

UNTERSUCHUNGEN

The Ethiopians in Jerusalem*

By Otto Meinardus

IV. THE ETHIOPIAN HOLY PLACES IN JERUSALEM

1. The Church of the Resurrection

A. THE ETHIOPIAN CHAPEL IN THE ROTUNDA

Niccolo di Poggibonsi (1345–1347)¹ is the first European traveller to provide us with data as to the exact positions of the Ethiopians in the holy places in Jerusalem. According to his observation, the Ethiopians possessed the altar behind the Holy Sepulchre in the Church of the Resurrection,² next to the altar of the Nubians.³ Interestingly enough, the Ethiopians participated in the celebrations of the Divine Liturgy of the Jacobites and Syrians, for this is the testimony of the anonymous pilgrim of the Abbey of Loos (15th cent.).⁴ Yet, in spite of this practice, it is beyond doubt, that the Ethiopians maintained an altar in the Rotunda, a fact which is also attested by Stephan von Gumpenberg (1450).⁵ From the reports of the pilgrims, it is evident that the Ethiopian chapel or altar in the Rotunda was situated to the south of the Holy Sepulchre, or as Hans Bernhard of Eptingen (1460)⁶ says, "as one enters the temple (the Church of the Resurrection) on the left hand next to the Holy Sepulchre." Sebald Rieter (1479)⁷ confirms the position of the Ethiopian site in the Rotunda, when he says that the Ethiopians have a special chapel with an altar and their lodgings on the left hand of the Holy Sepulchre. John Tucher (1479–1480)⁸ adds that the altar was situated be-

* Teil I–III siehe Heft I/II.

¹ *Niccolo di Poggibonsi*, Libro d'oltramare. Bologna, 1881. I, 94–95.

² Here the Syrians had their altar during the Latin occupation of Jerusalem.

³ *Theoderich* (1169–1173), "Description of the Holy Places", PPTS, VI, 14 f.

⁴ *Moravillé, H.*, "Un pèlerinage en Terre Sainte et au Sinai au XV^e siècle", Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, LXVI, 1905. 83.

⁵ "Wahrhaftige Beschreibung der Meerfahrt so von den Gestrengen Edlen und Ernvesten Stephan von Gumpenberg", in: *Reyssbuch dess heyligen Lands*. Frankfurt, 1584. 249.

⁶ "Reise des Ritters Hans Bernhard von Eptingen", in: *Der Schweizerische Geschichtsforscher*, VII, 1828, 388.

⁷ *Röhricht R. and Meisner, H.*, "Das Reisebuch der Familie Rieter". Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart. 168. Tübingen, 1884. 75.

⁸ *Reyssbuch dess heyligen Lands*; Frankfurt, 1584. 355r.

tween the columns of the Church, and that the Ethiopians were even entitled to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Sepulchre, provided they received the permission of the Latin fathers (the "Barfüßer"). The Syrians had their lodgings next to the Ethiopians and the Armenians above the Ethiopians.⁹ For how long the Ethiopians retained the privilege of celebrating in the Holy Sepulchre is difficult to know. Georg of Gaming (1507)¹⁰ and Duke Friedrich II of Liegnitz (1507)¹¹ confirm the fact that the Ethiopians had their living quarters on the left hand of the entrance between the columns, and that, with permission of the "Barfüßer", they could celebrate the Divine Liturgy.

Felix Fabri (1484)¹² observed that the Ethiopians held daily services in their chapel which was situated between the columns of the church, shut in, instead of by walls, by cloths and mats, and other hangings, which are suspended by ropes.¹³ Apparently, the Ethiopians had a special entrance to their lodgings in the Rotunda, for Leonhard Rauwolffen (1575)¹⁴ clearly states that the Ethiopians, who have their dwellings near the door of the Church to the left, are in possession of a separate entrance which enables them to enter or to leave the Church unmolested, that is, without paying taxes to the Turks. In his respect, they even compared themselves with the Turks.¹⁵

George Sandys (1610)¹⁶ provides us with an interesting list of the various chapels which were situated in the Rotunda. The first on the left belonged to the Ethiopians, the next to the Jacobites, the third to the Copts, the fourth to the Georgians, and the fifth to the Maronites. The small chapel behind the Holy Sepulchre was used in those days by both, the Copts and the Ethiopians.¹⁷ Jean Doubdan (1651)¹⁸ is one of the last pilgrims to notice the Ethiopians in their chapel in the Rotunda. He describes the site by saying that their chapel was situated twelve or fifteen paces left of the Holy Se-

⁹ This site would correspond to the so-called "Armenian Gallery".

¹⁰ "Venerabilis Georgii Prioris Gemnicensis Ordinis Carthusiani in Austria Ephemeris sive Diarium peregrinationis transmarinae videlicet Aegypti, Montis Sinai, Terrae Sanctae ac Syriae", in Pez, *Thesaurus Anecdotorum Novissimus*. Augsburg, 1725. 553.

¹¹ *Meisner, H. and Röhricht, R.*, "Die Pilgerfahrt des Herzogs Friedrich II von Liegnitz und die Descriptio templi Domini von Philippus de Aversa", in ZDPV, I, 1878, 185.

¹² *Felix Fabri*, "The Book of the Wanderings", PPTS, VIII, 436.

¹³ Cf. also the testimony of Arnold von Harff (1496). *Groote, E. von*, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln*. 1860. 175.

¹⁴ "Beschreibung der Rheyss Leonhardi Rauwolffen", in *Reyssbuch dess heyligen Lands*. Frankfurt, 1584. 340.

¹⁵ It is stated elsewhere, that the Ethiopians had acquired special privileges on account of the fact that on various occasions they had threatened the Turks to divert the waters of the Nile, if their rights were not respected.

¹⁶ *Sandys, G.*, *A Relation of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land*. London, 1627, 165.

