

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ORAL AND WRITTEN
TRADITIONS ABOUT MAKƏDDA AND
SOLOMON**

BY

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MAKØDDA AND SOLOMON**

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GIDENA MESFIN

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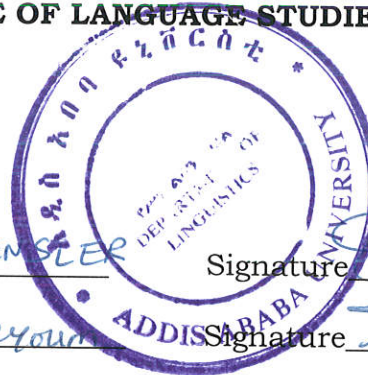
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ABBREVIATIONS

KN= Kəbrä Nəgäst

LL= Story as narrated by Lik'ä Lik'awənt Yared Kasa

EL= Enno Littmann's Account

F= Däbtära Fəssəha Gəyorgis 'Abəyā'əgzi"s account

G= Story as narrated by Gäbrämādhən 'Ayalew

A= 'Aəməro Täs fayä's account

E= 'əšätu's account

M= Story as narrated by the student Makədda

SYMBOLS

Consonants

‘ ɒ

’ ɣ

Vowels

First order (Gə‘əz) ä

Second order (Ka‘əb) u

Third order (Saləs) i

Fourth order (Rabə‘) a

Fifth order (haməs) e

Sixth order (Sadəs) ə

Seventh order (Sab‘) o

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopians, like other Africans, have a great treasure of oral traditions. These oral traditions reflect their views of life, their struggles for survival and their feelings about their history. As Courlander (1975:1) says: “The myths, legends, epics, tales, historical poems and countless other traditional oral literary forms of African peoples have been woven out of the substance of human experience.”

Ethiopia occupies a special place in the study of African historiography and tradition. This is evident in Brooks’ (2002: xix) comment:

Ethiopia is a unique phenomenon in Africa for, along with Egypt, it is one of the two African nations that can trace its history to antiquity; ... Ethiopia retained its original character, and has been able to preserve and to perfect an enduring culture born of the ancient encounter and the gradual fusion of two equally gifted peoples...

Ethiopians have both a long written history and a rich oral tradition. The long history of writing, which goes back to the 4th century AD when the writing developed the syllabic form it has today, has played a paramount role in the documentation of the country’s history and culture. The coexistence of written and oral history leads us to another facet of Ethiopian cultural history: traditions that exist in both written and oral versions. One such tradition is the tradition about Makødda (the Queen of Sheba) and Solomon.

The tradition about Makədda and Solomon is also of special importance in that it is also a tradition documented, in different ways, in the two main sacred scriptures: the holy Bible and the Quran.

After the Bible and the Quran, one of the earliest sources for this tradition is the Kəbrä Nəgäst (KN). This work contains the basic narrative with additional motifs included. The work is dated to the 14th century (the Ge'ez version). This work is considered a national 'saga' by the Ethiopians (Ullendorff 1963:487), with motifs which partly survive to the present day.

The Ge'ez version of the K.N has been translated into English at least twice. The famous translation is that by Wallis Budge; it includes an extended introduction on the material sources of the K.N, the possible dating of the Vorlages of the translation and some remarks on its national value. Brooks did a more recent translation in 1995. The second translation is an abridgement, as stated by the translator himself. It was done with the intention of glorifying the Emperor Hailä Səlasse, for the translation relates itself to Ras Täfarianism. The work has also been translated into other languages including Spanish, German, and French and Amharic, though the Amharic one (ironically) is the last to come to light.

Philology should not only be regarded as manuscript science; where possible, it is valuable to tie written traditions to oral traditions. Baye (2008:64) emphasizes this point: "In short, there should be an interface whereby Folklore and Philology complement each other, an arena that has to be charted." The present thesis is a study of such a type, incorporating both oral and written tradition.



The ideologies of people at a particular juncture in history and the written documents of that period are interrelated, for the scribes are part of that social milieu. The oral tradition, too, reflects an ideology, and not always the same ideology as the written tradition. This dual way of looking at the particular tradition thus paves way to understand manuscripts from a fresh angle. This angle can sometimes provide a new confirmation of an existing documented tradition. Examining the oral tradition enables the philologist to triangulate the ideas from a new perspective — not with mathematical accuracy, but to make the whole philological analysis less conjectural.

More recent studies of the tradition of Solomon and Makədda after the Kəbrä Nəgäst can be found in the works of Enno Littmann (1904 G.C), Edward Ullendorff (1963 G.C), Däbtära Fəssəha Gəyorgis 'Abəyā'əgzi' (1993[1899] G.C) and a recent undergraduate paper by 'A'əməro Täsfaye (1997 E.C). Scattered here and there are also works of citation from the Kəbrä Nəgäst. But, taking a holistic approach to the tradition and the Kəbrä Nəgäst there also exists a work by Bayä Fäläkä (1996 E.C). Bayä tries to question and analyze the sources of the KN, the chronological ambiguities within the KN, the discrepancies the Geez KN has with the Arabic version, the motives of the compilers of the Geez version, i.e. if it was genuinely perceived as a work of compilation, and related issues. Though Bayä's work could hardly be taken as scholarly in the usual sense, many of his inquiries furnish good insights into the KN.

Among the above-mentioned works that of Däbtära Fəssəha Gəyorgis 'Abəyā 'əgzi' is concerned purely with oral documentation. Enno Littmann tries to comment on the tradition as a whole with proper exegesis. As to the works of Ullendorff and 'A'əməro, their analysis tries to relate the Biblical account to the oral traditions in Ethiopia.

From the above bibliographical summary one can note that no work has focused on the developmental changes in the tradition. This is one thing I will attempt to do in this thesis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This thesis proposes to examine philologically the developmental changes through time in the Ethiopian tradition about Makædda and Solomon, both written and oral. Development in this regard refers to the various versions that the tradition has assumed over time. This multiplicity is a natural consequence of the volatile nature of oral traditions. Especial attention will be paid to the implications that can be inferred from this development. Thematic changes will be treated where possible; this is because oral traditions, though they may differ in other aspects of their narration, typically (though not always) exhibit a common thematic concern. In this regard, Courlander (1975:3) comments:

A village may reshape, to its own liking, a widespread tale. A narrator may embellish, recast and refine stories known elsewhere and give them the mark of his own creative genius, or compose new narratives out of the experience of day-to-day living. The process of creating literature goes on side by side with the process of preserving what is generalized and old.

The next form of change we are concerned with includes the minor changes one can get when comparing traditions. In our tradition about Solomon and Makædda these slight changes include proper nouns, i.e. names of people, place etc. These slight variations are given in one tradition and omitted in another, changed phonologically, or corrupted over time. Under this header come also deliberate changes which are parts of the story's twists. This can be traced in the names of Mønilik I

and his son by a maidservant of Makədda, according to some of the traditions.

Other types of changes, which will be treated in this thesis, are strong, deliberate changes that create a visible rift between parts of the tradition. This type of change concerns the overall unity of the story. Though the story as a whole has a coherent, single flow, there are versions of the story which either delete parts or treat the narrative as two distinct sections.

Another point of discussion is the issue of contrast: contrast among the written traditions, contrast among the oral traditions and finally, contrast between the oral and the written traditions. The contrasts will focus only on the basic elements of the story, for it is difficult to include each detail.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives.

A. General Objectives

- a. Documenting the Ethiopian traditions on Solomon and Makədda, both old and modern.
- b. Outlining the changes within the tradition

B. Specific Objectives

- a. Documenting the traditions about Makədda based on recently told narratives especially from Təgray.
- b. Citing differences among
 - The existing oral narratives
 - The existing written narratives
 - The existing oral and written narratives taken as a whole.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is believed to be important in the following regards.

1. It is worthwhile documenting a national epic that occupies a central position in the nation's history, and the study does this.
2. As the national tale is set in the prehistory of Ethiopia, it can cast light on some aspects of Aksumite history and its external relations.
3. The study bridges the gap between philology and oral tradition, thereby making a contribution to this emerging interdisciplinary field of study.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is defined as involving the Ethiopian traditions about Makædda and Solomon; it includes no other traditions told about Makædda and Solomon. This is done for these reasons:

- If the study is not delimited in such a fashion, the data will be unmanageable, covering a huge expanse both geographically and thematically.
- If the study tried to include traditions told outside Ethiopia, lack of availability of materials and data would hamper the research work.
- As the tradition is a bone of contention across cultures ("Which country does the Queen of Sheba 'belong' to?"), it is wise to sift the available data of each of the contending traditions. The thesis does this for the Ethiopian tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

2.1 Method of data collection

The researcher collected the oral traditions by interviewing four people of very different backgrounds. The first is a well-known church scholar Lik'ä Lik'awənt Yared Kasa. He is one of the leading intellectuals of the Ethiopian Orthodox church as can be inferred from his title Lik'ä Lik'awənt, the highest title given in church academics, and is the chief teacher at the St. Mika'el cathedral at Mäk'ällä. The second is a young student at Mäk'ällä University who is herself a namesake of the queen Makədda. She grew up in Eritrea, and hence her narration shows us the story from the other side of the Märäb River. The third is a layman from Addis Ababa named 'əšätu who has little formal education. This is done to include the story as it is told outside Təgray. The fourth is Gäbrämādhən 'Ayalew, a man who teaches in a Sunday school in Mayč'äw. When I was a boy, I heard him narrate the story in my days in Sunday school. His story has very distinctive features. All these people have narrated the story to me.

The second type of data consists of written sources, namely:

- The story as given in the Kəbrä Nəgäst(I have used the English version by Sir Wallis Budge in this thesis)
- The story as given in the Bible
- The story as given in the Qur'an
- The story as given in a work by Däbtära Fəssəha Gəyorgis 'Abəyə 'əgzi' entitled *Tarik 'Itəyop'ya*
- A book entitled *Fərädu* by 'Abba Yəshak' Gäbräyäsus.
- The story as written by Enno Littmann in his "The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the tradition of Axum."

- The story as given in an undergraduate paper (Addis Ababa University) by 'A'əməro Täs fayä.
- The story as given in a book *Yänəgəstat Gädločənnə Yäfək'ər Tarikoč* by Taddälä Gädle.

In addition to these sources I have also consulted several secondary sources which give the story in various forms. These include:

- A comprehensive Ethiopian history by Bəlaten Geta Hərüy Wäldä ssəllasse entitled *Yä'ityop'ya tarik kənəgəstə Saba 'əskä Talak'u Yä'adwa dəl dräs*.
- An internet article by Torrey Philemon entitled "Makeda, Queen of Sheba"

3.2. Methods of Data Analysis

The method I have used is a qualitative comparative method.

- The first part of the analysis briefly presents a comparative sketch of the story as given in the Bible and the Quran.
- The bulk of the thesis presents a comparative analysis of the traditions as a whole, taking the narrative of the KN as a framework. Deviations that exist in other traditions are cited for each part of the KN proper.
- The last part is a three-way contrast
 - Among the oral versions
 - Among the written versions
 - Across the whole set of the narratives

CHAPTER THREE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Prelude to the Tradition— the Name of the Queen and Her Parents

The queen's father is mentioned in two traditions. The first is by Bəlaten Geta Hərüy Wäldä ssəlasse (1999:1) የንግሥተ ሳባ አባት አጋቦስ ይባላል። “The queen of Sheba's father was called 'Agabos.” The other tradition with such a citation is that of Lik'ä Lik'awənt Yared Kasa, who mentions the name 'Agabos as the queen's father. Similarly, Yəshak' Gäbräyäsus has this name documented in his book entitled *Färädu* (1992:115). None of the other traditions examined has anything to say about this.

As regards the name of the queen's mother, the only mention I have found is in an internet source by Torrey Philemon (1990: no page). She writes: “According to Ethiopian legend, she [the Queen of Sheba] was born in 1020 B.C in Ophir, and educated in Ethiopia. Her mother was Queen “Ismenie”; her father, chief minister to “Za Sebado”, succeeded him as king.”

Two points are worth mentioning here. First, the problematic location of Ophir that is given in the stories of the Bible (1 Kings and 2 Chronicles) is mentioned as the birthplace of the mysterious queen. Secondly, this is the only source that gives a date of birth for the queen.

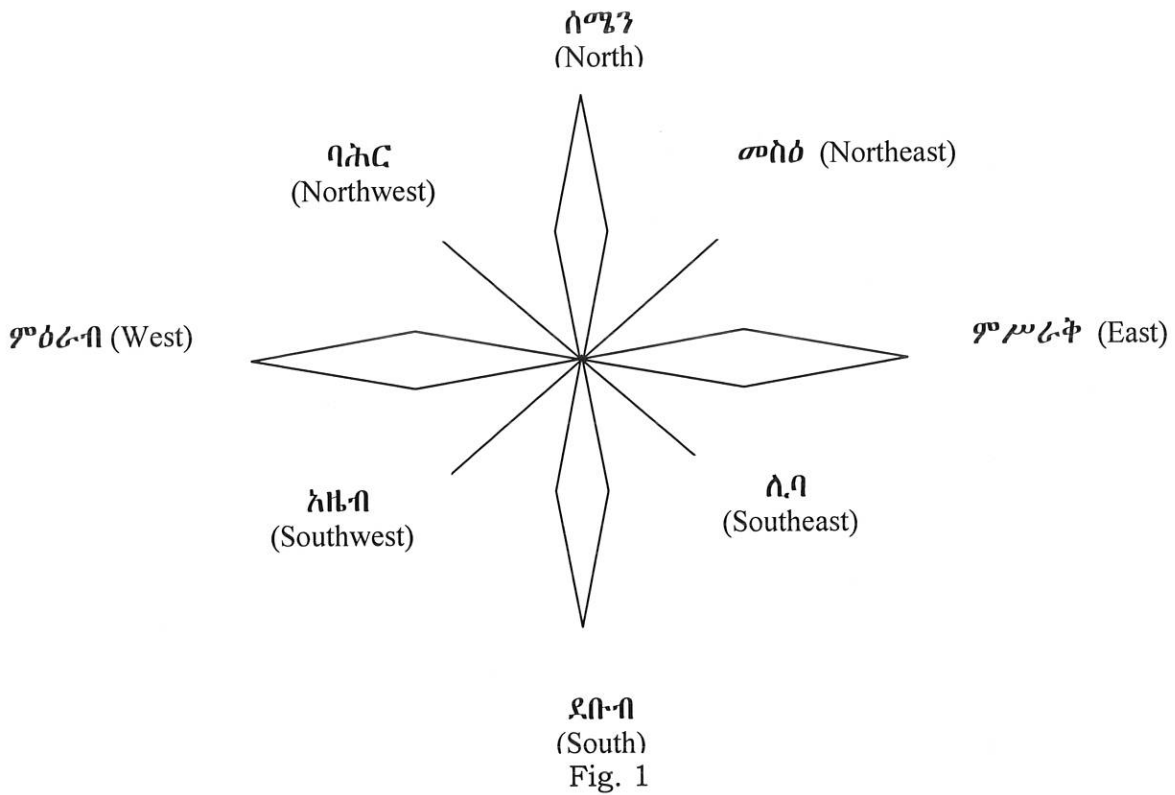
As for the queen's name, no etymological information is given except by Bølaten Geta Hərüy Wäldäsəlasse.

