

Concise Essay on The Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia (2nd century BCE- 10th century CE)

Scott Pearson
Professor Emeritus
Stanford University

The Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia (2nd century BCE-10th century CE)

Origins. How did the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia originate?

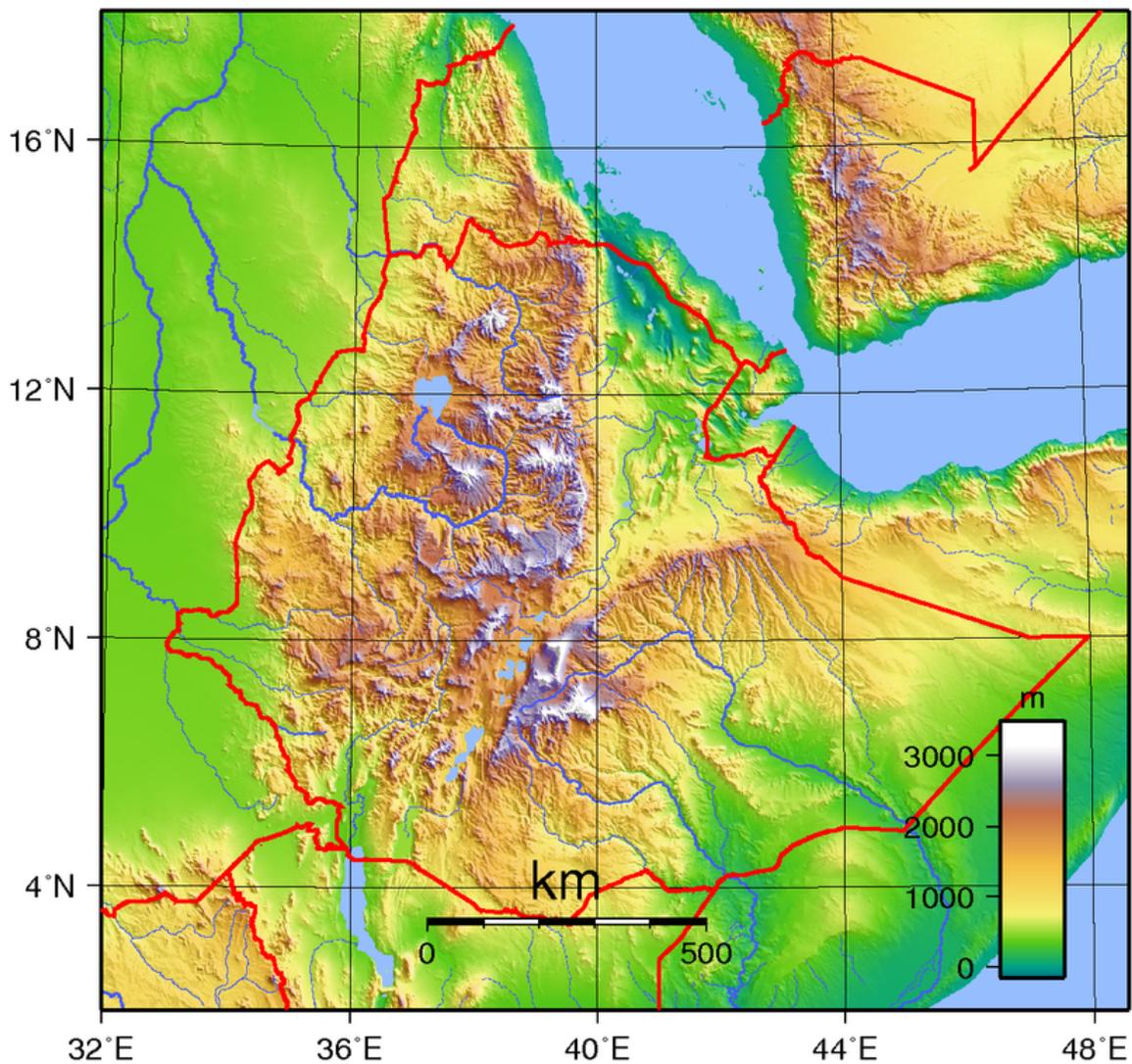


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*The Axum Kingdom (2nd century BCE-10th century CE) –
Territorial Extent c. 150 BCE*

Ethiopia was located on the periphery of the leading ancient civilizations and was an unlikely candidate to develop an important regional kingdom. Ethiopia's heartland is a mass of high mountains and plateaus that provided an important degree of

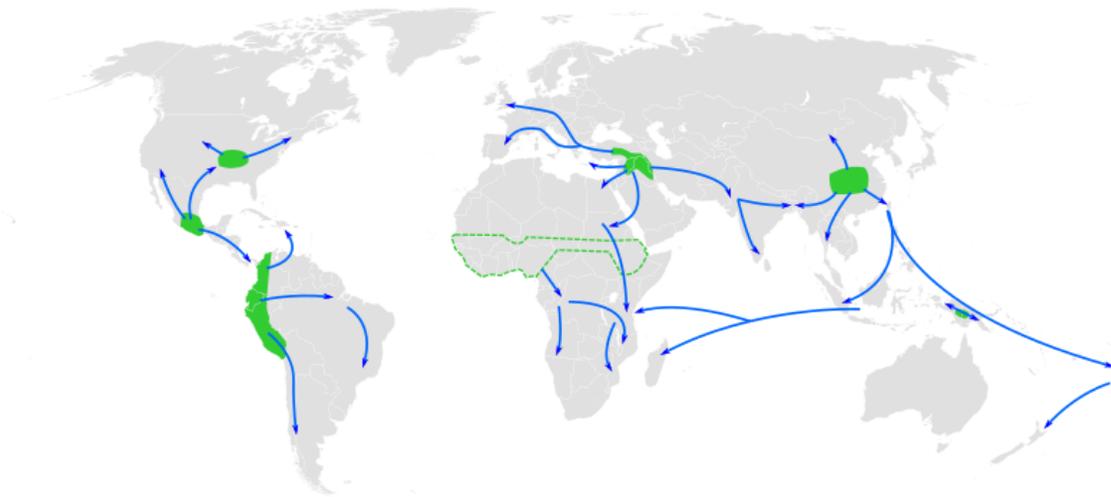
natural protection from potential foreign invaders. Although highland Ethiopia was well watered, the country did not benefit from large river valleys or deltas that could support dense populations of intensive agriculturalists.



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Ethiopia's Physical Geography

Agriculture was developed independently in Ethiopia – one of only eight or nine places in the world where that happened – and the region soon became home to organized city-states and kingdoms. Cushitic-speaking Ethiopians were practicing agriculture by the third millennium BCE (5000 years ago).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Centres_of_origin_and_spread_of_agriculture.svg

Origins and Spread of Agriculture

Several plants, endemic to Ethiopia – teff, finger millet, ensete, coffee, and chat – were first domesticated there. Ethiopian agriculture also benefited from the introduction of Fertile Crescent plants – wheat, barley, flax, and chickpeas – and animals – cattle, sheep, and goats – via southern Arabia.

