# THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

# EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE ETHIOPIAN TRADITIONS

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#### THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Until the twentieth century it was generally accepted that the events described in the Biblical Old Testament before the Babylonian captivity (ca.586 B.C.) occurred in the area of modern Israel, Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq (Babylon). Abraham was supposed to have come from Ur in Mesopotamia, the Hebrews held captive in Egypt, the Exodus to have taken place in the Sinai peninsular and Joshua's invasion launched across the River Jordan. When professional archaeologists commenced digging in the Holy Land in 1920 they fully expected to uncover evidence of the Exodus, the destruction of Canaanite cities, the establishment of Israelite kingdoms, large public works undertaken by King Solomon and King Omri, the 722-1 B.C. Assyrian destruction of Israel, and the 587-586 B.C. Babylonian conquest of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem. However doubts emerged among archaeologists in the 1960's [Kenyon] that escalated in the 1970's [Pritchard] and finally developed in the 1990's and at the turn of the twenty-first century into outright dismissal of the pre-586 B.C. Biblical account [Finkelstein, Herzog, Lemche, Sand, Silberman, Thompson, Van Seter, Whitelam]. Today leading so called "minimalist" Israeli, American, British, and Danish-based archaeologists believe that Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon never existed and the pre-Babylonian captivity narrative was either fantasy or highly exaggerated. Their opinions are opposed by "maximalist" often faith-based scholars and archaeologists [Bright, Dever, A. Mazar, B. Mazar]. The issue is very controversial because many observers interpret the minimalist hypothesis as undermining the raison d'être of the State of Israel.

In the nineteenth century a number of writers and academics [Dozy et al 1] suggested that Arabia, not Palestine, may have been the true location of the pre-586 B.C. events described in the Old Testament. Other researchers added to this hypothesis in the first half of the twentieth century, postulating that the rise of Islam may have been deeply influenced by close contact with a long established local Judaic community [Margoliouth, Montgomery, Torrey]. In 1985 the debate became extremely heated following the publication of Professor Kamal Salibi's book The Bible came from Arabia. Salibi based his findings on Arab traditions and place names in Asir, Hijaz and Jizan provinces of present Saudi Arabia and concluded that Ancient Israel and Judah prior to 586 B.C. were in West Arabia spanning territory from north of Medina to Yemen. While incensing the maximalists, Salibi's work was also condemned by Saudi Arabia, which believed he was suggesting that Israel had a divine right to annex its western provinces of Hijaz, Asir and Jizan. Interestingly Salibi received no support from the minimalists, one of whom (Silberman) privately implied to this writer that it was safer to deny the historical record than suggest it was true but located in West Arabia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> C. T. Beke, T. K. Cheyne, Reinhart Pieter Dozy, Heinrich Graetz, F. Hommel, W. V. Kelly, H. Ooort, A. H. Sayce, N. Schmidt, J. Taylor, J. Wilson, and H. Winckler

The solution to the divide in Old Testament archaeology appears to rest in ancient Ethiopian traditions, inscriptions and documents concerning the Ark of the Covenant, the most revered possession of the Hebrew people. The Beta Israel ("Black Jews of Ethiopia") and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church believe the Ark was brought to Ethiopia in about 950 B.C. by Menelik, son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. This booklet argues that the story is true.

The Hebrew Old Testament is silent on the fate of the Ark of the Covenant but the second century B.C. *Second Book of Maccabees* states it was hidden at Mt Nebo during the Babylonian invasion and destruction of 587-586 B.C. Traditions from Arabia, where arks were still being carried into battle in the 1920's A.D. [Grierson and Munro-Hay:176-194, 244a] say the Arabs captured it from the Israelites in battle and it was flung on a dunghill [Parfitt 2008:213]

The most detailed account of what happened to the Ark is contained in the Ge'ez (Ancient Ethiopic) epic *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the Kings). The Kebra Nagast was complied in about A.D. 1314 in Aksum. It consists of two intertwined main documents of roughly equal length and a short conclusion. The earliest part is a totally Israelite (i.e. pre- 586 B.C.) document known as the *Sheba-Menelik Cycle* and appears to have been originally recorded in Solomon's reign. The second part, the *Caleb Cycle*, was probably written in about A.D. 520 on the eve of the Christian invasion of Jewish Yemen [Shahid 1976; Leeman 2005, 2009]. A thorough study of the literary sources of the Kebra Nagast was undertaken in a 1956 doctoral thesis at St Andrew's University Scotland by the late David Hubbard, who became principal of Fuller Theological College in California. Hubbard agreed with many earlier researchers that the Sheba-Menelik Cycle had been translated into Ge'ez from *Arabic* not from Coptic as the compilers claimed.

The Cycle begins with the account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon's capital of Jerusalem. The queen stays several months and just before she leaves Solomon insidiously tricks her into bearing his child, knowing that this will cause her to lose the right to rule in Yemen. The queen gives birth to her son Menelik on the bank of the Mai Bela stream in what is now Eritrea ("her mother's country") and remains queen of her African possessions with a capital at Aksum.

When Menelik comes of age he insists his mother names his father as he is tired of his friends' taunting. Eventually he receives the queen's approval to visit Solomon. Solomon is delighted with Menelik and when Menelik declines his offer to stay in Jerusalem Solomon makes arrangements for the establishment of a client Israelite state in Ethiopia administered by the eldest sons of the hierarchy of Solomon's kingdom.

The eldest sons of the ruling elite led by Azariah, son of Zadok the high priest, are not happy with this arrangement and take steps to steal the Ark of the Covenant to sustain them in their new land. Azariah drugs the celebrants at the farewell dinner and enters the temple through a secret door removing the Ark from under its silk covering and replacing it with a wooden structure.

Menelik is oblivious to the theft and it is only after his party has travelled some way from Jerusalem that Azariah reveals the Ark. Menelik is shocked but then assents to the theft. The party races for Ethiopia.

Meanwhile Solomon is reminiscing with Zadok but his account of a dream in which he saw the Sun move from Judah to Ethiopia alerts Zadok, who rushes to the Temple and finds the Ark gone. Solomon orders an immediate pursuit but by the time his troops reach the coast, Menelik "has crossed to Ethiopia opposite Mt Sinai" (*sic*).

The Queen of Sheba agrees to rule jointly with Menelik. Dual monarchies in Aksum were still common in the Christian era. At length the queen abdicates and allows Menelik to rule alone over a mixed population of Sabaeans, Ethiopians and Israelites. The religion is officially Israelite, centred on the Ark of the Covenant (tabot) and the Law of Moses (orit). The state is regarded as the new Zion. The Sheba-Menelik Cycle states that Menelik expanded his territory.

Traditions from Tanzania and the Comoros islands respectively state that Menelik died and was buried in the crater of Mt. Kilimanjaro<sup>2</sup> [*Tanganyika Times* 10 February 1928] and that Edomites stole the throne of Solomon and placed it in the crater of Mt. Katala [Prosperi 1957:142-3].

The Sheba-Menelik Cycle only describes events before 925 B.C. so it mentions neither Solomon's death nor the breakup of his kingdom. The Old Testament *Book of Kings* and Josephus's *History of the Jews* have accounts of the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon both of which appear to be summaries of the Sheba-Menelik narrative except they say nothing of events after the queen's departure, such as the birth of Menelik, his visit to Jerusalem and the theft of the Ark. The Islamic Qur'an account differs in that it tells the story from Solomon's perspective [see Appendix B].

#### The Evidence

The most important inscriptional evidence supporting the Sheba-Menelik Cycle is found on two of three Sabaean incense burners [photo, page 37] kept in the Church of Abun Garima at Adi Kaweh, a hilltop village eight kilometers south-west of Wukro, near Mekele in Ethiopia [Schneider 1973; Leeman 2009]. The church is sited on a much older structure, most probably a major Sabaean temple, because the two larger incense burners were found a short distance respectively at and below two other hill top Sabaean structures to the east and west of Adi Kaweh. The eastern site is the alleged burial place of Queen Yodit, the pagan-Hebraic leader who destroyed Aksum in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and also the location of ca.800 B.C. Sabaean temple in the process of excavation [Leeman 2009]. The Sabaean inscriptions state that the area was part of the realm of D'mt and was ruled by four named high kings and kings of Sheba

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Kilimanjaro's crater was known to the Ethiopians before it was rediscovered by the Ashira Marangu army scout Kinyala Johannes Lauwo (1871-1996 [sic]) in the 1880's and "officially" by Hans Meyer and Ludwig Purtscheller in 1889. Lauwo climbed the peak nine times before he realised there was a crater. He served as guide for the Meyer and Purtscheller's 1889 first successful European ascent. Johannes Notch is named after him. <a href="https://www.ntz.info/gen/n00398.html">www.ntz.info/gen/n00398.html</a>. Leeman video interview with Kinyala Lauwo, Ashira 1993

and D'mt, three of whom ruled with unnamed high queens and queens of Sheba<sup>3</sup> over a mixed population of red (Semitic) Sabaeans and black (Cushitic)'BR (Hebrew) [Schneider 1973, Fattovich 1990].<sup>4</sup> The inscriptions are the work of professional stone masons from Marib (Yemen) and indicate that the Sabaeans were at that time making a major effort to dominate the area while cooperating in conjunction with the local (probably Cushitic) population [Durrani:122] It is generally assumed that the realm of D'mt with a major centre at Yeha, the site of a huge Sabaean temple, gave way to Aksum around the first century B.C. but this is not absolutely certain and the D'mt realm may have lasted until Queen Yodit's time (she was queen of "Damot" ca. A.D. 970). The Adi Kaweh inscriptions therefore support the story that a mixed population of Sabaeans and Hebrew (Israelites) was ruled jointly by kings and queens of Sheba in northern Ethiopia one hundred and twenty five years after Solomon's death and probably much earlier. The inscriptions at Adi Kaweh are the oldest mention of the Hebrew people.

