

HDG63	Deba 09°39'/35°06' 1541 m	09/35	[Gz]
HDG29	Deba Robi 09°16'/35°41' 1834 m	09/35	[Gz]
HFE17	Deba Selama Amanuel (church) 13°40'/39°07'	13/39	[Gz]
HDL78	Debacora, see Deka Bora		
H...	Debai Tilat Gin wereda (centre in 1964 = Kuye Maryam)	10/38	[Ad]
HET86	Debai 13°29'/39°04' 1421 m, cf Debay	13/39	[Gz]
HFF44	Debaina (Demberona) 13°57'/39°46' 2938 m	13/39	[Gz]
HEC94	Debak Awra (Devach Aura)	11/36	[+ It]
HDK69	Debakora (Debacora), see Deka Bora		
JDJ21	Debal 09°19'/41°45' 2638 m	09/41	[Gz]
JEJ56	Debalti (Gabalti) (mountain) 12°15'/42°12' 863 m	12/42	[Gz WO]
HEC88	Debanji, see Devangi		
??	Debanu (pilgrim place) Oromo pilgrims of the Arsi used to go to Debanu. [Mohammed 1994]	../..	[x]
HDM.?	Debar (with church Gebri'el), in Bulga/Kasim wereda	09/339?	[x]
HEU22	Debar 12°52'/39°33' 3219 m	12/39	[Gz]
HES34	<b>Debark</b> (Debarq, Dabarq) 13°00'/37°55'	13/37	[MS n]
HES55	Debark (Debarech, Devark, Davark) (area)	13/37	[+ WO 18]
HES64	<b>Debark</b> (Debarek, Debarec, Dabarek, Debarak) (Debark', Dabark, Dibark, Dobarik, Dobaruk) (Debbivar, Debehahir, Divarik), cf Dib Bahir ("Debarec nuova", Däbärek) 13°08'/37°54' or 13°14'/37°56' 2235 m or 3020 m or 13°09'/37°53' 2848 m, mountain 13°11'/37°57' 2908 m (centre at least 1950s-1980 of Simen awraja, also 1964 of Debark wereda & Asera Belai sub-district), distance 841 km from Addis Abeba The climate is severe and windy, and hoar-frost and hail are not infrequent in the rainy season. "If one wants to visit the Simien Mountains, one may start by mule from Debarek." [Jäger 1965] The Wilkifit Pass is shortly beyond on the main road.	13/37 13/37 13/37 13/37	[MS Ro Gu x] [MS Te 18] [n Gu]
1770s	On their way to Gondar in early 1770, James Bruce and his party passed the Debark market, which Bruce writes Dobarke. "Icy winds compete with the blazing sunshine and people with eyes asquint, ruined by sunlight at high altitude, walk for miles to barter on the eroding mountainside." The country about was riddled with hermits and exiles pretending to be hermits, who lived in caves outside the bounds of normal society. The road grew progressively worse as they made their way up the mountain. [M Bredin, The pale Abyssinian, London (2000)2001 p 107-108]		
1800s	A map in 1814 by Henry Salt includes also Debark, with spelling Davarik.		
1830s	Gobat tells for the 1830s that Debark was passed every week by 1,200-1,500 people from Gondar, with cattle and cloth to be exchanged for salt. The weekly market was held at half an hour's walk from the Giyorgis church, on Wednesdays according to Rüppell, on Mondays according to Combes and Tamisier. Samuel Gobat in 1834 reports that a murderer at Debark (Däbareq) was condemned to pay 200 M.T.-dollars, and in consequence took his stand in the market, begging for charity, until he had the wherewithal to pay. [Pankhurst (1990)1992 p 306]		
1850s	Plowden stated in 1854 that the Nägadras (chief of trade) of Debark was one of only six officials with that title in northern Ethiopia, the one in Debark being the only one among them who was Christian.		
1860s	"-- steep ascent to Debareq, situated on the plateau of the Wagara. In 1860 Theodore defeated his nephews, the two brothers Garet. They were both killed. His friend, the		

Irishman Bell, was also killed in the engagement. The evening after the battle, Theodore had 1,700 of the Garets' warriors beheaded in the market-place of Debareq."

"Theodore flew into an uncontrollable fury when he heard of the death of his English friend /Plowden/. He decided to destroy the Garets above all. He gave orders that his troops be made to surround the whole region. After some days the band commanded by the Garets was surrounded in a small forest near Debareq.

The Garets thereupon made their last desperate venture. Accompanied by a few ardent horsemen, they made straight for the Emperor at a furious gallop. Just before reaching him, the elder Garet reined in his horse, made it rear, and fired. But the shot only grazed Theodore's shoulder. The Irishman, Bell, came dashing along and shot Garet down from his horse. But the younger Garet attacked Bell with his lance and, piercing his lung, killed him. The lancer was immediately shot down by the Emperor himself.

The loss of his two friends turned the relatively good-natured monarch into a bloodthirsty monster. Seventeen hundred warriors surrendered on the death of their two leaders. Seventeen hundred headless corpses covered the market-place at Debareq that same evening."

[P Hartlmaier, (Amba Ras 1953) Golden Lion 1956 p (96, 112-113) 88, 99]

The British consul general in Egypt was told by letter from Raffaele Baroni in January 1861 that Emperor Tewodros was then at Debark.

[Acta aethiopica II p 145]

1905 The Rosen party of Germans reached the market place of what they called Dobarik on 21 April 1905 and measured its altitude to be 2837 m. They re-counted the tragic memory of the place from Emperor Tewodros's time.

[F Rosen, Eine deutsche .., Leipzig 1907 p 438-439]

1920s The British hunters Maydon and Blaine passed there in early 1923, when they hoped to find Walia Ibex in the mountains.

"-- we must obtain permission from the Dedjatch Ayalé, who lived at Davart, beyond Davark, before we could hunt in the Simen district."

[H C Maydon, Simen, London 1925 p 64]

"Davark is the name of a scattered group of villages, built along the ridge of a large down, and famous for nothing except perhaps a church rather larger than the average. It contains the seat of the local Fitaurari and lies on the main route to Gondar, which perhaps accounts for its prominence on the map. The more locally famous town of Davart, headquarters of the powerful Dedjatch Ayalé, situated twenty miles south, is not shown at all."

"-- one and all in this district were terrified of the Dedjatch Ayalé, and nothing could ever be done without his approval --"

The hunters had contact with Fitawrari Makonnen, with a scribe, and a Grazmach.

"The local hunter, Wan Defrau /=Wondefru/ by name -- begged us to present him to the Fitaurari and to ask his permission to be allowed to act as a hunter. The two Roman Catholic deacons of Tigré, who had marched with us from Aksum, also begged our intercession to obtain a safe conduct as far as Gondar."

Captain Blaine tried to shoot a lammergeyer. "-- it is a strange sight to see these huge birds skimming low on motionless wings --"

[H C Maydon, Simen, London 1925 p 79-81]

Rosita Forbes, who published in 1925, writes that at Debark the officials, on seeing her government pass, "declared that they had nothing to do with the government, cared even less for it and wanted a paper signed by their local Dejasmach."

American naturalists from Chicago travelled in 1926.

"-- we set out for the village of Davart - the seat of Dejasmach Ayalu. -- was indeed a stronghold in the African sense of the term: the house was surrounded by a stone wall six feet high from which rose a much higher palisade of timber. -- there were two gates in two separate walls -- The house was two-storied with an outside staircase leading to a porch above."

"European patent leather shoes encased /Ayalu's/ small feet, for his territory is not more

than ten days' travel from the Italian colony of Erytrea and foreign goods can be easily imported, as we realized when he ordered set upon the luncheon table eighteen bottles - all different - of Italian wines and liqueurs."

The Americans - with some reluctance - obtained Ayalu's permission to go to the mountain peaks and hunt for walia ibex.

[J E Baum, Savage .., New York 1927 p 281-288]

1930s The Brigata Eritrea, on its way to Gondar, crossed the Tekezze river in early March 1936 and passed also Debark, "capoluogo dell'Uogherà", which they estimated to be at 2850 m altitude.

[P Gentizon, Milano 1937 p 101]

About 700 inhabitants. Italian *Commissariato* which was moved to "new Debark", post, telephone, infirmary, *spacci*. Important market on Wednesdays and a place where caravans naturally used to pass. The Italians repaired the mosque there.

Post office of the Italians was opened on 1 May 1937. Its cancellations read DEBAREC \* AMARA.

South of the road in a dense grove of trees there is the church of Kidane Mihret and more distant the church of Kidus Giyorgis. The latter is also called Feres Seber ("crushed horse") because of a story that a horseman intended to violate the right of refuge in the church, but could not because his horse tumbled dead to the ground. [Guida 1938]

"New Debark", previously called Debbivar in Italian spelling, received the *Commissariato del Semièn* and is situated on a short stretch of level ground. Masonry buildings were constructed.

The main road northwards from Debark to the Tekezze river 149 km was gravelled in the 1930s but not asphalted, while a road Debark-Mesal Dengiya 35 km was asphalted.

1940s Around January 1941 Mohammed Effendi of the Sudan (speaking Amharic because he had an Ethiopian mother) was based at Debark and made attacks on the Gondar-Asmara road.

Dejazmach Ayelu Birru in early 1941 deserted his Italian overlords to join a small British force to occupy Debark. The rains stalled their action but, at least, the road to Gondar from the north was blocked.

[R N Thompson 1987 p 190]

"North of Gondar Ringrose and Railton between them controlled the Gondar-Asmara road between Uollaich and Debarech, Ringrose operating north from Dabat against Debarech assisted by Dejasmach Ayalewu and his 7000 Patriots, and Railton operating south -- On 12 May Railton went to see Ringrose at Dabat -- Ringrose had a wireless telegraphy set and was in touch with the *kaid's* headquarters at Asmara and could call on air support. Railton agreed to mount an attack on Uollaich to divert attention from an attack planned by Ringrose on Debarech on 14 May."

"Ringrose's attack on Debarech had some initial success, but the Patriots were driven back by a counterattack and lost 18 killed and 27 wounded. A second attack was planned for 21 May and again Railton was asked to mount a diversionary attack on Uollaich -- The attack was a disaster. At 10.000 a.m. the Armachaho chiefs, whom Sheppard had persuaded to join in with 1200 men, walked off the field -- At 11.00 a.m. the RAF bombed Railton's camp -- by mistake -- C company attacked alone with great courage -- One platoon got through the wire but it suffered heavily and Railton called off the attack."

[Shirreff 1995 p 234-235]

1950s Storage pits for grain in the ground were found at Debark by a researcher in the 1950s, though they were generally scarce in this part of Ethiopia.

[Simoons 1960 p 81]

About 1955-57 there was a young teacher Kebede Tigu who had just got his certificate in Harar. He later studied at the university in Addis Abeba and thereafter in the USA. After serving in Nazret and Gondar under the Derg government, he worked also to revise schoolbook texts so that they would be compatible with the ideology of the government after the revolution.

[AddisTribune 2002/12/27]

- 1960s Sub-province Governor of Simen awraja in 1959 was Fitawrari Kebede Ambachew. Thier was a group of Muslims in Debark like in many other northern towns. The Felasha Mission had its headquarters at Debark. At the junior secondary school 9 students passed 8th-grade examinations in 1960. The average daily traffic on the Gondar side in 1962 was 5 buses, 3 cars, and 34 trucks. /21 January 1967:/ "Debarak looks attractive at first sight. From the crest of a distant ridge the majority of its tin roofs are concealed by a thick wood of blue-gums, and this wealth of trees is pleasing on the naked plain. However, the reality is a hideous child of the engine-age - a shanty-town born to soothe drivers' nerves before they begin the northward descent from the Semiens or after they have completed the southward ascent." "Recently Debarak was made capital of the Semiens -- and it has a governor, a police-station, a telephone, a petrol-pump, a Health Centre, several bars and as many brothels, a secondary school - and an American Peace Corps teacher. Some of the houses off the road are square, two-storey wooden buildings - like overgrown log-cabins - which look well beneath the tall blue-gums; but the Piccadilly of this capital is a large market-place, furnished with mechanical weighing-scales and surrounded by *talla-beits* and scruffy stalls, selling cloth, salt, kerosene, saddlery, rope, kettles, saucepans, glasses, coffee-cups, torches, batteries, gaudy nylon head-scarfs and a few very rusty tins of imported fruit which look as though the Italians had left them behind." "When we reached the main street and saw a moving truck /the riding mule Jock/ promptly reared in protest - whereupon the load conveniently fell off on to a hotel doorstep. 'Hotel' is of course a courtesy title. This sleazy Italian-built doss-house is blatantly a brothel, where harlots (to use the favourite term of English-speaking highlanders) may be observed undressing truck-drivers in the bar." "I intend to sleep on the floor; bed-bugs are an occupational hazard, but the likely result of using these foul beds is not. - Tonight I am suffering from what the Americans call 'Cultural Shock'. This road runs like an infected scratch down the tough, rough, healthy body of the unprogressive highlands and on coming to these towns one knows that they are sick. Contact with our world seems to suppress the best and encourage the worst in the highland character; here it is evident that already the locals have degenerated from an integrated, respect-worthy peasantry into a community of coarse and crafty primitives. Walking around Debarak - or sitting in its bars, watching highlanders in dirty jeans and T-shirts drinking 'Chianti' and smoking cigarettes - one sees a much cruder aspect of the highland culture than one would ever see in an isolated settlement." [Dervla Murphy 1969 p 127-128]
- In 1967 there were 4 telephone numbers: Governor, police station, Birhanu Abdul Kadir, Said Wassie. Population as counted in 1967 was 4,400. The primary school in 1968 had 404 boys and 310 girls, with 11 male and 2 female teachers. The junior secondary school had 46 male and 20 female students in grades 7-8, with 4 teachers.
- 1970s Paul Henze passed there in the early 1970s: "Debarak was abustle with people, animals, and vehicles. The manager of the Semyen Mountain Hotel, a two-storey wood structure gaily painted in yellow and blue, came out to invite us in as we slowed down to ask the way to the police station to make our presence known and find out where to find Ato Eneyu, organizer of mules. -- The police chief /Major Tamre Bellehu/ urged us to camp in a meadow behind a building which housed the Semyen police headquarters as well as the local prison." [P B Henze (1977)2001 p 159]
- There was a sub-post office and a Shell petrol filling station (-1978-). Spelling used by the post (-1973-) was DEBAREK.
- 1980s Population about 8,500 in 1984. The TPLF launched an offensive against the 603rd Core Army of the Derg on 1 January 1989, and having destroyed government forces stationed at Debark they controlled the town of Debark on the 3rd of January.

- [12th Int. Conf. of Ethiopian Studies 1994]
- 1990s Population about 14,500 in 1994.  
 Debark is a small town on the Aksum road 90 km north of Gondar [Camerapix: 101 km]. Immediately north of Debark "you plunge into the Simien foothills along a road that I would rate as the most dramatic I've seen in Africa." At least one bus runs daily each way between Gondar and Debark, taking three to five hours. [Bradt 1995(1998)]  
 "The nearest hotel accommodation is in Gondar, as hotels in Debark are not geared to foreign tourists, with the possible exception of the Simien Hotel. A small, local hotel, it has a very amiable and cooperative management, excellent food, delicious coffee, cold beers, and is bug free."  
 [Camerapix 1995]  
 Debark is an important meeting point for the people of Simien. It is also an important caravan centre between the Amhara country and the Tigray. In the village centre is the office for the Simien National Park.  
 [Aubert 1999]  
 "Most trekkers stay at the Simen Hotel, a block back from the main street and a short walk from the bus stop and market. -- Newer, well-run and a little quieter is the Simien Park Hotel, on the right as you come in from Gonder, past the park headquarters. -- There are no taxis in Debark."  
 [Lonely planet 2000 p 183]
- 2000s Population about 17,800 in 2001.  
 "We got a bad feeling from Debark, where we stayed the night before heading into the Simen mountains. It was poor and the children were persistent and almost aggressive. Some of the adults were also a little crazy. Into the mountains we took with us a guide and a scout. The scout (and his semi-automatic weapon) is required by law. There had been assaults by bandits in the past although the situation had apparently improved."  
 [E-mail from Pieter Rae, UK 2000-04-08]  
 "The jump off to the /Simien National Park/ is at Debark, about 2 hours north of Gondar. From past experience we knew that the process of registering and getting organized in Debark might take a little while. Even at the best of times it takes awhile, but we had arrived on Saturday. Considering that the Park office was closed, things were pretty efficient. We went to the park office and found it closed, but there were a couple of guards there who directed us to the house of the Park Warden."  
 "The Simien Hotel was gracious enough to allow us to unpack our lunch and eat on their tables -- but we did trouble them for refreshments. Another stop was the bustling town market, just off the main road on the turnoff to the Park, where we purchased a couple of pots and created a lot of excitement amongst the locals. The children in the town seem particularly excited by the appearance of ferengies."  
 "The Park Warden was found and we went off to the office. There was an unexpected crowd of men, all guide wannabes waiting to be chosen. The Warden was an excellent fellow, who signed us up to go into the park and accepted our explanation that we had no room to carry a guide with us. For -- 320 Birr: entrance of 40 Birr per adult, 15 per child, 10 per vehicle and 90 for the guide/guard, we were granted the right of entry and enjoyment of the park for 48 hours."  
 [John Graham in AddisTribune 2001/06/22]
- picts J E Baum, *Savage ...*, New York 1927 at p 290 part of the fence at Ayalu's stronghold in Davart near Debark;  
 L'industria in A.O.I., Roma 1939 p 53 winding road near Debivar;  
 Nat.Geog. vol 163 May 1983 p 643 front of a coffeehouse
- HES64 Debark sub-district? (-1997-) 13/37 [n]  
 HES64 **Debark wereda** (also in the 1990s, centre = Debark) 13/37 [n]
- In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the Debark constituency had 111 polling stations and 124,684 registered voters of whom 87% cast their votes.  
 Dominating party was EPRDF with 54,356 votes and candidate Ato H/Silase G/Micael Berihe. Second was CUD with 34,500 votes and candidate Ato Sisay Ayana Shemelash.

Third was UEDF with 1,805 votes. The remaining 17,204 (!) votes are not explained.  
[www.electionsethiopia.org]

[Debaroa (Debarwa) is in Eritrea although called the capital of Tigré in former times]

*debas* (däbas) (A) spirit believed to preferably stay where there is *tella* and *tej*

H...	Debas Kindish sub-district (D. Kndish ..) (centre in 1964 = Hamus Gebeya)	13/37	[+ Ad]
??	Debaso (sub-post office under Asbe Teferi) A map in 1814 by Henry Salt records a place Debbassoo on the caravan route from Harar to Ankober, inside Dewaro.	09/41	[Po 18]
HES32	Debat, see Dabat		
HDP75	Debat (Debatie), see Dibate		
HDT14	Debay 11°04'/38°50' 1965 m	11/38	[Gz]
HDT..	Debay Telatbin sub-district (-1997-)	11/38?	[n]
??	Debayna (Däbayna) (historically recorded) "In the spring of 1741 /Emperor Iyasu II/ conducted a first campaign against the Bäläws, who, his chronicle claims, no previous Emperor had dared to attack since the time of Susneyos. Iyasu fought with them at Däbayna, after which he captured numerous camels and pack animals, and 'led into slavery many men and women'." [Pankhurst 1997 p 362]	../..	[Pa]
JEP94	Debbeta (Dobbeta) (waterhole) 13°33'/41°03'	13/41	[WO Ne Gz]
HEC55	Debbikan (Debbican) (village) (with church Maryam 1 km to the south-west)	11/37	[+ It]
HES64	Debbivar (Debivar), see Dib Bahir		
HEC38	Debbuk (Debbuc)	11/37	[+ WO]
HD...	Debdebo (Debdebbo, Deb dabo) In Menilek's time (-1870s-) a district in Efrata province, governed by a Balambaras.	09/39	[n 18]
HD...	Debdebo sub-district (centre in 1964 = Bashkewet) debe: <i>dabe</i> (Som) tortous, crooked, flexible	09/39	[Ad]
HDK53	Debe 09°34'/37°47' 2546 m, see under Kachisi debe wein: <i>weyn</i> (Som) big, large, great	09/37	[AA Gz]
??	Debe Gojo (Däbbä Gojjo) Menilek camped there in mid-1879.	../..	[x]
JCM00	Debe Wein (Debewein)	06/44	[MS Ad]
JCM00	Debe Wein sub-district? (-1997-)	06/44	[n]
JCM00	Debe Wein wereda (centre in 1964 = Debe Wein)	06/44	[Ad]
HEC55	Debecam, see Debre Tsehay		
HDL91	Debegojo sub-district (centre in 1964 = Ejere) cf Debokojo	09/38	[Ad]
JDF62c	Debegoriyale	08/44	[MS]
HET96	Debek (Debek', Debeq, Debuc, Dibbuc, Dibbuce) 13°31'/39°04' 1548 m (with church Maryam)	13/39	[Gz q WO Gu]
HFE82	Debek (Debek', Debeq) 14°19'/38°37' 1452 m debeka: <i>dabaka</i> (Sidamo O) kind of tree, <i>Faurea rochetiana</i> ; it grows mostly on rocky hillsides and is good for firewood and its bark gives red colour	14/38	[Gz q]
HDG44	Debeka (Debek'a, Debeqa) 09°28'/35°12' 1616 m	09/35	[Gz q]
	<i>debel</i> (däbäl) (A) billygoat; fool		
HDE70	Debel, mountain 08°48'/38°28' 2169 m Debel (this village is 4 km west of the next one)	08/38	[x Gz]
HDE71	Debel (mountain and village)	08/38	[x]

HF...	Debel sub-district (centre in 1964 = Tsebel) Population (in Debel settlement?) 1.986 as counted in 1956.	14/38	[Ad]
JDK36	Debel Weyne 09°23'/43°04' 1830 m	09/43	[Gz]
JDK37	Debel Weyne 09°22'/43°11' 1759 m east of Jijiga, halfway between that town and Somalia	09/43	[Gz]
JDK82	Debel Weyne (Debeluin) (area) <i>debela</i> (däbäla) (A) kind of cloth; <i>debelan</i> (T) muslin	09/43	[+ WO]
HDL55	Debela 09°31'/38°55' 2630 m, cf Dabala	09/38	[AA Gz]
HES.?	Debela Kasa A village near Bwahit, the 7th highest mountain in Ethiopia. It is said the in this village the battle started which led to Kasa's victory so that he was crowned Emperor Tewodros in 1855. [F Wencker-Wildberg 1935 p 16]	13/38	[x]
HFF52	Debela (mountain chain) 14°02'/39°38' 2525 m <i>debele</i> (O) a grade in the <i>gada</i> system; <i>debbele</i> (däbbälä) (A) share room with someone, be associated; (däbbälle) (A) large, green butterfly	14/39	[Gz]
HDE43	Debele 08°33'/38°43' 1910 m	08/38	[Gz]
HDL44	Debelicha 09°29'/38°51' 2608 m	09/38	[AA Gz]
HEK08	Debelima (Debeliman) 11°55'/38°15' 2424 m	11/38	[WO Gz]
HDL74	Debeliti 09°42'/38°47' 2558 m (with church Gebriel)	09/38	[AA Gz]
HDD86	Debelo 08°56'/38°07' 2272 m	08/38	[Gz]
H....	<i>debena</i> (A) (Gondar A) royal black tent; (däbäna) (T) cloud; Debenawi (Däbänawi) (historically recorded) "-- while on a journey to Damot in 1567-8, Särsä Dengel summoned Sepenhi, and ordered him to bring the expected tax. The chief complied, and arrived at a place called Däbänawi, in Damot, together with an army 'as numerous as the sands of the sea'. His tribute reportedly consisted of a large quantity of gold, such as had never been paid by any of his predecessors." [Pankhurst 1997 p 252] <i>debene</i> (T) become cloudy, darken; stain soil; blend; <i>debene</i> (däbäne) (Gondar A) turtle-dove; <i>debbene</i> (däbbänä) (A) be tight /as said of a knot/	10/37?	[Pa]
JDG45	Debene (tribal area)	09/40	[Ne]
JDR02	Debene (Debeni) (area) /this one?:/ Captain Harris, leader of a caravan with a British diplomatic mission to Shewa, passed this area in mid-June 1841, and Harris describes Débeni as a branch of the Danakil people. He mentions a watering pool Leilé and a halting ground Suggadéra. The low huts seen there were the first such ones which the party met with after leaving the coast at Tajura. Harris arranged for the important chief in the region to visit his camp, a chief who had cleared the route of marauders so that trading caravans could pass more safely. Some of these carried salt from the Great Salt Lake to Awssa. The chief whose name by Harris is written Loheíta Ibn Ibrahim, Makobúnto, Akil, was concerning clothes as ragged and greasy as his escort, but he had a haughty air and a look of wild determination. His weapons were definitely more ornamented than those of his men. After "having swallowed a sufficiency of hot coffee" he laid aside some of his reserve and said that he was trying to recover some horses sent by the Negus of Shewa as a gift to Her Britannic Majesty. These horses had been stolen in the region. The chief hid in his clothes the presents given to himself by the British and did not want his followers to see them. [W C Harris, The highlands .., vol I, London 1844 p 138, 146-148]	10/41	[WO Ha]
HCT90	Debenna, see Dobena  Deber ..., see generally Debir ..., Debre ..		

deber: *debir* (däbir, däbr) (A) mountain; abbey? cf *debr*, *debre*; sanctuary of a church; *debere* (T) collect in one place; *dibir* (Gurage) forest

??	Deber (in Hararge), cf Debir Population 3.563 as counted in 1967.	../..	[x]
HFE15	Deber Ansa, see Debre Asa, cf Amba Debre Ansa		
KCA18	Deber Wen (Dabarueine, Dabureine) 05°32'/45°31' 344 m	05/45	[LM WO Gz]
HEJ75	Deberega (Deberiga) 12°27'/37°07' 1939 m	12/37	[Gz WO]
JCE89	Deberia 06°10'/44°18' 414 m	06/44	[Gz]
HDA79	Debeso 08°51'/35°39' 1833 m	08/35	[Gz]
H....	Debeso (sub-district & its centre in 1964)	08/36?	[Ad]
JDH03	Debeso 09°08'/41°00' 2257 m debet: <i>dibet</i> (T) silt, alluvium	09/41	[Gz]
HDS56	Debet (Debiat) (mountain) 10°29'/38°01' 2542/2840 m, cf Debial	10/38	[WO Ch Gz]
HDS..	Debet Medhane Alem (Debiet ..) (centre in 1964 of Wedemit sub-district)	10/38	[+ Ad]
HDH86	Debeta 09°48'/36°18' 2130 m	09/36	[Gz]
HES63	Debevar, see Dib Bahir		
JCM00	Debewein, see Debe Wein		
JEH19	Debheli (hill) 11°54'/41°38' 360 m	11/41	[WO Gz]
HDS55	Debial (mountain) 10°26'/38°01' 2542 m, cf Debet debicha labo: <i>labo</i> (Som) both, two; <i>laabo</i> (Som) turn back, curve; <i>labu</i> (O) 1. low thorny bush; 2. wander aimlessly	10/38	[Gz]
HDE28	Debicha Labo (Debiccia Labo, M.) (area)	08/39	[+ WO]
JDE14	Debiley (Debilei) (area)	08/43	[+ WO]

*debir* (däbir, däbr) (A) mountain, sanctuary, parish, church served by married priests  
*Debir* is in the Old Testament the city designated for the Levites (also name of two other towns, and name of a king who tried to halt Joshua's invasion of Canaan).

HDM71	Debir 09°42'/39°30' 2712 m	09/39	[Gz]
HDU07	Debir (Mafud, Mahfud, Makfud) 09°58'/39°58' 1344 m (district in Yifat-Timuga) Used to be an important market described also abroad in the 1920s.	09/39	[Gz]
HED24	Debir 11°07'/37°56' 2128 m	11/37	[Gz]
HEE97	Debir 11°45'/39°05' 3199 m	11/39	[Gz]
HEL48	Debir 12°11'/39°12' 2769 m	12/39	[Gz]
HEM91	Debir 12°38'/39°30' 2465 m	12/39	[Gz]
HET28	Debir 12°54'/39°14' 2145 m, or 12°55'/39°13' 1984 m	12/39	[Gz]
HEU80	Debir 13°27'/39°26' 2113 m (with church Giyorgis) debir duba: <i>duba</i> (O) 1. back, behind, continuation; 2. sheep's tail; 3. outer surface of an object; 4. level direction, not upwards or downwards	13/39	[Gz]
HEC96	Debir Duba (Lata) (village) 11°42'/37°13' 1847 m	11/37	[Gu It Gz]
HEK52	Debir Mikael (church) 12°17'/37°44'	12/37	[Gz]
HEK45	Debir Teklehaymanot (church) 12°08'/38°02'	12/38	[Gz]
--	Debire .., see Debre ..		
HDL64	Debis 09°37'/38°51' 2653 m	09/38	[Gz]

*debisa*, *debisaa* (O) 1. furrow; 2. answer, reaction;  
*debisa*, *dabessa* (western O) Adina microcephala;  
*debise* (O) pair, couple; return, reward



HDD47	Debisa 08°32'/38°12' 2373 m	08/38	[Gz]
HDD98	Debisa 08°58'/38°18' 2125 m	08/38	[Gz]
HDK19	Debisa 09°13'/38°23' 2697 m	09/38	[AA Gz]
H....	Debisa	10/38?	[Ad]
JEA42	Debisa (area) 1748 m, see under Bati	11/40	[WO]
HDL54	Debiti 09°34'/38°49' 2659 m	09/38	[AA Gz]
HES63	Debivar (Debevar, Debbivar), see Dib Bahir		
H....	Debko (Debqo) (in Lasta) A university team from Addis Abeba who visited Lasta in June 1974 noted that the school at Debqo had 95 pupils in January but only 45 in May, due to the problems of famine, disease and poverty. [Jansson, Harris & Penrose 1987 p 95]	12/39?	[+ x]
	<i>debo</i> (däbo) (A) communal labour		
GCT48	Debo, see Gesi		
HDD21	Debo 08°21'/37°40' 1619 m	08/37	[Gz]
HDE69	Debokojo (Debocogio, Debocodio, Debogoggio)	08/39	[+ Gu WO]
HDE69	Debokojo (Debocogio) (mountain area) 08°45'/39°18' 2011/2320 m, cf Debegojo	08/39	[+ Gz]
JDK30	Debole 09°22'/42°32' 1517 m	09/42	[Gz]
HCT91	Debona sub-district (Dobena ..) (centre in 1964 = Koshe)	08/38	[Ad x]
HDT59	Debora Guracha 10°29'/39°16' 2601 m	10/39	[Gz]
HEK63	Debosghie (village), see under Belesa	12/37	[WO]
HEM10	Debot 11°56'/39°23' 3393 m <i>debr</i> (däbr) (A) mountain, sanctuary, parish, church served by married priests /the word makes names of the form <i>Debre Xx/</i> Debra .., see Debre ..	11/39	[Gz]
HEC72	Debra Sina, see Sena		
HFC54	Debragut, see Debregut		
HEC55	Debrakoni, see HEC55 Debre Tsehay		
HEJ95	Debrasma <i>debre</i> (däbrä) (A) mountain being a retreat of monks or the site of a monastery; the word is normally followed by a name or word of Christian religious character	12/37	[WO]
HFE52	Debre Abale Vanus (rock-hewn church)	14/38	[Br]
HFD35	<b>Debre Abay</b> (Debra Abbai, D. Abbay, Devra Abbai) 13°52'/37°59' 1272 m (monastery recorded in the 1400s, with rock-hewn church?)	13/37	[WO Pa n 18]
1400s	King Yishaq (1412-1427) made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Abay. Over 50 estates are included in the preserved document. King Fasiledes renewed this charter about two hundred years later. [Huntingford, The land charters ..., A.A. etc 1965 p 34] Zara Yakob, who became emperor in 1434, had first received religious training in Aksum and then entered the monastery of Debra Abay. "He remained in obscurity until the confusion following the death of Yeshaq" coming down from Amba Geshen only shortly before he was proclaimed emperor. [P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 68]		
1830s	Wube of Simen, Goshu Zewde of Gojjam, and Kinfu of the Sudan borderlands joined up with Ras Marye's army in 1831, when he marched north from Gondar to Debre Abay on the Tekeze, where his superbly led Oromo cavalry defeated Dejzasmach Sebagadis's army.		

