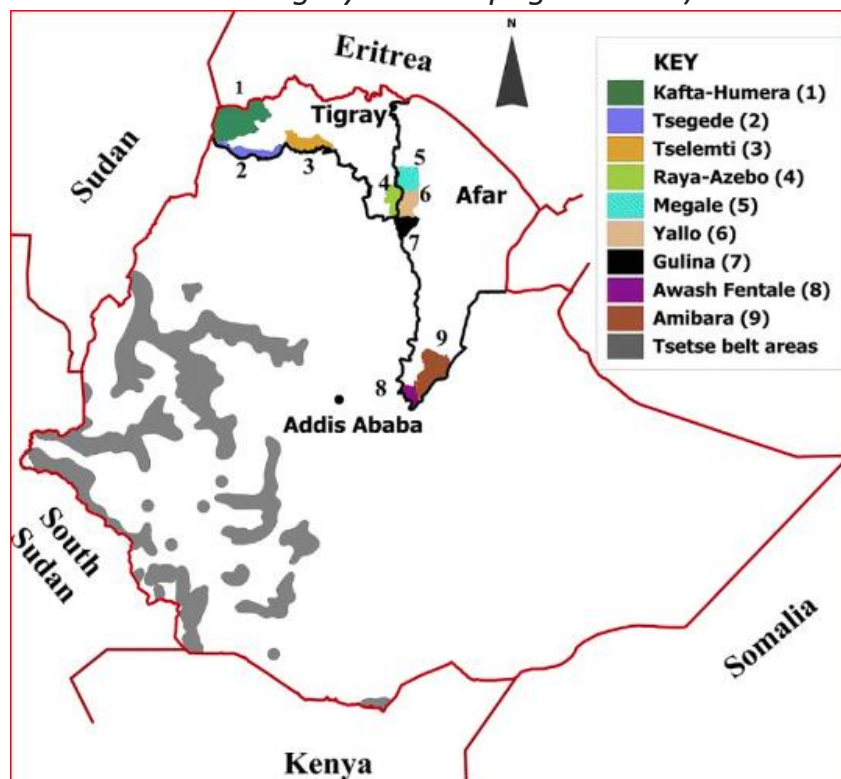
One of the most notable achievements of **Abiy Ahmed's** Prime Ministership was the peace agreement he brokered with Eritrea in 2018. The two countries had been in a **state of war since 1998**, and the peace agreement ended the conflict and restored diplomatic relations between the two nations. For his efforts, Abiy Ahmed was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2019**.

He reformed the country's politics by releasing political prisoners, lifting bans on opposition groups, allowing exiled opposition leaders to return to Ethiopia and relaxing media censorship.

He has also appointed women to key positions in his government, including the country's first female President, **Sahle-Work Zewde**. She was elected as president **unanimously by members of the Federal Parliamentary Assembly on 25 October 2018**.



In 2020, when the local government in Tigray conducted the local elections, in spite of the order of the Federal Government to postpone the elections due to Covid - 19, a war between the Federal Government and **Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)** started. On 2 November 2022 in Pretoria, Ethiopia’s Federal Government and TPLF signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) under an African Union (AU)-led process. The agreement concluded a gruelling two-year war. *(Please see a BACKGROUNDER on the Tigray War on pages 41-42.)*



The CoHA cemented the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state, establishing the **Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)** as the sole military force

entrusted to safeguard the country's security. The parties agreed to restore constitutional order, disengage their forces, embark on a transitional justice process, and cease all forms of hostile rhetoric, among other things.

The CoHA Agreement's part on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) for the 400,000 TPLF fighters has got delayed, though Tigrayan forces have surrendered most of their heavy and medium weapons.

The Pretoria agreement's ambiguity on disputed territories currently under Amhara control, has complicated matters. The contest for control over the disputed areas of **Wolqayt-Tsegede, Telemt and Raya** (2, 3 and 4 in the map above) between the Amhara and Tigray regions has remained an active issue between the two regions.

Abiy Ahmed's Prime Ministership has also been marked by significant challenges:

- In 2019, he faced a failed coup attempt by a rogue general in the Amhara region. The coup attempt was followed by a wave of ethnic violence that left hundreds dead and displaced thousands. Abiy Ahmed has also faced criticism for his handling of the conflict in the Tigray region, which has been ongoing since November 2020. The conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than two million people.
- Although he hoped to bring Ethiopia in unity and pan-Ethiopian nationalism, ethnic unrest resurged; both Oromo and Tigray political parties rejected the invitation and refused to merge with his **Prosperity Party**.

