

Remembering unique Eritreans in contemporary history

Biography
Of
Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam



1906 -1954

Most unknown of the Eritrean unsung heroes

The life story of Dr. Embaye Woldemariam is told by a blogger who has the address below.

<http://ambayewoldemariam.blogspot.com/p/other.html>

I found the biographical sketch of Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam in the blog to be very interesting and deserves to be listed in my biography of Eritrean unsung heroes. Although I have still not succeeded to contact the blogger I nevertheless believe adding the life story of this unknown and unsung hero to my list of heroes should not be disputable. I am fully engaged in identifying and writing Eritrea's unsung heroes and make them known by the new generation. It is freely accessible online and anyone asking for hard copy gets it freely. The sole aim of the campaign is to document, honor and commemorate Eritrea's heroes and heroines of the past. The only items I have added to the script is the introduction of his name, added pictures of his home place Keren, structured with some formalities the end of his life and reformatted the document to have resemblance of a biography booklet. I would appreciate if the blogger contacts me via my website.

Stavanger, Norway

june 2020

Source: <http://ambayewoldemariam.blogspot.com/p/other.html>

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The meaning of the name and its history

እምባዩ

ቀሺ ሙሳ ኦሮን አብታ መዝገበ ቃላት ናይ ኤርትራውያን ኣሰማት ትብል መጽሓፍ ንእምባዩ ዝብል ስም ብኸምዚ ይገልጻ። እምባዩ ትግርኛ ስም ወዲ እዩ። ካብቲ “እምባ” ዚብል ናይ ትግርኛ ቃል ፈልፊሉ ፣ በዚ “እምባዩ” ዝብል ናይ ቛንቋ ግእዝ ናይ ዋንነት ረባሕታኡ ተሰሪዑ ከም ስም ወዲ ዝዝውተር መጻውዒ። “እምባዩ” ዝብል ረባሕታ ግእዝ ፣ እምባይ ፣ ከረነይ ፣ ኩርባይ ፣ ዝብል ትርጉም ይህበና። እዚ ትርጉም እዚ ከኣ ፣ ጸግዐይ ፣ ዋልታይ መከላኸልየይ ዚብል መግለጺ የገንዝበና። ስለዚ እዚ “እምባዩ” ዝብል ስም ፣ “ዋልታይ” (ዋልታ ወለዱ) ዝብል ስም ይሕብር። ኣዝዩ ዝውተር ስም ኣውዳት።

ወልደ-ማርያም

ቀጺሉ ቀሺ ሙሳ ኦሮን ን ወልደ-ማርያም ዝብል ስም ብኸምዚ ይገልጻ። ወልደ-ማርያም “ወልደ” ፣ “ማርያም” ዝብል ዚብል ናይ ድርብ ቃላት ስም ፣ ወዲ ማርያም ፣ ናይ ማርያም ድንግል ወላድ ማለት እዩ። እዚ ስም እዚ ኣብ ኣብ ግዜ በዓለ-ማርያም ንዝውለዱ ኣውዳት ውን ከም መዘከርታ ኦቲ በዓል ይሰመ እዩ። ኣዝዩ ፍሉጥን ዙውተርን ስም ኣውዳት እዩ።

Geospatial data and satellite images of Keren and its vicinity

Here below is the geographical name data for the town of Keren in Eritrea, including the geographic coordinates and location in its respective administrative division within the country.