በክብረ ነገሥት ግን ማክዳ ይላታል። ይኸውም መንገደኛ ማለት ነውና ወደ ኢየሩሳሌም ወርዳ ከተመለሰች በኋላ የተጠራችበት ስም ነው ይባላል። ስለዚህ በአገሩና በግብረ ስም ትጠራ ነበር ከማለት በቀር አባትና እናቷ ያወጡላት ስም ነው ለማለት ያስቸግራል። (1999:1)

But in the Kəbrä Nəgäst she is called Makədda, which means ‘traveler’ [cf. Geez kedä ‘to tread, step’]. This name was given to her after she came back from Jerusalem, hence the name ‘traveler’. Thus, she was named after her country and her journey. For this reason it is not easy to conclude that this name is her personal name [personal name in the Ethiopian tradition]. (1999:1)

The name of her country also shows variation: Sheba (Hebrew Shəbā), Saba etc., but also Azeb.

When Hərüy says ‘her country’, he has in mind ‘Saba’, which he has already established as the name of a district in Təgre (Təgray) in the neighborhood of Aksum. Kidanä Wäld Kəfle (1948:210) discusses the other name of her country, Azeb (አዜብ). አዜብ፤ ... የማእዘን ስም፤ ንኡስ ማእዘን፤ የአፍሪቃ ወገን፤ በምዕራብና በደቡብ መካከል ያለ፤ የመስኖ ትይዩና አንጻር፡ ፊት ለፊት። ‘Azeb ... name of a direction, between West and South, left of South, opposite to Northeast’ [i.e. “southwest”].’



Lik'ä Lik'awənt adds an interesting interpretation of the name 'Azeb'. He says, "Taking Jerusalem as a frame of reference, Ethiopia would lie to the Southwest. That is why she, the queen, was called ንግሥተ ሕዙብ - Nəgəstā Azeb", the Queen of Azeb. (In fact, however, Ethiopia lies roughly South-southeast of Jerusalem, not Southwest.)

But, the K.N. as translated by Wallis Budge has the following reading in translating Matthew 12:42 [Luke 11:31] "The queen of the South shall rise up on the Day of Judgment and shall dispute with, and condemn, and overcome." The Ge'ez text, by contrast, has this reading ንግሥተ ሕዙብ ትትነሣእ አመ ዕለተ ደይን ምስለ ዛ ትውልድ ወትትፋትላ። "The queen of Azeb shall rise up and judge that generation." These contrasts lead us to a conclusion that Budge's translation of 'Azeb is not right, i.e. it should have been rendered as "The queen of the Southwest". Indeed, "Azeb" means "Southwest" in Tigrigna (Kane 2000:1515). The discrepancy might have various causes:

- ❖ Budge apparently has followed the Greek Vorlage of the New Testament here, for it has the reading “South” in the above-mentioned verse.
- ❖ The people who translated the New Testament into Ge‘ez might have committed the mistake of using the Ge‘ez term for ‘Southwest’ instead of ‘South’.
- ❖ Possibly the word *azeb* had the (partially) different meaning ‘South’ centuries ago. Leslau (1987:52) translates *azeb* as ‘South’, but notes that there is confusion in Ge‘ez regarding the meaning of the directional terms *azeb*, *däbub*, *sämen* (1987:503).

Bəlaten Geta Hərüy Wäldä ssəlasse (1999:1) also raises another point not mentioned in the other works: tries to determine the geographical delimitation of the queen’s territory. ግዛቱዋም እጅግ ሰፊ ነበር። በስተምሥራቅ እስከ ማዳጋስካር በስተሰሜንና በስተምዕራብ እስከ ምስርና እስከ ኖብያ ዳርቻ፤ በስተደቡብ ዛሬ የቪክቶሪያ ባሕር እስከተባለው እስከ ኒያንሃ ባሕር ነበር።

And her [the queen’s] territory was very vast. Towards the East it extended to Madagascar; towards the North and the West it extended to Məsər [Egypt] and the border of Nobya [Nubia]; towards the South it extended to what is now called Lake Victoria and formerly was the Sea of Nianza.

But though the writer does not include Yemen within the territory of the queen in the above citation, he has the following to say while narrating her journey to Jerusalem. (Ibid 3) በዚያን ዘመን የመን የሚባለው የዓረብ አገር የእርስዋ ግዛት ነበርና ባሕረ ኤርትራን ተሻግራ የመን አገር ስትደርስ ያገሩ ባላባቶች ብዙ ስንቅ በግመሎች ጨነው ሲጠብቁት አገኘች። “At that time, because what is called Yemen of the Arab country was part of her territory, the lords of that country were waiting her with many camel loads of food stuff after she arrived there crossing the sea of Eritrea. ”

This seems a deliberate addition by Hərüy; this might have been done to counter the claim to a Yemenite provenience for the queen, as the writer clearly has an interest in presenting her as Ethiopian.

As far as the geographical demarcation of the queen's territory is concerned, Fəssəha Gəyorgis, drawing on oral traditions, notes that Noba and Sənar are neighboring countries to the queen's country (1993:19).

... አብ ኖባ ሓደ ንጉሥ አብ ስናር ሓደ ንጉስ ነበሩ ይብሉ።
ንግሥተ ዓዜብ እውን ናብ ኢየሩሳሌም ጥበብ ሰሎሞን
ክትርኢ ቢላ ምስ ነቐለት እንክትከይድ አባይ ንአባይ እኽሊ
እናዘርኤት ከምዝከደት ኣብ መልሳውን ብአኡ
ከምእተመልሰት ይናገሩ።

It is said that... in Noba was one king and in Sənar likewise was another king. And she [Queen 'Azeb] was sowing crops along the way when she went to Jerusalem to see the Wisdom of Solomon. And when she returned, she used the crops as landmarks for her way back home.

The theme of sowing crops also appears in the tradition narrated by Lik'ä Lik'awənt Yared Kasa. It is not found in the other traditions considered.

From the above comments, it can be inferred that the queen had three different names:

- Nəgästä 'Azeb
- Makədda
- Nəgästä Saba

The tradition documented by Littmann has the name Nəgästä 'Azeb in a slightly changed form. It has እም ንጉስ ምሊሊክ ትግረይት ታ ወስማ እትዬ አዜብ (1904:3); his translation reads "King Mənilik's mother was a Tigre girl named Etiye Azeb". Here "Etiye Azeb" is different from "Negeste Azeb" in

that “Etiye” is an honorific title given to a woman; therefore, “Azeb” is presented here as a real personal name. But “Negeste Azeb” is the direct translation of what is used in the English – “Queen of the South”. The tradition M has all the above names except “Etiye Azeb”.

It is hard to be sure which country the term Saba is referring to, though the Ethiopian church equates it with Ethiopia. For the “Saba” readings in the Bible refer to Appendix 5.

The 'andəmta version of the New Testament, under Matthew 12:42 and Luke 11:31, presents these passages as equivalent to the version seen in 1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chr. 9:1-13. This makes it clear that the Queen of Sheba given in the Old Testament is the same person who is called 'Nəgəstā 'Azeb' in the New Testament in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church belief. This sort of relationship is corroborated by the idea given in the KN in which the Ark of the Covenant (called 'Zion' in the KN) is the property of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; according to Ethiopian belief it is still kept in the St. Mary of Zion Cathedral in Aksum.

3.2 The 'Arwe 'Wild Beast' across the Traditions

Many versions of the story include a wild beast, the 'Arwe. The following versions have the 'Arwe as part of their narration.

- The legend G
- The legend EL
- The legend F
- The legend LL
- The legend A

The legend G tells us that Makədda killed an 'Arwe, who was the king of the land of the Ethiopian Sabians. From this incident arises the queenship of Makədda. It is said that the 'Arwe and Makədda were born

together. And later the people were in a state of fear for it was a custom that they should give him a girl as a sacrifice each day. They even worshipped him as their creator. Makødda then told her father that they should kill the 'Arwe. But her father was afraid, for the 'Arwe was mighty. However, Makødda devised a plot to kill the 'Arwe by setting fire to his home. She told her father that first they should dig out all the area for some distance encircling the 'Arwe's home. This, she explained, will prevent the fire from expanding and resulting in damage to the surrounding area. They did as she said and the 'Arwe was killed. As a result of this the people praised her and made her queen after her father. The narrative by a Hamasien elder in the narrative H2 (see Appendix 4) and that by Føssøha Gøyorgis present almost the same ways of killing the 'Arwe. H1 relates: "At his command they set up seven enclosures around the place where he (= the serpent) was coiled up and placed swords and pikes at a certain distance. They set fire to the enclosure closest to the monster. He tried to flee in every direction, but he tore himself up on the swords and pikes, which cut him into pieces so that he died."

The legend EL reports this differently. Littmann (1904:3-4) documents:

1. And [in her days] the Tigre people were worshipping a dragon, and the sacrifice which they brought [to him] was the following: each man among them gave in turn his first-born daughter and an entalam of mead and an entalam of milk to the dragon.
2. Now when the turn of Etiye-Azeb's parents came, they tied her to a tree for the dragon. And to the place where she was tied to the tree came seven saints and seated themselves there in the shade.
3. And while they were sitting there in the shade, she began to weep, and one of her tears fell upon them. And when [this tear] had fallen upon them,

they looked up and beheld her tied there and they asked her saying: "What art thou? Art thou Mary or a human being?"

When they asked her why she was tied there, she told them the truth. She told them that the dragon was as big as a hill. Of the seven saints reported, three are mentioned by name – Abba Č'ahama, Abba Gärima and Abba Met'elit. With Abba Ment'elit in the lead they killed the dragon. A few points should be noted here which Littmann (1904:3-4) explains in footnotes:

- 'Entalam' is a unit of measure equal to 300 liters.
- The seven saints are given as seven angels in some variants.
- The expression "Art thou Mary?" is given as "Art thou an angel?" in some variants.

The difference between these two legendary accounts is that

- 1) In tradition G the girl is not given as sacrifice.
- 2) In tradition EL the dragon is killed through the help of the saints, while in G it is the people who kill the dragon.

The next point worth noting is the idea of the 'dragon'. As rightly noted, this dragon motif has its foundations in the traditional beliefs of peoples all over the globe, from Christianity through Islam to traditional beliefs. In Littmann's words (1904:17), "The legends and myths of dragons and serpents are common to almost all peoples of the world ... usually the dragon receives maidens as tribute, or he himself carries off the girls of the country: then a hero comes and kills the monster." In the above citation 'the hero' is the seven saints.

Here one should ask a legitimate question of chronology. There is an evident anachronism in the account. The historical time when the mysterious queen might have existed, if at all, is long before the birth of

Jesus. However, we are told that she was helped by the ‘seven saints’ — a misnomer, as they should be the nine saints, for the names given are of the nine saints who came to Ethiopia later in the 6th century AD according to existing accounts. Littmann (1904:19-20) discusses the matter in detail:

The reason why these nine saints were made the deliverers from the serpent does not seem to be accidental. For it is not only very natural that men, who were as famous as these should be considered performers of almost every great deed, but we know also that in the lives of Abyssinian saints snakes and serpents occur very often. Thus for instance in the life of Za-Mikael Aragawi, one of the leaders of these very nine saints, we read that a serpent sixty cubits long carried that saint up to a high mountain. (1904:20)

The legend as given by Abba Yəshak’ Gäbrä Yäsus (1992:115) is given below. It is quite similar to the narrative by the Hamasien elder (H2 in the Appendix).

ሻብዓይ ትውልዱ ንግብጋቦ ከምቲ ሽዱሽተ ወለዶ ይገብር
ቅድመኡ ዝነበረ ሓማሴናይ ወድ መስፍን ኣቦ ሓጎኡ
ዘይኮነስ ከምቲ ገበል “ኣጋቦስ” ዝብል ሽም ያኢ ነገሰ።
ኣጋቦስ ካልኣይ።
ኣጋቦስ ካልኣይ ሓንቲ መኻዳ እተብሃለት ጻ ል ወሊዱ
ይጸንት።መኻዳ ንግስነት ኣቦታታ ትወርስ። ንሰለስተ ሚእቲ
ዓመት ዚኸውን ብስርወ-ንግስነት ነገደ ኣርወ ሰጥ ኢሉ
ኪግዛእ ዝጸንሐ ህዝቢ ግን “ብጓለንስተይቲ ኣይንግዛእን”
ብምባል ያኢ ንመኻዳ ምግባር ይኣብያ።

መኸዳ ኣብ መቓብር ኣጋቦስ ከይዳ ትፅሊ። ብጸሎታ ከኣ ኣብ መቓብር ኣጋቦስ ሓደ ሓድሽ ኣርወ (ገበል) ብተኣምር ይውለድ። ንመዓልቲ ሓደ እመት ዚኸውን ንውሓት እናወሰኸ ከኣ ኣርወ ብቐጽቦት ኪዓቢ ይርኣ። ነዚ ዝተዓዘበ ህዝቢ ይርዕድ። “ከይኣበዩ ከሎ ነቲ ገበል ክትቀትሎ፡ ከይተመርዓወት ብድንግላ ክትነብር እንተክኢላ ከኣ ንላ ክትነግስ” ዚብል ልማኖ ናብ መኸዳ የቐርብ።

መኸዳ ነቲ ኣርወ ትቐትሎ። ንግስነት ጨቢጣ ከኣ ብሰላም ትገዝእ።

The seventh descendant of Gəbgabo not like the person, a Hamasien lord who was before six generations; but like the Arwe, reigned under the name 'Abagos, i.e. 'Abagos II.

'Abagos II died leaving a girl named Makəda as the only successor. She came to power after her father. The people, who had been ruled by the 'Arwe dynasty for three hundred years, now stopped paying tribute to Makəda, saying “We shall not be ruled by a female.”

Makəda prayed on her father's grave, which resulted in the creation of a new 'Arwe in a miraculous way. Growing one 'əmmät (about 20 inches) per day, the 'Arwe was seen to become bigger and bigger in a short period. Noticing this, the people entered into a state of anxiety and fear. The people sent an appeal to Makəda: “If she can kill the 'Arwe before it gets big, and if she can

live in purity (as a virgin), they will let her reign over them.”

Makəda killed the 'Arwe and began ruling peacefully.

This account by 'Abba Yəshak' Gäbräyāsus is preceded in his book by yet another version, but now with a different motif. On pages 105-107 of the same work 'Abba Yəshak' presents another story of an 'Arwe which he uses as background for the story above – hence, “the seventh descendant of Gəbgabo”.

I give the story here in brief. In the land of Habäša there was a big and powerful 'Arwe who was worshipped. And there was also a very beautiful girl from the royal family of the people of Mādäbay. In the story the girl was taken by force by a young man from a nearby country. She then went to bathe in a river in which the 'Arwe had discharged his sperm. This caused the conception of twins: a girl and another 'Arwe. She departed alone into the wilderness out of fear of the people's harassment. There she gave birth to the girl and the 'Arwe, and she died while delivering the 'Arwe. The two grew up in the wilderness. Finally, they were seen by shepherds. When the girl was asked to kill the 'Arwe, she refused, saying “How can I kill my brother and the son of my god?” The 'Arwe was called 'Agabos or 'Angabo. 'Agabos grew up and he was about three and half meters long and had 70 teeth.

The 'Arwe started to hunt people each day, which resulted in chaos. The people convinced the girl to speak with him. The girl and 'Angabo agreed that he would not do them any harm if the people would offer him the following items as tribute daily:

- 10 oxen
- 10 cows

- 50 sheep
- 50 goats
- a large jar of honey
- a large jar of milk
- a virgin girl

This continued for four hundred years. The people were delivered by a hero called Gəbgabo. Gəbgabo asked the people, “What will you give me if I kill ’Angabo?” They agreed to be ruled by him and his descendants if he did so.

