

“Bahr Negus Yeshaq’s Rebellion” - An Extract from Sarsa Dangel Chronicles

This is a direct excerpt and translation of Carlo Conti Rossini's Italian Book from pages 54 to 93 of *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Series 2, Scriptores Aethiopici, Tome 3 - Historia regis Sarša Dengel (Malak Sagad)*. This is a rough translation, with the assistance of chat-gpt's OCR mechanism.

In those days, the heart of the aḡmäč Yeshaq felt guilty, almost to the point of uttering these words: "Do not call on me, O my master, for I am seized with fear; do not come to my house, because you will not find me there." Having heard this, the king's heart blazed like a flame of fire. Could there be a better response from this king when he said to him about this speech: "When have we ever called upon you for you to say: 'I will not come?' And when have we said: 'We will come,' for you to say: 'You will not find me?' Your speech resembles that of children, who do not know how to discern good from evil, and who do not understand what they are saying." Hearing this, we admired the grace of his speech and the warmth of his words.

In those days, on the 30th of the month of ḡamlē, died the king's brother, the abētahun Zahawāryāt, good and philanthropic, pure of heart and wise in action: may peace be upon him! May the Lord be merciful and gracious to him!

All of this happened in the twelfth year of the reign of Malak Sagad.

When the rainy season had passed, the great ones of the kingdom held councils, saying: "Let us not allow Yeshaq to lose his soul by passing into the hands of the Turks for the love of domination; will he accept our advice (?), for he has been nurtured in this royal house since his childhood. Let Zaparaḡliṡos and Asbē go with Ilṡē Yodit and abbā Qāmā to conclude the peace; may he obey the king, and the king will keep him in his former position." And so they left. When they reached him, they argued over what was good and what was better. He ended the speech by saying that he accepted. Having completed the matter, during which Ilṡē Yodit and her companions were already on their way when Yeshaq told them:

"Let the Haṡāḡē, Ilṡēḡē, the royal children, and all the great ones of the kingdom be placed under threat of excommunication by one of my priests, if they change their words against me; and then let me be placed under threat of excommunication by one of their priests!" After saying this, he sent a priest and Agar along with Ilṡē Yodit and her companions. When they arrived at the Haṡāḡē, he did not disapprove of what they were discussing; on the contrary, he said to them: "What you say is done!" He made them do what had been decided, and even added what had not yet been addressed. Thus, they completed the matter under threats of excommunication, starting with the Haṡāḡē, Ilṡēḡē, and the royal children, until reaching the azāḡ, the west belattēnā, and the ba'al mawā'el. This peaceful king said regarding the threats of excommunication: "I do not wish to put an end to the duration of the threats of excommunication; let it be valid until the day of Yeshaq's death." Such was the virtue that gave much to one who demanded little! Having thus completed the matter, Agar and his companions returned with the azāḡ Ḥalibo and the monk who was to pronounce the threats of excommunication against Yeshaq on behalf of the king; they arrived at the Šembelā in the month of nahasē.

In this month of rains¹, the king's brother, mār Fiqtor, died — a joyful face, clear intelligence, good works, pure thoughts: may peace be upon him! May the Lord be merciful and gracious to him! At the same time, the good and faithful lady, Amalta Yohannes, died — wise in counsel, of good conduct: may peace be upon her! May the Lord be merciful and gracious to her!

In the same month of nahasē, the azāž Ḥalibo arrived at the zamāč Yeshaq and told him the king's words, which were all love and peace. Yeshaq welcomed him warmly, with a happy face. When Ḥalibo said: "Here, the Hašägē has sent a monk who will place you under threat of excommunication, just like the Hašägē, Ilṭägē, the royal children, and all the great ones of the kingdom have already been placed." He tried to delay the matter by saying: "We will do this tomorrow, or the day after!" But the other was insistent to return to the Hašägē, the azmāč refused to dismiss him until he had completed his diabolical design.

All this happened in the thirteenth year of the reign of Malak Sagad.

Before the rainy season, the king received news that said:

"The Muslim (eslām), the king of Adal, named Mahammad, has arrived: he is the one who killed the chiefs of the tribes of the Muslims (malasāy), without sparing a single one of the notable persons among their families and relatives,² not even the children." Upon hearing this news, the king did not hasten to go fight him; rather, he waited to learn the outcome of Yeshaq's situation. Later, this merciful king, who repaid with good those who had done him harm, sent Yeshaq gifts through the son of azāž Ḥalibo: a qeṭan, the shirt that he was to wear, a gold necklace that was taken from his neck, along with a gold bracelet and a golden crown for his head to confirm Yeshaq in the office he had once laid down and the dignity of dağ azmāč, a saddle mule, and a magnificent blue silk garment to wear over the shirt. All these gifts that this king gave to Yeshaq, while secretly setting traps for him, resembled the gifts that Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to Judas, who handed him over to those who were to crucify him and kill him. But Yeshaq did not reveal to anyone the bad decision he had secretly made.

One day, Yeshaq said to azāž Ḥalibo, Zaparaḍliṭos, and Asbē:

"What do you say? Look, I have learned important news. Amḥa Giyorgis has proclaimed the son of azāž Gērā king, lowering the ambā. Inform the Hašägē; I myself will inform him of this event; if you suspect that I agree with this affair, may God destroy my existence!" Speaking thus, he falsely swore oaths to them, for he was at the beginning and end of this bad decision. Indeed, he sent secret messages to Amḥa Giyorgis saying: "Send me the Israelite whom you have taken down from the ambā, I will proclaim him king openly." Asbē and his companions consulted with azāž Ḥalibo to inform the Hašägē of what was happening: openly, they showed Yeshaq that they were going to see the Hašägē, but secretly they sent a message to the king, urgently all that Yeshaq was deceitfully doing against him. It was thus that azāž Ḥalibo sent his son. But this king, full of wisdom and intelligence, made the decision of prudent men and said:

"Now, I will fight against the enemies of my faith: if I die for Christ, the gain will be mine; if I win the victory, I will praise the Lord who helped me because I believe in Him. Until today, I have waited for the end of the affair of the perfidious Yeshaq: may God reward him according to his actions!"¹

¹ The rainy season of 1576

² That is, all notable Muslims who had joined the Ethiopian side

CHAPTER VI

After speaking thus, the king hastened to set off. Reaching the Godjam,³ he took Qoḏmos and all the warriors who were with him. When he arrived at Felhambo,⁴ the ṣaḥafa lām of Dāmōt also came with all his armed men and supporters; the ṣaḥafa lām of Shoa and all the chiefs of the surrounding areas also gathered there, coming from all directions. Then the king moved towards Wāḡ and arrived at Šerkā. There he sent out about thirty cavalry scouts to explore Mahammad's positions. Advancing, they found his camp beyond the Wabi. They returned after seeing it and reported the enemy's positions to the king. Then he hurried and went to set up his camp in a place from where one could see in front of Mahammad's camp. Then the fighting began. This happened in the month of magābit, after the fourth Saturday of Lent. The day the fighting began, thirty enemy cavalry deserted and came to the aid of the Christian king: every day, four or five cavalymen came to surrender; and large numbers of infantry also came to submit. As the fighting became more intense, the king built a rampart of stones without mortar and fortified himself there.

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After accomplishing these things, the king left Hadyā, headed toward Dāmōt, and chose Abazāgāy to spend the rainy season there.⁵ That rainy season was a month of joy and cheerfulness, a month of comfortable living and entertainment.

All this happened in the fourteenth year of the reign of Malak Sagad.

When the rainy season was over, the king thought of departing to fight Yeshaq. Then the Aqet zār held a council and said: "How could the Haṣāgē set out, abandoning the country to the Galla?" But he refused to listen to them. Indeed, he had decided to go fight Yeshaq because his thoughts burned like a flame of fire as he remembered his treachery, which had led him to this, by the wickedness of his heart, until naming king Walda Zatā'os, the day before the feast of Baptism had passed.⁶ So he left. He set out and reached Sabrād. Then, while he was there, his mother learned that her son wanted to go to Tigrē; she immediately left Gend Barat (for she was living there at that time) and hurried to find him at Sabrād. On that day, she said to him: "Oh my son, why have you decided this thing against me and your brothers? Do you wish to deliver us to the Galla? Our loss does not cause you grief?" With these and other similar words, she softened his heart and persuaded him, for he was obedient to his mother and observed the voice of the Book, which says: "He who honors his mother will have long life."⁷ And in another Book, it says: "Honor your father and your mother."⁸ For this reason, he did not disdain his mother's counsel and did everything she told him. When he gave up going to Tigrē, he decided to go to the land of Wāḡ to fight the Galla who were there, for he had the habit of keeping watch over his people and going to fight the enemies, like a hunter who always watches and goes into all the regions to hunt beasts. So he left that place, reached the land of Wāḡ, found the Galla in the land of Māyā,

³ The Paris and Frankfurt manuscripts say: "After the feast of Masqal (the Cross = September 16, 1576), the king left Gubāē and arrived, etc..."

⁴ The Paris and Frankfurt manuscripts: "Felhembā."