[Marcus 1994 p 57]

Dejazmach Wibe, together with Ras Mariyye Gugsa, crossed the Tekkeze river and defeated Dejazmach Sebagadis at Debre Abay on 14 February 1831. This was a battle with far-reaching consequences. Mariyye fell in the battle. Sebagadis, the last outstanding leader of the Tigreans during the *Zemene Mesafint*, was captured, and executed the following day. Wibe of Simen received Tigre and gradually made himself the ruler of all northern Ethiopia as far as the Red Sea.

[S Rubenson 1976 p 67 + King of kings ..., 1966 p 22]

Leading predominantly Oromo contingents from Wollo and Begemder, and supported by Wube /Haile Maryam/ of Semien and Goshu of Gojjam, Marye crossed the Takazze into Tigray with cavalry and defeated Sebagadis's much better armed force at the Battle of Debre Abbay on 14 February 1831. Marye was killed and Sebagadis surrendered to Wube. Wube handed him over to the Oromos who killed him in retaliation for Marye's death.

Both Sebagadis and Marye were buried at Debre Abay /at the monastery?/.

"Subagadis Waldu of Agame -- continued his predecessor's bid for control of the imperial throne. This led him into a bloody clash with the Yajju lord, *Ras Mareyye Gugsa* of Bagemder, at the battle of Dabra Abbay (14 February 1831). Both leaders lost their lives. -- Subagadis was executed by Mareyye's victorious troops. The man who picked up the pieces was *Dajjach Webe Hayla-Maryam* of Semen, -- The most significant results of the battle were the end of Tегrean autonomy and the extension of *Dajjach Webe's* overlordship to that region."

[Bahru Zewde 1991 p 12]

1840s Mansfield Parkyns, on his way from Adwa to Sudan, arrived to Debre Abay in early July 1845. They found the village "built in a deep hollow or chasm, and so nearly concealed, that, when approaching it from some directions, you would scarcely imagine yourself to be near habitations, seeing nothing but a wide tract of table-land before you."

"We were shown into a large oblong building, in shape and size much resembling an English barn, but here built of stone and mud, and thatched over; it was, I believe, intended for religious festivals, and occasionally for the reception of travellers."

Parkyns was hit by a violent inflammation of the eyes and had to stay at Debre Abay for about ten days. He could not see much of it before leaving. He found that the church "is built at the bottom of the hollow, the village rising like an amphitheatre from it; behind the church is a large plot of grass, backed by a wood of considerable size; a stream, forming in one place a natural cascade, ripples among the trees --"

There were many small grey monkeys and some birds, feeling protected by the sanctity of the place. Parkyns during his suffering of the eyes was attended by a man he calls Yakoub but does not seem to have known even the full name of. He was a German who had arrived to Adwa and hoped to earn some money, but learning from Schimper that this was almost impossible there, he was happy to join Parkyns on short notice hoping that it would be an adventurous journey.

When they descended from Debre Abay to the Tekezze they found fairly much water in the river. Yakoub waded confidently into the water, without having some other man next to him, and he demonstrated his confidence by waving his arms like a windmill. Suddenly he was taken downstream quicker and quicker and under the water, and was not found again. It was uncertain whether he was killed by a crocodile or a whirlpool.

[M Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, vol II, p 315-323]

1935 Dr Harald Nyström accompanied Dejazmach Ayalew's forces. After crossing the Tekezze river they sought protection in the park of the Debre Abay monastery and in three caves, on 17 December 1935. Most of the force was ordered not to go beyond a forested area some 5 km south of the monastery.

The church of the monastery had been restored with considerable money from the Emperor, and this work had recently been completed. On this morning of the 17 December three Italian planes bombed the place. The doctor took care of 26 wounded and after a while there were totally 17 dead. In the afternoon the Italians dropped bombs

intended to set fire to the church, but they did not succeed in their plan. After having buried their dead in the graveyard of Debre Abay the Ayalew party continued towards Dembegina.

At a later time the Italians destroyed completely the buildings of the monastery, including its fine church.

[H Nyström, Med S:t Giorghis ..., Sthlm 1937 p 67-70, 95]

- 1960s There is a music school for priests, with music faculty of Kedasse.
- HEK23? Debre Abreham (old name), see Addis Zemen
- HEL05 Debre Abune Aaron (rock-hewn church) 11/38 [x]  
south-west of Lalibela  
"For only a few minutes each day, when the sun is at its zenith, a golden shaft of light pierces the gloom of the underground church of Dabra Abuna Aaron. -- The monks claim that for some mysterious reason no water enters the hole during the rainy season."  
One of the most cherished possessions is a large ornately carved crucifix of wood, rare in Ethiopia where metal processional crosses predominate. [Nat. Geog. Mag.]  
picts Nat. Geog. Mag. vol 138 Dec 1970  
p 876 interior of subterranean church;  
G Gerster, Äthiopien, Zürich 1974 pl 48 ditto  
(same picture as above), pl 59 top of church for nuns.
- HEU60 Debre Aila, see Debre Hale
- ?? Debre Alias (sub-post office under D.Markos) ../.. [Po]
- HFE06 Debre Amba /Silase/ (Debra Amba) 13/39 [n x WO Gu]  
(with rock-hewn church)  
13°39'/39°01' 2434 m, see under Abiy Adi
- HFF61 Debre Amo (mountain) 14°11'/39°31' 3099 m 14/39 [n]
- HFE87 Debre Anbesa 14°23'/39°06' 1962 m 14/39 [Gz]
- HFE15 Debre Asa (Debra Ansa, Amba Debre A.) 13/38 [Gz WO Gu]  
(mountain chain) 13°44'/38°58' 1949/2426 m,  
see also Abiy Adi : Abba Yohanni  
On the morning of 27 February 1936 a mass of Ethiopians left the cover of the woods covering the slopes of Debre Ansa to fling themselves at the Italians. From 8 am until 4 pm, wave after wave of Ethiopian warriors, armed for the most part only with swords and clubs, tried to break through or get round the forward lines established by the Alpini and Blackshirts. Finally, General Pirzio Biroli counterattacked. Ras Seyoum's warriors decided they could take no more punishment. When they fled from the battlefield they left more than a thousand dead.  
[A J Barker 1971 p 83-84]
- HDL74 Debre Asbo (ancient name), see Debre Libanos
- ?? Debre Bage ../.. [x]  
When Tewodros arrived at the border of Shewa in October 1856, Habte Maryam tried to stop him but was killed. He was buried at the monastery of Debre Bage.  
[H de Monfreid, Ménelik ..., Paris 1954 p 69]
- HES.. Debre Bahir 13/37 [n]  
"The road soon starts to climb towards the high plateau of Debark, and the welcoming village of Debre Bahir. The entrance to the village is marked by an avenue of conifers and eucalyptus. This is the start of the steep climb up to the magnificent Walkafit rock."  
[Aubert 1999]
- ?? Debre Bahrey ../.. [x]  
Abba Giyorgis of Debre Bahrey was a disciple of Iyesus Mo'a in the 1200s. He preached over a wide area and became a saint of the Ethiopian Church.
- H.... **Debre Beg** (Debra Bag, Debre Bege, D. Beggi) 09/39? [n x]

(Däbrä Bäg'é) monastery in Tera, Shewa.

Site of the grave of Negus Haile Melekot of Shewa, who reigned 1847-1855.

King Haile Malakot of Shewa died (in Debre Birhan? of malaria?) in December 1855 and was buried at the church of Debre Bag on Hidar 30, Ethiopian calendar. One manuscripts says that Emperor Tewodros was present at the funeral, as a conciliatory gesture after armed encounters.

[Marcus, Menelik II, (1975)1995 p 19]

When Haile Melekot died at an age of about thirty, his body was buried without much ceremony, at the church of Etane Moca (Cecchi's spelling) at Debre Beg. His widow Tedenekiyalesh remained grieving at the tomb, although Emperor Tewodros was in the neighbourhood and represented a threat to Shewan royalty. Tewodros entered Debre Beg three days later and wanted the body excavated to prove that it really was that of Haile Melekot. His wife was given escort to the coast. She later went to Jerusalem and died there. She had no child (Menilek's mother was a servant).

[A Cecchi, vol I, 1886 p 254]

??	Debre Beggi (monastery in Tera, Shewa)	../..	[n]
HFE62c	Debre Benkwal (recorded in the late 1400s) about 20 km north-west of Aksum	14/38	[20]
HF...	Debre Berbere (Dabra Barbare) (monastery in Tigray) monastery south-east of Amba Senayt Sebagades (1818-1831) made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Berbere. In the preserved document many estates are named, eleven of which are also found in a grant by Lebna Dengel to the cathedral of Aksum. The charter to Debre Berbere says that a grant was originally made by Amde Tsiyon and renewed in the time of Gigar (1821-1830), and that Debre Berbere was built by Dejazmach Gebre Mesqel and Abbot Tesfa Hawariat (mentioning of Gebre Mesqel indicates the 1700s or early 1800s?). [Huntingford, The land charters ..., A.A. etc 1965 p 71-72]	14/39	[x]
??	Debre Berek (D.Bäräq) (monastery in Shewa) cf HDL16 Berek	../..	[x]
HDK89?	Debre Besrat (monastery), see Zena Markos		
HDM62	<b>Debre Birhan</b> (Debra Beran, Dabra Berhan) (Debra Brehan) 09°41'39°32' 2806/2840 m Centre at least 1956-1980 of Tegulet & Bulga awraja. Within a radius of 10 km there are at km 10SE Ilala Werke (Ilala Uorche) (village) 3S Wolo (Uolo) (area) 7S Faggi (area) 8S Kormargefiya (Kormagafiya) (village) 2802 m 2SW Tebassi (Tebase) (kind of centre?) 2779 m 9SW Kidane Mihret (Chidanbemeret) (church) 8W village with Body Guard camp 2NW Beressa (valley) 6NW Dunguit (village) 10N Amoragedel (Amoraghede) (village) 2078 m 10NE [Liche (Licce) see this name as own entry] "Debre Birhan" is this town, but it is also a church in Gondar, see Debre Birhan Silase below.	09/39	[Gz It WO x]
geol	Sedimentary intercalations, frequently lignitiferous, have a notable development between Addis Abeba and Dessie; at Debre Birhan a 1 metre lensing lignite band occurs in a 4 m thick inter-Trappean bed of sands and clay. In the Beressa valley at a locality 2 km nort-west of Debre Birhan, inter-Trappean sands		

and shales expose a 10-100 cm bed of lignite. A similar occurrence is found in the Mush valley north-east of Debre Birhan.

[Mohr, Geology 1961 p 129]

1400s

Emperor Zär'a Ya'qob (1434-1468) "was secure enough to establish a permanent capital in northern Shewa at Debre Birhan -- on an austere, cold and windswept plateau, reflecting the emperor's celebrated asceticism. During a fourteen-year residency there he established a large palace and endowed churches, and the *makwanent* (high nobility) and abbots built villas, whose needs attracted craftsmen, workers, farmers, and merchants. As Ethiopia's first major town in centuries, it attracted teachers and savants -- The new capital even drew the interest of the outside world -- Some artisans apparently reached Debre Birhan, but the Egyptians managed to keep most of them away."

[Marcus 1994 p 25-26]

Zara Yaqob started to build his palace, but he did not give the name Debre Birhan until later. Extracts from a chonicle: "He gave orders to the builders that the palace should be well constructed without any mistakes, and commanded the *Raq Masare* of the right and left and the *Jan Masare* /kinds of court officials/ not to put on their tunics until the work was completed -- When the building was complete it was surmounted with a golden cross -- a usage which did not exist heretofore."

When Zara Yaqob returned from his coronation at Aksum, a light appeared in the sky which gave the name 'Place of Light'.

"A light appeared in the sky and remained visible to all the land for several days. This caused our King to take a fancy to this locality, which he named Debre Birhan. He built there a magnificent church which he dedicated to our Lord Jeus Christ -- The light appeared for a second time when the mass was being said, and for a third time during the night --"

"During his stay at Debre Birhan, our King arranged all the institutions of his kingdom: it was then that men were put to death and that others were condemned to exile for crimes against God and His anointed; -- those who carried out the will of God and obeyed the King were rewarded and heaped with honours."

"A great plague came which killed such a vast number of people that none were left to bury the dead. The King then began the construction of the church Bete Qirqos to the right of Debre Birhan, so that God might take the plague away from the place -- He commanded all inhabitants of each locality to come together to bury the dead, carrying a stick and branches and sprinkling holy water -- The village chiefs were given orders to pillage the houses and seize the goods of those who did not conform to these instruction."

[R Pankhurst, The Ethiopian royal chronicles, Oxf. Univ. Press 1967 p 33, 38-39]

Zera Yaqob built a notable palace at Debre Birhan which had a roof ten cubits high and was surrounded by walls fifteen or twenty cubits high. He once spent no less than twelve years there."

[Pankhurst 1961 p 141]

1450s

"Debre Birhan has a remarkable early history. The settlement was founded by one of Ethiopia's most important early rulers, Emperor Zara Yaqob (1434-1468), when at night his compatriots saw a heavenly light over the area. This vision, which was vividly described by old Ethiopian authors, was almost certainly Halley's Comet, which appeared in 1456 --

Zara Yaqob -- decided to make the place his permanent residence and named it Debre Birhan, meaning 'Place of Light'. He accordingly ordered his chiefs and nobles to collect wild olive trees and other wood for the construction of a palace and a stout surrounding wall, the likes of which no previous ruler had ever erected. -- In the vicinity of his palace he also built a fine church, which was fitted, the chronicle proudly claims, with a 'strong lock' - perhaps an innovation of the time.

[Camerapix 1995 p 119]

1460s

Though beloved by Zara Yaqob, the town was abandoned by the monarch's son and successor -- after which his father's palace and other buildings at Debre Birhan soon fell to ruin. The settlement was not heard of for over two centuries, until a successful Shewan

chief called Nagasi made it his residence."

[Camerapix 1995 p 119]

In the map of Fra Mauro completed in 1460 is shown a town Hamara which is believed to have been located in the Debre Birhan region.

[J Doresse 1957 vol II p 240]

In the time of Baeda Maryam (1468-1478) the artist Brancaleone made a painting of the Madonna with the Child which became influential in Ethiopian church art.

At the Mesqel feast early in his reign, King Ba'eda Maryam in Debre Birhan visited the churches Iyesus, Mesqel and Maryam. The King showed his face to the people and this was something new. On 17 September he left Debre Birhan again.

Emperor Ba'eda Maryam, after having made a military occupation of the country of the Doba, went to Debre Birhan and was annoyed that the monks of Debre Libanos had not come to greet him. However, all the clergy of Shewa were there to receive their king.

Near the compound where Ba'eda Maryam had lived in his youth, he found again a wild rose which he had planted with his own hands.

[J Doresse 1957 vol II p 168]

1500s Imam Ahmed, "the left-handed", was at Debre Birhan around 1532. [Pankhurst 1997]

1600s Church bells were sent in the late 1600s as a gift to the Ethiopian Emperor from the Governor of the Dutch colonies in India, and a merchant named Murad took care of getting them there. They were hung in Debre Birhan but later removed by Tewodros? [Muthanna, Indo-Ethiopian relations 1961 p 96]

King Iyasu I in 1693 made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Birhan. Of seven districts mentioned in the charter a couple are described as having been earlier in the hands of Oromo.

[Huntingford, The land charters..., A.A. etc 1965 p 62-63]

1700s In 1707 the monastery at Debre Birhan was burnt by lightning.

[Muthanna p 97]

1800s The Abichu Oromo burnt Debre Birhan soon after the young Sahle Selassie had been proclaimed *Ras* of Shewa in 1813.

[Abir 1968 p 153]

Wossen Seged (1808-13) restored the church of the Trinity - Selassie - in Debre Birhan. Opposition groups had Wossen Seged assassinated by a slave in 1813. Thereupon Oromo groups rose and sacked Debre Birhan. A younger son of Wossen Seged, Sahle Selassie, overcame his older brother Bakure and emerged as the new ruler of Shewa.

[P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 128]

DebreBirhan was used by several later rulers, notably by King Sahle Selassie (1813-1847), who rebuilt the town in the 1820s/?/ after it had been bestroyed by Oromo, and he had a fine palace there in which he spent several months a year.

He also built several churches there.

1840s At Mäsqäl there was a yearly rally before King Sahlä Sellasé when, as told by C.

Johnston, every tenant and slave capable of bearing arms was expected to be present. The ruler watched sitting "in a small cabinet" on the balcony of his palace, while about 6,000 warriors filed past on a large meadow-ground.

[Pankhurst (1990)1992 p 154-155]

The Harris embassy made an excursion to Debre Birhan in September 1841 and attended the Meskel celebration.

"A cluster of white-roofed houses, stragglng beyond the walled palace and the church of the Holy Trinity - long indistinctly visible - now rose rapidly to view; and a small eminence having been ascended, the goal was presently attained. As we passed the royal lodge, a page -- galloped off to make his report."

"/In the evening/ glimmering lights soon illumined the stragglng hamlet - dancing and singing occupied both sexes of the inhabitants - and with almost as much pomp and ceremony as in more civilised lands, the departed year was consigned to its last long resting-place in the relentless tomb of Time."

[W C Harris, The highlands .., vol II, London 1844 p 48-49]

"No royal residence can be conceived more desolate and less princely than the palace at Debra Berhán -- Crumbling walls -- surround a vast assemblage of wattle and dab edifices -- which are clumped together in separate court-yards -- Six rude gateways on the southern side conduct through as many miry enclosures, lined with troops, and crowded with herds, flocks, and applicants for justice. A paddock, covered with bright green turf, extends in front of the chamber of audience. Hoary junipers stretch their moss-grown branches fantastically over the lawn; and at the further extremity of the enclosure rise the mouldering remains of the palace of Zárá Yácoob."

"Debra Berhán is one of the principal depôts for the numerous royal slaves -- A strange clatter, and a Babel-like mixture of tongues, greets the ear of the visitor, and the features of many races -- are distinctly visible among the crowd --"

"Issuing from the gateway under the authority of a bloated eunuch, a numerous flock of brown damsels take their way to the river. Heavy earthen jars are slung over their slender backs -- These are newly purchased Christians from the last Gurágue caravan,"

"Following close behind comes a group of favoured dames of a certain age -- Exalted to the post of mistresses of the royal brewery, and decked out like the first ladies of the land, in flowing garments resplendent with crimson stripes, they have little reason to wish for a change of condition."

"Seated upon a gaily caparisoned mule, amidst the jingling of bells and brass ornaments, the general of the gun-men proceeds in state across the green parade. -- But he too is a slave, as was his father before him, and his son will be after him."

"A last group is straggling through the gateway. The aged and the infirm, who can still perform a light task, have just received their daily dole from the royal storehouse at the niggard hand of the pampered steward. -- A wistful glance is cast upon the handful of raw barley, which must content them for the day."

[Harris vol II p 50-52, 54-64 with p 73-86 about the Meskel review]

When Sahle Selassie was fatally ill in 1847, he ordered his servants to carry him from Ankober first to Angolala and then to Debre Birhan. There, a few hours before his death, he proclaimed Haile Melekot his successor as king of Shewa.

[Abir 1968 p 178]

According to Henry de Monfreid the king was wounded by a shot during a hunting trip and died in October after having pardoned the man who accidentally caused his death.

[H de Monfreid, Ménelik ..., 1954 p 49]

1850s Sahle Selassie died in Debre Birhan in 1847. His successor Haile Malekot burnt Debre Birhan in 1855 to keep provisions there from falling into the hands of Tewodros II.

[P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 131-132]

When Tewodros arrived at the frontier of Shewa in October 1855, Haile Malakot eventually decided not to submit. He retired with his army to Debre Birhan. There, the king began to suffer severe attacks from an illness (malaria?). The king's only chance to improve the morale of his forces was to obtain a victory, so he led his army into battle against emperor Tewodros in early October 1855. After a day-long battle his troops suffered a serious reverse. Haile Malakot retreated to Debre Birhan again. When Tewodros was less than five days from the town, Haile Malakot admitted ultimate defeat by destroying the provisions stored there and evacuating and burning the city. King Haile Malakot asked a group of loyal Shewan chiefs to safeguard his son, the future Menilek II. The king himself died in December 1855.

[Marcus, Menelik II, (1975)1995 p 18-19]

"Menelik, the founder of modern Ethiopia, later resided at Debre Birhan on several occasions. He was so pleased with the area that he ordered the construction in 1865 of a new capital at a nearby place called Liche -- but, under pressure from the then emperor, Yohannes IV, soon abandoned it in favour of Debre Birhan." [Camerapix 1995 p 119-120]

1870s When Menilek submitted to Emperor Yohannes in the treaty of Wadara of 1878, it was also stipulated that the capital of Shewa would be moved from Liche to Debre Birhan.

[Marcus, Menelik II, (1975)1995 p 55]

Bezabu, the most dangerous opponent of Menilek in the early part of his reign, was condemned at court and executed at Liche/?. His body was buried without honours at the Sahle Selassie church in Debre Birhan.

[A Cecchi, vol I, 1886 p 264]

The explorer Gustavo Bianchi arrived in Debre Birhan from Debre Tabor on 28 December 1879. Bianchi carried a letter from Emperor Yohannes to Menilek but he felt that he did not have clothes to dress properly as an ambassador for handing it over. "And I had no umbrella!" It seemed to be a sign of importance to carry an umbrella.

Only in the evening did Menilek tell that he had no interpreter, so Bianchi did also not receive the meal he had hoped for. There was no wood to be had in town for cooking food. His caravan people ate the meat of a sheep raw, but Bianchi himself refused to do so with the duck he had in store.

On the evening of arrival, after some waiting, Bianchi was received by Menilek in a little elegant tent which was a gift from the Società Geografica Italiana.

[G Bianchi, Alla terra dei Galla, Milano 1896 p 204-216]

On 30 December arrived from Let Marefia a young Oromo man Gebre Maryam to be interpreter to Bianchi. Gebre Maryam spoke French and knew a little Italian. He had been under the impression that he would meet Baron Heuglin and not Bianchi.

The second time Bianchi met Menilek he was made to wait in one of the round buildings. Inside were four small rooms on the periphery and a central circular room. Some two hundred old Italian rifles had been placed leaning against the walls, a gift presented by Martini. From there they moved to another round building with a kind of terrace, where Menilek was seated.

Menilek asked many questions, instead of accepting to discuss Bianchi's travel plans. He said that he wanted a photographic camera. Bianchi had none (but Chiarini had brought a camera to Ethiopia.)

The conversation revealed that Menilek expected much of Italian gifts and that Bianchi had so little in his baggage. Bianchi was sent to fetch immediately whatever he had. The interpreter Gebre Maryam confirmed that there was no photographic apparatus. At the end of the audience there was finally a discussion of Bianchi's wish to travel to the southwest. Menilek hinted that it had cost him so much that Cecchi and Chiarini had travelled there, that he was not willing to finance such a thing again. Bianchi said that he would be satisfied to go only to Gurage, and he also hoped that Ras Gobana would do something for him, and so the audience ended.

[Bianchi 1896 p 220, 226-236]

The Debre Birhan market in the 1800s was considered important for mules and horses.

1880s For 11 January 1880 Menilek called an assembly at Debre Birhan of all the Europeans in the region. It seemed that Menilek wanted to learn from the Europeans how to operate accounts. Those present were:

- Orazio Antinori, Spedizione Geografica Italiana
- Furer, viceconsul of Sweden-Norway in Aden
- Bremond, merchant
- Alred Ilg, engineer
- Zimmerman and Appenzeller, technicians accompanying Ilg
- Mayer and Grainer, German Protestant Mission
- Tissier, master mason
- Labattut, small-scale merchant
- Gustavo Bianchi, explorer
- Sebastiano Martini and Pietro Antonelli, Sped. Geog. Italiana
- Père Ferdinand, Catholic Mission at Finfine
- Duboy, "much Ethiopian and not much European"

thus about 15 Europeans in Shewa at this time.

The real question was rather where some elephant tusks and other goods sent by Menilek to the coast to pay for arms had disappeared. Several days were spent on conferring with the Europeans.



[Bianchi 1896 p 268-272, 274-275]

On 16 January 1880 Bianchi got the opportunity for an audience with Menilek about Bianchi's own travel. It was promised that Bianchi could make a journey of exploration to Gurage and Soddo. When the caravan people heard this they refused to go any further, so Bianchi paid them off and started to recruit other men in Debre Birhan. He finally assembled his little caravan at Let Marefia.

[Bianchi p 276-278, 284]

When Bianchi departed from Let Marefia on 5 February 1880 to travel westward, he passed Debre Birhan again. At that time the town was almost deserted, because Menilek had left for Were Ilu.

The guide whom Menilek had promised to supply was not there. Welde Giyorgis provided two guides, in exchange for two shirts (he asked for much more) and some zinc sulphate for his infected eyes.

[Bianchi p 285-286]

On 27 March 1881, at Debre Birhan, Count Pietro Antonelli and Menilek signed a contract under which 2,000 Remington rifles were to be consigned to Assab and would arrive in Shewa six months after.

[Marcus p 61]

1900s The Silase church was rebuilt by Menilek in 1906 and contains many mural paintings.

1930s Afe-Nigus Aregay Becchere was Minister of Justice around 1928. He was an Oromo from Jirru near Debre Birhan and was father of the famous Patriot leader Abebe Aregay. Aregay Becchere lived in Debre Birhan during the Italian occupation and died some time after it was over.

[Studien zur Kulturkunde 104, Köln 1994 p 512]

When the missionary Anna-Lena Röstin travelled in the early 1930s/?/ she was shown in Debre Birhan a spring said to have been created when Zera Yaqob dropped a bottle of holy water from the Jordan river. The water of this spring was believed to come through a subterranean channel directly from the Jordan.

The church was newly repaired at this time, with metal sheet roof. The Greek contractor for this work had been buried in the churchyard with a huge stone on his grave. There was a wall clock in the church, but so incorrectly hung that the pendulum could not work. Anna-Lena borrowed a ladder and corrected it immediately. She was invited inside the house of Grazmach Haile Mariam whom she knew from before. There were some books in that house.

The governor in Debre Birhan was not known to be very generous to visitors. In the innermost ring of some kind of ruined palace was a two-storey round house, and on its upper floor was the telephone station, the *Silk Bet*. "Its operator shouted so loudly that he could almost be heard in Addis Abeba without the aid of any wire." He was receiving a telegram saying that the head priest of Lalibela had died in the capital and would be transported by air to Dessie and from there be carried to his home town Lalibela.

The missionary invited people for a Sunday service and she could also offer printed books in Amharic.

[A-L Röstin, Arvet i främlingars hand, Sthlm 1936 p 19-29]

The road Addis Abeba-Debre Birhan 125 km was asphalted in the 1930s, and Debre Birhan-Debre Sina 70 km was gravelled but not asphalted.

1935 When the Emperor established headquarters at Dessie towards the end of November 1935, three British journalists - Evelyn Waugh, W.F. Deedes and Stuart Emeny - hoped to reach Dessie by joining and hiring a Chevrolet truck together. They left Addis Abeba on 13 November and were not stopped by any military checkpoint at the outskirts of the capital. However, at about 80 km from A.A. they were stopped at a provincial telephone post. There had been an order by telephone to stop "two lorry loads of white men travelling without permits". The journalists had their papers in order, except that they had not acquired a permit to leave the capital.

The local chief did not think he could stop them when they had valid passports, so they continued until they put up tents before nightfall. When at 9 in the morning they arrived

at Debre Birhan, they were resolutely stopped there. They tried to offer the chief some whisky, but it was a fasting day. Negotiations were fruitless. The journalists had to put up their two tents again, and the chief placed his tent near them. In the morning there was an official telegram ordering them to return to Addis Abeba, which they also did.

Within forty-eight hours Waugh and Emeny were on the same road again, with valid permits and accompanied by several colleagues. Deedes preferred to go to Harar again. [W F Deedes, *At war with Waugh*, London 2003 p 87-98]

Robinson MacLean was the first of the journalists to reach Debre Birhan.

1936 Groups from the cadet school in Genet, travelling with about a dozen decrepit trucks and with the Swedish officers Tamm and Bouveng going with them, arrived in Debre Birhan on 20 April. In the night they met at line of motorcars. It was the Crown Prince returning from Dessie to the capital. In Debre Birhan they also met the first of the fleeing soldiers from the northern front, with no officers among them. Hakim Igezaw (Gizow) was supposed to provide petrol but it was finished since quite some time.

[V Tamm, *I tjänst ..*, Sthlm 1936 p 275-278]

At Debre Birhan "they stopped for petrol and met heading in the other direction Lij Legesse Gabremariam -- with the five Italian prisoners from Dessie and some cannon which he refused point-blank to hand over.

They were forced to stay at Debra Berhan that day /21 April/. The lorry drivers, Hindis and therefore British subjects, went on strike: so far and no further. None of Tamm's cadets or their men knew how to drive. -- A group of journalists driving back from Dessie told the cadets the Wollo army was retreating. Tamm, Kifle, and Negga decided to halt the army and rally it. But when during the day the fugitives drifted in, without food, begging for bread, leaderless and refusing to return, the cadets realized it was useless; it was no longer an army but rabble. -- That night they finally found drivers."

[Mockler 1984 p 125-126]

"Many patriotic Ethiopians were from the outset determined to continue the struggle. The first to do so was Lej Hayla Maryam Mammo, of Dabra Berhan -- who on 4 May 1936 attacked a group of invading forces on the way to the capital. This action earned him the title the 'first *arbagna*', or patriot, of Shawa."

[R Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, 1998 p 243]

Lij Haile Mariam Mammo, in the beginning of his career as the first Patriot leader in Shewa, on 4 May 1936 attacked Italians passing through Debre Birhan. From four lorries full of soldiers, 170 *askaris* lost their lives. Four white Italians were captured and taken to Chaha. Among them was a doctor who was later handed over to a French mission. (According to P. Gentizon, 4 May was a very rainy day.)

[Ethiopia Observer vol XII 1969 no 2 p 76-77]

Also among Patriots at Debre Birhan, Dejzasmach Zewde Abakoran operated in collaboration with Abebe Aregay and with minor chiefs.

