THE ETHIOPIAN CHRISTIAN HIGHLAND KINGDOM (1543-1855)

Belay Stotaw

Attempts to Consolidate and Shift Political Center of Highland Christian Kingdom

- The continuity of Adal attack, the Oromo population movement and the ***encroachment of Turkey*** threatened the CHK.
- The long-year Muslim-Christian war resulted
  - loss of professional soldiers
  -religious chaos in Orthodox Church
  - decline of the Christian Kingdom

Contd.

- ***King Gelawdewos*** faced the raids of Adal and the Oromo incursion.
- He established his center in ***Waji***.
- He defeated the Adal force because the Muslim force used ***conventional*** war.
- The Oromos defeated Gelawdewos because they used ***gorrilla*** warfare (hit and run-away).
- In 1559 ***Emir Nur Mujahid*** killed and beheaded Gelawdewos in the battle.

Contd.

- ***The Adals didn't continue attacking the CHK due to the Oromo pressure.***
- ***The Oromos easily defeated Emir Nur and the emir reduced the sultanate in to the walled city of Harar.***
- **Emir Nur Mujahid built the Jegol ginb to defend the city from the Oromo assault.**

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- The Oromos defeated ***Jan Amora*** (powerful army of the CHK) and drove out from ***Fatagar***.
- ***Fatagar*** became the new center of the Oromos to attack the CHK provinces.
- ***Minas*** succeeded Gelawdewos in 1559 and shifted his center to ***Mengiste-Semayat*** in eastern Gojam.
- The highest dignitaries met in mengiste-semayat and shifted the center to ***Enfranz***.

Contd.

- The Oromos removed Adal force from **Fatagar** and ***Waji***
- ***The provinces south of the Abbay river became open for the Oromos.***
- In 1563 ***Sartse-Dingel*** succeeded Minas.
- The old Generals (***Hamalamal*** in W. Shewa and ***Fasilo*** in 1560) rebelled up on SertseDingel but were controlled.

Contd.

- In 1568 ***Sartse-Dingel*** got submission of Enarya.
- In1572 he got victory over the Oromos.
- But they used gorilla warfare and weakened the king’s army.

The New Problem in the North

- In 1557 the ***Ottoman Turkey*** occupied ***Mitsiwwa/Massawa*** and advanced to ***Debarwa*** (highland regions of the present day of Eritrea).
- ***Yisihaq*** was the ruler of coastal area with the tittle of ***Bahr Nagash***.
- ***He rebelled up on Minas and Sartse-Dingel supported by Ottoman Turkey.***

Contd.

- ***Yisihaq*** submitted to ***Sartse-Dingel*** and the king reinstated him to his old post.
- The ***Turkish*** pressed ***Yisihaq*** to rebel up on the king since 1578.
- ***In 1579 Sartse-Dingel crushed the rebelled Yisihaq.***
- ***Mitsiwwa remained under Turkish control for three centuries.***

The Southern Challenge and End of Sartse-Dingel

- The Oromos destroyed the large army of the king led by ***Fasil*** (brother of Sartse-Dingel).
- When the king march to avenge the ***Jawi*** Oromos, they retreated to their base.
- In 1597 the ***Sartse-Dingel*** marched to save ***Enarya*** from the Oromos attack.
- Unfortunately he died in ***Shat***, near ***Gibe river*** due to illness.

Power Succession Problem in Denqez

- From 1597 t0 1601 ***Yacob, ZaDingel*** and ***Susnyos*** were enthroned and dethroned one after another.
- ***Susnyos took the throne by the help of the Oromos(those hosted him for 20 years).***

Catholicism and Civil War

- The Portuguese soldiers stayed here after the defeat of the Adal force and invited ***Jesuits*** (Catholic missionaries).
- ***Bermudez*** claimed a third of land and conversion of the whole people in to Catholic.
- There is no evidence about the promise of Libne Dingel for land and conversion.