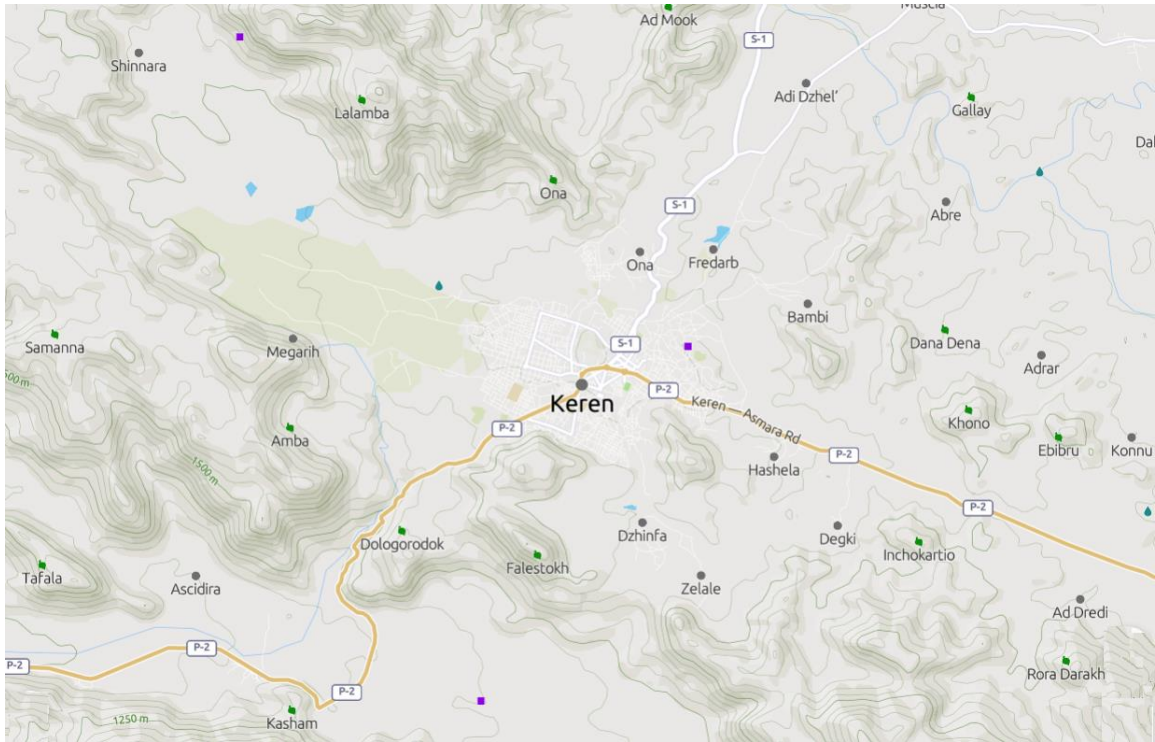
Geographical data

Full Name :	Keren
Primary Country Code :	ER (Eritrea)
Region :	Senhit
Sub Region :	Greater Keren region

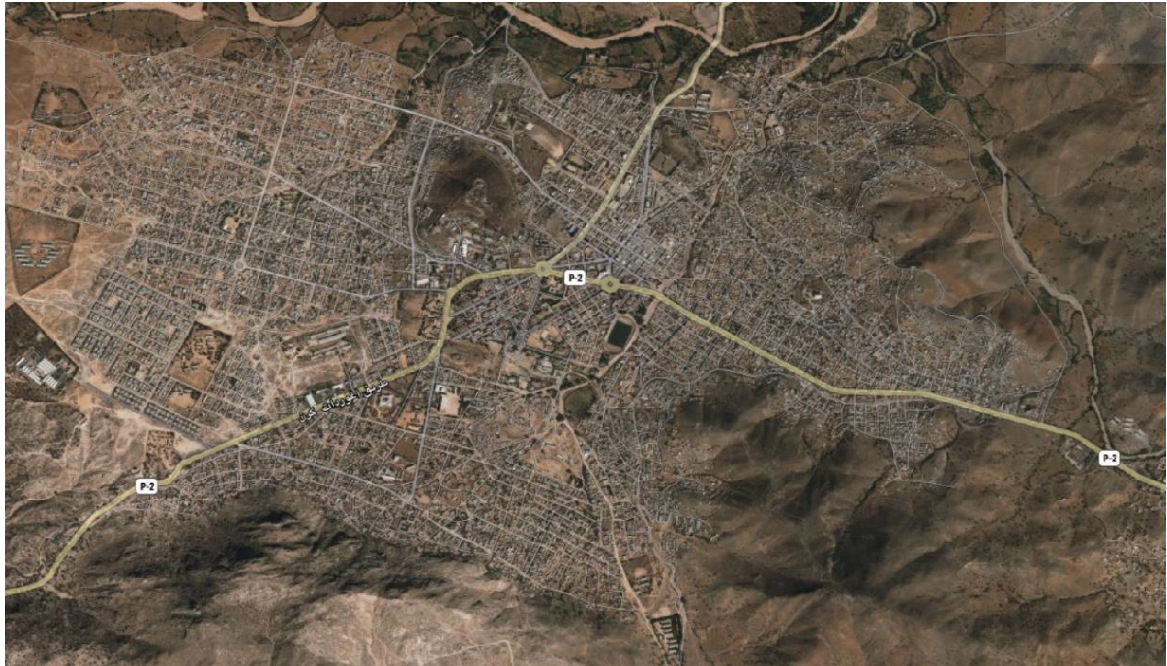
Geographical Coordinates

Latitude in decimal degrees:	15.7833302 North
Longitude in decimal degrees:	38.4499982 East
Latitude in degrees, minutes, and seconds:	15° 46' 59" 99 N
Longitude in degrees, minutes, and seconds:	38° 26' 59" 99 E
Average elevation:	1,590 meters
Population census :	No data available
Areal size :	No data available