Gəbgabo built seven fences made up of logs and stone around the habitation of ’Angabo. ’Angabo was badly burned. Gəbgabo then bit ’Angabo and stabbed him with his spears. ’Angabo tried unsuccessfully to escape by jumping over the fences. Finally ’Angabo was killed. Gəbgabo split open his head, out of which came tiny seeds which then became the common Ethiopian grain *t’ef*. This (Abba Yəshak’ continues) is why David the Psalmist says, “And you crushed the heads Leviathan [the dragon]; you gave it as food to the Ethiopians” (Ps. 73 (74):14). [Note that the translation “Ethiopians” appears already in the Septuagint.]

Part of this legendary account is also mentioned in the homily of Abba Gärima (edited by Conti Rossini) as cited in Littmann (1904:21). The ’Arwe is described thus:

And when he drinks, 107 measures do not suffice him; and they bring him as his food every day 10 cows and 10 bulls, 1000 goats, 100 sheep and ten thousand thousands of birds; and he has a horn on him 3 cubits long.

There is a striking similarity between Littmann’s version and that documented in the homily of Abba Gärima in the description of the ’Arwe. This type of similarity recalls that oral legends typically mix things up

according to the situation to which each narrator is exposed; his religious affinities may also have had their effect on the shaping of the account.

Another point of importance is that only Fəssəha Gəyorgis and 'Abba Yəshak' Gäbräyäsus present separate 'Arwe stories with no connection to the main Makədda narrative. Fəssəha Gəyorgis presents the 'Arwe legend in isolation with no connection to Makədda. He talks about two events in which an 'Arwe was made king in the history of Abyssinia. In the first, which is very similar to the above-mentioned account, an 'Arwe came to power (as he says) in 1804 B.C. (1993:20). In the other case, an 'Arwe reigns after the birth of Christ in an era which is not mentioned (1993:36). A striking feature of Fəssəha Gəyorgis' account is the personal comment he adds by way of explanation:

ምእንት-ዙይ ክፍላቱ ንምርኣይ ብስም ገበል ስምየምዎ እምበር
ገበልስ ኣብ ልዕሊ ሰብ ኪነግሥ ዘይእመን ነገር እዮ እቲ ሰብኣይ
እንከ ወይ ሰብ ሃገር ናብኡ ኣሸረው ቀቲሉዎ ኣሎ፤ ወይንከኣ
ኣብ እንደኡ እንከሎ ብለይቲ ናብ እንደኡ ሐዊ መሊሱ ኣሕሪሩዎ
ኣሎ፤ ወይን ከኣ ከምዙይ ብዚመስል ብካልእ ተጋብር ቀቲሉዎ
ኣሎ። (1993: 22-23)

They might have called him 'Arwe to show his brutality, for it is hard to believe an 'Arwe ruling over people. As for the man (the man who killed the 'Arwe), he might have gathered the people to him through trickery or he might have set fire to the house of the 'Arwe king or might have killed the king in some other manner. (1993: 22-23)

The above comment by Fəssəha Gəyorgis fits exactly with the definition given in the Good News Bible: "Leviathan: legendary monster which was a symbol of the forces of chaos and evil", given as an explanation of the "leviathan" of Ps. 74:14. This opens up another possibility – the whole

story of the 'Arwe might have sprung out of tyrannical rule, so that the story perhaps expressed an outburst of popular sentiment against a wicked king.

Two concluding points about the 'Arwe tradition emerge from information given by Budge (1932: xxviii) in his introduction to the translation of the KN, based on information from the Oxford catalogue of manuscripts edited by Dillmann. Five kings reigned before Makədda. These were 'Arwe 400 years; 'Angabo 200 years, Giedur 200 years, Siebado 50 years, and Kwanasya 1 year. This information disagrees with some of the points raised above. 'Abba Yəshak' says that the name of the 'Arwe born together with Makədda was 'Angabo. But the citation given by Budge tells us that these were two distinct kings. Secondly, 'Abba Yəshak' says that the queen came to power after her father, Gəbgabo; but the citation from Budge indicates that the queen succeeded Kwanasya, if we take the listed kings as reigning in succession.

3.3 Contrasts between the Biblical and Quran Traditions

Contrasts between the biblical traditions 1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chr. 9:1-13.

The narratives about the queen of Sheba in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles are almost identical. One difference is that the description in 1 Kings 10:10 runs: "The amount of spices she gave him was by far the greatest that he ever received at any time", while in 2 Chronicles 9:9 we have "There have never been any other spices as fine as those that the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon". As can be seen from these two citations, the description of the queen's gift is more quantitative in 1 Kings and qualitative in 2 Chronicles. Interestingly, in both versions, the description of the queen's gifts is interrupted by mention of similarly rich gifts given to Solomon by Hiram, which were from the land of Ophir.

Let us now turn to the contrast between the Biblical and the Quran traditions. The story of the queen of Sheba is given in Surah 27:22-44.

	Biblical Story	Quran Story
1	The account tells us that the queen of Sheba goes to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions.	The account tells us that it is a hoopoe who tells Solomon about the existence of the queen and Solomon sends her a letter to go to him.
2	When she arrives at Solomon's court she is overwhelmed and admires Solomon's organization and wisdom.	When she arrives at Solomon's palace, her feelings are not expressed in the story.
3	Solomon receives the queen's gifts.	Solomon is not happy at the gift which the queen had sent him through her envoy.
4	The queen blesses the God of Israel.	The queen surrenders to Allah after she is tricked by the floor of smooth glass, for she assumes it to be a pool and bares her legs.
5	The gift is quantified and described (120 talents of gold; spices and jewels).	The gift is not described.
6	Solomon gives the queen gifts in return.	Nothing said.

Though the two narratives have in common that the queen goes to Jerusalem to meet Solomon, in the Quran story the queen is sent for by Solomon and she surrenders to the God of Solomon – Allah in this case. In the Bible story she comes on her own initiative, seeking to test Solomon's knowledge and understanding, and she blesses God but with no mention of surrender or acceptance. The Biblical narrative provides the recurring framework for all subsequent traditions. The Quran narrative is reflected in later versions only in the matter of the glass floor and the queen's exposed legs.

3.4 The Kəbrä Nəgäst (KN) Story as Compared to the Other Traditions

3.4.1 How the queen heard about King Solomon

The KN version I have used here is the English translation of the Ge'ez Version by Wallis Budge in 1922.

The passages Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31 are mentioned in the KN to substantiate the claim that the queen's name is reported in the New Testament. The name "the queen of the south" is explicitly equated to "queen of Ethiopia".

Additional descriptive remarks are given in the KN: the queen was very beautiful and rich and had traders who trafficked for her by sea and by land, and in India, and in 'Aswan (Syere).

The KN speaks of a man named Tamrin who is described as a wise man and who was the leader of the caravans of the queen. He used to load 520 camels, and had about 73 ships. In his time King Solomon was building the House of God. A man (anonymous) told King Solomon about Tamrin. Solomon told Tamrin to bring red gold, and black wood that could not be eaten by worms, and sapphires from Arabia, which inspired him to go to Jerusalem to meet Solomon. Tamrin marveled after seeing all the deeds and wisdom of Solomon. He then returned to Ethiopia after telling Solomon that he would have liked to be like even the very least of his servants, but that he had stayed a long time and had to go back to his queen in Ethiopia. But, tradition A reports that an anonymous merchant came to Aksum and told the queen about King Solomon. The account taken from "The Acts of Märk'orewos" (Beylot 2008:59) tells us that Tamrin was a Muslim merchant.

Tamrin repeatedly talked to the queen about what he had seen under King Solomon's rule. The Queen thus became eager to go to him.

Unlike the other traditions, oral tradition G presents a different reason for the queen's journey. After she had the dragon killed, the people started to praise her. They said 'You are as wise as King Solomon'. After this episode she started thinking about the king— she found that he was a man of wisdom and great innovations. This all made her decide to go and see the king. In the other traditions we are merely told that she heard about the king's wisdom, either through the merchant Tamrin as in the KN or from an anonymous person. But in the G narrative, her own people told her about Solomon, for they were Sabeans, i.e. people who had their origins on the other side of the Red Sea. This is the background to their knowledge of Solomon.

Tradition M tells us that the queen went to Jerusalem not in search of wisdom but in order to get her legs healed. It explains that the queen was told that if she set foot on the ground of Israel, she would get healed. This is also found in the tradition by Littmann. The oral version by G, however, tells us a different story about the healing, in which the healing is not presented as the purpose of the queen's journey to Jerusalem. The story goes: There was a philosopher called 'ask'andər living in Jerusalem. He had a horse more powerful than any other horse, and the horse had wings, for it was the result of the hybridization of a horse and an eagle. Once the philosopher flew to the Garden of Eden. When he was walking in the garden, the angel Surafel came up to him with a sword. Startled, 'ask'and'ər mounted his horse, which resulted in the uprooting of the tree to which the horse was tied. He returned to his seat in Jerusalem with the tree still attached to the horse's reins. The tree was placed near the gate of the royal palace of Jerusalem, and became known as a log with mysterious powers. Some time later King Solomon came to power, and during his reign the queen went to Jerusalem. On her arrival, she passed the place where the log had been put. This healed her legs. In gratitude for this miracle she pasted one birr on the log as a token and Solomon the king did so too. An amusing point in the narrative is that

upon her arrival the queen told the palace guard to announce her to Solomon. The guard told Solomon that a very beautiful queen with an ass's hoof on her leg was waiting at the gate. When Solomon saw her, he was surprised at the sight, for there was no trace of an ass's hoof on her leg. He was about to punish the guard if the queen had not told him about the miracle. According to this tradition, another twenty-eight kings came to power after Solomon who all followed the custom of pasting one birr on the log. And this was this sum of money which was given to Judas for delivering Jesus into the hands of the Jews. The log finally became the wood of the holy cross.

This narrative by Gäbrämādhən is striking in that it incorporates a part of the legend which is not a feature of any of the other oral or written Ethiopian accounts I have seen. Fiaccadori (2006:674) in his article "Makədda" in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* mentions the same theme:

These and other elements as the healing of the queen's deformity with a special cream (nura) ordered by Solomon to remove the disfiguring hair, or with a tree trunk—later to be the wood of the cross (māsqäl), i.e. the tree planted by Seth on the grave of his father Adam miraculously brought from the Garden of Eden for the building of the temple in Jerusalem, are variously elaborated by Arab Muslim commentators and writers.

This element of the story, the magical healing, shows that the Makədda-Solomon narrative is a blend of many traditions. "Local legends sometimes travel" (The New Encyclopedia Britannica 1998:224). Geographical, religious, political, social and economic ties can all serve as ways for the exchange and mixing of legends in whole or in part.

A final variant on the hoof motif is found in Philemon (1990). In this version, there is no ass's hoof; instead, the queen's leg has a deformity, which was caused by her being bitten by her pet wolf.

3.4.2 The Queen's Journey to Jerusalem

In the KN, after the queen is told about Solomon by her caravan chief, Tamrin, she gives a lengthy disquisition on the benefits of wisdom in part 24 of the KN. In the internet article by Torrey Philemon (1990), a similar discourse by Solomon from the Christian apocryphal book *The Wisdom of Solomon* is presented, which echoes what the queen explains about wisdom.

When I reflected in my mind
That in kinship with wisdom there is immortality,
And in her friendship there is pure delight...
I went about seeking how to win her for myself.
I loved her and sought after her from my youth up,
And I undertook to make her my bride,
And I fell in love with her beauty....
So I decided to bring her to live with me,
Knowing that she would give me good counsel,
And encouragement in cares and grief...
If the possession of wealth is to be desired in life,
What is richer than wisdom, which operates
everything?
She understands the tricks of language and the solving
of riddles;
She knows the meaning of signs and portents,
And the outcomes of seasons and periods
Wisdom is bright and unfading,
And she is easily seen by those who love her,
And found by those who search for her.

The queen then tells her people that she will go to Jerusalem to seek wisdom.

The nobles and her other subjects accept her proposal for the journey, and 797 camels, mules and asses are loaded. Tradition A adds that the queen went to Jerusalem and loaded 400 camels with gifts when she set out on her journey.

The KN in part 24 says “She set out on her journey and followed her road without pause, and her heart had confidence in God.” But a close look at the KN narrative yields a problem in the logical flow of ideas. Later in the KN narrative we are told that the queen worshipped the stars, woods and other pagan deities, but here we are told that the queen had “confidence in God”.

One of the traditions gives us information about her journey. Fəssəha Giyorgis narrates (1993:19) እንት-ትከይድ አባይ ንአባይ እኽለ, እናዘርኤት ከምዝ ከደት አብ መልሳውን ብኣኡ ከምኣተመልሰት ይናገሩ:: “And she (queen of 'Azeb) was sowing crops all along the way as she went (to Jerusalem)... and she returned back through it.” Tradition A reports that the queen went to Jerusalem using small boats; but tradition G has it that she went to Jerusalem via Bab El-Mandab, which at the time (according to the narrator) was a land mass connecting Ethiopia and Asia and not a strait.

3.4.3 The Queen's Arrival in Jerusalem

The Queen arrived in Jerusalem and presented her gifts as reported in KN part 25: “She brought to the king very many precious gifts which he desired to possess greatly.” This description of the gifts fits the description given in the Bible quite well.

She was given lodging near the royal palace, with servants placed at her disposal. Detailed descriptions of the meals served are given (only in the KN).

Part 25 of the KN sets the scene for the seduction: "And he visited her and was gratified, and she visited him and was gratified, and she saw... his grace. And she marveled in her heart, and was utterly astonished in her mind ... how perfect he was in composure."

Solomon was working building the House of God. He was helping each person at work with his wise and acute skill. In the same part of the KN as above, the wisdom of Solomon is described in this way:

And of the speech of the beasts and the birds there was nothing hidden from him, and he forced the devils to obey him by his wisdom. And he did everything by means of the skill which God gave him when he made supplication to Him; for he did not ask for victory over his enemy, and did not ask for riches and fame, but he asked God to give him wisdom and understanding whereby he might rule his people, and build His House, and beautify the work of God....

Such an expression of the wisdom of Solomon is part of all the other oral and written tradition available, though not expressed as strongly as this. One thing worth remembering here is: The expression "he forced the devils to obey him by his wisdom" is similar to what is given in Surah 27 of the Quran. There we are told that there was a jinni, and Solomon compelled him to bring him the queen's throne. In this regard 'devils' and 'jinni' can be related for both have to do with evil spirits.

3.4.4 The Queen Tests the King

The Queen tells Solomon that his wisdom is immeasurable. Solomon responds that all his wisdom is God's gift and that he is building the house of the holy and heavenly Zion. Only a single available Ethiopian

source gives the questions that the queen asked Solomon: a small book entitled “Yänəgästä Saba t’əyak’ewoç” (1956 [E.C]:5). In this book the queen challenges Solomon to distinguish an artificial flower from a natural one. The text (translated) reports: “When he understood that it was impossible to identify which through simple observation, he had the windows opened. Then bees flew in and came to rest on the natural flower, for they knew it through its smell.”

The other questions which the queen asked Solomon are not part of the Ethiopian tales. Some of them are documented in Philemon’s internet article, citing Josephus. Philemon explains “Not only did she ask Solomon philosophical questions; she also tested him with riddles”. The following are the riddles she asked Solomon, which Philemon documents from the Targum Sheni, Midrash Mishle “Proverbs” and Midrash Hachefez.

