

Egyptian - Ethiopian Cultural and Religious Relationships 1981-2011

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ABSTRACT:

Relationships far from politics are always stronger and their ties are better than political ties. Investing relations in cultural and religious aspects, as well as in the field of economics is better and brings positive results that politics had failed to reach.

Therefore, the cultural and religious aspect in relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia was stronger in terms of politics. Despite the political differences and the tension in the relations, especially in the issue of the Nile river, we find that the relations were largely developed in the cultural and religious fields, so there was an exchange of visits and experiences and the establishment of The forums also have the influential role of clerics in calming the situation and tensions at the political level, so that cultural and religious ties serve as a vital field for relations between Egypt and Ethiopia, especially the historical heritage of the two countries that extends for thousands of years, to be a factor that contributed to the rapprochement of the two peoples as well as rapprochement and dialogue Between the officials of the two countries through holding meetings and meetings to bridge the gap in viewpoints and mutual cooperation in the cultural and religious fields.

Keywords:

Egypt, Ethiopia, culture, religion, the two churches

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Introduction

Cultural and religious relations between Egypt and Ethiopia are considered one of the most important ties that had a positive impact on the relationship of the two countries, with the presence of important ties through the official authorities in both countries, including the Ministry of Endowments, Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and the Ministry of Higher Education, especially since religious relations extend with far historical roots in The Islamic and Christian religions, and in particular the relationship between the Egyptian and the Ethiopian-Orthodox Churches.

As for the field of culture, there were agreements, scholarships, holding exhibitions and cultural centers, and exchanging experiences in various cultural and media fields. These ties greatly strengthened bilateral relations, especially when the two countries' relationship was witnessing differences and tensions in the issue of the water of the Nile river.

Many official and popular visits took place between the two countries in scientific, religious, artistic and media magazines, which had the effect of rapprochement between the peoples of the two

countries, which increased the bonds of relations and joint cooperation away from differences and problems. Binary convergence.

First: Egyptian-Ethiopian cultural relations 1981-2011

Cultural relations between Egypt and Ethiopia are among the important links in the joint cultural cooperation, which had an impact on strengthening the relations between the two countries¹, as cultural relations are linked to many official bodies in Egypt and Ethiopia. The Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Endowments and Al-Azhar come on top of it. Cultural relations have taken many forms, including scholarships, cultural agreements, holding exhibitions, reciprocal visits, opening cultural centers and forums, opening technical training courses, as well as establishing friendship associations, exchanging experiences and media programs².

Among the most important features of supporting cultural relations between Egypt and Ethiopia are:³

1 -Scientific links have been established between universities, institutes, cultural bodies and scientific research institutions.

2 -I contributed and developed academic programs.

3 -It created cultural rapprochement between the two countries and the exchange of visits, missions and delegations.

The Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with the African Continent, which was established under Republican Decree No. (620) of 16 December, 1980, which provided technical assistance and human resource development in African countries and had many activities in various fields, including the educational field, holding courses, developing capabilities and experiences ⁴.

One of the activities of the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation is that it sent professors from Egyptian universities in various specializations, including medicine, engineering, social subjects, mathematics, pharmacology and the Arabic language, to teach in Ethiopian schools and universities, and these activities began since 1982.⁵

The Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation was amended by Republican Decree No. 46 of January 21, 1988, to increase support and scientific and cultural activities. ⁶ The Egyptian and Ethiopian sides concluded an agreement in Addis Ababa on March 10, 1989 to strengthen cooperation in the field of media ⁷, And the number of Egyptian experts who were dispatched to Ethiopia (147) experts in various fields, and they held many training courses and scientific and cultural conferences, for the period from 1982 to 2002, in the fields of media, radio, journalism and scientific research ⁸.

In the field of education, the number of students coming from Ethiopia to study at Al-Azhar University for the period from 1988 to 2003 reached approximately (344) students, and in 1997 witnessed the influx of (194) students, the highest total number in one academic year, and the students were studying Islamic sciences and Arabic language , and in Table No. (17) we

explain the numbers for students coming from Ethiopia to study at Al-Azhar University in Egypt for the period from 1988 to 2003 ⁹.

