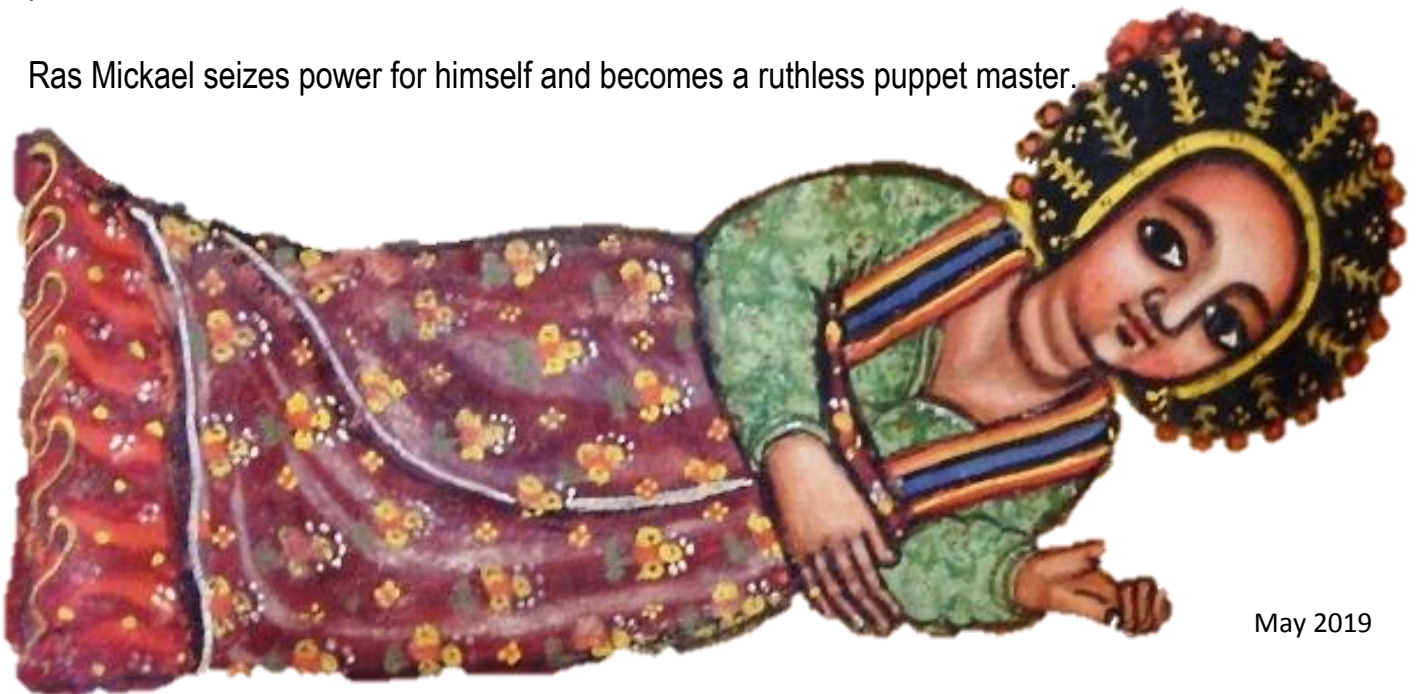


# Zemene Mesafint - "Era of the Princes"

## Aka "Game of Thrones" Ethiopian Style



- The reign of Iyasu II (1730–1755) brought instability to the empire. Iyasu II ascended the throne as a child, allowing his mother, Empress Mentewab to play a major role as his Regent from 1723 to 1730. Mentewab had herself crowned as co-ruler in 1730, becoming the first woman to be crowned in this manner in Ethiopian history. Beyond the capital of Gondar, the Empire suffered from regional conflict between nationalities that had been part of the Empire for hundreds of years—the Agaw, Amharans, Showans and Tigreans—and the Oromo newcomers.
- Iyasu II fell seriously ill (possibly due to poison) in May, 1755. Despite the death of her son, Empress Mentewab tried to maintain her power, causing conflict with her former daughter-in-law, Wubit, Iyasu's widow, who believed that it was her turn to preside at the court of her own son Iyoas.
- The conflict between these two empresses led to Mentewab summoning her Qwara relatives and their forces to Gondar for support. Wubit responded by summoning her own Oromo relatives and their considerable forces. Mentewab summoned the powerful Mikael Sehul (who was to become her son-in-law) to mediate the dispute and prevent a bloodbath.
  - Upon arriving in Gondar, Mikael was made Ras (a royal title, like a "duke") by the nobles. Mentewab had hoped that he would land firmly on her side, but instead Ras Mikael seized power for himself, and eventually engineered the murder (by strangulation) of Emperor Iyoas I, at which time Mikael also married the aunt of his victim.
- Empress Mentewab was distraught at the murder of her grandson. She retreated to Qusquam and buried her grandson there next to her son, refusing to return to the city of Gondar. She lived at her palace there in seclusion till the end of her life.
- Ras Mikael seizes power for himself and becomes a ruthless puppet master.