⁵ The great rainy season of 1577

⁶ The order of events is different in the "Chronique abrégée des rois d'Ethiopie": "In the thirteenth year, Mahammad died, and Yeshaq revolted after the extension. The new governor of Tigrē, the king named Dāraḳo, attacked and defeated Yeshaq. The fourteenth year, he marched against Mahammad, fought a battle in the Wabi valley, defeated him, and spent the rainy season in the Wābis of Zāhon-dur.

⁷ Cf. Deuteronomy, v, 16

⁸ Exodus, xx, 12

and tore them out like leaves, until he filled the fields with their corpses. This happened during the days of Lent. Returning from there, he celebrated Easter in Azāmer.

Before the Easter feast, on the Wednesday of Holy Week, abbā Newāy arrived with Ya‘əqob the Israelite, who was staying with azāž Ḥalibo. Indeed, in those days, Ḥalibo had fled from Yeshaq, who had forced him to remain under his guard with him, after having chained him, not with iron but by the bonds of treason, which are worse than chains and irons. Having arrived in Dambyā, Ḥalibo had sent Ya‘əqob to the Haṣāgē. On arriving in Gend Barat, at Ilṭēgē, Ya‘əqob delivered the message from Ḥalibo, who assured that Yeshaq did not want peace with the Haṣāgē and that all the governors desired the arrival of the Haṣāgē, detesting Yeshaq. Therefore, the king was urged to come, and abbā Newāy and Ya‘əqob were sent to inform the Haṣāgē of what was happening. Abbā Newāy was a valiant man in conduct, prudent in his counsel, swift in his missions, and a supporter of this reign, watching over him and providing his care with urgency. So, abbā Newāy hurried: in just one week from the time he left Gend Barat, he arrived where the Haṣāgē was, on the Wednesday of Holy Week, as we have already explained. Such was the first haste of abbā Newāy for this divine reign; we shall continue further and write each thing in its place the king to come, the Passion Week seemed to the king as long as a year, due to his haste to set out. Having celebrated Easter, he departed on Tuesday, after gathering the Čawā from Bāli, Šerkā, Ar’ēn, Wāğ, Šoa, and Dāmot. Arriving in Dāmot, he headed towards Godjam and went along a path that no one knew, guided by a man from Gāfāt. He entered Godjam without anyone noticing. From there, having taken supplies for the men and horses, he left, set out, and arrived at Särkā without anyone knowing. From there, after taking supplies, he left and set out on the road to Darḥā. After a day's journey, he sent a message to Takla Giyorgis, saying: "Here we are, we have arrived; come and meet us!" Takla Giyorgis, upon hearing these words, was terrified, for this arrival was sudden, as will be the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ; so he rose, left immediately, and received him.

At that time, by the will of the Lord, the arrival of the Galla coincided with the king's arrival: ⁹ they plundered the men and oxen of Dambyā and killed a large number. Then the king left immediately and went ahead of them by the Waynā Dagā road; he sent armed men by a path that led them and lined the combatants at his side. When the battle grew fiercer, as these rebellious slaves were strong and warlike, the powerful and victorious king prevailed; he entered among the enemies and killed a great number. Then they fled from his presence. The king then surrounded them on all sides, "like a castle," with his infantry and cavalry; their defeat resembled the defeat of Sennacherib's army, which was slain by the Angel of the Lord. Very few managed to escape from the battle. Some fell into ravines. Others hid in the mountains, caves, and ditches of the land; but the peasants found them and killed them. The heads taken as trophies of valiant men and warriors who fell in the battle, and who did not turn their faces before the adversaries, numbered about 800,²¹⁰ not to mention those who fell into ravines, nor fugitives who were killed on the road or in places where they had hidden.

Then the king resolved to go to Tigrē to fight Yeshaq. Then the nobles of the kingdom and all the Aqēt zār advised him, saying: "We cannot go, as our horses and mules are weakened." But he refused to listen, saying: "Why have I come then? Is it not to pursue Yeshaq? How do you want to look for a place in Dambyā to spend the rainy season?" They begged him earnestly and led him

⁹ The "Chronique abrégée des rois d'Éthiopie" says: "In the fifteenth year, he attacked the Boran in the Māyo valley and defeated them; he returned to Dambyā, met the Abaṭi in Waynā Dagā, and exterminated them without leaving a single one

¹⁰ Paez: "900

to agree to spend the rainy season there. The place where he spent the rainy season¹¹ was Gubāē.

Then wāzaro Yolyañā, the itē Walatto, azāž Ḥalibo, and azāž Be'ēdo resolved to obtain permission from the Haṣāgē to send a letter to Yeshaq, to make peace if he accepted, with the Haṣāgē. When the Haṣāgē had given his approval, they sent a letter to Yeshaq, saying: "We will obtain the Haṣāgē's forgiveness for your past fault; repent and ask for forgiveness." Some of their supporters, having taken this letter, left with one of Yeshaq's supporters, named Ḥalib, whom the Haṣāgē had found in Dambyā as he was going "as a messenger to wāzaro Amatta Giyorgis": they took him to Yeshaq, with the intention of carrying out the king's desire for peace; for the king was peaceful and did not want to remain Yeshaq's enemy, on the contrary, he wished to make peace with him. In those days, Yeshaq was in Debār wā to make war against the Turks; with the help of the Lord, he had not yet abandoned his endeavor, an endeavor he renounced voluntarily, like Judas Iscariot. When the messengers arrived, Asbē and Zaparaḍliṭos were at Māḥdara Māryām. Seeing the letter they refused to send to wāzaro and azāž Ḥalibo, who continued to take care of the peace matter, a letter that said: "After completing the matter of Yeshaq, come immediately without wasting time, we will obtain from the Haṣāgē that he maintains Yeshaq in his former domain," they sent a letter with these messengers to Yeshaq, upon returning with him on the matter of peace, saying: "We do not wish to stop going to the Haṣāgē; we will not look for excuses or pretexts in the difficulties of the rainy season! But send us back after finishing the peace discussion with all the proposals you think are preferable and better." Such was their message.

With the arrival of these messengers and their letter, it coincided with the arrival of the bacha from the direction of Sawaken, driven by his fate, which would cause him to fall into the hands of the victorious king. Then Yeshaq's intelligence abandoned him so much that he concluded peace with the bacha, who arrived, and he went to meet him. The bacha made peace with 'Aftār and his companions who were in the fortress. Then Yeshaq sent an audacious letter, saying: "I have made peace with the bacha, not through messages as before, but by sitting with him on the same carpet; not that I want to provoke a quarrel with the Haṣāgē, but because I am filled with fear, I sought a protector as a slave seeks one who fears his master." At the same time, he sent a cannonball, saying: "I entrust myself to the master of this bullet because I fear my master."

He sent this message to Asbē and his friends: "Address a letter to the Haṣāgē about peace; on my part, I have sent a letter! Send a response to all the people of the Haṣāgē who sent you letters! But you will not leave until the arrival of a new letter." They then understood that he did not want peace, for he said, "Do not leave!" They told Ḥalib: "You must not send the bullet to the Haṣāgē because it would irritate him a lot," and they thus worked to fervently bring him to make a covenant and make peace with the Haṣāgē. But Ḥalib, a supporter of Yeshaq, refused to abandon the bullet, fearing to disobey his master's orders, for the custom of his supporters was to deliver messages, good or bad. All this happened to make Yeshaq's fault complete and his betrayal entire. A doctor said about these two brothers: "They resemble the two priests who stayed with Absalom when David fled; but the reason they remained was not to hate David but, on the contrary, to show solicitude for him, in order to inform him of everything Absalom was planning to do against him."

¹¹ The great rainy season of 1578

Such was the reason for Asbē and Zaparaḏliṭos staying with Yeshaq, for they reported to the Haṣāgē everything they saw and heard from Yeshaq, both good and bad. When he insulted the Haṣāgē, they reported it to him, down to the Bizāmō; when he wanted to revolt against the kingdom, they told him up to Dambyā; they sent word to the Haṣāgē about all this and other similar matters. That is why this man compared them to the two priests who loved the king chosen by the Lord among his brothers, and whom David rewarded generously with many gifts and counted as sincere friends, in return for their good conduct towards him during his exile. However, the two brothers then stopped sending letters with information to the Haṣāgē, for Yeshaq had admonished them before his wife and children, saying in a voice full of fury: "May the Lord hear! Behold, I have changed the king! Henceforth send no more messages to the Haṣāgē, neither by word of mouth nor in writing, and let none of your followers go to his house! If you do not obey, misfortune and punishment will befall you!" For this reason, they stopped sending letters since the revolt of Yeshaq against this Christian kingdom, fearing the wickedness of his heart, which spared not even his wife, his children, or his relatives. The messengers they had sent at that time had left with Yeshaq's permission. He said to them: "You shall no longer send any of your men," suspecting they were sending messages by word of mouth; however, they would not have sent messages to accuse him, but only to beg him to forgive them and to forgive his transgressions.

