

Highlights of Ethiopian History and Culture

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Abstract

Ethiopia's history and culture was hidden for centuries from the outside world due to different factors and has not been known as it deserves. One of the factors is the fact that Ethiopia was largely isolated following the decline of the Axum (Aksum) civilization around 700 A.D. Unlike most ancient civilizations, the history of Axum is not widely known in the mainstream and some historians are surprised when they somehow learn about it, wondering why it was not part of their university studies. Ethiopia has a rich history of at least three thousand years. Its prehistory, the Axum civilization and the last one thousand and three hundred years of its history are fascinating. Today, thanks to the internet, Ethiopian history and culture is increasingly being known, overcoming past prejudices and biases. This is good not only for Ethiopia, but also for many who are interested in history, culture and religion. It is especially good for Ethiopian history because, as seen in Youtube videos and online articles, it helps in the systematic exploration and documentation of Ethiopian history by genuine historians and enthusiasts around the world. Many people, however, still remain unaware of Ethiopia's history. This note aims to help interested readers discover and explore Ethiopian history and culture for themselves. It also examines the prolonged violence that has unfolded in Ethiopia over the past four decades against the Amhara people, which many scholars and observers have long identified as a genocide.

Ethiopian history and culture was largely hidden for centuries from the outside world and has not been known as it deserves. One of the factors is the fact that Ethiopia was isolated from the outside world following the decline of the Axum (Aksum) civilization around 700 A.D. Axum was one of the great civilizations of the ancient world, on a par with Persia, Rome and China. Yet, unlike most ancient civilizations, the history of Axum is little known in the mainstream and some historians are surprised when they encounter it and wonder why they had not learned about it in universities.

Ethiopia has a rich history of at least three thousand years. Its prehistory, the Aksum civilization and the last one thousand and three hundred years of its history are so fascinating that many people see it in disbelief as bordering on 'myths'. Yet these 'myths' are so supported overwhelmingly by various evidences that some have described it as 'a seamless fusion of facts and myths'.

Thanks to the internet, Ethiopian history and culture is increasingly being known today, overcoming past biases and prejudices. This is good not only for Ethiopia, but also for many who are interested in history, culture and religion. It is good for Ethiopian history particularly because, as can be seen from YouTube videos and online articles, it will help in the systematic exploration and documentation of Ethiopian history by genuine historians and history enthusiasts around the world. Certainly, there are a lot more people who have never heard about Ethiopian history before. This short note is meant to help anyone

interested discover and explore Ethiopian history and culture for themselves. It is meant only to inform and is not intended to be rigorous. It may also reflect my own views.

Ethiopia's prehistory and antiquity (origins) is little known to professional historians and anyone trying to explore it finds it to be shrouded in mystery. Mainstream theories about Ethiopia's prehistory and antiquity are not accepted by, and are unknown to, many Ethiopians because these theories are biased or prejudiced. The only credible source one can hope to gain a glimpse of Ethiopia's antiquity is the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, according to which Ethiopians are the children of Kush. Ethiopia is the first country to be mentioned in the Bible, in connection with the river Ghion (Nile or Abay) , and this proves that ancient Ethiopia is largely the same place known as Ethiopia today. This disproves theories that ancient Ethiopia is not exactly the same Ethiopia today.

There are credible claims that Enoch, author of the now famous Book of Enoch, was an Ethiopian. The evidence is that the only known authentic and oldest Book of Enoch is the one written in Geez language, Ethiopia's ancient language now limited to church services only. Melchizedek, King of Salem, is also claimed to have been Ethiopian. The Bible also mentions that the wife of Moses was an Ethiopian. I have heard some church fathers saying that, based on Biblical references, the Magi (Sebe'a Segel , in Geez), who paid tribute to Our Lord Jesus Christ, were all Sabeans /Ethiopians. The story leading up to the Magi is said to go as far back as Adam.

The well-known history of Ethiopia begins with the biblical story of the Queen of Sheba visiting King Solomon of Israel around 900 B.C. That episode resulted in the conception of Minilik I and started a new chapter, the beginning of the Solomonic Dynasty that would rule Ethiopia for the next three thousand years. The coming of the Solomonic dynasty to Ethiopia was also accompanied by another great history, the Ark of the Covenant. The 'lost' Ark of the Covenant has been in Ethiopia for three thousand years. To many, these claims are fascinating; to others, they are seen as legend rather than history. Yet, for Ethiopians (particularly Orthodox Christians) they are real.

