



UNIT ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE AND USES OF HISTORY

- ❑ The term history is came from the Greek word **historia** which meant
 - ✓ Inquiry or
 - ✓ an account of one's inquiries
 - ❑ The first use of the term is accredited to one of the ancient Greek historians, **Herodotus (c. 484–c. 420 B.C.E.)**, who is often held to be the “**father of written history.**”
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Nature

- ❑ **In ordinary usage**, history means all the things that have happened in the human past.
 - ❑ **Academically**, it is an organized and systematic study of the past. The study involves the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.
 - ❑ It is the period after the development of complex social and political organizations along with the invention of writing
 - ❑ It studies the interaction between humans and their environment in the past within the framework of the continuous process of change taking place in time.
 - ❑ It studies about change and continuities.
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Uses

- ❑ History Helps Us Better Understand the Present
- ❑ History Provides Us a Sense of Our Own Identity
- ❑ History Provides the Basic Background for Many Other

Disciplines

Sources and Methods of Historical Study

- ❑ Sources are a key to the study and writing of history. Historical sources are broadly classified into two types

1. Primary sources

- ✓ These are **surviving traces** of the past
 - ✓ They are **original** or **first hand**
 - ✓ Manuscripts, diaries, letters, minutes, court and administrative files, travel documents and physical remains or relics such as coins, fossils, weapons, utensils, and buildings.
 - ✓ Primary sources have to be verified for **their originality** and **authenticity** because sometimes primary sources like letters may be forged
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2. *Secondary sources*

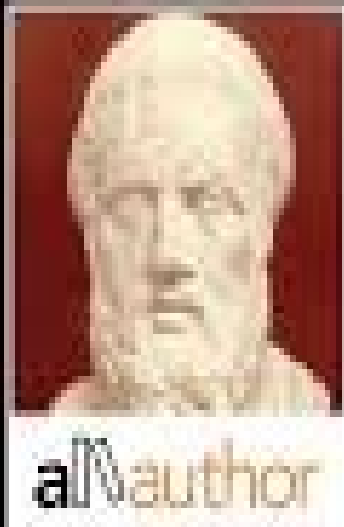
- ✓ They are second-hand published accounts
 - ✓ articles, books, textbooks, biographies, and published stories or movies about historical events
 - ✓ They provide an interpretation of what happened, why it happened, and how it happened
 - ✓ They have to be examined for the reliability of their reconstructions.
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Oral sources

- ✓ They are indispensable to study and document the history of non-literate societies
 - ✓ Oral information that passes from one generation to another without being recorded in known **Oral tradition**.
 - ✓ An oral tradition may lose its originality and authenticity due to
 - ✓ Omission
 - ✓ Exaggeration and
 - ✓ distortion
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The History of Historical Writing in Ethiopia and the Horn

- ❑ **Historiography** is the history of historical accounts.
 - ❑ It studies how knowledge of the past, either recent or distant, is obtained and transmitted.
 - ❑ The organized study and narration of the past were introduced by
 - ✓ Herodotus (c. 484–c. 420 B.C.E.)
 - ✓ Thucydides (d. c. 401 B.C.E.)
 - ✓ Sima Qian (145– 86 B.C.E.)
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No one is so foolish as to prefer war to peace in which instead of sons burying their fathers fathers bury their sons.

-Herodotus

Thucydides

(c. 460-404 BCE)



*“One’s sense of honour
is the only thing that
does not grow old,
and the last pleasure, when
one is worn out with age,
is not, as the poet said,
making money, but having the
respect of one’s fellow men.”*

*- History of the
Peloponnesian War*

The Historian’s Hut

Quote from *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides, translated by Rex Warner and introduced by M. I. Finley. New York: Penguin Classics, 1972. Background photo of Thucydides, by user:shakko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, cropped and modified. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thucydides_pushkin01.jpg



Each man has only to be left to utilize his own abilities and exert his strength to obtain what he wishes — When each person works away at his own occupation and delights in his own business, then like water flowing downward, goods will naturally flow ceaselessly day and night without being summoned, and the people will produce commodities without having been asked.

