

- gon, gonn (A) side, flank /of body/; goma (A) hornless animal
- HFK34 Gon Goma (Gongoma) 14/37 [LM WO]  
Gona, one of the two main branches (moiety) of the Borana people
- ?? Gona (valley with archaeological sites) ../.. [Pa]  
South-west of Hadar where "Lucy" was found.  
Investigations by American and Ethiopian paleoanthropologists between 1992 and 1994 led to the discovery of several thousand stone tools thought to be between 2.6 and 2.5 million years old. These are assumed to be the oldest such tools thus far found.  
[Pankhurst, The Ethiopians, 1998 p 4]
- HEL58 Gona 12°13'39°13' 3286 m 12/39 [n]  
gona gona (O?) ensete
- HET69 Gonaydairo (Gonayda'iro) 13°16'/39°16' 2251 m 13/39 [MS]  
?? Gonber Finchaa (Gonber Finchewa) ../.. [+ Po]  
?? Gonber Finchaa (visiting postman under Nazret)
- HDJ23 Gonbo 09°15'/36°52' 1851 m 09/36 [n]  
?? Goncha ../.. [20]  
A gorge with in the neighbourhood the monastery of Getisamani.
- HEK71 Gond 12°26'/37°40' 2345 m 12/37 [n]  
gonda, goonda (O) black ant; liba (A) northeast; very hot wind
- KDA13 Gonda Libah (Gondolibah) 868 m 08/45 [MS WO]  
(seasonal waterhole)
- HEJ99 **Gondar** (Gonder)12°30'/37°20' 2210/2270m 12/37 [Ro Ha Gu MS]  
or 12°35'/37°28' = HEJ 99, 2133 m (source from 1940s: 12°36'/37°29')  
MS coordinates would give map code HEJ88.  
Centre at least 1964-1980 of Gondar awraja,  
also of Gondar wereda & Gondar sub-district  
(Gonder Zuriya wereda & Gonder Zuriya sub-district).  
Within a radius of 10 km there are at km  
2E Inda Abba Yohannes (church)  
4E Daflecha (ridge)  
4SE Sima Kefu (village)  
4SE Meldiba (Abba Maldiba) (village)  
1S Addis Alem (village)  
7SW Azezo (see this name directly)  
2W Chinchilla (Cincilla) (village) 2165 m  
5W Bilagich Mikael (village)  
6W Musua (village)  
2NW Kaa Iyesus (Caa Iesus) (church)  
3NW Abba Antonios (village)  
7NW Amba Tabara (area)  
9NW Tarat (area) 2155/2843 m  
2?N Tigre Mekeha (mountain, visited for the view)  
6N Weleka (see this name directly)  
8N Gai (area)  
6NE Deva  
9NE Sana (mountain with saddle)  
9NE Sena (village)  
?? Awura (village)
- geol Basaltic tuff has been used for building purposes in Gondar, being compact, durable, and showing a variety of grey, brown, violet and pale red bands.  
[Mohr 1961]
- 1600s Emperors in the 1600s after the move to Gondar:  
Fasiledes (1632-1667)

Yohannes I (1667-1681/82)

Iyasu I (1682-1706)

1630s Gondar was a rather insignificant village until Emperor Fasil (Fasilädäs) made it his fixed capital about 1635. When arriving, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fasil decided to construct his castle.

[Levine, Wax and gold, 1965 p 23]

In late 1634 or early 1635 arrived a new abun, and in his company arrived the European Peter Heyling (1607/1608-1652) who practised medicine and taught Greek and Hebrew to the clergy. He started to translate the Holy Scripture into Amarinnya, became a kind of special adviser to the Emperor, and was given a princess of royal blood in marriage. The story of Heyling has been told by Abba Gorgorios, a Catholic convert who returned from exile in Goa (India) in 1647 and was pardoned by the Emperor.

[Arén 1978 p 34-37]

"Fasilidas, like so many of his forebears, decided to found a new capital. Abandoning his father's fine palace at Danqaz -- he moved to the north-west. There, in 1636, he established himself at the then already existing settlement of Gondar -- Gondar was destined to remain Ethiopia's capital, and most populous city, for over two centuries. Fasiladas -- endowed his capital with a sizeable palace -- larger than any structure erected in the country up to that time. -- Fasiladas -- spent much of his time on campaign, but almost invariably returned to his Gondar palace, where he spent most rainy seasons."

[Pankhurst, The Ethiopians, 1998 p 109-110]

Peter Heyling of Lübeck came, according to Hiob Ludolph, to Gondar in 1634 and lived at the court of Emperor Fasil. He is said to have married one of the Emperor's daughters. James Bruce reports that Heyling served as an adviser and introduced a book of laws in Ethiopia. Hayling's life, as far as it is known, has been described by Michaelis of Halle in 1724. A certain Malem Petros, known for his moral laws in Fasil's time, may be identical with Heyling.

[Jäger 1965 p 45]

Peter Heyling left Gondar with an honourable farewell from Emperor Fasil but was killed by the Turkish pasha when passing Suakin. [Arén 1978 p 34-37]

"Contacts between the country of the Bahr Nägash and the interior became closer after the establishment of Gondär as the imperial capital in 1636. The city rapidly emerged as a major political, commercial and religious centre, and because of its location in the north-west of the empire, and difficulties of communication with the Sudan, had particularly close ties with the coast." [Pankhurst 1997 p 397]

1640s Fasil's impressive castle which still stands in modern times was constructed around 1640. Despite the difficulties, the Afar route was not abandoned. One of those who used it, in 1639-40, was a Coptic bishop from Egypt, Abune Mikael, who travelled to Gondar by way of the country of the Danakil. [Pankhurst 1997 p 386-387]

A diplomatic mission from Yemen arrived to Gondar in 1648. It was led by Hasan ben Ahmed el Haimi who wrote:

"We went to the King's stronghold and climbed a high building, a stately edifice which ranks among the most wonderful of wonderful buildings and among the most beautiful of exceptional wonders, constructed of stone and lime. And there is in that town, indeed in the whole of Abyssinia, no other but it (as it is of very pleasing appearance and handsome design), because all other dwellings in these localities are only nests of grass. The builder of the edifice was an Indian and the characteristics of his design correspond to the methods of his country. --"

"Around these quarters are some other buildings made of earth, stretching in length, breadth and height to an extent which no eye has beheld in any other building. And these apartments are furnished as the King is wont to stay there, and there is in each apartment manifold Byzantine beds and Italian mattresses -- And these palaces are unsurpassed as a wonder for the visitor and as a pride for this unbeliever king."

[cited in Pankhurst, Travellers in Ethiopia, Oxford Univ. Press 1965 p 53-54]

"Another notable building -- attributed, without much real evidence, to the reign of Fasiladas, was a two-storey crenellated stone structure popularly known as Fasil's 'Bathing Pavilion'." This edifice, today a popular tourist attraction, is set within, but to one side, of a large rectangular pool. It was probably intended for the annual Timqat celebrations.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 112]

- 1650s "In 1654, at a church council convened in Gonder, the emperor /Fasilidas/ -- came down on the side of the unctionists and quickly put down the ensuing unionist insurrections."  
 "The emperor's decision for the unctionists alienated most of the Amhara nobility because the monks at Debre Libanos -- were traditional unionists -- They tended therefore to isolate themselves from the Solomonic state, which increasingly had to rely on the strength of the newly assimilated Oromo aristocracy. The latter were called on to protect the frontiers of Christendom, but, ironically, even they failed to stem the Oromo movement into southern Tigray /etc/."

[Marcus 1994 p 44]

Fasil was continually joining battle with enemies, and he spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath.

- 1660s Reign of Emperor Yohannes I was 1667-1681/82.

After a religious council in 1668 an edict was proclaimed, ordering that the *Afrenj* (Catholics) must leave the country, and the Muslims and Falasha must live in villages separate from the Christians and from each other. A large number of *Afrenj* left Gondar in the first half of 1669. They were escorted westwards. The edict about separation of religious communities was not fully effective and had to be repeated in 1678.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 117]

It was during the reign of Yohannes that an Armenian bishop brought from his native land a relic of Eustathius, the famous monk who founded the second of the great Ethiopian communities -- The bishop was subjected to a proplonged interrogation of the utmost solemnity on the finer details of the Catechism to make sure he was not an impostor, before the bone he had brought was acclaimed as a holy relic.

[J Dorese, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 179-180]

The Moslem traders were given a quarter of their own in 1669, and the Falasha (perhaps later) received another.

Yohannes was not particularly preoccupied with warfare, but there was small scale war during half the time he ruled.

- 1670s "Fasiladas was succeeded in 1667 by his son Yohannes, and in 1682 by his grandson Iyasu I. Both built further palaces in the immediate vicinity of the Fasil Gemb. The reigns of the first three Gondarine rulers thus witnessed the growth of a large imperial quarter -- The royal compound with its many palaces was later surrounded by a substantial *Makkababya*, or encircling wall --"

[Pankhurst 1998 p 110]

Yohannes built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. His queen, Sebla Wangel, sponsored the translation of works from Arabic.

[Levine, Wax and gold, 1965 p 24-25]

- 1680s "Warfare, and slave-raiding, which owed much to Gondär's growing wealth, and demand for servile labour, as well as to the increasing acquisition and utilisation of fire-arms, was intensified during the reign of Emperor Iyasu I (1682-1706). The most powerful of the Gondär rulers, he was militarily far better equipped than his predecessors, and succeeded in capturing an unparalleled number of slaves in the north-western and western borderlands." [Pankhurst 1997 p 357]

"Iyasu I -- built a large two-storey crenellated structure immediately adjacent to that of his grandfather Falilidas's. Iyasu's palace was unusual in that its upper ceiling was not flat, like those of the other buildings, but vaulted, with brick ribs."

[Pankhurst 1998 p 110]

- 1690s "Numerous other buildings in the area were also constructed in this period. The palace compound by the end of the seventeenth century thus consisted, according to an

Armenian merchant, Gosia Murad, of 'more than a hundred and twenty large structures, besides pleasant gardens and plantations'."

[Pankhurst 1998 p 111]

"French physician Charles Jacques Poncet -- arrived at Gondar in July 1699 and stayed there for nearly a year. He cured the king and seems to have enjoyed considerable popularity. His travels did not extend far beyond the Gondar area, and, while he gives an adequate account of what he saw -- his narrative can in no way be likened to the great works of exploration and description produced by the Portuguese before him."

[Ullendorff (1960)1973 p 11]

Charles Poncet witnessed the impressive court ceremonial of Gondar in 1699 and wrote a detailed account. [Pankhurst 1998 p 113-114 contains two pages of extracts from Poncet's story]

"For some reason churches, very rude and simple in their style, seem to have clustered in this little township. In certain respects their dedications read with a strangely European sound like a list of parishes in Rome, St. Mary of Sion, St. Mary of Sihor, St. Mary of the Gondar people, St. Michael of Aira, St. Michael of Belaggio, St. Simon of Tzaamdi, St. George of Damot, St. George of Uerangheb, St. John of Guarà, the church of the apostles of Deva, the church of the Four Saints."

[D Mathew, Ethiopia ..., London 1957 p 56]

"The Christian monarchs of Gondar -- were great church-builders. Emperor Fasiladas reportedly founded no less than seven places of worship in the city. -- One of the churches founded by /Iyasu I, reign 1682-1706/ was that of Dabra Berhan Sellasé, an originally round building which was rebuilt as a rectangular one in the early nineteenth century. -- ceiling decorated with winged angels --"

[Pankhurst 1998 p 116]

"-- gateways were completed at different dates and in certain instances the names were changed, but taken all together they provide an impression of that universal grandeur -- A mere enumeration will in a sense convey the atmosphere of high observance, the Gate of Giarra Grande, the Gate of the Judges, the Gate of the Funeral Commemorations, the Gate of the Chamberlain Tucurie, the Gate of the Spinners, the Gate of the Bistre, the Gate of the Musicians, the Gate of the Secret Chamber, the Gate of the Chiefs, the Gate of the Pigeons, the Gate of the Princess Incoie, the Gate of the Treasury of the House of Mary. Situated within reach of the south wall and linked to it by a covered way, which opened near the Judges' Gate, there rose the Castle of Fasilidas." [Mathew 1957 p 58]

Emperor Iyasu I brought from Gojjam a great master of religious verse, Kifle Yohannes. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhan Selassie alone.

[Levine 1965 p 25]

"Trade in Gondar, and indeed in most parts of the empire, was largely in Muslim hands. This was scarcely surprising, as most of the city's trade-routes led to Islamic territories, notably Arabia, Sudan and Massawa --"

"The Muslims of Gondar lived for the most part in their own distinct settlement. Known as Eslam Bét -- or Eslamgé or Salamgé -- it lay to the south-west of the city, in a lower stretch of land near the junction of the Qaha and Angerab rivers."

"Many of /Gondar's/ principal artisans came from minority groups. Some were Falashas, or Béta Esra'él -- also known as Kayla, the name of a Falasha regiment in Emperor Fasiladas's service. -- The Falashas of Gondar lived west of the Eslam Bét, beyond the Qaha river, and played a notable role in the city's economy. Falasha menfolk worked mainly as blacksmiths and weavers. There were also a number of Falasha masons, some of whom were engaged in both palace and church building. Most of the Falasha women were potters."

"Another minority group were the Qemants -- who lived in the countryside north-west of Gondar. Many were engaged in bringing timber and firewood to the city."

"-- there were in the early days of the city a small number of Catholics, probably made up mainly of half-caste descendants of the Portuguese, as well as, no doubt, a few Ethiopians

earlier converted by the Jesuits, or descendants of such converts. Many Catholics were subsequently expelled, but some may have stayed on in the country, practicing their faith in secret."

[Pankhurst 1998 p 116-117]

society The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city, the only permanent population centre that grew beyond the contours of a large village.

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogenous societies than of a diffused heterogenous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these.

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bet. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bet and Denkake.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna* lived with his retinue in one sector. Another area, Ichege Bet, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where the clergy kept their modest huts.

