



Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi

By Gérard Prunier, loi Ficquet

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When we think of Ethiopia we tend to think in clichés: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, the Falasha Jews, the epic reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Communist Revolution, famine and civil war. Among the countries of Africa it has a high profile yet is poorly known. However all clichés contain within them a kernel of truth, and occlude much more. Today's Ethiopia (and its painfully liberated sister state of Eritrea) are largely obscured by these mythical views and a secondary literature that is partial or propagandist. Moreover there have been few attempts to offer readers a comprehensive overview of the country's recent history, politics and culture that goes beyond the usual guidebook fare. Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia seeks to do just that, presenting a measured, detailed and systematic analysis of the main features of this unique country, now building on the foundations of a magical and tumultuous past as it struggles to emerge in the modern world on its own terms.

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Review

"This volume on all things Ethiopian by a group of noted experts is a tour de force. Focussing on the nature of power in Ethiopian state and society, the contributors provide powerful and provocative accounts that chart the process of rapid societal change as Ethiopia assumes its place as a rising regional power. In doing so they uncover a new model of economic development and state-building, pointing to the importance of the Ethiopian state in conditioning violence, social change and economic accumulation. A must-read." -- Will Reno, Professor, Director of the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University

"Ethiopia can no longer be caricatured or mythologised. No one could have envisioned the extent to which this country would be transformed nearly twenty-five years after the end of its long civil war. To help us make sense of the dynamics shaping contemporary Ethiopia, this much-needed volume brings together important insights from the world's most notable experts on the country's culture, history, politics, and society. They offer a comprehensive and accessible account that should be widely read." -- Leonardo R. Arriola, University of California, Berkeley

About the Author

Gérard Prunier is a renowned historian of contemporary Africa and author of the acclaimed *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* and *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*.

Éloi Ficquet is an anthropologist and historian, professor at the EHESS, and Director of the French Center for Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa. He is the author of *A French-Amharic Dictionary* and of many articles on Ethiopian history and culture.

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