

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL AFFINITIES: THE CASE OF ARABIC AND ETHIOPIAN LANGUAGES

Yousuf Dadoo

Department of Religious Studies & Arabic
University of South Africa
Pretoria 0003
E-mail: dadooy@unisa.ac.za

(Received 09/12/2015; accepted 19/08/2016)

ABSTRACT

Multi-faceted relations between Ethiopia and South Arabia existed since the sixth century B.C. During the earlier phase, the Christian Ethiopians networked with their co-religionists. Later they interacted primarily with Muslim Arabs some of whom settled in Ethiopia either in search of religious sanctuary or for trade purposes. The Muslims entrenched themselves and established petty kingdoms between the ninth and fifteenth centuries C.E. Thereafter, they suffered huge reversals at the hands of their Christian compatriots who were assisted by the Portuguese colonial power. Over the last two centuries relations between these two religious groups suffered appreciably. Despite these mammoth problems, testimonies to the linguistic and cultural affinities between Ethiopia and Arabia are evident; illustrations of which are given in this article. They could be used as a springboard for improving relations between the two communities. The Ethiopian socio-political climate has improved since the installation of a new federal and democratically elected government. It behoves all relevant groups to grasp the mettle by doing more intensive and extensive research in topics like this one in order to trace commonalities between them.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the narrow geographical width across the Bāb al-Mandab – which separates the Horn of Africa from South-Western Arabia– the chasm of ignorance and misunderstandings about the broad linguistic and cultural ties between the inhabitants on both sides of this strait are far broader. This article briefly explores causes that engendered the antagonistic relations between these groups before outlining historical affinities between them. It then scrutinises those impasses before proposing solutions.

Historical data indicate wide-ranging reciprocal influences among these communities. Actually, the Italian orientalist Carlo Conti Rossini (d. 1949) called Ethiopia the museum of peoples according to a statement attributed to him by El Amin

Ahmed (2013:9). On the other hand, biblical archaeologists like Amihai Mazar (1992:38) have considered Arabia the cradle of Semitic people from where, to quote Rossini once more, they spread into Ethiopia in search of arable land in about 500 B.C. (Abd al-'Azīz Ibrāhīm 1994:13; Mekonnen 2013:320; Pankhurst 1955:43–45). The latter author cites the following view of Rossini: Southern Arabian migration into Africa began very long ago. They came mainly from north of the Straits of Bāb al-Mandab. Besides the Red Sea coast, they also settled on the coasts of the Somali peninsula and Azania (that is, Zanzibar, the land of the Zanj). They transported names like Sabā and Deire to the lands in which they settled. July (1970:44) mentions that they also gave their tribal names like Ḥabeshat, precursor to the word Abyssinia, and Agaziyan which yielded the name for the classical language of Ethiopia called Ge'ez. Jawwād 'Alī (1993:I/84–85) and 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibrāhīm (1994:13, 31–32) give additional factors for this migration such as trade and avoidance of internecine strife among tribes in South Arabia.

Progressively, they settled in different regions of the country, intermarried with the local people and contributed to the genetic pool of the Ethiopian people (Khadījah al-Ṭanāshī 1996:52). They initiated major and wide-ranging changes in language, art and agriculture (July 1970:44).

Contacts between South Arabia and Ethiopia continued at various levels. The Qur'ān in Chapter 85 cites the dignity and determination of some Christians to uphold their faith amid vehement opposition from the Jewish King Dhū Nuwās and his supporters in the sixth century B.C., for which they were dumped into a trench containing a bonfire (Abdullah Yusuf Ali n.d.:1714). In 524 C.E., the Aksumite Ethiopians assisted them by forming an alliance with the Byzantine Empire and local Christians; thereby defeating the army of Dhū Nuwās (Ansary 1996:139).

In 520, Kaleb invaded Yemen to oust the Jewish Ḥimyarite king, Yūsuf Asar Yathar, who was persecuting the Christian population. But there were also possibly other causes for this event because it seemed that this king may also have acted against the political and economic interests of Aksum and her Roman allies.

The Ethiopian viceroyalty lasted until around 525, when Abraha became monarch. During his later reign, Abraha extended his rule to Sabā, Ḥimyar, Ḥaḍramaut and Yamanat (Heinrich n.d.).

When South Arabia came under the control of the Persians between 577 and 600 C.E., many Ethiopians who had settled there returned home while a small group established residence in the Ḥijāz province of present-day Saudi Arabia. This last feature will be amplified during the discussion about literary and cultural influences later.¹

In about 615 C.E., the Ethiopian ruler, known among Arab historians as Aṣḥamah, provided sanctuary to Muslim exiles (Ibn Kathīr 1987/III:64). Thereafter, about eight Muslim tribes from Arabia settled in Ethiopia (Jawwād ‘Alī 2001/I:237, VI:139, 141 and Āl Yūsuf 1996:80, 83).

The central role of this kingdom of Aksum, over which Aṣḥamah had ruled, and its inhabitants have to be highlighted. According to some ethnographers, the inhabitants there were the product of a linguistic and cultural blend between African Kushitic and South Arabian Semitic peoples. It served a crucial role in the trade network that linked India and the East Indies, Iran, Arabia, and the East African coast with the Mediterranean territories (Craig et al. 2009:130).

Between the ninth and sixteenth centuries C.E. the Ethiopian Muslims established petty dynasties in numerous parts of that country.

But relations between Christians and Muslims began souring with conflicts that raged in the first half of the sixteenth century C.E. and have continued up to fairly recently. Historians belonging to both sides have supported their respective religious outlooks and maligned their opponents.² I will elaborate on their consequences later. Let us focus on the crux of this article.

¹ This issue has been briefly alluded to by Osman (2005).

² For instance, Trimingham (1952) is representative of the Christian view, and ‘Abd Allah Khiḍr Sharf al-Dīn (2014) articulates the Muslim view.

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL AFFINITIES

This analysis will be divided into two sections, namely the impact of Arabic on Ethiopian languages, and vice versa.

Impact of Arabic on Ethiopian languages

Politically speaking, the contact between Ethiopia and Arabia has been very close on account of their geographical proximity. South Arabia was annexed by Ethiopia on some occasions between the third and fourth centuries and the sixth century C.E. (Munro-Hay 1991:71–88). Rapport between the leaders of the Quraish tribe of Makkah and the Aksumite kingdom existed during the early Prophetic period in the seventh century C.E. After the entrenchment of Islam in the Arab peninsula, religious and broad cultural ties between Ethiopia and Arabia were strengthened (Sharaf al-Dīn 2014:40–48).

Sociologically speaking, there have been Arabic-speaking immigrant communities from Yemen, and traders from the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Yemen that have either resided in or visited Ethiopia for varying periods of time. There are also foreign Arabic-speaking individuals belonging to Islamic propagation groups who travel around the country and teach the local Muslims about the tenets of Islam. Some Ethiopians who have worked in Arab countries have gained exposure to Arabic, be it spoken, written or both. Finally, the inhabitants of areas like the Bani Shangul region are competent in Arabic.