Additional evidences of the connection between Queen of Sheba and King Solomon is seen in the heritage of Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. The Falasha (Bete Israel) were the Jewish community that lived in northern Ethiopia for thousands of years until recently. These are believed to be descendants of twelve thousand Jews who accompanied King Minilik I and the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia. The story is that, as written in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church book Kibre Negest, Minilik I , at the age of twenty -two , went to Israel to visit his father, King Solomon. Minilik I returned to Ethiopia with the Ark of the Covenant and with about twelve thousand Jews including priests. The ruins of the palace of the Queen of Sheba can be seen outside Aksum in Yeha.

Minilik I was the first king of the Solomonic Dynasty. This dynasty ruled Ethiopia for three thousand years, except for an interruption of about three hundred and seventy years after the fall of Axum, during which the Zagwe Dynasty ruled. King and Saint Lalibela was one of the kings from the Zagwe dynasty. But there is also conflicting information suggesting that the Zagwe Dynasty was also of Solomonic origin. One account holds that not only the Queen of Sheba but also her maid conceived a child, and that this line became the Zagwe Dynasty.

The Solomonic Dynasty gave rise to the Axum civilization that lasted nearly one thousand years. Axum was one of the great kingdoms of the ancient world. As one of the surviving written evidences from the ancient world, the Persian Prophet Mani, who lived in third century AD, commented that Persia, Rome, Axum and China were the four world powers of his time.

At the peak of its power, Axum ruled over lands as far as present- day Yemen and Somalia. One evidence is the name of the capital Mogadishu itself, which is said to derive from the Geez word “ Meqdes “, meaning temple. Axum is believed to have had a formidable naval power, reportedly consisting of about five hundred ships.

The monolithic stelae that can be seen sanding in a field in the town of Axum are a ‘living’ testament to this forgotten ancient civilization. How these large structures (the largest, weighing five hundred tons, has fallen) were carved from a single stone, how they were decorated with such precision, and transported and erected remains, like Ethiopia’s prehistory itself, shrouded in mystery. Excavations at Axum have uncovered golden coins, household goods, and other artifacts.

After flourishing for about one thousand years, Axum declined and eventually fell. The fall of Axum was due to changing geopolitical conditions : the rise of Islam in the Arabian peninsula.

The history of Ethiopia after the fall of Axum is another chapter. Ethiopia was isolated from the rest of the world for about one thousand years and became an inward-looking country. As one author put it, “During the last one thousand years, Ethiopia forgot and was forgotten by the rest of the world”.

Despite the loss of its world power status, Ethiopia’s history during this period is also rich and fascinating. The stories of internal struggles for the throne, the kings, the nobility and conflicts among them, battles, resistance against foreign powers, foreign relations, the Church, saints, medieval society and the dynamics created by all these can be fascinating.

I should mention the role of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Ethiopia’s history by noting that, as is often said, the history of Ethiopia and the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are two sides of the same coin. Ethiopia is the only country in the world that worshipped the One Abrahamic God in the Old Testament and later accepted Christianity. Ethiopia accepted Christianity not in the fourth century, but in 34 AD, just one year after the crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ! Along with Israel, Ethiopia had been awaiting the coming of the Messiah for thousands of years, when the rest of the world was in the dark.

Just to highlight some events from the post-Axumite era, a Jewish queen known as Yodit Gudit (Yodit the Evil) came to power and eventually ended the already weakened kingdom of Axum. According to Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, she ruled Ethiopia for forty years. Yodit is said to have come from the Flasha, the Jewish community mentioned earlier, who did not accept Christianity. She burnt and destroyed countless churches, monasteries, ancient manuscripts. The five hundred-ton obelisk lying broken on the ground at Axum is attributed to her.

Another milestone in the history of Ethiopia was the influence of the Arabs. In the sixteenth century, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, known as Gagn Ahmed (“Ahmed the left-handed” in Amharic), moved from Harar to central Ethiopia to overthrow the Christian kingdom. A great battle took place at a place known as Shimbera Kure. There is no place known by this name today, but it is said that it was around the place known as Wonji in eastern Shewa today. It is regrettable that no one knows the exact place of this significant battle today and that no historian has tried to study it as it deserves. It was a war between Christians and Muslims. It was both a religious war and part of a long-standing struggle for power among different groups.

