



The Ethiopian Empire

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PROF. ALAPO

King Solomon and Ethiopia?

- Ethiopia's long history starts with the biblical King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.
 - In a Ethiopian history book called the Kebra Nagast it tells the story of how the queen of Sheba went to Israel and was tricked into having an affair with King Solomon. She came back to Ethiopia and had a child named Menelik I the first emperor or Negus of the Ethiopian empire.(Mark Cartwright of Ancient.eu)
- The Solomonic dynasty claims descent from King Solomon and King Menelik I but officially, the kingdom was started in 1270 when Yekuno Amlak overthrew the Zagwe dynasty and officially brought back the Solomonic line(Mark Cartwright of Ancient.eu)
- Menelik I was raised as a Jew in Ethiopia, but his Empire would later convert to Orthodox Christianity (Mark Cartwright of Ancient.eu)

Axum and early Ethiopia

- There's not much we know about Axum, but we know it was a very important kingdom in their time.
- According to Khanacademy.org they were at their most powerful between 1st century CE and 7th century CE,
- They followed Judaism until the 4th century CE when King Ezana was converted by Frumentius, a former Syrian captive who was made Bishop of Aksum(Khanacademy.org)
- Even with the conversion Judaism was still big in Ethiopia(Khanacademy.org)
 - The religion stayed so prominent there were a group of Jews who lived in a region of Northern Axum called Beta Israel.(Khanacademy.org)
- A major highlight of the kingdom is that the script Ge'ez was started in this time, and it is still used today(Khanacademy.org)

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Ge'ez Script

The Zagwe dynasty

- The Zagwe Dynasty was founded in 1137 and had a very short but impactful history
- their rise to power started with a legendary marriage to a daughter of one of the last Aksumite kings (WMF.org)
- Their greatest leader was king Lalibella, he is known for creating a large amount of monolithic rock cut churches, and they even renamed their capitol after him. (WMF.org)
- Even though in Ethiopia they say their empire lasted over 3,000 years (Not continuously) they consider the Zagwe dynasty as a separate lineage than the Solomonic dynasty.
 - Yekuno Amlak didn't consider the Zagwe as part of the lineage of his country and saw them as a rival kingdom that he eventually conquered
- Their biggest accomplishment is the rock cut churches that are in the formal capitol Lalibella.



A Rock hewn church in Lalibella

Kingdom of Abyssinia/ Ethiopian empire

- The Empire was started when Yekuno Amlak overthrew the Zagwe dynasty in 1270
- First thing Negus Amlak did was expand territory
 - He began expanding in all directions and came into direct confrontation with a plethora of Muslim sultanates to the east.
- The lineage lasted from 1270 CE - 1974 CE when Ethiopian military leaders led a coup against the monarchy

Types of government

- Ever since the biblical origins the governments of all three major kingdoms was a monarchy
- They were always kings but were not called as such. They were called Negus or king of kings.
- Their dynasty was called the Solomonic dynasty after King Solomon of ancient Israel



Religion

- Because of the ties to King Solomon the first iteration of a kingdom in Ethiopian soil was Jewish
- The first king of the Solomonic dynasty was Menelik I, and he was raised as a Jew in Ethiopia
 - He visited his father Solomon once in Israel and was asked to rule the kingdom, but he chose to rule Ethiopia instead. His father sent him with a bounty of goods and tutors to show him and his people how to properly follow Judaism
- The kingdom would convert to Christianity when the emperor Ezana converted to Christianity around 330 A.D., making Aksum into one of the earliest Christian state



Religion part 2

- Religion continued to be a huge part of the empire throughout the different kingdoms/empires
- King Lalibella of the Zagwe dynasty envisioned when creating his capital to have a Jerusalem on african soil.
- In the city of Lalibella lies a unique complex of 11 churches cut out of the living rock some 800 years ago. Their construction is attributed to King Lalibela (approximately 1181-1221)



