"Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers!"
From Ethiopianism to Pan-Africanism

Dominik Frühwirth[1]

Abstract

The *Universal Ethiopian Anthem* of Marcus Garvey's *Universal Negro Improvement Association*, from its opening lines "Ethiopia, thou land of our fathers, thou land where the gods loved to be" to its conclusion that "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand" in the final verse, gives a glimpse at the influence Ethiopianism had on emerging Pan-Africanism in the early twentieth century. The following article will trace this influence in order to show how widespread and profound it was. It will also show how Ethiopianism was not only a mere forerunner of Pan-Africanism that ceased to exist once Pan-Africanism was in place, but that Ethiopianism constitutes a whole religious cosmology, in which pan-African unity plays a central role, that has survived the twentieth century and is now most visibly upheld and still developed within the Rastafarian movement.

One winter Sunday night on December 21st 1919 the opening line "Ethiopia, thou land of our fathers" of the *Universal Ethiopian Anthem* was officially sung for the first time at a meeting held by Marcus Garvey's *Universal Negro Improvement Association* (UNIA) at its Liberty Hall headquarters on Lenox Avenue in Harlem, New York (Bonacci 2014: 1060f). About half a year later, in August 1920, the poem with the famous Ethiopianist opening line originally penned by the UNIA's Arnold Josiah Ford (1877-1935) from Barbados and Benjamin Ebenezer Burrell (1892-1959) from Jamaica, "amended from its 1918 original version, was declared the 'anthem of the

---

[1] Dominik Frühwirth, University of Vienna; contact: mag.dominik.fruehwirth@gmail.com

Negro race' on the occasion of the UNIA's *Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World*" (Bonacci 2016: n.p.).

By that time, Marcus Garvey's (1887-1940) *Universal Negro Improvement Association*, founded in Jamaica in 1914 and incorporated in the USA in 1918 (Hill/ Bair 1987: lxiv), had already come a long way in its relatively short history: By the early 1920s, the UNIA was both one of the largest Pan-Africanist movements as well as "the largest international movement of Black peoples" on the African continent and in the countries of its Diaspora. It had about 1,700 groups in 40 countries with 4 million members, with its largest concentration in Harlem (Sherlock/ Bennett 1998: 301).

This article argues that the Pan-Africanism of this "largest international movement of Black peoples" (and others as well) was inherited from the "ideology" – as Ken Post (1970: 4) insisted to call it – of Ethiopianism. This follows from the fact that "Ethiopia", for Marcus Garvey, pointed to the notion of Africa as one unified land, as expressed in the anthem of the *Universal Negro Improvement Association* (UNIA), which was entitled, "Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers", i.e. Africa (Edmonds 2003: 35). The article argues that Ethiopianism was not only an important influence on Pan-Africanism but, moreover, was itself a type of religious Pan-Africanism in existence well before the terminology of political Pan-Africanism was adopted, and has as such coexisted with political Pan-Africanism throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Ethiopianism

The term Ethiopianism subsumes various ways of enslaved/colonized Africans and their descendants to positively identify with Africa via the ancient notion of Ethiopia in both Western as well as Biblical mythologies. Western and Biblical mythologies positively mentioning Ethiopia, "the name which the Greeks and Romans applied to a number of dark- and black-skinned African peoples" (Snowden 1976: 11) or sub-Saharan Africa in general (Sonderegger 2010: 174), was important to enslaved/colonized Africans because it constituted a rare niche in the European imperialist worldview, which was forced on enslaved/colonized peoples as part of their own frame of reference, where Africa was not a despised wilderness inhabited by subhuman savages.

The first Ethiopians in European literature were Homer's "blameless Ethiopians" (Snowden 1976: 28). Writing in the eighth/ seventh century BC,

the legendary Homer praised Ethiopians in both of his main works: In the *Iliad* (1.423-4), Zeus himself went "to feast with the Aethiopians, loyal, lordly men, and all of the gods went with him", and in the *Odyssey* (5.281-287), Poseidon was "just returning home from his Ethiopian friends." Thus, Homer's allusion to "blameless Ethiopians" and to Ethiopia as a favorite of the gods testifies to the respect which the ancient Greeks, the famed founders of European civilization, evidently had for this black power (Snowden 1976: 20), and therefore fueled the impact of Greek mythology on Ethiopianism as expressed in the second line of the *Universal Ethiopian Anthem*: "Ethiopia, thou land of our fathers / thou land where the gods loved to be"; thereby lifting the ancestors of enslaved, denigrated and dehumanized Africans and their descendants to the level of the gods of their European oppressors' own mythology.

About 300 years after Homer, "Herodotus described Ethiopians as the tallest and most handsome men on earth", and in the first century BC, Diodorus Siculus expounded the view "that many Egyptian institutions were derivatives of Ethiopian civilization" (Snowden 1976: 29, 22), which is significant because ancient Egypt was the only African civilization widely respected by European colonialists who therefore tried to claim it for themselves. Diodorus had further already established the notion which would later become central to Ethiopianism in the age of colonialism, that Ethiopians "manifestly enjoy the favour of the gods, inasmuch as they have never experienced the rule of an invader from abroad; for from all time they have enjoyed a state of freedom and of peace one with another, and although many and powerful rulers have made war upon them, not one of these has succeeded in his undertaking" (Bibliotheca Historica, Book III, 2:1-4).

But although Western mythology influenced the whole spectrum of diasporan Ethiopianism, from the more grassroots` Ethiopianism of Marcus Garvey to the more intellectual Ethiopianism of W.E.B. Du Bois (Bonacci 2015a: 75), whom Wilson Moses (1975: 426) called "a poet of Ethiopianism", the primary tradition basic to Ethiopianism was the Biblical tradition.

