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**AFRICAN CLAIMS TO CHRISTIAN ORIGIN II
ETHIOPIA¹**

By

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Abstract

Christianity started well over 2000 years ago. It spread quickly all over the then known world, especially Palestine and Europe. As a religion, Christianity is practiced in all over Africa. It has been said that it was introduced to Africa by European Missionaries beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries. Is this really true? If this is the case, how did the names of some African nations find their way into the Christian scriptures? Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned in the Jewish scriptures from the very beginning. There was also the episode of the Ethiopian Eunuch recorded in the New Testament. Were they accidental? Were they intentional? These and more are the aim of this and the earlier paper, to trace the true origin of Christianity in these places.

Key words: Christianity, Jewish scriptures, Egypt, Ethiopia and African claims.

Introduction

In the first part of this article published in the maiden edition of “Agora Journal”² I traced the origin of Christianity into the continent of Africa in general and placed particular interest on Egypt. In the article, I started from the names of the places in Africa that were mentioned in the Scriptures, that is Egypt and Ethiopia. I concluded by concentrating on the former and establishing the fact that Christianity came into Egypt and

flourished until the advent of Islam in the 7th century when most of the ancient centers of Christianity were destroyed and taken over by Moslems. In this article I wish to conclude my search on the origin of Christianity in Africa with special interest on Ethiopia, the other location that was mentioned frequently in the Bible. The appearance of the name Ethiopia in the Bible does not necessarily imply that Christianity was practiced there. My task is to try to trace the source or origin of Christianity in Ethiopia. Did the Ethiopian Eunuch, that is, the court official, mentioned in the Acts of Apostles (Acts 8: 26-38) go back home to proclaim the faith? Did someone else bring the faith to Ethiopia? Who proclaimed the faith there and when?

Ethiopia in the Bible

In my earlier article I had written that the name Ethiopia did not appear until much later but another name had been used to designate the same place from the second chapter of the book of Genesis. Genesis 2:13 reads: "The second river is named the Gihon and this encircles the whole land of Cush". 'Cush'³ was the name that from the very beginning appeared even in the second creation story. The same name was used in 2Kg. 19:9, here a certain Tirhakah, king of Cush, who intended to fight the king of Assyria is mentioned (cf. Is. 37:9). Ethiopia is also said to have been referred to as "the South". It is believed through an ancient legend in Ethiopian tradition that her kingship and priesthood are a legitimate continuation of the dynasty of King Solomon, the son of King David. The legend goes thus: "the queen of the Sheba" who visited king Solomon (1Kg. 10:1-13) was Makeda of Aksum (or Axum), she is said to have had a son with King Solomon named Menelik I who later became the king of Ethiopia.⁴

The scriptures have nothing of the content of the legend other than the fact that there was a visit by the queen of Sheba who was amazed at the Wisdom of Solomon, his administrative acumen, etc.; she offered him gifts, praised the God of Israel and returned to her country with her entourage. It is believed that the legend

was written much later to support the idea and authenticity of the Solomonic Dynasty and the source of the prevalent Jewish culture and religion in present day Ethiopia. It is said that “the Aksumite kingdom adopted Judaism and the law of Moses during the reign of King Menelik, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba...”⁵ All these can be said to be allusions to the strong link between Ethiopians (Aksumites) and Jews which is still present in Ethiopia of today. It is believed that only members of the Solomonic dynasty have ruled Ethiopia until recently. Karbo said that the ruling descendants were linked to the Amhara and Tigre tribes: “In the ideological field, there was a concentration on the divine personality of the leader, the idea of “closeness” the official nationalism practically meant domination of power, resources, politics and economics by the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigre are the two dominant Christian groups, as well as the groups that have controlled the political and social space the longest.”⁶

It was in the book of Esther that the name Ethiopia was first mentioned in the Bible: “It was in the days of Ahasuerius, the Ahasuerius whose empire stretched from India to Ethiopia” (Es. 1:1). This text also affirms the vastness of the territory that is usually referred to as Ethiopia. From this point on, the name Ethiopia appeared severally in the Old Testament. These include the following: Es. 8:9, Job. 28:19, Ps. 68: 31; 87:4, Is. 18:1; 20:3; 20:5; 37:9; 43:3; 45:14, Ezek. 29:10; 30:4; 30:5; 38:5, Nahum 3:9 and Zeph. 3:10. In most of the cases here mentioned, Ethiopia appeared alongside Egypt. It must also be noted that the fact that Ethiopia was mentioned in the Old Testament is no allusion to the presence of Christianity there. This can only buttress the link between Ethiopia and Judaism.