Table No. (17)

Years	Numbers
1988-1989	13
1989-1990	22
1991-1992	15
1992-1993	13
1993-1994	12
1994-1995	15
1995-1996	11
1996-1997	18
1997-1998	194
1999-2000	14
2002-2003	17
Total: 344	

It is possible to notice a fluctuation in the number of Ethiopian students studying in Egypt, to the fact that Ethiopia follows the Christian religion in an official capacity. Therefore, it is impossible to measure the strength of scientific activity within the framework of studying at Al-Azhar University in particular.

The number of Ethiopian students studying in Egyptian institutes and universities in the years 2001 to 2003 was (5) students ¹⁰.

As for the scholarships offered by Al-Azhar Al-Sharif to Ethiopian students for the period from 1990 to 2004, they amounted to (241) scholarships, and in Table No. (18) the number of scholarships offered by Al-Azhar to Ethiopian students from 1990 to 2004 ¹¹.

Table No. (18)

Years	Number of grants
1990	2
1991	2
1992	2
1993	10
1994	25
1995	20
1996	20
1997	20

1999	20
2000	20
2001	20
2002	20
2003	20
2004	20
Total: 241	

Ethiopia ranks first in the number of scholarships from Al-Azhar Al-Sharif compared to the countries of the African continent, especially after 1995 with (20) annual scholarships, in a step that promised to enhance the scientific and cultural role of the Egyptian Ethiopian¹². Al-Azhar in 2004 (99) students, in 2006 (78) students, and in 2008 their number reached (58) students¹³.

As for general cultural activities, the Egyptian embassy in Addis Ababa held a cultural celebration on November 2, 2006 in which the Ethiopian Writers Union participated, and Egypt participated in Ethiopia's celebrations of its national holidays with a number of folklore groups in 2007, and Egypt held a number of art exhibitions for crafts Al-Handiya and a festival for Egyptian films in Addis Ababa for the period from March 31 to April 5, 2008, in which (6) Egyptian films were shown¹⁴.

From this it becomes clear to us that cultural relations, despite their limitations in the aforementioned years, and their absence in other years, were considered a gateway to support public relations between the two countries, and a ring of bilateral communication sessions, exchange of visits and meetings, and the establishment of various training courses, which had an impact. In rapprochement and mutual cooperation.

Second: Egyptian-Ethiopian religious relations 1981-2011

Religious relations between Egypt and Ethiopia are distinguished by their common historical roots in the Islamic and Christian religions, but the religious ties were stronger on the part of the link between the Egyptian and Ethiopian Orthodox

Churches¹⁵. An agreement was signed on June 28, 1959, according to which the Ethiopian Church was raised from an archdiocese to Patriarchate, and the rank of its bishop was raised to the rank of a patriarch, and thus the Ethiopian Church became independent from the Egyptian Church, after the latter was the one that issued spiritual and religious directives and installed bishops and bishops¹⁶.

After the change of government in Ethiopia in 1974 and the arrival of Mengistu Haile Miriam, a quasi-break occurred between the Egyptian and Ethiopian churches after the new rulers in Ethiopia began to interfere in the affairs of the church by removing the Patriarch of the Church and confiscating many properties from the church, which was opposed by the Holy Synod in Alexandria as it contradicts The laws and traditions of the church, but the Ethiopian government continued these procedures and installed a new patriarch, who is (Tekela Hemanot), on August 29, 1976, despite the Holy Synod's demand for the necessity to adhere to the laws and correct the situation, which led to the interruption of communication between the Egyptian Church and the Ethiopian Church. The relationship was formal and dominated by the character of apathy throughout the eighties of the twentieth century until the end of Mengistu Haile Miriam's rule in 1991¹⁷.