It is difficult to say when the notion of the "blameless Ethiopians" from Western mythology was first accessible to enslaved Africans or their descendants before it became evident in the late nineteenth century leading up to Marcus Garvey's UNIA or Du Bois' prose and poetry. But it is safe to say that it was secondary to the Biblical influence because "Ethiopianism in

North America and the Caribbean owes its origins to the 'Ethiopian references in the Bible which had a liberatory promise and which, when contrasted with the indignities of plantation bondage, showed the black man in a dignified and humane light'" (Chevannes 1994: 33f quoting George Shepperson, one of the pioneer historians of Pan-Africanism; see Sonderegger in this volume). These Ethiopian references were widespread in "the King James Version or authorized English version of the Bible, published in 1611, [because] translators used the term Ethiopian, which was quite popular at the time, to render the Hebrew Kush or the Greek Αἰθιοπία, designating black people. This term covered a rather vague expanse, an origin extending beyond modern Ethiopia to all of sub-Saharan Africa" (Bonacci 2015a: 49).

Although enslaved Africans had been shipped from Africa across the Atlantic since the early 16th century (Fyfe 1976: 59), this did not automatically mean instant Christianization or even access to the Bible because the different colonial powers followed varying approaches of introducing or withholding the Bible from enslaved Africans: For example, "[u]nlike Haiti, where the slaves were commanded if not forced to be members of the Catholic faith, the English planters in Jamaica adamantly refused to share their religion with the slave population" (Barrett 1997: 17). For the North American colonies, Barrett (1997: 74) asserted that it "is now impossible to know with certainty when Ethiopianism emerged in American Black religion", but like in the Caribbean, he connects it to the emergence of Black Baptist Churches and records that the first Black Baptist Church in the North American South was established in 1788 (ibid.: 75).

But even before that time, there must have existed a tradition of Ethiopianist interpretations of the Bible in North America so that Biblical Ethiopianism should probably be more widely dated to the eighteenth century in general. Because the formerly in Georgia enslaved Baptist Preacher George Liele had already brought Ethiopianist interpretations of Christianity from North America to Jamaica in 1783, where he consequently founded the first Baptist Church, which he named the Ethiopian Baptist Church (Erskine 2007: 9).

Ethiopianism in Jamaica

In Jamaica, an important location for the development of Ethiopianism up to Marcus Garvey and beyond, these so-called Native (Black) Baptists of the late 18th century were therefore the first to widely enable enslaved Africans

access to the Bible, an endeavor which the Anglican Planters' Church found highly subversive and tried to prevent. That is why, in contrast to North America, Ethiopianism in Jamaica cannot be dated prior to George Liele's arrival and activities in the late 18th century (Chevannes 1994: 34), whose "sermons, which highlighted the African and Ethiopian elements in the Bible, usually began with the call, 'Arise ye sons of Ethiopia'" (Edmonds 2003: 34f).

Liberatory passages and "African and Ethiopian elements in the Bible" that the Planters' Church in Jamaica tried to keep away from enslaved Africans included, for example, the Exodus story of liberation from slavery, urging slave-owners to "let my people go!" (Exodus 9:11); the Books of the Maccabees about liberation from colonialism; Ethiopia as part of the Garden of Eden where all humanity and its civilization originated (Genesis 2:13); Moses being first introduced to the Biblical God by his Ethiopian family (Numbers 12:1; Bauks 2019: 65, 68); or Jeremiah (13:23) reminding enslaved Africans that, despite their social and cultural alienation due to slavery, just like the leopard who cannot change his spots, the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, and that therefore such messages of salvation pertaining to Ethiopia as contained in Psalm 68:31, that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God", or Psalm 87:4, that a messianic figure will be born in Ethiopia, still applied to them. And on top of this, Acts 8:27 even identified the first foreign national to follow Christ as an Ethiopian at a time when the European ancestors of their Christian slave-holders were still so-called "pagans" and "heathens" for centuries to come; ironically terms with which the Christian slave-holders later tried to justify the enslavement of Africans.

In an attempt at damage control, the Anglican Planters' Church distributed *"Selected Parts of the Holy Bible, for the Use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands"*, commonly known as the Slave Bible. According to Anthony Schmidt, curator of the Washington Museum of the Bible where the Slave Bible is exhibited, "about 90% of the Old Testament has been removed and about 50% of the New Testament has been removed. To put it another way, a normal King James Version has 1189 chapters in it, the Slave Bible has only 232" (Schmidt quoted by NBC News 2019: n.p.). "The reason? So that the enslaved Africans in the Caribbean islands of Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua couldn't read or be read anything that might incite them to rebel" (Little 2018: n.p.). Apart from that, in line with Protestant canonicity, even normal King James Versions do not include the Books of the

Maccabees, which is why King James Versions including apocrypha like the Maccabees have become known as Maccabee Bibles in subversive Jamaican folk traditions.

Therefore, before the introduction of the Bible and Christianity to enslaved Africans in Jamaica towards the late 18th century, they had forged a new African-Caribbean cosmology following the loss of much of their African religions in the middle passage (Besson 1998: 56). This new cosmology was known as Myal or Myalism and emerged in Jamaica around the middle of the eighteenth century (ibid.: 57), just before the arrival of the Ethiopianist Baptists, and was therefore incorporating and controlling the Native Baptists' Ethiopianism (ibid.: 58), so much that "the name 'Native Baptist' was being widely used to refer to the more christianized forms of Myal" (Chevannes 1994: 19). Myal is often described as a protective spiritual tradition not only against its counterpart of Obeah, often described as harmful (Polk 2001: 216f), but initially probably also against slavery conceived as the sorcery of the white man. Consequently, as Myal could protect against sorcery of all kinds, it must have also been able to protect against slavery (Edmonds 2003: 33). It is therefore no coincidence that Myal came first to the attention of the colonialists as an anti-colonial liberation force in the Taki Rebellion of 1760.[2]

Since Myal developed due to the loss of regional religious affiliations in Africa and was therefore forced to develop beyond these limitations in Jamaica, "it enabled a rebellion to be organized on pan-African instead of strictly ethnic lines for the first time in the history of the Africans in Jamaica" (Chevannes 1994: 17) and is therefore often understood as the beginning of pan-African sentiments in Jamaica, "the basis of a pan-African solidarity" (Besson 1998: 57).