The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qiha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated.

The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Abeba in later time, but as the advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondares love *shumat*, political appointments. In the naming of children they prefer names which express an ambition for political honours, such as *Makonnen* and *Neguse*. A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This - the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists - represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments.

Gondares have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learnt to read the Psalms of David. They claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land.

[D N Levine, Wax and gold, Chicago 1965 p 41-43]

1700s Emperors in the 1700s:

- Iyasu I (1682-1706)
- Tekle Haymanot I (1706-1708)
- Tewoflos (1708-1711)
- Yostos (1711-1716)
- Dawit III (1716-1721)
- Bekeffa or Bakaffa (1721-1730)
- Iyasu II (1730-1755)
- Iyoas (1755-1769)
- Yohannes II (part of 1769)
- Tekle Haymano II (1769-1777)

.....

An earthquake made serious damage in 1704. The great tower of the palace called Jan Takal fell and crushed many. This was the first of the Gondar ruins none of which would ever be repaired. Emperor Yasu retired to his summer palace on Lake Tana where he met his end. [Mathew 1957 p 71]

When Emperor Iyasu returned from one of his field tours, he learnt that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away. Grief-stricken Iyasu withdrew to one of the monastic islands. His son, Tekle Haymanot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor in 1706. Shortly after he had his father assassinated on the isle. Tekle Haymanot was stabbed to death a little later.

[Levine, Wax and gold, 1965 p 23]

Téwoflos became emperor in 1708. "-- the accession -- witnessed a further integration of Oromos in imperial affairs. The -- courtier Tigé played a major role in a palace conspiracy, and was arrested, and imprisoned in far away Hamasén."

[Pankhurst 1997 p 317]

1710s After three years of rule Téwoflos (Tewophilus) died of fever - or poison? - in Gondar in the autumn of 1711 and Yostos (1711-16) established himself upon the throne. Yostos founded the church of Lideta and one more. He was the last emperor who had a clear tendency towards the Catholic faith. He was forcibly deposed.

[Mathew 1957 p 74-75]

Three Kapuchins, the Austrian Liberato de Wies and the Italians Michele da Zerba and Samuele da Biumo, were stoned to death 14 March 1714 /according to the Guida in the reign of Dawit III?/. Their graves are said to be east of Addis Alem, not far from the Muslim cemetery and about 300 m from the Angareb river. [Guida 1938 p 358]

"Contacts between Oromos and the empire developed further after the death of Emperor Yostos in 1716. Fifty royal princes, who had been imprisoned on the mountain of Wähni - - made their way to Gondär to claim the throne. The choice fell on Iyasu's eldest son, who was crowned as Emperor Dawit III (1716-1721). His younger brother Bäkäffa /name meaning the Inexorable/ thereupon fled -- and sought hospitality with -- the Yäjju Gallas. -- Dawit meanwhile had also developed Oromo contacts." [Pankhurst 1997 p 317]

Dawit III founded two churches and also resumed building activity in the palace compound, where he erected a small *Dabal Gemb*, or House of Song.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 119]

"The chief slaughter in Dawit's reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views."

[Levine 1965 p 23]

1720s "On Dawit's death in 1721 Bäkäffa once more came down from Wähni, and by popular demand was proclaimed emperor. -- Bäkäffa continued the by then well established use of Oromo Jawi cavalry. Early in his reign he is stated by Bruce to have employed a thousand of them to crush a rebellion by one of the royal princesses." [Pankhurst 1997 p 318]

Levine writes that Dawit III was poisoned. Gondar by this time had a considerable slave population. A significant proportion of them consisted of various "blacks" from the far west. [Pankhurst]

Bakaffa (1721-30) restored political stability for a time. His reign witnesses the construction of two further palaces, one of them a long single-storeyed crenellated building still to be seen to the north of the royal compound. He also erected at least one church, and rebuilt the old palace wall.

Bakaffa's reign was a time when literature and the arts revived, and many beautifully illustrated manuscripts were produced by newly established scriptoria in or around the city. [Pankhurst 1998 p 119-120]

"Bakaffa spent his days breaking the power of the feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and he died a natural death."

[Levine 1965 p 24]

1730s Iyasu II became emperor in 1730. Imperial dependence on Oromo support was by this time considerable, and such troops were used against a rebellion in Damot shortly after the young emperor's coronation. Iyasu married an Oromo princess Wobit, christened Bersabesh. The many slave-raiding campaigns of Iyasu II built up in Gondar a powerful contingent of slave troops. They included the Känisa, who constituted an important and highly honoured force. [Pankhurst 1997 p 319-320, 363]

On the accession of Yasu II, who was still a child, it was his mother Queen Mentwab who controlled the state. Furthermore, she survived her son and retained her influence over a long period. James Bruce (visiting 1770-1771) has left us his impressions of the beautiful queen, who was getting on in years when he saw her. The lords and chiefs of Kwara were her kinsmen.

[J Doresse, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 183]

One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar /when?/, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital.

[Levine 1965 p 24]

The total eclipse of the sun in 1736 gave rise to many prophecies of the death of the king.

[Mathew 1947 p 77]

1740s

Emperor Iyasu II embarked, in 1741, on what his chronicle claims was a victorious expedition to Sennar. He is said to have returned to Gondar with many prisoners and booty of all kinds, including 300 camels and 20,000 cattle. They were kept for a time within the palace walls.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 121]

Empress Mentewwab remained in Gondar, where she had an original palace erected.

"This structure, located at the northern end of the royal compound, was far more elaborate than those of Fasiladas and his immediate descendants. It was a two-storey structure surmounted by a square tower, both crenellated in what was by then the Gondarine style. The front of each floor had two rows of doors with curved arches, decorated in red tuff, while the walls, fitted with several balconies, were profusely ornamented with a number of Ethiopian-style crosses, likewise in red."

[Pankhurst 1998 p 122]

In 1745 a deputation of three Christian clerics accompanied by three Muslims left Gondar for Egypt in quest of a new Patriarch. The Naib of Massawa detained the envoys for six months and seized their money before letting them on board a vessel bound for Egypt. The new Patriarch Abba Yohannes on his way to Gondar was also detained for five months in Massawa. [Pankhurst 1997 p 411]

Emperor Iyasu II cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He began to construct a palace with lavish decoration:

"A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts ... with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. ... Iyasu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen."

[Levine p 26 citing Sir Wallis Budge 1928 II p 453]

1750s

Emperor Iyoas (1755-1769) succeeded to the throne as a child and spoke only Oromo, because his mother was a Yeju Oromo. It was the beginning of the "era of the princes" which was to last for almost a century. [Arén 1978 p 39]

"The great favour shown to the Oromos, according to Bruce, encouraged many of their countrymen to follow them to the imperial capital. Young Iyo'as later summoned two of his Oromo uncles, Biralé and Lubo, who came with a thousand Oromo horsemen, and were given high titles and placed in charge of the king's person. -- Many Oromos of lesser rank also rose to prominence. One of them was Gwangwél, described by Bruce as chief of the eastern Gallas -- of Angot. On one occasion he arrived in Gondär, the Scotsman recalls, riding a cow. Carrying a short spear with a single iron head and a hide skin shield, he was accompanied by forty horsemen and 500 foot soldiers." [Pankhurst 1997 p 320-321]

1760s

"Oromo influence on the court had, however, reached its zenith. This influence later declined as a result of the rise of the Tegray chieftain Ras Mika'él Sehul, who -- made himself master of Gondär in 1768. In the following year he deposed the unfortunate Iyo'as, who was murdered a week later." [Pankhurst 1997 p 322]

One evening in March 1769 Ras Mikael was sitting in the balcony of his new house when a shot was fired from a window in the palace. This missed him but killed his dwarf, who was standing before him fanning flies from his face. Iyo'as' page confessed that the shot had been fired by an Armenian on his master's orders. That night the emperor was murdered alone in his palace at Gondar and buried in the church of St. Raphael.

Two months later Yohannes, the youngest son of Iyasu I, was brought by Ras Mikael

from the fortress of Wehni. Yohannes II was over seventy years of age and had passed all his life in the mountain; his hand had been cut off by his brother Bakaffa. There was no prospect of his establishing any personal rule. He died in the early autumn and was succeeded by his son Tekle Haymanot II "who entered into the views of Ras Mikael entirely".

[D Mathew, Ethiopia, 1947 p 83-84 citing James Bruce]

Emperor Iyo'as was murdered in 1769. One of his great uncles, an old and feeble man, was then proclaimed Emperor Yohannes II. He was poisoned within less than six months. During the time of decline of the Gondar monarchy, the head of the Ethiopian church for the most part was resident in Gondar, even if inhabitants of the Christian highlands rather recognized Aksum as the capital and often went on pilgrimage to there.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 130]

1770s In mid-February 1770, the Scotsman James Bruce, the Italian Luigi Balugani, and some porters arrived to Gondar, altogether a group of about twenty men.

The young king, Tekle Haymanot, and his vizier Ras Mikael, who really ruled the country, were away on one of their punitive raids when Bruce arrived.

In December 1771, a full year after he had returned from the Little Abay and over two years since his first arrival in the country, James Bruce could leave Gondar in the direction of Sennar and finally Europe. Luigi Balugani died in Ethiopia.

[Moorehead, the Blue Nile]

The town according to Bruce: "It consists of about ten thousand families in times of peace -- On the west end of the town is the king's house, formerly a structure of considerable consequence; it was a square building, flanked with square towers; it was formerly four storeys high -- Great part of this house is now in ruins, having been burnt at different times; but there is still ample lodging in the two lowest floors of it, the audience-chamber being above one hundred and twenty feet long.

A succession of kings have built apartments by the side of it of clay only -- The palace, and all its contiguous buildings are surrounded by a substantial stone wall thirty feet high, with battlements upon the outer wall and a parapet roof between the outer and inner, by which you can go along the whole and look into the street. There appears to have never been any embrasures for cannon --

Immediately upon the bank opposite to Gondar, on the other side of the river, is a large town of Mohometans of about a thousand houses."

[cited in Pankhurst, Travellers in Ethiopia, Oxford Univ. Press 1965 p 75-76]

Bruce found in Gondar a Greek called Abba Christophorus who acted as a physician as well as a priest.

Battles north of Lake Tana in 1772 led to the collapse of Ras Mika'él's power.

During the reign 1769-1777 of the not very powerful Tekle Haymanot II, seven churches were built in Gondar. The church Ba'ata Maryam became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of religious dance, *aquaquam*, with 276 masters in its heyday. Abi Egzi became noted for instruction in religious interpretation, *tergum*, and remained a leading school for such studies.

[Levine 1965 p 26]

1779 On a day in 1779, the Oromo forces of Ras Gusho, who had defeated Ras Mikael, invaded the palace and massacred King Tekle-Haymanot II, shattering the great Venetian mirrors in the course of the struggle.

Ras Mikael died in 1779/80. His son Wolde Gabriel took up the battle against Oromo authority in Gondar, but fell in the battlefield in 1788. [Abir p 31]

1800s Kings and other secular power holders in Gojjam in first half of the 19th century:

- - 1800 Tekle Giyorgis ruled on and off until the turn of century

1825-1828 Ras Yimam

1828 - Ras Mareed

Ras Ali II

Yohannes III

.....

Abuna Joseph III, who had come from Egypt in 1770, died in Gondar in 1803.  
For some 13 years his place was vacant.

1810s Abuna Kerilos (Cyril) had arrived to Ethiopia in 1816 and went to Gondar in 1819.  
He tried to bring unity to the Church by forbidding the continuation of all discussions  
regarding the number of births of Christ. His opponents, with the help of Ras Gugsa,  
forced the Abuna to return /to Aksum?/.

1820s *Ichege* Wolde Yonas died in 1821. He had cooperated with Ras Gugsa and was the main  
opponent of the Abuna. *Ichege* Yohannes, his successor, resigned in 1823. The next  
*Ichege*, Phillipos, was forced by Ras Marye to abdicate in 1830.  
The Abuna came again to Gondar, but Ras Yimam, who succeeded his father Gugsa in  
1825, banished Abuna Kerilos to a monastery on Lake Tana, where he died about 1829.  
In the following years, the *Ichege* and others did what they could to prevent the coming  
of a new Abuna, so the next one did not arrive until the end of 1841.

[M Abir, Ethiopia - the era of ..., London 1968 p 41-42]

1830s The Swiss missionary Samuel Gobat (1799-1879) arrived to Gondar and stayed there for  
six months. He paid a courtesy call on Emperor Gigar (1821-1830). He later met *Ichege*  
Filipos, whose quarters had recently been looted and whose fields had been destroyed by  
the armies of warring chiefs. Filipos permitted the Scriptures to be distributed and read in  
Amarinya. In September 1830 Filipos was deposed by Ras Mariyé who was the virtual  
ruler of Gondar at this time. A new *Ichege* Gebre-Sillassé was enthroned on 3 October  
1830. [Arén 1978 p 56-58]

The Christian name Gigar is from the first martyr for Jesus's sake, slain by Herod.

Gobat has left a record of the monarchy at its most pitiful:

"I went to see the king, Guigar; who truly has only the name of king. He was formerly a  
monk. He lives in a little circular house built by Joas on the ruins of a part of the palace --  
the palace, although in ruins, is still superior to anything that I should have expected in  
Abyssinia. There are still three large rooms, and some small ones, in good condition; but  
full of dust and filth. The king occupies only one room ... divided into two compartments  
by a white curtain."

[cited in D Mathew, Ethiopia, London 1947 p 156-157]

Gobat reported in 1830 that Gondar was full of men who were plundering the town, while  
a subsequent royal chronicle tells of soldiers breaking into the city in 1840, eating up all  
the provisions.

[Pankhurst (1990)1992 p 161]

Gobat found that the Felasha in Gondar lived separated from other Ethiopians,  
"were ignorant and poor, ostracized and suspected of sorcery".