[3rd Int. Conf. of Ethiopian Studies 1969 p 306]

1937 When the Italians arrested and killed monks at Debre Libanos on 20 May 1937 there were also 129 young deacons which were taken in custody and transported to Debre Birhan. A week later Graziani gave order that they should be shot. [Mockler 1984 p 180]

Post office of the Italians was opened 3 July 1937 (3 Aug?). Its cancellations read DEBRA-BERHAN\*(AMARA) which was modified to DEBRA-BERHAN\*SCIOA after the locality was transferred to *Governo dello Scioa* on 1 September 1938.

[Philatelic source]

1938 Important centre with about 3000 inhabitants, *Commissariato*, post, telephone, hospital, hotel, several restaurants, mission of the Franciscans.

[Guida 1938]

In the time of Abebe Aragai's Patriot forces, church treasures were stored in ancient excavated caves near Debre Birhan.

[Greenfield 1965]

1940s A Patriot who in some periods fought in and near Debre Birhan was killed on 29 July 1940. The Italians cut off his head and hands and carried them around in Debre Birhan.

[Ethiopia Observer]

The Allies in early April 1941 sent a South African armoured car patrol to Debre Birhan. They found 400 Italians beleaguered in a hastily built fort.

[Birkby, It's a long way to Addis, p 240-241, 252]

Ras Abebe Aregai's forces advanced from Debre Birhan to Dessie.

After the liberation, the Ethiopian post office was opened on 22 April 1943.

The hospital had one doctor and 50 beds in 1949.

1950s In 1954 there were only three telephone numbers: the Governor, Kebede Wolde Mariam Hotel, and one Mohammed Rashid.

There was a 90kW hydro-electric power station (-1955-).

14 November 1956 Ras Kassa died at Mittak/?/ in Debre Birhan.

26 April 1957 the Emperor opened the Community Teacher Training School.

It is described in Ethiopia Observer, August 1957 no 7 p 232-235.

At that time Haile Mariam Mammo School was one of altogether 9 provincial secondary schools in Ethiopia (if Eritrea is excluded).

By 1958 Debre Birhan was one of 27 places in Ethiopia ranked as First Class Township.

In late March 1958 staff from ESIBT ("Building College") taught at a short course for community leaders and made a textbook for it.

Sub-province Governor of Tegulet & Bulga awraja in 1959 was Dejazmach Kefelew Wolde Tsadik

1960s The Community Development Workers Training Centre in 1958 had 189 male students and in 1960 a little less, 160 students.

There was a Mission Language School of S.I.M with about 8-month courses.

"No pains are spared to make the course at Debre Berhan as profitable as possible to new missionaries, for whom it is also a time of adjustment to a new land and a different way of life." Miss Moen was teacher there at one time.

[H M Willmott ... p 80]

A mobile school financed by Unesco together with the American Point Four was tested in mid-1961 at places a few kilometres south-west of Debre Birhan.

A Volkswagen station wagon carried the equipment and served as an anchor for the awning that made up the open-air classroom. No furniture was provided so flat rocks served as chairs. Square pieces of plywood served as blackboards for writing exercises.

The Volkswagen had its station at the Community Education Teacher Training School.

"Mobile teachers" at the start were Tesfaye Reda and Marcos Yifru.

[Eth.Herald 1961-07-02]

The average daily traffic on the Addis Abeba side in 1962 was

18 buses, 46 cars, and 72 trucks. Ditto on the Kombolcha side was

24 buses, 27 cars, and 66 trucks. The road from Addis Abeba to Debre Birhan was asphalted in 1965.

The Min. of Agriculture operated a sheep breeding station, see Debre Birhan : Kundi below.

The Debre Birhan Wool Factory was "almost ready" in October 1964. It was started as an administrative part of the Bahr Dar Textile Mills and "wholly financed by the Ministry of Finance" with a capital of Eth\$ 2.7 million. Production was planned to start on 1 January 1965 with 120 spindles and 6 looms, having capacity to process one metric ton of wool daily. Equipment and technicians were acquired from Belgium. The workers were recruited mostly fresh from school. It was the first wool factory in Ethiopia.

[Eth.Herald]

In half a year January-June 1965 the wool factory produced 7,065 blankets in one-shift operation with a labour force of about 200 of whom 45% females.

Around 1965 the installed electrical capacity in the town was 125 kVA and annual production 103,000 kWh.

In 1966 it was decided that the Ministry of Interior would design a master plan for Debre Birhan, without engaging external consultants.

In 1966/67 the Teacher Training Institute had 163 students in grade 3

and 140 in grade 4 (but none in grades 1-2).

Concerning Swedish volunteers, there were at the Community Development Centre in 1966 Britta Johansson, and in 1966-67 Marianne Karlsson, and in 1967 Kåre Norberg. Engineer Karin Lidman (b 1941) was general community development worker around January 1970, and Gunilla Walleroth (b 1943) was housekeeping teacher at the Teacher Training Institute.

The population of Debre Birhan as counted in 1967 was 9,188 of whom 93% had Amharic as their mother tongue, 96% were Christian and 3% Muslim.

In the same year there were 38 telephone numbers, of which 10 registered on personal names. Four of these names were of Islamic type, and Major Moshe Meyer seems to be an expatriate.

Gunilla Bjerén, who worked for the Swedish Volunteer Service as a social researcher in 1965-1967 and returned to Ethiopia in 1968 for her own studies, made one of her sample surveys in Debre Birhan.

[Bjerén 1985 p 22]

Head of the Community Development Project was Tesfaye Haile (-Jan.1968-). It had Swedish support. There was a sewing school for women. Volunteer Marianne Karlsson of the Swedish Peace Corps worked a second contract period there.

Volunteers Ingvar Svensson and Lars Erik Larsson worked on water supply questions.

They were rather frustrated with the project. Water resources were good but the water was not clean. A small irrigation project had good support from the local population.

[Tenaestelin, Sthlm]

A branch of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia was established within the period 1965-1968.

Atse Zera Yakob primary school in 1968 had 644 boys and 454 girls, with 17 male and 4 female teachers.

Atse Zera Yakob secondary school in 1958 had 106 male students and in 1960 it had 292 male and 4 female students.

Haile Mariam Mamo Secondary School had 39 students in grade 12 who sat for school leaving certificate in 1968, and 12 of them passed.

The Teachers Training Institute in 1968 had 265 male and 48 female students, with 19 teachers of which 12 foreign. (Is this the same as Debre Birhan Community Education Teacher Training School providing teachers for rural primary schools?)

The Ethiopian Government was a 100 per cent owner of the Debre Berhane Wool factory, as of year 1969.

[Gilkes 1975 p 154]

"There are several gas stations -- A restaurant is behind the Total station at the west entrance to the town. There is -- a large wool factory in the town. One can buy the local wool burnoose (a long cape) in the market for about \$17. Market day is Saturday. -- At 122 kms. /from A.A./ there is a fairly large village where a camp of the Imperial Body Guard is located."

[Welcome to Ethiopia, A.A. ca 1965 p 61]

Population 19,978 in 1975, which is 10,000 more than at a previous census eight years earlier in 1967.

1970s It was announced on 3 February 1975 by the Derg government that the Debre Birhan Wool Factory (with Belgian investment) was among 14 textile enterprises to be fully nationalised. [News]

Spelling used by the post office was DEBRE BERHAN around 1975.

By around 1978 there were petrol filling station of Agip, Mobil, and Shell.

Not quite 23% of those living there in 1978 were born in the town.

1980s Late 1984: "In Debre Birhan there would be roadblocks and soldiers preventing refugees from reaching the capital." [M F Harris]

"In Debre Birhan -- a few of my colleagues and I experienced the conditions of the refugees by spending a September /1984/ night in the field with the famine victims. It was terribly cold. We had blankets, and slept in tents, but the piercing wind bit through our

clothing. Before going to sleep we walked through thousands of people out in the open fields with no blankets, huddled together for warmth. Sixty-four had died during the day, and we were told that the night would take more. We saw hundreds who had dug shallow holes in the ground - human beings forced to sleep in burrows like animals, shivering and starving. We woke up early in the morning and found that 31 people had died during the night. Some were dead in the holes they had dug for protection. Their shelters became their graves."

[Dawit W Giorgis, Red tears, USA 1989 p 164]

"In one instance, Legesse's hatred of Tigrayans resulted in a brutal criminal act. The people who were to go to Gambella were first transported to Debre Birhan, where we had a transit camp. They couldn't be flown to Gambella because the airstrip was not yet complete. The number of people waiting in Debre Birhan grew to thousands. To clear out the transit camp, Legesse decided that /certain groups/ should go ahead by bus. -- every Tigrayan, old or young, sick, weak, or on his deathbed, was ordered onto the buses for the two-day journey. In effect, he condemned the old and sick Tigrayans to death."

[Dawit as above p 300]

Population 27,929 as counted in 1987.

1990s Population 25,637 as estimated in 1993.

Saturday is the main market day in Debre Birhan.

A Danish traveller Hjalte Tin with family passed there in late 1992 while touring Africa on motorcycles. "In the evening we drive into Debre Birhan, a cold and dark countryside town in the highlands. Small two-wheel carriages, drawn by horses, are scrambling past -"

[Rasmussen & Tin, Fra Cape til Cairo 1994]

The Teacher Training Institute used Amharic as working language in the 1990s.

On 2 July 1994 it was broadcast that nine people were killed and eleven captured in an exchange of fire with security forces in Assagirt wereda. It was said that the group had earlier broken into the Debre Birhan prison and set certain prisoners free. According to the police, Ato Andale Melaklu, the Debre Birhan representative of the All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) was one of the "bandits" killed in the fire exchange.

[Horn of Africa Bulletin]

"It is the site of a modern woollen goods factory, which is on the right side of the road at the beginning of the town. Here are woven the thick blankets for the Addis Ababa market. Traditional woollen goods are -- the little hats made and worn by shepherd boys and the famous black, white, and brown Debre Birhan carpets in traditional designs of lions and birds."

[Camerapix 1995]

"Debre Birhan firmly fits into the sprawling category of Ethiopian towns. The old town centre, which lies towards Addis Ababa, is separated from the newer buildings on the Dese road by a church and open fields. The bus station and most of the hotels are in the new part of town.

Debre Birhan is a settlement of some antiquity, but the only physical evidence of this is a church that is said to date to the 15th century. --"

"Several hotels in Debre Birhan offer inexpensive self-contained rooms -- The Helen Hotel is a real gem. Large, clean first-floor rooms have private hot showers and bowl toilets -- The Tsigedera /Tsigereda?/ Hotel next door is scruffier, and the rooms only have cold showers -- Just as good, and similar in price, is the Ambassador Hotel, which has cramped but clean rooms with private cold showers. In the dollar-a-night category, the Gilma Hotel is the best bet. -- the best of the rest are the Haile Meskel Hotel in the old part of town, the large, red double-storey hotel near the Ambassador, and the Gelala Hotel near the bus station, all of which cost around a dollar. The Haile Meskel is particularly nice; an old building with large comfortable rooms that wouldn't look out of place in a low-key government hotel. -- Fresh rolls are to be had every morning at the Green Zone Bakery, and a limited range of cakes is served at the pastry shop next to Haile Meskel Hotel."

[Bradt 1995(1998), sketch of town plan p 343]

In a one-hour search for weapons on 15 February 1997 in Debre Birhan, 123 persons were arrested.

[News]

2000s Distance 130 km from Addis Abeba.

Debre Birhan is the administrative capital of Northern Shewa Zone, which has a population of nearly two million. It is also the centre of Debre Birhan wereda.

Names of good hotels are Girma, Helen, and Akalu. The last-mentioned is regarded as the most comfortable, and Helen as having one of the best restaurants. At least ten buses run daily between Debre Birhan and Addis Abeba.

[Lonely planet 2000 p 212-213]

In 1998 a project was started to train children for circus, and two years later there were about 100 training in this circus school, even handicapped children. Instructor was Netsanet Assefa, who was about 20 years old and had trained himself for five years in the circus school in Addis Abeba. There was collaboration with a Swedish circus under the name Sweet Circus Project (Sweet = Swedish-Ethiopian) and Ato Netsanet visited Sweden in 2001. [Danstidningen (Sthlm) 2000 no 5 p 30-31]

Population about 47,600 in 2001.

2002 In January 2002 an Information & Communications Center was inaugurated in Debre Birhan. It was initiated by the UK Dept. for International Development as the second of its kind in Ethiopia. Its services were intended to include Internet, e-mail, CD-rom searching, telephone, fax and distance education.

[AddisTribune 2002/01/18]

Called the Multipurpose Community Telecentre it was inaugurated again in October 2003 and seems to have been located at the Public Library.

[AddisTribune 2003/10/24].

In 2002 a three-storey hospital complex is underway and aiming to be of international standard. It is to be named Hakim Gizaw Memorial Hospital, in honour of one of the first two Ethiopians who were sent to Russia by Menilek II to study medicine.

[AddisTribune 2002/03/02]

2003 Helen Hotel had 25 rooms. There was still the Blanket Factory.

Ambasel Trading House PLC for cotton export etc. had a branch in the town.

2005 In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the Debre Birhan constituency had 66 polling stations and 51,068 registered voters of whom 86% cast their votes.

Dominating party was CUD with 26,595 votes and candidate Ato Belayhun Zemedhun Kabebewu. Far behind was EPRDF with 6,382 votes and candidate Weyzero Beletshachew Agzew Dres. An independent female candidate received 2,413 votes. The remaining 8,358 votes are not explained.

[www.electionsethiopia.org]

text Ethiopia Observer, November 1958 vol II no 10 p 330-331, 333-335  
feature article on the Community Training School.

picts Bianchi 1896 p 205 view with gibbi, 221 in compound of gibbi;  
D Buxton, Travels ..., London 1949(1957) frontispiece: small  
rural church in the neighbourhood, p 32-33[13] Timket festival  
in the neighbourhood, 64-65[1] Kidus Mikael church near D.Birhan;  
Liberation Silver Jubilee, A.A. 1966 p 292 same school as next item;  
Ethiopia Observer 1957 no 7 p 232-233 three photos  
from the Training Centre for Community Education;  
Ethiopia Observer 1958 no 10 p 330-331 activities  
at the school and part of the buildings;  
D Buxton, The Abyssinians, London 1970 p 59 map of the  
surrounding area, pl 10 plateau in the neighbourhood, pl 14 small  
country church of Abune Gebre Menfes Qiddus;  
Tenaestelin (Sthlm) 1992 no 1 p 20

many people working at building a dam;

Tenaestelin (Sthlm) 1995 no 1 p 6

people in front of church Aliyu Amba.

maps 1:10,000 by Mapping & Geog. Inst. November 1961;

Surrounding area, *in* Buxton 1970 p 59

**Debre Birhan: Beresa** (river)

About 2 km north-west of Debre Birhan there are coal containing seams having a thickness between about 0.3 m and 2 m. [Mineral 1966]

**Debre Birhan : Keyit**

In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the Keyit constituency had 61 polling stations and 33,649 registered voters of whom 87% cast their votes.

Dominating party was CUD with 17,244 votes and candidate teacher Werku Tegegnu Abay. Far behind was EPRDF with 6,474 votes. The remaining 5,466 votes are not explained.

[www.electionsethiopia.org]

**Debre Birhan : Kundi**

Kundi is at high altitude. Next to it is Wof Washa (name meaning Bird Cave) with a juniperus forest.

A sheep breeding station was operated by the Ministry of Agriculture (-1964-) to supply material for the wool factory. Marino sheep with good wool were imported and raised in the centre in order to cross-breed with local sheep.

[Official pamphlet, A.A. 1964]

**Debre Birhan : Makdesa** (church)

Emperor Zara Yaqob in the 1460s feared that his Queen Tsiyon Mogese and his son Baeda Maryam had been plotting to seize the throne. The Queen was flogged and beaten so severely that she died. She was buried secretly in a church called Maqdesa Maryam, 'Temple of Mary', near Debre Birhan. When Baeda Maryam gave incense and candles to this church, his father became angry and had him bound, and tortured his servant Mehari Kristos. The clergy sided with Baeda Maryam and there was some kind of reconciliation between father and son before Zara Yaqob died in 1468 and Baeda Maryam became the new Emperor.

[The Ethiopian royal chronicles p 41-42]

**Debre Birhan : Mittak**

Ras Kassa died there on 14 November 1956, at the age of 76.

**Debre Birhan : Tebasse** (Tebase, Tebasie)

Located a couple of kilometres from Debre Birhan in direction of Dessie. With sub-post office using spelling **TEBASIE** on its postmark.

1940s "An interesting experiment was the community centre launched in 1943 at Tebasse --

Here Mr. and Mrs. McLaren, who were formerly in charge of the National School in Swaziland, have carried out a remarkable experiment in village betterment. Working in a village of 500 people they have shown the villagers how to improvise a village hall; grow new kinds of vegetables; make compost pits; run a co-operative village shop, and knit the wool they spin for themselves. They have also introduced a clinic and village school. Everything is done as a community effort with the help of local social service committees."

[M Perham 1948 p 252]

For a description by Mr. and Mrs. McLaren themselves, see *Oversea Education*, vol 26 no 2.

David Buxton was with this scheme for some time and writes: "Our area was the high plateau near Debra Berhan. -- Travellers along the road always formed the impression that we lived in the coldest, windiest, bleakest and altogether most inhospitable part of Ethiopia they had seen. This impression, however, was largely unjustified. True, the place was both cold and almost ceaselessly windy, and the road, since it followed a secondary watershed, naturally kept to the most exposed part of the plateau, which is also the least productive and least inhabited. -- The Amharas of this area live for the most part in

isolated homesteads scattered on the higher ground, each marked by a clump of eucalyptus trees. The absence of villages sometimes gives the countryside an empty look, but the population is in fact very dense by African standards."

The primary school in 1968 had 188 boys and 161 girls in grades 1-5, with 6 male teachers and one female.

- text D.M. & I.M. McLaren, *The Tebasse Community Centre, Ethiopia: an experiment in mass education*, in *Oversea Education* (vol 16, 1945?) vol 26 no 2 p 55...
- HEJ99 Debre Birhan 12°37'/37°29' 2184 m 12/37 [Gz]  
near Gondar
- HEJ99 Debre Birhan Silase (church) 2184 m 12/37 [n Br]  
see under Gondar : churches
- HDM62 **Debre Birhan wereda** 09/39 [20]  
Centre in the 2000s = Debre Birhan.  
Population about 40,000 and predominantly agrarian.
- HDL97 Debre Bisrat (Debir Besrat) 09°52'/39°05' 09/39 [n]  
An old monastery in Moret founded by Abba Zena Marqos. Its abbot in 1993 was Memhir Zewge Maryam Felfele (Zäwgä-Maryam Fälfelè).
- HFL97 Debre Bizen 15°20'/39°05' 15/39 [WO Gz]  
Monastery, in the 1900s and later belonging to Eritrea.  
The Treaty of Wichale of 1889 specified Debre Bizen as Ethiopian property. However, from 1893 to 1895 the Italians expropriated land belonging to the monastery, and this made serious opposition develop among the clergy.  
[Marcus, Menelik II, (1975)1995 p 154]
- HFE99 **Debre Damo** (Debra Damo, Debra Dama) 14/39 [Gz Br Gu WO]  
(monastery on amba) 14°22'/39°17' 2216 m  
A steeply rising plateau of trapezoidal shape, about 1000 m by 400 m.  
Debre Damo lies 9 km north of the Adigrat road. The turn-off lies 6 km west of the village of Biset. No public transport goes near the monastery during the rains. Women are absolutely forbidden from visiting this monastery. [Bradt 1995(1998)]
- early "One of the earliest, and undoubtedly finest /of numerous monasteries/, was that of Debra Damo, believed to date from the time of King Gabra Masqal. It was founded -- by one of the Nine Saints -- Aragawi, 'the Elder', who was supposedly carried to its almost inaccessible summit by an amiable serpent, and is so depicted in innumerable church paintings."  
[R Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, 1998 p 38]  
The Debre Damo monastery was apparently also known as Debre Halleluya (or Allelujah), the name deriving from the triumphal shout of Abba Aragawi when he arrived at the top.  
[S Munro-Hay]  
Za-Mikael, one of the Nine Saints who arrived about 480, went to Debre Damo. There he succeeded in eradicating the cult of the Serpent, and he founded a monastery there.  
A land charter given in the 500s by king Gebre Mesqel to the monastery of Debre Damo has been preserved. Over twenty estates are mentioned in the document.  
[Huntingford, *The land charters ...*, A.A. etc 1965 p 30-31]
- 500s According to legend the monastery was founded at the beginning of the 6th century by Abune Za-Mikael Aragawi. The saint is said to have left his mother Edna at the base of the rock where there is a cleft called Baat Elem (Arabic: Cave of the Mother). King Gebre Mesqel is said to have built the church, and his order to destroy afterwards the stairs or ramp for bringing materials is supposed to be the origin of the name (*dahmemo*, *dammo* = take it off). Construction is believed in reality to have extended from the 6th to the 11th century.



[Guida 1938]

Gebre Mesqel was buried at Debre Damo and canonized. He was emperor of the Aksumite empire perhaps 543-560 or possibly 550-575.

Debre Damo has been the site of the discovery of a number of interesting objects. In 1940 a hoard of 104 gold coins of the Kushan kings of northern India and Afghanistan was found there, possibly not younger than the first century AD. Oddly, only one Aksumite coin has been so far reported from the monastery.

900s Queen Gudit is reported in the *Gadla Abuna Aregawi* to have taken Debre Damo, building a ramp. She massacred the princes who were exiled on the amba. There is no further evidence for this story - except that Miguel de Castanhoso (1540s) also believed Debre Damo to have been the place of exiles of the princes.

[S Munro-Hay 2002 p 336-337]

"After the massacre of the royal family on Debra Damo by Gudit /Yodit, Judith/ in the tenth(?) century, the practice of detaining members of the royal line is said to have been abandoned for almost half a millenium until the reign of Baeda Maryam (1468-1478) who ordered Amba Geshen to be used for this purpose."

[Pankhurst 1961 p 133]

A noted religious figure who once resided there was Iyesus Mo'a (c. 1211-1292).

He joined the monastery of Debre Damo as a young boy and studied there for many years under its Abbot, Abba Yohanni. Iyesus Mo'a apparently copied many books while at Debre Damo, and he is renowned for having left a large collection of manuscripts when he died at Hayq in 1292.

Gebre Tsiyon accompanied his brother Iyesus Mo'a to Debre Damo in the 1200s. He lived in a cave there and a church was later built at its entry.

"The main church, named after its builder, Abuna Aregawi, is widely regarded to be the oldest standing church in Ethiopia. Its architecture shows strong Axumite influences, and the wooden ceiling is decorated with animal engravings. Other ancient buildings include a secondary church which was built on the spot where Abuna Aregawi is said to have vanished into thin air at the end of his mortal existence. Near this church are a number of rock-hewn tombs. On the main cliff there are several cramped hermit's caves, the inhabitants of which subsist on bread and water which is lowered from the monastery by rope."

[Bradt 1995(1998)]

Crypt in the zone of graves: "A côté de l'angle N-O de l'église basse, sur le rebord de l'amba. Petit hypogée rectangulaire avec deux niches, une coupole et de grands bas-reliefs symboliques contre le parois. Probablement en relation directe avec la tombe du fondateur du monastère de Debra-Damo, Za-Mikaël Aragawi."

Mentioned already by Samuel Gobat 1834 and by Oudenrijn 1939. Described by Matthews & Mordini in *Archaeologia* (Oxford) vol XCII 1959 p 46ff with plan, sections and photos.

[Sauter 1976 p 159]

The cave with wall reliefs which is supposed to have been the retreat of Abune Aragawi was discovered by Mordini when he spent some time at Debre Damo.

[Helfritz, Äthiopien, 1972]

1240s Iyasus Mo'a travelled to Tigray about 1241 and entered the monastery of Debre Damo. There he served under Abba Yohanni, said to have been the seventh abbot after its founder Abuna Aregawi. Iyasus Mo'a was sent out on missionary journeys, which became his main vocation.

[P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 60]

1300s The monks of Debre Damo became involved in religious politics in the time of Amda Seyon (1314-44), when the monastery became a centre for the followers of Saint Ewostatewos, one of two important rival monastic groups - the others followed Tekla Haymanot and were centred at Debre Libanos.

1400s In Zar'a Ya'eqob's time, the superior, Nob, mediated in a dispute between the king and the monks on the question of sabbath observance.

Abba Matewos was superior of the convent of Debre Damo in 1468 when the reign passed from King Zar'a Ya'eqob to King Ba'eda Maryam. In 1468 Abba Matewos and other clerics were summoned by the new emperor and told to pray for him and for his recently deceased father. Matewos was consulted about choosing Aksum as the place of coronation for Ba'eda Maryam.

[Chronicle of Ba'eda Maryam]

1540s "Emperor Lebna Dengel, totally defeated /by the late 1530s/, had become little more than a hunted fugitive, obliged to flee from one mountain fastness to another. He finally died, at Dabra Damo, in 1540."

[R Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, 1998 p 88]

Despite the ban on women, the Empress Seble Wengel and her daughters and attendants were in refuge there in 1541. [Prouty 1981]

Ahmed Grañ besieged Debre Damo in vain for an entire year, and Lebne Dengel died there on 2 September 1540. In 1541 some Portuguese climbed the rock to conduct the queen, having stayed four year on the amba, from there to Cristoforo da Gama's camp. A store of arms was left at Debre Damo and collected after Cristovão da Gama's death in 1542. Debre Damo seems to have been somewhat eclipsed during the time of the Portuguese, not being mentioned in their books by any author after Castanhoso.

[S Munro-Hay 2002 p 338-339]

1550s "Gälawdéwos's initial success in the north was short-lived, for in 1557 the Ottoman Turks seized the port of Massawa. Within little more than a year a Turkish expeditionary force, led by Ozdemür Pasha, began advancing into the interior. They destroyed, or seriously damaged, a number of Christian places of worship, including the important monastery of Däbrä Damo, where they massacred the monks." [Pankhurst 1961 p 327 and 1997 p 234 + ..Chronicles 1967 p 75-77]

1580s "Särsä Dengel had meanwhile /around 1587/ organised expeditions to the north, where the Turks, gaining support of an ambitious local chief, Bahr Nägash Yeshaq, had advanced southwards to occupy Däbrä Damo and Debarwa. With the assistance of the local population, who had by then gained access to fire-arms, the Emperor won victories over both Yeshaq and the Turks."

[Pankhurst 1997 p 439]

1810 The mountain was passed on 8 March 1810 by a large party with five Englishmen: Salt, Pearce, Coffin, Smith and a servant Ingram. Henry Salt from the distance made a drawing of Debre Damo which is reproduced in his book. Mr Salt also calls Devra-Damo a minor district of Tigré.

[H Salt, *A voyage to Abyssinia ..*, London (1814)1967 p 248-249]

1830s In late 1830 or early 1831 the Swiss Evangelical missionary Samuel Gobat (b.1799) and a German carpenter Christian Aichinger took refuge at Debra Damo because of war in the Adwa and Adigrat areas.

[Arén 1978]

Gobat stayed on the mountain for a while, together with six young men whom he was teaching several subjects. They had almost nothing to eat, and Gobat had to start spending the money which had been reserved for his return to Egypt. Most of the monks at the monastery were sceptical about Gobat but a few became friends. Two young men Hadara and Kidan, 17 and 18 years of age, had been sold as slaves to Yemen but been rescued from there. They reached Debre Damo and joined Gobat. He departed on 27 November 1831 and decided to contact the powerful Wube.

[T Schölly, *Samuel Gobat*, Sthlm 1915 p 121-125]

E. Combes and M. Tamisier, who later wrote an important joint work *Voyage en Abyssinie* (1838), visited Debre Damo in May 1835. They learnt that Coffin, the servant of the English traveller Henry Salt, was at that time finding refuge on the mountain of Debre Damo.

[3rd Int. Conf. of Ethiopian Studies 1969 p 181]

1840s Mgr Giustino de Jacobis lived at Debre Damo for a while in 1843.

The Abuna retired to Debre Damo in 1847. From there he excommunicated Dejzmach

Wube (Wibe). One reason given was that Wube protected the Catholic missionaries in Tigray. Wube retaliated by confiscating the Abuna's estates in 1848. In the last months of 1848 Wube went to Debre Damo to make his peace with the Abuna, which he only succeeded in doing after agreeing to banish all the Catholics from his territories.

[Abir 1968 p 134-135]

1900s

In January 1909 A. and J. Kolmodin and J. Iwarson of the EFS mission made an excursion from Eritrea to Tigray. Near Debre Damo they were told a story that Abune Petros had once visited Debre Damo and been hoisted up sitting in an easy chair. After a long service by the monks he was told that an extra fast had been ordered to honour the Abune. He got very hungry and ordered to be hoisted down again. The chair happened to turn upside down so Petros came "like an angel" down from the mountain and decided never to visit it again.

The Swedes returning from Adwa visited Debre Damo themselves at the time of the Timqet festival. There were about 400 monks on the amba. Prior was Abba Aragawi. Being a researcher, J. Kolmodin tried to be permitted to see the library of the monastery, but like for Professor Littman of the Deutsche Aksum-Expedition a couple of years earlier this was denied.

[J Iwarson, På färdevägar ..., Sthlm 1935 p 169-170, 183-187]

1940s

"The survival of this old church is something of a miracle. It might well have succumbed to the elements, exposed as it is on its mountain-top, and unfortunately it is today on the point of collapse. -- We were led on to see the monks' houses, solid and stone-built in the Tigrean style, with high stone walls to keep out the wind. We saw also the water-tanks, of great size and depth, excavated in the solid rock of the mountain-top. At the Abbot's guest house, a pleasing building partly two-storeyed, we were given refreshment including some excellent *talla* brewed by the monks. This skill in the preparation of a beverage was quite in accord with the monastic tradition of Europe. But the monks themselves are restricted to an austere diet, usually eating little but boiled millet. Only on Sundays do they take a normal Ethiopian meal."

"Another legend of Debra Damo deserves to be repeated. It concerns Tekla Haymanot, the most revered of Ethiopian saints. After visiting the monastery he was climbing down the rope, when the Devil came with a knife and cut it. But the Lord at this desperate moment gave Tekla Haymanot three pairs of wings, and he flew safely to the ground. The saint is always represented in Ethiopian art with his six wings."

[D Buxton, Travels in Ethiopia, London (1949)1957 p 126-127]

1950s

Thomas Pakenham visited Debra Damo in early 1956, with a letter of introduction from the Governor-General: "Spectacular it was -- Its strength as a fortress and a prison depended on a layer of sheer rock no higher than forty feet at the narrowest point. To this neck of rock the path now led us, spiralling up behind the amba through forests of prickly-pear. At the foot of the rock were a collection of stone huts - flat-roofed and rectangular like most in eastern Tigre - in which -- the nuns that were attached to the monastery had their abode."

"-- like a dormer-window, a wicket-gate had been built into the rock. This was presumably the entrance to the monastery. I observed a pious greeting in Ge'ez -- roughly painted over the lintel; but there was no sign of a rope. -- As we stood below, a couple of young monks appeared on the path and looked gravely down at us, then disappeared again."

"Rather grudgingly, it appeared, the monk gave orders for one of the debtera to fetch our letter. A rope of plaited thongs was now uncoiled from behind the wicket-gate, and lowered towards us; down this a debtera in a black cape came stealthily climbing, rather like a spider stealthily climbing down its thread towards a fly. He took the crumpled leaf of paper on which Ras Seyum had scribbled the invaluable introduction, kissed the foot of the mountain and reascended; a few minutes later, mollified it seemed by the warm words of Ras Seyum, the chief monk gave orders for us to be admitted."

