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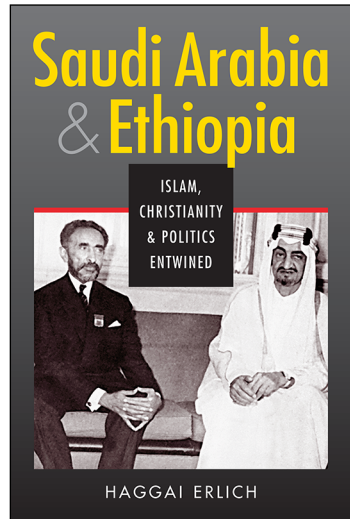
Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia:
Islam, Christianity,
and Politics Entwined

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1

Politics and Religious Legacies: An Interplay

ETHIOPIA, ONCE A “CHRISTIAN ISLAND” IN AFRICA, IS UNDERGOING a fundamental revolution, perhaps the deepest in its history. Today’s Ethiopia, recuperating from an old siege mentality that deepened during the dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974–1991), is no longer an isolated culture “encompassed on all sides by the enemies of [its] religion.”¹ Instead, it is opening up to its own ethnic and religious diversity and intensively reconnecting to the neighboring Middle East. Islam and Muslims are rapidly entering the core of Ethiopian life across all conceivable dimensions—social, economic, and cultural. It is clear that Ethiopia is being redefined before our eyes, that Christianity is no longer comprehensively hegemonic as it was in the past sixteen centuries, that Islam is no longer the religion of the marginal and the deprived, and that the very cultural identity of the country is being modified in a most meaningful way.

But in what way, and in which direction? Does this Islamic momentum herald the pluralization of society, the diversification of culture, and the revival of an economy based on trade, commerce, technology, and international dynamism—namely, momentum that enriches the Ethiopian fabric? Or, does the rise of Islam herald a religious conflict, a struggle for political hegemony, a new round in the age-old cycle of Islamic-Christian collision?

The revolution inherent in Ethiopia’s redefinition is too young to be assessed. One can derive comfort from the country’s long tradition of relative religious tolerance. Over the centuries, the Ethiopian common denominator has often proved stronger than her religious differences. Ethnic, linguistic, and regional identities often turned out to be more

vibrant factors in internal politics than religious ones. Were the Ethiopians left on their own, one could expect a process of constructive transformation. However, as this process is taking place in close combination with Ethiopia's rapid integration into the economic, cultural, and strategic circles of the Middle East, much depends on external influences. Indeed, a major, determinant question is the nature of Middle Eastern involvement in the current Ethiopian process. What factors are involved, and how are Ethiopia and her future conceived by others in the region?

Islamic Middle Eastern states and Christian Ethiopia share a long and intensive history. The story of the Prophet Muhammad sending his first group of followers, still persecuted by Mecca's polytheistic leadership, to seek asylum with the neighboring Christian *najashi* (a negus, or king) of Ethiopia, molded Islam's concept of the Ethiopian "other." Islamic interpretations of Muhammad's relations with his contemporary *najashi* are still centrally relevant to the subject of this book.

The story—as narrated by Muslim historians of the period—has two main parts. The first begins in A.D. 615 with the Prophet telling his early followers—the *sahaba*—of a just king in Ethiopia "who oppresses no one" and instructing them to flee to Aksum. There, in the court of Najashi Ashama, they found shelter, and the *najashi* protected them from a Meccan mission seeking their extradition. The Christian *najashi* thus not only saved the whole Islamic community of the time, but went on to protect the *sahaba* in his kingdom and to help the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca.

The second part of the story begins later, in A.D. 628. In that year, Muhammad, already well established in al-Madina, initiated Islam's first international diplomatic effort. He sent letters to eight rulers, including the kings of Persia and Constantinople and the rulers of Egypt, Syria, and some Arab Peninsula entities, calling on them to adopt Islam. He also sent a similar letter to his friend the *najashi*. According to all Islamic sources (there is no trace of the story in Ethiopian sources), only the Ethiopian king responded positively. He replied that he appreciated Muhammad's mission and accepted Islam. Two years later, when Muhammad heard of the *najashi*'s death, he prayed for him as one would for a departed Muslim.