The naturalist E Rüppell was received in 1832 by Emperor Sahle Dengel in a rather  
miserable building on the side of the ancient Palace. Sahle Dengel's reign, with little  
authority, lasted until 1840.

In 1838 the Egyptians raided Abyssinian territory and threw Gondar into a panic, but the  
town was not sacked as is often stated. This is confirmed from both Sudanese and  
Abyssinian sources.

[Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia, p 115]

1850s Dajazmach Webé of Tegray claimed the imperial crown and was planning to march to  
Gondar, where the newly arrived Metropolitan, Abuna Salama, was supposed to crown  
him as emperor. Webé, however, was defeated and captured by Kasa Haylu at Darasgé on  
8 February 1855. The victorious chief was crowned three days later at Darasgé - not in  
Gondar - as Emperor Téwodros.

He favoured Debra Tabor as his capital. He started to build simple roads from Dabra  
Tabor to Gondar and other places, working at it with his own body to set an example.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 144, 150]

Wibe Hayle Maryam's nephew Niguse Welde Mikael (Agew Mikael) captured Gondar in  
November 1855 while Tewodros was away elsewhere.

[Acta aethiopica II p 23]

In July 1856 Emperor Tewodros moved from Gojjam to Gondar. [Zänab 1902]

The Felasha in Gondar were about 1000 at this time, and there were several Felasha communities in surrounding areas. A special Felasha Mission was founded in Europe in 1859.

In the later part of the 1800s one Aleqa Gebre Hanna became teacher in the church of Ba'ata Maryam in Gondar and subsequently became head of that church. He invented a new style of dance for the clergy and many stories about Gebre Hanna survived into next century. He ended his career in Shewa as a favorite at the court of Emperor Menilek. [Levine, Wax and gold, 1965 p 27-28]

1860s After Consul Walter J. Plowden had been pierced with a lance by Gared, a son of Tewodros's elder brother, near Gondar in early March/?/ 1860 and had died after nine days, his body was obtained for money from Gared and brought to Gondar where he was buried at "the king's church" Gimjabet Maryam. [Acta aethiopica II p 100]

According to a chronicle, Emperor Tewodros in 1864 removed 981 manuscripts from Gondar to Mekdela, where they were subsequently soon looted by the British. [Pankhurst]

On 2 December 1866 Tewodros entered Gondar where the churches were systematically plundered, people by the thousands driven out, and most of the town burnt. Only four lesser churches remained standing. The Moslems fled from Gondar.

Asseggaheñ wrote to Antoine d'Abbadie on 15 April 1867 that Tewodros set fire to Gondar, that many churches had been destroyed, and "There is no one in Gondar; only beasts live there." In a later letter he describes with some dramatic details how Tewodros plundered Gondar.

[Acta aethiopica II p 321, 365]

Asseggaheñ wrote on 27 November 1869 that "Gondar is a little better off this year", and a year later he writes that Gondar "is as before".

[Acta aethiopica III p 32, 77]

One Abba Yosef wrote to Antoine d'Abbadie on 29 January 1873: "I knew you very well when you were in Gonder in the house of Debtera Getahun at Ichege Bet, when, in my young days, I was studying with the bishop, Abune Biancheri."

[Acta aethiopica III p 135]

Tekle Giyorgis during his few years in power (1869-1872) worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar.

1870s On 18 February 1873 Yohannes IV wrote from Gondar to the French consul at Massawa: "By the grace of God I have entered Gonder safe and sound. Ras Wereña has surrendered to me with his whole army."

[Acta aethiopica III p 141]

Emperor Yohannes marched to Gondar at the head of 30,000 men and the governor Ras Woregna submitted to Yohannes on 20 February 1873.

[Zewde G Selassie 1977]

Letters are preserved which Yohannes IV wrote from Gondar in March & May-June 1873 and also in June 1879.

[Acta aethiopica III p 150-151, 318-319]

1880s In June 1887 a large Sudanese army of Mahdists invaded Gojam, defeated Nigus Tekle Haymanot, sacked Gondar, killed thousands of priests and monks, and carried off the women and children into slavery. [Zewde G S?]

A powerful Dervish force, under Hamdan Abu Anga, defeated the Gojjam army on 18 January 1888 and then rampaged into Gondar.

[Pankhurst 1998 p 174]

The Mahdists heavily defeated Tekle Haymanot on 21 January 1888. They entered Gondar on 23 January where, as claimed by the Sudanese side, forty-five churches were set on fire.

"In January 1888 Mahdist troops with 19,000 men invaded western Ethiopia, defeated Nigus Tekle Haymanot, plundered Gondar and are said to have burnt 240 churches there."

[Zewde G Selassie 1977]

The Shewan army under Menilek was camping in Begemder, actually ruining the country. His army did not join any battle with the Mahdists. Menilek camped near the already ruined Gondar on 18 April 1888, but in May Emperor Yohannes brusquely ordered Menilek to return to Shewa.

There were reports of a new invasion from Sudan which started from Metemma toward Gondar on 17 June 1888.

[Ehrlich 1996 p 119, 129-130]

1890s Gabru Desta had been assistant to Ras Makonnen and was appointed mayor of Gondar in 1896 at the age of about forty. He decided that part of the customs money should be used for education. He was sent on a diplomatic mission to the mahdists in Sudan, but in the meantime there was a British-Ethiopian agreement which had differences from what Gabru Desta negotiated, so Gabru was imprisoned for 18 months.

[E Leijonhufvud, Kejsaren och hans hövdingar, Sthlm 1948 p 121]

[F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 432 has a photo of Gabru with daughter]

1900s A German botanist Felix Rosen visited Gondar in 1905 and wrote a book afterwards..

1910s A British 'Diplomatic and Consular Report on the Trade of Abyssinia' in 1913 described Gondar as "merely a collection of squalid huts clustered round the ruins of its former greatness". [Perham 1948 p 222]

1920s Average rainfall 1264 mm per year recorded in 1924-1931.

1930s Gondar was occupied by the Italians 1 April 1936, first by Colonna Starace and a little later by III Brigata Eritrea.

"As the Eritrean Brigade followed the main caravan route into Begemder, a motorized column was sent out from Asmara way over to their right along the safer, because emptier, edges of the frontier with the Sudan. Its commander Achille Starace, Secretary-General of the Facist Party, was not a man to miss an occasion for bombast. When the column of 433 lorries and 3,400 men reached Om Ager -- their commander halted and harangued his men. --"

"As the column drove cautiously down through Begemder, there were rumours of British troops -- ready to march to the protection of Gondar. No doubt inspired by their leader, Starace's men declared themselves 'ugly and pugnacious' and talked of shooting on sight any British or Sudanese who might dare to cross their path. None did. Indeed they met with no opposition at all. Nor did the Eritrean column." [Mockler 1984 p 109-110]

Italian version: "-- the 3rd Eritrean Brigade proceeded from Dacua towards Gondar, and on April 1st occupied that place, after a rapid march of over 75 miles accomplished in only three days in co-operation with the mechanized column which had come up from the western plain, under whose command it then came."

[Badoglio (Eng.ed.) 1937 p 131]

Members of the British Red Cross at Gondar went to the Italian officers for safety when the Starace column arrived there. [Sbacchi 1997 p 70]

On 24 May 1936 the Italians evacuated the Swedish mission doctor Harald Nyström from Gondar. Exactly 7 months earlier, Dr Nyström had gone to the northern battle front as a physician and being the only white man on the Ethiopian side of that front. He has described it in Swedish in his book "Med S:t Giorghis på dödsritt" (Sthlm 1937).

An Italian observer estimated in 1936 that one fifth of the population of Gondar were slaves. [Perham 1948 p 222]

The Italians formed a wide administrative unit called Amara (=Amhara), with its regional capital at Gondar.

The main post office of the Italians was opened on 2 July 1936. Its cancellations read GONDAR\*ETIOPIA in 1936-1937 and GONDAR(AMARA) in 1938. Branch post offices were opened 1 June 1938 and 20 October 1939.

[Philatelic source]

1938 In a master plan designed by Italians the intention was to develop offices and European-type houses north of the group of ancient castles. On initiative by Governor Mezzetti in May 1938 some restoration work on the ancient buildings was started.

There were about 14,000 inhabitants in Gondar during the occupation, of which about

2,000 Italians. The government offices of the Italians were still mostly in tents and provisional buildings.

There were two Italian banks near the post office. Albergo CIAAO was under construction, and the two small hotels Littorio and Cigno had only 7 rooms each. Restaurants were named Fior del Tana, Trattoria Romagnola etc and there was a Cinema Impero. A mosque was built by the Italians near the stony and sloping Saturday Market. The old mosque, *Islam Bet* was in Addis Alem. Near the post office were Banca d'Italia and Banco di Roma.

*Azienda Statale della Strada* was at the northernmost part of the town.

*Comando Tappa* was near Fasil's Bath. *Prefettura Apostolica* was near the Catholic church.

The bus, "*autopullman*", to Asmara would travel for two days and started from the Gondrand transport offices. The airport was at a distance of 16 km, see Azezo.

[Guida 1938 p 350-366]

1940 The Italian general Nasi had proclaimed Dejazmach Ayele Birru as governor of Gondar, but the Dejazmach later recalled his loyalty. He was the feudal heir of Simien and had fought alongside Ras Imru before the latter's retreat to Gore. Dejazmach Ayelu and his forces rejoined the Patriot armies and later joined in the attack on Gondar. [Greenfield 1965 p 260]

1941 "The real possibility of a British defeat in North Africa encouraged continued resistance by the remaining Italian forces in AOI, both to detain British troops who might otherwise go to North Africa and in the hope that the Germans might come to their assistance. These remaining forces were concentrated in the Gondar sector under the resolute General Nasi and consisted of about 40,000 troops in Gondar and the outlying garrisons -- Nasi's troops were about one half colonial and one half national, the latter mainly Blackshirt militia with some units of the Royal Army. He had 40 guns, four aircraft and some homemade tanks, tractor bodies with metal superstructures carrying machine guns." [Shirreff 1995 p 226]

In late 1941: "Kulkaber /=Kulkwal Ber/ having fallen Nasi anticipated, correctly, attack from the south and east and brought down two national batteries from Uollaich /Walag/, including his one battery of 104-millimetre guns, and kept Torelli's 22nd Brigade, now reduced to two battalions, in reserve. /The British major general 'Fluffy'/ Fowkes's plan was for the 26th (East African) Brigade under Brigadier Dimoline to attack the Daflecha Ridge on a two-battalion front and advance on Gondar from the east, while the 25th (East African) Brigade under Brigadier James advanced from the southeast -- The attacking forces benefited greatly from the accurate sketches of the Gondar defences prepared by McLean over the past weeks. Millard was now in command of Dougforce in place of Douglas, but, being a gunner, had obtained the brigadier's permission to shoot the guns with Morrow. Molloy substituted for him /as commander of Dougforce/ -- Birru was left out, according to Molloy, 'in disgrace for his failure at Kulkaber, but his men got in on the looting'. In the north two other forces had parts in the assault. -- Attacking on the right flank of the 26th (East African) Brigade were Campbell and his Shoans, men from Ababa Aregai's army who had fought at Dessie and Magdala." [Shirreff p 268]

At the final confrontation in October 1941 the Italians had 14 battalions and 11 batteries in Gondar itself. In the region, excluding the outlying garrisons, there were almost 25,000 troops. The Allies had almost complete aerial superiority. [Shirreff p 250]

"Attacks by the whole force started at dawn on 27 November, supported by a heavy aerial bombardment on Gondar itself. From a vantage point Molloy watched and recorded the advance of his forces. 'Typically the Wollo were off the mark, first going for the Fantar forts /east of Azezo/.' They took the first fort, then 'moving amazingly fast in their bare feet, they went straight on for the second fort and took this too, though with heavier casualties. The opposition were mainly Blackshirts who fought bravely and were mostly killed.' -- Millard and Morrow had got their three guns in position and Millard was shooting the guns, firing mainly in support of McLean -- but McLean's men moved with

such speed that it was difficult to keep the artillery fire ahead of them. 'The Italians fought like tigers for a short time but we moved too fast for them, swept over their forward defences and on.' -- Millard and his gunners were being shelled by the big 104-millimetre guns from Gondar, but 'we were far too busy and excited to worry about that. Old Morrow by this time was cheering in broad Irish, his great red beard flying in the wind, and shaking a colossal fist at one enemy battery, which continued to plaster us on the ridge.' By 12.15 p.m. Pilkington and McLean had taken the day's objectives and it had been envisaged that the battle for Gondar would take two days. Pilkington had other ideas and sent a message to Molloy at 1.00 p.m. that he was going for Gondar. 'I was appalled. Not only was it against orders, but he had to go up an open valley, overlooked by positions on both sides and commanded by the 104 mm guns from Gondar.' Molloy watched Pilkington's progress up the valley, being pounded by the heavy guns and also being strafed by allied aircraft that mistook him for fleeing enemy. -- In Gondar Nasi launched his reserve against the southern attack but for the first time he records that Torelli's 22nd Brigade, which had fought so gallantly in so many actions, failed him." [Shirreff p 268,270]

"Because of the failure of his reserve, Nasi decided at 2.30 p.m. to send envoys to the British commander to ask for an armistice. At 3.15 p.m. Pilkington, after taking the high ground on each side of the road and the Addis Alem cavalry station, signalled Molloy that he was entering Gondar. 'We were in Gondar hours ahead of the regular African Brigades! We had some fighting at the old Portuguese castle where the *carabinieri* held out, but this was soon over and I went off to see General Nasi. It was a great day for the Wollo *banda*.' Pilkington found Nasi in the town hall. His envoys had not yet returned but, after some argument, Nasi agreed to surrender unconditionally when Major Yeatman of the Kenya Armoured Car Regiment arrived with a squadron, sent by James to find out what was happening. Yeatman took the surrender, and Nasi's sword, which was later handed over to James. It was 4.30 p.m. when the Union Jack and Ethiopian flag were raised over Nasi's headquarters. -- /The 26th Brigade had some very hard fighting east of Gondar./ In the attack on Daflecha Ridge the 2nd/2nd KAR, a new Nyasaland battalion, attacking on the right with the 4th/4th KAR, a new Uganda battalion on its left with the 1st/6th KAR in support, suffered losses of two British officers, one British NCO and 15 *askaris* killed, 96 *askaris* wounded and six missing. The 4th/4th KAR also suffered casualties, but not so severely."