In the middle of the first millennium BCE, Ethiopia absorbed a major migration of peoples from southern Arabia. Those Sabaean migrants first entered Ethiopia to trade and later settled to farm, bringing advanced agricultural techniques and iron metallurgy. The Sabaeans introduced terracing, irrigation, water storage, use of the iron plow, and humped (*zebu*) cattle into Ethiopia. The Semitic-speaking migrants used their advanced technology to superimpose themselves as a ruling elite.

Between 700 and 300 BCE, the kingdom of Daamat held power in northern Ethiopia. The political structure, language, and architecture in Daamat followed the model of kingdoms then ruling in southern Arabia. The economic bases of the kingdom were irrigated agriculture (producing cereals with techniques imported from southern Arabia), metallurgy (making iron and bronze weapons and tools), and foreign trade (with southern Arabia). The kingdom of Daamat exported local elephant ivory and a range of valuable items that it obtained through interregional trade – gold, silver, slaves, tortoise shell, and rhinoceros horn.

Daamat fell about 300 BCE, after small states emerged nearer the coast of the Red Sea and caused Daamat to lose control of the Red Sea trade routes.



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Daamat Kingdom, 1st millennium BCE

For more than a century, rival city-states tried to fill the political vacuum caused by the demise of Daamat. The ultimate success of Axum, beginning in the 2nd century BCE, had much to do with the city's location. Mountains surrounded the city of Axum and created a natural fortress. Axum city also was sited in

the middle of a fertile and well-watered agricultural area that permitted self-sufficiency in food supplies and near a major center of elephant herds that provided valuable ivory for export. Axum thus had all of the key ingredients for success as an expanding ancient kingdom – a defensible location, a rich agricultural hinterland, a resource base that provided luxury exports (ivory), links to major international trade routes (the Nile Valley and the Red Sea), and effective entrepreneurial leadership.

Wealth. In the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia, what were the main sources of wealth and power – agriculture, foreign trade, and foreign conquest? Axum was the dominant power in northeast Africa for eight centuries until its decline in the 7th century CE. The kingdom combined ample natural resources (ivory, salt, and gold) with a fertile agricultural base to create significant wealth. In Axum, the principal sources of wealth were agricultural surpluses and the gains from international trade. Only limited mining was done within the boundaries of the Axumite kingdom, and artisans produced crafts mostly for local consumption. Agriculture was

highly productive because it was based on Sabaean techniques and tools – iron implements (plows, sickles, saws, and axes), terracing, and irrigation (using dams, wells, reservoirs, and canals). The high productivity of agriculture formed the basis of Axum's success as a trading center since it meant that the city had ample food supplies for transient merchants and caravan workers.

Trade was the primary source of wealth in Axum. Lacking local exports other than ivory, the Axumite leaders developed secondary trade routes to bring export products to the city. They bought salt in Danakil, gold and slaves in the Blue Nile basin, and frankincense and myrrh on the Somali coast. The kingdom then created a network of profitable trade routes, centered on the city of Axum. The Axumites' principal long-distance trade route linked the upper Nile River valley (providing access to Nubia and upper Egypt) with the Red Sea (giving access to Arabia, Persia, and India). In 325 CE, King Ezana of Axum destroyed the once-great city and kingdom of Meroë (in modern Sudan). For more than two centuries thereafter, Axumite merchants were unrivalled in plying

the profitable trade routes that linked the Nile Valley with the Red Sea.

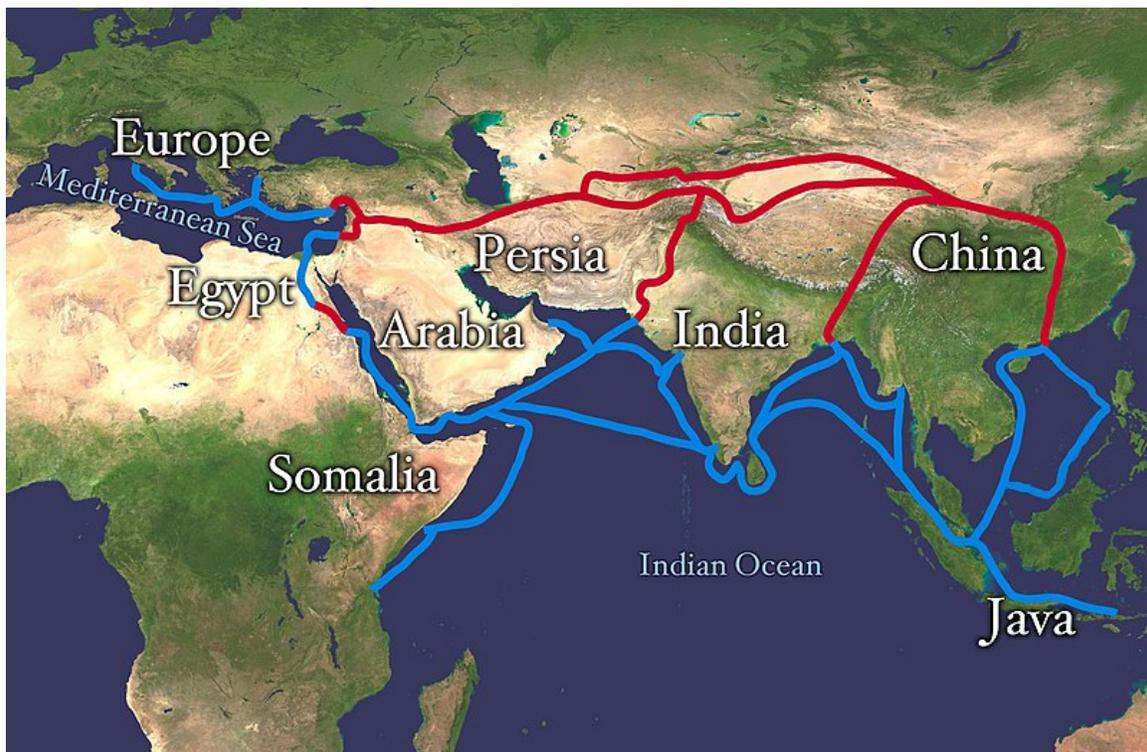


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indo-Roman_trade.jpg

Trade Routes of the Kingdom of Axum – 2nd-7th centuries CE

Globalization came early to Ethiopia. Despite the long distances and high costs of transportation, the remotely-located capital city developed into a wealth-generating trading entrepôt. Adulis, on the Red Sea, was the main port of Axum, where the kingdom operated a large merchant fleet owned by the royal state. With their exports of local elephant ivory and their re-exports of

imported gold, incense, slaves, and hides, the Axumites imported cloth, metals, tools, jewelry, and glassware from Egypt, the Mediterranean, Persia, and India. The key to wealth and power in Axum thus was to maintain control of the Nile Valley-Red Sea trade route and of the subsidiary routes that supplied the products exported through Adulis.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_route.jpg >

Europe-Africa-Asia Trade Routes in the Axumite Era

Control. What forms of religious persuasion, political organization, economic sanction, and military coercion did the leaders of the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia use to extract wealth for the elite and maintain imperial power? The Axumites created a centralized system of government. At the top was a strong king who governed autocratically. He was supported by a large standing army, a loyal nobility, and an entourage of civil servants. The king of Axum earned revenue in three ways. He participated directly in agriculture and trade (and operated the merchant fleet out of Adulis), he taxed traders and farmers, and he received regular tribute payments from outlying provinces under Axum's control. The Axum government was the only state in ancient Africa (outside of the Roman Empire) to strike its own coins. Axumite coins first appeared in the late 3rd century and were made of gold, silver, and bronze. The issuance of coins ceased in the early 7th century.