The Portuguese Problems

- ***Bermudez*** made himself as the ***patriarch*** of Ethiopia but not ordained from the pope of Rome.
- He asked ***Gelawdewos*** conversion in to Catholicism and recognition his patriarchate.
- ***Gelawdewos*** rejected the request of Bermudez.
- Bermudez attempt the Portuguese soldiers to stop fighting for Gelawdewos.

Contd.

- ***King John III*** of Potugal refused patriarchate of Bermudez over Ethiopia.
- The frustrated Bermudez retired to ***Debarwa*** in 1553.

Contd.

- ***Gelawdewos*** asked Portugal to send priests for the religious service of Portuguese soldiers.
- The king and the pope sent patriarch and two bishops over Ethiopia.
- Gelawdewos heard about the arrangement in Europe for his conversion. He wrote a letter of objection to the Portuguese governor of India.

Contd.

- The governor sent a young Jesuit ***Rodriguez*** to convince Gelawdewos.
- ***Bermudez advised Rodriguez to threat Gelawdewos to accept his request***.
- Rodriguez openly criticized the Orthodox traditions of ***circumcision, food taboo, fasting and observance of Saturday as Sabbath*** as ***heresies*** but failed and went back to ***Goa.***

Contd.

- The recruited patriarch and Bishop asked governor of Goa for military escort.
- But he opposed using force and sent again a bishop called ***Andre Oviedo*** to convince Gelawdewos but was failed.
- Gelawdewos wrote a book called ***The Confessions of Gelawdewos*** in which he rejected the criticism of Jesuits.

Contd.

- In 1559 Gelawdewos lost his life while fighting against the Adal force.
- ***Minas*** (r. 1559-1563)succeeded Gelawdewos.
- ***Oviedo*** took the Portuguese force to Tigray and convinced ***Bahr Nagash Yisihaq*** to remove Minas and Portuguese assistance.
- ***Yisihaq*** agreed to accept Catholicism when the said military assistance arrive.

Contd.

- ***Pedro Paez*** and ***Alfonzo Mendez*** were successively ordained as bishop for Ethiopia.
- ***Paez*** came in 1603 and converted kings ***ZeDingel*** and ***Susnyos*** and died in 1622.
- ***Mendez*** replaced Paez and pressed ***Susnyos*** to declare Catholicism in the country.
- ***1604 ZeDingel was killed in the civil war caused by opposition of Catholicism***.
- In 1607 ***Yaicob*** was killed in the same way.

contd.

- In 1611 ***Se'ela Kiristos*** (brother of Susnyos) and in 1612 ***Susnyos*** accepted Catholicism.
- There was a ***debate*** between Catholics (represented by ***Se'ele Kristos***) Orthodox (represented by clergies) chaired by ***Susnyos***.
- The king and Jesuits condemned
- ***-circumcision***
- ***-fasting Friday and Wednesday***
- ***-observance of Saturday as Sabbath***
- -and they declared ***eating pork.***

Contd.

- The Orthodox clergies faced ***mistreatment*** in the court.
- N ***1622 Susnyos declared Catholicism as official state religion***.
- The first peasant rebellion broke out against the declaration of Catholicism.
- ***From 1626 to 1632 Susnyos fought many times until his last battle in Denqez in 1632.***

Contd.

- The clergies and peasants rebelled against Catholicism.
- The civil war resulted the lost life of many people.
- In 1632 Susnyos abdicated the throne in favor of his son ***Fasiladas***

Measures of Fasiladas

- Fasil took measures after he took power.

I. He restored Orthodox religion.

II. He expelled Jesuits from Ethiopia.

III. He introduced closed door policy towards Europeans.

-The isolation policy stayed until the early 19th century.

-The CHK allied with Muslim states of Swakin, Yemen and the pasha of Massawa (Mitsiwa).

The only two Europeans ***Jaques Poncet*** (French) and ***James Brouce*** (Scotish) were successful to reach Gonder.