When Yeshaq's message arrived at the Haṣāgē, upon seeing his letter saying: "I have made peace with the bacha, and I found myself with him on the same carpet," seeing also the cannonball he had sent with the words: "I entrust myself to the master of this bullet," the king was astonished and said: "O Lord! See the arrogance of Yeshaq!" On this occasion, he appeared like King Judas, Hezekiah, when Sennacherib sent him an arrogant message; he prayed to the Lord, saying: "O Lord, see the arrogance of Sennacherib!" And this prayer rose before the Lord, who sent an angel to destroy Sennacherib's army. The king's prayer went up before the Lord, who destroyed his enemies, so that their corpses filled the fields. Then the king, trusting in the Lord, placed this cannonball on the altar of the tabernacle and said to the priests: "Pray over this bullet, that the Lord may rebuke the arrogance of this man, who has no shame before men nor fear of the Lord." Such is the custom of the king: when he is against the arrogance of his enemy, in writing or otherwise, he places proof on the altar and prays over it; then he rises, wages war on his enemies, and remains victorious; he subdues all the peoples under his feet; he kills with the sword those who do not submit and leaves their corpses to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.

During that month of rains, one day, he drew his sword and said to those standing before him, the belattēnā and the inner men (courtiers and servants): "If I have betrayed Yeshaq, and if I have deceived him, may the Lord seize me in His impartial judgment, in which there is no treachery! But if Yeshaq has treated me treacherously and deceived me, may the Lord seize him and throw him into my hand!" Having said this, he threw his sword at random, and the sword sank into the ground, penetrating more than a palm's depth, as if it had been thrown with force. Aqābi was astonished to see this, and said: "It is not by chance that this sword has sunk into the ground when he threw it at random; it is a sign of the victory of my master Malak Sagad, the mighty, the victorious"; for a prophetic spirit had come into his mouth so that he could pronounce this prophecy of the victory that was to come to this Christian king.

Then the king sent back Yeshaq's messengers, who were coming to him, with a letter that was nothing but a cry of trust in the Lord. Here is what it said: "As for you, you trust in yourself; as for me, I trust in my Lord Jesus Christ! If you come with the Turks, I will come against you with my

Lord Jesus Christ!" Indeed, the king, who had confidence in the Lord, always said: "It is not my bow in which I trust, it is not my lance that will save me; but I put my trust in the power of the Lord; it will weaken the cunning of the wise, it will weaken the strength of the brave."¹²

The sixth chapter is finished.

CHAPTER VII

This chapter will explain many miracles of the Lord, which we will write down in succession. The messengers, upon arriving at Yeshaq, handed him the letter from the Haṣāgē, whose entire tone exuded trust in the Lord. On seeing this letter, Yeshaq no longer wanted peace or friendship with the Haṣāgē; instead, he became drunk and increased his wickedness to the point of no longer wishing to discuss with those urging him to make peace with the Haṣāgē. But the Christian king, after sending away the messengers, set off after them. He left the place where he had spent the rainy season, on the 21st of the month of maskarram¹³; he stayed a week in Wayna Dag'ā. There, Takla Giyorgis fell ill with a dangerous illness. He was ṣaḥafa lām of Dāmōt, brave in battle, and had covered himself with glory during the war against Mahammad in Hadyā, against the Galla, and in many battles that we have not mentioned. It is also said that he was good in his works and prudent in his counsel. On the 2nd of the month of teqemt, he died: may the Lord be merciful and gracious to him!

All this happened in the seventeenth year¹⁴ of the reign of Malak Sagad.

Here we will present the faith of this king, who loved the Lord. When Takla Giyorgis died, the hearts of all the men in the camp were stirred, and fear invaded their minds, so they said: "Thus the crown of our pride has fallen! The mighty refuge in which we had placed our trust has been destroyed! How can we go to Tigrē, if at the beginning of the journey we have been struck by such misfortune? Should we not hasten to fight Yeshaq, when he has so many guns, so many cannons, and numerous horses!" The king, trusting in the Lord, hearing the people's fear, responded in a voice full of anger, saying: "O men of little faith¹⁵, why do you doubt? Are you so lacking in trust? Is it not better to trust in the Lord than to trust in a man?" He said these things because he had been taught by the voice of the Book, which says: "Do not trust in princes or in men, who cannot save; their souls will depart, and they will return to dust; on that day all their plans will vanish. Blessed is the man who has the help of the God of Jacob and who has his refuge in the Lord, his God!"¹⁶ With these words and other similar ones, he encouraged himself, strengthening himself in the religion of the Lord; and he dispelled the mistrust of his people, so that they said: "It is better for us to die for the religion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and for the reign of our master, King Malak Sagad."

Also, we shall write about the peaceful times they had in those days, for it has been forgotten to write it in its proper place. Since the death of abuna Yosāb, the Orthodox, virtuous in his works, in the eighth year, abbā Salik had a metropolitan sent by Patriarch abbā Yohannes; the name of

¹² Cf. Psalm xliii, 7

¹³ September 30, 1578

¹⁴ This is an error in the manuscripts; it should read "the sixteenth year," as found in the "Chronique abrégée," or at least in those manuscripts that speak of this year, as it is omitted in a large number of them.

¹⁵ The third footnote is a reference to Matthew 14:31, where Jesus rebukes Peter for his lack of faith. This reference is used to emphasize the king's message about trusting in God rather than fearing earthly troubles.

¹⁶ Psalm CXV, 6

this metropolitan was abbā Mārḳos. When he had left the patriarch, with the episcopal dignity, while he was on the way, came the victory of King Malak Sagad in his war against Mahammad, in the second instance against the Galla of Wāḡ, in the third instance against the Galla of Dambyā; then came the great victory, which we are now going to describe. All these gifts of victory coincided with the arrival of abbā Mārḳos; may God grant him a good end!

In those days, when he expelled the spirit of distrust from the hearts of his people about the death of Takla Giyorgis, the king left Waynā Dag'ā and took the road of Wāḡ; but he sent Takla Selus, governor of Sirē, and Gəbārā on the road of Sirē. He also sent messages to Dahragot, nagāś of Godjam, urging him to come immediately. The path the king took through the land of Wāḡ recalled what Our Lord said in the Gospel: "Enter through the narrow gate: for wide and broad is the road that leads to destruction."¹⁷ Such was the way of this king. He went on a narrow path and came out into a spacious place, where he destroyed the enemies of his faith and the despisers of his reign. On the contrary, Yeshaq went on a broad path and ended in a narrow place, where he found his ruin and the fall of his friends.

The third prophecy of this king arrived at the moment when he was about to leave the place where he had spent the rainy season. He said: "I know what Yeshaq is doing: The Haṣāgē will not leave Dambyā before the harvest season. It is only after the feast of the Cross that Yeshaq will leave the place where he spent the rainy season, the land of Debār wā, and move forward to have news of our arrival by his spies; in the meantime, he will send his followers to rest at their homes, for they have completed their expeditions and will remain with their wives and children. Then, while he will have no suspicion, we will attack him." He spoke thus to the numerous belāttēnā, who stood before him, while he was in the place where he had spent the rainy season. Behold, they are now witnesses to his prophecy! Not a single word of all his discourse was contradicted. It is therefore just to say that he is king and prophet; thus, the disciples said to Our Lord: "Now we understand that you know everything, and that you need not have anyone question you."¹⁸ This shows that his gifts are both prophecy and royalty.

To demonstrate the truth of the word of this king, Yeshaq left immediately the place where he had spent the rainy season and reached the land of Yeha, which is called Ṣafṣaf; there, he sent his followers back home to their wives and children, retaining no one, neither the great nor the small; he remained alone with some of his relatives.

Then, the king arrived at 'Ad Hāsaro, which is one of the lands in the country of Tambēn. Yeshaq, having sent people to gather information, could only learn about the king's arrival at 'Ad Hāsaro; for previously, his spies and the people of his country had hidden the matter from him. It is thus that one day the king of Persia took from Jerusalem the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ and sent it to his country; Emperor Heraclius, upon learning of this, burned with spiritual zeal, suddenly set out with a large army, and arrived unexpectedly at the moment when the king did not expect it, killed him, and took back the Cross of Christ. But the reason why the king of Persia did not learn about the arrival of the formidable emperor, with numerous armies, was that the people of his country hated him and, for that reason, did not inform him, so that he was suddenly killed by the hand of his adversary. Now, Yeshaq, weighing down on them the yoke of his domination, like Pharaoh's yoke, the people of his country hated him and hid the king's arrival from him until he arrived unexpectedly. Otherwise, by sending spies as far as Shewa and Dāmōt, he would have been informed of the king's affairs and would have reported to his followers, saying: "This is

¹⁷ Matthew, VII, 13

¹⁸ John, XVI, 30

what happened, and this is what was done in Haṣeḡē. But at that moment, he could not *recognize even himself nor say anything to his companions; as it is said: "The wise man will be silent on that day." ¹⁹ The explanation of these words from the prophet is not that the wise will be silent because they know things, as is the habit of the wise, but because they will have no advice to give. Such was the silence of Yeshaq at that time, for the Lord had concealed and hidden the king's arrival from him.