¹⁷ This would be the Coptic Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

¹⁸ *Doubdan, J.*, *Le Voyage de la Terre-Sainte*. Paris, 1666. I, 48.

puldre, or towards the south. Jean de Thévenot (1657)¹⁹ merely mentions the existence of an Ethiopian chapel, while Michel Nau (1667)²⁰ still noticed one poor Ethiopian monk, who represented his nation in the Church of the Resurrection. After his death, however, the chapel was abandoned, and the Greeks took over the Ethiopian property in the Rotunda, since the Ethiopians were so impoverished that they were unable to pay the taxes demanded by the Turks. Henry Maundrell (1696–1697)²¹ sums up the developments of the 17th century in the Church of the Resurrection when he says: “the Latins, Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, Abyssinians, Georgians, Nestorians, Coptites, Maronites, etc., all which had anciently their several apartments in the Church. But these have all, except four, forsaken their quarters, not being able to sustain the severe rents and extortions, which their Turkish landlords impose upon them. The Latins, Greeks, Armenians and Coptites keep their footing well, the Coptites have now only one poor representative of their Nation left”.

B. THE CHAPEL OF ST. MARY OF GOLGOTHA

During the first few decades of the 14th century, the Ethiopians acquired the Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha, known today as the Chapel of St. Mary of Egypt. This chapel is the lower of the two chapels which today occupy the projecting building in the north-east corner of the parvis. Niccolo di Poggibonsi (1346) is the first pilgrim to present us with a more detailed description of this chapel. According to his account, the Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha was “very beautiful, and within dark, and there stands the altar where St. Mary stood, when she saw her Son being put on the Cross, it is small so that four men fill it, and this is sacred to the Ethiopians who are all black”.²² That the Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha was situated outside the Church of the Resurrection is also attested by the anonymous author of the Guide-Book to Palestine (1350) who explicitly states, that when “you go out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and on the left hand, you shall find a little chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary under Mount Calvary, and there the Nubians, *i. e.* the Ethiopians minister”.²³ This observation is also substantiated by Pierre de Pennis,²⁴ a contemporary of Niccolo di Poggibonsi, and by Hans Siltberger (1393). The latter describes the chapel by saying: “In front of the door of the church one ascends eighteen stairs, and there Our Lord spoke from the Cross to His Mother: ‘Woman, behold thy son. Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother’. (*St. John 19:26b, 27*) And the same stairs, Our Lord ascended as He carried the Cross, and there is a chapel,

¹⁹ *De Thévenot, J.*, Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant. Paris, 1664. II, 378.

²⁰ *Voyage nouveau de la Terre sainte*. Paris, 1679. 173.

²¹ *Maundrell, H.*, A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter A. D. 1697. Oxford, 1740. 70.

²² *Poggibonsi, Niccolo di*, A Voyage Beyond the Seas. Jerusalem, 1945. 27.

²³ “Anonymous Guide Book to Palestine”, PPTS, VI, 9.

²⁴ *Kohler, C.*, “Le libellus de locis ultramarinis de Pierre de Pennis, O. S. D.”, in *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, IX, 1902, 348.

in which there are the priests of Prester John's land (Ethiopia).²⁵ Throughout the 15th century, the Ethiopians maintained this chapel, and Stephan von Gumpenberg (1449) confirms the description of the anonymous author of 1350, when he states that the Chapel of the Ethiopians, where the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John stood, was situated underneath the stairs.²⁶ Unfortunately, we have to admit that the pilgrims of the 15th century were not unanimous as to the name of this chapel. Thus, Hans Rot, for example, who visited the Holy Land between 1440 and 1453, refers to the Ethiopians in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, which also was one of the four chapels situated outside the Church of the Resurrection.²⁷

By the end of the 15th century, the four chapels outside the Church of the Resurrection were destroyed, for this is the testimony of Count Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, who went to Jerusalem in 1495.²⁸ To what an extent the chapels were rebuilt, we do not know. By 1529, however, the Ethiopians are reported to have regained their Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha. Fr. Antonio de Aranda speaks of the Ethiopian Chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary which is situated underneath the stairs leading to Golgotha outside the Church of the Resurrection.²⁹ The last reference which we can cite with regard to the Ethiopians in the Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha comes to us from Greffin Affagart in 1533. He mentions this chapel as marking the site where the Blessed Virgin Mary stood beneath the Cross, when her Son addressed to her the words; "Woman, behold thy son".³⁰

We may assume, therefore, that by the middle of the 16th century, the Ethiopians no longer possessed the Chapel of St. Mary of Golgotha.

C. THE CHAPEL OF ABRAHAM

During the first few years of the 16th century, the Ethiopians acquired an additional site, just outside the Church of the Resurrection, abutting on to Golgotha. This chapel, which the Austrian pilgrim George of Gaming (1507)³¹ still records as being in the hands of the Armenians, apparently changed its

²⁵ *Langmantel, V.*, Hans Schiltberger's Reisebuch nach der Nürnberger Handschrift herausgegeben. Tübingen, 1885, 73.

²⁶ "Wahrhaftige Beschreibung der Meerfahrt so von den Gestrengen Edlen und Ernvesten Stephan von Gumpenberg", in *Reiysbuch dess heyligen Lands*. Frankfurt, 1584. 284.

²⁷ *Bernouilli, A.*, "Hans und Peter Rot's Pilgerreisen", in *Beitr. z. Vaterl. Gesch.* hrsg. Hist. u. Antiquar. Ges. Basel. I, Basel, 1882. 373.

²⁸ "Die Reise des Grafen Johann Ludwig nach dem Heiligen Lande", in *Mitteilungen d. hist. Vereins f. d. Saargegend*, IX, 1909, 94.

²⁹ *Verdadera informacion de la Tierra Sancta segun la dispusicion que en el ano de mil y quinientos y treynta el muy reverrendo padre F. Antonio de Aranda, etc.*, Alcala, 1563. II, 139.