The Gonder Period

- The CHK rulers shifted political center from the Shewan highlands to Lake Tana region due to continual attack of Adals and the Oromo pressure.
- Minas succeeded his brother, Gelawdewos in 1559 and retreated to Lake north of Abay river
- Denqez, Gorgora, Azezo Dembiya and Qoga served as mobile capital.

The Establishent of Gonder as Permanent Capital

- Fasiladas founded Gonder as a permanent capital in 1636.
- **Gonder** linked trade routes of ***south-eastern regions*** with ***Mitsiwa*** (on the Red Sea) and ***Metemma*** (on Ethio-Sudan Border).
- It served as permanent capital for about two centuries.
- Gonder became known for its ***architectural achievements*** and ***building technologies.***

Contd.

- The three successive kings ***Fasiladas*** (r.1832-1667), ***Yohannes I*** (r.1667-1682) and ***Iyasu I*** (r.1682-1706**)** brought Gonder prosperity and technological developments.
- ***Castles as palaces, bridges, swimming pools, churches traditional school of learning*** were built.
- There were different religious, cultural, indigenous and foreign communities.
- Traders were mostly Ethiopian Muslims, ***Jeberties***

Contd.

- ***Bete-Israel (Falashas)*** were engaged in crafts like masonry, pottery basketry and iron works.
- ***Addis Alem*** was living quarter of Muslim communities, Felashas and foreigners.
- The foreign communities included Indians, Greeks, Armenians and Persians.
- Cash payment for labor service was introduced.

Administration and Economy of Gonder

- ***Fasiladas*** established Gonder as permanent capital in 1636.
- ***The establishment of permanent capital provided revival to the Kingdom.***
- The Gonderine period lasted from 1636 to 1769.
- The core provinces of the Christian Kingdom were ***Gojam, Begemidir, Simen*** and ***Tigray***.
- ***Shewa*** was isolated from Gonder in the 17th century.

Contd.

- Palaces and castles for kings and residents for ***Abun Echege*** and Churches were built.
- The buildings contain elements of ***Axum*** and ***Zagwe***.
- Churches became the center of ***education***, ***music*** and ***poem***.
- Gonder was trade center before it became capital.
- Fasiladas shifted to Gonder probably to control the trade.

Contd.

- Gonder connected southern regions with Mitsiwwa and Metemma in trade.
- The trade items from countryside were ***cattle, honey, butter*** and ***grain*** while urban supplied ***the products of weavers, blacksmith*** and ***goldsmith.***
- Trade was dominated by Muslim merchants called ***Jeberti***.

Contd.

- ***Falashas*** were engaged in crafts, basketry, masonry, Jewelry and metal works.
- ***Addis Alem*** was living quarter of ***Jeberti, Falasha*** and ***foreigners***.
- Foreigners included ***Armenians, Indians*** and ***Persians***.
- ***Gonder had about 70,000 inhabitants.***

Contd.

- The prosperity of Gonder benefited the ruling class.
- The three successive king Fasiladas, Yohannes Iand Iyasu I brought Gonder Prosperity.
- Iyasu I (Iyasu the Great) was the most powerful king.
- He introduced few reforms in the country.

Reforms of Iyasu I

I. *He revised the traditional civil code called **Fitiha- Nagast**.*
II. *He amended land laws of the country.*
III. *He reorganized taxes and customs.*
IV. *He violated the closed door policy for the sake of entrance of physicians for his skin disease. He brought the French **Jacques Poncet**.*
V. *He strengthened the relation with Egypt.*

Contd.

- The reforms of Iyasu I promoted trade.
- ***The king sent seven Christians to the pope of Rome.***
- The 1704 ***earthquake*** aggravated the clergies opposition towards the king.
- Iyasu fled to island in *Lake Tana*.
- ***Tekle Haymanot*** succeeded and had his father assassinated in the island.

Decline of Gonder

- ***The death of Iyasu I (1706) ushered period of political upheaval in Gonder.***
- Murder and assassination of kings were common in Gonder.
- The kings could not keep political power due to ***military weakness and unmonitored lords***.
- ***Five kings were murdered between Iyasu I and Bakafa (from 1706 to 1721).***

Contd.