Riddle 1

“What is it? An enclosure with ten doors; when one is open, nine are shut and when nine are open, one is shut,” Sheba asked Solomon. Solomon answered, “The enclosure is the tomb, and the ten doors are the ten orifices of man, his mouth, and the apertures for discharge of excreta and urine, and the navel. When the child is still in its mother’s womb, the navel is open, but all the other apertures are shut; but when the child issues from the womb the navel is closed and the other orifices are open.

Riddle2

“Seven leave and nine enter; two pour out the draught and only one drinks. How did Solomon respond? “Seven are the days of woman’s menstruation, nine the months of her pregnancy;

her two breasts nourish the child, and one drinks”.

Riddle 3

At one point, Sheba asked, “What when alive does not move, yet when its head is cut off, moves?” Solomon’s answer: “The timber used to build a ship”.

I take the above-cited riddles to be some of the hard questions the queen asked Solomon.

Solomon, while conversing with the Queen, sees a laborer and stops him only to observe that he and the laborer are the same, for God gives power and wisdom. This interpolation is documented solely in the KN. Solomon expounds that human beings should love each other and that God loves those who practice humility.

The Queen then says "How thy voice doth please me! And how greatly do thy words and utterance of thy mouth delight me! ” And she asks him a question: “Whom is it right for me to worship? We worship the sun according as our fathers have taught us to do, because we say that the sun is the king of the gods.” She further explains that there are among her subjects those who worship stones, trees, carved figures and images of gold and silver. She gives justifications for why she and her people worship the sun. After that she tells him that they (the Israelites) have another God whom the Ethiopians do not know.

A striking point worth considering is that though all the other traditions tell us that the 'Arwe (wild beast) was a king and a deity worshipped in Ethiopia, the queen never mentions this in the KN narrative. She says (in part 27 of the KN) that she worships the sun, and her subjects worship stones, trees, carved figures and images of gold. The idea that the queen worships the sun is also part of the Quran narrative.

Solomon gives the Queen commandments in part 28, saying “Verily, it is right that they (men) should worship God, who created the universe...” and the Queen accepts his idea saying, “From this moment I will not worship the sun, but will worship the creator of the sun, the God of Israel.” The Queen stayed in Jerusalem for six months. Solomon was perplexed when the queen told him about her departure; he “pondered in his heart and said, ‘A woman of such splendid beauty hath come to me from the ends of the earth! What do I know? Will God give me seed in her?’”

Solomon is reported to be a ‘lover of women’ for he had sexual relations with many women, including non-Israelites. But the KN tells us that it was not because Solomon was promiscuous that he did this, but because he wanted to control his enemies through the marriage relationship and destroy the worship of idols among the people of these countries: Egyptians, Canaanites, Edomites, “Iyobawiyān” [marked as unclear by Budge], Rif, Kuergue, Damascus, Syria and some other ‘beautiful’ women.

But we see that this explanation is refuted in the next paragraph of this same KN narrative, where it says that it is not godly to have many wives.

Now these early peoples lived under the law of the flesh for the grace of the Holy Spirit had not been given unto them. And to those [who lived] after Christ, it was given to live with one woman under the law of marriage.

The above reading implies that the greatly admired and wise Solomon also lived under the law of the flesh.

Though the KN tries to gloss over a fact which can easily be extracted from the narrative itself, Bəlatengeta Hərūy Wäldä Səlasse (1999:4) says: በዓለም የታወቀችና የከበረች እንኳን ን ግስተ ሳባን አይቶና እንዲያውም ቢሆን ሰሎሞን

መፍቀሬ እንስት መሆኑ የታወቀ ነውና በፈቃደ ስጋ ተገናኛት:: “Let alone having a look at a queen who was highly respected and noble, Solomon was promiscuous even with any woman for he was a womanizer and made love with the queen of Sheba.”

At this point there is an interruption of the main story of the KN, and an account of three hundred and eighteen (patriarchs) is given. Structurally treated, this reminds us of the interruption we see in the same account in the Bible. The difference lies in the fact that the content of the interruption is different: in the Biblical account the interruption concerns the mysterious land of Ophir.

3.4.5 The Seduction

In the KN the narrative continues with the invitation given to the Queen by Solomon that she should visit him in his royal palace by going out of the lodging she had been given near the palace. By contrast, narratives G, EL and A report that the queen passed the first night with her maid in the royal palace itself.

At this point in the story an authorial intervention makes it clear that Solomon is prophesying about the future of the Queen's seed and her kingdom Ethiopia. This reflects the Ethiopian-Israelite ideology; better said, the ideology of the newly chosen people, as we have it in the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition. The tradition asserts that Ethiopians are called *'asra'el zänäfs* “Israelites of the spirit” and the Jews are called *'asra'el zäsäga* “Israelites of the flesh”. Here Ethiopia is conceived as the abode of the true Zion which springs out of this Sheba-Solomon tradition.

The Queen of Sheba accepts Solomon's invitation and the ceremony and dining take place with splendor and magnificent attendance. At this point in the story Solomon asks a favor from the Queen as ‘they were alone’. “Take thou thine ease here for love's sake until daybreak.” The Queen

then asks the king to swear to her that he will not force sexual relations upon her against her will. After they swore to each other Solomon proceeded wisely. He made her eat a very spicy food which resulted in her thirst and a craving for water; hence she took some water, thereby breaking her oath to take nothing of the king's. This serves as a means of developing the plot. For the king had ordered his male servant to prepare a jar of water in front of the queen; and the KN reports that "Solomon spake to the servant in another tongue which the queen did not understand". In this case, language itself is used creatively as a way of heightening the plot.

At this juncture the story shows the following differences:

The oral traditions of Makadda, 'əšātu and Gäbrämādhən tell us that the Queen was sleeping with her maidservant and it was the maidservant whom Solomon seduced first. It was only on the second occasion that Solomon slept with the Queen. The account by Littmann (1904:7) documents this version as follows:

15. And she entered to the king and grasped his hand, [greeting him]. The king ordered: "Bring bread, meat and mead!", and they sat down to eat. And while they were eating, the [women] out of modesty ate (little of the meal) and drank little (of the beverage). So the king suspected that they were women.

This part of the story is peculiar to the EL version only. The story establishes a background in which the queen sets out on her journey to see Solomon with her maidservant and both of them disguise themselves as men. This is a striking difference. The KN version reports that the queen with other servants of lesser importance went to Jerusalem, and that she did not go to the palace directly but was given a place where she stayed before she was invited to the royal palace. It does not specifically mention a maidservant. The narratives A and G give the same account of

the seduction of the queen and her servant as is found in Littmann's version.

Littmann's version continues:

16. When it grew evening, he [Solomon] gave order: "Make their beds for them!" and in one and the same room [with him] they made them, one opposite the other.**17.** And he took a skin with honey and hung it up in the room, and he put a bowl under it; also he made a hole in it (the skin), so that it would trickle.**18.** Now it was his custom, when he was sleeping, to keep his eyes half open, and when he was awake, to close them.**19.** At night while they were resting, he fell asleep, and his eyes were half open. And the women said: "He does not sleep; he sees [us]. When will he sleep?" While they spoke thus, he awoke, and closed his eyes. "Now he has fallen asleep" they said and began to lick from the bowl. So he knew [certainly] that they were women. [The logic is not clear to me.] **20.** And he approached them both and slept with them. Each one of them said to him: "My deflowering has been accomplished" and he gave each of them a staff of silver and a ring, saying unto them: "If it is a girl, let her take this staff of silver and come to me; and if it is a boy, let him take this ring and come to me." And the queen of the South bought a mirror. And being [both] with child they returned to their country. (Ibid)

Several points are worth noting here. First, this written account describes the behavior of Solomon when he sleeps. This is also true of the oral legends by Lik'ä Lik'awənt Yared, Gäbrämädhən, 'Aəməro, Makədda and 'əšātu. The difference lies in the detailed description of Solomon's character. Though the other narratives say "Solomon kept his eyes open

when he was sleeping” the narrative by 'Aəməro has “Solomon opened one of his eyes and closed the other when he slept”. Secondly, the mirror mentioned here is reported in the versions of Gäbrämādhən, 'Aəmro and Fəssəha Giyorgis, with slight differences but the same motif. In the version related by the student Makədda, the mirror is replaced by a photograph— an amusingly anachronistic development of the story. Third, the statement about deflowering is peculiar to this tradition. Obviously, the statement is textually well-motivated in the sense that it advances the plot, for one can now expect that children will be born to the King.

As a variant on the “maidservant” motif, the traditions M and E present the child born to the maidservant as bearing the name Zägäyā (Zagwe), the founder of the Zagwe dynasty. This consideration is bound up with the later political history of the nation. The lineage which sprang from Zägäyā was considered lesser in rank than the Solomonids, in that it is described with the epithet “Usurper” in the power struggle of the 13th century. This notion of purity of Solominid origin continued to have its impact on the question “Who should reign?” in Ethiopia until as recently as 1974, when the last king bearing the lion of Judah was replaced by a military junta.

While Solomon was in bed with the Queen, the KN reports that he dreamed a very frightening dream in which a “sun” shone over Judah for a while but only to pass over to Ethiopia with a much brighter light than before. Though Solomon expected that it would shine again on the land of Judah, it did not. As a result the Israelites hated the sun and tried to extinguish it with all their might. And the Israelites cast darkness upon the earth.

The following points can be raised concerning the dream:

- This incident is not given in any of the other traditions.

- The dream, surely a deliberate addition by the narrator, strengthens the idea that the Ethiopians are the ‘newly chosen people’; hence, the shift in the location of the light.
- The ‘sun’ symbolizes Christ, for the narrative says: “And He (the sun) paid no heed whatsoever to Israel, and He ascended his former throne.”
- The symbolism that the sun is Christ is strengthened in that Christ is also called *Šaḥayä Šädək* ‘the sun of truth’ in the Ethiopian tradition.
- The ‘sun’ which appears in Solomon's dream is also found in *Gädlä Hanna* ‘The Life of Saint Ann’ (the mother of Mary), as Budge mentions in his introduction to his translation of the KN.

The KN continues its narration, relating that the Queen had reigned for six years in her country before she traveled to Jerusalem. Solomon gives her a ring from his little finger as a token of her stay and in consideration of the possibility that she might have conceived as a result of their relation. He tells her that if she gives birth to a baby boy, the boy shall come to him, which is very similar to the above citation from Littmann.

The KN relates further that Solomon told the Queen about his dream so that her country (Ethiopia) might be blessed through her. This dream is found only in the KN narrative. The dream serves as a main element of the plot of the stealing of the ark. In the KN tradition this dream serves as an inhibition to Solomon’s further actions, for he seems convinced of the fact that the Ethiopians are indeed the “newly chosen” people.

The next incident is about the Queen’s return to Ethiopia. The KN narrative gives it in detail, but the other versions treat it as a simple incident.

3.4.6 The Birth of Mənilik

The Queen arrived at a place given as “Bala Zadisareya” after 9 months and 5 days and delivered a child, the baby Mənilik. But oral tradition has it that the Queen gave birth to the child in a place called “May Bāla” in Eritrea. The element “Bāla/Bala” is common to both versions. Däbtära Fəssəha Giyorgis ‘Abəyā ‘əgzi’ has the following to say on the birth of Mənilik: ...ንገዛካ ከይኣተወት ኣብቲ ማዕዶ ሃዘጋ ኣብ ማይበላ ንምኒሊክ ወለደቶ ሻዕቲይ ምስተወልደ እታ መሕረሲት ማይባ በላ/ማይ ኣምጽኡ በላ/ በለትያ እንካብቲይ እቲይ ሩባ እቲይ ማይበላ ተባሂሉ ተረፈ:: (1993:13)

Before arriving home she (Nəgəsta ‘Azeb) gave birth to Mənilik near Hazäga in a place called May Bāla. When he was born, the midwife said “may bāla” (please call for water). From that time on the river has been named May Bāla.

Hərüy adds that “May Bāla ” is located in “Hamasen” (1999:4). In this citation the etymology of the name of the river where Mənilik was born is explained.

As has been noted, some traditions have it that the maidservant of the queen also gave birth to a child. But that child’s birthplace is given in none of the traditions.

The queen’s child is named Bayna Lehkem in the KN tradition. As for the meaning and etymology of his adult name Mənilik, Hərüy (1999:4) recalls the names of the child “Ibnä-Mäläk” meaning “the king’s son” and “Ibnä-Hakim” meaning “son of the wise”. These two etymological citations also appear in Fəssəha Giyorgis’ account (1993:24). In the same way the two writers agree in stating that the name Mənilik came into being through phonological change through time. Taddälä Gädle (1997:53) presents a different etymology: ምኒሊክ ማለትም ምን ይመስል ምን ያምር ማለት ነው:: “And

Mənilik means: ‘How great is he, how handsome is he’ ”. This is told slightly differently in the tradition narrated by Gäbrämädhən. After his arrival and after the episode with the trick, Solomon admires the young man saying: “Who told you (that I am here in disguise)?” — “Man alāk?” The tradition of Makədda also tries to relate a meaning to the personal name Mənilik. All of these are undoubtedly fanciful folk etymologies.

As to additional names of Mənilik, Budge (1932: xxvii), in his introduction to the KN, tells us that Mənilik is also called “Walda-T’abib, i.e. “son of the wise man” (Solomon), or ‘Ebna Hakim’, i.e. Ibn al -Hakim, again “the son of the wise man” (in Arabic). “Bayna Lehkem” could be a deformation of Ibn al-Hakim.

3.4.7 Mənilik Sets off to Jerusalem

The traditions of 'əšätu and Gäbrämädhən relate that it was because the child Mənilik was teased by his friends as a son with no father that he asked his mother for his father’s name and whereabouts. Fəssəha Giyorgis adds the following, which expands on 'əšätu’s and Gäbrämädhən’s account.

ምስ እቶም መጋዘቱ እውን ኩዕሶ ቃርሳ ኪጸወት ኣትጋዘ
 እቶም ንሱ ዘለዎም ወገንያ ዚበዝኑ ሳዕ ይስዕሩ ነበሩ
 እንካብ ቱይ ወዮም መሓዘቱ ቀኒኦም ወላዲኡ ኣይፈልጥን
 ነበረም እዚ ወዲ ዘይፍለጥ እናበሉያ ይጸርፍዎ ነበሩ
 (1993:24)

And he started to play a hockey-like game with his friends. And it was usual that his group was the winner. Because the other groups were envious of him, they used to tease him, saying ‘Son of the unknown’.

Here the Gäbrämädhən story says that the teasing of the other boys was especially cruel in that they said: አንተ እንደ እንግዳ ደራሽ እንደ ውኃ ፈሳሽ ነህ። “You are like an alien, someone (newly) arrived, like flowing water.” This made him ask his mother about his father.

However, the KN in part 32 relates the story much more neutrally:

And the child reached the age of twelve, and he asked his friends among the boys who were being educated with him and said unto them 'Who is my father?' And they said unto him, 'Solomon the king'.

It is after this incident that he asks his mother. His mother seems reluctant at first but finally she tells him the truth.

In all traditions except the KN, we are told that only the young Mənilik (and his brother) went to Jerusalem, without any third party. But the KN has it that Tamrin, the chief merchant, takes the young Bayna-Lehkem to Jerusalem by the order of the queen. Tradition F says እንካካ እቴጌ ምስ ዓበየ ንወላዲኡ ከተርእዮ እኅዘቶ ናብ ኢየሩሳሌም ወረደት። “And then, when he grew up she took him with her to Jerusalem to show him his father” (Fæssəha Giyorgis 1993:24).