³⁰ *Chavanon, J.*, *Relation de Terre Sainte, 1533-1534 par Greffin Affagart*. Paris 1902. 84.

³¹ "Venerabilis Georgii Prioris Gemnicensis Ordinis Carthusiani in Austria Ephemeris sive Diarium peregrinationis transmarinae videlicet Aegypti, Montis Sinai, Terrae Sanctae ac Syriae A. D. 1507", in *Pez, Thesaurus Anecdorum Novissimus*. Augsburg, 1725. c. 547.

owner between 1507 and 1512. Jean Thénau (1512)³² is the first traveller, who records that the Ethiopians had their lodging at the site, where Melchisedek offered both bread and wine "pour la victoire d'Abraham". Morosini (1514)³³ adds that the site of the Ethiopians was near Calvary, but separated from it by a wall, and that, at this site, there was an olive tree, near to which Abraham prepared his son Isaac for sacrifice. Here, also, near to the wall of the Church, the Ethiopians maintained their lodgings, a site, where Melchisedek brought forth bread and wine to Abraham. (*Genesis* 14:18-19).

Denis Possot (1532)³⁴ also mentions the Ethiopian Chapel in commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham, and refers to the olive tree, in the branches of which the ram got caught; and the anonymous Spanish Franciscan (16th cent.)³⁵ states that above the Chapel of Calvary, there was another chapel, situated in a high and prominent place to which the pilgrims ascended from the parvis outside the Church of the Resurrection. Here Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, and by the chapel there grew an olive tree. This was a large chapel and belonged to the Ethiopians. Fra Lucca da Gubbio (1559)³⁶ refers only briefly to the Ethiopian Chapel of Abraham, while Samuel Kiechel (1585)³⁷ speaks of a beautiful and dainty chapel, the floor of which was artistically inlaid with coloured marble. De Villamont (1588)³⁸ provides us with a more detailed description in so far as he mentions the olive tree, the site of the sacrifice, which was situated five or six paces from the Chapel of the Ethiopians, and which was decorated with marble. It is said, De Villamont continues, that Melchisedek, King of Salem, made here his offering to Abraham. De Bréves (1605)³⁹ clearly speaks about two Ethiopian chapels. One chapel, known as the Chapel of the Sacrifice of Abraham, and situated in front of Calvary, separated from the sacred site by a wall, while the other chapel is said to commemorate the offering of Melchisedek. Both chapels were used by the Ethiopians. George Sandys (1610)⁴⁰ merely repeats the observations of his predecessors when he says: "Belowe thorow a wall which bounds the East side of the court, a paire of staires do mount to the top of the rocke (yet no rocke evident) where is a little chapel built (they say) in the place where Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac; of much devotion, and kept by the Priests of the Abissiens."

³² *Schefer, Ch.*, *Le voyage d'outremer: Egypte, Mont Sinay, Palestine, de Jean Thénau*. Paris, 1884. 100.

³³ *Morisini, B.*, "Peregrinagio de mi Barbon Morisini as viagio de Jerusalem . . ." MS. Italiani, cl. VI, n. 6. Provenienza: Amedeo Svajer. f. 9r.

³⁴ *Schefer, Ch.*, *Le Voyage de la Terre Sainte . . .* Paris, 1890, 185.

³⁵ *Luke, H. Ch.*, *A Spanish Franciscan's Narrative of a Journey to the Holy Land*. London, 1927. 31.

³⁶ "Viaggio in Terra Santa di Fra Luca da Gubbio (1559)" in *Bessarione*, III, IV, 1908. 87.

³⁷ *Haszler, K. D.*, *Die Reisen des Samuel Kiechel aus drei Handschriften*. Publikation des Litterarischen Vereins, Stuttgart, 1866. 315.

³⁸ *De Villamont, Les Voyages*, Lion, 1611. I, 222.

³⁹ *De Breves, Relation des Voyages*, Paris, 1628. 131.

⁴⁰ *Sandys, G.*, *A Relation of the Turkish Empire, of Egypt, of the Holy Land, of the remote parts of Italy, and Islands adjoining*. London, 1627. 61.

And William Lithgow (1612)⁴¹ describes, how "they brought us to Mount Moriah (*sic!*) and showed us the place where Abraham offered up Isaac, which is in the custody of the Nigroes or Aethiopians, to whom each of us payed ten Madins of Brasse, the common coin of Jerusalem, for our in going to that place." That the Ethiopians possessed two distinct sites on the same level as Calvary is also attested by Bernard Surius (1644–1647)⁴² who distinguishes the site of Abraham from that of Melchisedek. The Chapel of Abraham must have gained considerably in significance, for Jean Doubdan (1651)⁴³ states that all Christians honour and respect this place. He also mentions two chapels in which the Ethiopians conduct their services. Jean Doubdan may well have been the last pilgrim who testified to the Ethiopian ownership of the Chapel of Abraham. Michel Nau (1668)⁴⁴ wrote that the Chapel of Abraham was in Greek hands and adds that the chapel used to belong to the Ethiopians, who, however, were unable to pay the taxes demanded by the Turks. Thereupon, the chapel returned to the hands of the Greeks. Today, the Chapel of Abraham belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church.

D. THE CHAPEL OF THE OPPROBRIUM

The Chapel of the Opprobrium, known also as the Chapel of Derision or the Chapel of the Mocking (*St. John* 19:2), is situated in the ambulatory southwest of the stairs which lead to the Armenian Chapel of St. Helena. The fragment of the Column of Derision, built into the altar is said to have been used by Jesus Christ as a seat, when He was mocked, reviled and buffeted by the Roman soldiers. Today, the chapel belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church.

