

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

By Gérard Prunier, Éloi Ficquet

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When we think of Ethiopia we tend to think in cliches: 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. How- ever all cliches 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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Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi By Gérard Prunier, Éloi Ficquet Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #852737 in Books
- Published on: 2015-09-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.50" h x 1.40" w x 8.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 416 pages

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