

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to present from the historical perspective the Ethiopian Amharas as a nation, which, even though they are not forming majority of the state, they had and still have major impact on the Ethiopian society. They also maintained influence on other nations mainly thanks to the Amharic language, which became the official language of the whole of Ethiopia.

The structure of the work is divided in such a way in order to include all the relevant phases that are related to the history and life of the Ethiopian Amharas. The compilation of the work is based on the theoretical analysis and the study of the literature. In the thesis I give a brief overview of the history, including the legend of the origin of the Solomon dynasty, to which the Amharas still avow. In the view of the fact that significant role in Ethiopian society plays also the affiliation of most of the Amharas with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, I deal with its history and hierarchies. I also apprise of the religious rituals, feasts and celebrations.

In individual parts I follow up the historical roots of Amharic and its relevance to a particular language group. Role of Amharic is analyzed with respect to the educational system in Ethiopia, I am also referring to its role in connection with 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 from various aspects basic facts related to the socio-political conditions of life of the Amharas, their traditions that are preserved till today, including unique Amharic poetic tradition called "wax and gold".