Reference: https://pantheon.world/profile/person/Meles_Zenawi/

Notes: 1. **Soqota:** Sekota Zuria (*meaning "Greater Sekota Area"*) is one of the woredas (*meaning "District"*) in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The Tigray region is in its East.

The town of **Soqota** is surrounded by Sekota. Population: 0.13 Mn, Area: 1,722 Km².

The **predominantly hilly terrain** of the woredas of 'Sekota Zuria' and 'Soqoto' serves to isolate the inhabitants of Sekotas. Mount Biala (3,810 meters) is the high point of this terrain.

The steep slopes of Soqoto are highly degraded, limiting crops yields. Ethiopia has yet to use technology to regenerate the slopes so that the farmers' hard work can obtain for them high yields.

Notes: 2. Gurage: The people of the ethnolinguistic group, called Gurage, live in the **fertile and semi-mountainous region**, 240 Km South and West of Addis Ababa, bounded by the Awash River on the North, the Gilgel Gibe River (a tributary of the Omo River) on the SouthWest, and Lake Ziway on the East. The **Gurage** are either Muslim or Christian—members largely of the **Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church**.

Settled agriculturalists, the **Gurage** cultivate their staple crops, the Ethiopian false and banana (*Ensete ventricosum*), prized for its roots.

The **Gurage** had no centralized institutional political power or leadership. Local power is vested in lineages; these descent groups display corporate rights, obligations, and influence.

In contrast, the religious or ritual system is highly centralized; ritual officials sanction the authority of the political elders. One of the more interesting aspects of the religious practices of the Gurage is the integral place in the system assigned to the **Fuga**, the local representatives of what are believed to be remnants of earlier inhabitants of the Horn of Africa. This **lower-caste group of artisans and hunters** are also ritual specialists **whose powers are both feared and deemed essential** in all major **Gurage** religious functions. **The Fuga share a ritual language with Gurage women, which Gurage men may not learn lest they discern the mysteries of the female initiation ceremonies.**

Notes: 3. The Oromo are native to the Oromia region of Ethiopia and parts of Northern Kenya. They are one of the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Recent estimates have **the Oromo comprising 35.8% of the estimated 116 Mn Ethiopian population, placing Oromos at a population of 41 Mn.**

Although most modern Oromos are either Muslims or Christians, about 3% practice *Waaqeffanna*, the native ancient Cushitic monotheistic religion of Oromos.

Haile Selassie's mother was paternally of **Oromo descent** and maternally of **Gurage heritage**, while his father was maternally of **Amhara descent** but his father's paternal lineage remains disputed.

----BACKGROUND on **King Mikael of Wollo** ----

Negus (King) Mikael of Wollo (born Mohammed Ali, 1850 – 8 September 1918; changed name to Mikael when he converted in 1875), was an army commander. His Wollo army was one of the most powerful in Northern Ethiopia, and the Wollo cavalry was renowned throughout the empire.

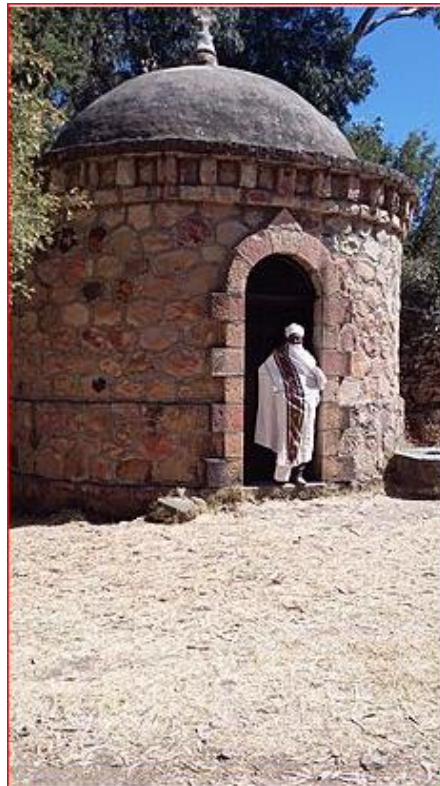


Mikael founded **Dessie**, Wollo's new capital. He built many churches in the new city. He was the father of the "uncrowned" Emperor Iyasu, and the grandfather of Empress Menen, wife of Emperor Haile Selassie. Ras Mikael had a strong relationship with both Yohannes IV (who became his godfather) and Menelik II (who became his father-in-law, when his eldest daughter became the third wife of Mikael).