In the New Testament there was no mention of Ethiopia in the gospels, the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch or court official, is the first and only indicator of any connection between Ethiopia and Christianity. The story is found in the Acts of the Apostles. Acts 8: 27-38 reads:

Now it happened that an Ethiopian had been on

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pilgrimage to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at court of the *Kandake*, or queen, of Ethiopia, and was in fact he chief treasurer. He was now on his way home; and as he sat in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and meet that chariot.’ ... Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look, there is some water here; is there anything to stop me being baptized?’ he ordered the chariot to stop, and then Philip baptized him.

The Eunuch was passing time while on a journey with the writing of the Prophet Isaiah. What happened to the court officer? He is said to be returning home, but what did he do when he got home? Did he proclaim the Good News in Ethiopia? We do not know for sure but it is said that he was the first Christian evangelizer of Ethiopia, though there isn’t much indication of the success of his work.

Church Fathers on Ethiopia and Christianity

Since the Bible is not completely clear on the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia, I would like to recourse to the early Christian writers. Origen, talking about him “mentioned a legend which made the eunuch the first evangelizer of ‘Aethiopia.’ Yet there is no evidence of a Christian community at Meroë in the first century. Acts see the baptism of the eunuch rather as a symbolic act, announcing the future conversion of the Gentile world.”⁷

This is further affirmed by Jerome (a fourth century Father of the Church known for his translation and interpretation of the scriptures) in his interpretation of the above text: “For the purposes of his history, Luke has left out the religious status of the eunuch vague so as not to preempt the Gentile overture by Peter; but the deep African origin of this convert, conjuring readers’ vision of dark skinned hordes beyond civilization’s outer boundaries, gave expressive evidence that the gospel, having conquered Samaria, was truly on its way to “the ends of the

earth.”⁸As said earlier, the term Ethiopia is a representation of the whole of Africa south (black Africans) of the Sahara. The queen or *kandake*(Candace) is also a title that is common around the same area. It is not a proper name by chance. The journey made by the court official should not also be a surprise to anyone because of the long rapport that has existed between the Jews and the Aksumite. The Aksumites were also used to the Jewish scriptures.

Christianity in Ethiopia (Aksum)

Aksum or Axum is the name of the ancient capital of the Aksum kingdom, it is situated on the northern part of Ethiopia, west of Adwa. In the first century AD, Aksum became a political, cultural and economic centre, this was brought to an end with the spread of Islam in the 7th century when the city lost control over the Red Sea. It is now a religious and tourist centre known for the many tall granite obelisks. It is the setting of the 14th century work *KebrāNegast* (Glory of the Kings) which depicts the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Aksum by Menelik I, the legendary son of King Solomon with the Queen of the South.⁹ It is also purported that the Ark of the Covenant is still present in a small chapel, called St Mary of Zion (Mariam Tsion) till date.

That there was communication between the Jewish nation and this part of Africa has so far been established and the visit of the eunuch to Jerusalem that we have discussed above is also a confirmation of this fact but how were they able to move? The well-established trade route from the Mediterranean through the Red Sea to Ethiopia and India, that was popularly known as the “Incense Route” because incense, spices and exotic goods were the main commodities that were traded along the route is the most probable link between the two territories. The route is believed to have run from the Mediterranean ports of Levant and Egypt through Southeastern Africa and Arabia to India and beyond.