The fact that the Ethiopians possessed the Chapel of the Opprobrium in the 15th century is first attested by Sebald Rieter of Nürnberg (1464), who mentions the chapel with a walled-up window and an altar under which stood a silver-black stone of marble upon which Christ sat while He was crowned.⁴⁵ John Tucher (1479–1480), who also noticed the Ethiopians in possession of this chapel adds that they kept a sanctuary-lamp burning there all the time,⁴⁶ whereas the anonymous pilgrim of Württemberg (1494) saw several lamps suspended in the chapel.⁴⁷ That this stone was taken from the House of Pilate and transferred to the Church of the Resurrection is pointed

⁴¹ *Lithgow, W.*, The totall discours of the rare adventures and painefull peregrinations of long nineteen yeares. Glasgow, 1906. 222.

⁴² *Surius, B.*, Den God Turuchtigen Pilgrim of te Jerusalemsche Reyse. Antwerp, 1705. II, 580.

⁴³ *Doubdan, J.*, Le Voyage de la Terre-Sainte. Paris, 1666. 274.

⁴⁴ *Nau, M.*, Voyage nouveau de la Terre sainte . . . Paris, 1679, 148.

⁴⁵ *Röhricht und Meisner*, Das Reisebuch der Familie Rieter in Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart. Band 168. Tübingen, 1884. 20.

⁴⁶ *Reyssbuch dess heyligen Lands: das ist ein grundtliche Beschreibung aller und jeder Meer und Bilgerfahrten zum heyligen Lande.* Frankfurt, 1584. 355.

⁴⁷ *Schön, Theodor*, "Eine Pilgerfahrt in das Heilige Land im Jahre 1494", in Mittheilungen des Instituts für Oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung, XII, 3, 6.

out by Arnold von Harff (1496), who mentions the Ethiopians as one of the seven nations in the Church of the Resurrection.⁴⁸ According to Dietrich von Kettler (1517) indulgences amounting to seven years and seven "karen" (Karen means quarantine [forty days], and thus seven "karen" equals 280 days) were attached to this chapel. It is interesting to note that even prior to the Union of Ethiopia with the Latin Church in the 16th century, indulgences were attached to Ethiopian sites in Jerusalem.⁴⁹ By the time of Barbon Morisini's visit around 1514, wooden planks were erected for the support of the chapel which in turn prevented the pious pilgrims from obtaining any small fragments from the column at which the Saviour had been scourged, and which according to his observation was of white, black and green stone.⁵⁰ Throughout the 16th century, the Chapel of the Opprobrium remained in the hands of the Ethiopians, as attested by the following pilgrims. The Spanish Franciscan Antonio de Aranda (1529) noticed the chapel in which a sanctuary-lamp was always lit, as belonging to the Ethiopians,⁵¹ and Denis Possot (1532) actually calls this site "the Chapel of the Indians" *i. e.* the Ethiopians.⁵²

Greffin Affagart (1533)⁵³ and Fra Luca da Gubbio (1559) confirm that the Ethiopians possessed the chapel, at the time when they made their pilgrimage. The latter calls it the "Chapel of Coronation" and states that the sponge which was filled with vinegar and put upon hyssop and held to Christ's mouth (*St. John* 19:29) was kept here. He also adds that the Ethiopians always keep a sanctuary-lamp burning in the chapel and that seven years and seven "forties" of indulgences are attached to this site.⁵⁴ Samuel Kiechel (1585) calls the column upon which Christ was crowned mistakenly the "collonna imperii" (for *improperii*), and advises the pilgrims to contribute alms according to their ability to the Chapel which is in the hands of the Ethiopians.⁵⁵ Giovanni Zuallardo (1586)⁵⁶ and De Villamont

⁴⁸ Groote, E. v. (ed.), *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln . . . in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499*. Köln, 1860. 175.

⁴⁹ Hoogeweg (ed.), "Eine Westfälische Pilgerfahrt nach dem Heiligen Lande vom Jahre 1519", in *Zeitschrift für vaterländische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde*, XLVII, 1889, 203.

⁵⁰ Ms. Italiani, cl. VI, n. 6. Provenienza: Amadeo Svajer.

⁵¹ Verdadera informacion de la Tierra Sancta segun la dispusicion que en el ano de mil y quinientos y treynta el muy reverendo padre F. Antonio de Aranda . . . Alcala, 1563. 139.

⁵² Schefer, Ch., *Le Voyage de la Terre Sainte composé par Maitre Denis Possot et achevé par Messire Charles Philippe, seigneur de Champarmoy et de Grandchamp*. Paris, 1890. 178.

⁵³ Chavanon, J., *Relation de Terre Sainte (1533-1534) par Greffin Affagart*. Paris, 1902. 84.

⁵⁴ Gregori, L. de, "Viaggio in Terra Santa di Fra Luca da Gubbio (1559)", in *Besaronne*, III, iv, 1908, 70.

⁵⁵ Haszler, K. D., *Die Reisen des Samuel Kiechel aus drei Handschriften herausgegeben*. Stuttgart, Litterarischer Verein, 1866. 311.

⁵⁶ Zuallart, Giovanni, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme fatte e descritto*. Rome, 1595. 181.

(1588)⁵⁷ mention the Ethiopian Chapel of the Opprobrium only briefly. The latter calls the chapel small and obscure, and speaks of two columns which support the altar under which a sanctuary-lamp always burns in honour of the Opprobrium. An almost identical account comes from the pen of Martinus Seusenius (1602). He also refers to the two columns upon which the altar was built, and under which a sanctuary-lamp was hung in honour of the column which was of coloured marble.⁵⁸ George Sandys (1610) speaks of "a little room, which is called the Chappell of the Derision, where under the Altar is observed a part (as they say) of the pillar to which Christ was bound".⁵⁹

By the middle of the 17th century, the Ethiopians lost the Chapel of the Opprobrium to the Armenians. Whereas Francesco Verniore (1631–1647) attributed the Chapel of the Opprobrium to the "Soriani" (Syrian Jacobites),⁶⁰ Bernard Surius (1644–1647) definitely states that the Chapel was in the hands of the Armenians.⁶¹ Yet, Jean Doubdan (1651)⁶² explicitly states that the Chapel was in the possession of the Ethiopians. That the Ethiopians may have temporarily regained the Chapel is most unlikely. For whoever is forced to surrender his property in the Church of the Resurrection is, normally speaking, unable to regain it. It is, therefore, more likely that Surius mistook the Ethiopians for Armenians. When, however, Michel Nau (1668)⁶³ visited Jerusalem, the Chapel of the Opprobrium was in the hands of the Greeks. It is difficult to give an exact date for the transfer of the Chapel of the Opprobrium from the Ethiopians to the Greeks. That it occurred around 1660 is most plausible. Today, the Chapel of the Opprobrium belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church.

