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Africanism, Apocalypticism, Jihad and Jesuitism: Prelude to Ethiopianism

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Ethiopianism conceptually shaped modern Africa. Perceivably, this has been deduced from distinguished events in Ethiopian history. This investigation explored Ethiopianism as a derivate of the multifaceted narrative of Ethiopian religious political dynamics. Ethiopianism has arguably been detached from the entirety of the Ethiopian Christian political establishment, being deduced separately from definitive events such as the Battle of Adwa 1896. This research reconnected Ethiopianism to a wholistic religious–political matrix of Ethiopia. Therefore, it offers an alternative interpretation of Ethiopianism, as a derivate of Africanism and Apocalypticism, also correspondingly as a factor of Islamic Jihad and Jesuit Catholicism. The research was accomplished mainly through document analysis and compositely with cultural historiography. This study was a revisionist approach to Ethiopianism as a concept, deriving it from the chronological narrative of Ethiopian Christianity's religious and political self-definition. Consequently, this realigned Ethiopianism as a derivate of multiple influences. Ethiopianism was possibly a convolution of the Donatist biblical appeal to the nativity, Judaic apocalypticism, Islamic attacks and Jesuit missionary diplomacy. Throughout the narrative of the Ethiopian Christian establishment, autonomy and independence are traceable; in addition, there is an entrenched enculturation of native Christianity and synergy with the political establishment. This formulates a basis for Ethiopianism as an ideology of African magnanimity. Parallel comparisons of Ethiopianism against Donatism and Zionism decode the nationalistic matrix of Ethiopia. Dually encultured native religious practice coupled with theocratic symbiosis of politics and religion fostered resistance from Islamisation and Jesuit Catholicisation. Further enquiry of Ethiopian Christianity as an index of the Ethiopian political establishment, from which Ethiopianism is derived, is qualified.

Keywords: Ethiopianism; Jihad; Africanism; Zionism; Apocalypticism; Jesuits; Religious political self-definition; Ethiopian Christianity; Islam; Judaism.

Introduction

Ethiopianism by definition is an ideology derived from selected events within the history of Ethiopia and its antique placement in biblical times. Ethiopianism transforms the narratives of Ethiopia into metaphors of African magnanimity and correspondingly decodes them as a commentative script to autonomy and assertive sovereignty. Ethiopianism as an ideology was catalytic to African Nationalism and native consciousness of African missions (Kalu 2006). The battle of Adwa is a recorded victory of Ethiopia where forging a united front against Italian Ethiopians in 1896 became an icon for African sovereignty (Jonas 2011). Accompanied by the *tabots* of the Virgin mother and Saint George, the Axumite clergy in Israelite fashion signified the presence of God in the Ethiopian cause of battle (Pankhurst 1989:78–103; Silverman 2005:84). The emperor Menelik and empress Taytu led a combined force in circumstances riddled with pious devotion (Jonas 2011:182, 183). The battle became a modern myth in tangent with the correspondent advancements in education the fact that it became an ideology entails its transcendence into legend.

This ideology derived from the autonomous and actively engaging Christian empire of Ethiopia. Notably the religion and statecraft of Ethiopia arguably were reflective of Jewish or Judaic values; it therefore follows that inference can be made regarding derivate Judaic ideologies that compositely shaped Ethiopianism. The closest parallel would be Zionism. Both Ethiopianism and Zionism are 19th-century phenomena, which derive from their native antiquities (Kalu 2006; Novak 2015). These ideologies are a synthesis of their respective historical magnanimously definitive national epochs. In a sense, Ethiopianism is subordinate to Zionism given the subordinate nature of Ethiopian Judaic tradition to Israel as per the legendary Queen Makeda's visit to Solomon (*Kebra Naghast* 25, Budge 2008:25). However, it has to be established how

Ethiopian Christianity was autonomous and had an emphatic sovereign claim with regard to its territorial superiority.

Research has been entrenched in the study of these two ideologies with regard to their contributions to modernity. This investigation is an attempt at reconciling the historical framework from which Ethiopianism derives, dually placing it alongside then emergent ideologies during their respective era, such as Islam and Donatism. This investigation is an endeavour to explain what Ethiopianism embellished as a rallying ideology among African missionaries and nationalists. To be particular as to the significant feature from which Ethiopianism was conceptualised, this study reviews the enduring nature of Ethiopian Christendom averse to the engulfing dynamics faced by Christianity within its surrounding region (Wilhite 2017:339).

The Christendom of Ethiopia was characterised by a chrono-transcendent tradition that spanned different eras and their respective political and religious dynamics. The dynamics emanated from geopolitical and religious changes over centuries. For example, the rise of Islam and the Arab conquests meant the decline of North African Christianity (Wilhite 2017:339). The capacity of Vasco Da Gama to navigate the seas not only opened new trade routes but also implied foreign threats through naval invasions of territories surrounding Ethiopia. In addition, the advent of the Portuguese and Italians upon the continent meant the introduction of a medieval-European-defined Christianity in many ways different from what had been the custom.

Methodology

The investigation was mainly comprised of document analysis (cf. Bowen 2009:27). This was primarily through literature review and the examination of artistic depictions. While within the corpus of the research a topical thematic research design was incorporated, composite to document analysis of other methodologies such as cultural historiography and sociological models were also integrated (Danto 2008:17).