The patriarchal rule of the Solomonids in Ethiopia may have its roots in the narrative of the KN where the Queen says to Solomon, “Henceforward a man who is of thy seed shall reign, and a woman shall nevermore reign; only seed of thine shall reign and his seed after him from generation to generation” (KN, Part 33). This part of the KN narrative is not part of the other traditions. The passage continues in a striking manner: “And if there be anyone who shall transgress this law, thy seed shall judge him forever.” If one asks, how can the seed of a human being judge forever?, the answer given in የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ መዝገበ ቃላት (1998:132) is that

Solomon and Christ are related through genealogy, so that the seed of Solomon is equated to Christ.

The young man received the ring from his mother as a sign that he was truly the child of Solomon. But, the tradition of Taddälä tells us that: **ልጁ እንደ ተወለደ የወርቅ ቀለበት ጨምረው የምስራቹን ለአባቱ ላኩ።** “And when the child (Mənilik) was born, the Queen sent the ring to his father as a sign of her glad tidings” (1997:53). None of the other traditions has such an explanation. They all agree that it was Mənilik who took the ring with him to Jerusalem.

The idea that the maidservant also gave birth to a son exists in written accounts only in Littmann’s and ‘A’məro’s versions. Makədda, ‘əššātu and Gäbrämādhən also cite this detail as part of their oral narratives. But only Littmann mentions a warning given by the queen to her child (1904:9): “My son, thy father resembles thee. Take this mirror and go [to him]; for he is very shrewd and he will hide himself from thee. And if thou seest another man sitting on the throne, do not greet him.” In this account the queen has omniscient foreknowledge of exactly what is going to happen before it happens. None of the other traditions documents this type of warning being given by the queen.

Bayna Lehkem had a mirror given to him so that he could identify his father after looking at his own face in it and comparing to Solomon’s face. But, the other boy was given no such gift. The traditions of Gäbrämādhən and Fəssəha Giyorigis tell us that Mənilik grew up looking at his image in a mirror (Fəssəha Giyorigis 1993:24).

The young man Bayna Lehkem reaches the ‘neighborhood of Gaza’, mentioned in none of the traditions other than the KN. The next citation of the KN is from the Acts of the Apostles (8:27): “And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians.” In an article in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* by

Fiaccadori (2006:672), the name Händäke (an Ethiopian name of the queen Candace) is cited as another name of the queen. But of the traditional narratives, it is only in the KN that uses this verse in reference to the queen.

We must also remember that Hərüy cites six earlier queens with very same name Händäke in his chronological list of the kings and queens of Ethiopia (1999:8-11). He additionally relates that the Händäke given in the above citation from Acts is the seventh queen of those queens who reigned after the birth of Christ, i.e. the Händäke of this story is identified as “Händäke VII”.

The KN (and no other tradition) tells us that when Bayna Lehkem arrived at Gaza, the people thought that it was King Solomon, for the two of them (Solomon and Bayna Lehkem) were exactly the same in stature. But soon a dispute arose, for some of the people in Gaza suspected that the man was not Solomon. As a means of settling the matter they sent spies to Jerusalem and found out that, in fact, it was not the king who had come to their territory. They sent word to the king that a merchant had come to Gaza who was exactly the same as him in appearance. The king sent his general to Gaza who brought Bayna Lahkem to Jerusalem, where the king received the young man in his palace with joy and happiness. These episodes are not present in the other traditions; the young man’s arrival is only noted as a simple incident.

The next episode presents arguments on which country, i.e. Ethiopia or Israel, is the better one. This is found only in the KN narrative.

3.4.8 Mənilik in Jerusalem

Once Bayna Lehkem has arrived in Jerusalem, Solomon holds a conversation with the young man; this too is mentioned only in the KN.

Next, following the queen's instructions, Tamrin, the Queen's chief merchant, tells Solomon he should 'anoint' the young man king and send him back to Ethiopia. Instead, Solomon asks his son to stay in Israel and reign after him. But Solomon's request is fruitless, for the young man insists that he must go back to Ethiopia. Bayna Lehkem says "Oh! My lord, it is impossible for me to leave my country and my mother, for my mother made me to swear by her breasts that I would not remain here but would return to her quickly, and also I would not marry a wife here". This formula for swearing an oath "on your mother's breast" is still used today.

After Solomon fails to convince the young man, he tells his officers and the elders that they should send their first-born children with Bayna Lehkem and that in this way they can rule over two kingdoms. His proposal is accepted and they do so.

The oral traditions E, M, 'A, and G relate this in another way. First, the two brothers who appear in the tradition [Mənilik and Zagwe] go to Jerusalem. Upon their arrival they are made to know their father using their personal intelligence. M has it that Mənilik has been given a photograph of his father; 'A, E and G say that Mənilik has a mirror given to him by his mother, by means of which he can distinguish his father—for the father has concealed himself in order to test the intelligence of his sons. The written tradition F also has the mirror conception.

The versions A, G and M have it that the child born to the maidservant went to the royal palace and stood before the person who was sitting on the throne and bowed. But, in version M Mənilik, making use of the photograph he has, looks around in the palace to find the man with the same face, and fails. He finally went to the stable where he found his father dressed like a beggar. As for the child born to the maidservant, in tradition M the king names him 'Zägäyä', which means "slow thinker"; in tradition A he punishes him; and in tradition G nothing is said. Another point of importance is reported in LL and A. In both we are told that the

king hid himself from Mənilik. In A it is related that the king concealed himself from Mənilik for the months of Säne (June) and Hamle (July). It was only in the third month, i.e. Nähase (August), which the king allowed Mənilik into the palace. LL says that the king hid himself from Mənilik for three years.

In version M, it is said that the king called the intelligent young man “Man aläh” “Who told you”. This means, who told you that your father was here in the stable, where is hard to clearly distinguish things? The name changed over time and became “Mənilik”, which in its present phonetic form has no meaning.

Still in the oral version M, it is narrated that the proposal made by Solomon when he wanted to acquire another kingdom through his son is different. M says that the people of Israel, after recognizing that Mənilik was as wise as his father, asked Solomon that they should not be ruled by two kings at a time. 'A adds an incident where Mənilik resolves a controversial matter in the royal court which is used to substantiate the claim of the Israelites. The idea is that King Solomon had issued a proclamation which ran, “If cattle enter into a[nother man’s] field, let the proprietor of the field confiscate the cattle”; Mənilik’s answer was “Let the proprietor of the field take six measures of grain” and he rebuked [his father], asking, “How can the cattle be confiscated?” (Littmann 1904:10-11). This is also part of 'A'əmro's and 'əšātu's narratives. It was because Mənilik commented on this controversial issue that the Israelites started to question who was their king. 'əšātu's narrative, on the other hand adds a problem which is created by the second son i.e. Zagwe. In this version, Zagwe is a dissolute young man who essentially causes a riot when he is out having a good time. Using this as a pretext the Israelites ask Solomon to send his sons back to their home. This episode reflects the harassment of the Zagwes in the political scene of Ethiopia.

According to M, Solomon sets a loophole to test the Israelites. He told them that he would send Mənilik back to his country only if they killed their firstborn sons. They did so and Solomon sent Mənilik and his brother back to Ethiopia.

3 .4.9 Mənilik’s Journey Back Home

The KN narrative then lists the firstborn sons of Israel who were sent to Ethiopia with Bayna Lehkem in part 43. This list has implications for the traditional roots of “the Ethiopian Jews”. Tradition has it that the Ethiopian Jews, the Fālashas, have their origin in Israel and came to Ethiopia accompanying the young king Mənilik and the Ark of the Covenant. Plausibly, the firstborns just mentioned were these Israelite Jews.

Part 39 of the KN narrative presents the ceremonial crowning of the young Bayna Lehkem. He is crowned king of Ethiopia with the regnal name of David II. This harks back to the name of his grandfather, David, the king of Israel. Kings named David recur repeatedly in Ethiopian history.

The idea that David the king of Israel was the founder of the Solomonids and the throne is named the “throne of David” still held true as late as the coronation of Hailäsəlasse. In his speech dated Mägabit 25-1922 E.C (as cited in K’umnägär Vol.8 No 85 Yäkatit, 2001 E.C page 21) he said:

አዋጅ

ንጉሥ ተፈሪ መኮንን

ፈጣሪያችን በህዝቡ አድሮ መርጦን እንዳናገረው አዋጅ

የእናትና ልጅ ቃል ኪዳናችን ሳይፈርስ ኖረን አሁን

በእግዚአብሔር ሕግና ትዕዛዝ ሰው ሆኖ ከመሬት የሚቀር

ስለሌለ ግርማዊ ንግስት ነገስታት በጥቂት ቀን ሕመም ዓረፉ።

የግርማዊት ንግስተ ነገስታት ማለፍ ለእኔም ለመላ ኢትዮጵያም ኃዘናችን ነው። የሕዝቡ እረኛ ንጉሥ ሲሞት ንጉሥ መተካቱ የቆየ ልማድ ስለሆነ እኔም በታጨሁበት መንበረ ዳዊት ሆኜ በእግዚአብሔር ቸርነት እጠብቅሃለሁና ነጋዴም ነግድ ገበሬም እረስ ከአባቶቼ ሲያያዝ በመጣው ህግና ደንብ አሳድርሃለሁ።

መጋቢት ፳፭ ቀን ፲፱፻፳፪ ዓ.ም

Proclamation

King Tāfāri Mākonān

A proclamation, as our Creator has elected us and issued it through the mouth of his people: We have lived together, our covenant kept like a mother and her child: Now as it is impossible for a human being to escape death, for it is the law and order of God; her majesty the queen of kings has passed away after a few days' illness.

The death of her majesty is a sad event to me and to all Ethiopia. As it is a custom to replace a king when the king, the shepherd of his people, dies, so will I keep you through the mercy of God, being on the throne of David where I am placed. As a result the merchant should do his business and the farmer should perform his harvest as usual. I will lead you by the law and regulation that has come down from my forefathers.

Mägabit 25-1922 E.C

The next part of the KN (i.e. part 40) says that Zadok the high priest gives commandments on which the rule of the crowned prince Mənilik shall depend. Part 41 also advances the idea that kings are blessed.

The just-mentioned episodes in parts 40 and 41 of the KN appear in no other versions of the Sheba-Solomon narrative.

The KN in part 44 makes the strong remark that one should not revile the king. “Now it is not a seemly thing to revile the king, for he is the anointed of God”. This may be the source of the Ethiopian saying ንጉሥ አይወቀስ ሰማይ አይታረስ “A king is not to be reviled just as the sky is not to be ploughed.” This quotation from the KN has a bearing in the speech of Hailāsəlasse cited above: ፈጣሪያችን በሀዘቡ አድሮ መር ጦን “our creator has elected us through his people” is a reflection of the idea ‘... for he (the king) is the anointed of God’

3.4.9.1 The Plot to Take Zion

A plot to take Zion (i.e. the Tablets in the Ark) is narrated in part 45 of the KN. This plot exists in the versions M, R, E, where the priest [name not mentioned] exchanges the ark of the angel Michael for that of Zion when Mənilik and his people depart from Jerusalem. The narrative A has it that Mənilik himself made a model of the Ark and exchanged it for the real Ark.

The KN version of the plot about taking Zion starts with the high priest 'Azaryas asking his countrymen who are ready to depart to Ethiopia to swear him an oath on an issue which he does not mention beforehand. They swear, and he tells them that he is going to take Zion from the temple and that they shall carry it with them. He asks them for money to pay a carpenter to build a box similar in size and shape to that of the seat of Zion. Next is related a dream that 'Azaryas has dreamed. In the dream

an angel of the Lord appears who supports 'Azaryas in his idea of taking Zion with him. The core of the plot is explained in the dream.

The other versions of the story have nothing to say about this dream. Secondly, in the narration of the dream is the expression "He (the angel) has sealed him ('Azaryas) [with the sign of the cross]". This expression is an anachronism reflecting the Christian ideology of the writers of the story.

3.4.9.2 Zion Taken to Ethiopia

It is only after Bayna Lehkem left Jerusalem and the city fell into great sadness that Solomon felt a new feeling he had never experienced. The KN (part 50) expresses this: "There was not a house wherein there was not wailing, from man even to the beast; the dogs howled, and the asses screamed, and all those who were left there mingled their tears together."

This bitter expression appears in no other version of the story. The atmosphere created as a result of this description carries the clear implication: The might of Jerusalem has gone to Ethiopia. This fear then makes Solomon remember the dream he saw while he was in bed with the Queen. Solomon tells Zadok about the dream in part 56, which changes the mood into one of profound grief. Zadok explains each symbol in the king's dream as an element in the story of the theft of the Ark. Zadok finds nothing in the temple but an ordinary wooden box. These incidents reveal the truth to the king and he sets out on a campaign to pursue the men of Ethiopia.

In the KN narrative, Solomon asks Zadok to see the Ark (Zion) simply based on his own personal feeling. In Littman's account the reason is different, as is also given in Gäbrämädhan's and Makødda's narratives. Littmann (1904:11) narrates "After a few days a storm rose in Jerusalem, and Solomon said 'Look for Mary's ark'".

From this a few observations can be made:

- First, the Ark of the Covenant is directly called “St. Mary”, an anachronism in this pre-Christian context.
- Secondly, the KN narrative tells us that it was the instant Mənilik and his men left Jerusalem that the city was filled with woe and Solomon was disturbed and told the high priest to look for Zion. But Littmann’s narration we are told that Mənilik and his men were very far away when the messenger reached them. The KN narrative tells this differently. A group of soldiers with the fastest wagons were sent to pursue the men of Ethiopia, but they could not overtake them.

However, in narrative A, Solomon notices that there is a problem with the Ark only after he has a dream in which he sees something missing from it.

The KN narrative tells us that Solomon orders his army to pursue the men of Ethiopia. The narrative by ‘Aəməro reports it differently: says that it was Solomon himself who tried to pursue Mənilik.

But, as is related in part 53, the men of Ethiopia were given the fastest wagons, which could cover a distance of thirteen days’ march in one day. The wagons are miraculous in other ways, too: in part 58 we read that they are “suspended in the air”. It was only when the Israelites with King David II (Mənilik) arrived at ‘Takkazi’ that they told the king that the Ark Zion was with them, which caused him extreme delight: “And king (David) rose up and skipped about like a young sheep and like a kid of the goats that hath sucked milk in abundance from his mother.”

The oral account by Littmann contains several striking features about the return of Mənilik from Jerusalem. One noteworthy incident in Littmann’s narrative is its mention of a place called “Qayəh-kör”, in which a deacon named “Gäbrä Həywot” died. In Littmann’s account, this Gäbrä Həywot is

the person who carried the Ark. There is a philological concern regarding this man's name, which is purely Geez. Whether Geez existed as a language within the time frame of this narration is an intriguing question. There is also a clash here with the facts as given in the KN. We are told in the KN that the priest Azaryas accompanied Mənilik to Ethiopia. If so, then it should have been this Azaryas who carried the Ark, not Gäbrä Həywot.

In Littmann's narrative the death of Gäbrä Həywot is accompanied by a curious story. Gäbrä Həywot died and was buried. Thereupon the Ark refused to be lifted up. At Mənilik's order they dug him up and had him reburied in a coffin, but still the Ark was immobile. When they dug him up for a second time, they found his finger outside the coffin and buried it with him. Only then did the Ark started to move. (Narrative A tells the same tale but the person who died is anonymous.)

