



# ETHIOPIA - A PICTORIAL OVERVIEW OF THE NORTHERN ROUTE

By LOGAN STINE



*The Coffee Ceremony - An Ethiopian Tradition*



*A Priest at the Ura Midane Mihret Monastery on Bahir Dar's Lake Tana*



*A Bicycle Repair Shop in Axum*



## BAHIR DAR AN ETHIOPIAN PARADISE



The source of the Blue Nile is the beautiful Lake Tana, which flows out and plunges over a 150-foot high rock face to form the Blue Nile Falls. Although the installation of a hydroelectric plant above the Falls has lessened the water flow during the dry season, the Falls remain a truly impressive sight year-round. Here, you can walk down to the very bottom of the gorge, close enough to touch the water and feel the spray of the Falls!

The monasteries of Lake Tana are filled with stunning Ethiopian religious artwork and artifacts, each detail of which has meaningful significance to the Ethiopian Orthodox religion, which is practiced by approximately 45% of the country's people. To the left, you see a variety of candle and incense burners, and below one of the paintings from the church of Ura Kidane Mihret.



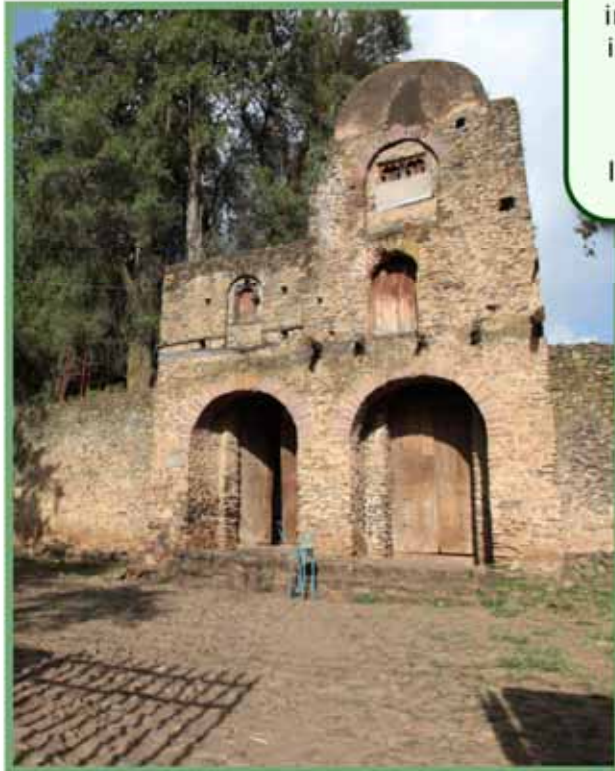


# GONDAR

## ETHIOPIA'S CAMELOT



The city center of Gondar is dominated by an impressive royal enclosure called the Fasil Ghebbi. It is a walled compound filled with 17<sup>th</sup> century castles such as those you see above. The castles are the central feature of Gondar, lending it an almost European character, although Axumite and even Indian influences are evident in some of the castles.



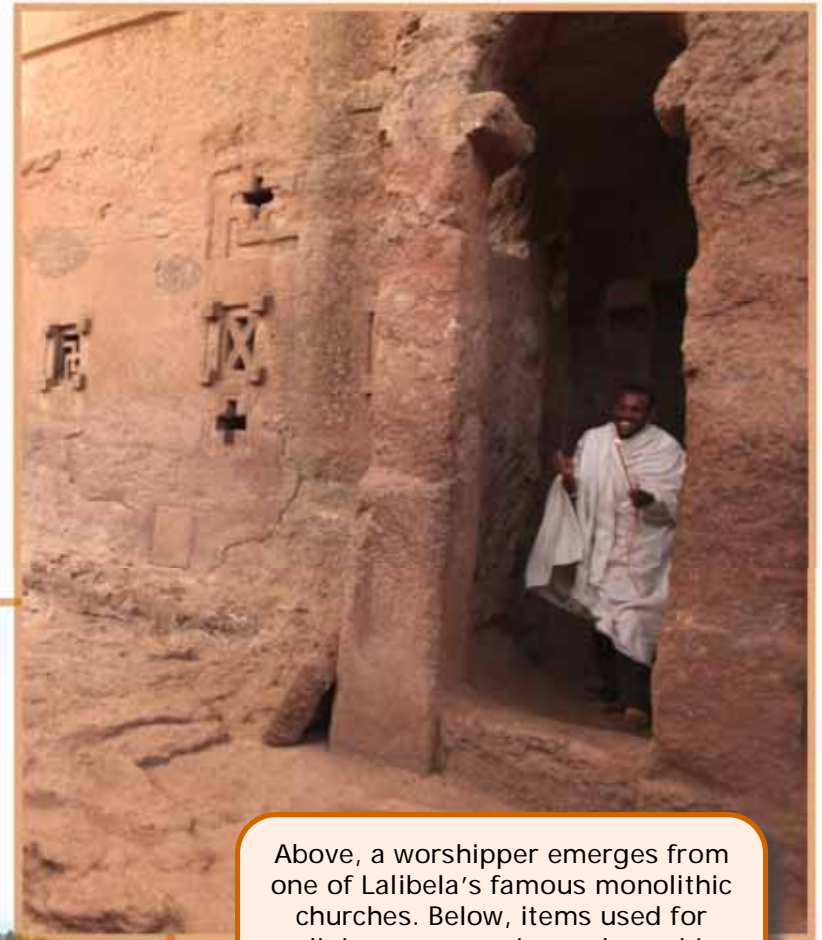
The bath of King Fasilidas is another important site in Gondar, and this massive pool is the center stage on which the Timkat (Epiphany) Festival takes place in January. Below you can see the roots of trees growing over the edges of the pool.