While the king remained at ʿAd Hāsaro, the sons of Yohannes, son of Romāna Warq, came to submit to him: Sem'on, the eldest, Agadom, Krestosāwi, and Ya'eqob, the youngest; they came after abandoning Yohannes, their father. Their behavior was similar to that of James and John, who followed Our Lord Jesus Christ after abandoning Zebedee, their father, with his hired men. But their submission, before the other chiefs, was similar to the priority given to all the other apostles over Andrew and his companions, who followed at the first call of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Yeshaq's camp, when the arrival of Haṣeḡē was announced, everyone was troubled, and in the encampment, there was great apprehension. Similarly, Herod and all Jerusalem were frightened at the arrival of the kings of Persia, who said: "Where is the king of Judah?" ²⁰ Then Yeshaq ordered a herald to proclaim: "Behold, Haṣeḡē has arrived! Let anyone who has affection for me, my relatives, and my followers, and let all the peasants who are my subjects, Muslims (eslām) or Christians, come and follow me, each with his wife and children!" On the 18th day of the month of *teqemt*, he sent ahead his wife and children. Many left with them, with their wives, their children, their cattle, all who walked on foot, and with all the utensils from their houses; so that the road they traveled seemed to disappear under the crowd of men and animals.

On the 19th of the month, in the evening from Thursday to Friday, Gabra Iyasus fled and went to Haṣeḡē, abandoning everything in his house, even the mule on which he rode. Then Yeshaq and his army experienced fear because of Gabra Iyasus's departure, who knew all their affairs and who secrets had been revealed. It was for this reason that fear penetrated them.

The previous Thursday, when Yeshaq learned that Sem'on had left with his three brothers to join Haṣeḡē, his heart burned like fire; *the next day, when he learned that Gabra Iyasus had also left, flames were added to the fire.

Here we must recall the prudence of Sem'on, son of Yohannes, and his wisdom. When Yeshaq received news of Haṣeḡē's arrival, he developed suspicions regarding Sem'on; for he knew that he was attached to Haṣeḡē. Once, he had even put him in chains, confiscated his horse and his sword, and placed them under guard, saying: "You have decided to go to Haṣeḡē and ally yourself with my enemies!" Having these suspicions, when he learned that Haṣeḡē had arrived, he sent Gabra Krestos, son of Ba'al Gäda Täsä Sellase, to summon Sem'on to come immediately with his wife. Gabra Krestos, upon arriving at Sem'on's, said: "This is what the lord has told you: 'Come immediately!'" He replied: "Yes, we will come tomorrow at dawn." But he said this out of caution and cunning. He then let him enter his house. They slaughtered a calf for him; they ate and drank, and Sem'on gave them plenty of mead until they lost consciousness. Gabra Krestos's soldiers indeed fell asleep in the fields due to their great drunkenness, lying like corpses, having put down their lances and shields. Then Sem'on ordered his mule and horse to

¹⁹ Proverbs, XI, 12

²⁰ Matthew, II, 3

be saddled and said to his followers: "Take their lances and shields!" But when they wanted to take their clothes as well, he ordered them to leave them, out of mercy, while, out of caution, he had their lances and shields taken away.

On that day, which was Friday, Yeshaq left Şafşaf and headed towards Mazber. On that day, he took with him Zaparāqlīṭos and ʿAsbe. But, on that same day, many of his people turned back and no longer marched with him. He camped at ʿEnguyəya from Friday to Saturday. Then the two brothers, Zaparāqlīṭos and ʿAsbe, went to the home of his wife, Maryam ʿEbayä, and said to her: "Why are we going with you? Would it not be better for us to turn back? We would be a cause of annoyance to the lord, as all our men, even the belättēnā and the stableman, have abandoned us." She replied to them: "Do not be sad; I will arrange your return." Then she spoke to Yeshaq in a tone of prudence. The Lord placed a feeling of mercy in the heart of Yeshaq, who said: "Let them return with Agār, and let them wait for me at Dāmo, until I return! When I come back, I will send them to Haşegē to finish the matter of peace that they have begun!" They hurried to leave his house, saying that they would obey, as they feared he would change his orders towards them.

Yeshaq headed towards the Balasā. But the two brothers, after separating from him, began to transgress his orders and his decisions; they sent one of their men to Haşegē, saying: "God, Our Lord, has delivered us from the hand of Yeshaq, who is harsher than chains and worse than iron bonds." The king, upon hearing this news, rejoiced greatly and sent messages to all his relatives, saying: "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that were lost; they have escaped from the jaws of the wolf!" Truly, he is indeed the good shepherd who seeks out the lost sheep and, upon finding them, rejoices more over these two than over the ninety-nine that are not lost.

(²¹Certainly, he is indeed the good shepherd who sacrifices himself for his sheep! But the mercenary, who is not the shepherd, abandons the sheep to the jaws of the wolf, and runs away to save himself, for he is a mercenary, and does not care about the sheep. Oh, what incomparable virtue! Oh, what mercy, who follows the word of Our Lord, saying: "Be like me; for I am gentle and humble of heart." ²²

The king, as soon as he learned that Yeshaq was in the vicinity, suddenly set out, roaring like a lion. When he reached Angabā, the land of the Şedyā, Yohannes, son of Romāna Warq, arrived: then the good and merciful king received him with a radiant face and a joyful heart; such is his habit: he brings closer out of love the one who was distant, he does not drive away the one who comes, he does not push him out. He sought to bring back to his former situation not only Yohannes, who was his kinsman by blood, but even Yeshaq, who had acted so badly against him and against his father; and it was only due to the wickedness of his heart that Yeshaq ended up as he did. Then, when the king reached Dārakā, he learned that Yeshaq was staying near Balasā. He then sent many cavalymen and infantrymen. The time to direct the battles was returning that day to Šum Takla Giyorgis. The soldiers set off in the morning, taking the path from Mazber, following Yeshaq's tracks. At 9 o'clock, the king followed them and found them at the river ʿEnguyəya: bringing them with him, he started walking quickly. Then Yeshaq, having learned that the king was coming down, became so frightened that he no longer knew where to go: he decided to flee towards the Marab, *Thursday, the 25th of the month of teqemt. The victorious king marched during that night from Thursday until dawn on Friday, and when he reached Balasā at dawn, he found Yeshaq's camp empty of men and animals; then his heart burned like

²¹ A reference to the parable of the lost sheep, commonly found in the New Testament.

²² Matthew, XI, 29

flames of fire. He wanted to pursue him, but the advisors and all the high officials of the royal household stopped him by saying: "Our horses and mules are weakened, we cannot set off in pursuit; moreover, who knows if the Turkish army is not waiting for us in a *dipā*, that is, in an ambush, along our path?" By these counsels, they made him abandon the idea of pursuing him. Then he sent cavalry scouts. These scouts met cavalymen sent out by Yeshaq for reconnaissance: they killed one and wounded the horse of another; a third one escaped with his horse while fleeing, so that he lost consciousness as if he had been possessed by an evil spirit. These scouts then arrived at Yeshaq's and reported everything that had just happened to them.

There was then a great fear in his camp. At this moment, Yeshaq made his decisions, saying: "You, O son of Etmān, you will remain with 700 armed men with shields in a position where the arriving warriors can see you; it seems to me that the leader of these warriors is Takla Giyorgis, but Haṣeḡē will not come. The caravan of baggage and women must go its way. When these soldiers attack the caravan, for the Amhārā love loot greatly, I will attack them from behind and defeat them." Having spoken thus, he sent the caravan of baggage and women by way of Ḥanabā; but the king's soldiers returned to Haṣeḡē, for the time had not yet come. Besides, it was God's will that Yeshaq should be the cause of the Turkish retreat and that they should be annihilated in a single day in the same way that he wanted their reunion with him, he also led to their annihilation.

Then Yeshaq headed towards Debār wā to make the Turks leave. But the Christian king headed towards his former residence; however, he changed his place and set up his camp at Yaḥa. While Yeshaq was going down to Debār wā, the peasants of Bur and Sarawē plundered all his cattle and goods; for such is the custom of these people: they give their goods to the victor and steal the goods of the vanquished. Then Yeshaq made every effort to get the Turks out; for they always delayed concerning him and looked for many *pretexts. With great difficulty, he managed to convince them; he had them come out by promising them great wealth. Then the king, informed of Yeshaq's and the Turks' arrival at Balasā, rejoiced greatly and immediately set out to meet them, as if they had come to help him, for he ardently wished for a pitched battle and not to delay any longer, so as not to ruin the people of Tigré because of this affair.

Upon leaving Balasā, Yeshaq and the Turks went to camp at Maman, in the land of 'Eggālā. Then the king felt great joy because Yeshaq and the Turks were approaching, for he desired a pitched battle. At that moment, he was at Megāryā Ṣamr, near Mazber, after having left Yaḥa.