This is why Myal is important to the present topic, because it cannot only be traced as an African influence on the Native Baptists' Ethiopianism, but specifically as a pan-African influence. And when, in late 1860, a Christian revival from the Anglophone North Atlantic spread through Jamaica, this Myalist Ethiopianism further developed into what is known as Revivalism (Chevannes 2001: 283). Since then, this Christianized Myalism known as

---

[2] Although the history of slavery in Jamaica was dotted with rebellions against it, the rebellion led by Taki in 1760 was the first "that seriously threatened to bring the system of slavery crashing down" (Chevannes 1994: 11) due to its transregional (i.e. pan-African) mass-appeal through Myal.

Revivalism or simply Revival has been Jamaica's most widespread religion (ibid.: 282).

Since later in this article Rastafari will be showcased as a continuation of these Afro-Jamaican religious traditions still holding on to Ethiopianism, as "Ethiopianism would flower in the twentieth century into the Rastafari movement" (Besson 1998: 64), it is already important at this point to mention that like "the Revival worldview, the roots of Rastafari can be traced in part to [this] eighteenth century Jamaican slave religion, with the emergence of the ideology of Ethiopianism among the plantation slaves" (ibid.: 63). But since, unlike Revivalism, Rastafari is not only derived from African religious roots but also aspired to an actual return to Africa, "[r]epatriation, as the return to Africa is known, thus became the first important departure from Revival" for Rastafari (Chevannes 1998: 26).

Ethiopianism in South Africa

Just as this Biblical Ethiopianism was establishing a strong foothold in Jamaica through Revivalism, which "grew out of Myal" (ibid.: 22), towards the late nineteenth century, a strong Ethiopianist tradition, which had until then been limited to the diaspora, also emerged in South Africa. Because just like in Jamaica, where discontentment over racial discrimination in the Methodist Church had led to the establishment of so-called Independent Methodists (Erskine 2007: 23), in South Africa also, "[d]isillusioned by the wide gulf between the Christian principles of equality and justice and the hard reality of the colour bar within European-led churches and in the South African society at large, Africans made up their mind to set up their own churches" (Lahouel 1986: 686). Like Jamaican/diasporan Ethiopianism, the South African

> "Ethiopian churches had only an indirect link with today's Ethiopia, reposed on the biblical corpus characteristic of Ethiopianism and appropriated the nationalist slogan 'Africa for the Africans', while largely rehabilitating their organization based on the model of Protestant missionary churches. The first among them was the Ethiopian Church founded by Mangena M. Mokone in 1892 in Witwatersrand." (Bonacci 2015a: 61)

Although Ethiopianism in the diaspora and South Africa seem to constitute two independent developments due to the geographical distance, the Ethiopianist influence was apparently brought to "South Africa by some (American Negroes) who went there and preached to the natives, 'Africa for the Africans' and caused a great race feeling" (John L. Dube quoted in Shepperson 1953: 14). But although the diasporan influence was so prevalent in the establishment of the South African Independent Churches[3] that "a South African missionary added, the 'natives received impressions of an idealised America, which they took to be almost entirely peopled by Blacks [as] a new element brought by the descendants of the white people's slaves entered at that time into the minds of the Blacks of South Africa" (ibid.: 18), George Shepperson insisted that:

> "American Negro influence [only] accentuated tendencies already present in African church separatist movements, with all their political consequences, in the first stage of Ethiopianism from 1892 to 1921. But, if no American Negro had ever set foot in Africa, it is more than likely that Ethiopianism would have taken much the same course." (Shepperson 1953: 16)

Nevertheless, it is important for illustrating the Caribbean/ Jamaican/ diasporan – South Africa connection to mention that one of these Ethiopian Churches was the so-called Afro-Athlican Constructive Church (AACC) based in Kimberly and founded by the Anguillan born and New Jersey based Robert Athlyi Rogers (Bonacci 2015a: 61). In 1922, Marcus Garvey invited Rogers to speak to a UNIA meeting in Newark and in 1924 he published *"The Holy Piby"*, a short Ethiopianist interpretation of Bible messages central to descendants of enslaved Africans also known as *"The Black Man's Bible"*, in which "Garvey was portrayed as an 'apostle of the Lord God for the redemption of Ethiopia and her suffering posterities'" (ibid.: 61). The creed of the AACC, contained in *The Holy Piby*, which

---

[3] The Ethiopianist Churches were also known as Independent Churches since Ethiopianism enabled an African claim to Christianity independent of European colonial interpretations, which therefore soon also necessitated an institutional and organisational independence from the European missionary churches that led to "the independent African church movement in South Africa, whose origins may be traced back to the 70's of the nineteenth century and earlier" (Shepperson 1953: 9).

constitutes the essence of Ethiopianist hopes in a nutshell, was also widespread by the AACC in Jamaica during the 1920s and has become the Rastafarians' *"Ethiopian Prayer"*, "which indicates the extent to which Ethiopianism, despite significant changes during the twentieth century, continues to permeate the Rastafari movement" (ibid.: 62f). Although the UNIA eventually distanced itself from the AACC, calling its members "imposters", there were "persons who were simultaneously members of the UNIA and members of the AACC" (Bonacci 2015a: 64), which nevertheless shows how intertwined Ethiopianism in Jamaica, South Africa and the UNIA was.

