

SOME SUGGESTED TRIPS

In and Around
(Department)

ADDIS ABABA

by

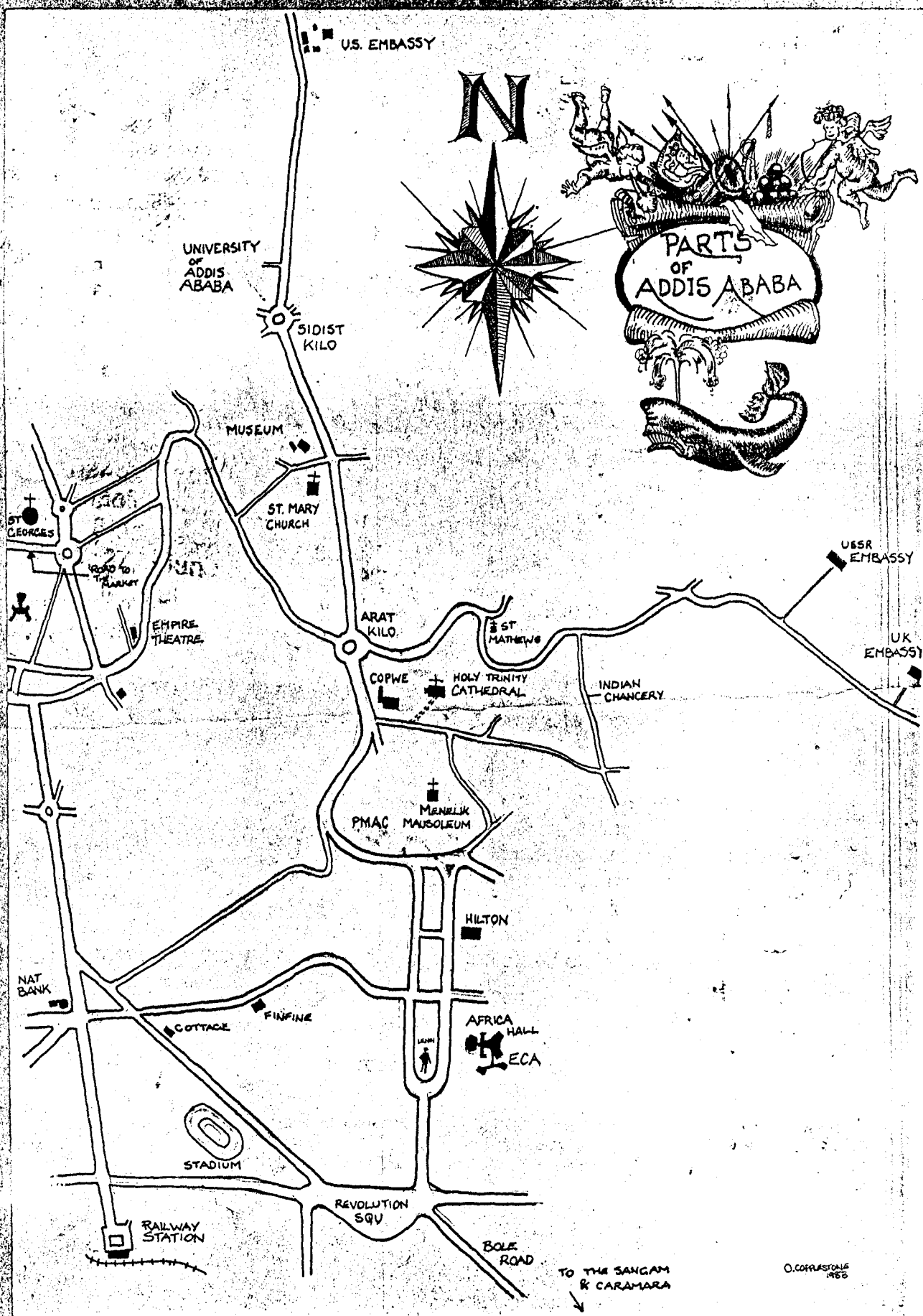
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LOLEKIN AND CORROBORATION

E N BUREAU

DELIVERED BY POLICE



A FEW OF THE PLACES TO VISIT IN AND AROUND ADDIS ABABA

HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL

Reached by turning right from the Indian Chancery route and then sharp right up the hill from the road which runs between the Grand Palace and the COPWE Building. At the top of the hill turn left and drive into the churchyard. In the churchyard are buried a number of 'Patriots' - those who lost their lives during the Italian War, or contributed towards the Resistance.