Sima Qian (c. 145 or 135 – 86 BC),
Chinese Historian

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- ❑ besides such historiographical traditions, history emerged as an academic discipline in the second half of 19th c.
 - ❑ A German **Leopold Von Ranke** (1795–1886), and his colleagues **established history as an independent discipline in Berlin.**
 - ❑ He is considered as the “father of modern historiography”.
 - ❑ He introduced history with its own set of methods and concepts by which historians
 - ✓ collect evidence of past events
 - ✓ evaluate that evidence, and
 - ✓ present a meaningful discussion of the subject
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Leopold von Ranke
(1795-1886)

*'History seeks to show the past as
it essentially happened'.*

❑ *The earliest known reference to the history of Ethiopia and the Horn*

✓ **The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea**

- ✓ It was written 1st century A.D by an unknown author.

✓ **Christian Topography**

- ✓ It describes Aksum's trade and the then Aksumite king's campaigns.
 - ✓ It was composed by **Cosmas Indicopleustes**, a Greek sailor, in the sixth century A.D.
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□ *A Manuscript*

- ✓ It was found **in Haiq Istifanos** monastery of Wollo in 13th century

A.D

- ✓ Even though they are religious documents they added value for historians
 - ✓ They contain the list of medieval kings and their history in brief.
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Some Parchment manuscript books within the museum show case which one put over the other. Photograph by Getnet Z (2017)



❑ *Hagiographies*

- ✓ They largest groups of sources for medieval Ethiopian history from EOC
 - ✓ Their primary function is enhancing the prestige of saints.
 - ✓ They discussed the development of the church and the state including territorial conquests by reigning monarchs
 - ✓ **A parallel hagiography of Muslim saint also existed**
 - ✓ **Shaykh Ja'far Bukko of Gattira** in 19th century Wollo
 - ✓ The development of indigenous Islam and contacts between the region's Muslim community and the outside world are some of the issues discussed in this document
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❑ *Chronicles*

- ✓ Ethiopia had an indigenous history writing called chronicle.
 - ✓ First appeared in the 14th century in geez and continued in Amharic into the early 20th
 - ✓ The earliest and the last of such surviving documents are
 - ✓ The glorious victories of Amade-Tsion
 - ✓ The chronicle of Abeto Iyasu
 - ✓ Empress Zewditu
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- ❑ They incorporate *both legends and facts* past and contemporary about the monarch's genealogy, upbringing military exploits, piety, and statesmanship.
 - ❑ They are known for their factual detail.
 - ❑ They provide a glimpse into the character and lives of kings, their preoccupations, and relations with subordinate officials and the evolution of the Ethiopian state and society
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❑ *Written accounts of Arabic-speaking visitors*

- ✓ They provide useful information on various aspects of the region's history
 - ✓ *al-Masudi* and *Ibn Battuta* described the culture, language, and import-export trade in the main central region of the east African coast in the tenth and in the fourteenth centuries respectively.
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❑ *Futuh al Habesha (The Conquest of Abyssinia)*

- ✓ An eye witness accounts in 16th century
 - ✓ *Futuh al Habesha was composed by Shihab al-Din*
 - ✓ He recorded the conflict between the Christian kingdom and the Muslim principalities in the 16th c
 - ✓ The document describes major towns and their inhabitants in the southeastern part of Ethiopia
 - ✓ The discussion ends in 1535.
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❑ *Al-Hayami*

- ✓ An eye witness accounts in 17th c
- ✓ He led a Yemeni delegation in 1647 to the court of Fasiledes (r. 1632- 67)

❑ *Aba Bahrey's*, the History of the Oromo

- ✓ It was written in the 1590s
- ✓ This document provides firsthand information about the Oromo population movement in the stated period

❑ *Missionaries and travelers* they had a significant contribution to the development of Ethiopian historiography.