"While we were preparing for the rigours of the ascent a troop of white-robed monks appeared from the valley north of the amba. It was astonishing how easily they climbed

the rope, two at a time, swinging from their arms lightly like the angels climbing the ladder in Jacob's dream. Like the debtera they took care to kiss the foot of the rock before taking the rope in their strong brown hands."

-- there was a shout of warning from above; shoes must be removed. Accordingly we all removed our shoes and put them in the canvas bag we had with us. A second thong was lowered and the bag was quickly attached and drawn up. A safety thong was now attached to the waist of the interpreter and he followed the bag --"

"As I took hold of the main rope I was surprised to find that the monk holding the safety rope was quite prepared to wind me in like a fish, so I went through the motions of climbing but left most of the work to the monk above."

"Eventually we were led towards the church concealed behind a mud wall in the centre of the amba. We were both limping as we reached the church. In our stokinged feet we had walked across a patch of grass thickly sown with thorns."

"By degrees we were admitted to the arcana. First we were shown the narthex or ante-chamber. In its dusty ceiling one could dimly make out a series of wood carvings -- These, I knew, were probably copies from Syrian textiles imported into the country."

"When we had gained the nave of the church, the full excitement of the architecture was apparent. The stones holding up the roof piers were actual Axumite relics incorporated in the Christian structure; while the doors and windows which held up the roof were all Axumite in style -- Beyond the nave we were not allowed to go; we were not even allowed a peep at the sanctuary --"

"The hospitable Abbot would not allow us to leave before drinking a glass of 'talla' in the refectory. Despite our protests we were led to a spacious refectory where we were set down on leather chairs and had to wait -- while the slow ritual of hospitality worked itself out. While we fidgeted the Abbot poured out an interminable tale of woe about the falling revenue of the monastery, the decrease of vocations and broken promises of assistance. 'If only His Imperial Majesty the Emperor would come,' he concluded sadly, 'we would get more money to finish painting the church, as well as a proper road built to the foot of the mountain.' We promised to give the Emperor his message personally as soon as we returned to Addis --"

[T Pakenham, *The mountains of Rasselas*, London 1959(1998) p 81-86]

1960s

"There is a legend that one of the nine saints, Aba Aragawy, wandered to the foot of the cliff and found the plateau suitable for leading a solitary life. God commanded a large snake, which had been living on the mountain top, to stretch down and lift the saint to the top."

"From kilometer stone 62, a heavy car can be driven during the dry season over rough terrain about 4 km to the left under the direction of the guide. Then one has to climb. In about 40 minutes a river in a ravine is crossed (during the rainy season this crossing may be difficult); from there, the direct ascent to the mountain begins along a tiring and steep rocky path. It will take a little over an hour. The last 15 meters -- can only be scaled with the help of a rope which the monks provide."

"The monastery can be visited by men only, since this is holy ground on which women may not tread, and men must remove their shoes. There is a small landing on the top, from which steps are hewn into the rock leading to the summit."

"Some hermits live in caves in the cliff which are so narrow and low that a person is unable to stand upright in them. Squatting in these caves, some of the hermits have spent a lifetime in contemplation."

"The summit of the mountain is like a flat island about one kilometer in diameter. About 150 monks live in wellbuilt stone houses along a road leading to the church. They grow their own food on the mountain top. Wells provide fresh water."

"Considered the oldest Christian church existing in Ethiopia, it is presumed that the Enda Abuna Aragawi Church on Debre Damo was built before the 9th century. There is a library which contains about 50 manuscripts; many more valuable ones have now disappeared. The monks claim that this library once contained about 1000 volumes. The architecture of the church is characteristic of the Axumite style --" /Otto Jäger goes on for

most of page 101 to describe the church/. [Jäger 1965 p 99-103]

It is 10 km from the Aksum-Adigrat road to Debre Damo. "The turnoff is rather difficult to find. As soon as you first sight the amba to the north, start looking for the track. It is just before a small bridge. Most vehicles can follow it for a few kilometres, but about half way the track descends into a small gorge, crosses a river and climbs to the other side of the gorge to the foot of the amba. This part of the journey can be made by four-wheel drive vehicles only and requires some care, since there are several switch-backs on the north side of the gorge.

Once at the base of the north side of the amba, leave the car and walk up the slope to the sheer face of the cliff. Here there is a rope hanging down and foot holes cut into the rock. -- It is recommended that you always hold onto the extra rope when being lifted and take advantage of the foot holes."

"After the 16 metre ascent, you can climb the steps cut into the rock above -- At present /1965/ there are about 300 monks and novices living here. All their food must be hoisted up by rope, since there is insufficient space to grow food on the top of the amba -- Some hermits live in caves in a cliff that are so narrow and low that a person is unable to stand upright in them. Squatting in these caves, some of the hermits have spent a lifetime in contemplation. Once daily a jug with water and some bread are lowered to them by rope from the top of the cliff. Their seclusion is voluntary; and, if they wish, they may leave the caves at any time."

[Welcome to Eth., A.A. ca 1965 p 174-175]

The church Enda Abune Aragawi is rectangular, 20 x 9.70 m. The habitations of the monks are rather varied in shape and location. To the west is the House of the Abate, a picturesque two-storey building.

[Guida 1938, with p 275 about the church]

The church described in some detail by Buxton: "From the western porch (of later date) twin doors lead into a low-roofed narthex, to the north of which a stairway, rising round a square masonry block, gives access to an upper chamber. The coffered ceiling of the narthex deserves special tribute for its admirable panels bearing zoological motifs in relief, which may be derived from an earlier building. Twin doors lead on again to the nave which is divided into four bays by re-used monolithic columns of Axumite type. On either side of the nave these columns support lintel-beams over which runs a decorative frieze constructed like a row of miniature blind windows; such a frieze also runs round the sanctuary. The upper nave walls rise to a height above this frieze, and formerly supported a rather complicated timber roof of uncertain date (this had to be sacrificed in the restoration of 1948, since when the roof has been flat, and to that extent probably more like the original Axumite roof). The aisles are much lower than the nave and surmounted by lofts.

To the east the nave leads through a 'sanctuary arch' (the only arch in the building) to the *maqdas*, or Holy of Holies, which is crowned by a dome. Neither arch nor dome are properly constructed as such: the arch is composed of curved timber segments, carved with geometrical patterns, and the dome, similarly, is based upon framework of curved timbers.

/One page deals with how walls, window-frames and door-frames are constructed./

Various dates have been attributed to Debra Damo, but no one date will serve, since it represents many successive periods of building or rebuilding from early Christian times until - possibly - as late as the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In my own /Buxton's/ opinion much of the existing fabric could be as early as the tenth or eleventh century. In any case it remains the most perfect and the most archaic of the few built-up churches still standing in Ethiopia."

[D Buxton, *The Abyssinians*, London 1970 p 97-102]

"Ivories, lamp-fittings of bronze and censers of silver, hangings and paintings of great renown, all that once adorned these interiors have long since disappeared in the course of centuries of disruption, and it is left to the imagination to reconstruct the picture with the aid of a few sidelights from Syrian or Coptic archaeological material."

[J Doresse, Ethiopia [1956]1959 p 83]

The church is at the east end of the *amba*, with monks' houses scattered in a village consisting of a number of compounds in various places on the flat top of the hill. Many rock-cut cisterns, some situated around the church, others cut into a rocky outcrop further away between groups of substantial stone-built monks' houses, conserve the water supply. There is another small yellow-coloured church of Maryam built on a ledge below the top of the *amba*, on the east, with a small rock-cut grotto hermitage nearby, with a dome and some decoration on the walls. This is supposed to have belonged to Za-Mikael Aregawi himself.

The *amba* is still a functioning monastery, with more than two hundred monks in February 1996; although at times in the past there have been as many as a thousand living there, a figure reflected in the many now-ruined houses in the monks' village.

[S Munro-Hay 2002 p 340]

The Enda Abba Aregawi church was 'discovered' for the modern European scientific world by the Deutsche Aksum-Expedition in 1906. It is a two-storey building of rectangular plan, with two indentations on the longer (20 m.) north and south sides, one on the shorter (9.70 m.) east and west sides. In the north-eastern corner is a projecting two storey wing (a slightly later addition?), the ground floor windows giving on to a small walled court with a cistern cut into the rock.

[Munro-Hay p 341]

Since the major restoration of 1948 the roof has been flat; regarded by some as a pity, the interest of the trussed roof being lost, and by others as perhaps a more 'Aksumite' form than the complex trussed type. In any case, the 'new' roof already looks old!

The restorer Derek Matthews found that the round cross-members do not normally go right through the walls to form monkey-heads on either side, although some do. Larger stones at the corners reinforce the walls. The dating of the church has always been uncertain.

[p 343-344]

1990s

Debre Damo is reached by 25 km of main road from Inticho and further 11 km on a rough, four-wheel-drive-only track, followed by a 2 hour stiff uphill walk to the base of the cliff.

"Though local people give food and supplies, the monastic community is virtually self-sufficient, growing selected crops and rearing male sheep and goats. The monastery also has its own reservoirs - spectacular caverns hewn deep beneath the surface of the cliff-top centuries ago - which provide the monks with water throughout the year."

"The treasures secreted within, kept intact through the country's 1,400 tumultuous years of history because of that arduous, dangerous ascent, include an extensive collection of illuminated manuscripts, among them the oldest surviving fragments of texts anywhere in Ethiopia."

[Camerapix 1995 p 105,107]

"After crossing the torrent Na Hayoug, the track climbs towards the cliff on the eastern side of the mountain. Park your vehicle near some low buildings, which are actually a monastery, close to the cliff."

"Za Mikael Aragawi would have come from a rich family. At the age of 14, he became a monk in the community of St. Pacome, in Egypt. He later left for Axum where he chose the Debre Damo as the place to establish his monastery. The saint left his mother, Edna, in a rocky fault that is still called today Bet Elem (mother's house)."

"Legend also has it that the main church of the monastery was built by King Gebre Maskal during the lifetime of its founder. In reality, it seems to date from several centuries later. It is a magnificent example of Axumite architecture in stone, wood and clay. -- Inside the church itself, three naves are separated by six pillars."

"In the past, this monastery was considered one of the greatest centres of Christianity in Ethiopia and had several thousand monks, as well as two thousand nuns living at the foot of the cliff."

[Aubert 1999]

"The ascent is not difficult, but requires some nerves and a bit of bicep. Women are not allowed to visit the monastery, but the priests will let you have a dangle on the rope if you really want to." Some 80 monks live in the monastery.

[Lonely planet 2000 p 194]

1996 On 19 October 1996 it was disclosed that the archive at the Debre Damo monastery had burnt down. An investigation was requested to determine whether the fire had actually been caused by lightning. It was believed that there were about 6,000 parchment books in the archive.

[News]

- texts C. Conti Rossini, I pergamene di Debra Dammo, *in* Rassegna di Studi Etiopici vol 19, 1941;  
A. Mordini, Il soffitto del secondo vestibolo dell'Enda Abuna Aragawi in Dabra Dammò, *in* Rassegna di studi etiopici (Roma) vol 6(1947) p 29-35;  
D.H. Matthews, The restoration of the monastery church of Dabra-Damo, *in* Antiquity 28(December 1949) p 188-200.  
A. Mordini, Un tissu musulman de Moyen Âge provenant du couvent de Dabra Dammo, *in* Annales d'Éthiopie 2, 1957 p 75-77;  
D.H. Matthews & A. Mordini, The monastery of Debra Damo, Ethiopia, *in* Archaeologia vol 97, 1959;  
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A. Mordini, Gl'aurei Kushana del convento di Dabra Dammo, *in* Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici, Roma 1960.
- picts Henry Salt, A Voyage ..., London 1814(1967) p 249 wide view of landscape; reproduced in *Ethiopia engraved* 1988 p 20;  
D Buxton, Travels ..., London 1949(1957) p 64-65[13] distant view of flat-topped mountain, p 96-97[7] full height of ascent by rope, [8] steps on rock ledge to gatehouse, [9] nave and portico, [10] western window and carved ceiling, [11] monastic building of Tigray type, and eastern end of the ancient church before restoration;  
Annales d'Ethiopie, vol 1, Paris 1955 pl IV wide air view;  
J Doresse, Ethiopia, (France 1956) London 1959, p 101[pl 47] plateau on the horizon seen from Atzera;  
J Doresse, L'empire .. vol I, Paris 1957 p 184-185 air view, two-page photo of ceiling, monk outside door, 234 dwg of church;  
T Pakenham, The mountains ..., London 1959 p 65 ascent by rope, 80 front and aisle of ancient church;  
H Neubacher, Die Festung ..., Freiburg im Breisgau 1959 p 139 drawing of front of ancient church;  
O A Jäger, Antiquities ..., Stuttgart 1965 at p 97 ascent by rope;  
Nat. Geog. Mag. vol 127 April 1965 p 566-567 close view of amba, rock cistern, Memhir Gebregiorgis Desta, ascent;  
Merian Monatsheft: Äthiopien, Hamburg Okt 1966 p 2 distant view of the flat-topped mountain;  
C Monty, Ethiopie ..., Paris 1968 p 62 ascent by rope;  
G Gerster, Kirchen im Fels, Stuttgart 1968 p 72-73 thirty drawings of details, p 74 four drawings of Za-Mikael's cave, p 77 twelve drawings of animal pictures, pl 21 ascent by rope, pl 23-24 church wall and window, pl 25-33 photos of carved pictures of animals;  
D Buxton, The Abyssinians, London 1970 p 62 drawings of chairs, p 98,99,101 four drawings of the ancient church and its kind of

construction (from Krencker), pl 51-53 stone masonry details,  
 pl 104 ceiling panels in the church;  
 H Helfritz, Äthiopien .., Köln 1972 p 172[pl 82] amba from a distance,  
 173[83] ascent by rope;  
 G Gerster, Äthiopien, Zürich 1974 pl 50 wide air view,  
 pl 51 detailed air view of monastery village,  
 pl 52 window and part of church wall;  
 Selamta 1993 no 3 p 31 reaching the gate after ascent;  
 Camerapix guide 1995 p 106 rope ready for ascent,  
 107 ancient church seen over corner;  
 T Pakenham, The mountains of Rasselas, London (luxury ed.) 1998  
 p 13 front of ancient church, 76 ascent in 1955, 77 whole amba  
 with euphorbia in foreground, 79 ascent in 1998,  
 82-83 priests and crosses;  
 K Nomachi, Bless Ethiopia, Tokyo 1998 (English ed. Hong Kong)  
 p 98 church exterior, ascent seen from above, 100 priest w large cross.

- ?? Debre Daret (Dabra Darèt) ../.. [+ x]  
 Monastery in Begemdir in the 1300s, with a name Aaron known from there.
- HEF.. Debre Egziabeher, see Estifanos, cf Hayk
- HDR49 Debre Eliyas, see Eliyas
- HDL74 Debre Fisiha 09°45'/38°48' 2522 m 09/38 [AA Gz]  
 (with church Mikael to the south), see under Debre Libanos
- HDE74 Debre Gelan 08°50'/38°50' 2141 m 08/38 [Gz]
- HDU57 Debre Gelele (Debra Ghelele) 10/39 [+ WO Gz]  
 10°24'/39°59' 1462, 1812 m
- HEL86 Debre Gelila (Debre Ghelila) 12/39 [+ WO]  
 (church), see under Sekota
- HDD68 Debre Genet 08°47'/38°20' 2067 m 08/38 [Gz]
- HFE22 Debre Genet (Debra Ghennet, Debra Ganatt) 13/38 [MS WO Gu 18]  
 (Edaga Selus) (with church) 13°37'/38°42' 1413 m  
 A mission primary school (in Aksum awraja) in 1968 had 298 boys and 11 girls  
 in grades 1-4, with 3 teachers.
- HFE23 Debre Genet (Debra Ghennet) (area) 13/38 [Gz WO Gu]  
 13°47'/38°42' 2110/2139 m  
 /which Debre Genet in Central Tigray?/  
 In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the Debre Genet constituency had 45 polling  
 stations and 51,269 registered voters of whom 96% cast their votes.  
 The only reported party was EPRDF with 48,364 votes and candidate Weyzero Mamit  
 Tesifaye Medihane. The remaining 770 votes are not explained.  
 [www.electionsethiopia.org]
- (Debre Genet is also a church of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem.)

- ?? **Debre Gerza** (D. Gärza, D. Gerzen) ../.. [Pa n]  
 (historically recorded, monastery of the Stephanites)  
 "Interesting testimony to Oromo acceptance of Iyasu's rule came in 1700 when his  
 commander Ras Farés was approached by some of the Christians of Lasta, who were then  
 under strong Oromo pressure. They asked him to cut down, or burn, a forest at nearby  
 Däbrä Gärza which, they claimed, was used as a hiding place by the Abäti, Wäro, Qoré  
 and Ana Gallas, who were encircling them. The chief did as he was bid, but the Oromos  
 at once came to him to complain. Declaring that the forest was their shelter from both  
 cold and heat, as well as a fortress in time of war, they begged him to desist from  
 destroying the trees, and warned him that if he did not do so they would fight against him  
 -- they were, they claimed, Iyasu's guards no less than he. The Emperor apparently  
 accepted this view, for he sent a message to the Ras to stop the wood-cutting, on the



ground that the Oromos were guards in his service." [Pankhurst 1997 p 313]

??	Debre Gol (Dabra G.) Monastery in the Amhara region. Be-Tselote Mikael (Bäsälotä Mika'él) was abbot of Däbrä Gol in the 1300s, and a monk Abba Yeshaq is also known from there.	../..	[+ x]
HEU60	Debre Hale (Debra Aila) 13°15'/39°23' 2362/2559 m	13/39	[Gz]
HFE72c	Debre Halle Luya (recorded in the late 1400s) about 20 km north-north-west of Aksum; see also Debre Damo. With constructed /or rock-hewn?/ church Abune Gebre Nazrawi. Situated at midway between Adigrat and Nebelet. [Sauter 1976]	14/38	[20]
HFE78c	Debre Hareykuwa (Debra Harelkua) (with rock-hewn?/ church)	14/39	[x]
HER84	Debre Hariya (Debra Haria), see Gebre Harya		
HFE95	Debre Harmaz (with church Mikael) 14°26'/38°55'	14/38	[Gz]
HET57	Debre Hayle (Debre Hail)	13/39	[LM]
HEU71	Debre Hayle (with cave church) Said to be near Antalo. [Sauter 1976]	13/39	[+ x]
HEU61	Debre Hayle sub-district (ctr in 1964 = Adi Gudom)	13/39	[Ad]
HEM..	Debre Hermo Emperor Dawit (1380-1409) made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Hermo. Most of the estates mentioned in the preserved document are in Adi Abo. [Huntingford, The land charters .., A.A. etc 1965 p 33]	12/39	[x]
HEJ18	Debre Istefanos (St. Stephanos) (church) (Dago Istafanos) see Dega	11/37 11/37	[+ WO Gu Ch] [+ WO Br]
HDS61	Debre Kelmo Akawuha (D. K'elmo A.) (church) 10°32'/37°37', east of Dembecha debre kente: <i>kentte</i> , <i>qeenttee</i> (O) single /like an ox without working partner/	10/37	[Gz]
HED73	Debre Kente (Debra Chente) 11°31'/37°55' 2459 m	11/37	[+ WO Gz]
HED74	Debre Kente (mountain) 2710 m	11/37	
HFE40	Debre Kerbe (Mariam Debre Cherbie, M.D. Cuorie) (M.D. Cuvrie, Debre Kebre) 13°57'/38°27' 1957 m (centre in 1964 of Zana wereda)	13/38	[Gz Ad Gu]
HDU..	Debre Kopros (Dabra Qopros) (hill in Mama Midir in Menz) "One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Mama Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area." [Levine 1965 p 39]	10/39?	[+ x]
??	Debre Kozet (Däbrä Qozät) Gebre Indriyas was a monk there, possibly in the 1200s. He was a disciple of Iyesus Mo'a and preached from Wegda to Gojjam.	../..	[x]
??	Debre Kuna (D. Quna), on the slopes of the Tekkeze In December 1935 Fitawrari Shiferraw was ordered by Ras Imru to attack and try to dislodge the Italians in their fort at Debre Quna. This succeeded and several tanks were captured from the Italians, but Shiferraw himself died in the battle. [R K Molvaer 1997 p 109]	../..	[+ n]
HFE..	Debre Kwenatsel (Däbrä Qwänasel) Abba Liqanos was one of the Nine Saints who arrived in the 400s-500s. He established himself in the monastery of Däbrä Qwänasel near Adwa.	14/38	[x]

	debre laf: <i>lafa</i> (O) land; <i>laf</i> (Som) 1. bone; 2. self		
HEU11	Debre Laf (Debra Laf) (pass) see under Maychew	12/39	[+ WO]
HEC55	Debre Lai Maryam (Devrilai Mariam) (village on hill)	11/37	[+ It]
HFE..	Debre Legaso (Dabra Lagaso) King Sertse Dengel made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Legaso, probably after 1588. This monastery is stated to have been burnt by Moslems in 1535 and therefore probably was situated in the Aksum area. [Huntingford, The land charters .., A.A. etc 1965 p 57-58]	14/38	[x]
HDL74	<b>Debre Libanos</b> (Debra Libanos) 09°42'/38°49' or 09°43'/38°52' 2008 m monastery Debre Libanos Gedam at 09°48'/38°51' = HDL84 (famous religious centre; ancient name Debre Asbo) Within 10 km from the main church there are at km	09/38	[Gz AA WO Ha]
	6E Anzuch (with church)		
	8E Arasho (with church Maryam) 2184 m		
	9E Ayat (with church) 2184 m		
	10E Bergafet (Bergatit) 2564 m		
	6SE Arera 2589 m		
	6SE Fentale (with church) 2648 m		
	7SE Merketa (Merk'eta) 2612 m		
	8SE Sebro (with church)		
	10SE Sire		
	1S Bolo 2578 m		
	2S Mute (place and area)		
	3S Guracho (Guracho Wena) 2546 m		
	4S Terara		
	4S Dide Guba 2546/2729 m		
	5S Dorent		
	5S Misrake (Misrak'e) 1400, 2602 m		
	6S Kike (K'ik'e) 2563 m		
	7S Serte 2625 m		
	8S Mekicho 2133 m		
	8S Kuremanyo (K'uremanyo) 2625 m		
	8S Nyaa (Nya'a)		
	8S Debre Tsige (with church) 2577 m		
	9S Tulu Geda 2593 m		
	3SW Abichu 2636 m		
	3SW Geda Amba 2556 m		
	4SW Imenu Washa 2546 m		
	7SW Kasim (K'asim) 2655/2769 m		
	8SW Use		
	9SW Wayu		
	9SW Gurage 2660 m		
	4W Dahana (with church) 2196 m		
	5W Chagel (Chagalla)		
	7W Abeyi (with church) 2493 m		
	9W Giraro 2518 m		
	9W Weld Ami 2582 m		
	10W Muke Guracha 2590 m		
	10W Kecha (K'echa)		
	10W Agaje 2590 m		
	2NW Keteba (K'et'eba)		

6NW Sherer (with church Silase)  
 7NW Debre Fisiha (with church) 2522 m  
 7NW Abaro (with church) 1884 m  
 8NW Skinkurt 2522 m  
 9NW Genet (with church)  
 7N Weko  
 8N Wenedi 2628 m  
 9N Wijiba (with church)  
 9N Weko (with church)  
 10N Welbati 2646 m  
 10N Minkiros (Mink'iros)  
 1NE Telado (T'elado) 2008 m, waterfalls nearby  
 7NE Lemi  
 8NE Girarge (with churches Gebriel and Mikael) 1678 m  
 8NE Dembi 2519 m  
 9NE Dereku  
 --- Zegamel (district in which D.Libanos is situated)

geol Outcrops of coal in the sandstones have been indicated near Debre Libanos in the Karisso and Selmi rivers. [Mineral 1966]

At Debre Libanos "the whole succession of 450 m is composed of at least twelve distinguishable basalt flows resting horizontally on the upper Mesozoic sandstones; slight unconformity, such as marks the whole of the Abbai basin in this respect, at the base of the Trap Series is proven by the gradual overlap of the basalts onto progressively lower horizons of the Upper Sandstone to the north-west along the Zega Wodem gorge. The two lowest basalt flows are separated by a thick bed of soft basaltic tuff which forms a broad structural terrace in the Zega Wodem gorge. Below the topmost flow a deposit, at least 20 m thick, of basaltic breccia and tuff contains much incorporated fossil wood."

[Mohr, Geology 1961 p 132]

1300s The famous monastery is believed once to have had over 5000 monks. It was founded by Abune Tekle Haymanot who died around 1312. The monastery had political influence for centuries. The *echege* was traditionally selected from among the monks of Debre Libanos. The monastery defended the faith of "the knives" (*welde kebe*). [Guida 1938]

"The monks of Debra Libanos had fallen upon evil days, for shortly after the advent of King Amda Sion -- a member of their order had ventured to protest publicly against the King's licentious life, who retaliated by having him publicly flogged. Whether by accident or as an act of vengeance, the King's capital, Tegulet --, was burned down, and the Sovereign, supposing this to be an act of vengeance on the part of the monks, banished the Ichegue to the rock fortress of Amba Geshen, and scattered the rest of the monks of Debra Libanos throughout the country."

[C F Rey, In the country ..., London 1927 p 254]

Amde Tseyon (1314-1344) exiled *Echege* Filipos of Debre Libanos to an island in lake Ziway.

[P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 64]

A church was built there in 1370, that is 57 years after the death of Tekle Haymanot.

[Prouty 1981]

1400s Zera Yaqob (1434-1468) gave "rich gifts to the monastery founded by Saint Täklä Haymanot at Däbrä Asbo, which he renamed Däbrä Libanos, entered into a holy covenant with its monks, and gave them one hundred measures of land."

[Crummey 2000 p 31]

Abba Tekle Hawariat of Debre Libanos is cited chastising Zera Yaqob for "the futile deaths of men, the arrests and beatings which take place, but Zera Yaqob had him beaten and imprisoned and he died a few months later.

[Henze p 72]

Prior in the late 1460s was Abune Marehena Kristos (1462-1496). He wanted to stay near King Ba'eda Maryam and refused to go back to his monastery. At a later time the King

- gave him a formal order to return to Debre Libanos.
- 1480s "Bä'edä Maryam was deeply distressed by this debacle /during an expedition to Adäl/. He reportedly loved -- in particular /his general/ Mähari Krestos -- The monarch prayed for the souls of all who had died in the battle, and made gifts to numerous holy persons. He sent two thousand ounces of gold for distribution in Tegray, and five hundred to Abunä Yemerehannä Krestos at Däbrä Libanos. Grieving greatly at the defeat he died shortly afterwards."  
[Pankhurst 1997 p 121]
- 1500s One prior of Debre Libanos was Abune Petros (1497-1523).  
"A very active figure in Ethiopic literature was a certain Embakom (Habakkuk) who flourished in the sixteenth century and had a most adventurous career. An Arab by birth, he came to Ethiopia during the Grañ wars, was converted to Christianity and entered the monastery of Debra Libanos. Through his piety and exceptional learning he rose to the position of Prior and thus became Etchege - a feat no other foreigner has achieved. Embakom distinguished himself principally by a series of translations from Arabic (though he was also the author of an original work, the *Ankasa Amin*, 'Gate of Faith', an anti-Islamic polemical tract)."  
[Ullendorff (1960)1973 p 147]  
'Enbaqom emerged as one of Ethiopia's most productive scholars in the 1500s.  
[R Pankhurst in AddisTribune 2003/11/03]  
F Alvares reported from the 1520s that the best barley he saw anywhere was in the region of Debre Libanos, but the plots were small. He wrote its name Brilibanos.  
Alvares three times saw the King visit Debre Libanos in connection with the death of Ichege Yohannes.
- 1530s The buildings and manuscripts were burnt in 1531. Fleeing monks took the tabot of Tekle Haymanot to Azezo near Gondar. This tabot was brought back to Debre Libanos in 1889.  
[Prouty 1981]
- 1540s About 1540 three monks from Debre Libanos arrived to Rome via Jerusalem. "The senior one among them, Tesfa Sion (Täsfa Seyon Malhéso), was a well-educated man and attained, under the name of 'Pietro Indiano' or 'Pietro Etiope', a good deal of local fame. He printed large parts of the Ethiopic New Testament in 1548-9 and succeeded in exciting some interest in Ethiopia and its classical tongue among educated persons at Rome. -- he died suddenly in 1550 and was buried in the Church of Santo Stefano."  
[Ullendorff (1960)1973 p 7-8]
- 1690s "Returning to Shäwa in 1699 Iyasu proceeded to the site of the old Däbra Libanos monastery, which he learnt, to his chagrin, had earlier been 'devastated' by the Ahmäd ibn Ibrahim, or Grañ, and later by the Oromos."  
[Pankhurst 1997 p 312]
- 1800s Wossen Seged (1808- ) restored the Church of the Virgin in Debre Libanos.  
[Henze 2000 p 128]  
Ichege Gebre Sillase was chief priest in the early 1800s.  
Aleqa Desta was a church artist at Debre Libanos in the 1800s, and also at Ankober.  
"Fearful was the tragedy that followed the assassination of Woosen Suggud. -- at Debra Libanos alone there fell no fewer than eight hundred victims to private animosity, of whose murder no account was ever taken."  
[W C Harris vol III 1844 p 12]
- 1830s The place was visited early by the French traveller Rochet d'Héricourt, who made the first of his two journeys to central Ethiopia in 1838.
- 1870s The explorers Antinori and Cecchi visited Debre Libanos in the late 1870s. They were told by the monks that the church contained a cross which had magically descended from heaven. Not far away to the south was the holy spring which made a 10-12 m high waterfall. Archangel Mikael was supposed to have led the water to this spring from the holy river Jordan. Monkeys in the neighbourhood were held in respect as it was believed that their ancestors had kept company with saint Tekle Haymanot. Concerning caves above the spring, one of the largest is near to it and was used for depositing the remains of

dead persons. Corpses were buried or laid a little everywhere, many of them being from people who had come to Debre Libanos suffering from disease and had died there. Even if entrance to the monastery was strictly forbidden to women and still by the 1850s also to female animals, there were plenty of young boys being "sons of monks".

Debre Libanos was regarded as one of the four principal religious schools in Ethiopia (if the others were Aksum, Lalibela and Gondar). Being a famous place of refuge, some of the men staying there were important people who for some reason had been forced to flee and seek protection.

Food for all inhabitants of the monastery was prepared in three very large houses. Local type of beer was brewed and served with the food.

[A Cecchi, Da Zeila .., vol I, Roma 1886 p 383-385]

When the explorer Chiarini was near Debre Libanos around 16 April 1878, it was said that Negus Menilek was in the area and had taken a bath in the holy spring.

[Cecchi p 466]

In 1878 after his Shewan expedition Emperor Yohannes called a church council at Borumieda. This council promulgated an edict which ordered the Debre Libanos party to renounce their so-called heresy, whilst non-Christian people were ordered to join the national Church.

[J S Trimmingham 1952 p 122]

1880s Debre Libanos was declared a place of asylum for fugitive thieves and murderers about 1881. Menilek II had a church started which took 1881-1893 to build and which had to be rebuilt in 1906.