Ethiopianism among Pan-Africanist Pioneers

As the Greek understanding of "Ethiopia" already implied a certain oneness of all sub-Saharan Africa, as opposed to the Greek term "Libya" which designated Northern Africa to the West of Egypt (Sonderegger 2010: 174), many of the nineteenth-century-forerunners of Pan-Africanism had been steeped in Ethiopianism. Since Pan-Africanism, like Ethiopianism, is usually understood as a phenomenon that originated in the diaspora (ibid.: 175 and Sonderegger in this volume), it is important to look at some diasporan protagonists first. As it happened, Africans from diverse regions were enslaved and forced to forge alliances beyond regional and ethnolinguistic lines – alliances like those in the Taki Rebellion or Myalism in Jamaica. This made it possible for them to identify with the continent of "Africa" so much and so deep that George Shepperson (1976: 8) could confidently write, "it is no exaggeration to call pan-Africanism the latter-day ideology of the African diaspora".

It is safe to say that W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963), who is credited with having coined the term "Pan-Negroism" in 1897 that consequently developed into "Pan-Africanism" no later than the First Pan-African Conference in 1900 (Sonderegger 2010: 182), was an Ethiopianist of the nineteenth-century-type of Ethiopianism where Western and Biblical mythologies coincided: "Du Bois used Greek etymology to define Ethiopia as the 'land of the burnt faces' and also quoted Herodotus" (Bonacci 2015a: 57). Already before him, Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912) had looked for references to Ethiopia in the work of Greek authors. Both quoted Homer's *Iliad* on the "blameless Ethiopians" among whom the gods loved to be (ibid.: 58). Yet, both were also steeped in Biblical Ethiopianism: In 1880, Blyden gave a lecture for the

American Colonization Society, entitled *"Ethiopia Stretching Out Her Hands unto God"*, which is, of course, a reference to Psalms 68:31, often considered the core of Ethiopianism (Moses 1975: 412; Bonacci 2015a: 49). In this lecture, Blyden also expressed the pan-African essence of Ethiopianism "that by *Ethiopia*, is meant the continent of Africa, and by *Ethiopians*, the great race who inhabit that continent" (in Bonacci 2015a: 57). The extent to which Western and Biblical mythologies intertwined in Du Bois' Ethiopianist thinking becomes apparent, for example, when he, in almost Garvey-like fashion, asserted at the outbreak of the Ethiopian-Italian war in 1935 that the "hands which the Land of Burnt Faces is today stretching forth to the God of Things-that-be are both physical and spiritual; and today, as yesterday, they twine gnarled fingers about the very roots of the world" (Du Bois 1935: n.p.).

Biblical implications are also found in his poetic work. In his poem *"Children of the Moon"*, for example, the "Mountains of the Moon" refer to a legendary mountain range in the African interior, first mentioned in Ptolemy's Geographic (Moses 1975: 420), often thought to prove that "Ethiopia, land of the blacks, was thus the cradle of Egyptian civilization" (Du Bois quoted in Bonacci 2015a: 59), which is why the "Children of the Moon symbolized not only the ancient Ethiopians but twentieth-century Afro-Americans as well", while the "black face surrounded by wings [refers to] the wings of Ethiopia, mentioned by Isaiah in one of Du Bois's favorite Biblical passages: Ah! Land of the buzzing wings / Which lies beyond the rivers of Ethiopia […,] a nation strong and triumphant" (Moses 1975: 421).

Also continental representatives like Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (1866–1930) from the then Gold Coast followed Blyden's idea of natural racial unity, which the latter had already promulgated in his concept of the "African Personality" since 1865 (Mährdel 1994: 182), into the twentieth century along the lines of vintage Biblical Ethiopianism. Being aware of Ethiopianism's inherent pan-African dimension, Mährdel (1994: 187f.) already sees this pan-African dimension expressed in the title of Casely Hayford's famous book *"Ethiopia Unbound"*, in which he speaks of Africa as "the whole stretch of Ethiopia from sea to sea". Casely Hayford also illustrates Ethiopianism's inherent Pan-Africanism in that he sees pan-African unity as constituting the fulfillment of Ethiopianism's most central hope expressed in Psalms 68:31 when "Ethiopia will have at length raised up her hand unto God" (Casely Hayford quoted in Mährdel 1994: 186).

Pan-African unity as the fulfillment of Ethiopianist hopes and expectations led to the emergence of millenarian Ethiopianism which supposedly arose at the end of the nineteenth century where it promulgated "a kind of 'pan-African millennium'" (Bonacci 2015a: 54). This millenarian Ethiopianism then coincided with a messianic Ethiopianism which was provoked by the Adwa victory of 1896 in which Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia defeated the first Italian invasion. This trend was manifest in Marcus Garvey's UNIA since Adwa was a major awakening of the consciousness of African Americans at that time and thereby produced a deep reverence for modern Ethiopia, thus reviving and adding a new twist to the long history of Ethiopianism (ibid.: 54, 71). Therefore, the span from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was a time in which the earlier mythical, Biblical, and vague notions of "Ethiopia/Africa" morphed into more concrete political approaches towards the African continent provoked by the European "Scramble for Africa" and emerging African nationalism, thus giving way to the prevalence of political Pan-Africanism.

At that time, Marcus Garvey represented the most radical manifestation of black nationalism and is therefore regarded as "the ancestor of all later manifestations of black nationalism" (Bonacci 2015a: 46). In this, Garvey, like Blyden and even Du Bois, followed Ethiopianism's understanding of Africa as inherently black, since Africa was conceived as Ethiopia, "land of burnt faces", and therefore of African nationalism as black nationalism with a pan-African twist that concerned all people of African descent "at home and abroad" (Garvey 1986b: 34), i.e. in Africa and its diaspora. Since he was an Ethiopianist black nationalist, Garvey used biblical metaphors, religious phraseology and practices similar to those of Church congregations to channel the religious enthusiasm of his members for his socio-economic endeavours, so that "Garvey championed Ethiopianism" which "had contributed to the shaping of black nationalism and pan-Africanism", because "[b]lack nationalism, seeking to unite all black people be they Africans or Afro-descendants, was intrinsically linked to the development of pan-Africanism" (Bonacci 2015a: 41f, 20).