For the Islamic world, the Prophet-*najashi* story carried a double message. In the years to come, mainstream orthodoxy tended to emphasize the first part, that of Ethiopian generosity and the righteousness of the Christian *najashi*. The legacy of this part was that Ethiopia, in spite of its Christianity, deserved gratitude and was therefore legitimate. This

interpretation was eternalized in the famous saying attributed to the Prophet: “Leave the Ethiopians alone as long as they leave you alone.” For many Islamic jurists, Christian Ethiopia was a unique case, a “land of neutrality” (*dar al-hiyad*), exempt from jihad. Muslims in the Middle East should not interfere in Ethiopian affairs, on condition, naturally, that the Ethiopians did not mistreat Muslims. Moreover, Muslims in Ethiopia should live in peace under the Christian government. This early Ethiopian model, of Muslims accepting a non-Islamic regime as prescribed by the Prophet himself, still serves moderate Muslims the world over. The figure of the dark-skinned *najashi* later embracing Islam served the moderates mainly as an example of Islam’s supraracial universality.

The second part of the story, however, carried a totally different message for more radical Muslims. As interpreted over the centuries by Middle Eastern advocates of anti-Ethiopian militancy, *Islam al-najashi* meant that Ethiopia was already an integral part of the “land of Islam” (*dar al-Islam*). The Muslim *najashi*, they contended, betrayed by his generals and priests, died in isolation. Ethiopia, therefore, represented Islam’s first failure, and her Christian history was traitorous and illegitimate. Christian Ethiopia prevented Islam from spreading into Africa and continued to oppress its own Muslims. In the eyes of Islamic radicals, Ethiopia should be redeemed by again installing a Muslim ruler. Over the centuries, the slogan *Islam al-najash*—the contention that Ethiopia’s king had been a Muslim and that the country should therefore be ruled by a Muslim—served those in the Middle East who sought to undermine Ethiopia’s Christian system, and encouraged Muslims in the Horn of Africa to take over its political leadership.²

In my earlier studies on relations between Middle Eastern Muslims and Ethiopia, I made extensive use of the dichotomy between the concept of “leave the Ethiopians alone” and that of *Islam al-najashi*. This dichotomy was often the principal theme of internal Islamic discussions whenever Ethiopia was on the agenda. The Sudanese Mahdi (d. 1885), for example, initially pursued a flexible policy regarding Ethiopia and preached the “leave the Ethiopians alone” concept. He, and his successor, the *khalifa*, later changed their line and declared a holy war on Emperor Yohannes IV (1872–1889), calling on him to follow the *Islam al-najashi* precedent and to convert.³ When Ethiopia was threatened by Benito Mussolini in 1935, this dichotomy polarized public opinion across the Arab world. Those who identified with Ethiopia’s struggle recycled the Prophet’s legacy about gratitude and acceptance. Those siding with the Fascists hoped that Mussolini would finally reinstall a Muslim *najashi*.⁴

In a previous book, *The Cross and the River*, I followed the internal Egyptian-Islamic discussion of Ethiopia from the time of the Mamluks (1250–1517) to the presidency of Husni Mubarak (1981–). Here too, the principal abstract argument underlying the strategic dilemmas revolved around these polarized interpretations of the initial Muhammad–*al-najashi* story. There is no doubt that Egypt has been the most relevant Islamic entity in Ethiopian history. It played a major role in shaping both Ethiopia’s Christianity and its Islam, and it remained centrally influential in practically all related developments in Ethiopia. In general, however, most Egyptian leaders tended to follow a rather pragmatic, flexible Ethiopian policy. Dependent on the Nile, ever anxious that Ethiopia might interfere with its flow, Egyptians often pursued the “leave the Ethiopians alone” policy. The *Islam al-najashi* concept was always ready—kept alive and revitalized by their own radicals—to be addressed and used in time of confrontation and peril.⁵ However, over the past decade or two, Egypt lost its centrality in Ethiopian affairs. For reasons beyond the scope of this book, officials in Cairo preferred to keep a low profile in Ethiopia. The leadership of external Islamic involvement in Ethiopian affairs passed in the 1990s to the Saudis, who indeed, by the turn of the century, managed to practically monopolize the issue.