Religiously speaking, the Aksumite kingdom in northern Ethiopia adopted Christianity in the fourth century C.E. Its church belonged to Orthodox Christianity with close links to Coptic Egypt. Gəʿəz was its classical literary and liturgical language which, according to Rossini (as cited in Pankhurst) originated from a mixture of several local dialects (1955:44). The rise of the Solomonic dynasty in the thirteenth century C.E. led to increasing cultural exchanges between Ethiopia and Egypt with the Arabic language becoming the language of communication of the Ethiopian Christian rulers with their Arab neighbours.

Many theological works were translated from Arabic into Gǝʿəz. During the process of this activity, Arabic heavily influenced Gǝʿəz by providing it numerous lexical items. The many structural similarities between these languages facilitated literal translation (Leslau 1958:146–148).

But before listing lexical borrowings, we need to remember that there are also many words that are common to both Arabic and Ethiopian languages wherein no context points to their prior usage in one or other language (or language group). Some languages share the same pronunciation for certain vocabulary whereas others exhibit variation in order to comply with the phonological patterns of those borrowing languages. Examples of both categories are given in the following table (Al-Fayā, 'A al-Munīm 'Ajab, Jan. 2015:1–7; Leslau 1958:146–168³ and 1990:x–xii; Salt 1967:xviii–xxii):

<i>ras</i> (Amharic)	ra's (رأس)	head
' <i>ain</i> (Amharic)	' <i>ain</i> (عين)	eye
" (Tigre)	"	fountain, spring
<i>sinn</i> (Tigrinya)	<i>sinn</i> (سن)	tooth
<i>īd</i> (Amharic, Tigre)	<i>yad</i> (يد)	hand (Note the common consonants in both languages shown by the Arabic form)
<i>lubb</i> (Amharic, Tigrinya)	<i>lubb</i> (لب)	heart
<i>izne</i> (Tigre)	<i>udhn</i> (أذن)	ear
<i>ungat</i> (Amharic)	' <i>unqat</i> (عنق)	neck
<i>dum</i> (Amharic)	<i>dam</i> (دم)	blood
<i>rajur</i> (Tigrinya)	<i>rajul</i> (رجل)	man (Note the metathesis between an alveolar and velar sound)
<i>amm</i> (Tigrinya)	<i>umm</i> (أم)	mother
<i>abat</i> (Amharic)	<i>ab</i> (أب)	father
<i>ihit</i> (Amharic)	<i>ukht</i> (أخت)	sister (Note the metathesis between glottal sounds h and kh)
<i>wadd</i> (Tigrinya)	<i>walad</i> (ولد)	boy, youth (Note the deletion of the consonant l)
<i>māi</i> (Tigrinya)	<i>mā'</i> (ماء)	water (Note the substitution of the glottal stop by the vowel i)
<i>baḥr</i> (Gǝʿəz), <i>bahār</i> (Amharic)	<i>baḥr</i> (بحر)	sea (Note the substitution of a medial guttural by a remote guttural sound in Amharic)
<i>samāi</i> (Gǝʿəz)	<i>samā'</i> (سما)	sky (See note for “sea” above)
<i>yamm</i> (Gǝʿəz)	<i>yamm</i> (يم)	ocean
<i>lailit</i> (Amharic)	<i>lail</i> (ليل)	night

³ Leslau's list stretching over more than twenty pages is far too detailed for complete inclusion here.

<i>saiṭān</i> (Amharic)	<i>shaiṭān</i> (شيطان)	satan, devil (Note the substitution of one sibilant by another)
<i>wāddasa</i> (Tigre)	<i>waddasa</i> (وَدَس)	to conceal
<i>kāsā</i> (Tigre)	<i>kasāa</i> (كسع)	to drive, push from behind
<i>bidāa</i> (Harari)	<i>biḍāah</i> (بضاعة)	merchandise
<i>dalīl</i> (Harari)	<i>dalīl</i> (دليل)	evidence
<i>qīma</i> (Harari)	<i>qīmah</i> (قيمة)	value
<i>tāman</i> (Amharic); <i>tāban</i> (Tigre)	<i>thaman</i> (ثمن)	price
<i>fādda</i> (Tigre)	<i>fiḍḍah</i> (فضة)	silver
<i>da'if</i> (Harari); <i>də'if</i> (Tigre)	<i>ḍā'if</i> (ضعيف)	weak
<i>zabṭiya</i> (Amharic, Tigrinya); <i>zəbbaṭ</i> (Tigre)	<i>ḍābiṭ</i> (ضابط)	policeman
<i>sādaf</i> (Gəəz, Tigre, Amharic)	<i>ṣadaf</i> (صدف)	pearl oyster
<i>ūdr</i> (Gəəz, Tigre)	<i>ūdhr</i> (عذر)	excuse, pretext
<i>quōkub</i> (Amharic)	<i>kaukab</i> (كوكب)	star
<i>nefās</i> (Amharic)	<i>naḥās</i> (نفس)	wind, mild breeze
<i>beit</i> (Amharic)	<i>ba'it</i> (بيت)	(small) house
<i>feras</i> (Amharic), <i>f'ras</i> (Tigre)	<i>faras</i> (فرس)	horse
<i>bukalo</i> (Amharic), <i>bugale</i> (Tigre)	<i>baghl</i> (بغل)	mule
<i>gemél</i> (Amharic)	<i>jamal</i> (جمل)	camel
<i>kerne</i> (Tigre)	<i>qarn</i> (قرن)	horn
<i>amit</i> (Amharic)	<i>'ām</i> (عام)	year
<i>kerib</i> (Amharic), <i>kerúb</i> (Tigre)	<i>qarīb</i> (قريب)	near
<i>takti</i> (Tigre)	<i>taḥt</i> (تحت)	below
<i>tchelema</i> (Amharic), <i>sellemat</i> (Tigre)	<i>zūlmah</i> (ظلمة)	darkness
<i>tukkul</i> (Agau)	<i>thaqīl</i> (ثَقِيل)	heavy
<i>memarar</i> (Amharic), <i>murrur</i> (Tigre)	<i>murr</i> (مر)	bitter
<i>ou-er</i> (Amharic)	<i>a'war</i> (أعور)	blind
<i>bird</i> (Amharic)	<i>bārid</i> (بارد)	cold

Examples of loanwords from Christian Arabic literature include the following:

Gəəz	Arabic	Meaning
<i>ba'</i>	<i>bā'</i> (باع)	unit of measurement
<i>həṣn</i>	<i>hiṣn</i> (حصن)	fortress
<i>sahəl</i>	<i>sāḥil</i> (ساحل)	coast

<i>māṭazāla</i>	<i>muṭazilah</i> (معتزلة)	secessionists ⁴
<i>ābid</i> (Harari)	<i>‘ābid</i> (عابد)	a worshipper
<i>imām</i> (Harari)	<i>imām</i> (إمام)	a (religious) leader

Other categories of loanwords in this category include the following (Wetter 2006:1–2):

<i>‘aruz</i>	<i>‘arūs</i> (عروس)	bridegroom
<i>jism</i>	<i>jism</i> (جسم)	body
<i>jahil</i>	<i>jāhil</i> (جاهل)	ignorant person
<i>sobbir</i>	<i>ṣabr</i> (صبر)	patience
<i>tēziya</i>	<i>taḏiyah</i> (تعزية)	mourning
<i>ṭahir</i>	<i>ṭāhir</i> (طاهر)	clean
<i>khaddem</i>	<i>khadama</i> (خدم)	to serve
<i>zeyyer</i>	<i>zāra</i>	to visit, pay respect

There is a great correlation between names of numerals in Arabic and Gəəz which decreases between Arabic and Amharic.