[Shirreff p 271]

British casualties in the Gondar operation were 8 officers and 108 other ranks killed, 15 officers and 370 other ranks wounded, total 501. Ethiopian casualties are not recorded, but were considerable with the Wollo and Shoans suffering most. Italian casualties were 10 officers killed, 12 wounded or missing, 138 nationals killed, 214 wounded and 143 missing, and 599 colonial killed, 944 wounded and 444 missing, an overall total of 1765 on the Italian side. A total of 23,008 prisoners were taken. One British historian sums up the operation as 'causing the heaviest casualties of the Abyssinian campaign.' The Patriots played an important part at Gondar. The air cover provided by the allied air forces was also a major contribution to victory. [Shirreff p 272]

Several historic buildings were damaged by British bombing during the liberation campaign of 1941, especially Fasil's Royal Archives building because the Italian headquarters lay within the compound.

1942 In a decree of 1942, Gondar is listed as one of only six "Schedule A" municipalities in Ethiopia, while there were about a hundred in "Schedule B".

A renaissance of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transport centre of northwestern Ethiopia.

After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Begemdir, one of twelve provinces.

The traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. Almost none of the young

people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

[Levine, Wax and gold 1965 p 46]

- 1944 "-- in June 1944, I had occasion to continue my journey to Gondar -- Had the Italian *régime* continued /Gondar/ would again have risen in importance, since it was the capital of their colony of Amara, and much building was done there. The visitor to Gondar today does well to turn his back on the Italian town, a scene of squalor and decay. But the famous castle-palaces of Fasilidas and later kings are a delight. I do not myself regret the Italian restoration, which seems to have been done with taste and care." [D Buxton, Travels in Ethiopia, London (1949)1957 p 111]
- 1946 When the Ethiopian Air Lines began operating in 1946, Gondar was one of the first provincial towns to have an airport for it, at Azezo - see this name directly. Swedish medical staff worked at the provincial hospital in Gondar about 1946-1952. The hospital had two doctors and 100 beds in 1949. Ras Andargachew Mesay (born circa 1902) was Governor General of Begemder 1946-1952. Ras Asrate Kassa held this post before and after him, see below. The mayor of Gondar around 1954, Blatta Tsehai Desta, descended from Christian converts from the Falasha (from 1870 called Maryam Wodet and later Falas Mura). He avoided direct contact with Falasha. His 'administrator' and kinsman, Mellesse Tekle, had attended the Hebrew school in Addis Abeba for two years just prior to the Italian invasion. In the 1940s he learnt English by self-studies. He lived near the Gondar castles and, though with religious discretion, his house was open for contacts concerning Falasha, e.g. that he assisted the linguistic researchers Wolf Leslau and Joseph Tubiana in 1947-1949. [The Beta Israel ..., UK 1999 p 64]
- 1950 Americans visiting circa 1950: "I visited a silver smith. Tailor-fashion, he sat on the floor before a small anvil. On a short board nearby lay a hammer, a pair of pincers, and a small goat-skin bellows. These plus a charcoal fire were the tools of his trade." A new school building not yet ready for use: "The white stone building formed a great U, with gardens in the center between the wings. As we stepped inside the hall, the first thing which met our eyes was - not a drinking fountain - a long row of foot baths. -- Here, as in all the public buildings in Ethiopia, were the great marble squares set into the floor with a hole in the middle and the print of a man's shoe on either side. And, always, the doors are marked W.C." [E Heffner, Ethiopia - land beyond the Rift, USA 1957 p 111-112]
- 1953 The Haile Selassie I Public Health College and Training Center was established in 1953. It was a joint undertaking of ICA, WHO and the Ethiopian government. Its program was to educate health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians.
- 1954 FAO estimated the population to be around 22,000 in 1954.
- 1955 Asrate Kassa, born circa 1918 and the only son of Ras Kassa to survive the 1930s, was Governor General of Begemder 1942-1944, 1952-1956. He received Thomas Pakenham in his house in Addis Abeba and was willing to help him to try to find Mount Wehni. "Though the Governor of Gondar, he had barely heard of the Mountain, and had much less definite views on its whereabouts than Colonel Shifferaw." Asrate gave letters of introduction and Pakenham travelled to Gondar to start his discoveries from there. He uses ten pages of his book to tell the history of Gondar according to James Bruce. [T Pakenham, The mountains of Rasselas, London 1959(1998) p 35-45]
- Still in the mid-1950s the number of trucks arriving and departing from Gondar was small, perhaps a half-dozen arrivals in a day as a maximum and no arrivals for two or three days as a minimum. [Simoons 1960]
- However, by 1955 Gondar had service by Ethiopian Air Lines three times a week.
- 1956 Lt.General Merid Mengesha (1912-1966) was Governor General of Begemder 1956-1957 and then became Deputy Minister of Defence. The Gondar Public Health College together with hospital and health centre was visited by

the Minister of Public Health in December 1956. They were at this time staffed from Ethiopia, USA, Germany, Peru, Denmark, Netherlands, Iran, Poland, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, and the Sudan. The first 20 public health officers, 15 community nurses, and 12 sanitarians graduated on 24 August 1957.

Abune Mikael was bishop of Gondar at this time.

Haile Selassie I School in 1958 had 227 male students, and in 1960 it had 147 male students and one female in secondary education.

In the Community Nurses Course (2 years school + 1 year field training) there were 26 female students in 1958 and 46 in 1960.

In the Sanitarians Course (1 year school + 1 year field training) there were 20 male students in 1958 and 47 in 1960.

The Laboratory Technicians Course had 10 male students in 1959 but none in the immediately preceding or following years.

1959 Provincial Governor General in 1959 was Dejazmach Kifle Dadi. Provincial Director of Begemdir Teklay Gizat was Kenyazmach Bekele Zelelew, and Secretary General was Ato Siyoum Negash.

Kentiba (Mayor) of Gondar city was Ato Feleke Ergetu. Sub-province Governor of Gondar awraja was Dejazmach Kassa Meshesha.

Provincial chief of police in 1959 was Lt.Col. Gashaw Kebede and deputy chief was Lt.Col. Gedlu Wolde Ammanuel.

At the Highway Authority branch in Gondar the District Engineer was Mr Nicola Anesti (a Greek). Regional manager of Telecommunications, IBTE, was Ato Moges Bogale.

At the Public Health College in 1959 graduated 37 health officers, 18 community nurses, and 12 sanitarians. By 1960 there were not yet more than four community health centres where they could be placed as intended: Gondar, Gorgora, Kola Diba and Adi Arkay. The Unesco health centre at Majete was also suited for Gondar graduates.

[G A Lipsky, Ethiopia, USA 1962 p 165]

1960s "Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur."  
"The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's time of power. Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The townspeople of Gondar have chiefly been traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be."

[Levine, Wax and gold, 1965 p 21-22]

1960 "Finally, ahead, in a wooded green basin lay Gondar, once a capital of twenty palaces and over thirty churches, though all that could be seen now were a few white buildings amongst a thick growth of eucalyptus trees. I disturbed a pair of large spur-winged geese before dipping down into the final valley to the town. They took to the air heavily and were the first unusual birds I had seen.

The town spread over small hills and valleys, and the main street climbed in a steep winding spiral past derelict Italian structures that had been built more for show than style, and led to a small modern hotel overlooking the walled castles of the Ethiopian kings. -- The hotel was small and modern, with a swimming-pool in the garden. -- a young woman sat near the window reading. -- She was Margaret Mabbott, and her husband, Lyle, was the chief engineer on the Sources of the Nile project."

"We were disturbed early one morning by the beating of drums, and climbing the high road near the Governor's palace saw a procession coming towards us. It was the Sunday early in May -- the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. -- The velvet and gold glistened in the clear early light and the procession, followed by a large proportion of the inhabitants of Gondar, had a carefree and festive air that accompanies all ceremonies in Ethiopia. -- The procession turned off the road and entered the high gates of the Governor's palace which closed behind the Head Priest and his retinue. The rest of us waited outside while they breakfasted together."

[Toy 1961 p 157, 164]

An agreement signed with the American company RCA on 10 September 1960 concerned construction of several 1kW radio transmitters in the provinces, one of which in Gondar.

[News]

The future Lt.Colonel Workneh Gebeyehu was born in Gondar of poor parents. He made his own way to Addis Abeba. He was a captain in the second Kagnew battalion which served 1952-1953 in the Korea War. In 1959 he was important in a security department with the title of assistant minister. He was one of the top leaders of the attempted coup in December 1960 and killed himself when he would otherwise have been captured. His body was hanged on display in Addis Abeba.

[Greenfield 1965 p 360-361, 434]

Artist Abdurahman Jemaw Getahun was born in Gondar in 1960. He graduated from the Art School. He has designed many posters for cinemas and theatres.

[Eth. Artists p 202-203]

Artist Ketsela Markos was born in Gondar in 1942. He graduated from the Art School in Addis Abeba in 1963 and pursued higher studies in Hungary. He became employed as a restoration expert in the museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

[Eth. Artists p 158-159]

1960s Dejazmach Amaha Abera was appointed Governor-General of Begemder & Simen Province in February 1961.

The average daily traffic on the Azezo side in 1962 was 9 buses, 45 cars, and 33 trucks.

Ditto on the Debark side was 5 buses, 3 cars, and 34 trucks.

1965 Official statistics for 1965 say that there were 2,980 owned and 4,970 rented and 520 unspecified dwellings in Gondar. Of these 6,630 used piped water, 390 water from wells and 1,390 from streams. Illiteracy was 65.4% in 1965 (the average in Ethiopian towns at that time was 70.3%). According to an official publication Gondar had only one industrial establishment at this time, in the food sector (Incode Meat Company?).

The Gondar castles were visited by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on 6 February 1965.

"As one enters Gondar /from the north/ the road comes to a traffic circle. It is best to continue straight on a few more blocks until two large buildings appear on opposite sides of the street. Turn right here and then left at the first intersection. This street goes past the Fasil Hotel and down to the main square in front of the post office."

The Itegue Menen Hotel has a large capacity, tennis courts and a swimming pool, though the latter is usually empty. Rates are rather high. To reach the hotel by car, start from the post office in the centre of town and drive south on the main street to the large square next to the castles. Turn left here and then left again at the first crossing. At this point the hotel is visible on the right. It is a large, two-stoey, rectangular, yellow building on the hill.

On foot, go to the square in front of the post office. Walk east up the stairs, cross the road, mount the second set of stairs and then follow the road to the right.

The Fasil Hotel is located about three blocks north of the post office. The food is Italian.

The cinema is located on the east side of the main street running south from the post office. It shows films mostly in Italian.

There are several taxis and also horse-drawn *gari* carts. The EAL office is south of the post office but it does not provide transport to and from the airport.

A station for small buses to short-distance destinations like Azezo and Gorgora is half a block west of the post office. The main bus station is a large square about two blocks west of the post office.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 179-183]

"Life in Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches - some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to

communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people."

"The ecclesiastical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondare, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery.""

"In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem -- The Gondares -- view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as 'Galla.' As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondares. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely."

"-- government representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal - the great sycamore near Fasil's castle - has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagassi /a Shoan ruler around 1700/, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities."

[Levine, Wax and gold 1965 p 46-47]

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

1967 Population 30,734 as counted in 1967 (another source gives 36,309).

There were 21 telephone numbers in 1954. By 1965 there was a 200-lines automatic telephone exchange, and 190 subscribed lines were listed by 1967, with the Governorate General having a branch exchange at its number. (Only four towns in Ethiopia outside Addis Abeba and Eritrea had an automatic exchange around this time.) The telephones on personal numbers were about 55 for Ethiopian-type and about 30 for Arab-type names. The Public Health College is not counted there and had a total of 17 numbers, of which telephone at the residence were for foreign doctors En Shu Cahng, Lee-Min Han, H Lewinaki, L Molineaux, F W Rosa, S N Wasti and Ethiopian doctors Aseffa Teklie and Kassaye Tesfaye as well as for foreign unmarried female staff (all nurses?) M Gross, N O'Brien, M Paul, E Petti, S Van Buskirk. There was the Malaria Eradication Service, the Roman Catholic Church, the Wolde Sibhatu hotel and hardware shop, and the Asgedom Wolde Michael bookshop.

"-- saw Gondar /on 24 January 1967/ below us, cloaked in trees. -- I had planned to stop first at the Post Office, but now even letters mattered less than food. Wobbling into the respectable Fasil Hotel I sat in the bar-restaurant, on a blue tin chair at a blue tin table, begged the startled barman to give me something - anything - edible --"

"The news of our arrival had already spread and quite a crowd was awaiting me in the bar - which embarrassment became understandable when I learned that Leilt Aida has recently been telephoning the Chief of Police every evening, to enquire if we have yet arrived in Gondar."

The Italian-built Fasil Hotel is owned by a rich Gondare. It is a meeting-place for neatly-dressed students and civil servants who gamble with dice or cards, play billiards, or talk by the hour while drinking bottled beer. None of the staff speaks English. The electricity operates all night.

"This evening the Bank Director and the provincial Chief of Telecommunications took me to a *tej-beit* beyond the town centre. On our way we passed the market-place, where a public gallows dominates the scene. -- /Next day/ I met a compatriot, Nancy O'Brien, who is in charge of the Maternity Department at the Public Health College. -- In addition to the difficulty of recruiting intelligent young men, this project is hampered by the highlanders' resistance to change and by the influence of the *debtaras*, whose income would decrease if Western-trained medical advisers gained the people's confidence."