Saudi money is behind much of the current Islamic revival in Ethiopia, the construction of hundreds of new mosques and quranic schools, the establishment of welfare associations and orphanages, the spread of the Arabic language and translated literature, the expansion of the hajj, the organization of conferences of preachers, the monthly subsidies for the newly converted, the spread of the contention that Muslims are already an overwhelming majority in the country, and more. A good part of the Saudi effort focuses on the Oromo people and southern areas, where Islam, revolving mainly around the walled city of Harar, historically enjoyed long periods of political independence, but there is also a clear endeavor to influence people in the Christian core. There is a marked effort to promote education and to spread the notion that the Saudi aim is actually to advance general openness and assure democratic progress.

Saudi books, the press, and various other publications also disseminate pieces describing the ideology behind this effort. One central argument is that Christianity, revitalized throughout Africa by the same imperialist West that had subjugated the continent in the past, is again threatening to marginalize Islam and that the struggle for Islam in Ethiopia is crucial to its defense throughout the continent. A recurrent

theme is that Islam is by nature tolerant, so its revival would benefit Ethiopian democracy. The spread in Ethiopia of Wahhabism—the Islamic radical doctrine of the Saudi state—is inconsistent with such openness and indeed is not always overtly encouraged by the Saudis.

Various Saudi nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) help in this effort, most of them under the umbrella of the Muslim World League (*Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami*). Founded in 1962 “to disseminate Islamic *da'wa* [the call to join Islam] and expound the teaching of Islam,” it is administered by the religious establishment but supported, financed, and controlled by the Saudi government. Though still part of the system, since the early 1990s the Muslim World League has led Saudi Arabia’s more fundamentalist wing. By challenging the royal Saudi regime to implement Islamic morality and law more rigidly, it is said to have facilitated, at least indirectly, the cause of global Islamic militancy and its networks.⁶

What do the Saudis think about Ethiopia’s religious worlds? Do they seek the revival of Islam as one dimension of Ethiopian openness, or do they seek its victory? What is Wahhabism’s main concept of historical Ethiopia? How was the old, neighboring Christian kingdom perceived by the spiritual founders of the Saudi state? Was it “a land of righteousness,” legitimate and worthy of acceptance in spite of its religious difference? Or was Ethiopia a painful reminder for them of Islam’s first defeat (the demise of the Muslim *najashi*), which can only be redeemed by Islamization? Or, did the Saudis vacillate, coping with a dynamic mixture of these dichotomous approaches, shifting their conceptual emphasis in accordance with historical change, as indeed was the case with most other Islamic communities vis-à-vis Ethiopia? What is behind Saudi “exported” Al-Qaida radicalism in the 1990s and its impact on the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia? Is Al Qaida’s terrorism and assistance to local subversive organizations another dimension of Wahhabism? Is there still a voice of Saudi moderation and of acceptance of the Ethiopian “other?” Addressing these crucial questions of the Wahhabis’ attitudes and policies, our analysis will follow Saudi strategic and religious complexities over the past seven decades.

