# *HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN (HIST.1102)*

**Set by Yonas Tefera**

# UNIT FIVE
# Politics, Economy & Social Processes
## ( from the early 16th to the end of the 18th centuries

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## ( from the early 16th to the end of the 18th centuries)

## 5.1. Conflict b/n the CK & the Sultanate of Adal & After

- the struggle to control the trade routes lay at the heart of the conflict
- religion also provided ideological justification for the wars
- the situation in the MS before the conflict: internal strife, corruption & anarchy

➢ A new leadership came under **Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi**

- little is known about his early life; he was born at Hubet (b/n Dire Dawa & Jijiga)
- he was a devout Muslim & served as a solider under *Garad* Abun of Adal
- he proved his leadership by mobilizing the pastoral communities of the Afar, the Somali, the Harla, Harari & others to fight against the CK
- in 1520 he refused to pay tribute, & campaigned against the CK in 1527 (controlled Bali, Dawaro, Fatagar, Sidama, Hadiya and Kambata)

- The Christian Kingdom was led by **Lebne-Dengel** (r.1508-1540)
  - he was only eleven when he came to power
  - in 1528 he mobilized his army, but the large & well-equipped army of the
  - CK was defeated at Shimbra Kure(1529), near present day Mojo
  - Adal controlled vast territories (Shewa, Amhara, Lasta, and moved as far north as Mereb Melash

- Bati Del Wanbara, daughter of Mahfuz & wife of Imam Ahmed
  - accompanied her husband throughout his expeditions
  - delivered her two sons during the campaigns of 1531(Ifat) & 1533(Tigray)

- Seble-Wongel, wife of Libne-Dingel & mother of Gelawdewos (r.1540-59) advised the reigning emperor how to prepare & march



- The war made Lebne-Dengel to retreat & finally he died in 1540 being fugitive

- In 1541, about 400 Portuguese soldiers arrived to support the CK led by Christopher da Gama, the youngest son of Vasco da Gama; the Christian army was defeated in Ofla ( southern Tigray); about 200 Portuguese were killed & their leader Christopher da Gama was beheaded.

- the monarch employed hit & run strategy, w/h severely affected Adal's army
- On February 25, 1543 while Imam Ahmed encamped near Lake Tana, he was attacked & killed after a fierce fighting at the battle of Woyna-Dega.
- Soon Gelawdewos succeeded in restoring many of the pre-1520s territories
  - he was tolerant toward the Muslims to promote national conciliation
  - in the early 1550s, Gelawdewos had established a strong Christian Kingdom
  - but Adal continued its challenge under Nur Ibn al-Waazir Mujahid
  - in 1559, the forces of Emir Nur confronted & killed Gelawdewos

Emperor Minas (r.1559-1563) & Sartsa-Dengle (r.1563-1598)

- **Consequence of the Conflict b/n the KC & Adal**

✓ Considerable human and material destruction

✓ Weakened both the CK & the Muslim sultanates,& paved the way for OPM

✓ cultural interaction & intermarriages among various ethnic groups

## 5.2. Foreign Intervention & Religious Controversies

- in 1557 the Jesuit missionaries under bishop Andreas de Oviedo came to Ethiopia to spread Catholicism (later Pedro Paez, Alfonso Mendez)
- the Catholic & EOC have d/t doctrine about the birth & nature of Christ
- the Jesuits began their evangelical effort with Emperor Gelawdewos
- but he publicized his stand in a document called the *Confession of Faith*
- they got relative success with Emperor Za-Dengel (r. 1603-4)
- in 1612, Susenyos converted to Catholicism & announced it as a state religion(1622)

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**The new decrees include**:

- all the Orthodox Christians to be rebaptized & the clergy to be re-ordained
- prohibition of ark of the covenant (*tabots*) & male circumcision
- replacement of the Ge'ez liturgy by Latin Mass
- denunciation of the reverence for Ethiopian saints
- the eating of pork was allowed & Gregorian calendar to be adopted
- prohibition of fasting on Wednesdays & Fridays/ observance of *Sabbath*

➢ All these triggered a rebellion and bloody civil war (June 1632 )