"This evening /28 January/ I dined at the home of the Bank Director, a thirty-six-year-old native of Manz who has eight handsome, high-spirited children between the ages of

eleven and two -- This Italian-built house is furnished - sparsely - with European couches and chairs -- During our conversation I again observed that goodwill towards the Italians which seems to be universal among educated Ethiopians. -- Among English-speakers I frequently hear Italians being spoken of almost as adopted cousins, Americans being derided for the usual reasons and Englishmen being praised for their trustworthiness but resented for their aloofness."

"During the past week I have spent hours talking to the local representatives of Ethiopia's new middle class, who use this hotel as their chief meeting-place. Many of them are very young for the positions they hold, since few Ethiopians over the age of thirty-five have had a modern education: some were trained abroad, but the majority are country-born graduates of Addis colleges, who now deplore their exile to Gondar."

"This afternoon I went on a shopping-spreed, which is quite possible in Gondar, where the Arab-owned stores surrounding the piazza display goods ranging from German lanterns and Japanese tennis shoes to resin and cowrie-shells. -- Colonel Aziz, second in command at the Provincial Police Headquarters - has gone to a lot of trouble to find an old Italian pack-saddle which, in theory, will solve my loading problem."

"Our departure from Gondar /31 January 1967/ was delayed by Jock's new saddle. -- Now, for the first time since leaving Massawa, I was walking through an undramatic landscape that might have been in Europe."

[Dervla Murphy, *In Ethiopia with a mule*, 1969 p 132-149 (1994 p 136-152)]

Out of handcrosses obtained for the museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in 1963-1977 about one-third have been described in a book. The provenance was unknown for 100 of them, but for 18 with known provenance 6 were wood crosses from Gondar. These six are quite different from each other and do not indicate any particular Gondar style.

[D Hecht, B Benzing, Girma K, *The hand crosses of the IES collection*, A.A. University 1990 p 35, 37, 40, 42]

1968 In 1968 there were 16 male and 13 female foreign teachers and 27 male and 11 female Ethiopian teachers at the College of Public Health.

1969 Around 1969 the Incode Meat Company employed 300 people.

The main hotel had the name Hotel Itegue Menen, or Itegue Hotel for short. There was also the less expensive Fasil Hotel.

1970s There were petrol filling stations of all the suppliers active in Ethiopia (-1978-): Agip, Mobil, Shell, Total. Spelling used by the post office (-1975-) was GONDAR. In March 1974 there was some unrest of workers in connection with the ongoing revolution. [News]

Population 64,562 in 1975, and as estimated in January 1978 including Azezo it was 67,790.

Only 23.6% of those living in Gondar in 1978 were born in the town.

1976 In 1976/?/ students in Gondar demonstrated against the Derg. The Rapid Deployment Force of the Derg with semi-automatic bren guns started shooting at the students. There seems to have been about 26 victims, including those who died in hospital afterwards. This is stated in an interview with Lisane Yohannes, a teacher who became a secret member of TPLF in September 1975 while the EPRP was a much more established opposition group.

The Party head, Melaku Tefera, started to come to Lisane's school to check attendance, and Lisane was badly beaten by Melaku's deputy Lieutenant Gebre-Igziabher.

One of the strong members of the TPLF committee, Gebrehiwet Kebedow, was imprisoned as a suspected EPRP member, but he succeeded to hide codes, names and money above the ceiling. It was later moved and hidden in another place, so the TPLF was not discovered and its members dared to visit Gebrehiwet in prison on Sundays when it was permitted. He was killed after about three months in prison. He seems to have remained completely silent about the TPLF.

[Hammond 1999 p 356-358]

1980s Main hotels around 1982 were Goha with 132 beds, "beautifully situated on a bluff overlooking panoramic view of the ancient castles", with swimming pool and manager

Mammo Habte Yohannes; Fogera with 12 beds and manager Demissie Sahle; Quara with 32 beds and manager Dagne Molla; Terrara with 51 beds and manager Assefa Mekuria. Wanzye Filwoha with manager Negash Beyene was a thermal bath only, with no restaurant and not even telephone.

Dr. Malede Marou was dean of the Faculty of Medicine in the early 1980s.

During famine relief flights in 1985, three Russians died when a Soviet helicopter hit a tree and fell to the ground at Gondar.

During the time of the famine, the TPLF ambushed Derg vehicles in a mountainous area.

"Almost at once, troops began to be diverted from Tigray to Gondar."

[Hammond 1999 p 348-349]

Population 90,220 in 1987.

Archbishop Merkorios of Gondar was elected patriarch of all Ethiopia when the previous patriarch died. [Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 2]

Late 1988/early 1989: the lifting of the 17th Army Division from Gondar reduced the defensive capacity of the 603rd Core Army and made the Gondar region vulnerable to rebels' offensive. [12th Int Conf 1994]

Late 1980s: "I walked up to the town's summit and found a garden full of poinsettia shrubs. An old Italian villa passed as the government hotel. It was an ugly building, rendered in sand-coloured plaster, yet clipped with the cold neatness of its fascist designers. -- /The Italians/ laid out the main street and lined it with 1930s buildings, and built municipal offices above. All these are still used, protracting the importance of those few unhappy years."

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 117]

1991 Early in 1991 it was the Fifth Revolutionary Army which had its headquarters in Gondar. "On February 23, 1991, the year of relative quiet came to an end, when the EPRDF announced 'Operation Tewodros' aimed at destroying the army in Gondar and Gojjam. Within a fortnight Operation Tewodros achieved its aims. The offensive was so swift that there was little chance for the army to undertake reprisals against civilians, though two incidents deserve mention.

One incident was the systematic execution of prisoners in Gondar town during the three days before its capture. -- Jenny Hammond, a British writer who visited the town the day after its capture by the EPRDF, spoke to townspeople who reported that about 120 detainees had been killed, and the execution of 100 or so more had been scheduled for the day of the EPRDF takeover. Later, Ms Hammond met Dawit Berhane, a Tigrayan merchant who had spent three years in prison on charges relating to alleged irregularities in obtaining a truck license. Dawit related how 19 of his cellmates (17 of them Tigrayans) were taken out and executed the day before the town fell. -- Dawit believed that 300 detainees had been executed in the final days, and said that during the previous three years over 3,400 people had been executed in the prison, 90 per cent of them Tigrayans." (The second incident referred to above was the long-distance shelling of Dejen town.)

[Africa Watch 1991]

Jenny Hammond stayed in the Quara Hotel on one side of the main square and it was almost empty at that time, just after the Front having entered the town. She heard Patrick Gilkes say on the World Service radio news that rebels were hanging people in the main square in Gondar, but when Hammond looked through the curtains the square seemed very peaceful to her.

[Hammond 1999 p 348-349]

By March 1991, EPRDF successes had removed the Derg forces from Gondar.

[Young 1997]

The battle for Gondar was preceded by the battle for Bahar Dar, called the battle of Hamusit because the 605th Army Corps had its centre of gravity there. Located there was also the command centre for the 25th Army Division, the one to be met in Gondar. "The battle for Gondar was over in six hours and was very low on casualties."

The Front held a public meeting in Castle Square and claimed that there were 25,000 participants. The first new administrator was Helawe Dagnaw.

[Hammond p 351, 355]

Jenny Hammond interviewed hotel manager Kidane Assegahegne on 15 March 1991.

"We have transferred to the Fogera Hotel, one of the four state tourist hotels. One reason is that it has kitchen staff and our presence helps to give them work; another is that the Hotel manager, Kidane Assegahegne, has been for years an underground member of the Front. In the early seventies, he had built up the Quara Hotel (from where we have just moved) from almost nothing to a successful establishment, until it was forcibly requisitioned by the Dergue. Later, Kidane was imprisoned and tortured for seven years in Addis Ababa -- Until only last week, the Fogera was filled with Party members and Dergue officials. Little did they suspect that Kidane was also providing a refuge for agents from the Front in disguise --"

"The restaurant and main facilities are in the main house of the hotel, but we stay in one of several thatched two-room chalets in a beautiful garden -- There are no tourists now and the hotel is virtually empty. Fighters don't stay in hotels -- After throwing away the lumpy porridge the cook makes me from our stores, I go to the kitchen the next morning to make it myself. In the basement, under the main hotel building is the largest cooking range I have ever seen, about fifteen feet long and five wide. When I walk in, the round lids have been removed and Mohammed is stuffing wood into it through the top - a dangerous business -- the hotel is secluded behind walls designed to keep tourists and their property safe from beggars and thieves, to keep poverty at a proper distance."

[Hammond 1999 p 361-362]

1994 Population 112,249 in 1994, and including Azezo about 150,000 in 1995.

Melaku Tefera (name translating as 'angel of fear') was extradited from Djibouti in May 1994.

"Mr Melaku is infamous for his nine years as party chief in Gondar under the 17-year communist dictatorship of the former president Mengistu Haile Mariam. A mass grave exhumed near Gondar airport two years ago uncovered more than 1,000 bodies."

[Lucy Hannan in Horn of Africa Bulletin]

"-- firing into a gathering of Christian worshipers and murdering several in Gondar in September 1993 -- had a chilling effect on those who would challenge *en masse* the acts of the apostles of Meles /Zenawi/."

"In Adebabay Iyesus Church in Gondar, seventeen were killed and sixteen wounded by security forces on 7 September 1994."

[T M Vestal, Ethiopia - a post-cold war .., USA 1999 p 56 + p 61 note 4]

Population about 112,200 in 1994.

"The town has one excellent modern government hotel, the Goha, which has a breathtaking view of the city. There are also several other good hotels, including Terara Hotel, Quarra Hotel, and Fogerra Hotel. Be warned, however, that all the hotels in town are hampered by the fact that water is available for only a half hour in the morning and another half hour in the evening." [Camerapix 1995]

"There are four government hotels in Gonder, all under the management of the Ghion chain. The most upmarket, the Goha Hotel, is perched on a hill a couple of kilometres from the town centre, and has a reputation as one of the best hotels in northern Ethiopia. - For character, you won't beat the Fagera Hotel, which was originally built as a villa by one of Mussolini's fascists. -- The most central and cheapest of the government hotels is the Qara Hotel on the Piazza -- There is the predictable cluster of dollar-a-night hotels around the bus station." [Bradt 1995 p 281-282 sketch map p 280]

Sightseeing: "The Royal Enclosure lies at the heart of modern Gonder -- Surrounded by high stone walls, the enclosure -- contains five castles -- and several smaller buildings. -- The most impressive castle is the original built by Fasil, which was constructed in around 1640. -- The first-floor roof was used for -- religious ceremonies -- Fasil's prayer room, also on the first floor, has four windows, every one of which faces a church. -- The other major relic of Fasil's reign is the Royal Archives building. This was partially destroyed during World War II -- the tiny castle built by -- Yohannis I (1667-82) is the least interesting -- was succeeded by Emperor Iyasu (1682-1706) -- His castle is one of the

largest in the compound -- was partially damaged by an earthquake in 1704 and the ground floor ceiling collapsed under the British bombardment in World War II. It is now little more than a shell. -- Bakafa /1721-1730/ -- left his mark on the Royal Enclosure by building a fourth castle, an immense banqueting hall (another victim of the British raid, and rendered unrecognisable by a feeble attempt at restoration using concrete!) and the adjoining stables. -- Mentuab's castle is a fine building, decorated with Gonder crosses, and in such good condition that it is now used as the public library. -- About 2 km out of the town centre, along the Bahir Dar road, lies a large sunken bathing pool which was built by Emperor Fasil. This pool is still used for the Timkat Festival -- There are 44 churches in Gonder, at least seven of which date from Fasil's rule, but most of the original buildings were destroyed in the 19th century Mahdist War -- The only original church that remains is Debre Birhan Selasie -- built during the reign of Yohannis I /1667-1681/ -- The church lies about 2 km out of town -- enclosed by a high stone wall and surrounded by juniper trees." [Bradt 1995 p 282-284]

1997 There were domestic flights by the EAL between Gondar airport (see Azezo) and Aksum, Bahir Dar, Humera, Lalibela.

2000s Population around 138,000 in 2001 and Gondar was then the 4th largest town in Ethiopia. John Graham wrote from Gondar on 12 May 2000: "The best view of Gondar is from the Goha Hotel, on a hill on the north side of town. Gondar stretches out below you, with the road in from the south clearly visible so you can retrace your drive into town."

"Detailed descriptions of the castles fall into a litany of storerooms, bedrooms, and archways. -- The first and most elaborate is the castle of Fasilides, under renovation the last time I visited in April 2000. It rises 32 meters, and defined the Gondar style -- Inside there are over 20 rooms, with elaborate archways and carvings which included the Star of David. -- Emperor Bekafa (1721-30) managed to build a wonderful castle, the longest of the bunch. It has two long courts, one a banquet hall and the other a stable, with arched doorways down the side, There is restoration underway, including an unfortunately ugly concrete roof to the banquet hall."

"Lions were kept in the cages of Gondar up until 1991. These were the characteristic Ethiopian lions, which are small and have darker manes -- Although the ongoing restoration is a bit disruptive, it's a credit to the Ethiopian government which is investing 2.3 million birr in it. The little HM which appears engraved in stones all over the site is not graffiti by Hailu Melaku, it is the symbol for restoration."

Included in the 50 birr ticket to see the castles is the service of a guide.