Strabo, a Greek geographer, historian and philosopher of the ancient world (63 BC – 24 AD), said in his geography that:

“Again, since the Romans have recently invaded Arabia, Felix with an army, of which Aelius Gallus, my friend and companion, was the commander, and since the merchants of Alexandria are already sailing with fleets by way of the Nile and of the Arabian Gulf as far as India, these regions also have become far better known to us of to day than to our predecessors. At any rate, when Gallus was prefect of Egypt, I accompanied him and ascended the Nile as far as Syene and the frontiers of Ethiopia, and I learned that as many as one hundred and twenty vessels were sailing from Myos Hormos to India, whereas formerly, under the Ptolemies, only a very few ventured to undertake the voyage and to carry on traffic in Indian merchandise.”¹⁰ This is a firsthand piece of information, since Strabo was not reporting what he had been told, rather he was recounting a personal experience. There was the sea route and it was quite active during his own time.

The Royal Chronicles claims that the Apostle Thomas evangelized Ethiopia while Origen links the name of the Apostle Matthew to the presence of Christianity in Ethiopia.¹¹ There is no evidence to prove or disprove either of these claims. Rufinus of Aquileia, a church historian, mentions the same but also tells us the story of two brothers, Frumentius and (Aedissius) Edesius, who were travelling on the sea with their tutor (others said that he was their uncle). Their ship was wrecked and their tutor died or as some sources said that the ship stopped at a port for supplies and it was attacked by the indigenes. The brothers survived and were captured and taken to Aksum where they were treated well. They were said to have been well educated and very intelligent and were tasked with instructing the son of the king, the crown prince Ezana. Moore Dale gave the sequence of events as follows:

A merchant vessel, belonging to Meropius, a Syrian trader, landed on the Ethiopian coast for provisions. The natives attacked the ship and murdered its crew. Only two sons of the merchant, Frumentius and Edesius, survived and they were taken captive to Aksum, the ancient capital. In time they impressed the king so much

with their ability that they were released from slavery and given important position at court.¹²

SalaminiusHermias Sozomen (c.375AD – 447AD), a 5th century AD church historian, who used the work of Rufinus as his source (Rufinus is believed to have been told about this by one of the brothers, Edesius) puts the sequence of event in India as follows:

In emulation, Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre in Phoenicia, journeyed as far as India. They say he was accompanied by two youths, named Frumentius and Edesius; they were his relatives; he conducted their rhetorical training, and educated them liberally. After exploring India as much as possible, he set out for home, and embarked in a vessel which was on the point of sailing for Egypt. It happened that, from want of water or some other necessary, the vessel was obliged to stop at some port, and the Indians rushed upon it and murdered all. Meropius included. These Indians had just thrown off their alliance with the Romans; they took the boys as living captives, because they pitied their youth, and conducted them to their king. He appointed the younger one his cup bearer; the older, Frumentius, he puts over his house and made him administrator of his treasures; for he perceived that he was intelligent and very capable in business. These youths served the king usefully and faithfully during a long course of years, and when he felt his end approaching, his sons and wife surviving, he rewarded the goodwill of the servants with liberty, and permitted them to go where they pleased.¹³

Sozomen gives more details regarding how Frumentius and Edesius got to Ethiopia and the fact that though they were taken prisoners but they found favour in the sight of the king who saw in them intelligent and knowledgeable persons and also

entrusted them with very important roles in his administration of the kingdom. The same was continued by the wife after the death of the king. It was with this freedom that Frumentius was said to have proclaimed the Christian faith in Ethiopia, though this did not happen until the death of the king. According to Sozomen, it was towards the end of the life of the king that the two young men regained their freedom and the queen requested that they remain to take charge of the public affairs of the kingdom. There is no evidence that the king was converted before his death but immediately after regaining their freedom, Frumentius enquired about the presence of Christians in the kingdom and found some with whom he prayed and he also built a house of prayer. Who are and where did the Christians that Frumentius found in the kingdom come from? We do not know but he is said to have found some with whom he prayed and also spread the faith in the kingdom.