The next piece of information concerns ancient Hebrew-Israelite populations, traditions, religious practices and customs in Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. Until most were evacuated to Israel in the late 1980's Ethiopia possessed a large population of Beta Israel ("Black Jews", "Falasha"). They are the only "Judaic" group to contain Nazarites (like Samson). In addition there are many Ethiopians who claim they are Israelite in origin but converted to Christianity. These are known as "Falasha Mura." Next are the Qemant, who practise a religion described as "pagan-Hebraic" [Gamst]; and the Yibir/Ibro ("Hebrew"), a landless Agaw serf caste in Somaliland, who are nominally Muslim but traditionally are despised and partly feared as being pagan-Hebraic sorcerers [Kirk 1905:184, Farah 2006:6, Leeman 2005, 2009]. In addition there is a group in Eritrea associated with the traditional landowning aristocracy of Hamasien and the present leadership of the Eritrean government known as "Latos" or "Mai Bela." Because they are so secretive, no more than a paragraph has been published about them. The Israelis recognise them as Jews but they seem to a mixture of Israelites and Christians, a sort of Judeo-Christian group with a headquarters at Himberti, priests called kes and holy places called kansha [from kanisa meaning a church]. Outsiders call them *Latos*, from *Pilatos* (Pontius Pilate = Christ killer). They call themselves Mai Bela, from the river bank where Menelik was born [Leeman 2005, 2009].

Besides the pagan-Hebraic and Israelite groups there are the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians themselves who retain ancient Judaic practices and other elements, some of which are no longer associated with "main stream" Judaism. The chief authority on Hebraic influences in Ethiopia is Professor Edward Ullendorff [1920 - ], who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Despite continuing protests Wikipedia refuses to alter its erroneous statement in its D'MT entry that a work by Nadia Durrani [2005] names the queens

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Neither of these "maximalist" authorities translated 'BR (Hebrew) although the discovery of the word near or in modern Israel would have caused enormous interest. See excitement over similar words: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habiru

supervised David Hubbard's thesis on the Kebra Nagast but unfortunately published his own work with untranslated important quotations from many dead and living languages (e.g. Syriac, Ge'ez, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Portuguese). Despite this, Ullendorff [1956, 1968] concludes that the Hebraic and First Temple Israelite influences in Ethiopia are very ancient while the Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi [1998b:62-63] suggests that a form of Israelite religion ("Nazarene") associated with exiles who fled to Yemen from the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem was influential at the court of Aksum from about 586 BC to A.D. 332 and this faith was incorporated into Christianity in the fourth century A.D. to accommodate the tradition that Aksum was the True Zion as well as the keeper of the True Faith (Monophysite Christianity). Others argue that Monophysite Christianity around Antioch, Alexandria, and Byzantium/Constantinople had itself incorporated Jewish practices from the "Greeks" (Hellenised Jews) who formed the nucleus of early Christianity. Whatever the reason Ethiopian Christianity has a significant element of First Temple Israelite religion within it and some clerics such as Ewostatewos (ca.1273-1352) at Debra Bizen in Eritrea went into exile rather than accept a ban on "Jewish" practices, which is why both Saturday and Sunday are still respected as holy days [Tamrat 1977, Beylot 1995]. Ullendorff believes that maybe half of Ethiopia's population was Israelite when Christianity was introduced. In areas such as Agame (where people still endure the insult "Yehud") in northern Ethiopia and in Hamasien in Eritrea mass acceptance of Christianity has allegedly been fairly recent but the Latos/Mai Bela have chosen western churches instead of the Orthodox [Leeman 2005:185-6] and totally ignore Asmara's Italian synagogue.

Fourth is the Ge'ez word for the Ark of the Covenant – "tabot." There are two main authorities on this word. The first, Theodore Nöldeke (1836-1930) was so confused by the word that he termed it an "atrocious monstrosity" [Nöldeke 1860:211] because in his view the word should not exist because it had somehow come to Ethiopia during Solomon's time. The second scholar, Chaim Rabin (1915-1996), was also deeply perplexed by the word. He concluded that the word was indeed ancient and had come from the Medina area of Arabia during Solomon's era [Rabin 1951:109].

Fifth, the Hebrew Old Testament and Jewish traditions do not record how the Ark of the Covenant vanished. Nor do they explain why Azariah the high priest of Judah (the Sheba-Menelik Cycle identifies him as the *son* of the high priest) disappeared and his Zadokite priesthood only reappeared three hundred years later [Benjamin Mazar: 1992:98]. The Sheba-Menelik Cycle is the only document that details the reasons.

Sixth, the Sheba-Menelik Cycle contains the Torah/Orit (Law of Moses) that must have existed during the time of King Solomon [Leeman 2005, 2009]. It is certainly much older than the Torah in the "official" Old Testament because it omits the major part of the Laws of Deuteronomy, the Biblical book that authorities agree was compiled in the reign of Josiah (ca. 640-609 B.C.) during the high priesthood of

Hilkiah [Wright, 1996:6]. Hubbard noted that the Sheba-Menelik Cycle contains variants of the Old Testament whereas the Old Testament quotations in the Caleb Cycle adhere to the Christian era "official" Ge'ez version of the Old Testament. The Sheba-Menelik Cycle contains the Holiness Code [Leviticus 17-26], which Biblical Scholars agree is one of the oldest parts of the Old Testament.

Next, the German missionary Johann Martin Flad [1831-1915], noted that the Beta Israel, the First Temple Israelite Cushitic population of Ethiopia who have now mostly adopted Semitic Tigrinya and Amharic, recited Hebrew prayers in Agaw, although most no longer understood the meaning [Flad 1869; Leslau 1951:xxi]. In summarising the above evidence it seems that at the very least Ethiopia has an ancient association with the Israelite First Temple and a culture obsessed even today with the Ark of the Covenant reflecting the ancient existence of an Israelite state that eventually nearly obliterated the Christian state of Aksum under its pagan-Hebraic Queen Yodit ca. A.D. 970. It appears impossible to accept relatively recent writers' contentions [Hancock, Kaplan, Quiran, Shelemay] that the Beta Israel adopted a syncretic form of Judaism from ca 500-400 B.C. Aramaic speaking Israelite troops at Elephantine (Aswan in Egypt) on the Nile or affected it in medieval times to distance themselves from their Semitic-speaking Christian overlords and escape imperial taxation.

There is much more. Ironically it is the seemingly ludicrous geographical references in the Sheba-Menelik Cycle that convincingly demonstrate that the Ark was indeed stolen from Jerusalem and brought to Ethiopia three thousand years ago and this leads to far greater issue of immense implications that most Biblical scholars will not even mention.

#### Ethiopia is right, Israel is wrong

Millions of dollars fund Old Testament research in the Holy Land (Palestine and Modern Israel). Although the Beta Israel are Africa's most studied people, Ethiopian studies receive very little funding. Even the Wukro I site at Adi Kaweh, which may prove to be one of Biblical archaeology's most important sites, is being excavated by a "maximalist" German team. William Dever, who ridiculed Salibi, has received over a million dollars of archaeological funding but has never once made any investigation of the origins of Arabian Judaism [Leeman 2005:149] which, as Torrey observed, is seemingly illogical because most Arabian Jews were historically located in the Yemen and their numbers diminished towards Palestine, whereas it would be more reasonable to expect the opposite should be true [Torrey1967:21].