Two foreign cultural influences predominated in Axum. One was Sabaean from south Arabia, reflecting the Semitic origins of

the rulers. The other was Greek, via Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Egypt.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byzantine_and_Sassanid_Empires_in_600_C_E.png>

Byzantine Empire, c. 600 CE – Greek Cultural Influence on the Axum Kingdom

For several centuries, the Sabaeoan- and Greek-inspired pantheistic religion of Axum centered on a trinity of gods – Astar (heaven), Beher (earth), and Mahrem (sea). The first god represented the after-life, the second the centrality of agriculture, and the third the importance of sea-based trade. King Ezana converted to Orthodox Christianity in the 4th century CE, and the

Axumite people gradually followed in his footsteps. The Orthodox Christian Bible and liturgy were translated from Greek and Syriac into Geez, the Ethiopic language of Axum. The government and church leaders supported each other's hierarchies and worked together to help the aristocracy dominate the peasantry.

The most spectacular cultural manifestations in Axum, the stone obelisks (stelae), were funerary monuments for the graves of Axumite kings. The stelae were made of single blocks of granite. The largest obelisk continuously standing in Axum is 24 meters (79 feet) high. The obelisks were constructed during the pantheistic period to serve as religious monuments and as awe-inspiring demonstrations of royal power.

Decline. What caused the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia to weaken and fall apart? At its peak, in the 3rd-6th centuries, Axum was the strongest state in northeastern Africa. Some scholars rank it as the world's fifth leading power – after Rome/Byzantium, Han and post-Han China, Guptan India, and Sasanid Persia – in that era. Axum began to decline in the late 6th century when Sasanid Persia

forced Axum out of Yemen and extended Persian power throughout the Red Sea region.

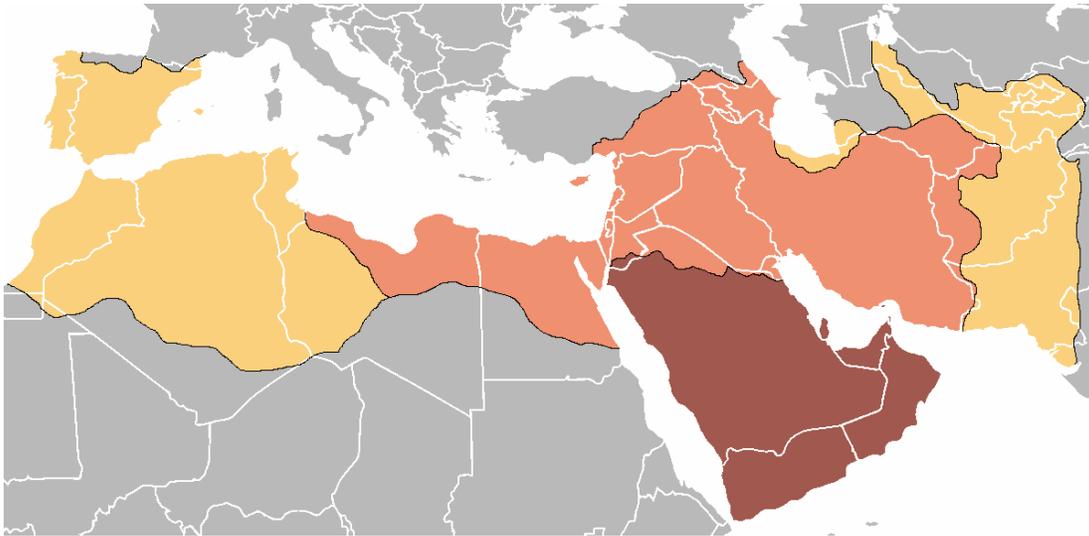


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LocationAksumiteEmpire.png> >

Kingdom of Axum – At Its Peak, 6th century CE

The half-century-long, Axumite expansion into Yemen had drained resources from overextended Axum. Imperial greed and religious fervor had debilitated Axum's strength. Following the rise of Islam in the early 7th century, the Muslim Arabs replaced the Zoroastrian Persians in the Red Sea region and effectively

severed Axum's trade routes there. But Islamic forces did not attack Christian Axum during the Arab Muslim diaspora because King Armah of Axum had offered asylum to early converts to Islam who had fled to Axum from Mecca to seek protection.



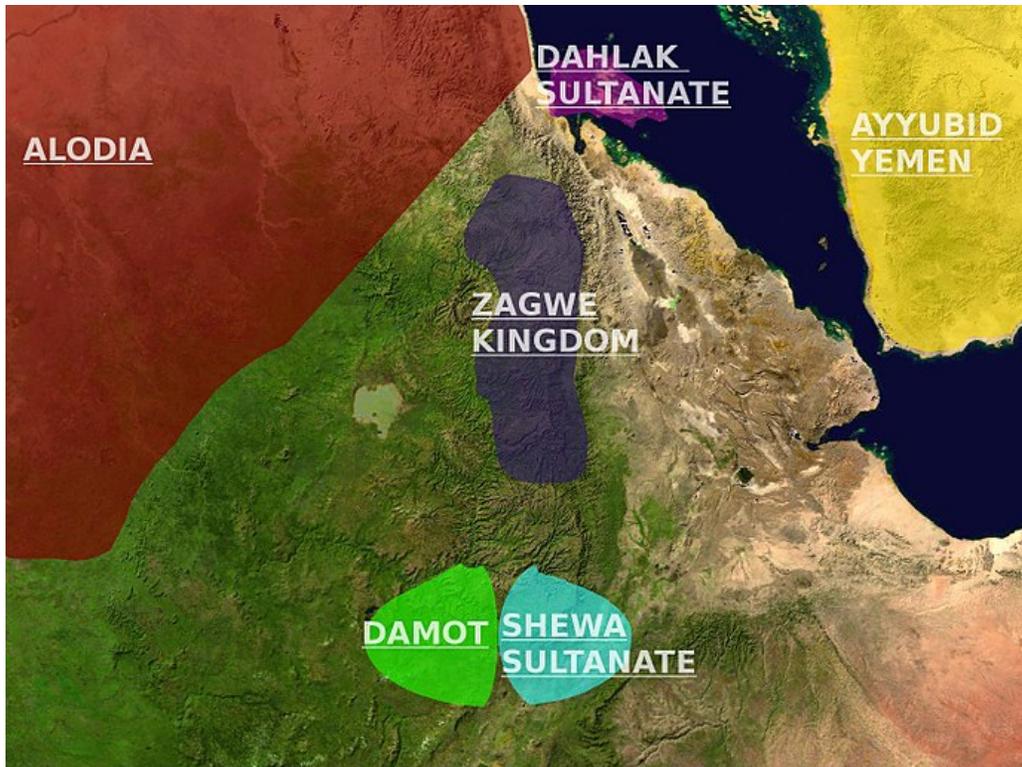
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Age-of-caliphs.png> >