When **Negus Mikael** heard that Iyasu, his son, had been removed as the Emperor, he set out from Wollo, on 7 October 1916, at the head of an army of 80,000 men to reinstate his son. **Iyasu** was supposed to join him with his army. On 27 October, 1916, **Negus Mikael** confronted the forces supporting **Empress Zewditu** in the **Battle of Segale**. **Iyasu** arrived at the battlefield too late to help. He was only able to see that his father, **Negus Mikael**, was defeated and captured by **Fitawrari** (military title for *Commander of the Vanguard*) **Habte Giyorgis**. **Mikael** was imprisoned in an island in **Lake Chabo** in **Gurageland**. After two and a half years, **Mikael** successfully petitioned to **Empress Zewditu** to be moved from the island. He was put under house arrest at **Holeta Genet** at a **former country home of the late Emperor Menelik II**. On September 8, 1922, **Mikael** died at **Holeta Genet**.

As the grandfather of the wife of the Crown Prince, Negus Mikael was given full mourning by the royal court. (Reference: <http://www.ethiopian treasures.co.uk/pages/iyasu.htm>)

Negus Mikael, was buried in a mausoleum, in the **Tenta St. Mikael's church's** compound about 20 metres from the church's building. The inscription on the mausoleum shows that his family members - his sons **Gebrehiwot Mikael and Ali Mikael**, together with Negus Mikael's sister, **Yetemegn Mere'ed** are also buried there.



Negus Mikael's mausoleum

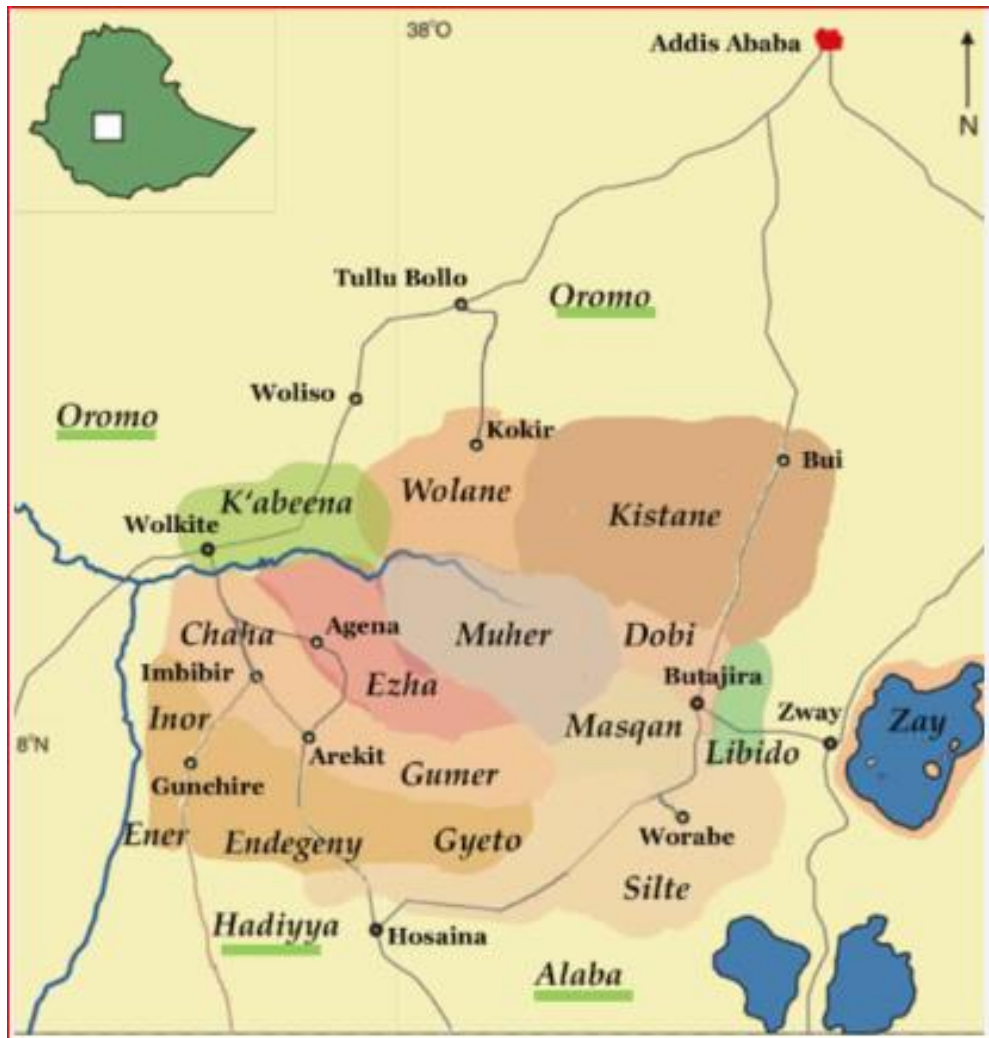
Wollo, earlier known as **Bete Amhara**, was the center of the Solomonic Dynasty established by Emperor **Yekuno Amlak** around **Lake Hayq** in **1270**.