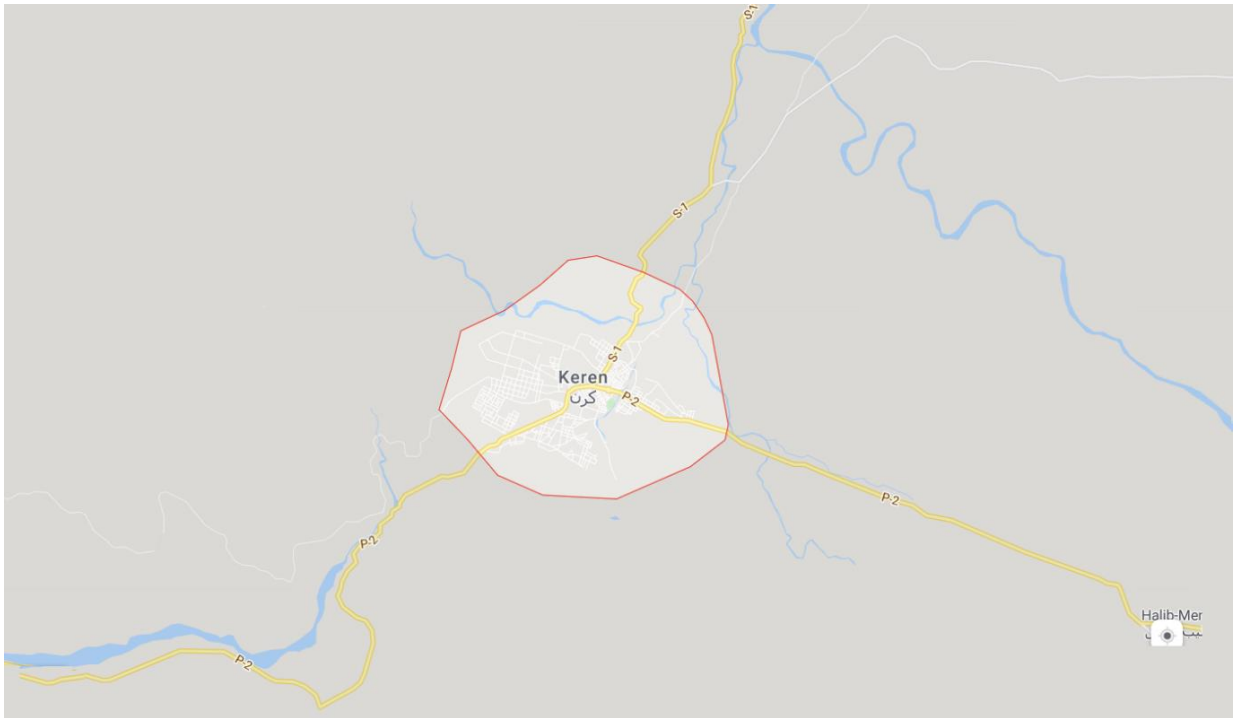
Source: <http://mapcarta.com/>



Map of the town of Keren and its vicinity source: mapcarta.com



Areal view of Keren



Map of the city of Keren, aerial view

Keren, the capital city of Senhit province

Keren is an attractive, lovely city and is often visited by those wanting a change of scene from Asmara or Massawa. The name Keren means highland. The sun rises over one set of peaks in the east and sets over another set in the west. Depending on where you stay, rising for the dawn does not present a problem as the muezzin is likely to act as your early morning call.

This city surrounded by mountains is the third biggest city in Eritrea, after Asmara and Massawa with a population of around 120,000. It is the capital city of Senhit province.

Keren is situated around 91 kilometers northwest of Asmara, at an elevation of 1,390 meters from sea-level. The city sprawls on a wide basin surrounded by granitic mountains on all sides.

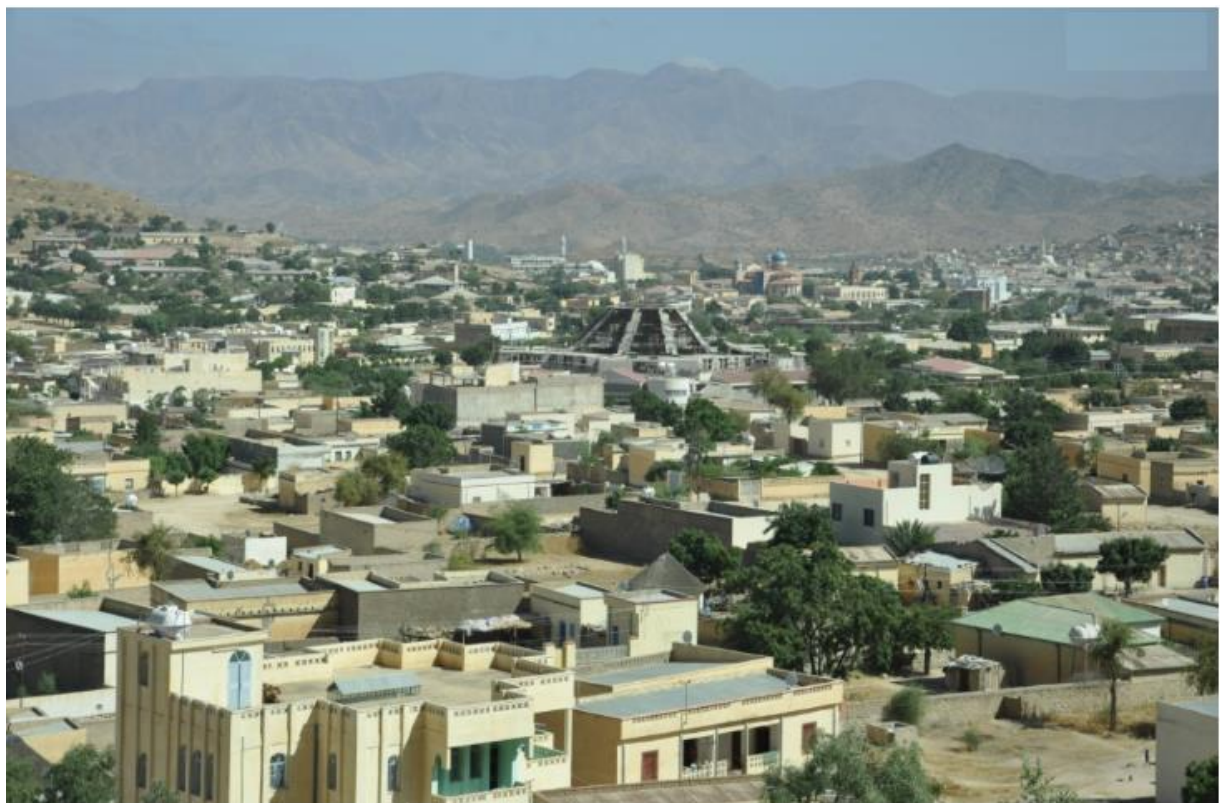
Keren is one of the major agricultural centers of Eritrea, particularly for fruits and vegetables. To the west the region is known for its banana plantations. In addition its dairy herds supply fresh milk, butter and cheeses in its heyday time.