Ethiopianism and Donatism: Africanism an appeal to nativity

Ethiopianisms main definitive feature is the emphasis on indigenous identity, that is, an Africa by Africans for Africans (Kalu 2006:581). This, as explained earlier, is a derivate of the manner the Ethiopian Christian Empire remained organic and autonomous despite the existence of notable geopolitical influences. By extension, the African background of Ethiopian Christianity is shadowed by the Donatist movement. The Donatist movement as a phenomenon characterised 4th century Christianity as the Emperor Constantine attempted a forged ecumenical orthodoxy (Van Dam 2011:245). The Donatist movement, a pocket of Carthaginian resistance to the imperial orthodox establishment, arguably did not have any contact with Ethiopian Christianity; however, a reconciliation of the two African philosophies is relevant for this investigation. The capacity of Donatism to seemingly

transcend its contemporary era of ecclesiastical politics, and gain an ideological personification that stretched into the 600s CE, is notable (Atkins & Dorado 2007:127; Roldanus 2006).

It has to be noted that one of Donatism's strengths derived from its claim to an African identity is an obvious advantage on the African continent. It would divert the focus of the investigation to review the polarised environment of Roman Africa in relation to socio-ethnic dynamics; however, the concept of an African movement as a philosophy will be explored.

Donatism made a scriptural claim for the African continent in asserting an explicitly African social identity (Augustine Letter 93.8.24). According to Augustine, however, the Donatists practised eisegesis in certain circumstances to establish this notion; paradoxically, Augustine in certain instances indulges the same methodology of an African exegesis himself (Wilhite 2017:221).

Such as the reading of Song of Solomon 1:5–8 (KJV) which is highlighted beneath:

> [5]I *am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.[6] Look not upon me, because I *am* black, Because the sun hath looked upon me: My mother's children were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards; *But* mine own vineyard have I not kept.[7] Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, Where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? [8] If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Given the Latin usage of African Christianity, the Donatist would then translate *meridie* (Latin), meaning noon, to mean south as per the meridian southern inclination of the sun. The preceding assertion therefore implies that the geographical locale referred to in the passage is Africa that is a place south of Rome (Wilhite 2017:221).

Wilhite further explores Augustine's rebuttals of the Donatist biblical deduction of Africa; Augustine argued that the south rather than referring to a region was to be understood as a relative descriptor (Augustine Letter 93.8.24).

Overall, the Donatists interpreted themselves as the flock here in reference, an African flock. Perceivably the allusion to black in this chapter is taken as dark complexion which is a recurrent feature in Old Testament allusions to African nationalities, such as the Ethiopians (Jr 13:23). In the interest of the research, the Donatist African theory was an inevitably definitive feature of the movement that had a notably nationalistic approach in its practice of Christianity and clerical leadership.

The link

The notion of Africanism as an appeal to nativity, that is, an Africa for Africans by Africans, is central to the concept of

Ethiopianism. The conceptualisation of an African Christian destiny is epitomised in biblical passages such as Psalm 68:31 and Zephaniah 3:10 (KJV):

- [31]Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.
- [10]From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, in Africa shall bring mine offering.

These scriptures served as an incitement for a localised native version of African Christianity and dually as motivation for revolution (Kalu 2006:581). Given the specific mention of Africa in God's salvation design all other privileges granted to fellow men became inevitable. The issue of self-determination, purpose and sovereignty was composite to a comprehension of Africa's position among the nations according to the divine word. In the words of Kalu, Ethiopia represented the 'recovery and recontextualization of black traditions of emancipation hidden from consciousness of black peoples by colonial hegemony' (Kalu 2006:582).

Continued Iconism

Observably, the basis of the concept could be biblical Ethiopia; however, it seems that the iconic capability of Ethiopia transcended generations. The significant resistance and autonomy of Ethiopia averse to definitive dynamics in African history implied the conceptualisation of an Ethiopic resistance legacy. The Arab conquests and Islamisation of the Northern horn of the African continent was an abject reality facing Ethiopian Christianity and sovereignty post the 7th century CE; equally significant was Portuguese diplomacy that came coupled with Catholic tradition. Therefore, the investigation now reviews the interaction of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Christianity with the two perceived phenomena.

Ethiopia and the emergent Islamic faith

The relationship between the Ethiopian Christian Empire and the then emergent faith of Islam proved rather cordial. Axum, similar to its sister Christianities in Syria and Egypt, found a formula of cohabitation with Muhammad's faith (Wilhite 2017:339). Significantly, the rise of Islam took place against the backdrop of imperial geopolitical policies of three empires: Persia, Byzantium and Ethiopia. Definitively, religion was a determining factor of foreign policy securing alliances and client religious establishments (Procopius Wars I.19–20, Dewing 1914–1928:1:178–195). The demise of the Ethiopian Byzantine alliance, and ultimately a hostile Persian versus Byzantine scenario, preceded the rise of Muhammad's faith.

While there had been general stability in the Arabian Peninsula because of the Ethiopian-Byzantine alliance that watered-down Persian influence in that region and implied a viable client Christianity for Ethiopia in Himyar (Bowersock 2013:93), the caste incited by Ethiopian Monophysitism and Byzantine Miaphysitism entailed a widened rift; consequently, the collapse of Ethiopian client Christianity in Himyar was definitive in imperial regional power dynamics (Isaac

2013:39). The result was an oblivion of Ethiopia's sovereign claims in the Arabian Peninsula, a notable feature of the Ethiopian *Negus* [ruler] (Phillipson 2012:188). The dissolution of the Ethiopian–Byzantine nexus incubated a steady to rocky policy between Persia and Byzantium.