The original Wollo/Bete Amhara province was mainly only the area of modern-day South Wollo.

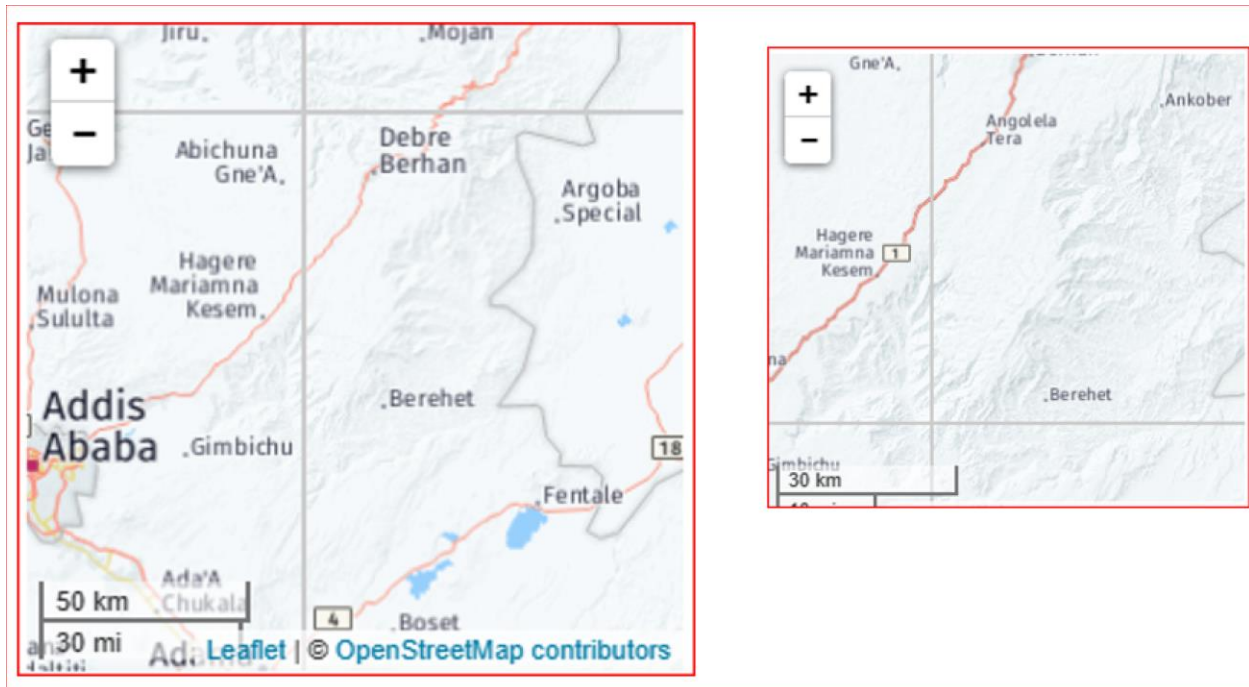
In the 1940s, under Emperor Haile Selassie, administration changes were made and provinces such as Lasta, Angot (*now known as Raya*), and parts of Afar lands were incorporated into Wollo. Today, Wollo is a zone in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The administrative center is **Dessie**. The zone is bordered on the south by North Shewa and the Oromia Region, on the west by East Gojjam, on the northwest by South Gondar, on the north by North Wollo, on the northeast by Afar Region, and on the east by the Somali Region.