The Muslim Arab Diaspora, 622-632 (Dark Red), 632-661 (Light Red), 661-750 (Yellow) – Axum Stayed Independent

The diminution of Axumite trading on the Red Sea was soon followed by the loss of Axum's internal trade monopolies in ivory, gold, salt, and incense. With the loss of control of long-distance and regional trade, Axum was deprived of its primary source of wealth and power. Land degradation and local rebellions made the

situation worse. Government tax revenues decreased, and the government no longer could support a strong military to suppress rebellions. The Axum kingdom was on a downward spiral. The Axumites gradually retreated southward into the agricultural highlands occupied by the Cushitic-speaking Agau people. In the late 10th century, Axum was devastated by an attack of the Damot people, a Cushitic-speaking group whom Axum had long subjugated. But the Damots did not replace Axumite rule in the Christian core in highland Ethiopia.

Aftermath. After the fall of the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia, what local or foreign groups succeeded to power and how successfully did they wield power and extract wealth? The Zagwe Dynasty ruled Christian Ethiopia and some Muslim regions between 1137 and 1270. The rise of the Zagwe Dynasty entailed a movement of political power southward and a shift from Semitic- to Cushitic-speaking rulers.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at

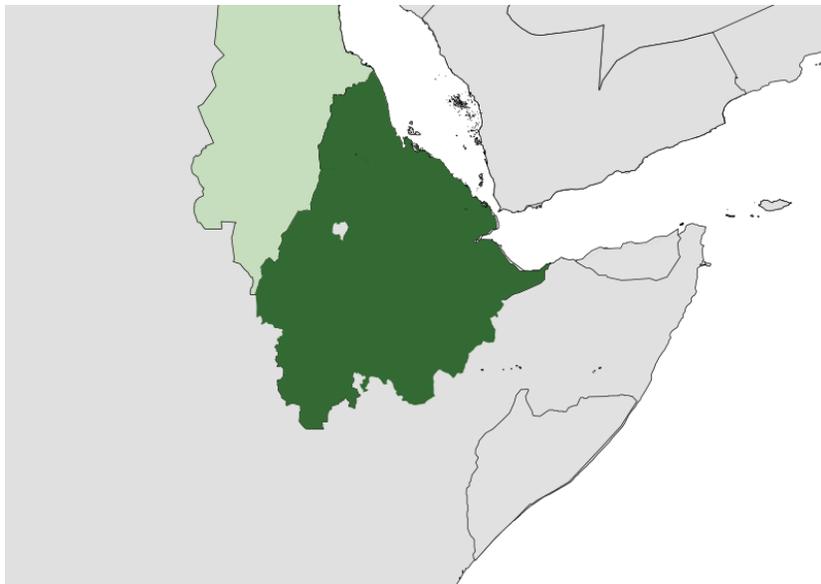
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Approximate_extension_of_the_Zagwe_Empire.JPG>

Ethiopia, Zagwe Dynasty (1137-1270) – c. 1200

The Agau rulers in the Zagwe Dynasty, lacking a direct tie to Axum, sought political and religious legitimacy by constructing a new pilgrimage site to emulate Jerusalem. The central features of the Lalibela pilgrimage site were eleven stunning rock-hewn churches. The Zagwe Dynasty relied heavily on agriculture for its basic income and on foreign trade for extra earnings. The agricultural base for Zagwe was cereal (teff, barley, and wheat)

production in the highlands. Foreign trade continued to be an important source of wealth, but much less so than during the height of the Axumite kingdom. Slaves, obtained from raids in pagan areas, were traded to Egypt, and elephant ivory retained its importance as an export.

With the rise of the Solomonic Dynasty, Semitic-speaking Amharas replaced the Cushitic-speaking Agaus of the Zagwe Dynasty. That shift of political power to Shewan Amharas lasted for seven centuries – until 1974.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethiopia_1500.svg>

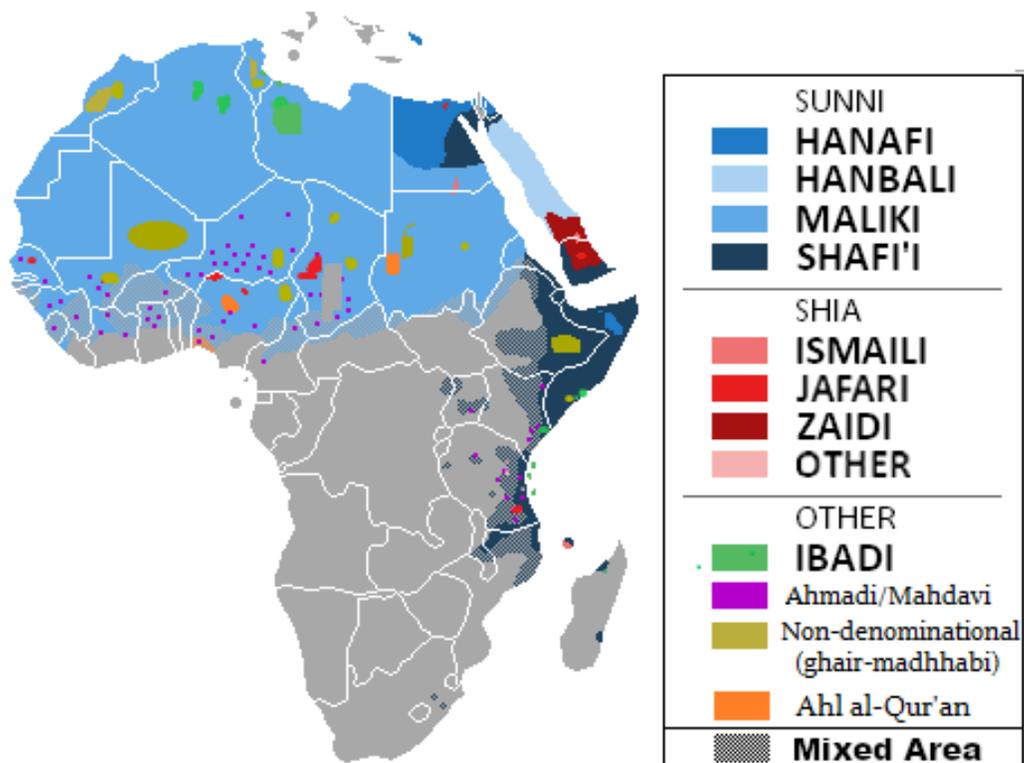
Solomonic Ethiopia (Dark Green Area) in the Horn of Africa, 1500

The rulers of the Solomonic Dynasty, like those of the Zagwe Dynasty, initially were regarded as illegitimate. Whereas the Zagwe kings built a rock-church pilgrimage in Lalibela, the Solomonic kings invented a myth linking the descent of their rulers to King Solomon. The *Kebre Negast*, a national epic written in the 14th century, asserted that Menelik I was the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (who was claimed to be Ethiopian). By linking Ethiopian rulers to Judeo-Christian tradition, the book legitimized the line of imperial succession.

