

Ethiopia 2017 -Impressions

Several Visits to Ethiopia:

- 1985-86, Addis and Awash valley, Kesem Irrigation Project (during the “Derg” regime)
- 2004-2006, Koga Irrigation Project, Bahar Dar (during democratic Government- Zenawi PM)

January 2017, 2 week holiday covering Historical Circuit (Bahar Dar, Gondar, Simien, Axum, Yeha, Mekele, Lalibela)

Subjects of Talk:

- General (Economy, Population, Climate, Recent History, Major Developments)
- Historical Circuit (Bahar Dar and Lake Tana, Simien Mountains, Peasant Farming, Mai Aini Refugee Camp, Axum, Yeha and Pre-Axum, Tigray Rock Hewn Churches and Timkat at Mekele)

Mums for Mums- Charity in Mekele supported from Cambridge

Population

- 103 million this year and growing at 2.72% per year (4.6 children per woman)
- Peasants very large percentage (85% of population)-smaller and smaller farms (subsistence farming)
- 46% under 15 years old, 5% over 65 years old
- Free primary, secondary and tertiary education (do peasants use this??)
- Unemployment at 17% (not including peasants)
- Country perceived as one of the poorest in the World despite high growth rate in economy (how is poverty assessed ??)
- Birth Control not permitted by Ethiopian Orthodox Church (but partly ignored mostly by more educated).
- 65% Christian, 30% Moslem.

Economy

- One of the fastest growing economies in the World at present (10%-8% per year over last 6 years)
- Low cost manufacturing, much investment by China
- Private investment mainly from China, Turkey and India (plantations, textile factories), also Sweden and Britain named
- Diaspora funds from Ethiopians returning from abroad or solely investment in the country
- Effectively managing development aid from US, Britain and other parts of Europe (seen as “island” of relative stability within this part of the World)

From Tuesday's Times

Garment makers from countries such as Belgium and Spain are shifting production to an industrial park by Lake Awasa

New clothes intended to be best fit

On the banks of Lake Awasa, a drought-ravaged region 135 miles from Ethiopia's capital, the owner of Calvin Klein makes pants and T-shirts.

PVH has been the main investor in a big industrialisation project by the Ethiopian government to create jobs and pull the economy out of its rural past (Philip Aldrick writes).

Garment makers from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Belgium and Spain are also shifting production to the industrial park, where

wages are a third of those in Bangladesh. It is already expanding six months after opening, with several leading British suppliers to blue-chip retailers looking at the site

Ethiopia's government decided to target the labour-intensive textile industry two years ago as a key step in its industrialisation, with the goal of moving from

being a low-income to a middle-income country by 2025 and to meet the demands of the two million people joining the labour force every year.

Awasa has attracted business because the park is tax-free, has onsite customs and an electrified railway line running straight to Djibouti's port to feed the needs of global fast-fashion.

Climate in Highlands (altitude approx 2000 - 2400 m, except Bahar Dar, 1600 m)

- Annual rainfall 1000 mm in east, 2000 mm in west in Highlands, falling between May and September.
- Temperatures, 20-28 deg C during day, 6-12 deg C at night
- In terms of impacts of droughts, 5-7 months later (hence in theory plenty of warning)
- Droughts usually somewhere in the Highlands every year (last March in SW Ethiopia). Rains last year were generally good .
- Critical area in terms of droughts leading to possible famine is North East (Tigray), but also Wolo. 1973-74 and 1984-85
- Can a famine occur again? (much better roads to bring food from other parts of the country, particularly “China road” from Bahar Dar. Also much better prepared in terms of disaster relief, emergency stockpiles)
- **Media always give Ethiopia a bad press, “drought ridden”**

Recent History-Ethiopia

1944- 1974 Reign of Haile Selassie (OAU started in Addis in 1963)

1974-1991 the “Derg”- Mengistu Regime and Red Terror (end of Ethiopian Civil War in 1991)

1991-2012, Democratic government led over 21 years by Meles Zenawi (OAU ended in 2002)