It will also follow the Ethiopian role in these dialectical relations. Christian Ethiopia—meaning the core culture and the hegemonic elite groups—also developed its own perceptions of the Islamic, Middle Eastern “other.” The Christians’ concepts were equally dichotomous and similarly shifting. They, too, were shaped during formative processes and events. During the very early medieval emergence of Ethiopia’s Christian culture, there arose a vital urge to retain a constant connection

with the lands of the Middle East. However, there was also the ingrained fear, which in the early sixteenth century became a resilient trauma, that opening up to the Middle East would result in Islamic momentum in the Horn of Africa and the destruction of the Christian state. I shall elaborate below on these polarized attitudes and especially address how they influenced the complex relations with the Wahhabis. Both Ethiopian Christianity and Saudi Wahhabism, though connected to universal religions, did, and still do, manifest local identities and cultures and are integrally related to concrete political systems. The relations between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia, therefore, can not be understood without following their religious premises and transformation. Equally, following interstate political relations is an essential background to understanding today's religious redefinition of Ethiopia on one hand, and to appreciating today's transformations, and indeed, the new global impact of multi-dimensional Wahhabism on the other hand.

A third pillar of the history analyzed in this volume is that of the Muslims of Ethiopia itself. Caught between their position within the "Christian empire" and the influences, messages, and involvement of their Middle Eastern co-religionists, they have also developed their own perceptions and concepts. We shall address several dimensions of their modern history as it flowed toward current dilemmas. Are the Muslims of today's Ethiopia ready to follow the initial Islamic message of accepting their state—provided it is "righteous"? Or will they follow the *Islam al-najashi* concept and strive for a political Islamic victory in Ethiopia?

Internal Islamic-Ethiopian dynamism is perhaps the most important single issue on the country's contemporary agenda and has an impact on the more comprehensive Islamic-Christian and Arab-African dialogues. Interestingly, it has acquired an even broader significance. One of the most interesting intellectual struggles splitting today's greater Islamic world is an argument over the very essence of Islam between Wahhabi activists and a group called "the Ethiopians" (*Al-Ahbash*), on the other. The latter, centered in Beirut, has branches all over the world and preaches peaceful Islamic-Christian coexistence in the Middle East, Europe, America, and elsewhere. Their Wahhabi rivals accuse them—in a comprehensive war of Internet exchanges, pamphlets, books, sermons, and *fatwas*—of distorting the true nature of Islam. Both camps are led by old shaikhs from the Ethiopian Islamic capital of Harar. One dimension of our story will follow the rivalry between Shaikh 'Abdallah ibn Yusuf al-Harari (now in Lebanon) and Hajj Yusuf 'Abd al-Rahman (now in Saudi Arabia) as it developed throughout seven decades of the Saudi-Ethiopian story. Indeed, the history of the relations between Ethiopia,

the last Christian state, and the fundamentalist Islamic kingdom of Saudi Arabia reflects issues that trouble not only Ethiopia, but also the entire globe.

Ethiopia, we saw, was the first, early medieval meeting ground between Christianity and Islam. As Christian-Islamic relations have become a pivotal issue, often portrayed as a global “clash of civilizations,”⁷ our Saudi-Ethiopian story may contribute a new perspective. It offers a glance at the heritage of the longest Christian-Islamic dialogue and the way it developed outside Western-Eastern relations. Ethiopia’s Christianity emerged from fourth-century Eastern Christianity and remained the state religion from A.D. 334 to 1974. Saudi Arabia developed from the eighteenth-century adoption, by a ruling family, of a rigid quranic-centered doctrine. Both states, cultures, and societies have remained strongly history-oriented, and their modern relations continue to be influenced by their respective, formative, Christian and Islamic concepts.

Our analysis will revolve around the dialectical interplay between formative religious legacies and concrete issues of international politics. Muslims and Christians across the Red Sea, like members of all human groups, continue to resort to their own reservoir of common historical memory, concepts, symbols, and images when they form attitudes and policies. We shall follow Saudi-Ethiopian relations as they unfolded from 1930 to 2005 and will reconstruct the inner debates they energized. We shall discuss the relevant literature, newspaper articles, speeches, school textbooks, official declarations, and—more recently—Internet debates, as we attempt to understand the mutual conceptualizations of the “other” and their evolution, transmission, and reinterpretations.