There is a town market, where silver items may be purchased, and a wood market, where camels gather on the dry river bed. On Mondays there is a livestock market in a walled compound on the hillside along the road leading south from town. Cattle, sheep and goats, camels and donkeys are bought and sold.

Keren hosts many examples of Italian and Ethiopian colonial heritage. Overlooked by a seemingly impregnable Egyptian 19th century fortress (Tigu), which still bristles with destroyed Ethiopian army cannons. Keren boasts stylish public buildings and a Romanesque Catholic church. There are good views from the top of the fort (1460m). At its foot lie the ruins of the old Imperial Palace, which were destroyed during the Struggle for independence.

At one time Keren boasted not one but two railway stations. One of them now serves as the local bus station, both for the buses to Asmara, Nacfa and Barentu and for the yellow Toyota taxi buses that intersect Keren. The speed of life is best exemplified by the fact that camels and donkeys still outnumber cars.

Source - Eritrea.be



Keren the city of moderate temperature

Early life and family background

Dr. Ambaye was born in Keren, Eritrea in 1906. Dr. Embaye's great grandfather, Humed, was part of the entourage of the Eritrean hero of Hazega, Ras Woldemichael. He was originally from Hamelmalo (today's Zoba Anseba region). He fled, with his son, from Hamelmalo in 1880's because of a blood feud. For a time, they hid in the Mogolo/Hagaz area, under the protection of Sheikh Arey Agaba. When Humed died, his son Ali became afraid for his life, so he discreetly moved to Keren and took shelter at the new Catholic missionary. To conceal his identity, he converted from Islam to Christianity (Catholic) and changed his name from Ali to Woldeyohannes.

Dr. Ambaye's father, uncle, cousins, and siblings were born and raised in Keren. Dr. Ambaye's mother, Mezengue Fantabel was from Meraguz, Serae (today's Zoba Debub region of Eritrea). Her grandfather, Eyesab Dimtsu was a follower of Ras Woldemichael of Hazega. Additionally, Humed's grandson married Eyesab Dimtsu's granddaughter. She settled in Keren, and gave birth to their children. Dr. Ambaye was the eldest.

Dr. Ambaye's wife, Woizero Ruth Araya (from Tsezazega, Hamasien, today's Zoba Maekel, Eritrea), gave birth to his four children. link: [Image](#)



Wedding day of Dr. Embaye woldemariam and Woizerit Ruth Araya

Facts about Dr. Ambaye Wolde Mariam

1906 Born in Keren Eritrea.

1914 through 1930's education: in Keren, Eritrea, The Vatican and Paris, France.

1942 and 1943 Vice Minister of Justice

1946 Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

1947 Minister of Justice

1952 Minister in the Prime Minister office without a portfolio.

1953 Foreign Minister (Acting).

1954 Died in Addis Ababa.

The Sources:

This is a collection of facts, gathered from testimonies of relatives, childhood friends, books, and newspapers, on the life of Dr. Ambaye Wolde Mariam.



Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam, 1953

Character:

Dr. Ambaye was humble, well respected and loved by his family and community both in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Dr. Ambaye was very proud of his Eritrean heritage. His father's side from the Lowlands (Metahit), and his mother's side from the Highlands(Kebesa) .

Dr. Ambaye was a religious, principled person. His charity extended beyond his family and community organizations such as the Saint Michael Catholic Church in Keren. For example, Dr. Ambaye occasionally donated money to help his visiting relatives from the lowland region of Eritrea.