The Shewan leaders expanded their empire southward by forcing pagan states to pay tribute to Ethiopia, westward to include gold-producing Damot, and eastward where small Muslim states agreed to pay tribute so long as Muslims could dominate trade. Wealth in medieval Ethiopia continued to be generated principally from agriculture – mostly from taxes on peasant production of teff, wheat, barley, sorghum, millet, chickpeas, and lentils. Farmers paid a fixed annual tax and a 10 percent share of production. Foreign trade, based on the export of slaves, ivory, and gold, was

also a key source of wealth. The Shewan rulers collected a tax of 10 percent of goods imported into Ethiopia.

Ahmad ibn Ibrahim, from neighboring Adal, led a Muslim jihad against Christian Ethiopia in 1527. Ahmad's extraordinary leadership, ample Turkish firearms and artillery, and fanatical courage in battle resulted in a series of military victories.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at < https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Self-reported_muslim_affinity_in_africa.png >

Spread of Islam in Africa – Ethiopia Was a Christian Outpost

The Ethiopians eventually received military aid from Portugal. The empire thus gained access to the new weapons – firearms and artillery – that the Ottoman Empire had supplied to Ethiopia’s Muslim foe. The Portuguese and Ethiopian armies killed Ahmad in 1543 and ended the jihad.



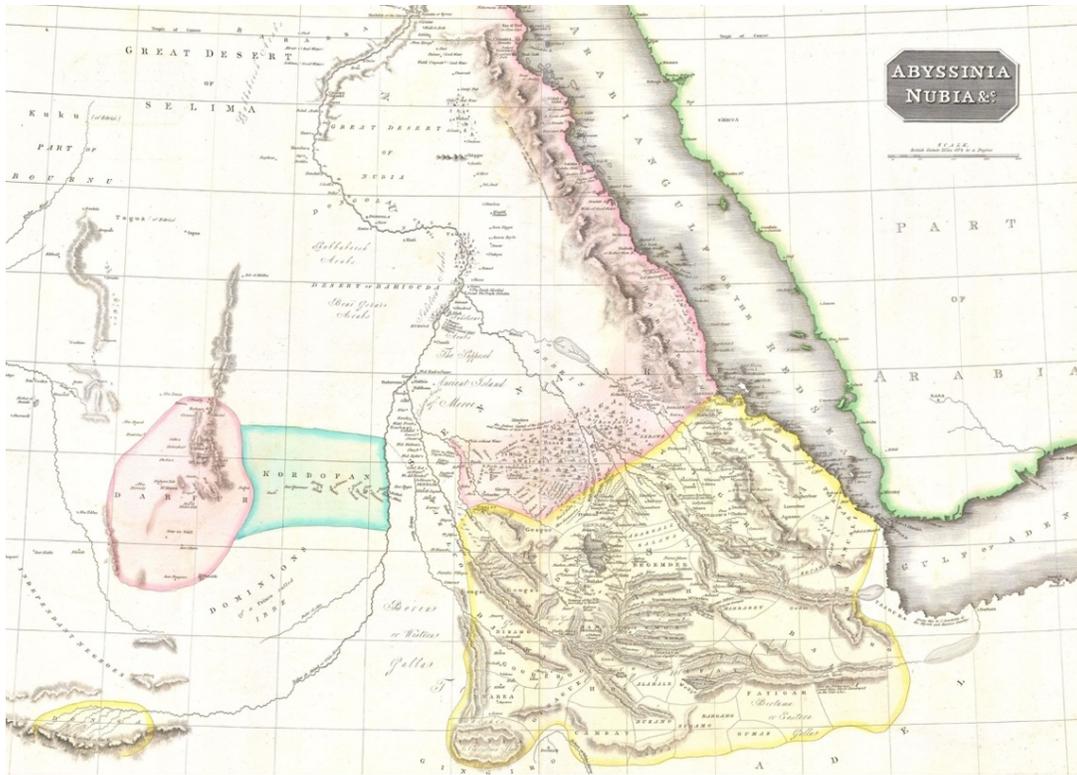
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portuguese_Empire_map.jpg >

Portugal’s Maritime Settlements, 15th-16th centuries

Ethiopia’s feudal Christian leaders retreated to the northwest. Their new empire was less than half the territorial extent of the earlier one, but it was much easier to govern and defend. Gondar, the new capital, grew into the political, economic, and cultural center of the reduced and more cohesive Ethiopian empire.

Gondar was located in a fertile agricultural area, north of Lake Tana. Cereal agriculture (teff, barley, and wheat), oilseeds (flax), and animals for transport (horses, mules, and donkeys) provided much of the wealth in the reorganized empire.

Foreign trade was the second source of wealth. From its founding in 1636 until the middle of the 18th century, Gondar was the center of trade routes linking the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. Coffee was first exported from Ethiopia, where it originated, to southern Arabia in the 15th century. Coffee became an important export to the Sudan and Egypt in the 16th century, expanded into the Turkish and European markets in the late 17th century, and gradually became Ethiopia's leading export commodity.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1818_Pinkerton_Map_of_Abyssinia \(Ethiopia\), Sudan %5ENubia - Geographicus - Abyssinnia-pinkerton-1818.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1818_Pinkerton_Map_of_Abyssinia_(Ethiopia),_Sudan_%5ENubia_-_Geographicus_-_Abyssinnia-pinkerton-1818.jpg)