It was during the reign of the son of the king, Ezana, after attaining the age whereby he could take charge of the kingdom, that the two brothers were allowed to depart from Aksum. Edesius was said to have returned home to Tyre, where he remained and was later ordained priest. Frumentius on the other hand went to Alexandria where he conferred with Athanasius (295/300 - 373), the head of the church in Alexandria at the time. He reported on the situation of things at Aksum while requesting for a bishop to continue the proclamation of the good news in the kingdom. Thereafter Sozomen said that: "Athanasius assembled the endemic priests, and consulted with them on the subject; and he ordained Frumentius bishop of India, since he was peculiarly qualified and apt to do much service among those among whom he was the first to manifest the name of Christian, and the participation in the doctrine was sown."¹⁴ Frumentius returned to Ethiopia and it was at this point that he evangelized and converted the king Ezana and his court. In the work quoted above, Sozomen consistently referred to the place where Frumentius and his brother were taken captives as India, this only further confirms the confusion of terms referred to at the

very beginning of this article regarding the territory.

The following questions, however are yet to be answered: who is Frumentius? When did he proclaim the gospel in Ethiopia? When did the king and his court adopt Christianity as the state religion? These questions will occupy the remaining part of this research work.

Frumentius

Very little is known about him. The first time we heard of him was with his brother Edesius and his tutor/uncle Meropius, the Syrian merchant. What is the relationship between the brothers and Meropius? Were they, his sons? Were they, his students? Were they, his companions? We do not know for certain what they were to him but they were together in the ship when it was attacked at the coast of Ethiopia and the brothers were the only surviving passengers. Voicu referred to him as the apostle of “India interior” who was consecrated bishop by Athanasius. His traditional identification as the first apostle of Ethiopia has been contested by Altheim and Stiehl.¹⁵

Scholars generally believe that the two brothers, Frumentius and Edesius (Aedesius), were students of Meropius, who is said to be a Christian Philosopher from Tyre, a region of modern Lebanon. Some affirmed him to be their uncle while others simply said that he was their teacher. Their ship on a return voyage to Tyre seems to be the beginning of the lives of the two brothers who were the only survivors of the attack or ship wreck at Adulis. They were taken captives but were favoured by the king who made Edesius his cupbearer and Frumentius his Secretary. On his death bed, the king liberated the brothers but the queen pleaded with them to assist her in the administration of the kingdom because her sons, Ezana and Sheazana (Shai’azana) were not of age. The brothers were also said to have educated the princes. They heeded the queen’s plea and it was during this time that Frumentius gradually began the work of evangelization with the encouragement of Christian merchants to worship openly. If their uncle/tutor was a Christian Philosopher, he must have influenced

them. When the princes were of age and capable of taking charge of the kingdom, the brothers left Aksum, one for Tyre and the other for Alexandria.

At Alexandria, Frumentius narrated his experience to Athanasius, the Patriarch of the city and appealed to him to send a bishop to the people so that the work of evangelization can continue. Athanasius is said to have consulted and the decision was made for Frumentius to be ordained bishop and sent back to Aksum. He returned to Aksum where he proclaimed the good news, especially in the court, Frumentius was loved by the people and was called Abuna, that is, father.

Why Frumentius went to Athanasius in Alexandria instead of Antioch is not clear, was it for proximity or because the Antiochene church at that time was Arian? Was it a calculated move? We really do not know but it was to Alexandria that he went. This move and the fact that Frumentius was consecrated by Athanasius linked Ethiopia to Egypt and this has also remained the fact in the Monophysite faith of both cities. He returned to Aksum after his consecration as bishop to continue his work, this was affirmed in the letter of Constantius, the Emperor to the king of Aksum and his brother. The Emperor had favoured Arian Christianity who had denied the full divinity of Christ. In the letter which Constantius addressed to the king of Aksum, he had requested that Frumentius should be expelled from the kingdom and be replaced by an Arian bishop. It reads in part:

Send therefore speedily into Egypt the Bishop Frumentius to the most venerable Bishop George, and the rest who are there, who have special authority to appoint to these offices, and to decide questions concerning them. For of course you know and remember (unless you alone pretend to be ignorant of that which all men are well aware of) that this Frumentius was advanced to his present rank by Athanasius, a man who is guilty of ten thousand crimes; for he has not been able fairly to clear himself of any of the charges brought against him, but was at once deprived of his

see, and now wanders about destitute of any fixed abode, and passes from one country to another, as if by this means he could escape his own wickedness. Now if Frumentius shall readily obey our commands, and shall submit to an enquiry into all the circumstances of his appointment, he will show plainly to all men, that he is in no respect opposed to the laws of the Church and the established faith. ... And our fear is lest he should pass over into Auxumis and corrupt your people, by setting before them accursed and impious statements, and not only unsettle and disturb the Churches, and blaspheme the supreme God, but also thereby cause utter overthrow and destruction to the several nations whom he visits. (*Apologia ad Constantium imperatorem*, 31)

The above quotation affirms all the facts about the ordination of Frumentius by Athanasius and his return to Aksum. George of Cappadocia who was referred to in the text was the Arian bishop who occupied the seat of Athanasius at Alexandria between 356 and 361 AD. He was the controversial successor of Athanasius after he had been exiled by Constantius in February of 356 AD. The above quoted letter has been dated 356 AD.

When, then, was Frumentius ordained the bishop of Ethiopia? When did Christianity become the state religion in Ethiopia? The early part of the fourth century is the most plausible date, though some have suggested the first half of the fifth century. The date of the episcopal consecration of Frumentius is not certain but it has been fixed between 326 and 331 AD when he returned to Aksum. It was after his return that the king Ezana was converted and it was after his conversion that the King declared Christianity as the state religion. The conversion of the king and declaration of Christianity as state religion are fixed for 333 AD. A German-Aksum expedition of 1906 discovered two inscriptions made by the king Ezana, the first declaration was made when he was still a pagan, it reads: "committed himself to the protection of Astar, and Beher, and Meder." The second on the other hand shows

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a Christian king who severally made reference to “the Lord of Heaven.” There were also coins issued by the same king in the later part of his reign with the Greek cross inscribed on them.¹⁶

Those who proposed a later date were led by Littmann, who while speaking of the two inscriptions of the king claimed that they belonged to a certain Tazana in the fifth century. Littmann gave a definite date of 450 AD in his article on “Abyssinia” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, for the conversion of the kingdom to Christianity. This date is not supported by some basic facts, such as, Athanasius, the bishop who consecrated Frumentius, he died in 373 AD; Constantius who wrote the above quoted letter to king Ezana of Aksum died even earlier in 361 AD. It was also the death of Constantius that facilitated the murder of George of Cappadocia in the same year. The Emperor could not have been writing a letter from the grave, neither could he have been encouraging King Ezana to send Frumentius to a dead man.

The beginning of the second quarter of the fourth century is the most plausible date of consecration of Frumentius, conversion of King Ezana and the declaration of Christianity as a state religion. Moore supports the same date with the following summary:

Rufinus refers to the tradition that Frumentius converted the king of Aksum. The Chronicle records the that Ethiopia was converted to Christianity in 333. Constantius’ letter about Frumentius and Athanasius was written to the king of Aksum in the year 356. The two inscriptions found in the German-Aksum Expedition clearly indicate that, in the early part of his reign, Ezana was a pagan and that, in the latter part, he was a Christian. This fact about Ezana is further corroborated by the discovery of coins which tell the same story. The history of their lives shows that Edesius and Frumentius were always serious Christians¹⁷

Rufinus is said to have translated the work of Eusebius "*Historia Ecclesiastica*" and added two books to it between 402 and 403 AD. The additional two books concluded with the death of Emperor Theodosius in 395 AD. This work was used by Sozomen and others. Rufinus died in Sicily in 410 AD. All these facts foreclose further discussion of any other date other than the beginning of the second quarter of the fourth century. We are sure now that Frumentius evangelized Aksum but how did he carry out his mission and what was the content of his mission are unknown to us. There is no evidence regarding these. Most probably what he did was the conversion of the king and the court which led to the declaration of Christianity as the state religion.