Befana (Bafena), consort of Menilek from 1865 to 1882, lived there in seclusion towards the end of her life and died there about 1887.

[Prouty 1981]

1890s "The celebration of Easter in April 1893 was marked with prodigal feasting; the famine was clearly on the wane. Lavish provisions were supplied by Ras Darge when Menilek and Taytu went to Debre Libanos in May 1893. The occasion was the dedication of a church, the construction of which had began 12 years earlier. It was also an opportunity for political talks /which here are regarded as belonging not to local but to national history/."

"The public business was the reformation at Debre Libanos, from which one deduces that there was clerical behaviour that needed disciplining. The new rules specified equality of privilege and increased austerity. -- The *echege* -- had more responsibility for these rules than Abune Matewos, who was not a particularly busy man."

[C Prouty, Empress Taytu .., 1986 p 109]

1907 Dr. Kurt Herzbruch accompanied Menilek in mid-May 1907 on the Emperor's annual visit to Debre Libanos. After marching from the capital, Herzbruch found Menilek's camp to contain over one thousand tents with more than ten thousand soldiers. Moreover there were women, slaves and children. The Emperor provided a quite new tent of European type for the doctor. Nearer to the centre of Debre Libanos were two large tents to be used during ceremonies. The Emperor used a special cave, and holy water was poured over him inside there. In the meantime the doctor made a little excursion to graves together with Dejasmach Teferi (the future Haile Selassie).

On 19 May the Emperor visited the quarry where stone for the new church was excavated. 3000 soldiers were used for carrying stones to the constructions site. The quarry was not very far from the Portuguese-type bridge which at this time was believed to be very old (corrected in later literature). Herzbruch could greet the Emperor near the quarry. Later and starting again from Debre Libanos the doctor climbed a mountain together with the director general of Posts. He could look widely over the landscape and found it to be almost a wasteland. On the third day Menelik spent food distributed among the masses of people. The doctor succeeded to take a photo of the Ichege by a sudden 'attack' but he understood that the monks and nuns were very much against use of the camera. When the place with holy water was opened to ordinary people again, many of all ages bathed there quite naked. When the royal party returned from Debre Libanos on 22 May, Menilek for

several hours sat in a carriage drawn by horses.

Herzbruch in his book describes many details of the Ethiopian culture he could observe during the excursion.

[K Herzbruch, Abessinien, München 1925 p 172-216]

- 1908 The ageing Menilek II, at that time always accompanied by Doctor Vitalien, went to Debre Libanos on 30 April 1908 to inaugurate a church consecrated to Mikael.. He returned in late May via Entotto where, according to Vitalien, he had a biliary haemorrhage and a mild stroke, which slightly distorted his face.

[Marcus, Menelik II, (1975)1995 p 231]

- 1909 The decline in Menilek's health was so alarming that the empress and the *abun* insisted that the emperor go again on pilgrimage to Debre Libanos. He set out in the beginning of 1909, accompanied by Ras Wolde Giyorgis and a large retinue of in all 8,000 people, with 30,000 transport and food animals.

The emperor would go daily at dawn to the baths. In the cold air, instead of improving, the monarch's health deteriorated. In desperation, Menilek told his physician l'Herminier: 'It will kill me! Forbid the baths for me.' The French doctor acted immediately, but he could not save the emperor from another paralysing attack. But once again Menilek survived, albeit much weakened. He returned to Addis Abeba on 13 February 1909.

[Marcus p 234]

"In November 1908 Dr. l'Herminier advised the emperor to take a trip in order to get him away from the importuners at court. The sojourn, however, turned into the opposite of what l'Herminier had in mind. It became a religious pilgrimage to Debre Libanos with a retinue of 8,000 persons, despite the opposition of the head of the church, Abune Matewos. The arduous journey, partly by carriage, began on 2 December."

"On 19 January 1909, Dr. l'Herminier sent a message to the French legation from Debre Libanos, saying that something had happened as he had not been allowed to see his patient for the past five days. It transpired that the empress and priests had pressed Menilek to try the miraculous but frigid waters of the shrine. When l'Herminier was finally admitted to Menilek's tent, the emperor begged him to forbid the icy baths, 'they are killing me ...'--"

"Despite their mutual hostility, Dr. l'Herminier summoned Dr. Mérab to Debre Libanos to assist in an operation for gunshot wound on an Ethiopian officer. While he was there he saw the emperor once, in the presence of Empress Taytu. Mérab added his support to l'Herminier's warning. 'His Majesty must be kept warm.' --"

"Menilek carried out business at Debre Libanos, against his doctor's orders. He asked for all the documents on the railroad to be sent from the French legation. Both he and Taytu saw Tigrayan delegations with their usual array of complaints against each other."

"Then, seeing that at Debre Libanos, only the men had a monastery, and noting that the Holy Book says that women must stay apart from men during prayers /Taytu/ said to Menilek, 'Let us build a cloister reserved for women.' The emperor agreed, knowing that in the time of St. Tekle Haymanot -- there had been a woman's place; then he named as mother-superior a nun called Itot Djemanesh."

Menilek and Taytu travelled part of the way back from Debre Libanos by car, but from the Entotto heights Menilek descended on mule back, so that the people could see him.

[C Prouty, Empress Taytu .., 1986 p 309-310]

- 1910s Aba Gebre Hanna Jimma, who at the age of eleven had been a junior butler at Menilek's court, spent twelve years at Debre Libanos monastery before he, in 1928, returned to Addis Abeba to become Negus Teferi's/Emperor Haile Sellassie's special treasurer.

[Greenfield 1965 p 180]

One Haile Mariam was born in Fiche around 1883 and got his first education in Debre Libanos. He later was employed by the Emperor and became known as the martyr Abune Petros during the Italian occupation.

- 1911 Ras Tesemma died on 10 April 1911. Shortly after midnight on 11 April his body was taken to Debre Libanos for immediate burial. It was given out that the Ras had gone to visit the bath there for the sake of his health. Except for the legations, who were informed

promptly, few in Addis Abeba were aware of what had happened until the government had moved troops into position.

[Marcus as above, p 251]

- 1912 In 1912, Lij Iyasu made a meandering tour through central Ethiopia. The prince was supposed to return to the capital on the last Friday of May, but, instead, he went off to Debre Libanos for a few days of meditation and to establish himself with the monks as a devoted son of the Church. He then moved on to Addis Alem.

[Marcus p 258-259]

Lij Iyasu attended the feast of Tekle Haymanot at Debre Libanos on 1 June 1913 /? Eth.Cal. 1905/ and then donated more land to the monastery. He left on 2 June and continued travels in other parts of Ethiopia.

Kenyazmach Wendim-Neh had entered the monastery of Debre Libanos but was recalled by Lij Iyasu. Later the Kenyazmach was among those who supported to replace Iyasu with Empress Zewditu.

Ras Ababe Bwa-Yalew ("Abba Yitref") was buried in Debre Libanos. Ras Teferi was present, put Ras Abate's sabre in his coffin with the body, and paid for a chiselled stone tomb.

- 1920s On 29 December 1925 Weyzero /later Empress/ Menen with two daughters went by motorcar to Debre Libanos to celebrate the feast of Tekle Haymanot. Ras Teferi had paid for the 'House of Siloam' for 30 poor people, and Menen for a house with five rooms and ten beds for poor widows.

- 1930s After the Coronation in 1930, the journalist Evelyn Waugh together with a researcher Professor W. and an Armenian car driver plus an uninvited boy made an expedition to Debre Libanos. They first had to obtain permission from Ras Kassa to use the road to Fiche recently improved by him. They knew that Professor Mercer had recently returned from Debre Libanos with photos of a manuscript with an until then unknown version of Ecclesiastes.

"Apart from the two churches, the most prominent building was a tall, square house of stone, with a thatched roof and a single row of windows set high up under the eaves; it was here that we were led. -- the head of the monastery -- brought our letter of introduction out of his pocket and, for the first time, opened it. -- The professor then asked whether we might visit the library of which the world stood in awe. Why, certainly, there it was in the corner. The abuna produced a small key from his pocket and directed one of the priests to open the cupboard. They brought out five or six bundles wrapped in silk shawls -- Sometimes faces and figures had been cut out of prints and stuck into the page with a discomposing effect on their highly stylised surroundings. -- Professor W. asked whether there were not some older manuscripts we might see, but they affected not to understand. No doubt there were still reserves hidden from us."

[E Waugh, When the going was good, London 1946 p 110, 117-119]

"At last we reached the spring, which fell in a pretty cascade to join the river far below at the bottom of the valley. Most of the water, however, had been tapped, and was conveyed in two iron pipes to bathing-places near the monastery. We climbed down again to see them. One, built especially for Menelik, was a little brick house with a corrugated iron roof. The old Empress had frequently come here, and since her death it had not been used. We peered through the window and saw a plain kitchen-chair."

"The other bath was for public use. The pipe was fitted with a double spout, directing two streams of water on to either side of a brick wall. One side was for men and the other for women, and a three-sided screen was built round each."

The abuna lent the visitors a tent which had been the property of the old Empress.

[Waugh p 119-121]

"In the main church we paid a fee of seven dollars to have the frescoes unveiled. They had lately been repainted in brilliant colours and the priest was justly proud of the renovation. On one wall were portraits of Ras Kassa, Menelik and the late Empress. It was clear that these heads had been copied from photographs, with the curious result that they stood out solidly, in carefully articulated light and shade and great fidelity of detail, against a

composition of purely conventional pre-Renaissance design. Another wall was filled with rider saints. -- We were then shown some brass processional crosses and some illuminated missals, none of any great antiquity. It was, in fact, a curious feature of Debra Libanos that, although the community had been the centre of Abyssinian spiritual life since the conversion of the country, and been settled on this spot for several centuries, they seem to have preserved no single object from the past. It may be that their treasures have all been pillaged --"

[Waugh p 124]

The Swedish Pastor Nils Nilsson together with his wife and missionary Sigrid Berggren made a visit to Debre Libanos around 1931. (The ladies of course could not enter the monastery compound but were taken care of by courteous monks.)

At this time there were about 300 monks and 100 disciples down at the monastery while an equal number of *debteras* lived in the highland villages.

Twelve selected elderly monks lived together in a house as the "spiritual guard" of Debre Libanos, with the duty to stay there at all times except processions and to pray incessantly for the welfare of the monastery. Pastor Nilsson was admitted to meet even this group. Nilsson also witnessed a court procedure when all the people in the neighbourhood were collected to reveal who had stolen a drum and a cross of silver.

At some distance from Debre Libanos there was a place Siloam taking care of some thirty old and incurably sick people. Two energetic fugitives had received money from Ras Teferi to buy a plot of land and construct a couple of buildings for Siloam. One had ten rooms for twenty men, the other five rooms for ten women.

A vegetable garden had been planted and a water-mill had been constructed. The monks called the mill "a machine of Satan" so it was left out of service for a while until the monks got used to it. On the whole the monastery seemed to have little regard for Siloam. When the Emperor visited Debre Libanos for the first time after his coronation in 1930 he upbraided the monks for drinking too much and said that they ought to reduce their production of *tej*.

[Varde Ijus! (EFS calendar 1932) Sthlm 1931 p 68-84]

The missionary Pastor Josef Svensson also visited the grave of Tekle Haymanot probably around 1930. He asked about the mummified corpse of a former Kefa king. In a box he was shown the remains of this small old man who had lost a couple of fingers and some teeth but on the whole was fairly well preserved.

The remains of Tekle Haymanot himself were kept in a church, particularly the leg which is said fell off when the saint stood on a single leg for several years. An itinerant monk in the early 1900s bribed the keeper to take off the cloths and show that leg - and it was a wooden leg!

[F Hylander, Ett år i tält, Sthlm 1934 p 74-76]

1936 The royal archives from the Ankober time and later were kept by the Minister of Pen, but a little before the Italian occupation in 1936 they were secretly transported to Debre Libanos and hidden there. The Italians discovered them the following year and took them to Rome /and by the early 2000s they have still not been returned/.

[3rd Int. Conf. of Ethiopian Studies 1969 p 327]

1937 The 'Graziani massacres' after the attempt on the Viceroy's life on 19 February 1937 became a disaster also for Debre Libanos.

"Graziani remembered that at the ceremony the Abuna Cyrillos had appeared 'pale'. Further investigations proved that the monks of Debra Libanos had been in Addis Ababa in the first week of February, to apply to the government for financial grants. They had left on their return journey twenty-four hours before /the ringleader/ Abraha Deboch, with whom they had clearly therefore been in contact during their week in the capital. It was also discovered that on his escape from the city Abraha Deboch had gone back to Debra Libanos to collect or warn his wife, and it was suspected that he might still be there, hidden by the monks. -- Graziani, who was still in hospital, studied /the Military Advocate Francheschino's report/ and took his decision. On 19 May he cabled the conclusion of the report and his orders to General Maletti. After reference to 'a nest of



murderers under the guise of monks' it ended with the chilling instructions: 'Therefore execute summarily all monks without distinction including the Vice-Prior.'

On 20 May the monks assembled for the feast of -- Tekle Haimanot. Colonel Garelli, the local commander, attended - reluctantly, according to the post-war evidence of his interpreter, but all the same attended. After the ceremony the monks were arrested on his orders and by his men. Some were taken by lorry to Shinkurt, others to Debra Berhan. 297 were shot, plus 23 laymen, considered to be their accomplices; the young deacons attached to the monastery were kept in custody at Debre Berhan. A week later, another telegram followed: their 'complicity having also been proved' the 129 deacons at Debre Berhan were also shot. Of the whole population of Ethiopia's most famous religious centre, only 30 schoolboys, being educated at the monastery and possibly the Prior, Tekle Giorgis, survived. General Maletti reproached Colonel Garelli for not having caught Abraha Deboch. And Graziani cabled to Rome: 'In this way ... of the monastery of Debra Libanos ... there remains not a trace.'

[Mockler 1984 p 180-181]

"Ethiopian and Italian sources have established that prior to the attempt /on Graziani's life, Abraham Deboch, of Eritrean origin/ sold his possessions, and on 9 February 1937 took his wife to the monastery of Debra Libanos for safety. -- Kebede Yardu trained Abraham and Mogos in bomb throwing at Debra Libanos. -- It still remains to be proven if *Abuna* Kirillos received advance information on the attempt. After the attempt on Graziani's life, Abraham and Mogos escaped to Debra Libanos and then to the Sudan. Ironically they were shot by passing Ethiopians near Metemma, possibly in error."

"Graziani's vengeance fell on the monks of the famous monastery of Debra Libanos for their alleged complicity in the attempt to assassinate him. The police inquest revealed that Mogos and Abraham's wife, Taddesesh Istefanos, had on various occasions stayed at Debra Libanos. *Abba* Kinfu, a friend of the plotters, it was said, was present on February 9 when Abraham practised grenade throwing. Further accounts suggest that *Abba* Kinfu and the prior of the monastery, *Abba* Tzebatie Takle Giorgis, left Debra Libanos on 22 February 1937 after Abraham and Moges had informed them about the massacre of Addis Abeba. Basing his conclusions on circumstantial evidence, Graziani became convinced of the complicity of the whole religious community in the plot to assassinate him and ordered the death penalty. Between May 21 and 26 General Pietro Maletti executed 449 monks. Those who survived were sent to exile at Danane in Somalia."

[Sbacchi 1997 p 177-178]

Graziani's final words about it are said to have been: "Thus there is not a trace left of the Debre Libanos monastery."

1930s Debre Libanos is a whole village shadowed by wild olives, juniperus and eucalyptus. The principal church is the octagonal Tekle Haymanot. Its churches keep precious ancient manuscripts but no library. In the neighbourhood there is a thermal spring frequented even by non-Christian Oromo. [Guida 1938]

"The bones of the martyred monks can be seen at the monastery to this day."

[Camerapix 1995]

1941 "On 27 April Haile Selassie, escorted by most of Gideon Force, accompanied by Ras Kassa and indeed by Ras Hailu -- set out from Debra Markos. -- At the monastery of Debra Libanos, where Haile Selassie and Ras Kassa had last prayed when fleeing from the lost field of Mai Ceu /Maychew/, they prayed again together." [Mockler 1984 p 378]

1940s "I was invited to join a party of teachers and senior boys from -- secondary school in Addis Ababa. -- We were lucky to find the last few miles of our route -- quite passable, for it had been put in order with a view to a royal visit some months before."  
 "We had a most inhospitable reception at the monastery - a great surprise to me, as I had never before, nor have I since, met anything but friendly kindness from priests and monks alike in all parts of the country. First of all the Abbot told us we had no right to visit the place without special authority, and he refused us any help or lodging. Later, he intimated that, having come, we might not leave; apparently we were prisoners in the monastery until higher authorities had been consulted. -- The boys eventually found a house in the

village and the Englishmen camped outside."

"If the churches disappointed, nothing could disturb the charm of the site and surroundings. -- A careful inspection revealed two or three routes up the cliffs to the next level above us. One route led away behind the monastery, past the holy water - rather vulgarized now, in its modern piping. The path then rose and skirted a series of crevices at the foot of the cliffs, in which the bones of pious people are buried. Here were innumerable bones and skulls - bones in bags and bones in boxes, bones lying in confused heaps, awaiting burial. Many were the remains of monks butchered here during the Fascist régime. They will eventually be packed into the crevices below the cliffs, and sealed up with stone and mud."

We came to a point where some colossal boulders, broken away from the mountain above, had come to rest precariously on the extreme verge of the cliff we were following. Here, dwarfed among the boulders, was a hut, with an old man, his wife and his cat. We asked if there was any way down this part of the cliffs. He said yes, only it was 'precipitous', and he advised us to remove our shoes. He led us down over the edge and we followed an insignificant track which became more and more precipitous. At last we were clambering down sheer rock with hardly a foothold; we reached the bottom breathless, and not a little relieved. But we were put to shame. Some country women were waiting at the bottom. Casting an amused glance at us, they stepped nimbly up the rock-face as if it were a staircase, holding their straw parasols in one hand."

[D Buxton, *Travels in Ethiopia*, London (1949)1957 p 64-66]

"The whole gives the impression more of a gathering place for hermits than of a monastery in the European sense."

[Erik Leijonhufvud]

1950s

A visit by the British ambassador: "Some introduction to the monastery is desirable, because the community are rather suspicious of foreigners. -- There are still over 1,500 monks and some nuns, so the community is almost a small town, with many buildings hidden in the groves of trees -- The church is of the usual Ethiopian octogonal type and is not ancient. -- /Its paintings/ are not frescoes but painted on canvas, which is affixed to the walls; this is the usual method for ecclesiastical painting in Ethiopia. -- /We were invited/ to visit the little church of Medane Alem on a tiny higher terrace above the monastery. Here we were interested to find that some of the painting was *fresco secco*."

[D Busk, *The fountain of the sun*, London 1957 p 74-75]

The Homes for the Aged at Debre Libanos in 1959 were brought under central administration of the Haile Selassie I Foundation.

1960s

On 13 October 1960 the Emperor attended the funeral at Debre Libanos of Afe Negus Zewde Ayele who had died at the age of 60. He had been in exile in Kenya and was a patriot fighter at the liberation in 1941. [News]

The new Tekle Haymanot church was inaugurated by the Emperor on 18 November 1962.

In 1967 there were three telephone numbers: Imperial Palace, National Community Development, and Bitsue Abune Basilios.

"On the cliffs towering over the greenness there is a small gem of a church, and many caves hollowed from the rock, where hermits had come to live near the tombs of their illustrious predecessors and to leave their bones. The holy springs arise high up, and it was probably their presence in these rocks which attracted the first builders to this place. A somewhat makeshift, but rather delightful, native church has now been replaced by a building of marble and gold. The lovely marble floor is still cold to the barefoot worshippers, and the place has no more come alive than the new cathedral at Axum. -- Behind the church is the burial place of the rich and the great -- Below on a further shelf are the monastery buildings - new long bare dormitories each of twelve beds. They are of a bright cleanness and back against the bare rock, facing outward over the formidable view. The young monks -- point with their prayer sticks towards the power house of which they are unduly proud and demonstrate how the holy water from the springs now is led through -- pipes to issue from modern taps. So the new world has even come to Debra

Libanos.

[T Tonkin, Ethiopia with love, London 1972 p 129-130]

1980s When the newspaper pioneer and writer Welde-Giyorgis Welde-Yohannis died in Addis Abeba on 19 December 1981 at 87 years of age, he was afterwards buried in Debre Libanos near the church there. His son, ambassador Ayyalew, came from London at his own expense to attend the funeral.

[R K Molvaer 1997 p 43]

"I took the dawn bus to Debra Libanos -- Some people I had asked said no permits were needed, one or two had said I must have permits - most seemed unsure. I trusted to luck, and at the checkpoint on the edge of /Addis Abeba/, the soldiers yawned and waved us on."

"We left the main road and followed an unmetalled route along the ridge until it dipped down to a narrow finger above the Jema river. At the end of the road, the bus stopped beside the shining dome of a church.

A guard showed me into a hut strewn with fresh grass. The abbot sat behind a table signing papers, an elegant figure in a black cassock. He read my letter, then looked up and smiled. 'I think I saw you at Selassie Cathedral -- Come, I will show you a room.' We pushed through a low door into his own garden where his banana trees circled a plot of sorghum. Around it was an L-shaped single-storey building with red wooden doors. One of these hung open and an old man was leaning against the jamb, reading and muttering a text in the sun. 'He is a visiting bishop - from Sidamo. These rooms we keep for special visitors.' The abbot /also showed me a room/."

"Then he took me to the church and, bowing, left me there while he returned to his work. Outside, its stone walls rose to a plain parapet and flat cruciform roof, and the bell-shaped dome. But somehow it was all wrong, ill-proportioned; the transepts seemed truncated, the dome too heavy and its finial - a golden cross - grotesquely large. The vaulted nave inside was too short for its height and had the inert emptiness of a municipal building."

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 20-21]

"Below the church the ground fell away to another broad ledge. Here I stumbled on a necropolis in a grove of thorn scrub. Cramped plots lay behind iron railings. There were headstones of marble and alabaster inscribed with Amharic epitaphs, and angels bearing festoons and busts of the Sacred Heart.

The pediment of each headstone was marked by a small enamel oval: a sepia photograph. Some were grinning portraits in suit and tie, others stern figures in military uniform -- one man was remembered sitting at a desk, his pen poised over a document."

"To be buried here at Debra Libanos was the final accolade for a nobleman, a deathbed plea to his family, even a condition of the will. But for the bereaved family it often meant a tedious trudge through the mountains, sometimes for days, to be faced with the abbot's fee for the plot."

"The ornate, classical graves seemed to have come in with independence in 1941 -- The photographs showed proud men, the agents of the Emperor's quest for progress. -- Since 1974 there had been few additions to the graveyard, and most had suffered from neglect. Ivy curled around the cracked stones and some of the ledgers had broken open to expose the bones."

"Dotted among the graves, like ghosts, were the poor and deformed, hunched against the pediments and hobbling towards me for alms, and beyond them like the soldiers at Calvary, was a group of boys throwing craps on top of a sarcophagus."

Tekla Haimanot's cave: "We reached an iron gate that blocked the cave's entrance. -- /The guide went to ask the hermit to open for a look inside./ The hermit appeared, muttering. He approached the gate of the shrine at a crouching trot, bearing before him the rusty blade of a shovel. On it was a pile of smouldering charcoals and crystals of incense resin. He bent to kiss the gate and pulled a key from around his neck. Inside, it was no more than a damp crypt, the floor dotted with an archipelago of tins and plastic beakers. The hermit tipped the spade into a censer beside a makeshift altar. On the altar rested an image of the Virgin and a faded chromolithograph of Christ, and in the middle the stylized figure

of Tekla Haimanot."

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 21-24]

1990s

"The monastery of Debre Libanos was founded in the 13th century in a magnificent 700 m high canyon. The modern church, built in the 1950s, is tucked away in a small wooded gorge that feels intimate and secluded next to the surrounding canyon. There is a definite aura about this place: peaceful and devout, especially if you follow the footpaths along the stream - its waters boosted by several waterfalls tumbling over the gorge's edge - that runs past the new church to its derelict predecessor. There is a small woody village about 1 km towards the main road from the church. There are no signs of accommodation here - - When you're ready to leave Debre Libanos, you'll probably have to walk out as far as the main Addis road - vehicles appear to turn around immediately they arrive. This is only a 4 km walk but it is *very* steep. -- There is a good chance of seeing gelada baboon and lammergeyer along the way." [Bradt 1995(1998) p 260-261]

"The original monastic buildings of Debre Libanos have long since disappeared -- They were replaced by a succession of structures, the latest of which is a spectacular modern church erected after World War II -- Note the mosaic figures on the façade. The church also has beautiful stained glass windows and contains some interesting mural paintings by the well-known Ethiopian artist Afewerk Tekle. To the left of the church is the nun's residence, built in the 1920s, and to the right behind the church is a cave containing holy water. Nearby are the huge monks' kitchens, dating from the early 20th century. Although women are not allowed to enter the monastery, they can visit other areas of the compound."

"Visit the House of the Cross, which is decorated internally with interesting paintings and said to house a cross that belonged to Tekle Haymanot.

A hundred metres beyond the monastery's turnoff, a five-minute walk to the right, towards the gorge, is a bridge from which there is a fine view of the countryside far below. This bridge is popularly described as sixteenth-century Portuguese but was in fact built in the late nineteenth century by an Ethiopian nobleman, Emperor Menelik's uncle, Ras Darge. It is possible to climb down below the bridge to where some waterfalls start their 600-metre plunge to the valley below."

[Camerapix 1995 p 79.81]

A modern and imposing church, built by Haile Selassie in 1961 and notable for its fine stained glass windows by the artist Afewerk Tekle, stands below. A little sloping footpath leads through the lush vegetation to a cave which contains the tomb of Tekle Haymanot. These days, this tomb is one of the most frequently visited by pilgrims of the Ethiopian Church. [Aubert 1999]

2000s

"Although the road to Debre Libanos is smaller than the main road it is quite accommodating. -- The drive down to the monastery has some steep drops and winds, but it is quite simple. Along the way you often see troops of baboons. -- You come out into a canyon surrounded by 700 meter cliffs on one side, and a deep gorge on the other."

"A short walk up a hill takes you to the cave in which Tekle Haymanot reputedly stood on one leg for 7 years. He survived on one seed a year, fed to him by a bird. As a result of this habit his leg fell off. There are wonderful paintings of Tekle Haymanot, usually with one foot with angel wings, presumably flying off to heaven to wait for the rest of the Saint. The cave has been given a rather ugly metal wall to block it off, and inside it has cheap vinyl on the ground and other unattractive modern additions. This doesn't distract too much from the holiness of the place, however."

"Graziani not only killed the priests, he also killed Debre Libanos as the centre of the church. It never recovered from the loss of the priests and teachers. Although it was resurrected, and a new and wonderful church was built there in the 1950s, it could never become the centre of learning it had previously been."

"The church at Debre Libanos, appropriately named Tekle Haymanot, has a wonderful interior with stained glass depictions of biblical figures and saints."

"During Timkat the pilgrims come from all over to douse themselves in the holy water of Debre Libanos. There are various holy springs and ponds. Priests assist in the baptism,

but many of the throngs do it themselves, splashing themselves with the water or throwing off thier clothes and hopping in."

[John Graham in AddisTribune 2000/07/14]

"The present church, the latest in a succession of structures, was built in 1961 by Haile Selassie. -- The old church was replaced with one apparently in the emperor's seemingly peculiar style: monumental, hybrid and hideous.

The church interior doesn't contain a great deal of interest, beyond what is supposed to be a tomb of the saint. The stained-glass windows and mural paintings are not in fact by Afewerk Tekle, as the other guidebooks and church literature like to make out."

Up the hill from Tekle Haymanot's cave, there is a marvellous view of the monastery.

"The cross-shaped tomb next to the carpark is dedicated to those executed by the Fascists." [Lonely planet 2000 p 163]

texts

E. Cerulli, Gli abbati di Dabra-Libanos ... secondo la lista rimata, *in* *Orientalia* (Roma) vol 12(1943) p 226-253, vol 13(1944) p 137-182, vol 14(1945) p 143-171;

E Leijonhufvud, Kejsaren och hans hövdingar, Sthlm 1948 p 79, 155-162;

Field trip to Däbrä Libanos /by 13 Ethiopian participants/, *in* *Ethnological Society Bulletin* (A.A.) 1954 no 3 p 3-21;

Sergew Hable Sellassie, Source for the history of Dabra Libanos, *in* *Journal of the Archives of Ethiopia*, vol 1, 1993(2) p 1-107.

picts

(The name may sometimes be confused with Debre Libanos in Eritrea, where there was an ancient church said to have been demolished in the 1960s. This church is shown in J Buchholzer, *De brændte ..*, København 1954 p 32, and its entrance-door in D Buxton, *Travels...*, London (1949)1957 p 96-97[13].)

F Rosen, *Eine deutsche ..*, Leipzig 1907 p 375 old stone bridge;

K Herzbruch, *Abessinien*, München 1925 p 185 valley with church being new at the time, 201 landscape, 207 old stone bridge, 209 people carrying stones from quarry;

Varde ljus! ..för 1932, Sthlm (EFS) p 71 wide view, 77 at Maryam;

F Hylander, *Ett år i tält*, Sthlm 1934 p 75 Tekle Haymanot's cave;

E Leijonhufvud, *Kejsaren och hans ..*, Sthlm 1948 p 161 buildings and waterfall;

D Buxton, *Travels ..*, London (1949)1957 p 32-33[11] wide view of monastery area;

J Buchholzer, *De brændte ..*, København 1954 p 33 the old bridge;

Bortom bergen vol II, Sthlm (EFS) 1954 p 224[3] monastery church;

D Busk, *The fountain ..*, London 1957 p 100 octagonal church Medhane Alem;

H Jenny, *Äthiopien*, Stuttgart 1957 p 177 Medhane Alem church;

H Neubacher, *Die Festung ..*, 1959 p151[pl 21] boys at Medhane A.;

Liberation Silver Jubilee, A.A. 1966 p 376 new church in full view;

Addis Reporter 1969 no 23 p 26-27 eight photos of the landscape;

T Tonkin, *Ethiopia with love*, London 1972 p 128 sketch of modern small church;

J Wenzel, *Im Land der dreizehn ..*, Rudolstadt 1985 pl 5 modern church and surrounding nature;

Camerapix guide 1995 p 79 the modern small church.

### **Debre Libanos: Debre Tsige**

1960s

"69 km from A.A. is the village of Debra Tsighe. In the middle of town a road to the right leads to the recently constructed church of Lena Mariam. The church stands atop a small hill planted with euphorbia surrounded by the homes of the clergy." [Welcome to Ethiopia, A.A. ca 1965 p 37]

Population 735 as counted in 1967.

### **Debre Libanos : Shinkurt**

The about 300-400 monks that were shot during the "Graziani massacre" in May 1937, see above, were mostly transported by truck to Shinkurt and executed there.