- There was religious controversy between Orthodox and the remnants of Catholic ***(Qibat*** and ***Tsega***).
- ***The reign of Bakafa (1721-1730) was relatively peaceful***.
- Bakafa was admired for his efficient administration even if Shewa began isolation.
- ***Iyasu II (Iyasu the Little) succeeded Bakafa inn1730 under the regency of Mintiwab.***

Contd.

- ***Mintiwab*** used her Brother ***Welde Leul*** to secure her power with the title of ***ras bitwadad*** since 1732.
- Iyasu II used the ***Wello Oromos*** to get rid of ***Quaregnoch***.
- His father Bakafa was exiled with the Wello chief called ***Amizo***.
- Iyasu I married ***Wabi*** (daughter of Amizo).

Contd.

- The marriage between ***Iyasu II*** and ***Wabi*** (***Bersabeh***) marked the active involvement of the Wello Oromos in the CHK palace.
- ***Iyoas*** succeeded his father Iyasu II and faced challenge from the ***Amhara chiefs of Quara***.
- He invited his two Oromo cousins (***Lubo*** and ***Birile***) to secure his power.
- The influence of the Wello Oromos grew and the ***Oromo language*** was spoken in the court.

Power Struggle in Gonder

- There were two factions (***Quara*** led by ***Mintiwab***) and (***wello*** led by ***Wabi*** or ***bersabeh***) for power struggle.
- In 1767 ***Ras Bitwadad Weldeleul*** died.
- In1768 ***Mintiwab*** invited ***Ras Michael Sehul*** of Tigray and he suppressed the opposition.
- ***Ras Michael Sehul*** mudered Iyoas and enthroned ***Yohannes II.***

Zemene Mesafint (Era Warlords)

- It was the period of the domination of regional lords over the nominal kings in the palace of Gonder.
- ***It stayed from 1769 (death of King Iyoas) to 1855 (the power seizure of Eperor Tewdros II).***

Causes for the Emergence of Zemene Mesafint

- The long fifteen years Muslim-Christian conflict (mainly from 1529 to 1543)
- The Oromo population movement and expansion
- The establishment of Gonder as the permanent capital

Features of the Zemene Mesafint

I. continual civil war

The regional lords were fighting each other for the sake of

A. territorial expansion.

B. the title of ras bitwadad

C. Collecting tribute in the name of weak kings.

II. Religious controversies

- The clergies were in conflict over the religious principles or doctrine.
- ***The major cause of the conflict was the divine nature of Jesus Christ.***
- There were two births and three births groups.
- ***Orthodox Tewahido*** clergies believed in two births of Jesus Christ.
- '***Qibat***' and '***Tsega***' believed in three births of Jesus Christ (legacies of Catholic missionaries).
- ***The conflict had regional character.***

III. political & public instability.

The people was forced to pay tribute for different lords and to loss the property even children to bandits.

IV. Regionalism

There was no common idea and movement among the regional lords.

V. Decline of Agriculture, Trade and civilization

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Farmers were forced to pay tribute for different lords.

Merchants were blocked by the robbers and shifts (bandits)

Education, Literature, architecture, crafts and other aspects of achievements were diminished.

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VI. Entrance and Threat of foreign powers

After the collapse of closed door policy the Europeans came to Ethiopian regions.

Egyptians attacked Ethiopia mainly in the north and north west since they captured Sudan.

The regional lords defended the Egyptian aggressions successfully.

