

Landlocked Countries: Ethiopia

by Geir Sør-Reime



populous country in the world. It is a multi-ethnic state with more than 80 ethnic groups.

Ethiopia has not always been landlocked and during the Middle Ages the Ethiopian empire at times also included territories on the Arabian Peninsula.

The current extension of Ethiopia was roughly established during the reign of Emperor Menelik II (ruled 1889-1913). Ethiopia managed to remain independent when most of Africa was colonized by European countries, except for a brief period 1939-41 when it was occupied by Italy.

In more modern times, Ethiopia annexed the coastal country of Eritrea in 1962 after a ten-year period of a federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Eritrea became independent in 1993, and Ethiopia was again landlocked.

In principle, Ethiopia is now a federal republic, currently consisting of 12 states and 2 chartered cities.

The Ethiopian Empire

Until the 1974 deposing of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was a monarchy.

Emperor Menelik II (reigned 1889-1913). Stamps for Ethiopia were first issued 1895 and bore either a portrait of Emperor Menelik II or a depiction of the Lion of Judah. They were denominated in Guerche. These stamps were only valid for local mail and for mail to Djibouti.

As stocks of these stamps were sold in Paris far below face value, and such stamps were also sent to Ethiopia, the post in Ethiopia applied control marks on their stocks to prevent use of the stamps sold on Paris. These control marks included rubber or metal stamps inscribed "Ethiopie" in French or "Post" or "Message" in Amharic.



Menelik II or Lion of Judah: Top right, 1895 1/2 guerche, Sc. 1; Bottom left to right, 1902 1/2g, Sc. 16; 1901 4g, Sc. 12; 1904 8g, Sc. 41

Ethiopia has an area of 429,000 square miles and an estimated population of 133 million making it the most populous landlocked country and the 10th most



2007 Ethiopian Millennium Sc. 1712



Left to right: 1905 40g on 2g, Sc. 46; 1906 3.20 francs on 16g, Sc. 70; 1907 1/4 on 1/4g, Sc. 71

Between 1905 and 1907, the 1895 stamps were surcharged in French currency (Centimes and Francs). Also stamps with control marks were surcharged.

France operated post-offices in Harar, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa 1905-08 and 1906-08 used unoverprinted French Levant stamps along with stamps of Djibouti and Port Said.

Ethiopia joined the Universal Postal Union in 1908, and its stamps became valid for international mail. The first issue was the 1895 stamps surcharged in French currency in typography.



French PO Ethiopia 1907 Sc. Offices in Turkey 33



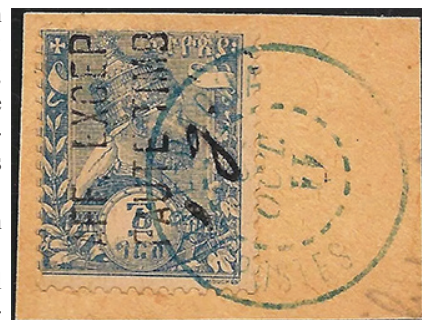
1908 Sc. 81; 1908 postage due Sc. J38



1909 Emperor Menelik Sc. 88, 91, 92

A pictorial issue with three different motives: King Solomon's Throne; Emperor Menelik in native costume; and Emperor Menelik in royal dress; was issued in January 1909. These were denominated in a Piastre currency.

In 1911 a provisional issue was used in Dire-Dawa for 5 days when the 1895 set was handstamped "Special Franking/Lacking Stamps" in French and surcharged in manuscript.



1911 provisional Sc. 96

Empress Zauditu with Prince Tafari as regent (1913-30, coronation 1917)

For the coronation of Empress Zauditu and the appointment of Prince Tafari (known as Haile Selassie when he became Emperor in 1930) as regent and heir to the throne, a set of handstamped overprints and another with a typographed overprint on the 1909 issue were issued in 1917. The latter set was also issued with additional handstamped surcharges.



Left, 1917 Coronation issue 1, Sc. 106; right, 1917 Coronation issue 2, Sc. 108;



Left, 1919 Empress Zauditu, Sc. 125; right, 1921 surcharge, Sc. 141



1928 Empress Zauditu and King Tafari Sc. 158, 177

Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974)



1930, left to right: proclamation of Tafari as King Haile Selassie, Sc. 180; as Emperor Haile Selassie, Sc. 192; Coronation pictorial issue, Sc. 216

In 1930 all stamps of the 1928 set were overprinted to mark his elevation as Emperor with the name Haile Selassie and there was also a set overprinted to mark his coronation as Emperor upon the death of Empress Zauditu in 1930.

A pictorial series of seven stamps were also issued in 1930 to celebrate his coronation showing the coronation monument and other symbols of the Empire.

In 1931 a pictorial series featuring the imperial family was issued showing the effigies of Emperor Haile Selassie and Empress Menen as

well as Prince Makonnen (father of Haile Selassie), a monument showing Emperor Menelik II, and a railway bridge.

A Taler currency was introduced 1936 and some of the 1931 pictorials were surcharged with the new currency.



1931 imperial family: Emperor Selassie, Empress Menen, Sc. 234-235, 1936 new currency surcharge Sc. 246

Italian occupation

Due to the Italian invasion of the country, a series of five Red Cross semi-postals planned for 1936 were not issued but were eventually issued in 1946 overprinted with a V as normal postage stamps. In 1950 the set was issued as semi-postals overprinted with a red cross and the surtax, and in 1960 the set was reissued with overprints for the 25th anniversary of the Ethiopian Red Cross and again as semi-postals.



Left to right, 1936 unissued Red Cross semi-postal, 1950 Red Cross semi-postal, Sc. B15, 1960 Red Cross semi Sc. B36



Italian occupation Ethiopia 1936 Sc. N7



Italian East Africa air post Sc. C11



Left, Italian East Africa 1938 Sc. 10; right, Italian East Africa 1938 Augustus Caesar 2000 birth anniversary Sc. 21



Italian East Africa 1941 Two Peoples, One War Sc. C18

To be Continued