Allies

- The Ethiopian empire had a few allies over the years. Including European Christian powers.
- Ethiopian embassy to the Pope in Rome in the early 14th century CE and exchanges of embassies with several European powers as the Crusades proved ever more disappointing in their attempt to regain control of Jerusalem from the Muslims. (ancient.eu)
- France and Russia became vital allies when Italy invaded in the 1890's
- When Italy invaded Negus Menelik II defeated them with supplies and help from the French and Russian Empire respectively (ancient.eu)

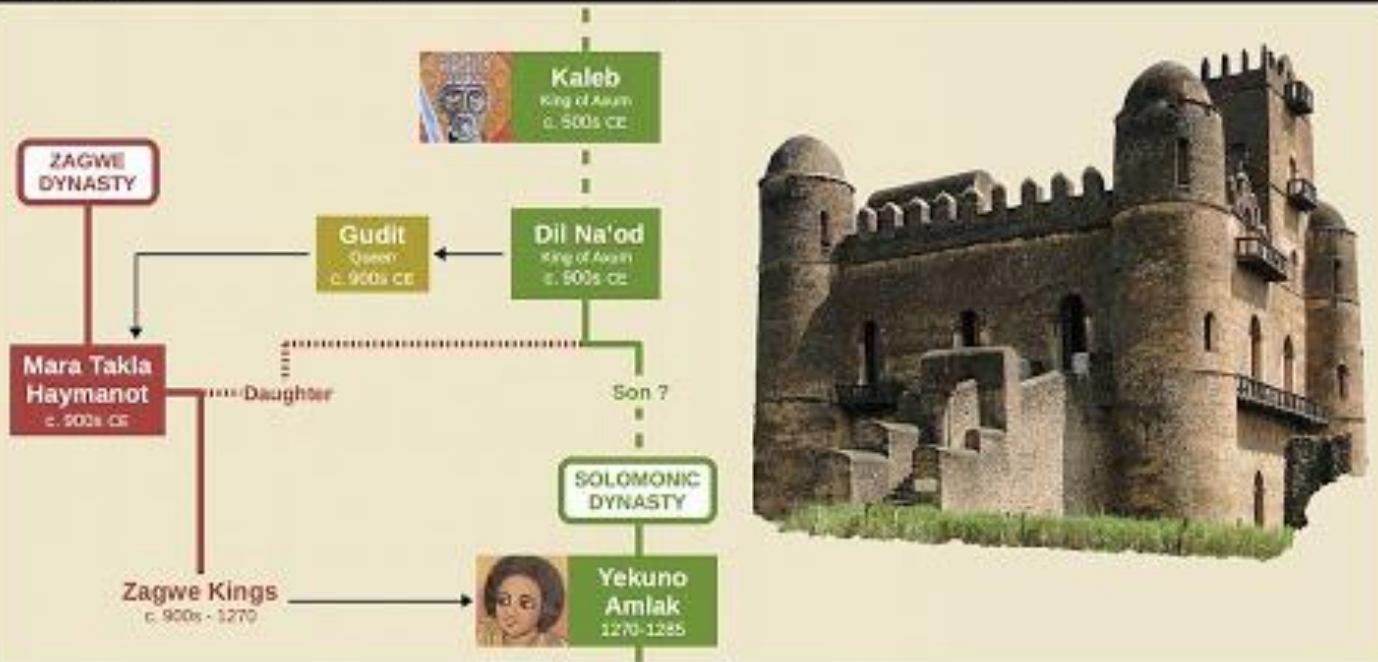
Interesting facts



- Rastarianism is a religion that was started in the 1930's and held Haile Selassie I as the messiah. (History.com)
- The ark of the covenant is supposedly in a church called St. Mary of TSION. (absoluteethiopia.com)
 - The Kebra Nagast tells the story of how Menelik visited Jerusalem in his twenties and his father gifted him with the ark of the covenant
 - No one, not even the specially chosen guardian, is allowed to look to confirm if it is actually there.
- the country of Ethiopia they're technically still in the year of 2013.(absoluteethiopia.com)
 - When the Roman church adjusted its ancient calendar in 525 AD, Ethiopia did not change its calendar and so, Ethiopia is seven years behind the Gregorian calendar(absoluteethiopia.com)



Ethiopian Emperors Family Tree



Video about
Ethiopian's
lineage

SKIP TO 1:10

Citation

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