Supported by the Ottoman Empire, Gagn Ahmed won the battle, but could not capture the Christian king. Ahmed’s superiority is attributed to the firearms he obtained from the Turks. Ahmed controlled much of Ethiopia, burned countless churches and monasteries, destroyed manuscripts, killed countless priests and monks, and forced many Christians to convert to Islam.

He was eventually defeated after thirteen years when the Christian kingdom gained support from the Portuguese. Ahmed was killed and his soldiers retreated back to Harar. The history of the Muslim city of Harar, an ancient walled city, is also interesting, adding color to Ethiopia’s colorful history.

Harar had its own values and traditions, distinct from the central Christian kingdom. It is this diversity that adds color and dynamism to Ethiopian history. The major players such as the Amharas, the Tigreans, the Oromos, and the Muslims each had their own values and traditions. Ethiopia is home to more than eighty ethnic groups, including Gurages, Somalies, Afar, Hadya, Kambata, Beneshangul. This diversity has been preserved due to Ethiopia’s long-standing independence.

Then the Zemene Mesafint (Era of the Princes) ensued between mid -18th and mid19th centuries. This was the era when the Solomonic kings were powerless, reduced to symbolic figures. The kings remained on the throne only because the people would not accept a non-Solomonic ruler. The history of this era is also interesting, with the feudal lords competing for power.

The Wikipedia article ‘ Zemene Mesafint’ describes this period as follows.

... It was a period in which the Emperors from the Solomonic Dynasty were reduced to little more than figureheads confined to the capital city of Gondar.

.... The lords constantly fought against each other for aggrandizement of their territory and to become the guardians of the kings of kings in Gondar, the capital of the empire at the time. The monarchy continued only in name because of its sacred character. This nominal but divinely ordained monarchy preserved the dynasty from actual extinction.

During this era, Ethiopia was weak and vulnerable to foreign powers that were beginning to encroach on its borders. The Zemene Mesafint was brought to an end by King Tewodoros, who defeated all the regional lords, came to power and reunited Ethiopia.

King Tewodros was succeeded by King Yohannes. By this time, foreign colonial powers were already eyeing Ethiopia. Ethiopia had long been under constant internal threats and the external threat of Islam, and now faced the threat of European colonialism.

Ethiopia also faced a unique threat from Egypt, which was neither a colonial power, nor had (I think) religious ambitions to convert Ethiopia to Islam, unlike the Ottoman Turks. There had been a long-standing connection between Ethiopia and Egypt through Christianity. For nearly one thousand and five hundred years, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was led by patriarchs from the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church until the mid-twentieth century.

Another connection between Ethiopia and Egypt concerns the Nile River, which has become an international issue today. The relation between Ethiopia and Egypt was always strained for centuries, and intriguingly, this tension cannot always be explained as related to the river Nile alone and there is something unknown to it. For example, Egypt has long been encroaching upon the Ethiopian Orthodox Church heritage in Jerusalem, which is not related to the Nile in any way. Even today the public consensus in Ethiopia is that Egypt has always conspired against Ethiopia.

The time of King Yohannes was when the Egyptians decided to execute their ambition of controlling the source of the river Nile. In two separate battles - Gundet and Gura- Yohannes crushed the technologically superior Egyptian army.

Another major milestone is the Battle of Adwa in 1896. Weakened by the Zemene Mesafint, Ethiopia faced serious danger from European colonialism. Even worse, between 1888 and 1892 a devastating plague known as Kifu Ken (meaning, Evil Day) hit Ethiopia, killing about 90% of its cattle. The plague also led to famine and a third of the population was also wiped out by the disease and famine. Some historians say that this was planned and was a precursor to the Battle of Adwa. Italy had brought a handful of infected cattle from India and introduced them to Eritrea and from there the disease spread to the rest of Ethiopia. One scholar described this by saying that perhaps the first biological weapon ever was used against Ethiopia by Italy.

As planned, Italy began encroaching on Ethiopia's borders, moving from its holds in Eritrea. King Minilik II, who succeeded Yohannes, had already begun acquiring modern weapons from European powers in anticipation of such threats. At a critical moment, Minilik was at a crossroads whether to confront a technologically advanced European army or to surrender Ethiopia's three thousand years of independence.