Sylvia Pankhurst is buried here. She campaigned on behalf of the Emperor before and during his exile and returned to live and die here after the liberation.

Building of the Cathedral itself was started before the Italian occupation and finished in about 1946. It is said to be the largest Cathedral in Africa. It is built in European Church style rather than in the traditional Ethiopian concentric style. There are plaques on either side of the main doors recording the contribution made by British soldiers to the Liberation of Ethiopia. The battle flags hanging in the Cathedral are the old Imperial flags of the Army, Navy and Airforce, displaying the Imperial crown. Murals in the dome ceiling depict Haile Selassie addressing the League of Nations and replanting the Ethiopian flag when he returned to Ethiopia, as well as conventional religious subjects. The altar is of ivory and gold and silver. The Imperial thrones are still on display. Haile Selassie's tomb stands empty and shrouded. The whereabouts of his grave is not known. The Empress Menen's tomb is alongside.

A priest will appear and unlock the Church if you are seen to be trying to gain entrance. You should give him about 3 birr on leaving. (If there are 5 or 6 of you give 1 birr each).

MENELIK MAUSOLEUM

This is within the Compound of the Grand Palace but now fenced off from the main compound. Reach it by turning left from the Indian Chancery route and then right along the track from which the dome of the mausoleum can be seen. This large, dignified building houses in the crypt the tombs of the Emperor Menelik, his Empress Taitu, and his daughter, Empress Zauditu, as well as one of Haile Selassie's daughters, the Princess Tsehai. She was in exile in England with her father and trained as a nurse at Gt. Ormond St. She was the first Ethiopian nurse but died in 1942 shortly after her return to Ethiopia. The hospital built in her memory and named after her is now incorporated in the Army Hospital on the Jimma Road.

Strangely enough, while the tomb of Haile Selassie in the Holy Trinity Cathedral is indubitably empty, there has always been a suspicion that the tomb of the Emperor Menelik is also

empty. He lingered for some years after the stroke which incapacitated him in about 1910. During that time his grandson and nominated successor, Lij Yassu, his Empress Taitu and factions surrounding Tafari Makonnen (Haile Selassie) fought for control of him and the succession. The date and place of his death have never been clearly established.

The church contains murals of the meeting of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, the coronation of the Emperor Menelik, the investiture of Ras Makonnen as Governor of Harar, and the Battle of Adowa.

From the steps of the Mausoleum with its large stone lions there is a good view of Addis Ababa and the grounds of the Grand Palace (where Chairman Mengistu now lives). The Priests get worried if you linger over this view and you should not take photographs around here.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

Turn right up the hill opposite the fruit shops at the beginning of the Piazza. The Cathedral is on the roundabout at the top. It was built in 1893 by Menelik. The Empress Zauditu was crowned here in 1916 and the Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930. The Church suffered during the Italian Occupation but was restored afterwards. There are marvellous murals in which members of the Royal Family intermingle familiarly with saints and angels.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

This is on King George VI Street between Arat Kilo and Sidist Kilo. Built in 1929. This is very undistinguished but is the seat of the Abuna of the Ethiopian Church.

You should give the priest about 3 birr in any of these churches and correspondingly more if there are a number of you. The best time to go is if you see a crowd in front of them; this means usually that there is a service and there will be chanting and dancing which can be very dramatic.

Take your shoes off before entering any church, except Holy Trinity, and hold on to them.

ENTOTO MARIAM

To visit this church you need to take a landrover. It is on Entoto, a continuation of the road leading past the U.S. Embassy. The road has good views and the Church is well worth seeing. The Emperor Menelik was crowned there and indeed planned to build his capital there but his wife preferred the gentler slopes and hot springs of Addis Ababa. The paintings again mix secular and sacred. You need here to do some hard bargaining with the priests and deacons. Don't pay more than 5 birr and

make sure you are outside the church again before handing it over. I was once locked in while I argued but I won!

Further along this road another church - St Raguel - is being restored. It is therefore not always possible to get in.

STATUES OF INTEREST

EMPEROR MENELIK

This was unveiled by Haile Selassie just before his coronation in 1930 and stands in front of St George's Cathedral. This used to be the site of public execution. The statue was removed and buried by the Italians but it was restored in 1942.

THE ABUNA PETROS STATUE

This is situated to the West of the Menelik Statue. It was unveiled in 1946 and honours the memory of Abuna Petros who was executed by the Italians in 1936. His splendid tomb stands in the Patriot's graveyard at Holy Trinity Cathedral.