For instance ***Dij. Kinfu in Quara, Dej. Wube in Simen, Ras Gobena in Wellega Dej, Kasa (Tewodros II) Yohannes IV in Mereb-Mellash or Eritrea repulsed the Egyptian forces.***

Decline and Loss of Kings' Power

- The kings in Gonder remained powerless due to the growing power of regional lords.
- The six times enthroned and dethroned of ***Tekle Giorgis*** or ***Fitsame Mengist*** (1789-1800) marked the end of power of the kingdom.
- *The successors of **Tekle Giorgis** became more puppet kings of regional lords.*

The Yeju (Were Sheh)Dynasty

- The Yeju Dynasty dominated the politics of Northern Ethiopia in the name of puppet kings of Gonder until 1855.
- ***Gojam Gonder, Tigray*** and ***Wello*** were main territories of the kingdom.
- ***Shewa*** was isolated from Gonder during the Zemene Mesafint.
- ***Ras Gugsa*** (r.1803-1825) was the strongest ruler of the Yeju dynasty.

Challenges of the Yeju Dynasty

- ***Ras W/Sillasie*** (r. 1790-1816) of ***Inderta*** and ***Dej***. ***Sabagadis*** (r. 1822-1831) resisted Gugsa's power in the north from Tigray.
- Gugsa tried to neutralize them through ***marriage*** and ***diplomacy***.
- Gugsa's military power and diplomatic skill enabled him to exercise his power over the regional lords of ***Gojam, Wello, Lasta, Semen, Wagara*** and ***Dembiya.***

Contd.

- ***Ras Yimam*** (r. 1825-28) suppressed the revolt of Semen.
- Yimam was succeeded by ***Maryye*** in 1828.
- ***Dej. Sabagadis*** of Tigray fought against Marye.
- The lords lost their lives in 1831 at the battle of ***Mayaslamay***, near ***Debra Abbay*** in Western Tigray and the Yeju rulers became victorious.

Contd.

- ***Dej. Wube*** of Semen was rewarded Tigray for his siding with the Yeju in the battle.
- The Yeju political dominance continued until the reign of ***Ras Ali II*** or ***Ali the Little*** (r.1831-1855)

Effects of Zemene Mesafint

Weakened of the unity of the Country

-Degradation of broad nationalism

-Entrance of European colonial agents

-Colonial occupation of Djibouti and Eritrea

End of the Zemene Mesafint

- ***Kasa hailu W/Giorgis*** (the later ***Emperor Tewodros II***) ended the Zemene Mesafint (Era of Lords).
- He was one of the regional lords of Zemene Mesafint.
- His attitude brought him to be the best figure of Zemene Mesafint.

Early Life of Kasa

- ***Kasa*** was not born from ***royal family*** but had aristocratic back ground.
- ***Dejach Kinfu*** (uncle or half brother of Kasa) governed ***Quara*** from 1827to 1839.
- Kasa attended Church education in ***Chunker Tekle Haymanot*** and ***Mahibere Sillsie*** Monastries.
- ***Ras Ali II*** was the guardian of the Atse ***Yohannes III*** of Gonder

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- Kasa claimed in the realm of his uncle Kinfu.
- ***Ras Ali*** assigned his mother ***Etege Menen*** as a governor of Quara.
- Kasa was offended and became ***bandit(shifta***) in ***Quara***.
- The victory and popularity of Kasa became high.
- Menen and Ali gave ***Tewabech*** (daughter of Ali) to Kasa with political marriage in 1846.

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- Kasa was ***discontented*** by corrupted with inefficient administration of them.
- He defied them and continued banditry.
- Itege Menen undermined him and sent Dej. Wondirad to quell Kasa revolt.
- Kasa defeated and captured ***Wondirad*** in 1847 at the battle of ***Chako***
- ***Menen*** led her force to punish the rebel Kasa but she was captured by Kasa at ***Eyyoha*** in 1847.