Finally, Susenyos abdicated his throne in favor of his son, Fasiledes (r.1632-1667)



- **Measures taken by Fasiledes**

- restored the Orthodox Church as the state religion
- expelled the Jesuits & punished local converts(including his uncle Se'ela Kristos)
- introduced a “closed-door” policy, isolated the country from Europe
- adopted a policy of close diplomatic relations with the Islamic world

- the Jesuit intervention triggered doctrinal controversy within the EOC

- ***Tewahedo*** teaches *Hulet Lidet* of Christ, one from eternity & other from Mary (dominant in Tigray & Lasta)

- ***Qibat*** (Unction) accepted the eternal birth as the first birth of Christ, but claimed that at the moment of his incarnation, when he was born into the world, Holy Ghost anointed him; dominant in Gojam.

- ***Sost Lidet*/Three** Births (*Ya Tsega Lij* / Son through Grace) taught that Christ was first born in eternity as divine being, was born again in the womb of St. Mary & anointed by Holy Ghost; was dominant in Gonder and Shawa.

## 5.3. Population Movements

- People moved from place to place due to pull & push factors (natural/social)
- include military conflicts, drought, in search of resources & better living

### 5.3.1. Population Movements of the Argoba, Afar, and Somali

**Causes**: i) the military conflicts b/n the CK & Adal; ii) demographic pressure

**The Argoba**:

- major agents of Islamic expansion, trade and Muslim state formation
- were dominant in Ifat, & integral part the Muslim résistance against the CK
- being located along the major caravan trade routes it was one center of conflict

**The Afar**:

- the region was the center of competition b/n the CK & the Muslim sultanates
- the wars pushed the Afar to move in different directions
- their pastoral economy helped the Afar to survive the destructive effects of the wars of the 16$^{th}$ century

**The Somali**:

- before the 16$^{th}$ c there was environmental pressure on Somali inhabited areas
- was a strong force behind the military strength of the Imam
- but did not last for long as they returned to their home base following the defeat of Imam Ahmed in 1543

## 2. Gadaa System and the Oromo Population Movement (1522-1618)

**A. The Gadaa System :** is important to better understand the Oromo population movement of the 16th century.

**Meaning**: The Gadaa system was an institution through which the Oromo socially organized themselves, administered their affairs, defended their territories, maintained law and order and managed their economies.

**History of the Gadaa system**:

- ✓ during the early 16thc, the system fully functioned because of which the Oromo were well organized.
- ✓ Besides, the Oromo is said to have practiced the Gadaa system long before their 16th c movement.
- ✓ the system evolved from the earlier Cushitic age-set social organization
- ✓ time computation & recording history was based on the 8 segment of time
- ✓ eight years represented one Gadaa period;
- ✓ 5-gadaa periods or 40 years represented one generation & nine generations represented an era.
- ➢ Gadaa was interrupted & revitalized during various eras because of d/t internal and external factors. For instance, the Borana-Barentu Gadaa was instituted after interruption for nearly two generations. It was revived in 1450 at Madda Walabu that became the central *Chaffe* (assembly) and seat of the senior *Qallu* until 1900.

**Values and how the Gadaa system had worked:**

- ✓ The Gadaa system constituted elements of democracy such as periodic succession & power sharing to prevent a one-man rule.
- ✓ Representation of all lineages, clans and confederacies.
- ✓ Means of socialization, education, keeping of peace & order, social cohesion.
- ✓ It constituted rules of ***arara*** (conflict resolution), ***guma*** (compensation) and ***rakoo*** (marriage)
- ✓ The Gadaa system organized the Oromo society into age-grades & generation sets delineating members' social, political, & economic responsibilities.
- ✓ The system provided a socio-political framework that institutionalized r/ship b/n seniors & juniors & egalitarian r/s among members of a grade.
- ✓ The Gadaa/*luba* assumed power for eight years.
- ➢ The head of the government was known as ***Abba-Gadaa*** literally "father of the period" who was assisted by several elected representatives from among the generation set. These included:
  - *Abba Bokku* (father of scepter),
  - *Abba Chaffe* (head of the assembly),
  - *Abba-Dula* (war leader), *Abba Sera* (father of law), *Abba Alanga* (judge)
  - *Abba Sa'a* (father of treasury) and other councilors.