Although Old Testament scholars ignored or vilified Salibi, his hypothesis, as Mazrui noted, appears to support the Sheba-Menelik Cycle's narrative as well as solving issues concerning Arabian Judaism. In his 1951 publication *Ancient West Arabian*, Chaim Rabin noted that there was a large amount of Hebrew vocabulary and grammar in the dialects of West Arabia. He could offer no explanation for the "surprising similarities and parallelisms of West Arabian with Canaanite" [Rabin:2-

3]<sup>5</sup> and concluded, "This is not the place to work out the historical implications of this, especially as it affects the darkest part of Arab history" [Rabin:199]. Fascinatingly, these dialects were in exactly the same area that Salibi had found the place names of the Hebrew Old Testament although he himself only realised it in 2010 [email to Leeman 2 March]. Secondly there are very obvious reasons why an ancient Arabian Judah could have prospered and reached a zenith in the period 1000-925 B.C. and then lost power to Israel in Omri's reign. Salibi placed Israel in the northern Hijaz near Medina and Judah in the south in Asir next to Yemen. Following the ca. 1200 B.C. domestication of the camel, which Arab traditions ascribe to the Hebrew, the western Arabian escarpment became an important trade route for Sabaean/Sheban gold, gemstones and incense caravans and attracted Egyptian and Assyrian imperial control. However, between about 1000-925 B.C. the Egyptians withdrew to deal with invasions by the Sea Peoples [Kitchen 2003: 99-100] while Assyria pulled back to counter the threat of Aramaean population movements near the border of what is now modern Turkey [Lipiński 2000]. These withdrawals opened the way for an opportunistic local population (e.g. the Hebrew) to seize control of the lucrative Sabaean trade and grow rich from taxing the carayans. Despite the 460 year captivity Hebrew has no Egyptian words but Rabin noted in another work that it contains trade words such as "sapphires" from India, which appears to indicate it was on a major trade route from India to Egypt [Rabin 1968].

Salibi's work has been of vital assistance in deciphering the geography of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle and had he taken much earlier notice of the large number of emails and letters urging him to consider Rabin's work and the Ethiopian evidence his arguments, too reliant on place names, would have probably gained much wider acceptance.

Much confusion has been caused in Old Testament studies because of place names. Edward Robinson was chiefly responsible for the haphazard unscientific wildly speculative methods used to identify locations in Palestine in 1837-8 and 1852 [Leeman 2005:22]. European Jewish traditions and scholarship have also been very unreliable, being over-influenced by the drive to prove that Palestine is the Promised Land and therefore the Jewish homeland through divine will. The definitive Hebrew Old Testament was published in about A.D. 950, six hundred years *after* the New Testament, by the Masoretic scholars, two priestly families based in Galilee and Babylon. These scribes laboured for four hundred and fifty years to complete their task. The original Old Testament had been written only with Hebrew consonants since vowels were considered divine sounds. Languages change over time, sometimes rapidly. For example modern English speakers would find it impossible to understand the English of King Harold of Hastings let alone the Anglo-Saxon of A.D.500. The Arabic and Aramaic speaking Masoretic scholars put the vowels into the Hebrew Old Testament while admitting that in three hundred and fifty places they had no idea

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Hebrew adopted Canaanite as their language.

of the original meaning [Encyclopaedia Judaica]. Words such as MSR and MSRM were taken to mean Egypt, while KWS and KSM were equated with Ethiopia or Sudan. Salibi suggested that in some places these words refer to cities not countries. He also argued that the Jordan (H-YRDN) was not a river but the escarpment in Arabia that rises from the coastal plain to the mountain range known as the Tihama or Sarawat. Many Arab traditions support Salibi's suggestions. For example Mecca is associated with Abraham and there is an ancient tradition the Red Sea was once blocked by a volcanic lava flow at the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb between Yemen and Eritrea which then broke causing massive death and destruction in the subsequent flood. Interestingly the word for Hebrew in Hebrew and Sabaean is not only identical ('BR) but has a second meaning in both languages of "those who crossed over" [Biella:350]. Since the Beta Israel and the Zagwe royal house have strong traditions about Moses, there is speculation that Moses' Red Sea crossing may have been at its southern end. Support for this comes from Moses' marriage to Zipporah, the Cushite daughter of the Prophet Jethro. Salibi places Zipporah's home as Kush (Kshm) next to the volcanic mountain in northern Yemen named Jebel al-Nabi Shu'ayb - the mountain of the prophet Shu'ayb. Shu'ayb is Arabic for Jethro. In 1997 a team of Canadian archaeologists [Keall 1997] discovered a ring of large monoliths on the coastal plain below Jebel al-Nabi Shu'ayb dating from about 1800 B.C. (Moses' era) and therefore, if Salibi's Arabian location for the Exodus is true, the pillars may be the same mentioned in Exodus 24:4. Perhaps the Hebrew captivity occurred near or in Ethiopia.

Whoever wrote the Sheba-Menelik Cycle was obviously not referring to a Jerusalem in Palestine. On page 11 is a map of Menelik's journey from Jerusalem to Ethiopia with Jerusalem sited in Palestine. The account makes no sense.

When Salibi's book was published in 1985 this writer wrote to him about the strange geography of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle and asked him to send his hypothetical map of an Arabian Judah marking place names mentioned in the Ethiopian document in case the Cycle's contents matched his hypothesis of an ancient Judah in West Arabia. Salibi replied [Letter 15 February 1987] that he was not conversant with the Sheba-Menelik Cycle but kindly sent his map. The result was sensational for it showed that the author of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle was referring to a Judah opposite Ethiopia in West Arabia not to one in Palestine.

A map of Menelik's journey from Jerusalem to Ethiopia with Jerusalem and other locations sited by Salibi in West Arabia is on page 12. Since Salibi drew his map blind to the Sheba-Menelik Cycle narrative of the journey of the Ark from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, the result is quite astonishing. It explains why the Beta Israel traditionally prayed to a Jerusalem in the east (in Arabia), not one to the north (in Palestine). It would also explain why the word "Falasha" and the word for the Beta Israel's house of prayer are both Sabaean in origin [Biella;405; Leslau 1991:363] but most of all why Ethiopian culture is so heavily Judaic, obsessed with the Ark and drew its political legitimacy from Moses (Zagwe dynasty ca A.D. 1137-1270) and Solomon (Haile

Selaisse). The short period of imperial Sabaean occupation and high culture ca.800 – 500 B.C. could probably be attributed to Sabaean attempts to find other trade routes to escape the instability in West Arabia as the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah vied for supremacy and were then respectively destroyed by Assyria and Babylon. Jacqueline Pirenne [1918-1990] suggested that the Beta Israel, First Temple Israelites, were refugees from the Assyrian (772 B.C.) and Babylonian (587 B.C.) conquests [Munro-Hay 1991:65]. Two Sabaean monarchs gave tribute to the Assyrians in 456 and 487 B.C., indicating the Assyrians were far closer than Palestine. [Schippmann 2001:39].

Although the Ethiopian evidence supporting the Salibi hypothesis has been widely distributed since 1985 it has been completely ignored in almost every publication. The Saudi reaction was extreme, bulldozing sites named by Salibi as probable locations of Old Testament cities such as An Nimas (Jerusalem), south of Taif. Salibi's book was banned in Saudi Arabia and Syria for implying that Modern Israel should annex Asir and Hijaz provinces. All references to this writer's work that argued that evidence from the life of the Queen of Sheba supports Salibi's hypothesis have systematically been removed from Wikipedia from early 2010 onwards and a Saudi student arrested and briefly jailed when a copy was found on his return home. While the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Beta Israel, the Yemeni Jews, the Rastafarians, Ethiopian and Eritrean university students and tour guides, and David Hubbard were intrigued by the idea of an Arabian Judah, it was not considered of any merit by Israel Finkelstein, Roderick Grierson, Graham Hancock, Stuart Munro Hay, Richard Pankhurst, Roger Schneider, Kay Kaufmann Shelemay, Thomas Thompson, and two thousand (sic) other Biblical and Ethiopian scholars and writers contacted between 1990 and 2010. If Ancient Israel and Judah were indeed located in West Arabia it would make the research of thousands of academics appear extremely careless and trivial and completely undermine the raison d'être of the State of Israel. One important consequence however would be to make early Ethiopian history, Beta Israel and Ethiopian Orthodox Church traditions, and the Ge'ez language major biblical and historical academic disciplines. However the Arabian Judah hypothesis appears too much of a threat to academic funding, academic reputations, Holy Land tourism, and political agenda to warrant consideration let alone open debate.

#### Conclusion

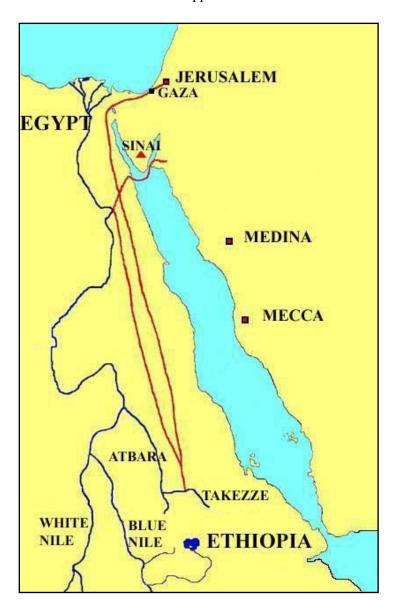
The Ark of the Covenant, according to the few reliable accounts that exist, is a wooden box containing a milky stone tablet that in the past exuded a mysterious light. It is almost certainly housed in Aksum and came to Ethiopia during Solomon's reign from Arabia. Most people who have written about the Ark never carefully read the Sheba-Menelik Cycle in Ge'ez. The best translation is by Carl Bezold in German in 1909 (republished 2009). A very inferior version was accomplished by Ernest Wallis Budge, who appears merely to have translated Bezold's German translation into English. Bezold was influenced by the assumption that Jerusalem was in Palestine and

therefore translated "City of Msrm" as "Country of Egypt" although he was astute enough to translate one section as the "water flow" whereas Budge put "the Takezze River" [Leeman 2005:162]. Bezold and Budge were not the first to insert their own interpretation. The original compilers of the Kebra Nagast, puzzled by the geography of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle, interpolated a section that told of Solomon's pursuit party being informed by Egyptian officials that Menelik's entourage had passed through Alexandria and Cairo, cities built centuries after Solomon's era [Leeman 2005:161,166]. Graham Hancock, the most famous "maximalist" writer on the Ark of the Covenant, completely missed this point [Hancock: 213, 219, 222].