- Eritrean Independence in 1993 (loss of only access to the sea-Assab).”Mistake ?”
- Eritrean-Ethiopian War in 1998 (Eritreans mostly ethnically Tigrayan, comparative populations in 2016, 6 million Eritreans to 100 million- hence need for conscription in Eritrea and correspondingly very weak economy)
- War against southern Somalia in 2006
- 2016, State of Emergency partially relaxed in December (many small riots and some killings-Govt and Army is mainly Tigrayan and largest ethnic group, Oromo, and others consider that there is corruption and nepotism and they are missing out on the economic success)

Major Projects (see Plan)

- Major programme of road building throughout country , example “China Rd” from Aramia (Bahar Dar) to Tigray/Wolo
- Light Railway in Addis Ababa
- Kesem Dam and Irrigation Project (sugar)
- Gibe 1 and 2 dams(hydropower)
- Gibe 3 dam, just completed 1870 MW hydropower and downstream sugar plantations (very controversial in view of downstream impacts, including Lake Turkana)- loan from China and Italy
- Tekese dam, 185 m high concrete arch dam (tallest in Africa), hydropower 300 MW
- Railway line, Djibouti to Mekele
- Grand Renaissance Dam in Blue Nile Gorge, hydropower 6000 MW (1999 Nile Basin Initiative replacing 1929 use of Nile Water Treaty-Egypt “pre-occupied”)

Ethiopia



Addis-Mesfut Square



Lucy, 3.6 million old hominid (in National Museum, Addis)