After the change of the political system in Ethiopia in May 1991, the religious relationship witnessed intense activity between the two churches, and the Patriarch (Marques) was replaced by a new patriarch, Pope Balos¹⁸ (Baulios I), to be the beginning of the development of religious relations. A joint committee between the two churches and held its first meeting in Cairo in March 1993, and another joint meeting was held in Addis Ababa from February 9 to 15, 1994. During the meeting, the obstacles that stand in the way of developing and strengthening the religious relationship between the two churches were discussed. It was also agreed to work on preparing A protocol for setting up a special system for religious bonds,

which will be approved by the Holy Synod of the two churches, to build relationships dominated by love and the faith and spiritual ties with which the two churches are bound, especially after the absence during the period coinciding with the rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam, and the desire was present to overcome differences and settle them definitively¹⁹. And the protocol included an introduction and (16) articles that defined the nature of religious relations and aspects of joint work between the two churches. The protocol was agreed upon and signed in the form established by the joint committee. In terms of bilateral religious relations²⁰.

One of the historical disputes between the Egyptian Church and the Ethiopian Church was the issue of the dispute over the ownership of (Deir al-Sultan) in Jerusalem, and because of that disagreement, the visit of the Patriarch of the Egyptian Church, Pope Shenouda III²¹, to Addis Ababa in May 1994, was canceled, which left a negative impact. In the development of religious relations between the two churches and the Monastery of the Sultan, which has been supervised by Ethiopia since 1970, but the Zionist court issued its ruling that Egypt has the right to own and supervise the Monastery of the Sultan, but the Zionist authorities returned again and asked the Egyptian Church to enter into negotiations with the Ethiopian Church on the issue of supervision. Regarding the monastery, however, the Ethiopians in charge of the monastery refused to hand over its keys despite Egyptian efforts, with an unresolved position on the part of the Zionist authorities²². The disputes escalated, especially after the independence of the Eritrean Church, which claimed ownership of the monastery of the Sultan, and clashes occurred with The Ethiopians in November 1997, and with the support of the Egyptians, which led to clashes and the Ethiopian flag was burned in the monastery by the Eritreans, and the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Church, Pope Paulos I, visited the Zionist entity to Al-Hoss No, for its support for the eligibility of Ethiopian ownership of the monastery of the Sultan²³.

Religious relations and visits continued between the bishops of the two churches, despite those disputes over the monastery of the Sultan, and historians have considered that the Egyptian Church's relationship with the Ethiopian Church has its own characteristics, as it is one of the oldest continuous ecclesiastical religious relations at all in the history of the Christian churches²⁴.

In Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, in December 1998, a meeting of the eighth general assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in Harare, and the meeting took place on the sidelines of the meeting between the delegations of the Egyptian Church headed by Pope Pishoy and the President of the Ethiopian Church, Pope Paulos I, and the latter requested the formation of a joint committee to discuss the relationship between the two churches and the relationship with The Eritrean Church, and the approval of Pope Shenouda to start implementing the provisions of the joint protocol signed in 1994, and to restore the relationship between the two churches to its previous state²⁵.

The Ethiopian Church welcomed the appointment of a Coptic priest residing in Addis Ababa sent by the Egyptian Church in 2002 to care for Copts in Ethiopia, in accordance with the protocol signed between the two churches in 1994²⁶.

The Ethiopian Church, in the forefront of which is Pope Paulos I, sought to restore religious relations as they were in the past, as the head of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Lebanon intervened and met with Pope Shenouda III, as well as the Egyptian ambassador to Ethiopia and the Ethiopian ambassador to Egypt to mediate in this matter. The Egyptian Coptic Church, Anba Musa, is that the dispute is administrative with the Ethiopian Church, and Pope Shenouda III responded with the necessity of a priestly presence in Ethiopia and the existence of a Coptic Church to take care of the Copts and take care of them²⁷. The issue was raised at the meeting of the Holy Synod on May 26, 2007 to discuss it in detail. It was agreed to travel with a delegation to Addis Ababa on June 24, 2007 headed by Pope

Antonious Morcos (and Bishop Nareej) as a witness from the Armenian Church of the agreement, and the delegation met with the head of the Ethiopian Church, Pope Paulos I, and the delegation also went to inspect the church that was designated for the Copts In Ethiopia, receiving its keys, and discussing the Coptic bishop who will be chosen by Pope Shenouda III, the fields he will sponsor, educational matters, and his place of residence in Ethiopia. Bishoy presented his report on the visit to Pope Shenouda III on June 28, 2007²⁸.