In Keren, he visited his hometown and relatives whenever it was viable. He remodeled his parents' houses on his grandfather's land.

In Serae, he maintained his grandparents' farmlands. His mother's great grand parents owned several farming lots in Serae. In keeping with tradition, his mother inherited the farm lands, providing agricultural work to his extended family. They utilized the sharecropping system to organize agricultural work. Specifically, Dr. Ambaye and his siblings owned the land, and some of his relatives and others worked the land. The fruits of their labor were shared by all. In keeping with his fair and moral nature, Dr. Ambaye believed in sharing the production equitably among his relatives.

Education:

At an early age, he joined the Catholic Seminary, where his grandfather had taken shelter when he moved to Keren. His outstanding academic achievement at the Seminary earned him the respect to be selected by the Vatican for higher education. He later received a scholarship to study law at the University of Paris, France.

International Context

In the mid 1920's Emperor Haile Selassie, approached Dr. Ambaye, at the Vatican, to join and help modernize his government. Recognizing the opportunity to struggle for the liberation of Eritrea from Fascism, Dr. Ambaye joined the Imperial government. The Emperor offered him a scholarship for higher education, at the University of Paris, France.

Return from exile:

After the occupation, he worked in the imperial government of Ethiopia in different capacities. At that time, Dr. Ambaye Wolde Mariam, Ato Akilu Habetewold (his next door neighbor) and Blantangeta Lorenzo Tæzaz (his schoolmate friend and mentor, at the Catholic seminary in Keren) represented the small class of highly educated members of the Imperial government.

In the 1940's Dr. Ambaye and Blantangeta Lorenzo participated in modernizing the Judicial system of Ethiopia. They both worked closely in international judicial matters. They were signatories of the establishment of the International Court of Justice, in The Hague, Holland.

Dr. Ambaye in 1946 presented Ethiopia's claim to try fascist war criminals (Badoglio, Graziani etc.), to the UN War Crime Commission. In 1947, he was a leading member of the Anglo-Ethiopian Boundary Commission. link: [Image](#)





UN Photo/McCreary

UN establishment signing ceremony, 1945, San Francisco.

Dr. Ambaye signing at the table.

Ato Aklilu and Ato Minasie standing in the back, the other delegates are standing next to Ato Minasie,

not appearing in this picture.

The Geopolitics

11. In the early 1940's both during and directly after World War II the British were very concerned about the Soviets gaining territories and strength around the globe. They saw the Soviets as the next threat to their colonies in particular and to Europe in general.

22. In 1941 the British aggressively started to secure the red sea basin. The strategy of the British was to keep the Germans and the Soviets away and from around the Middle East. Without the middle east oil fields and the passageway via the Red Sea, the British would have succumbed to the Germans.

33. Therefore, the British before they even ejected the Italians from Eritrea, started courting the Ethiopian government. They wanted to make sure the soviets won't get a foothold, by any means, in the red sea basin. The British and American oil companies owned the oil fields of the middle east and also were very much interested in the strategic geographical location of Eritrea.

44. The British design was to incorporate the whole of Eritrea as part of its East Africa colonies,

55. if that was not possible then try to split Eritrea in half. Keep the lowlands for itself by joining it to the Sudan which was its colony at the time and the combining the highlands with Ethiopia, which was allying with the USA.

6 **British Approach:**

In the late 30's the British aggressively and clandestinely started communicating and negotiating with palace insiders of the Ethiopian Imperial government, on how to handle the future of Eritrea.

American Approach:

The American design was to incorporate the whole of Eritrea into the Ethiopian empire. The U.S. also had two major interests, to set up a sophisticated communication center, a secret listening post between Moscow and its military. But, the main purpose was to keep the Soviets away from the Middle East and the Red Sea basin (the US had signed long term treaty with Saudi Arabia, which sat on top of an ocean of oil).

Internal Factors

1. The British mistrust of the highly capable and educated Eritreans, like Blantangeta Lorenzo and Dr. Ambaye, within the Ethiopian government.
2. The fear that capable Eritreans could be influenced and be used by the Soviet's Design/agenda, to set a foothold in the Red Sea basin.
3. They saw these same Eritreans to possibly be an obstacle to their general design in the red sea basin.

Some Disagreements:

a) The Case of Eritrea

Dr. Ambaye and Blantangeta Lorenzo, were adamantly opposed to this machination by the British whose intent was to abolish (splitting Eritrea into two regions the Lowlands and the Highlands) Eritrea as a nation.

The British conjured the Ethiopian palace insiders in suspecting both of these Officials with Eritrean origin. It was a fait accompli, both were removed from any discussions and involvement pertaining to any issues that have to do with the Eritrean question. These specifics were openly known to the various Eritrean and Ethiopian circles in Addis Ababa.