Pinkerton Map of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), 1818

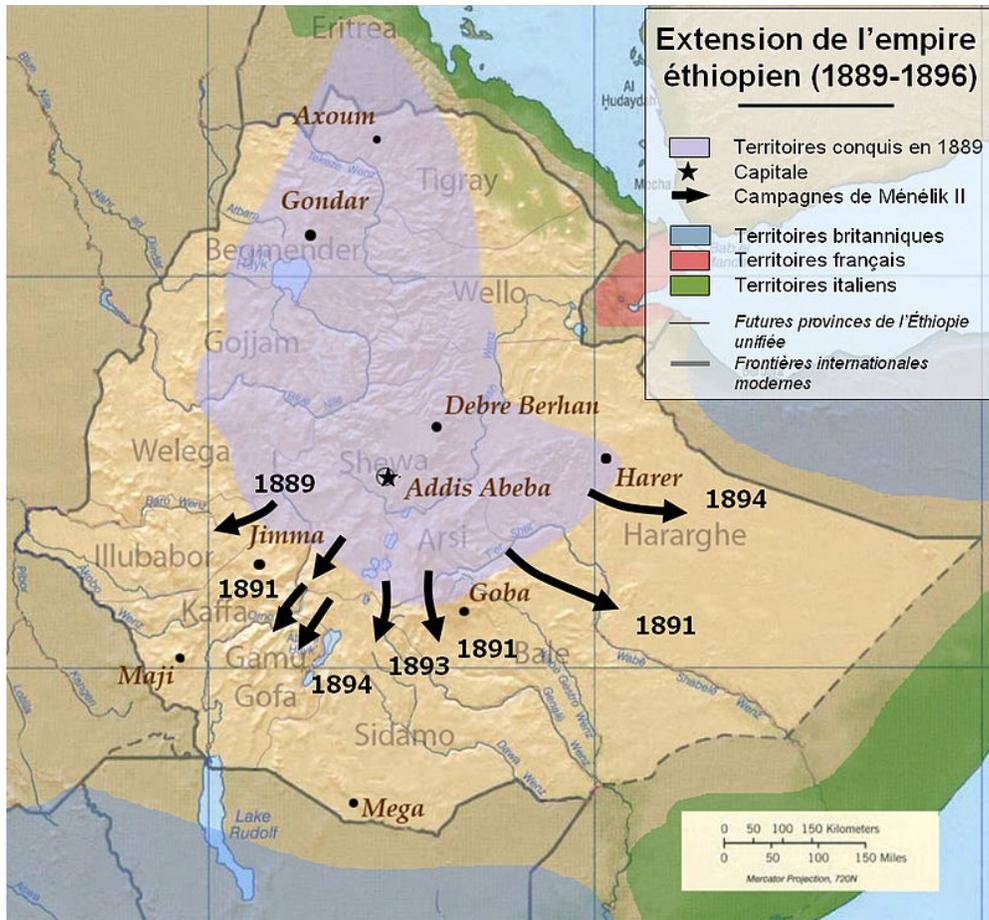
The combination of revived political power, military strength, economic prosperity, and a permanent capital provided an opportunity for an Ethiopian cultural renaissance in the 17th and 18th centuries. Gondar became renowned for its accomplishments in architecture, painting, sculpture, calligraphy, poetry, literature, and music. The Gondarine Empire peaked about the turn of the 18th century and then went into steady decline. Between the mid-

18th and the mid-19th centuries, imperial rule from Gondar totally broke down, and power was disseminated to regional princes.

Ethiopia began to recover in the first half of the 19th century. Three regional states – Tigray in the north, Amhara in the northwest, and Shewa in the central-south – rose to fill the political vacuum. Shewa became by far the strongest. During the second half of the 19th century, strong leadership emerged from three individuals who ruled as emperor – Tewodros II (1855-1868) from Amhara, Yohannes IV (1871-1889) from Tigray, and Menelik II (1889-1910) from Shewa. Tewodros II and Yohannes IV reunified Ethiopia, and Menelik II expanded it. They succeeded in spite of persistent external opposition.

The unification of Italy in 1861 had a significant impact on Ethiopia. The new country embraced European imperialism. In 1882, Italy established a colony in Assab. Three years later, the Italian government seized control of Massawa, the region's leading port. In 1890, Italy claimed a colony in Eritrea. Ethiopia and Italy went to war in 1895, and the outcome was decided in the Battle of

Adwa in 1896. The Ethiopian army won a total victory, destroying half of the Italian army. Menelik II thereby preserved Ethiopia's independence and gained international respect.



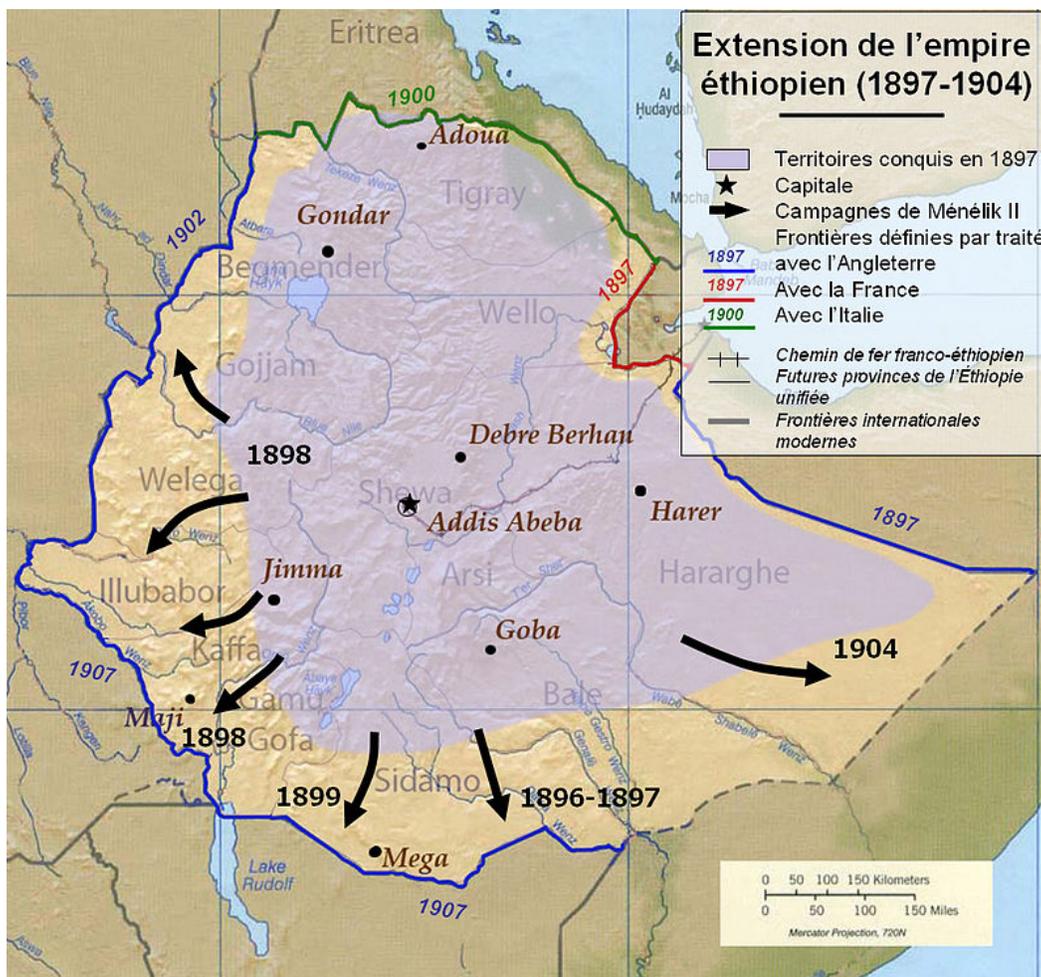
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Menelik_campaign_map_2_3.jpg

Menelik II's Expansion of the Ethiopian Empire, 1889-1896

Menelik II had become Emperor of Ethiopia in 1889.