LENIN

Unveiled, in a rainstorm, September 1983. Outside Africa Hall. Said to be the third biggest statue of Lenin in the world.

ARAT KILO - THE LIBERTY MONUMENT

Unveiled in 1942. It honours those who fought and resisted the Italians. The supporting pillars which depicted Haile Selassie among others have been replaced.

SIDIST KILO MONUMENT

Beautifully carved and well worth photographing, this commemorates the thousands of Ethiopians killed by the Italians in reprisal for the attempt on the life of General Graziano.

RAS MAKONNEN MONUMENT

This is a charming bust set in a wall in a road which leads off to the right just before Adwa Avenue bears left around to the main Piazza. There is a picturesque flight of steps, just beyond. If you climb these you can wander in some interesting alleys, and by bearing left finish up at Sidist Kilo.

OTHER BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

THE GRAND PALACE

Closed to the public. A compound containing churches, palaces, and government offices. The Emperor Menelik lived and worked here. Haile Selassie worked here, and probably died here.

THE NATIONAL PALACE

Formerly the Jubilee Palace. After 1960 this was Haile Selassie's home. It is now used for ceremonial state functions and as an official guest Residence.

THE ADMINISTRATION BLOCK OF THE UNIVERSITY

This was until 1960 Haile Selassie's home. During the abortive coup of 1960 the Crown Prince and many ministers and dignitaries were held captive here. On the failure of the coup many were shot by the defeated conspirators. The Emperor was unwilling to go on living there and gave the building and lands as the nucleus of the University. The upper floors house the Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, which is fascinating, and well worth a visit.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

This is just beyond St Mary's Church on George VI Avenue. The building is new and undistinguished, but the exhibition is worth a visit. The building next door, which used to house the museum, is much more attractive. It has also been a leading hotel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and an official Residence during the Italian Occupation.

THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

A very handsome house on the left just before Sidist Kilo. This was the Prime Minister's residence before the Revolution.

THE RAILWAY STATION AND LION OF JUDAH STATUE

The Station was completed in time for Haile Selassie's coronation in 1930.

The Statue was removed by the Italians and erected in Rome. It was only returned in the late 1950's.

OUTSIDE ADDIS ABABA

PORTUGUESE BRIDGE AND DEBRA LIBANOS

120 Kms, you do not need a landrover.

Turn right at St George's Cathedral and keep straight on for 2 hours. The Road goes over Entoto and after 120 kms you reach the right turn to Debra Libanos. The church at Debra Libanos was rebuilt in about 1960 and is not very attractive. The site however is one of the holiest in Ethiopia and the oldest continuously consecrated. Until the Concordat of the late 1940's whereby the Abuna of the Church became an Ethiopian appointment rather than an Egyptian one, the Abbott of the Church at Debra Libanos was the senior Ethiopian prelate and in effect the Administrator of the Church. The saint Tekle Haymont who stood on one leg for 7 years and is depicted in many church murals lived in the cliffs behind the Church.

Returning to the main road you will be signalled to stop within a very few yards by small boys who will lead you to the Portuguese Bridge from where you get beautiful views of a tributary of the Blue Nile Gorge. Baboons can usually be seen here. The Bridge was probably built during the 19th century by members of the Kassa family. 167

The whole area is Kassa territory. Two of Ras Kassa's sons were killed fighting the Italians near here.

Each member of the party should give a birr to the guide who will have attached himself to them; and give a birr to the zabanya who you have chosen to look after your car on the main road.

Continue on this road for about another 2 hours to reach the Blue Nile Gorge itself.

THE AMBO ROAD

Turn left on the Blue Nile Gorge Road at the first traffic lights past St George's Cathedral and then right on to the major road at the bottom of the hill. There are many places of interest on this road. There is a nice little pottery on the right. The pieces are cheap and attractive, but usually not waterproof or heatproof.

The Gulele Cemetary is worth visiting not only for the Commonwealth War Graves but also the Italian War Cemetary and the Greek and Armenian graves. Further along this road you will pass the Cheshire Home.

Addis Alem about 1½ hours drive (58km) is well worth a visit, although you need a landrover for the last stretch. Take a left turn up a rocky track in the main village and you will

come to a beautiful church on the top of the hill. The paintings outside are very Indian in style, and very beautiful. Inside there are many representations of Lij Jassu as well as Menelik, Taitu and Zauditu.