[J Graham in AddisTribune 2000/05/12]

texts C J Poncet, *A voyage to Ethiopia 1698-1701*, Hakluyt Society 1949;  
Sir William Jones, *Conversations with Abram, an Abyssinian, concerning the city of Gwender and the sources of the Nile. (Asiatick Researches I.)* Calcutta 1788.  
Luigi Cuffino, *La via carovaniera di Gondar e il mercato omonimo*, in *Bolletino della Società Africana d'Italia*, 24(1905) p 137-139;  
Raffaele di Lauro, *Tre anni a Gondar (1932-1935)*, Milano 1936;  
Ghiorghis Mellessa, "Gondar yesterday and today" & Richard Pankhurst, "Notes for the history of Gondar", *both articles in Ethiopia Observer* 12(1969) no 3 p 164-176, 177-227;

picts K Hildemann & M Fitzenreiter, *Äthiopien (Verlag Därr, Deutschland) 1999*, tourist guide p 275-301 with town plan p 276 and other plans p 281, 296;  
F Rosen, *Eine deutsche ...*, Leipzig 1907 p 234 market (castles/churches see below) 428-431 Falasha, pottery, synagogue, 432 Kantiba Gebru with daughter;  
H Norden, *Durch Abessinien ...*, Berlin 1935/?/ p 128-145 seven small-size pictures of castles and market scenes;  
A Frangipani, *L'Equivoco ...*, Milano 1935 p 113, 128 market, 192-193 Italian consulate in 1927, 208-209 brick kiln, agricultural concession of the Italian consulate, 256 castles;

Gli annali ..., anno I vol II /Roma Aug 1938/ p 446-447[plate 17] visit to the "beacon" by General Teruzzi, [18] crowd of Ethiopian priests and Italians at the same visit;

Gli annali ..., anno III vol I /1940/ p 692-693 [3] Palazzo della Gil project, schools for Ethiopians, [4] five photos of life at schools for Eth. children; p 716-717 [11] Italian project of Catholic cathedral, new Italian-built mosque, [12] church Gabriel and episcopal church Medhane Alem, with restorations by Italians, church of the Abuna, p 828-829 [1] three photos of hospital, p 916-917 [4] cinema-theatre of *Dopolavoro*, [5] seat of Federazione dei Fasci, p 964-965 [3] five photos of castles;

Gli annali ..., anno IV vol 3, Roma 1941 p 1022-1023 [4-6] three facsimiles of Italian propaganda prints from Gondar;

Gli annali ..., anno IV vol 4, Roma 1941 p 1164-1165 [5]

Albergo CIAAO several views, p 1186-1187 [2] market: - etching by artist Lino Bianchi Barriviera;

P Hartlmaier, Amba Ras, Frankfurt am Main 1953 pl 37, 42 castles, pl 39 fresco, pl 41, 43 people at market;

F J Simoons, Northwest Ethiopia ..., USA 1960 fig 75 large crowd at the first weekly market after the long Lenten fast, fig 77, 79 salt and cotton vendors;

M Abir, Ethiopia: the era of ..., London 1968 p 87 air view of the town;

Ethiopia Observer vol XII /1969/ no 2 p 123 Italians after surrender in 1941, ditto no 3 p 205 air photo of town and surroundings in 1968;

T Tonkin, Ethiopia with love, London 1972 p 78 drawing looking from castle towards town, 81-95 six drawings of historical remains;

Rakennusteknikka (Finland) 1976 no 2 p 105 multi-purpose hall at the Public Health College;

J Wenzel, Im Land der dreizehn ..., Rudolstadt 1985 (castle photos see below) pl 15-18 details of the hospital, pl 33-41 market and hospital pictures;

L Rapoport, Redemption song, New York 1986 p 110-111[4] town from above;

Tenaestelin (Sthlm) 1991 no 1 p 18 children in line for food at a relief centre;

T Pakenham, The mountains of Rasselas, London 1998 (luxury ed.)

p 28-29 two-page colour photo showing most of the town in 1998;

M Aubert, Ethiopia, Local Colour, Hong Kong 1999 p 49 street view seen from a launderette

maps a sketch of the town plan of Gondar from James Bruce (Edinburgh 1790)

is reproduced in Richard Pankhurst, A social history of Ethiopia (1990) The Red Sea Press 1992, p 100;

"Plan de Gondar" by Lejean in 1872, reproduced in Ethiopia

Observer 12(1969) no 3 p 204;

Guida dell'A.O.I. 1938 p 354, 356-357;

municipal borders in the Italian time,

in Gli annali ..., anno III vol I /Roma 1940/ p 907;

sketch map of the Gondar region, Shirreff 1995 p 242;

map of battle 27 November 1941, Shirreff ditto p 269;

### **Gondar castles (1)**

*Castle compound* (Royal Compound)

From the post office in the centre of Gondar, walk south to the high stone wall at the end of the street. Along the wall are window openings and the top of the wall is crenellated. From the large square to the north of the Royal Compound a street to the left curves to the south and follows the wall. From this street one can see the top of Queen Mentuab's palace and, to the west of it, forming part of the wall, the castle of Bakaffa. On a corner of the wall between these two castles, there is a tower where Mentuab's chief cavalry officer lived. Here is the first gate in the wall, the Gate of the Captain of the Cavalry. A bit further to the east is a large metal gate *Ras Ber*, the only entrance to the compound

of the church of Attami Kidus Mikael.

Continuing the walk along the wall, one comes to *Imbilta Ber*, the Gate of Flutists, and then to *Kwali Ber*, the Wedding Gate which opens on to the compound of the round House of Nuptials.

At the first ruined arch over the road is *Addanager Ber*, the Gate of Spinners; at the second arch is the Chamberlain's Gate.

Just inside the wall at the southeast corner of the compound are some small modern buildings. They house the Adebabay Yesus Clinic, health training centre and mother and child health clinic of the Public Health College.

Across the street is the church of Adebabay Tekle Haymanot. At the corner, across the street from the Royal Compound, is the modern Adebabay Iyasu orthodox church, which was constructed over the site of an old church.

Beyond this is a large square with a huge fig tree in the centre. This square is the meeting place of the town when important news is to be announced. Near the corner of the wall is *Teskaro Ber*, the Gate of Funeral Ceremony, and a bit to the west, near a round, ruined tower, is *Wember Ber*, the Gate of Judges. Inside the compound near the Gate of Judges, one can see the towers of the castle of Fasilides.

The road follows the wall and curves back toward the centre of the town, passing *Jan Tekel Ber*, the Gate of the Grand Guard, and then the Gate of Gimjabet Maryam, a circular church which has been constructed on the base of an old structure.

One then comes to another arch which projects from the wall. Here is the Gate of Princess Inkoi, named in honour of Queen Mentuab's mother. Next is a modern gate in the wall which is not one of the original gates, and this is the gate by which you enter the Royal Compound. Just beyond, near the castle of Bakaffa, is the twelfth and last gate, the Gate of Doves.

Around 1965 there was an entrance fee of Eth\$ 1 for a tour of the castles.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 184-185]

Within the vast enclosure, over 300 metres long, are about ten buildings of varying importance, the tallest of which present a certain incongruity, having towers in mediaeval style and lofty windows reminiscent of the Renaissance. It is difficult to say how far they show a connexion with the colonial architecture of the Portuguese, although this was certainly a source of inspiration. It has been suggested that these buildings were actually the work of the Portuguese, but this can hardly be so since at the time of the main foundations such Portuguese as had survived had already left the country. The buildings are arranged one after another from south to north, in strict order of succession according to the chronological sequence of the kings who constructed them.

[J Dorese, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 187-188]

picts

R Pankhurst, A social history ..., 1992 p 75 castles from an engraving

in T. Waldmeier 1886/1888; same in R Pankhurst., The Ethiopian borderlands,

The Red Sea Press 1997 p 399;

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

p 302, 304, 310, 313, 314, 317 castles and other ruins;

F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 402 north front of the castles,

409 Fasil's castle, 414-417 three views of the castles;

N Rodén, Abessiniens ..., Sthlm 1930 p 49 group of castles (from Budge);

F Wencher-Wildberg, Abessinien, Berlin 1935, plate 44 two castles;

D Mathew, Ethiopia, London 1947 p 38, 54, 70 castles;

Missionen i bild, Stockholm 1948 p 244 castles;

H Neubacher, Die Festung ..., 1959 p 97, 100 castles;

Tenaestelin (Sthlm) 1966 no 2 p 1 view out from Fasil's castle;

B Davidson, Africa ..., London (1966)1972 p 141 castle and part of town;

G Gerster, Äthiopien, Zürich 1974 pl 95 two-page view of the castle area;

S Rubenson, The survival ..., A.A. 1976 p 84-85 [fig 5-7] three photos;

J Wenzel, Im Land der dreizehn ..., Rudolstadt 1985 pl 19 castles with the town in foreground, pl 42-44 castles;

Camerapix guide 1995 p 41 castles, 91 castle compound from above;  
 T Pakenham, The mountains of Rasselas, London 1998 (luxury ed.)  
 p 32-33, 36-37 castles;  
 Bradt guide 1995 p 242-243[pl 3], ditto 1998 p 50-51[pl 4] castles  
 as seen from Fasil's castle;  
 M Di Salvo, Churches ..., Milano 1999 p 16-17 two main castles

### **Gondar castles (2)** (separately, mainly in chronological order)

#### *Fasil's castle* (reign 1632-1667)

The first but also the largest and among the best preserved of the royal castles, built after the move of the capital to Gondar in 1635 but not completed in Fasil's time.

Emperors Yohannes I and Iyasu I (1667-1682-1706) continued and finished the work. The square, two-storey castle has a round tower at each corner. On the roof is a large square tower from which there is a good view of the entire royal compound and on clear days even of Lake Tana.

The castle is entered by the stairs on the north side of the building. The interior has not been maintained, although the castle was partially restored in the 1940s/?.

[Welcome to Ethiopia p 186]

Fasil's castle is built of masonry with hewn stones and lime mortar. The corner towers are topped with domes, and the rectangular tower in the southwest corner has two more floors. The foundation is approximately 25 x 25 metres and the height of the square tower is 32 metres.

Next to Fasil's palace was a reception hall about 39 x 14 metres of which only some remnants of the walls remain. Not far away were the cages where lions were kept in recent times until 1991.

[Jäger 1965 p 41-41]

The palace was the first but also the biggest and loftiest of the group. It is almost square in plan, with a sugar-loaf tower at each corner rising above the crenellated terrace, each one being crowned with a square, two-storey keep. There is a steep stairway on the outside of each tower leading up to the top, and a long covered way that connects with the Gate of the Judges. On the first floor the high windows form a complete semi-circle giving on to long wooden balconies.

[J Doresse, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 188]

"Fasilades did not want the elaborate baroque that the Catholics had brought from Goa -- Gondarene architecture is sturdy and unembellished, and, in the shadow of the failed Catholicism, reaffirmed the austerity of life in the Ethiopian mountains."

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 119]

picts Nat. Geogr. Mag. LXVIII:3, September 1935 p 316 Fasil's castle, also an old bridge in the surroundings of Gondar;

D Buxton, Travels ..., London (1949)1957 p 96[pl 2];

D Busk, The fountain ..., London 1957 opposite p 96;

J Doresse, Ethiopia, (1956) London 1959 p 175[91];

Nat. Geogr. Mag. vol 127, April 1965 p 558;

Merian Monatsheft: Äthiopien, Hamburg Oktober 1966 p 31 castle,

p 32 very large sycamore tree;

N K Saxena, Ethiopia through ..., Calcutta 1968 p 66 drawing of the castle;

#### *Fasil's small castle*

A little to the northeast of the main castle is a small castle attributed to Fasilides. It is almost completely in ruins.

#### *Yohannes's chancellery* (reign 1667-1682)

The shell is standing of this building near the library, see next item. At the northwest corner of the building is a slender square tower. There used to be an outside staircase leading to the second floor.

[Jäger 1965 p 42]

*Yohannes's library*

A cube-like two-storey building with exterior decoration. The walls are painted yellow. The top of the building is crenellated along the edge of the flat roof. The interior of the building is in fair condition, although in the 1960s it was used as a store room.

[Welcome to Ethiopia p 186 + Jäger p 42]

picts J Doresse, Ethiopia (1956) London 1959 p 138[pl 68] the library

*Iyasu's castle* (reign 1682-1796)

Called the "saddle castle" because of the shape of its main tower. In the north a small conical tower is spiralled by an outside staircase. There was some damage already by the 1704 earthquake. The castle was bombed during the liberation war in 1941, the ground floor ceiling collapsed, and the southern part was destroyed. There is little more than a shell left.

[Jäger p 42]

The palace has a quaint outside staircase curling up in a spiral form from the bottom of one of the corner towers. Inside, on the second floor, there was a terraced roof supported by a series of round arches. The ground floor was used for receptions and the chronicler describes it as ornamented with ivory, with gilded ceilings and panelled walls decorated with paintings or hung with long mirrors. A large stone basin adorned the courtyard.

[J Doresse, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 188]

*Dawit's House of Song* (reign 1716-1721)

A large hall, also referred to as "Pavilion of Delight" or *Debbal Gimb*, where festivals were held. Size of the ground plan about 12.50 x 30 m. The building is nowadays a ruin. Dawit seems to have been the one to introduce a cage for lions as royal symbol.

*Bekeffa's castle* (reign 1721-1730)

A long one-storey palace close up against the enclosure wall of the compound, and across from it there is a series of arcades belonging to the stables. Also called the "reception hall", a banquet place consisting of two long halls connected by a smaller room at the end. "Another victim of the British raid /in 1941/, and rendered unrecognisable by a feeble attempt at restoration using concrete!"

[Bradt 1995 p 284]

*Iyasu II's castle* (reign 1730-1755)

Built with the help of craftsmen from Smyrna, see above in the general text about Gondar. Only a pile of rubble is left of it.

*House of the Nuptials*

There are some remains of this building intended for use in preparation for royal weddings. It is a square building with a corner tower.

*Mentwab's castle*

Queen Mentwab's castle, east of Bekeffa's castle, is one of the most ornate buildings in the Royal Compound. It has the characteristic outside staircase and wooden balconies. When James Bruce saw it around 1771 the interior was still furnished; he noted great chests of cedar wood and, in between the window bays, brackets evidently intended for wall mirrors which had never arrived.

[mainly from J Doresse p 188]

Just in front of the castle is a windowless building, used as a Turkish bath.

*Ras Mikael Suhul's palace* (in power until 1772)

It was early the best restored of the Gondar castles and served as the palace for Emperor Haile Selassie when he visited Gondar. An attempt was made to furnish it in Gondarine style, with square panels of dark wood in the large rooms.

