



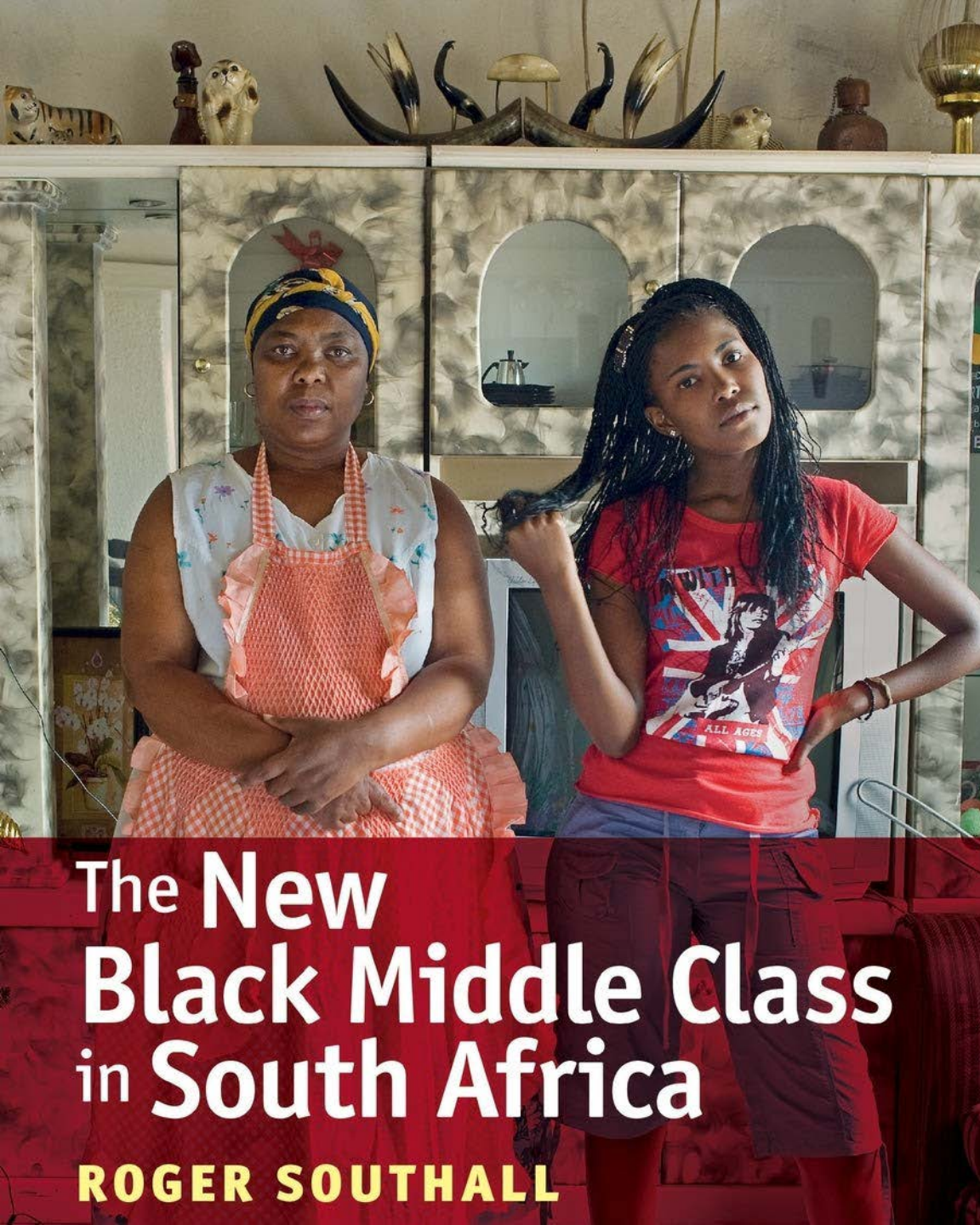


Conversations with the Pharaohs

African History in the Classroom



“Although ‘History’ as a subject is studied in South African schools, the study of ‘African History’ is neglected and/or perfunctory. This is mostly because there is an assumption that firstly, ‘Africa has no History’ or, relatedly that ‘African History’ is merely the study of ancient civilisations such as Pharaonic Egypt and that ‘African History’ is therefore irrelevant to the study of contemporary Africa. This lecture will attempt to overturn both assumptions by showing how multiple and diverse African civilisations actually are and were and, also make an argument for the contemporary relevance of the continent’s history.”