One day, many horsemen went to explore Yeshaq's and the Turks' camp. But the king, being wise, said to them: "Be careful, do not try to fight them for fear of weakening our army." So they set out, having promised to follow these orders. Yeshaq and the bacha had sent several of their soldiers to reconnoiter Haṣeḡē's camp, to see whether it was small or large; half of these scouts were made up of Turks and half of Yeshaq's followers, horsemen, and foot soldiers. They noticed along the way, neither too far nor too close; and each returned to his camp. Then the bacha and Yeshaq set off and went to camp in the land of 'Enta Šewi²³; the victorious king set up his camp opposite theirs, in a land called Māy Kəl Baḥrā. On Tuesday, the 15th of the month of ṭəḥədār,²⁴ the king's army fought a battle against the Turks and the followers of Yeshaq; and that day, the Turks fled before the king's army. But this happened by divine providence, so that they would be enticed by the charm of this victory, which had no real value, and dare to fight against this mighty warrior whom the Lord had anointed with the anointing of victory. But the king,

²³ Enticio (Entitscho) of Italian geographical maps

²⁴ The 13th of November 1578

confident, does not boast when he is victorious; and, if his armies retreat, he does not hurry nor does he feel fear.

Here we shall present the story of the faith of abbā Newāy. One day, after hearing him plead for the grace of Yeshaq, in the presence of the merciful and kind king, he said: "O peacemakers, why do you persist? Heaven will be diminished, and the earth will pass away, before there is friendship between my lord Malak Sagad and Yeshaq, the rebel of the kingdom; for my Lord Jesus Christ *will reduce him to distress and make him fall into the hand of my master. What I have just said is not a tale of imagination; but I have learned it from spiritual poor men, who know hidden things and future things of times to come." Such was his faith in speaking. We shall write his faith in action.

When Haṣeḡē arrived at Dambyā, in the month of sanē, Newāy set up a large tent and brought there the tabernacle of Our Lord Jesus Christ, glory to him! He placed a golden cross on this tent. He did the same for the gemḡā bēt and for the tent of Haṣē. May Our Lord Jesus Christ put the seal of grace on his forehead, as he put the cross on the sanctuary that bore his name and on the sanctuary of his mother! Then he appointed the priests and the psalmists who were to apply themselves to prayer in this chapel, day and night, without neglect, and those who were to sing the hymns of Yāred, according to the custom of the Church of Ethiopia. He also gave this church sacred objects, clothes for the priests, each of a different color, the divine Books called the inspirations of the Holy Spirit; for the Lord, seeing the desire of his heart and the greatness of his care, had prepared for him all the rules of the Church, which he had neither thought of nor known.

When the followers of Yeshaq brought the two cannonballs, he placed one on the altar of the church of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the other on the altar of the church of gemḡā bēt. Abbā Newāy had found this *tabot (consecrated stone) of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the land of Kambāt, forty-seven years after it had been abandoned there in the days of persecution.

In former times, this *tabot had been the *tabot of the king; it went where the kings went, never separating from them; on it, they supplicated and prayed when they were in distress and pain. The head of the priests of this tabernacle was called Saraḡ Ma'asārē. At the time when this *tabot was found, Saraḡ Ma'asārē was the very virtuous abbā Takla Wald. It had been abandoned in Kambāt, when the persecution raged against the Christians, and when Ahmad, son of Abraham, seized the empire. While Haṣeḡē was among the Gurage to fight them and plunder them, abbā Newāy found this *tabot abandoned in a place; he took it from where it had been left, carried it out of its exile, and wanted it to be returned to its former place; after taking it, he left, rejoicing like the vigilant shepherd who *comes to find his lost sheep and takes it home in his arms, full of joy and gladness. When Haṣeḡē reached Dambyā, the arrival of the two cannonballs coincided with the arrival of the *tabot of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the king came and stood humbly before this tabernacle, saying: "This wicked man has placed his trust in these cannonballs; I place my trust in you, O my Lord Jesus Christ; do not abandon me, me, your servant, son of your servants; may my enemies not mock me, saying: 'Where is your God?'" Then he let his blood flow before this *tabot as a sign of his submission to his Lord, who had redeemed him with his own blood. Then abbā Newāy established that the priests should pray, saying: "See, O Lord, the wickedness of Yeshaq!"—Behold, thus was his faith in actions!

Now we must return to where we were before, to the place from where we set off to explain the story of abbā Newāy in words and actions.—On the 19th day of the month of ṭəhədār, the *bacha and Yeshaq left their camp during the night, went down the slope of 'Enta Šew, and

spent the whole night walking to suddenly descend by way of the descent upon the camp of the king and arrive suddenly, without anyone in the camp realizing it; for the camp was in the middle of the mountain. That night, Gabra Iyasus, a native of Tambēn, was on guard at the entrance, having gone up, for he was the Tegrē makuannēn. When Yeshaq's soldiers arrived suddenly, he escaped from their hands and went close to Haṣeḡē, shouting: "The Turks and Yeshaq have arrived! Prepare yourselves; the fighters to their ranks!" Then the king, having arrayed all his army, rushed and stopped quite close, in front of the enemies. The *bacha had occupied a higher position; the Christian king was in a lower but more spacious position. When cannon shots were fired, the cannonballs fell to the ground in the middle of the troops, without hitting anyone; sometimes they fell forward, sometimes backward; thus not a single man perished among the thousands of soldiers, even though eight cannons fired many times, until seven o'clock. This happened by the power of God, to fulfill the faith that this confident king had sent to Yeshaq in a letter saying: "If you have placed your trust in the cannonballs, I have placed mine in *my Lord Jesus Christ; and if you come with the Turks, I will come to you with my Lord Jesus Christ." It seemed to him that Our Lord had said to this confident king: "All will happen," as he says to those to whom he wants to show his wonders.

Then the king sent the skilled combat corps, which remains close to him and is called the corps of the Querbān: they engaged in a fierce fight against the Turks, who were composed of soldiers with firearms and cavalymen. A number of Turks, the most valiant, were killed; among the Querbān, there were wounded who did not die, and some wounded who died.

Here we are going to recount, with praises, the fight of these men devoted to death. On that day, while the cannonballs, coming out of firearms, rained down on them like a hailstorm, not a single one turned his face away! When someone was wounded and fell, he was lifted up and carried back home; when someone died, the corpse was transported away and buried. Those who remained said: "Happy are our brothers who are dead! for they have paid with their blood for the sins they committed during their lives! Let us follow their example, and we will have our part in their merits by faithfully serving God!" As they spoke thus, while trying to overtake each other and rush into the midst of the Turks, some were killed, while others charged to kill. But the victorious king, seeing the dedication of these warriors, sent to their aid many cavalymen and about fifty riflemen and many Galla. Then he charged, crying out: "It's me, I'm the first!" The Turks and the followers of Yeshaq had to retreat before them: they raised the flag from the place where it had been planted, and near the place of that flag, the warriors of the victorious king stopped. Thanks be to the Lord, who breaks the power of the proud and raises the strength of the humble!

That same day, at 9 o'clock, the king left his camp and went to camp at the place where he had been previously. The day on which the Christian king obtained this victory was a Saturday. He had chosen this place *to camp because it was a very large area, suitable for horses and infantrymen to fight in ranks.

The *bacha and Yeshaq left on Monday, took the upper road, and camped in a narrow, difficult, and high place, which could only be reached with great difficulty. While he was in that place, Yeshaq sent a message to Haṣeḡē, asking for peace. His message said: "Let Walatto²⁵ come: I will tell her all that I have in my heart; for she has been my friend for a long time." The peaceful

²⁵ In the Frankfurt manuscript: "that your daughter (walatka)" Paëz also refers to her as "your daughter"; however, it should be noted that Father Paëz does not seem to have a deep knowledge of the Ethiopian language. It is undoubtedly about the Walatto mentioned on pages 28, 39, 63,

king rejoiced on hearing these words; it was his habit to seek out those who were lost and to gather up the strays. So he sent Walatto, saying to her: "You will speak thus to Yeshaq: If you seek peace, you must leave the Turkish camp, and we will go fight the enemies of our religion. I will restore you to your former place. If you do not act thus, I will not make peace with you, even if the crows turn white and if the course of the water flows backward!"

Then, upon arriving at Yeshaq's, she kissed him with a holy kiss. They spoke for a long time, recalling their old bond. Then Walatto gave him the message from Haṣeḡē about peace. Yeshaq answered her in a voice full of pride and insolence, as was his habit, and said to her: "The Turk has come to help me; how could I fight him? How could I hate him who loved me? If the king desires peace with me, let him give gold to the *bacha and let him send him back without hostility; he will return to his fortress."

Then this religious woman, fearing the Lord and loving the king, answered in an angry voice: "Have you not learned what the Lord has just done for the king, against Fāsilo and Maḥammad against the Galla and the other numerous enemies who have risen, each in turn, against him? If you trust in the power of the Turks, the power of Jesus Christ is greater!" She reprimanded him with these words and similar ones, and she did not show the least embarrassment with him; but he was also not disturbed by her words, and did not want to give in to her advice; for the spirit of the Lord had abandoned him, so that his heart hardened, and his ruin came; as it is said: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." ²⁶

Yeshaq said to Walatto: "I cannot violate my oath with the *bacha, nor break the alliance that I made with him." This discourse was similar to those who say: "We have sworn an oath with death; we have had quarrels, and we have made an alliance with the grave." Thus, the conversation was brought to an end, and each went his own way. She returned to Haṣeḡē, and he went to the Turks. In truth, this woman was Orthodox and of good deeds; she loved the king, and, because of her great attachment to this Christian king, she went so far as to venture into the place from which shots were fired by muskets and cannons, staying with the warriors; she did not faint despite the weakness of the feminine nature. Happiness *and praise to her! When this believing woman arrived at Haṣeḡē, she explained everything that Yeshaq had said; then the king stopped sending messages to Yeshaq about peace. Moreover, he ordered others to listen well and said: "If someone comes to bring me messages from the Turks and Yeshaq, let them cut off his head with a sword!" He thus decided resolutely.