The bottom line of our study is that in this interplay of politics and religious legacies everything is possible and all is changeable. Even the more past-oriented, conservative reservoir of concepts is diverse enough to be interpreted and reinterpreted. Our Islamic-Ethiopian case is a good example, because the early, formative events from the *najashi*-Muhammad episode offered distinctively dichotomous legacies. History shapers on both sides, we shall see, were therefore both captives and masters of history: they were driven by legacies of the past, yet were able to choose according to interests and legitimize whatever policy they adopted.

Among criticisms of the “clash of civilizations,” there is the contention that the main confrontation today is not Christian-Islamic, but Islamic-Islamic. It is believed that the worldwide, internal debates and conflicts over the interpretation of Islam, not its conflict with Western,

Christian civilization, are the main cause of today's international instability.⁸ Our study supports this argument. The chapters below describe the gradual development of an inner-Islamic debate, beginning in the 1930s and developing into a polarized drama in the 1990s. We shall follow the dialogue between the Wahhabi doctrine and the Saudi state, from the Wahhabi-influenced pragmatism of Ibn Sa'ud in the 1930s, to the fundamentalization of the Saudi-Wahhabi combination in the 1970s and 1980s, through the radicalization and globalization of Wahhabism and its complex relations with today's Saudi state—all as reflected in Saudi Arabia's Ethiopian policy. Even more closely, we shall follow the development of Islam in Ethiopia during these years as influenced by Wahhabi-Saudi inputs. What began in the 1940s as sporadic tensions between imported Wahhabi concepts and Ethiopia's local, popular, Sufi, mildly orthodox Islam, by the 1990s became a struggle over the very nature of Islam in Ethiopia and the redefinition of the country. We shall discuss the dilemmas and options of Ethiopia's Muslims as they rebuild their identity amid an ongoing dialogue with the dichotomous legacies of Islamic-Ethiopian history.

Our narrative will follow Ethiopian periodization. Chapter 2 discusses the early 1930s and the simultaneous solidification of both Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia as religious states. Having expanded his rule to dominate the Arabian Peninsula, in 1932 'Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud gave the Wahhabi kingdom its present name. At the time, he was the strongest Arab Islamic sovereign, believed by many admirers in the Middle East to be a candidate for a caliph who would lead the entire Islamic nation. Haile Selassie was proclaimed emperor of Ethiopia in late 1930 and began to intensively deepen the ancient alliance in Ethiopia between the cross and the crown. This chapter will also examine Christian-Ethiopian concepts of Muslims in Ethiopia and in the Middle East as well as fundamental Wahhabi concepts of Ethiopia. In 1934, the Muslim king and the Christian emperor began to develop a neighborly dialogue.

Chapter 3 begins with the outbreak, in early 1935, of the Abyssinian Crisis—Mussolini's threat to conquer Ethiopia, and from our perspective, to do so for the sake of Islam and the Muslims. Facing total destruction and fearing a fifth column at home, Haile Selassie hastened to redefine the position of Muslims in Ethiopia. He sought Middle Eastern backing for this policy and sent diplomatic missions to a number of Arab countries. That year, the Fascist-Ethiopian confrontation turned into a major dilemma for Arab, Egyptian, and Islamic nationalists in the Middle East, which had far-reaching consequences for all involved. Aware of Ibn Sa'ud's position in the Islamic world, the

Ethiopians repeatedly asked for a symbolic treaty with Saudi Arabia, or at least some token of solidarity. They got only sweet words and declarations of complete neutrality. Behind those declarations, however, the Saudis, inspired by their fundamental, Wahhabi concepts of Ethiopia, followed the advice of the more militant anti-Ethiopian Islamic-Arab nationalists. In practice, they paternalistically dismissed the Ethiopians and sold vitally needed camels to Mussolini's invading army. The Saudis were thus among the few countries that helped the Fascists' campaign to destroy Ethiopia.