The Governor General in the 1960s lives in a separate villa in the castle grounds and has his office one block north of Ras Mikael's palace.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 186-187]

Located outside the Royal Enclosure, this palace is like a small version of Fasil's castle. It has a slightly foreboding air, to fit with the character of Ras Mikael. It was used as a prison during the Derg period, and is said to have been the site of brutality and torture. It

is not open to visitors.  
[Lonely planet 2000 p 175]

### **Gondar castles in the neighbourhood**

*Fasil's pool* usually called Fasil's bath

Located in the valley of the Qaha river, northwest of the city about 2½ km along the road. The easiest route to there starts with the main road south toward Azezo. This road makes a large curve just past the business section of town, crosses a stream, curves again and then goes up a small rise. At the top of the rise there is a fork in the road. The dirt road on the left goes straight on to the bath, situated only about a kilometre from the town.

The pool compound is surrounded by a high stone wall consisting of one square and six round towers - sentry posts - placed at random along its length. Inside this large compound is another waist-high wall with trees growing in it that form a rectangular compound. Most of the area of this compound is occupied by a pool 70 x 40 m (or 50 x 30?) which is up to 2.50 m deep and usually dry. It is built of undressed stone.

In the pool, at the north end, is a square, two-storey building with narrow, arched doors and windows that lead onto balconies overlooking the pool. On the top is a crenellated tower.

The original use of the building is not known, but in the late 1700s it was converted into a church. In recent times it is used as the main place in Gondar for the Timqat celebrations, on which occasion the pool is filled with water and the tabots of seven churches are carried there.

North of the pool and inside the compound is a modern building which in the 1960s was designated as a sports club, but not in regular use.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 188-189]

picts G Hancock, *The sign and ...*, New York 1992

pl 42-47 priests and Timket celebrations;

T Pakenham, *The mountains of Rasselas*, London 1998 (luxury ed.)

p 67-71 Timket ceremonies with priests, one picture of the building;

Camerapix guide 1995 p 20 the pool at Timket

*Tomb of the Horse*

Just in front of Fasil's Bath, in a large field, are the ruins of a circular structure with six arches and a cupola. This building is generally known as the Tomb of the Horse Zubei, according to legend Emperor Fasil's favourite horse. It is also said that it was used as a pavilion from which the emperor reviewed his troops.

[Welcome to Ethiopia p 188 + Jäger p 46]

picts F Rosen, *Eine deutsche ...*, Leipzig 1907 p 403 "the tomb";

A Frangipani, *L'Equivoco ...*, Milano 1935 p 257 ditto

*Kuskwam*

Situated about 3 km to the northwest of Gondar, but the modern road to Azezo makes a bend northwards because of a valley and passes not far from Kuskwam.

Buildings mostly initiated by Queen Mentwab after the death of her husband Emperor Bekeffa in 1730. James Bruce was a visitor there in some periods within 1770-1771.

When he returned to Europe via Sudan he passed Kuskwam and left from there on 26 December 1771.

1960s After about 2 km from Gondar along the road to Azezo there is the headquarters of the Highway Authority. Across the road is a smaller building. Just beyond that building is a very rough road that leads up the side of the hill to the ruins of Kuskwam. "It is advisable to walk up."

"The best view of Kuskwam is from the valley. From below one sees only the majestic tower on the side of the hill, surrounded by trees, an idyllically peaceful scene. However, the visit to the ruins will change this impression."

The whole compound of the residence of Queen Mentwab is overgrown with brush and maize patches. To create a further obstacle farmers have constructed high stone walls between their patches, taking many of the stones from the convenient pile nearby - the

ruins. Many of the ruins are only a few metres away, but entirely inaccessible. The easiest to see is the compound that contains the large circular church of Debre Tsehay (see below under Gondar churches). This building was greatly damaged during the war in the early 1940s and was partly reconstructed, but not completed for regular use.

East of the church compound is the separate compound enclosing the ruins of the residence of Queen Mentuab, a chapel, and the reception hall used by the Queen. Kuskwam served as a pleasant retreat for her. Though physically separated from the life of the city, she continued to play an influential part in the politics of the empire.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 189-190]

The entire compound was surrounded by a fortified wall. Old trees spread a pleasant shade. It is imposing to see the front of the two-storey reception hall next to the slender watchtower facing Gondar. This reception hall is also only a ruin now, but one can still imagine how magnificent it was when the beautiful and highly cultured Empress held court here. Gerhard Rohlf, who visited Ethiopia in 1880/81, already found the palace in ruins, but shows in an etching a square tower with a saddle roof, which today no longer exists.

Above the doors and windows, Coptic crosses are carved in flat relief on red tuff. Also to be seen are a lion, an elephant, a man's head with a peculiar headdress, and a saint riding a lion. The view over the neighbouring hills and Gondar is splendid.

[Jäger 1965 p 46-47]

texts A A Monti della Corte, I castelli di Gondar, Roma 1938, with about 30 photos and 10 drawings of castles etc in or very near Gondar town;

picts Monti della Corte as above, p 51-53 drawings of reliefs, 65[XXIV] photo of tower, 68[XXV] main façade, 69[XXVI] ruin of Debre Tsehay church, 70[XXVII] abbot's house, 71[XXVIII] ruin of the Empress's dwelling, 74-75[XXIX-XXX] exterior and interior of the main ruin;

J Leroy, Ethiopian painting, (in French 1964) London 1967, plates LI-LIV scenes from the life of the Virgin, from manuscript of the church attached to Queen Mentuab's palace;

D Buxton, Travels ..., London (1949)1957 p 97 the palace;

H Helfritz, Äthiopien ..., Köln 1972 p 174-177[pl 84-87] four black-and-white exterior photos of the castles;

M Di Salvo, Churches ..., Milano 1999 p 30(fig 20) Queen's residence and its surroundings

### **Gondar churches**

with the most published church given first place and the others arranged in alphabetical order by their names; there were 44 churches in Gondar in the 1960s.

#### *Debre Birhan Silasse*

Located at about one kilometre east of the northern part of the north-south axis of Gondar town.

This church was constructed during the reign of Iyasu I (reign 1682-1706). It lies on the crest of a hill, a 30-minute walk to the northeast of Gondar. At that time the entire hill was covered with houses which have now disappeared so that there is a peaceful park of old juniperus and olive trees. The church is encircled by a high fortified wall with towers. The gate tower contains a priests' school on the upper floor. The court is diametrically divided, one part reserved for the aristocracy and the other for the community.

In 1693, on the initiative of the Governor of the Dutch East Indies, Emperor Iyasu received the gift of a bell for the church.

This church was never destroyed. It is said that when the dervishes from Sudan tried to burn it in 1881 they were attacked and dispersed by bees.

The church is rectangular. The cloister around it was added later to protect the old building. The main entrance has two high doors. Between the two first rooms above the centre division is the "empore" for the Emperor; a small outside staircase leads to it. The inside walls of the front room are covered with paintings on cloth, glued to the

surface. The ceiling is built with thick beams and is decorated with winged angel heads looking down.

[These angel heads are among the very most published pictures from Ethiopia, used as tourist propaganda and for other purposes.]

The wall paintings depict scenes from the life of Christ, Mary, and the saints, the Trinity, and others (the scenes are specified in detail in Jäger's book p 50-52).

[Jäger 1965 p 47-52]

According to the chronicles it was a magnificent building surrounded by trees of many different kinds. Contemporary writers rhapsodize about the cross with its golden balls which crowned the roof, and even more about the splendid paintings which completely covered the four walls of the body of the holy of holies. The square tower had a pair of bells sent as a gift by the Netherlands. There is a detailed list of the sacred objects and precious stuffs that also formed part of the endowment: crowns and crosses, a staff of silver with pommel of crystal, vestments of purple and gold, hangings and floor-coverings

...

[J Dorse, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 189]

"Through the gatehouse -- I found a low rectangular church murmuring with the chants of the morning service. -- Around the compound was a high wall spaced with turrets.

A monk was reading a text at the foot of one of the turrets. When I approached, his long, biblical face broke into a smile, and he said, 'Please, go inside.'

I stepped into the tower. Its hollow space was about seven feet wide.

'It is where I live,' said the monk, and swung a fly-whisk across his face. He pointed to a roll of matting, blankets, a couple of water bottles, and a half-empty sack of grain; on the wall was a print of the madonna. That was all.

Then he waved the fly-whisk at a ladder. The tower tapered towards the cupola, and when I poked my head above a wooden platform, I found a much narrower space. Through a high slit in the wall the sun fell onto a pile of neatly-folded blankets - the home of a novice. I thought of all the other monks' cells around the mountains --how their practical lives were not much different from the peasants."

/1980s:/ In the church the walls are covered in frescoes, and the ceiling and crossbeams painted with countless winged angels. But the thatch has thinned and allowed damp to seep through the timbers, and pigeons nesting in the rafters have streaked the paintings.

[Marsden-Smedley 1990 p 119-120]

Photography is permitted, though pointless without a flash which is no longer allowed. Entrance fee US\$2.

[Bradt 1995 p 284-285]

- picts O A Jäger, *Antiquities ...*, Stuttgart 1965 p 49-52 layout of wall paintings;  
 B Davidson, *Africa ...*, London (1966)1972 p 136 large colour plate of icon covering a door, 142 seraphim painted in the ceiling;  
 Merian Monatsheft: Äthiopien, Hamburg Oktober 1966 p 20 angel heads;  
 J Leroy, *Ethiopian painting*, (in French 1964) London 1967 plates XXXVIII-XXXIX mural paintings;  
 G Gerster, *Kirchen im Fels*, Stuttgart 1968 pl 14 ceiling with seraphim;  
 A Forsberg, *I Etiopien*, Sthlm 1969 p 83 wall and ceiling paintings;  
 H Helfritz, *Äthiopien ...*, Köln 1972 p 18-19 colour plates of wall paintings, p 178[pl 89] entrance of the monastery, with Juniperus trees;  
 G Hancock et al, *Under Ethiopian skies*, London 1983(1987) p 84-85 two-page wide view of interior in colour;  
 J Wenzel, *Im Land der dreizehn ...*, Rudolstadt 1985 pl 21 exterior of the church, pl 22 wall and ceiling paintings, pl 45 exterior of wall, pl 46-48 wall paintings;  
 Camerapix guide 1995 p 92-93 seraphim in the ceiling;  
 T Pakenham, *The mountains of Rasselas*, London 1998 (luxury ed.) two-page colour plate inside both covers;  
 K Nomachi, *Bless Ethiopia*, Tokyo 1998 (English ed. Hong Kong) p 109 ceiling with winged angel heads;

M Di Salvo, Churches ..., Milano 1999 p 66(fig 64) facade, 67(65) plan

#### *Abba Antonius*

This church, built during the reign of Yohannes I (1667-1682), is on the right side of the Qaha river. Its original wall paintings were removed by the Frenchman Marcel Griaule in 1927 and are displayed in the "Musée de l'Homme" in Paris. A poor copy of paintings for the church were made by a French painter.

[Jäger 1965 p 60]

Jean Doresse: The paintings are of distinctive charm, with bold lines and warm colours.

#### *Abba Tsehale Tekle Haymanot*

Tradition indicates that the original church was built in the time of Fasil or Iyasu. The present building is a reconstruction. The stones are well-hewn and well-set. Its plan is unusual with outer cruciform shape within overall rectangular dimensions and octagonal inner shape.

[Jäger 1965 p 58-59 with drawing of the plan]

#### *Adebabay Iyesus*

"In Adebabay Iyesus Church in Gondar, seventeen were killed and sixteen wounded by security forces on 7 September 1994."

[T M Vestal, Ethiopia - a post-cold war .., USA 1999 p 56 + p 61 note 4]

#### *Adebabay Tekle Haymanot*

Ruins, with a "poor little church" of later time inside the circular compound.

[Guida 1938 p 355]

The original church was built by Iyasu I (1682-1706) as a funeral church for one of his sons. The chronicles were kept in this church.

[Hildemann & Fitzenreiter, Äthiopien 1999 p 288]

#### *Arba tenza*

At one kilometre east of the north-south axis of Gondar.

#### *Atatami Kidus Mikael*

This church is within the castle compound on the northeast side. It was built by Emperor Dawit II. It is square and was surrounded by an open cloister, which had round towers on the four corners. Today, three of the sides and three towers are gone. The fourth side of the circuit has been closed and is now used as an anteroom for the church. The construction resembles that of a palace. Two small paintings on canvas of Mikael and Maryam, in the style of the 1400s, are loosely hung on the wall. Services are held occasionally once a month on Saint Mikael's Day; the church cannot, therefore, be visited at all times.

[Jäger 1965 p 57]

#### *Ba'ata Maryam*

Shown as "Bahata" west of the Saturday market on town plan in 1938.

During the reign 1769-1777 of the not very powerful Tekle Haymanot II, Ba'ata Maryam was one of the seven churches he built in Gondar. It became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of religious dance, *aquaquam*, with 276 masters in its heyday.

#### *Catholic church*

There was a small church, "chiesetta cattolica", during the Italian occupation, with near it the *Prefettura Apostolica*, situated in the northern part of the town.

#### *Debre Tsehay*

Also called Abbey of Kuskwam. Used to be one of the most important churches in Gondar.

It had a vast enclosure wall with squat turrets placed at intervals along it, and an inner adjacent wall surrounding the buildings, which consisted of the Empress's private residence, a small chapel, and a State building (see above under "Gondar castles in the neighbourhood"). The great abbey church was circular, with a conical roof, raised on a round stepped platform. It contained paintings even more distinguished than those of Debre Birhan Silasse, representing, in addition to the more usual scenes, the Last

Judgement, the Revelation of the Coming of the Antichrist, and, so we are told, all the saints held in veneration by the Ethiopian Church.

What is there left of all this magnificent display of Kuskwam? Only a few fine manuscripts preserved by the monks of Debre Tsehay, and, half-hidden in an abandoned shrubbery, a row of tumbledown arches worthy of a Roman ruin.