✓In the Gadaa system, the senior *Qallu* (*Abba Muda*) played indispensable roles in power transfer & legitimizing the ruling gadaa class.

✓ Women maintained their rights by the *Sinqe institution*, which helped them to form sisterhood and solidarity

**The five Gadaa classes (generation sets)**

| **Fathers** | **Sons** |
|---|---|
| *Melba* | *Harmufa* |
| *Mudena* | *Robale* |
| *Kilole* | *Birmajii* |
| *Bifole* | *Mul'ata* |
| *Michille* | *Dulo* |

**B. The Oromo Population Movement (1522-1618)**

**Causes**: Natural and manmade factors.

* **Natural factors:** include demographic pressure & subsequent need for land to accommodate the growing human & livestock population.

* **Manmade factor**: the conflict b/n the CK & Muslim Sultanates($13^{th}$–$16^{th}$c) pressurized mainly pastoral Oromo groups to leave the lands they inhabited for other areas.

- In 1522, when the pop'n movement began, they were already organized under Borana & Barentu confederacies.
- The Oromo forces took northern direction & passed through a corridor b/n Mount Walabu & Lake Abbaya.
- Some took westward & penetrated across the Bilatte River to the southwest
- Then they headed northwards to the lakes region of the Rift Valley.
- In the course of their movement into several regions, different Oromo branches established Gadaa centers.

  *Oda Nabee of Tulama, *Oda Roba of Sikko-Mando (Arsi),
  * Oda Bultum of Itu-Humabenna, * Oda Bisil of Mecha and
  * Oda Bulluq of Jawwi Mecha became major Gadaa centers.



- **Consequences of the Oromo population movement**:

- It put an end to the wars between the CK and Muslim states &the southward expansion of the Christian highland kingdom.
- Resulted in integrations among peoples across ethnic & religious background.
- The Oromo integrated non-Oromo through two adoption mechanisms: *Guddifacha* and *Moggasa*.

❖ ***Guddifacha*** refers to the adoption of a child by a foster parent.

- in this system, the child enjoyed equal rights & privileges with a biological child

❖ *Moggasa*: a system of adopting non-Oromos & it was the practice of incorporation of individuals or groups to a clan through oath of allegiance with all the rights and obligations that such membership entailed.

✓ The adopted groups gained both protection & material benefits.

- The process contributed to
  - the social cohesions, national integration, and
  - the revival of long-distance trade.
  - the interactions also brought an exchange of socio-cultural values & institutions

✓A number of peoples in the neighborhood of the Oromo adopted Gadaa system and Oromo language. Likewise, the Oromo adopted and adapted cultures and traditions of the people with whom they came into contact

## 5.5.1. Peoples and States in the East

### Somali

- Ibn Said(1214-86), an Arab geographer mentioned Merca town(brought the Somalis together
- *Shir* (council) provided a governing structure perform wide-ranging activities (law & justice; resource allocations; marriage, trade, conflict, etc.)
- *Gurti* (a council of elders) highest political body in resolving conflict & crisis

### Afar

- had an indigenous governance system called *Makabanto*
- established their sultanates like Awsa, Girrifo, Tadjourah, Rahaito & Gobad
- in 1577, Jasa moved his capital from Harar to Awsa
- around 1734, it was restored by Kedafo & thereafter ruled by Mudaito Dynasty
- later it became center of Islamic learning led by preachers like Tola Hanfire

### Argoba

there are two versions on their origin

- 1st - descended from followers of the Prophet Mohammed & settled at Ifat
- 2nd - one of the ancient peoples in the region that accepted Islam very early from religious leaders who came from Arabia

## The Emirate of Harar

- one of the earliest Muslim centers in the region (Islamic culture & power)
- capital of  Adal until 1557 (when moved to Awsa)
- Emir Nur Mujahid made it a walled city
- in the mid 17$^{th}$c Emir Ali ibn-Da'ud (r.1647-62) established a new dynasty
- the period of Egyptian rule(1875-1885)
- Emir Abdulahi, the last emir of Harar (restored & ruled Harar until 1887)