Menelik more than tripled the area of his empire, and by 1907, the country had reached its current size. Menelik successfully

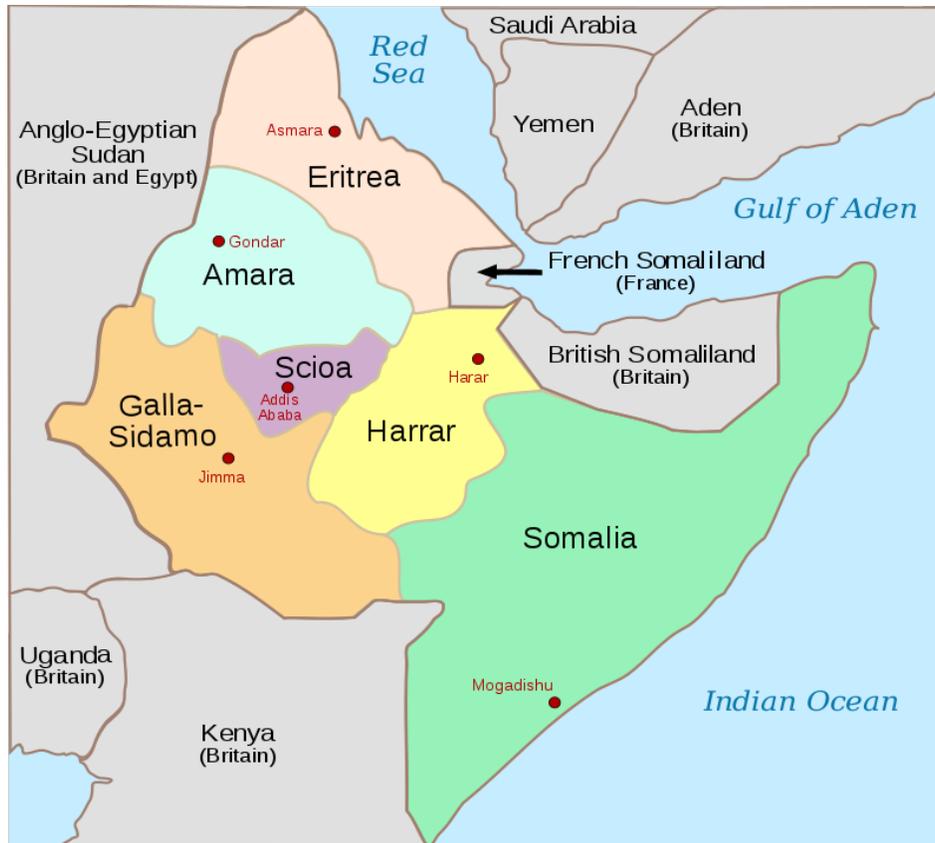
maintained a feudal political economy. He heavily taxed agriculture and foreign trade, shared the spoils with the church and nobility, conquered outlying areas to expand exports of coffee, ivory, and slaves, used the foreign exchange to buy modern weapons, and had a large standing army to ensure independence.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Menelik_campaign_map_3_3.jpg

Ethiopian Expansion under Menelik II, 1897-1904

Haile Selassie I ruled Ethiopia jointly with Menelik's daughter between 1916 and 1930 and became emperor in 1930. He focused initially on building a strong centralized government and a modern military to protect his country's independence. In the mid-1930s, Mussolini precipitated a war with Ethiopia to avenge the Italian defeat at the Battle of Adwa (1896) and to gain control of Ethiopia and thus connect fascist Italy's colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. Italian military force, based on tanks, artillery, airplanes, and poison gas, overwhelmed the Ethiopian army in 1936.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Italian_East_Africa_\(1938%E2%80%931941\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Italian_East_Africa_(1938%E2%80%931941).svg)>

Northeast Africa, 1936-1941 – Ethiopia Was Part of Italian East Africa

The Allied Army, led by Great Britain, recovered Ethiopia in 1941 and Haile Selassie returned to Addis Ababa to resume rule. In 1952, he successfully pushed to have Eritrea returned to Ethiopian control. Thereafter, the American government provided large amounts of military and economic assistance to Ethiopia,

helping the country to build the largest standing army in Africa, in return for an American intelligence base in Asmara (in Eritrea).

Haile Selassie's regime inadvertently ensured its own downfall. The regime felt it dare not risk losing the traditional support of the nobility, and so it was unwilling to contemplate meaningful land reform or increased taxation of the rich. The crown chose not to redistribute assets or income or to loosen its tight political control and met increasing opposition with greater force. The system continued to favor the very rich over the poor masses and the Semitic north over the outlying regions, and the emperor refused to promote economic restructuring and sustained development. The Solomonic system collapsed after foreign-educated progressives returned with hopes of reform and development, were rebuffed by military suppression, and eventually gained the support of reformers within the military.

A military coup, led by a secret committee known as the Derg, occurred in 1974. The Derg gradually imprisoned the palace nobility, deposed Emperor Haile Selassie I in September 1974, and

murdered him eleven months later. The Derg tried to establish a Marxist command economy based on central planning. The officers' committee announced that agriculture would be collectivized into peasant cooperatives and state farms. The government nationalized industries, banks, and service companies. The socialist policies adopted by the new regime were a disaster for Ethiopian agriculture. The agricultural sector provided 85 percent of national employment, half of total income, and nine-tenths of export earnings – mostly from coffee. But redistribution of land created over-cultivation on smaller farms, land degradation, and declining yields.

Mengistu Haile Mariam ruled with incredible brutality for seventeen years before his regime was overthrown in 1991. The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has governed Ethiopia since then. The EPRDF governments, led by Meles Zenawi (1991-2012), Hailemariam Desalegn (2012-2018), and Abiy Ahmed (2018-present), abandoned state socialism and liberalized economic policy. The Ethiopian economy responded to

the positive incentives with a spurt of rapid growth between 1992 and 1997, averaging nearly 8 percent per year.

But in May 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea began a brutal two-and-one-half-year war. The effects of the war were disastrous – 100,000 deaths in trench warfare, an expensive bilateral arms race, a freezing of foreign aid and investment, and a cessation of economic growth.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eritrean%E2%80%93Ethiopian_War_Map_1998.png

The Ethiopia-Eritrea War, 1998-2000

After the signing of the peace agreement, Ethiopia and Eritrea maintained a tension-filled relationship. A final peace treaty was negotiated in 2018 when Ethiopia ceded disputed land to Eritrea.