[J Doresse, Ethiopia (1956)1959 p 189-190]

This building was greatly damaged during the war in the early 1940s and was partly reconstructed, but not completed for regular use.

*Fit Abo*

At the very southern boundaries of Gondar, its oldest church has been reconstructed.

It was first built by Emperor Fasil (in the 1630s?) before he commenced with the building of his palace in Gondar. The original church was demolished by the dervishes, but now it again overlooks the plain towards Lake Tana. In a separate building an advanced ecclesiastical school is housed.

[Jäger p 60]

*Fit Mikael*

"La povera chiesa" in the southern half of the town. [Guida 1938]

*Gimjabet Maryam*

The church is located in the western part of the castle compound, constructed in Fasil's time. Inside the Holy of Holies is preserved a picture which, according to tradition, was painted with the tears of Emperor Yohannes I. The western wall of the Holy of Holies was painted in the 1800s.

The architecture deviates from the usual style of the round church, in that the cube of the Holy of Holies carries the roof and the cylinder is lacking. Within this cubicle, which no one may enter, but which is occasionally partly opened to view, one sees a large processional picture. It is even likely that the cube is but another circuit around an inner cube.

In the courtyard of the church lies a tomb with the inscription: "In Memory of Walter Michele Plowden First British Consul in Ethiopia and Friend of the Emperor Theodore. Died at Gondar 13th March 1860." The monument was disassembled and has been rebuilt with the stones set in disorder so that it is difficult to reconstruct the inscription.

[Jäger 1965 p 56-57]

In his brother's book "Travels in Abyssinia .." (1868) Plowden's name is given as Walter Chichele Plowden. The inscription, however, reads "Walter Charles M.... [illegible] Plowden". In the official *London Gazette* it says Walter Charles Metcalfe Plowden. His brother, writing eight years after the death and not having seen his brother since he was seven years himself, may have made a mistake about the name.

[D Busk, The fountain of the sun, London 1957 p 85-87]

*Gondaraj Giyorgis*

Church not far from Gondar.

picts

J Leroy, Ethiopian painting, (in French 1964) London 1967 pl XXXV-XXXVI

Council of Nicaea, reproduced from large-size manuscript

*Ilfin Giyorgis*

This church is situated adjacent to the Atatame Mikael on the eastern boundary inside the castle compound. It is a round church said to originate from the time of Emperor Fasil. The church owns a series of six small square portraits of St. George killing the dragon, painted in the style of the 15th century.

[Jäger 1965 p 57]

*Kaa Iyesus*

About two kilometres northwest of Fasil's Castle.

*Kidus Gebriel*

"Povera chiesa".

*Kidus Kirkos*

Near the north-south middle of town, "Cuddùs Chercòs" in Italian spelling. [Guida 1938]

*Kidus Mikael*

Attached to another building in the Castle Compound. Square in plan like some early Ethiopian churches, but with a different façade consisting of a series of wide bays with a round tower at either end.

*Kidus Yohannes*

The church is in the Angared valley off the road to the east near the Police School and not far from the Public Health College. This structure in the Gondarine style was built by Iyasu II (reign 1730-1755) and consists of four circular towers topped by cupolas, one at each corner of the rectangular church. The incongruous sheet iron roof serves as partial restoration.

[Welcome to Ethiopia p 190 + Jäger p 60]

Is this the same Kidus Yohannes as the one about 1½ km west of Fasil's Castle, near the former Italian Consulate?

*Lideta Maryam*

To find it one goes two kilometres past the Public Health College and then on foot east of the road. In a small village near the road is the circular church of Lideta Maryam. The church itself is of modern origin and is not of great interest [seems to refer to one more church on the site], but in one of the walls is the tomb of Emperor Yostos (1711-1716). It is said that Yostos founded the original church. [The photo in Rosen's book shows an old building.] The high walls with watchtowers are well preserved and give the impression of a strong fortress.

[Welcome to Ethiopia p 190 + Jäger p 60]

picts F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 427 "Lyd'heta" exterior of the whole church

*Medhane Alem*

This church lies in the centre of the town and is the seat of the bishop of Gondar. It was first built under the reign of Fasil (1632-1667), was later burnt and destroyed, and was then reconstructed after 1881. It is a typical Ethiopian round church with two circuits. All outer walls of the Holy of Holies are covered with paintings on cloth glued to the walls. (The scenes in these paintings are specified in detail in Jäger's book.) The paintings represent the Ethiopian style of the 19th century, but copy to a great extent the 17th century.

[Jäger 1965 p 52-56 with simple sketches of the paintings]

picts F Rosen, Eine deutsche ..., Leipzig 1907 p 425;  
Gli annali ..., anno III vol I /Roma 1940/ p 716-717 [12] several churches

*Mitmak Maryam*

Italian spelling Metmac Mariam. About one kilometre straight south from Fasil's Castle.

*Qaha Iyesus*

This church is in a grove of trees on a hill on the left side of the Qaha river. In the Holy of Holies the tabot is kept on a wooden shelf. The church owes a magnificent manuscript "Faith of the Fathers" which gives comments of the bishops on the Council of Nicea in 381 AD.

[Jägerr 1965 p 59]

*Tekle Haymanot*

On the eastern side of the castle compound, across the road and formerly connected to Iyasu's castle by a covered bridge, lies Tekle Haymanot church. The supporting arches of the connecting bridge still cross the road. The church might date back beyond the 17th century but the present building is a modern rectangular church. It is surrounded by a high wall, and large gates lead into the court.

In the shadow of its gate live people who seek the Saint's blessing and healing of their infirmities. They live on the charity of the church-goers. It is said that a bone from the foot of Tekle Haymanot is preserved in the church.

The grave of Emperor Iyasu's son was in a small adjacent chapel to which the covered passage led.

On the door of the Holy of Holies, three small square paintings of Tekle Haymanot in the style of the 15th century are loosely hung.

[Jäger 1965 p 58 + Guida 1938 p 355]

### **Gondar: Addis Alem**

1600s "The governor of Gojjam appealed to Susenyos, and he arrived at Addis Alem, the headquarters of Sela Christos, at the time when the latter was under heavy Matcha attack. When Susenyos descended on the Matcha like a whirlwind from the hill above Addis Alem 'the Galla fled like animals chased by a lion' (Pereira p 222)."

[Mohammed 1994]

Emperor Fasiledes went to Gojjam in 1655 and advanced to Addis Alem, but the Oromo fled at the news of his arrival.

[Pankhurst 1997]

1950s "In Gondar even today the Moslems still live in their ancient quarter, Addis Alem ('New World'), which is located on a hill slope to the south of the city proper. Addis Alem is a settlement difficult of access, with crooked, narrow paths and a stone wall surrounding each house and mosque compound."

[F J Simoons, Northwest Ethiopia ..., Madison/USA 1960 p 33]

### **Gondar: Awura**

Faitlovitch reported in 1908 that christianised Falasha lived in the village of Awura. This was later absorbed by Greater Gondar.

[The Beta Israel ..., UK 1999 p 64]

### **Gondar: Chechilla**

Small village about 4 km from Gondar, near the Public Health College.

[Jäger 1965 p 61]

### **Gondar: Tigre Mekeha**

On a small mountain to the north of the city is a thatched round hut that provides a place to enjoy the panoramic view. Future plans include a bar there, which would be most welcome after the long climb.

In order to reach the place, drive north on the main road. About one kilometre from the city there is a dirt road that leads up the side of the hill to the left, and to the water reservoir. The road ends at the reservoir, and the rest of the journey is by the trail that climbs the hill beyond the reservoir.

[Welcome to Ethiopia, AA circa 1965 p 191]

### **Gondar Zuriya wereda**

Six hand-dug wells in the Gebriel and Sendaba kebeles were inaugurated in late October 2001. The project was expected to benefit 12,250 people. The cost of the project was nearly 260,000 Birr, with community input of labour and material worth 37,000 Birr. The balance was paid from the indigenous Centre for Peace and Prosperity, with contribution from the Canada Fund.

[AddisTribune 2001/11/01]

HBR42	Gondaraba (Condaraba) 04°58'/36°49' 581 m	04/36	[n WO]
HES13	Gondarabo (area) 2700 m	12/37	[WO]
HEL36	Gondat (Gundat, Gundet) 2070/2309 m	12/38	[WO Gu 18]
	The Egyptians decided to attack Emperor Yohannes IV. The emperor responded by declaring war. "The powerful Egyptian army then crossed the Marab river into the heartland of Tegray, but were almost annihilated by the emperor's forces at the battle of Gundat on 16 November 1875."		
	[Pankhurst, The Ethiopians, 1998 p 166]		
HCT88	<b>Gonde</b> (Gondie, Gondi) (centre) 2160/2296 m	08/39	[MS Ad WO Gu]
	On the river of the same name, an affluent of Katar.		
	Population about 500 in the 1930s.		
	The primary school in 1968 had 207 boys and 68 girls, with 5 male and 2 female teachers.		
pict	Eth Geog Journal 5(1967) no 1 p 32 town in the middle of		

	cultivated uplands		
map	Cohen & Isaksson, Villagization in the Arsi region, Uppsala (Swedish Univ. of Agricultural Sciences) 1987 p 127 settlement pattern prior to villagization		
HDJ14	Gonde 09°09'/37°00' 1821 m	09/37	[MS]
HDT03	Gonde 10°01'/38°46' 1672 m	10/38	[MS]
JDH17	Gondela (mountain) 09°13'/41°19' 2950 m	09/41	[MS]
HEU93	Gondele 13°31'/39°42' 2476 m	13/39	[n]
HEE77	Gonder 11°30'/39°08' 2301 m	11/39	[n]
HEJ99	Gonder, see Gondar, cf Gwender		
HEJ99	Gonder Zuriya sub-district (-1997-)	12/37	[n]
HEJ99	Gonder Zuriya wereda (-1997-)	12/37	[20]
HCC71	Gondere 06°04'/36°46' 2608 m	06/36	[MS]
HEJ99	Gonderoch 12°37'/37°25' 2226 m a little north of Gondar town? <i>gondi</i> (T) blow, chock	12/37	[n]
HCT88	Gondi 08°01'/39°10' 2296 m	08/39	[n]
HDJ94	Gondo 09°52'/37°00' 2287 m	09/37	[n]
HEH65	Gondona 1093 m	12/36	[WO]
HDH99	Gondor (area) 2135/2408 m <i>gonfa</i> (O) ornament of a married woman	09/36	[WO]
HDK53	Gonfi, see under Kachisi	09/37	[AA]
HDK54	Gonfi Abeyi 1966 m, see under Kachisi	09/37	[AA MS]
HDK54	Gonfi Kedida (G. K'edida, G. Qedida) 09°33'/37°52' 1892 m <i>gonfo</i> (O) conical Oromo hairstyle; kind of hat; <i>gonfu</i> (O) to decorate, to adorn	09/37	[MS q]
HDD38	Gong 08°26'/38°17' 2616 m <i>gonga</i> (Welega Bega) kind of quick-growing shrub; (O) kind of heavy box; <i>Gonga</i> , name of an ethnic group	08/38	[n]
HDS23	Gonga 10°13'/37°47' 2350 m <i>gonga bainu</i> : <i>baynu</i> (baa aynu) (Som) we	10/37	[n]
HBR40	Gonga Bainu 1360 m	04/36	[WO]
??	Gongar (hill close to the Abay)	../..	[Ch]
HEB19	Gongi (Gonghi) Gongi Tewodros primary school (in Bahir Dar awraja) in 1968 had 83 boys and 32 girls in grades 1-4, with two teachers.	10/36	[WO It]
HEC10	Gongi (Gonghi) (mountain) 10°58'/36°37' 1882 m	10/36	[Ch WO It n]
HDB97	Gongo (mountain) 09°01'/36°22' 1840 m	09/36	[n]
HDL30	Gongo 2787 m	09/38	[AA]
JCJ16	Gongo, see under Imi	06/42	[WO]
HFK34	Gongoma 14°46'/37°55' 1239 m	14/37	[n]
JCN85	Goni 08°01'/40°17' 1488 m <i>goni tika</i> : <i>tika</i> (O) tending of animals	08/40	[MS]
JBj43	Goni Tika (area)	04/41	[WO]
??	Gonj, cf Genj Ancient monastery in Gojjam, with an important school of <i>gene</i> .	../..	[WO]
HED31	Gonj 11°13'/37°40' 2140 m <i>gonji</i> (Kefa) kinds of tree, <i>Milicia excelsa</i> , <i>Morus lactea</i> , <i>M. mesozygia</i> ; the two last-mentioned are forest trees which give good wood for joinery; <i>gomji</i> (O) oven, furnace	11/37	[n]
HDH07	Gonjo (area) 1840 m	09/36	[WO]
??	Gonka (Gonqa), see Ganka <i>Gonna</i> , one of the two main branches of the Borana people		

JDC96	Gonna, 1750/1778 m <i>gonne</i> (Kefa) female slave	09/42	[Gu]
HFD98	Gonogono 14°25'/38°16' 1737 m	14/38	[n]
HET78	Gonokwat (Gonok'wat, Gonoqwat) 13°18'/39°15' 2320 m	13/39	[MS q]
??	Gonsha Area with hills, not far from the Abay. Consul Cheesman in 1927 was advised to circumvent Gonsha, as there were some big precipices, and so he missed to see one loop of the Abay. [Cheesman 1936]	../..	[Ch]
HES12	Gontrabo 12°49'/37°45' 2630 m	12/37	[n]
??	Gonza (river in Wellega) A right affluent of the Yabus. Prospecting with 24 pits at a distance of 25 m from each other was done about 30-40 km from Sirekole. The gravel is very shallow so the reserves of gold cannot be high. [Mineral 1966]	../..	[Mi]
GDM61	Gonzo, see Ganza		
HDK89	Gooda, see Goda		
HDK60	Gooderoo, see Gudru		
JCS99	Goodi, see Gohodeh		
JDF57	Goondale (area)	08/44	[WO]
HDH95	Gootu 09°55'/36°10' 2178 m, cf Gutu	09/36	[n]