Found in Danakil desert-Afar, 1974



Full scale model



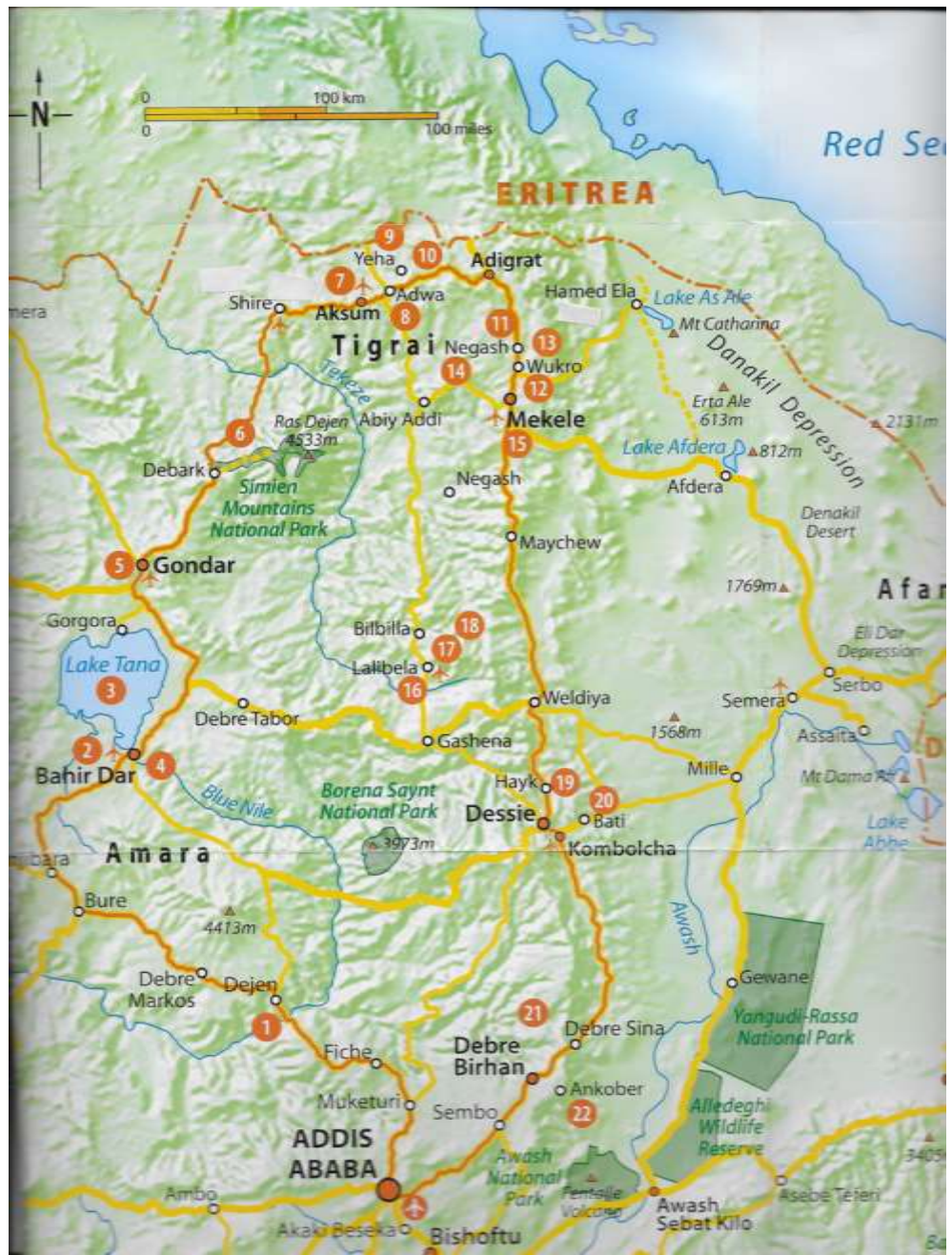
Cathedral in Addis

Very typical church painting in Ethiopia



Sylvia Pankhurst's Grave





Bahar Dar

Population:

1994 96000

2007 222 000

2016 318 000

2nd largest city/town after Addis

University, 45 000

Several textile factories

Tourism with Lake Tana

Totally changed since 2006

“Booming”

Bahar Dar



Gondar (capital for 250 years from 1632- Fasilidas's castle built in 17th century



Simien Mountains



Mai Aini Refugee Camp



- 18 000 refugees from Eritrea at Mai Aini- not fenced
- In Ethiopia, 740,000 refugees, of which 281,000 South Sudan, 254,000 Somalia, 161,000 from Eritrea
- Majority political or economic, with objective to get to Europe (then earning to support family back home)
- Main complaint “nothing to do” (last September US\$ 500 million from EU, World Bank and UK (US\$ 100 million) to create 100,000 jobs in the camps).
- Many photos on [Mai Aini website](#)

Eucalyptus, introduced by Menelik 2 in about 1902 (and peasant houses built in eucalyptus + charcoal)