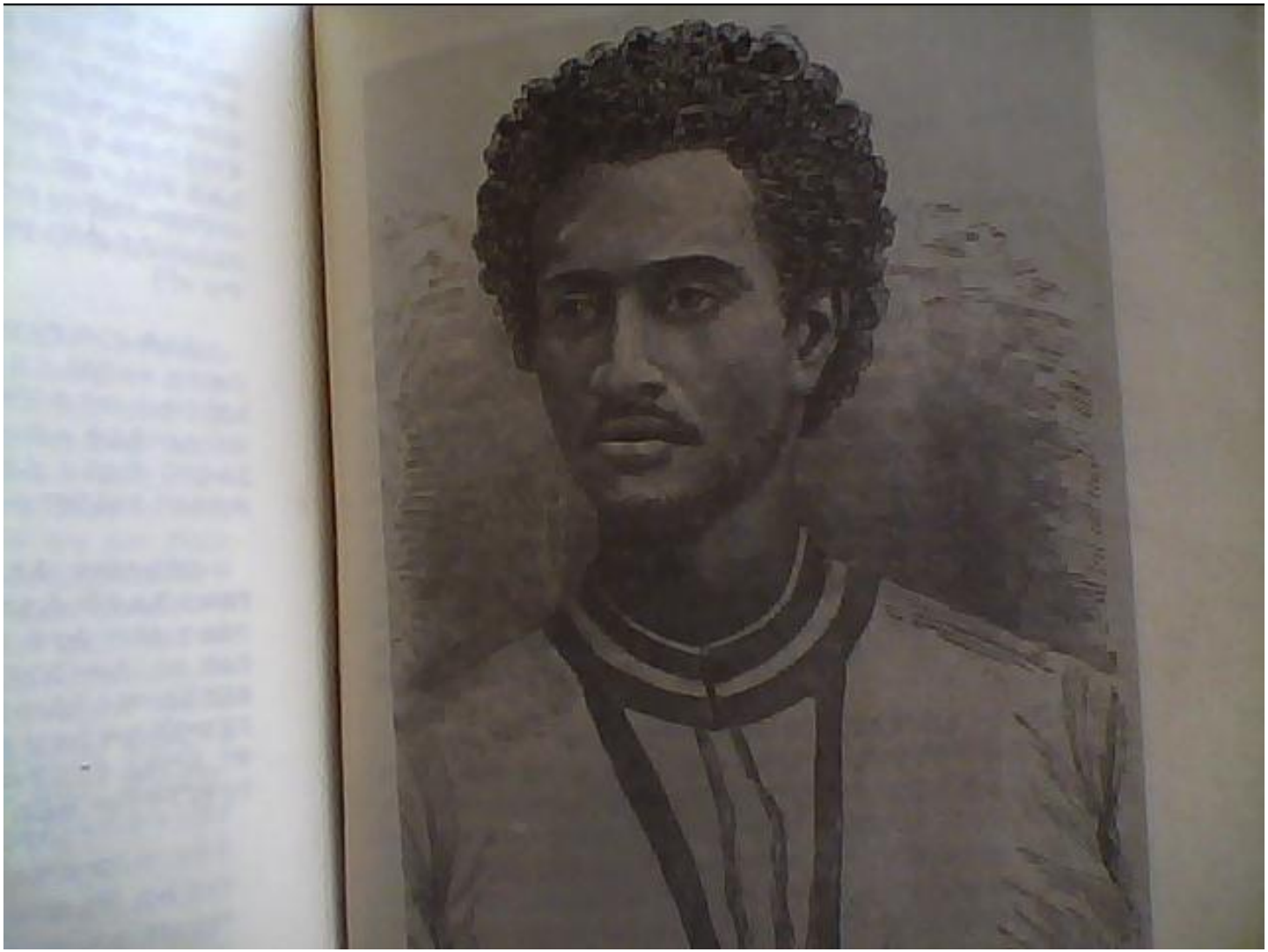
Decisive Victories of Kasa Over the Lords of the Zemene Messafint

- In 1852 he defeated ***Dej. Goshu at Guramba***.
- In 1852 he defeated ***Dej. Biru at GogoraBichen***
- Kasa defeated ***Ras Ali II at the battle of Ayshal*** in 1853. It marked the end of the ***Yeju Dynasty***
- Kasa defeated ***Dej. Wube Haile Mariam*** in 1855 and was crowened in ***Deresge Mariam*** as ***Emperor Tewodros II*** by ***Abune Selama***.
- Tewodrs defeated the Shewan force in 1855 at the battle of ***Barakat*** and took the 12 years old ***Menelik***.