This affinity even extends to grammatical structures like verb conjugations and the use of attached and detached pronouns.

As stated earlier, many loanwords found their way first into Gəəz. Some of them later crept into other languages like Tigrinya and Amharic (Al-Fayā Jan. 2015:1–5 and Wetter 2006:1–2).

Islamic literature in Ethiopia portrays a vast degree of Arabic influence. In Eastern Shoa, Arabic inscriptions on ruins of a mosque give the date of its construction as 171 A.H. (roughly 787 C.E.). But the city of Harar remained a city of Islamic scholarship in Ethiopia where Arabic was used for religious instruction, liturgy, administration and broader literature. In the 18th century, centres of Islamic scholarship were also established in Wällo.

Islamic literature was also composed in the indigenous languages such as Amharic, Argobba, Oromo, Səṭṭe and Tigrinya. It is called *ajām* in Amharic and uses the Arabic writing system for the majority of local Muslims whose knowledge of Arabic is either superficial or non-existent (Wetter 2006:1–7, and Jīlānī n.d.:1–3).

⁴ For the purposes of this article, I will be using a modified version of the Arabic transcription system followed by Hans Wehr in his *Dictionary of modern written Arabic* in order to highlight phonological and lexical details which will enable me to give approximate equivalents of Arabic sounds in Ethiopian languages.

Regarding phonology, Wetter (2006:3) comments: “Some phonological similarities between Ethio-Semitic (Amharic, Harari, Səḷṭe) and Cushitic languages (Oromo) on the one hand and Arabic on the other hand facilitated the application of the Arabic script to Ethiopian languages”. He adds further that only a few consonants do not occur in Arabic and have had to be represented by modified letters with similar places of pronunciation (2006:3, 5).

Al-Fayā explains in this regard that the Arabic medial guttural letter ξ has been replaced with the glottal stop ϵ in modern Ethiopian languages while the transmutation trajectory for the gurgling sound ξ went via ξ to ϵ for them. Finally, the path for the guttural voiceless χ was to the voiced guttural sound υ via the aspirate guttural \mathcal{C} (Jan 2015:1–2).

Leslau remarks that a few Arabic phonemes display regular correspondence with their equivalents in Ethiopian languages which helps us to determine whether a lexeme is originally an Arabic loanword or not; for example, $\mathcal{d} \rightarrow d$, $\mathcal{s} \rightarrow s$, $\mathcal{t} \rightarrow t$ and $\mathcal{z} \rightarrow z$ (1990:xi).

We now focus on the influence of Ethiopian languages on Arabic.

Impact of Ethiopian languages on Arabic

This influence has occurred at the levels of both language and literature.

Language influences

Before delving into details about lexical items it is important to clarify what we mean by arabicised terms from cognate Ethiopian languages. These are words that do not reveal their designated meanings based on the morphological structures of Arabic vocabulary (as is the case with a word like منبر [pulpit] if it has to be related to its trilateral root of نبر [to sit], or مصحف [the Qur’ānic scripture] if it has to be related to its trilateral root of صحف [to distort in reading or writing]). However, they can comfortably be traced to their etymological roots in Ethiopian languages.

Additional complicating factors here are phonological variations that occurred during their transfer to Arabic. For example, محراب (*mihrāb*) was *mikrāb* in Amharic to designate a sacred space.

There are also words that entered Arabic from Ethiopian languages which could be traced to other languages; for example, انجيل (*Injīl*, meaning New Testament) is originally Greek, while جهنم (*jahannam*, meaning hell) is originally either Greek or Hebrew and تابوت (*tābūt*, meaning casket) is originally ancient Egyptian (Ābidīn n.d.:98–102).

We shall examine the language impact, which took place by means of lexical borrowings, first. The following table gives a list of some Arabic words found in the Holy Qur’ān having Ethiopic origin. The relevant Qur’ānic verses are given alongside their transliterated forms (Al-Suyūfī 1973/I:137–140):

Word of Ethiopian origin	Transcription & Qur’ānic reference	Meaning
شطر	<i>shaṭr</i> (2:144)	towards
الجبت	<i>al-jibt</i> (4:51)	the devil
الطاغوت	<i>al-tāghūt</i> (4:51)	sorcerer
حوب	<i>ḥūb</i> (4:2)	major sin
أواه	<i>awwāh</i> (9:114)	convinced person; merciful; believer
ابلعي	<i>iblaī</i> (11:44)	swallow!; hold back!
غيض	<i>ghūḍa</i> (11:44)	to diminish
طوبى	<i>ṭūbā</i> (13:29)	paradise
سكر	<i>sakar</i> (16:67)	vinegar
طه	<i>Ṭāhā</i> (20:1)	O Muḥammad!; O man!
مشكاة	<i>mishkāṭ</i> (24:35)	niche
دري	<i>durrīy</i> (24:35)	radiant
منسأة	<i>minsa’ah</i> (34:14)	rod; staff

I now follow the same procedure for Prophetic literature (Al-Munjid n.d.).⁵ (Note: I am unable to provide the Ethiopian language equivalents for these lists.)

⁵ For Ḥadīth referencing, I have opted to give the book number, followed by the chapter number and the Ḥadīth number in specific collections. All the latter are found in a Ḥadīth encyclopaedia entitled *Mawsūat al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf* whose full publication details will be given in the bibliography.

Words of Ethiopian origin	Transcription and reference	Meaning
سنا	<i>sanā</i> (Abū Dāwūd, Book 31, Ch. 2, no. 4025)	good
زفن	<i>zafan</i> (Al-Bukhārī, Book 13, Ch. 2, no. 949)	dance
هرج	<i>haraj</i> (Ibn Mājah, Book 36, Ch. 25, no. 4047)	killing
شيوم	<i>shayūm</i> (Ibn Hishām, p. 180)	safe

Literary influences

From the sketchy reports, we are able to deduce that many literary figures of pre-Islamic Arabia enjoyed close contact with Ethiopia besides the many Ethiopian poets who lived in Arabia at that time. Of strategic importance was the city of Najrān in South Arabia which served as the stronghold of Ethiopian Christianity: it played a discernible impact on the literary activities people.

There was a particular genre of rhythmic prose, called *sajʿ*, that was popular with orators and fortune-tellers whose function inter alia was to dispense advice by means of aphorisms and proverbs (Ḍaif 2003:24).

I will quote extracts from one of the most renowned proponents of this genre, Quss bin Sā'idah al-Iyādī, who was bishop of Najrān.