Chapter 4 discusses the Islamic dimension in Ethiopia's history between 1936 and 1948 and its connections with Arabia and Wahhabism. These were years when Ethiopian Islam seemed to be reasserting itself as a political entity. First, the Italian Fascist occupiers of the country (1936–1941), with their eyes on the Arabian Peninsula, worked to revive Islam throughout the region. Then, as of the end of World War II, the struggles over the former Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somalia further encouraged Islam as an anti-Ethiopian identity. Our discussion will mainly follow the story of Harar, the historic capital of Islam in the Horn of Africa. The Islamic community of Harar was split throughout the period. One wing, led by many who, with Italian help, had made pilgrimage to Mecca, tried to spread Wahhabism in Harar, and led to Harar's secession from Ethiopia. The other wing, more loyal to Harar's tradition of popular Islam, remained oriented toward Ethiopia and worked for Islamic-Christian collaboration. The Harari story of those years, replete with rivalries and plots, left enduring legacies that are still recycled today, involving competing "Ethiopian" and Wahhabi values.

Chapter 5 deals with the period from the end of World War II to the fall of the imperial regime in 1974. This period was, from our perspective, marked by the weakening of Islam as a political identity in both Ethiopia and the Middle East. In Ethiopia, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the culmination of Haile Selassie's power as a Christian king. Aspects of growing Christian hegemony and the further marginalization of Muslims in Ethiopia will be addressed, with Harar again a case in point. Muslims in Ethiopia who opposed centralizing imperial politics and culture did so mainly in the name of modern Arab revolutionism rather than in the name of Islam. An Arab-Eritrean nationalist movement became a major issue for Ethiopia. It oriented itself toward the pan-Arab revolutionaries of the Middle East: the Nasserites, the Ba'athists, and others, forces that, at the time, also threatened the Islamic kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The chapter will discuss these international complexities and also

the aspects of the traditional-royal solidarity that developed between the emperor of Ethiopia and the Saudi royal house. However, when this solidarity was put to the test, the Islamic-Christian dichotomy won out. The chapter will discuss how the Saudis viewed Haile Selassie's Ethiopia and conclude with their indirect contribution to his downfall.

Chapter 6 analyzes the period of Mengistu's dictatorship, 1974–1991, which was marked by mutual Saudi-Ethiopian enmity and demonization. Mengistu introduced Marxist terminology and declared religious equality, which in the beginning seemed favorable to Islam. In practice, however, he turned to oppressing both Christianity and Islam. His effort to uproot religiosity in Ethiopia proved disastrous and his communist methods only aggravated old problems, cultural isolationism, and internal conflicts. After the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1975, the Red Sea became, for a time, a focus of international tensions. These culminated with the Somali-Ethiopian Ogaden War (1977–1978) that led to a battle over Harar, which reactivated the old Christian and Islamic-Arab legacies. Various Arab regimes in the Middle East were portrayed as backward reactionaries in Ethiopia, the newly rich Saudis—who contributed significantly to the deterioration toward the Ogaden War—were depicted as the ultimate, feudal-capitalist, jihadi enemy. Ethiopia's image in the eyes of the Saudis fared no better. It was now the worst combination of Communists and black crusaders. In the 1980s, the strategic focus of the region shifted from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, and by the end of his reign, Mengistu was forced to tolerate both Christianity and Islam, even opening the doors of Ethiopia to Saudi influence.