Minilik, and particularly Empress Taytu, bravely chose to confront Italy and called on Ethiopians to defend their country. Ethiopians from every tribe and culture answered Minilik's call as one man. They sensed (and, as many Ethiopians believe, by Divine intervention) a new and real danger to their country. Men, women, young, old, priests, monks, children, donkeys, horses,... marched from different parts of the country towards Adwa, about 1000km from the center. As is usually said, it was as if the entire nation moved to Adwa. The internal feuds were forgotten or suspended.

Ethiopia decisively defeated Italy at the battle of Adwa in 1896. Minilik's stunning victory was a complete one and was not only a military victory. Minilik excelled not only in military strategy, but also in intelligence and diplomacy. Particularly, the role of Empress Taytu and Minilik's agent, Basha Awualom, can never be forgotten.

Ethiopians believe that there was a divine intervention. Numerous witnesses- including Empress Taytu and even some Italian soldiers, that they had seen Saint George fighting on the battlefield. This belief is considered even more remarkable given that Menelik brought the Tabot of Saint George with him from Addis Ababa, and that the battle took place on Yekatit 23, a day traditionally dedicated each month to Saint George.

Some historians would like to make up excuses for Italy's defeat, such as the difficult terrain. If this was the case, then it was ironical that Italy marched with arrogance not only into a physical landscape it was not familiar with but also into a cultural landscape it was ignorant of. They were ignorant of the sophistication of Ethiopians.

The Battle of Adwa was a climax. Adwa became a global stage on which Ethiopia's diverse ethnic and cultural groups- Amhara, Oromo, Tigrayans, Gurage, Christians, Muslims, and many others- stood united and shone before the world. The stunning victory of Ethiopia repelled the danger to its three thousand years history of independence, and also marked the beginning of the end of the colonial era. Its effect would reverberate for many decades to come, particularly among blacks in Africa and worldwide.

From the perspective of Italy, the humiliation was unbearable. Adwa left a lasting stain on its glorious Roman past. The trauma of Adwa haunted generations of Italians. Italy returned forty years later for a second war with Ethiopia, mainly to restore its reputation. Italy mobilized vast national resources to invade Ethiopia in 1935. Despite their vast numerical and technological advantage, the Ethiopian forces mounted strong resistance. Italy then abandoned the rules of warfare and used mustard gas. The fact that Italy resorted to such measures, according to some accounts, was because they were on the verge of defeat - an outcome that would have profound implications for the nation's pride and standing.

Logically, Italy would have chosen a decisive and honorable victory, and not a victory tainted by the use of chemical weapons, if the goal was to restore its reputation. That it chose the use of mustard gas suggests the desperation of the situation.

The second Ethio-Italian War caused immense destruction and may have, to some extent, alleviated the trauma of Adwa for Italians. However, the deeper impact of Adwa could not be undone by any military campaign. Adwa had already accomplished what it was meant to accomplish, and that was to shatter the myth of “superior” race. Once that illusion was exposed, no amount of force or warfare could erase it.

During their five years occupation, Italians committed numerous atrocities. They burned countless churches and monasteries, killed monks, priests, civilians, women, children, and destroyed priceless cultural heritage. Despite their vast resources, they managed to control only a third of the country.

After five years of occupation, the Italians were expelled by Ethiopian resistance fighters, supported by the British army. The history of Ethiopian guerrilla warfare during this period remains a source of pride for many Ethiopians to this day.

Those five years produced many heroes, including Dejjazmach Geresu Duki, Dejjazmach Belay Zeleke, Ras Abebe Aragai, Dejzasmach Balcha Safo and numerous others, including Colonel Abdissa Aga, whose exploits in Italy- after being captured and taken to Rome- read like the plot of a Hollywood film. What is particularly profound is that those heroes came not from a single background, but from diverse ethnic and cultural origins, once again reflecting the unity of Ethiopians seen at Adwa.

The Amhara genocide

Italy’s crushing defeat at the Battle of Adwa humiliated the nation on the world stage and would haunt generations of Italians. For Ethiopia, it was a moment of glorious history. For Africans and oppressed black peoples alike, it was a beacon of hope. However, it would also prove to be a double-edged sword for Ethiopia (although no Ethiopian sees it in this particular way). Ethiopia as a nation, and the Amhara as a people, would pay the price over the coming century. Italy consequently viewed the Amhara as its principal “enemy,” holding them responsible for its humiliation at Adwa.