The New Black Middle Class in South Africa

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THE
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“This contrast of a vulgar soul and a keen intellect is characteristic in an Egyptian king.”

Hegel, G.W. F. 2007 [1899]. *The Philosophy of History*. Cosimo Classics: New York.



Tutankhamen |
Tutankhamun (c.1341–1323BC) –
Egyptian pharaoh (r.1333–1323 BC)
of the New Kingdom's 18th dynasty
(1550–1307 BC). The revolutionary
changes made by his predecessor,
Akhnaten, were reversed during his
reign. The capital was re-established
at Thebes (Luxor) and worship of
Amun reinstated. Tutankhamen's
fame is due to the discovery of his
tomb by Howard Carter in 1922. The
only royal tomb of ancient Egypt not
completely stripped by robbers, it
contained magnificent treasures,
which are now on display in Cairo.

Reference:

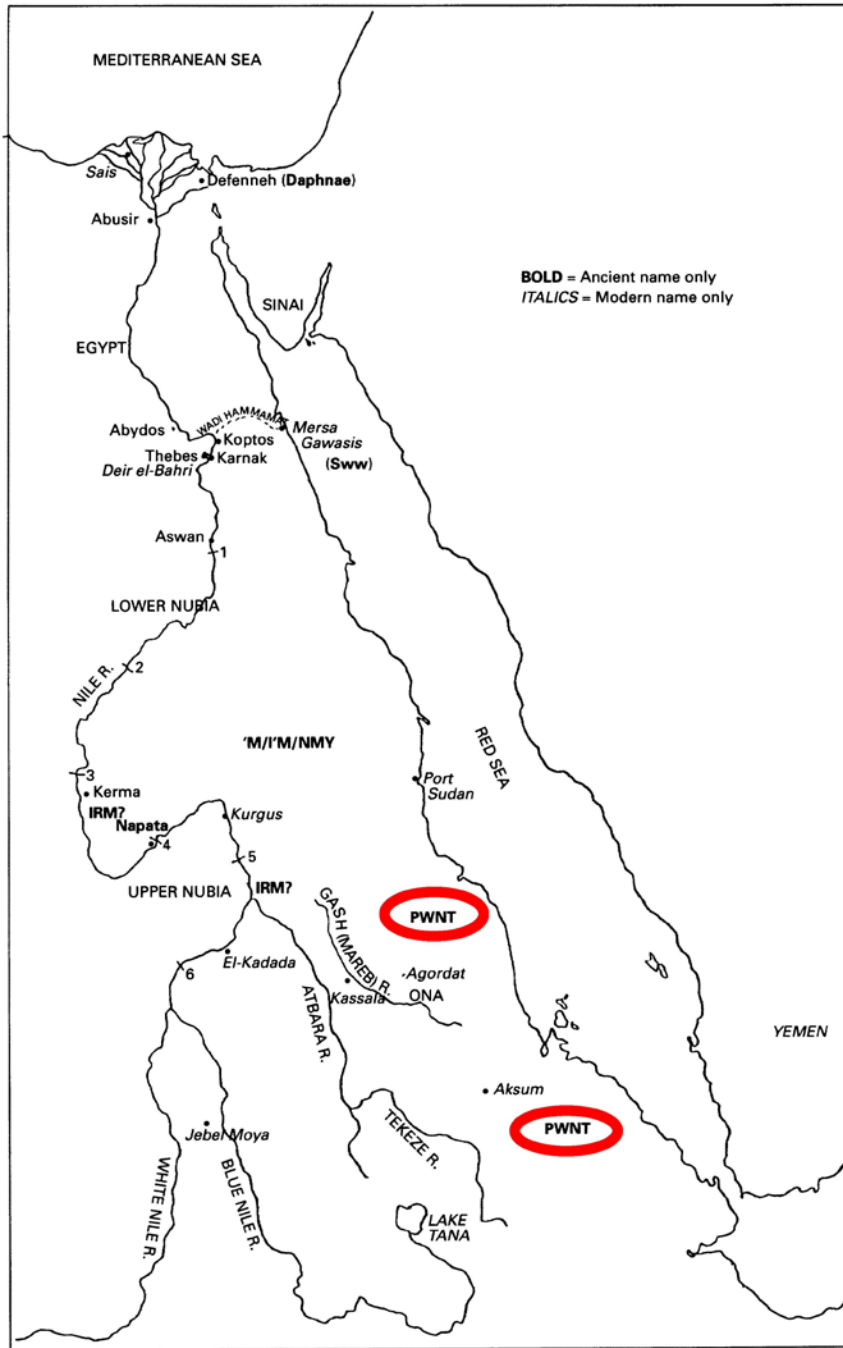
“Tutankhamen”. 2008. *World Encyclopedia*. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Accessed, 21 October 2010.