In the same compound is Menelik's palace. The priests are usually very happy to open this for you, for about a birr per person, and you may have to leave your cameras with them. Inside there are priceless crowns, one presented by Queen Victoria; costumes, now rotting, which belonged to Menelik and Zauditu; and some very old books.

There is also a large bare banqueting hall in which Menelik entertained his soldiers and court. An old man still living nearby remembers Menelik but is apparently too ill to meet visitors.

A visit to Addis Alem can be combined with a trip to the Mengasha State Forest. When you have finished at Addis Alem, take the road back to Addis Ababa, and turn right at the signpost to the Mengasha State Forest. You need a landrover, and when you get to the top you reach an Alpine World similar to the foothills of the Himalayas, and marvelous for a picnic. There is a newly completed restaurant there, which is not yet opened.

Ambo is about 3 hours drive (131 kms) from Addis Ababa, which you do not need a landrover for. There is a hot springs swimming pool at the Ras Hotel and you can get a very adequate meal.

THE DEBRE ZEIT ROAD

We all know this as the road to Langano. One can eat at the hotels at Debra Zeit, although swimming is not recommended because of bilharzia.

Carry on on the road to Nazareth, and turn right after Mojo, to get to the Koka Dam. There is a pleasant hotel where you can have lunch or a drink. Continue over the dam to the Koka Hotel Compound from where a track to the right leads to the Hippo Pool. You will need a landrover, and a driver and/or guide. You will have to pay a small fee, and will be given a receipt. There are always people about who will point out Hippos and crocodiles.

Try to get the driver to take you to the hot springs village about 10 minutes drive across country. Here people come to bathe to cure themselves of illness. It is very picturesque, but do not take photographs.

If you return to the main road at Koka Dam, continue away from Addis Ababa and you will reach Nazareth, where there is a hotel and swimming pool, and a colorful Saturday market.

THE DESSIE ROAD

Turn left outside the Embassy and drive straight on. This is one of the most spectacularly beautiful roads just outside Addis and superbly engineered by the Italians.

Yet another earlier capital of Ethiopia is at Ankober. On the way out of Debra Berhan (1½ - 2 hours from Addis) look for a sign on the left hand side of the road pointing to Ankober, which is in fact a right turn. You need a land-rover for this road. Drive for 43 kms and park your car. Ankober is about an hour's walk.

Ankober was destroyed by heavy shelling by the Italians, but the remains of the city walls, and Menelik's palace can be seen. There are superb views over the Danakil.

The Shoan Royal Family of whom Haile Selassie was the last to reign originate in this area. Sahle Selassie the modern founder of the line was born in 1795 in a village near to Debre Berhan. This is Ankolele, where there is an underground rock-hewn palace. Now only the entrance is visible, but the locals will be glad to show you where it is. To get to Ankolele, turn left just after the ILCA field station, just before Debra Berhan. It is an unmistakable white road. Then turn left after about 15 kms, going cross country towards the church on the hill. You will need a landrover.

About 3½ hours drive from Addis Ababa on the Dessie Road is a Sunday camel market at Senbete, beyond Robit and just before Efeson where there is a cheap and primitive hotel, where you could spend Saturday night, or else leave Addis at about 6 am Sunday morning. The Affars bring their pack camels from the Danakil, with goods to sell, making a very colourful market. You do not need a landrover for this trip.

THE JIMMA ROAD

This goes past the turn-off to the Canadian Residence. You will pass Alert (the Leprosy Institute) and Hope Enterprise, both of which are worth week-day visits.

The village of Sebeta is 25 kms from Addis. Turn right after the village to the Meta Brewery, which is signposted. There is an attractive restaurant, and a waterfall.

Woliso is 114 kms from Addis Ababa. There is a Saturday market, but get there in the morning for this. If you turn left just inside the village at the signpost, there is a Ras Hotel with hot springs swimming pool and a good value lunch. You do not need a landrover for this trip.

Suggested Reading

Black Mischief by Evelyn Waugh - Set in the Compound
When the Going was Good by Evelyn Waugh - Chapters 2 & 5
Fountains of the Sun by Sir Douglas Busk

The Real Abyssinia

Undiscovered Abyssinia

In the Country of the Blue Nile

} C F Rey - whose children are
buried in the
Embassy Graveyard

Eight Years in Abyssinia by Fan C Dunckley

Abyssinia on the Eve by Ladislav Farago

In Search of Sheba by Barbara Toy

Most of these books, and many more, can be borrowed from
the Embassy Library in the Residence, open every day
including weekends.

This is by no means a complete guide; suggestions for
expanding it would be very welcome.