In pursuit of revenge, false narratives were deliberately constructed to turn Ethiopians against one another, particularly against the Amhara people. The Amhara—who had ruled Ethiopia for millennia were portrayed as oppressors of other Ethiopian ethnic groups. In reality, however, while Ethiopia was often ruled by Amhara elites or in the name of the Amhara, it would be more accurate to say that the country was governed according to Amhara values rather than by a rigid ethnic identity. Ethiopian kings were not always of “pure” Amhara ethnicity, yet none

compromised on what were understood as Ethiopian values (“Ethiopiawinet”)—values largely synonymous with Amhara cultural and political traditions.

In this sense, the term Amhara has carried a broader meaning beyond ethnicity alone. An Ethiopian from another ethnic background who identifies with these values is regarded as an “Amhara” and held in high esteem within Amhara society. Conversely, an individual of Amhara ethnicity may be looked down upon if he fails to live up to these values. In fact, there was no distinct Amhara nationalism until recently; it has emerged in response to what is perceived as an existential threat to the Amhara.

Over generations, these narratives gradually took root and eventually became fully realized. Over the past fifty years, the Amhara have been both a “cause” and an “ideology” fueling numerous rebel groups formed to liberate their own ethnic communities from so-called “Amhara oppression.” Ironically, the general Amhara population has been identified as one of the poorest in the world.

This “Amhara” cause remains alive—and intensely polarizing—even fifty years after the dismantling of the last Ethiopian emperor and the abolition of Ethiopia’s three-thousand-year-old monarchical tradition.

The genocide against the Amhara became systematic and semi-official immediately after the fall of the Derg regime, when the EPRDF took power in 1991. This marked the moment when decades of hate speech turned into brutal reality. Perhaps the most widely recognized “official beginning” of the genocide occurred in Bedeno, East Harerge, where innocent civilians were massacred. With the introduction of ethnic-based federalism—deliberately designed to set the stage for genocide—the Amhara, who had lived throughout Ethiopia without concern, suddenly found themselves living in hostile regions to which they did not ethnically belong, and with no one to protect them.

However, few recognized this as the beginning of an outright, decades-long genocide. It would take years before the general population, including many Amharas, fully became aware of the unfolding atrocity. In fact, it is only recently that other Ethiopians have begun to sympathize with the Amhara’s suffering.

This is mainly because the genocide was systematic and prolonged. While bullet (and other weapons such as machetes, knives) killings have persisted over the past forty years, the genocide also involved secretive schemes, including forced sterilization of Amhara women and even deliberate HIV injections carried out under the guise of vaccinations, family planning and even the intentional denial of malaria prevention and treatment. The genocide was comprehensive, systematically aimed at reducing the Amhara to a marginalized social, political, and economic minority.

The harsh reality unfolding beneath the surface in Ethiopia was briefly brought to light when approximately 2.5 million Amharas were declared “missing” in the 2007 census report. Ironically, this revelation came at a time when Ethiopia was celebrated as one of the fastest-

growing countries and an emerging ‘democracy’ in the world. Yet the international community either turned a blind eye to the atrocities or remained conveniently silent.

Even today, after decades of mass killings and genocide, the hostility toward “Amhara rule” has neither subsided nor been satisfied; in fact, it is intensifying. What was once carried out covertly is now happening openly. The genocide is being perpetrated on an even greater scale and with new, more dangerous dimensions. In the past, an Amhara might survive by avoiding openly opposing the ruling system. Today, even that no longer guarantees safety. For many, being an Amhara has become a death sentence.

Killing an Amhara has become unofficially approved and is often covered up by labeling it as “ethnic conflict,” a “security problem,” “instability” or a “political issue” , while the media always reports the victims simply as “civilians” , intentionally obscuring their identity (I don’t recall local or international mainstream media clearly reporting it as targeting Amharas).

We stand today at a critical moment in history. After four decades of systematic and coordinated violence, the Amhara—as a people, a nation, a culture, and an identity—are being pushed to the brink of destruction.

We call upon global powers to take responsibility for their role in planning and enabling these atrocities and to act immediately to bring them to an end. Millions of innocent Amhara men, women, children, and infants have been sacrificed for political ideologies they don’t understand. And this will not go unanswered. The “Universe” will judge.

Ethiopian Culture

By Ethiopian culture, we refer to the dominant cultural framework that coexisted in relative harmony with the country’s many diverse cultures for centuries—at least until the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in 1991. As in many nations, it is natural for one cultural tradition to emerge as dominant among a variety of coexisting cultures and values.