Given the religious emphasis of Biblical Ethiopianism within Marcus Garvey's UNIA, Burkett (2001: 354) has proposed that, in order to understand the UNIA's extraordinary mass appeal, "it must be analyzed and appreciated as a religious movement." Apart from his own speeches and writings which document his theology, Garvey also had his chief

religious lieutenant, George Alexander McGuire, who was the UNIA Chaplain-General from 1920 to 1922 (ibid.: 357). Although McGuire had been "the most prominent African-American official in the Episcopal Church", inspired by Garvey, he left the Episcopal Church in 1919, became the UNIA's Chaplain-General in 1920, and, similar to the Ethiopianist Churches in Jamaica and South Africa, in 1921 he founded the *African Orthodox Church* as an independent African-American Church that emerged in part because of segregation and discrimination in white American Churches that frustrated the ambitions of African-American clergy (Levinson 2001: 15f.). Although the *African Orthodox Church* was not the official Church of the UNIA, "Bishop George Alexander McGuire, who was called to the Primacy of the African Orthodox Church [in 1921], has still remained with the [United Negro Improvement] Association, officiating on all occasions when necessary as Honorary Chaplain General", according to Garvey (1986b: 283) himself, and has compiled in 1921 the "*Universal Negro Catechism*" for the UNIA. In it not only the basics of Ethiopianism are enshrined as the foundation of Garveyism: "Q. Whom did the ancients call Ethiopians? A. All men of dark-brown or black color.", but also the imminence of the fulfillment of the age-old Ethiopianist hopes and expectations:

> "Q. What prediction made in the 68th Psalm and the 31st verse is now being fulfilled? A. 'Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' Q. What does this verse prove? A. That Negroes will set up their own government in Africa, with rulers of their own race." (McGuire 1921: 11)

In keeping with this conviction that the fulfillment of Psalms 68:31 – which not only contained the essence of Ethiopianist hopes but which Burkett (2001: 355) also called the "Ur-text of black religious nationalism in the United States from the early nineteenth century to the present" – lay in "Negroes [setting] up their own government in Africa, with rulers of their own race", just six days after the coronation of Ras (Negus[4]) Tafari as

---

[4] Although Tafari Makonnen had been Negus (King) since 1928 before he was crowned Emperor (Negusa Nagast, literally King of Kings) as Haile Selassie I in 1930, he was still widely known in the diaspora as Ras (often translated as Duke, literally Head) Tafari at the time of his coronation in 1930 and beyond.

Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia on the 2nd of November 1930, Garvey proclaimed in his Jamaican newspaper *"The Blackman"* that this long-awaited time had finally come:

> "The Psalmist prophesied that Princes would come out of Egypt and Ethiopia would stretch forth her hands unto God. We have no doubt that the time is now come. Ethiopia is really now stretching forth her hands. The great kingdom of the East has been hidden for many centuries, but gradually she is rising to take a leading place in the world and it is for us of the Negro race to assist in every way to hold up the hand of Emperor Ras Tafari." (quoted in Erskine 2007: 120)

This assessment of Garvey, along with his insistence on calling Haile Selassie Ras Tafari even after his coronation, triggered in his native Jamaica the emergence of "the Rastafarian movement in which [therefore] the ideology and inspiration of Garvey have been retained as in no other organization, and where Ethiopianism has now become a full-fledged doctrinal base of the movement" (Barrett 1997: 80).

Although it is widely known that Garvey was no great fan of the "intellectual Ethiopianist" Du Bois (Drake quoted in Bonacci 2015a: 57), as Garvey "was one of the first to abandon an intellectualized discourse in order to reach the masses" (ibid.: 38), the different manifestations of Ethiopianism in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century as exemplified by such protagonists as Blyden, Casely Hayford, Du Bois or Garvey nevertheless illustrate the Ethiopianist context out of which Pan-Africanism largely grew.

From Ethiopianism to Pan-Africanism

The term Pan-Africanism itself was only established with the Pan-African Conference of 1900, in which Du Bois was already involved and which then inspired his Pan-African Congress movement since 1919. It was probably because of the novelty of the term coupled with his mistrust for Du Bois that Garvey (1986a: 68, my emphasis) dismissed Du Bois` undertaking as "his *so-called* Pan-African Congress". Although the term was new, the idea itself was not, as we have seen; Bonacci (2015a: 20), referring to German historian Imanuel Geiss, speaks of "proto-pan-Africanism before 1900". Pan-African notions had been inherent in the Greek terminology and (pan-)

African religious influence on Ethiopianism, as described above, and also in "the cause of Africa for the Africans – that is, that the Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa", as Garvey (1986a: 68) defined it.

Although the African-American "proto-Pan-Africanist" (to use Bonacci's/Geiss' term) Martin Delany (1812-1885) has been "credited with the pan-African slogan 'Africa for the Africans'" (Steverson 2005: 811), the motto had also been widely used in South African Ethiopianism in the late nineteenth century before Marcus Garvey championed it in the 1920s. Apparently brought to South Africa by the English missionary Joseph Booth (1851–1932), whom Shepperson (1953: 13) called "one of the most overlooked figures in the 'Africa for the Africans' movement [although he] kept the pot of Ethiopianism boiling in South Africa and Nyasaland", *Africa for the Africans* was the connection between South African religious Ethiopianism and African nationalism. Also the pan-African essence of "Africa for the Africans" was introduced to South Africa by Booth who introduced American Ethiopianists like Du Bois to South African audiences (ibid.: 13). Booth also worked closely with South African Ethiopianist nationalists like John Chilembwe, "whom he had taken to America in 1897" and who later led the Chilembwe Rising of 1915 in Nyasaland (ibid.: 13f).