Hatshepsut (r. 1502–1482 BCE), fifth king of the eighteenth dynasty, New Kingdom. The daughter of Thutmose I and Queen Ahmose, Hatshepsut married her half brother, the future Thutmose II and produced one child, Neferure. After the premature death of Thutmose II, his son from a union with another woman, Isis, was crowned as Thutmose III, who possibly married Neferure to gain legitimacy. Since Thutmose III and Neferure were both children at Thutmose II's death, the king's "Great Wife" Hatshepsut ruled Egypt as regent. From two to seven years later, she assumed full power and crowned herself "king," using all royal titles. To vindicate her claim to the throne, the priests made use of a story of divine birth: the god Amun visited Queen Ahmose in the guise of her husband and begot Hatshepsut. She acted as king and frequently posed and dressed as a man. Though Hatshepsut counted the beginning of her reign from the coronation of Thutmose III, his role as ruler was downplayed. She appeared in written sources for the last time in the twentieth year of Thutmose III's reign, the same year in which he was represented with her as an equal for the first time. Previously, she always took precedence over her stepson, leaving no doubt concerning her role as senior pharaoh.

Reference:

Jadwiga Lipinska. 2001. "Hatshepsut". *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. Ed. Donald B. Redford, Oxford University Press.

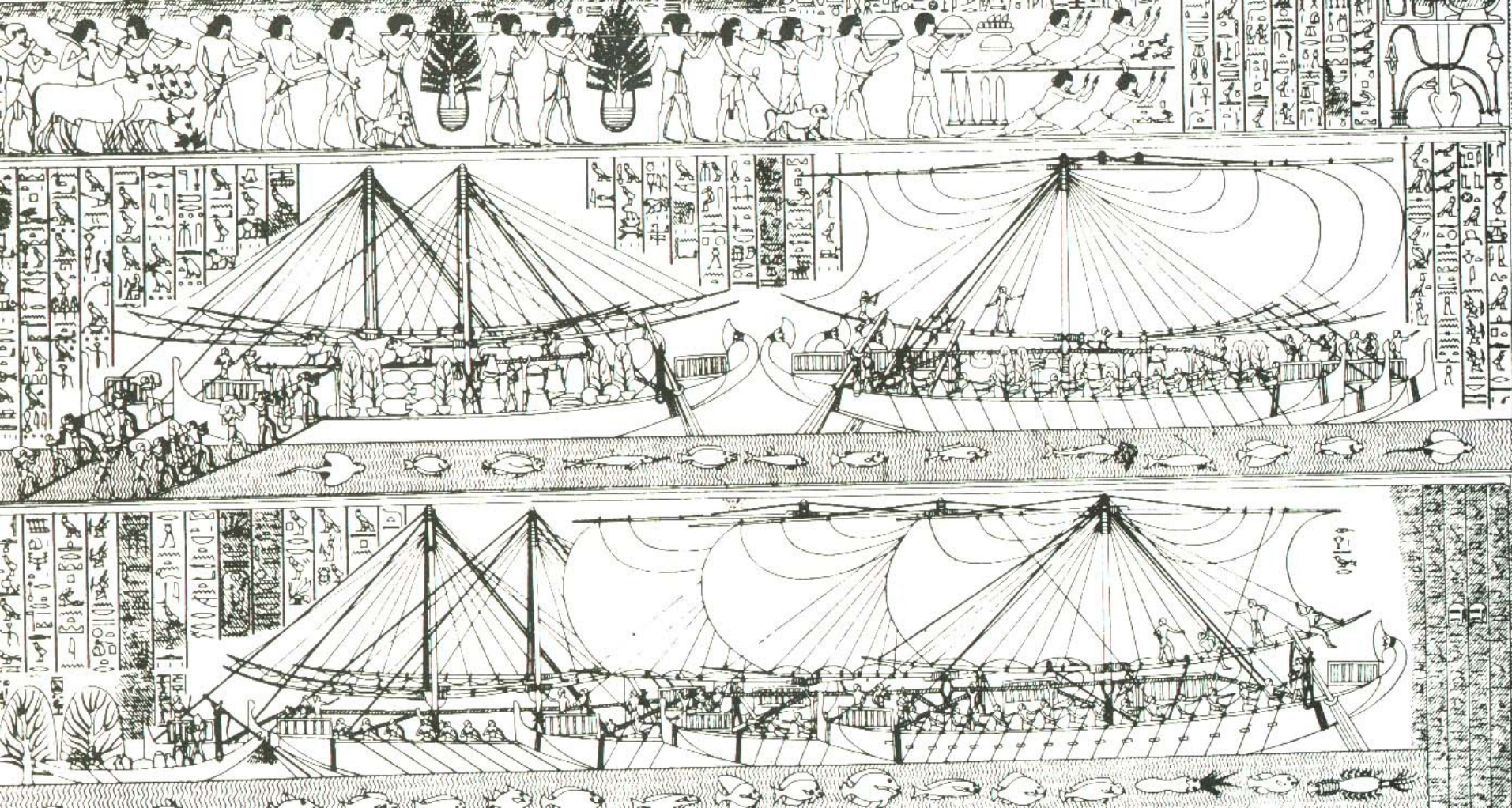