E. OTHER SITES

The Chapel of the Prison of Christ

The procès verbal of 1655 mentions that the Armenians, who had acquired the Ethiopian Chapel of the Prison of Christ, transferred this site to the Greeks.⁶⁴ This statement leads us to believe that, by the middle of the 17th century, the Chapel of the Prison of Christ was in the possession of the Ethiopians. Generally speaking, the pilgrims of the 16th and 17th century do not mention the Chapel of the Prison of Christ as an Ethiopian possess-

⁵⁷ *De Villamont*, Les voyages. Lion, 1611, 246.

⁵⁸ *Mühlau, F.*, "Martinus Seusenius' Reise in das heilige Land i. J. 1602/1603". ZDPV, XXVI, 1903. 39.

⁵⁹ *Sandys, George*, A Relation of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the remote parts of Italy, and Islands adjoining. London, 1627. 168.

⁶⁰ *Golubovich, G.*, Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa. N. S. I, vi, 55.

⁶¹ *Surius, B.*, Den God Turuchtigen Pilgrim of te Jerusalemsche Reyse, Antwerp, 1705. II, 598.

⁶² *Doubdan, J.*, Le Voyage de la Terre-Sainte. Paris, 1666. I, 56.

⁶³ *Nau, M.*, Voyage nouveau de la Terre sainte . . . Paris, 1679. 148.

⁶⁴ *Cerulli, E.*, Etiopi in Palestina. Rome, 1947. II, 122.

ion, with the exception of Girolamo Dandini (1596) who briefly refers to this chapel as belonging to the Ethiopians.⁶⁵

An interesting reference with regard to the Ethiopian sites in the Church of the Resurrection comes to us from Francesco Verniore (1631–1647), who, in his *Croniche ovvero Annali di Terra Santa* attributes the Chapel of the Division of the Raiments to the Ethiopians.⁶⁶ It is very probable, of course, that, in this case, a confusion may have occurred, and that the Chapel of the Division of the Raiments was really the Chapel of the Prison of Christ.

The Chapel of the Superscription on the Cross

From the reports of some pilgrims it appears that also this chapel was temporarily in the hands of the Ethiopians. The location of this site is described by Bénard (1616) who states, that further above the Chapel of the Prison of Christ, and turning backwards, one sees on the left hand a chapel which is occupied by the Ethiopians. To this place there had been taken and preserved the title and the superscription of the Cross, which Pilate had written and fixed upon the Cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ It is difficult to determine when the Ethiopians acquired this chapel. Lucca da Gubbio (1559) is the first pilgrim who mentions this site as belonging to the Ethiopians.⁶⁸ He describes the location by saying that following to the right, and in the wall of the Church, there is a chapel with an altar which commemorates the site, where Pilate caused to be written the superscription of the Cross: "Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum". This chapel is in the hands of the Ethiopians, and attached to it are indulgences amounting to seven years and seven "forties". It is strange, indeed, that the other pilgrims remain silent about this chapel. By the middle of the 17th century, however, the Ethiopians had abandoned this site, as it is not mentioned in the *procés verbal* of 1655.

The Church of the Ascension

The summit of the Mount of Olives is the place which is intimately associated with the Ascension of Jesus Christ. The 4th century Church of the Ascension was transformed into a mosque in 1187.

Throughout the centuries, however, the Christian communities were permitted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the court of the Church of the Ascension on Ascension Day. That the Ethiopians participated in the Ascension Day celebrations is recorded by Louis de Rochechouart (1416) who mentions that the Latins, Armenians, Greeks and Ethiopians held their services in the Church of the Ascension.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Missione Apostolica al Patriarca e Maroniti del monte Libano. Cesena, 1656. 208.

⁶⁶ Golubovich, G., Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Santa. N. S. I, VI, 43.

⁶⁷ Bénard, *Le Voyage de Hierusalem*. Paris, 1621. 213.

⁶⁸ "Viaggio in Terra Santa di Fra Luca da Gubbio", in Bessarione. III, vol. IV. 1908. 69.

⁶⁹ Conderc, C., "Journal de voyage à Jérusalem", in *Rev. Orient. Latin*, I, 1893. 168–274.

Today, the Ethiopians do not celebrate the Divine Liturgy on the Mount of Olives. The Ethiopian community assembles on Ascension Day in the court-yard of the Church of the Ascension for special prayers only.

2. The Dair as-Sultan

At one time the property of the Augustinian Canons (1100–1241), who used this site as a refectory, the Ethiopians have resided on the roof of the Chapel of St. Helena, at least from the middle of the 17th century.

On the roof there are twenty separate cells which are occupied by Ethiopian monks and one Coptic monk. In addition to the Ethiopian monks, two Ethiopian nuns live in the Dair as-Sultan, Walata Jesus, and Wezorah Amarg, an Ethiopian princess.

The Ethiopians worship in the small Chapel of the Saviour which is situated west of the Dome of the Chapel of St. Helena. The chapel is so small, however, that there is room for only one priest at the altar.