The Persian king Chrosoes II held a truce with Byzantium, which crumbled following Byzantium's instability in 602 CE caused by the rise of Phocas (Bowersock 2013:122). Interestingly, the events consequent from the renewed Persian–Byzantine hostility positioned Ethiopia in the perspective of the emergent Islamic dynamic.

The Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 CE was a signal to Arab '[b]elievers' of Muhammad to flee Mecca (Bowersock 2013:122, 123). Notably their destination of choice was Ethiopian Axum, whether it was at the invitation of the Ethiopian *Negus* or another fact altogether (Raven 1988:197–218).

The immigration of Muslims into Ethiopia implies an active foreign policy by Ethiopia post its alliance with the Byzantine era. The possibility that the emigration was at the invitation of the Ethiopian monarch further implies that the Arab conquests that would be a consequence of Islam would affect Ethiopia rather uniquely.

The possibility of cordial policy between the *Negus* of Ethiopia and Muhammad corresponds with evidence of overtures by the latter to regional powers (Shahid 2008:27–28).

The Islamic immigrations into Ethiopia made it part of early Islamic legend. It is on record in Islamic tradition that amidst the Arabian persecution sponsored by Persian support the Prophet Muhammad urged an exodus beyond the Red Sea into Abyssinia. The Prophet showed the neutrality and pacifist nature of the nation calling it a 'land of righteousness', where no one was wronged' (Pankhurst 2007:ix, xx). The goodwill of the Ethiopian asylum was proven when the *Negus* turned down bribes by the Arabian embassy demanding the forced repatriation of these refugees. The *Negus* assertively defied the gesture saying, 'even if you were to offer me a mountain of gold, I would not give up these people who have taken refuge with me' (Pankhurst 2007:xx).

Revitalised Persian hostility perceivably is the background against which Islam arose. The region while posing as a scene of instability consequent of the geopolitical wrangle between Byzantium and Persia had a neutral safe haven. Ethiopia was refuge to a sizeable number of Muslims it would appear; this made the emigration from Mecca into Ethiopia a proto Hijra that foreshadowed the movement later on into Medina (Bowersock 2013:125). The narrative regarding the cordial connections between the Prophet Muhammad and the Ethiopian empire recurred with a series of events that imply Ethiopia as part of Islamic early tradition. The prophet is said to have prayed for the Aksumite *Negus*, declaring that Ethiopia was to be spared from the offenses of *Jihad*

[Holy war] (Pankhurst 2007:xx). Correspondingly, Islam expanded relatively peacefully in the southern eastern, northern and western Ethiopian lowlands. Notably, the city of Harar resembled a separate autonomous Islamic theocracy fostering Muslim piety, education and commerce.

The cohabitation with the Christian nation of Ethiopia was evident in that the Islamic centre of Harar was passively allowed its own governance and currency (Pankhurst 2007:xx). This corresponds with the theory regarding Ethiopia's political religious definition, how Ethiopia and its politically defined Christianity embraced the principles of religious toleration. This adds to the magnanimity of the Ethiopian *Negus*, the alliances with Muslims which would in the future forge the needed nationalist capacity. However, there were also adverse circumstances brought about as a result of fluctuations with the Islamic connections.

The intentions of Ethiopia however could have been an extension of glorious foreign policy, a characteristic that had characterised Axumite *Negus*(es) in the preceding eras. This was possibly a derivate of the Christian political economy of Ethiopia which here was illustrating its autonomous foreign policy defiant of the Persian incursions. This however poses a complex enquiry into the religious matrix of Ethiopia which premised religion as a composite to foreign policy; however, the alliance with Rome was riddled with religious non-conformity, a suggestion that Ethiopia could somewhat give room for divergence with its allies.

Islamic threat in African Christianity

The continual rise of Islam after Muhammad was accompanied by Arab conquests, consequently given technological advancements and geopolitical changes that affected the Aksumite empire. The history of Christianity in North Africa in the 7th and 8th century CE reflects a cataclysmic swing of fortune with the rise of Islam and the perceivable decline of Christianity (Wilhite 2017:321). The challenge regarding the verifiability of the existence and vibrance of North African Christianity as a phenomenon recognisant with its glorious past is the scant contemporary Christian sources from this era (Pringle 2001:1–8). The sources that illuminate this era emanate from Egypt and Syria and are dated for a later time (Wilhite 2017:322).

The sources that give information regarding this era are mainly Arabic (Stjostrom 1993:22, 23). These sources are compromised by factors such as their silence about natives, and correspondingly they reflect the shift in the Arabic dynasties and their agendas (Brett 1978:506). The preceding observation thereby jeopardizes the objectivity of these sources. Wilhite (2017) notably observed that the other challenge stemmed from the interpretation of modern Christian historians of the respective era and preconceptions and/or misconceptions regarding Islam. In substantiation of his theory, Wilhite argues regarding the capacity of Islam to cohabit with other religions as evidenced in the Quran's charge that oversaw the protection of synagogues, churches

and monasteries (Quran 22:40; Wilhite 2017:322). Also, the following facts (Wilhite 2017:322, 323):

1. Forced conversion was not a premise in Islam:

    Since the Quran urged an equal brotherhood among fellow Muslims, subjugating heathens who would in the minimum pay higher taxes and be enslaved appeared more favourable to conquest.