----BACKGROUND on Menelik, the King of Shewa----

Shewa lies mostly on high plateau country, rising to 4,000 m in **Mount Ābuyē Mēda**. Its modern capital and main commercial centre is **Addis Ababa**. Shewa is bounded on the NorthWest by the **Blue Nile River** and on the SouthWest by the **Omo River**; its Eastern and SouthEastern boundaries are in the **Great Rift Valley** along the **Awash River**.



About Menelik: Menelik was the son of the **Shewan Amhara king, Negus (King, a title usually bestowed on regional rulers) Haile Melekot**. **Haile Melekot**, at the age of 18, before inheriting the throne, impregnated *Ejigayehu Lemma Adyamo*, a palace servant girl. At **Angolalla**, a capital of the former principality of Shewa, located in **Angolalla Tera**, a *woredas (district)* in the **Amhara Region**, *Adyamo* gave birth to a son, who was baptized as *Sahle Maryam*. **Haile Melekot** did not recognize that *Sahle Maryam* was born. The boy, *Sahle Maryam*, received a traditional church education in the royal household.



In 1855, the then Emperor of Ethiopia, **Tewodros II** (1855-68), invaded the then **semi-independent kingdom of Shewa**. During the invasion, *Sahle Maryam's* father, **King Haile Malakot** died, and many Royals of Shewa, including *Sahle Maryam*, were captured and taken to **Tewodros's** mountain stronghold, **Amba Magdela**. **Tewodros** treated the young prince well, even offering him marriage to his daughter **Altash Tewodros**, which Menelik accepted.

Tewodros appointed **Menelik's** uncle, **Haile Mikael** as the **Shum (governor) of Shewa**, with the title of **Merid Azmach (ruler of Shewa)**. However, **Haile Mikael** rebelled against **Tewodros**, resulting in his being replaced by the non-royal **Ato Bezabeh** as the **Shum (governor)**.

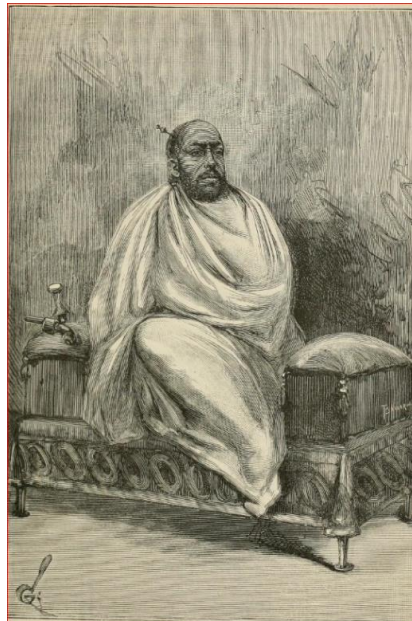
Ato Bezabeh in turn rebelled against **Tewodros** and proclaimed himself **Negus of Shewa**.

Although the Shewan royals imprisoned at **Magdala** had been largely complacent as long as a member of their family ruled over Shewa, the usurpation of Shewa's governorship by a commoner was not acceptable to the Royals of Shewa, imprisoned at **Amba Magdela**. With the help of **Mohammed Ali** and **Queen Worqitu of Wollo**, **Menelik** escaped from **Magdala** on the night of 1st July 1865, abandoning his wife, and **returned to Shewa**.

In Ethiopia, a **Shum** was a governor of a province or district during the Zemene Mesafint period (1769-1855), which was a time of political turmoil and decentralization in Ethiopia. The Shum was appointed by the Emperor and was responsible for collecting taxes, maintaining law and order, and providing military service. The Shum was also responsible for appointing local officials and was often a member of the nobility.

The Zemene **Mesafint** (*hereditary nobility*) was a period in Ethiopian history when the country was ruled by a class of **Oromo elite noblemen** who **replaced the Tigrayan and Amhara nobility** in the court, making the Emperor merely a figurehead. During this time, the regional lords fought against each other for expansion of their territory and to become the guardian of **the kings of kings** in **Gondar, the capital of the empire at the time**. The monarchy continued because of its sacred character.