In Ethiopia’s case, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has played a central role in shaping and unifying this cultural framework. For centuries, it has served as a foundation for shared values, traditions, and identity among diverse communities. Prior to 1991, this cultural synthesis functioned with no significant issues, contributing to a sense of continuity and cohesion.

The origins of what is often described as Amhara—or more broadly Ethiopian—culture and values are deeply rooted in Christianity, particularly in the traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

Next, we briefly highlight selected, prominent features of Ethiopian culture and traditions, while leaving more detailed exploration to the reader.

Unique calendar

Ethiopia maintains a distinct calendar system, which differs from the Gregorian calendar by approximately seven to eight years. The Ethiopian calendar comprises thirteen months: twelve months of thirty days each, followed by a thirteenth month consisting of five days, or six days in a leap year.

Unique alphabet

Ethiopia also possesses a unique writing system known as Ge'ez. Unlike alphabetic systems that separate consonants and vowels, this script integrates vowel sounds into each character, resulting in a syllabic structure that enhances consistency in spelling and pronunciation, making spelling and pronunciation a non-issue, unlike the English alphabet. For example:

በ ቡ ቢ ባ ቤ ብ ቦ

Each symbol represents a consonant-vowel combination; for instance, በ (be), ቡ (bu), and ቦ (bo).

መ ጠ ጡ ጢ ጣ ጤ ጥ ሀ ሁ ሂ ሃ ሄ ህ ሆ ሇ ለ ገ ገጽ ገጽጽ ገጽጽጽ ገጽጽጽጽ ገጽጽጽጽጽ

The Ge'ez script contains roughly 182 symbols, often described as 26 base letters each appearing in seven forms. However, this large number can be misleading, since many of these symbols are not entirely independent. Instead, they are systematic variations of a smaller set of base characters.

In fact, most letters follow consistent and recognizable patterns when they change form to represent different vowels. These modifications—such as adding a stroke, extending a line, or slightly altering the shape—are often shared across multiple letters. As a result, once the underlying patterns are understood, the script becomes much more structured and easier to learn than the total number of symbols might initially suggest.

Holidays

Ethiopia has numerous religious and cultural holidays, including Enkutatash, Buhe, Meskel, Timket, Genna, Fasika and Felseta, as well as many other holidays honoring various saints.

Enkutatash, the Ethiopian New Year, is connected to the story of the Queen of Sheba (Saba), as previously discussed.

Ethiopia is also known as the birthplace of coffee. Drinking coffee in Ethiopia is not merely a daily habit but a deeply rooted cultural ceremony. In fact, coffee plays a crucial role in fostering social bonds within Ethiopian society. It is traditionally shared with neighbors and rarely consumed alone, creating a space where people gather, converse, and relax. In this sense, the Ethiopian coffee ceremony can be seen as an everyday “mini-holiday“.

Sadly, much of these cultural traditions have been systematically and intentionally undermined through sustained internal and external attacks, with the aim of eroding Ethiopia’s cultural heritage, traditions, and identity. This is not an isolated occurrence, but part of a decades- long conspiracy against Ethiopia - not only by Italy, but also by Western powers that have viewed Ethiopia’s defiance as a challenge to their hegemonic worldview. This has occurred through, among other factors, the spread of numerous Christian sects entering Ethiopia in the name of faith, following the EPRDF’s introduction of religious freedom, as well as open, sustained political attacks through media. The younger generation, which is meant to inherit and continue these traditions, has been particularly vulnerable, having been born and raised during this period. This raises the risk of a discontinuity in tradition and identity. Some of the once vibrant and beautiful national holidays of forty or fifty years ago have faded over time, leaving only a shadow of what they once were. While Ethiopia has arguably made some material improvements over the past thirty to forty years, particularly in living standards, it has lost much of its invaluable traditions and cultural heritage, and with them, a deeper sense of happiness.

Food

Ethiopia’s traditional foods, spices and drinks include, among others, injera, defo dabbo , doro wet, shero, chebechebsa, kitfo, kurt (raw meat), kocho, berbere, tella, tej, arakei, shameta, borde. Thanks to the internet, many of these have gained popularity on the global stage today.

Social culture

Ethiopia has rich social culture. Wedding and funeral ceremonies, social support systems such as *edir* and *ekub*, and religious gatherings such as *mahiber* and *senbete* are all part of Ethiopia’s deep cultural traditions.

Glory be to Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Mother, the Holy Virgin Mary