2. By then there was no clear distinction between Christianity and monotheist Islam as two separate entities given the prevalent Christian sectarianism and religions of Africa:

    This fact is corroborated additionally by the incapability of a number of Christians to even understand their own Christianity because of their illiteracy. Correspondingly, Islamic allusions to an honoured Jesus and Mary and depictions of Muhammad as 'the' Prophet or 'a' Prophet of the great God composed perhaps as though not a right but acceptable euphemism to an already confused Christian populous.

Irrespective of the non-conclusive nature of the preceding facts, Wilhite (2017) argues for the revisionist history of Islam. Deductively, the challenge faced by historians is consequent of their interpretation of the era, rather than the decline of Christianity, which could alternatively be analysed as the rise of Islam.

The formidable and empirical nature of the Islamic-Arabic phenomenon intersects with the investigation's respective enquiry. Given the capacity of the rise of Islam to definitively shape events in North African Christianity, the question regarding Ethiopia's averse nature emerges. How did Ethiopian Christianity fare with respect to this definitive era in African history?

Islamic hostility an inducement to foreign incursions

Initially with respect to the introduction of Islam in Africa by the Prophet Muhammad, Ethiopia was a friend of Islam being part of its origin legend. The honour given to Islamic refugees encouraged the prophet to declare Ethiopia a neutral land to be spared from *Jihad*. With time given various emergent and prevalent dynamics, the peaceful alliance that had initially been forged faded. Notably though Ethiopia was not displaced by Islamic-Arabic invasions in the 7th–8th centuries CE.

Ethiopian Christianity in the face of disappearance theorem

Scholarship in Early Christianity developed a theorem regarding the disappearance of Christianity in North Africa (Wilhite 2017:340–347). These theories share a common locus of the Arab conquests, whereas Ethiopia has been highlighted to have known some peace during the inception of Islam. Reviewing these theories in the perspective of Ethiopia's adverse survival corroborates the concept from which Ethiopianism emanates. This is also reflective of the symbiotic relationship between the Ethiopian imperial establishment and Ethiopian Christianity.

Political power theory

This theory is a concept derived from the German reformation – a later phenomenon, during which the protest of the princes against Charles V saw the formulation of the idea *Cuius regio, eius religio* (Latin), meaning he who rules, his religion (Wilhite 2017:340). Under the respective notion, the assumption is that subjects will conform to the religion of the governing authority. Correspondingly some historians have deduced the Arab conquest to have been to that effect (Holme 1895:4). That is in the face of an exchange of regional powers in which Christians found themselves switching from the Byzantine Christian establishment to the Arabic Islamic rule.

This theory despite the multiple flaws that stem from the essence of African Christianity as one of non-conformity to domineering powers is also non-applicable to Ethiopia as a whole (cf. Bowersock 2013). That the imperial establishment of Ethiopia was buttressed in a way by religious claims was evident (cf. Phillipson 2012). The Christianity of the Ethiopian *Negus*(es) traceable throughout history also implies that the nation remained Christian. The issue perhaps stems from the Ethiopian lowlands and the city of Harar where there was a firm Islamic presence; however, aggregately Ethiopian Christianity thrived as an index of its Christian monarchs.

Christian exodus theory (Wilhite 2017:341)

This theory implies a massive exodus from Africa into Europe by Christians in the face of Arabic-Islamic invasions (Holme 1895:203). This never was the case with Ethiopian Christianity; rather Ethiopia later forged alliances with certain Christian European nations to avoid an Islamic takeover.

Decapitation theory (Wilhite 2017:342)

This theory ascribes the decline of Christianity during the Arabian-Islamic rise to have been consequent of the attacks on Christian clergy that is the episcopate in particular, this having been a recurrent feature of the Vandal and Byzantine transitions (Cyprian Ep 59, Schaff 1885e:628–630). For example, while initially the attacks on the episcopal leadership were reflective of the accepted Christianity in each respective order whether Nicaean or Homoian (*HP* 3.14, Whelan 2018:44), the Arabs being non-Christians would not take any Christian prisoners, thereby attacks on Christian leadership would mean decimation.

Notably Tilley brings another angle to this theory where she asserts for the critical role of the African episcopate in the maintenance of its firm ecclesiastical structure (Tilley 2001:3–22). Cyprian on record is the author of the *unitate ecclesiae* [ecclesiastical unity] (*Unit Eccl*; Schaff 1885e:738). Tilley's argument draws from how the political changes in African politics were potentially catalytic for a weakened African episcopate. Correspondingly this weakened Bishopric when faced with the Islamic threat fell.

Ethiopian Christianity appears not to have reflected regional political influence but rather regional religious influence and that only to a certain degree. The capacity of Ethiopia to forge an alliance with Byzantium and yet refuse the imperial changes from Nicene to Arianism conformity is evidence. When Constantius II engaged the Ethiopian Negus regarding the reappointment of the Alexandrian Bishop and the corresponding subordinate compliance of the Ethiopian Abuna, Ethiopia did not correspond (Rufinus, *Hist. Eccles*. 2.5.14, Amidon 1997:18–23; Athanasius. *Apol*. 29, 31 Schaff 1892:495, 497–498). The refusal of Ethiopia to comply implied the regional political autonomy of Ethiopia (cf. Bowersock 2013).