## 5.5.2. Peoples and States in Central and South Central Parts

### The Kingdom of Shewa

- founded by Negasi Kristos (r.1696-1703) and succeeded by
*Merid Azmatch* Sebestie/ Sebastyanos (r.1703-18)
Abuye/ Abiyye (1718-45) made Haramba, his capital
Amaha Iyesus/ Amayyes (r.1745-75)
Asfa-Wosen (r.1775-1808)

*Negus* Sahle-Sellasie (r.1813-47), the grandfather of Emperor Menilek II.
(signed "treaty of friendship and commerce" with the British in 1841)

**Gurage** (Western and Northern Gurage)

Western/Sebat Bet Gurage include:
Chaha, Muher, Ezha, Gumer (Inamor, Enner, Endegegna and Gyeto)

Northern Gurage: Kistane, Aymallal or Soddo Gurage
(Additional groups included Dobbi, Gadabano and Masqan).

Local Governance system:
* the Yajoka Qicha among the Sebat Bet and
* the Gordanna Sera among the Kistane



**Kambata**

- around 1550-70, four communities of separate origin coalesced to form Kambata
- Kambata means, “this is the place” (where we live-as the Kambata believe in)
- Kambata had its original homeland around Mount Hambericho
- the other three namely the Dubamo, Donga & Tembaro trace their homeland from Sidama highlands
- Emperor Yeshak (r.1413-30) annexed Kambata proper & controlled the area b/n Omo and Bilate Rivers
- had a traditional administrative institution called Hambericho council

**Hadiya**

- in 1332, Amde-Tsion subdued Hadiya after defeating its ruler, Amano who was supported by a Muslim “prophet” Bel’am allied with Ifat’s ruler, Sabraddin
- in 1445, a Hadiya king, Mahiqo rebelled against Zara-Yaqob (r.1434-68),&
- replaced by his uncle Bamo & the emperor made a political marriage (Elleni)



## 5.5.3. Peoples and States in the South

### Sidama

- had an indigenous system of governance led by the *Mote* (king).
- the *Mote* exercised its authority with the council of elders called *Songo*
- the cultural and ritual leader in Sidama society was the *Woma*
- the Woma offer sacrifices & perform rituals such as circumcision & marriage
- Sidama society was divided into generation-sets called *Luwa*
- the system had five grades each lasting for eight years
- these are *Darara, Fullassa, Hirbora*, *Wawassa* and *Mogissa*
- candidates for *Luwa* received a 5 month military training & war songs_*gerarsha*
- under the leadership of the *gaden* with his deputy called *Ja'lawa*
- *Seera* was the social constitution of the Sidama people governing social life based on the Sidama moral code, *halale* (the ultimate truth)

### Gedeo

- had a traditional governance system called *baalle*,
- it worked with age classes & ranking; had 7 grades with a 10-year period each creating a 70-year cycle.
- *Sasserogo* was a federation of three territories; Sobbho, Ributa and Rikuta
- all share one *Abba Gadaa* who leaves office every eight years/replaced by new one



## 5.5.4. Peoples and States in Southwestern Part

### Wolayta

- first emerged as a state in the 13th century
- at the apex of the social & political hierarchy was the *Kawo* (king),
- from the 13th to the late 19th C, two successive dynasties ruled Wolayta: the Wolayta-Malla and the Tigre
- Founded in the 13th century by Motalami, the Wolayta-Malla seems to have ruled until the end of the 15th century. It was then superseded by the Tigre dynasty. Wolayta's dominant food crop was *enset*.

### Kafa

Its kingdom's origin: 14th century. The ruling Minjo dynasty and the medieval kingdom of Ennarya had close contact. The Oromo expansion might have forced the ruling house of Ennarya to flee south of the Gojeb which as a result brought Christianity and the royal title *Tato* to Kafa.

Trade: Kafa had a prosperous commercial relation with the Oromo states of the Gibe region. Major trade items such as musk, coffee, slaves, Ivory, gold, honey-wax, and civet were exported.