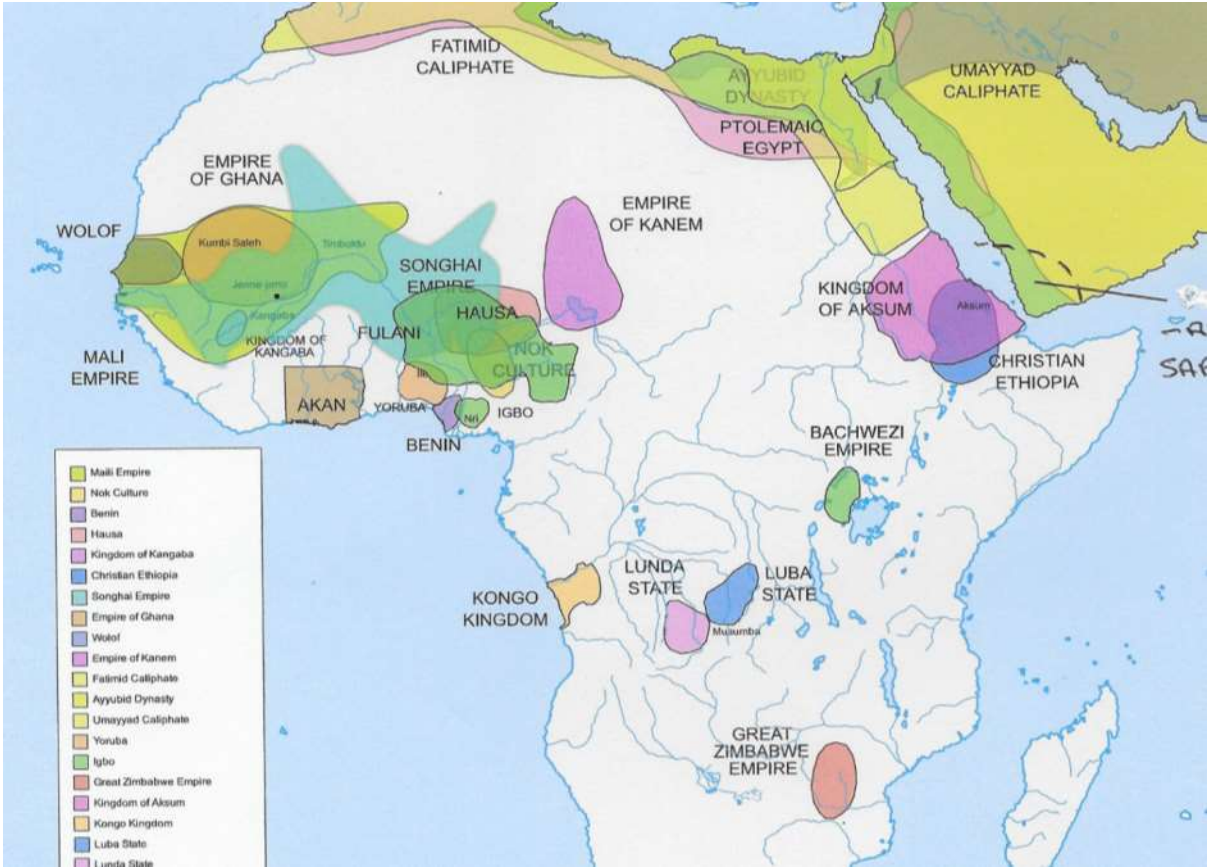
Axum Stellae, 300-700 AD

Stellae



Granite Outcrop



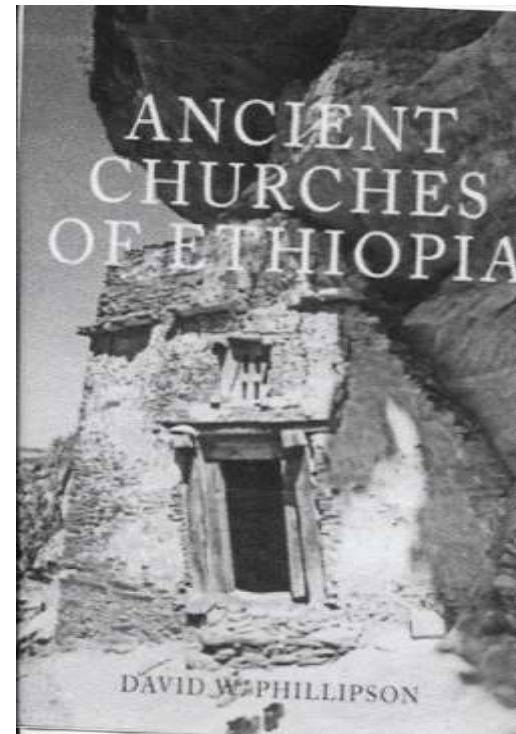


Axum

Archaeology



Prof Phillipson



Axum-Ark of the Covenant

- Menelik 1, son of Queen of Sheba (Saba) and Solomon brought back Ark from Jerusalem about 1000 BC
- Axum Empire, mighty empire from 300 BC to 700 AD)
- Christianity from AD 340 (two shipwrecked Syrians)
- 500-600 AD . Refuge for followers of Mohammed “leave the Abyssinians in peace”
- Post Axum, Ethiopia’a Dark Age- Queen Yodit (Judith)



Battle of Adwa (1902-Menelik 2 defeated Italian Army- country never colonised)