In the centre of the courtyard is the dome of the Armenian Church of St. Helena. On the Eve of Easter and the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, the Ethiopians process three times around the dome, singing: "For those who believe Thy Resurrection, send us Thy Peace and Thy Light."

The Church of the Four Bodiless Living Creatures is situated to the southwest of the Dair as-Sultan and forms part of the passage which leads from the roof of the Chapel of St. Helena to the parvis of the Church of the Resurrection. The church has one haikal with a wooden haikal screen. No services are held in this chapel, and the key to the passage is in the hands of the Copts.

West of the Church of the Four Bodiless Living Creatures is the Church of the Angel. This church has one haikal, and it also forms part of the passage from the Dair as-Sultan to the parvis of the Church of the Resurrection. No services are held in this chapel.⁷⁰

In 1962, Dair as-Sultan was inhabited by 22 Ethiopian monks.

3. The Monastery of St. Takla Haymanot

The Ethiopian Monastery of St. Takla Haymanot is situated in a narrow lane which turns off from St. Francis Street. The monastery serves as the episcopal residence of the Ethiopian archbishop in the Holy City. The property was acquired from the Latins by Mamher Walde Semait in 1884. The monastery was built by the Emperor Yuhannis IV in 1891. The inscription above the entrance to the monastery reads:

This monastery was bought by the Emperor Yuhanna Kasa who gave it to the Ethiopian monks who stay in Jerusalem, that he might inherit the Kingdom of God. Amen. 1883 (Ethiopian Calendar).

The Church of St. Takla Haymanot is situated in the eastern part of the monastery and is reached by passing through the inner court. The Church is

⁷⁰ *Meinardus, O.*, *The Copts in Jerusalem, Cairo, 1960.* 61, 62.

noteworthy because of its wall-paintings which represent the Symbols of the Four Evangelists, the Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch by St. Philip, the Holy Virgin and Christ, and the Nativity.

On the first floor of the Monastery there is the episcopal residence, the reception hall and the offices. From the roof of the monastery one has an excellent view over the Holy City.

In 1962, the monastery was inhabited by the Archbishop and five Ethiopian monks.

4. The Church and the Monastery of the Garden of Paradise

The Ethiopian Monastery of the Garden of Paradise is situated in the northwestern part of West Jerusalem, at 10 Street of the Ethiopians, between the Strauss Health Centre and the Italian Hospital. An imposing gate with a beautifully designed wrought-iron fence leads to the outer court of the monastery in which the Church of the Holy Virgin is situated. The church is a typical Ethiopian circular edifice with three doors. The Holy of Holiest (Makdas) with the altar is surrounded by the Holier (Keddist) and the Holy (Kenimahalet). The monastic buildings, which are situated in a garden of cypresses, have a ground floor and a first floor. Stairs lead to the first floor from the outside. North and south-west of the church are the cells of the monks. The cells of the nuns are situated in the southeastern part of the monastery. South of the church is the belfry, which stands by itself.

In 1889, the Empress Taitu, Consort of Menelik, requested her cousin, Ras Makonnen, to purchase on her behalf some land near Golgotha, outside the old wall of Jerusalem, in order that she might have a church built on that site. In 1901, the church and the monastery of the Garden of Paradise were built there. According to G. Jeffery, this is one of the most imposing modern churches in Jerusalem. It was built from the designs of a French architect.

5. The Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is situated in the Valley of Josaphat, belongs today to the Greeks and the Armenians. The original church with a dome over the sepulchre was built during the first part of the 5th century. St. John Damascus (730 A. D.) refers to the sepulchre, when he stated that the Empress Pulcheria (390–450 A. D.) sent to Jerusalem for some relics of the Blessed Virgin which she desired to enshrine at Constantinople.⁷¹ Bishop Arculf described a circular church built over the tomb (7th century), and Bernard the Wise saw this circular church in ruins (9th century). Godfrey of Bouillon built in the immediate vicinity of this site the Abbey of the Valley of Josaphat for the Benedictines of Cluny, to whom he entrusted the Church. The Crusaders rebuilt the Church about 1130 in the same form as it appears today. When the Saracens occupied

⁷¹ It should be remembered that according to the dogma of the Bodily Assumption the Blessed Virgin Mary only passed through the tomb, but did not delay there.

Jerusalem in the 13th century, the Benedictine Abbey was destroyed, and the materials were used for building the city walls. Yet, the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary was respected. The Franciscans entered into possession of the Church in the second half of the 14th century and retained the Church until 1757, when the Church passed into Greek and Armenian hands.⁷²

During the period of the Latin possession of the Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Ethiopians are reported to have had altars in this Church. The first reference to the Ethiopians in this Church comes from Grethenios, the Russian Archimandrite, who visited the Holy Land in 1400.⁷³ Ethiopian pilgrims to the Holy Land in the 14th and 15th century worshipped in the Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for a colophon of an Ethiopian Codex of the 15th century informs us that a codex of the *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* was presented to the Church of Gethsemane by Melchisedek, a member of an Ethiopian group of pilgrims.⁷⁴ In 1593, the Ethiopians possessed the altar west of the cistern in the western section of the Church, which later was used by the Copts. This altar, which was rarely used in the middle of the 19th century (Tobler, 1852), became the object of property disputes in 1867, when the Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem sent a letter on June 1st, 1867 to H. B. Cyril, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, requesting him to state his view about the altar west of the Sepulchre of the Holy Virgin. In answer to this request, the Greek Patriarch sent word to the Coptic Archbishop on June 20th, 1867 stating that during his forty years of office in Gethsemane, he had never seen the Armenians in possession of the Choir situated west of the cave, facing St. Mary's Tomb, and that he had always noticed that the Copts were the only owners of the Choir.⁷⁵ In addition to this, the Chapel of St. Joseph, situated west of the stairs leading to the sepulchre belonged to the Ethiopians.⁷⁶ Michel Nau, writing in 1668, states that the Ethiopians possessed an altar at the base of the stairs near the altar of the Georgians,⁷⁷ while Corneille Le Bruyn (1674) also confirms that the Ethiopians possessed an altar to the left of the stairs.⁷⁸

⁷² Jeffery, George, *A Brief Description of the Holy Sepulchre*. Cambridge, 1919. 180.