On that same day, abbā Newāy sent a message to Yeshaq and sent him a letter of reproach, comparing him to the rich man who put his hope in food and drink, in joy and festivity, as the evangelist Luke has reported. But the Lord said to him: "O fool! tonight your soul will be demanded from you; to whom will go the riches that you have amassed?" ²⁷ Sometimes Newāy compared Yeshaq to the demon who abandoned his place and wanted to become like his Creator; other times, he compared him to Judas, who sold his master for thirty pieces of silver; or he compared him to Sennacherib, because of his insolence and pride; or again he compared him to Pharaoh, because of his evil ways actions, worse than the work of masonry²⁸. Having heard these reproaches, Yeshaq remained stunned and said nothing.

²⁶ Cf. Exodus, 10:27

²⁷ Luke, 12:20

²⁸  Indicates that the actions were seen as worse or more degrading than physical labor, such as masonry.

We will also reveal here the virtuous conduct of abbā Newāy. When he found those rebelling against this kingdom, he reprimanded them by word and by deeds; for he was learned in the Holy Scriptures and understood the words of Saint Paul, who said to Timothy, his disciple: "You must reprimand those who err before the assembly, so that others may feel fear" ²⁹. For this reason, when the rebels saw him, some trembled, became frightened, and turned to wax before a fire; others fled far from him and crossed from one country to another.

Then all Yeshaq's relatives and all the chiefs of his followers came to submit to the king; all the riflemen and all the Galla also came without exception. But, despite everything that happened, Yeshaq did not return from his errors, did not repent; on the contrary, he remained firmer in the wickedness of his heart.

The *bacha and Yeshaq, having left this camp, went to camp in a narrow place, that is to say, in a mountain surrounded on all sides by precipices. The day they camped there, Thursday, the 1st of the month of ṭāhsāṣ, they had, with the king's soldiers, a meeting that was not a pitched battle. — That day, Gilo died after penetrating among the numerous Turks, massacring them on both sides. This man was well known among the Muslims (malasāy) for his strength and bravery. He had been the first *of the valiant soldiers of King Mahammad who had come to submit to Haṣeḡē; the others had followed in his footsteps, so that Mahammad remained all alone, abandoned by everyone.

A number of the king's soldiers were struck by gunfire; among Yeshaq's cavalymen, some had their hands broken by the gunshots, and others perished by the javelin. — Gebarā's son struck one of the Turkish horsemen and cut off his head, right hand, and iron collar in a single blow; the dead man's horse returned to the Turks, taking with it half of the corpse. The entire Turkish army, seeing this, was terrified. But the father of the aggressor, Gebarā, got angry at his son and said to him: "Why did you cut off his head, rather than cut him in half with all the chain mail he was covered with? Was it so difficult to give his blessing to his son, when he had cut off the head of a Turk with the sword? Why was he indignant against him?" The deeds of the valiant ones are truly marvelous!

The youngest of Gebarā's children, having killed the infantrymen, his father got angry with him and said: "Why did you kill the infantrymen, you who are my son? You were supposed to kill a cavalryman!" He threw his sons into irons, and it was with great difficulty that Haṣeḡē prevented him from beating him and had the son released from his chains; however, the father expressly ordered him never to kill infantrymen in battles, but only cavalymen. What an extraordinary thing! This took place on Thursday, the 1st of the month of ṭāhsāṣ. ³⁰

Then, on Wednesday 7th, at dawn, Gūdar went to his people and returned to his former place. Oh! what wickedness this perfidious man showed! By abandoning the one who had elevated him materially and had honored him spiritually with Christian honor, he went to shame and misfortune. This action was similar to the deeds of the pig who returns to the mud after being washed. ³¹ Furthermore, his action was like the action of Judas, the deceiver of his good master, who repaid evil in exchange for his goodness. Indeed, his Master had made him share in all his favors and had given him the power to cast out demons and to heal the sick; when he saw that he loved riches, he had given him the charge of *aqābē askarēn, which is to say the guardian of

²⁹ 1 Timothy 5:20

³⁰ Paëz does not have the account of this battle; besides, his whole account is excessively abridged.

³¹ II Peter, II, 22

the alms treasury, where the gold of the offerings was collected; Judas took possession of the things that were there, for he was a thief, and yet the Master had not despised him, had not hated him, but on the contrary continued to treat him as if he knew nothing. Likewise, Gūdar had shared with the king the riches of the body and the soul, and then, he returned to infamy and became a son of treachery. When he arrived at the *bacha, at dawn on Wednesday, the *bacha was not at all happy and said to him in contrast: "Jadis, you abandoned Islam; now you want to abandon Christianity to convert to Islam!" Thus, the mirror of shame had turned away from Gūdar's face! How could he abandon the one who had given him, on the eve, on Tuesday evening, golden bracelets for his right hand and for the left? Previously, he had even dressed him in luxurious garments, had given him a sword wrought in gold, had placed at his side a golden dagger, had given him a choice horse, exchanging at every moment what was good for what was better; he had also bought, with his possessions, a number of mules and oxen and had also given much gold, the quantity of which we do not know. He abandoned the good king and the kind master who had done all this for him; but the Lord did not wait long; on the contrary, He rewarded him very quickly. After his departure to the *bacha, he lived only ten more days; the day of the *bacha's fall and Yeshaq's fall was also the day of his fall; we shall recount his story later.

Upon Gūdar's arrival at the *bacha's, the latter decided that they had to descend from the mountain to engage in battle; immediately, many Turks, cavalymen, and riflemen descended. The king hurried to advance, placing his warriors in their ranks. Then he began to launch the Çawā and the Querbān, uniting them; the enemies yielded before them. The king's soldiers arrived at the place where the standard and cannons had been placed and overturned the latter from their mounts; the standard-bearer fled and reached the *bacha's camp. The king's soldiers went beyond the cannon emplacements and climbed up, almost reaching the *bacha's and Yeshaq's camp. That Wednesday was for the king a day of victory and strength; but for the *bacha and Yeshaq, it was a day of fear, hour by hour, from dawn until evening.

From that day, until the predestined day when the *bacha and Yeshaq fell with all their army, there were no more battles, and no more encounters took place; those who were there no longer came out, and those who were here no longer came to fight. Only the cavalymen of the Turkish army came, in twos or threes, to submit to the king; Yeshaq's relatives also came to submit each day in groups of two or three cavalymen. Riflemen from the Turkish army and warriors armed with shields, followers of Yeshaq, also came to submit from dawn until the moment *when they decided to say: "Thus, all our men are going to abandon us; it is better for us to go to a general battle before remaining alone."

We are going to reveal here the wisdom of the words of the *bacha. He said: "In this camp, we are three fools. When the king sent me messages, he would say: 'I will send you much gold, but do not leave your walls to provoke a fight by helping Yeshaq'; I left the walls. That was my foolishness!

The second foolishness was that of Yeshaq when he was told: 'Make peace with the king, your master, the master of your fathers. We will support you so that he keeps you in your former position'; but, hating peace, he sought a quarrel with his master, to the point of dying for it. It was an enormous foolishness. The third foolishness was that of this king ³², who does not have a

³² The account by Paëz adds "who was raised by Yeshaq; it is not, in fact, King Malak Sagad, but the usurper proclaimed by Yeshaq, who was to be taken prisoner."

single horse and claims to be king; because of his fault, all our misfortunes and calamities have come. This foolishness is greater than all the other foolishnesses!" Thus spoke the *bacha.

On the 17th³³ of the month of ʔähsäš, at dawn, Yeshaq was informed that all the men from the king's camp were leaving to carry out a raid. He immediately left, went to the *bacha, and said to him: "Let's fight today! The people from Haṣeḡē's camp are mostly out to plunder!" The *bacha did not want to engage in battle that day, but Yeshaq's words prevailed, for the *bacha always did as he thought best. On that day, the two diviners of Yeshaq, that is to say, the two soothsayers of lies, abbā Askāl and abbā Ḥalib, had an argument between them. The first said to him: "You will have a resounding victory"; but the other said to him: "You must not engage in a pitched battle today, for the victory would go to King Malak Sagad." He did not say this because he had accurate knowledge, but he said it by force, like Caiaphas, who prophesied the death of Our Lord as a sacrifice for the entire world. — Yeshaq did not want to listen to the voice of the one who spoke the truth. He relied, on the contrary, on the voice of his false diviner, for he was led by the day set for his downfall.