Countryside

eucalyptus



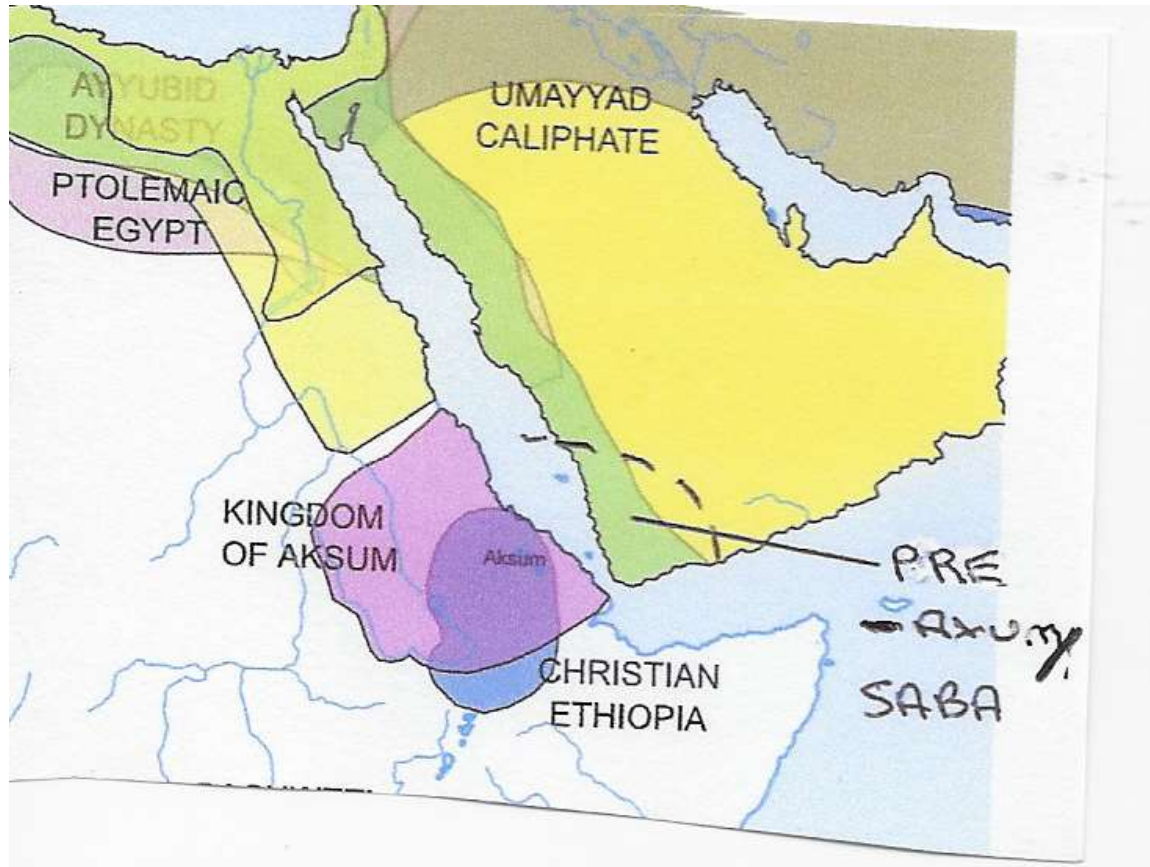
Subsistence farming



Yeha

- Temple 2500 years old
- Pre-Axumite (the South Arabian/Sabean Period from 1000 BC to 400 BC)
- Dramatic scenery (360 deg) around village of Yeha





Temple at Yeha (Very well “dressed” stonework)





Tigray (historic famine areas)



Rock Hewn Churches in Tigray



Market Scene



Peasant Scenes



Countryside (note terracing)



Scenery

Town (Shire) near Axum



Adjacent Countryside with Terracing



Timkat at Mekele



Timkat at Mekele





Timkat at Mekele



Timkat at Mekele



Plateau at top of Highlands



Lalibela



Mums for Mums/FECIN



Mums for Mums/FECIN



Mums for Mums/FECIN



Mums For Mums/FECIN



Mums for Mums/FECIN



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