⁷³ Khitrowo, B., *Itinéraires Russes en Orient*. Geneve, 1889. I, i. 178.

⁷⁴ Turaiev, B., "Ethiopskiya rukopisi v S.-Peterburge", in ZVO, XVII, 1906. Cf. Cerulli, Enrico, *Etiopi in Palestina*. Rome, 1943. I, 308. The Ethiopian altar in the Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin in the 15th century is also mentioned by Felix Fabri (1484). Cf. *Fratrīs Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae*, in Hassler, *Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*. Stuttgart, 1843-59. II, 375.

⁷⁵ Timoteos, *Translation of Documents bearing on the Rights of the Copts over Sultan's Monastery and Other Places at Jerusalem*. Cairo, Schindler, n. d., 36-38.

⁷⁶ Amico, Bernardino, *Plans of the Sacred Edifices of the Holy Land*. Ed. Bel-lorini and Hoade. Jerusalem. 1953. 124.

⁷⁷ Nau, M., *Voyage nouveau de la Terre Sainte*. Paris, 1679. 237.

⁷⁸ Le Bruyn, Corneille, *Voyage au Levant*. Adelff, 1700. 267.

By the end of the 17th century, the Ethiopians had to give up their sites in the Church of the Sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary, thereby losing at the same time the right and privilege to hold services in this church.

6. The Grotto of David on Mount Sion

Sebald Rieter, Jr., visiting the Holy Land in 1479, is one of the first Western pilgrims who supplies us with information about the Ethiopians in the Grotto of David on Mount Sion. According to his report, the Ethiopians had their lodging in a house which was situated behind the Latin monastery on Mount Sion. The grotto in which David composed the seven penitential psalms⁷⁹ was situated underneath the Ethiopian lodging.⁸⁰ Johann Tucher, who went to Jerusalem in the same year, adds in his report that indulgences amounting to seven years and seven "karen"⁸¹ were attached to this site.⁸²

Joos van Ghistele (1485) provides us with some more additional information insofar as he mentions that twenty-two steps led down to the grotto on the right side of which was a small rectangular space where David composed the psalter as well as other devotional literature.⁸³ While Jean Thénaud (1511) mentions only that one of the "houses" of the Ethiopians was near Mount Sion, where David had written several psalms,⁸⁴ Barbon Morisini (1514), also referring to David and the seven penitential psalms, adds that, after descending many steps, two habitations can be found which were occupied by the Ethiopians.⁸⁵ Peter Füssly and Philipp von Hagen (1523) went to the Grotto of David, which, according to their estimation, was a "finster loch", a dark hole, where David offered his prayers and wrote the seven penitential psalms.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, detailed information about the Ethiopian holdings on Mount Sion are not available. Indeed, most of the 16th century pilgrims do not even refer to the Ethiopian property in the Grotto of David. In all probability, therefore, the Ethiopians were either evicted or gave up their

⁷⁹ Repenting of his complicity in the death of Uriah (II Samuel 11, 12) David composed the seven penitential psalms which are Psalm VI, XXXII, XXXVIII, LI, CII, CXXX, CXLIII (Hebrew reckoning). These psalms were used liturgically from earliest Christian times. In the Middle Ages they were ordered to be recited after Laudes on Fridays in Lent. They are now prescribed for occasional use, e. g. at the consecration of churches.

⁸⁰ *Röbricht und Meisner*, Das Reisebuch der Familie Rieter in Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, Band 168. Tübingen, 1884. 66.

⁸¹ "Karen" or quarantaines means forty, seven "karen", therefore are 280 days.

⁸² *Reyssbuch dess heyligen Lands: das ist ein grundtliche Beschreibung aller und jeder Meer und Bilgerfahrten zum heyligen Lande*. Frankfurt, 1584. 353.

⁸³ *T'voyage van Mynher Joos van Ghistele*. Ghent, 1542. II, 82.

⁸⁴ *Schefer, Ch.*, Le voyage d'outremer: Egypte, Mont Sinay, Palestine, de Jean Thénaud. Paris, 1884. 100.

⁸⁵ Ms. Italiani classe VI, n. 6. Provenienza: Amadeo Svajer.

⁸⁶ *Böhmer, H.*, Studien zur Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu. Bonn, 1914. App. 33. *Conrady, L.*, Vier rheinische Pilgerschriften des XIV, XV, and XVI Jahrhunderts. Wiesbaden, 1882, I, 254.

holdings on Mount Sion. The last reference to the Monastery of the Indians (Ethiopians) in the Grotto, where David composed the penitential psalms, is found in the travel account of Stefano Mantegazza (1600).⁸⁷

V. THE ETHIOPIAN SITES OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM

1. The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem

The Church of the Nativity of Our Lord at Bethlehem is built on the site where, according to tradition, Our Lord was born. In 326, the construction of the Church was begun by St. Constantine who built a great basilica over the Cave of the Nativity. Towards the end of the fourth century, St. Jerome and SS. Paula and Eustochium settled in Bethlehem, where they founded a Western monastery and nunnery. On the destruction of the Church by the Samaritans, the Emperor Justinian built in its place the present church, which survived both the Persian and the Muslim Conquest of Palestine. On Christmas Day, 1100, Baldwin was crowned first King of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