- From early 16th to the late 19th century *missionaries* came to the country with the intention of staying who nevertheless maintained intimate links with Europe.
 - The missionaries sources provide as valuable information covering a considerable period.
 - Some of the major topics were *religious and political developments* within Ethiopia and *the country's foreign relations.*
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- *The Prester John of the Indies*

- ✓ Composed by a Portuguese priest, *Francisco Alvarez*

- *Travel documents* had important contribution to the development of Ethiopian historiography.

- ✓ *James Bruce's* Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile.

- however, both the missionaries and travelers' materials can only be used with considerable *reservations and with care* for they are socially and politically biased

- ❑ A German, *Hiob Ludolf (l.1624-1704)*, were *the founder of Ethiopian studies in Europe in the 17th c.*
 - ❑ He wrote *Historica Aethiopica (A New History of Ethiopia)*.
 - ❑ Ludolf never visited Ethiopia; he wrote the country's history based on information he collected from an Ethiopian priest named *Abba Gorgorios (Aba Gregory)* who was in Europe at that time.
 - ❑ In the 19th , *August Dillman* published two studies on ancient Ethiopian history.
 - ❑ Compared to Ludolf, Dillman demonstrated *all markers of objectivity* in his historical research endeavors.
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❖ Historical writing made some departures from the chronicle tradition in the early 20th c

□ *Traditional Ethiopian writers*

- ✓ They made conscious efforts to distance themselves from *chroniclers* whom they criticized for *adulatory tone* when writing about monarchs.
 - ✓ They discussed a range of topics from
 - ✓ *social justice*
 - ✓ *administrative reform, and*
 - ✓ *economic analysis to history*
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□ The earliest group of these writers includes

✓ *Aleqa Taye Gebre-Mariam*

✓ *Yeityopia Hizb Tarik (The History of Ethiopian People)*

✓ *Aleqa Asme Giorgis*

✓ *Ye Oromo Tarik (The History of the Oromo)*

✓ *Debtera Fisseha-Giorgis Abyezgi*

✓ *A History of Ethiopia*

✓ *Onesmus Nasib*

✓ *(Aba Gemechis translated the Bible into his native tongue, Afan Oromo)*

✓ *Negadrases Afework Gebre-Iyesus*

- ✓ wrote the first Amharic novel, *Tobiya*, and

✓ *Gebre-Hiwot Baykedagn*

- ✓ *Atse Menilekna Ityopia (Emperor Menilek and Ethiopia)* and *Mengistna Yehizb Astedader (Government and Public Administration)*

✓ *Blatten Geta Hiruy Wolde-Selassie*

- ✓ The most prolific writer of the early 20th
 - ✓ He published four major works namely *Ethiopian Metema (Ethiopia and Metema)*, *Wazema (Eve)*, *Yehiwot Tarik (A Biographical Dictionary)*, and *Yeityopia Tarik (The History of Ethiopia)*.
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- *Gebre-Hiwot and Hiruy* exhibited relative objectivity and methodological sophistication in their works.
 - Unfortunately, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia interrupted the early experiment in modern history writing and publications.
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❑ *Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria*

- ✓ He formed a bridge between writers in pre-1935 and Ethiopia professional historians who came after him.
- ✓ He has published eight historical works
- ✓ He made a better evaluation of his sources than his predecessors

❑ *Yilma Deressa*

- ✓ A History of Ethiopia in the 16th c
 - ✓ *Ye Ityopiya Tarik Be'asra Sidistegnaw Kifle Zemen (A History of Ethiopia in the Sixteenth Century)*
 - ✓ His book addresses the Oromo population movement and the wars between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim principalities as its main subjects
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❑ *Blatten Geta Mahteme Selassie Wolde-Meskel*

- ✓ *He wrote Zikre Neger (Things Remembered)*
- ✓ It is a comprehensive account of Ethiopia's prewar land tenure systems and taxation
- ✓ His work fails to capture **localized circumstances, responses, and conflicts** and **silent on the actual impacts of government** legislation on regulating access to resource control.