August, 1865: Menelik, King of Shewa: Bezabeh's attempt to raise an army against Menelik failed; Thousands of Shewans rallied to the flag of **the son of Negus Haile Melekot** and even Bezabeh's own soldiers deserted him for the returning prince. **Abeto** (*Prince, a title reserved for males of imperial ancestry*) **Menelik** entered **Ankober** and proclaimed himself **Negus (King)**.



Menelik, King of Shewa

While Negus Menelik reclaimed his ancestral Shewan crown, he also laid claim to the Imperial throne, as a direct descendant male line of **Emperor Lebna Dengel**.

Dawit II also known by the macaronic name **Wanag Segad** (*to whom the lions bow*), with his birth name of **Lebna Dengel** (*essence of the virgin*), was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1508 to 1540, whose political center and palace was in Shewa.

However, he made no overt attempt to assert this claim at this time, probably because he was emotionally incapable of helping to destroy the man who had treated him as a son.

Menelik did not take part in the 1868 British Expedition to Abyssinia. When **Emperor Tewodros II** committed suicide, Menelik arranged for an official celebration of his death even though he was personally saddened by the loss. When a British diplomat asked him why he did this, he replied "to satisfy the passions of the people ... as for me, I should have gone into a forest to weep over ... [his] untimely death ... I have now lost the one who educated me, and toward whom I had always cherished filial and sincere affection."

EXPANSION of SHEWA: PERIOD of '**Agar Maqnat**' ('*Cultivation of land*'): Beginning in the 1870s, Menelik set off to reunify 'the lands and people of the South, East, and West into an empire including the people of Harar and southerners – Oromo, Sidama, Gurage, Wolayta and other groups.

In territories incorporated peacefully like **Jimma**, **Leka**, and **Wolega** the former order was preserved and there was no interference in their self-government; in areas incorporated after war, the appointed new rulers did not violate the peoples' religious beliefs and they treated them lawfully and justly.

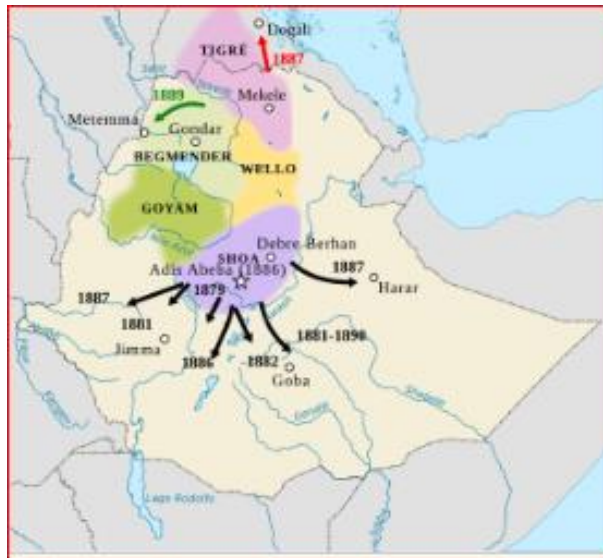
Since **Yohannes** was preoccupied in the battles with Egyptians, in the summer of 1876, Menelik took over **Wallo**, located to the NorthWest of Shewa. Early in 1877, he took over **Begemdir** (also known as Gondar or Gonder), a province located to the north of Shewa.

To **punish Menelik** for intruding into these areas, in **March 1877**, **Yohannes** left Adwa and advanced south, while Menelik retreated back to Shewa. **On 10 March 1878**, **Yohannes** reached Shewa. **Menelik submitted to Yohannes** and promised to pay annual tribute, to cease trade routes to European ruled territories and to be faithful to the emperor. In exchange, Menelik got to keep his land and was anointed by the Emperor as King of Shewa.

After 10th March 1878, the Shewan King remained faithful to **Yohannes** but took the opportunity in January 1887 to incorporate **Harer** into his kingdom.