At the apex of the administration of the kingdom was the Tato with his major political center at Bonga. The *Tato* was assisted by a council of seven advisors called *Mikrecho*.



**5.Peoples and States in the West**

**Berta and Gumuz**

✓The Berta people inhabit the present day Beni-Shangul Regional National State. The earliest record of Berta settlement in this region dates back to the 16th century.

✓Both Berta and Gumuz in terms of language classification belong to the Nilo-Saharan linguistic group.

✓Islamic influence had been strong on the Berta and other Nilotes because of their trade and social contacts with the northern Sudan.

**5.6 The Gondarine Period and Zemene-Mesafint**

**1. The Gondarine Period**

✓**Beginning of this period**: It started during the period of Emperor Sartsa-Dengel (camped at Enfranz in 1571) with a shift of political center to Gondar.

✓Gondar was founded in 1636 when Fasiledas established his political seat there.

✓Gondar achieved its glory during the reigns of its first three successive emperors: Fasiledas (r.1632–1667), Yohannes I (r.1667-1682) and Iyasu I (r.1682-1706).

✓Among the major reforms during these periods were the restoration of Orthodox Church as state religion.

✓The Gondarine Period also witnessed increased involvement of the Oromo in politics and the army.

✓From 1728 to 1768, Etege Mentewab together with her brother Ras-Bitwaded Walda Le'ul (1732-1767) dominated the Gondarine court politics.

✓But to counter the growing power of the Wollo Oromo in the royal court, Mentewab sought the alliance of Ras Mika'el Sehul of Tigray who was politically astute and military powerful.

✓**Achievements of the Gondarine Period : Architecture** like castles-of Fasiledes, bridges, residences, bath, library, towers, fortifications and churches were constructed; **painting**-religious paintings put on manuscripts and on wood were plenty; **literatur**e-e.g. manuscripts, Gospels, the Miracles of Mary, the Lives of Ethiopian Saints/ hagiographies and other were produced; **trade and urbanization-**Gondar **was** a commercial center and connected trade routes of the southern region with Massawa and Metemma in the Ethio-Sudan border. **Medium of exchange :** gold and salt.

✓**Gondar** was residential town for Indians, Greeks and Armenians. It had a population of about 60,000-70,000; It served as political and commercial, and religious centers-for Christians (residence of the Abuna/Ichege), Muslims and Bete-Israel.

## 2. The Period of Zemene-Mesafint (1769-1855)

✓Zemene-Mesafint refers to the period when actual position of political power was in the hands of different regional lords.

✓The period lasted from the time Ras Michael Sehul "assassinated" king Iyoas in 1769 to 1855, when Kasa Hailu was crowned as Tewodros I.

✓During that period, Ras Mika'el who was a king maker. He was the most influential and important person. Because of the harsh measures he took against the nobility he was considered as unpopular among them.

✓For this reason lords of Gojjam, Amhara, Lasta and Wollo cooperated and defeated him at the battle of Sarba-Kussa in 1771.

✓Zemene-Mesafint was a period of the rise of regional lords which weakened the power of the central government.

✓The main political regions that Zemene-Mesafint lords ruled were Tigray, Semen, Dembiya, Begemedir, Lasta, Yejju, Wollo, Gojjam and Shewa. "Yejju dynasty" was the leading power during the Zemen-Mesafint with the center at Debretabor. Ali Gwangul (Ali I or Ali Talaq) was considered as the founder of "Yejju dynasty" in 1786.

✓The period of Zemene mesafint was came to an end by Kasa Hailu of Qwara through a series of battles that lasted from 1840s to 1855.



- **Major features of *Zemene-Mesafint*** include:
  - absence of effective central government;
  - the growing power & influence of the regional warlords;
  - the domination of Yejju lords over other lords in northern Ethiopia
  - rivalry/competition among regional lords to become king-maker;
  - establishment of fragile coalitions to advance political interests;
  - revival of foreign contacts that ended the “closed-door” policy
  - developments in literature, arts, architecture etc.
  - the EOC was unable to play its unifying role due to doctrinal disputes;