

## **Abstract**

This thesis is devoted to the Ethiopian Amharas, who had and still have big impact on the present Ethiopian society in spite of not being majority in the state.

Before it was thanks to the privileged position within the Orthodox Church and later, thanks to taking control of the educational system, when Amharic became the official language of whole Ethiopia.

The work is based on theoretical study of literature and is structured in such a way as to include all the important phases of the history and life of Ethiopian Amhara. In this thesis I give a brief overview of the history, including the legend of the origin of the Solomonic dynasty, to which Amharas still avow. In the view of the fact that significant role in the Ethiopian society plays also the affiliation of most of the Amharas with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church I am pursuing its history and hierarchy. I also appraise religious rituals, feasts and celebrations.

In individual parts of the thesis I follow up the historical roots of Amharic and its relevance to a particular language group. Role of Amharic is analysed also with respect to the so-called amharization process - Ethiopian modernization. I also put up a historical view of the language situation in Ethiopia in general and briefly describe other Ethiopian languages, including their classification.

In subsequent chapters of the thesis I allude to Amharic religious rituals and customs and unique Amharic poetic tradition called "wax and gold."