Several reasons explain why the Ethiopian evidence has been ridiculed ever since James Bruce's epic account of ancient ties with the Old Testament was published in the 18th century. Firstly there is enormous racial and paternalistic prejudice towards Ethiopia and those who identify with it, especially the Rastafarians; and anything that can construed as a malevolent Arab agenda against Israel (Salibi is in fact a Protestant Christian). Biblical Scholarship hardly ever needs to exert itself against criticism because it is defended in depth by millions of supporters whose ignorance is matched by fanaticism, and also by newspapers, academic journals, publishing houses and other media too timid to challenge accepted wisdom. Secondly there are theological implications. The Sheba-Menelik Cycle states that Solomon's behaviour towards the Queen of Sheba cost Judah and Israel its status as the kingdom of God's Chosen People. Thereafter Ethiopia became the True Zion. The Sheba-Menelik Cycle was almost certainly written in Solomon's time because it does not mention the catastrophes that befell the united kingdoms after his death, which could be construed as confirming that Judah and Israel had lost divine grace. If the Sheba-Menelik Cycle account is true, serious question arise about the standards and objectivity of Western Jewish and Christian scholarship.

Early Ethiopian history has so far been written by Biblical maximalists who interpret Ethiopian traditions and customs through the flawed comparison with an Old Testament located in Palestine. Although Biblical maximalists continue to interpret any find in Palestine and Israel as proof that the Old Testament occurred entirely in that area, inevitably the lack of findings combined with human curiosity must eventually lead to a reassessment of the Ethiopian and Arabian evidence. Until serious archaeological investigations commence in Asir and Hijaz the Ethiopian records concerning the Ark of the Covenant are the most important evidence along with the work of Rabin on West Arabian and Schneider at Adi Kaweh proving that Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon existed. The records strongly indicate that indeed there once was a powerful united kingdom of Judah and Israel that for seventy five years under David and Solomon played an important historical role in the Middle East and made an indelible imprint on the history and culture of Ethiopia.

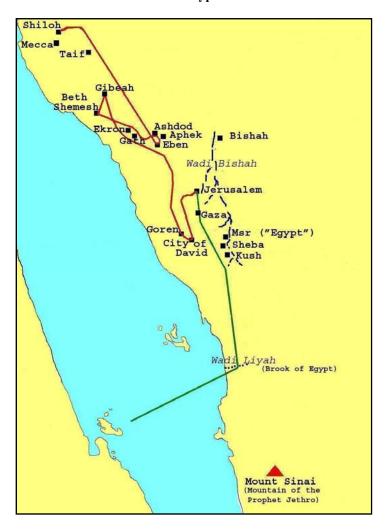
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Map 1: The geography of Menelik's route according to the Kebra Nagast with Jerusalem in Palestine and Msr/Msrm translated to mean Egypt

Jerusalem – Gaza– border – arrival in Ethiopia opposite Mt Sinai

Map 2:The geography of the movements of the Ark of the Covenant according to the Salibi hypothesis



**Biblical account of the Ark's movements**: Shiloh–Eben–Ashdod-GathBeth Shemesh – Gibeah – Goren – City of David – Jerusalem

*Sheba-Menelik Cycle account of Menelik's route*: Jerusalem – Gaza – border of Egypt– Waters of Ethiopia– Brook of Egypt – Sea of Eritrea– arrival in Ethiopia opposite Mt Sinai

#### APPENDIX A

#### 1. The Jewish Torah and the Israelite Torah of the Queen of Sheba

The Torah in the Sheba-Menelik Cycle is listed in Chapters 41, 42, 89, 90, and 91 of the *Kebra Nagast*. This Torah seems to be that which existed when the Queen of Sheba accepted the Israelite faith. Certainly scholars are in agreement that the laws governing sexual relations are from the Holiness Code [Leviticus17-26], one of the oldest parts of the Hebrew Bible.

It is illuminating to compare the Sheba-Menelik Torah with the 613 commandments of the Jewish Torah [available at several sites on the Internet and about 7500 words in length]. The Jewish Torah emphasizes racial purity. It accepts slavery. It has highly detailed rituals and has laws relating to personal matters, urban bureaucratic centralized government, and the priesthood. It calls for respect for prophets but death for those who dissent. It gives a privileged role to hereditary priest clans, the Levites and Kohenin, and sanctions taxation to maintain them. It outlines regulations concerning kingship. The laws from Deuteronomy that enhance the priesthood, establish central control, demand racial exclusiveness and theological conformity, are listed below, followed by brief comments and the Torah of the *Sheba-Menelik Cycle* itself:

Bring all offerings to Jerusalem. Deuteronomy xii. 5, 6

Offer all sacrifices in the Temple. xii. 14

Bring to the Temple also the offerings from beyond the land of Israel. xii. 26

Obey the prophet of each generation if he neither adds nor takes away from the

statutes. xviii. 15

Appoint a king. xviii. 1.

Obey the authority of the Sanhedrin. xvii. 11

Appoint judges in every town. xvi. 18

Destroy idolaters and burn their city. xii. 2, xiii. 16

Destroy the seven Canaanite nations. xx. 17

Blot out the remembrance of Amalek. xxv. 17

Neither fear a false prophet nor hinder any one from killing him. xviii

Never show mercy to or intermarry with idolaters or allow them to live in your land.

[Also in Exodus xxiii. 33; and vii. 2, 3]

Never permit the marriage of a daughter of Israel with an Ammonite or Moabite. xxiii. 3

Never offer peace to the Ammonites and Moabites in time of war. xxiii. 6

Never forget the evil done by Amalek. xxv. 19

Never leave any Levite without support. xii. 19

Never rebel against the Sanhedrin. xvii. 11 Never elect a stranger as king over Israel. xvii. 15

None of these issues are mentioned in the Sheba-Menelik Torah. On the other hand, the Jewish Torah has a section on laws relating to Nazarites, who only exist among Ethiopia's Beta Israel.

Hilkiah's success in using the book of Deuteronomy to massacre and defile the Samaritan priesthood was followed later by Ezekiel's "vision" and Ezra's draconian measures that distanced the Jewish colony of New Jerusalem from the tolerance of the earlier Torah.

The provisions of the Israelite Torah in the *Sheba-Menelik Cycle* are listed on the next page. The Torah of the Queen of Sheba is obviously much older than the "official" Torah in the Hebrew Old Testament. It indubitably was written before 600 BC and most probably during Solomon's reign. It is quite extraordinary and indicative of the narrow focus of Old Testament researchers that it was not until 2005 that any scholar pointed out its antiquity.

# 2. The Israelite Torah According to the Sheba-Menelik Cycle

# Chapter 41 [Kebra Nagast]

Do God's work
Have no other God
Don't get angry
Treat good people well
Criticize sinners
Deal harshly in court with violence
against people
Treat poor people and orphans well
and defend them
Protect and restore abandoned and
unhappy people
Judge impartially irrespective of
background
Never accept bribes

### Chapter 42

Respect only the one true god
Don't worship material objects
Don't make a false oath invoking
God's name
Respect as holy the seventh day of
the week and do no work that day
Treat your parents well
Don't have sex with someone else's
wife
Don't kill anyone
Don't kill anyone
Don't steal
Don't give false testament
Don't desire anything belonging to
another person

A man must not have sex with the following:

Sister, half sister, step sister, adopted sister Son's daughter Daughter's daughter Father's sister Mother's sister Father's brother's sister Son's wife Daughter Brother's son's daughter Brother's wife Woman and her daughter Woman and her son's daughter Woman and her daughter's daughter A menstruous woman Your neighbour's wife Another man

Don't marry sisters while both live Don't offer your children to Moloch

An animal

A woman must not have sex with an animal "Sanctify ye your souls and your bodies to God"

# Chapter 89

Love what is right

Hate deceit

Don't be fraudulent

Don't oppress

Don't make auguries from birds or

signs

Don't use charms

Don't use incantations

Don't use portents

Don't use magic

# Chapter 90

Don't eat the meat of an animal that died of natural causes or was killed by other animals