In a move to improve and strengthen relations, the President of the Ethiopian Church, Pope Paulos I, visited Cairo on July 13, 2007, at the head of a high-ranking ecclesiastical delegation that included (10) senior bishops of the Ethiopian Church and was received by Pope Shenouda III²⁹.

In a sign of the strong restoration of the religious relationship and reconciliation between the two churches, the head of the Egyptian Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III, visited Addis Ababa for the period 11-13 April 2008, in a visit that went back to history, and he received a full reception, and fireworks were set, hymns were sung and candles were carried in Addis Ababa, and the Pope was Shenouda III at the head of a high-ranking delegation of bishops, metropolitans and priests, led by the Secretary of the Holy Synod, Father Bishoy, and Bishop of the Lake Church Al-Banna Bakhomius Bagomus), the Bishop of Al-Shabab Al-Banna Musa and the Bishop of the Shubra El-Kheima Church, Father Markos (Morcos), and the head of the Ethiopian Church was Pope Paulos I. And the senior bishops, Pope Shenouda prayed the prayer of thanksgiving in the (Holy Trinity) Cathedral in Addis Ababa³⁰, and Pope Paulos I gave a speech welcoming that visit, then Pope Shenouda III delivered a speech in which he said: "I am preparing this visit to mark the beginning of a relationship. New between the two churches, not at the level of Egypt and Ethiopia, but in all countries of the world that have churches. Finally, I wish you every blessing and blessing, for we are

your servants Shepherds, without a flock, a shepherd is not³¹.

On the second day of the visit, Pope Shenouda III and his accompanying delegation went to the Cathedral of the Savior of the World in Addis Ababa, and held a joint mass with Pope Paulos I, and Pope Shenouda III gave a short speech in which he said: "May the Lord bless you with every spiritual blessing, and let the Holy Spirit descend upon Your hearts lead your lives, and I hope that you will remember me in your prayers³².

After that, Pope Shenouda III opened a Coptic Church in Addis Ababa, to care for and serve the Copts in Ethiopia, and the church had been prepared and equipped at the request of Pope Shenouda III, and he chose Father Anthony Mark, who has knowledge of the Ethiopian Amharic language as he worked as a doctor in Ethiopia before his monasticism, and he chose Likewise, the secretary of the Holy Synod, Father Bishoy, was to prepare a Coptic priest and prepare Coptic professors to teach at the Seminary in Addis Ababa in the English language and to learn the Amharic language to facilitate the care of Copts in Ethiopia, and a large number of Ethiopians gathered around Pope Shenouda carrying roses and candles, and spoke to them about the relationship The historical and religious between the Egyptian and Ethiopian peoples and invited them to visit Egypt and that they are welcome at any time³³.

During his visit, Pope Shenouda met with senior officials in the Ethiopian government, led by the Ethiopian President, Jerma Welid Jeurjes³⁴, and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, and he confirmed the depth of the relationship between the two countries, especially the religious relationship dating back (16) centuries. The two sides touched on the issue of the water crisis between the two countries and the need to find logical solutions to it³⁵.

A joint meeting of the Holy Synod was held between the two churches, and that meeting issued a final statement, and the most important thing in the statement is the necessity of communication

and the strengthening of the long religious relations between the two churches, and the exchange of visits and joint cooperation, attention to the traditions and teachings of the Church, and the activation of the protocol signed between the two churches in 1994, Which indicated in one of its clauses that the Egyptian Coptic Church is the mother church despite the independence of the Ethiopian Church, but the latter remains ideologically and spiritually linked to the Egyptian Church ³⁶.

Pope Shenouda III left Ethiopia on April 13, 2008, concluding his visit back to Cairo. A number of bishops and metropolitans of the Ethiopian Church and the Egyptian ambassador to Ethiopia with a number of ambassadors from Arab and other countries ³⁷.

I went back to the historical visit of Pope Shenouda III, since the first visit was in September 1973, during the reign of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, after what almost interrupted those visits during the rule of (Mengistu Haile Mariam) ³⁸.

Religious relations witnessed a great improvement between the two churches, and Pope Paulus I visited Cairo in November 2009, and met with Pope Shenouda III and congratulated him on the occasion of the anniversary of his sitting in the thirty-eighth papal throne, and the Egyptian Coptic Church participated in their celebrations on that occasion ³⁹.