In the 1940's, it was a well-known fact, that besides the case of Eritrea, Dr. Ambaye and Blantangeta Lorenzo had many disagreements with powerful Palace insiders. Dr. Ambaye, several times attempted to resign. He used poor health as an excuse. Each time he tried to resign, he was transferred to different posts. As a matter of fact, it was his friend Ato Aklilu that kept on persuading him to not resign and encouraged him to stay the course.

There is no denying that a lot of officials with Eritrean origin in the Ethiopian government adopted Ethiopia as their country, accepted the Emperor as their leader and served it to their utmost ability before, during and after the war of liberation. Their only desire was for an equitable and fair relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

In recent years, a so-called 'Ethiopian Expert on Eritrea', who was well aware of the predicaments of the Eritrean Officials in the Ethiopian government in the forties and fifties, has been making defamatory statements, maliciously dismissing them as irrelevant to their cultural patrimony. His deliberate manifestation implied that the Eritrean officials were unscrupulous, they opted for splitting and trashing their own sacred parental heritage. The so-called 'Expert' postulates that Eritreans at that time were incapable of governing.

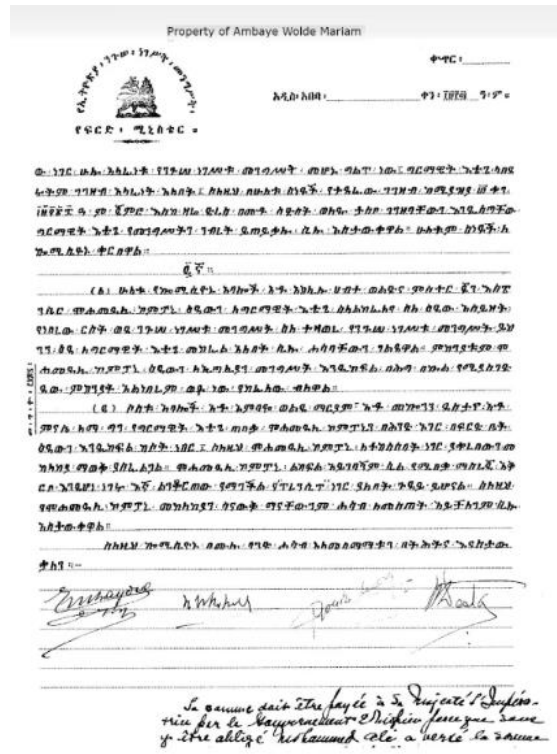
The so-called 'Expert', should at least have the courage to state that a more logical and fair political action would have been, to utilize Officials with Eritrean heritage, the likes of Blantangeta Lorenzo and Dr. Ambaye, who at the time possessed more diplomatic and legal experiences, than most in the government, to play a role in presenting the Eritrean narrative objectively to the world.

Unfortunately, this approach was not taken; It was a grave mistake made by the Imperial Palace. The Palace Insiders conspiratorial machinations, the British consulted had a far-reaching political damage on the relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Instead, the 'Expert' tried to cover up these shortcomings of the responsible palace insiders. His intention seemed to protect the palace authorities from their mistakes. He unashamedly tried to manipulate the facts so as to wickedly define the character of Eritreans in general, at that junction of history. Realizing the various mistakes committed by the palace insiders, the Emperor tried belatedly to mitigate his administration's inefficient handling the case of Eritrea.

Note:

(The so-called 'expert on Eritrea', who at that time was a personal secretary and a 'relative' of Ato Aklilu who lived in the neighborhood behind both Ato Aklilu's and Dr. Ambaye's residences, was well aware of Dr. Ambaye's predicament. He deliberately chose to avoid implicating the blunder created by the notorious palace insiders. His misguided judgment implies that the palace feudal aristocrats were more sympathetic to the Eritrean cause, than the native Eritrean officials in the Ethiopian government).

b) The Case of Etegue Menen link: Image #1, Image #2



A court case regarding a loan transaction between Etegue Menen (the emperor's wife) and the owner of Mohamedeli (an Indian company), that left the country without paying off its debt. Etegue Menen's agent requested that the Ethiopian government should take the loss.

A committee of five people was selected to decide the case. The five committee members were Dr. Ambaye Wolde Mariam (the head of the committee), Ato Aklilu Habetewold, Ato Mekonen Desta, Mr. John Spenser and Ato Minasie Lemma.

Subsequently, Dr. Ambaye, Ato Mekonen and Ato Minasie argued that the case should be handled by Indian courts in India. Ato Aklilu and Mr. Spenser argued in favor of Etegue Menen, that means the Ethiopian government should carry the loss and compensate Etegue Menen. The committee, could not reach consensus.

The palace insiders were very unhappy with the outcome.

In the 1940's Dr. Ambaye, served in the Ministry of Justice of Ethiopia. Around that time, he was approached by prominent elders of Serae. They contacted Dr. Ambaye to intervene, advise, and guide them to reform and modernize their traditional laws. Unfortunately, Dr. Ambaye could not proceed with the case because the Palace insiders blocked all contacts between him and the elders.