Keep sex within marriage

Don't use force to settle disputes

Don't rob your neighbour

Don't abuse each other

Don't oppress anyone

Don't quarrel

Return stray livestock

Report livestock in difficulties and

assist in their retrieval

If you dig a well, cover it

If you build a shelter, put a roof over it

Help people carrying heavy loads

Don't cook the meat of animal in the milk of its mother

Respect and defend the rights of the poor and orphans

Don't take bribes

Refuse to be corrupted

Neither harm birds with young nor

remove the young birds

Don't harvest the entire crop

Keep surplus food for strangers

Don't engage in dishonest and immoral activities

Judge fairly

Don't bully people

Don't mistreat the infirm

Don't have sex with your father's

partners

Don't cheat your neighbours

Don't cause death by perverting

justice for aliens

Respect your parents and don't treat

them lightly

Don't worship material objects

Don't have sex with animals

Men must not have sex with other

men

Don't kill innocent people

Don't worship other gods

# Chapter 91

# Acceptable food

Ox Sheep Goat Ram Stag Gazelle Buffalo Antelope

Oryx

Any animal with cleft foot and nails

Fish with scales and fins Birds with clean habits

# Forbidden food

Pig Sea gull Camel Heron Wolf Swan Ibis Hare Coney [rabbit or hyrax] Pelican Water creatures without fins and scales Hoopoe Birds with unclean habits Night raven Hornbill Vulture Eagle Water piper Osprey Water hen Raven Bat Owl Locust Grasshopper Hawk

Flying or springing creatures with two to six legs [nor touch their dead bodies]

# APPENDIX B

# COMPARISON OF EVENTS DURING THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO KING SOLOMON

Sheba-Menelik Cycle	Josephus 1	Kings 10: 1-13	Qur'an 27:28, 17:29, 27:37, 27:38, 27:44
Came with gifts	Came with large retinue and gifts	Came with large retinue and gifts	Solomon learns the queen worships the sun and orders her to submit to him
Took up residence in the palace	Amazed at the palace	Questioned Solomon	Solomon rejects her gift of gold and threatens invasion
Description of the wonderful food	Amazed at sumptuous apartments	Solomon answered all her questions	Solomon obtains the queen's throne and alters it
Was given beautiful clothes	Was shown the house known as the Forest of Lebanon	Was impressed by Solomon's wisdom, palace, food, seating arrangements, attendants' clothes, wine, and burnt offerings	The queen visits and is tested by a glass floor and the altered throne. She submits to Solomon and adopts his religion
Experienced Solomon's wisdom	Description of the daily food and its preparation	Declared she was deeply impressed	
Had her questions answered	Saw beautiful clothes of the servants	Gave gifts of gold and spices	
Daily given food and clothes	Witnessed Solomon's administration	Acknowledged benign influence of Solomon's God	
Saw how table was prepared	Witnessed daily sacrifices	Solomon reciprocated in official and other ways	
Amazed at the palace	Believed things were better than expected		
Amazed at sumptuous apartments	Believed that the Hebrew were a blessed people		
Witnessed daily burning of incense			
Converted to Solomon's religion			
Tricked by Solomon into bearing his child			

# APPENDIX C

Ge'ez transcript of sections of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle of the Kebra Nagast concerning the route of the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Ethiopia

CHAPTER 53	20
CHAPTER 55	23
CHAPTER 58	26
CHAPTER 59	28
CHAPTERS 53- 59 Transliterated and translated	30-33

# Chapter 53 of the Kebra Nagast

# ፶፫ ጎበ ትውህበ ሰረገላ ስኢትዮጵያ።

ወበጎበ ጎደሩስ ጋዛ ይእቲ ሀገረ እሙ ለንጉሥ ዘወሀባ ሶበ ትመጽእ ኀቤሁ ንጉሥ ሰሎሞን ለንግሥተ ኢትዮጵያ። ወእምህየ በጽሑ በአሐቲ *ዕስት ውስተ ደወስ ግብጽ እንተ ስ*ማ ምስሪን: ወሶበ ርእዩ ደቂቀ ጎያሳነ እስራኤል ከመ በአሐቲ ዕለት በጽሑ ምሕዋረ ፲ወ፫ ዕስት ወኢደክሙ ወኢርጎቡ ወኢጸምኡ ኢሰብእ ወኢእንስሳ ወኩሎሙ ከመ ዘሶቤ ጸግቡ ወሰትዩ አእመሩ ወአምኑ እሙንቱ ደቂቀ ጎይል ከመ እምጎበ እግዚአብሔር ኮነት ዛቲ: ወይቤልዎ ለንጉሦሙ ናውርድ ሰረገሳተ አስመ በጻሕነ ማየ ኢትዮጵያ ዛቲ ይእቲ ተከዚ እንተ ትወርድ እምኢትዮጵያ ወትሰቂ ፈለገ ግብጽ: ወአውረዱ ሰረገላቲሆሙ ህየ ወተከሉ ደባትሪሆሙ። ወሓሩ ኅቡረ ደቂቀ ኅይል ወሰደዱ ኵሎ አሕዛበ ወደቤልዎ ለንጉሦሙ ንንግርከት ነገረ ለእመ ትክል ተዐግሦ: ወይቤሎሙ አወ እክል ወለአመ ትቤሉኒ እስከ ዕለተ ሞትየ ኢያወፅእ ወኢያወሥእ። ወይቤልዎ ወረደት ፀሐይ እምሰጣይ ወተውህበት በሲና ለእስራኤል ወኮነት መድጎኒተ ለዘመደ አዳም

እምነ ሙሴ እስከ ዘርአ እሴይ ወነዋ ኀቤክ በፌቃደ እግዚኣብሔር፡ ወአኮ እምጎቤነ ዘተገብረ ዝንቱ አላ በፌቃደ እግዚኣብሔር ወአኮ እምኅቤነ ዘተገብረ ዝንቱ አላ በፌቃደ ኬንያሃ ወገባሪሃ ኮነ ከመዝ: ንሕነ ፈቀድነ ወእግዚአብሔር ፈጸመ ንሕነ ተሰናአውነ ወእግዚአብሔር አሠነየ ንሕነ ተናገርነ ወእግዚኣብሔር ገብረ ንሕነ ጎስይነ ወእግዚኣብሔር መከረ ንሕነ ንቤ ወእግዚኣብሔር ሠምረ ንሕነ አንጸርነ ወእግዚኣብሔር አርትዐ ንሕነ ጎለይነ ወእግዚኣብሔር አጽደቀ፡ ወይእዜኒ ኪያከ ኅረየ እግዚኣብሔር ወሀገርከ ሠምረ ከመ ትኩን ሳእከ ለጽዮን ቅድስት ለማያዊት ታቦተ ሕጉ ስእግዚአብሔር ወይእቲ ትኩንከ መርሐ እስከ ለዓለም ለከ ወለዘርአከ እምድኅሬከ ለአመ ዐቀብከ ትእዛዞ ወገበ ርከ ፈቃዶ ለእግዚኣብሔር ኣምሳክከ: እስመ ኢትክል አንተ ኣግብኦታ ለአመ ፈቀድከ ወአቡከ ካዲአታ ስእመ ፈቀደ እስመ ስሊሃ: ተሐውር ጎበ ፈቀደት ወኢትትነሣእ እመንበራ ለእመ ኢፈቀደት ስሊሃ ወነያ ይእቲ እግዝእትነ እምነ ወመድኅኒትነ ጸወንነ ወምስካይነ ክብርነ ወመርሶ መድኅኒትነ ለእስ ናሰምክ ባቲ። ወቀጸቦ አዛርያስ ለኤልምያኖስ ወይቤሎ ሖር አሠንያ ወአልብሳ ለእግዝእትነ ከመ ይርአያ ንጉሥነ። ወዘንተ ሶበ ተናገረ አዛርያስ

ደንገፀ ንጉሥ ዳዊት ወአንበረ ክልኤሆን እደዊሁ ውስተ ልቡ ወአስተንፈሰ ሠስስተ እስትንፋሰ ወይቤ አማንኑ እግዚኦ ትዜከረነ በሣህልከ ለግዱፋን እለ መነንከ ሕዝብ ከመ እርአያ ለማኅደርከ ንጽሕት እንተ በሰጣያት ጽዮን ቅድስት ሰጣያዊት: ወምንተኑ ነወስዮ ለእግዚኣብሔር በእንተ ኵሉ ዘገብረ ለነ ሠናያተ እንዘ ወእምንትኒ በጎቤሁ ክብረ ወስብሐተ ከለስነ በጸጋሁ ከመ ናእምር በምድር ስብሐቲሁ ወንግነይ ኵልነ ልዕበየ ዚአሁ: እስመ ኄር ውእቱ ለኅሩያኒሁ ወሎቱ ስብሐት እስከ ለዓለም። ወተንሥአ ንጉሥ እንዘ ያንፈርዕፅ ከመ ማሕስአ በግሪ ወከሙ ሐርጌ ጽጉበ ሐሊበ አሙ: በከሙ ፍሥሓ ዓዊት አበ አቡሁ በቅድመ ታቦተ ሕጉ ስእግዚኣብሔር። አጽሐሰ በእገሪሁ ወተሐሠየ በልቡ ወተሀስስ በአፉሁ። ወምንተ እብል ሚመጠነ ፍሥሓ ወሐሤት በውስተ ትዕይንተ ንጉሠ ኢትዮጵያ: ይነግሮ ፩ ስካልኩ ወያንፈርዕፁ ከ-ሎሙ ከመ ጣዕዋ ሳህም ወይጠፍሑ እደዊሆሙ ወያነክሩ ወይሰፍሑ እደዊሆሙ ውስተ ሰጣይ ወይሰግዱ በግጾሙ ውስተ ምድር ወያአኩትዎ ለእግዚኣብሔር በአልባቢሆው።