Although West Africa, which became a hotbed for the later African nationalist movement that mainly grew out of the pan-African movement especially after the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945, had a "comparative lack of the Ethiopian phenomenon" so that "it does not appear to have had much Ethiopianism of the kind characterized by secessions from the nonconformist white churches" (Shepperson 1953: 11), the West African nationalist Bandele Omoniyi nevertheless wrote in 1908 *"A Defence of the Ethiopian Movement"* which he understood in very general terms as

> "a struggle between those who recognize the claim to equal participation in social and political rights with others and those who for themselves and their order assert a certain fictitious superiority of race, and claim for it as a consequence of causes, however accidental, exclusive and special privileges." (cited in Shepperson 1953: 11)

The roots of African nationalism in West Africa go back to the earliest colonial infringements on the West African coast where in 1787 a private

colonization society founded what was later to become the British crown colony of Sierra Leone and the American Colonization Society established Liberia after 1816, both eventually for the re-settlement of formerly enslaved Africans (Sonderegger 2010: 176). But African nationalism proper came up only in the 1930s with West African nationalists like Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996) and Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), who was on the one hand highly influenced by Marcus Garvey and on the other hand took part in the *Fifth Pan-African Congress* in 1945 that grew out of Du Bois' Pan-African Congress movement which Garvey rejected. The *Fifth Pan-African Congress* thereby not only connected Pan-Africanism and African nationalism in a way that would shape African independencies, it also illustrated how Ethiopianism was the hotbed for both: The Congress was organized by the *International African Service Bureau* (IASB) around George Padmore (1902–1959), Jomo Kenyatta (1893–1978) and Nnamdi Azikiwe, which in 1937 had emerged out of the *International African Friends of Abyssinia* (IAFA) established for the support of Ethiopia during the fascist Italian invasion (ibid.: 185f). After the first Ethiopian victory over Italy at Adwa in 1896 had already brought Ethiopianism into the twentieth century of political Pan-Africanism, the 1935 invasion further consolidated the pan-African concern for Ethiopia, as exemplified in the history of the *Fifth Pan-African Congress* that is usually regarded as the most important of all the Pan-African Congresses, and as Haile Selassie himself later recalled:

> "During this period the relentless struggle of our people to maintain the independence of their country had won the sympathy and moral support of the entire world and gave meaning and form to the present Pan-African Movement. At this point it would be fitting to pay tribute to such distinguished personalities as Mr. Jomo Kenyatta, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Dr. W. E. Du Bois, and others who had completely identified themselves with our struggle against colonialism and imperialism in trying years." (Haile Selassie 1967: 232)

As Haile Selassie mentioned, Du Bois was also touched by the invasion of Ethiopia and highlighted its Ethiopianist connotations and pan-African implications in even black nationalist terms when he rallied Ethiopianist sentiments for the Ethiopian cause at the outbreak of the 1935 invasion, asking,

"Why, for instance, is Haile Selassie Emperor of 'Ethiopia' and not of 'Abyssinia,' as his predecessors often called themselves? Abyssinia is a word of Semitic origin, but Ethiopia is Negro. Look at the pictures of Abyssinians now widely current. They are as Negroid as American Negroes. If there is a black race they belong to it." (Du Bois 1935: n.p.)

Ethiopianism as a Variant of Pan-Africanism, and the Rastafarian Link
Due to its intrinsic emphasis on African/ black unity, Ethiopianism can be regarded as a type of proto-Pan-Africanism (Bonacci 2015a: 20) from earliest pan-African notions in Jamaican Myalism and Ethiopianist self-conceptions as one black/ African entity (Ethiopia) to the Ethiopianist influence on Pan-Africanism proper in the twentieth century within Garveyism, Du Bois' Congress movement and African/black nationalism. It has therefore become clear that Ethiopianism was a forerunner of Pan-Africanism in that it promoted pan-African unity long before 20th century Pan-Africanism.

What this shows is, further, that Ethiopianism was not only a forerunner of Pan-Africanism but somewhat of an earlier form of Pan-Africanism itself under a different name and religious conception. As such, Ethiopianism was not just chronologically superseded by Pan-Africanism and ceased to exist once the twentieth century political notion of Pan-Africanism was in place, but Ethiopianism has existed as a form of Pan-Africanism parallel with what is usually regarded as Pan-Africanism proper throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

Although Ethiopianism has influenced the twentieth century Pan-Africanism of the Congress movement, this Pan-Africanism in time has shed the religious and mythical emphasis on "Ethiopia/Africa". In addition to the religious emphasis, some expressions of Pan-Africanism also do not share Ethiopianism's emphasis on blackness, as the term "Africa" is more a geographical denotation while "Ethiopia" describes the people themselves as black / with "burnt faces." Du Bois tried a middle course of relativizing racialism on the one hand while nevertheless defending Ethiopianism's emphasis on blackness on the other hand: "Of course there are not and never were any 'pure' Negroes any more than there are 'pure' whites or 'pure' yellows. Humanity is mixed to its bones. But in the rough and practical assignment of mankind to three divisions, the Ethiopians belong to the black race" (Du Bois 1935: n.p.).

The emphasis on Ethiopia within Ethiopianism can be explained in its chronological forerunner-role in that Ethiopianism represented pan-African ambitions at a time when modern knowledge about both the African continent and the Ethiopian state was not yet available to enslaved Africans and their descendants in the West. But this does not mean that when knowledge about Africa was becoming available, Ethiopianism had outlived its usefulness, as not only the Ethiopianist leanings of early Pan-African protagonists in the twentieth century have shown. Ethiopianism has survived in what Bonacci (2015a: 69) has called "Modern Ethiopianism", centered on the Ethiopian state, and in spiritual pan-African movements like Rastafari.