Hence, in the perspective of the centrality of the viability of ecclesiastical leadership as a key determinant in the decapitation theory, Ethiopian Christianity was not affected. The Christianity of Ethiopia though derived from Byzantine–Alexandrian elements was relatively autonomous. The clergy of Ethiopia arguably were not exposed to external political transitions; hence, their succession and authority were relatively stable. This implied that if the Islamic incursions would target a weakened Christianity without substantial leadership at its helm, Ethiopia was exempt.

Cultural gap theory (Wilhite 2017:344)

Lastly, the decline of Christianity during the rise of Islam is attributable to the lack of enculturation among the African nationals. Thereby African Christianity retained a Roman ascription which made it a foreign entity (Frend 1997:611–627). This theory corroborated with the Donatist appeal to Africanness/nativity.

Hence, the survival of Christianity in Africa could have partly been a consequence of the Roman Byzantine empire's hold upon Africa. This resonates with the political power theory which argues for adherence by a subjugated group to the ruler's religion. Correspondingly, given the detached nature of native African adherents to Christianity, the Arab-Islamic wave would be equally welcome in proportion to its capacity to enculturate.

In the case of Ethiopia, however, the reverse is true. The enculturation-syncretisation of Christianity appears to have been a component of Ethiopian Christianity that entrenched it as part of its national heritage. The resistance by the general populous against the exotic catholic element during the medieval era implies the adoption of Christianity as a local culture, and notably their respective form of Christianity (cf. Boavida, Pennec & Ramos 2011). In addition, the very narrative of Ethiopia's Judeo-Christian background as illustrated in its hagiography and the *Kebra-Naghast* [Glory of Kings] proves Christianity as intrinsic and organic to Ethiopia.

Notably the discussion of the theories regarding Christianity's disappearance against the rise of Islam can be perceived to have been relatively abstract given the

geographical positioning of Ethiopia. In recurrent fashion, the locality of Ethiopia was the other possible reason for its independence from Byzantine and Persian invasion (cf. Bowersock 2013). Ethiopia was not even part of Roman Africa to begin with; therefore, to insert Ethiopia into the discussion regarding Ancient African Christianity can be misplaced in certain respects.

It is however notable that irrespective of the aforementioned valid facts, Ethiopian Christianity and the Ethiopian imperial establishment are central to a wholistic discussion of Early African Christianity. The interaction of Ethiopia with Alexandria made it by extension part of the Roman–Byzantine Christian jurisdiction. The Christian alliances forged in establishing Ethiopian client Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula while neutralising the Persian presence correspond to this argument (cf. Bowersock 2013).

Thereby having established the relevance of Ethiopia as composite to the generic African Christian narrative, its capacity to withstand the definitive events that saw African Christianity's decline becomes paramount. The liberative aspect of Ethiopianism, although primarily a derivate of the victory of the Ethiopians against the Italians at the battle of Adwa (Augustyn 2017), is the result of the formative religious and political history of Ethiopia. The battle if deduced as a culmination of an expression of the Ethiopian nationalistic spirit which should be comprehended as a consummation to a preceding trajectory of the definitive religious–political enculturation of Ethiopian Christianity.

In cognisance of the Islamic era in Africa, however, there were definitive events in Ethiopian history because of interaction with Islamic conquests. These perceivably should be deduced with regard to their instrumentality in the consequent events they incited.

Islam and Jesuit Catholicism: Ethiopian Medieval terrain

The Axumite *Negus* fell with time (cf. Phillipson 2012); however, the Ethiopian dynasties continued in a series of successions. Despite the internal political turbulence of Ethiopia, it was rather the external dynamics that posed an identity threat. The military endeavours of the Islamic Ottoman empire and Catholic Jesuit missionary ambition defined the medieval history of Ethiopia (cf. Friedlander & Friedlander 2015).

Relationally, these two geopolitical influences had a correspondent effect which induced circular entrenchment of either phenomenon while gripping Ethiopia in-between. The Jesuit missions were partially boosted by the weakened religious political establishment of Ethiopia consequent of Islamic attacks, whereas in the name of Christian alliance to curb Islamic attacks Ethiopia had to open up for increased foreign intervention by the Portuguese (cf. Boavida et al. 2011).

Between 1546 and 1554, as per the tripartite alliance of the Pope, Portuguese Monarch John III and Ignatius Loyola, the Portuguese Ethiopian embassy was to be the entrance point for Catholic Jesuit missionaries under the guise of diplomacy (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:51). The purpose was to establish schools, hospitals and social amenities, with the ultimate end of Catholic enculturation of the nation of Ethiopia. The mission source would be Goa in India (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:52). Notable among the Jesuit mission objectives were to enculturate Catholicism, endeavour to supplant the Judaic customs and traditions and Romanise the Christianity of Ethiopia. Ultimately, they intended to convert the monarchy to Catholicism and then correspondingly the whole nation (cf. Boavida et al. 2011).

The Jesuit mission would meet an impregnable wall of entrenched Judaic-Christian tradition that had been enculturated into the local culture. Gonzalo Rodrigues, who was part of the 1555 envoy, attributed the Hebraic tendencies to the Semitic Falasha (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:52). Compositely the fact that Ethiopian Christianity had enculturated and politically defined Ethiopia entailed that even conversion of the *Negus* was tentatively an impossibility. As established, perhaps the only formidable catalyst for continued Jesuit presence in Ethiopia was the military alliance.