Punt. For about two thousand years (c.2600–600 BCE), Punt appeared in Egyptian sources as a real geographical and political entity. Later, it featured as merely an antiquated entry in Greco-Roman period name lists. The phrase “God’s Land” serves as a partial synonym for Punt in literary sources, but it covered a large area—almost anything northeast, east, or southeast of Egypt. In its heyday (c.2400–1170 BCE), Punt served the pharaonic government and temples primarily as a source of aromatics (myrrh and incense), and also of gold, electrum (a natural silver and gold alloy), panther skins, and other exotica. Most of those goods reached Egypt through indirect trade by a chain of middlemen, except when the pharaohs dispatched occasional major expeditions to conduct direct trade with Punt.

Reference:

Kenneth A. Kitchen. 2001. “Punt. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. Ed. Donald B. Redford, Oxford University Press.

Map 1. The Pharaonic period, third millennium to c. 500 B.C. (Sites not a contemporary.)



Hatshepsut (1473-1458 BC.) – the above depicts her expedition to the land of Punt. It is found in her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri. Her voyage was the first in 300 years and the Puntites are depicted with their products (myrrh, gold rings and ebony wood):

“The reliefs are laudatory and, whilst clearly a trading expedition is being depicted, the intended impression was that of Egypt receiving the ‘tribute’ of Punt, an impression wholly characteristic of Egyptian royal propaganda.” (Phillips, Jacke. 1997. “Punt and Aksum: Egypt and the Horn of Africa”, *Journal of African History*, 430)