Bonacci's use of the term "Modern Ethiopianism" is similar to how Haile Selassie I himself originally coined it in the context of the Ethiopian state where he understood "the ideals of modern Ethiopianism [as] preserving those elements of the past which have proven useful, modifying and improving those parts which call for change" (Haile Selassie 1967: 436), essentially reconciling the ancient and the modern. Because by "Modern Ethiopianism", Bonacci (2015a:71) means the "gradual incarnation of classic Ethiopianism in the representations of the Ethiopian state and sovereigns" since the Adwa victory of 1896 and reinforced by the pan-African rallying around the Ethiopian cause during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia 1935-1941. These events gave the vague notion of the ancient Greek term "Ethiopia" within Ethiopianism a specific focus on the oldest independent modern African state. Therefore, the "embodiment of Ethiopianism in the Ethiopian state and its representatives that started with Adwa became increasingly concrete with Tafari" (ibid.: 75), who built on the pan-African policies of his predecessor Menelik II by inviting Africans from the diaspora into government and other positions in Ethiopia with the specific aim of racial solidarity (ibid.: 81). One of these black professionals was Arnold Josiah Ford, co-author and musical director of the UNIA's *Universal Ethiopian Anthem* "Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers", who reached Ethiopia in 1930 where he attended the coronation of Haile Selassie I later that year and died before Mussolini's invasion in 1935.

During the invasion, when Ethiopia was in the spotlight of world sympathy and "the first grand pan-African international mobilization took shape" (Bonacci 2015b: 150), Haile Selassie sent his envoy Melaku Beyen (1900-1940) to New York in 1937 to found the *Ethiopian World Federation* (EWF) in

order to pool and supervise diasporan support for the Ethiopian cause. The EWF was an embodiment of the pan-Africanist core of Ethiopianism as expressed in the preamble of its constitution that understood Ethiopians in traditional Ethiopianist fashion as "We the Black Peoples of the World" and validated the centuries-old diasporan Ethiopianist claim to "Ethiopia, which is our heritage" (Barrett 1997: 227), through the authority of the Ethiopian government itself. The EWF's pan-African perspective was also evident in its newspaper *Voice of Ethiopia* which featured articles on Ethiopia, Haiti, and the black presence in the United States, in the Caribbean and in Africa. In it, Melaku Beyen already wrote: "We are out to create the United States of Africa" (quoted in Bonacci 2015a: 102) – a pan-African slogan that resurfaced at the time of the African independencies when Ethiopia again played a central role in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Eventually, the EWF filled some of the void that the decline of the UNIA, following the set-up incarceration and consequent deportation of Marcus Garvey back to Jamaica in 1927, had left, illustrated by the adoption of the UNIA's *Universal Ethiopian Anthem* for EWF meetings (ibid.: 104). It is therefore not surprising that many Garveyites in Jamaica joined the EWF when it opened its first Jamaican local in 1939, about four years after Garvey had left Jamaica for England in 1935. Especially Rastafarians were drawn to the EWF, being Garveyites who saw in the EWF and its establishment by the Ethiopian government itself a natural continuation of Ethiopianist developments from mythical prophecies to concrete fulfilments, so that the EWF is today nearly exclusively a Rastafarian organization.

Barrett (1997: 68) had already pointed out in the 1970s that the "emergence of the Rastafarians will remain a puzzle unless seen as a continuation of the concept of Ethiopianism which began in Jamaica as early as the eighteenth century", because it was Garvey's proclamation that the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930 was nothing less than the fulfillment of Ethiopianism itself, as expressed in its key Biblical expectation of Psalms 68:31 that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God", which led to the emergence of the Rastafarian movement in the 1930s (Erskine 2007: 120).

Thus, Rastafarians are today the most visible evidence for the continuity of Ethiopianism, besides smaller survivals like the UNIA or the EWF, which is also mainly run by Rastafarians. The Rastafarian example thereby shows

that Ethiopianism was not only a mere forerunner of Pan-Africanism but a religious equivalent still alive as many Rastafarians continue to prefer the Biblical terminology of Ethiopianism to the political terminology of Pan-Africanism. In an interview with Bob Marley and the Wailers at the University of Los Angeles in 1980, one member speaking for the group explained that

> "the first thing you have to do is to get rid of the 'pan'. This 'pan-African' thing is a mix-up thing, you know, [it is] the African thing we are dealing with now. [...] So forget about this 'pan' business, 'pan-African', no 'pan-African' because Africa never named 'Pan-Africa', it named Africa, Ethiopia!" (Bob Marley and the Wailers 1980: n.p.)

This not only calls to mind Marcus Garvey's hesitancy to speak of the "*so-called* Pan-African", but also illustrates the Ethiopianist understanding inherited by Rastafarians that the term *Africa/ Ethiopia* in itself already implies a certain unity, which is therefore more culturally and racially connoted than politically.

Besides an inherent preference for the term *Ethiopia* within Rastafarian theology, Rastafarians also prefer Ethiopianism for its religious connotations which Pan-Africanism has mostly shed for a more political approach. Because the pan-African notion of African unity is only an aspect of Ethiopianism, albeit a central one, as Ethiopianism offers a whole religious worldview and cosmology in which pan-African unity constitutes an eschatological, messianic or millenarian climax that becomes meaningless without this religious context.

In conclusion it can be said that Ethiopianism was not only a forerunner of Pan-Africanism and indeed a form of Pan-Africanism itself, but it is a broader cosmology in which pan-African unity has always constituted an aspect or a goal. But this goal cannot be realized disconnectedly from the religious meaning that the long Ethiopianist history up to this realization has given it. In Ethiopianist and therefore Rastafarian understanding, pan-African unity is a matter of divine intervention linked to their liberation that can only be achieved because it is spiritually ordained that "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God"; and stripping Ethiopianism off the religious meanings that Ethiopia has held for generations of enslaved Africans and their descendants would therefore also render the pan-African

unity that it promulgates meaningless. For, after all, as the third verse of the *Universal Ethiopian Anthem* has proclaimed and Rastafarians still chant today, "when Israel was sore in need" it was none other than "Jehovah" himself whose "voice through the dim past has spoken: Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand!"

References

Barrett, Leonard (1997): *The Rastafarians.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Bauks, Michaela (2019): *Theologie das Alten Testaments. Religionsgeschichtliche und Bibelhermeneutische Perspektiven.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Besson, Jean (1998): Religion as Resistance in Jamaican Peasant Life: The Baptist Church, Revival Worldview and Rastafari Movement. In: Chevannes, Barry (ed.): *Rastafari and Other African-Caribbean Worldviews.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 43-76.