أيها الناس، اسمعوا وعوا، فإذا وعيتم فانتفعوا: إنه من عاش مات، ومن مات فات، وكل ما هو آت آت، مطر ونبات، وأرزاق وأقوات، وآباء وأمهات، وأحياء وأموات، جميع وأشتات، وآيات بعد آيات. إن في السماء لخبراً، وإن في الأرض لغيراً، ليل داج، وسماء ذات أبراج وأرض ذات رتاج وبحار ذات أمواج. مالي أرى الناس يذهبون فلا يرجعون؟ أرضوا بالمقام فأقاموا؟ أم تركوا هناك فناموا؟ أقسم قس قسما حقاً لا حائثاً فيه ولا آثماً: إن الله تعالى دينا هو أحب إليه من دينكم الذي أنتم عليه، ونبيا قد حان حينه، وأظلكم أوانه، وأدرككم إبانته، فطوبى لمن آمن به فهداه، وويل لمن خالفه وعصاه. ثم قال: تبا لأرباب الغفلة من الأمم الخالية، والقرون الماضية. يا معشر إياد، أين الآباء والأجداد؟ وأين المريض والعواد؟ وأين الفراعة الشداد؟ أين من بنى وشيد؟! وزخرف ونجد؟! وغره المال والولد؟! أين من بغى وطغى، وجمع فأوعى، وقال: أنا ربكم الأعلى؟! ألم يكونوا أكثر منكم أموالاً، وأبعد منكم آمالاً، وأطول منكم أجالاً؟! طحنهم الثرى بكلله، ومزقهم بتطاوله، فتلك عظامهم بالية، وبيوتهم خالية، عمرتها الذئاب العاوية كلا، بل هو الله الواحد المعبود، ليس بوالد ولا مولود!! ثم أنشأ يقول:

في الذاهبين الأولين ... من القرون لنا بصائر

لما رأيت موارد ... للموت ليس لها مصادر

ورأيت قومي نحوها ... يمضي الأصغر والأكابر
لا يرجع الماضي إلي ... ولا من الباقيين غابر
أيقنت أني لا محَا ... لة حيث صار القوم صائر⁶

Translation:

O People! Listen and heed! Once you have heeded, benefit from it! Each one who lives will die. And he who dies will go into oblivion. Everything that is to transpire shall come to pass. In the rains and vegetation, sustenance and provisions, mothers and fathers, living and dead, groups and individuals, are recurring signs. There is information to be gained from the skies and admonition from the earth as well as in dark nights, and in the heavens with constellations, and in the earth with gateways and the oceans with waves. Why do I see people going; never to return? Were they pleased with their status that they could live on? Or did they leave behind items there that they could sleep on? Quss swears an unblemished oath in God's name: God has a religion more beloved to Him than the one you observe. The time for a new prophet's arrival has come. His era has already cast its shadow over you. And He has made you understand his epoch. Glad tidings be to the one that believed in him and his guidance; and cursed be he that disobeys him and rebels against him. Cursed be the leaders of negligence among preceding generations and times. O people of Iyād! Where are the people of Thamūd and the 'Ād? Where is the sick person and his visitor? And the mighty pharaohs? Where is the one that built and fortified buildings; and embellished and reinforced them? Did wealth and children deceive him? Where is the oppressor who amassed wealth and stored it; and then said 'I am your lord most high?' Were they not wealthier than you, and aspired to more things than you and had longer lives than you? The dust pulverised them and destroyed them with its extended reach. There lie their decayed bones and their vacant homes in which only howling wolves live. Indeed! God is the only one worthy of worship; without father or son.

In the lives of generations of people who have preceeded us are doubtlessly signs for us.

⁶ The last few lines comprise a poetic rendition.

When I observe the end points
 And I observe my people proceeding to it,
 And none who has gone has returned to me
 I certainly believe that I
 (Al-Baihaqī 1988/II:109).

of death without any
 beginnings;
 both young and old;
 nor does any fleeting
 person endure;
 am going the way of all
 people.

According to Ibn ʿĀbidīn (n.d.:122), the inclusion of a poetic extract to conclude a sermon was a common practice among Ethiopian preachers.

Al-Zarkalī (2002/V:124) comments that Ethiopians introduced many themes of valor in Arabic poetry after affirming that Ethiopians actually placed a brick in the general edifice of musicality in Arab poetry through initiating forms of dance and song in it (2002/V:52). An exploration into the last remark is beyond the scope of this article.

I now present brief extracts from some poets who lived between the seventh and twelfth centuries C.E. in different regions of the Arab World.⁷

ʿAntarah (d. 608) was one of the most eminent poets in Arabia of Ethiopian lineage. In his most famous poem he remarked:

وَلَقَدْ شَفَى نَفْسِي وَأَذْهَبَ سُقْمَهَا ... قَبِيلُ الْفَوَارِسِ وَيَاكَ عَنَّتْ أقدام

Translation: The cry of horsemen ‘Shame on you, ʿAntarah, advance!’

Cured my heart and removed its ailment

This is an example of the depiction of valor alluded to by al-Zarkalī above. In addition, he often confronted racism that people of his background faced from sectors of Arab society:

يعيبون لوني بالسواد وإنما ... فعالهم بالخبث أسود من جلدي

Translation: They blame my black complexion

While their evil deeds are darker than my skin.

⁷ The translations are fairly free to facilitate a clearer understanding in the target language.

He comments further:

يعيبون لوني بالسواد جهالة ... ولولا سواد الليل ما طلع الفجر
وإن كان لوني أسودا فخصائي ... بياض وممن كفي يستنزل القطر

Translation: They blame my black complexion ignorantly. Were it not for the night's darkness, dawn would not have arrived.

Although my complexion is black, my character is white. Suffice it to say that he can cause rainfall (Al-Baghdādī 1997/I:139).

Naṣīb bin Rabāh (d. 726) rose to prominence as a slave in the Umayyad court. Despite this stature, he was taunted for his dark skin. Responding to the bigoted poet, al-Farazdaq (d. 732 C.E.), he said:

ليس السواد بناقصي ما دام لي ... هـذا اللسان إلى فؤاد ثابت
ممن كان ترفعه منابت أصله ... فبيوت أشعاري جعلن منابتي
كم بين أسود ناطق ببيانه ... ماضي الجنان وبين أبيض صامت

Translation: Blackness is not a defect so long as this tongue of mine is attached to a firm heart. Anyone whose status is elevated by his racial pedigree should know that my poetry determines my pedigree.

How many a black person is eloquent and of sharp mind while the tongue of many a white person is silent! (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī 1993/VI:2754).

During this period, lived al-Ḥaiqaṭān who submitted the following rejoinder to another bigoted poet, Jarīr (d. 728 C.E.):

ولقمان منهم وابنهم وابن أمه ... وأبرهمة الملك الذي ليس ينكر
غزاكم أبو يكسوم في أم داركم ... وأنتم كغيض الرمل أو هـو أكثر
فلو كان غـير الله رام دفاعه ... علمت وذو التجرير بالناس أخبر
ومما الفخر إلا أن تبيتوا إزاءه ... وأنتم قريبت ناركم
تتسـعـر

Translation:

Luqmān, the legendary saint belongs to them, as do his son and brother
Together with Abrahah the king whose status cannot be denied.