So . . .

<i>Emperor</i>	<i>Reign</i>	<i>Details of his Death</i>	<i>Fun Fact [s]</i>
Iyasu II	1730-1755	Possible poisoning	Son of Mentewab
Iyoas I	1755-1769	Strangled by Ras Mikael, the man the nobility of Ethiopia had sent to mediate an end to the conflict between Mentewab and his mother.	Grandson of Mentewab
Yohannes II	7 May – 18 October 1769	Poisoned by Ras Mikael	Ras Mikael's choice for Emperor. Only had one hand. When Ras Mikael realized Yohannes II was too weak (he was in his 70s) he had him murdered.
Tekle Haymanot II	18 October 1769 – August 1770 & December 1770 – 13 April 1777	Dies as a monk after renouncing the throne.	Lost the throne briefly when he and Ras Mikael left the capital on a military campaign (see Susenyos II below).  Witnesses <b>the fall of Ras Mikael</b> (after he goes on a rampage to purge all those who opposed him – even slaughtering a troop of travelling actors who mocked him).
Susenyos II	August 1770 – December 1770	Hanged for stealing.	Ras Mikael returned and deposed this pretender before enslaving him (he worked in the kitchen).
Salomon II	13 April 1777 – 20 July 1779	Dies as a monk after renouncing the throne.	Was the focus of a power struggle between rival factions of nobility. He lost.

Tekle Giyorgis I	1779–1800	Deposed, he dies of natural causes in the City of Axum.	Tekle Giyorgis gained and lost the Imperial throne five times since ascending it in 1779.
Salomon III	16 June – 25 July 1799	Dies in captivity.	Salomon was deposed and put into chains by rival nobles in favour of Demetros.
Demetros	25 July 1799 – 24 March 1800 & June 1800 – June 1801	Unknown	Demetros was dragged to the Royal Palace against his will where he was made ruler.
Egwale Seyon	June 1801 – 12 June 1818	Unknown (he was always sickly)	Beholdened to the powerful nobles, the emperor – in the words of historian Henry Salt: "lived neglected at Gondar, with a very small retinue of servants, and an income by no means adequate to the support of his dignity; so that, as he possesses neither wealth, power, nor influence in the state; royalty may be considered, for a time, almost eclipsed in the country."
Iyoas II	1818–1821	Unknown	Former monk. Controlled by the nobles.
Gigar	3 June 1821 – April 1826 & April 1826 – 18 June 1830	Deposed and poisoned.	Former monk. Controlled by the nobles & lived on their donations. Dwelled in a small circular house on the ruins of part of the palace.
Baeda Maryam III	A few days in April 1826	Unknown	Installed by rival nobles before being deposed.

Iyasu IV	18 June 1830 – 18 March 1832	Unknown	Installed and controlled by nobles. Deposed by rival nobles.
Gebre Krestos	24 March 1832 – 8 June 1832	Died of natural causes	Deposed and exiled briefly by his brother. Returned only to die of natural causes.
Sahle Dengel	Intermittently between 1832 and 11 February 1855		Eduard Rüppell, who visited the capital of Gondar in 1833, stated that at the time the Emperor "barely had the income of an averagely well-to-do Ethiopian, and the great princes of the Tigray, Shoa and Amhara were unable to prevent continuous strife and bloodshed." A none-entity, he was deposed in 1855.
Egwale Anbesa	1832	Sahle Dengel cut his head off and mounted it in a tree.	Was a wondering monk who declared himself emperor.
Yohannes III	Intermittently throughout 1840-1851.	Unknown	E. A. Wallis Budge writes "He was a glutton and a wine bibber, and was usually drunk, and when he was not in his banquet hall he was in his harim."



One of the Ethiopian Crowns