On the expulsion of the Crusaders by Salah ad-Din in 1187, the Ethiopians were assigned certain sites in Bethlehem. We hear that Salah ad-Din gave to the Ethiopians a site near to the northern door to the Cave of the Nativity, three cubits in dimension, and that the Ethiopians used part of the demolished narthex, where they built their cells and lodgings.⁸⁸ The first pilgrim to give us some further information about the Ethiopians in Bethlehem is Jacques de Verone (1335), who mentions that the Ethiopians possessed an altar next to the altar of the Nubians, on the left side of the basilica, near the cistern from which the Blessed Virgin Mary drank water, when she gave birth to Christ. This altar was situated in the northern apse of the Basilica, not far from the entrance to the Cave at a northeastern angle.⁸⁹ Apparently, the Ethiopians maintained the right to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Nativity, for, when in 1513–14 Fr. Antonio Medina visited the Church of the Nativity, he noticed among other Christian communities also the Ethiopians,⁹⁰ and Barbon Morisini (1514) confirms this observation by pointing to the Ethiopian altar in the Church of the Nativity.⁹¹ A little more detailed than the previous accounts is the description of Jan Want, who went to Bethlehem in 1519 and observed the Ethiopians, both men and women, and about ten or eleven of them, how they danced and sang until

⁸⁷ *Steffano Mantegazza*, *Relazione tripartita del viaggio di Gierusalemme nella quale si raccontano gli avvenimenti dell'Autore...* Milano, 1616. 262.

⁸⁸ *Papadopoulos-Kerameus, A.*, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes Stachyologias e Sulogone anekdoton*. Petersburg, 1894. II, 409.

⁸⁹ *Röhricht, R.*, "Le pèlerinage du moine augustin Jacques de Vérone", in *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, III, 1895, 218–219.

⁹⁰ *Viaggio di Terra Santa con sue stazioni e misterii del M. R. P. Antonio Medina*. Florence, 1590. 182.

⁹¹ MS. Italiani, cl. VI, n. 6 Provenienza: Amadeo Svajer, *Bibl. Marc. Venice*.

they got tired.⁹² Jan Want is the last pilgrim who mentions the Ethiopians in the Church of the Nativity. Quoting Papadopoulos Kerameus, Hugo Duensing states that the Armenians occupied the living quarters and the garden of the Ethiopians in Bethlehem in 1653.⁹³ There is no question, that ever since the beginning of the 17th century the Armenians attempted to acquire the Ethiopian properties in the Holy City.

Today, the Ethiopians go once a year to Bethlehem. At 6 a. m., on the Feast of the Nativity, January 7, they have a short service consisting of prayers, the reading of the Gospel of the Nativity and a brief sermon in the Cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

2. The Monastery of the Holy Trinity at the River Jordan

We may assume that once a permanent Ethiopian community had been established in Jerusalem, some time around the 12th or 13th century, Ethiopian pilgrims to the Holy Land would have included in their itinerary a pilgrimage to the River Jordan to behold the sacred site, where Christ was baptized by St. John the Baptist. One of the first pilgrims to notice the Ethiopians at the River Jordan was Paul Walther, who visited the Holy Land in 1483. While travelling to the River Jordan on the fourth day of the Week of Easter, he saw the Ethiopians and the Armenians who were more than three hundred of both sexes, accompanied by guards who provided for them a safe escort, on their way down to the River Jordan.⁹⁴ And there is no reason to doubt, that, until the middle of the 17th century, these pilgrimages to the Jordan River were an annual occasion.

But even after the expulsion of the Ethiopians from the Church of the Resurrection, and during the period of general penury of the Ethiopian community, Ethiopian Christians continued in their pilgrimages to the River Jordan. Charles L. Irby, who visited the Holy Land in 1818, mentions the immense number of Christians from all quarters, among whom were the Abyssinians from Ethiopia, some of the pilgrims riding on camels, others on mules, horses and asses, in all five thousand.⁹⁵

Today, the Ethiopians possess the Monastery of the Holy Trinity which is situated in the immediate vicinity of the River Jordan, about 2½ kilometres south of the Greek Monastery of St. John the Baptist. In order to visit the monastery, one follows the road which leads from the traditional site of the Baptism of Christ southwards, passing on the right hand first the Syrian, and

⁹² *Weisweiler*, "Eine Pilgerreise nach Jerusalem im Jahre 1519", in *Das Heilige Land. Organ des Deutschen Vereins vom Heiligen Lande*, XLI, 1897, 114-115.

⁹³ *Papadopoulos Kerameus, A.*, *Analecta B.*, 409 in *Duensing, H.*, "Die Abyssinier in Jerusalem", *ZDPV* (1916), XXXIX, 105.

⁹⁴ *Sollweck, M.*, "Fratris Pauli Waltheri Guglingensis Itinerarium in Terram Sanctam et ad Sanctam Catharinam", in *Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, vol. 192, Tübingen, 1892. iv. 146.

⁹⁵ *Irby, Ch. L.*, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria, and the Holy Land*. London, 1808. 100.

then the Coptic monastery. After another 200 metres, on the left hand of the road, there begins the Ethiopian property which extends over 10 feddans. The Monastery of the Holy Trinity is located in the centre of the garden. Four isolated cells are found at the north wall of the garden while the kitchen is situated in the southwest corner of the property.

The monastery, which, in addition to guestrooms and cells, includes the Church of the Holy Trinity, was built by the Empress Menen in 1934. The Church is adorned with modern icons representing the Baptism of Christ, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Agnus Dei, the Holy Trinity, and three icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary. An interesting icon portrays Ethiopia extending her hands to God. Other pictures show Haile Selassie, the Emperor, and Anba Philippus, the Ethiopian Archbishop of Jerusalem.

In 1961, ten Ethiopian monks resided at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity.

3. The Ethiopian Property at Bethany

At Bethany, on the hills north of the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, the Ethiopians purchased about thirteen feddans in 1956. The property is divided by a small path into a smaller and a larger piece of land. Plans are being prepared for the construction of a monastery, a church and an Ethiopian Theological Seminary to be built on the larger piece of land. The smaller area has been set apart for a cemetery.