Dejach Kasa Hailu



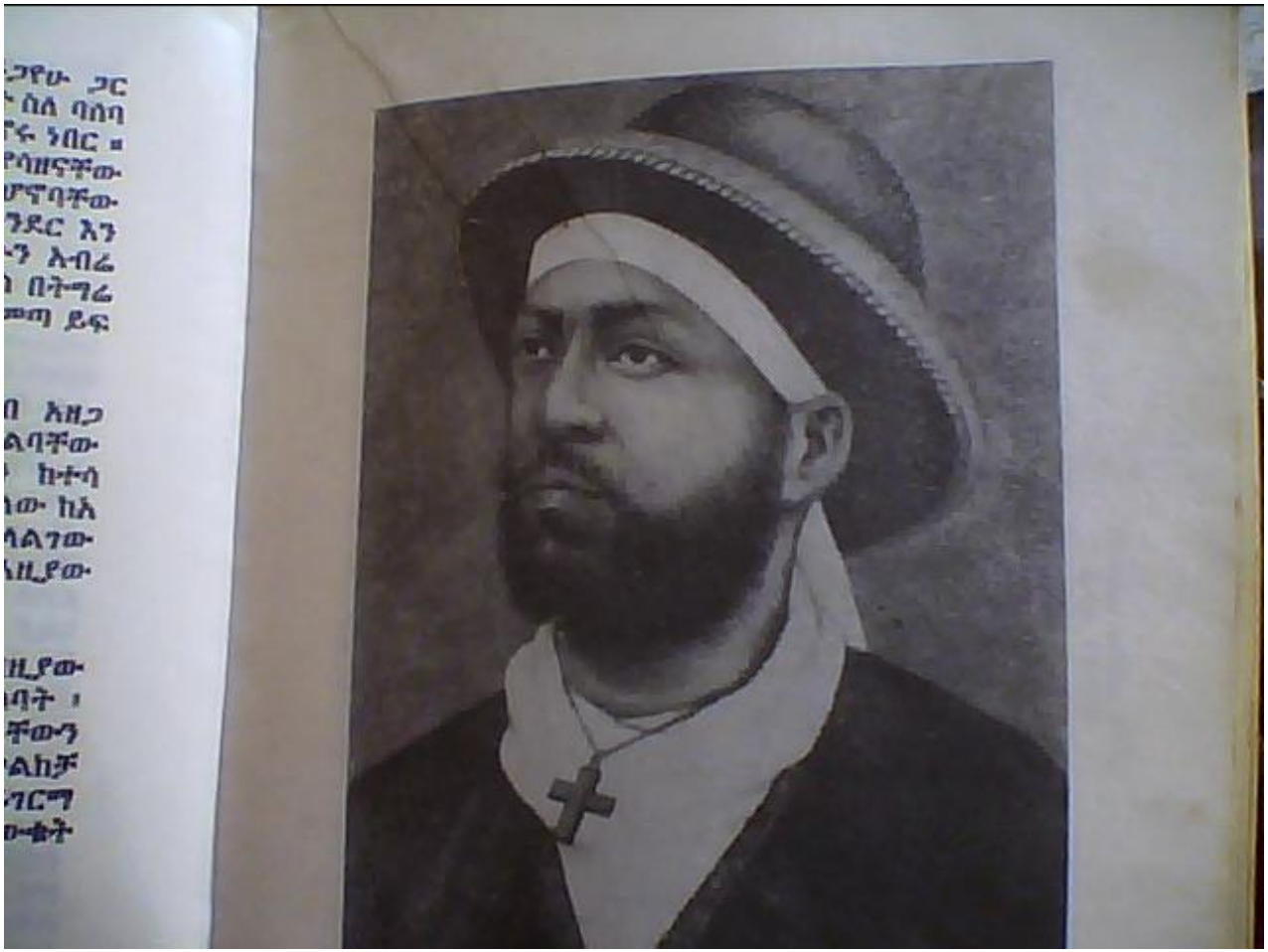
Ras Ali Iiof theYeju Dynasty



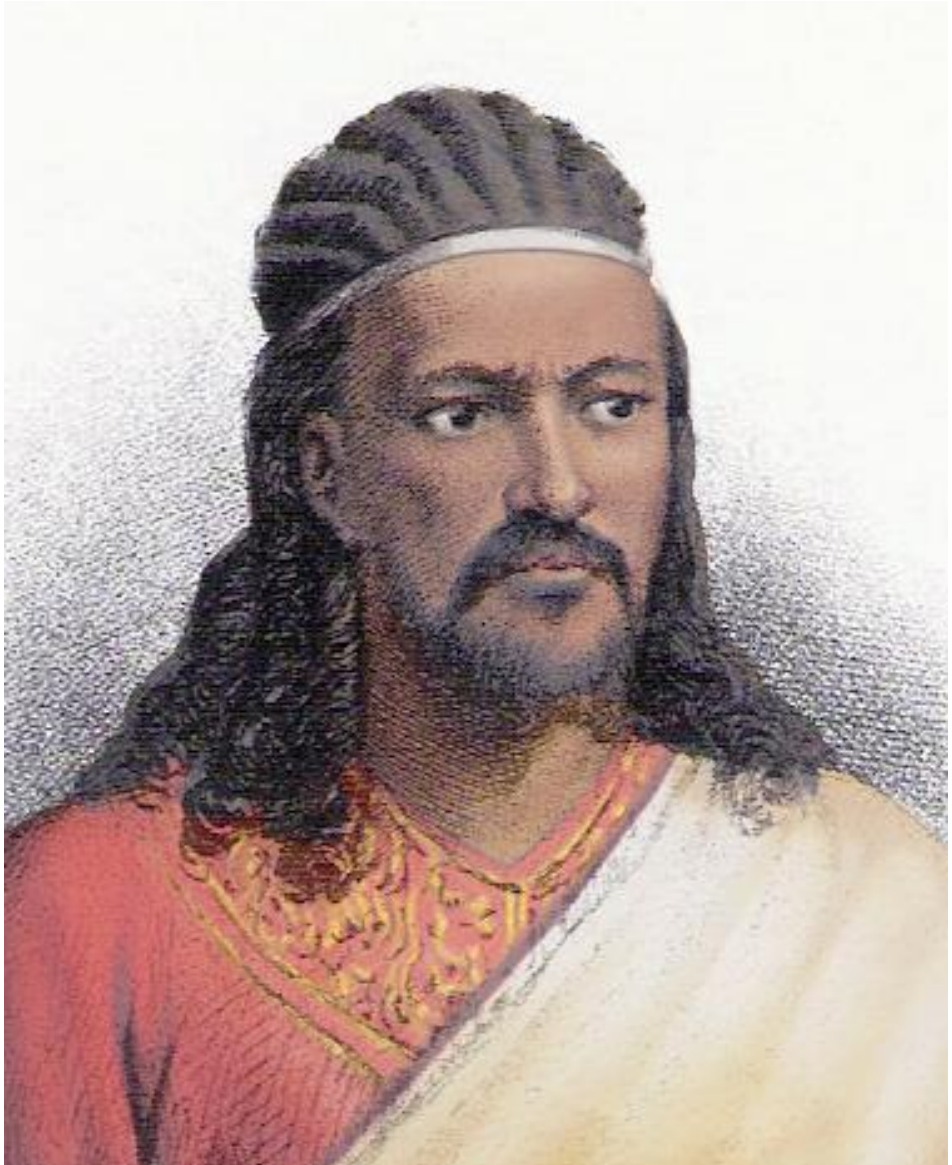
Dejach Wube Haile Mariamof Semen



King Haile Melekot of Shewa



Emperor Tewodros II



Emperor Tewodros II(r.1855-1868)



Tewodros II