## LALIBELA THE HOLIEST CITY

The striking hill town of Lalibela is, justifiably, the most popular stop on the northern circuit. The town is best-known for its fascinating array of monolithic, or rock-hewn, churches. In addition to its impressive historic sites, this region's natural beauty cannot be overstated! Most of the town's churches are enclosed in two large, tightly-packed clusters. Separate from these clusters, the stand-alone church of Bet Giyorgis (pictured below) is often considered the most remarkable, having been entirely excavated below ground level. All of the town's churches can be visited within the span of a day. However, I would recommend a longer stay in Lalibela, during which you can see some of the town's other highlights, including the cave monastery of Nakuta La'ab, and enjoy some of the area's scenic hiking trails.



Above, a worshipper emerges from one of Lalibela's famous monolithic churches. Below, items used for religious ceremonies and worship are sprinkled throughout the interiors of the churches.



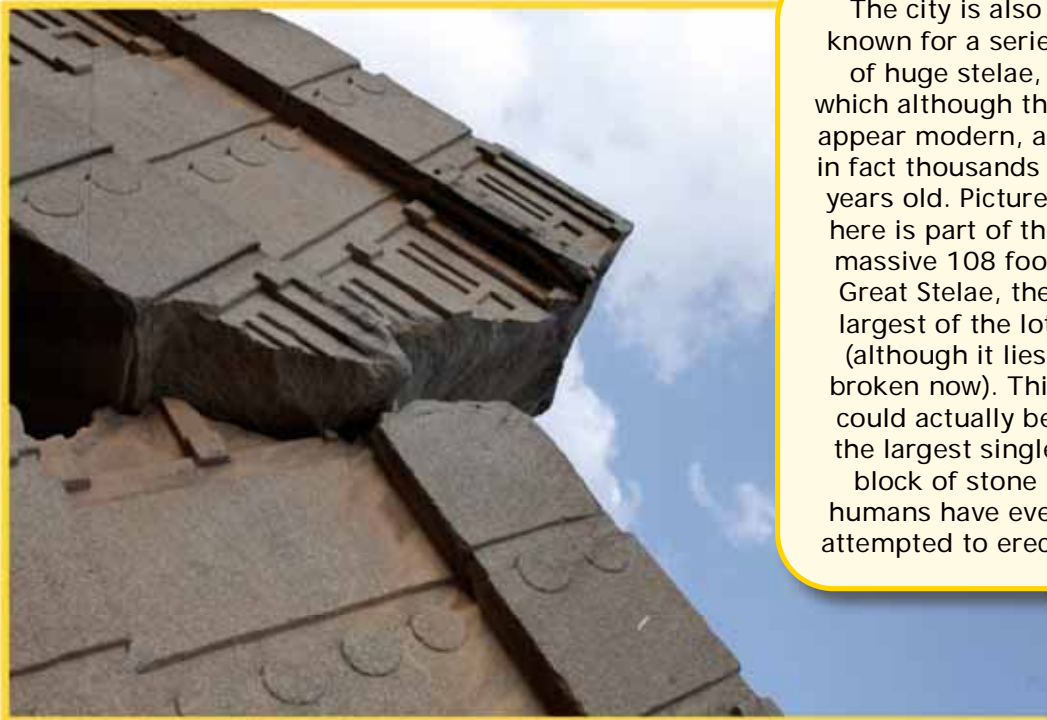


# AXUM

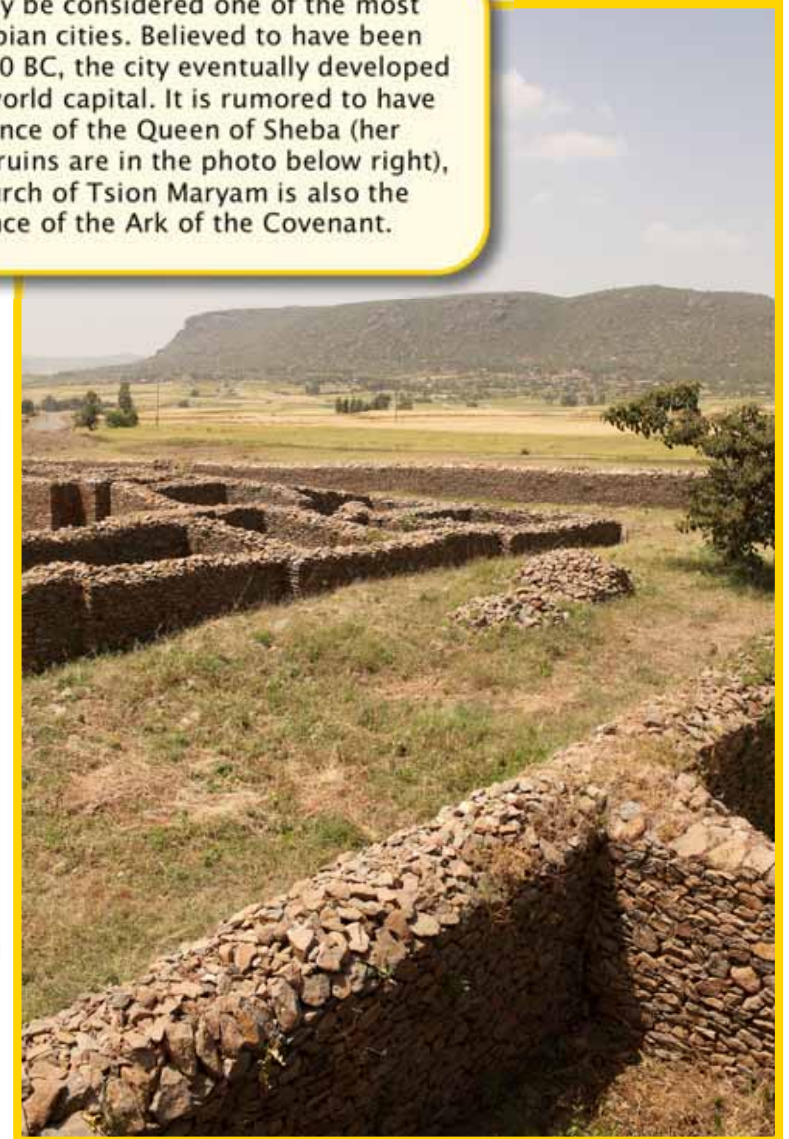
## A MYSTERY IN TIME



Axum could easily be considered one of the most mysterious Ethiopian cities. Believed to have been founded around 400 BC, the city eventually developed to be a powerful world capital. It is rumored to have been the residence of the Queen of Sheba (her supposed palace's ruins are in the photo below right), and Axum's Church of Tsion Maryam is also the alleged residence of the Ark of the Covenant.



The city is also known for a series of huge stelae, which although they appear modern, are in fact thousands of years old. Pictured here is part of the massive 108 foot Great Stelae, the largest of the lot (although it lies broken now). This could actually be the largest single block of stone humans have ever attempted to erect!



# THE END.

That's it for our tour of Ethiopia's Northern route! Please call for further details, or view the following Northern Ethiopia tours on our website. Both tours feature a visit to all of the towns listed in this pictorial.

[Northern Ethiopia: The Historic Route](#) -- an 8-day/7-night Cox & Kings Private Classic Journey  
[Ethiopian Odyssey](#) -- a 12-day/11-night Cox & Kings Discovery Escorted Group Journey

We look forward to hearing from you when you are ready to start planning your own Ethiopian Adventure!

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