Monasticism in the late fifth Century

The close relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the faith was established by the visit of Frumentius to Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexander. It was more a relationship of dependency, Ethiopia depended on Egypt even until recently for the appointment of her bishops. When Egypt chose the Monophysite faith (a doctrine that teaches that in the incarnate Word, that is, Jesus Christ there is only one nature, that is, the divine nature, invariably negating the consubstantiality of the humanity of Jesus with us. This doctrine was condemned by the council of Chalcedon's acceptance of dyophysitism 451 AD) immediately after the Council of Chalcedon, Ethiopia also made the same choice. This was a disadvantage to the development of the Christian faith in Ethiopia. This closed the country completely from Europe. It was also from Egypt in the last quarter of the fifth century that a party of monks known as the "Nine Saints"¹⁸ arrived Ethiopia from Egypt. They are Abba Aftse, Abba Alef, Abba Aragawi, Abba Garima (Isaac, or Yeshaq), Abba Guba, Abba Liqanos, Abba Pantelewon, Abba Sehma, and Abba Yem'ata.¹⁹

The arrival of these monks, usually said to have all come from Syria but this has since been negated. They are from various parts of the ancient Roman Empire. Only two or three

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of them were from Syria, the rest were from Rome, Anatolia, Cilicia and Constantinople. Their arrival is said to have been of utmost importance to the development and growth of the church in Ethiopia around 480 AD. They were Monophysites definitely and were running away from the persecution that has ensued due to the rejection of their form of the faith by the Council of Chalcedon. They propagated the faith among the people and made Christianity known in the nooks and crannies of Aksum and environs. They learned the language of the people, founded monasteries especially in the Tigre region, made translations of sacred books into Ge'ez the native language, developed the liturgy and propagated the faith. Moore using the words of Kammerer puts it thus:

They completed the spiritual conquest of the country, and founded the liturgy. Tradition honors them with the introduction of liturgical music. Each of them became the namesake of a great monastery or a great shrine. They definitely established the Monophysite Church in Abyssinia. Their role in the local hagiography is immense. Each of the event remains happily attributed to them and it can be said that for fourteen hundred years they have dominated the religious life of countries.²⁰

Conclusion

With the work of evangelization carried out by the monks mentioned above and their disciples, Christianity spread far and wide in the kingdom and continued to flourish in the sixth century. However, the beginning of the seventh century saw the advent of Islam in Ethiopia. Between the seventh and the thirteenth century very little is known of the activities of the faith in Aksum but it was said that in the tenth century, Queen Judith of Samen seized and destroyed Aksum. The middle of the thirteenth century saw another round of evangelization in Ethiopia again by Monks from Egypt.

Christianity came into Ethiopia through the court official

who was converted and baptized by Philip, in the first century but there was not much to show for it. Frumentius, the apostle of Ethiopia, proclaimed the faith to the court during the reign of Ezana in the fourth century, after he had been consecrated bishop of Ethiopia by Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria. With the efforts of Frumentius, Christianity became the state religion but did not spread beyond the court. With the advent of the 'Nine Monks' Christianity spread further to the hinterlands of Ethiopia, churches were built, monasteries were established, liturgical and sacred books were translated into the native language and liturgical music was also developed. The advent of Islam brought all these to a halt, just as it did in Egypt.

Endnotes

¹Baur John, 2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History, 2nd Ed., Pauline Publications, Kenya, 2009. He said that: “The name ‘Aethiopia’ was later extended from Nubia to the whole of Africa south of the Sahara and by ‘Aethiopian’ was meant a member of the Negro race. Modern Ethiopia was rather associated with India and later called Abyssinia by outsiders but the country itself stuck to the biblical name Ethiopia, connected with its legendary origin.” P.31. There was also a confusion of terms regarding the geographical limitation of Ethiopia. In their usage, they could have been referring to Nubia or Egypt or even India.