- ?? Debre Libanos of Shimezana (in Ham?) ..../ [20]  
 A number of abbots of the monastery of Debre Libanos of Shimezana held the title *aqabe-sa'at* in the time of King Lalibela in the early 1200s, according to information from land charters.  
 [S Munro-Hay 2002 p 43]
- HDL74 Debre Libanos sub-district (-1997-) 09/38 [n]
- HFF30 Debre Mahar, see Debre Mear
- HFE63 Debre Makeda, the name of Aksum given by the Queen of Sheba according to a legend. [Toy 1961]  
 In chapter 84 of *Kebrä Nagast* it was reported that Menilek and his companions brought the sacred Ark to a place called *Debre Makeda*, 'Queen of Sheba's Mountain', after their arrival in Ethiopia. To my surprise there was no mention of Aksum whatsoever. 'Debra Makeda', wherever it might have been, was clearly and unambiguously highlighted as the Ark's first home in Ethiopia. Aksum was not founded until about 800 years after Menilek's supposed journey.  
 [G Hancock, The sign and the seal, New York 1992 p 219]
- HES... Debre Malago 13/38? [x]  
 King Zara Yaqob (1433-1468) made a land charter to the monastery of Debre Malago. It mentions the land of Guankua which, like the monastery itself, may have been east-north-east of Mai Tsalo in Simen.  
 [Huntingford, The land charters..., A.A. etc 1965 p 37]  
 Abba Mika'el was prior of the Däbra Malago monastery in the 1400s.
- ?? Debre Markorewos (Däbrä Marqoréwos) ..../ [+ Pa]  
 (historically recorded)
- HDS42 **Debre Markos** (Debra Marcos, Däbrä Marqos) 10/37 [Gz WO Gu Pa]  
 (Dabra-Marqos) (old name: Moncorer, Mankorar) 10/37 [Ca Gu Pa]  
 (Fre: Ménquarér)  
 Gz: 10°21'37°44' or MS: 10°22'37°43', 2465/2515 m  
 Centre at least 1964-1980 of Debre Markos awraja.  
 The old name is seen even on a world map published in 1917.  
 Distance 299 km from Addis Abeba.  
 Within a radius of 10 km there are at km  
 6S /Gebre/ Mikael (Gh. Micael) (village)  
 10S Ikobi Maryam (Icobi Mariam) (church)  
 9SW Ziwad (Omata) (village) 2167 m  
 4W Gulit (line of small hills)  
 9N Enerata (Ennereta, Inerata) 2486/2610 m  
 8NE Senan Gero (area)  
 ?NE Abima (fort)  
 On high ground there is an ancient church of Markos surrounded by a famous monastery. There is a plain Santera in the neighbourhood.
- meteo Mean annual rainfall 1309 mm, and mean annual air temperature 17.3°C,  
 as published in 2004.  
 Mean monthly rainfall in 1954-1957 was almost 300 mm in July and August, 224 in September, only 5 in November and 8 in February, and between 13 and 83 in the other six months.
- 1870s The explorer Pellegrino Matteucci (b 1850) on 3 June 1879 arrived to what was at that time named Monkorer and residence of Ras Adal. Matteucci made excursions and passed there again, departing on 20 June for Adwa and Massawa. He continued to travel much in Africa.  
 [G Puglisi, Chi è? .., Asmara 1952]

- 1880s The town was the seat of government in the 1880s of a local Gojjam chief, Ras Adal, who later assumed the name and title of Negus Tekle Haymanot. He subsequently founded the fine church of Markos, after which the settlement soon came to be known as Debre Markos. [Camerapix 1995]  
 The name was changed from Manqorar after the town became the seat of Negus Tekle Haymanot in 1869. He built the church of Markos which soon burnt down but was promptly replaced by a new building. In its paintings Tekle Haymanot can be seen fighting the Mahdists. He was buried here in 1901.  
 Raffaele Alfieri was an Italian traveller and surgeon born about 1840-42. Staying in various places in Africa he arrived to Debre Markos and served king Tekle Haymanot for a while, but was taken prisoner by Menilek's forces on 15 June 1882.  
 [G Puglisi, Chi è? .., Asmara 1952]  
 The explorer Gustavo Bianchi arrived at Monkorer on 1 May 1880. He met Ras Adal on the following day, but he was not expected as no letter had arrived from Debre Tabor as had been the intention. There were a number of houses on a rather barren hill. Bianchi was received rather coolly by Ras Adal, and as it was Easter time, it was not permitted to write and send letters during that period. Bianchi was invited to a feast with a meal of raw meat, in a rectangular building about 30 m long.  
 Ras Adal on Bianchi's insistence promised to send a letter in Arabic to the queen of Gera, demanding that the explorer Cecchi would not be kept prisoner there any longer.. Among Ras Adal's men was one Greek by name Ghiorghis. He had lived in Ethiopia for some fifteen years and was accustomed to live in the Ethiopian way. Among other merits he could speak both Italian and Arabic. To make Ras Adal more friendly, Ghiorghis suggested that Bianchi should design a bridge over the Abay and show him. Ras Adal understood the design and was enthusiastic. Contrary to every expectation of Bianchi, Ras Adal's letter to Gera also succeeded to make Captain Cecchi free. No Italian contract to build the Abay bridge became reality in this period.  
 Ras Adal sent Bianchi to Dembecha for the rainy season, so the explorer left Monkorer on 21 May.  
 [G Bianchi, Alla terra dei Galla, Milano 1896 p 530-531, 538-542, 554-556]  
 On 23 October 1880 Captain Cecchi together with Count Antonelli and Engineer Ilg arrived to Monkorer to thank Ras Adal, and Gustavo Bianchi also joined them from Dembecha. The three Europeans coming from Shewa had crossed the Abay by swimming. After the ceremonies, Ilg returned, but Cecchi and Antonelli joined Bianchi at Dembecha and went there on 3 November.  
 [Bianchi as above p 604, 616]  
 Cecchi, Bianchi, Antonelli and a representative of Ras Adal by name Dereshi left Monkorer on 20 December 1880 to go to Samera/Debre Tabor.  
 [Cecchi vol II p 582]
- 1890s In the late 1800s the trade route from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos took 14 days.
- 1900s Members of the Royal House of Gojjam were provincial governors during the following periods:  
 Ras Bezabeh (d.1905) 1901-1905  
 Ras Hailu (Bezabeh's brother, d.1951) 1909-1932  
 Ras Hailu Belew 1942-1946, 1951-1957  
 The hunting party of Powell-Cotton halted there in March 1900:  
 "The palace buildings are at the north end and consist of six principal tuculs and innumerable smaller huts, the whole enclosed by a fine stone wall, ten feet high and two feet thick /3.0 x 0.6 m/. -- the buildings being much less scattered -- the place looks more like a town than does Menelik's capital. After crossing a small stone bridge (or rather a stone dam pierced with water channels), which spans the stream running at the foot of the hill, we were /conducted to our/ camping-ground, which was fairly level and close to a water-hole."  
 They visited the Thursday market held on a large open space to the south of the town.  
 "My men were kept busy explaining that I was an Englishman who had come to shoot,

and that I had nothing to sell. -- During my visit to the market I found no mules for sale, and only secured one good donkey, for although there were plenty on hand most of them were small or in bad condition. There was a good supply of cattle, not so many sheep, plenty of grain of all sorts, potatoes, onions, limes, apricots, raw cotton (grown near the Abbai), jars of ghee, tej and tala. Manufactured goods -- were very poorly represented. -- Five salts was the exchange for a Maria Theresa dollar here."

"-- both King Tecla Haymanot and Queen Wisseron Lacutch were away --". The Powell-Cotton party was received by notables within the palace grounds:

"Fitaurari Notoro, the civil governor, an old man of sixty-five with grey hair and beard. His face was intelligent, but he had a careworn expression -- Next to him was Fitaurari Iman, the military governor, a much younger man, with his head bound up in a piece of white muslin. -- Among the crowd which almost filled the room I also noticed a dwarf and a very old lady /a cousin of Tekle Haymanot?/."

[P H G Powell-Cotton, A sporting trip .., London 1902 p 208-217]

Negus Tekle Haymanot died early in 1901.

The Rosen party of Germans on their way northwards arrived at Debre Markos on 31 March 1905. They were received by Ras Bezabeh much in the way described by Rey further below. This about 30-year son of Negus Tekle Haymanot met them personally. The Germans were persuaded to stay a few days, although they would have preferred to continue their journey without any pause. According to their book it was Bezabeh who changed the name of the town from Monkorer to Debre Markos, derived from a monastery to the north. The Germans thought that there were at most 10,000 inhabitants, mostly soldiers and priests and monks. They heard a story about a people of pygmies in the south and this seemed confirmed by a pygmy girl they saw in the market. The Markus church was not quite completed and there were still scaffoldings. Nearby was the mausoleum of Negus Tekle Haymanot with some objects to honour his person. Ras Bezabeh liked to be photographed and was eager to receive copies of the photos, but message of his too early death arrived before they could be sent to him. To the Rosen party he did not seem like an important personality. The party continued their travel on 2 April.

[F Rosen, Eine deutsche .., Leipzig 1907 p 341-354]

1920s When Ras Teferi made his first extensive foreign tour in 1924, Leul-Ras Hailu at Debre Markos belonged to the ten notables which he, for security, ordered to accompany him. "When /Ras Hailu/ met King George V of Britain, that monarch is said to have asked him, through an interpreter, 'Can you speak English?' When the Prince of Gojjam replied in the negative the King asked, 'French? Arabic?', but received the same reply. Exasperated he asked, 'Well, what do you speak?' Leul-Ras Hailu retorted, 'Can you speak Amharic? Gallinya? Gurage?' When George V admitted he could not, Hailu commented 'I am glad to see that we are both equally ignorant!' -- Many foreign visitors /to Debre Markos/, some fortunately writers, were intrigued by this noble who was to play the important role in the Ethiopian politics of the next twenty years."

[Greenfield 1965 p 179]

1926 When Cheesman became British consul in Dangila in 1926, one of his first duties was to visit Ras Hailu in Debre Markos.

"The Palace stands up conspicuously on the top of a hill. It consists of a large rectangular banquet-hall in which three thousand chiefs and retainers can sit down to a meal. The other houses are separate rooms built close together in courtyards enclosed in fences. The Palace grounds comprise the whole hill, which is divided into courtyards several hundred yards wide. -- Massive wooden doors in a roofed porch give entrance to each court."

/Pages 30-31 describe how Cheesman was received./ Near the church was the tomb of Tekle Haymanot, father of Ras Hailu.

At Easter time in 1926 Ras Hailu "was erecting a big pretentious building with large rectangular rooms -- He said he was his own architect and employed his own builders to carry out his designs, which were evidently inspired by his recent visit to Europe, as he had accompanied Ras Tafari on an official mission to Rome, Paris, and London. -- The



walls of the new house were three feet thick, made of rock blocks consolidated with wet mud in place of mortar, with wooden window-frames imported from Addis Ababa. The building was to be of three stories -- Windows, houses of more than the ground floor, and corrugated iron, were all three innovations in Gojjam."

Cheesman met Weyzero Seble Wengel, Ras Hailu's only daughter and wife of the deposed Emperor Lij Iyasu. She had recently had a tour in the motorcar which Ras Hailu had brought to Debre Markos. Seble Wengel had one child with Lij Iyasu, a small girl which was living with her.

C.F. Rey was magnificently received in Debra Markos, probably in 1926.

"Directly we were seen a messenger rode up to us to say that this was a 'guard of honour' - about five hundred strong - sent out by Ras Hailu to meet us, and that they awaited our pleasure. -- /After preparations/ we rode down the hill, and then to our further astonishment the long line of soldiers came to the salute, quite a creditable performance, and just as we got on to the bridge a band of native musicians started giving forth some rather marvellous sounds."

"Hot and weary, but much enthused, we bade a temporary farewell to our escort, and, as I mentioned that I should like to have a photograph of them as a memento, they formed up into three sides of a hollow square, and I managed to get quite a good picture." Even Ras Hailu himself came to see them and gave them the warmest of welcomes.

"He is a keen trader, and goes in for trade himself on quite a large scale: he encourages trade in his district, though very wisely will not allow Greeks and Armenians to come and rob himself and his people. In Addis Ababa he has bought a lot of property -- he also imported into Addis a number of motor-cars, which his agent lets out on hire for his account."

At the market, held twice a week, Rey saw separate portions for ponies, mules, donkeys, and cattle. There were grains and spices of every kind. Bars of salt were valued at six bars for an M.T. dollar. There was cotton roughly ginned and cleaned, and cloth woven from it. There were silver necklaces and other ornaments, and a variety of other odds and ends. There was an important feast on the anniversary of the death of Negus Tekle Haymanot, even 25 years after his death. Rey and his wife took part for some three hours in the banqueting-hall before they obtained leave to depart. They later attended the Timqet celebrations.

When finally departing from Debre Markos the Rey party were given as farewell presents a pony and a couple of riding-mules with silver-mounted harness, also lion skins, fur rugs, and elephant tusks. They had breakfast with the Ras for their final farewell.

[C F Rey, In the country .., London 1927 p 129-133, 143-154, 163-164]

1927

An American group of naturalists from Chicago arrived within sight of Debre Markos on 3 March 1927:

"As we topped the next ridge we opened a wide valley with a high hill beyond, on the apex of which was the big grove and many *tukel* roofs, all outshone by the big turret and bulk of Hailu's *gebbi*. As we crossed the savanna a lake was passed on our right, thickly sprinkled with ducks -- in the open spaces beyond were white storks. Cranes (black-necked) were seen many times -- coming out of town to meet us, an old soldier with an armed guard of seventy-five riflemen -- brought us to a prepared camp."

On the following day they were brought to see Ras Hailu's huge reception hall. "From this we passed outdoors and on to a smaller structure which would hold two hundred or three hundred people. The walls here were covered with American wallpaper, the floor was wholly covered, in fact smothered, with oriental rugs -- As we passed out of this building through a courtyard we noticed a couple of somewhat dilapidated Ford cars -- we were then conducted to a dingy little council room, the walls of which were decorated with French war photos -- The bedroom of the Ras was also opened for us, and here were hunting scenes -- The bed was in a dark recess practically devoid of ventilation."

Ras Hailu's daughter was the one to receive the Americans and she excused herself for taking her food separately, saying that she was fasting. She said that she was very fond of her husband Lij Iyasu who was imprisoned by this time. It rained all evening. About noon

on the following day the Americans proceeded on the trail to Dembecha.

[L A Fuertes, New York 1936 p 161-168]

Ato Gebre Mesqel was postmaster around 1929.

1930s

There was an airmail flight A.A.-Debre Markos on 29 June 1932, with pilot Paul Corriger, and return flight 1 July. Another was on 15 Oct 1932 with return the same day and new pilot Micha Babitcheff. The following flights were on 4 Nov, 11 Nov, 22 Nov, 12 Dec 1932 and at least one more on 11 April 1934, and the last one in September?

Postage stamps of 1931 were used.

[Norman Cape 1982 + R Sciaky]

Early in 1933 the Ethiopian government had decided to build a track for motorcars from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos, and a Greek builder had been sent to find and mark the road on both sides of the Abay. Ras Imru, the new governor of Gojjam, was responsible for the road work on the right bank of the Abay. A flying pontoon had been constructed at the river. There was already a telephone line from A.A. to Debre Markos.

[Cheesman 1936]

In early 1933 a caravan of the Swedish geologist Erik Nilsson moved northwards in Gojjam. Caravan leader was Waldemar Nyström who had grown up in Ethiopia and could speak Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo languages. In Debre Markos they were received by governor Ras Imru, who pointed at a Swedish L.M. Ericsson telephone on his table.

Nilsson had a total of 16 recommendation letters with him from Addis Abeba. Ras Imru sent an escort of up to 30 men with the caravan, led by Grazmach Alemi. The party bought needles and safety-pins in Debre Markos to use partly instead of coins along the road. Their trekking to lake Tana took one month.

[E Nilsson *in* Ymer (Sweden) 1934 no 3 p 198-200]

A radio telegraph station was started in 1934 and an S.I.M. mission station was established..

Ras Hailu was Governor of Gojjam until July 1932, when he was sentenced to 'perpetual prison' and sent to Arussi (but he returned to power again later).

After Ras Hailu's deportation to an island in the Rift Valley in 1933: "Hailu's son Alem Seged, a youth of eighteen years, tried to arouse the people of Gojjam to revolt, but Hailé Sellassié sent Dejazmach Wodajo and a bishop to Debra Markos. The boy was made to swear fealty before the sacred Tabot -- and was brought to the capital. There was a solemn reunion and Alem Seged went to live with Ras Desta."

[Greenfield 1965 p 179]

An air mail cover sent from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos on 11 April 1934 was sold by eBay on Internet on 27 June 2004 at the extraordinary price of £320, much more than usual for that type of philatelic object. The buyer was George Roussos. His father in early time had a store for building materials in the capital and had sent the letter to his customer Gabre Meskel in Debre Markos.

[Menelik's Journal, July-Sep. 2004 p 23-24]

Around 1934 a medical doctor Denis (=Diyounisiyous) Basiliou was resident in Debre Markos and acquired supplies from Sandoz in Switzerland.

[Philatelic source]

On 15 September 1934 a medical worker of the Italian consulate visited a local chief in town to give him treatment. He discovered that some forty slaves were kept chained in the chief's garden. A proclamation of Ras Teferi had said that owners of slaves within a month must present themselves at the bureau of registration and liberation. The chaining was exactly for the purpose to prevent these slaves from being registered at the *Bureau de libération*.

[Italian source 1935]

1935

Governor-General of Gojjam from 1933 was Ras Imru. He had Dr Vassiliou as his private physician. Gassassa (Gesesse) had been made Dejazmach in 1931 and was under the orders of Ras Imru. Head of Debre Markos monastery was Memereh Haile Mariam. There was post, telegraph, and telephone, with Gebre Meskel as operator. Director of Customs

was Nagadras Sarse Wolde.

[Zervos 1936]

Ras Imru arrived as the new governor of Gojjam in November 1932. One of his early actions was to open Debre Markos to foreign traders. He was the first to use electricity in Debre Markos, from a generator which Ras Haylu had bought in 1924 but never used. Imru brought several young and progressive teachers to schools he opened, among them Haddis Alemayehu who later became known as an Amharic writer.

Ras Imru left Gojjam for the front in October 1935 and became one of the main leaders of the resistance movement against the Italians.

[R K Molvaer, *Black lions* (The Red Sea Press) 1997 p 108-109]

When the Italians published various accusations against Ethiopia in 1935 they also stated that the Italian consulate in Debre Markos had been subject to a number of troubles and humiliations in February-May 1935. The Italian consul was married to a daughter of the British Minister in Addis Abeba, Sir Sidney Barton.

"The consulate is the only stone building, and the Consul and his wife and child are the only white inhabitants for miles around. The natives had looked threatening, and although there had been no actual conflict, it was anything but pleasant for a woman and child. The English Minister and his wife were very worried about their daughter and had frequently tried to bring her and her child back to Addis Ababa. A caravan, for anyone connected with the Italian Legation, would have been suicidal, so an aeroplane was the only way out. Lady Barton visited her friend, the Empress, and asked her, as mother to mother, for help. The next day the Emperor put his Fokker machine at their disposal, and the Italian Consul's wife and child arrived a few hours later in Addis Ababa. But Baron Muzzi, the Consul, remained at his post."

[L Farago, *Abyssinia on the eve*, London 1935 p 194 (Sthlm 1935 p 165)]

A little later Baron Muzzi (Muzi?) was damaged by a shot near Mount Entotto on a hunting expedition. On an X-ray at the Italian hospital in the capital they could see a small revolver bullet under his third rib. Robinson MacLean in his book retells the widely divergent testimonies of many person in a kind of court with Lorenzo Tazaz as chairman and MacLean together with two other expatriates as jury. It was not proved that any attempt at murder was behind the accident.

[R MacLean, *John Hoy of Ethiopia*, New York 1936 p 57-69]

Italians who were evacuated by train from Addis Abeba on 12 October 1935 also included some from Debre Markos: Dr Dagnino and his wife and two radio telegraph operators.

1936 Around New Year 1936 Dejazmach Gessese Belew, a grandson of King Tekle Haymanot, came to Debre Markos after having deserted Ras Imru. However, the 'household troops' left to defend the town pursued Gessese so that he had to flee and live like an outlaw.

After retreats, Ras Imru came to Debre Markos in May 1936 with the intention to form a second front. There was a radio station operated by a young man Gebre-Mesqel Habte-Maryam, and he told Imru that the Emperor had left Ethiopia and was in Djibouti.

[Molvaer as above p 110-112]

On 1 May 1936 Ras Imru was told by telephone from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos that the Emperor and his nearest persons would leave the capital next day and go to Europe, and that Imru had been appointed Viceroy of Ethiopia.

[Greenfield 1965 p 223]

April 1936: It took Ras Imru a month to reach Debre Markos from the Tekezze, and through desertions and air attacks the ranks of his army of about 10,000 who managed to cross the river thinned to the 300 men of his personal bodyguard. Twice Ras Imru escaped capture by the Italians only by a hair's breadth.

[A J Barker 1971 p 91, 93]

Ras Imru stayed at Debre Markos for a while during his retreat but left before the Italian occupants entered. After occupying Gondar, Starace let his irregulars march towards Debre Markos in three columns under Gessesew, Belay and Assege. Starace himself was flown to Debre Markos on 20 May 1936. Through an interpreter he told the surprised local inhabitants that he had come on behalf of the Duce to free them from their

oppressors. Starace had already hoisted the Italian flag in the town when his troops arrived around noon.

[Potyka, Haile Selassie 1974 p 202]

1938 About 10,000 inhabitants, *Commissariato del Goggiàm Orientale*, post, telegraph, infirmary, landing ground.

Starace added to the former gibbi of Negus Tekle Haymanot and called the project Forte Dux. This administrative seat of the occupants had various fascist inscriptions and ornaments. The old palace was kept and called House of the Ras. There was also a circular church built by Ras Bezabeh, with the tomb of his father Tekle Haymanot and with paintings describing Tekle Haymanot's life. [Guida 1938, with details of buildings p 374-375]

Post office of the Italians was opened in August 1936. Its cancellations read DEBRA MARCOS\*AMARA.

[Philatelic source]

"In the short space of a few months the rebellion in Gojjam had become by far the most serious of all the rebellions in Italian East Africa. On 15 March 1938 the British Consulate General reported that Debra Markos, the capital, was surrounded by rebels and cut off; and a fortnight later added that all available troops, including cavalry with only a few weeks' training, were being sent into Gojjam; -- and that General Cavallero was personally directing a veritable invasion. --

No less than sixty thousand men, supported by aeroplanes and tanks, took part in the 'invasion' of Gojjam. While columns fanned out in all directions, Cavallero himself flew from fort to fort planning a new network of garrisons. By mid-May operations were over, and on 31 May the Viceroy's government announced in Addis Ababa that Gojjam was officially pacified."

[Mockler 1984 p 189-190]

1939 The Italian "Medical Orderly Spriglio, stationed at Debra Markos, liked to go shooting guinea fowl and francolin, and one day while out with his shotgun alone on foot some distance from Debra Markos he was stopped by an Ethiopian who asked him to go and see a sick man in a nearby village. He found a badly wounded Patriot and treated him. He continued to visit and treat the wounded man secretly from Debra Markos until one day he was warned by Ethiopians that the Fascist police had heard what he was doing and were about to arrest him. He defected to the Patriots and served with the band as their 'doctor' until the British arrived in 1941. After the Emperor's return he set up his practice as a 'doctor' in Debra Markos, married an Ethiopian wife and had numerous children and eventually died there, much lamented."

[Shirreff 1995 p 18-19]

1940 In 1940 General Guglielmo Nasi was moved from Harar to Debre Markos, and from 11 October he took command of Gojjam. He made written notes which are kept in the Ufficio Storico in Rome.

[Shirreff 1995 p 47]

"General Nasi proposed his political solution for the Gojjam revolt - bringing back its former ruler, Ras Hailu - in a letter to the viceroy of 25 November, mentioning two conditions that would make the position acceptable to the *ras*, a title which would give him precedence over the other nobility, and a liberal allowance. The proposal was approved by the viceroy and Ras Hailu arrived at Debra Markos on 8 December -- An allowance of 100,000 lire a month was granted, and sufficient weapons to form a *banda*, initially 1500 strong and later increased to 4000."

[Shirreff 1995 p 61]

"Sandford heard of Ras Hailu's arrival and signalled Haile Selassie who replied on 13 December enclosing a letter to be sent on to the *ras*. Ras Hailu did not reply to the Emperor's letter. On 20 December Sandford received a report from one of his Ethiopian officers that Ras Seyum had accompanied Ras Hailu to Debra Markos but had not stayed, that Ras Hailu was proposing to visit Bichena to arrange for the marriage of his granddaughter Alau Sahau to Belai Zelleka (as a bait to win him over), that he promised

to clear all opposition from Gojjam if the Italians made him *negus*, and that he was here in fulfilment of a prophecy that Hailu in his old age would rule all Ethiopia as representative of a foreign power, his power likened to that of the moon rather than the sun."

[Shirreff 1995 p 61]

1941 Debre Markos was transferred on 14 March 1941 to the command of the Shewan sector commander, General Scala, who was stationed in Addis Abeba. The new local commander, Colonel Saverio Maraventano, had firm orders to defend Debre Markos, which he proceeded to carry out, and Wingate found that he had a much more determined enemy than Natale.

Royal Air Force Blenheims bombed Debre Markos on 16 and 17 March. It was the first air support for Gideon Force since late February.

[Shirreff 1995 p 127, 129]

February-March 1941: "The small town of Burie barred the road to Debra Markos -- At Burie Colonel Natale had been ordered to stand fast. He had several thousand troops -- A line of fortified posts stretched behind him towards Debra Markos. Natale was an experienced colonial fighter." [Mockler]

8-17 March: "As the Dembecha garrison pulled back, an infuriated General Nasi flew down from Gondar. His first action was to relieve Natale of his command -- Before flying back to Gondar, General Nasi, with Ras Hailu at his side, assembled the garrison at Fort Dux in Debra Markos and harangued them. There was no point, he said, in retreating out of Gojjam across the Nile, to face even stronger forces of the enemy." [Mockler p 348-349]

"Before leaving Debra Markos Nasi had sent Ras Hailu to join his *banda* in the hills; and there were satisfactory reports of fierce fighting in the Chokey Mountains to the east between the rival forces of Ras Hailu and of Lij Hailu Belew. --

"/Orde Wingate/ decided to attempt to win Ras Hailu over to the Emperor's side. His next move was a dangerous gamble. With only three hundred Sudanese as escort, he marched across country past Debra Markos into the foothills of the Chokey Mountains. Ras Hailu came down with 6,000 armed men to confront him. The two forces camped warily, two miles apart, by Abba Mariam. Wingate sent a messenger to Ras Hailu's camp, bidding him to acknowledge Haile Selassie as his liege lord and submit. Ras Hailu sent a messenger back, courteously refusing. -- Next day, 15 March, he entered Debra Markos with half his strength, leaving - astutely - 3,000 *banda* in the hills to block any further outflanking move by Wingate." [Mockler p 350-351]

Colonel Maraventano arrived by air back to Debre Markos on 31 March, with orders to concentrate his forces at Debre Markos and then evacuate Gojjam in the Fiche-Debre Birhan direction.

[Shirreff 1995 p 144]

1941 Within the advancing British-Ethiopian forces, the 2nd Ethiopian Battalion was in mutiny from 29 March to 2 April. Wingate said in comment on the refugee battalions that 'the best of these was the 2nd Ethiopian Battalion and they spent a considerable part of the campaign in a state of mutiny.'

[Shirreff 1995 p 147]

Battle for Debre Markos 18 March-6 April: "On the western outskirts of Debra Markos, about two and a half miles /4 km/ from the town, the road from Burie ran through a line of small hills, the Gulit Ridge. Here facing Gideon Force Colonel Maraventano placed two battalions, his first line of defence. Wingate and Boustead took up position in front of the ridge -- force amounted to merely 400 Sudanese and a dozen Englishmen - 'besieging' 16,000 armed men. -- the Sudanese mortared away at the Gulit Ridge by day, and sniped from closer in by night. These tactics were surprisingly effective. The irregular *banda* began to desert in great numbers and come over to join the besiegers. -- Gideon Force had never been in a more dangerous position. -- Wingate made up his mind. When in doubt, whatever the odds, attack. But on the morning of the 24th /March/ the Italians attacked first, just before dawn. However, warned by the *bande*, the Sudanese cleared out of High Hill Camp, where they had bivouacked, before the attackers reached it -- That night

Boustead's men split into three groups and in their turn attacked the enemy posts on the Gulit Ridge with machine-guns, grenades, and the bayonet. -- This night attack succeeded temporarily in its aim. It put a damper on the dismayed enemy. Neither the Gulit Ridge battalions nor the garrison in Debre Markos made any further move forward. --"

"Wingate, at his best when faced with apparently insoluble problems, devised a new plan: all the Patriots, led by the Emperor in person, should move up from Burie for an all-out attack on Debra Markos. -- Unfortunately, for the whole of this Gojjam campaign, memoirs and documents, official and unofficial, though plentiful on the British side, are totally lacking on the Italian side. But it seems that General Nasi -- was preparing a pincer movement -- The attack was planned for 27 March.

On the evening of 26 March, however, General Frusci had given the order to evacuate Keren /after the decisive battle in Eritrea/: an order that within hours became known to all Italian senior officers in the Empire. --

So, fortunately for Boustead and his Sudanese, there was no attack from Debra Markos on the 27th."

[Mockler p 351-355]

"Between 1 and 3 April Boustead sent patrols led by Turrall, Kabada, Makonnen Desta and Clarke against the forts north of Debra Markos, continuing the pressure. -- On 2 April Boustead sent Johnson with two platoons, Kabada and his men, and a mortar section southeast of Debra Markos to ambush the Italians as they withdrew. On the same day Grey on Wingate's orders sent by wireless telegraphy a signal to the Italians at Debra Markos threatening a forward movement of 'vast masses of patriots', and inviting them to surrender. There is no record of any reply to this message. On 3 April the Emperor and Sandford -- started closing in on the kill. Fitaurari Haile Yusus and others arrived in the Debra Markos area and were allotted sectors to cover -- Wingate had no help from Patriots in the fighting round Debra Markos. In contrast Maraventano not only had Ras Hailu's *banda* but also numerous other bodies of irregulars under chiefs still loyal to the Italian government."

[Shirreff 1995 p 147]

"On the evening of 1 April Maraventano was informed -- that the 13th Colonial Battalion at Safartak and the Engineer company would remain in position until the column /evacuating Debra Markos/ passed -- On 1 and 2 April he sent the two CCNN battalions to Addis Ababa. -- At the same time the regular Gojjami *ascari* were discharged or transferred to Ras Hailu's *banda* -- On the afternoon of 2 April Lieutenant Colonel Tremontano of the operations' staff telephoned from Addis Ababa to ask Maraventano if he could speed up his withdrawal. Maraventano declined and said he would move on 4 April as planned. -- It is quite clear that although he was under some pressure from Gideon Force the pressure was not severe and he could afford to take his time."

[Shirreff 1995 p 148]

"Boustead was -- predicting, rightly, that the Gulit Ridge garrison, 2,000 strong, would probably withdraw the following day, 1 April. He planned a real massacre, herding them backwards with his Sudanese into the arms of the 2nd Ethiopians who would carefully have been posted in ambush in their rear --

It did not work out. The 2nd Ethiopians were not only not in position but had relapsed into a state of total chaos. 'A' Company had mutinied, and a deputation was sent to the Emperor, as he and Wingate moved slowly forward from Burie, to complain that they had been struck and treated like slaves by their white officers. Boyle and his adjutant Smith were called back to explain, and finally relieved of their commands."