The Islamic–Jesuit synthesis of influence

The Catholic church perceivably failed to deduce the narrative of Ethiopian diplomacy, and the Byzantine–Ethiopian connection showed mutuality and a certain level of sovereignty. The preceding factors transcended politics affecting religion as well. Therefore, the Jesuits by attacking local tradition would be perceived as threats of socio-religious subjugation. The desired Portuguese military assistance was the inducement for endured Jesuit operations in Ethiopia.

The Shawan Ethiopian state, a descendent of the Axumite, Lalibala states, succumbed to the disadvantages of inaccessibility to coastal trade routes as an inland country. Muslims such as Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim from Harar could easily access the coast, and thereby import rifles and cannons (Pankhurst 2007:xxi). Ahmad, also called *Gran* [the left handed], launched a series of attacks and raids that threatened the whole of the Shawan state in 1527. Lebna Dengel, the Ethiopian monarch, became a refugee in his own country (Pankhurst 2007:xxi).

The Islamic threat was definitive; *Gran* would enslave locals, eradicate churches and literature, and also destroy the cultural, religious and historical heritage of Ethiopia (Pankhurst 2007:xxii). This threatened Ethiopian identity and the Empire as it was known. This implied the necessity of foreign Christian military aid, whereas the 5th and 6th centuries had witnessed alliances that expanded Ethiopian influence; this was for the very existence of the nation. Empress Eleni had dispatched a distress call to Christian

Portugal; the response was a Portuguese military launch from Massawa advancing inwards (cf. Pankhurst 2007:xxii). In 1543, Imam Ahmad fell and died in combat; this decidedly returned the highlands to Christianity, leaving the lowlands to Islamic control. The war also incited the import of arms by Ethiopians (Pankhurst 2007:xxii).

Sarsa Dengel (1563–1597) maintained Ethiopian–Portuguese diplomatic ties even entertaining the Jesuits, given his reign was characterised by attacks on Islam; he requested Portuguese assistance in the form of arms manufacture (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:52). Considerably, the formidable Jesuit mission was that of Pedro Paez. Partially his success stemmed perhaps from his appreciation of the history and culture of Ethiopia, such as his notable study of Amharic and Ge'ez and then his interest in the architecture of Ethiopian Churches (cf. Caraman 1985:np).

The approach of Paez differed from that of his predecessors, such as Oviedo, and even successors, such as Mendez. It appears that Paez noted the pride of the people in the ancient religion. His record is one of influence with the Ethiopian monarchs. The attempt by emperors, however, to convert them to Catholicism and confess submission to the Papacy would always hit a brick wall courtesy of the monks of Ethiopia (cf. Boavida et al. 2011; cf. Hassen 2015). The influence of monasticism was a key catalyst to preserving the Christian traditions of Ethiopia. Aggregately retrospective of his mission, Paez had enculturated Catholicism among certain nobility and influenced architecture and art in the minimum. It was the successor of Paez, Alfonso Mendez, who would end the Jesuit endeavour in Ethiopia.

After Paez's death from malaria in May 1622, Alfonso Mendez, an appointee of Philip IV of Spain, was sent to Ethiopia (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:58). Given the headway made by Paez in the Catholic conversion of Susenyos, correspondingly Mendez urged for the reordination of clerics, the rebaptism of the laity and a stop to all festival tradition and circumcision (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:58). This disastrously incited civil war, leading to the death of 8000 Ethiopians and ultimately Susenyos abdicating the throne in 1632 (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:58). Fasilidas, Susenyos' son and successor, cut off diplomacy with the Jesuits, hence ending the romance between Ethiopian nobility and the Jesuits.

The narrative regarding Ethiopia and the Jesuit endeavour reaffirms the significance of the enculturation of religion among a local populous. The capacity of the monks and clergy to incite the people into resistance over the imposition of a faith perceived to be dilutive to their traditional Christianity is evidence of this. The narrative implies that enforcement of Catholicism was taken to be just as antagonistic as the Islamic eradication of Churches and literature. The strength of the resistance by Ethiopian Christianity perceivably drew from its capacity to resonate with the native population. The sentiment of Holy war was apparent.

The perception of a holy struggle by the natives when the national sociocultural and religious matrix was threatened further establishes Ethiopia as a theocracy. The narrative resonates with that of Judaism and the correspondent derivate of Zionism. There appears to be a multifaceted relationship between the two concepts of Ethiopianism and Zionism. This is premised on arguably grounded parallels in the Judaic Christian nation of Ethiopia and Israel (cf. Phillipson 2012). The investigation reviewed Ethiopian apocalypticism in relation to second temple Judaism and the messianic fever.

Ethiopianism a derivate of Zionism

The ability of Ethiopian Christianity to emerge from these perceivably definitive catalysts in retainment of its organic indigenous version that had predated these dynamics remains as the focal point of the investigation. Dually derivate parallelisms from Israelite historical-religious-political ideology – the philosophy behind Zionism – are considered. Zionism is established by some to be correlated to Judaism though semi-detachably (Jacob Klatzkin c1948). The dichotomy between Judaism and Zionism is ascribed to the definition of Zionism as a political and secular philosophy rather than a religious one (Novak 2015:50).

The significance of Judaism to Zionism, however, is also substantiated with regard to its nationalistic sentiment. Additionally, the celebration of the Jewish nation as a theocracy has implications on a symbiosis of governance and religion. The preceding deductions are composite features of the narrative of Ethiopian Christianity from which stems Ethiopianism as an ideology. Therefore, the research is an allusion to those features that insulated Ethiopian Christianity, as it were, from its adverse dynamics.