Then the *bacha and Yeshaq left, descended from the summit of the mountain where they had fortified themselves, had the cannons carried down, and placed them in an open area, where they could engage. They organized a pitched battle: they positioned the cavalry and musketeers in rows, following the military formations of the Turks. But the king, who was distributing rewards, left his camp rejoicing like a groom leaving his palace; he formed three groups of warriors, giving Takla Giyorgis and Daharagot command of the soldiers on the right and left flanks; he himself stood at the front, supporting the troops on both sides. *Then the Turks fired so many shots of rifles and cannons that the sound was like thunder and lightning. But Takla Giyorgis's soldiers prevailed, penetrated the Turks' ranks, forced them to retreat, and captured two drums and the mule on which Yeshaq was riding. Many of the Turks' mules were wounded or captured. Yeshaq managed to escape, followed by forty or thirty Turkish horsemen; however, they remained behind. Separated from them, he was spotted while walking alone by an infantryman from Takla Yohannes's partisans, the son of Robel from Madabay, who was lying in ambush waiting for him; this man immediately threw a spear, pierced him in the back, and began to boast about this feat, as was customary among the warriors. Yeshaq returned to the battle, spilling his blood like water; all his clothing was soaked in it. He was taken off his horse, which they made a pavilion over with clothes. Informed of the death of Garad, his minister, Yeshaq said: 'It is good that we are prepared to die; we will only leave behind a bitter memory, having been killed along with impure dogs!' Then Yeshaq's horsemen and infantry began to come and surrender in twos or threes, including Asgadom, his brother; even the Turks surrendered in large numbers. Among them was Gudar, the new Judas; because he believed that they were competing to show their strength and that they would kill the king's men. The king's guards received those who came to surrender: but they shamefully seized this Gudar, who had deceitfully abandoned his master and came to fight him as a traitor; they dismounted him from his horse and led him before the victorious king. Then the king admired the judgement of the glorious and high Lord, giving glory to the power of his formidable hand, which breaks the arm of the arrogant. Then they beheaded Gudar. All those who saw this said: 'Now we know that the power of the Lord remains with his anointed one.' and it was carried out vengeance on his enemy and made him fall before him." — "Gudar was worse than Judas who sold our Lord; that man, seeing that they had condemned our Lord, repented, returned the thirty pieces of silver he

³³ Manuscripts of Paris and Frankfurt: "the 15th"; Paëz: "the 21st of December 1573"; the indication of the year is undoubtedly erroneous and should be corrected to 1578.

had received from the chief priests, and said: 'I repent for having betrayed innocent blood and for causing the death of the righteous one'³⁴; but Gudar did not repent of his initial treachery; he renewed his betrayal to fight his master.

Then all the warriors remained silent on either side: those who were seated remained in place, and those who were standing did not retreat from their positions, for the time to finish the battle had not yet come. At nine o'clock, the men who had gone for the raid returned, brave men who did not turn away out of fear of a sword or a lance. They then attacked the Turks, because they thirsted for combat, as they were informed that a pitched battle had been joined. The first to arrive and those who came later supported each other: they surrounded the basha and all the Turks from all sides, like a castle. Some were killed by gunfire, others fell under javelins, and others by the sword: the Turks were agitated in this campaign like the leaves of a tree. Yeshaq died at that moment: after the first blow, a large number of javelins fell upon him, at the spot where he had been laid. Some say that his head was cut off while he was still alive; others say that his head was cut off after his death. His spoils were brought before the victorious king.

While the basha was standing on his horse with an iron breastplate, a golden-ornamented helmet on his head, a gold-adorned dagger at his side, a golden sword at his arm, and a golden javelin in his hand, Yona'el, a brave warrior, saw him and struck him in the chest with his lance: the basha fell from his horse, and Yona'el seized his golden sword, cut off his head, and brought it before the victorious king. At the same time, the false anointed of the Lord, who had been captured wounded, Abbā Neway, upon seeing him, roared like a lion, and wanted to tear him apart: it was with great difficulty that the merciful and clement king took him away and returned him to those who were charged with keeping him until his hour³⁵.

Then the king's warriors climbed the mountain upon that had belonged to the basha and Yeshaq; they seized the treasures of the basha and Yeshaq, and shared the spoils of the Turks. On that day, many poor people became rich, and many who had been stripped of their garments were clothed in magnificent robes. Later, the king climbed this mountain and examined the camp of the basha, of Aftar, and all the Turks, and the camp of Yeshaq and his companions. The soldiers who reached this mountain first found Yeshaq's women, his daughters, his sisters, and his relatives in great numbers; they stripped them of their robes. How surprising and strange it was: yesterday they were adorned, today they stood naked! Most of the king's soldiers were rich, yet some of them were still destitute; but that day, they too were able to dress themselves. What is this changing world, which gives to one one day and to another the next? But justly and rightly, the hand of this victorious king was filled. That is why I say: "Henceforth, the Most High will change his direction, once punishing and at another time being merciful, once destroying and at another time showing clemency."

Then the king returned to his camp, called Ashbe and Zaparaqlitos, and said to them: "See the work of the Lord, who has performed a miracle on earth!" In saying this, he had the heads of the basha and Yeshaq placed on the same carpet; thus Yeshaq had sent a message long ago saying: "I am equal with the basha on the same carpet!" Now Yeshaq has received what he desired, and his wish is fulfilled, for his head lies next to the head of the basha on the same carpet! Then these brothers marveled at the Lord's wonders and gave praises to His glory. On that day, Zaparaqlitos said to Abba Dhahba Maryam: "Thus today the prophecy of John, the author of the Apocalypse, is fulfilled, who said in his vision: 'And I heard a great voice saying: "Salvation,

³⁴ Math., xxvii, 4. — Referring to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27, verse 4

³⁵ On the losses of the Turks at 'Addi Qoro, cf. p. 178, lines 6-7

power, and the kingdom belong to our God, and the power to his anointed, because the enemy of the brethren, who fought against our brothers day and night, has fallen; they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb, for they neglected themselves even to death." This prophecy has come to pass today!" Dhahba Maryam replied: "What you say is true; what you express is just!"

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That Friday evening until Saturday, there was great joy; in fact, this Saturday was a great day: three joys came together: victory, song, and wine. Because of these three joys, we did not know the darkness of night, as it is said: 'The night is bright in my joy, because with you the darkness is not obscure and the night is as bright as day; light and darkness are alike.'³⁷

During the day on Saturday, the night before Sunday, and on Sunday, there was great rejoicing, giving thanks to the glorious and most high Lord.

The names of the rebels, who died after being made prisoners, are: the usurper of the empire, Manadlēwos; the rebel of the kingdom of Kumo, son of the Azaz Wanago; and the Kantiba Engedazan, who had a trumpet called "nasser qūnā" brought and gave it to Yeshaq; they all died as a result of a judgment by the doctors and by the judgment of the glorious and most high Lord. The merciful and compassionate king was moved and would not have wanted to have them killed; but the kingdom's nobles and the leaders of the people had them killed, as the doctors of the Church came to judge according to the *Fetha Nagast*³⁸.

The trophies that were looted, such as the standards and drums, and such as the cannons, rifles, horses, chain mail, helmets, swords, javelins—all these military items and similar things came into the possession of the king; he did not seek the other goods, such as mules, robes, utensils, but left them, and each took as much as they could. Here is what happened:

On the 21st of this month of Tālhās, the king, master of victory, left Addi Qoro and headed towards Debarwa. On that day, the Turks who had stayed to guard the fortress, having learned of the destruction of their companions, sent messages saying: 'We are the slaves of the king; everything that is ours belongs to the king; send trustworthy people to take care of it!' Hearing this, the king sent Sebhat La'ab and Qerban Heywatē to Debarwa to secure everything in the fortress. Arriving near Debarwa, he sent Abba Neway, Ma'emro, and Keslyano to protect the goods of the Turks that were in the fortress: indeed, it was reported to him that that the people of Tigré were looting the goods that were there with the men of Sebhat La'ab. Neway and his companions arrived there on Monday evening to Tuesday. When they entered the fortress, all the Turks gathered and prostrated themselves at the feet of Abba Neway. How admirable and wonderful that the favor of this Christian king rested upon this poor and miserable monk! Thus he made the Turks bow before him, before whom even brave men trembled! Blessed be the Lord, who breaks the proud and honors the humble!

The next day, when the king arrived at Debarwa on Tuesday at three o'clock, the Turks fired shots with cannons placed at the fortress's murder holes for those who approached, as is the Turks' custom: when their master returns after leaving to fight his enemies or for other reasons, they receive him by firing gunshots and cannon shots. The gates were opened to him because the command of the Lord applied to him, who said: 'Open the gates of the judges, and let the closed

³⁶ Apoc., xix, 1 — Referring to the Apocalypse, chapter 19, verse 1.

³⁷ Ps. cxxxviii, 11-12 — Referring to Psalm 138, verses 11-12

³⁸ That is to say, I believe, according to the customary law of the royal tribunal.

doors since the creation be opened, and let the king of glory come out.' ³⁹Upon entering, he seized the goods of the basha and the goods of all the Turks: the quantity is unknown, as many of these riches were shared after he abandoned them, taking only exquisite and precious items, as much as he wanted. He gave thanks to the Lord, who had granted him possession of the wealth of his enemies; for it was the habit of this believing king, when he defeated his enemies and plundered their goods, to say: 'All this has happened by the power of my Lord Jesus Christ.' Such is the greatest of his virtues! May the Lord make him great and virtuous, glorious and exalted!