# Chapter 55 of the Kebra Nagast

፶፫ በእንተ ዘተፈሥሑ ሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ።

ወአጎዙ ዕንዚራተ ወነፍ ቀርነ ወከበሮ ወብሪዛ ወበቃስ ማሕሴቶሙ ወፍሥሓሆሙ ተሀውከት ወደምፀት ፈለገ ግብጽ ወጎብሩ ምስሌሆሙ ውውዓ ወማሕሴት: ወወድቁ ጣየታቲሆሙ ዘገብሩ በእደዊሆው አምሳስ ሰብእ ወከልብ ወድመት ወዓዲ ማኅ**ሬ**ደ ነዋ*ኃት ወ*እስ ምስሌሆ*ሙ አምሳ*ስ አንስርት ዘወርቅ ወብሩር ወድቁ ወተቀጥቀጡ: እስሙ ከሙ ፀሐይ ታበርህ ወእምግርጣሃ ይደነግፁ: ወአልበስዋ አልባሲሃ ወጾሩ ሞጻሃ ቅድሜሃ ወአንበርዋ ዲበ ሰረገሳ ነጺፎሙ ሜሳተ ታሕቴሃ ወፀሬሮሙ ሜሳተ በመልዕልቴሃ ወይሔልዩ ማሕሌተ በቅድሜሃ ወበድኅሬሃ። ወተንሥት ሰረገሳትኒ ከመ ቀዲሙ ወጌሡ በጽባሕ እንዘ ይሔልዩ ላቲ ወተላዐሉ ኩሎሙ መጠነ እመት: እንዘ ያስተፋንውዎሙ ሰብአ ብሔረ ግብጽ ጎስፉ በቅድሚሆሙ ከመ ጽሳሎት ወሰገዱ ሎሙ ሰብአ ብሔረ ግብጽ እስመ ርእደዋ እንዘ ትረውጽ ከመ ፀሐይ በውስተ ሰማይ: ወኵዀሙ ይረውጹ በሰረገላ እንዘ ይረውጹ በቅድሚሃ ወበድኅሬሃ። ወበጽሑ ባሕረ አልአሕመር

እንተ ይእቲ ባሕረ ኢርትራ እንተ ተሠጥቀት በእደ ሙሴ ወኬዱ ደቂቀ እስራኤል ውስተ መዓምቅቲሃ ዐቀበ ወቍልቍስ እስመ ኢተውህበት አሜሃ ለሙሴ ታቦተ ሕጉ ለእግዚኣብሔር ወበእንተዝ ጠግዐ ጣይ አረፍት በይምን ወአረፍት በፅግም ወአኅስፎሙ ለእስራኤል ምስለ እንስሳሆሙ ወደቂቆሙ ወአንስቲያሆሙ: ወእምድኅረ ዐደው ባሕረ ተናገሮ እግዚኣብሔር ወወሀቦ ታቦተ ኪዳን ምስለ መጽሐፈ ሕግ። ወሶበ ተወዱ ጽዮን ቅድስት ምስስ እለአሃ አሜሃ እንተ ጎቤሃ እንዘ ይሔልዩ ሚሕሴተ በመሰንቆ ወበሪንዚራት ባሕርኒ ተቀበስቶሙ እንዘ ታንፈርሪጽ መዋግዲሃ ከመ ሶበ ይትበተኩ አድባር ነዋኃት ወከመ ድምፅ አንበሳ ዘይጥሕር ከጣሁ በገንሕ ትደም**ፅ** ወከመ ነጐድጓደ ክሪምተ ደግስቆ ወኢትዮጵያ ሶበ ይዘብጦን መብረቅ ለደጣናት ከጣሁ ታንጌደጒድ ወኅብረ ነኈድጓድ ምስለ ሪንዚራት ወሰገደት ላቲ ባሕርኒ፡ ወእንዘ ይትሀወክ መዋግዲሃ ከመ አድባር ተለዐስ ሰረገሳቲሆው መልዕልተ መዋግድ መጠነ ፫ እመት ወበዜጣ ሚሕሴቶ*ሙ መንክር ተላህያ ስባሕር*: ግሩም ፌድፋደ ወመድምም ተላህያ ለባሕር ዐዚዝ ጥቀ ወዕፁብ ተሳህያ ስባሕር ወእስ ውስቴታሂ አራዊት እስ ይትዐወቁ ወእስ ኢያስተርእዩ ይወፅኡ ወይሰግዱ ላቲ ወአሪዋፍኒ እስ ውስቴታ ይጠፍሑ

በክነሬሆሙ ወይጼልልዋ ወኮነ ፍሥሓ ለባሕረ ኢርትራ ወስሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ ወወፅኡ ባሕረ ወተፈሥሑ ፈድፋደ እምነ እስራኤል ሶበ ይወፅኡ እምግብጽ ወበጽሑ አንጻረ ደብረ ሲና ወጎደሩ ውስተ ቃዬስ ወበህየኒ እንዘ ይሴብሑ መሳእክት ወያጎብሩ ስብሐቶሙ መንፈሳዊያን ምስስ ደቂቀ መሬታዊያን በማሕሴት ወበመዝሙር በከበሮ ወበትፍሥሕት። ወእምሂየ ጸዐኑ ሰረገሳቲሆሙ ወተንሥኡ ወሓሩ ወጎስፍዋ ስብሔረ ምድያም ወበጽሑ ሀገረ ቤሎንቶስ እንተ ሀገረ ኢትዮጵያ: ወተፈሥሑ በህየኒ ወአዕረፉ እስመ ደወስ ብሔሮሙ በጽሑ በክብር ወበፍሥሓ ዘእንበስ ፃማ በፍኖት በሰረገሳ ነፋስ ምስለ ኀይለ ሰጣይ ወሚካኤል ሊቀ መሳእክት: ወተፈሥሑ ኩሎሙ አድያመ ኢትዮጵያ እስመ ታበርህ ጽዮን ጎበ በጽሐት ከመ ፀሐይ በውስተ ጽልመት።

# Chapter 58 of the Kebra Nagast

፶፰ ጎበ ተንሥአ ሰሎሞን ይቅትሎሙ።

ከመዝ ተናገረ ንጉሥ ሰሎሞን ወተንሥአ በመዐት ወሐረ ከመ ይኅሥሦሙ፡ ወሶበ ተንሥኡ ንጉሥ ወመኳንንቲሁ ወጎያሳኒሁ ተጋብኡ አእሩገ እስራኤል ውስተ ቤተ እግዚኣብሔር ምስስ አቤራት ወደናግል ወበከዩ በእንተ ጽዮን እስመ ተነሥአት እም ኔሆሙ ታቦተ ሕጉ ለእግዚኣብሔር። ወስሰዶቅኒ እስመ ገብአ ልቡ እምድኅረ ጒንዱይ ወእምዝ አዘዘ ንጉሥ ከመ ይሐሩ ይምነ ወፅግመ ከመ እመበ ከመ ይትገሐሡ እምፍርሀተ ስርቅ፡ ወስሲሁስ ንጉሥ ተንሥአ በአሠረ ፍኖቶሙ ስሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ ወፈነወ መባርዲን: ሰብአ አፍራስ: ከመ ያእምሩ ጎበ ሀስው ወይግብኡ ወይንግርዎ። ወሓሩ ወበጽሑ ሀገረ ምስር ጎበ ተወየኑ ህየ ሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ ምስስ ንጉሦሙ ወጎበሂ ተሰስምዋ ስጽዮን ወተፈሥሑ ወሐተቱ ኪያሆሙ ሐራ ንጉሥ ወይቤልዎሙ ሰብአ ብሔረ ግብጽ፡ እምርሑቅ መዋዕል በዝየ ጎለፉ ሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ እንዘ ይረውጹ በሰረገሳ ከመ መሳእክት ወይቀልሉ እምነ አንስርት በውስተ ሰጣይ: ወይቤልዎሙ ጣእዜ ዕለት ኀለፉ