The people of Aksum waged war against you while you were in your homes.

You were abundant like sand that disappears into the ground or even more in number.

Had God not planned to defend it (i.e. the holy sanctuary)

You would have known (the outcome) since experienced people are the most informed ones.

Your pride amounted to nothing but contriving in the face of it (i.e. Abrahah's attack)

While you were close to your inferno that was ablaze (Al-Jāhiz n.d.:533).

Nevertheless, some were more complimentary to the Ethiopians' physical appearance while the sexual undertone of others is undeniable. Here are a few examples:

The Iraqi scholar, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mubārak (d. 1239), remarked:

في الوجنة السمراء معنى يشتهى ... بخلاف ما في الوجنة البيضاء
إن الشفاه إذا تنازعت المدى ... في الحسن كان السبق للسمراء

Translation: In the fawny, protruding cheek lies an importance that is desirable

In contrast to the protruding cheek of the white woman.

When lips compete at the utmost level in beauty

The contest belongs to the fawn ones (Anon 27 December 2009).

The Syrian jurist, 'Abd al-Birr ibn Shaḥnah (d. 1515) said:

حبشية ساءلتها عن جنسها ... فتبسمت عن در ثغر جوهرى
فطفقت أسأل عن نعمة ما خفي ... قالت فما تبغيه جنسي أمحرى

Translation: I enquired of an Ethiopian woman about her race; so she smiled with her jewel-like shining teeth.

Then I suddenly asked her about her mysterious tenderness to which she answered 'What you desire (to know is that) I am Amharic (Al-Jabartī 1998/I:444).

An anonymous poet of the thirteenth century confessed:

سـلبت فـؤادي بالـها حبـشـية ... أبهى من الـدينار عند الـرائي
إن غبت من وجدي أقول لصاحبي ... غلبت علي حرارة الـصفراء

Translation: An Ethiopian woman stole my heart with her splendor
That was more intense than the shining dinar coin for an observer.
When she departs from my presence I tell my friend
The black woman's heat has overpowered me (Al-Baitār n.d.)

Another anonymous poet claimed love for all black women:

أحب النساء السود من أجل تلکم ... ومن أجـلـها أحببت من كان أسودا
فجئني بمثل المسک أطيب نكهة ... وجئني بمثل اللیل أطيـب مرقدًا

Translation: I love black women due to their silence.
And by virtue of them I love any black person.
So bring me the like of musk exuding the finest fragrance
And bring me the like of nightfall inducing the deepest sleep (Anon
n.d.)

As regards prose writings, Ethiopians comprised the subject matter of numerous social tracts from which I produce the following example:

أنواع الحبوش كثيرة ظاهرة والغالب عليهم جميعا الكرم وكثرة الضحك وطيب الأفواه وسهولة العبارة
وعذوبة الكلام وبالجملة والتفصيل فجيوش الحبش منصوره وخطاياهم مغفوره وسعيهم مشكور
وتجارتهم لا تبور... الأمحرة يفوق غيره بالملاحة والصباحة والفصاحة والسماحة والرشاقة في القذو
عقل ورزانه وعفة وديانة وصدق وصفاء وود ووفاء وظرف ومسكنة وضعف وأدب وحشمة ورعاية
وخدمة وكرم في النفس وسلامة في الصدر وأخلاق عظيمة وشمائل لطيفة كريمة مع فهم عظيم وطبع
سليم ورأي مستقيم وقابلية للتعلم والتعليم وبالجملة والتفصيل فطائفة الأمحرة حركاتهم سعيدة وآراؤهم
سديدة وأفعالهم حميدة لا عيب فيهم إلا التيه والشهامة.

Translation:

Varieties among Ethiopians are plentiful and clear. The major traits among all of them
are kindness, abundant laughter, beautiful teeth, ease of expression and smooth
speech. In general, the Ethiopian soldiers are victorious, their lapses are pardonable,

their efforts are worthy of thanks and their trade does not perish. The Amharic people supercede others in eloquence, beauty, generosity and refinement in articulating views. They are intelligent, sedate, chaste, honest, loving, trustworthy, polite, humble, respectable, bashful, regardful, prepared to serve and kind hearted. They are endowed with tranquillity, superb character, noble traits, great understanding, healthy nature, straightforward opinions, and an aptitude for learning and teaching. In total, the Amharic people's actions are pleasant and laudable while their views are unpretentious. Their only shortcomings are errancy and coarseness (Ālā' al-Dīn al-Bukhārī, as quoted by Ibrāhīm 1994:69).

In sum, the Ethiopians entered the realm of Arabic literature by firing the imagination of literati. Materials for tales like *1001 Nights* and *Sindbad the sailor* were based on the experiences of sailors who had reached the shores of East Africa. The Ethiopians had an undeniably huge role to play in these travels.

In travelogues and biographies they received great attention. Likewise was their function in geographical, historical and ethnographic accounts where they occasionally became the primary topics in works of scholars like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (who died about 450 years ago) and Abu l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī (who died about 900 years ago) (Ibrāhīm 1994:69–73).

After this presentation expounding the – broadly speaking – healthy interface between the speakers of Arabic and Ethiopian languages, we need to ask: Were there any counteracting factors that created a standoff between them? What were their consequences? And, finally, what are the possible solutions?

DISCORD BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND THE ARAB WORLD

Attention to this problem is vital for understanding the downplay of linguistic and cultural affinities between Ethiopians and Arabs in recent times, even though space constraints will prevent us from undertaking a more systematic, detailed approach.

We first cast our gaze at Ethiopia. As stated previously, interreligious conflicts in the sixteenth century placed a damper on harmony between Muslims and Christians.

Of particular importance was the emergence of Aḥmad Gragn (1506–1543), also known in Arabic sources as Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghāzī in Harar who, with the assistance and inspiration of Arab scholars and Ottoman commanders in the Muslim world, managed to unite the Muslims of the Horn of Africa to wage war against the Christian rulers of Ethiopia. Initially, he attacked Ethiopia in retaliation for an attack on his own Sultanate, then continued to subjugate Ethiopia and brought about three-quarters of the land under his control. In the process, many centres of Christian civilisation were destroyed.

Perceptions about him differ; with the Somalis remembering him as a national hero while Ethiopians regarded him as a ferocious and unwelcome conqueror. The fear of regional reunification of Muslims among Ethiopians remained ingrained in their minds (Abbink 1998:114; Anon., n.d.; Erlich 2013:14; Haile 2005/V:2858–2862).

In response, Ethiopian Christians sought the help of their coreligionists in Europe. Coincidentally, the latter powers that were driven by an insatiable desire to exploit available human and natural resources began colonising large parts of the world. In sum, the entry of a foreign force in the guise of the Portuguese exacerbated matters in Ethiopia.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were characterised by internal religious and political conflicts among Christians. But from the era of Theodorus (1855–1868), through Yohannes (1868–1889) to Menelik (1889–1913) plans were afoot to establish a huge Christian state with the aid of the West (Sharaf al-Dīn 2014:72). So earnest was this strategy that Yohannes summoned a convocation of Ethiopian clergy in 1878 who ordained that Christianity should be designated the single state religion (Arnold 1965:120).