Chapter 7 will analyze post-1991 Ethiopia and the nature of the current Saudi involvement. It will address the contemporary issues of Islam's resurgence in Ethiopia and discuss Saudi involvement in this multifaceted process. Against the background of the histories presented in this book, and the Saudis' own contemporary developments and splits, it will present various Saudi-Wahhabi inputs in promoting three Islamic options in Ethiopia: Ethiopian Islam, fundamentalist Islam, and militant anti-Ethiopian Islam. Following Saudi attitudes and policies toward the Ethiopian "other," it will provide a new perspective for understanding the current dilemmas of the Wahhabi kingdom. The chapter will also reexamine the old Ethiopian-Saudi and Christian-Islamic concepts of dialectical mutuality as they are reinterpreted today in Ethiopia. In recording some of the relevant Ethiopian voices, both Christian and Islamic, the chapter will present a new understanding of the nature and directions of Ethiopia's current redefinition.

The conclusion will briefly examine the global significance of our Saudi-Ethiopian, Christian-Islamic history. It will do so also by returning to the two Harari shaikhs, ‘Abdallah and Yusuf, whose rivalry, followed throughout these chapters, continues to reflect Islam’s main dilemmas. While the aging Shaikh Yusuf still persists in working from Saudi Arabia to promote the fundamentalization of Ethiopia’s Islam, Shaikh ‘Abdallah, the founder of *Al-Ahbash*, still works quite effectively from Beirut to spread Ethiopian-modeled flexible religiosity throughout the Islamic world. A third native of Harar has meanwhile appeared on the global scene to represent the third option, that of militant, terrorist Islam. In 1989, the young Muslim, Hamdi Isaac, left his native Harar for Europe, and in July 2005, was arrested in connection with a bombing attempt in the London Underground. The question of what Islam is in the eyes of its believers—the Ethiopian-Saudi aspects of which are discussed in this volume—will undoubtedly

Notes

1. Edward Gibbon’s famous sentence is the classical manifestation of Ethiopia’s image as a Christian island: “Encompassed on all sides by the enemies of their religion, the Æthiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by which they were forgotten. They were awakened by the Portuguese, who, turning the southern promontory of Africa, appeared in India and the Red Sea, as if they had descended through the air from a distant planet.” Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 5 (1788), pp. 78–79. (For a discussion of the Portuguese help against Islam, see Chapter 2 of this book.)

2. The passage above is based on my book, *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, especially Chapter 1, “Muhammad’s Message: ‘Leave the Abyssinians Alone,’” pp. 3–20. It should also be mentioned here that in the internal Islamic context, the figure of the Muslim *najashi*, the prophet’s Ethiopian friend, also served the call of those who stood for purifying Islam of racial tendencies and enhancing it as a supra-ethnic universal faith. For this aspect, see Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*. See a discussion of Lewis’s book in *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, pp. 12–14.

3. See Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, pp. 65–72: “Yohannes and the Mahdiyya: The Legacy of Radical Islam.”

4. See Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, Chapter 8: “The Arabs, Mussolini, and the Abyssinian Dilemma,” and Chapter 9: “Pan-Arabism, Arslan, and Conquered Ethiopia.”

5. Erlich, *The Cross and the River*. See mainly Chapter 2: “Christianity and Islam: The Formative Concepts,” pp. 15–33; also Chapter 9: “Egyptian Concepts of Ethiopia, 1959–1991,” pp. 145–182.

6. See, for example, “The Muslim World League” in <http://law.about.com/library/911/blmuslim.htm>.

7. See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington’s attempt to portray a global clash between Christian and Islamic civilizations has come under attack from various quarters. His short references to Ethiopia do indeed reflect overgeneralizations seemingly made to fit a sweeping theory. Recycling the concept of Ethiopia as a Christian island (which follows “Coptic Orthodoxy”) and is besieged by external Islamic factors (p. 136), he identifies Christianity with Amharas and Ethiopia’s Islamic minority with Oromos (p. 256). Moreover, he explains the Ethiopian-Eritrean struggle as one between Christians and Muslims (“On the Horn of Africa, largely Christian Ethiopia and overwhelmingly Muslim Eritrea separated from each other in 1993”), p. 137; see also p. 275.

8. See Sivan, “The Clash Within Islam,” pp. 24–25, and even more strongly, Sivan, *The Crash Within Islam*, mainly the Preface.