3.4.9.3 Zion Arriving at Aksum

The last part of Littmann's narrative (page 13) is worth quoting in full.

And after they had entered Tigray, they came to Axum. Now Satan was building a house in order to fight against God. But, when they said: "Mary has come to thee", he destroyed it and left it. [There was] one big stone [which] he had raised in order to carry it, but when they said, "She has come to thee", he left it and went away. And with those stones with which he had been building, they built a church for Mary. But the big stone is standing [there] upright even today.

This citation from EL's narrative recalls the story of the Tower of Babel given in Genesis 11 of the Bible. There is an Ethiopian tradition that is narrated in relation to this biblical passage, which is very similar to what

is cited above (EL). The tradition says that the people of 'Sāna'or', i.e. Babylon, were building the tower in order to fight against God. When the height of tower increased, they begun to throw arrows up to the sky so that they might hurt God. Satan painted the tip of the arrows with blood, which delighted the builders. It was this arrogance and blasphemy which resulted in the mix of their languages related in Genesis. Littmann has also touches upon this similarity.

In Ethiopian tradition, the "big stones" erected by Satan are linked to the erection of the obelisks at Aksum. These awe-inspiring monolithic obelisks are thus subjected to a legendary embellishment. The present-day clergy at Aksum would tell you that the obelisks are standing because of the power of St. Mary of Zion, an explanation which traces its roots back to the above citation.

3.5 Contrasts

3.5.1 Contrasts across the Written Traditions

In these contrasts the biblical story will serve as a framework, as the oldest documented story about the queen and Solomon. The thematic framework given in the Bible is of the form: "The queen heard about Solomon's fame and travelled to see him. She witnessed his wisdom. She gave him gifts and came back home."

The Quran thematic framework runs: "A hoopoe tells Solomon about the existence of a queen who worships the sun. The queen sends gifts to Solomon through her envoy. Solomon tells the envoy to invite the queen to go to him in person. The queen surrenders to Allah; she is tricked by a glass floor set in Solomon's palace."

The KN thematic framework is almost the same as the Biblical narrative with the following additions:

- ❖ Her initiative to go to Solomon is supported by another character: Tamrin, who tells the queen about Solomon.

- ❖ A crucial night is added in the KN during which the conception of the King Mənilik (David II) occurs.
- ❖ Related to the child are the stories about his journey to Jerusalem, the theft of the Ark of the Covenant (Zion), and his coronation as king.
- ❖ The coming of the firstborns of Israel to Ethiopia with Mənilik.
- ❖ The dream of Solomon while in bed with the queen is used by the narrator to foreshadow the coming episodes in the narration.
- ❖ Particular names of people and places are added which are not in the biblical narrative.

3.5.2 Contrasts Across the Oral Documentary Traditions

Most of the oral documentary traditions echo the elements given in the KN narrative: the journey of the queen, the birth of Mənilik and the theft of the Ark. An exception is the narrative which focuses only on the 'Arwe.

The peculiar characteristic of the oral documentary narratives is that the 'Arwe, a creature which is not mentioned in the Bible, Quran and the KN, is part of all of them.

Following is a summary of the characteristic features of each of the oral documentary accounts:

The oral documentary by Däbtära Fəssəha Gəyorgis has a peculiar feature in that it presents the 'Arwe narrative as a separate story, distinct from and parallel to the Makədda narrative. His version, however, is almost exactly the same as one of the narratives presented by 'Abba Yəshak' in connection with Makədda. In this 'Arwe story, there is no connection at all between the 'Arwe and the queen. The 'Arwe is killed by an anonymous man who thereby ends the 'Arwe's reign. A striking feature of this document is Fəssəha Gəyorgis' comment on the 'Arwe tradition: the writer believes that the tradition he is relating is totally fictitious or is symbolic.

Fəssəha Gəyorgis presents the Makədda story as a distinct unit. In his version there is no mention of the maidservant going to Jerusalem with the queen, nor (of course) of the queen being born together with the 'Arwe. The idea that the queen gave Mənilik a mirror is also part of this account.

The account by 'Abba Yəshak' mentions two generations of 'Arwe. This is peculiar just to this version. As only this account gives such special emphasis to the 'Arwe tradition, it can be called the 'Arwe document in this regard. In this tradition, unlike some others, Makədda is not herself born together with an 'Arwe, though a different girl is. This account narrates the creation of *t'ef* from the head of the 'Arwe killed by Gəbgabo. It has almost nothing to say about the queen's voyage to Jerusalem and the coming of the Jews to Ethiopia with the Ark of the Covenant.

Littmann's account presents the 'Arwe as the king of the people. The 'Arwe in this tradition is not mentioned having been born with the queen. The account presents the idea that the queen went to Jerusalem with her maidservant, both of whom concealed themselves as men. This tradition presents the Ark as carried by a deacon called Gəbrä Həywot. Satan building a house is an element which is found only in this narrative.

'Aəməro's narrative, though with many modern features, included mention of the 'Arwe as a king. It narrates the seduction of the queen and her maidservant. The following parts of the narrative are peculiar to it:

- The description of the beauty of the maidservant
- The presence of an old woman in a cave who is reported to have foretold the journey of both Zagwe and Mənilik.
- The way the stranger kills the 'Arwe, i.e. by poisoning the 'Arwe with a milk-like poison.

Tadälä does not mention the 'Arwe as part of his narrative, though he mentions the queen and her servant. The writer presents the work with a thematic focus on "love". It presents a land in Gaza as a possession of the Ethiopians which was given as a token by Solomon to the queen.

All the above versions except Tadälä's have the 'Arwe as part of their narrative.

3.5.3 Contrasts within the Oral Narratives

The student Makødda's narrative does not mention the 'Arwe as part of its narration. It presents the reason for the queen's journey as a journey in search of a cure for her deformity. It mentions the servant and the queen both journeying to Jerusalem. It also mentions the Ark of the Covenant and the Ark of Michael. The peculiar part of this narrative is the notion that Mønilik has a photograph of his father when he goes to Jerusalem.

The narrative by Gäbrämädhøn tells that the 'Arwe was a king and a deity. Like Makødda's narrative it also tells that the queen went to Jerusalem to get healed, though it also mentions her desire for wisdom. Peculiar to this tradition is the healing of the queen's foot by a mysterious piece of wood which was lying at the gate of the royal palace.

'øšätu's narrative has two peculiarities. It relates that Solomon gave Mønilik and Zagwe two envelopes as gifts. Upon their return to Ethiopia, they present the envelopes to the queen. The queen opens the envelopes and punishes Zagwe by sending him out of the palace. This part of the narrative tells us that the brothers went to Jerusalem together, which is peculiar to it. Secondly, the narrative considers that the hoof on the queen's feet was the result of the tears she wept on the father's grave.

The narrative by Lik'ä Lik'awønt Yared has no peculiar features except its explanation of 'Azeb. It is claimed (incorrectly) that Ethiopia lies exactly to the South-west of Jerusalem.

The main similarity among these oral narratives is that they do not mention the 'Arwe as part of their narrative except that of Gäbrämädhøn.

3.5.4 The Developments Recapitulated

In this part of the analysis the biblical account is taken as the main framework. Other differing developments are given as additions.

	Points of contrast	Biblical account	Developments
1	'Arwe	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mentioned as born with the queen ❖ Mentioned born alone and ruling over people. ❖ Two successive 'Arwes mentioned as ruling other people.
2	'Arwe's death	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Killed by the intelligence of Makødda ❖ Killed by anonymous stranger who was later the father of the queen of Sheba ❖ Killed by the "seven saints" who delivered the queen from death.
3	Queen's name	Queen of Sheba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Makødda ➤ Nægøstä Saba ➤ Nægøstä 'Azeb

	Points of contrast	Biblical account	Developments
4	Parents' names ❖ Mother ❖ Father	❖ Not mentioned ❖ Not mentioned	❖ Ismenie ❖ 'Agabos (Gəbgabo)
5	Reason for journey	To test Solomon with hard questions	➔ To see the wisdom of Solomon ➔ To be healed from her deformed leg
6	Her knowledge of Solomon	Heard anonymously	➤ Tamrin (her caravan leader) told her ➤ The Sabeans told her ➤ Heard it from anonymous person ➤ A jinni sent by Solomon told her to go.
7	Her journey to Jerusalem	Accompanied by many soldiers and servants	✓ With many soldiers and servants ✓ With her maidservant only.
8	The day she arrived	She is given a place to rest	• Passed the night with Solomon • Was given lodging • Passed the night with Solomon with her maidservant
10	The trick for the seduction	Not mentioned	❖ Solomon made the queen eat very spicy meal which resulted in her thirst. She wanted to drink

	Points of contrast	Biblical account	Developments
			<p>water and did so but Solomon accused her of breaking her oath and she let him sleep with her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Solomon placed a skin full of honey which let him know that the concealed persons were women when they started to lick it.
11	Birthplace of child	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bala Zadisareya ➤ May Bäla
12	Child	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Only Mənilik ❖ Mənilik and Zagwe
13	Child(ren)'s journey	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ With his mother-Mənilik ✓ With Tamrin-Mənilik ✓ Mənilik and Zagwe together
14	Theft of the Ark	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mənilik through Azaryas took the Ark of the Covenant (Zion) with him to Ethiopia. ❖ Mənilik, though told to take the Ark of Michael, took the

	Points of contrast	Biblical account	Developments
			Ark of St. Mary of Zion (The Ark of the covenant) with him.
15	How Solomon heard of the theft	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Disturbed by the woes of the people, he asks Zadok to look for the Ark (Zion). ✚ A storm broke out in Jerusalem which induced Solomon to ask about Zion.
16	People mentioned with the coming of the Ark	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstborns from all tribes of Israel • A deacon called GäbräHəywot carries the Ark and dies in a place called 'Qayeh Qor'
17	Arrival of the Ark in Ethiopia	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrived in Ethiopia and the people of Ethiopia received it in Aksum with joy. • Satan was building a house in Aksum and he fled upon the arrival of the Ark.

3.5.5 Tracing the Developments

From the above contrasts and recapitulation, the developments of the story can be grouped into the following aspects:

- ❖ The common core: This refers to the shared thematic element found in all the narratives. Though there are differences among the traditions, they all have a common denominator: A QUEEN WENT TO JERUSALEM TO SEE SOLOMON. All the other aspects develop from different motives with differing compositional or narrative aims.
- ❖ Developments in naming the queen and other characters of the story: These are the type of developments natural in any legendary account. The people who claim to have the legendary hero as their redeemer usually name him/her a name which they assume should be given to such a character. This is evident in the names given to the redeemers of the queen from the 'Arwe. Taking the Biblical account as a framework, the following names are involved in this type of development:
 - Names of the queen and her parents
 - Names of the caravan chief
 - Name/s of her son
 - Name of the birthplace of Mønilik
 - Names of the son born to the maidservant
 - Names of the people and priests who came to Ethiopia
 - Name of the deacon who is reported to have carried the Ark of the Covenant
- ❖ Deliberate additions: These additions are intentional inclusions to the body of the narrative. They include:
 - The account of the birth of Mønilik, with the dream of Solomon while he was in bed with the queen.
 - The further addition that the maidservant also gave birth a son to Solomon.
 - The theft of the Ark of the Covenant.

3.5.6 Whys of the developments

Developments in any case have a reason for their occurrence. In the narratives of the queen and Solomon, the developments have ideological implications:

- The specific personal names used in the story emerge out of the conception that giving specific names and narrating the etymology of the name can justify the existence of a given legendary figure—examples are when Hərūy explains the name Makədda, and Lik’ä Lik’awənt Yared tries to explain the etymology of one of the names of the queen, i.e. ’Azeb.
- The dream in the KN narrative is a deliberate addition, for it narrates that the queen will give birth to a child. This child is given as the founder of the Solomonic dynasty. On the other hand, the child born to the maidservant is given as the founder of the Zagwe dynasty. The dream in the KN narrative explains that the glory of Israel has gone to Ethiopia and that the sons of the child conceived shall be the rulers of the land of Ethiopia thereafter. Because the Zagwes were considered as “usurpers” in Ethiopian history, that the narrative in this regard can be considered anti-Zagwe propaganda.
- Drawing upon factual traces like the refined beauty of the obelisks at Aksum, one of the narratives explains that the obelisks were erected by Satan and that they are still standing because of the power of the Ark.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion, we can draw the following conclusions:

- The narrative has changed through time both thematically and structurally. The thematic change is obvious in the later versions of the story. The additions related to the birth of Mənilik, the theft of the Ark, the birth of Zagwe from the maidservant and the 'Arwe reigning over people are thematic changes which imply diverse concerns of the people who added them. As to the structural changes, we see the basic narrative presented in the Bible as a linear narrative with no particular literary qualities, i.e. it presents it as a simple tale. However, the later versions like the KN have created plots that add to the literary quality: suspense, psychology, and 'human interest' are featured prominently.

- Fanciful folk etymologies are incorporated in the later versions. These types of additions are evident in the names of the queen, her son, the son born to the maidservant.

- Regardless of whether they present "true" history, the additions have surely played a great role in the political history of Ethiopia.

- Typical additions like that of the Ark have religious and national values. It should be noted that it is a fervent belief of the Ethiopian Orthodox church that it is in possession of the true Ark of the Covenant.

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ኪዳነ ወልድ ክፍሌ፣ 1948፣ መጽሐፈ ሰዋስው ወግስ ወመዝገብ ቃላት ሐዲስ፣ ኣዲስ ኣበባ፣ ኣርቲስቲክ ማተሚያ ቤት

ወንጌል ቅዱስ ዘእግዚእነ ወመድኅኒነ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ፣ ወመጻሕፍቲሆሙ ለሐዋርያቲሁ ቅዱሳን፣ ማኅበረ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ዘኢትዮጵያ (ቀን የሌለው)

የመፅሐፍ ቅዱስ መዝገብ ቃላት፣ 1998፣ የኢትዮጵያ መፅሐፍ ቅዱስ ማኅበር፣ ኣዲስ ኣበባ ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ቤት

የንግስተ ሳባ ጥያቄዎች ሌሎችም ታሪኮች፣ 1956፣ ኣዲስ ኣበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ቤት

ደብተራ ፍስሐ ጊዮርጊስ ዓብዮዝጊ፣ 1993፣ ታሪኽ ኢትዮጵያ፣ ኣዲስ ኣበባ፣ ቤት ማሕተም ብርሃንና ሰላም

[The dates in the Geez, Amharic and Tigrigna entries are in the Ethiopian Calendar.]

APPENDICES

These appendices are part of the documentation work of this thesis. They testify the ever-changing nature of the story.

Appendix 1

The Amharic version of the narrative by Gäbrämädhən (Narrative G) written by the researcher.

