

THE COUNTRY OF THREE THOUSAND YEARS OF CIVILIZATION: WOLAITA OR ETHIOPIA?

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ABSTRACT

The ancient and medieval empire of Wolait predates any civilization Ethiopia and reached its peak during its powerful and expansionist king Motolame in the 13th century. This article explored the political, social and economic achievements of the empire in the period under discussion. The data was collected in 2018 through fieldwork, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Scholars used the names Damot and Wolaita interchangeably and its political influences included the south, south-west and the central region of present Ethiopia. As it is one of the first historically known sites in the Horn of Africa, the Wolaita-Damot civilizations predate any other civilization in Ethiopia. The Wolaita was the first to wear cloths made by their own hands out of cotton and had their own currency called Marchuwa.