"Inside Debra Markos, now seriously besieged, there was much toing and froing, with Maraventano receiving and issuing his last-minute orders while Ras Hailu sent out and accepted emissaries and messages from all sides. On 2 April mortar shells struck the *ghebbi* of Ras Hailu's daughter. Uncertainty was spreading. Morale was collapsing. Wingate's plan was working.

On 3 April the watchers, inside and outside the city, saw the sight which they were now half expecting. Lorries, cavalry, and infantry were pouring out of the eastern gates of the

city - two Brigades, the III and the XIX, 7,000 native troops, 1,100 Italians, and, with the column, over 2,000 women and children. Wingate smiled when the news was reported. He knew the column was doomed.

But before leaving the city Colonel Maraventano had handed over command of all the irregulars, plus all ammunition, rifles, and stores that he had not taken with him, to Ras Hailu. With over 6,000 well-armed followers Ras Hailu was the master of Debra Markos, and the potential master of all Gojjam. Wingate -- the Emperor -- waited tensely outside the city for Ras Hailu's next move. At dusk they saw the Ethiopian flag raised and flying above the citadel. But no offer of submission came. Makonnen Desta, sent in to Debra Markos, overcome by awe, prostrated himself and kissed Ras Hailu's hands and feet. After so many years Ras Hailu was back as lord of the capital he had once ruled, among his faithful people. After so many humiliations he had, very nearly, his old enemy Tafari Makonnen at his mercy."

"Against Haile Selassie alone he might have risked a coup. Against Haile Selassie supported by the British he knew he could not. Yet for two more days he enjoyed his brief but total independence, before, gracefully and with dignity, announcing his submission." [Mockler 1984 p 351-357]

"After Maraventano had taken leave of Ras Hailu and his daughters and loyal chiefs and subchiefs ('the older faithful ones wept'), his column started -- at 9.00 a.m. on 4 April having been assembling since dawn. Ras Hailu assured him again that his march would not be disrupted this side of the Abbai. In addition to his seven colonial battalions and 1000 national troops, the column included, '4000 women and children, the families of *ascari*, 500 native civilians who had compromised themselves by acts done in our favour, and about 100 nationals from the towns of Engiagara, Burye, Dambacha and Debra Markos. As most carried their own belongings, you will have a faint idea of how this crowd encumbered the march of the column.' They also had the 200 Ethiopian baggage camels captured at the Charaka river."

[Shirreff 1995 p 149]

"While Maraventano departed unmolested from Debra Markos, Gideon Force was poised to move in. In the town Ras Hailu -- performed a double act, displaying a most remarkable authority. He saw Maraventano off the premises, made sure that neither Belai Zelleka nor anyone else molested him on his way to the Abbai, put his men in to take over the forts and prevented looting in the town, and awaited Boustead and the Emperor. Boustead sent Hayes in at midday on 4 April with two platoons -- As Hayes approached the fort, 'I was met by a large crowd and Ras Hailu. They started kissing my feet and Ras Hailu took me in to a small inn and plied me with *tej*.' Boustead and Nott followed with Gideon Force, placed guards on all stores and allotted areas to the gathering patriot chiefs in the surrounding forts."

"Among the chiefs was Nagash with his men, designated as governor of Debra Markos by Haile Selassie, who /Nagash/ arrived on 5 April. With this authority he demanded that Boustead should remove his troops from the fort. Having had no help from Nagash in the fighting Boustead and his officers dealt with him and his men fairly sharply. Boustead refused to remove his troops, and when Nagash's men started looting the hospital, 'Jock Maxwell shot one dead at 300 yards and scared off the others, making them drop their loot as they ran.' -- On 6 April 1941, the same day Cunningham's forces entered Addis Ababa, Emperor Haile Selassie entered Debra Markos in a car driven by le Blanc in a convoy of six cars, which le Blanc had led up the Matakal escarpment on 2 April, the first vehicles to travel on the road he had been constructing."

[Shirreff 1995 p 149-150]

Emperor Haile Selassie and Brigadier Sandford entered Debre Markos to establish their Gojjam headquarters. It was here that Ras Hailu bowed to the ground, pledging allegiance to the Emperor. The 70 year old man was graceful, with his chest bemedaled with Ethiopian and Italian decorations. Again, Haile Selassie forgave him and accepted his support for the inevitable victory.

[R N Thompson, Liberation .., 1987 p 152]

"When the news of the surrender of Keren and Harar reached the Italians they withdrew from Debra Markos and Leul-Ras Hailu promptly responded by sending his Alfa-Romeo car complete with uniformed chauffeur to bring the British commander into the city -- The offer was refused. On April 4, 1941, Leul-Ras Hailu decided to surrender Debra Markos and, dressed in Italian general's uniform, he received the commander of the British Commonwealth forces in his citadel."

"The differences between the Ethiopian and the British concepts of government soon became very apparent. When Leul-Ras Hailu was required to move from the citadel of Debra Markos to his town house, Dejazmach Negash, his relative, announced that the Emperor had appointed him the new governor general of Gojjam and for this reason the citadel and in particular its stores should be handed over to him. Colonel Boustead -- refused, saying that as Negash was an officer of the Emperor he took his military order from the Commander of Ethio-British forces and not from the Emperor personally. The *dejazmach* was required to wait in the forts outside the town. For two days there followed what the British described as 'anarchy' and the Ethiopians as 'celebrations' and then the Emperor arrived."

"Leul-Ras Hailu came to pay homage - twenty minutes late - and the Emperor received him very coldly. Hailu suggested to the Emperor that he had secretly been rather loyal, but Hailé Sellassié did not laugh until he afterwards talked to a group of Ethiopian and British officers, for Hailu remained for some time a power to be respected and he even continued to be officially responsible for 'law and order'. He refused, for example, to hand over the Italian *residente* on the grounds that it was a breach of etiquette for a noble to surrender his guest on demand."

[Greenfield 1965 p 258-259]

"Ras Hailu knew he could expect little mercy from either Haile Selassie or Ras Kassa in whose sons' death he had been involved. Yet very few Ethiopians then or later condemned him outright. Some said he had always been a Patriot at heart; others that he had mollified the severity of the Italians, particularly of Graziani. The people of Gojjam saw him as their rightful ruler and protector. -- In British eyes, however, Ras Hailu was a traitor and a collaborator, nothing more nor less."

"As soon as Ras Hailu had announced his submission, Boustead and his men drove merrily past Debra Markos to join their advanced companies and to attack the Maraventano column in the rear."

As a last service to the Italians Ras Hailu sent messengers to 'Lij' Belai Zelleka to let Maraventano's forces through. With their crossing of the Abay bridge Gojjam was free of the Italians - except for one isolated battalion at Mota.

"On Palm Sunday, 6 April, Haile Selassie drove in triumph into Debra Markos, on the front seat of a truck driven by *Bimbashi* LeBlanc, with his chief officers and courtiers inside the truck or hanging on to its sides. Thanks to Wingate, the Emperor had 'recaptured' 'Holy Gojjam'." [Mockler 1984 p 358-359]

"On 8 April a letter from Ras Seyum in Adowa reached Debra Markos. It was addressed not to the Emperor but to Ras Kassa. -- Nothing in this letter could be judged treasonable or disloyal -- *But* there was no reference to Haile Selassie. -- Once again it seemed as if Ras Kassa's attitude and reactions might decide Haile Selassie's fate.

Although, in a more immediate sense, the fate of Haile Selassie lay in Ras Hailu's hands. - Ras Hailu had, indeed, submitted, but he was in his capital. -- Secretly Haile Selassie sent a message to Khartoum asking if the British would intern Ras Hailu in the Sudan. It seems that this request was refused --

[Mockler 1984 p 374-375]

"Haile Selassie arrived at the fort at midday and was greeted by Wingate and a parade of the two battalions of Gideon Force commanded by Boustead. After Haile Selassie had taken the salute, Ras Hailu was to make his submission, but, awkward to the last, he kept the Emperor and the parade waiting for half an hour. Then, as Tutton records, 'he drove up in a motor car and got out. He bowed stiffly, a formal obeisance to the emperor, and muttered something, and then stood upright.' -- In the evening, on hearing that



Cunningham's troops were in Addis Ababa, the Emperor invited all officers to a 'champagne reception'. So ended an eventful day."

"Next day Nott extracted petrol from Ras Hailu, who was still holding the petrol supplies - 'He gave me a good reception and some inferior cognac before breakfast' - and Haile Selassie held a review of patriot forces -- 'HM received patriots who danced before him, reciting their prowess, mostly lies except for Azaj Kabada and his boys.' Ras Hailu's *banda* also paraded before the Emperor."

"To the Italians the Patriots represented a threat but in fact played a negligible part in the Debra Markos operation. Some of Haile Yusus's men may have helped to garrison Emmanuel, and after Emmanuel was reoccupied Fitauraris Evetu and Alama gave some help to the 2nd Ethiopian Battalion. Mangasha and Nagash attended on the Emperor and played no part. Wingate tried to involve Belai Zelleka, but he failed. In contrast the Italians had strong support from irregulars, largely because of Ras Hailu, whose influence in east Gojjam was important. Ras Hailu was a man of commanding presence and great authority -- in character an amusing and time-servig rogue. Long at odds with Haile Selassie, who had treated him with clemency, he had thrown in his lot with the Italians -- When it was clear though that the Italians were going to be defeated he made his belated submission to the Emperor who again treated him with clemency."

[Shirreff 1995 p 151, 154-155]

/The Emperor's/ isolation was only relieved by the arrival from the Sudan of his two sons, the Meredazmatch Asfa Wossen and the Duke of Harar; and by that of Lij Asrate Kassa, Ras Kassa's fourth and only surviving son.

As always, Haile Selassie was patient. Wingate too was forced to be patient, kicking his heels in Debra Markos --

From Debra Markos the boy Duke of Harar was flown by the British to Harar to take up official residence in the Governor's Palace. Best of all a letter date 18 April arrived from Ras Seyum to Haile Selassie -- equivalent to formal submission."

[Mockler 1984 p 375]

"Sandford had been flown back with a flight of seven South African Air Force planes sent to escort the Duke of Harrar to his new post as governor of Harrar (one Junkers, three Gladiators and three Hurricanes), and the 'crack at night' took place after a ceremonial parade at which Haile Selassie had conferred the ranks of lieutenant general on the Crown Prince, major general on the Duke of Harrar, and colonel on Asrate Kassa. The Gladiators of this flight shot down a lone Caproni that appeared on that day, possibly the plane that had dropped supplies on Maraventano."

[Shirreff 1995 p 182]

"Yet there was a final hold-up. On 22 April a telegram arrived from General Cunningham ordering Wingate to halt any move of Haile Selassie's approach to Addis Ababa -- But Cunningham by now was only delaying the inevitable. For on 9 April Churchill had held a meeting of the Defence Committee and instructed that the Emperor should be allowed to return to his capital as soon as possible, and on 19 April a General Telegram had been dispatched to Wavell to the same effect. -- Therefore, on 27 April Haile Selassie, escorted by most of Gideon Force, accompanied by Ras Kassa and indeed by Ras Hailu whose presence he had 'insisted' on, and followed by Lij Johannes who had been promised the governorate of Sidamo, set out from Debra Markos." [Mockler 1984 p 376-378]

"The Emperor and his staff left Debra Markos on the morning of 27 April in two trucks with Wingate and Morrogh-Bernard, followed by Akavia in a 15-cwt truck escorting Ras Hailu, and arrived at the Abbai in the afternoon. -- The Frontier Battalion left Debra Markos on 28 April, also on foot, with its camel and mule column moving more slowly behind."

[Shirreff 1995 p 183]

A lone Italian Caproni was shot down over Debre Markos on 21 April 1941.

"Apprised of the occupation of his capital, Haile Sellassie asked for a plane. It was refused and he was ordered to remain in Debra Marqos until further notice. The pretext given was that the excitement of the Emperor's return would lead to an orgy of looting

and raping in which all the Italians would be killed. Later, General Cunningham countermanded the order so as to allow the Emperor a slow return by land. This was finally accomplished on May 5."

[J H Spencer, Ethiopia at bay, USA 1984 p 93]

1940s

The Ethiopian post office was opened on 22 May 1942.

After the liberation in 1941 two patriot leaders in Gojjam were particularly rewarded. Dejazmach Hailu Belew was made a Ras and Governor-General of Gojjam. Mengesha Jambere was made Bitwoded and Deputy Governor-General. In mid-1944 the Emperor found it necessary to visit D.Markos because of troubles over tax. Adjustment of land tax and large sums of gifts, partly for distribution to the poor, "had some effect".

[Gilkes 1975 p 181]

Kebede Tessema (b 1902) was made Dejazmach in 1946 and in that year was appointed Governor-General of Gojjam.

In 1948 there were EAL domestic flights Addis Abeba-Debre Markos-Gondar.

The hospital had one doctor and 50 beds in 1949.

1950s

"The government had scarcely been able to collect taxes /in Gojjam/ in the post-Liberation period: the amount collected was so low that it could not even cover the salaries of the local officials. In 1950, the new governor, *Dajjach* Kabbada Tasamma, tried to change the situation. He raised the tax rate from the low pre-war level -- and initiated a policy of assessment and classification of land to determine taxation. -- Rebellion broke out in Mota, Qolla Daga Damot and Mecha districts. The emperor was forced to reduce the new tax rate by a third, remove Kabbada, and reinstall the hereditary governor, Haylu Balaw."

[Bahru Zewde 1991 p 217]

Early in 1951 Dejazmach Kebede Tessema was replaced by one of the royal house of Gojjam, Ras Hailu Belew, as Governor of Gojjam. At the same time amnesty was granted to the rebels of a serious plot against the Emperor, led by Bitwoded Negash Bezabeh (a plot not necessarily related to the province of Gojjam).

[Gilkes 1975 p 182]

In April 1952 EAL flights Addis-Abeba-Debre Markos-Bahir Dar were started.

There were 10 telephone numbers in 1954, none of them registered on a personal name and only Besse & Co. on a firm. Debre Markos was regularly served by Ethiopian Air Lines. Hourly surface meteorological observations at the airport were made (-1957-) by ICAO-trained observers.

In 1955 a public address system was installed in the central square in Debre Markos (and in ten other towns), used for receiving transmission from Radio Addis Ababa and re-broadcasting it.

At this time there was a branch of United Oil Mills & Soap Factories (a firm established in 1950), and H. Behesnilian & K. Sissian had an enterprise for vegetable oils.

"Die Burg war weitläufig von Palisaden und Mauerwerk umgeben. Im Hauptgebäude wurden wir von einem eleganten, aber misstrauischen Sekretär empfangen. Er führte uns in eine Art Staatsraum, der unter einer hölzernen Decke mit barbarischen Malereien geschmückt war --

Dann wurden wir wieder gebeten. Einfältig hintereinander gingen wir in einen anderen Raum. Dort sass Ras Hailu an einem Schreibtisch mit Telefon. Natürlich war es nicht 'Ras Hailu', sondern es war der derzeitige Statthalter des Kaisers, Fitewrari Sebsibe."

[H Rittlinger, Schwarzes Abenteuer, Wiesbaden 1955 p 239-240]

1958

By 1958 Debre Markos was one of 27 places in Ethiopia ranked as First Class Township.

In 1957 Negus Tekle Haimanot School was one of totally 9 provincial secondary schools in Ethiopia (if Eritrea is excluded). In 1958 it had 69 male students, and in 1960 it had 221 male and 6 female students at the secondary level.

The Public Health minister suggested in November 1958 that 'Swedish Aid to Leprous Children ..' should choose to pay for a health centre in Debre Markos.

1959

Provincial Governor General of Gojjam Teklay Gizat in 1959 was Dejazmach Yemane

Hassen, and his representative at that time was Dejzmach Sebsebe Shebru. Provincial Director was Kenyazmach Ayenew Adal, and Secretary General was Balambaras Alemayehu Fanta. Sub-province Governor of Debre markos awraja was Dejzmach Haile Yesus Filate.

Provincial chief of police was Lt.Col. Bezuneh Haile (French speaking) and deputy chief was Lt.Col. Wube Desta.

Town officer of Debra Markos was Ato Tilahun Cherinet.

The Emperor visited Debre Markos in May 1959 during a tour of Gojjam. He granted a tax amnesty for the years 1948-1957.

"I drove into Debra Marcos, a little town set on a spur of the plateau. Here, the excitement over preparations for the royal visit had reached breaking point. Arches were being erected and crowds, who had come in from the surrounding country, walked along the streets with an aimless holiday air. As I tried to edge the car through them I became, for the time being, their main attraction, and they jostled and fought to look at me."

[Barbara Toy 1961 p 177-178]

1960 By 1960 a branch of the electric authority EELPA had started operation at D. Markos.

1961 25-year-old Mulattu Tsega in January 1961 won E\$ 10,000 in a Red Cross lottery and heard the news of it broadcast over Radio Addis Abeba. [News]

Artist Bekele Wubshet Demisse was born in Debre Markos in 1961 into an artistic family. He entered the Art School around 1980 and thereafter became a stage designer.

[Eth. Artists p 122-123]

In April 1961 were brought to Debre Markos, for transfer to Addis Abeba, the bodies of three men killed in a helicopter accident while surveying the Abay area for the Water Research Department. The very experienced pilot was an Englishman Alan H. Youell, the water experts were the Americans Howard J. Ferris and Earl R. Fogarty. It was the first crash of an Ethiopian Air Lines' helicopter. "Residents in the vicinity saw the helicopter flying normally when it suddenly did a loop and fell straight down to the ground."

[Eth.Herald 1961-04-21]

1964 Dejzmach Tsehayon E.Selassie was Governor in 1964. "The city gave a stagnant impression, not as bustling as Bahir Dar" writes Christina Söderling-Brydolf, who visited the town briefly.

1965 Official statistics for 1965 say that there were 3,510 owned, 2,620 rented, and 560 unspecified dwellings.

Of these 100 used piped water, 3,240 water from wells, and 3,330 from streams. No household had flush toilets, 41.1% had pit latrines, and 56.8% had none.

23% of the males and 28% of the females living there were born in the town.

Of the town population ten years of age and older, there were 5,890 men of whom 56.9% literate and 9,210 women of whom 10.7% literate.

Debre Markos is 253 (or 305?) km from A.A. "For the visitor, there is not much of interest in Debra Markos and it is not advisable to spend the night here, since there is no tourist hotel. The main section of town is east of the central square through which the main road passes."

[Welcome to Ethiopia, A.A. ca 1965 p 39]

The Imperial Highway Authority stated as proof of improvement that the travel time from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos was 9 hours in 1965, to be compared with 6 weeks in 1953.

In 1965 Debre Markos had only one industrial establishment (textile sector) in 1965.

Large grain silos were placed there (-1964-).

1966 A model house built by ESIBT on a rather central site was easily seen by people, but they did not approve of it and also found it too small. It was demolished about September-October 1966 to make room for a water reservoir.

[ESIBT News vol II 1967 no 2 p 15]

A brick kiln constructed by ESIBT around 1966 was leased to a man who went bankrupt after some time. The main problem seems to have been that it was too expensive to transport sufficiently good sand to the kiln.

[ESIBT News]

In 1966 it was decided that a contractor would be engaged to design a master plan of Debre Markos.

1967 The population of Debre Markos as counted in 1967 was 21,536 with illiteracy 69.3%. In the same year there were 48 telephone numbers, of which 17 on personal names. Nigus Tekle Haymanot School in 1968 had 456 male and 157 female students in grade 7-8, with 32 teachers of which 22 foreign. 44 students from this junior secondary school passed 8th-grade examination in 1960.

The traveller Thelma Tonkin passed there in the 1960s: "The Debra Markos which we saw from the aeroplane showed little of the tempest and pageantry which had once been there. We remembered it mostly for its grass runway, frighteningly short, whose upward slope ended at the edge of a precipice. -- A crate of chickens was taken on board together with a reluctant sheep. -- The wheels had barely left the ground before we came to the precipate edge of a gorge into which we fell a little to gain sufficient speed."

[T Tonkin, Ethiopia with love, London 1972 p 123]

1968 According to statistics published by the CSO in 1968, as much as 33% of the active population were engaged in sales. 95.4% had Amharic as their mother tongue and 97% were Christian, both of these being top figures for an Ethiopian provincial town. Only 1.4% were stated to be Muslim, and there were no Gurage.

"Part of the animosity the Gojjame felt for Kabbada /in the 1950s/ probably emanated from his being of Shawan origin. It was under another Shawan successor to Haylu, Tsahayu Enqwa-Sellase, that things came to a head between Gojjam and the central government. -- Tsahayu initiated an administration marked by iniquity and insensitivity. The population was forced to make contributions for such self-ingratiating projects as erecting an imposing statue of the emperor. -- Reversing the conciliatory approach of the emperor, he also ordered the payment of tax arrears and the registration (with fees) of firearms."

"What finally set off the Gojjam uprising of 1968 was the attempt to introduce the new agricultural income tax. -- The population resisted the tax assessors, sent the customary petitions to the emperor to reverse the order and, when no response was forthcoming, rose in rebellion. The uprising was centered in the districts of Mota and Daga Damot, and was led by veterans of the Resistance -- Thus, by a twist of irony, Tsahayu, himself a renowned patriot, found himself pitted against his fellow patriots."

"But matters soon went out of his control. -- Committees were successively set up to try and placate the rebels, and, on the recommendation of one of the committees, Tshahayu was transferred to Kafa province, and a general amnesty was proclaimed. When the revolt continued in spite of these concession, the government launched a military campaign involving the army, police and *nach labash*. By the end of 1968, the rebellion was suppressed. But the peasants had not lost their cause: not only was the new tax abandoned, but also tax arrears from 1950 to 1968 were waived. Many government officials who had not been over-popular were transferred."

[Bahru Zewde 1991 p 217-218]

Governor General of Gojjam in the 1960s was Dejazmach Tsehay Inqu Selassie. During his time there were disturbances or even revolt in Gojjam. In accordance with a new taxation law tax collectors were sent. The population reacted violently. In May 1968 five sub-provinces revolted against the central government, and this revolt continued still by mid-1969. The Governor General forced the tax collectors to continue. After a while he mobilised the Territorial Army. Peasants gathered by the thousands in Debre Markos and said that if the Emperor did not stop land measuring and tax collection, the Abay bridge would be blown up. The Emperor gave order that 900 soldiers of the Federal Army should enter Gojjam, but at the same time tax collection was halted. The hated Governor General was recalled.

[Pleijel et al, Etiopien Kenya ..., Stockholm 1971 p 54-55]

A primary school by name Indimata Yesus (in D. Markos awraja) was possibly located in the town(?). In 1968 it had 428 boys and 233 girls in grades 1-5,

with 10 male teachers and one female.

Nigus Tekle Haymanot primary school in 1968 had 1048 boys and 770 girls, with 26 male and 3 female teachers.

Nigus Tekle Haymanot secondary school had 77 (out of 80) students in grade 12 who sat for school leaving certificate in 1968, but only 5 of them passed.

The governor of Gojjam 1960-1968, Tsehayu Inqua-Sillase, turned to some ex-shifita as his immediate subordinates and enforcers, and particularly to the former bandit Damesse Alamayeraw, now elevated *fitawrari*, whose militia fleeced peasants. Damesse was a primary target of the rebels in Gojjam in 1968.

[13th Int. Conf. of Ethiopian Studies I, 1997 p 74]

The construction contract for a branch office of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia was signed on 3 August 1968.

1969 Even the official handbook of Ethiopia printed in 1969 says that Debre Markos "has little to offer the tourist and no good hotel". It is on a plain surrounded by eucalyptus. A new post office building near the main road was in operation by 1969 and was a round building of red brickwork. Spelling used by the post office was DEBRE MARCOS around 1974 and DEBRE MARKOS around 1983.

When the Emperor visited Debre Markos in May 1969 he gave a lunch for prominent people at the palace and announced that those who had not paid taxes during 1964-1967 would be excused and would not be required to pay tax arrears. The Emperor also inaugurated a new building of the Commercial Bank and an assembly hall in the Tekle Haymanot secondary school. He also granted amnesty or prison term reductions to 17 prisoners.

[Addis Reporter, May 30, 1969 p 11-12]

1970s The most impressive structure is the triumphal arch - *Yenetsanet Ber* (Gate of Freedom) - which dominates a formless square. It commemorates Haile Selassie's historical re-entry into the Ethiopian highlands in 1941.

[P B Henze (1977)2001 p 249]

Population 31,842 in 1975, which was 10,000 more than at a previous census in 1967. Around 8 February 1975 it was said that three powerful landowners and former members of Parliament had collected several thousand of the rural population in Gojjam, around Debre Markos, to make resistance against the new government.

[News]

The reporter Damblain joined *zemecha* students on a truck going northwards in late January 1975:

"A Debre-Markos, capitale de la province du Godjam, nous nous arrêtaâmes pour déjeuner sur la place centrale de la ville. Quelques enfants vinrent nous voir, mais les adultes demeurèrent invisibles. Notre présence, manifestement, n'était pas désirée. Quelques étudiants allèrent boire un *tedj* dans un café proche. Aussitôt les clients s'en allèrent. Le patron de l'établissement, un quinquagénaire /Ayelew/ à la barbe grise, m'expliqua que des incidents avaient eu lieu la veille: 'L'armée est intervenue pour protéger un groupe d'étudiants qui cherchait à prendre contact avec des paysans, à une vingtaine de kilomètres d'ici. L'affrontement a été évité de justesse. Vous verrez vite que cette arrivée des étudiants dans nos campagnes n'est pas populaire. L'évêque du Godjam et les curés de paroisse se déchaînent actuellement contre les révolutionnaires d'Addis-Abeba. Ils disent que les étudiants incarnent le diable, qu'ils viennent pour voler la terre aux paysans.'"

"Et voici que les étudiants viennent ici leur expliquer que la terre doit être cultivée collectivement, que le droit de propriété est une injustice. Les paysans répondent en prenant leurs fourches et chassent les étudiants."

[J-M Damblain, *La tragédie --*, Paris 1977 p 138-139]

Population 35,818 as estimated in January 1978.

By around 1978 there were petrol filling stations of Mobil, Shell, and Total.

1980s Population 44,410 as counted in 1987, more than a doubling in twenty years.

1990s Population 41,138 as estimated in 1993.

The OAU Observer Group of 81 members were represented at the polling stations of

Debre Markos and eleven other major towns at the elections on 7 May 1995.

"/From the moment I disembarked from the bus/ I attracted a trail of giggling, yelling and swearing which only abated when I left the next morning. Why mince words? Debre Markos is one of only two places in Ethiopia where I sensed genuine hostility -- The above reservation aside, Debre Markos is the largest and best-equipped town between Addis and Bahir Dar, and it remains a convenient place to break the journey. -- After I wrote this, I met two Israelis -- who had loved Debre Markos; they found it to be very friendly, and said that the church was among the most attractive they had visited in Ethiopia."

"There is plenty of accommodation in Debre Markos, and the generally high standards and low prices go some way to compensating for the town's atmosphere. Top of the range is the Tourist Hotel, a private establishment which has large rooms of government hotel standard with hot showers and toilets. -- Best of the cheapies is the Abay Hotel -- It's exceptional value for money. The Mari Zenib Hotel is an above par dollar-a-night affair with large, bright upstairs rooms and a communal cold shower."

[Bradt 1995(1998) p 261-263]

"You will also find some small private hotels in Debre Markos -- which is also served by Ethiopian Airlines three times a week. Originally known as Mankorar (meaning 'Cold Place' in Ge'ez), Debre Markos is the capital of Gojjam."

"King Tekle Haymanot's church of Markos is the town's principal church, and is well worth a visit. It contains pale but beautiful paintings, some of them depicting the king himself, as well as many illustrating scenes of biblical and other religious history."

[Camerapix 1995 p 81]

Around 1997 there were domestic EAL flights to Addis Abeba and Bahir Dar.

Unpaved runway, length about 1375 m.

2000 "There is not much of interest in Debre Markos, but as the capital of Gojjam, it's well furnished with hotels and restaurants."

"Decent hotels include the basic Nehasie 30 Hotel -- Up a notch, the Menkorer Hotel has rooms for Birr 10 (Birr 30 with shower)."

[Lonely planet 2000 p 163-164]

2001 Population about 60,600 in 2001, making Debre Markos the 13th largest town in Ethiopia.

2003 Capacity of the hotels was Kelem Pension 14 rooms, Menkorer 28 rooms,

Ras Dashen 26 rooms, Wegagen 19 rooms, Yenegat Kokeb 22 rooms.

Ambasel Trading House PLC for cotton export etc. has a branch also in D. Markos.

2004 Missionaries of Charity Sisters, founded by Mother Teresa in India, came to Ethiopia in 1973. Among their 15 branches by 2004 was one in kebele 11 of Debre Markos, with a home for sick and dying destitute, a mother and child care unit, and a feeding centre.

There were congregation members in 2004 by names Crispin, Avenita, Aelred, Amelita, and Philip, within the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

[www.ecs.org.et]

2005 In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the constituency published as Debiremarkos had 44 polling stations and 38,606 registered voters of whom 84% cast their votes.

Dominating party was CUD with 19,620 votes and candidate Ato Dereje Atinafu Dagachew. Far behind was EPRDF with 7,626 votes and candidate Ato Webishet Lengerih Mebirate. The UEDF party received 449 votes and two independent candidates 362 and 285 votes. The remaining 4,201 votes are not explained.

[www.electionsethiopia.org]

After the national elections there were student demonstrations in Debre Markos and other towns in early June 2005. Human Rights Watch obtained reports of mass arrests of students by police. Many of those detained were subsequently released, but not all.

[AddisTribune 2005/06/17]

picts P H G Powell-Cotton, A sporting trip ..., London 1902

p 210 market-place;

F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 344 Ras Besabeh,

347 his warriors, 349-351 paintings inside the Markos church;

C F Rey, In the country of ..., London 1927 p 130,138 escort, *durgo* and portrait of Ras Hailu with daughter;  
 Negus anklagar, Sthlm 1936 p 32 treasury of Ras Hailu;  
 Gli annali ..., anno I vol II /Roma Aug 1938/ p 446-447[17]  
 local nobilities at a visit of General Teruzzi;  
 Ethiopia Observer vol XII /1969/ no 2 p 114-115 crowd of Patriots photographed immediately after the Italian surrender in 1941;  
 C Sandford, Ethiopia under Haile Selassie, London 1946 p 86-87[11] Patriots escorting the Emperor at his entry;  
 P Hartlmaier, Amba Ras, Frankfurt am Main 1953 pl 67,68 Ras Hailu.

map urban map 1:10,000 by Mapping & Geog. Inst. November 1961

HDS42 **Debre Markos : Enerata** (Inerata)

7 km north of Debre Markos town.

An elementzary school building was constructed in 1970 Eth.Cal. (1977-78 Greg.Cal.), with Swedish assistance through ESBU.

HDS31 **Debre Markos awraja** (centre = Debre Markos) 10/37 [Gz Ad]  
 10°15'/37°40'

Population 206,000 according to a survey in 1965, with 2,000 more females than males. Illiteracy was 94.9%.

Teff was clearly the most important crop. The holdings were 87% owned and 8% rented (and the rest mixed). There were about 200,000 cattle in the awraja. Kenyazmach Makonnen Kassa was awraja governor (August 1968-).