That Tuesday, the king ordered the Turks to set up the tents of the basha and of Aftar: they laid out precious rugs and set up tents all around.

The next day was Christmas. On that day, there was great joy. We began the celebration in the church, with cries of joy and hymns, recalling the victory that the Lord had granted to our king. Abba Neway said: 'We must celebrate the feast of the birth of Our Lord for three reasons: the first, because we rejoice in the birth itself and the glory of our fathers; the second, for the victory that Jesus Christ gave to one of our fathers to our king over the enemies of His birth; the third, because Jesus Christ gave our king the power over this fortress and everything inside it.'

While the Turks of the garrison were handing over the riches of the basha to the king, the gold that this king had sent to the basha the previous year was found. The reason for this sending was not to seek peace with the basha, but to stir up quarrels between the basha and Yeshaq. We saw the pouch in which the gold was placed: its cords had not been untied nor had its seal been broken. Then we admired the work of the Lord!

The treasures of Yeshaq, his wife, and all his children fell into the hands of the king. Then the priests said: "As soon as the treasures and hidden riches were found, during the reign of this king, the word of the Gospel was fulfilled which says: 'There is nothing hidden that will not be discovered; and there is nothing secret that will not be revealed.'"⁴⁰

The day after Christmas, the king ordered the demolition of the fortress walls and towers. He even had the mosque torn down. He gathered the Turks who had escaped from the battle on the day of his victory and the Turks from the fortress garrison, and appointed them under a basha. In doing all this, he spent a week in Debarwa.

He left on Tuesday, the 4th of the month of Ter, and headed towards Aksoum. He celebrated the Feast of the Baptism at Reha Sawit, the land of Bankual.

Then he sent a message to the priests of Aksoum, saying: "Prepare yourselves; wait for me; I will arrive in Aksoum to celebrate the royal ceremonies before my mother, Syon, the Tabernacle of the God of Israel, as my fathers David and Solomon did."

Leaving Reha Sawit, he camped at Debura, which is in the territory of Aksoum. On the 15th of the month of Ter, on Saturday, he set off in the morning to go to the church of Aksoum. The clergy, priests, and deacons received him with the golden cross, the silver censer, and about twelve parasols, while they were pulling silk curtains composed of dark blue fabrics, manduqe, and other velvets, each of its own color. The clergy, adorned with church ornaments in their own way, all the superiors of the convents of Sire and all the superiors of the convents of Tigré, dressed in albs and chasubles, holding the cross and censers, sang the hymns of Yared, saying:

³⁹ Ps. xxiii, 7 — Referring to Psalm 23, verse 7.

⁴⁰ Matt., x, 16, etc. — Referring to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 10, verse 16, and related passages

"Be blessed, O King of Israel!" the priests stood the daughters of Syon, at the milestone, in the middle of the path, where there is a small obelisk. This obelisk bears inscriptions from the top to the bottom, which were engraved by the ancients in Greek letters. The name of this place is Mebtaka Faṭl, a name whose explanation will be known from the actions of this king that we are about to write. This place is located east of the cathedral of Aksoum. The daughters were lined up on the right and left, holding a thick thread. There were also two elderly women standing next to these daughters, one on the right and the other on the left, holding a sword. When this powerful and victorious king arrived on his horse, the elderly women raised their voices, speaking in an arrogant and insolent tone: "Who are you? What family and tribe are you from?" The king replied to them: "I am the son of David, son of Solomon, son of Ebna Hakim." A second time, they questioned him insolently, and he satisfied them, saying: "I am the son of Zarea Ya'qob, son of Ba'eda Maryam, son of Na'od." At their third question, the king raised his hand and said: "I am Malak Sagad, son of King Wanag Sagad, son of Asnaf Sagad, son of Admas Sagad!"⁴¹ As he said this, he cut the thread that the daughters were holding with his sword; and then the elderly women cried out, saying: "Truly, truly, you are the King of Zion, the son of David, son of Solomon!" Then the priests of Aksoum began to sing on one side, and the daughters of Syon to applaud on the other: thus he was received until his entry into the courtyard of the house of heavenly Zion⁴².

Then he scattered a great quantity of gold on the ground, for the men of the law. He then formed a magnificent procession: here the musketeers and there the gunners, here the cavalry and there the infantrymen, while the *Deb Anbasa* drum was struck, and trumpets (*sānti*), horns (*nesser qānā*), and flutes—Turkish and Amhara instruments—resounded. Then they fired volleys of muskets and cannonades, such that the noise was comparable to thunder. On that day, there were great ceremonies and pomp, such as had never been done before, even in the days of previous kings. Then they spread precious fabrics on the carved stone throne, which the ancients had crafted; and they made the king sit on this throne, which is called Manbara Dawit⁴³, as the fathers once named it. All the royal ceremonies were performed there according to the customary law. After the law was entirely observed, he came to the church. After the mass, he entered a bower of foliage (*dāš*), which had been prepared by the people of Aksoum. On that day, there was great joy and gladness for the priests and the men of the law. The king gave to the church a large quantity of gold, garments, and fabrics, each in its own color, such as dark blue fabrics and other similar items, with two pairs of drums.

Then a very high seat was brought for Abba Neway, and he was made to ascend it: he stood there holding the wood of a standard and began to name the kings from David and Solomon to King Zarea Ya'qob, to his children Asnaf Sagad and Admas Sagad, and to this victorious king Malak Sagad.

We will now write here and recall on this page the kings who received the royal anointing on this throne, called Manbara Dawit (*Throne of David*), as the doctors of the Aksoum cathedral named it, from King Ebna Hakim, son of Solomon, to our King Zar'a Ya'qob, the Orthodox. From then on, the royal anointing was placed upon the kings who followed, up to this king, who is full of counsel, good deeds, trusting in the Lord, King Malak Sagad, of great wealth, who was placed on

⁴¹ That is to say, the "cutting of the thread."

⁴² This is the name often given to the cathedral of Aksoum

⁴³ That is, "the throne of David."

this throne of the law and received the royal anointing by the grace of the glorious and most high Lord.

We leave aside the two kings that Yeshaq placed on this throne, rebelling against the Christian reign, because the power of the Lord caused them to fall and handed them over to King Malak Sagad, whose name ⁴⁴ indicates his deeds. We will also write here the number of the rebel kings: Tazkaro reigned by decree of Keflot and Yeshaq, and the Lord caused him to fall into the hands of King Admas Sagad. The kings who fell into the hands of his son Malak Sagad, the victorious king, were Marqos, the child, and Takla Maryam, the elder, who was named king by Hamalmāl; the king of Fasilo, whose ears were cut off; and the second king of Yeshaq, whose head was cut off because of his audacity against the Christian reign.

All of this story about the virtues of the victorious King Malak Sagad, we have heard, we have seen, and we have learned through inquiry. We have just written a few things; we have left out most of the miracles that the Lord performed by his hands, which were not done in the days of the kings, his fathers. If we wanted to write everything, the world would not be enough to contain the books that would be written. But what we have just written was written for everyone, for those who will read it and those who will hear this book, giving praises to the Lord.

The reason that led us to make an abridgment was not to discourage the lazy, as are the books collected by Georges, son of Hamid, that is, *The History of Times*; for he failed to write an abridgment, and he began with Adam to go up to the middle empire of the Muslims, who changed the orthodox Christian religion, which leads to eternal life, and who followed the crooked path that leads to Hell. But we have followed in the traces and abridged by writing the history of King Malak Sagad. Only, we hope to be able to add another story, if we live, and if it pleases the Lord; for we know that a mighty hand and a formidable arm guide him where he desires and where he signals with his finger. May this be the seal of our discourse!

Let us then say: let us be silent; for we cannot finish the discourse properly because of the greatness of this author of good works. If we see, if we learn, while we are in the physical life, the grand things and victories that the Lord will accomplish by the hand of this king, as he has already done, we will write them. But if the fate of all men reaches us and we are numbered among the dead, may the survivors not omit writing the history of the wonders that the Lord will have shown through the hand of this Christian king! May the Lord preserve our King Malak Sagad for long days, and may he protect his life by grace and mercy! Amen. Praise be to the Lord, by whom all work begins and by whom all discourse ends!

The author of this book says: O learned brothers who will read this book, do not be offended if it is not in a beautiful style and if it does not have an ornate diction, he is not ashamed, for he has spoken according to his abilities, as the Holy Spirit told him. This is not to collect of vain praises and worldly glory that he wrote: it is to obey the orders of his master. For the book says: 'Servants, obey your masters!' ¹ O teachers, do not be surprised by the faults of this obedient man, remembering the word of the Book, which says: 'Who can understand his errors?' ² — We end the discourse with these words."

End Of Chapter VII..

⁴⁴ Malak Sagad = "the kings bowed.