❑ *Gebre-Wold Engidawork*

❑ *Dejazmach Kebede Tesema*

- ✓ He wrote his memoir of the imperial period, published *as Yetarik Mastawesha in 1962 E.C.*
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❑ *The 1960s* was a crucial decade in the development of Ethiopian historiography for it was in this period that *history emerged as an academic discipline.*

- ✓ The pursuit of historical studies as a full-time occupation began with the opening of the *Department of History at the then Haile Selassie I University (HSIU).*
 - ✓ The production of BA theses began towards the end of the decade.
 - ✓ The Department launched its MA and PhD programs in 1979 and 1990 respectively.
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□ *The Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) is the other institutional home of professional historiography in Ethiopia.*

- ✓ The IES was founded in 1963
 - ✓ the IES has been publishing *the Journal of Ethiopian Studies* for the dissemination of historical research.
 - ✓ The Institute's library contains literary works of diverse disciplines and has its fair share in the evolution of professional historiography of Ethiopia.
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- ✓ Since then the Institute housed a number of historians such as ***Richard Pankhurst***, the first Director and founding member of the Institute

His prolific publications remains unmatched

- ✓ He has authored or co-authored twenty-two books
- ✓ He produced several hundred articles



- ❑ *The professionalization of history* in other parts of the Horn is a
 - ✓ **post-colonial phenomenon**
 - ❑ With the establishment of independent nations, a deeper interest in exploring their own past quickly emerged among African.
 - ❑ With this came an urgent need to recast the historical record and to recover evidence of many lost pre-colonial civilizations.
 - ❑ The decolonization of African historiography required new methodological approach (tools of investigation) that involved a
 - ✓ critical use of oral data and
 - ✓ tapping the percepts of ancillary disciplines like archeology, anthropology and linguistics
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- *European intellectuals* also provided for the intensive academic study of African history, an innovation that had spread to North America by the 1960s.
 - Foundational research was done at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London and the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
 - Francophone scholars have been as influential as Anglophones.
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The Geographical Context

- ❖ *In this section, we will study the impact that the region's geography has on the way people live and organize themselves into societies.*
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- ❑ The term “*Ethiopia and the Horn*” refers to that part of Northeast Africa, which now contains the countries of *Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia*.
 - ❑ The major *physiographic features of the region are*
 - ✓ a massive highland complex of mountains and plateaus
 - ✓ Great Rift Valley
 - ✓ lowlands, semi-desert, deserts and tropical forests along the periphery.
 - ❑ The diversity of the terrain led to regional variations in climate, natural vegetation, soil composition, and settlement patterns.
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- ❑ As with the physical features, people across the region are remarkably diverse: they speak a vast number of different languages, profess to many distinct religions, live in various types of dwellings, and engage in a wide range of economic activities.
 - ❑ At the same time, however, peoples of the region were never isolated; they interacted throughout history from various locations.
 - ❑ Thus, as much as there are many factors that make people of a certain area unique from the other, there are also many areas in which *peoples of Ethiopia and the Horn share common past.*
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- The history of Ethiopia and the Horn has been shaped by contacts with others through commerce, migrations, wars, slavery, colonialism, and the waxing and waning of state systems.

Geographical factor that has significant bearing on the ways in which history unfolds

- ❑ Ethiopia and the Horn lies between the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean on the one hand, and the present-day eastern frontiers of Sudan and Kenya on the other.
 - ✓ Since early times, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden linked Northeast Africa to the Eastern Mediterranean, the Near and Middle East, India, and the Far East.
 - ✓ The Indian Ocean has linked East Africa to the Near and Middle East, India and the Far East.
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- ❑ Drainage system: Ethiopia and the Horn has five principal drainage systems. These are the Nile River, Gibe/Omo–Gojeb, Genale/Jubba-Shebele, the Awash River, and the Ethiopian Rift Valley Lake systems
 - ✓ provide people with the source of their livelihood,
 - ✓ the drainage systems facilitated the movement of peoples and goods across diverse environments, resulting in the exchange of ideas, technology, knowledge, cultural expressions, and beliefs.
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Thank You!