The Egyptian and Ethiopian Churches had made strenuous efforts regarding the Nile water crisis that had reached its climax, especially after the failure of the joint meetings in this regard, and the Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation Muhammad Nasruddin Allam met with Pope Shenouda III in January 2010, and asked him to intervene to bridge the views. On the issue of the Nile River waters, Pope Shenouda III made extensive contacts with the Ethiopian ecclesiastical side ⁴⁰, and the result of those contacts was that Pope Paulus I visited Cairo on February 9, 2010 with a high-ranking ecclesiastical delegation, and they met with Pope

Shenouda III. In common, the papal endeavors are advisory only in Ethiopia, as it is a civil state according to the Ethiopian constitution that separated religion from the state. Religions do not interfere in state affairs, and the state does not interfere in religious affairs. The statement also indicated that the two churches are exerting their utmost efforts to solve the water crisis between Egypt and Ethiopia And that Pope Shenouda III is ready to travel to Ethiopia in the event that the Egyptian political leadership requests him to do that mission, and the statement clarified that the meetings between Pope Shenouda III and Pope Paulus I did not take place. Roads to the issue of the ownership of the Monastery of the Sultan in Jerusalem, which is located under Ethiopian supervision, in the interest of the Egyptian Church for the permanence of harmony between the two churches on the one hand and the two countries on the other hand, in order to ensure Egyptian water rights, and that the situation does not tolerate further tension⁴¹.

The return of religious relations between the Egyptian and Ethiopian Churches had a great impact in calming the situation, especially after the change of government in Ethiopia in 1991, and the mutual meetings at their highest levels greatly contributed to rapprochement and joint cooperation, and sent reassurance in the souls of the two peoples, and brought back to the minds the legacy. The religious and historical ties to which the two countries are connected, the rapprochement between the two churches also had an impact on the political situation, especially in the water crisis of the Nile River, which had been an obstacle to the progress and development of relations between Egypt and Ethiopia, although it did not achieve tangible results on the ground, but it was attempts that came from The keenness of those in charge of the two churches to improve relations, reject differences, and spread security, peace and tolerance between the two countries.

In Table No. (19), the framework of agreements and memoranda of understanding between Egypt and Ethiopia from 1986 to 2010 ⁴².

Table No. (19)

S.	The name of the agreement or memorandum of understanding	History
1.	Agreement to establish the Joint Committee for Cooperation	1989
2.	Executive Protocol for the Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation	1989
3.	Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation and Ethiopia	1989
4.	The general framework agreement for cooperation signed at the summit level between the two countries	1993
5.	Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of media	2006
6.	Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of social affairs	2006
7.	Memorandum of Understanding on scientific and technological cooperation	2010
8.	Memorandum of Understanding in the field of culture and arts	2010
9.	Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of media	2010

we see that the cultural and religious relations between the two sides were far from the political crises in the relations of the two countries, especially in the issue of the waters of the Nile River, in the field of culture, cooperation was present and witnessed a development from year to year, as well as the religious relationship developed a lot despite the difference of religions, but it is It was a positive and influential factor in the course of relations between the two sides, especially since the Egyptian and Ethiopian churches were characterized by friendship and mutual respect.

Conclusion

The cultural relations between Egypt and Ethiopia, despite their limitations, but they are a triangle gateway for communication, exchange of meetings and visits, and joint cooperation in cultural fields and various training courses. Likewise, the return of religious relations between the Egyptian and Ethiopian churches had a very important impact, especially after 1991, that is, after the regime change Governance Ethiopia, as clerics contributed to calming the tense conditions due to the dispute over the Nile, and for religious

relations to be an important factor that contributed to rapprochement and reassurance between the two peoples.

This brought back to the minds the religious and civilizational legacy that the two countries are connected to, after the people in charge of the two churches were keen to restore relations to a normal state and work to support and improve them, and to spread peace, security and tolerance between the two countries, and cultural and religious factors have succeeded in developing and improving relations between Egypt and Ethiopia, in At a time when politics failed to do so, after repeated disagreements, especially in the issue of the waters of the Nile River, the impact of cultural and religious relations was stronger than the political aspects.

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