እምኔክሙ: ወደቤልዎሙ ዮም ተሱዕ መዋዕል በH ጎስፉ እምኔነ። ወቦ እምኔሆው እስ ገብኡ ወነገርዎ ለንጉሥ ሰሎሞን ከመ ጎስፉ ተሱዐ መዋሪል እምዘ ጎስ<del>ፉ</del> እምስር ወአብያጺነሰ ሓሩ ከመ ይኅሥሡ እስከ ባሕረ ኢርትራ ወንሕነሰ ገባእነ ከመ ሰኑይ እምከመ ወፅኡ እምኅቤክ በጽሑ በሠሉስ ኅበ ፈስገ ተከዚ ሀገረ ምስር: ወስነኒ ሶበ **ፈነው**-ከነ እምኢየሩሳሌም በጻሕነ በዕለተ ሰንበት ወገባእነ ጎቤክ ዮም በዕስተ ራብዕ: ጎሊኬ በጥብብ መጠነ ይብጽሑ እሙንቱ ሰብእ። ወተምዐ ንጉሥ ወይቤ አጎዝዎሙ ጎምስቲሆሙ እስከ ንረኪብ ጽድቀ ቃሎሙ። ወአፍጠኑ ሐዊሪ ንጉሥ ወሰራዊቱ ወበጽሑ ጋዛ ወተስእሎሙ ወይቤሎሙ ማእዜ ጎስፈ ወልድየ እምኔክ*ሙ*። አውሥኡ ወይቤሉ ኅለፈ ይእቲ ሠሉስ ዕስት ወሶበ ጸዐኑ ሰረገሳቲሆሙ አልቦ ዘየሐውር መልዕልተ ምድር አሳ በሰረገሳ ስቁሳን መልዕልተ ነፋስ ወይቀልሉ እመን አንስርት ዘውስተ ሰጣይ ወከተሉ ንዋዮሙ የሐውር ምስሌሆሙ መልዕልተ ነፋስ በሰረገላ፡ ወስነሰ መሰስን ዘአንተ ረሰይክ ሎሙ በጥበብከ ከመ ይሐሩ በሰረገላ መልዕልተ ነፋስ። ወይቤሎሙ ቦኑ ዘሀለወት ጽዮን ታቦተ ሕጉ ስእግዚኣብሔር ምስሌሆሙ: ወይቤልዎ አልቦ ዘርኢነ።

# Chapter 59 of the Kebra Nagast

፱፱ ጎበ ሐተቶ ስግጻዊ ገብረ ፈርዖን።

ወጎስፈ እምህየ ወረከበ ፩ መኰንነ እመኳንንተ *ግብጽ ዘንጉሥ ፈርየን ዘስአ*ኮ ጎቤሁ ምስለ አም*ኃ* ወምሉእ ንዋይ ምስሌሁ ወበጽሐ ወሰገደ ለንጉሥ። ወአፍጠኖ ሐቲተ ሰሎሞን ንጉሥ ዘእንበስ የሀብ አምኃሁ ወመልእክቶ ወይቤሎ ቦኑ ዘርኢክ ሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ እንዘ ይግዕዙ እምህየ። ወአውሥአ ወይቤሎ መልአከ ፈርዖን ለንጉሥ ሕያው አንተ ንጉሥ ስዓስም: ስአከኒ እግዚእየ ንጉሥ ፈርዖን እምእስክንድርያ ጎቤከ ወነዋ አየድዕከ ዘከመ መጻእኩ: ወሶበ መጻእኩ እምእስክንድርያ ቦእኩ ቃህራ ውስተ ሀገሩ ለንጉሥ ወበብጽሐትየ በጽሑ ህየ እሱ ሰብአ ኢትዮጵያ ዘትብል። በጽሑ እንተ ጎለፈት ሠሉስ ውስተ ተከዚ ፌስገ ምስር እንዘ ይንፍሑ በዕንዚራት ወይረውጹ በሰረገሳት ከመ ጎይስ ሰጣያዊያን፡ ወእስ ርእይዎሙ ይቤልዎሙ እሱሰ እንዘ መሬታዊያን ኮኑ ሰማያዊያን መኑኬ ይጠብብ እምሰሎሞን ንጉሠ ይሁዳ ወው-እቱኒ ኢሖረ በሰረገሳ ነፋስ ከመዝ፡ ወእለ ሀስዉ ውስተ አህጉር ወማኅፌድ ስምዐ ኮኑ ከመ ሶበ ቦኡ እሉ ውስተ ብሔረ ግብጽ ወድቁ ወተሰብሩ

አማልክቲነ ወአማልክተ ንጉሥ ወማኅፈደ ጣዖታትኒ ከጣሁ ተቀጥቀጡ ወሐተቱ ገነውተ አጣልክት ጣርያነ **ግብጽ በእንተ ዘወድቁ አ**ማልክቲነ ወይቤሉነ ታቦተ አምሳከ እስራኤል እንተ ወረደት እምሰጣይ ሀስወት ምስሌሆሙ ወትነብር ውስተ ሀገሮሙ እስከ ስዓስም: ወበእንተዝኬ ሶበ ትበውእ ብሔረ ግብጽ ተቀጥቀጡ አማልክቲነ፡ ወአንተሰ አንጉሥ አልቦ ዘይመስላ ለጥበብከ እምታሕተ ሰሚይ ወለምንት ወሀብከ ታቦተ ሕጉ ስእግዚኣብሔር አማሳክከ ዘአንጽሑ ስከ አበዊከ: እስመ ንሰምዕ ከመ ይእቲ ታድኅነክሙ እምእደ ፀርክሙ ወመንፈሰ ትንቢትኒ ባቲ ይትናገረክሙ ወአምሳከ ሰማይኒአ የጎድር ውስቴታ በመንፈሱ ቅዱስ ወትሰመዩ ሰብአ ቤቱ ለእግዚኣብሔር፡ ወለምንት ዘወሀብክሙ ክብርክሙ ለባሪድ። አውሥአ በጥበብ ሰሎሞን ወይቤ በአይቴ ይክል 

#### Chapter 53 [first section]

## Xeba tawhba saragala la'ityopya

Wabaxeba xedarusa **gāzā** hagara 'emu laneguš zāwahaba soba tmasu'e xecēhu neguš salomon lanegušta 'ityopyā. Wa'emhya bashu ba'ahati 'elat westa dawala **gebes** 'enta smā **mesrin** wasoba r'eyu daqiqa xeyalāna 'esrā' ēl kama ba'ahati 'elat bashu mhwāra 13 'elat wa'idakmu wa'irxbu wa'isab'e wa'i'enssā wakwilomu kama zasobē sagbu wastyu 'a'imaru wa'amnu 'emuntu daqiqa xeyl kama 'emxeba 'egzi'abhēr konat zati waybēlwe lanegušmu nāwrd saragālate 'esma basahna māya '**ityopyā** zāti y'eti **takazi** 'enta tward 'em'ityopyā watsaqi **falaga gebes** wa'awradu saragalātihomu hjya watkalu dabāt rihomu. Wahoru xbura daqiqa xeyl wasadedu kwilo 'ahzaba. Waybēlwo lanegušmu nngrkanu nagara la'ema tkl ta'agšo waybēlomu 'ewa 'ekl wala'ema tbēluni 'eska 'elata motya 'iyawad'e wa'iyāš'e.

#### The translation reads:

#### How the transport of the Ark reached Ethiopia

They halted at Gaza, the city of the king's mother, which King Solomonhad given to the Queen of Ethiopia when she visited him. From there they took a single day to travel to Gebes [Egypt], the name of which is Mesrin. When the children of the leaders of Israel saw that they and their animals had taken one day to travel a distance that usually took thirteen without getting tired or hungry or thirsty and indeed felt that they had eaten and drunk their fill, they believed it was God's work. They spoke to their king [Menelik "Let us put our loads down for we have arrived at the waters of Ethiopia. This is the flow that comes from Ethiopia and waters the Brook of Gebes [Egypt]." And so they let down their transports [made their camels kneel?] and pitched their tents.

# Chapter 55 [extracts]

## Ba'nta zatafashu sab'a ityopya

Watanš'u saragalātni kamu qadimu wagēšu ba<u>s</u>bā<u>h</u> <u>yh</u>ēlyu lāti watalā'lu kwilomu matana 'emat 'enza yastafānwwomu sab'a bhera **Gebes** xelafu baqdmēhomu kama <u>s</u>lalot wasagadu lomu sab'ā bhera **Gebes** 'esma r 'eywā 'enza traws kama <u>dh</u>ay bawesta samāy wakwilomu yrawsu basaragalā 'enza yrawsu baqdmēhā wabedxrēhā. Wabashu **Bahra 'al 'Ahmar** 'enta y 'eti **Bahra 'Ireterā.......labāhra 'Ireterā** walasab'a 'tyopya wawad'u bāhra

watafaš<u>h</u>u fadfāda 'emna 'esrā'ēl soba ywad'u 'mgebes waba<u>sh</u>u 'an<u>s</u>ra **dabra sina** waxedr westa **qādēs**......Wa'emhiya <u>s</u>a'anu saragalātihomu watanš'u we<u>h</u>oru wuxelafwā lab<u>h</u>ēra **mdyām** wabu<u>sh</u>u **hagara bēlontos** 'enta **hagara 'ityopya** ...

The translation reads:

#### How the people of Ethiopia rejoiced

Then the transports [camels?] rose up early in the morning and left and the people sung praises to Zion and they were all raised up to the height of a cubit. They passed by like shadows and the people of **Egypt** called out their farewells and the people of **Egypt** paid homage to Zion as she flew above them by accompanying her transport before and behind. Then they came to the **Sea of Al-Ahmar**, which is the **Sea of Eritrea** [the Red Sea].......And the Sea of Eritrea was joyful as too were the people of **Ethiopia**, who went to the sea and celebrated mightily with a greater pleasure than did Israel after the escape from Egypt. They arrived opposite **Mount Sinai** and stayed some time in **Qades** and then they loaded their transports, rose up and departed, passing to the land of **Mdyamand** then the city of **Belontos**, a city of **Ethiopia**....