From early 1880s till 1894, Menelik's expansion campaigning towards the south greatly increased the size of Shewa by incorporating (i) Gurage, Arsi, (ii) **Leqa**

Naqamté, Leqa Qellem, Jemma, the Gibé states, and Illubabor in 1882 after defeating King Tekle Haymanot of Gojjam and (iii) Kulo and Konta in 1889.



Menelik's campaigns 1879–89

Though Menelik remained faithful to Emperor **Yohannes**, Menelik continued to make attempts to acquire new weapons. In 1875 he started communication with Ismail Pasha, the **Khedive** of Egypt so that he could obtain access to the seacoast and a supply of firearms.

Khedive is an honorific title of Persian origin used for a governor ruling a province or territory on behalf of a monarch. It was used **from 1805 to 1914** to refer to the **semi-autonomous rulers of Egypt under the supervision of the Ottoman Sultan**.

In 1876, Menelik tried to open a trade route to **Obock**, a French-ruled seaport located in *what is today Djibouti*. Menelik sent a draft treaty to France and he offered a substantial amount of land in Shewa for a French settlement. **But both the attempts failed.**

Upon **Emperor Yohannes'** suggestion, **Menelik** married **Taitu Betul**, whose brothers had been imprisoned by Menelik in Magdala during Tewodros' rule. The wedding took place in the **Church of Medhane Alem** in **Ankober** in the **spring of 1883**.

Taytu's father, **Ras Betul Haile Maryam**, was part of the ruling family of Semien that claimed to be **descendants of the Solomonic Dynasty** through **Emperor Susenyos I** (*Emperor of Ethiopia from 1607 to 1632, and a member of the Solomonic dynasty. His throne names were Seltan Sagad and Malak Sagad III*). Taytu's uncle was the Amhara warlord **Wube Haile Maryam** who was a regional ruler and Dejazmach (*a Military title for a Commander of the*

main army) of his hereditary province of Semien, and later as **the conqueror and non-Tigrayan ruler** of Tigray and Eritrea provinces.

FOUNDATION of ADDIS ABABA: For a period, Ethiopia lacked a permanent capital; instead, the royal encampment served as a roving capital. For a time Menelik's camp was on **Mount Entoto**, but in 1886, while Menelik was on campaign in **Harar**, **Empress Taytu Betul** camped **at a hot spring to the south of Mount Entoto**. She decided to build a house there and **from 1887 this was her permanent base**, which she named **Addis Ababa** (*new flower*).

In 1889, after Menelik was crowned as the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik's Generals were all allocated land nearby to build their own houses, and work began on a new royal palace. The city grew rapidly, and by 1910 the city had around 70,000 permanent inhabitants, with up to 50,000 more on a temporary basis. Only in 1917, after Menelik's death, was the city reached by the railway from Djibouti.

---- A BACKGROUNDER on the TIGRAY WAR-----

The Tigray War was an armed conflict that lasted **from November 3, 2020, to November 3, 2022**, primarily fought in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia between forces allied to the Ethiopian federal government and Eritrea on one side, and the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** on the other. The war later spread south to the Amhara and Afar regions.

The conflict was triggered by the TPLF's decision to hold regional elections in defiance of the federal government's postponement of all elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The war resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, displacement of millions, and a humanitarian crisis in the region.

The war ended on November 3, 2022, with the government and the TPLF formally agreeing to a cessation of hostilities and systematic, verifiable disarmament. The peace deal was signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and witnessed by African Union envoys, the United Nations, and other international organizations. However, the situation in Tigray remains fragile, with reports of ongoing fighting and human rights abuses.

The Eritrean troops withdrew from much of the region shortly after the peace deal, but nine months later, they still occupy several areas along the border, including four of Irob's seven subdistricts.

The conflict has had a devastating impact on the people of Tigray, with millions of people displaced, and many others facing food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease. The UN has reported that more than 5.2 million people in Tigray need humanitarian assistance, including food, water, and medical care. The conflict has also led to the destruction of infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and homes.

The Tigray War has also had a significant impact on Ethiopia’s political landscape. The war has exposed deep divisions within the country, with ethnic tensions and political rivalries fueling the conflict. The war has also led to a crackdown on opposition groups and journalists, with many people arrested and detained for speaking out against the government’s handling of the conflict. The Ethiopian government has been accused of committing human rights abuses during the conflict. The government has denied these allegations and has accused the TPLF of committing atrocities against civilians.