²Lewis Emmanuel, “African claims to Christian Origin”, in *Agora: A Journal of Philosophical and Theological Studies*, vol. 1, Abeokuta, 2020, pp. 132-151

³Cush is believed to have extended from southern Egypt into much of Sudan on modern maps. In the Old Testament, Cush is associated with the countries south of Israel. “The Cushites appear to have spread along extensive tracts, stretching from the Upper Nile to the Euphrates and Tigris. At an early period there was a stream of migration of Cushites “from Ethiopia, properly so called, through Arabia, Babylonia, and Persia, to Western India.” The Hamite races, soon after their arrival in Africa, began to spread north, east, and west. Three branches of the Cushite or Ethiopian stock, moving from Western Asia, settled in the regions contiguous to the Persian Gulf.” Cf. <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/cush.html> viewed on 20/05/2021 @ 9.19pm. This hypothesis is currently been contested. The new argument is to the effect that it was the Greek translators of the bible that have used the term Aithiopia to represent Cush/Kush and this misrepresentation has been accepted by many as indicating modern day Ethiopia. cf. Unseth Peter, Hebrew Kush: Sudan, Ethiopia or where? I have decided to stick to the former argument for this article.

⁴The *KebreNegast* is the title of the legendary origins of the Solomonic Dynasty: “Queen Makeda, who took the Ethiopian

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throne in the 10th century BC travelled to Jerusalem to learn to be a good ruler from king Solomon, who agreed to take Makeda as his student and taught her how to be a good queen. Queen Makeda was so impressed with Solomon that she converted to Judaism and provided Solomon with many gifts. Before Makeda returned home, the two had a son together. Solomon had a dream in which God said that Makeda's son would be the head of a new order. In response, he sent Makeda home but told her to send their son back to Jerusalem when he came of age to be taught Jewish lore and law. Makeda did as she was told and sent Menelik I, their son, to Jerusalem to be taught by Solomon, who offered to make him the prince of Jerusalem. However, Menelik declined and instead returned to Ethiopia, anointed by his father and God to be king of Ethiopia. Cf. Baur John, Op. cit., p.34 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Ethiopia (viewed 1/28/2021 @9.46am)

⁵<http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/religion.htm> (viewed 1/28/2021 @10am)

⁶Karbo Tony, Religion and Social Cohesion in Ethiopia, in International Journal of Peace and Development studies, 2013, p. 45

⁷Baur John, Op. cit., p. 31

⁸Brown Raymond et al. ed., The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Theological Publications, Bangalore, 1992, p. 743

⁹<https://www.britannica.com/place/Aksum-Ethiopia> (viewed on 9/2/21 @ 8.30am). Cf. Karbo Tony, op.cit., p. 44

¹⁰Strabo, II, 5, 12 - http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/2E1*.html (viewed on 3/02/2021 @ 1.09pm)

¹¹Glas Anton, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia, ByzantinischesArchiv*, Heft 6

¹²Moore Dale, Christianity in Ethiopia, Cambridge University Press, pp. 271-272, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3160789> (viewed on 28/01/2021 @ 9.27am)

¹³Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History, (II. 24) in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol.2, Henry Schaff and Henry Wace ed., 169

Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 2004, p.274. cf. Rufinus, H.E., I. 9 and Theodoret H.E., I. 23. H.E. here refers to *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

¹⁴Ibid. cf. Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium imperatorem*, 29-31. Frumentius was called Abba Salama of Axum (the Father of Peace of Aksum).

¹⁵Voicu S.J, Frumenzio, in *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, F – O, diretto da Angelo Di Berardino, Genova, 2007, pp. 2010-2011

¹⁶Moore Dale, op. cit., pp.272-273

¹⁷Ibid., p. 275

¹⁸Littmann Enno, “*Geschichte der äthiopischen Litteratur*,” in *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients*, p. 194

¹⁹Bhawaan Tatavarthy, *Ethiopian Saints* in

²⁰Moore Dale, op. cit, pp.276-277: *Ils sachevèrent la conquête spirituelle du pays, et fondèrent la liturgie. La tradition leur fit honneur de l'introduction de la musique liturgique. Chacun d'eux devint l'éponyme d'un grand monastère ou d'un grand sanctuaire. Ils établirent définitivement en Abyssinie l'église Monophysite. Leur rôle dans l'hagiographie locale est immense. Chaque événement heureux leur fut attribué et l'on peut dire que depuis quatorze cents ans il ont dominé la vie religieuse du pays.*