All regions of Ethiopia were incorporated into a new state with the exception of Eritrea, which remained an Italian colony. But it, too, was annexed by Haile Selassie in 1962 (it broke away in 1993). Selassie, who ruled between 1928 and 1974, maintained that Ethiopia was a Christian island in an ocean of Muslims (Sharaf al-Dīn 2014:72, 96). Addressing the US Congress in 1954, he stated that Ethiopia was unique among all nations of the world for being the only Christian state which could sketch

an uninterrupted history since the time of the Roman Empire. In response to a journalist's question during the same trip, he mentioned that a minority of Ethiopians were Muslims for whose ultimate reversion to their ancestral religion (namely, Christianity) he had already drawn up plans (Āl Yūsuf 1996/II:275). In all these narratives, the discourses of Christian hegemony and Muslim subjugation were brazen.

After Selassie's overthrow, the Marxist Mengistu Haile Mariam assumed the reigns of government in 1975. His rule advocated the destruction of all religions since, according to the communist doctrine, they posed a cancerous threat to their revolution. Marxist ideology had to be imposed on all sectors. Effectively, this meant the banning of religion from public life.

For different reasons, cultural relations between Ethiopia and the Arab world reached their ebb between the administrations of Theodorus and Mengistu Mariam; as the above details indicate.

But with the coup d'état against this despot in 1991, the adoption of a constitution in 1994 and holding of the first multiparty election in 1995 followed by the installation of a democratic, federal government matters began appearing healthier for Muslims. These events gave some impetus to the revival of Islamic activity. The National University in Addis Ababa dedicated a special section to collate and edit thousands of Arabic manuscripts still available in different areas of Ethiopia during the last decade. However, some obstacles have occurred in the post 9/11 phase where Muslims can be randomly and freely targeted at the behest of Western governments (Sharaf al-Dīn 2014:262, 265).

In recapping the relations between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia over the last three centuries, Abbink observes that coexistence and cooperation have been the *modus vivendi*. He adds (1998:113):

This *modus vivendi* was grounded in the economic activities of the Muslims, who introduced trade in and markets for new products, serving as pioneers intensifying trans-national commercial trade relations with countries outside Ethiopia, and also in common elements in the

underlying cultural fabric of Ethiopian societies. Nevertheless, one fact stands undisputed: despite its ancient history and roots in the country, Islam in Ethiopia has always been a religion with secondary, and in the eyes of many Ethiopian leaders, inferior, status; it emerged in the shadow of Christianity and often suffered from suppression and discrimination.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, Muḥammad Saïd, a researcher of Ethiopian heritage and Arabic language at the University of Addis Ababa, blames Muslims primarily for refusing to respond positively to the government's overtures over the past two decades. He accuses them of remaining steeped in illiteracy, and simply following ancestral and tribal customs pertaining to earning a livelihood.

He further adds that the official view about Arabic being a foreign language in Ethiopia is refuted by the following facts: its widespread use in the Bani Shangul region bordering on Sudan; and its appearance on electronic billboards advertising shopping malls and Arab restaurants in the capital city. There are also Arabic radio and TV programmes and a state-run Arabic newspaper that has been circulating for more than sixty years (Kashmīm n.d.).

Generally, there have been two conflicting views about relations between Muslims and Christians, according to Hussein Ahmad; with the one view supporting consensus, peace and tolerance between them and the other view supporting conflict, violence and intolerance. All the same, the marginalisation of the Muslims by the political elite has been acknowledged by many authorities (Desplat and Østebø 2008:2). Jan Abbink states candidly: "Christianity was the core world-view of the political elite and a defining element of the country's historical nationhood, and up to the demise of the monarchy in 1974, Muslims were excluded from this" (n.d.).

In light of the information presented above, I contend that in-depth research on our topic is presently at an infant stage from the Ethiopian side.

Let us reflect upon this subject from the Arab side now. Several theories that were sometimes even mutually incongruent, with their unique designs and objectives, captured Arab conceptualisation of this topic. Often thinkers interwove a few of these approaches. The following outlooks may be listed:

Linguistic prejudice

Beliefs about the superiority of the Qur'ān's eternal message to humanity soon translated into notions about the superiority of Arabic which comprised the linchpin and gauge for measuring all other languages. In support of this argument, many religious scholars cited Qur'ānic verses like 12:2, 40:3 and 42:3. As an additional corollary, Qur'ānic exegetes and jurists like al-Shāfiī (d. 820 C.E.) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923 C.E.) avowed that the scripture was couched in pure idiom and diction that did not countenance any adulteration by foreign languages. Although there were other more nuanced or even alternative views on this topic, the opinion espoused by al-Shāfiī reigned supreme (al-Suyūṭī 1973/I:135–136 and al-Zarkashī 1972/I:287–290).

The final logical outcome to this problem was Arab racial bigotry whose effects will be posited under appropriate approaches hereunder.

As a rebuttal of this view were the writings of the versatile scholar, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 829 C.E.), who penned an entire book on the superiority of blacks (حبشان; literally, Ethiopians) over whites (بيضان).⁸

Indubitably such parochial tracts impacted negatively on the Muslim psyche as a whole.

More measured works in this category was the later contribution of al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) entitled *Raf' Sha'n al-Habashān*.

Egalitarianism

Several scriptural decrees and historical events were invoked to prove the merit of an egalitarian society that was not divided along racial, linguistic or colour lines. In support of this view, scholars quoted Qur'ānic verses like 30:22 and 49:13 besides the elevated status of the Ethiopian freed slave, Bilāl and , the previously mentioned Ethiopian King Aṣḥamah (popularly known as Najāshī) in Prophetic society (Ibn Hishām n.d.:167–168, 170 and al-Bukhārī, Book 62, Chapter 23).

⁸ Refer to his *Fakhr al-Sūdān 'ala l-Bīḍān* whose full publication details appear in the bibliography (Al-Jāḥiẓ 1963).

Besides these, there were other secular views that were sometimes buttressed with religious teachings. I now turn our attention to one of them.⁹

Social, political and historical determinants

Alongside the positive propellers of healthy relations with Black Africans, which have been adequately discussed throughout this article, there remained a residue of negative experiences too. They included the Ethiopian occupation of South Arabia (e.g., in the sixth century B.C.) and the onslaught on Makkah planned by Abrahah just before the birth of Prophet Muḥammad (570 C.E.).

During the pre- and early Islamic periods, Ethiopians who had settled in Arabia were mainly treated as slaves occupying the lowest social rank. They served alongside European slaves who were mainly imported from the Slavic countries and the Balkans. Contrary to scriptural teachings about the emancipation of slaves, this practice survived and flourished, with Islamic legal “loopholes” assisting the status quo. Black slaves mainly performed domestic tasks.