The Logical Deduction

The Eritrean question would have been better served by the participation of Blantangeta Lorenzo and Dr. Ambaye. A more equitable and fair relationship, between the two nations, would have been achieved by now. Unfortunately, the palace insiders were threatened by their strength, so they separated them, sending Blantangeta Lorenzo to Moscow and keeping Dr. Ambaye in Addis Ababa, under close watch.

In 1952 Dr. Ambaye was assigned as Minister in the Prime Minister office without a portfolio, a ministerial position with no specific responsibility. link: [Image #1](#), [Image #2](#)



In 1953 he was assigned as an Acting Foreign Minister, a position of limited power and responsibility. link: [Image](#)

Photos from family album



left to right: Petros, Minasie, Amanuel, Ambaye, Mekonen, Aklilu, Ephrem

left to right: Petros, Minasie, Amanuel, Ambaye, Mekonen, Aklilu and Ephrem, in SF 1945



Dr. Ambaye and Ato Aklilu with a US official.

Ambaye and Aklilu with a US official.



left to right: top row; Minasie and Amanuel
bottom row; Aklilu, Mekonen and Ambaye



left to right: Ephrem, Aklilu, Mekonen and Ambaye.



University of Paris, student id.



The UN establishment signing document, 1945.

Old and new pictures of Keren, the home town of Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam.



The old Church of San Antonio (1874) in central Keren, Eritrea.



Giro Fiori (Flowers Circle) is in the very center of Keren.
Courtesy of David Stanley



A mosque under a mountain. Courtesy of Mateosh40 photostream



The grain market in Keren courtesy of David Stanley



Animal marketplace in Keren



Fresh vegetable market on a dry riverbed in Keren courtesy of David Stanley



Mat and straw market in Keren. Courtesy of David Stanley



Keren, Eritrea in the 1940's courtesy of Paul Jackson



Traditional coffee service in central Keren courtesy of David Stanley



Keren Camel market. Deal is struck after close examination, and haggling over the price.
Courtesy of Tarboat



Ask Kidun Italian or British cemetery in Keren? Courtesy of Hiro Otake



Open air market place in Keren



On the way to cattle market courtesy of Andrea Moroni



Mosque in Keren courtesy of DanielZolli



Former Keren railway station courtesy : Hiro Otake



Train approaching Keren



The Eritrean Railway line originally ran from Massawa, a port on the Red Sea, via the capital Asmara to Keren and Agordat.



Cattle marketplace in Keren

The Departure - End of life.

In the early fifties, Dr. Ambaye started getting ill. In 1953 when he was an Acting Foreign Minister, suddenly became gravely ill. He died at the age of 46, due to a mysterious illness. The official cause of death stated was "heart problem". He may have had some regular health issues, but, nothing grave that could have cut his life so short, so soon. The Imperial government had earlier sent him to Sweden for medical treatment. link: [Image](#)

208 የኢትዮጵያ እና ኤርትራ ግጭት መንግሥት እና መፍትሔ

ዶ/ር አምባየ ወልደ ማርያም (1898-1945 ዓ.ም.)



በኤርትራ ተወልደው በካቶሊክ ሚሰዮን ትምህርት ቤት በዘርዓ ክህነት ተመርቀው በፊሎሶፊና በነገረ መለኮት ከፍተኛ ትምህርትም ቫቲካን ባለው ኮሌጅዮ ኢትዮጵካ አጠናቀቁ። ከዚያም ወደ ፈረንሳይ ለገር ተዛውረው ከዮንቨርስቴ ደ ፖሪ በሕግ የዶክተር ዲግሪ ተመረቁ።

በ1925 ዓ.ም. ወደ ኢትዮጵያ መጥተው በአዲስ አበባ ተቋቁሞ በነበረው የውጭ ዜጎች የሚጻፉበት ልዩ ፍርድ ቤት ጻፏቸው ሆነው ሠሩ። ቀጥሎም ለሐረር ክፍለ ሀገር የሕግ አማካሪ ሆነው እስከ 1928 ዓ.ም. አገለገሉ።

ኢጣልያ ኢትዮጵያን ስትይዝ በጃፖን በሰ-ዳንና በግብፅ ተሰድደው ቆዩ።

የኢትዮጵያ ነፃነት ከተመለሰ በኋላ በተከታታይ በሐረር ጠቅላይ ግዛት የሕግና የፖለቲካ አማካሪ፣ ተጠባቂ ሚኒስትር ሆነው ፍርድ ሚኒስትርን በመምራት፣ በጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር ውስጥ በሚኒስትር ማዕረግ ሠርተዋል።

በ1938 ዓ.ም. በሳንፍራንሲስኮ የተባበሩት መንግሥታት ማኅበር ሲቋቋም መልክተኛ ሆነው ተልከው በሕግ ከተማ በሆላንድ ለተቋቋመው ዓለም አቀፍ ፍርድ ቤት ቻርተር የኢትዮጵያ ተወካይ ሆነው ፈርመዋል። በመጨረሻም ተጠባቂ የውጭ ጉዳይ ሚኒስትር ሆነው በመሥራት ላይ እያሉ በድንገት ተጣርቶ ባልታወቀ ሕመም ሕይወታቸው አለፈ።

Announcement of death by a local newspaper

Dr. Ambai Woldemariam, Acting Foreign Minister, Dies


FUNERAL IN GULALLE ATTENDED BY THEIR IMPERIAL MAJESTIES;

Funeral services for Dr. Ambai Woldemariam, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, were held Wednesday afternoon at Addis Ababa Catholic Cathedral. Burial was in Gullele Cemetery.