Bob Marley and the Wailers (1980): *Interview with Bob Marley and the Wailers at the University of Los Angeles in 1980*, parts 5 and 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ge9IZnGIs8&t=11s and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDXatouorvU [last accessed 22/7/2019]

Bonacci, Giulia (2014): L'Hymne Éthiopien Universel (1918). Un Heritage National et Musical, de l'Atlantique Noir à l'Ethiopie Contemporaine. In: *Musiques Dans l'"Atlantique Noir"* 54/216: 1055-1082.

Bonacci, Giulia (2015a): *Exodus! Heirs and Pioneers, Rastafari Return to Ethiopia.* Kingston: The University of the West Indies Press.

Bonacci, Giulia (2015b): From Pan-Africanism to Rastafari. African American and Caribbean 'Returns' to Ethiopia. In: Prunier, Gérard/ Ficquet, Éloi (eds.): *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia. Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi.* London: Hurst Publishers. 147-157.

Bonacci, Giulia (2016): *The Universal Ethiopian Anthem and the Ford Family.* http://www.afrikanheritage.com/the-universal-ethiopian-anthem-and-the-ford-family/ [last accessed 4/1/2019]

Burkett, Randall (2001): Universal Negro Improvement Association. In: Glazier, Stephen (ed.): *The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions.* New York, London: Routledge. 354-357.

Chevannes, Barry (1994): *Rastafari Roots and Ideology.* New York: Syracuse University Press.

Chevannes, Barry (1998): New Approach to Rastafari. In: Chevannes, Barry (ed.): *Rastafari and Other African-Caribbean Worldviews.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 20-42.

Chevannes, Barry (2001): Revival. In: Glazier, Stephen (ed.): *The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions.* New York, London: Routledge. 282-285.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1935): *Inter-Racial Implications of the Ethiopian Crisis. A Negro View.* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ethiopia/1935-10-01/inter-racial-implications-ethiopian-crisis [last accessed 6/8/2019]

Edmonds, Ennis (2003): *Rastafari. From Outcasts to Culture Bearers.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Erskine, Noel (2004): *From Garvey to Marley. Rastafari Theology.* Gainseville: University Press of Florida.

Fyfe, Christopher (1976): The Dynamics of African Dispersal: The Transatlantic Slave Trade. In: Kilson, Martin/ Rotberg, Robert (eds.): *The African Diaspora. Interpretive Essays.* Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press. 57-74.

Garvey, Marcus (1986a): *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey. Volume I.* Dover: The Majority Press.

Garvey, Marcus (1986b): *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey. Volume II.* Dover: The Majority Press.

Haile Selassie (1967): *Selected Speeches of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I. 1918 - 1967.* Addis Ababa: The Imperial Ethiopian Ministry of Information.

Hill, Robert/ Bair, Barbara (1987): *Marcus Garvey. Life and Lessons. A Centennial Companion to The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Lahouel, Badra (1986): Ethiopianism and African Nationalism in South Africa before 1937. In: *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 26/104: 681-688.

Levinson, David (2001): African Orthodox Church. In: Glazier, Stephen (ed.): *The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions.* New York, London: Routledge. 15-16.

Little, Becky (2018): *Why Bibles Given to Slaves Omitted Most of the Old Testament.* https://www.history.com/.amp/news/slave-bible-redacted-old-testament?fbclid=IwAR2_D3rMsGsnJZ3Izo43J_GxRChFTjZZ5VadJZ5QGw1vnAumB880YnbIHGQ [last accessed 9/7/2019]

Mährdel, Christian (1994): Afrika südlich der Sahara: Vom selbstbestimmt-visionären "Afrikanismus" zum antikolonial-emanzipatorischen Nationalismus. In: Bruckmüller, Ernst/ Linhart, Sepp/ Mährdel, Christian (eds): *Nationalismus: Wege der Staatenbildung in der außereuropäischen Welt.* Wien: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik. 175-200.

McGuire, George (1921): *Universal Negro Catechism. A Course of Instruction in Religious and Historical Knowledge Pertaining to the Race.* New York: Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Moses, Wilson (1975): The Poetics of Ethiopianism: W.E.B. Du Bois and Literary Black Nationalism. In: *American Literature* 47/3: 411-426.

NBC News (2019): *'Slave Bible' Removed Passages to Instil Obedience and Uphold Slavery.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvKUOuYn1-c&frags=pl%2Cwn [last accessed 9/7/2019]

Polk, Patrick (2001): Obeah in the West Indies. In: Glazier, Stephen (ed.): *The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions.* New York, London: Routledge. 216-217.

Post, Ken (1970): *The Bible as Ideology. Ethiopianism in Jamaica 1930 - 1938.* London: Church of Haile Selassie I.

Shepperson, George (1953): Ethiopianism and African Nationalism. In: *Phylon (1940-1956)* 14/1: 9-18.

Shepperson, George (1976): Introduction. In: Kilson, Martin/ Rotberg, Robert (eds.): *The African Diaspora. Interpretive Essays.* Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press. 1-10.

Sherlock, Philip/ Bennett, Hazel (1998): *The Story of the Jamaican People.* Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

Snowden, Frank (1976): Ethiopians and the Graeco-Roman World. In: Kilson, Martin/ Rotberg, Robert (eds.): *The African Diaspora. Interpretive Essays.* Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press. 11-36.

Sonderegger, Arno (2010): Atlantische Wellen - Afrikanische Positionen: Zur panafrikanischen Idee bis 1945. In: Schmieder, Ulrike/ Nolte, Hans-Heinrich (eds.): *Atlantik: Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte in der Neuzeit.* Wien: Promedia. 172-192.

Steverson, Leonard (2005): Pan-Africanism. In: Carlisle, Rodney (ed.): *The Encyclopedia of Politics. The Left and the Right*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications. 811-813.