Ethiopian apocalypticism affinity to Judaism

The art depictions on Ethiopian Churches show an inclination towards an apocalyptic depiction of their Christianity. The allusions to visions of the Revelation, the judgement and recurrent depictions of seraphim are constant in Ethiopian church art (cf. Friedlander & Friedlander 2015). Notably the mystification of historical events that are merged with the hagiography implies an apocalyptic impressionism with persistent allusion to battle scenery. The idolisation of certain saints and kings as warriors being in tangent with the apocalypse of Revelation and early Christian apocalyptic literature perceivably reflects the religious political ideology of Ethiopia.

The depictions of St George of Lydda show him mounted on a white horse with a spear in hand (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:28). Similar scenes in Christian literature are associated with the triumph of Christianity and the Divine judgement (Rev 19:10, 6:1; cf. Stefanovic 2002). How the pictorial depictions came to be integrated into a religious political agenda is evidenced by historical narratives that are retold as legend. For example, Fasilidas, the descendant of Susneyos,

is celebrated as a saint for his actions in reinstituting the authority of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Retrospectively, this was accomplished by demeaning Jesuit influence and ultimately banishing them. He is pictorially depicted as mounted on horseback with a spear in hand; this inspires a narrative of a holy battle in defence of the traditional faith of Ethiopia (cf. Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:29).

Saint George, who is mostly depicted as mounted on a white horse with a spear in hand, also is shown slaying the dragon so as to rescue the princess Birutawit. This saint appears to be associated with military conquests. The situation regarding arms in the medieval 1500s CE when the Islamic offensive was equipped by the Ottoman supply of muskets and cannons through coastal trade is revised; in the painting next to Saint George, Ethiopian troops are shown with their traditional armour and above their heads are partial sections of rifles. This painting possibly depicts the late use of rifles in Gondar (Friedlander & Friedlander 2015:113). Aggregately, the traditions of Ethiopia were mythicised as legend, consequently forming part of the nationalistic ideology.

When considered in view of the role of monasticism in Early African Christianity especially given the former Athanasian influence on Ethiopia, the observation regarding the myth and legend of holy battles gains significance. Given the capacity of monasticism to influence the masses and interestingly how the Ethiopian Church and imperial establishment found a way to balance the hierarchy of Christianity and its holiness – that is, the harmony forged between the Abunas and the monks of Ethiopia – the reference to apocalyptic art became more than an ecclesiastical theological statement. The art of Ethiopia becomes an index of its religious political philosophy. The establishment regarding the significance of Ethiopian apocalyptic depictions can be rightly appreciated in the perspective of Ethiopian wars. Deductively, reference can be made regarding how Ethiopian kings would derive inspiration from the Christian faith, possibly combining it with myth and legend derived from the empire's or nation's glorious past.

This apocalyptic impressionism is deductively the soul of Ethiopianism. In cognisance of the record of Ethiopian alliances and victories, this arguably augurs well. Retrospectively, this connects the Ethiopianist ideology with Zionism and, by extension, Rastafarianism.

Zionism as explored when defined religiously is a modern conceptualisation of Judaic nationalism. While the discussion on Zionism is one usually done while placing Judaism in the abstract, the research has already referred to its attempt to reconcile Zionism with its Judaic heritage (cf. Novak 2015:48). In other words, the research reviews the corpus from which the concept emerged. In this particular case, the common factor between the two explored religions – Ethiopian Christianity and Judaism (Second Temple) – is the reference to apocalyptic imagery. Judaism of the Second Temple was characterised by sectarianism and a common national cause (cf. Klawans 2012; Meissner 2000:67). The endeavour to

galvanise the Jewish nation in pursuit of a national agenda was a common feature among the sects it would appear (*Ant Jud* 17.2.4–3.1; O'Bannon 2016:911–913). The use of apocalyptic ideology by respective sects was distinctive such as the manner the Essenes looked forward to a righteous teacher (*Wars of the Jews* 2.8.12; O'Bannon 2016:1217). The Zealots and Pharisees may not completely have been in agreement with the Essene's exclusive pursuit of a free Jewish nation; however, aggregately the desire for a return to the sovereign Davidic days was a nexus point (Grabbe 2007:119; Josephus *Ant Jud* 18.1.6; O'Bannon 2016:959).

The messianic fever became a convolution of eschatological expectation and cognisance of retrospective sovereignty, as the Jewish nation looked to the end when the glory days would be restored (cf. Chalcraft 2007:56). The use of the apocalyptic scriptures became increasingly political rather than spiritual, a viable Christian argument being the denial of Jesus (Jn 1:11). The denial was possibly premised on what was perceived to be Jesus' abstract spirituality in the reality of Roman oppression. The secular conceptualisation of the messiah was a transcendent belief it would appear since the inception of the Second Temple era. Aggregately, the use of apocalyptic impressionism as an agent of political and religious definition in Ethiopianism and Zionism is notable. This further implies the link between the two concepts. Additionally, Rastafarianism, a derivate religion from Ethiopianism, is characterised by the emphatic use of apocalyptic imagery. Ontologically, Rastafarianism is indistinguishable from being a religion, political movement or otherwise. Arguably, this is consequently because it came as an outgrowth of an intricate socio-political and religious matrix (cf. Kalu 2006:582). The link between Ethiopianism with the Battle of Adwa and Black consciousness can be explored explicitly.