The slaves had their glorious times, too, as the following examples will illustrate: First, there was the Mamlūk dynasty (1250–1517 C.E.), comprising erstwhile slaves from the Balkans and the Caucasus that ruled for about three centuries over Egypt, Syria and Arabia. Secondly, there were the Ethiopian Najāḥids, who ruled over Yemen during the last phases of the Fāṭimid dynasty (1022–1158 C.E.). Thirdly, there was the “Black Rebellion” engineered by slaves south of Basra in 1259. Finally, the conflicts between the Egyptian Mamlūks and Christian rulers of Ethiopia during the sixteenth century C.E. in the aftermath to the Crusades were viewed as a continuation of the Crusades.

Thus, the Ethiopians suffered a double disadvantage at the hands of Arabs – racial and social.

⁹ I have relied exclusively on the excellent article of Shams al-Dīn al-Kailānī whose full publication details appear in the bibliography (Al-Kailānī 2005).

Quasi religious sources were invoked to underline the distinction between Arabs and Blacks (Ethiopians) suggesting that Arabs were the descendants of Noah's son, Shem, while the Blacks were the progeny of his son, Ham.

As a sequel to this deplorable state of affairs, chasms in the cognition of Blacks arose in Arab writings which ultimately resembled fables and folklore. Narratives were blended with hyperbole, the eccentric and the imaginary; as we find in the works of Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1349) and al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283).

At another level, a stubborn bias has incessantly been upheld by many Arab Muslim scholars with regard to the Middle East being the centre of Islamic civilisation and every other place being the periphery (Feener and Sever 2009:viii). This attitude has also negatively impacted perceptions of Blacks.

The ensuing ignorance about the "other" has been partly broken in recent times by Egyptian Coptic scholars like Zāhir Riyādh and Muslim authors like Fathī Ghaith, Rajab Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīzānī as well as the Sudanese academic 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd al-Ghanī Ibrāhīm.¹⁰ Yet this field pleads for more research.

CONCLUSION

Relations and reciprocal influences among the communities of Arabia and Ethiopia have existed since the sixth century B.C. Ethiopia became the first sanctuary for Muslim refugees in Prophet Muḥammad's time and has hosted many settlers from Arabia ever since. The Ethiopian kingdom of Aksum, whose inhabitants were the product of a linguistic and cultural blend between African Kushitic and South Arabian Semitic peoples, was situated on a strategic trade route linking Eastern and Middle Eastern countries to East Africa and the Mediterranean lands. Between the ninth and sixteenth centuries C.E. Muslims, who were the torchbearers of the Arabic tradition, established petty dynasties mainly in the eastern and southern parts of Ethiopia. But relations between the local Christians and Muslims deteriorated since the first half of the sixteenth century and have continued doing so up to the recent past.

¹⁰ Their contributions are listed in the bibliography.

Arabic impacted on Ethiopian languages at the levels of lexical items and usage of its script while Islamic literature in Ethiopia displays strong Arabic influence. In return, Ethiopian languages influenced Arabic at the linguistic and literary-cum-cultural levels.

From the Ethiopian side, the main cause for the retrogressive relations was its portrayal by successive rulers as a bastion of Christianity amidst Muslim adversaries. Consequently, the position of Islam and Muslims degenerated so long as its rulers spurned meaningful relations with Muslims. Remarkably, the Arabic language has survived in Ethiopia.

Generally, the Arabs have also been spiritless and inert to invigorate cultural affinities with the Ethiopians on account of linguistic prejudice, racial superiority associated with environmental determinism together with other social, political and historical determinants.

To address this problem, the new Ethiopian government has established a research unit for studying the combined heritage of all Ethiopians and promoted the teaching of Arabic at the University of Addis Ababa over the last two decades. It has also incentivised Muslims to upgrade their academic and tertiary skills.

At an academic level, researchers on both sides have begun to zero in on this topic. These efforts need support and expansion.

All parties need to dispel age-old prejudices to create a new era in cultural relations between Ethiopia and the Arab World.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Āl al-Shaikh, Ş bin 'A al-'A 2000. *Mawsūat al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf*. 3rd edition. Riyadh: Dār al-Salām.
- Āl Yūsuf, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib 1996. *Ithiyawbiyā wa l-'Arūbah wa l-Islam 'abr al-Ta'rīkh*. Makkah: Al-Maktabat al-Makkīyah.
- Abbink, J n.d. Ethiopian Islam and the challenge of diversity, *ISIM Newsletter* 4/99. Available: https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/17331/ISIM_4_Ethiopian_Islam_and_the_Challenge_of_Diversity.pdf?sequence=1. [Accessed 2015/09/23.]
- _____ 1998. An historical-anthropological approach to Islam in Ethiopia: issues of identity and politics, *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 11/2:109–124.

- Abir, M 1980. *Ethiopia and the Red Sea*. Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Frank Cass & Co.
- Abdulsemed, M H 2015. *Intishār al-Islam fi l-Ḥabashah: Āthāruhu wa Ab āduhu*. Unpublished MA dissertation. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Ahmed, El Amin Abdel Karim 2013. *Habasha, Abyssinia and Ethiopia: Some Notes Concerning a Country's Names and Images*. Available: activities.uofk.edu/multisites/Uofk_activities/images/stories/activities/Humanities2013/papers/habasha.pdf. [Accessed 2015/10/27.]
- Al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qādir 1997. *Khizānat al-Adab wa Lubb Lubāb Lisān al-'Arab* (ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn). 4th edition. Cairo: Al-Khānjī.
- Al-Baihaqī 1988. *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Al-Baitār, 'A al-R n.d. *Ḥilyat al-Bashar fi l-Qarn al-Thālith 'Ashar*. Available: islampost.com/w/tkh/Web/388/111.htm. [Accessed 2015/12/03.]
- Al-Fayā, 'A al-Munīm 'Ajab, 8 Jan. 2015. *Madkhal ila l-Washāij al-Lughawīyah bain al-Ḥabashīyah wa l-'Arabīyah*. Available: http://lahajat.blogspot.com/2015/01/08/blog-post_438.html. [Accessed 2015/11/02.]
- Al-Ḥamawī, Y 1993. *Muḥam al-Udabā'* (ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās). Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī.
- Al-Jāhiz n.d. *Al-Rasā'il al-Siyāsīyah*. Beirut: Maktabat al-Hilāl.
- _____ 1963. Fakhr al-Sūdān 'ala l-Bīdān, in *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz*.
- _____ 1963. *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz*. Cairo: Al-Khānjī.
- Al-Jabartī, 'A al-R 1998. *Ajā'ib al-Āthār fi l-Tarājim wa l-Akḥbār*. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah.
- Al-Jizānī, 'Abd al-Q 1971. *Futūḥ al-Ḥabashah*. Cairo: Al-Hai'at al-Miṣriyyat al-Āmmah li l-Kitāb.
- Al-Kailānī, Shams al-Dīn, 2005. "Al-Sūdān wa l-Zanj fi l-Thaqāfat al-'Arabīyyah: Al-Ma'āyir wa l-Aḥkām" in *Al-Tasāmuh*, no. 15.
- Al-Munjjid, M Ṣ n.d. *Silsilat al-Adab al-Islāmīyah*. Available: www.islampost.com/w/akh/Web/1601/461.htm. [Accessed 2015/12/02.]
- Al-Suyūfī, J 1973. *Al-Itqān fi Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-Thaqāfiyyah.
- _____ n.d. *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥabashān*. Amman: University of Jordan (Manuscripts and 629 Documents Division, Serial Number 373).
- Al-Ṭanāshī, Khadijah 1996. *Al-Ālāqāt al-Siyāsīyyah bain al-Quwa l-Islāmīyyah wa l-Masīḥīyyah fi l-Ḥabashah*. Tripoli: Markaz Dirāsāt Jihād al-Lībiyīn dīd al-Ghazwa l-Īṭālī.
- Al-Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn 1972. *Al-Burhān fi Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Mārifah.
- Anon., 27 December 2009. *Yā Shuhadā Taqtur (تقطر... شهداء يا)*. Available: www.sudanyat.org/vb/archive/index.../t-12767.html. [Accessed 2015/12/03.]
- Anon., n.d. *Ayyuhunna Ajmal al-Mar'ah Al-Baiḍā' am Al-Samrā' am Al-Saudā' Al-Muwaḥḥid al-'Arabī*. Available: 4uarab.com/vb/threads/ixn-gml-almr-albida-m-alsamra-m-alsuda23493. [Accessed 2016/11/07]
- Anon., n.d. *Ahmad ibn Ibrīhim al-Ghazi*. Available: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ahmad_ibn_Ibrīhim_al-Ghazi [Accessed 2016/08/02.]
- Ansary, A R 1996. *Arabia before Islam*, in de Laet and Hermann 1996: 139.
- Arnold, T W 1965. *The preaching of Islam*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.
- 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, Muḥammad Rajab 1983. *Al-Ālāqāt al-Siyāsīyyah bain Muslimī Zailā' wa Naṣāra l-Ḥabashah fi l-Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*. Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍat al-'Arabīyyah.
- 'Ābidīn, 'Abd al-Majīd n.d. *Bain al-Ḥabashah wa l-'Arab*. Cairo: Quṣūr al-Thaqāfah.
- 'Alī, Jawwād 2001. *Al-Mufaṣṣal fi Ta'rīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islām*. 4th edition. Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī.