The funeral, which was one of the largest ever seen in the city, was attended by Their Imperial Majesties, Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince, Princess Tenagne Work, Prince Sable Selassie, and other members of the Imperial family.

Among others attending the funeral were Cabinet Ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Government and military officials, and many residents of the city. Dr. Ambai, who was 46, died of a heart illness Wednesday morning in Haile Selassie I Hospital. He is survived by his wife and six children.

Soon after the demise of Dr. Ambaye, representatives of the government, removed several documents, books and file folders from his residence, claiming that they were governmental properties. Items taken included personal correspondences, folders, and books etc..



Dr. Ambai Woldemariam

Dr. Ambai Woldemariam was born in 1906 in Eritrea. After secondary studies in Rome, he later received the degree and Doctorate of Law from the University of Paris.

From 1933 to 1935, he served as Adviser to the Special Court in Addis Ababa and later as Legal Adviser in the Province of Harar. After the invasion of Ethiopia, he took refuge in the Sudan and in Egypt. After the liberation in 1941, he became Political Adviser to His Imperial Highness the Duke of Harar.

Dr. Ambaye served from 1942 to 1943 as Vice Minister of Justice and as Director of the Administrative Committee of the State Bank; in 1944 he served as President of the Appeal Bureau of the Income Tax Service; in 1945 as a member of the Legislative Commission; in 1946 as Acting Minister of Justice; in 1947 as a member of the Education Commission of the Ministry of Education; in 1952 he was nominated Minister Without Portfolio in the Prime Minister's Office, and in 1953 he was nominated as Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, *ad interim*.

Dr. Ambai Woldemariam



Strange enough, we Eritreans are not given to celebrating our own heroes, and this has to change. During the colonial times, it was a colonial legacy that was instituted to establish the inferiority of the colonized and justify colonialism. Twenty-eight years and counting after occupation ended, our attitude should change to reflect the numerous contributions, achievements and sacrifices in our history to elevate our pride and inspire the present and future generations.

Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam is an Eritrean of high caliber who gained higher education and worked at the highest echelon of power in Ethiopia. That is the time when the importance of education was not widely understood nor were there institutions of higher education available. He was among the few Eritreans and Ethiopians who gained high education. Because of his intelligence and hard work he rose to the highest ranks of government. He is the most unknown of the unsung heroes of Eritrea. It was by sheer coincidence I came across the blog that told his life story. In reality, it is not only the loss of life of our past heroes and heroines, some of them untimely, that dealt a lethal blow to Eritrea and Eritreans, but also the loss of their history and legacy. In the lack of constant reference to their ideals and ideas by their compatriots, by those who know and those who should know, it amounts to betrayal and mortification of their heroism.



Dr. Embaye Wolde Mariam

1906 – 1954

“Rest in peace”

A Wakeup Call

Many countries in the world honor their heroes and commemorate them eternally by erecting statues, naming streets, parks, schools, universities and all sorts of institutions in their names. Eritrea has failed to remember its heroes in all spheres of life and fields including statesmanship, military, scholarships, arts, literature, religion, music and sports. It would be too long to list all the great Eritrean personalities from antiquity to the present. Even the heroes of the last 50 years who have not been recognized and honored are very many.

I believe many will agree with me that Eritrea has many amazing individuals in history who have done something unique to their country in the field of politics, culture, education, sport etc. which we need to remember them for what they have done. It is disheartening though not to see biography books of Eritreans in the library shelves. Lately I have decided to open a section in my website that will be dedicated to the biography of individual Eritreans from all walks of life in history (www.emnetu.com).

To start with I have randomly established a list of possible candidates. I therefore ask you all to put additional names to the list and return it to me. The list has to accommodate only individuals who have passed away. In other words, we will concentrate only on post mortem biographies. I will update the list when I hear from you. The list will remain open all the time for additional names.

If you are positive about this idea and you have the time I would challenge you all to write biographical sketch or find individuals who can be interested to write a biography on any in the list. If you come across anyone who has access to information but not ready to write, you can ask him/her to supply the information to me in any format (paper, diskette, gramophone dish, cassette, videos, photographs etc.) so that I can send it to the one who is interested to write.

The size of the file is not important at all. What is important is remembering them and trying to document their history before it disappears all together. The size will be determined only by the amount of information available on these individuals. Of course, the individuals in the list must have done something positive to the cause of our country or to the wellbeing of our people and our culture.

Emnetu Tesfay