The Battle of Adwa: The iconic stand of African sovereignty

The definitive nature of the Battle of Adwa is the momentum from which Ethiopianism is derived. The Battle of Adwa holds continental significance as an interruption of the continuum of the European colonialisation of Africa in the 19th century CE. As a decisive end to the Italian–Ethiopian conquest, the battle made a lasting impression. As observed by Jonas, the Battle of Adwa was a forecast of the impending trend upon the African continent that would reverse the superiority of European domination (Jonas 2011:1). In a definitive character, the victory over Italy came at the resourceful military and diplomatic policy of the provincial monarch Menelik II. Notably the emperor emphasised his claim to the Judaic-Solomonic descendance; this implied a solid hold upon the religious–political–cultural matrix of Ethiopia, as it connected the king to the glorified history of the nation. In addition, he (Menelik II) had consolidated the form of an empire within his royal claims (Prouty 1986). Deductively by defeating his Islamic rivals and maintaining the Christian identity of the Ethiopian religio-polity, he resonated with other powers in Europe (Zewde 1998:302).

There were certain elements relating to the battle and its aftermath that played out as ideological; these include the unusual turn of events in the battle such as the racial caste of white versus black. In addition, the white Italians were defeated by black Ethiopians. There were a substantial number of Italian prisoners under native Ethiopian captivity, another unusual reality for this era. There is an indistinguishable attachment between the legendary aspects and the reality of the battle narrative; however, the impression is that of a magnificent show of African military force and intelligent strategy (Dunn 2005:125–127). As noted by Jonas, the Battle of Adwa redefined racial perceptions in the early 19th century CE and notably before substantial racial dynamics that characterised the century (Jonas 2011:5). The victory by Ethiopia was decoded as relevant in the momentum of liberty that characterised the Atlanta Constitution (*Atlanta Constitution* 1896). This continuum was expressed in the sentiments of Booker T. Washington, Ida Wells and Du Bois W.E.B. who iconised a mythical Zionic Ethiopia, an emblem of belonging and definition to black people. By extension Rastafarianism, African Nationalism among other dynamics can be deduced as a derivate from this continuum.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey: Ethiopia within Black consciousness

Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) was deduced as a prophet of black liberation in the early 20th century (Garvey 1974:1:121). In his attack on racial disparities, he championed for a systematic repatriation of black people to the continent of Africa (Tafari 2000:11). In his philosophy, he identified Africans as a parallel of biblical Israel in pursuit of a promised land. Therefore, he challenged all peoples of black ethnicity to a universal black consciousness that was to be characterised by decolonialisation (Bennet & Sherlock 1998:301). Garvey's ideology condemned all segregation rather urging an equal brotherhood among all mankind; for Garvey God could not be confined to a race, that is, he had no colour and he was for all (Garvey 1974:1:24, 44). He explicitly insisted that black peoples were to worship God 'through the spectacles of Ethiopia' (Garvey 1974:1:24, 44). Therefore, Ethiopia, according to Garvey, was a model for the ideal Africanness. Through Ethiopia black peoples are motivated to escape an exclusive complex that relegates them to being imitators and spectators but rather participants in the global arena. The preceding observation is a euphemism for Ethiopianism. Garveyism's explicit allusion to Ethiopia as an African icon for religious and political autonomy entrenches the ideas explored within the research regarding the formative elements that defined Ethiopian history.

Conclusion

Given the considered facts in Ethiopian history, the stand at the Battle of Adwa and its iconic personification of African sovereignty becomes derivate. The Battle of Adwa, a significant interpreted event through which the concept of Ethiopianism in conceived, is to be comprehended as a culmination to a formative process that defined the narrative of Ethiopia's Christian political establishment. The background of Ethiopian Christianity is riddled with intransigent movements that had an appeal to the natives such as the Donatists. In addition, the history of Ethiopia had substantial links with the influential world of the orient as evident in the diplomatic engagements with Israel that were consequent of the visit of the Ethiopian Queen to Solomon. The chronological disparity between the re-emergence of Judaic-affiliated Christianity in the 300s CE and the BCE phenomenon of Ethiopian–Judaic links appears insufficient to demean the notable influence of Judaic elements on Ethiopia. The issue of political religious definition is intertwined within the narrative of Ethiopian Christianity. Composite to that the manner in which the traditional religion had been enculturated among the natives rendered exotic missions an arduous task. The Constantinian top-down approach of Christianising the nobility/aristocracy with the end effect of the masses was ineffective (cf. Salzman 2002). In the end, the Jesuits managed to syncretise and influence institutions of government but not supplant the Ethiopian faith. Most notably, Ethiopia stands out in its respective geopolitical region as insulant against the definitive Arabian-Islamic threat. While Christianity in ancient North Africa recorded a dark era during the rise of Islam, Ethiopia has an alternative story. The later Islamic raids and incursions only re-invoked the Ethiopian diplomatic strategy making alliances with the Christian Portuguese. Ethiopianism derives from Zionism dually firstly because of the theocratic nature of Ethiopian *Negus*(es) and then the apocalypticism. The glorious past of Aksumite *Negus*(es) would metamorphosise into inspirational legend to never accept religious or political subjugation, thereby corroborating the build-up to the concept of Ethiopianism.

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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