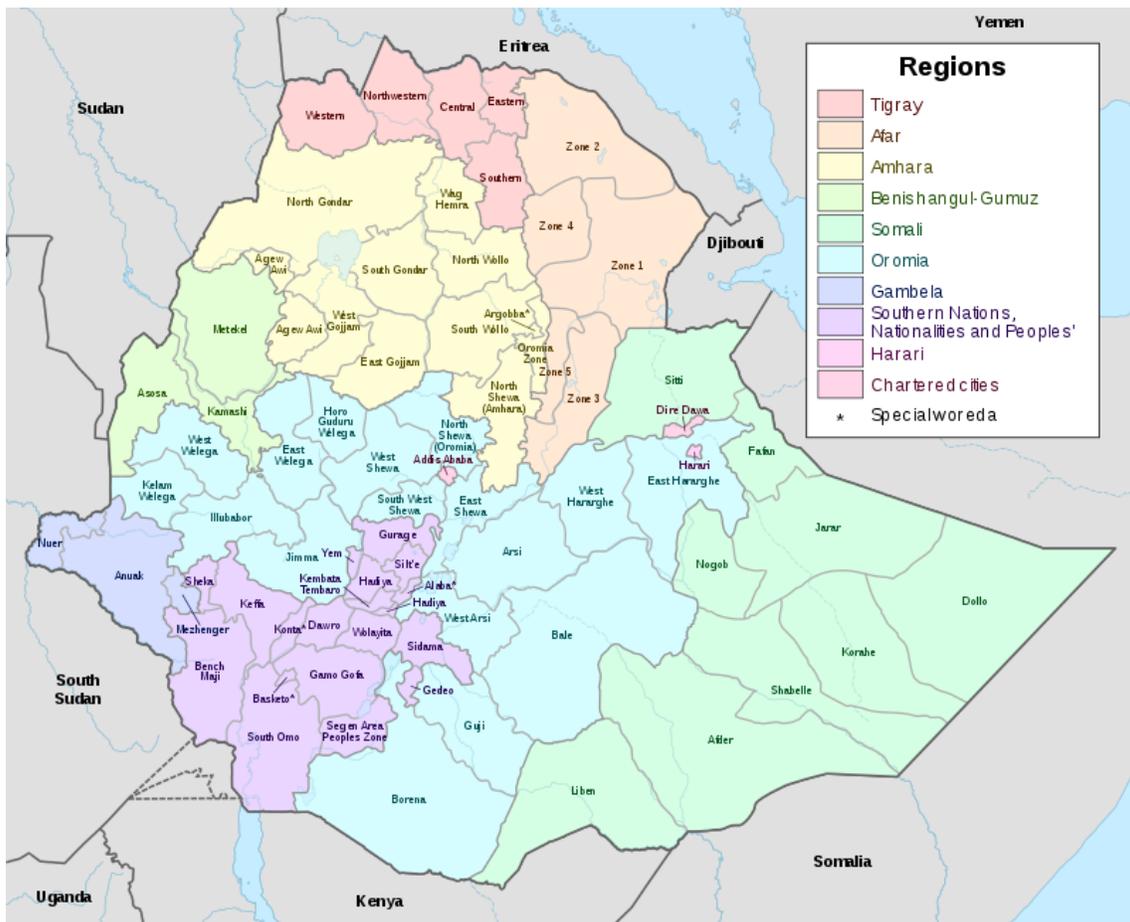


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eritrea_in_Ethiopia_\(1943-1987\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eritrea_in_Ethiopia_(1943-1987).svg)>

*Contemporary Ethiopia (White Area) and Eritrea (Red Area) –
No Longer an Economic Union*

Between 2003 and 2019, Ethiopia achieved one of the world's fastest rates of growth in per capita income – 7.3 percent per year (in constant prices). That rapid growth was led by

sensible policies that expanded exports (coffee, oilseeds, and clothing) and augmented by ample foreign assistance (\$4.9 billion in 2019). But Ethiopia’s price-adjusted annual income per capita, \$2,312 in 2019, ranked it among the world’s twenty poorest countries. Although the road ahead will be long and difficult for this struggling country, the potential for sustained success exists.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_zones_of_Ethiopia.svg

Contemporary Ethiopia’s Regions and Landlocked Border

Lessons. What lessons for contemporary powers can be drawn from the experiences of the Axum Kingdom in Ethiopia and of successor rulers of Ethiopia? Axum fell because the kingdom's rulers overplayed their hand. In the 4th century, Axum invaded Meroe (in Sudan), destroyed a trading competitor, and had the good sense to retreat in victory. But in the 6th century, King Kaleb conquered Yemen, the once-rich homeland of his ancestors, and occupied it. He was motivated by nationalistic greed – a desire to control the ports on both shores of the southern Red Sea – and religious fervor – a hope to promote Orthodox Christianity, goaded by Byzantine leaders in Constantinople. But the Axumites had not foreseen that the Sabaeans in Yemen would call in the Sasanid Persians to evict the Ethiopian invaders. Axum then lost control of the Red Sea trade to the Persians and with it the main source of Axumite wealth. The religiously-inspired foray into Yemen thus debilitated the strength of the Axumite kingdom, precipitated undesired foreign competition, and led to the eventual fall of the kingdom. The lesson in foreign policy is to balance religious

fervor and nationalistic pride against the maintenance of economic opportunities and regional geo-political realities.

A millennium later, in the 16th century, the Solomonic Dynasty of Orthodox Christian Ethiopia nearly perished. The Ottoman Empire supplied Ethiopian Muslims, fighting an Islamic Jihad, with advanced weaponry – firearms and artillery – that the Solomonids had never used. In the nick of time, Portugal saved the day and offered both modern weapons and troops to Christian Ethiopia. The lesson is to keep up with advanced military technology or to find allies who can provide it in need. The Solomonids later astutely moved to the secure northwestern part of the country and, with the help of Portuguese advisors, reorganized their truncated empire into a defensible unit.

During the 20th century, the Solomonic emperors of Ethiopia were not nearly as wise as the ancestor from whom they claimed ruling legitimacy. Twice, Ethiopia had golden opportunities to reform the traditional system and introduce policies that could lead to greater democratization and sustainable development. Menelik

II in the early years of the 20th century and Haile Selassie in the two decades after the Second World War had complete domestic political control and widespread foreign support. But both were myopic and chose to continue the archaic feudal system – an autocratic taxation of agriculture and foreign trade, a system of shared spoils between the nobility and the church, and a preference for spending on the military rather than on development. That rigidity ensured that most Ethiopians would live in poverty and ultimately brought down the autocratic regime in a violent revolution. The lessons are clear. Land reform and other methods of asset redistribution are necessary if societies are to transform and develop, politically and economically. Educated people and downtrodden masses in even the most hierarchical and underdeveloped countries eventually will demand such reforms. Aristocratic leaders will survive only if they have the foresight to introduce meaningful changes, even when reforms will undercut the short-run interests of some in the ruling class.