Chapter 58 contains the account of Solomon's pursuit.

**Chapter 58** [sentence four onwards]

# Xaba tans'a salomon yotlomu

Wahoru wabashu hagara msr xaba ta'yanu hya sab'a ityopya msla negušomu waxabahi tasalamwa lasyon watafašhu wahatatu kiyahomu hara neguš waybēlwomu sab'a bhēra gebes 'emrhuq maw ā'el bazya xlafu sab'a 'ityopyā 'enza yrawsu basaragalā kama malā'ēkt wayqallu 'emna 'ansrt bawesta samāy waybēlwomu mā'azē 'elat xalafu 'emnēkmu waybēlwomu yom tasu'e mawa'el bazu xalafu 'emnēna. Wabo 'emnēhomu 'ela gab'u wanagarwo languš salomon kama xalafu tasu'a mawā'el 'emza xalafu 'emsr wa'abyāšinasa horu kama yxešsu 'eska bahr 'irtrā wanhnasa gabā'ena kama nngrka zanta 'esku xali lalika neguš ba'elata sanuy 'emkama wad'u emxabeka bashu bašalus xaba falaga takazi hagara msr walanani soba fanawkana 'em'iyarusālēm basāhna ba'elata rāb'e xalikē batbab matana ybashu 'emuntu sab'e.

Watam'a neguš waybē 'axezwomu xamstihomu 'aska nrakb sdqa qālomu. Wa'aftanu hawira neguš wasarawitu wabasu gaza wattas'elomu waybelomu ma'azē xalafa waldya 'emanēkmu. 'Aws'u waybelu xalafa y'eti šalus 'elat wasoba sa'anu saragālatihomu 'albo zayahawr mal'elta mdr 'alā basaragalā squlān

mal'alta nafus wayqallu 'emna 'ansrt zawesta samay wakwilu nwayomu yahawr mslēhomu mal'elta nafās basaragalā walanasa masalana za''anta rasayka lomu batbabka kama yhoru basaragalā mal'elta nafās. Waybēlomu bonu zahalawat syon tabota hgu la'egzi'abhēr mslēhomu weybēlwo ālbo zar'ine.

#### The translation is:

# How Solomon rose up to kill them

And Solomon's cavalry sped on and reached the city of Msr where the men of Ethiopia had camped with their king and where they had made peace with Zion and rejoiced. And Solomon's troopers questioned the people and the men of the region of Gebestold them "Some days ago some Ethiopians passed through here and they traveled swiftly in wagons like angels and faster than eagles." And the king's men asked, "How many days ago did they leave?" And the men of Gebes told them nine days had passed since they left. Then some of the troopers returned to Solomon and told him, "It's been nine days since the Abyssinians left Msr. Some of our detachment have gone to look for them at the Sea of Eritrea hut we came hack to report the situation. Consider the matter, my lord. On the second day they left your territory and on the third they reached the river at the city of Mesr. And after being sent out by you from Jerusalem we arrived on the day of the Sabbath. And we returned today, the fourth day of the week. You can estimate just how far those men have traveled." At this the king became extremely angry and ordered the five cavalrymen to be seized and held until their story was checked. Then the king set out with troops for Gaza where he asked the people when his son had left. They replied that he had departed three days earlier, adding "and having loaded their wagons, none of them traveled on the ground but in wagons suspended in the air. And they were swifter than the eagles in the sky, and all their loads traveled with them in wagons above the winds. As for us, we thought you had in your wisdom, enabled them to travel in this way." But when the king asked them if the fugitives were carrying Zion, the Tabernacle of the Law of God, they replied they had seen nothing.

Chapter 59 appears mostly to be an interpolation but the reference to a three day journey to the Brook of Egypt is probably genuine.

# Chapter 59 [first section]

#### Xaba hatato lagbsawi gabra far'on

Waxalafa 'emhya werekebe 1 makwanna 'emakwānnta **gebes** zaneguš far'on zala'ako xabēhu mslā 'amxā wamlu'e nwāy mslehu waba<u>sha</u> wasagada laneguš. Wa'aftano hatita salomon neguš za'enbala yahab 'amxāhu wamal'ikto waybēlo bonu zar'ika sab'a 'ityopya 'enza yg'ezu 'emhya. Wa'awš'a waybēlo mal'aka far'on laneguš <u>h</u>yaw 'anta neguš la'ālam, le'akeni 'egzi'eya neguš far'on '**em'eskndryā** xabēka wanawa 'ayad'ka zakama ma<u>s</u>ā'eku; wasoba ma<u>s</u>ā'eku '**em'eskndryā** bo'eku **qāhrā** westa hagaru laneguš wabab<u>s</u>hatya ba<u>sh</u>u hya 'elu sab'a 'ityopya zatbl; ba<u>sh</u>u 'enta xalafat šalus westa **takazi falaga msr...** 

#### The translation reads:

# How the king questioned an Egyptian, the servant of Pharaoh

And Solomon left that place, and he met an emissary from the courtiers of the Pharaoh of Egypt, whom the Pharaoh had dispatched with a gift to present Solomon along with much treasure. He arrived and paid his respects to the king. King Solomon was so anxious to discover what had happened that he began asking questions even before the emissary had presented his gift and his compliments, saying, "Have you seen a band of Ethiopian fugitives pass this way?" Pharaoh's ambassador responded to the king, stating, "Oh king, live forever! My lord, King Pharaoh, dispatched me from **Alexandria** to see you. And so, I will tell you how I have come. Having left **Alexandria** I arrived in **Cairo**, the city of the king, and there encountered those Ethiopians of whom you speak for they had arrived there too. They reached there after a passage of three days to the watercourse, the **brook of Egypt...**.

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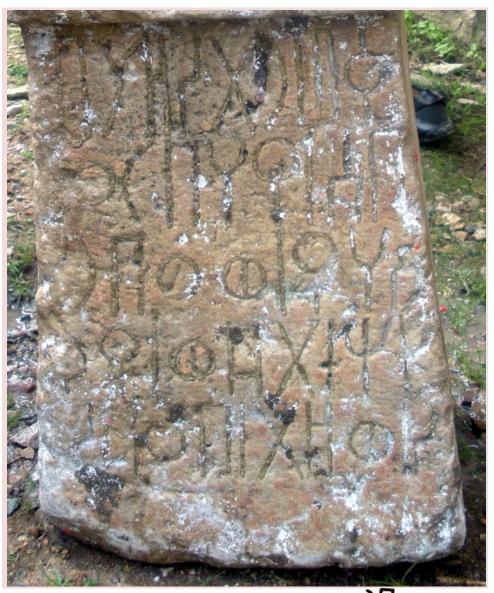
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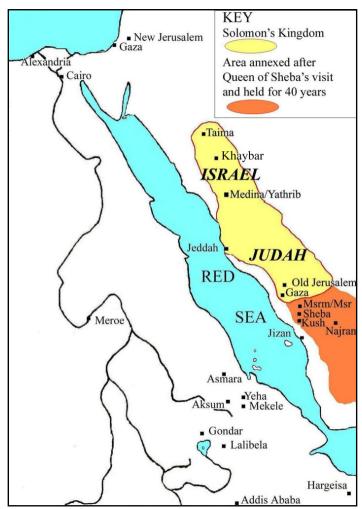
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The oldest known inscription mentioning the Hebrew people - DNO - [line 3 reading right to left. Sabaean inscriptions are boustrophedonic = bi-directional] discovered on two ca.750 B.C. Sabaean/Sheban incense burners at Adi Kaweh, *Leeman 2009* 

#### TRUE LOCATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRE-586 B.C.?



The marked area is the region that contains the Hebrew/Canaanite vocabulary and syntax recorded by Chaim Rabin in Ancient West Arabian, the Old Testament place names noted by Kamal Salibi, iron deposits (David and Solomon were famous armourers), and an ancient Ark culture. It also straddles the lucrative incense, gold, precious stones and luxury goods trade routes from Sabaea (Sheba). This area was temporarily abandoned by Egyptian and Assyrian imperial control ca. 1000-925 B.C., the same years as the zenith of the Israelite states under David and Solomon.

#### XI WANG MU Daoist Queen of the West ca.1000 B.C.



Xi Wang Mu, the Daoist Queen of the West (her location was the Kunlun mountains of western China), is believed by some authorities to be one and the same as the Queen Sheba (the Queen of the South). They lived in the same era, had relations with powerful monarchs, and cultivated plants associated with immortality (incense, myrrh, and a magical peach). Both were religious leaders and queens of the jinn (genies). Sheba's Torah has similarities to the Daoist emphasis on respecting nature and gender equality.

A Persian tradition states the Queen of Sheba was the daughter of a Chinese ruler and a peri (jinn). Arab traditions say her mother was queen of the jinn.



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