HEC89 **Debre Maryam** (Debra Mariam) 11/37 [Gz Ch Gu]  
 11°37'/37°23' 1784 m

Coordinates would give map code HEC88.

Small island, with ancient name Debre Sakon, near where the Abay flows out of lake Tana.

1905 The Rosen party of Germans passed there in early April 1905. Dr. Flemming wanted to see and study old manuscripts but the book does not tell how this succeeded.

[F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 377-380]

1930s /Cheesman in 1933:/ "The priest said that the Debra Mariam church was founded during the reign of Amda Seyon (1314-1344) -- There is no doubt that it was once a famous monastery, but its glory has departed. -- Iyasu I (1682-1706) ordered the principal monks of Debra Libanos and Tadban and others to go to the island of Debra Mariam to discuss the faith and study the scriptures. The church is built of red rock laid in mud mixed with straw. The original church had been constructed with lime mortar, but this had been burnt down during the period of the Walloch rulers /1777-1855/, and some of the books were destroyed. The church was rebuilt by King Theodore II /1855-1868/ and is still in good condition. -- The Mazgab /Register/ says that it was first called Debra Sakon -- and that Amda Seyon gave Debra Mariam fifty subordinate churches -- after the Emperor Baeda Mariam was christened there he begged his father, Zara Yakob (1434-1468), to have it made a *gadam* /monastery/ -- it has fallen from its former glory, has no churches subordinate to it, and has become a Government church /under the Governor in Debre Tabor/ -- Debra Mariam is in Bagemdir, but Shimabo, the next island, is in Gojjam. -- The church contains two metal bells, one old and roughly cast, the other presented /in 1920/ by Mr Grabham of the Grabham and Black Mission."  
 [Cheesman 1936]

"This island lies on the southeast corner of the lake, near the mouth of the outlet of the Blue Nile. -- /The church was rebuilt by Tewodros II/ but is now in poor condition. -- A legend tells that when Abuna Eostateos (Taddeus), the founder, first went to the island the waters divided and allowed him to pass on foot."

"The church possesses one of the oldest illuminated manuscripts found as yet in Ethiopia, the Gospels, with four outstanding paintings of the evangelists writing the Gospels. There is also a richly illuminated manuscript of the Four Gospels from the time of Emperor Fasil (1632-1667), an outstanding document of Ethiopian fine art." [Jäger 1965 p 73; Welcome to Ethiopia, A.A. ca 1965 p 199]

- 1970s The island is flat and almost totally cultivated. Men were mending fish-traps in a small village. "The churchyard was flat, like a large park, but the building itself was disappointing." The walls of the *qiddist* are of red stone and the *maqdas* is solidly built, but the roof thatch was in very poor condition. Henze was shown the church's Gospels, supposed to be among the oldest in Ethiopia.  
Saint Tadewos founded the church early in the 1300s. It was rebuilt during the reign of Emperor Tewodros (1855-1868), "but will need rebuilding again soon if its manuscripts and paintings are not to be endangered by the decay of the roof."  
[P B Henze, Ethiopian journeys, (USA 1977)A.A. 2001 p 262-263]  
"Close to the eastern side of the lake is the island of Debre Maryam. Legend tells that when Abuna Thadewos arrived here, the waters separating the island from the shore opened beneath his feet, and he was thus able to find refuge on the island. The church was built on the instructions of Negus Amda Seyon in the early part of the 13th century. It was reconstructed in the second half of the 19th century by Theodoros II, and was home to many monks.  
It was here in 1688 that Iyasou the Great met the church dignitaries and senior monks to discuss the matter of the Union of Natures of Christ - an issue which gave rise to strong divisions -- Today, the church is little more than a hut, but contains some precious relics including an illustrated manuscript from the time of Fasilades, as well as several bells, crosses, and painted panels."  
[Aubert 1999]
- picts O A Jäger, Aethiopische Miniaturen, Berlin 1957 pl 1  
Evangelist Markos, colour photo from MS of the D.Maryam church;  
C Monty, Ethiopie .., Paris 1968 p 74 illuminated gospel.
- |        |  |       |              |
|--------|--|-------|--------------|
| HED71  | Debre Maryam 11°33'/37°37' 1955 m  | 11/37 | [Gz]         |
| HED99c | Debre Maryam (Debra Mariam) c3500 m<br>(with thermal spring)<br>(centre in 1964 of Amumo Gemis sub-district)   | 11/38 | [Ad Gu]      |
| HEF53  | Debre Maryam (Debra Mariam)<br>(at north shore of lake, recorded in 1841)  | 11/39 | [Ha]         |
| HFE37  | <b>Debre Maryam</b> (Debra Mariam)<br>13°53'/39°06' 1684 m<br>/probably this Debre Maryam?:/<br>"Dabra Maryam is a well-known monastery in Tigre, in the province of Gar'alta, valley of the river Takkaze. Its scriptorium was founded by Absadi, one of the first disciples of St Eustathius, and followed the rules of the other Eustathian convents of Northern Ethiopia. Monks of Dabra Maryam are quoted in the MSS. Vaticanus Aethiopicus 38 (a monk Mekha Maryam living in Cairo in 1541) and Vaticanus Aethiopicus 66 (a deacon Ya'qob living in Rome in the Ethiopian College of St Stephen in the middle of the sixteenth century)."<br>[Journal of Semitic Studies 1964 no 1 note 4 p 77-78] | 13/39 | [Gz Gu]      |
| HEC59  | <b>Debre May</b> (Debra Mai, Dabra May)<br>11°22'/37°23' 2138, 2340/2380 m<br>Coordinates would give map code HEC58.<br>With fort and small church.<br>Within a radius of 10 km there are at km<br>6SE Shulluda (Sciulluda) (village)<br>8SE Abola Negus (hill) 2615 m   | 11/37 | [Gz WO 18 x] |



- 9S Manchil (Mancil) (village)  
 7SW Ding (village)  
 3W "fort" on map (ruin of palace?)  
 5W Arega (church)  
 6NW Feres Woga (Feres Uoga) (village)  
 8NW Gubberit (village)  
 9NW Kweskwam (Quosquam) (village)  
 9N Weg (Ueg) (village)  
 9N Gafat (village)  
 9NE Waalia (Ualia) (village)  
 10NE Koreng (Coreng) (village)

Area with a small church. In the nearby area of Ivara (Ibaro?) there are remains of a battlemented palace of Susenyos which seem anterior to the Gondarine period. A little to the west are the remains of a palace of Fasilidas.

[Guida 1938]

In a letter to Hormuzd Rassam of 14 March 1866 Emperor Tewodros says that Cameron had been received at his camp at Debre May.

[Acta aethiopica II p 284]

**Debre May: Abola Negus** (mountain area) 2615 m

A volcanic cone, an outstanding feature of the landscape. [Cheesman 1936]

pict F Rosen, Eine deutsche .., Leigzig 1907 p 372 mountain, acacia

- HFF30 Debre Mear (Dabra Maar, Debra Mahar) 13/39 [x Gu Gz]  
 13°52'/39°22' 2156/2184 m, peak at 13°52'/39°23'  
 (with rock-hewn churches), see under Geralta churches - northern
- HED99 Debre Medhani (D. Medahani) 11°43'/38°22' 2951 m 11/38 [+ WO Gz]  
 see under Nefas Mewcha
- HFE.. Debre Medhanit (Dabra M.) 14/39 [+ x]  
 The legendary monk and saint Abiya Egzi (late 1200s-early 1300s) is said to have had his main activity at a monastery Debre Medhanit which has completely disappeared. It was not very far from present-day Inticho. An immense rock mass in the middle of green fields has ancient graves cut into it. There is in its neighbourhood a square-shaped church dedicated to Abiya Egzi, which no doubt is at the site of the vanished monastery.  
 [J Doresse, L'empire .., Paris 1957 vol II p 88]
- HFE61 Debre Menkol Gedam (monastery) 14/38 [Gz]  
 14°11'/38°33', west of Aksum
- ?? Debre Meraf (historically recorded) ../.. [Pa]  
 1300s "Further Christian missionary activity in Damot also took place at this time /of 'Amdä Seyon 1312-1342/. Abunä Ya'qob, the Patriarch, appointed one of Täklä Haymanot's followers, Abba Adhani Egzi', to take charge of this work. -- Another Ethiopian missionary, the aforesaid Abba Iyosyas, is reported to have founded a monastery in the area, by name Däbrä Me'raf." [Pankhurst 1997 p 87-88]
- debre meshwae* (Geez?) place of sacrifice
- ?? Debre Meshwae (historically recorded) ../.. [Pa]  
 1470s Eskender (1478-1494) "-- around 1478 assembled all his troops so as to march down into the Adäl country -- On his return march he was, however, pursued by a much larger Adäl army, which killed or took prisoner many of his men. The Emperor only escaped, it is said, through the help of the angels, after which he built a church called Däbrä Meshwa'e, or Place of Sacrifice." [Pankhurst 1997 p 121-122]
- ?? **Debre Mewi** ../.. [x]  
 The battle of Ayshal ended the rule of Ras Ali, and led to the coronation of Emperor Tewodros in 1855.  
 When this event took place Taytu (the future empress), her sister, her brothers and her

mother were at the monastery of Debre Mewi in Gojjam, where her mother's second husband was the *aleqa* (lay administrator). Taytu's brothers, Wele and Alula, may have been warriors but they became prisoners at Mekdela about 1857. There they became acquainted with the young prince of Shewa, Menilek, who was also a captive. Menilek asked them if they had a sister; he was told she was in a monastery with her nurse. Taytu as quite young had several marriages, possibly one to a *Janterar*, a title reserved for the man who guarded the fortress of Ambasel. Emperor Yohannes IV imprisoned the Janterar some time after Tewodros's death in 1868. Taytu went home to her mother in Debre Mewi, "to succor mind and body".

It is a fair assumption that, since her stepfather administered the monastery at Debre Mewi, Taytu would have acquired her adeptness at law and theology there, though wherever she lived she must have pursued an education. -- According to Antonelli, Taytu was drawn from Debre Mewi to Shewa by the death of her brother, Alula, in about 1881. Another source says that she went to the court of Emperor Yohannes to visit her aunt -- All sources agree that Taytu married Kenyazmach Zikargatchew, the brother of Bafena, consort of Menilek, in 1881/2 -- He beat Taytu, and she left him, taking a great deal of property and many servants, on the pretext that she was going to visit her mother /still at Debre Mewi?/, but instead, took refuge with her brother Wele in Yejju."

[C Prouty, Empress Taytu ..., 1986 p 35, 39-40]

HEC55 Debre Mikael (Debra Micael) (church) 11/37 [+ WO]

debre mitmak: *mitmaq* (Coptic?) a font kept outside a church, as an unbaptized person is not permitted to enter the church

HDU03 **Debre Mitmak Maryam** (Debre Mit'mak' M.) 10/37 [Gz]  
(Debra Metmac Mariam, Dabra Metmaq) (church) 10/37 [Gu Pa]

10°42'37°50' 2940 m, see also under Sela Dingay, cf Aguba

1440s "Almost as soon as he came to the throne the king /Zara Yaqob/ visited Aksum for his coronation. On his way back he founded a number of churches and certain monasteries such as Metmaq, which he set up in Tegulat, his place of residence, in 1441, naming it after the famous Egyptian convent whose destruction had just been reported."

[J Dorese, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 120-121]

When Zara Yaqob was in Tegulet in 1441 and news arrived that the Muslims had destroyed the monastery of Mitmaq in Egypt, he ordered that a church of that name should be built in Ethiopia with the name of Debre Mitmaq, and that it should be granted land in the district of Tegulet.

[Pankhurst, .. Chronicles 1967 p 36]

1450s Zara Yakob capped off his efforts to produce harmony in the church in 1450 by convening a council of the clergy which he presided over at his new church of Debre Mitmaq in Tegulet. This brought to an end several decades of strife with the church.

[P B Henze, Layers of time, London 2000 p 71]

(The Debre Mitmak of Zara Yakob may not be the same as the one at 10/37 above, because HDM82 Tegulet is at 09/39.)

The missionary Anna-Lena Röstin visited a church Debre Mitmak in the early 1930s, coming northward from Debre Birhan. It was a small church on a hill, with old-looking trees and moss on them. She was told that the original church had been destroyed by Ahmed Grañ and left in ruins until the 1700s when it was rebuilt by Ras Wossen Seged. She met one very old priest Aleqa Kifle who had a book with his relatives during 700 years written, with Zera Yaqob as his first ancestor. He said that Saint Mary used to come down to Debre Mitmak often in former times but that people had become so godless that she refused to show up any more. The continued road was a one-day march to Sela Dingay.

[A-L Röstin, Arvet i främlingars hand, Sthlm 1936 p 30-32]

?? Debre Mota (monastery in Gojjam) ..../.. [x]  
cf HED24 Mota

HDT59c	<b>Debre Negodgwad</b> (Debra Naguadguad) (Debre Negwodgwad) (monastery on island in lake Hayk, first known from late 1400s) Church built by Emperor Zera Yaqob (1434-1468). "He gave the priests of Däbrä Nāgwodgwad 'vast land' so that they could observe the commemoration of St. Mary and of his parents, whom he buried there." [Crummey 2000 p 31] The monastery was founded by Zärä Ya'eqob. His father Dawit and mother 'Egzi'e Kebra were buried there, and later also Zera Yaqob himself who died on 26 August 1468. Ba'eda Maryam went there to commemorate his father on the fortieth day after his death. Na'od (1494-1508), however, caused the remains of Zera Yaqob to be transferred to Dega Estifanos in lake Tana in 1496-97. King Ba'eda Maryam went to Debre Negodgwad at Christmas time (in 1468 or later?) and there was much ceremony and many lamps and candles. The King's residence in that area was called Debre Zeyit. Prior of the monastery then or a little later was Abune Endreyas. [Chronicle of Ba'eda Maryam] When Emperor Zera Yaqob had conquered Sultan Badlai in the plains at Awash in 1445, his lance, shield, parasol and other rich objects were sent to Debre Negodgwad to be kept there and displayed in processions. [J Doresse 1957 vol II p 132, 163]	10/39	[x Ch 20]
HED60	Debre Nigist (D.Neghist, Devraneghesti) (village and mountain area)	11/37	[+ WO It]
H...	Debre Paraqlitos (D. Peraqlitos), see Atronsa Maryam Medieval monastery in the north, between Agula and Hawzen?	../..	[x]
HEK10	Debre Sahel (Debra Sehel), see Tana Cherkos 'Sehel' is a Geez word with a meaning related to 'forgiveness'.	11/37	[n]
HDF26	Debre Sahil 08°23'/39°56' 2706 m	08/39	[Gz]
??	Debre Sahin (historically recorded church) cf Enzoraja "Zär'a Ya'qob /1433-1468/, who had close relations with the Prior of Yäläbasha in Fätägär, on one occasion visited the area, and proceeded to Enzoraja where he erected the church of Däbrä Sahin." [Pankhurst 1997 p 130]	../..	[Pa]
??	Debre Selalo A map in 1814 by Henry Salt records this place south-east of lake Tana.	11/37	[18]
HE...	<b>Debre Selam</b> (in Gondar awraja) The Catholic Mission primary school in 1968 had 282 boys and 244 girls, with 12 teachers of which 2 foreign. (There is also a Debre Selam Kidist Maryam church in Washington DC for Orthodox Ethiopians.)	12/37?	[Ad]
HFF34c	Debre Selam (with rock-hewn church Mikael) see under Atsbi	13/39	[x]
JDA13	Debre Selam 08°15'/40°08' 1451 m Centre in the 1980s of Gololcha wereda/?/ in Arba Gugu awraja.	08/40	[Gz]
??	Debre Semayt (Däbrä Säma'et) In Gojjam, with important ruins from the 1700s.	../..	[n]
HFE16	Debre Sibhat Le'ab 13°44'/38°59' (with church Silase) north of Abiy Adi	13/38	[Gz]
H... pict	Debre Sina (Debersina, in Borena) A Dejene, Environment, famine .. USA (Lynne Rieuner) 1990 p 1 landscape.	../..	[n]
HCT73	Debre Sina (Debrassina, Mount Sinai)	07/38	[Gz Gu]

07°54'/38°46' 1636/1846 m

Island near the southern shore of lake Ziway, within Adami Tulu wereda; concerning its Laqi inhabitants, see under Galila. It is a small and rather low island.

There were 30 inhabitants around 1938.

Around 1950 there were about 40 decrepit houses around the neglected church Maryam. The population was estimated to be some 50-60 individuals, and many had moved to the mainland.

[E Haberland 1963 p 650]

1980s Yohannis was twenty-one. Eight years earlier he had left his family in Wellega and come to Ziway. After having finished school he learnt to be a carpenter. The EEC sponsored a proposed fishery project and a German came for a month to teach Yohannis to build boats.

The island of Galila slid past, deserted but for a herd of wild cattle. Stands of papyrus lined its shore. Further away was Debre Sina. Just before the revolution in 1974, only a few families remained on the island. Now, Yohannis told, an easier life on shore had drawn away all but one old woman ascetic.

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 140]

HED.. Debre Sina (centre in 1964 of Ashemen sub-district) 11/37? [Ad]

Debre Sina (in Borena awraja):

Enrollment in the Environmental Education Project at the Debre Sina Community Skill Training Centre (built with Swedish assistance) was 55 in 1985/86 and 66 in 1986/87.

HDM84 **Debre Sina** (Debra Sina, Dabra S.) 09/39 [Gz Gu WO x]

MS: 09°40'/39°40' = HDM63, 2919 m

Gz: 09°51'/39°46' = HDM84, 2660 m

Distance 190 km from Addis Abeba.

With church Medhane Alem.

Centre in 1964 of Menz & Yifat awraja.

Within a radius of 10 km there are at km

7S Bracho (Bracio) (area)

7W Gur Selassie (with small church) peak 3090 m

4NW Termaber (mountain) with pass and "Mussolini tunnel"

8NE Wajja (Uaggia) (church)

geol Interbedded tuffs are not uncommon in central Ethiopia and are thickly developed at Debre Sina where they are cut by trachytic dykes.

[Mohr, Geology 1961 p 129]

1860s Ras Baryau Gebre Tsadiq was defeated there in September 1867 by Kasa Mercha (the later Yohannes IV) - but at which Debre Sina?

1935 In late 1935 foreign journalists travelled with the intention to reach Dessie.

At Termaber: "-- we came suddenly and without warning - for the road was recent and not yet marked on any published map - upon an enormous escarpment -- Down this awful cliff the track fell in a multitude of hairpin bends -- Our Harari driver gave a sigh of despair -- /Waugh and someone more/ decided to go down on foot. It was a stiff descent -- When we reached more tolerable ground we waited for the lorry, which presently arrived, the driver speechless but triumphant."

"-- we were visited by heralds from the local governor, Dedjasmach Matafara, who was living near by in temporary quarters, to ask us our business. -- The Dedjasmach was a very old man, a veteran of the first battle of Adowa, corpulent, ponderous in his movements, with unusually dark skin and a fine white beard. He occupied a series of huts behind a well-made stockade." After having been given a good meal by the governor, they resumed their journey.

[E Waugh, When the going was good, London 1946 p 307-309]

1938 Developed by the Italians as a centre for rest and supplies, with *Residenza del Boronà*, post, telephone, infirmary, Albergo Bologna with restaurant and 16 rooms, Albergo Gondrand, restaurants named La Toscana and Le Viole. The *Casa del Fascio* in masonry

was designed by R. Guglielmi.

On the same side of the road as the Casa del Fascio was a small but monumental cemetery for Italian soldiers and workers who died in the war. There was from earlier time/?/ an Ethiopian orthodox church Debre Sina. Above the village/town there are many road curves, see below notes on Termaber.

[Guida 1938]

Post office of the Italians was opened on 14 June 1937 (or 9 May?). Its cancellations read DEBRA SINA (AMARA) but the town was transferred to *Governo dello Scioa* on 1 September 1938 so then the text was modified to DEBRA SINA \* SCIOA.

[Philatelic source]

1940s There was a brief engagement at Debre Sina around 13 April 1941, and after that the South African Brigade could move quickly on to Kombolcha.

[R N Thompson 1987 p 159]

Artist Tadesse Mamecha Gebre-Tsadiq was born in Debre Sina in 1941. He attended the Art School in Addis Abeba 1958-1962 and then stayed for seven years in the U.S.S.R. from 1963. His works span from statues to greeting cards, and he also became teacher at the Art School.

[Eth.Artists p 246-247]

After the liberation, the Ethiopian post office was to be opened in 1944.

When Axel B Svensson of the Swedish Mission BV passed Debre Sina in November 1947 it was a checkpoint where passports must be shown and stamped. As the police officer could not read or write, translation was made for him by missionary Anton Jönsson. On their return trip the Swedes were short of time and passed the checkpoint without even stopping!

[Svensson, *Det återuppståndna ...*, 1948 p 108, 111-112]

1950s In 1954 only the Governor Office seems to have had a telephone.

By 1958 Debre Sina was one of 27 places in Ethiopia ranked as First Class Township.

Sub-province Governor in Menz & Yifat awraja in 1959 was Fitawrari Tesfaye Inku Selassie.

1960s A mild earth tremor occurred in June 1961 and the telephone connection of Debre Sina seems to have been cut off for a while.

[News; see Karakore concerning the most damaged area]

In 1962 the connection eastwards to Gewani was described by the Highway Authority as a "dry weather road".

The population of Debre Sina as counted in 1967 was 3,513. There were 13 telephone numbers, of which four by personal names: Ambachew Dahne, Aklog Ketsela, Shewa Ferahu Kidanie, Kenyazmach Tefferra Wolde Michael. There was a health centre, education office, telecommunications pay station, governor's office, police station, and prison.

1980s Late 1984: "At the foot of the pass a decaying town leaned against the mountain, killed by beggars -- They swarmed everywhere -- crawling about the road, or just lying inert in the ditches and drains. The stronger bartered rags and sticks in what was left of the market, while here and there whole families gathered in corners waiting for the end."

[M F Harris, *Breakfast in hell*, New York 1987 p 226-227]

The reporter R. Kapuscinski visited Debre Sina during the famine period. He found all kinds of goods for sale at the square but none at the market place. Many people more or less dying were lying on the outskirts.

1990s At the Medhane Alem church in Debre Sina in early December 1994 was buried the important Amharic writer Dannyachew Werqu. His parents had moved there around 1940 when Dannyachew was four years old and continued to stay there, while Dannyachew moved to Addis Abeba for education ending with a BA degree.

[R K Molvaer 1997 p 290-291, 300]

In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the Debre Sina constituency had 91 polling stations and 67,831 registered voters of whom 82% cast their votes.

Dominating party was CUD with 32,386 votes and candidate Ato Mamush Seife Erigete. Second was EPRDF with 14,535 votes and candidate Ato Ayenew Tgabe Belay. The remaining 8,712 votes are not explained.

[www.electionsethiopia.org]

### **Debre Sina: Termaber**

A church Enda Giyorgis is situated 9 km from Termaber.

1840s "-- for the last few miles to the top of the Turmáber pass, neither village nor cultivation is to be seen. -- From the foot -- the road leads across the Telúnko, close to Debra Séna, a small eminence covered as with an inverted bowl, by a dense, cabbage-shaped clump of junipers, concealing St. George's church - a celebrated shrine for the performance of vows and orisons, which is visited from great distances. Hence the route winds to the bottom of a deep wooded dell, rich in botanical specimens, where the clear stream of the Telúnko is again crossed --"

[W C Harris, The highlands .., vol II, London 1944 p 307-308]

1936 The force led by cadets and their Swedish teacher Captain Tamm found drivers in Debre Birhan for their lorries and arrived at night to Termaber. "The following morning /22 April/ Tamm and Kifle visited Tsehafe Tazaz Haile: red-eyed, a beard, a coat, a raincoat, and black shoes with holes cut for the small toes, a detail which confirmed the Swede in his judgement - a bureaucrat. The position was not as strong as Tamm had foreseen; the slopes were steep but not impassable. The Tsehafe Tazaz had dug the road up but, ignorant of the most elementary military rules, was unable to cover the 'obstacle' he had created with fire. Below, the local village chief -- had refused to allow the road to be blown, alleging that this would cause a local revolt. -- Sending out patrols Tamm discovered five more tracks that came up from below and could be used to outflank his position."

"For the last Ethiopian defenders of the capital -- it had been a static time in a confined position. In those six days the situation had, if anything, deteriorated on Ad Termaber. Italian planes had flown over but not shown much interest. That was encouraging. But then 45 men and all the sentinels had deserted during the night, and the Tsehafe Tazaz Haile had left to 'inspect' Ankober in the rear. -- Bouveng and the two vital battalions had not arrived, and the only way of contacting Addis Ababa was by the telephone office at Debra Berhan."

"On 28 April there were reports of two enemy columns only 40 miles away. -- In the evening there was shooting in the foothills below. Negga Haile Selassie from his advanced post in the valley reported that Italians in 100 lorries were making a bridge over the little river -- Next morning the Italians had bridged the stream, and the Geraz in the village down below /Grazmach in Debre Sina?/, whom Tamm suspected of treachery, had locked himself in his house. -- To hold the Pass there were only a handful of cadets, two companies badly reduced both in number and morale by desertion, and two or three hundred peasants commanded by Tsehafe Tazaz Haile's son, Lij Ayele. Tamm was faced with a dilemma: to stay, hoping that Bouveng would arrive -- or to go and find out what was happening -- Both decisions were dubious. He took the more dubious of the two, he went."

"Badoglio's mechanized column had halted at the foot of Ad Termaber -- Gallina and his veteran askaris of the III Brigade were ordered to put in the attack. The inhabitants of the village down below guided them up the different mule tracks. It was quickly over; no Thermopylae, for the lorries were there ready for the retreat, and the handful of cadets were at their first battle, not their last. One cadet and fifty men were lost, and so the Italians occupied, almost without resistance, the second of the great mountain passes that stood between Asmara and Addis Ababa."

[Mockler 1984 p 126,130-131]

1941 On 13 April 1941, Brigadier Pienaar's South African Brigade travelled to the Mussolini Tunnel, which they had expected to be blocked by demolitions. Such was not the case, as the Italians were content to leave this monument to their road building expertise intact. It turned out to be an excellent air raid shelter. Just beyond the tunnel was a roadblock

which was quickly cleared.

[R N Thompson, Liberation .. 1987 p 159]

1960s "At 177 kms. /from A.A./ there is a good preview of the sheer escarpment of the Rift. At this point the road descends a long hill, goes over a bridge and curves to the north. Just past the bridge the hill to the east splits, and if one walks from the road, the Rift Valley will be seen far below. This point is known as Baboon Gorge because of the great troops of baboons that live on the cliffs.

A few kilometres farther on, there are two new roads off to the left. The first goes to Sala Dingay (24 kms), the second to Malale (84 kms). A new road to the right goes over the peak of Mt. Termaber rather than through the tunnel, but it is not intended for regular traffic. The main road passes through a large tunnel (587 m long, 8 m wide, 6.3 m high) --

"

[Welcome to Ethiopia, A.A. ca 1965 p 62]

1980s Late 1984, coming from Debre Birhan: "The tunnel was half a mile of unlit track filled with a deep layer of loose gravel so that the truck swayed and slid like a small boat in a swell. Midway two donkeys lay side by side in the half light, their swollen bodies shaped to the smoothness of stranded whales. The gravel was deepest there, slowing us near the stench. In the sunlight just beyond the exit two young soldiers laughed inside a guard post of rough breeze blocks surrounded by a concertina of barbed wire. Armed sentries patrolled the narrow ledges and paths immediately above. If a starving man climbed the eight thousand feet from the valley below he would be turned back here."

[M F Harris, Breakfast in hell, New York 1987 p 226]

picts V Tamm, I tjänst hos Negus, Sthlm 1936 p 283 Termaber, 285 sketch plan, 287 road, 289,291 views from a distance; Gli annali .., anno I vol II /Roma Aug 1938/ p 446-447[15] inauguration of the tunnel by General Teruzzi; A B Svensson, Abessinien under italienarna, Sthlm 1939 p 73 air view of road, 74 Italian-built monumental cross; I Ambjörn, Etiopien lockade, Sthlm 1949 p 241 tunnel entrance; C Sandford, The Lion of Judah .., London 1955 at p 37 view down the gorge; A M Rubin, I Etiopien, Sthlm 1957 p 89 view down the gorge; Aethiopien, München (Terra magica) (1958)1963 pl 20 highest road curve outside the tunnel; J Doresse, Ethiopia, (1956) London 1959 p 107[54] wide view of mountains; H Neubacher, Die Festung .., 1959 p 203(pl 35) the gorge; Addis Reporter 1969 no 42 p 8 tunnel opening /on A.A. side?/; R Wahlborg, Mina tio år .., Sthlm 1975 p 96 mountains, tunnel; J H Spencer, Ethiopia at bay, USA 1984 p 56 mountains.

HDT72 Debre Sina, see Ajibar

HEC73 Debre Sina (Devrasina) (at a peak) 11/36 [+ It]  
cf HEC72 Sena

HEF.? Debre Sina (which one in South Wello?) 11/39? [20]

In the national elections of 15 May 2005 the constituency called Debiresina 1 had 63 polling stations and 65,451 registered voters of whom 87% cast their votes.

Dominating party was EPRDF with 31,885 votes and candidate Ato Mekete Nega Abera. Second was CUD with 13,745 votes and candidate Ato Kasa Legas Bihar. An independent female candidate received 1,760 votes. The remaining 9,321 votes are not explained.

The constituency called Debiresina 2 had 58 polling stations and 56,871 registered voters of whom 87% cast their votes.

Leading party was EPRDF with 23,482 votes and candidate Ato Asen Muhiye Ymer. Second was CUD with 18,433 votes and candidate Ato Mulugeta Abera Ayele. The

remaining 7,813 votes are not explained.

[www.electionsethiopia.org]

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|--------|--|-------|--------------|
| HEJ58  | Debre Sina (Debra Sina, D. Sena) (island & church)<br>see under Gorgora  | 12/37 | [+ WO Gu Ch] |
| HEL20  | <b>Debre Sina</b> (Debra S., Sambillo)<br>(mountain) 11°58'/38°30' 2056, 2789 m, north-west of Debre Zebit<br>A prominent peak on the edge of the escarpment, crowning a mountain mass in Achefer area. It was used by d'Abbadie as one of his points for surveying and he called it Sambillo, but Cheesman was not able to find any local resident who knew it by that name. "On the foot-hills to the west of Debra Sina an interesting tribe called the Kwanfel live in villages in the forest. They have a reputation for being proficient in the occult sciences."<br>A volcanic lake at a distance of about 30 km can be glimpsed from the top of Debre Sina.<br>[Cheesman 1936] | 11/38 | [Gz WO Ch]   |
| HEL40c | Debre Sina   | 12/38 | [LM]         |
| HFE64  | Debre Sina /Korebta/ (hill) 14°12'/38°50' 2072 m<br>(with church Maryam), west of Adwa<br>Debre Sina Maryam, see above but also under HEJ58 Gorgora : Debre Sina.  | 14/38 | [Gz]         |
| H....  | Debre Sina sub-district? (-1997-)  | ../.. | [n]          |
| HDT62  | Debre Sina wereda (centre in 1964 = Wegedi)<br>(-1964-1994-)   | 10/38 | [Ad n]       |