ንግስተ ሳባ፥ ንግስተ ማክዳ፥ ንግስተ አዜብ ተብላ ነው የምትጠራው። በነገራችን ላይ የእስራኤል እና የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ በብዙ ነገር ይመሳሰላል። ለምሳሌ እስራኤል ላይ ደራጎን የሚባል የሚያመልኩት ዘንድ ነበራቸው። ይህንን ደራጎን የሚባል አንዳንድ ሰው እየሰጡ ሲገቡ ቅዱስ ጊዮርጊስ ነው ሂዶ ይህ አምልኮ ባዕድ ነው ብሎ በእግዚአብሔር ኃይል የገደለው። ልክ እንደዚህ በተመሳሳይ ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥም ዘንድ የሚያመልኩ ሰዎች ነበሩ። አንድ አንድ አፈ ታሪክ አባቶች ከቃል ወደ ቃል እያስተላለፉ ያመጡት ማክዳ በምትወለድበት ጊዜ አብሯት እባብ ተወልዷል ነው የሚሉት።

ያ እባብ ወደ በረሃ ሄዶ ዘንድ ሆነ። ያ ዘንድ ነው እንግዲህ እንደ አምልኮ አድርገው አንዳንድ ሰው ይሰጡት የነበረው። ማክዳ ለአባቷ፣ አባቷ አገረ ገዢ ስለነበረ፣ ለምንድነው ይህ አውሬ እኛን እየበላ ሰዎችን እየበላ የሚኖረው ስትለው አምላካችን ነው፥ የእኛ ፈጣሪ ነው ሲላት፣ እንዴ! እንዴት እኛን ፈጥሮ እኛን ይበላል? መጥፋት አለበት ስትለው አባቷ ፈራ። እንዴት እናጠፋለን ሲላት፣ ማጥፋት እማ ቀላል ነው። አሁን ዙሪያውን በሙሉ ልክ እንደ እሳት መከላከያ እንቆጥረው እና አገር እንዳይቃጠል ዙሪያውን ከቆፈርነው በኋላ እሳት እንልቀቅበት አለችው። እሺ ተባባሉ። እሳት ለቀቁበት። እንዲህ አድርጋ ዘንድውን አስወገደችው። ካስወገደችው በኋላ ግን መርገም ስለነበረ የዘንድው አጥንት ወግቷት ሸኾና ነገር ሆነ እግሯ። እንደዚህ ሆኖ በምትኖርበት ጊዜ እነዚህ ሳባውያን ከእስራኤል ፈልሰው የመጡ ስለነበሩ እኛ እንደ አባቶቻችን አምላክ እንዳከበረው እንደ ንጉስ ሰለሞን ጥበበኛ ነሽ። በጥበብ ከዚህ አውሬ አድነሽናል ስለዚህ ስምሽ ማክዳ ሳይሆን ንግስተ ሳባ፣ የሳባውያን ሁሉ ንግስት ነሽ እና እያሉ ያምግሷታል። እንግዲህ እንደ ሰለሞን ጥበበኛ ነሽ ሲሏት፣ ሰለሞን ማነው የሚል ጥያቄ መጣባት። ሰለሞን ማን ነው እያለች እያብሰለሰለች እያለ ስለ ሰለሞን አንዳንድ ታሪኮችና የሱ የዘመኑ የፈጠራ ስራዎች ሲነግሯት ሂጄ ማየት አለብኝ ብላ በወቅቱ የከበረ ማዕድን፣ ዕንቁ፥ አደስና ቀኔ የተባሉ መልካም መዳዘ ያላቸው ሽቶዎች ከሌሎች ገጸበረከቶች ጋር ጭና ተጓዘች። ጉዞውም በእግር ነበር። አሁን ይህ ባብኤልመንደብ የሚባለው ወሽመጥ

አፍሪካና ኤስያን የሚያገናኝ ደረቅ መሬት ስለነበረ በዛ በግመል እና በፈረስ ጓዟን ጭና ኢየሩሳሌም ደረሰች።

እዛ ከደረሰች በኋላ የንጉስ ሰለሞን ግቢ ጋር ስትደርስ በርቀት የቤተ መንግስቱን ዘበኛ ተመለከተችና ጠርታ መምጣቷን እንዲነግርላት ለመነቸው። ዘበኛውም ንጉስ ሆይ! የቸኮሌት ከለር ያላት ከእስራኤላውያን ወይም ከኤስያውያን ለየት ያለች በጣም የምታምር ሴት መጥታለች። ነገር ግን እግሯ አከባቢ ሸኾና ወጥቶባታል። ብዙ አጃቢዎችም አሏት አለው። እስኪ ትሁን ግቢ በላት ሲለው ንግስቲቱ ስትገባ በሰለሞን በራፍ ላይ የነበረ ግንድ እግሯን ሲነካው ያ ሸኾና ወደቀ። ከዛ በኋላ ውስጥ ስትገባ የንግስቲቱ ተክለ ቁመና ያማረ ነው! የተባለው ሸኾናም የለም። ሰለሞን እጅግ በጣም አደነቀ። ለአሽከሩም አንተ ውሸታም ነህ ብሎ እንደገሰጸው ታሪክ ያወሳል።

መዘንጋት የሌለበት እስክንድር የተባለ ፈላስፋ አሞራና ፈረስን አዳቅሏል። ይህም አሞራና ፈረስ አዳቅሎ ሥጋ እየበላ እንዲበር አድርጎት በዛ ፈረስ ላይ ተቀምጦ ገነት እንደገባ አፈታሪክ ይናገራል። ገነት በሚገባበት ጊዜ ግን የገነት መልአክ ሱራሬ አባትህ አዳም ኃጢአት ሰርቶ ከዚህ ገነት ወጥቷል። ከዚህ በኋላ በአጸደ ነፍስ እንጅ በአጸደ ሥጋ ልትገባ ማን ፈቀደልህ? ብሎ በቁጣ ሰይፉ ሲመዘበት ወደ ፈረሱ ሄደ። ፈረሱ ግን መልአኩን ፈርቶ ታስሮበት የነበረው ግንድ ነቅሎ ወደ መሬት ተመለሰ። ያ ግንድ ከሰለሞን ደጃፍ ነበር የተቀመጠው።

ይህ ተአምረኛ ከገነት የመጣ ግንድ የንግስቷን ሸኾና እግር ነቅሏል። በዚህ ጊዜ እሷ ይህ ግንድ ተአምረኛ ነው ብላ አንድ ብር ለጥፋብታለች። ሰለሞንም ስትነግረው አንድ ብር ለጥፎበታል። ከዛ በኋላ ከሰለሞን ውጭ የነገሱት ነገሥታት ቁጥር 28 ነው። እነዚህ ነገስታትም አንድ አንድ ብር ሸልመውታል። ከዛ ግንዱ 30 ብር ተለጥፎበታል ማለት ነው። በጣም የሚገርመው ግን በኋላኛው ዘመን ክርስቶስ ከድንግል ማርያም ከተወለደ በኋላ የመስቀል እንጨት ሲያዘጋጁ ያን ግንድ ነበር ያነሱት።

እንግዲህ በአጠቃላይ የንግስተ ሳባን ውበትና መልክ ያደነቀው ሰለሞን የፍቅር ጥያቄ አቅርቦላት ነበር። እስከ ቅርብ ጊዜ ድረስ በኢትዮጵያ የድንግልና ህይወት ዋጋ ነበረው። ስለዚህ እሷም “እኛ መንገስ የምንችለው የክብረ ንጽህናችን፣ የታማኝነታችን አርማ የሆነው ድንግልናችን ይዘን ስንገኝ ብቻ ነው። ስለዚህ ድንግልናዬን አሳልፌ ከሰጠሁ የኢትዮጵያ ንግስት መሆኔ ይቀራል። ስለዚህ አየሆንም አለችው።” ከዛ ሰለሞን ጥበበኛ ስለነበረ እንግዲህ በወቅቱ ቧንቧ ውኃ አዘጋጅቶ ይሁን ወይም በሌላ አናውቅም እራት በሚሆንበት ጊዜ ጨው የበዛበት ምግብ አቀረበላት። “አንቺ ፈቃዴ ከፈጸምሽ እኔም ያንቺን ፈቃድ ለምን አልፈፅምም።” ብሎ ዝም አለ። መጨረሻ ላይ ጨው የበዛበት ምግብ

ስለበላች ውኃ ጥም ተቃጠለችና ከመተኛቷ በፊት ግን ውኃ በብርጭቆ አስቀምጧል። ለመጠጣት ፈልጋ ሰለሞን እስኪተኛ ትጠብቅ ነበር። ተኝቷል አልተኛም እያለች እያረጋገጠች እያለች ለደንገጥሯ ሂጂ አንቺ ቀድተሽ ነይ ስትላት እሱ ደግሞ ሳባ መስሎት ይዟታል። “ፈቃዴን ሳትፈፀሚ ለምን ትጠጭያለሽ?” ሲላት “እኔ ልጠጣ ጠምቶኛል ፈቃድህን ፈፀምና” ስትለው ተገናኝቷታል። እንግዲህ ሴቶች ሚስጢር ይጠብቃሉና “እህ” ስትላት “ጠጥቻለሁ” እንጂ እንዲህ ሁኛለሁ አላለቻትም። ንግስተ ሳባም ልትጠጣ ተነስታ ስትሄድ አሁንም ንጉሠ ያዛት። በመጨረሻ ላይ “ለምን ፈቃዴን እምቢ ብለሽ የእኔን ውኃ ትጠጭያለሽ?” ሲላት በጣም ተጠምታ ስለነበረ በቃ ምንም ማድረግ አልቻለችም እሺ አለችው።

ከዛ ከተገናኙ በኋላ ሁለቱም ጸንሰው ወደ ኢትዮጵያ መጡ። ሲመለሱም አስመራ አካባቢ አሁንም ጭምር ከአስመራ ወጣ ብለህ ማይበላ የምትባል ቦታ አለች። እዛች ጋር ስትደርስ ምጥ መጣባት [ንግስተ ሳባ]። እኔ ተሎ በሉ ውኃ በሉ ማይ በሉ ምናምን ሲሉ “ማይበላ” ተብላ እንደምትጠራ አባቶች ይነግሩናል። ከዛ ወደ አክሱም ቤተመንግስት መጡ። አክሱም ቤተመንግስት ከገቡ በኋላ የ18 እና የ20 ዓመት አካባቢ ወጣት ሲሆን የንግስቲቱ ልጅ ገና ጨዋታ የታወቀ ነውና በዚህ ጨዋታ ላይ የምኒሊክ ቡድን ያሸንፋል። እነዚያ አንተ እንደ ወፍ እንደ እንግዳ ደራሽ አባትህ አይታወቅ ዘርህ አይታወቅ እያሉ ሲሰድቡት “አባቴ ማነው” ብሎ እናቱን ጠየቃት። ከዛ በኋላ ነው አባቱን እንዲያውቅ ወደ እስራኤል ልትልከው የተዘጋጀችው። ከዛ በፊት ግን “አባቴ ማነው” ሲላት ሰለሞን የቁም መስተዋት ሰጥቷት ነበርና “ራስህን እየው አባትህ አንተን ይመስላል” ትለው ነበር።

የገረጃ ልጅና የንግስቷ ልጅ ሆነው ወደ እስራኤል ሄዱ። ልጅህ መጣ በሚባልበት ጊዜ ሰለሞን መንበሩን ለቆ ከሌሎች አሽከሮች ጋር ተቀመጠ። ይህም ያደረገው ለፈተና ነው። በመንበሩም ላይ ሌላ ሰው አስቀመጠ። የሳባ ልጅ ምኒሊክ በመስተዋት እያየ ያደገው የራሱን ምስል አልመስል ስላለው መንበር ላይ ተቀምጦ የነበረውን ሰው ትቶ ወደ ሌሎቹ ዙሮ ካሽከሮቹ አባቱን ለየው። ከዛ “እናትህ ምን ብላ ስትልክ ነው” ብሎ “ምኒሊክ” አለው። ያኔ ያወጣለትን ስም ወደ አማርኛ ቀይረው ምኒሊክ ብለውታል። እንደገና ደግሞ ያሸከሯ ልጅ ዝም ብሎ ንጉሥ ነው አባትህ ስለተባለ ብቻ በዙፋን ላይ የነበረውን ሰው “አባቴ” ሲለው “ይህ የዘገየ ነው” ብለው “ዛጌ” አሉት። ዛጌ የአገው አካባቢ ግዛት ይገዛ እንደነበረ ይነገራል።

ከዛ በኋላ ነው እንግዲህ እዛው ቆይተው ልጆቹ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ የመጡት። የመጡበትም ምክንያት እስራኤላውያን ክርስቶስ ከእኛ ይወለዳል የሚል እምነት ስለነበራቸው ዘራችን

እንዳይበላሽ ልጆችህን ወደ አገራቸው ላክ ያሉት። እንግዲህ ንጉሡ ሰለሞን ቅድመ ሁኔታ አስቀመጠ። “እኔ በክር ልጄ ከኢትዮጵያ ነው የወለድኩት፤ የበክር ልጄን ከአገሪ የማስወጣ ከሆነ እናንተም በክር በክር ልጆችሁን አስወጡ።” የሚል ቅድመ ሁኔታ አስቀመጠ። የሀገር ሽማግሌዎች ተማክሩና ከሌላ አገር መጥቶ የእኛን ምርጥ ዘር ከሚያበላሽብን፤ ቃልኪዳን የተገባልን ሱባኤ የተቆጠረልን ሰዎች ዘራችን ከሚቀላቀል በቃ አንድ አንድ ልጄ እንስጥ ብለው ወሰኑ። ነገር ግን በእስራኤላውያን ልማድ በክር ልጄ ለቤተ መቅደስ ነበር የሚሰጠው። ስለዚህ ሁሉም የበክር ልጆች በወቅቱ የቤተ መቅደስ አገልግሎት ይሰጡ ነበር። እናም ሁሉም አንባቢዎች፤ ጸሐፊዎችና አዋቂዎች ስለነበሩ “እኛን ሂዱ ብላችሁ ከፈረዳችሁብን የምናመልከውን ጽላት ስጡን።” አሏቸው። ሙሴ የተቀበለው ጽላት ሁለት ነው። አንዱ የቅድስት ማርያም አንዱ የሚካኤል መሆኑ ነው የምናውቀው። ስለዚህ የሚካኤልን ውሰዱ አሏቸው። እነሱ ደግሞ የሚካኤልን መጎናጸፍያ ለታቦተ ጽዮን የታቦተ ጽዮንን መጎናጸፍያ ለሚካኤል አድርገው ታቦተ ጽዮንን ይዘው ወጡ።

ከወጡ በኋላ ታላቅ አውሎ ነፋስ ስለተነሳ በዚህ ጊዜ “አምባችን መጠጊያችን ታቦተ ጽዮን ምን ሁኔታ ነው እስኪ እዩዋት።” አለ ንጉሡ ሰለሞን። ሂደው ሲያዩ መጎናጸፍያው ስላለ አላች አሉ። ነገር ግን መጨረሻ ላይ እንዳልሆነ ተረዱና “የኤርትራን ባሕር ከተሻገሩ ተወክላቸው ካልተሻገሩ መልሷቸው።” ብሎ ንጉሡ ሰራዊቱን ላከ። እንደ እግዚአብሔር ፈቃድ ተሻግረው ነበሩና ቢዘህ አጋጣሚ ታቦተ ጽዮንንና የኦሪት መጻሕፍትን ይዘው ወደ ኢትዮጵያ እንደገቡ ነው ታሪኩ የሚያትተው።

English translation of the narrative by Gäbrämādhən

She is called Nəgästā Saba, Nəgästā Makədda and Nəgästā 'Azeb. By the way the history of Ethiopia and Israel is similar in many ways. For example, there was a deity worshipped by the Israelites called dragon. They used to give him a girl each day as a tribute. It was Saint George who killed the dragon in the name of God. In a similar manner there was a serpent in Ethiopia which was worshipped. In many oral legends that have come down from our fathers, it is related that Queen Makədda was born with a serpent. The serpent grew and lived in the wilderness. The people worshipped him and gave him a person each day.