- Craig, A M et. al. (eds.) 2009. *The heritage of world civilizations*. Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson Prentice Hall Publishers.
- Daif, S 2009. *Ta'rikh al-Adab al-Arabī*. Cairo: Dār al-Maārif.
- De Laet, S J and Hermann, J 1996. *History of humanity from the seventh century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.* Paris, London & New York: UNESCO.
- Desplat, P and Østebø, T 2008. *Muslim Ethiopia: the Christian legacy, identity politics and Islamic reformism*. London: Palgrave.
- Erlich, H 2013. *Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Ethiopia. The messages of religions. 5th Annual Levzion Lecture, 2009*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Available: http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/upload/_FILE_1415823004.pdf&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwiOnfiu27HOAhWCKcAKHTyFDtIQFgggMAI&usg=AFQjCNEWr-gtJTfl4bhFkw0ALBpG7KiDgQ. [Accessed 2016/08/06.]
- Feener, R M & Sever, T (eds.) 2009. *Islamic connections: Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia*. Institute of South East Asian Studies.
- Ghaith, Fathī 1963. *Al-Islam wa l-Ḥabashah ābr al-Ta'rikh*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah.
- Haile, G 2005. Ethiopian Church, in Jones 2005/5:2859-2862.
- Heinrich, E n.d. Aksumite History. Available: http://www.earlheinrich.com/Ancient%2520Nubia/_Private/Aksum%2520ch%25204.pdf&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwi6l46h4anOAhULCMAKHc2hC88QFggTMAA&usg=AFQjCNF4MGPnPufSwKn7Ek3ymag3jTxERw [Accessed 2016/08/01.]
- Ibn Hishām n.d. *Al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyah*. Available: www.al-mostafa.com/info/data/arabic/depot3/gap.php?file=i001288.pdf. [Accessed 2015/12/01.]
- Ibn Kathīr 1987. *Al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah*. Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān li l-Turāth.
- Wetter, A 31 May 2006. Arabic in Ethiopia. Available: www.academia.edu/2242457/Arabic_in_Ethiopia. [Accessed 2015/11/26.]
- Ibrāhīm, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd al-Ghanī 1994. *Ahl Bilāl Judhūr al-Islām al-Ta'rikhīyah fi l-Ḥabashah*. Khartoum: Al-Dār al-Sūdānīyah li l-Kutub.
- Jilānī, A n.d. Lahjat al-Tijrī wa l-Abjadīyat al-Arabīyah. Available: http://modaina.com/arabic/tigre_and_arabic_alphabet.htm. [Accessed 2015/11/25.]
- Jones, L (ed.) 2005. *Encyclopedia of religion*. (Ed. Lindsay Jones) (2nd ed.). Detroit: Macmillan Reference. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale.
- July, R W 1970. *A history of the African people*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Kashmīm, G n.d. "Takhalluf al-Muslimīn Akādīmīyan Yužhiruhum ka Aqallīyah" in *Ukāz*. Available: www.okaz.com.sa/article/292964/الرأي [Accessed 2016/11/07].
- Lane, E W 1984. *Arabic-English lexicon*. (Reproduction of 1863 original.) Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society.
- Leslau, W 1958. Arabic loanwords in Ge'ez. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 3/2:146–168.
- _____ 1990. *Arabic loanwords in Ethiopian Semitic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Loimeier, R 2004. Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi (1506–1543), in *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Available: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3403500042/ahmad-ibn-ibrahim-al.html> [Accessed 2016/08/10.]
- Mazar, A 1992. *Archeology of the land of the Bible, 10,000–586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
- Mekonnen, Y K (ed.) 2013. *Ethiopia, the land, its people, history and culture*. Dar es Salaam: New Africa Press.
- Munro-Hay, S 1991. *Aksum. An African civilization of late antiquity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Parkhurst, S 1955. *Ethiopia, a cultural history*. Essex: Lalibela House.
- Riyādh, Z 1964. *Al-Islam fī Ithyūbiyā fī l-Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā mā'a l-Ihtimām bi wajh Khāṣṣ bi 'Alāqat al-Muslimīn bi l-Masīhiyyīn*. Cairo: Dār al-Mārifah (published for the Centre of African Studies at Cairo University).
- _____ 1966. *Ta'rīkh Ithyūbiyā*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjalo al-Miṣrīyyah (published for the Centre of African Studies at Cairo University).
- Osman, G January 2005. Pre-Islamic converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina, *The Muslim World* 95/1:67–80.
- Salt, H 1967. *A voyage to Ethiopia*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.
- Sharaf al-Dīn, 'Abd Allah Khidr 2014. *Al-Thaqāfatal-Islāmīyyah fī l-Ḥabashah*. Istanbul: Dār al-Nidā'.
- Yusuf Ali, A n.d. *The Holy Qur'an: translation and commentary*. Durban: IPCI (original published by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf of Lahore in 1939).