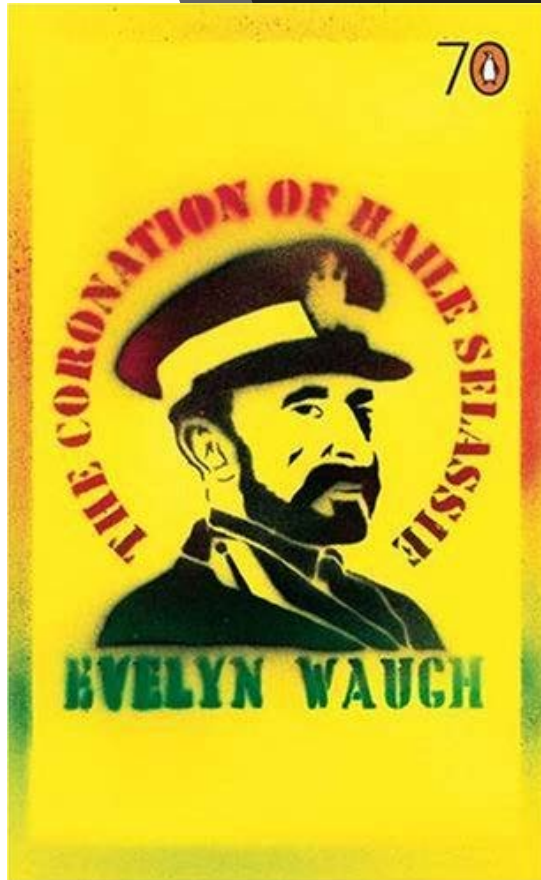
Ethiopia – The East African State of Ethiopia has its capital at Addis Ababa. For 14th-c. Europe, the king of Ethiopia was confused with the legendary Prester John, evidence of the fame attained at the time by this mysterious Christian kingdom. In the same period, historiographers charged with celebrating the restoration of the Solomonid dynasty wrote the legend of King Menelik I, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, the founding myth of Ethiopia. Aksum was the cradle of the Ethiopian nation. There, in this venerable capital, in the 4th century AD the Emperor Ezana embraced Christianity, after the welcome at court of a young shipwrecked Syrian, Frumentius, who was to become the country's first bishop. In the following century, monks from Antioch carried out the definitive conversion of the people, at the same time introducing the Aksumite Empire to monophysitism*, which was to keep the Church of Ethiopia under the tutelage of the Coptic patriarchate of Alexandria until its recent emancipation in 1959.

Reference:

Yvan G. Lepage. 2001. "Ethiopia". *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. Ed. André Vauchez. Distributed by Oxford University Press.

*"Monophysitism" – the doctrinal belief that holds that in the person of Jesus there is either a single divine nature, or one inseparable nature, partly divine, and partly (subordinately) human. [OED]





The image above is a cover of the 1999 edition of Evelyn Waugh's *The Coronation of Haile Selassie*, published continuously since 1937 by Penguin.

Haile Selassie (b. 23 July 1892, d. 27 Aug. 1976) – Emperor of Ethiopia 1930–74. Born in Harar as a great-nephew of Emperor Menelik II, he was baptized Ras Tafari Makonnen as a Coptic Christian. When his aunt, Waizeru Zewditu, became Empress in 1916, he became her regent and effective ruler of the country. He managed to control the opposition, and continued Menelik's reforms, such as the encouragement of missionary schools. Keen to establish his country as a modern state, Haile Selassie led Ethiopia into the League of Nations in 1923. He was crowned King in 1928 and, upon his aunt's death, Emperor in 1930. He continued attempts at political reform, and created a military academy. He was forced into exile in London during the Italian occupation of the country (1936–41). After his restoration he received massive aid from the UN, Britain, and the USA, which enabled him to create schools, colleges, medical services, and an army. He also became a well-known and influential international figure, for example within the UN and the Organization for African Unity (African Union). However, warfare against Eritrean independence organizations and internal ethnic opposition forces preserved his country's poverty. After a drought in 1973, the effects of which were compounded by inefficient administration of relief, he was deposed on 13 September 1974. He died (presumably murdered) under house arrest.

Reference:

"Haile Selassie". 2008. *A Dictionary of Contemporary World History*. Jan Palmowski. Oxford University Press, Oxford Reference Online.