Since her father was a ruler, Makødda asked him why the people were giving tribute to the serpent. He told her that the serpent is their god. Marveling at her father's answer, she asked: "How can a creator devour his creatures? It should be killed; it can't be our creator!" But her father was afraid for the serpent was mighty. She convinced him at last and she told him the way to kill the serpent: "We shall dig out the area far from the serpent's habitation encircling the serpent, so that the fire will not spread to the nearby locality; then we will set fire to the serpent's habitation." The people did as she said and they killed the serpent. As a result of a curse, her leg was changed into an ass's hoof when she stepped on the serpent's bones after his death.

While she was living with the deformity, the people used to praise her for what she had done. As people were Sabeans, they used to praise her saying: "Like Solomon whom God has chosen, you are wise. You have delivered us from this serpent through your wisdom and thus you should reign over us. And your name should henceforth be Nægøstä Saba as you are the queen of all of us— the Sabeans."

She started to wonder about who Solomon was. When she was thinking over this matter, she additionally came to know that Solomon was a wise man of superior ability. She then set out on to her journey to meet Solomon in person. She loaded spices, pearls and sweet-scented plants like 'Adäs and k'une and made her way to Jerusalem. Her journey was on land. She crossed through the land mass called Bab El-Mandeb.

When she arrived in Jerusalem, a palace guard told Solomon that a very beautiful woman with a chocolate complexion had arrived. She, the guard added, is not from Asia or Israel. But, the guard continued, she has a leg with an ass's hoof. Solomon ordered the guard to let the woman into his palace.

While on her way into to the palace, she passed a log which healed her deformity. When she entered the palace, Solomon noticed that she was very beautiful and that there was no such thing as an ass's hoof on her leg. Annoyed, Solomon reproached the guard for lying.

One thing to recall here is that there was a philosopher called ' 'ask'andør living in Jerusalem. He had a horse more powerful than any other horse, and the horse had wings, for it was the result of the hybridization of a horse and an eagle. Once the philosopher flew to the Garden of Eden. When he was walking in the garden, the angel Surafel came up to him with a sword. Startled, 'ask'and'ør mounted his horse, which resulted in the uprooting of the tree to which the horse was tied. He returned to his seat in Jerusalem with the tree still attached to the horse's reins. The tree was placed near the gate of the royal palace of Jerusalem. Some time later King Solomon came to power, and during his reign the queen went to Jerusalem. On her arrival, she passed the place where the log had been put. This healed her legs. In gratitude for this miracle she pasted one birr on the log as a token and Solomon the king did so too. Another twenty-eight kings came to power after Solomon who all followed the custom of pasting one birr on the log. And this was this sum of money which was given to Judas for delivering Jesus into the hands of the Jews. The log finally became the wood of the holy cross.

Because he was greatly attracted by her beauty, Solomon asked for her love. The queen replied that it was the custom of Ethiopians to dethrone a queen who has lost her virginity, for they value virginity.

As Solomon was very wise, he did not argue with her; rather, he gave her a very spicy stew. He also prepared water near the place where he was sleeping. But, before that he told the queen that she should not take anything that was not hers.

Later the queen was very thirsty, and kept checking whether Solomon was sleeping or not so that she could drink water. Eventually, she ordered her maidservant to bring her water. When the maidservant went to bring water Solomon explained to her how she was breaking her oath. He told her that he would not give her water. He forced her to sleep with him. When she went back to her mistress, she did not tell her what had happened. As a result the queen went to drink water and Solomon slept with her as he had done with the maidservant. Both started their journey back to Ethiopia being pregnant. When they reached Eritrea, near Asmara, the queen gave birth to Mənilik. The midwives cried out saying: “bring water” during the birth of Mənilik. Thus the place was called *May Bäla*, “call for water” from that time onwards.

They reached Aksum. The boy reached the age of about 18 -20 and started to play a hockey-like game with his friends. His group usually won. But the other children started to tease him, saying: “You are like an alien; someone (newly) arrived, like flowing water.” He then started to ask his mother to tell him who his father was. Though previously she used to give him a mirror to look at himself whenever he asked about his father so that he could compare himself (with Solomon), for he was exactly the same in stature with his father, this time she could no longer satisfy him in this way and so she sent him to Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, Solomon put some other person on his throne so that he could test the intelligence of his children. The other boy born to the maidservant went directly to the person on the throne and greeted him. For this, his father named him *Zägäyä/Zagwe*- the slow thinker. Mənilik did not do that. Rather, he searched for someone who looked like him in the palace, went out and found his father in a stable dressed like a beggar. Solomon was happy at Mənilik. These two, Mənilik and Zagwe, ruled in Ethiopia — Mənilik in Aksum and its surroundings and Zagwe in the regions of the Agaws.

The Israelites asked Solomon to send his sons to Ethiopia. They did this because they used to say that they were a special race as they were expecting Christ to be born out of them. Solomon in return asked them that they should send their firstborn sons together with his sons if he was going to do that. They did so. Since it was the custom of the Israelites that the firstborn sons served the temple, the sons who came with Mənilik were highly educated and knew how to compose. They even took the books of the Old Testament with them. They asked Solomon to give them one of the tablets to worship. He told them that they should take the Tablet of Michael. But they exchanged it for that of St. Mary (Zion). When Solomon noticed that the Ark (of the Covenant) had been stolen, he ordered his army to pursue them if they had not yet crossed the Red Sea, but to leave them if they had. As it was the will of God for the Ark to come to Ethiopia, they had already crossed the Red Sea when the soldiers reached the bank.

Appendix 2

Translator Orin Gensler from the French work by Robert Beylot (2008:59-60):

The narrative as given in "The Acts of Marqorewos"

Ethiopian Folklore is rich in stories about Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The Acts of Marqorewos (Mercury), an Ethiopian saint and Monk who died in 1419AD, provide an original version (of the story). The Queen of Sheba is called "Queen of the south", as in Mathew 12: 42 and Luke 11:31 and she is called Makeda, as in the KN. She had a Muslim merchant called Tamrin, who had dealings with Solomon. He admired the actions and wisdom of this King (Solomon). He (the merchant) advised his queen to make a visit to Solomon. She agreed. Solomon welcomed the Queen of the south warmly, who stayed in Jerusalem for seven months. At the end of her visit, the king desired to gain her favor (i.e. to sleep with her) by a trick, and succeeded. The Queen of the south left pregnant. She gave birth to a son in Qisarya (Caesarea), which the text locates for Hamasien, in central Eritrea, where Asmara is now located. This allows us to explain the name "Bala-Zadisarya" the name which is given to the town where the Queen of Sheba gave birth in the KN, of the beginning of chapter 32 of the Bezold edition. There is confusion here between qi and di (i.e. Qisarya vs Zadisarya); the place should be read as "Bala-Zaqisarya", meaning "which is called Caesarea". The Acts of Marqorewos go on to say that the Queen of the south named her son Ebna el Hakim "son of the wise man". She raised him till he was 12 years old and then sent him to Solomon. When Solomon learned of the arrival of [his] son, he wanted to test his wisdom. He cause himself to be replaced on his throne by one of his servants, and commanded everyone to act as if he [= the servant] were the king. He himself [= the king] took the place of a humble servant. They had the boy enter the palace which was called the house of Dremus, that is, the house of banquets and treasures. In fact "Dremus"

means “of the forest”. [FTN: “dremus” is not a proper name, but the vestiges of a transliteration of the Greek “drumon”= “of the forest”.] The text refers to 1 Kings 7:12 of the Ethiopian Bible; he presents this text as saying: “And Solomon built, in the desert of Lebanon, the house of Dremus”. [FTN: For the location of the treasures as being at this place, see 1 Kings 10:17-21.] Inspired by a divine wisdom, the boy recognized Solomon under his disguise. After 3 ½ months, Solomon sent his son back to Habasha, that is Abyssinia, with the first-born sons of the Israelites. Ebana el Hakim, who was also called “Menelik”, settled at Akuesem, the Tigrinya name of Aksum, the center of the first Christian Kingdom in Ethiopia.

Appendix 3 (H1)

Translator Orin Gensler from the French work by Robert Beylot (2008: 64-66):

[Tigrigna-language story from an elder man from Hamasien-Published 1915]

... Later Noah, the father (of the three), bequeathed to Shem the Ghebts, the entire country of the East; to Japhet, the entire country extending from there to the West; and as for Ham, he installed him here, where we are. As for Jerusalem, (which was located) in between the three, he decided that the elected of them [??] would inherit it. Subsequently a certain Abraham, son of Tare [=Terah], a descendant of Shem, was elected [??] and inherited Jerusalem. He begot Isaac and Ishmael; Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Mosef, Minab, and six other sons, (the ancestors of) all 12 tribes of Israel.

After this period, the serpent ruled over this country. Then the saints came and killed the serpent, who was the master of this people. Then Makeda, the Queen of Azeb, was enraged and killed the saints. Then she was struck by their curse, and one of her feet became similar to a donkey's hoof. And since she wanted to get married, she was very vexed by this foot of hers. Later she learned that a person named Solomon, son of the King of Kings David, had become king in Jerusalem. "If you go to see him," she was told, "you will be cured when you place your foot on the threshold (of his house). This is why the Queen of Azeb went to the King of Kings Solomon. Then, just as she had been told, her foot was cured when she entered the door/gate of the King of Kings Solomon.

King Solomon gave her a magnificent welcome and served to her a sauce, which burned her throat. Then he said, "As for me, I will not touch any thing that belongs to you; and you, you will not touch anything that

belongs to me.” Then he went to bed. But when he had gone to bed, King Solomon kept his eyes open when he was sleepy, and closed them when he was wide awake. When Solomon had closed his eyes, Her majesty Makeda whose throat was burned by the sauce went to draw water to drink, thinking that he was asleep. (Seeing this,) he went to seize her. Then the queen said to him, “Let me for the moment, I just want to drink! Afterwards, do as you like.” In this way the Queen of Azeb became pregnant by the King Solomon. After remaining there for some time, she returned to her country. When she arrived at the river which is found between Addi-Contsi and Woki-dbba, it came time for her to give birth, and she gave birth to Menelik, at the place called Azit –Bela. The midwives, asking for water for lotions, cried out, “Quickly, bring water! Bring water! (mai-bäla)” . From that moment on the river has been called May-bäla.

When Menelik had grown, the children insulted him, calling him “Son of a woman”. So he asked his mother, “Tell me, mother, whose son am I? Who is my father?” his mother told him, “Your father is in Jerusalem; he is the King of Kings Solomon.” Then Menelik went to see his father in Jerusalem.

The King of Kings Solomon welcomed him with great honors and made him king, saying to him, “Go and rule the country of your mother!” And as companions he gave him several children of Reuben, several children of Simeon, several children of Mosef, several children of Minab, several children of Judah, too, of his own brothers, and several children of Levi, to serve him as clergy. To guide him in his travels he gave him a holy ark, namely the Ark of St. Michael. But the children of Levi, who knew the interior & the secret passages (of the Temple), left the Ark of St. Michael there (in its place) and (instead) took with them the Ark of our Lady when they left. When they had said goodbye and had started their journey, King Solomon soon understood that they had carried off “Zion”. Accordingly he

pursued them on horseback with his army to catch them. Then the sea did what it had done for Israel, and Menelik and his people passed through the sea. When the King of Kings Solomon came to the sea, he did not dare to follow them, because he remembered the fate of Pharaoh.

Menelik and his people came to this country. Then the children of Judah went to Shoa with the royal family. However a brother of Menelik named Zagwa, son of the king of Kings Solomon and the maidservant of the Queen of Azeb, stopped at Lasta, Most of the children of Levi went to Temben, but some followed Menilik to Shoa. The children of Simeon went to Selo, and the children of Reuben to Kwara. The children of Mosef settled at Agame and the children of Minab at Dembia. Thus, they occupied this country and camped here. Then, continuing on in the same way, they expanded successively into all of Ethiopia.

Appendix 4 (H2)

Translator Orin Genler from the French work by Robert Beylot (2008: 66-68):

Another Story from Hamasien:

The Queen of the South and the serpent [1914]

The Kingdom of Akusem(Aksum) is 420 years older than the Kingdom of Saül (Sawl). Aksum was chosen by God. In the country of Adabay, there was once a woman who, after having sex with her husband, wanted to wash. A boa went to urinate [pass water] where she was washing in the river. She became pregnant and gave birth to a boa and a girl. The boa was named Agabos. His mother prevented the [people] from killing him. But later he began to exterminate people. In order to have peace, they decided to pay him a girl every day as tribute, with many head of cattle and a large quantity of honey and milk. A man from Hamasien named Gabgabo came one day to them. He reproached them for paying tribute to the serpent in this way, instead of killing him. They promised Gabgabo to pay him tribute if he would kill the serpent. He made them take an oath, for them and for their descendants. At his command they set up seven around the place where he [=the serpent] was coiled up and placed swords and pikes at a certain distance. They set fire to the wall closest to the monster. He tried to flee in every direction, but he tore himself up on the swords and pikes, which cut him into pieces so that he died. In the country of Madabay, t'ef was found after his death, growing where he was coiled up. Gabgabo ruled for 300 years. He was buried at Akusem (Aksum). Gabgabo begot Kurf, who begot Surf, who begot Aqla, who begot Tersheqla, who begot Muzyo, who begot Agabos who was named after the serpent. Agabos had a daughter, Makeda whose royal name was "Queen of the south". Thus, after 7 generations, a girl was born. The people broke

their oath and refused to pay her tribute, because of her sex. She told them that she was going to inform the god, her father, of it. She sat down to pray where the serpent had been killed and buried. That same day a serpent was born that was one "aune" long. Then third day he was 3 "aunes" long. The people looked for the Queen and found her praying upon the tomb. They saw the new serpent. The people asked her to kill the serpent, swearing to her that the kingdom would henceforth belong to her and her descendants. She killed the serpent crushing his head. Thus, the Kingdom of Akusem (Aksum) exceeds the kingdom of Saúl by 420 years.

Appendix 5

The Seba, Sheba readings in the Bible (excluding the Solomon Sheba story)

- Gen 10:7= 1 Chr. 1:9

And the sons of Cush were Seba and Havila and Sabta and Ra'ma and Sabtkha, and the sons of Ra'ma were Sheba and Dedan.

- Gen 10:28= 1 Chr.1:22

[And Yoqt'an begat...] and 'obal, 'ebal and Abimael and Sheba.

- Gen 25:3

"And Yoqshan begat Sheba and Dedan"= 1Chr.1:32 "And the sons of Yoqshan were Sheba and Dedan."

- Is 43:3

I gave as a ransom for you Egypt (= Mitsrayim), Cush and Seba instead of you.

- Is 60:6

The produce of camels will cover you, dromedaries of Midian and 'efa, all of them shall come from Sheba; they shall bring gold and frankincense, and they shall proclaim the praises of God.

- Jer 6:20

Why does frankincense come to me from Sheba, and good reeds from a far country?

- Ezek 27:23

Haran and Kaneh and 'eden, the merchants of Sheba, Assyria and Kilmad, are your merchants.

- Ezek 38:13
Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish...shall say to you

- Joel 4:8
And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they will sell them to the Shebaim, to a distant people.

- Psalm 72:10
The kings of Tarshish and the islands shall bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

- Psalm 72:15
And he shall give to him from the gold of Sheba

- Job 1:15
And (the men of) Sheba fell (upon them), and took them away

- Job 6:19
The caravans of Tema looked, the traveling-companies of Sheba waited for them

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all resources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Gideng Mestira Kebede

Signature 

Date 23/07/2009

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name PROF. ORIN GENSLER

Signature 

Date 23. 7. 2009

